

The modern illegal drug trade essay

[Parts of the World](#), [Asia](#)



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Introduction

The Middle East and Asia Pacific is home to almost half of the world population. Its economic and political development is fundamental to the furtherance of the world security and prosperity. Several countries are bound to the Middle East and Asia Pacific in terms of factors such as people-to-people ties, economy, geography and history. However, the strong connection of the two regions to the world also opens up opportunities for illegal drug dealers to prevail despite the efforts of the international state security partnerships to crack down the thriving drug smuggling activities. Drug trafficking is among the major security concerns of the countries within the Middle East and Asia Pacific regions. In order to provide a clearer picture of the current state of the problem in drug trafficking, an overview of the prevailing situation will be discussed along with the analysis that will provide perspectives in drug-trafficking networks in the aforementioned regions. In addition, smuggling strategies will to mobilize the distribution of illegal drugs from the Middle East to Asia Pacific, which defines the contemporary nature of drug smuggling. Apparently, the globalization of illegal drugs entailed the

contemporaries perceived in several instances of drug trafficking to and from the Middle East and Asia-Pacific.

Keywords: Drug trafficking, global trade, world economy, networks, contemporaries, strategies.

Discussion

In order to re-balance the Middle East and Asia Pacific, there should be adequate strengthening strategies that should be initiated to secure the economic, security and political sustainability in the aforementioned regions. However, the increasing presence of the illegal drug trade in the world market poses a threat to national prosperity and the rampant smuggling activities are an indication of the lack of adequate strategies. Drug trafficking is considered as a transnational concern that entails destructive consequences that reverberates from Asia to the Middle East. Such wide trade coverage allowed illegal drug trade to flourish in the region. In fact, the international drug trade is now being valued at an approximately \$400 billion. It is a relatively large industry in terms of profit that overshadows other legal industries. In addition, the international trading of illegal drugs knows no frontier and particularly don't have exact national identity (Williams 1).

The international drug traffickers are now running like multinational companies led by organized crime groups, which are operating in different parts of the world. Triads in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China are the main suppliers of illegal drugs in the Asian region while countries in the Middle East such as Afghanistan serves as a source of main ingredients in drug making poppy flowers. The growth of the international drug trade relies

on the increasing number of users that is currently approximated at 200 million (Williams 2). One of the main contributing factors to the growth of international illegal drug trade is the availability of vast transportation channels that smugglers can use to transport the illegal drugs. However, because of the emerging technology and security measures that are being implemented in each country, it is becoming more difficult for the illegal drug traders to mobilize their supplies to key locations. This explains the reason that illegal drug organizations are seeking for contemporary approach in securing transport of their precious shipment.

International news in recent months features the captured individuals that are carrying with them significant amount of illegal drugs. These individuals are referred to as drug mules because of their ability to conceal large amounts of illegal drugs with them when leaving and entering another country. In some cases the contemporary approach in illegal drug trade is to hide the contraband within their body, language, clothes and even putting the package inside the genitals as told by the female arrested drug mules. Other approach used by smugglers is to channel their cargos in porous borders particularly in geographical areas where border are the only thing that divides one country to another. For example, Afghanistan, which is the largest and the single opiate drug producing country shares border with three countries that are also struggling with their economies. Such economic condition forces the neighboring countries to take part in the illicit industry due to the promise of lucrative gains out of the illegal transactions. The prevalence of illegal drug trafficking also regarded as one of the causes of graft and corruption in the involved states because of under-the-table

transactions and bribes given to custom officials and other government personalities to allow the free trade of illegal drugs.

The huge profits obtained from such transaction and the availability of remote countryside helped boost illegal drug production in Asia-Pacific and in the Middle East. In fact, about 4. 5 million hectares of hemp plantation was discovered in Chue Valley in Kazakhstan, not to mention thousands of hectares of uncontrolled areas in the Asia-Pacific where poppy seeds were sowed (Williams 7). The abundance of uncontrolled channels and borders allowed traffickers to smuggle the illegal drugs without being detected and for that same reason, crime organizations engaged in drug trafficking have chosen to center their production in parts of the Middle East and Central Asia. Other countries such as Israel is also increasingly concerned about the state of state security when it comes to the exportation of illicit drugs such as heroin, ecstasy, cocaine and cannabis, which came from Lebanon.

Although cannabis production in Lebanon has significantly decreased in 2002, the increasing demand in consumption has resulted to other criminal problems such as money laundering of drug sales. The continuous existence of the drug trafficking problem is largely attributed to the apparent availability of transit channels, which in return fuels the widespread of other smuggling of other contrabands apart from illegal drugs. In the Philippines, a growing industry of methamphetamine production is one of the major concerns of the local law enforcement. Despite the continuous effort of its government to crackdown illegal drug laboratories, it is still impossible to control the growth of such industry because the country itself is home to vast waterways that are suitable for smuggling methamphetamine. Other

Asia-Pacific nations such as Thailand is also a minor producer of opium, but its advantage lies on the production of cannabis and heroin that are being transported to Burma and Laos and beyond.

Modern illegal drug trade was accelerated by the need for alternative source of income for most involved countries in the Middle East to Asia-Pacific because of the stagnant economic condition. This problem has resulted to the globalization of criminal trades, thus owing its modern characteristic. During the 1960's to early 2000, drug traffickers operate from their home territory and the classic international crime groups can only connect globally if they are transferring funds elsewhere, but cannot fully operate to move their commodities as independent groups. Hence, today crime organizations were able to form a much larger organization that comprises of groups of local organizations from different countries. It appears that the illegal drug traffickers are institutionalizing their organization to work as a single unit. This strategy brought their criminal operations to global scale, which becomes more impossible to contain. The government's diminishing control over the smuggling of illicit drugs is also becoming inevitable due to the fact that the criminal organization itself is continuously growing over time (South and Wyatt 540).

However, the growth of the illegal drug trafficking operation was not only owed from the international cooperation of criminal organizations, it also includes a systematic approach that has been formulated into a chain of processes. The first step in the process is the cultivation of the raw materials such as cannabis and poppy seeds. The next step in the process is the subsequent collection of the grown raw materials followed by the production

of the drug itself. However, the major concern is the transformation of the collected materials into a final product, which at some point deteriorates due to the unfamiliarity with the process. It somehow imitates the same process of manufacturing a regular commodity that undergoes a meticulous process to ensure maximized profitability. The last step in the chain is the transport of the produced illegal drugs, which encompasses the most risk because of the possible interception while in transit (South and Wyatt 543). However, the modern illegal drug trade have already fashioned itself to overcome the consequential result of its operation.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the modern approach applied by criminal organizations to illegal drug trade allowed them to compete in a global market. The illicit drug trafficking industry and its growing business is largely attributed to its various approach in transporting their commodity in a manner that even law enforcement cannot totally control. The number of available avenues for trafficking opened several opportunities for criminal organizations to further expand their operations, which needs to be addressed by re-balancing the economic, political and social development of the countries particularly in the aforementioned regions from the Middle East to Asia-Pacific.

Works Cited

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