

Drug enforcement administration (dea) report

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Introduction

The federal government system functions with hundreds of federal agencies and administrative offices. These federal agencies have specific purposes and were formed through enactment of congress. Congress has been given the mandate to create such agencies and these agencies are answerable to congress at any point in time. Some agencies are formed under cabinet departments while others are independent agencies. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is one such federal agency. The DEA, as the name suggests, is cabinet agency formed in response to the drug menace that has hit the country in the 1970s. Its sole purpose is to enforce the control of and use of illegal substances as defined by the Law of the United States. It is also the role of the DEA to bring violators of such laws into the United States Justice system. This research paper reviews the DEA as a federal law enforcement agency. The paper will first analyze the historical context, that is, the forming enactment and early life of the agency. The paper will further delved into the mission and purpose of the agency. The paper will analyze the organization chart as well as the recent accomplices and criticisms that have been directed at the DEA.

Historical context Formation and the early life (1970-1975)

The history of drug and substance abuse control dates back to the year 1915. In 1915, the federal agency tasked with the responsibility of drug and substance abuse control was the Bureau of Internal Revenue. After that several enactments and legislations, numerous drug enforcement agencies were formed while others were dissolved. By the year 1960, two federal

agencies had been tasked by the government to perform drug and substance abuse control. These were the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) and the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control (BDAC). However, in the 1960s, the drug culture in the United States had taken root and this is said to have taken a terrible toll on the nation. The drug business was becoming and hugely lucrative business as drug smugglers travelled across the globe to get the drugs. In particular, South American and East Asian states were the prime for sourcing the drugs. Furthermore, competition among drug dealers was getting really intense. Neighborhood shootings, assassinations, rampant homicides and endangered school children were becoming the norm. As the problem took a toll, the US congress under President Nixon, had had enough and decided to enact the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Under Title II of the CSA act referred to as the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 called for the merging of several legislations and the formation of a single agency. For the first time in US history, the psychotropic drug and narcotics would be controlled by a single agency. In 1973, the Drug Enforcement Agency was formed to replace U. S. Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD)

The formation of the DEA was through an Executive Order that president Nixon signed in 1973. The president, under Reorganization Plan 2, directed congress to make all concerted towards fighting the ever increasing drug menace. Before the formation of the DEA several significant events had taken place making the drug menace an international problem.

The most common internationalized drug issue was the French Connection. The French connection had its history in Marseilles France in the year 1937.

Illegal drugs gangs had managed to develop heroin labs and these gangs had started to transit drugs at the global stage. The gang, led by Paul Carbone had managed to create a well organized drug trafficking gang that was later referred to as the French Connection. The French Connection was wide scheme with a near global impact. Most of the raw materials used to make heroin, that is opium, were sourced from Turkey. Some Turkish farmers were licensed to grow opium on the condition that they would sell the produce to legal drug companies. However, drug cartels were able to source the opium and ship to the port of Marseilles. From the port the opium would be transported to nearby laboratories and processed. The finished product, heroin, would again be shipped to different destinations and the City of New York was one such destination. With time, heroin from the French Connection syndicate emerged in Manhattan, Belgium, Lebanon, Luxemburg and the Netherlands.

With time, the world realized that the French connection was becoming an international menace and each government was struggling to keep the drugs out. However, the drug syndicate was becoming effective in the smuggling and managed to move over 200 pounds of heroin per week. In 1971, the world community coerced Turkey to burn the production of opium. In 1972, the French and American drug officials were able to make several arrests and in the process seizing several hundred of pounds of heroin. Such multinational effort called for the creation single coordinated agency within the US that would oversee the creation of a single agency.

Reasons for forming the DEA

A senate committee was tasked with looking into the creation a single agency. The committee's proposed several advantages for creating a single federal agency. In its report, the Senate committee concluded that:

- A single federal drug enforcement agency would do away with the interagency rivalries that were synonymous with the Custom Services and BNDD
- A single federal agency would provide a coordinated approach towards drug enforcement, in terms of working with the local and state agencies.
- A single federal agency would provide better accountability and focal control points in its effort to stem corruption and effective enforcement of drug laws.

Following these recommendation, President Nixon directed the formation of the DEA. The first director of the newly formed DEA was John R. Bartels, Jr. His first objective was to coordinate an integration of all anti narcotic agents to become one effective force. His second priority was to restore public confidence in the federal agency's role in enforcing anti drug laws. The first priority of coordination an integrated and effective anti drug force faced fierce challenges. The two agencies, that is, the BNDD and the US customs services, had several differences in their philosophies and this would make integration rather challenging. Today the DEA is an effective agency that is with a single focal point of the control and a better drug enforcement pedigree.

Current State and organization structure

Today the DEA is a properly functioning federal agency with several departments and units working in a coordinated manner towards enforcing drug laws in the United States. The DEA is headed by the Administrator who is appointed by the president and approved by Senate. The current administrator is Michele M. Leonhart who was appointed by president Obama in December 2010. The next in command is the Deputy Administrator and together with the Chief Inspector and the chief of operations make the up the top tier of the DEA. The DEA reports to the Attorney General, through the office of the Assistant Attorney General. Currently, the DEA has its headquarters at Arlington, Virginia and runs its own academy. The DEA trains its agents at the Marine Corp at Quantico. The following organization chart indicates the organization structure employed by the DEA.

Current Operations

Today, the agency has made notable progress in fighting the drug menace. For instance, the DEA has been able to reduce the extent to which drugs from the lawless northern sections of Mexico have penetrated into the American society. The DEA has also been able to burst local laboratories involved in the production of methamphetamine commonly referred to as Meth.

Some of the major accomplishments of the DEA include the Cali arrest in the mid 1990s. The Cali was a Colombian mafia organization that was smuggling thousands of pound of heroin and cocaine into the United States. In coordination with Colombian authorities, the DEA assisted in the leading the arrest of the major mafia bosses in the Cali cartel. In the end, yearly 64

members of the Cali mafia groups were arrested.

A similar successful operation was Operation Zorro II of 1996, an undertaking that targeted a Mexican organized crime syndicate. The operation involved several DEA undercover agents who worked directly with the drug smugglers. After successfully building enough evidence with regard to the Mexican drug cartel, the DEA arrested over 130 individuals and seized over 5, 000 kilograms of cocaine and other 1000 kilograms of marijuana.

Other successful accomplishment has been a collaborated international effort at fighting global drug trafficking. Together with other law enforcement agencies, the DEA has been able to share intelligence with other nation and this has led to the arrest of several drug traffickers.

Criticisms

The DEA has come under criticism with regard to restriction of substances that may have medical benefits. The most common point of criticisms has been directed at the medical use of marijuana. Experts argue that medical marijuana may be used by several cancer patients to ease the troubles of lack of appetite and low esteems. The use of medical uses of marijuana has been discussed in several forums and at different levels of government.

However, the DEA has been known to raid medical marijuana clinics even though such clinics may possess dully approved licenses. The DEA should therefore consider a review of the issues overlooking medical marijuana.

Either, the DEA has come under criticism with regard to the mode of operations. The DEA has been seen to target only big smugglers and cross border trafficking. The result is that small time peddlers in the communities are left to local law enforcement. Thus local smugglers are left to less

equipped over burdened law enforcement while the DEA is watching border crossings.

A different criticism that has been directed at the DEA is the big budget that the agency uses as compared to the number of arrests made. The DEA is a huge agency with more than 10, 000 employees and immense resources are used to run the agency. In comparison to local law enforcement, a single arrest by the DEA is hundreds of times more expensive than a local arrest.

Improving effectiveness

The DEA can do a lot to improve on its effective approach to drug enforcement. The DEA should consider scaling down its international operations to only a few centers. Either, the CIA could double in its role and act as the intelligence wing of the DEA at the international level. Either, the DEA should work closely with border patrols and the Immigration department in order to reduce presence only a bare minimum.

Conclusion

The DEA is a federal agency with the noble mandate of enforcing anti-drug laws as defined by the United States laws. The DEA is therefore a single agency that coordinates all the anti-drug efforts both within the US and the beyond US borders. In doing this, the DEA has actively acted in collaboration with other agencies to try and mitigate the drug menace. Today, with the rise of the Mexican cartel, the DEA has its role set out. The Mexican Cartels and other drug trafficking syndicates around the world and getting ever efficient and effective in the smuggling ring. Thus, the DEA has to improve its efficiency in order to effectively stop the drug smuggling.

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