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# DRUG CONTROL

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Topic I:

Measures to eliminate international drug cartels in light of the failing current global drug policy

## **I. Background Information**

Drug Trafficking is the illicit trade of illegal substances through manufacturing, distribution, and sale. The rise of International Drug Trafficking is attributed to the infamous Colombian drug cartels of the 1970's. While drugs have obviously been used throughout the world for some time, the movement of large quantities of the drug across international borders is a relatively new threat and the countries affected by it have reacted in a variety of different ways.

The United States was one of the first world powers affected by drug cartels. Their approach to the issue, started under president Richard Nixon and influenced heavily by president Ronald Reagan, was to attack the drug cartels from the bottom up with unrelenting force in the "War on Drugs." The escalation of the conflict with police and military forces only created more chaos and violence in an already unstable Central America and started the problem of mass incarceration still seen in the US today.

The strategy of most other countries, including the EU, has been to go after drug trade routes in an attempt to stop drugs from crossing their borders. While this strategy has been somewhat effective, it fails to focus on the source of the problem and therefore only prompts drug traffickers to develop newer and less detectable ways of moving their products.

The Central and South American trafficking network has withstood the United States and Colombian “War on Drugs” and continued to thrive over the last half century. Today, Columbia and Peru are the top global producers of cocaine, controlling an estimated 60% of the global market. The massive output of these two countries is attributed to coca plant growth by poverty-stricken farmers, and large-scale cocaine production by armed anti-government guerrilla groups.

Similarly to cocaine, the world heroin market originates from a handful of countries, with one standing out in particular. Afghanistan has a virtual monopoly over heroin production with an estimated 95% of global production. Mexico and Myanmar come in behind Afghanistan in production, but still contribute to their regional markets.

Overall, despite a well-funded and coordinated international effort to crack down on the international drug market, the trafficking of illicit substances has only grown around preventive measures and production has remained relatively untouched. In 2013, 264 million people between 16 and 64 used an illicit drug and millions more suffered from injection spread HIV and drug use disorders. The consequences of this issue will only worsen unless a new strategy is developed that can truly stop the world’s drug addiction.

## **II. United Nations Involvement**

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime’s (UNODC) World Drug Report estimated in 2003 that the world drug market was worth roughly USD\$321.6 Billion, and the consumption and sale of drugs has only increased over the last quarter of a century. Despite various attempts by countries plagued by drug epidemics (Mainly the United States, Uruguay, Russia, China, The United Kingdom, and Portugal) to stop or decriminalize narcotics, the UN firmly believes that not enough states are focusing on the root of the problem. Therefore, it has been the goal of the UNODC to convince the UN General Assembly to target drug production at its heart in order to shut down drug cartels from the inside.

The UN’s annual World Drug Report provides the world with a comprehensive analysis of the current drug climate and provides countries with information such as the source and spread of all kinds of drugs. The hope is that this information will provide member states with the

knowledge required to shut down any operations within their borders. In general, the international cartel crisis relates most to the work of the UNODC and almost all UN action in this field has been carried out by that office. For more information on their stance on cartels, as well as information they have on various countries feel free to visit their website at [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org).

### **III. Bloc Positions and Possible Solutions**

When it comes to political positions almost all countries across the board, with minor exceptions like Uruguay (country with legalized/government-provided marijuana), want to stop drug use and bring down the cartels pushing into every country on the planet. The only difference is how much force they are willing to use to make that happen. While countries like the United States have already shown that they are more than willing to use military force for drug interdiction, other states like Portugal prefer more peaceful approaches. The US has failed to stop the massive flow of drugs into its borders and Portugal's 2001 decriminalization of drugs has only led to a larger death toll and higher usage. What this shows is that neither approach is working, and a middle ground must be identified.

The current approach that seems to be working is to seize drugs while they are in route to their destination. With 50-60% of all drug seizures occurring in South America (59% of cocaine) and the Middle East (Iran and Turkey making up 39% of heroin seizures), it could be effective to focus on those regions and create a UN task force for increased communication and coverage. The negative side of this strategy is the ability of drug cartels to evolve. With underground tunnels, submarines, and motivation to come up with more unique smuggling methods, this approach would never succeed in stopping drug cartels completely and would only diminish their effect.

Another Strategy would be to attack drug production and the hearts of the cartels outright. The UNODC's annual report could lead to the source of narcotics and from there a UN-led organization or group could move to shut down production completely. While this method would have a much larger effect on the drug trade, it is also much more aggressive and would certainly violate the sovereignty of any country at the heart of a drug market.

While both approaches are viable they are not the only options. It is the job of this committee's delegates to debate the best approach and form a resolution that outlines a specific plan of dealing with the issue.

## IV. Sources and Useful Links

UNODC Official Website

- <https://www.unodc.org>

EU Drug Control Policy

- [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/ic\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/ic_en)

CIA Factbook

- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

### Relevant and interesting articles that are worth reading/videos to watch

Vox News Article “The War on Drugs, Explained”

- <https://www.vox.com/cards/war-on-drugs-marijuana-cocaine-heroin-meth/war-on-drugs-goals>

Vice News Article “The Golden Age of Drug Trafficking”

- <https://news.vice.com/article/drug-trafficking-meth-cocaine-heroin-global-drug-smuggling>

The Guardians Article on the UN’s Reaction to Drug Cartels

- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/05/unitednations>

Topic II:

## Combating opium production in Afghanistan

### **I. Background Information**

By the late 1990s, Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries world-wide, had become notorious as the source of more than 80 percent of the world's illicit opium. In 2016, total area where afghan opium poppy is cultivated increased by 10 per cent in comparison to the previous years. The value of the illicit opiate economy was estimated at US\$ 3.02 billion in 2016. Afghanistan has even surpassed demand from other countries that use it for medical purposes, creating huge surplus in stocks.

Local farmers, traffickers and governing forces are strongly tied to the cultivation of illicit drugs, which has many multi-sided impacts on economy and the environment. The drug-oriented economy sector has pervaded the afghan rural society to the extent that a considerable share of temporal workers, who are among the most vulnerable groups to poverty and food insecurity, have become dependent on the daily wage from opium production. Nevertheless, this dependency is not associated with the income coming from the sales rather than with the lack of infrastructures, opportunities and access to other alternative markets.

Afghanistan remains a fragile country weakened by long years of war that have weakened state institutions. The Taliban taxes poppy production in areas it controls, which comprises more than 80 000 hectares of poppy cultivation and is a major source of income used for buying new weapons and financing military operations.

The unbelievably high safety and social costs of opium production are associated with the recreational consumption of opiates by drug users. Researches has shown that there is a striking relationship between gender inequality in schools, acces to healthcare and the presence of opium poppy cultivation where poppy-free villages tend to be far more developped. Moreover, almost 31 percent of all households in Afghanistan were affected by drug use in 2015, from which nearly 9 percent were children. Their engagement in drug use and opium trafficking instead of legitimate education and career opportunities poses barriers to the development of Afghanistan in general.

Opium is also a commonly used painkiller due to the lack of medical services, which leads to more people becoming addicted and generates justified medical concerns.

In 2005, the Afghan government embarked on programme of eradicating poppy crops, with limited success, because the opium production is far too anchored in the state's economy. It is

difficult to control the actual process because the officials in many government-controlled regions are accused of knowingly ignoring the problem. Consequently, the number of eradicated poppy plantations is descending.

## **II. United Nations Involvement**

There were three major drug-related international treaties; The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971) and the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988). The first two allowed the WHO to edit a list of substances that need to be controlled and let UNODC to monitor their use within each state, whereas the 1988 UN convention deals mostly with the illegal aspects of international drug trade with provision of cooperation in seizing all illegal drugs.

UN Drug Control Programme established a poppy plantations reduction programmes, as part of which it introduced alternative crops to local farmers, new irrigation systems and improved infrastructure in effort of modernising the agricultural sector. Key role in the reconstruction of current system is assigned to local farmers who have to directly participate in expansion of licit labour markets even in areas where it cannot be secured by a public institution.

Current UN primary strategy is simple; enable further development of transnational cooperation in tracking and stopping the flow of illicit opiates. Poppy field substitution policy is a priority as well as maximally decreasing drug production and its recreational use.

Through enhanced regional and inter-regional cooperation, UN is focusing on drug prevention, treatment of addicts and diseases linked to drug abuse, public safety and the environment as well. Still, UN is aware that for succeeding at finding alternative development for Afghanistan, long-term financial and political support is needed due to weak institutions and lack of rule of law.

## **III. Questions to Consider**

- When doing research for the position of your country, concentrate on the following questions:
- How is your country currently coping with the problem of opium abuse? How strict are the policies?
- Is your country a market or a trafficking route for afghan opium? By which routes do drugs flow into your country?
- What effects does the production, trafficking or abuse of drugs such as opium has on your country's population? Are there any security threats?

- What can be done by the government of your country to minimise the damage caused by opium in Afghanistan?
- Is your country at a state in which it can afford to resolve for long-term solutions? Is your state dependent on any other countries?
- What is your country's relationship with Afghanistan? Is it willing to help it?

#### **IV. Sources and Useful Links**

- [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_sustainable\\_development\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_sustainable_development_for_web.pdf)
- <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37743433>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/04/world/asia/taliban-afghan-poppy-harvest-opium.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FOpium%20in%20Afghanistan>
- <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/afghan/un-afghan-history.shtml>
- <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/why-eradication-wont-solve-afghanistans-poppy-problem/>
- [https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan\\_sustainable\\_development\\_for\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/Afghanistan_sustainable_development_for_web.pdf)