

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Reducing illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes

Student Officer: Harry Valsamis

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Harry Valsamis, and I am a IB1 student at Psychiko College. It is my absolute honor to be serving as one of the Co-Chairs of the Disarmament and International Security Committee in the 6th DSTMUN session.

I would like to warmly welcome you to this year's DSTMUN conference, during which all of you will have opportunities to approach complicated and significant issues from various angles, cooperate with each other in order to formulate solutions and even forge friendships.

The second topic of this committee refers to reducing illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with useful information about this topic, in order for you to comprehend it and be capable of structuring inventive solutions which will all align with your respective countries' policies. Nonetheless, you are strongly encouraged to perform your own additional research in order to get a better grasp of the issue at hand. This study guide should be used as a steppingstone, which aims to grant you a fundamental understanding of the matter, and as such permit you to create your own solutions and expand on your ideas.

Should you have any questions concerning the topic, the committee, or the conference, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at harryval07@gmail.com. I look forward to meeting every one of you at the conference!

Warm regards,

Harry Valsamis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes is a global issue that relates to the illegal and unlawful transportation of drugs via ships, boats, or other nautical vessels across international waters.¹ Countless drug cartels and organizations transfer these illegal substances through the seas from locations where they produce them to consumer markets. Many things are taken into consideration, including law enforcement presence, destination countries, maritime law and policies, and different maritime routes, as criminal organizations attempt to take advantage of circumstances and conditions to smuggle drugs and reach distribution centers and markets.

To this day, governments and other relevant countries and organizations cooperate with the common goal of taking measures to mitigate illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes. These measures include enhancing maritime security, improving and bolstering investigations and attempts to identify these routes, developing strategies and plans to counteract drug trafficking, and investing in surveillance technology. Some other useful measures include exchange of information, cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence agencies, as well as judicial systems and international organizations.

In fact, Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) even stated that “these crimes pose an immediate danger to people’s lives and safety, they undermine human rights, hinder sustainable development, and as this Council has recognized, they threaten international peace and security,”² while he was referring to high seas crime. Thus, the matter of illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes is a very grave one, which requires urgent attention and international cooperation in order to be entirely resolved.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Drug Trafficking

“Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.”³

¹ “Drug Trafficking.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html.

² “High Seas Crime Becoming More Sophisticated, Endangering Lives, International Security, Speakers Tell Security Council | UN Press.” *United Nations*, press.un.org/en/2019/sc13691.doc.htm.

³ “Drug Trafficking.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html.

Maritime Routes

“A function of obligatory points of passage, which are strategic places, of physical constraints (coasts, winds, marine currents, depth, reefs, ice), and political borders.”⁴

Maritime Law

“Also called admiralty law, or admiralty, the body of legal rules that governs ships and shipping.”⁵

Drugs

“Any chemical substance that affects the functioning of living things and the organisms (such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses) that infect them.”⁶

Surveillance Technology

“Any electronic surveillance device, hardware, or software that is capable of collecting, capturing, recording, retaining, processing, intercepting, analyzing, monitoring, or sharing audio, visual, digital, location, thermal, biometric, or similar information or communications specifically associated with, or capable of being associated with, any specific individual or group; or any system, device, or vehicle that is equipped with an electronic surveillance device, hardware, or software.”⁷

Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs)

“Complex organizations with highly defined command-and-control structures that produce, transport, and/or distribute large quantities of one or more illicit drugs.”⁸

Drug Cartel

“Large, highly sophisticated organizations composed of multiple DTOs and cells with specific assignments such as drug transportation, security or enforcement, or money laundering. Drug cartel command-and-control structures are based outside the United States; however, they produce, transport, and distribute

⁴ “Main Maritime Shipping Routes.” *Port Economics, Management and Policy*. 27 Dec. 2019, <https://porteconomicsmanagement.org/pemp/contents/part1/interoceanic-passages/main-maritime-shipping-routes/>.

⁵ “Maritime Law.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 13 July 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/maritime-law.

⁶ “Drug.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 27 June 2023, www.britannica.com/science/drug-chemical-agent.

⁷ “Surveillance Technology Definition: 105 Samples.” *Law Insider*, www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/surveillance-technology.

⁸ “Drug Trafficking Organizations.” (U) *Drug Trafficking Organizations - National Drug Threat Assessment 2010 (Unclassified)*, www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/dtos.htm.

illicit drugs domestically with the assistance of DTOs that are either a part of or in an alliance with the cartel.”⁹

Interdiction

“The act of stopping and taking illegal goods that are being transported somewhere, or an occasion when this happens.”¹⁰

Supply Chain

“The chain of processes, businesses, etcetera by which a commodity is produced and distributed: the companies, materials, and systems involved in manufacturing and delivering goods.”¹¹

Transshipment

“Transshipment (also known as trans-shipment or transshipment) means unloading cargo from one vessel and loading them into another to complete a journey to the final destination.”¹²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Shipping Process

Different Types of Maritime Routes¹³

There are three different types of maritime routes currently used on a daily basis. The first notable type is port-to-port, which most of the time is associated with a regular service between two ports. While this particular structure can and has been proven to be efficient in the past for raw materials

⁹ “Drug Trafficking Organizations.” (*U*) *Drug Trafficking Organizations - National Drug Threat Assessment 2010 (Unclassified)*, www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/dtos.htm.

¹⁰ “Interdiction.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/interdiction.

¹¹ “Supply Chain Definition & Meaning.” *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/supply%20chain#:~:text=supply%20chain%20noun%20plural%20supply%20chains%20%3A%20the,and%20systems%20involved%20in%20manufacturing%20and%20delivering%20goods.

¹² *What Is Transshipment? Best Guide to Process [+how to Track]*, www.container-xchange.com/blog/transshipment/.

¹³ “Types of Maritime Routes: The Geography of Transport Systems.” *The Geography of Transport Systems | The Spatial Organization of Transportation and Mobility*, 15 June 2022, transportgeography.org/contents/chapter5/maritime-transportation/maritime-routes-types/#:~:text=Maritime%20routes%20are%20structured%20according%20to%20the%20type,markets.%20...%20%20Inter-Range.%20...%20%3%20Multi-Ranges.%20.

like minerals, grain, and oil, it has the disadvantage of permitting limited connectivity.

Another noteworthy type is inter-range routes, which refer to shipping routes that allow the transportation of cargo and goods across various ranges, including entire regions and continents. A major route belonging in this category is the one connecting North America to Western Europe, which carries goods between ports in the United States (US) to Western European countries. Because these routes connect major economic centers and allow the transportation of cargo between different parts of world, they are vital for international trade.

The final type of maritime routes is multi-range routes, which address the long-distance maritime services requiring ports along more than two ranges. They can involve multiple segments across different regions or continents and are always used to transport cargo between locations that are not directly connected. Often, these ships cross entire oceans to reach their destinations, and they are undoubtedly fundamental for global trade and commerce, as they allow cargo to be transported across the world.

Issues Considered when Creating Routes

When creating maritime routes, many aspects must be considered in order to ensure that the routes created are effective and useful. First, weather and climate have to be taken into account prior to the establishment of a route. This is because they have the potential to cause tremendous complications, damage ships and cargo, and even harm people on the ship. Adverse weather conditions as well as currents all play a crucial role in regard to shipping.

Furthermore, in regard to the construction of maritime routes, although routes are created with the goal of minimizing the environmental impact of shipping, they may instill negative repercussions on nature. Another aspect that has to be carefully considered is navigational security. More specifically, the conditions of the ocean can significantly impact the route itself. For example, shallow waters or narrow passages can hinder the ship's progress and endanger the crew and cargo.

However, it is not only the environment that can pose a potential threat, but external factors as well. Piracy and theft are only some of the major issues that plague maritime routes, which is why planning needs to occur before the creation of these routes. Finally, political instability and

territorial disputes have to be considered, or the entire ship and crew could be placed at risk.

Rise of Drug Trafficking Through Maritime Routes

In recent years, a steady trend has appeared with the increase of drug trafficking through maritime routes, as drug cartels and DTOs turn to the oceans and seas to transport illicit drugs. However, there are many key events that ultimately shaped the history and rise of drug trafficking through maritime routes.

One could say that one of the key events in the history of drug trafficking were the Opium Wars, which took place in the mid-19th¹⁴ century, and involved the joint forces of Western countries against the Qing dynasty, which ruled China. The first war was fought between China and Britain and took place because of China's attempts to mitigate the British opium trade. However, the second one found China facing Britain and France together and was triggered by tensions between the nations. These wars ended with a series of treaties, with the second one coming to a close with the ratification of the Convention of Peking in 1860.

One of the following major occurrences of drug trafficking was the French Connection, which took place between 1930 and 1970.¹⁵ Essentially, it was a large-scale operation consisting of heroin traders, producers and smugglers, which were located across the Mediterranean and Atlantic.¹⁶ Naturally, maritime routes were crucial for the success of this operation, and as a result, the French completely dominated the trafficking of heroin from places such as Turkey and the Middle East to countries like the US.

The following relevant key event occurred in what became known as the "Golden Triangle" in Southeast Asia, which is comprised of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar, and the "Golden Crescent" in South Asia, which consists of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. These geographical regions are some of the world's largest centers and markets for opioid and heroin trading and have dominated the global opioid market. The Golden Crescent caters to a much larger market than the Golden Triangle, particularly due to Afghanistan's enormous opium industry and its status as the most important country in the world for opium trading.

¹⁴ "Opium Wars." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/Opium-Wars.

¹⁵ *Top 10 facts about the french connection*. Discover Walks Blog. (2023, May 27). <https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/paris/top-10-facts-about-the-french-connection/>

¹⁶ *Academic.Oup.Com*, academic.oup.com/book/10843/chapter-abstract/159025560?redirectedFrom=fulltext.

Another key instance of illicit drug trading through maritime routes are the Columbian drug cartels between the years 1980 and 1990. Specifically, Columbian drug cartels like the Medellin and Cali cartels made extensive use of maritime routes in the Caribbean and Pacific Ocean to transport tremendous quantities of cocaine to the US and Europe. This led to the US pressuring Columbia to extradite the associated drug lords to the US for trial.

These events, and many more, have shaped the history of drug trafficking through maritime routes and comprised the rise of illicit drug trading.

Maritime Law & Security Measures

Corruption & Bribery

Corruption is one of the many problems that is detrimental to the security and safety of the crew and ships in maritime trading. This is because DTOs and drug cartels are able to take advantage of it to ensure that their goals succeed, and thus, manage to trade illicit drugs. Corruption in this context may occur at various stages of the trading process, ranging from port officials and customs officers to ship crews or other relevant stakeholders. For example, traders or other shipping entities might falsely declare their cargo and contents on their ship, in order to import or export restricted items or contraband, or to simply evade taxes. Not only that, but corruption can also facilitate the operation of vessels which do not have the necessary documentation and permits.

Bribery is also closely intertwined with corruption. By offering officials sums of money or other valuable items, materials, and services, it could be in their best interest to act against the law and accept these bribes, even if it could seriously harm other individuals. For instance, customs officials may intentionally overlook the detection of any contraband that they discovered if they have been bribed. Thus, bribery and corruption are interconnected, and they can both indirectly or directly interfere with the trading process and harm other actors.

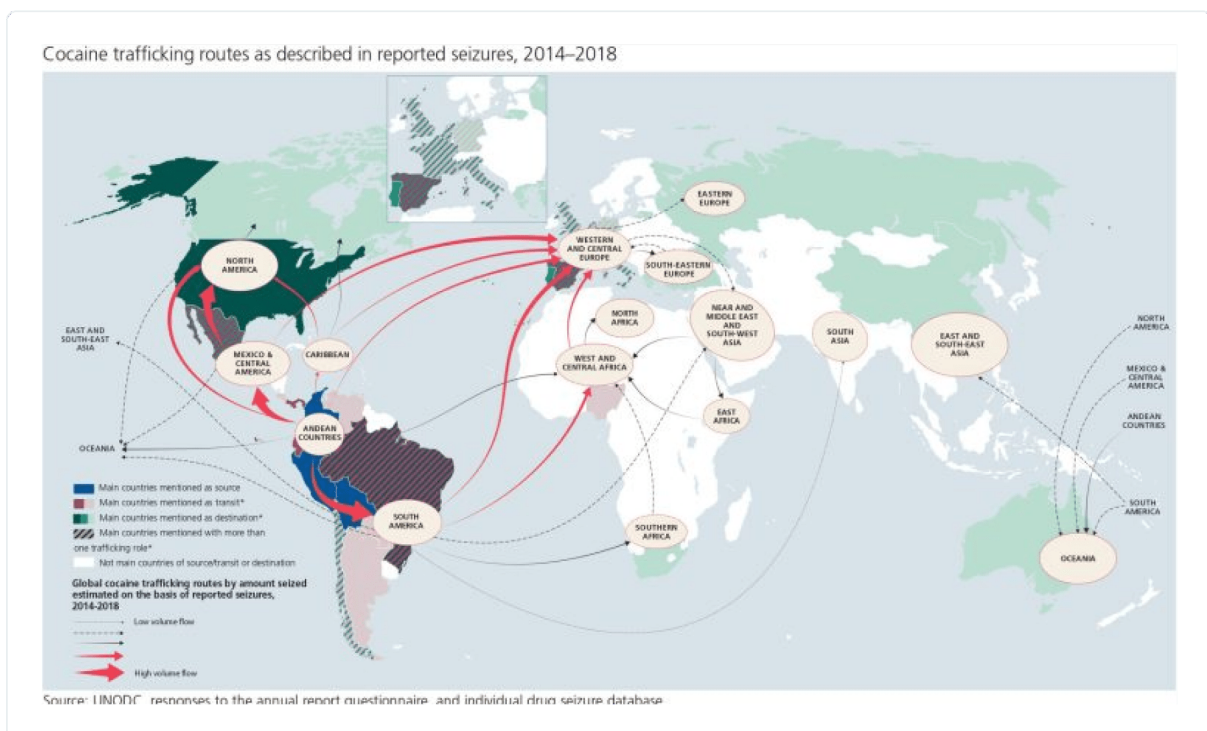
A notable example of bribery and corruption in this specific context was when two oil traders were charged with bribery, money laundering and conspiracy¹⁷. The two individuals named Glenn Oztemel and Eduardo Innecco are alleged to have bribed Brazilian officials and employees of Petrobras, which is a Brazilian state-owned oil giant. Furthermore, the two men used

¹⁷ Ship & Bunker News Team. "US: Two Fuel Oil Traders Indicted on Corruption Charges." *Ship & Bunker*, <https://shipandbunker.com/news/am/263443-us-two-fuel-oil-traders-indicted-on-corruption-charges>.

encrypted messages and code words to conceal their criminal actions. Although there is lack of concrete evidence and proof, the Department of Justice (DoJ) alleges that “Innecco paid a part of these funds to Petrobras officials as bribes in order to get insider information.”¹⁸

Interdiction Challenges

Many organizations, governments, and agencies organize interdiction operations as a means of combatting illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes. However, this is not always easily achieved, as there are many challenges that have to be overcome prior to interdicting DTOs and drug cartels successfully. One of the most important difficulties faced by authorities and law enforcement is corruption and collusion.¹⁹ Officials or other members of law enforcement agencies often receive bribes and conceal information such as the contents of cargo and intentionally mislabel it. As such, it is quite challenging to interfere in these situations where corruption is heavily present. Another major issue plaguing law enforcement agencies is jurisdiction and the areas that drug traffickers make use of, which are sometimes ungoverned. As such, lack of jurisdiction makes it harder for them to act against the traffickers. Moreover, the areas utilized by such parties are



¹⁸ “Two Fuel Oil Traders Charged with Bribing Petrobras Officials.” *The Maritime Executive*, [maritime-executive.com/article/two-fuel-oil-traders-charged-with-bribing-petrobras-officials](https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/two-fuel-oil-traders-charged-with-bribing-petrobras-officials). Source UNODC 2020 World Drug Report

¹⁹ Fromiti. “Organized Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Drug Trafficking.” *Organized Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Drug Trafficking*, www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-3/key-issues/drug-trafficking.html.

not only ungoverned, but also very remote, which may render them inaccessible to authorities.

Figure 1: Heroin Trafficking Routes 2014-2018.²⁰

Economic & Political Impact

Undermining Governments by Infiltrating Key Infrastructure

There are many key institutions as well as critical infrastructure which are all vital for the wellbeing of a nation, such as healthcare, law enforcement, courts, and prisons. These are all essential for the government to properly function and ensure the safety and welfare of its citizens, and the provision of the best possible living conditions. However, drug trafficking organizations and the industry of drug trading as a whole place such infrastructure in jeopardy, something that may lead to negative consequences.

To begin with, powerful DTOs, drug cartels, and drug networking rings may exert significant influence on these law enforcement entities. They can leverage their position and manage to intimidate judiciaries, police forces, and figures of high authority. Through threats of violence and intimidation, they can control the actions of these bodies, and fundamentally undermine their authority. Often, they are able to discourage certain bodies from prosecuting drug traffickers for their crimes. This can lead to impunity from legal prosecutions, as the traffickers remain “untouched” by law enforcement agencies.

Specifically, by exploiting their influence, they are able to create and instigate a climate and environment of fear and terror. This can easily lead to political instability, as these feelings become widespread and scare the public, and they begin to distrust their government and doubt its integrity. In countries where drug trafficking is prevalent, citizens hold less trust in their government when compared to countries without the presence of drug trafficking. This can also be inferred from the fact that in countries with extremely low to almost non-existent drug production, like Switzerland, the citizen’s trust in their government is 83.8%.²¹ On the other hand, in countries

²⁰ Khan, Ahmed. “How Technology Can Eradicate Drug Trafficking from Commercial Shipping.” *ShipIn*, 10 May 2023, shipin.ai/resources/how-technology-can-eradicate-drug-trafficking-from-commercial-shipping/.

²¹ “General Government - Trust in Government - OECD Data.” *OECD*, data.oecd.org/gga/trust-in-government.htm.

with higher percentages of production of illicit drugs, like Columbia, the citizen's confidence in their government is 29.7%, which is substantially less than 83.8%.²² This political instability is then able to weaken the government, as it is unable to truly combat these large DTOs.

Drug Addiction & Social Impact

Drug trafficking also has a major impact on each nation's society, particularly due to pursuant drug addiction. Specifically, the activities of DTOs significantly facilitate drug addiction and drug abuse. It is estimated that an entire 5.5% of the global population partake in drug abuse,²³ while in the US alone 50% of citizens aged 12 or more have used illicit drugs.²⁴

Often, drug addicts are not able to perform their obligations and jobs successfully and are not responsible with their spending. In accordance with the Addiction Center, "42% of people with an addiction who have a job report a decrease in productivity due to their addiction," and "each year, drug and alcohol addiction costs American businesses and organizations about \$81 billion in lost profits."²⁵ Drug trafficking only serves to worsen and deteriorate the situation, which is why the activities of DTOs are harmful to all levels of society. Relapse rates are very high, and individuals who consume drugs even at only one point in their life are at risk of relapsing. Substances like heroin exert such a powerful dopamine rush that using them just once is enough to lead many individuals into addiction.

A strain is also placed on healthcare facilities and providers, as well as other social services. Many addicted individuals visit hospitals and other healthcare services purely to receive substances that satisfy their addiction, which may lead to a shortage of medication to serve the population.

In conclusion, illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes comprises one of the most significant issues plaguing humanity in the 21st century. From encouraging drug addiction and promoting illegal activity to undermining governments and destroying entire economies, it has the potential to exacerbate serious issues in society. Not only does it involve violence, but also it places human lives in jeopardy and endangers innocent

²² "General Government - Trust in Government - OECD Data." *the OECD*, data.oecd.org/gga/trust-in-government.htm.

²³ Elflein, John. "Topic: Drug Use in the U.S." *Statista*, www.statista.com/topics/3088/drug-use-in-the-us/.

²⁴ "Drug Addiction Statistics & Facts [2023 Update]." *Addiction Group*, 19 May 2023, www.addictiongroup.org/addiction/statistics/.

²⁵ "Job Problems Caused by Addiction." *Addiction Center*, 14 Feb. 2023, www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/job-problems/.

civilians on a daily basis. Hence, measures must be taken to combat this type of drug trading, and a multi-faceted approach must be adopted to ensure the successful resolution of the issue.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the largest producer of opium in the entire world, with it being the source of 90% of the globe's illegal heroin and opium.²⁶ The country's economy is mostly dependent on drug trade, with countless Afghans relying on the trade of illicit drugs for survival. However, a major terrorist organization known as the Taliban significantly benefit from this. Specifically, the head of the Kabul office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Cesar Gudes, stated that "the Taliban have counted on the Afghan opium trade as one of their main sources of income."²⁷ They are associated with the entire procedure, including poppy planting, opium extraction, but also trafficking the opium and even exacting payments from the cultivators. From this drug trade, the Taliban earned around 400 million United States Dollars (USD) between 2018 and 2019 in accordance with UN officials.²⁸ However, it is worth noting that the Taliban have persistently claimed that they will abolish all drugs and legalize them once they have assumed power. Thus, it can be inferred that the Taliban are presently taking advantage of the drug trade in Afghanistan to boost their profits and enhance their reign, but they will cease to do so after they have accomplished their goals. Nevertheless, sufficient doubt may be casted upon the Taliban's claims that they will truly eliminate drugs.

Nigeria

Nigeria is also a country heavily involved in drug trafficking. First of all, Nigeria is an extremely prevalent source of the synthetic drug methamphetamine, also known as ice. On a yearly average, Nigeria is estimated to produce a massive 500

²⁶ "9 Major Drug Trafficking Countries of the World." *Asheville Recovery Center*, 18 May 2022,

www.ashevillerecoverycenter.com/9-major-drug-trafficking-countries/.

²⁷ "Opium: Afghanistan's Drug Trade That Helped Fuel the Taliban." *Business and Economy News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 16 Aug. 2021, www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/8/16/opium-afghanistans-illicit-drug-trade-t-hat-helped-fuel-taliban.

²⁸ "Opium: Afghanistan's Drug Trade That Helped Fuel the Taliban." *Business and Economy News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 16 Aug. 2021, www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/8/16/opium-afghanistans-illicit-drug-trade-t-hat-helped-fuel-taliban.

metric tons of ice.²⁹ Additionally, Nigeria is the largest supplier of cannabis. This particular illicit drug has garnered a significantly sizable demand due to its easy availability, low cost, and mild side effects. Other than the two aforementioned drugs, this country also produces dimethyltryptamine (DMT), a famous synthetic hallucinogen. This drug trade highly impacts the living conditions, including unemployment, with a rate of 35% in 2021,³⁰ corruption, and wages, whose minimums have remained unchanged for years.

Philippines

Much like other countries, the Philippines have declared a war on drugs and condemn drug trading. The country's President's anti-drug campaign has made considerable progress in reducing drug use. However, this has come at a cost, with there being countless lives lost in extrajudicial killings and deadly police operations. The UN itself has authorized an investigation into this war on drugs, as the International Criminal Court (ICC) has stated that it appears to be a "widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population."³¹ In response, the President claimed that he does not wish to comply with the investigation of the ICC. Despite his promises, ever since his election in 2016, an estimated amount between 12,000 and 30,000 people have been killed. The President has even openly claimed "full responsibility for the bloody war on drugs that has killed thousands of people."³²

Thailand

Another country that is heavily involved in drug trading and illicit drug trafficking is Thailand. However, Thailand's government, which began a war on drugs and has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against drug offenders, punishes those caught or implicated with life imprisonment, large fines or even the death penalty. While the government's stance is clear, there is no shortage of corrupt officials who despite their status, have entire personal drug empires, as they make use of their

²⁹ "Opium: Afghanistan's Drug Trade That Helped Fuel the Taliban." *Business and Economy News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 16 Aug. 2021, [www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/8/16/opium-afghanistans-illicit-drug-trade-t hat-helped-fuel-taliban](http://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/8/16/opium-afghanistans-illicit-drug-trade-that-helped-fuel-taliban).

³⁰ Ngere, Deborah. "How Is Nigeria Involved in the World Drug Trade?" *NEWS PICKS - WITHIN NIGERIA*, 7 Aug. 2022, [www.withinnigeria.com/news/2022/08/07/how-is-nigeria-involved-in-the-world -drug-trade/](http://www.withinnigeria.com/news/2022/08/07/how-is-nigeria-involved-in-the-world-drug-trade/).

³¹ "ICC Authorises Full Inquiry into Rodrigo Duterte's 'War on Drugs.'" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 15 Sept. 2021, www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/15/icc-authorises-full-inquiry-rodrido-duterte-war-on-drugs-philippines.

³² "Philippines' Duterte Says He Takes Full Responsibility for Drugs War." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 21 Oct. 2021, www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-duterte-says-he-takes-full-responsibility-drugs-war-2021-10-21/.

impunity from prosecution and extrajudicial violence. The ongoing issue with drugs is evident and can be seen through the fact that more than 80% of Thailand prisoners are drug offenders.³³ Moreover, the low cost of methamphetamine in Thailand has led to a rise in its use. Nevertheless, in accordance with the UNODC, “Thailand has made considerable progress in combating the opium trade over recent decades and represents global good practices.”³⁴

Republic of Korea

South Korea is a country with one of the world’s strictest drug policies. Not only are South Koreans forbidden from utilizing drugs in their home country, but also in countries abroad where the specific drugs are legal, such as cannabis. Moreover, at South Korean ports of entry, many civilians are required to undertake mandatory drug tests, randomly. In addition, the current administration is presently preparing a task force to combat drug trade and drug usage. The country has already declared a war on drugs, which is said to involve “the formation of a pan-governmental joint investigation team with the prosecution and police partnered with related agencies.” Finally, the amount of smuggled illicit drugs uncovered by customs authorities increased exponentially in the span of four years (2017-2021) by 18.4 times.³⁵

United States of America (US)

The US is a country that strongly condemns drug trafficking. Recently, the White House developed a National Drug Control Strategy, which essentially is a balanced plan supported by evidence aiming to reduce drug usage.³⁶ It highlights the significance of prevention and treatment. The US has declared war on xylazine, a famous drug known as “the zombie drug,” which has been previously linked to an increase in fentanyl overdoses. This particular drug, which is an animal sedative, can be lethal when used in combination with opioids such as fentanyl. Like other countries, it has also declared a war on drugs, especially since many of its citizens have been affected by the use of drugs. The main issue which concerns state officials

³³ Choonhavan, Tisana. “The Never-Ending Struggle against the Drug Trade in Thailand and the Culture of Impunity around It - Thai Enquirer Current Affairs.” *Thai Enquirer*, 9 Sept. 2021, www.thaienquirer.com/32438/the-never-ending-struggle-against-the-drug-trade-in-thailand-and-the-culture-of-impunity-around-it/.

³⁴ “Fighting Drug Trafficking in the Golden Triangle: A UN Resident Coordinator Blog | UN News.” *United Nations*, news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1071192.

³⁵ “Korea to Declare War on Drugs, Administration Sources Say.” *Korea to Declare War on Drugs, Administration Sources Say*, 3 Oct. 2022, koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2022/10/03/national/socialAffairs/Korea-war-on-drugs-Yoon-Sukyeol/20221003162337660.html.

³⁶ “Addressing Illicit Drug Challenges - United States Department of State.” *U.S. Department of State*, 18 Jan. 2021, www.state.gov/addressing-illicit-drug-challenges/.

is drug use among teens, and the death rate from drug overdose, which has significantly increased over the last years. Nevertheless, the US remains one of the countries that strongly opposes drug use.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC is undoubtedly one of, if not the most important, UN instruments when it comes to combatting drug trafficking. It was first established to aid the UN in carefully formulating responses to interrelated issues of illicit drug trafficking, as well as the abuse of drugs and much more. In addition, its goals include raising awareness through campaigns and educating individuals on the dangers of drug abuse, and even bolstering international action against the issue. It cooperates with agencies, governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in order to fully develop and incorporate drug control and crime prevention plans and programs, all tailored to every individual country's needs.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The IMO is “the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.”³⁷ Its most prevalent role consists of creating regulatory frameworks for the shipping industry, which are fair, efficient, effective, and accepted and implemented by most countries worldwide. It takes measures to ensure that companies and operators do not mitigate safety, security, and environmental performance for their own personal benefit. Taking into consideration that more than 80% of global trade is transported through international shipping,³⁸ the world is heavily dependent on a secure and safe international shipping industry, which highlights the IMO's importance. When it comes to drug trafficking, it has taken countless measures including “The Agreement on Illicit Traffic by Sea Implementing Article 17 Of The United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic In Narcotic Drugs And Psychotropic Substances, 1995.”³⁹

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

³⁷ “Introduction to Imo.” *International Maritime Organization*, www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/Default.aspx.

³⁸ “Introduction to Imo.” *International Maritime Organization*, www.imo.org/en/About/Pages/Default.aspx.

³⁹ *Table of Contents - IMO International Maritime Law Institute (IMLI)*, imli.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/THE-SUPPRESSION-OF-ILLCIT-DRUG-TRAFFIC-BY-SEA-ACT.pdf.

The countries in this alliance are strong opponents of drug trafficking. Having taken countless measures in the past with the goal of banning and mitigating drug trafficking, they condemn it to its core. Some highly notable countries in this alliance include the US and South Korea.

Bloc B

The countries in this alliance have been heavily involved in drug trafficking in the past. Not only that, but these countries also help produce these drugs. Some noteworthy examples of countries in this alliance include Afghanistan and Bolivia. Although not supporting it formally, these countries have not taken or are unable to take measures to successfully combat it.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
24 October 1860	Signing of Convention of Peking.
1930	Beginning of the French Connection.
1970	End of the French Connection.
1980	Columbian cartels begin illicit drug trading.
10 December 1982	Adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
10 March 1988	Adoption of Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation.
25 November 1988	Adoption of Convention against Illicit Drug Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
7 December 1997	Establishment of UNODC.
15 November 2000	Adoption of Convention against Organized Crime.
1 February 2003	Thai government takes action in the name of the “War on Drugs.”
May 2018	INTERPOL delivers comprehensive course on drugs.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)⁴⁰

Adopted in 1982, UNCLOS aims to outline specific regulations that relate to the world's oceans and seas, as well as their uses, including their resources. This international legal framework additionally supplies the foundation necessary for the development of sea-adjacent sectors. In addition, in Article 108 titled "Illicit traffic in narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances," it is clearly stated that "all States shall cooperate in the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances engaged in by ships on the high seas contrary to international conventions."⁴¹ However, UNCLOS has empirically not been successful.⁴² This is due to non-compliance on behalf of many member-states, something that undermines the convention's legitimacy and integrity.

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)⁴³

Adopted by the General Assembly on November 15, 2000, UNTOC is considered to be the most critical instrument in relation to combatting transnational organized crime. Furthermore, it is supplemented by three major protocols, "the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition."⁴⁴ All of these aforementioned protocols contribute to increasing the effectiveness of this convention.⁴⁵ However, doubt has been cast on its very slow rate of success, with one of the main issues hindering its progressing being the difficulty in defining organized crime. This has led to it not achieving its goals as a law enforcement instrument.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." *International Maritime Organization*, www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Legal/Pages/UnitedNationsConventionOnTheLawOfTheSea.aspx.

⁴¹ "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.

⁴² "UNCLOS Has Empirically Not Been Successful." *UNCLOS Has Empirically Not Been Successful | UNCLOSdebate.Org*, www.unclosdebate.org/argument/1590/unclos-has-empirically-not-been-successful.

⁴³ United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the ... (n.d.). <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>

⁴⁴ "United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime." *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html.

⁴⁵ *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and The ...*, www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf.

⁴⁶ "Adopted 18 Years Ago, Why Has the Untoc Still Not Achieved Its Aim?" *Global Initiative*, 30 Apr. 2018,

Convention against Illicit Drug Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances⁴⁷

Adopted in 1988, this particular convention aimed at encouraging interagency cooperation to maximize efficiency when it comes to tackling illicit drug trafficking. It includes information on sanctions, offenses, jurisdiction, extradition, as well as mutual legal assistance, cooperation, and training. It offers transparent, effective measures in terms of combating drug trafficking, such as provisions against money laundering.⁴⁸ Finally, this convention states that “parties would take measures they deemed appropriate to prevent diversion of substances used for the purpose of illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, and would co-operate with one another to that end,”⁴⁹ highlighting the significance of international cooperation. This particular convention has constituted a vital instrument in combating drug trafficking.

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention)⁵⁰

Adopted on March 10, 1988, the SUA Convention addresses concerns related to the safety and security of ships and welfare of their passengers. It takes into consideration possible crew kidnappings, ship hijackings, and utilization of explosives to threaten or even kill passengers. Not only does this specific instrument clearly and carefully define what an offence is in this context, but also legally enforces contracting governments to prosecute these offenders or extradite them.⁵¹ This convention has proved successful in the past, however some individuals believe that it has to be reinforced. Specifically, it should be revised to “allow signatory states the power to visit, board, and search and seize a ship suspected of trafficking of WMDs, delivery systems and related materials on the high seas.”⁵²

globalinitiative.net/analysis/adopted-18-years-ago-why-has-the-untoc-still-not-achieved-its-aim/.

⁴⁷ *United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs And ...*, www.unodc.org/pdf/convention_1988_en.pdf.

⁴⁸ “Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/illicit-trafficking.html.

⁴⁹ “United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/conferences/drug/vienna1988.

⁵⁰ *Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation*, treaties.un.org/doc/db/Terrorism/Conv8-english.pdf.

⁵¹ “Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf.” *International Maritime Organization*, www.imo.org/en/About/Conventions/Pages/SUA-Treaties.aspx.

⁵² Sakhujia, Dr. Vijay, and Author Note Dr Vijay Sakhujia is Senior Fellow. “Reinforcing SUA Convention: Towards a Safer Maritime Navigation.” *Reinforcing SUA Convention: Towards A*

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF–S)

The JIATF–S is a task force within the US Southern Command Area of Responsibility (AOR), whose mission includes cooperating with Partner Nations and leveraging “all-domain capabilities to target, detect and monitor illicit drug trafficking in the air and maritime domains, within the Joint Operating Area (JOA), facilitating interdiction and apprehension to reduce the flow of drugs and degrade & dismantle Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs).”⁵³ Some of its goals include the elimination of the trade and smuggling of illicit drugs, and the inclusion of all significant and relevant interagency and international partners. In fact, the JIATF–S was responsible for 76% of US cocaine disruptions over the last two years.⁵⁴ The JIATF – S is a critical instrument in the combat against illicit drug trafficking, and it has proven very effective.

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Efforts in Fiji

INTERPOL has taken countless measures to tackle drug trafficking in the sea. It assists national, regional, and even international law enforcement entities and bodies to combat illicit drug production, trafficking, and abuse. They achieve this through means including global operations against drug trafficking, aiding investigations, analyzing criminal evidence on drug trafficking routes, and providing comprehensive training for police on a global scale to effectively battle drug trafficking. A key example of this is an incident that took place in Fiji, where due to a spike in the volume of illicit drugs being trafficked throughout the entire country, the local authorities made the decision to request INTERPOL’s assistance. This led to INTERPOL delivering clear, comprehensive training courses on drugs, numerous financial investigations, and security document examinations in May 2018.⁵⁵

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Interdiction Operations and Investigations

In the 4th ASEAN Seaport Interdiction Task Force meeting, measures to facilitate joint investigations in combatting drug trafficking through maritime routes in

Safer Maritime Navigation | Society for the Study of Peace and Conflict,
sspconline.org/opinion/ReinforcingSUAConvention_VijaySakhuja_071105.

⁵³ *Home*, www.jiatfs.southcom.mil/About-US/.

⁵⁴ “JIATFS Conducts Change of Command Ceremony.” *DVIDS*,
www.dvidshub.net/news/161786/jiatfs-conducts-change-command-ceremony.

⁵⁵ “Our Role in Fighting Drug Trafficking.” *INTERPOL*,
www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Drug-trafficking/Our-role-in-fighting-drug-trafficking.

Southeast Asia were discussed extensively. These ASEAN countries have also made efforts on their own, with some notable ones including Malaysia and Indonesia. As a whole, ASEAN enforcement has discovered a significant amount of drug trafficking rings and cartels utilizing maritime routes. Another country which is making considerable efforts is Cambodia, aiming to implement some strategies including reducing drug supply, promoting international cooperation, adjusting specific laws and policies, and enhancing media campaigns the goal of raising awareness on the consequences of illicit drugs. These attempts at reducing illicit drug trafficking have proven somewhat effective. Nevertheless, some of the countries' goals could prove very difficult to achieve.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The following are ideas for possible solutions that serve as a steppingstone for delegates and their draft resolutions. Delegates are strongly urged to carry out their own research and consider many aspects and approach the issue from the standpoints of all stakeholders and relevant members. This will lead to more developed and holistic solutions, as countless perspectives have been considered prior to their creation. Delegates may also review past cases of illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes and study them to discover any possible solutions which can be applied to similar situations. Delegates should carefully view and comprehend their country's policy, as although on a surface level they may seem ordinary, they are usually much more complicated than what one can understand at a first glance.

Enhance Maritime Security

In order to properly battle illicit drug trafficking through maritime routes, maritime security must be enhanced. Specifically, to improve maritime security, vessel tracking technology needs to be updated, as many criminal organizations utilize small ships to smuggle illicit drugs, as their locations are harder to pinpoint accurately.⁵⁶ Thus, by enhancing vessel tracking technology, the quantity of the information available at disposal will be significantly increased, something that will decrease the number of ships capable of escaping current efforts.

Moreover, in order to boost maritime security, it is necessary to increase screening at locations where ships offload, so as to make sure that people are not using them to carry drugs illegally. These are key points in the drug trafficking process, which can be utilized, as the procedure of transshipment requires time and

⁵⁶ Khan, Ahmed. "How Technology Can Eradicate Drug Trafficking from Commercial Shipping." *ShipIn*, 10 May 2023, shipin.ai/resources/how-technology-can-eradicate-drug-trafficking-from-commercial-shipping/.

can expose drug traffickers to witnesses that can then help prosecute them. Thus, this can be exploited by increasing screening efforts at said spots.

Finally, more thorough security checks at ports as well as other locations can also significantly aid in the improvement of maritime security, as not only will they facilitate the identification of drug traffickers and criminals, but also intimidate other individuals who are considering smuggling drugs.

Stricter National Measures and Policies

Another measure that could significantly aid in combatting illicit drug trafficking is the implementation of stricter national measures and policies. These policies should focus on the legal prosecution of those suspected of partaking in illicit drug trafficking. Often, those associated with or those implicated in this illegal act manage to avoid confinement due to inadequate measures in place. That is why it is important that these individuals are properly prosecuted, and legal action is taken against them, and an effective way to achieve this is through the incorporation of airtight measures and policies.

Moreover, these policies could include agreements and treaties aimed at facilitating interagency as well as intergovernmental cooperation, with the common goal of successfully identifying individuals involved in drug trafficking. Due to the nature of drug traffickers, it has proved difficult to unmask them, which is why agencies, nations and relevant stakeholders have to coordinate with each other in order to expose them.

Regular Investigations and Interdiction Operations

To reduce drug trafficking, investigations and interdiction operations should take place on a regular basis. Information plays a catalytical role in the process of identifying drug traffickers, which is why the sharing of said information between governments and agencies is fundamental. In order for these investigations to be properly coordinated, all relevant agencies need to have all available information at their disposal. Combating illicit drug trafficking requires a multifaceted approach, and these agencies have to carefully cooperate with each other and combine their efforts.

Other than investigations, the relevant agencies should also organize attempts to intercept drug trafficking operations and interdict them. Essentially, by intercepting them at sea, not only will their arrest be facilitated, but also their legal prosecution. Due to the fact that they follow maritime routes, once these routes are uncovered then interdicting the drug traffickers is easy. Organizations should investigate rumors, cross-examine the information they obtain, and share it with each other in order to discover where to focus their efforts. Thus, by disseminating

their intel to each other, they would be able to coordinate interdiction operations and conduct investigations regularly.

Raising Awareness

Raising awareness for the issue is also very important, due to the fact that it concerns civilians as well, not just law enforcement agencies. Awareness can be raised through UN campaigns. Specifically, the UN could organize campaigns to warn about the dangers of using drugs, and to spread information on how drug trafficking as a whole affects them and their entire country. The UN could also release instructions, dictating how one must act when they have discovered information related to drug trafficking, such as where they should report it. Moreover, social media should also be used to spread information, and the UN should make announcements and posts to update civilians on any new cases unfolding and if succeed.

Other than campaigns, conferences and summits could be organized to unite world leaders and important personnel of law enforcement agencies to discuss about the issue. Due to its pressing nature, action must be taken, and intergovernmental as well as interagency cooperation is absolutely necessary. Unclassified information relevant to this cooperation may even be released to the public if deemed necessary.

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