

AA/EA, Mr. Roderic L. O'Connor

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An Overall Approach to the Narcotics Control Problem

In recent remarks you have correctly indicated your concern that the United States Government, and A.I.D. specifically, develop some overall master approach toward the solution of the drug problem. This instinct is entirely sound. To date I have been concerned by the lack of any formulation of an overall conceptual approach which, if implemented, would logically lead towards a solution of the problem. Instead, under bureaucratic pressures and in the face of conflicting interests of various agencies, there seems to have been a tendency similar to the one I observed for so long in Vietnam; namely, to come up with partial programs which, even if successfully implemented, would not necessarily add up to a solution of the problem we are trying to confront.

Obviously, there should be an overall conceptual plan within which A.I.D. would play a role. In a separate paper, I have attempted to analyze the possibilities open to A.I.D. in East Asia. (Briefly stated, they add up to the rather unspectacular conclusion that law enforcement [i.e., public safety] is the only area where A.I.D. can move on its own and expect to achieve tangible results in the short term.) The purpose of the present paper is rather to suggest some initial ideas which could lead ultimately to the development of some overall doctrine. Once doctrine is established, and people are made familiar with its contents, then the U.S. Government efforts overseas will be more rationalized than they are at present, and obviously will lead towards real solutions of the problem rather than merely frenetic bureaucratic and operational exercises. With this in mind, the following suggestions are made:

1. The opium derivatives specifically heroin, should be separated out as the priority target. Although there are many drug problems of greater or lesser priority, including marijuana, LSD, amphetamines, barbiturates, and a variety of others, morphine and heroin clearly present the greatest danger, and programs should be specifically aimed at these narcotics and not be diluted and confused by being lumped together with other drugs.
2. In the narcotics area, our overall objective must be the elimination of the growing of opium poppies. President Nixon clearly

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recognized this when he said, in his message to Congress of June 17, 1971, "It is clear that the only really effective way to end heroin production is to end opium production and the growing of poppies." This objective must first be served by working for an international convention against the growing of poppies. The only legitimate uses for opium at the present time are in the production of morphine and codeine for medical use. Substitutes have already been developed for morphine, and it remains to find an adequate substitute for codeine.

3. Chemical and bacteriological agents must be developed to permit efficient destruction of poppies. Once opium-growing has been banned--and it is already illegal in many countries, as you know--a scientific capability must exist to destroy poppies in an efficient and economical manner. Such destruction would normally be carried out overtly by the countries themselves which either have internal laws against poppy production or who are signatories to the international convention. In rare cases, covert operations might be required.
4. A.I.D. should stand ready to provide short-term assistance to ease economic and social dislocation caused by the discontinuance of opium production. This assistance would not only ease the plight of Indian farmers, hill tribes in Laos and Thailand, etc., but would also facilitate the political decision of certain foreign governments to cooperate in the international convention in the first place.
5. There should be international controls on the production and movement of specific chemicals used in the manufacture of heroin. Controls which have long existed regarding the movement of strategic commodities provide a basis for the application of appropriate controls of acetic anhydride and similar substances.
6. Law enforcement efforts against heroin factories and heroin shipments should be continued and increased. On the U.S. side, A.I.D. (public safety), FBI, and Customs would all have a major role to play in this area.
7. Heroin should be singled out as the target of a specific education campaign, both in the U.S. and abroad. Such conversations as I have had with former addicts, ex-traffickers, and Government officials have persuaded me that it is a mistake to link

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heroin with other drugs in educational materials. The association of heroin with marijuana has been particularly regrettable since it has led to a credibility gap among such groups as Vietnam servicemen and students.

Obviously, the foregoing represents only the basic outline of an approach to the problem. It does not address specific problems such as A.I.D.'s immediate program proposals (which are being considered separately) nor the specific problem of addicted servicemen in Vietnam. It is merely an initial attempt to contribute towards the development of strategy which, if carried out, could really ameliorate the U.S. drug problem in a substantive way. In the absence of some such doctrine, I fear we will flounder around with diverse programs, each self-justifying but not leading in their entirety towards the achievement of any real result. I have been talking along these lines with Mr. Vandivier in State and hope that it may be possible for the entire U.S. anti-drug community to develop some sort of doctrine within which we all may operate constructively.

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