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Committee Study Guide

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Director: Anmol Soin

My name is Anmol Soin. I just graduated from St. Xavier's and am now on my way to the University of St. Andrews to do my masters in International Strategy and Economics. I have been a part of over 35 MUN conferences including Harvard MUN China (HMUN), Cambridge University International MUN (CUIMUN), WorldMUN. Also

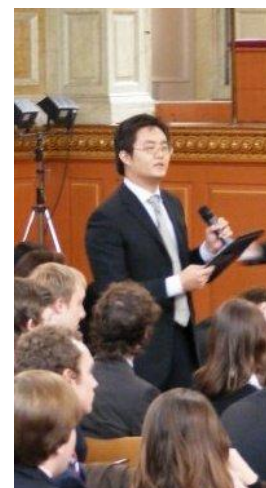


I was the President of the Organizing Council at Harvard MUN India. I am the co-founder of Indian Model United Nations Society which is touted to be the most prominent of its kind in India. I promise to all the delegates in my council that the entire Executive Board shall strive to make this a memorable experience in and out of council. I have several hobbies ranging from poetry to photography. My areas of interest are International Politics, “bad” music and good football.

Assistant Director: Cong Sheng

Hello delegates,

Keeping it short: My name is Cong Sheng. Originally from Australia, I studied Chemistry at Imperial College London, and have taken part in and chaired over a dozen Model United Nations conferences across the world including the LIMUN-IAEA committee in 2010. I was a Deputy Editor and co-founder of Imperial College's student journal on International Affairs, A Global Village, and am especially interested in both science and science policy.



Topic 1: Controlling the movements of narcotics and illegal substances

The serious problems arising from the abuse of narcotics and illegal substances such as psychotropic drugs has typically been countered by measures based on the concept of prohibition, chiefly via controlling the movements of such substances and banning their use, possession and production. These refer typically to psychotropic drugs and narcotic drugs, which can be chemicals of either synthetic or natural origin which have a variety of mind altering properties. The most widely used substance is cannabis, followed by ATS (amphetamine-type stimulants), opioids (opium based substance such as heroin and codeine), and cocaine (World Drug Report, 2011). To this end, three major UN treaties are in place (1961, 1971, 1988) that seek to coordinate international action against the suppliers and traffickers of these substances, as well as to strength legal provisions such as to seize or freeze assets in order to cripple smuggling organizations.

As such, the UN frameworks' policies have faced both criticism for the inherent difficulties in regulating drugs (due to chemical advances creating new synthetic, easily accessible pathways) and criticism for regulations being watered down because these prohibition policies, even when effectively implemented, often do lead to a such plethora of other serious problems that the harms of these effects are inseparable from the very problems it seeks to address. It should be clear that there are many complex relations between societal problems and the movements of illegal substances, and so Member States should not seek only to present new or enhance existing prohibitionist measures without both discussing these relationships during debate, and the effects of such policies; they should, finally, represent their country's best interests after everything is considered. It should be noted that while a strong moral case can be made to condemn any involvement in the drug trade or drug use and thus take a prohibitionist stance, many other arguments, originating from other reasonable premises centring on harm-reduction or scientific-based policy making have been gathering a lot of support and evidence for their effectiveness (EU Parliamentary Report, 2003).

Scientific and Medical Uses

International treaties and efforts made by NGOs made to control the movements of narcotics and illegal substance recognize the scientific and medical uses of psychotropic and narcotic drugs, and in fact there is a large global demand for opioid painkillers such as morphine and codeine due to their effectiveness in stopping many forms of pain. Problems with regulations, where countries are allowed to consume the amount of painkillers used in the preceding two years, mean that 80% of the world's opium-based medicines are consumed by the seven richest countries - despite a globally ubiquitous need for such painkillers, where developing countries have just 6% of the world's supply (ICOS

Press Release, 2009). Measures which reduce the illegal use of opioid narcotics, but simultaneously increases the supply and distribution of medical use opioid painkillers would alleviate a large amount of physical suffering in the world along with clear economic benefits.

Locations

The location of regions which supply the majority of illegal substances are quite important in how effective measures made to stop the movements of the illegal substances will be.

Regions in South America, South Asia 'The Golden Crescent', South-east Asia 'The Golden Triangle' are often less developed and have problems with corrupt government and police officials; some of these countries have known the use of such substances for hundreds of years and indeed many of the proceeds form such a substantial part of their economies as to be the only reliable source of liquidity in the recent financial crisis (Syal, 2009). Many of these regions, especially in South America, are plagued with problems of organized crime in which drug-producing and trafficking operations are a large source of their income; international cooperation can be most effective here.

Please Note – We have not given any specific ‘blocs’ or country positions since there are no governments that are against the action taken against illegal narcotics , corruption and terrorism . We expect the debate to be on the various methods that can be taken against the aforementioned issues and how effective and efficient these measure will be done .

Alternative solutions

There are proposed alternative policies that would aid the 'control of the movement of narcotics and illegal substances' in indirect ways. These include harm-reduction strategies

such as offering needle

exchange or opioid substitution therapy, and radical suggestions such as the legalization of currently banned drugs. These are aimed at reducing the damage of drug use, as well as to smash apart the profitability which drives drug traffickers and cartels. Other suggestions that mark a departure from traditional thinking include reclassifying and regulating drugs on the degree of harm that they pose to users, a paradigm shift as advocated by academics such as Professor David Nutt. The UNODC and other UN organs involving in fighting drugs are proponents of prohibition and have historically acted to ban such substances and restrict their movement by means including fighting drug trafficking, restrict production and increase punishments - and indeed this topic is often directly interpreted as being about finding ways to further the prohibition of drugs.

However, there is a huge amount of criticism that both claim and back up with feasible evidence to show that prohibition measures when used alone has not worked, especially when noting the size of the extant problem. While the consumption of some drugs such as heroin and cocaine had remained stable or even declines in a few major areas of their use, a growing problem is the non-medical use of prescription drugs across the world (World Drug Report, 2011).

Delegates at the LIMUN UNODC must represent their Member State or organization's stance, but they must also take into account the apparent ineffectiveness of solely propounding prohibition measures to curb the drug problem, as well debating on the new and sometimes radical measures to deal with a problem which is itself constantly evolving. As such delegates must pursue open and free discussion, and consider arguments for a scientific-based approach to reclassifying drugs, wider use of harm-reduction policies, decriminalization and potentially the legalization of drugs themselves, before accepting or rejecting such measures if it is to their interest.

What has happened so far: United Nations Frameworks

Three United Nations treaties are of particular importance. These are the Single Convention on Narcotics (1961), the Convention on Psychotropic Drugs (1971) and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988). Also of importance is the Commission on Narcotic Drugs which is the central UN drug

policy-making body; it can only amend the Schedules of controlled substances as discussed below. The International Narcotics

Control Board (INCB) works to monitor the enforcement of restrictions and implementations of the UN drug conventions, and its scientific assessment on scientific matters is binding on the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The Single Convention (1961) targeted narcotic drugs by limiting its production and supply, and consolidated previous treaties and standardizing national drug control laws through the UNODC working with Member States and their legislatures. A 'Commentary' commissioned by ECOSOC in 1962, gives the widely-accepted interpretation of the convention (given in references). The text of the treaty is such that narcotic drugs with morphine, cocaine or cannabis-like properties are placed under four Schedules (compared with the previous classification using two 'Groups') which can be amended by the UN ECOSOC's Commission on Narcotic Drugs, thus allowing newer drugs to be added without a lengthy updating via state-by-state ratification, while also greatly encumbering any efforts to deregulate drugs or plants which are written into the very text of the treaty itself - for example, drugs derived from cannabis may be deregulated in the Schedule, but prohibitions against the plant itself will be intact and very difficult to remove. While it is a strong first step into international regulation, the major shortcoming was in the definition of the narcotic drugs it covered, which effectively relies on arbitrary judgment as to whether the consumption of a drug induces effects similar to that of morphine, cocaine and cannabis, thus ignoring many psychotropic substances or drugs with different effects, and also failing to factor in the potency, and thus potential harm, of drugs. Nonetheless, the treaty marked a strong step in the fight to control the movements of some illicit substances, despite giving in to pressure to countries with strong pharmaceutical interests that do not wish to see their products facing stronger regulations. As such, a great many aspects of the treaty were weakened.

The Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971) attempted to control psychoactive drugs, that is, drugs that have a defined psychological effect. This supplemented the Single Convention which did not have the scope to ban such substances. It strengthens provisions against money laundering, and various drug-related crimes. The timing of this Convention is significant, for in the 1960s psychotropic drugs (esp. stimulants, classed as a psychoactive

drug) became more widely available, and large numbers of new drugs were also discovered as chemistry advanced. This Convention also has a commentary (1976) for its interpretation. Four schedules of controlled substances are also established. However, it is noted that the most restrictive Schedule, Schedule I, deals primarily with illicit drugs whereas the other three Schedules by their very wording regulate legally produced pharmaceutical products, again showing the hand of concerted action taken by powerful pharmaceutical interests. The Convention does recognize scientific and medical uses of psychoactive drugs, e.g. in Article 7; however it has also been criticized, rightfully so, that the regulations of the Convention are in many cases weaker (Canadian Parliamentary Committee, 2002; European Parliamentary Report, 2003) than those of the Single Convention despite a UNODC claim suggesting otherwise. This treaty is constituted predominately of prohibition measures, with a few small efforts made to treat and rehabilitate drug abusers.

The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances looks to provide more legal mechanisms to reinforce the previous two treaties; however this treaty's provisions are not binding in a country where prohibitions on drug possession or use is thought, by that country, to violate their constitution; this is highly regrettable. It is the last major drug-regulating treaty and notably acknowledges the inadequacies of previous treaties to reduce drug-related problems; many provisions are made for fighting organized crime, such as seizing assets and freezing funds.

What has happened so far: Selected Issues; Major Considerations for Policy Options

1. The sheer profitability of drugs

Plants such as coca or opium poppies are grown because for the same size plot, this substance can be up to half a dozen times more profitable than what most agricultural crops would yield. This gives a strong incentive for many people living in poverty to grow such crops. The prohibition of drugs has also driven up their price, making drug trafficking very profitable. While measures allowing for the seizure of assets and the freezing of funds attack the profitability of drugs trafficking, these measures are difficult to use against the many growers of drug-precursor plant material, especially considering that these countries are often

compounded by problems with poor policing and trafficking, such as Afghanistan where 90% of the world's illegal opium is produced.

The sheer profitability of manufactured drugs drives the desire of pharmaceutical companies to sell their products unhindered by regulations. The pharmaceutical industry has acted concertedly to lobby governments to severely weaken the 1961 and 1971 UN treaties. This is especially alarming in light of the evidence that it is non-medical uses of prescription drug makes for a huge and growing problem which is, globally, responsible for more overdoses than those involving banned substances.

2. Moral issues with legalizing drugs

Arguments for the prohibition of drugs often include moral arguments drawn from a range of premises. It is indeed a radical step for any society to decriminalize currently illegal substances, let alone allow the legal purchase and use of drugs such as heroin and cocaine – not least for the legal and moral precedents that would be set, but also that fears that widespread drug use may become a reality in the future if the perception of using now-illicit drugs has become acceptable. It is important to stress that small scale experiments in harm-reduction policies such as needle exchanges or opioid substitution therapy have shown some improvements, but whether the overall drug problem will be alleviated as a whole when such policies are applied on a large scale is unknown, especially with regards to decriminalization or the legalization of drugs. Portugal is the only country which has decriminalized drugs (Greenwald, 2009) and some measures of results, such as an absence of precipitant widespread drug use, are being encouraged. It must be noted that this study itself faces strong criticism.

3. Ensuring supply of narcotics to the correct places

Opioid-based painkillers are very effective in treating pain, and there is a real need to ensure that such substances can be available for legitimate use. As discussed in the Introduction, only 6% of such painkillers are available to developing nations. Problems with existing treaties limiting medical uses, as well as commercial interests by major opium producing countries such as Turkey and India. Ensuring proper control of the movement of narcotics and illegal substances requires blocking the correct channels as well as freeing up the legitimate channels to meet real, pressing needs.

4. Defining the problem - a scientific approach?

The actions that the UNODC will take will have very real implications. However, the problem which this committee faces is constantly changing due to developments in chemistry, resulting in new drugs or new and more easily accessible pathways to synthesize drugs from easily obtainable precursors. Professor David Nutt is a well known advocate of reclassifying drugs based on how much harm they do based on nine 'parameters of harm', and he looks at the damage that some chemicals can do compared with others such as alcohol and tobacco. It greatly challenges the overriding stigma attached to drugs and drug-users and looks to find an objective way of measuring harms. Whether such a course of action is justified or needed is for delegates to decide and debate.

5. Porous borders and unchartered sea routes.

One of the major issues which do affect the movement of narcotics is the availability of alternate routes of movement/shipment. Several nations have segments of the borders which are porous and/or have ports which are not monitored by the authorities. This makes the tracking of illegal narcotics extremely difficult . This is especially prevalent in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian sub-continent.

Conclusion

Controlling the movement of narcotics and illegal substances is a complex issue that requires open discussion on available ideas, exploration of new ideas, and acknowledgement of the successes and failures of past efforts. Delegates must decide whether his or her country's stance is most concerned with the cost to society and at personal levels due to drug abuse; or the economic costs for countries in which the production and trafficking of illicit drugs constitute a highly significant proportion of the overall economy; or the economic cost for the many developed nations with a strong pharmaceutical industry and powerful pharmaceutical lobbies that have always protested at strict regulations of industrially produced narcotic and psychotropic drugs. It should be clear that international cooperation is absolutely essential to combating these problems, just as it should be clear that the UNODC risks irrelevance if the policies it takes are not sufficiently effective.

Questions for further research:

- Is drug trafficking symptomatic of another problem, e.g. corruption, poor internal monitoring and policing, lack of viable alternate means for people to survive, historical or social acceptance and use, or other fundamental social forces?
- How can organized crime which relies on drug trafficking be fought?
- If money is the major incentive for some people, what kind of new measures can be taken to create disincentives to stop ordinary people from smuggling, or shift societal perceptions of drug use and trafficking?

Topic 2 – The role of corruption in narcotraffic terrorism

Narcotraffic terrorism can be defined as the act of funding terrorist activities/organisations through the profits raised by drug trafficking and production. It has been observed by several governmental bodies and independent agencies that various terrorist and violent organisations are funded by the sale of narcotics . The most prominent here would include Taliban , Al-Qaeda , FAARC Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), among others. While the threat of terrorism and also the negative influence that the narcotics have on the members of a nation's society indirectly involved in the entire process are pertinent issues , in this session of the UNODC we shall focus on a very specific sub-problem (i.e, the role that corruption plays in the given scenario).

Core Issues-

1. Bribery of officials – In order to facilitate the trade of narcotics, it has been noticed that the bribery of government officials at several levels is needed . Right from the procurement of 'cover' trade licences and passports to actually infiltrating various anti-drug agencies to secure information.

2. Customs – Corruption at customs various according to the type of product and the

quantities of narcotics transported . There have been instances of quantities less than 100 gms being moved out by hiding them in other objects or in large quantities by moving them in guise as other cargo.

3. Bribery of judiciary - In several nations , judges and other members of the judiciary are also found to be responsible of aiding and abetting the drug cartels by making sure that when caught the cases never make it to court or are dismissed while in court. With very little accountability and no strict enforcement procedures in several developing nations this has become a problem of core importance to our agenda.

Link with terrorism -In several nations (most note-worthy being Afghanistan and Colombia) the profits from the growth , sale and trade of narcotics is used to fund terrorist operations . This is a major cause for concern for several nations, because besides providing terrorist organisations financial support , it also creates political and social difficulties while fighting the drug cartels and terrorist organisations .

This is predominantly due to the reason that in major producing and consuming nations, illicit organisations have stake in the legislative and the judicial systems. When these organisations have partial control over the very governmental organs meant to control/eradicate them, it creates a situation which is beyond the control of the nation itself.

Also , socially - It is far more profitable for farmers to grow drug producing plants(It boosts their standard of living and also their standing in tribes, localities ,etc) .This in turn leads to a situation where due to constant interaction and financial support , a large sector of a nation's population in the primary sector becomes involved in / start supporting terrorist organisations.

Policies in practice:

- United Nations Convention Against Organised Crime
- United Nations Convection Against Corruption.
- United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime

- Most nations have their own domestic policies designed to cater to this particular agenda.

Questions for further research:

1. Is there any way besides the established protocols and laws to end corruption and narco-traffic terrorism ?
2. What can be done to make the execution of the current laws more effective?
3. How would the UNODC deal with both small-level and large-level corruption ?
4. What measures should the global community follow to eradicate an established and powerful illegal organisation?

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UNODC. Commentary on the Convention on Psychotropic Drugs.

http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/organized_crime/Drug%20Convention/Commentary_on_the_Convention_1971.pdf

UNODC. World Drug Report 2011.

http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR2011/World_Drug_Report_2011_ebook.pdf

Further reading:

Professor Nutt's 'Drug Harms in the UK: a multicriteria decision analysis' available on a free sign-up:

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(10\)61462-6/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(10)61462-6/fulltext)

UN World Drug Report - 2011

http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR2011/World_Drug_Report_2011_ebook.pdf

Decriminalisation of Drugs in Portugal:

http://www.cato.org/pubs/wtpapers/greenwald_whitepaper.pdf

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1893946,00.html>

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/Fact_Sheets/portugal_fact_sheet_8-25-10.pdf

(2-page document giving context on the Cato report)

Alcohol Prohibition

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa157.pdf>

Opinions of the Colombian and Mexican Presidents

<http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE78J0KL20110920>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/13/colombia-juan-santos-war-on-drugs/print>

Focus on Corruption and narcoterrorism only -

<http://www.u4.no/publications/fighting-corruption-in-countries-with-serious-narcotics-problems/>