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DIVISION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS
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*Special issue on an analysis of the campaign
against drug trafficking*

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UNITED NATIONS
New York, 1983

SPECIAL REQUEST

As indicated in recent issues of the *Bulletin on Narcotics*, the Division of Narcotic Drugs plans to focus forthcoming issues of the *Bulletin* on particular subjects of general interest.

For this purpose, the following topics have been identified for future issues:

1. Role of narcotics laboratories in combating the illicit drug traffic.
2. Illicit supply of, and traffic in, coca leaves, coca paste and cocaine: problems and countermeasures.
3. Sentencing policies for offenders convicted of drug-related infractions.
4. Recent research on the harmful effects of cannabis.
5. Drugs and youth.
6. Extradition of persons accused of illicit drug traffic—studies on existing international instruments and on judicial implementation at the national level.
7. Drug-related problems in Africa.
8. Developments relating to control of psychotropic substances.

Interested readers are accordingly invited to submit manuscripts related to the topics listed above in sufficient time to be considered for possible publication in the *Bulletin*.

For more detailed information concerning submission of manuscripts, readers may refer to the "Note" on page v.

NOTE

The *Bulletin on Narcotics* seeks to cover current information on experience gained in national and international drug control programmes with particular attention to results obtained in a given country that may be of interest and value to other countries.

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Editor's note

This special issue of the *Bulletin on Narcotics* is concerned with the campaign against drug traffic and is published in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 37/198 adopted on 18 December 1982. The continuing rapid increase in total quantities of many drugs being moved in the illicit traffic in most parts of the world is well recognized. It is also universally accepted that the most successful measures to counter this traffic must operate from a firm base of co-ordinated activity at the national level. On this basis it is possible to establish regional and interregional co-ordination mechanisms to counter the drug traffic which is itself an international phenomenon. The International Drug Control Strategy, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 36/168 of 16 December 1981, indicates the parameters within which co-ordinated action can most usefully be undertaken. This Strategy identified activities which could be undertaken by regional organizations and this special issue contains a number of articles describing the work of such organizations. Other articles describe national and international action against the drug traffic.

The United Nations Division of Narcotic Drugs, in accordance with decisions and resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, continues, within resources available, to encourage mutual assistance between States to counter the drug traffic and associated phenomena. Special attention has recently been directed to measures designed to alleviate the particular problems of transit States, the number of which is increasing exponentially. There is also concentration on supporting regional and interregional meetings, seminars and workshops designed to develop and promote more rapid, secure and accurate exchanges of information and intelligence. These measures at national, regional and international level have accounted for at least some part of the greater quantities of many drugs seized from the traffic. However, much remains to be done, especially in improving communication networks both within and between national territories.

Recent trends in illicit drug trafficking from the Canadian perspective

R. T. STAMLER, *Officer-in-Charge, Drug Enforcement Branch*,
R. C. FAHLMAN, *Chief, Research and Publications Section* and
S. A. KEELE, *Senior Intelligence Analyst, Research and Publications
Section, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

ABSTRACT

Parts of south-west Asia where opium is illicitly produced have recently become the principal source of supply of heroin to Canada, accounting for 79 per cent of this drug on the illicit market. Heroin from parts of south-east Asia is expected, however, to regain a greater share of the market in the next few years. That may result in increased availability of heroin in Canada. The availability of cocaine has increased on the illicit market; some 57 per cent of this drug originated in Colombia in 1982. Cocaine is increasingly abused in Canada by an estimated 250,000 persons, and this trend seems likely to continue in the next few years. Cannabis plant, cannabis resin and liquid cannabis are the most readily available and widely abused illicit drugs. An illicit demand has been created for the more potent preparations of cannabis. The dramatic increase in armed robberies perpetrated by criminal groups to procure manufactured drugs is a relatively new and alarming trend. The illicit drug market in Canada is largely controlled by organized criminal syndicates.

Introduction

This article has been prepared on the basis of the most recent intelligence and information contained in the "Monthly Drug Intelligence Trend Reports" and "Foreign Drug Situation Reports" of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Intelligence and information derived from data gathered by the operational statistical reporting system and the automated drug system of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have also been utilized.

The article outlines the most recent trends in availability and trafficking of illicit heroin, cocaine, manufactured drugs and cannabis, and projects possible developments in the illicit traffic in these drugs by the mid-1980s.

Heroin trafficking

The dynamics of the illicit heroin market in Canada changed during the second half of 1982. Illicit opium produced in parts of south-west Asia replaced that from parts of south-east Asia as the principal source of heroin on the illicit market in Canada. By the end of 1982 south-west Asian heroin achieved a monopoly of the illicit market in eastern and central Canada, while south-east Asian heroin continued to dominate the west coast market. Heroin from south-west Asia accounted for 79 per cent of the Canadian market in 1982, or more than twice its share of 1981. Heroin of south-east Asian origin accounted for only 21 per cent of the market in 1982, the lowest level recorded over the last five years.

International sources of supply

Although record opium crops continue to be harvested in parts of south-east Asia, with three successive crop years having produced estimated annual yields of approximately 600 tons, the world heroin market began to change markedly after the emergence of much greater quantities of illicit opiates from parts of south-west Asia. These greater quantities from south-west Asia coincided with a period of poor harvest in south-east Asia between 1978 and 1980. Following a dramatic rise in south-west Asia heroin production after 1978, south-east Asia heroin lost a considerable part of the market in both Western Europe and North America. South-east Asian trafficking syndicates concentrated on supplying markets in the Far East. Bumper illicit opium harvests in parts of south-east Asia over the past three years have now led to stockpiling in parts of that region, with prices falling to record low levels. This decline in prices is seen as an attempt by south-east Asia syndicates to win back illicit markets lost during the years of low harvest.

One result of the increasing competition between rival trafficking groups is that an increasing number of countries are emerging as transit points. India, for example, the world supplier of licit opium, is increasingly surfacing as a transit country for illicit opiates apparently originating from parts of both south-east and south-west Asia.

Mexico continues to supply a negligible percentage of the Canadian market. Information from the United States of America, however, indicates a substantial increase in Mexican heroin on the illicit market in the United States in recent years. In view of this development in the United States, Mexico cannot be overlooked as a possible secondary source of supply to Canada in future.

Organized criminal syndicates

Organized criminal syndicates control the illicit opiates traffic in Canada to a large extent. They have their own organizations in each of the three major areas supplied: Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

Trafficking routes for heroin

An estimated 90 per cent of heroin entering Canada arrives on commercial airlines and enters national territory at Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Sea and land transport each account for an estimated 5 per cent of the heroin entering the domestic market. Shipments by sea enter the country primarily at the ports of Vancouver and Montreal. This mode of smuggling, which was popular with the so-called French connection in the early 1970s, is now again being used more frequently to smuggle heroin into Canada. An increase in smuggling by sea was associated with the increase in the availability of south-west Asia heroin in 1982. Shipments of heroin by land enter the domestic market at various ports of entry along the 6,400 kilometre border between Canada and the United States. It is the most common method used to smuggle Mexican heroin into Canada. Conversely, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal are believed to be trans-shipment points for drugs destined for the United States market.

Illicit demand for heroin

It is estimated that Canada has a population of 20,000 heroin addicts who consume a total of 200 to 250 kilograms of pure heroin annually. A survey of the known heroin addict population, conducted by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1982, revealed that 51 per cent of known heroin addicts were located in the province of British Columbia, 21 per cent in Ontario and 20 per cent in Quebec. The level of purity of heroin on the illicit market suggested a slight increase in the supply of heroin throughout Canada during 1982. Although the retail price for heroin remained at \$Can 35 per single dosage unit in the main centres of abuse, the purity of heroin rose from an average of between 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent in 1981 to between 4.5 per cent and 5 per cent in 1982, possibly indicating an increase in heroin availability.

In recent years there has been an increasing trend towards the abuse of narcotics diverted from licit sources. Initially, these pharmaceutical narcotics were being used as heroin substitutes or supplements during periods of low heroin availability. These substances, however, are now the drugs of choice for a new population of drug dependent persons.

Cocaine trafficking

The availability of illicit cocaine continued to increase in Canada throughout 1982. This was attributed both to increased demand for cocaine by abusers and to higher production of cocaine in source countries. Uncontrolled availability of raw materials in source countries has allowed the manufacture of enormous amounts of cocaine of high quality, which are being offered for sale on the illicit market in many parts of the world.

International sources of cocaine supply

It is estimated that in 1982, 57 per cent of cocaine destined for the illicit market in Canada came from Colombia. In 1981, 48 per cent of cocaine in Canada had originated in Peru whereas in 1982 only 13 per cent came from that country. Bolivian sources accounted for 15 per cent and the remaining 15 per cent was obtained in other countries, principally Brazil. It seems clear that increased enforcement attention to persons arriving from the major source countries has produced an increasing tendency for those who wish to obtain cocaine to travel to countries in South America other than the main source countries to obtain the drug. Greater awareness of possible financial gains among some nationals of the new transit countries has also almost certainly contributed to this changed pattern of smuggling. Increased production of cocaine and increased competition among suppliers, have apparently resulted in a lowering of wholesale prices for this drug.

Trafficking routes for cocaine

The largest portion of the illicit cocaine destined for Canada (75 per cent) transited the United States. Other popular transit areas were Brazil, the Caribbean islands, Mexico and Panama. Certain South American countries, including Argentina, Chile and Venezuela, which have not been traditionally involved as transit points in the cocaine traffic, are now apparently becoming involved.

The most commonly used ports of entry for cocaine destined for Canada are Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. The drug is then distributed from these three major metropolitan centres. Some cocaine finds its way directly to other areas through the postal system. Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver have major international airports with many daily flights from source countries and transit areas and it is not difficult to see why the most popular smuggling method is on commercial airlines. This method accounts for approximately 75 per cent of the cocaine entering Canada. The next most common method is by land, which accounts for 24 per cent of the total. The remaining 1 per cent is believed to enter Canada by sea on either private or commercial vessels.

Illicit demand for cocaine

It is estimated that Canada has more than 250,000 cocaine users. It is difficult to assess the amount of cocaine consumed during one year. However, if, for example, each cocaine user only takes, on average, one gram of cocaine a year, the total demand for cocaine would amount to 250 kilograms per year. The average amount of cocaine used is, however,

suspected to be considerably higher. Cocaine users, while believed to reside in the major centres, are also increasingly found in smaller cities and towns and even in some rural areas of Canada.

Cocaine prices and purity

The price of cocaine at the street level in Canada is between \$Can 125 and \$Can 250 per gram depending on the area and on availability of the drug. One kilogram of high-quality cocaine, delivered in Montreal, costs \$Can 75,000. Street-level purities of cocaine are on average between 30 per cent and 50 per cent. Supply of this drug was plentiful in Canada throughout 1982.

Trafficking in manufactured drugs

Sources of supply

These substances are obtained from the following sources: domestic clandestine laboratories; illegal imports of illicitly manufactured substances; illegal imports of legally manufactured substances which have been diverted; and legally manufactured substances diverted in Canada. Clandestine laboratories in Canada were the largest single source of these drugs on the domestic market in 1982. This source accounted for virtually all of the methamphetamine, phencyclidine (PCP) and methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA). The United States remains the main sources for the lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) and "look-alike" drugs on the Canadian market. The largest part of the legally manufactured substances, such as diazepam, methaqualone, pentazocine, hydromorphone and oxycodone enter the illicit market through domestic diversion. Large shipments of commercially manufactured drugs, especially methaqualone and diazepam, enter the Canadian market through diversion from legitimate manufacturers in foreign source countries.

In 1982 Canada continued to be utilized as a transit point for large amounts of drugs diverted from commercial manufacturers within Canada and from foreign source countries destined for the illicit market in the United States. Restrictions on the manufacture and sale of bulk methaqualone in parts of Europe in 1981 led to a shortage of this drug on the illicit market in the United States. The shortage encouraged Canadian, Colombian and United States traffickers to seek alternate sources of supply in 1982. This development was highlighted in 1982 with the seizure in Canada of 1.1 tons of bulk methaqualone originating from south-east Asia and destined for the United States. Intelligence also indicates that Canada is a source country for bulk amounts of phenyl-2-propanone (P2P), a precursor chemical used in the production of methamphetamine, destined for the United States.

Clandestine laboratories

There was a significant increase in the number of clandestine laboratories seized in Canada in 1982. Of the total of 10 laboratories seized, six were producing phencyclidine, two methylenedioxyamphetamine, one methamphetamine and one mescaline. Most of the laboratories were in Quebec, but others were detected in British Columbia and Ontario. Intelligence continues to indicate that clandestine laboratories in Canada operate mainly to meet domestic demand and only nominal amounts are exported to foreign markets.

Outlaw motorcycle gangs

Although a significant portion of the illicit production and distribution of manufactured drugs in Canada has been linked to organized criminal groups, individual entrepreneurs continue to play an important role in such trafficking. Outlaw motorcycle gangs have in recent years been increasingly involved in the financing, manufacture and distribution of manufactured drugs in Canada. Their organizational structure, international affiliations and high mobility make these criminal organizations well-suited to the production of, and trafficking in, drugs such as methamphetamine, phencyclidine and lysergic acid diethylamide. Intelligence also indicates that outlaw motorcycle gangs have recently been involved in the distribution of heroin, cocaine and cannabis.

Armed robberies

The abuse of manufactured drugs as substitutes for heroin peaked in 1980 and appears to be stabilizing with the increase in availability of heroin. The most notable trend in the diversion of licit drugs to the illicit market has been the dramatic increase in the number of armed robberies involving drugs. This problem appears to be most acute in the provinces of Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.

"Look-alike" drugs

Both drug abuse and availability indicators suggest that the "look-alike" drugs continued to present a considerable problem in most parts of Canada in 1982. The manufacture and distribution of these substances are centered in the north-eastern part of the United States, where estimated production capability is of 30 million dosage units per week. Because of their relatively low retail cost and ready availability, the "look-alike" drugs are expected to become increasingly popular over the next several years, especially among younger users.

Cannabis trafficking

Illicit demand for cannabis

Cannabis and its preparations, cannabis plant, cannabis resin and liquid cannabis, remained the most readily available and widely abused illicit drugs throughout Canada in 1982. Studies indicate that most frequent cannabis abuse occurs among older teenagers and adults in their early twenties. These abusers have created an illicit demand for the more potent varieties of cannabis such as cannabis resin (hashish) and liquid cannabis.

International sources of cannabis supply

Cannabis on the illicit market in Canada in 1982 originated mainly from Colombia, Jamaica, Lebanon and Pakistan. Cannabis from Colombia accounted for 55 per cent of cannabis on the Canadian market, while Jamaica was the source of 25 per cent of cannabis plant (marihuana) and 90 per cent of the liquid cannabis in Canada in 1982. Approximately 40 per cent of cannabis resin (hashish) originated in Lebanon and Pakistan in 1982. Mother-ship operations from Colombia to Canada have increased substantially in 1982 compared with 1981. This may be due to the increased drug enforcement activities in the United States undertaken by the South Florida Task Force since March 1982. The activities of this enforcement group may have forced drug traffickers to travel further north than they normally would in order to bypass the area under the jurisdiction of the Task Force. Intelligence indicates that a significant portion of the drugs involved in these mother-ship operations was destined for Canada, but that the bulk of the cannabis would have been trans-shipped to the United States.

After a relatively dormant period, Mexico was again a source of cannabis on the illicit market in Canada in 1982. It is believed that Mexico also served as a transit point for Colombian cannabis destined for Canada and the United States. Approximately 500 tons of cannabis were destroyed by Mexican authorities in 1982.

Cannabis plant (marihuana) was smuggled into Canada primarily by sea in 1982, while cannabis resin (hashish) and liquid cannabis tended to be smuggled by air cargo or in body packs. The main ports of entry were Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. Other areas were reached by the postal system, courier services or any available mode of travel.

Possible developments in illicit drug trafficking in the near future

Heroin

South-west Asia heroin may remain readily available on the illicit market in Canada over the next several years. As long as the supply from south-west Asia remains constant and the abundant opium harvests

continue in south-east Asia, an increase in the heroin abuser population will remain a distinct possibility. Increased availability of heroin may result in higher purity at the retail level. This in turn may lead to increased dependency, an increase in heroin overdoses and emergency problems among addicts, and increased heroin-related criminal activity.

Heroin from south-east Asia is expected to regain a greater share of the market in the next few years. Three successive bumper harvests of 600 tons yearly may encourage south-east Asia trafficking organizations to market more actively in an attempt to regain what they lost in competition with south-west Asia trafficking organizations in recent years. Growing opium stockpiles in south-east Asia, together with a decrease in wholesale and retail prices to the lowest levels in the past five years, suggest that south-east Asia drug syndicates may attempt to recapture the market. Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal will most likely remain the major heroin abuse and distribution points in Canada. Imports by air will probably remain the principal method for smuggling heroin into Canada in the near future. An increase in smuggling by sea is expected, most likely through the port of Montreal. The importance of Montreal as a transit point for heroin destined for both the Canadian and United States markets was reduced with the termination of the so-called French connection, but the increase in south-west Asia heroin entering Canada via Montreal in 1982 indicates that this city may again become a major North American distribution centre.

The number of drug abusers solely dependent upon narcotic substances diverted from legal sources into the illicit market is expected to remain stable through 1985. However, the dramatic increase in armed robberies by abusers of these substances to obtain supplies is an alarming trend. Assessments indicate that the population of abusers of these substances should remain constant if heroin availability does not decline.

Cocaine

Cocaine availability may increase in Canada in the coming years. If abuser demand continues to increase and if heavy production of cocaine continues in the source countries, there will be a steady flow of this drug from South America to Canada. The international airports at Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver will probably remain major entry points.

There may be an increased shift by cocaine traffickers towards using South American countries other than the traditional source countries (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru) as transit points. These countries may include Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Venezuela. This pattern may also change if the Brazilian authorities force drug traffickers out of their area, which they appear to be doing with increased effectiveness.

Cocaine from Colombia may retain a significant share of the Canadian illicit market if aggressive marketing techniques and established organi-

zational supply structures remain in place. Such supply may fluctuate somewhat owing to increased Canadian enforcement efforts aimed at controlling international air traffic from that country. It is expected, however, that this will only force cocaine traffickers to use new transit points in an effort to avoid identifying Colombia as a point of origin.

There may be a notable increase in the number of persons seeking assistance at hospitals and social agencies with medical, psychological and financial problems directly related to cocaine abuse. Medical problems may increase owing to an increasing trend towards injecting cocaine hydrochloride and smoking free base cocaine, which are well-recognized as more dangerous patterns of cocaine abuse.

Manufactured drugs

Domestic clandestine laboratories may remain the principal source for manufactured drugs on the Canadian illicit market through 1985. Quebec, British Columbia and Ontario are likely to remain the major areas in which such illicit production takes place. Methamphetamine, phencyclidine and methylenedioxyamphetamine may account for the largest market shares. The United States is likely to remain the major supplier of lysergic acid diethylamide to Canada.

Canada is expected to be increasingly utilized as a staging area, and in some instances a source, for large shipments of manufactured drugs and their chemical precursors diverted from legal manufacturers in Canada and from foreign source countries destined to the United States market. It is likely that the manufactured drugs most often diverted will be methaqualone and diazepam.

The illicit demand for these substances is expected to remain stable so long as the availability of heroin does not decline to any great extent. Should heroin availability levels decrease, the abuse of manufactured drugs as substitutes for heroin will in all likelihood increase. The incidence of armed robberies may continue to rise in areas where diversion of these substances is most frequent.

The lack of a substantial body of legislation governing "look-alike" drugs, together with their relatively low cost and ready availability, may lead to increased abuse of such substances over the next several years. Although a number of states in the United States have passed laws aimed at controlling the manufacture and distribution of "look-alike" substances, distributors have begun to sell tablets and capsules which do not resemble any of the brand names of controlled substances. The United States may continue to be the principal source of supply of "look-alike" drugs on the Canadian market in the near future.

Outlaw motorcycle gangs are expected to become increasingly involved in the production and distribution of manufactured drugs in Canada

through 1985. Intelligence indicates that such criminal groups continue to be involved in other drug-related illicit activities, and they are expected to diversify their operations over the next several years by utilizing sophisticated money-laundering techniques such as investment in real estate and legitimate business enterprises.

Cannabis

Cannabis and its preparations will probably continue to be the most readily available and widely used illicit drugs of abuse in all areas of Canada through 1985.

Mother-ship operations involving cannabis from Colombia will almost certainly continue to occur in Canadian waters and a large percentage of this drug, routed through Canada, will be destined for the United States with the remainder being intended for use in Canada.

The apparent increase in cultivation of cannabis of good quality in Thailand may result in increased supply to the illicit market in Canada from south-east Asia. Canadian drug traffickers living in Thailand, and those who visit Thailand for heroin trafficking, are expected to take advantage of the potential profits to be made.

If the South Florida Task Force continues its operations, traffickers in Colombia and Jamaica will be forced to stockpile illicit cannabis crops. Pilots and boat captains may demand higher fees to cover increased risks; drug prices at source may decline while competition to sell cannabis may increase. Larger ocean-going vessels carrying greater loads are more likely to be involved in cannabis trafficking.

Lebanon and Pakistan are likely to remain principal source countries for cannabis resin (hashish) destined for the illicit Canadian market. It is expected that the drug may enter Canada in large cargo shipments and in some cases may be trans-shipped via Europe and the United States. The availability of cannabis from Lebanon may depend to a large extent on the outcome of the current situation in that country.

There appears to be a levelling-off in the number of cannabis abusers in Canada. This is attributed, in part, to a greater awareness among users of the risks associated with the long-term abuse of cannabis.