

The Year 2000 in Review

Though Royal Thai government has strictly focused on narcotics control measures, the epidemic of drugs in Thailand still exists and tends more severe. Not only in Thailand, the attractive incentive, the advancement of technology used by the traffickers' syndicate, and the borderless of drug business boost drugs situation becoming the world problem. . Comparing with last year, supply and demand of drugs remain in high level, and tend to be more complicated.

From the drugs seized data, the total number of drug cases were 168,592 with 183,395 offenders. It could be classified by weight; 4,481 tons of methamphetamine, 421.65 kilograms of opium and raw opium, 405.336 kilograms of heroin, 42.7 tons of fresh marihuana, 14.67 tons of dried marihuana, 1.95 tons of volatile substances, 7.9 kilograms of ecstasy, 536.3 kilograms of other amphetamine-type stimulants, 422.5 kilograms of kratom plant, and 5.1 tons of others.

In 1999, more than 80% of methamphetamine are being produced along the border in the North, and the rest

is produced within the country and the border in the East. The major instruments and chemical precursors have been smuggled from Thailand to the production source along the border in the North continually. Moreover, some of these equipment and chemicals have not yet been controlled by any laws, especially caffeine, which is the major component of methamphetamine production. The Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) has worried about this problem and being proposed caffeine to be controlled under Commodities Control Act B.E.2435 (1952). If this adjusted Act is passed by the government, caffeine obtaining, selling, and transferring has to be permitted by the

Governors of the Provinces. And this Act will be enforced in 32 districts in 6 provinces in the northern border.

According to the Prime Minister Order No.141/B.E.2541 (1998) under the strategy of state-civil alliance against drugs, the Thai Government had released the Office of the Prime Minister's Regulation regarding prevention of government officials from being related with drugs since January 1999. For the consequences of the administration from January 1999 to March 2000, there were 1,833 officials who got involved in drugs. 63 authorities faced administrative sanction, and 188 of them were arrested in drugs cases.

As the result of the Prime Minister Order No.192/B.E.2541 (1998), it was quite successful in its effort for the fight against drug traffickers. The Northern Border Narcotics Control Administration and Coordination Centres were established. A lot of smuggling drugs had been seized. Commencing from October 1998 to March 2000, the authorities could seize

24,335,229 tablets of methamphetamine, 183.52 kilograms of heroin, 6 making tablet machines, 99 sets of punching instrument, 18.4 tons of caffeine, 800 liters of acetone, and 5,000 kilograms of acacia. As the accomplishment of the Order, the Narcotics Suppression Centers are going to be established along the borderline of the country to prevent the narcotics illicit import and export in the Northeast, the Central, and the South.

Moreover, it affected the former illicit drugs transit routes changed from the North to the West of Thailand. Previously, 9 provinces have been stated as the main target provinces under this Order, also recently, Tak Province is going to be a new add. In addition, from October 1999 to February 2000, the authorities could seize 212 cases with 293 offenders within the main target provinces. These could be categorized as 2,561,878.75 tablets of methamphetamine, 19,236.1 grams of heroin, and 10,000 kilograms of caffeine.

As the review of the Central Narcotics Control Office, the strict

suppression policy in the North affected methamphetamine production spurred in this region again. In 1999, the authorities could destroy 4 producing sources. Also within the Bangkok Metropolitan area, they can seize a lot of mixed methamphetamine powder with precursors and producing instruments, which can produce methamphetamine in large amount.

Regarding the narcotics crop control, the illicit opium poppy cultivation area decreased from 1,485.76 hectares during 1997/1998 to 1,440.96 hectares during 1998/1999. The opium production was estimated to decrease from 8 tons to 7 tons. Besides, the growing area of marihuana spreading over Thailand has remained the same, especially in the Northeast. In 1999, the authorities could eradicate 25.43 hectares of marihuana. In the previous year, the smuggling of marihuana, which passed through Thailand, had been significantly detected. The government expected that more than 6.5 tons were exported to the third countries.

Concerning the prevention measure, the country has achieved the cooperation among government organization, non-government organization, and people organization at a good level. Thailand has campaigned to educate the people to fight against drugs, especially the juvenile in school and out of school continuously. The slogan “Love our King, care for our offspring, help combating drugs” has been raised for Thai society as the main concept to be away from drugs this year. What’s more, the most obvious cooperation between ONCB and the private organizations is the “State-Civil Alliance against Drugs” Project, which has been done by various media. There are the artists composed of movie stars, and singers joining to behave as the good example for the youth. They are also gathered under the “No Heart for Drugs” club in order to organize activities for social against drugs. Furthermore, the useful projects which were implemented last year has been continued such as Village/Community Free from Drugs, White School, and Sport Playground for the Youth against Drugs etc.

For treatment and rehabilitation measure, there is an effort to enhance the potential and efficiency of the existing treatment and rehabilitation centers. Meanwhile, Thailand has been supported from Narcotic Affair Section of United States in order to help the addicts in the follow up and after care stage. This assisting project established for helping the drug patients in coming back to the society, and reducing the relapse. Another project is the Family Therapy, which aims to create the key personnel for treatment and rehabilitation operation with drug addicts. This project uses the warmth of Thai family life-style applied to prevent narcotics in schools and communities.

Finally, the cooperation among various countries and international organizations in fighting against illicit drugs in the world society still is the main consideration of Thai Government. From 1999 to 2000, Thailand has encouraged the collaboration with other countries in bilateral, sub-regional, and international levels continuously. In bilateral level, Thai government has given good and close

cooperation with various countries not only in Asia, but also we have a good support from the USA, Germany, Australia, and Japan.

According to the cooperation with the countries in this region, Thailand hosted the Workshop of Key Personnel on Drug Law Enforcement, which was the cooperation among Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Thailand, during 8-11 February, 2000 in Chiang Rai Province of the North of Thailand. It contributed to formulate a framework and plan of action for the control of drugs and precursor chemicals as well as the drug law enforcement cooperation. Also, there was the Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting of the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control, held on 19-20 May and 21 May 1999, respectively in Vientiane, Lao PDR. It intensified joint action to reduce drug abuse and trafficking in the subregion, also supported an initiative to fight the increasing abuse of methamphetamine and other amphetamine-type-stimulants in the East Asia Region.

Furthermore, the cooperation with international organizations; such as UNDCP, Colombo Plan Secretariat, ASEAN, Interpol, European Union, etc, been continually maintained. The

cooperation also covers the international non-government organizations such as IFNGO, Daytop International Inc., Worldview International Foundation, IOGT etc.