

The Year 1998-1999 in Review

In 1998 and 1999 Thailand was quite successful in its effort for the fight against drugs problem. The overall outcome in controlling the problem was satisfactory.

As for narcotics law enforcement aspect in 1998, the total number of drug cases were 167,039. These cases were classified into 110,921 of methamphetamine, 23,094 of dried marihuana, 16,613 of volatile substances, 12,226 of heroin, and 4,185 of others. The total cases seized this year increased comparing with the previous 4 years. Last year

methamphetamine increased by 40%, while others remained constant or decreased. If comparing by weight, heroin and methamphetamine share the largest proportion of illicit drugs available in Thailand. About 60% of heroin provided for export and most of methamphetamine was produced for domestic demand.



Realizing the severity of the problems and their long term effects which undermine stability and economic development of the country, the Royal Thai Government determines to control the drugs problem and reduce them eventually in order to safeguard the country's stability. The government considers it an emergency to control the problems. The ONCB as a central coordinating agency to formulate the policy on drug control submitted the Prime Minister's Order No. 141/B.E.2541 (1998) to the government, and released it on August 19, 1998, in order to reduce the widespread of illicit drugs with the unique cooperation of every sectors. For an efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the Order, the authority of operation and administration is contributed to the provincial level through the Provincial Sub-committee on Narcotics Prevention and Suppression and Bangkok Sub-committee on Narcotics Prevention and Suppression. The Sub-committees' duties are to formulate policy and plan, to coordinate plan and budget, and the administrate and direct the narcotic drug prevention and suppression at the grass-root level to be more unique and effective.

Also, the Royal Thai Government has realized the critical situation of the illicit drug smuggling along the borderline, especially in the northern part of Thailand. Then the Prime Minister's Order No. 192/B.E.2541 (1998) has been released on September 19, 1998, in order to decrease the illicit drugs smuggling from the neighboring countries to Thailand. The Operation is composed of 5 strategies as the borderline prevention, psychological public relations operation, production and trafficking suppression,

international cooperation, and the cooperation in operation and follow up. As the consequence, during October 1998 to January 1999, the authorities could offense the smuggling of methamphetamine and heroin, by the number of durg case were more than 500 cases with the total 1,600 offenders.

It can also be said that during the years of this report, the Thai Government makes her efforts to make the law enforcement successfully. The Draft of the Money Laundering Control Act B.E.2542 (1999) has already been approved by the Parliament on March 19, 1999 and come into force on August 20, 1999.

Regarding the narcotics crop control, the illicit opium poppy cultivation area was a little bit increased from 1,405.28 hectares during 1996/1997 to 1,485.76 hectares during 1997/1998. But after eradication, we have found that the opium production estimated to increase from 4 from 4 tons in 1997 to 8 tons in 1998. Besides, the growing area of marihuana spreading over Thailand faced the restricted eradication measure of Thai Government, which affected the amount of fresh marihuana decreasing from 301 fons in 1993 to 48 tons in 1998.

Concerning the prevention measures of illicit drugs, cooperation of government organization, non-government organization, and people organization are raised to be the most important tools containing in the policies and strategies of all concerned organizations. Thailand has followed the work on campaigning and educating Thai people, especially the youth in school and communities to

fight against drugs and to support the anti-drugs projects of government by participating in solving drug problem in the communities continuously. In provincial level, there were seminars, conferences, and workshops to determine policies and exchange the ideas for unity and further cooperation to prevent and control the illicit drugs in each region.

For treatment and rehabilitation measure, according to the PM's Order No.141/B.E.2541 (1998), the addicts have to be treated as patients. The treatment and rehabilitation centers of both private and government agencies have to be adapted to suit the need of the community, and every hospital has to admit the patients and should provide the treatment of detoxification stage at least. Also the rehabilitation stage is very important and needs cooperation of the families, schools, temples, communities, and environment to prevent the relapse. The Significant activities are Teachers Training Course on Counseling Techniques, Life Skills Education and Peer Facilitators Training for Students, and

some other courses provided for the related authorities, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and public health officers.

Moreover, the international and regional cooperation has been concentrated because Thailand has worked closely with many countries and international organization to solve Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and related problems. The cooperation with neighboring countries has continuously been done to prevent and suppress the cross-border smuggling of drugs, precursor chemicals, and equipment used for drug production. In 1999, there were the Second Senior Officials Meeting and the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Cooperation in Drug Abuse Control among Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand hosted by the Royal Thai Government held in Bangkok. These declared the strong determination of the three countries to eliminate all aspects of the drug problem in this region, especially the cooperation for the interception of ATS problem that exists in the areas of the three countries.