



The Year 2000/2001 in Review



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The supply of methamphetamine from neighboring countries to Thailand during this period came from all borders of the country, especially, from the Northern border. Major seizures of methamphetamine around the country were made by law enforcement agencies to suppress the drug trafficking in Thailand. The total amount of seized methamphetamine could not make much difference when compared with the total volume of imported methamphetamine which has increased dramatically over time. At the same time, heroin and marijuana together with other drugs were continuously imported into the Thai drug market for distribution in Thai society. The drug problem in Thailand during this period seems more serious than that of the 1999 - 2000 period since the supply of many kinds of drugs did not decrease, while the demand of those drugs remained high.

From the data of seized drugs throughout the year 2000, the total figure of drug cases were 187,815 with 201,928 offenders. Those seized drugs could be divided into weight as follows: 7,421 kilograms of methamphetamine (about 82.5 million tablets); 1,133 kilograms of opium ; 385 kilograms of heroin ; 46.30 tons of fresh marijuana and 9.80 tons of dried marijuana ; 452 kilograms of volatile substances ; 17.95 kilograms of ecstasy (about 71,800 tablets) ; 4.25 kilograms of cocaine ; 465.31 kilograms of kratom plants, and 3,287 kilograms of other drugs. Most types of seized drugs in the year 2000, were less in weight than those in

1999, except methamphetamine and marijuana, which shared the largest proportion of illicit drugs available in Thailand. The total figure of drug addicts who were registered for treatment in treatment centres throughout the country was 41,746 people in the year 2000.

The export of drugs from the Golden Triangle via Thailand to other countries was still going on in this period. There were about 70 methamphetamine clandestine laboratory sites in neighboring countries of Thailand mainly producing the drugs and exporting them to Thailand and other countries. Most of those illicit drug

The Year 2000 / 2001 in Review





producing laboratories were in permanent locations and were escorted by armed forces. Some of these factories produced many kinds of drugs such as methamphetamine, ice (methamphetamine hydrochloride), heroin, and speed ball (methamphetamine mixed with heroin). There were reports ;however, indicating that some of those laboratories might already be producing relatively inexpensive ecstasy to distribute in neighboring countries. Imported methamphetamine from neighboring countries to Thailand in 2001, was estimated to be about 700 million tablets ,which increased about 40 % from the previous year. The large quantity of methamphetamine tablets (millions of tablets) have usually been smuggled in the form of drug caravans escorted by armed forces until they reached the destination areas. There have been frequent armed conflicts near the Northern Thai border between the Thai troops and those drug caravans for the past few years. In recent years, methamphetamine tablets have also been smuggled from the Golden Triangle via Thailand to other countries in East and Southeast Asia as well as Europe and America but in insignificant amounts. Domestic drug clandestine laboratories still existed to produce methamphetamine,

but heroin clandestine laboratories have not been found in Thailand since 1999. Smuggling of chemicals and precursors from the Northern Thai border to the drug producing sources in neighboring countries were detected less frequently during this period than in the past few years due to a strict control by the Thai government. Methamphetamine epidemic in schools around the country was still a very serious problem for Thailand.

In order to deal with the drug problem more efficiently, the Royal Thai Government issued the Prime Minister's Order No. 119/B.E. 2544 (2001) on 31st May 2001 to replace the Prime Minister's Order No. 141/B.E.2541 (1998). The new Prime Minister's Order is a major plan by the Government to eliminate drugs from the Thai society under the strategy on "Concerted Efforts of the Nation to Overcome Drugs." This order was the result of the Brainstorm Meeting to Overcome Drugs, which was held by the Royal Thai Government during the 10-11th March 2001, in Chiang Rai Province. The main objective of the meeting was to find the ways to deal with the drug problem more efficiently than in the past. Three solutions from the meeting were issued; i.e., control illicit



drugs, treat drug addicts, and prevent drug abuse. To control illicit drugs, chemicals and precursors used for producing drugs will be strictly controlled while suppression and interception of the drugs coming from outside the country will be systematically carried out. Suppression of drug trafficking will be focussed mainly on major traffickers. Prosecution and punishment process will be improved to accelerate drug cases for punishing the drug offenders as quickly as possible. To treat drug addicts, treatment and rehabilitation programmes will be improved to serve all kinds of addicts sufficiently. This involves using military camps and governmental agencies that are well-equipped to be additional treatment centres. To prevent drug abuse, the government will encourage public awareness on the dangers of narcotic drugs, which has threatened Thai people and the country as a whole for years. Local communities will be targeted in implementation of the drug prevention measures which will make them strong enough to fight against drugs.

It could be said that the Government's efforts to suppress drug trafficking in Thailand during this period were satisfactory. The Money Laundering Control Office was already

established lately in the year 2000, and now is ready to operate. Most of all, the Royal Thai Government has a strong determination to eliminate drugs from Thai society. During the first five months of the current Government's administration (March - July, 2001) over 60 million tablets of methamphetamine were seized, and 7 drug traffickers were executed. Moreover, there are so many drug offenders waiting for the execution now. Regarding the narcotic crops control, illicit opium poppy cultivation areas decreased from 1,440.96 hectares during 1998-1999 to 1,087.73 hectares during 1999/2000. The opium eradication areas were 757.52 hectares during 1999/2000. The opium cultivation during 2000/2001 was expected to increase a minimum amount due to the continued high price offered for raw opium and a high demand of raw opium needed to support heroin refineries located in neighboring countries. For the marijuana cultivation control, the Thai authorities continued to destroy marijuana fields which were located in many provinces in the North and the Northeast, and could seize 9.80 tons of dried marijuana throughout the year 2000.

Concerning the drug prevention measures, the Royal Thai Government



has given its highest priority in this area. Various types of media are used in convincing Thai people to fight against drugs. Drug prevention campaigns are carried out throughout the country, in schools and public places as well as local communities, to mobilize all available resources to solve the drug problem. Under the strategy on “Concerted Efforts of the Nation to Overcome Drugs”, which belongs to the Prime Minister’s Order No. 119/ B.E.2544 (2001), a cooperation from all parts of the nation to fight against drugs will be integrated by convincing the public that combating drugs is a responsibility for all Thai people. At the same time, the drug abuse prevention in schools will be focused mainly at preventing more students from getting involved with drugs and to reduce the demand of drugs in Thailand. Cooperation and coordination to control drugs from all concerned agencies have to be improved in order to work more efficiently and in order to accelerate their operations. The government’s plan mentioned above is to strengthen three main institutions ; i.e, schools, families, and communities. In addition, drug immunity will be developed to protect the public from drug abuse.

For treatment and rehabilitation measure, according to the PM’s Order No. 119 /B.E. 2544 (2001), the government has a plan to prevent drug addicts from returning to drugs in order to reduce the demand of drugs in the Thai society. Drug addicts have to be treated and rehabilitated by using both compulsory and voluntary systems. The Ministry of Public Health is assigned by the government to be the main agency to re-arranging all existing treatment and rehabilitation systems so that they will operate harmoniously and smoothly. All registered addicts will be divided into groups according to the kind of drugs they used and then, implemented guidelines/ treatment and rehabilitation methods will be set up to be suitable for each group of those addicts. Personnel development in this field will be carried out at the same time. The Ministry of Justice and other concerned agencies are assigned to revise the laws and regulations concerning the treatment and rehabilitation process in which the addicts have to be treated as patients. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is assigned to provide career training to drug addicts ,who come out for treatment, and the Ministry of Education is responsible for educating



addicts while they are receiving treatment.

In international cooperation for drug control, Thailand firmly stresses its policy of giving positive and close cooperation to foreign countries and international organizations in regards to controlling drugs. Collaboration with various countries in bilateral, multi-lateral, sub-regional, and international levels has been carried out by the Royal Thai Government for decades.

The cooperation in the bilateral cooperation has been done with countries in different regions such as, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, America, and Europe. Thailand also signed the MOU agreement on drug control with Argentina, Cambodia, Poland, and Vietnam, and may sign MOU with Russia in the next few years. Cross border cooperation has been established with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Malaysia. Furthermore, Thailand has been a good partner of the U.S.A. in the fight against drugs for over two decades.

In the sub-regional cooperation, Thailand has a close collaboration with

neighboring countries like Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and China under the framework of bilateral and sub-regional cooperation for drug control. The most important sub-regional framework is the cooperation under 1993 MOU on Drug Control between Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, and UNDCP. Eight drug control projects under MOU are being implemented in six of the countries above and three projects have just been finished for a couple of years. The latest MOU Ministerial and Senior Officials Meeting was just on 8th-11th May, 2001, in Yangon, Myanmar. The main objective of this meeting was to review what MOU countries have done for several years in controlling drugs in the region, and to initiate new projects and works for the next few years.

Cooperation between Thailand and international organizations to control drugs is still continuing. Those organizations include UNDCP., ASEAN, the Colombo Plan Secretariat, EU, ICPO/Interpol, DEA, JICA, etc. The cooperation also includes NGOs like WIF, IOGT, IFNGO Daytop International INC, etc.

