

Conclusion

Canada plays multiple roles in the current crisis of hemispheric narcotrafficking. Within its own borders, Canada is a significant consumer, producer, and distributor of illicit drugs. Abroad, Canada finds its investments threatened by the violent and corruptive effects of narcotrafficking, especially in Colombia. At home and abroad, the important conception of human security is closely related to narcotrafficking. Feasible options in dealing with the crisis must define effective policies commensurate with human security and apply them in an efficient manner.

Ironically, a strong case can be made that the origin of the most serious ill effects associated with the crisis is actually the prohibition of drugs, rather than drug usage itself. A culture of demand for illicit drugs, which began in the North in the late 1960s and early 1970s and which has spread to the Third World in the 1990s, has meant an insatiable underground market which continues to fuel the industry. But consumer tastes are manipulated by the narcotrafficking industry, as demonstrated by the marketing of 'crack cocaine' to the urban poor in the US. Hence, although the industry is driven by predominantly northern consumer demand, the narcoindustry perpetuates and manipulates the market.

The immense magnitude of the industry has meant the creation of a parallel security structure to protect and regulate it. These manifest uniquely in distinct societies, from 'Biker' gangs in Canada to guerrilla groups in Colombia. The State in general has encountered challenges in the post-Cold War Era which have the capacity to weaken it - especially in relation to economic globalization and the revolution in information and communication. By creating parallel security structures, narcotrafficking weakens the State even further. While the idealic traditional State maintains a monopoly on the use of force, narcotrafficking disperses military and political power away from legitimate institutions. Social power accrues to those criminal elements who can best manipulate the trade.

The problem is manifested in terms of an assortment of threats to human security.