

Narcotics

The serious problems associated with the international traffic in illicit drugs, both in terms of supply and demand, have been the subject of increasing international concern in the last few years, a concern shared by Canadians.

In response, the Canadian National Drug Strategy was released in 1987. It identifies the reduction of domestic demand for illicit drugs as the single most important component to eliminating the drug trade. To this end, Canada has adopted new legislation designed to seize the proceeds of crime and to attack the problem of money laundering (the legitimization of the proceeds of crime).

Canadian government departments and agencies have also been active in international interdiction efforts, which range from training and co-operative arrangements with other law enforcement agencies to the provision of equipment to countries with special requirements.

Canada has also extended the range of its co-operation with other countries; in the past year, memoranda of understanding have been signed with the U.S.S.R. and Mexico. The network of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) encompasses a diversity of countries, including many of the summit participants. Canada has strengthened the international legal framework with the conclusion of enhanced extradition treaties.

The narcotics issue has also gained prominence at recent summits. At the Toronto Summit in 1988, leaders acknowledged the need to improve international co-operation on programs to counter the illicit drug problem, including the financing of the drug trade and money laundering. Leaders agreed to convene a Special Task Force to improve national, bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the fight against narcotics. The Special Task Force, which met in Washington on September 6 to 8, 1988, issued a set of recommendations emphasizing the importance of those activities aimed at reducing the demand for drugs.

At the 1989 Paris Summit leaders reiterated the urgent need for decisive action on both an international and national basis. Leaders identified several initiatives which their countries would undertake to counter drug production, reduce demand and curtail drug trafficking. Leaders urged non-summit nations to participate in and support these efforts.

Among these initiatives was the creation of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), mandated to assess the results of co-operative measures already initiated to combat the problem of money laundering and to consider additional preventive measures. In addition to the summit participants,

eight countries participated in the FATF. Its report, released in mid-April, contains several guidelines on how individual states can eradicate the problem of money laundering within their financial institutions. These guidelines urge countries to improve their national legal and financial systems and to enhance their international co-operative programs.

Since Paris, summit countries have worked individually, collectively and in tandem with other states on a number of fronts. In response to the events in Colombia, Canada and several other countries initiated special programs of assistance to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Colombia to combat the drug cartels.

In the past year, three international meetings have discussed the narcotics issue. First, at the United Nations Special Session on Drugs held in February, the international community agreed to a Global Program of Action which would tackle all aspects of the drug problem — demand, supply and interdiction. In April in London, at the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and Combat the Cocaine Threat, world leaders and ministers responsible for national drug issues adopted a political declaration to build on UN action and enhance multilateral co-ordination. Later that month in Ixtapa, Mexico, at the Organization of American States Ministerial Meeting on Illicit Use and Production of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Traffic, participants reaffirmed the hemispheric commitment to controlling and eliminating the scourge of illicit drugs.

The results of the February 15 Cartagena Summit, which took place among the presidents of the U.S., Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, may be addressed by leaders in Houston. The regional Cartagena Summit marked a major advance in co-operation among countries concerned with the production and consumption of cocaine. The Cartagena Declaration outlines a comprehensive strategy which recognizes the interconnection between demand reduction, consumption and supply.

Canada has strongly supported summit and other international efforts to control the production and distribution of drugs, because unilateral and bilateral programs have proven inadequate to fully eradicate this problem. Canada participated in the UN Special Session, the London World Ministerial Summit and the Organization of American States (OAS) Ministerial Meeting. As well, Canada has informed the Cartagena countries of its willingness to participate in any follow-up designed to implement the Cartagena Declaration.