

implications on ASEAN. ASEAN, however, is unlikely to take action on Burma. It lacks leadership and it is unclear what ASEAN could, should or is able to do to address the drug issue in the region.

Acquiring information about Burma and specifically the drug trade is difficult. What information is gained is often fragmented and inconclusive. Law enforcement officers have problems getting sophisticated information about northern Burma and the drug flows and patterns. The drug trade as a political, social and health problem impacts on all of Canada. Some feel different and more integrated approaches need to be explored – and that Canada needs to re-think whether it has done enough.

WHY IS CANADA INTERESTED?

The problem of illicit drugs has been raised by the Canadian Government in Asia-Pacific fora since 1997. In the context of human security, which addresses threats to the safety and security of people, illicit drugs is a human security issue for Canadians as well as other countries. The production and trafficking of drugs and the destructive effects on the health of users, corruption of governance structures and the impact on political and economic life are complex and troubling.

Burma is currently the source of most of the illegal heroin entering Canada. Vancouver, as the key transit point, has become a regional drug market with a significant drug problem – a municipality dealing with a global problem without the resources to pursue a balanced approach. As a result social and health problems associated with the drug trade have been neglected in Vancouver and area. The lack of deterrence within the province means drugs are not confined to traditional locations, the spread of HIV is higher and drug overdoses have risen.

Canada's approach has attempted to balance health and social issues with law enforcement by working to reduce the supply of drugs and reduce the demand for drugs. However, there are now increased pressures for Canada to play a stronger role in controlling the drug supply – drugs are more visible on the streets, easier to obtain, cheaper to purchase, more accessible to younger people and distributed from the West Coast of Canada and across the country. Some feel it is time for different approaches.

HARD LINE OR FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION? WHAT SHOULD CANADA DO?

Views on how to deal with Burma range from no contact and complete isolation (also favoured by Aung San Suu Kyi) to functional cooperation on human security issues such as drugs.

The Friends of Burma, long advocates for democratic development and respect for human rights, favour continuing to promote democracy and non engagement with a regime widely accused of torture, brutal repression of the political opposition and deep involvement in the drug trade. The