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UNIVERSITY OF MINN<sup>OTA</sup>

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editorials

## Eye on high

With the electronic battlefield fast becoming a reality, and the Navy planning to wire the northern quarter of Wisconsin to make the world's largest radio antenna, it should come as no surprise to good citizens that federal technocrats have devised the ultimate weapon in the war against illegal drug trafficking: "Space Narc."

Space Narc is the nickname for a planned orbiting satellite capable of detecting fields of marijuana and opium poppies from 100 miles above the earth. Ian Fleming couldn't have done better.

The U.S. Treasury Department's bureau of narcotics and dangerous drugs is currently spending \$2 million on the project to determine methods by which the plants can be identified by the satellite.

The Department of Agriculture is cooperating with the bureau by growing three large fields of marijuana in Texas, Arizona and Florida to serve as test targets for Space Narc's eye.

Should the satellite prove to be effective it might also prove embarrassing for another governmental agency, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), ~~if there is any truth in the charges made last week by the editor of Earth magazine that the agency is involved in the smuggling of millions of dollars worth of heroin into the United States each year.~~

The magazine cited a study conducted by a professor at the University of California that traces the connections between opium growers, CIA operatives, flights of CIA-controlled airlines and the eventual delivery of heroin to the United States.

A former civilian aide to Continental Air Services (a CIA organization) said in San Francisco Friday that he witnessed opium being loaded aboard aircraft in Laos and Thailand and that he had seen hundreds of acres of cultivated opium fields planted by the CIA-supported Meo tribesmen.

A former member of the U.S. Special Forces also said this week he was assigned by the CIA to trade arms for opium grown by the Meo tribesmen, who would then fight for the CIA against the revolutionary forces in the area.

The possibility that the bureau of narcotics will use Space Narc to uncover the double-handed dealings of the CIA, however, is obviously naive. Space Narc, if successful, will undoubtedly circle the earth indicating field after lush field of taboo weed in every country graced with a suitable climate. This information, however, is neither new nor useful. The government knows already that opium-growing and exporting is a major industry in many Asian countries. Aside from general discouragement and threats of foreign aid stoppage, there is little the U.S. has done, or for that matter, can do about it.

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Space Narc, like the electronic battlefield, is but another example of expensive and futile attempts by the government to solve human problems with technological gadgetry; problems which plague governmental agencies as well as the general public.

Federal projects such as these only serve to point up the desperate need for the government to coordinate its efforts in combating drug addiction, aiming at effective treatment and education of people—and elimination of the conditions that breed addiction—instead of wasting funds on shallow attempts at confiscation or destruction of the drugs themselves.