

19 JUN 1972

# Asian Allies Help Cut Heroin Traffic

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U.S. narcotics agents are making a sizable dent in the Southeast Asian dope traffic and—despite reports to the contrary—America's Asian allies and the CIA are helping them do it.

"We have seriously damaged the program of the narcotics traffickers," reported John Warner, chief of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs' strategic intelligence office. "It's becoming increasingly more difficult for them to operate, even though their profits are tremendous."

Warner countered testimony given recently by Alfred W. McCoy, a Ph.D. student, before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee to the effect that the governments of South Vietnam, Laos and Thailand are actively engaged in the heroin traffic and that the U.S. government has not moved to stop it.

"Corruption," Warner acknowledged, "is a way of life in Southeast Asia. It reaches to all levels. But the United States government has made it perfectly clear to all governments in the area that we will not compromise on the narcotics issue."

He cited as an example of increasing cooperation on instance earlier this year when 26 tons of opium were turned over to the government of Thailand by one of the insurgent forces along its border—presumably for reasons of its own.

Until recently, the opium would have found its way back into the traffic. But this

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time, it was burned in the presence of American narcotics agents and samples were taken and analyzed by American chemists.

Even more significant are recent successes of Laos and Thai narcotics investigative units set up with U.S. aid.

Warner explained how they came into being and, in doing so, replied to the charges made by McCoy in his Congressional appearance.

McCoy had charged that the U.S. ambassador to Laos, G. McMurtrie Godley, "did his best to prevent the assignment" of U.S. narcotics agents to Laos.

Actually, Warner said, Godley has been one of the staunchest supporters of the anti-narcotics program in Laos, and requested U.S. narcotics agents as advisers long before they could be sent there. He was instrumental in persuading Laos to outlaw the opium traffic, Warner said.

Godley also persuaded the Laotian government to appoint an honest and competent general to head the new narcotics investigative unit which the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs established and trained, Warner added.

In the short time the unit has been operational, Warner reported, it has made tremendous progress in arresting traffickers and seizing laboratory equipment and the chemicals used to make heroin.

The unit's latest score came on June 7 when it arrested a Meo deputy of the Laotian parliament and seized 10 kilos of No. 4 heroin (the injectable kind), 26 kilos of opium and a number of U.S. Army carbines.

Another special investigative force, trained and equipped by BNDD agents, has just gotten under way at Chingmai in northern Thailand. Chingmai is a road junction in the network of roads leading south to Bangkok.

It's particularly important to U.S. narcotics agents because they hope there to halt the movement of heroin out of the "Golden Triangle," the opium growing area bordering Laos, Burma and Thailand.

The new Thai unit has just scored its first success. On June 10, a joint BNDD and Thai task force raided a compound and seized 1,600 kilos of raw opium and processing equipment, he said.

Warner also reported that the Royal Hong Kong police also have stepped up their anti-narcotics program, making large seizures of narcotics, arresting traffickers and seizing two laboratories this year. At the time, both labs had quantities of heroin, opium and morphine base.

Burma, the other government touched by the opium traffic, has expressed its willingness to cooperate, Warner reported, but Burmese officials frankly admit their control over the border areas are very tenuous. It would require an army to make any impact on the border areas where insurgent forces protect the opium traffickers, Warner said.

In Laos an acknowledged important trafficker has been knocked out of business not by an army but by American diplomacy, Warner said.

Gen. Ouane Rattikone, former chief of staff of the Royal Laotian Army, had consolidated several opium refineries into one, and with his army, controlled and protected the Laotian narcotics traffic for years, Warner said.

"He was forced to retire in July, 1971. We have political clout in the area and Ambassador Godley exerted it."

Warner said similar action would be taken against Vietnamese figures if charges of narcotics trafficking were proven.

"Politics means nothing to us in BNDD," he said. "If we had the evidence . . . the President would be informed and I know something would be done about it."

McCoy had said in his congressional testimony that the political apparatus of Gen. Nguyen Cao Ky (the former president of South Vietnam) "demonstrates the importance of official corruption in Southeast Asia's drug traffic." McCoy also said Ky's sister is tied in with heroin smuggling.

Warner, however, said there is no evidence that Ky is involved.

McCoy, in his Senate testimony, said he had briefed BNDD on his findings and they corroborated much of his evidence. Asked about that, Warner said he had seen nothing of an evidentiary nature from McCoy "other than gossip, rumors, conjecture and old history."

McCoy had accused the CIA of providing substantial military support to mercenaries, rebels and warlords actively engaged in the narcotics traffic and of letting aircraft it chartered be used to transport opium harvested by the mercenaries.

Of those charges, Warner said the American-chartered aircraft now have security forces guarding against the against the transport of any narcotics.

Since President Nixon asked the CIA to assist in dealing with the Southeast Asian narcotics problem, Warner said, the CIA has been one of the most cooperative government agencies working with BNDD to develop the information on which BNDD and its foreign counterparts can act to interdict the traffic and make cases.

The weeding out of Asian officials heavily involved in the dope traffic, as well as the strikes against the traffickers themselves, are all fairly recent. And so is the BNDD involvement in the Pacific.

It's only in the last two years that American narcotics agents have come into the Orient in force. Since BNDD Director John E. Ingersoll pushed for more agents to fight the Pacific traffic in drugs, regional offices have been set up in Bangkok, Saigon and Tokyo, and district offices in Chingmai, Vientiane, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Hong Kong, Okinawa and Manila.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE:  
28-Oct-2009

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18 JUN 1972

# Coming: A Ton of Trouble

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A ton of 96 percent pure Southeast Asian heroin — enough to satisfy more than one-tenth of all American dope addicts for a year — is headed this way as fast as its Chinese owners can gear up their smuggling apparatus to get it out of Asia.

This No. 4 or injectable heroin originally was destined for American troops in Vietnam.

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But the withdrawal of the troops has left the narcotics smugglers literally holding the bag — in fact, thousands of hermetically sealed bags of heroin.

Presence of the vast oversupply of heroin was disclosed by John Warner, chief of the strategic intelligence office of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs.

He said it's still "upcountry" — in the "golden triangle" of the opium trade, where Laos, Thailand and Burma meet. What BNDD hopes to accomplish with intelligence from the Central Intelligence Agency and Thai and Laotian police is to "interdict" or block the movement of the heroin down the line to where it can be shipped to the United States.

"With the withdrawal of our troops and the stricter military controls to locate heroin users," Warner said, "the market for No. 4 heroin dwindled. In the tri-border area, the price has dropped to \$750 a kilo, which is just their break-even point.

"We speculate that some of this heroin is going to find its way to the Western world. Some of it already is being seized in the major United States ports — New York, Miami, San Francisco and Seattle."

Right now, Warner said, there's a sizable oversupply of No. 4 heroin — equivalent to the best out of Marseilles. It's been stockpiled for lack of buyers.

The heroin traffickers, he said, had expected the United States to remain in Southeast Asia for the next quarter of a century. The troop pullout caught them off guard.

"We have pictures showing how they have doubled the plant capacity of their heroin laboratories," Warner said. "They're still producing because they have chemists under contract, but they're trying to sell practically at cost while they try to link up with American and European buyers. We know heroin is still in the pipeline."

The Chinese dominating this traffic are the overseas Chinese, motivated by profit rather than ideology. Warner rejected the oft-expressed theory that the Chinese Communists

are seeking world domination by making the young people of the West slaves to narcotics.

The intelligence chief said Peking officials can claim little influence over the border provinces where opium is the principal and usually only money crop. The tribesmen who grow the opium, he explained, "live on both the Chinese and Burmese sides of the border and ignore the central governments of both countries.

Instead, they deal with the various insurgent forces who war with each other to gain control of the area. Opium, in effect, pays for these tribal wars.

The farmers sell the raw opium to the insurgent forces whose leaders differ little from the old Chinese warlords.

Those leaders process the opium into morphine base or into No. 3 smoking heroin or No. 4 heroin. They safeguard it, escorting the shipments from remote areas and transport the finished product to distribution networks in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

## Pay With Weapons

The overseas Chinese pay for the heroin principally with guns the warring insurgent forces need to keep going.

One factor leading to increased production in the "golden triangle," Warner said, was the introduction of hermetically sealed packs which made it possible to keep No. 4 heroin from deteriorating.

Production of No. 4 heroin goes back to about 1967. With the increased military presence in Vietnam, Warner said, many of the laboratory operators saw an expanding market for the new product.

Up to then, most of the 750 tons of opium produced annually in the "golden triangle" was consumed by addicts in the area in the form of smoking opium or No. 3 smoking heroin, which addicts put on a piece of tinfoil, heated and ei-

ther inhaled through a funnel or sucked the smoke through a straw.

When Chinese traffickers started selling No. 4 heroin to American troops, Warner said, they told them it was cocaine — and was not addictive.

The bottom has dropped out of their business just at the time when farmers produced a bumper crop of opium, in March and April.

"The traffickers are still buying this year's opium crop," Warner said, "but we don't know their plans for producing No. 4 heroin. We assume they will produce some but will adjust to the market. We know the price is moving up a little as they see the end of their tremendous oversupply and start gearing up again.

"The Chinese entrepreneurs, however, are not going to overextend themselves now that the troops are no longer there to make it easy for them. They don't like to take chances. They don't like to deal with people they don't know and they don't like to deal with Caucasians."

## Forces Stiffened

Being aware of that attitude and concerned about that ton of heroin pointed in this direction, BNDD Director John E. Ingersoll has announced that BNDD is going to increase its forces in the Philippines. Here's his reasoning:

The Philippines are on the route of the traffic moving from Southeast Asia to the United States. Most Filipinos speak English and have good contacts in the United States. They have close commercial ties with the Chinese and language ties with Latin America. They could well emerge as the middlemen of the traffic.

Latin American ties are relevant because Latin America has been the transshipment point for heroin shipped from Europe to the United States.

Despite some testimony on Capitol Hill that much of the massive flow of heroin moving through Latin America on its way to the United States

comes from Southeast Asia, Warner said there is no indication yet that any Southeast Asian heroin has been transshipped through Latin America.

#### Diplomat Seized

The use of filipinos as couriers was indicated when a Philippine diplomat to Vientiane was arrested in New York and charged with carrying 17 kilos of heroin. His "control" was identified as an overseas Chinese.

The force of narcotics agents is being built up in Southeast Asia for a second pressing reason — the end of Turkish opium growing.

This is the last year that opium can be produced legally in Turkey. Warner said BNDD has no idea yet how much Turkish morphine base is in the pipeline "but we assume there's a lot of it" — in depots in southern France, in Germany, particularly around Munich, or buried underground or hidden in Turkish cellars.

Because of what's in the pipeline, the effect of Turkey's going out of opium production will not be felt immediately, Warner said "but there will be a shifting problem and a ready-made market for Southeast Asian heroin."

Tomorrow: How the United States and its allies cope with the Southeast Asian narcotics threat.