

Thesis Title The Policy Analysis for Narcotics Control in
Highlands of Thailand

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Abstract

The study is to analyse Thailand's policy on narcotics control on highlands after Thailand has cooperated with international organization and various countries to cope with the narcotics problem for a period of time. Major objectives of this study are to theoretically reconsider and find out applicable means for reconsideration of the solution of problems and to serve as data for considering on possible alternatives for the policy making and concerned measures.

The study reveals that there are two main narcotics problems on highlands : 1) the supply side, which includes the cultivation of narcotic plants, narcotic refining, narcotic trafficking and narcotic transporting from outside countries, and 2) the demand side of narcotics that concerns both socio-cultural and not socio-

cultural. Besides, other concerned factors are related and the scope of problems have become regional and international issue.

The narcotics that spread on highlands are of 2 types of plants : opium poppy and marijuana, and 3 types of synthetic substance : heroin, amphetamine and volatile substances.

Narcotics control policy initially aims to control opium poppy cultivation by crops replacement and highlands development measure and followingly eradication of opium poppy cultivation as a subsidiary measure. The model of narcotics control policy making on highlands is governed by the Committee of Narcotics Control Board (NCB), Committee for Solving National Security concerning Hilltribes and Narcotics Cultivation through the approval of the cabinet, Committee for the Narcotics Control, and the National Security Council (NSC). The limitation of narcotics control policy on highlands in the past was largely emphasized on narcotic plants control, particularly opium poppy rather than seeking possible solution in a comprehensive manner. Finally, the policies were mostly made by the cabinet decisions whereas the NCB which is directly in charge as the policy making body in narcotics control has instead a very limited role.

Due to the attempts to solve the problems, especially on the development measures that have turned the highlands to a significant source of cash crops, the hilltribes are better off. They get also better education, health service, basic infrastructure and so on. The problem of opium poppy cultivation in Thailand is decreasing.

The local opium output is therefore insufficient for local addicts consumption. The matter is likely resulted from the effective eradication of opium poppy cultivation than from the development. In some places, especially the developing areas, hilltribes can earn more income from their growing cash crops. This increases the purchasing power of the hilltribes. While opium poppy cultivation in the country is decreasing, opium poppy cultivation in neighbouring countries such as Laos and Burma and the narcotics output from those places tend to increase. Therefore, the narcotics situation on highlands has switched from being narcotics supplier to narcotics purchasers.

Though opium poppy cultivation is reducing, opium consumption is increasing. So, opium addicts have switched to other types of narcotics, especially heroin.

Owing to the fact that old hilltribes would not change their attitude toward the growing of narcotic plants, there is an impulse that narcotic plants are in demand. This caused the change of narcotic cultivation pattern from growing the crops in big plots of land to the cultivation in smaller areas deep in the forest from place to place. Besides, as an economic impulse, opium poppy cultivation has been replaced by marijuana cultivation. An economic impulse, including cultural influence from outside has caused many undesirable side effects such as the extension of cultivation areas of cash crops to cope with the demands of the market, the change of socio-economic and cultural structures of the hilltribes. Hilltribes

have depended more on outer society and labor factors have attracted the migration of hilltribes from outside the country. In the future there is possibility that there is a spread of more and more narcotics and Thailand might become a source of narcotic buyers as it is now on highlands.

While the problem tends to become more serious in the future, financial support for problem solving seems to be reduced, especially foreign aids.

Due to the above mentioned, it is advised that the current policy be reconsidered, adjusted or changed in order to cope with the existing problems and be prepared for future situation, particularly especially the expansion of narcotics, which directly affects Thailand.