

Geopolitical Drug Newsletter

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CAMBODIA New Drug Trafficking Trends

After years of Khmer rouge rule and civil war, the new Cambodian peace is marked by a huge increase of organized crime and illicit businesses. Taiwanese triads and government corruption, as well as border areas long held by Khmer rouge forces, make trafficking as well as cannabis production possible and profitable. In addition, casinos are mushrooming in the border areas.

A decade ago, the United Nations and the international community spent several billion dollars to restore peace and normality in Cambodia, following years of civil war, genocide and destruction. Since then, a semblance of political stability has returned to the war-ravaged country as prime minister Hun Sen and his Cambodian People's Party (CPP) has managed to outmanoeuvre his political opponents, by violent intervention in 1997 and at the polls in July 1998. But despite some progress, the Cambodian strongman and his party have not been able to curb the influence of organised crime, which is growing more powerful by the day.

Even the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP 2000/2001), which usually refrains from criticising governments, states in its country report for Cambodia that it has "become a safe haven for many criminal organisations who, attracted by Cambodia's weak law enforcement and judicial structures and wide-scale corruption, have begun to use the country as a centre for their illegal operations in the region such as illicit drug production and trafficking, smuggling and exploitation of human beings, kidnapping, prostitution, illegal gambling, arms trafficking and extortion". Transnational crime gangs are also reported to take advantage of Cambodia's institutional weaknesses to launder their ill-gotten gains through the country's many banks as well as the casinos, which operate in the capital Phnom Penh and in the Thai border areas.

Taiwan's Triad and Corruption

Alarm bells first began to ring in the offices of international law enforcement agencies when, in the late 1990s, it was discovered that Chen "Dry Duck" Chi-li, "spiritual leader" of the United Bamboo Gang,

Taiwan's biggest and most powerful Triad society, was living in palatial splendour in Phnom Penh along with bands of followers from the island republic and "business associates" from mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau. "Dry Duck", who got his nickname because he could not swim, used to run a string of night-clubs and brothels in Taiwan before he escaped to Cambodia. He was also implicated in the 1984 murder of Henry Liu, a Taiwanese writer living in exile in Daly City, California, which was carried out on behalf of Taiwan's security agencies in exchange for enjoying protection for the gang's other activities. But with Taiwan becoming more open and democratic in the 1990s, many of its gangsters fled to Mainland China - or Cambodia.

Whenever new investors from Taiwan came to Cambodia to set up a business, a visit to Dry Duck's luxury villa in Phnom Penh was obligatory. Investors would offer the mobster a generous gift as 'a gesture of their respect'. However, on 9 July 2000, Dry Duck was arrested in Phnom Penh, and charged with possessing firearms, including

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handguns, assault rifles, M-79 grenade launchers and thousands of rounds of ammunition. At the same time, it was revealed that Dry Duck had managed to be awarded both an honorary royal Oknha status - usually acquired through contributions in excess of \$100,000 - as well as an official advisor's position to Cambodian Senate President and security chief Chea Sim, a prominent CPP member. Hardly surprisingly, a year later, Dry Duck was released because of "lack of evidence".

The symbiosis between organized crime and the government was also demonstrated when, in October last year, Cambodia's top anti-drug official, Em Sam An, was fired from his job - three weeks after his personal assistant, police colonel Sok Sopheak, was arrested for drug trafficking. Among Sopheak's accomplices was a Phnom Penh Municipal Court clerk and two others who were caught red-handed with 14,000 methamphetamine pills, three pistols, four assault rifles, two cars and two mobile telephones. Em Sam An, whose official title was general secretary of the National Authority for Combating Drugs (NACD), was the third appointment to the post to be fired by the government following embarrassing disclosures of their private dealings and contacts. But, much to the annoyance of Cambodia's Western donor countries, Em Sam An was allowed to retain his other post in the state hierarchy, that of secretary of state at the Ministry of Interior. According to several sources in Phnom Penh, Em Sam An's luxury villa is still being used to store narcotics, mainly methamphetamines.

Golden Triangle Heroin Down the Mekong River

For many years, heroin from the Burmese sector of the Golden Triangle - where the bulk of the region's opium poppies are grown and where all Southeast Asian heroin is produced from the raw pro-

duct, which is also grown to a lesser extent in Laos and northern Thailand - have found its way down to Cambodia. Tougher, US-supported drug enforcement in Thailand has forced Burma's traffickers to look for other outlets. Subsequently, Laos, where law enforcement is not quite as weak as in Cambodia but still inefficient, became the solution.

Heroin was shipped down the Mekong river, and along the roads that follow it, to Muang Khong. Located on an island in the Mekong where there is also a small airport, Muang Khong soon developed to a major transshipment point for drug going south and cigarettes heading north, eventually for the vast and lucrative Chinese tobacco market. Huge, Russian-built helicopters have been seen landing and taking off at Muang Khong. The helicopters, which are based in Phnom Penh, allegedly belong to Theng Bunma, a controversial Sino-Cambodian tycoon and former President of the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce who is barred officially from entering the United States for suspected involvement in the Southeast Asian drug trade.

Since no opium poppy is grown in Cambodia, as its hot climate does not permit it, even the small amount of derivative heroin that is consumed locally has to be smuggled in from the Golden Triangle in the north. If little heroin is sold in Cambodia, where the market is small and the consumers poor, a lot is transported down via the provinces of Stung Treng and Kratie to Kompong Cham, and from there into Vietnam to supply local addicts in Ho Chi Minh City, and for re-export to third countries. But the authorities in Cambodia seize very little, if any, heroin. Publicised seizures vary in quantity from 300 grams to 5 kilograms, reflecting the traffickers' success in avoiding detection - and the degree of

corruption that exists among local officials.

Cannabis for the World

Cambodia has always been a major producer of cannabis mostly for local consumption, but in recent years it has become a huge, export-oriented growth industry, involving Chinese crime gangs with international connections as well as local military officials and a new breed of indigenous tycoons who are growing rich on drug trafficking and by running casinos in the border areas. Officially - and according to the UNDCP - cannabis plantations have been detected in eight of Cambodia's 23 provinces, with the main areas of production being Kandal in the central part of the country, Kompong Cham on the Vietnamese border in the east, and Koh Kong and Kampot in the south.

Since 1996, more than 200 tons of high-grade Cambodian marijuana has been seized all over the world, from Europe to Africa and from Australia to North America. Most of it appears to be shipped out from coastal provinces such as Koh Kong, where there is also a major casino that has been named in connection with money laundering, and as a storage point for assorted narcotics. According to one internal Cambodian police report, cannabis production is especially widespread and advanced in Koh Kong's Tiger Mountain near the Thai border. There, the well-tended plantations are reported to be protected by heavily-armed guards.

Casinos for Thais and Chinese

A few years ago, the Cambodian government issued a new law according to which all the casinos in Phnom Penh had to be relocated to sites at least 200 kilometres away from the capital. An exception was made for the Naga Casino behind Phnom Penh's plush

Cambodiana Hotel. The owners, it has been alleged, are very well connected in government and military circles, but the operation has not escaped the attention of international drug enforcement agencies, which in internal reports have mentioned the casino as a centre for the laundering of drug money. At least 17 casinos operate away from the capital, mainly along the Thai border. There are six casinos in the border town of Poipet opposite Aranyaprathet in Thailand: *Tropicana Casino*, *Golden Ground Casino*, *Scavigas Casino*, *Poipet Resort Casino*, *Poipet Aranh Casino*, and *Holiday Casino*. The casinos, which cater mainly to a Thai clientele, stand out in stark contrast to the impoverished countryside, where the local people live in squalor, and where health and education services are virtually non-existent.

In addition, there are two casinos in the former Khmer Rouge stronghold of Pailin: *Sisa International Casino* and *Pailin Group Casino*. *Grand Casino* in Koh Kong, one of the biggest near the Thai border, is run by a well-known, and well-connected, Sino-Cambodian tycoon, Li Yongphat. In the port city of Sihanoukville southeast of Koh Kong, there are another string of three casinos - *Ching Ching Casino*, *Phich Casino* and *Holiday Casino* - and, in August last year, it was announced in Phnom Penh that Theng Bunma has plans to build an international class hotel resort there. Mainland Chinese investors will provide "tens of millions of dollars" for the scheme, the Chinese-language Cambodia *Sin Chew Daily* reported in its August 3, 2001 issue. It is taken for granted that the luxury resort will include a casino, as it is meant to attract high rollers mainly from China.

A New Scourge: Methamphetamine from UWSA Laboratories

If heroin trafficking and money-laundering are major



headaches for international drug enforcement agencies, a new scourge has been added over the past two years: methamphetamines, which initially were smuggled down from Burma along the same routes as heroin. Like heroin, methamphetamines are produced mainly in areas controlled by the United Wa State Army (UWSA), an ethnic army that emerged from the collapse of the insurgent Communist Party of Burma (CPB) in 1989. Following a mutiny among the hill-tribe rank and file of the CPB's army, its Wa component (more than 80% of its then 15,000 men) founded the UWSA - and made peace with the military government in Rangoon. It became a mutually beneficial arrangement whereby the UWSA was allowed to engage in any kind of business, and the military government in turn managed to neutralise what has been its most powerful internal enemy. There is also little doubt that Burma's military rulers have benefited from the

flow of drug money into Burma in the form of bribes and joint-venture investment schemes.

In December last year, Thai and American drug enforcement agencies reported that Lt.-Gen. Khin Nyunt, the powerful head of Burma's military intelligence, had handed over a large piece of land on the border with Laos to the UWSA. Located on the banks of the Mekong river, the area - Mong Pa Liao and Keng Lap - has since become a new centre for the production of methamphetamine. This new area in the east is a long distance from the UWSA's traditional base area along the Chinese frontier as well as its new bases on the Thai border, and the only purpose for establishing a foothold on the Mekong river, where it forms the border between Burma and Laos, would be to facilitate the movement of drugs. Thai officials estimate that the UWSA smuggled more than 600 million methamphetamine tablets into their country

during 2001, and they expect the production this year to be at least 800 million tablets. Because of tight surveillance of smuggling routes on Thailand's border with Burma, methamphetamine pills are now being sent down the Mekong river in the east, and then into smaller towns in Thailand's northeast - or down to Cambodia, where the drug,

which is much cheaper than heroin, is becoming increasingly popular among young people.

The demand is so great that traffickers now have set up new methamphetamine laboratories in Cambodia itself. Sources within the Cambodian police say that such laboratories are in opera-

tion in Pailin, Poipet, Koh Kong and near the capital Phnom Penh - and there is precious little the country's few honest policemen can do about it. Cambodia is rapidly turning into a criminal state, which was hardly what the UN had intended when it launched its massive peacekeeping operation there exactly ten years ago.

RUMANIA

Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering between Turkey and Italy

Heroin laboratories destroyed, *Cosa Nostra* connections revealed, arrests and record seizures made, the Rumanian intelligence service has revealed numerous details on the scope of money laundering and drug trafficking operations in Rumania. A phenomenon that so far the authorities denied existed.

On February 8 at the Rumanian customs post of Nadlac, on the border with Hungary, 65 kilograms of heroin wrapped in 126 packages of 500 grams were seized from a late-model Porsche driven by a Turkish national, a businessman named Berimen Ferdi, accompanied by his son Sureyyaont. Both men told the police that they were going skiing to Austria and that they had been given the drugs in Bucharest thinking they were stimulants used by sportsmen. Police suppose that some of the heroin might still be in Bucharest and think that if it was manufactured in Turkey it was probably thanks to acetic anhydride made in Rumania and supplied by an exporting network.

American federal agents from the DEA have become interested in this arrest, which occurred within an ongoing large-scale police operation in Rumania. The network of "the

most important drug traffickers in the Balkans, nicknamed the heroin king" and a national of a country near Rumania, are said to be the targets of this operation.

Other drug seizures were carried out recently in Rumania, for instance heroin shipped to Bucharest, also in February, thanks to the co-operation of several Eastern European police services. Large amounts of precursor chemicals were found in forests near the Rumanian capital. Several more arrests are probable, at least they are expected.

Between Turkey and Italy

On February 11, the Italian national Ricardi Orlandino, a member of the Casaleze clan, was arrested in Rumania. According to the court of Naples, which informed the Rumanian authorities, Orlandino who belongs to an ultra-violent organisation, was sentenced 31 times in Italy

between 1986 and 1994. The Italian judges have especially told Rumanian counterparts that Orlandino and his network are specialists of money laundering and various forms of financial fraud. The arrest is linked to the "Cosa Nostra" outcry that broke out in Rumania in January when it was revealed that Rumanian companies were involved in money laundering operations on behalf of the Italian organisation *Cosa Nostra*.

The man who is alleged to serve as middleman between the two countries is called Paul Brener, a Rumanian national who has lived in Italy for 40 years and is connected to high Rumanian officials, including the head of SIE (External Information Service)¹ and former adviser of President Iliescu. As early as 1996, Italian judges had asked the Rumanian authorities to tap the telephone of Alabisco Rocco, one of Brener's contacts in Bucharest.

Although Italian magistrates were not informed, it seems that the office of the public prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Rumania did approve the bugging and that Rocco's phone was tapped by the intelligence service. The Rumanians finally informed their Italian counterparts through Interpol's office in Bucharest. However, the tapes of the bugging were never transmitted to Italy. And since the archives of Interpol are kept for a period of five years only, it is no longer possible to know why the tapes have "disappeared". The conversations between Brener and Rocco are lost. Since, Interpol's office in Rumania has been under suspicion.

In February, the parliament's Controlling Committee of the Intelligence Service heard Gheorghe Fulga, the head of the External Information Service, about his contacts with Paul Brener. Reportedly, Fulga is the highest Rumanian official involved in this case. While Fulga so far has refused to elaborate on his alleged acts, Brener has said that he met Fulga in 1995, a time when he was the representative in Rumania of the American firm AT&T. Brener added that Fulga had ques-

ted that Brener organise a meeting between President Iliescu and American businessmen. At the time, Fulga was a presidential adviser while Brener owned several companies used in operations with gangs of Sicilian mafiosi. One of those companies was managed by the former Rumanian consul in Rome, which suggests that Brener enjoyed high-level contacts.

Between Turkey and Western Europe

Turkey is the main gateway into Europe for the opiates produced in Southwest Asia, especially thanks to its numerous international road transport companies. Since Rumania is one of the main staging posts of the drug routes to Western Europe, notably Italy, reports of the Rumanian intelligence service quoted in the national press stress that at least one Turkish citizen has been somehow involved in all the international drug trafficking cases tried in Rumania. The Rumanian intelligence service, which appears to be desperate to restore its image following the revelations of the *Cosa Nostra* scandal, has leaked details on the networks specialising in drug trafficking to the

Rumanian press. Among other things, the service admits that some of the drugs that cross Rumania are consumed locally.

Rumanian intelligence also says that Istanbul and Samsun are the starting points of trafficking flows, adding for instance that drugs enter Rumania at the port of Constanza and through the border with Bulgaria. Another frequently mentioned route goes through Atena, Kapitan Andreevo, Sofia and Bucharest before reaching Budapest, Hungary. From Hungary, the drugs may be distributed as far as Germany via the Czech Republic before hitting the various consumer markets of Western Europe.

Apart from the traffic in drugs, in which many Rumanians are involved outside of Rumania, another growing phenomenon may be observed in the country — heroin laboratories² linked to the Turkish maffya. Since 1999, the latter has found that Rumania offers a more secure environment for illegal operations and commerce.

1• SIE (External Information Service) is the espionage branch of the Rumanian Information Service (SRI), Rumanian intelligence.

2• See article below.

Heroin Labs in Rumania Cannot Be Ignored

With so many drugs seized, laboratories destroyed, networks dismantled and arrests made during the last two months, the authorities in Bucharest can no longer deny the scope of the drug trade in Rumania. Heroin consumption and drug-related crime are increasing every month.

On late 2001, the Rumanian drug squad (BCCOC) announced that, for the first time, it had destroyed two laboratories manufacturing illegal drugs (heroin) in suburban Bucharest. In early February, several hundred

kilograms of acetic anhydride and amphetamines destined for European markets were seized during a distinct police operation against two new labs located in the departments (administrative regions) of Ramnicu Valcea

and Dambovitza. The labs were installed at the headquarters of licit firms and they were controlled by a Turkish-Rumanian network that exported various types of illegal drugs from Turkey to Germany via Rumania. The

first arrest was made at the home of George Nitzescu in Valea Mare, a village in the Dambovitza Department. Nitzescu's factory ostensibly manufactured food flavourings but was really a cover for drug trafficking. Colonel Ilie Perca, the deputy-head of the drug squad, said that the police seized several hundred kilograms of precursor chemicals used in the manufacturing of heroin, synthetic drugs and BMK (Benzylmethylketone — a key chemical for the manufacturing of ecstasy). Nitzescu used his firm's machines, as specially modified, to produce illicit drugs. Engineer Eugen Vaduva, a physicist from the Ramnicu Valcea Department, supplied the precursors. During the same operation, police uncovered a second laboratory operated by Vaduva. Sadak Ismes, a 44-year old national of Turkey,

headed the network that employed Nitzescu and Vaduva. Ismes was overseeing the production and transportation of the drugs to Turkey and the European Union.

Following a long investigation led by General Mihai Stoica, the reputedly incorruptible officer who heads the General Directorate for the Fight against Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking (BCCO for the organised crime section, and BCCOC for the antidrug section), the police confiscated more chemicals last month. Dozens of plastic containers totalling hundreds of kilograms of BMK and another substance used to manufacture heroin were seized in a forest near Bucharest on February 6. The police maintain that these chemicals were manufactured in laboratories located in Bucharest suburbs. Although the police maintain

that the first drug-manufacturing laboratories in Rumania were set up at the end of the summer of 2001, drug manufacturing and transformation labs started operating in the country much earlier. In all likelihood, the first labs were installed in 1997 or 1998. Two years ago, the Rumanian press timidly warned of the existence of such labs in what had been farms (drug labs operated throughout Rumania and most are located in the countryside). The media blitz organised by law enforcement services around these seizures (carried out with American help) clearly shows that the police and the authorities are eager to promote their image. But what this case also shows is that it has simply become difficult to continue denying that a large number of illegal drug laboratories operate in Rumania.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The Turn of the PNM

Last December general elections ended in a tie for the incumbent UNC and the official opposition party, the PNM, whose leader was appointed as Prime Minister. The most striking reality about the new PNM cabinet is the number of ministers suspected of close links with different criminal groups involved in drug trafficking.

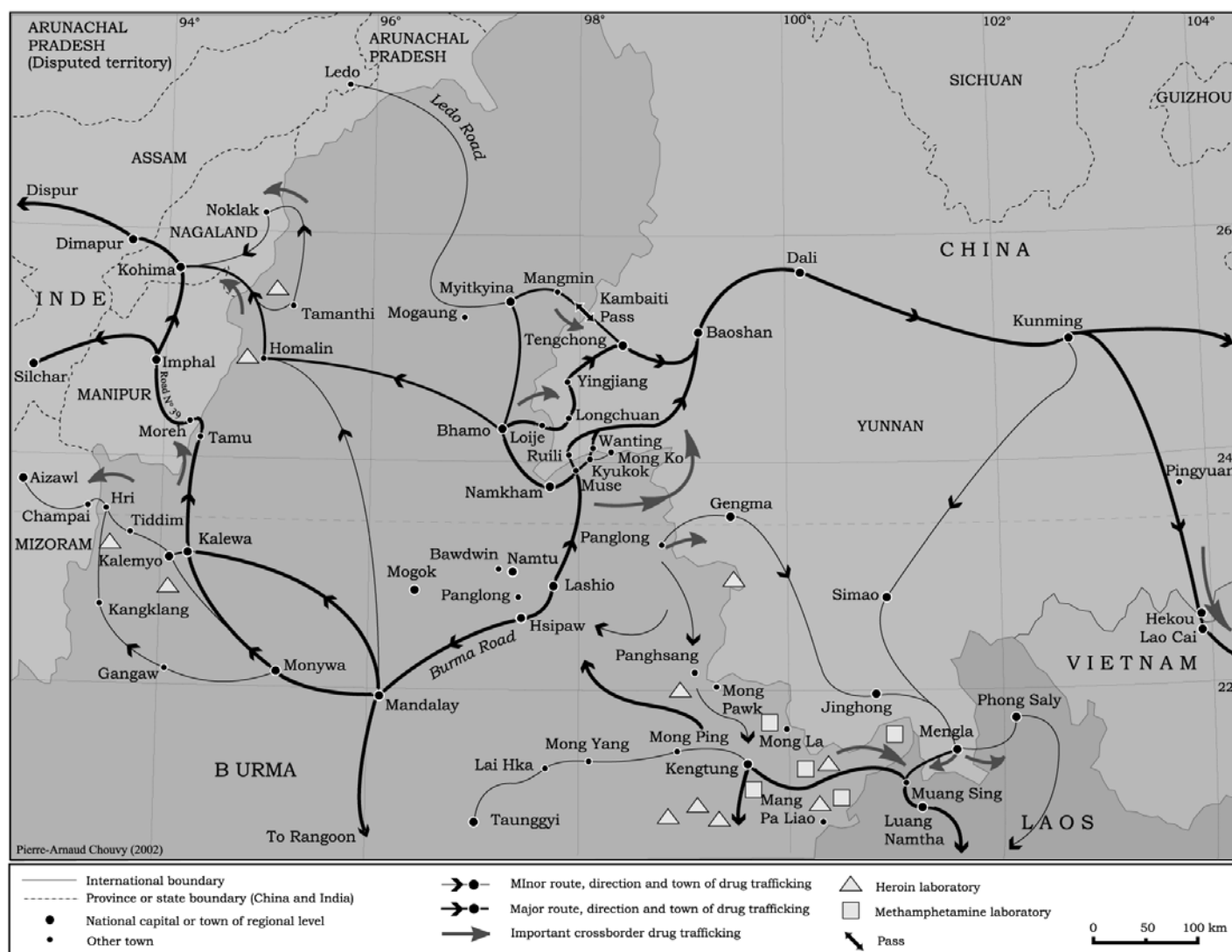
On December 10, 2001, general elections were held, less than one year after those of 2000¹. The UNC (United National Congress) and the PNM (People's National Movement) each won 18 seats. The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago appointed Patrick Manning (PNM), therefore empowering him to form a government. By January 7, 2002, Patrick Manning had appointed a cabinet of some

twenty-five persons, all PNM with, among them, a few well known drug lords. Such facts show a long-suspected complicity of both the PNM and the UNC in the illicit drug trade.

Among the new members appointed is a minister who owns the Pier 1 entertainment facility, located at Chaguanas, in the Northwestern peninsula of Trinidad. Created under the former PNM regime

headed from 1991 to 1995 by today's Prime Minister, the pier is said to be widely used for transshipping illicit drugs. The minister who owns the pier is said to be a member of a *Chinese Cartel*² involved in various front businesses used to cover their illicit drug business. He is also said to be involved in the trafficking of cocaine and heroin from Venezuela, *via* areas as Guiria,

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Axes of the Burmese Drug Trade

Itineraries through China and India (1/3)

In Mainland Southeast Asia, the production of opiates takes place in the region known as the “Golden Triangle” or, properly speaking, in the contiguous border fringes of Burma, Laos and Thailand. Poppy crops – poppies were first grown in the region as late as the nineteenth century – are now concentrated in the North and Northeast of Burma. Traditionally, the axes of the trade in opiates coming from northern China or the Shan states of Burma have followed the mule paths that cross the hilly and mountainous border

regions of the northern mountain chains of Indochina. However, recently drug trafficking itineraries from the Northeast of Burma have tended to use the routes that lead into China (Yunnan), especially through the border towns of Muse, Ruili, Kyukok and Wanting. Drug smuggling into India takes place mainly through Mandalay, Monywa, Kalewa and Tamu, with heroin entering Manipur State at Moreh. Axes into Thailand are still in use, although they have become less busy and more drugs now head to Laos either directly or through the staging

posts of Jinghong and Mengla in the Yunnan Province of China. The trafficking in methamphetamine (yaa baa) also makes up a significant proportion of the flows of Burmese drugs into China, Laos and, above all, Thailand. Thus, the recent relocation of methamphetamine laboratories west of the river Mekong, in Burma, or even across the river, in Laos, goes hand in hand with an increase in drug flows on the Mekong, especially via Mang Pa Liao (see article on Cambodia in this issue, p.1).

*In the next issue:
The axes through Laos
and Northern Thailand.*

Carupano, and Maturin, which are staging grounds for illicit drugs such as cocaine and heroin to be transhipped through the Caribbean to Europe and the USA. Among the people involved in this *Cartel* one can find the Cabinet Minister in the two consecutive UNC regimes, from 1995 to 2001, but also newly appointed Cabinet members.

One of this new cabinet member's father is connected to the Committee of the Chinese Merchant families of Trinbago, the oldest surviving Tong³ in Trinidad and Tobago. Last February the 7th, the Guardia Nacional of Venezuela (military force) seized two metric tonnes of cocaine aboard a fishing boat at the aforementioned Guiria harbour and the word spread in Trinidad that the cocaine was to be consigned to the *Chinese Cartel* after being picked up by the minister's organization who runs weekly tourist tours to Guiria.

Another PNM minister and his brother are involved in the illicit drug trade, concentrating on retailing crack cocaine. Since the 1990's, and given his political aspirations, this person has tried to distance himself from the illicit drug trade but his recent appointment by Manning is of crucial importance for his partners who have now the opportunity to easily hide cocaine and heroin in agricultural shipments. They also co-opt and, or, supplant members of the *Indian Cartel* who used such opportunities under the rule of the UNC.

An additional Minister is the minion and serves the interests of a prominent member of the *Indian Cartel* in various capacities, the most common of which is to provide legal protection especially in the criminal justice system and against money laundering charges. This PNM minister is also an ally and associate of a former Minister in two successive UNC cabinets

Outside of the cabinet, a functionary is a prominent member and ally of the *Indian*

Tong

The Tongs, or assembly halls, are organizations commonly found in North America, some kind of men's clubs dating from the nineteenth century that were created as self-help societies central to the life of repressed Chinese communities in US. Like the Che Kung Tong, the first such American secret society, most Tongs, even though founded by criminals, were not systematically or explicitly involved in criminal activities. Nevertheless, nowadays many of the Tongs are heavily involved in drug trafficking, especially heroin. One report from the FBI states that in this decade, the Tongs are responsible for "more than 70 percent of the heroin (China White from the Golden Triangle) reaching the East Coast". As such, in Trinidad and Tobago, the Tong is integrated into the Tong network of the Western Hemisphere moving heroin and cocaine to Western Europe, North America and Eastern Europe.

Cartel, the functionary has been given a position which allows him and his business partners to further their illicit activities.

As for the last minister of this new cabinet, he comes from one of a number of families known for serving the interests of Venezuelan crime families in Trinidad and Tobago. This family was responsible for marrying in Trinidad one arm of the Aboud clan, one of a series of Syrian immigrant families who traffic and retail locally illicit drugs shipped by Venezuelan suppliers, with suppliers of illicit drugs based in Tucupita, Venezuela. The Minister's brother is himself a defeated UNC candidate, so rumour says that the family's interests in the illicit drug trade will even be in better hands now with this new position in the cabinet.

It is then apparent that the Chinese Cartel is in ascendancy within the Manning regime but the salient question is whether the drug elite that controls both dominant race based political parties would want corruption charges being brought against members of the former UNC government who served the illicit drug traffickers above and beyond the call of duty? It is now apparent that the stage is now set for a drug trafficker to become the political leader

of either or both political parties and being elected to the post of prime minister within the next five years. The political institutions have now been totally subverted and co-opted by the various Cartel of Trinidad and Tobago in keeping with the Colombian model, which in itself is a potent indicator of the inability of the said institutions to resist covert actions of subversion. The trafficking groups of Trinidad and Tobago do not produce what they tranship and the supply of illicit drugs across the Gulf of Paria from Venezuela is the potent weakness of the transshipping organization and their allies / partners in the political institutions. The potent weakness of the political institutions is the fact that, having being subverted and co-opted by the illicit drug transshipping Cartels, they are powerless to protect themselves from covert subversion aimed at engendering crises in the functioning and legitimacy of the political institutions.

1• In the autumn of 2001, the UNC government was in crisis and unable to finish its term in office. Four cabinet ministers were accused by the press and some elected officials of being closely connected to the drug trade. See GDN No. 3, December 2001.

2• The term "Cartel" is used very frequently in Trinidad to describe criminal organisations or groups according to their communities of origin: Indian Cartel, Chinese Cartel, etc.

3• See box on the Tongs.

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Publication director
Philippe Dossal
Chief editor
Paskal Chelet
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Centre for Geopolitical
Drug Studies

11 rue des Olivettes
44000 Nantes - France
AEGD@WANADOO.fr
02 40 08 20 61
From overseas : + 33 2 40 08 20 61

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