

Global Drug Trafficking: Africa's Expanding Role
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Candace Ross, AFRICOM

Traffickers are increasingly using Africa as a transshipment point for South American cocaine, Southwest and Southeast Asian opiates, and Indian and Southeast Asian synthetics, and precursor chemicals. Many African countries also produce cannabis while some are producing synthetic drugs. Traffickers exploit Africa's porous borders, instability, corruption, and lack of law enforcement resources, while avoiding improved interdiction pressure against direct movements from South America to Europe. As interdiction forces adjust their efforts against these new patterns, traffickers are developing even more complicated and varied transport methods to avoid interdiction, such as expanding the use of non-commercial aircraft to move cocaine directly from South America to Africa.

Regional stability, good governance, and the rule of law, all key factors for U.S. AFRICA COMMAND are threatened by the expansion of the drug trade into Africa. Corruption bought with the profits from drug smuggling has significantly contributed to the degradation of regional stability, and has inhibited the process of establishing good governance and rule of law. Drug-related corruption contributes directly to instability by undermining public trust, intensifying corruption of public officials, diverting state resources to assist trafficking activities and creating a culture where involvement in illicit activity is seen as an easy and acceptable escape from poverty.

The shortage of resources, limited dedicated counter drug forces, and lack of consistent and adequate pay lead many security forces to accept bribes or to facilitate drug shipments for trafficking organizations. Known instances of high level corruption underscore how drug trafficking and the money generated from the trade are hampering real governmental progress and accountability, weakening an already weak judiciary, contributing to misappropriation of scarce and valuable resources, and most important exacerbating instability and heightening stability concerns by weakening the state's ability or willingness to control its border and coastline.

These conditions are ideal for criminal organizations to gain dominant influence of weak governmental institutions and bureaucrats, overriding any voice of the people or the international

community, risking the development of a Narco-State, (an area that has been taken over and is controlled and corrupted by drug cartels and where law enforcement is effectively nonexistent.)

At a lower level there are reports of traffickers paying African associates for services in drugs or trying to establish a demand for drugs in Africa. Press reports from Guinea Bissau give us some insight into this by revealing that crack cocaine is a readily available, inexpensive, and growing problem in an already overtaxed country...with local populations becoming crack addicts. Sadly there are almost no drug rehabilitation centers or appropriate health centers in Africa to deal with the problem of drug addiction. This puts a tremendous public health burden on an already overwhelmed social sector as well as presenting them with a problem they are unskilled to deal with. This also leads to concerns, as it should, to the possibility of HIV or AIDS spread if intravenous drug use follows.

Of note an eroding society, especially in an area with a large population of young people, has the potential to create an environment favorable to the development of dissidents malleable to terrorist ideology and creates safe havens for terrorist organizations. Also instability and rampant criminality can lead to a humanitarian crisis with refugees fleeing the devastation of a decaying government; finding refuge in neighboring countries and putting a crushing burden on already strained governments and resources.

According to a United Nations study, in 2007 approximately 40 tons of cocaine transited West Africa valued at approx \$1.8 billion European wholesale. Additionally the GDP of Bissau was only approx \$304 million in 2006 or equivalent to the price of 6 tons of cocaine at wholesale Europe levels. Or bluntly the value of cocaine is often greater than the money than almost any African country spends on its counterdrug forces or on its entire police forces.