

Chapter 45

Border Security and Cooperative Initiatives to Counter Illicit Drug Trafficking: The Case of Jamaica and the USA

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ABSTRACT

The illegal flow of drugs continues to undermine states border security. The chapter utilizes a document analysis of secondary source data from the USA Homeland Security and border security agencies in Jamaica. It aims to assess the security challenges posed by the Jamaica-USA trafficking of drugs and explores how border security measures function in reducing this problem. The Container Security Initiative, Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, the Jamaica-USA Maritime Counter Drug Agreement (Shiprider Agreement) and the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative will be explored to assess how these border security initiatives aid in curtailing drug flows to the USA. The chapter discusses the role of border security in detection, deterrence and apprehension via coordinated intelligence driven strategies. It concludes that the trans-border nature of illegal drug flows necessitate increased state-to-state sustained future cooperation especially within the context of globalisation.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that we live in a bordered world, drug trafficking is a dominant part of the life-blood of transnational crime across the Jamaica-USA border. As a trans-border criminal activity, it is perhaps the largest crime problem in the world and the most popular criminal activity facing these countries. Global estimates of this trade is USD400 billion annually (The World Drug Report, 2008). This illicit activity has gained a leading role due to the profits generated through illicit drug production, transshipments and sales. Illegal trafficking of drugs is connected to other types of trans-border crimes by feeding into

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money laundering, arms smuggling, human trafficking and corruption. It undermines national security and threatens peoples' lives through violence and drug addiction.

Jamaica is an island Caribbean state strategically positioned with maritime and aerial access to the USA. Traffickers have exploited this access to smuggle drugs from Jamaica to drug markets in the USA (Griffith, 1997; Vasciannie, 1997). Global processes have also fostered the increased movement of drugs from Jamaica into profitable USA markets. Increases in communication and transportation technologies are global processes which traffickers have used to further expand the cross-border drug trade (Haughton, 2011).

Yet even with the liberating forces of globalisation, state borders remain in place and border agents continue to provide protection. The flow of goods and services and even our movements are controlled by legitimate state bordering. Borders separate while they protect; they mark territorial jurisdiction but have become porous with globalisation. Geographic and manmade borders have created a bulwark for state's sovereignty as they act as state separators through the delineation of borderlines (Donnan & Wilson, 2001). Yet borders have been exploited by criminals to undermine states security therefore making border security measures critical in curtailing trans-border threats such as the Jamaica-USA drug trafficking.

The concerns raised in this chapter are two-fold. It explores the threat the illicit flow of drugs poses in undermining the Jamaica-USA border security and it goes further to show the resilient nature of these states in developing counter measures to improve border security. Hence, this chapter undertakes three goals. First, it assesses the illegal flow of drugs from Jamaica into the USA. It uses Jamaica as a quint-essential case because of its importance within the Caribbean and its prominence in drug trafficking. Second, it assesses the functions of border security and the role these play in reducing drug flows. To this end, it explores the importance of interdiction, deterrence and intelligence gathering and sharing in the border security measures used to minimize the flow of illicit drugs from Jamaica to the USA. Third, it explores specific joint USA-Jamaica border security countermeasures adopted to address this problem and argues that these specific as well as more general border security measures used to curtail trans-border crime, such as Customs Trade Partnership against Terrorism and the Western Hemispheric Travel Initiative, have also assisted in reducing drug trafficking.

Given this reality, the mission of this chapter is to highlight the security threat of drug trafficking and to explore the border security counter-measures adopted to curb this problem. Such measures are two-fold. On the one hand, the USA Homeland Security developed border security measures that filter to Jamaica with close Jamaica-USA relations and cooperation on security matters. Such matters directly targets the flow of illicit drugs while others are more geared toward border security generally but have, by their very nature, also curb illicit drug flows. On the other hand, border security measures such as the USA-Jamaica Maritime Counter Drug Agreement was designed specifically to protect the borders from drug trafficking. Finally, the chapter concludes that sustained bilateral cooperative border security measures are required between both States in order to further protect their borders from traffickers.

JAMAICA'S DRUG TRAFFICKING TO THE USA

Jamaican traffickers are prime players in the USA's illegal drug markets. In 2008, Jamaica was ranked as the largest Caribbean producer of marijuana and a major transfer state for Colombia's cocaine destined for markets in the USA (International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2008). This rank is not new. Jamaica has been a serious marijuana exporting state since the late 1970s. The USA remains the

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