Drugs and Conflict: The Impact of US Policy

Tuesday, December 14th from 9:30 – 11:00am

Johns Hopkins SAIS
Nitze Building, Kenny Auditorium
1740 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20036

Forum Details:

Drugs have become a common feature in many contemporary armed conflicts. Two of the most critical problems facing fragile countries, violence and corruption, are closely associated with drugs. Research has shown that drugs decrease the probability that armed groups will make and hold peace agreements. In places such as Afghanistan, Colombia, and Mexico drugs play a significant role in producing and sustaining armed conflict. Increasingly, Central Asia, Central America and Western Africa have become conduits of the drug trade with all the associated violence. The U.S. has overwhelming promoted repressive measures to curb drug trade and drug-related violence. Discussing the limitations of repression is often equated with being "soft on crime and drugs." However, scientific studies show that increasing enforcement is unlikely to reduce drug-related violence. As long as there is a strong demand for illicit narcotics, supply-side measures cannot be expected to stop supply and prevent consumption. Debate is important to devise the most efficient policies to curb the violence and health problems related to drugs. Is the U.S. policy of trying to stop the inflow of drugs a failure? How can the power of drug-trafficking organizations to corrupt and coerce be reduced? Do the benefits of repression-based strategies outweigh the human and economic costs? Should decriminalization be considered a possible policy? How can a global approach be promoted?"

Speakers:

Vanda Felbab-Brown
Fellow, Foreign Policy, 21st Century Defense Initiative, Brookings Institution

Patrick Ward
Deputy Director for Supply Reduction, White House Office of National Drug Control Policy

Sidney Weintraub
William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy, Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)

Moderator:

Peter Woodrow
Project Co-Director, Reflecting Peace Practice, CDA Collacorative Learning Projects
Bios:

Vanda Felbab-Brown

Patrick Ward
Patrick Ward was appointed to the Senior Executive Service as the Assistant Deputy Director for Supply Reduction in the Office of National Drug Control Policy on September 19th 2005. On December 10th, 2007 he was appointed as the United States Interdiction Coordinator and assumed the role of Acting Deputy Director. Mr. Ward is responsible for reducing the supply of illicit drugs in the U. S. In this role, Mr. Ward provides executive leadership in the interagency and international environment. His office is responsible for the development of national policy and strategy, focusing and overseeing all U.S. programs and activities involved in achieving the supply reduction goals of the National Drug Control Strategy, and countering the nexus between illegal drugs and terrorism. Mr. Ward's day-to-day duties are concentrated on supporting cooperative interagency efforts in support of the Andean Counterdrug Initiative, as well as programs in Mexico and Afghanistan. In supporting the work of the interagency, Mr. Ward is in frequent and close contact with relevant officials from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the United States Coast Guard, the Central Intelligence Agency, and departments of Defense, Homeland Security, State, and Justice. Mr. Ward co-chairs the relevant National Security Council Policy Coordinating Committee on International Drug Control, and represents ONDCP at meetings of the NSC Deputies.

Sidney Weintraub
Sidney Weintraub holds the William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He is also professor emeritus at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, where he was Dean Rusk Professor from 1976 to 1994, when he then joined CSIS. A member of the U.S. Foreign Service from 1949 to 1975, Weintraub held the post of deputy assistant secretary of state for international finance and development from 1969 to 1974 and served as assistant administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1975. He was also a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Recently Mr. Weintraub has co-authored the report “Cooperative Mexican-U.S. Antinarcotics Efforts.” His many publications include Energy Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Benefits and Impediments (CSIS, 2007); NAFTA's Impact on North America: The First Decade (CSIS, 2004); Issues in International Political Economy: Constructive Irreverence (CSIS, 2004); Free Trade in the Americas: Economic and Political Issues for Governance and Firms (Edward Elgar, 2004); Financial Decision-Making in Mexico: To Bet a Nation (Pittsburgh, 2000); and Development and Democracy in the Southern Cone: Imperatives for U.S. Policy in South America (CSIS, 2000). Weintraub has also published numerous articles in newspapers and journals, including several article on drug-related topics (Mexico's War on Drugs, Mexico is Facing a Difficult Time, The High Cost of Criminalizing Drug Use). He received a Ph.D. in economics from American University and an M.A. in economics from Yale University.

Peter Woodrow
Peter Woodrow joined CDA as co-director of the Reflecting on Peace Practice Project (RPP) in 2003. As an experienced mediator, facilitator, trainer, and consultant, he has facilitated issue resolution within organizations, as well as multiparty environmental and public policy disputes. He has also developed and implemented international programs in consensus building, problem solving, decision making and inter-ethnic conflict resolution in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. He holds a Master's in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and a B.A. in Government from Oberlin College.