

An Analysis of the DEA FAST Program

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DEA'S INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

- As of September 2015 the DEA has 89 offices in 68 countries
- DEA personnel assigned to these offices are responsible for:
 - Collaborating with host nations and federal law enforcement counterparts
 - Conducting investigations
 - Offering host nation training seminars
 - Sharing valuable intelligence
- DEA personnel assigned to foreign offices focus on Priority Target Organizations (PTO), organizations that engage in the highest level of drug trafficking
- From October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015, the DEA did not dismantle any CPOT's (Consolidated Priority Organization Targets)
- They did dismantle 23 PTOs
 - None of these were in the Middle East or Asia
- The DEA FAST (Foreign Deployed Advisory Support Team) Program was part of the DEA's international involvement in the past

PURPOSE FOR INVOLVEMENT

- 39% of terrorist organizations are linked to drug trafficking
- Drugs fund weapons, communications, transportation of fighters, and training facilities
- In response to the amount of terrorist activities being funded through drugs, the DEA developed The DFAS (Drug Flow Attack Strategy)
- The DFAS includes an integrated intelligence-enforcement process that rests on three pillars:
 - Intelligence-driven enforcement
 - Sequential operations
 - Predictive intelligence

DEA FAST PROGRAM

- FAST personnel are deployed globally to provide capacity building, training, and operational support for DEA foreign offices and host nation counterparts
- The DEA FAST Program is in charge of:
 - Planning and conducting special enforcement operations
 - Training, mentoring, and advising foreign narcotics law enforcement units
 - Collecting and assessing evidence and intelligence
- Units are composed of 10 agents per team
 - 1 team lead
 - 8 special agents
 - 1 intelligence specialist



Work program funded through the State Department in Afghanistan, 2002



DEA FAST Team

DEA FAST TRAINING

- DEA Fast training occurs in three phases:
 - Phase 1:
 - Agents have a physical and tactical assessment
 - Phase 2:
 - Agents receive specialized training
 - Phase 3:
 - Individuals receive advanced Special Operations Forces training

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- The DEA FAST Program does not follow through with their mission statement
- They collect information rather than intelligence
- Arrests and seizures are what drive their mission; they focus on dismantling small rings rather than attempting to collect intelligence on larger drug rings
- DEA only collects three types of intelligence:
 - Tactical intelligence
 - Investigative intelligence
 - Strategic intelligence
- DEA does not collect human intelligence
- There are ten agents, and only one is specialized in intelligence
 - It is difficult to collect and analyze intelligence with one individual
- The criminal justice system in the Middle East is weak
 - After the DEA turns over drug traffickers, the local police usually release them
 - Bribery
- There are other programs being implemented at the same time
 - State Department has a work program for individuals in Afghanistan

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Modify the training of the FAST Program to have four phases with a phase dedicated to intelligence training
- Train every individual in the unit in intelligence
 - Train half to be specialized in collection and analysis
 - Train the other half to be specialized in collection only
- Collect different types of intelligence
 - Human Intelligence would be most beneficial in finding the sources of the drugs
- Remove involvement from other agencies
 - The State Department and the DEA cannot be implementing programs at the same time
 - The success of both programs should be measured, and one overall strategy should be enforced