

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Illegal drug use is defined as “harmful drug use” and “drug dependence” by World Health Organization.¹ Harmful drug use is known as a clear proof that the substance use is responsible for physical and psychological harm, while on the other hand, drug dependence is interpreted by the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health problems, with three indicators such as an intense craving to consume the substance, weak control over the use and a denial syndrome or behavior to cease or reduce consumption.² marijuana, heroin, opium, cocaine and many more are examples of drugs that are identified as illegal drugs.

In Southeast Asia, there is an area of the world’s most originated illicit drug, known as The Golden Triangle since 1950s. United States Vice-Secretary of State Marshall Green is the first person to express this term.³ Yet looking back to the first half of the twentieth century the production of opium in the golden triangle was not on a large scale. Further on with the Second World War, there was a rapid increase of growth due to the French and American intelligence, which are *Service De Documentation Exterieur et De Contre-Espionnage* (SDECE) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), actions in developing the

¹ Louisa Degenhardt, Wayne Hall, Matthew Warner-Smith and Michael Lynskey, “Illicit Drug Use”, *Comparative Quantification of Health Risks*,. p. 1112 Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/cra/chapters/volume1/1109-1176.pdf>

²*Ibid.*

³Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy. “Drug trafficking in and out of the Golden Triangle.” *An Atlas of Trafficking in Southeast Asia*. The Illegal Trade in Arms, Drugs, People, Counterfeit Goods and Natural Resources in Mainland, IB Tauris, 2013. p.1.

narcotics business. Besides intelligence by French and America, policies applied by the Burmese government from the mid-1960s which attempted to engage the support the country's increasingly powerful drug barons with an agreement of non-interference in narcotics-related events.⁴ By 1980 these factors made the Golden Triangle a significant production of illicit drugs and smuggling centre.

A well-known illicit drug produced within the Golden Triangle is opium. The Opium is a narcotic drug that is extracted from the Opium poppy plant similar to Red poppy. Based on the information gathered from U.S Department of State, In 1996 Myanmar has cultivated 163,100 hectare which has the potential to yield up to 2,560 mt of opium gum.⁵ Located in the highlands of the fan-shaped relief of the Indochinese peninsula, illicit drugs continued to be smuggled into across Myanmar and Thailand border and pursued its route towards Laos. The following table and figure presents the data of Southeast Asia Opium cultivation also Heroin Production, 1992-1996.⁶

⁴ Peter Chalk, *Grey-Area Phenomena in Southeast Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking, and Political Terrorism*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies The Australian National University Canberra, 1997. p.42 Retrieved from:

http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2016-03/123_Grey-Area_Phenomena_in_Southeast_Asia_Peter_Chalk_P136.pdf

⁵ From US Department of State table regarding Burma Opium Statistic. Retrieved from: https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/narcotics_law/1996_narc_report/96narc_burma_data.html

⁶ Hans Derk, *THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CONTEXT*, Brill, 2012 p. 419. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1163/j.ctv4cbhdf.29.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fdefault-2%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A5982ece02f923fa10c8ec131cb2ed3f6

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<i>Net poppy cultivation in hectares</i>					
Myanmar (Burma)	153 700	165 800	146 600	154 070	163 100
Laos	25 610	26 040	18 520	19 650	25 250
Thailand	2 050	2 880	2 110	1 750	2 170
Total	181 360	194 720	167 230	175 470	190 520
<i>Potential opium production in metric tons</i>					
Myanmar (Burma)	2 280	2 575	2 030	2 340	2 560
Laos	230	180	85	180	200
Thailand	24	42	17	25	30
Total	2 534	2 797	2 132	2 545	2 790

Figure 1: Southeast Asia Opium Cultivation and Heroin Production, 1992-1996

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<i>Potential opium-heroin in metric tons</i>					
Myanmar (Burma)	190	215	169	195	213
Laos	19	15	7	15	17
Thailand	2	4	1	2	2
Total	211	234	177	212	232

Figure 2: continued

Due to high illicit drugs that has been proven to cause physical and psychological harm that eventually leads to death. In addition, it is no secret that illegal drugs production and trafficking leads to criminal behavior. The use of illegal drugs has fostered the spread of the incurable disease, HIV-AIDS. There are at least 50,000 people confirmed to be heroin addicts, which are identified with positive HIV as a result of sharing needles, based on the data collected from the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) in Bangkok.⁷ Other than that, drug trafficking in the Golden Trade is also influenced by white-collar financial crime

⁷ Peter Chalk, *Grey-Area Phenomena in Southeast Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking, and Political Terrorism*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies The Australian National University Canberra, 1997. p.47 Retrieved from: http://sdsc.bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2016-03/123_Grey-Area_Phenomena_in_Southeast_Asia_Peter_Chalk_P136.pdf.

because the profits received from an illicit source, producer and trafficker need to have a clean appearance, so that they can reinvest safely in other ventures without leaving a track.⁸

Crimes that are emerging in Southeast Asia are due to illicit drug trafficking the Golden Triangle. Therefore, in order to eradicate this issue, there is a need for Southeast Asia countries to be active towards international cooperation. Thus, from this action creates international relations among actors.

The implication of cooperation patterns among actors will resolve in the development of international relations issues and will reveal a contemporary international relation. A contemporary international relations is interpreted as an interaction that involves social phenomenon where it concerns ideological, politics, law, economic, social-culture and security defense aspects that crossing national borders of countries either it is a state actor or a non-state actors.⁹ In this case, regional organization can be the platform for developed and developing countries to work hand-by-hand, because solving this issue is not a one-man job.

For Southeast Asia, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is a regional organization that becomes the platform for member countries to cooperate and achieve the same goals based on the ASEAN Declaration. As for combating illicit drug trafficking within the Southeast Asia region, ASEAN has established Joint Declaration for a Drug-Free ASEAN by 2020 on July 24th, 1998 in Manila, Philippines. Within this establishment by ASEAN, nations of Southeast Asia are aware of the growth of illicit global drug trade, which is also concerned

⁸ Chalk, *ibid.* p.50.

⁹ Stephen Mcglinchy, Rosie Walter, and Christian Scheinpflug, *International Relations Theory*, E-International Relations Publishing, 2017, p.139.

about how it endangers the development of programs of ASEAN member countries, and fully aware that illegal drug trafficking is linked to other transnational organized crime.

ASEAN Senior Official on Drug Matters (ASOD) is a Committee branch that is established by ASEAN to handle drugs trafficking cases. At the 28th ASOD meeting, the goal “Drug-Free ASEAN” was no longer executed but was further elaborated within “A Vision of a drug-free ASEAN”. To reach the goal of a drug-free ASEAN, Vietnam proposed an agreed meeting of Workshop on “ASEAN Work Plan on Combating Illicit Drugs Manufacturing, Trafficking and Abuse” to consider an ASEAN work plan.

Given the information and fact above, this research will give an elaboration of how ASEAN, through ASOD, contribute in eradicating illicit drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle, and how the Work Plan on combating illegal drug is implemented within member countries in ASEAN in the year 2017-2019. This research will also give an analytical explanation on how states perform the program of ASEAN within its regulation and cooperation among states and international agencies and organizations.

Within this research, the theory that will be used is Neoliberalism. This approach will explain how a sovereign state is the key actor of international relations, but a sovereign state is not the only actor. Also, within this research I will use the concept of International Organization. Where ASEAN becomes a forum of sovereign states to reach a common goal and fulfil national interest. In

addition, the concept of transnational organized crime will be included within this research to identify illegal drug trafficking across borders.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the preliminary findings, I have formulated the following research questions that focuses from the year 2017-2019:

1. What is the background for the establishment of the ASEAN Senior Official on Drugs Matter (ASOD), in fighting drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle?
2. How does ASEAN Senior Official on Drugs Matter (ASOD) contribute in fighting illegal drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle area?

1.3 Research Objective

The research is conducted with objectives as follows:

1. To elaborate the meaning of illicit drugs production, consumption, and trafficking.
2. To understand the history Golden Triangle within the Southeast Asia.
3. To elaborate ASEAN's regional cooperation before and after ASOD is established.
4. To describe ASEAN's strategies through ASOD and its relations with related ASEAN Member States in eradicating illicit drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle area.

1.4 Research Significance

This study would provide an understanding of what is illicit drugs and its effect in production, consumption and trafficking. Besides the explanation of illegal drugs, this research will continue to explain the Golden Triangle history and evidence of how drug trafficking spreads among Southeast Asian countries and also in other continents. This research will also provide an elaboration of why a regional organization is needed to eradicate this issue. Furthermore, this research also will give an understanding of how related ASEAN Members States that are working with the ASOD participated and plays a role in eradicating illicit drug trafficking in the Golden Triangle area.

In addition, I hope this research will also raise awareness to the readers of how illicit drugs is a severe problem that must be solved, and I hope that this research can be used for students, lecturers and researchers for supporting data and references to find solutions and for eradicating illicit drugs.

1.5 Structure of Writing

This research will be structured according to the requirement of thesis that has been given by the International Relations Department, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Pelita Harapan. The structure in which the research is written is aimed to help the readers see the outline, discussions and the main arguments in this thesis. With this structure, all of the matter which are going to be discussed within one chapter and following chapters will correlate with one

another, therefore creating a flow which will tie every chapter accurately. The research is arranged in 5 (five) chapters which are as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter includes the background of the research regarding illicit drug trafficking in Thailand, Laos and Myanmar and ASOD's contribution in combating illicit drug trafficking. This chapter also includes the definition of drugs that are classified as illegal. Chapter I overall covers the background of the research, research questions, research significance and the structure of the thesis.

Chapter II: Literature Review

The second chapter provides the fundamental basis of the research which constructed through the making of literature review through scholarly writings. The chapter reviews previous research and/or literature regarding similar/related issues of drug trafficking and ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matter to help understand more on this research. The chapter also includes theoretical and conceptual basis where the conceptual basis includes key terms and definitions which will give a basis understanding for this analysis.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

The third chapter explains the process of conducting this research. This section provides information on the research approach that is being used which is through a qualitative approach. The research methodology will be depicted in more detail by describing the research approach, data collection process, identifying sources and analysis process.

Chapter IV: Result and Discussion

This is the central of this research. In this section, I will discuss and analyze how ASEAN, through ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD), contribute in combating illicit drug trafficking in the Golden triangle with specific tasks that are arranged. This chapter will use the relevant theories and concepts mentioned in chapter II and will answer the research question that has been formulated. The research findings are described and interpreted in this chapter and it will also discuss the analysis of the data obtained.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendation

The fifth chapter consists of two subsections which are conclusion. The conclusion of this research discusses the answer of the research questions coherently.

Thus, with the explanation of the background of this thesis, the next chapter will discuss the literature review from the sources that are used in this thesis writing and discussion along with the theory and concepts which is used to analyze, as well as to answer the research questions