The Reagan Administration was primarily concerned with three drugs: cocaine, marijuana and heroin. The main objective of the international drug policy of the administration was to reduce the availability of these drugs. It was two pronged: elimination of the drugs themselves before they reached the borders of the United States; and elimination of the traffickers who produced drugs for the US market. To achieve these objectives, the administration adopted three methods i.e., crop eradication and substitution, law enforcement, and interdiction. The agencies which played a major role in the implementation of the administration's policy could be divided into two groups; agencies which were already in existence but were consolidated.\(^1\) These agencies were: Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Agency for

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\(^1\) The powers of these organizations were increased during this period. This point is elaborated in the chapter later on.
International Development (AID). In the second category were agencies created by President Reagan himself. We discussed these agencies in the last chapter. Under the latter category one should also include acts passed and measures taken by the administration. These were:

2. South Florida Task Force (January 28, 1982).
3. Attorney General assigned Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Concurrent Jurisdiction with DEA to investigate drug law offences and Director General of FBI assigned the responsibility of general supervision over drug law enforcement efforts and policies.
4. Additional Task Forces (October 14, 1982).

The United States' policy of elimination of drugs before they reached its borders included reduction of opium, coca, and marijuana production by a combination of incentives and penalties, destruction of crops before they were harvested, capture of the drugs at different points in their refining process, and interdiction of the drugs before or as they entered the United States. The objectives of the
second set of policies, i.e., elimination of the traffickers overlapped inevitably with those of the first. It included apprehension, prosecution, and imprisonment of drug traffickers, and confiscation of their assets. It aimed at both reducing the incentive to engage in drug trafficking by increasing the costs associated with it, and reducing the flow of drugs to the United States by eliminating individuals from the business of trafficking and disruption trafficking organizations and routes. Both sets of policies clearly aimed at not only reducing the amount of drugs entering the United States but also increasing their cost to the consumer. 2

Though there is a considerable overlap between the two sets of policies, one can easily differentiate between the two. Different agencies involved in the implementation of the US international narcotics policy focus on one or the other programme and carry out their mandate in their own way.

Most efforts involving the crops before they were processed were supervised by the AID, INM, and by

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International agencies such as the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC). Interdiction efforts, depending upon the location and mode of transportations, were dominated by the Coast Guard, the military (since the congressional amendment to the Posse Comitatus Act of 1981 allowed them to assume a significantly enhanced role in enforcement of civilian laws), and the customs. Efforts against international drug trafficking were dominated by the DEA, which had over 300 agents and 60 offices in some four dozen countries. These efforts were supplemented domestically by the FBI, the US Customs, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the US Attorney's offices, and the lawyers in the justice department. To be sure, DEA agents were also busily involved in making seizures and occasionally involved in crop eradication.3

The US Congress fully supported the Reagan Administration in pursuing these objectives and organizational structure. In September 1986, Majority Leader in the House of Representatives Jim Wright (D., Tex.) introduced the "Omnibus Drug Enforcement, Education and Control Act of 1986", H.R. 5484, also known as Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1986. The purpose of the Act was:

3 Ibid., pp.87-88.
...to strengthen federal efforts to encourage foreign cooperation in eradicating illicit drug crops and in halting international drug traffic, to improve enforcement of Federal drug laws and enhance interdiction of illicit drug shipments, to provide strong Federal leadership in establishing effective drug abuse prevention and education programs, and to expand Federal support for drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation efforts.

The growing illicit drug use in America led the Reagan Administration to lay heavy emphasis on interdiction of drugs and smugglers in its international narcotics policy at the air, land, and sea borders of the United States. The objective was to check the entry of drugs in the country. It served as a check on the use of drugs by raising the risks faced by drug smugglers. In this civilian agencies like the US Customs and the Coast Guard were assigned pivotal role. Since the amendment of the Posse Comitatus Act in 1981, more particularly after the enactment of the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1986, the Department of Defense started assisting in the effort to interdict drugs because the customs service and the Coast Guard lacked the aircraft, ships, radar, command control, communications, and intelligence system, and manpower resources necessary to mount a comprehensive attack on the narcotics traffickers who threatened the United

4 Congressional Digest (Washington, D.C.), November 1986, p.263.
As stated before the responsibility of drug interdiction was mainly entrusted to three agencies: the Coast Guard, an agency within the Department of Transportation, provided marine interdiction aimed primarily at marijuana smuggling; the Customs Services provided inshore marine Coastal, as well as air and land, interdiction, encompassing both cocaine and marijuana, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was a major land border interdiction agency, though its drug seizures constituted a modest share of total seizures. Subsequently, the US army was also used for the drug interdiction. It carried out surveillance activities in interdiction by using highly sophisticated means of airborne radar, e.g., AWACS (advanced warning and control systems) and E.2C's. Some resources were devoted to augmenting maritime and air pursuit capabilities. However, military personnel were subject to legal restriction that prevented them from becoming primary interdiction agencies. Moreover interdiction was a secondary mission for most units, although the Congress at the end of President Reagan's term mandated that the services acquire

5 Public Law 99-570, October 27, 1986, pp.73-74.
certain assets to be dedicated to this activity.  

During the Reagan Presidency, interdiction remained the responsibility primarily of civilian administrative agencies. The military services only supported certain aspects of the programme but did not run any themselves because of certain legal restrictions, and lack of arrest powers. The assistance provided by the Department of Defense in the policy of drugs control can be divided roughly into two categories: loans or transfers of equipments, ammunitions, weapons etc., and military operations, primarily training but also assistance in drug interdiction and training of pilots and other civilian specialists.

The air interdiction process by the use of services provided by the Department of Defense passed through four phases: surveillance, identification, pursuit and arrest. The surveillance phase included the observation of an aircraft, typically by radar. The identifications phase covered the process of deciding that the observed aircraft

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7 Ibid., p.52.
was likely to be a smuggler and should be pursued. The pursuit phase involved closing with the target and following it until it entered the United States or made an airdrop to a vessel that was in or about to enter the US waters. The arrest phase involved getting Drug Law Enforcement (DLE) forces to the location of the smuggler with the drugs, closing with the smuggler and making an arrest. 8

The expenditure on interdiction was raised by the US government. From 1981 to 1986 annual non-military expenditure on interdiction increased from $263 million to $605 million. The expenditure of the Department of Defense however remained smaller in comparison with the interdiction expenditure of non-military agencies, which spent nearly $600 to 700 million. It was not that the expenditure of the Department remained stagnant. It too rose from $1 million in 1981 to $156 million in 1986. As a result the Department of Defense throughout the Reagan years remained a support rather than a primary agency. Its activities furthered those of the primary agencies like the Coast Guard, the Customs services and the INS but could not be the substitute of their activities. 9

8 Ibid., p.58.
9 Ibid., pp.41-43.
Leaner budgetary allocation was not the sole reason for this low profile. The Department of Defense operated under legal restrictions which did not apply to other agencies. This was despite the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act which permitted the use of armed services for interdiction. For instance, the military personnel had no power of arrest which could be made by other agencies. Therefore, strategies had to be worked out in which the armed services drove the traffickers in a position where they could be arrested by other agencies having powers to do so. One feels that the military which had been assigned a secondary role should have been given a primary role in interdiction. Only the armed services had the technical capability which could have increased the possibility of detection. However, the argument that was advanced sometimes that the funding provided on this account to source country should have been given to army for better results does not appear to be valid.

This argument presumes the source country to be only a passive agent which would not have reacted to this diversion and withdrawn its cooperation, so essential for the success of any drug control policy. Furthermore, for the military, primarily meant for fighting war, such programmes could never become its primary task. It could only lend a
helping hand to civilian authorities. Finally, the argument assumes that effectiveness of the army in interdiction would have increased if more funds would have been made available.

The Coast Guard and the customs service, were unable to play a crucial role in halting the inflow of drugs to the United States because of the lack of resources at its disposal. The United States has an air border which is 3520 nautical miles and aircrafts sometimes flying at relatively low altitudes could not be detected by the radar. The Violators could easily cross the US border anywhere in this long border. Same was true of land and sea border. The land problem in terms of cargo containers was a problem of massive proportions for the customs service. Over seven million containers entered into the United States every year and the Customs Service did inspect about one per cent of them. Much larger manpower was needed to increase the effectiveness of the inspection. On sea, traffickers took drugs in some false fuel and water tanks which were difficult to detect.

Raphael Perl, Specialist, International Narcotics Policy in Congress Research Service, library of Congress, stated in a seminar that some members of the Congress had called for the establishment of an elite military special
operations force to combat traffickers outside of the United States. Others suggested that drug interdiction was the best training the military could get short of going to war and that military involvement would constitute a major contribution to the success of the anti-drug policies and programmes of the United States. There could no doubt be more involvement of the military in interdiction but not at the cost of cooperation of the source countries. A well orchestrated and a balanced policy of implementation was needed.

INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS MATTERS (INM)

The Bureau of International Narcotics Matters in the Department of State with its primary responsibility of crop control and crop eradication also helped other US agencies, especially the DEA, the Agency for International Development (AID), the Customs Service, the Coast Guard in interdiction and law enforcement to halt the flow of narcotics into the United States.

10 Mr. Raphael Perl, Specialist in International Narcotics Policy, Congressional Research Service, was the moderator of the seminar on "Narcotics Interdiction and use of the Military: Issues for Congress", held on June 7, 1988. Ibid.
The Department of State functioned as the lead agency to develop and coordinate international narcotics control. President Reagan delegated these powers to the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters. International cooperation to control international drug trafficking was a central segment of the President Reagan's National Drug Strategy.

The INM developed and implemented the programmes overseas and coordinated the international narcotics control activities and programmes of the United States. Its stated objective was to control production simultaneously in all key sectors of illicit drugs exported to the United States.

So the INM's first priority was crop control through government bans on cultivation, enforced by manual and chemical crop eradication. It believed that preventing cultivation and destroying illicit narcotics at their source would prove to be the most effective means of reducing the availability of drugs in the US market. This policy in line with fashion in the coinage of new terminology of the Reagan Administration came to be known as supply side of the drugs. It was adopted by President Reagan at the beginning of his administration in 1981. This is evident from the statement of Mathea Falco, Assistant Secretary INM in January 1981. He
said:

the goal of the international narcotics control program since its inception has been, to the extent possible to prevent illicit narcotics crops from entering the United States. The ideal circumstances would be to eliminate worldwide production of illicit substances, and in the absence of such preventive measures, to secure the destruction of substances grown for the illicit drug market.\(^{11}\)

Therefore the Department of State's Bureau of INM worked with US law enforcement agencies as well as with foreign countries to tackle the drug problem. Its main anti-drug activities were in the form of:

- Support for crop eradication of opium, coca, and marijuana;
- Helping other nations strengthen their law enforcement and judicial systems;
- Working with foreign governments to develop alternative sources of income for farmers who abandon narcotics cultivation in countries where narcotics cultivation is traditional; and
- Providing information and assistance for help in drug abuse prevention and treatment.\(^{12}\)


It tried to accomplish its mission by assisting the host governments in crop control and interdiction, training foreign personnel, participating in international organizations, and providing technical assistance to reduce demand.\textsuperscript{13}

The INM supported operations and maintenance of over 150 aircrafts in four major country programmes: Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia and Burma. Most of these aircrafts were under the control of the host countries and all were involved in eradication and interdiction programmes. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 required the INM to develop an aviation programme. In a change of policy, the legislation prohibited granting of additional aircrafts to foreign governments. In the Fiscal Year 1987, the INM added some more aircrafts, including six Bell 212 helicopters and seven Thrush fixed wing spray aircrafts to the small fleet it had in the Fiscal Year 1986. It had five Thrush and the one C-123K aircrafts which were already employed in on-going US aviation programmes.\textsuperscript{14}


The INM also helped to some extent in law enforcement and worked closely with the DEA throughout the world but it devoted its attention to collaboration with countries in Latin America, Southwest Asia and Southeast Asia. In addition to their direct responsibilities for technical assistance, case making and their investigatory activities, DEA agents worked with INM narcotics coordinators in assessing the nature and degree of the drug problem and working with host government law enforcement agencies on planning and implementing action strategies. The INM also funded international narcotics training provided by the DEA and the customs.

In the US policy on narcotics control collection of intelligence and its evaluation had a vital role. The success of operation was dependent on the accuracy of and correctness of intelligence. The narcotics intelligence was gathered by a number of agencies and therefore there was need for coordination.

The Department of State was both an important collector of narcotics intelligence and the primary consumer of finished narcotics intelligence at the policy level. For a long time the department had been an advocate of closer coordination between intelligence collection agencies and
law enforcement organizations which collected foreign narcotics information in the performance of their narcotics duties. It particularly sought increased coordination of these activities under the guidance of the Director of Central Intelligence Agency.

Half way through the Reagan Presidency, the INM sought to improve the host country's reports on drug production and eradication. In order to coordinate the intelligence gathered by different agencies a sub-committee on production was created under the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC) was created. This Committee analyzed the International Narcotics Control strategy Report submitted by Bureau of INM and NNICC report by the DEA. These reports were submitted for the first time in 1985 and continues to be submitted annually uptil now. The INM, the DEA, and the CIA were members of the sub-committee which worked with the embassies to produce the estimates and data for production from 1984 to the end of Reagan Administration as well as the mid year report (which incorporated NNICC estimates and submitted by INM each August)to the Department of State. Data was reviewed at least twice yearly in the late summer and fall for the INCSR and again in the spring or early summer for the NNICC.15

15 Ibid., p.22.
In mid 1984, the INM embarked on a new programme to assist source country governments in data generation and analysis. It provided equipments, technical assistance and fundings for aerial photography usually through contracts with host country cartographic institutes and or military air survey organizations. The satellite imagery was used to make crop estimates, provided tactical maps that could guide eradication activities and monitor eradication progress and provide guidance to development assistance efforts. The INM also provided agricultural and technical assistants and small infrastructure projects to assist cooperating governments to enforce bans on narcotics production and to encourage farmers to stop growing opium poppies, coca and marijuana.

In the continuing battle to check the production of drug crop, the INM realized the need for better management procedures and technique in addition to various measure taken by it. It asked all the US embassies participating in narcotics control activities to prepare project based operating plans for both current and projects already in existence. These plans were required to include objectives, targets of performance, milestones of activity and measures

16 Ibid., pp.22-23.
of effectiveness. This process provided US officials with a framework or plan for tracking and evaluating programme progress as well as financial obligations and expenditures.17

Agency for International Development (AID):

From the late 1960s to the late 1980s, the AID provided counter narcotics assistance to over twenty five developing countries. Approximately 90 per cent of these narcotics assistance resources, however, went to only a few countries important for the objective of drastically reducing the supply of drugs into the US like Bolivia, Peru, Pakistan and Thailand. The AID's most important purpose was substitution of drug crops. Less than 10 per cent of its total budget was spent towards narcotics awareness and education projects (NAE) in roughly twenty five countries.18

Section 126 of the Foreign Assistance Act, of 198119

18 Ibid., p.28.
19 Section 126 of the Act reads as follows: Section 126 of the Foreign Assistance Act instructs the AID to give priority consideration to programmes that would help reduce illicit narcotics cultivation by stimulating broader development opportunities. GAO, Drug Control in Burma, Pakistan and Thailand, n.12, p.33. For details, see 22 USCA, 2291.
entitled "Development and illicit Narcotics Production", the Gilman Amendment, required the AID to give priority considerations to programmes which would help reduce illicit narcotics cultivation by stimulating broader development opportunities". Following the Gilman Amendment, the AID Administrator in 1982 issued a narcotics policy. Its main points were:

- Provide economic alternative to farmers in narcotics growing areas, including support for appropriate local non-government organizations (NGOs);
- Cooperate with other U.S. government agencies in support of narcotics control;
- Obtain assurances from host country governments that narcotics crops will not be permitted within AID project areas;
- Coordination with the Department of State on a yearly narcotics analysis and in obtaining the necessary commitments from the host country governments.  

During the eight years when Reagan served as the President, the AID played a significant role in US efforts to control the production and trade of illicit drugs in

several source countries. It undertook three kinds of activities. First to demonstrate to the host governments the importance the United States attached to the problem of narcotics control. It inserted into project agreements, poppy/coca clauses, which denied assistance to areas growing narcotics crops. Second, in selected narcotics-growing areas, the AID launched both crop substitution and area development initiatives, which provided agricultural inputs and services to the farmers adversely affected by narcotics control efforts and to improve the social and economic infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development. Third, AID initiated public education programmes to educate elite and middle class groups in source countries about the harmful effects of narcotics production on their societies.\(^{21}\)

These programmes were only partly successful because of a variety of reasons, including difficulties in identifying substitute crops and in integrating enforcement or control programmes with development projects.

AID's strategy was to combine area development programmes with narcotics awareness programmes. The former

\(^{21}\) Ibid.
were aimed at providing rural populations that were adversely affected by narcotics control efforts with alternative sources of income and employment. These programmes were to promote the extension of government administration and services as part of the modernization process in major narcotics growing areas.

The AID focussed its rural development programmes in traditional drug growing regions. During the fiscal years 1986-88, the AID allocated more than $46.6 million for directly supporting the developing countries in implementing the above mentioned programmes. It had four area development projects in Bolivia, Peru, Pakistan and Thailand. It also worked with similar agencies in other donor countries to enlist support for development programmes in drug source countries. 22

Since 1985, the AID initiated drug awareness programmes in Pakistan and Thailand and several Latin American countries. Awareness programmes were designed to convince officials and the general public in these countries that drugs were not just a US problem but also affected their own

societies through increased crime, increased spending for drug treatment, and overall decline in societal values.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Drug Enforcement Administration:}

This agency was mainly responsible for implementing one of the most vital aspects of US Drug policy i.e., law enforcement in and outside the United States. Though the DEA worked hard to carry out this task assigned to it and to boost the foreign law enforcement agencies by providing them with training, funds and equipments but it was hampered by the drug related corruption in the producing countries.

Immediately after the DEA was established in 1973 the \textit{New York Times} wrote:

\begin{quote}
The new Drug Enforcement Administration should be able to coordinate and control all law enforcement efforts more effectively and to impose higher standard of professionalism. This reduced Federal funding for treatment and prevention programmes and the new emphasis on law enforcement.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The major functions which the DEA performed include the following:

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.  
Act as lead agency responsible for the development of overall Federal drug enforcement strategy, programs, planning, and evaluation;

Enforce the provisions of the controlled substances act as they pertain to the manufacture, distribution, and dispensing of legally produced controlled substances;

Investigate and prepare for the prosecution of major violators of controlled substances laws operating at interstate and international levels in keeping with established drug priority goals;

Manage a national narcotics intelligence system in cooperation with federal, state, and foreign officials to collect, analyze, and disseminate strategic and operational intelligence information;

Seize and forfeit assets derived from, traceable to, or intended to be used for illicit drug trafficking;

Maintain liaison with the United Nations, Interpol, and other organizations on matters relating to international narcotics control programs;

Responsible for programs associated with drug law enforcement counterparts in foreign countries under the policy guidance of the Secretary of State and the US Ambassadors;

Promote programs designed to reduce the demand for illegal drugs.  

The DEA provided central leadership, management and coordination for intelligence and investigative functions to suppress trafficking in illicit drugs. It provided consultation, technical assistance, and training to the drug enforcement efforts in the United States and around the world. 

law enforcement officials in foreign countries; participated in collection and sharing international drug data; and assisted in drug control activities and investigations where authorized. In addition, it worked with foreign governments to locate and destroy clandestine laboratories and airstrips and to identify and interdict the chemicals and equipments needed to process illegal drugs. The DEA had over 300 personnel assigned to more than 40 countries. Its budget for international drug control programme has been steadily increased from $31 million in 1981 to $93.7 million in 1988. 26 The Drug Enforcement Administration's overall budget had risen from about $200 million in 1980 to a projected $500 million in 1988. 27

John C. Lawn, Administrator, the DEA, testifying before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control explained:

DEA's mission abroad is to reduce the supply of illegal drugs from foreign sources and transit countries. To accomplish this, DEA has special agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and support personnel stationed in 64 offices in 43 countries outside the United States, in addition to domestic offices.

26 GAO, US International Narcotics Control, n.17, p.11.
The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 enhanced DEA's operations in foreign cooperative drug investigations and in intelligence gathering with an increase of 65 positions and $9 million. DEA is proposing that 40 of these positions be used for special agents, most of whom would be assigned to South and Central America. It is anticipated that having additional special agents in countries that are primary sources for cocaine or transshipment areas could aid these countries in destroying coca crops and laboratories, increasing their seizures of cocaine and arresting traffickers.

The DEA was set up in July 1973 under the Nixon Administration. However, it really started playing significant role in the implementation of US policy after Ronald Reagan entered the White House. In March 1981, the sub-committee on Crime of the House Committee on Judiciary began hearings on the reauthorization of the DEA. Since the identification of drug abuse as a growing national problem more than a decade ago, a number of strategies had been tried and a major organizational changes at the Federal level had been made which were disdained in response to national problem of drug abuse.


Thus the principal objective of the DEA overseas during the Reagan Administration was not only to eradicate drug related corruption in source countries. Its emphasis was rather on "immobilizing" drug traffickers and their organizations wherever they were found which involved identifying those individuals who were engaged in trafficking, finding and arresting them, gathering the evidence necessary to indict and convict them, and finally imprisoning them. But sometimes corrupt officials in foreign countries and lack of "sovereign power" of the DEA agents undermined this objective. The DEA agents worked with foreign police agencies and were in a position to provide some degree of oversight and direction. Whatever limited influence they were able to exert was derived from being part of the United States government and their ability to reward and threaten local police in various ways and most important their own powers of diplomacy and persuasion.

Dr. Nadelmann, Professor at Princeton University, has done extensive research on how the United States deals with drug related corruption in foreign government. He has tried to analyze the role played by an outsider, a foreigner, lacking sovereign power, influences the very nature of corruption and its impact. The DEA agent is not so much concerned with the elimination of corruption but how the
agencies can successfully carry out their assigned task despite the rampant corruption in source countries. Nadelmann recommended immobilizing drug traffickers and their organizations wherever they were found. 30

The study was relevant in the context of the US government need for cooperation from Latin American and Caribbean governments in apprehending, arresting, prosecuting and punishing drug trafficker, but being hindered by corruption in those governments. What options were available to the US? More specifically, how did the DEA pursue its objective of immobilizing drug traffickers overseas despite pervasive corruption in foreign governments?

As the DEA lacked sovereign power, its agents were not in a position to arrest major drug traffickers all over the world. The ability of DEA to deal with corruption in foreign countries was strongly influenced by nature and scope of corruption, in particular to the extent to which it was condoned, or tolerated by the top officials in government. Even in those countries in which drug related corruption was

thoughly institutionalized, however, the DEA agent had other options open to him than leaving. The diplomatic leverage of the US government combined with international consensus, of sorts among governments that drug trafficking was both illegal and evil, ensured that no government would reject without sufficient reasons US requests for cooperation without incurring some costs. Even in cases where a government felt helplessness in countering the drug cartels, a resourceful agent could rely on his own diplomatic ability and appeals to the transnational value system of police. No matter how deeply rooted the corruption was, the fact was that almost no one was totally corrupt. Even those who had virtually no moral or other limits to their corruption still upon occasion would have no opportunities to be corrupted. It might be because that they failed to make necessary contact with the individual trafficker or the cartel. It might be because they found themselves in the spotlight when the opportunity arose. Whatever the case might be, it meant that there would be times when the only option left was to cooperate with the DEA agent.31

31 Ibid., p.6.
The DEA had much greater freedom to choose the agents and agencies with whom to work in Latin America. Therefore, its success or failure in any country depended on the performance of an agent. Corruption was not the only factor. According to Nadelmann there were a number of occasions when the DEA deliberately chose to work with a corrupt agent or agency instead of an honest one because the corrupt one was much more able and efficient. As one DEA agent who had worked through much of Latin America said of the Mexican Federale Police: "Sure the federals are corrupt, but when a Federale is doing his job, there is no better cop anywhere".\footnote{32 Ibid., p.8.} In Bolivia, the US Embassy pressured the Siles government to appoint, as head of the government’s narcotics coordination Committee someone they knew to be corrupt because the alternative was honest but ineffective official. The corrupt appointee on the other hand was a smart, ambitious, politician, who could get things done even if he would accept and even solicit bribes in some cases. The US embassy hoped that it could work around his corruption while it used him to get the anti-drug programmes under way. Then, once the programmes had become somewhat institutionalized
the embassy would get him fired and replaced by a more honest official at least that was the plan. Nadelmann does not point out that such strategies could not be very effective in the long run. If the government could be so manipulated its hold over the people was bound to be weakened. The loss of the moral authority could only work to the advantage of the drug cartel. Nadelmann goes on to argue that with limited manpower and resources left the DEA with no other choice but to develop good personal and working relationships abroad based on trust even with corrupt people and to rely on foreign agents for most investigative tasks. These foreign agents gained financial and political benefits in return for their services to the DEA, sometimes by getting increase in their salaries or protection from the senior officials through the influence of DEA and the US embassy. Sometimes in return for this cooperation of the local agents they were helped to get promotions in service and trips to the United States to attend a DEA training session. DEA's success depended upon its relationship with the ambassador. His willingness to back the resident DEA agents when they were in trouble. Again, favouritism and cronism could only result in short term gains for the

33 Ibid.
narcotics control programme but could have devastating effect on the political system. But that was not what concerned the DEA agent. He was in the country on a short term assignment interested in piling up a good record for himself.

During Reagan's Presidency, the DEA employed one of the most successful measures by the creation of elite drug enforcement units in Latin American countries composed of local police. Resident DEA agents played an important role in creating these units, often training them choosing heads and overseeing their hiring, and generally working closely with them in all respects of their operations. Some of these units were independent agencies, others, part of established police agencies. In some case, they were funded to a large extent by the DEA and the US State Department. Their training and much of their nonlethal equipments were provided by the United States. Because these elite units typically represented a threat to the established institutions and interests, both the DEA and the US Ambassador often were obliged to use their influence to guard against interference by corrupt officials and others.

The elite units generally fell into two categories. First, the paramilitary units called Mobile Rural Patrol
units (UMOPAR), in both Peru and Bolivia, and Special Action Narcotics Units (SANU) in Colombia. Although their formal names changed every few years, these agencies were primarily involved in raiding and destroying coca bushes and refineries in the outlying areas. In the second category were the elite criminal investigation units, usually within the national police agencies. The DEA worked with these units on narcotics cases.\textsuperscript{34}

Obviously, the ability of DEA to maintain such units both free of corruption and operationally effective depended upon the political will of the United States and the host government, as well as upon key personalities within and above those units.

The elite units created by the DEA faced certain problems because of the antagonism and jealousy of the military and other police units, underfunded by local governments. The DEA and the US State Department Narcotics Assistance Units had been unwilling to assume the entire burden for funding the drug enforcement units. They felt that foreign governments should share the financial obligation. But governments expecting assistance from the

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
United States were far from generous in funding these units.

The Reagan Administration strove very hard to eliminate the production, processing and shipment of illicit drugs to the United States. It followed the methods of crop eradication, interdiction, and law endorsement. These goals were pursued by different agencies i.e., INM, AID, DEA, the Customs Service, the Coast Guard and to some extent by the military. But, this move was thwarted by the corruption in the source countries and lack of funds. The maximum budget for the narcotics control programmes during the Reagan Administration was only a meagre $8 billion which was not sufficient to control multi-billion dollar trade of illicit drugs all over the world. Moreover, drugs were a major source of income for the farmers who raised drug-crops and a source of foreign exchange for the governments of source countries. These enormous benefits could be only substituted with huge foreign aid to the drug producing country. Although, defense and national security had a high priority during the Reagan Administration and drug trafficking was declared a issue of national security concern by the Anti-drug Abuse Act of 1986 but even then military had only secondary role to play in this sphere.