

IN THIS ISSUE

The “War on Drugs” has been a rhetorical policy feature of successive American presidential administrations. But, the term took on new meaning in the 1980s, as the US government reinterpreted the narcotics problem as a “national security” matter, and began to assign military resources to deal with it. In this issue we feature three articles that examine national security aspects of narcotics trafficking.

Patricia McRae examines the role of the narcotics trade in a key country: Colombia. Her essay illuminates the extent to which the formal economy and the informal, narcotics-based economy have become interdependent. More important, McRae explains how such interdependence has allowed the *narcotraficantes* to develop a power base sufficiently strong to challenge the power of the traditional governing elites. Ivelaw Griffith explores the impact of the narcotics trade in the Commonwealth Caribbean. After considering various key aspects of the problem — production, abuse, transshipment, and money laundering — he concludes that the trade has affected the political, military and economic security of several Caribbean nations, and that existing counter-measures are probably insufficient. Donald Mabry traces the growing involvement of the US military in the interdiction of the narcotics trade. He identifies the range of problems associated with this role, and concludes that it is not an appropriate, cost-effective mission for the US military.

The opinions expressed in the articles, reviews and other contributions are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily represent those of the Centre for Conflict Studies or the University of New Brunswick.
