

Amphetamine Drugs on The Pacific Rim

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1999

While all recent studies of crime and justice issues pay due attention to the significance of illegal drugs in shaping public policy, I would argue that we do not necessarily make rational choices in selecting the particular drugs to which we pay most attention. Specifically, we should pay much more attention to the past history and the present realities of the family of drugs known as the amphetamines, which have a good claim to be recognized as the distinctive crime problem of the Pacific Rim region.

I will briefly discuss the American encounter with speed, but also wish to place this in a much wider Pacific and Asian context, which provides the best approach to comprehending this particular type of organized and syndicated crime. I want to stress the disturbing and quite revolutionary changes in manufacture and trafficking which have been under way across the Pacific Rim countries over the last fifteen years or so. On the basis of this Asian experience, we can say that amphetamine drugs, and particularly methamphetamine, are likely to pose an increasingly serious menace for criminal justice systems globally in the coming decades.

Speed in America

This claim about the significance of amphetamines may sound strange given the very small scholarly or professional attention generally paid to these substances in comparison to other better-known drugs. For forty years now, the history of American drug policy has been mainly concerned with two major substances, namely heroin and cocaine, and other important substances have featured only sporadically. This perception gives rise to a self-sustaining cycle: we focus on the drugs we believe to be important, we concentrate on the areas and social groups using those drugs, most of our information and our research data tends to be about those substances; and to nobody's surprise, our resulting picture of the overall drug problem concentrates almost wholly on those problems. This gives rise to several misperceptions about the social, ethnic and geographical peculiarities of the drug scene. Researchers who concentrate on heroin and cocaine largely use data from inner-city and minority communities, and naturally enough, we conclude that drugs are predominantly inner city and minority issues. When drugs appear in a white or middle class setting, the suggestion is that they must somehow have spread from these other environments, giving rise to subtly racist rhetoric about the contamination of "mainstream" values and mores.

In reality, amphetamines have for over half a century been the basis of a very lively subculture that is overwhelmingly white, and concentrated in rural and suburban communities far removed from conventional stereotypes of "drug-ridden" neighborhoods. Originally widely used for legal purposes, amphetamine drugs acquired several distinct and quite respectable American markets, including among hard-pressed businessmen and blue collar workers (truckers and shift-workers), in schools and colleges, in sports, and among women seeking to lose weight (the following account is taken from Jenkins 1999). By far the biggest "speed-pusher" in history was the armed services, which from the second world war through Vietnam distributed amphetamines lavishly to service people undertaking tasks requiring alertness and wakefulness: we are talking in terms of multi-billion pill quantities. The amphetamine business became a vast and profitable economic enterprise: by 1958, some eight billion pills and tablets were produced legally each year in the United States, in addition

to the sizable illegal market, and to clandestine imports from Mexico, and by 1971, legal production had risen to twelve billion pills. Just the amount produced within the law had the potential to provide a month's supply to every man, woman and child in the country. It was difficult to grow up in the USA between the 1940s and the late 1960s without encountering amphetamines in some guise, usually quite legal.

Amphetamines were at least as widely abused than other better-known drugs. In the mid-1970s, an extensive survey of American men born between 1944 and 1954 suggested that some 27 percent had used an amphetamine stimulant at some point in their lives, and about a third of that group had used such a drug in the previous twelve months. Usage was significantly higher among men from Mountain and Pacific states, and among city-dwellers: men born in the period 1950-53, at the height of the baby-boom, were more likely to have used amphetamines at some point in their lives than those born either earlier or later. Almost ten percent of the sample claimed familiarity with Methedrine (methamphetamine), probably the riskiest of the various types. Unfortunately, the same study did not interview young women, whom we know from other sources to have been likely to use the same stimulants. Though several successive anti-drug campaigns limited access to an increasing range of projects, "speed" cultures survive and flourish to this day, as has been demonstrated by the recent furor over the rising use of methamphetamine across much of the nation.

As I have argued in my recent book Synthetic Panics, amphetamines represent a vital and largely unwritten chapter in the long history of the American encounter with drugs and substance abuse. Since the late 1980s, the mass media have discovered what appears to be the growing menace of methamphetamine and other cognate drugs, which seem to be growing rapidly in use in areas of the west and south-west. However, a convincing case can be made that amphetamines and especially methamphetamine have been popular in these precise areas at least since the 1950s, and that what is now being noted by the media is really a very old-established problem. Certainly some very early case-studies indicate widespread methamphetamine use in trucking centers and near military bases at least through the 1950s, and it is hard to deduce when, if ever, this usage declined. The fact that these drugs were so thoroughly neglected in years gone by partly reflects law enforcement priorities, but also demonstrates the Eastern biases of the media. It further reflects the racial assumptions and prejudices of journalists and editors, who tended to classify drug abuse as a strictly urban and minority phenomenon, so that predominantly White users were not taken seriously. The implication is that some "new" drug menaces might in reality represent not new phenomena, but the sudden discovery of pre-existing circumstances.

Throughout this history, too, we note the distinctive geographical setting of the speed culture, which is overwhelmingly western and Pacific in orientation. Following the exposés of the parlous effects of injectable methamphetamine in the early 1960s, major corporations reacted by limiting supplies of the drug, but as legal restrictions grew, meth's popularity ensured that users would find illicit supplies. It was a group of ex-servicemen who led the move to create an illicit manufacturing industry, and clandestine speed labs originated in the San Francisco Bay area around 1962. The Bay area would long retain this central role in manufacturing, and methamphetamine/Methedrine has been commonly blamed for the rising violence which terminated the culture of the "Summer of Love" in the late 1960s: there is a magnificent account of the San Francisco speed scene in these years in Frankie Hucklenbroich's autobiographical Crystal Diary. Other western centers came to play an important role in the production and consumption of the amphetamines, especially San

Diego, with its naval facility and extensive Asian contacts. Moreover, route 66 seems for many years to have been the main artery for speed supply through the west and Midwest.

Western regions again predominated in the renewed panic over methamphetamine in the late 1980s and 1990s. In the mid-1980s, the city of Eugene, Oregon, was a major manufacturing center, while some observers stressed the importance of both San Diego and the San Francisco Bay area. In 1987 and 1988, over three hundred methamphetamine laboratories were seized in the San Diego area alone, and the city's police chief complained in 1989 that his city "is to crystal what Bogota is to cocaine." In 1986, a member of the California BNE complained that "We are the leading state in production of methamphetamines and the problem is growing worse all the time. These labs are everywhere. Our Sacramento field office can't seize them fast enough to keep up." The western concentration is confirmed by drug tests performed on arrestees in selected cities under the Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) system. By 1990, the proportion of individuals testing positive for methamphetamine was 25 percent in San Diego, and a little over ten percent in San Jose, Phoenix, and Portland, Oregon, with some use recorded in Denver, Dallas, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Hawaii was the center of immense concern over smokable methamphetamine or "ice" in 1989-90, and most of the horror stories about the drugs in the early 1990s were concentrated in California and Arizona.

Through the early 1990s, there were regular reports of raids on clandestine laboratories, and seizures from criminal gangs, mainly in California and Arizona. In 1993, the California BNE seized 360 labs in that state, compared to a mere 160 raided by the DEA nationwide. From mid-1995, news reporting depicted a rising speed threat, suggesting that both production and abuse were spreading rapidly along the I-40 corridor. In Arizona, the rate of laboratory seizures accelerated dramatically, with some three hundred operations raided between early 1996 and mid-1998: methamphetamine-related arrests in Phoenix alone grew by 360 percent between 1992 and 1998. Though there has recently been intense concern about the drug's spread to the Midwest, to states like Iowa, Missouri and Illinois, it remains predominantly a western and southwestern concern.

The Asian Context

If we consider the use and manufacture of speed from an international perspective, rather than a merely domestic view, then the Pacific concentration fits extraordinarily well with the experience of other nations. At least since the 1940s, amphetamine abuse has been a major phenomenon across the Pacific region, and in the last two decades, methamphetamine in particular has represented a social problem comparable to that of cocaine in North America. While I am obviously not suggesting that speed has some kind of natural Pacific constituency, still less that the Pacific is somehow an "amphetamine ocean", the western US has a long history of cultural and commercial links with that wider region, which have repeatedly inspired and reinforced trends in criminality as much as any legitimate enterprise.

Methamphetamine has a long history in Japan, and in fact it was first synthesized by a Japanese chemist in 1893. During the second world war, the drug was used as a means to give workers the stamina to meet and exceed production quotas, and was also issued freely to soldiers, but predictably, other consequences included widespread addiction. During the calamitous post-war years, amphetamines became a massive public health problem, as perhaps half a million people responded to the social crisis of those years with the aid of "energy pills", many of which were diverted from American military bases. In 1951, a Stimulant Control Law was enacted, and this was amended in the mid-fifties to strengthen criminal penalties for amphetamine-related offenses. In 1954, also, the Mental Health Act was amended to include "compulsory hospitalization for chronic methamphetamine addicts

who are determined to be dangerous to themselves or to others” (Greberman and Wada 1994). Some fifty thousand users and dealers were arrested in the ensuing police purge. These draconian measures were initially successful, but a second epidemic followed in the 1970s: coincidentally or not, the Japanese speed boom coincided closely with the vast expansion of American drug use from about 1970 onwards. Since that time, amphetamines have remained popular through successive economic booms, as they have provided the energy and dedication required by hard-working students and employees, and speed has never been stigmatized as heavily as other substances, even marijuana. Japan’s culture of competitive examinations has ensured the survival of this market, which has more recently been transformed by changing concepts of gender roles, as young women and teenage girls take the drug to lose weight. In 1993, almost a fifth of those arrested for drugs in Japan were female (Suwaki et al 1997: 206)

Speed problems continue to pose a major challenge to Japanese society. To quote a recent journalistic account, “Despite its image as a drug-free nation, Japan is known as the ‘methamphetamine capital of the world,’ with an estimated 500,000 abusers who include overworked businessmen, cramming students and bored homemakers. The trade is so lucrative that it accounts for an estimated 43 percent of the illicit income of the *yakuza* - Japan's organized crime syndicates - bringing in about \$3.38 billion annually” (Watanabe 1995). Others would place the number of users closer to 600,000, but recently, Japanese police have placed the number of stimulant abusers at closer to two million (Torode 1999). As with all such data, certainty is impossible, especially since the using populations themselves are so difficult to track: “The addicts are on the fringes of Japanese society. They are the dispossessed: small-time gangsters, bar hostesses and prostitutes. They are the weary and overworked: truck drivers, construction workers and night laborers. They are the bored and curious: teenagers, students and housewives” (Shoenberger 1987; Suwaki 1991).

The volume of the business was immense, and drug seizures grew dramatically during the 1980s, even as the number of arrests was falling slightly (Suwaki et al 1997: 202-205). According to a 1987 report, “During 1987's first 10 months, Japanese police seized more than 1,200 pounds of imported speed, most of it from Taiwan, with a street value of about a hundred billion yen (\$760 million). The amount was nearly twice that seized in all of 1986 and six times the annual level of five years ago” (Shoenberger 1987). Mark Schreiber remarks that “Concern over the spread of drugs among teenagers was further heightened on October 23, 1996, when the Ministry of Health and Welfare released a White Paper on Drugs that noted that 17,364 cases of stimulant drug use were prosecuted during 1995. Of the total, 1,083 cases involved minors, representing a one year leap of 30.2 percent” (Schreiber 1997). In 1994, 88 percent of all drug arrests in Japan involved amphetamines (McGregor 1996). Apart from its surging popularity, the drug acquired even more sinister connotations during the investigation of the notorious Aum Shinrikyo cult, which released nerve gas on Japanese subways in 1995: the group had financed itself in large measure by manufacturing methamphetamine in its clandestine chemical factories (Watanabe 1995).

Beyond Japan, methamphetamine became a drug of choice among upwardly mobile urban dwellers in several rising nations, including Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines (McBeth 1989; Savadove 1991). The conventional explanation for this trend was that the amphetamines gave the ambitious the energy to succeed in the fiercely competitive and very hard-working cultures of the 1980s and early 1990s, as first the Four Tigers and then the surrounding nations emulated and even surpassed the achievements of Japan in its glory years. Richard Dickens of the United Nations' International Drug Control Program in Bangkok argues that “There is a definite link in this part of Asia between amphetamine use

and economic development. We have watched amphetamines and other stimulants surge in popularity in virtually all of the dynamic 'tiger' economies of east Asia, starting with Japan after the Second World War, through South Korea a decade ago" (Chance 1997).

There is ample evidence of rising amphetamine use across the region. Thailand especially has suffered from the popularity of amphetamines or yaa baa ("mad medicine"), and the country is today believed to have 1.2 million addicts and users, many of whom use methamphetamine in the form of pills. British journalist Matthew Chance notes that "amphetamine tablets are bought by the Thai poor as a means, not of recreation as in Europe and America, but of boosting energy to work harder and longer. Typically, it is taxi drivers, long-distance truckers, and factory workers, all paid by the hour, who are dependent on yaa baa. The more they swallow, the more they earn." (Chance 1997; DRUGS: Facts about amphetamines 1998; Emmons 1999). Increasingly from the mid-1980s, there was a general shift in usage from amphetamine pills to the far more potent methamphetamine, whether as pills or in its smokable form of "ice". In Hong Kong, for example, there was a decisive shift towards ice during the early 1990s (Fraser 1996). In 1994, the Philippine Narcotics Command seized 65.5 kg of ice (shabu), in addition to 11.6 kilograms of heroin, and less than two kilograms of cocaine (Dikkenberg 1995). In 1997, a single Philippine drug haul involved 253 kilograms of methamphetamine in its ice form (Smith and Robles 1997; compare "Anti-drug war increases in the Philippines" 1996; Fraser 1997).

The largest question mark in the whole regional drug market concerns mainland China, the PRC, an unimaginably vast market exposed to very much the same temptations of rapid development which affected Japan in the 1950s, Taiwan in the 1970s, Thailand in the early 1990s. If in fact China is to offer several hundred million new clients to the amphetamine producers, then the country is uniquely well situated to supply this demand, largely in consequence of biological accident. India and China are the two largest producers of the ephedra shrub, the source of ephedrine, which is in turn the crucial precursor chemical for methamphetamine and other related drugs, and which is already produced in large quantities in southern China, in Guangdong or Fujian provinces. Easy access to ephedrine makes methamphetamine manufacture a tempting proposition. By the mid-1990s, media in Taiwan and Hong Kong were reporting a massive, and predictable, surge in amphetamine use on the mainland ("Drive to step up control of drugs" 1997).

Organized Crime

Naturally enough, these very substantial trans-Asian markets support elaborate multinational crime networks (Huston 1995; Asian organized crime 1991, 1992; Bresler 1980; Buruma and McBeth 1984-85) We have already seen that Japanese organized crime has long played a crucial role in the manufacture and distribution of the drug, which is indeed their principal source of income. The National Police Agency has stated that illegal crime networks draw an annual income of 1.3 trillion yen, some ten billion dollars, about a third of which derives from amphetamines. This enterprise has proved immune to efforts to pass money-laundering laws on the US model, though a forfeiture law for gangster incomes was passed in 1992: significantly, this measure was appended to the narcotics control law, again indicating the centrality of amphetamine-derived income ("Money laundering" 1996).

Japanese networks are allied with wider international crime groups. The Yakuza cooperate with Chinese Triads to form sizable narcotic networks supplying illicit markets across eastern and south-east Asia. Other international linkages grow naturally out of the ethnic nature of the Japanese syndicates, which draw heavily on the nation's Korean minorities. During the 1970s and 1980s, multi-national East Asian crime networks had collaborated in a variety of activities, including product counterfeiting and trafficking in guns

and prostitutes in addition to narcotics, and there is much evidence of cooperative endeavors, based in Taiwan or South Korea. (Posner 1988; “Seoul on ice” 1989; Shoenberger 1989). In the area of methamphetamines, the Yakuza had developed manufacturing facilities in South Korea, which supplied much of East Asia, and which had the advantage of being outside the jurisdiction of the vigilant Japanese police agencies. There was also Triad drug activity in Hong Kong and Taiwan, while entrepreneurs and distributors might be nationals of any of a dozen Asian countries (Kaplan and Dubro 1986). The highly cosmopolitan nature of the business is suggested by one recent case in which several members of the 14K triad were imprisoned for drug smuggling in the Philippines, the illicit trade-goods including heroin from the Golden Triangle as well as ice from factories in southern China (Dikkenberg 1995; Smith and Robles 1997; Fraser 1997).

Recent Developments

Amphetamine drugs have thus been very well established in east Asian cultures for many years, but in the past decade, a number of trends have led to an enormous boom in use, manufacturing and trafficking, trends which should be noted carefully by North American policy makers. Combining these current developments, we find a truly disturbing picture, of several East Asian nations which have rapidly growing populations of regular methamphetamine users, who provide a major domestic market for local manufacturers and traffickers. These criminal networks in turn have long-standing international contacts allowing them to move drugs virtually anywhere in the Pacific Rim. Most alarming, perhaps, for Europe or North America, their manufacturing facilities seem immune to any customary means of interdiction, as they lie either within regions well able to resist outside intervention, even of a heavily militarized nature, or else within powerful nations which support their activities - North Korea and perhaps China, in addition to smaller states like Myanmar. The analogy of the heroin trade of the 1960s and 1970s suggests that we could be observing the creation of a very potent international crime network, and that methamphetamine might play the sinister global role in the early 21st century that heroin did in earlier decades.

I will discuss these trends under three headings, namely The Economic Crash; Away From Heroin; and thirdly, State Organized Crime.

i. The Economic Crash

Since the mid-1990s, the collapse of Asian economies and stock markets has been one of the most-reported and most-influential events worldwide, and needs no elaboration here. In terms of drug trafficking, however, the effects have been sweeping, both in offering consolation to desperate people whose lives and businesses have been ruined, and in driving hitherto legal entrepreneurs into riskier means of making money. In Thailand, for instance, the economic crash has been directly blamed for a massive increase in the already widespread use of amphetamines or yaa baa, which have become more popular among children and teenagers rather than simply laborers and truckers. Moreover, involvement in the drug business is no longer confined to foreigners, but has spread to Thais themselves, who would earlier have faced social taboos against exploiting fellow citizens (Emmons 1999). Though hard numbers for usage are hard to find, the consequences of the crash can be traced in the exploding scale of the nation’s juvenile facilities, where amphetamine use is constantly cited as a reason for incarceration. The nation’s adult prison population almost tripled from nearly 66,000 in 1988 to around 181,000 in 1998, and fifty thousand of the latter are serving drug-related sentences.

ii. Away From Heroin

One recurrent problem of drug policy in the US and overseas has been what we might call that of displacement, namely that a successful campaign against one drug can lead

to the rise of an equally or perhaps even more dangerous substitute. We should recall that heroin became popular in the late nineteenth century as a safe and nonaddictive successor to morphine, while cocaine became so popular in the 1970s precisely because it was a supposedly safe alternative to the then stigmatized amphetamines. More recently, the methamphetamine boom nationwide has owed much to the stemming of cocaine trafficking. In the Asian context, successive US and European governments have fought for years against the heroin production of the so-called Golden Triangle in Burma (Myanmar), Thailand and Laos, a story which has featured such evocative names as the Shan United Army and its overlord, Khun Sa.

As the old saying has it, however, beware of what you wish for, you may get it. In the last few years, international pressure and economic changes have led to a major movement away from heroin production, and the rise instead of new manufacturing facilities in methamphetamine, precisely in the traditional heroin regions of the Golden Triangle (“Narcotics” 1998; Torode 1998, 1999). Old Myanmar suppliers like the United Wa State Army simply moved wholesale into amphetamine production, and became what US authorities have described simply as “the world’s largest armed narcotics-trafficking organization” (“Business is Blooming” 1998). The South China Morning Post recently quoted a Thai law enforcement agent as stating that “Our intelligence suggests many networks that once produced heroin in our neighbouring countries are simply switching trades with the corrupt assistance of police and soldiers on all sides. Methamphetamines are where the money is now and they are a lot harder to control than heroin.” (Torode 1999). In an alarming analogy, the director of narcotics law enforcement at the Thai Narcotics Control Board has stated that “Right now we are seeing the trafficking of methamphetamines develop like the heroin trade in Thailand of 25 years ago,” (Torode 1998)

iii. State Organized Crime

Methamphetamine in the US is generally produced by clandestine laboratories which vary enormously in size, but which are generally located in houses or trailers. In contrast, large-scale production requires substantial facilities on the scale of true factories, and these are possible where states and law enforcement agencies tolerate or actively participate in the enterprise. This is the state of affairs in Mexico, by far the largest source of the drug in the US, and in certain Asian countries, where the exact relationship between the authorities and the criminal enterprise is highly controversial. China is one such nation commonly suspected of involvement in “state organized crime”, and Chinese sources have been cited as a primary suppliers of the rich amphetamine markets of Japan (Baum 1995, Sieff 1995). It is an open question whether drugs exported from Taiwan were originally manufactured there or merely re-exported from the PRC. Recently, Taiwan’s Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB) has stated that two-thirds of amphetamines and forty percent of heroin smuggled into Taiwan have come from China (“Drug trafficking a cross-strait problem” 1999). There is also a lively illegal traffic in ephedrine to the laboratories of the Golden triangle (“Narcotics” 1998). Illegal trafficking would certainly require the acquiescence of Communist officials within the PRC, but Triads based in both Hong Kong and Taiwan have acted as middlemen: in 1998, a Hong Kong based man was arrested for organizing the smuggling of twelve million dollars worth of heroin and amphetamines from China into Taiwan (“Suspected HK drug trafficker arrested” 1998). In 1997, three Taiwanese were arrested for attempting to import 78 kilos of amphetamines from China (“Police seize 78 kg of amphetamines” 1997)

Most recently, our picture of illicit drug trafficking in Asia has been radically changed by growing evidence of direct involvement by the state of North Korea, which has been

accused of trying to rescue its failing economy by massive involvement in drug trafficking, counterfeiting, and other forms of state organized crime (Peck 1998). Such charges must be taken with all due scepticism, as the Northern regime has many enemies in the US and overseas who are only too pleased to spread discreditable propaganda about this bizarre Stalinist regime, but some of the incidents are well documented. In one incident, Egyptian police found two North Korean diplomats in possession of half a million tablets of Rohypnol, the so-called “date-rape drug”, a quantity difficult to explain except in terms of major illicit trafficking (Kaplan 1999).

Most of the evidence of official drug-trading, however, comes in the form of amphetamines and methamphetamines, as the state seems to have adopted the role of principal suppliers to the ever heavy drug markets of Eastern Asia. According to David Kaplan, “Investigators have traced orders for fifty tons of ephedrine - the base for methamphetamine - to North Korean front companies; that quantity is twenty times as much as the nation's legitimate needs.” (Kaplan 1999) In the Spring of 1997, moreover, a huge amount of manufactured amphetamine was discovered in the hold of a North Korean freighter in the port of Hososhima, on the island of Kyushu: this was in fact the largest drug seizure in Japanese history. (Jordan 1997). To quote David Kaplan again, “A lone customs inspector wondered about the 12 large cans of honey that crew members hand-carried from a North Korean freighter. It seemed strange, the inspector thought, that North Korea was exporting food in the midst of a famine. A check found the cans crammed with 130 pounds of meth. Then, last August, Japanese police traced a 660-pound meth shipment, worth \$335 million on the street, to a North Korean boat disguised as a Japanese vessel. Investigators have tied both cases to the *yakuza* - Japanese crime syndicates - many of whose members are ethnic Korean. Japanese police are alarmed: In two years the North Koreans have come to supply nearly 20 percent of Japan's multibillion-- dollar meth market.” (Kaplan 1999). Political factors may play a role in facilitating Korean enterprises in Japan: As has already been noted, Japan has a sizable Korean minority, some 650,000 strong, and a significant proportion of these express their ethnic pride by identifying with the North Korean regime (Kristof 1999).

Policy Implications

Hitherto, these trends have not greatly affected the United States, except in so far as the fairly secure American economy has proved a tempting destination for much of the vast profits raised through the amphetamine trades, and duly laundered through the US (Duckworth 1991; “Money laundering” 1996). On the other hand, the American ice scare of 1989-90 gave a foretaste of quite realistic fears concerning the future importance of Asian methamphetamine. In that case, we may recall, extensive ice usage in Hawaii was widely seen as a first token of a new drug epidemic, though in that case, the charges were so hysterical and overblown that they soon lost credibility, and that particular problem remained confined to Hawaii and San Diego. Crucially, too, fears of Asian importers subsided because speed supplies were so much more easily obtained from Mexican labs: why trouble to import by sea or air when land routes were so convenient?

Nevertheless, since that point, methamphetamine has indeed become a very familiar part of the national American drug scene, and it is by no means absurd to see Asian conditions becoming more prevalent in the US: methamphetamine pills in particular remain a singularly dangerous menace that the US has yet to face. This prospect is all the greater when we consider the overall demographic picture. In 1990, 7.5 million Americans were of Asian origin, mainly Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese and Korean, but the projections for 2025 suggest 25.5 million Asian-Americans, and by that point, Asians and Hispanics

combined will constitute almost a quarter of the whole population. American politics and social development is moving from a black and white affair to a multicolored reality, which is already having revolutionary effects on every aspect of life, as western communities in particular redefine themselves in terms of the Pacific Rim - hence the present conference, of course. These changes will inevitably mean more travel and commerce, and an ever greater interchange of habits and customs, both legal and illegal.

To oversimplify greatly, if we observe the drug habits of eastern and south-eastern Asia today, we may be looking at something like our own American future. We cannot hope to understand the whole matter of "crime and public policy on the Pacific Rim" without taking due account of the history, culture and economics of the amphetamine drugs.

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