

Marramao says, "a 'light' party," a party, one is to understand, in which a multiplicity of perspectives and interests can find expression. It is clear that for Marramao the Communist apparatus, with its suffocating vocation for both extracting and expressing consent, is beyond salvation.

Yet however warmly Occhetto may have responded to this suggestion, he has wound up at least verbally mediating with the opposition. As Maria Luisa Boccia, an emerging speaker for the opposition, explains, the option her group abhors is precisely that of the "American," or "light" party. "Granted that there will be a change, for that is now clearly unavoidable," Boccia says, she and her companions will strive for the constitution of a "seriously reformist party with a communist component." She intends to prevent the PCI's transformation into an "electoral" party, in which the leadership interprets the consent of voters it only episodically encounters. In Occhetto's congressional speech he stressed the importance of the "mass" nature of party organization, in an obvious effort to reassure Ingrao, Boccia, and their comrades.

Stefano Rodotà, the shadow minister of justice now in his eleventh year as an Independent Left parliamentarian, points to the contradictions that undermine Occhetto's position. "You cannot have both a 'mass' party and a 'light' party," Rodotà says. Similarly, "the PCI must decide which kind of institutional system it will work for. Should Italy follow the example of the French Fifth Republic, electing a parliament with limited functions, or should it model itself on the American presidential republic, in which the Congress wields important powers?" The issue remains unresolved. But the PCI's willingness to support processes of institutional revision in itself marks a major transformation.

Of course, the choice of a new institutional system, like the choice of a new form of party organization, represents precisely the abandonment of long-held positions many militants find unacceptable. With local elections coming up in May, both sides need to work together so that each can avoid taking the blame for an eventual electoral failure. In the longer term, the current tensions bode ill for those hoping for a peaceful coexistence. Should party unity crumble, Italy might once again have a Communist Party. It would be a party of less than ten percent of the electorate. Alongside it there might then exist a new social democratic formation with a penchant for citing liberal philosophers. One cannot tell whether this new formation would be absorbed by Craxi's Socialists or maintain its independence. But if a new, credibly democratic, and reformist political party were to appear on the scene, the old equilibriums might have to change. One could then envisage alternative solutions to governments anchored to the Christian Democracy. The Italian party system, which has produced innumerable governments with few variations of their members, might come "unblocked."

In this perspective the new "thing" Occhetto wishes

to engender could not be called, as some hard-liners have suggested, the "Democratic Communist Party." It would have to adopt an altogether new name for an altogether new organization. The way systems die reveals much about how they lived. The Partito Comunista Italiano dies attempting innovation: it may be sheer opportunism, or it may be the result of conviction.

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The cocaine blizzard.

SNOWED IN

By Mark A. R. Kleiman

President George Bush, congressional Democrats, most big-city police chiefs, and the vast majority of Americans agree that it is both vital and feasible to stop the flow of cocaine from South America into the United States. Unfortunately, they're wrong. Nothing that happens in South America has any real chance of significantly reducing the cocaine problem in North America.

The mid-February "drug summit" in Cartagena was only the most recent media event promoting the fantasy theme of solving our drug problem offshore. Since the president's Oval Office address of last September applauding increased anti-cocaine efforts by the Colombian government, there has been a series of what the drug czar's latest strategy document calls "successes." The Colombian government "declared war" on the Medellín cartel. Several major South American dealers were indicted or extradited, and one was killed in a shoot-out with police. The Defense Department announced a billion dollar effort against drug smuggling. Manuel Noriega, reclassified from CIA asset to national menace when his drug-dealing activities came to light, moved his headquarters from the presidential palace in Panama City to the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Miami.

None of this, alas, had any perceptible effect on the U.S. cocaine market. A kilogram in Miami still costs about what it did a year ago (roughly \$16,000), and retail crack markets continue to spread to new neighborhoods and new cities.

Some legislators have responded to this disappointing news by berating the administration for not doing enough to stop the drug flow, or doing the wrong things. But that criticism is misplaced; stopping the drug flow is like stopping the tide. Neither of the two goals of the "international supply reduction" strategy—creating a physical shortage of cocaine or increas-

ing its import price enough to force consumption down—is achievable.

Consider the prospects for creating a long-term physical shortage, by eradicating and seizing so much cocaine that U.S. demand can't be satisfied. Cocaine isn't scarce and can't be made scarce. The State Department puts total production last year at 775 tons, more than triple current U.S. consumption. If increased seizures or increased demand threatened a shortage, farmers and refiners could always grow and process more cocaine.

The attempt to create a short-term shortage is frustrated by the fact that everyone in the cocaine business holds large inventories. In one recent six-week period, U.S. domestic law enforcement agencies seized more than forty tons of cocaine, about a two-month supply for the entire country. The vast bulk of that was concentrated in four large caches. Yet there was no shortage of cocaine. There must be even larger inventories in South America; the stuff is cheap to make, and no trafficker wants to be out of stock when a customer calls.

Thus we can't create a shortage because Adam Smith is more powerful than William Bennett. That leaves us with the goal of increasing prices. If more enforcement could impose very heavy costs on drug dealers, prices might rise enough to reduce abuse substantially—for drug consumption, like consumption of anything else, does respond to price. Even if some existing users will pay almost anything (most of them will not), new users certainly won't. Unfortunately, there's no reason to believe that anything done offshore could have much impact on domestic retail prices.

Refined cocaine is only a raw material in the cocaine dealing business—and a cheap raw material at that. Of the five dollar retail price of a rock of crack cocaine, only about fifty cents goes to growers, processors, and importers. The rest—ninety percent of the total—is added after the drug reaches the United States. That \$4.50 in wholesale and retail markups isn't much influenced by conditions in the Andes or by seizures on the high seas or at points of entry. Even a doubling of import prices wouldn't much change the drug scene as viewed from the streets of Los Angeles, New York, or Washington.

Nor do any of the four currently fashionable approaches to increasing the price of cocaine imports—eradication, substitution, pre-emptive buying, or interdiction—have any prospect of doubling import prices. Eradication is cheap (\$21 million) but largely futile: existing growers can always grow more coca. That's just as true for techno-thriller approaches such as releasing coca-eating caterpillars as for the more old-fashioned chop-and-spray techniques. In addition, new growers can enter the market by opening new areas to cultivation; the Colombian lowlands and the Amazon basin of Brazil have already been added to the Andean highlands as coca-growing regions because of eradication attempts and increased demand. Farther afield, Indonesia's role as the major supplier of coca for licit pharmaceutical cocaine between World War I and World War II shows that the range of *Erythroxylon coca* is not

limited to South America. As long as the customer base is there, the financial awards of growing coca will assure that there will always be a supply to meet the demand despite any costs imposed by eradication efforts.

Crop substitution—offering coca growers incentives and technical assistance to grow non-drug crops—is another popular idea. Anything we can do to improve the ability of South American peasant farmers to earn an honest living is to be applauded, but providing alternatives isn't the same as reducing the supply of cocaine for the export trade.

Even at current prices, coca yields more revenue per hectare than any licit crop. Some farmers, given the choice, will leave the coca trade, but their greedier neighbors won't. And unfortunately, many of the technologies taught by crop-substitution experts are useful when applied to illicit as well as licit species. For instance, attempts in Thailand throughout the seventies to introduce drip irrigation and terrace farming to help farmers substitute rice for poppy led to the development of drip-irrigated, terrace-farmed poppy fields. By the same token, better roads built to encourage orange-growing make it that much easier to get coca to the airport.

Buying the coca crop, a perennial favorite despite a disastrous experience with Burmese opium in the sixties, sounds plausible only until someone asks what is to keep the farmers from growing twice as much coca and selling us half. Whatever the price announced for the official buy, refiners only have to offer to pay a little more to ensure their sources of supply. As both the European Community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture can testify, agricultural price supports are a reliable way to generate bumper crops. Buying refined cocaine instead of raw leaf runs into the same problem: somebody can always make more.

The fourth major international supply control strategy, and the one on which we now spend nearly \$3 billion per year, is interdiction: capturing bulk drug shipments on their way north. The effectiveness of seizures in increasing price depends on how expensive it is for cocaine importers to replace the drugs lost to enforcement. For high-seas and port-of-entry seizures, replacing their merchandise costs them only about \$2,000 per kilo—that is what cocaine sells for leaving the dock in Colombia. To this one must add the costs to importers of using more expensive smuggling techniques to avoid seizures. But it's hard to see how the replacement costs and additional smuggling expense associated with even a doubling of current interdiction efforts could make more than a few hundred million dollars' worth of impact on the \$20 billion to \$30 billion U.S. cocaine trade. That ratio of additional cost to current price suggests a price change of five percent or less: twenty-five cents added to the price of that five dollar rock.

It may seem incredible that in the high-tech nineties we can't keep drugs out of the country. But tens of thousands of vessels and vehicles and millions of people and heaven knows how many containers of everything from cars to blue jeans cross the U.S. border every

month. It is obvious by now that we can't keep illegal aliens out, and an alien is substantially harder to hide than a kilogram of cocaine.

Since the value of a kilogram of cocaine goes from a couple of thousand dollars as it leaves Colombia to more than \$10,000 as it reaches the United States, individuals and organizations will expend ingenuity, time, money, and risk to get the powder in, as long as there are customers with money and a distribution system to deliver the drugs to them. Like Star Wars, interdiction is an offense-defense game that the defense is guaranteed to lose.

In fact, interdiction actually makes the situation worse in South America by forcing U.S. importers to buy more cocaine from Colombian exporters—the Medellín and Cali cartels and their competitors—to replace seized drugs. Every time we seize a kilogram of cocaine, someone in Colombia sells another kilogram to the importers. From the viewpoint of the South American drug lords, a kilogram seized is about as good as a kilogram snorted or smoked. Last year seizures accounted for about a quarter of all the cocaine shipped north.

If source control and interdiction won't work, what will? Legalization, the latest fad? Only if you either (1) imagine that making a product much more safe and convenient to buy and cutting its price by ninety percent won't have a huge impact on its consumption, or (2) don't care how many heavy crack users there are. (See "Crackdown" by James Q. Wilson and John J. DiIulio Jr., *TNR*, July 10, 1989.) Biomedical research? Only if you think that the root of the national drug crisis is insufficient knowledge about neurotransmitter chemicals and receptor sites. Treatment and prevention? Maybe, if we knew more about how to do them.

The one area of anti-drug effort that now gets almost no federal money is the point of contact between the drug distribution system and the drug user: the dealer on the street. The size of the cocaine problem in a city or neighborhood depends not on the state of the world cocaine market, but on how many retail dealers choose to make that city or that neighborhood their marketplace and how blatantly they feel they can safely hawk their wares. That in turn depends partly on retail-level law enforcement (and hardly at all on foreign source control).

State and local governments have been pouring more and more resources—police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections—into enforcing the drug laws, mostly at the retail level. As a result, many local systems are choking on drug cases. Corrections capacity (cells and "alternatives" alike) is in particularly short supply; local systems are catching more drug dealers than they have room for. The federal government, which has provided lots of cheerleading but not much money, could usefully donate some of the billions it now spends failing to keep drugs out of the country to expanding local criminal-justice systems.

But all of the political pressures push the other way. The ACLU doesn't like street-level enforcement because it means building more prisons. Police and prosecutors

don't like it because chasing Mr. Big is more glamorous, less grubby, and safer. Republicans don't like it because it costs money and doesn't go bang. The president doesn't like it because it means spending federal revenues on state and local programs. Voters don't like it because it means putting a prison or halfway house in somebody's neighborhood. Against all of these disadvantages, increasing our capacity to punish retail drug dealers has a single advantage: some hope of actually reducing the impact of drug dealing on our lives.

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Canada's constitutional crisis.

TONGUE TIED

By Andy Stark

In Canada whenever politicians want to avoid talking about the substance of an issue, they generally adopt one of two postures: call them the "sincere" and the "courageous." John Turner, until recently the leader of the Liberal Opposition, leans toward sincerity: his election speeches attacking the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement were thick with emotion-charged avowals like, "I have never cared more passionately about an issue" and "this is the fight of my life." Thus, in reviewing one Turner performance, a Toronto columnist declared that although Turner was "wrong on many counts," he nevertheless spoke with "sincere conviction"; a recent headline in the *Ottawa Citizen* announced, "TURNER GOES ON THE ATTACK, BUT SINCERELY." Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, by contrast, often opts for the courageous approach: in defending his government's new scheme for a national sales tax, Mulroney habitually dwells on the proposal's unpopularity before concluding with something like, "We haven't decided to take this initiative because it's popular; we're doing it because it's right." The sincere politician makes his case by telling you how much he believes in what he's saying, the courageous politician by telling you how few believe in what he's saying. Both approaches disguise the real issues at stake.

Such has been the case in the current Canadian "constitutional crisis." On June 23, 1987, Mulroney and the premiers of Canada's ten provinces agreed on an important package of constitutional amendments. To be ratified, the "Meech Lake Accord," as it is called, requires the approval of the national Parliament and each