

'30 Percent of U.S. Supply'

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S.E. Asia Heroin 'Up'

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WASHINGTON — (AP) — Federal narcotics officials are revising sharply upward their estimates of the amount of heroin Southeast Asian countries supply to the United States.

New estimates from the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD) say 30 percent of the 6.5 to 10 tons of illicit heroin entering the country annually originates in Southeast Asia.

In congressional testimony and in other public statements, federal officials previously have estimated Southeast Asian countries accounted for between 5 and 15 percent of the heroin sold to the 500,000 or more addicts in the U.S.

For example, in August,

retired Marine Gen. Lewis Walt cited official estimates in reporting to a Senate committee that "Southeast Asian heroin accounts for no more than 10 to 15 percent of the total traffic coming into this country."

Walt, a former U.S. Marine commander in Vietnam, noted Southeast Asia is one of the world's most important opium growing areas and said it will become "an increasingly important source of illicit opiates now that Turkey is phasing out legal production." Heroin is produced from opium.

The BNDD report said its figures on the sources of heroin sold in the United

States came from identification of traffickers. BNDD said 60 percent of the heroin sold to U.S. addicts originated in the Near East and another 10 percent in Mexico.

Last June, Alfred McCoy, a Yale University graduate student who spent months in Southeast Asia doing research on drug trafficking, told a Senate appropriations subcommittee that top South Vietnamese leaders control their nation's illegal drug trade.

The State Department replied:

"We are aware of these charges but we have been unable to find any evidence to substantiate them, much less proof."