

George Soros Was Not Happy

Dean Andromidas reports from Vienna on the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Part 2 of 2.

The British Empire has declared war on the war on drugs. This was made manifest at the High Level Segment of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna, March 11-12, for heads of state and government ministers. The CND is the policy-setting body of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN's drug- and crime-fighting arm, backed by the vast majority of the UN member-states. The Vienna meeting was the group's 52nd session.

Part 1 of this article ("The Queen Does Push Drugs," *EIR*, March 20, 2009) was a report on how the British government delegation at the High-Level meeting was working hand-in-glove with the gaggle of pro-legalization and pro-drug-use "no good organizations" (NGOs), financed by the mega-speculator and drug-pusher George Soros. This included allowing a Soros- and British government-financed NGO, the International Network of People Who Use Drugs (INPUD), to speak at one of the roundtable discussions during the time allotted to the official British delegation, thus, de facto, speaking in the name of the British government.

To be sure, the shenanigans of Soros's foot soldiers were not welcome. Like horse flies, they harassed the conference attendees, the vast majority of whom were national government officials deeply involved in the struggle against the criminal empire of Dope, Inc. The attendees included people engaged in the dangerous fight against criminal gangs that, in many cases, are more powerful than the governments of the countries they target, and also the medical and social workers who struggle to bring the millions of addicts back into the productive world. The idea of legalization and drug promotion is anathema to these people.

The tone of the conference was set by Antonio Maria Costa, the director general of UNODC. In his keynote



speech, "Drug Crime Is a Threat to Development and Security," Costa said that the drug trade has created a "criminal market of macroeconomic size," with an estimated value of \$300 billion a year, a figure he later said was likely too low an estimate. "If it were a country, its GNP would be listed as 21st in the world," he said.

The danger the drug trade poses to society should not be underestimated, Costa warned: "The drug economy is more than just mafia cartels buying estates, businesses and aircraft. They also buy officials, elections, and parties. In a word, they buy power." Attacking those who call for legalization with the claim that the crime associated with illegal drug trafficking is more harmful than the drugs, Costa said bluntly, "Drugs are not harmful because they are controlled; they are controlled because they are harmful." To lift controls on drugs would "reveal a state's impotence to fight organized crime or protect the health of its citizens," he said. "A policy change is needed against crime, not in favor of drugs."

Laying out a plan of attack, which was also embodied in the conference's Political Declaration, Costa said: "Drug markets (and their mafias) are integrated in their logistics, financing, marketing and bribery power. They do not stop at borders. Governments need to do the same."

Costa called for a much more integrated approach, starting with programs to attack the supply. In this respect, he pointed to the establishment of multi-national regional intelligence centers and task forces, in the Balkans, West Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, and Southeast Asia. Second, he said, is tackling demand reduction, launching inner-city development projects, in much the same way that crop substitution and economic development are used in the regions where drugs are grown.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks is financing. With a minuscule budget of \$300 million, which has declined in real terms in recent years, the UNODC must fight a criminal empire of at least \$300 billion, “a crime monster 1,000 times our size,” Costa said.

Costa distanced himself from the Soros formula of so-called “harm reduction,” which pushes legalization and promotion of drugs. In answer to a question at his press conference, Costa said: “Harm reduction must be part of an integrated approach to the reduction of drug abuse. It cannot be at the expense of other measures. . . . The reduction of drug demand begins with ‘A,’ abstinence, including prevention and treatment and harm reduction. It should not stop with ‘H’ [harm reduction].”

On the issue of Dope, Inc. laundering its billions through the financial system, with the help of the banks, Costa replied to a question by this reporter: “Now we have unfortunately a financial crisis, which means illiquidity of the of the banking sector. Which means banks not being willing to lend to one another, which means shares and stock values of the banking sector collapsing to a dollar, the price of a hamburger. So what happens? Obviously, any rescue operation is welcome and we have seen, we have heard, we have some evidence of the banks not being as careful in applying the ‘know thy client’ policy. . . . Not many questions are asked when people come with assets.”

The same issue was taken up in the CND Political Declaration, which calls for “the effective and comprehensive implementation of regimes for countering money-laundering and improving international cooperation, including judicial cooperation . . . to prevent, detect and prosecute such crimes, dismantle criminal organizations and confiscate their illicit proceeds.”

Epicenter: Afghanistan

How to tackle the epicenter of opium production, Afghanistan, was at the center of concern at the conference. Afghanistan produces 90% of the world’s opium and heroin (see **Figure 1**). The war in Afghanistan, fueled by the billions generated by the the dope trade, has been a key British imperial tool to destabilize a region that extends deep into Central Asia, the Russian Federation, and Southwest and West Asia. While most of Afghanistan’s heroin and opium is destined for Russia and Europe, it has also caused serious addiction problems in Iran and other neighboring countries.

In response to a question during his press conference, Costa said that Afghanistan has produced “twice



EIRNS/Dean Andromidas

Antonio Maria Costa, the Director General of the UNODC, addresses the Vienna meeting. He repudiated the “harm reduction” sophistry which Soros and others are using to try to legalize dope.

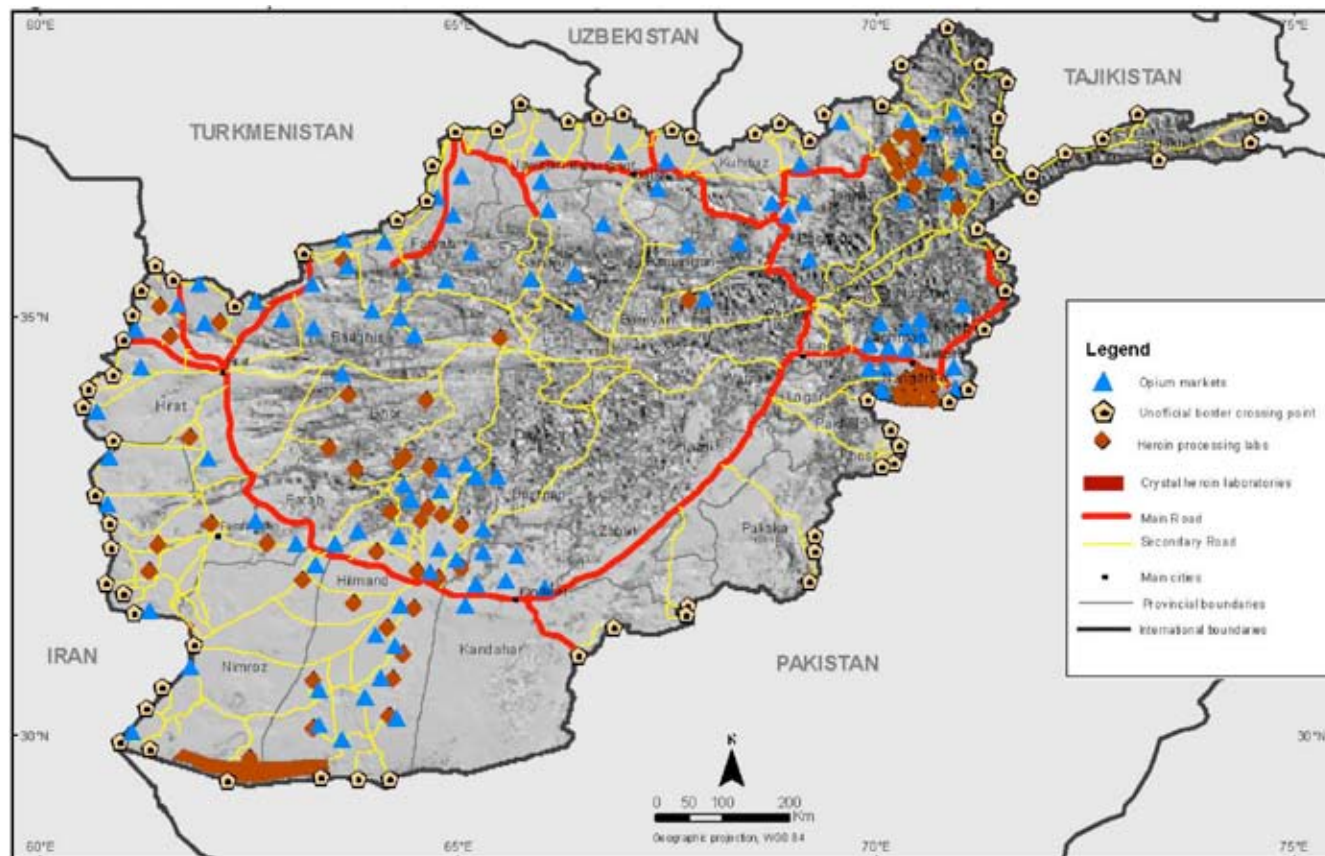
the amount of drugs being used worldwide, twice the amount of opium needed for the demand of drug addicts, which means the market is over supplied, which means the market is not demand driven, it is supply driven, which means somebody’s the engine between demand and supply.”

Pointing to insurgency as that engine, Costa said: “There are political motivations behind it. There are political motivations in terms of funding the logistics of insurgency in Afghanistan. The Taliban and whoever else, fighting the government of President [Hamid] Karzai. . . . We have drugs and insurgencies. . . . Not only in Afghanistan, but drugs, crime, violence, insurgencies, and terrorism.” This is the case in general, he said. “I know of no terrorist organization . . . that need not find itself financed at least in part from drugs.”

In a breakthrough in dealing with the Afghan drug problem, Costa announced the first joint Afghan-Iran-Pakistan anti-drug operation, conducted only a few days before the Vienna conference opened. This was the fruit of a three-year effort by the three countries, supported, financially and technically, by the UNODC, to establish a strong cooperative regime to stop the flow of drugs from Afghanistan into Iran and on to Europe. Shortly before this latest operation, the three nations established a joint headquarters in Tehran.

FIGURE 1

Locations of Opium Markets, Heroin Processing Labs, and Unofficial Border Crossings in Afghanistan



UNODC report, "Illicit Drug Trends in Afghanistan," 2008.

It is this type of cooperation which Lyndon LaRouche has called for as crucial to stopping the drugs, and therefore stopping the war, in Afghanistan.

The Iranian government’s Drug Control Headquarters had a display booth at the conference, illustrating its ambitious program to stop the drug flow from Afghanistan. Sharing a contiguous border with both Afghanistan and Pakistan, stretching over 1,300 kilometers, Iran is a major transshipment country. Heroin and opium are shipped from Afghanistan into Pakistan, and then through the Balochistan Desert, a huge expanse that straddles the borders of Iran and Pakistan. The heroin is put into the stomachs of camels, which can hold as much as 25 kilos, or human couriers, whose stomachs can hold 1 kilo.

To stem the flow, Iran has taken unprecedented measures. Most dramatic has been to build 1,000 km of barriers along almost the entire border between Iran and Pakistan and Afghanistan. This includes 826 km of em-

bankments, 717 km of canals, 131.8 km of barbed wire fences, plus concrete walls and the blocking of passageways—at a cost of more than \$600 million. Command posts are built periodically along the barrier, so that it is constantly being patrolled. The danger is acute; more than 250 border guards have been killed in the last year.

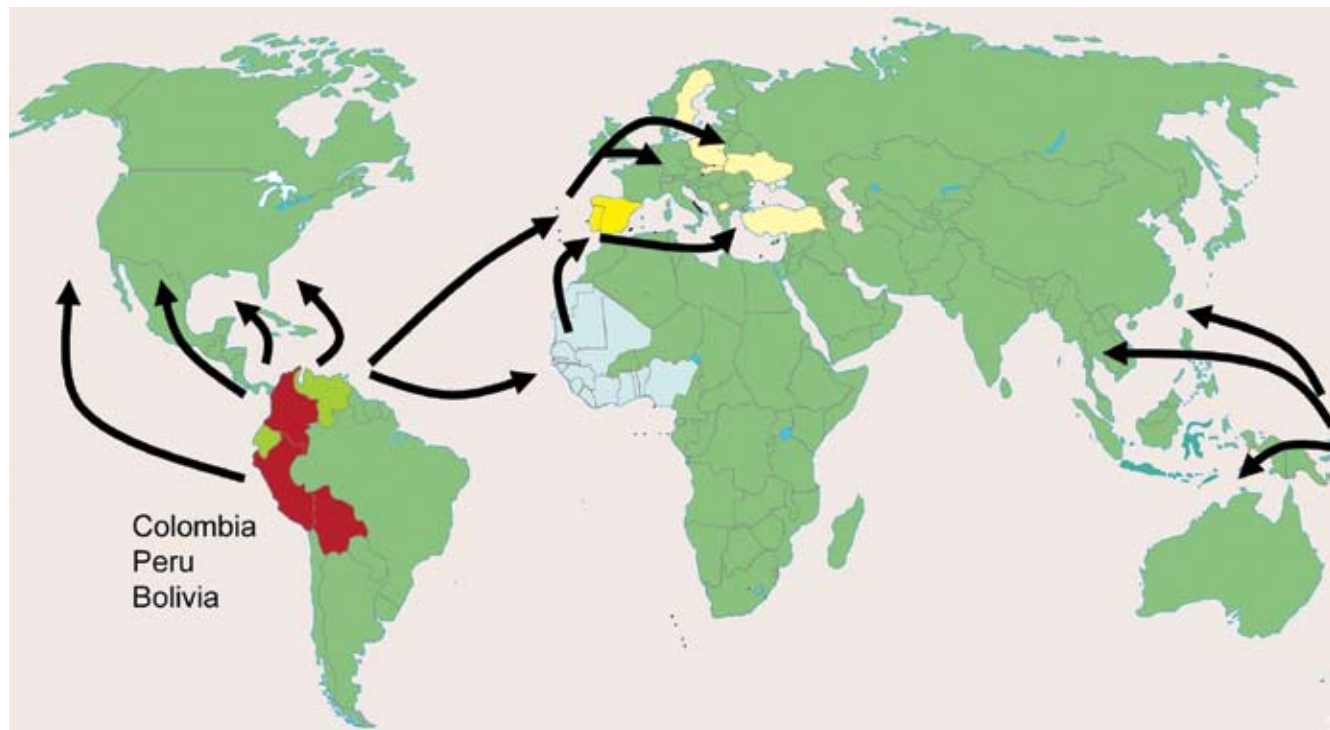
At the same time that Iran is fighting to stop the narcotics flowing into Europe, the country itself is being targeted by amphetamine-type stimulants which are illegally manufactured in Europe and then smuggled into Iran, adding to Iran’s already considerable addiction problem. Having more than 1 million addicts, Iran maintains a high-level treatment program. Over 600,000 addicts have been registered, and are undergoing some form of treatment and rehabilitation.

Africa Under Attack

Dope, Inc. has targeted Africa as a major transshipment point for cocaine into Europe. Mexico’s

FIGURE 2

Cocaine Trafficking Routes



Source: DEA, EIR.

Prosecutor General Eduardo Medina Mora, who joined Costa at the press conference, pointed out that the successful closure of the traditional Caribbean route for shipping drugs into the United States is one reason that the situation along the Mexico-American border has become so critical: It is one of the only routes left open to the cartels for shipping into the United States. At the same time, the cartels have begun to flood Europe with cocaine via Africa, especially West Africa (see **Figure 2**).

Costa reported: “I said already last year ... that Africa is under attack. West African cocaine trafficking from across the ocean, from the Andes, from Colombia, and from Venezuela. And East Africa as well, from opium trafficking across the Gulf and across the Red Sea, coming from Pakistan, coming from Afghanistan. It is a very dramatic situation that West African countries are facing. We called the attention of the world to this problem in 2004, and nobody paid any attention. We are now paying the price of neglect of that call.”

Giving the numbers, Costa pointed out that drug seizures in Africa have been escalating exponentially, year by year, from a few hundred kilos a few years ago, to eight tons last year, which he said shows that “there is

obviously a very clever plan by organized crime to take advantage of the very vulnerable conditions of these countries.” Pointing to the open borders, unprotected coasts and air space, as well as the ease of bribing police, customs officials, and politicians in an impoverished region, Costa emphasized that for Africa, the concerns are not just the drugs, which are consumed in Europe. A major concern is security, and in this regard, he called on the UN Security Council, which until now has not dealt with the drug issue, to begin playing a role.

Costa pointed out, “When mafia can buy, as ... I said, business, land, aircraft, but also elections and candidates and political parties and power, I am afraid that the consequences can only be highly destabilizing. We [would] welcome the intervention of the Security Council.”

Costa said that the UNODC has already begun pulling together a multilateral task force of African countries, but he will be pressing the Europeans, in particular, to provide funding, “so that there is another line of control before the drugs get into Europe, another line of control which would protect, first, the countries in the region, and second, Europe.”

If Soros’s intention was to sabotage the conference, his efforts failed.