

United Nations report blasts the drug lobby

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

The annual report of the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board for 1997, which was released in late March, has broken important ground, in identifying the causes behind the growth of drug production and abuse. Although the report maintains the form of objective reporting, the material it has assembled documents quite conclusively, that drugs are not a sociological phenomenon. Given the importance of this report, and the fact that it is not generally circulated to a broad public, the following review will include substantial quotes from the text itself.

The most important points made by the report, whether explicitly or implicitly, are the following: 1) that war conditions are ideal for production, trafficking, transshipment, and abuse of drugs; 2) that countries which have most recently been assaulted by the drug mafia, are those whose economies had been destroyed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shock therapy policies; 3) that financial institutions, banks and non-banking alike, are complicit in narcotics trafficking; 4) that effective anti-drug measures by sovereign governments do lead to the desired results; 5) that experiments with legalization, such as free needle distribution, have failed utterly; and, 6) that the main obstacle to effective anti-drug actions, is the growing legalization lobby, especially in Europe and the United States.

1. War breeds drugs

This is the message that emerges from Chapter 3, "Analysis of the World Situation," which canvasses each continent with respect to "major developments," "treaty adherence," "regional cooperation," "national legislation, policy and action," and "cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse." In Africa, for example, both Sierra Leone and Angola, which have been ravaged by war, have become major centers of production and transshipment of drugs. "Angola is a major center for the transshipment of cocaine. Direct flights connecting Luanda with Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon are frequently used for the transportation of illicit drugs." The report states: "African drug-trafficking organizations took advantage of the



Opium poppy cultivation in Pakistan. While the drug legalizers claim that the war on drugs cannot be won, in fact there has been significant progress, where serious efforts have been undertaken. The UN reports notable successes in narcotics interdiction as a result of cooperation between India and Pakistan.

civil war in order to expand their operations in Angola.” As a result, “The Board encourages the Government of Angola to strengthen customs controls at its airports and seaports, as well as the control of its border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to request international assistance to that end.”

Not only has Angola been involved in trafficking, but, “As a consequence of the illicit transit traffic in cocaine, the abuse of that drug is on the rise in Angola. As there are no statistics on drug abuse in Angola, the Board encourages the Government to undertake an assessment of the drug abuse situation and to develop prevention programs.”

Sierra Leone has been found to be involved in the production of psychotropic substances as well. “There are continuing reports on the illicit traffic in and abuse of stimulants (ephedrine, pemoline, amphetamine and amphetamine derivatives) from several countries in the region, mainly in western Africa.” In 1996, the report “drew attention to the fact that the quantities of ephedrine imported by some African States seemed to be excessive. The import of such large amounts of ephedrine has continued; for example, in 1996, over 4 tons of ephedrine were imported into Sierra Leone from one Asian country alone and, in 1997, orders of ephedrine totalling over 5.6 tons were placed from Sierra Leone, with the consent of the national competent authorities.” Such quantities cannot be justified by medicinal requirements. Thus, “The Board urges Governments in Africa to evaluate their real medical needs for ephedrine and invites WHO

In this section

The U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, directed by Gen. Barry McCaffrey (ret.), released its 1998 “National Drug Control Strategy,” an annual report mandated by Congress, in March. For the second year in a row, the document called for a concerted effort to “counter attempts to legalize marijuana.” It also denounced the scheme for introducing marijuana legalization through the back door, by permitting hemp cultivation—an idea associated with George Soros.

McCaffrey’s campaign has received support from an unexpected quarter: the United Nations. In this *Feature* package, Muriel Mirak-Weissbach reports on the UN’s newly released annual survey of the international drug traffic. It provides extensive documentation of some of the trends that *EIR* has previously identified (see “Britain’s Dope, Inc. Grows to a \$521 Billion Business,” July 26, 1996; “George Soros: Drug Pusher for the Queen,” Aug. 29, 1997).

We also publish situation reports on the drug crisis in Russia and Australia, and an interview with the National Secretary of the Australian Federal Police Association, Luke Cornelius.

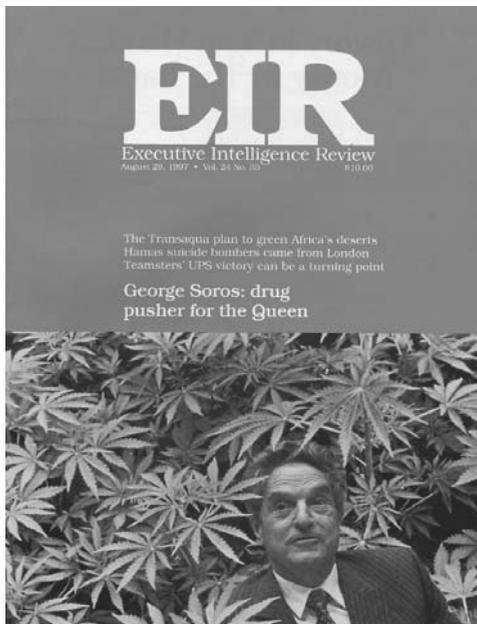
George Soros and the international dope lobby

In our cover story of Aug. 29, 1997, *EIR* documented the role of international speculator George Soros, banker to Queen Elizabeth II, in promoting drugs and drug legalization around the world. Here are some highlights:

- Soros, in recent years, has funneled at least \$15 million to the Drug Policy Foundation, a group devoted to the legalization of drugs. He created his own drug legalization lobby, the Lindesmith Center, in the headquarters of his Open Society Institute in New York City, at an initial cost of \$5 million. He has poured undisclosed millions from his personal fortune into a number of state ballot initiatives, in an effort to legalize “medical” use of narcotics.

The Soros-funded Americans for Medical Rights group is now preparing new ballot initiatives to legalize “medical marijuana” in Colorado, Maine, Alaska, and Washington, D.C.

- In Ibero-America, Soros is a leading financier of the drive to legalize cocaine. For example, he bankrolled



a meeting on Oct. 8-9, 1997, in the Colombian city of Medellín, for the purpose of pushing drug legalization. Participants included representatives of the Drug Policy Foundation. Soros is also a principal funder of Human Rights Watch/Americas, which specializes in attacking those national forces deployed against the drug cartels—especially the armed forces.

- The “Burma Project,” in which Soros’s Open Society Institute is a partner, with the British Crown, is attempting to topple the current military government in Myanmar. As the U.S. National Narcotics Intelligence Consumer’s Committee (NNICC) pointed out in a report released in September

1997, the Myanmar government is having significant success in closing down the production of opium and heroin in the Golden Triangle, bordering Thailand, Laos, and China. The campaign by Soros and the British is aimed precisely at preventing that. (See *EIR*, Sept. 26, 1997.)

[World Health Organization] to assist them in the fulfillment of that task.”

In Asia, the UN report points to Myanmar and Cambodia, which have emerged from a long period of strife; both countries have reportedly been used for cultivation. Opium poppy is grown in Myanmar, where heroin is also produced. In Cambodia, the UN mission visiting in 1997 found increased drug trafficking, transit activities, and also money-laundering. The reasons were war-related: “Strong measures against drug abuse and trafficking in neighboring countries have led traffickers to move their operations to Cambodia, taking advantage of its weak legislative, enforcement, and administrative structures and scarce resources resulting mainly from decades of war and political instability. International seizure reports indicate increasing illicit cultivation of cannabis and transit trafficking in heroin in Cambodia. The clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine is likely to take place. Attempts to import large quantities of ephedrine into the country for such illicit purposes must therefore be investigated by national authorities.”

But the most alarming situation reported in the study, is certainly that in Afghanistan, which is the theater of a massive insurgency carried out by the Taliban forces. The UN report notes with satisfaction, that several of the newly independent republics in central Asia have become parties to the three main international anti-drug treaties. But this “promising development,” which includes cooperation among these states for cross-border anti-drug operations, has no echo in Afghanistan. On the contrary, during 1997, Afghanistan became a leading opium producer.

“In Afghanistan, due to civil war, political turmoil and lack of administrative structures, large-scale illicit opium poppy cultivation, opium production and heroin manufacture continue. Largely as a result of the increase of 25% in the opium yield in 1997 in Afghanistan, opium production in southwest Asia now exceeds that in southeast Asia. A ban has recently been issued on poppy cultivation, opium production, and heroin manufacture. For the time being, the extent to which the illicit traffic can be reduced depends mainly on the law enforcement services of neighboring countries of Af-

ghanistan and the extent to which they are able to stop, or at least hinder, the flow of illicit opium and morphine from Afghanistan into or through their territories. There are also some clandestine heroin laboratories operating in Afghanistan, but most are in other countries in the region. In Pakistan, the easy availability and low prices of heroin have resulted in its abuse becoming even more widespread than before.”

In addition, the illicit heroin manufacturing, which continues in West Asia, depends in large part on opium supplied to laboratories from Afghanistan. Afghanistan itself has such laboratories, as do Pakistan and Turkey. The acetic anhydride required to convert opium into heroin, comes from Europe, and also from Asia, smuggled through Myanmar.

The report continues, to document that Afghanistan is also the area of widespread cultivation and abuse of cannabis: “Afghanistan is one of the largest producers of cannabis resin in the world. There is a high risk that in Central Asia the current levels of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse will significantly increase as a consequence of the increasing local production of illicit cannabis and opium and the influx of large amounts of cannabis resin, opium, and morphine originating in Afghanistan.” (See “Why the Afghan War Does Not End,” *EIR*, April 12, 1996.)

2. Drugs and the IMF

Drugs flood the areas devastated by IMF policies. The case for most of Ibero-America has been documented by *EIR* over the last 20 years. Now, since the collapse of communism and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the countries subjected to the IMF’s shock therapy have joined the ranks as leading clients of Dope, Inc. Although the UN report does not make any reference to the IMF or the effects of its policies, there is a direct correlation between IMF victims and countries with new drug problems. This is the case of countries in the Caucasus. Here, the report states, “The Board urges the Governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia to proceed with the adoption of new drug legislation (drafted with the assistance of [UN International Drug Control Program] UNDCP),” because of increasing narcotics flows. “There is an urgent need to implement regulatory and control measures to combat the increasing flow of illicit drugs through Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on their way from Asia to Europe and the growing drug abuse problems in those three countries.” Georgia is singled out as a special problem, in that it has not yet acceded to any of the major international treaties on narcotics controls. The Board, therefore, urges Georgia to do so.

In the whole Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), illicit opium poppy cultivation was reported. Figures on eradication show that Russia and Ukraine were major producers: “In 1996, 3,500 hectares of opium poppy were eradicated in the Russian Federation and 4,500 hectares were eradicated in Ukraine; and in the Republic of Moldova, about 4 tons of poppy straw were seized.” The report notes that “authorities

of the Russian Federation are having difficulties controlling the many (more than 100) licit manufacturers of precursors and other chemicals in Tables I and II of the 1988 Convention.” Although in 1996, new laws were passed to regulate the manufacture, export, and import of these substances, still “large amounts of acetic anhydride originating in the Russian Federation have been seized in Turkmenistan and in other Asian countries.”

Special attention is devoted to the production and abuse of poppy straw extracts in the former communist world: “The abuse of poppy straw extracts continues in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, and Ukraine; in those countries, 70-90% of the registered drug addicts abuse such extracts. In the Russian Federation, more than 500 clandestine laboratories engaged in the extraction of poppy straw were dismantled in 1996.” Since these extracts are usually consumed through injections, the spread of this form of abuse has contributed to the spread of AIDS, by massive proportions: “In the Russian Federation, the share of new HIV cases attributed to intravenous drug abuse increased from 0.3% in 1987 to 61.2% in 1996. In Poland, the rate was 67%. In Belarus and Ukraine, most of the cases involving HIV infection are attributed to intravenous drug abuse. In Ukraine, in 1996, there were about 1,000 registered overdose-related deaths as a consequence of the spread of intravenous drug abuse.”

In Russia, whose standard of living has been ravaged by the IMF policies, abuse of hard drugs, especially opiates, has skyrocketed: “In the Russian Federation, the proportion of abusers of opiates among all drug abusers increased from 1994 to 1997 from 37% to 87%. . . . According to some surveys, the number of persons abusing drugs regularly in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 2 million. In Ukraine, the number of registered drug addicts increased between 1992 and 1996 from 8,000 to 65,000. In 1996, the emergence of heroin abuse was noted in some central and eastern European countries.” In addition, there was a rise in the number of abusers of synthetic opioids in Russia, produced in clandestine laboratories, many of which were dismantled 1996, in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

As a result, the report states, the “activities of drug-trafficking and other criminal organizations are considered to be among the biggest threats to the security of the Russian Federation and they have become a major challenge to the international community.”

To appreciate the correlation between IMF economic devastation, which in turn produces the economic and social conditions for drug trafficking and abuse, and the rising statistics for these countries of the former communist bloc, it is instructive to compare this picture with the one given of other formerly communist states, which have been fighting against IMF policies. These are mainly the Central Asian Republics.

The UN report applauds Kazakhstan and Tajikistan for having joined the 1961 Convention, and notes approvingly

Glossary

Cannabis: *Cannabis sativa* is the Latin name for the marijuana plant, from which can also be produced the more powerful concentrate, known as hashish.

Diazepam: The generic name for the prescription tranquilizer, known by a common brand name, Valium.

Chlordiazepoxide: The generic name for the prescription tranquilizer, known by a common brand name, Librium.

Pemoline: The generic name for the prescription stimulant, Cylert, used to treat so-called Attention Deficit Disorder. Like the better-known Ritalin, its action is similar to the amphetamines, although both are chemically different.

Ephedrine: The active ingredient in the plant *ma-huang*, it was developed to treat sinus congestion and asthma. Amphetamines were developed as synthetic substitutes for ephedrine.

MDMA: Methylendioxy-methylamphetamine, or "Ecstasy," an extremely powerful, dangerous, and addictive synthetic hallucinogen.

that Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have made arrangements for cooperation in law enforcement along border areas. Kazakstan and Tajikistan have also adopted national programs against drugs, Turkmenistan has set up a national coordinating committee, and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have created national centers, to analyze information on drug control. UN missions were conducted to Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in April 1997, and progress made in the anti-drug effort was duly acknowledged. The UN report singles out the case of Turkmenistan, which, because of its geographical location, has become a major transit route for illegal cannabis resin, opium, and heroin from Afghanistan into Russia. Although it is by no means the case, that drug cultivation and trafficking have been eliminated in these countries, it is a fact that the governments in most of the Central Asian Republics have taken measures to contain the drug threat, and have, at the same time, mounted a significant resistance to the IMF's demands for liberalization, nationalization, and currency convertibility.

3. Role of financial institutions

Banks and other financial institutions play a central role in drug trafficking. The UN report lays great emphasis on the need for participant governments to introduce effective legislation to stop drug-money laundering, and applauds those efforts where they have been successful. At the same

time, it points out, that once banks are put under control, other institutions take over the criminal function of money-laundering: "The Board notes with concern that money-launderers continue to operate in the [Central American] region, mainly in the Caribbean, where non-bank financial institutions are increasingly being used for money-laundering purposes as the banking system is being more closely scrutinized by the authorities. There is a need to extend the monitoring system to include institutions and companies beyond the banking system."

In its treatment of the situation in Ibero-America, the UN report specifically identifies casinos, as such alternative financial institutions, or "money-laundering *front* companies."

4. The war on drugs can be won

This is the message that emerges from the UN document, which singles out a number of success stories, which have been completely blacked out by the international press. The most striking are Nigeria, Mexico, India, and Iran.

Nigeria has been targetted by British-controlled agencies worldwide, on charges of human rights violations, and operations are continuing, to destabilize this, Africa's most populous nation. One of the pressure points against the military government of Gen. Sani Abacha, has been the flow of drugs through the country. Lagos international airport has been on the black list for American travellers for years, designated as one of the most dangerous. Thus, it is doubly significant, that Nigeria has been found by the UN, to be one of the countries most successful in stopping trafficking. In its overview of Africa, the report notes, "A mission of the Board visited Nigeria in September 1997. The Board appreciates the strengthening of the import authorization system for psychotropic substances in Nigeria and the increased cooperation of the competent authorities of that country with those of exporting countries and with the Board. Those developments have contributed to the prevention of the diversion of significant amounts of psychotropic substances into illicit channels." The UN reports that "because of the tightening of controls over psychotropic substances in Nigeria, traffickers are using neighboring countries as transit points for smuggling such substances into Nigeria. During the first eight months of 1997, 715 kg of diazepam, 170 kg of chlordiazepoxide, and 260 kg of pemoline were seized by the Nigerian authorities; those were among the most significant seizures of diverted psychotropic substances worldwide." As a result, the Board "recommends the Government to further strengthen the capacity and capabilities of its law enforcement services and to continue its cooperation with the Governments of neighboring countries."

Specifically regarding airport security, the UN remarks, "In order to prevent cannabis from being illicitly cultivated and smuggled into Europe, a cannabis eradication campaign was launched by the Government of Nigeria. From January 1994 to August 1997, over 60 tons of cannabis were destroyed. The Board notes with satisfaction the continuation

of the eradication campaign.”

Another important success story is Mexico, which had become an important production and transit area for narcotics into the United States. The report states, “The Board appreciates the introduction in Mexico of a comprehensive strategy to combat illicit drug trafficking and related criminal activities, such as money-laundering and arms trafficking, and the adoption of a number of laws and regulations, as well as the action-oriented implementation of those regulatory measures.” Furthermore, it “welcomes the strengthening of the Mexican authorities responsible for the investigation of cases involving drug trafficking and related matters and for the prosecution of drug traffickers. Those measures taken by the Government of Mexico have led to the arrest of over 11,000 persons from September 1996 to August 1997 for drug trafficking and related criminal activities. Those arrested included high-ranking government and military officials.” Regarding measures against production, “Mexico continued its campaign to eradicate a significant portion of the illicit opium poppy cultivation sites on its territory, destroying about 14,600 hectares of opium poppy in 1996. In the same year, Mexican law enforcement services seized 363 kg of heroin, an increase of almost 90% over 1995; Mexican heroin (known as ‘black tar’) is smuggled into the western states in the United States.”

In India, too, positive developments have unfolded, which have even included cooperation with Pakistan. “Strict control measures and law enforcement action in India have curtailed the large-scale smuggling of methaqualone out of that country into African countries. Cooperation between national law enforcement authorities aimed at preventing the cross-border smuggling of drugs, including cooperation between India and Pakistan, has significantly increased in the region.” India is singled out for a number of anti-drug measures: “International trade in psychotropic substances is under strict control in India; however, in the other countries in South Asia, either domestic trade, distribution and dispensing of those substances are not regulated or the regulations are not adequately implemented. India is also the only country in South Asia where the manufacture, export and import of precursors are regulated; their relatively free availability in other countries in the region might result in illicit manufacturers exploiting that situation.”

India has achieved notable successes in narcotics interdiction, through increasing cooperation with Pakistan, which is both a producer and transit land. “The Board notes with satisfaction the further development of the cooperation between the authorities of India and Pakistan in the field of drug control. New zonal offices have been opened and inter-agency task forces have been created to facilitate operations involving the border between India and Pakistan in response to a recent sharp increase in the illicit traffic in heroin and cannabis resin. The two States have agreed to cooperate with each other in carrying out financial investigations related to drug-trafficking cases, in exchanging information on money-laundering activities, in establishing a mechanism for the quick exchange of information and in conducting controlled delivery operations and joint investigations.”

In addition to its cooperation with Pakistan, India’s joint work with China is also lauded.

Finally, on the legislative plane, India has earned the praise of the UN, and is presented as a model in some respects for other countries of the region. “The Board encourages the Government of India to speed up the updating of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (amendment) Act, which is needed to implement the provisions of the 1988 Convention, to which India is a party. The Board hopes that the draft bill on money-laundering and seizure of assets will be adopted soon in India. . . . India is the only country in South Asia where manufacture, export, and import of precursors are regulated; the Board urges the other countries in the region to adopt adequate legislation on precursor control.” The UN report mentions as well certain drug-abuse prevention programs “introduced in some states in India, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country, where the incidence of heroin abuse cases is high. In the opinion of the Board, a central coordinating and monitoring body would enhance the development and implementation of a policy for drug demand reduction at the national level.”

The Islamic Republic of Iran is noted, for having adopted a new law that “will enable that State to accede to the 1971 Convention.” Furthermore, the law enforcement measures undertaken by Iran, have been effective in blocking narcotics flows from the east: “The efforts by the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop the flow of illicit drugs across its border with Afghanistan have prevented the smuggling of large amounts of drugs into Europe.” The determination on the part of the current Iranian government, to fight the drug plague, has been manifest in its efforts to organize international cooperation. “The Board notes with satisfaction the organization in 1996 of the first national symposium on the prevention of drug abuse in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the enhancement of the treatment policy of the Government.”

Following the issuance of the UN’s report, Pino Arlacchi, the executive director of the UN International Drug Control Program, visited Teheran for three days in early April, to coordinate the fight against drugs. Arlacchi characterized Iran as an exemplary country, and told Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi that the UN was determined to continue cooperation with Iran, stressing the importance of such cooperation, as the UN cannot solve the problem without active support of regional forces. He highlighted the fact that Iran had unilaterally decided to end poppy seed cultivation. The talks on enhancing cooperation focussed on the need to reinforce surveillance and interdiction along the borders of Iran and Pakistan, particularly to deal with the major problem constituted by Afghanistan, which produces 80% of the drugs used in Europe. Arlacchi spoke of a ten-year plan, which had been formulated to stop production of poppy seeds and trafficking in

Afghanistan, but added that a security belt around the country had to be put in place, in the interim.

5. Free needle distribution

Experiments with free needle distribution have failed completely. The report takes into consideration in particular the programs launched with great media fanfare in Switzerland. “The Board recalls that a policy of toleration of drug abuse in public places that was pursued in major Swiss cities until the early 1990s led to increased drug trafficking and growth in the drug-abusing population. The Board expressed its concern at the time and welcomed the abandonment of that practice.” It goes on: “The Board expressed its doubts about one element of the new policy in Switzerland, namely, a project for distributing heroin to addicts, and recommended that the scientific merit of the research protocol and the results of that experiment should be evaluated by WHO. That proposal was accepted by the Government of Switzerland and by WHO.” The story of the Swiss program continues: “In July 1997, the Swiss Government made known its own evaluation of the project, under which heroin had been administered to about 1,000 heroin addicts. It claimed that, for a limited number of addicts who could not be reached by other means, the medical distribution of heroin, accompanied by health and social support services, led to some positive results. The Board is concerned that the announcement of those results and a subsequent national referendum on the Swiss drug policy have led to misinterpretations and hasty conclusions by some politicians and the media in several European countries. The Board regrets that, before the evaluation by WHO of the outcome of the Swiss experiment, pressure groups and some politicians are already promoting the expansion of such programs in Switzerland and their proliferation in other countries. The Government of the Netherlands has already submitted to the Board estimates for heroin to be used in conducting a similar project. The Board expressed the same reservations about that project as it had expressed about the Swiss project and firmly believes that no further experiments should be undertaken until the Swiss project has undergone full and independent evaluation.”

6. The drug legalization lobby

The greatest obstacle in the path of a drug-free society, is the legalization lobby. This is surely the most startling point made by the UN report. To document it, the UN has dedicated an entire chapter to the subject. In its situation report on Europe, the report notes that, “Among member States of the European Union, differences between national drug control policies as well as the ongoing promotion of the liberalization or legalization of the non-medical use of drugs, are increasingly threatening the consensus needed for meaningful measures against drug abuse and trafficking, especially in the area of demand reduction.” It “welcomes the holding of drug demand reduction campaigns in the region, but regrets that some of those campaigns have focused only on ‘harm reduc-

tion.’ The Board reiterates its opinion that ‘harm reduction’ is an important part of demand reduction but not a substitute for it; the Board greatly appreciates the main message of a mass media campaign in Spain that the idea of ‘controlled’ or ‘safe’ taking of illicit drugs is not appropriate.”

The main perpetrator of de facto drug promotion identified in the report is the Netherlands. Here is a country where companies are using the Internet to promote sales of cannabis products and seeds, a country where cannabis products are openly sold in coffee shops. The report notes that the government has begun to stiffen fines for certain amounts of such open sales, and, under international pressure, has decided to forbid cultivation of cannabis in greenhouses, etc. In the Netherlands, it reports, “180 indoor cultivation sites were detected and 500,000 cannabis plants were seized in 1996.” It is also the “main point of entry for cannabis smuggled into Europe” and “the main source of the MDMA supply in the region.”

Chapter 1 of the report is entitled, “Preventing Drug Abuse in an Environment of Illicit Drug Promotion.” It begins by stating that any attempt to reduce consumer demand must “attempt to change attitudes and behavior by tackling all environmental variables in a comprehensive manner.” It adds, immediately, that this is no mean task: “Preventing the abuse of drugs is becoming an increasingly difficult endeavor, at least partly because of the rapid and growing spread of messages in the environment that promote drug abuse. *Many of them can be regarded as public incitement and inducement to use and abuse drugs.* Therefore, present efforts at prevention need to be strengthened and innovative prevention initiatives need to be developed and implemented.”

The UN argues the obvious point, that “public health measures, to ensure a healthy society, include the prevention of drug abuse,” and emphasizes that “no form of non-medical drug use is healthy; therefore, drug abuse prevention should be seen as part of the general effort to raise the level of health in society.” It writes, “While the elimination of all forms of drug experimentation, use, and abuse will never be achieved . . . [this] should not be a reason to give up the ultimate aim of all prevention efforts, namely a drug-free society.”

Drug consumption, it explains, depends on elements related to “the biological and psychosocial factors, including personality traits, behavioral factors, and family and educational background of the individual, to the wider environment, which includes school and peer groups, and to the contextual situation, such as illicit drug promotion, drug availability, cultural norms, such as the frequency with which medicines are resorted to, economic circumstances, community disorganization, and social marginalization.” The problem arises when these factors become active promoters of consumption. “Increasing influence is being exerted by some media in terms of encouraging the initiation into drug abuse of children and adolescents, and in some instances there appears to be, if not public incitement, public inducement to use and abuse drugs.”

As the report spells out, such incitement is illegal, as it violates “Article 3 of the United Nations Convention against

Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988,” which “refers to ‘publicly inciting or inducing others, by any means, to commit any of the offences established in accordance with this article or to use narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances illicitly’ (subparagraph 1 [c] [iii]) and requires each party to establish such conduct as a criminal offense under its domestic law. The provision was included in the 1988 Convention because of concern about magazines and motion-picture films glorifying drug abuse and promoting a drug culture.”

The UN report emphasizes that “public incitement” means any action taken in public and that the provision should be very broadly interpreted, to cover not only rallies, etc., but “also incitement using any type of media, including printed, audio-visual, and electronic media. ‘By any means’ should also be understood as covering any method of incitement and inducement, such as deceit, influence, monetary inducement, or force.”

In dealing with the challenge, how to change the environment which promotes drugs, the UN addresses the problem of “popular culture” in no uncertain terms: “By far the greatest influence on many young people in developed countries, as well as in some developing countries, is the promotion or at least the tolerance of recreational drug use and abuse in popular culture, particularly in popular music. Some lyrics of songs advocate, directly or indirectly, smoking marijuana or taking other drugs and certain pop stars make statements as if the use of drugs for non-medical purposes were a normal and acceptable part of a person’s lifestyle. Popular music has quickly developed into a global industry. In most countries, the names of certain pop stars have become familiar to the members of almost every household. With such globalization of popular music, messages tolerating or even promoting drug abuse are reaching beyond their countries of origin. Therefore, the Board believes that there may be some merit in enlisting the support of pop stars, sports stars, and other popular personalities as non-drug-using role models in order to counter the multitude of messages in favor of the recreational use of illicit drugs. The Board invites Governments to contact representatives of the music and sports industries in that regard and to explore with them ways of contributing to the development of a popular culture that is against drug abuse.”

As for the media, which induce drug consumption, the report denounces those newspapers which pursue “sensationalism . . . at the expense of truth.” “Sensationalism, the desire to be provocative and the need for higher ratings, may also be behind the fact that several television companies in some countries in western Europe appear to be broadcasting many more programs in support of a change in the drug law, if not the outright legalization of drugs, particularly cannabis, than programs examining the consequences of following such a policy and the harm arising from it.”

The UN also attacks the promotion of drugs by medical magazines, which argue for the “use of cannabis” or the

“outright legalization of drugs,” thus tending to “generate an overall climate of acceptance.” The same is true of propaganda campaigns for the promotion of products made of hemp, as environmentally friendly: “The promotion of many products made from hemp (cannabis plant) is designed to further enhance the image of cannabis being a useful product, and the goods that are produced from hemp are often described as being environmentally friendly because they are made from natural substances. The products made from hemp that are currently being marketed include jackets, handbags, caps, hats, wallets, and shoes, as well as food and beverages. The use of hemp in foodstuffs and beverages further presents the image of cannabis as an innocuous, edible, or even nutritious substance. *In many instances, the use of hemp in such products is not intended to demonstrate its superiority to other natural materials that already exist; it is done for tactical reasons, to legitimize the commercial use of hemp as part of a campaign to legalize cannabis.* In their catalogues or advertising campaigns, many marketers of hemp openly admit that their objective is the legalization of cannabis, thus contributing to the overall promotion of illicit drugs.”

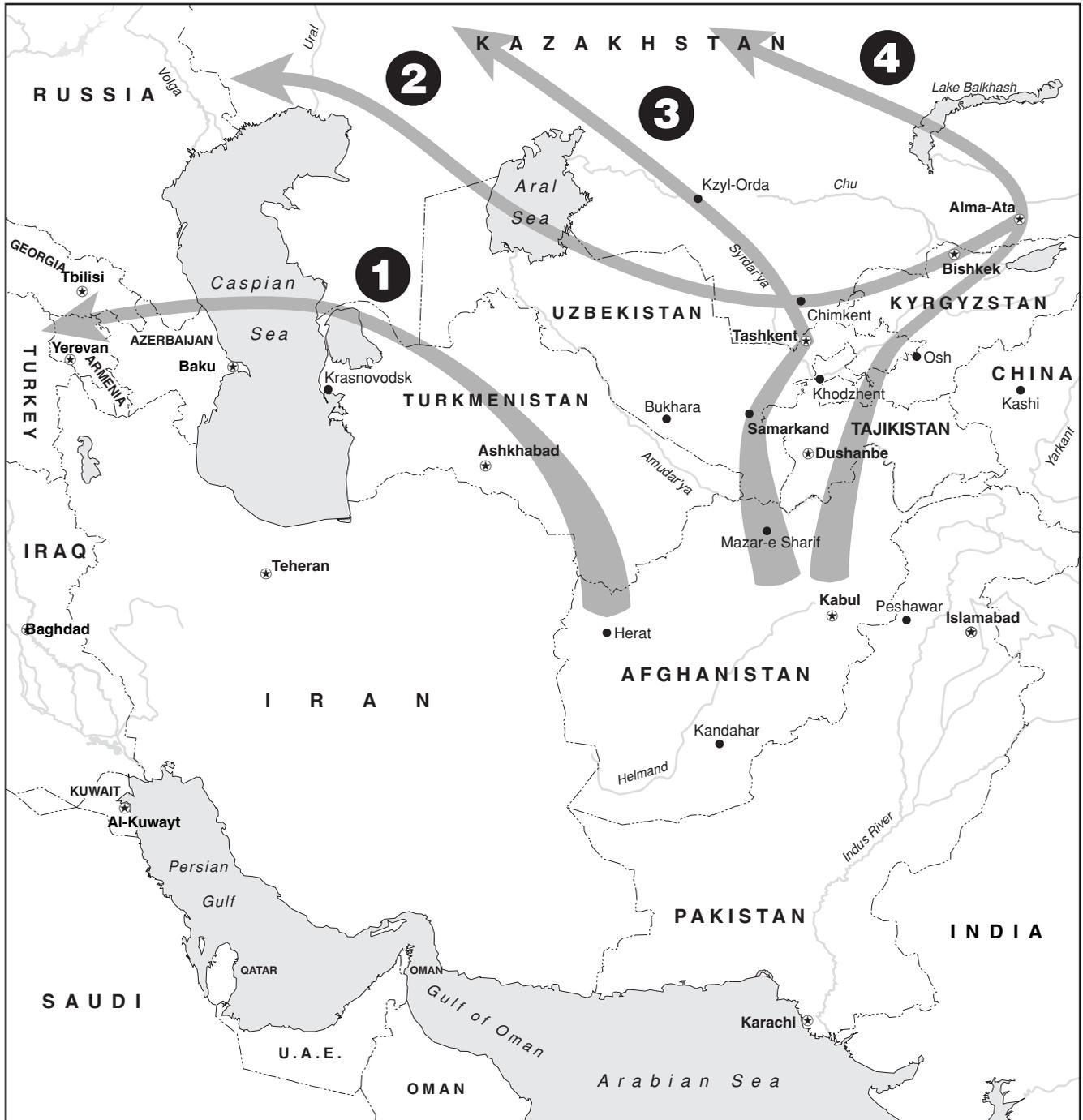
Finally, the UN report reminds governments, that, in having signed international treaties on drug prevention, they are bound to act accordingly. “Governments should play a positive, leading part in the debate and should not leave the advocacy role only to those who wish to bring about change. Drug issues which are of concern to and which will affect the majority of people should be the subject of a balanced debate, one that will allow those who are not persuaded by the calls for drug legalization to put forward their views. Scattered evidence from public opinion polls suggests that the majority of people are not in favor of any form of such legalization. The debate, unfortunately, has been taken over by a small number of activists who support some form of drug legalization.”

The report is explicit in stating that adherence to the 1988 Convention, means taking action “to make the incitement or inducement to take drugs a criminal offense.” Pointing to the fact that “Prominent people have issued some very public calls to take drugs and have not been prosecuted,” the report comments that “*This flagrant refusal by Governments to implement an international convention to which they are signatories is almost hypocritical.*”

By the same token, the Board urges governments to take measures leading to reducing demand for narcotics.

Clearly, the responsibility for drug prevention, and interdiction lies with sovereign governments, and no supranational entity, like the UN, can, or should, usurp that responsibility. That said, it must be emphasized, that the report issued for 1997 by the UN International Narcotics Control Board, has provided a useful service, in laying bare the inconsistencies between commitments made by governments to cooperate against narcotics internationally, and capitulation to or complicity with the drug legalization lobby.

Heroin and opium trail through Central Asia



This map is reproduced from EIR's April 12, 1996 article on "Dope, Inc.'s Afghan Harvest." As the UN's recent report documents, opium production increased fully 25% in Afghanistan in 1997.

Route 1: Opium from Afghanistan to Turkey, for processing into heroin. **Route 2:** Heroin from Afghanistan and Tajikistan to western Europe, through Estonia and Latvia. **Route 3:** Heroin from Afghanistan through Uzbekistan to western Europe, via Moscow and Tallinn, Estonia. This route feeds Chechnya as well. **Route 4:** Heroin from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan to Europe, via St. Petersburg.