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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent decades, the international narcotics trade has profoundly affected the economies, social life, and political institutions of nations throughout the world. In some countries, especially in South America, narcotics syndicates have insinuated themselves in the upper reaches of the power structure, established territorial bases, altered the dynamics of national and regional power relationships, and revamped employment and foreign trade patterns. Narcotics industries and the political movements that they support are associated with the violent political and economic disintegration of states such as Lebanon, Peru, and Afghanistan. Drugs are a social catastrophe in the United States and other consuming countries, where abuse of illegal drugs drives or complicates a wide range of social ills, from violent crime to homelessness to joblessness to AIDS.

The former Soviet bloc countries occupy a vast Eurasian region stretching from Prague to Vladivostok, and they increasingly are a part of this dismal drug panorama. To be sure, Eastern Europe and the former USSR, now the loosely-federated Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to date have incurred fewer adverse consequences of drug abuse and drug trafficking than many other countries. The bloc's relative isolation from the West precluded a significant influx of Western hard drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and crack. In the Communist world's controlled economic system, small and uncoordinated narcotics traffickers found little opportunity to accumulate vast wealth. The newly liberated nations of Eastern Europe and the CIS, however, are assuming the status of an important new frontier for the illicit drug traffic. The demise of
communist totalitarianism in the East, the transition from socialist to free market economies, and access to the global economy have kindled new incentives and opportunities for organized crime, including the narcotics industry. In addition, political liberalization and the easing of social controls have spurred urban young people and many others to experiment with mind-altering substances. The rise of narcotics industries is further bolstered by the uncertain economic conditions prevailing in much of Eurasia, as well as by weak law enforcement, permissive drug laws, unprotected frontiers, and porous financial systems.

Several recent developments illustrate the volatility of the Eurasian drug front. In Poland, a sophisticated amphetamine industry with well-established international connections coalesced in the late 1980s. Czechoslovakia and Hungary have become significant way stations for moving Turkish-controlled heroin into Western Europe. Colombian trafficking families established front organizations and courier networks in Eastern Europe, facilitating the penetration of Western European markets. A drugs-for-weapons link may have precipitated the initial stages of Yugoslavia's disintegration. The former Soviet Union is emerging as an important network of drug-producing and drug-consuming nations. Moscow's weakening (and now virtually nonexistent) hold over former Soviet Central Asia and that region's bleak economic prospects directly correlate with an apparently massive expansion of drug crop cultivation in the region. If current trends continue, Central Asia could assume the status of a significant world supplier of cannabis and opium products in the 1990s.

The Western governments have not devoted sufficient attention to such disturbing trends. Consumed by issues such as economic reform, ethnic strife, and disarmament, Western policymakers have failed to develop a coordinated
antidrug strategy that addresses this vast and awakening region. To date, the total flow of U.S., European Community (EC), and United Nations (UN) narcotics assistance to the East probably totals not more than $3 million to $4 million—and most of that sum goes to Eastern European countries along the Balkan heroin route.¹ In comparison, in FY 1991, the United States allocated almost $5 million in such aid to one relatively peripheral trafficking country, Ecuador. From Washington's standpoint, narcotics problems in the post-Communist world quite simply rank as a non-priority. For instance, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the former USSR are not even on the list of 50 drug-producing and drug-trafficking countries published in the State Department's 1991 version of its annual *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, while minor trafficking countries such as the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Nepal at least rate a page in the report. The United States has not dedicated a DEA or State Department narcotics representative for any post-Communist country. Such lapses seem shortsighted. The former Communist bloc countries collectively possess the potential to flood Western and U.S. markets during the 1990s with narcotics such as amphetamines, hashish, and opium derivatives. Furthermore, the unrestrained growth of criminal narcotics enterprises in the East threatens the integrity of Eastern economic and governmental institutions, magnifies the potential for East-West conflict, and complicates the building of a stable post-Communist order in Eurasia.

¹ Principal instances of Western aid include a $750,000 United Nations (UN) grant to the Czech Customs Service (1992), a $420,000 UN grant to Yugoslav Customs (1987), and a $280,000 British government grant to reorganize the Czechoslovak police force. Funds spent on other purposes—such as incidental equipment transfers, training programs, and exchanges—probably do not exceed $1 million to $2 million.
THE DYNAMIC EASTERN DRUG INDUSTRY

Post-Communist states offer extremely attractive possibilities for drug trafficking and for laundering of drug money. A variety of historical, attitudinal, legal, regulatory, and economic factors work to undermine drug law enforcement in these states. The legacy of Communism itself constitutes one important factor: The Communist system encouraged self-delusion if not the growth of narcotics enterprises. Former Communist leaders in the USSR and Central Europe adhered rigidly to the ideology that illegal drug trafficking is peculiar to decadent capitalist societies. As a consequence, police, public health officials, and financial authorities are largely unprepared to cope with an unfettered drug trade. As one Czechoslovak psychiatrist observed:

Under the previous government, certain social problems were purposefully ignored or simply suppressed to the point of non-recognition. Drug abuse is among those problems and just as we are learning the fine points of the free market system, we find ourselves newcomers to the role of fighting drug abuse and drug traffic.2

This political myopia permeates virtually all institutions. A narcotics official in Kyrgyzstan recalls that drug entries in crime reports prompted some members of the public to cross out the statistic with a red pencil and scrawl, "What drugs?

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We don't have a drug problem." In the former Communists states, police generally acquired little experience in investigating trafficking organizations, recognizing narcotics, and tracking the flow of drug money. Health personnel usually were not trained to identify drug addiction symptoms, furnish appropriate care, or conduct epidemiological research. Furthermore, schools, employers, families, and the media did little to educate potential users about the health hazards associated with drug abuse, reflecting the prevailing belief among Communist educational and health authorities (especially in the Soviet Union) that antinarcotics propaganda actually is counterproductive and only stimulates curiosity about drugs, particularly among the young.

Second, antiquated drug laws prevail throughout much of the post-Communist world. Drug use is not a crime in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and (as of December 1991) the Russian Federation. In Poland, penalties are not necessarily imposed for possession of large quantities of drugs. In 1989, for example, Polish police arrested three men for the sale of 17 kilograms of amphetamines, but the prosecutor could not prove that the drugs actually had changed hands. After a 2-year trial, the court dismissed the charges, although the prosecutor is appealing. By early 1992, not a single Polish amphetamine trafficker had been convicted and imprisoned by a Polish court. In Czechoslovakia, a major loophole in the current narcotics law apparently permits individuals to cultivate marijuana for botanical, horticultural, or aesthetic purposes—because "they like the shape of the leaves or the color of the flowers," as one Czechoslovakian police official

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4 Telephone interview with Polish Interpol Headquarters in Warsaw, conducted by Lee in Washington, D.C., on March 4, 1992.
stated—and marijuana seeds are freely sold in local shops. In Poland and Czechoslovakia, extradition of citizens is specifically outlawed, thus preempting a vital judicial tool for authorities confronting the essentially transnational drug trade. Finally, in many post-Communist countries, weak or nonexistent conspiracy statutes preclude bringing drug criminals to justice. Although transporting and selling narcotics and planting narcotics crops are crimes unless authorized by the government, the rules of evidence virtually require that the perpetrators be caught in the act. As a narcotics official in Uzbekistan's Ministry of Internal Affairs notes about opium cultivation, "The organizers, the growers are not here in the field; they are back in the villages and to prove their involvement is impossible under the legal system." 

Not surprisingly, the authorities themselves exhibit a relatively relaxed attitude toward illicit drugs. One Polish Interpol official commented, "Fighting drugs is a low priority for us. Prosecutors, judges and even police regard this crime in the same category as petty theft. They do not recognize that trafficking poses a threat or danger to society." 

Third, drug law enforcement suffers from a lack of broad-based citizen support. The law enforcement tactics employed during the Communist era bred a deep and pervasive popular mistrust of the police throughout Central Europe and the CIS. Criminal investigations consequently are hampered if not hamstrung by the authorities' failure to recruit citizens as informants and to identify witnesses

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5 Interview with the Czechoslovak Narcotics Commission in Prague, conducted by Lee on January 23, 1992.
6 Interview with Bern Bambayev, Transcripts, p. 12.
7 Telephone interview with Polish Interpol Headquarters in Warsaw, conducted by Lee in Washington, D.C., on March 4, 1992.
who will testify in court cases. Moreover, prosecutorial systems in countries such as Poland and Hungary offer little latitude for plea bargaining, so traffickers perceive little incentive to confess crimes, identify accomplices, or furnish details about their organizations.

Fourth, the general economic and political disarray displayed throughout the former Communist world imposes an additional constraint on drug law enforcement. For example, the Polish police budget declined 13 percent from 1990 to 1991, as the government's overall budget deficit rose more than 700 percent as a percent of GNP. The use of patrol cars reportedly is limited to 60 kilometers per day, and the police abandoned plans to modernize vehicles and purchase new car radios. Incredibly, only about 30 full-time drug enforcement police patrol the entire country, and their annual funding totals only about $100,000 to $200,000.8 In the now-defunct Soviet Union, law enforcement is characterized by chaos, especially in the Central Asian states, which depended on Moscow for much of their antidrug manpower and resources. Critical shortages are common in basic equipment such as vehicles, bulletproof vests, herbicides, computers, and typewriters. Moreover, funds are not available to rent helicopters for aerial crop surveys or eradication missions. Because drug crops increasingly are sown in mountain or desert regions that are logistically inaccessible by raid, police forces are virtually helpless to prevent the proliferation of illegal plots.

Fifth, post-Communist states unfortunately offer an inviting target for criminals who want to abuse local financial systems as a stash for narcotics earnings and funds derived from other serious crimes. The CIS and most East European states do not criminalize money laundering, and the legal system does not incorporate procedures for investigating the origin of private sector funds. Banks are not legally required to report deposits, transfers, and withdrawals, and banking authorities have no incentive to screen their clients or report suspicious transactions. In Poland, the convertibility of local currency and the absence of controls on importing and exporting foreign exchange generate additional incentives for laundering drug profits.

Although Czechoslovakia and Hungary recently passed laws to control money laundering, such laws will be difficult to implement: Western accounting procedures are relatively new, and bank regulators and their enforcement counterparts are preponderantly inexperienced in conducting financial investigations. Inconvertible currencies in most post-Communist countries constitute a not insuperable barrier to traffickers' financial operations. (For instance, recent data document Hungarian bank accounts belonging to the late Medellín kingpin Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha and Cali trafficker Jose Santa Cruz Londoño.9) Moreover, increasing East-West economic integration and the stabilization of the ruble in the CIS undoubtedly will undermine the inconvenience of converting currencies. In addition, the tightening of banking laws throughout the European Community (EC) to conform to the EC's June

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1991 policy directive on money laundering will encourage the transfer of drug funds into more loosely run Eastern institutions.

**Drug Trafficking Trends**

Recent trends in drug supply, drug abuse, and organized crime are summarized below.

**Supply**

The decay and collapse of Communism have generated new narcotics trafficking patterns in the East. For instance, the Balkan countries, especially Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, traditionally served as a transit region for narcotics moving between Turkey and Western Europe, but the supply chain now extends to Central Europe. Record quantities of cocaine and heroin apparently are being conveyed through Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Although small by U.S. standards, these shipments represent a dangerous upward surge. The relaxation of custom controls in the late 1980s and early 1990s and the military conflict in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia have prompted Turkish, Iranian, and Yugoslav traffickers—who dominate the overland heroin trade in Europe—to ship more heroin northeastward through Hungary and Czechoslovakia and from there across the Czechoslovakian-German border. As an indication of this trend, German heroin seizures along the Czechoslovakian-German border exploded from 8.5 kilograms in 1989 to 670 kilograms in 1991. Moreover, such seizures increased as a proportion of total heroin impounded by German customs, from 5 percent in
1989 to 65 percent in 1991. Furthermore, Colombian trafficking organizations, primarily those associated with the Cali cartel, apparently are contemplating using Poland and Czechoslovakia as staging areas for smuggling cocaine to Western Europe. Such a route is exotic and undoubtedly expensive, but cocaine's European selling price of $50,000 to $55,000—compared to $15,000 to $20,000 in the United States—makes the option one that traffickers can easily afford.

Northeastern Europe is evolving into a source region for amphetamines, but Poland by far ranks as the most important producer and exporter of these substances. (A methamphetamine called Pervitin is produced in Czechoslovakia, but only minor quantities are exported.) Techniques for manufacturing amphetamine sulfate were introduced directly from the Netherlands, according to Polish Interpol officials. (Holland's amphetamine industry ranks as the largest in Europe.) This successful transfer probably transpired sometime in the early 1980s; by the middle of the decade, Polish traffickers were beginning to export these drugs, according to European narcotics experts. Polish chemists improved on the techniques of their Dutch teachers, and Polish amphetamines currently embody the highest drug quality in Europe, with purity levels often ranging from 97 percent to almost 100 percent. According to the Swedish Amphetamine Profiling Project, a center that analyzes the chemical signature of amphetamine sulfate seized in Europe, 20 percent of the amphetamines captured in Western

11 Interview conducted by Lee with Polish Interpol officials in Warsaw on January 16, 1992.
12 Interview conducted by Lee with UN officials from the UN Drug Control Program in Vienna, Austria, on January 9 and 10, 1991.
Europe in 1991 were of Polish origin, compared to only 6 percent between 1985 and 1989.\textsuperscript{13}

The former Soviet Union can be characterized as both a narcotics-producing and narcotics-consuming nation. Indeed, the country is virtually self-sufficient in narcotics. Heroin and cocaine imports from the West are escalating, but still represent a negligible share of the former Soviet market, although the CIS's increasing economic integration with the West could modify this equation considerably. As one MVD official in Moscow, Valentin Roshchin, explained. "If ruble convertibility is achieved, a tremendous flood of drugs could pour toward us."\textsuperscript{14} The CIS has not yet acquired the status of a significant exporter of illicit drugs. However, one former Soviet official conceded in 1990, "The geographic scale of contraband drugs and the transit of drugs across our territory are expanding."\textsuperscript{15} Drug cargoes from Southwest Asia (the Golden Crescent) and Southeast Asia (the Golden Triangle) travel across former Soviet territory by air, rail, and truck on route to Western Europe and North America. Most of the drugs move by train, hidden in the 150,000 containers that annually pass through the CIS.\textsuperscript{16}

The former Soviet Union encompasses a gigantic base of raw materials necessary for the production of illicit drugs: Huge extensions of mostly wild marijuana, possibly more than 1 million hectares, reportedly are growing throughout CIS territory. A United Nations team visiting Central Asia in the spring of 1992 was informed that some 200,000 hectares of marijuana were

\textsuperscript{13} Interview conducted by Lee with BKA officials in Wiesbaden on December 9, 1991.


thriving in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan—about five times the recorded marijuana cultivation in the rest of the world—and that an additional 1 million hectares may be germinating in Russia. Central Asian marijuana, which reportedly tests for a high tetrahydrcannabinol (THC) content, frequently is processed into hashish, one of the most commonly used drugs in the CIS. In addition, an estimated 3,000 hectares of illegal opium poppies are cultivated in Central Asia, mostly in Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, and Turkmenistan—and a type of poppy with lower morphine content, the so-called maslichny or oil-bearing variety, thrives in southern Russia and the Ukraine. Although Central Asia does not hold a monopoly on drug crops, the region's high-quality drugs dominate illicit drug markets in Russia and probably in other European CIS states. According to a ranking Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) official in Moscow, between 40 percent and 50 percent of the poppy straw, some 80 percent of the cannabis derivatives, and nearly all of the opium confiscated by police in Russia during 1991 originated in the Central Asian republics. The narcotics relationship between these states and Russia is somewhat comparable to the one between Latin America and the United States. Since the collapse of the USSR, which obliterated Moscow's direct control over Central Asia's law enforcement institutions, the parallel is becoming ever more evident.

Drug crop cultivation is exploding in Central Asia in response to both dismal economic conditions and rising demand for drugs, especially in the European

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17 UN International Drug Control Programme. "Special UNDCP Fact-Finding Mission in Seven Republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States." April 2 to May 2, 1992, pp. 3-4. (Hereafter: UN Report.) The opium estimate was furnished by Boris Kalachev, a narcotics expert and instructor at the Russian MVD Higher Militia School, during an interview conducted by Lee in Moscow on May 13, 1992.

18 Interview conducted by Lee with Valentin Roshchin, head of the Moscow Interregional Bureau for Narcotics Control, in Moscow on May 13, 1992.
sections of the CIS. For example, the chief of the antinarcotics unit of the Uzbek Ministry of Internal Affairs reports a 10-fold increase in the number of poppy sowings in that republic in the past 3 years. "We see that the planted area has expanded, and at the same time that life is more expensive and the economy is getting worse." says another official in the same unit.19 Traffickers are financing some of this new cultivation by hiring peasants and sometimes entire villages to plant and protect the crops. Poppy cultivation offers enormous economic returns. In late 1991 and early 1992, a hectare of Uzbek opium poppies translated into a gross annual income of at least 1,500,000 rubles (between $12,000 and $15,000)—approximately 20 times the earnings from an acre of cotton and 100 times the income from an acre of fruit crops. Not only peasants but also members of the upper echelons of society seemingly covet a piece of the action. In one Uzbek oblast, prominent citizens such as the head of a public catering establishment and the deputy director of an asphalt plant were discovered growing opium poppies during an Moscow-run crop eradication campaign ("Operation Poppy") in 1990.20

Such trends might well be unstoppable. On the one hand, after the Union dissolved, Moscow ceased funding counternarcotics operations, including aerial map surveys and crop eradication campaigns in Central Asia. Governments in that region lack the resources and probably the political will to continue such programs, at least at the same level of intensity. On the other hand, Central

19 Interview with Major Bem Bambayev, Uzbek MVD Department for Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse. Transcripts, p. 11. Interview conducted by Lee with Alisher Dzhurayev, chief of the same unit, on April 29, 1992.
Asia's grim economic conditions—poverty, expanding populations, high unemployment, and physical isolation from world markets—probably will propel even larger numbers of Asians into the lucrative opium business. Interestingly, hard-pressed Central Asian governments also have evaluated opium, albeit legal opium, as a potential source of revenue. Both Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have contemplated introducing official cultivation of opium, and in Kyrgyzstan, an agonizing public debate raged from early 1991 to early 1992. The governments of three out of Kyrgyzstan's five oblasts and some national-level officials support a plan for establishing plantations on 9,000 hectares. This plan would earn the country perhaps $10 million to $15 million annually at current legal opium prices (assuming optimal growing conditions) and even more if the opium was converted to morphine and pharmaceuticals. Opium in fact was cultivated on Kyrgyz state farms as late as the early 1970s, but the practice led to corruption. As much as 40 percent of the crop was stolen and sold through criminal channels to addicts in Kyrgyzstan and other republics. In 1974, the USSR halted state production of opium, and Kyrgyzstan's plantations, which at one time extended over 7,000 hectares and employed 20,000 people, were cut down. Opponents of the scheme—including various domestic groups, Russia, and almost the entire international community—argued that traffickers would infiltrate the new plantations and make off with a portion of the opium crop. Bowing to pressure, the government of Kyrgyzstan shelved its opium project in January 1992. Yet, the issue probably will survive—especially if desperate farmers connive with financially-strapped local governments to make ends meet by cultivating illegal opium.

22 Interview conducted by Lee with Kyrgyz narcotics officials in Bishkek on April 20 and 21, 1992.
Drug Abuse

Abuse of nonalcoholic drugs long has plagued Eastern Europe and the former USSR, although discussion of the subject officially was discouraged until late in the Communist era. Patterns of drug abuse thus developed in isolation from the international narcotics market. The principal Western hard drugs—heroin, cocaine, crack, and LSD—seldom are available in post-Communist countries. In contrast to the Western pattern, addicts often procure or manufacture their own drugs rather than buying them on the black market. The pattern of drug abuse varies somewhat by country. Homemade poppy derivatives, especially injectable compounds made from poppy straw or opium, are common in Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, and Uzbekistan. Marijuana and hashish are particularly prevalent in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Ephedrine-based amphetamines (actually methamphetamines) are gaining popularity in Russia, the Baltic states, and Czechoslovakia. However, Poland's high-quality amphetamines, produced from the chemicals benzylmethylketone and phenyl 2 proponol, are almost all exported.

No reliable data are available on the number of people abusing drugs in Eastern Europe. This is hardly surprising: The former Communist regimes in Eastern Europe viewed drugs essentially as an affliction of capitalist societies and thus did not encourage epidemiological research on the subject. No national household surveys on drugs were conducted, and no national data banks were established. Consequently, health authorities possess no overall understanding of the nature and scope of drug consumption.
Yet, drug abuse apparently has reached serious proportions in some former Communist states. Although the number of Poles treated in hospitals and outpatient facilities is relatively small (only 6,700 in 1989), a senior health official estimates the drug-abusing population at anywhere from 50,000 to 300,000. Approximately 80 percent of patients hospitalized for drug abuse are addicted to a poppy straw extract called *kompot*, a kind of liquid heroin, usually of low purity, which is injected intravenously. (Approximately 7,000 hectares of low-grade *papaver somniferum*, opium poppy, are legally cultivated in Poland for seeds. Farmers illegally sell the straw—the dried bulbs and upper stems of poppy plants—to addicts.) *Kompot* is limited by a short shelf life, cannot be easily transported over long distances, and has not stimulated a market in the West. Drug addiction in Poland, however, does produce spillover effects that trouble Western health authorities. Needle sharing among addicts and unsanitary practices in the street sale of *kompot* have contributed to the rapid spread of AIDS in Poland. For example, many addicts buy from street dealers who sell the drug from large bottles by the cubic centimeter. The same bottle serves as many as 100 addicts, who insert syringes and extract the required doses. According to 1990-1991 health statistics, approximately 1 in 12 Polish drug addicts is infected with the AIDS virus, and more than two-thirds of all HIV-infected people use drugs. Because Poland now is open to the outside world, the not unlikely prospect of an AIDS epidemic in that country would almost certainly accelerate the spread of the disease in other parts of Europe.

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24 Statistics furnished by Maria Dziedzic, Adviser to the Minister of Health, during an interview at the Ministry of Health in Warsaw on January 14, 1992.
The CIS states have not forged a consensus on the total number of users. Recent police estimates range from 1.5 million to 7.5 million for the former Union. Soviet health authorities tabulate addiction rates by counting everyone who used a treatment facility during the past 5 years; these rates vary substantially by republic, reflecting both cultural patterns and drug availability. For example, in rural Turkmenistan, opium consumption is traditional: The drug is prescribed for stomach ailments, distributed at weddings and other celebrations, and administered to unruly children. Consequently, Turkmenistan's addiction rate in 1990 totaled 94.8 per 100,000 people, quadruple the all-Union average of 23.7 and quadruple Russia's rate of 19.1. Uzbekistan, probably the former Union's largest opium producer, reports only 20.6 addicts per 100,000. The Ukraine, a major producer of poppy straw, tallies the second highest addiction rate in the former Soviet Union—41.3 addicts per 100,000.25

Some indicators suggest that drug use in the former Soviet Union is rising rapidly. Between 1985 and 1990, the number of drug addicts as a percentage of the Soviet population multiplied by more than 70 percent, according to the USSR Ministry of Health Statistics. Gorbachev's ill-conceived anti-alcohol campaign in 1985-1987 was designed to reduce violent crime (alcohol figures in about 70 percent of the murders committed in the USSR) and to regain lost workforce productivity, but probably contributed to expanding drug use. An unfortunate and unforeseen outcome of the campaign was driving many young people to consume drugs. Many young Soviets became familiar with drug use during the Afghanistan war, providing a conduit for the large quantities of Afghan opium and hashish entering the Soviet Union and later stimulating increased production

of these narcotics in the Central Asian republics. In the Slavic republics, the especially rapid growth in drug addiction rates in the mid- and late 1980s ranged from 90 percent in the Russian Republic to 320 percent in Byelorussia.\textsuperscript{26} According to Moscow's head narcologist, Edward Drozdov, the percentage of Moscow secondary school students who sampled drugs increased from 6.4 percent in 1986-1987 to 16.5 percent in 1992. According to Drozdov, in some of Moscow's professional technical schools, 100 percent of the student body has experimented with narcotics.\textsuperscript{27} The drug abuse scenario likely will deteriorate further: A decision by the Russian parliament in December 1991 to remove criminal penalties and fines for nonmedical use of drugs—functionally an attempt to legalize use—will almost certainly foster the spread of narcotics in the Russian federation.

Comparatively speaking, Central Asia exhibits a fairly serious drug abuse problem. In four Central Asian republics—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—drug abuse rates in 1990 exceeded those in Russia and most other former Union republics. However, the rates apparently are swelling more slowly in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan actually recorded declines in addiction rates from 1985 to 1990. Tadjikistan stands out as the anomaly in the group: The addict population is relatively much smaller than Russia's, but is growing somewhat more rapidly. At the same time, drug production—or at least commercial processing of opium poppies—apparently is rising at an alarming rate in Central Asia, primarily to serve the expanding ranks of consumers in the European region of the former USSR. However, as one

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
Uzbek narcotics official notes, "With the opening of ties to the West, now it is possible that the narcotics will reach the West in exchange for hard currency."28

**Organized Crime**

Organized drug crime in a sense has arrived in post-Communist states. Criminal organizations are acquiring the capability to transport drugs across regional and national boundaries. International trafficking organizations are gaining footholds in the region, a development that ultimately will enhance the sophistication of local trafficking. Finally, the drug trade is producing seven significant political and economic effects on post-Communist societies. Polish, Colombian, Yugoslav, and intra-CIS trafficking groups exemplify these trends, in effect representing the new face of organized drug crime in Eastern Europe and the CIS.

Poland's amphetamine industry constitutes the most sophisticated indigenous narcotics enterprise in the post-Communist countries. Judging from the extremely high purity of the final amphetamine sulfate product, the Polish amphetamine production process characterizes a sophisticated operation. Criminal groups apparently have first-class laboratory equipment and highly qualified chemists at their disposal. (Polish Interpol officials believe that traffickers may have access to legal laboratories in universities and scientific research institutions.) Polish amphetamine gangs are fairly rudimentary by international standards. Unlike Colombian organizations, they exhibit little permanent structure, lack a core of salaried employees, are not vertically

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integrated from production through foreign distribution, and tend to be multilin
e organizations that engage, for example, in auto and art theft, counterfeiting, and
drug trafficking. Moreover, the traffickers can ship drugs to markets in
Germany and the Scandinavian countries, procure essential chemicals such as
benzyl methylketone, and even clandestinely manufacture the chemicals in
Poland. Finally, traffickers are adept at keeping the authorities at bay. "We
know the location of the amphetamine laboratories in the Praga district of
Warsaw," reports one Polish Interpol official. "But by the time we get there, the
chemicals and drugs will be gone." 29

Like successful trafficking organizations elsewhere, Polish amphetamine gangs
are starting to buy into the legal economies. According to Polish Interpol,
traffickers in Poland apparently have invested in fish processing, publishing,
photo processing, purchasing, and agribusiness enterprises. The police reported
that amphetamine traffickers bought a vegetable farm and an associated canning
plant with the idea of smuggling amphetamines out of Poland in the cans. 30

Outside of Poland—especially in Germany and the Scandinavian countries—
amphetamine gangs operate through a kind of Polish pipeline, a broad network of
resident Polish citizens or former Polish nationals who serve as critical links in
the wholesale trade, taking delivery of drugs from Poland, storing them, and
reselling them to local distributors. The foreign connection is as important to
Polish drug smuggling gangs as the estimated 1 million Colombians living in the
United States are to the activities of the so-called Colombian cartels—or the 2

29 Interview with a Polish Interpol official, conducted at the Marriott Hotel in Warsaw on
30 Interview conducted by Lee with Polish Interpol official in Warsaw on January 16, 1992.
million Turks living in Europe are to Turkish heroin-smuggling families. Of course, the Polish pipeline can move any type of drugs into Western markets—Central Asian hashish, Afghan heroin, or even Colombian cocaine.

Ominously, international trafficking organizations are trying to coopt Central European nationals into smuggling. The strategic objectives are easily discernible: widening avenues of penetration into Western European markets and reducing the visibility and exposure of the parent organization. The authorities associate Colombians, Turks, and Nigerians with organized drug trafficking, making them tempting targets for customs officials at national borders.

Colombian trafficking organizations most clearly exemplify this trend. For example, the Cali cartel tried to recruit Polish couriers to smuggle cocaine across the Polish-German border. The Colombians also reputedly are developing ties with Polish amphetamine trafficking networks, again to diversify pathways for shipping cocaine to the West. For instance, in October 1991, Polish customs officials at Warsaw International Airport arrested a Colombian nurse, Julia Stella Cruz Oviedo, who was carrying 600 grams of cocaine in 75 vials in her stomach. A subsequent police interrogation disclosed that Cruz Oviedo was linked to the so-called Cali cartel and that she had instructions to deliver the cocaine to a Polish courier who would then transport the cocaine to Germany across the Polish-German frontier.31 In Czechoslovakia, Colombian traffickers established warehouses and shipping companies, probably using such enterprises as fronts for receive cocaine shipments. Last September and October, two 100-kilogram loads of cocaine secreted in bean shipments were impounded in Poland and

31 Ibid.
Czechoslovakia. The cocaine was routed to a Czechoslovakian-Colombian agricultural import company—YAROS—based in Prague, for further transshipment to the Netherlands. A Colombian national and, interestingly, two former intelligence officers from the Czechoslovakian security forces jointly owned the shipping company\textsuperscript{32}—perhaps a harbinger of the future profile of organized crime in the East.

The Yugoslav trafficking organizations have fostered strife and anarchy. Yugoslav heroin dealers now actively operate in a number of European countries, including Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Germany. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav nationals constitute a special case—some of the groups apparently are motivated by political as well as business priorities. Specifically, Yugoslav trafficking groups apparently served as vehicles for financing and equipping separatist movements in Yugoslavia. Many if not most of the Yugoslavs arrested in Europe in 1990 were Croats and ethnic Albanians, the latter from Serbia's Kosovo province. Croatia, of course, has more or less gained its independence, and many Kosovo Albanians are now seeking freedom from Serbian domination, possibly as a prelude to anschluss with Albania. Switzerland's Minister of Justice learned last October that Kosovo Albanians purchased semiautomatic weapons in Bern and Basel, using the proceeds from heroin sales in Switzerland.\textsuperscript{33} An analysis of other reports suggests that the weapons were either sold to Croat separatists or

\textsuperscript{32} Information from interview with DEA officials at The Marriott Hotel in Vienna, Austria, on January 24, 1992.

\textsuperscript{33} Interviews with UNDCP officials in Vienna on January 10 and 11, 1992.

supplied to Kosovo's Front of Resistance and National Liberation, which claims to represent the 2-million-strong Albanian majority in that province. The Yugoslav arms-for-drugs link functions as a controlling precedent. Any ethnic splinter group might want to turn to narcotics trafficking to finance its separatist or irredentist ambitions. Other ethnically mixed countries that are source or transit countries for narcotics—Russia, Czechoslovakia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, for instance—view such a prospect as very disturbing indeed.

The criminal landscape in the CIS countries also features organized drug gangs. For example, interregional criminal organizations have emerged to transport Central Asian drugs into the Slavic CIS countries. Central Asians themselves typically do not perform this role. Rather, outsiders—mainly Caucasian groups such as Azerbaidjanis, Ukrainians, and Georgians—travel to Central Asia, purchase the drugs from local dealers, and distribute them in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, and other major cities. Several years ago, individuals or by small, uncoordinated groups managed the production and sale of narcotics in major Soviet cities. Today the market is much more highly structured. In a 1990 Pravda interview, a Moscow police official was asked, "How does the drug mafia differ from ordinary sellers of marijuana and hashish?" The official replied:

34 See, for example, the following sources.
First, there were occasional deals, one on one. Second, a person involved in drugs combined within himself both the manufacturer and the buyer and even the seller. That was three or four years ago. Everything is different now. All the elements characteristic of the drug mafia are inherent in the drug delivery and sales organization: demarcation of roles, profound secrecy, and also the use of hiding places, passwords, and the hiring of guards.\(^\text{35}\)

In a retail drug organization, different members assume varying responsibilities, such as transporting drugs to points of sale, identifying buyers, hiding drugs, collecting payments, informing buyers of the location of the drugs, and furnishing security. Such gangs—which sometimes boast modern transportation, weapons, and communication equipment—pose a major challenge for the usually undermanned, underequipped, and underfunded police forces in major CIS cities.

Sophisticated production facilities for processing narcotics are still relatively rare in the CIS. Most manufactured drugs are still made at home, usually in the user's own kitchen. However, as one MVD spokesman noted in August 1990:

The appearance of synthetic drugs in illegal circulation is increasingly being recorded. And this means that underground laboratories using industrial equipment and chemical reagents are operating in the country.\(^\text{36}\)

\(^{35}\) Urvantsev, op. cit.

Such operations have been detected in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Baku, Perm, Rostov, Tomsk, Vladivostok, and other CIS cities. Most of these illegal laboratories produce methamphetamines or methadone. Emulating Polish operations, chemists and laboratory workers from universities or government research organizations manage these facilities. Rather curiously, heroin refining is virtually nonexistent, even in the opium cultivation zones of Central Asia—however, this virtual vacuum probably cannot be sustained. Central Asia's growing economic ties with its Moslem neighbors—including experienced narcotics producers such as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan—will offer a conduit for transferring refining and trafficking expertise throughout the region. Indeed, drug dealers in countries such as Turkey and Iran—which punish drug offenses harshly—may see the poor and weak Central Asian states as an attractive ancillary site for large-scale heroin production.

Finally, organized drug criminals are making inroads into post-Communist societies. On the economic front, some private or cooperative commercial ventures established since the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika campaign in 1985 are acting as convenient legal covers for laundering drug money. This corruption created apprehension about the privatization process itself. For example, in a 1992 interview with an ABC news team, Russian MVD official Valentin Roshchin described narco-investment as follows:
It taints the character and future of free enterprise; it subverts it. The criminal element is in a position now where it can buy out a lot of property previously owned by the people. So drug money speaks louder here than anywhere in the world.37

Corruption of the bureaucracy also is worsening, especially in the poppy cultivation zones of Central Asia. For example, leading drug dealers in Uzbekistan reportedly hold positions in the government bureaucracy, in state economic enterprises, and (before 1992) in Communist party organs. Alternatively, traffickers can bribe local officials, although protection payments did not always achieve the desired results when Moscow was running "Operation Poppy" campaigns. For example, in July 1992, the Soviet MVD's elite Dzerzhinski division detected a large field (between 2 and 3 hectares) in Uzbekistan's Samarkand oblast. Swooping down on the field, the team was greeted by an angry peasant who asked, "Why did you come here? We already gave money to the raion (district). Wasn't it enough?"38

The organized criminal groups dealing in narcotics regard the USSR's collapse and the emergence of the CIS as the best of all possible worlds. Moscow's relations (at least formal relations) with MVD antidrug units in Central Asia have virtually vanished. The CIS retains a common economic space and almost transparent borders—although Russia reportedly intends to monitor its boundaries with other CIS states more closely—but the sovereign member states have yet to agree on a common strategy for combatting drug trafficking.

37 Interview with Valentin Roshchin, Transcripts, p. 31. 
Agreement still must be negotiated on matters such as interdiction, joint investigations, crop eradication, antidrug legislation, and extradition. In effect, traffickers can roam freely around the commonwealth, but the authorities are not free to pursue them. Moreover, in the near absence of customs controls, shipping drugs from Tashkent to Arkhangelsk, for example, is virtually risk free. The Central Asian states are hypersensitive about their newly-gained sovereignty and recoil from giving the Russian police information about local trafficking groups or drug shipments in progress. Finally, a new class of untouchables has risen from the ruins of the Soviet empire. For example, in Moscow, Azerbaidjani clans control an estimated 80 percent of the retail narcotics market. Yet, the brain centers of these families—the organizers and financial controllers of this traffic—reside in Azerbaidjan. In the absence of an extradition agreement between Russia and that country, the Azerbaidjani kingpins effectively are beyond the reach of Moscow authorities. As Valentin Roshchin, the head of the Moscow interregional antinarcotics bureau, summarizes the problem, "There are no law enforcement structures capable of fighting the narcomafia today in the CIS."39

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Confronting increasingly out-of-control drug traffic, police and public health officials everywhere from Warsaw to Bishkek desperately crave large infusions of antidrug assistance from Western nations, especially the United States. The Eastern wish list is vast: They want helicopters, herbicides, vehicles, teams of DEA agents to organize and carry out eradication missions, Western advice on improving their criminal legal codes for narcotics, U.S. advice on tracking the

39 Ibid.
flow of illegal drug money, and foreign assistance in coordinating epidemiological surveys and testing and producing drugs that seem to show promise in treating addicts.

Such appeals have not elicited much of a Western response thus far. The region has received miserly antinarcotics assistance, and Washington—mired in an expensive and unproductive cocaine war in the Andes—views drugs in post-Communist societies as exotic and essentially tangential to U.S. interests.

However, the West and the United States should begin taking notice. The potential drug scenarios themselves are disturbing. The former USSR—by virtue of its size, geographic location, and potential for cultivating drug crops—likely will become a significant exporter of narcotics during the 1990s. Because of its proximity to the Golden Crescent countries, Central Asia almost certainly will serve as a staging area for moving narcotics from many different regions—South America, Central Asia, and the Golden Crescent.

Nonetheless, compared to other sectors of the world—Southeast Asia, South America, Mexico—the problem apparently is relatively manageable. Trafficking organizations in the post-Communist world have not yet acquired the technical capabilities and distribution linkages common in groups such as the Colombian cartels, the Turkish heroin clans, or the Chinese trids. Heroin refining has not yet caught on in former Soviet states. Although the gigantic marijuana stands in the CIS would daunt even the most determined eradicators, the Central Asian opium production of some 3,000 hectares apparently is on a par with the cultivation of Colombia or Lebanon—not with that of major producers such as Burma and Thailand. Drug dealers have not yet bought into the upper reaches of
the bureaucracy and the political system. No "Samarkand cartel" operates paramilitary armies and controls vast reaches of Uzbekistan's territory. Yet, as Bem Bambayev, a major in the Uzbek MVD Criminal Investigation Division, remarked, "If this disease is not choked while it's young, it will expand and grow. It will grow if we do not get the necessary help." The chief of the Kyrgyz MVD's antinarcotics unit, Aleksandr Zelichenko, observed, "It is very worthwhile to invest money in our republic so that you do not have a second Colombia or Bolivia on your hands." Perhaps these officials have a point. Certainly the marginal effect of sending narcotics-related assistance to Uzbekistan would be much greater than sending the same resources to the Andean countries, where coca covers an area of more than 200,000 hectares; $500 million in U.S. funding since 1989 has failed to make a dent in cocaine production; and leading drug dealers stroll in and out of prison cells at their convenience.

Although the emergence of a sophisticated Eurasian narcotics industry clearly threatens Western Europe, the risk to the United States is at first glance less obvious. However, the following prospects afford little room for U.S. complacency. First, if regions such as Central Asia assume the status of major opium, heroin, and cannabis producers, the worldwide supply of such drugs undoubtedly will rise significantly. Central Asia currently could flood the world market with marijuana and hashish if better transportation and marketing arrangements were negotiated. In the near-term, Central Asians—or Turks, Iranians, Pakistanis, or other enterprising outsiders—could easily build heroin refineries in Central Asia. The concomitant burst of cheaper and purer heroin ultimately would find its way to the streets of New York, Los Angeles,

41 Interview with Aleksandr Zelichenko, Transcripts, p. 8.
Washington, and other U.S. cities—directly or indirectly. For example, if the supply of Central Asian heroin to Western Europe displaces Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle heroin, those traditional producers likely would channel their oversupply into the existing distribution network in the world's largest potential market, the United States.

Second, more than any other part of the former Soviet Union, Central Asia urgently requires external development assistance in any form—a circumstance that has created new and exciting financial opportunities for international organized crime. Traffickers are responding eagerly, exploiting the abysmally weak law enforcement in the East to establish a new network of smuggling routes, money-laundering operations, cultivation and production centers, and—as Eastern currencies become increasingly convertible—consumer markets. Moreover, these international players are not exclusively European and Eurasian. For example, Colombian and Nigerian traffickers who currently serve the U.S. market are gaining a foothold in Eastern Europe. If successful, such diversification can only enhance the profits, reach, and power of these already lethal international enterprises, which surely would flex their new economic muscle in Latin America and the United States.

Third, the United States cannot afford to ignore the geostrategic implications of a dominating drug industry in post-Communist Eurasia. For instance, Central Asia stands not only as the most prominent narcotics producer in the CIS, but also as a centuries-long crossroad for competing national and ethnic interests. Drugs and associated trafficking operations consequently fuel an already incendiary political dynamic now commonly characterized by ethnic clashes, boundary disputes, and religious challenges to state authority. In addition, opportunistic
neighbors such as Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey might further undermine Central Asian stability by trying to exploit the social and military vacuum produced by the collapse of the USSR. Unlike their Latin American counterparts, however, Central Asian states have access to sophisticated conventional weapons, and Kazakhstan retains an ominous nuclear arsenal. At its worst, the resulting strife would inexorably demand U.S. attention. Could we overlook a Central Asian cycle of violent political and economic disintegration comparable to the narcotrafficker-fomented crises in Lebanon, Peru, and Afghanistan? Would the U.S. national interest be well served by the emergence of a narcocratic rogue state in Uzbekistan or nuclear power Kazakhstan?

Fourth, the escalating infiltration of fledgling Eastern financial systems by drug traffickers represents a clear and present danger to Western commercial institutions, including the U.S. banks and corporations operating in the region. The narcotics industry's money laundering enterprises in countries such as Poland can instantaneously wire drug trafficking profits to U.S. branch banks and financial repositories worldwide. The integrity of the international financial system is at risk because of the potential contamination by illegal drug profits. Despite recent measures to improve accountability in international banking transactions and thus reduce counterparty exposure. Moreover, the unimpeded international flow of narcodollars would further obstruct struggling law enforcement officials.

To be sure, geography dictates policy: The evolving drug industry in the post-Communist world probably will play a more central role in supplying drugs to Western Europe than to North America. Still, large exports of hashish and ultimately heroin from former Soviet states would directly or indirectly flood
U.S. markets, especially on the West Coast. Furthermore, the global dimensions of the narcotics problem require sharing the burden. Washington is trying to induce wealthy European nations and Japan to increase contributions to global antinarcotics programs, including the drug war in the Andes, primarily a U.S. concern. For geographic or political reasons, U.S. bilateral programs admittedly might not be the most appropriate vehicle for funneling antinarcotics assistance to some post-Communist countries. For example, in Central Asia, institutional agencies such as the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) might pursue this goal most effectively. However, even here, Washington is running in the wrong direction—the Bush administration plans to slash its 1992 contribution to UNDCP by a huge 40 percent.

Despite such constraints and caveats, U.S. interests are too powerful—and world-class players too few—to disregard the emerging narcotics industry in the former USSR. The United States must consider a range of cutting-edge and traditional antidrug policy strategies, including but not limited to imposing conditions on aid packages, supporting crop eradication and substitution, and furnishing financial technical expertise. For example, when the United States signs an aid agreement, such assistance should depend on the prospective recipient documenting legal and law enforcement reforms such as criminalizing money laundering, making drug trafficking a major offense, strengthening law enforcement tactics, and cooperating with other law enforcement agencies bilaterally or through organizations such as Interpol. The United States also could influence conditions on multilateral aid by using its leverage with institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Because the drug trade can be viewed as a socially perverse response to fundamental functions of supply and demand, crop eradication and substitution programs could be a key component of U.S. policy. If we intend to discourage Central Asian farmers from cultivating opium and to encourage their cooperation in eradication programs, we must offer them an alternative livelihood. Even successful eradication programs cannot prevent peasants from recultivating formerly lucrative crops such as opium unless they can turn to viable crops, gain access to Central Asian markets, and sell their produce for a profit.

Financial systems in the CIS are rudimentary and would benefit from a wide variety of technical assistance, including advice on needed legislation, basic accounting standards, current supervisory practices, and techniques for investigating financial crimes. As Valentin Roshchin noted in an interview last May with ABC News, "One of the most acute problems we will have to address soon is money laundering of funds received from the West. We have no laws to deal effectively with the problem." Although the G-7 Financial Action Task Force is assessing Eurasian needs, the more crucial step is advanced training for bankers, financiers, and associated government regulators. In addition, wherever possible, we should encourage countries to implement asset forfeiture programs, thus creating an additional incentive for Eurasian government agencies to cooperate with their Western counterparts.

In the end, both the United States and Western Europe hold compelling political interests in restraining the expanding drug trade in the East. A flood of

43 Transcripts, p. 30.
opiates, amphetamines, cocaine, and other drugs from the lawless reaches of Eurasia could prompt Western counties to erect new trade and customs barriers and retard the European economic integration from the Atlantic to the Urals that General de Gaulle envisioned. A deluge of narcotics also could undermine the economic integration process in the European Community, especially the projected removal of trade and finance barriers after January 1, 1993.

Moreover, the spread of drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime in Central Europe and the CIS—stark symbols of post-Communist social decay and political incompetence—could generate widespread pressure for a return to authoritarian rule or at least for a suspension of privatization and economic liberalization programs. When a narcotics official such as Valentin Roshchin contends that Russia’s emerging capitalist sector is tainted by drug dealers, he is articulating a state of mind about his country’s entire economic and political direction.

Finally, the stable and legitimate development of societies evolving from Communist rule is in the best interests of all countries. Yet, this development is not a foregone conclusion. The former Soviet republics, economically poor but well endowed with narcotics crops, seem especially vulnerable to political and economic penetration by drug dealers and their criminal cohorts. Societies dominated by such forces will not be reliable partners for building a new post-Communist order in Eurasia. Given such prospects, Washington should closely monitor developments in the newly liberated region from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Ocean, build antinarcotics coalitions when appropriate, and assist Russia, Central Europe, and Western Europe as they shape responses to an increasingly dangerous drug dynamic. When Western aid programs help the CIS counter
money laundering, addiction, rampant crime, and other drug-related problems. Such programs also indirectly bolster the case for democracy and free markets in these formerly communist countries.

In short, U.S. policymakers who view the evolution of a thriving CIS drug industry as tangential to our primary interests are simply misguided. The window of opportunity for formulating an effective policy is rapidly narrowing: The narcotraffickers suffer from no crisis of will and are moving decisively to augment their economic base. If we short-sightedly fail to act, drug abuse in the United States—and the worldwide economic and political power of organized crime—will rise in parallel to previously unimaginable heights.