

Heroin

Britain's Opium Wars: two centuries, and going strong

by Joseph Brewda

Dope, Inc. came into being as global opium vendor in the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, narcotic use was widespread, but there was no single global organization guiding its distribution internationally. The banking, planning, marketing, and smuggling network that came into being then, in order to destroy China, provided the basis for Dope, Inc.'s expansion

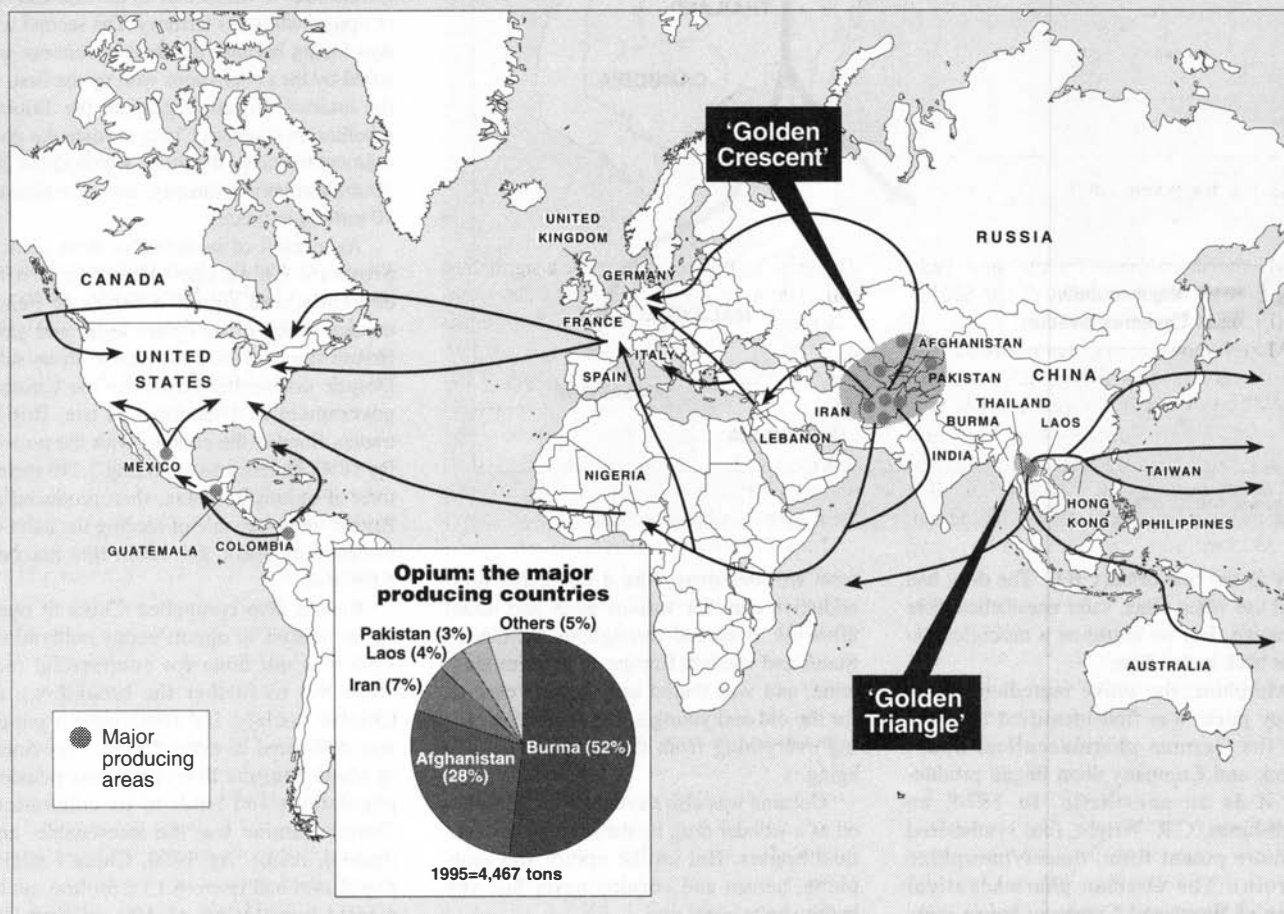
in the twentieth century. Because of this global infrastructure, Dope, Inc. not only controls world narcotics trafficking, but weapons trafficking, currency smuggling, money laundering, and related criminal enterprises.

The use of opium to destroy China in the nineteenth century, is the model that Britain is following in its war against the institution

of the nation-state today. Dope, Inc. is not merely a commercial enterprise, but comprises the very center of British imperial strategy of re-creating its old empire in a new form. To do that, the British empire must destroy powerful institutions and entire societies throughout the world. Opium and heroin are among the poisons used to that end.

Opium is a narcotic drug prepared from the juice of the unripened seed pod of the opium poppy, a flowering plant indigenous to southern Europe and western Asia, but now cultivated throughout the world. It is usually consumed through smoking or eating. Morphine and heroin are extracted and refined from its juice, and are consumed either by smoking, or through hypodermic injection. The use of opium as a powerful painkiller was known in the ancient world, and is referenced in Greek medical texts as

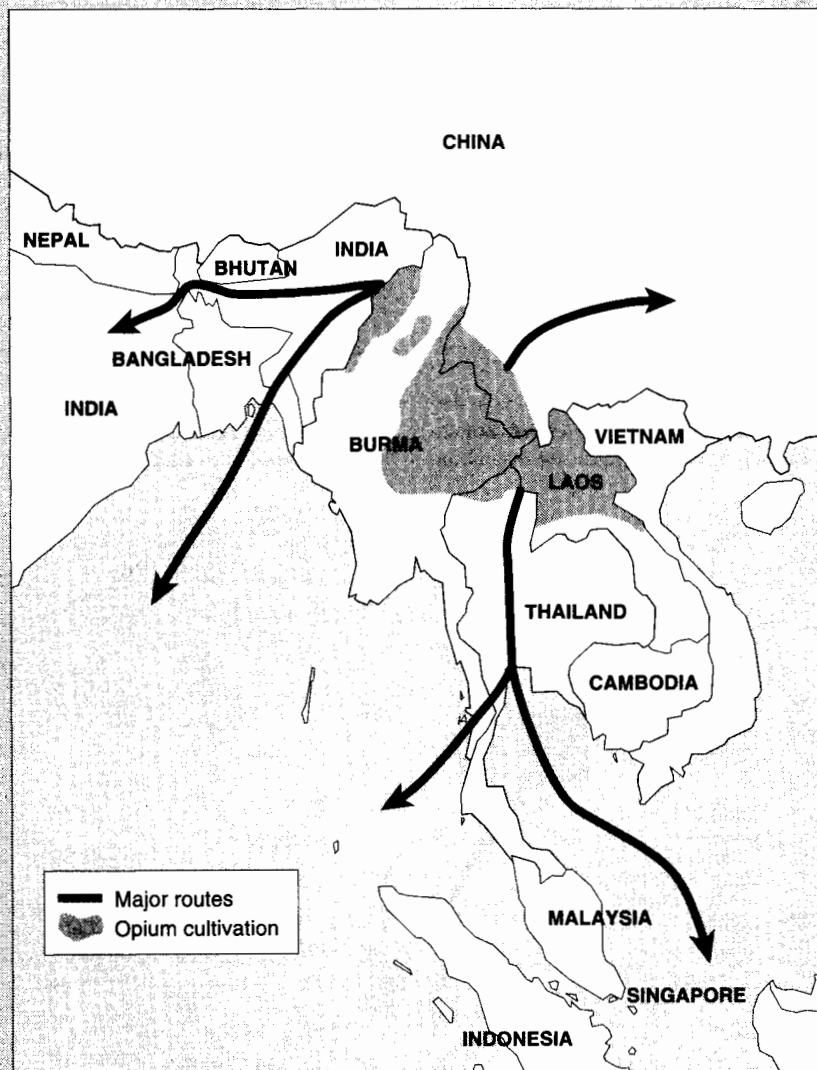
MAP 8
Heroin-trafficking routes



Sources: NNICC; EIR.

Map 9

Opium and heroin trafficking from the Golden Triangle



Sources: NNICC, DEA, EIR.

early as the first century B.C. The drug had valid use when other, safer anesthetics were unknown. But its abuse as a narcotic also dates back to that time.

Morphine, the active ingredient in the poppy juice, was first identified in 1805, and the German pharmaceutical house Merck and Company soon began producing it as an anesthetic. In 1874, an Englishman, C.R. Wright, first synthesized its more potent form, diacetylmorphine (heroin). The German pharmaceutical house of Bayer and Company began mass production of the drug in 1896, under the patented trade name of "heroin." It said the

new wonder drug was a powerful non-addictive cure for various adult and infant ailments. It spread throughout the United States and western Europe as a patent-medicine, and was touted as a general cure-all for the old and young alike, capable of curing everything from the common cold to aging.

Cocaine was also developed and promoted as a wonder drug by the same pharmaceutical houses. But unlike opium and morphine, heroin and cocaine never had any legitimate medical use.

The extraction of morphine from poppy juice is uncomplicated. But the manufacture

of heroin requires training and equipment, and a considerable amount of the chemical acetic anhydride—making Southeast Asia the world's largest consumer of an industrial chemical whose only legitimate use is in photography.

The first Opium Wars

The use of opium as a means of social control is as old as its use as a pain killer. In the ancient Near East, pagan cults regularly intoxicated their devotees with opium, hashish, and various powerful psychedelics, to ensure that they remained under total control. Pagan priests also used opium and other drugs to enfeeble, corrupt, and control the ruling aristocratic families.

However, the use of opium to destroy entire societies on a mass scale, was first introduced by the British in the nineteenth century. British use of opium against China then, remains the model for what it is doing with narcotics worldwide, today.

In 1842-44, and then in 1856-60, Britain fought two Opium Wars to force the Chinese government to lift its ban on the sale and use of opium within its territory. The second war was fought because the British were not satisfied by the concessions won by the first. In the interim, Britain organized the Taiping rebellion in southern China to force the government to accept the trade, which killed 20-30 million people directly, and an estimated 70 million indirectly.

As a result of its defeat in these wars, a prostrate China capitulated to British demands, and signed a series of peace treaties which made opium legal, and gave Britain the exclusive monopoly on its sale. Despite continuing efforts by the Chinese government to discourage its use, British traders flooded the country with the poison. By 1850, Britain was exporting 3,210 metric tons of opium to China, then produced in British India, capable of feeding the habit of millions of users. By 1880, this reached 5,880 tons.

Britain also compelled China to open up its interior to opium poppy cultivation. This was not done for commercial reasons, but to further the breakdown of Chinese society. By 1900, opium poppy was cultivated in every Chinese province, in some regions diverting vast peasant populations and lands to its cultivation. Terrible famine was the foreseeable, and desired, result. By 1900, China's addict population had risen to 13.5 million out of a total population of 400 million. Its domestic production for internal use was 22,600 tons. By comparison, opium pro-

duction in the entire Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle in 1995, was "only" 2,560 tons—about one-tenth of what China was consuming in 1900.

Through this decades-long subversive campaign, China was made a de facto British colony.

Massive opium cultivation in British India to supply the Chinese market, also served British interests there as well. There, too, society was ravaged by famine, and there were related effects of massive poppy cultivation, including local use of the drug. In the 1860s, Britain greatly expanded small-scale opium cultivation in the Iranian and Ottoman Turkish empires, to meet the needs of its Chinese market. This opium was also exported to western Europe, to service Britain's growing market there, as well as feed its own developing addict population.

The explosive growth of opium use in the nineteenth century, led to increasing efforts to ban the drug, particularly as it spread into Europe and the United States. In 1909, the British Empire reluctantly agreed to U.S. pressure to outlaw opium cultivation and sale. Then, as now, narcotics revenues comprised a major part of the profits of its banking system. But despite this legal ban, Britain continued the export of opiates.

As late as 1927, opium was the largest source of official Crown revenue in all of Britain's Asian colonies; it was then primarily sold to her own colonial subjects to keep them subdued. Of the official Straights settlements (Singapore) revenue that year, 37% came from opium trade. At its high point, 60% of Malaya's revenues came from taxes on the opium monopoly.

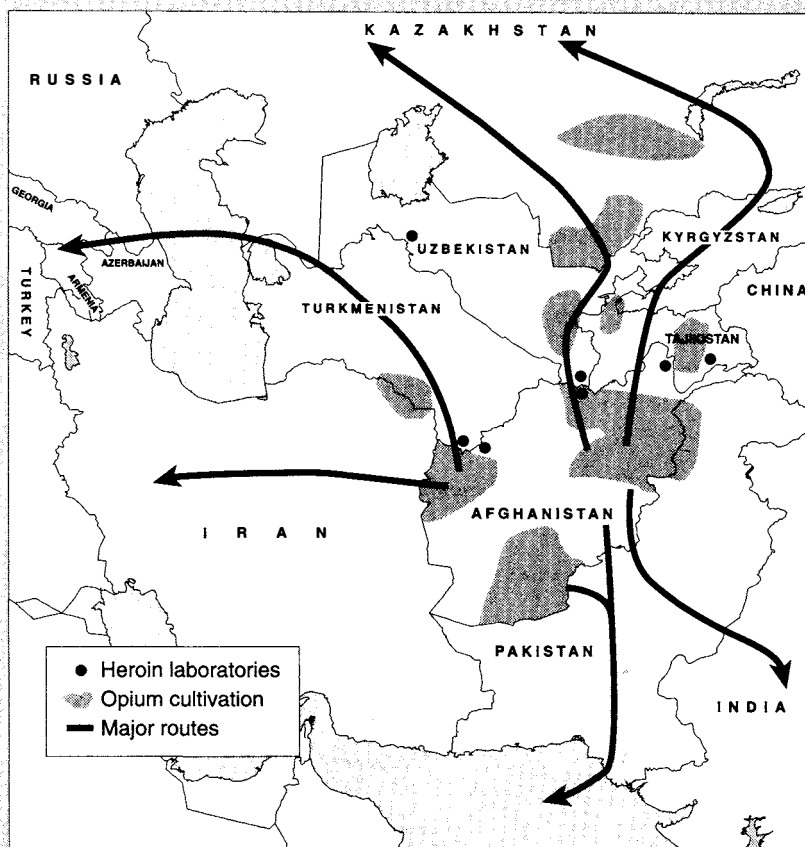
And under the British claim that morphine is still legitimately needed as a painkiller, opium poppy cultivation still is legal in many British Commonwealth countries, such as Australia and India, and is produced there under government license. Opium is the only important narcotic which remains legal under this guise.

Britain's current opium war

A review of the sites of opium poppy cultivation and heroin manufacture, trafficking routes, and the populations targeted for addiction, corroborates other evidence showing that Britain is currently engaged in another opium war, this time against the entire world.

Map 8 shows the world's three opium poppy production regions, and the main traf-

MAP 10
Opium and heroin trafficking from the 'Golden Crescent'



Sources: INCSR; UN International Narcotics Control Board; EIR.

ficking routes bringing this opium, in the form of heroin, to the external market.

These three producing regions are the Golden Triangle region of Southeast Asia, which produces 57% of total world opium output, and 51% of its refined heroin; the Golden Crescent region of Southwest Asia, which produces 40% of world opium and 46% of world heroin; and Ibero-America, which produces about 3% of world opium and a like share of world heroin. The Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent are entirely a creation of the British Empire.

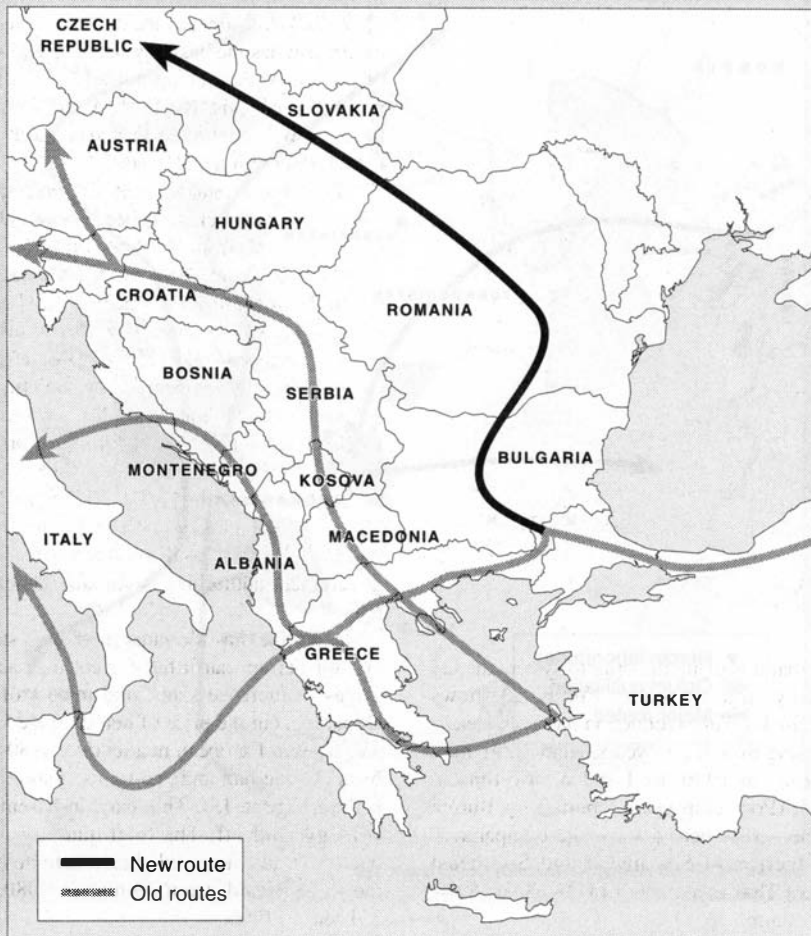
As the map indicates, the broad band stretching from the Balkans in southern Europe, into Central Asia via Turkey and Iran, and on to Southeast Asia via northern India, is the world's primary production and transshipment zone for the drug. There is not one country in that area, which the British sometimes term the "Arc of Crisis," which is not deeply involved in heroin production or trafficking.

This is not an accidental feature that can

be explained by either suitable climate conditions, or an ancient tradition of cultivation of the plant, but is a deliberate result of British imperial policy, which systematically introduced opium production throughout the entire area. By placing opium production there, Britain has situated itself to launch broad destabilizations of Asia, and to break up any efforts to develop the interior of the Asian landmass. It is now particularly targeting China and Russia, and opium is one of the means through which it is doing it.

Map 9 shows the Golden Triangle region, the world's largest opium plantation, and the source of about three-quarters of the heroin found on the streets of the United States. The major producing area is Burma, with smaller amounts produced in Laos, and across the border in China and Thailand. Most of this opium is refined into heroin. Thailand is the primary refiner of the drug and the main transshipment point for heroin sent to Europe and the United States. China is another important route to western markets.

MAP 11

Heroin trafficking: the Balkan routes

Sources: NNICC; EIR.

This entire production region is in a rugged cross-border area, inhabited by minority backward tribes, which have never been fully controlled by their respective governments. Northern Burma has been in revolt against its central government, since independence. The Shan, Wa, and other minority tribes, which produce almost all of Burma's opium, were patronized by the British during the colonial period, and sustained by them in their revolt since that time. The same minority peoples live on the other side of the porous border, in China. (The area depicted as under cultivation in China is approximate, due to lack of reliable data.)

Contrary to claims one often finds in the western media, opium is not indigenous to the region, but was introduced there at the end of the nineteenth century by the British and French empires, to supply their Chinese

market. Both powers continued cultivation there in the twentieth century, in part to fund their intelligence operations, which remain dependent on narco-proceeds. During the Vietnam War, Britain and Maoist China dramatically expanded cultivation in the region, to supply, and demoralize, nearby American troops.

More recently, China itself has become a primary target of the dope trade, as in the nineteenth century. Heroin and opium use there has skyrocketed, particularly along southern transport routes to the Chinese coast.

Map 10 shows the Golden Crescent region, the source of about two-thirds of the heroin found on the streets of western Europe. Most of the poppy is cultivated in Afghanistan, and refined and transported through Pakistan to the coast, for shipment to Europe. As in the case of Southeast Asia,

narcotics cultivation is done by minority tribes, in border regions, which largely operate outside the control of any of the governments concerned. An increasing, unknown, but large amount of poppy is also cultivated in former Soviet Central Asia, which is also being used as a route for Afghan opium destined for the West. Iran is also a producer, especially since the rise of the ayatollahs, and is on the main land route to the European market.

Commercial-scale Southwest Asian production began in the nineteenth century, to supply opium for the Chinese market. In the aftermath of World War II, the Anglo-American-reorganized Italian Mafia used the region to supply opium for the European and U.S. heroin markets.

As recently as 1979, there was almost no heroin refining in the region. Except for Iran, there were *no* heroin addicts anywhere in the area, including nearby India. The opium produced there was almost entirely refined in Turkey and Lebanon, and destined for Western markets.

But the overthrow of the Shah of Iran that year, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, soon transformed the region into the world's major opium plantation and heroin refinery. Afghan mujahideen, trained and equipped by Western secret services to fight a war against Soviet troops, were also instructed to grow opium to finance their needs. Afghanistan produced very little opium before the war. It is now the world's second largest producer.

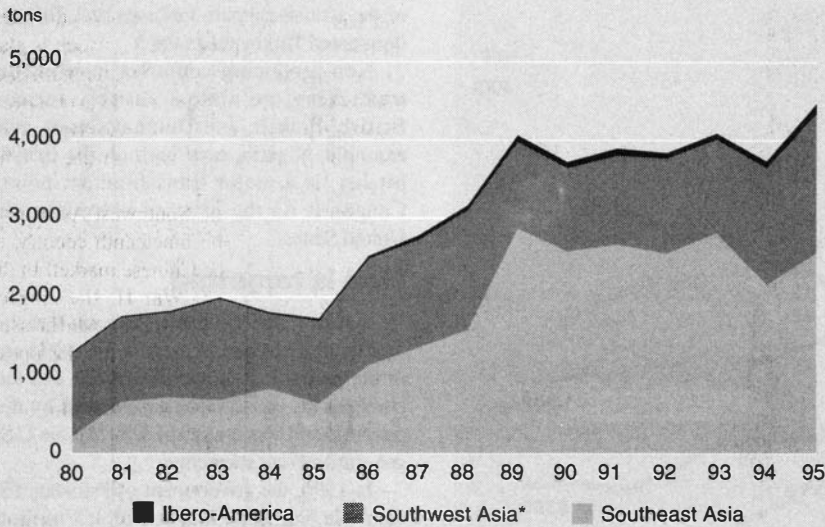
The collapse of the Soviet Union has drastically worsened this problem. Opium cultivation is now spreading rapidly throughout former Soviet Central Asia, to provide revenue for desperately poor, newly independent states, who are encouraged by international agencies to produce the drug. Clan wars fought over the control of opium production and trade in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, are convulsing the entire region.

Behind these developments stands Dope, Inc., which oversaw the expansion of the Golden Triangle during the Vietnam War, and the creation of the Golden Crescent during the Afghan War. Now, the former Soviet Union is targeted for the same treatment.

War is not unfavorable to the cultivation, refinement, and trafficking of narcotics, by any means. Map 11 shows the "Balkan routes," through which most of the heroin destined for western Europe passes. Heroin and hashish trafficking played an important part in the pre-war

FIGURE 13

Illicit opium: quantity produced



* Including India.

Sources: NNICC; INCSR; ANF, Pakistan; NALA; EIR.

economy of Yugoslavia, providing an important source of income for the Serbian-dominated military. The trade continues there, in fact aided by the war, providing income for Serbian fascist militias, as well as militias and criminal gangs outside the control of the Croatian and Bosnian governments. And, as in the case of Afghanistan, international agencies have descended on the region, encouraging all sides to cultivate narcotics in order to buy arms. A new route, via Romania and Hungary, supplementing the old Balkan route, has also been added.

Although Ibero-American cultivation of opium is small by comparison with Southwest and Southeast Asia, it takes on relatively greater significance because it is converted, in its entirety, into heroin for export to the United States. Mexico has historically been the principal producer in the region, but Colombia has become a major factor in just the last 3-4 years, and now produces more than Mexico. This is a cause for great concern in law enforcement circles, because the Colombian cocaine cartels are logistically, politically, and militarily well equipped to handle a huge increase of heroin trafficking.

What the numbers show

EIR's review of statistics compiled by several governments and other agencies, show that the British Empire remains the world's major opium and heroin producer,

and that it is using the drug to systematically destroy targeted states. Figure 13 shows that illicit opium production has been steadily rising over recent years, from 1,291 metric tons in 1980, to 4,467 metric tons in 1995. (Poor crop years reported for Burma in the earlier period skew the comparative production of Southwest and Southeast Asia.) That is a growth of 346%, or 8.6% per annum.

Not all of the opium produced in the

world is converted into heroin. In 1980, about 40% of the total crop was refined into heroin, but that proportion has been steadily increasing over time, as the far more dangerous heroin has increasingly become the drug of choice of former opium addicts in the producing regions. By 1995, a full 75% of the crop was converted to heroin, both for local consumption and export.

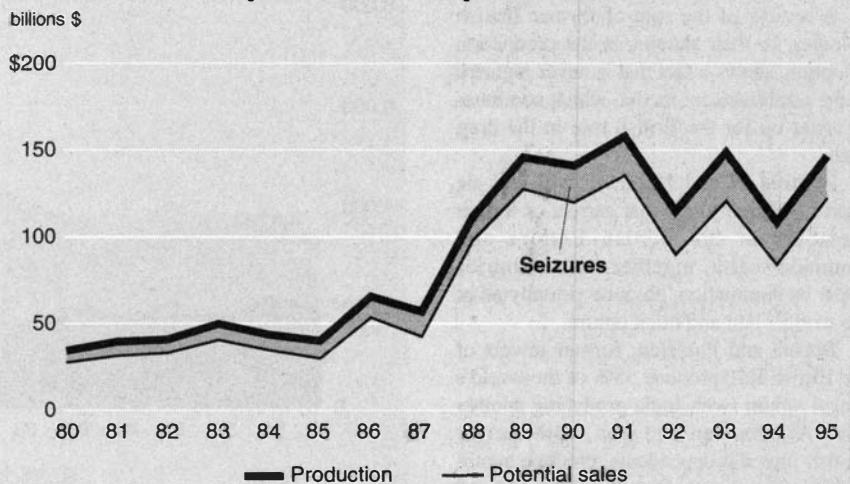
Dope, Inc.'s total revenue from potential sales of heroin increased nearly fivefold in 1980-89, rising from \$27.5 billion to \$127.4 billion (see Figure 14), and has fluctuated around that high-point since. Of this revenue, over 90% comes from the lucrative western European and U.S. markets, despite the fact that the majority of the heroin, by quantity, is consumed in the producing regions themselves, but at far lower prices than in Europe or the United States (see below). Relatively little of world heroin supplies is seized, unlike cocaine and marijuana. The eradication of the poppy plant by government authorities is virtually nonexistent.

Dope, Inc. has the same marketing strategy for heroin that it has for cocaine: slash prices to increase sales, and total profits. Dope, Inc. cut the price of heroin in the U.S. and western European market over 1980-95, by about one-half and two-thirds, respectively (see Figure 15). This bargain-basement strategy paid off. The total quantity produced for sale increased almost sevenfold in the same period, from 49 tons in 1980, to 331 tons in 1995.

But illicit opium and heroin is only part

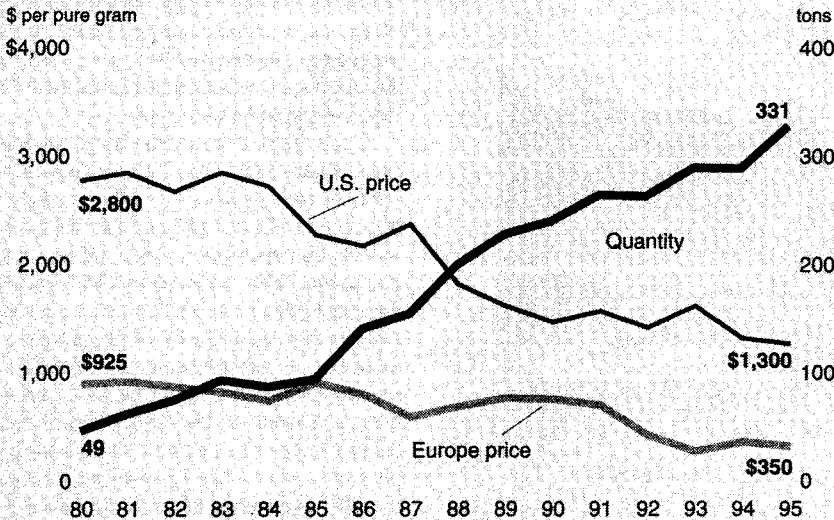
FIGURE 14

Heroin: value of production vs. potential sales



Sources: NNICC; INCSR; UN; Abt Associates; ANF, Pakistan; NALA; EIR.

FIGURE 15
Heroin price vs. quantity produced, United States and Europe



Sources: NNICC; INCSR; UN; Abt Associates; ANF, Pakistan; NALA; EIR.

of the story. There is also *licit* opium production, supervised by pharmaceutical houses, for manufacture of morphine as a prescribed painkiller. As **Figure 16** shows, licit production has remained steady from 1980 to 1995. Although shrinking as a proportion of total opium production, licit output remains vast. Diversion of licit stocks to illegal use is a major problem. According to Indian government estimates, 10-30% of its yearly licit production of 740 tons of opium, is siphoned off for illegal use—equivalent to the entire illegal crop in Laos.

A review of the role of former British colonies, or their satraps, in the production of opium, shows a fact that is never reported in the establishment media, which continues to cover up for the British role in the drug trade.

Figures 17 and 18, along with the pie chart on Map 8, show that current or former members of the British Empire and Commonwealth, together with countries under its domination, produce virtually all of the world's licit and illicit opium.

Burma and Pakistan, former jewels of the British Raj, produce 55% of the world's illegal opium (with India producing another 3%). Afghanistan and Iran, both former British imperial dependents, produce another 35%. The former French colony of Laos produces 4% of the total. Only 3% of the world's illegal opium production takes place

in countries that were not under British rule. And, in all these cases, opium cultivation was introduced by Britain to supply its Chinese market.

With the partial exception of Burma, all these countries remain British dominated to this day.

The case of licit production tells the same

story, as **Figure 17** indicates. The Crown colony of Australia is the world's largest producer of licit opium. India, the former jewel of the British Empire, ranks second. British-dominated Turkey ranks third.

Non-producing countries involved in trafficking are almost entirely former British, French, and Dutch colonies. For example, Nigeria, now high on the British hit-list, is a major transshipment point. Canada is on the primary route into the United States.

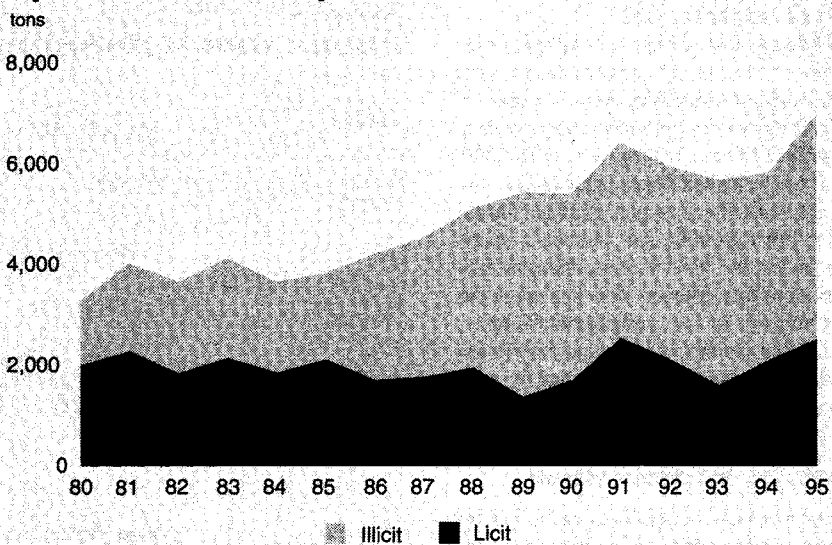
Who is targeted

It may shock the reader to learn that the vast majority of heroin users in the world are in the producer regions themselves, and the numbers (as conservatively estimated by the governments concerned, the UN, and the U.S. government) are staggering.

In 1996, the government of Pakistan, for example, reported that it had 1.5 million heroin addicts and an equal number of opium addicts, constituting over 2% of its 125 million population—the highest addiction rate in the world. Before the Anglo-Americans created the Afghan mujahideen in 1979, there was no heroin addiction in Pakistan at all. By comparison, the United States, with a population of 255 million, has 816,000 heroin users.

Similarly, Thailand, which refines most of the opium produced in Southeast Asia, has 340,000 heroin addicts—largely as a by-product of the entertainment it provided to

FIGURE 16
Opium: licit vs. illicit production



Sources: NNICC; INCSR; UN; Abt Associates; ANF, Pakistan; NALA; EIR.

U.S. troops during the Vietnam War. India has an estimated 1 million heroin addicts, and another 4.5 million opium addicts. There was also no significant heroin addiction in India before the Afghan War. Thus, out of perhaps 5 million heroin users worldwide, less than a million are in the United States, and perhaps an equivalent number in Europe.

This is reflected in the consumption figures as such. Out of the 331 metric tons of heroin produced worldwide in 1995, an estimated 83 tons were exported to the United States, 51 tons were exported to western Europe, and 197 tons remained in the producing regions of Southwest and Southeast Asia to feed their own addicts, who usually consume lower grade No. 3 heroin, mainly for smoking, as distinct from the No. 4 heroin for export, which is usually injected.

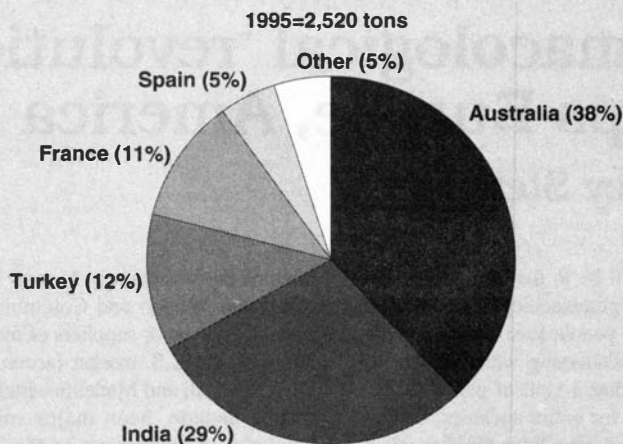
In other words, 60% of the world's total heroin production in 1995 was consumed in the Southeast and Southwest Asia producing regions themselves. (Relatively little heroin is consumed in Ibero-America.) This was not a one-year anomaly. In fact, over the entire decade from 1985 to 1995, about 70% of all world heroin was consumed in the producing regions. While the revenue Dope, Inc. earns through this use is comparatively small (\$7 billion in 1995) because of the vast difference in price, the devastating effects on the societies concerned are enormous.

Table 1 shows the disposition of world heroin production in 1995, from its source in Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, and Ibero-America. Of the 168 tons of heroin produced in Southeast Asia, an estimated 86 tons were consumed regionally, and the rest was exported to the United States and Europe. Of the 151 tons produced in Southwest Asia, about 111 were consumed in the region. In the case of Ibero-America, virtually all the 12 tons produced were exported—to the United States. Of the total 83 tons of heroin exported to the United States from different sources, about 17 tons were seized, leaving 66 tons for sale (most originating in Southeast Asia). Europe, similarly, had 43 tons available for sale after seizures, and most of the supply came from Southwest Asia.

This table shows that the common media and government distinction between producing and consuming regions is ultimately misleading, in some cases deliberately so. It also leaves no doubt that a new opium war, directed against the same general region as the nineteenth-century Opium War, is now in progress.

FIGURE 17

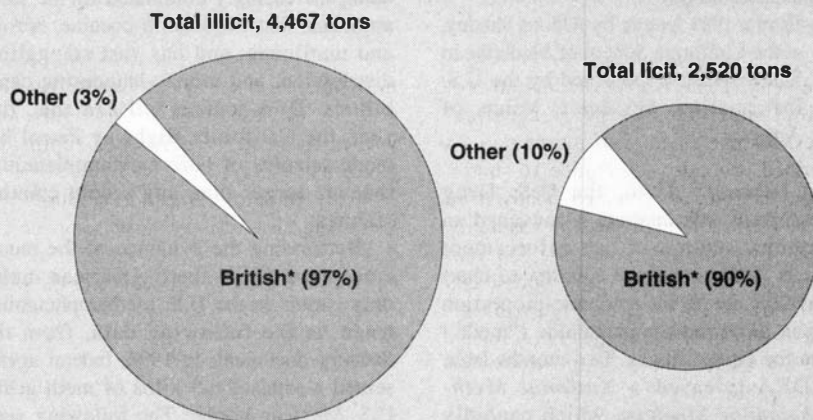
Licit opium: the major producing countries



Source: UN.

FIGURE 18

British domination of world opium production, 1995



* British Commonwealth; former British colonies and satrapies; and British-aligned former French colonies.
Sources: NNICC; INCSR; UN; NALA; EIR.

TABLE 1

Disposition of world heroin production, 1995

(tons)

Source	Destination			Total
	Local consumption	Exported to U.S.	Exported to Europe	
Southeast Asia	86	61	21	168
Southwest Asia	111	10	30	151
Ibero-America	0	12	0	12
World production	197	83	51	331
Seizures	0	-17	-8	-25
Net consumption	197	66	43	306

Sources: NNICC; INCSR; UN; NALA; EIR.