

express and Amada Carrillo Fuentes' group (before he liposuctioned himself to death) used to cover transborder shipments from El Paso to Brownsville. The Juarez cartel runs drugs to the East Coast. In many cases, the cartels have cut out the beleaguered Colombian middlemen and go right to the source for the coca paste. Cocaine is big business, smuggled in massive bundles complete with exporter logos from South America in multiengine cargo jets and cargo ships. Corrupt customs officials drive new Chevy Suburbans and the ruling class in Acapulco and Tijuana could outbid Bill Gates at any poker game. The downside is that Mexico's border population is coming down with a jones for their product, and the U.S. government is losing patience with our biggest narco-neighbor.

Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras are major land, air, and sea transshipment routes for Colombian drugs entering Mexico. Mexico snaps up about 50 to 70 percent of all cocaine from South America. Mexico's corrupt police and long border with the United States make it an ideal entry point for drugs and a major money laundering center.

Mexico also produces about 80 percent of marijuana, 20 to 30 percent of heroin, and a growing amount of methamphetamines.

Panama

The Darien region of Panama is a hot spot for coca cultivation for the Colombian drug czars. Local Indians are goaded into cultivating crops under the watchful protection of Colombian guerrillas. Panama retains its reputation as an ideal shipment point for drugs and is a major center for laundering drug money.

Peru

Coca is Peru's second largest crop (after maize), with 930 square miles under cultivation. The major areas are the Huallaga Valley and the Apurimac-Enc Valley east of Lima. The 115,300 hectares of coca leaf (60% of the world's total coca crop) under cultivation is worth 40¢ to 50¢ a kilo (down from \$3 in 1994). The drugs are grown by peasants who sell to buyers on behalf of processors.

Russia

Russia's geographical position makes it a major drug-producing, shipping, and consumption center. Its neighbors make good use of the corrupt and inefficient police and border guards. The Russians quickly

motorized the drug business and Russian generals made millions sending drugs back to Russia in lead-lined coffins.

Drugs from the Golden Crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran) are transported to major centers like Tashkent in Uzbekistan, or through the states of Chechnya, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. There are also major growing areas in southern Russia and the western Ukraine, as well as the states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Krygyzstan. The presence of foreign troops during the Balkan War has disrupted the once traditional smuggling routes into Europe, which are being replaced by Afghanistan to Tajikistan to St. Petersburg to Cyprus, and then out through ports on the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean. Russian officials estimate there are about 5.7 million drug users in Russia, with hashish being the drug of choice. A UN report says there may be 100,000 opium poppy fields and more than 2.5 million acres of marijuana under cultivation within the country. Drug-related crime is up 15 percent, and 23 tons of drugs were seized in raids last year. About 80 percent of drug dealers arrested in Moscow are Azerbaijanis; the rest are Chechens. Moscow banks are becoming popular with out-of-town drug dealers like the Sicilian mafia and the Colombian cartels to launder money. The total drug business adds up to an unimpressive US\$25 million (compared to our US\$500 billion narcotics industry). A kilo of hash in Russia goes for as little as US\$15, compared to US\$200 in Europe. Accordingly, the profit-savvy and brutal Russian gangs are also expanding into Europe and the United States.

Those drugs that don't end up in Moscow or St. Petersburg go through to the Baltics, where eager Scandinavian and Lowlands customers await.

Africa

Africa is not a major consumer of drugs, but it is an important transshipment point. Southern Africa is a growing consumer of drugs and producer of meth.