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The USSR and Illicit Drugs: Facing Up to the Problem



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A Research Paper

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November 1986

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The USSR and Illicit Drugs: Facing Up to the Problem



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A Research Paper

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**The USSR and Illicit Drugs:
Facing Up to the Problem**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 6 October 1986
was used in this report.*

In sharp contrast to past official efforts to conceal the existence of a drug problem in the USSR, the regime of General Secretary Gorbachev is providing extensive publicity on this topic. This media attention, along with a few concrete measures taken to facilitate the work of government drug organizations, suggests that the Kremlin is gearing up for an assault against illicit drugs. This would be a logical extension of the drive against alcohol abuse and be consistent with Gorbachev's overall effort to strengthen law and order. The USSR's drug problem is fueled by:

- The Soviets' lack of expertise and experience in dealing with illicit drugs and failure to make a major commitment of resources in this area.
- The close relationship between drug use and other societal problems such as crime and corruption, family instability, youth alienation, and a desire to imitate Western trends.
- Soviet users and dealers who illegally divert supplies from legal drug crops.
- Widespread drug use in Afghanistan among Soviet troops, some of whom smuggle drugs back into the USSR.
- Increased cross-border drug trafficking, particularly from South Asia, which includes some of the world's top drug producing and trafficking countries.
- An incipient role as an international conduit for drugs transported from South Asia to Western Europe.

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By Western standards, the drug problem in the USSR is small; alcohol remains the Soviets' number-one drug of choice. Fragmentary data suggest that Soviet addicts number in the hundreds of thousands, compared with several million in the United States. Nonetheless, illicit drug use is increasing, especially among Soviet youth. The growth of drug use among privileged youth from Russian ethnic backgrounds—the USSR's future leaders—causes the Kremlin particular concern. This development and its association with societal maladies such as crime are most likely the reasons behind the government's decision to take a more aggressive stance.

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The official approach to combating the drug problem, as in the case of alcohol problems, has been largely punitive. Most apprehended addicts are sent to facilities that differ little from prison camps. Drug laws are tough but poorly enforced. In any event, the Soviets lack the medical treatment facilities, cadre of professionals, educational programs, specialized law enforcement units, and eradication equipment that would enable them to tackle the drug problem on a comprehensive basis.

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Given the high priority Gorbachev assigns to taking on problems that strain the social fabric and discipline, it seems that he will move more vigorously than his predecessors against the drug problem, much as he did against alcoholism in 1985. There are reasons to believe that the Gorbachev regime does have the capability to prevent or at least slow down the growth of drug abuse:

- Unlike heavy drinking, a deeply entrenched habit sanctioned by centuries-old tradition and involving a huge proportion of the Soviet population, drug abuse is an incipient problem that has not taken root among the population at large except perhaps in Muslim areas of the USSR.
- Since most Soviet drugs come from internal sources, at least for now the Soviets can largely deal with the problem internally. Thus, the Soviets may be able to stabilize the drug problem in the short term through the inexpensive method of a law enforcement crackdown.

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However, if the USSR's domestic illicit supplies are curtailed, demand could lead to increased cross-border smuggling and more international trafficking through the USSR to Western Europe. As the Soviets face up to both domestic and cross-border drug problems, we expect that they will become more active in multilateral drug control programs. The USSR plans to participate in the UN's World Conference on Trafficking and Drug Abuse in June 1987; and it has hinted that it may join Interpol, the international police agency, sometime in 1987. Although this involvement will be on the Kremlin's own terms, we believe that the Soviets will become increasingly cooperative during the next few years.

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The USSR and Illicit Drugs: Facing Up to the Problem

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Introduction

Under General Secretary Gorbachev, the Soviet Government is both publicizing and developing solutions to a variety of social problems that it previously played down. A case in point is the regime's 1985 alcohol control initiatives. Illicit drug activity is small in comparison to alcoholism in the USSR, but it nonetheless contributes to broader societal problems that are forcing the Kremlin to act. Although a Soviet antidrug program is likely to be focused inward on drug abuse, concern over trafficking probably will cause a move into the international arena that will bring Soviet officials into contact with the United States on a number of drug issues over the next few years.

- A June *Izvestiya* article acknowledged that the "growing problem" of drug abuse has begun to affect children and expressed regret that "we have shown ourselves to be ill-prepared to fight this evil."
- In mid-July, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published a letter to the editor written by a mother of two drug addicts in Odessa who lamented that "soon the poppy harvest will start pouring into the city. The militia is doing nothing to control this. We can't be silent about this."

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Since April, a number of high-level officials have addressed the drug issue publicly:

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Evidence of Recent Soviet Concern

Increased Soviet press coverage and official statements in recent months indicate heightened regime concern about illicit drug activity in the USSR. In sharp contrast to past efforts to conceal the drug problem, the Gorbachev leadership is providing publicity that since April 1986 has assumed the proportions of a minicampaign (figure 1). We estimate that the number of drug-related articles during the first six months of 1986 are more than twice the number that appeared from 1980 to 1985. Moreover, public attention is no longer concentrated in the Caucasian and Central Asian republics but is reflected in periodicals throughout the country:

- In mid-April the *Moscow Komsomol* youth newspaper published the first in-depth expose of the nationwide drug problem, acknowledging the existence of Soviet pushers, addicts, and drug-related crime.
- In a May interview the head of the leading Soviet psychological institute publicly urged that a campaign be launched against drug addiction similar to that against alcoholism.
- Moscow party chief Boris Yeltsin, a Politburo member and Gorbachev protege, stated in a July interview that "drug addiction has increased greatly."
- In late July First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party Patiashvili noted at a local party meeting that prominence was being given "to the task of nipping in the bud such negative phenomena as narcotics addiction that push people into crime." His predecessor in Georgia and now Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze had previously told a meeting of republic law enforcement personnel that "drug addiction, which ruins people's health and brings about their moral degradation, is not being fought with sufficient vigor by us."
- Also in July, at a conference in Kharkov attended by prosecutors from a number of union republics and oblasts, USSR Procurator Aleksandr Rekunkov called for a stepped-up effort in the struggle against drug addiction. The attendees concurred on the necessity for studying drug use nationwide.

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Figure 1. Soviet media on illicit drugs "When the Illusion Vanishes" (left). "Dangerous Addiction" (right).

- Later in August, in a lengthy piece in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, interviewed police, farm, and health officials called for urgent measures to combat the cultivation and use of drugs. RSFSR Health Minister Anatoliy Potapov stated, "It's high time this evil (of drug abuse) was denounced loud and clear."
- In an August issue of *Izvestiya*, I. Usmankhodzheyev, First Secretary of the Uzbek Party Central Committee, admitted that both drug addiction and the cultivation of narcotic plants were widespread problems in the republic.
- At an October conference of social scientists, Secretary Yegor Ligachev stated that "energetic measures are being taken to erect barriers against drug addiction."
- At a September meeting held by the Ukrainian Central Committee, Politburo member Vladimir Shcherbitskiy complained about the ineffectiveness of educational and preventive measures in dealing with the drug problem.

The Kremlin's public acknowledgment of a domestic drug problem broke a longstanding taboo. Until 1986 senior Soviet officials dismissed drugs as a feature of Western moral decay not found in the USSR. The recent turnaround is partly the result of Gorbachev's call for openness, or *glasnost*, in the press. In striking contrast to Brezhnev, who suppressed information of

domestic problems to avoid stirring up public criticism of the regime's failure to deal with them, Gorbachev is publicizing these problems to marshal public support behind his policy initiatives. He probably believes it is necessary to portray the drug problem more candidly to raise public awareness and to condition the population to accept the need for vigorous remedial measures.

Current Soviet Drug Scene

The exact size of the USSR's drug problem is unknown both to the Soviets and to us. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) statistics on social maladies are state secrets. Official data that are released are fragmentary and seemingly inconsistent. In recent years data published in Soviet professional journals have indicated that the official number of "registered narcotics addicts" in the entire USSR has hovered around 2,500 (in a population of about 280 million). Moscow party chief Boris Yeltsin, however, publicly acknowledged in July 1986 that Moscow alone has 3,600 registered addicts. Government figures represent only those addicts who are registered, the term used for those who have been arrested or turned in for narcotics abuse. Yeltsin affirmed that his figure of 3,600 registered addicts in Moscow included only

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those people who were involuntarily registered, and he readily admitted that there are many who are not registered. [redacted]

We believe that Soviet authorities themselves do not have a good handle on the total number of drug users, but [redacted] the total number of addicts is much higher than that officially reported:¹

• [redacted] authorities put the number of addicts in the republic at 40,000.

• [redacted] there were 50,000 drug users in Moscow in the late 1970s. [redacted] according to MVD estimates, there were 100,000 addicts in Moscow in 1984 and three to four times that many occasional users of narcotics.

• [redacted] several Soviet cities along the Volga River—Kazan', Saratov, Gor'kiy, and Ul'yans'k, each with a population of more than 1 million—are said to have between 20,000 and 30,000 addicts each. [redacted]

In an apparent effort to improve its ability to size up the problem, the Georgian Republic earlier this year conducted a large-scale survey on drug use. An August 1986 *Izvestiya* article disclosed that, while the survey did not reveal exact totals of addicts, it did conclude that the drug problem in Georgia is rising.

[redacted]

Although drug use appears to be a growing phenomenon in the Soviet Union, the problem is still small by Western standards. The higher unofficial estimates

¹ Compounding the difficulty of assembling accurate figures on Soviet drug use is the problem of definitions. Even Soviet drug specialists do not always differentiate between narcotic drugs and milder substances, whose psychological and physiological effects differ substantially. In addition, very different forms of drug dependence are often referred to in Soviet literature as "addiction," whether the dependence is psychological, physical, or both. Finally, persons who merely experiment with drugs are not always distinguished from actual addicts. Thus, whether or not officially released statistics on drug use have been manipulated to accommodate political motives, they do not appear to reflect scientific methodology. [redacted]

Georgian Survey of Drug Abuse

Two field surveys of "hundreds" of drug addicts in Georgia, conducted by the laboratory of criminal sociology of the Georgian MVD related that:

- Drug addiction exists at all social levels—among workers, villagers, children of doctors, teachers, and scholars.
- The majority of those questioned (85.6 percent) were 16 to 35 years old. Of these, half were 20 years old or younger.
- More than one-half came from well-to-do families, and the majority had secondary and incomplete higher educations.
- Ninety percent obtained their drugs either from pharmacies or from hospital medical personnel. Eighty percent of the drug users obtained their drugs from points outside the Georgian SSR. Nineteen such geographical sources within the USSR were mentioned, mainly cities in other areas of the Caucasus and in Central Asia. [redacted]

put the number of Soviet drug users in the hundreds of thousands; in the United States, in addition to the widespread use of marijuana, current users of cocaine number more than 4 million and heroin users about 500,000, according to the National Institute of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. [redacted]

Soviet Drug Users

Drug use is not new to the USSR; many ethnic groups of Central Asia and the Caucasus have used hashish and opium for centuries (figure 2). Until the 1970s drug use was largely confined to those southern regions. [redacted] drug use began to spread on a small scale in the 1960s. [redacted] drug abuse among criminals and in Soviet prisons first became noticeable during that period. A recent article in the

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Figure 2
Soviet Drug Production Centers and Routes of International Trafficking



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Moscow youth newspaper also fixed the spread of drug use at this time, which coincides with when drugs became fashionable in the West. [redacted] during the 1970s drug use expanded into northern European areas of the USSR, especially in the larger cities of the Slavic and Baltic republics, and among Soviet youth of all social classes. It is probably this extension of drug use from traditional areas into elite youth circles that alarms Soviet authorities. [redacted]

[redacted] the majority of the USSR's drug users are young, usually in their teens or twenties. [redacted] the recent converts to drug use are primarily urban, educated youth from the privileged social stratum. [redacted]

[redacted] drug use was rising among the children of "important officials," who could afford the habit. [redacted] divided drug users into three categories: bored and affluent children of top party and military officials; working class juveniles, described by the press as "hooligans," who often lack parental supervision, belong to street gangs, and become pushers to pay for their habits; and young school children who accept offers of drugs out of curiosity and believe drug use is a sign of maturity.

[redacted] Moscow addicts also include "decent" personalities such as scientists, writers, physicians, and famous athletes. [redacted]

These different segments of Soviet society are using a broad range—in price and kind—of narcotic substances:

- Drugs used by affluent users include morphine and codeine preparations, which, at a cost of 400 rubles per gram, are considered expensive.
- Students, workers, minor criminals, and homosexuals use a cheaper, potent narcotic called *kuknar*, which is made from dry poppyheads. Known as one of the "hardest and strongest" narcotics, *kuknar* results in a very painful withdrawal syndrome but is considered a bargain at 150 to 200 rubles per kilogram.²

² The official monetary conversion rate is 0.743 rubles to US \$1 (1983 average). [redacted]

- Hashish and marijuana appear to be more widely used than opium-derived products among Soviet youth because they are less expensive. One hundred grams of hashish costs 40 to 50 rubles. 25X1

- *Chefir*, a highly concentrated tea extract with a high caffeine content, causes a substantial high. It is legally produced from tea and is widely used by Slavs in Siberia and in forced labor camps, where it is openly available and cheap. 25X1

- LSD and cocaine are not common in the USSR because of the complicated processing procedure and the lack of indigenous sources of supply. [redacted] 25X1

Links Between Drug Use and Other Domestic Problems

Like alcoholism, drug abuse is associated with a wide range of social maladies that worsened during the 1970s and early 1980s: divorce and family instability, crime and corruption, youth disaffection and alienation, and a general waning of ideological belief and lowering of popular morale. Greater contacts with Westerners in recent years have given impetus to drug use among Soviet youth infatuated with Western trends and fashions. For some, more leisure time and an increase in disposable income during a period of consumer shortages have been contributing factors. At the same time, drug use feeds a variety of domestic ills by increasing opportunities and incentives for corruption, helping to cause family breakups, aggravating already serious national health problems, and further straining social cohesiveness and discipline. [redacted]

For some "golden youth," as sons and daughters of the elite are called, drugs have become a symbol of rebellion and a means of emulating the West: 25X1

- [redacted] alienation of many young people, including children of ranking CPSU officials, was directly linked to drug use. 25X1

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- A young Moscow teenager said that she and her friends smoked hashish because they wanted to keep up with Western trends and that using drugs was the “in” thing to do.
- In a recent book, Chingiz Aitmatov, noting the weakening hold of ideology on Soviet youth, said that, for many of them, drugs have become a symbol of “entering the West.”
- A June 1986 *Komsomolskaya Pravda* article blamed drug use among children and youth on “families for whom material values long ago pushed spiritual and moral order into the background.” Georgian sociologists, in a recently published study, asserted that “hedonism” is the main reason for the spread of drug addiction.
- Another recent article in *Moskovskaya Komsomol's*, noting that the drug problem was acute among children of the affluent, concluded that drug use in the Soviet Union can be traced in part to weakened family values. [redacted]

Gorbachev's stern antialcohol campaign, under way since May 1985, may have stimulated drug use by raising the price of alcohol and reducing its availability.³ In early June several Soviet newspapers reported that some youth have reacted to the restrictions on liquor by turning to substitutes such as raw poppy extract, paint thinner, and prescription medicines.

Open Soviet press sources affirm a connection between drugs and crimes, ranging from apartment burglaries to murder, and indicate that drug-related crime is on the rise. According to an October 1986 *Izvestiya* article, a Soviet legal official reported “a steady growth in the number of solved crimes linked to drugs.” Georgiy Morozov, in a mid-May 1986 *Sovetskaya Kultura* interview, linked narcotics use and crime and cited as proof West German statistics

[redacted]

showing 64,000 crimes connected with drug abuse in 1983. Yuri Dyachenko, chief of the Kuibyshev MVD antidrug section, recently told a *Sovetskaya Rossiya* reporter that “bloody crimes are sometimes committed over a codeine tablet, an ampule of morphine, or hashish cigarettes.” Other newspaper articles have hinted at the involvement of organized crime, although most drug trafficking appears to be carried out by small-time entrepreneurs rather than large-scale networks. [redacted]

Drug use also is beginning to contribute to a variety of health problems in the USSR. A physician at a children's hospital noted in 1984, for example, that there was a rise in the number of addicted mothers giving birth. There is little evidence thus far linking drug abuse to AIDS or needle-transmitted hepatitis; but [redacted] Soviet drug addicts reuse hypodermic needles, and in June officials publicly acknowledged one AIDS case caused by intravenous drug use. RSFSR Health Minister Potapov recently admitted that “drug addiction often goes hand in hand with homosexuality.” [redacted]

Internal Production and Marketing of Illicit Drugs

Most of the USSR's illicit drugs come from internal sources—cultivation, production, and marketing all occur within Soviet borders—although cross-border trafficking from South Asian countries, like Afghanistan, supplies some drugs. According to an August article by a Soviet MVD official, 80 percent of illicit narcotics are produced from licit domestic crops, with the remaining 20 percent coming from illegal diversions from medical institutions. [redacted]

Two main crop sources for illicit drugs exist within the USSR. Cannabis is cultivated legally in the southern USSR, and the plant's tough fiber, known as hemp, is used for making rope and twine (figure 3). Although most of the cannabis native to the USSR contains only a small percentage of narcotic substances, it is cultivated illicitly for marijuana and

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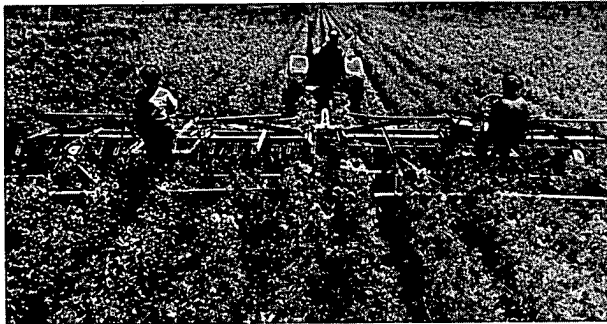


Figure 3. Cannabis cultivation in the USSR

hashish.⁴ According to several Soviet officials quoted in the press, however, a type of cannabis with higher levels of narcotic substances is grown illicitly near the Aral, Black, and Caspian Seas; in the Central Asian republics of Kirghiz, Tajik, and Kazakh; and in the Donetsk area of the Ukraine.

[redacted] a marijuana production center was located in Tajik. Hashish is produced throughout the Caucasus and Central Asian republics.

Some marijuana and hashish is also derived from wild cannabis, which contains even smaller amounts of narcotic substances than the licit, cultivated cannabis. According to a top Soviet agriculture official quoted in an August 1986 issue of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, wild cannabis grows on more than 1 million hectares in the Chu Valley of Kirghiz alone, with another 1 million hectares in the Far East, from Khabarovsk to Zabaikal. The same agriculture official reported that cultivated cannabis covers only 86,000 hectares. We have not seen comprehensive official data on the USSR's cannabis growing areas and are unable to confirm these figures, which may be little more than inflated guesses.

Opium poppies are grown legally in the Georgian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Uzbek Republics, in the Kuibyshev area of the Russian Republic, and along

⁴ Marijuana is the dried, tobacco-like product of the cannabis plant; hashish is a more processed product of cannabis that consists of compressed resinous powder. Hashish usually contains a higher concentration of the psychoactive agent delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) than marijuana because of the additional processing.

the Soviet-Afghan border in Tajik. The poppy heads are used in licit morphine production, and the seeds are used for cooking. Although many of the legal poppyfields are patrolled to ward off illicit harvesters, Soviet press accounts affirm that numerous drug dealers and users raid the fields. The focus of official concern appears to be the large-scale diversion of opium poppies from state-run farms scattered from the western Ukraine to the Volga uplands, a span of more than 1,600 kilometers.

Hashish, marijuana, and opium derivatives are readily available in the southern republics at most of the local bazaars, although many users harvest their own supplies. [redacted] a large opium market is operating in the Ukraine. Georgian drug dealers are said to obtain some supplies from L'vov, Donetsk, and Kiev.

Widespread corruption in the USSR facilitates the internal production and marketing of illicit drugs:

- [redacted] drug trafficking flourishes in the Derbent region of the Dagestan Autonomous Republic because of an agreement between opium poppy growers and police officers, who reportedly receive 2,000 rubles per hectare of opium poppies.
- [redacted] the local militia in Odessa do little to interfere with the drug trade because of widespread kickbacks.
- [redacted] when drug dealers were arrested in Moscow in the early 1980s, most bribed their way out of jail within one or two days. [redacted] the militia generally ignores the drug situation in Moscow because junior- and medium-ranked militiamen themselves are obtaining drugs on the black market.
- [redacted] prison inmates obtain narcotic substances by bribing the guards.

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Drug Trafficking in the Soviet Capital

[redacted] it is as easy to obtain illicit drugs in Moscow as it is in any major US city. [redacted] both drug users and dealers "feel free and quite comfortable in Moscow." [redacted] drugs can be acquired in more than 300 places in the capital. Market dealers, or "street pushers," are known to operate from Cheremushkiy Market, the Central Moscow Market, Leningradskiy Market, and Arbat Square, [redacted] in the early 1980s, dealers who stood on Leninskiy Prospect with ready syringes were approached by addicts in automobiles who stretched out their arms, received injections, and departed without ever having to get out of their cars. When the weather got cold, these dealers moved to Vnukovo Airport. The Salyut Hotel in Moscow was used as a drug distribution point in the early 1980s. [redacted] during that time on a "hot" day nearly 1 kilogram of pure morphine was distributed. [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet teenagers in Moscow talking openly about puffing plan and anasha (types of hashish), popping tranquilizers, sniffing chemical fumes, and drinking a toxic, mind-numbing concoction known as BF, or Boris Fedorovich, that is made from butylphenol glue. [redacted] a number of teenage hippies often use marijuana, hashish, and LSD. [redacted] marijuana use by Soviet students is not a rare occurrence. [redacted]

Drugs are usually brought from the southern republics to northern cities by train or automobile. Some dealers and users also grow their own opium poppies at dachas just outside of Moscow, [redacted] "Tourist dealers," who live in regions where poppies grow and travel to Moscow to sell wholesale quantities of illicit drugs, usually obtain their supplies from state opium poppy farms. Dealers often process the collected product with crude and cheap "home technology" to purify it and sell it at higher prices. [redacted]

Numerous Soviet press reports tell of dealers and users who flock to the state opium poppyfields. A June 1986 Komsomolskaya Pravda article depicted groups of dealers and addicts converging on Central Asian poppyfields from the Baltic region and from the Russian cities of Orenburg, Orel, and Krasnodar. These visiting groups often stay for days and collect sacks of opium poppies, according to the article. One enforcement official in the Kuibyshev region publicly stated that the availability of narcotics in the area is like "home brew flowing from the kitchen tap." [redacted]

Dealers and addicts obtain processed narcotics, such as morphine and codeine-based medicines, from medical personnel, as well as from civil defense enterprises. Criminal channels reportedly supply the Moscow black market with opiates obtained from robbing drugstores, hospital storage facilities, and railroad cars transporting medicinal drugs. Some directors of drugstores and hospitals cooperate with various commercial narcotics traders. Dealers can obtain medicines containing narcotic substances from pharmacological plants in Khar'kov, Tomsk, Ufa, Kazan', Navoi, and Moscow. Some narcotics dealers buy narcotics contained in medical supplies of geological teams going to remote parts of the Soviet Union. Some physicians and therapists sell prescriptions for drugs containing narcotic substances. Illegal home laboratories also supply the black market with narcotics. Dealers also bribe or swindle civil defense warehouse managers to borrow individual protective kits and replace the synthesized narcotic substance that each kit contains with water or a cheaper painkiller. Dealers obtain similar narcotics and reusable syringes from military supply stores, which stock ampules of 10 percent morphine for medical purposes. [redacted]

Drug Use Among Soviet Troops in Afghanistan

[redacted] drug use among Soviet troops in Afghanistan is based on fragmentary information. [redacted] Consequently, there is no conclusive [redacted]

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Figure 4
Major Smuggling Routes of Afghan Drugs Into the Soviet Union



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little publicly. To date, the Soviets have not taken any drastic steps to curtail the drug problems among their troops in Afghanistan. For example, [redacted] the Soviet military has not attempted to destroy opium poppyfields. Soviet commanders in outlying areas of Afghanistan, where drug use among troops is particularly high, have adopted a tactic of rotating troops between posts more frequently to disrupt dealer-user relationships. The measure, however, has not been successful, [redacted]

[redacted] Since 1984 Soviet officers have made soldiers more accountable for their weapons, reportedly to prevent soldiers from trading them for drugs. For example, Soviet military police have established roadblocks in Kabul to look for any suspiciously large amounts of military equipment Soviet troops might be accumulating for drug trades, [redacted] the strict controls against narcotics abuse by Soviet troops in Kabul have become increasingly effective. Any soldier found guilty of selling or trading a military weapon is arrested and immediately sentenced to a military jail in the USSR. [redacted]

[redacted] some Afghan insurgents, or *mujahideen*, occasionally entice Soviet troops with drugs to ensnare them or to barter for weapons. The insurgents generally deny involvement in the drug trade, although Afghans who support the insurgency admit to supplying Soviet soldiers with drugs. Nonetheless, we doubt that the drug trade constitutes an organized, large-scale effort by the insurgents. [redacted]

[redacted] involvement of any kind with hashish and opiates among their people is prohibited on the basis of their conservative Islamic principles. Others, however, have no scruples about selling narcotics and traditionally have trafficked drugs. Nevertheless, we believe that individual *mujahideen* or insurgency supporters purvey drugs to Soviet troops and to any other buyer as well. [redacted]

Cross-Border Trafficking

The USSR as a Market

As with numerous other countries, drug trafficking into the USSR is accomplished through the time-honored methods of smugglers. We suspect that drug

smugglers capitalize on the fact that drug interdiction is new to the Soviets, and customs personnel are not trained in or equipped for drug identification and seizures. In addition, [redacted] smugglers get illicit drugs into the Soviet Union by bribing customs officials at the borders. We do not have comprehensive data on the frequency and quantities of illicit drugs that cross into the USSR, but we judge that the flow of trafficking is regular and increasing. [redacted]

A key factor contributing to the Soviet Union's cross-border trafficking is its geographic location. The USSR's southern regions border some of the world's top drug-producing and trafficking countries, such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. We believe that most of the illicit drugs sent to the Soviet market from the south originate in Afghanistan, which is an increasingly popular avenue for South Asian drug smuggling. This drug trade puts greater pressure on Soviet customs officials who apparently concentrate on checking identifications of travelers and movement of war-related cargo along the Soviet-Afghan border. We also suspect that cross-border smuggling into the USSR is made easier by the ethnic ties between South Asians and Soviet Asians, who are traditional drug users and could offer non-Soviet smugglers easier cross-border trafficking channels. [redacted]

Most of the illicit drugs bound for the Soviet market from Afghanistan probably are brought in by returning Soviet military troops. Reports of drug smuggling into the USSR have increased since the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979:

- [redacted] 270 Soviet personnel were implicated in 1983 in connection with a smuggling operation between Kabul and Moscow. Soviet soldiers involved in a smaller narcotics ring along the Afghan-USSR border were being investigated by the KGB in late 1985, [redacted]

[redacted] the KGB was ordered to investigate drug smuggling from Afghanistan to the USSR via military transport.

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- [redacted] Soviet soldiers returning from Afghanistan with 150- to 200-gram balls of hashish. [redacted] [redacted] widespread smuggling of radios and tape recorders, as well as hashish and opium, out of Afghanistan by Soviet soldiers. This smuggling reportedly was accomplished by bribing Soviet Naval personnel who were serving as customs officials at the USSR-Afghan border.

interdiction efforts. The Soviet Union, with its lack of experience in interdiction and drug enforcement, provides a relatively low-risk alternative to these sophisticated, international traffickers. For example, if illicit drugs are well concealed in other cargo, they can cross the USSR by truck without much difficulty. Once shipments clear inspection at the Soviet border, there usually is no careful examination of transit goods at checkpoints within the USSR if the shipping papers are in order. Inspection procedures at Soviet ports and, to a lesser extent, airports are also not designed to detect and seize concealed drugs. [redacted]

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- In a case not involving Soviet troops, an Afghan [redacted] saw illicit drugs being smuggled from Afghanistan into the USSR by civilian couriers at the following border crossing points: via the Keleft overhead pipeline, at Sher Khan Bandar by ferryboats, and in Termez on a Soviet railway line. [redacted]

Several recent cases support our view that drug smuggling through the Soviet Union is increasing. For example, illicit drugs have been discovered on Aeroflot flights from South Asia to Western Europe via Moscow's Sheremetevo II Airport:

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We believe that the majority of illicit drugs shipped into the USSR comes from South Asia, but supplies also filter in from other sources. For example, Leningrad militia officials acknowledge that heroin is smuggled in by Soviet and foreign sailors, [redacted]

[redacted] The Black Sea port of Odessa, long a center of black-market trafficking in the USSR, is probably a major entry point for illicit drugs. [redacted] the state vehicle impound bureau arrested more than 50 Polish citizens along the Soviet-Polish border in a six-month period for drug smuggling. Most of the confiscated drugs reportedly were marijuana and cocaine. [redacted]

- In a 10 April 1986 Moscow *Izvestiya* article, N. A. Bazhenov, First Deputy Prosecutor General of the USSR, cited cases from 1985 in which fairly small amounts of hashish were discovered on Aeroflot flights. A Jordanian, an Australian, and a Briton were imprisoned in the USSR for carrying the drugs in amounts of 10 kilograms or less. They were flying from New Delhi to Zurich with a stopover in Moscow. In another case, a Danish man was imprisoned for three months in the USSR after Soviet customs authorities found 3.6 kilograms of hashish in his luggage. The Dane, who was arrested in December 1985 at the Moscow airport, was flying from New Dehli to Denmark. These flight routes confirm reporting that identifies India as a major refining and trafficking center for drugs that are then shipped to Europe and North America.

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The USSR as a Conduit

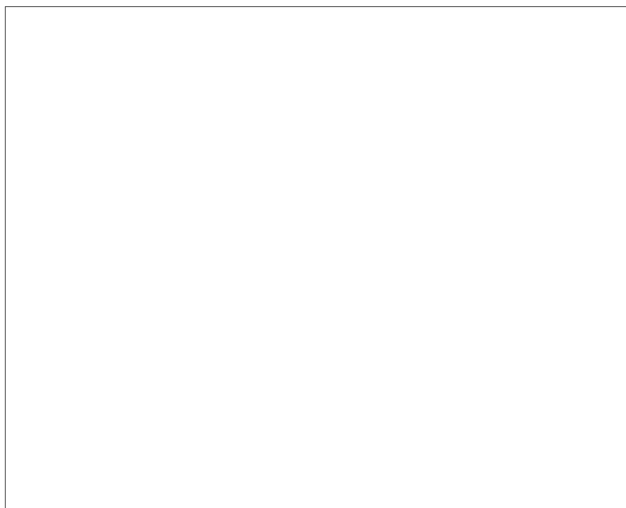
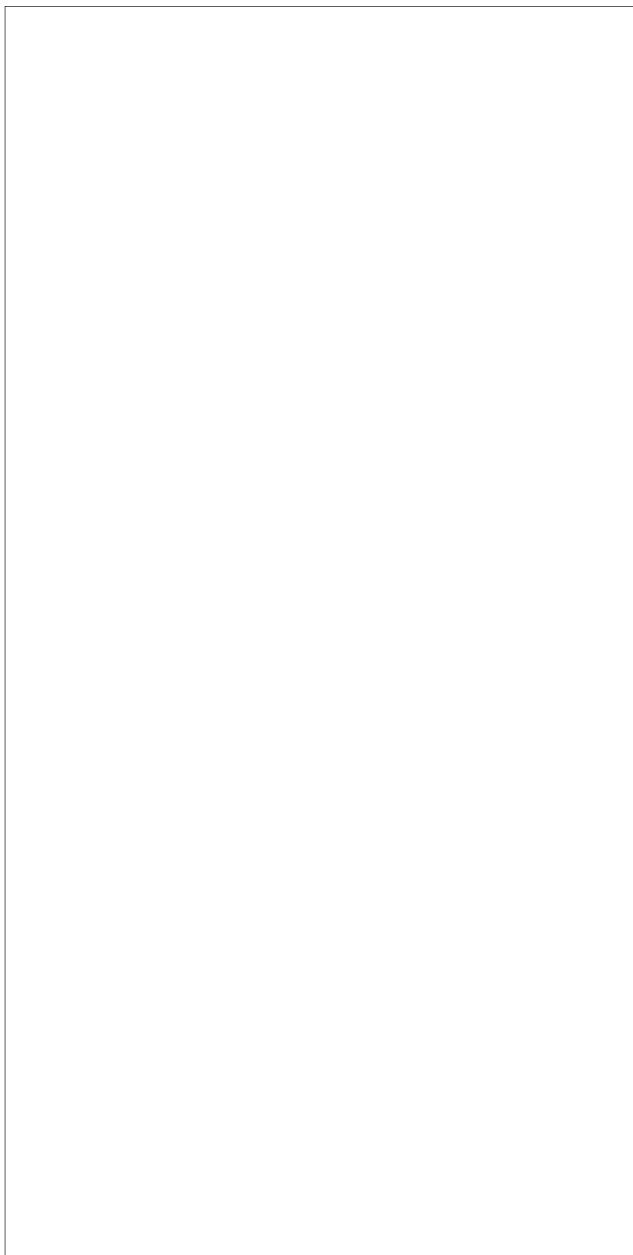
Although not yet a major transit route, the USSR is being used more frequently by traffickers as a conduit for South Asian-produced drugs moving to markets in the West. This may be an attempt by the trafficking groups that supply drugs to the Soviet market to carve out a niche in the more lucrative markets of Western Europe. It may also reflect an attempt by established international traffickers to locate secure alternative routes to replace traditional routes that have been identified and come under stricter enforcement. Turkey, for example, has long been a transit point for South Asian drugs, but traffickers now face higher risk there because Turkish officials have beefed up

- The US Embassy in Moscow confirms that the less expensive Aeroflot routing from South Asia to Western Europe via Moscow continues to be used by small-time drug smugglers. Embassy consular staff, who have access to nonpublic areas of the Moscow airport, report seeing Soviet sniffer dogs in

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use. All incoming Ariana (Afghan-flag carrier) baggage is checked by the dogs, and they apparently are targeted against other flights arriving from South Asia.

Larger amounts of drugs, especially heroin, are smuggled across the USSR on overland and maritime routes. The shipments usually originate in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India:



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Soviet Policy Response to the Drug Problem

Thus far, the USSR's antidrug efforts lack the teeth Gorbachev put into his 1985 alcohol control initiative. Soon after Gorbachev made the alcoholism campaign a top national priority, the USSR Council of Ministers created a 28-point set of marching orders to implement the program. In addition, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet enacted a statute significantly stiffening every area of the Soviet legal code dealing with alcohol consumption, sale, and production. These types of tough nationwide measures are still absent in the Soviets' antidrug efforts. Moreover, Soviet action against domestic drug problems is hindered by a lack of trained enforcement and medical personnel. Soviet drug control agencies have limited experience in combating what is a recent problem for the USSR.

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There are indications, however, that the Soviets are gearing up for an assault on drug abuse—as a logical extension of the drive against alcohol and, more generally, a part of Gorbachev's overall effort to strengthen law and order. Along with the onset this spring of the media focus on drugs, some regional party organizations have begun to take concrete measures to combat addiction. In the most striking effort to date, Moscow authorities launched a citywide drug

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Soviet Official Attention to the Drug Problem Before the 1980s

1965	First hospital specializing in drug addiction treatment opens in Georgia.
1969	USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium ukase stipulates the assessment of responsibility for narcotics use and stepped-up efforts against the sale of narcotics.
1970	First national popular press item revealing drug abuse among youth is printed in the journal Krokodil.
1972	Academy of Sciences' scientist is arrested for producing kilogram amounts of LSD (this is the first reported use of LSD in the USSR). Decree by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet provides for detention of persistent drug takers for up to two years in "curative labor dispensaries."
1974	Harsh national narcotics law are promulgated.
1975	USSR Supreme Court issues decree "On Court Cases Dealing With the Theft of Narcotics, the Illegal Manufacture, and Distribution of Narcotic, Dangerous, and Toxic Substances."
1976	First drug couriers from Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle are caught at Sheremetyevo Airport.
1979	World Health Organization International Seminar on "Topical Problems of Present-Day Narcology" is held in Dushanbe, the capital of Tadjik. <input type="text"/>

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abuse program this April. The Moscow party committee reprimanded city legal and medical services for past mistakes and specifically ordered that enforcement officials ensure proper storage and use of medicines.⁶

We expect that further measures will be taken, although the Kremlin will have to make a greater commitment to fighting illicit drugs and back its antidrug enunciations with material resources and training. The government seems to be focusing on three general areas in its antidrug efforts: vigorous and consistent enforcement of drug laws; drug education and prevention programs, particularly for youth and medical personnel; and improved drug treatment and rehabilitation programs.

⁶ As early as 1984, the Moscow militia instituted several methods to fight the drug addiction problem in the city. These included registration of addicts during roundups; apprehension and detention of other suspected addicts; forced medical examinations by physicians or narcologists; roundups in districts haunted by addicts; and resettlement of addicts out of Moscow, usually following the failure of prison or treatment centers to solve the problem.

Enforcement

Improved law enforcement has been a key theme of the Soviet Government from the Kremlin down to local levels. The Soviet press has openly reported on drug-related arrests, the replacement of at least one top drug official, and the creation of new drug enforcement units. Recent drug cases publicized by the Soviet press suggest that tougher measures are imminent. According to the 6 August *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, a number of Soviet doctors and nurses have recently been found guilty of illegally selling drugs from medical institutions. In one case, a nurse at a convalescent home near Moscow was sentenced to death for stealing drugs and for unspecified "severe consequences" that resulted from her actions. In another incident publicized in this newspaper article, a medical worker at Sklifosovsky Emergency Hospital in central Moscow was found guilty of peddling stolen drugs from the hospital. The Georgian press reported that a republic Komsomol Central Committee Bureau

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meeting this spring dealt with the case of four members apprehended for possession and use of drugs. The investigation also disclosed evidence of protectionism and other abuses on the part of schools attended by the youths. [redacted]

Dr. Eduard Babayan, the USSR's foremost authority on drug and alcohol abuse for the past decade and its representative to the UN Commission of Narcotic Drugs, was removed this spring from his post in the Ministry of Health, which is the USSR's top drug enforcement agency.⁷ Babayan, who played down the Soviet drug problem and opposed draconian measures against drinking, was reprimanded for urging "sensible moderation" in alcohol consumption instead of taking a more aggressive stance. Clearly, he was out of step with the drive to toughen enforcement of both alcohol and drug laws. [redacted]

In a move that could affect future drug trafficking in the USSR, Soviet customs has been reorganized. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Foreign Trade was relieved of responsibility for customs and a new Customs Directorate was created under the Council of Ministers. The head of this new directorate publicly stated that "drug addiction is a misfortune that quite evidently has affected us, too," and announced that Soviet customs would become more "vigilant" against the smuggling of contraband, including drugs. [redacted]

Soviet enforcement agencies are starting to implement relatively small antidrug programs, and the police are beginning to tackle the problem directly in the fields:

- The MVD is organizing new antidrug units, working on installing electric alarm systems in poppyfields, and studying the experience of the Kharkov district, in the Ukraine, which reportedly consolidated poppyfields to make them easier to guard.

⁷ The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), the KGB, and the Customs Directorate are the main drug enforcement agencies in the USSR. According to US Embassy reporting from Moscow, the Narcotics Control Commission of the Ministry of Health coordinates the work of these four organizations. [redacted]

- *Izvestiya* reported in June 1986 that authorities had used helicopters to pinpoint illicit opium poppyfields in Uzbek and other areas of Central Asia. The operation involved mounted and foot patrols in the valleys of the Amu Darya River and roadblocks set up by the highway police.

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- In August, *Izvestiya* reported that local authorities of the Karakalpak area of Uzbek had been severely criticized for failing to deal effectively with the growing of illegal opium poppies. According to the government paper, an investigation in May revealed 170 cases of illicit poppy growing in the Karakalpak region; 5 hectares of poppies were destroyed, growers were prosecuted, and five people were expelled from the party.

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- *Sovetskaya Rossiya* in late August ran a long article outlining measures undertaken in the Kuibyshev oblast to counter drug trafficking and abuse, including the use of airborne and mounted patrols and police raids of fields.

- Uzbek authorities reported in mid-September that dozens of hectares of poppies had been destroyed in the Karakalpak, Fergana, Dzhizak and other oblasts of the republic. [redacted]

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Although it appears that local police officers and the MVD are trying to curb illicit cultivation and production, these enforcement efforts remain small. Soviet press reports have conceded that eradication measures in some areas are implemented only in fits and starts and are not sufficiently backed up by organizational and educational work:

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- *Komsomolskaya Pravda* in early June 1986 severely criticized the lack of training of the police in combating the theft of poppies from fields. The article reported that hundreds of hectares of poppyfields in the Volga region remain unguarded. In January a regional guard conference decided to erect watchtowers, but [redacted] there was no one to man them.

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Soviet Drug Laws

The USSR's criminal code on illicit drug activities, enacted in 1974, stipulates the following:

- *Persons convicted of manufacture, acquisition, storage, transportation, or sale of illicit drugs face up to 10 years confinement, with or without confiscation of personal property. The decree does not specify a minimum sentence for these acts, but it does outline a harsher penalty for those involved with "large amounts" of illicit drugs (no gram specification) or those committing a second offense. If convicted a second time, an individual can be sentenced to six to 15 years, with or without confiscation of personal property.*
 - *Foreign citizens arrested in the USSR for drug smuggling can be imprisoned from three to 10 years. For those convicted of cross-border smuggling, the sentence can carry an additional two to five years. The period of pretrial investigative detention is usually limited to two months, but can be extended up to nine months with the permission of the USSR's procurator general. Consular access is permitted during this period.*
 - *The maximum penalty for possession of illicit drugs, without intent to sell and not in combination with other drug offenses, is three years plus treatment if addiction is detected. The law does not differentiate between various drugs. The penalties*
- are the same for all types of drugs. There is no minimum amount for the possession offense to become operative. When "very large" amounts (no gram specification) are involved, the offense may fall under one of the "aggravated" categories that carry stiffer penalties.*
 - *Theft of medicinal drugs is punishable by up to five years imprisonment and from three to 10 years for a repeated offense. Once again, no minimum sentence is included in the decree, and there is no breakdown of penalties according to quantities of drugs stolen.*
 - *The illicit cultivation of cannabis and opium poppies can lead to a prison sentence of up to five years. Setting up or maintaining dens for narcotics consumption is punishable by imprisonment for five to 10 years.*
 - *"Instigation of narcotics use" is punishable by up to five years. If minors are involved, the maximum sentence is 10 years. No minimum sentence for either offense is spelled out in the code.*
 - *Fines can be levied for obtaining drugs without a doctor's prescription. An offender can be fined up to 50 rubles for this offense. Parents or guardians are held liable for juveniles' use of narcotic substances without a doctor's prescription.*

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- *In Kuibyshev one official recently complained about the lack of helicopters and guards; another decried the "lack of a comprehensive approach."*

The lack of experience and adequate equipment for eradication and interdiction limits the government's ability to follow up its tough talk against drugs with strong action.

and sale of illicit drugs; cross-border smuggling by foreigners; theft of pharmaceutical drugs; illicit cultivation and manufacture of drugs; and forging a doctor's prescription to obtain drugs. The Soviet Government's approach to the drug problem has been mostly punitive, and the laws reflect this heavyhanded response.

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The Legal Framework

The USSR Supreme Soviet enacted national drug laws in 1974, and no major amendments have been made since then. Drug offenses outlined in the criminal code include possession, storage, transportation,

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By Soviet criminal code standards, the drug laws are not extremely harsh, but they are not soft either. Soviet media have reported at least one recent execution in the USSR for drug theft, although the death sentence seems to be a rare occurrence for drug offenses. We lack information on such things as the number of drug cases brought before Soviet courts, the USSR's conviction rate in drug cases, and what constitutes a typical drug sentence—information that could aid in assessing the adequacy of the law. Nevertheless, it seems that drug sentences in the Soviet Union are more arbitrary than in many other countries because offenses and penalties are not sharply defined in the criminal code. For example, minimum sentences are not stipulated for all drug offenses. As the USSR perceives the drug problem to be worsening, the laws for producing, selling, and using drugs may be made tougher. A key issue in the effectiveness of the laws, of course, will be the degree and consistency of enforcement. [redacted]

Drug Education and Prevention

Until recently very few Soviet drug education and prevention programs existed. There is little or no education policy established to educate Soviet young people, who are probably much less cognizant of the health hazards than Western youth. In an August 1986 *Sovetskaya Rossiya* interview, for example, a young drug addict claimed that “poppies are good for your health.” Georgiy Morozov of the Serbskiy Institute said in a recent Soviet press interview that “serious educational work” is needed to effectively control illicit drug activities. He cited young people's inexperience with and ignorance of drugs as a cause of drug abuse and addiction. [redacted]

Traditionally, officials discouraged talk of drug education problems and warned that too much publicity would cause youth to experiment with drugs. This ostrichlike approach has now been reversed. The current volume of articles by addicts and parents as well as a television documentary in Georgia are clearly intended to educate the population to the harmful consequences of using drugs. Morozov's institute and other centers within the Ministry of Health are organizing grants for drug education programs. Making headway rapidly, however, will require earmarking resources to upgrade the priority of drug

education. Soviet press articles have acknowledged that a major problem in setting up effective drug education programs is the lack of Soviet drug experts who can lead them. [redacted]

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation

Drug rehabilitation programs are few and ineffective. In mid-August RSFSR Health Minister Potapov stated that only one-fourth of the registered addicts were being medically treated, often in a cursory fashion for seven or eight days, and that 90 percent of these returned to addiction. More extended “treatment” is largely coercive. [redacted]

Addicts rarely seek treatment themselves if only because of the system's punitive approach in dealing with them. All suspected drug users are registered with the militia even if evidence of drug abuse is only circumstantial. If the addict is not released through luck or payment of a 300- to 500-ruble bribe, the addict is admitted to a narcology dispensary where psychiatrists determine the status of the addiction. Once diagnosed, addicts are dealt with in various ways:

- Many users who are caught are accused of being dealers and given lengthy prison sentences with no medical assistance.
- Other drug patients, especially those who became addicted through treatment for illness, are sent to psychiatric hospitals and clinics, where they do not receive specialized care but are confined with alcoholics and mental patients.
- According to Potapov, the current Soviet recommended treatment for addiction is isolation and withdrawal for at least 60 days.
- Most drug abusers, however, receive compulsory treatment in Labor Treatment Facilities (LTPs), which differ little from prison camps. Addicts sent to LTPs are not paroled until certified cured. According to US Embassy reporting from Moscow, active “treatment” at an LTP can last three years,

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followed by two years of "controlled observation." LTP clinics force addicts to withdraw from narcotics without receiving limited doses to ease the transition. The LTP's compulsory "therapy" results in a very low cure rate. [redacted]

Treatment also appears to vary from republic to republic and even from city to city. In Odessa in the mid-1970s, for example, drug abusers were registered with the public health department and local pharmacies and received controlled doses of medicines. [redacted]

[redacted] in Moscow in the early 1980s, after an addict was reprimanded three times, he was sentenced by a court to jail for three years if he was unemployed and had no family. If he had a family and was employed, he received forced medical treatment in a labor dispensary. [redacted]

Some evidence suggests that Soviet authorities are rethinking their approach to drug abuse. A recent article written by a Soviet judge, for example, promised confidentiality and exemption from criminal liability for addicts who voluntarily sought help. The Moscow evening newspaper recently published information about a hotline that drug addicts could call with guaranteed confidentiality. Because there are almost no Soviet doctors treating drug addiction and no known courses of instruction in drug therapy in the USSR's medical education institutions, a major effort to launch an effective rehabilitation program might not show results for several years. [redacted]

Outlook

The Soviet drug abuse problem pales in comparison to the alcohol problem but appears to have grown enough to cause concern at high levels within the regime. It combines with alcohol abuse and other manifestations of societal stress to impede Gorbachev's overall effort to shore up social discipline, strengthen law and order, and restore popular respect for the regime's ability to assert its authority and to make domestic improvements. [redacted]

A comprehensive program to deal with drug abuse would severely tax the already overburdened Soviet medical system. Implementing effective measures to

rehabilitate addicts would require a major commitment of resources at a time when economic constraints make this especially hard to do. Nevertheless, there are reasons to believe that the Gorbachev regime does have the capability to prevent or at least slow down the growth of drug abuse:

- Unlike heavy drinking, a deeply entrenched habit sanctioned by centuries-old tradition and involving a huge proportion of the Soviet population, drug abuse is an incipient problem that has not taken root among the population at large except perhaps in Muslim areas of the USSR.

- Because most Soviet drugs come from internal sources, at least for now, the Soviets can largely deal with the problem internally. In this regard, the Soviet problem is strikingly different from the US problem; the US drug market draws so heavily on external supplies that purely internal measures of control not directed at the sources of production are insufficient. [redacted]

Thus, even if the Soviets do not embark on a costly program of rehabilitation and better medical treatment, they may be able to stabilize the drug problem in the short term through the less expensive method of a law enforcement crackdown. Over time, however, if domestic supplies are curtailed, increased demand for external supplies could give impetus to smuggling. Moreover, as long as the war in Afghanistan drags on, young Soviet soldiers will rotate through Afghanistan, be exposed to drugs there, and in some cases carry drug habits back to the USSR. [redacted]

Because of the potential for expanded cross-border smuggling, the Soviets are likely to become more inclined to cooperate in international efforts against the illicit drug trade. However, the USSR will probably pursue international involvement in typical Soviet style, actively seeking assistance for drug control but hedging on supplying detailed information about Soviet-related drug cases or material resources for international programs. Nonetheless, the Soviets have already shown some interest in broadening the UN

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convention, or treaty, on narcotic drugs. When the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs met in early 1986, the Soviet representative, Oleg Nikolayevich Khlestov, was elected second chairman to the commission's Bureau of Officers.⁸ After the election of officers, members discussed the UN-sponsored World Conference on Trafficking and Drug Abuse, which is set for June 1987 in Vienna. The commission members agreed that the 1961 convention on combating drug traffic is outdated, and therefore a new convention will be discussed at the world conference. We believe that the Soviets will help update the convention, although they may approach proposals more cautiously than other UN commission members. During the commission meetings Khlestov confirmed that the USSR supports the drafting of a new convention. He indicated that the US draft proposal might be too ambitious, according to US Embassy reporting from Vienna, but repeatedly said that the Soviets are committed to keeping irrelevant political issues out of the world conference discussions. [redacted]

Although Moscow's strong sense of sovereignty limits the Kremlin's interest in bilateral drug efforts, we believe that Moscow will more actively participate in multilateral drug enforcement outside the UN framework. For example, the general secretary of Interpol, the international policy agency, predicted this spring that the USSR will join the organization sometime in 1987. One East European country, Yugoslavia, is already participating in multilateral drug control programs and provides a precedent and model for socialist bloc involvement. According to US Embassy reporting from Belgrade, the Yugoslav police are very active in Interpol, which helps train the Yugoslavs in interdiction, drug identification, and drug testing methods. Drug enforcement training has become routine for all Yugoslav customs and police officers. The training apparently has paid off because the Yugoslavs have made important contributions to international interdiction efforts. We believe that Moscow

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might permit international organizations like Interpol to train Soviet customs officers in drug enforcement. Although the Soviets may be hesitant at first to fully participate on the international level, we expect that they will become increasingly cooperative in the next few years. [redacted]

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