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Drugs and War: What Is the Relationship?

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Abstract

What is the relationship between psychoactive drugs and war? This review article identifies and traces five key dimensions of this relationship: war while on drugs, war for drugs, war through drugs, war against drugs, and drugs after war. The review provides empirical illustrations across times, places, and drugs to demonstrate the importance of each of these dimensions. Political scientists and other scholars have typically either ignored the drugs–war relationship or focused on only one dimension. The common tendency is to privilege illegal drugs such as cocaine and heroin in the contemporary era over the historical centrality of legal drugs such as tobacco and alcohol in relation to armed conflict. Placing both history and a wider range of drugs (legal and illegal) front and center in the analysis provides a corrective that allows for a fuller and richer understanding of the multiple linkages between psychoactive substances and warfare. It also suggests that as a counterbalance to contemporary accounts stressing the growing threat posed by drug-financed violent nonstate actors, we should recognize the many ways in which the centuries-old nexus between drugs and war has also been about statecraft and the pursuit of the state's strategic objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Roman legions introduced wine to France through imperial conquest. Boston protesters dumped tea and sparked a revolution. Britain went to war with China over the opium trade. American temperance advocates exploited intense anti-German sentiment during World War I to pass Prohibition. Nazi troops ingested millions of methamphetamine tablets to stay awake during the Blitzkrieg. US Cold Warriors turned a blind eye to heroin trafficking by anti-Communist allies in Southeast and Southwest Asia. Colombian left-wing insurgents and right-wing paramilitaries used the cocaine trade to fund their war against each other. The Mexican military was deployed against heavily armed trafficking organizations in a drug war that has so far claimed well over 100,000 lives.

What these otherwise disparate actors have in common is that they are all part of the age-old and ever-evolving relationship between psychoactive drugs and war, from traditional interstate war to various forms of unconventional intrastate war. This complex relationship can be made more comprehensible if we break it down into five core dimensions: war while on drugs (drug consumption by combatants and civilians during wartime); war through drugs (using drugs to finance war or to weaken the enemy); war for drugs (war over control or access to drug markets); war against drugs (using instruments of war to suppress drugs or to attack or discredit military rivals in the name of drug suppression); and drugs after war (different drugs emerging as winners or losers in the aftermath of war). These dimensions are distinct but can interact and shape each other, and often do. This brief review brings together and builds on the existing literature to trace the five dimensions of the drugs–war relationship across times and places. In various ways and in various forms, drugs made war and war made drugs.

Most political scientists have not devoted much attention to the drugs–war relationship and the often highly contentious politics that surrounds it—readily apparent by simply looking through the readers and textbooks, course syllabi, and leading journals in the field. With rare exceptions (Kan 2009, 2016; Kamienski 2016), this scholarly neglect extends across the social sciences and beyond. Of course, there is a vast literature on war (a substantial portion of it written by political scientists), as well as a much smaller but still sizeable and growing literature on drugs (most of it not written by political scientists), but it is striking how rarely these literatures overlap and engage each other.

Some excellent accounts focus on the histories of particular drugs (Courtwright 2001, Herlihy 2002, Gootenberg 2008, Rasmussen 2008, Schrad 2016, Rappaport 2018), particular wars or types of war (McCoy 2003, Felbab-Brown 2009, Ahmad 2017), or geographic locations and time periods (Lintner 1999, Dikotter et al. 2004, Chin 2009, Kuzmarov 2009). Perhaps not surprisingly, political scientists have made the greatest contribution to the literature on the so-called war against drugs (which has taken on some of the characteristics of a real war), mostly focused on the United States and Latin America since the 1980s (Bertram et al. 1996, Kenney 2008, Felbab-Brown 2009, Bagley & Rosen 2015, Friesendorf 2015, Lessing 2018, Duran-Martinez 2018). These contributions, however important and insightful, have privileged illegal drugs such as cocaine in the contemporary era at the cost of glossing over the historical centrality of legal drugs such as alcohol and tobacco.

In this preliminary account, I place both history and a wider range of psychoactive drugs (legal and illegal) front and center in the analysis to allow for a fuller and richer understanding of the multiple linkages between psychoactive substances and warfare. I suggest that, as a counterbalance to the current alarm about the growing threats posed by violent stateless actors—ranging from so-called narco-insurgents to narco-terrorists to drug cartels—we should recognize the many ways in which the nexus between drugs and war has been a site where states are empowered and have pursued their strategic objectives.

Table 1 Dimensions of the drugs–war relationship and variation in relevance across drugs

Dimension	Alcohol	Tobacco	Caffeine	Opium	Amphetamines	Cocaine	Cannabis
War while on drugs	High	High	High	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate
War through drugs	High	High	Moderate	High	Low	High	Low
War for drugs	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Low	High	Low
War against drugs	Low/Moderate	Low	Low	High	Low	High	Moderate
Drugs after war	High	High	High	High	High	High	Low

Defined simply as chemicals that alter the mental state of the user, psychoactive drugs are not inherently connected to war. They have no agency of their own. Rather, certain drugs have attributes that make them especially useful for war-making. The most war-facilitating attributes of psychoactive drugs are their potentially habit-inducing effects, ease of production and transport, and high value and profitability relative to weight and bulk. Some drugs are more potent than others as war ingredients, and there is much temporal and geographic variation in their significance. Although the drugs–war relationship dates back to antiquity, this article is primarily about modern warfare, since most of the world's leading psychoactive drugs only became globalized commodities during and after the sixteenth century. Six drugs have proven to be particularly important: alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, opium (and its derivatives morphine and heroin), amphetamines, and cocaine. They range from old to relatively new, mild to potent, licit to illicit, natural to synthetic. Although they have medical applications, all have become extraordinarily popular and profitable global commodities through their nonmedical use. As **Table 1** indicates, all six drugs score high on at least one dimension of the drugs–war relationship.[1]

Contrary to conventional accounts that mostly focus on the contemporary era, illegal drugs are not always the most important when viewed from a broader historical-comparative perspective. After all, the global criminalization of drugs such as cocaine and heroin came rather late in the history of warfare. Moreover, it is worth noting that the world's most popular illegal drug, cannabis (marijuana), has not been as closely associated with war as these six other drugs (and in the late 1960s even came to be closely associated with an antiwar movement). It is not as if cannabis has had no connection to war but rather that it has been less important, and its most important war role has not been as a drug but rather as a strategically valued fiber in the form of hemp for rope. Hallucinogens such as "magic mushrooms" and LSD are also not particularly prominent in the drugs–war relationship. Although not entirely divorced from war, they are niche products compared to the six most important mass-produced mind-altering substances with global reach. Their profitability, desirability, and war-related utility have been comparatively limited.

WAR WHILE ON DRUGS

Mind-altering substances have long been essential for both relaxing and stimulating combatants. War, of course, is exceptionally stressful and traumatic work, and it is therefore no surprise that those tasked with war-related jobs often turn to drugs to help them cope. This has often been tolerated, facilitated, and even promoted by states as a way to motivate, reward, desensitize, or distract those tasked with carrying out the work of war. But drug use has been a double-edged sword with many risks. Take the case of alcohol, one of the world's oldest and most popular drugs, which has been a particularly potent war lubricant for soldiers and leaders alike. In moderation,

[1]This table is based on a broad reading of the relevant historical literature rather than on any sort of systematic coding of all wars that have involved drugs.

drink has helped soldiers prepare for battle (sometimes called liquid courage), celebrate victories, anesthetize the injured, and numb the emotions of defeat, but in excess it has made soldiers unreliable, useless, and even self-destructive. This was embarrassingly evident in Imperial Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, which some scholars partly blame on the fact that Russian commanders, soldiers, and sailors were more often drunk than sober (Herlihy 2002, p. 54; Schrad 2016, p. 62). Yet despite the risks of combatant alcohol use, governments have often been great enablers, as evident by a long history of including alcohol in rations—most famously the rum ration in the British Royal Navy that lasted until 1970.

The double-edged nature of alcohol use during wartime has also been evident on the home front. Alcohol has long helped civilian populations endure wartime hardships, but it has also undermined worker productivity and the mobilization for war. No wonder, then, that temperance advocates and government leaders alike have campaigned to restrict and even prohibit the consumption of alcohol in the name of war, sometimes with long-lasting consequences well beyond wartime. This was perhaps most evident in the Russian effort to ban vodka during World War I, a bungled punitive move that backfired so badly that some scholars have suggested it helped to spark the Russian Revolution (Schrad 2016, p. 181).

Beyond alcohol, many other mind-altering substances have long been used to manage the stress and trauma of war, whether before, during, or after battle. Some drugs, such as tobacco, have even been viewed by states as vital to troop morale. As US Army General Pershing explained during World War I, "You ask me what we need to win this war. I answer tobacco as much as bullets. Tobacco is as indispensable as the daily ration; we must have thousands of tons without delay" (quoted in Wagner 1971, p. 45). General George Goethals similarly reasoned that tobacco was as important as food (Tate 1999, pp. 71–72). Some military doctors even endorsed soldiers' smoking habit. The Army's chief medical officer, William Gorgas, argued that the utility of tobacco in promoting "contentment and morale" trumped any health concerns (Tate 1999, p. 88). Smoking while soldiering was pushed by the US government, so much so that it quickly became the world's biggest purchaser of cigarettes. Tobacco was designated an essential industry, cigarettes were added to the rations for deployed soldiers, and cigarette sales to soldiers were subsidized at PX stores and canteens.

The US wartime tobacco experience was part of a much older global trend. Soldiers proved to be the perfect vehicle for the spread of tobacco smoking throughout Europe and eventually across the world starting in the seventeenth century. Tobacco was the ideal drug for calming nerves and coping with boredom. And later, especially with the invention of the cigarette as a highly effective and portable delivery mechanism (and aggressive promotion by tobacco companies), tobacco was added to standard soldier rations. From the Thirty Years' War in the early seventeenth century to the world wars of the twentieth, every major military encounter brought with it a surge in tobacco use, with soldiers leading the way (Tate 1999, p. 68). Importantly, war not only spread tobacco but profoundly shaped the way it was consumed; the industrialization of tobacco in the form of mechanized mass production of cigarettes was perfectly timed with the industrialization of warfare.

Caffeine, a mild stimulant and the world's most popular drug (mostly in the form of coffee and tea), has come to rival tobacco in military importance. The rise of the caffeinated soldier was nowhere more apparent than during the American Civil War. The Union Army allocated approximately 36 lbs. of coffee per soldier each year. Later, during World War I, instant coffee was introduced on the battlefield and became an instant hit: "Almost overnight, the industry was developed and expanded until at the war's end production had increased over 3,000% to 42,500 lbs. daily. Soluble coffee was used in the front-line trenches where it was difficult and often impossible to prepare the roasted-and-ground product" (Koehler 1958, p. 16). Coffee drinking

became even more popular during World War II, not only on the war front but on the home front. American defense workers at home were kept caffeinated with the introduction of the coffee break (Pendergrast 2010, pp. 220–21).

The invention of new drugs can also have transformative battlefield applications. Most striking in this regard was the development and commercialization of amphetamines, which turned World War II into the first major armed conflict in which there was widespread use of synthetic psychoactive drugs. At the high point of the industrialization of warfare, the war included states pushing industrial-strength pills to produce more efficient, fast, and effective soldiers. Most importantly, amphetamines reduced fatigue and appetite and increased wakefulness (Rasmussen 2008). Based on extensive archival research, Ohler (2017) provocatively argues that methamphetamine was an essential source of fuel for the German war machine in the initial stages of World War II, when Allied forces were entirely caught off guard by the unprecedented speed of the German advance into France in May 1940. German tanks covered 240 miles of challenging terrain in 11 days, including through the Ardennes Forest, bypassing the entrenched British and French forces who mistakenly assumed the Ardennes was impassable. General Graf von Kielmansegg ordered 20,000 methamphetamine pills for the 1st Panzer Division, which took them the night of May 10. No one slept that night as the Germans began the invasion. The German soldiers took three days to reach the French border, many not having slept since the beginning of the campaign (Ohler 2017, p. 85). Between April and July 1940, German servicemen received more than 35 million methamphetamine tablets.

The Japanese imperial government contracted methamphetamine production to the country's pharmaceutical companies for use in the war effort. The tablets were especially useful for keeping pilots awake for long flights. Kamikaze pilots also took large doses of methamphetamine, via injection, before suicide missions. In addition, the Japanese government gave munitions workers and those laboring in other factories methamphetamine tablets to increase productivity. Japanese called the war stimulant the "drug to inspire the fighting spirits." Strong prewar inhibitions against drug use were pushed aside in the name of wartime necessity and patriotism (Kamienski 2016, p. 128).

Allied governments also turned to amphetamines to keep their troops awake and alert, with little awareness or concern about the significant health hazards (Grinspoon & Hedblom 1975). The British armed forces distributed 72 million standard-dose amphetamine tablets during the course of the war. The Americans were as eager as the British to exploit the performance-enhancing potential of amphetamine in wartime. They began with the Air Force in late 1942, and the Army added amphetamine tablets in soldiers' medical kits in 1943. The US military continued to routinely supply amphetamines to servicemen during the Korean and Vietnam wars, and to this day, so-called go-pills are made available to pilots on long-distance missions (Kamienski 2016).

WAR FOR DRUGS

From Burma to Mexico to Colombia, major drug traffickers have created their own private armies to violently defend and compete for drug markets (Lintner 1999, Grayson 2009, Lessing 2018). Turf wars between rival traffickers have taken an especially heavy toll in Mexico in recent years. However, the use of military force to secure drug markets goes back at least to the Opium Wars of 1839–1842 and 1856–1860. The main change is that wars for drug markets have gone from being state sponsored—epitomized by the British forcing open the Chinese opium market via the barrel of a gun—to being largely the domain of heavily armed nonstate actors.

The Opium Wars stand out as particularly dramatic historical examples of war for drugs (Trocki 1999, Lovell 2011). The Treaty of Nanking opened up five ports for foreign trade and handed

Hong Kong over to the British. The port of Hong Kong, which would later emerge as a global commercial hub, owed its start to opium. After the second Opium War, more ports were opened to foreign trade, and foreigners were given full access to the Chinese interior for the first time. The remaining decades of the nineteenth century would be defined by China's rapid decline, including violent turmoil, economic hardship, and repeated foreign intervention. The Opium Wars left a permanent scar on the country's psyche; the so-called century of humiliation that began with the Opium Wars turned into a cornerstone of Chinese nationalist ideology (Dikotter et al. 2004).

Importantly, the Opium Wars were really about two drugs—opium and tea. These were wars not only to keep China's market open to opium but also to use opium to fund Chinese tea imports for the booming British market. Britain became the largest tea-drinking country in the world in the nineteenth century, and as the nation became addicted to tea, the Crown became addicted to tea revenue (Ellis et al. 2015, p. 219). Supplying Britain's enormous caffeine habit became an imperial imperative, placed largely in the hands of the British East India Company thanks to its monopoly on trade with the East Indies. The problem, however, was that China, the world's only tea source at the time, had little interest in importing European goods and insisted on being paid in silver.

Opium provided the unofficial, unstated solution to Britain's fiscal woes. In the wake of the Battle of Plassey and annexation of Bengal, Indian opium production, previously in the hands of the Nawab of Bengal, had come under the control of the British East India Company by 1763. There was a ready market for the drug in China, where it had been banned by the authorities since 1729. Chinese leaders kept denouncing the opium trade and passing more laws against it, while the British and their trading accomplices simply ignored them. In a bold move that would shape China's fate for the next century, Chinese officials resorted to forcibly confiscating some 2.6 million pounds of opium from foreign traders. The ensuing merchant outcry led to Britain's declaration of war, officially to protect free trade but unofficially to protect the opium-for-tea trade.

A century and a half later, states no longer go to war with each other over drug markets, yet violent conflict for control of such markets persists, with Mexico presenting the most extreme case (Rios 2013, Shirk & Wallman 2015). Today's battles between rival drug traffickers can be viewed as a form of criminal commercial warfare, made possible by both the criminalization of drugs and the availability of military hardware and military-trained foot soldiers. This reality prompts Lessing (2015, p. 1486) to provocatively suggest, "In the study of war, 'criminal' may be the new 'civil.'"

Traditional security scholars may object to classifying this type of organized violence as a war, but the sheer number of deaths and the heavily armed nature of the most powerful players may suggest the need to rethink our conventional definitions of what counts as war. Distinctions between military conflict and criminal conflict can become blurry, especially in terms of lethality (Kalyvas 2015, Lessing 2015, Barnes 2017). After all, more people have died in Mexico from drug-related violence than in most civil wars (Barnes 2017, p. 974).

It should be emphasized that war for drugs can closely interact with and be fueled by war against drugs. For example, in the Mexico case, it is clear that the government's strategy of decapitating major drug trafficking organizations has unintentionally helped to unleash violent turf battles between rival traffickers. When one trafficking organization has been taken down or weakened by the war against drugs, other trafficking organizations have aggressively engaged in war for drugs, violently competing for the newly vacated turf—typically meaning control of the major corridors and border entry points for US-bound drug shipments (Andreas 2009, p. 159).

Another interactive effect is that drug trafficking organizations may launch a war for drugs as a response to a war against drugs, with tactics including assassination of judges, police, and politicians. Although the standard operating procedure for most drug traffickers is to evade rather than violently confront the state—too much violence can be bad for business by attracting

unwanted attention and increasing security costs—the exceptions have included declaring an all-out war on the state. The most famous case was the Medellín cocaine trafficking organization of Pablo Escobar, whose escalating war against the Colombian government in the 1980s and early 1990s took the lives of hundreds of police officers, dozens of judges, and several presidential candidates. That war only ended when Escobar was tracked down and killed with US intelligence assistance (Bowden 2002). Of course, responding to a war against drugs with a war for drugs is not entirely new. Recalling the Opium Wars, one can describe the Chinese as fighting a war against drugs while the British were fighting a war for drugs.

WAR THROUGH DRUGS

Much of the work on war through drugs focuses on illegal drugs in relation to insurgency and counterinsurgency (McCoy 2003, Felbab-Brown 2009, Kan 2009, Ahmad 2017). Concern about cocaine-funded rebels in Colombia and opium-financed insurgents in Afghanistan has even popularized the terms narco-guerrilla and narco-terrorist. The use of drugs to fund war clearly relates to broader debates in the field over so-called conflict commodities, lootable natural resources, and greed and grievance as motivating post–Cold War conflicts (Berdal & Malone 2000, Ballentine & Sherman 2003, Ross 2003, Collier & Hoeffler 2004, Snyder 2006). Yet too often overlooked is that using drug revenue to fund war is an old story, one in which legal drugs have played an especially prominent role.

One insurgency that was particularly reliant on drug revenue in the late eighteenth century was George Washington's Continental Army. Soldiers were sometimes paid in tobacco, and essential supplies from Europe, including weapons and food, were often purchased with the leaf. Perhaps most critical was that tobacco provided the collateral for the key wartime loan that Benjamin Franklin secured from France. And after the fighting was over, tobacco exports helped to pay off wartime debts (Gately 2001, p. 142). The British were well aware of the importance of tobacco to the rebellion and were especially outraged by its role in the French loan. In retaliation, Lord Cornwallis launched what came to be dubbed the Tobacco War, resulting in the burning of some 10,000 hogsheads of cured Virginia leaf in 1780–1781, some of which belonged to Thomas Jefferson (Gately 2001, p. 142; Burns 2007, p. 95).

However, the historical record suggests that states, not rebels, have more often been the main beneficiaries of drug revenue to finance war. For centuries, taxing drugs was a cornerstone of major power war financing. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rival European imperial powers, including France, England, and Russia, were able to build up their massive war machines and keep them running during wartime partly due to heavy taxes on high-demand commodities such as tea, alcohol, and tobacco. The competing European powers became dependent on drug revenue. As Napoleon III is said to have quipped, "This vice [tobacco smoking] brings in one hundred million francs in taxes each year. I will certainly forbid it at once—as soon as you can name a virtue that brings in as much revenue" (quoted in Gately 2001, p. 181).

The excise tax on alcohol was the single most important funder of Britain's transformation into a dominant military (especially naval) power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. War provided a convenient rationale to impose new taxes on alcohol, and collecting such taxes, in turn, created an ever-more-capable taxation bureaucracy—making it possible for the state to collect even more revenue to pay for its increasingly expensive military campaigns (Nye 2007). Even with the repeal of the Corn Laws in the 1840s and Britain's embrace of free trade, tariffs on alcohol—as well as on coffee and tea—remained in place due to their importance for state revenue.

This dynamic dated back to the English Civil War, when England imposed the first excise tax on alcohol. The pressure to raise tax revenue grew as the business of war became more costly. "War

and national defense were the public goods that rulers used to justify taxation," explains Levi (1989, p. 96). And in the case of eighteenth-century Britain, no tax was more important than the excise on alcohol. According to one historian, "If smoking and the consumption of alcoholic beverages had not been widespread in British society, the government would have experienced far greater difficulty in finding the money and resources to defeat Revolutionary France and Napoleon" (O'Brien 2009, p. 200). This pattern continued through the nineteenth century: Between 1819 and 1900, alcohol taxes provided at least 30% of national tax revenue. "Like his predecessors in the Napoleonic Wars," writes Harrison (1994, p. 61), "Gladstone responded to the Crimean War by raising malt and spirits duties."

Imperial Russia was even more addicted to alcohol revenue. This began as early as 1474, when Ivan III established a state monopoly on the vodka industry and "relied heavily on vodka-generated tax revenue to wage his wars of conquest" (Herlihy 2012, p. 46). At the height of the tsarist empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "alcohol revenues constituted fully *one-third* of the entire operating budget of the Russian state—enough to cover the full costs of fielding and maintaining the largest standing army in Europe" (Schrad 2016, pp. 10–11, emphasis original).

In some cases, using drugs as a funder of war can provoke charges of using drugs as a weapon of war. In the years before Japan invaded China with soldiers in 1937, it had been invading the country with narcotics. While imposing strict controls at home—banning nonmedical opium use and carefully avoiding China's fate of having free trade in opium imposed from outside—Japan encouraged and facilitated the distribution and sale of opium and its derivatives to its neighbors, especially China (Kamienski 2016, pp. 124–26; Friman (1996, pp. 35–61). Taiwan, a Japanese colony since 1895, and Korea, annexed by Japan in 1909, had long served as southern and northern hubs for trafficking drugs into China. And in the 1930s the Japanese puppet-state of Manzhouguo promoted both opium poppy cultivation and heroin production, turning northern China into a major supplier (Meyer 2002, p. 214). In the 1930s, Japan reportedly earned more than $300 million annually from the Manchurian opium and heroin business (Booth 1999, p. 163).

As the Japanese armies moved south into China following the outbreak of war in 1937, they gained control of more drug crops and manufacturing facilities. This simultaneously provided funds for ongoing military operations and a way to continue to feed the habits of the sizeable local addict population. Many Chinese considered Japanese involvement in the narcotics trade a deliberate use of drugs as a weapon of war, meant to undermine their will to resist occupation. From the Japanese perspective, however, they were not engaged in a sinister plot to poison China but rather were simply being militarily pragmatic, using opium as a strategic resource. In other words, their main focus was on financing their military forces, not drugging the local population. Satomi Hajime, imprisoned after the war as a Japanese war criminal for running Shanghai's opium monopoly at the start of the Japanese occupation of China, was questioned by American prosecutors who told him he had violated international law. Satomi matter-of-factly replied, "Warfare itself is a violation of international law, and the violation of what I call the Opium Treaty was a necessary part of our warfare" (quoted in Meyer 2002, p. 219). Kumagai Hisao, acting head of Showa Trading, a firm created by the Japanese army in 1939, explained that "the army used opium as a 'treasured pharmaceutical' to pacify conquered areas and acquire food and other goods from the populace" (quoted in Kamienski 2016, p. 127).

During the Cold War, major powers sometimes found drugs to be a convenient way to unofficially fund covert operations. This was especially evident in the case of the French and the United States in Southeast Asia. Colluding with Corsican traffickers who shipped opium from Indochina to Marseille, the French intelligence service used opium funds to covertly pay local hill tribe leaders and warlords as part of its counterinsurgency campaign. When the French withdrew after their defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

simply stepped in and took their place, building on the opium-trade relationships and infrastructure inherited from the French. As American intervention escalated and the war in Vietnam dragged on, CIA-backed anti-Communist allies in the region increasingly profited from opium and its derivatives, with the Cold War context providing the necessary political cover. As historian Alfred McCoy (2003) documents in detail in his classic, *The Politics of Heroin*, the CIA was complicit not through corruption or direct involvement in the illicit trade but rather through what he describes as a radical pragmatism that tolerated and even facilitated drug trafficking by local allies when it served larger Cold War goals.

Following earlier patterns, Washington looked the other way when CIA-backed Afghan insurgents battling the Soviets in the 1980s were involved in cultivating and smuggling opium poppies to help fund their cause. This was the CIA's biggest covert operation since Vietnam, and once again, the opium trade was one of the biggest winners. As McCoy (2003, p. 18) summarizes, "To fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the CIA, working through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, backed Afghan warlords who used the Agency's arms, logistics, and protection to become major drug lords."

More recently, subcontracting work out to drug-financed irregular forces has continued in other forms. In a particularly extreme case, right-wing paramilitary groups heavily involved in drug trafficking in Colombia were so "fully integrated into the army's battle strategy, coordinated with its soldiers in the field, and linked to government units via intelligence, supplies, radios, weapons, cash, and common purpose that they effectively constitute[d] a sixth division of the army" (Americas Watch, quoted in Barnes 2017, p. 977).

While states today are no longer nearly as reliant on drug revenue to fund wars as they were in previous eras, nonstate armed actors have continued to rely on drug revenue to finance their military causes. Afghanistan presents a particularly striking example (Mansfield 2016, Ahmad 2017). However, these contemporary war-through-drugs linkages are easily distorted, exaggerated, and oversimplified. Kan (2009), for instance, argues that illegal drugs have been a crucial war resource in virtually every recent and ongoing conflict. Even the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia is classified as a "serious" case of drug trafficking influence on conflict. Yet Bosnia was never actually a major drug production or trafficking area, and the traditional Balkan route for heroin smuggling was in fact disrupted by the wars related to the breakup of Yugoslavia. The war in Bosnia was certainly good for black marketeering, but illegal drugs played a relatively minor role, especially compared to sanctions evasion, arms embargo busting, looting, and theft of humanitarian aid (Andreas 2004). Indeed, for those in the illegal drug trade, this particular war was mostly bad for business. At the same time, the two drugs that *were* important in the Bosnia war—tobacco and alcohol—are entirely overlooked by Kan (2009) because his view of the drugs–war relationship excludes legal drugs.

There is no automatic connection between illicit drug trade revenue and warfare in the contemporary era. This is readily apparent from the fact that many drug-producing and transit countries are not war zones, and similarly, that many war zones are not drug-producing and transit countries. In one particularly prominent case, Mexico (a major heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine producer and the main entry point for US-bound cocaine), the country's large drug trade and small and isolated Zapatista rebellion have been noticeably disconnected. Similarly, Bolivia has long been a major producer of coca (the raw material used to produce cocaine) and has gone through many bouts of political instability, but so far without turning into a conflict zone. It is also worth noting that some of the world's largest cannabis producers (such as the United States and Morocco) are far from descending into civil war. Thus, while there is a clear correlation between the drug trade and armed conflict in some countries, and drug-producing countries are more likely than non-drug-producing countries to be afflicted by civil war (Ross

2003), there are also many countries where there is no such correlation; and where such correlation does exist, it is too easily confused with causation. In this regard, we need more work on the contextual and institutional factors that explain why some drug-producing and transit countries are more prone to armed conflict than others (Snyder 2006).

WAR AGAINST DRUGS

Declaring war against drugs changed from metaphor and political slogan in the early 1970s to reality in the 1980s through the increased use of military tools, strategies, and personnel to combat the illicit drug trade. The change was most dramatically evident in the United States and its drug-exporting southern neighbors. This militarization trend has ranged from a gradual loosening of the US Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibited the use of the military for domestic law enforcement (Kraska 2001, Balko 2013), to supporting the use of local militaries on the frontline in antidrug campaigns across the region (Call 1991; Isaacson 2005, 2015). The war against drugs even provided the pretext for the US military invasion of Panama—the most expensive and dramatic drug bust in history. More generally, the militarization of the drug war has helped to prompt a partial post–Cold War shift of the US national security state away from traditional military threats and toward new so-called transnational threats (Andreas & Price 2001). As part of this shift, the intelligence community was also drafted to take on a more frontline role in the drug war. In 1989, the CIA created the Counter-Narcotics Center and declared that fighting drugs was a priority mission. Some observers no doubt found this rather ironic given that the agency had, since its creation, shown a chronic willingness to subvert the fight against drugs in the name of fighting communists.

Partly due to the drug war, conventional distinctions between crime fighting and war fighting have become increasingly blurred. Within the United States, for example, this has been exemplified by the proliferation of SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams. SWAT teams first appeared in response to the 1965 Watts Riots, but the drug war fueled their rapid expansion in later decades (Kraska 2001). Their militarized nature came from training directly with military personnel, hiring military personnel, and using weapons they gained directly from the military. In the 1980s, there were approximately 300 SWAT deployments nationwide, but deployments mushroomed to 30,000 by 1995, with the sharp increase mainly attributed to the drug war (Balko 2013, p. 207).

But the US-sponsored militarization of antidrug campaigns has been mostly externalized, focusing especially on cocaine production and trafficking in the Americas. Drug law enforcement has come to define post–Cold War military relations between the United States and its southern neighbors. With US diplomatic prodding and a massive injection of military assistance and training, soldiers throughout the region have been turned into cops, and old Cold War equipment and technology have been recycled for new drug war tasks. At the same time, major trafficking organizations have built up their own military capacities, ranging from cocaine-financed paramilitaries in Colombia to Mexican trafficking organizations composed of ex-military personnel using military-grade arms. From Rio to the Rio Grande, the cocaine war has taken on some of the characteristics of an actual war, with no end in sight.

Reinforcing this militarization trend has been a partial merging of the war against drugs and the war against terrorism in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy even promoted an advertising campaign in early 2002 that depicted drug users as sponsors of terrorists. Terminology from the counterterrorism campaign became incorporated into the antidrug campaign: In 2003, the Southern Command's General James Hill kept referring to drugs as a "weapon of mass destruction" (quoted in Isaacson 2005,

p. 48). Recasting the war against drugs as part of the war against terrorism was especially crucial in sustaining political support for growing levels of US security assistance to Colombia, where the line between fighting drugs and fighting guerrillas had become progressively blurred. In earlier years, US officials were careful to emphasize that Washington was supporting Colombia's antidrug campaign rather than the antiguerrilla campaign, but the new emphasis on so-called narco-terrorism made it less necessary for officials to publicly distance themselves from counterinsurgency. The term narco-terrorism was coined long before September 11 but gained much wider currency and acceptance in the wake of the attacks. Labeling the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) narco-terrorists became standard practice in Washington.

Moreover, as the United States has partly retreated from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of the personnel, knowledge, tactics, and technologies have been transferred to the drug war effort in the Americas. For instance, military forward operating bases modeled on bases set up in Iraq and Afghanistan have been created in Honduras to fight drug traffickers there, and military personnel returning from the Middle East have taken up new drug war positions in Central America. Several hundred US servicemen have been deployed to Honduras alone. This new development has echoes of the past: As the drug war in the Andean region heated up in the late 1980s and 1990s, US military strategists applied the old Cold War counterinsurgency methods and tools to the new counter-narcotics mission.

The war against drugs is the dimension of the drugs–war relationship that has received the most attention from political scientists. With few exceptions (Bertram et al. 1996, Friman 1996, Bewley-Taylor 2012, Pryce 2012, Friesendorf 2015), these scholars also tend to come from the subfield of comparative politics. Not surprisingly, many of them are Latin America specialists with region or country expertise (Smith 1992; Griffith 1997; Arias 2006, 2017; Payan 2007; Snyder & Duran-Martinez 2009; Payan et al. 2013; Bailey 2014; Zepeda & Rosen 2014; Bagley & Rosen 2015; Arjona 2017; Trejo & Ley 2017; Duran-Martinez 2018; Lessing 2018). Political scientists have the potential to make a much greater contribution here. For example, those with expertise on civil–military relations in Latin America and elsewhere would no doubt have useful insights regarding the implications and longer-term consequences of turning soldiers into cops through the militarization of antidrug campaigns.

But while the contemporary war against drugs has understandably received growing scholarly attention, too often forgotten are some striking historical precedents. These include the militarized British crackdown on the smuggling of molasses for rum production in the New England colonies, which provoked an intense backlash that helped spark the American Revolution. The British Royal Navy's crusade against the smugglers was not called a war against drugs, of course, but it was fully militarized. And smugglers' resistance not only defied the imperial authorities but turned to armed rebellion, making them a far greater threat to the state than any modern-day drug trafficking organization. The Royal Navy was unleashed against colonial smugglers because civilian customs agents had proven too corrupt and unreliable. Although much has obviously changed since colonial times, the inadequacies of civilian law enforcement continue to be used as a rationale to turn to the military for anti-smuggling work.

There has been a growing scholarly consensus that the drug war has both failed to achieve its stated objectives and generated massive collateral damage. Nevertheless, it should also be recognized that the antidrug campaign has often provided an effective tool to further other strategic objectives, including to attack and delegitimize rivals. This was evident, for example, during the Cold War, when the United States accused Red China and Castro's Cuba of flooding the United States with drugs, when in fact China had largely removed itself from the international drug trade and the Cubans mainly involved in the drug trade were anti-Communist exiles in Miami and elsewhere. The Reagan administration also accused Sandinista Nicaragua of colluding with Colombian

drug traffickers, while at the same time overlooking the cocaine ties of US-backed Contra rebels fighting the Sandinistas. And after the Cold War came to an end, when the US Congress and the American public were less enthusiastic about funding anti-Communist campaigns, the drug war provided a convenient alternative funding channel for Washington to militarily support the Colombian government's war against the FARC guerrillas (Tate 2015).

DRUGS AFTER WAR

Not only have drugs shaped war but war has shaped drugs well beyond wartime. Specifically, war has often profoundly influenced postwar drug production, regulation, and consumption patterns. Consumption of a particular drug may increase sharply in the aftermath of war. This was strikingly evident, for instance, after the Opium Wars, when the British victory opened up the floodgates to importing even more Indian opium into China. One Chinese policy response was to eventually fully legalize domestic production as an import substitution strategy. But the considerable downside was that both the Chinese economy and the population became increasingly hooked on the drug. By the turn of the century, China had the distinction of being both the world's largest producer and consumer of opium. In 1906, the government estimated that more than a quarter of all adult males in the country smoked opium. The opium poppy was so conspicuous that it was jokingly called the national flower (Slack 2001, p. 6).

Fast forward to the Chinese Revolution, however, and Chinese opium is dealt a fatal blow with the Communist victory. China's sweeping post-revolution crackdown on drugs included jailing or executing thousands of drug traffickers and dealers. Chinese antidrug rhetoric was wrapped up in the larger revolutionary cause—to be against opium was to be against foreign imperialism and capitalist decadence. China's post-revolution antidrug movement, which took place alongside anti-prostitution and antigambling movements—all targeting what were labeled capitalist vices—included rounding up and executing thousands of drug dealers, and forcing addicts to choose between treatment and imprisonment (McCoy 2003, p. 14). The immediate geopolitical context also played a key role in mobilizing support: "China was at war with the United States in Korea. Drug peddlers could be identified with the Guomindang in Taiwan and, by extension, with the United States. This gave the movement a patriotic boost" (Meyer 2002, p. 220). By 1953, domestic opium production and consumption had been virtually eradicated. Opium production and trafficking were pushed out of the country, south across the border to what later came to be known as the Golden Triangle. The mass antidrug mobilization, largely unseen and unacknowledged by the outside world, was very much a state-building initiative, a rejection of the old as part of the creation of what was termed the new China (Yongming 1999).

Wars can also lead to a surge in substance abuse by returning soldiers, though sometimes exaggerated for political ends (Kuzmarov 2009). For example, soldiers on all sides of World War II developed an amphetamine habit, and the wartime availability of the drug extended into peacetime. As Grinspoon & Hedblom (1975, p. 18) write in their classic study, *The Speed Culture*, "World War II probably gave the greatest impetus to date to legal medically authorized as well as illicit black market abuse of these pills on a worldwide scale." Japan in particular experienced a postwar amphetamine epidemic, the first drug epidemic in the history of the country. Many soldiers and factory workers who had become hooked on the drug during the war continued to consume it into the postwar years, and it was widely available. The Japanese Imperial Army's postwar amphetamine surplus was dumped into the domestic market (Kamienski 2016, p. 131). By 1954, there were an estimated 550,000 illicit amphetamine users in Japan. This epidemic led to strict state regulations of the drug.

Another important dynamic is that new regulations and restrictions on drugs are often rationalized as a response to wartime drug problems, both real and imagined. This has ranged from Russia's ill-fated effort to ban alcohol in the wake of the disastrous Russo-Japanese war to America's post–World War I embrace of Prohibition and post–Vietnam War antidrug campaigns. Intense anti-German fervor during World War I was an essential ingredient in the political campaign for the prohibition of alcohol in the United States, where the leading beer brewing families were of German origin. There were many forces pushing for Prohibition, but thinking counterfactually, we can speculate that the act may very well not have passed in the absence of World War I.

The popularity of certain drugs can rise and fall as a result of war. For instance, while the British continued to favor rum in the aftermath of the American Revolution, the break from the empire brought a break in the drinking habits of the new republic. By the early eighteenth century, whiskey had replaced rum as the most popular spirit in America. Whiskey was much easier and cheaper to produce: It could be made from surplus domestic grain and corn instead of imported molasses, the supply of which had been disrupted during the war and never fully recovered. Most New England rum distilleries eventually shut down. Drinking whiskey came to be seen as more patriotic, since it was associated with self-reliance and independence. Rum, in contrast, represented dependence on foreigners and was associated with the British. The growth of domestic whiskey production, in turn, provided a new source of government revenue through taxation—though not without resistance, as witnessed by the Whiskey Rebellion, whose quick pacification represented a key early state-building move.

Similarly, American tea consumption was a casualty of the American Revolution, supplanted by coffee as the caffeinated drink of choice by a newly independent nation that negatively associated tea drinking with British rule. Not coincidentally, postindependence access to coffee was greatly enhanced by the newly legalized trade with the more proximate non-British suppliers. Coffee from Latin America became an easier and less expensive way for Americans to get their caffeine hit. The popularity of coffee later surged again in the aftermath of the Civil War and two world wars. The coffee break, institutionalized in the American workplace during World War II, as noted above, outlived the war (Pendergrast 2010, pp. 220–21). Similarly, instant coffee, first popularized on the battlefield, also became entrenched in postwar drinking habits. And the appeal of instant coffee extended well beyond the United States: "It was as if World War and the concomitant World Peace had opened the door to instant coffee in countries that previously had little acquaintance with it" (Wild 2004, p. 200).

A particularly dramatic example of a drug as a casualty of war is cocaine. World War II and its aftermath killed off legal cocaine. The US military occupation wiped out the Japanese cocaine industry that had grown up in the 1920s and 1930s, and the United States also uprooted the last remnants of coca production in Java, which Japan had invaded during the war. More generally, postwar US hegemony also meant the hegemony of the US antidrug agenda, including the global criminalization of cocaine. The United States had for decades been an antidrug crusader, but only in the transformed postwar geopolitical context did it finally have the opportunity to fully promote prohibition on a global scale. After the war, coca cultivation fully retreated to its Andean origins and its indigenous consumer base. Having been heavily dependent on Germany and Japan as customers before the war broke out, and entirely cut off from them during the war, Peru's already struggling crude cocaine manufacturers were now put out of business. "At war's end," writes historian Paul Gootenberg (2008, p. 230), "legal cocaine came to its last crossroad, as Peru faced the United States alone on the global stage. Former German, Dutch, and Japanese cocaine networks now lay physically demolished by warfare or under U.S. occupation." But legal cocaine's loss was illegal cocaine's gain: Cocaine would reemerge in later years as an enormously profitable illicit drug handled by criminal organizations rather than pharmaceutical companies.

Finally, there is an age-old pattern in which wars can introduce entirely new drugs to conquered lands. Conquerors have long brought their drug tastes with them. The military expansion of the Roman Empire brought wine to France, while beer came to be identified with the still unpacified Germanic tribes. The fall of the Roman Empire, in turn, led to a fragmentation of alcohol preferences, with beer making a comeback, wine retreating even while remaining entrenched in some locales, and mead and ale becoming increasingly popular. Similarly, conquest brought distilled spirits to the Americas, sometimes with devastating effects on native communities. The adoption of drug habits is not always a one-way street; the conquerors can sometimes also adopt a local drug and make it their own—as evident in the case of European (and subsequently global) adoption of native American tobacco smoking. Alternatively, conquerors may avoid a local drug themselves but use it to help pacify the population, as was the case with coca in postconquest Peru. The Spanish turned it into a mass consumption crop for the first time when they realized they could use it to motivate poorly fed native laborers in the fields and mines to work longer and harder.

CONCLUSION

The drugs–war relationship has fueled imperial expansion, fomented rebellion and revolution, built up states, and helped to create not only addicted armies but also nations of addicts. Drugs have certainly been a double-edged sword for states. On the one hand, states have had to deal with drug-funded insurgents, drug-impaired soldiers, and drug traffickers. On the other hand, drugs have been crucial boosters of troop morale and performance and have provided a lucrative source of war revenue for state coffers. And even when states have been challenged by the proliferation of prohibited drugs, deploying military tools and methods to suppress them has provided a mechanism to expand state power and reach. Moreover, there is a long history of intelligence agencies turning a blind eye to drug trafficking by covert allies when deemed geopolitically convenient. Therefore, far from simply threatening and undermining states, the drugs–war relationship should also be viewed as contributing to state security objectives.

Though not a peripheral issue in world politics, the drugs–war relationship is largely peripheral in the field of political science. This disciplinary marginalization is especially unfortunate since understanding the drugs–war relationship can contribute to our understanding of much broader issues of central concern to the discipline, including armed intervention, insurgency and counterinsurgency, civil–military relations, resources and war, and post-conflict reconstruction. But while political scientists and other scholars should pay more attention to the drugs–war relationship and its dimensions across times and places, there is a danger of overstating and distorting this relationship. This is particularly evident in current policy debates regarding the nexus between drugs and conflict, which too often generate more heat than light, providing a seductively simple rationale to merge the global campaigns against drugs with the campaigns against terrorists and insurgents.

While some scholars alarmingly point to a growing connection between drugs and contemporary armed conflict (Kan 2009, 2016; Shelley 2014), even a limited glance at the historical record suggests there is actually a fair amount of continuity rather than a radical post–Cold War shift. Conventional accounts of the drugs–war relationship tend to bracket history beyond recent decades and to privilege illegal drugs and the violent, stateless organizations that benefit from them. As a corrective to this selection bias, I have suggested it is necessary to place both history and a wider range of drugs (legal and illegal) more centrally in the analysis, and to more fully recognize and unpack the multiple dimensions of the drugs–war relationship. Doing so reveals that this relationship is an old one, and that it has ultimately been as relevant to empowering states as weakening them.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that war itself can be thought of as a drug (Kamienski, pp. 304–9). Soldiers get high on war, as many a helmet in Vietnam proclaimed. Combat produces an adrenaline rush, which is what amphetamines do, except that with amphetamines the rush is longer and the crash harder. If frequent and prolonged, combat can also cause lasting and pathological neuronal changes in combatants' brains—something else drugs do. Countless war memoirs describe war as a form of addiction, such that its absence can provoke intense withdrawal symptoms for combatants returning home. Many of them then turn to other drugs—both prescribed and self-prescribed, licit and illicit—to help them cope and recover.

In the end, war will likely remain the hardest of all habits to kick. Despite a long-term historical trend toward fewer and less lethal wars, calling for a world without war seems about as realistic as calling for a drug-free world. The one thing that we can therefore predict with some confidence is that drugs and war will continue to symbiotically interact, making and remaking each other in the years and decades ahead.

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