

**WILLIAM J. PERRY CENTER**



**FOR HEMISPHERIC DEFENSE STUDIES**

# ***Countering the Evolving Drug Trade in the Americas***

***Mexico Institute 8th Annual U.S.-Mexico Security Conference***

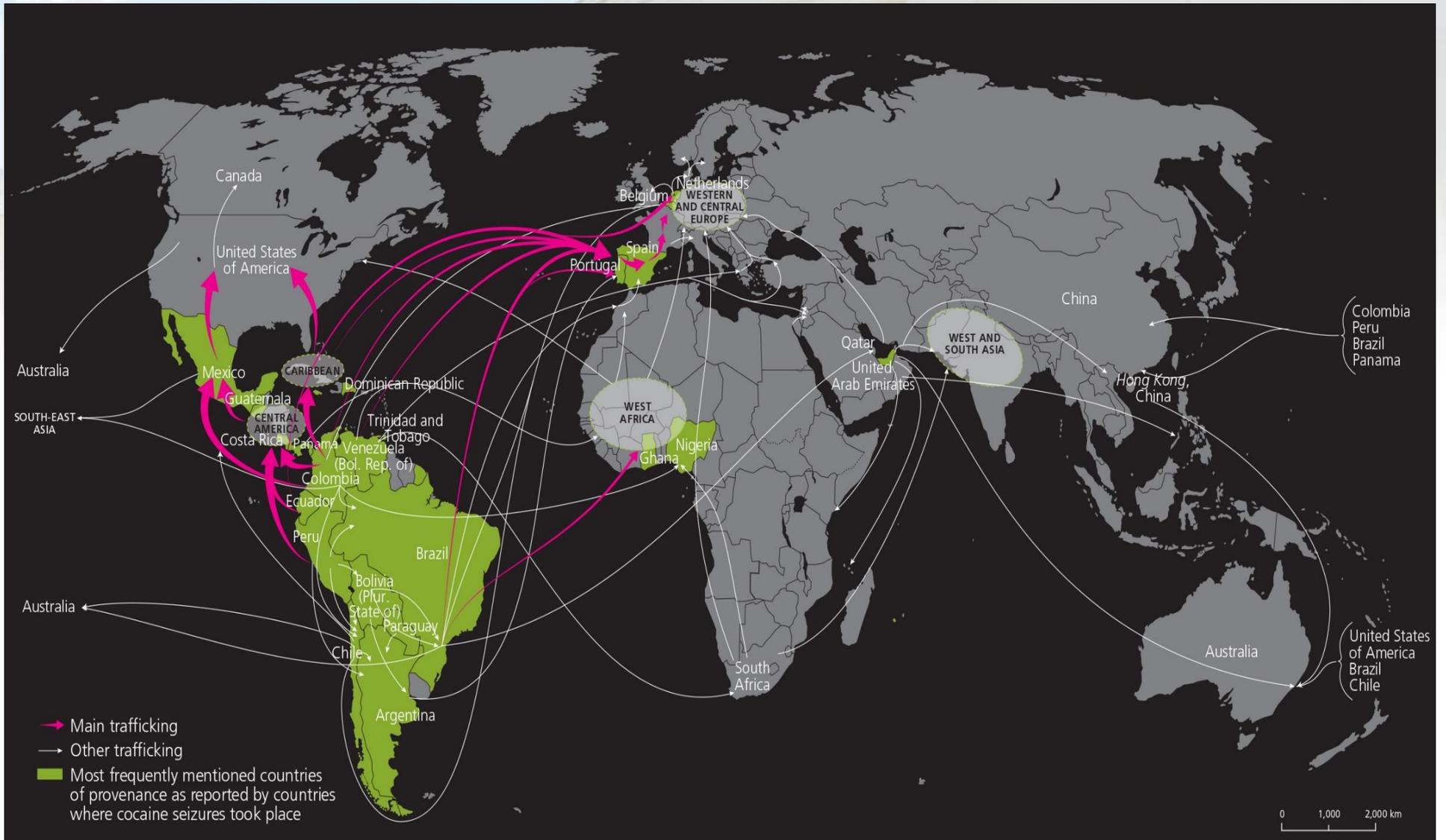
***15 January 2020  
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# The Globalization of Drug Trafficking

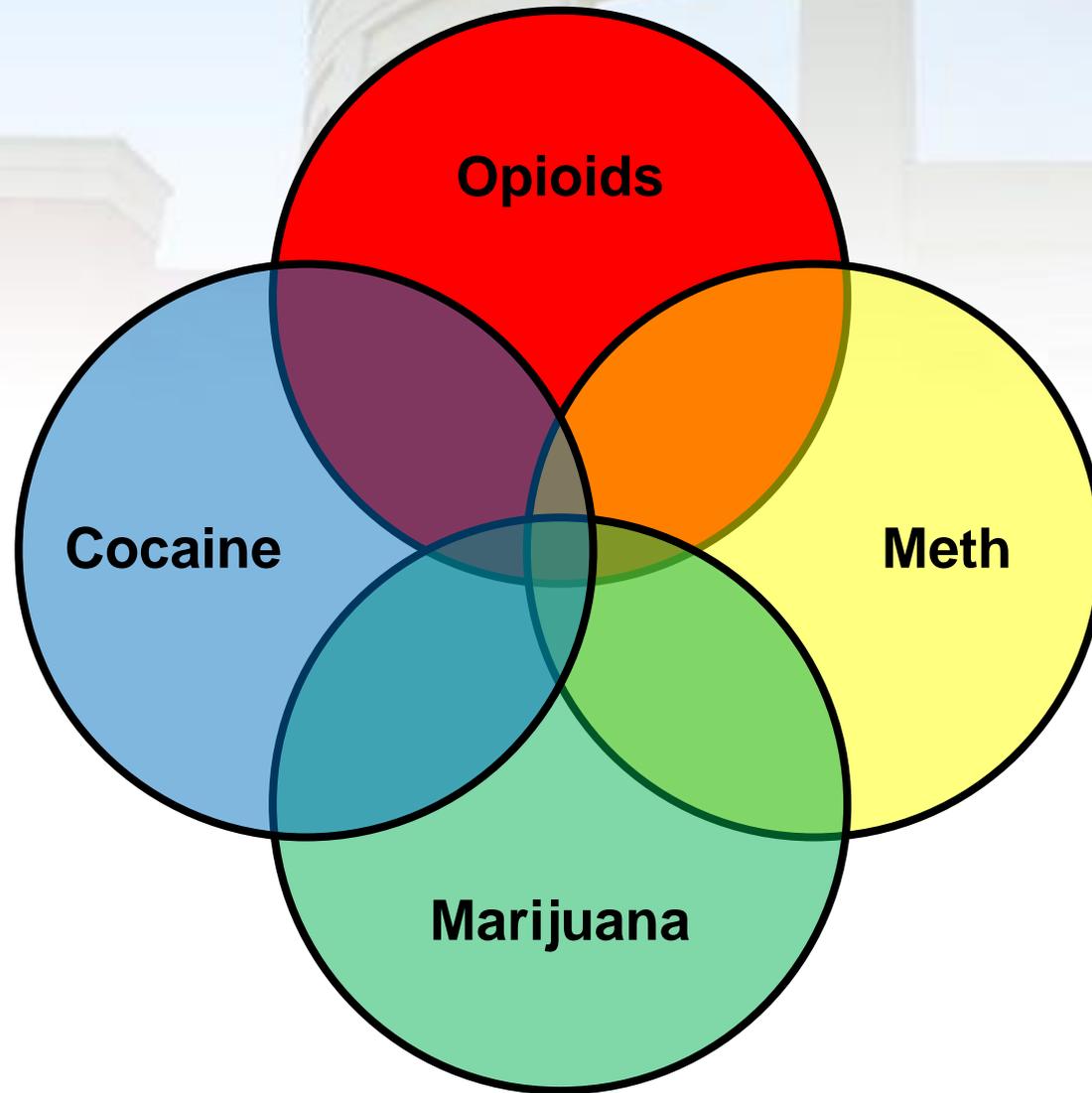


Source: UNODC



# The Diversification of Global Drug Consumption

## The Growing Threat from Synthetic Drugs



Source: Celina Realuyo



# The Opioid Epidemic in the U.S.

## THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC BY THE NUMBERS



**130+**

People died every day from opioid-related drug overdoses<sup>3</sup> (estimated)



**10.3 m**

People misused prescription opioids in 2018<sup>1</sup>



**47,600**

People died from overdosing on opioids<sup>2</sup>



**2.0 million**

People had an opioid use disorder in 2018<sup>1</sup>



**808,000**

People used heroin in 2018<sup>1</sup>



**81,000**

People used heroin for the first time<sup>1</sup>



**2 million**

People misused prescription opioids for the first time<sup>1</sup>



**15,349**

Deaths attributed to overdosing on heroin (in 12-month period ending February 2019)<sup>2</sup>



**32,656**

Deaths attributed to overdosing on synthetic opioids other than methadone (in 12-month period ending February 2019)<sup>2</sup>

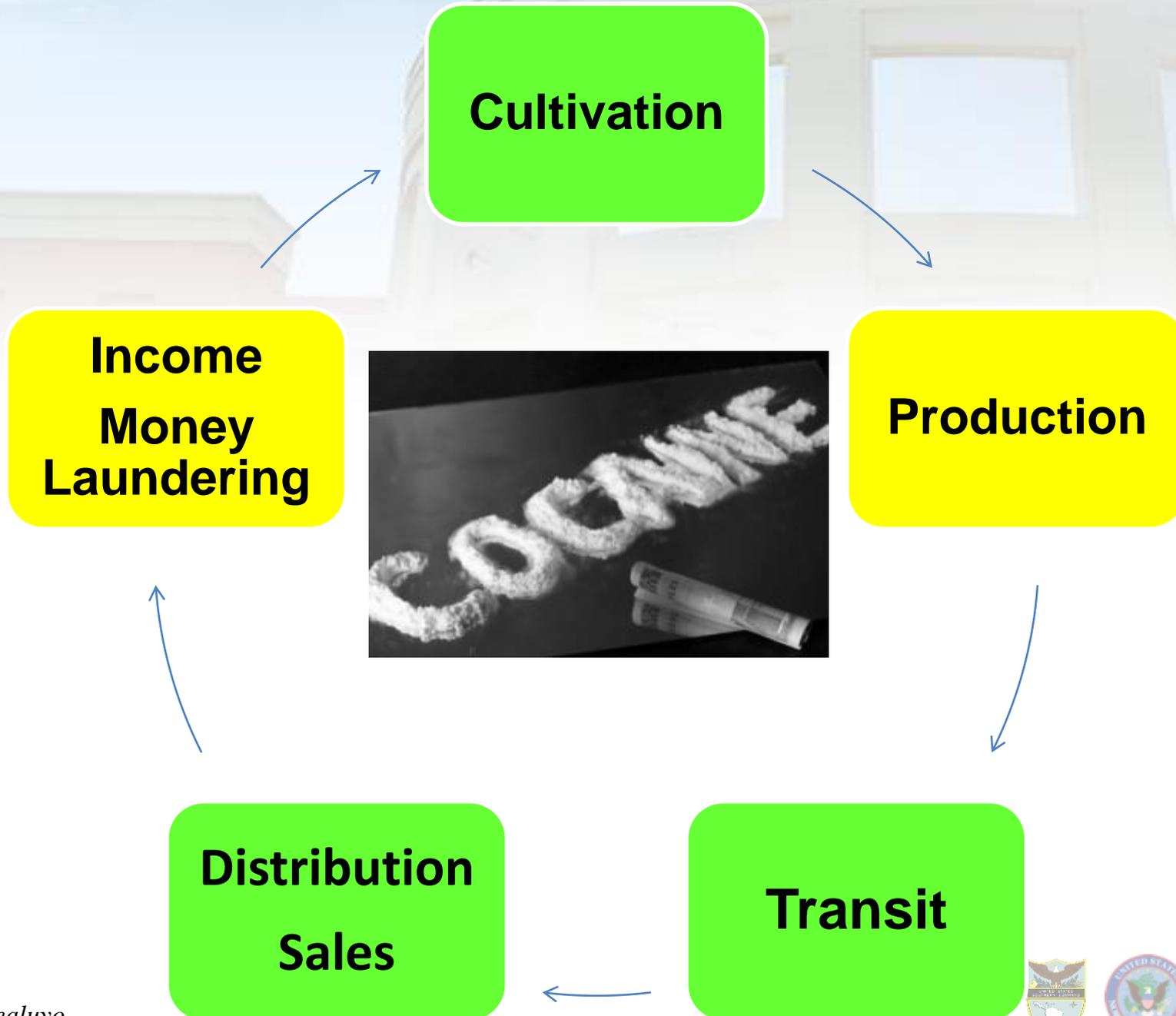
### SOURCES

1. 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Mortality in the United States, 2018
2. NCHS Data Brief No. 329, November 2018
3. NCHS, National Vital Statistics System. Estimates for 2018 and 2019 are based on provisional data.

 [HHS.GOV/OPIOIDS](https://www.hhs.gov/opioids)

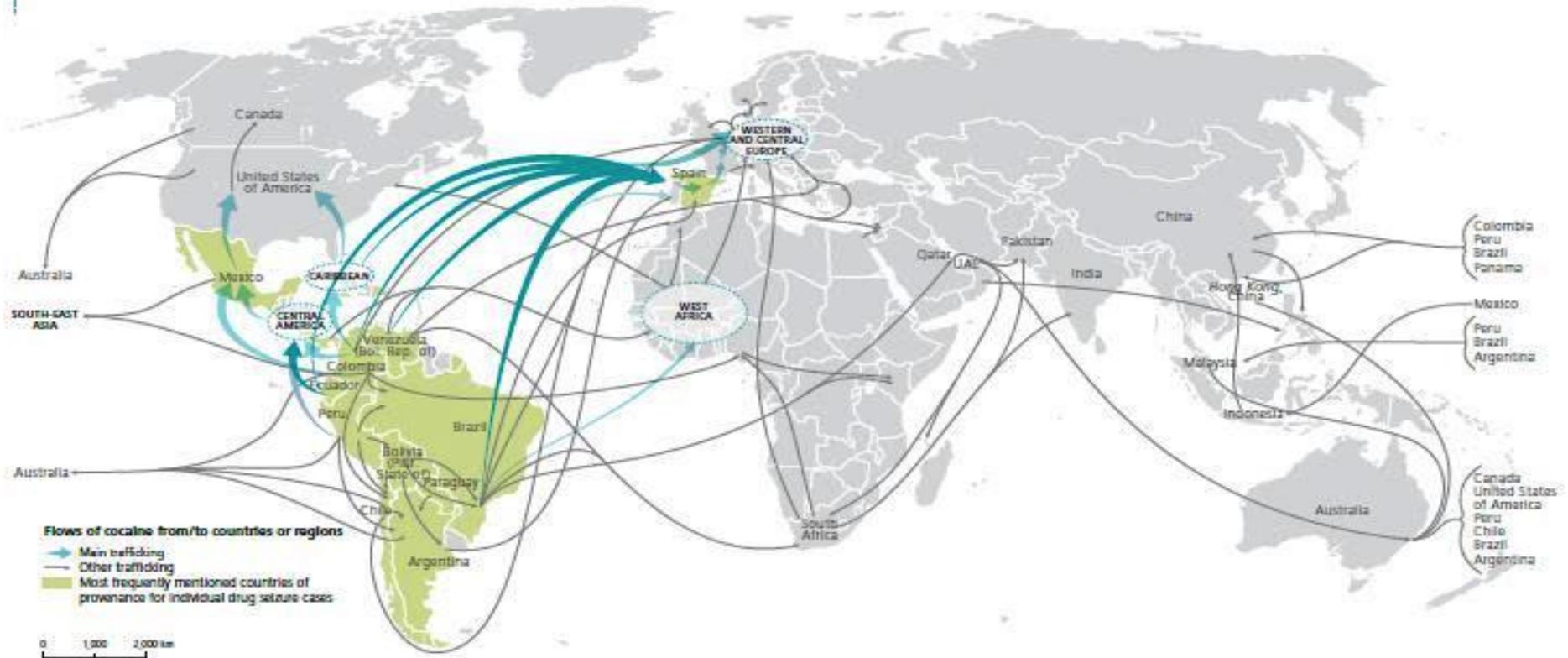


# Plant-Based Drug Production and Business Cycle



# Unprecedented Levels of Cocaine Production in Colombia

Main trafficking flows of cocaine



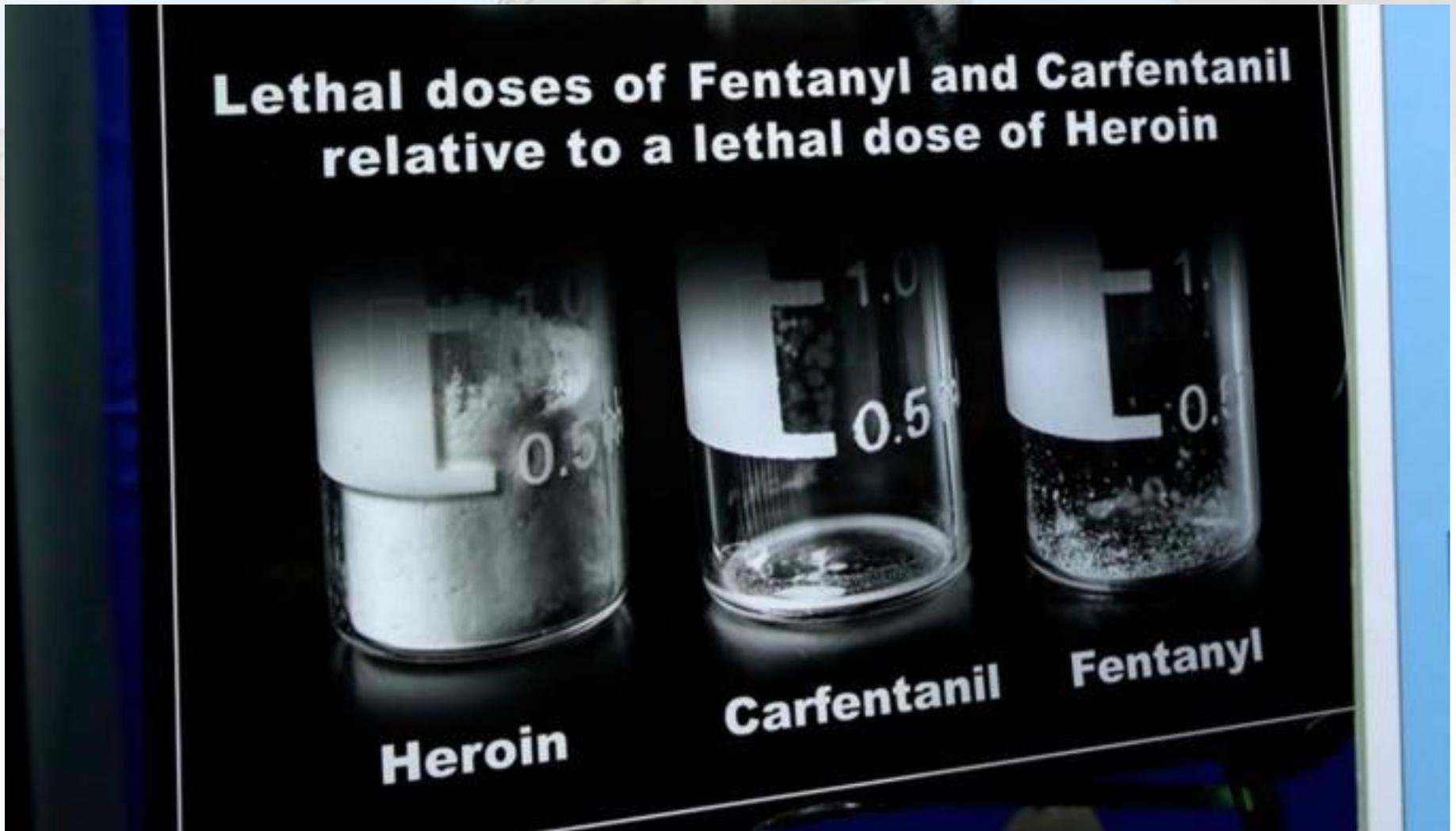
Source: UNODC, responses to annual report questionnaire and individual drug seizure database.

Notes: The trafficking routes represented on this map should be considered broadly indicative and based on data analyses rather than definitive route outlines. Such analyses are based on data related to official drug seizures along the trafficking route as well as official country reports and responses to annual report questionnaires. Routes may deviate to other countries that lie along the routes and there are numerous secondary flows that may not be reflected. The boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dashed lines represent undetermined boundaries. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined.

Source: UNODC



# The Growing Threat from Synthetics Fentanyl



# Fentanyl Flows to the U.S.

## Fentanyl pipeline

Most of the fentanyl in the country comes from China, but it doesn't always take a direct route here.

### China to U.S.

Americans buy pure fentanyl or precursor chemicals over the dark web from illicit suppliers in China. It is mailed in small quantities.

### China to Canada to U.S.

Sometimes fentanyl from China is shipped through other, less-suspicious countries such as Canada or Tonga before being mailed to the U.S.

CANADA

UNITED STATES

### U.S. to Mexico

Some fentanyl is shipped from China to the U.S. for the Mexican cartels because the U.S. mail system is more reliable. It is then smuggled south to Mexico for production before coming back up to the U.S. in its finished form.

MEXICO

### Through San Diego

Fentanyl ready for consumption is smuggled across the Southwest border, primarily through the San Diego region, then dispersed throughout the U.S. market.

### China to Mexico

Fentanyl or precursor chemicals are shipped to Mexico to be made into a finished product in drug cartel labs. It is heavily diluted with fillers and marketed as cocaine, heroin or meth, or pressed into pills and marketed as oxycodone. Pure fentanyl can also be laced into illicit street drugs.

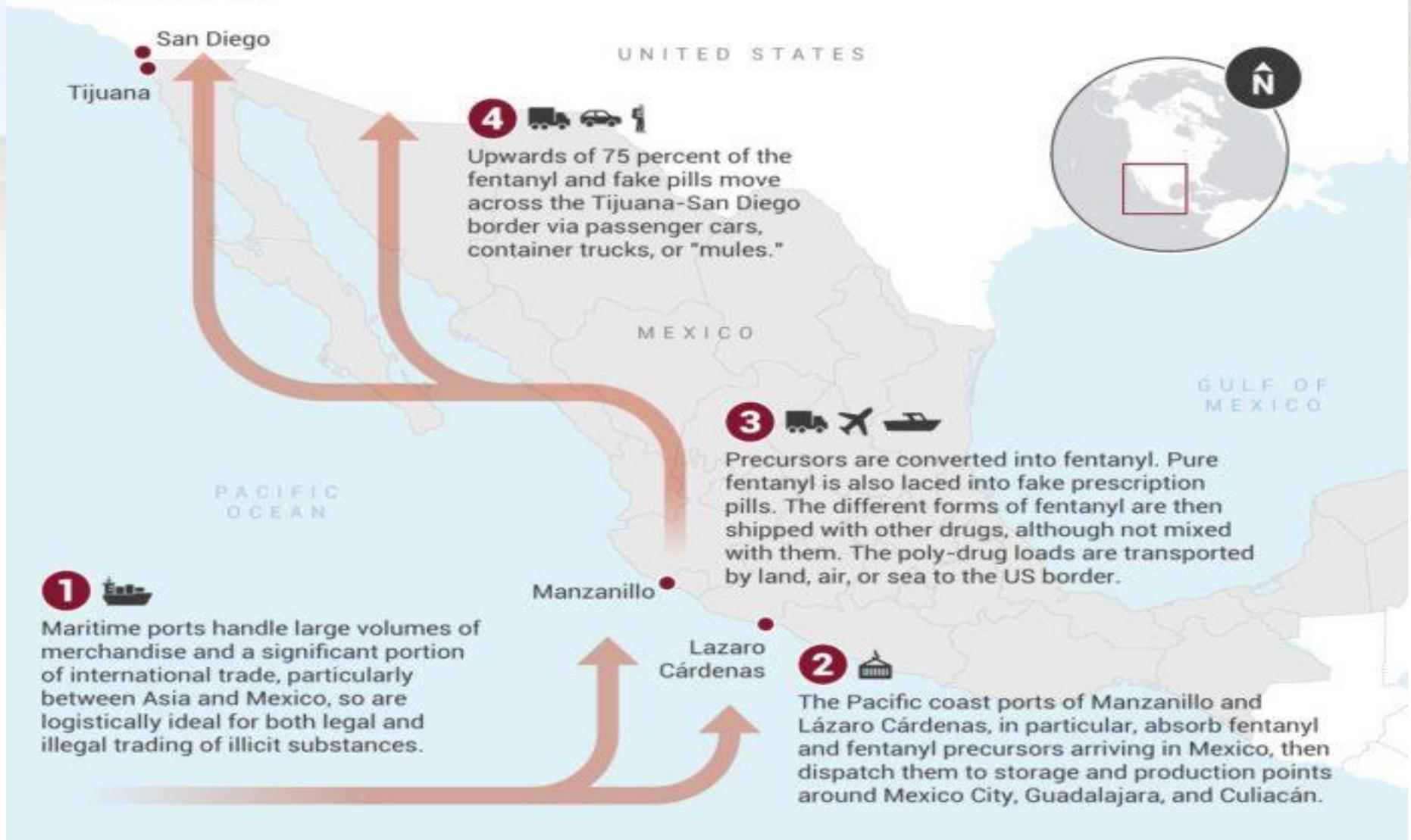
KRISTINA DAVIS & SHAFFER GRUBB U-

Source: San Diego Union Tribune



# Fentanyl Flows Through Mexico

insightcrime.org

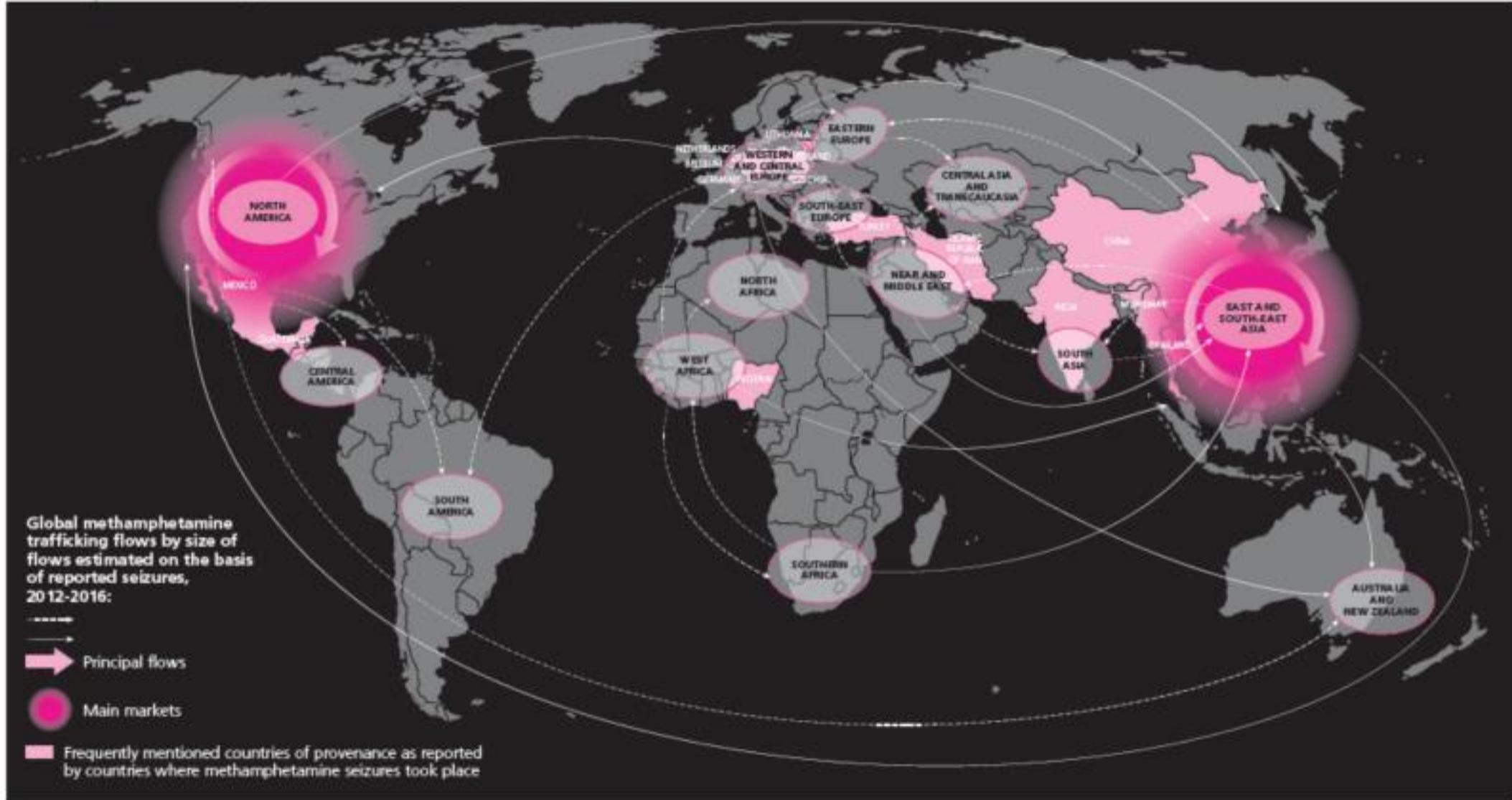


Source: InSight Crime



# Resurgence of Methamphetamine

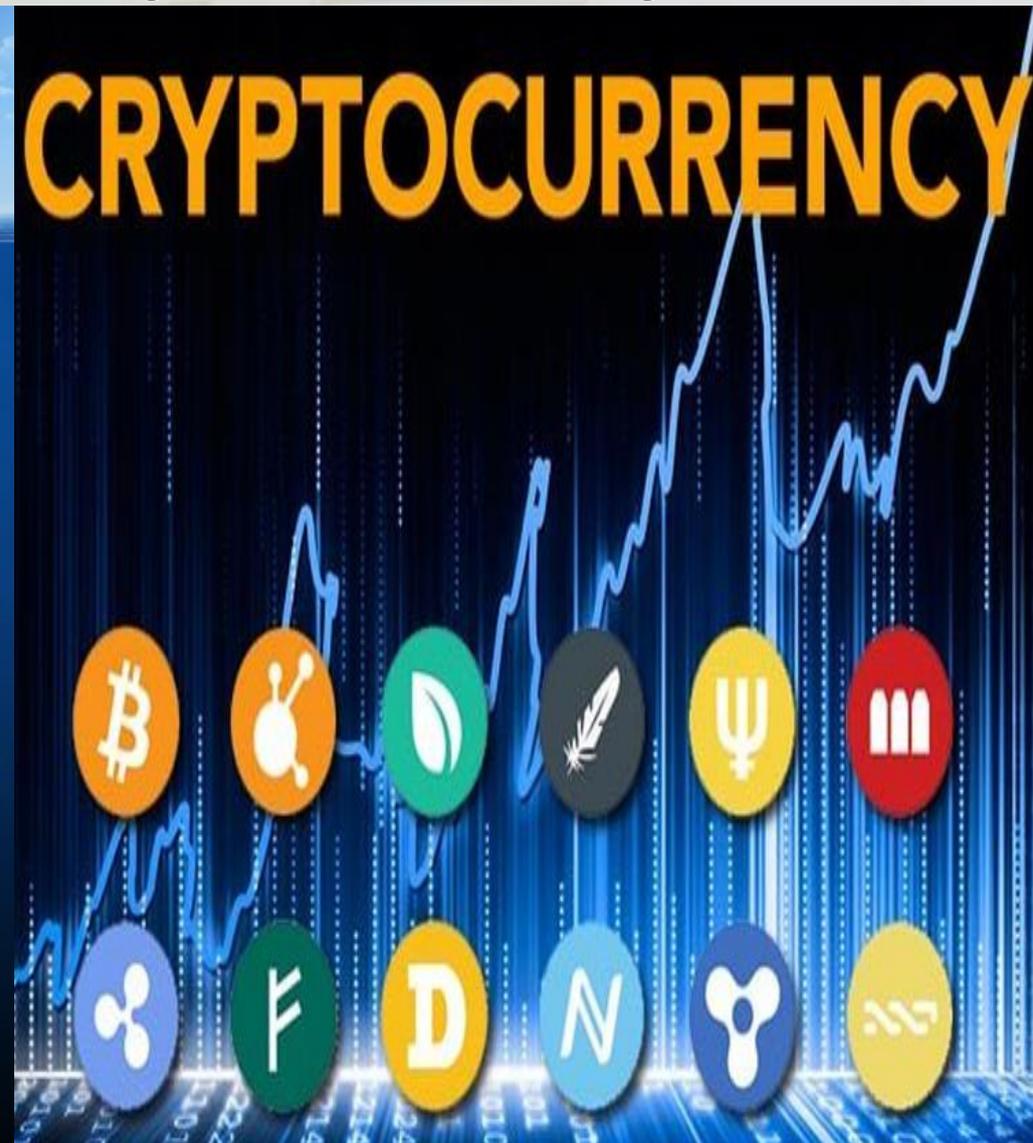
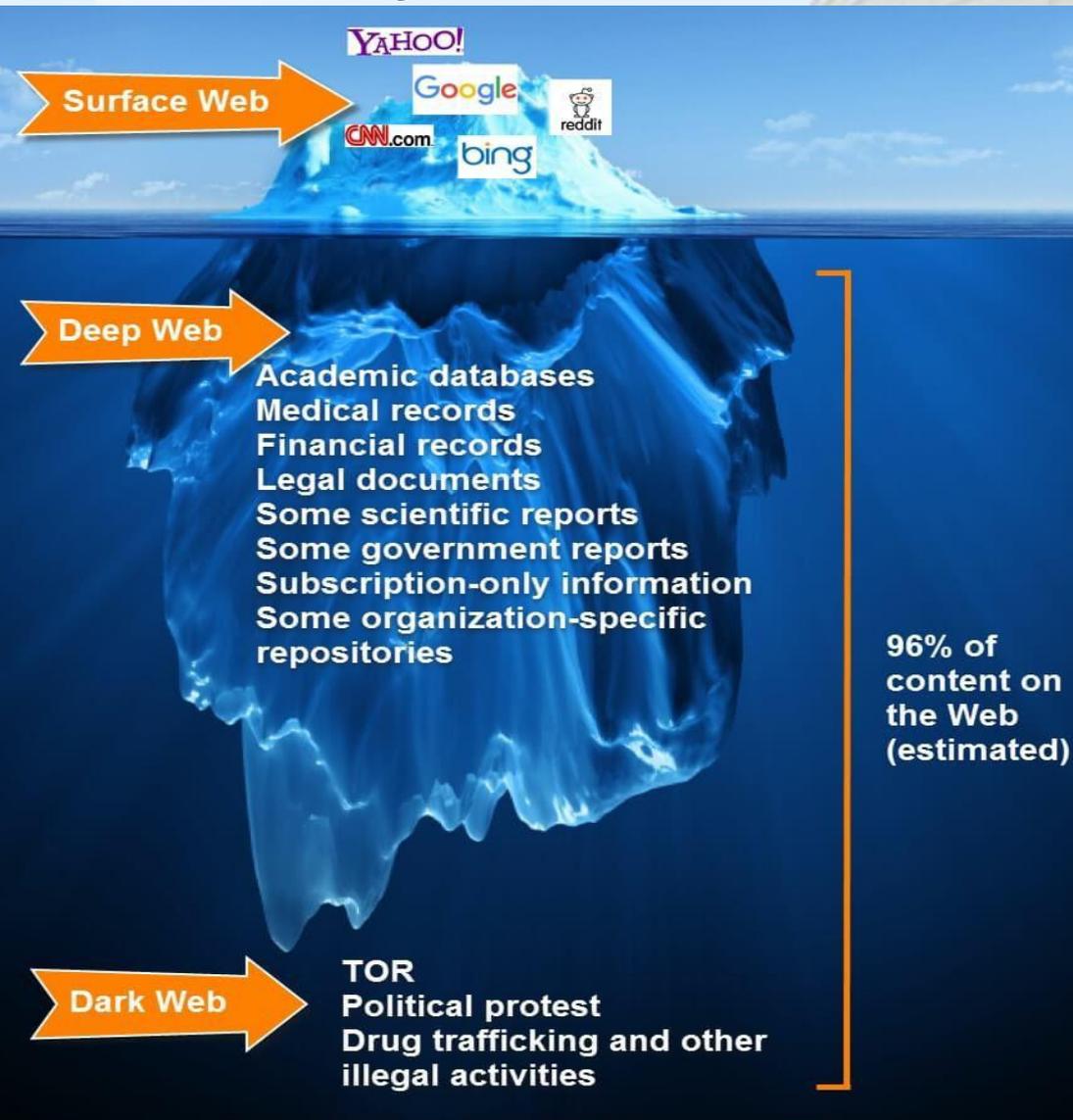
MAP 1 | Main methamphetamine trafficking flows, 2012–2016



Source: UNODC



# The Drug Trade Empowered by the Darknet and Cryptocurrency

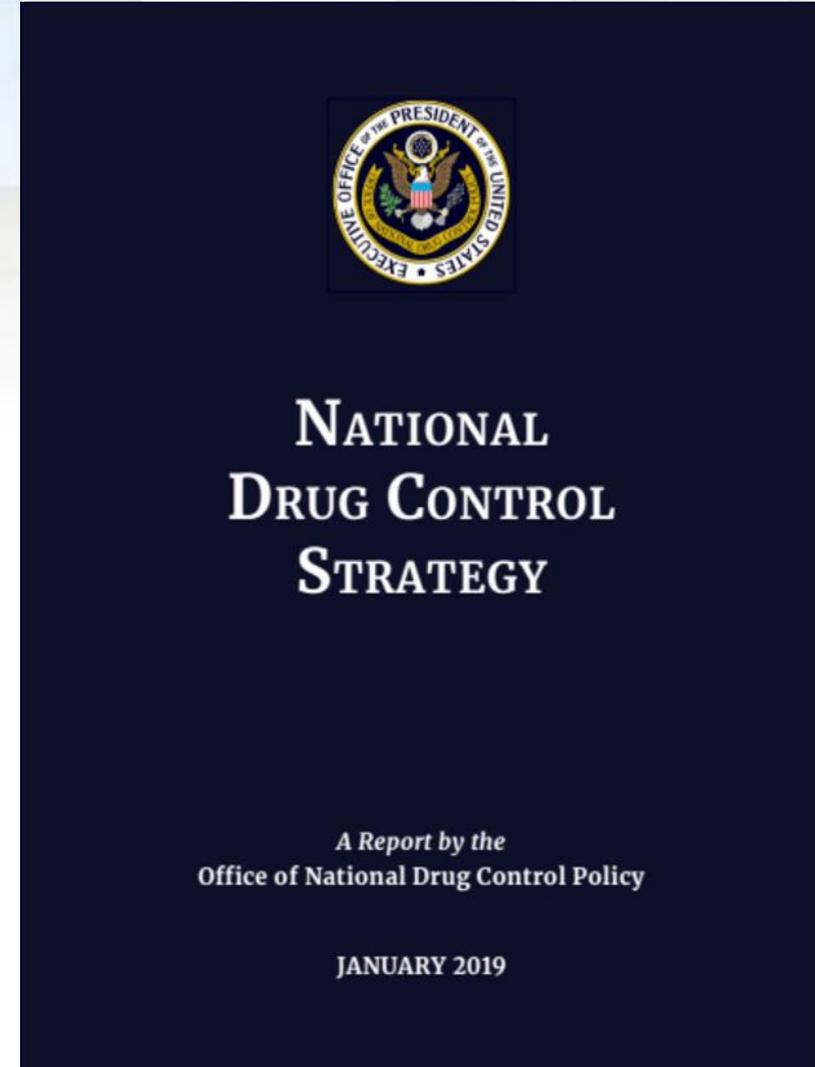
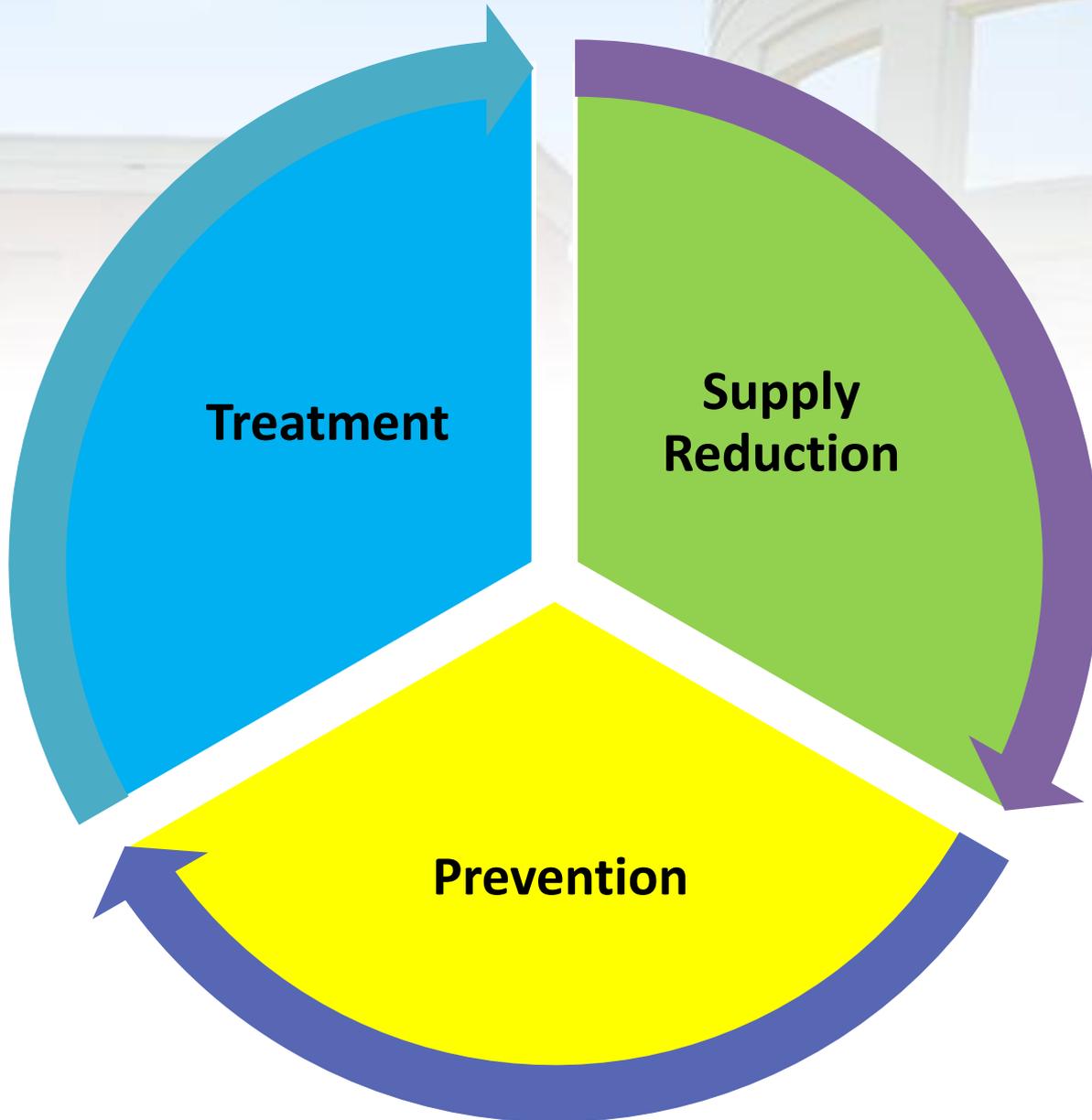


# U.S.-Mexican Efforts to Address the Evolving Drug Trade

- ***Demand Reduction and Treatment Measures***
- ***Supply Reduction Measures***
- ***Detection and Interdiction Measures***
- ***Financial and Cyber Measures***
- ***Arms Trafficking Reduction Measures***



# 2019 U.S. National Drug Control Strategy to Reduce Supply and Demand



Source: The White House



# Improved Bilateral Detection and Interdiction of Fentanyl and Meth Trafficking



Source: Department of Homeland Security



# Bilateral Financial Intelligence Sharing and Collaboration to Combat Money Laundering



# Mexico-U.S. Binational Strategy on Illicit Arms Trafficking Discussions - November 2019



Source: Government of Mexico



# Policy Options for Countering the Evolving Drug Trade in the Americas

- **The United States and Mexico should continue to collaborate on the bilateral security agenda through information and intelligence sharing; joint counternarcotics and border security operations; and financial investigations against Mexican cartels. This collaboration should be continuously reviewed and updated to reflect changing dynamics within criminal organizations, and evolving threats.**
- **Both countries should remain focused on countering drug trafficking and transnational criminal organizations even when the migration crisis dominates the bilateral agenda.**
- **More human, financial, and technological resources should be marshalled for counternarcotics security forces in the United States and Mexico to anticipate, detect, and interdict new synthetic drugs such as fentanyl and methamphetamines.**
- **The fight against trafficking should be taken into the cyber domain. This should include better understanding of how drug traffickers are capitalizing on cyberspace to expand their markets, as well as, actual cyber operations to detect and dismantle these networks.**



# Policy Options for Countering the Evolving Drug Trade in the Americas (continued)

- **The United States and Mexico should continue to collaborate on the bilateral security agenda through) To address the unprecedented violence in Mexico, the government should seek to improve the capacity of Mexican security forces. The United States should provide technical assistance for this effort based on Mexico's identified needs.**
- **Both the United States and Mexico should work together to reduce the flow of illegal firearms from the United States and the diversion of firearms from the Mexican security forces. This could be accomplished in part by expanded background checks, more control over straw purchasers, expanded border inspections, or greater oversight of sales at gun shows in the U.S.**
- **Both countries need to exhibit the political will and define effective security strategies and capabilities to counter the evolving drug trade in the Americas.**

