

carried out, and an illicit laboratory was dismantled where both MDMA and methamphetamine were being manufactured.

#### 4. Substances used in the illicit manufacture of other psychotropic substances

##### Methaqualone

##### Seizures

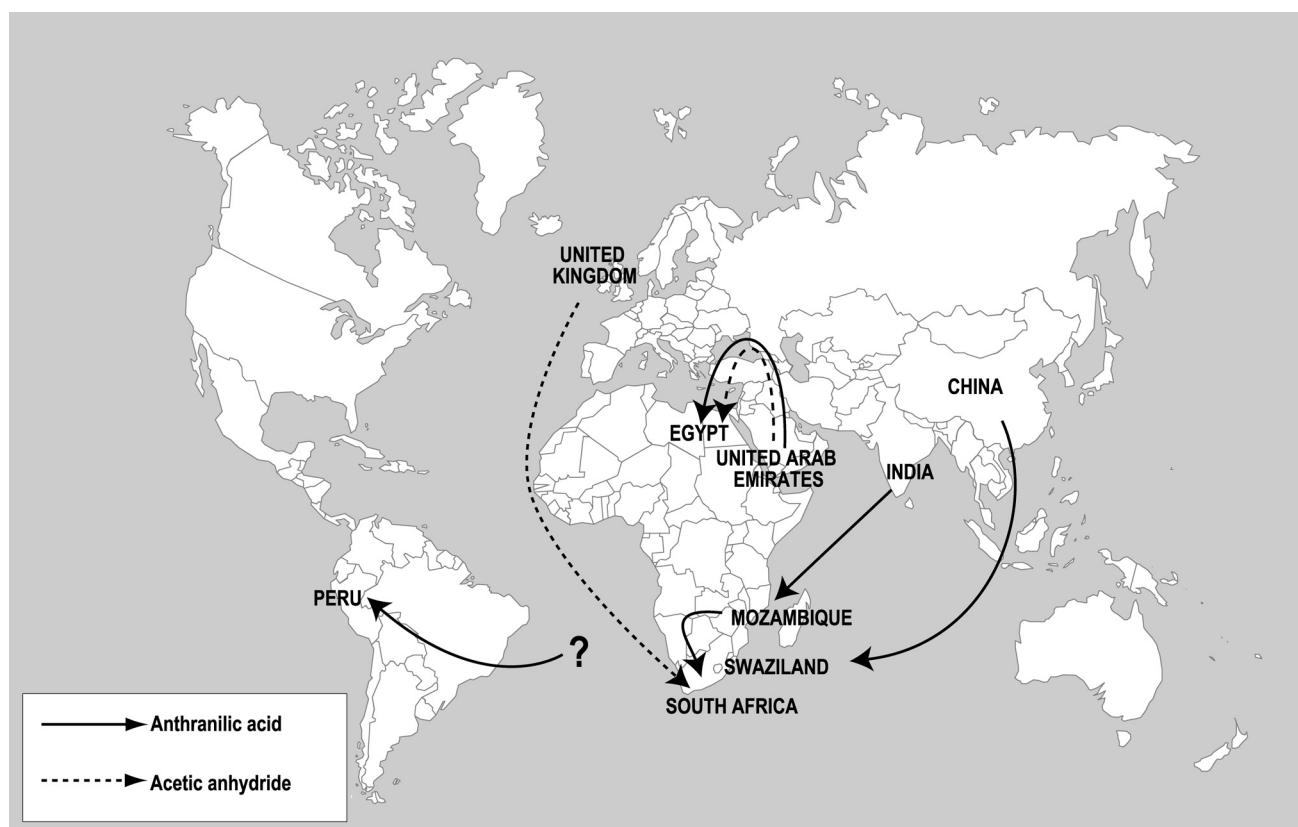
117. While the abuse of *methaqualone* remains largely restricted to Southern and Eastern Africa, during 2001, the only major seizure of anthranilic acid, an important precursor used in the illicit manufacture of

*methaqualone*, was reported by Peru. Nearly three tons of the substance were seized, and since no such seizures, and no illicit manufacture of *methaqualone*, have previously been reported by countries in the South American region, the Board is currently determining what circumstances led to the seizure and whether grounds exist to believe that the substance was to be used in illicit drug manufacture.

118. No major seizures were reported during 2001 in Africa or India, where illicit *methaqualone* manufacture has previously been detected. In contrast, several major cases have been uncovered during 2002. The trafficking routes identified are shown in figure XI.

Figure XI

**Trafficking routes and attempted diversions of the precursors used in the illicit manufacture of methaqualone identified through successful action by competent authorities, 2001-2002**



119. During that year, the authorities of Mozambique seized a shipment of 10 tons of anthranilic acid from India. The substance had been legally exported from India and was allowed to enter Mozambique, since that country currently does not exercise import controls over precursor chemicals. Inquiries initiated to identify the ultimate end-user determined that the substance was to be re-exported from Mozambique to South Africa and that the importing company in South Africa did not exist. The consignment was therefore seized. Investigations in South Africa identified the trafficker responsible for placing the order, who was subsequently arrested in connection with the discovery, in July 2002, of a major network intending to manufacture methaqualone in South Africa. In that operation, nearly 30 tons of acetic anhydride and 16 tons of anthranilic acid were seized, together with other non-controlled substances and industrial equipment used for synthesis. Some of the anthranilic acid seized was again identified as having originated in India, although how this particular consignment was diverted has not yet been determined.

120. The illicit manufacture of methaqualone has been largely prevented in India since the mid-1990s. In 2002, however, a major laboratory was dismantled and 2.5 tons of methaqualone were seized. In view of the strict controls exercised over both the domestic distribution and exports of acetic anhydride in India, the traffickers involved were using non-controlled substitute chemicals to replace acetic anhydride in the synthesis process. However, the seizure of the 50 kilograms of anthranilic acid at the laboratory site would indicate that the substance was being used. In view of the above seizures of anthranilic acid in Mozambique and South Africa, and taking into consideration the possibility of illicit manufacture taking place within their country, the authorities of India are urged to ensure that appropriate controls are introduced to prevent diversions of this substance from both domestic distribution channels and international trade.

*Stopped shipments, diversions and attempted diversions from international trade*

121. In addition to the above seizures, the competent authorities of China have been instrumental in preventing the diversion of over 20 tons of anthranilic acid from China to Swaziland. The Chinese authorities requested the assistance of the Board in determining

the legitimacy of the shipment and it was possible to determine, on the basis of information supplied by Governments voluntarily to the Board on licit trade, that no previous shipments of this substance had been made to Swaziland. In follow-up inquiries, the authorities in Swaziland were unable to conclusively identify the ultimate consignee and the Chinese authorities stopped the export. The information on licit trade provided by Governments under Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/20 is continually utilized by the Board in cases such as the above to identify suspicious orders and to initiate further inquiries.

122. Apart from the recent attempt to establish industrial-scale laboratories in South Africa, a smaller diversion attempt was uncovered when an order for 50 kilograms of acetic anhydride was placed with a company in the United Kingdom for delivery to South Africa. While a controlled delivery was planned, the order was cancelled before it could proceed. It is suspected that an employee of one of the companies involved may have warned the traffickers of the attention that law enforcement authorities were paying to the shipment in question.

123. Finally, the competent authorities of the United Arab Emirates stopped an export of 75 kilograms of acetic anhydride and 75 kilograms of anthranilic acid, that was placed by a company in Egypt. While the amounts ordered were not large, the ordering of those two chemicals together was itself a cause for suspicion. In the case in question, it was determined that the Egyptian company placing the order was not authorized to import either substance and the shipment was stopped. Although the order could not conclusively be linked to the illicit manufacture of methaqualone, it is such stopped shipments that need to be followed up and thoroughly investigated by the law enforcement authorities in order to develop intelligence that may later make it possible to identify and dismantle criminal networks.

*Notes*

<sup>1</sup> *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).