U.S. Role In Global Drug Trafficking Part 2

If the "Golden Triangle" had turned out to be the only area in the world suitable for cultivating the opium poppy, then the Vietnam War would have probably taken a totally different turn. But this time the world managed again to avoid another small nuclear bombing. To the joy of all those who benefit from the profits of drug trafficking, opium poppy grows in many remote corners across the planet. These corners are inhabited by poor and, therefore, not very discerning population. Besides, opiates are not the only way for drug addicts to withdraw from the abominable reality.

The United States withdrew its troops from Vietnam in 1973, and until 1975 the northern communists were trying to finish off the Saigon puppet regime, but what could that change in principle? Whether by coincidence or not, but it was in the 70-90s of the last century that the South American cocaine cartels expanded their activities. This expansion was accompanied by the encouraging electric-guitar chords (well, who doesn't remember Cocaine and Nazareth?) and the strident promises of the United States Administration to put an end to all such nonsense. In the meantime, Hollywood was raising the stakes and elucidating in detail the class struggle of brutal muchachos against some incorruptible American police officers. Different pop culture personalities hurried to confess to cocaine dependence, whilst the death of some of them through overdose even became a rock music legend.

The epic story of the birth, struggle and death of the Medellín cartel is well known. In the 1970-90s, it virtually monopolised the cocaine production in Colombia. And what is important here is this. Any monopoly generates superprofits ensured by high prices, and the latter go up because of the lack of competition.

One day, the drug cartel's leaders decided to claim their rights for more than just technical control over the collection and packaging of raw cocaine. They started actively buying in public figures and politicians. In Latin America, as is well known, the morals of the latter are simple and uncomplicated. If they are offered money, they take it, and later on they promise in the elections that all corruption offenders will be shot. It is obvious that, in a sense, Escobar and his lot were protecting their investments.

The White House Administration did not like any of that, so in 1984 it decided to declare a "crusade" against the cocaine empire of evil. It challenged the cartel.

In response to the strategic initiatives of the US Administration, the savage dogs of the Medellín cartel did not walk away with their tails between their legs, so the so-called "Andean triangle" turned for a few years into a living hell where a human life was worth absolutely nothing. By the early 1990s, the "cocaine war" had generally finished with the unconditional victory of democracy. All of the Medellín cartel’s bosses had been either killed or arrested. And so what? Does it mean that the American intelligence services put in place a secure protection against the cocaine flow which was bringing drugs in their tonnes onto the territory of the United States? Not at all.

According to the research conducted by Yuri Latov (RF Ministry of Internal Affairs), the dynamics of the cocaine retail prices shows that the effectiveness of the war with the cartel is questionable: in the 1984-1988, a kilo of cocaine became five times cheaper in the USA – the price plummeted from 300 thousand dollars per kilo to 60 thousand. During that period, this type of drug became much more affordable in the United States than before. How was it possible? Have disrupted supplies and shortage of goods ever led to lower prices? This is just not
Expert literature on this subject normally contains one explanation to this – Washington "wanted the best, but it turned out as always", in other words, at some point a miscalculation was made, at another point the wrong guy was shot or the right guy wasn't shot – "but we did fight, didn't we?".

Oh yes, the CIA did fight, that's for sure.

As has been pointed out above, the Medellin cartel's monopoly in the 70-80s of the last century caused the prices to go up in the USA, and that factor was constraining the spread of the drugs and reducing the client base. And what did the destruction of the cartels lead to?

Yuri Latov observes that, by the end of 1990s, a paradoxical situation had emerged in the Andean triangle: nearly all of the more or less significant drug traffickers were either in prison or had been killed, and still the export cocaine flow had not decreased, and the plantations of this drug crop had not reduced either. However, it is not paradoxical at all. This is how market-regulated pricing is introduced in societies prone to juntas and monopolies. Bearded bandits were replaced by clerks wearing white shirts and carrying laptops. This is called civilization, and this is how it is different from criminal lawlessness.

Can anyone say that the CIA's activity was ineffective? Not in the least. It is clear that it is the result it had been striving for. A high-quality product at an affordable price – that is the ideal of the work of the market economy. If Pablo Escobar had not practised shooting so much and studied the principles of the market economy instead, he would have radically changed the strategy of his firm and would have lived much longer.

The Colombian cartel story is only one of the episodes from the extensive work carried out by US government agencies in Latin America.

It would not be much of an exaggeration to say that, in the Latin American governments, there are probably as many CIA officers as in Langley itself. For example, what happened to General Noriega? He used to be a CIA agent and received money from it. The general was awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honour by France, and he bought real estate in that country. Director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia Harvey Sicherman assures: “The CIA rejected his services, so Noriega started mistreating American citizens in Panama. At the same time, he continued trafficking drugs and weapons. Therefore, President Bush (senior) removed him from power by military force.”

You see? Just think about it. The CIA rejected the general's services, but he (what a brat!) continued engaging in the trafficking of weapons and drugs, that is, he kept doing what he used to do while serving Washington. But we can understand the general, can't we? Bush (senior) not just sacked the devoted CIA staff for nothing, but it looks like the general didn't even get any severance pay. So he had to continue earning money in the way he was accustomed to.

What is the ex CIA agent's life like in prison?

Harvey Sicherman claims that particularly favourable conditions were created for General Noriega in prison to stop him from talking too much because this man knew really far too much. To stop him from talking about what? Surely not about the activities of the Chinese intelligence services?

You see?

On 15 November 1996, Michael Ruppert – an officer of the anti-drug division in Los Angeles (here he had worked 20 years) – made a public statement in front of CIA Director John Deutch and accused the organisation led by the latter of supplying drugs onto the US territory. A month later, John Deutch left his post. No, the CIA director had not treated his friends to cocaine during work meetings in Washington. It's just that his computers had some problems regarding secret access.

Peter Dale Scott, a former Canadian diplomat and Professor at the University of California, writes in La Tribune that the CIA's involvement in and responsibility for global drug trafficking is a taboo subject in political circles, election campaigns and the mass media. Those who have tried to violate this ban, such as journalist Gary Webb, have paid with their career. There was a certain shift in this issue when a big article by Alfred McCoy appeared on the TomDispatch website on 30 March 2010.

The problem is absolutely clear. The multi-billion-dollar operations with drugs, with the involvement of the CIA, are
getting increasingly bigger, whilst the officials of the world's only superpower are getting more and more insolent. The situation in Afghanistan is a graphic example of that.

(To be continued...)

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