

NARCO-TERRORISM: THE KREMLIN CONNECTION

by Rachel Ehrenfeld

Drug abuse for most people in this country is still a matter of individual behavior, either a personal character defect or a community social problem. Thus, in spite of the growing negative publicity against drugs, drug trafficking is still justified by many as an entrepreneurial enterprise, which is of course encouraged by Western society, and mainly as fulfilling a demand in the marketplace. Terrorism, on the other hand, is still perceived by some as politically motivated behavior, as a revolutionary reaction to some injustice and, therefore, somehow justified often as a "fight for freedom." There is and always will be someone to call attention to the "cause" that leads "desperate people" to hijacking, bombing, and murder of innocent civilians, in the same way that there will always be those who justify drug trafficking as a quick way to make a lot of money that fills a fast-growing demand. The idea that drug abuse in Western society, especially in the United States, might have other causes than the local demand, such as planned exploitation by foreign forces, initiated by the Soviet Union, is met with disbelief and denial by almost everybody. Many still do not see the link between terrorism and drug trafficking. For those who do see the link, even in the Administration, it is usually perceived as financially beneficial to both sides.

There is little interest in the Administration in presenting the existing evidence about countries supported and controlled by the Soviet Union in connection with drug trafficking. Not only is it too delicate politically, but once it is admitted publicly, the Administration may then have to actually do something about it. This omission is similar to the one that occurred in the Tokyo Summit on International Terrorism last May, where no links were made between the Soviets and international terrorism. Disbelief and denial are probably the reasons. Those who know the facts and who are outspoken about them, such as William von Raab, Commissioner, U.S. Customs Service, and Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, U.S. Department of State, are not given appropriate publicity. Thus the public is rarely exposed to those facts.

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The Soviets and their proxies did not invent drug abuse in the United States, but they definitely know how to exploit an existing phenomenon to their advantage by undermining American society within the government, at the workplace, on the street, and in homes and disrupting the order and changing traditional values within American society. As Humberto Ortega and the Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge told Antonio Farach; a former ambassador to Nicaragua: "The drug trade produced a good economic benefit which we needed...we wanted to provide food for our people with the suffering and death of the youth in the U.S....the drugs were used as a political weapon because we were delivering a blow to our political enemy."¹

The problem of creditability regarding the narco-terrorism phenomenon and its threat to democracy lies in the powerful psychological urge to disbelieve an awful truth even about an adversary's intentions. The problem is also one of interpretation and conceptualization rather than lack of information. Above all, there is a problem in the United States Administration in perceiving Soviet foreign policy in terms of Western values. Often when, in the opinion of Americans, including policy makers, Soviet behavior is "unrealistic" or its goals unclear, there is a tendency to dismiss the very existence of this behavior.

The Soviet Union with the collaboration of its allies in Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Western Hemisphere is the initiator and sponsor of major narco-terrorist activities. The U.S. Administration's efforts to slow down or halt the drug problem will be in vain, unless there is a carefully planned strategy to handle the magnitude of the U.S. domestic drug problem and recognition, understanding, and acknowledgement of the Soviet-backed plan and the consequences of its implementation. The ultimate goal of the Soviet-backed agenda, as we know it, is to undermine the integrity of the U.S. government and to destroy the social and economic organization of American society, as well as to weaken its moral fiber. Maybe using Nikita Khrushchev's own words: "...we must state categorically that anything that speeds the destruction of capitalism is moral,"² would make the Soviet initiative clearer.

One of the reasons that narco-terrorist investigations dealing with political implications still lack total acceptance is because of the heavy personal ideological and emotional investments of the

1. Antonio Farach, formerly the second highest ranking official in the Nicaraguan embassies in Venezuela and Honduras in testimony at the hearing on Drug and Terrorism, August 1984.

2. Remarks made by Khrushchev at a secret meeting of the Warsaw Pact leadership in 1962, as recalled by Jan Senja, a former Secretary of the Czechoslovak Defense Council.

investigators. The Soviet Union and its surrogates--including Cuba, Bulgaria, Nicaragua, and some international terrorist organizations--use the international drug trade as one of many instruments in their overall strategy of active measures against the West. The United States as the leader of Western nations is the primary target and is known as the "main enemy" in the Soviet global strategic plan. Students of Soviet foreign policy know that it has always been based on the achievement of long-term goals and that the achievement of those goals calls for flexible and dynamic changes, not an "either/or" approach. Therefore, the Soviets exploit favorable conditions within the context of their overall objectives. What better example could there be than the exploitation of the drug phenomenon combined with terrorism in the Western Hemisphere? "Cuban agents are instructed to exploit any type of weakness in American society...their task is to make more acute the internal problems that exist, including drug addiction."³

The alliance of the Eastern bloc, their surrogates, and organized crime networks inside the United States performs several functions for the overall strategy tied to the Soviets in their policy toward the Western Hemisphere. Some aspects of these strategic relationships were outlined in numerous publicly available congressional hearings, court decisions, and more recently in the report of the President's Commission on Organized Crime: America's Habit: Drug Abuse, Drug Traffic, and Organized Crime.

For the Soviets and their allies, the original network provides an intelligence apparatus parallel with and complementary to the local communist party and labor fronts. Part of this Soviet-inspired program is to penetrate directly into U.S. society by utilizing already existing forces and mechanisms of disruption and illegal activities. Among those forces and mechanisms are organized crime: the Cosa Nostra, the Colombian Mafia, the Nigerians (the largest group of individuals to traffic heroin from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India to the U.S.) and others; self-styled protest movements that are open to foreign influences. Of course, the existing market of drug users in the United States provides them with the opportunity for exploitation and expansion.

In countries in which terrorism and drug trafficking exist, such as several Latin American countries, this systematic interrelationship and penetration indicates that these associations are more than marriages of convenience. The combined forces take advantage of the lucrative drug trade to and in the United States, not only to fund their activities and to provide a reliable source of arms supplies, but to permit the Soviets and their proxies to erode the security

3. Testimony by former Cuban secret police agent Peraza before the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, 1983.

establishments in the Latin American countries where they operate. These security establishments are often the only stable institutions of government support in these countries. When such alliances become permanent, the United States is facing and will face increasingly more serious threats to regional and domestic security. Hemispheric economic and social stability are seriously undermined, and the resources of the United States are severely taxed in the attempt to cope with the situation. The recent political and economic drawbacks in Mexico as well as growing tension in Mexico's relation to the U.S. are caused not only by the oil crisis, but other factors as well. "Problems with the Mexican economy and corruption are an integral part of the Mexican drug situation."⁴ Mexico's deep involvement in trafficking drugs to this country and arms from the U.S. to terrorist organizations worldwide, as well as in providing safe haven to those who encourage and are involved in these activities, helps to erode not only Mexico's economy, but also its relationship with the U.S.

Drugs generate money--a lot of it--and money corrupts. Because of individuals within the Mexican government, the whole Mexican government is perceived as the archetype of corrupt administration. Recently, Colombian, Bolivian, Cuban, Nicaraguan, and other drug traffickers operating in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America have been distributing small booklets containing Marxist propaganda to the peasants when they collect the drug crops. This is in addition to encouragement and instructions on how to grow poppies instead of, and much more profitable than cannabis. There is no need to expand on the issues of financial gain related to the connection between drug trafficking and terrorist organizations or states--everyone understands them. But just as an example, they are the agreements between guerrilla movements in Colombia and the Colombian families that control the local cocaine trade, which generated approximately \$1.5 billion in 1985. This should be compared to the better-known guerrilla activities of kidnapping and bank robbery, in which, according to U.S. government estimates, the Salvadoran guerrillas accumulated only about \$75 million from the mid-1970s to 1981. Or in the case of North Vietnam, Hoang Van Hoan, a former Politburo member disclosed that in 1982 the Central Committee decided that opium production should be used to raise badly needed foreign currency, for example, U.S. dollars. Needless to say, the production was for sale in the U.S. And a direct Soviet involvement in trafficking heroin to the West was exposed last June in Rotterdam, where the local police seized 220 kilos of heroin shipped from Afghanistan through Riga on the Soviet ferryboat "Captain Tomson." This was probably not a private entrepreneurial endeavor, but according to Dutch sources, there is growing evidence that the Eastern bloc countries are trying to acquire the Western currency they so desperately need by trading in narcotics.

4. William von Raab, The New York Times, October 28, 1986.

The use of terrorism and drug trafficking in relation to and in accordance with Soviet long-term political strategies is clearly documented in the Soviet Military Encyclopedia Volume 7, 1979, p. 493. There the definition of special reconnaissance is the following: Reconnaissance carried out, with the aim of subversion of political, economic, military and moral potential of actual or possible enemies. It already had been mentioned that the United States is known as the "main enemy" for the Soviet Union, but the Soviets go further. Basic tasks within special reconnaissance include organization of sabotage and diversionary terrorist acts and conduct of hostile propaganda for these purposes. The recommendation is to use, among others, biological weapons, narcotics, and poisons. The Soviets equate the use of terrorism with the promotion of drug abuse and have put it down in writing. All that is necessary is to study these plans. Unfortunately, very few do, and even fewer are interested.

If we look at the strategic planning criteria for Soviet diversionary operations, we will find that the essence of diversion is to disorient the enemy. In military thought of all persuasions, diversion is clearly defined not as being an end in itself, but as a means to the end of overthrowing the enemy. In this context, it is dangerous to think of terrorism and drug trafficking, the major features of this diversion, as the principal international danger to be encountered. For whatever political or other expedient reasons, the perception of terrorism and drug trafficking as the basis for action prompts a diversionary effect in which attention is drawn away from the main danger, which is the collapse of Western society and values.

Here, another aspect of diversion enters, that of provocation, in which the victim is provoked to act against his own interests. Study of Soviet military science shows that the Soviet Union recognizes the strategic character of diversionary operations. Hence, they surely are initiated at the highest political/military level and involve direction and control by the General Staff, the International Department of the Central Committee, the Committee for State Security (KGB), and other appropriate agencies. Diversion is inseparably interrelated with intelligence gathering, and indeed, the Soviets hold it to be one of its most active elements. In the case of drug trafficking and its connection to terrorism, there are similarities between those links and their connection to the Soviet strategic planning against the West. They have existed as an integral part of Soviet military and political strategy since the 1917 revolution when the Communist Party seized control.

Today, countries controlled, influenced, and supported by the Soviet Union are playing an important part in trafficking drugs into the United States, to wit Cuba, Bulgaria, Syria, and Nicaragua. Growing evidence is coming to light about the connection between these countries and the training, funding, and arming of terrorist

organizations as well as trafficking drugs into the United States and other Western countries, but people who are born and raised and are living in democratic societies find it hard to believe that this is really true. Causing death by bombing or by providing drugs are similarly violent acts, threats against civilian targets, and crossing national borders of a given state for political purposes. They fall outside the normally accepted rules of international diplomacy and war. These acts are committed by individuals or organized groups operating as allegedly independent entities under no official state umbrella and usually wearing no uniforms. The logistical support comes from a sponsor state, and used as a tactic, these acts create a sense of tension, fear and disorder wherever they are applied. Operations of this kind are systematic attempts to undermine a society with the ultimate goal of causing the collapse of law and order and loss of confidence in the state. Terrorism and drug trafficking are a way of subversion and clandestine support for murder on an organized scale, and they add dangerous dimensions to activities that otherwise would be limited to small groups of lunatics or criminals acting on their own.

Theories like these indicating "international conspiracy" do not find attentive audiences, especially not in the United States. This disbelief is promoted with the help of disinformation instigated by the Soviets, which serves to discourage looking for the real sources behind the increased terrorist and drug-related activities in the Western Hemisphere. And although the "Siamese twins of death and destruction"--drug trafficking and terrorism--are recognized, and "their parents" in the Western Hemisphere are known to be the Cuban government and the Sandinista regime,⁵ the question remains--why are the Soviets omitted from those allegations?

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5. William von Raab, Commissioner, U.S. Customs Service, April 19, 1985. At the hearing on the Role of Nicaragua in Drug Trafficking, before the Subcommittee on Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.