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# THE CITIZEN

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for Social Responsibility, a non-profit Corp.

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This issue of the CITIZEN presents part 2 of our 3 part series analyzing narcotics trafficking.

► *"Americans have not just the right to learn what their government has done in this tumultuous century; they also have an imperative to know."*

LA Times editorial July 21, 1998.

by: Victor Saraiva

In the late 1980's and early 1990's facts emerged which connected international underworld organizations and some governments, inclusive of our own, in the traffic of narcotics.

*"Drug traffic should be "visualized not as a horizontal line between producers and consumers, but as a triangle. At its apex sit governments whose civilian and military intelligence agencies recurringly afford de facto protection to drug kingpins beneath them... our conclusion remains that the first target of an effective drug strategy should be Washington itself, and specifically its own connections with corrupt, drug linked forces in other parts of the world." (See our sources, Cocaine Politics).*

On the surface, this appears to be a statement beyond credibility, unimaginable, until one begins to research the basis for such an affirmation. Proof exists, it is undeniable ! Elements within our own government, spanning successive presidential administrations, can be directly tied to the international traffic of illicit narcotics. While DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) agents have died in the line of duty to thwart drug traffic, as well as agents from other law enforcement agencies, elements high in government have assisted, protected and profited from nefarious activities conducted by mobsters and drug 'kingpins'. The evidence establishes that those who truly profit from such activities sit on boards of multinational banks in Wall Street. Such a fact

makes such treason, to the people of this nation, and such corruption, much more heinous and sinister.

We shall first examine the facts.

U.S. government complicity with members of organized crime and drug traffickers dates back to WWII. Initially the Office of Strategic Studies (OSS), the precursor of today's CIA, enlisted the help of mobsters to prevent sabotage by agents of foreign powers, specifically Nazi Germany, and Japan from sabotaging America's ports. Later, when America entered the Cold War, such ties with the underworld continued. In the late 1940's and 1950's the CIA assisted the mafia by protecting their heroin smuggling activities from southeast Asia through Sicily and into Marseille France.

The CIA, began utilizing drugs as a method to control human behavior. Under the leadership of Allen Dulles, they launched Project Artichoke, Project Chatter and Project Bluebird.

*"During the forty years of the Cold War, the CIA joined with urban gangsters and rural warlords, many of them major drug dealers, to mount covert operations against communists around the globe...active in Burma, Thailand, Laos, into the 1970's, and later into Afghanistan in the 1980's...(such gangsters and warlords) used their alliances with the CIA to build an empire of opium production, shipping heroin to international markets, the United States included." (See sources, Alfred McCoy) During this period such activities were performed with the knowledge, assistance and protection of agents of the CIA. These activities were performed with total immunity and protection.*

*"By 1971, 34% of all U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam were heroin addicts, according to a White House survey. There were more addicts in South Vietnam than in the entire United States...Asian drug lords then began, with CIA knowledge, shipping large quantities of heroin into the United States." (McCoy).*

Alfred McCoy investigated the CIA's involvement with Asian drug traffickers which to a large extent were controlled by Army officers of Asian nations. When he published his findings (*The Politics of Heroin*) the CIA launched a campaign of intimidation and disinformation which was successful in derailing a House Foreign Relations Committee inquiry from taking shape. Even though Asian drug traffic accounted for 30% of the supply of U.S. heroin usage, most Americans did not accept the alliance between such foreign traffickers and the CIA, an agency of the United States government. No one could accept the agency's complicity in such illicit traffic, that was essentially poisoning the urban poor in the cities of America, leading to an upward spiral in crime and social chaos in society. What could motivate, or explain the CIA's complicity in narcotics trafficking into the very nation that it was empowered to protect?

By the 1980's the CIA was heavily entrenched in Afghanistan and in Central America. Attempting to vanquish Soviet control in Afghanistan and defeat leftist movements in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, it financed its operations with U.S. funds as well as profits from narcotics traffic.

*"Throughout the Cold War, the CIA used gangsters and war lords, many of them drug dealers, to fight communism. As the Cold War ends, our list of CIA's assets who use their alliance with the Agency to deal drugs grows ever longer. It includes Marseilles Corsicans, Lao generals, Thai police, Nationalist Chinese irregulars, Afghan rebels, Pakistani intelligence, Haitian colonels, Mexican police units, Guatemalan military... During the forty years of the Cold War, government intelligence services-our own CIA included-forged covert action alliances with some of Asia's key opium traffickers, inadvertently contributing to an initial expansion of opium production" (McCoy).*

Before terrorism became a national issue of first importance on 9/11/01, more than a decade before the terror of 9/11, the United States Senate convened a subcommittee on terrorism and narcotics, headed by Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.). Kerry's committee published a report which for the first time

affirmed, beyond doubt, that agencies of the U.S. government indeed had been involved and assisted drug traffickers in the illicit traffic of narcotics. Primarily concerned with U.S. involvement with the Contras, Kerry's investigations established beyond doubt the CIA's involvement in drug traffic.

A year later, in August 1987, the CIA's Central American Task Force Chief became the first U.S. official to revise that assessment to suggest instead that the links between Contras on the Southern Front in Costa Rica to narcotics trafficking was in fact far broader than that acknowledged by the State Department in 1986. Appearing before the Iran-Contra Committees' the CIA Central American Task Force chief testified: *"With respect to (drug trafficking by) the Resistance Forces ... it is not a couple of people. It is a lot of people."* (Iran-Contra testimony of Central American Task Force Chief, August 5, 1987, 100-11, pp. 182-183).

The nation got glimpses into the Kerry hearings, as Oliver North stood before the committee in full uniform, medals and all, as he raised his right hand swearing to "tell the truth". As the weeks went by, the committee heard testimony that again and again denied any wrongdoing, any involvement by the military or U.S. intelligence in any traffic of narcotics. The military and the CIA denied everything.

At the height of the Iran-Contra investigations at least three Congressional committees sought to identify the extent and complicity by agencies of the U.S. government that had been involved. The House Judiciary subcommittee on crime, chaired by Rep. William Hughes (D-NJ), subpoenaed three assistant U.S. attorneys from Miami to testify about how Miami U.S. Attorney Leon Kellner may have sanitized his contra arms and drugs investigation, eliminating any evidence of a White House connection. By the time the Iran-Contra investigations were completed many of the initial suspicions had been corroborated.

The Kerry Committee's report concluded;

*"As the Committee proceeded with its investigation, significant information began surfacing concerning the operations of international narcotics traffickers, particularly relating to the Colombian-based cocaine cartels. As a result, the decision was*

made to incorporate the Contra-related allegations into a broader investigation concerning the relationship between foreign policy, narcotics trafficking and law enforcement.

*While the contra/drug question was not the primary focus of the investigation, the Subcommittee uncovered considerable evidence relating to the Contra network which substantiated many of the initial allegations laid out before the Committee in the Spring of 1986. On the basis of this evidence, it is clear that individuals who provided support for the Contras were involved in drug trafficking, the supply network of the Contras was used by drug trafficking organizations, and elements of the Contras themselves knowingly received financial and material assistance from drug traffickers. In each case, one or another agency of the U.S. government had information regarding the involvement either while it was occurring, or immediately thereafter."*

## America's Drug War— an Hypocritical Undertaking!

By mid August 1996, a decade after the Iran-Contra affair had been investigated, televised, and largely 'put to rest', the San Jose Mercury News ran a series of articles authored by investigative journalist Gary Webb. In his first article he stated;

*"FOR THE BETTER PART of a decade, a San Francisco Bay Area drug ring sold tons of cocaine to... street gangs of Los Angeles and funneled millions in drug profits to a Latin American guerrilla army run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, a Mercury News investigation has found. This drug network opened the first pipeline between Colombia's cocaine cartels and the black neighborhoods of Los Angeles, a city now known as the "crack" capital of the world. The cocaine that flooded in helped spark a crack explosion in urban America ... and provided the cash and connections needed for L.A.'s gangs to buy automatic weapons. It is one of the most bizarre alliances in modern history: the union of a U.S.-backed army attempting to overthrow a revolutionary socialist government and the Uzi-toting "gangstas" of Compton and South-Central Los Angeles."*

Webb went on to detail CIA involvement, and the FBI's role as one covering up any tracks left behind. He named names and quoted sources; *"The Justice Department flipped out to prevent us from getting access to people, records — finding*

*anything out about it," recalled Jack Blum, former chief counsel to the Senate subcommittee that investigated allegations of Contra cocaine trafficking into San Francisco. "It was one of the most frustrating exercises that I can ever recall." (SJMN 8/18/96).*

Webb traced heroin flow into San Francisco, and characterized it as a 'protected' racket. Juan Meneses Cantarero, was at this time San Francisco's main drug kingpin, supplying the streets with heroin, and cocaine and yet he was 'untouchable' thanks to the FBI.

Webb's series detailed how the crack epidemic was 'born' in the U.S.— starting in the San Francisco bay area. It detailed the main players, such as Carlos Cabezas, head of the Bank of America's foreign division in Nicaragua, and Oscar Blandon Reyes, a CIA operative, as the men behind the scenes running the drugs into Southern California.

During this time an investigation headed by Sandra Smith of the DEA was halted, and she was transferred. *"When she quit in 1984, Smith asked her fellow DEA agents if they wanted the intelligence files she'd collected on Meneses in case 'anyone might be interested in picking up where I left off,' she recalled. 'No one was. So I had a lot of notes that I had made that, just for lack of doing anything else (with them), I just shredded. No one was interested.'" (SJMN 8/19/96).*

Webb's reporting didn't end there, he went on to identify another source, in pseudonym, Davis Morrison, a GOP activist and California fundraiser who went to the DEA and FBI, with a tale of cocaine trafficking and gun running involving Adolfo Calero, head of the FDN— the Contras. His statements made to the FBI were classified until Gary Webb was able to obtain the information. *"Much of what Morrison told the agents about the inner workings of the FDN and its ties to the U.S. government was corroborated by the Congressional committees that investigated the Iran-Contra scandal. But his information about the FDN's drug operation seemed to fall on deaf ears, he said." (SJMN 8/20/96).*

*"Morrison told FBI agents that "Norwin Meneses would have been arrested in a major drug case in 1983 or 1984 except that he had been warned by a corrupt (information deleted) officer." "Morrison said he never heard back from the FBI and didn't know why. He also complained to Iran-Contra Special Prosecutor Lawrence Walsh's office and was told that Walsh*

had no jurisdiction to look into allegations of Contra cocaine trafficking. 'I thought this bastard (Meneses) should have been arrested. I assumed there would be an outstanding warrant on this guy. There was nothing,' Morrison said. 'They had no interest whatsoever.' Stunned and disheartened, he left California and went into virtual seclusion in New England, where he lives today, writing about economic trends. 'I had worked on national campaigns. I had grown up in a family that knew politicians. And I thought I was part of the establishment,' Morrison said with a sad laugh. 'And all of a sudden I was a leper.' (SJMN 8/20/96).

Several investigations into U.S. government knowledge of, and possible involvement with, the Nicaraguan drug ring have run their course. Both the CIA and the Justice Department have denied government involvement. After Gary Webb's articles hit the stands, no other newspapers or TV media reported these facts. Later the San Jose Mercury News would publicly retract the articles and Gary Webb resigned his position as investigative journalist for the Mercury News. One year later he posted his work on the web and had this to say: "The only "shortcoming" in our Dark Alliance series is that it didn't go far enough...We have evidence that at least one top CIA official in Washington was aware of the drug ring's activities in El Salvador. We also know that these traffickers were more deeply involved with the U.S. intelligence community than we reported last year..."

By October 1998, the CIA declassified parts of its own internal investigation into the Iran-Contra affair and provided tangible proof that the agency had been well aware of the agency's sponsorship of drug traffic activity, even when it had publicly denied such knowledge to Congress during Congressional hearings in the 1980's. Additional proof was made available in June 2000 by CIA and Justice Department files which were de-classified (HITZ REPORT) as reported by Peter Dale Scott of the San Francisco Chronicle. The report sheds light and goes much deeper in detailing the Gary Webb reportage. **The report solidifies the fact that U.S. government agencies have in fact provided protection "...to major Drug Enforcement Agency targets considered to be among the top smugglers of cocaine into this country. Perhaps the most egregious example is that of the Honduran trafficker Juan Ramon Matta Ballesteros. Matta had been identified by the DEA in 1985 as the most important member of a consortium moving a major share (perhaps a**

third, perhaps more than half) of all the cocaine from Colombia to the United States. The DEA also knew that Matta was behind the kidnapping of a DEA agent in Mexico, Enrique Camarena, who was subsequently tortured and murdered." (S.F. Chronicle 6/19/2000).

The Gary Webb disclosures were also independently confirmed by a former DEA agent Celerino Castillo III. Castillo documented drug trafficking out of Ilo Pango, El Salvador, a U.S. air base. He said he logged the amounts of cocaine, the identification numbers of the airplanes, informant numbers, and even the names of the pilots who were involved in the shipments. Castillo said he sent those reports to the DEA headquarters in Washington but no action was taken.

## BUSH INVOLVEMENT

Public record documents also establish that General Manuel Noriega of Panama, was on the CIA payroll in the early to mid 1970's, as well as the 1980's. An important point mostly ignored in the mainstream press, however, is the Congressional testimony by George Bush's own NSC advisor, Donald Gregg, that George Bush (then Pres. Gerald Ford's CIA Director) met with Noriega and other Panamanian officials sometime in 1976. This meeting with Noriega took place well after Noriega had been implicated by the intelligence community as a drug trafficker in the DEA's, June 1975, DeFeo report.

It is interesting to note that when George H. W. Bush was the Drug Czar and thus responsible for knowing about Noriega's activities yet he did nothing. Further still, during his tenure as Vice President under Pres. Ronald Reagan, he continued to support Noriega. In NSC (National Security Council) memos discovered during the Iran-Contra investigation, it has been revealed that George H.W. Bush's NSC advisor Donald Gregg was aware early on of Contra involvement in the drug trade.

Noriega's ultimate downfall during the first Bush presidency, had little to do with drugs, and more so with his escalating open defiance to George H.W. Bush's many demands. Noriega had this to say; "Why, after being the man the United States could count on, did I become the enemy? Because I said no. No to

allowing the United States to run a school for dictators any longer in Panamanian territory. No to the request that Panama be used as a staging base for the Salvadoran death squads and the Nicaraguan Contras. Lots of No's... Three times they tried to force me into an agreement in which I could get every personal assurance, money, protection and safe passage... The underlings always made sure to tell me they were asking for my help 'in the name of President Reagan' or 'in the name of President Bush'..." (The Memoirs of Manuel Noriega)

Drug trafficking was never an issue, until Noriega's defiance forced the excuse for his downfall— as a drug trafficker.

And the pattern continues: During the first two years of the elder Bush's presidency, William Bennett, Bush's first Drug Czar, was criticized by members of Congress for his apparent indifference to Federal judicial and legal loopholes which permitted U.S. companies to export unusual volumes of cocaine processing chemicals to Latin American countries harboring cocaine production laboratories. Mr. Bennett had been an outspoken proponent of escalating the war on drugs, and yet on this important front of anti-drug policy, Mr. Bennett was apparently negligent. (See Rolling Stone, "Between the Lines", October - November 1990).

## THE AFGHANISTAN CONNECTION

Is it possible that U.S. motivation for the invasion of Afghanistan may include additional reasons, than simply the search for Osama Bin Laden? Are they still searching?

According to the Afghanistan Poppy Survey conducted by the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) in 2002, Afghanistan was classified as the **largest source of illicit opium and heroin in the world**. UNODCCP stated that the overall turnover from the opiate trade in Afghanistan was around US \$25 billion annually. In 2002, it said the area under poppy cultivation had ranged between 69,000 hectares and 79,000 hectares. (IRIN news.org 8/5/03).

Journalist Andrew Stelzer (NarcoNews Network), interviewed Dr. Zaher Wahab who was born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan. Dr. Wahab has spent the last 30 years as a professor at Lewis & Clark University in Portland, Oregon, USA. He is a

three-time Fulbright scholar. Dr. Wahab made the following observations; "In the last year of the Taliban, they had actually eliminated drug cultivation almost to zero, but right now, the country is back as the number one producer of heroin in the world, and its all over, especially in the Southeast part of the country... So there are a couple of drug related issues, one is, and this is the minister of finance speaking in a conference in Brussels, saying unless something is done very quickly and effectively, Afghanistan could become a narco state, something like Columbia. So that's one issue, that potentially it could destabilize the country. I heard rumors actually, that planes were landing and taking off in the middle of the night, carrying drugs. For example, they go north to Russia, and then Europe, and then to all parts of the world."

Could it be, that the Bush administration does not know? Maybe it just does not care about the War on Drugs anymore? One could say that the U.S. alliance with Afghanistan war lords and gangsters, who go on 'search' missions during the day for that famous phantom known as Bin Laden, have good reason to continue to be armed and supplied by U.S. forces because at night they run the traffic in narcotics, mirroring events of Central America when the Contras were active in the 1980's. While American soldiers risk their lives and some die, narcotics trafficking goes on, under the noses of the U.S. military and Intelligence networks, who protect and by silent collusion, thereby aid criminal organizations in the trafficking of narcotics.

**Thus it is hard to escape the conclusion that the poison that kills the youth of the world is being made possible by American tax dollars—hard at work around the world!**

### *The CITIZEN*

will continue this series with part 3, in our next issue. In it we will examine the **MEXICAN CONNECTION**. And the world of Banking that launders the money of drug traffickers. We will look at events which have involved large American Banks in sordid transactions.

## The DEA, 30 years young

Formed by an executive order signed by President Richard Nixon in July 1973, the DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency) turned 30 earlier this year. The DEA's initial mission was supposed to establish a unified command for federal efforts that would, at long last, win the war on drugs. Its budget has skyrocketed, from less than \$75 million in fiscal 1973 to an estimated \$1.9 billion in the current fiscal year. Not surprisingly, this 2,500 percent funding increase helped kick-start a massive upsurge in arrests. According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, the annual number of arrests for drug crimes skyrocketed from 328,670 in 1973 to 1,586,902 in 2001. That 2001 figure includes 723,627 arrests for marijuana offenses – more than double the number arrested for all drug crimes combined in 1973. This skyrocketing arrest rate, coupled with lengthy prison terms required by mandatory minimum sentencing laws, has led to an incarceration rate that strains state budgets and shocks most of the world. Most of those incarcerated are minorities. **One thing it has not done, though, is reduce the availability of illegal drugs.**

### POETRY READING

On December 6<sup>th</sup> at the NEWARK PUBLIC LIBRARY, on Washington Street, Thomas C. Murray will be a guest lecturer at the Centennial Room where he will read excerpts from his new poetry book "*The Spirit of '69.*" T.C. Murray, as he prefers to be called, was for many years a high school history teacher, before retiring, who graced the halls of Mater Dei H.S. in Middletown, and previously Essex Catholic H.S. when it was located in Newark. T.C. Murray has also written a play which was produced by *Seraph Productions*, his own company. T.C., a gay rights activist, is also on the Board of Directors of THE CITIZEN, and has contributed an article for our next issue, entitled 'Freedom Rings'. We wish T.C. much deserved success! Below are two of his poems from the book.

#### DREAM HOME

Clear the land and sell them plots!  
Build those dream homes on their lots!  
Cut on costs and skimp on goods!  
Save a nickel! Save a dime!  
No more pay for overtime!

Fell the trees and gut the land!

Clear the green, let nothing stand!  
Build your homes in record time!  
Do not tarry! Act Today!  
Buy your dream home right away!

#### MALL MICE

Mall mice hurry  
to a super sale.

Mall mice scurry  
to their favorite retail stores.

Mall mice curry  
through the goody-counters.

Mall mice leave in a flurry  
with a rain check in their hands. Eek!

#### Our Sources... Read More

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

The Citizen for Social Responsibility was created as an educational tool which seeks to examine critical issues in our society which are not being addressed, by motivating public debate and discussion. It is solely an enterprise which does not seek profit as its reason to exist.

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