

Robert Pittman, the man who created and headed Music Television (MTV Networks); and individuals who created Rupert Murdoch's Fox television network.

Not surprising, among AOL's list of joint-venture business partners is the Venezuela-based Cisneros Group, which owns 50% of all AOL's Ibero-American operations. Cisneros, known as the "porn king" of Venezuela, had his connections to international drug-money-laundering circles exposed in *EIR's* book *Dope, Inc.*, the Spanish version of which he arranged to have banned in Venezuela.

AOL, which has announced plans to merge with Time-Warner, to become the world's largest multimedia giant, made a profit of a little under \$400 million in 1999. This compares to its astounding bubble-driven market capitalization of \$150 billion—far more than the Gross National Product of Colombia and many other Ibero-American countries combined.

The hyperinflated value of AOL stock enabled Kimsey to retire in 1994 and to continue to increase the value of his \$150 billion portfolio, while pursuing his other "interests." He runs two foundations, the Kimsey Foundation, as well as AOL's own foundation. He participates in the work of another foundation, the Jamestown Foundation, in which he was part of a team which was sent in 1996 to "observe" the Russian elections; and was planning to do the same this year.

In those activities and in his recent visit to FARC-land, Kimsey has attempted to distance himself from AOL. However, sources report that AOL executives were fully aware of the visit, and supported it. It is widely known that the FARC have used the Internet to post communiqués and send e-mails to journalist "stringers," and have used computers to track the finances of their drug-trafficking and to develop intelligence about potential kidnap victims. It is thought that Kimsey may have touched on such matters with FARC drug lord Manuel "Sureshot" Marulanda.

Kimsey and Robert are both actively organizing for a FARC tour, to address Congress and prominent business forums. In a defensive commentary in the March 20 *Washington Times*, the two argue that giving such prominence to the narco-terrorists might speed their conversion away from drug operations. The FARC leaders "maintained they could and would cooperate in ending drug trafficking, and swore they were willing to make these promises directly to the U.S. Congress and to the American people," the two write. FARC financial expert Raúl Reyes "not only denied he had 'declared war' on us, but does not consider himself our enemy, and he lamented the recent killings of three Americans, branding it a 'mistake,' of the same sort as our bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade." One businessman who knows Kimsey, upon hearing this and seeing a picture of "Sureshot" sporting an AOL cap given him by Kimsey, suggested that maybe the company should change its name to "America Mainline."

## Why Kosovo has become the 'Colombia of Europe'

by Umberto Pascali

Ibero-America is not the only region in which the Project Democracy crowd and the U.S. State Department have gone out of their way to boost narco-terrorist gangs into state power. The role of these agencies in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo, has been as shameless as their behavior in Colombia and Peru.

"Kosovo today is the Colombia of Europe!" Thus did Marko Nikovic, the vice president of the International Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association, describe the situation in the Balkan province of Kosovo, which has been a crucial element in the drugs-for-weapons "Balkan connection" since at least the early 1980s. The Kosovo mafia was a vital link in the organized crime chain that connects Turkey to Central Europe and, through Albania and the Adriatic Sea, to Italy, whence new traffic routes spread out in several directions. Later on, Kosovo became a transit point for opium and heroin produced in the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, after the Taliban "freedom fighters," with NATO support, especially from London and Washington, took over the country. However, it was only after June 1999—when NATO took over Kosovo following 78 days of relentless air bombings against Kosovo, Serbia, and Montenegro—that Kosovo became a safe haven for the drug mafia. In less than one year under a "NATO protectorate," Kosovo has become the supplier of 80% of the heroin consumed in western Europe, with routes now also reaching into North America.

The basic reasons for this cancerous growth of the drug traffic in Kosovo, is to be found in the connection between the drug mafia and the organization sponsored, trained, cultivated, and established in power in the province by NATO, and by intelligence organizations based both in London and Washington. We are talking about the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose head, Hashim Thaci, was imposed as the representative of Kosovo at the 1999 Rambouillet "peace" talks by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, NATO Commander Gen. Wesley Clark, and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook (see *EIR*, March 31).

In anointing Thaci as head of the Kosovo Albanians, Albright ensured that the KLA's ferocious war waged against Ibrahim Rugova, the elected head of the Kosovo's Albanians, would be a success. That war led to the intimidat-

tion, and often the assassination, of every significant leader loyal to Rugova.

### **The Albright-Thaci connection**

Unfazed by the growing rumors surrounding her flirtation with Thaci, Albright publicly characterized Thaci as “the Gerry Adams of the Balkans” (referring to the bona fide peacemaker of Northern Ireland’s Sinn Fein), and even imposed upon her good friend Clark (who immediately obliged) to fly to Paris to meet Thaci in a hastily organized tête-à-tête, in a Rambouillet café outside Paris.

“The KLA is indebted to Balkan drug organizations that helped funnel both cash and arms to the guerrillas before and after the conflict,” wrote a Stratfor global Intelligence news report on March 3. “Kosovo is the heart of a heroin-trafficking route that runs from Afghanistan through Turkey and the Balkans and into western Europe. It now appears that the KLA must pay back the organized crime elements. This would in turn create a surge in heroin trafficking in the coming months, just as it did following the NATO occupation of Bosnia in the mid-1990s.”

Reports by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) concerning the “Kosovo connection” were already being covered early last year by national newspapers and magazines. Still, in June, NATO took over Kosovo, and what was a dangerous situation rapidly went out of control. “Backing the KLA is simply insane,” decorated former undercover DEA agent Michael Levine stated in May 1999. “My contacts within the DEA are quite frankly terrified, but there is not much they can say without risking their jobs. These guys [KLA] have a network that is active on the streets of this country. It is a scary operation. In fact, the mafia relied on Albanian hit-men to carry out a lot of their contracts. They are the worst elements of society you can imagine, and now, according to my sources in drug enforcement, they are politically protected.”

### **‘Exactly what we did with Afghanistan’**

How is that possible? How is it that NATO, the alliance created to defend the West, is not only unable to stop these organized crime groups, but also that under NATO, those groups seem very often to thrive?

Levine gave his answer: “It’s the same old story. Ten years ago we were arming and equipping the worst elements of the mujahideen in Afghanistan—drug traffickers, arms smugglers, anti-American terrorists. We later paid the price, when the World Trade Center was bombed, and we learned that some of those responsible had been trained by us. Now we are doing the same thing with the KLA, which is tied in with every known Middle and Far Eastern cartel. Interpol, Europol, and nearly every European intelligence and counter-narcotics agency has files on drug syndicates that lead to the KLA.”

The DEA official could have easily added the example of other “freedom fighters,” groups such as the protégés of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), the Contras of Nicaragua, and their role in the cocaine traffic flooding the United States.

According to Stratfor: “Two to six tons of heroin, worth 12 times its weight in gold, moved through Turkey towards eastern Europe each month. The route connecting the Taliban-run opium fields of Afghanistan to western Europe’s heroin market is worth an estimated \$400 billion a year—and is dominated by the Kosovar Albanians. This ‘Balkan route’ supplies 80% of Europe’s heroin.”

Most of these drugs are paid for with weapons, and this gives just a faint idea of the kind of firepower that is available in the Balkans at this point—under the protection of NATO!

Nikovic told the London *Guardian* on March 13: “It’s the hardest narcotics ring to crack, because it is all run by families. . . . Kosovo is going to become the cancer center in Europe. After NATO took over Kosovo, there was no police control over drug traffic at all. [Heroin] is coming through easier and cheaper—and there is much more of it. The price is going down, and if it goes on, we are predicting a heroin boom in western Europe.”

The *Guardian* also reports that since NATO installed itself in the province, Kosovo heroin dealers, most of them coming from four main families, are concentrating on western Europe and in the United States.

### **The Balkan route**

During the beginning of March, anti-drug officials from northern and eastern Europe met in Sweden to discuss an issue that is considered scary and out of control: the Balkan route. The chief of the Czech anti-narcotics agency, Jiri Komorous, stated: “There are four paths of drug trafficking through the Balkans to western Europe, and we have to improve our attempts to control the Kosovo Albanians.”

Even the British *Jane’s Intelligence Review* had pointed to this disaster in preparation for a report, “The Balkan Medellín,” published on Feb. 1, 1995. “If left unchecked, this growing Albanian narco-terrorism could lead to a Colombian syndrome in the southern Balkans, or the emergence of a situation in which the Albanian mafia becomes powerful enough to control one or more states in the region,” it said.

In the early 1980s, the Balkan route was known as the “Bulgarian connection.” It became the target of an international “David and Goliath” investigation by the Trento, Italy Magistrate Carlo Palermo. Palermo had fought bravely for years, until in the media the “Bulgarian connection” was associated not only with the network behind the attempt against Pope John Paul II in 1981, but also with Henry Kissinger and his cronies. For unclear reasons, Palermo was forced out of his jurisdiction and sent to one of the most dangerous places in Italy, in Sicily, apparently with drastically reduced security.