

Russia Condemns Drug Legalizers' Report as PR Job for Lethal Drugs

by Ramtanu Maitra

June 26—The Global Commission on Drug Policy, based in Rio de Janeiro and funded by the drug legalization lobby's strongest voice, George Soros, issued a report on June 2 saying the war on drugs is a failure, costing governments oodles of money to no effect.

The "global war on drugs has failed," the report states, "with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world. . . . Political leaders and public figures should have the courage to articulate publicly what many of them acknowledge privately: that the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that repressive strategies will not solve the drug problem, and that the war on drugs has not, and cannot, be won." The report concludes that governments should legalize marijuana and other controlled substances. (It is not altogether surprising, that in attesting the failure of the war on drugs, the Soros-supported Commission makes no mention of the role of the banks in the drug trade.)

Reacting to this dangerous proposal, Viktor Ivanov, the director of Russia's Federal Narcotics Control Service (FSKN), said on June 2, "We should realize that this is nothing else but a global PR campaign to popularize drugs. Directly or indirectly, this campaign is linked with the colossal revenues estimated at about \$800 billion." Ivanov is co-chairman of the Russian-U.S. presidential anti-

drug commission, along with Gil Kerlikowske, the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Ivanov was supported by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, whose spokesman said that drug addiction is a disease that can be treated successfully, and that the war against drugs has met with success, contrary to what the Commission claims, and that drug use in the U.S. is half of what it was 30 years ago. The spokesman also pointed out that the production capacity for pure cocaine in Colombia fell by almost two-

thirds, from 2001 to 2009, and that making drugs more easily available will just put more people and communities in danger.

The Commission's members include former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou, and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, among other luminaries. They all have close links to Soros or his associates. For instance, under Kofi Annan, Soros's partner, Britain's Lord Mark Malloch-Brown, ran the UN Oil for Food program in the 1990s, and defended both it and Annan, when accusations of fraud emerged. While Malloch-Brown countered critics that "not a penny was lost from the organization," an audit of UN peacekeeping procurement concluded that at least \$310 million, from a budget



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"George Soros and his imperialist friends—narcos and legalizers." *The LaRouche Youth Movement in Buenos Aires distributed this pamphlet at a pro-drug-legalization conference there.*

of \$1.6 billion, could not be accounted for.

Annan himself is associated with a leading opposition Kyrgyz politician, Azimbek Beknazarov, who had reportedly offered to grow opium in the Tien Shan Mountains. He is linked to Kyrgyz mafia boss Kamchi Kolbayev, known locally as Kolya Kirgiz. Kolbayev is on the U.S. Presidential list of drug lords who are not allowed to carry on business in the United States. Kyrgyzstan rivals Kazakhstan in drug production; hashish is produced in many districts of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the traffic of Afghan opiates through Kyrgyzstan's territory is estimated at \$20 billion annually.

Despite the "eminence" of the panel members, the pawprints and money trail of drug-legalizer Soros can be found throughout the report. For instance, at least three writers associated with this report, Bernardo Sorj, Dr. Alex Wodak, and Martin Jelsma, are beneficiaries of the Open Society Institute and Lindesmith Center, both funded by Soros. The report acknowledges the Open Society Foundation for its support.

Salivating over the years at the prospect of gaining official control of some parts of the at least \$1 trillion drug market, Soros has long been in the forefront of promoting legalization of lethal drugs. For instance, concerning Afghan opium/heroin, the Soros-funded International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), formerly known as the Senlis Council, having enlisted a number of drug-loving bureaucrats, held seminars on the "impossibility" of eradication of Afghan opium. The prime objective of the Council, and its benefactor Soros, is to legalize opium production in Afghanistan, ostensibly for medicinal purposes.

Devastation of Russia

The Commission report was issued at a time when Russia has been staggered by the influx of Afghan heroin, whose production has jumped 40-fold during



DoD/Cpl. Lindsay L. Sayres, USMC

U.S. Marines patrol along an opium poppy field in Afghanistan. No serious effort has been made to smash the drug production and traffic there, and Russia is bearing the brunt of the problem, with thousands of new addicts every day.

the almost ten-year stay of the U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan. According to Ivanov's FSKN, Russia currently has 2.5 million heroin addicts, and 3 million other illegal drug users. Russia is the world's second leading region for heroin consumption, according to a recent UN study. Russian addicts consume 21% of the world's supply, while Europe is number one at 26%. The number of heroin-related deaths in Russia is about 100,000 per year.

Russia, along with Iran, has been ravaged by the explosion of Afghan opium/heroin. The United States has largely abandoned eradicating the poppy crop in favor of a narrower strategy focusing on cutting off funding to the Taliban, and cracking down on traffickers. Ivanov says that isn't enough to counter the flow of heroin into Russia.

The heroin-led devastation in Russia has now begun to affect its military. According to the military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* last year, Russia's Main Military Prosecutor Sergey Fridinskiy, participating in an FSKN meeting, said: "Growth in the number of narcotics crimes among servicemen is notable in the course of the last five years. In 2009, the number of serious and very serious crimes connected with narcotics almost doubled." Fridinskiy said that drug-related crime increased fourfold. In the first nine months of this year, 345 crimes

involving narcotics trafficking were registered in the Armed Forces, he reported.

Ivanov, during his October 2010 visit to the United States, said in an interview with *Foreign Policy* magazine, published on Oct. 22, that he was appalled by California's legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes. "I hadn't known about it before," he said, "and I was absolutely shocked when I was in the city and saw these posters saying that you can get marijuana for medical purposes. . . . I'm afraid that the consequences of [legalization] will be catastrophic. Even the Netherlands, where they sell marijuana legally in coffee shops, they are now reversing on this. Because there, and everywhere, drug addiction is becoming stronger and the people who are addicted develop psychiatric deviations. They say, 'What does God do when he wants to punish a person? He deprives him of his mind.'"

Partners in Crime

What Russia must realize is that drug-generated money is one of very few sources of cash that exists in the present bankrupt global financial system, where trillions of dollars worth of unpayable debts fill the banks' balance sheets. UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) chief Antonio Mario Costa told the London *Guardian* of Dec. 13, 2009, that he has seen evidence that the proceeds of organized crime were "the only liquid investment capital" available to some banks on the brink of collapse in 2008. He said that a majority of the \$352 billion in drugs profits was absorbed into the economic system as a result.

In other words, most of the drug-generated cash extracted from millions of drug addicts around the world makes its way to the City of London-Wall Street-based banks, protected by the Bush and Obama administrations because those were "too big to fail."

The Afghan drug money gets converted to cash in Dubai. The tax-free island-city, sitting at a strategic crossroads of the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and Africa, is a major offshore banking center. With the development of the Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), the latest free-trade zone there, flexible and unrestricted offshore banking has become big business. Many of the world's largest banks have a significant presence in Dubai, including Abbey National Offshore, HSBC Offshore, ABN Amro, ANZ Grindlays, Banque Paribas, Banque de Caire, Barclays, Dresdner, and Merrill Lynch.

Besides those in Dubai, there are many other big money-laundering banks. Most of these are "offshore" banks that are located in former British colonies, and all are involved in money laundering: Legitimizing cash generated from drug sales and other contraband for the "respectable banks" is the lifeblood of these offshore institutions. Arguably the most important of the Caribbean offshore financial centers is the Cayman Islands, a British Overseas Territory run by a royal governor appointed by Queen Elizabeth II. The Caymans are mainly a mail drop and regulation-free zone, a place where hot money is welcome, and few questions are asked.

The British oligarchy, besides having almost a lock on the offshore banks that bring in most of the drug-generated cash keeping the City of London-Wall Street duo and Buckingham Palace alive, also works through some others who have the keys to almost all the doors in Washington.

Take, for instance, George Soros and Lord Malloch-Brown, mentioned above. Malloch-Brown is a dyed-in-the-wool representative of the British nobility, who prospers through thievery.

While Soros promotes drug legalization internationally, the Afghan drug lords do their part—with the help of the Afghan militia, illegal cash, and gunpowder. At the same time, the Soros-funded International Council on Security and Development, which has offices in Paris, Brussels, Rio, and Kabul, has set up offices at the center of Afghan drug production, Helmand Province and Kandahar, seat of Afghan Taliban power. ICOS's advocacy has been objected to by U.S. authorities. Legalizing dope cultivation could undermine the use of moral persuasion to deter growing, said Bobby Charles, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Law Enforcement. "Anything that went about legalizing an opiate in that market would send exactly the wrong message. It would suggest that there is something legitimate to growing."

But the British are not going to give up their opium easily. Paul Fishstein, an analyst with the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, an independent think tank in Kabul which walks in lockstep with the ICOS, says that outside political pressure on Afghanistan to eradicate the crop makes this idea a "non-starter." At best, he says, it is a "long-term prospect," which requires the difficult work of strengthening Afghan institutions first.