

Eriksson: The conclusion of this is, of course, that organizations like Interpol, have a say. I know I am speaking as president of Interpol, because being a global worldwide organization we have some advantages over the regional organizations, just due to the fact that we cover the globe. There are many moves nowadays between the continents, and I think this is something Interpol should take advantage of.

Interview: Richard D. Schwein

Puerto Rico has emerged, unfortunately, as one of the leading strongholds for drug running. In March of this year, 27 out of 29 members of the Puerto Rican Senate submitted to drug tests. The governor, Pedro Rossello, had asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate allegations that four legislators are linked to the drug business itself. One of the senators, suspended as vice president of the Senate, was accused of "transferring millions of dollars to banks in Switzerland, the Cayman Islands, and Panama."

One of the key fighters on the anti-drug front there is Special Agent in Charge, FBI San Juan, Richard D. Schwein. Known as the "director" in Puerto Rico, Special Agent Schwein handled "Operation Golden Trash," the indictment of a large-scale cocaine-trafficking and money-laundering ring based in Colombia. Schwein has been with the FBI for 38 years, and has been stationed for the past 13 months in Puerto Rico. He is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, and has been married for 35 years. He has two children, one of whom is also an FBI agent, and two grandchildren.

Recently, *El Nuevo Día*, a Puerto Rican daily, drew attention to the problem when it quoted Schwein saying that "Puerto Rico is the main drug-laundering center in the world . . . megamillion of dollars' problem." SAC Schwein clarified his comments to this reporter.

EIR: What exactly did you say, and what did you mean?

Schwein: I said that Puerto Rico is among the leading places for money laundering, which it certainly is—it's big, big business here. Whether it's number one or number ten, I don't know, nor does anyone else. I meant, and sometimes the translation isn't very good, it is a *major* money-laundering center.

EIR: Can you give us an instance?

Schwein: For example, we indicted a case about six months ago which involves somewhere around 80 people who laundered somewhere between \$40 and \$80 million. We ran an operation against them and were very successful.

But the reason Puerto Rico is [so ideal], is its location, off the coast of South America; we have an American banking system, and once you're in country, there's no customs prob-

lem. Flights between here and the mainland are [considered] domestic flights. So all of that makes it very attractive for money laundering.

EIR: In the same paper, it was asserted that the governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rusello, stated that Puerto Rico is more fertile ground for drug traffic than Florida. Again, this wasn't in quotes, so I'm not clear exactly what was said.

Schwein: I would not want to comment on what the governor said or on what he meant, but yes, Puerto Rico is very fertile ground.

EIR: Many say that the United States needs to do more in this area. Now, I have interviewed people in the Office of National Drug Control Policy, including Director Dr. Lee Brown, and I know they have been setting up these High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs), including one in Puerto Rico. So it seems to me as though the United States, especially now, is making substantial efforts in this area.

Schwein: Great efforts, yes, very great efforts. Our staff has, as has the DEA; and we have HIDTA, which is just being implemented now. It's a target-rich environment, however. We have a lot of targets to work on.

EIR: Yes, I saw what is happening with the Senate—the level of alleged corruption. Can you explain for our readers what jurisdiction the United States has over that?

Schwein: Federal jurisdiction applies to the citizens of Puerto Rico, like it does to the citizens of Ohio. Everybody here is a U.S. citizen by birth.

EIR: So these Senate members or anyone else—

Schwein: If there is political corruption, we work on it and the U.S. Attorneys indict it and prosecute it, and it would be handled here just like it would be anywhere else. Under the corruption laws, under our white collar crime program.

EIR: And where would that take place?

Schwein: We have U.S. District Court here; this is America. Puerto Rico is a commonwealth, of course, semi-self-governing in that it has a governor and a legislature, like Ohio or Alabama. But all federal laws apply here. And everyone here gets treated just like everyone else who is a U.S. citizen, as far as the federal law goes. We have seven federal judges, a United States Attorney, a United States Marshal, FBI, and DEA. There's just no difference, other than geographical. . . .

EIR: It seems that money laundering in particular is more and more in the limelight.

Schwein: Oh yeah! It's the money, who's got the money. Money laundering has to be an integral part of any drug investigation. That's where the real profits are. Without the money, where would they be? You have to go after that.