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A New Wave of Terrorism

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The United States is about to experience terrorism from the south that will land in Florida with a brutality exceeding the devastation associated with the attacks on the World Trade Center. The carnage may not have the drama and trauma of the attack of the World Trade Center but in the final analysis there will be no doubts about the totality of destruction.

The stage for this wave of Terrorism was set by the War on Drugs. The new terrorists will come from the existing drug cartels that have destabilized and threatened nascent democracies in Latin America. Like the mafia who developed their power base with the manufacture, distribution and sale of illegal alcohol, the cartels of Latin America have matured and developed their power base with the production, distribution and sale of illegal drugs.

The winners in the wars on drugs are the drug cartels that have plagued the producing countries and are now threatening the well being of the USA. It is the gross profits accumulated through the production, distribution and sale of illegal drugs that have enabled them to create organizations and amass the war chests for the next move.

Interpol noted that the chief source of terrorist funding is the drug trade: the UN reports illegal drugs are over a \$400 billion annual business, which is 8 percent of the world's trade and about the same as the Pentagon's budget. The War on Drugs is providing a massive revenue stream to terrorists.

The terror visited by the drug cartels on their native countries is nothing more than a prelude to what we can expect in the not too distant future. Using Columbia as an example and taking into consideration the havoc reached by one cartel alone we find it was responsible for the death of 60,000 people within five years, including 1,000 policemen, 60 judges, 70 journalists, 1,500 leftists union and political leaders, an attorney general, two cabinet ministers, four presidential candidates, a governor, and several police chiefs.

The USA is just starting to feel the leading edge in this new war on terrorism. The gangs we thought were limited to Los Angeles have already started reaching out into the hinterlands of the US.

Gang experts have reported emerging trends that could make Florida "the next Los Angeles" in years to come. Jacksonville police and other law enforcement agencies are observing gang influence growing in Northeast Florida and across the state

Their initial strikes are in controlling the distribution and sale of drugs. However, there is a far more alarming target that will augment the movement of drugs and introduce a new revenue source.

These are the 12 million illegal workers that travel the byways of our nation undetected and unrestrained. The Inter-American Development Bank stated that remittances from these illegal workers in the United States to Latin America will total more than \$45 billion this year.

This is a vulnerable work force ripe for exploitation by organized terrorists from their own countries. There is no doubt any resistance offered by this work force will be met by the same violence and terror that is endemic to their native countries. Any violence directed against this group will most likely go unreported because of their illegal status.

Once the work force is organized the drug cartels, like the mafia, will move with the same violence and terror tactics into the world of businesses that depends on these workers.

The difference is that while the mafia lost the income from alcohol with the end of prohibition; these cartels will retain their income from illegal drugs. The organized and mobile force of 12 million undocumented workers will provide cover for the movement of illegal drugs, weapons and men necessary to terrorist organizations.

In the early 1970s, I had occasion to be in Columbia as a Special Forces officer. In a conversation with a Columbian intelligence officer, I asked him why the army had not gone after the illegal drugs. He told me they could do it and wipe them out in short order but it would include arresting many politicians and corrupt members of the judicial community. He also said there was a limited window of opportunity before the power of the drug lords would exceed the capabilities of the army to defeat. It was a political decision to maintain the political status quo.

Does this have a familiar ring? So what is the political status quo that not only laid the ground work for the new wave of terrorism but will continue to support it?

Does all of this sound esoteric and far fetched? One of the best and most objective commentaries comes from those in the cells of the Florida Department of Corrections. There are over 4,000 illegal aliens in state prisons and over 80 percent of them are in prison for crimes related to drugs and violence. Over 60 percent of those illegal aliens are in for crimes of violence and 20 percent are in for drug crimes. The combination of drug crimes and crimes of violence among general population admitted to the system last year is about 60 percent with 30 percent for each category.