

# America's "War on Drugs": CIA- Recruited Mercenaries and Drug-Traffickers

By [Michael Levine](#)

Global Research, January 13, 2011

[wanttoknow.info](http://wanttoknow.info) 13 January 2011

Region: [USA](#)  
Theme: [Intelligence](#)

When Nixon first declared war on drugs in 1971, there were fewer than 500,000 hard-core addicts in the nation, most of whom were addicted to heroin. Three decades later, despite the expenditure of \$1 trillion in tax dollars, the number of hard-core addicts is shortly expected to exceed five million. Our nation has become the supermarket of the drug world, with a wider variety and bigger supply of drugs at cheaper prices than ever before. The problem now not only affects every town on the map, but it is difficult to find a family anywhere that is not somehow affected. (pp. 158, 159)

The Chang Mai factory the CIA prevented me from destroying was the source of massive amounts of heroin being smuggled into the US in the bodies and body bags of GIs killed in Vietnam. (p. 165)

My unit, the Hard Narcotics Smuggling Squad, was charged with investigating all heroin and cocaine smuggling through the Port of New York. My unit became involved in investigating every major smuggling operation known to law enforcement. We could not avoid witnessing the CIA protecting major drug dealers. Not a single important source in Southeast Asia was ever indicted by US law enforcement. This was no accident. Case after case was killed by CIA and State Department intervention and there wasn't a damned thing we could do about it. CIA-owned airlines like Air America were being used to ferry drugs throughout Southeast Asia, allegedly to support our "allies." CIA banking operations were used to launder drug money. (pp. 165, 166)

In 1972, I was assigned to assist in a major international drug case involving top Panamanian government officials who were using diplomatic passports to smuggle large quantities of heroin and other drugs into the US. The name Manuel Noriega surfaced prominently in the investigation. Surfacing right behind Noriega was the CIA to protect him from US law enforcement. As head of the CIA, Bush authorized a salary for Manuel Noriega as a CIA asset, while the dictator was listed in as many as 40 DEA computer files as a drug dealer. (pp. 166, 167)

The CIA and the Department of State were protecting more and more politically powerful drug traffickers around the world: the Mujihadeen in Afghanistan, the Bolivian cocaine cartels, the top levels of Mexican government, Nicaraguan Contras, Colombian drug dealers and politicians, and others. Media's duties, as I experienced firsthand, were twofold: first, to keep quiet about the gush of drugs that was allowed to flow unimpeded into the US; second, to divert the public's attention by shilling them into believing the drug war was legitimate by falsely presenting the few trickles we were permitted to indict as though they were major "victories," when in fact we were doing nothing more than getting rid of the inefficient

competitors of CIA assets. (pp. 166, 167)

On July 17, 1980, drug traffickers actually took control of a nation. Bolivia at the time [was] the source of virtually 100% of the cocaine entering the US. CIA-recruited mercenaries and drug traffickers unseated Bolivia's democratically elected president, a leftist whom the US government didn't want in power. Immediately after the coup, cocaine production increased massively, until it soon outstripped supply. This was the true beginning of the crack "plague." (pp. 167, 168)

The CIA along with the State and Justice Departments had to combine forces to protect their drug-dealing assets by destroying a DEA investigation. How do I know? I was the inside source. I sat down at my desk in the American embassy and wrote the kind of letter that I never myself imagined ever writing. I detailed three pages typewritten on official US embassy stationery—enough evidence of my charges to feed a wolf pack of investigative journalists. I also expressed my willingness to be a quotable source. I addressed it directly to Strasser and Rohter, care of *Newsweek*. Two sleepless weeks later, I was still sitting in my embassy office staring at the phone. Three weeks later, it rang. It was DEA's internal security. They were calling me to notify me that I was under investigation. I had been falsely accused of everything from black-marketing to having sex with a married female DEA agent. The investigation would wreak havoc with my life for the next four years. (pp. 168-171)

In one glaring case, an associate of mine was sent into Honduras to open a DEA office in Tegucigalpa. Within months he had documented as much as 50 tons of cocaine being smuggled into the US by Honduran military people who were supporting the Contras. This was enough cocaine to fill a third of US demand. What was the DEA response? They closed the office. (p. 175)

Sometime in 1990, US Customs intercepted a ton of cocaine being smuggled through Miami International Airport. A Customs and DEA investigation quickly revealed that the smugglers were the Venezuelan National Guard headed by General Guillen, a CIA "asset" who claimed that he had been operating under CIA orders and protection. The CIA soon admitted that this was true. If the CIA is good at anything, it is the complete control of American mass media. So secure are they in their ability to manipulate the mass media that they even brag about it in their own in-house memos. The *New York Times* had the story almost immediately in 1990 and did not print it until 1993. It finally became news that was "fit to print" when the *Times* learned that *60 Minutes* also had the story and was actually going to run it. The highlight of the *60 Minutes* piece is when the administrator of the DEA, Federal Judge Robert Bonner, tells Mike Wallace, "There is no other way to put it, Mike, [what the CIA did] is *drug smuggling*. It's *illegal* [author's emphasis]." (pp. 188, 189)

The fact is - and you can read it yourself in the federal court records - that seven months *before* the attempt to blow up the World Trade Center in 1993, the FBI had a paid informant, Emad Salem, who had infiltrated the bombers and had told the FBI of their plans to blow up the twin towers. Without notifying the NYPD or anyone else, an FBI supervisor "fired" Salem, who was making \$500 a week for his work. After the bomb went off, the FBI hired Salem back and paid him \$1.5 million to help them track down the bombers. But that's not all the FBI missed. When they finally did catch the actual bomber, Ramzi Yousef (a man trained with CIA funds during the Russia-Afghanistan war), the FBI found information on his personal computer about plans to use hijacked American jetliners as fuel-laden missiles. The FBI ignored this information, too. (p. 191)

[Michael Levine](#) is a 25-year veteran of the DEA turned best-selling author and journalist. His articles and interviews on the drug war have been published in numerous national newspapers and magazines, including the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, USA Today, and Esquire.

Learn about Mr. Levine's books and radio show at <http://www.expertwitnessradio.org>.

The original source of this article is [wanttoknow.info](http://wanttoknow.info)

Copyright © [Michael Levine](#), [wanttoknow.info](http://wanttoknow.info), 2011

---

[\*\*Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page\*\*](#)

[\*\*Become a Member of Global Research\*\*](#)

Articles by: [Michael Levine](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)