



## RUSSIAN MILITARY OLIGARCH ACCUSES THE CIA AND MI-6 OF FLOODING RUSSIA WITH DRUGS

Translator's Note. The name Vladimir Ilyich Filin ("Ilyich", "Vova Filin") does not say anything to Western public even though it might have been long known to intelligence services and drug enforcement agencies around the world. Filin was not a public figure even in Russia until last year when he debuted as political scientist and expert on "revolutionary and guerilla movements in the developing world" at the [Moscow Institute for Globalization Studies](#). His public appearance was preceded by a number of publications in Russian press alleging that Filin was the leader of an "organized criminal society" involved in drug trafficking and run by a group of former Soviet army intelligence officers from the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff since the early 1990s. **1** Allegedly, the activities of this society include trafficking large quantities of Afghan heroin to Europe, using Russian military bases and transport, as well as shipments of Colombian cocaine to Russia where the society is said to control almost 80 percent of the wholesale cocaine market. According to several documents published, some of these activities were until recently protected by a secret decree, issued by Yeltsin and the corresponding orders of Russian Defense Ministry, which allowed Russian military to transit drugs through the territory of Russian Federation. According to one report, this decree was rescinded only recently. Whatever is the truth of these allegations, according to public statements by Filin and his partners, Filin is the president of the "international consulting agency" Far West Ltd, headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. Officially, the agency offers help to "investors in countries with unstable regimes" and has unidentified partners in the United States. According to some reports, these partners include private military companies KBR Halliburton and Diligence LLC. The agency has offices in Colombia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Kosovo, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine. Filin's articles regularly appear in [Zavtra](#) and [Pravda-info](#).

Russian original: Alexander Nagorny **2**, "[Narkobarony iz CIA i MI-6](#)" *Pravda-info* 2004.09.13 and [Zavtra \(38/565\)](#) 2004.09.14

*There have been reports in mass media about the involvement of the U.S. military in Afghanistan in drug trafficking. I asked the well-known political scientist and specialist on organized crime Vladimir Filin to comment on this.*

*-Vladimir Ilyich, is it true that Americans are involved in drug business?*

-Yes, they are in ideal situation for this. They control the Bagram airfield from where the Air Force transport planes fly to a U.S. military base in Germany. In the last two years this base became the largest transit hub for moving Afghan heroin to other US bases and installations in Europe. Much of it goes to Kosovo in the former Yugoslavia. From there the Kosovo Albanian mafia moves heroin back to Germany and other EU countries. **3**

*-Why such a complex arrangement?*

Drug traffickers enjoy relative safety on military bases. There is no serious control there. German police cannot work there. However, outside of military bases German law-enforcement is in effect. True, any police can be bought. But the level of corruption in Germany is not as high as, say, in Russia. This is why it is more convenient for Americans to establish distribution centers in other places. I believe that, in time, such centers will move to their military installations in Poznan, Poland, and also in Romania and Bulgaria. Poland is already a EU member. Romania and Bulgaria are expected to be in 2007. Corruption in these countries is almost as high as in Russia.

*-How big is American drug traffic to Europe and who is behind it?*

-About 15-20 tons of heroin a year. When Poznan became open, I think it could rise to 50, even 70 tons. Behind this business are the CIA and the DIA (Defense Intelligence Agency). Actually, this is what they did already in Indochina in the 1960s-70s and in Central America in the 1980s.

- *What are the goals of these U.S. secret services?*

- In the first place, it's personal enrichment. Second, special services make huge amounts of money out of drug trafficking. They can spend this money at their own discretion, without the knowledge of the Congress and even the U.S. president. Finally, with this money secret services can solve certain political problems. For example, they can enter into mutually profitable agreements with Afghan warlords, who give "protection" to drug business in their fiefdoms. This also gives secret services powerful influence on Kosovo Albanian diaspora in Europe, which is more than one million strong. It is a kind of "fifth column" of the United States in "the old Europe."

- *And what are the consequences for Russia?*

-The new American route for drug trafficking creates an alternative to the old ones, which included transit through Russia. The new route is no longer controlled from inside Russia, but by other forces. So the smaller drug traffic through Russia is, the weaker is the drug mafia, which has contacts with external forces.

- *Does it mean that before this drug traffic was controlled by us?*

-Well, how should I put it? In 1994 the Talibs came from Pakistan to Afghanistan and took control of the southern part of the country. In 1996 they entered Kabul and two years later came to Kunduz. Ahmad Shah Masud was left just with Panjshir and a small territory on the border with Tajikistan. In Tajikistan itself, after the civil war power went to the Kuliab clan. They totally depended on Russia, on our 201st Division. Masud also depended on Russia. We sent him advisors and shipments. His aviation was based in Kuliab. In other words, Masud and Tajiks completely depended on Russia's support. Our influence was dominant. True, already back then the British entered into the picture, represented by Aga Khan IV Foundation. But that had only local significance. As to "special merchandise," mainly it always went--and for now continues to go--to Europe via Iran and Turkey. No more than 15 percent ever passed through Tajikistan.

-*And exactly who did this?*

-Tendencies, not names are important. Before 2000, Russia was not a significant user of heroin. Its population was too poor and heroin was expensive. Besides, there was no tradition of using heroin. So the main part of "special merchandise"--25-30 tons a year--went to Kosovo Albanians in Europe. You see, it's not that simple to traffic drugs from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, from there to Russia and from Russia to Europe, former Yugoslavia. It took a serious organization with much power and good protection.

-*You mean special services and the army?*

- Why necessarily the army? Aga Khan IV Foundation always did this as well. And then not the entire army was involved in this.

- *What did change after 2000?*

Oil prices went up. Russia was getting easy money and a large internal market was created. It's easier to get "special merchandise" from Tajikistan to Russia than to move it from Russia to Europe. Monopoly and centralization does not help here. On the contrary, more effective is decentralization, a cell structure based on the multitude of predominantly small and middle-size ethnic societies, Tajik, for example. Besides the Tajik, this business attracted the government circles of Turkmenistan. The country is well located for this: the Caspian Sea, Astrakhan, and Azerbaijan. Afghan heroin comes to Azerbaijan from Iran as well. It used to come from Turkey too before last spring when they closed Batum. I believe it won't stay closed for long. In the end, all this heroin reaches Russia. Our Azeri diaspora is two million strong, the Tajik one million. There are also Gypsies, the worst of them all. In short, there exists a ready retail

network for drugs. Nor do they have problems with laundering drug money in Russia. The Moscow construction business alone can take care of this! Approximately in 2002 British MI-6 and DIS (British military intelligence) took control of this drug business. They control it indirectly, of course, but very effectively.

*- And how did this happen?*

- In the end of 2001 the British came to the Kanduz province. It's their zone in Afghanistan. Within the multinational forces they are responsible for drugs control in the entire Afghanistan, not just in their zone in the north. To be more precise, officially they are supposed to fight poppy cultivation. Not the Americans, but the British are responsible for that. They began by flooding with drugs their own country. The use of heroin in Britain went up 1,5 times within one year. And four fifth of all heroin was trafficked through Tajikistan. After that they decided that it was enough for Britain and turned to the Russian market.

*-How?*

- They recruited big narcobarons, who were prominent statesmen of Tajikistan and had influence with the Tajik diaspora in Russia. This gave them an established retail network, ties with corrupt elements in police, FSB, and the customs. Besides, they had old ties with some Russians in Tajikistan, in the military and the border service, who are having financial problems after our troops withdrew from Bosnia and Kosovo. Not that they became poor, but before they did not have to count their money and now they do. In other words, these people cannot resist when their old partners in the Tajik elite approach them with "business" proposals. This is a typical commercial recruiting through intermediaries, a traditional British method.

*-It turns out that the British control drug business in Russia?*

-Yes, indirectly they control about 70 percent of both whole and retail sales of heroin. They do this through Tajik and Russian citizens, recruited on a commercial basis.

*-What is to be done? How can we fight this?*

-This situation cannot be changed radically by controlling the shipments of acetic anhydride to Asian countries. Nor the recent arrest of Gafur "Gray-haired" will solve all problems. [One of the closest associates of Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov and the former head of the Presidential Guard, General Gafur Mirzoev was arrested in August 2004. At the time of his arrest Mirzoyev was the head of Tajik Drug Control Agency [http://www.nobf.ru/engl/news/news\\_archive\\_04.html](http://www.nobf.ru/engl/news/news_archive_04.html)].

There must be real struggle against corruption of customs officials and in the law-enforcement agencies. But with the present Russian administration these are pure dreams. However, I believe it is possible to scale down air and rail cargo transportation from Tajikistan, which will be also in the interests of our law-enforcement services. This would make harder large wholesale deliveries. Also something must be done with migration, both legal and not. This would be a blow to the network of drug dealers. In general, we need to cut down the traffic of Afghan heroin to our country by any means possible.

*- But where there is demand for drugs there will be supply.*

- Anyway, one has to fight this. We need to study the experience of other countries. There is one point of view--though I strongly disagree with it--that if heroin traffic is stopped, at least temporarily, it will be replaced by cocaine. That happened in the United States in the 1970s-80s after they had left Indochina. Cocaine is, of course, a poison, but heroin is much worse.

*-Why?*

In the first place, heroin is more harmful to health. Secondly, cocaine is more expensive and therefore less accessible. Thirdly, there is no Colombian diaspora in Russia, and in Colombia there are not enough representatives of those organizations that "control" Russian seaports. Colombia is not a Petersburg. It's a dangerous country for FSB agents, there is a war going on,

you can be kidnapped or killed. In short, the [Colombian] connection is fragmented and less vulnerable to the US and British influence. Finally, we have only few seaports that ships from Latin America can call. In contrast, our borders with Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus are immense. So it is easy to monitor and control [cocaine traffic].

*-But you said you did not agree with this viewpoint?*

- Of course, I do not. It would be great to shield ourselves from all drugs. I just don't know how this can be done.

Translated by Ralph Moody

## *Примечания*

**1** In English, see Pakistan Times at <http://pakistantimes.net/2004/01/31/scoop.htm>

**2** Alexander Nagorny is deputy of Alexander Prokhanov, chief editor of the weekly "Zavtra", which has the reputation of a nationalist and anti-Semitic publication, but since 2002 formed an anti-Putin alliance with Boris Berezovsky and Yukos oil company. Presently it supports Mikhail Khodorkovsky's electoral bid for a seat in the Duma.

**3** It is instructive to compare Filin's description of the U.S. trafficking scheme with his recent statement on the new contract that his company Far West Ltd. signed on September 1, 2005 in Istanbul. "-This is a commercial contract. It's transparent for the controlling agencies of the countries involved. Our cargo is absolutely legal. Our competitors would like very much to find drugs in it. They have been searching for three years and failed to find anything because there were drugs in it. The new contract renews the similar old one that was signed in 2002. It has to do with the transportation of commercial cargo from Afghanistan--where our company has representation—to the Black Sea ports. There is a well-known US Air Force base in Bagram, Afghanistan. It is connected by air with a number of U.S. Air Force bases in Germany. One of them is the biggest base in Frankfurt am Mein., where they fly to with a stopover in Chkalovsk, near Moscow. But the route from Bagram to the American air force base in Magas in Kyrgyzstan is the most attractive from a commercial point of view. By the way it is located not far from the Russian base in Kant. Through Magas passes a significant cargo traffick and there is a niche for commercial cargo as well. This is very profitable. More profitable than to transport commercial shipments from Afghanistan to Tajikistan. This is why last year we stopped shipments through Tajikistan and closed our local representation. -Who are your business partners?-The identity of our business partners is our commercial secret. I can only say that these are four private companies from three countries: Turkey, Russia, and the United States, which are in the cargo business among other things. One of these firms is a subdivision of a well-known American corporation. This firm is one of the co-founders of our agency."

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