

nations. The literally genocidal conditions of debt repayment demanded by the IMF have driven the Caribbean and Central American nations to resort to "quick cash crop production" in order to generate urgently needed foreign exchange. More often than not, the most lucrative "cash crop" turns out to be marijuana or some other narcotic.

Last week this news service learned that Guyana has capitulated to IMF arm-twisting. Following months of IMF-imposed import cutbacks and other murderous austerity conditions, the government has acquiesced to growing marijuana in the country's northwest, in a pathetic attempt to alleviate Guyana's balance of payments crisis. Jamaica has also been subjected to almost unbearable IMF pressure to legalize local consumption of marijuana, and in that way turn the island into a tourist haven for pot-headed American and European youth.

The Nicaragua connection

Part of the story behind the Vietnam-style civil war erupting in Nicaragua is this Anglo-centered drug-running operation.

Since Carter's inauguration almost two years ago, Zbigniew Brzezinski has masterminded a strategy to destabilize the entire Caribbean region with a series of "human rights" campaigns, and then move in reliably manipulable regimes under the direction of the London-directed Socialist International. The goal is to isolate Cuba's influence in the area, and that of the Mexican republic's aggressive industrial development policies, and in that way ensure that the IMF and associated policies have unchallenged hegemony.

The model is the Dominican Republic, which earlier this year elected Socialist International confrere Antonio Guzman President after Brzezinski, with help from social democrat Mario Soares of Portugal, had destabilized the unreliable Balaguer regime.

In Nicaragua, the 40-year-old Somoza dynasty has outlived its usefulness to the Brzezinski-British forces — not because the current dictator is opposed to the IMF or to drug-running (he isn't), but because he is so widely despised by the population that sooner or later he would be overthrown in any case. The current virtual civil war in Nicaragua demonstrates that fact.

Rather than being caught unprepared, the British prefer to have a voice in replacing Somoza, and have therefore chosen to back factions within the Sandinista guerrillas and the business-linked Broad Opposition Front. One top level Brzezinski policy planner bragged hopefully to NSIPS this week that the Nicaraguan situation is "totally under control — just like Angola was with our friend Holden Roberto, until the damned Cubans stepped in to mess up the works." He went on to express confidence that this time the Cubans would keep hands off.

The economic side of this "social democratic" approach to installing drug economies in the Caribbean is the World Bank. The World Bank recently established the so-called Caribbean Consortium, a fund which encourages economies being subjected to IMF strangulation to engage in Maoist "local agricultural production" to generate foreign exchange. To entice them, the Consortium has pooled a pathetic \$120 million from the U.S., Canada, Venezuela, and Britain, to be doled out with an eyedropper to the IMF's desperate victims.

2. How the pushers sell drug economics

World Bank officer:
"They couldn't find a better product"

A statement by John Holdson, the senior official for Latin America in the World Bank's International Trade and Monetary Flows department, Sept. 8:

"I haven't looked at Colombia's drug industry, although I've just returned from Bolivia, and I know that the coca industry there is highly advantageous to producers. In fact, from their point of view, they simply couldn't find a better product. Its advantages are that no elaborate technology is required, no hybrid seeds, the land and climate are perfect..."

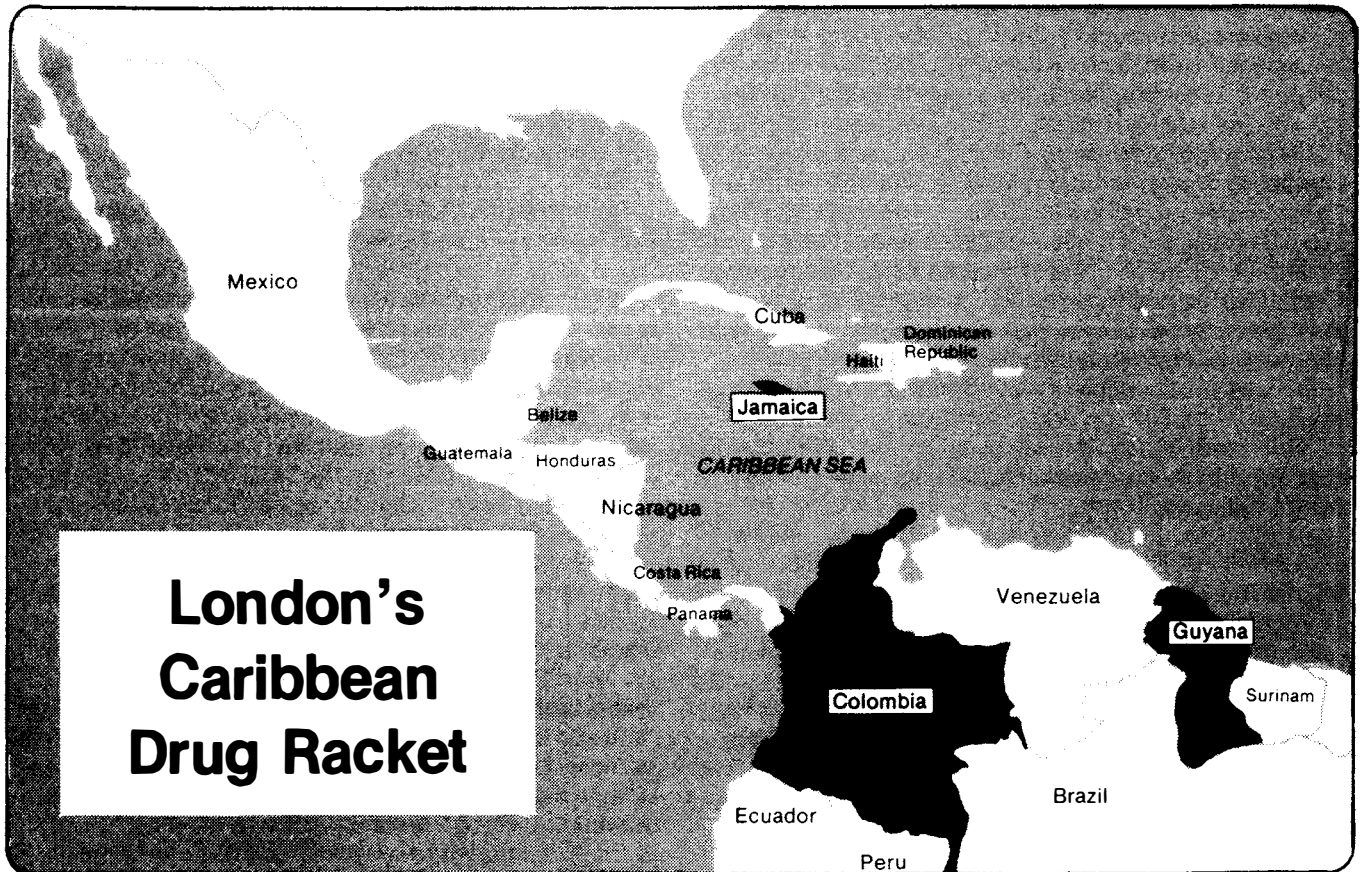
IMF official: "Economically, marijuana is just another crop"

From an interview last week with a Colombia specialist at the International Monetary Fund:

Q: There have been statements coming from prestigious layers inside Colombia, such as the head of the Banco de Bogota, which urge the creation of some form of mechanism which could channel the flow of illegal monies coming off of drug trafficking through the Central Bank of Colombia or "to give these highly liquid assets a constructive outlet" as one American banker noted to me. What sort of mechanisms do you think might be considered?

A: Well, I think it highly improbable that the government of Colombia would consider legalization of marijuana given the intense pressure they are under from the United States. And besides, they already have 2.1 billion dollars in reserves and 7 million sacks of coffee just sitting there. I don't know what they would do with any more money coming in.

Q: It has been observed that the Colombian government faces two alternatives: to either legalize drug



London's Caribbean Drug Racket

cultivation and export, or ignore the parallel economy. It appears that an all-out eradication program is a third alternative.

A: Well, an eradication program would mean militarization of those areas where they grow the stuff, and besides, the country would face the problem of having to provide an alternate crop for the population to grow there. That would take several years at best.

Q: And yet to simply ignore the parallel economy means to let it grow to the point at which it would just swallow up and destroy the national economy.

A: But there I must absolutely disagree with you, with the last thing you said. It would not destroy the national economy. From an economic viewpoint, the marijuana is just a crop, like any other. It brings in foreign exchange, and provides income for the peasants.

Q: But it doesn't represent productive investment in the economy...

A: Well, what kind of productive investment is the armaments industry? Drugs may destroy the health of the people who use them but weapons can destroy the whole world.

Q: But the armaments industry is a thoroughly legal enterprise, and its funds are totally regulated...

A: Well, you know, legality is a relative concept. In a few years, marijuana may become legal anyway.

U.S. bankers: "Drugs are a stable source of income"

From a series of conversations last week with top international bankers in New York City:

"There's no question that the Colombian government is not going to risk the displeasure of the United States by legalizing the drugs, but that leaves the government with only two choices: either ignore the drugs trade, as they pretty much have been doing, or find some way of bringing it into the economy...they want to make the nouveau riche 'legal citizens' again, you know, giving their highly liquid assets some constructive outlet...You know Colombia's roads are a mess, they could start rebuilding them, building schools, clinics in the countryside...Lopez had the coffee reserves and didn't use this and caught a lot of flak for it...Turbay appears to be a doer, not just a talker..."

"Coffee prices are simply too unstable, always

fluctuating on the world market you know...Drugs, on the other hand, provide a stable source of income at all times. With coffee prices like they are, Colombia will never get its development going, can't make plans like the oil producers can..."

"Colombia is not about to legalize drugs, given the pressure from the U.S., but doubtless some Colombians are looking at all the money and thinking how it can be used in the economy...There's no precedent for these kinds of 'mechanisms' that you're talking about, but I happen to know that the World Bank has been pressuring some Latin American countries — not Colombia as far as I know — to find some way of statistically accounting for their contra-band flows."

Colombia's 'left' press: "Marijuana for the workers"

From the "left" Colombian magazine Alternativa of July 1978:

Approximately five thousand families in Riohacha depend directly on the marijuana business, and although there is no quantitative data of the direct and indirect number of jobs generated by this activity, undoubtedly it has brought in a great deal of personnel to the industry...What is true is that the high salaries paid by the (marijuana — ed.) industry have bettered the buying power of the workers tied to it which has had favorable repercussions on other salaried layers: the capitalists of the traditional agricultural sector, the cotton, banana, and rice growers have been forced to better the salaries of their workers, pressured by the movement of the labor force towards the marijuana sector.

The marijuana bonanza on the other hand has generated regressive migration from the city to the countryside. Before the surge in its (marijuana — ed.) cultivation there was a constant flow of peasants to the city, displaced by the large latifundistas (large land owners—ed.) who needed adequate land for extensive cattle production...

The effects of the marijuana bonanza is not only reflected in the economy. To the extent that this activity generates certain stability and economic power, it's reflected in turn in politics, as occurred with coffee in the past. In this context, one could think that our economic crisis would be more acute if there was no marijuana bonanza and thus the existing

political structure could not have sustained itself given that the (drug — ed.) traffic generates employment in the countryside and in the city, which produces interesting effects on our economy which permits the maintenance of the state of things, and provides a certain mechanism of adjustment.

From an article in El Spectador, one of Colombia's two leading dailies, by Rojas Morales:

...There is a great deal of money that was thrown out of the normal money flow by the last tax reform or which comes from the many businesses which are prohibited by law but which exist in reality. This money does not reach the banking system, nor are they accounted for as invested savings, they are dedicated to unproductive speculation....

Land and safety deposit boxes have become the most generalized form of freezing large amounts of capital whose social function should be that of creating employment and the generation of additional fiscal resources...

Another important intervention is the need to turn around the existing tendency of "expensive money and cheap salaries" through the reduction of the existing high interest rates in order to allow (this money—ed.) to be channeled by businessmen into real salary increases. The increase in available capital obtained through the legalization of the "illegal" economy will permit, without traumas to the bankers, the drastic reduction of the usual retribution that is now demanded by the owners of financial savings....

Apparently these proposals could have the flavor of imaginative audacity or of unpardonable cynicism, but (these proposals — ed.) are only the result of not closing one's eyes to the overwhelming reality...

The new rich can not continue spending their money on foreign trips, paying ransoms for kidnapping, or importing luxury cars, without generating any other employment than a few personal bodyguards. Their investments can not be circumscribed to speculating on land or the buying up of industries that are already functioning, but without any additional productive effect.

Giving the "illegal" economy a way to be channeled into the normal (money — ed.) flows will not benefit those that have constructed it...but on the other hand it will strengthen the shaky economy where those that fear to dirty their hands in wicked business work without stopping.