

## **EXPERIENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN WRESTLING WITH DRUGS**

Musaev Djamaliddin Kamalovich

Associate Professor of the Department of Special  
Legal Disciplines of the Customs Institute

### **ANNOTATION**

The article presents the history of drug business emergence in Mexico. The strategy of the American fight against drug trafficking is characterized. The conclusion is made on possible development of the situation in the future.

**Keywords:** the USA, Mexico, drug trafficking, the U.S.-Mexico border.

In the 1960s, new drugs became widespread in the United States - primarily LSD. The Vietnam War contributed to a sharp increase in the number of drug addicts in the country. Richard Nixon, who became president in 1969, became determined to fight the drug trade.

In September 1969, the US-Mexico border was almost completely closed for a month to stop the flow of marijuana from Mexico. However, the United States began to receive drugs from the Middle East, earned a system of supplying heroin from Turkey to France, and from there to the United States, known as the French Connection.

From 1978 to 1984, US cocaine consumption increased from 19–25 tons per year to 71–137 tons. A Gallup poll in 1977 showed that a quarter of the population had tried marijuana at least once and about ten percent had tried cocaine.

The main countries of origin of cocaine are Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. Colombia is the undisputed leader among them. The annual turnover of the Colombian Medellin drug cartel, Pablo Escobar, was estimated at 30 billion dollars. When Colombian law enforcement agencies began to fight him, Escobar launched a brutal terrorist war, which since 1984 has killed hundreds of people - both officials and policemen, and ordinary citizens.

Most of the coca leaves from which cocaine is made are grown in Peru and Bolivia. From there they are transported to Colombia, where they are processed in clandestine laboratories into cocaine hydrochloride - the final product. After that, cocaine is shipped to the US and Europe. In the US, Colombian cocaine is shipped through neighboring Brazil, Peru, Venezuela and Ecuador, and in increasing quantities through Mexico. Currently, about 60% of drug smuggling in the United States is controlled by the Mexican drug cartel Sinaloa.

Today, Mexico is the main drug supplier to the United States. As you know, the United States ranks first in the world in terms of drug consumption, respectively, neighboring Mexico at one point began to profit from this American weakness.

The drug business in the country began to flourish, and with it the first drug cartels began to appear. Only in the period from 2005 to 2010. seizures of marijuana increased by 49%, seizures of methamphetamine by 54%, heroin by 297%, and ecstasy by 839% on the southern border of the United States [1].

Continuous wars over markets and consumers between cartels led to internal unrest. As a result, in 2006, the Mexican government declares war on drug cartels, in order to reduce the crime rate in the country, as well as to reduce the number of drug trafficking in the United

States. However, drug cartels have not disappeared to this day, they have struck back, and until now the drug war in Mexico haunts neither the country itself nor its northern neighbor. To understand this situation, you need to analyze the origins of the drug problem. Mexican drug trafficking has a long history. Back in the 16th century, the Spaniards brought cannabis to the North American continent, which became very popular and widespread. In addition, in Mexico, growing opium poppy was as commonplace as growing crops.

Under the influence of anti-drug movements in the early XX century. The American Congress passed the 1909 Non-Medical Opium Prohibition Act. Nevertheless, there remained a huge number of people who were willing to pay exorbitant prices for intoxicating substances. Therefore, the Mexicans realized that by selling crops abroad illegally, they were getting huge profits, which could feed their families.

Despite the fact that Mexico (under US pressure) was forced to ban in the 1920s, the production of marijuana and opium, the drug business did not disappear: the production remained shady, and the income of the drug lords was rapidly increasing.

In addition, it was a distinctive fact that ordinary farmers who cultivated the product were under the auspices of high-ranking Mexican officials. In fact, no one condemned their actions. In addition, the federal center at any moment could get a compromise on any disobedient official.

In 1947, a special police was created, the main goal of which was the fight against drugs, but in fact its leadership was involved in the implementation of drug trafficking, because police officers could be easily bribed. Therefore, already from the middle of the XX century, the drug mafia and the state power went in step with each other. Meanwhile, the United States began to put pressure on its southern neighbor and impose anti-drug measures on Mexicans. But this did not bring tangible results, as business began to move from one state to another.

This is how the situation developed only until the 1960s. In the United States during this period, the hippie counterculture and pacifist movements took over the minds of young people, and the marijuana boom destroyed the anti-drug ideas of the American government. Mexico became a major drug dealer: 75-80% of heroin and 99% of marijuana were shipped across the US-Mexican border to the southern states.

The United States began to consume 3.5-5 tons of cannabis per week [2], and, as is known, demand creates supply, so the growth of new players on the drug market was obvious. Drug cartels began to wage a fierce struggle for new routes of drug delivery. In addition, already in the 70s and 80s, due to the economic crisis in Mexico itself, the number of drug users is increasing, which leads to their greater involvement in the production and trade of intoxicating drugs.

The 37th President of the United States, Richard Nixon, who came to power in 1969, was initially set to pursue a policy aimed at removing drugs from American markets: he planned to tighten sanctions for the sale and possession of drugs, severely criticized the ruling apparatus for being loyal to drugs, and also believed that one of the reasons for the defeat of American troops in the Vietnam War was the use of drugs by military personnel.

The Nixon administration began carrying out all-out searches at the border, thus slowing down legal trade and migration. However, this was not a reason to slow down drug traffic: dealers always had many routes of drug transit, be it the sky, the sea or the tunnels. Perhaps the only

joint method of struggle in the XX century. With drug trafficking between Mexico and the United States, there was an operation to clean up the plantations of the northern Mexican states, which also did not succeed, because the drug mafia reoriented to the transit of drugs from the south, which contributed to the rise in prices for them.

In the 1970s-1980s. The Mexican mafia switches from producing drugs to importing them and begins to contact Colombian drug cartels to further smuggle drugs into the United States. But after in the 90s. Colombian drug cartels were crushed, Mexicans won the primacy in the drug business on the American continents.

Another proponent of anti-drug policy was Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy, who launched a nationwide campaign, Just Say No. The main purpose of the program was to discourage children from trying drugs, while offering various ways to say no to prohibited substances. The campaign contributed to a greater awareness of the population.

Consumption of illegal drugs dropped significantly during the Reagan presidency. In addition, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics has repeatedly proposed to introduce the death penalty for drug dealers (today in the United States, drug lords can be sentenced to death, through whose fault the death of a person has occurred and whose guilt has been proven) [3].

In the 1990s. there has been a sharp rise in the cocaine trade in Mexico. One of the reasons, paradoxically, was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was concluded by Canada, the United States and Mexico in 1994. Many farmers, due to the appearance of cheap American goods on the Mexican market, were unable to sell their goods followed by the ruin and poverty of the majority of the population.

The poor peasants had no choice but to join the drug cartels, whose drug smuggling brought good income. After drug cartels began to grow and divide sales markets among themselves, and the illegal penetration of American weapons into Mexico contributed to the rapid militarization of cartels, a real drug war unfolded in Mexico.

The cartels began to wage war not only with each other, but also with civilians. They were kidnapped, killed, intimidated, and the cruelty of the Mexicans knew no bounds. In 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderon decided to end the unrest in the country and declared war on drug cartels. He tried to resist police corruption, which grew to unimaginable levels and was primarily due to the minimum wages of Mexican police officers. Calderón also added tens of thousands of troops to help local police in the Mexican states, and in most cases completely replaced the local police force.

As part of this program, the military carried out several high-profile arrests and murders of cartel leaders. For example, in October 2012, Heriberto Lazcano, the leader of one of the most powerful Mexican cartels, Los Zetas, was assassinated. In the framework of bilateral cooperation with the United States, the Mexicans managed to capture 25 of the 37 most wanted drug lords in Mexico [4].

However, as a result of such actions, it was not possible to achieve much success, since large cartels split into many small organizations that began to supply drugs across the US-Mexican border. In addition, as a result of the policies pursued by Calderon, the number of victims has only increased.

All this time, the United States saw the problem mainly in Mexico, and paid much less attention to its drug-using population. Therefore, the next program to support Mexico's domestic struggle

against drug cartels was a program for providing funds for the purchase of weapons and equipment, as well as for military training, which was called the "Initiative Merida" or "Plan Mexico".

In fact, it was supposed to help Mexico eradicate problems with illegal crime, as well as normalize the situation on the common border, both in terms of migration and drug trafficking. But unlike previous bilateral actions, "Merida" was based on the fact that the United States ranks first in the world in terms of the amount of drug consumption, therefore, the initiative to combat drug trafficking, according to the plan, had to be common.

President Barack Obama, who initiated the plan, noted that the United States will be held accountable for the drug war on an equal basis with Mexico. The US Congress allocated \$ 2.5 billion for the implementation of the plan. It called for the creation of an anti-corruption program, which should include the verification of police and justice officials, the creation of a secure, cross-border communication system between ten sister cities, the creation of drug courts in five Mexican states, the creation of interdepartmental task forces, including the training of municipal and state police personnel, the exchange of intelligence on drugs between governments, etc. [5].

However, Merida did not produce the desired results, although in 2010 Congress came up with a proposal to extend the project. Again, the same problem was traced: the American demand for drugs was not reduced and was not taken into account in a possible solution in full force.

Almost in parallel with the "Merida" in 2006, governments began to carry out the "Project Coronado", which lasted almost 4 years and ended in the famous operation to destroy the Mexican drug cartel La Familia. Its essence was approximately the same as that of the above operation. During the program, 1200 people were caught who were involved in one way or another in the drug business.

On the US side, more than 3,000 federal and municipal agents were involved in the final two-day operation against La Familia, during which 729 pounds of methamphetamine, 62 kilograms of cocaine and 967 pounds of marijuana were seized. [6]

In fact, in both operations, the United States largely helped financially and sent small detachments of agents to destroy drug cartels and arrest drug lords. But on their part, they also carried out a number of actions.

For example, in 2006, US President George W. Bush authorized the construction of a mechanical fence on the US-Mexican border in order to prevent the entry of illegal immigrants and drugs. In total, about 700 miles of the fence was built along the total length of the border, which later became known as the Great American Wall.

And on January 25, 2017, the newly elected 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump, signed a decree on the protection of the state border, according to which it was planned to continue the construction of the wall on the border with Mexico [7].

If the decree was implemented, then relations between the two states could significantly deteriorate, and such problems as migration and drug trafficking have not disappeared anywhere. In addition, on the southern border of the United States, the number of armed clashes between Mexicans and American customs services has increased, which entailed a high concentration of border guards and special agents not only at crossing points, but also along the entire length of the border.

For example, as a result of one incident in which bandits opened fire on American border agents who were trying to detain smuggled trucks, the United States authorities were forced to close the border between the two countries for a certain period of time.

However, despite all the actions taken, the drug war in Mexico continues to this day, and unilateral action even with the support of the United States is not enough for Mexico. Therefore, it seems rational to take action in the United States itself, since American drug use remains very high, demand remains high, and Americans continue to sell firearms to Mexicans.

Of course, as a solution, many propose the abolition of criminal liability for the use and possession of drugs, in particular marijuana - one of the most used drugs in the United States. But such a development of events is unlikely to help, since the loss of marijuana drug cartels on the markets, of course, will affect the cartel's finances, but not significantly: savvy dealers will find another way to profit.

In addition, you must take into account the difference in the laws of the US states. In some of them, taxes on certain restricted goods may vary, so they are also sold on the so-called gray market. A similar situation can happen with drugs. Another option for solving this problem is to decriminalize drug users and provide them with mandatory medical services. A controversial point of view, but in the report outlining these ideas, the Drug Policy Commission referred to the successful implementation of decriminalization programs in Portugal and Australia. [8] The liquidation and capture of drug lords and cartel leaders can also act as a solution, but this is already a passed stage and it has not shown the necessary results. Some leaders are replaced by others, and those arrested have proved that they are able to manage their drug organizations while in prison.

It is worth mentioning the example of the leader of the Sinaloa drug cartel, Joaquin Guzman, nicknamed Shorty, who was arrested many times, but he managed to escape from the most protected prisons in both the United States and Mexico. But on January 19, 2017, Shorty was still handed over to the American authorities and will receive a life sentence, which means that the world famous drug cartel will have to look for a new leader [9].

Strengthening border security, toughening migration policy, as well as mass arrests also did not affect the business of drug cartels. dealers not only began to carry out the transit of drugs by land routes, but also by air, water and underground. In addition, according to a report from the US Border Guard Service, one in four of five drug detainees turns out to be a US citizen. [10]

Dealers recruit ordinary American citizens, threaten them, offer huge amounts of money, etc. It remains to act against the main motivation of the drug business - money, to carry out actions aimed at financial restrictions, not to allow the profits to be spent, to freeze accounts, etc. But here again, corruption plays an important role, which can contribute to the transition of certain banks to the side of criminals: which can be found a lot of evidence.

Thus, we can conclude that, perhaps, only Latin American countries, including Mexico, can stop this drug boom and the drug war that accompanies it. As soon as Mexico legalizes cocaine, its wave will descend on the United States, which will not be able to stop it.

By moving drugs off the black market, the government could destroy the huge source of drug cartels' profits, which would greatly weaken their position. If this happens, then the entire regime of world control over drugs and drug trafficking will collapse.

Accordingly, the war over drugs will become meaningless. Of course, developed countries, together with the United States, which are the main consumers, will have to choose ways to solve the resulting problem, which can boil down to the same legalization and simultaneous development of the National Institute of Public Health in the field of drugs, as well as decriminalization of consumers, i.e. in the future, it may be more rational for America to pursue policies that minimize drug harm rather than trying to curb drug trafficking.

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