

## Organization Attributes Sheet – America Group (Serbia-Montenegro)

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<b>A. When the organization was formed + brief history</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The America Group appears to have been founded in Serbia sometime in the 1990s (or earlier) by Vojislav Voja Amerikanac Raicevic, a native of Danilovgrad.<sup>1</sup></li><li>• Raicevic disappeared in Belgrade in 1997 under “mysterious circumstances”; no trace of him or his body has been found.<sup>2</sup></li></ul>
<b>B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,</b>
a. In general
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean:</b> Drug Trafficking (cocaine)</li><li>• <b>Globally:</b> Drug Trafficking (cocaine from South America and the Caribbean; heroin from Afghanistan; marijuana through Albania),<sup>3</sup> Extortion, Car Theft and Smuggling, Kidnapping, Contract Killing, Loan-Sharking,<sup>4</sup> and money laundering<sup>5</sup></li></ul>
b. <i>Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Drug Trafficking</b> – large shipments of cocaine transported by sea and air from Colombia and South America to Europe and the Balkans<sup>6</sup></li></ul>
<b>C. Scope and Size</b>
a. Estimated size of network and membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unable to determine exact size from open source information; however, the number of illicit activities in which the America Group engages, as well as the number of countries in which it operates would suggest that size is considerable.</li></ul>
b. Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group’s operating area)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>As pertains to Central America and the Caribbean:</b> Colombia, Panama,<sup>7</sup> Argentina,<sup>8</sup> and Brazil specifically,<sup>9</sup> although there could be additional areas of operation within the region as “South America” is often mentioned in general terms</li><li>• <b>Globally:</b> Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece,<sup>10</sup> Sweden, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy,<sup>11</sup> and perhaps Belgium<sup>12</sup></li></ul>
<b>D. Leader Characteristics</b>
a. Who is/are the leader(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Mileta Miljanic</b> (aka Mile/Mike) and <b>Zoran Jaksic</b> might still be the current leaders (or among the leadership) of the America Group. They were the confirmed leaders until their arrest in 2004, but reportedly went back to the America Group and its business after their release.<sup>13</sup></li></ul>
b. Leadership timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vojislav Voja Amerikanac Raicevic, a native of Danilovgrad, reportedly the founder of the America Group, disappeared without a trace in 1997 in Belgrade.<sup>14</sup></li><li>• Miljanic and Jaksic appear to be the most authoritative successors to Raicevic.</li></ul>
c. Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Somewhat diffuse as there are two believed leaders of the group (see above).</li></ul>
<b>E. Organizational Structure</b>
a. Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information not found.</li></ul>
b. Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information not found.</li></ul>

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

c.	Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
<b>F. Resources</b>	
a.	Financial
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
b.	Human
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	Logistical
	i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
	ii. Key routes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No information known beyond the fact that cocaine is moved from Colombia and South America in general to Europe and the Balkans.</li> </ul>
d.	Transportation
	i. Land
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
	ii. Sea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sea vessels are used to transport cocaine from South America, although further details are unavailable in open source.<sup>15</sup></li> </ul>
	iii. Air
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aircraft is used to transport cocaine from South America, although further details are unavailable in open source.<sup>16</sup></li> </ul>
	iv. Intermodal container
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
<b>G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities</b>	
a.	Corruption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The America Group seems to have connections to at least Serbian and Montenegrin state and security apparatuses, using corruption in these structures for gain (see “Relationships” below).</li> </ul>
b.	Concealment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	Deception
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
d.	Circumvention (avoiding border entry points)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
<b>H. Prior / Existing Relationships</b>	
a.	Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Berane-Coastal Gang</b> – The America Group might have an “offshoot” or “subdivision” of sorts in the Berane-Coastal Gang. While there appears to be a great deal of interconnection between the two groups, the extent and details of the linkage are difficult to determine from open source information.<sup>17</sup></li> <li><b>Darko Saric group</b> – Saric is either a close partner to the America Group, or might well work for America and/or the unnamed “Montenegrin Mafia Boss” (see below; these ties remain ). One of Saric’s close associates, Joksovic, had set up a link between Darko Saric and the America Group. <b>Both Saric and the America Group are linked by Joksovic to cocaine deliveries destined for Belgium and The Netherlands.</b> According to Joksovic’s information, most of which appears to have been</li> </ul>

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corroborated by authorities, “Cocaine is a commodity that someone with money but without references cannot buy in large quantities from, say, the Colombians, and it was no other than **the bosses of "America," whose links with drug cartels in South America date back decades, who had offered guarantees for Saric.**” Saric has also been described as working for the America Group: “**Since 2006 Darko Saric's name come up as the name of a member of a mysterious clan called Amerika.**”<sup>18</sup> Indeed, “**Joksovic has confirmed that Saric had not been the "head" of the entire criminal organization and that the "America" gang he worked for was behind it and that he played an important role in legalizing money and cocaine transfers.**” The hypothesis that Darko Saric was not at the top of the command pyramid had already been voiced by numerous senior state officials and crime experts, but the question regarding the identity of the key player, whether a Montenegrin, a Serb or a foreign national, remains unanswered.”<sup>19</sup>

- **Sreten Jovic Group** – believed to be very close to the America Group – at least in 2007, they were believed to “control” Sweden, the Netherlands, Hungary, and Italy.<sup>20</sup>
- **Montenegrin “Mafia Boss” /Criminal Organization** – (name listed as unknown in many open source documents) both the **America group** and **Sreten Jovic** were key associates of (or workers for, it remains somewhat unclear) this individual/group for a lengthy period. With arrests of America group leaders for a time, and the recent incarceration of Jovic, **Darko Saric** appears to be the Montenegrin boss’s new partner.<sup>21</sup>
- **South American criminal connections** – In the course of investigations instituted as part of Operation Balkan Warrior, it was established that the top people on the ground in South America worked both for **Saric** and for the **America Group**, allegedly through **Nenad Novakovic**, for whose arrest an Interpol warrant has been issued.<sup>22</sup>

b. Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc.

- **Law Enforcement/Security Structures (Serbia and Montenegro)** – Rumor had it that the group was set up by the Serbian State Security Department of the day for the purpose of eliminating "the rogue element" of the then-dominant Vozdovac gang. In the late 1990s, the America Group was able to successfully “squeeze out” the Vozdovac gang. During this time, many criminals were liquidated; according to information available to the police and intelligence services, they were killed by the America Group. Many prominent members of the America Group then fled from Serbia and found refuge in Montenegro. It appears that some Serbian police elements requested their Montenegrin colleagues to find and arrest the American members, but the "Americans" suddenly went to ground. Reportedly, somebody in the Montenegrin police tipped them off and they subsequently fled the country for a time.<sup>23</sup>
- **Montenegrin State Security (DB)** - Prominent America Group member Ivan Delic is said to have ties to the Montenegrin State Security [DB].<sup>24</sup>

c. *Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.*

- *No indications in open source of past or present dealings with known terrorist groups.*

**I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any)**

- Ethnicities of the former Yugoslavia (particularly Serbia and Montenegro)

**J. Technical Sophistication**

- Information not found.

**K. Penchant for Innovation**

- Information not found.

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<b>L. Activities in United States</b>	
a.	Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
b.	<i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul>
c.	Linkages with US groups <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market/transaction links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Stable supplier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Franchise arrangement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> <li>HQ and Branch office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information not found.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>M. Evaluations</b>	
a.	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent and strength of <b>international connections</b> – to other criminal entities as well as to Serbian/Montenegrin state and security apparatuses.</li> </ul>
b.	Weaknesses and vulnerabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The names of several members are known to law enforcement authorities worldwide, and there appear to be Interpol warrants out on some of these members. This might hinder, the America Group, but would not completely neutralize the group, given its proven resilience and the extent and strength of its international connections.</li> </ul>
c.	Additional insights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>In 2006, the America Group made a type of “resurgence,” once again gaining a powerful foothold in Serbia and allegedly “regain[ing] supremacy in the Belgrade gangland.”</b><sup>25</sup> Policemen in the Security and Information Agency [BIA] department specializing in monitoring developments on the Serbian crime scene declared the "Americans" a priority, since many of the group's members have returned to the Belgrade criminal scene and taken the lead in lucrative businesses such as drug smuggling and distribution.<sup>26</sup> It is unknown in open source information what exactly caused the “downturn” in the America Group from approximately 2002-2006, but it might be partly because of the arrests of leaders Mileta Miljanic (aka Mile/Mike) and Zoran Jaksic in 2004.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Notes</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Known members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Slobo Solaja</b> of Banja Luka - whose smuggling contacts have been monitored by the United States' DEA since the Bosnia-Herzegovina war<sup>27</sup></li> <li><b>Velimir Krivokapic</b> from Kotor<sup>28</sup> - Based on security data received from their colleagues in Serbia, the Montenegrin police in date placed in custody Krivokapic, who was charged with belonging to the powerful criminal group "America" and (together with <b>Ivan Pavlovic aka Iker</b>) organizing the smuggling of 1.2 tons of cocaine from Argentina and Brazil to Europe.<sup>29</sup></li> <li><b>Nebojsa Joksovic</b> (aka <b>Joksa</b>)<sup>30</sup></li> <li><b>Ivan Delic</b> from Budva [Montenegro]<sup>31</sup> - A prominent place in the America Group is held by Delic, who is said to have ties to the Montenegrin State Security [DB] and who worked together with founder Voja Raicevic.<sup>32</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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- Veselin "Meda" Raicevic<sup>33</sup>
- Sasa Vujko<sup>34</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America," Belgrade *Blic* Online, February 15, 2010, OSC: EUP20100217047004.

<sup>2</sup> "Serbia: 'Sources' Say 'America Group' Regains 'Supremacy' in Belgrade Gangland," Belgrade *Politika*, November 15, 2006, OSC: EUP20061117047002.

<sup>3</sup> "Serbian, Montenegrin Drugs Syndicates Fighting at Home for Positions Abroad," Belgrade *Blic*, May 23, 2007, OSC: EUP20070524047003.

<sup>4</sup> "Serbia: 'Sources' Say 'America Group' Regains 'Supremacy' in Belgrade Gangland," OSC: EUP20061117047002.

<sup>5</sup> "Montenegro: Report Details Darko Saric Ties with Criminals, Tycoons, Politicians," *Podgorica Monitor*, January 29, 2010, OSC: EUP20100228023004.

<sup>6</sup> "'Source' Details Connections Among Serbian, Balkan, Colombian Cocaine Smugglers," Belgrade *Blic*, December 12, 2006, OSC: EUP20061213047008.; and "Serbian, Montenegrin Drugs Syndicates Fighting at Home for Positions Abroad," OSC: EUP20070524047003.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America," OSC: EUP20100217047004.

<sup>9</sup> "Drug Boss Saric's Associate Joksovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling," *Podgorica Revija*, February 16-23, 2011, OSC: EUP20110225023001.

<sup>10</sup> "'Source' Details Connections Among Serbian, Balkan, Colombian Cocaine Smugglers," OSC: EUP20061213047008.

<sup>11</sup> "Police 'Source' Says Two 'Drug Cartels' Operate in Serbia, Details Foreign Ties," Belgrade *Blic*, May 24, 2007, OSC: EUP20070525047007.

<sup>12</sup> "Drug Boss Saric's Associate Joksovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling," OSC: EUP20110225023001.

<sup>13</sup> "Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America," OSC: EUP20100217047004.

<sup>14</sup> "Montenegro: Report Details Darko Saric Ties with Criminals, Tycoons, Politicians," OSC: EUP20100228023004.

<sup>15</sup> "Serbian, Montenegrin Drugs Syndicates Fighting at Home for Positions Abroad," OSC: EUP20070524047003.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "'Source' Details Connections Among Serbian, Balkan, Colombian Cocaine Smugglers," OSC: EUP20061213047008.

<sup>18</sup> "Montenegro: Report Details Darko Saric Ties with Criminals, Tycoons, Politicians," OSC: EUP20100228023004.

<sup>19</sup> "'Source' Details Connections Among Serbian, Balkan, Colombian Cocaine Smugglers," OSC: EUP20061213047008.

<sup>20</sup> "Police 'Source' Says Two 'Drug Cartels' Operate in Serbia, Details Foreign Ties," OSC: EUP20070525047007.

<sup>21</sup> "Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America," OSC: EUP20100217047004.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Serbia: 'Sources' Say 'America Group' Regains 'Supremacy' in Belgrade Gangland," OSC: EUP20061117047002.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Serbia: Source Says 'Drug Baron' Saric Has Own Coca Plantations in South America," OSC: EUP20100217047004.

<sup>28</sup> "Drug Boss Saric's Associate Joksovic Discloses Information on Cocaine Smuggling," OSC: EUP20110225023001.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Serbia: 'Sources' Say 'America Group' Regains 'Supremacy' in Belgrade Gangland," OSC: EUP20061117047002.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.