

Editorial

A Worthy Russian Proposal

Victor Ivanov, head of the Russian Federal Narcotics Control Service, said in an interview with the government daily *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Jan. 30, that Russia wants to work with the new U.S. Administration in Afghanistan to fight drug trafficking. According to RIA Novosti, that was Ivanov's comment on the appointment of a high-ranking U.S. figure, former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke, as U.S. special envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ivanov is the Russian official who, shortly after the Nov. 26, 2008 terror attack on Mumbai, India, cited intelligence received on its having been financed by the drug-running networks of Dawood Ibrahim.

Ivanov's proposal was heartily endorsed by Lyndon LaRouche, who emphasizes that the only way to stabilize the world strategic situation, is for the U.S. to get out of Afghanistan militarily (except for a presence around the capital), and to wage an all-out war on drugs. Winning that war, he stressed, is essential not only to stopping the narcoterrorist threat being wielded by the British Empire, but also to carrying out the necessary world economic reform.

Russian cooperation with the United States in carrying out a (primarily non-lethal) war on drugs would re-establish relations between the two in a way vital to the interests of both nations.

Noting the spread of drug crops and trafficking from southern Afghanistan to the whole area along the border with the Central Asian countries, Ivanov said, "To reduce this danger, we are vitally interested in working with the new American Administration." Novosti also cited U.S. State Department representative Robert Wood's earlier statement that the Obama Administration considers working with Russia a key component of its Afghanistan strategy.

Ironically, the U.S. will find it much easier to work with Russia against the drug trade, than with many of its NATO allies. The U.S. Commander of NATO, Gen. John Craddock, has long since attempted to get NATO troops in Afghanistan to take on the drug traffickers, only to meet vehement resistance, especially from the British. The leaking this week of the contents of a classified directive from Craddock, giving NATO troops the authority to go after the traffickers, brought the fight among the NATO nations to the public. The British, who "control" the Afghan province where most of the opium is grown, have been steadfastly opposed to targetting the drugs and their pushers.

Ivanov called for convening a conference under UN auspices on Peace and Prosperity in Afghanistan, as a "first step" in such U.S.-Russian collaboration against drugs. "It would be appropriate to hold such a conference in Afghanistan itself, e.g., in Kabul," said Ivanov. All tribes, areas, and political forces "prepared for a constructive dialogue" should be invited, he said, proposing a special role for Russia, as a country "whose forces have not participated in this seven-years-long war." Ivanov said that creation of a "single, independent, and strong nation of Afghanistan" would be the pathway to tackling the explosion of the heroin business.

In addition to Russia, it is also possible that Iran could be brought into such an anti-drug campaign, as that nation is a prime target of the opium scourge.

In supporting Ivanov's proposal, LaRouche added, "The real issue is that the United States and other countries are sending troops in as suckers to get killed for no purpose, while the British are promoting drug trafficking out of the area. That's what's happening. Either we stop the drug trafficking, or we lose civilization."