

Only a Total War on Drugs Can Resolve Afghan Disaster

by Jeffrey Steinberg and Nancy Spannaus

April 19—A senior U.S. intelligence source has confirmed a report in the April 16 *Washington Post*, that, with the active backing of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, U.S. Marines in the Marja area of Afghanistan's Helmand Province have begun a program to destroy the opium harvest, just as the poppy crop is ready for harvesting. "Hillary stepped in and pushed it through," the source confirmed.

Under the new program, which reverses the Obama Administration's policy of ending opium eradication, first announced in March 2009, U.S. Marines will be paying opium poppy farmers \$120 per acre to destroy their crops. And at the same time, Marines are cutting off migrant workers from the opium-growing region, who are vital to the harvesting of the massive opium crop.

By these actions, and a third track, which targets the opium dealers as they attempt to purchase the opium poppy from the farmers, the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade is taking precisely the kinds of measures that Lyndon LaRouche has demanded, in recent calls for the impeachment of President Barack Obama.

Yet, don't be confused. As numerous military-intelligence sources have confirmed, this shift in behavior does *not* amount to the necessary shift in policy, toward cooperation with the Russians on wiping out the British

imperial game, by destroying the Afghan drug trade. The dominant Obama Administration approach remains the expansion of the British policy of land war in Asia that was engineered more than 40 years ago, as a geopolitical trap for destroying the Soviet Union and the United States alike.

The disaster awaiting the NATO forces is totally predictable, as U.S. and NATO forces commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal and his team plan for an assault on the birthplace of the Taliban, the half-million strong city of Kandahar. Indicative of the disaster the NATO forces will run into is the fact that the 1,000 tribal elders in the Kandahar region have let it be known they do not want the NATO operation. And, although McChrystal had allegedly promised that the operation would be carried out in consultation with these local leaders, generally reliable journalist sources have reported that the General has decided that the assault will go ahead anyway.

That's par for the course for this General, who, along with President Obama, is taking his cues directly from the British strategists who are determined to see the United States, in particular, destroy itself in the course of this conflict, while preserving the dope trade which is the lifeblood of their bankrupt financial system. Both McChrystal and Obama are implementing a policy which is tantamount to treason.

Clinton's Opportunity

As to the Helmand program to destroy opium, LaRouche noted that the opportunity for Hillary Clinton to push through this useful tactical breakthrough came as the result of several factors. First, there is a clear policy-vacuum at the Obama White House. And second, President Obama was desperate for a foreign policy "victory" by signing the just-concluded nuclear arms limitation treaty with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev. And the Russians were insistent that the United States had to take some action against the opium and heroin trafficking out of Afghanistan, which had been the source of funding and logistics for the recent spate of terrorist attacks in Moscow and in the North Caucasus—not to mention the epidemic of heroin addiction among Russians.

Recall that, on March 17, Victor Ivanov, head of the Russian Federal anti-narcotics program, was in Kabul, pressing for a full-scale opium eradication program. A week later, he was in Brussels, making the same demand before the Russia-NATO Council meeting. On March 30, Secretary of State Clinton sent a cable to the U.S. embassy in Kabul, authorizing the eradication program in Marja, describing it as "the best decision in the face of an array of less-than-perfect options." Two days later, on April 1, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) head Michele Leonhart arrived in Kabul for a three-day visit, to further push the eradication program, which has DEA backing.

According to the senior U.S. intelligence source, U.S. military and intelligence officers in the Helmand area had established solid intelligence that the overwhelming majority of funds derived from the local opium production (40% of world opium and heroin supplies come from the 155-square-mile area around Marja) were going to the Taliban and other insurgents, fully confirming LaRouche's warnings that any policy that allowed the opium production to continue was providing aid and comfort to the enemy in a theater of war, which was tantamount to treason.

The decision to permit the resumption of eradication, through payments to the farmers to plow under their own crops, is a victory, albeit a tactical one, for both Secretary of State Clinton and her Russian counterparts, including anti-drug official Ivanov, who made U.S.-Russian cooperation on the eradication of the narco-terror operations centered in Afghanistan, a precondition for overall U.S.-Russian partnership. Even

this limited operation is going to send Her Majesty's Dope, Inc. apparatus climbing up the wall—including those Russian "Mafiya" elements who operate out of British and Dutch offshore money-laundering centers like the Dutch Antilles, and who are the enemies of the Putin, Ivanov, Yakunin patriotic faction in Moscow.

Russian Pressure

Meanwhile, sections of the Russian government continue to push hard for the shift to a war on drugs.

At a joint press conference with the European Parliament's special envoy on the war on drugs, Pino Arlacchi, which was held following talks on the issue in Brussels April 14, Victor Ivanov said that the war on drugs must be waged ruthlessly, but so must be the effort to rebuild the economy of Afghanistan. Arlacchi urged Europe to join Russia for a war on Afghan drugs, because Europe is the number-one consumer of drugs from Afghanistan, followed by Russia.

Russia, Ivanov said, is ready to assist in rebuilding 142 economic facilities that were built by Soviet specialists in Afghanistan. Among them are the Jalalabad irrigation system, the Naglu hydroelectric plant, the Mazar-e-Sharif mineral fertilizer plant, and the Salang Tunnel.

"We are ready to invest in rebuilding these objects and, of course, we hope that NATO, which has specifically undertaken to maintain security in Afghanistan, will guarantee this for us," Ivanov said at the press conference.

More than 140 industrial facilities and other branches of the economic infrastructure built in Afghanistan by Soviet specialists are considered candidates for reconstruction using Russian expertise. The structures were set up before the U.S.-led NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Ivanov said "those 142 objects, which were built earlier by Russia, are today the base of the entire Afghan economy." Soviet engineers were involved in constructing these 142 industrial and infrastructure facilities in 1952-88, with funds provided by the Soviet government. The Pul-i-Kumri hydropower plant on the Kunduz River, the Naglu Dam on the Kabul River, and a nitrogen fertilizer plant in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif are among the facilities, as well highways, power lines, and gas and oil pipeline networks. According to Russian estimates, the facilities accounted for more than 60% of Afghanistan's GDP in 1970-80.