

Russia's Ivanov: Let's Jointly Fight Afghan Drugs

April 1—Victor Ivanov, chairman of Russia's State Anti-Narcotics Committee and director of the Federal Service for the Control of Narcotics, gave this speech at the enlarged ambassador-level session of the Russia-NATO Council in Brussels on March 24. The following day, the Russian Foreign Ministry denounced NATO's refusal to eradicate the opium crop in Afghanistan, accusing the United States of "conniving" with Afghanistan's drug producers with this decision. Subheads have been added; emphasis is from the Russian transcript.

Lines of Cooperation Between Russia and NATO Aimed at Eliminating the Global Phenomenon of Afghan Drug Production

Dear NATO Secretary General,
Dear Delegates,

Quite soon, on May 9, the whole world will celebrate the 65th anniversary of the victory of the Allies in World War II. One of the symbols of the unfading spirit of that prominent coalition will be, in particular, the Victory Parade in Moscow's Red Square, involving NATO military personnel (up to a company of soldiers equipped with modern armaments).

It looks as though a new, broad coalition—but anti-drug, instead of anti-Hitler—should be set up. This is indicated by both the importance of keeping up traditions of partnership and cooperation, and the absolute fact that drug production in Afghanistan, which is phenomenal in terms of its scope, has become a *fundamental, damaging factor* for our countries' populations.

We are professionals who realize the need for an adequate response to the threat that has emerged, and its scope, as well as for effective solutions to be taken for the sake of our peoples.

The other day, I returned from Kabul, where I discussed this problem with representatives of anti-drug



Russian “drug czar” Victor Ivanov is shown speaking here in Washington on Sept. 24, 2009.

institutions (those of Russia, ISAF countries [NATO’s International Security Assistance Force], and Afghanistan), as well as the UN mission.

Huge Drug Production

Therefore, let me say a few words about official estimates of Afghan drug production, which is a common challenge for our 29 countries. According to the UNO, 100,000 people die of Afghan heroin every year. *About 1 million people have died from Afghan drugs* during the first decade of this century, while 16 million have suffered mentally or physically. International heroin consumption in 2008 amounted to: 21% in Russia (70 tons), 26% in Europe, excluding Russia and Turkey (88 tons), 6% in the U.S. and Canada (22 tons). Thus, *the countries represented at today’s event account for more than half* of all globally consumed heroin. Our countries account for a greater part of the world opiate market: approximately \$20 billion in Europe, out of the total of \$65 billion; \$13 billion in the Russian Federation; \$8 billion in the U.S. and Canada; i.e., our countries account in total for 59% of the world opiate market.

Speaking of the threats and challenges facing our countries, we should compare figures showing losses among our citizens from events in the Central Asian region.

It is shocking that annual civilian losses in the NATO

countries due to heroin overdoses are *50 times higher than their military losses in Afghanistan*. This is confirmed by the data provided by UNODC [UN Office on Drugs and Crime] Director Antonio Costa regarding the annual death of 10,000 citizens of the North Atlantic Treaty countries caused by Afghan drugs.

It is obvious that military operations in the region should be aimed, not at self-protection, but at *protecting these countries’ own citizens*, who also happen to be the taxpayers that are paying for their military men’s operations.

It should be stressed that, besides direct damage to the lives and health of our citizens, Afghan drug production is forming and consolidating *transnational organized crime in Eurasia*, as well as—and this is extremely dangerous—providing huge financial resources and recruitment

potential for terrorist and extremist organizations, illegal infrastructure, and supplies of armaments, explosives, and communications facilities aimed at operations against the civilian population.

The International Response

At the same time, *the lack of results* of international anti-drug efforts in the region over a long period of time—*actually for eight and a half years*—has provided strong evidence of the inadequacy of the approaches that have been applied to ensuring security.

In summary, one can state that, in general, the existing architecture is not only ineffective, but *even has a negative result*. For example, the decisions of the Jan. 28 London Conference, on reintegrating a part of the Taliban into the power structure, indicate that there is an intensifying process of reassessment of the level and type of threat from this movement, while the role and significance of large-scale drug production keep growing steadily, and are *multiplying its negative and life-threatening consequences for the world in general*.

Under the conditions of globalization, there is an obvious need not to just pick discrete threats from among the broad spectrum of challenges, but also to *formulate a new security philosophy*. At the present time, a linear, or even primitive approach, of focusing

the total international force-potential on solving one problem, taken by itself—e.g., terrorism—is absolutely insufficient; this may be stated in the context of the evaluation by such prominent politicians as the head of the British Foreign Office, *David Miliband*, and others, to the effect that “*the war on terror*” was a mistake that may have caused “*more harm than good*.”

Issues concerning hierarchy and priority of threats must be addressed, within the security architecture, in such a way that elimination of some of them not give rise to new, much more dangerous threats, as has happened in the case of Afghanistan. Therefore, the new security starts not with a linear definition of a list of threats, but with the calculation of the risks and consequences of the international community’s response to such threats. Global policy is a *sphere of absolute risks*—i.e., absolutely unexpected and sometimes highly painful consequences can result from quite trivial and ordinary solutions and actions.

The term “risk” is of Greek origin (*risikon*), meaning “cliff”—i.e., a high degree of an unfavorable outcome, if you’re on the edge of a precipice.

Consequently, the planning of new steps and solutions by international institutions, in response to threats, must be accompanied by reflection on the outcomes of the solutions previously executed. An overview of the events of the last decade convinces us that *there has been a serious failure* in the application and character of joint efforts on the part of the international community, in implementing key UN resolutions.

Political imperatives to combat the drug menace were established in 1998. As a result, opium production in Afghanistan decreased 12-fold. 2,693 tons of opium were manufactured in 1998, but 185 tons in 2001. New enforcement solutions, adopted by the international community in the significant year 2001, resulted in a drastic growth of opium production—by 40-fold, in fact. Thus, using medical terminology, we can state that *the medicine proved to be more harmful* than the diagnosed disease.

When evaluating the architecture of global and Eurasian security, we should stress the priority of eliminating Afghan drug production. The stability of both Eurasia and the world as a whole depends on the efficacy of joint efforts in this area.

Cooperative Security

Probably we already have all the necessary grounds to introduce quite a *new type of security into interna-*

tional politics: anti-drug security. What we need is cooperative responsibility and cooperative security projects.

It is for these reasons that *Russia views NATO as its key partner in fighting the Afghan drug threat*. Moreover, NATO took command of the ISAF on Aug. 11, 2003, and is essentially operating on behalf of the global community, alongside another NATO member, the U. S.A., which, since Oct. 7, 2001, has been implementing *its own* Operation Invincible Freedom.

Thus, taking into account the principle of joint and shared responsibility, *it is NATO that is fully responsible* for normalizing the situation in Afghanistan, including the elimination of drug production.

But, *Russia is not willing to stand aside*.

The Russia-NATO Council, as well as the bilateral Medvedev-Obama Presidential Commission, within which there is already an actively working anti-drug group, jointly presided over by Mr. Gil Kerlikovsky and myself, provide a good basis. Along the lines of this Russian-American working group, it could be expedient to form *a joint Russia-NATO group*, aimed at elaborating a common approach to fighting Afghan drug production.

Russia’s Proposal

In the current situation, I would like to present to the Russia-NATO Council the main provisions of *Russia’s plan for the elimination of Afghan drug production*, as a practical basis for consolidating the efforts of Russia and the NATO member-states:

1. Raising the status, through the UN Security Council, of the problem of Afghan drug production to that of a threat to global peace and security.

2. Elaborating and implementing the program of Afghan economic development, through developing infrastructure, first and foremost for the energy and electricity industries, as well as creating a sufficient number of jobs (at least 2 million) for Afghan citizens.

3. Eliminating the cultivation of opium poppy through the eradication of crops by well-tested methods, and raising the efficiency of these efforts from 3% to not less than 25%.

4. Adding to the “UN Sanctions List” those landlords who provide their land for growing poppy. For this purpose, organizing a special cadastral registration of the territory of Afghanistan’s southern provinces.

5. Introducing into the ISAF mandate the compe-

tence and obligation to eradicate opium poppy crops in Afghanistan.

6. Providing the necessary level of trust, in order to develop operative collaboration, intelligence data exchange, including information on the location of drug laboratories, precursor supplies, movement of intermediate products, etc.

7. Joint, well-coordinated efforts aimed at training Afghan Drug Police (during the current year, Russia will train 225 policemen under the program of the Russia-NATO Council).

Taking into consideration the number of proposed points, *I suggest naming this plan "Rainbow-Two: Russia-NATO."* Implementing this plan may require *creating an international commission or agency* for the elimination of Afghan drug production, with clearly established goals for the next five years. If this plan is supported and approved, I believe the anti-drug coalition which takes shape will receive an effective instrument and will succeed.

Incidentally, "*the big success*" of *Operation Moshtarak*, in the evaluation of the UN Secretary General and our colleague Mr. Rasmussen, has made it possible to liberate Helmand Province from armed insurgents; this is the province providing over 75% of Afghanistan's drug production. Thus, already today we can see unique opportunities for *implementing point 3 of the proposed plan*, to eliminate 60% of the world's drug production.

Thank you.