

Russian-American anti-narcotics operation in Afghanistan

On 29 October, the head of the Russian anti-narcotics agency (FSKN), Viktor Ivanov, reported on an American/Russian operation on the border with Pakistan. Russian involvement in the action, the aim of which was to destroy drug production facilities, consisted of passing on intelligence information, and on four Russian operatives joining the American detachment as observers. At the current stage, however, it is unclear whether Russian/American anti-narcotics cooperation in Afghanistan will be long-term in nature.

In recent years, the leadership of the FSKN has constantly criticised the actions of NATO forces in Afghanistan. Ivanov has often suggested that American involvement has led to the expansion of the drugs trade, and that the West is unable to effectively combat this without close collaboration with Russia. After this latest operation, he stated that his agency is ready to share intelligence data on the location of other drug production facilities. He also offered to send liaison officers from the FSKN to Afghanistan to this end. The Russian announcement of this action should be seen as another attempt to put pressure on Washington, with the aim of obtaining an agreement to increase the participation of Russian forces in operations in Afghanistan. <pez>