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NEGATIVE BRIEF: Afghan Anti-Narcotics War - good

By Vance Trefethen

**This brief can be used against a plan that calls for ending US involvement in anti-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan.**

NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

“Do Both”. US strategy cannot be “either” narcotics “or” counter-insurgency. We have to do both simultaneously

Lieutenant Commander Jonathan R. Biehl 2009. (US Navy officer) Counter-Narcotics Operations in Afghanistan: A Way to Success or a Meaningless Cause? 12 Nov 2009 <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA512380>

According to Secretary Gates, “We’re not talking about a counter-narcotics strategy–that really is the Afghan’s responsibility. What we’re talking about is greater freedom to track down the networks of those who are funding the Taliban. In a chicken-or-egg debate of global proportions, stabilizing the country might require the defeat of both the insurgents and opium traffickers simultaneously (Wood 2009, 51).

Opium is Afghanistan’s biggest problem

Frank Skov Pedersen 2009. (master’s degree candidate at Aalborg University, Denmark) Sustainable agricultural production: Providing an alternative to opium in Afghanistan <http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/18274422/Sustainable_agricultural_production.pdf>

Afghan President Karzai has stated “that opium is Afghanistan's biggest problem. Either we destroy the problem or it will destroy us.” [Costa, 2008]. As illustrated by the facts stated above this could be true as opium is the funding source for terrorists, insurgents, and warlords, spreading addiction in and around Afghanistan as well as causing the threat of a HIV epidemic following the injection of heroin [UNODC 2009].

TOPICALITY

1. Insignificant change in policy – not substantial change

Anti-narcotics programs are only 5% of US foreign aid to Afghanistan

Lisa Curtis 2013. (Senior Research Fellow [Asian Studies Center](http://www.heritage.org/about/staff/departments/asian-studies-center) The Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation; former  senior adviser to the assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, tracking India-Pakistan relations; also e worked as an analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency ) 30 Sept 2013 U.S. Counternarcotics Policy: Essential to Fighting Terrorism in Afghanistan <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/09/us-counternarcotics-policy-essential-to-fighting-terrorism-in-afghanistan>

Counternarcotics initiatives have accounted for about 5 percent of total U.S. aid provided to Afghanistan since 2001. These programs are implemented by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) in conjunction with the Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

New Afghan counter-narcotics programs are making progress

William R. Brownfield 2014. (Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) testimony before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, January 15, 2014 <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rm/2014/219833.htm>

Despite these tough realities, we have seen encouraging progress in the Afghan government’s counternarcotics capacity. In particular, there have been positive developments in areas such as interdiction, prosecutions, treatment services for substance use disorders, and alternative livelihoods for Afghan farmers. We have also seen that farmers are less likely to grow poppy in communities where the government has established a strong foothold and where basic development facilities, such as electricity, medical clinics, and schools, are available. Together with the United Kingdom, we have helped the Afghan government stand up skilled Afghan interdiction units with specialized intelligence capabilities. Over the past several years, we have seen a steady increase in the amount of illicit narcotics seized by the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) and its vetted units, which have been trained through U.S. programs. The growing and self-sustaining capacity of these vetted units is the direct result of the mentoring, training, and assistance of U.S. programs, which INL implements with our partners at the DEA and Department of Defense. INL successfully transitioned the Kunduz Regional Law Enforcement Center to the Afghan Ministry of the Interior (MOI) in September. The MOI now manages this center and it continues to be used by the CNPA vetted units for sensitive interdiction missions.

Narcotics problem in Afghanistan is not insurmountable, and current programs are becoming increasingly effective

William R. Brownfield 2014. (Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) testimony before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, January 15, 2014 <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/rm/2014/219833.htm>

Our work with the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MCN) cuts across all of these efforts. In recent years, the leadership and staff of the MCN have demonstrated increased effectiveness in designing counternarcotics policies across the relevant Afghan ministries and in implementing counternarcotics programs nationwide. Each of these positive developments has matured in spite of a difficult security environment, entrenched corruption, and criminal groups that have worked to undermine progress. But while the challenges are many, let us also keep them in perspective. The estimated value of opium to the Afghan economy has remained relatively stable over the last decade. Yet Afghanistan’s legal economy has grown steadily. As a result, the potential net export value of opiates now make up a much smaller fraction of Afghanistan’s economy – from 60 percent of the GDP in 2003 to 14 percent in 2013. Today, poppy is grown on less than three percent of Afghanistan’s farmable land – roughly the same amount of land devoted to rice and one tenth as much as is devoted to wheat production. In short, Afghanistan’s drug challenge may be formidable, but it is not insurmountable.

Government pressure is effective at reducing opium production

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The dominant reasons for not growing poppies in the southern and western region, where most of the production takes place [UNODC, 2009], are the high sale price of wheat and that opium cultivation is forbidden according to Islamic law. Thus, even though the southern region remains the largest opium cultivation area, the lower prices on opium and higher price on other crops will most likely cause a reduction in opium cultivation. The dominant reason for not growing poppies in the rest of the country is the pressure from the government authorities. This reason illustrates how important that security and governance is in preventing opium production.

Too early to tell if counter-narcotics programs have failed: It could take up to 20 years

Frank Skov Pedersen 2009. (master’s degree candidate at Aalborg University, Denmark) Sustainable agricultural production: Providing an alternative to opium in Afghanistan <http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/18274422/Sustainable_agricultural_production.pdf>

While all of these areas are important, the top priority must be to ensure that the Afghans have a viable alternative to opium production. When the Afghan agriculture develops to a point where none of the Afghan farmers are dependent on opium, as it was in the late 1970s, then the risk of eradication and further prosecution will most likely keep the farmers from starting the opium production up again. This emphasises the importance of the other counter-narcotic initiatives and the success of stopping the opium production by providing the farmer with a viable alternative is linked with the success of the other initiatives. Because of the current underdeveloped state of the agricultural system the timeframe for an Afghan agriculture not dependent on opium is estimated to roughly 8-20 years for the poor highly dependent farmers and the landless rural labourers [Ward et al, 2008]. This depends on an improvement of the security situation in Afghanistan.

INHERENCY

1. Reforms are happening that are fixing the problems with anti-narcotics programs in Afghanistan

The reason for failure was lack of alternate jobs. Now, we are transitioning from eradication towards alternative livelihoods

Lisa Curtis 2013. (Senior Research Fellow [Asian Studies Center](http://www.heritage.org/about/staff/departments/asian-studies-center) The Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation; former  senior adviser to the assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, tracking India-Pakistan relations; also e worked as an analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency ) 30 Sept 2013 U.S. Counternarcotics Policy: Essential to Fighting Terrorism in Afghanistan <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/09/us-counternarcotics-policy-essential-to-fighting-terrorism-in-afghanistan>

As referenced earlier, the U.S. has transitioned from emphasizing eradication to promoting alternative livelihood programs—a transition that began at the end of the Bush Administration and was strengthened during President Barack Obama’s first term. Eradication and interdiction assistance had long been given priority over livelihood assistance. This changed as U.S. officials recognized that eradication could not occur until an alternative form of livelihood took hold with Afghan farmers. The late Richard Holbrooke, while serving as the U.S. State Department Senior Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, declared in 2009 that U.S. efforts to eradicate opium poppy crops in Afghanistan had been “wasteful and ineffective.” Holbrooke was a major proponent for shifting U.S. counternarcotics efforts toward helping Afghan farmers.

The problem is being fixed: Programs are now shifting toward alternative crops and livelihoods, to replace narcotics

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U.S. policymakers learned that eradication can often harm the farmers more than it harms the drug lords. Without adequate emphasis on alternative work for farmers, Afghans were robbed of their livelihoods before they were given the opportunity or skillset to engage in other vocations. This lesson was learned first in Colombia in the early 2000s; the eradication measures ended up benefitting the leftist guerillas, who capitalized on the people’s anger at the government for destroying their only source of income. While USAID has intensified its focus on alternative development programs in Afghanistan in the past several years, media reports note that such alternative programs have so far only reached about 30 percent of households that rely on opium cultivation for their incomes  Alternative livelihood programs equip farmers to participate in legal markets rather than the illicit production of drugs. They do so by providing alternative seeds, agricultural training, and monetary assistance. The Afghan government and international community have supplemented alternative livelihood assistance with microfinance in an attempt to diversify the market. Microloans total $142.3 million with 245,046 borrowers. One of the major purveyors of microfinance, the Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA), has reached more than 82,000 Afghans and invested over $93 million. MISFA receives funds from the World Bank and subsequently distributes loans to a diversified set of microfinanciers who grant loans to the people of Afghanistan.

2. US major crop eradication programs are over

Only “modest” assistance is provided now, but it’s outsourced to local Afghan provinces

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The U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy states, “The U.S. Government no longer funds or supports large-scale eradication of poppy fields (though we do not object to Afghan-led local eradication).” Nonetheless, the U.S. continues to provide modest assistance for eradication measures. For example, through the Good Performers Initiative (GPI), the U.S. rewards provinces that discourage the growth and in other ways reduce or eliminate the production of opium through Afghan government-led eradication programs. In 2013, the State Department allocated $18.2 million for programs under the auspices of the GPI.  In addition to funding the GPI, some U.S. assistance for eradication is also provided through the DEA Foreign Advisory Support Teams (FAST), elite tactical units that are deployed overseas for a limited period of time to conduct counter-drug missions.

3. U.S. military isn’t involved

Military only hits Afghan drug dealers if they are connected with terrorism or insurgency – they don’t hit targets solely for drugs

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According to current U.S. law, the military must prove a nexus, a direct connection, between counterterrorism efforts and counternarcotics operations in order to provide support to law enforcement. Additionally, the U.S. Code states that it is legal for U.S. troops to supply assistance to law enforcement operations, but the military’s direct participation in law enforcement activities is illegal. “Military lift and security support have been provided by special operations forces (SOF) to target high-value individuals where the nexus can be established. In this case, there is no restriction to military support because it is considered a military mission rather than a law enforcement mission.” The military can only directly target drug traffickers that have proven ties to insurgents. Proving these links can be difficult and time-consuming, making it unfeasible for the military to engage in situations that require a quick response.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Terrorism

Canceling US couter-narcotics programs would make Afghanistan a haven for international terrorists

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While Congress has a responsibility to oversee aid to Afghanistan and is rightly insisting that this aid is used effectively, counternarcotics programs remain integral to U.S. stabilization efforts in Afghanistan. With the drawdown of international troops, there is a risk of a spike in drug production. It is in the U.S. national security interest to help the Afghans counter, and eventually uproot, the drug industry through the maintenance of funding for key military, infrastructure, and counternarcotics operations. Failure to target this industry, which continues to take a toll on the sociopolitical development of the country and benefit insurgents, would perpetuate the cycle of instability in Afghanistan and increase the risk that it once again becomes a haven for international terrorists.

2. Afghan justice system fails.

Link: US-funded special counter-narcotics courts are prosecuting drug dealers in Afghanistan, including Afghan government officials

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**Continue funding for special counternarcotics courts,** such as the Criminal Justice Task Force and the Afghan Judicial Security Unit. The U.S. currently provides rule of law training through the Afghan Judicial Security Unit (JSU) and should continue to create a robust framework for legal and judicial reform. In 2013, the INL requested over $181 million for justice reform and an additional $63 million for Counternarcotics Justice and Anti-Corruption Aviation Support.  From 2005 to 2010, the Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF) prosecuted and convicted 440 people and actively targeted those in the Afghan government who were mired in the drug trade. While these courts have been effective in prosecuting low-level officials, some have contended that they need additional capacity to prosecute high-level officials and deal with security concerns.

Impact: Fixing the Afghan justice system is key to stabilizing the whole country

International Crisis Group 2010. (**independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict.** Crisis Group's Board of Trustees is co-chaired by Lord Malloch-Brown, former UN Deputy Secretary-General and Ghassan Salamé, Dean, Paris School of International Affairs, Sciences Po.) REFORMING AFGHANISTAN’S BROKEN JUDICIARY, Asia Report N°195 – 17 November 2010 <http://issat.dcaf.ch/content/download/2287/19890/file/ICG%20Reforming%20Afghanistans%20Broken%20Judiciary.pdf>

Afghanistan’s justice system is in a catastrophic state of disrepair. Despite repeated pledges over the last nine years, the majority of Afghans still have little or no access to judicial institutions. Lack of justice has destabilised the country and judicial institutions have withered to near non-existence. Many courts are inoperable and those that do function are understaffed. Insecurity, lack of proper training and low salaries have driven many judges and prosecutors from their jobs. Those who remain are highly susceptible to corruption. Indeed, there is very little that is systematic about the legal system, and there is little evidence that the Afghan government has the resources or political will to tackle the challenge. The public, consequently, has no confidence in the formal justice sector amid an atmosphere of impunity. A growing majority of Afghans have been forced to accept the rough justice of Taliban and criminal powerbrokers in areas of the country that lie beyond government control. To reverse these trends, the Afghan government and international community must prioritise the rule of law as the primary pillar of a vigorous counter-insurgency strategy that privileges the protection of rights equally alongside the protection of life.

3. Narcotics trade flourishes

Link: Afghan counter-narcotics efforts are not effective without US support

Lieutenant Commander Jonathan R. Biehl 2009. (US Navy officer) Counter-Narcotics Operations in Afghanistan: A Way to Success or a Meaningless Cause? 12 Nov 2009 <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA512380>

Are LE [Law Enforcement] units capable to handle the drug problem without the military? These Afghan LEAs [Law Enforcement Agencies] are unable to protect themselves in more dangerous areas where they could be overwhelmed by the Taliban. This limits the areas where they are able to execute missions, which provide Taliban forces freedom to operate. “The civilian police mentors hired by the State Department to provide civilian law enforcement expertise to the developing Afghan police forces do not have the flexibility to deploy into areas where they are needed the most, for reasons of force protection and non-permissive threat conditions” (Irwin 2009, 73).

Impact: Without US anti-narcotics effort, Afghanistan will become a narco-terrorist state, threatening regional stability and international security

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As the U.S. and coalition partners draw down troops in Afghanistan and hand over security operations to local forces, the U.S. must renew its diplomatic and financial commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan that will not revert to its pre-war status as a haven for international terrorists. This effort should involve commitment to a long-term counternarcotics policy that diminishes, and eventually destroys, the drug trade in Afghanistan. Although the fate of Afghanistan rests with its own people, without leadership and assistance from the U.S., it will devolve into a narcoterrorist state that poses a threat to regional stability and to the security of the broader international community.