Negative Brief: Afghanistan Counter-Narcotics Aid - good

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially reform its foreign aid.***

Summary: AFF plan eliminates US aid for counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan. Not clear whether it includes military intervention (extra-topical), so we have arguments against that specifically, as well as against stopping counter-narcotics efforts generally. Growth of poppies and processing into opiates (like heroin) is widespread in Afghanistan, since it is more profitable than any other business in that war-torn country.   
  
NEG will argue that we aren’t really doing much “foreign aid” to fight narcotics in Afghanistan any more. The only anti-narcotics “aid” we’re really doing now is drug addiction treatment centers and education programs against drug abuse. Those should be increased, not canceled. NEG will argue that Status Quo policies are on the right track, if you correctly understand what the SQ is doing. The focus shifted during the Trump administration from foreign aid programs (ground level efforts to fund anti-narcotics programs by paying farmers, eradicating crops, etc) to airstrikes and bombing of drug labs. Meanwhile, the State Department has mostly stopped aid programs and is currently reviewing what works and doesn’t work, while they draw up a new strategy.   
  
NEG philosophy is, let’s wait for those studies to finish before we make any premature changes in policy. Counter-narcotics efforts on the ground can work if designed correctly, we just need to study and make sure we have the right programs. Permanently canceling them like the AFF does is the wrong policy. A NEG ballot gives us the opportunity to study and get it right.

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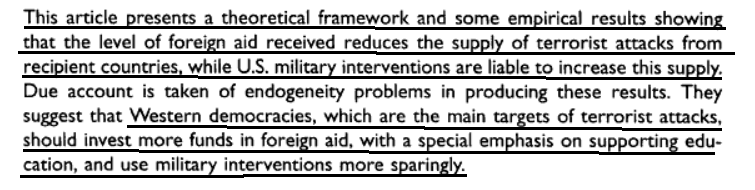
TOPICALITY

[If the plan claims US military intervention is a form of “foreign aid” in Afghanistan]

1. Military intervention is NOT “foreign aid”

In fact, it’s exactly the opposite. The literature describes these as 2 opposite policies with 2 opposite results

Jean-Paul Axam and Veronique Thelen 2010 (Axam – with the Toulouse School of Economics, University of Toulouse, France. Thelen – with the Industrial Economics Institute, Toulouse, France.) “Foreign Aid Versus Military Intervention in the War on Terror” <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27820984?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents>



Backup: Foreign aid can be a complement or add-on to military intervention, but they’re 2 separate things

Prof. Clair Apodaca 2017 (associate professor in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech) Apr 2017 « Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy Tool” <http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-332>

Foreign aid can also be used to complement to military intervention. A study by Kisangani and Pickering ([2015](http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-332#acrefore-9780190228637-e-332-bibItem-0032)) found that donor-state military interventions have a significant effect on that state’s foreign-aid allocations. During and after an intervention, foreign aid to the target state increases significantly. Foreign aid is a tool used to supplement the use of military force to ensure that foreign policy goals are met and, once met, secured. Foreign aid “demonstrates the benign intentions of the intervention (toward the target populace, if not the target government), and that the military action was undertaken to further ideals shared within the broader international community” (Kisangani & Pickering, [2015](http://politics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-332#acrefore-9780190228637-e-332-bibItem-0032), p. 219). The goals of encouraging good governance and democracy, fostering human rights standards, or alleviating poverty in the target state cannot be achieved with military might alone. They often require the provision of foreign aid.

Violation: Resolution limited to foreign aid

Changing US military intervention, no matter how justified, cannot be debated under this resolution because the wording is limited to “foreign aid.” The literature says clearly that these are two different things.

Impact: Abusive expansion of the resolution

Adding military intervention to foreign aid doubles the scope of the resolution. Stoa already did a resolution on military intervention a few years ago, so it’s pretty clear this resolution is not intended to repeat that one. There’s no way Negatives can debate effectively if the resolution now covers twice as much as the already-broad “foreign aid” topic did. You should send Affirmative the signal not to do this by giving a negative ballot.

HARMS RESPONSES & NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

The Negative philosophy is that the bad impacts of Afghanistan’s narcotics are too big to ignore. Under INHERENCY, we’ll show you with evidence that the Status Quo isn’t really doing much foreign aid on this issue. But the Status Quo is reviewing past failures of counter-narcotics foreign aid efforts. We need to just wait and let the Status Quo review process finish so that we can come up with a better foreign aid policy on Afghanistan narcotics. We see this in 3 sub-points:

A. The Link: Bad impacts of drugs in Afghanistan make it critical that the U.S. reduce the drug trade

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

While very little Afghan heroin comes to the United States, the Afghan drug trade has undermined reconstruction and security goals in many ways, including by financing insurgent groups, fueling government corruption, eroding state legitimacy, and exacting an enormous human and financial toll. Given the upward trend of opium poppy cultivation and the number of Afghans who rely on the opium industry, it is critical that U.S. policymakers determine how best to mitigate the drug trade’s impact on U.S. reconstruction goals in Afghanistan.

B. The Solution: Counter-narcotics development aid programs can work, they just have to be designed correctly and given enough time

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

Development programs should be designed to help farmers achieve a mix of income sources rather than attempting to replace poppy with another crop. Enduring reductions in drug-crop cultivation are best supported by diversifying farmers’ income sources, including increased high-value horticultural crops, reductions in dependence on staples like wheat, and non-farm income. Effective development programs must also account for all parts of the rural population that depend on drug production, not just landowners. Interventions that target landowners but ignore the land-poor can impoverish the rural population, leading to the relocation of drugcrop production and fueling instability, as was the case with the Helmand Food Zone. Furthermore, these interventions must be sustained for more than five years. Perennial crops take four to five years to reach their full production potential. To help communities permanently transition away from drugcrop cultivation, therefore, development assistance programs should be sustained and conduct monitoring and evaluation at least over a period of five years.

C. The Policy: Vote Negative and let the State Department’s strategy review and study process finish before we decide on a policy

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

Finally, as of 2018, State continued to implement counternarcotics programming within the framework of a counternarcotics strategy approved in 2012. A revised strategy has been under development since 2014. According to State, the current draft strategy seeks to deny the Taliban drug revenue to pressure them to participate in peace negotiations. The draft strategy also maintains focus on building and improving Afghan counternarcotics capabilities and capacity.

Backup: Counternarcotics in Afghanistan is critical, but we need to not act prematurely and be sure we get the right policy first

Vanda Felbab-Brown 2009 (Senior Fellow - [Foreign Policy](https://www.brookings.edu/program/foreign-policy/), [Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence](https://www.brookings.edu/center/center-for-21st-century-security-and-intelligence/)) 21 Oct 2009 “U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan” <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/u-s-counternarcotics-strategy-in-afghanistan/>

Narcotics production and counternarcotics policies in Afghanistan are of critical importance not only for the control of drugs there, but also for the security, reconstruction, and rule of law efforts in Afghanistan. However, premature and inappropriate counternarcotics efforts greatly complicate counterterrorism and counterinsurgency objectives, and hence also jeopardize economic reconstruction and state-building efforts.

INHERENCY

1. USAID quit trying anti-narcotics aid in 2013

US Agency for International Development (USAID) gave up on anti-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan in 2013

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

By 2013, USAID’s decision to no longer include counter narcotics indicators in its alternative development programs resulted in a shift away from interventions specifically targeting poppy reduction. In the absence of these requirements, many USAID contractors shifted their focus to strengthening the licit economy and ignored opium poppy cultivation altogether, even when conducting programs in areas where opium poppy was concentrated. As of 2013, it appeared that USAID’s only program that directly targeted poppy cultivation was the Kandahar Food Zone (KFZ). All four of the fully developed Regional Agricultural Development Programs (RADP), totaling approximately $228 million through 2017, largely ignored opium poppy cultivation, including few mentions of poppy in the contracts signed with implementing partners, no risk mitigation plans, and little distinction between areas with or without significant poppy production.

2. Counter-narcotics aid to Afghan military already ended

Programs of counter-narcotics training & aid to Afghan military units ended in 2008 and 2015

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

Further, the United States and UK both invested in and provided military support to Afghan interdiction units. The Afghan Special Narcotics Force, also known as TF-333, a specialized paramilitary unit, was trained and equipped by the UK and tasked with conducting raids and destroying heroin laboratories. (See page 41.) It operated in a counternarcotics-focused capacity from roughly 2003 to 2008 and destroyed a number of labs. In addition, DEA used its Foreign-Deployed Advisory and Support Teams to operate in military-style raids with Afghan or U.S. Special Forces, and to train and mentor Afghan units from 2005 until 2015.

3. Current strategy is bombing, not foreign aid

Trump’s new strategy is airstrikes against Afghan drug labs

Jelena Bjelica 2018. (independent researcher with Afghan Analysts Network; formerly worked for the UN in Afghanistan) From Bad to Bombing: US counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan, 15 Jan 2018 <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/from-bad-to-bombing-us-counter-narcotics-policies-in-afghanistan/>

The US and its allies, as explained above, have tried a variety of approaches to counter the expansion of drug industry in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2017. This has included the latest airstrikes against drug processing facilities under the Trump’s administration new US strategy for South Asia.

Trump’s strategy is escalated air strikes to bomb Afghan drug labs

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf> (brackets added)

In Pentagon press briefings in late November 2017, USFOR-A [US Forces in Afghanistan] commander General Nicholson announced a series of airstrikes against “Taliban narcotics production” facilities in Helmand Province, carried out by both U.S. and Afghan forces. Nicholson stated the strikes were one part of applying pressure to the Taliban, in line with the Trump administration’s 2017 South Asia strategy and the goal of a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan. Nicholson also noted the strikes represented a significant use of new authorities granted under the strategy, including the authority for USFOR-A to target Taliban “revenue streams and support infrastructure.” By April 2018, USFOR-A had conducted as many as 75 strikes.

4. Status Quo switch from foreign aid to bombing is working

Trump’s new airstrike campaign is successful, and Afghanistan’s President Ghani endorses it

Jelena Bjelica 2018. (independent researcher with Afghan Analysts Network; formerly worked for the UN in Afghanistan) From Bad to Bombing: US counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan 15 Jan 2018 <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/from-bad-to-bombing-us-counter-narcotics-policies-in-afghanistan/> (brackets in original)

On 19 and 20 November, US and Afghan forces conducted a combined 24-hour operation to strike several alleged Taleban drug labs and one so-called command-and-control node in the north of Helmand province. A press release from the Resolute Support Mission said the strikes – three in Kajaki district, four in Musa Qalah district and one in Sangin district – were [successful](https://www.rs.nato.int/news-center/press-releases/2017/afghan--us-forces-launch-new-campaign-tbnetworks.aspx). From videos of the strikes, it appears the operation was named “Jagged Knife” (see these two Resolute Support Facebook posts [here](https://www.facebook.com/usforces.afghanistan/videos/vb.184272495109675/671904576346462/?type=2&theater) and [here](https://www.facebook.com/usforces.afghanistan/videos/vb.184272495109675/668264383377148/?type=2&theater)). The US forces said that the airstrikes were the first authorised use of the new approach under President Trump’s strategy in South Asia, which includes Afghanistan and Pakistan, “that allow U.S. forces to actively pursue terrorist elements and attack them offensively in collaboration with Afghan forces.” In the [words](https://www.rs.nato.int/news-center/press-releases/2017/afghan--us-forces-launch-new-campaign-tbnetworks.aspx) of General Nicholson “never before have we had the kind of trust and cooperation [with the Afghan military] that makes these types of strikes possible.” President Ashraf Ghani endorsed the new campaign (quoted [here](http://www.post-gazette.com/news/world/2017/11/21/Afghan-leaders-in-Helmand-are-criticizing-American-airstrikes-on-Taliban-drug-labs/stories/201711210141)) “We’re determined to tackle criminal economy and narcotics trafficking with full force.”

5. The real problem is not enough aid

The reason past counter-narcotics efforts failed was because they didn’t give enough aid. They relied on force (eradication, crop destruction) and didn’t give development assistance (to help poppy farmers find other jobs)

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

U.S. counternarcotics strategies repeatedly advocated a balance of different counterdrug interventions, particularly eradication and alternative development. According to the 2007 U.S. counternarcotics strategy, “Coercive measures, such as eradication, must be combined with both short- and long-term economic incentives in order to alter the risk/reward calculus of rural households to be in favor of licit crop cultivation.” Despite U.S. policymakers’ emphasis on the need for such balance, there is limited evidence of a coordinated, balanced implementation effort on the ground—or of monitoring and evaluation to ensure communities in poppy growing areas experienced both the deterrent of crop destruction and the ameliorating effects of development aid. Geographic Information System mapping of U.S.-funded development projects shows that many areas that experienced significant, repeated eradication efforts were both highly dependent on poppy as a livelihood and received relatively little development assistance. This frequent failure to collocate eradication and development aid reduced the chances of successful transitions away from poppy dependence and sustainable reductions in poppy cultivation.

US anti-narcotics foreign aid failed because it was insufficient and too short timeframe

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan“ <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

Alternative development programming was often based on a poor understanding of why poppy was grown and failed to address the multiple economic roles played by poppy in rural Afghanistan. USAID’s alternative development programs overemphasized crop substitution and did not devote sufficient resources to creating off-farm and non-agricultural income opportunities for rural populations. Furthermore, USAID underestimated the amount of time and investment required to establish crops that could compete with poppy. For example, perennial crops—one of the only viable agricultural alternatives to poppy cultivation—take four to five years to reach their full production potential, whereas most alternative development projects lasted an average of three and one-half years.

DISADVANTAGES

1. More heroin users worldwide

Link: Reduction in anti-narcotics efforts produces big increase in Afghan opiate supply

WASHINGTON POST 2017. (journalist Pamela Constable) 19 June 2017 Opium use booms in Afghanistan, creating a ‘silent tsunami’ of addicted women <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/opium-use-booms-in-afghanistan-creating-a-silent-tsunami-of-addicted-women/2017/06/19/6c5b16f2-3985-11e7-a59b-26e0451a96fd_story.html?utm_term=.81089e7c4d3f>

Over the past five years, programs of crop eradication and substitution have been largely abandoned as foreign funding has ended and insurgent attacks have increased. As a result, tens of thousands of farmers have returned to the lucrative business of growing opium poppies. Last year, 420,000 acres in Afghanistan were devoted to [poppies](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/05/AR2006050501465.html), and opium production rose 43 percent over 2015, to 4,800 tons, [according to](https://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Afghanistan/AfghanistanOpiumSurvey2016_ExSum.pdf) the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime.

Brink: Afghanistan is key to world markets. They produce 90% of the world’s illegal opiate supply

Jelena Bjelica 2018. (independent researcher with Afghan Analysts Network; formerly worked for the UN in Afghanistan) 14 June 2018 How to Fight the Booming Opiate Economy? Harsher and progressive laws, but to no avail <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/how-to-fight-the-booming-opiate-economy-harsher-and-progressive-laws-but-to-no-avail/>

Most cases that ended up in the court were for small amounts of drugs that are punishable by a penalty. This, taken together with a symbolic number of seizures by the Afghan law enforcement agencies (more on this below), means that the country which has almost no legal consequences allows, if not nurtures, the production of over 90 per cent of the world’s illicit needs in opiates, ie opium, and it derivatives – morphine and heroin.

Link: Lower cost heroin = more people using it

Jelena Bjelica 2018. (independent researcher with Afghan Analysts Network; formerly worked for the UN in Afghanistan) 19 Nov 2018 “A Drop from Peak Opium Cultivation: The 2018 Afghanistan survey” <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/a-drop-from-peak-opium-cultivation-the-2018-afghanistan-survey/>

The most worrying outcome of this year’s decrease in opium prices for the rest of the world is that it may trigger a decrease in heroin prices on the world’s illegal markets. An abundance of high-quality, low-cost heroin could result in cheap heroin on the streets and, globally, more people using the drug.

Impact: Heroin = death

BBC news 2017. (journalists Ed Thomas & Claire Kendall) “Why is heroin killing so many people?” 11 Oct 2017 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/Heroin>

But now the number of deaths from heroin are at the highest level since comparable records began. In the past five years death rates have doubled in England, Wales and Scotland. On average in 2016, every five hours someone died after using heroin and/or morphine.

2. Taliban Strengthened

Link: Affirmative permanently cancels counter-narcotics efforts before reform finds the best policy

In the Minor Repair we showed that counter-narcotics efforts can work, if we review and study to do the right ones.

Link: Narcotics money fuels the Taliban

Vanda Felbab-Brown 2016. (Senior Fellow - [Foreign Policy](https://www.brookings.edu/program/foreign-policy/), [Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence](https://www.brookings.edu/center/center-for-21st-century-security-and-intelligence/)) No Easy Exit: Drugs and Counternarcotics Policies in Afghanistan <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FelbabBrown-Afghanistan-final.pdf>

The Taliban is profiting from the drug trade, as are various criminal gangs, which often are connected to the government, the Afghan police, tribal elites, and many ex-warlords-cum-government officials, at various levels. Measuring the size of illicit economies and any derivative numbers, such as profit levels, is notoriously difficult, but it is estimated that somewhere between 20-40 percent of the Taliban’s income comes from drugs.

Impact: Terrorism threat

Nicholas Grossman 2018. (professor of political science at the University of Illinois, where he teaches classes on terrorism and insurgency; national security policy; and 21st century technology and warfare, primarily robotic systems. He is also editor-at-large of Arc Digital. He has a PhD in international relations from the University of Maryland.) 7 February 2018 “The U.S. Needs to Rethink What Winning in Afghanistan Looks Like” https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/02/afghanistan-united-states-military-presence-maintain-troops-vietnam-war-different/

As with the Vietcong, the Taliban and other Afghan insurgents do not directly threaten American security. But the similarities end there. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Taliban willingly hosted al-Qaeda, which proved itself a threat to American security. If the Taliban retakes power, it could allow transnational jihadists to set up shop.

Impact: Homeland Security at risk. If we lose in Afghanistan, they bring the fight here

Tara Copp 2018. (Pentagon Bureau Chief for Military Times; MA in the Security Studies Program from Georgetown University.) 30 May 2018 “Why should the US stay in Afghanistan? Here’s what the top commander there said.” https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2018/05/30/why-should-the-us-stay-in-afghanistan-the-commander-of-coalition-forces-offers-his-views-as-he-departs/ (brackets added)

In a teleconference from Kabul with Pentagon reporters Tuesday, Military Times asked [Army Gen. John Nicholson] Nicholson why, after 17 years, the U.S. should continue to send its sons and daughters to Afghanistan? Why should the U.S. military stay? “Thanks for the question,” Nicholson said. “It’s really important, and it’s been a long war.” “There is a threat from this region to our homeland. So our choice is fairly simple: We either keep the pressure on them here, or they bring the fight to our doorstep,” he said.

3. Drug education & addiction treatment canceled

Link: AFF permanently cancels “all” anti-narcotics aid

That’s what their plan says.

Link: US government has funded drug treatment centers in Afghanistan

WASHINGTON POST 2017. (journalist Pamela Constable) 19 June 2017 Opium use booms in Afghanistan, creating a ‘silent tsunami’ of addicted women <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/opium-use-booms-in-afghanistan-creating-a-silent-tsunami-of-addicted-women/2017/06/19/6c5b16f2-3985-11e7-a59b-26e0451a96fd_story.html?utm_term=.81089e7c4d3f>

The new rehabilitation center, run by the Ministry of Public Health but funded largely by the U.S. government, houses and treats women for 45-day stints of detoxification and therapy at no cost. The premises are locked and guarded; no women are allowed out, and no men are allowed in except for limited visits. Children are welcome to stay, but they are separated from their mothers for play and study, and some are also under treatment for addiction.

Link: US has provided $110 million for drug addiction treatment and prevention

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan” (brackets added) <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

The U.S. government has provided approximately $110.3 million in support of demand reduction programs, including treatment programs for Afghans suffering from drug addiction. Much of this funding was provided by INL [U.S. State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs] to support the work of the Colombo Plan Drug Advisory Program (CPDAP), a regional intergovernmental program created in 1973 to build capacity for drug demand reduction in the Asia and Pacific region. INL’s support in Afghanistan funded dozens of substance abuse treatment centers, school-based prevention programs, outreach centers, women’s shelters, a mobile exhibit, and a drug-use survey.

Link: Small addiction-treatment programs are about the only counter-narcotics aid left

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan” <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

Within the reconstruction effort as a whole, the focus on counternarcotics was also reduced after 2012. In practice, U.S. efforts consisted primarily of supporting specialized counterdrug units and scaled-back eradication initiatives. USAID shifted away from requiring specific counternarcotics indicators in alternative development programs and paid little attention to drug-related impacts. Some U.S.-supported demand-reduction and addiction treatment programs continued, but were increasingly centered on Kabul. DEA’s reduced ability to conduct operations outside Kabul, due in part to the smaller U.S. military footprint and corruption concerns, illustrated the new reality on the ground.

Link: We need “more” drug education and addiction treatment in Afghanistan, not less

Vanda Felbab-Brown 2016. (Senior Fellow - [Foreign Policy](https://www.brookings.edu/program/foreign-policy/), [Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence](https://www.brookings.edu/center/center-for-21st-century-security-and-intelligence/)) No Easy Exit: Drugs and Counternarcotics Policies in Afghanistan <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FelbabBrown-Afghanistan-final.pdf>

Improving access to treatment for addicts and undertaking smart approaches to prevent opiate abuse should be greatly elevated in policy and funded far more extensively than has been the case so far. Apart from expanding and improving treatment centers, such measures can also include very simple ones, such as educating those who scrape the opium resin, many of whom are children, not to lick their fingers. Focus on rural women and their exposure to and (mis)use of opiates should be prioritized. As it is the Taliban’s professed goal to reduce opium use, some of this work might even be possible in insecure areas, particularly if negotiations between the Afghan government and the Taliban get under way.

Impact: Hurts Afghan people’s lives and their economy

Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2018. (independent oversight agency established by Congress in 2008 to supervise and audit the US reconstruction mission in Afghanistan) June 2018 “Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan” <https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/lessonslearned/SIGAR-18-52-LL.pdf>

A 2015 drug use survey estimated there were 2 to 2.5 million drug users in Afghanistan. Of these, 1.3 to 1.6 million—5 percent of the population—were opiate users. Furthermore, the survey’s toxicology tests indicate nearly one in three households tested positive for one or more drugs, and one-quarter of all rural households tested positive for opioid use. This rate of drug usage is one of the highest in the world and has spillover effects in neighboring Iran and throughout Central Asia. High rates of drug abuse adversely impact Afghanistan’s public health and economic wellbeing.

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