

Opium--The Fuel of Instability in Afghanistan: Why the Military Must be Involved in the Solution, and Recommendations for Action

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

OPIUM--THE FUEL OF INSTABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN: WHY THE MILITARY MUST BE INVOLVED IN THE SOLUTION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION by MAJ Thomas A. Duncan II, US Army, 66 pages.

This paper seeks to answer the question, “What role should the militaries of the US and their NATO allies play in the counter-narcotics effort in Afghanistan?” This monograph shows the United States (US) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military support of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s counter-narcotics programs should have a critical supporting role in a comprehensive counter-narcotics program in Afghanistan, and that military support can lead to the reduction of opium-heroin trafficking, reducing the influence of the forces that oppose the legitimate Government of Afghanistan.

To demonstrate why Afghanistan’s opium economy is a serious concern to the US, the first section of this monograph describes how forces that work against the legitimate central government in Kabul profit from these illicit funds. The second section describes the current situation in Afghanistan as it relates to the narcotics issue. The final section contains recommendations for US and NATO military involvement in the counter-narcotics effort in Afghanistan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE LINK BETWEEN POPPIES AND INSTABILITY	7
How the Neo-Taliban Benefits From the Opium/Heroin Trade	7
International Terrorist Organizations, Guerrilla Terrorists and Opium.....	12
Corrupt Afghan Officials and Warlords	16
THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN.....	20
The Opium Economy and the Lack of Infrastructure	20
The Current State of the Afghan Government.....	23
Aid Organization Contributions	25
US Interagency Cooperation on Stopping Opium-Heroin Trafficking	26
Current Role of the Department of State and Department of Justice	29
The Status of US and Coalition Security Forces in Afghanistan.....	31
NATO's Counter Narcotics Role in Afghanistan.....	34
The State of Afghanistan's Security Forces	37
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE US MILITARY	
COUNTER NARCOTICS ACTION	39
Improve Coordination with Allies, Non Government Organizations, and Other Agencies	40
Continue to Train and Equip Afghan Security Forces.....	46
Targeting Traffickers and Opium-Heroin Storage Facilities.....	48
The Military's Role in Information Operations.....	51
Why Eradication Is Not the Answer.....	54
CONCLUSION	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	58

INTRODUCTION

When the United States (US) formally announced the Taliban no longer controlled any territory in Afghanistan in January 2002, an opportunity was created for Afghanistan to become something it had not been in a long time, a stable state. That dream is currently threatened by a number of factors. The central government's inability to fulfill promises to improve security; provide more economic opportunities; and build sufficient infrastructure throughout the country; have left many of the Afghan people feeling that the new government has failed them. There are many forces at work in Afghanistan that are countering the efforts of President Hamid Karzai's central government and the international community to create a stable Afghan state. The Taliban were resurgent in 2006 in the East and South; elements of al-Qaeda still operate along the Afghan-Pakistan border; warlords control portions of Afghanistan and provide the central government only nominal support; criminal organizations grow increasingly powerful; and governmental corruption runs rampant throughout the entire system.

This monograph shows US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military support of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's counter-narcotics (CN) programs can lead to the reduction of opium-heroin trafficking, reducing the influence of the forces that oppose the legitimate Government of Afghanistan (GoA). Section one of this monograph will discuss the question, "Is the opium economy contributing to the violence and instability of Afghanistan?" It will then discuss the link between this illicit trade and the anti-government elements the US and their NATO allies are currently struggling with in Afghanistan. It is nearly impossible to truly prove the opium economy is the causal factor of the instability in Afghanistan. It is equally difficult to prove exactly where opium money is going. However, the opium-heroin trafficking produces such a large amount of unaccounted for income, this paper will leave little doubt a great deal of that money is getting into the hands of anti-governmental forces, and that it is necessary to identify how anti-coalition forces are funded, and reduce their financial support systems. The

second section focuses on the current situation in Afghanistan as it relates to the CN effort. The final section of the paper contains recommendations for NATO and US military involvement in a comprehensive CN program.

All of the anti-governmental forces, the neo-Taliban, local warlords, criminal organizations, and corrupt members of the current government that exist at all levels, require money to finance their operations. This money is raised through a number of licit and illicit activities. But the largest portion of the illicit economy is the growth, production, and trafficking of poppies, opium, and heroin. According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Bank, Afghanistan accounted for 87 percent of the world's opium production in 2005, with an approximate value of 2.663 billion US dollars¹. President Karzai showed he is greatly concerned with the opium problem when he said, "If we do not kill opium, it will kill us."²

President Karzai discussed a plan to combat traffickers of opium and heroin, provide alternative livelihoods, and strengthen state institutions. But he cannot succeed against a \$2.6 billion a year industry alone. Alternative livelihoods, infrastructure improvement, and the reduction of corruption in government are the main effort in Afghanistan's CN fight, but security and the reduction of funds to those elements that oppose the Government of Afghanistan are crucial supporting efforts. In October 2006, NATO extended its security mission to all of Afghanistan, and assumed control of 12,000 US troops, while the US continued to control an additional 8,000 troops that are functioning outside of NATO control.³ NATO and US forces have the lead for providing security to the country of Afghanistan in coordination with the

¹Doris Buddenberg and William A. Boyd, eds. *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy* (New York, NY: United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, The World Bank, 2006), 26-27.

²"Karzai Launches Plan to Fight Opium Trade," *USA Today*, 23 August 2006, 5.

³"NATO Expands Afghanistan Role," *USA Today*, 6 October 2006, A17.

Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and local police forces. These elements are also responsible for the training and equipping of the ANA.

A great deal has been published on the impact of narcotics trafficking on state security, and recommendations for reducing the impact of the drug trade. Crooker (1988) predicted the reduction of opium production in Thailand [part of the 'Golden Triangle']. He believed insurgencies in the 1950's and 60's "became factors for advancing export of opium from the zone [mountainous region of Thailand adjacent to China]." Crooker reported the success of Thai efforts to close heroin refiners and interdict drug traffickers, while avoiding an eradication policy that would force the 'hill tribes' to strengthen their alliance with the communist insurgents.⁴ Dupont (1999) argued that the growing threat of narcotics trade threatened regional stability in East Asia. He recommended a comprehensive and effective regional response led by the ASEAN Regional Forum.⁵ Steinberg (2000) writes about the links between drug trafficking and insurgencies in Myanmar and Columbia. He highlights how a fund from narcotics trafficking finances the insurgencies in those two countries.⁶ Salazar (1993) argues that addressing the underlying economic issues that cause the production and use of drugs is the answer, although he also states this not seem possible at present. Salazar believes the international community should

⁴Richard A. Crooker, "Forces of Change in the Thailand Opium Zone," *Geographical Review* 78, no. 3 (July 1998): 22-35.

⁵Alan Dupont, "Transnational Crime, Drugs and Security in East Asia," *Asian Survey* 39, no. 3 (May-June 1999): 454. "The security effects are felt most acutely at the national and sub-national level, but the burgeoning trade in illicit drugs has the capacity to complicate relations between states." While the symbiotic relationship between drugs and organized crime is not new, the scale and corrosive nature of contemporary drug trade are greater than anything previously experienced by the states of East Asia." "In the most seriously effected states such as Burma, national sovereignty is directly challenged by the activities of drug traffickers, who both operate with relative impunity in areas that are outside the effective control of the government and may employ significant military force to protect and maintain their business interests. Burma's sovereignty arguably is as much under threat from the anti-state imperatives of criminals trafficking in heroin and ATS as it has been from ethnic separatists or insurgents."

⁶Michael Steinberg, "Generals, Guerrillas, and Third World War-Making," *Geographical Review* 90, no. 2 (April 2000): 260-267. "The situation in Myanmar is an excellent example of the connection between well-stocked arms and a rogue government, not just thanks to the SPDC's actions, but also because numerous separatist ethnic armies have financed their military operations through the production and sales of opium." "This [the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia's] power is overwhelmingly supported by cocaine and opium sales from within Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia -controlled territory."

not focus on drug trafficking issues to the detriment of other important concerns, such as development. He also writes he is against legalization and eradication.⁷ Palmer (1992) mentions the Peruvian military's role in reducing the drug trade financing of the Shining Path. He argues for interdiction, enhanced military aid and training (aid from the US to the Peruvian military), intelligence assistance to identify key narcotics traffickers.⁸ Alvarez (1995) also briefly discusses military involvement, but her work focuses on how the improved economy reduced the production and trafficking of narcotics in Bolivia and Peru.⁹ Hansen (2001) writes an article on the economic history of legalized opium in Iran from 1921-1941. He highlights the failure of legalization in that case study.¹⁰ Bagley (1988) argues the demand side of the drug trade must be addressed at the same time as the supply side. He also argues for a better coordinated international effort.¹¹ Pearl (1990) writes on his concerns for the new supply side focused anti-drug policy that emerged under the Reagan and Bush presidencies. He is concerned that the

⁷Luis Suarez Salazar and Luis Fierro. "Drug Trafficking and Social and Political Conflicts in Latin America: Some Hypothesis," *Latin American Perspectives* 20, no. 1 Cuba: Labor, Local Politics, and International Views (Winter 1993): 83-98. "Policies of crop eradication should be prevented from eliminating, without providing viable alternatives, the only source of employment and survival left to many groups."

⁸Scott David Palmer, "Peru, the Drug Business and Shining Path: Between Scylla and Charybdis?," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 34, no 3, Special Issue: Drug Trafficking Update (Autumn 1992): 65-88. It is of note that the reduction of drug funding to Shining Path significantly contributed to the dramatic reduction of that threat to the legitimate Peruvian government.

⁹Elena H. Alvarez, "Economic Development, Restructuring and the Illicit Drug Sector in Bolivia and Peru: Current Policies," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 37, no. 3, Special Issue: Report on Neoliberal Restructuring (Autumn 1995): 125-149. "The illicit drug sector may have served to ameliorate the costs of restructuring to the extent that it has created opportunities for employment in both the agricultural and urban informal sector, especially in Bolivia. However, to the extent that it affects the real exchange rate, and changes (increases) in prices of factors of production and other consumer goods in producing areas, the illicit sector may have made the sectoral and macroeconomic adjustment somewhat more difficult."

¹⁰Bradley Hansen, "Learning to Tax: The Political Economy of the Opium Trade in Iran, 1921-1941," *The Journal of Economic History* 61, no. 1 (March 2001): 95-113. "The Iranian government [under Reza Shah] was constrained by its choice of opium policies by popular protests, by the competition of smugglers, by Reza Shah's commitment to state-led westernization and industrialization, and by his opposition to foreign loans and investment," This is a good case study to consider the effectiveness of legalization of the opium production in Afghanistan as a potential solution. Such a solution is unlikely to work due to the amount of opium being produced, and the GoA's questionable ability to enforce any taxes or standards in outlying provinces at this time.

investment of resources in reduction and interdiction on the supply end would be better spent on decreasing demand in consumer countries, specifically the US.¹²

The aforementioned articles give us a sense of the global impact of narcotics trafficking, and how some countries have confronted this global challenge. It is necessary to consider past CN challenges and efforts before focusing on Afghanistan's opium problem. Much has been written on confronting the challenge of the opium economy in Afghanistan. Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Millen (2005), an Army officer with experience in Afghanistan, wrote "Afghanistan: Reconstituting a Collapsed State." He wrote "A greater emphasis on targeting laboratories and movement of opium products places pressure on drug lords without affecting farmers directly." Lieutenant Colonel Millen also believes emphasis on training Afghan CN forces, increasing public awareness of the "unethical aspects" of opium products, and economic development is essential to CN efforts in the country.¹³ Former Afghan Minister of Interior, Ali Jalali (2006) wrote, "The Taliban-led insurgency, particularly in the South and East, the presence of illegal armed groups, and the illicit drug trade [underline added] are the main security threats in Afghanistan."¹⁴ He points out how the illicit economy in Afghanistan funds anti-government groups such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda, but argued aggressively against poppy eradication programs to combat this source of insecurity. Instead, Jalali argues for Afghan CN forces to be improved by their International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) partners, and for the active targeting of drug traffickers.¹⁵ Barnett Rubin (2007), the Director of Studies and a Senior Fellow at New York University's Center on International Cooperation and the author of "Saving

¹¹Bruce Michael Bagley, "US Foreign Policy and the War on Drugs: Analysis of Policy Failure," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, no. 2/3, Special Issue: Assessing the Americas' War on Drugs (Summer-Autumn 1988): 189-212.

¹²Raphael F. Pearl, "United States International Drug Policy: Recent Developments and Issues," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 123-135.

¹³Raymond A. Millen, "Afghanistan: Reconstituting a Collapsed State" (Monograph, Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, 2005).

¹⁴Ali A. Jalali, "The Future of Afghanistan," *Parameters* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 8.

Afghanistan,”¹⁶ lists some of the problems contributing to the opium-heroin trade; the lack of alternative livelihoods, corrupt police,¹⁷ the link between drug money and the Taliban and al Qaeda.¹⁸ Rubin did not discuss the role of the military in his recent article. However, during an interview Rubin stated he believed there should be no crop eradication at present. He did advocate major investments in rural development and employment creation. He went on to say the military could assist by providing military interdiction and destruction of heroin laboratories and large, para-military smuggling operations. Rubin also believes NATO and US military can provide security to establish governance and rule of law to facilitate licit economic activities. Finally, he recommended focusing intelligence assets on major narcotics smugglers and their high-level political protectors in order to enhance diplomatic and police action.¹⁹

Each of these articles provide great insight into the current status of Afghanistan, show how the opium economy is threatening the current and future stability of the country, and give recommendations on how to proceed in a CN effort. These articles highlight themes that are essentially the same; opium production has increased dramatically and violence is on the rise. Recent articles on Afghanistan do not speak with any detail on the role of NATO military forces in the CN endeavor. Almost every recent written work lists opium as a source of instability in Afghanistan, but none conduct an in depth exploration of the role of NATO’s military in the CN effort.

¹⁵Ibid., 12. “The farmers receive less than 20 percent of the drug revenue in Afghanistan. The rest goes to the nexus of traders, traffickers, illegal militia commanders, and corrupt government officials. Therefore targeting the nexus can have a much greater impact on the enterprise.”

¹⁶Barnett R. Rubin, “Saving Afghanistan,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 1 (January-February 2007): 57-78.

¹⁷Ibid., 9. “Police chief posts in poppy growing districts are sold to the highest bidder: as much as \$100,000 is paid for a six-month appointment to a position with a monthly salary of \$60. And while the Taliban have protected small farmers against eradication efforts, not a single high ranking government official has been prosecuted for the drug-related corruption.”

¹⁸Ibid. “Drugs are only part of a massive cross-border smuggling network that has long provided a significant part of the livelihoods of the major ethnic groups along the border, the Pashtun and the Baluch. Al Qaeda, the Taliban, warlords, and corrupt officials of all ethnic groups profit by protecting and preying on this network. The massive illicit economy, which constitutes the tax base for insecurity, is booming, while the licit economy slows.”

THE LINK BETWEEN POPPIES AND INSTABILITY

To demonstrate the negative impact of poppy growth, this paper will examine how poppies contribute to forces that oppose the NATO backed government in Afghanistan led by President Hamid Karzai. Poppy growth provides resources to the neo-Taliban, international terrorist organizations such as the al-Qaeda network, warlords and corrupt officials within the Afghan government. The trafficking of opium and heroin also results in the spread of instability along the major opium and heroin trade routes. All of these negative influences undermine US interests. US, European Union (EU) and NATO security interests demand they continue to take steps to address the poppy issue.²⁰

How the Neo-Taliban Benefits From the Opium/Heroin Trade

Lieutenant General Karl Eickenberry, the US Commander in Afghanistan, said “Where the road ends, the Taliban begins.”²¹ 2006 was a good year for the Taliban in many respects. They appeared resurgent. The Taliban appear to be moving in larger groups, challenging central authority, resisting NATO elements, and apparently feeling more confident in their ability to move freely.²² It does appear that the huge increase in opium and heroin production and trafficking is contributing to the Taliban resurgence. Any terror or insurgent network needs funds

¹⁹Barnett R. Rubin, Electronic mail with author, on 11 December 2006.

²⁰It is useful to begin with a snapshot of how poppies turn into drug money. Opium resin is harvested from the unripe seed pods of poppy plants. This resin is easily transportable, making it resistant to the challenges of moving products in a country with inadequate infrastructure and torn by violence. The raw opium is then transported to heroin production facilities, either within or outside of Afghanistan, where it is combined with precursors to become heroin. Heroin and raw opium are both trafficked out of Afghanistan in exchange for money or products.

²¹Anne Mulrine, A Dangerous Backslide, USNews.com, 8 October 2006, Available from <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/061008/16afghan.htm>. Internet. Accessed on 16 December 2006.

²²Sami Yousafzai, “Want to Meet the Taliban? No Prob,” *Newsweek*, 25 December 2006.

for recruitment, bases, food, equipment, bribery, and others.²³ Financial support is a critical pillar of support for an insurgency. While it is difficult to ascertain exactly how much drug money is moving into the hands of the Taliban, the Taliban do have a historical link to the opium trade, and are clearly benefiting from trafficking currently.

There is a history, a link, between violence in Afghanistan and drug trafficking. During the war against the Soviet Union, the economy and infrastructure of Afghanistan was destroyed, causing “opium to become an important source of revenue for the opposition and cultivation expanded.”²⁴ Once the Soviets destroyed the licit subsistence economy, they were left with almost no choice but to turn to the narcotics trade to fund their war.

The Afghan opium trade did not get started without help. Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Service Intelligence helped anti-communist Mujahideen to establish the Afghan drug trade to assist them in their fight against the Soviets.²⁵ This allowed the Mujahedin to “expand poppy growth and increase taxes as they expanded areas under their control.” The Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Service Intelligence also assisted in the set up of heroin laboratories along the Pakistan and Afghanistan border. Today, heroin production is concentrated on the Afghan side of the border that is currently under Taliban control.²⁶ Annual profits from the narcotics trade during this period was estimated at \$75 to \$100 million annually.²⁷ It appears the majority of these profits went to the Mujahideen in order to fund the insurgency. At the end of the war, US support to the Mujahideen stopped, increasing their reliance on drug revenues.²⁸ Such a systemic source of revenue has proven impossible to slow down so far.

²³Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed and How to Stop It* (Chicago and Los Angeles: Bonus Books, Volt Press, 2003), 57.

²⁴Chris Johnson and Leslie Jolyon, *Afghanistan: The Mirage of Peace* (London, New York: Zed Books, 2005), 106.

²⁵Christian Parenti, “The Afghan Poppies Bloom,” *The Nation* (24 January 2005): 22-25.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Alain Labrousse and Laura Garces, trans. “The FARC and the Taliban’s Connection to Drugs,” *Journal of Drug Issues* 35, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 42.

²⁸*Ibid.*

After the war with the Soviet Union ended and the Taliban came to power, there is further evidence they were involved in drug production and trade. By 1999, the Taliban controlled the majority, eight of ten, opium producing provinces in Afghanistan.”²⁹ These included provinces such as Helmand and Kandahar that are still influenced by the Taliban today. The provinces that were producing, at this time, are areas where the Taliban exert their influence, and still produce opium today.³⁰ These eight provinces produced much of Afghanistan’s opium, with the other two provinces only producing 4 percent of the total.³¹ Drug revenue for the Taliban during this period was estimated to be \$75-\$100 million annually.³² While relatively small compared to the \$2.6 billion generated by opium-heroin trafficking today, the difference in these figures demonstrates the spread of poppy production in Afghanistan. While some may point to the Taliban’s banning of poppy in the late 1990’s as proof they were reducing the amount of opium flowing from the country, there is ample evidence they were not truly committed, or did not have the ability, to completely stop production. During this period in the late 1990’s, the leader of the Taliban, Mullah Omar stated “We will permit neither opium or heroin to be sold in Afghanistan itself. It is not up to us to protect non-Muslims who wish to buy drugs and get intoxicated.”³³ While this paper has shown the anti-communist fighters in Afghanistan benefited from the opium trade in the 1980’s, and that the highest poppy production in the 1990’s were in Taliban controlled areas, and the Taliban leadership did not oppose narcotics trafficking, there is still no real smoking gun to prove the Taliban’s current link to the opium economy beyond a reasonable doubt. There is enough evidence to warrant more investigation into the link between

²⁹Kamal Matinuddin, *The Taliban Phenomenon: Afghanistan 1994-1997* (New York, Oxford, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 42.

³⁰Johnathan Goodhand, “From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North Eastern Afghanistan,” *Central Asian Survey* 19, no. 2 (June 2000): 267. War economy developed in Afghan, which means there are strong vested interests in the current situation. “Many Afghan warlords have used drugs money to fund their military campaigns. However, approximately 90 percent of drugs production is currently taking place in Taliban held areas.” (This is in 2000!!)

³¹Ibid.

³²Labrousse and Garces, 103.

³³Ibid.

the Taliban and opium-heroin traffickers, and how much money from the opium economy finds its way into the Taliban's war chest.

The US military is aware the Taliban are seeing some profits from narcotics trafficking. In a recent interview the author conducted with Mr. Bob Vierkant, The Counter Narcotics Coordinator in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, he said, "The Taliban see this [the opium trade] as a cash crop to not only add funding to their coffers but to discredit the Karzai government. They facilitate trafficking by providing protection and moving narcotics and taxing production. They have also been known to apply pressure on farmers to cultivate poppy."³⁴ Vierkant believes there is a connection between the opium-heroin traffickers and the Taliban fighters.

There is a natural link between drug lords and insurgents according to author Rachel Ehrenfeld in a 1990 study focusing on the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia and the drug lords in Columbia. She found, "There is now direct working links forged between terrorist-guerrilla groups and narco-traffickers to carry out acts of terrorism. Their motives may be different, but their goal is to destabilize and undermine the government."³⁵ The Taliban and drug traffickers in Afghanistan seem to share a similar relationship. While both groups may have different motivations, they are both attempting to undermine the Karzai government for their personal gain. Most of the Taliban's gain is through taxing poppy farmers.

Mr. John O'Rourke, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) representative to the Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Group at the military's Central Command (CENTCOM), stated the Taliban are taxing poppy farmers at approximately 10 percent in the southern areas they control. While the number varies in any given area, O'Rourke says 10 percent "is an agreeable figure." Government officials are aware the Taliban is collecting money from the drug trade, and that they are using the money to improve their position militarily. O'Rourke goes on to say, "When you see

³⁴Bob Vierkant, Telephone interview by author, 8 December 2006.

the weapons of the Taliban and the foreign fighters [in Afghanistan], they often have newer weapons and more ammunition than we [US forces] do. Someone is paying for them.”³⁵ While this statement is clearly circumstantial evidence, it does call for increasing investigation into what the fund sources for the resurgent Taliban are, clearly establish how much of that money comes from taxing the opium economy, and work to limit their access to the cash they need to conduct operations against NATO and GoA forces.

The fact that the Taliban are able to tax economic activity, to include the opium economy, is an indicator they are reestablishing control in some areas where the Karzai government lacks control. They are able to gain funding for their insurgent activities through the illicit economy. Taxing the opium economy increases the Taliban’s ability to control these areas by increasing their available resources to pay their fighters, bribe GoA officials, and create their own social support system in opposition to the legitimate governments.

Helmand province is not only considered the “birthplace” of the Taliban, it has also historically been a major trade route for opium and heroin. Pakistan’s Directorate of Inter-Service Intelligence established this link with the Mujahideen, and there appears to be a link between Afghanistan drug traffickers in the Helmand province and Pakistani traffickers.³⁷ The fact is that the Taliban are operating in Helmand, and Helmand is a major route for drug traffickers. Johnson and Jolyon (2005) suggest the link between the Taliban controlled areas in Kandahar and trafficking elsewhere.³⁸ The insurgents are profiting solely from opium, there is ample evidence the neo-Taliban are profiting from the trade.

³⁵Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Narco-Terrorism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1990), 98.

³⁶John O’Rourke, Telephone interview by author, 7 December 2006.

³⁷Lieutenant Colonel John M. Rochelle, Interview by author, 13 December 2006, Fort Leavenworth, KS. “Drug routes run through Helmand and out through Pakistan.” Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle is an officer in the British Military that worked on decision to commit UK forces to Helmand Province in Afghanistan while working as an Operations Team Leader for Afghanistan, J3 Branch of UK Permanent Joint HQ, February-September 2005 in London.

³⁸Johnson and Jolyon, 121. “In Hazarajat, on the other hand, the contract is more tenuous. Poppy growing is a new activity brought in by outsiders and, though local commanders still benefit, the really big

The GoA also appears well aware of the links between the Taliban and opium. “It’s reached a point where about half the opium we seize in the provinces has some link to the Taliban,” says General Ali Shah Pkhtawar, Director of the Anti-criminal Branch of the Kabul Police.³⁹ While coalition forces must be careful to ensure GoA officials do not have other motives for linking the Taliban to the drug trade, it is clear that Karzai government public officials are making an effort to tell the world the Taliban is linked to opium trafficking.

While the opium trade is not the only source of revenue for the Taliban today, it is clearly a means of financial support that is too large to be ignored.

International Terrorist Organizations, Guerrilla Terrorists and Opium

International terrorist groups that work against US interest’s world wide are also making money from the Afghan opium trade. Although it is not clear exactly who is benefiting or how the money is traveling, there is a great deal of evidence that points to the link between narcotics and terrorism.⁴⁰

In the late 1990’s, al-Qaeda would purchase crops directly from growers in Kandahar, Helmand, Nangarhar, Herat and Badakhshan provinces, and deliver them to clandestine laboratories.⁴¹ This shows a significant connection between the Taliban, al-Qaeda and opium. These provinces were controlled by the Taliban at this time. While it is not solid proof of the link

players are from elsewhere. The lines of profit and control do not run to the centre of government but rather to the traders (and warlords) in Kandahar; the connection is to the periphery, not the centre.”

³⁹Gretchen Peters, “Taliban Drug Trade: Echoes of Columbia,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 November 2006.

⁴⁰Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Funding Evil: How Terrorism is Financed and How to Stop It* (Chicago and Los Angeles: Bonus Books, Volt Press, 2003), 53. “Terrorism and drugs go together like rats and the bubonic plague,” said [former] Attorney General John Ashcroft. “They thrive off each other, support each other, [and] feed off each other.” I grant the Attorney General’s statement is incorrect. The rats were the vector, while it was the fleas that transmitted the plague. Getting rid of the rats did not slow the plague, improved sanitation did. Having said that, it is still worth mentioning that the US Attorney General is concerned with the link between international terrorists and narcotics trafficking.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 53. “Conversion laboratories would then refine the opium into both morphine base and heroin. The conversion labs are still operational in Afghanistan, particularly in the Helmand province. They are also operational in Pakistan, particularly on the northwest frontier on the Afghan border.”

between the Taliban and opium, it appears the opium-heroin trade flourishes in Taliban held areas.

John Boit was a Department of Defense (DOD) contractor who assisted the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior's (MOI) public relations office. He conducted a great deal of work on the CN while working in the MOI. In an interview Boit stated, "Farmers, drug lords and Taliban get a lot of the money, but a lot of the money is unaccounted for."⁴² Boit believes money is flowing from the opium economy to the Taliban and the al-Qaeda network; the US and their NATO allies must continue to work to reduce the amount of money going from the opium economy to anti-coalition elements.

The US and her allies appear to have had success cutting into funding to terror organizations. Ehrenfeld (2003) states "With many channels of funding cut off or curtailed since 11 September 2001, western authorities claim many of the Islamic groups affiliated with al Qaeda in Europe and Southeast Asia have turned to financing themselves and that dealing in narcotics has become one of their mainstays."⁴³ It has also been reported by DEA sources following the 2001 war in Afghanistan that "al-Qaeda gave large sums of money to Afghan farmers to increase opium production."⁴⁴ It appears the US and their allies have had some success reducing the amount of financial support available to international terror organizations in recent years, but they will continue to look for new sources of funding, and they cannot stop identifying these new sources and reducing or stopping them. The opium trade appears to be growing in importance to terror organizations. To understand how money is made by many terror guerilla and criminal organizations on the trade route, the US military have to examine the connections between the international terror organizations, trade routes, and local insurgent-guerrillas.

⁴²John Boit, Telephone interview by author, 8 December 2006.

⁴³Ed Blanche, "Multibillion \$ Illicit Drug Sales Fuel Terror Offensive," *The Middle East* (November 2004): 10.

⁴⁴Faisal Islam, "World Bank Chief Issues Opium Alert," *Guardian Unlimited*, 16 March 2003. Ehrenfeld also attributes a similar statement to "DEA sources" that wished to remain anonymous.

Major opium trade routes leave Afghanistan in all directions to the international consumer markets. Opium drug trade moves to Europe through Pakistan, Turkey, the Central Asian Republics, Russia, or the Balkans, to the US through Pakistan, to Moscow Central Asia, and Chechnya.⁴⁵ Most of Afghanistan's poppy products end up in Europe. According to British Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle, the United Kingdom is in Afghanistan as part of international community effort to stabilize the country and also because 90 percent of the heroin in the United Kingdom (UK) originates in Afghanistan.⁴⁶ Understanding the opium trade routes enables us to understand how terror, guerilla-insurgent, and criminal groups are benefiting from the trade at every stop along the route. Al-Qaeda, Hizbollah, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) all have benefited from their role in the Afghani opium trade.

Al-Qaeda and Hizbollah in Lebanon are two organizations that have made a great deal of money from the heroin trade.⁴⁷ Morphine base, from which heroin is produced (predominantly in Afghanistan) is moved to Lebanon, where the Hizbollah refines it and smuggles it into Europe.⁴⁸ This is a clear example of Afghanistan opium production contributing to terrorists in other areas. It is likely that Afghan poppy fields contributed to Hizbollah's success in their war with Israel in the summer of 2006, by providing them more money for weapons, and to buy popular support. There are many other guerrilla-terrorist organizations that benefit from the Afghan drug trade.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia facilitate opium smuggling and use the trade as a source of revenue to achieve their local aims, many of which counter US national interest. The

⁴⁵Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, "Opiate Smuggling Routes from Afghanistan to Europe and Asia," *JANE'S Intelligence Review* (1 March 2003): 27.

⁴⁶Rochelle.

⁴⁷Ehrenfeld, 55. "Terrorist groups that benefit the most from the trade in heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, and hashish are al-Qaeda, Hizballah, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC). For the year 2000, for example, revenues generated from illegal drugs for the FARC alone have been determined by US experts to be at least \$7 to \$8 billion."

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 44. "Morphine base, from which heroin is produced, is channeled from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Syria to Lebanon, where it is refined into heroin by Hizballah in laboratories in the Beka'a Valley."

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is an ally of the Taliban and al-Qaeda⁴⁹ and also benefits from the opium trade. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is seeking to overthrow the government of Uzbekistan to establish an Islamic regime across central Asia. They have also targeted US forces in Afghanistan as well as US diplomatic facilities in central Asia in recent years.⁵⁰ That “Albanian Islamists” and the KLA in Kosovo “have used \$4 million in profits from Afghan heroin, which they sold in European cities, to purchase weapons, including SA18 and SA 7 surface-to-air missiles.”⁵¹ There is no doubt that the heroin from Afghanistan continues to flow through the Balkans.⁵² Any illicit trade that strengthens local criminals or the potential resurgence of any armed group could provide the spark that reignites a Balkan conflict. The Opium trade through the Balkans clearly undermines NATO efforts to maintain long term peace in the region.

It is also interesting to note there is a link between al-Qaeda and the Revolutionary Armed Forces in Columbia, where the US is currently deeply invested in helping the Colombian government in its insurgency and drug war. Al-Qaeda became involved with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia in the mid 1990’s. Al-Qaeda helped drug lords in Columbia to begin harvesting poppies and improve their heroin trade. “According to Columbia’s former Police Chief, General Jose Cadena, ‘The ones who brought this problem [to Columbia] were Afghans and Pakistanis. They entered with tourist visas through Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, and here they worked giving instructions for planting poppy.’”⁵³ There appears to be no reason to believe that contacts established by al-Qaeda operatives between the Taliban and Revolutionary Armed

⁴⁹Scott Peterson, “Fabled Silk Road Now Paved with Narcotics,” *Christian Science Monitor*. 8 January 2001, 109. “The head of the Kyrgyz National Security Council, Bolot Djanuzakov, states that Islam is ‘only a veil . . . [the IMU’s] main aim is distribution of drugs.’”

⁵⁰MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, Group Profile, Available from <http://www.tkb.org/Group.jsp?groupID=4075>; Internet; accessed on 8 December 2006.

⁵¹Ehrenfeld, 55.

⁵²Lorretta Napoleoni, *Terror Incorporated: Tracing the Dollars Behind the Terror Network* (New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 95-96. “Mujahedin moved from the fight in Afghanistan to Chechnya and from there to Bosnia and Kosovo. These men established the ‘Balkan Route’ for smuggling Afghanistan opium into Europe. This trade also helps move weapons, and raise money for the Islamist insurgencies in Central Asia, Chechnya, and the Balkans.”

⁵³Ehrenfeld, 51.

Forces of Columbia do not still exist in some fashion. It is clear that the money obtained through opium and heroin trafficking is impacting US interests around the world.

Al-Qaeda is still the primary terror threat to US interests. Drug money is financing some amount of al-Qaeda operations. While the exact amount of funding coming from the drug trade is subject to debate, any amount of money being raised or laundered through drug smuggling is too much. There is no reason to believe drug money will stop finding its way to terror organizations any time in the near future. According to the Ehrenfeld (2003), “because of the steadily expanding consumer market, and because drugs are easily concealed and converted into local currency, they are likely to remain a major funding source for al-Qaeda and other groups.”⁵⁴

Corrupt Afghan Officials and Warlords

It is not just terrorists and guerrilla organizations that receive money from Afghan poppy fields. There are also corrupt government officials and warlords that profit from the trade, undermining the US backed Karzai government in Kabul.

In December 2004, President Karzai announced a goal to complete the eradication of the opium-heroin trade in two years. But according to Larry P. Goodson, Professor of Middle East Studies at the US Army War College, “so much of the economy is now tied to this industry [opium-heroin], and so many senior officials and/or family members reportedly including Karzai’s brother) are complicit in the traffic that the goal is a pipe dream.”⁵⁵ Over two years have passed at the time of this writing, and the opium trade has only increased, proving Mr. Goodson’s prediction correct. In addition, the Afghanistan Compact written by the Afghan government and her allies (to include the US, UK, Japan, Germany, Italy) in early 2006 gives the following CN timeline for the opium-heroin problem in Afghanistan.

⁵⁴Ibid., 51. Ehrenfelds analysis for this quote was based on research from the following publication. Arturo Salinas, “US Drug Czar Says Drug Smuggling Gangs Help Fund Terrorist Groups,” Associated Press Worldstream, 31 August 2002.

“By **end-2010**, the Government will strengthen its law enforcement capacity at both central and provincial levels, resulting in a substantial annual increase in the amount of drugs seized or destroyed and processing facilities dismantled, and in effective measures, including targeted eradication as appropriate, that contribute to the elimination of poppy cultivation.”

“By **end-2010**, the Government and neighboring and regional governments will work together to increase coordination and mutual sharing of intelligence, with the goal of an increase in the seizure and destruction of drugs being smuggled across Afghanistan’s borders and effective action against drug traffickers.”⁵⁶

Clearly the signatories of the Afghanistan Compact, which includes the Karzai Government, the US and the UK, are conceding the most they hope to accomplish is begin to reduce the opium trade over the next four years. The link between the drug trade and corruption is a critical reason for the slow pace of reducing the drug trade and the influence of drug lords on the future of Afghanistan. No one can afford to wait until 2010 to begin to seriously confront this issue.

Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle explains that the Japanese led effort to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate militia members has had some success. But most of the positive effect has been disarming and demobilizing the former militias. The challenge has been proving former militiamen other viable economic options, or reintegrating them into society so they can have a positive impact on the Afghan future. In Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle’s words “People who used to be part of the warlord armies now are drifting around with nothing to do.” This leads experienced fighters to poppy farming or drug trafficking to survive. Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle went on to say the problem “goes back to the influence of the warlords who use the stuff [opium-

⁵⁵Larry P. Goodson, “Afghanistan in 2004: Electoral Process and Opium Bloom,” *Asian Survey* 45, no. 1 (2005): 88-97.

⁵⁶The London Conference on Afghanistan, The-Afghanistan-Compact, 31 January-1February 2006, Available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/20060130%20Afghanistan%20Compact%20Final%20Final,0.doc> London; Internet; accessed on 16 December 2006.

heroin] to maintain their influence.”⁵⁷ The lack of economic alternatives forces former militiamen to become involved in the drug trade, reinforcing local warlords.

This illicit economy is not just providing funds to international terror organizations or the neo-Taliban; it is also reinforcing the power of corrupt officials that are part of the Afghan government. Sarah Chayes, the author of *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Fall of the Taliban*, and a current resident of Kandahar, describes how corrupt US backed members of the current government abused their power and used drug money to help fund their operations. One such Afghan official was Razziq Shirzai. Razziq Shirzai’s men protected the outskirts of the US compound in Kandahar. They used the area they controlled to organize shipments of marijuana to Pakistan. Fuel trucks came into Kandahar, unloaded fuel, were loaded with marijuana, and sent south through Pakistan.⁵⁸

While this example involves the shipment of marijuana instead of opium, it is a good account of a local official using drugs to help finance their operations and solidify power. What makes this example worse is that it occurred on a US military base in Afghanistan, which creates the appearance the US looks the other way when leaders they support are involved in the drug trade. It does not matter whether that is actually the case or not, incidents such as this cause the US to lose credibility with the Afghan people when it comes to reducing the influence of the drug trade.

There are many reports of local leaders (governors, and local law enforcement) looking the other way when it comes to the opium trade. Evidence shows production labs are often out in the open,⁵⁹ and small growers feeling protected because of the certainty the local and central

⁵⁷Rochelle. Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle’s insight given his time focusing on Afghanistan during his time in the UK Ministry of Defense gives him a great deal of insight into the situation in Afghanistan.

⁵⁸Sarah Chayes, *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 183-184.

⁵⁹Johnson and Jolyon, 116-117. “Heroin labs are often out in the open. Local rulers are being paid to allow them to continue.”

government will take no concrete action.⁶⁰ It is not only the people of Afghanistan to sense the government is not going to stop the trade any time soon.

Afghanistan's neighbors are seeing the effect of members of the Afghan government dealing in the drug trade as well. General Rustam Nazarov, the head of Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency, sees his country's drug challenges as a direct result of Afghanistan's opium-heroin trade. Shortly after the US-Afghan victory in 2002, Nazarov said, "The prospect of the Northern Alliance cracking down on the drug trade in a grateful token of appreciation for the US aid in its victory is unlikely. The drug trade finances the Northern Alliance just as it did the Taliban. To give it up would be to give up their income."⁶¹ The opium-heroin trade is only part of the problem confronting warlords and their links to the illicit economy.

Former warlords that have been brought into the Afghan government at all levels are using their position to enrich themselves.⁶² Any member of the government that is involved in the illicit economy, largely comprised of the opium-heroin trade, is not investing their profits into alternative livelihoods and infrastructure for the benefit of the future Afghanistan.

Corrupt government officials, the neo-Taliban, insurgents all along the opium-heroin trade routes, as well as international terror organizations, such as the al-Qaeda network, are all funded in part by the Afghan drug trade. The volume of the opium-heroin trade demands that the Afghan government and NATO allies address the issue in order to reduce opium-heroin production and trade, which will result in the strengthening of the GoA and increase the stability of surrounding countries.

⁶⁰Ibid., 119. "What is noticeable in Badakhshan is that small growers feel protected, because almost everyone in power in the province is involved in poppy, and the networks run right to the centre of government. Few people here think it is possible to stop the growing, or that the new governor will even try.

⁶¹Aram Roston, "Central Asia's Heroin Problem." *The Nation* (25 March 2002): 23-26.

⁶²Goodson, 91. "Virtually all warlords utilized their power to enrich themselves and their followers, coming to control well over half the cash economy, not only through the opium/heroin trade but also via customs monies, illegal real estate transactions, mineral wealth, timber and road tolls."

This paper has examined why the US and NATO must care about the opium-heroin issue. The illicit nature of opium-heroin trafficking makes it nearly impossible to determine exactly how much narcotics money is moving into the bank accounts of insurgent and terror groups in Afghanistan and along the trade routes, it seems clear that the drug trade is providing financial support to bad actors that are opposed to US national interests. But before making recommendations on how to better address the challenge of reducing the opium economy in Afghanistan, it is important to examine the current situation in Afghanistan, and make some predictions on what the situation will look like in the near future.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

This author can not make recommendations on how NATO military forces can continue to contribute to the solution without having at least a cursory view of what day-to-day life is like in Afghanistan. One must understand the situation in Afghanistan to appreciate why the Afghan people grow and trade poppy, opium, and heroin. This monograph will briefly examine of the current state of affairs of the economy, government, infrastructure, and impact of foreign aid in Afghanistan. Then it will explore the current status of some of the elements available to combat the growing heroin-opium trade, such as the Afghan security forces, NATO forces in theater, and other US agencies.

The Opium Economy and the Lack of Infrastructure

The opium economy has dominated Afghanistan since the 1980's. A war economy developed that funded Afghan warlords in their fight against the USSR, then each other, and now the GoA and NATO.⁶³ Dr. Nasreen Ghufraan wrote that "The neo-Taliban insurgency has increased despite the presence of a large US led coalition force and ISAF, and the opium

⁶³Johnathan Goodhand, 267. "Many Afghan warlords have used drugs money to fund their military campaigns. However, approximately 90 percent of drugs production is currently taking place in Taliban held areas."

production has risen to levels threatening and retarding the growth of the legal Afghan economy.”⁶⁴ Ghufuran believes the opium economy is one of the major challenges to reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Since 2004, for the first time, farmers in every province of Afghanistan planted poppy.⁶⁵ Although there are varying estimates regarding how many Afghans are involved in poppy cultivation or the drug trade, a recent estimate that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* is one eighth of the population.⁶⁶ In January 2006, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics published comparison between the opium and licit economic production in the country in 2005. The licit economy was US\$5.2 billion and the opium economy was valued at US\$2.7 billion that year.⁶⁷ To make recommendations on how to address the opium problem, the sheer volume of this illicit economy and the huge number of Afghani’s involved has to be understood. The current economy gives many Afghan people no choice but to become involved in the drug trade.

There is no easy way to replace a farmer’s poppy income with any substitute. In her article “Afghan Poppies Bloom,” Christian Parenti wrote, “It costs 1,000 Pakistani rupees to plant one jerib of poppy, and one jerib will yield at least 15 kilograms of poppy, which is worth 300,000 Pakistani rupees (US\$5,000) at least.” Parenti also quoted an Afghan farmer who said “Wheat takes twice as long to grow, and we can buy almost ten times as much wheat as we could produce if we grow poppy instead.”⁶⁸ Profit from wheat cannot compete with opium profit under the current system. The German Aid organization Agro Action estimates the profits from one

⁶⁴Nasreen Ghufuran, “Afghanistan in 2005: The Challenges to Reconstruction,” *Asian Survey* 46, no. 1 (January-February 2006), 38.

⁶⁵Joel Hafvenstein, “Afghanistan’s Drug Habit,” *New York Times*, 20 September 2006.

⁶⁶Josh Meyer, “Pentagon Resists Pleas For Help in Afghan Opium Fight,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 5 December 2006.

⁶⁷Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy: An updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem* (Kabul, Afghanistan: Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, January 2006), 11.

⁶⁸Christian Parenti, “The Afghan Poppies Bloom,” *The Nation* (24 January 2005): 22-25. A jerib equals approximately 1/2 acre. A farmer can produce approximately 28 kilos of opium/jerib.

kilogram of opium are US\$600-US\$1000, while a kilogram of wheat is likely to bring an Afghan farmer US\$1.⁶⁹ That income figure also assumes the farmer can get his licit produce to market before it spoils given the current infrastructure and violence.

While it is important to understand why farmers are attracted to poppy cultivation, it is also equally important to understand where most of the profit goes. Afghanistan veteran Lieutenant Colonel Raymond A. Millen wrote that “Although the farmers are drawn to poppy cultivation for a living, the majority of the profits go to traffickers, warlords, militia leaders, and even the Taliban, al Qaeda, and Hizb-i-Islam (HIB).⁷⁰ While it is vital to keep the funds generated from the opium-heroin trade out of the hands of their enemies, the average Afghan farmer is not an enemy of the coalition. The US solution to the opium problem has to consider the fundamentals of the “economics of the opium culture.”⁷¹ When devising recommendations for reducing the opium economy, it is also necessary to consider the lack of infrastructure on the average Afghan farmer.

Based on his study of the situation while in London, Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle stated “Afghanistan needs the infrastructure to process and transport other agricultural products, whether it’s pomegranates or wheat. They also need better and improved irrigation systems.” After serving as a DOD contractor with the Afghan MOI for a year, John Boit confirms that “What licit goods can be grown can’t be moved due to poor infrastructure and security.” Boit went on to describe how Kabul international airport has no warehouse. Even if a farmer can get his produce to Kabul, there is currently no system for transporting produce out of Afghanistan.

Afghan farmers have few choices that are economically viable in large portions of Afghanistan. Any plan for reducing poppy cultivation has to take the poor economic situation and infrastructure into account. Given the dependence of so many Afghans on the illicit economy, is

⁶⁹Millen, 3.

⁷⁰Ibid., 8.

the Afghan government capable of reducing the opium economy without significant outside assistance?

The Current State of the Afghan Government

President George W. Bush said, “Poverty does not make poor people into terrorist and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their own borders.”⁷² That statement is a good summation of the challenge the opium economy presents to the Karzai government. Poverty forces many to turn to poppy farming to survive, which fuels an illicit economy, providing resources to the forces that work against the central government. For these reasons, and based on his experiences with the Afghan MOI, John Boit also believes, “It is a recipe for disaster if we do nothing about the opium problem in Afghanistan.” Since doing nothing is not a viable option if the US government expects the current GoA to survive, they will examine their CN plan, and consider some of the potential roadblocks to achieving their goals.

President Karzai seems committed to reducing the opium economy. He has stated the GoA’s efforts to reduce the opium economy is to disrupt trade by targeting traffickers, providing alternative employment to farmers, and strengthen weak state institutions.⁷³ The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Counter-Narcotics--*National Drug Control Strategy* (January 2006) listed disruption, economic diversity, reduced demand, and strengthening state institutions as the four national priorities for stopping opium trafficking.⁷⁴ The same document also listed that the

⁷¹Ibid., vi. “The failure of a CN strategy for Afghanistan reflects fundamental inattentiveness to the economics of opium culture, the potential ethical and social forces, and the opiate processing nodes.”

⁷²Rebecca Carr, “Authorities Say Terrorists Planned Drugs-for-Guns Plots,” *Cox News Service*, 7 November 2002. This paper has also pointed out the massive profit from the opium-heroin trade as a risk to their strategies success.

⁷³“Karzai Launches Plan to Fight Opium Trade.” *USA Today*, 23 August 2006.

⁷⁴Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 17. Reducing demand does seem out of place here. While there are a growing number of heroin users in Afghanistan, most of the markets are outside the country. Demand reduction would presumably be the responsibility of states that serve as major heroin markets.

policy was not eradication led.⁷⁵ Given the situation that this paper has described so far, these seem like rational steps forward for the GoA.

But the GoA has also named what they see as the risks to their strategy's success. They are:

1. Insecurity and corruption
2. Lack of reconstruction funding
3. Lack of progress on judicial, police, admin, fiscal reforms, and disarming illegal groups
4. Lack of structure at the provincial level
5. Lack of coordination across ministries and donors.⁷⁶

Insecurity and corruption is being funded to a great extent by the heroin-opium trade. The other risks appear to be reasonable requests for international assistance. In order to ensure NATO's success in Afghanistan, this monograph must consider how NATO's military organization can best contribute to addressing these risks. Critical to this success is addressing the lack of structure at the provincial level. Mr. John O'Rourke, the DEA representative to the CENTCOM, has worked in Afghanistan on multiple occasions. He describes the capital city of Kabul as having the rule of law, but outside of Kabul is a "no mans land."⁷⁷ He attributes the lack of influence of the Karzai government outside of Kabul to drugs and corruption. In his words, they are the "roadblocks to success." Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle believes the "People who control the drug trade are leaders or people in positions of power." As this paper described in the

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid., 30.

⁷⁷O'Rourke. When describing Kabul as a no mans land, O'Rourke is referring to the lack of control the Karzai government has over most of Afghanistan. His span of control is largely limited to Kabul and adjoining provinces.

section on how opium helps fuel corruption, this is a serious force working against the central government's CN efforts.⁷⁸

Aid Organization Contributions

According to the US Government of Accountability Office, in 2004, US Agency for International Development oversaw \$922 million of aid assistance to Afghanistan (70 percent of this assistance went to the areas in the vicinity the cities of Kabul and Kandahar).⁷⁹ This is no small amount of money. The situation has deteriorated since that money was spent on Afghanistan in 2004. What has happened to reduce the impact of foreign aid? The two biggest reasons appear to be the security situation and the lack of control over how those funds are spent.

The security situation for aid workers in the Helmand province of Afghanistan was still very grave in 2006. Joel Hafvenstien, an aid worker that wrote an article for the *New York Times* where he described the security situation he attempted to work in. Hafvenstien wrote: "We heard rumors the attackers were Taliban troops--and indeed the attacks were the harbingers of the Taliban resurgence in Helmand has seen in the last year. We also heard the Taliban had been **paid by local drug barons** [emphasis added] to attack our project. All we knew was that we were the targets, and that we could not protect ourselves. Within days, we had stopped all projects and most of the staff went home." He went on to say, "Security was our Achilles' heel. There was a new American military base by the graveyard at the edge of town, but the few score Iowa National Guard members there lacked the manpower and local knowledge to protect us."⁸⁰

International aid and non governmental organizations (NGO's) are essential to successfully improving economic conditions in Afghanistan, undermining the drug lords,

⁷⁸Rochelle.

⁷⁹United States Government of Accountability Office, *Afghanistan Reconstruction: Despite Some Progress, Deteriorating Security and Other Obstacles Continue to Threaten Achievement of U.S. Goals* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2005), 5.

⁸⁰Joel Hafvenstein, "Afghanistan's Drug Habit," *New York Times*, 20 September 2006.

insurgents, and corrupt local leaders. Hafvenstien's experience how important security is to the NGO's potential for success.

The UK has the lead for CN assistance. In October 2001 they contributed US\$70 million spread out over three years to purchase and distribute wheat seed and fertilizer to help wean farmers off the opium economy. As it turns out, these assets were not used to improve local wheat production. The Department of International Development ascertained the farmers had "kept the fertilizer, used it on the poppy and sold the wheat seed."⁸¹ This is an indicator of what is happening when aid is distributed without oversight. Well intentioned aid can actually contribute to the poppy fields that help fund anti-coalition elements in Afghanistan.

But the international assistance is imperative. Members of the international community such as the US, UK, Germany, Italy, Japan and many others, are investing tremendous effort to provide the Afghan government the tools they need to enhance security and stabilize the local government. John Boit said, "We worked hard [in the Afghan MOI] to keep money coming into the country so they could fight this [opium]." NGO's are not the only source of aid to Afghanistan. There are a myriad of US agencies engaged in helping the GoA solve the opium-heroin problem.

US Interagency Cooperation on Stopping Opium-Heroin Trafficking

NATO and the US DOD are not the only key players in stopping the flow of funding to anti-coalition forces in Afghanistan. The DEA, Department of State (DOS), and Department of Justice (DOJ) all provide essential capabilities and expertise that are not available in military organizations. The US and NATO military organizations must consider how the military can best support other governmental agencies. To narrow the scope of this work, this monograph focuses

⁸¹Johnson and Jolyon, 128.

on the US military and the DEA, DOS, and DOJ as examples of how the military can support other governmental agencies, beginning with the DEA.

“Never before has the CN mission been so clearly tied to a US combat zone,” said Colonel Dewayne Walker, DOD representative to the DEA, “There is no precedent for this. Everything that is done in a combat zone has to be coordinated with the military [both US and NATO].”⁸² Colonel Walker’s summation of the DEA’s operational challenges in Afghanistan indicates they cannot provide assistance to the Afghan government without the military’s help. But does the military need the DEA’s help?

In 2005, the DEA, working with the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan confiscated 42.9 metric tons of opium and 5.5 metric tons of heroin, shut down 247 clandestine conversion labs, and arrested or detained 32 individuals on charges related to these seizures. The DEA also assisted the Afghan Special Narcotics Forces (ASNF) in the destruction of 100-plus tons of opium and 30 tons of heroin. The ASNF is also actively targeting labs and wholesale market locations. While this is only a drop in the bucket, these joint missions show the potential effectiveness of training local CN law enforcement to attack the traffickers.⁸³ The DEA assisted in the training of the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan and ASNF while only maintaining about ten agents in country at any given time. Additionally, they rotate small teams of agents and intelligence analysts into Afghanistan to work with Afghan narcotics police and conduct their own investigations.⁸⁴ But these agents are often frustrated by the infrastructure and security challenges in Afghanistan, problems that require assistance for them to overcome.

An article in *The Los Angeles Times* published in March 2006 stated, “DEA agents can’t move about the mountainous terrain without helicopters, and in many cases, can’t infiltrate well-

⁸²Colonel Dewayne Wagner, DOD Representative to DEA, Telephone interview by author, 8 December 2006.

⁸³United States Congress, House, Committee on International Relations, *Afghanistan Progress Report: Counternarcotics Efforts*: Thomas A. Schweich, Testimony Before the Middle East and Central

protected drug operations without backup troops.”⁸⁵ While the US military in Afghanistan has not always been forthcoming in providing support,⁸⁶ coordination between the DEA and DOD appear to be improving over time.

The aforementioned Lieutenant General Eickenberry, US Commander in Afghanistan, has said, the intelligence sharing is taking place, and references requests for support such as helicopters he acknowledges, “Capacity is always a problem.”⁸⁷ DOD capacity to support other agencies is being expanded.

One of the people working the issue of expanding military resources for the CN effort is Mr. Robert Vierkant. Vierkant has worked in the Office of the Secretary of Defense CN office for over six years and has served as the program manager for CN in Columbia. He provided the author a briefing on the DOD Afghan CN Program. This document states the DOD CN effort will be conducted “In coordination with the UK, DOS and DEA, to develop an Afghan capacity to interdict drug production trafficking.” This document also establishes the goals of assisting in the development of the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU), provide tactical field training to DEA personnel who will deploy to Afghanistan to work with the NIU, establish an Afghan CN police aviation capacity, assist the UK in enhancing the capabilities of the ASNF, support staffing, systems and infrastructure for intelligence cells, and fully integrate police and ANA to secure border crossings. All of these DOD projects support the DEA’s mission; while the DEA brings a CN expertise that the GoA and DOD do not possess.

Asia Subcommittee and the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House Committee on International Relations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 9 March 2006).

⁸⁴Meyer.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶“Picking a Different Target,” *Saint Louis Dispatch*, 24 September 2006. Sites a Congressional Memo “Nearly all joint DEA/Afghan operations have little to no support from the US military. During the last 12 months, (US military units) supported only three DEA requests for air support of interdiction operation. DEA made 23 such requests before realizing DOD has very little interest in supporting the CN mission in Afghanistan.”

⁸⁷United States Congress, Schweich.

The resources to conduct CN are available to the major players in Afghanistan. The question is how to prioritize the utilization of available assets, such as helicopters, and coordinate the efforts of these multiple agencies. That task falls to the US Embassy operated by the DOS.⁸⁸

Current Role of the Department of State and Department of Justice

The DOS understands the scope of the narcotics problem in Afghanistan. Thomas A. Scheich, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, said “Columbia has been a narco-economy for decades, and they have learned a lot of lessons on how to target drug kingpins, interdict drugs going across borders, and how to deal with insurgencies being financed by drugs. All of that is going on in Afghanistan as well.”⁸⁹ Given their understanding of the threat, the DOS has worked with their UK allies to develop a five pillared CN program for Afghanistan.

Public Information pillar--is focused on galvanizing the Afghan populace to reject opium poppy cultivation and trade.

Alternative Livelihoods pillar--spearheaded by US Agency for International Development, seeks to establish economic alternatives to poppy cultivation.

Elimination and Eradication pillar--centers on preventing poppy-planting and eradicating those fields when prevention is unsuccessful.

Interdiction pillar--seeks to build Afghan capacity to destroy drug labs, seize precursor chemicals and opiates, and arrest major traffickers.

⁸⁸Wagner. “The embassy in Afghanistan has the lead for coordinating the US CN effort there. DOD, DOS, and DOJ are the big players.”

⁸⁹“Calling in the Drug Cavalry: With a Booming Opium Crop and a Swarm of Smugglers, Afghanistan Turns to Experienced Colombian Narcotics Officers for Answers,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 6 September 2006.

Law Enforcement and Justice Reform pillar--assists the Afghan Government in building its capacity to arrest, prosecute, and punish traffickers and corrupt officials.⁹⁰

DOS focuses on discouraging production, trafficking, and eradication.⁹¹ But they do not have the resources in theater to pursue those goals alone. They can only achieve success through inter-agency cooperation. This monograph will discuss how DOD can support these efforts in the recommendation section of this paper, but it is also important to understand the role of the DOJ. Understanding the DOS has no resources to improve the law enforcement and justice reform pillar makes the DOJ a necessary interagency ally for them to reduce narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan.

Authors Johnson and Joylon wrote, "One of the few things that seem certain is that the growing of opium poppy will not be stopped until the rule of law is restored to the country. Concerned donor countries might well do better to focus their efforts on that rather than specific eradication schemes."⁹² Many western experts believe Afghan legal system is seriously flawed and in a state of collapse, but the DOJ is helping to improve the country's justice infrastructure. The DOJ has recently established a narcotics court according to DEA Agent O'Rourke. The new court had already seen over 200 narcotics cases in the early winter of 2006. But this stepping stone to success was only possible due to a small number of vetted US prosecutors and judges working in Afghanistan and their success hinges upon an effective police force and local security to conduct their operations. The DOD can be instrumental in meeting those needs and in providing the DOS the resources it needs to conduct the US portion of the allied Afghan CN effort.

⁹⁰United States Congress, House, International Relations Committee, *United States Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan*: Nancy J. Powell, Testimony Before International Relations Committee (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 22 September 2005).

⁹¹O'Rourke.

⁹²Johnson and Jolyon, 46.

Setting the conditions for successful development of the five pillar program requires rule of law and effective security forces controlled by the legitimate government. The next section will next examine the status of NATO and Afghan security forces to determine what resources the DOD must bring provide to assist in an interagency and allied solution.

The Status of US and Coalition Security Forces in Afghanistan

The coalition working to stabilize Afghanistan is as diverse as the security forces working to stabilize the country. The US and NATO are leading international assistance efforts to stabilize the country. International security forces are not only actively fighting resurgent Taliban; they are also playing a central role in the construction of the Afghan security forces. The US has the lead for training the ANA, and Germany has the lead for training the Afghan police forces. When considering options for military support to the CN effort, policy makers must develop a basic understanding of the current status of the Afghan and international security elements in Afghanistan, beginning with the US forces.

US Army General Dan McNeill took command of the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in early February 2007.⁹³ He will be the first US Commander of ISAF. His command consists of approximately 31,000 NATO Soldiers, 12,000 of which are US Soldiers. There are also approximately 8,000 US troops operating outside of NATO command who are “tracking al-Qaeda terrorists, helping train Afghan security forces and doing construction work.”⁹⁴ McNeill’s new position and the presence of over 18,000 US troops in country equals significant resources available for the CN effort. This paper has established the link between the drug money and forces that oppose a successful Afghanistan, and that reducing the flow of drug money to anti-Karzai government forces assists the US and NATO military’s efforts in

⁹³Ron Martz, “NATO’s New Boss Set to Face Taliban,” *Atlantic Journal-Constitution* (6 January 2007): 4.

⁹⁴“NATO Expands Afghanistan Role,” *USA Today*, 6 October 2006.

Afghanistan. At this time, the CN effort is not the main effort in Afghanistan. The question becomes where CN falls in the priority of the US effort, and what resources the US is able to put against this growing problem.

According to Mr. Vierkant from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the US military “primarily supports the interdiction pillar,” of the five pillar CN strategy.⁹⁵ The interdiction focus seems to be assisting in the training of Afghan CN and border forces, sustaining intelligence fusion cells, and providing support to agencies such as the DEA in their CN effort. Thomas A. Schweich, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs stated the, “Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) [commanded by Lieutenant General Eikenberry] provides air lift, medevac, in extremis support, helicopter assets, and pilot training to support interdiction missions. The Department of Defense has refurbished three MI-17 helicopters for the ASNF, leased two MI-17s for the NIU, and has committed to provide eight MI-17s to the Ministry of Interior for interdiction operations, with the first four scheduled to arrive in May/June 2006.”⁹⁶ Mr. Vierkant confirmed the US military is in a supporting role in the CN effort. “We provide everything for DEA which only has, at most, 30 agents in country at any given time. We are building facilities for the CN police and border police, providing training and equipment, supplying helicopters (MI-17’s) and pilot/crew training, providing O&M for CN operations, communications systems, etc. We are also providing support to surrounding countries as this is a regional problem, which stems from Afghanistan. Our main focus is to increase Afghan capacity and capability to conduct CN operations on their own and in conjunction with DEA and the international community.”⁹⁷ From Mr. Vierkant’s statement, it is

⁹⁵Vierkant.

⁹⁶US Congress, Schweich.

⁹⁷Vierkant.

apparent that while the US military is in a supporting role to the GoA, DEA, and other international allies, they bring the most resources and capabilities to the fight.⁹⁸

Mr. O'Rourke provides a good operational view of the US military's policy. In more tactical terms, the local commander on the ground "makes the call" on how to handle narcotics production and trafficking in their AO. A CENTCOM Executive Order instructs all commanders at a minimum, to report drug related events in their sector.⁹⁹ Many make a reasonable argument that the focus of security forces in Afghanistan should be security. No well-synchronized program that incorporates all the elements of national power will work without it. "Alternative livelihood program only works with security," observed Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle. But as critical as US support is at the strategic, operational, and tactical level in the CN fight, it is important to remember the US military is in a supporting role to other coalition partners and agencies.

The US military is not, and need not be, the lead on the CN issue. However, the US military can provide the resources for achieving success, and that success is defined by reducing the amount of funds flowing from the opium-heroin trade to anti-coalition forces.¹⁰⁰ The US military, in close coordination with its NATO allies, are enablers for success in Afghanistan. The question that must be asked is if the policies that are currently being pursued are working, why does the drug trade continue to grow and the Taliban continue to have the capability to re-arm? Representative Henry J Hyde (R-Illinois) believes it is time to change US policy. Hyde stated, "If

⁹⁸Referring back to DEA comments about the lack of military support on pages 25-26 and comparing it to Mr. Vierkant's statements there does appear to be conflicting views between DEA and DOD on whether enough support is being provided by the military. At the time this research paper was completed, it is unclear if sufficient support is being given to agencies fighting the opium-heroin trade. This is an area of research that requires further study.

⁹⁹O'Rourke.

¹⁰⁰Johnson and Jolyon, 129. "As one analyst notes, the USA has the intelligence and military capacity to destroy Afghanistan's drug stores and processing facilities if it wished to do so. Yet, it has specifically ruled out Provincial Reconstruction Teams taking action on the drug issue. The logic of this is somewhat puzzling, given that there is plenty of evidence to show that drugs money directly pays for terrorist activities and has enabled radical Islamist groups to become self-financing, not only in Afghanistan but throughout the central Asian region. Criminal groups in Pakistan also benefit, making between US\$400 million and US\$ 800 million per year from trafficking."

we do not change our policy soon, and fight both drugs and terrorism simultaneously, Afghanistan may well fall into a failed narcotics state status.”¹⁰¹

US and NATO military need to address the opium-heroin trade issue, but they are not the only forces working to secure the future of Afghanistan. NATO now has the lead for the security effort throughout most of Afghanistan.

NATO's Counter Narcotics Role in Afghanistan

NATO operates ISAF in Afghanistan. ISAF has been authorized by NATO and the UN. ISAF's purpose is to help extend GoA control across the entire country. Security is its main purpose, which will allow various governmental agencies, NGO's and IO's to work freely to improve the lives of the Afghan people and support the GoA.¹⁰² Operation Plan 10302 provides guidance to NATO forces on their role in CN as they have assumed the security mission in southern Afghanistan. An article from the *NATO Review* explains that Operation Plan 10302 instructs NATO forces to provide logistical support, intelligence and information, and training assistance to Afghan security forces. But at the same time states “While ISAF must perform these duties, NATO forces must avoid becoming so entangled in CN activities that their ability to implement tasks are undermined.”¹⁰³ This illustrates the root cause of the challenge. Recommendations for mitigating the opium problem have to be balanced against available resources and other missions. NATO's mere presence on the battlefield in Afghanistan provides many additional resources to support the CN mission there. Keep in mind, the total NATO force

¹⁰¹Meyer. This article also states, “Hyde and other lawmakers say the Bush administration is making a crucial mistake in not directing US forces to collaborate with the DEA to take down those supplying the Taliban with cash, high tech weapons and trucks.”

¹⁰²British Foreign Office, Afghanistan Web Page, Available from <http://www.fco.gov.uk>; Internet; accessed on 13 December 2006. “The return of 4.6 million refugees is witness to its success.”

¹⁰³Alexia Mikos, “Analysis: Afghanistan's Drugs Challenge,” *NATO Review* (Spring 2006), Available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue1/english/analysis.html>; Internet; accessed on 15 December 2006.

is over 31,000 Soldiers.¹⁰⁴ NATO forces include troops from the US, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, and Denmark.¹⁰⁵

While General O’Neil recently took command of ISAF, it was originally commanded by General Richards (UK). He has been an advocate of focusing NATO resources on the many challenges in Afghanistan quickly. He believes NATO only had six months to win over the Afghan people (that time is over in the spring of 2007). His plan was to retake Taliban held areas, initiate reconstruction projects, and maintain a security presence.¹⁰⁶ These tactics were demonstrated in September 2006 during Operation Medusa.

NATO’s Operation Medusa is of note for several reasons. British and Canadian forces killed approximately 900 neo-Taliban insurgents in Kandahar and Helmand province.¹⁰⁷ These provinces have long been linked to the Taliban, and the drug trade. NATO military involvement greatly increases the coalition’s capability to impact the enemies of the GoA and reduce trafficking, but there are political complications.

According to Lieutenant Colonel Rochelle, “Legally and constitutionally most countries do not allow their soldiers to do CN [operations].”¹⁰⁸ NATO is currently not conducting any direct action against opium-heroin trafficking. NATO Operations Plan 10302 outlines the NATO CN effort. NATO will support GoA counter drug operations through training of Afghan security forces, intelligence sharing and logistical support. NATO is determined to “avoid becoming so entangled in counter-narcotics activities that their ability to implement key tasks is undermined.”¹⁰⁹ While training, logistical and intelligence support are critical to a successful CN

¹⁰⁴“NATO expands Afghanistan Role,” A17.

¹⁰⁵“NATO Takes Security Helm,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 6 October, 2006.

¹⁰⁶Rowan Scarborough, “British General Faults U.S. For Taliban Resurgence” *The Washington Times*, 18 October 2006.

¹⁰⁷Jason Straziuso, “US: Afghan Rebel Toll Nearly 2,100 Since Sept 1,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 December 2006.

¹⁰⁸Rochelle.

¹⁰⁹Mikos. “Operation Plan 10302, the guidance document according to which ISAF forces should operate as they expand into southern Afghanistan, a major poppy-growing area, specifies the role of NATO forces in supporting Afghan counter-narcotics efforts. This includes logistic support, sharing intelligence

program, there may be times when direct action against traffickers or production facilities is necessary. Taking these options away from NATO commanders creates a potential road block to undermining anti-government forces in Afghanistan. Directly attacking traffickers and production facilities is best left to Afghan security forces assisted by agencies other than the military. However, there may be circumstances where NATO military support is required to reduce the flow of opium-heroin money into the hands of anti-coalition elements. Direct action against traffickers and heroin producers will not be the most critical element of the militaries CN efforts, but it is a tool that should not be discarded.

However, all NATO forces can observe and record information, and hold any narcotics they seize long enough to hand them over to Afghan authorities. What each NATO partners are allowed to do by their government is central to constructing an effective CN program.

It is equally important to consider that other NATO allies bring more than the troops committed to ISAF. The additional contributions to the CN effort being made by the UK and Germany are very significant. This paper will examine the UK contribution to the effort, and focus on the German assistance when in the section on police training. In 2002, the UK took the lead in coordinating the CN effort. They initially committed \$134 million over three years to the poppy problem. When added to the \$73 million for the CN effort committed by the US in 2002, the commitment of these two governments to finding a solution becomes clear.¹¹⁰ The UK has taken the lead in CN because the majority of the heroin sold in the UK originates in Afghanistan.¹¹¹ While motivated to be involved in the CN effort for internal drug related issues, it

and information, and providing training assistance to the Afghan National Army and police in counter-narcotics procedures. While ISAF must perform these duties, NATO-led forces must also avoid becoming so entangled in counter-narcotics activities that their ability to implement key tasks is undermined.”

¹¹⁰The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, “Afghanistan Country Report May 2004,” Available from <http://www.eiu.com>; Internet; accessed on 12 July 2006.

¹¹¹The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited, “Afghanistan Country Report November 2003,” Available from <http://www.eiu.com>; Internet; accessed on 12 July 2006. Interesting quote from the same source. Mr. Costa [Head of UNODC] said, “further rises in Afghan opium production risk turning the country into a failed state, which would be at the mercy of ‘narcoterrorists’ or drug cartels.” During a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels on September 10th [2003], he also said that “the US-led coalition force

is important to consider that “While the Brits have the lead for CN in Afghanistan, they don’t possess the same resources [such as number of troops and equipment (i.e. Helicopters) and funds] we do to attack the problem,”¹¹² emphasizing the need for US support. In an interview Vierkant stated, “We work closely with the Brits and have provided them considerable support.” Support to the UK includes assisting in enhancing the capabilities of the ASNF. Specifically the US DOD will support the ASNF through the construction of a Forward Operating Base at Kandahar AB, provision of surveillance equipment (to include night vision devices), and the refurbishment of one MI-8 helicopter.¹¹³ The US is committing significant resources to enable the ASNF.

The State of Afghanistan’s Security Forces

At the London Conference on Afghanistan, the international community and the GoA agreed to a ceiling of 70,000 Soldiers for the ANA and 62,000 border police. There are currently 30,000¹¹⁴ Soldiers in the ANA, while the US leads the effort to train the remaining Soldiers. The ANA appears to have been very successful. They have approximately an 80 percent approval rating of the Afghan people.¹¹⁵ While there are still discipline problems, the ANA appears to be on track to serve as a functioning arm of the GoA.¹¹⁶

Lieutenant General Eickenberry’s comments of the training the Afghan police expressed the difficulties, “In terms of building a police force, it’s a pretty new experience for the international community. It’s now on the road. But there’s been some trial and error to get started out.” He also stated the goal is to train 62,000 Afghan police in 2007.¹¹⁷ President Bush also

in Afghanistan could do more to combat the opium trade, and he appealed for the military to get involved in the fight against trafficking.”

¹¹²O’Rourke.

¹¹³John Vierkant, OSD DOD Afghan CN Program Brief Slides.

¹¹⁴Rubin, 68.

¹¹⁵Rochelle.

¹¹⁶Andrew Maykuth, “US Slow to Build An Army,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 21 September 2006, A01. “US Soldiers reported ANA soldiers were smoking hashish at the observation post. The [US] NCOIC said, “There’s not a lot we can do about it.”

¹¹⁷Ibid.

seems to be aware of some challenges standing up a credible police force that follows the rule of law. Bush said the Afghan National Police (ANP) “have faced problems with corruption and substandard leadership.” Although he also stated President Karzai was working to make leadership changes to improve the ANP.¹¹⁸ Because of challenges with corruption and the continuation of warlordism instead of the rule of law, the ANP has an approval rating of 20 to 30 percent.¹¹⁹

Another NATO ally, Germany, has the lead for police training in Afghanistan. The Germans have made a significant impact on the training of the ANP, but it is of note that they are not directly involved in any CN efforts.¹²⁰ While they are involved with training, the German military will not involve themselves with direct action against poppy farmers or opium-heroin traffickers. Their effort is restricted to instruction only.

To try to speed the training of ANP officers, the US military has begun training a new corps of auxiliary police called the Afghan National Auxiliary Police. The Afghan National Auxiliary Police officers are paid US\$70 per month, and undergo a ten day training program. The training program focuses on basic police duties, with the intention of freeing up ANP officers that have received more training to execute more complex tasks. The training also focuses on the rule of law and ethical behavior.¹²¹

“Standing up the ANAP [Afghan National Auxiliary Police] was necessary as a temporary initiative, officials said, until sufficient numbers of ANP are trained and equipped to

¹¹⁸William Douglas and Jonathon S. Landay, “Bush Defends Afghanistan Approach,” McClatchy Newspapers, *Kansas City Star*, 30 September 2006.

¹¹⁹Rochelle. “Afghan Police have an approval rating of 20-30 percent in general terms.”

¹²⁰Vierkant. “The Germans are more involved in the police in general but do not do CN work.”

¹²¹Petty Officer 1st Class Scott, “Soldiers Training Afghan Police Auxiliary.” Special to American Forces Press, *The Leavenworth Lamp*, 21 December, 2006. “It was a challenge to get the recruits to understand they are here to protect their community, not steal or harass the people. In the past, police were feared y the public at large, but it surprised me how fast the recruits picked up on the concepts of what a policeman is supposed to do--what is right and what is wrong.” “The Afghan National Auxiliary Police will receive additional training each quarter, and by the end of the first year on the job will have the same training as the ANP.”

meet all the threats in Afghanistan.”¹²² By the end of the year, all Afghan National Auxiliary Police members will have the same training as their ANP peers. This process, while perhaps unsatisfactory on the surface, appears to be a good solution to begin exposing all men involved in the police force with at least some training on the concept of “serve and protect,” while at the same time paying them a decent wage that will allow some of them to resist the potential influence of those that oppose the Karzai government.

The Afghan National Auxiliary Police is just one example of how DOD trainers and resources can make a difference. Earlier this monograph discussed how the DOD is taking the lead in providing training, helicopters, security check points, and a host of other resources to this fledgling police force with the hope of continuing its transition to a functioning entity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE US MILITARY COUNTER NARCOTICS ACTION

This paper has established there is a link between the opium economy and organizations working against the interests of the GoA, the US, NATO members, and other key allies around the world. This document has also examined some of the key players and the resources they bring to the CN effort. Within the US, the DOS, DOJ, DOD, and DEA are key inter-agency allies in the fight. Germany, the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the GoA itself, are just some of the many governments that bring men and materiel to the CN efforts in Afghanistan. Now all of these elements must tie all of these elements together into a recommendation for future action by the US military. This section will show how the US and NATO military support of the GoA CN programs can result in the reduction of opium production and trafficking, resulting in the strengthening of the Karzai government and increasing the stability of surrounding countries. Many have asked the question, “should the US be involved in CN at all?” The DEA representative to CENTCOM states the military needs to, “Look at how any illicit activity

¹²²Ibid.

impacts security. It does not matter if it is narcotics, smuggling or money laundering, if it impacts security, we need to take action to mitigate it.”¹²³ The author believes there are nine things the military needs to do to support the CN effort. Improve allied and interagency coordination, refine systems for US military support of its allies and other US agencies, increase interdiction of traffickers, increase targeting of storage facilities, continue programs to train and equip Afghan security forces, assist in the establishment of a functional justice system, assist and coordinate with other governments and agencies on a cohesive Information Operations (IO) plan, and develop systems for continually refining analysis to ensure the military is targeting the correct critical nodes. This paper will also examine why military involvement in eradication is not the answer.

Improve Coordination with Allies, Non Government Organizations, and Other Agencies

Army doctrine states “the integration of US political and military objectives and the subsequent translation of these objectives into action have always been essential to the success at all levels of operations.”¹²⁴ While this is clearly a statement of the obvious, it takes established systems for synchronizing US actions with NATO allies, non-governmental agencies and other governmental agencies, and there are many institutional and systemic challenges to overcome.¹²⁵ The US DOD has the most significant resources in Afghanistan, but it is in the US national interest to integrate other governmental agencies and allies into almost every action taken. The

¹²³O’Rourke.

¹²⁴Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations* Vol 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), vii.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, viii-ix. JP 3-08 recommends the following to Building Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination. Forge a collective definition of the problem in clear and unambiguous terms; understand the overall USG strategic goal in addition to the objectives, end state, and transition criteria for each involved organization or agency; understand the difference between US national objectives, end state and transition criteria and those of IOs and NGOs; establish a common frame of reference; develop courses of action or options; establish responsibility; plan

US military needs to examine the current architecture of these systems, and ensure they are coordination and information sharing with non-governmental organizations, allies, and other agencies.

After serving as a DOD contractor with the GoA MOI, Mr. Boit said the actions of his organization were not always effectively integrated with DOS activities. However, Boit does provide a positive example of successful coordination from his time in. He described CN synchronization meetings held every two weeks in Kabul. These meetings were chaired by the UK officer that was second-in-command of ISAF. Approximately 30 people from organizations like DOJ, DEA, and the UK, gathered to discuss how to go forward on the CN issue. It was the DOD that invited Mr. Boit's contracting group to this conference.¹²⁶ This is a good example of the military reaching out to other organizations to increase inter-agency and allied cooperation.

While there are examples of success in inter-agency coordination in Afghanistan, Tomlin argues there are still serious challenges to interagency coordination. He states interagency operations "may be arguably characterized as dissonant, fragmented, inefficient and protracted reaction to external and internal stimuli."¹²⁷ Tomlin listed high tech information systems not available to NATO allies and other agencies, and the lack of training with other agencies and allies due to structural and financial considerations, as significant hurdles to overcome.¹²⁸ While Tomlin's comments are meant as a broad critique of the entire system, they also appear applicable to CN operations in Afghanistan.

for the transition of key responsibilities, capabilities and functions; plan for the transition of key responsibilities, capabilities and functions; direct all means toward unity of effort.

¹²⁶Boit. Mr. Boit worked for the Rendon Group. He also stated that while the DOS was responsible for overseeing the CN message, they did not attend the meetings.

¹²⁷Harry A. Tomlin, White Paper, "Transformation, Evolution or Reaction? Implementing National and Theater Policies and Strategies Through Enhanced Integrated Operational Capacity" (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), 1.

¹²⁸Ibid., 6-7. "Information systems and technologies are promoted as representing critical capabilities where the US holds strategic superiority; yet, efforts to develop collaborative systems and information exchange mechanisms between government partners and actions to enhance interagency transparency continue to be diffused and unresponsive." "Requests for exercise support from partner US

The US military has more resources than its allied or interagency partners, requiring them to provide significant assistance to the combined CN effort. The US military and its NATO allies already seem to be improving their ability to synchronize its actions in Afghanistan. There is now one military chain of command since General McNeal (US) took command of NATO forces in Afghanistan. NATO now has the opportunity to better coordinate actions with US elements in Afghanistan. While these appear to be steps aimed at increasing military cooperation, leaders on the ground must continue to look for ways to synchronize military actions with other agencies and allies.¹²⁹

Tomlin also speaks directly to the operational level this paper is focused on in Afghanistan. He states, “There is a critical void in integrated operations architecture at the Joint Force Headquarters level.”¹³⁰ He is referring to a group known as the Joint Interagency Task Force. While Combined Forces Command Afghanistan established a direct link to the embassy through an organization called the Embassy Integrated Planning Group, the future effectiveness of this link is in doubt due to the end of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan’s mission.¹³¹ Their mission is being absorbed into either the NATO headquarters (ISAF) in Afghanistan, or Joint Task Force 76, which will now be the senior US military headquarters in Afghanistan. C/JTF 76 will be located in Bagram instead of Kabul, potentially making coordination between the US military command and other US agencies more difficult. Tomlin recommends the

Government agencies such as the Department of State and other integrated operations entities are exceeding their personnel and fiscal capabilities.”

¹²⁹Rochelle. “Our military regions contain several provinces and the commanders change every few months.” While it is outside the scope of this paper, it is worth considering the effect our constant rotation of leadership has on promoting coordinated military action and building effective relationships.

¹³⁰Ibid., 6-7. “Connectivity with the combatant command Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Group, appropriate rationale and mechanisms for establishing Joint Interagency Task Forces (JIATFs), working groups and teams, collaboration mechanisms, and divisions of labor between the JTF and the parent combatant command are not established.”

¹³¹Christopher M. Schnaubelt, “After the Fight: Interagency Operations,” *Parameters* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2005-2006): 47-61. P 58 “One successful example is the creation of the Embassy Interagency Planning Group by Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (EIPG). The EIPG was credited with helping to make ‘Embassy Kabul and the Combined Field Command a model of tandem coordination to achieve joint goals.’”

formation of a Joint Interagency Task Force.¹³² While this interagency task force would have to be approved at the Presidential level to ensure proper resources and longevity, it is certainly worth the investment of effort. A JIATF can help bridge the coordination potential gap created by the end of Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan's mission in Afghanistan.

Bogdanos offers three recommendations for properly integrating a Joint Interagency Coordination Group [also applicable to the Joint Interagency Task Force].¹³³ First, the group should involve the military Joint Task Force Chief of Staff or Deputy Commander to ensure sufficient resources and unity of effort. Second, he recommends an executive steering group to advise the senior military leader. Finally, he calls for sufficient military staffing of the task force. Other agencies do not have the sufficient personnel available to fill all the positions would make sense to improve coordination. The military must be willing to invest the people to facilitate synchronized actions.

Schnaubelt states, "More needs to be done to produce coordination at the operational and tactical levels."¹³⁴ He recommends that education programs are critical to the success of interagency operations. This is essential prior to the deployment of a Joint Task Force headquarters. Each Joint Task Force military headquarters conducts training exercise and reconnaissance in Afghanistan prior to their deployment. This is the time for meeting, training, and coordinating with interagency associates, allied partners, and non-governmental

¹³²Harry A. Tomlin, Interview by author, 8 March 2007, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

¹³³Mathew F. Bogdanos, "Joint Interagency Cooperation: The First Step," *Joint Forces Quarterly* 37 (Spring 2005): 10-18. p 17. "At the combatant commands, the Joint Inter-Agency Coordination Group should report directly to the chief of staff or deputy commander. Such senior leadership is essential to ensure unity of effort among individual staff directorates that might otherwise view interagency issues from their necessarily narrow and sometimes competing perspectives." "Second, to achieve consensus and overall direction on its interagency activities, each combatant command should establish an interagency executive steering group to function as an operational-level policy coordination committee." "Third, combatant commanders must provide JIACGs sufficient military staffing to enable them to continue performing their necessarily varied functions."

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, 57. "Teaching leaders from the military and civilian agencies to work together would be a key step, but no one has stepped forward to put a substantial education program into place. This is an area where DOD should take the lead, not only in regard to interagency support during post-major combat operations overseas, but also for DOD's civil support and homeland defense missions within the US."

organizations in Afghanistan to determine how to effectively coordinate CN efforts at the operational level.

Increasing military cooperation with Afghanistan's neighbors is also essential to US success in reducing the flow of opium money to anti-coalition elements. Foreign Internal Defense programs with allied countries along the trade route such as Russia, the former Soviet Central Asian States, and Pakistan are essential to establishing professional and effective security forces in the region. These actions will not only slow opium-heroin trafficking, it will also curb other smuggling activity and the spread of terror networks.¹³⁵ There is also an opportunity to work with countries the US does not have a close relationship with. Trafficking of drugs is making a negative impact on Iran and China. Reducing the flow of drugs through Iran and China is an issue that creates the possibility of the international community working together to reduce the trade.¹³⁶ The smugglers do not have any ideological problems establishing trade routes across every country in the region, the US and NATO must be involved in a regional solution to combat the problem.¹³⁷

¹³⁵The United States General Accounting Office, *Afghanistan Security: Efforts to Establish Army and Police Have Made Progress, but Future Plans Need to be Better Defined*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, (2005), 17. "Perhaps 65 percent of the entire Afghan yield passes through Central Asia, the Russian Federation and the Baltic States."

¹³⁶Sohail Abdul Nasir, "Afghanistan: The Poppy Problem," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (2004): 16. "A two day UN-sponsored meeting held in Islamabad on July 6 [2004] brought together representatives from Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Iran had already signed a memorandum of understanding on working together to check narcotics smuggling in the region; Afghanistan was invited to attend for the first time. The three countries agreed to share drug-related information on a monthly basis. The idea of establishing a joint training program was also discussed." p.16 "Earlier on June 16 [2004], India and Pakistan had discussed the narcotics problem with particular attention to the smuggling of chemicals used in heroin production from India and Pakistan to Afghanistan, and the supply of heroin via Pakistan to various parts of India. China and Russia are also beginning to be involved in regional anti-narcotics activities."

¹³⁷*Ibid.* "It is ironic that while smugglers have been using coordinated strategies to move drugs along for some time, neighboring countries have not effectively cooperated with each other." "A two day UN-sponsored meeting held in Islamabad on July 6 [2004] brought together representatives from Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Pakistan and Iran had already signed a memorandum of understanding on working together to check narcotics smuggling in the region; Afghanistan was invited to attend for the first time. The three countries agreed to share drug-related information on a monthly basis. The idea of establishing a joint training program was also discussed."

According to Colonel Wagner, there is coordination between Afghan CN authorities, Afghan border police, and adjoining border police. While it seems clear this system does not function perfectly, NATO and the US military is improving the Afghan security forces ability to better coordinate their actions through training programs and integrated missions. Even though the US may not be able to deal directly with the militaries of Iran or China for political reasons, strengthening the capabilities of the Afghan border police improve their ability to work with their neighbors to secure their borders will help reduce trafficking.

Because of the need to synchronize aid programs with CN efforts, it is also important to integrate non-governmental organizations into military planning and operations to the extent possible. Seiple argues that the military should be prepared to support these organizations, and that they can enhance the military's cultural awareness in the area of operations.¹³⁸ He also argues for increased acceptance of these organizations by the "military culture." Finally, Seiple contends the military should become familiar with NGO's prior to conducting operations with them, engaging them during the planning process, and improve information sharing.¹³⁹ While these

¹³⁸Chris Seiple, "The Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions" (Monograph, Strategic Study Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1996), 180-182. "First, the military cannot be in charge. If it is in charge, there is the strong potential for it to provide its own solutions with its own means." "The second percept is to help the helper, specifically the NGO's. They are usually culturally aware and sensitive to the situational needs of that particular emergency. This awareness generally provides the right information to the military and prevents military infrastructure-based solutions. In the end, it is the NGOs war to win or lose. The military can only help with the more severe battles of the humanitarian continuum." "The third percept is that the CMOC must be the military's operational focus of effort within a humanitarian intervention. Humanitarian intervention is about joint civil-military efforts." "The military's Tactical / Combat Operations Center should work in support of the CMOC." "Finally, the CMOC must be elevated in the military culture. Once recognized as the operational center of effort, the military should work to support it just as they would support the operations center of any regular military operation."

¹³⁹Ibid., xix. "At a minimum, the military should ensure that the key personnel are broadly familiar with those organizations that are most relevant to humanitarian relief operations. "In addition, the military should try to improve long-term planning and coordination by engaging the most important relief agencies and bringing them into the planning process." "The unified commands should establish regular contact with officials at these key agencies, inviting them to play roles in the planning process and, in cooperation with other US government elements, encouraging them to develop relief packages that could be quickly deployed during a crisis." "Exercises should also involve the core-team and other major NGOs more extensively." "The military should encourage efforts to improve information sharing." "The military should minimize classification of data that should be shared among military and civilian actors."

recommendations are aimed at NGO's, they are also useful guides for interagency and allied coordination.

Proper coordination between NATO allies, NGO's, and other agencies require integrating them into the military's training program and planning prior to the deployment, establishment of a system for integrating them into the military's daily operations (such as a JIATF), information sharing whenever feasible, and military acceptance it is often in a supporting role.

Continue to Train and Equip Afghan Security Forces

President Karzai wants a close relationship with the US to help train his security forces and help provide his government the resources it needs to effectively govern Afghanistan, the US and NATO need Karzai's help in the Global War on Terrorism.¹⁴⁰ The GoA and the international community have agreed on the five pillars of security as a way forward. They are security sector reform; build the ANA and ANP, justice, combat drugs and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. This monograph describes the current state of affairs for the security forces earlier in this monograph. The US military has made good progress, but the US and its NATO allies have a long way to go before the GoA has an effective and professional security apparatus. There are some challenges that must continue to overcome. The United States General Accounting Office released a report that states, "US Training of Afghan Combat Troops has outpaced efforts to equip and sustain them."¹⁴¹ The US is the key resource provider for the development of the ANA and ANP. The US provided \$1.4 billion from Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2005 to these two organizations alone. Despite the much needed assistance of NATO allies, especially the UK and Germany,¹⁴² the US military will still play a central role in the resourcing and training of

¹⁴⁰Nasreen Ghufra, "Afghanistan in 2005: The Challenges to Reconstruction," *Asian Survey* 46, no. 1 (January/February 2006): 92.

¹⁴¹United States General Accounting Office, 23.

¹⁴²*Ibid.* The following quote speaks to the need to continually improve allied communication in all areas. This GAO report refers specifically to police training. p 26 - "In 2003, Germany developed a strategy paper that assessed the condition of the police and proposed ways to reconstituting the sector. However,

these elements. US task organization must reflect not only the training mission, but the building of schools and institutions as well, if the US wants to obtain long term success in the country.

Assisting in the establishment of a professional military and police force is also an area where the US military can greatly contribute. In order for these Afghan elements to enforce the rule of law, and thereby help curb the illicit economy, professionalism is central to any success.¹⁴³ In her study of narco terrorism in Columbia, author Rachel Ehrenfeld discussed strengthening the Colombian security forces and attacking government corruption to help mitigate the drug trade. There are lessons that that US military can glean from studying US successes and failures in Columbia.¹⁴⁴

Embedding NATO troops can help local Afghan Soldiers and police to work under the rule of law and reduce corruption. This author believes an embed program can be successful, but military trainers need to understand some of the potential complications. Embeds can have cultural issues. There is a difference between how a military policeman operates from a civilian police officer. Any embed program will need to be carefully monitored by senior leadership to ensure the successful integration of the various cultures involved. It will also involve making the Soldiers entering the embed program culturally aware of the situation they will be working in.

The military can also continue to improve systems for providing resources and systems that the ANP, or most civil police, would not have access to, such as high tech surveillance,

this strategy was not widely circulated and was not adopted by other donors, to include the US; State/INL officials told us they could not provide us a copy of the strategy because they did not possess a copy themselves. According to cognizant German officials, Germany has viewed its role as one of advising and consulting with other donors and the Afghan government rather than as the major implementer or fund source for the police sector.

¹⁴³Sarah Chayes, *The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 183-84. Razziq Shirzai's men protected the outskirts of the U.S. compound in Kandahar. They used the area they controlled to organize shipments of marijuana to Pakistan. Fuel trucks were came into Kandahar, unloaded fuel, were loaded with marijuana, and sent back south. One truck was stopped by a border patrol officer from another tribe." Any bad action taken by Afghan security forces we support, is accredited to the US, and erodes our position in the country, and in the CN effort.

¹⁴⁴Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Narco-Terrorism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1990), 106.

logistical and transportation support, medevac, and combat troops when the situation calls for them.

NATO military forces can improve the GoA's ability to handle the opium-heroin trafficking problem by continuing to train Afghan security forces, emphasize the building of a professional force that obeys the rule of law, and continue to assist in the construction of the infrastructure, such as police offices and soldiers barracks, and institutions, such as officer and NCO academies, that any force requires to effectively accomplish missions.

Targeting Traffickers and Opium-Heroin Storage Facilities

Targeting the traffickers and opium-heroin storage facilities has the potential to reduce the amount of opium being produced in Afghanistan, and reduce the amount of money flowing into the pockets of anti-coalition elements. Targeting mid-level traffickers and larger storage facilities allows NATO to attack the problem, without attacking subsistence farmers that are growing poppy simply to survive.¹⁴⁵ The DEA representative to CENTCOM agrees the US should "Go after the organizers, not farmers working at subsistence level."¹⁴⁶ This practice can also help the US to undermine top tier drug traffickers they may not be able to openly target for political reasons.

The UNODC says there are 25 to 30 "key" traffickers, most of them based in southern Afghanistan.¹⁴⁷ The UN states there are approximately 200 to 250 large traffickers, and 500 to

¹⁴⁵Millen, vii. "The British and American forces in Afghanistan are assisting in training and supporting Afghan drug interdiction forces. In view of the limited opium processing plants and smuggling routes, the central government can apply direct pressure against the warlords and their lieutenants without hurting farmers directly. This approach is less volatile than attempting to eradicate poppy growth directly. In view of the ease and speed with which poppies are grown, as well as the financial investment farmers have in their fields, focusing on interdiction will likely be more effective over time than hunting for will-o-the-wisp poppy fields."

¹⁴⁶O'Rourke. "Traffickers are the ones making the real money."

¹⁴⁷ Buddenberg and Boyd, 17. "Southern traffickers largely control the flow of opium from northern Afghanistan to the south which has become the center of the drug industry." It is important to note these areas are also the lands controlled or influenced by the Taliban, HIG and al-Qaeda Network.

600 mid-level traffickers nationwide.¹⁴⁸ The UNODC report also states the trafficking is becoming more consolidated. Some of the larger traffickers are protected by local security forces or government agencies.¹⁴⁹ This significantly complicates efforts to dismantle the larger trafficking organizations. By targeting the largest possible traffickers within these organizations, it is possible to undermine and weaken the political actors that support them.

Targeting of mid-level and upper-level traffickers is critical to ensuring these organizations do not continue to grow in power. The emergence of increasingly powerful drug lords that are wealthy, control their own security forces, influence the local government, and are not controlled by the GoA, will only serve to undermine the central government and the NATO effort in Afghanistan.

Identifying key individuals and organizations and then eliminating them will weaken these complex systems, allowing the central Afghan government time to increase its influence in outlying regions. Targeting the traffickers also has the potential to increase the risk of trading opium, reducing the total amount of traffickers purchasing opium from the farmers. Thereby reducing the demand for opium, and influencing farmers to turn their efforts to growing licit crops without directly targeting them. The risk to NATO and the GoA of targeting farmers directly is significant. Eradication without well coordinated alternative livelihood programs is likely to turn families and tribes against the central government.

While the military should not have the lead in targeting traffickers, NATO elements have a key supporting role. Improving the training of Afghan CN forces, intelligence and logistical support, providing transportation, and in-extremis support are all critical. Synchronizing military

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 85. The UNODC defines a small trader as a part time opium dealer that trades 10-15 kg per month. A medium trader are also seasonal traders, but they move 50-100 kg per month. Large traders are defined as dealing in large volumes of opium (at least 1,750-2000 kg annually), and the opium trade was their primary, but not only, business. Large traders are generally large land owners and managed complex production, storage and trafficking systems.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 6. "There are clear signs that the changing (and generally tightening) environment against narcotics is contributing to a consolidation of the drug industry around fewer, more powerful, and

efforts with the DEA and Afghan CN elements to facilitate targeting of mid- and key higher-level traffickers is a crucial supporting effort. However, the US should not limit direct action as an alternative when required to reduce influence of opium-heroin traders that are becoming more consolidated, growing in power, and are opposing the success of the GoA. In instances where key traffickers are protected by political figures, direct action may be necessary to undermine the larger organizations, in order to ensure the stability of the GoA.

Targeting the trafficking of drugs going out is only half of the solution. With more heroin being produced in Afghanistan, large amounts of precursor chemicals are being smuggled into the country.¹⁵⁰ Foreign Internal Defense in countries along trade routes can also contribute to the solution. India, Pakistan, Russia, and China are making tentative steps toward reducing the trafficking of drugs and precursors.¹⁵¹

Targeting storage facilities and refineries can limit the demand for the crop and force farmers to look for other sources of income. The problem is the refineries and storage can be small and easy to hide, or easy to replace. A similar program in Bolivia in 1986 (Operation Blast Furnace) had limited success.¹⁵² Operation Blast Furnace was very successful early on destroying large storage and production and facilities, which led to the creation of many smaller facilities that made targeting more difficult.

Reducing the number of large trafficking organizations in Afghanistan is the point of the current anti-trafficking effort there. Declining influence of the largest traffickers is the intent of this interdiction program. NATO and the GoA can reduce the amount of larger facilities and

politically connected actors, with compromises of key institutions like the Ministry of the Interior and police and involvement of other security forces.”

¹⁵⁰Wagner. “Precursor chemicals are coming in, and drugs are coming out.”

¹⁵¹Nasir, 16. “Earlier on June 16 [2004], India and Pakistan had discussed the narcotics problem with particular attention to the smuggling of chemicals used in heroin production from India and Pakistan to Afghanistan, and the supply of heroin via Pakistan to various parts of India. China and Russia are also beginning to be involved in regional anti-narcotics activities.”

¹⁵²Raphael F. Pearl, ed. *Drugs and Foreign Policy: A Critical Review* (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994), 216-17.

traffickers, in order to reduce the number of powerful drug lords that have the potential to undermine the legitimate government.

The Military's Role in Information Operations

IOs are critical to the success of the CN effort in Afghanistan.¹⁵³ A coordinated message, followed up by action will set the conditions for drawing people away from the opium-heroin economy.

“If we don’t back this [our CN IO campaign] up with action, people will very quickly learn to mistrust us,” said John Boit after serving as a DOD contractor in the Afghan MOI, “We would say police would go after poppy fields, then they would not. We would say drugs are against Islam and talk about alternative livelihood programs, but the programs moved slowly.”¹⁵⁴ NATO military assets, and DOD contractors such as Boit, can be very useful in a successful CN campaign. Coordination and synchronization are as critical to the CN effort as to any other military action. Mr. John O’Rourke has experienced successful IO campaigns in Afghanistan.

A properly conducted IO campaign can enhance the military’s chances of success. “Almost everywhere we went we were thanked for getting rid of what they [local Afghans] considered the local ‘mafia’ [local drug traffickers].” “Target the right nodes to gain significant success. Get the mid-level guys and make an IO campaign out of that.”¹⁵⁵ Taking actions that

¹⁵³Dan Lindley, “Untapped Power? The Status of UN Information Operations,” *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2004): 608-624. This article contains a good definition of Information Operations. “IO are the use of media (all forms of communication devices from puppets to television) to help peacekeeping operations to accomplish their mandate. On the continuum from simple to complex information operations, at the most basic end is public affairs, in which a mission spokesperson responds to questions from reporters and puts out self-promotional brochures and news-releases. At the most demanding and assertive end of the continuum, one can imagine a full scale Chapter VII-authorized use of information involving equipment and personnel necessary to monitor information in the conflict area, to plan and programme information and counter-information activities across a broad array of print and broadcast media, and sufficient hardware to meet these goals.” In Afghanistan, where we are on this continuum differs depending on which province we are in, and current enemy activity.

¹⁵⁴Boit.

¹⁵⁵O’Rourke. Highlights the need to link operational IO campaign to tactical actions.

improve local security demonstrate the US be willing to work to reduce the opium economy, corruption, and improve the lives of the average Afghan citizen.

But what systems are required to make IO success like this the norm? This requires the development of IO programs at every level of the military command structure down to at least battalion, developing systems to shape the environment through soft power at the joint task force headquarters, and coordination of the militaries program with non-military entities.

The US military has improved systems for conducting IO over the last twelve years during missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and throughout Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁶ The military must continue to build on lessons learned during these operations. Military staff officers at all levels must build IO-shaping operations into courses of action for combat and stability missions, units must continue to enhance IO training, and IO themes must be integrated into operations prior to the execution of a mission. Preparation of CN operations should be carried out through IO programs.¹⁵⁷ Military planners can never forget that IO does not exist in a vacuum; the message must be synchronized with military actions on the ground.

The application of soft power is also critical to shaping perceptions about the narcotics trade before the military takes direct action against the opium-heroin economy in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁸ Although the instruments of soft power are largely out of the militaries control, military commanders must realize they have the ability to use soft power to shape the operational environment. But doing so requires the allocation of people, money, equipment, cultural awareness, and both internal and external coordination.

¹⁵⁶Lieutenant Colonel Author N. Tulak, Major Kelly R. Broome, and Captain Donnie S. Bennett, "The Evolution of Information Operations at Brigade and Below," *Military Review* (March/April 2005): 95-105.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵⁸Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, Perseus Book Group, 2004), 5. Nye defines soft power as "...getting others to want the outcomes you want—co-opts people rather than coerces them. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others."

Applying resources internally is relatively easy to accomplish. The challenge is to coordinate the military's message with numerous other agencies. Many external organizations will have challenges with their own IO systems the military must consider. For example, the United Nations has several challenges to their IO program. The UN requires more personnel, full integration of IO into planning, has to overcome equipment shortages, and has difficulty coordinating their message due to the size of their bureaucracy. Many states that fall under the UN umbrella are also concerned that IOs involves partiality, spying, or lying.¹⁵⁹ Military IO cells at division and above must understand the IO systems of other agencies they work with in order to effectively coordinate the message. Given the militaries IO experience and resources, they also need to be prepared to either take the lead, or play a critical supporting role in the overarching IO scheme.

When the military and other agencies are successful in Afghanistan, they need to get the word out. DOD assets have the capability to do that, but they do not always take advantage of these IO opportunities. Boit provides another example. He wanted to do a massive documentary focusing on how the drug trade is hurting Afghanistan and show where alternative livelihood programs are working. His documentary was not funded by the DOD or Afghan MOI.¹⁶⁰ DOD resourcing for thoughtful and synchronized IO purposes can play a significant role in reducing the opium problem in Afghanistan, and make the military's missions easier to accomplish.¹⁶¹

Boit also said there is a "Challenge getting message to the outskirts of Afghanistan." The military has the capability to assist in spreading information beyond Kabul and Kandahar. This will be essential to the success of the CN program, and the success of the country.

The military can also assist with IO in theater, but they have to ensure each message is backed by action.

¹⁵⁹Lindley, 608-624.

¹⁶⁰Boit.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

Why Eradication Is Not the Answer

This paper has discussed many actions the US military and its NATO allies should take, but time must be taken to discuss why eradication is not the answer, and why the US and NATO military should not be involved in an eradication effort. Retired General Barry McCaffery, the Clinton administration drug czar, said massive eradication efforts may be the only way to win in Afghanistan before drug profits undermine the country's elected government. "We know exactly where these fields are. They're absolutely vulnerable to eradication. And it is immeasurably more effective to do it with an airplane. I've been telling the Pentagon, if you don't take on the drug production, you're going to get run out of Afghanistan."¹⁶² The US military must increase support of the CN effort in Afghanistan, but eradication is not the answer.

McCaffery's model seems to be the "eliminate first develop later" model the UNODC opposes. The UNODC states "that developmental assistance cannot be delivered in as timely a way as would be desirable; neither government nor bilateral or multilateral agencies have the capacity to respond so quickly, particularly in the insecure environment that prevails in most of the opium regions in Afghanistan." Reducing the number of mid to large traffickers, storage and production facilities, appears to be the best way of weaning the Afghan farmers from the opium economy by reducing the demand for opium. As discussed in the section on the economy, the Afghan economy is currently dependent on opium to survive.¹⁶³ Large scale crop destruction is only likely to turn local farmers against the US and NATO, making the fight in Afghanistan more difficult.

¹⁶² "Herbicides eyed to destroy Afghan poppy crops" The Associated Press, 30 September 2006.

¹⁶³ "Pragmatism over opium production in Afghanistan (editorial)" *The Lancet* (2005), 1052. Opium is 60 percent of the national GNP. 350,000 rural households depend on the opium production / trade. Crop eradication alone threatens the economy.

Other countries, such as Mexico in the 1970's have used eradication programs against poppy fields with significant short term effects.¹⁶⁴ But in December 2006, the new Mexican President is once again pursuing a poppy eradication effort against fields that are smaller and more dispersed.¹⁶⁵ It appears that achieving lasting results requires more than eradication, and that if poppies are the only economic alternative, may cause more harm to the local populace than good. Eradication only produces temporary results. The UNODC states that "households [in Afghanistan] that have lost their opium crop to eradication on more than one occasion have been found to continue to cultivate opium poppy, even increasing the amount of land dedicated in subsequent seasons."¹⁶⁶

Even targeted eradication can be problematic as long as the security and governmental systems are corrupt. The danger of targeted eradication is who picks the target and what is their motivation?¹⁶⁷ The UNODC have stated several larger traffickers are protected by local government.¹⁶⁸ Given that this is correct, every GoA lead eradication effort is suspect. Are larger drug lords using the government to target their competitors, or driving prices up for their stored opium? The only way to ensure eradication is legitimate, is for the US and NATO to take over the program. US or NATO military led eradication has the potential to turn larger numbers of the local population against their efforts to stabilize the country. Reducing the demand for the growth of poppies is best achieved by targeting the mid- to high-level traffickers.

The British Foreign Office also opposes military involvement in eradication. Its web site states, "Eradication of poppy fields is a final resort, targeted against farmers who already have options for alternative livelihoods. The campaign will continue to be led by Afghan civil

¹⁶⁴Raphael F. Pearl, ed. *Drugs and Foreign Policy: A Critical Review* (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994): 213-214. Mexican government eradication program (poppies in the mid-1970's). This had a significant, but short term impact on US heroin consumption. "Within five years, though, the Mexican industry had reestablished itself, with smaller fields, located in more remote areas and better protected from aerial spraying. Opium growing had now spread well beyond the original three provinces."

¹⁶⁵ "Mexico Takes on the Drug Trade," The Associated Press, 13 December 2006.

¹⁶⁶Buddenberg and Boyd.

¹⁶⁷Johnson and Jolyon, 133.

authorities. It is not for the military. No ISAF forces will be involved in eradicating poppy crops. But ISAF support is critical in providing the security environment in which the CN effort can be made.”¹⁶⁹

Eradication is not the answer to Afghanistan’s opium economy. Reducing the systems that support this illicit economy, such as traffickers, storage and production facilities, will slowly reduce opium production and the amount of funding reaching individuals that oppose the legitimate government.

CONCLUSION

This paper attempted to prove the link between opium-heroin trafficking and instability in Afghanistan and around the world. While it is difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt opium is the causal factor for instability, it is certainly a significant contributing factor that must be addressed. This writing also discussed the current state of affairs in the country as they related to the narcotics problem; and gave recommendations for military involvement for reducing the negative impact of the Afghanistan’s opium economy. This monograph showed US military and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) support of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s CN programs can result in the reduction of opium production and transportation, resulting in the strengthening of the GoA and increasing the stability of Afghanistan.

Specific recommendations for the NATO partners military involvement in reducing opium-heroin trafficking focused on improving allied and interagency coordination, continuing to improve the quality of the Afghan security forces by training and equipping them, targeting traffickers and storage facilities, and assisting in a coordinated IO campaign that matches military actions. This paper also discussed why eradication is not the answer given that it creates more hardship on subsistence farmers than on the traffickers, corrupt officials and insurgents,

¹⁶⁸Buddenberg, 69.

¹⁶⁹British Foreign Office.

potentially turning rural farming communities against the NAOT and GoA efforts in the outlying provinces.

In the words of the former Afghan Minister of Interior Ali A. Jalali, “Afghanistan finds itself again at a crossroads. One road leads to peace and prosperity; the other leads to the loss of all that has been achieved.”¹⁷⁰ Reducing opium-heroin trafficking, the fuel of instability in Afghanistan is a significant part of putting Afghanistan on a path of peace and stability. NATO military elements, combined with proper resources and emphasis, can play the critical role in reducing this source of instability.

¹⁷⁰Jalali, 4.

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