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The Role of NATO Military Forces in Counter-Narcotics Operations in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

The nefarious effects of the opium industry in Afghanistan continue to undermine the achievement of significant progress in Afghan stability and reconstruction as planned in the Afghanistan Compact. Opium and its derivatives fund terrorist and insurgent groups, perpetuate factionalism, foster corruption throughout all levels of government and its institutions, and propel Afghanistan towards narco-state status. The monumental growth of opium cultivation, resulting in Afghanistan supplying over ninety-percent of the world's opium and heroin, is attributable to the drug's utility as a source of war income to fund insurgent groups and factions beginning with the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union. Moreover, international, regional and farm-level economic forces reinforce poppy cultivation. Their combined effect renders any shift away from poppy cultivation a most difficult transition. This study explores the impact of drugs on Afghanistan, draws comparisons with contemporary historical situations in the Andean and Golden Triangle states and assesses the role NATO military forces can play in addressing the industry's existence and effects. It asserts that there are policy and implementation gaps, shortfalls and inconsistencies within NATO's counter-narcotics strategy that should be addressed by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan if progress is to be made in reducing opium production, processing and trafficking.

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

> Let us be clear: if we do not defeat this menace, our joint vision for Afghanistan will never be realized. Our Government will be corrupted by a criminal economy; our security will be threatened by narco-terrorism; and our formal economy will be devastated.[1]

More than five years after the Bonn Agreement set Afghanistan on the path to reconstruction, and with considerable expenditure of resources and loss of civilian and military lives, the future of the international counter-insurgency and state-building project in Afghanistan remains uncertain. The country is certainly not at a point whereby security, good governance, the economy and development are self-sustaining. Rather, a concerted effort by international development partners and military forces remain necessary for a democratic, presidential, centralized government to remain in operation in Kabul, and even more so as one moves down the political hierarchy into the provinces where central control and authority is almost irrelevant.

Adding to the plethora of problems associated with post-conflict reconstruction of a state decimated by over twenty years of war and social upheaval, and that is fighting for survival against terrorists and insurgents, is the narcotics trade. The opium and its derivatives industry[2] is a nefarious system of financers, growers, producers and traders that is inextricably intertwined with Afghan society and governing power structures.

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[1] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "*Afghanistan: Challenges and the Way Ahead*," Position Paper presented by the Government of Afghanistan at the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting in Berlin January 30-31, 2007, 5.

[2] The principle derivatives of opium are heroin and morphine. Heroin normally comes in numbers four (pure) and three (mixed with morphine and codeine). Peter Chalk, *Heroin and Cocaine: A global threat*. Jane's Intelligence Review Special Report 18 (London, Huntcard Litho, 1998), 5.

Although a historical cultivator of opium, the current trade in Afghanistan has expanded beyond one built for national consumption to one designed for an international market that is destabilizing the country and the region and perpetuating informal power structures.[3] It is a product of a war economy established over the course of twenty years of civil war. This war economy continues to flourish in an environment of political, economic and social instability and insecurity. The opium trade in Afghanistan is at best hindering reconstruction and state-building and at worse funding terrorists and insurgents, fuelling criminality and reinforcing local partisan systems of governance.[4] In the latter case, it serves to undermine the international effort to develop Afghanistan into a functioning safe liberal Islamic democratic state that is a partner in the fight against international terrorism.[5]

The international community's reaction thus far to address the opium industry has been primarily restricted to G8 initiatives spearheaded by the UK and supported by donor nations that involve training Afghan counter-narcotics police, providing alternative livelihood/crop programs for farmers and an information campaign designed to educate Afghans of the deleterious effects of opium consumption. Poppy crop eradication is

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[3] Similar to the South American natives' relationship with coca, the opium poppy was an integral part of the lives of the inhabitants of Afghanistan and used as a medicinal plant and for such products as poppy seed oil, food for livestock, firewood and soap. Alain Labrouse, *La Drogue, l'argent et les armes* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 104-105.

[4] United Nations Security Council, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security." Report of the Secretary-General A/60/712–S/2006/145, 7 March 2006. "The illicit narcotics industry poses a profound threat to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. Afghanistan remains the largest supplier of opium to the world, accounting for 87 per cent of the global supply with an estimated export value of US$ 2.7 billion in 2005. This thriving economy, equivalent to more than 50 per cent of the country's legal gross domestic revenues, has provided fertile ground for criminal networks, illegal armed groups and extremist elements."

[5] United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan, 11 to 16 November 2006." Report of the Security Council S/2006/935, November 2006. "Afghanistan's burgeoning narco-economy was identified by the vast majority of the mission's interlocutors as a primary threat to stability. [Afghan]National Security Adviser Rassoul stressed that the narcotics industry was fast becoming the number one problem in Afghanistan. One interlocutor described it as a "cancer" that would spread and kill Afghan society over the long term."

effectuated by Afghan police in a patchy manner with little impact on production, and the production and dissemination chain is left largely untouched. The international military contribution has also been minimalist, with NATO and US-led coalition forces preferring to characterize the narcotics issue as an Afghan domestic concern to be policed by local Afghans.[6] The military's position is that it wants to avoid opening a "second front" with the opium industry criminals, and fear that any concerted action would at best undermine their hearts and mind campaign with locals and at worst turn the rural population against the international presence in Afghanistan and the government in Kabul.

This study explores the impact of the opium/heroin industry on the state-building and reconstruction process in Afghanistan and the role NATO military forces can play in addressing the industry's existence and effects. Based on political economic analysis and lessons learned/best practices, it asserts that there are policy and implementation gaps, shortfalls and inconsistencies within NATO's counter-narcotics strategy that should be addressed by the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

NATO's policy gap is its decision not to conduct interdiction operations or to seek out and destroy narcotics processing facilities. Permitting drug transformation sites and traffickers to remain active provides financial support to all those factions and factors that perpetuate instability and that are driving Afghanistan towards narco-statism.

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[6] North Atlantic Treaty Organization. On 5 October 2006, the NATO-led force assumed responsibility for international stability and security operations throughout Afghanistan, including a number of former coalition forces operating in the eastern part of the country. As of 7 February 2007, ISAF strength stood at some 35,460 military personnel. 8,000 were deployed under the U.S.-led coalition, most belonging to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF), responsible for conducting counter-terrorist and counter-insurgency operations.

Implementation inconsistencies exist in the manner in which the counter-narcotics tasks of the NATO Operations Plan are interpreted and conducted by Alliance members. Implementation gaps are the refusal to conduct joint interagency interdiction operations, laboratory destruction, border control, and tracking down and prosecuting drug lords. Areas for further or new engagement include: establishing ISAF-led central and regional joint interagency counter-narcotics operations centres and intelligence cells; developing mutual cooperation between Afghan Ministries involved in counter-narcotics programmes relevant to all pillars in the Afghanistan Compact; contributing more to the training, equipping and administration of the Afghan counter-narcotics police forces and other security forces; improving intelligence and information sharing; intensifying information and awareness campaigns; implementing border security initiatives; increasing counter-narcotics related surveillance activities; executing electronic warfare and computer network operations to suppress or monitor the communications of the drug traffickers; and, delivering more alternative livelihood programmes by Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) that target government controlled areas relevant to opium production.

The risks associated with doing more are considerable, but so is the risk of continuing along the same tack. Risks include physical and political backlash, the requirement for more capabilities from already overstretched nations, mission creep, national caveats and information leaks. Mitigation is achieved through information campaigns, Alliance cohesion, Afghan government action against factional leaders, rapid

development of effective security institutions, and physical and information force protection measures.

Scope

Counter-drug solutions require synchronized activities in many sectors (agriculture, economic, social, medical, police, legal etc.) by the producing and consuming countries. International military forces are one of many tools in the international stabilization and reconstruction toolbox. Although cognizant of the multinational, multi-agency and multi-sectoral initiatives that are required to address the narcotics threat, this paper focuses on the potential contribution international military forces may make. The scope of the recommendations then is limited to NATO military solutions to control the opium trade, and its derivatives, within the borders of Afghanistan.

In terms of starting points for further analysis, it is posited that NATO has the mandate[7] to engage its military forces in counter-narcotics activities, when those illicit activities are a threat to the Afghan government**,** and that the question of why NATO nations should be diligently addressing this issue is straightforward: to remove a source of income from insurgent forces and terrorists in Afghanistan; to reduce levels of criminality, social disintegration and corruption in Afghanistan in addition to the

[7] In addition to the UNSCRs authorizing the mission and ISAF's expansion, UNSCR 1746 (2007) states that the UN: "Calls upon the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, including the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom coalition, in accordance with their respective designated responsibilities as they evolve, to continue to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida, other extremist groups and criminal activities, welcomes the completion of ISAF's expansion throughout Afghanistan and calls upon all parties to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law and to ensure the protection of civilian life."

undemocratic political power dynamics it creates; and, in order to curb international drug trafficking into Europe and North America.[8] Within NATO nations, the social costs of opium and heroin are staggering in both terms of death tolls from abuse and AIDS/HIV. The economic costs are also very high. The US spent US$3 billion in 1998 for drug-related medical treatment, part of the total of almost US$16 billion in the fight against drugs that year. NATO nations, however, currently appear unwilling to take concerted military action against the drug trade at its origins as a means of reducing or halting the trade into Europe, preferring to advocate Afghan policing activity, reconstruction-type solutions and focusing on demand side issues within their borders. Nevertheless, the deleterious effects of the opium trade on the success of NATO's security mission and the international (ie. UN, G8 and donor nations) state-building mission provides a rationale for NATO nations to become involved militarily and not just financially or through development related activities.

What is missing from the "why" and "how" arguments to convince NATO to engage its military forces in counter-narcotics activities to a greater degree is a better understanding of the degree to which insurgents, terrorists, governing officials and warlords/local leaders are empowered by the illicit drug trade and how opium contributes to the Afghan war economy. This is examined below as it becomes a key variable in NATO's risk analysis to determine whether and how it should open a "second front" in Afghanistan against traffickers. A "second front" risks mission creep beyond UN and NATO mandates, may require supplementary forces that NATO nations will not force

[8] Narcotics problem in Afghanistan also affects Canadians directly, because most of the heroin entering Canada comes from Afghanistan. Government of Canada, *Government of Canada Report to Parliament on Afghanistan*, February 2007, 4.

generate, could undermine ISAF's ability to perform its key tasks, and the potential losses may outweigh any gains.

Another starting point concerning the question of what should be done starts with the assumption that Afghan opium production needs to be significantly reduced and should remain illegal. Whereas there is some debate over the legalization of opium production to emulate successes in drug control in Turkey and India, the UN and international position on the issue is that legalization should not be an avenue of approach for Afghanistan. That position is based on legal versus black market drug values and the impact of overproduction and market flooding on Turkey and India and the international market in general if Afghan opium is permitted onto the market.[9] Furthermore, the opium industry in Afghanistan supports insurgency, factionalism, drug-related criminality and uneven economic growth. Those problems will not be dispelled by legalization, merely reinforced as traffickers open both a legal and an illegal market. Legalization would have negative international, regional and national repercussions. Reduction programmes, taken in concert with security, governance and development programmes,

[9] UNODC, "Afghan opium cultivation soars 59 percent in 2006, UNODC survey shows", KABUL, 2 September, UNODC webpage http://www.unodc.org . The argument against legalization: "The Afghan Government, the Parliament and partner nations have made it clear that legalizing cultivation or buying up the opium crop for medical purposes is not an option under current circumstances. The price differential between the legal market, where opium costs about $20-30 per kilo, and the illegal one, where the price is $100, would lead to even greater cultivation and the massive diversion of supplies to the black market." Some suggestions have been made to legalize opium, such as was finally accepted in Turley after years of trying to abolish its cultivation. The Senlis Council, a UK Medical Association, recommends turning Afghan poppies in to a medicinal crop. Likewise, Canadian Liberal politician Michael Ignatieff wants Canada to spearhead an international effort to licence poppy fields. As Lynda Hurst notes, however, in the mid-1970s the UN helped Turkey build a poppy-processing plant despite US calls for complete eradication. Now, if Afghan opium – 95% of the world's production – was permitted on the open market it would reduce Turkey and India's market share, hence sending excess opium to the black market. Lynda Hurst, "Turkey did it. Can Afghanistan?," *Toronto Star* (25 February 2007), A10. Also on legalization see Line Beauchesne in Guy Debrel, *Géopolitque de la drogue,* Paris : La Découverte/Campagne Européenne d'information sur la drogue, 1991, 253-270.

are the best approach as they steer Afghanistan away from narco-state structures and dependence on a conflict-financing product developed as part of the Afghan war economy over the course of the last thirty years. Regional leaders, tribal leaders, terrorists, insurgents, farmers, drug processors and transporters, and criminals are not going to voluntarily give up the most lucrative product at their disposal. Weaning Afghanistan of reliance on the drug trade, and doing so before the country meets the narco-state criteria, requires the deterrent and physical assistance of security forces – military and police – if civilian counter-narcotic activities are to succeed.

Roadmap

The conclusion of this paper is drawn from the information presented in four steps. The first step is an analysis of the political economy of the opium trade, war economies and the link between the drug trade and post-conflict reconstruction in general and in Afghanistan. This includes an overview of drugs as a factor in state-building and state collapse and an examination of the political-economic and security explanations for opium cultivation in Afghanistan and the economic rationale for Afghan farmers to grow opium. The second is a review of the lessons and best practices that are useful from other conflicts involving narcotics operations that may be applied to Afghanistan such as in the Andean Triangle, the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent. [10] The third step is an assessment of the current impact of the opium industry on security, governance and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and the degree to which insurgents, terrorists, governing officials and warlords/local leaders are empowered by the illicit drug trade. The fourth

[10] The Golden Cescent countries are Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The two other regions responsible for the majority of opium, heroin and cocaine production are the Golden Triangle – Laos, Thailand and Myanmar – and the Andean Triangle countries – Peru, Bolivia and Columbia.

step identifies the international and Afghan response[11] and analyzes that response within the context of the war economy of drugs and lessons learned/best practices from comparable situations. It identifies any NATO policy and implementation gaps, shortfalls and inconsistencies. It culminates by recommending areas in which ISAF could become more engaged, and assesses the associated risks and mitigation efforts.

[11] That includes the Afghanistan Compact, Afghan National Development Strategy, Afghan National Drug Control Policy, counter-narcotics Security Sector Reform, relevant UNSCRs, NATO Operational Plans and the conduct of operations by Afghan and international security organizations.

CHAPTER 2 - CONFLICT AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DRUGS

This section examines the role of drugs as a factor in state-building, instability and state collapse and war economies in addition to the political-economic and security explanations for opium cultivation in Afghanistan.

Drugs as a factor in state-building, instability and state collapse

David Keen's analysis of the economic functions of violence in civil wars leads to a number of salient conclusions about how economic benefits are derived by certain people or groups during a civil war or conflict.[12] He argues,

> . . . that internal conflicts have persisted not so much *despite* the intentions of rational people, as *because* of them. The apparent "chaos" of civil war can be used to further local and short-term interests. These are frequently *economic*: to paraphrase Carl von Clausewitz, war has increasingly become the continuation of economics by other means. War is not simply a breakdown in a particular system, but a way of creating an alternative system of profit, power and even protection.[13]

States in civil war, weak and failed states, post-conflict states under reconstruction – all provide propitious conditions for the pursuit of illegal economic activities by elites and groups seeking empowerment and by persons taking advantage of the societal malaise and economic turmoil caused by war and insecurity. Those illegal activities, such as smuggling precious gems or the production of narcotics, can perpetuate

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[12] David Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper 320, International Institute for Strategic Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Also on economic causes and solutions to conflict see World Bank, *Briser la Spirale des Conflits: Guerre Civil et politique de développement*, trans. Monique Berry, (Brussels, Belgium : de Boeck, 2005).

[13] Keen, *The Economic Functions* …, 11.

undesirable power structures and conditions that benefit certain societal elements and undermine efforts to establish peace and reconstruction. Establishing effective and non-corrupt security institutions and political structures is not in the interest of those benefiting from illegal economic activities, such as from: collecting protection money; trade taxation and the procurement of arms; labour exploitation; control of land and its resources; and, diversion of aid funding.[14] Despite the environment of exploitation and insecurity, however, large segments of local populations are often provided immediate economic relief from their participation in the production chain, such as the poppy farmers extracting opium gum for traffickers. Furthermore, cultivation of narcotics in certain areas is encouraged, or at least not discouraged, by tribal and local leaders. Such positive incentives, with lack of viable alternatives, put Afghan farmers in a situation whereby they are drawn into playing a key role in the drug trade.

The profitability of illicit drugs, the ever-increasing impoverishment of the Third World, the dislocation of the Soviet Union, weak governments and the rise of globalization have driven the boom in the international drug trade since the 1980s. After the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, and both their funding and that of the CIA/Pakistan, factional groups were less controlled and were required to fill the financial gap by seeking new markets for their opium: "Declining levels of external patronage (in comparison to the mid-1980s) forced the warring parties increasingly to

[14] Keen, *The Economic Functions* …, 15-17.

develop their own means of economic sustainability. This meant moving beyond the Afghan state in pursuit of wider alternative networks in the regional or global market."[15]

Globalization has improved inter-state linkages and facilitates the movement of goods and capital, including narcotics and its profits.

> The trade has evolved into a complex, sophisticated transnational commercial industry whose growth has been fostered by (a) a vast and largely unregulated international market in industrial chemical, (b) the universal reach of the requisite production expertise and laboratory technology, (c) the transportation revolution, and (d) the globalization of banking and financial markets.[16]

Jonathan Goodhand concludes that "the growth of the opium economy is linked to processes of globalisation and the collapse of the nation-state" as drug barons are required to link into the global trade on drugs.[17] The links between the opium trade and governing power structures and insurgents in Afghanistan is discussed in a subsequent chapter on Afghanistan.

Drug cultivation areas are predominantly those with weak or corrupt governments and national security institutions. Coca is produced primarily in Peru (the world's leader) and refined in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Argentina, Ecuador and Brazil. Opium and heroin is produced in the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Thailand and Laos), the

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[15] Jonathan Goodhand, "From Holy War to Opium War? A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North-eastern Afghanistan," *Disasters*, June 2000, vol 24, Issue 2, 6.

[16] Stephen E. Flynn, "The Transnational Drug Challenge and the New World Order." The Report of the CSIS Project on the Global Drug Trade in the Post-Cold War Era (Washington, D.C.: The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, January 1993), vii.

[17] Goodhand, "From Holy War …," 11.

Golden Crescent (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran), Central and South America (Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia), Eastern Europe (Poland, Ukraine, Moldova), China, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan).[18]

Drugs are a global threat and certainly a threat to weak states and nascent democracies in periods of post-conflict. "Narcotics can act as a facilitator of state collapse by their impact on human and economic security that consequently undermines political security."[19] They pose a criminal threat that occupies security institutions, renders regular economic activities more difficult and draws funding from social programmes. They create a medical threat from consumption and from the increased levels of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis from needle sharing. They threaten democracy through the corruption of governments and bureaucracies and narco-terrorism, and destabilize economies through black-markets, illegal economies and money laundering.[20] In a UN report in 1995, it was estimated that at least US$500 billion is laundered each year, representing about 2% of the global GDP in that year.[21]

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[18] Flynn, 5-6.

[19] Matt Weiner, *An Afghan Narco-State? Dynamics, Assessment and Security Implications of the Afghan Opium Industry,* Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence 158 (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, 2004), 42.

[20] The forced closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), the world's seventh largest private bank, provides an example of the macroeconomic impact of money laundering. After a two year undercover investigation, it was revealed that the BCCI was involved in money laundering for a variety of organizations, including the Palestinian terror group Abu Nidal, the Colombian Medellin cartel and Panamanian President Manuel Noriega. "By the time of its closure, the BCCI had assets in excess of US$23 billion and conducted operations in 73 countries." Chalk, p. 18.

[21] Chalk, 17.

States overcome by the impact of trafficking are labelled narco-states. It is feared that Afghanistan is moving along that path. Matt Weiner describes a narco-state as "a state where drug networks are able to control and regulate the coercive instruments of the state, financial apparatus and government executive and policy to facilitate narcotics production, refining and trafficking."[22] Those three pillars are particularly susceptible to penetration or co-option in a fragile post-conflict state. Control of the military eliminates a principle threat to traffickers and may even implicate the military in logistical support and protection of narcotics networks. Control of the financial apparatus permits networks to launder their narcotics profits and build their wealth. This legalizes a black-market economy, drives inflation and develops economic dependence on an illegal product. It also permits networks to direct their funding towards activities that support their operations. This is also the case when traffickers control the government executive and policy makers.

Ethnic, religious and tribal rivalries prevent the establishment of unitary drug cartels like Medellin and Cali of Colombia. The global narcotics industry is fragmented, including in Afghanistan: "Phil Williams …has argued that the narcotics industry is now based on networks rather than traditional hierarchical structures. A network is a collection of web-like nodes, each of which could be a person, organization, business, family or otherwise. The linkages between each node vary and can be fluid, local or global, centralised or decentralised."[23] Consequently, Williams continues, opium growers and police officials on the take would not consider themselves part of a criminal

[22] Weiner, 18.
[23] *Ibid*., 8.

organization or drug cartel, but both are important nodes in the network. Fragmentation of the narcotics industry within a state means that regional and local leaders profiting from the trade will likely be in competition with one another for more than political reasons. This complicates and may entirely undermine liberal democratization and attempts to generate collaboration at the regional/provincial and federal levels.

A state moves towards becoming a "narco-state" as drug networks gain control and regulation of three state pillars identified by Matt Weiner: coercive instruments of the state; financial apparatus; and, Government Executive and Policy.[24] The ability of drug networks to gain control, and the occurrence of massive cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotics at state level is the result of complex and interrelated security, economic, political and social conditions. It is particularly the result of war economies, whereby drugs are used as a means of financing insurgents and to perpetuate non-state power arrangements. Drug producing nations in the last forty years have undergone political upheaval and economic instability, and most have been involved in civil wars in which insurgents and revolutionaries benefit from trafficking. These countries include, but are not limited to, the Andean Triangle (Bolivia, Columbia and Peru), the Golden Triangle (Laos, Myanmar, Thailand), the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran/Turkey), China and the ex-soviet states. Drug production has a financed groups involved in conflicts in a number of states, including: Colombia; the Contra's in Nicaragua; the Shining Path in Peru; the Afghan *mujahideen*; Libya; Pakistan ethnic minorities; and Tamils.[25]

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[24] *Ibid*., 10.
[25] Delbrel, 43.

David Keen[26] provides insights on Sierra Leone's war economy in which political, economic, social and security factors were relevant to the onset and perpetuation of the country's conflict. The post-colonial heritage and its empowerment of certain governing classes, tribes or ethnic groups with the accompanying problems of patronage and corruption and economic inequities certainly moved the country along the route to civil war. Economic instability caused by diamond mining and privatization of Sierra Leone's natural resource industry, criminality and a lack of professional and non-corrupt military and police forces destabilized the country further. Keen argues that economic, political and moral life did not simply collapse, but was 'reformulated, modified, manipulated and perverted."[27] Interestingly, those profiting from illegal activities, such as diamond smuggling, preferred to have a quasi-functioning state than no state apparatus at all.

> The growth of smuggling and illegal mining and the proliferation of acquisitive armed bands did not make the state an irrelevance. On the contrary, control of the state – in wartime as in peacetime – was vital for those seeking to set the "rules of the game" that determined what was to be considered legal and illegal – in practice as well as in theory. Control of the state was also important in controlling access to aid (including international loans), and in determining which individuals and social groups would be placed in positions of responsibility that could allow them to exploit the illegal or quasi-legal economy. Rather than contenting themselves with local expropriation, excluded groups were often keen to "break into" the state and redistribute its benefits.[28]

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[26] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2005)
[27] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*…, 296.
[28] Keen, *Conflict and Collusion* …, 105-106.

Hence a war economy was created that benefited a minority of politicians, rebels, soldiers and smugglers. The participation of Afghan warlords in politics and their ascension to Provincial Governor status reinforces Keen's point. Although one could argue that bringing the warlords into the fold may make them more participative in the state-building process, the alternate viewpoint is that legalized leadership provides democratic cover over their often illegal activities and perpetuates a war economy based on opium production and trafficking.

A number of examples exist of narco-states and narcotics production as a result of war economies, such as Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and China. The narcotics trade in Colombia was at its apex when the Medellin and Cali cartels were still operating.[29] The impact at that time was a confusing blend of both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, drug trafficking created employment opportunities, investment, infrastructure and had a beneficial equalizing effect on external national debt.[30] On the other side of the ledger, only 20-30% of the benefits from trafficking remained in Colombia. Of those funds, only a minority contributed to the legal productive capacity of Colombia.[31] Moreover, the flow cash from trafficking led to inflation and encouraged farmers to cultivate coca instead of other edible crops, resulting in a trade deficit as the country became import dependent for food stocks.[32] Drug lords bought or had appointed political representatives that legislated policies favourable to the traffickers. As in a war

[29] In 1991, about 80% of the world's cocaine was produced in the Andean Triangle (Bolivia, Colombia, Peru). Colombia was primarily a marijuana producer until the suppression of cocaine production in Mexico by state authorities and US border services transferred the problem further south.

[30] Olivier Brouet, *Drogues et Relations Internationales : Du phénomène de société à la narcodiplomatie* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1991), 49-50.

[31] Brouet, 50.

[32] *Ibid*., 50.

economy, the traffickers did not wish to make the economy collapse, they wanted to control it to maximize their own gains.

The poor economy of Bolivia in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the establishment of cocaine networks and drug production. The golden age began in 1980 with a series of military coups.[33] In 1983, the US was to provide some US$2.47 million to equip the local police, control production, inhibit trafficking and to develop a crop substitution policy.[34] Changes in the Bolivian government led to the cancellation of that programme. With coca production such an important part of the economy and society, for financial and cultural reasons, government attempts to cease production or eradicate coca plants were met with stiff resistance by coca unions and organizations representing cultivators.[35] These organizations had political clout and, in 1984, resulted in the cessation of raids by the Bolivian army and their withdrawal from coca regions.[36]

The history of the opium trade on China in the 18th and 19th centuries is one that transitions from forced trade by the British Empire, to the Opium Wars (1st in 1839-1842 and 2nd in 1860), to full Chinese government control of the external trade of opium. Opium was traded as a legal commodity with the state benefiting from the taxes. The social price for assuming control was an increase in drug users and criminality within China.[37] After the communist revolution in 1949, opium production was criminalized and the government created expansive state programmes to eliminate opium and heroin

[33] *Ibid*., 228.
[34] *Ibid*., 228.
[35] *Ibid*., 235.
[36] *Ibid*., 235.
[37] *Ibid*., 94.

use. These measures were effective until the beginning of economic liberalization in the 1990s.

In sum, the scourge of drugs is not only a social and security issue for consumer states, but also for the producer states – who themselves may also have a consumption problem. The security, political, economic and social destabilization caused by drug networks is certainly a key factor, if not sufficient cause, for state degradation if not collapse. State collapse, however, is not necessarily the goal of drug traffickers in that they benefit from the existence of certain weak state structures. Their objective may not be the demise of the state, rather the subservience of the state to traffickers and drug networks. In the case of post-conflict nascent democracies, this destabilization can prevent sustainable state-building and reconstruction or at least deform such efforts to render them ineffective or biased in favour in the drug networks and undermine efforts to establish good governance and rule of law.

The international intervention in Afghanistan presents the international community, and the participant Western drug consumer states in particular, the opportunity to strike a significant blow against the predominant source of opium and its derivatives in the world. Whether this concerted effort is best manifested primarily in the form of support to domestic policing efforts, education and the provision of alternate crops and livelihoods, with little international military input, is a theme of this paper. Given Afghanistan's weak central government, nascent security organizations, informal regional leadership structure, tribal customs and remnant war economy based on opium

production, the international support to the Government of Afghanistan may be missing a key tool to combat the narcotics industry if NATO forces are not actively employed towards this cause.

Political-economic and security explanations for opium cultivation in Afghanistan

The contemporary historical production of opium and its derivatives can be conceptually divided into four periods: pre-Soviet; 1979 to 1989 during the Soviet occupation and resistance; 1990 – 1996 civil war; and during the Taliban from 1996 to 2001.[38] The narcotics industry in Afghanistan, the production of opium and its derivatives in particular, "has dominated the war economy of the region for over two decades. Used by some *mujahideen* as a source of income for anti-Soviet resistance, it continued to provide regional strongmen an economic base to perpetuate civil war throughout the early 1990s and as a survival strategy for many impoverished Afghans. As the Taliban successfully dominated the political and military landscape from 1994, the war economy shifted to an open criminalised economy based on opium."[39] The threat to Afghanistan now is that the drug-centric war economy has become the mainstream economy in peacetime.[40]

Production prior to 1979 was limited to localized production for local domestic consumption.[41] Although one of many opium-producing countries in South West and South East Asia (Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India), "historically,

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[38] Weiner, 21-23. On pre-1989 history, see also Alison Jamieson, *Global Drug Trafficking*, Conflict Studies 234 (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1990).

[39] Weiner, 2.

[40] *Ibid*., 2.

[41] *Ibid*., 21-22.

Afghanistan has not been a major source of opium or heroin."[42] Narcotics production in Afghanistan grew in the late 20th century as a result of a number of events:[43] opium production reduction in Turkey and Iran caused by counter-narcotics policies in the 1970s transferred production activities to Pakistan's autonomous tribal regions; the presence of Pakistani drug trafficking routes to Europe and the US; Pakistani President General Zia's 1979 "Hudood Ordinance" ban on narcotics combined with bumper crops in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) on Afghanistan's border created massive supplies that were turned into heroin for export; the fact that southern Afghans are mostly ethnic Pashtuns, like the Pakistanis in the autonomous provinces, and tend to share values and economic livelihoods; weather and counter-narcotics policy in the Golden Triangle that hindered narcotics cultivation and exportation hence opening the door to Pakistani heroin exports; and the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the USSR and the rise of the *mujahideen*.

During the Soviet occupation, opium was produced and traded to finance the *mujahideen* resistance. The US and Pakistan enhanced and empowered the drug networks by using them to move weapons and munitions into Afghanistan.[44] Moreover, the destruction dealt upon Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and the financial requirements to fund the resistance significantly promoted the production of opium poppies. "Between 1979 and 1989, half to two-thirds of villages were bombed, livestock levels fell 70 percent and more than one-quarter of the irrigation systems were destroyed. By 1988, food production was less than half pre-1979 levels. Thus, due to opium's

[42] *Ibid*., 19.
[43] *Ibid*., 20.
[44] *Ibid*., 21-22.

hardiness, high cash value, and little need for water or weeding, it was cultivated as a survival strategy by farmers."[45] Afghan refugees contributed to the development of cross-border and diaspora networks. The *mujahideen* resistance movement required funding to pay local governments for their collaboration and to purchase weapons, some from opium production.[46] The drug trafficking networks were used by the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to move weapons to the *mujahideen* from Pakistan.[47] With the anti-Soviet resistance taking priority over US counter-narcotics policy, the US turned a blind eye to Pakistani and *mujahideen* heroin syndicates, and even that of one of their principle armaments recipients, Gulbuddin Hekmatayar and his organization the Hizb-I Islami.[48] Later known as the HiG, after 2001 it was recognized by the US and NATO as a terrorist/insurgent movement threatening Afghan reconstruction.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan produced a concomitant withdrawal of Soviet and US CIA income and the descent into civil war between regional warlords and against the Taliban. The effect was threefold. First, opium was again used to finance the regional conflict, as was the case for the warlords of the Northern Alliance and the United Front (UF).[49] "The power and military support, which narcotics provided, allowed them to control their own fiefdoms within Afghanistan and battle other Afghan factions for control of the capital and the countryside – which included the ability to tax

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[45] *Ibid*., 20. Also in François Lafargue, *Opium, Pétrole and Islamisme: La triade du crime en Afghanistan* (Paris : Ellipses, 2003), 21.

[46] Weiner, 21.

[47] *Ibid*., 21.

[48] *Ibid*., 21. On CIA involvement in the opium trade, especially the role of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-i Islami guerrilla group, see Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade, Revised Edition* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003), 466-487.

[49] Weiner, 21.

lucrative smuggling and opium trading routes."[50] The opium industry increased the reasons for warlords to be in conflict as they vied for regional hegemony and the poppy crops that went with such control. This in turn further reified the fragmentation of what was left of the Afghan state: "…opium also contributed to a self-sustaining war economy where actors profiting from narcotics had little or no incentive for putting the state back together."[51]

Second, opium became further entrenched in the economic and social fabric of Afghan society as farmers were encouraged to grow poppies by warlords, were granted loans to do so, and used opium as a produce for barter between themselves. Opium itself became a form of currency between farmers, perhaps like tulip bulbs in Holland in the 16th Century: "For them, opium prices were more stable, and the crop obtained a high return, could be stored for long periods, and provided a source of future credit (called salaam)."[52] Third, the rising value of Afghan currency encouraged the production of crops easily transferable into cash by the drug industry.

As a result of these effects in the early 1990s, the production of opium, heroin and morphine began to "mature" in Afghan society.[53] The rise in opium production and the strengthening of regional networks did not, however, lead to the consolidation of networks and opium monopolies such as the cocaine cartels in Columbia in the 1980s. Given that opium supported the interests of regional tribal commanders and Afghanistan

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[50] *Ibid*., 21-22.
[51] *Ibid*., 21-22.
[52] *Ibid*., 21.
[53] *Ibid*., 22.

lacked a central government and security institutions, the industry remained regionally based and separate from formal political, economic and military institutions. "Despite this maturation, the narcotics industry was fragmented and spread amongst a number of criminal actors divided by ethnic and regional affiliation."[54]

When the Taliban seized power in 1996 they *de facto* legalized opium production through its taxation.[55] Production increased in general, with 1999 being the year of greatest production since at least 1990.[56] In July 2000, however, Taliban leader Mullah Omar banned opium cultivation and production subsequently ceased throughout the country, except in Badakshan province in northeast Afghanistan where the Taliban had no control. The rationale for Omar's ban are controversial in that he could have taken that measure as a means of driving up opium prices or to provide a market for the opium bumper crop from the previous year. Alternate rationales are that Omar wanted to gain international recognition and support or thought that his control over the local populations was sufficient to ban a nefarious substance, but one upon which many drew their livelihood.[57]

In September 2001, the US-led coalition launched Operation Enduring Freedom and removed the Taliban from power. The anti-Taliban resistance of the Northern Alliance and the United Front (UF) fought with, or at least in parallel with, the coalition forces. Consequently, when time came to fill the power vacuum left by the Taliban,

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[54] *Ibid*., 22.
[55] *Ibid*., 23.
[56] United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, *Afghanistan Opium Poppy Survey 2002* (New York: UN, 2002), 2.
[57] Weiner, 23.

regional leaders who had assisted the coalition and others simply taking advantage of the situation moved into positions of leadership when it was time to form an interim Afghan government. Despite President Karzai's declaration on 17 January 2002 prohibiting opium cultivation, consumption and sale, the 2002 crop was abundant, indicating again that regional leaders tolerated, if not condoned, opium production. This demonstrated the fleeting control the nascent central government had outside Kabul, a situation that continues to plague the Karzai administration.

In sum, an overview of contemporary history suggests three conclusions. First, the rise of opium production in Afghanistan is related to its financial support of the war economy during the Soviet occupation and the post-soviet civil war, and to the empowerment of regional tribal commanders in a political vacuum. Second, Afghanistan and only a few other countries in the world supply the international demand for opium and its derivatives. Production is maximized in the one with the security and political institutions most favourable to narco-state and war economy structures, which at this time is Afghanistan. Third, the poppy farmer producing opium is simply acting as a self-interest maximizer seeking to acquire the greatest profit from the most stable, agriculturally resilient and highly demanded cash crop. With regional warlords, their subordinate commanders or drug producers providing positive reinforcement (eg. credit) and negative reinforcement (eg. threats against farmers and their families) it is not difficult to understand a farmer's motivation to cultivate opium, even when the central government in distant Kabul threatens crop eradication or imprisonment. The farmer's economic rationale is further developed below.

The economic rationale for Afghan farmers to grow opium

The UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006 provides the substantiation required to demonstrate that opium poppies are certainly the crop of choice for Afghan farmers. According to the survey, the average farm gate price of fresh opium at harvest time was between US$ 94/kg to 102/kg and the average farm gate price of dry opium at harvest time was between US$ 125/kg to 138/kg. This meant an indicative gross income from opium per hectare (ha)[58] of US$ 4,600 to 5,400, based on a 2006 average dry opium yield of about 37kg/ha.[59] Given the small size of farms, however, the household average yearly gross income from opium of opium growing families was between US$ 1,700 to 1,800, with per capita gross income between US$ 260 to 280. As a comparison, the indicative gross income from wheat per hectare was between US$ 530 to 550. So, in some cases, opium could produce ten times the return of wheat. This return on investment was the primary reason given by farmers for producing opium in the UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006.[60] The principle reasons for opium cultivation given by some 754 farmers from 1554 villages, as a percentage of the response, are as follows: 41% high sale price of opium; 16% high demand for opium; 12% high cost of weddings; 8% personal consumption; and 8% possibility of getting a loan. So, apart from the financial rewards and personal requirements, the most important reason is that someone (ie. insurgents, war lords/regional leaders and local leaders) will provide farmers with

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[58] 1 hectare is 10,000 square metres, or 2.47 acres.

[59] In 2002 it was 46kg/acre. UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Poppy Survey 2002*, 2. As a Canadian comparison, canola farmers generate a gross income yield of roughly about CA $872/ha. Canola Council of Canada.

[60] United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006* (New York: UN, 2006), Figure 31.

credit (*salaam*) to cultivate poppies, permitting him to support his family over the winter and while waiting for harvest, and possibly to pay labourers. Not included here, but certainly a factor in any farmer's planting decision, is that the opium poppy (of which there are a number of varieties grown in Afghanistan) is a hardy plant requiring little water and can grow in soil weak in nutrients.

The regions particularly dependent on poppy cultivation, as an approximate percentage of total farmer income generation, are Southern (35%) and North-eastern (28%). Farmers in the Eastern (18%), Northern (17%) and Western (14%) also have significant gains from poppy cultivation. Only in the remaining Central region (2%), close to the capital, do poppies provide little income generation.[61] With Taliban presence concentrated in the southern and eastern regions, it is clear that the insurgency is not the only impetus behind the current production of opium from a state perspective. It is arguable, however, that it is the strongest one given that the southern provinces accounted for the majority of the opium cultivated in 2006, with 80 percent of farmers in poppy-growing areas involved in opium cultivation.[62]

> A record 165,000 hectares [in the south] were under opium poppy cultivation in 2006, an increase of 59 per cent compared to 2005. This was mainly due to large-scale cultivation in the southern province of Helmand. Further increases in Helmand, as well as in Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces, are likely [in 2007]. In all cases, permanent Taliban settlements have provided sanctuary for drug cultivation, heroin

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[61] UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006*, Table 37. The two principle sources of income generation for farmers are opium poppies and wheat. Those that did not cultivate poppies likely grew wheat.

[62] UNODC, "Afghan opium cultivation shows divergent north-south trends in 2007, UNODC survey shows: UN drugs chief urges more rapid disbursement of aid for farmers," UNODC Website, Tuesday, 3 April 2007. http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press_release_2007_03_05.html

> processing and trafficking into Pakistan and Iran. The revenue received in return is used to fund Taliban activities . . . The high sale price of opium is the main reason given by farmers for growing opium, especially when there is little risk of their crops being eradicated.[63]

In sum, the cultivation of opium is not only financially rewarding, but may be done at minimal risk in those areas controlled by regional leaders or insurgents implicated in trafficking. Alternative crop and livelihood programmes alone are not rich enough incentives for farmers to change crops. Such programmes need to be executed in parallel with legal and enforcement measures supported by regional and local leaders.

This chapter has examined three areas: drugs as part of a war economy and the institutional conditions to be a narco-state; an overview of the contemporary history of opium in Afghanistan during twenty years of civil war; and, the economic rationale for farmers to cultivate opium. A number of conclusions were posited. The drug trade is an international scourge requiring consumer/producer partnership solutions within the producer states. The multifaceted destabilization caused by drug networks is certainly a key factor, if not sufficient cause, for state degradation if not collapse. State collapse is not necessarily the goal of drug traffickers in that they benefit from the existence of certain weak state structures. In the case of post-conflict nascent democracies, such as Afghanistan, this destabilization can prevent sustainable state-building and reconstruction or at least deform such efforts to render them ineffective or biased in favour in the drug networks and undermine efforts to establish good governance and rule of law. The rise of opium production in Afghanistan can be explained in terms of its role in the war economy during the many years of civil war and insecurity, and also as a result of the

[63] *Ibid*.

withdrawal of Soviet sponsorship, globalization and the international demand for opium and its derivatives given supply reductions in the Golden Triangle following counter-narcotics activities in that region and inadequate rainfall. The poppy farmer producing opium is simply acting as a self-interest maximizer seeking to acquire the greatest profit from the most stable, agriculturally resilient and highly demanded cash crop. If regional leaders and insurgents condone cultivation, force and/or provide economic incentives to farmers and protect poppy fields from eradication, then that amounts to enough positive and negative reinforcement for farmers to cultivate opium, even when the central government in distant Kabul threatens crop eradication or imprisonment. How other regions in the world dealt with similar issues is the subject of the following chapter, with a view to improving the international community and NATO's response in Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 3 – CASE STUDIES: LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

This section draws out the lessons learned and best practices, security/military in particular, that can be derived from historical examples of states involved counter-narcotics operations. It concludes by grouping possibilities for military action within the "combat functions" of a military force.

The cases of Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Thailand and Myanmar provide insight into the actions that comprise both unsuccessful and successful counter-narcotics methodologies. There are a number of general conclusions that can be drawn from all cases: the strength and nature of the government and its security institutions are decisive factors; a multi-dimensional regional and international approach incorporating programmes addressing all sectors is necessary; solutions require long term commitments and programmes; international financial and development assistance is required; eradication as a sole means of addressing the issue at best only displaces cultivation and at worst places farmers in an adversarial position with the government; a realistic endstate is not the elimination of narcotics networks but their limitation and alienation from society; and, restricting production in one state only transfers that supply gap in production to another location in the world. The Peruvian case is particularly informative in that the existence of drug lords, narcotics networks and insurgents resembles the current situation in Afghanistan.

Non-security/military lessons-learned include the conditions for drug cultivation and the counter-narcotics programming requirements of various social sectors. Financial solutions include subventions and grants to farmers and farm organizations during a poppy-reduction transition period. Farmers require credit to develop commercially viable alternatives to poppies. Economic and security activities should be complemented with social programmes designed to improve health, living standards, education.[64] Adequate laws must be in place to enforce counter-narcotics strategies. This is a shortcoming in Thailand where no laws exist against conspiracy so only people caught in possession of drugs are arrested.[65] The state of international commodity prices, such as the price decline in sugar, coffee, cotton and wheat in the 1980s, motivates farmers to switch to cash crops such as coca and opium poppy.[66] Drug exports can also replace the gap in a country's balance of payments (imports vs. exports) when the international price of their commodities decline. These conclusions lead to the current gambit of measures designed to control narcotics trafficking, including: crop substitution, crop eradication, community-based law enforcement and control, drug abuse programmes, preventative programmes, exchange of intelligence information, law enforcement training, international conventions, establishing global standards for financial institutions, and supporting UN programmes to control the drug trade.[67] Security lessons learned follow.

Professional Army and Police

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[64] Delbrel, 231.
[65] Jamieson, 8.
[66] Jamieson, 3.
[67] Chalk, 22. These activities are conducted by a plethora of international organizations in addition to national ones, eg. Europol, Interpol, Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC) etc..

Security lessons learned generally indicate that effective counter-narcotics operations require professional, non-corrupt, well-paid, well-armed security forces that are not connected to the local economy or society in which they operate. In Thailand in the early 1970s, the police and parts of the military were corrupt and heavily involved in the opium and heroin trade. In Bolivia, where the military was the core institution providing continuity and stability within the state, the armed forces were not involved in counter-narcotics activities in order to remain impartial and untainted, after being completely corrupt in the early 1980s.[68]

In 1981 in Peru, the Minister of the Interior created a policing force called "Umopar." This force was the stick end of the carrot and stick approach designed to deter farmers from growing coca. With the carrot end not working, as it consisted of payments of $US100 per hectare of coca eradicated although the coca was worth six hundred times that amount, the security forces increased their attacks. These attacks, however, tended to strike those farmers not associated with drug lords thereby indicating that the police were corrupt or unwilling to engage the drug lords. The result of these activities was an uprising of farmers against the government and the narcotics mafia, with protection provided by the Shining Path revolutionaries.[69]

The Soviet forces in Afghanistan were involved in opium use and trafficking, as was the puppet government in Kabul. This was one of the factors that contributed to the

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[68] On the corrupt nature of the Bolivian Army in 1980, see Clare Hargreaves, *Snowfields: The War on Cocaine in the Andes* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1992)

[69] Delbrel, 204-206. In Bolivia, farmers were offered US$369/ha, but could receive US$34,000/ha for coca for cocaine.

corruption of the Red Army and likely their failure in Afghanistan.[70] Another example is the conduct of the Pakistani armed forces under General Zia Ul-Haq (1977-1988). Prior to his tenure, market quantities of heroin were not produced in Pakistan.[71] Once in power, and as part of the campaign to arm the Afghan *mujahideen*, Zia and elements of his armed forces were directly involved in trafficking as they used the narcotic trafficking routes to ship the weapons and supplies.[72] The defunct Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI) laundered the funds derived from opium sales in Pakistan.[73]

Use of the domestic armed forces instead of a specialized narcotics police force may place the military in a position whereby they become targets for corruption by traffickers. In countries where the military is the only institution that can forcibly remove a government from power or retain it in power, it is important not to put the military into a position in which their autonomy and legitimacy can be compromised. "This problem is best exemplified in countries such as Mexico and Brazil where the integrity of military forces is still high and therefore the dominant public opinion states that they should *not* be involved in counter-narcotics operations."[74] Another method is to isolate the military conducting counter-narcotics operations from society, such as in Thailand where the Third Army officers and soldiers are required to live in barracks, minimizing their economic and social interaction in Thai society.[75] This suggests that the international military force in Afghanistan, independent from Afghan society and its economy, would

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[70] Brouet, 176 and 204.
[71] *Ibid*., 205.
[72] *Ibid*., 205.
[73] *Ibid*., 205.
[74] Weiner, 13.
[75] Weiner, 13.

be best placed to conduct counter-narcotics operations. Afghan Army and Police personnel should not be from the local area, should not have tribal links with the regional leaders and should remain in barracks to distance themselves from the local economy. The control of operations and the identification of targets should be the purview of a joint Afghan/NATO security body, with the NATO force commander in place having overall command of the counter-narcotics operations – eg. interdiction, eradication and surveillance – in his/her Area of Operations. The intent is to distance the control of counter-narcotics operations as far as possible from regional leaders, and to minimize the likelihood that the military and police forces will be corrupted or threatened/deterred by drug networks.

Backlash by Traffickers

When it comes to the eradication of coca or poppy fields, or the targeting of refinement laboratories and trafficking routes, the military and police forces must be prepared for a significant backlash by the narcotics networks. In the second drug war in Colombia in 1984, the Minister of Justice and other officials were assassinated after a violent attack on the interests of the drug lords, including a number of clandestine laboratories.[76]

In the late 1990s, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar governments agreed to work with US DEA to perform crop eradication, develop alternative and agriculture production programmes and to be trained by the US DEA on counter-drug techniques and procedures: "Despite the obvious value of such international initiatives, the concern is

[76] Brouet, 53.

that they could spark the type of violent reaction already seen in states such as Colombia and Italy."[77] For example, assassinations in Cambodia from 1995 to 1997 are thought to be related to this pressure on the drug industry.[78] Likewise in Peru between February and September 1989, the Shining Path halted counter-narcotics efforts by the government after the latter's successful 1985-1988 seizures, arrests and cocaine destruction. "In retaliation against the use of herbicide Spike, the senderos surrounded a 50-man garrison in the town of Uchiza, forced its surrender and shot the officers."[79]

Eradication alone is counterproductive

Eradication as a stand-alone measure has the opposite effect of that desired. The act and threat of eradication and destruction of opium or coca pastes has a psychological impact on the farmer and his risk analysis as to what type of plant he should produce. That threat, however, is likely less salient than the requirement for credit provided by traffickers and the cash rewards of cultivating the source plant.[80] Moreover, the threat is likely to produce the opposite effect desired, making the farmer seek protection from traffickers and solidifying his relationship with the narcotics networks. Destroying refining centres generally leads to their movement to more inaccessible areas, as was the case in Colombia,[81] Myanmar, Peru and Bolivia.[82] Similarly, killing and arresting

[77] Chalk, 20.
[78] Chalk, 20.
[79] Jamieson, 18.
[80] Bolivia planned to eradicate a significant number of plantations in 1988, but the plan was discarded when it was realized that the US would not provide the subsidies required to pay farmers. Jamieson, 19.
[81] Brouet, 54.
[82] Delbrel 222. Eradication in Myanmar from 1974-1988 was ineffective. In Bolivia, the first attempt at crop eradication eliminated about 2% of the total crop acreage, but the counteraction was that some 10-20% new planting occurred. In Peru, for every acre eradicated, 15-20 new acres were planted.

traffickers leads to them being replaced by others. One cannot expect to eliminate the drug networks simply by destroying them one at a time. The destruction caused by the attacks and their deterrent effect become significant when they contribute to a larger counter-narcotics programme linked to development, good governance and rule of law. The Peruvian military had at least temporary success in 1989/1990 when Peruvian General Arciniegas launched strong military attacks against the Shining Path insurgents, but did not target the peasants or their crops. The result was that after eight months, 3000 insurgents dwindled to four hundred. Of the 2600, six hundred were killed in battle and the remainder returned to their fields to continue farming.[83] General Arciniegas credited his success to not reprimanding the people but targeting the traffickers: "Il faut sortir les agriculteurs de la marginalité, et réprimer les trafiquants."[84] The military gained the confidence of the people, who then provided them with information on the insurgents.

Eradication may have a deterrent value in a potential cultivator's risk/gain calculation when it is combined with the threat of other legal actions and the benefits of financial assistance and alternative crop/employment opportunities. Benefits alone are insufficient to cease production given the enormous profits to be made by farmers (relative to other crops) and traffickers. Best results in the case studies occurred when eradication was executed in areas controlled by the government (meaning their military). The poor results over fourteen years in Myanmar were due partly to the fact that aerial

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Belen Boville, *The Cocaine War in Context: Drugs and Politics* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), 174-175.

[83] Delbrel, 207.

[84] *Ibid*., 209.

spraying without a ground presence was used.[85] In the case of Lebanon in the 1970s, the US paid millions to Lebanon for alternative livelihoods and almost $US100 million to Syria with no effect.[86] This financing could not break the grip that drugs held on the military and political authorities that controlled the areas – the Bekaa valley in particular – where drugs were produced, as there was no real or threat of coercive force to dissuade cultivators from producing drugs.[87] The stick without the carrot is ineffective, but the reverse is also true.

Link between Insurgents and Traffickers

An important security consideration, with particular relevancy to Afghanistan, is whether there is collusion between traffickers and insurgents – "the drug insurgency nexus."[88] In Libya, Peru and Lebanon, opium and hashish financed armed groups and fuelled their civil wars.[89] In Colombia, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) eventually developed a position whereby they opposed the capitalist nature of the drug barons and their exploitation of the workers, but taxed coca paste production in the areas under their control.[90] In that sense, the revolutionaries were complicit in the drug trade but were rivals of the drug barons. Nevertheless, traffickers and the FARC developed a "marriage of convenience."[91] Both shared the same goal of destabilizing and undermining the government. The guerrillas acted as a government for

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[85] *Ibid*., 222.
[86] *Ibid*., 83.
[87] *Ibid*., 89-90.
[88] Brouet, 60.
[89] Delbrel, 43 and 63.
[90] Brouet, 60.
[91] Boville, 151. United States General Accounting Office, *GAO/NSIAD-91-296 Drug War: Observations on Counternarcotics Aid to Colombia* (Gaithersburg: GAO, September 1991), 20: "The 1990 Defense Department report … stated that the underlying relationship between the insurgents and traffickers is based upon the insurgents' control over areas where coca is grown and processed."

the peasant farmers and profited from the drug trade by guarding illegal coca plots and processing laboratories and providing safe passage of drugs.[92] Traffickers were taxed by the guerrillas in their territory, and by the corrupt government authorities if in their territory.[93]

Colombian guerrilla groups "reaped close to US$1 billion in revenues in 1997, mainly from organized crime, drug trafficking, banditry, extortion and kidnapping": FARC gained an estimated US$348 million from drug trafficking activities (mainly protection); and the Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN) earned an estimated US$380 million from similar activities.[94] In Myanmar in the late 1990s, drug syndicates built up private militias with their funds.[95] Similarly, prior to 1994, cocaine refining and trafficking in Columbia were dominated by the Cali and Medellin cartels. The trade was decentralized once the Medellion leader Pablo Escobar was killed in December 1993 and the Cali principals captured. One group that rose up from the vacuum created by the Cali and Medellin defeat was the Simon Bolivar Guerrilla Co-ordination Group (CGSB) – "an umbrella guerrilla group which uses profits from the drug trade to finance its continuing rural insurgency against the Bogota government."[96]

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[92] Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Narco-terrorism* (New York: BasicBooks, 1990), 98.

[93] Boville, 151.

[94] Chalk, 20. See also United States GAO, *Drug War* …, 20: "According to a 1990 Defense Department report … the FARC was increasing its control of the cultivation, processing, and commercialization of coaine sales for the international market; maintaining FACR owned cocaine labs; establishing a cocaine monopoly in its area of control; acquiring a fleet of aircraft for smuggling; and directly using its leadership to provide direction and supervision of narcotics finances."

[95] Chalk, 20.

[96] Chalk, 11.

In Peru, the Shining Path created a position for themselves as the protector of the local people within the areas they controlled, demanding higher and consistent coca paste prices from traffickers and taxing along trafficking routes.[97]

In the case of Afghanistan, in 1990 it was estimated that opium production never went below 500 tonnes during the war against the USSR.[98] As the *mujahideen* controlled ninety percent of the territory in Afghanistan, one could deduce that they were profiting from the drug trafficking whether directly through farmers or indirectly through taxation of routes.

Information campaign

Control of information and public perception was a key tool in the trafficker's toolbox. The information sector includes the messages that traffickers and state authorities communicate to the farmers and local communities. In the case of Colombia during the 1980s, the drug barons succeeded in portraying themselves as defenders of national sovereignty and independence against US aggression.[99] This was simplified by the history of US intervention in Colombia during the first drug war against marijuana in 1978, assistance to Colombian authorities during the second drug war in 1984 and again in 1989 during the third drug war led by President Barco with some US$65 million in military aid.[100] Even the Colombian politicians protested against this external assistance.

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[97] Delbrel, 205-207. In the late 1980s, it was estimated that coca production provided the Shining Path with US$20-100 million/year.

[98] Delbrel, 63. The price at that time was $US50 per kilogram of opium and $US800-4000 for a kilogram of heroin.

[99] Brouet, 51.

[100] *Ibid*., 51-53.

Likewise in Thailand in the late 1970s, US support for the Prime Minister and his attempts to fight the drug trade contributed to his loss of public support and military coup by General Kriangsak, an officer with strong links to the Thai drug industry.[101] The lesson learned was that public interest with respect to sovereignty can undermine a counter-narcotics strategy if it appears that the impetus for change is coming from outside the state. Winning the information campaign is a key requirement for the government authorities.

Porous Borders

Trafficking in Afghanistan other landlocked producer states such as Bolivia requires porous borders and transit countries to permit the movement in and out of unrefined and refined products and the chemicals required to make them. The North West Frontier province in Pakistan shares their border with most of southern and eastern Afghanistan. Both sides of the border are the home to the same ethnic/tribal groups, which facilitates the movement of goods through both areas and across the border. The same situation occurs along the Iran and western Afghan border: "The ethnic link between Baluchi tribesmen on both sides of the Afghan/Iran border provides the transitional link which safeguards the traffic."[102]

Stricter border controls are required throughout the trafficking chain. Containing all the movement of drugs from a producer state or restricting importation have proven to

[101] *Ibid*.,144.
[102] Jamieson, 10-13.

be impossible tasks,[103] but restricting drug movement to lower mobility routes by patrolling high mobility routes (eg. paved roads and principal exits from a state), or forcing movement to occur by air, would serve to complicate trafficking and perhaps reduce the flow. Well-armed joint Afghan/NATO border sites, with improved unmanned surveillance on remote sites, would hinder at least large movements of drugs.[104]

Military-Police Cooperation

To avoid functional stove-piping and divergent objectives, military and police elements must work jointly and their operations coordinated through a single operations centre and commander. Importantly, the aim of the military and police must be the same. In Peru in the 1990s, when military and police cooperation was weak, the military commander's aim was to defeat the insurgency whereas the police commander's aim was to defeat drug trafficking. This lead to the military accepting some trafficking in their area in exchange for information on activities of the Shining Path guerrillas.[105]

Interagency cooperation, coordinated by international forces but primarily with a host-nation face on ground operations, would contribute to dispelling local perceptions that international forces are usurping state sovereignty, host-nation security forces are inadequate for the task and that host-nation security forces are unable to provide security.

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[103] Dennis F. Coupe, "Military Force in the Drug War: A Strategic Mismatch?," Paper prepared for the Conference on Ethical Dimensions of the Changing Use of Force at the Institute for International Peace Studies of the University of Notre Dame, October 25, 1990 (Unpublished draft), 25-26.

[104] Expectations should be mitigated, however, as porous borders are a serious problem even for nations with advanced detection/surveillance means. For example, in 1989 about 74% of opiates in Europe transited through Turkey.

[105] Jamieson, 18.

It adds to the credibility of host-nation security forces and to the legitimacy and legality of the joint counter-narcotics activities.

Military forces, international and host-nation, are generally better equipped than local police forces. In the Andean countries of Boliva, Peru and Colombia, the military became involved to varying degrees in the drug war in the mid-to late 1980s when police forces were unable to provide security. In Colombia, where the U.S. granted about US$267 million in emergency assistance, military grants and loan guarantees to Colombia's military and police as part of its 1989 Andean Initiative,[106] the military became involved because of the resource and capability shortfalls of the police. The Congressional Report on this subject stated: "(1) the police do not have the resources needed to adequately conduct counternarcotics operations and (2) the military already has a greater capability than the police in terms of available personnel, equipment, and training to conduct counternarcotic operations throughout the country."[107]

Summary of findings

A cursory overview of a very broad topic that is awash with literature provides a glimpse of lessons learned and best practices for the military in counter-narcotics operations. In particular, the countries studied provide insights on operations conducted in a conflict or post-conflict setting characterized by terrorism and insurgency and in which narcotics were a fundamental component of the state's war economy.

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[106] The U.S. granted US$65 million worth of emergency assistance to Colombia's military and police. This was in addition to about US$118 million in military grant aid and US$84 million in loan guarantees to purchase U.S. equipment. United States GAO, *Drug War*..., 1-2.

[107] United States GAO, *Drug War* …, 17.

Effective counter-narcotics military forces need to be well-paid, adequately armed, multiethnic, professional (trained and full time) and dissociated from the local economy and tribal society in which they are operating. International forces, working jointly with host nation military and police forces but independently from local government, are well-placed to provide this type of force. The presence of foreign troops, however, is often seen by the indigenous population as interference in a state's internal affairs and a blow to its sovereignty. Insurgents and narco-traffickers alike have been successful in garnering support throughout a polity, from farmers to the middle class to governing elites. Acting without being seen, or at least without being perceived as the instigators, is what is required of the international forces.

The backlash from opening what amounts to a second front with traffickers may be more severe than the threat posed by insurgents and terrorists. Not only is that backlash physical, but it may also be political in the sense of undermining the governance reconstruction process as regional leaders empowered by the drug trade move away from voluntary obedience to the centralized control of the distant state government.

Eradication as a policy has proved itself to be not only unsuccessful, but counterproductive, often leading to more acreage being replanted or cultivation simply displaced to another area. Eradication drives farmers to side with the insurgent or traffickers. This is even more so the case when it is conducted by foreign troops or via aerial spraying without ground troops and follow-up development teams. It can,

however, be useful as a deterrent when accompanied with sustainable alternatives and financing in government controlled areas. Both positive and negative reinforcements and threats of punishment are required to undermine narcotics production.

The link between insurgents and traffickers is tenuous and exists as long as both continue to profit from the relationship. It is a marriage of convenience as they exist in symbiosis. Insurgents, however, ultimately wish to overthrow the government. Traffickers simply wish to limit the government's ability to threaten trafficking networks and to ensure that government policies enhance their ability to operate, legally and illegally. What is clear from the cases is that insurgents/terrorists profit from the drug trade through protection rackets, taxing routes and sometimes processing. These profits are their lifeblood, providing them with the wherewithal to purchase weapons/materiel and local support and to corrupt all levels of leadership.

The control of the sources of information permits the shaping of perception. The information campaign needs to portray international forces in good light, communicate the laws of the central government and the rationale behind those laws, and to highlight the successes and autonomy of the central government to demonstrate its independence from foreign interference and the maintenance of state sovereignty.

There are multiple agencies involved in counter-narcotics activities, from regular police forces to specialized ones to regular and specialized military forces. The key to successful surveillance, interdiction, laboratory destruction and eradication is unity of

purpose and command. Security organizations must share a common operational objective and end state, and control of their operations would best be delivered from a joint interagency and internationally led operations centre.

Globalization has increased the transnational movement of people and materiel. Porous borders facilitate the trafficking of narcotics. The control of significant high-mobility inflow/outflow corridors at state borders would detect and deter some narcotics shipments, and would also compel traffickers to use lower-mobility routes or air routes. The lower-mobility routes could limit shipment size and could be observed via satellite or aerial surveillance forces.

Implications for Afghanistan

A number of implications for Afghanistan can be drawn from the summary of findings of the case studies. A prerequisite of effective counter-narcotics operations are professional, adequately paid Afghan National Police and National Army. Ideally, police forces involved in counter-narcotics operations should not come from the same tribal region in which they are carrying out their duties, and they should be housed in barracks to isolate them from the local economy.

Local Afghans currently profiting from cultivation and trafficking, particularly the farmers, must perceive counter-narcotics operations as being run at the request of and by the Afghan government despite the fact that control of the targeting and command of operations is held by someone else (ie. ISAF) until such time as Afghan security forces

are able to conduct operations with minimal support. Information operations that shape the information flow to the Afghan population are key to ensuring that this is perceived as an Afghan solution to an Afghan problem. This requires a strong commitment from the central government and buy-in from the provincial leaders. Similarly, the multiple police and military security organizations must share a common operational objective and end state. Control of their operations would best be delivered from a joint interagency ISAF-led operations centre that is co-located in ISAF headquarters, with members from the Afghan Ministry of Counter-narcotics, the Interior, Defence and other ministries such as Rural Development that have relevance to implementing the Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy.

The political and violent backlash from directly targeting trafficking is perhaps the crux of the problem in Afghanistan. First, NATO nations lack the political and military will to engage their armed forces in a conflict against traffickers, likely because of the fear of casualties, mission/mandate creep, the military involved in what is considered a police function in Europe, or lack of resources to take on a greater role.[108] Second, taking on trafficking also infers confronting many of those regional and local leaders – particularly in the north – who assisted the coalition in unseating the Taliban and who fought against the Soviets. Furthermore, without a fully deployed Afghan National Army able to provide security throughout the country, the regional leaders are

[108] "[The Observer, 26 February 2006] suggested that the Taliban were becoming involved with the narcotics trade. This was supported by [UK Head of the Afghan Inter-Departmental Drugs Unit] Peter Holland who told us 'there are some indications, particularly in the South, that the Taliban have been encouraging farmers to grow poppy this year and offering them protection against law enforcement forces'. There is a danger that UK Forces will become the subject of attack by groups, including the Taliban, seeking to protect their interests." United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee, *The UK deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005–06, Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2006), 17.

providing that stability with forces armed from their own funds, money acquired from taxation and narcotics.

Eradication is generally an unsuccessful policy. It may be of some use in Afghanistan as another legal deterrent for poppy cultivation when it is linked to alternative livelihood programmes and financing for alternate crops. Positive reinforcement alone will not make farmers change crops given the profits to be made from growing poppies. Legal action such as heavy fines, imprisonment and eradication of one's field should be part of the counter-narcotics toolbox. At least initially, the main effort of operations should be directed at the regional trafficking and processing level beyond the farmer's field.

The link between drugs and terrorists/insurgents is well established in Afghanistan, with Taliban and other armed groups often cultivating poppies themselves in addition to financing and coercing locals to do the same. Opium and heroin profits are their lifeblood, enabling them to purchase weapons/materiel and local support to perpetuate their fight against the Afghan central government, NATO forces and representatives of the international community seeking to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan. Severing that link will weaken the capabilities of terrorist and insurgent groups. Doing so, however, and also not to simply shift the problem into Pakistan or Iran requires monitoring and interdiction along the borders. Improving Afghan border services and monitoring capabilities is also essential to reducing the flow of opium and heroin.

Applications to the military's combat functions

According to Canadian joint doctrine, the military performs five combat functions: command, sense, act, shield and sustain.[109] Military involvement in counter-drug activities in the Andean, Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent countries touch upon all these functions. International military forces, NATO in the case of Afghanistan, can provide multinational joint command and control organizations, processes and equipment (including telecommunications) to lead and coordinate interagency counter-narcotics operations. For example, a counter-narcotics operations cell working within the formation headquarters would ensure that counter-narcotics operations would be linked to counter-insurgency operations and could make international resources available for counter-narcotics activities. This would have the effect of making operations against traffickers an integral part of the counter-insurgency and stabilization operations of the international forces. Counter-narcotics would, therefore, not be an extraneous or even parallel activity, but one that is integrated into the overall military and political strategic campaign design. This is particularly relevant if the weapons procurement funding and empowerment of insurgents is linked to narcotics trafficking. The insurgents/terrorists can be undermined indirectly by removing their source of income and local support.

The sense function refers to intelligence gathering and analysis, surveillance and reconnaissance activities. A joint corps-level formation, such as the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, is equipped with integral capabilities that permit limited land, air and electromagnetic surveillance. Deployed troops provide the

[109] US and NATO doctrine are somewhat similar.

most significant information through the course of their routine operations and patrols, as do small human intelligence (HUMINT) teams and special operations forces. Similarly, air surveillance and air traffic control provides some information on movements within the host nation's airspace. The headquarters also has reach-back to strategic resources such as satellite imagery and strategic reconnaissance aircraft. The UN used satellite imagery, with some inspections to provide ground truth, to develop their estimates on poppy cultivation in Afghanistan and other opium and coca producing states. Intelligence gathering and analysis facilitates the understanding of the interaction between the various military, political, economic and social networks and the role of drugs therein. The sense function provides hard data on narcotics production and trafficking movement that can be used for target identification and to pressure regional leaders to disassociate themselves from narcotics cultivation. It is also of assistance in planning needs assessments for development activities.

The act function includes the kinetic and non-kinetic activities designed to shape the operational environment and eliminate the threat. Kinetic activities include the destruction of processing laboratories, land and air interdiction of traffickers, eradication of fields, border control, and electronic warfare and computer network operations to suppress or monitor communications. Non-kinetic activities include training of military and police organizations and civil-military and public affairs to win the hearts-and-minds campaign.

The shield function refers to protecting friendly assets from attack or subversion, physical or non-physical. International military forces provide a shield against the backlash by drug traffickers, threats against host nation military and police communities and opposing information operations that undermine the credibility of the government and the legitimacy of the international forces.

Lastly, the sustain function includes such activities as providing logistical support to host nation military and police organizations in the form of transport, equipment, medical/health services, pay administration, food and supplies. Proper administration of the military and the police, including their pay and benefits, is an essential part of developing professional forces less tempted by corruption or forced to abandon their position to support their families. The US spent millions of dollars in South America to support the Bolivian, Colombian and Peruvian military operations against coca cultivation and trafficking. Unfortunately, that financial support was tied to the procurement of American military equipment and left little for development programmes.

In sum, the role of international military forces can be quite extensive. They can positively impact on counter-narcotics strategies if employed in a way that ensures joint interagency collaboration under a single chain of command, a public view that operations are conducted by the host nation without infringement on the host-nation sovereignty, and that is sensitive to both the role narcotics play in the war economy of the state and how drug production is interwoven into the various social, economic, political and military networks. Given the possibilities for action, the issue is one of whether the

political will and resources exist among contributing nations to pursue counter-narcotics operations. It is assumed that the threat associated with such action is a restraint, but what of the threat of inadequate action? Seven Canadian soldiers were recently killed on 8 and 9 April 2007 in Afghanistan bringing the count to fifty-three soldiers and diplomat Glynn Berry. If the insurgents are acquiring arms and funding from the drug trade to carry out such acts, then the case may be made for attacking narcotics production as a way of undermining the enemy's financial and moral base. Afghanistan is more a case of engaging insurgents and parallel power structures by attacking their resource base then it is a case of combating the international drug trade. Interdiction in Afghanistan will not stop the demand for drugs throughout the world, and any reduction in Afghan production would most likely be filled somewhere else, but it would help Afghan state-building and reconstruction efforts. Perpetuation of the opium war economy while state structures are erected will only lead to their collapse over time. The impact of narcotics production on the state-building process in Afghanistan and the international military response is the subject of the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – IMPACT AND RESPONSE:

THE OPIUM INDUSTRY IN AFGHANISTAN

> Major traffickers, warlords and insurgents are reaping the profits of this bumper crop to spread instability, infiltrate public institutions, and enrich themselves. Afghanistan is moving from narcoeconomy to narco-state. While criminals prosper, the rest of society suffers. In Afghanistan, opium is choking development and democratization. The rule of the bullet and the bribe exists where there is no rule of law.[110]

The opium industry continues to negatively affect Afghanistan reconstruction and state-building. This chapter examines that impact and, in particular, how the illicit drug trade supports terrorism, insurgency and factionalism. It also examines the nature and progress of the current response, with particular attention to the military contribution by NATO. It analyses that response within the context of the war economy of drugs, lessons learned/best practices from comparable situations and military combat functions. In doing so, it identifies NATO counter-narcotics policy gaps and inconsistencies, implementation gaps that provide areas for further engagement by NATO military forces, and risks associated with further engagement.

Extent of the industry

The release of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006 provided astonishing data on the magnitude of the opium industry in Afghanistan.[111] The survey states that opium cultivation in Afghanistan rose to 165,000

[110] UNODC *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006*, iii.

[111] Although the methodology and hence accuracy of the data may be critiqued, the survey results are generally accepted as representing a reasonable estimation of opium production and trafficking in Afghanistan.

hectares in 2006, a 59% increase over 2005. The record production of 6,100 metric tonnes of opium gives Afghanistan "the dubious distinction of having nearly a monopoly of the world heroin market," or an estimated 92% of world production. Of note, cultivation soared 162 percent to 69,324 hectares in the southern province of Helmand, an area of considerable Taliban representation in Southern Afghanistan. The number of households involved in opium cultivation increased 45% from 2005, from 309,000 to 448,000. The number of persons involved in opium cultivation grew from 2.0 million to 2.9 million, representing about 12.6% of the total population of 23 million inhabitants.

Following the cash flow lines from this lucrative market is very sketchy. The UNODC 2006 Survey claims that gross trafficking profits, the amount of export sales less the money going to farmers, is US$ 2.34 billion. That amount is subdivided into US$ 1.2 billion in opium exports and US$ 1.9 billion in heroin and morphine exports. In 2005, the total amount was US$ 2.14 billion. Apart from the traffickers themselves, others undoubtedly benefit to varying degrees: insurgents, terrorists, governing officials and warlords/local leaders. The link between these actors is nebulous and documentation is not readily available that provides solid proof of those links. Looking at the impact on security in general, however, provides some strong circumstantial evidence. Moreover, the precedent has already been set in other regions, as noted in the case studies above.

The UNODC Survey indicates that opium poppy cultivation in the Southern Region increased by 55,753 hectares (121%), accounting for the substantial increase in 2006 over 2005 figures. The Survey suggests that the lack of security in the South

permitted anti-government elements – which could be terrorists/insurgents or criminals – to encourage and threaten farmers to grow opium poppies. The Afghan government's eradication campaign in the southern region was ineffective because of security issues in all but Kandahar province. No new farmers in the South, however, cultivated for the first time, indicating that they were simply producing more poppies on more land. Given the region's historical record poppy production, the claim that farmers were forced to grow poppies is tenuous. It is likely more a case of security conditions permitting, even encouraging the growth of poppies.

NATO's southern Afghanistan consists of the six provinces of Hilmand, Kandahar, Day Kundi, Nimroz, Zabul and Uruzgan.[112] The Survey indicates that most of the opium poppy cultivation in the south takes place in Hilmand, accounting for a whopping 42% of the total opium poppy cultivation acreage in Afghanistan in 2006. Kandahar, Uruzgan, Farah and Day Kundi follow. Southern Afghanistan has five of the top seven producing provinces, or about 65% of the poppy fields. The Survey also indicates that although there was a recent spike in acreage of poppy cultivation, those provinces are also the historical production areas.

The UNODC conducted a survey of the ethnic distribution of cultivators.[113] In terms of production, available data for 2006 shows that more than half of the country's opium production (65%) originated from Pashtun farmers, followed by Tajik/Dari-speaking farmers (19%), Hazara farmers (6%) and Uzbek farmers (4%). The south, the

[112] There are only five provinces in the southern region according to the 2006 Survey: Kandahar, Uruzgan, Zabul, Hilmand and Day Kundi. Nimroz was included in the Western region.

[113] UNODC collected data from village leaders in 1,554 villages.

area of greatest insurgency, produces the majority of poppy and also has a Pashtun majority, the ethnic/tribal affiliation of the Taliban. Furthermore, the survey identifies the main morphine/heroin producing centres to be located in south and south-western Afghanistan in the provinces of Hilmand, Nimroz and Kandahar. Other major production centers are in Nangarhar and Badakhshan, and some production facilities were reported to be in Baghlan province. UNODC regional offices indicated that around 53% of the Afghan opiates leave the Afghanistan via Iran, 32% via Pakistan and 15% via Central Asian countries.

Impact, strategy and progress

Impact

The overall assessment of Afghanistan is that it is making slow and even progress. The security situation remains tense and the upcoming summer 2007 offensive by insurgents will undermine reconstruction and stability efforts. In recent reports of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly, he noted: security incidents have increased overall; governing and civil society elites have been assassinated; "night letters" propaganda [has] intensified; limited progress has been made on the disarmament of illegally armed groups; human rights abuses continued in the form of killing of teachers and attacking schools; improvements in gender equality is slow; opium poppy cultivation and the drug economy "continue to grow"; and, "the insurgents leadership structure remained intact, despite the capture or killing of a few senior commanders."[114]

[114] UN SecGen Report A/61/799–S/2007/152 15 March 2007: "The figures for January 2007, for example, were more than double those in January 2006. The insurgency-related violence resulted in 2,732 fatalities between 1 September 2006 and 25 February 2007. Since the last reporting period, there was a marked increase in insurgent forces prepared to engage in conventional combat operations against

Insecurity is caused by a number of distinct yet related entities: terrorists (Taliban and Al-Qaida), illegally armed groups, factional/tribal leaders or warlords, and criminals involved in the narcotics trade. The reasons for the revitalized violence in the last eight months are multiple, but generally revolve around the lack of adequate government, economic and security structures:

> Popular alienation remains a key factor behind the revitalized insurgency, and stems from inappropriate Government appointments, tribal nepotism and monopolization of power, and the marginalization of those outside the dominant social and political groups.[115]

Factionalist violence and criminality in the northern part of Afghanistan are hindering progress on the Afghanistan Compact, with disputes between former factional commanders in Badakhshan, Faryab and Jawzjan provinces. Much of the violence is believed to be related to the narcotics industry: "Competition over control of revenue sources, including drug trade routes, is suspected to be the main reason for the clashes observed."[116] For example, the allocation of senior police positions in the ANP as part of the Ministry of the Interior's January 2007 reform ran into difficulties because "bribes are commonplace, particularly for lucrative positions in drug-producing areas or along smuggling routes."[117] The deleterious effects of the narcotics economy on state-building is undermining state-building:

Government and international security forces, and a significant improvement in the insurgents' tactics and training. Despite high losses of personnel during the past year, indications pointed to an insurgency emboldened by their strategic successes, rather than disheartened by tactical failures."

[115] *Ibid*.
[116] *Ibid*.
[117] *Ibid*.

> The narcotics economy, linked both to the insurgency and failures of governance and rule of law, poses a grave threat to reconstruction and nation-building in Afghanistan. An urgent concerted effort by all stakeholders is needed to improve implementation of the national drug control strategy. Tackling the drug industry in Afghanistan must be viewed as part of the overall strategy to build healthy State institutions and restore people's trust in the authority of the Government.[118]

The UN, Afghanistan and nations and organizations participating in Afghan state-building are concerned with the links between terrorism activities and illicit drugs.[119] All posit that terrorism, insurgency and factionalism are financially fueled by the drug trade.[120] Similarly, Canada's February 2007 report to Parliament on progress in Afghanistan recognized the threat the narcotics industry poses to security, governance and development, that "the growing narcotics trade is helping to fuel the insurgency,"[121] and reiterated that the Afghanistan Compact "calls for a sustained and significant reduction in the production and trafficking of narcotics."[122] Solutions for a cross-cutting problem from a Canadian perspective include, "among other things, greater capacity in law enforcement and the judicial system, a wider provision of economic alternatives, improved regional cooperation and no tolerance of official corruption."[123] The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) states, "[the] drug trade

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[118] *Ibid*.
[119] UNSCR 1746 (2007)
[120] Sources are multiple, for example: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Interview with NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan Hikmet," *NATO Review* (Summer 2006); Foreign Press, "Interview with General Jones, US EUCOM and NATO SACEUR," Foreign Press Center Roundtable Update on NATO Operations in Afghanistan, 24 October 2006; CRS Report for Congress, *U.S. and Coalition Military Operations in Afghanistan: Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 11, 2006); The United Kingdom Parliament, *Lords Hansard*, 8 January 2007 and 26 February 2007; and, Associated Press Interview, "US counter-narcotics chief in Afghanistan hopeful of doubling number of opium free provinces," *The International Herald Tribune Europe*, 28 March 2007.
[121] Government of Canada, *Government of Canada Report to Parliament on Afghanistan*, 18.
[122] *Ibid*.,4.
[123] *Ibid*., Annex I.

is considered one of the greatest obstacles to Afghanistan's security and long-term development. Drug traffickers in Afghanistan contribute to lawlessness, fuel corruption and directly and indirectly support the insurgency."[124]

Strategy and Progress

The overall statebuilding strategy for Afghanistan is currently embodied in the 2006 Afghanistan Compact, a document that identifies strategic objectives that are consistent with and programmed through the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS).[125] The international community and the UN adopted the Afghanistan Compact as the metric upon which donor funding requirements would be identified and reconstruction progress assessed. The Afghanistan Compact is divided into three pillars, similar to Canadian, UN and NATO military lines of operations: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and, economic and social development. Counter-narcotics is considered a cross-cutting theme.[126] The Compact established specific benchmarks for sub-objectives within each pillar (such as the number of personnel in the Afghan National Army or National Police), funding requirements and, importantly, authorized the establishment of a Joint Coordination Monitoring Board (JCMB) to oversee progress in

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[124] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Protecting Canadians Rebuilding Afghanistan," http://geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/afghanistan/library/afgh_narcotics-en.asp.

[125] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *The Afghanistan Compact,* presented at the international conference "Building on Success: The London Conference on Afghanistan, 31 January - 1 February 2006." Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *The Afghanistan National Development Strategy*.

[126] "A further vital and cross-cutting area of work is eliminating the narcotics industry, which remains a formidable threat to the people and state of Afghanistan, the region and beyond." *Afghanistan Compact*, 2.

meeting the benchmarks.[127] The financial resources for the variety of programmes are allocated under the ANDS throughout international donor funding.

Security

The Compact calls upon the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the now remnants of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) to "provide strong support to the Afghan Government in establishing and sustaining security and stability in Afghanistan," and for ISAF to "continue to promote stability and support security sector reforms in its areas of operation."[128] The Compact recognizes, however, that "security cannot be provided by military means alone," rather it requires concomitant progress in the other two pillars.

The benchmarks[129] for all three pillars are generally scheduled to be met in 2010, with ISAF and the remnants of the coalition forces continuing to promote security and stability in all regions of Afghanistan and strengthening Afghan capabilities throughout the implementation period. The Afghan National Army (ANA) will expand to a professional, equipped, trained and ethnically balanced force of up to 70,000 personnel. The Afghan National (ANP) and Border Police (ANBP) will expand to an ethnically balanced force with a combined force of up to 62,000 personnel (revised to 64,100 plus

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[127] Government of Canada, *Government of Canada Report to Parliament on Afghanistan*: "Progress in implementing the Afghanistan Compact is measured by the international community through the work of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB). This body, co-chaired by the UN and the Government of Afghanistan, is composed of seven representatives of the Afghan government and 23 representatives of the international community, including Canada. As the "custodian" of the Afghanistan Compact, the JCMB meets four times a year and produces a detailed status report on Afghanistan's progress toward meeting its Compact benchmarks biannually."

[128] *Afghanistan Compact*, 3.

[129] *Afghanistan Compact*, Annex I.

11,271 Auxiliary Police, for a total force of 75, 371).[130] Illegal Armed Groups will be disbanded. Seventy percent of lands contaminated by mines will be cleared and stockpiles will be destroyed under Mine Action and ammunition benchmarks.

The interim target manpower level for the ANA is 64,000 by 2008, but the current estimated "present for duty" strength is approximately 25,000. It lacks mortars, adequate machine guns, aviation assets, artillery, body armour or light armoured vehicles. Nevertheless, the ANA is perhaps one area that can claim institutional progress, despite having to conduct operations while it is being formed: "Logistics support, administrative systems and the fabric of the institution are improving. Most significantly, in Operation Oqab at the end of 2006, the army (and the police) planned and executed complex joint operations as equal partners with ISAF."[131] The military has not been employed to conduct counter-narcotics interdiction.

Governance, rule of law and human rights

Governance, rule of law and human rights measures of the Compact include: capacity building of the Afghan government throughout the country; creation of a competent and credible public service and accountable and transparent government at all levels; measures to fight corruption and to promote human rights; and the establishment of provincial institutions (competent and paid civil administration, police, prisons and judiciary). Specifically, the reformation of the justice system includes: completing

[130] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, Implementation of the Afghanistan Compact: Status Update on Short-life benchmarks and Follow-up Action Points. Report to JCMB-IV Berlin, 30-31 January 2007, 5.

[131] *Ibid*., 5.

legislative reforms for the public as well as the private sector; building the capacity of judicial institutions and personnel; promoting human rights and legal awareness; and rehabilitating judicial infrastructure.[132]

Rule of law benchmarks support counter-narcotics by setting as a goal to "increase the number of arrests and prosecutions of traffickers and corrupt officials" and the improvement of the police "information base concerning those involved in the drugs trade, with a view to enhancing the selection system for national and subnational public appointments. . ." Such a database would serve as a tool to eliminate known traffickers or those with links to the drug industry from formal positions of office in the government of Afghanistan.

Progress in good governance and rule of law at the central and provincial levels is hindered by corruption related to the narcotics trade. "Despite an explicit statement in the ANDS that it "will take all necessary measures to remove any members of Government involved in illegal drug related activities" drug-corrupt officials remain untouched. Drug trafficking is rife and law enforcement agencies do more to facilitate than prevent it."[133]

The UN Secretary General's March 2007 report is explicit in terms of measuring progress made in attaining the benchmarks of the Compact. For the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, responsible for the various police corps, progress meant a growth in trained

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[132] *Afghanistan Compact*, 3-4.

[133] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, Kabul – Afghanistan, Progress Report on Implementation of National Drug Control Strategy, Report to JCMB-IV Berlin, 30-31 January 2007, 1.

personnel.[134] Their ability to function was restricted, however, by the slow rate of development, lack of equipment and salary compensation issues. The Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), a stop-gap measure to fill the void left by a slowly developing ANP, receive only ten days of training and are deployed to the area from which they come, making their allegiance to the central government vice warlord or tribal village leadership questionable. To prevent this, the Ministry of the Interior and UNAMA are supposed to monitor the implementation of the programme, the recruitment and vetting processes in particular: "The aim is to prevent infiltration by those who owe allegiance to former local militia commanders, rather than to the central government."[135]

The Ministry of Counter Narcotics has security forces that are separate from the Ministry of the Interior police and border police forces. Those forces, the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA) and the Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF), are small in size and rely on the Ministry on the Interior to provide them with logistical support.[136] The CNPA have been more effective in arresting drug criminals than other police agencies.[137]

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[134] According to the Afghan Ministry of the Interior there are 61,879 members of the Afghan National Police (ANP). In addition, "3,212 [National Auxiliary Police] have been trained, equipped and deployed; 819 are currently in training; and 4,590 have been vetted and are awaiting training. The current plan is to train a total of 9,063 Afghan National Auxiliary Police by 1 May 2007." UN SecGen Report 15 March 2007.

[135] *Ibid*.. The report also states "[t]he same concerns for adequate security lay behind the recent establishment of the Afghanistan National Civil Order Police, a 5,000-strong force with the special capacity to tactically respond to incidents of civil disorder and emergency situations in the urban and rural areas of Afghanistan."

[136] The strength of the CNPA in January 2007 was about 1000 officers, but the plan is to increase to about 3000 officers in the future. In 2005, the ASNF destroyed over 80 tonnes of opiates, 30 tonnes of precursor chemicals, 70 drug laboratories and disrupted 2 opium bazaars. The CNPA have a presence in all major opium producing provinces. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics Progress Report on Implementation of National Drug Control Strategy, 2.

[137] *Ibid*., 2.

Apart from the myriad Afghan factors that hinder stability and development, the shear number of players that are involved in reconstruction also hampers progress in the security sector.[138]

Economic and social development

Economic and social development measures of the Compact include: promoting private and public sector growth; curbing the narcotics industry; fiscal and monetary policies to ensure macroeconomic stability; strengthening civil society; and, reintegrating returnees, internally displaced persons and excombatants.[139]

Social development benchmarks for counter-narcotics include government programmes designed to reduce the demand for narcotics and to provide improved treatment for drug users. Agriculture and rural development benchmarks also support counter-narcotics efforts. Programmes include those designed to increase agricultural productivity and animal health, and water management systems and financial support. Of particular note for those in poppy production areas are the rural development measures designed for the benefit of some nineteen million people in over 38,000 villages, including: the creation of community development councils that promote "local governance and community empowerment;" access to safe drinking water to 90% of villages and sanitation services 50%; road connectivity to 40% of all villages; increasing

[138] For SSR alone: Justice sector reform (Italy); disarmament of illegal armed groups (Japan and UNAMA); police reform (Germany); and the establishment of the ANA (US, France and Germany and NATO Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs).

[139] *Afghanistan Compact*, 4. Investment is based on six sectors of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy: Infrastructure and natural resources; Education; Health; Agriculture and rural development; Social protection; and Economic governance and private sector development.

access to markets, employment and social services; small-scale irrigation to 47% of villages; improved access to financial services for 800,000 households (22% of all Afghanistan's households); and 91 million labour days will provide the livelihoods of at least 15% of the rural population.[140]

Rural development projects and programmes for alternate livelihoods have not convinced poppy farmers to abandon their crops.[141] In some cases it is because the programmes have not reached their target populations in areas controlled by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, and in others it is because poppy cultivation is in the interest of local leaders.

Counter-narcotics

Counter-narcotics is granted an important cross-cutting status in the Compact, from the perspective that progress in this area requires progress across the spectrum of state and institution building activities. " Meeting the threat that the narcotics industry poses to national, regional and international security as well as the development and governance of the country and the well-being of Afghans will be a priority for the

[140] *Afghanistan Compact*, Annex I. The Counter-Narcotics Trust Fund has received $42 million out of the $74 million committed, with most projects in the area of rural development and alternative livelihoods, but under $1 million was actually disbursed in 2006. In November 2006, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics established a Good Performance Fund to reward the six poppy-free provinces (Ghazni, Logar, Paktika, Paktya, Panjsher and Wardak). Each received $500,000. Additional funds will be provided to eight "good performers" (Bamyan, Kabul, Kapisa, Khost, Kunduz, Laghman, Kunar and Parwan). It is important that funds for the Fund increase, thus providing an incentive to provinces making tangible progress on opium reduction. UNSC Report on Afghanistan.

[141] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan: Challenges and the Way Ahead." Position Paper presented by the Government of Afghanistan at the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board meeting in Berlin January 30-31, 2007, 5.

Government and the international community."[142] The objective of the Compact is to "achieve a sustained and significant reduction in the production and trafficking of narcotics with a view to complete elimination."[143] The Compact prescribes a variety of measures requiring an international and interagency approach:

> Essential elements include improved interdiction; law enforcement and judicial capacity building; enhanced cooperation among Afghanistan, neighbouring countries and the international community on disrupting the drugs trade; wider provision of economic alternatives for farmers and labourers in the context of comprehensive rural development; and building national and provincial counter-narcotics institutions. It will also be crucial to enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards official corruption; to pursue eradication as appropriate; to reinforce the message that producing or trading opiates is both immoral and a violation of Islamic law; and to reduce the demand for the illicit use of opiates.[144]

Counter-narcotics benchmarks include the development of adequate law enforcement capability at the central and provincial levels to substantially increase the annual "amount of drugs seized or destroyed and processing facilities dismantled" and other measures such as "targeted eradication" that contribute to the elimination of poppy cultivation. Further goals are to increase "the seizure and destruction of drugs being smuggled across Afghanistan's borders" and to take "effective action against drug traffickers" through inter-state coordination and intelligence sharing.[145]

The 2006 National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), implemented by the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics with assistance from the UK as lead nation for counter-

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[142] *Afghanistan Compact*, 4.
[143] *Afghanistan Compact*, 4.
[144] *Afghanistan Compact*, 4-5.
[145] *Afghanistan Compact*, 6.

narcotics security sector reform, is the government strategy that incorporates the Compact's objectives. It identifies four key counter-narcotics priorities: disrupting the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers; strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods; reducing the demand for illicit drugs and treating drug users; and, further developing state institutions at the central and provincial levels vital to the implementation of the counter-narcotics strategy.[146] The NDCS identifies 8 pillars or objective areas for grouping related activities: demand reduction, alternative livelihoods, eradication, information campaign, interdiction and law enforcement, criminal justice, international and regional cooperation, and institution building. [147] The eight pillars are the focus of the 2005 Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan, which details steps to be taken by Government organisations, international partners and other stakeholders to implement the NDCS.

Despite internationally accepted policy documents on drug control in Afghanistan, the establishment of Afghan counter-narcotics institutions and security forces, support by the UK, and eradication of poppy fields, opium production has increased over the last few years to record levels. The UN Security Council has expressed its concern over the increase in production and continues to call upon the Afghan government and the international community to implement the National Drug Control Strategy and encourages additional international support for the strategy's four

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[146] Islamic State of Afghanistan, *National Drug Control Strategy 2006*. The precursor to this revised strategy was the *5-Year Strategy (1381-1396) for tackling illicit drug problem in Afghanistan,18 May 2003*. It's stated goal was "to eliminate the production, consumption and trafficking of illicit drugs into, within, and from, Afghanistan." It anticipated a 70% reduction by 2007, something that certainly has not happened.

[147] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics Progress Report on Implementation of National Drug Control Strategy, 1.

priorities.[148] The assessment of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) in January 2007 was equally as discouraging:

> Despite the combined efforts of the Government and the international community, poppy cultivation and trafficking have continued to increase. Narcotics producers have compensated for crop eradication in some provinces by expanding poppy cultivation throughout the country. Ongoing alternative livelihood programs have failed to convince farmers to abandon poppy cultivation, and no major drug dealers have been brought to justice.[149]

The JCMB assessment also states that regional cooperation on counter-narcotics has stalled and that the public awareness information campaign has had a limited impact on deterring farmers from cultivating poppy. Although some progress can be claimed in terms of the number of provinces not producing opium, those producing opium have increased their output to surpass levels never before reached. Failure to halt the escalation in cultivation is a result of the government's inability to bring security to, and hence control, areas held by the Taliban and other insurgents. The government lacks the military capability to do so, but what of NATO?

NATO's contribution

In response to the various UN Security Council Resolutions authorizing its deployment to Afghanistan, G8 Security Sector Reform plans, the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Drug Control Strategy, NATO's counter-narcotics response is limited to assisting Afghan authorities in a non-confrontational manner. When queried on what to do to reverse the narcotics production trend, NATO SACEUR General Jones

[148] UNSCR 1746 (2007)
[149] Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, "Afghanistan: Challenges and the Way Ahead," 5.

stated, "It's not part of my military mandate to be proactive in terms of the battle on drugs. That is not seen as a military task, and my authorization from nations is to be fairly passive from the standpoint of collecting intelligence, providing security and enabling but not to have NATO troops going up, for example, and participating in eradication."[150] NATO forces are thinly stretched throughout Afghanistan and do not conduct interdiction operations or target drug laboratories. NATO Operation Plan 10302, the operations plan for NATO expansion into southern and eastern Afghanistan, specifies how ISAF will support Afghan counter-narcotics activities: "This includes logistic support, sharing intelligence and information, and providing training assistance to the Afghan National Army and police in counter-narcotics procedures."[151]

As the G8 security sector reform counter-narcotics lead nation assisting Afghanistan, the UK is taking a more proactive role as a nation in conducting operations in Helmand province, their Area of Operations.[152] It has established a strategic-level Afghan Inter-Departmental Drugs Unit, whose focus in Helmand province is to support Afghan institutions such as the Afghan National Army, Police and judicial system in

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[150] Foreign Press, "Interview with General Jones …

[151] Alexia Mikhos, "Analysis: Afghanistan's drugs challenge," *NATO Review*, Spring 2006. According to NATO Senior Civilian Advisor Hikmet Cetin, providing assistance includes "helping develop command and control procedures for effective liaison coordination; we are supporting the counter-narcotics information campaign; and we have been training Afghan security forces in counter-narcotics related activities. We also provide logistical support to various international counter-narcotics agencies. And we support the Afghan government's counter-narcotic operations with intelligence and surveillance capabilities." NATO, "Interview with NATO Senior Civilian Representative ….

[152] The UK MoD perceives the ISAF mission to be: "Prevent Afghanistan reverting to ungoverned space which could harbour terrorism; build security and Government institutions so that the progress of recent years becomes irreversible, and to enable eventual international disengagement; and, support efforts to counter the growth of narcotics production and trafficking." United Kingdom House of Commons Defence Committee, *The UK deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005–06, Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence* (London: The Stationery Office Limited, 2006), 11.

disrupting the supply and prosecuting the traffickers of narcotics.[153] The UK Minister of Defence Howard, however, told the UK Defence Committee that "the military contribution to counter-narcotics . . . will be in support of the Afghan authorities rather than the British carrying out a counter-narcotics mission on its own account."[154] Nevertheless, this demonstrates how NATO nations may interpret the NATO operational plan to fit their national strategies, and how NATO military forces can embark on activities to support their lead nation development objectives in isolation from ISAF.

Summary of Strategy and Progress

Despite massive international funding, strategic and operational coordination and the commitment the Afghan central government,[155] over 33,000 NATO troops, coalition Special Operations Forces, and thousands of government organizations and NGOs, the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact is slow, unsteady and not self-sustaining. The counter-narcotics cross-cutting theme is undermining progress in all areas as it cuts through the security, governance and rule of law, and economic and social development pillars. Security remains an issue because of terrorists, insurgents, criminals, and tribal leaders, each with their own agenda. With relatively few NATO troops on the ground given the size of their Area of Operations, Taliban can be pushed out of an area then return when the NATO forces have withdrawn to the safety of their central camps. NATO cannot control terrain, a prerequisite for effective counter-narcotic programmes.

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[153] The ADIDU is a multi-agency organization that includes staff from: the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development, Home Office, and Revenue and Customs.

[154] UK Defence Committee, 7.

[155] Including a presidential decree and a fatwa issued by the National Council of Ulema.

The ANA is not adequately manned, equipped or trained to undertake unilateral counter-insurgency activities, let alone counter-narcotics interdiction ones. Governance and rule of law is slow due to corruption of government officials and police forces, and economic development activities cannot provide cash crop alternatives that are superior to the opium poppy. Rural development initiatives are difficult if not impossible to implement in areas controlled by the Taliban and other armed groups. Ample counter-narcotics policies exist, but the implementation is inadequate because of the lack of Afghan security resources, lack of sufficient numbers of international police forces, and the unwillingness – and perhaps in ability – of NATO nations to immerse themselves fully in the war on drugs in Afghanistan.

Analysis of the response: gaps, shortfalls, inconsistencies and areas for engagement

The preceding section reviewed and evaluated the progress of the Afghan and international strategy for drug control in Afghanistan, and identified NATO's contribution therein. Building on this and preceding chapters, this section comments on NATO counter-narcotics policy gaps and inconsistencies, implementation shortfalls and gaps that provide areas for further engagement by NATO military forces, and risks associated with further engagement. It suggests what current activities undertaken by NATO need to be further developed, what new activities should be undertaken, and what activities should be avoided, using the military combat functions as a guide. The areas of particular relevance to military forces from the National Drug Control Strategy are the information campaign, interdiction and law enforcement (disrupting the drugs trade by

targeting traffickers and their backers), eradication, institution building and regional cooperation.

Policy Gaps and Inconsistencies

NATO's policy gap is its decision not to conduct interdiction and drug-laboratory destruction. The policy inconsistency is in the relationship between NATO's Operational Plan for Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Compact with its benchmarks of improved interdiction, increased seizure and destruction of drugs being smuggled across the borders and effective action against drug traffickers. The NATO Operational Plan is also inconsistent with the National Drug Control Strategy's key priority of disrupting the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers, nor is it consistent with the Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan pillar on interdiction and law enforcement.

NATO's counter-narcotics policy is the result of debate within the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Military Committee, and national capitals over the extent of the Alliance's military commitment to Afghanistan, the risks it is willing to accept and the political will and national capabilities to deploy supplemental personnel and equipment if necessary to branch out into what many consider a non-military sphere of expertise and activity. The policy should not be surprising given the disparate positions of nations on what the scope of NATO military and civilian activity should be (at all times and not just in Afghanistan) and to what degree individual nations are prepared to engage in counter-insurgency and direct-action type activities. These positions are often reified in the form of national caveats limiting military operations. One such reticence to become more fully

engaged is with respect to counter-narcotics. NATO acknowledges that the drug trade is fuelling terrorists, insurgents and factions who are undermining security, rule of law and economic and social development. These same opposing forces are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of NATO soldiers and thousands of civilians. Narcotics are responsible for much of the corruption in Afghanistan, is regionally destabilizing and provides over ninety percent of the worlds illegal opium and heroin – drugs making there way onto the streets of North America and Europe. Yet, ISAF has not been given the mandate by the NAC to do more than provide assistance, and that assistance has been minimal despite room for manoeuvre in terms of what is permissible. Interdiction and the destruction of processing labs are not an ISAF task, but without adequate Afghan security forces available to do so traffickers will continue to ply their trade to the detriment of Afghan state-building, making the international end state of a self-sustaining stable democratic state an elusive one.

Implementation shortfalls and inconsistencies: What NATO needs to do better

ISAF and NATO nations acting independently through development programmes provide significant assistance to the Afghan counter-narcotics campaign. The failure of the campaign to suppress cultivation, production and trafficking, however, infers that ISAF, in collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, needs to improve upon its current activities. Implementation inconsistencies are related to the manner in which counter-narcotics tasks, as enumerated in the NATO Operations, are executed on the ground. For example, although ISAF forces are permitted to seize drugs when discovered during routine operations and can provide the location of poppy and hashish

fields to Afghan authorities, this course of action is not proactively pursued. The UK, as the SSR lead partner nation on counter-narcotics, is more forward leaning in its Area of Operations in Hilmand Province than is Canada in Kandahar, or the Dutch in Uruzgan. With five of the top seven producing provinces located in Southern Afghanistan (about 65% of the poppy fields), the application of a common and consistent counter-narcotics strategy is required at the regional level.

Implementation gaps are defined below with reference to five combat functions. In terms of Command and Control, although the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics is the lead agency (assisted by the UK as SSR lead), multiple agencies with varying levels of capabilities exist to combat the cross-cutting nature of the drug industry. From a security perspective, the key to successful surveillance, interdiction, laboratory destruction and eradication is unity of purpose and command. Security organizations must share a common operational objective and end state, and control of their operations would best be delivered from a joint interagency counter-narcotics operations centre run by ISAF with access to the panoply of military and police capabilities. Comparable organizations should exist within the ISAF regional commands. From an institution-building perspective, such an entity at the ISAF HQ/Afghan state level could eventually transfer to the Afghan government. As part of ISAF, this centre would have the benefit of access to improved cooperation with Pakistan on border control and counter-narcotics issues as ISAF co-chairs the military Tripartite Commission and uses that forum to

improve operational cooperation between Afghan and Pakistani armed forces. Indeed, a sub-group of the Commission already considers border security operations. [156]

Military sub-units with strategic coordination abilities, such as the Canadian bilateral initiative the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT), can assist institutional capacity building in ministries affiliated with counter-narcotics operations and programmes. Similarly, having NATO undertake the responsibilities of the UK with respect to capacity building would assist in the centralization and focussing of counter-narcotics efforts.

The sense function includes human, land, air and electromagnetic surveillance and the analysis of data to provide intelligence. Currently, a joint ISAF, Afghan and Pakistani operations intelligence is established in Kabul to enable the sharing of military intelligence.[157] Similarly, the UK assisted the Afghan Counter Narcotics Police in establishing a Counter Narcotics Intelligence Fusion Cell in 2005.[158] ISAF could improve the synergy of these entities with a joint interagency counter-narcotics intelligence cell working within ISAF. Such a cell could improve the intelligence available to the counter-narcotics security forces and provide awareness of the various military, political, economic and social networks related to drugs. It could provide hard data on narcotics production and trafficking movement that could be used for target identification, to pressure regional leaders to disassociate themselves from narcotics cultivation, and to complete the list of those involved in the drug trade for the

[156] Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan
[157] Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan
[158] The United Kingdom Parliament, Lord Hansard Text for 8 January 2007.

government's anti-corruption list for government appointments. Intelligence information could also be of use in planning needs assessments for development activities.

The act function includes elements from the information campaign, interdiction and law enforcement and eradication. NATO could increase its pubic awareness campaign efforts to inform Afghans on the progress in development and law enforcement, the harms of drug abuse, laws against and punishment for cultivation etc., and progammes available for alternative livelihoods and financing. The control of the sources of information permits the shaping of perception. The information campaign needs to portray ISAF and the international assistance in favourable light, communicate the laws of the central government and the rationale behind those laws, and to highlight the successes and autonomy of the central government to demonstrate its independence from foreign interference and the maintenance of state sovereignty.

Border security and cross-border trafficking coordination with Pakistan and Iran are areas in which further ISAF assistance would be valuable. Assistance could entail the provision of training to border guards or police/military personnel stationed at significant high-mobility inflow/outflow corridors at state borders, the provision of equipment to inspect vehicles and detect narcotics shipments, and the provision of infrastructure for border guard personnel. ISAF could pay more attention to the surveillance of suspected narcotics trafficking air corridor routes and, via satellite or aerial surveillance forces, land smuggling routes.

ISAF has provided logistical assistance to Afghan security forces conducting poppy crop eradication. As the situation matures, and only in areas under government control, ISAF could increase its assistance by providing security to the eradicators. "President Karzai acknowledged the severity of the threat, indicating that he would consider the use of ground spraying, but not aerial spraying, to eradicate the next poppy crop providing that international military forces provided security."[159] Eradication is only useful as one of many legal deterrents in government controlled areas when it is accompanied with sustainable alternatives and financing.

ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams could increase the programming available for alternate livelihoods and financing, or ensure that Provincial Development Committees are expediting Rural Reconstruction funding to poppy growing villages.

Shield activities include training of Afghan security forces (institution building), protecting security and other agencies involved in counter-narcotic programmes, and countering disinformation that would otherwise undermine the credibility of the government and the legitimacy of the international forces. ISAF forces work in collaboration with Afghan security forces when conducting operations and are providing formal training in training institutions and with mobile teams. The target effective strength figures for the ANA and other security forces will not be met unless the output of the training entities increases. The NATO-Russia counter narcotics training initiative is one avenue that could be augmented. By March 2007 about 120 mid-level military officers from Afghanistan and five other states in central Asia received training. Mobile

[159] Report of the Security Council mission to Afghanistan

teams provide similar forms of training with assistance from the UK, Russia and Turkey and funding from NATO nations including Canada.[160] The current plan of providing minimal (one week) training to Afghan Auxiliary police and deploying them to their home regions will not provide any effective counter-narcotics capability.

The sustain function refers to the provision of logistical support, including pay and benefits administration, to host nation military and police organizations. The ANA deficiencies are mainly in terms of weapons, equipment, vehicles, support and compensation administration. The same may be said of the various police forces. International financial support is well structured in that it is generally not tied to the procurement of equipment or contracts from donors, as most funding is centrally pooled as part of the Afghan National Development Strategy.

Implementation gaps: What NATO does not do but could

In terms of the Afghan Counter Narcotics Strategy, and as noted in the policy gaps section above, the only area in which ISAF is not engaged is in interdiction and law enforcement. This includes disrupting the drug trade by targeting traffickers, their backers, targeting production labs and transportation vectors. Interdiction from an ISAF perspective means conducting joint interagency operations with Afghan law enforcement officials, that are perceived by local populations with visibility of the interdiction as Afghan-led. This corresponds to putting an Afghan face on operations, but maintaining control of the targeting and command and control. Although it could be argued that

[160] NATO, "NATO News: Good Progress in NATO-Russia counter-narcotics training initiative," 19 March 2007. http://www.nato.int/ ; Internet; accessed 12 April 2007.

traffickers are legal military targets because the narcotics trade is financing terrorism and insurgency, missiles strikes out of the sky may be on the fringes of ISAF Rules of Engagement unless a connection to the Taliban or other opposing armed groups can be positively made. Tracking down and prosecuting the drug lords requires a substantial commitment on the part of the Afghan government, which is the verbal and legal signal that the government has portrayed to date.

Further act combat function activities include electronic warfare and computer network operations to suppress or monitor the communications of the drug traffickers. Interdiction operations would need to be supported by an intense information campaign.

What NATO should not do

NATO should maintain its current policy of not actively eradicating poppy fields. Even assistance to eradication efforts should be avoided in areas not controlled by the Afghan government and that are not subsequently the target of alternate crop/livelihood and financing programmes.

Risk

The risks associated with augmenting ISAF's counter-narcotics role are multiple, especially when considering interdiction and drug processing lab destruction. Interdiction operations will likely lead to a physical and political backlash, from the traffickers and the corrupt or profiting political leaders and security officials. As the UK House of Commons Defence Committee noted:

> There is a fundamental tension between the UK's objective of promoting stability and security and its aim of implementing an effective counter-narcotics strategy. It is likely the more successful the deployment is at impeding the drugs trade, the more it will come under attack from those involved in it. In the short term at least, the security situation is likely to deteriorate.[161]

NATO and ISAF must be prepared to assume short-term risks for long-term gain. Mitigation of this risk is through public affairs activities to maintain Alliance cohesion, buy-in from the central government with political pressure to oust regional leaders implicated in narco-trafficking, a strong information campaign and the rapid enhancement of Afghan security forces in terms of training, weapons, equipment and logistics. The main effort of this campaign should be in southern Afghanistan where the narcotics – insurgency/terrorism link is the strongest.

Increasing the scope of military activities will require more capabilities. Most nations are already overstretched, especially given the troop drain related to Iraq.[162] Similarly, resources within the state may be shifted from stability and counter-insurgency operations. The war against drugs is also a war against the funding base of the insurgents, terrorists and factional leaders. It should not be considered a move away from stability or counter-insurgency operations but a task of those operations. Nevertheless, expansion of the Afghan security forces remains essential to successfully stabilizing Afghanistan.

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[161] UK Defence Committee, 17.

[162] UK Defence Committee, 22-23. The UK, like Canada and other NATO nations, is concerned with "overstretch," especially of specialist trade.

Enlargement of the ISAF scope of activities leads to mission creep. Besides opening a "second front" within Afghanistan, it places NATO in competition with the European Union for pre-eminence in paramilitary and development capabilities. Instead of mission creep, counter-narcotics activities should be viewed as mission essential activities or as an operational task that is compatible with the UN mandate, the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy. The issue of NATO undertaking activities beyond its institutional mandate, as interpreted by some Alliance members, is perhaps the most important barrier to an expanded counter-narcotics role for ISAF.

National caveats will undermine a united effort. With the majority of poppy cultivation occurring in areas in southern Afghanistan ultimately controlled by insurgents/terrorists or in the tribal areas of factional leaders, the national caveats of concern are those of the UK, Canada, the Dutch, Romanian and the U.S., and the nations that replace those countries beyond 2009. It is essential to have those NATO nations implicated in southern Afghanistan security to agree to direct action counter-narcotics, like intervention and processing site destruction, and more passive ones, like surveillance of narco-routes and border exit locations, without invoking national caveats. NATO wants to avoid a situation comparable to the current tendency whereby certain nations have not made their personnel or resources available for deployments outside their province of interest, or to Taliban-held areas in particular.

Sharing intelligence and operational information could lead to leaks that will benefit the enemy and threaten the safety of ISAF personnel and those of the international community assisting in counter-drug programmes. Currently, much of the intelligence information in Afghanistan is generated by national means with restricted visibility and transmitted through means also with restricted visibility such as US-only, "four eyes" (Canada-US-UK-Australia), CANUS (Canadian-US), or NATO-eyes only (26 NATO nations). ISAF, therefore, is habituated to working in an environment of restricted intelligence sharing. Mitigating the risk of information leaks is a force protection issue that would require careful analysis of what information needs to be shared, to whom, and when.

Conclusion

The international counter-narcotics response is well structured in the sense that objectives and benchmarks have been established (with some revisions by the Afghan President) in the Afghanistan Compact, the National Drug Control Strategy and the National Drug Implementation Plan. Implementation of the strategy has been slow and unsteady despite the universal agreement that it is the primary threat to stability in Afghanistan. The key objective areas or pillars in which ISAF currently operates are in the information campaign, logistic support to eradication, alternative livelihoods indirectly through national development programmes in PRTs, institution building and regional cooperation.

In comparison to lessons learned from previous operations, there do not appear to be any policy gaps within the government of Afghanistan's counter-narcotics strategy. It is clearly understood that counter-narcotics is a cross-cutting theme whose solution requires success in areas of development and governance in addition to effective security institutions. Until the underlying economic, security and governance issues are resolved, opium as a product of Afghanistan's war economy will continue to be used to finance factionalism and provide a cash crop to farmers. The farmer's economic rationale for cultivating poppy and opium gum will continue so long as traffickers provide credit, the cash return is high and legal/eradication risks are low, cultivation is supported by local leaders, and threats or coercion forces farmers to grow poppies. NATO does, however, have a policy gap, namely, its decision not to conduct interdiction or to seek out and destroy narcotics processing facilities. Permitting drug transformation sites and traffickers to remain active provides financial support to all those factions and factors that perpetuate instability and that are driving Afghanistan towards narco-statism.

Implementation inconsistencies exist in the manner in which the counter-narcotics tasks of the NATO Operations Plan are interpreted and conducted by Alliance members. Implementation gaps are the refusal to conduct joint interagency interdiction operations, laboratory destruction, border control, and tracking down and prosecuting drug lords. Areas for further or new engagement include: establishing ISAF-led central and regional joint interagency counter-narcotics operations centres and intelligence cells; developing mutual cooperation between Afghan Ministries involved in counter-narcotics programmes relevant to all pillars in the Afghanistan Compact; contributing more to the

training, equipping and administration of the Afghan counter-narcotics police forces and other security forces; improving intelligence and information sharing; intensifying information and awareness campaigns; implementing border security initiatives; increasing counter-narcotics related surveillance activities; executing electronic warfare and computer network operations to suppress or monitor the communications of the drug traffickers; and, delivering more alternative livelihood programmes by PRTs that target government controlled areas relevant to opium production.

The risks associated with doing more are considerable, but so is the risk of continuing along the same tack. Risks include physical and political backlash, the requirement for more capabilities from already overstretched nations, mission creep, national caveats and information leaks. Mitigation is achieved through information campaigns, Alliance cohesion, Afghan government action against factional leaders, rapid development of effective security institutions and information force protection measures.

In sum, counter-narcotics should not be an extraneous or even parallel activity to ISAF stability and counter-insurgency operations, but one that is fully integrated into the overall military and political strategic campaign design. This is particularly relevant when the weapons procurement funding and empowerment of insurgents is linked to narco-trafficking. The insurgents, terrorists and factional leaders can be undermined indirectly by removing their source of income and local support. The road to peace, security and good government crosses the opium fields of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 5- CONCLUSION

> There is a fundamental tension between the UK's objective of promoting stability and security and its aim of implementing an effective counter-narcotics strategy.[163]

From the perspective of political economy, the opium and heroin industry in Afghanistan exists in its current state as a result of its exploitation as a source of income for the *mujahideen* against the Soviets, factional groups during the civil war both against one another and the Taliban when exterior sources of finance were no longer available, and even today as a source of empowerment for regional leaders, especially those in areas of insecurity beyond the influence of the central government. Terrorists, insurgents and factional leaders profit from the drug trade and the economic dependency it creates amongst farmers. Moreover, international drug prices, the effects of globalization, regional economic conditions and drug production, and the cost-benefit analysis of individual farmers reinforce the industry. These same dynamics were demonstrated in the Andean and Golden Triangle states with respect to cocaine and opium.

Insights from counter-narcotics activities in those states include: drugs finance terrorism, insurgency and factionalism and can lead a state into collapse, corruption or dependency; security forces must be professional, adequately paid, and dissociated from the society and local economy in which they operate; the conduct of counter-narcotics operations by foreigners can be perceived as an affront to the host nation's sovereignty so

[163] UK Defence Committee, 17.

a native face must be kept on operations while delivering a strong information campaign; interagency unity of purpose and action is essential; there is a strong possibility of a physical and political backlash; eradication is unsuccessful unless conducted in areas under government control and provide with alternative livelihood and financing programmes; and, consideration must be given to border security and smuggling routes. Application of these lessons/best practices can be understood in terms of the military combat functions of command, sense, act, shield and sustain.

The international community, its organizations, the UK and the Government of Afghanistan have developed the policy framework for kicking the drug habit. The Afghanistan Compact, the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the National Drug Control Strategy and the National Drug Implementation Plan provide objectives, benchmarks and apply funding to the fundamental pillars that acknowledge the cross-cutting nature of the drug problem. A solution depends on progress in security, good governance and rule of law, and economic and social development. The International Security Assistance Force of NATO is currently the only true source of effective stability and security in Afghanistan. It lacks, however, the capability to truly control many sectors of the state, including the terrorist and insurgent areas of southern Afghanistan were poppy cultivation and opium production represents over sixty percent of the country's stock.

ISAF participates in many of the counter-narcotics objective areas of the Afghan strategic plans, namely: the information campaign; logistic support to eradication;

alternative livelihoods indirectly through national development programmes in PRTs; and institution building and regional cooperation. NATO has chosen not to be involved in interdiction and law enforcement, which includes disrupting the drug trade by targeting traffickers, their backers, targeting production labs and transportation vectors. NATO nations are encouraged, however, to provide what amounts to bilateral civilian assistance through their PRTs. Another area in which ISAF does not operate but that is a node in the trafficking process is border/customs security. There is also room for ISAF to be more proactive and fully engaged in counter-narcotics activities through command and control arrangements, information operations, training, equipping, personnel support, surveillance and target acquisition, and intelligence sharing.

A bolder position on counter-narcotics entails accepting more risks and implementing risk mitigation efforts. Risks include a popular and political backlash, overstretch of the forces of contributing nations, mission creep with the financial and political ramifications, national caveats that undermine Alliance and ISAF cohesion, and information/intelligence leaks. Mitigation efforts would entail: an enhanced information (abroad) and public affairs (at home) campaign; the commitment by the central government to act against factional leaders implicated in narcotics production (perhaps after a period of amnesty); concerted effort to enhance rapidly effective Afghan security forces; enhanced force protection measures for physical and information security; and, perhaps most importantly, a well-orchestrated carrot and stick approach in government or ISAF controlled areas that combines legal penalties (including eradication) with substantial alternative livelihood/crop programmes accompanied by adequate financing

for farmers. The risk of not doing more is likely the continued, if not greater, opium and heroin output, sustained or increased funding for terrorists, insurgents and factional leaders, more regional instability, and more Afghan drugs on the streets of Europe and North America.

Through the preceding risk mitigation efforts, and in view of the longer term gain to be made both within the state, regionally and internationally, NATO should be in a position to weather the anticipated short term threat increase. Addressing counter-narcotics this way, fully within the framework of the Afghanistan strategic documents, would mean that NATO and ISAF are not undermining their mission or priorities. That is because counter-narcotics is not an extraneous or even parallel activity to ISAF stability and counter-insurgency operations, but one that is fully part of the overall military and political strategic objectives leading to the desired end state and the subsequent withdrawal of NATO troops. The insurgents, terrorists and factional leaders can be undermined indirectly but removing their source of income and local support.

It is likely that more assets would be required for initiatives related to border security and the training of the Afghan security forces, but the other areas could be covered by existing capabilities within ISAF. Surveillance, interdiction, administration of the security forces etc. are activities that current forces could conduct. What would assist those forces in the south and northeastern provinces where poppy cultivation is high, are the elimination of national caveats that restrict any movement of ISAF forces to areas throughout the ISAF Area of Operations to assist in counter-narcotics operations.

NATO cohesion, unity of effort and commonality of aim may well be the most difficult hurdles to cross in the war on drugs in Afghanistan. NATO and ISAF have more to offer, and what it has to offer is essential to progress in controlling the drug trade in Afghanistan.

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