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**Masters in Defence Studies**

**A FAILED INTERVENTION-CAN THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY COUNTER AFGHANISTAN'S NARCOTICS  
TRADE?**

By Major Cynthia MacEachern

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**ACRONYMS**

ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
CJTF	Criminal Justice Task Force
CNPA	Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan
DIAG	Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups
DOD	Directorate of Defense
DOS	Directorate of State
FCO	Foreign Commonwealth Office
GOA	Government of Afghanistan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWOD	Global War on Drugs
GWOT	Global War on Terror
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau
MCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MRRD	Ministry of Roads and Rural Development
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDCS	National Drug Control Strategy
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSP	
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
ONDCP	
PEF	Poppy Eradication Force
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Program  
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## **ABSTRACT**

Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 to United States forces, the international community has been engaged in stabilizing the country, building Afghanistan's overall capacity and state strength. At the same time, Afghanistan's opium production industry has boomed, and it now represents an approximate 35 percent of Gross Domestic Product. This growing is opposing development and stabilization efforts, and is impeding progress in building a licit economy and providing legal livelihood opportunities. It encourages corruption within the state bureaucracies, which is particularly evident in the state security apparatus. There is some speculation that the trade is becoming more organized, and concern that Afghanistan may develop into a narco-state.

The Government of Afghanistan and the international community are making attempts to address the narcotics industry through a variety of methods. An integrated and agreed international approach does not exist, and in its place there is a community of nations and agents who are 'pitching in' to help. Without a coordinated effort, some efforts and programs are in conflict, and there are conflicting mandates, philosophies, and counternarcotics goals. The 'ad hoc' approach is not effective despite evidence of substantial effort on the part of many actors. There is significant discord in the international community about poppy eradication, and no clear agreed approach to drug interdiction.

This paper expresses the requirement for the international community to build understanding and consensus about the nature and problems associated with Afghanistan's narcotics industry, rationalize differences, and eventually develop and

implement a comprehensive counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan in order to build up state strength.

## CHAPTER 1-INTRODUCTION

Opium is: the funding source for terrorists, insurgents, and warlords; corrupting Afghan society and perverting its economy; spreading addiction in and around Afghanistan as well as an HIV epidemic.<sup>1</sup>

There does not seem to be much progress in Afghanistan. Despite the efforts of the global community to assist in bringing stability to the country, indications are that the insurgency is gathering strength, or in the least it is not abating.<sup>2</sup> After the Taliban were toppled in 2001 by Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), western nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations (UN) all undertook to provide a measure of safety and stability. No one foresaw the insurgency that has followed. Daniel Marston summed it up, saying;

The desire for quick solutions led to actions that encouraged an insurgency in southern and eastern Afghanistan. Additionally, they failed to prepare their forces for the possibility of conducting a prolonged counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director Antonia Maria Costas, speaking at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Globsec Conference, Bratislava, on 18 January 2008. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/speeches/2008-01-17.html>; Internet; accessed 16 April 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Moreau, Sami Yousafzai, Micheal Hirsh, Zahid Hussain and John Barry, "The Rise of Jihadistan," *Newsweek* 148, no. 14 (2006): 24-30, <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=22472683&site=ehost-live>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Marston, "Lessons in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Counterinsurgency: Afghanistan 2001-2007," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, (New York: Osprey, 2008), 220.



Eight years afterwards, NATO forces remain fixed in southern Afghanistan, unable to fully secure the key populated areas or completely win the trust of the Afghan people.<sup>4</sup> Hamid Karzai's government cannot provide basic services to most regions, and the Taliban, sheltered by safe havens across the border in Pakistan, can claim to rule as much of the south as the central government can. Vast areas of Afghanistan can be characterized as 'ungoverned spaces' and are rife with violence, subterfuge, smuggling, and insurgency. They are also rife with opium production.

The 2008 United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report noted that in 2007, Afghanistan produced 92 percent of the world's opium, most destined for markets in Europe, the Near and Middle East and Africa, and that Afghanistan is responsible for the overall global increase. As well, it notes that while worldwide demand is relatively stable, the countries around Afghanistan are experiencing an increase in drug use.<sup>5</sup>

The opium trade is a critical destabilizing factor in the Afghan insurgency to an extent not fully appreciated by the variety of agencies which are attempting to help stabilize this failed state. This is because Afghanistan's insurgency is greater in scope than is appreciated, and includes a large criminal narcotics component which is thriving in the regional instability. Narcotics traffickers actively oppose the spread of government

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Korski, "Afghanistan: Europe's Forgotten War," European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009. He writes, "Six years of war and the biggest military operation in the history of NATO have failed to subdue the Afghan insurgency and have left the government of President Hamid Karzai entirely dependent on the continued massive presence of international forces."

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "2008 World Drug Report," p 7; <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2008.html>; Internet; accessed 16 April 2009.

control in order to retain their freedom to operate. Opium production and politics have political ramifications for the Government of Afghanistan (GOA), as it struggles to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The narcotics trade is one significant reason there is such a high amount of corruption in the country, and as well, Afghanistan's economy is dependant on the trade.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Taliban leverage opium production to fund the insurgency.<sup>7</sup>

In order to be successful, NATO and other stakeholders must fully recognize and address the impacts of the opium trade on Afghanistan's progress, and rationalize their own disparate responses. Efforts to curb the Afghan insurgency and to rebuild Afghanistan from its current status as a failed state recognize that there is a significant narcotics problem, but have not fully respected the key role it plays in state weakness.<sup>8</sup>

The current philosophies are to attack smaller parts of the overall problem in the country such as prosecuting the Taliban insurgency, completing development agendas, or building state institutions in order to focus on repairing discrete and manageable parts of

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<sup>6</sup>Jan Koehler and Christoph Zuercher have noted that in 2006 the poppy economy profits were estimated at 2 billion dollar per year, while Afghanistan's GDP was estimated at 4 billion dollars. This accounts for approximately 50 percent of Afghanistan's DGP. See, Jan Koehler, and Christoph Zuercher. "Statebuilding, Conflict and Narcotics in Afghanistan: The View from Below." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 62-74. p 63.

<sup>7</sup> David Rohde, writing for The New York Times noted that opium is a major funding source for the Taliban. See David Rohde, "Taliban Raise Poppy Production to a Record Again." *New York Times*, 26 August 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Koehler and Christoph Zuercher note that conflict research has identified fragile state institutions as a source of war, and so the drug economy, in weakening institutions prolongs conflict. See Jan Koehler and Christoph Zuercher, Koehler, "Statebuilding, Conflict and Narcotics in Afghanistan: The View from Below." *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 62-74.

the overall instability. This notion of isolating the narcotics trade as a distinct problem, separate and alone, ensures limited progress is made against the trade, and also in other important problem areas. While time, effort and money are essential in helping stabilize Afghanistan, so too is a realistic and comprehensive understanding of what are the main areas of continued conflict.

With so many agencies taking too limited a view of the nature of the problem, and with little concurrence between them as to approaches, methodologies and solutions-progress in Afghanistan becomes one unpredictable and uneven. This lack of progress caused by a failure to appreciate the full effects of the narcotics trade can only be corrected by; first defining the entire extent of the impact of the narcotics trade in Afghanistan across all the areas that it touches, identifying how the approaches of the various actors become unsuccessful due to a failure to address narcotics, and identifying how the approaches are in conflict with each other.

Two main themes will be found throughout the paper. The negative effects of poppy eradication will be one prevalent theme, and the fractured opinion of the international community and its lack of cohesion. NATO's limitations as an international body to effect results will be demonstrated and explained.

The paper will begin with a general discussion of how the opium trade affects Afghanistan's overall state strength and note how its existence resists progress delivering stability and security by the GOA, the international community, NATO, and the key nations of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). The impact of opium production upon areas of legitimate market growth and industry, law enforcement and justice, and regional security will be discussed. Then, an explanation of how

counterinsurgency efforts are thwarted by the existence of the opium industry, as well as the burgeoning links between narcotics traffickers and insurgent groups, will be drawn.

Next, this paper will review the positions, actions and problems associated with the major actors attempting to influence change in the country. It will highlight and explain all of the points of fracture in the current disparate approach. Discussion will take place on the roles of and interplay between the GOA, the UK, and the US.

Finally, this paper will offer some options and recommendations for achieving more effective progress. These options will stress the requirement to deliver one coordinated effect, with counternarcotics and counterinsurgency efforts fully integrated into an overall comprehensive Afghan assistance strategy.

In conclusion, this paper will recognize its own limitations in scope in comparison to the enormity of the opium problem and make some suggestions for further areas of potential study. It is hoped this paper will be useful for anyone attempting to understand fundamental aspects of the current Afghanistan conflict, and why solutions seem so distant. An ambitious follow on project might be to attempt to develop a comprehensive internationally agreed counternarcotics strategy for Afghanistan that is well nested within current conflict and counterinsurgency theory and practice, and which reflects the priorities and concerns of key stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 2-NARCOTICS NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON AFGHANISTAN'S STATE STRENGTH

According to the Fund for Peace's 2007 Failed Index Scores, Afghanistan ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 177 states.<sup>9</sup> With a high score of ten, balanced across twelve social, political, and economic indicators, Afghanistan scored 102.3 out of a possible 120 points, just below such countries as Sudan, Somalia, and the Congo.<sup>10</sup> This is sufficient to catalogue Afghanistan as a failed state.

Its failure is characterized by several conditions which contribute to overall failure. While this chapter will discuss each in relation to both the narcotics and state strength connections, the conditions are the following: the insurgency, Afghanistan's poor capacity to govern, porous borders, corruption, the lack of a licit economy, tribalism, and the narcotics industry itself, which crosscuts across all of the other areas.

These systemic weaknesses and conditions within Afghanistan support the premise that the state strength of Afghanistan is negatively influenced by the narcotics trade across a number of areas. As a result, the trade is weakening the overall capacity of the state to function, and it is a key driving factor in conflict within Afghanistan. The clear recognition on the part of all stakeholders about the full role narcotics is playing in destabilizing the country is essential in order to develop a suitable comprehensive

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<sup>9</sup> The Fund for Peace, "Failed States Index," [http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009.

<sup>10</sup> The Fund for Peace, "Failed States Index,"

counterinsurgency approach as part of a greater conflict resolution strategy. Such an approach does not exist at the moment, but is badly needed.

In *Rethinking Insurgency*, Stephen Metz argues that contemporary insurgency is one manifestation of the declining ability of a state to exercise control. He connects it to “the rise of militias and criminal gangs, informal economies, the collapse of state services, humanitarian crises and transnational terrorism.”<sup>11</sup> For Metz, insurgency is about power, but it is also about economics, services, and social identity.<sup>12</sup>

For the purposes of this paper, Metz’s arguments and characterizations of modern insurgency will be used when discussing the Afghan insurgency. A further recognition of Metz’s premise that insurgency is a manifestation of a state’s declining ability to rule and is characterized by third and fourth forces on the battlefield, including criminal elements, which in Afghanistan’s case are narcotics traffickers, is also necessary.<sup>13</sup>

Both Metz’s theory of the modern insurgency and the notion of state strength in conflict point to modern post 1945 internal state conflicts where legitimacy is lacking, and the landscape is populated by many disparate groups with separate agendas. It is only by fully understanding these ideas that a sufficiently comprehensive view of the conflict in Afghanistan can be fully conceptualized, a necessary step before any resolution can occur.

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Metz, “Rethinking Insurgency,” Strategic Studies Institute; [http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub790\[1\].pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub790[1].pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Steven Metz, “Rethinking Insurgency,”

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## THE STRENGTH OF THE STATE OF AFGHANISTAN

In order to relate the problems caused by the narcotics industry to the overall functioning of the state of Afghanistan, it is necessary to understand how the concept of state strength operates in general, then how it is specifically applied to Afghanistan, and finally to understand how the narcotics industry impacts upon it.

Kalevi Holsti argues that a state's right to rule is measured in its ability to extract resources from the country and provide services to its people, to maintain its own sovereignty, exercise monopoly over the use of force and to function within a consensus based political community.<sup>14</sup> Holsti goes on, with the aid of Barry Buzan, to indicate three interlinked components of a state. They are, "the idea of the state; the physical basis of the state; and the institutional expression of the state."<sup>15</sup>

The idea of the state is the human component. It reflects such things as the history, culture, language, habits and desires of the inhabitants, and the way in which the inhabitants interpret all these aspects to take a view of what their state is, or should be. Holsti notes that when the idea of a state does not meet with the consensus of its inhabitants-Afghanistan, in fact, is specifically cited- the state will be weaker. The physical component of a state (its geography, population, boundaries, and resources) and a state's institutions (government apparatus and institutions) both connect to the idea of the state. All three characteristics together are necessary. They must all be strong, and not in conflict with each other in order for state strength to be maximized.

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<sup>14</sup> Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 83.

<sup>15</sup> Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*, 83.

Within the first component, the idea of a state, the further concept of legitimacy must be explored. Rodney Barker's definition of legitimacy will be used for this discussion. He defines it as "precisely the belief in the rightfulness of a state, in its authority to issue commands, so that those commands are obeyed not simply out of fear or self-interest, but because they are believed in some sense to have moral authority."<sup>16</sup> Two aspects of legitimacy occur. The first, which Holsti calls vertical legitimacy, encompasses the ideas of consent to a state's authority and loyalty to its ideals by the inhabitants.<sup>17</sup> States must have the consent of their people to achieve this measure of legitimacy and to function with authority. The second, called horizontal legitimacy, is about the definition of the community and its political role.<sup>18</sup> This aspect of legitimacy demands that all segments of society have a voice in their political community. It requires internal political cohesion between different parts of society and the government. Those excluded from the political community have several options including migration and secession, but the choices that can be made which are most relevant to Afghanistan are those of organized resistance, coup or revolution or internal conflict.<sup>19</sup>

Sarah Lister, in her writing on state-building in Afghanistan, makes a further connection between weak statism and a requirement to extend governance to the local

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<sup>16</sup> Find Rodney Barker (1991) at the college on Sunday.

<sup>17</sup> Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 84.

<sup>18</sup> Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*, 84.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.



level, comments, “It is usually at the sub national level that people interact with public officials-in receiving or requesting services, or dealing with local disputes, or registering land.”<sup>20</sup> She then goes on, in her description of power structures and local government to identify two trends that are weakening Afghanistan’s state building efforts. The first trend is “...entry into the formal political process of former warlords and criminally-linked strongmen.”<sup>21</sup> The second trend is:

The second trend changing both sub national power dynamics and the relationship between the central government and local powerholders is the consolidation of organized crime. In particular the processing and trafficking of opium is coalescing into the hands of a few powerful and politically connected individuals, with the alleged involvement of the Ministry of Interior, the police, and other security forces...Now it seems that the criminal “underworld” is further compromising key state institutions to support criminal activities in a more organized fashion than ever before...The rules governing how the state works are therefore being infiltrated and co-opted by criminals and narco-traffickers.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, Barnett Rubin notes that Afghanistan’s state legitimacy fell to an all time low within the past 25 years, but now possesses a diffuse legitimacy which has not yet been supported by performance, with delivery of services not meeting expectations. He also went on to comment that the

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<sup>20</sup> Sarah Lister, “Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan,” Crisis States Research Centre, London: May 2007; <http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP14.2.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 April 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Sarah Lister, “Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan,” 5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

narcotics trade poses a contradiction for state-building. Without eliminating the trade:

...the government cannot implement the rule of law, diminish corruption, gain control over its local appointees, and curb illicit power holders. Yet the state cannot increase its legitimacy while destroying nearly half of the country's economy with foreign military assistance<sup>23</sup>

### **CONFLICT THEMES PREVALENT IN AFGHANISTAN**

Both Lister and Rubin's remarks clearly identify narcotics as an instrumental cause of Afghanistan's state weakness. Given Holsti's characterizations of a state, particularly how its right to rule is expressed, and considering the critical concept of legitimacy, several conflict themes are apparent in Afghanistan that impact upon the state's legitimacy and weaken its overall strength. The narcotics trade is one of these on its own, but it is also a prevalent theme in each of the others. Cumulatively, the narcotics impact is substantial and must be viewed holistically.

Conflict themes in Afghanistan which relate back to legitimacy will now be discussed in more detail, with a view to linking them to Afghanistan's state strength and recognizing the insidious role the narcotic industry is playing. Themes that will be discussed are the following: the insurgency, poor governance capacity, rule of law and

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<sup>23</sup> Barnett R Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard, "Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond, Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document," [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400\\_cru\\_paper\\_barnett.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400_cru_paper_barnett.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009.

justice, infrastructure and provision of essential service, lack of economy, insecure borders, and the narcotics industry itself.

## **INSURGENCY**

Afghanistan's insurgency is complex, evolving, and not abating. It is not within the scope of this paper to catalogue or chronicle the Afghan insurgency, but rather to note its continued existence and draw links between it, state strength, Metz's theories of modern insurgency, and narcotics. The Taliban are fighting to return to power and are "exploiting the opium industry to garner additional power in Afghanistan."<sup>24</sup> Using increasingly asymmetric means, and with evidence of terror tactics imported from other theatres, the Taliban opposes expansion of government control throughout Afghanistan, but particularly in the south, where the insurgency has gathered the most steam. This is evidenced by attacks upon Afghanistan's military and police forces as well as NATO troops, who are labeled as foreign invaders or infidels. The Taliban also makes its presence known to the people, and are passing judgment in the manner of a government in exile. They leave night letters, warnings and threats. The Senlis Council agrees that the Taliban is resurging, and complicit with opium, noting on page 5 of its April 2006 *Afghan Insurgency Assessment* that,

Foreign troops deployed under NATO's new mandate will  
be entering territories that are shifting further away from

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<sup>24</sup> John A. Glaze, "Opium and Afghanistan: Reassessing U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy," Strategic Studies Institute, October 2007; <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub804.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

the control of mainland Afghanistan. These troops will face communities and anti-state actors structured with complex political and economic lines, with illegal opium playing a central role.<sup>25</sup>

Its report links the insurgency to the narcotics industry. These together impact on Afghanistan's overall state strength and are one measure of demonstration of lack of legitimacy, both vertical and horizontal. The people have not consented to governance by the GOA, and they exist within a growing power vacuum, which is being filled by non-state actors engaged in the opium trade.<sup>26</sup> The more the people withhold loyalty to the GOA, the bigger the power vacuum becomes, and it is being filled by narcotics traffickers.

The Senlis field notes assess the state of insurgency in three provinces in Afghanistan, two in the south, which are known as the heart of the insurgency, and make the connection that these are also as the main opium producing areas. The insurgency and the narcotics industry are strongest within the same geographic locations within the country. The provinces discussed were Kandahar, Helmand, and Nangahar Province (in Eastern Afghanistan), and the news is bleak. The Council is of the opinion that GOA control in these volatile regions is fragile. The southern provinces are virtually 'ungoverned' and are succumbing to the control of anti-government forces.<sup>27</sup> In a report

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<sup>25</sup> Senlis Council, "Field Notes: Afghan Insurgency Assessment: The Signs of an Escalating Crisis," (2006); [http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/insurgency\\_assessment\\_field\\_report.pdf](http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/insurgency_assessment_field_report.pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Senlis, 18. The Council notes that government control is rapidly faltering in Helmand Province and that local shuras are under pressure from drug traffickers and anti-government forces. Helmand Province is known as a bastion of the insurgency and the centre of Afghanistan's drug industry.

that would not surprise Metz given his views that a state's declining ability to exercise control is characteristic of an insurgency, the Senlis Council noted the rise in kidnappings and suicide attacks which indicate a new pattern of political violence, which they termed, a 'new' insurgency.<sup>28</sup> Opium production or poppy is central to the overall dynamic. This report demonstrates how the narcotics trade resists state efforts to govern, impose order, and gain legitimacy. By succumbing to anti-government control and accepting the narcotics trade as legitimate, the people are sending a message that indicates they do not view the state as legitimate. Thus, we see that the insurgency is linked with opium production in a complicated fashion and that the two together impact negatively on Afghanistan's strength.

Senlis goes on to say that the poppy eradication campaigns initiated by the GOA with western backing and conducted with private military contractor support are assessed as effectively turning the population away from government support.<sup>29</sup> This is a first indication of how poppy eradication is a central theme in defining the overall narcotics problem, and is a significant point of fracture. Eradication will be discussed in later chapters from the point of view of the GOA, the US, the UK, and NATO.

The connection between the insurgency and the narcotics industry is clear. It exists practically, as a union between two anti-government forces prepared to work

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 24.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. The Council notes, "The international community now faces the disturbing prospect of the new insurgency embedding itself in communities and spreading to other weak districts, and a progressive de facto dismantling of Afghanistan."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

together to oppose the GOA. It also exists at a more insidious level, ideologically. The Taliban are reported to view opium production and the West's attempts to eradicate it as an insurgency tool.<sup>30</sup> The people need the opium trade to survive because it is an important source of income for many in the south, given the overall level of poverty, given that in 2004 the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) assessed Afghanistan at close to the bottom of the list of 177 countries.<sup>31</sup> If the people need it, and the government cannot provide any reasonable economic substitutes, then for the Taliban the government's opposition to the trade while failing to provide alternatives tarnishes its legitimacy and brings support to their insurgency. This speaks to a weaker state strength through lack of legitimacy.

### **POOR GOVERNANCE CAPACITY**

To increase state strength, the GOA must be able to deliver services to its people. In all geographical areas of the country it needs to ensure there are security and justice, infrastructure, economic development, education, and healthcare—all basic elements of its responsibility as the ruling authority. This requires the extension of an authoritative government presence from the capital in Kabul to all the provinces, districts, and communities. Sarah Lister argues compellingly for this extension of presence in

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Development Program, "Human Development Index," available from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/monitoring/news/2005/title.395.en.html>; Internet; accessed 17 April 2009.

*Understanding State-Building and Local Governance in Afghanistan.*<sup>32</sup> If a government is not capable of administrating the state, its strength is weakened through the loss of legitimacy. President Karzai's Government is challenged to extend governance. This failure impacts directly on the strength of the government's vertical legitimacy, negatively impacting the state's authority, which is not seen as useful and discouraging loyalty. The failure further creates a power vacuum that can be filled by anti-government forces, specifically the narcotics industry.

While central agencies like the Ministry for Roads and Rural Development (MRRD), the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), and the Ministry for Counter Narcotics (MCN) are established bureaucracies in the capital, Kabul, their effects are not seen throughout the country in enough positive quantities to demonstrate an ability to rule to the people. This is indicative of the challenge of extending the state past the capital and into the provinces. While provincial governors are appointed and directed to control matters at provincial levels, the mechanisms to do so do not exist, or where they do exist are not uniform or transparent. Effective provincial administrations require capacity that does not exist within Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> Governors need transparent bureaucracies that serve the citizens that can deliver such things as competent policing, public communications, healthcare, and all types of public administration. Lacking these bureaucracies, many are challenged to exercise power.

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<sup>32</sup> Sarah Lister, "Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan," *Crisis States Research Centre*, London: May 2007; <http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP14.2.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 April 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Sarah Lister, "Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan,". Lister notes that public administration reform has been attempted to be delivered to provinces with mixed results. There have been many administrative and political problems that made program delivery difficult. 6.

Allegations continue that some governors are corrupt; representing their own interests rather than those of the people.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, links between the narcotics industry and corrupt government officials and agencies exist.<sup>35</sup> The result of both of these factors is that narcotics, through corruption and by thriving in the ungoverned space, is lowering the level of legitimacy of governance, and impacting upon state strength. Dissatisfaction with government also fuels the insurgency and moves the people towards the Taliban. A vicious circle of government failure, effective corruption, and an insurgency which benefits from both is established and entrenched. Opium enables this dynamic.

While the state is challenged to deliver services, it is making attempts, with the assistance of the international community, to develop its army and police force.<sup>36</sup> These necessary institutions, which are meant to eventually assure the GOA a monopoly on force, are still in embryonic stages of development.<sup>37</sup> The police forces particularly still

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Lister has cited Mohammed Atta, the Governor of Balkh Province as a prime example. She notes that while he is the ‘darling of the international community, intelligence reports that he maintains ties to his former activities and with his contacts. His province has seen a rise in cultivation for the past three years.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 5. Lister notes “the processing and trafficking of opium is coalescing into the hands of a few powerful and politically-connected individuals, with the alleged involvement of the Ministry of Interior, the police, and other security forces.”

<sup>36</sup> The US is the largest actor in building the army and police forces. Daniel Korski noted, citing data from a Combined Security Transition Team-Afghanistan briefing in February 2007 that the CSTC-A annual budget is 2 billion dollars. For more information about CSTC-A capacity building programs, see <http://www.cstc-a.com/>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009.

<sup>37</sup> For more information about CSTC-A capacity building programs, see <http://www.cstc-a.com/>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009.



remain suspect as being corrupt and self serving.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime, without the full capacity to enforce law, the state cannot control illegal activity and cannot stamp out the narcotics industry. Because the industry is a criminal one and is characterized by violence, narcotics breed violence which the state, with its limited capacity cannot address.

This failure to address its responsibility for security, and the fact that the state does not own a monopoly of force, further weakens the state's legitimacy and the overall idea of the state despite its attempts to develop security institutions.

## **RULE OF LAW AND JUSTICE**

Afghanistan's justice system does not function, and therefore, there is limited rule of law. Policing is not well developed, nor effective.<sup>39</sup> While the concept of the justice system is spelled out in the Afghan Compact, it is not fully developed in practice.<sup>40</sup>

Afghanistan still requires the capability to arrest or detain a suspect, house that suspect

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<sup>38</sup> Senlis Council. "Helmand at War," June 2006. Here evidence of corruption by police during poppy eradication in the district of Reg 20-31 March 2006 is chronicled. The eradication team was lead by the district chief of police, Commander Daoud who was reported to have accepted bribe not to eradicate of 3000-4000 rupees per jerib. Or alternately, see footnote 35 for a point on corruption within the MOI and police.

<sup>39</sup> As an example, Antonio Giustozzi noted on page 85 of his treatise, "In the absence of an even remotely effective police force, it is highly unlikely that the expansion and consolidation of the organized crime networks will be checked in the future." Antonio Giustozzi, "War and Peace Economies of Afghanistan's Strongmen," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 75-89.

<sup>40</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan, "Afghan Compact," <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/AfghanistanCompact-English.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009. The compact makes a commitment to justice system reform that includes legislative reforms, building the capacity of judicial systems and personnel, promoting human rights and rehabilitating judicial infrastructure in each province of Afghanistan by end 2010.

until trial, institute a fair and transparent trial, and if guilty, move him to a fully functioning prison system in all areas of the country. This capacity does not exist at the moment. The ANP have little to no detention facilities in communities throughout the country, there are no robust courts and only a primitive prison system operates.<sup>41</sup> All of these are key requirements for state strength; their non-existence impacts on overall legitimacy. Their non-existence also empowers the narcotics industry, and enables it to act freely without fear of punishment.

With these essential justice institutions not functioning, there are few legal mechanisms in place to bring narcotics traffickers to justice.<sup>42</sup> Traffickers are then free to produce narcotics with no risk or threat of punishment. They are able to operate with impunity. This freedom to operate is visible to the Afghan people, and further perpetuates views of non legitimacy and less loyalty to the state. The vicious circle is just that. The more impunity the narcotics trade can operate with, the less the state strength. The less the state strength, the less is the ability to generate the strong justice system that is one component of the solution to the narcotics trade problem.

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<sup>41</sup>Canada, Library of Parliament-Parliamentary Information and Research Service, "Afghanistan: The Rule of Law," <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/prb0717-e.pdf> ; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009. This report notes that the court system is far from adequate and generally inaccessible. It lacks resources and trained staff. It also requires construction or rehabilitation of 97.8 percent of court facilities and access to professional resources. Finally, the report notes that lack of security and rampant corruption also detract from the legitimacy of the court system. It goes on to note that there is one prison per province, with most in need of real improvements to raise them to international standards.

<sup>42</sup> United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office Website, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/uk-in-afghanistan/Counter-Narcotics/>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009. The FCO describes the United Nations project to build a secure detention wing in a Kabul Prison to house narcotics criminals that was completed in 2006. Nevertheless, this one facility is not sufficient to ensure all narcotics traffickers who are sentenced by Afghanistan's courts will be assured a place in prison.

## RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Part of governance responsibilities hinge on delivering infrastructure and development services to the population. These services at the most basic level should include road networks, irrigation and water supply, electrical power, education, and healthcare. The status of Afghanistan's infrastructure is extremely poor, and "physical infrastructure has been largely destroyed and degraded through years of neglect."<sup>43</sup> There is a significant development and rebuilding effort required to adequately support the population, which being lacking, fuels state weakness, support for the insurgency and it can be used as a lever to further alienate the people from the government.

The Kajaki Dam problem is indicative of the overall nature of the failure of development in Afghanistan and will be used as an illustrative case in point. Kandahar City, the capital of Kandahar Province, houses a large segment of the province's population, but yet has no reliable power grid. The power source for Kandahar City and points in between lies in neighboring Helmand Province to the west, in the form of a large power generating station called Kajaki Dam. This dam is disabled, working on less than full power because some major components are damaged. As a result, power flows intermittently to Kandahar City, and citizens are often left in blackout for hours each day. Due to the violence and lawlessness between Kandahar City and the Kajaki Dam site north of Lash Kar Gar in Helmand province, repairing the Kajaki Dam has not been possible. This is a significant dissatisfier that causes government loss of legitimacy. In

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<sup>43</sup> Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, World Bank Group, [http://www.fdi.net/investmenthorizons\\_afghanistan/horizon.pdf](http://www.fdi.net/investmenthorizons_afghanistan/horizon.pdf); Internet; 25; accessed 18 April 2009.

the battle to win the support of the people, provision of this and other significant regional infrastructures is important.

In the case of Kajaki Dam, its location in the heart of both the Taliban insurgency and the center of the narcotics industry is strategically important. The government is unable to work freely in the centre of Helmand Province due in part to the violence caused by both the insurgency and the narcotics industry. If the narcotics industry did not fuel violence in Helmand Province and reject the advent of government forces and developers, it would be easier to bring the significant resources to bear at the Kajaki Dam construction site. Turbines could be repaired and a power distribution system could be built south towards Lash Kar Gar and east to Kandahar City. The government would enjoy a huge surge in legitimacy and be empowered in southern Afghanistan.

This would suit neither the narcotics trade, nor the insurgency, that both profit from their remote location in Helmand Province, far from government control. Helmand Province is the epicenter of Afghanistan's narcotics production, which is the only successful economic venture that Afghan farmers have recently seen. The Senlis Council points out that there is widespread discontent with the GOA in Helmand Province, a failure to deliver alternative livelihoods and the tendency by the people to turn to anti-state actors to offer protection for opium cultivation.<sup>44</sup> As a result it can be demonstrated that the narcotics industry benefits in this case from the failure of government to deliver

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<sup>44</sup> Senlis Council, "Helmand at War," [http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand\\_Report.pdf](http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand_Report.pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009. The report notes, on pages 19-20 that, "...the elders faith in the central government falters. Insurgents are competing for the community institutions' support through threats but also offering financial help and protection against the widely unpopular eradication processes."

development projects and essential services. With progress and stability far away, narcotics production can thrive.

### **LACK OF ECONOMY**

A licit economy is required in a strong and stable state. Due to the long periods of instability and crisis, this type of economy is lacking in Afghanistan, and that fuels state weakness.<sup>45</sup> Mark Shaw, writing for the UNODC notes, “Afghanistan now faces a daunting set of challenges. In particular, it faces the challenge of whether legitimate state formation and economic growth will be subverted by the expansion and consolidation of the illicit economy.”<sup>46</sup> Amina Khan further notes, “The poorest country in South Asia, Afghanistan’s economy is more dependent on illegal drugs and foreign aid than any other nation.”<sup>47</sup> Lack of economy allows the narcotics industry to prosper by filling the void with illicit opium production. Production of the opium crop means that Afghanistan’s gross domestic product (GDP) is primarily supported by illegal activity.<sup>48</sup> For many

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<sup>45</sup> Carol J. Riphenburg, “Afghanistan: Out of the Globalisation Mainstream?” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 27, No. 3, pp 507-524, 2006. In a synopsis of the state of the Afghan economy Riphenburg notes that “The noticeable characteristic of Afghanistan’s economic structure is the dominance of the informal sector, not only in agriculture and in the (illegal) drug industry, but also in most other sectors...it is clear that some 80%-90% of economic activity in Afghanistan occurs in the informal sector...”

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mark Shaw, “Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan,” 210, available at: [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Amina Khan, “Afghanistan: Still at a Standstill,” *Strategic Studies*, Vol 28, No 1 (Spring 2008) p6/23, pp 171-193, available at [http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2008\\_files/no\\_1/article/a7.htm#top](http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2008_files/no_1/article/a7.htm#top). Internet; accessed 17 April 2009.

people, the opium crop is the only way to support their families and by its nature it is much more lucrative than comparable licit crops, such as wheat. Once poppy production has begun for a family it becomes more difficult to encourage growth of other less profitable crops. Overall, rural development efforts are stymied. With opium as the main economic product not supported by the GOA, the GOA loses legitimacy in the eyes of the people, and this also impacts on state strength.

This makes conditions ripe for Afghanistan as a country to continue on as a 'failed state'. In order to have stability and prosperity, conditions must be set for legitimate industry to thrive and markets to develop. This is essential to lower the level of poverty and desperation that currently exist, and which contribute significantly to the strength of the insurgency and Afghanistan's overall strength.<sup>49</sup>

When anti-government forces actively strive to ensure markets, progress, and legitimate economic growth do not occur, the GOA is unable to fulfill its responsibility to provide for the Afghan people. The people, understandably, lose faith in their government. It then becomes essential that the GOA wins this struggle with anti-government forces that operate with almost complete freedom in southern Afghanistan. Until that struggle is successfully resolved, the level of violence and conflict will be such that the extension of government offices, the placement of officials in the south and all other manifestations of government control and services will not be possible. With the

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<sup>48</sup> Carol J. Riphenburg, "Afghanistan: Out of the Globalisation Mainstream?" *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 27, No. 3, pp 507-524, 2006. Riphenburg estimates the opium economy as 35% of GDP.

<sup>49</sup> United Nations Development Program, "Human Development Index," available from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/nhdr/monitoring/news/2005/title.395.en.html>; Internet; accessed 17 April 2009. This report chronicles the state of poverty in Afghanistan.

continued void in governance, opportunities continue for insurgent as well as narco-trafficker interests to be advanced. Sharing the same goal of preferring volatile environments difficult to govern or control, narco-traffickers and insurgents interests coincide.

## **INSECURE BORDERS**

Afghanistan does not have the capacity to secure its borders. It is a landlocked country and borders six nations: Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China.<sup>50</sup> These unprotected border routes allow the narcotics industry to move large quantities of product to other parts of the world, with the lion's share moving north into Europe and the United Kingdom. The UNODC has called for improved measures to control Afghanistan's borders and the flow of drugs.<sup>51</sup>

Since one of the responsibilities of a state is to secure its territory, border control is essential, and there is counterinsurgency literature that links open borders to stronger insurgencies.<sup>52</sup> Therefore Afghanistan's unprotected borders serve to allow unimpeded

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<sup>50</sup> Maps of World, available at <http://www.mapsofworld.com/afghanistan/>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>51</sup> UNODC head Antonio Maria Costa called for improved border security between Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan to curb drug trafficking. His proposals included joint border patrols, training exercises, border liaison offices, and compatible communications systems. In United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "UNODC proposes plan for improving border security between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan," Available online at: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2007-02-26.html> ; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>52</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare, Theory and Practice*, (London: Praeger Security International, 2006), 23.

narcotics smuggling. They also facilitate Afghanistan's insurgency. Finally, they are also another indication of GOA state weakness.

### **THE NARCOTICS INDUSTRY**

The UNODC has catalogued the recent history of the evolution of Afghanistan's drug industry. It reports that drug cultivation was on the rise from the 1970s as neighboring Iran's industry shut down. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 opium became an increasingly important source of funding for warlords who were no longer benefiting from foreign aid. For the years between 1994 and 2000, the Taliban allowed opium production, famously banning it only in 2000 in an effort to gain greater international recognition. The result was higher opium prices. Just as the warlords did, the Taliban levied taxes on opium. Following the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the industry went underground in response to international pressure; political players remained involved, but from a distance. The Ministry of the Interior (MOI), in its capacity as being responsible for policing became more influential in the trade, and allegations of its corruption abound.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mark Shaw, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan," 210, available at: [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009



The UNODC goes on to point out that the industry is now becoming organized, with key traffickers identified as, "...a mix of businessmen, former political players, religious figures, former NGO heads, and simple "bandits"."<sup>54</sup>

The structure of Afghanistan's trafficking industry forms a pyramid. At the bottom are the base of families and small farmers engaged in cultivation. These small farmers will sell opium locally, to a local trader-usually someone they know and trust such as a local merchant.<sup>55</sup> This is beneficial to farmers who cannot traverse Afghanistan's insecure roads to get other, legitimate goods to market. This activity is called farmgate. Low level traders then sell to mid level traders, who operate on the edge of the organized component of the trade. They then sell to traffickers, noted as organized and wealthy, with connections past their own borders. Traffickers have connections to just a few of the last tier of the pyramid, that of key traffickers. Key traffickers are politically connected and do not move the product themselves, preferring to key a hands off approach. They do function to regulate supply, control the supply of precursor chemicals and supervise the laboratories in the south where opium is made into heroin.<sup>56</sup>

This brief synopsis suggests that the trade is consolidating itself into organized networks and into the hands of a few high level criminal elements, many of whom are linked to political power in Afghanistan. The MOI, responsible for policing, is identified

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<sup>54</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mark Shaw, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan," 206.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

as a key government security agency that is riddled with corruption.<sup>57</sup> This becomes a difficult problem for the GOA to solve due to the increasing level of secrecy, consolidation, and base in the ungoverned territory of southern Afghanistan where “The lack of an international presence, high levels of insecurity, and the poor economic situation have provided the conditions in which both cultivation of opium poppy has expanded and control over it has been consolidated.”<sup>58</sup> GOA failure to prevent the organization and criminalization of the trade demonstrates an important failure of control, and is indicative of state weakness.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has described the complicated situation that leads to Afghanistan being a weak and failing state in order to draw attention to the prevalent narcotics threads that run through each part. It has also summarized how the narcotics industry functions within Afghanistan and explained how narcotics are affecting state strength by impacting upon its legitimacy.

Having a comprehensive understanding of how narcotics functions to keep Afghanistan a weak state is necessary in order to recognize how the various disparate actions and approaches of the significant stakeholders are insufficient. Without a comprehensive strategy for resolution that fully recognizes the legitimacy deficit as expressed in weak state literature, the multiple agencies working towards a more stable

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*,198.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

Afghanistan will struggle to help resolve aspects of the conflict, but not gain any traction. Worse, agencies' actions to make repairs in some of the areas just discussed will continue to have the result of lowering legitimacy and setting back hard gained progress in a number of critical areas.

It has been recognized in the Afghan Compact that counternarcotics is a cross cutting theme, and this recognition needs to transfer past the level of policy and into realization and delivery of consolidated results.<sup>59</sup> The main actors' views and strategies of how to address the narcotics problems are important to understand in order to identify their challenges, and to make the point that enough progress is not being made due to their failure to properly frame the narcotics problem as part of Afghanistan's overall state weakness, or alternately, to act upon this fact. The main actors whose roles will be discussed in chapter 3 are, the GOA, the UK, the US, and NATO.

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<sup>59</sup> United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan, "Afghan Compact," <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/AfghanistanCompact-English.pdf>; Internet; accessed 18 April 2009.

## CHAPTER 3-ACTIONS AND CONFLICTS

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe what actions are being taken to counter the narcotics trade by the main stakeholders: the GOA, NATO, the UK, and the US. It will draw attention to the significant themes and agendas held by each group, their preferred ways of solving the problem, and identify points of fracture or points of convergence in their approaches. It will explain, as best possible, why these fractures exist and will demonstrate the requirement for much more research, cooperation, and synergy than currently exists. Finally, this chapter will demonstrate that failing to completely link counterinsurgency strategies with counternarcotics strategies is one reason that overall progression of Afghanistan's state strength is low.

### AFGHANISTAN

The illegal opium trade poses an even greater threat to the stability of Afghanistan than do the Taliban or al-Qaeda. Despite spending millions of dollars to tackle the menace, the narcotics trade has skyrocketed to the point where it now is one of the most difficult and intractable challenges facing the Afghan government.<sup>60</sup>

Afghanistan has a narcotics problem which affects growth, prosperity, security and stability. In a speech given on 5 July 2006 at the Tokyo Conference II, Consolidation

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<sup>60</sup> Soeren Kern, "Can Afghanistan Be Rebuilt?" *Real Instituto Elcano*. Online: [http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/riecano\\_eng/Content?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/Elcano\\_in/Zonas\\_in/USA-Transatlantic+Dialogue/ARI+30-2006](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/riecano_eng/Content?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/Elcano_in/Zonas_in/USA-Transatlantic+Dialogue/ARI+30-2006); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

of Peace in Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai cited the drug trade as a major source of regional instability linked to terrorism. He expressed the requirement to continue to expand counternarcotics efforts, and pledged to work alongside the international community in pursuing the overall destruction of the narcotics trade.<sup>61</sup>

He is hampered in these efforts by state weakness. The government is dependant upon the international community to assist in building all of the necessary state institutions that are required for the state to function, as well as to prosecute effective counternarcotics efforts. A significant corruption problem; well linked to the narcotics industry, exists with his government.<sup>62</sup> Much of the GOA's plans and policies have been strongly assisted by the international community and reflect the concerns of others as well as those of the GOA.<sup>63</sup> Because of the failure noted by Sarah Lister to bring effective governance to the local level, counternarcotics plans and policies remain just that-plans and policies that are difficult to deliver as tangible results.

### **The MCN and the NDCS**

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<sup>61</sup> Embassy of Afghanistan in Canada, "Statement by His Excellency Hamid Karzai President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan At the Tokyo Conference II Consolidation of Peace in Afghanistan," [http://www.afghanemb-canada.net/en/speeches/2006/july/tokyo\\_speech\\_pres\\_karzai\\_peace\\_conf.php](http://www.afghanemb-canada.net/en/speeches/2006/july/tokyo_speech_pres_karzai_peace_conf.php); Internet: accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, Kabul: January 2006. Available online at: [http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco\\_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy](http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. Governmental corruption is included on page 30 as a risk to success of the NDCS.

<sup>63</sup> The GOA has been strongly assisted in development of the NDCS by the UK, acting as G-8 lead nation in counternarcotics. Eradication efforts are funded and mentored by the US.

GOA anti-narcotics efforts are spearheaded through its MCN which has developed, with the help of the UK, the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS).<sup>64</sup> While the NDCS is a well written and comprehensive policy document, the challenges lie in the realm of program delivery, due to lack of resources, institutional capacity, and high corruption levels. There is no evidence that the NDCS is well nested within the Afghan Compact or other international strategic policy documents aimed at increasing Afghanistan's state strength.<sup>65</sup> It does clearly identify Afghanistan's requirement to integrate counternarcotics into broader national development agendas as outlined in the National Development Strategy (NDS), and the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes directed by the National Security Policy (NSP).<sup>66</sup> This is positive, as it links Afghanistan's internal strategies together. A further forward step would be to link the international strategies to the NDCS.

In January 2006, the MCN published an updated version of the NDCS. In it, President Karzai's opening remarks are again clear: "There can be no further consolidation of peace until we substantially reduce the cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs in Afghanistan."<sup>67</sup> The MCN is responsible

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<sup>64</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, Kabul: January 2006. Available online at: [http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco\\_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy](http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>65</sup> The NDCS evidence is supported by only a few sources. These are primarily authored by organizations with a unilateral focus on drug issues rather than taking a perspective based on state strength. The most heavily used sources are UNODC documents and US DOS Narcotics Control Strategy Reports.

<sup>66</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 7.

for both developing counternarcotics policy and coordinating counternarcotics efforts between the different involved Afghan ministries. It calls upon Afghan ministries and institutions to deliver concerted efforts within their own areas of responsibility to combat the narcotics trade.<sup>68</sup> Much coordination is required between the MCN and the MOI (MOI), with its reputation of corruption and its overall weak capacity for internal security operations.<sup>69</sup> This is a divisive split between the policy setting and the policy implementation ministries that should be noted and must somehow, be corrected.

The NDCS aim is “To secure a sustainable decrease in cultivation, production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs with a view to complete and sustainable elimination.”<sup>70</sup> Four priority activities are directed. They are: disrupt the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers and eliminating the basis for the trade; strengthening and diversifying legal livelihoods; reducing the demand for illicit drugs and treatment of problem drug user; strengthening state institutions both at the center and in the provinces.<sup>71</sup> These priorities are subdivided into eight pillars. They should be

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>69</sup> Sarah Lister, “Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan,” Crisis States Research Centre, London: May 2007; <http://www.crisisstates.com/Publications/wp/WP14.2.htm>; Internet; accessed 14 April 2009. Lister notes “the processing and trafficking of opium is coalescing into the hands of a few powerful and politically-connected individuals, with the alleged involvement of the Ministry of Interior, the police, and other security forces.” p 5.

<sup>70</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 17.

<sup>71</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 18-20.

thought of as the key areas which the GOA intends to address. The pillars are: public awareness, international and regional cooperation, alternative livelihoods, demand reduction, law enforcement, criminal justice, eradication, and institution building.<sup>72</sup> It is this goal, these four priorities, and these eight pillars which need consolidated action on the part of the international community to assure a comprehensive international response.

It is not enough to offer assistance to the GOA in any one of these areas without first clearly understanding certain things. It is necessary to know how the GOA bureaucracy is pursuing these priorities within subsets of its organization, if the GOA organization charged with a responsibility has the capacity or will to carry it out, how internal corruption is affecting specific projects that have these aims, what other international agencies are attempting to work in this field, and with what results, and if promises have been made and kept, or conversely not kept in any of these areas. Without this type of consolidated understanding, time, effort, and money will be wasted. More importantly, results will not be forthcoming and the credibility and overall legitimacy of all those involved, including the GOA, will be lessened.

In the case of the top priority of disrupting the drugs trade by targeting traffickers and their backers and eliminating the basis for the trade, significant research is required. First, how are efforts to disrupt the drugs trade impacting on the other security initiatives (counterinsurgency efforts against the Taliban and other illegal armed groups), or vice versa? What are the mechanisms being used, and by whom to disrupt the drug trade?

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<sup>72</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21.



Are they consistent and transparent to the Afghan population, and do they serve to increase the legitimacy of the GOA or lower the overall level of violence and criminality in a certain region? If the methods employed will not result in increasing the GOA's level of legitimacy, are they necessary? Have all options been considered? Is there national Afghan and international consensus?

Given positive and clear answers to these questions, targeting traffickers and their backers is one effective element of an overall counternarcotics strategy. It is positive, in that it focuses on the criminal element rather than small farmers, and it attempts to place as much financial hardship as possible upon the organized elements.

### **Eradication**

Poppy eradication is the most controversial of the eight NDCS pillars that support the top priority of disrupting the drugs trade. The NDCS eradication goal is to "Build the capacity to conduct targeted and verified ground-based eradication."<sup>73</sup> Eradication is one way to disrupt the drug trade, a top priority goal, but in practice, it is remarkably inefficient. The UNODC reports that only 5480 hectares of poppy fields were eradicated, out of an estimated overall cultivation of production of 162,480 hectares in 2008.<sup>74</sup> Its overall effectiveness is widely contentious, and a common misperception of conducting

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<sup>73</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008, Executive Summary," August 2008, 1, Available online: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

counternarcotics operations in Afghanistan is that efforts equate solely to poppy eradication.<sup>75</sup>

The GOA eradicates poppy fields in order to induce an element of risk within the opium industry.<sup>76</sup> This element of risk is intended to discourage farmers from growing poppy, encouraging instead the growth of legitimate crops. Because of its controversial nature, and since there is no international accord about it, poppy eradication dominates the literature about counternarcotics efforts, and it is a popular subject for the international press when reporting on Afghanistan's drug problem.<sup>77</sup> This serves to oversimplify the complexity and multifaceted nature of Afghanistan's drug industry in the eyes of the public, further fragmenting public opinion about Afghanistan's narcotics industry. That is not to say that the concept of poppy eradication is not fraught with problems that require informed debate.<sup>78</sup>

Delivery of eradication causes popular backlash against the GOA by the people, and a loss of legitimacy, and there are also allegations that corruption and graft are

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<sup>75</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21. The NDCS clearly makes an attempt to clarify that “.the Government of Afghanistan's drugs control policy is not eradication-led.” This is intended to diffuse some of the contention and misperceptions that surround the eradication concept.

<sup>76</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21.

<sup>77</sup>A survey of newspaper reporting as evidenced in the bibliography leads the author to conclude there is a preponderance of popular reporting about poppy eradication.

<sup>78</sup> It is difficult to have an informed debate about how the narcotics trade is impacting on overall state legitimacy in Afghanistan if the international community remains fixated on one aspect of the problem, no matter how significant.

resident within the program, with more loss of legitimacy.<sup>79</sup> Western and international support for eradication and the visible presence of westerners on poppy eradication sites extends this backlash and substantial loss of credibility to the entire international community, including NATO.<sup>80</sup> The legitimacy of all involved actors suffers, making efforts in all aspects of stabilization, state building, and capacity building less respected.

So, eradication is a politically charged and emotionally laden idea which conflicts with other efforts to increase state strength and build overall legitimacy. The NDCS acknowledges that eradication is a “controversial and frequently misunderstood element of the Government’s counternarcotics policies”.<sup>81</sup> It attempts to mitigate the popular backlash by stating that counternarcotics strategies are not overly dependant on the eradication pillar.<sup>82</sup> Eradication is only important in that it brings a credible risk to poppy cultivation, but in practice it is a much bigger issue that affects state legitimacy.

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<sup>79</sup> Senlis Council, “Helmand at War,” [http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand\\_Report.pdf](http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand_Report.pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009. The report identifies evidence of corruption during eradication in the district of Reg between 20-31 March 2006. The eradication team was lead by the district chief of police, Commander Daoud who was reported to have accepted bribes not to eradicate of 3000-4000 rupees per jerib. This is one example of widespread allegations of corrupt eradication procedures.

<sup>80</sup> Senlis Council, “Helmand at War,” The report also noted that American forces were present and there are also photos of DynCorps employees. While DynCorps contractors are not military forces, that nuance is lost upon the Afghan people. Given this, it is not clear whether there were simply DynCorps contractors at the site, or if there were contractors and American forces. In either case, the US and NATO credibility suffer.

<sup>81</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21.

<sup>82</sup> Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 21. The NDCS clearly makes an attempt to clarify that “..the Government of Afghanistan’s drugs control policy is not eradication-led.” This is intended to diffuse some of the contention and misperceptions that surround the eradication concept.

The GOA has stated its intent to eradicate illicit poppy crops each year. Further, there will be no compensation for eradicated poppy fields, although efforts must be made to not eradicate in fields where poppy has already been lanced.<sup>83</sup> Ideally, eradication should occur prior to the poppy flowering.<sup>84</sup> As well, eradication must be conducted from ground based platforms, and use either mechanical means or hand cutting. Aerial spraying is prohibited.<sup>85</sup>

With the exception of the statement that there will be no compensation, these restrictions are meant to lessen the hardship placed on farmers faced with crop eradication. Poppy that has been lanced is indicative that more effort and investment has been made in that field by a farmer, and so its loss is more significant. Flowering poppy is poppy that is closer to being a cash crop for a farmer than poppy not yet blooming, and so also more significant. Early eradication could allow a farmer to seed a legitimate crop in its place, while eradication closer to harvest does not provide that option. (Early eradication might also allow a farmer to replant the field with poppy if enough time is available to fully grow a crop.) The GOA will not compensate farmers for lost poppy fields because they do not want to reward illegal behaviour, which could instead encourage poppy growth. Eradication is preceded by a pre-planting public information

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* The author learned from speaking to DynCorp PEF mentors in Afghanistan in 2008 that this is because efforts are made to not eradicate poppy crops that are too close to being ready to harvest. This type of eradication is thought to be particularly difficult for the Afghan people to witness.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

campaign that warns of the potential to lose a crop to eradication. During the public information campaign the point is made that no compensation will be made.<sup>86</sup>

As part of a grander counterinsurgency or state building strategy, eradication is a losing proposition which results in lowering the credibility of all actors. Since, as mentioned, many Afghan families rely on poppy as their only source of income; its destruction does not garner their support for the GOA or any western presence that may be facilitating that destruction.<sup>87</sup> The issue of the illegality of poppy is not important to the Afghan people in these circumstances. If as common counterinsurgency doctrine stipulates, the will of the people is the key to winning in Afghanistan, destruction of poppy is counterintuitive.<sup>88</sup> While it is recognized that eradication is intended to be a general deterrent, the negative effects of eradication are backfiring against the GOA and the international community.

### **The Poppy Eradication Force (PEF)**

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<sup>86</sup> The information in this paragraph was gleaned from the author's conversation with DynCorp International contractors and British Embassy Kabul officials in Afghanistan during the 2008 eradication campaign, while deployed with NATO forces.

<sup>87</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008, Executive Summary," August 2008, 1, Online: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. On page 17, survey results for 2008 that 92 percent of farmers stated they grew poppy in order to alleviate poverty. This is an increase, since in 2007 only 85 percent of farmers gave that reason.

<sup>88</sup> Bard E. O'Neil, *Insurgency and Terrorism*, (Washington: Potomac Books Inc, 2005) O'Neil states "The constant reiteration of the need for popular support, in one form or another, in the written and spoken commentaries of countless insurgent leaders demonstrates its centrality to insurgent thinking in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as does the attention that it receives in counterinsurgency literature and thinking.", 93.

Poppy eradication is conducted by an Afghan force, called the Poppy Eradication Force (PEF) in an annual centrally directed eradication campaign which is focused in southern Afghanistan. The PEF is the only Afghan force responsible to eradicate poppy. It is a loosely trained Afghan police organization which reports to the MOI. It is equipped with all-terrain vehicles, sickles and sticks, and it is mounted in fleets of unarmored Ford Rangers. They will deploy to an area and eradicate between one and ten acres of poppy in a day.<sup>89</sup> This small amount of eradication capability is in marked contrast to the vast horizons of poppy fields noted in southern Afghanistan.<sup>90</sup> Given its small comparative size and loose state of training and equipment, the PEF is not capable of imposing a credible threat to the narcotics industry. It is one important case that demonstrates how the GOA's security institutions are not capable of completing the assigned tasks, and negatively influence state strength.

While the PEF have difficulty providing reasonable deterrence to the drug trade in acting as a significant risk, it is certainly subject to charges of corruption.<sup>91</sup> Corruption

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<sup>89</sup> The information in this paragraph was gleaned from the author's conversations with DynCorp International contractors and British Embassy Kabul officials in Afghanistan during the 2008 eradication campaign, while deployed with NATO forces, and the author's visit to a PEF eradication site in Helmand Province on 17 March 2008.

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "2008 World Drug Report," Online: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/WDR-2008.html>; The executive summary indicates that Helmand Province is responsible for 53 percent of Afghanistan's overall opium production. Vast amounts of opium are visible to anyone who enters a growing area.

<sup>91</sup> Senlis Council, "Helmand at War," June 2006. Senlis has identified evidence of corruption during PEF eradication in the district of Reg between 20-31 March 2006. The eradication team was lead by the district chief of police, Commander Daoud who was reported to have accepted bribe not to eradicate of 3000-4000 rupees per jelib. They indicate this is one example of widespread allegations from rural Helmand Province of corrupt eradication procedures.

by an Afghan force in relation to narcotics causes significant loss of legitimacy and negates state strength. Allegations of corruption and corrupt practices spill over from the PEF to all who are associated with it. The PEF are clearly identified with NATO, the US, the UK and the international community in the eyes of the Afghan people.

It is mentored by DynCorp International, a private military contractor employed by the US Department of State (DOS). DynCorp International is the preferred contractor the DOS employs in Columbia, where it conducted aerial spraying operations.<sup>92</sup>

DynCorp contractors and the DOS International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) air wing are present and visible on eradication sites, mentoring the PEF.<sup>93</sup> This fact may link PEF activity to the NATO mission in the minds of local Afghans. Many DynCorp contractors are identifiably western, dress in para-military uniforms, and travel in easily recognizable US vehicles. Someone without enough detailed knowledge to discern differences between a US military force, a NATO military force, and a paid private military contractor could easily mistake DynCorp employees as members of the NATO mission, or representatives of a western nation.

This, by association, links NATO and the international community firmly with PEF activity. Since many Afghans consider the PEF to be corrupt, by association, NATO is viewed as complicit in this dubious eradication process, despite refusing an active role.

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<sup>92</sup> Christopher Spearin, "Accountable to Whom? An Assessment of International Private Security Companies in South America," *Civil Wars*, Vol 6, No. 1(Spring 2003), pp 1-26. Christopher Spearin has catalogued the Dyncorp contract with US State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Bureau to conduct aerial eradication of drug fields in Columbia. Dyncorp is a known quantity in international drug eradication and has demonstrated they support aerial eradication. Choice of this contractor reinforces the view that the US is pursuing controversial eradication policies in Afghanistan that could end up mirroring the problems seen in the Columbia coca fields.

<sup>93</sup> See footnote 91.

NATO, the US, and the GOA all lose overall credibility by this one association, or one allegation.

As noted, the politics of eradication fall neatly together with the potential for PEF corruption. Due to the large quantity of poppy fields, and the comparatively small eradication capability of the PEF, being a farmer who is subject to poppy eradication is unlikely.<sup>94</sup> It is essential that wherever the PEF eradicate poppy fields, it must be, and be seen as a completely fair process. There can be no prejudice or bias in selection of what fields are eradicated. Any indication of bias will result in significant negative backlash against the GOA and the remainder of the international community, lowering the state's level of legitimacy. There is scope to better develop and assist how the PEF function, and this will be a key recommendation in chapter 4.

### **Governor Led Eradication**

While the PEF is responsible to conduct a centrally directed eradication campaign, provincial governors are also responsible to eradicate poppy within their provinces.<sup>95</sup> Governors' campaigns vary widely in scope and scale and are extremely

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<sup>94</sup> See footnote 74.

<sup>95</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy, An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, Kabul: January 2006. Available online at: [http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco\\_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy](http://www.fco.gov.uk/resources/en/pdf/pdf18/fco_nationaldrugcontrolstrategy); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The report states, "Provincial Governors are responsible for ensuring that required eradication is delivered effectively within their own respective provinces, whether by provincial or central eradication forces. Provincial Governors should eradicate all cultivated poppy within the approved targeted areas."



dependant upon the preferences of the responsible provincial governor. Some governors conduct ambitious eradication programs, and some governors do not. This disparity in provincial response usually leaves the GOA open to allegations of corruption, or other failure.<sup>96</sup>

### **GOA Limitations**

Despite having promulgated the NDCS and established the MCN as a coordinating counternarcotics agency, the GOA cannot deliver enough concrete counter narcotics results due to its overall limited capacity and state weakness, as explained in chapter 2. Most importantly, as part of its overall limited capacity, its security institutions are still in the fledgling stage, and are dependant upon the international community for their overall development. As well, the GOA is caught up by the eradication component of its overall NDCS, which is causing more loss of legitimacy and state weakness.

Corruption that the GOA can not adequately address is acting to facilitate state weakness, and the narcotics industry enables more corruption. Corrupt police and agents within the MOI limit abilities to counter the trade. Mark Shaw, writing for the UNODC noted that despite the difficulty in obtaining hard evidence, "...the provision of state

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<sup>96</sup> Not delivering needed alternative livelihoods in association with eradication is one common complaint made in southern Afghanistan.

protection to organized criminal activities may often be linked to the appointment process for senior police officials at the provincial and district levels.”<sup>97</sup>

As it struggles to demonstrate overall progress in gaining legitimacy and demonstrating responsible governance across a number of fronts, counternarcotics is just one small problem for a country with many other’s to address. It needs the help of the international community. NATO is one important agent whose support is required.

### **NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)**

NATO is the most robust international agency working in Afghanistan. It is composed of many nations, but its membership includes a significant number of US and UK forces. NATO espouses a hands-off approach to the narcotics industry that is not in accord with either the UK or the US approaches. NATO possesses the most military capacity in Afghanistan, with 42 troop contributing nations and an approximate strength of 58,390 soldiers, but it has not been as responsive as the GOA requires in solving counternarcotics problems.<sup>98</sup> This is because it is concerned that conducting narcotics operations will cause loss of support from the Afghan people. NATO is correct,

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<sup>97</sup> 19 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mark Shaw, “Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan,” 210, available at; [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009, 199.

<sup>98</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army strength and laydown.” [http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf\\_placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The placemat identifies a rounded total number of troops at 58390, but the US has contributed almost half of these, with 26215. The next largest contributor is the UK with 8300 troops. For this large preponderance of troops, it would make sense that the US and UK national positions about narcotics should influence NATO’s position. They do not.

however, it is already seen by Afghans as complicit in counternarcotics work. Despite this, NATO prefers that counternarcotics tasks be the work of Afghans.<sup>99</sup> It places restrictions on what it can do.

### **Mandate and Counternarcotics Restrictions**

NATO's main role in Afghanistan is to assist the Afghan Government in exercising and extending its authority and influence across the country, paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance.<sup>100</sup>

Today, ISAF, NATO's operating arm, considers its mission to be conducting security and stability operations together with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) so that conditions will exist for reconstruction and development of the country.<sup>101</sup> Key tasks are the following: supporting the development of the Afghan National Army and Police (ANA) (ANP), providing assistance with the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), assisting in maintaining Afghanistan's ammunition depots, providing post operation reconstruction and development, humanitarian assistance, providing security which is needed to effect reconstruction, providing

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<sup>99</sup> Kern Soeren, "Can Afghanistan Be Rebuilt?" Elcano Royal Institute 2008 noted that NATO has focused on reconstruction rather than attacking the drug trade for fear of antagonizing the general population. [http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano\\_eng/Print?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONT](http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_eng/Print?WCM_GLOBAL_CONT) accessed 1/5/2009.

<sup>100</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's role in Afghanistan," <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>101</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "ISAF Missions," <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.html#missions>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

assistance in governance development and finally, providing assistance to the GOA in its counternarcotics efforts.<sup>102</sup>

Although NATO has recognized and stated that the narcotics industry in Afghanistan is beyond the GOA's capacity to address without international assistance, counternarcotics is not a key task.<sup>103</sup> NATO will only share counternarcotics information, assist with counternarcotics public information campaigns and provide information support to ANSF counternarcotics operations.<sup>104</sup> It will not conduct counternarcotics operations, except where a link to the insurgency is established.<sup>105</sup> NATO remains focused on the insurgency.

Concerning the narcotics industry, NATO's media fact sheet acknowledges the following: recognition that eliminating illicit opium production is critical for long term growth and stability in Afghanistan, poppy cultivation is highest in areas characterized by weak or ineffective governance, in these areas the narcotics trade promotes corruption and helps fund the Taliban, NATO's mission of helping the GOA extend its authority throughout the country is essential for any counternarcotics efforts to have success, and

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<sup>102</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's role in Afghanistan," <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>103</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's role in Afghanistan,"

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

finally, it recognizes that the GOA is in the lead for counternarcotics, assisted by its G8 partner nation, the UK.<sup>106</sup>

NATO's keys supporting tasks as written are laid out as follows:

1. Sharing of counternarcotics information through the Intelligence Fusion Cell, which brings ISAF together with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Afghan authorities and other key international community actors;
2. Developing command and control procedures for effective liaison, co-ordination and de-confliction with the Afghan National Security Forces and the OEF Coalition;
3. Supporting the Government's counternarcotics information campaign with a range of activities, including television and radio advertisements;
4. Training Afghan national security forces;
5. Providing emergency support, such as medical evacuation, to Afghan army forces conducting counternarcotics operations, and
6. Providing logistical support to international community actors, such as the international counternarcotics agencies, as well as Afghan counternarcotics personnel and forces.<sup>107</sup>

Following a request made by Afghanistan's Minister of Defence, Abdul Rahim Wardak, at the NATO Minister's Conference in Budapest in October 2008, NATO agreed to enhance the level of counternarcotics support that can be provided.<sup>108</sup> Actions

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<sup>106</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Fact Sheet: NATO Support to Counter Narcotics Efforts in Afghanistan," <http://www.nato.int/isaf/topics/factsheets/counter-narcotics-factsheet.pdf>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>107</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Fact Sheet: NATO Support to Counter Narcotics Efforts in Afghanistan,"

<sup>108</sup> America.gov, "NATO Ministers Endorse Greater Anti-Drug Role in Afghanistan," <http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/October/20081010150529sjhtrop0.9508936.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The statement reads, "...the participants responded to a request from Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak for aid to counter the corrupting influence of drugs in his

can now be taken to destroy heroin processing facilities and directly against narcotics producers, where a clear insurgency link has been established. The NATO statement reads:

This enhanced support by ISAF includes the destruction of processing facilities and action against narcotic producers if there is a clearly established link with the insurgency. Such action by ISAF forces can be taken only upon request of the Afghan Government and with the consent of the national authorities of the forces involved.<sup>109</sup>

Defining what is a clear link to the insurgency is not simple, and a requirement for making this connection misses the point that the narcotics industry, in and of itself, is a defining characteristic of Afghanistan's instability.

To act, a request must first be received from the GOA, and the NATO troops that are tasked with conducting the counternarcotics task must have received national approval. The New York Times commented, "Attacks on drug 'facilities and facilitators supporting the insurgency' are to occur only if the NATO and Afghan troops involved have the authorization of their own governments..."<sup>110</sup> These limitations serve to hinder counternarcotics progress, but remain to satisfy the demands of some of NATO's member nations. However, this accession does represent a gradual move by NATO towards more effective targeting of the narcotics industry, and offers NATO's

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country. The group agreed that ISAF, working with the Afghan Army, can take action against drug labs or drug trafficking profits..."

<sup>109</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO's role in Afghanistan," <http://www.nato.int/issues/afghanistan/index.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

<sup>110</sup> Judy Dempsey and John F. Burns, "NATO Agrees to Take Aim at Afghan Drug Trade," *New York Times*, 11 October 2008.

recognition that the insurgency and the narcotics trade are both linked. A further recognition of the link between the narcotics trade and state weakness is needed in order to aid the GOA to stabilize Afghanistan.

Given NATO's mission of conducting security and stability operations in aid of reconstruction and development, aggressive prosecution of the narcotics industry is essential. Too much NATO focus is placed only upon destruction of 'the insurgency' without having a clear definition of what the key elements comprise the Afghan insurgency. Metz's characterization of a modern insurgency that is rife with third and fourth forces, including strong criminal elements that work to destabilize a country must be better understood by NATO military planners and their home governments. Metz says that once an insurgency has reached a point where greed motivates it, the counterinsurgency campaign must become, "...more like a counter organized crime or counter-gang program. Law enforcement should replace the military as the primary manager of a mature counterinsurgency campaign."<sup>111</sup>

NATO's six key supporting tasks are too limiting. They encourage NATO forces to follow a 'checklist' and reactive approach to the narcotics trade; addressing it only when there is no other choice. The idea that narcotics are an Afghan problem and must be addressed only by Afghans is acceptable in theory, but it does not work in practice. Afghanistan is incapable of sufficiently addressing the problem, while NATO is capable. NATO possesses the information gathering capabilities; Special Operating Forces (SOF) well trained and suited for counternarcotics operations, necessary logistics and

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<sup>111</sup> Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," Strategic Studies Institute; [http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790\[1\].pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790[1].pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009, 52.

technology, and above all, is not saddled with internal corruption. Since destroying the narcotics industry is critical to stabilize the country and set conditions for reconstruction and development, counternarcotics is a valid task for NATO forces. It can even, according to Metz, be a valid element of a mature counterinsurgency plan that is evolved to resemble a counter organized crime program.

## **THE UNITED KINGDOM**

Meanwhile, in their attempts to rein in the ballooning opium trade, the British have either ignored or deliberately circumvented the police and justice system reforms put in place by the Germans and Italians.<sup>112</sup>

The UK has adopted a more aggressive approach to the narcotics industry than NATO, and expends its efforts along a number of fronts. It better understands the scope and scale, and the political nature of the overall problem and has taken a strong international stand about what must be done.

### **G8 Partner Nation in Counternarcotics**

The UK is the G-8 designated ‘partner’ nation in counternarcotics.<sup>113</sup> This term replaces the former, and still commonly used term, G8 lead nation in counternarcotics.

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<sup>112</sup> Daniel Korski, “Afghanistan: Europe’s Forgotten War,” European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009.

<sup>113</sup> UK in the USA Foreign Commonwealth Office, “Counter-Narcotics,” <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-usa/conflict-prevention/afghanistan/counter-narcotics>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.



Significantly, the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) notes that over 90 percent of the heroin on the UK's streets originates in Afghanistan.<sup>114</sup> This is a problem that has become a significant domestic concern for the UK. So, while the narcotics trade is a destabilizer in Afghanistan, the effect of the trade is also directly felt in the UK, giving it very good reasons to want to defeat the trade at its source. This places the UK in the position of being perhaps the most invested of all the international community in the destruction of Afghanistan's narcotics industry. This is best reiterated by Dr John Reid, who as UK Secretary of State for Defence said, in discussing British forces deployment to Afghanistan, "We cannot ignore the opportunity to bring security to a fragile but vital part of the world, and we cannot go on accepting Afghan opium being the source of 90 percent of the heroin that is applied to the veins of the young people of this country."<sup>115</sup> Acknowledged as international leaders, the UK also bears the brunt of failures for the public. As Amina Khan says, "The current situation clearly highlights the failure of international Afghan and British-led counter-narcotics efforts to tackle the problem."<sup>116</sup>

### **UK Role in Afghanistan's NDCS**

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<sup>114</sup> UK in the USA Foreign Commonwealth Office, "Counter-Narcotics," <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-usa/conflict-prevention/afghanistan/counter-narcotics>; accessed 17 April 2009.

<sup>115</sup> The UK Kingdom Parliament, "House of Commons-Foreign Affairs-Fourth Report, item 363," <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfaff/573/57311.htm>; accessed 5 April 2009.

<sup>116</sup> Amina Khan, "Afghanistan: Still at a Standstill." *Strategic Studies*, Vol 28, No 1 (Spring 2008) p18/23, pp 171-193; [http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2008\\_files/no\\_1/article/a7.htm#top](http://www.issi.org.pk/journal/2008_files/no_1/article/a7.htm#top); accessed August 27, 2008.

As the lead nation, the UK assists the GOA to implement the NDCS. UK ambitions for the NDCS are: that there will be significant and sustained decreases in opium cultivation in Afghanistan, an integrated alternative livelihoods program will exist in all provinces, and there will be functioning law enforcement and criminal justice systems. It wants to marginalize the drug trade and drug economy, and increase GOA capacity to conduct its own long term counternarcotics programs with little to no international assistance. In effect, the UK wants to facilitate the GOA being capable of conducting its own counternarcotics policy, planning, and actions.

The UK supports four key priorities, which it views as having the most promise in breaking down the trade. They are the following: developing strong and effective counternarcotics institutions for Afghanistan, targeting the drug trafficker and the top end of the drugs trade, strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods, and treatment of problem drug users and drug demand reduction.<sup>117</sup> These priorities have much promise, reflect considered study, but do not seem to have the support of the international community in terms of overall coordinated effort, as has already been demonstrated by reviewing the NATO approach. The UK as G8 partner nation lead is challenged to bring all others together to support its vision.<sup>118</sup> This is unfortunate, because without a clearly identified and supported international community leader, efforts will continue to be fractured.

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<sup>117</sup> UK in the USA Foreign Commonwealth Office, "Counter-Narcotics," <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-usa/conflict-prevention/afghanistan/counter-narcotics>; accessed 17 April 2009.

<sup>118</sup> This is evidenced by the existence of a US separate counternarcotics strategy, and by Daniel Korski's remarks at footnote 112 that indicate the UK is not in policy accord with either the German or Italian partner nations police and justice reforms.

### **UK Role in Institution Building**

The UK aggressively supports counternarcotics institution building. It has been instrumental in establishing Afghanistan's Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF), which has the responsibility of making drug prosecutions and is manned with police investigators from the Counter Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), judges who sit on Afghanistan's Central Narcotics Tribunal, and prosecutors. The UK ensures the CJTF continuous support, training, and mentoring.<sup>119</sup>

There is strong investment in the CNPA, and the MCN, in order to support both internal capacity building and provision of technical assistance<sup>120</sup>.<sup>121</sup> Despite their small size compared to the overall drug industry, the CNPA has had some success. It is a vetted Afghan force, highly trained and equipped to UK standards who conduct counter-drug operations throughout the country, focusing at the top end of the trade.<sup>122</sup> This force

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<sup>119</sup> Website, <http://www.rolafghanistan.esteri.it/NR/rdonlyres/1035039D-EBB5-421A-9790-78B8CABE7B0F/0/CJTFDiscussionPaper.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 April 2009.

<sup>120</sup> The UK Kingdom Parliament, House of Commons-Foreign Affairs-Fourth Report, item 374. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmcaff/573/57311.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>121</sup> Daniel Korski, "Afghanistan: Europe's Forgotten War," European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009. On page 6 Korski reports that UK funding for MCN staff salaries mean that MCN staff receive wages higher than Afghans working in other ministries. This is an example of how the international community is not adopting a unified approach in Afghanistan, despite the good work being completed by the UK through the MCN.

<sup>122</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "War and Peace Economies of Afghanistan's Strongmen," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 75-89. Despite being a vetted force, allegations exist of CNPA corruption. Antonio Giustozzi notes on page 85 that UN officials in Kabul voiced the opinion that the CNPA was corrupt, with seizures being underreported, missing quantities being pocketed by police

pays dividends for the UK because it is instrumental in disrupting the Afghan side of the trade, and its operations stand good chances of actually reducing the amount of heroin made available on UK streets. The CNPA is an example of what type of capacity building is possible within Afghanistan's other security institutions. They are effective, motivated, and comparatively non-corrupt. Their level of success can be attributed to the strong level of mentoring and funding provided by the UK.

### **UK Role in Strengthening Legal Livelihoods**

The UK also sees the critical importance of strengthening legal livelihoods. Work in strengthening legal livelihoods attempts to set conditions for farmers which encourage production of licit crops instead of poppy. The UK recommends that farmers have access to micro-credit, markets, jobs, and all needed agricultural materials. The UK states that, "eliminating opium poppy without developing viable legal livelihoods is not sustainable."<sup>123</sup> In this vein, it supports the National Solidarity Program (NSP) in community led development projects and the Rural Access Program (RAP) in labour generation.

The concept of legal livelihoods is critical to building the state of Afghanistan. When legal livelihood programs are successful, state legitimacy will rise. With a rise in

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officers and resold. This is further evidence of the depth and unknown quantity of overall corruption within the security forces, of which the CNPA have the best overall reputation.

<sup>123</sup> UK in the USA Foreign Commonwealth Office, "Counter-Narcotics," <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/working-with-usa/conflict-prevention/afghanistan/counter-narcotics>; accessed 17 April 2009.

state legitimacy there will be a fall in the strength of both the narcotics trade and the insurgency.

### **UK Roles in Conflict with Others**

The political arm of the UK takes counternarcotics policy and capacity building action, while the UK military presence in Afghanistan is with NATO. As demonstrated, NATO and the UK are not in policy accord. Since the UK is a significant contributor to NATO's military mission and has a NATO leadership role, UK policy conflicts with itself.<sup>124</sup>

The UK is not the only international entity which engages in GOA capacity building. Both NATO and the US also build indigenous capacity. They both assist with training and mentoring the ANA, and helping develop the ANP. In practice, this means that NATO officers, US officers, as well as UK officials concerned with building counternarcotics capacity all interact regularly with the GOA, but they do not work from one overall capacity building plan. Also, they do not have one coordinated view of how to develop Afghanistan's counternarcotics capacity, either singularly in itself, or as one priority among other capacity building initiatives.

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<sup>124</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "International Security Assistance Force and Afghan National Army strength and laydown." [http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf\\_placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The placemat identifies a rounded total number of troops at 58390, but the US has contributed almost half of these, with 26215. The next largest contributor is the UK with 8300 troops. For this large preponderance of troops, it would make sense that the US and UK national positions about narcotics should influence NATO's position. They do not.

So far, we have determined that disparate approaches to the narcotics industry are being taken by NATO and the G8 lead partner nation, the UK. We have noted that while the GOA understands the nature of the narcotics problem in Afghanistan, and its overall scope and scale, it does not have sufficient capacity to address it, and requires outside assistance. Since its efforts are not yet uniform, consistent and robust, they are not effective in either countering the trade or raising the GOA level of legitimacy.

The GOA is assisted by the UK, but the UK is motivated by domestic agendas of removing opium from its own streets, as well as having altruistic reasons of destroying the drug trade to assist with overall stabilization of Afghanistan and to build state strength. It has indicated its opposition to aerial spraying, and voiced concern with forced eradication, while supporting the overall concept of interdiction and positing that British forces could play an interdiction role.<sup>125</sup> The UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Fourth report closes its discussion on Afghanistan by noting:

We conclude that there is potential for a blurring of the United Kingdom's counter-insurgency and counter-narcotics objectives in Afghanistan. We recommend that the Government clarify the role of British personnel, including with regard to the policy of eradication and support to eradication activities.<sup>126</sup>

NATO's hands-off approach suggests that NATO has not fully defined the extent of Afghanistan's overall state weakness, and determined the reasons, and so does not

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<sup>125</sup> The United Kingdom Parliament, "House of Commons-Foreign Affairs-Fourth Report, item 380." At <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmfaff/673/57311.htm> accessed 5 April 2009.

<sup>126</sup> The United Kingdom Parliament, "House of Commons-Foreign Affairs-Fourth Report, item 391,"

place enough weight upon countering the narcotics trade. These factors are more complicated when considering the US counternarcotics approach.

## THE UNITED STATES

### US View of Counternarcotics

The United States is trying to create an effective democratic state in Afghanistan and is demonstrably failing. Further, despite the presence of 60,000 NATO and US troops, Afghanistan's output of opium has increased massively over the seven years since the Taliban fell.<sup>127</sup>

Initially, despite a traditional hard stance against drugs and the tendency to intervene about drugs internationally, the US saw the Afghan narcotics problems as separate to what it was doing in Afghanistan, which was pursuing Al Qaeda.<sup>128</sup> Former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld viewed becoming involved in counternarcotics as “a dangerous diversion from fighting terrorism.”<sup>129</sup> The US weight of military effort, as

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<sup>127</sup> Peter Reuter, “Do No Harm, Sensible Goals for International Drug Policy,” *The American Interest* Spring (March/April) 2009, 50.

<sup>128</sup> Peter Reuter, “Do No Harm, Sensible Goals for International Drug Policy,” *The American Interest* Spring (March/April) 2009. Reuter contends that internationally, America is like a bull in a china shop in prosecuting a global war on drugs. This was not initially evident in Afghanistan where the Global War On Terror superseded the US “War on Drugs”.

<sup>129</sup> Robert Matthews, “Poppy seeds and dragon’s teeth: NATO struggles with an opium-funded war in Afghanistan,” 5. [http://www.fride.org/download/COM\\_Afghanistan\\_NATO\\_War\\_ENG\\_ene08.pdf](http://www.fride.org/download/COM_Afghanistan_NATO_War_ENG_ene08.pdf); Internet: accessed 5 January 2009.

balanced between Iraq and Afghanistan, was squarely centered on Iraq, with Afghanistan relegated to the role of an ‘economy of force’ operation.<sup>130</sup>

Considering Afghanistan as secondary, and with the national focus being the Global War on Terror (GWOT), little thought appears to be placed on the role the narcotics industry played within the Afghan insurgency, or in defining it in Metz’s terms, as third forces in a contemporary insurgency. Remembering from Metz that “3<sup>rd</sup> forces form and survive when states are weak and unable to provide security”, “they serve to partner with insurgencies, perform functions the government cannot” and; important for the US to recognize, “change the basic dynamic or structure of the conflict.”<sup>131</sup>

In not recognizing this, the US has stove piped its approach to counternarcotics in Afghanistan in a less than full comprehensive approach, although interagency efforts are attempted, and there is coordination by the National Security Council.<sup>132</sup> As the lead US agency, counternarcotics initiatives are controlled and funded by the DOS’s INL, responding to policy set by the Office of the National Drug Control Programs (ONDCP).<sup>133</sup> It is important to note is that the Department of Defense (DOD) is only recognized as having responsibilities towards two of the five pillars of the US strategy,

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<sup>130</sup> Robert Matthews, “Poppy seeds and dragon’s teeth: NATO struggles with an opium-funded war in Afghanistan,” 5.

<sup>131</sup> Steven Metz, “Rethinking Insurgency,” 15, *Strategic Studies Institute*; [http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790\[1\].pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790[1].pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>132</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007, 21. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 April 2009.

<sup>133</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007, 21.



indicating fragmented delivery. These pillars are in the areas of interdiction and public information. As part of the interagency approach the DOD does have significant responsibility for capacity building of the Afghan CNPA. They provide these forces with equipment, airlift, heavy weapons and salaries.

There is a US counternarcotics strategy, separate of the strategy proposed by the G8 partner nation, the UK.<sup>134</sup> Released in August 2007, it recognized three categories or types of problems that narcotics cause. They are: security issues, economic issues, and political issues.<sup>135</sup>

The US respects that a lack of security and non permissive environments, notably in Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan, limit counternarcotics efforts.<sup>136</sup> It does not comment or make connection to the inverse-that the narcotics trade is a significant cause of lack of security and a reason for the existence of non permissive environments.

It also acknowledges that spikes in violence occur in areas where the PEF are deployed. PEF weaknesses have already been explained as part of the GOA's response to narcotics production, but it is important to remember that the PEF is funded, trained, and mentored by the US DOD through DynCorp International.<sup>137</sup> This fact is not surprising,

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<sup>134</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 April 2009.

<sup>135</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007. 14-15.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>137</sup> Christopher Spearin, "Accountable to Whom? An Assessment of International Private Security Companies in South America," *Civil Wars*, Vol 6, No. 1(Spring 2003), pp 1-26. Christopher Spearin has catalogued the Dyncorp contract with US State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement

given favorable US opinion about eradication as a counternarcotics strategy, and is indicative of strong US influence on the GOA's eradication programming. Peter Reuter notes that, "Tensions with NATO allies in Afghanistan have been exacerbated by disagreements over how aggressively to act against opium production."<sup>138</sup> He goes on to say that, "Pressing the Karzai government to spray poppy fields increases tensions with our allies."<sup>139</sup>

As well, Reuter argues that, "...international programs like eradication or interdiction simply cannot make much of a difference because they aim at the wrong part of the problem: production and trafficking in source countries."<sup>140</sup> This discussion is aimed at the US public and is intended to spark demand for US domestic reduction, but it supports the point that eradication-heavily supported by US administrations, is not universally accepted as being an effective counternarcotics measure.

The US avocation for aerial spraying causes Daniel Korski to comment, "The US advocates spraying of poppy fields. Many European governments fear this could lead to a massive loss of support for the government of Afghanistan and its international

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Bureau to conduct aerial eradication of drug fields in Columbia. Dyncorp is a known quantity in international drug eradication and has demonstrated they support aerial eradication. Choice of this contractor reinforces the view that the US is pursuing controversial eradication policies in Afghanistan that could end up mirroring the problems seen in the Columbia coca fields.

<sup>138</sup> Peter Reuter, "Do No Harm, Sensible Goals for International Drug Policy," *The American Interest* Spring (March/April) 2009, 47.

<sup>139</sup> Peter Reuter, "Do No Harm, Sensible Goals for International Drug Policy," 52.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

allies...”<sup>141</sup> Aerial spraying and US support of it causes discord with the remainder of the international community and the GOA.

In recognizing the difficulty in countering the trade due to the lack of security, and acknowledging the connection between eradication programming and violence, the US has partially defined the security problem, but has not seemingly made the connection that narcotics are central to the Afghan conflict, and not simply tangential. Without a full definition of the impact narcotics has on state strength and overall stability, and because of the existence of a separate strategy, the US is not in lockstep with either the UK or NATO.

The US has noted that small farmers are dependant on large opium producers or insurgents through loans. It frames this as economic issues associated with the narcotics industry.<sup>142</sup> It also recognizes that this type of borrowing leaves the Afghan farmer in a cycle of dependence and obligation that is difficult to break simply by provision of economic development opportunities and micro-loans. There is now pressure from organized crime upon the farmer to continue with this pattern of behaviour and dependence. The US also notes the entrenchment of the drug economy within the overall Afghan economy and makes remarks about how this limits national economic

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<sup>141</sup> Daniel Korski, “Afghanistan: Europe’s Forgotten War,” European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009, 8.

<sup>142</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/90671.pdf>; Internet; accessed 21 April 2009. Page 39 of the report states, “Estimates as to the total debt of poppy growers in Afghanistan are in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Many of the indebted have little choice but to grow a crop which yields the necessary income to meet obligations, as the repercussions of default in Afghanistan are severe.”

development, stating “The drug economy remains entrenched, and continues to present a serious impediment to national sustainable development.”<sup>143</sup> These remarks reflect its own research, but are in general alignment with the comments and views of the UK and the GOA. With this degree of general accord, better alignment of alternative livelihood programming should be possible between the major international actors.

The US also recognizes the prevalent political issues. It notes the high level of corruption within government-all branches, executive, legislative and security, and points out that many police chiefs and provincial governors are known as heavily corrupt, with narcotics being a significant enabler.<sup>144</sup> It also advises of a growing nexus between narco related traffickers and insurgent groups and acknowledges the need to build a comprehensive security strategy for Afghanistan with drug enforcement planning fully integrated. It states unequivocally:

The increasing linkage between the region’s major drug trafficking organizations and insurgences prompts the need to elevate the drug enforcement mission and integrate it appropriately into the comprehensive security strategy<sup>145</sup>

This clear recognition of the requirement to disrupt the trade is important. It is another established link between the insurgency and the narcotics community, and the fact that this is given voice by the US, a significant actor in the pan-Afghanistan stabilization efforts is positive. It demonstrates accord with the international community

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<sup>143</sup> United States Department of State, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan*, August 2007, 15.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

that Afghanistan's narcotics trade must be addressed, even if narcotics role in keeping the state weak is not fully developed.

### **Chapter Summary**

In review, the US pursues the narcotics trade in Afghanistan as only one issue for resolution amongst many others, and it has assigned the DOS as its lead agency. It is the lead international funding source for counternarcotics, outstripping the UK, and it funds Afghanistan's eradication program, as well as provides mentorship through the services of DynCorp International.<sup>146</sup> The US is, on one hand, most interested in pursuing Al Qaeda and the GWOT, but on the other hand is consistent in its international drug policy aims, favoring aerial spraying and generally punitive measures. It follows a national strategy, which is interagency but which contains its own stovepipes.

The UK is the G8 partner nation assisting Afghanistan's counternarcotics efforts. Its focus has been in assisting with the development and promulgation of the NDCS, aiding and building the Afghan bureaucracy, specifically the MCN, and promoting targeting of the top end of the trade through interdiction and eradication.

NATO has placed restrictions upon how much counternarcotics work it can do, and its role is more reactive than proactive, even though NATO soldiers are a robust military force in theatre which has the capacity to do more. Recently, NATO has agreed

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<sup>146</sup> Daniel Korski, "Afghanistan: Europe's Forgotten War," European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009, On page 7, Korski cites the following RAND comment, stating that the US is spending "seven times the resources to counter-narcotics activities provided by the United Kingdom (the lead nations for counter-narcotics), nearly 50 times the resources to the police provided by Germany (the lead nation for police reform), and virtually everything for training the Afghan military (for which the United States was responsible).

to prosecute narcotics operations where a clear link has been established to the insurgency, but there is no support for prosecuting other narcotics operations. NATO views counternarcotics as work for the GOA.

The GOA has produced the NDCS and in a limited fashion, with the support of the US and the UK, is pursuing a range of options, including interdiction, eradication, and delivery of alternative livelihoods, but these programs are poorly coordinated with each other and with the international community. The lack of overall GOA capacity means that these efforts can not be delivered in the right scale and with the required level of sophistication.

Overall, there has been significant effort directed towards counternarcotics, but the desired level of coordination and comprehensive international response is not visible. National agendas colour each of the responses, allowing for fundamental differences in priorities, with the UK being invested in halting the flow of Afghan opium into its country, and the US seeing the narcotics trade as something of a side issue in comparison to the requirement to fight a GWOT and track down Al Qaeda. As well, the US has announced its own independent national counterdrug strategy and is a proponent of crop eradication, including the highly controversial aerial spraying option.

Divergent approaches are apparent. Daniel Korski recognizes this, writing:

The international coalition's efforts have been held back by the lack of a common strategy and by tensions between different partners. The current effort is characterized by an over-reliance on military power, a failed counter-narcotics effort, ineffectual management of governance reforms, and by an ad hoc approach to dealings with the Taliban.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Daniel Korski, "Afghanistan: Europe's Forgotten War," European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008, 4.

The GOA is dependant upon the international community for support, due to its lack of capacity and also because it has not yet been effective in countering the internal level of corruption that is intertwined with the narcotics industry. It has requested more counternarcotics support from NATO, and has received a qualified response, with NATO only supporting counternarcotics operations that have links to the insurgency.

This chapter has attempted to summarize the range of initiatives being made to curb Afghanistan's drug industry and to highlight the disparity of responses. While it is clear that the major stakeholders of the GOA, NATO, the UK, and the US recognize the narcotics industry and its associated problems, and there may be loose and informal coordination, each stakeholder is approaching the problem from its own perspective. There are a variety of bureaucracies and organizations from different nations which all have a hand in the counternarcotics response, or more commonly, have a hand in attempting to stabilize some other aspect of Afghanistan's overall weakness and attempt to deal with narcotics as one factor.

The GOA, supported by the UK, is attempting to move the NDCS forward. As a policy document, the NDCS is comprehensive. The challenge is to turn policy into concrete results, and due to its overall state weakness, it cannot effect substantial change.

The UK concern for addressing the top end of the trade is not surprising, given the amount of Afghanistan's heroin products found on the UK's streets. Its international role

as G8 partner nation often places the UK in the role of lobbyist with NATO, the US, and the GOA.<sup>148</sup>

NATO's military structure clearly delineates the scope and scale of tasks it can perform in Afghanistan, and places restrictions upon counternarcotics efforts. While the literature indicates that NATO is happy to support the efforts of others, by NATO's definition the narcotics trade is the GOA's problem and is not part of the overall NATO mandate. This approach does not allow NATO to fully assist in countering Afghanistan's state weakness.

Since many NATO nations participate in the Afghanistan mission, each with its own national approach to the narcotics industry, it is not surprising that the alliance lacks consensus. Coalitions require consensus in order to operate, and since consensus is lacking about the best counternarcotics strategy for Afghanistan, including considerations about what weight of international effort would be appropriate, progress is difficult. As well, lacking this consensus, the allowances contributing NATO nations have made for NATO forces are quite general and subject to wide interpretation. While NATO has the forces in theatre to better directly attack the narcotics industry, it does not yet have the mandate, despite requests from the GOA for more assistance.

Taken together, the result is an un-joined, poorly coordinated counternarcotics effort, inconsistently delivered. This is despite the existence of the NDCS, which is a comprehensive and clearly stated plan. The next chapter will attempt to offer some options to remedy these problems.

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<sup>148</sup> The uk lobbies at...(put earlier in text as well)



## CHAPTER 4-OPTIONS

...the diversity, flexibility, and dynamism of the drug industry must be taken into account in designing the Government's and international community's responses. The available counter-narcotics instruments are often blunt and unwieldy...<sup>149</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Having discussed at length how the international community has not clearly identified all aspects of the problems that narcotics cause in Afghanistan, and has not been able to produce one comprehensive plan; this chapter will offer some solutions. Key recommendations will be: NATO taking more responsibility for counternarcotics operations, particularly drug interdiction, rationalizing poppy eradication concepts, strategy, and delivery, further developing Afghan security forces towards general tasks and counternarcotics, developing one counternarcotics plan, and issuing a call for a comprehensive approach from the entire international community.

These recommendations are intended to produce conditions whereby Afghanistan can overcome elements of its state weakness caused by the narcotics trade. Once narcotics related state weakness is comprehensively addressed, the international community will find it easier to achieve progress in many other areas, since the GOA will be stronger, and there will be a better level of overall stability. Disharmony, stove piped

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<sup>149</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post Taliban Afghanistan," *Afghanistan's Drug Industry, Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*. Online: [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009, 6.

national approaches, and conflicting philosophies have no further place in a successful counternarcotics strategy. While a constructive debate is always helpful, once the party lines are made clear, and positions become entrenched, it is time to take the best of what has been proposed, make some compromises, and build a truly comprehensive strategy: one that is capable of being implemented.

### **NATO MUST ACCEPT A ROBUST COUNTERDRUG ROLE**

NATO's current mandate for counternarcotics in Afghanistan is too restrictive. In order to provide security and stability, NATO requires the freedom to take direct action against the narcotics industry.

These actions should include: destruction of all known processing laboratories, confiscation and destruction of drugs, and the conduct of robust and routine drug interdiction operations. This may seem to be a hard approach-it is. NATO is a military organization designed to conduct military operations, and that is the part that it must play within an overall comprehensive international approach. NATO could conduct these essential counterdrug operations more effectively than the GOA forces are capable of. Antonio Giustozzi, in his work about Afghanistan's Strongmen would concur that direct engagement is required, noting;

Directly engaging the criminal networks centered around the strongmen might become the only realistic option in the face of a protracted failure of the central government to deliver conditions conducive to genuine economic development.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Antonio Giustozzi, "War and Peace Economies of Afghanistan's Strongmen," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 14, No.1, January 2007, 86.

Counterdrug operations should be conducted as part of an overall comprehensive counternarcotics approach that has wide international concurrence and support. It should be clear that taking punitive action against the organized elements of the trade can only be one part of an overall strategy, but it should be the part of the strategy that devolves to NATO. Barnett Rubin reminds us that “the goal of counter-narcotics in Afghanistan is building stability and the rule of law in Afghanistan.”<sup>151</sup> This is also what NATO must do. He goes on to caution that what must happen is, “curtailing the flow of income to and accumulation of wealth by traffickers and commanders, while maintaining growth in the legal economy.”<sup>152</sup> NATO must assist in the first area, while other agents address the second.

Until October 2008, NATO limited its counternarcotics actions to provision of in-extremis support to Afghanistan’s counternarcotics forces. The *Pocket Oxford English Dictionary* defines in- extremis as, “1-in an extremely difficult situation” or “2-at the point of death.”<sup>153</sup> When considered in the context of counternarcotics operations, the term is too vague. There is not a sufficiently clear framework for NATO to use to effectively work with the GOA’s counternarcotics forces. Each situation must be considered individually, at the time that it arises. This allows for inconsistent NATO delivery of counternarcotics support, which transmits the message that NATO is not

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<sup>151</sup> Barnett R Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard, “Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond, Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document,” [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400\\_cru\\_paper\\_barnett.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400_cru_paper_barnett.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009., 64.

<sup>152</sup> Barnett R Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard, “Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond, Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document,” 64.

<sup>153</sup> *Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed., 464.

credible or consistent. More definition of what in-extremis support means in relation to counternarcotics support is necessary, but it is only a first step.

NATO's responses to requests for counternarcotics assistance should be consistent and robust. Therefore, NATO must better define the conditions under which it will support GOA counternarcotics operations. Once clearly defined, all GOA forces and all NATO forces must be educated about the levels of support in tangible terms. NATO forces must know what they will deliver, and GOA forces must know what they will receive. Levels of support should be made as robust as possible, in order to best support and operate together with GOA counternarcotics forces. The term in-extremis should no longer be used.

NATO must also respect that while the counternarcotics onus does lie with the GOA's forces; if these forces were capable, no international help would be required, and that is clearly not the case. Not until the long term capacity building of all the security institutions is completed, a project that is widely recognized as one that will take many years to complete, can the GOA hold its own in combating the trade.

There is a parallel to be drawn, in that the GOA's forces are not capable of stabilizing and securing the country, or defeating the insurgency, and so NATO has been deployed to fill these roles while the GOA institutions develop. Counternarcotics operations should be no different. Metz's statement that a mature counterinsurgency campaign could resemble a counter organized crime campaign is indicative that NATO should reconsider how it intends to achieve its stated aims in Afghanistan.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Steven Metz, "Rethinking Insurgency," Strategic Studies Institute; [http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790\[1\].pdf](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub790[1].pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009, 52.

NATO must also recognize that action against the trade is required now, and not in the future, once GOA forces are up to the task. As time passes, the narcotics industry becomes more entrenched and will be much more difficult to address.<sup>155</sup> Its associated corruption, insurgency linkages, and detrimental effects upon rural development, governance development, and licit markets will continue to negatively impact Afghanistan's overall state strength.

With a mission of conducting security and stability operations in order to set conditions for reconstruction and development, failing to recognize that robust counter drug operations are one type of critical stability operation is setting the stage for a potential NATO mission failure. It is also a failure of the international community to implement a comprehensive and unified strategy.

As well, NATO should rationalize its capacity building approach, with a better counternarcotics focus. NATO builds the security capacity of the ANSF, but does not train counternarcotics forces. These, the ANP, the CNPA and the PEF are left to the UK, the US, and Germany's Police Mission. NATO should integrate its capacity building initiatives with those of the other actors. NATO forces do partner ANA units with Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams (OMLTs).

NATO OMLTs could expand training regimes to include counternarcotics operations. Links and working relationships should be built between the ANA and the

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<sup>155</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mark Shaw, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan," 210, available at; [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009. Mark Shaw notes that the drug industry is moving towards more vertical integration, with increased involvement of organized crime. Therefore, the more organized the trade becomes; the more difficult it will be to remove.

local ANP that is responsible for counternarcotics. When the information becomes available about the presence of a narcotics factory, or a drug transit route, or any other criminal narcotics issue, the ANA should be trained and prepared to address it, just as it would address an insurgent threat. This type of training would make progress in building relevant capacity for GOA forces that can be used to counter the actual stability problems that exist in Afghanistan.

When conducting operations, both NATO and ANA forces often come across opium products, drug laboratories, and traffickers. The December 2007 NATO and Afghan operation to re-establish control of the Musa Quala district of Helmand Province is the most widely published example. During this operation, significant quantities of opium products and drug laboratories were discovered by NATO soldiers.<sup>156</sup> According to current NATO practice, these sites and items and locations must be given over to Afghan forces immediately. While the GOA clearly owns the mandate to make arrests, confiscate illegal substances, and isolate and investigate crime scenes like the drug factories, this is not within its capacity. It was for these reasons that Defence Minister Abdul Wardak requested more counternarcotics assistance from NATO in Budapest in October 2008.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>156</sup>Daniel Korski, "Afghanistan: Europe's Forgotten War," European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009. Daniel Korski noted that NATO and Afghan forces who retook Musa Quala found a stockpile of more than 12 tons of brown heroin along with processing chemicals.

<sup>157</sup>America.gov, "NATO Ministers Endorse Greater Anti-Drug Role in Afghanistan," <http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/October/20081010150529sjhtrop0.9508936.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The statement reads, "...the participants responded to a request from Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak for aid to counter the corrupting influence of drugs in his country. The group agreed that ISAF, working with the Afghan Army, can take action against drug labs or drug trafficking profits..."

Since then, NATO can act to destroy processing facilities and conduct other counternarcotics operations, but only where a clear link has been established to the insurgency. Some NATO nations are refusing to allow their forces to act, however, citing domestic policies and espousing the point that counternarcotics is a police, rather than a military issue-Germany, Italy, Poland, and Spain are particularly noted.<sup>158</sup> This approval to take action against narcotics where there are established insurgency links is positive, but it does not go far enough. The qualified response of some member nations for even this small initial step indicates that NATO must take steps to come to political consensus about counternarcotics, and must clearly present the requirement to all member nations. NATO should go further than attacking the insurgency-narcotics nexus. Restrictions should be lifted against NATO forces to allow them to conduct counternarcotics operations, and member nations should all support this premise, building concord between NATO and their home nations, and effecting one step in development of a comprehensive international plan. John Glaze also makes this suggestion about lifting restrictions.<sup>159</sup>

As well, an integrated approach between the GOA, OEF, and NATO forces to counternarcotics operations is necessary. NATO should build cooperation, and the essential planning mechanisms required to conduct joint operations. Further, NATO

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<sup>158</sup> Thom Shanker. "Obstacle in Bid to Curb Afghan Trade in Narcotics," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2008. Online: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/23/world/asia/23poppy.html?ref=asia&pagewanted=print> accessed 5 January 2009.

<sup>159</sup> John A. Glaze, "Opium and Afghanistan" Reassessing U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy," *Strategic Studies Institute*. Online: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub804.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009. Glaze recommends increasing troop levels and eliminating national restrictions in order to improve the effectiveness of the Afghanistan counternarcotics strategy.

should assist the GOA with planning for and provision of logistical support for counternarcotics operations. NATO is better positioned than the GOA to provide such essential assistance as airlift, intelligence and targeting support, and communications to GOA counternarcotics forces.

NATO forces conduct counterinsurgency information campaigns within Afghanistan. These campaigns are intended to inform the Afghan people, and counter insurgent statements and claims.<sup>160</sup> Further, NATO has a current responsibility to support the GOA's counternarcotics information campaign. This means that the potential exists for NATO to deliver an integrated counterinsurgency and counternarcotics information campaign. Both NATO and the GOA would be issuing the same counternarcotics messages in a coordinated fashion. This would gain legitimacy from the Afghan people for both the GOA and NATO, building state strength, alliance credibility, and delivering integrated effects.

Uniform messaging is critical. An integrated information campaign should include more than just NATO and the GOA. It should include all involved agencies of the UK and US, and other invested international stakeholders. An additional benefit of a coordinated counterinsurgency/counternarcotics strategy is that it would require NATO harmonization of both strategies. This has the effect of 'mainstreaming' the counternarcotics efforts in overall stability planning, cutting out disparate and stove piped efforts.

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<sup>160</sup> One example of an information campaign is Radio Rana. Employed in Canada's Land Force Doctrine and Training System, the radio station is based in Kingston, Ontario and broadcasts in Kandahar City, Afghanistan. The messages and programming are directed from Joint Task Force Afghanistan.



## INTERDICTION

NATO does not conduct drug interdiction that is not linked to the insurgency. As discussed, following the Budapest NATO Defence Ministers meeting, interdiction that is linked to the insurgency-narcotics nexus is approved.<sup>161</sup> This is not sufficient. NATO should engage in drug interdiction operations where possible in order to break down the narcotics industry.

Drug interdiction operations are a profitable counternarcotics strategy. The opium has been processed and is more concentrated and valuable than poppy. Larger effect can be achieved by its destruction, with much less effort, than by eradicating large swaths of the poppy crop. If there is intelligence to allow an interdiction operation, the results, in terms of impeding the trade, will be disproportionate to eradication.

NATO is well able to conduct interdiction operations. It has access to a wide variety of information made available through national channels which might enable interdiction.<sup>162</sup> Once enough information is available that necessitates planning an interdiction operation, NATO's full suite of military capability, including air, special and conventional forces is well suited to conducting drug interdictions, which simply are a form of tactical action, and well within NATO abilities.

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<sup>161</sup> America.gov, "NATO Ministers Endorse Greater Anti-Drug Role in Afghanistan," <http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2008/October/20081010150529sjhtrop0.9508936.html>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2009. The statement reads, "...the participants responded to a request from Afghan Defense Minister Abdul Rahim Wardak for aid to counter the corrupting influence of drugs in his country. The group agreed that ISAF, working with the Afghan Army, can take action against drug labs or drug trafficking profits..."

<sup>162</sup> Individual nations supporting NATO all have national sources of information that could bring interdiction opportunities to the attention of NATO forces.

A benefit of interdiction is that by the time poppy has been processed into opium, it is clearly in the hands of major traffickers and criminal elements rather than in the hands of the small farmer. As discussed, the small farmer is often a victim in the narcotics industry, having few choices. The major trafficker is not the victim; he is the target. It is this element that is actively working to continue destabilizing the country and is sometimes linked with the insurgency.<sup>163</sup> By focusing NATO efforts on his operations, through interdiction, his heretofore lightly opposed operations can be substantially deconstructed. This will result in more of the industry being destroyed, the organized elements of the trade being challenged, and the small farmer bearing less of the brunt of anti narcotics efforts than with eradication. As an extra bonus, the effort the criminals have expended to process poppy into opium can be squandered, making it wasted effort. Traffickers would view losses to interdiction as more significant in terms of time, money, and effort. This is more effective in hitting hard at the centre of the drug trade, and causing significantly more risk and hardship.

While increasing interdiction is a strategy with promise, it will be important at the same time to deconstruct the tangle of problems that eradication causes.

## **SOLVE THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ERADICATION**

### **Eradication Methods**

Given that the recommended focus is upon interdiction rather than eradication, careful thought needs to happen about the role of eradication as part of the whole strategy. Eradication is reported as one factor in the plan, and having the job of creating

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<sup>163</sup> That is why the UK strategy demands focus upon the ‘top end of the trade’.

risk to the trafficker. This is a valid, but the identified problems must be resolved. These problems are: methodology, targeting, Afghan capacity, land registry, alternative livelihoods, and corruption.

First, there must be some resolution about eradication methodologies. One important question is whether to continue pursuing support for of aerial spraying. While aerial spraying is a clearly effective method of destroying the poppy crops, it is indiscriminate. Poor farmers and organized elements alike will see their poppy destroyed and President Karzai's government will lose significant levels of respect from the population for allowing this to occur.<sup>164</sup> Eradication operations must be capable of being extremely precise and discriminating, which disallows the aerial option. Discussion and proposals for aerial campaigns should no longer continue. The international community should make a clear statement about this, in support of President Karzai's decision.<sup>165</sup>

This would gain more legitimacy and respect for eradication as a program. That is not to say that current methodologies of hand cutting, or using scythes and sickles will be an effective alternative. Consideration should be made of using mechanical means to

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<sup>164</sup> Significant levels of politics are associated with pursuing aerial spraying. Thomas Schweich, a former US senior narcotics officer in Afghanistan writes, "The most effective method of eradication was the use of herbicides delivered by crop dusters. But Karzai had long opposed aerial eradication, saying it would be misunderstood as some sort of poison coming from the sky. He claimed to fear that aerial eradication would result in an uprising that would cause him to lose power." This is one clear example of the level of discord between the GOA and the US about aerial eradication. Whether or not aerial eradication would work is not the only issue at hand. It is possible that the second and third order effects of that effective an eradication program would be politically damaging, with unforeseen consequences. Thomas, Schweich, "Is Afghanistan a Narco-State?" *The New York Times*, 27 July 2008.

<sup>165</sup> Ted Galen Carpenter weighs in, writing on page 5 of his report, "Washington should stop putting pressure on the Afghan government to pursue crop eradication programs and undermine the economic well-being of its own population." Ted Galen Carpenter, "How the Drug War in Afghanistan Undermines America's War on Terror," *Foreign Policy Briefing*, No. 84 (November 10, 2004). Online: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/fpbriefs/fpb84.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

both plow poppy and deliver safe herbicides. Any herbicide delivery must be accompanied by a proactive information campaign aimed at the Afghan public.

Next, poppy eradication must target fields associated with the organized criminal end of the trade. This part of the trade is responsible for the violence and criminality that the opium trade brings. It is this organization which actively opposes GOA stability operations and is challenging efforts to expand governance and bring stability. It must endure the most risk. If it is not specifically targeted, it will continue to operate with impunity, expanding its presence, causing overall stability efforts continue to falter.

Given this focus on organized narcotics traders, eradication planning requires careful targeting of specific fields. That requires ongoing and meticulous information gathering efforts, which are correlated for accuracy through a variety of sources. It is crucial that the fields being eradicated are the right ones, with no eradication focus placed on the small farmers. John Glaze supports not eradicating small plots, stating “...eradication without provision for long-term alternative livelihoods is devastating Afghan’s poor farmers without addressing root causes.”<sup>166</sup>

Once the right fields are determined and eradication planned, there should be the expectation that eradication efforts will be opposed. Therefore, the eradication force must be robust, non-corrupt, armed with the best available mechanical means, and have competent and well armed force protection ability. This force, once working, must not be able to be driven away by criminal elements. By nature of the expectations set out above, it should be a standing, professional force rather than an ad hoc organization, which trains

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<sup>166</sup> John A. Glaze, “Opium and Afghanistan” Reassessing U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy,” *Strategic Studies Institute*. Online:<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub804.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009, 13.

continuously and is well equipped-both for eradication operations itself and in its ability to fight to eradicate. No taint of corruption is possible.<sup>167</sup>

### **Eradication Capacity**

Lack of Afghan eradication capacity must be corrected. The requirement for a vetted and trained force, sufficiently robust in terms of size and capability is clear.<sup>168</sup> Efforts must begin to build such a force on a standing and permanent basis. The rudimentary work being done with the PEF is a start, but it does not go far enough.

Given the amount of opium in production, fresh calculations need to be made about how big the PEF should be, and how it should be structured, manned, and trained. Properly equipping the PEF with mechanical eradication tools, such as tractors plows and ATVs; and provision of associated lift and sustainment is also necessary. The PEF must be highly trained to defend itself, while at the same time imposing minimal force upon the greater civilian population. It must be able to escalate its actions rapidly and precisely when attacked or confronted by organized elements. The PEF must become corruption free, and it must be a complete Afghan organization, inclusive of its planning abilities, targeting capabilities, and ability to conduct effective eradication.

### **Land Titles and Alternative Livelihoods**

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<sup>167</sup> Increased capacity building of the PEF would achieve these goals.

<sup>168</sup> See the comments made in chapter 3 about the comparative size of the PEF to that of the poppy fields.

Efforts are ongoing to build a land registry in Afghanistan. Without being able to identify who owns what piece of property it is not possible to hold owners accountable for growing opium on their land. Existence of a land title registry is critical, and these efforts should receive the full and immediate support of the international community. Land registry as an essential element of a rural development strategy would also facilitate state strength. This one act will have positive effects in two areas; counternarcotics and governance extension to rural areas.

### **Alternative Livelihoods**

Afghan people require secure and legitimate ways of making a living in order to turn away from illegal industries. All attempts counter the narcotics industry which does not have an integrated legal livelihood component continue to fracture the overall effort. It is not possible to eradicate poppy, interdict opium, conduct counterdrug operations which target individuals without making it clear that the GOA and the international community proposes viable alternatives and will deliver needed support. This is what the Senlis Council report has happened in Helmand Province, noting, “In reality, alternative livelihoods programmes in Helmand have to date been substantially ineffective.”<sup>169</sup>

Alternative livelihood strategies must be successfully delivered in intimate coordination with eradication programming. There is no room for disparity between the two programs and so integrated program delivery is necessary. Small farmers who face eradication must receive help. They will need seeds to enable them to plant and harvest

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<sup>169</sup> Senlis Council, “Helmand at War,” [http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand\\_Report.pdf](http://www.icosgroup.net/documents/Helmand_Report.pdf); Internet; accessed 5 January 2009.

an alternate crop, and they may well need short term funding. While it could be viewed that paying, or rewarding a farmer who has his poppy crop eradicated is detrimental to the overall program and sends exactly the wrong message, assisting a small farmer to survive and to wean him away from growing opium at the same time is the desired result. This will have the effect of assisting in the generation of a legitimate economy while at the same time engendering support for the GOA by the Afghan people, and will assist in raising its overall level of legitimacy.

Indeed, John Glaze recommends more focus on alternative livelihoods, stating these programs require a longer term focus and not short term cash for work projects, as has been the case.<sup>170</sup>

### **Corruption**

Corruption associated with eradication can extend past the obvious connection to the eradication force. It is possible that Afghan officials at other levels, either representing the GOA at the provincial or local level or as members of the ANSF could extort funds from local farmers to prevent 'pending eradication' which may never have actually been intended. An important part of solving this problem is delivery of an effective eradication information campaign by the GOA. The campaign must stress its themes for eradication (targeted criminals) and be clear about what procedures the eradication forces will take. It must clearly state that no money should change hands

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<sup>170</sup> John A. Glaze, "Opium and Afghanistan" Reassessing U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy," *Strategic Studies Institute*. Online:<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub804.pdf>; Internet; accessed 5 January 2009, 13.

with the eradication force, or anyone claiming to influence the eradication force. It should offer the citizens a way to report any attempts to extort funds.

Solving these problems identified with eradication will pay dividends for the GOA. Farmers will be able to envision other ways to make a living and will have felt the actual support of their government, raising the level of confidence. At the same time, efforts will progress towards building a sustainable diversified industry and economy. The organized elements of the trade will face the most risk, and Afghanistan's indigenous capability in the field of counternarcotics will be raised. Corruption associated with the program can be lowered, and in time eliminated. The overall effect would be a much stronger claim to legitimacy on the part of the GOA while delivering greater risk to the narcotics industry as one element of an overall counternarcotics plan. It is clearly recognized that the challenges with eradication demand meticulous planning and delivery. Results will only be achieved by integrating all efforts in this field.

## **FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF AFGANISTAN'S SECURITY FORCES**

### **Afghan's Security Institutions**

Not enough counterdrug capability exists, or is being developed within Afghanistan's security forces. Within the MOI, only two units have specialized narcotics roles, the CNPA for interdiction and the PEF for eradication. This is not sufficient capacity for a country the size of Afghanistan that is responsible for production of over 90 percent of the world's illegal opium. Two things should happen.

First, the CNPA and the PEF should be built up until their size is able to challenge the scope and scale of the drug industry. Careful analysis of how much total interdiction



capacity is required. The CNPA should then be scaled to this amount. In increasing the size of the organization, the characteristics that make it successful should not be diluted. The larger sized force should be highly trained and educated, well resourced, and non corrupt. The PEF should also be built up to a level where it is able to conduct concurrent eradication operations. Its development should follow the model of the CNPA, by becoming a permanent professional force that is well equipped and has a high level of training, and no amount of internal corruption. Both organizations should be developed so that they have strong institutional backing that allows for delivery of coordinated information campaigns. They also need an integrated targeting and intelligence capability, as well as suitable permanent infrastructure.

The second thing is that the remainder of Afghanistan's security forces should be trained in counternarcotics as a subset of existing roles. These specifically include the ANA, ANP, and ABP. These forces are already better sized to face the drug industry, but are not trained for counternarcotics work.

The ANA, the most developed of Afghanistan's security services, has a clear counterinsurgency focus that precludes their consideration of counter drug operations. Both ANA mindset and training must be addressed. The ANA should be educated about the insurgency and narcotics linkages, as well as be encouraged to understand how the narcotics trade's existence opposes government control. If Afghanistan did develop a combined counterinsurgency and counternarcotics approach, the ANA, as the most developed security agency could exercise a more significant role than now.

The ANP can not yet provide necessary policing services. Policing does include anti-drug activity, and more counternarcotics policing is required. This means that police

capacity must be built to counter an already entrenched criminal organization. The ANP must be prepared to defeat organized crime, which is a very specialized police skill set. This requires that training focus strongly on counterdrug operations. In supporting ANP development consideration must be given towards providing appropriate police detention facilities. These facilities are required so that the ANP are able to make narcotics arrests and to hold prisoners who are pending trial. This type of police infrastructure must exist in all communities, but should first be constructed in the heaviest opium growing areas in southern Afghanistan. At the same time, as discussed earlier, a higher degree of internal corruption is recognized within the ANP. This police corruption must be routed out, particularly where the links exist between police and the narcotics industry.

These same considerations must be made regarding the ABP. The ABP are challenged to police insecure borders along all of the significant narcotics trade routes, and they must become capable of stopping the flow of drugs out of the country. This will be easier in cooperation with neighboring countries, as part of an integrated border management strategy. Remembering from Holsti that one of the requirements of a state is that it be capable of controlling its own territory, border control is important to the GOA. By curbing the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan, it signals that it is fulfilling its responsibilities as a state, and it is being a cooperative member of the international community. At the same time, border management is required to develop legitimate industry and trade, and as such is a key pillar in any counterinsurgency strategy. Effective border policing is a critical component of a combined counterinsurgency-counter-narcotics strategy.

### **Law and Justice**

In order to curb the narcotics trade while at the same time building the state strength of Afghanistan, the justice system and the prison system must be repaired.

Antonio Maria Costa of the UNODC notes:

Drug cultivation, production, and trafficking are carried out on an enormous scale thanks to collusion between corrupt officials, landowners, warlords and criminals. Until they all face the full force of the law, the opium economy will continue to prosper with impunity...<sup>171</sup>

Courts need to be established in all of the provinces as credible and standing institutions. Free from corruption, a court should be able to hear evidence of drug criminality and impose fair punishment upon the offender. This would have the result of imposing a very credible risk of punishment upon the drug trade and at the same time be a visible demonstration of government authority.

In the same vein, the prison system must be able to accommodate the sentences passed by the courts. Drug offenders who are sentenced in the courts must be transferred easily between court and prison bureaucracies. Prisons must exist to incarcerate narcotics criminals. These should be transparent and modern organizations, equipped to administer their prisoners, and to perform the variety of expected rehabilitation and retributive functions.

Barnett Rubin has commented that there must be a long term approach to counternarcotics law enforcement capacity building, and added that international forces

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<sup>171</sup> UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008, August 2008, viii. Online: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

should be embedded for monitoring purposes and to limit the power and potential for corruption on the part of the Afghan commander.<sup>172</sup>

### **Coordination, Targeting and Intelligence**

Afghanistan's security forces need to coordinate their counternarcotics targeting and intelligence capabilities, and share this information between the various agencies. As an example, information gleaned from ANA operations should be centrally collated and made available to the CNPA for its interdiction operations, to the PEF for its eradication operations, to the ABP for border control purposes, and to the local ANP force. In the same vein, all security forces should have a common understanding of what operations the PEF and the CNPA are conducting, in order to perhaps re-enforce with a supporting operation, or to deconflict other ongoing field operations. In this way, interagency counternarcotics field operations can be coordinated. Each time a security force takes to the field in Afghanistan, there should be several clearly identified objectives, and one should always be to move the counternarcotics effort forward.

## **REQUIREMENT FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND BROAD**

### **INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT**

The international community has demonstrated inconsistent interest and understanding about the role narcotics plays in Afghanistan's overall state weakness. In

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<sup>172</sup> Barnett R Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard. *Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond, Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document*, Netherlands Institute of International Relations Conflict Research Unit, April 2005. The Hague. Online: <http://www.clingendael.nl/cru> ; 71.

order for the international community to take the educated stance necessary to deliver consolidated and forward thinking policies, further research and study are required.

While the UNODC has published a substantial amount of information about the drug industry, and publishes statistically oriented annual reports, and the Senlis Council is proactive in raising its concerns; there is a comparative dearth of informed literature to assist the international community to become better informed. Most sources are found in journals, newspapers and government reports, but books about Afghanistan's drug trade are not plentiful. Further detailed research and writing about the extent of the narcotics industry and its impacts, including second and third order effects are required. Several aspects need to be better understood.

First, the extent of the industry, and the amount of inroads that it has made into Afghanistan's bureaucracy and institutions should be catalogued. While it is known that the narcotics industry is linked with corruption, and often government or security representatives are implicated, the complete network and extent of the corruption are not known, or if they are known, they are not publically reported. Most reports of corruption are only anecdotal. How organized and advanced is the narcotics industry? What external mafias are involved? Is Afghanistan on its way to becoming a narco-state? If so, what are the implications for regional security? Does reporting on the opium trade take into proper consideration the growth of other illegal crops, specifically cannabis?

While it is suspected that narcotics traffickers have stockpiled large amounts of opium, how much opium actually exists within Afghanistan is not known. The UNODC make efforts to record how many hectares of poppy are cultivated each year, but this does

not relate to how much poppy is harvested and opium subsequently produced. This type of quantification is necessary in order to begin scaling an appropriate response.

Next, study should be conducted with the aim of determining how the narcotics industry is impeding development of the legitimate economy. To what extent are other crops, such as grains, not being grown due to the persistent presence of the narcotics industry? How free are small farmers to switch between poppy crops and licit crops? Is there a level of coercion, and what are the sources of the coercion? What would be the personal and economic ramifications to a farmer who chooses not to grow poppy? Is delivery of alternative livelihoods programs enough to provide other options, or is there a level of coercion at play by organized elements of the trade that limits what a small farmer's options are? What are the impediments to alternative livelihood delivery?

As well, a full study should be conducted that describes the linkages between the narcotics trade and the remainder of the elements in the Afghan insurgency. What is the actual amount of funding that the narcotics trade provide to the insurgency, and what proportion of the overall funding does this constitute? Is it a significant percentage? If the narcotics line of funding to the insurgency were curtailed, would the insurgency be materially affected, or simply financially inconvenienced? Are the narcotics traders and the insurgency in active collusion or do they simply have related and complementary aims? What would be the impact upon the insurgency if the narcotics trade were destroyed? How much would destruction of the narcotics industry result in greater state strength for the GOA?

We know from Aras and Toktas that "Assertive policies are needed to assess the reasons behind widespread cultivation of opium and why the transition to legal

agricultural crops is impossible.”<sup>173</sup> This type of assessment, and other related assessments and research, are critical, if any positive steps are to be taken to remedy the situation. Daniel Korski concurs with the need to better understand the Afghan dynamic, writing, “The international community collectively lacks local knowledge, and key decisions in Afghanistan have been taken on the basis of incomplete and insufficient intelligence. There is little detailed understanding of political and tribal dynamics, or of the relations between drug traffickers and insurgents.”<sup>174</sup>

Once the facts are better understood, and a consolidated basis of analysis exists and has been widely read by the international community, chances are better that the international community will be able to offer more informed and consistent support. This support is critical in order to build one comprehensive international plan that could be implemented in Afghanistan, and which would replace the myriad of national approaches that exist.

Given the state of lawlessness, conducting this research will be challenging. UNODC efforts are instructive. It records challenges in gathering data about the narcotics industry that, “In Afghanistan in particular, this challenge is accentuated by the weakness of state institutions, the blurring of political and criminal interests, and the increasing secrecy in which drug trafficking is being conducted.”<sup>175</sup> While challenging,

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<sup>173</sup> Bulent Aras and Sule Toktas, “Afghanistan’s Security: Political Process, State-Building, and Narcotics,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XV, No. 2, Summer 2008, 45.

<sup>174</sup> Daniel Korski, “Afghanistan: Europe’s Forgotten War,” European Council on Foreign Relations, January 2008; [http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb\\_cem6bqqcx.pdf](http://ecfr.3cdn.net/c43ad7d70cf03ddadb_cem6bqqcx.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009, 19.

such research is necessary in order to move to the next stage, development of one comprehensive counternarcotics plan.

## **ONE COUNTERNARCOTICS PLAN**

Despite the UK's leadership, and US recognition of the problem, there is no one comprehensive international counternarcotics plan for the international community can subscribe to. As part of the international effort to stabilize Afghanistan, it is clear that the US and the UK are the largest actors attempting to solve narcotics problems, and that each has its own national approach. If both stakeholders were to develop a comprehensive UK-US counternarcotics policy and plan of action, their efforts could be synergized, and could act as a catalyst for the remainder of the international community.<sup>176</sup> Importantly, interaction with the GOA by the international community could be uniform and consistent, allowing for some consistency within Afghanistan's own counternarcotics programming across its various bureaucracies. The Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit makes a similar proposal, commenting, "...the first is to

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<sup>175</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organized Crime in Post Taliban Afghanistan," *Afghanistan's Drug Industry, Structure, Functioning, Dynamics, and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy*. Online: [http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan\\_drug\\_industry.pdf#page=197](http://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf#page=197); Internet; accessed 17 April 2009, 209.

<sup>176</sup> A similar call was made for a coordinated strategy by Robert Matthews. On page 9 he writes, "...All US strategies need to be coordinated in an overarching plan that is synchronized with NATO allies. Counter-narcotics strategy should be part of a sophisticated, diversified counterinsurgency programme and counter-narcotics/insurgency in turn should be subsumed into a broad-based and well-coordinated reconstruction and nation-building project." See, Robert Matthews, "Poppy seeds and dragon's teeth: NATO struggles with an opium-funded war in Afghanistan," 5. [http://www.fride.org/download/COM\\_Afghanistan\\_NATO\\_War\\_ENG\\_ene08.pdf](http://www.fride.org/download/COM_Afghanistan_NATO_War_ENG_ene08.pdf); Internet: accessed 5 January 2009.



fully integrate counter-narcotics into the wider development agenda, preventing it from being seen as a separate and distinct strand of activities...”<sup>177</sup> The GOA could count upon a dependable and consistent line of funding, mentoring, and capacity building, and it would be in receipt of one clear international plan.

In order to do this, the various plans now in play must be harmonized across several areas, as follows: eradication and interdiction policy, avenues for creating legitimate markets, institutional capacity building, anti-corruption, justice reform, delivery of the alternative livelihood program, and concurrence upon how to deliver a mainstreamed counternarcotics strategy.

In considering the necessary security capacity building investment, a strong and coordinated focus should be placed upon building all of Afghanistan’s security institutions to provide a robust overall counternarcotics capacity and ensure interoperability between institutions. The ANA, ANP, and ABP must be as competent in counternarcotics as is the CNPA and the PEF, while at the same time recognizing their more general focus.

A full international counternarcotics plan is required. The UNODC concurs, calling for, “...an array of medium to long-term interventions...such as establishing criminal justice institutions, improving customs and border control, effective regulation of the banking sector, and management of the process of economic reform...”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, David Mansfield and Adam Pain, “Counternarcotics in Afghanistan,” Online: [http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:bo5k9uOIZ-IJ:www.areu.org.af/index.php%3Foption%3Dcom\\_docman%26Itemid%3D26%26task%3Ddoc\\_download%26gid%3D617+counternarcotics+the+failure+of+success+areu&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca](http://74.125.47.132/search?q=cache:bo5k9uOIZ-IJ:www.areu.org.af/index.php%3Foption%3Dcom_docman%26Itemid%3D26%26task%3Ddoc_download%26gid%3D617+counternarcotics+the+failure+of+success+areu&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ca); Internet; accessed 21 April 2009., 18.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 212.

The plan should have, as a goal, to increase the legitimacy of the State of Afghanistan through the progressive dismantling of the illegal opium trade. It should be nested in modern conflict theory, and compatible with modern counterinsurgency theory. It should be fully supported internationally in order that it can stand the test of time, and it should be properly funded.

While this proposal is significant in scope, and calls upon all actors to review their actions and priorities to date; it is the most effective way, perhaps the only way, to solve Afghanistan's narcotics trade problem and begin the long climb to state strength, and overall stability and security. In contemplating development of this plan, it is useful to remember Barnett Rubin's remarks, "Counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan suffers from a confusion of goals...The goal of counter-narcotics in Afghanistan is building stability and the rule of law in Afghanistan."<sup>179</sup> Keeping this idea in mind, the international community could make strides towards a comprehensive approach.

While these recommendations are ambitious, they are essential steps in generating solutions to the narcotics trade that is destabilizing Afghanistan. Most are continuations of already ongoing initiatives, but the difference is in a call for an integrated effort, delivered at the right scale by the various involved agencies.

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<sup>179</sup> Barnett R Rubin, Humayun Hamidzada and Abby Stoddard, "Afghanistan 2005 and Beyond, Prospects for Improved Stability Reference Document," [http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400\\_cru\\_paper\\_barnett.pdf](http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/2005/20050400_cru_paper_barnett.pdf); Internet; accessed 14 April 2009, 64.

## CHAPTER 5-CONCLUSION

The narcotics trade in Afghanistan has not been properly catalogued by the international community in its significance, where only piecemeal considerations have been made, mainly on national bases. It is a key factor influencing the overall continued state weakness of Afghanistan, and permeates all other areas where stabilization efforts are proceeding. The tendency to view it separately, as one of many problems in Afghanistan results in failure to properly assess to what extent the industry is impeding overall progress in stability and security operations. The narcotics industry does function as a third element in a modern insurgency within Steven Metz's insurgency construct and so its destruction is necessary in order to deconstruct the Afghan insurgency.

Lack of cohesion is apparent within the international approach, despite the efforts of the G8 partner nation in counternarcotics-the UK. It is important that the international community first become better educated about the extent of Afghanistan's counternarcotics trade and how it is impacting upon their efforts in the country, and then survey the breadth and scope of the disparate international response in order to begin developing one comprehensive international approach. Such an approach should rationalize the national strategies of the US and the UK and bring the NATO mission into line. This scale of international response could prepare a jumping off point for the remainder of the international community that is involved in stabilizing Afghanistan to rationalize their own national or group agendas.

As a first step, agreement about the best way forward for poppy eradication is necessary. This controversial program has not been effective to date and has had

negative spillover for the NATO mission. It has clearly affected the credibility and overall legitimacy of the GOA and all western partners.

Counternarcotics should become a fully integrated component of the overall counterinsurgency and stabilization effort for Afghanistan, and considerably more directed research should be conducted to quantify the extent to which the narcotics trade is influencing progress. The general view that it is 'a lot' or 'significant' is not sufficient to allow enough detailed planning to occur to see results.

The international community must recognize that the GOA is incapable of solving this problem. Its overall state weakness, lack of institutions, and burgeoning levels of internal corruption prohibit it from taking effective counternarcotics measures. Although it has produced a comprehensive NDCS, it cannot make the leap from strategy to implementation. Since this is the case, the international community can not simply remark that the narcotics trade is a problem for the GOA and have expectations that the GOA will be able to deliver results.

Perhaps taking these steps will meet with the approval of Antonia Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UNODC, who in the 2008 Afghanistan Opium Survey calls for practical measures, which include but are not limited to a call to: Build integrity and justice; Find the missing opium, Catch the most wanted, Stop the precursor chemicals, and increase Regional security cooperation.<sup>180</sup>

Afghanistan has been a country in conflict for many years, and the years of war and strife have caused many significant issues. Since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the international community has taken great strides to assist rebuilding this country. Much

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<sup>180</sup>UNODC, Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008, August 2008, viii. Online: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2008.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/publications/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2008.pdf); Internet; accessed 20 April 2009.

effort has been put forward towards bettering the life of the Afghan people, providing development and reconstruction, and quelling the high level of violence. These are worthy goals, and will be a lifetime's worth of work for many. Much of this effort will be wasted if the narcotics trade is not destroyed. Without a clear focus on the narcotics trade, the efforts to build institutional capacity and governance, develop legitimate markets, and bring about security and stability will be unsuccessful. Collectively closing our eyes to the impacts of the narcotics trade is not an option.

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