

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**OCTOBER 2006**

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**AFGHANISTAN AND OPIUM:  
A PRIMER**

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**STAFF REPORT**

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## Afghanistan and Opium: A Primer



### Afghanistan Opium and Heroin Production

The late 1970s saw an increase in the importance of the opium and heroin coming out of the Golden Crescent nations of Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. That increase can be seen in the steady rise in Afghan opium production, as measured by hectares under cultivation (see chart below).

The opium poppy growing season in Afghanistan varies, depending on where the growers are located in the country (north or south) and its elevation. Generally, planting occurs during September and October in the south and moves north as the season allows.

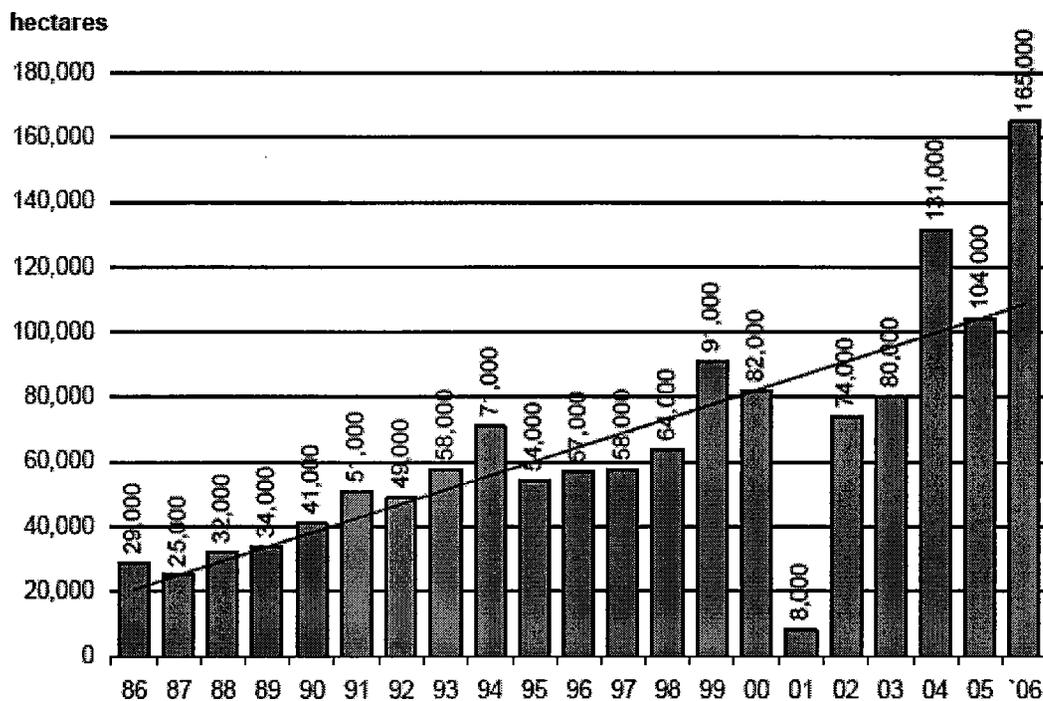


Figure 1 Afghan Opium Production<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of poppy varieties grown in Afghanistan, with two predominating<sup>2</sup> - 'watani soorgulai' (or red flower) and 'watani spingulai' (white flower) representing 60% of the varieties sewn (42% for 'soorgulai' and 18% for 'spingulai'). 'Soorgulai', whose flowers are generally pink, red, or red and white, produces good quality opium with low moisture content, but the yield is low compared to other varieties and its small pod makes it harder to lance<sup>3</sup>. 'Spingulai' has a white flower, matures early, is relatively resistant to disease and poor weather and requires less fertilizer and irrigation than other varieties<sup>4</sup>. 'Spingulai' is preferred by northern farmers where is suited more to that region's soils, but its low morphine content contributes to lower opium prices in the north<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p. 52

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Email dated 7-20-2006 to House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources staff from Research and Analysis Section, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Kabul, Afghanistan.

On September 2, 2006, results of the United Nations Opium Poppy Survey were released in Kabul by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa. Costa said cultivation in the 2006 growing season had grown by 59% over that of 2005<sup>6</sup>, with more than 400,000 acres planted (compared with less than 260,000 in 2005<sup>7</sup>). The potential opium yield is estimated at 6,100 tons, sufficient to manufacture 610 tons of heroin which *exceeds* world demand by 30%. During the 2006 growing season the United Nations said 38,000 acres of poppy were confirmed to have been eradicated<sup>8</sup>, compared to the 57,000 acres claimed by provincial governors.

The bulk of the production came from Helmand Province where cultivation rose by 162%, accounting for 42% of the Afghan crop<sup>9</sup>. It is no coincidence that opium production has increased in those areas where central government control is weakest and Taliban control strongest. Executive Director Costa in part blamed the Taliban for encouraging farmers to grow opium, but also singled out the former governor of Helmand Province, Sher Muhammad Akhundzada, for criticism. Akhundzada encouraged people to grow poppy in the months before he left<sup>10</sup>. He has since been appointed to a position in the upper house of parliament.

Per hectare opium yield figures for 2006 declined six percent over those of 2005 from 39.3 kilograms per hectare to 37 kilograms per hectare. Some of this decline has been attributed to drought.<sup>11</sup> The 2004 average opium yield was 32 kilograms per hectare, rising to 39 kilograms per hectare in 2005. This increase occurred despite a decrease in the amount of land cultivated for opium<sup>12</sup>. This was in part due to a protracted drought in 2004, but also to disease which was mainly credited for the lower

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<sup>6</sup> Washingtonpost.com, *Afghan Opium Cultivation Soars, U.N. Says*, September 3, 2006, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/02/AR2006090200903\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/02/AR2006090200903_pf.html)

<sup>7</sup> The New York Times, *Opium Harvest at Record Level in Afghanistan*, September 3, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Washingtonpost.com, *Afghan Opium Cultivation Soars, U.N. Says*, September 3, 2006

<sup>10</sup> The New York Times, *Opium Harvest at Record Level in Afghanistan*, September 3, 2006

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p.13.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p. 47.

yields. There are many insects and diseases which can affect Afghan opium poppy. The common ones are sun pest disease, aphids, root worms, blight, powdery mildew, fusarium wilt, and mosaic<sup>13</sup>. The possibility of using bioherbicides (herbicides comprised of natural biological agents to attack plants e.g., fungi) has been explored both in Central Asia and the USA as a means of eradicating poppy. Work in the USA focused on *fusarium oxysporum* and *pleospora papaveracea*. The fungi inheres in the seeds and causes the plant's pod to drying and be unable to produce opium latex. When compared to the results of a conventional herbicide, bioherbicides did not totally eliminate the crop<sup>14</sup> and therefore were not significantly beneficial.

Harvesting opium in Afghanistan is both a labor intensive and expensive operation. About 350 person days are required to cultivate one hectare of poppy, as compared to 41 person days for a similar plot of wheat, making it eight to nine times more labor intensive<sup>15</sup>. For the typical farmer with .33 hectares under poppy cultivation in 2005, labor demands were about 117 labor days growing season<sup>16</sup>. While the average family farmer with 6-7 family members<sup>17</sup> can manage up to one jerib of land (one jerib is equivalent to about .2 hectares) much beyond that area requires itinerant labor whose costs of about \$6 per day (plus meals)<sup>18</sup> are higher than for those cultivating wheat at about \$4 per day<sup>19</sup>. With an average of five lancings per pod in 2005 (and up to eleven in one province)<sup>20</sup> in a two week harvest period, labor can become very expensive. Similarly, other production costs (including bribes) are higher for opium. For example, in 2005 fertilizer cost \$80 per jerib of opium as opposed to \$48 for a similar plot of wheat<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.50.

<sup>14</sup> Interview by House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources staff and Brian Bailey of the US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service on 5-24-2006.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations Office on Drug Control and Crime, *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem*. New York 2003, p. 100

<sup>16</sup>United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p.80.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 56

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 80

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 80

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 49

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 79

In a nation struggling to outgrow decades where invaders came and went and internecine war destroyed what little was left, opium has proven a virulent and pervasive money maker. Nonetheless, profitability and the nature of the plant play a large part in the decision to plant poppy. The Asian Development Bank has described it as the “...ideal cash crop.”<sup>22</sup>

*“It does not require good soil or irrigation and is somewhat drought resistant. It is durable (opium paste is not subject to post-harvest losses and actually increases in value with age). It commands a good, although volatile farm gate price, attracts credit and other inputs from traffickers (at the risk of opium debt) has a guaranteed international market, and is easy to transport...”*<sup>23</sup>

In 2000 opium prices fell by 30% and the area under cultivation declined by 9%<sup>24</sup>. Despite the figures in the chart below, in general in Afghanistan, opium farmers are not wealthier than non-poppy farmers<sup>25</sup>, a fact the UN attributes to poppy being grown in the more backward and impoverished areas of the country.

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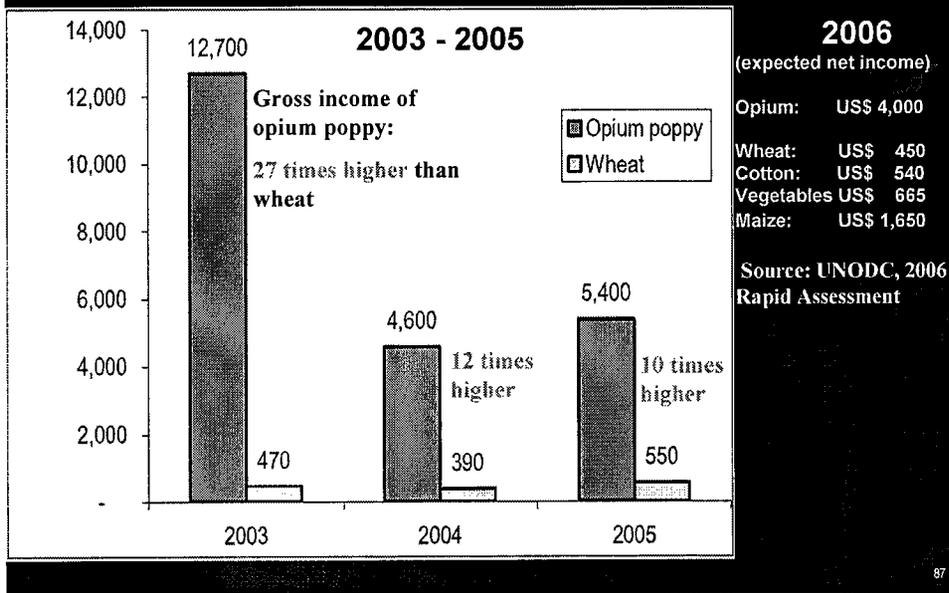
<sup>22</sup> Asian Development Bank, *Afghanistan's Opium Economy* (2005) at [http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADB\\_Review/2005/vol137-6/opium-economy.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADB_Review/2005/vol137-6/opium-economy.asp).

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem*. New York 2003, p. 99

<sup>25</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p.78

**Afghanistan: Gross income of opium poppy and wheat per hectare in US\$**



**Figure 2<sup>26</sup>**

Some pertinent details on opium poppy cultivated in 2006 as compared to the year before are summarized in the fact sheet below<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime PowerPoint presentation, *Afghanistan's opium Economy in 2005 and Cultivation and Eradication Trends in 2006*, Thomas Pietschmann, Research and Analysis Section, UNODC, April 2006, on file with the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 1

## 2006 ANNUAL OPIUM POPPY SURVEY IN AFGHANISTAN

### Summary of findings

|  | 2005             | Difference<br>on 2005 | 2006             |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Net opium poppy cultivation                            | 104,000 ha       | 59%                   | 165,000 ha       |
| In percent of agricultural land                        | 2.30%            |                       | 3.65%            |
| In percent of global cultivation                       | 62%              |                       | 82%              |
| Number of provinces affected                           | 26               |                       | 28               |
| Eradication  | 5,000 ha         | 210%                  | 15,300 ha        |
| Weighted average opium yield                           | 39.3 kg/ha       | -6%                   | 37.0 kg/ha       |
| Potential production of opium                          | 4,100 mt         | 49%                   | 6,100 mt         |
| In percent of global production                        | 87%              |                       | 92%              |
| Number of households involved in opium cultivation     | 309,000          | 45%                   | 448,000          |
| Number of persons involved in opium cultivation        | 2.0 million      |                       | 2.9 million      |
| In percent of total population (23 million)            | 8.7%             |                       | 12.6%            |
| Average farm gate price of fresh opium at harvest time | US\$ 102/kg      | -8%                   | US\$ 94/kg       |
| Average farm gate price of dry opium at harvest time   | US\$ 138/kg      | -9%                   | US\$ 125/kg      |
| Afghanistan GDP <sup>1</sup>                           | US\$ 5.2 billion | 29%                   | US\$ 6.7 billion |
| Total farm gate value of opium production              | US\$ 560 million | 35%                   | US\$ 755 million |
| in percent of GDP                                      | 11%              |                       | 11%              |

In addition:

- Afghanistan provided 87% of the world's opium in 2005<sup>28</sup>; however, that number increased to 92% in 2006.
- In 2006, opium cultivation occurred in 28 of the 34 provinces<sup>29</sup>, up from twenty-four of the thirty-two provinces in Afghanistan<sup>30</sup>. (NOTE: The number of provinces increased). When compared to 2005, the 2006 opium poppy cultivation increased 121% in the south<sup>31</sup>.
- In 2005 the three provinces where declines in cultivation were greatest were the same provinces which received the largest amounts of alternative development<sup>32</sup>.
- About 79% of proceeds from the opium economy go to traffickers while 21% goes to farmers<sup>33</sup>.
- In 2003, a hectare of land under poppy would bring the farmer 27 times more in gross income than that of a wheat farmer. In 2005 that figure was down to 10 times more in gross income<sup>34</sup>.
- Loans advanced by shopkeepers and traders (traditional sources of loans to poppy farmers) dropped from 70% in 2003 to 53% in 2005, reflecting an increase in risk perceived by the lenders<sup>35</sup>. Borrowing from relatives increased in the same period from eight percent to 30%<sup>36</sup>.
- The most common reasons for the increased poppy cultivation in 2006 were higher opium prices (41%) and high demand (16%)<sup>37</sup>. External

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<sup>28</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, Preface, p. iii

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p. iv.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, Preface, p. 23

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p. 3

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. iv.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 79

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66

<sup>37</sup> <sup>37</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p. 27

pressure to grow opium accounted for only about two percent of those polled<sup>38</sup>.

- Farmers who stopped growing in 2006 were surveyed for their motivation, about 25% said it was for religious reasons, with 21% saying they bowed to a decision by elders and about 16% said they did so because of fear of eradication<sup>39</sup>.
- The main reasons given for *not* cultivating poppy or reducing its cultivation in 2005 were fear of eradication (35%), fear of imprisonment (20%), forbidden by Islam (15%), and, lower prices/demand (10%)<sup>40</sup>.
- Approximately 70% of the opium produced in northern Afghanistan is transported to the south for further processing into heroin or morphine base. The south is where the main morphine/heroin production centers are located<sup>41</sup> (see map below).
- The average price of fresh, farm gate opium in 2005 was \$102/kilogram, an increase of 16% over 2004. That number dropped by eight percent in 2006 to \$94 per kilogram<sup>42</sup>. The lowest prices were in northern Afghanistan, while the highest were in the central part of the country<sup>43</sup>.
- Villages producing opium had opium addiction rates seven times higher than rates for villages that did not produce opium poppy<sup>44</sup>. Heroin addiction is estimated at .03% of the population<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 26

<sup>40</sup> <sup>40</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p. 60

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 81

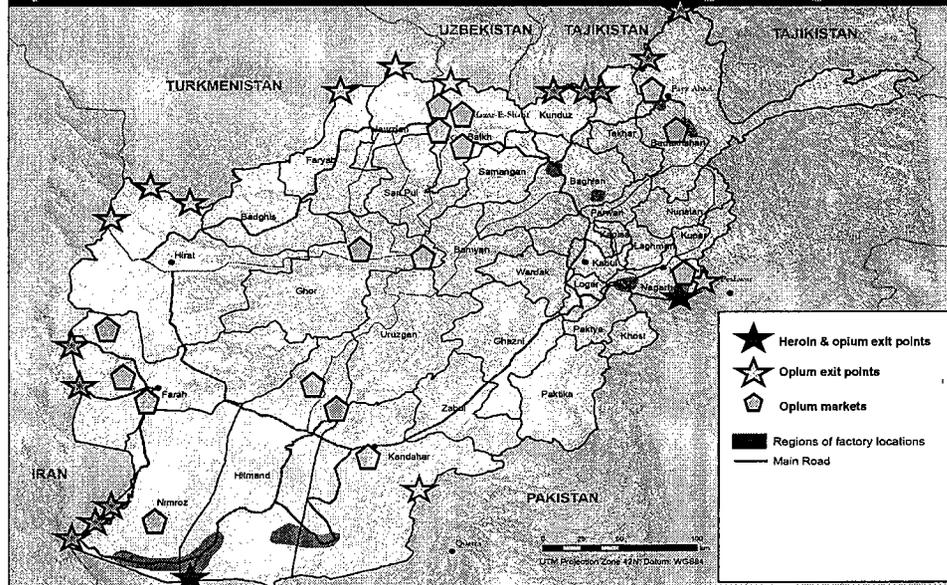
<sup>42</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> <sup>43</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p. 71.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 85

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 85

## Opium markets, laboratories and trafficking in Afghanistan



The eradication effort for the 2005 poppy crop in Afghanistan were considered the first such comprehensive program<sup>46</sup>. At the direction of the central government, governors eradicated about 4,000 hectares<sup>47</sup>, with most of that occurring in Nangarhar and Helmand Provinces, the two main opium producers in 2004<sup>48</sup>. The central government also undertook eradication efforts using the Central Poppy Eradication Force (CPEF) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), which resulted in a total estimated eradication of 5,100 hectares, or five percent of the total crop<sup>49</sup>. In 2006 eradication increased 210% over 2005, with 15,300 hectares destroyed or about 10% of the total crop<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup>United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p. iii.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53

<sup>50</sup> <sup>50</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2006: Executive Summary*, September 2006, p 17.

## Impact on Europe and the USA

The impact of southwest Asian heroin is greater in Europe, with the European Law Enforcement Organization (EUROPOL) estimating that 135 metric tons of heroin is required to meet Europe's annual demand.<sup>51</sup> Of that figure, an estimated 25 to 35 metric tons of heroin<sup>52</sup> (90 percent of which is derived from Afghan opium<sup>53</sup>) are smuggled into the United Kingdom each year. In the 2005 opium poppy growing season, an estimated 4,100 metric tons of opium were produced in Afghanistan<sup>54</sup>, sufficient for approximately 400 metric tons of heroin (although one estimate puts it at 526 metric tons).

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<sup>51</sup> European Police Organization, *Drugs 2006* (January 16, 2006), p. 3.

<http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/SeriousCrimesOverviews/2005/drugs2005.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Serious Organized Crime Agency, *The United Kingdom Threat Assessment: The Threat from Serious and Organized Crime 2006/*, p.25

[http://www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/threat\\_assess\\_unclass\\_250706.pdf](http://www.soca.gov.uk/assessPublications/downloads/threat_assess_unclass_250706.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26

<sup>54</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *2006 World Drug Report, Volume 1: Analysis*, p.12.

## The global impact of Afghanistan's production of opiates

Afghanistan is the largest producer of illicit opium in the world:

**88% of world production in 2005**

Annual value of Afghan opiate market:

**> US\$ 40 billion**

Number of abusers of Afghan opiates in the world:

**11 million abusers (incl. 1 million with HIV/AIDS)**

(Neighbouring countries (Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia) 2.5 million, Europe as a whole 4 million, of which Russia 2.5 million, Europe 25 1.4 million; Others (India, Near & Middle East, Africa, North America) 4.5 million)

Number of annual deaths related to Afghan opiate abuse:

**>10,000 direct deaths (overdose)**

**~ 100,000 indirect deaths (sickness)**

115

Figure 3<sup>55</sup>

The impact on the United States is significantly less, but potentially as devastating. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimates (based on the net weight of heroin seized and analyzed) that 14% of the heroin entering the country in 2004 was from Afghanistan, as opposed to 69% from South America. (See chart below.)

1993 - 2004<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime PowerPoint presentation, *Afghanistan's opium Economy in 2005 and Cultivation and Eradication Trends in 2006*, Thomas Pietschmann, Research and Analysis Section, UNODC, April 2006, on file with the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

## HEROIN SIGNATURE PROGRAM

Geographic Source Area Distribution (in percent\*)  
Based on Net Weight of Heroin Seized and Analyzed

| Year   | Mexico | Southeast Asia | Southwest Asia | South America |
|--------|--------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2004   | 14     | 3              | 14             | <b>69</b>     |
| 2003   | 3      | <1             | 8              | <b>88</b>     |
| 2002   | 9      | 1              | 10             | <b>80</b>     |
| 2001   | 30     | 7              | 7              | <b>56</b>     |
| 2000   | 17     | 8              | 16             | <b>59</b>     |
| 1999   | 24     | 10             | 6              | <b>60</b>     |
| 1998   | 17     | 14             | 4              | <b>65</b>     |
| 1997   | 14     | 5              | 6              | <b>75</b>     |
| 1996   | 20     | 8              | 20             | <b>52</b>     |
| 1995   | 5      | 17             | 16             | <b>62</b>     |
| 1994   | 5      | <b>57</b>      | 6              | 32            |
| 1993** | 8      | <b>68</b>      | 9              | 15            |

\*Percentage based on samples for which a signature was identified. In 2004, approximately 92 percent of the samples were classified.

\*\* The signature for heroin from South America was developed in July 1993; therefore, this figure represents only partial-year data.

Note: The dominant source area is indicated in bold.

As of May 2006, the Governor of Helmand Province claimed 7,409 hectare of opium poppy destroyed, however only 1,363 hectare have been independently confirmed.<sup>57</sup> These eradication efforts are a result of manual, not herbicide, efforts. This approach is dictated by the Afghan President and his cabinet and by other nations involved in the counter narcotics effort in Afghanistan. A New York Times editorial

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Intelligence Division.

<sup>57</sup> E-mail response to questions directed to Department of State, INL to Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Police and Human Resources on 5-25-2006.

recently listed a litany of failures in Afghanistan, one being “...a badly flawed United States backed opium eradication program...”<sup>58</sup>

However, due to lower than expected snowfall and poor spring rains, Afghanistan is again in the grip of drought<sup>59</sup> and there are reports that the domestic wheat crop has failed<sup>60</sup>. According to Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime, the drought caused alternative crops to fail while, at least in some provinces, poppy survived<sup>61</sup>.

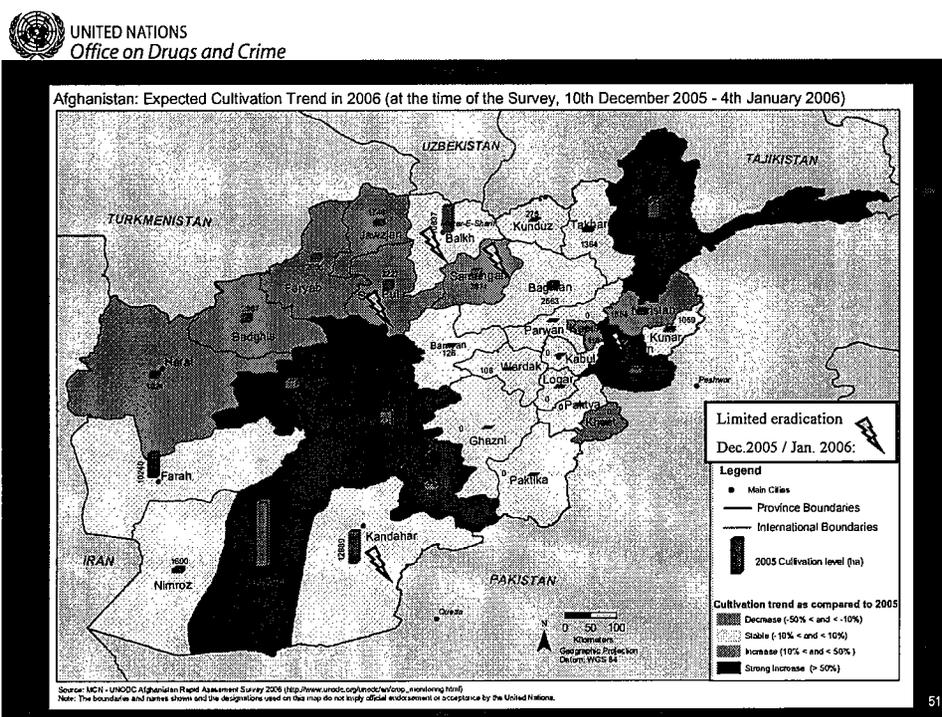


Figure 4<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Editorial, *Afghanistan, Unraveling* NEW YORK TIMES, June 1, 2006 at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/01/opinion/01thu1.html>.

<sup>59</sup> BBC News, *UN Warns Over Afghanistan Drought*, July 18, 2006.

[http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/5189052.stm](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5189052.stm)

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> The New York Times, *Opium Harvest at Record Level in Afghanistan*, September 3, 2006

<sup>62</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime PowerPoint presentation, *Afghanistan's opium Economy in 2005 and Cultivation and Eradication Trends in 2006*, Thomas Pietschmann, Research and Analysis Section, UNODC, April 2006, on file with the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

## War, Taliban and Opium

In December 1979 Soviet troops entered Afghanistan's capital, Kabul and began a decade long occupation of the nation by Russian troops. The guerrilla war fought by the Islamic Unity of Afghan Warriors, or *mujahadeen*, against the occupiers devastated and depopulated an already impoverished nation<sup>63</sup>. Approximately 3.8 million people left Afghanistan during this time and fled to Iran and Pakistan<sup>64</sup>.

When the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989, the parties which comprised the *mujahadeen* managed at times to work together, but Kabul became the target of frequent bombardments by rival groups<sup>65</sup> and a damaging internecine war. However, in 1994 a new group comprised of Pathan tribesmen, emerged from the south province of Kandahar. They call themselves 'talibs' (meaning students) and become known widely as the Taliban. When compared to the self-interest of the various groups of the old *mujahadeen*, the simple message of Islamic fundamentalism preached by the Sunni Muslim Taliban proved attractive to the people. Military successes against the various factions fighting for control of Afghanistan followed in the south and east and finally in September 1996, Taliban seized Kabul. By 1998 Taliban controlled 90% of the country and had established a strict form of 'sharia' (Islamic law)<sup>66</sup>.

Torn by twenty years of war, Taliban reigned over a devastated and impoverished nation (third lowest GDP in 1991<sup>67</sup>), but a nation not historically associated with the opium trade<sup>68</sup> (although opium had been cultivated in the country for centuries<sup>69</sup>). The rise in the manufacture of opium in Afghanistan has been attributed to six factors<sup>70</sup>:

1. A shift in supply away from the traditional suppliers of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, and growing demand.

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<sup>63</sup> Historyworld: Afghanistan. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad09>

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> World Bank, *Afghanistan's Drug Economy*, Christopher Ward and William Byrd, December 2004, p. 9

<sup>69</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 p. 33.

<sup>70</sup> Ward and Byrd, p. 9.

2. Collapse of government and effective law enforcement.
3. Civil strife encouraged the use of opium as a currency for guns.
4. Rural impoverishment arising from the loss of traditional agricultural markets and destruction of infrastructure.
5. Comparative advantage obtained from farming abilities, cheap labor and irrigated lands.
6. An organized market extending beyond national frontiers.

Despite the strictures of sharia law, opium cultivation steadily increased under Taliban but plummeted in 2001 to about 8,000 hectares from the previous year's estimate of 82,000 hectares<sup>71</sup>. The drop was attributed to a widely documented ban on the *cultivation* of opium issued on July 28, 2000 by Taliban leader Mullah Omar<sup>72</sup>. However, the ban did not apply to the *trade* in opium<sup>73</sup>. Further, evidence provided by the Drug Enforcement Administration revealed that Taliban profited from the opiate trade by taxing both cultivation and the production of morphine base and heroin<sup>74</sup>, with a tax as high as 10% on cultivation (presumably in years prior to 2000).

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<sup>71</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p.23.

<sup>72</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, written testimony by Asa Hutchinson, Administrator, on October 3, 2001 before House Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources

<sup>73</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *The Opium Economy in Afghanistan, An International Problem, Executive Summary Highlights*. 2003  
[http://www.unodc.org/unodc/publications/highlights\\_opium\\_afghanistan\\_2003.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/publications/highlights_opium_afghanistan_2003.html)

<sup>74</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, written testimony by Asa Hutchinson, Administrator, on October 3, 2001 before House Government Reform Committee, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources

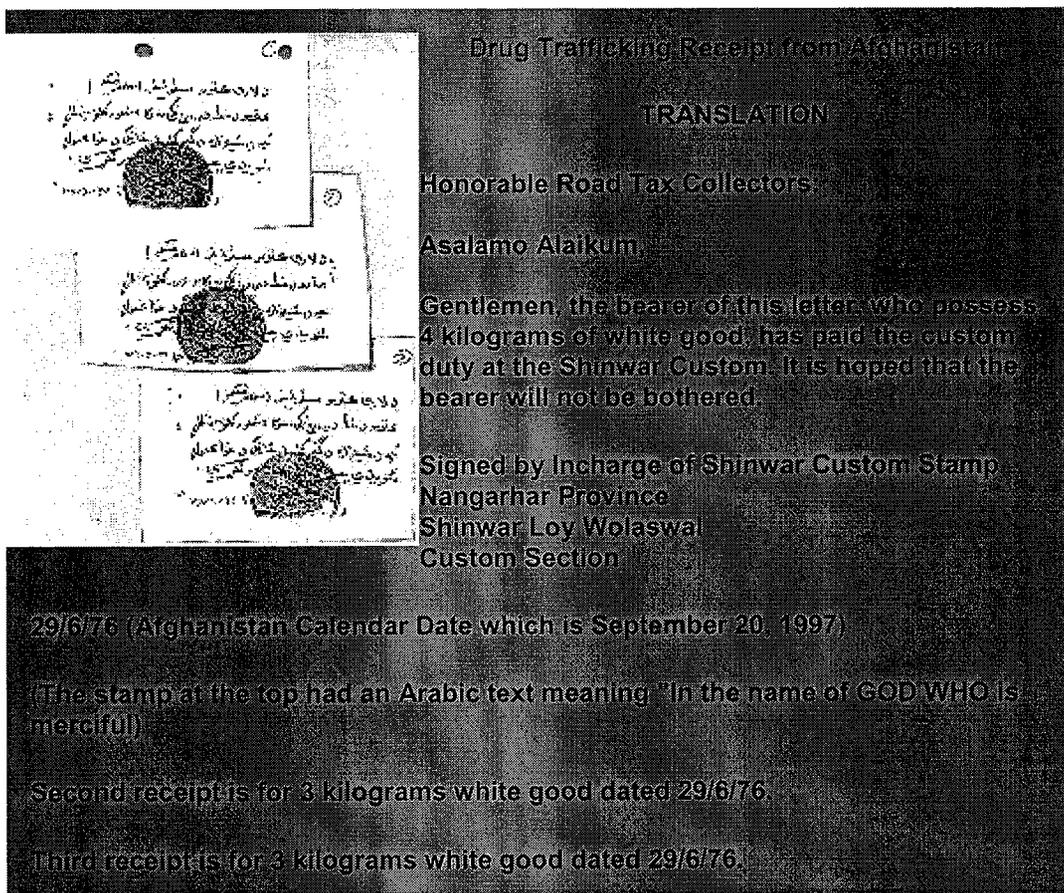


Figure 5 Tax receipts issued by Taliban for heroin.<sup>75</sup>

The 2001 reduction did not last after the fall of Taliban at the end of that year. This has been attributed to a number of factors<sup>76</sup>.

- Opium cultivation had become entrenched in the livelihood of farmers and associated communities.
- The ban on cultivation ‘...devastated the livelihoods of many farmers and laborers...’<sup>77</sup> and increased pressure to resume cultivation. The increase in the price of opium as a result of the ban added to this.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<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*, Kabul, January 2006, p. 33

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

- The fall of Taliban and the coalition occupation resulted in increased availability of wheat and a reduction in wheat prices, which meant that opium was more attractive than usual<sup>78</sup>.
- The fall of Taliban (and the concomitant disappearance of the opium ban) coincided with the planting season<sup>79</sup>. With no real central authority, farmers and traffickers were free to operate.

The connection between heroin production and terrorism in Afghanistan cannot be overstated. “The booming drug trade has given a strong second wind to the stubborn insurgency being waged by the Taliban and Islamists warlords ... The ballooning dope trade is rapidly creating narco-states in central Asia, destroying what a little border control exists and making it easier for terrorist groups to operate.”<sup>80</sup> In an April 2004 hearing, Rear Admiral Bruce Clingan of US Central Command told the Senate Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities that the counternarcotics program in Afghanistan was a “key element” in the U.S. campaign against terrorism.<sup>81</sup>

The summer of 2006 has seen a resurgence of Taliban in the southern provinces of Afghanistan, which is their original power base and, and not coincidentally, where opium is most extensively grown<sup>82</sup>. This resurgence is reportedly funded, at least in part, by the trade in opiates. According to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld “Any time there’s that much money floating around and you have people like the Taliban, it gives them an opportunity to fund their efforts”<sup>83</sup>. The British military experience in Helmand Province confirms this view: “Taliban and drugs feed each other. You cannot separate

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> David E. Kaplan, *Paying for Terror*, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, (Dec. 5, 2005) p. 50.

<sup>81</sup> See *U.S. Central Command’s Counter Narcotics Program Hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, Senate Armed Services Committee*, 109<sup>th</sup> Cong. (Apr. 2, 2004) (testimony of Rear Admiral Bruce Clingan, USN, Deputy J-3, US Central Command).

[http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2004\\_hr/040402-clingan.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2004_hr/040402-clingan.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> United Nations Office of Drug Control and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2005*, November 2005, p.

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/10/world/asia/10cnd-rumsfeld.html>

them here,” said Lieutenant Colonel Henry Worsley<sup>84</sup>. Despite this widely held view, General James L. Jones, commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan has been quoted as saying “We have kind of a generally accepted mantra that narcotics is not a military problem.”<sup>85</sup> In talking about the counter narcotics effort he said “We’re not making progress: we’re losing ground.”<sup>86</sup> Other, unnamed military officers, have said that the counter-narcotics effort is pivotal, “...their priority is defeating the insurgency.”<sup>87</sup>

### The Government of Afghanistan Responds

The dangers posed by drugs to the nascent Afghan state, as well as prohibitions imposed by Islam, were reflected in Section I, Article 7 (2) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, (adopted in January, 2004): “The State prevents all types of terrorist activities, production and consumption of intoxicants, production and smuggling of narcotics.” It is surely no accident that ‘terrorist activities’ and ‘production and smuggling of narcotics’ are mentioned in the same Article.

In his preamble to Afghanistan’s National Drug Control Strategy in 2006, President Hamid Karzai said, “It is difficult to over-state the dangers of the ‘opium economy’ for our country. It is the single greatest challenge to the long term security, development and effective governance of Afghanistan<sup>88</sup>.”

### The Eight Pillar Plan

In May 2003 the National Drug Control Strategy for Afghanistan was released by the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan. It identified five long term goals<sup>89</sup>:

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<sup>84</sup> Gulf Daily News, *Taliban Feeds on Opium*, March 14, 2006. <http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/printnews.asp?Article=138087>

<sup>85</sup> St. Louis Post-Dispatch, *A Failed System*, September 24, 2006. [Http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/newswatch/story/5517AF578A42AFA5862571F20016CA8D?OpenDocument](http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/newswatch/story/5517AF578A42AFA5862571F20016CA8D?OpenDocument)

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibi.

<sup>88</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy: An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, January 2006, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, *National Drug Control Strategy: 5 Year Strategy (1381-1386) for Tackling Illicit Drug Problems in Afghanistan*, 18 May 2003 p.9

1. Long-term elimination of opium cultivation, with 70% eradication by 2008 and completely eliminated by 2013.
2. Countering trafficking, processing and distribution of drugs in and out of the country.
3. Forfeiting drug-generated assets and checking money laundering.
4. Reducing demand for drugs through treatment, rehabilitation and social integration.
5. Enhancing regional and international cooperation.

On August 2, 2004, the Afghan General Council of Ulema (interpreters of Islamic law<sup>90</sup>) issued a fatwa (a ruling on Islamic law<sup>91</sup>) denouncing drugs but in particular clarifying poppy cultivation as a violation of Islamic law<sup>92</sup>.

In January 2006 the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan issued its “National Drug Control Strategy: An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem”. The Strategy now has one all-encompassing policy goal and four national priorities<sup>93</sup>. The policy goal states, “To secure a sustainable decrease in cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs with a view to complete and sustainable elimination.”<sup>94</sup> The priorities are:

1. Disrupting the drug trade by targeting traffickers and their backers, and eliminating the basis for the trade. This element focuses on traffickers at the exclusion of farmers who the government believes may have “...little choice but to cultivate poppies...”<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> WordReference.com <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/ulema>

<sup>91</sup> WordReference.com <http://www.wordreference.com/definition/fatwa>

<sup>92</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter Narcotics [http://www.mcn.gov.af/Eng/Downloads/Press\\_Release/Fatwa\\_Ulema.htm](http://www.mcn.gov.af/Eng/Downloads/Press_Release/Fatwa_Ulema.htm)

<sup>93</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter-Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy: An Updated Five-year strategy for Tackling Illicit Drug Problem*, Kabul, January 2006, p. 17

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 18

“Excessive eradication” the Strategy states “may have an impact on the wider security, governance and economic development...”<sup>96</sup>

2. Strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihoods.

Recognizing a complex ‘set’ of motivations for growing opium poppy, this priority focuses on programs such as crop substitution, cash for work program, infrastructure development, improved access to credit and crop development<sup>97</sup>.

3. Reduce demand for drugs by directing arrested drug abusers into treatment programs and rapidly expanding existing programs<sup>98</sup>.

4. Strengthening national and provincial law enforcement in order to effectively combat corruption<sup>99</sup>.

The 2006 Updated Strategy does not repeat the target dates for the elimination of opium poppy laid down in 2003. The Ministry of Counter-Narcotics makes it clear that any opium poppy eradication will be accomplished only by manual or mechanical, ground based methods, and that such eradication will not occur ‘...in fields where poppy has already been lanced...’<sup>100</sup>

The 2003 Strategy was followed up in 2005 with “The 1384 (2005) Counter Narcotics Implementation Plan” which sets out an eight pillar approach.

1. Building institutions. This section establishes which agencies, (national and provincial) and committees will lead Afghanistan’s counter-narcotics fight and establishes a counter-narcotics trust fund for such programs as alternative livelihoods.
2. Initiate an information program on the threats to the nation caused by drugs, with a particular focus on the impacts of cultivation.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. p. 19

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p. 20

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 21

3. Development and continued support for alternative livelihood programs.
4. Emphasis on law enforcement, interdiction and anti-corruption efforts with a call to governors and chiefs of police to close bazaars where opium is sold.
5. Continued development of a viable justice system, to include a legal framework, secure court and prison facilities, extraditions and a court in Kabul with jurisdiction to prosecute major drug-trafficking cases.
6. The establishment of a "...credible, targeted and verified eradication campaign in 1383-84 (2005)..." This element states that the government has no aerial eradication policy and identifies who will be responsible for poppy eradication.
7. Demand reduction and the treatment of addicts.
8. Regional cooperation.

The Implementation Plan and the two strategies identify the new agencies involved in the counter-drug effort in Afghanistan. Those agencies are:

- Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) within the Ministry of the Interior, which is a paramilitary unit employed in sensitive interdiction operations<sup>101</sup> against hard targets<sup>102</sup>. The force does not conduct independent investigations.
- Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA), which is in the Ministry of Interior and is divided into units for investigation, intelligence and interdiction<sup>103</sup> capable of narcotics investigations.

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<sup>101</sup> The United Kingdom Parliament, Select Committee on Foreign Affairs,

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmfaaff/441/441we13.htm>

<sup>102</sup> United States Department of State, Bureau for International narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume 1: Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2006, p. 209

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* p. 208

- Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan National Interdiction Unit (CNPA-NIU), which consists of approximately 110 CNPA officers supported and monitored by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The unit was created to achieve enforcement action as soon as possible. The unit attacks command and control structures of mid and high-value organizations<sup>104</sup>.
- Vertical Prosecution Task Force (VPTF), which consists of teams of investigators and prosecutors working to develop prosecutable cases. The Central Narcotics Tribunal (CNT) is a court designed to move expeditiously against narcotics traffickers<sup>105</sup>.
- Poppy Elimination Program (PEP) teams, which are employed in a year round effort to reduce poppy cultivation through education programs<sup>106</sup>.
- Afghan Eradication Force (AEF - reconfigured from the Central Poppy Eradication Force) which is a mobile, air-supported force controlled by the central government and tasked with eradication<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 209

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. p. 208

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.



## US Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) has aided in crafting Afghanistan's Counter-Narcotics Drug Law, which became effective in December 2005. The legislation provides the framework for high-level investigations and codifies the 1988 UN Drug Convention as a legal basis for extradition<sup>108</sup>. DoJ has also sent teams of prosecutors to assist with the VPTF. In addition to mentoring officers in the CNPA-NIU, the DEA also has deployed Foreign Advisory Support Teams (FAST) to Afghanistan. These teams consist of DEA Special Agents and Intelligence Research Analysts which operate in Afghanistan on a rotational basis in support of the NIU and the DEA Kabul Country Office.

## USAID

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is involved in almost every aspect of rebuilding Afghanistan and covers the gamut of building a nation from its lowest ebb. The major program areas include:

- Democracy and Governance. Projects under this program heading include creating permanent electoral institutions, rebuilding the justice system and strengthening human rights<sup>109</sup>.
- Health. Training essential healthcare professionals and educating the population on better health habits in addition to building and renovating clinics (528 have been built to date)<sup>110</sup>.
- Education. Nearly three-quarters of Afghans over 15 cannot read or write and over 90% of rural Afghan women are illiterate. USAID has built or refurbished 524 schools, created and instructed teachers in a compressed study program (to bring students denied an education up to grade level) and embarked on a functional literacy program for women and older girls<sup>111</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid. p. 208

<sup>109</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Democracy and Governance* fact sheet, April 2006.

<sup>110</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Health* fact sheet, April 2006.

<sup>111</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Education* fact sheet, April 2006.

- Agriculture. About 80% of Afghans earn a living from farming and for this sector to be viable land mines, bombs, neglect and a harsh climate have to all be confronted. Infrastructure and irrigation systems have been repaired and cold storage warehouses built. In addition, basic banking services have been restored and about \$5 million in micro-credit loans provided<sup>112</sup>.
- Alternative Livelihoods. Because opium poppy cultivation dominates Afghanistan's economy and has the potential to destabilize the country, programs to rehabilitate the infrastructure (roads and canals) provide immediate stimulus to local economies. This is especially focused in major poppy growing areas. In addition, materials and expertise have been provided to produce and market high-value crops such as fruits and nuts. Sources of credit and new markets have been developed, and skills training and raw materials have been provided for women to work at home<sup>113</sup>.
- Infrastructure. War, harsh climate and neglect have all taken a toll on Afghanistan and so the need to construct, refurbish or repair infrastructure is woven into all programs. Schemes include roads, clinics, schools, dams, power generation, telecommunications, industrial parks and court houses<sup>114</sup>.
- Strengthening the Economy. The aim of this program is to strengthen the public sector and to encourage the private sector to produce jobs and income. This includes central bank reform, helping to resolve land rights issues, developing a new customs code, privatization of state-owned enterprises, micro-finance loans and farm credit<sup>115</sup>.

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<sup>112</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Agriculture* fact sheet, April 2006.

<sup>113</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Alternative Livelihoods* fact sheet, April 2006.

<sup>114</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Infrastructure* fact sheet, April 2006.

<sup>115</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Strengthening the Economy*, fact sheet, April 2006.

## Department of Defense

Overall the goal of the Department of Defense (DoD) in Afghanistan is to build host nation capacity through training, equipping and sharing information. The most recent of these endeavors is the opening of the Joint Narcotic Analysis Center in London, UK. Opened March 3, 2006 at the Old War Office Building in London, the U.S. and U.K. established the center to provide a new collaborative effort for intelligence and law enforcement agencies combating the Afghan drug trade at the strategic level. It is responsible for timely, fused, all-source, predictive, actionable intelligence. Start-up funds were provided by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Narcotics (DASD/CN). The commitment was matched by the British with support from law enforcement, military and intelligence. The total startup cost was \$3.4 million from DASD/CN with \$3.5 million scheduled for FY06 and \$3.2 million for FY07. U.S. Agencies represented at the JNAC include: National Geo-Spatial Intelligence Agency; Defense Intelligence Agency; National Security Agency; State INL; and, Office of Naval Intelligence. In addition, in conjunction with the UK, the Inter-agency Operation Coordination Center was established and manned in Kabul, Afghanistan to act as a deconfliction center for all counter-narcotics activities at the tactical level.

DoD is providing ten MI-17 helicopters to the Afghan Ministry of Interior by DASD(CN). Two of these aircraft will remain at Ft. Bliss, TX, for training, the remainder will be delivered to Afghanistan in late 2006 and early 2007. The initial crews completed training in early June 2006 to coincide with the delivery of the first aircraft. Their mission is to provide operational flight capability to Afghan counter-narcotics personnel and DEA Foreign Advisory Support Teams (FAST) operations. In addition, responding to a call<sup>116</sup> by Congressmen Henry Hyde and Mark Kirk for assistance to Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) operations in Afghanistan, DoD said<sup>117</sup> it would have military units take DEA agents with them when they were operating in areas known to have drug activity.

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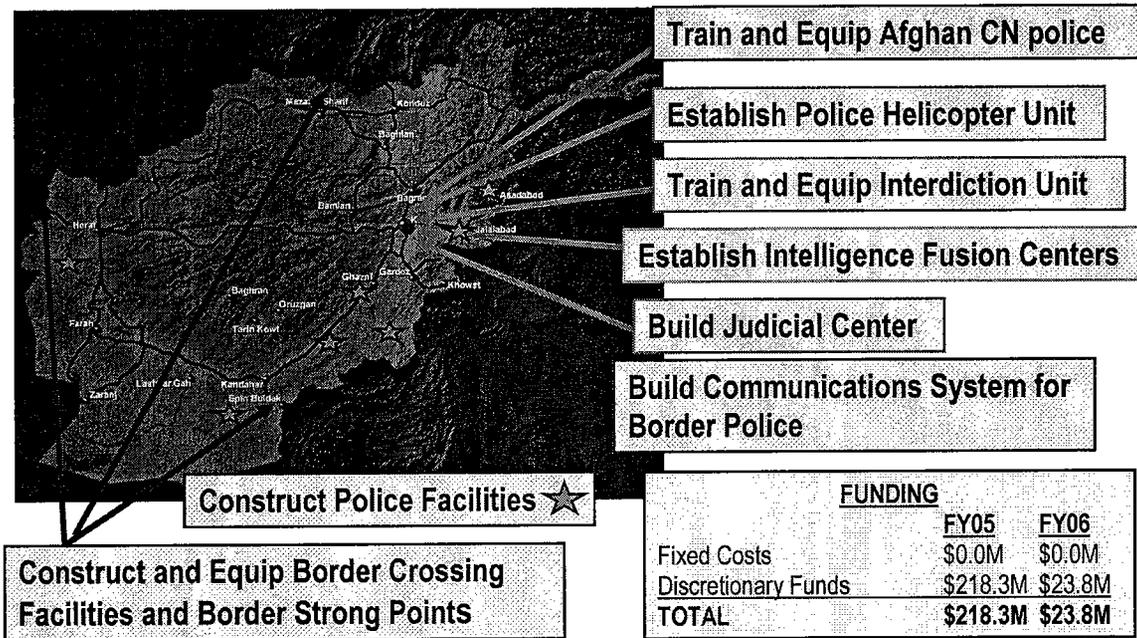
<sup>116</sup> Letter dated October 12, 2006 by Congressmen Henry Hyde and Mark Kirk to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld located on the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations web site.

<sup>117</sup> USA Today, *Hyde Asks Rumsfeld to Bolster Fight Against Afghan Heroin Seeks Air Support for DEA Missions*, October 24, 2006.

The U.S. military in Afghanistan has supported efforts by Afghan and U.S. agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) by providing airlift and transport support, planning and intelligence assets. DOD requested \$192.8 million to fund efforts to combat the drug trade in Afghanistan, and Congress approved \$150.47 million (P.L. 109-234, Title VI) in funds for facilities, equipment, communications and training, and to lease and refurbish helicopters for the Afghan government. These funds are in addition to the \$18.5 million in DoD's FY2006 Defense Budget for counter-narcotics assistance to the Afghan government.

### ***DoD counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan***

Build Afghanistan Security Force capacity to address narcoterrorism.



State Department (INL)

As of June 2006, INL has ten Huey II helicopters in Afghanistan, four stationed in Kandahar and six at Bagram airbase outside Kabul. The six Bagram aircraft are scheduled to relocate to Kabul in the near future. Other aircraft, one AN-72, two MI-8s and one MI-26, are on lease. The MI-8s are used to transport large numbers of personnel and equipment in-country in support of ground eradication<sup>118</sup>.



**Figure 6 Mi-17 helicopter**



**Figure 7 Huey II helicopter**



**Figure 8 AN-72 Aircraft**

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<sup>118</sup> E-mail from Jeffrey White, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs on May 26, 2006..



Figure 9 Mi-8 helicopter



Figure 10 Mi-26 helicopter

### Precursors

For opium to be converted from its raw form to morphine base and onto heroin, several chemicals are required. The essential precursor acetic anhydride (as mentioned earlier), is a dual-use chemical with many legitimate applications, but because of its potential for use in the manufacture of a controlled substance, it is subject to particular international scrutiny. However, Afghanistan has no registries for tracking, storing or

owning precursors<sup>119</sup>. While Afghanistan is a signatory to 1988 UN Drug Convention, it will need new laws to develop a regulatory system and policing agency that distinguishes between illicit and licit end-use.

According to the International Narcotics Control Board 2005 report, there have been no major seizures of acetic anhydride (AA) in Afghanistan since 2003,<sup>120</sup> and seizures in Turkey are down for the third year in a row<sup>121</sup>. Equally, no seizures of AA have been reported in Pakistan since 2001 even though seizures were reported every year between 1991 and 1998<sup>122</sup>. However, in 2004, the Russian Federation reported a 53 ton AA seizure, their largest ever<sup>123</sup>.

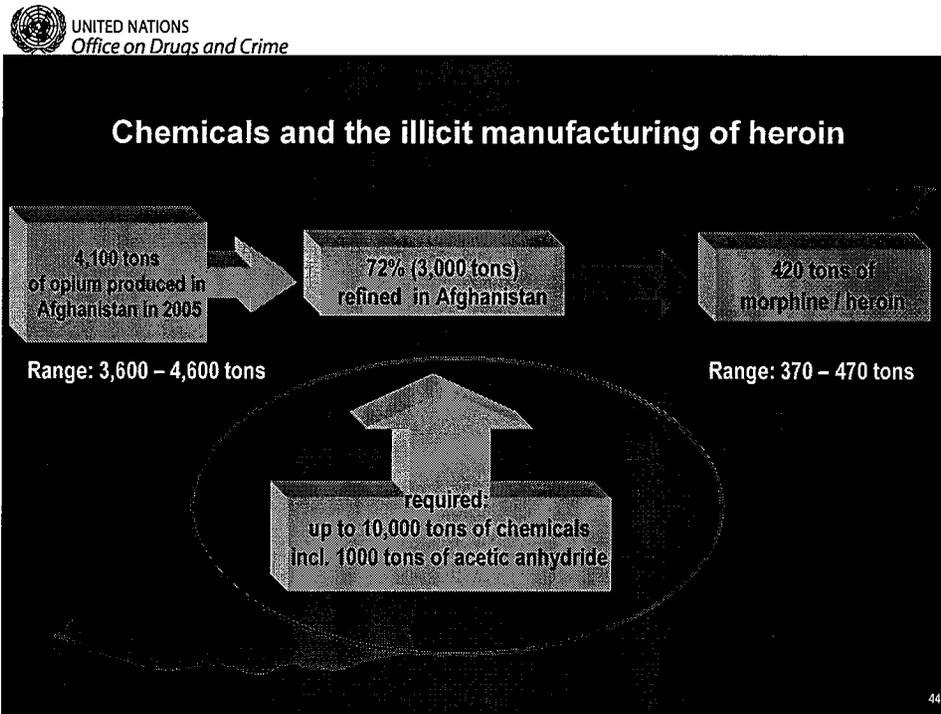


Figure 11<sup>124</sup>

<sup>119</sup> US Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume 1, Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2006 p. 209.

<sup>120</sup> United Nations International Narcotics Control Board *2005 Report*, p. 30.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime PowerPoint presentation, *Afghanistan's opium Economy in 2005 and Cultivation and Eradication Trends in 2006*, Thomas Pietschmann, Research and Analysis Section, UNODC, April 2006, on file with the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

Acetic anhydride is manufactured in the USA, Mexico, Canada, China and a number of European nations including Germany. Operation Cohesion is a voluntary program monitored by the International Narcotics Control Board which tracks shipments of precursors worldwide<sup>125</sup>. Often precursor chemicals are either brokered or shipped through third countries which complicates tracking of consignments<sup>126</sup>. Many of these countries do not have the criminal justice infrastructure to control the movement of precursors such as acetic anhydride<sup>127</sup>. The US Department of State notes this is of particular concern in nations bordering Afghanistan<sup>128</sup>.

### Licensing the Poppy Crop

Due to what has been perceived as failures in enforcement and eradication efforts, there has been a call for a license (granted by the International Narcotics Control Board) to export opium to be issued to Afghanistan<sup>129</sup>. The call has been repeated by senior conservative Members of Parliament (UK), who have said the crop should be licensed due to the failure of eradication efforts<sup>130</sup>. Licensing, it is claimed, would limit supply of opium to the black market and therefore the production of heroin<sup>131</sup>. However, in their 2005 Report, INCB expressed concern about the legalization of the Afghan opium crop<sup>132</sup>:

*“The idea that legalizing opium poppy cultivation would somehow enable the Government to obtain control over the drug trade and exclude the involvement of criminal organizations is simplistic and does not take into*

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<sup>125</sup> United States Department, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Vol. I, Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2006, p. 69.

<sup>126</sup> Executive Office of the President of the United States, Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Efforts to Control Precursor Chemicals*, ONDCP Fact Sheet.

[http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/international/factsht/eff\\_contr\\_precursr\\_chem.html](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/international/factsht/eff_contr_precursr_chem.html)

<sup>127</sup> United States Department, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Vol. I, Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2006, p. 71.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> The Senlis Council Drug Policy Advisory Forum, *Rising to the Opium Production Challenge in Afghanistan: A license to meet the world shortage of opiate-derived painkillers*, p.2

<sup>130</sup> GuardianUnlimited, <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/foreignaffairs/story/0,,1827679,00.html>

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> United Nations International Narcotics Control Board, *2005 Report*, p.35

*account the complex situation in the country. On the contrary, implementation of such an idea would make drug control in Afghanistan more difficult.*"<sup>133</sup>

Other quick solutions have been proposed such as buying the opium crop; however, such a proposal would be extremely expensive and would lead to an increase in the cultivation of opium. Opposition to such plans is supported by the Government of Afghanistan and the United States.

### Extradition

There is no extradition treaty between the United States and Afghanistan; however, the 1988 UN Drug Convention Article 6 (3) states:

*"If a Party which makes extradition conditional on the existence of a treaty, receives a request for extradition from another Party with which it has no extradition treaty, it may consider this Convention as the legal basis for extradition in respect of any offence to which this article applies. The Parties which require detailed legislation in order to use this convention as a legal basis for extradition shall consider enacting such legislation as necessary."*<sup>134</sup>

In October 2005 this section of the Treaty was used to effect the first-ever extradition of an Afghan drug lord to the USA. The trafficker, Baz Mohammad, was a designated narcotics kingpin who had been responsible for the distribution of millions of dollars worth of heroin to the US and other countries<sup>135</sup>. He was alleged to have close ties to the Taliban and other Islamic extremist groups who gave him safe haven to operate in Afghanistan in return for financial support. Baz Mohammad pled guilty to conspiracy charges in New York in July 2006<sup>136</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotic Substances, 1988.

<sup>135</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration news release, October 24, 2005, <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr102405p.html>

<sup>136</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration news release, July 11, 2006, <http://www.dea.gov/pubs/states/newsrel/nyc071106p.html>

## Trafficking Routes

The two primary drug trafficking routes out of Afghanistan, are the Balkan Route and the Silk Route<sup>137</sup>. The Balkan route, which consists of three sub-routes, also serves as a corridor for precursor chemicals entering Afghanistan<sup>138</sup>. The sub-routes are the southern route (through Turkey, Greece, Albania and Italy), the central route (through Turkey, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy and Austria), and the northern route (Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania to Austria, Hungary, Czech republic, Poland or Germany)<sup>139</sup>. The primary route to Russia, through the Central Asian states, is the Silk Route, along which varying amounts (estimates ranging from 24%<sup>140</sup> up to 50%<sup>141</sup>) of Afghan heroin travels.

The Silk Route's growth has been attributed to three factors, namely Iranian counter-drug initiatives, increased Afghan opium production, and the post-Soviet environment in Central Asia<sup>142</sup>. The government of Iran has deployed 30,000 personnel to monitor its border with Afghanistan as well as building observation post and other physical barriers to deter traffickers<sup>143</sup>. Seeking new routes, traffickers found that weakened states and corruption that either pre-existed or followed the Russian withdrawal from Central Asian nations provided an advantageous environment for their trade<sup>144</sup>.

Much of the heroin leaving Afghanistan via the Silk Route stays in the transit nations which has, according to the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, accelerated

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<sup>137</sup> Interpol – Drugs Sub-Directorate, December 8, 2005  
<http://www.interpol.org/Public/Drugs/heroin/default.asp>

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Jane's Intelligence and Insurgency Centre, *Traffickers Turn From Balkan Conduit to 'Northern' Route*, October 22, 2001, [http://www.janes.com/security/international\\_security/news/jir/jir011022\\_2\\_n.shtml](http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jir/jir011022_2_n.shtml)

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Harvard Asian Quarterly, Tamara Makarenko, *Crime, Terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade* vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer 2002). <http://www.asiaquarterly.com/content/view/121/40/>

the spread of HIV/AIDS through intravenous drug use<sup>145</sup>. Press reports claim that one hundred people a day are infected in Russia<sup>146</sup>, but little is known of the actual infection rates along the Silk Route. “An epidemic is underway and most infections have been found among injecting drug users who share needles”<sup>147</sup>.

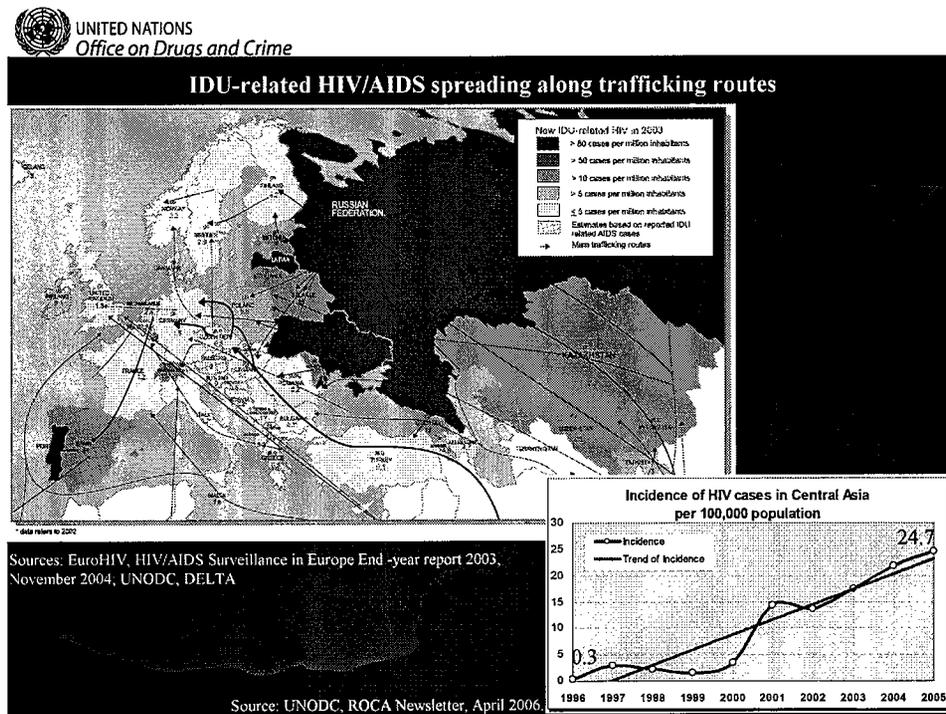


Figure 12<sup>148</sup>

## The Way Forward

In light of the ever increasing trend in opium production in Afghanistan, culminating in the 2006 numbers, the following recommendations are made:

<sup>145</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *HIV Scores on the Heroin Highway*, November 4, 2004. <http://www.aegis.com/news/ifrc/2004/IF.html>

<sup>146</sup> Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume I, Drug and Chemical Control*, March 2006, p. 412.

<sup>147</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *HIV Scores on the Heroin Highway*, November 4, 2004. <http://www.aegis.com/news/ifrc/2004/IF.html>

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime PowerPoint presentation, *Afghanistan's opium Economy in 2005 and Cultivation and Eradication Trends in 2006*, Thomas Pietschmann, Research and Analysis Section, UNODC, April 2006, on file with the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources.

- The Department of Defense (DOD) and other federal agencies need to accept that narcotics smuggling in Afghanistan is fueling the Taliban-led insurgency. Defeating the Taliban is impossible without simultaneously addressing the drug problem so the DOD must play a greater role in non-eradication efforts.
  
- On September 07th, the Schumer amendment was inserted into the DOD appropriations bill for \$700 million towards the drug problem in Afghanistan. At conference, I recommend mandating this funding to jump-start a new, counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan.
  
- Since narcotics and terrorist operatives function in a mutually beneficial and symbiotic fashion, our national policy must shift toward a “Unified Campaign” against drugs and terror similar to the initiative in Colombia which has yielded significant results. Our national policy should not focus solely on eradication. Instead, the DOD must be mandated to support other federal/international agencies in pursuit of narcotics traffickers as well as terrorist organizations. More specifically:
  - Purchase or lease adequate DEA helicopter lift and support gun ships to support enforcement actions against drug kingpins (also known as High Valued Targets or HVTs) or heroin labs.
  - Utilize the State Department’s ten Huey II helicopters, currently being used for eradication, to support DEA law enforcement operations.
  - Purchase an adequate number of counter-narcotic canines to support all drug enforcement operations including airport security/cargo inspection and road check-points.
  - Provide \$18.5 million for the DEA to create human-intelligence networks.
  
- The successful counter-narcotics lessons from Colombia are also clear. Upon the U.S. Congress’ request, the Colombian National Police visited Afghanistan in July 2006 and made several recommendations to curb the narcotics problem. The Colombian police are experts at dealing with the terrorism and drug nexus so we

should give great weight to their recommendations. They encouraged the Afghan police to develop their investigative and intelligence collection techniques to exploit human informants in order to take-down drug kingpins as well as to trace and eliminate the trafficking networks. In addition, the Afghan police needs to learn how to develop legal cases in order prosecute major drug kingpins.

- A key mechanism of the DOD's efforts is the use of the Central Transfer Account (CTA). This account was developed to preserve the integrity of the Department's counter-narcotics efforts and should remain firewalled from other uses. A recent reorganization proposal within DOD to expand the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) for Counter-Narcotics responsibilities to also include counter-proliferation and other unspecified "global threats", derails the singular focus of the CTA. If the CTA's resources are combined with other responsibilities, such as the Nunn-Lugar program which focuses on dismantling Soviet-era nuclear warheads, the DOD's counter-narcotics mission would be seriously distracted if not compromised. Counter-proliferation and counter-narcotics are distinct activities and the DOD should not combine both functions under one office.
- Finally, provincial corruption is the lubrication which keeps the narcotics engine running in Afghanistan. The potential profits from narcotics trafficking are a compelling temptation to many officials in this poverty stricken nation. Unless the Afghanistan government, with the support of the international community, can root out corruption at all levels and successfully prosecute those who violate their own laws, it will be a struggle to gain any ground.