

Afghanistan Narcotics Disadvantage

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Uniqueness: New Counter-Narcotic Strategy Good Now

The new counter-narcotic strategy by the US is in full swing now.

“Report on U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan,” U.S. Department of State, March 24, 2010, <http://uspolicy.be/Article.asp?ID=90732A4C-501D-449F-8D73-D63E7B870420>

The USG no longer funds or supports large-scale eradication of poppy fields (though we do not object to Afghan-led local eradication). Instead, our CN Strategy is directly linked to the counterinsurgency strategy undertaken in a “whole of government” approach. New CN strategy is focused on reducing the funding, support, intimidation, and corruption that fuels the insurgency in Afghanistan and the region. Identifying and targeting key nodes in the nexus of insurgency, narcotics, corruption, and criminality will unravel the insurgency’s material support. Tackling the nexus will restrict insurgent capability, enabling Afghans to increasingly reject insurgent coercion and influence, and rapidly generate a more informed common operating picture of the nexus and targets for military or judicial actions.

Link: Afghanistan Withdrawal

US military presence is needed in Afghanistan in order to defeat the Taliban and thus the opium production. Withdrawing causes more opium production, terrorism and death.

“The US Counternarcotics Campaign in Afghanistan: Rethinking America’s Strategy,” Lesley Young, **Huffington Post**, February 16, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lesley-young/the-us-counternarcotics-c_b_463885.html

Fortunately, the Obama administration unveiled a new Afghanistan strategy in December 2009 that limits military resources used to counter the drug trade. President Obama appears to have acknowledged that in order to succeed in Afghanistan, the U.S. military must shift away from counternarcotics operations and concentrate on defeating the Taliban. This strategy accepts that the key steps to curtailing Afghanistan's opium industry -- interdiction, eradication, political and economic development, and judicial reform -- cannot be taken without first establishing a basic level of security. And at present, Afghanistan slips farther from stability every day.

Although it has moved in the right direction, the Obama administration must go further by recognizing that security in Afghanistan is a two-tiered process. The Afghan drug industry will continue to flourish as long as the insurgency threatens the country's stability and undermines its nascent democratic institutions. An effective counterinsurgency campaign is therefore a prerequisite to a robust counternarcotics effort.

Link: Afghanistan Withdrawal (2)

It's simple: US military presence makes poppy production go down. It will go up as soon as they leave.

“Afghan drug traffickers face more resistance,” Jim Michaels, **USA Today**, May 9, 2010

Stepped up U.S. and Afghan military operations in southern Afghanistan have loosened the Taliban's grip on narcotics trafficking, a key funding source for the militant group, a top Marine commander said.

"This is not going to be a good year for them money wise," Maj. Gen. Richard Mills, the commander of Marines in southern Afghanistan, said in an interview with USA TODAY.

U.S. and Afghan forces have seized about 4,000 kilos (or roughly 4.5 tons) of drugs or chemicals used to process narcotics in the past two weeks, Mills said. Afghanistan produced about 6,900 tons of opium last year, according to the United Nations.

Poppy farmers have just finished harvesting their crop, providing a critical opportunity for U.S. forces in southern Afghanistan to disrupt the Taliban's drug-trafficking operations.

While the amount of drugs seized is a small percentage of what is produced, officers believe the increased presence of U.S. and Afghan forces had made it more difficult for traffickers to move their drugs and tax farmers who grow poppies.

Brink: Opium Production Increasing

Opium production is still as important as ever in Afghanistan.

“Taliban fighters lay down their guns to harvest opium poppies,” Richard Norton-Taylor, **The Guardian**, April 23, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/apr/23/opium-afghanistan-harvest-taliban-nato>

The opium poppy harvest in southern Afghanistan means insurgents have temporarily laid down their weapons so there are fewer Taliban-led attacks on British troops, a senior army spokesman said today.

"The reduction in insurgent activity ... is a sign the poppy harvest is in full swing and therefore a great deal of young men are involved in harvesting," said Major General Gordon Messenger. He warned that attacks could be expected to rise once the harvest was over. Official figures show the number of British casualties is relatively low in the spring but increases significantly during the summer.

Messenger was speaking at a briefing in London on the latest situation in central Helmand province, where 9,500 British troops are engaged in counter-insurgency and reconstruction. He disclosed that Royal Marines were recently attacked there by a child suicide bomber.

The general conceded that revenue from the lucrative narcotics trade remained "as important as ever" to the Taliban-led insurgency. However, he said, disrupting it was not a matter for Nato troops, but for the Afghan authorities.

How to eradicate opium poppies in Afghanistan, which produce some 90% of the opium reaching Europe, has been a highly controversial and divisive issue ever since the collapse of the Taliban and the deployment of Nato troops in 2001. Initial American proposals to spray the crop were strongly opposed by Afghan leaders. Now Afghan governors in Helmand are eager to get rid of the poppies but Nato commanders are concerned about a backlash from the local population. A programme to distribute seeds for alternative crops is under way.

Impact: Terrorism & Deaths

More opium production equals more terrorism and more deaths from drugs.

“Killer Crop: Aghan opium fuels addictions, finances terrorists,” Tom Lasseter, **McClatchy Newspaper**, October 21, **2009**

MOSCOW -- Afghan opium kills more people every year than any other drug on the planet, claiming up to 100,000 lives annually, according to a United Nations report released Wednesday.

Although U.S. officials have pointed to the last two years of lower production in Afghanistan, the country still produces 90 percent of the world's opium, which the report says now threatens to sow havoc in much of Central Asia.

"The catalog of casualties caused by Afghan narcotics is gruesome," Antonio Maria Costa, the executive director of the U.N. office on drugs and crime, says in a note in the report's summary. "We need to go back to the dramatic opium addiction in China a century ago to find comparable statistics."

In addition to drug-related deaths, Afghan opium and heroin pay for weapons that anti-U.S. insurgents use to kill American troops.

From 2005 to 2008, Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan earned an average annual income of some \$125 million from the opium trade, not including money gained from drug-processing facilities or other related business in neighboring Pakistan, according to the report.

The Afghan opium crop, used to produce heroin, dropped from 7,700 metric tons in 2008 to 6,900 this year, but because of massive overproduction there are now more than 12,000 metric tons of opium in stockpiles, enough to meet world demand for more than two years. Criminal and insurgent groups probably are holding most of those reserves, the U.N. said.

The U.N.'s findings sounded a strong warning about the Central Asian opium-trafficking route, which has become a virtual conveyor belt for heroin between Afghanistan and Russia, referring to it as the "most sinister development yet."

"The perfect storm of drugs, crime and insurgency that has swirled around the Afghanistan-Pakistan border for years is heading for Central Asia," Costa said. "If quick preventive measures are not put into place, a big chunk of Eurasia could be lost."

Impact Extension: Terrorism → (Very, Very Bad)

By withdrawing, the US will not be able to control terrorism in the area, causing a massive outbreak of regional terrorism in the Middle East which is very, very bad for everyone.

“Terrorism myths and realities,” Yonah **Alexander**, Inter-University for Terrorism Studies Director, The Washington Ties, August 28, 2003

Last week's brutal suicide bombings in Baghdad and Jerusalem have once again illustrated dramatically that the international community failed, thus far at least, to understand the magnitude and implications of the terrorist threats to the very **survival of civilization itself**. Even the United States and Israel have for decades tended to regard terrorism as a mere tactical nuisance or irritant rather than a critical strategic challenge to their national security concerns. It is not surprising, therefore, that on September 11, 2001, Americans were stunned by the unprecedented tragedy of 19 al Qaeda terrorists striking a devastating blow at the center of the nation's commercial and military powers. Likewise, Israel and its citizens, despite the collapse of the Oslo Agreements of 1993 and numerous acts of terrorism triggered by the second intifada that began almost three years ago, are still "shocked" by each suicide attack at a time of intensive diplomatic efforts to revive the moribund peace process through the now revoked cease-fire arrangements [hudna]. Why are the United States and Israel, as well as scores of other countries affected by the universal nightmare of modern terrorism surprised by new terrorist "surprises"? There are many reasons, including misunderstanding of the manifold specific factors that contribute to terrorism's expansion, such as lack of a universal definition of terrorism, the religionization of politics, double standards of morality, weak punishment of terrorists, and the exploitation of the media by terrorist propaganda and psychological warfare. Unlike their historical counterparts, contemporary terrorists have introduced a new scale of violence in terms of conventional and unconventional threats and impact. The internationalization and brutalization of current and future terrorism make it clear we have entered an Age of Super Terrorism [e.g. biological, chemical, radiological, nuclear and cyber] with its serious implications concerning national, regional and global security concerns.

Impact Extension: Deaths from Production Worse than Taliban

It's simple: opium production kills more people than the Taliban does.

“UN: Afghan Opium kills many more than Taliban bullets,” **Daily News**, June 9, 2010,
http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/wires.php?id=4140682_russia-un-drugs-moscow-un-afghan-opium-kills-many-more-than-taliban-bullets

MOSCOW (AP) - A top United Nations official says the annual number of people killed by Afghan heroin in Western Europe exceeds the total death toll of NATO troops killed in Afghanistan since 2001. Some 1,800 international coalition troops have been killed in Afghanistan, including 1,100 Americans. Speaking at an anti-drug conference in Moscow, the head of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, Antonio Maria Costa, said the world's largest consumer of Afghan drugs is Russia, where more than 70 metric tons of heroin are sold annually. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told the conference heroin is seen as a "serious threat" to Russian youth

Impact Calc: Terrorism is Worst Impact

Terrorism is the worst impact because it includes all types of warfare – biological, chemical, nuclear or otherwise – and risks entire global extinction.

“Extinction!” Mohamed **Sid-Ahmed**, staff writer, Al-Ahram Issue 705, September 1, 2004,
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/705/op5.htm>

We have reached a point in human history where the phenomenon of terrorism has to be completely uprooted, not through persecution and oppression, but by removing the reasons that make particular sections of the world population resort to terrorism. This means that fundamental changes must be brought to the world system itself. The phenomenon of terrorism is even more dangerous than is generally believed. We are in for surprises no less serious than 9/11 and with far more devastating consequences.

A nuclear attack by terrorists will be much more critical than Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even if -- and this is far from certain -- the weapons used are less harmful than those used then, Japan, at the time, with no knowledge of nuclear technology, had no choice but to capitulate. Today, the technology is a secret for nobody. So far, except for the two bombs dropped on Japan, nuclear weapons have been used only to threaten. Now we are at a stage where they can be detonated. This completely changes the rules of the game. We have reached a point where anticipatory measures can determine the course of events. Allegations of a terrorist connection can be used to justify anticipatory measures, including the invasion of a sovereign state like Iraq. As it turned out, these allegations, as well as the allegation that Saddam was harboring WMD, proved to be unfounded.

What would be the consequences of a nuclear attack by terrorists? Even if it fails, it would further exacerbate the negative features of the new and frightening world in which we are now living. Societies would close in on themselves, police measures would be stepped up at the expense of human rights, tensions between civilizations and religions would rise and ethnic conflicts would proliferate. It would also speed up the arms race and develop the awareness that a different type of world order is imperative if humankind is to survive.

But the still more critical scenario is if the attack succeeds. This could lead to a third world war, from which no one will emerge victorious. Unlike a conventional war which ends when one side triumphs over another, this war will be without winners and losers. When nuclear pollution infects the whole planet, we will all be losers.