

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2006

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
The Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
The Pentagon, Room 3E880  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your willingness to work with us on the opium crisis in Afghanistan, which has, in recent months, greatly increased violence and terrorism against coalition forces there, and is now threatening to totally corrupt all of the new Afghan democratic institutions we support. We appreciate the support you have provided, and continue to provide, in tactical training, personal equipment, weapons, helicopters and facilities for all of the Afghan police and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). We also we believe more needs to be done.

With regard to your support, we fully appreciate the Department of Defense's (DoD) position that the opium and illicit drug trafficking threat is primarily a "law enforcement problem" in Afghanistan and recognize your valid concern about "mission creep." Your awareness of the adverse impact that eradication of opium could have on poor farmers, combined with the possibility of increased insurgency and loss of support from the local populous that the DoD might face from such a opium eradication program, is reflected in your timely and courageous support for rural development by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Afghanistan.

We have spoken out on the Department of State's failed eradication program, as well as the need for the DEA to turn the bulk of the U.S. counterdrug policy and effort in Afghanistan against the major drug kingpins, the heroin processing labs, and the drug convoys. These same convoys carry the drugs out and bring back the new NVGs, IEDs, landmines, and modern weapons, including crew-served weapons, all purchased with the drug monies from the Taliban and other anti-coalition forces. In addition, we have heard that these drug monies are also used to pay foreign fighters as well.

We all know the drugs fuel the violence and insurgency, we think that the debate concerning these obvious links is over, and now we need a new policy that addresses both the drugs and related terror, simultaneously.

As to your Department's view that the counterdrug mission is one of law enforcement in Afghanistan, and with the DEA's increased presence and willingness to take on the Afghan drug mission to go after the prioritized targets that we noted above, the problem we need to solve now is one simply of mobility. The DEA cannot function and carry out its law enforcement role, including enforcing the new PATRIOT Act provision on narco-terrorism,

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without military support and assistance in the current Afghan security climate, and that means the DoD's military operational and tactical air support for some of the DEA's counterdrug missions across Afghanistan.

We need to fight both drugs and terror simultaneously and have both your Department and the DEA doing this job, but in complement, so that we prevail in Afghanistan. We must find a way to merge your counterinsurgency mission with that of the DEA's drug-fighting mission. We have some simple suggestions on how to do so quickly in the interim, until such time as the DEA has its own capacity to conduct missions and operations in country and the security situation improves dramatically to permit the DEA's own independent operations. This mission gap must be filled before the start of the 2007 Afghanistan opium crop.

We suggest for your consideration actions which the DoD could undertake to improve the situation on the counternarcotics front in Afghanistan. Specifically, we suggest that DoD shall permit, facilitate and encourage DEA agents to participate (ride along, in fact) in DoD Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE) operations in Afghanistan, including SSE operations involving: (1) overlapping high-value DoD and DEA targets, (2) direct action missions in which there are a strong likelihood that a targeted Anti-Coalition Militant (ACM) may be in possession of substantial amounts of illicit narcotics based on DoD or DEA intelligence information, or (3) any planned, direct-action mission in areas of traditional, strong-opium production and processing, such as the Helmand province.

Any involvement of DEA agents in SSE operations as described above shall occur only after the targeted locations have been fully secured and are deemed safe for civilian law enforcement personnel.

In all other instances where extensive amounts of illicit drugs are located at secured sites by DoD personnel, the DEA should be alerted as soon as possible, and in a timely fashion, so that it can take appropriate action consistent with the previously suggested actions and attendant criteria.

We very much appreciate your taking the time to consider this proposal.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

HENRY J. HYDE  
Chairman  
Committee on International Relations

MARK STEVEN KIRK  
Member of Congress