



Counternarcotics Strategy and Police Training in Afghanistan

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As prepared

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Pence, and other distinguished Members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you to discuss our efforts to assist Afghanistan in curbing the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics. My testimony today will focus on the new U.S. strategy for counternarcotics in Afghanistan. I will begin with an overview of what has changed in Afghanistan and explain how the U.S. government has worked with our Afghan and international partners to develop a plan that addresses these new realities. I will specifically highlight our police training programs and their successes and challenges.

Combating the drug trade and instituting a professional, civilian police force are critical elements of our mission in Afghanistan. The drug trade has undermined many aspects of the Government of Afghanistan's drive to promote political stability, economic growth, and the rule of law and has also affected the Afghan government's ability to address internal security problems. Proceeds from narco-trafficking are fueling the insurgency and drug-related corruption is undercutting international reconstruction efforts. In order to sustain Afghan progress against these threats, a national police force is essential to secure the rule of law.

DEVELOPING THE NEW STRATEGY

Early this year, when we received information that Afghanistan's 2007 poppy harvest would likely exceed the previous year's record high, Office of National Drug Control Policy Director Walters and Deputy Secretary of State Negroponte asked that an interagency group be convened to evaluate the implementation of the existing U.S. counternarcotics strategy and to propose recommendations for a more effective interagency approach. As a result, a high-level interagency group was convened, comprised of the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, Agriculture, and Treasury; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the Office of National Drug Control Policy; and the U.S. Agency for International Development. This group's goal was two-fold: to adjust our strategy to ensure long-term success, while also looking for ideas to facilitate successes in the short-term. We coordinated our new strategy closely with the Governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom, and in July the *2007 U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan* was adopted as U.S. policy.

TRENDS IN THE 2006-2007 OPIUM CULTIVATION SEASON

The major difference in this year's poppy cultivation has been the growing divide between the north and south, with significant poppy reductions in northern provinces, including some that are traditional poppy-growing provinces like Balkh and Badakhshan, and substantial increases in the south. This year the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime reported that 13 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces were poppy free. This is up from 6 provinces last year. Unfortunately, the advances in the north have been more than offset by setbacks in the south, particularly in Helmand province, where the insurgency is most active and where poppy cultivation increased by 48% last year, accounting for over half of national production. Poppy cultivation in Oruzgan and Kandahar, which have also experienced increased insecurity, is also a serious concern.

The evidence from Afghanistan suggests that in the north, where we can deliver security, promote alternative development and effectively get out the anti-poppy message, our counternarcotics efforts have met with considerable success. Consequently, our new strategy - developed in coordination and consultation with the Government of Afghanistan and the UK, which serves as the key international partner on counternarcotics issues, seeks to build upon what has worked in the north, while redoubling our efforts in the south so our efforts there can be similarly successful.

The new strategy represents a refinement of our previous approach, with three principal elements:

- First, we aim to dramatically increase the scope of both incentives, such as development assistance and expansion of the Good Performers Initiative; and disincentives, such as interdiction, eradication, and law enforcement.
- Second, working with our NATO allies, we intend to improve coordination of counternarcotics and counterinsurgency information-sharing and operations.
- Finally, we will work to develop consistent, sustained political will for the counternarcotics effort among the Afghan government, our allies, and international civilian and military organizations. This will include working with the international community on a coordinated strategy to ensure that government officials in Kabul and the provinces appoint strong, law abiding officials and remove weak or corrupt ones.

It is also important to emphasize that the new strategy does not replace the pre-existing Five-Pillar Strategy. On the contrary, the U.S. has evaluated the soundness of the Five-Pillar approach and determined that it continues to provide the correct framework for comprehensively addressing the narcotics problem in Afghanistan. However, the implementation of the five pillars needs to be substantially refined and improved based on the changing situation in Afghanistan.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

In past years, public information focused on radio, television, posters, and other traditional communication methods. In spring 2007, we experimented with more word-of-mouth activities in the north by sending out poppy elimination teams that met with local *shuras* and discussed the benefits of reducing poppy cultivation. We saw significant successes in the north and decided to expand the program as part of the new strategy. Implementation of the strategy has already begun through the fall replanting campaign. For instance, three *shuras* have been hosted in Helmand that were attended by hundreds of local farmers and also included the distribution of mosque kits to villages. These mosque kits are given to mullahs and religious leaders in recognition of their support for counternarcotics efforts and include loudspeakers, microphones, paint, rugs and other resources that will improve their mosques.

Southern Afghanistan also requires greater coordination of the counter-Taliban and counternarcotics message. This comes out of a recognition that there is a clear and direct link between the illicit opium trade and insurgent groups in Afghanistan. The Taliban and other anti-government elements exploit the opium trade to facilitate their financial, logistical, and political objectives, jeopardizing the prospect of long-term security, economic development, and effective governance. We have been working closely with the Department of Defense, ISAF, and our UK partners to ensure the dissemination of a consistent and tough message: poppy production breeds insecurity.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Alternative development continues to play a vital role in the new strategy. Afghans need viable economic alternatives to poppy, and in recognition of this reality, our alternative development programs include a robust array of both short-term and long-term development alternatives. One important component of the new strategy is to dramatically strengthen the Good Performers Initiative. The Good Performers Initiative provides timely, high-impact development assistance to provinces that achieve or

maintain poppy-free status, significantly reduce poppy cultivation, or demonstrate exemplary cooperation with national interdiction forces. This assistance is funded by the U.S., UK, and other allies, and will be tied to specific benchmarks based on UN poppy cultivation figures. Villages that decide to become poppy-free during this fall's planting season will see an immediate result in the spring. Over the coming year, USAID will also be working closely with small, private companies in Afghanistan to secure market access for Afghan crops in high-profit regional commercial hubs. These and other programs to provide credit and infrastructure to the Afghan people will offer more viable alternatives to poppies.

ELIMINATION/ERADICATION

A recent UN report stated that opium cultivation in Afghanistan is no longer associated with poverty. Helmand, Kandahar and three other opium-producing provinces in the south are the richest and most fertile provinces in the country, and have served as the breadbasket and main source of earnings for the nation. Seventy-five percent of the poppy growth in Helmand Province did not exist two years ago, so it is clear that the cultivation is not being carried out by individuals who have relied on this activity for generations. Much of the cultivation in Helmand and other insecure areas is being carried out by wealthy landowners, corrupt officials, and opportunists who are exploiting insecurity for illicit profits. In order to interject greater risk into the trade, we need to make it clear to powerful poppy growers that they will be targeted for eradication. As a result, the new strategy also emphasizes the need to develop a force protection component that will allow eradication to occur in less-than-secure areas.

INTERDICTION

Assisting the Government of Afghanistan in improving interdiction capabilities - and, specifically taking down key high-value targets (HVTs) - is our highest priority under the new strategy. U.S. spending on interdiction increased from \$118 million in FY2006 to \$343 million in FY2007, *representing a greater funding increase for interdiction than for any other pillar of the strategy*. DEA and the special Afghan police units that it assists have been provided additional airlift assets in order to extend the reach of counternarcotics law enforcement operations. This activity also requires a force protection component to protect DEA and Afghan counternarcotics police operations. The strategy calls on increasing the number of arrests for high-value targets so that all actors in the production and trade of narcotics will recognize they are vulnerable.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JUSTICE REFORM

The justice sector now benefits from a counternarcotics tribunal which has exclusive jurisdiction over all cases of two kilograms or more. It presently has several hundred cases pending and recently convicted some mid-level traffickers. The new strategy recommends adding resources to the central criminal tribunal for narcotics in order to increase the system's capacity to prosecute and incarcerate higher levels of traffickers. In the meantime, though, an extradition policy needs to be developed for the very high-level traffickers that Afghanistan may not yet be able to prosecute. Currently, three high-level traffickers are facing charges here in the U.S., and we expect this number to increase as we have better success in interdiction.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE

The U.S. goal for the Afghanistan National Police (ANP) is to increase overall capabilities and enhance public security in Afghanistan. The Department of State works closely with the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan (CSTC-A) and other international partners to train and mentor the Afghan Police, and to reform the Afghan Ministry of Interior. CSTC-A has oversight over the security sector reform programs, while the State Department retains policy responsibility.

Recognizing the critical role played by the Afghan police, U.S. and international efforts have focused on helping to develop the capabilities of this force. We welcome the creation of the European Union's policing support unit for Afghanistan (EUPOL) and look forward to coordinating closely with it. Together with our international partners, we have made substantial progress in developing a respected and institutionalized police force. Since May 2003, more than 83,000 ANP officers have gone through basic and advanced courses at the Central Training Center (CTC) in Kabul and seven Regional Training Centers (RTCs), and nearly 59,000 ANP officers have gone through advanced courses such as firearms and criminal investigation. In order to continue to develop police skills after initial training, more than 460 U.S. police advisors serve as mentors alongside Afghan police units throughout the country.

Progress continues in pursuing key reform objectives, such as pay and rank reform, which has now been completed to the company level. The recent Afghan decision to give the ANP pay parity with the Afghan National Army (\$100/month basic pay) will also help boost police morale and alleviate official corruption. The Electronic Payroll System (EPS) has been installed in 33 out of 34 provinces, and has been deployed in over 60 payment locations of the Ministry of Interior. The international donor body which funds police salaries, the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), is also working to establish an Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) system for the direct payment of police salaries to individual bank accounts. A program to provide police with secure identification for pay and accountability purposes has issued more than 43,000 identification cards out of a registered database. These cards include various security features, including a photo, an electronic chip, and a holograph. Over time, this program will improve the reliability and timeliness of police pay, which has been a particularly acute problem in outlying areas of the country.

One key challenge we face is to help Afghanistan recruit and train more female police personnel. There are fewer than 200 women in the ANP, and women account for less than 1% of all police in Afghanistan. INL has recently launched an initiative, the Women's Police Corp (WPC), to further develop training opportunities for women. The WPC will be based at RTCs in Herat, Konduz, and Jalalabad, and the CTC in Kabul. The curriculum will include basic police skills, basic and advanced computer skills, and conflict resolution.

Given the critical importance of the police to ensuring security and the rule of law, we will continue to work closely with CSTC-A and our Afghan and international partners to pursue ways to improve the program and ensure its continued success.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you for holding this hearing on such an important topic. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

