



Drugs and Terror:

international cooperation in afghanistan

Office of National Drug Control Policy 2008

The United States has made a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan rebuild itself after years of war. The U.S., along with its European allies and others in the international community, currently provides resources and expertise to Afghanistan in a variety of areas, including humanitarian relief and assistance, capacity-building, security needs, counternarcotics programs, and infrastructure projects. The U.S. also supports the Afghan Government in its efforts to establish a framework for a vibrant civil society, one that emphasizes democratic principles through the rule of law, and creates accountable and transparent forms of government.

Poppy Cultivation Remains a Serious Threat to a Democratic Afghanistan

- The narcotics industry poses a threat to Afghanistan's stability and emerging democracy. Nearly 93 percent of the world's illegal opiates originate in Afghanistan, the profits from which provide criminal and terrorist organizations with money and power. The export value of the 2007 opium harvest is \$4 billion; more than a third of the country's GDP.
- The latest annual U.S. Government estimate for opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan shows that approximately 202,000 hectares of poppy were cultivated during the crop season in 2007 - an increase of 17 percent over the 2006 (172,600) level, but below the record poppy crop of 2004.
- Current cultivation levels equate to a potential production of 8,000 metric tons of opium, a 42-percent increase in potential opium production over 2006 estimates (5,644 metric tons).
- Poppy production has soared where the Taliban is most active and in agriculturally rich areas with relatively higher incomes. Three provinces - Nangarhar, Kandahar, and Helmand - accounted for more than 70 percent of all poppy cultivation in 2007. The number of poppy-free provinces increased from 12 in 2006 to 15 in 2007. Cultivation declined in poorer, but more secure northern and central provinces.
- Cultivation trends indicate that farmers plant opium poppy not because of a lack of economic alternatives, but because it is a hardy, profitable, low-risk crop. Alternative development opportunities must be supported by eradication and law-enforcement activities that increase risk to those who plant poppy.

International Support is Critical in Efforts to Reduce Poppy Cultivation

- With the support of the international community, the Afghan people are working hard to overcome difficult circumstances to begin building a viable counternarcotics strategy.
- From 2001 to 2008 the US Government has committed \$20.4 billion in financial assistance to Afghanistan. \$13.7 billion supported Afghan Security Forces (military and police) and \$6.7 billion was directed to reconstruction and other aid programs. The major categories of our economic and reconstruction assistance include: economic growth, democracy and governance, roads and electricity, health and education, and food aid. Special programs are aimed at the south, which is traditionally the poorest region of Afghanistan and a center for opium poppy cultivation and insurgent activity.
- Support from European countries - many of which are destinations for Afghan heroin - is vital to the success of alternative development programs. Agribusiness programs help bring Afghan agricultural products to the global market.

