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"Counternarcotics Strategy and Police Training in Afghanistan"
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Mr. Chairman, Senator Lugar, and other distinguished Members of the Committee, 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 and to enhance the ability of the Afghan National Police (ANP) to provide public security throughout Afghanistan. These are two of our most critical missions in Afghanistan today. My testimony will provide you with an update on counternarcotics and police training activities facilitated by the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), in close collaboration with the Government of Afghanistan, the interagency community, and our international partners, since I last appeared before this committee in September 2007. In particular, I would like to focus my remarks on how we have adjusted our strategy in light of new realities and as we enter the 2008 poppy growing season.

CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS

The scope of Afghanistan's drug problem cannot be overstated. According to the UN , in 2007 Afghanistan produced 93% of the world's opium poppy, which was a record high for the second year in a row. Total poppy cultivation increased by 28,000 hectares over 2006 levels, which accounts for an increase of 17% in land under cultivation. Cultivation was particularly pronounced in the south of the

country where the insurgency is strong and government authority is weak, with the southern province of Helmand producing over 50% of the country's opium on its own. It is now clear that Afghanistan's narcotics industry feeds a troubling cycle of insecurity wherein drug money fuels insecurity by assisting the insurgency, undercuts international reconstruction efforts, and hinders the development of the legitimate economy.

Despite these challenges, UN surveys showed significant poppy reductions in the north of the country, including in the traditional poppy-growing provinces of Balkh and Badakhshan. During 2007, the number of poppy-free provinces more than doubled from six in 2006 to 13 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces in 2007. These trends demonstrate that counternarcotics success can be achieved where there is security, political will, and the ability to provide alternative development opportunities.

Early indications for the 2008 poppy growing season show a deepening of the previous year's trends: sustained reductions in poppy cultivation in the north and east of the country will likely be offset by increases in the insecure south. We anticipate that Nangarhar Province, where cultivation of poppy more than doubled from 2006 to 2007, will demonstrate a dramatic decrease – perhaps as much as 50% – in poppy cultivation in 2008 due in large part to the successful counternarcotics efforts of its Governor. If this expectation proves true, it would

demonstrate the power of political will even in areas where drug traffickers operate and insecurity thrives.

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE U.S. COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY

In August 2007, the *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan* was unveiled, and sets forth the USG's efforts to achieve short-term and long-term success in the fight against narcotics. The strategy maintains the basic framework of our comprehensive five pillar approach to counternarcotics – which includes public information, alternative development, eradication, interdiction, and law enforcement and justice sector reform components – but calls for several key improvements to better address changing trends in cultivation, the security context, the political climate, and economic development requirements. In particular, we aim to dramatically enhance *incentives* for participation in licit livelihoods through the provision of additional development assistance, while simultaneously strengthening the *disincentives* in participating in all facets and levels of the narcotics industry through increased interdiction, eradication, and law enforcement. The complexity of the drug problem in Afghanistan demands a balanced counternarcotics approach that melds deterrence, prevention, and economic development assistance.

To advance this strategic refinement, the Department of State is actively working with the Government of Afghanistan and our allies to provide increased development assistance to Afghans who live in areas with high levels of poppy cultivation and who have demonstrated progress in counternarcotics. One vital component of this strategy is the implementation of a strengthened Good Performers Initiative (GPI) which is a counternarcotics incentive program designed to deliver high-impact development assistance directly to those communities leading the fight against poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Established in 2006 by the Government of Afghanistan with financial support from the United States ($35 million committed to date) and the United Kingdom ($6.5 million committed to date), the GPI initially only rewarded poppy-free provinces with funds for development assistance. With sustained encouragement from the United States, President Karzai expanded the terms of the initiative in November 2007 to provide GPI assistance to provinces that achieve net poppy reductions of over 10% as well as those that have taken extraordinary counternarcotics measures but did not meet the criteria for an award. To date, 17 provinces are eligible for or have received GPI development assistance totaling more than $16 million. GPI projects currently underway include irrigation projects; provision of agricultural equipment; and the construction of greenhouses, university buildings, information technology training centers, and girls' schools.

The enhancements made to the Good Performer's Initiative further support the U.S. Government's well-established alternative development program in Afghanistan, which is led by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). During FY 2007, nearly $229 million in funding was allocated for USAID-led alternative development initiatives, which included efforts to implement a rural finance program to provide credit to farmers and small- and medium-sized enterprises, to create overseas markets for Afghan agricultural exports, to provide technical and material assistance to farmers, to establish economically viable infrastructure to produce and move licit goods to market, and to administer cash-for-work programs. USAID has been particularly successful in organizing a series of agricultural fairs, which encourage public-private partnerships to advance licit agriculture in high-poppy cultivation areas, including Helmand, Nangarhar, and Badakhshan.

Incentives such as these must be balanced with strong disincentives – namely interdiction, eradication, and a viable justice sector – to deter drug traffickers and the wider public from participating in the narcotics industry. Although insecurity, porous borders, and mountainous terrain make interdiction a particular challenge in Afghanistan, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is working with the Departments of State and Defense to help the GOA improve its interdiction capability by strengthening the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan

(CNPA). DEA provides training, mentoring, and investigative assistance to the CNPA and supports three specially-vetted CNPA units that investigate and pursue high-value targets. DEA, with DOD and State Department support, is planning to further expand the Afghan government's efforts to break major trafficking groups that are operating in outlying and border provinces.

Eradication, while controversial and difficult, is a critical component of our counternarcotics strategy and is essential to ensuring sustainable progress in democracy, economic reform, and rule of law. Based on the experiences of other countries, the UN estimates that 25% of Afghanistan's poppy crop must be eradicated in order to effectively deter poppy farmers, and those who support them, from planting poppy in the future. Past efforts by the Afghan central government's Poppy Eradication Force (PEF) showed that negotiated eradication, in which PEF leaders negotiate with local leaders over which poppy fields to eradicate, allowed for undue political influence and an inconsistent application of Article 26.6 of Afghanistan's December 2005 Counter Narcotics Law, which subjects ***all*** illicit drug cultivation – whether you are a wealthy landowner with connections to power or a poor farmer – to the risk of destruction without compensation. To this end, the U.S. Government strongly supports PEF engagement in non-negotiated eradication supported by adequate force protection. If the Afghan government chose to pursue this strategy, it would instill a heightened degree of risk into the decision to

cultivate poppy and have the added effect of demonstrating the reach of the central government in areas where it has struggled to consolidate its power to date.

Just as the security context is closely linked to the narcotics industry in Afghanistan, we strongly believe that the State Department's foreign policy counternarcotics mandate, which includes an eradication component, is closely linked to wider U.S. Government counterinsurgency objectives. A growing body of evidence indicates the presence of a symbiotic relationship between the narcotics trade and the anti-government insurgency, most commonly associated with the Taliban. Narcotics traffickers provide revenue and arms to the insurgency, while the insurgents provide protection to growers and traffickers and prevent the government from interfering with their activities. In recent years, poppy production has soared in provinces where insurgents are most active - five relatively higher-income, agriculturally rich provinces along the Pakistan border account for 70% of Afghanistan's 2007 poppy production with over 50% in Helmand Province alone. Our strategy faces this challenge head-on, seeking to starve the insurgency of the drug money that fuels it.

Some have suggested that increased eradication would have the effect of pushing "farmers with no other source of livelihood into the arms of the Taliban without reducing the total amount of opium being produced."[1] The facts do not

[1] Richard Holbrook, "Still Wrong in Afghanistan," *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2008, A19.

support this view. The poppy fields in the south – where poppy cultivation and the insurgency are most acute – are largely owned by wealthy drug lords and, in some instances, corrupt officials. Recent aerial reconnaissance missions have observed organized and industrialized poppy farming in broad, open fields. Helmand Province is also a significant recipient of international assistance. In fact, if Helmand were a separate country, it would be the sixth largest recipient of bilateral USAID assistance in the world. Pursuing non-negotiated, force-protected eradication would primarily impact these well-financed narco-farmers and provide a blow to the insurgents that protect them in the process. The benefits of this policy – of reducing financial benefit to insurgents and corrupt officials that enable a climate of corruption – far outweigh the potential loss of support of a small percentage of the population.

Advances in interdiction and eradication will stall without simultaneous efforts to develop the ability of the nascent Afghan justice sector to investigate, arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate those guilty of narcotics violations. The Departments of State and Justice, in collaboration with other international donors, are working to support the Afghan Government's Criminal Justice Task Force (CNTF), responsible for narcotics prosecutions, and the Counternarcotics Tribunal (CNT), which has exclusive national jurisdiction over all mid- and high-level narcotics cases. While much work remains, progress has been made to help

Afghanistan build its justice system from the ground up. We are in the process of expanding training efforts for provincial and district-level prosecutors to assist them in developing narcotics cases to be transferred to Kabul and tried before the CNT. None of these counternarcotics efforts would be possible without the presence of a capable and independent Afghan National Police (ANP) force, which I would now like to discuss.

AFGHAN NATIONAL POLICE (ANP)

In 2003, the United States and the international community began a program to increase the overall capacity of the Afghan National Police (ANP) and its ability – under the direction of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) – to provide law enforcement throughout Afghanistan. To this end, the Department of State's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the Department of Defense's Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) are working together and with our international partners to train, equip, and mentor the Afghan Police and reform the Afghan Ministry of Interior.

Together, we have made substantial progress in developing the rosters, the capabilities, and the reach of the ANP. Many of the 74,000 ANP currently deployed – including more than 25,000 in 2007 – have completed basic, advanced, and/or specialized training at one of seven Regional Training Centers (RTCs) in

the provinces or the Central Training Center (CTC) in Kabul, To assist in the development of law enforcement skills, approximately 500 U.S. civilian police advisors work alongside Afghan police units at RTCs at the provincial and district level and within the MOI.

In addition to the large number of ANP already trained and mentored, the efforts of our civilian police advisors have yielded other concrete successes in Afghanistan, including:

- A greater understanding of the operational capabilities and requirements of the ANP, which led to the creation of specialized civil-order police units and domestic violence (family response) police units. The civil order police now serve as the bedrock of the Focused District Development (FDD) plan to enhance district-level law enforcement, while the family response units provide a unique and critical capacity for the ANP to extend their reach to the female population;
- Recognition of the importance of female police, which has led to greater efforts to recruit female ANP and the establishment of the Women's Police Corps (WPC) with facilities designed specifically for training female police;

- Development of a specialized border security curriculum for the Afghan Border Police (ABP); and,
- Significant improvements to the ANP's investigative techniques for tracking the perpetrators of crime.

Despite these and other successes, considerable challenges remain in establishing a professional MOI and a fully independent and functional ANP. Similar to the challenges facing our counternarcotics mission, persistent insurgent activity, especially in southern Afghanistan has routinely placed the ANP in high-threat environments that demand skills and operations far more complex than those required of community police. ANP are regularly targeted by insurgents and suffer a high casualty rate. This environment, and the resulting high mortality rate for ANP, continues to have a negative impact on the ANP and on the MOI's ability to recruit and retain qualified personnel.

To overcome these challenges and further enhance the effectiveness and operational independence of the ANP, the highest priority for our police advisors in the coming months is the successful implementation of the Focused District Development (FDD) plan, which is a new and holistic approach to train, equip, and mentor the ANP. FDD was designed by the Government of Afghanistan, the United States, and international partners to be a Ministry of Interior-led, cross-sectoral approach to training, equipping, and mentoring Afghan Uniformed Police

(AUP) at the district level. In each district undergoing FDD, four primary activities occur:

- A needs and skills assessment of district AUP is conducted;
- Collective training and equipping of district AUP occurs at RTCs based on the assessment findings;
- Comprehensive mentoring of district AUP follows training; and
- Concurrent development of the judicial and prosecutorial sectors is assessed and implemented in that district.

Each full cycle of FDD is expected to take six to eight months, per district.

The first FDD cycle – currently being implemented in seven districts in throughout Afghanistan – began in December 2007, and is expected to be completed in April 2008. The MOI is working with the international community to plan for future iterations of FDD, which will be rolled out on a regular basis. Assessments for the second FDD cycle are currently underway in five districts.

While comprehensive findings and outcomes of FDD will not be available until late Spring 2008 at the earliest, preliminary reports on the program are positive. Thus far, U.S. civilian police mentors and trainers report that training is proceeding on track and anecdotal evidence has indicated that the improved student-mentor ratio at the RTCs has led to a more positive learning environment for the ANP. Also, the Afghan Civil Order Police (ANCOP) has been effective in

maintaining district security and has been well-received by local populations. Given the vital importance of the police to ensuring security and the rule of law, we will continue to work closely with CSTC-A, the Government of Afghanistan, and our international partners to look for creative ways to improve the police program and ensure its continued success.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today. Please know that I will continue to strive to keep you fully informed of our progress and our setbacks in these important missions, and I certainly welcome your thoughts and advice. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.