



COUNTRY FACT SHEETS, EURASIAN NARCOTICS

AFGHANISTAN 2004

General Information

Population: 28.5 million
UNDP Human development index ranking: Unranked
TI Corruption indicator: Unranked

Afghanistan is both the world's largest producer of opiates and increasingly itself a consumer. After a drop in production resulting from a largely successful ban imposed by the Taliban in 2001, Afghanistan has returned to the top of the list of opium-producing countries following the US-led invasion. In 2004 opium production was approximately 4,200 tons, the majority bound for export on western and north-western routes, ultimately to Russia and Europe. The current harvest is expected to set a new record as weather conditions have been very good. This will prove a significant challenge for Karzai's administration.



Production and Smuggling of Opiates

The production, processing and consumption of opiates and other narcotic plants is quite free and the difficulties involved in transportation are not great. Precursor chemicals for opium processing are not produced domestically but are imported, primarily from Pakistan and China but increasingly from Central Asia. The increase in seizures of a primary precursor, acetic anhydride, is one of a number of indications that the processing of opium inside Afghanistan is rising. Processing laboratories appear to have shifted northwards and become smaller, often family-run. The geographical shifts in production and processing reflect political realities and a growing preference for Central Asian smuggling routes. Traditionally, opium has been smuggled through Pakistan and Iran to Turkey, with processing to morphine base or heroin occurring primarily in those countries. In recent years, however, drug seizures in Central Asia have increased dramatically. Heroin seizures have seen a per annum increase of an average 148% between 1994 and 2000. The majority of these seizures occur in Tajikistan and trafficking northwards out of Badakhshan appears to be ever more popular.

Health and Economic Aspects

The IMF estimates the share of opium in the economy at 40-60% and opiates are the country's largest export, earning around \$2.5bn in 2002 according to the UNODC. Per capita income from opium is several times GDP per capita. 28 of the country's 32 provinces now cultivate opium and it is impossible to overstate its importance to many local economies. Opium is the only significant cash crop and wealth continues to be concentrated in two groups: those who control opium production/distribution, and those in positions of authority. In the large areas beyond central government control, it is difficult to separate the two.

Corruption: Corruption is difficult to measure even if known to be rampant in many regions. Afghanistan does not yet feature in Transparency International's corruption perceptions rankings.

Opium cultivation outlook: The fall in opium cultivation experienced during 2001 has been reversed and the 2003 harvest was more than 75% of the record 1999 harvest. 2004 data suggest that the rebound continues; significantly, 69% of opium farmers surveyed at the start of the poppy season intended to expand cultivation.

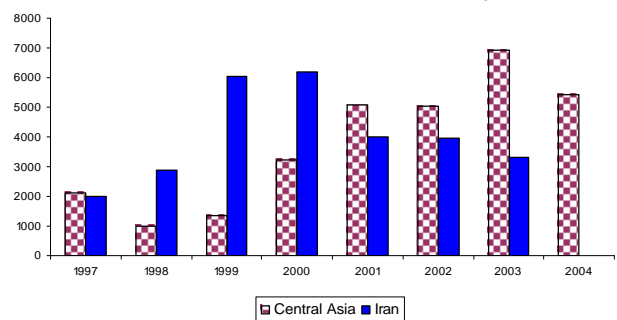
Drug abuse: Statistics for the number of drug users nationwide are not comprehensive, but UNODC estimates suggest that there are 42,000 in Kabul, out of a population of 2.5 million. In rural regions, opium is a traditional drug and measuring abuse is difficult. The increasing availability of high-quality heroin as a result of local processing laboratories is likely to lead to more users.

Distribution of cultivation: As the processing laboratories have moved northwards, so has opium cultivation. This is most clearly seen in the rapid decline in the southern province of Hilmand, compared to the rapid increase in the northern provinces, particularly Badakhshan, and the general trend of production moving from border areas toward the inner parts of the country.

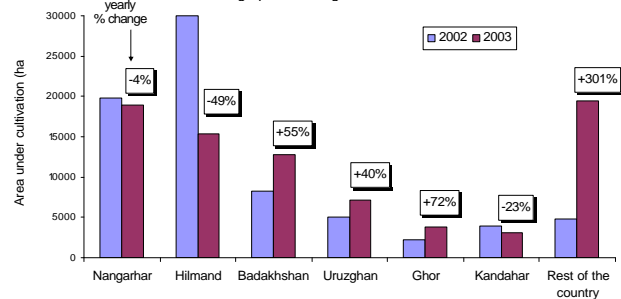
Political and Social Aspects

The opium economy fuels continuing instability. The state is still largely undefined in Afghanistan and many of its functions are not provided by the government but by local leaders whose loyalty is unclear and subject to rapid change. Large areas of the country are only nominally under the control of the central government and the country's political sphere is fractured into factions led by competing warlords. Their powers of patronage and access to weapons depend to a significant degree on taxing opium-related activity in their areas of control. In this way, the opium trade funds both local structures of stability and inter-regional competitive instability.

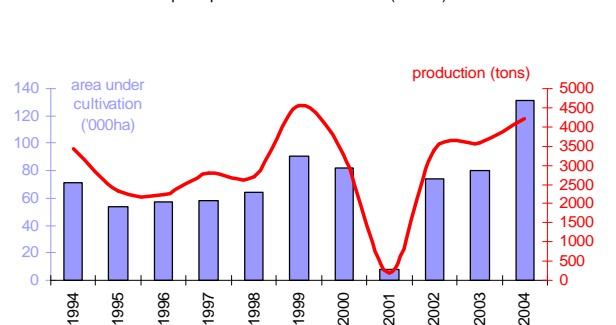
Heroin seizures on Western and Northern routes (in kg)



Geographical changes in cultivation



Opium production and cultivation (000 ha)



Counter-narcotics efforts

The State

Afghanistan now has the 'three pillars' of drug control in place. A Counter-Narcotics Directorate was established in October 2002, a National Drug Control Strategy was adopted in May 2003 and the Drug Control Legislation came into force in June 2003. Officially, the government is committed to the eradication of opium cultivation, although the Counter-Narcotics Directorate admits that it faces significant difficulties in achieving this goal.

The Counter-Narcotics Directorate manages the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan and currently consists of 300 staff members, although the government hopes to expand this by a further 700 and deploy these outside Kabul. It is aiming for a 70% reduction in opium cultivation by 2007 and a complete elimination by 2012.

The National Drug Control Strategy is a holistic attempt at control and includes plans for projects to encourage diversification away from poppy cultivation and for the provision of opportunities for development without dependence on opium.

Substantial eradication programs have been carried out in the last two years. These have focused on the provinces of Hilmand and Kandahar and to a lesser extent Nangarhar. The government reported the eradication of 23,000 ha in 2003. Concurrently, the Counter Narcotics Directorate has been implementing the Counter-Narcotics Public Awareness Campaign, consisting of Islamic-based radio broadcasts throughout the country and the dissemination of information via the Inter-News Agency.

Civil Society

There is a distinct lack of knowledge of HIV/AIDS in the country, and an appreciation of the scale of drug abuse – or indeed its dangers - is lacking in most sectors of society, including in government. Very limited community-based rehabilitation facilities exist in Kabul and the planned creation of UNODC Demand Reduction Action Teams has yet to occur. Similarly, NGOs willing to distribute drug education information have been hampered by a lack of funds. The BBC World Service, the most popular radio station in Afghanistan, regularly

includes counter-narcotics messages and broadcasts interviews with political and religious leaders from Kabul on the issue.

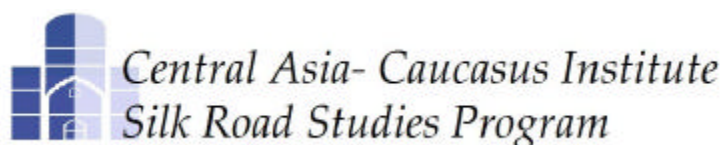
Regional Cooperation

Despite being a focal point of the world's counter-narcotics efforts, Afghanistan conducts little official cooperation with its neighbors, mainly as a result of its embryonic government and state. Though some bilateral cooperation with Iran has taken place, most forums for cooperation, such as the recent conference on Afghanistan's Regional Economic Cooperation including Central Asia, Iran and Pakistan", held in Bishkek, are provided for by international agencies. The Good Neighborly Relations Declaration on Counter-Narcotics was signed in Berlin by Afghanistan and its six neighbors as a statement of principles, but cooperation between relevant agencies is coordinated multilaterally by donors, since they in effect underpin enforcement in many of the region's countries. For similar reasons, Afghanistan's ability to cooperate with its neighbors on key border crossings is complicated by the central government's weakness in many of the border provinces.

International

The United Kingdom has the lead in international counter-narcotics assistance, while Germany is the lead in police assistance and Italy in judicial reform. The funds for Afghanistan's drug control programs and agencies come almost entirely from other countries, which can have undesirable effects on their efficacy. There are a plethora of initiatives sponsored by donor countries, ranging from Japan's \$1m for opium demand reduction programs implemented by UNODC to UN technical assistance to the government in drafting legislation against organized crime.

The most significant multilateral agency operating in Afghanistan is the UNODC, through which much of the international funding for drug control is channeled. Others include the Food and Agricultural Organization, implementing agricultural finance projects to encourage farmers away from opium cultivation, and the European Union, whose funding for some 290 health clinics has included efforts at HIV monitoring and education.



Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center

The Project on Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia

The Project on Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia is conducted by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program. The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program form a Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center affiliated with the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC; and the Departments of East European Studies and Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Latest publications:

Niklas L.P. Swanström, "Multilateralism and Narcotics control in Central Asia", *CEF Quarterly*, the journal of the China-Eurasia Forum, February 2005.

Niklas L. P. Swanström and Maral Madi, "International Cooperation Against Drug Trafficking, in Central Asia," *United Nations: Multilateralism and International Security*, in C. Uday Bhaskar et. al., eds, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses & SHIPRA Publications, 2005.

Svante E. Cornell, "Stemming the Contagion: Regional Efforts to Curb Afghan Heroin's Impact", *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 6 no. 1, Winter/Spring 2005.

Kairat Osmonaliev, *Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia: Legal and Political Dimensions*, Silk Road Paper, January 2005.

Svante E. Cornell, *Narcotics, Radicalism and Security in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, East European Studies Working Paper no. 84, December, 2004.

Maral Madi, "Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Structure, Implications and Countermeasures", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 23, No 3-4, December, 2004.

Database:

The current version of the database contains information on illegal drugs and related issues in Central Eurasia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), Russia and the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan). These countries are the primary focus at Silk Road Studies. The database can be accessed at www.silkroadstudies.org/drugsdatabase.htm

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