

Statement for the Record
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Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee
“Department of Defense Counternarcotics Efforts in Afghanistan”
February 5, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Representative Deutch, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Department of Defense’s (DoD) counternarcotics, or “CN,” efforts in Afghanistan and our strategic vision for CN support in 2014 and beyond. In October, we submitted to Congress DoD’s *Post-2014 CN Strategy for Afghanistan and the Region* which outlines our approach to addressing these threats in light of significantly reduced military force levels inside Afghanistan. Of course, our efforts will ultimately be scoped and sized by the U.S. government’s post-2014 total presence in Afghanistan.

As the Members of this Subcommittee well know, since 2001, the United States has made an extraordinary investment in blood and treasure to eliminate the terrorist safe haven Afghanistan had become. To date, over 2,000 Americans have lost their lives in Operation Enduring Freedom and another nearly 20,000 have been wounded. DoD has invested approximately \$2 billion for dedicated CN training and programs, which is a small fraction of the almost \$570 billion we’ve spent on the war since 2001 (through FY 2013), and we believe that \$2 billion has been well spent in developing specialized CN units and capabilities that have begun to achieve concrete results. Despite the progress made in building Afghan CN capabilities, these gains are not yet irreversible and these nascent institutions will continue to require sustained international support for the foreseeable future - particularly for resource-intensive programs such as aviation. Like a seedling

that has recently sprouted, these organizations have great potential but will require care and nurturing before they are ready to stand on their own. With the upcoming reduction in U.S. and coalition forces and other international capabilities, sustainment will be all the more important. Stepping back from our efforts now would jeopardize the further development of these units that have become reliable partners for U.S. and international law enforcement efforts. I'd like to begin by sharing some observations from the DoD perspective and highlighting a few of the main points I'd like to leave you with.

Afghanistan Drug Threat

As illustrated by resurgent opium production in 2013, the instability caused by the illicit drug trade remains a major obstacle to the long-term security and prosperity of Afghanistan and the region. Recognizing the severity of this threat, the Department invested in counter-drug training and programs during the course of Operation Enduring Freedom to build partner capacity and support U.S. law enforcement and other interagency partners' efforts to weaken drug trafficking networks.

As we look at the future for Afghanistan, it is impossible to envision success without sustaining an Afghan capability to fight the violence and corruption created by the drug trade. Illicit narcotics - although a shrinking proportion of Afghanistan's lawful economy - contributes to insecurity, corruption, poor governance, and stagnation of economic development. Addressing the drug trade and its effects is essential to the successful transition of security responsibility to the Government of Afghanistan. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 209,000 hectares of opium poppy were cultivated in 2013, a 36% increase from the 154,000 hectares cultivated in 2012. Additionally, the UNODC estimates that potential opium

production in Afghanistan increased from 3,700 metric tons in 2012 to 5,500 metric tons in 2013, which is approximately 49% greater than UNODC's estimate for consumption globally of approximately 3,700 metric tons.

The link between insecurity and opium cultivation is well established in Afghanistan. Most of the opium poppy cultivation is concentrated in southern and western provinces where the narcotics trade continues to fuel criminal and insurgent networks. Insurgents tax local poppy farmers, and in return, provide farmers with loans, material support, and protection for their operations. Insurgents also charge a protection tax to traffickers and labs. The production of opium competes with the country's lawful agriculture industry, distorts other legitimate businesses by undercutting them to launder profits, degrades revenue collection, and undermines public health.

The illicit drug trade originating from Afghan opium extends well beyond the borders of Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran, and Pakistan's Makran Coast. The trade in Afghan-produced opiates has become an increasingly global phenomenon, with drugs and illicit proceeds flowing to the Persian Gulf and the Middle East, East Africa, Europe, Russia, and North America, with a small percentage of the heroin consumed in the United States coming from Afghanistan. The ripple effect of the heroin trade undermines stability in key regions of U.S. interest, fuels corruption, undermines legitimate economic activity, and provides vital revenue for terrorist groups and other transnational criminal organizations that threaten U.S. security interests worldwide.

In addition, we cannot ignore the growing threat to ourselves and our Allies. For instance, our Canadian partners believe they are seeing more heroin than their user population can absorb.

We must also be sensitive to information such as Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin's "state of the state" speech which focused entirely on Vermont's exploding prescription drug abuse and heroin problem, and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine recently declaring heroin an epidemic, with the number of heroin overdoses in Ohio doubling in 2012. While the vast majority of heroin consumed in the United States continues to originate in the Western Hemisphere, we must be vigilant about the possibility of Afghan-produced heroin becoming more available across the United States. DoD, as always, is committed to disrupting the flow of these drugs as far away from our shores as possible.

DoD CN Efforts in Afghanistan

DoD's CN efforts in Afghanistan support the U.S. government's interagency strategy to counter and disrupt drug-related funding to the insurgency, and second, to strengthen the Afghan government's capacity to combat the drug trade during and after the security transition. Over the past decade, DoD has worked to build the capacity of the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan, or CNPA, improve border security, promote information sharing, and foster regional and international cooperation. Despite the increased opium production this past year, DoD-supported efforts have made steady progress building the capacity of specialized Afghan CN units. While, none of these efforts individually can solve this problem, interdiction operations are a key component of a holistic strategy to address all phases of the drug trade and can be successful in reducing insurgent financing from narcotics.

The Departments of Defense, State, Justice (including the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)), and Homeland Security, have collaborated to build the law enforcement capacity of

Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior. Information sharing and the ability of Afghan law enforcement and CN forces to prosecute traffickers are integral parts of this infrastructure. The DEA-mentored specialized units within the CNPA continue to demonstrate successful evidence-based operations and serve as key partners in law enforcement efforts. The Afghan Counter-Narcotics Justice Center continues to successfully prosecute narcotics traffickers, including the conviction of Haji Lal Jan Ishaqzai, a U.S. Treasury-designated "kingpin" in 2013, who was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in Afghanistan's prison system.

In partnership with the Department of Justice's (DOJ) International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, DoD established the Counternarcotics Development Unit to coordinate the development of the CNPA in support of ISAF's police development mission. The CNPA continues to make progress and has become a reliable counterdrug law enforcement partner. The Defense Intelligence Agency reports that from January 1, 2013 through December 17, 2013, 2,297 Afghan-led operations resulted in the seizure of 72,433 kilograms (kg) of opium, 11,962 kg of morphine, 6,203 kg of heroin, 31,647 kg of hashish, and 64,784 kg of chemicals.

Effective border management plays a vital role in the future stability and prosperity of the Government of Afghanistan. Customs and other border management agencies help disrupt the flow of illicit narcotics, weapons, and terrorists across international borders; collect taxes and tariffs; protect public health and cultural heritage; and facilitate legitimate trade and travel. DoD also supports the U.S. Embassy Kabul's Border Management Task Force (BMTF) that provides critical training to Afghan customs officials and improved border and customs infrastructure and equipment critical to enhancing their border security capacity. BMTF deploys 65 advisors to critical locations

across Afghanistan including the Kabul International Airport. DoD supports the Department of Homeland Security's efforts focusing on mentoring, illicit finance, counter-improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and bulk cash smuggling.

Due to the severe topography and security environment of Afghanistan, aviation support is a key enabler of interdiction operations that deny drug traffickers freedom of action in remote areas. DoD provides CN funding to support the Afghan Special Missions Wing (SMW) which provides aviation support to DEA and Afghan CN law enforcement organizations and special operations forces. This air mobility capability allows Afghan specialized CN units to conduct enforcement efforts with a greater degree of effectiveness and safety, in areas where it would be impractical to infiltrate by other means. With the drawdown of U.S. and coalition forces, we expect that air mobility will continue to be critical to maintaining CN law enforcement effectiveness.

The capabilities of the SMW aircrews have shown impressive development in the last year. As an example, in July 2013, the SMW supported an all-Afghan air and ground force tactical assault interdiction mission. Six Mi-17 helicopters with all-Afghan crews provided tactical insertion and extraction of a 74-man, National Interdiction Unit, all-Afghan ground assault force. The air mission was planned, briefed, and executed without the direct assistance of Coalition Air Advisors and supported a successful CN operation yielding the destruction of 1,500 kg opium, 500 kg hashish, and 25 kg heroin, and the confiscation of 10 AK-47 assault rifles.

DoD CN authorities enable DoD to provide significant analytical support to law enforcement agencies, integrating intelligence and law enforcement information for use in the

investigation and prosecution of criminal networks. At the strategic level, DoD supports the Joint Narcotics Analysis Center (JNAC), a joint U.S./United Kingdom initiative that provides strategic and operational-level decision-makers with analysis on the narcotics trade in Afghanistan and the surrounding region. The JNAC provides reach back support for intelligence and law enforcement organizations in Afghanistan and improved collaboration across a wide spectrum of CN partnerships. The JNAC is an effective model of interagency and international collaboration and partnership.

At the operational level, DoD provides support to the law enforcement-led Interagency Operations Coordination Center (IOCC). The IOCC was established to de-conflict and coordinate support for law enforcement CN activities in Afghanistan. The IOCC has become an important source of targeting information and drug trade analysis. At the tactical level, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force – Nexus (CJIATF-N) was established to provide tactical support to military and law enforcement organizations to counter narcotics threats and corruption in partnership with host-nation forces. As U.S. and coalition military forces transition from their combat role, CJIATF-N will be discontinued and the IOCC will be reduced in size.

The Afghanistan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC) was established in 2008 to identify and disrupt sources of insurgent and terrorist funding in Afghanistan. This organization is co-led by DEA and DoD. However, as the 2014 transition proceeds, the composition of interagency leadership is likely to evolve. Pending final decisions on U.S. presence post-2014, disrupting the financial links of the drug trade will remain critically important and will require the type of

intelligence support currently provided by ATFC. The interagency is analyzing the possibility of integrating the ATFC into the IOCC for better coordination and collaboration.

Central Asian states have repeatedly expressed their concern over narco-traffickers and extremist networks operating across their irregular borders and extreme mountainous terrain and welcome DoD assistance in confronting these challenges. Given these countries' systemic lack of training, maintenance, and standardization, dating back to the Soviet era, DoD has provided modernized CN equipment, training, and facility investments. Working with DEA and other interagency partners, DoD has provided CN equipment and regional training in support to the Central Asian Regional Information Collection Center and is exploring further interagency opportunities to support the border management efforts. Programs funded with host-nation resources have been modeled after U.S. programs and have helped modernize many border crossing points. DoD efforts also provide additional leverage points for negotiating agreements to the Northern Distribution Network in support of the war effort in Afghanistan. These efforts are often the most consistent or only reliable assistance the U.S. government can provide in a timely manner, and they help maintain diplomatic relationships in a region where influence is difficult to maintain.

DoD Post -2014 Strategy

DoD's Post-2014 *Strategy* prioritizes programs that disrupt, degrade, and dismantle illicit narcotics networks. DoD's primary focus remains sustaining and advancing Afghan CN capabilities while also continuing to work with Pakistani and Central Asian law enforcement agencies. The government of Afghanistan must be able to control narco-trafficking to advance the security of its population and allow room for lawful economic growth. The Strategy outlines three broad objectives: 1) to contain/reduce the flow of drugs from Afghanistan; 2) to disrupt and

dismantle transnational criminal organizations; and 3) to reduce the flow of illicit proceeds that finance insurgent and terrorist activities globally.

Our CN strategy for post-2014 Afghanistan can be summarized by saying that we believe we must focus on three key areas:

- 1) Continued support for vetted units,
- 2) Continued aviation capacity building, and
- 3) Continued leveraging of international and interagency capabilities.

First, specialized CN units have shown that they are willing and able to do the job, and more and more specialized-units are now able to plan, execute, and follow-through on CN missions on their own. For example, in December, the DoD-supported and DEA-mentored Sensitive Investigative Unit was able to use judicially authorized wire intercepts to build a case that led to the arrest of 2 criminals and the seizure of 660 grams of heroin, 500 boxes of ammunition, 40 remote control IEDs, and 75 rocket-propelled grenades.

Second, I cannot overstate how continued support to building Afghanistan's aviation capability is vital due to the terrain of Afghanistan. For any security effort, and certainly to run effective CN operations, Afghan forces must have adequate air mobility to operate in the remote areas where insurgents and illicit drug networks operate. My office's focus has been the SMW, which has demonstrated the capability to completely plan and execute operations without international assistance. With greater aviation capabilities over time, the SMW will be able to conduct vital operations, continue training aircrews in more complex operations, and focus more resources on further developing the capability of the Afghan maintenance team to independently

maintain aircraft. That said, our experiences in Colombia and elsewhere illustrate that it can take a decade or more for an aviation capability to become truly self-sustaining. In a nation like Afghanistan where budgetary pressures will be high, it may take longer. With sustained support, however, we are confident the SMW can continue to make progress.

Third, as U.S. and coalition forces Afghanistan drawdown over the coming year, the interagency and international partnerships we have forged will become increasingly important as our military and other capabilities are reduced inside Afghanistan. The worldwide breadth of the Afghan heroin trade will require working across numerous “seams” between the Geographic Combatant Commands and building upon existing international partnerships to disrupt the flow of drugs and other illicit commodities. We are therefore working with several Combatant Commands, U.S. law enforcement agencies, U.S. intelligence agencies, and interested international partners to create a regional targeting and intelligence center able to coordinate and facilitate international efforts to disrupt the flow of heroin, target illicit sources of revenue, and dismantle criminal organizations that pose the greatest threat to U.S. and international security.

The regional center will help DoD retain the interagency and international collaboration that has been so effective for CN efforts in Afghanistan and the region and will bridge the seams of several Combatant Commands. The center will help fill the gap where space for personnel on the ground in Afghanistan is no longer available and will provide reach-back capability, intelligence/operations fusion capabilities, regional CN support, and regional counter threat finance support. We would begin by expanding upon the current Operation Riptide, located in Bahrain, which leverages the capabilities of U.S. and international law enforcement and national intelligence

agencies to facilitate interdictions, seizures, investigations, and prosecutions. Naval interdictions from Combined Maritime Forces in Bahrain, notably by Canada's HMCS TORONTO and by Australia's HMAS MELBOURNE, have proven the international community's ability to identify, track, board, and seize illicit cargo on the high seas. HMCS TORONTO conducted seven seizures in 2013. We estimate that just one percent of the value of what they removed from the high seas is equal to the amount of funding necessary to outfit a platoon of insurgents. On January 17 of this year, acting on specific intelligence and in collaboration with the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the TORONTO intercepted a dhow off the coast of Tanzania, seizing 280 kg of suspected heroin. A regional targeting center would allow us to retain valuable working relationships that enhance our ability to identify, track, board, and seize illicit cargo on the high seas and to expand our ability to attack these networks with law enforcement partners on land. It will require us to operate across combatant commands, which we believe is essential to effectively combat the global heroin trade.

Given the close association of drug trafficking with other national security threats such as terrorism, insurgency, and weapons trafficking, the authorities and expertise of our law enforcement partners are critical to helping the Department accomplish non-CN specific national security objectives as well. Having a flexible tool like our CN authorities and Central Transfer Account allows us to work with them to effectively meet both of our goals. This collaboration is a true win-win that helps the U.S. government remain effective in today's more austere budgetary environment.

In closing, DoD plans to continue its successful and effective partnership with the interagency and international partners to disrupt the sources of revenue for terrorists and insurgents, and reduce the corrosive, corruptive, and destabilizing impact of illicit narcotics. Our primary goal is to continue support and sustainment of Afghanistan's CN law enforcement institutions which have made tremendous progress over the course of Operation Enduring Freedom. DoD also expects that the establishment of a regional center will help counter the threat of narco-trafficking by providing a coordinated platform for our law enforcement and international partners and greater visibility into the illicit narcotics flow into the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about DoD's CN work in Afghanistan. I look forward to your questions and comments.