



UNITED AGAINST DRUGS? DIVERGENT COUNTERNARCOTIC STRATEGIES OF US GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN AFGHANISTAN

Anthony George Armiger II

Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Germany

This paper focuses on the counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies in Afghanistan from 2001-2014. Despite a heavy US presence in the country, Afghanistan currently accounts for 80% of opium production worldwide and remains a key contributor to the global drug market. This paper argues that the divergent counternarcotic strategies of various US government agencies on the ground in Afghanistan are a product of the organizational differences amongst those agencies and that those differences can challenge the implementation of counternarcotics policies in Afghanistan. To gain a more in-depth perspective, this paper analyzes the counternarcotic strategies of two US government agencies in Afghanistan; the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Utilizing the framework of the organizational behavior model of organizational theory, this paper will highlight the varying organizational interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines of both of the government agencies. The paper concludes with implications on counternarcotics, as well as the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and provides recommendations for future research on foreign policy and counternarcotics.

Keywords: Drug politics, Counternarcotics, Afghanistan, United States Foreign Policy.

Introduction

For more than two decades now, Afghanistan has topped the charts as the world's largest opium producer. The "Golden Crescent" country currently accounts for 80% of illicit opium production worldwide¹ and remains "a major contributor to the global drug supply"², as also heroin and other opiates are derivatives of the opium poppy plant. These are not surprising facts, nor are they new trends. It is a reality, though, which continues to haunt Afghanistan, as well as the global community. The illicit production and trade of opium are activities which negatively affect the country and make its steps toward development much more difficult. The Afghan government remains plagued by corruption, as top-of-the-hierarchy officials are easily enticed into accepting bribes which establish contract-like safety mechanisms for drug traffickers in Afghanistan, as well as along its borders. Government officials themselves also directly partake in the drug trade and earn profits from its sale, as evidenced in Gretchen Peter's 2009 *Seeds of Terror*³. Opium's illicit economy also undermines the success and growth of legitimate economies within the country by contributing to inflation and the devaluation of the national currency, the *Afghan Afghani*. Violence, time and time again, has been proven to accompany the illicit narcotics industry wherever it

¹ UNODC, *Drug Report* (2014) page 21

² Civil Military Fusion Centre, *Counter-Narcotics in Afghanistan* (August 2012) page 7

³ Peters, Gretchen, *Seeds of Terror: How Drugs, Thugs, and Crime Are Reshaping the Afghan War* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009) page 186

sprouts in the world and increasing drug abuse has led to the spread of deadly diseases such as HIV and AIDS.

The opium industry in Afghanistan is not entirely negative though. For 75 percent of the Afghan population, “agriculture is the main source of livelihood and subsistence”⁴ and opium cultivation continues to be the most lucrative business for the average Afghan farmer. It is more profitable than most available legal crops and it provides the farmers with an income suitable to support their families. In this sense, opium sustains life and provides wellbeing to middle and lower-class Afghan families.

It is indeed partially due to the presence of the negative and positive aspects of opium in Afghanistan which create a conundrum for rebuilding the country, not only for the Afghan government, but also for the foreign powers currently present there. But the complicity of such a conundrum is not only due to the presence of these aspects in Afghanistan; it can also be due to the way in which these aspects are handled and dealt with. As Moisés Naím explains in his book *Illicit*, “the drug trade has evolved; the methods to fight it, by contrast, have changed very little”. Along with the Afghan government, U.S. and NATO forces are contributing resources and knowledge in an attempt to solve this problem; an approach known as *counternarcotics*. But how is such an approach being executed and who are the actors involved?

This essay focuses on the United States, its various agencies on the ground, and their strategies, or lack thereof, toward counternarcotics in Afghanistan. For many decades now, the United States has been a key player in the international war on drugs. Not only has it contributed resources and knowledge to this ever present fight, it has shaped an ideology which places emphasis on the evilness of nearly all things related to drugs. This ideology has, in turn, shaped the way in which the war on drugs is fought all around the globe. By increasing its coercive tactics and supporting and arming the security forces of other countries, it has cultivated the physical resources to fight the war on drugs. Through the use of politics, “US policy-makers have put economic, political, and military pressure on countries whose anti-drug efforts they regarded as insufficient”⁵, strategies which are evidence to the US’s push for global prohibition.

It is ironic, though, that since 2002⁶, one year after the US-led War on Terror in Afghanistan, the rate of opium cultivation and production in the country climbed to unprecedented levels and became a threat to the global war on drugs more than ever before. As Cornelius Friesendorf explains, there are two arguments for this development: the first argues that the US has been fighting the war on drugs all around the world and that if it didn’t, the global drug problem would be worse; the second argues that the increase in illicit crop cultivation and drug production is an outcome *directly due* to US counternarcotic strategies. In line with many scholars, this essay maintains the latter of the two arguments, yet focuses on a specific aspect of the overall failure to manage the problem of opium in Afghanistan; the divergent counternarcotic strategies of various US government agencies.

At first glance, the average observer would assume that there is one general counternarcotic strategy issued by one or more governments. This can indeed be true, as governments do define objectives in the fight against drugs, but these objectives are vague and their implementation is thus open to interpretation by more concentrated forms of government; government agencies. It is at this level of government where strategies are formulated and policy is implemented in order to achieve those general objectives. It is at this level, also, where these strategies can diverge. For example, as evidenced by Gretchen Peters in *Seeds of Terror*, “the Drug Enforcement Administration had requested military airlifts on twenty-six occasions in 2005 and these requests were denied [by the United States Department of Defense] in all but three cases.”⁷ If the United States government assumes an anti-drug position and allows the Drug Enforcement Administration to conduct counternarcotic operations in Afghanistan, why would the United States

⁴ USAID (<http://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan/agriculture>)

⁵ Friesendorf, Cornelius, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the War on Drugs: Displacing the cocaine and heroin industry* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007) page 1

⁶ In 2001, Afghanistan experienced a drastic decline in opium cultivation and production due to the ruling Taliban’s ban on the “un-Islamic” commodity.

⁷ Peters, 2009, page 184

military avoid aiding its progress? We know that, looking at past experiences and even its current counternarcotic policies, the US military maintains an anti-drug stance as well, but why would it not aid another US agency in its efforts to conduct counternarcotic operations? Thus we ask ourselves, how can we understand the apparent divergent counternarcotic practices in Afghanistan? In order to answer this question, this essay looks at the agencies which implement policy on the ground in Afghanistan, the way in which these agencies interpret government objectives and policies and why, and the implementation of their divergent counternarcotic strategies in Afghanistan.

This essay specifically analyzes the counternarcotic strategies of two US government agencies in Afghanistan; the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The DoD, or the US military, is primarily responsible for counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan, yet controls many of the resources, both capital and human, which are highly valuable for counternarcotic initiatives in the country. The DEA has the sole responsibility of combating illicit narcotics in the country, bringing much knowledge to the table from its previous international endeavors, yet limited resources. By analyzing these two US government agencies, the reader will obtain a better understanding of the differences between them in Afghanistan and the reasons for their actions in the conflict. The essay will have provided sufficient evidence to support its main hypothesis; that divergent counternarcotic strategies are present because of the different interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines of the US governmental agencies involved in Afghanistan.

This paper seeks to avoid viewing the US government as a single unitary decision-making and implementing actor in Afghanistan. As stated by Graham Allison and Morton Halperin in 1972, such an oversimplification of foreign policy “obscures the persistently neglected fact of bureaucracy: the “maker” of government policy is not one calculating decision-maker, but rather a conglomerate of large organizations and political actors who differ substantially about what their government should do on any particular issue and who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actions of their government”⁸. It becomes evident that the foreign policy of a government is actually strained by actors within the government. Many scholars highlight the fact that US government organizations are not on the same page when it comes to foreign policy implementation and some scholars even argue that there exists intense infighting between actors within the US government (Peters, 2009; Cox and Stokes, 2012; Felbab-Brown, 2010; McCoy, 2003; Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, 2010). As Michael Cox and Doug Stokes highlight in their analysis of US foreign policy, “...the foreign policy sphere in Washington has increasingly come to imitate the very properties of multi-polarity that have come to characterize the world itself”⁹. This “multi-polarity” is a symptom of the differences between the US government agencies themselves. Although voices of the government continuously re-emphasize the importance of, as well as its commitment to pursue, counternarcotics strategies in Afghanistan, as outlined in the U.S. Senate’s *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan* report¹⁰, the implementing agencies which make up the government are often on different pages when it comes to formulating counternarcotic strategies. Such differences are continuously made known, but drug policy scholars such as Vanda Felbab-Brown, Gretchen Peters, and Pierre Arnaud-Chouvy, to name a few, rarely focus on these organizational differences and the effect they have on counternarcotic strategies and their implementation.

In order to support this paper’s hypothesis, an appropriate theory must be utilized. As different organizational factors will play a vital role in understanding the diverging counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies in Afghanistan, it seems most appropriate that a model specifically embedded in *organizational theory* be used. The *Organizational Behavior Model* of organizational theory focuses on

⁸ Allison, Graham T. and Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, World Politics, Vol. 24, Spring 1972) page 42

⁹ Cox, Michael and Doug Stokes, *U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 2012) page 128

¹⁰ Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan* (Washington D.C.: United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, Second Session, July 2010) Letter of Transmittal, page iv

the “*outputs* of large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior”¹¹ and therefore deems itself as the most appropriate framework for the following thesis. As outlined by Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow in their analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis, this paper will focus on the following concepts of the organizational behavior model; “existing organizational components, their functions, and their standard operating procedures for acquiring information, defining feasible options, and implementation”¹². As hypothesized by Allison, “if organizations produced an output of a certain kind at a certain time, that behavior resulted from existing organizational structures, procedures, and repertoires”. This organizational behavior model will back up the hypothesis that the diverging counternarcotic strategies of the various US government agencies in Afghanistan are direct outcomes of their varying organizational interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines.

In order to test this theory and validate the hypothesis, this paper will use a method known as *process tracing*. As put forth by Andrew Bennett and Alexander George, this method “attempts to trace the links between possible causes and observed outcomes”¹³. The paper will define possible *causal mechanisms* in order to identify the relationship between individual variables which lead to an observed outcome, or effect. In this paper, these causal mechanisms will include the different interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines of each of the US government agencies involved in counternarcotic operations in Afghanistan; the observed outcome, or effect, will be the divergent counternarcotic strategies of those different US government agencies. By defining the causal mechanisms more in-depth, this paper will make clear that those mechanisms are indeed responsible for the divergent counternarcotic strategies in Afghanistan.

This paper includes 5 parts. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of the opium industry in Afghanistan, outlines the negative and positive aspects of its existence there and their implications on the Afghan society, economy, and politics, as well on the world, and broadly describes the roles of various forces within the country, both foreign and domestic, including the United States’ role there since 2001. By introducing organizational theory and more particularly the organizational behavior model, chapter 2 will discuss the role of organizations and their apparent lack of communication while implementing policies while also highlighting their autonomous nature when it comes to strategizing. The method of process tracing will also be briefly discussed. Chapter 3 will focus more intensely on the United States military, or DoD, as it is the most present US government agency in Afghanistan, and discuss its interests and norms and analyze its presence on the ground in that country. Chapter 4 will analyze the interests and norms of the DEA, as well as its presence on the ground in Afghanistan, as it is also a key contributor to US counternarcotics policy implementation on the ground. The conclusion will summarize the findings of this paper and provide new insights into the matter of US counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan and offer policy advice and recommendations for further research.

A Brief History of the Opium Industry in Afghanistan

With an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$695 in 2014¹⁴, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, nearly 25 percent of Afghans are undernourished¹⁵. This has been a continuous trend, as can be seen while reviewing the World Bank’s 2008 report, which revealed that 36 percent of all Afghans

¹¹ Allison, Graham T. and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York, NY: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1999) pages 5-6

¹² Allison and Zelikow, 1999, pages 5-6

¹³ George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, 2004) page 6

¹⁴ International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook (WEO) database (April 2014 edition)

¹⁵ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Interactive FAO Hunger Map 2014* available at <http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>

lived below the poverty line¹⁶. Three years prior to that report, the International Labor Organization estimated that 46.8 percent of Afghanistan's employed population earned below US\$1 a day¹⁷. These statistics are an ongoing reality for Afghans and any means necessary to ensure the survival of their families is imminent. The Afghan people have suffered not only from poverty and hunger, but also from years of war, and to overcome these troubles, Afghans have turned to anything and everything to ensure their families' wellbeing. Since most of the people are employed in the agricultural industry, the answer to their salvation has evolved, over thirty years, from one lucrative crop; the opium-poppy plant.

The opium-poppy plant is the source of all opiates ranging from medicinal morphine, to illicit opium and heroin. Known also under its scientific name *Papaver somniferum*¹⁸, it has been cultivated throughout history since the days of the ancient Sumerians; a civilization which, referring to its enjoyable mental and physical effects after human consumption, labeled it the "joy plant"¹⁹. Since that time, dating back as early as 3400 B.C., its trade has expanded into many corners of the world, while its cultivation has been concentrated in distinct parts of Asia. These areas, currently known as "opium zones", comprise two major regions; the "Golden Triangle", which includes Thailand, Laos, and Burma, and the "Golden Crescent", which includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran²⁰. In 1996, these two regions produced "over 96 percent of the world's 280,000 hectares of illicit opium"²¹. At the very end of the twentieth century, in 1999, Afghanistan was named the world's largest producer of both illicit opium and heroin.

During the latter half of the twentieth century and into the 21st century, Afghanistan has experienced decades of war-induced turmoil and strife, leaving dangle both its social and political stability on the finest of ropes. During these periods, the opium poppy deemed a valuable resource in many ways than just one and for many different groups of people in the country. Afghans came to learn of the crop's power and value and, as its demand had increased all around the world, they were able to take advantage of its high financial return. As it is a durable crop which facilitates a less strenuous cultivation process than most other crops and requires only little agricultural infrastructure, farmers with even the fewest agricultural resources can partake in its cultivation. For many, it is a venture which provides an intriguing financial return for its sale and also various forms of security and protection for families. The following parts of this chapter outline various periods of conflict in Afghanistan in the last two decades of the twentieth century and the first decade and a half of the 21st century and opium-poppy's involvement during each period. Each part will discuss the general conflict of the respective period, the actors involved and their policies present in the country during that time, and the role of opium-poppy, both positive and negative.

The Cold War

Afghanistan's decade-long downward spiral began in 1978, when the former Afghan President Mohammad Daoud was overthrown and killed during a Communist coup d'état called the Saur Revolution. It was at this time when Nur Mohammad Taraki, along with his Minister of Defense, Hafizullah Amin, assumed leadership roles of the country and renamed it the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA). Both of the new politicians were close allies with the greater communist republic, the Soviet Union, and looked to strengthen ties with it by persuading the Soviets to become more prevalent in the country through military and humanitarian assistance. The primary reasons for such

¹⁶ The World Bank, *Annual Report* (2008)

¹⁷ The International Labor Organization's *Trends Econometric Models* via the United Nations Millennium Development Goal Indicators, "Proportion of employed people living below \$1 (PPP) per day, percentage", July 7th, 2014 available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/SeriesDetail.aspx?srid=759>

¹⁸ *Papaver* is Greek for "poppy"; *somniferum* is Latin for "sleep-inducing".

¹⁹ www.deamuseum.org/ccp/opium/history.html

²⁰ McCoy, Alfred W., *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Chicago, Illinois: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003) page 3

²¹ McCoy, 2003, page 3

requests were due to the anti-DRA movement known as the Mujahedeen, a guerilla force present in Afghanistan since the mid-1800s consisting of many different ethnic and tribal groups with goals to fight against any form of foreign influence in their country, such as the prevailing Soviet backed regime.

Unfortunately for the newly established government, the Soviets were quite reluctant to do so and, as Taraki attempted to persuade them to provide Afghanistan with more aid, his relationship with Amin turned for the worse only a year after they both took office. During a period of heavy disagreement, Amin decided to take to arms and launched yet another coup d'état against his former ally and friend Taraki. Shortly after the coup began, Amin gave the order and his men murdered Taraki, allowing Amin to assume full power over the country.

Believing that Amin was an operative of the United States' CIA, the Soviets decided to take their own action. In December of 1979, the Soviet Politburo sent 7,700 troops to the Afghan capital, Kabul, and, in what was called Operation Storm-333, overthrew Amin and ended his short-lived 3 month rule. By December 29th, 1979, five days after invading the country, the Soviet Union had 20-25,000 troops on the ground in Afghanistan. The Soviets replaced Amin with Babrak Karmal, a highly praised Afghan politician among the Soviets, and began their 10 yearlong campaign in what would become known as the "Soviet Union's Vietnam"²².

The same year of the Soviet military invasion, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was already secretly providing Afghan guerillas, primarily the Mujahedeen, with monetary aid to strengthen the resistance against the Communist threat. In the words of the then US National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the United States could now give "the USSR its Vietnam War"²³. By the time Soviet troops had fully occupied Afghan territory, support for the Mujahedeen resistance movement was coming from many different governments in many different forms. As outlined by Alfred McCoy, China was providing antitank weapons, Egypt was providing rifles, and Saudi Arabia was providing munitions²⁴. The most important to the US' CIA covert war against the Soviets, though, was by far the government, or more specifically the intelligence agency, of Pakistan under General Zia ul-Haq.

The Pakistani Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) was a key ally in providing Afghan resistance groups with the weapons and aid they needed to put pressure on the Soviets. As Pakistan borders an area of Afghanistan which is enormously vast and extremely desolate, known as the North West Frontier, the CIA and ISI were able to execute their aid missions to the Mujahedeen without being noticed by the occupying forces. The ISI was the best bet for the CIA, as it had the most informed intelligence in, and cultural understanding of, Afghanistan. Through its valuable yet complicated alliance with the CIA, the ISI was able to coordinate beneficial relationships between the US and its rebel counterparts in Afghanistan in the war against the Soviets, but only for that cause. Having convinced the CIA to ally with one of its most 'valuable' guerrilla commanders on the ground in Afghanistan, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the ISI had created what would later become a very difficult situation in the region. As there were many different ethnic and tribal mujahedeen factions in Afghanistan, Hekmatyar leading just one of them, aid was split amongst them in order to sustain a continuous and widespread resistance against the Soviets. It was at this time that the Mujahedeen commanders also saw an opportunity to expand their profits and sustain their ranks on their own through the use of one lucrative cash-crop; the opium poppy.

It was only a couple years prior to Afghan Mujahedeen funding when General Zia gave in to US demands to cut opium production within Pakistan's borders, as the production of opium in Pakistan at the time was as great a threat, if not greater, than the production of opium in Afghanistan. Zia thus initiated coercive action against the crop in his country, leading to the reduction in its cultivation from 900 tons in 1979, to 60 tons in 1984.²⁵ This ultimately led to what scholars call the "balloon effect" (Russell, 2002;

²² Sarin, Oleg and Lev Dvoretzky, *The Afghan Syndrome: The Soviet Union's Vietnam* (New York, NY: Presidio Press, June 1st, 1993)

²³ McCoy, 2003, page 475

²⁴ McCoy, 2003, page 473

²⁵ *Pakistan Rule Says U.S. and West are Too Soft on Drug Dealers* (Rawalpindi, Pakistan: New York Times, August 12th, 1984)

Friesendorf, 2007; Lyman, 2013). The balloon effect occurs when tough, coercive enforcement is used to fight the illicit cultivation and production of drugs in one area or country and then, suddenly thereafter, the same, or another, illicit industry pops up with a vengeance in another area or country, thus reflecting what happens to an air-filled balloon when pressure is applied; its form is changed and the air inside is displaced.

While General Zia brutally reduced the illicit industry in Pakistan, Mujahedeen commanders in Afghanistan took the opportunity to invest heavily in the opium poppy so as to promote their cause against the Soviet forces, while at the same time strengthening their own ethnic and tribal factions. With the sole objective of ousting Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the CIA and the ISI funneled the funds to the respective Mujahedeen without making any attempt to control opium poppy cultivation or opium production in the country. Some of the Mujahedeen leaders exploited the crop by taxing its sale and, sometimes, even by establishing processing plants to process heroin, most of the time across the border into Pakistan with ISI approval, making the opium poppy versatile and even more lucrative than it already was. Although opium has been a controversial crop because it has been, to many Muslims, against the fundamentals of Islam²⁶, the notion that they would use the crop to oust an enemy from their territory, while at the same time sustaining their people's survival, took precedence. It became such a lucrative business that even ISI agents couldn't stand by idly and pass the chance to make their own profits from the crop. Opium thus began to flourish at unprecedented rates in the region. It seemed that Cold War priorities had left opium production unchecked; a situation which would lead to even more, complicated conflicts in Afghanistan's future. As McCoy writes;

By the early 1980s, Afghanistan had become the world's second-largest opium grower, the Pakistan-Afghanistan border was the leading source of heroin for Europe and America, and mass heroin addiction was sweeping Pakistan. In retrospect, this rapid change seems the result of pressures in the global drug market, local political forces, and covert operations.

The shift from Pakistan to Afghanistan was not the only reason for an increase in opium production. Until 1987-88, the Soviets did not use a "winning the hearts and minds" strategy in the country. Their tactics to rid Afghanistan of the Mujahedeen insurgency were "small-scale and uncoordinated"²⁷. Soviet implementation on the ground was defined by a "scorched earth" policy in which fields were burnt and agricultural resources destroyed, "forcing the rural population to leave for cities, which the Soviet forces controlled...By 1987, agricultural output was one-third of what it had been in 1978..."²⁸. As Alfred McCoy states, "...the Soviet army's modern firepower ravaged the herds and destroyed orchards that would have survived the traditional warfare of centuries past, crippling this unstable human ecology's capacity for recovery"²⁹. As a normal agricultural lifestyle could not be sustained, average farmers, who had little to do with the Afghan resistance movements, turned to opium poppy as a crop to assure their survival. This was of course possible due to the crops durability in harsh conditions and good turnover with the sale of opium.

The sudden boom in opium cultivation and production proved to be a vital weapon for the Mujahedeen against the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. In a 1988 study conducted by the RAND Corporation, author Alexander Alexiev outlines many different factors which negatively influenced the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Among these factors, he highlights the poorly prepared psychological state of the Soviet troops, the bad relations between younger and older soldiers, as well as soldiers of different ethnic backgrounds, and the horrible quality of life which the troops maintained while in Afghanistan.

²⁶ UNODC, 2013, Page 23

²⁷ Robinson, Paul, *Soviet Hearts and Minds Operations in Afghanistan* (The Historian, Blackwell Publishing Inc., 2010) page 2

²⁸ Felbab-Brown, Vanda, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2010) page 115

²⁹ McCoy, 2003, page 506

These factors were not as surprising, though, compared with the study's analysis of the amount of Soviet troops who abused drugs while on tour in Afghanistan.³⁰

The benefits of opium for the mujahedeen ranged from the purchasing of weapons, food, and clothing, to fighting the Soviets on a more equal level. "Control over the drug economy became a significant source of legitimacy for the Mujahedeen. Traditionally, tribal elites in Afghanistan derived legitimacy from their ability to provide security and distribute goods among members of their communities."³¹

The Era of the Warlords

In February of 1989, the last Soviet troops left Afghanistan. After the Soviets ceased their financial support to the country, a new era had begun. It was unfortunately not the era of peace which most were hoping for, but rather an era of prolonged warfare and internal strife; it was the era of the warlords.

As the Soviets were no longer present, their puppet government, installed in 1986 under the leadership of President Najibullah, was left alone to fight the unchecked Mujahedeen leaders. The Mujahedeen took over the capital, Kabul, in 1992 and overthrew Najibullah's government, but then soon turned on each other in what became a power struggle. Although the Mujahedeen fought a counterinsurgency alongside each other against the Soviets, they were, nevertheless, made up of different tribal and ethnic groups. After the Soviet withdrawal and the collapse of the Soviet-backed Afghan government, their common goal and objective had vanished and, with it, their alliances. Those same Mujahedeen leaders, who once led their men in the fight against Communism, would become the infamous and brutal warlords of post-Soviet Afghanistan.

Thanks to the CIA's and ISI's primary objective of ousting the Soviets from Afghanistan, all other matters seemed not as important and were pushed to the backburner. The cultivation of opium poppy and the production of opioids served their interests at the time, so they allowed what was globally illegal, to flourish without constraint or restriction in Afghanistan. This continued even after the Cold War and would last up until and throughout the U.S. war in Afghanistan which would later begin in 2001. As Ahmed Rashid explains in *Decent into Chaos*, "Having won the Cold War, Washington had no further interest in Afghanistan or the region. This left a critical power-vacuum for which the United States would pay an enormously high price a decade later."³² The amount of the CIA's and ISI's disproportionate funding to certain factions, compared to others, also created vacuums of power within the country; a problem which would last until today and affect social, economic, and political decisions in Afghanistan for a long time coming.

After the international spotlight was turned away from Afghanistan, each ethnic and tribal faction was soon able to stand on its own feet. Powerful Pashtun, Tajik, and Uzbek warlords popped up throughout the country and began their reign over various regions in Afghanistan. Due to the opium poppy crop's financially generous nature, it in turn provided the various warlords the power to shape the future fate of the country. It soon turned out that "all sides relied on involvement in the illicit economy to augment their power."³³ Jonathan Goodhand highlights that factors such as globalization and the collapse of a central government increased the illicit economy's profitability for the warlords. With globalization, he means that global demand for drugs increases the value of opium-poppy, and with the collapse of the central government, he explains that the regional and local commanders in Afghanistan were easily able to assume power with the absence of a central government. "All these factors have enabled Afghan drug

³⁰ Alexiev, Alexander, *Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan* (RAND Corporation, 1988) page 49

³¹ Felbab-Brown, 2010, Page 118

³² Rashid, Ahmed, *Decent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2008) page 11

³³ Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 120

barons to link into and profit from the global drugs trade...warlords may act locally but they think globally.”³⁴

The military leader Ahmed Shah Massoud of the Jamiat-i-Islami is a prime example of power based on the illicit economy. He and his commanders began to tax the cultivation of opium-poppy and used the profits in the struggle against the Soviets. After the Soviets left the country, Massoud would continuously raise the tax up to 20 percent, making his faction one of the richest in the country. He soon “controlled trafficking routes through Tajikistan to Russia and Europe and cooperated with a major Iranian drug baron, Hadj Gulyam, to ensure that the trucks that they sent to Iran loaded with opium made the return trip carrying money and weapons. Massoud...used [his] revenues not only to finance [his] militias but also to build up regional government and military institutions that functioned independently of Kabul.”³⁵ “Leadership has come with the gun (as opposed to consent) and commanders have a vested interest in the continuation of weak central authority in which there are few restraining influences on their local “fiefdoms”.”³⁶ As was the case for many other warlords in Afghanistan, Massoud’s reach of power continued to grow and, without international attention and without a central Afghan government, his reign ran unchecked. When Afghanistan officially became the Islamic State of Afghanistan on April 28th, 1992, his power allowed him to become the Minister of Defense of the country; a position he would not hold for long.

As fast as the various warlords came into power, they would just as fast be forced into hiding by yet another, more powerful faction; the Taliban.

The Taliban Rule

As legend has it, the Taliban emerged as a savior or, as Gretchen Peters puts it, as a sort of “Robin Hood”, for the people of Afghanistan in the mid-90s. In a period of time during which chaos was widespread and the infighting between tribes, factions, and warlords ravaged the country, the Taliban was able to offer the people a different form of governance; one offering security and stability for the average folk. Forming only in 1994 and rapidly gaining support from the masses on the basis of Islam, the Taliban briskly swept through the country, toppling powerful warlords and implementing their own law of the land. Beginning in Kandahar, a southern Afghan province deeply invested in the cultivation of opium-poppy, the Taliban had already controlled 12 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces as of 1994³⁷; evidence of its quick takeover of the country. In 1996, they would claim authority over most of Afghanistan.³⁸

The Taliban was led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, a man who was one of many resistance fighters trained by the Pakistani ISI during the fight against the Soviets in the 1980’s.³⁹ Unlike the many warlords of the post-Soviet era, Mullah Omar began his reign by using tactics which won over the hearts and minds of the masses. The initial increasing popularity of Omar and his Taliban was also fueled by the Afghan people’s hate for the warlords⁴⁰. During the rule of the warlords, the people were oppressed, forced to plant opium-poppy and made to surrender a large majority of their profits from its cultivation to their

³⁴ Goodhand, Jonathan, *From Holy War to Opium War?: A Case Study of the Opium Economy in North Eastern Afghanistan* (Manchester: Peace Building and Complex Political Emergencies, IDPM, University of Manchester, 1999) page 15

³⁵ Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 120

³⁶ Goodhand, 1999, page 9

³⁷ Goodson, Larry, *Afghanistan’s Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001) page 114

³⁸ The Northern provinces were still under control of the Northern Alliance; a faction made up of various warlords who stood against the Taliban.

³⁹ Price, Colin, *Pakistan: A Plethora of Problems* (Northfield, VT: Global Security Studies, Winter 2012, Volume 3, Issue 1) page 55

⁴⁰ Rashid, 2010, page 83

authority. Many times, they were also threatened with “castration or death”⁴¹. The Taliban at first moved to outlaw the opium trade since it was against Islam, but, realizing its worth, adapted its structure to it and reaped its benefits, while at the same time riding a fine line between Islam and opium cultivation. If their religious preaching’s were not enough, the Taliban were able to broker deals with local tribal leaders who were deeply invested in the opium trade. This provided the Taliban with what Vanda Felbab-Brown calls *political capital*, which includes “legitimacy – the belief among local residents that the belligerents’ actions are beneficial and justified; and popular support – residents’ willingness to provide supplies, shelter, and intelligence for the belligerent group”⁴².

The Taliban’s approach to gain political capital was multi-pronged and took all aspects of the opium trade into account in order to secure their rise to success, as outlined by Felbab-Brown in *Shooting Up*. The Taliban began by removing road tolls which were established by warlords to take copious amounts of money from Pakistani and Afghan truckers and smugglers who were both legally and illegally trafficking licit goods and opium on the roads connecting the two countries. Sometimes, a smuggler would be stopped as many as 20 times on a single route and charged an excessive pass fee at every toll; sometimes their goods would even be stolen by the warlords. These tolls harassed the smugglers and caused tension for Afghanistan and Pakistan alike, as the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA), which was established between the two countries since the 1950s, allowed Afghanistan the right to import goods duty-free through the Pakistani port-city of Karachi. Due to the country’s landlocked geography, this agreement was quite beneficial for Afghanistan. As it also promoted trade between the two countries, it was also beneficial for Pakistan. With such tolls in place, though, the warlords were undermining this agreement, and as the Taliban rid the transit routes of their harassment, the smugglers and trafficking networks found solace under the Taliban’s umbrella of security; even Pakistan supported their emergence. They would be handsomely rewarded for protecting the traffickers against the warlords, with both money and loyalty. Through such preliminary actions, their legitimacy with both traffickers and villagers along the trade routes increased.

In 1995, as the Taliban continued to emerge and gain more power, they attempted to ban the cultivation and trade of opium, as it was against Islam. But as quickly as they had instated the ban, they just as quickly lifted it in 1996⁴³. They had realized that the ban had caused an anti-Taliban sentiment among the masses of the south, as many of them were employed in the cultivation and trading industries of opium and used the profits to feed their families. Such a ban had created a resistance against the Taliban’s rise and, therefore, the Taliban’s view of opium quickly changed. In an interview with Ahmed Rashid in 1997, the head of the Taliban’s then Anti-Drug Force in the province of Kandahar, Abdul Rashid, explained that “opium is permissible because it is consumed by *kafirs*⁴⁴ in the West and not by Afghans, but hashish is consumed by Afghans and Muslims”⁴⁵, thus the ban on cannabis cultivation and a *Laissez Faire* approach to opium-poppy cultivation and trade.

Shortly thereafter, the Taliban had come to realize the financial potential of the opium industry and, therefore, began to levy taxes on both its cultivation and trafficking within Afghanistan, establishing a “De Facto Legalization” of the entire industry. As the opium industry gained traction, the Taliban imposed a 10 percent *ushr*, or tax, on both farmers and traffickers and, in 1996-1997, they were able to raise \$9 million; that sum is estimated to have risen to nearly \$200 million after they raised the tax to 20 percent⁴⁶. Traffickers benefited through the stabilization of their industry and the guarantee of security along their smuggling routes and the general population benefitted through the increasing opportunities of employment in the opium industry, as opium cultivation increased from 54,000 hectares in 1995 to 91,000

⁴¹ Peters, Gretchen, *How Opium Profits the Taliban* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, August 2009) page 8

⁴² Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 17. “Belligerents” in this context referring to the Taliban.

⁴³ Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 126

⁴⁴ The Arabic word for ‘non-believer’ or ‘non-Muslim’.

⁴⁵ Rashid, 2008, page 317

⁴⁶ Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 126

hectares in 1999^{47 48}. Corners of the Afghan economy which had no direct affiliation with the opium industry also reaped the benefits of the Taliban rule. These included “rest stops and fuel stations” along trafficking routes, construction companies which regained footing “in areas where opium poppies were grown”,⁴⁹ as well as basic businesses such as those at a bazaar. The industry became so organized that the Taliban even handed out permits for heroin labs⁵⁰ and issued tax receipts to truckers driving illicit goods into both Iran and Pakistan. Such a tax receipt, as seen on the DEA’s website, stated the following:

Asalamo Alaikum,

Gentlemen, the bearer of this letter, who possess 4 kilos of white good, has paid the custom duty at the Shinwar Custom. It is hoped that the bearer will not be bothered.

Signed by Incharge of Shinwar Custom Stamp⁵¹

Such positivity did not last long though. As the Taliban gained more and more legitimacy within Afghanistan, it saw “its long awaited international recognition more than ever compromised by the dramatic increase in Afghanistan’s opium production that [had] literally exploded in 1999”⁵². Therefore, in order to win over the recognized legitimacy of the international community, the Taliban instated a ban on opium cultivation in July of 2000, exclaiming that opium was “un-Islamic”; a move which drastically reduced opium production from over 5,000 tons in 1999, to less than 200 tons in 2001⁵³. Although the ban proved successful and some parts of the international community rewarded the Taliban for their enforcement efforts⁵⁴, it also caused Afghanistan’s economy to topple to the brink of collapse, as “15 percent of the population, including 80,000 farmers, 480,000 itinerant laborers, and their millions of dependents” fell victim to drastic income reductions and ultimately the loss of their families’ livelihoods⁵⁵. The country was in shambles.

Although the Taliban had attempted to save what little domestic legitimacy it had by rescinding its ban on opium in September of 2001, the events which would occur halfway around the world on the 11th of that month would lead to the nearly full annihilation of their presence and legitimacy in the country; a direct outcome of the presence of the new power in Afghanistan; the United States.

The United States

The United States invaded Afghanistan on October 7th, 2001 in a direct response to the al-Qaeda-led September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York City. Although confronted with a Taliban and al-Qaeda insurgency, the US military, along with allied NATO forces, swept through the country in what seemed like a speedy victory. Some say that such a speedy and successful invasion was an indirect outcome of the Taliban’s opium ban in 2000, as it was that ban specifically which had turned opium farmers and tribal communities against their rule. Unfortunately for the coalition, though, the war in Afghanistan would continue on and prove more troubling and complicated for counterinsurgency and counternarcotic efforts alike.

One major problem lied in the fact that preliminary US operations in Afghanistan were focused solely on the counterinsurgency against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, while strategies for counternarcotics

⁴⁷ UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey* (2013) figure 1, page 5

⁴⁸ The area of opium-poppy cultivation dropped to 54,000 hectares in 1995 from 71,000 hectares in 1994 due to the Taliban’s ban on cultivation, along with harsh weather conditions.

⁴⁹ Felbab-Brown, 2010, page 128

⁵⁰ Peters, 2009, page 85

⁵¹ <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pr/speeches-testimony/2001t/ct100301p.html> via Gretchen Peters, 2009, Page 82

⁵² Chouvy, Pierre-Arnaud, *Taliban’s Drug Dilemma: Opium Production vs. International Recognition* (Washington D.C.: The Central Asia – Caucus Analyst, Central Asia Caucus Institute, Johns Hopkins University’s Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Wednesday, December 8th, 1999)

⁵³ Naim, Moises, *Illicit* (London: Arrow Books, 2005) page 69

⁵⁴ McCoy, 2003, page 518

⁵⁵ McCoy, 2003, page 519

were viewed as less important and separate. Such a prioritization of objectives was reflected in Afghanistan's opium surge in 2002. "A year before the U.S.-led invasion, Afghan farmers harvested just 8,000 hectares – mostly in areas outside the Taliban's control, according to UNODC. In 2002, 74,000 hectares of poppies were planted. Overnight, Afghanistan became the world's leading opium producer."⁵⁶

One primary reason why a counternarcotics strategy was viewed as less important in the early years of the war in Afghanistan is because such a strategy would, in turn, negatively affect the counterinsurgency; if the US military focused efforts on fighting drugs in the country, their counterinsurgency strategy would turn into an uphill battle as they would lose the support of more than 10 percent of the Afghan population involved in opium cultivation⁵⁷. The United States' strategy to defeat al-Qaeda and the Taliban involved using Afghan warlords who were previously ousted by the Taliban in the 90s in order to oust the Taliban themselves and eliminate al-Qaeda. Those same warlords had already been heavily invested in the drug trade and to deny them their investments through counternarcotic efforts would have been catastrophic for the counterinsurgency. "American troops were there to fight terrorists, not suppress the poppy crop, and Pentagon officials didn't see a connection between the two.

The Pentagon feared that counter-narcotics operations would force the military to turn on the very same warlords who were aiding the United States against the Taliban, and that would lead to another round of violent attacks on American troops."⁵⁸ It was the goal of the US military that the warlords gain political capital throughout the country; a task which would, with the help of opium and the US military's *laissez faire* approach to drugs, prove quite easy.

While maintaining a *laissez faire* approach toward drugs, the US military provided Afghan warlords the allowance and protection to gain the political capital needed by any means necessary. The CIA simultaneously "handed out \$70 million in \$100 bills to [the same] local warlords"⁵⁹ in order to gain intelligence on the ground, as well as additional boots by means of the warlords' own local militias. According to Alfred McCoy, one Pashtun warlord was able to use the CIA funds in order to gather and arm 6,000 militiamen while making himself security minister of Jalalabad, the capital city of Nangarhar province.⁶⁰ "Now they (the warlords) had defeated the Taliban, and felt stronger than ever. Empowered by, but not necessarily loyal to, the Americans and Karzai, they dominated the political landscape. Often rapacious, corrupt, and ruthless, they hired large militias that terrorized the population but also kept a kind of peace. Their income came from road tolls, the drug trade, or the patronage they received from their foreign backers. Afghans hated them most because, invariably, they were the cat's paw for neighboring countries."⁶¹

As the warlords rose to prominence throughout Afghanistan again, thanks to the US counterinsurgency, they entered into politics in Kabul and partnered with the Karzai government. This only complicated the situation as they were able to "manipulate" any efforts by Kabul to hinder opium cultivation and drug production in the country, all the while continuing to reap the benefits from their involvement therein; oftentimes, those benefits doubled.

But while the US military stayed away from counternarcotic efforts in Afghanistan, the presence of drugs in the country still warranted action. Therefore, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) appointed Great Britain as the lead nation to conduct counternarcotic operations on the ground. Although establishing counternarcotic strategies and funneling millions of dollars into eradication and interdiction efforts, their attempts to control drugs and reduce cultivation and production ultimately failed on multiple accounts. British officials blamed the United States' *laissez faire* approach which entailed the US military's unwillingness to provide British counternarcotic officers with

⁵⁶ Peters, 2009, page 107

⁵⁷ UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey* (September 2006)

⁵⁸ Risen, James, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration* (New York, Free Press, 2006) page 154

⁵⁹ Felbab-Brown, 2009, page 135

⁶⁰ McCoy, Alfred, 2003, page 521

⁶¹ Ahmed Rashid, 2008, page 128

intelligence on major drug players in the country and its reluctance to aid the British with troop support in counternarcotic missions.⁶²

With pressure growing not only from the British, but from the entire international community (due in large part to record-breaking opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2004), the US government decided that it needed to change its counterinsurgency strategy to encompass counternarcotics, even though the Pentagon continuously maintained the position that they were separate wars altogether.⁶³ In 2005, the US developed a “five-pillared counternarcotics strategy” which included the assistance of, and the allocation of \$782 million to, multiple US government agencies.⁶⁴ Each government agency was to aid and facilitate each other’s implementation on the ground in Afghanistan. These agencies included the Department of Defense (DoD), the US State Department (State), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The five pillars included “(1) alternative livelihoods, (2) elimination and eradication, (3) interdiction, (4) law enforcement and justice reform, and (5) public information”.⁶⁵ Although partially praised, the US State Department noted that the strategy was hindered by widespread corruption and a lack of infrastructure in Afghanistan, among other things.⁶⁶ This became obvious in 2007 as opium cultivation in Afghanistan that year reached yet another record-breaking point with 193,000 hectares of land area cultivated, while opium production reached a record-breaking 8,200 metric tons, compared with 6,100 the previous year.⁶⁷ Along with opium, the Taliban was also reviving.

In 2009, after the DEA raided 25 heroin processing laboratories and discovered that they were all deeply involved with the Taliban, the U.S discontinued the “poppy crop eradication program in Afghanistan, saying that it was ineffective and drove farmers to side with the Taliban”.⁶⁸ In the summer of that year, the Obama administration shifted the focus of US counternarcotic policies from “premature eradication of poppy crops” to “increased interdiction and rural development”⁶⁹ while increasing US troop presence on the ground with a “surge” of 33,000 troops in 2010, a move which was welcomed by many critics of US counternarcotic policies. Since then, opium poppy cultivation again reached yet another record-breaking point in Afghanistan, with 209,000 hectares cultivated and a potential production rate of 5,500 metric tons in 2013, making Afghanistan accountable for over 80% of the world’s opium production.⁷⁰ With such figures, one questions the effectiveness of US counternarcotic policies in the country, as well as the policy implementation of the various US government agencies on the ground in Afghanistan.

In order to understand the occasional absence of, as well as the many revisions to, US counternarcotic strategies in Afghanistan since the US invasion in 2001, one must specifically analyze the organizational behavior of the key agencies involved in the formulation and implementation of those strategies rather than the government as a whole. By looking at the individual agencies on the basis of organizational behavior theory, one can more appropriately address the apparent divergent counternarcotic strategies being undertaken in Afghanistan. The following chapter will outline the

⁶² Felbab-Brown, 2009, page 140

⁶³ *Pentagon Sees Aggressive Antidrug Effort in Afghanistan* (The New York Times, March 25, 2005) http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/25/politics/25military.html?_r=0

⁶⁴ Five-pillared Counternarcotics Strategy as outlined by the United States Government Accountability Office (US GAO) in *Afghanistan Drug Control: Despite Improved Efforts, Deteriorating Security Threatens Success of U.S. Goals* (November 2006)

⁶⁵ US GAO, November 2006, page 2

⁶⁶ US State Department, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan* (August 2007) page 1-2

⁶⁷ UNODC, *Afghanistan Opium Survey* (2011)

⁶⁸ Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control, *U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan* (July 2010) page 2

⁶⁹ Felbab-Brown, Vanda, *The Obama Administration’s New Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan: Its Promises and Potential Pitfalls* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, September 2009)

⁷⁰ UNODC, *World Drug Report* (2014)

organizational behavior theory and describe the methodology which this paper will use in order to understand those divergent strategies.

Theory

The perception that many people have of governments is that they are single unitary actors; this is far from the truth. Governments are made up of various organizations, also known as departments or agencies, which themselves comprise diverging interests and varying procedural norms. These interests and norms evolve from the character of the organizations themselves and are reflected in their bureaucratic goals or mission, as well as the people who make them up. Richard Daft et al. define organizations as being “(1) social entities that (2) are goal-oriented, (3) are designed as deliberately structured and coordinated activity systems, and (4) are linked to the external environment”.⁷¹ As most governments throughout the world are made up of such bureaucracies, it is important to understand their structure, their interests, and the way in which they implement policy; be it in a domestic setting or abroad.

Organizational theory produces the framework to analyze such government organizations and understand why they make the decisions they make; it is the study of organizations and how they interact with the environment within which they operate. Established only in the 20th century to help aid the researcher in that endeavor, organization theory created an alternative to the more favored (at the time) rational choice theory, which lacked many valuable insights when analyzing the decision-making of a given organization. Whereas rational choice theory views the organization as a “rational” actor which weighs the costs and benefits of a certain decision it may make, organizational theory asserts that the actual organizational set-up of an organization plays the central role when making decisions; in organizational theory, the rational actor model has evolved into just one of the three primary theoretical models which constitute the overall theory.

In order to analyze government organizations and their decisions more closely using organizational theory, Allison and Zelikow established the *organizational behavior model*.

Organizational Behavior Model

The *Organizational Behavior Model* of organizational theory focuses on the “*outputs* of large organizations functioning according to regular patterns of behavior”⁷². In other words, it analyzes the routines and procedures of an organization and how they are reflected in what an organization does. In their analysis on the Cuban Missile Crisis, *Essence of Decision*, Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow concentrate on concepts of the organizational behavior model which included “existing organizational components, their functions, and their standard operating procedures for acquiring information, defining feasible options, and implementation”⁷³ in order to describe why the Soviet and American governments did what they did during a time of elevated military tension. As hypothesized by Allison, “if organizations produced an output of a certain kind at a certain time, that behavior resulted from existing organizational structures, procedures, and repertoires”.

Government organizations are established in order to produce specific outputs. For instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was created with the sole purpose of developing communities throughout the world; the CIA was created in order to gather intelligence in order to inform policymakers; the United States Department of Defense (DoD) was established with the sole mission of protecting the security of the United States of America. During the preliminary evolutionary phases of their establishment, certain rules were instated with the intention of maintaining a level of order while completing tasks aimed at fulfilling the organization’s mission. Certain procedures were also

⁷¹ Daft, Richard *Organization Theory and Design Eleventh Edition* (Mason, Ohio: South-Western, 2013) Page 12

⁷² Allison and Zelikow, 1999, pages 5-6

⁷³ Allison and Zelikow, 1999, pages 5-6

formulated so as to efficiently execute those tasks. These rules and procedure make up an organization's *standard operating procedures*, commonly referred to as SOPs.

SOPs are used by an organization in order to establish its organizational structure. It must do so because the organization itself is comprised of individual people in smaller organizations (we shall call them sub-organizations), known as departments, divisions, units, committees, etc. These groups of people, or *operators* as Wilson labels them, are placed together with the intention of completing specific tasks which contribute to the organization's general mission.⁷⁴ The fact that these people are capable of following the SOPs of their organization shows that they are capable of being 'molded' to embody the organization itself. This embodiment establishes an organizational culture with which the operators pride themselves. "Those who study the behavior of bureaucratic organizations often make the point that the individuals who work for a particular agency are socialized to reflect their own agency's interest and needs. In a sense, the characteristics of the bureaucracy are more important than the characteristics and personality of the individual."⁷⁵ Associating oneself with a culture contributes to 'what' an operator does (or does not) and 'how' an operator does it (or doesn't do it). In essence, SOPs establish the behavior of individuals within an organization.

Those same individuals, which comprise the various sub-organizations of the organization, are managed by other individuals, referred to by Wilson as *managers*⁷⁶. These people assure that the organization's SOPs are being followed by the operators as they attempt to complete their tasks. Managers enforce the SOPs, whether in a domestic setting or abroad.

Wilson also labels a third group of people called the *executives*. These people are positioned at the top of an organization's hierarchy and are the link between the law and the organization. They make sure that the organization does not "break the law" and that it executes its mission along the government's legal framework. As the organization is a formal government entity, it answers directly to legislature which in turn answers directly to the people which the government represents, or the citizens. The fact that an organization can be bound by law determines how an organization goes about accomplishing its missions. These executives also have a tendency to avoid short-term uncertainty when assuring the organization's mission success. By observing the outcomes of the various tasks being undertaken by the organization's sub-organizations, executives are able to gauge not only if the mission is being accomplished legally, but also if it's being accomplished efficiently. Thus, outcomes become a vital aspect of the organizational behavior model.

When producing outcomes, a government organization tends to implement policy through lessons of the past. In other words, if an organization has had past experiences which produced certain outcomes, positive or negative, it will use those experiences as a guide to implement future actions. The implementation capabilities of an organization become overly complex when that organization confronts a problem to which it is not attuned. If it is a problem which is foreign to the organization, the organization will attempt to avoid it while continuing to produce outcomes with its mission specific SOPs and culture.

Wilson also creates typology in order to differentiate between the various 'types' of organization. He asserts that there are four different types of organizations and that each of them are contingent upon two questions. His first question "Can the activities of [the organization's] operators be observed?"⁷⁷, directly refers to the outputs of an organization, or the work that it does. His second question, "Can the results of those activities be observed?"⁷⁸, refers directly to the outcomes of an organization's outputs, or the "results" of an organization's work. The type of organization depends on whether or not one can observe the outputs and outcomes of an organization.

⁷⁴ Wilson, 1989, Page 27

⁷⁵ Michael Cox and Doug Stokes, U.S. Foreign Policy Second Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) Page 7

⁷⁶ Wilson, 1989, Pages 111-136

⁷⁷ Wilson, 1989, Page 158

⁷⁸ Wilson, 1989, Page 158

The first type of organization is a *production organization*. In this type, both the outputs and outcomes of its organization are observable. This is primarily the case because the managers of production organizations can observe what its operators are doing and, when the outcome is negative, the managers can change the output of the operators in order to improve efficiency, thus improving the outcome.

In *Procedural organizations*, only outputs are observable. Their outcomes, on the other hand, are rather difficult, if not impossible to observe. Wilson uses the US Army during peacetime as a prime example of such an organization. The managers, or officers, observe the “training, equipment, and deployment”⁷⁹ of the organization, but cannot observe the outcomes which such outputs produce, primarily because they can only be produced on the battlefield on which peace is absent.

He goes on to say that when a procedural organization, such as the US Army, does indeed go to war, it becomes a *craft organization*. In craft organizations, the outcomes can be observed by the managers, i.e. the enemy is being eliminated or the enemy is resurging, but the outputs of the operators cannot be. This is due to the fact that the operators are fighting “in the haze, noise, and confusion of distant battlefields”⁸⁰. In such an environment, managers are lucky if they can observe anything their subordinates do.

Last but not least are *coping organizations*. In these organizations, neither output nor outcomes can be observed by their managers. Because such an organizational environment is difficult to manage, the managers must “cope with a difficult situation”⁸¹. Here, Wilson uses police officers as prime examples of such an organization. Since they’re in the field enforcing the law, their superiors cannot observe every output they perform. The level of order a specific officer maintains in an assigned location also cannot be directly observed, nor can it be directly “attributed to the officer’s efforts”⁸².

This study will highlight the prevailing organizational differences between US government agencies when it comes to counternarcotics. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Department of Defense. By applying this theory, the reader will understand why each of those US agencies has their own approach to dealing with drugs in Afghanistan. Various organizational factors such as operator output, manager oversight and executive guidance, as well as each organization’s past experiences, SOPs, routines, technological capabilities and the resulting organizational cultures, will explain in detail the reasons for diverging strategies.

The organizational behavior model of organizational theory thus creates the foundation for understanding why the counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies diverge in Afghanistan. But in order to test the theory and explain how those strategies do indeed diverge, it is necessary to utilize an appropriate methodological approach.

Methodology

Process tracing proves to be the most appropriate methodological approach to explain the diverging counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies in Afghanistan. It is an important method to use when conducting qualitative research. Developed by Alexander L. George in 1979 and built on further in 2005 by both George and his colleague Andrew Bennett, this approach “attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable”⁸³. By linking the independent variable with the dependent variable, process tracing provides the answer to the question ‘how’ in order to back up the ‘why’ divergent counternarcotic strategies exist. Identifying the link between the variables highlights a

⁷⁹ Wilson, 1989, Page 163

⁸⁰ Wilson, 1989, Page 165

⁸¹ Wilson, 1989, Page 168

⁸² Wilson, 1989, Page 168

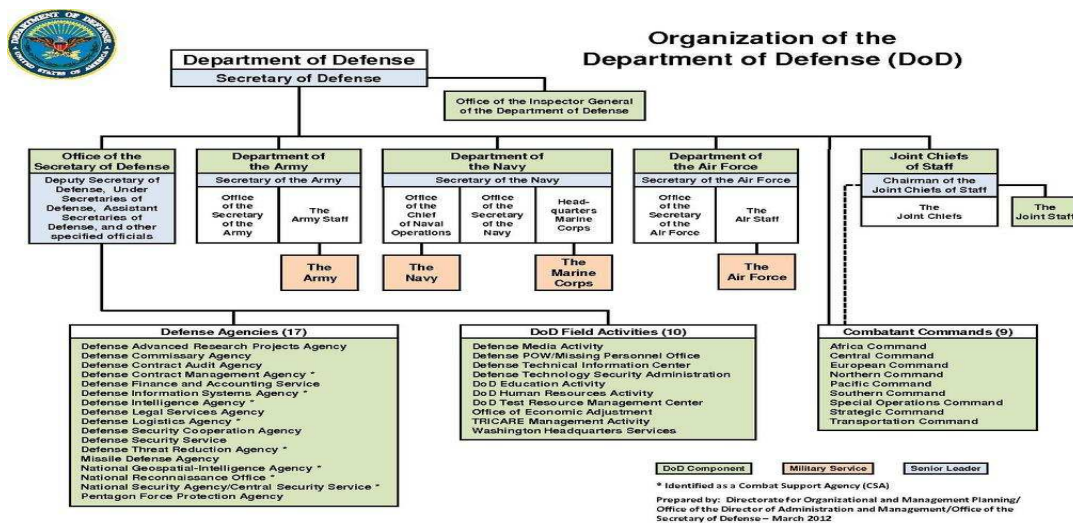
⁸³ George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005) Page 206

process which caused the outcome of the dependent variable. “Tracing processes that may have led to an outcome helps narrow the list of potential causes.”⁸⁴

In the following study, process tracing will be used in order to explain the diverging counternarcotic strategies of two US government agencies in Afghanistan. Diverging practices of US government agencies with regard to drugs in Afghanistan are indeed evident, but why do such divergences exist? By applying variables presented by the organizational behavior model, such as past experience, individuals working within the organization, standard operating procedures, organizational routines, and legal constraints, the reader will understand *why* government organizations such as the DEA and DoD practice divergent counternarcotic strategies in Afghanistan. Such divergent strategies are dependent on the independent variables characteristic of an organization. At the end of the thesis, one will better understand the causal process between both variables.

The Department of Defense

The United States Department of Defense, or DoD, is the largest of the United States’ government agencies with over 3 million employees, comprised of both civilian and military personnel alike. It is an organization which incorporates values such as defense and security into its overall mission in order for it “to provide the military forces needed to deter war and to protect the security of [the United States of America].”⁸⁵ Its complex organizational structure has been, over the years, established in a way so as to physically defend the United States and its interests from any external threat such as a hostile country or a religious extremist group. As outlined in Figure 1, the DoD consists of various sub-organizations, or departments, each of which are guided by the same general mission, but which are allocated their own department specific resources to do so. Those departments are also comprised of divisions with special, division-specific resources. “The smallest self-contained fighting unit is a division (or a reinforced regiment) consisting of thousands of personnel performing a myriad of specialized tasks. Tanks artillery, infantry, anti-aircraft, signals, engineering, and intelligence must operate on the basis of a common plan.”⁸⁶ The personnel performing many of these “specialized tasks” are soldiers in the U.S. military who take orders from officers who take orders from their superior officers and so on. It continues all the way up to the President of the United States, known also as the Commander in Chief of all US armed forces.



Courtesy of odam.defense.gov

Figure 1. Organization of the DoD

⁸⁴ Alexander and Bennett, 2005, Page 207

⁸⁵ Department of Defense, Mission Statement: <http://www.defense.gov/about/>

⁸⁶ Wilson, 1989, Page 58

The DoD is an organization based on hierarchy and it is exactly that which establishes a routine emphasizing the importance of ‘command’ and ‘follow command’. In times of peace, when the military is on standby, these routines are established through the abidance of rules and procedures specific to the Department of Defense. These rules and procedures can include saluting those soldiers higher in rank to show respect, wearing a wrinkle-free uniform with perfectly polished boots to show discipline, or acknowledging a superior officer’s command while yelling “Sir, yes sir!” to show obedience. Such rules and procedures enforce the routines which create a synchronized organization capable of performing tasks with the utmost professionalism and achieving outcomes with well-managed efficiency. It is particularly during times of peace when the military relies heavily on its own standard operating procedures (SOP) to create such efficient synchronization.

James Wilson uses those military specific SOPs to label the military as a *procedural organization*. He explains that the U.S. Army has particularly “devoted much of its peacetime efforts to elevating SOPs to the level of grand tactics by trying and then discarding various war-fighting doctrines”.⁸⁷ It can do this because its high ranking officers, or “managers”, can observe the output of its personnel, or “operators”, while incapable of observing the outcomes of that output. This is due to the fact that outcomes are only observable when attempting to execute the tasks created to accomplish a mission. The DoD can observably attempt to complete its mission in times of war because it is specifically an organization designed to confront war. “But when war breaks out, SOPs break down”.⁸⁸

When peacetime ends, so too does the military’s ‘procedural’ label. Wilson explains that, in times of war, the military becomes a *craft organization*. It is no more procedural because it now “consists of operators whose activities are hard to observe but whose outcomes are relatively easy to evaluate.”⁸⁹ While the soldiers of the military are out in the field attempting to complete the tasks necessary to accomplish the general mission of defending the United States, they are distant from those high in the organization’s hierarchy. Although their actions are to an extent unobservable, the outcomes of what they do, both bad and good, are.⁹⁰

The actions which are performed on the battlefield are usually a product of the military’s instated SOPs and its own military culture, but those are not always appropriate for every aspect of a certain problem which the military may confront. Such aspects can alter the environmental conditions under which the military is operating and, if this is the case, the DoD will attempt to avoid that aspect as much as possible, as it, as a governmental organization, is not attuned to such tasks. Changing its organizational behavior in order to encompass such a problem in its mission is not always a priority for the DoD. “When faced with changed environmental conditions, some organizations persist in traditional ways of behaving and others will adopt new ways of behaving.”⁹¹ When confronted with such a dilemma, the DoD prefers the former. This is especially evident in Afghanistan when the US military is confronted with the drug problem.

The DoD and Counternarcotics in Afghanistan

When the Bush Administration gained congressional approval to invade Afghanistan in October of 2001, following the 9/11 attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C., there was no question as to which of the government agencies at its disposal it would use; the DoD. This was an understandable decision, as terrorist attacks were perpetrated against the US and utilizing the government agency with the sole purpose of protecting the security of the United States was a direct response thereto. Although some scholars, such as Christopher McIntosh, argue that a law enforcement approach utilizing law enforcement

⁸⁷ Wilson, 1989, Page 164

⁸⁸ Wilson, 1989, Page 164

⁸⁹ Wilson, 1989, Page 165

⁹⁰ The actions of troops are, to an extent, observable, particularly in more modern, technologically advanced militaries in which reporting capabilities are more readily available.

⁹¹ Wilson, 1989, Page 93

organizations would have been more appropriate to fight a non-state actor such as al-Qaeda, the president would not have sent another government agency, say, the Social Security Administration, to deal with the impending War on Terror; that agency's bureaucratic specialization has little to do with the physical security of the nation, although 'security' is a part of its official title.⁹² The government's organizational division of labor had therefore allocated the DoD with the primary objective of defending the country and deterring its enemies, along with a generous financial budget to do so. Indeed it completed this objective; it toppled the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and thrust the al-Qaeda network into hiding. The problem was, though, it was viewed as a military victory, understood by the military as "...enemy forces were quickly defeated"⁹³. In traditional, more conventional warfare, this may have been the case, but when fighting an enemy who uses guerilla warfare tactics, it is difficult to know when they are truly defeated.

But while Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was claiming military victory against one enemy in 2003⁹⁴, the world was witnessing the emergence of another; opium poppy. Since the time of the military invasion in 2001, opium poppy production continued to increase with little deterrence. In writing about organizational learning, Karen Black defines *systems thinking* as "the importance of cohesiveness and interdependency within organizational structures and communities, even when some individuals are not viewed as allies". She also describes the attitude of an organization functioning contrary to such thinking. An example of such thinking is the US military, as it maintained an attitude of "stabilizing immediate problems rather than attempting to analyze each situation as a whole and determine the best course of action so that the problem or any other symptoms that may result from the "quick fix" attitude do not arise again."⁹⁵ Although constantly pressured by the international community, officials at the Pentagon continuously reiterated that the US military would not combine their counterinsurgency strategy with one of counternarcotics. "American troops were there to fight terrorists, not suppress the poppy crop, and Pentagon officials didn't see a connection between the two."⁹⁶ Since the military did not see counternarcotics as vital to the counterinsurgency, it maintained a *laissez faire* counternarcotics policy. This policy also stemmed from the fact that if the DoD had decided on a coercive approach, one which entailed eradicating opium-poppy fields, it would most likely have had to sacrifice the intelligence which it was gaining from the Afghan warlords, as the warlords themselves "had often been deeply involved in the drug economy since the 1980's"⁹⁷. The military did not want to jeopardize such a relationship which was vital to their counterinsurgency efforts. The complex dilemma which it would later confront would be the connection between opium poppy and the Taliban insurgency.

It was only in 2003 when the US military realized the potential detrimental consequences of its *laissez faire* counternarcotics approach; a realization that is evidence of what scholars of organizational theory call 'organizational learning'.⁹⁸ Although the Taliban and al-Qaeda were smashed at the onset, the terrorists and insurgents sought other ways to enhance their presence and might in the country and gain support from the Afghan people. In December of 2003, "a U.S. Navy team from the guided-missile destroyer USS *Decatur* boarded a dhow carrying two tons of hashish worth an estimated \$8 to 10 million. Three of the twelve crew members were found to have links to al Qaeda"⁹⁹. After having discovered that the terrorists were indeed involved in the drug trade and that they were collecting taxes amounting to over

⁹² McIntosh, Christopher, *Ending the War with Al Qaeda* (Philadelphia, PA: Orbis, Volume 58, Issue 1, Nov. 2014) Page 117

⁹³ Cox, Michael and Doug Stokes, *U.S. Foreign Policy Second Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) Page 142

⁹⁴ Peters, 2009, Page 189-190

⁹⁵ Black, Karen A., *The Systems Approach: A Model for Organizational Learning* (Florida: Florida Department of Law Enforcement, August 1996, SLP-4) Page 1

⁹⁶ Risen, James, *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration* (New York: Free Press, 2006) Page 154

⁹⁷ Felbab-Brown, Vanda, *Counterinsurgency, Counternarcotics, and Illicit Economies in Afghanistan: Lessons for State-Building* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2013) Page 190

⁹⁸ Levinthal, Daniel and James March, *The Myopia of Learning* (Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 14, 1993)

⁹⁹ Peters, 2009, Page 111

\$100 million from drug-traffickers and farmers, and that al-Qaeda was reaping the financial benefits of heroin trafficking across the border in Pakistan where they had regrouped¹⁰⁰, the DoD decided to invest \$73 million dollars in counternarcotic efforts in 2004, an increase from \$0 the previous year¹⁰¹. This proved that, after having ‘learned’ of a problem, ‘organizational change’ *could* indeed occur in a government organization such as the DoD. As Allison explains, “...organizations do change. Learning occurs gradually, over time. Dramatic organizational change occurs in response to major disasters.”¹⁰² Although the link between the terrorists and the drug trade was not ‘major disaster’ per se, it was indeed a major realization which need to be taken into the consideration of the counterinsurgency.

Unfortunately for the US government agencies physically dealing with the narcotics problem in Afghanistan, such as the DEA, State, and USAID, military funding for counternarcotics initiatives came at a point when yet another war began; Iraq. Although the DEA and State had been pushing for military troop involvement in combating drugs due to the link with the insurgents, DoD had bigger fish to fry by defeating Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq because of the ‘possibility’ of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). “In March 2003, the United States sent more than one hundred thousand troops into Iraq and mounted a “shock and awe” aerial bombing campaign over Baghdad that was aimed at overthrowing Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.”¹⁰³ In comparison to fighting drugs, the US military was much more equipped to fight a conventional war and overthrow a military dictator. Quoting Joseph Nye, Martin Rochester emphasized that the U.S. military is “a military that is better suited to kick down the door, beat up a dictator, and go home than to stay for the harder work of building a democratic polity”¹⁰⁴. It was not just the fact that the US military was more equipped to fight against a military adversary that it focused its attention on the Iraq war rather than counternarcotics though; it also had to do with the fact that the military knew what it was getting into because of past experiences. Twelve years prior, the US military fought the same regime in *Operation Desert Storm* and, because of that, it knew what to expect from that enemy; drugs in that part of world, on the other hand, was not an enemy which the US military could eliminate through sheer force. Including defeating such a ‘foreign enemy’ onto its list of critical tasks was therefore last on the list because it did not know what to expect. Although the funding for counternarcotics in Afghanistan was now more evident, physical troop support was not.

Although engaged in another war, the responsibility of the military in dealing with counternarcotics in Afghanistan went from just funding, to funding and providing vehicles, equipment, and weapons to those agencies directly dealing with counternarcotics. As the DoD is a government organization, it is constrained by the interests of US legislature which represents the American people, as well as other government agencies. The Department of Defense therefore adopted more change to its counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan, although reluctantly, according to the wishes of Congress. In Section 1022 of the *Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005*, Congress outlined that “the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of State and the heads of other appropriate Federal agencies, should expand coordination with the Government of Afghanistan and international organizations involved in counter-drug activities to assist in providing a secure environment for counter-drug personnel in Afghanistan...”¹⁰⁵ Such a recommendation by way of legislature was also pushed by other government agencies such as the Department of State and the Drug Enforcement Administration.¹⁰⁶ After Congress received a report that was compiled by State and DoD outlining the extent of how much

¹⁰⁰ Peters, 2009, Page 110, citing Mirwais Yasini, former head of Afghanistan’s Counter Narcotics Directorate

¹⁰¹ Peters, 2009, Page 190

¹⁰² Allison, Graham T., *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1999) Page 144

¹⁰³ Rochester, Martin J., *US Foreign Policy in the 21st Century* (Boulder, CO: Gulliver’s Travails, Westview Press, 2008) Page 2

¹⁰⁴ Rochester, 2008, p.118

¹⁰⁵ Public Law 108-375, 108th Congress, *Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005* (October 28th, 2004) Sec. 1022(a)(2)

¹⁰⁶ Meyer, Josh, *Pentagon Doing Little In Afghan Drug Fight: U.S. focuses on battling the Taliban, not the opium that funds it* (Washington: Los Angeles Times, December 5th, 2006)

opium poppy actually funded the insurgency, the new role of DoD in counternarcotics was established. In the *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2007*, Congress listed different “types of support” the DoD was to provide counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, including “vehicles...aircraft...patrol boats”, “The transfer of detection, interception, monitoring, and testing equipment” and “For the Government of Afghanistan only, individual and crew-served weapons of 50 caliber or less and ammunition for such weapons for counter-narcotics security forces.”¹⁰⁷

But just the same, as the DoD increased funding to counternarcotics programs and began to provide support in forms of surveillance and equipment to other US government agencies, coalition members, and the Afghan government, its ground strategy changed very little and remained focused of physically defeating the insurgency where it sprouted. Indeed the provisions of such resources were easy tasks for the Department of Defense because it had those resources to lend and it had that money to spend. That change to its strategy was not such a drastically altering change because its own forces would not have to directly partake in countering the drug trade. The military continuously emphasized that it was not a law enforcement agency (Richter, 2002; Meyer, 2006; Risen, 2007) and it reiterated that its forces would not partake in law enforcement issues because its capabilities and procedures did not exist for such tasks; they rather existed to fight a war. On those grounds, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld stated that expanding the focus of the military to include counternarcotics, which in his eyes was a law enforcement issue¹⁰⁸, would create a mission creep¹⁰⁹. As Allison continues in *Essence of Decision*, “Both learning and change are influenced by existing organizational capabilities and procedures.”¹¹⁰ In this sense, the DoD learned through experience, and it changed its contributions to counternarcotics missions accordingly, all the while keeping in mind its limitations by law, as well as its preexisting capabilities and procedures which have for its entire existence been used for war, not law enforcement.

US government agencies such as the DEA and State, along with the British forces leading the coalition’s counternarcotics mission in Afghanistan, were pleased with this increase in DoD contribution, but regarded its reluctance to assume the task of fighting drugs as unjustifiable. This was primarily due to the fact that USAID and State, in close cooperation with the Justice Department and DEA, organized a five pillar counternarcotics plan which encompassed, as stated in chapter 1.4, “(1) alternative livelihoods, (2) elimination and eradication, (3) interdiction, (4) law enforcement and justice reform, and (5) public information”.¹¹¹ In order to successfully and effectively implement each pillar of this newly strategized plan against drugs, security in Afghanistan had to be under control. State, DoJ, DEA, and USAID consulted with the DoD about its role in the strategy but, as “the overall goal of the strategy [was] to significantly reduce Afghanistan’s poppy cultivation, drug production, and drug trafficking”¹¹², DoD saw it sufficient to maintain course and stick to allocating funds and providing supplies to the other departments. Unfortunately, although “USAID and State initiated a number of projects under each of the U.S counternarcotics strategy’s five pillars,...delays in implementation – due to the security situation...-limited progress”.¹¹³ It was evident that the military’s mostly laissez faire approach was harming the counternarcotics initiatives of the other US government agencies because only the military could provide the security necessary to implement such vital tasks.

While USAID and State attempted to apply their strategy on the ground, a resurgence of the Taliban in 2006 continued to further dampen the situation, as it narrowed the military’s priorities yet again to focus solely on its counterinsurgency efforts. The increase in suicide bombings from 21 in 2005, to 141 in

¹⁰⁷ Public Law 109-364, 109th Congress, *John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007* (October 17th, 2006) Sec. 1022(c)

¹⁰⁸ Meyer, Dec. 5th, 2006

¹⁰⁹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines mission creep as “the gradual broadening of the original objectives of a mission or organization”.

¹¹⁰ Allison, Graham T., *Essence of decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, 1999) Page 144

¹¹¹ US GAO, November 2006, page 2

¹¹² US GAO, November 2006, page 2

¹¹³ US GAO, November 2006, page 3

2006, and the increased use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from 530 in 2005, to 1,237 in 2006, was evidence of the revitalization of the insurgency.¹¹⁴ “The Pentagon, engaged in a difficult fight to defeat a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan, has resisted entreaties from U.S. anti-narcotics officials to play an aggressive role in the faltering campaign to curb the country's opium trade. Military units in Afghanistan largely overlook drug bazaars, rebuff some requests to take U.S. drug agents on raids and do little to counter the organized crime syndicates shipping the drug to Europe, Asia and, increasingly, the United States, according to officials and documents.”¹¹⁵ While the DoD was focusing on defeating the Taliban resurgence, opium poppy cultivation increased 15% in 2006.¹¹⁶

In 2009, after even more years of increased poppy cultivation and the more obvious connection between drugs and the insurgency, the newly elected Obama administration decided to change the U.S.’ counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan. Leading the change to the strategy was the late U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke. At a G-8 conference in Italy in June of 2009, Holbrooke outlined the US’s new policy with just one sentence; “Eradication is a waste of money”¹¹⁷. According to him, “[the United States alienated] poor farmers who had no alternative cash crops or means of livelihood, “and [it was] driving people into the hands of the Taliban””¹¹⁸. The new strategy drastically reduced DEA and State supported eradication efforts in the country, substantially increased US military presence on the ground there, and attempted to “synchronize counternarcotics policies with its counterinsurgency efforts”¹¹⁹. The pillars in this new strategy can be seen to have remained unchanged when comparing it with the counternarcotics strategy under the Bush administration, but the prioritization of each had changed. Vanda Felbab-Brown explains though that “the effectiveness of [the new administration’s] counternarcotics policies there—interdiction focused on Taliban-linked traffickers and alternative livelihoods efforts—has been challenged by implementation difficulties and is ultimately dependent on major progress in improving the *security situation...in Afghanistan*”¹²⁰. This emphasizes that the DoD’s involvement is pivotal in successfully implementing the overall strategy.

Although this current strategy has indeed achieved limited direct military support, the problem continues to remain at an organizational level; more specifically the fact that the military is a government organization and it is bound by a legal framework. Currently, “the military can only directly target drug traffickers that have proven ties to insurgents” and “proving these links can be difficult and time-consuming, making it unfeasible for the military to engage in situations that require a quick response.”¹²¹ This reveals that the reluctance of the US military to involve itself in counternarcotics is not only due to its defense and security culture, but also, as previously asserted, due to its bounded legal framework restrictions, and thus continues even as the US begins to scale down its overall efforts in Afghanistan.

In 2014, the Department of Defense’s Principal Director for Counternarcotics and Global Threats, Erin M. Logan, explained that the DoD’s counternarcotics efforts consisted of two goals: “to counter and disrupt drug-related funding to the insurgency, and...to strengthen the Afghan government’s capacity to combat the drug trade during and after the security transition.”¹²² She has also stated that, of the \$570 billion spent on the war in Afghanistan, \$2 billion has been invested in “counternarcotics training and

¹¹⁴ BBC, *The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan*

(http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/the_taliban_resurgence_in_afghanistan , Accessed on Oct 30th, 2014)

¹¹⁵ Meyer, Dec. 5th, 2006

¹¹⁶ Weitz, Richard *New U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy for Afghanistan Leaves Critics Dissatisfied* (World Politics Review, August 15th, 2007)

¹¹⁷ Cook, John L., *Afghanistan: The Perfect Failure* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2012) Page 169

¹¹⁸ Lakshmanan, Indira A.R., *Holbrooke Says U.S. End to Afghan Drug Eradication Gets Results* (Washington D.C.: Bloomberg, July 30th, 2009)

¹¹⁹ Felbab-Brown, 2013, Page 190

¹²⁰ Felbab-Brown, 2013, Page 189 (my italics)

¹²¹ Curtis, Lisa, *U.S. Counternarcotics Policy: Essential to Fighting Terrorism in Afghanistan* (Washington D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, September 30th, 2013) Page 9

¹²² Roulo, Claudette, *Afghanistan Counternarcotics Efforts Continue, Official Says* (Washington: www.defense.gov, Feb. 6th, 2014)

programs”. She elaborated that “the form those efforts take include building the capacity of the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan, improving border security, promoting information sharing and fostering regional and international cooperation,...including with other U.S. government agencies.”¹²³ The US military continued to allocate even more funds to anti-drug efforts and added further, yet limited, counternarcotics tasks to its agenda; it still didn’t mean that it would apply its military muscle to deal with the situation. If anything, its objectives continued to remain focused on defeating the insurgency with what the DoD prides itself most; military might.

Just as Graham T. Allison explains in *Essence of Decision*, “...organizations influence the prioritization of purposes into a definition of their “mission” and are especially influential when the mission is translated, for a specific task, into more concrete, operational objectives. In that context, the organization may seek congruence between the operational objectives and its special capacities for efficient performance.”¹²⁴ Along such lines, the military as a bureaucratic organization had indeed translated its mission into “concrete, operational objectives”.

But, as Wilson explains in *Bureaucracy*, “the advantages of a clear sense of mission are purchased at a cost. Tasks that are not defined as central to the mission are often performed poorly or starved for resources”¹²⁵. Central to the mission of the DoD has been, since 2001, to defeat the insurgency, and just because the department at times slightly adjusted its focus to encompass supporting elements of counternarcotics, it didn’t mean that it would perform such tasks with the utmost performance and the most maximizing resourcefulness.

The Drug Enforcement Administration

The Drug Enforcement Administration, or DEA, is a United States government agency established in 1973 to uphold the Controlled Substances Act of 1970; a US policy which regulates narcotic drugs. The agency contrasts itself with the DoD in that it is a sub-department of the US Department of Justice. Whereas the head of the DoD, or the Secretary of Defense, answers directly to the President of the United States, the head of the DEA, also known as the Administrator of Drug Enforcement, answers directly to the head of the US Department of Justice, or the Attorney General, who himself, answers directly to the President. Rather than value and incorporate into its overall mission defense and security, as does the DoD, the DEA prides itself in being a federal law enforcement agency, with law enforcement being its forte. This is reflected in its overall mission, which “is to *enforce* the controlled substances laws and regulations of the United States and bring to the criminal and civil justice system of the United States, or any other competent jurisdiction, those organizations and principal members of organizations, involved in the growing, manufacture, or distribution of controlled substances appearing in or destined for illicit traffic in the United States; and to recommend and support non-enforcement programs aimed at reducing the availability of illicit controlled substances on the domestic and international markets”¹²⁶.

The organization of the DEA, as pictured in figure 2, is structured in such a way that enables the administration to efficiently tackle the problem of illicit drugs within the United States, as well as, in many instances, outside of it. It comprises, among others, a department which deals with intelligence, departments which focus solely on enforcement operations, and an office which deals with US legislature and drug policymaking. Those departments implement department specific tasks while utilizing task specific resources to do so.

Some of the DEA’s most important operators are its agents in the field. These operators are equipped with resources which enable them to physically enforce the law. They are the operators of the organization who ‘get their hands dirty’ in order to accomplish their tasks, which can range from

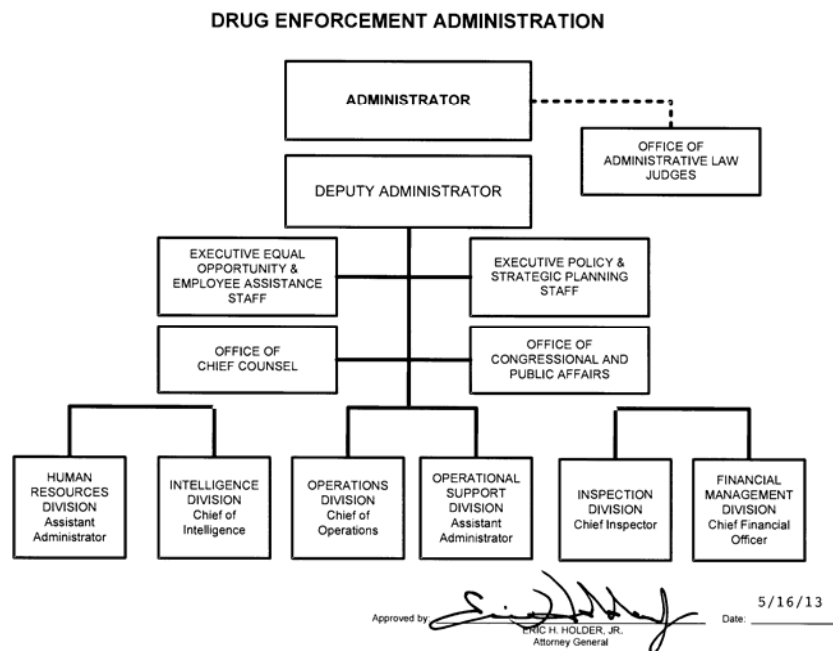
¹²³ Roulo, Feb. 6th, 2014

¹²⁴ Allison, 1999, Page 151

¹²⁵ Wilson, James Q., *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989) Page 110

¹²⁶ DEA Mission Statement, <http://www.dea.gov/about/mission.shtml>, (italics mine)

infiltrating a drug cartel in order to extract intelligence in order to support the overall mission, to performing interdiction operations against drug-traffickers in order to halt the flow of illicit drugs. The agents are the operators who quite literally enforce the law, both domestically and internationally.



Courtesy of www.dea.gov

Figure 2. Organizational Structure of the DEA

The DEA is not structured in a way in which it places emphasis and value on giving and following orders like the US military. While the military implements its mission's policy by fighting an enemy in times of war and stands by in times of peace, the DEA is constantly conducting counternarcotics operations. When conducting counternarcotics operations, in comparison to counterinsurgency operations, drugs are much more elusive and volatile in comparison to human enemies and, as such, require a unique approach to avert their problematic, far-reaching implications. Whereas the military fights enemies abroad, and is restricted from fighting enemies on American soil as a result of the *Posse Comitatus Act*¹²⁷, the DEA has jurisdiction to fight drugs both in the US and, when the negative implications of drugs are US oriented, abroad. It is thus the largest narcotics law enforcement agency in the world.

In order to implement policy to fulfill its law enforcement mission, the DEA has, under US constitutional law, established its own standard operating procedures. As it is a governmental organization, US legislature allocated the DEA certain SOPs by which it must legally abide when attempting to accomplish its overall mission. One example of such legal allocation is articulated in Article 878 under Title 21 of the United State Code (U.S.C). This statute gives legal authority to DEA personnel while they carry out their operational tasks and includes provisions such as carrying firearms and making "arrests without warrants"¹²⁸. Such SOPs are law enforcement specific and provide the DEA its capability to accomplish its mission. Compared with normal law enforcement agencies though, such as a city police

¹²⁷ Although, the US National Guard does indeed have the authorization to operate on US soil in certain circumstances.

¹²⁸ Drug Enforcement Administration, *DEA Agents Manual* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, 1999) Chapter 61 General, Subchapter 611 Authority and Conduct, Page 1

department, the DEA also has SOPs which are specifically established to accommodate counternarcotics efforts.

Similar to the military in times of war, the DEA can be categorized as a *craft organization* under Wilson's criteria, because the output of its field agents, or operators, is difficult to observe, whereas the outcomes of their actions are observable.¹²⁹ Specifically in the field, DEA agents are on their own and making their own decisions with regard to how a certain problematic situation should be handled. Although they are accustomed to the SOPs of the organization, they must improvise at times in order to more appropriately diffuse a situation or solve a crime. Such agent improvisation in the field becomes a cultural norm within the organization and reflects the behavior of its operator. As counternarcotics is a more specific form of law enforcement, an organizational culture which deals solely with drug-related situations is inevitable. As drugs are such volatile illicit commodities, a culture charged with a flexible, improvisation-oriented nature seems to be the most appropriate to implement counternarcotics policy; a culture like that of the DEA.

But culture, when abiding by tradition and maintaining constant, outdated policies, has the ability to affect the implementation of the intended strategies. And too much organizational flexibility can oftentimes lead to problems between other government organizations. Such organizational problems are evident when comparing the DEA's counternarcotics strategy in Afghanistan with the strategies of other government agencies in the country.

The DEA and Counternarcotics in Afghanistan

The DEA reopened its Kabul Country Office in Afghanistan in February of 2003, a year and a half after the US military invaded the country in 2001. As the counterinsurgency there was priority number one, the US government placed less emphasis on the problem of illicit drugs in the country. Although the DEA had just under 10,000 employees at the time, of which nearly 5,000 were special agents¹³⁰, it was only allowed to station two agents in Afghanistan of whom the "movement and ability to conduct traditional drug enforcement operations [had] been severely restricted"¹³¹. In a DEA Congressional Testimony in 2004, DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy explained that the reasons for this low presence in a country with such a great drug problem were because "the criminal justice system is in disarray", "the country is not uniformly controlled by a central government", and there is no proper Afghan counterpart with which the DEA can consult and interact. Such challenges present multiple problems for the DEA, as it is an organization which normally consults foreign governments on how to deal with the problem of drugs in their country and typically does so in areas where a militarily waged war is not underway. Thus, it needed to improvise its strategy in Afghanistan and start from scratch in the middle of a war; an endeavor which the DEA was not accustomed to in its over 30 year existence.

Another major problem from the onset was that the DEA was at odds with both the Central Intelligence Agency and the US Department of Defense. Even before the US military invaded the country, the CIA was on the ground gaining human intelligence on the Taliban from anyone it possibly could so that DoD would have an easier time in defeating the insurgency and its allies. In many cases, the easiest way to gain such intelligence was to provide people throughout the country with money, as 'money speaks'. Many of the people who received CIA funds were warlords with whom the CIA worked against the Soviet Union in the 1980's, then called the Mujahedeen, as established in chapter 1. During that time, the CIA gave out money, the Mujahedeen invested it in opium cultivation, and the proceeds therefrom bought the weapons needed to fight the Soviets. The US thus looked the other way when it came to drugs, as they helped achieve US interests at the time; the CIA and the US military were doing

¹²⁹ Wilson, 1989, Page 165

¹³⁰ DEA Staffing and Appropriations Chart, www.dea.gov/about/history/staffing.shtml

¹³¹ Tandy, Karen P. *Afghanistan: Law Enforcement Interdiction Efforts in Transshipment Countries to Stem the Flow of Heroin* (Washington D.C.: Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Committee on Government Reform, U.S. House of Representatives, February 26th, 2004)

the same in Operation Enduring Freedom. Intelligence against the enemy was instrumental for fighting the insurgency, and thus, drugs were left untouched.

As CIA informants were using their funds to invest themselves more into the opium market, the DEA found itself in a catch-22. It was a law enforcement agency in a country where law barely existed; it would be counterproductive for its agency to conduct counternarcotic operations when such actions would disrupt intelligence gathering from the CIA which would in turn negatively affect the counterinsurgency, especially when the CIA and the US military did not want to involve themselves in counternarcotics. At that point, it seemed that intelligence agencies and the military would have the upper hand in such a war-torn environment. A simple response to such alienation of its agency's mission on the ground in Afghanistan could have been to pursue tactics of either an intelligence or military nature. But because the DEA was neither of the two, it did not want to be labeled as such because it would in turn affect its overall mission, thus possibly altering its law enforcement culture and indefinitely limiting its ability to pursue its goals. "DEA does not want to be part of the IC for several reasons. First, DEA does not want to receive requirements - particularly because DEA would not receive additional money. Second, being part of the IC would interfere with DEA's foreign relationships. Third, DEA would then be overseen by the Congressional intelligence oversight committees."¹³²

While the CIA was providing money to warlords, the DEA was attempting to convince the DoD to target drug traffickers who usually worked closely with those same warlords. But because they received the CIA's financial support in order to aid the US counterinsurgency efforts, the military was reluctant to do so. But this propelled corruption throughout the country, as those involved in the drug trade were also able to buy off authorities and evade indictment, thus complicating the DEA's mission yet further. In some instances, members of Hamid Karzai's government, appointed directly by him, have been rumored to be heavily invested in the drug trade and have been for a long time already.¹³³ Most of the time, these have been the same Afghan officials and warlords who "still work closely with the U.S. military and the CIA"¹³⁴. This had been happening all the while USAID and the US State Department were working towards eliminating corruption within the Afghan government and while the DEA was fighting the drug trade altogether. While commenting on Alfred McCoy's analysis of the CIA's involvement with drugs, Peter Dale Scott sums up the CIA's preliminary strategy in Afghanistan in 2001;

*Perhaps the best example of such CIA influence via drug traffickers today is in Afghanistan itself, where those accused of drug trafficking include President Karzai's brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai (an active CIA asset), and Abdul Rashid Dostum (a former CIA asset). The drug corruption of the Afghan government must be attributed at least in part to the U.S. and CIA decision in 2001 to launch an invasion with the support of the Northern Alliance, a movement that Washington knew to be drug-corrupted.*¹³⁵

As the DEA has traditionally been a law enforcement agency, it sought to enforce the law in Afghanistan and imprison drug offenders in the country. But due to the extreme corruption and lack of judicial infrastructure, it was evident that the administration was becoming more and more frustrated. In one instance, "the D.E.A. and the Afghan national police arrested two drug suspects in remote Kunduz Province, only to find themselves hauled before the provincial governor as a crowd gathered outside. The drug team had to leave their suspects in custody in Kunduz"¹³⁶. In a New York Times interview, federal prosecutor Rob Lunnan, who consults the Afghan Counter Narcotics Criminal Justice Task Force (CJTF), explained that "...[i]t's happened several times that there will be a raid, and a mayor is involved, and

¹³² Bertini, Judith, *Briefing by the Drug Enforcement Administration* (Washington D.C.: Department of Justice, October 16th, 2003) Page 3

¹³³ Peters, 2009, Pp. 20-21

¹³⁴ Peters, 2009, 186

¹³⁵ Scott, Peter Dale *Opium and the CIA: Can the US triumph in the Drug-Addicted War in Afghanistan?* (Montreal: Centre for Research on Globalization, April 9th, 2010)

¹³⁶ Risen, New York Times, 2007

nothing happens...”.¹³⁷ But it wasn’t only members of Karzai’s government and/or former warlords who were involved with drugs; it was also the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Even though “CIA Director George Tenet testified to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence [in 2000] that “there is ample evidence that Islamic extremists such as Osama bin Laden use profits from the drug trade to support their terror campaign”¹³⁸, the CIA continued handing out cash as if it would at no time and in no way reach the insurgents’ and the terrorists’ pockets. Thus, in 2002, before the DEA even placed a foot in Afghanistan, “Asa Hutchinson, the DEA administrator at the time, said his agency “[had] received multi-source information that Osama bin Laden himself [had] been involved in the financing and facilitation of heroin trafficking activities.”¹³⁹ Since his administration was now in Afghanistan, it needed to publicly prove that the nexus of drugs and terrorism was indeed a reality in the country; it needed to show the other government agencies in Afghanistan that its sheer existence as an organization was indeed justified so that it could attempt to complete its mission goals in that country. If it didn’t succeed in convincing the other government agencies to combine counternarcotics efforts with counterinsurgency efforts and gain interagency cooperation, “DEA agents [wouldn’t be able to] move about the mountainous terrain without helicopters and, in many cases ...infiltrate well-protected drug operations...”¹⁴⁰

But just as the DEA had set up its operations in the country and had begun to seek interagency cooperation with other US agencies, “the Bush administration ramped up for war in Iraq... [T]he official language on [the drug] issue took a 180-degree turn, to the immense frustration of U.S. officials who track it closely”¹⁴¹. Robert Charles, the former director of the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), explained that, at that time, he “was only permitted to say that we had a ‘high probability’ of drug money going to the Taliban and ‘the possibility’ of it going to al-Qaeda...”¹⁴² This shift in focus made it even more difficult for the DEA to gain leverage in Afghanistan.

Although newly reintroduced in Afghanistan, counternarcotics seemed to become a sideshow to the counterinsurgency and the US military, being spread even thinner across two countries, saw the DEA’s insistence for interagency cooperation as interfering with its own organizational goals. But the DEA, itself seeking organizational legitimacy and the accomplishment of its own goals, was adamant about the counterinsurgency moving the spotlight to encompass the drug trade as well. Thus, the DEA requested, on numerous accounts, that the DoD help in aiding its efforts to eliminate opium production and trade in Afghanistan (Tandy, 2004). Although the military, in comparison with all other US agencies on the ground there, was most capable of undertaking operations against drug traffickers, it did not want to do so. Military officials allowed the DEA to conduct counternarcotic operations, but the DEA needed to rely on the military for sheer strength. The Foreign Relations Committee reported news that “U.S. military units would not disrupt opium bazaars, rarely stopped drug shipments moving toward the borders, and routinely rejected DEA requests to provide backup to their missions.”¹⁴³

It seemed that the goals of both US government agencies were odds. To illustrate just how divergent the interests of the DEA and the DoD have been, one can review a memorandum of agreement between the two agencies which entails mutual support in personnel recovery in US foreign engagements. Although the two agencies were in Afghanistan for already four years together, the agreement was only signed in 2007. “This is the first such MOA on personnel recovery signed by the DoD and the DEA. Similar agreements are being coordinated with other organizations within the U.S. government. This memorandum is implemented to protect the lives and well-being of employees from both agencies who participate in U.S.-sponsored activities or missions outside the country. Through this partnership, personnel recovery policy, planning, training, operations, and research and development will be

¹³⁷ Risen, New York Times, 2007

¹³⁸ Peters, 2009, Page 15

¹³⁹ Peters, 2009, Page 15

¹⁴⁰ Meyer, Josh, US Pentagon Resists Pleas for Help in Afghan Opium Fight

¹⁴¹ Peters, 2009, Page 16

¹⁴² Peters, 2009, Page 16

¹⁴³ Peters, 2009, Page 184

coordinated to mutually support both agencies.”¹⁴⁴ The fact that such an agreement had to be formulated in order for one US government agency to help another US government agency in saving the lives of their personnel is indeed cause for concern, but it highlights the notion that the DEA and the DoD are two entirely separate bureaucratic organizations under the umbrella of the US government and that they have maintained completely different interests in organizationally collective missions abroad. In this case, it is worrying that government agencies in Afghanistan have not, until 2007, worked together to recover their personnel in foreign conflicts; it was only the *responsibility* of the POW’s or missing personnel’s agency.

Unfortunately for the DEA, their goal of convincing other government agencies that a cooperative counternarcotics strategy is indeed pivotal for winning the counterinsurgency appeared still unattainable. Therefore, as a government agency, it needed to first convince those sitting on the Hill in Washington D.C. in order to gain some leverage with the other agencies. “The DEA’s advocates in Congress argue[d] that the Pentagon could undermine the insurgency by combating the drugs that help finance it”...whereas... “[m]ilitary officials [continuously] say they can spare no resources from the task of fighting the Taliban and its allies.”¹⁴⁵ In 2005, in the US House of Representatives’ Committee on International Relations, Chairman of the Committee Henry J. Hyde explained that “[w]e need our Department of Defense to work cooperatively and coordinate with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the State Department to take on this threat of narco-terrorism. Otherwise, all our efforts amount to spinning our wheels.”¹⁴⁶ Later in 2005, while the DEA was creating a storm about the matter in Washington D.C., legal US law enforcement provisions had changed;

*Section 122 of the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005 (codified at 21 U.S.C. § 960a) expands federal jurisdiction for drug crimes committed outside the United States, where the prohibited drug activity is for the purpose of funding any person or organization that has engaged or engages in terrorist activity or terrorism. As a practical matter, the provision expanded the reach of U.S. law enforcement beyond U.S. borders by granting extraterritorial jurisdiction to investigate, indict, and seek the extradition of narcoterrorists worldwide.*¹⁴⁷

This change in law gave certain US law enforcement agencies, such as the DEA, jurisdiction worldwide. This was different than the previous law enforcement provisions in that the DEA now did not have to prove that the drugs were coming into the US in order to conduct operations against those involved with drugs. It just had to prove that the drugs were funding terrorism; only then could the DEA “investigate, indict,” and extradite the narcoterrorists anywhere in the world. Once this provision of the Patriot Act was passed, the other government agencies had to respect it.

Not only was the DEA’s jurisdictional reach changed, and with it DEA standard operating procedures; its cultural identity underwent a change in the form of adaptation. More specifically, “a component of DEA, the Office of National Security Intelligence, joined the intelligence community in 2006 to better coordinate drug- and terror-related intelligence.”¹⁴⁸ This occurred even after Judith Bertini, Acting DEA Assistant Administrator for Intelligence, exclaimed in October of 2003 that “DEA is a law enforcement agency, not an intelligence agency; as a result, everything at DEA has to do with operations, and there is no separation between intelligence and operations”¹⁴⁹. She further explained that DEA’s mission “is to put people in jail, not collection of intelligence for the sake of intelligence. Law

¹⁴⁴ Department of Defense, News Release, <http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=10778>

¹⁴⁵ Meyer, December 15th, 2006

¹⁴⁶ Hyde, Henry J., *U.S. Counternarcotics Policy in Afghanistan: Time for Leadership* (Washington D.C.: Hearing Before the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 109th Congress, First Session, March 17th, 2005) Page 7

¹⁴⁷ United States Government Accountability Office (US GOA), *Drug Control: Better Coordination with the Dept. of Homeland Security and an Updated Accountability Framework Can Enhance DEA’s Efforts to Meet Post-9/11 Responsibilities* (Washington, D.C.: Diane Publishing, 2009) Page 18

¹⁴⁸ US GOA, 2009, Page 19

¹⁴⁹ Bertini, October 16th, 2003, Page 1

enforcement needs intelligence “to do”; the IC needs intelligence “to know.”¹⁵⁰ It seemed that environmental conditions in Afghanistan, and/or elsewhere, had forced the DEA to undergo organizational change. This change is evidence of Wilson’s explanation for organizational change; “When faced with changed environmental conditions, some organizations persist in traditional ways of behaving and others will adopt new ways of behaving.”¹⁵¹ While the DoD prefers the former, the DEA seems to prefer the latter.

In 2008, the DEA finally got what it wanted; “the Pentagon changed its rules of engagement to permit US troops to target traffickers allied with insurgents and terrorists, and soldiers were allowed to accompany and protect counternarcotics operations run by Americans and Afghans.”¹⁵² That same year, the DEA established its commando enforcement arm known as FAST, or Foreign-Deployed Advisory and Support Team, and with such, was able to conduct and execute one of its most successful operations in Afghanistan; Operation Albatross. The operation ended with a seizure of 262 tons of hashish and was reported to be “the largest of any known drug seizure. Operation Albatross was a result of the joint effort between the Government Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and DEA’s Foreign-Deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST). Operation Albatross was also supported by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization International Security Assistance Force (NATO-ISAF), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Department of State.”¹⁵³ It was becoming increasingly evident that the DoD, along with other organizations involved in the counterinsurgency, were aiding the DEA in accomplishing its mission.

After the United States’ five-pillar counternarcotics strategy was revamped in 2009 under order from the new Obama Administration, to focus on “interdiction and rural development”¹⁵⁴ and place less emphasis on State-led eradication efforts, the DEA seemed to be gaining more traction in Afghanistan. Under direction of the US Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, “[t]he number of permanent DEA agents in Afghanistan ha[d] increased from 13 to over 80 in 2011 and the Pentagon...established a Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-Nexus in Kandahar to provide coordination support and intelligence for DEA interdiction missions and ISAF counterinsurgency operations that target insurgents with links to the drug trade.”¹⁵⁵

From 2011 up until 2014, there still remained one major problem though; the statistics. Since the DEA is labelled as a “craft organization”, the operations and actions which its agents have undertaken on the ground are not as easily observable as, say, an agency like the IRS, or a “production organization”, in which one “can observe the activities of its clerks and auditors...”¹⁵⁶ One *can* indeed measure the outcomes of their efforts, though, just like the IRS measures “the amount of money collected in taxes as a result of [its employees] efforts.”¹⁵⁷ As can be seen in figure 3, the results show a failed counternarcotics crusade on behalf of the US, NATO, and Afghanistan alike, as they are all attempting to work together in order to resolve the problem of drugs. From 2010 onward, the rate of opium cultivation has risen to unprecedented levels, surpassing 2007’s record-high of 193,000 hectares in 2013.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁰ Bertini, October 16th, 2003, Page 2

¹⁵¹ Wilson, 1989, Page 93

¹⁵² Mercille, Julien, *Afghanistan, Garden of Empire: America’s Multibillion Dollar Opium Harvest* (Montreal: Global Research, June 8th, 2014)

¹⁵³ Courtney, Garrison, *DEA Releases Photos of Record-Breaking Seizure in Afghanistan* (Washington D.C.: News Release, www.DEA.gov, June 13th, 2008)

¹⁵⁴ Felbab-Brown, September 2009, Page 2

¹⁵⁵ Mercille, June 8th, 2014

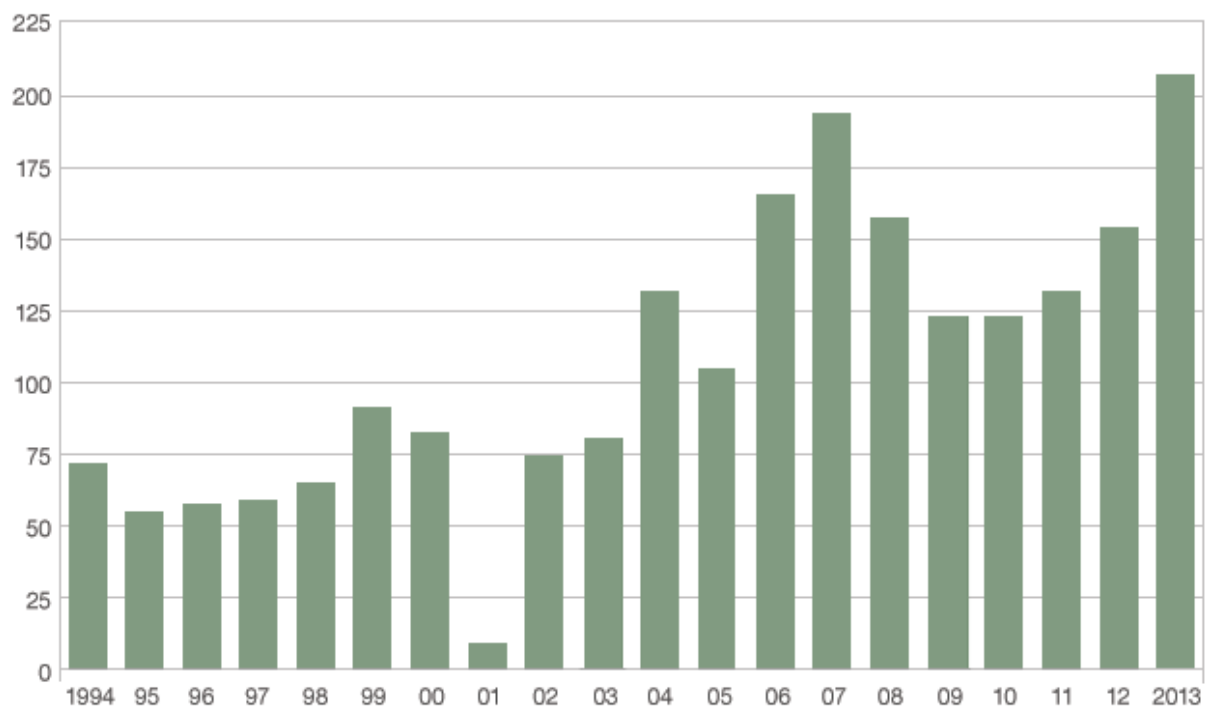
¹⁵⁶ Wilson, 1989, Page 160

¹⁵⁷ Wilson, 1989, Page 160

¹⁵⁸ UNODC and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter Narcotics, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2014: Cultivation and Production* (November, 2014) Page 12

Opium cultivation in Afghanistan, 1994-2013

Hectares (thousands)



Source: UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013

Figure 3. Opium Cultivation in Afghanistan, 1994-2013

Although the focus has turned to interdiction with the DEA leading the efforts jointly with the DoD, rather than eradication, opium production continues to rise as well, reaching 6,400 tons in 2014; up from 3,700 in 2012.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, the insurgency has gained footing yet again, as well, and has resurged throughout many regions of Afghanistan, as outlined in a July 2014 United Nations news brief; “...deaths and injuries caused by mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire in ground engagements jumped dramatically as the frequency and intensity of these incidents increased in 2014, particularly in areas with concentrated civilian populations.”¹⁶⁰

Even though the DEA has been claiming victory in its own battle to gain organizational legitimacy for its mission in both Afghanistan and on Capitol Hill, it has not been able to accomplish its actual mission in Afghanistan; “to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug trafficking organizations posing the greatest threat to the United States”¹⁶¹, aka the terrorist organizations and the insurgents. In *Essence of Decision*, Allison and Zelikow explain that “organizations must adapt to... new problems, acting in an environment surrounded by other organizations, private as well as public. This adaptation is another reason why, as they evolve, “policy preferences of organizations reflect mainly non-ideological

¹⁵⁹ UNODC and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Counter Narcotics, November, 2014, Page 34

¹⁶⁰ United Nations News Centre, *Afghanistan: Ground combat taking ‘devastating’ civilian toll, says UN, reporting sharp rise in casualties* (www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48229#.VJOPnXkKA, July 9th, 2014)

¹⁶¹ Soiles, James, *Statement of James Soiles, Deputy Chief of Operations, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice before the U.S. House of Representatives for a hearing entitled After Withdrawal: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Part III)* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, December 10th, 2014) Page 1

organizational imperatives”.”¹⁶² In this sense, the DEA focused more on organizational imperatives rather than accomplishing its own mission objectives in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the US-led war in Afghanistan, the drug problem in that country has continued to persist and cause problems at “levels unprecedented since at least World War II”¹⁶³, both nationally and internationally. While the drug trade continues to thrive, repeated Taliban resurgences continue to create complications for the success of both the counterinsurgency and the establishment of Afghanistan’s stability. Although US government agencies on the ground in Afghanistan implement counternarcotics policies by contributing their own knowledge and resources to counternarcotics operations, they each face their own difficulties while do so.

US counternarcotics policies in Afghanistan have undergone several changes from 2001 until the present, in multiple attempts to manage the drug problem there, but opium cultivation and production rates continue to increase more than ever before. When the US invaded in 2001, it “took a hands-off approach to the drug problem in Afghanistan, focusing on working with former war lords (who had ties to the drug industry) to destroy al-Qaeda bases and keep the Taliban at bay”.¹⁶⁴ In 2005, as the nexus between drugs and the insurgency became more evident, the Bush Administration created a five-pillared counternarcotics strategy which allocated \$782 million to multiple US government agencies in order to implement policy on the ground.¹⁶⁵ As cultivation and production rates continued to rise and the Taliban continued to resurge, the Obama Administration rearranged the priorities of the five-pillared strategy and in doing so, placed less emphasis on forced eradication and more emphasis on the interdiction of drug-traffickers. Yet the problem of both drugs and the insurgency continue to persist. In 2013, the UNODC recorded the highest rate of opium cultivation in Afghanistan ever with over 200,000 hectares of land cultivated, while at the same time, reports of a resurging Taliban continuously make media headlines.¹⁶⁶

This paper has outlined the divergent counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies on the ground in Afghanistan and has focused attention more specifically on the strategies of the US Department of Defense and the Drug Enforcement Administration. Since it is at this level of government where strategies are formulated and policy is implemented in order to achieve the more general government objectives, this thesis has asserted that the difficulties which these agencies face in Afghanistan are, in essence, a product of their own organizational make-up or, more specifically, their different interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines. Failure to effectively manage the drug problem in Afghanistan cannot be, therefore, attributed solely to the general counternarcotics policies, but rather the implementation of those policies.

When focusing on the counternarcotics strategies of the DoD and the DEA, another “war” in Afghanistan becomes evident. Since the beginning of the US-led war, both government agencies have fought to maintain their own organizational legitimacy by attempting to fulfill their own organizational goals. While abiding by their pre-established organizational norms and procedures, each agency has created tasks which are aimed at completing the general missions, specific to each organization, in Afghanistan. Such organizational differences have created tensions between the agencies in Afghanistan and have ultimately created divergences in counternarcotics strategies there.

By utilizing the organizational behavior model of organizational theory, this thesis has been able to show the usefulness which an organizational approach has for foreign policy research. By analyzing

¹⁶² Allison and Zelikow, 1999, Page 149

¹⁶³ Felbab-Brown, 2013, Page 189

¹⁶⁴ Curtis, 2013, Page 2

¹⁶⁵ US GAO, *Afghanistan Drug Control: Despite Improved Efforts, Deteriorating Security Threatens Success of U.S. Goals*, November 2006

¹⁶⁶ Azam, Ahmed, *Taliban Making Military Gains in Afghanistan* (Mahmud Raqi, Afghanistan: New York Times, July 26th, 2014)

organizations, or in this case, government agencies, researchers are better able to gain more insight into the implementation of foreign policy. Counternarcotics research tends to focus more specifically on the formulation of policy rather than the implementation of policy or, in general terms, what's on paper rather than how it's put into action. Such tendencies create obscurity, as general government policies are vague and open for interpretation. An organizational approach focuses more on how such policies are interpreted at an organizational level and why. Further foreign policy research, and more specifically counternarcotics research, must therefore place more emphasis on organizations, or, in the case of counternarcotics, on government agencies, and less on government legislature where policy is formulated.

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