



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

**JAMES SOILES
DEPUTY CHIEF OF OPERATIONS
DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEES OF MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, AND
ASIA AND PACIFIC
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FOR A HEARING ENTITLED

**AFTER WITHDRAWAL: THE WAY FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND
PAKISTAN (PART III)**

PRESENTED

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Statement of James Soiles
Deputy Chief of Operations, Drug Enforcement Administration
Before the Subcommittees of the Middle East and North Africa, and
Asia and the Pacific
Committee on Foreign Affairs
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Introduction

Chairmen and Ranking Members, and distinguished members of the Subcommittees, on behalf of Administrator Leonhart and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), I appreciate your invitation to testify today.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's core mission is to disrupt and dismantle the most significant drug trafficking organizations posing the greatest threat to the United States. Terrorist organizations and insurgent worldwide, including groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, benefit from drug trafficking. Terrorist organizations require money to operate, train, and execute attacks and are increasingly turning to the estimated \$400 billion per year global drug market as a source of financing.¹ DEA has linked 22 of the 59 foreign terrorist organizations to drug trafficking. One quarter of those foreign terrorist organizations that have been linked to drug trafficking operate in or are associated with Afghanistan and/or Pakistan.

Many of these organizations and other insurgent groups operate in or receive drugs or drug-related funding from drugs that are produced or transit through Afghanistan and Pakistan. DEA's objectives in these countries are designed to establish or enhance strategic partnerships with foreign counterparts, deny drug-generated revenue to terrorist organizations and insurgent groups, promote government stability through the rule of law, and expose and reduce corruption.

In order to fulfill our objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan, DEA leverages our existing programs, such as specialized vetted units; our Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST); the Special Operations Division to support, mentor, and advise foreign counterparts and coordinate, deconflict, and synchronize ongoing investigations; and support from the Departments of State and Defense.

Background

On October 30, 2014, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) released a quarterly report to Congress warning that "opium production in Afghanistan is at or near an all-time high." The report also indicated that the United States (U.S.) and our allies have

¹ Congressional Research Service Report to Congress "Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy," April 5, 2004, p. CRS-2.

deemphasized counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. However, DEA and our partners have continued to address the drug threat in Afghanistan.

Afghan-produced opium, morphine base, heroin, and hashish frequently transit Pakistan before reaching global markets. It is estimated that 160 tons of heroin and 80 tons of opium are smuggled annually across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In addition, currently there are 24 Afghan and 15 Pakistani individuals and/or entities designated as significant Foreign Narcotics traffickers under the Kingpin Act.²

In response, DEA identifies, investigates, infiltrates, indicts, and incarcerates members of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) responsible for the production and distribution of illegal drugs around the world. In order to accomplish these activities, DEA establishes and enhances strategic partnerships with foreign counterparts, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Situation Today

Afghanistan produces an estimated 80 percent of the world's illicit opiates; however, only a small percentage of Afghan-produced heroin is destined for the United States.³ The primary markets for Southwest Asian opiates continue to be in Europe, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, China, and, increasingly, Africa. In order to reach these markets, Afghan-produced drugs must transit through other countries. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that 42 percent of the opiates that exited Afghanistan transited Pakistan.

The drug trade in Afghanistan continues to undermine economic development, enable corruption, erode government stability, facilitate other forms of transnational organized crime, and threaten the rule of law across the region.

The nexus between drug trafficking and the insurgency in Afghanistan is not a new concept. Insurgent groups in Afghanistan have long utilized drug-related proceeds to advance their political agenda and corrupt and destabilize the country and region.

Successfully addressing this threat must include actions to interdict the transit of drugs out of Afghanistan. Pakistan is one transit country for drugs exiting Afghanistan and precursor chemicals, such as acetic anhydride which is an essential chemical in the conversion of morphine to heroin, entering Afghanistan. Since January 2014, DEA counterparts in Pakistan seized approximately 960 kilograms of heroin, 25,000 kilograms of opium, and 52,865 kilograms of hashish. During fiscal year 2014, the Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan initiated and led 2,684 operations, arrested 2,771 individuals, destroyed 38 clandestine drug labs, and seized over 109 metric tons of drugs, over 50,000 liters and approximately 50,000 kilograms of precursor and other chemicals used to produce illegal drugs. Additionally, in fiscal year 2014, DEA and our counterparts denied over \$51 million in drug-related revenue to organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

² Includes individuals and entities with a SDNTK designation under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Sanctions Regulations, [31 C.F.R. part 598](#) Available: <https://sdnsearch.ofac.treas.gov>, numbers pulled November 20, 2014.

³ https://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2014/World_Drug_Report_2014_web.pdf, Page 21.

Staffing

DEA currently has approval from the Department of Justice and the Department of State for 30 permanent positions in Afghanistan, down from 82 in FY 2013 as part of the Administration's staffing draw down. In addition to the 30 permanent positions, DEA is authorized 12 temporary duty positions, consisting of two pilots and ten Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Team members. Additionally, the DEA Kabul Country Office is supported by 18 contract employees, including nine intelligence analysts, three pilots, five air wing mechanics/avionics technicians, and one office network technician.

The Islamabad, Pakistan Country Office is currently staffed by six DEA employees and two foreign service nationals. DEA anticipates reassigning two special agent positions from the Islamabad Country Office to the Karachi, Pakistan office when it re-opens. In the interim, DEA is using temporary duty deployments to staff the Karachi office.

Vetted Units and Capacity-Building

Vetted Units serve as a DEA force multiplier in the foreign arena. Currently, DEA has 13 Sensitive Investigative Units (SIUs) operating worldwide. The members of these specialized units, established in partnership with the host country, have successfully passed extensive screening requirements, and received basic and advanced training designed to increase their capacity and capability. Our capacity-building efforts include: training, providing equipment and infrastructure, and mentoring by DEA enforcement, intelligence, and training personnel. These efforts support larger U.S. policy objectives promoting regional stability and rule of law.

DEA special agents and intelligence research specialists, serving as mentors, work side-by-side with these units throughout the world. Through this program, DEA is currently mentoring over 1,000 foreign counterparts assigned to SIUs and Vetted Units worldwide. Historically, members of DEA-sponsored SIUs are frequently promoted to high-ranking positions within their organizations, which further strengthens the strategic partnerships with our foreign counterparts. For example, in Colombia, two of the active duty 2-star Generals in the Colombian National Police were former commanders of a DEA SIUs while two other 3-star Generals had divisional oversight of DEA SIUs.

In Afghanistan, the Kabul Country Office, with the support of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement and the Department of Defense, is engaged in a decade-long effort to assist the Afghan government by developing Ministry of Interior specialized units of the Counternarcotics Police-Afghanistan (CNP-A) and working to disrupt and dismantle trafficking organizations and break the country's nexus between narcotics and the insurgency. DEA, with support from the Department of Defense and the Department of State, has developed the specialized units of the CNP-A, through training and mentoring, to be able – on their own – to investigate, arrest, and assist in the prosecution of high-level drug traffickers.

DEA was also instrumental in standing up the Afghan National Interdiction Unit (NIU) currently staffed at 536 members. DEA is also assisting with the Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) and the Technical Investigative Unit (TIU) currently staffed at 77 members. An additional 159 civilian Afghan translators support the TIU.

In Pakistan, the DEA has entered into a letter of agreement with the Anti-Narcotics Force of Pakistan. This unit is composed of approximately 100 vetted personnel who have been selected to work with foreign law enforcement representatives based in Pakistan. DEA's relationship with the ANF/SIC is supported by the U.S. Department of State/Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement-Pakistan (DoS/INL-P).

Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Teams (FAST)

The DEA also supports Afghan counterparts with our FAST. The teams are comprised of ten special agents who have received specialized training by U.S. Special Forces. FAST rotates into Afghanistan every 120 days. FAST augments DEA's workforce and capabilities in Afghanistan and partners with the National Interdiction Unit to identify, target, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations.

Special Operations Division (SOD)

DEA's Special Operations Division directly supports Afghan and Pakistani law enforcement activities, including SIU efforts directed against significant drug trafficking organizations. The Bilateral Investigations Unit, within SOD, works closely with the Kabul Country Office to leverage U.S. extraterritorial authorities against the most significant drug trafficking organizations in Afghanistan. SOD also assists DEA offices worldwide with case deconfliction, synchronization, and coordination. SOD supported investigations have led to the apprehension of several traffickers in Afghanistan, including Haji Juma Khan, who was reputedly Afghanistan's biggest drug kingpin, with ties to the Taliban and the leader of one of the largest drug trafficking organizations in the Central Asia region; Haji Bagcho, an Afghan heroin kingpin who was one of the first defendants ever extradited to the United States from Afghanistan; and Khan Mohammed, who intended to ship heroin to the United States and use profits from that trade to assist the Taliban. A dangerous narco-terrorist, Khan Mohammed would have used the profits to purchase rockets to attack American and coalition soldiers who were risking their lives to stabilize Afghanistan.

Looking Ahead

Moving forward, the scope of DEA's counterdrug operations in Afghanistan will be reduced consistent with U.S. military and coalition forces drawdown that supports field operations throughout Afghanistan, particularly in areas more prone to instability such as parts of Helmand and Kandahar.

As the U.S. military continues to drawdown forces in Afghanistan, the Kabul Country Office will more closely resemble a traditional DEA foreign office. We will remain close partners with the SIU and support operations by the NIU.

In Pakistan, DEA and our foreign partners have identified numerous heroin shipments departing from the Makran Coast of Pakistan and Iran destined for east Africa. These shipments, which usually involve hundreds of kilograms of heroin, enter Africa before being transported to their final destinations. In order to address this emerging threat, DEA initiated a containment strategy designed to stem the flow of heroin entering East Africa. As part of this strategy, DEA sought

and received approval to re-open an office in Karachi, Pakistan. Once fully operational we anticipate our office in Karachi will work closely with our office in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Special Operations Division to coordinate the disruption and interdiction of many of these heroin shipments.

Additionally, DEA offices in Afghanistan and Pakistan will continue to assist domestic DEA offices with bilateral investigations, collect and disseminate drug-related intelligence, and train and mentor foreign counterparts.

Lastly, the difficulty in securing the extradition of wanted criminals from either Afghanistan or Pakistan limits our ability to bring defendants to a U.S court of law. DEA has had past success in gaining legal custody of defendants on a case by case basis, and will continue to work with our host nation counterparts to see that justice is done.

Conclusion

DEA's continuing presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan is designed to preserve security gains made over the past decade and to continue to fulfill our core mission of disrupting and dismantling the most significant drug trafficking organizations posing the greatest threat to the United States. DEA, through a strategic partnership with our host nation counterparts in the region, continues to disrupt and dismantle DTOs, contain the flow of drugs from Afghanistan, disassemble threat networks, and work with external partners to coordinate counternarcotics efforts in the region.

These efforts are an important aspect to long-term security, development, and good governance, but political will and the assistance of other countries in the region are critical to manifest and mobilize a well-coordinated, multilayered approach to this extremely complex issue.

The opium trade in Afghanistan is the single largest funding source for the insurgency and undermines economic development, erodes government legitimacy, and threatens stability and security of Afghanistan and the region. Afghan-led counternarcotics programs, reinforced with support from DEA and other international partners, play an important role in preserving the progress made over the past 13 years, while advancing Afghanistan's long-term security and strengthening institutions and governance.

In Pakistan we must continue to pursue a collaborative and productive relationship with the government. Cooperation and information-sharing with our counterparts continues to improve as we tackle a shared threat. Moving forward we will pursue a regional interdiction approach whereby we work with our international counterparts to further disrupt the insurgency-narcotics network.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and we look forward to working together with you on counternarcotics operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere.