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EXAMINING THE CIRCULAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HEROIN TRADE
IN AFGHANISTAN AND AFGHAN INSURGENCY FUNDING

by

Edward J. Kljunich

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The heroin trade is a vital part of the Afghan economy. The heroin trade in Afghanistan has represented 40% to 50% of the country's entire gross domestic product for the past 30 years. The aim of this study was to examine the heroin trade as a circular circuit. Disrupt or break the circuit and the heroin trade comes to a halt. A disruption in the drug trade is also a disruption for the insurgency since the majority of the insurgency's funding is generated by the heroin trade. Historically, there have been times when neighboring borders were closed, poppy crops failed, or eradication efforts were stepped up. These all caused disruptions in the heroin trade and slowed the flow of heroin leaving Afghanistan and the flow of money going back into the country. By studying the heroin trade from this circular perspective, law enforcement will be able to initiate ways to step up anti-narcotic efforts on multiple fronts. This will stem the flow of heroin leaving Afghanistan and the money coming back in, with an end goal of ending the Afghan heroin trade overall. Previous studies have focused on only one aspect of the Afghan heroin trade. Using a multi-pronged approach offers the most options for law enforcement to launch anti-narcotic efforts against the drug lords and traffickers.

Keywords: Afghanistan, criminology, heroin trade, circular, disruption, insurgency, destabilization, corruption, drug trade

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Introduction

Afghanistan is at the heart of the illegal transnational heroin trade emanating from the region referred to as the Golden Crescent (Medler, 2005; Chouvy, 2006). The Golden Crescent is comprised of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was the start of the modern transnational heroin trade (Medler, 2005). The mujahidin resistance fighters to the Soviet invasion needed money to purchase weapons to fight the Soviets. Weapons were sold and sent to mujahidin fighters by the US government, starting with the Carter administration. The volume of weapons sold and sent to Afghanistan increased during the Reagan administration (Medler, 2005).

The majority of the funds to purchase these weapons were made from the illegal heroin trade. Previous studies of the Soviet occupation have shown that the United States was not actively involved in the heroin trade, however, Medler (2005) states, “there were extensive sins of omission,” by the United States (Medler, 2005, p. 275). These sins of omission reflected the United States’ Cold War strategy against the Soviet Union, where Afghanistan was used as a political battleground by the United States. The United States averted its eyes from the illegal heroin trade and focused on the damage that the mujahidin fighters could do to the Soviets (Medler, 2005).

These sins of omission continued with the US invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001 and through the first few years of the Afghan occupation (Jones, 2008). In 2001, approximately 350 United States Special Forces soldiers, 100 Central Intelligence Agency officers and 15,000 Afghan soldiers overthrew the Taliban regime in less than three months (Jones, 2008). The United States suffered one dozen fatalities during the initial overthrow. Between 2002 and 2006, the Taliban and other Afghan insurgent

groups began a sustained effort with the goal of overthrowing the legitimate Afghan government, which was supported by coalition forces (Jones, 2008).

Previous studies have shown that during this period of time the numbers of attacks by insurgents rose by more than 400% and the numbers of deaths from these attacks rose by more than 800 % (Jones, 2008). There was a substantial increase of violence in 2005 and 2006 where the numbers of insurgent attacks spiked. The number of suicide bombings rose from 27 to 139; the number of remotely detonated bombings rose from 783 to 1677; and armed attacks rose from 1,558 to 4,542 (Jones, 2008). Also, between 2006 and 2007 insurgent-initiated attacks rose an additional 27%. The result of these increases in violence was a lack of security for the Afghan population as well as coalition forces and a breeding ground for the drug trade and insurgency to flourish (Jones, 2008).

When the United States-led coalition forces invaded Afghanistan, combating the drug trade was not a primary focus of the coalition forces. However, as the years passed and the insurgency grew and attacks on the Afghan government and coalition forces mounted, eyes turned to where the insurgency was acquiring funding. In 2004, John Walters, who was the Director for White House Office of Drug Control Policy said, “drug cultivation and trafficking in Afghanistan are undermining the rule of law and putting money in the pockets of the terrorists we are trying to neutralize,” (Bagley, 2004, p. 5). A connection was made between the insurgency and the drug trade. The opium trade funded terrorism, inhibited reconstruction and created a financial and locally supported power base for the insurgency to launch attacks on coalition forces, further destabilizing the government and the country (Taylor, 2004; Johnson, 2007).

Destabilization of Afghanistan is the goal of the insurgency. Destabilization of the Afghan government benefits both the insurgency and the drug lords. The poppies that produce heroin are grown throughout Afghanistan, however, the majority of cultivation is concentrated in the southern and eastern regions of the country (UNODC, 2003; UNODC 2005; UNODC, 2006; Medler, 2005). These regions are where the drug lords reign supreme and the legitimate Afghan government is unable to project power or exert rule of law or control. These regions are also where the insurgency launches its attacks and is able to avoid capture and detection from government and coalition forces since the Afghan government is unable to control these areas (Medler, 2005; Jones, 2008).

The insurgents are given financial support by the drug lords. With this financial support the insurgents purchase weapons, ammunition and bomb-making materials. Attacks by these well-armed insurgents are launched against Afghan and coalition force targets. Having such an additional well-armed force at the disposal of the drug lords benefits their drug trade. As part of the financial support given to the insurgents, the drug lords now have an additional armed unit, which aids them in transporting heroin out of Afghanistan. The drug lords can protect their heroin convoys, as well as the convoys of supplies that are brought back into the country that are required to break down poppies and produce and refine heroin.

High poppy production equals more poppies to produce heroin. More heroin means more money to the drug lords. More money for the drug lords means increased insurgency funding. This allows the insurgency to continue to launch attacks against the legitimate Afghan government and coalition forces. Combined, these factors further destabilize the country, thus pushing Afghanistan in the direction both the insurgents and

the drug lords want the country to go--a destabilized Afghan government. This environment would allow the drug lords to cultivate, produce, refine, transport and export heroin with minimal government interference. This would increase profits for the drug lords and remove one of their largest obstacles, mainly the anti-drug enforcement efforts from the legitimate Afghan government. The insurgency would then realize their goal of expelling the foreigners (Coalition forces) and the demise of the legitimate Afghan government.

Since the goal of the insurgency is to destabilize Afghanistan, the drug lords and insurgents share a common goal. This common goal provides the basis for why they work together to destabilize Afghanistan. The motives for why each particular group wants destabilization are irrelevant. The simple fact that they share this common goal is the key point to understand and on which to focus. For the drug lords, the heroin trade is about power, profit and greed. For the insurgents, the heroin trade is viewed as a means to an end. For these reasons and others, applying Conflict Theory would be appropriate. Afghan society is divided into areas controlled by the Afghan government and areas controlled by the drug lords. The two groups have competing ideas and values (Babbie, 2010). The group that reigns over a particular Afghan region determines the societal controls under which Afghan citizens live.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the current research is to show that the drug trade and the insurgency are similar to a circular electrical circuit pattern. There are six steps in the drug trade; these include:

- 1) cultivation of opium poppies to produce heroin;

- 2) production of heroin from the opium;
- 3) transportation of the heroin out of Afghanistan into the world market;
- 4) distribution and sales of the heroin in the end cities;
- 5) subsequent movement of the profits from the sale of the heroin back into Afghanistan to the drug lords;
- 6) provision of funds by the drug lords to the insurgents.

A breakdown in any one of these six areas interrupts the electrical circuit. If such a breakdown occurs, the drug trade grinds to a halt until the circuit is reestablished.

By examining the relationship between the drug lords and the insurgents as a circular electrical pattern, insight may be gained into ways to break the circuit and lessen the flow of drugs out of Afghanistan and the flow of money from the heroin trade back into Afghanistan. Less money coming back to the drug lords would mean they would have less money to give the insurgency, therefore restricting the activities of the insurgents and reducing attacks against coalition forces and the legitimate, freely elected government of Afghanistan. Rather than Afghanistan becoming a destabilized state where the heroin trade would continue unabated, Afghanistan would become a stable and centralized government with the ability to project power and rule of law throughout the country. Afghanistan would uniformly be able to combat the drug trade and the insurgency, thereby eliminating two of the largest obstacles Afghanistan faces in becoming an autonomous self-governing country free from international aid. A stable, self-sufficient Afghanistan would improve security in the central Asian region, as well as improving security in Western countries. Afghanistan would no longer be a haven for

Islamic extremists, and the threat of a terrorist attack from Afghan-based extremists would be reduced.

Rationale

Studying the relationship between the insurgents and the drug lords and their common goal of destabilization is vital for the Afghan government's long-term ability to govern. From determining the allocation of anti-narcotic resources, to being able to project their legitimate power throughout the country, the Afghan government needs to understand the relationship between drug lords and the insurgency. Corruption of Afghan government officials and law enforcement officers is a major problem in combating the illegal drug trade. The drug lords use their power and money to bribe government officials and law enforcement officers to look the other way. This corruption is not only happening in Afghanistan but extends to the surrounding border countries of Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Research Questions

This study will examine the following questions:

- 1) Is there is a circular pattern to the Afghan drug trade and the insurgency?
- 2) What role do destabilization and corruption play in the heroin drug trade and insurgency in Afghanistan?

Limitations/Delimitations

Some of the limitations of this study include potentially inaccurate figures and statistics gathered by the United Nations and Drug Enforcement Agency (UNODOC), due to the illicit nature of the heroin trade. However, the statistics from the World Drug Report are universally accepted as the best approximations of the actual drug trade in

Afghanistan. An additional limitation of this research is that first-hand interviews about the drug trade with actual participants in the trade will not be possible due to the illicit nature of the trade and the distance to Afghanistan to conduct interviews. These same limitations apply to the insurgency. The majority of the information for this research will come from second-source data collected by reporting agencies and previously written articles, journals and books.

Some of the delimitations of this study that can be controlled will be the various groups described in this study. Some of the key groups that will be discussed will be the Afghan drug lords, Afghan insurgents, Afghan law enforcement personnel, Afghan government officials and Allied coalition force personnel.

Definitions:

Circular electrical circuit pattern to the drug trade - The Afghan drug trade is similar to an electrical circuit. The drug trade is comprised of six components (see below). If a break in any one of these six drug trade components, then the circuit of the drug trade is broken. The drug trade comes to a halt until the circuit is re-established.

Break in the circuit - A break constitutes any type of anti-narcotic law enforcement actions aimed at stopping the flow of drugs out of Afghanistan, disrupting distribution and transportation networks, growing of poppies to produce heroin or the refinement of poppies into heroin.

Destabilization - Any actions which cause the legitimate government of Afghanistan to become unstable.

Insurgency - an organized rebellion aimed at overthrowing a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (Farflex, 2011).

The six steps of the drug trade –

- 1) cultivation of opium poppies to produce heroin;
- 2) production of heroin from the opium;
- 3) transportation of the heroin out of Afghanistan into the world market;
- 4) distribution and sales of the heroin in the end cities;
- 5) subsequent movement of the profits from the sale of the heroin back into Afghanistan to the drug lords;
- 6) provision of funds by the Afghan drug lords to the Afghan insurgents.

Taliban - Primary insurgency group most active in Afghanistan

The criminological theory that will be incorporated into the study is part of Karl Marx's Conflict Theory. Conflict Theory views that society is divided into two or more groups with competing ideas and values (Babbie, 2010). The group or groups with the most power make the laws and control society. In the case of Afghanistan, the two groups are the drug lords and the legitimate Afghan government. In Afghanistan, the drug lords have the power due to the wealth they obtained from the drug trade. In Afghanistan, money equals power. Therefore, since the drug lords have power they are able to control vast regions of Afghanistan. Due to the drug lords' power base and the inability of the Afghan government to project the rule of law in drug lord controlled areas, drug lords are able to make the laws in the areas that they control. The legitimate

Afghan government is only able to impose laws and control society in the regions that they control. Depending on whose area of control an Afghan citizen inhabits, this will be a determining factor as to what kind of behavior an Afghan citizen may participate in. Those citizens in the drug-lord-controlled regions will be more inclined to participate in poppy cultivation than those citizens in areas controlled by the government.

Literature Review

Afghanistan is the primary player in the opium trade originating from the area of Southern Asia referred to as the Golden Crescent. Afghanistan has been the primary producer in the world of opium since 1991 (Chouvy, 2006). An estimated 85% to 94% of all opium in the world is cultivated in Afghanistan (Chouvy, 2006; United Nations Report on Drug and Crime, 2009). The cultivation and trafficking of opium in Afghanistan has been a source of funding for the insurgency since the United States led invasion in 2001 (Medler, 2005). Previous literature on the subject has demonstrated evidence that Afghan insurgency activities are fueled by proceeds from the illegal heroin trade. A brief history of Afghanistan starting with the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979 is an integral component of understanding why and how the drug trade is circular in nature and to show how the drug trade and insurgency feed off of each other. The historical economics of Afghanistan are vital to examine since opium cultivation accounts for almost half of the gross domestic product for the country (UNODC, 2003).

The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and changed the country's entire economic focus for the next thirty years. Prior to the Soviet invasion, opium cultivation and trafficking were not a central feature of the Afghan economy (Carpenter, 2004; Chouvy, 2006). The Soviet occupation and subsequent insurgency by Islamic forces devastated the country's infrastructure (Carpenter, 2004). Previous studies have shown due to the destruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure, traditional forms of agriculture and other economic activities were not possible. During the occupation, the Soviets destroyed established social institutions in Afghanistan and created what Carpenter (2004) described as "widespread economic chaos" (Carpenter, 2004, p. 4). The brutal

tactics employed by the Soviets included “bombing villages, burning crops, slaughtering livestock and displacing large numbers of people” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 5). These tactics angered the Afghan population and helped fuel the fight to remove the Soviets from the country.

The use of these brutal tactics led to the formation of the anti-Soviet Afghan resistance, which needed money to fund their efforts. The resistance discovered that trafficking in opium provided them both a substantial and a reliable source of income (Carpenter, 2004). From these beginnings, in a relatively short period of time, Afghanistan became the largest producer of opium in the world. Even after the Soviets left in 1989, the various Afghan political factions waged a battle for control of Afghanistan. In the 1990s, the radical Islamic Taliban emerged as the victor in the Afghan Civil War for control of the country (Carpenter, 2004; Schweich, 2008). During the Afghan civil war, all of the warring factions were heavily involved in the opium trade to finance their war efforts (Bagley, 2004; Carpenter, 2004; Taylor, 2006).

Once the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, the Taliban passed an edict in 2001 that “banned the cultivation of opium under pain of death” (Carpenter, 2004, p. 4). The Taliban had ulterior motives for doing so. During the civil war, the Taliban had stockpiled large quantities of opium to create a temporary scarcity of opium on the world market. This scarcity produced higher opium prices that boosted Taliban revenues (Carpenter, 2004; Schweich, 2008). In late 2001, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States and its allies in the Northern Alliance overthrew the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Since this time, Taliban opium cultivation has grown to record numbers (Carpenter, 2004; Chouvy, 2006; Schweich, 2008).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2003) Opium Survey, the illegal drug trade in Afghanistan alone amounts to \$2.3 billion dollars per year, which is more than half of Afghanistan's legitimate gross domestic product. It is estimated that 6% to 8% of the Afghan population is involved either directly or indirectly in the drug trade. However, when taken into account the role of the extended family and clan structure in Afghan society, that percentage likely jumps to 20% to 30% of the population (Carpenter, 2004).

According to the 2003 UNODC Opium Survey, the concentration of opium cultivation is in the central and southern regions of Afghanistan. Opium was also being cultivated in the Northern region along the eastern border with Pakistan and Tajikistan. However, the 2009 UNODC Opium Survey found that the Northern regions of Afghanistan are virtually poppy cultivation free. The concentration of opium cultivation is now in the southern region where the insurgency is concentrated (Bagley, 2004; Taylor, 2006).

Understanding the past thirty years of Afghanistan's history is integral to understanding the purpose of this study. By examining the history of Afghanistan, the six components of the heroin trade can be examined as a circular circuit. The historical record has shown that there have been disruptions or breaks in the heroin trade in the past and that various groups have used the heroin trade a source of funding.

Previous literature has focused on the heroin trade from a variety of perspectives. One prominent viewpoint suggests that since cultivating poppies in Afghanistan is more financially lucrative than any other crop, it is difficult to implement a policy of substituting a different crop (Carpenter, 2004). The Afghan government has attempted to

pay farmers not to cultivate their fields with poppies and that has not worked. To date, there has been little to no successful crop substitution on any noticeable scale in Afghanistan (Taylor, 2006). Due to a variety of reasons, crop substitution is simply not viable in a country with such a poor infrastructure and crop irrigation system (Ward et al, 2008). Crop eradication has also been attempted half-heartedly. In 2006, Afghan president Hamid Karzai authorized opium crop eradication on the ground but would not approve aerial eradication, even though aerial crop eradication is more effective than ground eradication (Taylor, 2006).

Since the Afghan government is incapable of projecting power in the southern and central regions of the country, the farmers take the money from the Afghan government to not grow poppies and then the drug lords come in and tell the farmers that they must still grow poppies. Farmers cannot go to the government for help since the government cannot project their power into the drug-lord-controlled regions. Since the drug lords are able to project power over the farmers in the regions the drug lords control, the farmers are left with no choice but to grow poppies.

For many years, Afghan drug lords projected a false image of Afghan farmers, suggesting that poppy cultivation protected them from starvation. This image was used to influence farmers in supporting poppy cultivation and the ensuing drug trade (Carpenter, 2004; Bagley, 2004; Taylor, 2006). While income gained from poppy cultivation does help farmers, prior to the Soviet invasion, Afghan farmers grew wheat, cotton and vegetables, all of which currently are in severe short supply in Afghanistan (Schweich, 2008). In 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) arrived at a startling conclusion. The UNODC produced a map showing that poppy cultivation had

become concentrated in the southern regions of Afghanistan, which was more associated with the insurgency and drug lords than with poverty (Schweich, 2008).

The image of the starving farmer having to cultivate poppies in order to survive took a severe hit. The UNODC report showed that poor farmers were abandoning the poppy crop and that the poppy cultivation was concentrated in the wealthier Southern region of Afghanistan (UNODC, 2007). The UNODC report went on to show that close to 80% of the land devoted to the cultivation of poppies had been planted in 2005 and 2006 (UNODC, 2007). The Afghan government insisted that they still needed more humanitarian aid to help their destitute farmers, even after having been shown the UNODC report and corresponding cultivation maps. The UNODC report was a wake-up call to the US Pentagon. The report clearly showed that poppy cultivation was no longer associated with humanitarian aid but was more closely associated with funding the insurgency and war (Schweich, 2008; UNODC, 2007).

Several months after the 2007 UNODC report, the UNODC issued a discussion paper that reinforced the findings of the 2007 report. The report was titled “Is poverty driving the Afghan opium boom?” The report found that poverty was not the main factor in the expansion of opium cultivation. The vast majority of Afghan farmers in Afghanistan choose to grow licit crops instead of poppy (UNODC, 2008). The report concluded that the rise in cultivation occurred in the wealthier southern regions of Afghanistan, which have a large exposure to the insurgency. Therefore, it was this exposure to the insurgency and not poverty that drove farmers to cultivate poppies (UNODC, 2008).

According to Mansfield (2001), poppy cultivation is appealing to farmers since it is a non-perishable, low weight-height product and it is ideally suited to the war-ravaged physical infrastructure of Afghanistan. More so, opium as an annual crop has a virtually guaranteed market and provides a degree of economic security to farmers which other crops like fruit and vegetables cannot offer (Mansfield, 2001). Farmers have an economic incentive to grow poppies since the average annual household income in Afghanistan is approximately \$2,000 US per year (Ward et al, 2008). If Afghan farmers have a sustainable non-perishable crop, they will be able to live and support their families.

At the heart of the Afghan drug trade is the cultivation of opium. Developing ways or methods to reduce and then ban opium cultivation would be a central tenet of any anti-narcotic eradication program. However, numerous authors to date, including Ward, Mansfield, Oldham and Byrd (2008) have stated any kind of attempt to seriously reduce opium cultivation is hindered by the extreme weakness of modern Afghan institutions, widespread corruption and inability of the Afghan government to enforce rule of law throughout the country. Anti-narcotic efforts by Afghan law enforcement and the legitimate Afghan government with the assistance from the U.S. led coalition forces have tried to stop poppy cultivation since the invasion in 2001, with poor results (Ward et al, 2008)

Since the farmers are primarily responsible for the first level of the six steps of the drug trade, understanding the farmers' reasons for growing poppies is essential to any counter-narcotic strategy. If poppies aren't cultivated, they cannot be refined and, therefore, heroin cannot be produced. Moreover, no money will be made in the

transportation, distribution or sale of the heroin. There will be no money going back to the drug lords, who will then have no money to funnel or donate to support the insurgency. The discontinuation of poppy cultivation would produce a break in the circuit. The drug trade would grind to a halt if the primary ingredient of the main product was not being cultivated.

Conversely, if there were a destabilized Afghanistan, then there would be no government interference in opium cultivation since the government would be unable to project its authority over the areas controlled by the drug lords. The drug lords could force farmers to grow as much poppy as the drug lords want. Cultivation would increase, and there would be further destabilization of the country produced by a battle for control of the drug trade amongst Afghan drug lords. Afghanistan would become a narco-state where rule of law would not be possible to impose. The insurgency would have free reign to do whatever it wanted. Afghanistan would once again become a breeding ground for terrorists, and the security threat posed by the Central Asian region would dramatically increase.

According to the UNODC World Drug Report (2010), over 90% of the opiate-processing laboratories in the world are located in Afghanistan. One of the key components to refining opiates from poppies into heroin is a precursor chemical known as acetic anhydride. According to the annual UNODC World Drug Report (UNODC 2008, 2009 and 2010), all acetic anhydride has to be smuggled into Afghanistan. There is no known production facility in the country, nor is there any reported legitimate use for this chemical in Afghanistan (UNODC, 2010). Since 2007 there has been an international cooperation on not allowing the diversion of precursor chemicals to drug-

producing countries, particularly Afghanistan. The controls that have been put in place by the international community have led to the price of a single liter of acetic anhydride in Afghanistan to fluctuate between \$350 and \$400 per liter (UNODC, 2010). This steep price for precursor chemicals is thought to have become a major cost factor in refining heroin (UNODC, 2009).

Acetic anhydride is packaged in liter-sized glass bottles, five-gallon sized metal canisters and 55-gallon steel drums. The majority of the chemical is smuggled into Afghanistan via Pakistan (Strategypage.com, 2010). Once the chemical arrives in Pakistan, the acetic anhydride is transported into Afghanistan. Transportation is done via truck due to the weight, size and amounts needed for refinement. Due to the limited number of available roads, border guards at these crossing points are accustomed to being bribed. Ten tons of raw opium can be refined into approximately 1.3 tons of heroin. To refine this quantity of raw opium takes 2.6 tons of acetic anhydride (Strategypage.com, 2010). Due to the large quantity of acetic anhydride needed to refine the heroin, a break in the acquisition of the chemical would cause the drug trade to come to a halt, representing another break in the circuit. This theory was partially proved out in the 1990s. While the civil war waged in Afghanistan, Pakistan curtailed the supply of acetic anhydride going to Afghanistan. Opium was still cultivated and produced in Afghanistan during this time, but the heroin destined for the far more lucrative foreign markets was not as readily available and the prices of heroin rose in the 1990s (Reuter & Trautmann, 2009; Strategypage.com, 2010).

The second step in the drug trade is the refinement and production of the raw opium poppies into heroin. Any interruption in the refinement and production of opium

into heroin causes a break in the circuit. If chemicals needed to refine the raw opium are not getting into Afghanistan, then the heroin cannot be produced. If the heroin cannot be produced, then there is no product to transport, distribute or sell. There are no profits to be made, therefore there are no profits that are getting back to the drug lords. If they are not receiving money, they are unable to give funding to the insurgency.

Refinement of opium into heroin is primarily done in Afghanistan. The major chemical precursor acetic anhydride is needed to refine the opium into heroin. Acetic anhydride is not manufactured in Afghanistan and needs to be smuggled into the country. Without acetic anhydride, refining opium into heroin would not be possible. Disrupting the flow of acetic anhydride into Afghanistan would cause a break in the circuit. This break has happened in the past when Pakistan had shut down its border with Afghanistan and stopped the flow of acetic anhydride into the country.

The third step in the drug trade is the transportation of heroin out of Afghanistan into the world market. This is an area where corruption and geography play a vital role. From a geographic perspective, Afghanistan is a land-locked country. It is surrounded by Pakistan to the east, southeast and the south, Iran to the south and southwest, Turkmenistan to the northwest, Uzbekistan to the north and Tajikistan to the north as well (CIA, 2010). All of these countries have suffered as a result of the opium trade and some have gone to great lengths in an attempt to stop the flow of drugs. Iran in particular has the highest opioid dependency in the world due to its close proximity to inexpensive partially refined heroin and raw Afghan opium (Pagel, 2009).

As a result of this high dependency, Iran constructed a \$6 billion wall along its western border with Afghanistan in an attempt to cut off a major trafficking route of the

Afghan drug lords (Pagel, 2009). However, due to the pervasive culture of corruption amongst the local officials, coupled with the increased opium production in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, such efforts have been largely unsuccessful. Iran's anti-narcotic efforts are an example of a single-scope approach to the drug trade. Iran's effort was an attempt to break the circuit by cutting off major drug trafficking routes.

Due to the countries surrounding Afghanistan, these border countries are directly involved in the transportation of heroin leaving the region. The countries surrounding Afghanistan have been adversely affected by the heroin trade, particularly Iran, which has the highest opium dependency in the world (Pagel, 2009). Iran attempted to disrupt the flow of heroin by building a wall along its border with Afghanistan. Iran attempted to break the circuit by shutting down its borders. However, due to rampant corruption in the region, this effort has been less successful than hoped.

Corruption is rampant in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan, located to the east of Afghanistan, is generally considered a failed state by the world community (Medler, 2005). For that reason, Pakistan is viewed as being incapable of any meaningful counter-narcotics efforts and the lawless lands between Pakistan and Afghanistan are proof of this (Taylor, 2006). Pakistan is a major crossover point for drugs flowing out of Afghanistan and for money and chemicals needed to break down the opium coming back into Afghanistan. Historically, the people that populate the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan share a common ethnic and cultural makeup, and smuggling has been a way of life for these peoples for decades (Medler, 2005). Pay for civil servants in Pakistan is poor and paying bribes to civil servants is common (Medler, 2005; Jones, 2008). Even

more so, along the more remote border areas, bribes are paid to border guards and law enforcement as normal course of business (Medler, 2005).

In Afghanistan, the government is unable to provide basic services to its people, the security forces cannot protect local villages and the population is losing faith in the government (Jones, 2007). The Afghan government is unable to enforce any sustained and lasting anti-narcotic efforts against the drug lords. The government's inability to lead feeds the corruption that is plaguing the country as well as further destabilizing the country (Jones, 2007). By its own inabilities, the Afghan government aids the drug trade (Taylor, 2007).

Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are all parts of the former Soviet Union. All three are considered some of the poorest countries in the world. Per capita income in 2009 for Turkmenistan was \$3,420, compared with \$2,890 for Uzbekistan and \$700 for Tajikistan (World Bank, 2009). Due to such low income, corruption is prevalent in these former Soviet states. The low wages paid to border guards, police and local government officials helps proliferate the drug trade (Bagley, 2004; Medler, 2005).

Corruption is rampant in all the bordering countries around Afghanistan. The amount of money that drug lords pay the border guards, police and local officials is an insignificant fraction of the value of the heroin that is being trafficked (Ward et al, 2008). Yet to the border guards, police and local officials, the payoff money they receive is a large sum of money. Due to the poor pay that civil servants receive in these countries, the drug lords are able to easily bribe the civil servants to allow their shipments to go through. The borders in all of these countries are porous, and the effective policing of these borders is hindered by the poor pay that is paid to police (Medler, 2005).

Without the culture of corruption that is rampant in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries, the heroin trade would not be able to flourish. Corruption plays its part in the transporting of heroin out of Afghanistan and the smuggling of needed supplies to refine heroin into Afghanistan. Low wages paid to border guards, police and local officials contribute greatly to the problem of corruption. The low per capita income in surrounding countries further aids the proliferation of corruption. Eliminating the culture of corruption in these countries would aid in disrupting the flow of heroin out of Afghanistan and the flow of supplies into the country. This would result in another break in the circuit.

The drug trafficking networks that exist in Central Asia have been in use for many years and simultaneously shutting down all of these routes is not possible or feasible (Medler, 2005; Taylor, 2006). This third step of the drug trade is the most difficult place to break the circuit, due to the numerous countries and trafficking routes that are involved. In the 1990s, when Pakistan shut its borders down to drug trafficking, the trafficking shifted to Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (Taylor, 2006). Pakistan attempted to break the circuit, but due to the numerous alternate trafficking routes, heroin still flowed out of Afghanistan and the drug trade continued.

The fourth step in the drug trade is the distribution and sale of heroin in the consumer or end cities. According to the 2011 UNODC World Drug Report, UNODC estimates that there were between 12 and 21 million opiate users worldwide in 2009. This same report showed that in 2009, an estimated 375 metric tons of heroin were consumed by those users. This was up from 2005 when the 2005 UNODC World Drug Report showed 12-14 million opiate users worldwide. "Opiate users generated an estimated \$68

billion dollars in revenue for drug traffickers in 2009 with \$60 billion of that from Afghan opiates” (UNODC, 2011, p. 45). While the Afghan drug lords have a substantial influence on the Afghan economy, the largest profits in the heroin trade stem from the international traffickers, not the Afghan drug lords themselves (UNODC, 2011). The international drug traffickers distribute the drugs to the consumer countries. Despite the fact that the Afghan drug lords account for only a small slice of heroin trade profits globally, their slice is powerful in Afghanistan due to the poor socio-economic conditions and the low per capita income in Afghanistan. The amount of money that the drug lords are making compared to the average Afghan citizen is astronomical (Schweich, 2008).

Consumption of heroin is on the rise. The United States is the primary export country for Afghan heroin (UNODC, 2011). Interestingly enough, poppy production has fallen in 2011 (UNODC), however, that was due to crop disease of poppy fields and not due to a lessening of demand by consumers. Countries throughout the world have tried to stop the import of illegal drugs, but these prohibitionist strategies and policies have done next to nothing to stem the flow of drugs (Carpenter, 2004; Chouvy, 2006; Taylor, 2006). As long as there is a demand for illegal heroin and there is such an immense lucrative profit to be made in drug trafficking, the heroin will continue to flow (Taylor, 2006).

The number of heroin users worldwide is on the rise. Opiate users in 2009 generated profits of \$68 billion dollars with \$60 billion of that coming from Afghan opiates. The split on the profits from the heroin trade vary with the Afghan drug lords receive a smaller share of the profits in comparison to the distributors and traffickers themselves. However, the profits made by the Afghan drug lords are incredibly high for the region when compared to per capita income. Disruption of these distribution

networks would cause a break in the circuit. Examining these factors provides insight into ways to possibly disrupt or break the circuit of the heroin trade.

Organized crime is heavily involved in the drug trade (UNODC, 2004). These criminal networks are well-organized and structured. This structured system makes the distribution and sale of the drugs easier to accomplish. These organized crime groups purchase heroin wholesale from the drug lords once it has left Afghanistan (Medler, 2005). The heroin is not purchased in Afghanistan; rather, it is purchased at exit locations along the smuggling routes. The heroin is concealed inside shipments of legitimate goods and moved from Afghanistan to Pakistan, where the heroin is then transported by road and rail to the main Pakistani port of Karachi (Medler, 2005). The port of Karachi is a major international shipment hub that moves high volumes of containerized cargo and bulk goods, as well as contraband like drugs and weapons (Medler, 2005).

It is at this point in the drug trade, step number five, where the money begins to flow back to the drug lords. The money flow extends outward to the surrounding countries of Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tjikistan, Turkmenitsan, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia. These travel and exit countries are where the Afghan drug lords are paid for their goods (Mullen, 2010). These are countries where the wholesaling of Afghan heroin occurs, with most of the heroin being sold to transnational organized crime groups (Medler, 2005). Afghan drug lords deal in cash. There is no wiring of funds to an account in some offshore country. Cash is smuggled back into Afghanistan along the same routes that the heroin was smuggled out on (Ward, et al, 2008). Once again, due to

the porous borders of all of these countries, the profits get back into the hands of the Afghan drug lords (Mullen, 2010).

A break in the money-flow circuit would cause the drug trade to grind to a halt. The money generated by the drug trade is used to keep financing the drug trade (Medler, 2005). The money that comes back into Afghanistan is used to pay for chemicals to break down the poppies, bribe border guards, police and local officials, pay the people that the drug lords employ, fatten the coffers of the drug lords and to fund the insurgency (UNODC, 2008). With no money coming back to the drug lords, they would be unable to pay the farmers to cultivate poppy, purchase the acetic anhydride to refine the opium into heroin, or bribe the border guards, police and local officials along the smuggling routes, and the drug lords would not have money to give to the insurgency.

The money generated from the sale of Afghan heroin flows back to the drug lords along the same routes that the heroin left the country. These funds are used for paying the farmers, bribing the border guards, funding the insurgency and fattening the coffers of the drug lords. If there is a disruption of the flow of money, it affects the entire heroin trade. A disruption in the flow of money causes a break in the circuit. No money coming into Afghanistan would mean that the drug lords would be unable to pay for the cultivation of poppies and not be able to afford the necessary chemicals needed to refine the heroin. This break in the circuit would cause the drug trade to come to a halt until the circuit could be reestablished.

The sixth and final step in the drug trade is the giving of funds by drug lords to the insurgents. When the Taliban was in charge of Afghanistan, the government received funding from the drug lords by taxing all aspects of the drug trade (Cilluffo, 2000). The

Taliban taxed the opium harvest, the refining laboratories and the transportation of the heroin to all exit points out of the country (Cilluffo, 2000). Currently, it is not known as far as an exact figure how much money is being given to the insurgency by the drug lords. There is no bank statement from a drug lord that will show they gave “X” amount of dollars to the insurgency in a given month. Previous authors have concluded that money is being provided to the insurgency to fund their efforts against the Afghan government and coalition forces (Ward et al, 2008).

In 2004, John Walters, who was the Director for White House Office of Drug Control Policy said, “drug cultivation and trafficking in Afghanistan are undermining the rule of law and putting money in the pockets of the terrorists we are trying to neutralize,” (Bagley, 2004, p. 5). The insurgency is comprised of various groups, with many of them being former Taliban. According to Schmidt (2010), “although the Taliban did not mastermind the drug trade, it is clear that they benefit from it financially” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 63). Schmidt (2010) concluded the Taliban “use revenues generated by it to purchase new weapons and pick up new recruits in Pakistan. Once the Taliban’s financial arteries linked to the poppy are cut off, it will experience a major blow to its organization” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 63). Experts, including Taylor (2004) and Johnson (2007), agree that the opium trade funded terrorism, inhibited reconstruction and created a financial and locally supported power base for the insurgency to launch attacks on coalition forces, further destabilizing the government and the country.

Schmidt (2010) stated that since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, one thing has become clear: the new Taliban have been active participants and “have aided and abetted opium cultivation on a scale unmatched to anything Afghanistan has produced in the

past” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 62). For example, in 1999 Afghanistan produced 4,500 tons of opium, which is 15 times the output of the preceding 20 years (UNODC, 2001). The business partnership between the drug lords and the Taliban has grown deeper since the invasion in 2001. The lack of trust among Afghanistan’s citizens in the Afghan government has also given opium value (Schmidt, 2010). Krutzmann observed that “opium is not only a commodity, but also a currency at the same time. Poppy is the lifeblood of the Taliban’s insurgency in Afghanistan” (Schmidt, 2010, p. 63).

Previous literature has shown that the heroin trade has funded the Taliban when they were in power as well as providing funding to the current insurgency. The insurgency has been at the forefront of attacking the Afghan government as well as coalition forces. These attacks have led to destabilization of the Afghan government as well as the country itself. Since the major source of insurgency funding is the heroin trade, disruptions of the trade affects the insurgency. Without the funding provided by the heroin trade the insurgency would be unable to purchase weapons, ammunition and bomb-making materials. Lack of these resources would inhibit their ability to launch attacks and further their attempts to destabilize Afghanistan.

The UNODC reports from 2005 thru 2010 showed that opium cultivation more than doubled between 2005 and 2007, from 4,000 metric tons to 8,200 metric tons. Since 2008, the cultivation has decreased back to the levels seen in 2005 (UNODC, 2010) where 4,000 metric tones of opium were cultivated. Previous authors, including Taylor (2007) and Schmidt (2010), stated that the insurgency activities against the Afghan government and the coalition forces increased greatly in the years between 2005 and 2007. The numbers of attacks increased, as did the number of casualties resulting from

these attacks (Schmidt, 2010). Coincidentally, other authors have argued that the decline in insurgent attacks resulted from the “surge” of United States troops in 2010, coupled with the diseases that hit the poppy crop in 2009 (Stenersen, 2010). Regardless, the fact remains that the drug lords give money and aid to the insurgency.

A break in the circuit of money going to the Afghan insurgency would have an impact on the entire Afghan drug trade. Since the insurgents themselves have become immersed in the drug trade, if money did not come back to them, they would not be able to fund their efforts against the Afghan government and the coalition forces. The partnership with the drug lords could fall into jeopardy, resulting in a turf war between the insurgents and drug lords for control of the drug trade. Under such circumstances, the insurgency would step up their attacks to get the money flowing in and the drugs flowing out of Afghanistan, further destabilizing an already unstable country. This set of circumstances clearly illustrates the circular nature of the Afghan drug trade and the Afghan insurgency and shows how the common goal of these groups to further destabilize Afghanistan binds them in an ongoing, mutually reliant relationship.

Examining the previous literature on the Afghan heroin trade forms the launching point of this study. Understanding the historical and economical significance of the six components of the heroin trade is vital to understanding the purpose of this study. The circular nature of the heroin trade is examined. Breaking the circuit of the circle or disrupting the circuit causes a halt to the drug trade. A stop in the drug trade means a stop to the funding provided to the insurgency. Destabilization and corruption play their part in the heroin trade and need to be included since without both of them, the heroin trade would be hard-pressed to flourish the way it currently does.

Methods

Methodology

Babbie (2010) stated that the purpose of most types of social research is to find out the unknown. The unknown that this study seeks to find is if there is a circular pattern to the Afghan Heroin trade and to see what roles corruption and destabilization play in the trade. In order to provide a sufficient amount of information on this subject, exploratory means will be utilized to familiarize the researcher with the topic (Babbie, 2010). The exploratory means of this study include second source data from peer-reviewed journals, scholarly articles, World Drug Reports, published books, websites and newsprint articles.

A qualitative research approach will be utilized to examine and answer the research questions in this study. According to Babbie (2010), the research conducted seeks to provide answers to a phenomenon. In the case of this study the phenomenon is the heroin trade. The results obtained through the use of qualitative research will help answer the research questions that have been posed. Furthermore, since an aspect of exploratory research is, “to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study,” (Babbie, 2010, p. 92), the information gleaned from this study may lead to further research on the circular nature of the Afghan heroin trade and the roles of destabilization and corruption in the Afghan heroin trade.

Research Design

This research is a qualitative examination of the circular nature of the various components of the heroin drug trade in Afghanistan. The research is designed to identify independent variables such as opium cultivation, the production of opium into heroin, the transportation of heroin to the world market, the distribution and sales of heroin in end cities, the movement of profits from the sale of heroin back to the drug lords, and the provision of funds by the drug lords to the insurgency. This research addresses the following research questions:

RQ1 Is there is a circular pattern to the Afghan drug trade and the insurgency? RQ2 What role do destabilization and corruption play in the heroin trade and insurgency in Afghanistan?

Procedure

Babbie (2010) defined content analysis as, “the study of recorded human communications, such as books, websites, paintings and laws” (Babbie, 2010, p. 333). Based on a detailed content analysis of the Afghan heroin trade, I was able to demarcate the steps in heroin manufacture and distribution of heroin. The electrical circuit provides a convenient metaphor for understanding and discussing the Afghan heroin trade.

Results

This researched addressed the question of whether a circular pattern exists between the Afghan drug trade and the insurgency. The answer to that question is a resounding “yes.” The drug trade starts with the farmers who cultivate the poppies. The next step is to process and refine the opium into heroin, which takes place primarily in Afghanistan. Chemicals are needed to refine the opium into heroin. These chemicals need to be smuggled into Afghanistan. The refined heroin is then transported out of Afghanistan through neighboring countries along long used drug trafficking routes. Corruption of police officers, border guards and local officials is part and parcel of the drug trade and is necessary to get the heroin out into the world market.

Once the heroin leaves Afghanistan, it is transported along drug trafficking routes through Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is along these routes that the majority of heroin is purchased by drug traffickers who pay a wholesale price for the heroin. These traffickers are primarily transnational organized crime groups that have the means, ability, organization and money to get the drugs out the end cities for distribution and sale to the eventual heroin consumer. Price markups for the heroin occur all along the transportation and distribution network. Chossudovsky (2005) stated the amount of money generated by the heroin trade once it leaves Afghanistan is between 80 to 100 times what the Afghan farmer was paid to cultivate the crop.

The money generated from the wholesale of the heroin flows back to the Afghan drug lords along the same path that the drugs exited the country. In addition to the heroin profits, chemicals such as acetic anhydride needed to break down and refine opium poppies are transported back into Afghanistan. Once again, corruption plays its role in

allowing the money and supplies to go back into Afghanistan. The profits that drug lords get back from the sale of the heroin gives them the ability to fund the insurgency. The more money that the drug lords earn means that they have more money to give to the insurgency. More money to the insurgency means they are able to conduct more attacks, which further destabilizes Afghanistan and gets the insurgency closer to their goal of a destabilized Afghanistan. Any break in this circular flow of drugs and money causes a major disruption to the Afghan drug trade, which in turn ripples down to the insurgency and their ability to get funding and launch attacks.

A break anywhere in the circle affects the flow of heroin out of Afghanistan and flow of money back into Afghanistan. A break in the circuit was defined as any type of anti-narcotic law enforcement actions aimed at stopping the flow of drugs out of Afghanistan, disrupting distribution and transportation networks, growing of poppies to produce heroin or the refinement of poppies into heroin. According to the UNODC World Drug Report (2011) the number of heroin seizures doubled between 2005 and 2009. In 2005, 348 metric tons of heroin were seized and that number increased to 653 metric tons in 2009. There was a major increase in opium production in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2007 and since more heroin was being produced and transported, there was more chances for law enforcement to interdict and seize the illegal drugs (UNODC, 2011).

Any break in the circuit has implications for all facets of the drug trade. Since the drug trade is so inter-connected, any kind of disruption or break at one point affects the other components. For example, when Pakistan shut its border with Afghanistan in the 1990s, the primary export route for Afghan heroin was cut-off, as was the avenue of

money coming back into Afghanistan. This interrupted the flow of drugs from the country as well as the money coming back in. This also affected the Taliban government since they taxed the drug trade and lost income when the border was shut down.

For a time, the Afghan drug trade came to a halt until the drug lords were able to re-establish and start using alternative trafficking routes through Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The new trafficking routes re-established the circuit, but at a cost. The new trafficking routes resulted in additional expenses incurred by the drug lords in order to move their drugs and get their money. The drug lords had to pay bribes to border guards, police and local officials in areas where they did not have to be paid when the Pakistan border was open. New routes for the trafficking meant establishing and building new relationships along the alternate routes.

Another potential break in the circuit could be produced by a reduction in poppy production. Whether through eradication efforts by law enforcement or crop failure due to drought or disease, the lack of poppy production would result in a lack of drug to refine, transport, distribute, sell or yield profits to the Afghan drug lords. All along the heroin trade, from poppy cultivation to heroin consumption by users, each group involved in the trade makes money, so reduced poppy production not only affects Afghan drug lords but individuals and organized crime groups all along the production cycle, from bribed border guards to international traffickers.

Since acetic anhydride is a primary chemical needed to refine opium to heroin, if it is unable to be smuggled into Afghanistan, heroin could not be produced. If there is no heroin then there is nothing to transport, distribute or sell. If there is nothing to sell then there is no profit to profit from. No profits will then get back to the drug lords who will

then have no money to fund the insurgency. The insurgency will not have the funds it needs to achieve its goals and will have to look to other sources for funding its activities. If there is a break in any of the six components of the drug trade circle, the drug trade comes to a halt until the break can be fixed, by-passed or re-established.

The second question posed was regarding the roles corruption and destabilization play in the circle. Numerous authors, including Bagley (2004), Taylor (2006), Jones (2007), Pagel (2009) and Mullen (2010), have stated that corruption in Afghanistan is absolutely essential for the drug trade to exist and flourish. All of these authors agree that without the levels of corruption that exist in Afghanistan, the drug trade would not be as profitable or at all possible as it has been to date. The corruption goes to the heart of the destabilization of Afghanistan. The Afghan government is viewed by many of the citizens of Afghanistan as corrupt and not trustworthy. This attitude by Afghan citizens is prevalent since the legitimate Afghan government is incapable of enforcing the rule of law or providing the basic services to its citizenry. Without the support and backing of its people, the Afghan government inadvertently feeds the insurgency. The insurgency is able to recruit bodies and sympathizers to their cause, which helps the insurgents reach their end goal: a destabilized Afghanistan.

Transparency International's corruption index in 2010 listed Afghanistan in position 176 out of 178. The only countries that had higher levels of corruption were Myanmar and Somalia. Tajikistan was listed in position 152, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan were listed in position 172, Pakistan was listed in position 143, and Iran was listed in position 146 (Transparency International, 2010). With such high levels of corruption in all of these countries, any kind of anti-narcotic law enforcement will face

major challenges. Due to the low wages paid to civil servants in all of these countries, corruption is a way of life and is embedded in each of these respective societies.

Discussion/Conclusion

Previous research on the subject of the heroin drug trade in Afghanistan has shown that the insurgency benefits financially from the drug trade. Financial benefit from the heroin drug trade goes back to the mujahidin resistance fighters who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The ensuing participants in the civil war after the Soviets departed also benefited from the drug trade, including the eventual winner of that civil war, the Taliban. Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the insurgency that has risen against the Afghan government has also been benefiting from the drug trade.

The aim of this study was to reflect that the Afghan heroin trade is similar to a circular electrical circuit. A break or disruption anywhere in the circuit causes a halt in the drug trade until the circuit is re-established. A disruption can include disease of the poppy crop, shutting down of drug trafficking routes, seizure of heroin by law enforcement, disruption in the supply lines into Afghanistan of chemicals needed to refine opium into heroin, or any of the other factors reviewed in this study.

History has shown that there have been times over the past 30 years where the heroin trade has been temporarily halted. The key to the last statement is “temporarily.” In recent history, there has not been a time when heroin was not being trafficked out of Afghanistan. Future research can focus on a multi-scope approach to disrupting the circuit at numerous points and not just focusing on one of the six areas of the circle. In World War II, when the Allies invaded France on D-Day, there was a multi-pronged front that stretched the lines of the Germans. The idea behind this was to stretch the lines so

thin that eventually a break could be made in the German lines and the Allies would be able to advance off the beaches and into France.

The same multi-scope approach can be used to attack the heroin trade. Break one circuit and it temporarily stops the drug trade. However, break two, three or four circuits and the trade will come to a standstill. Similarly, if you blow a breaker in an electrical panel, power is shut down until you can flip the breaker switch in the panel. If you blow three, four or five breakers, there is a high probability that the entire electrical panel will have to be replaced. This is a large project, requiring a person with specific technical skills and it takes longer to rectify than just switching a breaker switch. When the circuit has been broken is the time when the drug trade is most vulnerable.

Much has been written on the corruption that plagues not only Afghanistan but also the surrounding countries of Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The drug trade and the insurgency feed off of the corruption. The Afghan government inadvertently feeds the insurgency and the drug trade by its inability to govern and project its legitimate authority throughout the country. The Afghan government's inability to provide basic services to its citizens, rebuild an infrastructure that has been decimated by thirty years of war, and to provide security to rural Afghans perpetuates the Afghan belief that their country is unstable and that their government is incapable of governing. The insurgency uses this belief to recruit people to its cause. The drug lords prefer a destabilized Afghanistan. It is better for their business if the Afghan government is unable to mount any serious anti-narcotic efforts against them.

The longer the Afghan government is unable to project the rule of law and govern its people, the longer the battle with the insurgents will continue. Part of stabilizing

Afghanistan is for the Afghan government to deal with the massive corruption that is rampant in its entire organization. Battling corruption derives two benefits for the Afghan government. First, it shows the people that corruption will be not tolerated and that there are criminal consequences to being involved with corruption. Battling corruption gives the government legitimacy in the eyes of its citizenry. Secondly, by battling corruption the government is taking a key component of the heroin drug trade away from the drug lords. If the drug lords are unable to bribe corrupt border guards, police or local officials, then the heroin will not be able to leave the country. If the heroin cannot be exported then there will be no distribution, transportation or sale of the heroin. There will be no money flowing back to the drug lords, which means there will be no money to funnel to the insurgency. The Afghan government hits the insurgency where it will feel it the most, in their funding pockets. For the Afghan government, battling corruption is win-win.

Studying the heroin trade as a circular pattern provides insight into a problem that has had devastating effects in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries, as well as every country and end city throughout the world where Afghan heroin ends up being consumed. Finding ways to stop the flow of heroin out of Afghanistan and the flow of money into Afghanistan by using this circular approach to the heroin trade will aid law enforcement in anti-narcotic measures and operations. Less heroin mean less profits for the drug lords, which will mean less money to give to the insurgency. Less money for the insurgency means less of an ability on their part to launch attacks, which further destabilize the country. This in turn will allow the Afghan government the ability to project power throughout the country, including areas currently controlled by the drug

lords, thereby unifying the fractured country. Less heroin being produced also means less heroin available for consumption. In the end, by reducing or eliminating the supply, the demand may also go down. This would benefit the drug treatment budget of every end city where heroin is being sold and consumed.

The two primary social powers in Afghanistan are the legitimate Afghan government and the heroin trading drug lords. Afghan citizens fall under the control of one group or the other. Currently, the legitimate Afghan government is unable to provide rule of law and social order to all parts of the country. This is due in part to the government's own inabilities due to internal corruption and the power and influence of the Afghan drug lords. Since the Afghan drug lords are in control of the southern drug producing areas of the country, they are able to exert social control over the population. The Afghan government and drug lords are diametrically opposed when it comes to their ideas and values. For these reasons, Conflict Theory is an appropriate criminological theory to use when researching the heroin trade.

Using this study as a jumping off point, future research should focus on ways to interrupt or break the circuit of the heroin trade. Each component should be studied in order to find weak links in the component and ways for law enforcement to exploit those weak links in order to disrupt or break the circle of the drug trade. Once each weakness of the various components has been identified, a multiple-pronged approach to disrupt or break the various components of the heroin trade simultaneously should be a focus. A multi-pronged approach to the heroin trade will give law enforcement the greatest chance of success in eliminating the heroin trade.

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