



COUNTERNARCOTICS: LESSONS FROM THE U.S. EXPERIENCE IN AFGHANISTAN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The full report can be found on the SIGAR website at www.sigar.mil.



Cover photo credit:

Afghan farmers work in their poppy field in Khugyani District of Nangarhar Province on April 29, 2013. (AFP photo by Noorullah Shirzada)



Special Inspector General
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

Counternarcotics: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan is the fifth lessons learned report issued by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Since 2002, stemming opium poppy cultivation and drug production in Afghanistan has been an important, though not primary, goal for the United States, its coalition partners, and the Afghan government. While very little Afghan heroin comes to the United States, the Afghan drug trade has undermined reconstruction and security goals in many ways, including by financing insurgent groups, fueling government corruption, eroding state legitimacy, and exacting an enormous human and financial toll. Given the upward trend of opium poppy cultivation and the number of Afghans who rely on the opium industry, it is critical that U.S. policymakers determine how best to mitigate the drug trade's impact on U.S. reconstruction goals in Afghanistan.

This report examines the U.S. counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan, detailing how the Departments of Defense (DOD) and State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) tried to deter farmers and traffickers from participating in the cultivation and trade of opium, build Afghan government counterdrug capacity, and develop the country's licit economy. While we found several examples of success—some Afghans were able to move away from poppy cultivation and Afghan counterdrug units became increasingly capable, trusted partners—those successes were limited in their impact. The report identifies lessons to inform U.S. counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan and other major drug-producing and transit countries, and provides 13 actionable, evidence-based recommendations to strengthen these efforts.

Our analysis reveals no counterdrug program undertaken by the United States, its coalition partners, or the Afghan government resulted in lasting reductions in poppy cultivation or opium production—and, without a stable security environment, there was little possibility of success. We found the U.S. government failed to develop and implement counternarcotics strategies that effectively directed U.S. agencies toward shared, achievable goals. For example, though strategies highlighted the need for coordinated interventions, such as eradication and development assistance, these efforts were not consistently implemented in the same geographic locations. Further, eradication efforts had no lasting impact on the opium poppy problem. The U.S. push from 2005 to 2008 for aerial spraying damaged U.S.-Afghan relations during that time, hindering cooperation on other fronts. Alternative development programs intended to

support farmers in their transition away from poppy cultivation were often too short-term, relied on the simple substitution of other crops for poppy, and sometimes even contributed to increased poppy production. Counternarcotics goals were often not incorporated into larger security and development strategies, which hindered the achievement of those goals.

While discussions of counternarcotics efforts generally focus on numbers—related to drug crop cultivation, production, arrests, seizures, and cost—we should not forget the human element of these efforts. Many U.S. and Afghan security forces, Afghan civilians, DEA agents, and contractors have been killed or wounded in the course of counternarcotics-related missions. Similarly, this report attempts to ground its treatment of counternarcotics issues in an appreciation for the role opium poppy plays in the lives of millions of rural Afghans, whose livelihood may depend on the success or failure of an opium harvest and, yet, who also suffer from the drug trade’s corrosive effects. It is our hope that this report succeeds in capturing the many facets of this enduring issue.

SIGAR began its lessons learned program in late 2014 at the urging of General John Allen, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, and others who had served in Afghanistan. Our lessons learned reports comply with SIGAR’s legislative mandate to provide independent and objective leadership and recommendations to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse; and inform Congress and the Secretaries of State and Defense about reconstruction-related problems and the need for corrective action.

Congress created SIGAR as an independent agency. Unlike other inspectors general, SIGAR is not housed within any single department. SIGAR is the only inspector general focused solely on Afghanistan reconstruction, and the only one devoted exclusively to reconstruction issues. While other inspectors general have jurisdiction over the programs and operations of their respective departments or agencies, SIGAR has jurisdiction over all programs and operations supported with U.S. reconstruction dollars, regardless of the agency involved. Because SIGAR has the authority to look across the entire reconstruction effort, it is uniquely positioned to identify and address whole-of-government lessons.

Our lessons learned reports synthesize not only the body of work and expertise of SIGAR, but also that of other oversight agencies, government entities, current and former officials with on-the-ground experience, academic institutions, and independent scholars. The reports document what the U.S. government sought to accomplish, assess what it achieved, and evaluate the degree to which these efforts helped the United States reach its reconstruction goals in Afghanistan. They also provide recommendations to address the challenges stakeholders face

in ensuring efficient, effective, and sustainable reconstruction efforts, not just in Afghanistan, but in future contingency operations.

SIGAR's Lessons Learned Program comprises subject matter experts with considerable experience working and living in Afghanistan, aided by a team of seasoned research analysts. I want to express my deepest appreciation to the team members who produced this report. I thank Kate Bateman, project lead; David Mansfield, subject matter expert and lead researcher; Matthew Bentrutt, Nikolai Condee-Padunov, Sonia Pinto, and Matthew Rubin, research analysts; Olivia Paek, graphic designer; Elizabeth Young, editor; and Joseph Windrem, program director. In producing its reports, the program also uses the significant skills and experience found in SIGAR's Audits, Investigations, and Research and Analysis directorates, and the Office of Special Projects. I thank all of the individuals who provided their time and effort to contribute to this report.

In addition, I am grateful to the many U.S. government officials at State, USAID, DOD, the Department of Justice, DEA, and other agencies who provided valuable insights and feedback. This report is truly a collaborative effort meant to not only identify problems, but also to learn from them and apply reasonable solutions to improve future reconstruction efforts.

I believe our lessons learned reports will be a key legacy of SIGAR. Through these reports, we hope to reach a diverse audience in the legislative and executive branches, at the strategic and programmatic levels, both in Washington and in the field. By leveraging our unique interagency mandate, we intend to do everything we can to make sure the lessons from the United States' largest reconstruction effort are identified, acknowledged, and, most importantly, remembered and applied to ongoing reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, as well as to future conflicts and reconstruction efforts elsewhere in the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John F. Sopko', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John F. Sopko
Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2002, stemming opium poppy cultivation and drug production in Afghanistan has been an important, though not primary, goal for the United States, its coalition partners, and the Afghan government. While very little Afghan heroin comes to the United States, the Afghan drug trade has undermined reconstruction and security goals in many ways, including by financing insurgent groups, fueling government corruption, eroding state legitimacy, and exacting an enormous human and financial toll. From fiscal year (FY) 2002 through FY 2017, the U.S. government allocated approximately \$8.62 billion for counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. This included more than \$7.28 billion for programs with a substantial counternarcotics focus and \$1.34 billion on programs that included a counternarcotics component.

Despite this investment, drug production and trafficking remain entrenched. Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer, and opium poppy is the country's largest cash crop, with an estimated annual export value of \$1.5 billion to \$3 billion in recent years. In 2017, poppy cultivation and opium production reached record highs. U.S. counternarcotics activities in Afghanistan have thus failed to produce lasting reductions in both cultivation and production. Given the upward trend of cultivation figures and the number of Afghans who rely on the opium industry, it is critical that U.S. policymakers determine how best to mitigate the drug trade's impact on U.S. strategic interests in Afghanistan.

U.S. counternarcotics programs and policies over the past 16 years have included efforts to develop Afghanistan's licit economy, build Afghan government counterdrug capacity, and deter farmers and traffickers from participating in the cultivation and trade of opium. This report charts how counternarcotics strategies in Afghanistan evolved and how counterdrug initiatives were incorporated into the overall reconstruction effort. It categorizes U.S. counternarcotics efforts into four strands of activity: interdiction and counterdrug law enforcement, eradication, alternative development, and the mobilization of Afghan political and institutional support. In addition, the report uses Geographic Information System (GIS) imagery and analysis in new ways to evaluate counternarcotics program implementation and outcomes over time.

The report draws critical lessons from the U.S. counternarcotics experience in Afghanistan to inform and improve ongoing counterdrug and reconstruction efforts. In addition, the report provides actionable, evidence-based recommendations that can strengthen U.S. counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan as well as other countries facing drug-related challenges.

FINDINGS

Our report identifies 13 key findings regarding the U.S. counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan from 2002 to 2017 that serve as the basis for the report's lessons and recommendations:

1. No counterdrug program undertaken by the United States, its coalition partners, or the Afghan government resulted in lasting reductions in poppy cultivation or opium production.
2. Without a stable security environment, there was little possibility of effectively curtailing poppy cultivation and drug production in Afghanistan.
3. The U.S. government failed to develop and implement counternarcotics strategies that outlined or effectively directed U.S. agencies toward shared goals.
4. Eradication and development assistance efforts were not sufficiently coordinated or consistently implemented in the same geographic locations.
5. Counternarcotics goals were often not incorporated into larger security and development strategies, which hindered the achievement of those goals and the wider reconstruction effort.
6. Counternarcotics efforts were not a consistent priority at the most senior levels of the U.S. or Afghan government.
7. Eradication efforts, including compensated eradication, had no lasting impact on poppy cultivation or national-level drug production.
8. The failed U.S. push for aerial spraying damaged the U.S.-Afghan relationship and unity of effort in the coalition's counterdrug mission.
9. Alternative development programs were too short-term and often relied on the simple substitution of other crops for poppy. These programs did not bring about lasting reductions in opium poppy cultivation and sometimes even contributed to increased poppy production.
10. In limited areas with improved security and greater economic opportunities, some Afghans were able to diversify their livelihoods away from opium poppy. However, local reductions in poppy cultivation were almost always short-lived or offset by increases elsewhere.
11. U.S. support helped Afghan counterdrug units develop promising capacity and become trusted partners. However, these units did not have a strategic impact on the drug trade due to insecurity, corruption and poor capacity within the criminal justice system, and lack of high-level support from the Afghan government.
12. Poor-quality estimates of poppy cultivation levels, eradication numbers, and drug money going to the insurgency made it more difficult for policymakers to accurately assess the problem and determine effective policy responses.
13. The counternarcotics performance metrics used in Afghanistan, particularly the overemphasis on annual estimates of poppy cultivation and eradication, contributed to ineffective policy decisions.

When the United States and its coalition partners intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, poppy cultivation was at an historic low due to a successful, short-lived Taliban ban on cultivation. Afghanistan had just 7,606 hectares of opium poppy cultivation in 2001, or approximately 1/43rd of the estimated 328,000 hectares in 2017.¹ This low level of cultivation was an anomaly, however, and policymakers knew the drug trade could pose serious challenges to the reconstruction effort. Counternarcotics was included as one of the five pillars of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) framework established at a 2002 donor nation conference, at which the UK agreed to serve as the lead nation for counternarcotics.

The initial two years of counterdrug work were marked by increased poppy cultivation and drug production as farmers and traffickers took advantage of the power vacuum that followed the collapse of the Taliban government. The lack of functioning Afghan law enforcement and judicial institutions on which counternarcotics work normally relies limited the options available to address the drug trade. In the spring of 2002, the UK started an eradication program based on compensating farmers whose poppy crops were destroyed. This approach proved to be misguided and ineffective, as it was inconsistently applied and undercut by corruption. Yet, the UK embraced the unrealistic goal of eliminating poppy cultivation within 10 years.² At this stage, U.S. counternarcotics programs were minimal, in part due to the U.S. military's concerns that counterdrug efforts would detract from higher priority counterterrorism goals.

By mid-2003, the UK had helped to establish a Counter Narcotics Directorate under the Afghan National Security Council and a National Drug Control Strategy for Afghanistan. But progress was stymied by the need to build law enforcement units from scratch, a fragmented SSR effort, and a lack of focus on counternarcotics within the Afghan government. These challenges led the UK to build the Afghan Special Narcotics Force, which was tasked with raiding and destroying drug-production facilities while other counternarcotics institutions were still developing.

Rural development programs to encourage alternative sources of income in poppy-growing areas were also slow to get started. The U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) initially supported small-scale alternative development projects conditioned on reductions in poppy cultivation. However, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was reluctant to support these initiatives due, in part, to concerns that conditioning aid on reductions in poppy cultivation could be self-defeating.³ These conflicting approaches, coupled with growing concerns over the UK's effectiveness as lead nation for counternarcotics, led to a restructuring of the U.S. counternarcotics effort in Afghanistan in 2003 and a push by some U.S. officials for a greater U.S. counterdrug role.

A large increase in poppy cultivation in 2004 strengthened this push, particularly in Congress and the State Department. In 2005, the U.S. government put forth a new counternarcotics strategy that emphasized poppy crop eradication. To achieve eradication goals, INL strongly advocated for aerial spraying of chemical herbicides, a policy that proved highly divisive. When officials within the U.S., Afghan, and coalition governments expressed opposition to aerial spraying, the focus shifted to manual eradication and led to the creation of the Central Poppy Eradication Force. At the same time, USAID significantly increased alternative development programming, which aimed to reduce poppy cultivation and promote viable economic alternatives.

By 2006, the initial Department of Defense (DOD) resistance to counternarcotics was ebbing. DOD began to give higher priority to counternarcotics objectives in response to rising levels of cultivation, as well as the increasingly common view that there was a nexus between the drug trade and the insurgency. The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counternarcotics and Global Threats began to provide training and equipment to Afghan agencies in the hopes of achieving both counterdrug and counterinsurgency objectives. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) deployed more personnel in country, including agents for the recently launched Foreign-Deployed Advisory and Support Teams to mentor Afghan units and raid drug production sites. In 2008, DEA, DOD, and Treasury established the Afghan Threat Finance Cell to target financial flows related to terrorist and insurgent groups, the drug trade, and corruption. These interagency efforts reflected both an increased focus on and resources for U.S. counterdrug programs in Afghanistan.

A number of international partners also scaled up their counternarcotics efforts after 2004. The British government established a Counter Narcotics Trust Fund to coordinate donor financial support, as well as new counterdrug programs in cooperation with the United States. These programs included intelligence organizations and judicial reform efforts to prosecute and convict drug traffickers. Other donor institutions, including the World Bank, European Commission, and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), examined how economic development programs could help counter the drug trade and lent technical expertise. On the military side, a 2008 change to NATO's operations plan allowed International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) personnel to combat drug-trafficking activities linked to the insurgency. Despite these initiatives, poppy cultivation, the primary metric by which counternarcotics programs were judged, remained at historically high levels.

Beginning in 2009, the U.S. counternarcotics effort underwent significant changes due, in part, to the surge of coalition military and civilian personnel.

This surge coincided with a change in U.S. counternarcotics strategy overseen by the newly appointed Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke. Ambassador Holbrooke's appointment marked the end of the U.S. government push for aerial spraying and the disbanding of the centrally led eradication force. On the law enforcement side, specialized counterdrug institutions like the Counter Narcotics Justice Center and National Interdiction Unit were demonstrating increased capability, but were hindered by corruption within the Afghan government.

In 2010, a new U.S. counternarcotics strategy emphasized rural development to provide legal economic opportunities and interdiction initiatives explicitly focused on cutting drug funding to the insurgency. This strategy was supported by the influx of thousands of ISAF and Afghan security forces into major poppy-growing provinces that aided programs like the Helmand Food Zone (HFZ). The food zone program was viewed as a comprehensive set of counternarcotics interventions and supported the reduction of poppy cultivation in some areas of the province. However, declines in poppy on higher-quality agricultural land were offset by the spread of cultivation to outlying desert areas. Interdiction operations increased with the greater security force presence, but later proved unsustainable because of their dependence on the temporary influx of coalition and Afghan forces.

After leveling off in 2009 and 2010, poppy cultivation began to rise again in 2011. In Helmand, the rise was compounded by misguided efforts to replace poppy with wheat, which had the unintended effect of displacing people and poppy to desert areas. In 2012, the U.S. government scaled back its counternarcotics strategy in recognition of the reduced numbers of coalition personnel and the shortcomings of previous efforts. The new strategy focused on two primary objectives: building self-sufficient Afghan counterdrug capabilities and weakening the links between insurgents and narcotics.

Within the reconstruction effort as a whole, the focus on counternarcotics was also reduced after 2012. In practice, U.S. efforts consisted primarily of supporting specialized counterdrug units and scaled-back eradication initiatives. USAID shifted away from requiring specific counternarcotics indicators in alternative development programs and paid little attention to drug-related impacts. Some U.S.-supported demand-reduction and addiction treatment programs continued, but were increasingly centered on Kabul. DEA's reduced ability to conduct operations outside Kabul, due in part to the smaller U.S. military footprint and corruption concerns, illustrated the new reality on the ground.

International interest and investment in the counternarcotics effort also waned after 2012. The Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework included only a minor counternarcotics commitment and listed no counternarcotics-specific indicators

under its governance, rule of law, and human rights goals. On the ground, the Afghan government's ability to carry out counterdrug work was hampered by the need to combat an increasingly active insurgency. For example, specialized counternarcotics forces were often called on for general security and counterterrorism missions. This eroding security environment, weakening government control, and reduced economic growth, combined with the lack of attention to counternarcotics programs, contributed to poppy cultivation topping 200,000 hectares for the first time in 2013, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

From 2013 to 2016, drug production continued at or near the highest levels ever consistently seen in Afghanistan. The 2013 U.S. Civilian-Military Strategic Framework for Afghanistan included only a passing reference to counternarcotics, with no mention of eradication or interdiction. State continued to operate under its 2012 strategy, but neither State's nor DOD's efforts appeared to appreciably dampen narcotics production and trade. In August 2017, the Afghan government launched the Kabul Compact with the United States. While the compact has included a fluctuating number of counternarcotics benchmarks, these are non-binding commitments.

A 2017 UN survey indicated poppy cultivation had reached a new record high of 328,000 hectares. In November 2017, U.S. and Afghan forces initiated airstrikes against "Taliban narcotics production" facilities in Helmand Province. The strikes represented a significant use of new authorities included in the South Asia strategy, announced in August 2017 by the administration of President Donald Trump. DOD described the airstrikes as the start of a new, "sustained air interdiction campaign" to disrupt Taliban financial networks.⁴ While U.S. and Afghan forces had targeted heroin laboratories in prior years, the level of attention from senior military commanders and use of aerial bombardment were unprecedented.

While the increases in Afghan drug production make clear that counternarcotics efforts have largely failed, it is important to acknowledge that these increases are not solely due to failures of counternarcotics programs. The exponential rise in opium poppy cultivation and drug production is rooted in far-reaching, persistent challenges in Afghanistan—namely, lack of security, a poor economy, weak governing institutions, and failures of the wider reconstruction effort.⁵

Given these challenges, there are serious limitations to the U.S. capacity to bring about large-scale, lasting reductions in poppy cultivation and drug production. The opium economy will continue to undermine U.S. goals in Afghanistan. Therefore, ongoing U.S. reconstruction efforts must effectively address, or at least attempt to mitigate, the drug-related threats to Afghan security and stability.

LESSONS

This report distills 11 lessons from the U.S. counternarcotics experience in Afghanistan to date. These lessons are intended to inform and improve ongoing counterdrug initiatives in Afghanistan, and those in other regions facing drug-related challenges. The lessons also identify key factors and principles policymakers should apply when making decisions about counternarcotics-related programs.

In major drug-producing and transit countries that receive significant levels of U.S. foreign assistance:

1. A whole-of-government U.S. counternarcotics strategy should be developed to coordinate various agencies around shared, long-term goals.
2. The U.S. ambassador, in coordination with the U.S. military commander in country, should have responsibility for directing agencies to implement the counternarcotics strategy.
3. The goals of a U.S. counternarcotics strategy should be aligned with and integrated into the larger security, development, and governance objectives of the United States and the host nation.
4. U.S. counternarcotics strategies and programs should be based on a robust understanding of how the illicit drug economy functions and how it relates to local socioeconomic and political conditions.
5. To implement a balanced counternarcotics strategy, development programs and eradication should be collocated on the ground. In addition, tracking funding by strategy component is critical for effective oversight and evaluation of counternarcotics efforts.
6. Development assistance programs should include measures to mitigate the risk of programs inadvertently contributing to drug production and trafficking.
7. Development assistance programs that aim to incentivize a shift away from illicit drug production should be sustained for more than five years, support farmers' household income diversification, and consider the needs of different socioeconomic groups.
8. Eradication can be an effective deterrent to drug-crop cultivation when undertaken in areas where viable alternative livelihoods to drug-crop cultivation exist and the state has an enduring presence.
9. The U.S. government should strive to reach consensus with the host nation and other partner countries on counternarcotics goals and measures. Lack of consensus can alienate host and partner governments and preclude a cohesive counternarcotics effort.
10. Specialized counterdrug units and targeted law enforcement interdiction efforts have limited impact without a competent judicial system or extradition agreements.

11. U.S. support for host-nation counternarcotics institutions should be resourced according to the priority that nation is willing and able to place on counterdrug efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report also makes 13 recommendations intended to strengthen U.S. counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan and in other countries facing drug-related challenges. To improve counternarcotics outcomes, ensure better returns on U.S. investments in partner nations, and advance the reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, SIGAR recommends the following actions that can be taken by Congress and executive branch agencies.

Afghanistan-Specific Recommendations

1. The U.S. government should finalize its revised counternarcotics strategy for Afghanistan. This strategy should prioritize efforts to disrupt drug-related financial flows to insurgent and terrorist groups, promote licit livelihood options for rural communities, and combat drug-related corruption within the Afghan government.
2. The Director of National Intelligence should produce an annual assessment of how much funding the Afghan insurgency obtains from the drug trade and the extent of the insurgency's direct involvement in that trade.
3. Given ongoing U.S. military operations and the significant numbers of U.S. forces in country, civilian leaders should coordinate counternarcotics efforts closely with the commander of U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.

General Recommendations

Legislative Branch Recommendations

4. Congress should consider strengthening counterdrug reporting requirements, as set out in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and in Section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for FY 2003 (Public Law 107-228), to include indicators of long-term drug production trends, such as crop diversification, income levels, and the number of people dependent on the drug trade for their livelihood.
5. Congress should consider requiring certification from the Secretary of State that viable alternative livelihoods are in place and potential negative outcomes have been considered prior to the obligation of funding for drug-crop eradication.
6. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees should consider requiring an annual report from the Secretary of State for each country that has been designated a major drug-transit or drug-producing country and receives U.S. counternarcotics assistance. The report should detail how

counternarcotics assistance for a given country is coordinated across U.S. agencies, track total U.S. counterdrug assistance to that country by fiscal year, and provide a breakdown of assistance supporting each objective of the counternarcotics strategy.

Executive Branch Recommendations

7. U.S. agencies responsible for counternarcotics efforts in major drug-transit or drug-producing countries should focus their eradication efforts in areas that are more secure, have persistent state presence, and offer more diverse livelihood opportunities.
8. The Secretary of State should require that, for each country designated a major drug-transit or drug-producing country and receiving U.S. counternarcotics assistance, the U.S. ambassador to that country convene all U.S. agencies providing counternarcotics assistance to design a strategy that identifies actionable steps to integrate a counternarcotics perspective into larger security, development, and governance objectives. This strategy should be devised in close cooperation with the recipient country and should set forth practical and sustainable counterdrug goals.
9. The USAID Administrator should require an assessment of the potential impact a development project could have on illicit crop cultivation prior to obligating funds for development programs in major drug-transit or drug-producing countries.
10. U.S. agencies responsible for counternarcotics efforts should use geospatial imagery, crop mapping, and other effective monitoring and evaluation systems to more accurately capture both development and counternarcotics outcomes. This data should be shared among all U.S. agencies with counterdrug responsibilities.
11. U.S. agencies charged with reporting to Congress on drug-crop cultivation, eradication, production, and trafficking estimates should include caveats regarding the reliability of those figures and level of confidence in them.
12. USAID should have primary responsibility for designing and administering development programs in drug-producing countries. INL should focus on areas where it has a comparative advantage, such as strengthening the rule of law, building law enforcement and interdiction capacity, and initiating demand-reduction programs.
13. State, DOD, and Justice should consider supporting small, specialized counternarcotics units as a means to build host-nation counterdrug capacity. However, this assistance should be proportional to the willingness and capacity of host-nation leaders to support such units, and should be coordinated with broader U.S. efforts to strengthen political, security, and judicial institutions.



The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (P.L. 110-181) established the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR).

SIGAR's oversight mission, as defined by the legislation, is to provide for the independent and objective

- conduct and supervision of audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations funded with amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.
- leadership and coordination of, and recommendations on, policies designed to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of the programs and operations, and to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse in such programs and operations.
- means of keeping the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of such programs and operation and the necessity for and progress on corrective action.

Afghanistan reconstruction includes any major contract, grant, agreement, or other funding mechanism entered into by any department or agency of the U.S. government that involves the use of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

As required by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018 (P.L. 115-91), this report has been prepared in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

Source: P.L. 110-181, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008," January 28, 2008; P.L. 115-91, "National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018," December 12, 2017.

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