



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Drug Trafficking From Northern Afghanistan and Effect of States Cooperation

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ABSTRACT

Afghanistan is a state that completely landlocked, consists of very rough terrain that is comprised of mountains and cliffs. Security problems resulting from the increasing flow of narcotics illegally smuggled across border of Afghanistan have become critical in understanding the nature of political instability within region. Annually more people die from Afghan opium and its derivatives than from any other drug. Afghanistan produces most of the world's heroin supply. It is severely dysfunctional and beset by problems relating to weaknesses in both Central and Provincial Government, which are compounded by systemic corruption at all levels and in almost all aspects of society. All the main opium and heroin trafficking routes lead out from Afghanistan across the world via neighboring states, such as Iran, Pakistan, China, Central Asia and other neighboring states. Developing a comprehensive and effective multilateral response to the drug challenge should be priority task for Central Asia countries. Resolving drug production and trafficking problems requires consolidated efforts between Central Asian states especially Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In additions, Afghanistan can actively participate in multilateral cooperation to combat against drug trafficking. The central point of this paper, focus on the growing trend of drug trafficking and its impacts on northern neighbors such as Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and Why Afghanistan's northern route has gained importance compare with other routes.
Keywords: Afghanistan, Central Asia, drug trafficking, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan

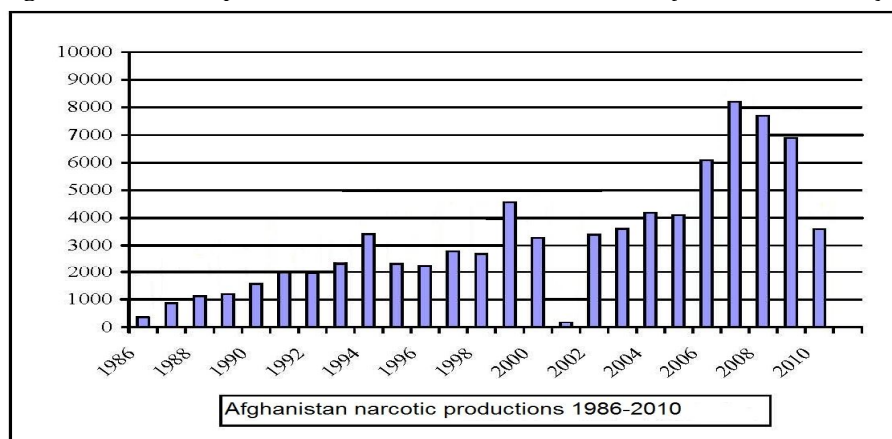
Received 19/09/2013 Accepted 11/10/2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Islamic republic of Afghanistan is a landlocked country in south central Asia. It is variously described as being located within central Asia, South Asia or the Middle East. Afghanistan bordered by Iran to the west and Central Asian countries to the north and Pakistan to the east and south. The history of opium can be traced back to 3400 B.C. where the opium poppy was cultivated in the lower Mesopotamia. The Cold War clearly helped the illicit opium-heroin economies thrive in Asia. This trend (opium cultivation), emerged first in Laos and in Burma, then in Afghanistan in what came to be known as the Golden Crescent. The Golden Crescent is the name given to Asia's principal area of illicit opium production, located at the crossroads of Central, South, and Western Asia. Following a Taliban edict in 2000 banning poppy growing, production fell from the 1999. In 2000, it was estimated that 75 percent of the world's opium supply came from Afghanistan [1]. Central Asia countries are now a major consumer of Afghan heroin that has resulted in an HIV epidemic caused by injecting drug use. Opium has long been cultivated in the region, and records of opium poppy cultivation in Kyrgyzstan go back to the 19th century. Opium production began to be used for medicinal purposes during the colonial period. At the end of the 19th century, an opiates-producing pharmaceutical plant was opened in what is now Shymkent, Kazakhstan. In fact, the Kyrgyz continued to grow opium poppy until 1974 legally. Some 98 state and collective farms in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul oblast produced 80 percent of the total licit opium in the Soviet Union and 16 percent of the world's supply. Opium cultivation and production in central Asia is minimal, The Central Asian states are no strangers to drug cultivation and consumption, something that has made people at the grassroots level more willing to be drawn into the financial incentives of the drug trade. These countries have the right kind of terrain and climate for cultivating narcotics. Everybody admits that cannabis production is very widespread, although no one is willing to make its eradication a priority. Cannabis is an easy-to-produce and lucrative cash crop [2]. Afghanistan's Drug trafficking through central Asia has expanded dramatically over the past many decades.

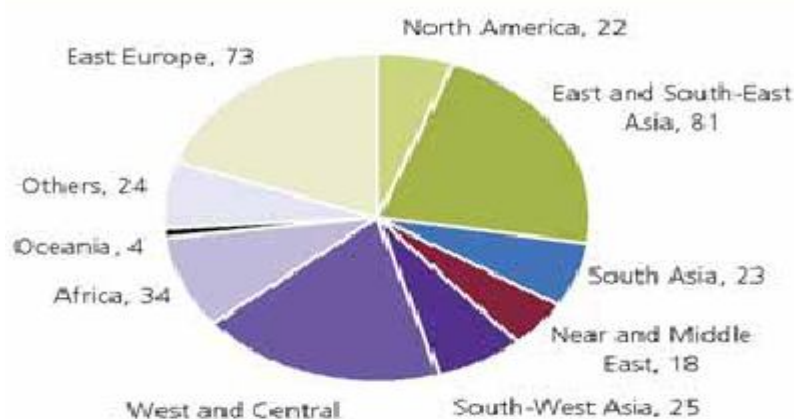
Afghanistan Illicit Opium Potential Production, 1986-2010 (Unit: Metric Tons)



Source: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP), *Global illicit drug trends, 1999*, New York, 1999, p. 23; UNODC, *World Drug Report, 2010*, p. 138; UNODC, *World Drug Report, 2011*, New York: United Nations, 2011, p. 60.

In 2010, Afghanistan's opium production declined by almost half due largely to the spread of a disease that damaged poppy plants and the UNODC estimated it dropped to 3,600 mt, the lowest since 2003, "but the amount of land used for growing the crop remained the same (8). Today Afghanistan accounts for an estimated three-fourths of the world's heroin supply with an increasing proportion of those drugs trafficked through the central Asian states of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Most of this supply sent into European and Russian markets and sometimes to the U.S and Canada. Obviously, the global opiate market has neither been eliminated nor significantly reduced since 1998 (8). An estimated 80 percent of the heroin seized in Europe and 95 percent in Great Britain, originates from poppies in Afghanistan, most of which is trafficked through central Asia.

Distribution of heroin consumption by region, 2009 (375mt)



Source: UNODC

Geopolitics of Central Asia and drug trafficking routes:

Afghanistan has dominated the worldwide opium market for more than a decade. In 2009, the total quantity of opium produced in that country was 6,900 metric tons (mt), accounting for 90 per cent of global supply. Afghan heroin feeds a global market worth some \$55 billion annually, and most of the profits of the trade made outside Afghanistan. Afghanistan and its neighbors affected by trafficking as the drugs moved to their key destination markets of Western Europe and the Russian Federation. Drugs follow three general trafficking routes out of Afghanistan: the "northern route" through Central Asia, the "western route" through Iran, and the "southern route" through Pakistan. These routes are not mutually exclusive and in recent years, there has been evidence of opiates moving between the different routes to avoid detection [4]. About a third of the heroin produced in Afghanistan transported to Europe via the Balkan route, while a quarter is trafficked north to Central Asia and the Russian Federation along the northern route.



The northern and Balkan heroin routes

Source: UNODC World Drug Report 2010

Trafficking of opiates occurs along diverse trajectories with a vast array of methods but transport by road continues to be the most frequent for large quantities. The other path from Afghanistan is the northern route, which carried an estimated 90 tons of heroin on different paths through the Central Asian States to the Russian Federation and beyond. Reports also indicate a growing importance of these northward trafficking routes for Afghan opiates flowing into China. Central Asia is one of the main routes for narcotics trafficking, because of its geographic location and infrastructure has become a convenient trafficking corridor for drugs from Afghanistan to other countries. The geography of the region works to the advantage of drug trafficker's. For example, the Kyrgyz border with Tajikistan is difficult to patrol since large parts of it are more than 13,000 feet above sea level and temperatures fall to 40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter. In addition, drug abuse in Central Asia seems to be very high. The reasons for the cases mentioned above could be divided to the following items:

- Power vacancy after collapse of communist government in the former Soviet Union, Power vacancy as well as independency of states in Central Asia resulted in disorganization and uncontrollable transition of the opium in the region, especially in the border areas. The Soviet breakup led to more open borders and freer foreign travel. Increased cross-border communications meant increased opportunity for drug smugglers to establish contacts with interested parties in the region. The cross-border cooperation, which was not very new, had been a major factor in the beginning of the proliferation of drugs in the Soviet Union during the war in Afghanistan [2].

- Creating of no democratic and individualism in this area. The scenario caused forming a kind of dictatorship in the states like Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan. However, increasing of poverty and a big gap between poor and rich people and also increasing of corruption led to increase trade and narcotic trafficking in Central Asia.

- Afghanistan's internal crisis and inability in government to control opium production in one side, and border controlling problems in Central Asia countries on the other side, caused Central Asia to be one part of drug abuse area and transition to Russia, Europe, U.S. and Canada.

Tajikistan is not a major producer of narcotics, but it is major country for heroin and opium trafficking from Afghanistan to other part of world. The opium/heroin moves through Tajikistan through Central Asia and on to Russian and European markets, and it finally enter to the United States.

Afghanistan's drug trafficking and northern neighbors

Afghanistan shares its border with Iran, Pakistan, China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Geographical realities, along with the close cultural and economic ties across borders in local areas, have created a situation in which Afghanistan neighbors beset by drug trafficking on all sides. Likewise, with the increased production of drug in Afghanistan, trafficking from Asia into the cross regional has rapidly increased. The displacement of drug production sources and the diversification of narcotics that have been product led to more complex international drug trafficking routes that targeting the Global markets. Narcotic trafficking from Afghanistan through neighbors caused increasing government corruption, crime, diseases, societal problems and insecurity in common borders with Afghanistan. Organized crime is a threat to political stability, public security and health in transit and destination countries.

Central Asia is also extremely vulnerable to the activities of terrorist groups funded by drugs money. Theoretically vacancy of power and creation of no democratic and individualism in this area caused Central Asia to be transition rout to consumer markets. The illicit drugs pose a clear danger to the security of states, societies and individuals in this region. The main reasons for involvement in drug trafficking is the lack of good governance, porous regional borders and strengthening of control along the

Iranian and Pakistani common borders with Afghanistan. These are more important reasons that international drug traffickers took a strong interest in the region from drug trafficking. Political and economic instability and corruption, less productive economies with higher levels of violence, because of more resources are allocated to deal with drug-related problems. Another direct negative impact of the drug trade is the laundering of illegal proceeds, and drug is funding insurgency in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Undoubtedly the growth of heroin abuse through injection has contributed to the spread of the HIV/AIDS infection that this is another impact of drug trafficking in Central Asia. However, with over 99 percent of opiates in the region originating from Afghanistan About One-quarter of Afghan heroin and opium destined for European markets.

The Republic of Tajikistan is a developing country in Central Asia that strongly affected by Afghan drug related criminality. Tajikistan's Southern neighbor Afghanistan is the world's largest opium producer and the biggest heroin supplier to both European and Asian markets. The 1344 km long border with Afghanistan is at the transit route for drugs being trafficked into the Northern and Western recipient countries. Through geographic location Tajikistan has become a major transit route for drugs bound mainly for Russian and to a lesser extent European markets. The country seizes about 80% of all drugs captured in Central Asia. Nearly 20 per cent of the opiates leaving Afghanistan transit through Central Asia, and much of that flows through the porous Tajikistan-Afghanistan border, delineated by the Pianj River. Despite internal turmoil caused by the civil war (1992-1997) and numerous social problems connected with transformation from centrally planned to free-market economy, the country remains committed to combating illicit drug trafficking. Since regaining independence in 1991, Tajikistan has engaged in multilateral cooperation aimed at constructing and implementing an international counter narcotics strategy. In March 2011, authorities in Tajikistan seized 404 kg of acetic anhydride and 7.3 tons of sulphuric acid destined for Afghanistan [3].

The Tajik Drug Control Agency was positively assessed by a comprehensive external evaluation conducted in November 2001. The Northern Province of Badakhshan is partially a cultivation region due to its closeness to Tajikistan. The DCA (Drug Control Agency), in Tajikistan plays a central role in tackling drug abuse and raising drug awareness issues. Its coordination activities have helped in the seizure of several tons of drugs and other outcomes from DCA work means licit drugs are now licensed and controlled, drug awareness programs have been initiated, drug addict numbers have established and cooperation with both national and international partners is stable and practical. The number of registered drug addicts has fallen over the past four years from 1,637 in 2007 to 1,038 in 2011 (Drug Control Agency (DCA) of Tajikistan, march 2012).

Kyrgyzstan suffers significant spillover from the Afghan narcotics trade too. The UNODC identified Kyrgyzstan as an important source of precursor materials for processing Afghan opium. In additions, it views the drug trade and the attendant organized crime networks as undermining stability, development and the rule of law, and jeopardizing the political reform process ([http:// csis.org](http://csis.org)).

In Kyrgyzstan, the situation with respect to drug abuse worsened as a result of the increased availability of opium and heroin originating in Afghanistan, a spillover effect of the transit in that country. Abuse of drugs has become more widespread: the number of registered drug dependent persons has increased sharply in the past decade, totaling 10,171 in early 2011. Increasing abuse of opioids has been accompanied by increasing abuse by injection and increased infection with blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS. According to the Government of Kyrgyzstan, in the first quarter of 2011 there were 726 HIV-positive persons registered in the country, of who 423 abused drugs by injection. Law enforcement officials reported an increase of 50 per cent in drug-related offences in the first half of 2011 compared with the first half of 2010 (3). Uzbekistan shares a 137-km border with Balkh province in Afghanistan. The main crossing is the Hairaton border crossing point located at a bridge over the Amu Darya River in Kaldar district. Afghan heroin also enters via Uzbekistan, although in smaller quantities compare with Tajikistan. Tajikistan smuggle generally moves through Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan before transiting Kazakhstan into the Russian Federation.

Badghis and Hirat are probably the main crossing areas for smuggling heroin into Turkmenistan. UNODC information from Faryab suggests that small-scale heroin smuggling into Turkmenistan takes place, but there are no seizures indicating a fixed heroin route continuing north. With some reports advancing that, every extended Turkmen family has at least one drug addict. Based on estimated demand in Central Asia and the Russian Federation, approximately 90 tons of heroin were trafficked from northern Afghanistan into Central Asia in 2010. Tajikistan accounts for most of the heroin flow, followed by Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Estimated volumes of heroin trafficked through Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan in 2010 (tons).

Heroin (tons)			Total
Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan	
2-4	8-10	75-80	90

Source: UNODC

Heroin aside, it is estimated that an additional 35-40 tons of opium were trafficked from Afghanistan to Central Asian markets in 2010 (UNODC, July 2011). UNODC estimates that nearly half of the opium flow travels through the

Borders of Tajikistan followed closely by Uzbekistan and with Turkmenistan accounting for only a small proportion.

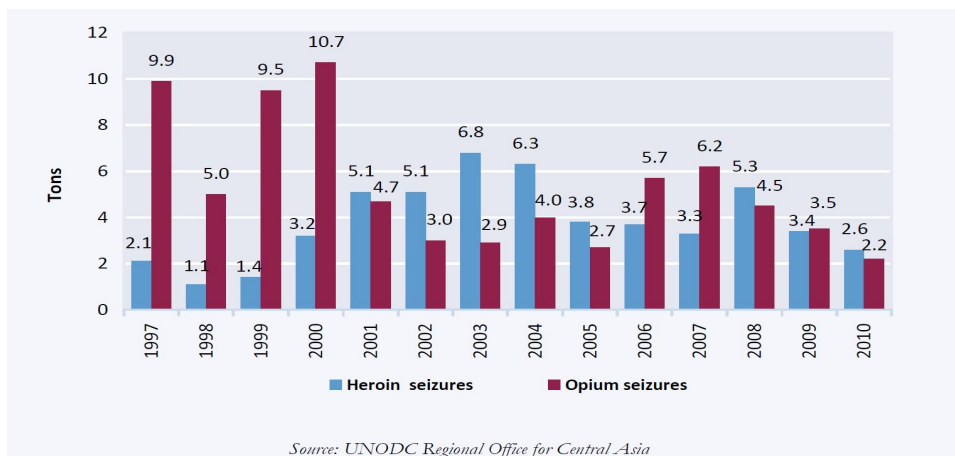
Estimated volumes of opium trafficked through Central Asian countries bordering Afghanistan in 2010 (tons).

Opium (tons)			Total
Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Tajikistan	
1-3	15-17	18-20	35-40

Source: UNODC

Altogether, Central Asian countries seized some 2/6 tons of heroins in 2010, less than 3 per cent of the estimated 90 tons trafficked through the region. Overall, regional seizures have decreased by 25 per cent in the case of heroin and by 36 per cent for opium, compared to seizures in 2009 [5]. One possible explanation for this decrease is a reported trend towards smaller shipments, reflected in the individual seizure data during 2010-2011. This also allows traffickers to spread the risk and mitigate against losses in response to the high volume of single seizures which occurred in 2008-2009.

Opiate Seizure Trends in Central Asia, 1997-2010



Source: UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia

The majority drug trafficking entered the Central Asia region was trafficked onwards to the Russian Federation. Given that the only land border between the Russian Federation and Central Asia is Kazakhstan, almost the entire amount of heroin trafficked by land to the Russian Federation passed through that country. Central Asia forms the gateway for heroin destined for the Russian Federation and onwards to East Europe, a route known as the "Northern Route". East Europe received the majority of its heroin from the Russian Federation, as well as from Turkey and countries of the Caucasus. Under the auspices of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia, China and the Central Asia Republics

have reconsidered anti-terrorism, drug production and trafficking in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the U.S. and China have participated in the "Six plus Two" Drug Control Mechanism Program, with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia (6).

Cooperation between countries at northern Afghanistan

Facilitating dialogue and exchange intelligence service at the bilateral, regional and international level, along with the promotion of international conventions, standards and best practices should be main priority for Central Asia countries that have common borders with Afghanistan such as Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The main feature of this cooperation must be concentrated for common aims (drug trafficking), such as, preventing illicit trafficking and border management, drug demand reduction, HIV control, crime, justice and corruption. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are countries that had to have a positive cooperation against drug trafficker. Some of these countries have political legitimacy and economic capability (in terms of material resources) in other hands. Successful regional cooperation requires leadership with both capability and legitimacy [7]. Tajikistan has close cultural ties with Afghanistan and other central Asia countries. it can obtained central rule to fight against drug trafficking because geopolitically, Tajikistan has vast common borders with Afghanistan and this country is main route for drug transition to consumption markets, that this phenomena leads to appear many problems for Tajikistan and constant fight against drug trafficking was main priority for Tajik's foreign policy. Finally, Tajikistan has good experience to fight against drug trafficking and more drug captured between Central Asia countries, obligated to Tajikistan. Turkmenistan is outstanding in economic terms. Nevertheless, Turkmenistan has political legitimacy to have active presence in Central and south Asia region, but it enacted neutrality strategy in political matters. As a result, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan should be led weaker states to fight against drug trafficking especially Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan is outstanding in military and intelligence force. Kazakhstan is buffer zone and drug come from other Central Asia countries then from this way transit to Russia federation and east European.

CONCLUSION

Every year, Drugs consumption cause deaths many people in the entire world, because of Afghanistan's opium production. soaring production, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, accompanied by resurgence in opium poppy cultivation and heroin trafficking, are a major concerns about drug cultivation then trafficking through Afghanistan to peripheral And cross- regional countries. To fight the continued trafficking of drugs, it has been necessary to develop new initiatives and exercise greater concerted action in Central Asia states and worldwide. Geopolitically, central Asia countries have suitable situation for drug trafficking, but States cooperation is main key to fight against this phenomena through northern route. This cooperation should be based on the cooperative agreements, especially on intelligence sharing and common law enforcement. An overall lack of strategic trust between governments could cause a gap in intelligence sharing and multi-level interactions in law enforcement efforts, despite positive statements that hail the signing of new bilateral agreements between countries for fight against narcotic productions. In addition, Differences in the Central Asia countries criminal justice systems and economic capability have restricted the breadth of bilateral counter narcotics cooperation and have hindered increasing cooperation in simple matters. Governments counter narcotics cooperation have accomplished much in stemming drug trafficking across borders in recent years, aimed at establishing a complete legal framework for anti-drug work and smooth liaison channels. It has developed practical cooperation on the exchange of intelligence, investigation of cases, precursor chemical control, personnel training, concentrated principally on strengthening border controls, and increasing anti-narcotics capacity through coordinated training across the region. Sustainable and comprehensive alternative economic development programs are essential for long-term success in the war against Central Asia drug trafficking. Afghanistan is poorest country in the world, and as such, it cannot resist the impact of powerful transnational trafficking flows.

Finally, the economic integrity of the countries and foreign investment in Afghanistan will dramatically decline the narcotic production and its illicit trafficking through other countries. It is theoretically possible but regional and Trans regional countries could develop political relations that it lead to collective management with equal rights, but their mutual rivalry might prevent this. International organizations have a demonstrable role in building confidence and enhancing cooperation on issues of common concern. International community must also play a role by doing more to assist in the fight against illicit drugs.

- More cooperation between Central Asia and they were enacting new enforcement law that it was common to combat against drug trafficking. Meanwhile, Afghanistan's neighbors have more

cooperation with peripheral and consumption countries such as; Iran, Pakistan, U.S, Russia and EU.

- Changing tribe life and traditional agriculture and building irrigate system for fields that it is needed construction dams in Afghanistan or transmit water to agriculture uses from neighbor such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- Training and representative awareness programs, that they helped reduction drug demands.

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How to cite this article

Salar Moradi, Heydar Moradi · Drug Trafficking From Northern Afghanistan and Effect of States Cooperation. *Bull. Env.Pharmacol. Life Sci.*, Vol 2 (12) November 2013: 130-137