

PD-ABU-387

11927

~~ISA 7/07/66~~

~~Page 8~~

END OF TOUR REPORT

OF

THE FIELD OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, QUETTA
NARCOTICS AWARENESS AND CONTROL PROJECT

Bradford R. Miller
Narcotics Awareness and Control Project
Development Alternatives Inc.

September 26, 1991

I ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Due to the delay in the approval for Poppy Reduction and Elimination Unit (PREU) activities, the efforts of the Field Operations Director, Quetta were largely directed toward establishing and managing the Quetta Office and building an information gathering network.

Along with collecting documents, a network of informants including commanders, Afghan political party workers, personnel of various humanitarian assistance organizations and residents of refugee camps was established during the past 14 months. The information collected was geared toward; 1. Increasing project knowledge concerning the extent and nature of opium production in southwestern Afghanistan, 2. Providing a basis from which to plan field studies in potential project areas, and 3. Providing a basis for developing implementation strategies.

Though the PREU did not receive approval for its operations during the tenure of the Field Operations director, a great deal of useful information was collected with the following results:

- Site Selection Tool: This tool, using a lotus spreadsheet foundation, quantifies and ranks logistical, political, economic, security and opium production data to assist in site selection for project development activities.
- Area Profiles: Brief reports on opium producing districts (wuluswalis) in southwestern Afghanistan containing relevant information on political structure and dynamics, agricultural economy, demography, logistical considerations, security situation, environmental characteristics and opium production. While these profiles were originally intended to serve as planning aids for PREU activities, they are equally relevant for planning awareness and research activities as set forth in the reconfigured project plan.
- Extent of Opium Production: Based on information gathered in the past 14 months, the project now has a fairly accurate knowledge base concerning the extent of opium production in the provinces of Helmand, Kandahar, Urozgan, Farah, and Zabul provinces.
- Knowledge Base for Planning: Based on the information gathered in the past 14 months, the project has a much stronger knowledge base concerning opium production, political situations, social dynamics, cultural characteristics and logistics in southwestern Afghanistan which will be used to plan not only future project research and awareness activities but future anti-narcotics activities directed from Afghanistan.

II PROBLEMS

The problems encountered by this project, and the Poppy Reduction Unit in particular, are well known by both O/AID/REP and the contractor, and are largely beyond their control. Therefore the following discussion of problems will be confined to issues identified during the course of the project that would not only have had a negative impact on PREU activities but will likely complicate any future project activities or future development activities geared toward reducing poppy cultivation.

PROBLEM I Diverse and Conflicting Anti-narcotics Strategies among NGOs, the U.S. Government and the United Nations.

While opium production is condemned by nearly all of the various foreign and indigenous agencies involved in the implementation of humanitarian assistance/development programs in Afghanistan; and while many organizations have policies to discourage opium production or to promote economic alternatives, the great diversity of often conflicting policies and procedures for addressing this problem serves to inhibit the overall effort.

The contrast between the policies and operational procedures of O/AID/REP and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) provide a clear example of this problem.

Because of restrictions articulated in the Foreign Assistance Act, USAID has perhaps the most stringent policies regarding assistance programs to poppy growing areas. Essentially any dealings with known or suspected drug traffickers or people known to have aided and abetted narcotics traffickers are prohibited. This effectively prohibits any contractor or grantee from working in a poppy growing area in Afghanistan as doing so requires cooperation between and an on-going relationship with, the area leadership, who are invariably linked in some fashion to narcotics production and trafficking.

UNDP, on the other hand, requires that grantees or implementing partners have area representatives sign contracts with a clause that prohibits the use of project inputs to promote narcotics production and trafficking. However, UNDP makes no effort to monitor compliance with this clause and has never terminated a contract because of non-compliance with this clause. Discussions with UNDP personnel indicate that opium production and marketing are not priority issues and that, aside from the contractual clause, they have no anti-narcotics strategy and little interest in determining the impact of their assistance (positive or negative) on narcotics production.

What has resulted over the past year is that NGOs tend to avoid seeking funds from USAID for projects in poppy growing areas and approach one of the UN agencies instead.

This has created a situation where not only are USAID restrictions rendered meaningless in terms of discouraging narcotics trafficking, but where USAID is losing any kind of leverage in poppy growing areas. Furthermore, due to the UN's policies and procedures with regard to opium, it can be argued that UN assistance is sometimes used to support opium production.

SOLUTION: It is not realistic to expect that there could ever be a consensus on the importance of anti-narcotics efforts and policies and procedures governing them among all the agencies operating in Afghanistan. However part of the problem is that there has been no concerted attempt to promote the importance of the narcotics issue within the international community and to try to coordinate anti-narcotics activities.

As the USG is one of the most important donors in the region and as it probably has the strongest commitment to reducing narcotics production and trafficking, it appears that the USG is in the best position to take the lead in trying to promote a more serious and better coordinated effort to discourage opium production.

The NACP project could be an important vehicle for this effort. Resources can and should be devoted to hosting forums, seminars, and meetings to heighten awareness of this problem amongst various NGOs and UN Agencies and to facilitate discussion and operationalization of policies and procedures to address the problem.

Also it must be acknowledged that while USAID funded activities are, by and large, in compliance with the Foreign Assistance Act, the USG is supporting both UN agencies and NGOs who are clearly contravening US policies. The USG is a UNDP donor and many NGOs are supported by both USAID and the UN. Though USAID money may not be used in poppy growing areas, the generous overhead allowances provided by USAID are vital to the continued operation of NGO's who are working in poppy growing areas with UN funding. (UN funding provides very little funding for overhead and expatriate personnel).

Therefore the USG can and should use its leverage with UNDP and NGO's to align their policies and procedures to more effectively combat opium production.

PROBLEM II: Conditions in Afghanistan make the collection of accurate information extremely difficult.

Collecting accurate information on economic and social conditions in Afghanistan is an extremely difficult problem faced by every organization working there. The factors constraining the collection of both baseline and monitoring data include; a shortage of resources (skilled researchers and money), inaccessability (unstable conditions and poor infrastructure), the limited methodologies being employed (generally interview surveys), the fact that most monitoring information is being collected by the very same people who implement the assistance, and characteristics of the Afghan culture that make most Afghans unable or unwilling to report accurately. This problem was encountered time and time again during NACP research efforts in Quetta over the past year. This problem is especially acute for opium issues as it is now well known by Afghan leaders, and to a lesser extent, the general population that foreigners don't like opium which exacerbates the tendency to exaggerate or under report.

SOLUTION:

Regardless of what political developments occur in the next few years, it is difficult to see how the environment will change enough to make information gathering any less difficult. For future development efforts the following are suggested.

- Develop instruments and research methodologies that minimize the use of interviews with beneficiaries. Examples are; remote sensing, and farm systems research where trained observers make continuous measurements of yield, land under cultivation, water usage, fertilizer usage, development inputs, etc on actual farms selected according to a sampling frame.
- Do not implement activities whose objectives can't be quantified and can't be measured.
- Do not have people responsible for implementation also be responsible for monitoring those activities

III RECOMMENDATIONS

The following discussion of recommendations will be limited to research priorities geared toward supporting future anti-narcotics activities implemented from inside of Afghanistan that can be addressed by the project, given the time and resources remaining.

A. Opium Marketing Studies

An adequate understanding of the economic importance of opium production and marketing on local and regional levels, and the development of sound and effective strategies to combat this production, will require a more comprehensive understanding of several aspects of opium marketing such as; opium price structure, opium price dynamics and the nature and extent of the opium marketing industry

Price Structure: Opium price structure is a function of several sets of variables.

1. Quality: Prices differ according to moisture content, color, and source.
2. Location: Prices vary according to location on the supply chain such as farmgate, catchment bazaar and at processing centers. Farmgate prices vary according to distance from processing center.
3. Method: Price varies according to the nature of the buying/selling transaction such as short selling or post harvest selling.

Price Dynamics: Opium prices have been seen to fluctuate dramatically over the past year. A clear understanding of price dynamics is complicated by currency fluctuations and the potential price elasticity in local currency. Developing a capacity to track prices is essential to: determine the effect of price on farmers' decisions as to whether or not to plant poppy, to isolate the relationship between world price and local prices, and to monitor the impact of supply disruptions such as banditry, political disturbances and interdiction efforts in both Pakistan and the impact of seasonal factors.

Opium Marketing Industry: The buying and selling of opium gum is a sizable industry in and of itself. Many Afghans are employed in the trading and transport of this commodity both in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. Efforts need to be made to understand who is involved, what the economic impact of this

industry is in local areas and the region, what role this industry has in promoting the cultivation of poppy and what sanctions it can bring to bear on efforts to reduce production.

While key informants have been used to collect some data on opium marketing and will comprise part of the future research effort, the opium price structure is too complicated and price fluctuations too frequent to be reliably studied through the use of casual informants.

A more systematic approach is required where monitors are placed in the field and in important bazaars to collect price information on a regular basis. Eventually, price monitoring can be done less intensively once price structures are better understood and indicators established. These monitors should be shopkeepers who are carefully selected and briefed on unobtrusive information gathering.

B. Remote Sensing Capacity

Given the difficulties associated with collecting reliable information in Afghanistan, it is presently impossible to accurately estimate opium production there. Furthermore, regardless of political developments in Kabul it is unlikely that the situation will improve in the foreseeable future.

It is therefore recommended that the project investigate the feasibility of developing a capacity to remote sense opium poppy in Afghanistan. Remote sensing may be the only reliable method to accurately determine land area under poppy cultivation on local, regional and national levels. Knowledge of land area under poppy cultivation is essential to

- Estimate opium production on a local, regional or national level
- Estimate economic value of opium production on local, regional and national levels.
- Estimate economic impact of poppy bans.
- Analyze and select economic development alternatives in poppy growing areas.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of development programs on opium production.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of control activities.
- Analyze the relationship between prices and production.

- Analyze the relationships between localized social and political phenomena and opium production.

C. Socio-Political Studies

Without plunging too deeply into anthropologic, economic and sociologic theory, it is safe to say that a culture is influenced by, while at the same time, influences economic activity. Opium production and marketing undoubtedly influence the political dynamics and social relationships in Afghanistan. In fact this influence may grow as the weapons supply dwindles and petty commanders/mullahs must rely on local resources to support their hostilities. Concomitantly, the social context must at the same time influence the extent and nature of opium production.

A review of the literature on anti-narcotics efforts throughout the world consistently point out that these efforts, whether developmental, educational or control-oriented, require an extensive knowledge of the culture and society in which they are being conducted. Many failed anti-narcotics efforts are, at least in part, caused by an inadequate knowledge of the culture.

Effective awareness campaigns will depend on effective messages being conveyed through effective and appropriate communication media. Similarly, effective development activities will require a clear understanding of the political and social forces that serve to reinforce opium production so that the potential winners and losers that will result from the reduction of that production can be identified, as well as, what forces they can and will bring to bear to confound reduction efforts.

As vital as it may be, this type of research will prove to be particularly difficult to conduct. A comprehensive understanding of an area's political and social structures and dynamics cannot be arrived at through a total reliance on survey questionnaires. A variety of techniques will be required including long-term observation by trained social scientists. This will be impossible to accomplish unless trained participant observers can have a legitimate long-term presence in selected areas. Given the current situation this will require the presence of trained Afghan or foreign social scientists to visit areas or to stay in areas in the guise of some other type of assistance such as a health program or agriculture support program.