



Counternarcotics Initiatives for Afghanistan

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On-The-Record Briefing

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MR. CASEY: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the State Department. A pleasure to have you all with us this afternoon.

This afternoon, we'd like to give Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Robert Charles an opportunity to talk with you today about some of the positive developments, as well as some of the other challenges confronting us in Afghanistan, as we move forward and work with the international community on dealing with the narcotics issue in that country.

Assistant Secretary Charles.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Thank you. It's amazing, with the Secretary away, it's a surprise to see so many people here. I appreciate the people who have come, and what I want to do is give you a birds-eye view and then open it to questions of where we're headed in Afghanistan. And I know there's a lot of talk out there, and so what I really felt is that I was overdue in coming down and just explaining where we're headed.

The first thing I want to say right off is a couple of disclaimers. First, I am not the guy that creates, nor the guy that releases numbers on cultivation, so I don't have those. I understand the UN will be releasing something shortly and, you know, others may have something to say about that. But it's really not my purpose in being here today.

What I can tell you broadly on that is that we generally expect that there has been -- because all the indications have been over the year that there is -- an increase in cultivation. It's pretty natural as a result of the economic circumstances of the country and the gradual movement toward a more stable democracy and a more stable, legitimate economy.

The second thing I wanted to do is note that today is not a revolutionary day in any way. The progress I'm about to report to you and the planning that I'm about to report to you, which is a consensus really of a lot of both our own agencies and the Afghan Government and the British and other allies, is really the product of about five months of intensive work behind the scenes to understand where the Afghan Government believed, because they have really been the primary driver on this, that we can be of best support to them. And so the modalities that I'm about to roll out for you are in many ways a reflection of an evolutionary, not a revolutionary, set of thoughts.

So from the top, again, poppy cultivation, everybody understands it's an issue over there. The narcotics trade is expanding. It has really given rise, I think, to what can safely be called a degree of alarm by the Afghan Government. President Karzai has spoken about it a number of times. He spoke about it quite eloquently, I think, in May in Berlin. He has done so before the election and he has done so very aggressively after the election. And in many ways, we are responding to what we understand to be a primary concern, if not the primary concern parallel with terrorism and democracy and stabilization and institution building in his country.

The significance of narcotics production, as most folks in this room know, but it's worth saying again, is that narcotics don't just create their own downstream set of negative effects as a drug, affecting tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of young people and of people across Afghanistan, as well as up through the trafficking routes and into Europe; but they have separate effects, they fund bad people and bad things, and in particular, we know that they have funded some of the warlords, they fund everyday criminals, they fund extremists within that country and terrorists. And the groups that one can safely say benefit include at least HIG, historically, and IMU, remnants of the Taliban, and there are certainly some indications that other groups, including possibly al-Qaida, have benefited from narcotics money.

That is significant, but it is in some ways no less significant or not more significant than the impact of drugs on corruption in the country. We are at a point where a miracle in some ways occurred. And I really do believe it is something of a miracle. It's a great testimony to freedom and the power of freedom as a driver of individuals in the election on October 9th. And everything I'm telling you, I'm telling you from the heart and I believe it 100 percent. And I'm telling you, it is in some ways a miracle.

We trained 27,000 police in order to help stabilize. They were all Afghans, and they did stabilize a safe and non-violent election in which people did things like swim across rivers to get to their polling places. I mean, I don't know if we'd even do that in Ohio and Florida. I mean, it's a pretty powerful, moving force: freedom. And I kid you not when I say that to watch it happen was itself really remarkable. So we don't want to lose that and they don't want to lose that. And there has been a, really, I think, an understanding from months ago that we want to do everything we can to buttress the Afghanistan commitment to get narcotics -- the narcotics trade, growing, processing, trafficking -- under control.

It is an obstacle to the legitimate development. Some people have heard me say it before, but I will say it again, just because I think it's timely, that it is a significant problem, but right now the poppy cultivation, the overall amount of land which is used to cultivate poppy, is actually only 8 percent of the total land used to cultivate all crops in Afghanistan. The top four crops that make up that 92 percent that is not poppy are cereals, wheat, barley and corn, in order. So people get a grasp for how big the market is for food in that country, that group of crops only meets about 10 percent of the Afghan population's food needs. So there is, once you get the price differential down, once you begin to tackle this by raising the risks and costs of growing and processing poppy, which is quite doable, you end up creating an equilibrium in which the other legitimate market begins to flow.

That is also buttressed and we have some -- I know some experts here from AID -- also buttressed by the extraordinary road infrastructure that has been put into place to help get legitimate crops to market. And if people want to ask more about that, I'm happy to talk about it.

The United Kingdom has been extremely helpful. Most people, again, who have followed this know, but I'll say it so that the background for this is well understood. They have created really a highly effective interdiction force, which goes out and hits labs and warehouses and other production facilities.

They worked very hard to try to bring governor-led eradication to fruition this year. I think there were a lot of obstacles to that and they're self-evident.

It is difficult -- it was difficult -- to use the combination of incentive and penalty when there wasn't yet a sovereign central government; there is now. I think in many ways, the future will lie in that government's decisions on how to approach governors, but it is clear that we will be supporting the central government directly in each of the components, including central government-led eradication.

There's also, it should be noted that the British not only have the lead on paper, but have been the de facto lead in targeting. There's a targeting cell in which we participate, and that cell will probably get more active this year. But they have been very, I think, aggressive about picking targets all over the country in both Pashtun and Tajik areas. I don't think anyone can fault any of that cell's efforts, in terms of their targeting, their disposition of where the targets are.

Again, I want to say that President Karzai has done and has said since the election, really, all of the things that one would hope and has really begun to initiate a lot of the institutional change that will support a robust counternarcotics effort. He has come up with, again, what -- we have worked very closely with him, but what I think is a solid national drug control strategy. I would go so far as to call it something tantamount to a Plan Afghanistan, which has parallels to the Plan Colombia effort that was initiated about five years ago during the Clinton Administration with the full support of both Republicans and Democrats in our Congress, and led very much by the Colombian Government.

What the modalities are that they will choose to make this effective in Afghanistan are up to the Afghan Government. They may choose to emphasize one thing over another. They may choose to emphasize one region over another. One of the things that has been talked about a lot, particularly when it comes to eradication, is working on larger tracts first. But however they choose to do it, we are going to be there full-bore, 100 percent to support them. And I think the international community has made it clear in our recent discussions, including a day-long conference here with the British privately to go through details, has really reinforced that everybody is on side. While we will all do different things in support, probably there can be no question that everybody understands the magnitude of the problem. And again, that's true in our own interagency.

So what will evolve now, or what is about to, I think, become the next step in this support to the Afghan Government, now possible because you have a very -- you have a legitimate, democratically elected Afghan Government, is a plan that will tackle this coming growing season, but will also be preceded by a number of other law enforcement and alternative development efforts.

There are five pillars, and you'll hear them discussed probably more than once. But they are: effective public information, tough law enforcement, enhanced alternative livelihoods, aggressive interdiction and expanded eradication. And I will, before taking questions, just give you a snapshot of each of those.

In the effective public information category, there will be an effort, and the Afghan Government is moving ahead vigorously and we are going to support them in launching a major public information and awareness campaign, designed to discourage poppy cultivation and the drug trade by driving messages, including such things as the fundamentals, like the danger and the effect of heroin and drugs in general on the health and well-being of the Afghan people and families.

I met with a number of the mullahs in Malaysia a few months ago and talked through things that we could do to work with them to reinforce the message, which is, quite frankly, a part of their view of the world, which is that heroin is dangerous and that heroin affecting their communities is a bad thing, not a good thing, even if it brings with it, in some cases, some income.

It'll also include the fact that there are better ways of making a living; i.e. the education piece of this has to also include all of the alternative development opportunities, alternative livelihoods and the involvement -- the fact that the involvement in the drug trade is risky, it will get more risky, it is already becoming more risky for people's personal security and for the democratic rights that they fought so hard to make a reality.

The second thing is law enforcement, a very strong law enforcement effort. And there are some people here in the audience that have worked hard on that and I think it's very important to acknowledge that this is a centerpiece, as it is in every country which has beaten back the narcotics trade. We're going to help them rapidly build out the justice sector. Again, this has already begun, but it will be accelerated with new money and new people and new effort so that the freedoms that they cherish are also protected by the equivalent of our Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights, which regard how you get into the criminal justice systems, how you are treated by a criminal justice system and the fact that you will be prosecuted, convicted and sentenced if you are a drug trafficker or a corrupt official.

Again, the Afghan Government has spoken loudly about this. They seem very committed to it, and I think that only reinforces our own strong resolve to support them.

The next one is alternative livelihoods and it is a big piece of the equation. In fact, I think there has to be really a proportionate, and there will be a proportionate, increase in the effort dedicated to alternative livelihoods that matches the eradication effort that the Afghan Government chooses. I think they're already speaking very ambitiously about this effort. And we know from Bolivia and Colombia and Peru, places that I have worked in for -- or on for more than ten years, that this works very well.

When you match eradication efforts directly with alternative livelihoods, development in places like the Chapare, it works exceedingly well. And that's why we're seeing in places like Colombia, the kind of -- and we can go through those numbers, too -- the kind of impact that is necessary. That includes everything from seeds and fertilizer to micro-credit -- a very important component -- irrigation and, of course, roads.

As people may or may not know, there have been hundreds of millions of dollars dedicated to creating a road infrastructure. Now you might say, well, what do roads matter? I mean, that's not such a big deal. Well, in a country like Afghanistan where there are no roads to get legitimate things to market, it matters a lot, and that has been proven in both Peru and Bolivia. When you put a road system in, while the traffickers have always been able to get the drugs to market by foot or in some other way, roads are essential for livelihoods that are legitimate.

And just last year, by way of example, in Bolivia, there was a \$25 million uptick in legitimate trade coming out of Chapare. That's a really significant thing. That's a first time. It was a 25 percent increase in legitimate trade. A lot of that was a direct result of roads having been put in that give you wall-to-wall pineapples and bananas and things, instead of coca. Similar things can happen in Afghanistan.

Aggressive interdiction. And this is, in particular, the increasing the capacity and ramp-up of efforts to destroy clandestine labs. Those who don't know, as well as -- by the way, precursor chemicals and stockpiles of opiates. Those who don't know, and there are some folks I can see here in the room who know very well what these labs are, these are not -- they are large in some cases, multiple buildings in some cases, but they are not laboratories in the sense of white coats and sort of high-tech operations.

They are very findable and they are -- unfortunately, they prove how easy it is to create heroin or opium out of poppies. And so they have to be targeted. They will be targeted. And I think, again, the Afghan Government has made it clear that they will push for it, for an increase, a marked increase.

And there has been, just so you again see the evolution in this -- while more money will flow directly into this, more support, there has been over the last several months a fairly substantial uptick in the takedown of labs and stores of heroin. And I think one of the things that betrays is that while the cultivation numbers are one metric for measuring progress, there are other metrics, and one of them is production, one is the actual creation, how much quantity of heroin will we see at the end of the year, in terms of measured seizures and particularly what locations and in terms of what we think has actually flowed out of the country or around the country.

There are other metrics, by the way. One of the metrics that was discussed in the interagency just this week is ways that you measure the growth of capacity, the growth of just a sector of capacity, the growth of capacity to actually put a criminal justice system in place, which is, again, a highly legitimate method.

The final factor is eradication, and the effort here, again, that the Afghan Government has said they will initiate is a better integrated, stronger eradication effort to reduce the overall number of fields at all stages of the growing cycle, in particular, so that farmers see the opium crops being destroyed and that they think twice about planting into the future.

We know that wherever manual or aerial eradication has been used, ranging from the high mountains of Peru and Colombia, to Mexico and the flatlands, that when you can create a deterrent environment, where the symbolism and the reality is that you're deterring the growth of the drug, people do begin to get out of that business. And you know, if you think about -- if you're skeptical and you say, no, it doesn't happen, we can never beat this, you need only look at recent history.

And I'll start with Colombia. But in Colombia, you had a 21 percent reduction in cultivation in 2002, you had a 15 percent reduction in 2003. This year, it will be higher again. And so what you're beginning to see is people say forget it, I can do other things. The risks rise, the incentives of doing something else grow.

Laos is an example. They are talking about being completely drug-free by the end of 2005. I took Thailand off the majors list this year. Why? Because they had historically been a drug exporting country. Because of their overall commitment, they are now a drug importing country. They have made a full-bore reversal, and that a lot of it has been dedicated to this composite, if you will, of efforts to turn it around. Even in places like Burma, you see heroin production dropping.

So I think the point is, if there is a concerted effort -- Bolivia is another good example. The Chapare is a classic example. The Chapare used to be the breadbasket of coca production in the world; it is no longer.

Finally, we come to funding. And again, let me say that the Afghans are the ones that have made this commitment, and they have made it *sua sponte*. We are very supportive of it. They have made it clearly, sometimes in forums where it was unexpected, that they are reinforcing very strongly the desire to get heroin out of their economy and out of their society.

There will -- this will necessarily involve a major effort to inform, again, the average Afghan, and there have already been efforts underway to get -- there have been a number of high-profile arrests that have been made. As the criminal justice sector gets into place, those will become prosecutions and convictions.

And the last big question, which I know lingers out there, is how much of an effort is this, really? What is this concerted effort that's gone on for five months to reinforce the Afghan commitment once the elections now are over and the new growing season is in place? And the answer is, this is likely to be about a \$780 million commitment by the U.S. Government, paired with efforts by the British Government and other allies and international donors, to do each of those five pillars, to work together to ramp up each of those five pillars.

That is being worked right now with Congress. If I had the numbers in front of me, I would give them to you in terms of a breakout. I'm sure in the weeks ahead, that will happen. But what I know is that it will be worked very closely with our Congress and it was driven very much by the Afghan Government's desires, category by category, what they wanted to do, how much they felt they could absorb, how quickly they could do it, and where they would put it.

With that, I think I'm just going to end and say I'm open to any question and I will stay here as long as it takes to answer all of them.

Yes, Tammy.

QUESTION: You talked about a \$780 million commitment.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Yes.

QUESTION: What about other resources being committed, like additional troops, or you talked about an increase in the targeting cell?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: I don't think -- the 780 doesn't include any of that, in terms of troops. I don't think troops are what's needed. This is an Afghan-led solution to an Afghan problem, and they have identified what they want and we have identified what we can give. And that will probably start initially with the reprogramming of some funds to match the requirements that are most immediate, where you have to obligate something now to trigger something in two or three months.

But it is also true that is likely to continue as a dialogue between us and the United States Congress as to how much we need, what we would need to do in the future to tackle this problem aggressively.

It is not -- you know, again, I'm not the Department of Defense, but it is -- I don't think it's their intent, desire or hope to add more troops for any purpose like that, and it doesn't really match with what the Afghans feel they need and what, historically, we have needed in any country in the world to tackle this.

Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: In terms -- I guess this is a twofold question. In terms of alternative development, could you expand on that? Are you trying to just give them alternative crops or alternative development, as opposed to alternative livelihood? And do you think that you'll need to increase security for people that, you know, that might feel threatened by not growing -- by not growing poppy or anything like that, because they know that it's going to the drug trade? They may -- in Colombia, that's a big problem.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Yeah, no, this is a -- it's an excellent question, obviously one that comes out of a knowledge of the rest of the field and how we've done it and how other countries have done it around the world.

Alternative development is a phrase that used to be used exclusively without reference to alternative livelihoods. Alternative livelihoods is an expanded way -- and again, I'm not an expert on this -- but an expanded way of describing income streams that go beyond the traditional.

What we have done in places like Peru and Colombia, which has been highly effective, is a combination of matching eradication, if a tract of land is eradicated, and it's a very precise process nowadays. And if you haven't seen, there's some tapes and things you might find interesting to see exactly how precise it is now when you eradicate a tract of land, large or small. But that is directly tied to the provision in a region of the resources, the opportunities for somebody to get into a different business. A lot of it is agricultural, and in this case, you know, wheat, again, barley, some of the -- there is even a movement in some of the areas to move toward things like saffron for export, and things of that sort, larger variety of crops that are actually going to be grown.

But the other thing about it is that it is a complex -- I mean, alternative development isn't an alternative livelihoods. And, again, I'm not the expert on this, Andrew Natsios is and his team, and I will defer to them to add. But let me just say, the core of this -- we put \$26 million in this year, the British put \$5 million in; it was, again, intended to tie directly to eradication and there is more that can be done to tie it ever more tightly to the eradication effort.

We use, in places like Peru, auto-eradication, where you go into a small village, you have a contract with that village. That village actually signs a contract. It has proven incredibly successful. They sign a contract to eliminate a crop in a given area. We don't buy the crop from them. You eliminate the crop, the illegal crop in a given area. We go in and verify it, and if it is true that they have done that, then they get a combination of sort of a Chinese menu, if you will, of infrastructure capabilities.

Some of these communities I've been in have asked for hospitals. They've asked for not just roads, but medical facilities, whatnot, and you get alternative development. One I was in a few months ago had cotton, corn and cacao being grown in it. It is a complete package. You know, in a sense, it's a module. It's the way that it always should have been and I think now is. The same exact process can work. And, in fact, some of the same AID personnel that I think were over there are now beginning to advise in Afghanistan.

So it's a comprehensive effort. It will include more money. And one thing I want to make crystal clear is, you don't go in and eradicate in an area without making provision in that geographic region at least for marked-up or added alternative development resources and alternative livelihoods. And that is a very important component of any comprehensive plan, and that is what the Afghans want, and that is what we are working very closely on to produce.

Does AID want to add anything to that?

MR. WARD: The only thing I would add to that is that you also have to remember the impact on the non-farmer in the community. And what we have in mind there, as Secretary Charles mentioned, some of the infrastructure projects, the roads, we can provide jobs to the shopkeeper who might have been selling cigarettes or something that, when there isn't the income around that might have been there yesterday from the poppy, there may be need for jobs in the community, not for the farmers but for others in the community.

So we're going to be looking -- as he said, when we talk to community leaders about what the needs are going to be in that community, we're going to be looking at the non-farm community as well.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: This has been very successful elsewhere and there's no reason to believe it won't be here.

Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Me?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Yes.

QUESTION: There have been international programs in place for some time now, and yet all the information suggests we're seeing a dramatic, rather alarming, increase in production. Looking back, so far, what do you think has been wrong with the approach that they failed to arrest that growth? And is it partly to do with the balance between incentives and eradications? Some people are suggesting that there's been too much in terms of alternative livelihoods and not enough in terms of really using a more stick approach and making sure there is more eradication?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Well, the answer to that question in many ways is similar to a metaphor that I recently used about being asked to build an entire house in 24 hours. I used to work as an assistant to a contractor who did build houses, and I will tell you that you cannot build a house in 24 hours. You have to lay a foundation; you have to build a second floor; you have to have a first floor before you get a second floor; you have to get a roof.

But we've been told, and the Afghans have tried, and they're doing a miraculous job. It took us 13 years, by the way, to get from a Declaration of Independence to a Constitution, and they did it in less than, I think, a year, or just over a year. And they have driven themselves very fast and very hard toward a democracy.

The problem is, the infrastructure has to follow that. It's not a matter of too much AID money or too little, in some ways, of will to enforce the law. You have to have laws to enforce. There are no extradition laws to speak of right now. You have to have a legal infrastructure that begins with the actual law. You have to educate people. You have to move on those who are violating those laws. It has to become obvious that there is such a thing as lawlessness and that lawlessness will not be tolerated and, in particular, it won't be tolerated on narcotics; there is a true counternarcotics commitment.

Again, I have to compliment the Afghan Government. They have done a remarkable job in saying unequivocally and unprompted, there will be no future in the heroin economy long term in this country. That's a very firm commitment. And I think that what it means is that now, as we build this house, we build it ever faster to support them.

We are going to have to build an infrastructure. Right now I have a team, INL team, folks over there working intensively, the entire State Department team over there together with the interagency trying to build prisons, build courthouses, train judges, train prosecutors -- by the way, also train defense counsel -- to create a system where the rule of law is a reality, not just a hope.

You know, Yogi Berra said something good about you can't live on hope, and I can't remember what he said, but the short of it is, you can't live on hope. You've got to be able to drive real hard things into the ground and bring criminals to justice. And then, the expectations are created. And there isn't enough infrastructure right now and that's what we're really trying to create. Infrastructure is a big word and people sometimes think it's a Washington word. But what it means is, it's the little things. You have to have someone who arrests, you have to have a law, and then you have to have expectations; and then you have to have them be violated and someone be arrested; and then they have to be arraigned and then they have to be prosecuted and they have to be defended in our, you know, an adversarial rule of law in a democracy; and then they have to be sentenced and they -- convicted, sentenced, and ultimately put in a real prison and not let to get out. And that's what we're talking about here.

Around the world, where countries have tackled this *de novo*, they have actually succeeded. And we have helped an awful lot of them get there. So that's what we're going to be doing here.

QUESTION: Sorry, can I just follow up?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Are you saying then, basically, that there isn't anything in the international programs, just recently, that might have been better, that might have stopped this dramatic growth in production? That wasn't the problem?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: I don't know whether it would have stopped it. There are certainly things that could be done better, but better within the context of what? Better within that 24-hour period in which that house was supposed to be built. Example: I think we've learned that governor-led eradication is extremely difficult. I think we've learned that verification of eradication, when done by governors, is very difficult. Why? Because poppy, when you eradicate it, and the field is all done and it's been carted away, it doesn't look a whole lot different from when it's been harvested.

So there are a lot of elements of this that I think we learn to do better. I think the biggest thing is an absence of capacity. You have to train people to do eradication. You have to train security folks. Again, we've trained 27,000 police this year, INL has and the State Department has, and I think that one of the things that we have learned here is that it takes -- training isn't something you just snap your fingers, pay the dollar, and it's done. It takes time. You have to recruit people, you have to educate them, you then have to deploy them. Sometimes there's a clinical component to it. You know, you can sit around in ground school all your life, but until you're in a cockpit and you're airborne, you don't really know what you're doing.

So I think that we've learned a lot this year, and I think what we've learned will generate genuine results next year, and I think the Afghan Government is committed to that.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Could you clarify a few things? You talked about the U.K. will be more aggressive in targeting cells. And you also said the U.S. would support --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Not in targeting cells, but in the targeting cell. The targeting cell is a description of U.S. and U.K. and Afghan individuals on the ground there who are working to target locations in the country where you can eradicate.

QUESTION: Okay. Well, could you clarify a bit more what is the role of the military in this, the NATO or U.S. or British? I don't understand how a central government which has virtually zero control over the poppy-growing areas of Helmand is going to go in without military support from NATO to carry this out. And is it police that you're talking about? You're talking about 27,000 police? Are they police, or was it the Afghan National Army that is going to be -

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Right now, you have to look at the -- let me go back to targeting cell, and then roll forward through your question. First, the targeting cell doesn't do any eradication itself. It picks the places which are predominantly valleys right now and increasingly large tracts of land that they will go -- that they will deploy Afghans to to eradicate.

We have folks on the ground to support them, as we do all over the world when there's an eradication program undertaken with conviction by a country. There is a security component to that, and it is a combination, really, of three things. The first is, you have a fundamental DOD component in there right now. They are securing many parts of the country. They are working directly with the Afghans to train ever more ANA and to train individuals who will secure areas of the country.

That is the sort of first layer, if you will. The second layer is, you have Afghan National Police and other specialized Afghan folks who do security, and they are going to be -- they are localized. Most of them are central-trained, but there will obviously be some that are governor-associated.

The third and perhaps most important is when you pick these targets and they go to eradicate in a given geographic area, we work with contractors who have done this, again, all over the world, and they provide -- part of the overall effort is to coordinate with the regional security, whatever it is, whether it's police or whether it's DOD, to coordinate a CSAR capability, for example, to go in and pull someone out if there is a -- if there's a problem, and to coordinate the ability to get people to the location and back again.

I don't foresee and I believe -- I don't think anyone foresees an active role by DOD in doing any physical eradication. I think there is a necessary, nascent and perhaps to-be-elevated role in simply making sure that the targeting that is done by the British and by the U.S. and by the Afghans matches with areas which are secure enough in order to be able to eradicate in them. But it's not a -- you know, I guess the good news and the bad news is that you go about this in a step-wise process. As the justice sector is creating expectations, as security increases for other reasons in other parts of the country, including the valleys and including Helmand, you get a situation where you're also increasing the level of eradication, I think. That's certainly the way it's been done elsewhere in the world.

Right now, in Colombia, we have reached a point over the last two years where we're eradicating 100 percent of the -- well, the Colombians are eradicating it and we're working with them on 100 percent of the crop. That will be a -- there will be a growth, no doubt, in time to create expectations of deterrence. But I don't foresee any radical new need for security, anything more than would be normally associated with trying to get out to the field and do what needed to be done.

QUESTION: And the private contractors? Sorry, the --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: They are the individuals who actually are training, and in some cases accompanying, the eradicators. I mean, in some cases they are the eradicators physically in the field with them. I can give you, and we can, in more depth, give you details probably in the next week or so as the details become more apparent as to how that will be done. But again, it's -- and frankly, a lot of them are Afghans. I mean it -- what we're doing that -- the contractors are in support of the Afghans who -- we have had, in the last year, there were 150-man teams going out, of Afghans. My expectation is you'll see an increased number of teams, and the team size may shrink a little bit so that you'll get tighter, more tightly configured, better OPSEC out to the field and back kind of eradication effort. And again, it'll be more centrally driven.

We know that the centrally driven eradication effort in Wardak, and Gardez in particular, as sort of a pilot for what is now a much broader effort, this year worked well. They got there. They were able to do the job. Again, things like OPSEC are very important. I mean, if you telegraph a week or two ahead that you're coming in, if you're a, you know, a smart trafficker, you go to your farmers and tell them that, you know, you'd better get that crop taken care of. So we need to do that better.

Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: The 780 million, over what period of time would that be spent?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: All for FY05.

QUESTION: Okay. And you alluded to reprogramming earlier. Would that money be reprogrammed from funds that would have been spent in Afghanistan on other things or from other places in the budget?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: No, I think they would be coming from other places in the budget, almost certainly.

Well, right now, what's happening -- and that's why if I were OMB I'd have a much better answer for you, or if I were the United States Congress and however long it'll take them time to notify, I'd have a better answer for you. But it is going to be broken out across things that right now can be afforded to do that in. I mean, in other words, I don't know where, specifically, they will come from. Every agency -- this isn't just a State Department number -- every agency that is involved in Afghanistan has been involved in this interagency effort to figure out, can we accelerate and push some, you know, reprogram in order to, again, work in the regular order probably next year, and work with Congress if there's a necessity for more money.

QUESTION: There's (inaudible), State, Pentagon. Where else?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: State, Pentagon, I think AID, DEA -- I'm trying to remember who else is --

MR. TODD: Most of it's coming off the 150 account, which is the Foreign Operations Account, so we're moving money within the same account.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Okay.

Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Just to follow up --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: That may -- by the way, that may not -- is that technically a reprogramming, or is that a reallocation?

MR. TODD: We are doing congressional notification. It's occurring today. Once that's occurred, it will become public information.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Right. Okay.

QUESTION: But this isn't the totality of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan? It's just for the counternarcotics?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: No. This is just counternarcotics, and this is just the add-on. That's why in many ways I think it makes sense to describe it as really a full-bore commitment to support the new Afghan Government as almost a Plan Afghanistan, if you will.

Other questions? Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: You mentioned corruption. I gather there have been allegations that some very senior officials have been involved in drug production themselves. How much of an obstacle is that to you in implementing these programs and making sure it's been taken seriously?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: I can't speak to specific allegations and I don't know that I would tie them to drug production, per se, but I do think corruption is a significant issue worldwide -- and I do mean significant and I do mean growing. I think that in Afghanistan, because you have such an incipient democracy, because essentially it's at its most vulnerable, again, because the expectations are not pre-set, that there is such a thing as the rule of law, that is an evolving process. We all learn that in any domain we live in. And I'm a big fan of John Locke, and he says a lot about that. But the reality is it takes time to build that.

Corruption is a real threat. It is a threat particularly where there is a lot of money coming out of one illegitimate source. And, frankly, drugs are not the only place that happens. But when you have substantial upticks in revenue, for example, the farmer tends to make about a dollar for every hundred dollars that the sort of senior drug trafficker is able to rake in on the streets of Paris or London; as a direct result of that, the corruption force is very high, the propensity for corruption is very high.

So what you have to do is all of the, you know, things we've talked about already. You have to be vigilant. You have to prosecute. But more importantly, you also have to educate and make it clear that this is not going to be tolerated. And that's really what the Afghan Government is doing.

MR. WARD: If I can just add to that, and actually introduce myself -- Mark Ward from USAID -- another aspect of the corruption piece is all of the assistance we're going to be providing, another opportunity for corruption. And one of the really important things that's going to be part of this program is

the transparency of the assistance that we're going to provide. Assistant Secretary Charles talked about going into the communities and putting compacts -- I think he used the word "contracts" -- together with the local leadership. That's terribly important.

But the other thing that's also important is make sure the community knows what's in that compact so that they know what promises have been made, they know what's coming to their community, they know what the deal is. That's an important part of it, too, and we will make that a part of what he said was the first pillar, the public information piece.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: And if I could just back my colleague up, that has proven so effective that in Peru, I think, last year, they had 529 communities that subscribed to this. I think there were a large number in Bolivia and an even larger number in Colombia. It's a very successful way of changing expectations and tamping out even local corruption.

Other thoughts, questions, queries? Yes.

QUESTION: Do you have any timeframe at all, even if it's a ballpark figure on when we might start to see with the implementation of these programs the growth and production starting to level off or obviously eventually starting to go down?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHARLES: Well, I think it's important not to confuse words, and this is my fault probably because I do that on occasion. Production is what you get out of the crop that you've harvested and cultivation is what you harvest. And I think that you can only attack cultivation by preparing for the actual cycle when growth occurs, and I think we're likely to see from -- you could measure it from the south to the north, you know, Helmand, Nangarhar, Batakshan to the north -- I mean, those first two to the south and east, and then Badakshan to the north; or you could measure it elevation-wise.

We're going to end up seeing a beginning of this process end of February, probably beginning of March, because that's the cycle, and it will evolve forward until the last lettuce phase and last, you know, poppies are up and at a level where you can get at them. And that varied. This year, it came about three or four weeks early, actually, I think, but traditionally that would be the timeframe. So you can't kill it until it's up there.

Any other thoughts, questions?

Please feel free to reach out to us afterwards and, again, you'll probably see a lot of details coming out about this but I wanted to be the first to tell you it's up there, it's out there and it's real.

Thank you.

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