

# Counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan may benefit insurgents, analysis finds

June 25 2010, By Minne Ho

---

(PhysOrg.com) -- In an applied economic analysis, UCLA's Mark Kleiman and his co-authors found that the current counter-narcotics strategy is likely to aggravate the Afghan insurgency and exacerbate corruption and criminal violence.

Could the counter-narcotics efforts of U.S. forces and their allies in Afghanistan actually make the insurgency worse?

That's the argument Mark A.R. Kleiman, a professor of [public policy](#) at the UCLA School of Public Affairs, Jonathan Caulkins, a Carnegie Mellon University professor of operations research and public policy, and researcher Jonathan Kulick put forth in a new report, "Drug Production and Trafficking, Counterdrug Policies, and Security and Governance in Afghanistan."

In their study, released by New York University's Center on International Cooperation, the authors provide an applied economic analysis of the effect of the counter-narcotics policies which challenges the current view that these initiatives benefit counterinsurgency efforts by cutting off revenue to insurgents.

The researchers found that, contrary to much of what has been written on the subject, the counter-narcotics strategy is likely to aggravate the Afghan insurgency and to exacerbate [corruption](#) and criminal violence.

In particular, they argue:

- "Price is king" — global production of heroin and opiates will remain concentrated in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future, regardless of counter-narcotics efforts.
- Rural development efforts should be focused on assisting rural populations — aid should not be provided only to those who desist from poppy-growing.
- Counter-narcotics enforcement efforts should be refocused to discriminate against illegal armed groups and corrupt officials.

The authors utilized microeconomic analysis of the likely consequences of various counter-narcotics strategies on both drug-market outcomes and the security and governance situation in Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan supplies 90 percent of the illicit opium in the world. Nothing done in Afghanistan is likely to change that much or to shrink world demand," Kleiman said. "When counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan succeed, the result is higher prices and the movement of the drug trade to insurgent-held areas. Why should we enrich our enemies?"

Provided by University of California Los Angeles

Citation: Counter-narcotics policy in Afghanistan may benefit insurgents, analysis finds (2010, June 25) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-counter-narcotics-policy-afghanistan-benefit-insurgents.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.