

BACKGROUND PAPER

March 2010

Narcotics and Pakistan

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CONTENTS

Preface

Introduction	07
Historical Context	07
Routes and Cultivation	07
Government Agencies/Department for Narcotics Control	08
- Ministry for Narcotics Control	08
- Anti-Narcotics Force	08
- Narcotics Interdiction Committee	08
- Inter-Agency Task Force	08
- Pakistan Coast Guard	09
- Federal Investigation Agency	09
- Airports Security Force	09
- Pakistan Customs	09
- Frontier Corps (NWFP and Baluchistan)	09
- Frontier Constabulary	09
- Pakistan Rangers (Punjab and Sindh)	09
- Provincial Police (Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP)	09
Narcotics Control Strategy	09
Drug Abuse in Pakistan	09
The Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010: An Analysis	10
Conclusion	10
References	10
Tables & Figures	10
Table 1: Annual Seizures of Narcotics in Pakistan	10
Table 2: Opiate Use in Pakistan	10
Figure 1: Annual seizures of Narcotics in Pakistan	10

PREFACE

Production and trafficking of narcotics and its nexus with insurgency and terrorism targeting Pakistan is a critical issue for Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan is about to announce its new Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010. It is, therefore, important for the citizens to review the draft policy and provide their input to the government before its finalisation.

This Background Paper, prepared by Ms. Soufia Siddiqui under the guidance of PILDAT, sets the draft policy in a context, analysing the need for a comprehensive policy on narcotics control in Pakistan. Impetus for this Background Paper, and a series of Consultation with a cross-section of the society have been provided by the draft Anti-Narcotics Policy formulated by the Ministry of Narcotics Control. We acknowledge the support of the Ministry in sharing the draft Policy as well as the Ministry Year Books that have been used as sources in preparing this Background Paper.

Disclaimer

PILDAT and its Team have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the data provided in this Background Paper. However, PILDAT and its Team do not accept the responsibility for any omission or error as it is not deliberate.

Islamabad
March 2010

Introduction

Narcotic refers to any psychoactive compound/addictive drug that induces morphine-like effects i.e. it reduces pain, alters mood and behaviour and usually induces sleep or stupor.¹ One of Asia's two primary areas of illicit opium production is the Golden Crescent, where mountainous peripheries of Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan overlap to define the crescent shape. The region produces primarily opium, including heroin, along with marijuana (hashish) and cannabis. The region produces enough drugs to meet the annual use of the United States, Europe and Central Asia combined.²

Historical Context

Opium is not a new export for Pakistan. It was sent from this region even during the Mughal and British empires. In 1979, large-scale heroin production took place in the country. Following the enforcement of the Hadd Ordinance in 1979, poppy cultivation and its resultant opium production declined steeply in Pakistan until the mid-1980s, when the possibility of tremendous profits pushed up its cultivation.

Routes and Cultivation

Pakistan is a primary transit country for opiates produced in Afghanistan. Trafficking of opiates into and through Pakistan increased dramatically during the period 2001-2006 corresponding roughly to the increase in opium production in Afghanistan from 185 metric tonnes in 2001 to 6,100 metric tonnes in 2006.³ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2009 Afghanistan Opium Poppy Survey highlights that in 2009, 74 per cent of Afghanistan's poppy was grown in five provinces along the border with Pakistan. Fifty Seven per cent of the Afghan opium crop is grown in the province of Hilmand, which shares a border with Balochistan. Other major opium producing Afghan provinces sharing a border with Pakistan includes Kandahar, Nimroz, Nangarhar and Badakhshan. These facts show it is not hard to guess the drug traffic routes that pass through Pakistan.

Trends have shown that poppy cultivation in Pakistan had dropped to less than 600 hectares by 2000, but had risen up

to 3,100 hectares in the country's tribal areas in 2004.⁴ In the same year, according to the Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004, opium cultivation reached an unprecedented 131,000 hectares. It later went on to hit a peak of 193,000 hectares in 2007, but has now dropped to 123,000 hectares per year in 2009. Afghanistan's output meets 90% of the world's demand today. In 2008/2009 opium cultivation was 1779 hectares.

Most of the cannabis trafficked in the region originates in Afghanistan,⁵ but tends to be processed in the inaccessible areas of Pakistan's Orakzai and Kurram agencies and the Tirah area of Khyber agency. It then travels by caravan through the tribal areas bordering NWFP in the direction of Baluchistan for transportation out of the country via Iran or the Makran coast.

From Afghanistan, processed opium finds some of its most popular external trafficking routes linked to Baluchistan from Helmand - usually crossing over through Chaman - and from Kandahar and eastern markets like Badakhshan to frontier areas in the NWFP. Some of the Pakistani shipments end up at major ports like Karachi or smaller ports like Bandar Abbas from where they transit to Europe past the Gulf.

Detailed and precise information on drug trafficking routes is largely unavailable. Nonetheless, it is known that drug traffickers rely on three major routes through the region to Western Europe and other destinations, one of which is the Southern route through Pakistan. The country's geographical location provides a suitable corridor for trafficking. It is anticipated that from Pakistan, air routes are used for trafficking into the Gulf States, India, China, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Sea routes are preferred for some Gulf States and Africa en route to Europe.

Government Agencies/Department for Narcotics Control

Ministry for Narcotics Control

The Narcotics Control Division (NCD) was established in 1989 and the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board (PNCB) became its attached department. The Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) was also established the same year. In 1995,

1. <http://www.justice.gov/dea/concern/narcotics.html>

2. <http://www.drugpolicy.org/global/drugpolicyby/asia/casia/>

3. UNODC Pakistan. (2008). Illicit drug trends in Pakistan, p 6: http://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends%20Report_Pakistan_rev1.pdf

4. Taylor, Dr. L. (2006). The nexus of terrorism and drug trafficking in the golden crescent: Afghanistan, USAWC Strategy Research Report, p 19: <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA449213&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>

5. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: http://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/country_profile.html

the PNCB and the ANTF were merged to constitute the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and were declared as an attached department, headed by a Director General. The NCD was given the status of a full-fledged Ministry in 2002. Its functions include issuing drug-related policies, furthering legislation on drugs, coordinating foreign assistance for narcotics control, making efforts for drug rehabilitation, establishing inter-provincial coordination on narcotics and dangerous drugs, monitoring the implementation of such policies and the regulation of administrative, budgetary and other matters of the Anti-Narcotics Force.

Anti-Narcotics Force

As the primary drug law enforcement agency, the ANF collects intelligence and is responsible for arrests, investigation and prosecution of offenders. It is also involved in seizures of drug-generated assets and curbing of money-laundering. The ANF is also responsible for demand reduction programmes. Powers to carry out counter narcotics operations have been delegated by the ANF to the Pakistan Coast Guard and Pakistan Rangers as many drugs are smuggled out of Pakistan through the Pak-Iran border, the Makran coast or by sea and air.

Narcotics Interdiction Committee

The committee was established in 1997 to ensure well-coordinated prohibition of narcotics by various law enforcement agencies and to make the management role of the federal government more effective. It is headed by the Secretary, Narcotics Control Division.

Inter-Agency Task Force

The Prime Minister of Pakistan approved the creation of an Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Narcotics Control on February 03, 2010. The Director General Anti Narcotics Force is the Chairman of the Task Force and the members include the representation from Federal and Provincial Law Enforcement Agencies. The objective for the creation of the Task Force is to maximize effectiveness of the Anti Narcotics Policy of the Government of Pakistan through coordinated implementation of the Counter Narcotics Enforcement Strategy, with a view to making Pakistan a drug free state.

Pakistan Coast Guard

Pakistan Coast Guard is responsible for the security of Pakistan's coastline and its sphere of operation extends from 30 km to 120 km inland.

Federal Investigation Agency

The Anti Corruption and Economic Crime Wing is an important part of the FIA, which deals with organized crimes other than terrorism and human trafficking. This wing is headed by a senior police officer as Additional Director General at the HQ who is responsible for assisting the Director General and coordinating operations of the zonal directors. One of its functions is to monitor the production of spurious drugs. The FIA's crime wing has taken up the challenge of eradicating illicit trade in drugs and has recovered spurious drugs valuing over Rs.416 million and seized eight illegal manufacturing units. Special drug units have been established in provincial headquarters. The FIA registered 67 cases against spurious drugs in the years 2005 & 2006.

Airports Security Force

The ASF, in the performance of its other duties, also helps in the detection of narcotics trafficking through its baggage screening mechanisms at different airports.

Pakistan Customs

There are two main arms of Pakistan Customs-the Intelligence and Investigation Division and the Customs Collectorates, both of which have drug control within their remit.

Frontier Corps (NWFP and Baluchistan)

This is a federal paramilitary force, primarily recruited from the tribal areas in both NWFP and Baluchistan and led by members of the Pakistan Army. The FC primarily guards the border area with Afghanistan and Iran but also undertakes counter drug-trafficking operations.

Frontier Constabulary

A federal paramilitary force that is drawn largely from NWFP, but also operates in Punjab. It has been merged into Frontier Corps NWFP now.

Pakistan Rangers (Punjab and Sindh)

The Pakistan Rangers assist with maintenance of internal security in provinces of Punjab and Sindh and also cover the border with India. They are responsible, inter alia, for interdiction of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Provincial Police (Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP)

The provincial police forces have a duty to check the trafficking and distribution of drugs within the country especially at the consumption level.

Other bodies include Khasadar (tribal police) Force, Pakistan Railways Police and Provincial Excise and Taxation offices.

Narcotics Control Strategy

The Narcotics Control Strategy of Pakistan included supply reduction and demand reduction through law enforcement agencies and alternative development projects and national and international cooperation. Due to coordinated and concerted efforts, the law enforcement agencies of Pakistan were successful in seizures of considerable quantities of drugs. Table 1 gives details about the annual seizures (in metric tonnes) made over the last six years.

As opium production has increased in Afghanistan, heroin/morphine base seizures in Pakistan have generally

kept pace. In particular, Pakistan made the largest number of seizures of heroin/morphine base since 2003 as compared to its neighbours in the Golden Crescent.

Drug Abuse in Pakistan

According to the National Survey on Drug Abuse 1993, carried out by the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board, there were 3 million reported drug addicts in the country. Of these, 51% were heroin abusers and 72% of the drug addicts were between the ages of 24 and 30 years. Recent figures estimate about 6 million addicts in the country,⁶ although the Draft of the Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 admits that fresh, exact data is not available for drug abuse in the country. Table 2 exhibits the figures for opiate use in Pakistan on a provincial and national basis.

According to the 2006 National Assessment Report on

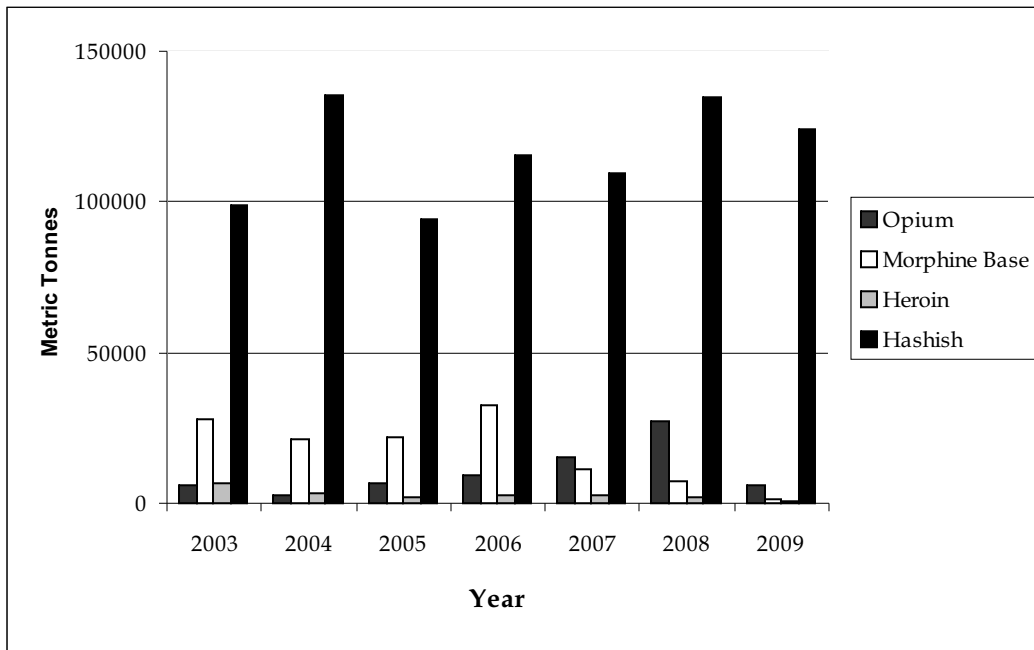
Table 1: Annual Seizures of Narcotics in Pakistan

Year	Opium	Morphine Base	Heroin	Hashish
2003	5785.710	27777.550	6363.931	99123.245
2004	2495.112	21256.000	3487.550	135638.674
2005	6447.682	22196.800	2144.497	93994.402
2006	8997.380	32657.600	2819.072	115443.699
2007	15368.594	10989.000	2873.857	109530.453
2008	27242.620	7324.890	1896.465	134620.525
2009	6081.322	1353.000	433.531	124000.295

Source: Ministry of Narcotics Control Yearbook 2008-2009, Government of Pakistan

6. UNODC Pakistan. (2008). Illicit drug trends in Pakistan, p 19: http://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends%20Report_Pakistan_rev1.pdf

Figure 1: Annual Seizure of Narcotics in Pakistan



Problem Drug Use in Pakistan, jointly prepared by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Cannabis is the most commonly used substance and the 'drug of choice' given its low price and easy availability. The report makes no estimate of its prevalence, but highlights its increasing use along with synthetic sedatives and tranquilizers since 2000.

The same report states that the number of opiate users has reached a plateau. It estimates the number of opiate users at 628,000 of which 77 per cent (482,000) are chronic heroin abusers.

Several reasons may be behind drug abuse in the country:

- Socio-political disruption
- Economic imbalance
- Easy access due to ineffective law and order system
- Rigid and outdated curriculum and teaching methods
- Inadequate recreational/community activities/centres
- Peer pressure, especially among young schoolchildren
- Attempts to seek false sense of pleasure/relief
- Weak parental influence/control
- Addiction to initially prescribed drugs for pain/stress

relief

- Erosion of religious values
- Influence of media containing drug content/glorification

Such factors are considered responsible for the increasing narcotics consumption and production in the country (to cater to this demand both inside and outside the country). However, other factors that contribute to the growing trend of drugs in the country include poor border control, especially along the west of Pakistan and the ability of traffickers to circumvent authority. To counter this, it has become even more imperative that the government (whether federal or provincial) take measures to enhance the capacities of law-enforcement agencies to strictly guard known smuggling borders and also identify new routes and changing methods of trafficking.

The Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010: An Analysis

The Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 strategy deals with reducing both the supply and demand of drugs and promoting international cooperation with Pakistan to counter the menace of drugs. It has been issued to support the Drug Control Master Plan 2010-2014. The following are

Table 2: Opiate Use in Pakistan

	Prevalence of Opiate Use (Percentage of Population)	Prevalence of Opiate Use (In Number of Users)	Injecting Drug Users Prevalence (Percentage)	Injecting Drug Users (In Number of Users)
NWFP	0.7	90,000	0.06	8,000
Punjab	0.4	200,000	0.2	100,000
Sindh	0.4	87,000	0.2	44,000
Baluchistan	1	45,000	0.1	4,500
Pakistan	0.7	628,000	0.14	125,000

Source: Report of the UNODC 2006 National Assessment on Drug Use in Pakistan

the key features of the policy:

1. Drug Supply Reduction

- a. Eliminate poppy cultivation to maintain poppy free status of the country
- b. Effectively check resurfacing of heroin laboratories
- c. Effectively check trafficking/production of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursor chemicals
- d. Enhance coordination/information sharing through structured arrangement within organizations/institutions
- e. Capacity building of Anti-Narcotics Force
- f. Enhanced efforts for forfeiting drug-generated assets
- g. Improvement of judicature for expeditious disposal of drug cases

2. Drug Demand Prevention

Potential Demand Prevention

- a. Strive towards creation of drug free society in Pakistan, particularly the youth
- b. Reduce drug demand through mass awareness/education and community mobilization/active participation of people

- c. Develop a drug free city in each province as a model for others to emulate by 2012

Demand Reduction by Treatment and Rehabilitation

- a. Enhancement of treatment and rehabilitation facilities
- b. Drug addiction survey

3. Promote International Cooperation in Fight against Drugs

4. Constitution of National Anti-Narcotics Council (NANC) and Parliamentary Committees on Narcotics Control (for policy review and monitoring)

Improvements

Although the policy is comprehensive in explaining how various dimensions of the drug war will be fought, certain other points require mention here. On the supply side, it does not stress on the need for strict legislation, registration and licensing of the sale and purchase of precursor chemicals like acetic anhydride or phenobarbitone (an anticonvulsant). The latter is especially important as it is a chemical used to treat epilepsy, hence, is a licit import which may be used inappropriately. Such a policy will not only allow documented tracing of chemicals, but also act as

a measure of check on those involved in the trade of chemicals with the potential for such grave harm.

For a market like that of drugs, the demand generates most of the supply. Unless Law Enforcement Agencies have better access and ability to deter consumers from accessing drugs, demand will not reduce. This is especially true in case of Pakistan's upper class, which is now consuming an increasing amount of synthetic drugs. The UNODC reported a sharp increase in the number of Ecstasy tablets seized between 2005 and 2006- from just 13 in the former to 8,325 in the latter year.⁷

Thirdly, while the policy is lengthy in explaining management structures and related issues, it avoids answering the key question of how regularly the Drug Abuse Survey will be conducted. This is important because unless it is a routine exercise, the government will not be able to gauge the extent of abuse and emerging trends. Without such trends, revising the policy will serve little purpose and become ineffective in meeting the aims it sets out for itself.

Conclusion

As outlined in this paper, Pakistan has a long and troublesome history with narcotics. While the cultivation and production of narcotics has been drastically cut in Pakistan, the trafficking of drugs, rather than experiencing a reduction with the passage of time and efforts, is only gaining strength, a fact acknowledged within the Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 itself. This can largely be attributed to the country's porous Western border, low capacity of law-enforcement agencies, rapidly deteriorating socio-economic conditions and the ability of traffickers to evade the law by coming up with novel means and routes.

Although Pakistan has had relative success in seizing narcotics (its heroin/morphine base seizures higher than other countries in the region,) much remains to be done. To this effect, the Anti-Narcotics Policy 2010 is a good effort to outline the multi-level approach to supply and demand both within the country and the international arena in the fight against drugs. However, it misses out on certain key issues including stricter legislation, registration and licensing of listed/licit chemicals that have the potential to become drugs. It also goes without saying that more transparent and efficient policing and judiciary is required to curtail narcotics from both the producers' and the consumers' sides.

The UNODC reported in 2009 that opiate trade in Pakistan was valued at about USD 1 billion. In addition, the same report presents the alarming reality of the share that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda have in this underground market of drugs. All of this implies that the battle against drugs entails a need to understand the much deeper relation between drugs, terrorism and the government role.

The draft Anti Narcotics Policy 2010 is a welcome step and various segments of the society should be involved in finalising and later monitoring its effective implementation. Parliamentary Committees should be involved as a special case to not just approve the policy after their review but also carry out periodic monitoring for its effectively implementation.

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