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Afghanistan's Expanded Opium Trade: Byproduct of War



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An Intelligence Assessment

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Afghanistan's Expanded Opium Trade: Byproduct of War



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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
[redacted] Strategic Narcotics/Eurasia-Africa Branch,
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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
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Division, OGI [redacted]

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Afghanistan's Expanded Opium Trade: Byproduct of War [Redacted]

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Key Judgments

Information available as of 15 August 1985 was used in this report.

Afghanistan's narcotics industry has expanded since the Soviet invasion, and we anticipate continued growth. Economic disruptions caused by the Soviet invasion and the wartime environment have substantially increased the attractiveness of opium poppy cultivation, heroin refining, and narcotics smuggling. Poppy cultivation is expanding and probably will stimulate further narcotics trafficking and processing activities. Many Afghans have long grown and smuggled narcotics, and individuals loosely associated with insurgent groups probably participate in the trade. Available evidence, however, does not indicate large-scale, organized exploitation by the insurgents. [Redacted]

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We judge that the Afghan Government is unlikely to crack down on poppy farmers, laboratory operators, and narcotics traffickers. Indeed, UN officials believe that much of their financial and technical aid is being used to fight the insurgents rather than to attack the narcotics trade. Moreover, [Redacted] Afghan authorities at all levels are willing to aid traffickers for a price. [Redacted]

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Even if the Afghan Government were to institute control programs, the narcotics trade would be difficult to suppress because most of the activity takes place in insurgent-controlled areas beyond Kabul's authority. Moreover, the Soviet-backed Karmal regime is preoccupied with combating the insurgency, and as long as the narcotics trade neither finances the insurgents' efforts nor seriously affects the Soviet military campaign, government authorities have little incentive to curtail an activity that helps to keep the economy afloat. Increased Soviet concern over drug abuse by troops, however, could encourage interdiction efforts, at least in the cities where authorities are able to exercise control. [Redacted]

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Afghanistan's role as a heroin supplier to international markets probably will expand as long as the instability and strife continue. In the absence of any concerted effort at narcotics control within Afghanistan, the ability of neighboring authorities to intensify their interdiction efforts offers the only alternative for limiting Afghan narcotics exports. We do not expect Iran to move decisively against narcotics traffickers; but Pakistan may step up enforcement, at least in some cities, to stem its rising drug abuse. [Redacted]

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Afghanistan's Expanded Opium Trade: Byproduct of War [Redacted]

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Introduction

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 disrupted incipient government narcotics control programs and gave rise to insurgent warfare in opium-producing areas. It also drastically reduced reporting on the narcotics trade [Redacted] severely restricting our ability to assess narcotics production and trafficking in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, our analysis of [Redacted] limited reporting still available suggests that the disruptions of traditional social and economic patterns in the country have not hampered and may have even stimulated new growth in the narcotics industry. [Redacted]

The War: Incentives for the Opium Industry

The predominantly agrarian Afghan economy has been seriously hurt by the Soviet hostilities: irrigation networks are being neglected, distribution and marketing systems disrupted, and a significant part of the labor force has taken flight or been displaced. The small industrial sector also has been plagued by labor and raw material shortages, frequent power blackouts, and fuel rationing, severely disrupting trade and commerce. Such unsettlement does not always have similar negative effects on illegal economic activities—black-marketeering or smuggling, for example—and, indeed, the evidence suggests that the civil war environment in Afghanistan has spawned a flourishing opium trade. [Redacted]

Opium poppies are an ideal cash crop for subsistence farmers when wartime conditions disrupt commerce in traditional crops. They are a hearty, multi-purpose crop that yield a variety of products besides opium gum. The seeds can be eaten whole or processed into poppyseed cake or edible oil, the seed pods can be used for medicines or liquor, the straw for fuel, and the resulting ash for soap. Since opium does not spoil, it can be stored or stockpiled indefinitely. Profits from selling opium are as much as two to three times more than the next most profitable crop, yet cultivation costs are low. [Redacted]

Drug Abuse by Soviet Troops

Drug use among the Soviet troops is a growing problem. [Redacted] widespread hashish use and at least the start of heroin addiction. [Redacted] the Soviets frequently sell boots, clothing, and ammunition to shopkeepers in the bazaar in return for drugs [Redacted] assaults and robberies of bus passengers by Soviet soldiers were commonplace before the drivers started carrying adequate supplies of drugs to bribe the soldiers when stopped at checkpoints. As proof of the contention that Soviet troops are becoming increasingly desperate for drugs, [Redacted] the bazaars where one could see an abundance of Soviet gear, especially field jackets, all swapped by soldiers in exchange for drugs. [Redacted]

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Isolated incidents suggest the Soviets believe that drug abuse has impaired the performance of their troops in Afghanistan, but there is no evidence that drug abuse alone has lessened the overall military readiness of the forces. The problem probably is not as severe as the infectious diseases and alcoholism among both the troops and the officers. Drug usage, however, could become more of a problem for the Soviets as troops on rotation out of Afghanistan bring the narcotics into the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Some East European countries have attributed an increase in hashish use to Soviet troops reassigned there from Afghanistan. [Redacted]

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Wartime disruptions, in our view, also make heroin refining an attractive enterprise. Heroin is more profitable than opium—1 kilogram of heroin is worth substantially more than the 10 kilograms of opium used to produce it. It is less bulky to transport and more easily concealed than opium, and the processing

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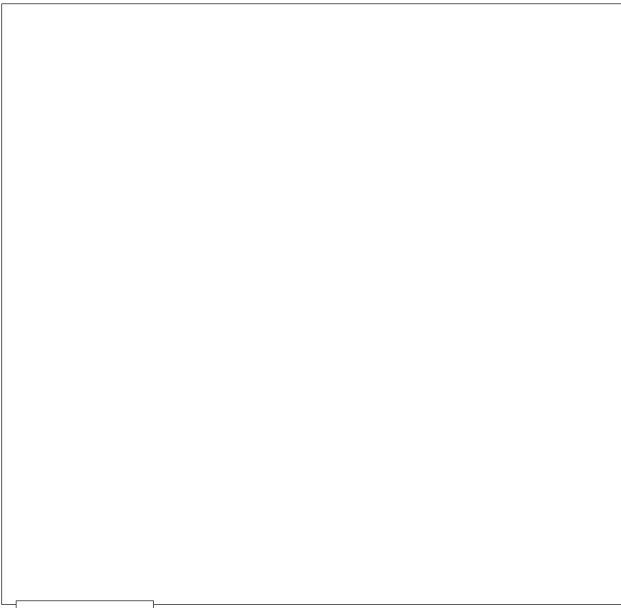
laboratories are small, simple to start up, difficult to locate, and easily moved. War also produces a potential new source of demand for refined opiates—the soldier. [redacted]

Smugglers and merchants have similar incentives to move into the opium trade. War disrupts regular trade patterns and encourages smuggling. Smugglers regularly operate outside normal distribution and transportation networks, and the disruptions enhance their ability to travel surreptitiously and to bribe officials. Although the war increases demand for smugglers' services, it also adds to their risks, which encourages them to turn to high-profit, illicit contraband. Merchants, finding their established markets adversely affected, also seek alternative commodities, such as opium and heroin, to trade. [redacted]

Afghanistan's Expanded Opium Trade: The Evidence Part of the case for Afghanistan's expanded opium trade depends on circumstantial, uncorroborated, or secondhand information. The frequency of the reporting and the nature and number of allegations, however, strongly suggest that the opium trade continues unabated. [redacted]

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and State Department reporting, indicates that Afghan farmers are cultivating opium poppies throughout the country, that heroin is now being refined in Afghan laboratories, and that Afghan smugglers are taking advantage of the insurgency to increase their involvement in the drug trade. [redacted]

Cultivation. A wide variety of evidence indicates poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is becoming more widespread (figure 1). Reporting from Islamabad, Pakistan, predicts that the 1985 opium crop in Afghanistan may be 25 percent greater than that for 1984, which by our estimate was 140 to 180 metric tons.¹ DEA reporting claims that individual farmers are devoting a higher percentage of their acreage to poppies in traditional growing regions, and [redacted] more farmers in these areas are sowing poppies. [redacted]



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poppies are even cultivated in nontraditional growing areas [redacted]

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[redacted] reports of increased acreage to poppies in traditional growing [redacted]

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Nangarhar Province, the major producing region, reveals that in some areas of the province approximately 50 to 70 percent of the cultivated fields are planted to poppy, compared to 30 to 40 percent last year (figure 2).

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Nangarhar traditionally accounts for about two-thirds of all poppyfields in the country, and, if opium production in Nangarhar has more than doubled, Afghanistan's total production for 1985 may be as high as 300 metric tons. A count of poppyfields in other provinces indicates similar increases in the number of fields of poppy. We are unable to confirm [redacted]

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the expansion of poppies to nontraditional areas. Nevertheless, we believe that the expansion in traditional areas alone is sufficient to boost production this year by at least 70 percent. [redacted]

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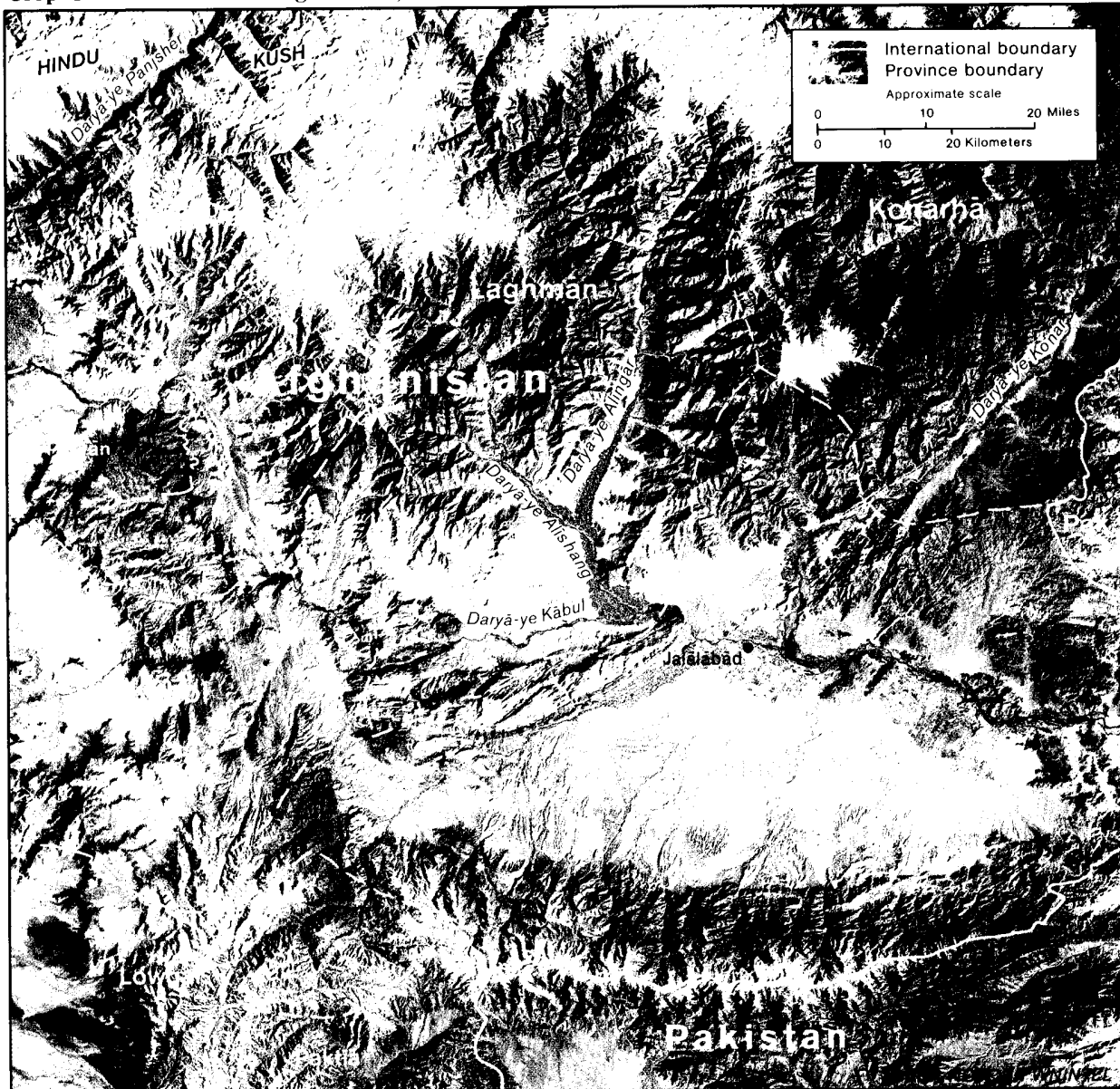
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Figure 2
Crop Growth in Eastern Afghanistan, Late March 1985



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This Landsat scene centers on Nangarhar Province in eastern Afghanistan where nearly two-thirds of the poppy crop is cultivated. Snowmelt feeds the irrigation networks here, and this image, taken shortly before poppy flowering, reveals ample snowfall in the mountains. Contrary to reports of a drought during this year's growing season, the deep red coloring in the valleys indicates high crop vigor and the prospects for good yields. Opium is a major cash crop here. [redacted] about 50 to 70 percent of the cultivated fields were planted to poppy in some areas this year. Jalalabad, seen in the middle of the image, is a major market center in the opium-marketing chain. [redacted]

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Figure 3
Areas of Poppy Cultivation and Major Military Activity



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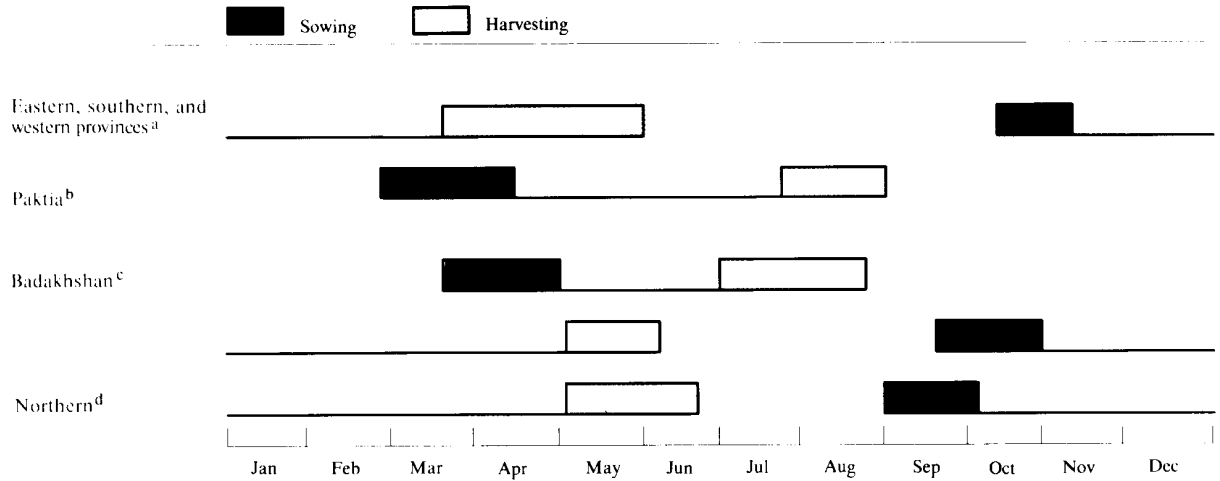
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We suspect that poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is unaffected by the war, largely because of the nature of the fighting. Most of Afghanistan's poppy is cultivated in small, scattered fields in remote mountain valleys away from Soviet and government military operations, which have been directed mostly against specific, accessible targets along main roads or near important towns (figure 3).² Many operations are focused attempts to relieve besieged garrisons or halt

insurgent infiltration along the Afghan-Pakistani border or the Afghan-Iranian frontier. The use of airpower also has limited combat on the ground that could have disrupted poppy planting or opium harvesting (figure 4). Government operations in the past year suggest less interest than before in acquiring control over remote rural areas and more willingness to countenance insurgent control there, or at least a low level of activity.

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Figure 4
The Poppy Season in Afghanistan



^a Confirmed for Kabul, Nangarhar, Konarha, Laghman, Lowgar, Kapisa, Helmand and Oruzgan Provinces. Probably similar in Herat.

^b Spring sowing and summer harvesting is likely characteristic of much of the poppy crop, but possibly some is grown as a winter crop.

^c Confirmed

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] supports these conclusions about the likely impact of military operations on poppy cultivation. [Redacted] no signs of widespread crop burning or destruction of irrigation systems; bomb damage and craters are seen most often in villages and along roadways. We estimate that the destruction of crops and farms caused by military operations affects only a small portion of cultivated land, less than 1 percent of total farm crop areas observed on satellite imagery.³ We judge that the rugged landscape and numerous irrigation ditches

restrict access to fields in remote areas to foot soldiers or heliborne troops, who are more concerned with the battle at hand than with destroying poppyfields.

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The manner in which insurgents conduct their operations limits the effects of the war on agriculture. At times it appears the insurgents deliberately divert their operations from farming areas and from their sometime supporters. Operating in small mobile bands, they have engaged Soviet and government forces in brief, confined battles. Generally, insurgents attack regime garrisons, Soviet installations, radar

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[Redacted]

The War in the Poppy-Growing Provinces

Analysis of several military operations in poppy-growing regions during the fall of 1984 and early spring of 1985 illustrates why the hostilities probably have little negative effect on poppy planting or harvesting:

Valley. Although the heavy airstrikes before the insurgents' withdrawal could have delayed the opium harvest, we believe that farmers had adequate time to harvest their opium because the airstrikes ended in early April.

- *Kabul increased its military operations in mid-October 1984 in Nangarhar Province and continued at that level of activity through the end of the year. Major battles during this time of the year could have limited sowing and damaged seedlings, but most of the activity was aimed at relieving garrisons and interdicting insurgent supply caravans and occurred near major roadways crossing the Afghan-Pakistani border rather than in the countryside.*
- *Lowgar Province was the site of similar military efforts late in 1984, but [redacted] the operations were primarily along important supply routes and did not affect farming areas away from the roads.*
- *From the end of 1984 through early 1985 there was heavy fighting in Herat Province. Although we know little about the poppy crop in Herat, we doubt that it was affected if the Soviets used the same tactics as used in Lowgar and Nangarhar Provinces.*
- *Qandahar Province was the scene of heavy fighting in January 1985, but the activity was limited to insurgent attacks against the airport, Soviet and government posts, a Soviet military convoy, and daily skirmishes in the bazaar. The Soviets responded by bombing nearby villages, but we doubt major damage was inflicted on the more remotely located poppyfields.*
- *In late March 1985 insurgents attacked an Afghan base northeast of Lashkar Gah in the Helmand*
- *Konarha Province was the scene of fighting in February 1985. Most military operations in Konarha, however, occurred along the province's main roads in the valleys of the Darya-ye Konar and its major tributaries, the Landay Sind and the Darya-ye Pich. Although some airborne forces were used in the mountains, [redacted] analysis indicates little destruction of the terraced poppyfields.* 25X1
- *Paktia and Paktika Provinces have been the scene of constant battles as Soviet and Afghan troops have attempted to relieve insurgent pressure on regime outposts. The government conducted a blockade and sweep operation in Paktia in late October 1984, but we doubt that the poppy crop was damaged because many regime units here, hard pressed to hold their posts against guerrilla assaults, have little time to conduct massive field operations that could destroy crops. These provinces, however, have experienced considerable population loss that may have reduced poppy cultivation.* 25X1
- *Kapisa and Laghman Provinces, often the location of Soviet offensives, are mountainous with only scattered poppy cultivation on smaller-than-average fields in terraced agricultural areas. Farmers probably had difficulty planting or harvesting their fields because of the fighting, but we consider it unlikely that destroyed poppyfields in these areas will affect total Afghan production. [redacted]* 25X1

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outposts, border posts, military supply convoys, airports, and highways. Many insurgents are also part-time farmers, which tends to reduce hostilities during planting and harvesting seasons. [redacted]

We judge that the increase in the number of heroin refineries reflects the traffickers' belief that Afghanistan's lawless, war-torn environment is ideal for refining heroin with impunity. DEA sources in Pakistan report that many heroin refiners have relocated to Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Processing. Evidence indicates that trafficking organizations in Afghanistan have had the capability to process opium into morphine and heroin since the mid-1970s. [redacted]

[redacted] We suspect that some laboratories also may be shifting from Pakistan to Afghanistan because of the increase in Afghan opium production and decrease in Pakistani cultivation. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

We doubt that Afghan laboratories manufacture large amounts of pure heroin or compare in number with those in Pakistan.⁴ Reporting about increased heroin refining activities involving Afghans began about three years after the Soviet invasion:

Other, more circumstantial evidence also suggests an increase in heroin processing in Afghanistan. [redacted]

- In early 1983, DEA sources reported laboratories in Nangarhar Province, and other sources later corroborated the presence of the laboratories.
- By the fall of 1983, DEA had learned of the existence of at least 40 heroin laboratories in Nangarhar Province alone.
- In mid-1984, DEA reported the spread of laboratories to areas outside of Nangarhar Province—one near Kabul, four in Helmand Province, and nine in Ribat.⁵ [redacted]

[redacted] Soviet soldiers regularly barter items in the Afghan bazaars for heroin. Heroin powder is readily available in Afghan cities and frequently traded in the bazaars of Jalalabad, Qandahar, and Herat, as well as other cities and towns (Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, Towr Kham, Farah, and Zaranj), according to all available evidence. The distance of some of these locations from Pakistani laboratories suggests nearby refining in Afghanistan. DEA reporting also indicates that Pakistani authorities have seized heroin en route from Afghanistan. [redacted] 25X1 25X1

We have received no reporting of any government crackdown on heroin refineries. [redacted]

[redacted] the proliferation of small heroin laboratories continues in Afghanistan. In March 1985, reliable DEA sources reported that many temporary laboratories were set up to process opium following the harvest in April. US Embassy sources in Kabul also claim that numerous heroin laboratories are located east of Kabul near the Afghan-Pakistani border. [redacted]

We believe that military operations have little effect on heroin refining activities in Afghanistan. Few laboratories are located in areas that are potential military targets, such as the important villages or major roadways. [redacted] the laboratories are in remote mountain areas where government control is limited. Like Pakistani operations, most Afghan heroin laboratories are so-called garage or kitchen operations—easily established, crudely constructed, and using existing buildings in outlying villages and [redacted] 25X1

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⁴ Most heroin laboratories in Southwest Asia process raw opium into crude heroin base (Number 2 Heroin) or smoking heroin (Number 3 Heroin), but [redacted] more laboratories are refining pure heroin (Number 4 Heroin), particularly in Pakistan. Pure heroin is also referred to as injectable heroin or heroin hydrochloride. [redacted]

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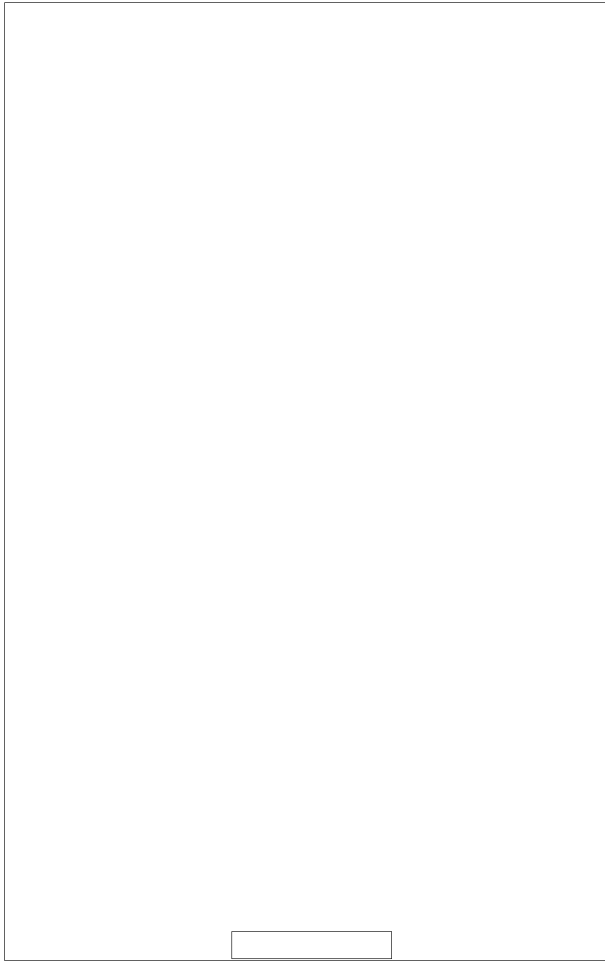
⁵ Ribat is a village somewhere in the Afghan-Iranian-Pakistani triborder area. [redacted]

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Inside a laboratory. [redacted]

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farm compounds. It is unlikely that the laboratories would be distinguishable from normal agricultural buildings, and, if destroyed, they easily could be reestablished [redacted] [redacted]

borders with Pakistan and Iran. Before the insurgency, tribal caravans traveled west across northern Afghanistan carrying opium to the consumers in Iran and the processing laboratories in eastern Turkey. Traditionally, opium was brought from almost all the growing regions to Herat, a commercial center in the western part of the country. There, arrangements were made to smuggle the opium across the border into Iran. Caravans carried some of the opium south to Qandahar Province and from there west across Helmand and Nimruz Provinces into Iran or south into Pakistan and west across Baluchistan—these routes facilitated diversion of the cargo to the Persian Gulf area. [redacted]

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Smuggling. Smuggling has long been a way of life for many Afghans, and available evidence indicates that Afghan drug smugglers have taken advantage of the insurgency-related disruption to increase their activities. We receive numerous reports of drug smuggling throughout Afghanistan and of bazaars well supplied with narcotics. Drug smuggling into Pakistan and Iran is also common, according to numerous DEA reports. [redacted]

Afghan smugglers have a large number of well-established routes, most of which cross unguarded

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The Opium and Heroin Trade

In Afghanistan, opium is purchased initially by a local dealer, who may himself be a grower, or by a dealer from a nearby town. Using a human carrier, an animal caravan, or a motor vehicle, the dealer takes the opium from the growing area to a major center or bazaar, where it is either stockpiled by an opium broker or sold directly to smugglers. The broker usually maintains a stock of about 4 tons of opium. He will sell to refiners or may refine opium himself. When his opium stocks run low, he orders more from the dealers in the growing areas. Brokers and refiners in the Afghan bazaars supply the smugglers. Usually, the smugglers transport their cargo in vehicles or on pack animals to villages near the border. These villages serve as staging areas where the opiates are transferred to pack animal caravans to begin the journey across the border trails into Pakistan. Once inside Pakistan, the opiates are transferred to another pack animal caravan, or to small trucks, for delivery to the brokers and refiners in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) bazaars. The NWFP brokers and refiners are the major regional wholesalers who move the opium and heroin by car or truck to major traffickers in Karachi or Lahore, who, in turn, generally supply the international trafficking networks that supply the United States and Europe.

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According to US Embassy reporting, Afghan drug smugglers take advantage of the traditional money bazaar between Peshawar and Kabul—a hundi network of partnerships based on family and tribal relationships—to finance the flourishing narcotics trade. The hundi—called Hawala in Afghanistan—is an instrument of credit and exchange in Southwest Asia that predates and bypasses banking institutions. The small chit of paper authorizing delivery of a specific amount of money to the bearer has been replaced by the telephone. Transactions between the receiver in Kabul and distributor of hundi funds in Peshawar are now authorized by phone. The hundi dealers simply convert rupees to afghanis at whatever exchange rate the market establishes; a transaction takes only three days to complete. A separate system also operates between Quetta and Qandahar.

We believe that the Soviet invasion has altered the use of traditional smuggling routes and added a new dimension to narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan.⁷ To avoid contact with roadblocks and other increased security measures, smugglers began moving their drugs to the nearest border. Smugglers from the less important, northern-producing provinces, such as Balkh, Konduz, and Baghlan, continued their treks southwest to Herat; but new routes were needed from the major growing areas on the eastern border to Pakistan. The need to develop routes leading east was reinforced further by a crackdown on heroin laboratories in Turkey. As a result, Jalalabad (Nangarhar Province) became the major marketing center in Afghanistan for transshipment to Pakistan. Some changes in routes were made to adjust for the dislocations of the insurgency. For example, smugglers from the Helmand Valley still travel to Qandahar, but now are more likely to head east to Pakistan than west to Iran. [redacted]

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Five years after the Soviet invasion, Afghan smugglers have adapted to the fighting and security measures, and we believe they may be in an even stronger position than before the hostilities began (figure 6). They have managed to maintain access to their old smuggling routes and connections, while developing new ones with Pakistani organizations. Smuggling east to villages near the Khyber Pass and into Pakistan occurs on a much larger scale, and Pakistani trafficking organizations in the North-West Frontier Province have expanded their operations to handle more narcotics. Afghan smugglers are also crossing the Afghan-Soviet border near Iran. According to DEA analysis, the location of several seizures in Iran at or near the Soviet border suggests that this route is being used. We doubt that drug smuggling through the Soviet Union is a regular occurrence, however, because Soviet security measures along the Afghan border are quite thorough and movement across this border is tightly controlled. [redacted]

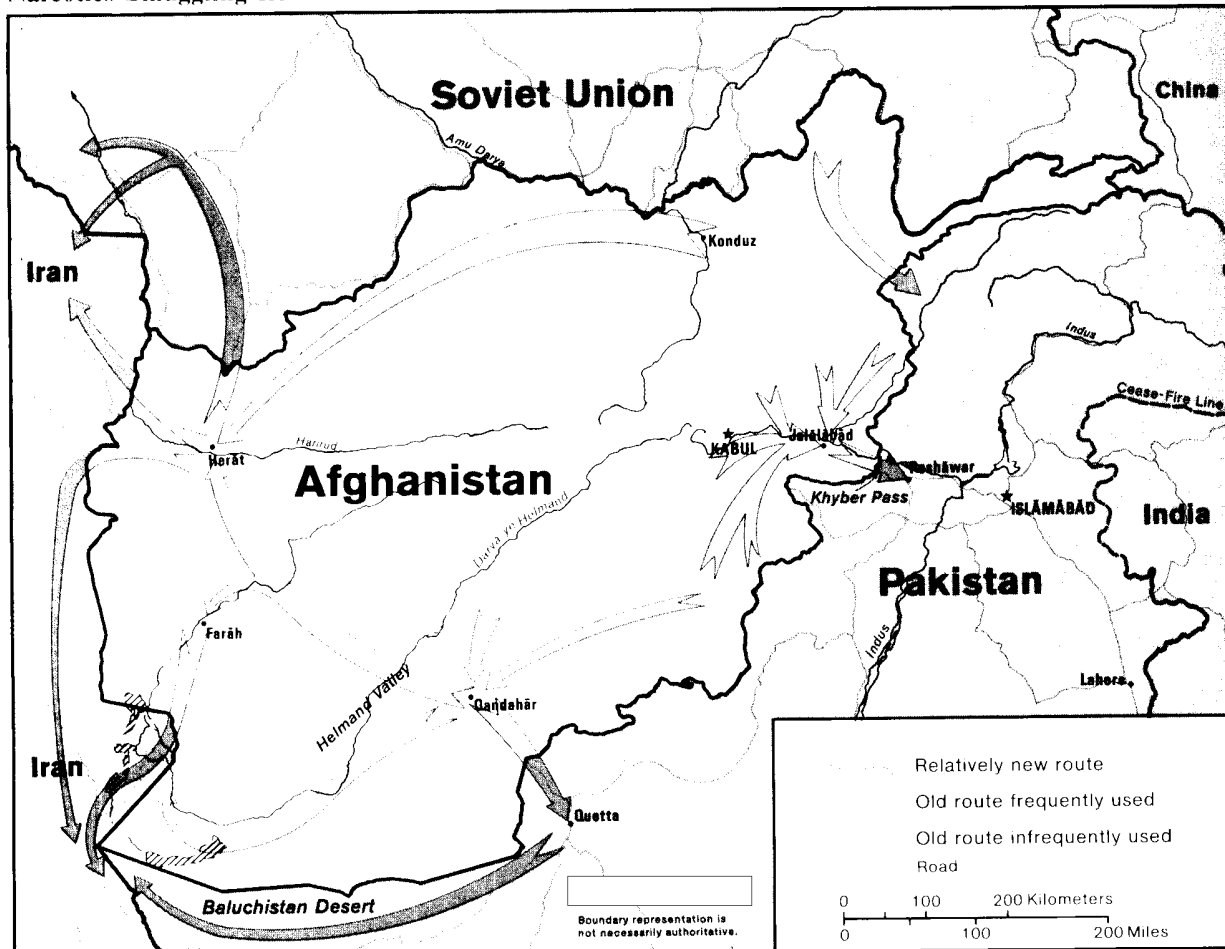
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Figure 6
Narcotics Smuggling Routes



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The Role of the Government

Preoccupied with combating the insurgency, the Soviet-backed Karmal regime is devoting little attention or resources to the narcotics problem. Most cultivation occurs in areas beyond its control and is so widespread

that eradication would be impossible. The government has not made poppy cultivation illegal. This lack of government action may be a simple acknowledgment that to do so would be futile but also may be an attempt to appease rebellious farmers, particularly those in areas of significant opium production adjacent to Pakistan and Iran.

Publicly, the regime maintains that land reform has almost eliminated poppy cultivation and that any narcotics found in Afghanistan originate in Pakistan.

Afghan counternarcotics efforts focus on interdiction by the Anti-Smuggling Division of the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Investigations Department. Staffed with about 40 poorly equipped men, it is not an effective antinarcotics force. The division has men assigned to eight provinces in Afghanistan but is

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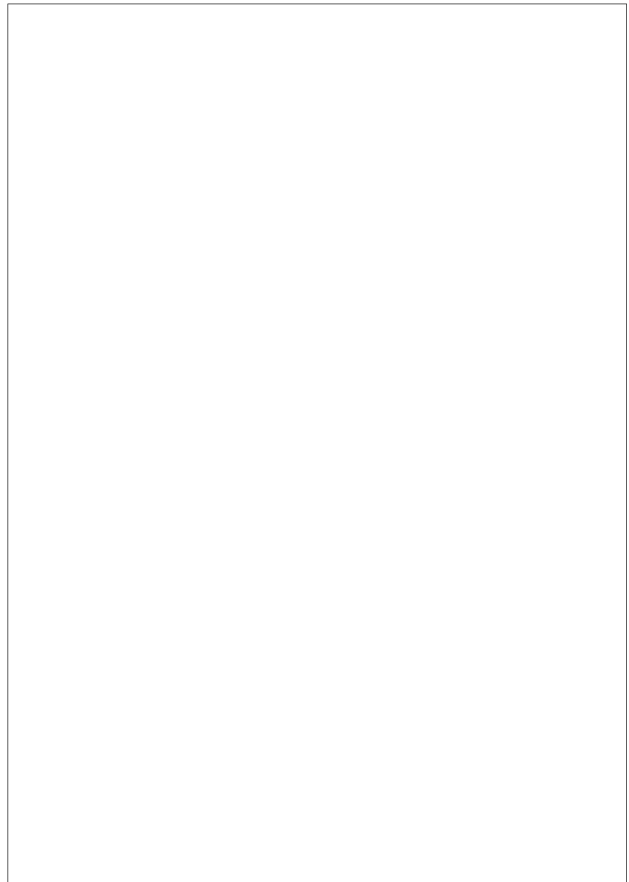
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active only in the major cities, such as Kabul and Herat, according to a State Department source. Afghan officials try to highlight their successes and effectiveness and claim that a coordinated drug law enforcement effort has been implemented that includes the armed forces. Kabul reported a significant increase in drug seizures in the first half of 1984, compared with the first half of 1983. The 1984 seizures netted less than 5 metric tons of opium and only about 91 kilograms of heroin. Even if these claims are accurate, such seizures are only a tiny portion of estimated production, and we judge they have not appreciably affected the drug trade. The US Embassy reports that most narcotics seizures probably result from efforts to intercept illegal arms shipments to insurgents rather than from actual drug enforcement operations. [redacted]



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Kabul has given no sign that it intends to increase the emphasis given antidrug efforts. To the contrary, [redacted] the government misuses the limited drug enforcement resources available. [redacted]

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Even if the government had a comprehensive antinarcotics program, we believe that it would be quickly subverted by the traffickers. We receive occasional reports that Afghan authorities at all levels are corrupt and willingly abet traffickers for a price. [redacted]

The Role of the Refugees and Insurgents 25X1

Afghan and Soviet press statements allege that the Afghan refugees and insurgents are largely responsible for the illegal narcotics trafficking. Refugee and insurgent leaders have denied publicly any collusion with narcotics traffickers. There is no conclusive evidence to support either side's contention, but [redacted] circumstantial evidence strongly indicate that individuals or small groups of refugees and insurgents are profiting from the narcotics trade. [redacted]

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[redacted] We suspect, however, that most of the corruption entails bribing Afghan border guards and customs officials or offering heroin to Soviet soldiers at roadblocks and checkpoints outside the cities. [redacted]

Refugees. Both opium cultivation and narcotics smuggling are traditional activities in Afghanistan, and we

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* Mujahideen is a term used to refer to the Afghan insurgents or resistance fighters. Literally, the word translates "fighters in the holy war." In the Pashtu language, "mu" means fighter, "jihad" means holy war, and "een" is the plural form. [redacted]

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Figure 7
Afghan Ethnic Groups Involved in Opium Trade



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assume that refugees continue to pursue these activities (figure 7). On the basis of reporting from US and UN officials in Pakistan, we estimate that at least three-fourths of the Afghan refugees are Pashtun farmers, some of whom are poppy farmers who regularly cross back into Afghanistan to assist with the crop.⁹ For centuries, Pashtun tribesmen have routinely traveled to what is now Pakistan to trade narcotics and other goods, look for work, visit relatives, and

move their herds to winter grazing areas. Establishment of national borders has not stopped this movement. According to DEA intelligence sources, some Pashtun families reside only part-time in the refugee camps; the older family members remain in Afghanistan to look after the farms and the younger men return periodically to tend and harvest their crops. Although we have no direct evidence, we suspect many refugees may migrate between their farms and refugee camps.

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The Smugglers

In most cases, from the producers in the growing regions to the brokers in the bazaars across the border, transactions are based on longstanding relationships. Consequently, most regions are free zones for opium and heroin smuggling among the Pashtun, Baluchi, Turkmen, and Tajik ethnic groups who inhabit the various opium-growing regions and whose ties span the nearby international borders. The Pashtun tribes dominate the narcotics smuggling trade, inhabiting the southern and eastern slopes of the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan and Pakistan and controlling the fabled Khyber Pass and the strategic Khojak Pass through which most of Afghanistan's opium and heroin move. The Baluchistan Desert—spanning Qandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz Provinces, as well as parts of Pakistan and Iran—is the usual area of operation for Baluchi caravans. Turkmen caravans move across northern Afghanistan—through Samangan, Balkh, Jowzjan, Faryab, Badghis, and Herat Provinces—and the Tajiks are dominant in northeastern Afghanistan, particularly Badakhshan Province. Turkmens and Tajiks also inhabit the regions across the Soviet border. [redacted]

Several individual Pashtun tribes are particularly well known for their smuggling activities. The Afridi and Shinwari tribes have switched from brandishing rifles on horseback to running profitable trucking concerns and smuggling narcotics across the Afghan-Pakistani border. Some tribesmen farm poppyfields, and others are reported to operate heroin laboratories. They inhabit the region south of the Darya-ye Kabul on both sides of the border and dominate licit and illicit traffic on the Grand Trunk Highway between Kabul and Peshawar through the Khyber Pass. Some of the Ghilzai and Durrani confederations are nomads, migrating between winter quarters in the valleys and summer pasture grounds in the mountains. They also tend to be itinerant merchants and moneylenders, whose caravans regularly move opium across Afghanistan. Many of the Durrani and Ghilzai confederations also have large landholdings and farm acres of poppies. The Ghilzai live in the region south of Kabul as far as Chaman, and the Durrani inhabit a broad arc of territory from the lower Darya-ye Arghandab and Darya-ye Helmand Valleys eastward toward the Iranian border. [redacted] 25X1

Insurgents. Despite some circumstantial evidence that individual insurgents or insurgent bands are involved in smuggling narcotics, we have no information of organized narcotics smuggling involving the mujahideen. We judge that such involvement is unlikely under present circumstances because the disadvantages outweigh the potential benefits and will continue to do so as long as other sources of income are available. Any publicity regarding insurgent participation in narcotics smuggling, moreover, would tarnish the mujahideen's image and could cost them support from external sources. It could also cost them some popular support from the Afghan community itself; Islamic religious leaders teach strongly against the use of opium, and many Afghan Muslims are very conservative. Organized narcotics smuggling also would divert insurgents' attention and energies from planning and staging military operations and undermine their ability to achieve political and ideological goals. [redacted]

The major insurgent organizations have repeatedly denied any involvement and have officially instructed their supporters not to engage in narcotics smuggling, [redacted] The insurgency draws heavily from groups that historically have been involved in opium growing and smuggling, however, and these groups maintain considerable autonomy as part of the insurgent movement. In addition, numerous other Afghans sometimes follow the mujahideen, and many of these individuals may well grow or smuggle opium for their personal benefit. [redacted] 25X1

Outlook

We doubt that the Afghan Government will take any action to curtail narcotics production and smuggling given present circumstances. Kabul's preoccupation will lie with putting down the insurgency, and not

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with stopping a thriving trade that brings hard currency and Western goods into Afghanistan. The attitudes of the Kabul regime and its Soviet advisers toward drug enforcement could change if they perceive that drug abuse threatens the performance of Soviet troops in Afghanistan or that drug sales finance the insurgent movement.

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The government would have difficulty curbing the narcotics trade even if it decided to implement a serious control program. Authorities would be able to crack down on narcotics trafficking in and around Kabul and the various military outposts, but this intervention would not significantly reduce the flow of narcotics out of Afghanistan unless accompanied by crop eradication. Manual elimination of opium cultivation would first require greater government control of the countryside, which would entail a costly military buildup and a commitment of additional resources to narcotics enforcement. Aerial spraying, the cheapest and most effective control method, would require planes to fly at such low altitudes that they would be easy targets. Either method could easily be thwarted by moving the fields into more remote and difficult-to-locate areas, a countermeasure used with a great deal of success in other opium-producing countries.

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In the absence of any concerted effort at narcotics control within Afghanistan, the ability of neighboring authorities to intensify their interdiction efforts offers the only alternative for limiting the amount of opium and heroin from Southwest Asia that reaches international markets. Iran—preoccupied by the war with Iraq and sharing a rugged, nearly 900-kilometer-long border with Afghanistan—is not likely to be able to check the flow of drugs moving west. Effective interdiction of opium and heroin moving through Pakistan could cut Afghanistan's other principal means of access to the international narcotics traffic. Control of Pakistan's growing drug abuse problem offers Pakistani authorities some incentive to step up interdiction. Although we doubt that Islamabad will move against narcotics traffickers in the North-West Frontier Province, increased enforcement efforts in Karachi and Lahore could at least limit some of the narcotics currently reaching European and US markets.

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