

**Senate Caucus on  
International Narcotics Control  
Hearing on “Future U.S. Counternarcotics  
Efforts in Afghanistan”**

**Wednesday, January 15, 2014**

**Prepared Statement of  
Co-Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa**

Madam Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing to follow-up on our two previous hearings about counter-narcotics programs in Afghanistan. This discussion is especially timely because the drawdown of our troops this year will significantly impact these programs. Today’s hearing gives us the opportunity to hear from the Obama Administration about the future of these programs going forward.

Our efforts in this area are highly dependent on the security that our military provides. Therefore, I’ve long been concerned that if our troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan too abruptly or without the proper planning, the United States could forfeit the progress it has made against the drug trade there.

Indeed, in July of 2010, Chairman Feinstein and I released a bipartisan Caucus report regarding the U.S. counter-narcotics strategy in Afghanistan. In the report, we recommended that the key agencies involved in counter-narcotics “devise a comprehensive strategy for continued operational effectiveness after the departure of U.S. troops.”

At the time of our hearing in 2011, the Obama Administration was already beginning to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan. I raised concerns then that we could lose our counter-narcotics successes in the rush to reduce our presence.

Indeed, we are already seeing some of our progress begin to erode. For example, the United Nations recently reported that in 2013, poppy cultivation skyrocketed to 209,000 hectares, a 36 percent increase from 2012. And the number of provinces

considered poppy-free declined in both 2012 and 2013 after rising steadily for years.

Additionally, the Obama Administration's failure to finalize a Bilateral Security Agreement with the Afghan government is undoubtedly damaging our ability to plan future counter-narcotics efforts. As we're seeing in Iraq, without such an agreement in place, the country may well descend into chaos.

We shouldn't forget why our troops are in Afghanistan in the first place. Narcotics trafficking in Afghanistan helped fuel a mix of corruption, organized crime, and instability that helped lead to the rise of the Taliban. And the Taliban then provided a safe haven from which al-Qaeda launched the September 11th attacks. Counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan play a role in ensuring that terrorist organizations cannot use the country as a base from which to threaten the United States in the future.

As we reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan, we need to focus our efforts on continuing to build the capabilities of the Afghan military, police, and courts. We also need to ensure that our law enforcement agencies, such as the DEA, will still be allowed to work alongside Afghan personnel to conduct operations and investigations.

We should also prioritize our efforts to combat the money laundering and terrorist financing associated with the proceeds of narcotics exported from Afghanistan. In 2012, the estimated value of Afghan opiates before export was almost \$2 billion. These funds support both the insurgency against the Afghan government as well as criminal and terrorist activities directed at the United States.

It is critical that plans are in place to deal with how counter-narcotics efforts will continue absent the security provided by the U.S. military. As the Drug Caucus recommended in our July 2010 report, I strongly encourage the Administration to provide Congress with a comprehensive, multi-agency, workable strategy to do so.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses today regarding the status of the counter-narcotics plans of their individual agencies, as well as their concerns as we reduce our military footprint in Afghanistan. I'm also interested in being updated about what's working and what's not working in our current efforts to combat drug trafficking in Afghanistan.