**Question for the Record Submitted to**

**Assistant Secretary Brownfield by**

**Senators Dianne Feinstein and Charles Grassley**

**Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control**

**January 15, 2014**

**Question:**

Prior to our hearing, Senator Feinstein presented you with eight recommendations on how to carry out future U.S. counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan. We would appreciate your feedback concerning these draft recommendations, including the costs and benefits of each of these measures intended to help counter the Afghan drug trade.

Can you please respond in writing to each of these eight draft recommendations?

**Answer:**

Tackling illicit narcotics is critical to ensuring a stable and economically sound Afghan state. The illicit cultivation, production, trafficking, and consumption of narcotics in Afghanistan undermines good governance, the licit economy, and public health; fuels corruption and insecurity; and funds the insurgency. We appreciate the Senate Drug Caucus’ recommendations, and provide the following responses for your consideration.

1. **Increased Cooperation with Russia:** As the largest consumer of Afghan opiates, Russia can play an important role in the fight against the Afghan narcotics trade. We encourage engagement from Russia and other key stakeholders, in line with the priorities set by the government of Afghanistan. We are actively working to leverage our mutual interest in Afghan counternarcotics with Russia, but we face some challenges. Russia has a history with Afghanistan which sometimes complicates engagement.  At times, Russia has viewed our efforts to establish stronger CN cooperation, such as in Central Asia, through the lens of our overall bilateral relationship and broader regional concerns. Nevertheless, we continue to engage with Russia both bilaterally and through multilateral fora, including through the Paris Pact Initiative, Istanbul Process, and NATO-Russia Council. We look forward to working closely with Russia as the chair of the G8, and we appreciate the attention Russia has given to counternarcotics within the G8 by elevating it as a point of discussion at the highest level.
2. **Greater Focus on Central Asian Transit Countries:** A key element in our efforts to address illicit narcotics in Afghanistan is to approach the issue of Afghan heroin as a regional challenge and to integrate regional partners into our strategy. Afghanistan shares some of the highest opiate addiction rates in the world with Central Asia. This has a devastating impact on the region, with tens of thousands of narcotics-related deaths each year, and strengthens channels for transnational organized crime. INL actively engages Central Asian countries including through the Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI), which has increased International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) drug interdiction funding for the region by $19.2 million since 2011 and is ongoing. CACI is focused on improving the capacities of Central Asian drug enforcement services to identify, investigate, and dismantle significant drug trafficking networks and on promoting regional cooperation, most importantly among the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, in combating cross-border trafficking. We also engage with Central Asian countries through the NATO-Russia Council Project on Counternarcotics Training, the Paris Pact Initiative, the Istanbul Process, the Central Asia Regional Information Coordination Center (CARICC), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Regional Program for Central Asia and Afghanistan.
3. **Alternative Development/Food Zone Programs:** INL supports a holistic approach to addressing illicit narcotics in Afghanistan. Our programs help give Afghans a stake in their communities, but there is reason to be cautious about the practicality of non-agricultural support.  We agree that we must go beyond crop substitution, but are concerned that support for manufacturing may not be a realistic or sustainable development approach for many communities.  We are currently in discussions with the Afghan Government to redesign our signature Good Performers Initiative program and will take this recommendation into account as we seek to increase the program’s focus on rural alternative livelihoods. We are also looking into increasing our support for microfinance, as Senator Feinstein recommended during the hearing, through the development of a broader system of alternative livelihood support with existing partner organizations.

We appreciate Congressional support for the Food Zone concept. As Assistant Secretary Brownfield noted in the hearing, cultivation in the Helmand Food Zone core area was down again in 2013 – 42 percent from 2012 and 81 percent since the program began in 2008. The Afghan government is supportive of the Food Zone concept and continues to request additional Food Zones, which we also encourage our international partners to support.

1. **Continued Support for Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Vetted Units:** We greatly appreciate the support the Senate Drug Caucus has given this particular part of our program. Although we cannot predict the precise footprint until post-2014 personnel and resource realities are clarified, we plan to continue our support for the DEA and its exemplary work with the vetted units.
2. **Comprehensive Counternarcotics Strategy:** The interagency is currently operating under a CN strategy approved by the Deputies Committee in December 2012. The Department of Defense and the Drug Enforcement Administration have conducted post-2014 strategic reviews. We have also reviewed our programs to ensure that they are as effective as possible, sustainable, and adaptable for the post-2014 environment. While the post-2014 environment is still unclear, we agree that a comprehensive strategy is important for success, and we stand ready to contribute to a new interagency counternarcotics strategy.
3. **Targeting Heroin Processing Labs Over Crop Eradication:** INL supports a comprehensive approach to counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, which includes both interdiction and eradication, as well as alternative development, public information, capacity building, and demand reduction. INL strongly supports the interdiction program, which represents nearly half of INL’s Afghanistan counternarcotics program budget. INL’s support for eradication is limited to the Governor Led Eradication (GLE) program, which is just three percent of our CN budget. Based on experience in other countries and current U.S. government analysis, we know that eradication injects risk into the farmers’ planting decisions creating a deterrent effect, and it is important that we continue this effort as part of a holistic approach to counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan.
4. **Stop Purchase Of Special Missions Wing Aircraft:** On this recommendation, we defer to the Department of Defense.
5. **Maintain The Afghan Threat Finance Cell:** Discussions are ongoing about the future of the Afghan Threat Finance Cell (ATFC), as many of the post-2014 decisions still have to be made.  We agree that the mission of the ATFC is important, and INL supports its work both in concept and directly through limited operational funding.