**Question for the Record Submitted to**

**Assistant Secretary William R. Brownfield by**

**Senator Sheldon Whitehouse**

**Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control**

**January 15, 2014**

**Question:**

Iran’s position as a link in the long heroin smuggling chain between Afghanistan and Europe has been well-documented, as has the prevalence of drug use and intravenous drug-related HIV among Iranians. While Iranian preventive public health campaigns and treatment-based initiatives have contributed to an impressive turnaround, the country’s battle against the scourge of drugs has not received nearly as much international support as have similar campaigns in Colombia and elsewhere.

* In light of the mutual interest in curbing the flow of heroin out of Afghanistan and combating narco-terrorism, do you see any room for diplomatic opportunities or cooperation between Iran and the United States in this area?
* Based on your understanding, who within the Department of State or elsewhere in the Administration would be responsible for determining the existence of mutual interests between ourselves and Iran when it comes to combating heroin?

**Answer:**

While Iran is a consumer of Afghan heroin, very little Afghan heroin reaches the United States via Iran. The Afghans, Pakistanis, and Iranians meet trilaterally to discuss illicit Afghan narcotics, among other issues, and other governments that have been impacted by heroin traveling via Iran have been cooperating with Iran on this issue.

The Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) encourages broad bilateral and multilateral cooperation and assistance from the international community to address illicit narcotics in Afghanistan. We share an interest with Iran in curbing the narcotics problem in Afghanistan, which is critical to Afghanistan’s stability and licit economic development. Countries most affected by the use and trafficking of Afghan narcotics, including Iran, should be actively engaged in supporting the Afghan government to address the problem, in line with Afghan priorities.

INL works with international partners to address illicit narcotics stemming from Afghanistan through multilateral fora, such as the Paris Pact Initiative, the NATO-Russia Council, the Istanbul Process, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Triangular Initiative, the Central Asia Regional Information Coordination Center (CARICC), and the UNODC Regional Program for Central Asia and Afghanistan. Iran participates in several of these fora, including the Paris Pact Initiative and the Istanbul Process. Iran is also an emerging donor to UNODC, and UNODC engages with Iran through an office in Tehran on a variety of issues linked to counternarcotics efforts, including drug demand reduction, drug trafficking, border controls, and multilateral cooperation.

The President’s Iran policy is managed by the Secretary of State, supported by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA). INL provides subject matter expertise on Department of State counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan and the region.