

Highlights of [GAO-07-78](#), a report to congressional committees

AFGHANISTAN DRUG CONTROL

Despite Improved Efforts, Deteriorating Security Threatens Success of U.S. Goals

Why GAO Did This Study

The prevalence of opium poppy cultivation and drug trafficking in Afghanistan imperils the stability of its government and threatens to turn the conflict-ridden nation once again into a safe haven for traffickers and terrorists. To combat the drug trade, the U.S. government developed a counternarcotics strategy consisting of five pillars—alternative livelihoods, elimination and eradication, interdiction, law enforcement and justice, and public information.

The Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2005 directed GAO to examine the use of all fiscal year 2005 funds administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Department of State (State) for Afghan counternarcotics programs. To comply with this mandate, we examined progress under each counternarcotics pillar, challenges faced, and efforts to ensure that funds were used for intended purposes. To address these objectives, GAO reviewed pertinent USAID and State documents and met with cognizant U.S. and international officials in Washington, D.C., and Afghanistan.

GAO makes no recommendations in this report. USAID, State, Department of Defense, and Department of Justice were provided a draft of this report, but did not provide formal comments.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-78.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact David Gootnick, (202) 512-3149 or GootnickD@gao.gov.

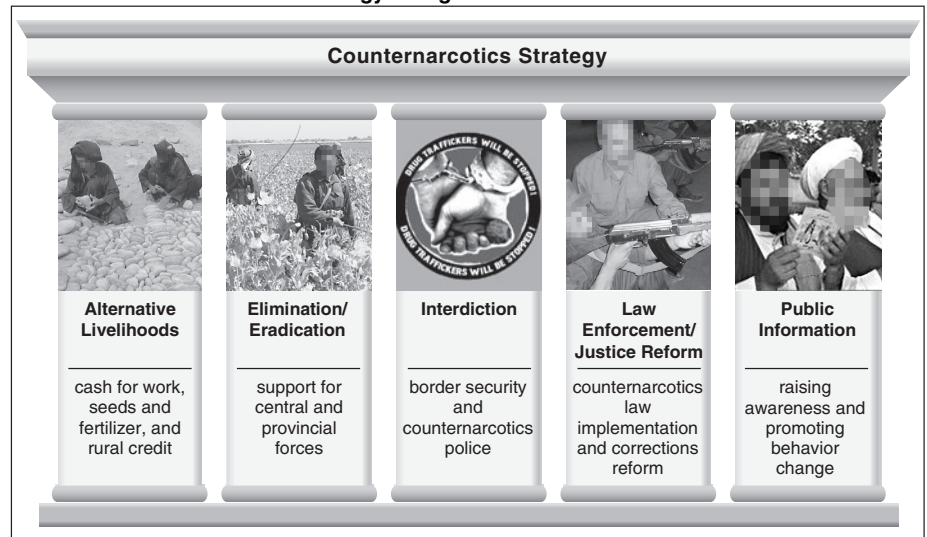
What GAO Found

USAID and State received about \$532 million in fiscal year 2005 funds and initiated a number of projects under each counternarcotics pillar, but delays in implementation limited progress. For example, State's provision of aircraft enhanced the mobility of eradicators, but coordination difficulties between Afghan officials and security forces delayed the eradicators' fielding. Despite increased eradication and other U.S. efforts, the poppy crop grew by 50 percent in 2006 to a record level. However, many projects have not been in place long enough to assess progress toward the overall goal of significantly reducing drug cultivation, production, and trafficking. For example, projects to provide rural credit and to field teams to discourage poppy cultivation were not in place prior to the 2005-2006 growing season.

The worsening security situation and the lack of Afghan capacity are tremendous challenges to the success of U.S. counternarcotics programs in Afghanistan. The security situation continues to decline; during the 2005-2006 growing season, eradicators were attacked several times and alternative livelihoods project personnel were killed. Moreover, due to Afghanistan's lack of infrastructure, educated populace, and functioning governmental institutions, significantly reducing poppy cultivation and drug trafficking is expected to take at least a decade.

USAID and State have made efforts to oversee the use of funds, including the use of self certifications, contract clauses, and vetting, when applicable. However, a lack of official records and reliable information limited efforts to vet Afghan nationals. In addition, although USAID and State have made efforts to monitor ongoing projects, security concerns and poor infrastructure limited site visits.

Five Pillar Counternarcotics Strategy in Afghanistan



Sources: GAO and State Department (data and photos).