

The Lies About Taliban Heroin

Russia and Oil the Real Objectives With Heroin As A Weapon of War

A Replay of CIA's Vietnam-era Drug Dealing

FTW Revises Its Map On Economic Impacts

by Michael C. Ruppert

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FTW, October 10, 2001 - The governments of the United States and Britain - along with a lap-dog mainstream media all too willing to regurgitate falsehoods - are feeding us a line of demonstrably inaccurate lies about the Taliban and opium. We are being warned of a "new flood" of al-Q'aeda opium as the war expands. As British Prime Minister Tony Blair boasts, "We will bomb their poppy fields," he neglects to mention that there aren't any poppy fields in Taliban controlled areas to bomb. This outrageous deception of the public, in an effort to stir up support for the war effort, is further evidence that most of the rest of the government's line following the attacks of September 11, is simply not credible.

A simple side-by-side comparison of reports from the UN and the U.S. government, along with major media stories from before and after the Sept. 11 attacks exposes the lie.

Even the U.S. State Department (www.state.gov/www/regions/sa/facts_taliban_drugs.html) acknowledges that in July 2000, Mullah Omar of the Taliban ordered a ban on poppy cultivation in all Taliban controlled regions of Afghanistan. That State Department Fact Sheet, published after Jan 1, 2000, however, expresses U.S. disbelief in the ban's effectiveness. This position is, however, flatly contradicted by some very credible sources, including Secretary of State Colin Powell. He gave the Taliban \$43 million this May to replace the income lost to Afghani farmers as a result of the ban. Their wheat crops had failed due to the drought and they had no money from opium harvests to buy food. The middlemen who had stockpiled the opium had income. But the farmers, who had harvested in the summer of 2000, had already been paid.

In February 2000 citing reports from *Agence France-Presse*, the *AP*, and *UPI*, *FTW* published a story describing the Taliban's successful destruction of their poppy crop. We viewed this at the time - possibly incorrectly - as a move by the Taliban to take \$90 billion in drug cash out of the western banking system. That sales remained stable, however, is reflected in the fact that heroin prices fell only slightly in 2000. Had Afghanistan stopped selling altogether, then Western Europe, which gets its opium from Afghanistan, would have seen a steep increase in prices. It did not. So why then did Powell give Afghanistan the \$43 million? I wish I knew.

Now, based upon new evidence, we know that in 1999 Afghanistan produced a bumper crop of 4,600 metric tons of opium and that this has been verified by a number of sources including the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) as well as in a multitude of press stories. The 2000 harvest was close to 3,300 metric

tons. The result, as Colombia expanded poppy cultivation in the late 1990s, and as the Golden Triangle in Southeast Asia showed only a minor drop in output, was a glut. Therefore the Taliban's ban on production would have had the impact of creating a price support by reducing supplies. How successful was the ban and destruction of crops? Well, aside from the above reports, which all indicated that inspections confirming the ban had taken place, consider the following:

- On January 3, 2001 an *ABC News* story, posted on their web site stated, "Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Inam ul-Haq's claim to have eliminated all opium plantations in Taliban controlled territories - reported by *Agence France-Presse* -- seems to have been confirmed by a UN survey.

"This development could have several important ramifications for both the geopolitical situation in the region and the world drug trade...

"The center of world drug production will shift from Afghanistan, which accounted for 75 percent of world opium production last year, to Colombia and the Golden Triangle on the border between Myanmar (Burma) and Thailand.

A February 16, 2001 *AP* story by Kathy Gannon was headlined, "Taliban virtually wipes out opium production in Afghanistan." It opened with these lines:

"U.N. drug control officers said the Taliban religious militia has virtually wiped out opium production in Afghanistan - once the world's largest producer - since banning poppy cultivation in July.

"A 12-member team from the U.N. Drug Control Program spent two weeks searching most of the nation's largest opium-producing areas and found so few poppies that they do not expect any opium to come out of Afghanistan this year.

"'We are not just guessing. We have seen the proof in the fields,' said Bernard Frahi, regional director for the U.N. program in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He laid out photographs of vast tracts of land cultivated with wheat alongside pictures of the same fields taken a year earlier - a sea of blood red poppies.

On May 24, 2001 Barry Berak of the *New York Times* wrote a story entitled, "Taliban Ban on Drug Crops Is Working, U.S. Concludes." Here are the lead paragraphs:

"ELMAND PROVINCE, Afghanistan, May 20 - This has been heroin's great heartland, where the narcotic came to life as an opium resin taken from fragile buds of red and white poppies. Last year, 75 per cent of the world's opium crop was grown in Afghanistan, with the biggest yield sprouting from here in the fertile plains of the country's south, sustained by the meander of the Helmand River.

"But something astonishing has become evident with this spring's harvest. Behind the narrow dikes of packed earth, the fields are empty of their most profitable plant. Poor farmers, scythes in hand, stoop among brown stems.

"Mile after mile, there is only a dry stubble of wheat to cut from the lumpy soil...

"But American narcotics officials who visited the country confirmed earlier United Nations reports that the Taliban had, in one growing season, managed a rare

triumph in the long and losing war on drugs..."

Before looking at what the press is saying since the WTC attacks, take three facts and lock them firmly in your brain. First, the opium-growing season in the region, according to the UN and other drug monitoring agencies, is a planting in October and November with a harvest in May and June. There have been no crops planted or harvested in Afghanistan or Pakistan since the summer of 2000. The Taliban and farmers have been sustaining themselves by selling stockpiles, with the prices fairly stable since the ban.

Second, Afghanistan, for the last four years, has been suffering under one of the worst droughts in its history. The last year has been the worst.

Third, Central Asian expert, Vladimir Davlatov, writing for "1 world media," from the Tajikistan capital of Dushnabe, interviewed a General [Rustam Nazarov] in command of Tajik border guards charged with intercepting heroin supplies smuggled out of Afghanistan. The August 31 story (Issue No. 67) quoted the General as saying, "The quality of Afghan heroin has recently deteriorate[d]."

The Propaganda

- "The West At War: Drugs Wipeout - We'll Bomb Poppy Fields - Blair Targets Terror Profits - Poppy fields which supply the Taliban's multi-billion pound drugs trade are to be a key target of military strikes in Afghanistan" read the headline of a September 30, 2000 story in the British paper, *The Sunday Mirror*. The story said:

"A senior Downing street aide said: 'We have reliable information that the Taliban are planning to use money from drugs to finance military action, and that bin Laden has ordered farmers to step up production...' How can they step up production? It takes six months to grow a crop and they have to plant one first. The planting doesn't start until November. Meantime we're bombing the region to smithereens. Is this a new form of plowing the soil?

"There is an estimated 3,000 tonnes of opium stockpiled inside Afghanistan ..." OK, what have they been selling for the last year, wheat? Mushrooms?

- "Flood of Cheap Afghan Heroin," blazed the headline of a story in the *Times of London* dated September 25, 2001. The lead sentences of that story read:

"AFGHAN farmers are ready to swamp world markets with heroin amid signs that the Taleban has dropped its ban on opium growing.

"The ban was imposed by Mullah Muhammad Omar last year, leaving many farmers ruined. But the sudden halving of the price of raw opium to \$250 a kg suggests the decree has been reversed." So whose heroin is flooding the markets?

- The *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, along with every network, have all reported that the Taliban's response to U.S. attacks will be to increase heroin production. Strange for a country that is now militarily sealed off and has no remaining operable airfields and whose land borders are now sealed by the U.S. military. That gives a whole new meaning to the term "Thunder Road."

- On September 30 *The Chicago Tribune* published a story entitled "Panicked Opium Traders Unload Huge Stocks. Implying that it was the Taliban doing so, the story opened with the lead:

"ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - Just as the Dow Jones industrial average fell precipitously in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the U.S., so did the main economic marker in the ramshackle street bazaars of Pakistan's North West Frontier province.

"Traders from Peshawar reported that the price of opium had plunged from \$700 a kilo to \$90 since September 11..."

There is no mention in the story of the fact that Pakistan itself grows the opium poppy or that the Pakistani government of Musharraf Pervez - our erstwhile ally - has been dependent upon drug money to sustain itself for at least ten years. How come the story doesn't look to the Pakistani issue?

- The *Ananova* press agency reported on September 29th, "...A Downing Street spokesman says there is evidence of a sudden movement of opium out of neighboring Pakistan where it was being stockpiled."á Now let me get this straight. The stockpiles are in Pakistan so we're going to bomb Afghanistan for it. That makes real good sense!

- In this most outrageous propaganda of all, the Indian news service *PTI* in New Delhi, published a story on October 4, headlined, "Laden Planned to Wreak Havoc in U.S. Through Super Heroin." It's lead paragraph reads:

"The most wanted terrorist Osama bin Laden had planned to develop a 'super heroin' drug and export the same to United States and West Europe to wreak havoc there much before the deadly September 11 attacks. 'The terror network headed by Osama bin Laden has tried to develop a high-strength form of heroin that it planned to export to United States and Western Europe,' a major American daily said today quoting intelligence reports."

This is the most patent b.s. I have ever read. I specialized in heroin at LAPD. I was also trained by the DEA in 1976. There is no such thing as super heroin. Heroin is a chemical, diacetyl morphine. Its purest form is 100%. It is usually "cut" at least four times - each time by 50% - to 6.25% purity or less before it is sold on the streets. There is no way to make it stronger unless you just cut it less, which automatically cuts the profits to street vendors. And it is the middlemen and retailers who do the cutting, not the manufacturer. It is easier to smuggle one kilo of pure heroin from Afghanistan to Uzbekistan or Pakistan or Turkey than it is to smuggle eight kilos at 6.25%. It would take eight times as many airplanes and trucks.

Each time a middleman cuts the heroin he has twice as much to sell.

This lie of a story implies that Osama bin Laden controls street-level drug dealing in the United States from the black ghettos of New York and L.A to the white suburbs of San Francisco and Chicago. That's the only way it is possible to get a higher-strength heroin on the streets of America.

And what about the fact that the U.S. receives - according to the DEA and the Department of Justice - more than 60 per cent of its heroin from Colombia. Does bin

Laden control Colombia too?

"Oh Yeah, We Forgot To Tell You"

Only belatedly have major outlets like the *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 2), *The Associated Press* (Oct. 5), and the *Washington Post* (Oct. 5) begun to acknowledge, in stories placed well back in the paper, and with much less emphasis, that the Northern Alliance - our allies against the Taliban - are now in real control of the heroin trade. Smuggling routes have shifted from south through Pakistan northward through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. They acknowledge the obvious - that the Taliban is no longer the primary supplier of heroin. How could they be?

The Real Story

In March 2001 *FTW* reported from Moscow that Uzbekistan was "awash" in a sea of poppies. Since September 11 we have seen Uzbekistan not surprisingly become the hub for all U.S. military operations going into Afghanistan. It was, in fact, the very first place that U.S. military and "special operations" forces deployed - within days of the attacks. Unmentioned in press stories is the fact that firms like Southern Air, Evergreen and other CIA proprietary or contract operations have been establishing a presence in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent for more than a year. And Tashkent is a surprisingly modern city. It even has an Intercontinental Hotel. This is undoubtedly due in part to increased oil exploration, but it hauntingly parallels our experience from another era - Vietnam.

Now, as we are hearing the first reports that the Uzbeki government, fighting its own battle against a Muslim insurgency, will permit offensive operations from its military bases, *FTW* has had two reports that CIA operative Richard Secord has recently traveled to Tashkent. Secord's documented history of involvement in heroin smuggling, from Vietnam, Laos and Thailand in the 1960's and his criminal involvement in illegal operations, including drug smuggling during the Iran-Contra years, tells us exactly what is happening. These same intelligence sources have also reported that many other CIA veterans of Iran-Contra and Vietnam - despite their age - are converging on Tashkent like bees to a field of flowers - poppy flowers.

In the 1960's and 70's, as the Vietnam War raged, the CIA fostered and maintained a series of covert wars in Laos and Cambodia. They did this by funding their operations with heroin, refined from opium grown by indigenous tribesmen including the Hmong in Laos. The Hmong, in turn became surrogate U.S. armies and the money from the trade supported the CIA and its allies as the region became totally unstable. In the years since, the only difference is that drug money has become a \$500-600 billion a year cash flow that is now an essential part of the world banking and financial system because it provides the liquid cash necessary to make the "minimum monthly payments" on huge stock and derivative and investment bubbles in the U.S. and Britain. These bubbles were already bursting in the weeks prior to the September 11 attacks.

Now, as the CIA moves to control the drug trade in the region you can be sure of several things. First, when the world sees an explosion of heroin from the region it won't be the Taliban's doing. Second, the cash flows from the smuggling will now be directed through U.S. banks and stocks. That is what the CIA does. Third, those cash flows - as direct air operations from Tashkent to the U.S. become commonplace - will be taken away from Russia, the Balkans, Turkey and Eastern

Europe. Fourth, the result of that will be de-stabilization of the entire region. Fifth, destabilization in the region will Balkanize Russia. Sixth, the increasing U.S. military and economic presence will consolidate U.S. control over the vast oil and gas reserves in the region. A revived Unocal-Saudi pipeline project, which will begin construction soon after the U.S. establishes control, will take the oil and gas from Central Asia, through Afghanistan, and down to the Pakistani coast where it will then be sold to China and Japan. The profits from those sales will come back into Wall Street. This will be a further drain on Russian influence in the region and greatly increase global instability.

Throughout the 1990s the United States - under an exclusive arrangement coordinated by the Harvard Endowment, Goldman Sachs and the U.S Treasury - looted some \$300 billion from Russia. During the period from 1989-2001 the population of that country shrank from 165 to 145 million people. As infrastructure collapsed, as services disappeared, as unemployment skyrocketed, as the Ruble collapsed, the life expectancy for a Russian male dropped from 68 to 48 years.

Make no mistake. Russia is the target here just as much as is the propping up of a feeble U.S. economy with drug money. And remember that Russia still has most of its nuclear arsenal intact.
