



ANALYZING THE AFGHAN-PAKISTAN WAR

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Working Draft: July 28 2008

Afghanistan and Measure of Effectiveness

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Introduction

It is important to preface any attempt to establish analytic criteria, and measures of effectiveness, for a conflict like the Afghan War with some important caveats:

- Broken states where counterinsurgency must be accompanied by armed nation building. There is a natural desire to find bottom line metrics and judgments, but the task is to manage complexity and not to oversimplify.
- There are broad lessons and criteria that can be applied to such wars, but history shows that (a) each such struggle since World War II has had very important differences and is case specific, (b) the dynamics of conflict are often highly local and regional, and (c) conditions vary sharply over time and analytic models and metrics must adjust. To paraphrase Tip O'Neill, all counterinsurgencies are local.
- A war like the Afghan conflict is a particularly good warning that the real world AOR in such conflicts is never just the country where a conflict takes place, but must include regional and other outside actors. The Afghan War is actually an Afghan-Pakistan War, with a significant Pashtun focus, as well as one where transnational movements like Al Qaeda play a far more serious and direct role than in Iraq. Any metrics or analysis which focus narrowly on formal command structures, or national boundaries, are inherently wrong.
- It is far easier to quantify what is easily measured than to quantify what is relevant. It is easier to estimate killed than wounded, and combat casualties than extortions, kidnappings, disappearances, and displacements. It is easy to generate GNP figures, using standard methods, but far harder to ensure they have any accuracy or relevance. One can always generate rough data on per capita income, but not meaningful data on income distribution. Numbers trained and equipped are easy to generate relative to numbers retained. Total expenditures and obligated funds can be estimated, but actual expenditures and related measures of effectiveness can be difficult to impossible.
- When numbers are applied to reality, they are always uncertain adjectives – not scientific quantification. This is especially true in conflicts like Afghanistan where accurate data collection is often difficult to impossible. Metrics often imply a false precision, particularly since they are rarely shown as full ranges or rounded to reflect uncertainty. The problem is made worse by the fact that many users do not really understand probabilities, statistics, percentages, or the overall process of quantification half as well as they understand words. In general, numbers that are unsupported by narrative are a remarkably poor method of communication.
- Various elements of the US government – civil and military – often generate metrics and analytic models without adequate efforts to ensure comparability. Net assessment and fusion are still the exception and not the rule. The end result in war after war has been that different value systems are applied to some degree to US, allied, host country, and threat forces; and kinetic measures of tactical progress have more emphasis than the equally important data on ideology, politics and governance, economics, and the perceptions of the population. Red-blue measures of warfighting (incident counts, combat casualties, etc.) are the natural default setting for metrics and analysis. This has been partially corrected in Afghanistan and Iraq, but only partially.
- Different users have very different needs. Tactical users need data for warfighting. Local and regional commanders and civilians (PRTs) need civil-military data to deal with the combined challenges of warfighting, overall security, governance, economics, and political alignments. The US has not created an effective national command in Afghanistan similar to the country team effort in Iraq, and relies heavily on NATO/ISAF, but experience shows that such wars are best planned, managed and analyzed at the country level. Various elements of National Command Authority are key users that must integrate reporting into both national policy and the overall needs of global policy making, but easily become involved in micromanaging. Sufficient credible

measures need to be provided to Congress, the media, and outside analyst to provide transparency, create trust, and create sustained domestic political support.

- A constant battle must be fought to find the right balance of trade-offs between protecting sources, methods, and truly sensitive data; and compartmentation, overclassified, proprietary used of data, and transmittal of weakly defined or “black box” information. The intelligence community perpetually errors on the side of overclassification. Policy and military users error on the side of politicizing data.
- In general, US collectors and analysts tend to err by analyzing such conflicts from the viewpoint of US warfighting goals, policy goals, and values. In the case of Afghanistan, military reporting often focuses on tactical victories and short term gains when the Taliban and threat may be focusing on expanding political and economic influence, destroying governance and aid activity, and fighting a war of attrition where NATO/ISAF/US tactical gains may eventually prove to be irrelevant. There also is a natural tendency to report on the “short war” of immediate interest to policymakers and military commanders than to deal with the complexities and uncertainties of the “long war” that is actually being fought.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these caveats in terms of individual collection/reporting and analysis. It is unfair to imply that a great of useful “fusion” and net assessment-like analysis does not take place. Equally important, no one can claim to have had fully access to all of the data and analysis involved, particularly an analyst outside the United State government and without access to sensitive command and intelligence data. Nevertheless, even an unclassified survey of some of the indicators and metrics that the US, UN, and NGOs provides a warning as to just how challenging effective analysis really is. This survey is entitled “The Afghan-Pakistan War: A Status Report,” and is available on the CSIS web site at:

http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080703_afghan_status.pdf .

A matching analysis of indicators for the Iraq War, entitled “The Iraq War: Key Trends and Developments,” is available on the CSIS web site at:

http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/080709_iraq_status_trend.pdf .

At the same time, no one can visit either Afghanistan and Iraq -- or be briefed in depth on Pakistan, Al Qa’ida, and transnational terrorism -- without becoming aware that there is still a long, long way to go. The US continues to repeat mistakes it made in Vietnam – or for that matter in the Philippine campaign against Emilio Aguinaldo.

Disseminating the Matrix: Fusion and Net Assessment

The context and nature of analysis is as important as any selection of metrics. If there is any single lessons from past exercises in counterinsurgency and armed nation building, it is that the quality of analysis is extraordinarily dependent on examining as many variables as possible, having access to as much data as possible, explicitly examining uncertainty, and constantly revalidating past models, analyses, and conclusions. This means keeping classification to an absolute minimum, automatic dissemination to all possible users, and avoiding compartmentation or stovepiping of data and analysis.

It has been equally clear from every such war since Korea and Vietnam that “fusion” needs to extend beyond the intelligence community. The failure to provide a net assessment of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in comparison of various elements of ARVN forces – intelligence was effectively excluded because the ARVN was the

province of the military training effort – was a key problem. Today, net assessment is clearly needed on how ANA and ANP force development compares with the evolving capability of Taliban, other Islamist, and Al Qa'ida forces – just as similar net assessments are needed in Iraq.

Net assessment -- and fusion of intelligence, plans, operations, and analysis of policy issues -- is needed at every major level of analysis and operations. This includes each national command area in Afghanistan (including US forces in the East), and should involve detailed net assessment of how well NATO/ISAF/ANA forces are actually doing relative to the threat. The same is true in the Afghan-Pakistan border area, and in looking at Frontier Corps/Pakistani Army and threat forces and activity in FATA, Baluchistan, and other areas in Pakistan. Such net assessment should examine how each force is evolving and reacting to the other, different perceptions, and comparisons of goals and intentions.

Intelligence and operational analysis cannot focus on the threat and military sides alone. There are good reasons why the operational plans of the US military also examine governance and development, as well as ideology and political trends, in both Afghanistan and Iraq. "Win" has consistently proved largely irrelevant unless it can be tied to "hold," and "build."

The role of Afghan and Pakistani politics and governance must be included in the analysis. The development of the ANP and MOI – and to some extent the ANA and MOD – must be analyzed in terms of broader progress in the rule of law, including court activity, detentions, and due process. The presence of active government activity or "governance" must be tied to assessments that go beyond "win" to real world assessments of "hold" and "build." Economic and aid activity must be appraised as another key part of war fighting activity, not simply in terms of economic development.

There also seems to be a need to ensure that the full range of collection, analyses and reports are not only made broadly available but actually accessed and used. Current intelligence nets provide a wide range of information, but finding that data can sometimes be difficult. Analysts also indicate that more effort is needed to ensure that all relevant data and reports are actually accessed. They suggest surveying user activity and downloads, spot checking analysis to ensure it is using a wide range of sources, and forcing analysts to regularly revalidate models and reporting – rather than recycle past work.

Analyzing Security Developments and War Fighting

The standard measures of war fighting – tactical outcomes, incident counts, estimated casualties, attack patterns and trends, are all useful metrics. For example, incident counts and maps quickly reveal broad patterns in combat and threat activity or "flares." This is particularly true when seasonal or monthly trends are shown, as well as annual averages. NATO/ISAF reports that the number of attacks in the peak combat month increased from around 400 in 2005, to more than 800 in 2007, and to around 1,000 in 2007. Counting attacks by type can also be revealing as to both trends in violence and shifts in the pattern of violence. NATO/ISAF reports that roadside bombing attacks increased from 22 in 2002, to 80 in 2003, 334 in 2004, 844 in 2005, 1,931 in 2006, and 2,615 in 2007.

Much, however, depends on the level of resolution, detail, and proper mapping to show the concentration of activity and shifts in patterns of location. Broad statistical reporting and analysis at the national or even provincial level can disguise key patterns by district, and key terrain/supply patterns.

Work already done in Afghanistan has shown, for example, that nation-wide incident counts, and even provincial counts of attacks like suicide attacks or road side bombs, can disguise the fact that virtually all violence took place in a limited number of Pashtun-populated districts. In 2007, some 70% of all attacks took place in only 40 of Afghanistan's 364 districts – a little over 10% of the total. In the first five months of 2008, 76% of the attacks took place in the same 40 districts – with some shift to Farah and Nimruz provinces.

It is clear, however, that violence and incidents alone can be a poor or misleading measure of threat capabilities and intentions. The Taliban, Haqqani, Heymatyar, Al Qa'ida, etc do not need to win clashes with NATO/ISAF/US/ANA forces if they can effectively occupy areas in political and economic terms; deny or restrict NATO/ISAF/US/ANA activity except during actual operations; expand support areas; and/or establish secure lines of communication and infiltration. The same is true of what goes on in Pakistan. The Afghan-Pakistan War is essentially a war of attrition for the control of people, space, and money. Tactical and kinetic activity is a means to an end.

Similarly, far too much emphasis is placed on rough casualty estimates in terms of killed, and far too little on wounded, intimidated, extorted, displaced, kidnapped, and disappeared. The attitudes and role of the Afghan people, and Pakistanis in border areas, is not going to be dominated by kills unless the war grows far more violent than it has been to date. It will be driven by the overall patterns of violence.

Analyzing the Threat Developments and Perceptions, and Local/Afghan Perceptions of the Threat

One key issue is how do given threat elements and movements perceive the course of the fighting, the divisions within them, and the extent to which they do or do not have a working consensus and effective hierarchical leadership. Both intelligence and operations in Afghanistan have made it clear that treating such groups as coherent structures disguises key fault lines, leadership issues, organizational problems, and fault lines that can be exploited.

The divisions inside the Taliban, and its growing east-south splits, and the role of elements of the Haqqani, Heymatyar, Al Qa'ida groups need to be analyzed in detail, and such analysis must be localized enough to reflect differences by area and level of combat. Similarly, mapping and analysis of the interfaces between such groups and tribes and local authorities in given areas in Afghanistan, the FATA area in Pakistan, and Baluchi areas in Pakistan provides insights into the base of popular support or disaffection.

Intercepts and open source statements can be key indicators, as can activity analysis by leaders, cadres, etc. It is important, however, to avoid cherry picking leadership statements to try to dramatize NATO/ISAF/US/ANA successes and progress or new shifts in the threat. Moreover, some analysis has tended to underestimate the level of religious and ideological support, and assume "extremist" movements are always seen as

extreme in the broad sense. Ironically, analysis was slow to detect the factors that alienated Al Qa'ida in Iraq from the Sunni population, but has sometimes assumed that attitudes towards the Taliban are broadly negative when public opinion polls indicate that it may sometimes have substantial local popular support.

Public opinion polling has obvious limits, but can still be a powerful tool. Work by the 82nd Airborne and 101st Airborne have shown that it is critical to survey how local populations see the fighting and the threat with enough tactical resolution to both support operations and avoid smoothing over key differences.

As has also been supported by independent polls in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, this should include careful analysis of attitudes towards NATO/ISAF/US/ANA forces and operations. For example, friendly military activity that causes civilian casualties and collateral damage, or activities like drug eradication, can alienate part or large portions of the local population. Abandonment (“win” without “hold”) can have the same impact, as can raids, checkpoints, detentions, etc. So can a lack of aid; ineffective host country governance; and corruption. We are only the “good guys” to the extent we are perceived as such by given local populations. Surveys have repeatedly shown that such perceptions can be mixed at best.

It is also important to note that the US experience in Iraq has shown that similar analysis and metrics are needed of the range of different counterterrorism and counterinsurgency activities and particularly of the impact of detentions. One clear lesson from Iraq, and other exercises in large-scale counterterrorism operations, is the need for both the US and the host country to quickly sort out who should and should not be detained, perform triage of detainees to separate out hard core cases from those who can be educated and released, reassure families and make it clear that extreme measures are not being applied, and organize programs for education and release back into civil society. The classic problem of Lenin's brother applies as much to Afghanistan and Iraq as it did to Czarist Russia.

Political, Ethnic, Sectarian, and Tribal Factors

Analysis tends to focus on two aspects of the conflict: central government activity and threat activity. There seems to be little near to mid-term prospect, however, that Afghanistan will not remain divided along political, ethnic, and sectarian lines; with complex tribal divisions – particularly in Pashtun area, or that Pakistan will not face serious ethnic and tribal problems in the Baluchi and FATA areas.

Work already underway has shown that detailed analysis and mapping is needed sectarian, ethnic, tribal and mixed areas, and of their impact on the insurgency and nation building activity. In many cases, this requires detailed quantification of levels of incidents, violence, and displacements caused by both the insurgency and internal tensions.

Detail mapping and analysis is also needed the impact of ties to neighboring states and outside non-state actors. For example, Iran will continue to play a role in supporting Shi'ite groups (19% of the population), just as Pakistan will play its own updated version of the great game with Pashtun elements (42%). The north will remain heavily influenced by its ethnicities: Tajik 27%, Hazara 9%, Uzbek 9%, Aimak 4%, Turkmen 3%.

ANA, MoD, ANP, MoI

The development of effective host country forces is critical to success in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As in Iraq, however, reporting on ANA and ANP force plans and progress is often equally erratic or misleading, and series differences can emerge between working level plans and estimates and policy-level claims.

In-country time tables, for example, can show a readiness date for aspects of ANA capability of 2013, when more political data can estimate the same progress will occur in 2009. Far too many data focus on the numbers of men trained and equipped and training activity. Similarly, authorized manpower is often reported because data on actual manning is not available.

Other statistics exaggerate progress by lumping together data on units truly capable of independent operations, units dependent on US and allied support, and units dependent on embedded advisors, US and allied “partner units, and/or “enablers like US aircraft, artillery, command and control, and IS&R assets.”

In short, more critical and more objective analysis is needed of host country forces by element and ministry. Afghanistan and Pakistan are different enough so that different measures are needed for each country, but some key measures for Afghanistan are:

- What have given combat and paramilitary units actually done in operations and combat; what is the operational history of the units in the order of battle.
- What have given police elements actually done in terms of activity levels, and are they located and operating with support in the form of a functioning court and jail system, and credible government presence?
- What is the overall force development concept and how effective is the transition from formal training and unit formation to creating unit effectiveness? What are the measures and metrics used for the ANA and ANP by NATO/ISAF and are they adequate? How solid are innovative concepts like taking whole police districts offline, and how is effectiveness being measured?
- Are credible data available on actual manning, with breakouts of officers, NCOs, manpower trained and equipped, and numbers present for duty.
- Are matching data available on embedded trainers and partner units – which remain badly understaffed for the ANA and present critical shortfalls for the ANP. One of the few “iron laws” of force development is that training output is virtually meaningless unless (a) the output can be tracked to given units and retention can be measured, and (b) the output either goes to mature and effective host country units or is supported by embedded trainers and partner units for newly forming units.
- Are pay and benefits adequate? Are they actually provided? What level of payoffs and favoritism affects recruiting, retention, training assignments, and promotion?
- Are facilities and services adequate?
- What are the actual flows of equipment, actual holdings, and operational availability data?

In many cases, Ministries are also major problems, and here one key point needs to be made about some forms of US analysis. Promised reform is not actual reform. The ability to formulate budgets and spend money is not a measure of merit unless than spending is effective, properly allocated, and relatively honest.

It is also a reality that trainers and training commands have long failed to provide objective data. The problem is not simply vetting host country data, it is ensuring that data on host country forces do not become politicized or spun in favorable directions.

Allied Forces

There are obvious political sensitivities in analyzing and criticizing the role of allied forces, aid efforts, and governments – as much in the case of Pakistan as allies in Afghanistan. The same is true of NATO/ISAF activities. This does not mean that this should not be done. The US failure to properly analyze allied activity in Iraq led to serious problems in addressing growing security issues in the south. The existence of fragmented national mixes of security and aid efforts in Afghanistan -- coupled to overt or undeclared national caveats on the use of forces and very different scales of aid and security efforts – makes this analysis a critical part of any net assessment.

It is equally important that such assessment should not be shaped by political or diplomatic sensitivities, and that major problems and failures should be identified. This often may have to be done publicly. Levering allied actions cannot always be done through diplomacy.

Dealing with the Problem of Governance

The lack of effective governance is critical problem in the Baluchi and FATA areas and is a potentially crippling problem in Afghanistan. There is a natural tendency to focus on how the central government operates in Kabul: The “Kabulstan syndrome.” Even the best elections do not create effective governance or make governments legitimate. In practice, governance is local and regional, and the perceived legitimacy of governments is not determined by national or other elections, but rather by where the government has a meaningful presence and provides basic services. “Win, hold, and build” can only take place where government is present, active, and perceived as carrying out activities and providing key services.

As the US seems to have learned in Eastern Afghanistan, governance needs to be realistically mapped and analyzed in terms of actual presence, key services provided, level of security, and existence of a rule of law. Any kind of “victory” requires local governance, and neither political progress nor the success of governance can be effectively assessed on the basis of the actions of a weak, corrupt, and incompetent central government.

Mapping and quantifying the level of government presence and activity, and popular perceptions of the government and quality of its services, is a key measure of “hold” and “build.” Key activity includes basic government services, education, police, rule of law, and aid. In Afghanistan, both government activities of any kind and government services can be patchy or uncertain in much of the country outside Kabul, provincial capitals, or the site of NATO/ISAF/US forces and PRT teams. The presence of governance in combat and high-risk areas is, however, critical to both providing security and winning/maintaining power support.

Public opinion polls also show that corruption and extortion remain critical problems, and that polling and on-the-scene assessments are needed to determine the quality of governance and its integrity, not merely whether there is a government presence and resources are being allocated to it. Similarly, narrative analysis is needed of local political factors and their impact on war fighting and development, and analysis needs to look beyond the Taliban and pay more attention to ethnic, sectarian, and tribal impacts on warfighting and stability.

Analyzing Economic and Demographic Factors

Economic and demographic problems are critical factors in Afghanistan, and the Baluchi and FATA areas in Pakistan. Much of the existing reporting has little relevance or credibility, and the unclassified data and reporting on the Afghan economy repeat critical mistakes made in Iraq and Pakistan.

Macroeconomic statistics do not measure the economic realities in combat or high-risk areas. Some figures like GNP -- measured either in market or purchasing power parity terms -- are uncertain at the best of times, and become grossly distorted by aid impacts and wartime spending. Data like per capita income can be meaningless if the vast majority of the per capita don't get the income.

Broad data on unemployment are no substitute for data on employment of young men in high risk and combat areas, and the very term employment may have limited value in nations where chronic underemployment is more common than unemployment. Data on new companies formed is meaningless when most companies are little more than paper shells. Rise in investment -- as a percentage of absolute number -- has little value if it is not clear where investment is taking place. Investment in reconstruction and development is meaningless without an assessment of the impact of such investment.

Meaningful analysis of war fighting issues, and economic forces that aid or reduce stability, require detailed analysis of problems and progress by economic sector. Progress in providing key services, economic developments in manufacturing and services industries than provide urban employment, and agricultural development are particularly critical. This requires a focus on the economics of combat and high-risk areas in Afghanistan, and the FATA and key Baluchi areas in Pakistan.

Breakouts that combine a picture of security, governance, and economic status in combat and high-risk areas are critical to defining the environment of critical interest to war fighting and policy. Comparisons of Afghan and Pakistani government economic activity, outside activity, and Taliban/Haqqani/Hekmatyar/Al Qa'ida economics and aid activity are critical to understanding the motivation of young men.

Too little attention also seems to be paid to demographics. For example, the CIA estimated Afghanistan's population as being 14.4 million people in 1979 -- at the time of the Soviet invasion. The latest World Factbook estimate is 32.7 million people, of which nearly 45% are 14 years of age or younger and with an annual growth rate of 2.6%. The lack of capital, job skills, and education is obvious, as is the fact that consumption is now vastly higher and the density of people relative arable land is much higher. Some studies talk blithely, however, about rapid recovery to a past status of agricultural exporter with no supporting analysis of the impact of nearly 30 years of population growth.

Economic Aid

Aid can be a critical aspect of military operations, developing local stability and employment, and moving towards development. As is the case in Iraq, however, many of the metrics and much of the analysis of economic aid to Afghanistan or Pakistan are largely meaningless. They report on money allocated or obligated without an analysis of actual spending, how much was actually spent in Afghanistan, and how much of the money was actually spent on the project.

It is almost impossible to find any useful measures of the flow and impact of US war-related aid to Pakistan, and the US is just establishing an Afghan equivalent to the Special Inspector General for Iraqi reconstruction (SIGIR), and the operational and intelligence community do not seem to have given SIGIR reporting proper attention even in the case of Iraq. The analysis of how aid and host country money is actually spent, however, is critical to understanding the real world forces shaping an insurgency, and the “hold” and “build” processes.

Total aid funding (and the size of Afghan budgets) is largely irrelevant, as is an estimate of total aid and Afghan government spending. The issue is their impact and effectiveness. Many estimates (of uncertain credibility) estimate that 40-60% of all aid is not actually spent in country and on Afghans. Some estimates indicate that only 7-14% of all aid is spent on agriculture, which employs some 70% of the population. Few data explain the size and impact of aid on urban areas. Many public opinion surveys show spending on local roads, schools, clinics, and water is critical. In most cases, it is difficult to determine a valid requirement in any of these categories, whether it is being met, and how it is being met in combat and high-risk areas.

There also are far too many signs of an aid “culture” that acts as if the goal of long-term development could be reached without regard to the fact that the nation is at war, and as if local and regional measures to bring stability, and deal with short term economic needs, was somehow an interference with the true mission of aid.

Many descriptions of aid activity and aid impacts are unrelated to risk, war fighting, impact, and requirements, and fail to map the distribution of aid into combat and high risk areas. Reports often describe plans and not actual activity, and project starts rather than completions. Other data report on the number of schools, hospitals, roads built without describing the success of the effort, its impact, or whether it remains effective or operational. Percentages are used without reporting the statistical base, and without indicating the source of the data or its validity.

Equally important public opinion polling can data provide a critical picture of how aid is perceived, and whether it is seen as effective and as having a stabilizing effect. Most such polling data to date have shown little perception that aid activity is taking place or effective, and often deep resentment about the lack of aid. There is nothing wrong with “buying” hearts and minds. There is a great deal wrong with not getting value for money.

Cash Flows

“Follow the money” is a basic principle in both analyzing government efforts and in criminal justice. In Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, however, most fiscal data focus on

the size of the funds available, and on budget and aid plans and allocations. Limited effort seems to be made to determine where money actually goes and whom it actually benefits, and whether it meets valid requirements in ways that have a major impact on war fighting. Accounting efforts are limited, if conducted at all, and broad charges are made about waste and corruption with little substantiating detail and operational focus.

In the real world, actual outlays are critical to determining how much money has actually gone to given activities. They show whether given activities are effectively funded and when that funding began. They provide a picture of whether and when resources are adequate to support activity range from medical aid to police salaries.

There is a clear need to do more to trace actual spending patterns, flag key areas of accountability and non-accountability, and establish whether the money was actually spent in Afghanistan in useful ways. Many of the models developed by the office of the Special Inspector General for Iraqi Reconstruction (SIGIR), and used in its quarterly reports, provide a potential model for such analysis.

Drugs and Narcotics Eradication

The data on narcotics eradication and drug growth and exports are somewhat contradictory, but UN and other analysis, maps, and metrics indicate that eradication efforts have failed to prevent a steady growth in Opium/Heroin output and exports, have alienated some Afghans without winning their support, and have shifted growing pattern to the south where drugs have become a major source of income to the Taliban.

Better and more objective analysis is needed of the counter drug effort to date and the extent to which it has and had not effectively provided aid and comfort to the enemy.

This requires better analysis of popular attitudes towards drug growing and eradication, and the role of the Taliban, warlords, and criminal enterprises in exploiting the situation. As in the US, analysis needs to focus on how many key cadres in drug groups are captured or killed, not largely meaningless data like drug seizures, street value, and arrests that do not involve key cadres.

Analysis must also look beyond drug growing and eradication and tie the analysis of drugs to real world analysis of the options open to given farmers and the economic incentives that shape the drug trade. Analysis should make a clear distinction between poor farmers, farmers with clear alternatives, and the incentives affecting the links in the chain from local brokering of poppy groups up through king pins and distributors. At the same time, the analysis of the overall agricultural development in given areas should be shaped to show the extent to which viable alternatives do or do not exist to growing drugs, and aid may or may not be able to change the pattern of incentives.

Eradication also should not be analyzed on a national basis, but should be closely linked to whether it affects the Taliban and other threat groups. A distinction needs to be made between options for counterdrug activity in areas clearly under Taliban control or influence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and areas largely under Afghan government, US, and NATO/ISAF control. Options like eradication may have a very different impact in areas where growing and trafficking are already under the control of hostile forces, and

helps finance their operations, from exercising options in other parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan.