

United against Drugs: Divergent Counternarcotic Strategies of US Government Agencies in Afghanistan

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Abstract : This paper focuses on the counternarcotic strategies of US government agencies in Afghanistan from 2001-2014. Despite a heavy US presence in the country, Afghanistan currently accounts for 80% of opium production worldwide and remains a key contributor to the global drug market. This paper argues that the divergent counternarcotic strategies of various US government agencies on the ground in Afghanistan are a product of the organizational differences amongst those agencies and that those differences can challenge the implementation of counternarcotics policies in Afghanistan. To gain a more in-depth perspective, this paper analyzes the counternarcotic strategies of two US government agencies in Afghanistan; the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Utilizing the framework of the organizational behavior model of organizational theory, this paper will highlight the varying organizational interests, opinions, standard operating procedures, and routines of both of the government agencies. The paper concludes with implications on counternarcotics, as well as the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and provides recommendations for future research on foreign policy and counternarcotics.

Keywords : Afghanistan, drug policy, organizational theory, United States foreign policy

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