



When Wars Collide: The War on Drugs and the Global War on Terror[1]

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by [Steven L. Taylor, Ph.D.](#)

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Introduction

There is a well known tendency among American policymakers to declare metaphorical wars, perhaps the most well known of which was Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Additionally we have seen declaration of hostilities against such foes as cancer (President Richard Nixon), illiteracy (both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush), and (to note this is not just a U.S. phenomenon), Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva recently declared war on hunger (to list but a few).

If anything, such rhetorical declarations have the advantage of giving policy pronouncements an air of grave significance. Of course, while underscoring the gravity of an issue may help galvanize political action, the invocation of the war analogy also presupposes a chance at victory. Hence, the double-edged nature of this type of rhetoric: these types of wars are often foreordained to be lost, raising the wisdom of utilizing the formulation.

The United States currently finds itself in two such "wars"—the War on Drugs (WoD) declared by President Nixon[2] and the much more recent Global War on Terror (WoT) declared by President Bush. Indeed, both are far more actual wars than those mentioned in the first paragraph, although both do share the characteristic common to all of these battles: they are aimed at nouns rather than an easily identifiable enemy. However, unlike a war on cancer or illiteracy, bullets are fired in the wars on drugs and terror.

There is another connection to these two wars in that in some cases illegal drugs are being used to fund terrorist activities—a problem that is likely to grow over time. Indeed, in some cases these two wars have become almost merged, as in the South American state of Colombia. In others, like Afghanistan, the long-term linkages are difficult to ignore.

The purpose of this article is to examine the intersection of these two "wars" by looking at two cases which fall into both: Colombia and Afghanistan. The purpose of this comparison is to detail the degree to which lessons can be learned about the current state of both politics and policy vis-à-vis these two exceptionally important areas of U.S. foreign policy.

This study examines the difficulty of dealing with the terms “terrorism” in the first main section and then moves to case-specific discussions of Colombia and Afghanistan. From there the implications of the confluence of drugs and terrorism are discussed in broader terms. It is the position of this article that the case of Colombia has some instructive (or, at a minimum, cautionary) elements for those who may be planning long term policy in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Further, it is argued herein that there is often a disconnect between more formal definitions of terrorism and the political usages of the term that can lead to policy sloppiness. Finally, the question is posed as to the degree to which the war on drugs is actually counter-productive vis-à-vis the war on terror rather than necessarily being one in the same, as is the dominant view of U.S. policymakers.

A Multi-Level Game

Discussing terrorism is a difficult task, given the emotionally charged nature of the term. This problem is compounded several times over when one tries to deal with the term in a context which has academic, policy and political overtones (i.e., analytical, action-oriented, and rhetorical modes). Throw in the fact that these are not mutually exclusive categories (e.g., the academic can inform policy and politics and certainly there is a clear linkage between politics and policy) along with the fact that the general public responds with great emotion to the term, and one is tempted to toss the concept out the window and utilize different words.

However, given the importance of the politics of language in this case, tossing out the term is not an option. Indeed, to understand the basic thesis of this paper one has to deal directly with the fact that political implications of the word “terrorism” is at the heart of public policy and of the comparison of Colombia and Afghanistan.

An Academic Definition

I would accept Cooper's definition of the term as a useful starting point for a working academic definition of term. Cooper defined the term as follows: “[t]errorism is the intentional generation of massive fear by human beings for the purpose of securing or maintaining control over other human beings.”^[3] I would further add that terrorism is a tactic that is aimed primarily at non-combatants for the purpose, typically, of securing the concession of a government.

The tricky part then becomes defining who is a “terrorist” insofar as it is possible for terrorist tactics, as described above, to be employed by both regular and irregular armies, and by state actors and non-state actors. I would argue that a group is properly identified as terrorists when that group's primary tool is the type of activity described above. If the main way by which a groups seeks power is through bombing of civilians, kidnapping and murder, and other relatively small-scale attacks that are designed to affect change not through military conquest, but by generating insecurity and fear in the non-combatant population, then that group is a terrorist group.

The presupposition is that these groups engage in such terror tactics because they lack the ability to engage in direct warfare against their opponents. It is clear, for example, that a conventional military interchange between the Palestinians and the Israelis would lead to a decisive victory for Israel, hence the decision made by Arafat and the PLO to engage in a wholly asymmetric type of violent conflict. Similarly, Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda could not have militarily stormed New York City and downed the towers of the World Trade Center, yet the terrorist tactics of hijackings combined with suicide flights were quite effective.^[4]

An additional element to the definition is that it is not just that the violence perpetrated is aimed at civilians or hopes to generate fear, but that such attacks are the primary, if not sole, method of

operation in question. As Merari notes: “[i]f the definition of terrorism is equally applicable to nuclear war, conventional war and guerrilla, the term loses any useful meaning.”^[5]

The Politics of Terror

There is no denying the inherently inflammatory and profoundly negative connotation of the word terrorism. As such, the term has deep political implications and usages. There really is no specific “political” definition of terror, rather it tends to be in the eye of the rhetorician. To put it somewhat glibly (yet still accurately): terrorism is whatever a given government wishes to call it. So, when there is violence that a state (or whomever) does not like, it calls it “terrorism” but when that violence is considered to the benefit of the state or group, then it is not terrorism. This semantic fact is especially true in the post-9/11 world, in which it sometimes seems that all political violence is defined within the rhetoric of terrorism.

Not only is terming an opponent a “terrorist” a useful tool in terms of demonizing said opponent, it is also a useful turn of phrase when one is seeking funding. There is little doubt that now that the major focus of U.S. foreign and defense policies is the WoT, that funding is substantially linked to one’s place in that policy field. This is true in terms of defense budgets and in terms of foreign aid. For example: Iraq and Afghanistan both have become major recipients of U.S. aid dollars because of the Bush administration’s policies in the WoT.

As will be discussed further below, the U.S.-Colombian relationship in terms of aid and military assistance has changed because of the added factor of politically-defined “terrorism.” The redefinition, to some substantial degree, of the ongoing conflict in that country has led to an important shift in U.S. policy.^[6] Additionally, the interest in the DEA and SOUTHCOM in terming the Colombian insurgents as “terrorists” underscores this transformation in thinking. As such, it is not unfair to think of terrorism as the “new communism” insofar as best way to receive additional funding (whether in terms of foreign aid or in terms of a line-item in the budget) is to be associated with the war on terror.

Policy-Making and Terrorism

Beyond just the usage of the term to attract attention (and perhaps dollars) is the fact that the politicking itself is linked to actual political action, i.e., policy on terrorism. Certainly the way a given state or administration defines the term will affect its policy actions in this arena. For the purposes of this paper, for example, the manner in which the two cases fits into the same discussion has to do with policy definitions in the wars on terror drugs.

Such policies manifest as military action, domestic security, international aid, and a host of other governmental actions. Despite whatever issues of political rhetoric or whatever problems of definition one may wish to cite, there is no doubt that especially in the post-September 11th world that terror-related public policy is quite significant. Further, since it is clearly on the minds of U.S. policy-makers, there is no denying its global salience.

Two Cases: Colombia and Afghanistan

How then, do the cases of Colombian and Afghanistan fit into this discussion? In simple terms they are both subjects of U.S. foreign policy in both the WoD and the WoT. Further, a comparison of the cases is useful in illustrating the tension between academic and political definitions of terrorism, which in turn have important policy implications for both counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism policy formulation.

Fitting the Cases into the Discussion

The two cases came onto the radar screen of U.S. policy-makers for different reasons and their relationship to the two wars is different. The basic tie-ins of the cases are as follows.

In Colombia the relationship between drugs and terrorism started with the drugs. Indeed, the concept and presence of extensive political violence in Colombia substantially predates the current global concern with terrorism. It isn't hyperbole to state that political violence, normally on a national scale, has been a part of Colombian political history since its independence from Spain in the mid-19th Century. Illicit drugs become relevant to the story starting in the 1970s, but did not become central until the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of a direct connection between armed groups that have been labeled "terrorists" the maturation of that connection did not take place until well into the 1990s and not officially (in terms of State Department classification) until after 9/11.

In fact, it really isn't until post-9/11 that we find a rhetorical connection between narcotics trade and terrorism in the Colombian context. This connection is instructional both in terms of the aforementioned political and policy definitions of terrorism. The public pronouncements of both President Bush and also President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia underscore this reality.^[7]

More specifically: prior to the September 11, 2001 attacks, U.S. policy towards Colombia was one of separating the Colombian state's war with the guerrillas and their struggle with drug traffickers. It was standing policy that the considerable amount of U.S. aid going to Colombia could be spent on the drug war only, not in the guerrilla war.

This policy, and the post-9/11 shift, is well illustrated by statements by U.S. Ambassadors to Colombia in 1997 and 2002. In 1997, Ambassador Myles Frechette stated in a cable to Washington: "There will be no U.S. government assistance for fighting the guerrillas" while roughly five years later, Ambassador Anne Patterson told an audience in Colombia that "the U.S. strategy is to give the Colombian government the tools to combat terrorism and narcotrafficking, two struggles that have become one. To fight against narcotrafficking and terrorism, it is necessary to attack all links of the chain simultaneously."^[8] The post-9/11 language in Ambassador Patterson's statement is stark, and the policy implications are quite clear. The 2002 Supplemental Appropriations Act allowed for the usage of counter-narcotics funds to be used for counter-insurgency programs in Colombia. And it is certainly the case that the administration of Colombian President Alvaro Uribe (2002 to 2006) has used the rhetoric of terrorism far more post-9/11 than any Colombian administration in the past.

The chief concern of U.S. policy-makers in Afghanistan was, and remains, terrorism. Afghanistan had been in the control of a pro-terror regime (the Taliban), which had harbored al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, who used the country as a training and staging ground. It was the linkage of the Afghan government to al Qaeda and the events of September 11, 2001 that led to the U.S. invasion and to the current level of aid being poured into the country. While opium poppies have long been cultivated in Afghanistan, that cultivation was not a sufficient reason for U.S. intervention (although crop eradication in Afghanistan was a stated goal of U.S. policy). However, in the aftermath of the Taliban, and the desire by the U.S. government to see the Karzai administration's success, the issue of what to do about the burgeoning cultivation of opium poppies is becoming a key issue for U.S. policy-makers.

As such, for the purposes of "colliding" wars, it is the war on drug that has collided with the war on terror in the Afghan case and the war on terror that has collided with the war on drugs in the Colombian case.

[Table One](#) details a basic comparison between the two cases in terms of the war on drugs and three modes of addressing terrorism as noted above: the academic, the political and policy.

Table 1: Comparing Afghanistan and Colombia in the Two Wars

	War on Drugs	“Academic” Terrorism	“Political” Terrorism	Anti-Terror Policy
Afghanistan	*Produced roughly 87% of the world’s opium supply in 2004. [9]	*Major site of al Qaeda training and planning. *Ongoing anti-state/anti-U.S. terrorism from Taliban and al Qaeda remnants.	*Main purpose for U.S. invasion: al Qaeda presence in retaliation for 9/11 attacks. Presence of al Qaeda pre-9/11 did not result in invasion.	*Removal of Afghanistan as haven for terror groups the main purpose behind all U.S. policy in Afghanistan. *al Qaeda on the State Department list of Terrorist Organizations .
Colombia	*Accounted for 56% of coca cultivation and 67% of cocaine production in 2003. [10] *Has long been the managerial nexus of the drug trade in the Western Hemisphere. *Major Western Hemispheric producer of opium (along with Mexico).	*Groups such as the FARC and the AUC have used terrorist tactics such as bombs in civilian areas (the FARC specifically), kidnapping (both, although primarily as a revenue source) and forced displacement and massacres of civilians (both).	*Post-9/11 President Uribe of Colombia started heavily using word “terrorism” to describe violence in his country. *President Bush has been more willing to link Colombia aid to threat of terrorism. *SOUTHCOM links drugs and terror in the Western Hemisphere.	*U.S. policy shift on the linkage between guerrilla war and drug war. Pre-9/11 the two are seen as distinct, with funding restriction in place. Post-9/11 distinction no longer seen. *AUC, ELN, & FARC on the State Department list of Terrorist Organizations .

The Specifics of Colombia

As already noted, collective political violence is nothing new to Colombia, being a phenomenon that reaches back over a century and a half. However, the synergy between illicit narcotics and violence in that country is only a few decades old, only having fully manifested itself since the 1990s. [11] Indeed, while Marxist guerrillas have been fighting in Colombia since the early 1960s (some of which having origins in the civil wars of the 1950s), the connection between guerrillas and cocaine especially (also heroin) emerged in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the near disappearance of not only the argument that Marxism presented a viable alternative to Western-style capitalism, but also any source of outside aid. So, unlike similar groups in places like El Salvador, where guerrillas eventually fought the state to a standstill, which led to a negotiated settlement, Colombian guerrillas had a way to continue to fund their fight. Via either “taxing” the lands of drug lords, or by directly participating in drug trafficking, groups in Colombia have demonstrated how connection to a narco-economy can lead to that group’s self-perpetuation.

The Colombian situation presents three groups on the U.S. State Department’s list of terrorist organizations, [12] all of which are known to generate revenue from drug trafficking: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC). That a political economy of violence has emerged in Colombia is indisputable—what Nazhi Richani has called a “war system.” [13]

The FARC and ELN were originally Marxist guerrillas in the classic mode, seeking the overthrow of the Colombian state. Yet with the collapse of the, the guerrillas have turned to other sources of support: specifically the illicit narcotics trade, kidnapping, extortion and so forth. The guerrilla revenue stream is broken down by Alfredo Rangel Suarez as follows:

It is estimated that the income of the Colombian guerrillas may be as high as US\$600 million dollars a year, or over US\$1.5 million dollars a day. Out of this sum, nearly US\$360 million goes to the FARC, amounting to three times the earnings of the Banco de Colombia, one of the country's largest banking institutions; twice those of El Tiempo, publisher of the country's most important news daily; over half the income of Bavaria, a prominent financial group; and exceeding by US\$35 million dollars the sales of Celumovil, one of Colombia's largest cellular phone companies. Broken down by source of income, 48 percent of the FARC's revenues come from its involvement in drug trafficking, 36 percent from extortion, 8 percent from kidnapping, 6 percent from cattle theft, and the remainder from robbery of financial institutions and other sources. The ELN obtains 60 percent of its income through extortion, 28 percent from kidnapping, 6 percent from drug trafficking and 4 percent from cattle theft.[\[14\]](#)

Some estimates place FARC drug revenues alone to be as high as \$600 million per annum.[\[15\]](#)

The paramilitaries are a different type of organization than the leftist insurgents, as the "self-defense groups" ostensibly formed to counter-act guerrilla violence.[\[16\]](#) While not an inaccurate description, it is an incomplete one. While the concept of peasants and farmers arming to protect their property (both in legal and illegal militias) is a long-standing practice in Colombia, the 1980s saw the creation of more organized groups, many of which had ties to drug cartels.[\[17\]](#) In recent years the main organization in this category has been the AUC, and which has also been linked to the drug trade.[\[18\]](#)

The Colombian case gives us special pause for thought: do the activities of armed groups there foreshadow a model for jihadists who could conceivably create financially self-sustaining operations? It is certainly a model that worked for Peru's Shining Path for a time.[\[19\]](#)

The Specifics of Afghanistan

The cultivation of opium poppies in Afghanistan is a well-documented phenomenon.[\[20\]](#) Further, the obvious economic implications are clear. Less well-established is the exact interaction between these drugs and politics, at least in concrete terms. For example, establishing the Taliban's exact relationship to opium cultivation and the heroin trade are murky. Further, the long-term consequences of heroin-driven economies during an age of terrorism have not been fully explored.

However, it is clear that the Colombian case is highly suggestive of a model that could be exploited by groups seeking to fund political violence. Further, the underground nature of the illicit drug trade and that of terrorist groups is one that creates natural intersections. Certainly it is not a particularly difficult leap to presuppose that groups willing to engage in the suicide bombings of civilians would be willing to allow the heroin trade to fund their activities. So while some of the evidence of this connection is circumstantial in nature, the preponderance of the evidence is persuasive.

Looking Back: The Taliban, Opium and Terrorism

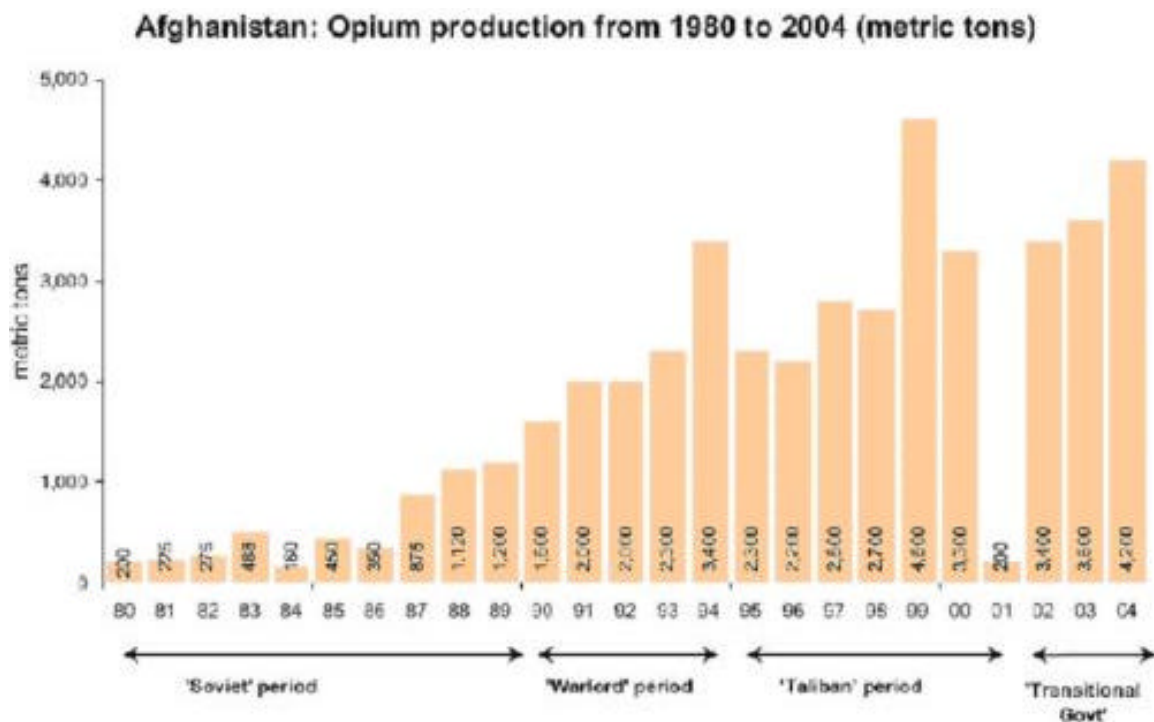
That the Taliban was enriched by the opium trade is clear, as they taxed both the cultivation of opium poppies (until they banned the practice in 2000) and the opium trade itself, which was never banned even once cultivation was declared illegal. Indeed, reports state the Taliban taxed

both the cultivation of opium poppies and the opium trade, at rates of ten percent and twenty percent respectively.[21]

Questions exist as to the role played by the July 2000 fatwa issued to declare cultivation of opium poppies to be an un-Islamic activity. One theory is that the Taliban had simply not gotten around to dealing with this issue until 2000. However, the lack of a similar ban on the opium trade raises questions as to whether they sought to manipulate the price of opium.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt the precipitous increase in the price of opium after the fatwa was issued would have resulted in tremendous increases in drug revenue by the Taliban. The first graphic (Figure 1) below shows the cut in opium production, the second (Figure 2) demonstrates a radical increase in price—both are from the UNODC's *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004*. [22]

Figure 1: Afghanistan—Opium Production from 1980-2004 (Metric Tons)

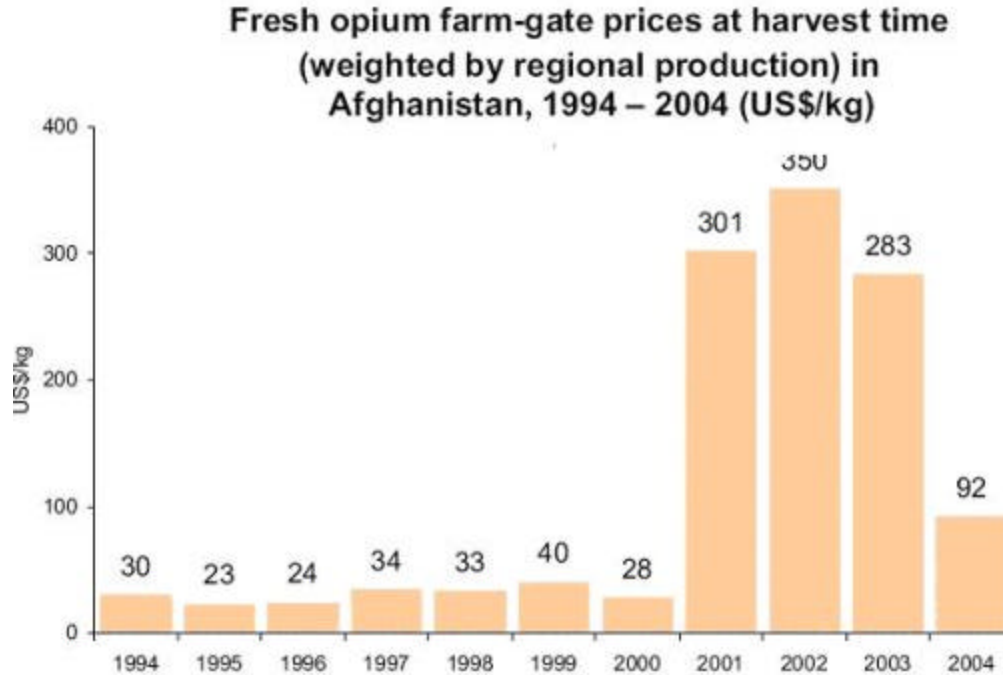


It is clear that the relationship between supply and price is quite strong. As such, governments willing to do so could very substantially affect the price of a commodity such as opium providing it could control production. Further, the market share of the crop by Afghanistan put the Taliban in the perfect position to do so, if, indeed, that was the goal of the Fatwa. The evidence suggests that the policy move was intended to affect price because the Fatwa did not make the sale of opium illegal and the government's taxation of that activity continued after the Fatwa's issuance.

Source: UNODC: *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004*, 4.

The degree to which this directly aided al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden is impossible to know. However, in terms of circumstantial evidence is hard to deny that at least indirect aid redounded to the group given that the Taliban was indeed receiving tax revenue from opium farming during the time they acted as hosts to al Qaeda.

Figure 2: Fresh Opium Farm-Gate Prices at Harvest Time



Source: UNODC: *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004*, 5.

Additionally, other terrorist groups aside from al Qaeda, including Chechen separatists and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan may also have used Afghan opium/Taliban connections as a method of funding.^[23] Suggestions that Kashmiri separatists may also be using opium to fuel their fight have also emerged.^[24]

Looking Forward: The Burgeoning Narco-Economy in Afghanistan

It is as we look forward that the parallels with Colombia become quite stark. Indeed, the conditions for narco-economies in Afghanistan are even better than in Colombia. The control of the central government over national territory is less in Afghanistan than in Colombia, the prevalence of poverty far higher and the pervasive presence of warlordism are all factors which all lead to the promotion of cultivation.

There can be no doubt that there is a substantial economic incentive for Afghans to grow poppies over other crops. As the *Financial Times* noted this is “an industry that employs 2.3 million Afghans and earned \$2.8 billion last year [2004], equivalent to about 60 per cent of Afghanistan's legal gross domestic product.”^[25] The story further notes that the crop “yielded about \$4,600 per hectare last year, according to United Nations estimates—more than 10 times the income from wheat.”^[26]

Adding to the economic incentives, and drawing yet another parallel with Colombian coca, opium poppies require less water than traditional licit crops—a fact that further encourages cultivation in the current drought conditions in Afghanistan.^[27]

Implications

The Dual Power of Markets and Poverty

Both Afghanistan and Colombia illustrate the underlying power of the market that counter-narcotics policies have to face. In both cases the farmer of either poppy or coca are often faced with a similar choice: cultivation of an illegal crop or starvation.

In the case of post-Taliban Afghanistan, this choice is especially stark. As noted above, the profits from illicit crops radically outweigh those of the licit ones. Such profits not only ensure survival, but lead to tangible benefits. For example: "In the last four years, said Abdul Rahman, 18, poppy provided his family with a motorbike, a television, an electric generator, a VCR and a CD player—and a new house to hold it all."^[28] It is estimated that in 2003 poppy farmers earned approximately \$1 billion dollars and traffickers \$1.3 billion.^[29] These are substantial numbers, when one considers that the country's estimated GDP for 2003 was only \$20 billion.^[30]

Similar economic conditions can be found in Latin America. For example, in 2002 peasants in Peru could sell coffee beans at \$1.5 per kilogram, but coca leaf was going for \$3.5 per kilogram.^[31] Indeed, this marks a price spike in Peru, that is not coincidentally correlated to increased crop eradication in Colombia.^[32] And, of course, the fact that coca paste has been reportedly used as currency (with local prices in grams of coca paste, not pesos) in the hinterlands of Colombia undercuts the adage that "money doesn't grow on trees."^[33]

This synergy of poverty and the laws of supply and demand create some of the greatest challenges for U.S. policymakers. On the one hand, stated U.S. policy is to drive the price of drugs up, so as to discourage users from buying. In fact, the ultimate goal is that the drugs would be made so expensive, that no one could afford to buy them. Of course, this creates what Professor Eva Bertram and her co-authors call "the profit paradox"—as the government seeks to drive the price of drugs upward in the hopes of stifling demand, the profitability of the production and sale of drugs increases.^[34] So even if governmental policy is successful in driving up price, it does not have the desired effect of dampening the drug trade. Instead, it encourages it.

As such, the cultivation of illicit crops used to produce illegal drugs may be unrivaled as a ready-made source of funding for terrorist activities.

The Policy Relationship between the Two Wars

This situation clearly affects the behavior of the poor in the source-countries of the raw materials of these drugs: as price goes up, so too does the incentive of the peasant to cultivate the crops needed by the drug trafficker. Further, such situation undermines U.S. development goals in places like Afghanistan, where without economic development the success of the President Hamid Karzai regime is questionable, which in turn puts U.S. anti-terror policies in the region in jeopardy.

The connection between terrorism and illicit drugs is not one that has been lost on the U.S. Government. To wit: the Office of National Drug Control Policy produced a series of commercials, which debuted during Super Bowl XXXVI in 2002^[35] wherein the argument is made that Americans should think twice about purchasing illegal narcotics, as the proceeds from those sales often fund the activity of terrorist organizations. Of course, a flaw in the ad campaign's logic is that a key reason why drugs help fund terrorism is because the war on drugs drives drug profits through the roof. This flaw underscores the degree to which one set of foreign policy objectives are being counteracted by another. And despite the fact that it is an unpopular thought, it underscores the need to evaluate U.S. anti-narcotics policies and the degree to which the actions of that government undermines its own policy goals.

There are several policy dangers here. First, there is now a clear incentive for bureaucrats and analysts to see every foreign policy and security problem as a terrorism problem. This induces the desire to pound square pegs into round holes so that funds and attention can be given to specific programs. It therefore can lead to misdiagnosis of policy problems, and lead to incorrect conclusions and actions. Second, as the government attempts to work in one policy area, it may be damaging goals in another. The daily fact that our policies radically drive up the price of illicit substances, thereby aiding those who sell them is indisputable.

The bureaucratic response in the U.S. policy-making establishment is clear.^[36] Just as anti-communism was the key to understanding U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War period, anti-terrorism has become the watch-phrase in the current era. If one wants attention and funding, the easiest way to get either is to have one's cause associated with the global war on terror.

It is no coincidence that in the 2001 National Drug Control Strategy^[37] (written prior to 9/11) the three references to "terror" were all aimed at domestic "street terror" yet in subsequent reports references are directed at the linkages between drugs and international terror. The FY2005 National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary for example, contains 51 references to international terrorism/terror.^[38]

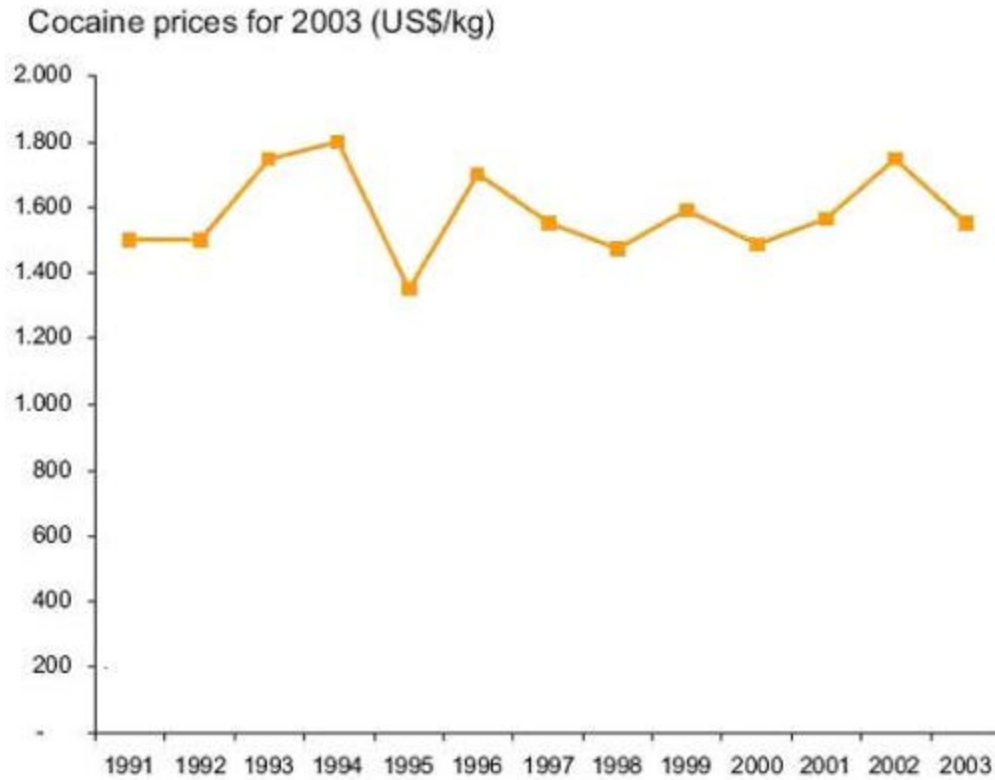
Given that resources are finite, one wonders as to the wisdom of the grand expenditures devoted to the WoD when not only does that mean that those resources are not necessarily contributing to the WoT, but that, in fact, that drug war logic leads to the radically inflated prices of substances such as heroin and cocaine, which, in turn help fund political violence. Rather than these two "wars" working in concert, the argument can be made that the War on Drugs actually hampers the War on Terror by making illicit drugs an amazingly profitable funding source. This is especially troubling when we note that the actual success of the WoD is questionable.

This cycle is clear in Colombia. There has been a substantial amount of money expended in crop eradication in Colombia, to measurable success in terms of hectares under cultivation. However, the degree to which price has been affected is negligible. For example, despite over a billion dollars spent on anti-drug activities in Colombia in recent years, which has led to a reduction in coca under cultivation, the actual price of cocaine has remained quite steady. In other words, the massive crop eradication policies of the past two Colombian administrations have had a minimal effect on the cocaine industry while simultaneously leading to greater escalation of the violence in that state.

The efficacy of interdiction dollars is an issue that is rarely discussed by U.S. policymakers, as they would prefer to focus on the question of hectares under cultivation. If one consults the Office of National Drug Control Policy's web site, one finds that from 1994 to 2003, the U.S. government spend an average of \$718 million per annum on international aid towards drug eradication and an average of \$1.8 billion per annum on interdiction.^[39] The goal, of course, was to decrease supply on U.S. streets and to further inflate the price, so as to discourage consumption. However, as the following graph (Figure 3) from the *Colombia Coca Survey for 2003*^[40] compiled by the United Nation's office on Drugs and Crime, the price of cocaine has been quite steady during that same period (and note: the dollars expended by the United States on international aid tripled from 1994 to 2003 and spending on interdiction almost doubled—with the 1999 to 2003 period being one of substantial outlays).

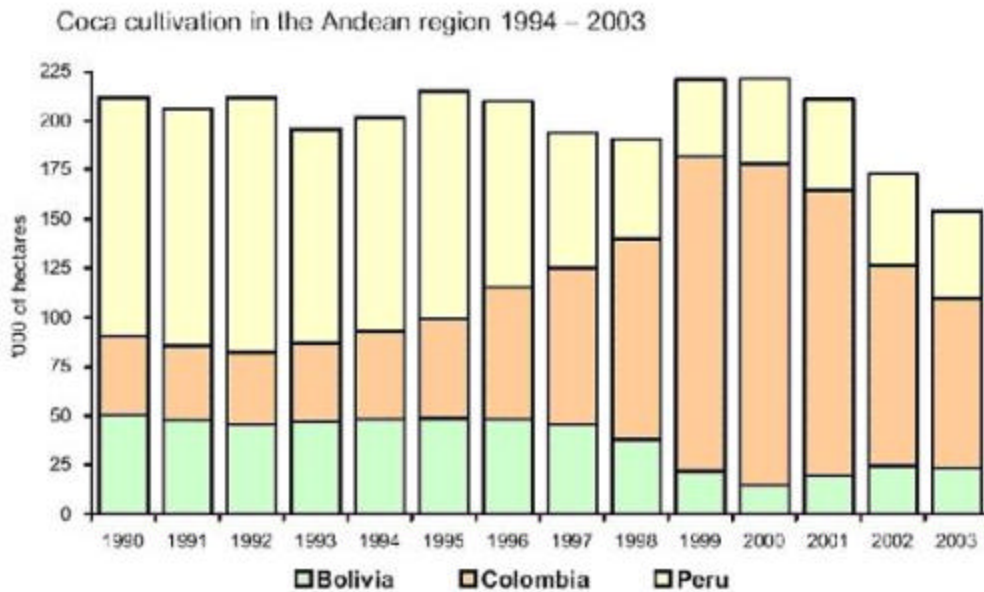
Further, if we consider that while there have been crop eradication successes in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia during this period, it is also the case that these changes in cultivation tend to only have small overall effects on the total coca crop, but rather demonstrate the Balloon Effect: when cultivation is reduced in one location, it tends to simply move to another locale—like what happens when one squeezes the air in a balloon, which just moves the air from one part of the balloon to another.

Figure 3: Cocaine Prices for 2003 (US\$/kg)



Source: UNODC's Colombia Coca Survey for 2003, 47.

Figure 4: Coca Cultivation in the Andean Region, 1994-2003



Source: UNODC's Colombia Coca Survey for 2003, 12.

Not only does the Colombian case provide a potential model for the propagators of violence to fund their activities, the failure of crop eradication to actually affect the supply and price of cocaine should provide an advisory to those who would pursue similar policies in Afghanistan.[41]

Ultimately the collision of these two “wars” may lead, on the one hand, to increased violence in Colombia because it has now been dubbed part of the WoT, while in Afghanistan, now part of the WoD, U.S. policy will likely make it easier for terrorists to fund their activities. In neither case is the intersection of these policies likely to further the ultimate goals of U.S. policy.

About the Author

Steven L. Taylor, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Troy University in Alabama. He is the contributing editor on Colombia to the Library of Congress's *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, and author of "Colombia: Democracy under Duress," in William J. Crotty, ed., *Democratic Development and Political Terrorism* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004).

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References

1. A version of this article was presented at the 2005 Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana (January 6-8, 2005).
2. Arguably, the “war on drugs” can be traced back to the Harrison Act of 1914, the first major drug-control legislation passed by the U.S. Congress. For a brief overview of U.S. drug policy and legislation, see Steven L. Taylor, “Drug Policy,” in David Schultz, ed., *The Encyclopedia Of Public Administration and Public Policy* (New York: Facts on File, 2003).
3. H. H. A. Cooper, “[Terrorism: The Problem of Definition Revisited](#),” *American Behavioral Scientist* 44 (February 2001), 883.
4. While some argue that the attack on the Pentagon was one on a military target, I would argue that the building was chosen for symbolic, not military, purposes, and hence fits better into the category of “terrorism” as defined herein.
5. Ariek Merari, “[Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency](#),” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1993), 217.
6. Also see Steven L. Taylor, "Colombia: Democracy under Duress," in William Crotty, ed., *Democratic Development And Political Terrorism: The Global Perspective* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004) for a fuller discussion of the Uribe administration and the political rhetoric of terrorism.
7. Taylor, *Op. Cit.*

8. Both quotations come from Adam Isacson, "[Washington's 'New War' in Colombia: The War on Drugs Meets the War on Terror](#)," *NACLA Report on the Americas* (March/April 2003), 36, 5:13.
9. See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004](#), 4.
10. See the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [2004 World Drug Report](#), 96.
11. For an overview of this merger see Rafeal Pardo, "[Colombia's Two-Front War](#)," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 4 (July/August 2000): 64-73, and Julia E. Sweig, "[What Kind of War for Colombia?](#)," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 5 (September/October 2002): 122.
12. See "[Fact Sheet, Foreign Terrorist Organizations](#)," U.S. Department of State, Office of Counterterrorism, Washington, DC, January 30, 2003.
13. Nazih Richani, "The Political Economy of Violence: The War-System in Colombia," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 39 (Summer 1997), 37-81.
14. Alfredo Rangel Suarez, "Parasites and predators: Guerrillas and the insurrection economy of Colombia," *Journal of International Affairs*, 35, no. 2 (Spring 2000), 585.
15. Jeremy McDermott, "[Colombian Rebels 'Stronger than Ever'](#)," *BBC*, May 28, 2001.
16. Fernando Cubides, "From Private to Public Violence: The Paramilitaries," in Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Penaranda, and Gonzalo Sanchez., eds., *Violence in Colombia 1990-2000: Waging War and Negotiating Peace* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2001).
17. Bruce M. Bagley, "[Colombia and the War on Drugs](#)," *Foreign Affairs* 67 (Fall 1988), 70-92.
18. Steven Dudley, "[Dead Man's Bluff](#)," *The Washington Post*, November 24, 2002, W10.
19. Bruce H. Kay, "[Violent Opportunities: The Rise and Fall of 'King Coca' and the Shining Path](#)," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* (Fall 1999), 97-127.
20. For example, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "[The Opium Economy in Afghanistan: An International Problem, Executive Summary](#)," January 31, 2003; and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [Afghanistan Opium Survey 2004](#). (Vienna: The United Nations, 2004).
21. These figures are employed by a variety of sources, including United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Opium Economy," which noted: "The opium trade was de-facto legal in Afghanistan before and throughout the Taliban period," (4) and that opium was an integral part of Afghanistan's "war economy" (9). Similarly, DEA Administrator Asa Hutchison, in testimony before Congress, stated: "DEA possesses credible source information indicating ties between the drug trade and the Taliban. Current indicators suggest that the Taliban derives a significant amount of income from the opiate trade. Acting as the *de facto* government of Afghanistan, the Taliban taxes all aspects of the opium trade. DEA intelligence reveals that taxation is institutionalized, but not standardized. It is even institutionalized to the point that the Taliban provides receipts for collected revenues. While the current tax rate for cultivated opium appears to be ten percent, processing and transportation of the product is sporadic and taxed at varying rates." From "[DEA Administrator Testifies on Taliban and Drug Trafficking](#)," October 3, 2001. Further, the ten percent and twenty percent figures are cited in "[Asia: The poppies Bloom again: Drugs in Afghanistan](#)," *The Economist* 363, April 18, 2002, 8269: 66.

22. Available online at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, [Reports and Surveys](#).
23. See Raphael F. Perl, "[Taliban and the Drug Trade](#)," *CRS Report for Congress*, October 5, 2001.
24. Scott Baldauf, "[Heroin Money Could Fund Kashmir's Militants](#)," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 20, 2003, 7.
25. Burnett, Victoria and Peter Spiegel, "[Fear of fighting and economic ruin hold back bid to stamp out opium](#)," *The Financial Times*, January 4, 2005.
26. *Ibid.*
27. See, for example, Andrew North, "[Afghanistan's Prospects in 2005](#)," *The BBC*, January 5, 2005.
28. Amy Waldman, "[Afghan Route to Prosperity: Grow Poppies](#)," *The New York Times*, April 10, 2004, 1A.
29. *Ibid.*
30. "[Afghanistan](#)," *The World Factbook*, CIA.gov.
31. Elliott Gotkine, "[Coffee Slump Fuels Peru's Coca Bonanza](#)," *BBC*, September 18, 2002.
32. "[Spectres Stir in Peru](#)," *The Economist*, February 14, 2002.
33. Juan Forero, "[Where a Little Coca Is as Good as Gold](#)," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2001.
34. Bertram, Eva, et al., *Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996).
35. See Major Garrett, "[White House buys Super Bowl anti-drug spots](#)," *CNN.com*, February 1, 2002.
36. As a perusal of speeches from SOUTHCOM Commander, General James T. Hill easily confirms. See the United States Southern Command, [Command News](#).
37. See [National Drug Control Strategy, The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program: 2001 Annual Report](#), Office of National Drug Control Policy, The White House.
38. See [National Drug Control Strategy, FY 2005 Budget Summary](#), Office of National Drug Control Policy, The White House, March 2004.
39. [National Drug Control Strategy, FY 2003 Budget Summary, Drug Control Funding Tables](#), Office of National Drug Control Policy, The White House, February 2002.
40. [Colombia Coca Survey 2003](#), United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, 2003.
41. Interestingly, the issue of aerial spraying to eradicate poppies has created tension between the Bush and Karzai administrations. Further, the entrenched nature of poppy-based economy may make eradication policies politically difficult, if not impossible, for Karzai. See: Halima Kazem,

["Crop Spraying Draws Controversy in Afghan Drug Fight,"](#) *The Christian Science Monitor*,
January 25, 2005.

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