



Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking

Summary Report, Fall 2013



Strengthening Cooperation

From October 12-14, 2013, the EastWest Institute (EWI) convened the fourth meeting of its Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking in Brussels, Belgium.

INTRODUCTION

This working group builds on the work of the experts group's first three meetings, which resulted in a joint threat assessment on Afghan narcotics trafficking¹ in April of this year. Like the first group, this second working group also seeks to address the mistrust in the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship by providing a forum for constructive engagement on an issue of strategic concern to both countries—Afghan narcotics trafficking. In contrast to the many issues currently straining the U.S.-Russia relationship, Afghan narcotrafficking has been and continues to be an area in which both countries seek to maintain robust cooperation. EWI's working group strives to sustain U.S.-Russia cooperative engagement on Afghan narcotrafficking by continuing a robust Track 2 dialogue with the aim of clarifying concerns, providing greater transparency, contributing to confidence-building, suggesting consensus policy recommendations and highlighting the greatest obstacles to practical cooperation.

The working group's two and a half days of meetings in Brussels focused on assessing and generating concrete policy recommendations to address one issue of specific concern identified by the first working group: managing Afghanistan's borders to combat the trafficking of narcotics out of the country. A formal report assessing the issue of border management by Afghanistan and its adjoining neighbors and identifying specific policy recommendations will be released in the first half of 2014.

¹ Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking, *Afghan Narcotrafficking: A Joint Threat Assessment*, April 2013. <http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/869038/JTA.pdf>.

In addition to the issue of border security, the working group also discussed more generally the current political and economic situation in Afghanistan; expectations for the impact of NATO troop withdrawal on the cultivation of poppy and trafficking of narcotics; and the overall U.S.-Russia relationship, including recent developments and prospects for cooperation.

During its meeting in Brussels, the working group also met with senior officials from NATO headquarters, the Russian mission to NATO and the Afghan embassy in Brussels.

U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION

Overall Health of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Relationship

U.S.-Russia relations over the past five years have been characterized by noteworthy positive developments as well as significant setbacks. Several important high points followed the 2009 “reset” in the two countries' relationship, including agreements by Russia allowing NATO to move Afghanistan-bound cargo through Russian ground and air space. In recent years, however, the relationship has soured to a relative low point—an observation noted by several participants from both countries—and has been plagued by a number of issues, such as the Magnitsky Act tit-for-tat exchange, a stand-off around Syria and the Snowden affair. One participant observed that there is a noticeable negativity to the language and tone of top leaders on both sides, which permeates the bilateral relationship to a significant degree. Another commented

that the political rhetoric in the media and exchanges between leaders are reminiscent in some ways of the Cold War. Several individuals on the U.S. side also noted the significant deterioration of U.S. congressional sentiment towards Russia in recent years.

Despite these negative trends, some working group members expressed a more optimistic perspective of the current situation. One U.S. expert expressed disagreement with the perception that U.S.-Russia relations are at an unusually low level. Rather, this expert observed, the unusual feature is that both administrations seem more willing than before to pursue a bilateral relationship that is characterized by multiple kinds of rhetorics and policies, some of which are extremely negative while some are relatively more positive.

U.S.-Russia Cooperation on Syria

Recent U.S.-Russia cooperation in addressing the issue of Syria's chemical weapons is a relatively positive development, but it was noted that this collaborative effort may have been a one-off case. One U.S. expert observed that this successful cooperation was the result of U.S. president Barack Obama allowing Russia to take the lead—thereby receiving credit at home for the outcome—and wisely withdrawing the U.S. threat of military intervention. The close personal relationship between U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also helped to facilitate successful collaboration.

Some in the U.S. group pointed out, however, that Obama's actions were interpreted as “weak” by his opponents, and Obama was only able to act as he did because he is a second-term president. One U.S. expert specifically

observed that the United States' high-pressure domestic situation at the time created a unique circumstance that allowed Obama to act on foreign policy in a way that would not have been possible had domestic demands been lower.

Prospects for Future U.S.-Russia Cooperation

Although too early to predict if cooperation on the Syrian issue is sustainable or can pave the way for U.S.-Russian collaboration elsewhere, one significant prospect for cooperation between the United States and Russia continues to be in Afghanistan, especially on the issue of narcotrafficking, where a commonality of interests remains. The two main priorities on the G8 agenda when Russia assumes the presidency in 2014 will be counterterrorism and counternarcotics. Thus, one Russian participant predicted that the issue of counternarcotics and prospects for U.S.-Russia cooperation in this regard may emerge more prominently in 2014. Another Russian participant noted that Russia's leadership and expert community are particularly concerned about the increasing international trend towards the legalization of drugs. This participant recommended that the United States and Russia take the lead in engaging other nations in countering this trend and preserving existing international legal frameworks on illicit drugs turnover, particularly the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988). In response, a U.S. expert noted that marijuana in the United States is starting in some states to be treated as the equivalent of alcohol, and marijuana and poppy-based narcotics thus need to be separated from each other as policy issues in the U.S.

However, given the current U.S. domestic situation and the influence of some anti-Russian policy intellectuals in the United States, one U.S. expert cautioned that U.S.-Russian cooperation should focus on non-controversial technical cooperation and proceed quietly in order to avoid provoking those who would advocate against collaboration. Additionally, policymakers who want to increase cooperation between the two countries should move quickly, before the next presidential election cycle puts into office a first-term president who will be concerned about reelection, making it much more difficult for him or her to cooperate with Russian president Vladimir Putin.

CURRENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, STATUS OF DRUG PRODUCTION AND OUTLOOK FOR POST-2014

Political Stability and Security

Many anticipate 2014 to be a transformative year, but the nature and level of that change remains deeply uncertain. The failure to date of the United States and Afghanistan to sign a bilateral security agreement augments the uncertainty and contributes to the unanswered questions: What will the country look like after NATO forces conclude their combat role? Will the country devolve into civil war, or will Afghan forces be able to maintain some measure of security?

One U.S. working group member expressed cautious optimism regarding security in the immediate future, stating that the Afghan forces had performed reasonably well this past fighting season, albeit with help from interna-

tional forces. Thus, if a small, continuous, international presence remains in the country, this expert predicted that Afghan forces should be able to maintain security in the urban areas, at least in the immediate future, despite the Taliban's likely continued expansion into rural areas. A dramatic curtailing of international assistance, on the other hand, could result in a rapid disintegration of security in Afghanistan.

A Russian expert brought up the impact that warlords may have on stability, citing these warlords as key factors in determining the level of fragmentation in the country following the April 2014 elections, a race with no current frontrunners. This expert noted that the warlords do not necessarily want to fight and are motivated to some extent to maintain unity, but the continuation of this sentiment would depend on election results satisfactory to their interests. A U.S. expert agreed that fragmentation within the country is likely to be inevitable, although it is currently unclear whether that fragmentation would be peaceful or violent. Regardless, this expert advised the international community to recognize that approaches to security and development assistance must take into consideration the regional distinctions and to be aware that a uniform method would not be viable.

An individual from the Russian side noted Russia's call for the United Nations to establish a strong presence in Afghanistan following 2014, as Russia attaches great importance to a future mission with goals that have been approved by the UN. Without a resolution by the UN Security Council establishing these aims, ongoing Russian cooperation and logistical support to NATO troops in Afghanistan may prove difficult.

International Aid and Investment

Given the possible deterioration in stability following the drawdown of NATO troops, another key question is how international aid—and thereby the capacity of both the international community and the Afghan government to address narcotics production and trafficking—will be impacted.

One U.S. expert pointed out that even with longer-term U.S. and NATO presence in the country, the number of specific locations where the international community can safely operate is going to drop markedly over the next few years, especially in locales away from major cities, and one can assume that the ability of those providing economic assistance will likewise fall off significantly. This negative impact on economic activity within the country may potentially increase the desire of and necessity for people to look to poppy production for their livelihood. However, another U.S. expert argued that simply because foreign troops and military funds will be withdrawn, a parallel decrease in development assistance is not a bygone conclusion, as aid organizations often work in dangerous places.

Despite the extensive international assistance over the past decade, the challenges of implementing sustainable foreign assistance and increasing foreign investment in Afghanistan have been significant. Several participants noted that a number of international aid programs have been unfortunately ineffective because of short-term perspectives and/or poor implementation. Others pointed to poor records for private investment, such as failure by the Chinese to invest the promised billions of USD into the Aynak copper mine and other oil and gas refineries. Looking forward to post-2014, one individual from the Russian side suggested that NATO member countries transfer the costs they have spent on troops in the country to investment in social economic development. Otherwise, this individual argued, the billions of USD

spent on military forces in Afghanistan since 2001 will be lost if stability in the country is not maintained.

Poppy Production

Despite the expected decline in the stimulus to the economy of aid and military dollars, one U.S. expert cautioned against leaping to the conclusion that narcotics production and trafficking will necessarily increase considerably as a result. His expectation is that figures for the forthcoming year will show a significant but not startling increase in the area in Afghanistan under cultivation for poppy as well as a significant but not startling decrease in the number of “poppy-free” provinces. Thus, the general trend is negative but will not exceed the high figures of 2007 and 2008.

There was overall agreement on both sides that any counternarcotics strategies need to be all-encompassing and to include options for alternative livelihood for farmers. One individual on the Russian side specifically pointed out that alternatives to poppy production have not been offered in the past years and urged action before Afghanistan becomes a narco-state. A number of experts from both the U.S. and Russian sides expressed overall agreement and support for the recommendations set forth by David Mansfield and Paul Fishstein in their paper “Eyes Wide Shut: Counter-Narcotics in Transition,” which cautioned that there is not a “‘magic bullet’ that will provide immediate short-term results” to the problem of Afghan narcotics trafficking. Rather, the report urged western policymakers to recognize the reality that drugs will remain an “integral part of the political economy of Afghanistan ... and start seeing drugs as part of the economic, political and physical landscape in which they are operating.”²

2 David Mansfield and Paul Fishstein, *Eyes Wide Shut: Counter-Narcotics in Transition*, September 2013, 21-23. <http://www.arei.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdf/Opium%20BP.pdf>.

COUNTERING NARCOTICS ON AFGHANISTAN'S BORDERS WITH CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), an estimated 92 percent of opiates produced in Afghanistan are trafficked out of the country, with approximately 25 percent of heroin in 2009-2010 smuggled out to and through Central Asia along the Northern Route. More than three-quarters of those drugs eventually enter the Russian market.³ Addressing the trafficking problem along the Northern Route is therefore a critical topic of focus for the working group. The assessment of border security between Afghanistan and the three Central Asian states with which it shares a border—Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan—and the related problem of combating trafficking and drug use within these Central Asian states featured prominently in the working group's discussions.

Political Dynamics in the Region

The political and economic situation in each Central Asian state varies, which in turn affects each country's efforts against narcotrafficking. Nevertheless, certain local political dynamics permeate throughout the region. First, several leadership characteristics apparent throughout the region are patronal regimes that include nepotism and technocratic features as well as imminent generational changes for the ruling elites that could affect intra-elite stability. Second, localized pockets of instability remain throughout Central Asia in areas such as South Kyrgyzstan; the Ferghana Valley, which extends across

3 Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking, *Afghan Narcotrafficking: A Joint Threat Assessment*, April 2013, 26-27. <http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/869038/JTA.pdf>.

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan's Rasht Valley and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO); and West Kazakhstan. Third, specific issues—such as social injustice, foreign investment and ethnic minorities—are extremely sensitive, especially among certain people groups that are prone to react strongly to such matters. Finally, the overall political will for fighting narcotrafficking is limited, albeit the extent and success of efforts vary from state to state.

International and Regional Border Assistance and Cooperation

Existing international border assistance to Central Asia—focused on overall border management as well as specific facilities—is extensive and likely to continue for the foreseeable future. For example, both the U.S. Department of State and Department of Defense has spent funds to strengthen border crossings in the region. Border management also is a key area of focus for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which has collaborated with both the United States and other international organizations on a number of projects, such as education and training for border guards to equip them for handling passport procedures. The European Union funds two relevant organizations: the Border Management Programme in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Border Management in Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF). Funding for BOMNAF will continue, although its current funds do not match the level of financial assistance to Afghanistan by the United States. BOMCA has established offices and implemented in each Central Asian country a range of programs, from building infrastructure at border crossings to training border guards to encouraging changes in the Central Asian states' legislation. Although current and past BOMCA training programs lack an extensive counternarcotics component, the organization is at present seeking to identify a more effective way to incorporate this component into its programs.

Despite extensive international cooperation with Central Asian countries on border management, inter-region collaboration between and among the various nations in the region has been limited. At best, information-sharing occurs two to three times a year when mid- to high-level border commanders meet in Kazakhstan, but even those conversations do not usually include a focus on cooperation to combat drug trafficking. The limited amount of collaboration across borders is emblematic of the high level of distrust that persists among these nations, which is reflected by a number of laws in these states specifically forbidding such cross-border cooperation.

Tajikistan

Of the Central Asian states, Tajikistan is the most fragile at all levels and faces weak governance, intra-elite tensions, popular resentment, geopolitical challenges, relatively few development prospects and a severe narcotics problem. The country is becoming increasingly centralized, but significant competing legitimacies remain.

Afghanistan-Tajikistan Border Crossings

The Afghanistan-Tajikistan border currently comprises seven operating bridges, with two more scheduled to become operational soon. The opening of these bridges is significant for narcotics trafficking because it allows the transit of drugs to evolve from smaller shipments to larger shipments hidden within otherwise official cargo. At present, drugs are most often moved across the border via the Nizhniy Pyandzh bridge, which was rebuilt by the United States. One working group member observed that although development aid for the construction of infrastructure such as bridges certainly benefits the region and cannot be construed as causing drugs trafficking, such financial assistance nonetheless has the potential to create unintended consequences in terms of the movement of illicit drugs.

International Aid and Challenges

Tajikistan stands out in Central Asia as the one country where the United States, Russia and other international players have cooperated on border security. The U.S. and Russia both have assisted in establishing border training schools in the country, and Russia—in conjunction with programs such as BOMCA—has hosted Tajik border officers in Moscow for training. Regular meetings in Dushanbe of border-coordinating bodies generally include Russian diplomats with expertise on border issues. This has not only promoted the sharing of information among countries to minimize overlap in activities, but a significant unspoken understanding among these bodies has been that no actions related to the management of Tajikistan's borders would be carried out if Russian representatives object.

Despite these positive signs of cooperation, international aid providers also have experienced significant frustrations with Tajikistan's level of collaboration and effectiveness in carrying out its part of the agreement. For example, international donors have felt that Tajikistan has failed to maintain various border facilities constructed by outside aid, with the government instead requesting additional assistance funds in order to upkeep those facilities. The United States and Russia specifically encountered challenges in the establishment of border training schools. Both countries expected to participate in designing the curriculum itself, but Tajikistan unexpectedly refused involvement by either country in this regard when it came to that stage.

On the other hand, Tajikistan itself has expressed concerns with international border aid, specifically with the fact that the Afghan side of the border receives significantly more funds than the Tajik side. The aid to Afghanistan has come in the form of infrastructure, such as large customs houses, border houses and large generators, in part because of the pressure on international donors

to expend funds before 2014. Thus, one U.S. expert observed that although the level of aid to the Tajik side is lower than to the Afghan side, the assistance provided to Tajikistan can be seen as more sustainable because it likely will continue after 2014.

Possibilities for U.S.-Russia Cooperation in Tajikistan

The working group revisited the possibility of U.S.-Russia cooperation in Tajikistan several times during the meeting, as the great need for counternarcotics and border management support is complicated by the geopolitical sensitivities of U.S. and Russian involvement in the country. The Russian experts emphasized the Russian government's wariness of too much U.S. involvement in Tajikistan, precluding increased U.S.-Russia cooperation within the country itself. They suggested, instead, a coordinated approach with Russia focusing its efforts on the Central Asian side of the border and the United States working predominantly on the Afghan side of the border.

Given Russia's concerns, the working group discussed—in lieu of practical on-the-ground cooperation—the possibility of the United States and Russia jointly conveying a uniform message to the Tajik government to strengthen its political will to fight narcotics trafficking and better manage its borders. Experts from both sides identified this as a potentially feasible idea, with several suggesting that perhaps the message would be better delivered via multilateral regional or international organizations such as the OSCE or the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARRIC).

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan remains the most pivotal of the Central Asian states, and any change in regime would change the face of the region. There is some concern that the trafficking of narcotics is tightly controlled by state security services,

and its impact on society is minimal. Uzbek border security has become increasingly tight in recent years, and it is now difficult to transit any products—either licit or illicit—from either Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan across the borders to Uzbekistan. The European Union and the OSCE both are active in the country, as Uzbekistan does participate in some foreign-funded border management programs, albeit selectively only in aspects that it sees as matching with its interest.

Most drugs transited into Uzbekistan enter by way of its border with Tajikistan, and that border is thereby a source of significant concern for the Uzbek government, which complains that the Tajik side is too weak. The Uzbek side of the border comprises significant infrastructure and equipment, such as computers and freight x-rays, whereas the Tajik side largely lacks even the basics. A Russian expert pointed out that the contrast is stark, with Tajikistan's management of the border too lenient but Uzbek management too rigorous, thereby interrupting even licit trade that could benefit the region.

Opportunities for U.S.-Russia cooperation on the Uzbek-Tajik border hold potential because of less geopolitical fighting for influence or interests between the U.S. and Russia than there is in Tajikistan. Members from both sides of the working group agreed that, for example, foreign assistance in training border officials on how to use and maintain the European- or U.S.-produced technical equipment could be beneficial.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan appears to be largely stable, and any domestic instability would have a limited regional impact. Like Uzbekistan, trafficking in Turkmenistan is controlled by state security services and has a contained impact on society, except in the case of consumption. Despite its tendencies to be relatively insular and to refrain from engagement, Turkmenistan does participate in border

assistance programs, such as those funded by BOMCA.

U.S.-Russia Interaction and Cooperation in Central Asia

The significant role that Central Asia plays in the flow of drugs from Afghanistan to Russia establishes the region as a critical area of opportunity for the United States and Russia to cooperate in addressing the problem of Afghan narcotics trafficking. The working group discussions generated a number of preliminary recommendations that will be further researched and considered for feasibility and implementability before being released in the forthcoming report on border management in the first half of 2014.

The idea of a uniform message from the United States and Russia to various Central Asian states—for example, in the case of Tajikistan, as mentioned above—was raised several times in the course of the meeting. One U.S. expert observed that there is sometimes the sense that the Central Asian countries like to play the United States and Russia off of each other; thus, the two countries could increase their leverage if they agreed on one message. In addition to Tajikistan, the working group also raised the possibility of a uniform message to Uzbekistan. Additionally, several experts also felt that Russia's security role in Tajikistan could give it significant unilateral leverage in urging the country to strengthen its border management, particularly if Russia's security presence increases in the future.

Another possible recommendation for U.S.-Russia collaboration focused on visa procedures. Several working group members on both sides agreed that perhaps the United States and Russia could work together to help Central Asian countries better manage their visa process, particularly at the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border. Both the United States and Russia's interests would be better served by increased transparency on the exact number and

specific information on the individuals crossing the border from Afghanistan into Tajikistan.

In light of the distrust that exists on all sides—both between the United States and Russia and among the Central Asian states themselves—the working group also discussed a number of non-security prospects for collaboration. For example, both countries—but in particular the United States—could assist Central Asian countries with demand-reduction practices, including in the areas of education and medical treatment. This is potentially an important role that the United States could play in the region that may be welcomed by both Russia and the Central Asian states themselves, particularly as they face an increasing number of domestic consumers.

COUNTERING NARCOTICS ON AFGHANISTAN'S BORDERS WITH IRAN, PAKISTAN AND CHINA

Although the Northern Route is the most critical channel for transiting drugs from Afghanistan to Russia, the majority of opiates leaving Afghanistan—an estimated 75 percent—are smuggled out through Iran and Pakistan.⁴ China also shares a border with Afghanistan, but the border is short and most Afghan heroin in China enters by way of Pakistan. Despite this reality, China's role in the fight against Afghan narcotics trafficking was raised several times by the working group because of the potential impact of Chinese investment and assistance in Afghanistan and the region.

Iran

Despite Iran's aggressive efforts to deter traffickers, the smuggling of narcotics remains a problem at the Afghanistan-Iran border. Trade across this border is active; although a Russian expert pointed out that a substantial portion of oil entering Afghanistan labeled as "Iranian" is actually Iraqi oil transited through Iran. Despite some loopholes in its customs, Iran's active fight against narcotics has resulted in a relatively high number of smugglers arrested in the part of the country close to the Afghan border. A working group member mentioned statistics reporting 200 Iranian operatives killed annually in clashes with smugglers. Although these casualties are not completely the result of Afghan narcotics trafficking, no Central Asian state can say that their operatives clash to this extent with narcotics smugglers. These statistics, the expert observed, is an indirect sign that Iranian border security is actively fighting smuggling but not necessarily successfully.

Pakistan

The working group highlighted the reality that Afghanistan's border with Pakistan differs from those with other countries, in that those other borders, at minimum, are recognized by state actors on all sides. The Afghan-Pakistani border, in contrast, is complicated because it is recognized by neither the Afghan government nor various non-state actors on both sides of the border. The border is thus very weak, with more than 100,000 crossings daily in both directions, a significant percentage of which occur at non-official points. A Russian expert noted that therefore Afghanistan and Pakistan essentially do not have a border. The crossings involve not only licit trade and business but also trafficking in arms, terrorists and narcotics. Via this Afghanistan-Pakistan border, Afghan narcotics go on to Karachi, Pakistan and Xinjiang province, China; from Karachi, some of the drugs go on to Europe and the United States.

China

Afghan opium enters the Chinese market by way of Pakistan instead of trafficking directly over the Afghan-Chinese border, which is not an official border crossing. Thus, discussions during the meeting regarding China's role in countering Afghan narcotics focused heavily on Chinese economic involvement in the region rather than border issues.

Chinese investment projects in Afghanistan are plentiful, but the largest state investments have lagged behind schedule. Despite promises to spend \$3 billion USD in Afghanistan, these Chinese state-owned enterprises to date have spent just about \$50 to \$60 million USD, erecting infrastructure such as barracks for workers and electricity wires but without beginning any exploration in the ground at the copper mine or the production of oil at refineries. Thus, one Russian expert observed, Chinese state corporations have done their best to stake out areas in Afghanistan that they are interested in, but they are not in a hurry to invest multi-million or multi-billion dollars in the country.

One potentially monumental infrastructure project on the Afghan-Chinese border is the construction of a road system to connect Badakhshan and Xinjiang provinces by building a road from Peshawar to Fayzabad in Badakhshan province through the Wakhan corridor to the Chinese border. This would considerably shorten the length of time it takes to travel from Kashgar, Xinjiang to Kabul, Afghanistan, which currently takes approximately 10 to 15 hours. However, a Russian expert observed that the two countries present varying perspectives of this construction project: The Afghans state that the Chinese are interested in building the road and have started some work already. The Chinese, however, downplay their role in it, saying they are hired simply as contractors to build an Afghan project. Additionally, China has not officially approved the opening of a path at the border, creating a situation in which

4 Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking, *Afghan Narcotrafficking: A Joint Threat Assessment*, April 2013, 27. <http://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/869038/JTA.pdf>.

the construction of the road has been examined in detail but the opening of the border is still under question.

With regard to narcotics, Afghan heroin is beginning to permeate into the Chinese market by way of Pakistan. The number of addicts is increasing substantially, not only in the western-most province of Xinjiang, but more and more heroin is being intercepted in the past three to four years among the poor working class in industrial areas around the eastern city of Beijing. Nonetheless, heroin remains a small portion of the entire Chinese market, as China does not have any large mafia structures for Afghan heroin.

CONCLUSION

This Brussels convening was the first of three meetings of EWI's second Joint U.S.-Russia Working Group on Afghan Narcotrafficking. As NATO troops continue to turn over much of the responsi-

bility for Afghan security to local forces throughout 2014, maintaining and increasing awareness of the problem of Afghan opiates and devising policy solutions to address the issue will become increasingly important. Counternarcotics will continue to remain a top priority in Russia and is one of two key items on the G8 agenda when Russia assumes the presidency next year. Although it remains to be seen if U.S.-Russia collaboration in addressing the issue of Syrian chemical weapons can lead to further cooperation in other areas, it appears that the fight against Afghan narcotrafficking will continue to be an area with noteworthy potential for effective collaboration between the United States and Russia.

From 2013 to 2015, EWI plans to convene the working group at least two more times and to publish four consensus reports by the group that seeks to address specific concerns related to Afghan narcotrafficking. Each report will

include recommendations that the United States and Russia can implement either unilaterally or bilaterally and—in some instances—via regional and multilateral organizations to address a problem of critical concern not only for the two countries and Afghanistan itself, but also for the immediate surrounding region and the international community as a whole. The first report on border management is expected to be released in the first half of 2014, followed by reports on flows of Afghan drugs money and laundering in the international financial system; assessment of the post-2014 security, political and economic situation in Afghanistan and expected impact on narcotics trafficking and counternarcotics efforts; and alternative poppy-free development strategies for Afghanistan. The next meeting of the working group will be in the summer of 2014.

List of Meeting Participants

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