

Terms of Reference

Baseline Research on Rural people's perceptions of the Government's effort against the Drug Economy in Afghanistan

1. Background

Since the liberation of Afghanistan from the repressive clutches of the Taliban regime and their Al Qaida allies in December 2002, many people in Afghanistan have been struggling to survive. Years of conflict, drought and the destruction of other legitimate crops have led many Afghan farmers to the cultivation of poppies. In an effort to put bread on their tables and clothing on their backs, many ordinary Afghans have been drawn into this act of desperation. Still other Afghans, mostly of the power elites, have exploited this desperation and fostered the explosive growth of the poppy economy. This cruel exploitation of other's suffering has been done in conjunction with international criminal syndicates.

After having been sworn-in as the first freely-elected President of the country, Hamid Karzai declared all-out war against the cultivation of poppies and downstream refinement of dangerous narcotics in the country. The President's firm stance on the fight against poppy cultivation and narcotics production is a reflection not just of his own moral viewpoint but also of the international community's growing concern over the issue.

In an effort to combat the problem, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is working closely with its international partners to take direct action against the cultivation of poppies and the production of dangerous narcotics. A seven pillar approach to all counter narcotics efforts in Afghanistan has been agreed to and is being implemented by the Afghan Government and its international partners. These pillars are interdiction, eradication, alternative livelihoods, capacity building, judicial reform, demand reduction and public information.

Over the course of 2003 the capacity of the Afghan Government to eradicate and interdict poppy growth and distribution networks has steadily grown. The difficult issue of providing sustainable alternative livelihoods for farmers whose crops have been eradicated has also been addressed to some extent. Judicial reform efforts are underway and have started yielding results. Demand reduction efforts are also underway. And while there have been extensive public information campaigns undertaken, there has yet to be an exhaustive review of the effectiveness of the messaging involved in these programs.

As such, the Afghan Government and its coalition partners now believe that a comprehensive review of the public's understanding of the narcotics problem in Afghanistan is warranted. More importantly, a study of which types of anti-narcotics messages are the most effective on the village level is needed to ensure that the tactics

and strategies that comprise the public information pillar of the counter narcotics effort are sound.

2. Country Context

Afghanistan is a country of 28 million people, 52% of which are between the ages of 15 and 52. The ethnic composition of the country is a hodge-podge of Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Aimak, Turkmen and several other ethnicities. The predominate religion of the country is Islam, with an estimated 80% - 20% split between Sunni and Shia sects of that religion. It is estimated that 36% of the adult population is literate.

3. Situational Analysis

Afghanistan's economic outlook has improved significantly over the past two years because of the infusion of more than \$2 billion in international assistance, dramatic improvements in agricultural production, and the end of a four-year drought in most of the country. However, Afghanistan remains extremely poor, landlocked, and highly dependent on foreign aid, farming, and trade with neighboring countries. Much of the population continues to suffer from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, and jobs.

A growing percentage of Afghanistan's overall GDP is derived from the cultivation of poppies and the downstream processing of that crop into refined narcotic products.

4. Problem Analysis

Lacking scientifically acquired public feedback on the effectiveness of counter narcotics messages, public information campaigns to support the other elements of the national counter narcotics will remain essentially directionless.

Baseline information regarding the types of counter narcotics messages that are easily understood and absorbed by the targeted populations must be acquired through a methodical study of public opinion.

5. Objective of the Survey

The objective of the study proposed in this TOR will be to quantify current public understanding of counter narcotics messages disseminated by the Afghan Government and other organizations to date.

A subsidiary objective will be to compile information on methods through which Afghans on the village and provincial level gain their understanding of counter narcotics programs in the country.

6. Scope of Work

The scope of work will be two-fold:

Initially a baseline survey targeting four provinces (Helmand, Badakshan, Nangarhar, and Kandahar) will be conducted. Within the four provinces, a random sample of rural districts to be determined by the surveyor will be used to compile data through one-on-one interviews with farmers, casual laborers and other people likely to be affected by government counter narcotics efforts.

Subsequent to the completion of the baseline research, quarterly tracking surveys will also be conducted in the targeted provinces. The methodology of these tracking surveys will be at the discretion of the surveyor, subject to approval by the contracting agency.

6.1 Survey Design

Because of the sensitive nature of this proposed study's subject matter and in consideration of potential security threats to the survey researchers in the field, the proposed study will entail a series of generalized questions into which specific counter narcotics questions will be injected. The generalized questions can be of any subject matter, i.e., perceptions of the coalition forces, feelings about the direction of the government, etc., but there will be more specific questions regarding counter narcotics. The contracting agency will provide the majority of the questions for the study and will finalize the list of questions in consultation with the surveyor.

6.2 Survey Methodology

Left to the discretion of the surveyor and subject to final approval by the contracting agency.

6.3 Survey Research Management

Left to the discretion of the surveyor with pre-survey report on operating plans provided to the contracting agency as a requirement before implementation.

7. Reporting Requirements

The surveyor will be required to submit three (3) reports:

- Overall design of survey
- Operating Plan for field work
- Final Report on survey findings

8. Proposed Schedule for Fieldwork

The proposed schedule for this research is for field work to be conducted through the first two weeks of January 2005.

The period from deciding on a vendor for the survey work, estimated to be no later than 27 December 2004, through 1 January 2005 will be used for design and approval of survey plans as outlined above.

9. Proposed Schedule for completion

The final report for the survey will be due on the 21st of January 2005.