

The “Afghan Drugs” Problem – A Challenge to Iran and International Security

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Abstract

This article looks in to the issue of the Afghan drugs problems from the international security perspective. The definition of international security has evolved since the end of the cold war. In the past, there were, and there are presently, some people who perceive that only military capabilities of their rivals can pose a threat to their security. That is, while the new definition of international security has expanded to include many issues that are not necessarily in the domain of military or armed forces. In that context, drug habits that caters to the trade of illicit narcotics, and with connections to the organized crimes has become a nascent threat to international security. In recent years, the drug problem in Afghanistan has grown to a staggering proportion and its outflow threatens the security of many countries. The sheer scale of the problem and its devastating impact on regional and international security calls for a concerted effort by all in the international community, especially those who are mostly affected. However, when it comes to major anti-drug projects in Afghanistan and its adjacent regions, the stances of certain Western countries seem to be ambivalent at best. In this context, one can point to the tendencies in some of these governments making an effective cooperation with Iran in the critical fight against drugs impinging on an agreement on its nuclear dossier. That approach indeed overlooks the urgency of the problem and the scale of the threat that Afghan drugs imposes on all sides especially the Europeans. The author concludes that to find a lasting solution for this problem, it is imperative that cooperation would be based on an inclusive approach, and participation of all states, with the essential coordinating role of the United Nations.

Keywords: Afghan Drugs, International Security, Iran, UNODC, US, NATO, Europe

Introduction

Afghanistan is going through one of the critical periods of its history. The devastating situation in Afghanistan has greatly impacted the life of Afghans and threatens regional and international security. Military intervention and engagement of foreign forces in Afghanistan have further complicated the situation, making the emergence of a national solution even more challenging. In the analysis of the present problems that currently engulf Afghanistan there seems to be three main issues that are different in nature and yet somehow interlinked. Therefore, each needs to be addressed and dealt with separately. These issues are: establishment of peace and security; reconstruction and development; and drug and narcotics problem. The present paper addresses the latter issue, especially from the vantage point of its security impact and implications.

Presently, the illegal Afghan opium industry poses not only a threat to the country's own security and reconstruction programs, but also to international stability. It has created conditions for terrorist groups to launch attacks both inside Afghanistan and beyond its borders. The Afghan drug problem has assumed such a grave dimension that it has prompted Russia to propose its discussion by the UN Security Council as a threat

to world peace and security.⁽¹⁾ The devastating effect of drugs on Afghanistan's internal security is another grim reality which has to be faced. According to the Afghan Ministry of Counternarcotics “Every province in Afghanistan where you find opium cultivation, you have insecurity as a result.”⁽²⁾

With that background, this paper attempts to study some critical issues related to the problem of drugs in Afghanistan from an Iranian perspective. To that end, the following questions will be addressed:

1. What is the current situation with regard to the drug problem in Afghanistan?
2. What are Iran’s specific interests and policies regarding this problem and how it executes its strategy?
3. How do these efforts interplay with the ongoing international efforts?
4. What options exist to strengthen international cooperation to overcome the Afghan drug problem?

1. Internal and External Dynamics of the Problem

The drug problem in Afghanistan has multidimensional aspects with internal and external dynamics. The problem has been exacerbated during the past few years; it has in fact reached an alarming point for many countries especially those who have become the main destination and final consumers of drugs originating from Afghanistan. An October 2009 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicates that Afghanistan with 92% of the world's cultivation of opium



has practically the monopoly of the raw material for production of heroin, the world's most deadly drug.⁽³⁾ The devastating consequences of the 900 tons of opium and 375 tons of heroin that is trafficked every year from Afghanistan all the way to Europe, Russia and India impose great burdens on the health and security of the neighboring countries and those along the drug routes. The UNODC documents show that drugs have created an almost 65-billion-dollar market, catering to 15 million addicts, causing up to 100,000 deaths per year, spreading HIV at an unprecedented rate and, not least, funding criminal groups, insurgents and terrorists.⁽⁴⁾

The drug problem has also negatively impacted other plans for the restoration of peace and stability as well as reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan. The drug trade has grown and become a huge, lucrative business that not only has increased the drug addiction and risk to the health of the people in many countries but it has also come to finance terrorism and insurgency activities in the region and beyond. The poppy cultivation in Afghanistan outflanks any other substitute crop for sheer economic reasons. According to the reports a few years back, the Taliban used to gain \$90-160 million per year in and around Afghanistan solely from taxing opium production and trade.⁽⁵⁾ All indications are that their net gain has increased in more recent years due to the expansion of poppy cultivation and processing. This drug money increases substantially by adding the charges that the drug lords impose on laboratories and precursor imports, as well as the taxes on economic activities in the districts they control. Furthermore, as

indicated in the UNODC 2009 report, the Taliban and al-Qaeda-inspired groups take a share of the \$1 billion opiate market in Pakistan which has a direct link to the drug market in Afghanistan.⁽⁶⁾

Added to the problem of opium is the surge in the production of cannabis in Afghanistan. In "Afghanistan Cannabis Survey", the first-ever UNODC report on cannabis in Afghanistan published in 2009, it was noted that Afghanistan, the world's biggest producer of opium, has also turned into a major cultivator of cannabis, a narcotic plant from which the dreaded drug 'hashish' is made. According to this report, Afghan cannabis crop is estimated at between 1,500 and 3,500 tons a year. The value of the cannabis resin produced in Afghanistan was estimated at between US\$ 39 million and US\$ 94 million, or about 10-20 per cent of the farm-gate value of opium which was approximately US \$438 million in 2009. The UN study found that it is three times cheaper to cultivate a hectare of cannabis plant than a hectare of opium poppy in Afghanistan. However, the survey shows that opium poppy is still favored over cannabis plant among Afghan farmers because cannabis plant has a short shelf life. Like opium, cannabis cultivation is concentrated in regions of instability, namely in the southern provinces of Afghanistan.⁽⁷⁾

2. Iran's Approach to the Problem

Iran is one of Afghanistan's neighbors that have suffered mostly from the problem of drugs that flow from Afghanistan. At least



until a few years back, the UNODC estimated that 60 percent of Afghanistan's opium was trafficked across Iran's borders, much of that in transit to European destinations.⁽⁸⁾ Evidently, the rise in drug use and smuggling has strained Iran's police forces and prisons, as well as its economy. It is feared that if that trend is not brought under control and stopped soon, it will further exacerbate an already difficult situation and may leave Iran with huge social, demographic, and health problems for generations. The drug use has also been a major factor in the rise of HIV/AIDS through sharing contaminated needles. However, as reported by Iranian authorities, a successful fight against drug abuse has "stopped the spread of these diseases to the families of the addicts and the society at large, [and has] prompted a great decline in the number of HIV/AIDS contractions in Iran."⁽⁹⁾

Iran's zero tolerance for narcotics has led to the arrests of tens of thousands of addicts and the execution of hundreds of drug traffickers. Based on 2009 statistics, there are an estimated 38,161 Iranians imprisoned for drug trafficking.⁽¹⁰⁾ As reflected in the UNODC 2009 report, from all the drugs that enter Iran almost 20 percent is seized by law enforcement agencies, while another 30 percent is estimated to remain in the country fueling local addiction.⁽¹¹⁾ During the past years Iran has pursued a comprehensive plan in its fight against illicit drugs. In that plan, the issue has been addressed from both the supply and the demand sides of the drug market.

On the supply side, since Iran lies on a popular transit corridor between opium producers in Afghanistan and

consumers in Europe, the country faces added pressure to deal with the problem, including in securing its rugged borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁽¹²⁾ Thus, it has energetically attempted to block the smugglers' path with gigantic infrastructures along its eastern borders and through spending millions of dollars and deployment of thousands of troops. As the UNODC reports indicate nothing similar has been done by other neighboring countries of Afghanistan. Also, according to the same reports, Iran has been successful in seizing more Afghan opiates and destroyed more drug laboratories and cross-border drug networks involved with Afghan opiates than any other state in the region. Each year hundreds of Iranian anti-narcotic police lay their lives in the battle with smugglers and the fight against illicit drugs. A recent report released by the head of the Iranian Police indicates that in the course of the past few years 3600 Iranians have lost their lives and another 12000 have been injured in the fight against smugglers and drug gangs.⁽¹³⁾ As a result of these intensive efforts, Iran succeeded in seizing 900 tons of drugs in the year 2006-2007 which amounted to 94 percent of the total opiates that was confiscated worldwide.⁽¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, indications are that the fight against the drug gangs is becoming further challenging due, among others, to the increasing use of guerilla tactics and light and even heavy weaponry by drug gangs hauling large drug convoys into the country. Periodic reports in the Iranian press on clashes between the anti-drug police units and drug traffickers in the eastern border areas point to the serious dimensions of the problem.

On the demand side, and in order to curb the local demand



for drugs, Iran has launched a comprehensive plan that includes establishment of rehabilitation centers for the treatment of the addicts. For instance, some 600,000 addicts were treated in the Iranian rehabilitation centers during the 2007-2009 period.⁽¹⁵⁾ According to a senior officer at the Iranian police force, about 600,000 drug addicts in Iran have been receiving treatment over the past three years.⁽¹⁶⁾ Parallel to the rehabilitation programs, the Iranian government renders support to national plans that would sway potential consumption of drugs through an extensive program through the promotion of sports and other recreational activities.

At the international level, Iran has been an active partner in the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It has concluded counter-narcotics agreements with several European, Asian, and Central Asian states. In order to enhance further counternarcotics cooperation, Iran has also forged a close joint cooperation with Afghanistan, bilaterally and through the UNODC. It has as well engaged in regional mechanisms, including Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan tripartite session for drug control. Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan agreed in a trilateral meeting in Tehran in May 2008 to establish Border Liaison Offices, on each of their three borders, to plan joint operations against traffickers attempting to smuggle heroin out of Afghanistan. They also announced that they would step up the campaign to block the transport of precursor chemicals for heroin production in and around Afghanistan.⁽¹⁷⁾ Iran has worked as well with other neighboring states in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf regions for many years,

attempting to build cross-border cooperation in the fight against narcotics. In a meeting of interior ministers from Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member states (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan) in Tehran in March 2009, drug control was discussed among other security-related issues.⁽¹⁸⁾ On bilateral initiatives, the Iranian police chief has offered advice to a Syrian deputy interior minister on using sniffer dogs and computer systems to combat drugs.⁽¹⁹⁾

In addition to these efforts, Iran has participated in a number of multilateral arrangements involved in combating illegal narcotics trade. Paris Pact is one of these multilateral drug control initiatives. The Pact initiative was launched under the auspices of the UNODC and with support from France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States at a meeting of 55 countries in the French capital in May 2003, where the participants agreed on the need for strong and coordinated border-control activities and law enforcement along the main drug-trafficking routes. Tehran hosted a Paris Pact roundtable in mid-September 2005 with the participation of counter-narcotics enforcement experts and delegations from 20 countries, including the EU, Economic Cooperation Organization, Interpol, and UNODC.⁽²⁰⁾ The issues of opiates trafficking and drug-control activities in Iran were discussed at that meeting, as was also the need to strengthen regional and international cooperation on drug control in Iran. One of the new initiatives that was launched at that event was the Nomak Project, which collects and analyses information on Southwest Asia heroin



trafficking. One of the high-ranking counter-narcotics officers of the Iranian police informed the Tehran meeting that Iran had [by then] spent more than \$900 million to secure the frontier with Afghanistan and Pakistan by building border posts, watch towers, barbed-wire fences, and trenches. As part of its intensive ongoing efforts, Iran also trains Afghan border guards and counternarcotics personnel, equips border posts in Afghanistan, and provides motorcycles.⁽²¹⁾

Dublin Group is another multilateral drug-control initiative with which Iran is involved. The Group is a coordinating body that includes, among others, the European Union and the United States.⁽²²⁾ The Mini-Dublin Group, a subsidiary of the Dublin Group, works on the drug situation in Iran and related policy initiatives in the Southwest Asia region. The Mini-Dublin Group is based in Tehran and includes Dublin Group members' diplomatic representatives in Iran; it serves as a mechanism for analyzing priorities, coordinating cooperation, and making recommendations, as well as for interacting with Iranian drug-control authorities. Iranian officials stressed the importance of creating a "security belt" around Afghanistan at a Mini-Dublin Group meeting held in Tehran in December 2005. In this vein and along the same concern, the Iranian drug-control chief stressed recently that because of the presence of the British troops in the border areas of Afghanistan, the UK should take appropriate actions to help secure Afghanistan's borders with the cooperation of the neighboring countries.⁽²³⁾

However, it seems that despite these efforts at regional and international level, Tehran is not satisfied with the degree of



current cooperation and the level of support it receives from the international community in its difficult and costly fight against illicit drugs. The Iranian logic is quite clear and straight-forward; Iran happens to be situated at the forefront in the battle with the drug gangs and narcotic traffickers, therefore, even the self interests of other countries, especially in Europe – the final destination of Afghan drugs - who are more prone to suffer from increased drug addictions among their population, dictates that they extend a more effective helping hand to Iran in this campaign. While emphasizing the decisive role that Iran plays in the fight against drugs coming from Afghanistan, Antonio Maria Costa, the director of UNODC, is on record to have stated that a "heroin tsunami" could hit Europe if the drug interdiction by Iran is weakened.⁽²⁴⁾

3. Enduring International Efforts

Although there is a consensus at the international level on the necessity of enforcing effective measures to curb the flow of narcotics across international borders, in reality much remains to be done in this respect. For instance, as UNODC report indicates, presently, as the drugs move closer to their destination in the lucrative and more opulent markets in Europe, the rate of drug interdiction declines. It is astonishing to note that although Europe and Russia consume 88 and 70 tons of heroin per year respectively, but their share of interdiction of drugs seems to be meager when compared to some other countries and despite the fact that they have better means to intercept the flow of drugs to



their respective countries. For example, Central Asian states have intercepted 5%, Russia 4%, and countries of South Eastern Europe, including EU member states like Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania, have intercepted just less than 2% of the opiate trade in their territories. By comparison Iran has intercepted 20% of the opiates crossing its land, ranking first in the fight against illicit drugs in the world.⁽²⁵⁾

Another important factor concerning the international supply side of the illicit drug trade is the correlation between the value of the drug and the distance it is transferred. Literally, the value of drug doubles with every border crossing. For instance, as reported in the 2009 UNODC report, a gram of heroin worth \$3 in Kabul may reach \$100 on the streets of London, Milan or Moscow.⁽²⁶⁾ Thus, it would be much easier and less expensive to intercept the drugs in Afghanistan or at its borders before reaching the markets in Europe and elsewhere. The main consumer market of Afghan drug is Europe, with an estimated value of \$20 billion a year. Hence, the Europeans are considered to be the main source of funding for the Afghan drug industry – and trade. Also, it is reported that Western countries and some of their allies are major suppliers of precursors for drugs to Afghanistan. The UNODC's 2008 Afghan Opium Survey points to Germany among some other countries in Europe as the source of precursors. The value of chemical precursors in Afghan drug trade is not clear, but it is estimated to be \$450 million per year for just one precursor - acetic anhydride. It is sad to note, however, that in this way part of the drug money goes back to Western chemical corporations in the form of profits.⁽²⁷⁾

The situation of the supply side within Afghanistan is also a matter of concern since the production of drugs in that country has shown an upward curve since 2001 when foreign forces, namely the US and NATO, occupied Afghanistan. This trend has further fueled the existing skepticism in Iran and other countries in the region about the real intentions and role of the foreign forces in Afghanistan. Various Iranian officials, even at the level of the president, have on many occasions expressed concern and doubt over the seemingly inexplicable situation of substantial increase in drug production despite the military presence and engagement of the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. The statement by deputy head of Iran's Judiciary in November 2009 was quite reflective of Iran's feeling of dismay at the attitude and policy of Western countries toward this problem: "Today, the issue of illicit drugs should be considered as a threat to humanity and the European countries should not imagine that Iran is the sole victim of narcotics...". While emphasizing that Iran is in "the frontline in the campaign against this devilish phenomenon," he added that "We do not have production of opium in Iran, illicit drugs are coming to Iran from Afghanistan and Pakistan."⁽²⁸⁾ The message was clear: Iran should be assisted in its campaign against the illicit drug trafficking.

Iranian officials also complain that not only they are not receiving the necessary international assistance in their fight against the drug gangs, but their law enforcement operations are routinely hampered when chased smugglers flee to the other side of the border, practically seeking refuge and shelter under



the NATO and ISAF forces. The problem becomes more complicated considering a centuries-old Pashtun and Baluchi cross-border tribal links, without any involvement whatsoever of international obligations in those areas. Viewed from an Iranian perspective, the dismal and ineffective record of the NATO/ISAF forces in the fight against drugs in Afghanistan provides added rationale and fuel for the critics to further lambaste the presence of these forces in Afghanistan. As argued by these critics, NATO/ISAF military involvement in Afghanistan and actual the protection they have accorded the drug lords has turned Afghanistan into the leading producer of opium and heroin in the world. They draw on the continuing trend that started in 1979 with the American involvement in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupation, which led, among others, to the US open, full support for the warlords and drug lords. Continuation of the same support under the current unstable conditions in Afghanistan has all but put the drug lords in a much stronger position, immune from any effective persecution.

4. In Search of a Solution

As viewed from Iran, the Afghan drug problem constitutes a challenge in the spheres of national, regional, and international security. The complexity of the problem requires taking into consideration its multi-dimensional nature and different aspects, including the following considerations:

First, as the term "narco-terrorism" suggests, there is a

direct link between narcotics and terrorism. Unfortunately, this nefarious phenomenon is becoming more evident now with the drug money increasingly fueling terrorism and insurgency in Afghanistan. As stated in very clear terms by the head of UNODC: "...the Taliban direct involvement in the opium trade allows them to fund a war machine that is becoming technologically more complex and increasingly widespread".⁽²⁹⁾ This critical situation, however, has failed to receive a commensurate approach and response from the NATO/ISAF forces in Afghanistan, who seem, by all indications, to have turned a practical blind eye to the growing menace. In this particular regard, the UNODC complains that despite its recommendations for a “robust military action” by the NATO forces to take out poppy farms, the NATO has resisted taking requisite action. The head of UNODC further complains in the 2009 report that "Many of these drug barons, with links to insurgency, are known to Afghan and foreign intelligence services. Why have their names not been submitted to the UN Security Council, as required by Resolutions 1735 and 1822, in order to ban their travel and seize their assets?"⁽³⁰⁾

Second is the pivotal role of the UNODC in the field of drug campaign. Given the complexity of the problem, as discussed earlier, under the current conditions, a much more coordinated effort is needed by the international community to fight the menacing drug problem in Afghanistan. It is imperative that the UNODC receive the requisite assistance of all countries towards the effective discharge of its critical mission. Moreover, in the absence of formal political-diplomatic relations between



Iran and the US/NATO, the UNODC, enjoying the necessary trust and confidence of all the parties concerned, could as well act as an intermediary for a much needed cooperation and coordination between the two sides in the campaign against drugs in Afghanistan. That cooperation seems to be indispensable in many areas, including, in particular, intelligence exchange, logistical support, and overall cooperation in the planning for a successful campaign against illicit drugs.

Third is the issues related to the flow of the drug money. As discussed earlier, the circulated sum of drug money amounts to billions of dollars per annum, which circulates through established monetary networks as well as through the international banking system. Much is needed to be done at the international level to effectively curtail and ultimately stop this circulation, especially by the European countries where the high prices creates a lucrative market for drugs, and where also huge profits accrued by international gangs militates against and undermines the campaign. Effective tracing of the routes where the drug money changes hands and passes from Europe to its destination [to Afghanistan, in this case] should not be a difficult task for the Europeans and specialized international agencies that are well endowed with sufficient means to undertake a meaningful campaign against money laundering.

The fourth – and the final consideration, though not the least important - relates to the urgent need to improve the livelihood of the Afghan people. The lives of the Afghan people have been ravaged as a consequence of three decades of uninterrupted occupation, war and internecine conflict. In the

war-stricken Afghanistan, poppy cultivation for opium has become the most viable means of subsistence for a significant part of the Afghan farming communities.⁽³¹⁾ The sad fact is that opium provides a basic living for more than two million Afghans; desperate people who also often fall prey to the vicious, cruel avarice of drug gangs and lords. Various studies by international experts and institutions indicate that although substitution of poppy cultivation by other crops (such as wheat) could be considered as the optimal solution for the Afghan drug problem in the long-term, but for a short- to medium- term solution, some form of controlled poppy farming strictly for [world] pharmaceutical needs could be considered as a way out of the present crisis. Supporters of this idea contend that similar schemes already exist in other parts of the world. As argued by these quarters, India, Turkey and Australia are currently producing much of the opium used for pain-killing medications through a licensing system endorsed by the International Narcotics Control Board.⁽³²⁾ The advocates of this scheme suggest that Afghanistan’s opium would be channeled into a legitimate use as the basis for painkillers such as morphine and codeine. They point to the global shortage of these medicines and the current need for about 10,000 tones of opium a year, while Afghanistan could, under the suggested scheme, supply about 6,100 tones of the total demand.⁽³³⁾

Conclusion

The devastating situation in Afghanistan has great impact on the



life of Afghans and at the same time it threatens regional and international security. Presently, the illegal Afghan drug trade poses not only a serious threat to the country's own security and reconstruction programs, but it also disturbs regional and international stability. It has created conditions for terrorist groups to launch attacks both inside Afghanistan and beyond its borders. The drug problem in Afghanistan has multidimensional aspects with both internal and external dynamics. The problem has been exacerbated during the past few years; it has in fact reached an alarming point for many countries especially those who have become the main destination and final consumers of the drugs originating from Afghanistan. Although there is a consensus at the international level on the necessity of enforcing effective measures to curb the flow of narcotics across international borders, in reality much remains to be done in this regard.

Iran is one of Afghanistan's neighbors that have suffered mostly from the problem of drugs that flow from that country. As viewed from Iran, the search for a solution for the drug problem in Afghanistan seems to rest upon several short, medium and long term measures by the international community, tackling both the supply and the demand sides of the illicit drug trade. Indeed, the role of NATO and ISAF, as the occupying forces in Afghanistan, is critical in the task of interdiction of illegal narcotics stemming from Afghanistan. Similarly, the European countries that have become the main market for Afghan drugs should also become more vigilant and active in this matter. It goes without saying that all these

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collective efforts could be more effective when carried out in harmony and coordination with the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the prime international body entrusted with the task of dealing with this problem.

Notes

1. Illusions versus reality: NATO and Afghan opium, *The voice of Russia*, available at: http://english.ruvr.ru/rtvideo/2010/03/28/video_5726805.html.
2. Zulmai Afzali, the spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Counternarcotics says that “The Taliban are the ones who profit from opium, so you are letting your enemy get financed by this so he can turn around and kill you back.” *The New York Times*, 20 March 2010, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/world/asia/21marja.html>.
3. UNODC, “How the world’s deadliest drug feeds addiction, crime and insurgency”, 21 October 2009, available at: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2009/october/unodc-reveals-devastating-impact-of-afghan-opium.html>.
4. Ibid.
5. PII, 22 October 2004.
6. UNODC, op.cit.
7. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the UNODC says: "While other countries have even larger cannabis cultivation, the astonishing yield of the Afghan cannabis crop (145kg/ha of hashish, the resin produced from cannabis, as compared to around 40 kg/ha in Morocco) makes Afghanistan the world's biggest producer of hashish, estimated at between 1,500 and 3,500 tons a year. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/March/afghanistan-leads-in-hashish-production-says-unodc.html>.

8. *IRNA*, 23 February 2003. Although this report refers to the situation a few years back, but other indications and data tend to indicate that that the same general trend continues to prevail.
9. Interview by Esmail Ahmadi-Moqaddam, Iran's Police Chief and Head of the Anti-Narcotics Headquarters with the Press TV, 23 April 2010.
10. *Fars News*, 6 February 2010.
11. UNODC, op.cit.
12. Lionel Beehner, “Afghanistan's Role in Iran's Drug Problem”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, 14 August 2006. at: <http://www.cfr.org/publication/11457>.
13. *Reuters*, 14 June 2008. Also see Ahmadi-Moqaddam’s interview with Press TV, available at: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=120441§ionid=3510302>, 09 March 2010.
14. *Mehr News*, 15 December 2009.
15. *Mehr News*, 24 October 2009.
16. *Mehr News*, 24 November 2009.
17. The 6-7 May 2008 meeting in Tehran was organized jointly by the UNODC and the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
18. <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4092346,00.html>, 12 March 2009.
19. *IRNA*, 13 November 2006.
20. This project also contributes to put in motion relevant recommendations of the Paris Pact border assessment mission to key border sites in Iran (11-23 August 2005), and the second Paris Pact Expert Round Table for Iran (Tehran, 13-14 September 2005).
21. <http://www.unodc.org/iran/en/i53.html?print=yes>.
22. The Dublin Group was established in 1990 as an informal coordination body that meets to exchange views on international drug affairs (production, trafficking, and abuse), make recommendations on ways to contend with these problems, and coordinate members' approaches to



these problems. Dublin Group members are the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, and the United States, and the UNODC participates in its meetings.

23. *ISNA*, 24 March 2010.
24. *Associated Press*, 24 June 2008.
25. UNODC, op.cit.
26. Ibid.
27. <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2009/11/05/un-report-misleading-on-afghanistan-s-drug-problem.html>
28. *Fars News*, 11 January 2009.
29. UNODC, op.cit.
30. Ibid.
31. UNODC, “*Discussion Paper :Is poverty driving the Afghan opium boom?*”, March 2008: available at :<http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Afghan-poverty-paper-2008.pdf> ; Also see Barnett R. Rubin and Ahmed Rashid, From great game to grand bargain, *Foreign Affairs*, November/ December 2008. p23.
32. John A. Glaze, “Opium and Afghanistan: Reassessing U.S. Counternarcotics Strategy”, *Strategic Studies Institute*, October 2007, available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub804.pdf>.
33. Ibid.