

# “Narco-State Afghanistan” Leads to Heroin Addiction in the USA

White House Makes a Big Deal of New Heroin Efforts--But Says Nothing about Stemming the Flow or Why We're Still at War in Narco-State Afghanistan

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Region: [Asia](#), [Middle East & North Africa](#),  
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Theme: [Global Economy](#)

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*On March 29, 2016 the White House issued a [press release](#) on its new heroin initiative. The [Washington Post](#) described how much Obama proposed to do. The long list of fixes and new public-private partnerships relate almost exclusively to treatment. The 1 billion dollars, Obama said, will treat “tens of thousands” of addicts.*

*Additional treatment is desperately needed, but the money won't go far. The [White House and RAND](#) said in 2014 that the US had 800,000–2.4 million heroin addicts. Treatment requires many months, or years, and costs tens of thousands of dollars per person. The new funding will support less than 10% of those needing treatment.*

Speaking at the [National Prescription Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit in Atlanta](#), Obama ... called addiction a “heartbreaking” issue that’s costing lives and devastating communities across the country.

[But he said: “I’m very optimistic that we can solve it.”](#)

Yeah right. [Till you get it off the street, bro, you ain’t done shit.](#)

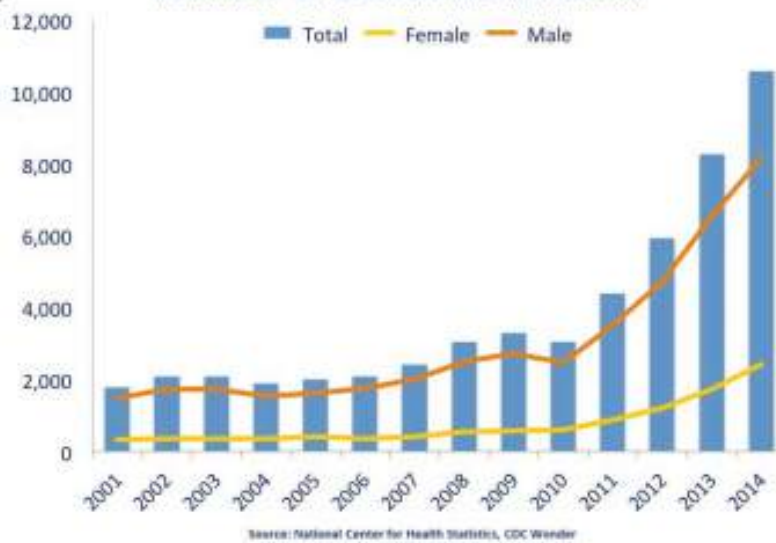
And can you be as glib, Mr. President, at explaining why you completely left out efforts to reduce the US heroin supply?

From [Wired](#), we learn that Obama ended (yes, ended) Afghan opium eradication soon after taking office:

In 2009, in one of his first major war policy decisions since becoming president, Barack Obama oversaw an end to U.S. poppy eradication... Without American support, Afghan government counter-narcotic operations withered to a merely symbolic scale. Kabul’s agents would raze one acre of a 10-acre plot and call it “eradicated.”

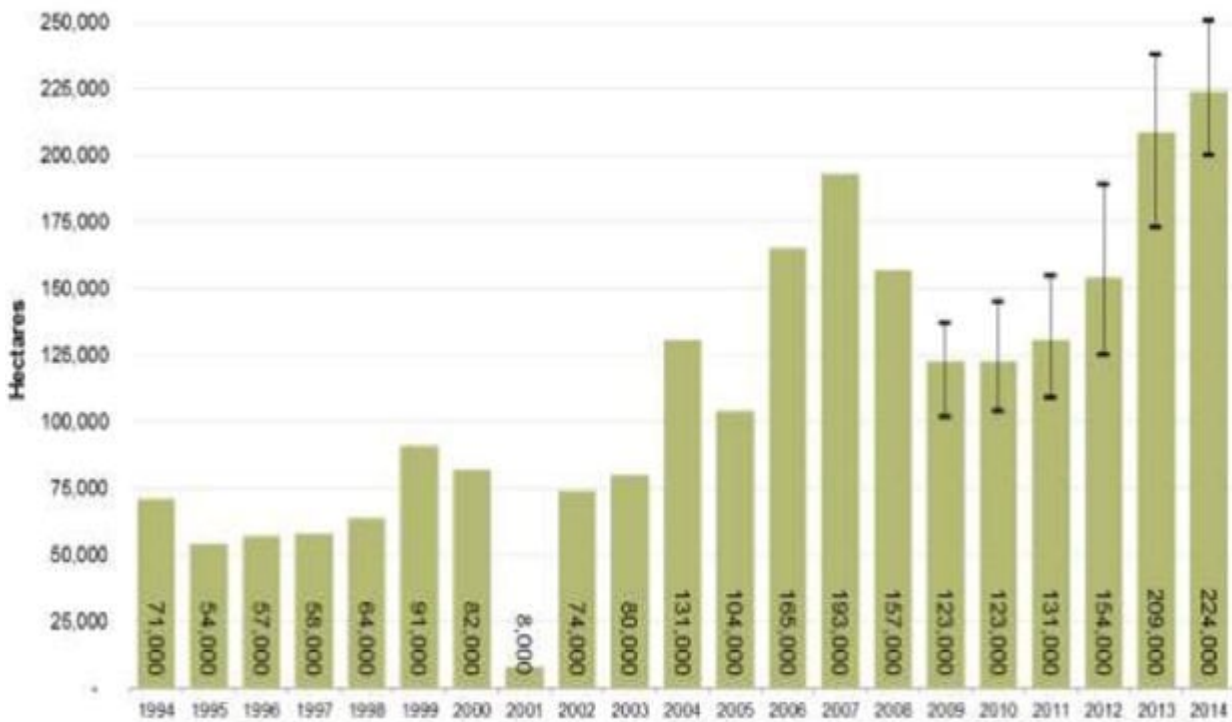
And that’s when the US heroin epidemic really took off, according to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#):

## National Overdose Deaths Number of Deaths from Heroin



[GR editor's Note: the rise in heroin addiction is functionally related to the increase in opium production in Afghanistan, see table below:]

**Figure 1: Opium cultivation in Afghanistan, 1994-2014 (Hectares)**



See: Michel Chossudovsky, [The Spoils of War: Afghanistan's Multibillion Dollar Heroin Trade, Washington's Hidden Agenda: Restore the Drug Trade,](#)

Global Research, 14 May 2005

Aerial poppy eradication is off the table, [according to the State Department](#), and the US no longer supports Afghan national counter-narcotics efforts. Hello?

Mr. President: Please explain how and why you pulled the wool over the eyes of the American people by claiming the Taliban are in charge of Afghan opium? Why didn't you tell the truth: that [they tax the acreage used to grow the crop?](#) (As do [anti-Taliban militias in areas they control.](#)) This is akin to property taxes.

**Somebody else** actually buys the opium, converts it to heroin, and brings it to the US, where it sells for over [1,000 times](#) what the Taliban received in taxes.

Who, Mr. President, collects the big money? Who buys the opium harvest, **protects** the movement of opium, its conversion to heroin, and ships it over here, undetected? Last I heard, the US installed much of the Afghan government and [patrolled a lot of poppy fields.](#) Afghanistan is where between 75% and 93% of the world's illicit opium is grown each year, on [500,000 \(undisturbed\) acres.](#)

Funny how after [spending 100 billion dollars on Afghan reconstruction,](#) over [\\$8 billion on opium eradication,](#) and [several trillion dollars](#) on our 15 year Afghan war, [the acreage under poppies has only expanded.](#) Funny about that.

Funny, too, is that big question mark... why are we still in Afghanistan? I thought we went to get Bin Laden. Well, he's history.

Can someone explain our military objective for Afghanistan? How do we justify this longest war in the 240 year history of our nation?

Writing about the Afghanistan war in [National Defense magazine in 2009,](#) Lawrence P. Farrell noted,

“Seldom do we hear or read a discussion of what the “political objective” should be or even whether anyone has articulated the political aims for the use of military force in that country.”

In 2010 [General Petraeus was interviewed for the Council on Foreign Relations](#) about this. He claimed that “our military’s operational objective [was] nation-building, euphemistically called counterinsurgency...”

**Nation-building?** Back during the Vietnam war, we used a different expression to say the same thing: [“We had to destroy the village in order to save it.”](#) During the Vietnam war, most US heroin came from poppies grown in Southeast Asia.

Some of this heroin arrived in the US on military planes, [inside the body bags of fallen soldiers.](#) It was loaded onto planes at US military bases in Vietnam, and unloaded at military bases in the US. Somebody in the government knew what was going on.

At fourteen years into the Afghan war, in October 2015, [USAT reported,](#)

“The president said he does not believe in “endless war,” but there remains an **opportunity to forge a stable country** that can prevent the emergence of future threats, an effort in which more than 2,200 Americans have given their lives.”

Face it. The expressed reasons for our continuing adventure in Afghanistan are smoke and mirrors, nothing more.

Vietnam was a war in which the number of US soldiers who had lost their lives was oft-repeated as a justification to keep the war going. Vietnam was another war with fuzzy objectives, supposedly fought for a [discredited "Domino Theory."](#) But perhaps there are good reasons why the lessons of Vietnam seem to have been ignored.

Few people know that Afghanistan hides immense underground wealth. But first it must be wrested from the Afghans. Heroin aside, two financial blockbusters are just waiting to be tapped.

1. [The value of Afghanistan's mineral wealth was estimated at one trillion dollars by NPR](#), and at [3 trillion dollars by Bloomberg](#). This almost certainly impacted Russia's failed takeover of Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan, with certainty I can say, in 20 years is going to be a mining country," Paul Brinkley, head of a Pentagon group called the Task Force for Business Stability Operations, tells NPR's Rachel Martin. "That is going to happen."

2. [Pipeline construction, which has been on the table for the last 20 years, would move oil and gas from the Caspian basin to the Arabian Sea](#). The region's proven gas and oil reserves are huge, and [equal to those in the US](#). To finally reach the ocean, an oil or gas pipeline must cross through Afghanistan, or else through Iran.

From [The Diplomat](#) comes a telling quote:

"It is, therefore, little surprise that some experts contend that the country is not transitioning from "war to peace," but rather from "military conflict to resource conflict."

Obama needs to ["forge a stable country" to prevent pipelines from being tapped or blown up](#), and protect future mining operations.

3. Don't forget that Afghanistan's half million acres of poppy fields generate heroin worth roughly \$200 billion dollars on the street, year after year. Unlike minerals and gas, this is a truly renewable resource.

**Is the Afghan war-the longest American war-just about opium, minerals and pipelines?** I could be missing some of the picture. Maybe I have oversimplified things. But phenomenal resources, still untapped, have to count as the lurking, almost-never-discussed elephant in the Afghan war room.

If the US government had reasonable political and military objectives, wouldn't the government have provided a coherent account of its objectives by now? In the absence of any meaningful explanation for this war, the only reason we remain there, with no prospect of getting out, is to secure control of Afghanistan's resources for the US. Or, more correctly, for the oligarchs who control US policy and [who will reap the benefits-while the people of](#)

[the US \(and Afghanistan, much more so\) pay the costs.](#)

**FACT:** the [land under poppy cultivation has tripled since the US entered Afghanistan in 2001, helped by US spending for wells, roads and “reconstruction.”.](#)

**FACT:** Ground was broken for [Afghanistan’s first gas pipeline in December 2015.](#)

Connect the dots. As the pipeline project grows, so will our military commitment.

But there is one little bright spot. It is a Presidential election year, and the candidates do have to answer questions. I’m going to try and put their feet to the fire. Will you do the same?

Ask the Presidential candidates to explain what we are doing in Afghanistan.

Who owns Afghan mineral rights? Who is invested in Afghan pipelines?

Will the next President change course, and get seriously behind drug interdiction and eradication in Afghanistan? How will the US government act to get Afghan (and all) heroin off our streets? How many soldiers must continue to die to protect the right to loot Afghanistan?

The huge tide of addiction blows right back from our rapacious Afghan policy. Over 10,000 Americans were lost to heroin in 2014. Deaths continue to climb. In my state, Maine, deaths from heroin surpassed deaths from prescription drugs for the first time in 2015.

Even children of the rich and powerful are being fed to the demon heroin. Will the costs of our Afghan policy ever be too high for our policymakers to bear?

**Author’s note:** *The 2 earlier pieces I wrote regarding the heroin epidemic are [here](#) and [here](#) and they add to these ideas and documentation. My mentors in this effort are Peter Dale Scott, Alfred McCoy, Michel Chossudovsky and Sibel Edmonds. Thanks also to William Edstrom for reminding me we can fight back.*

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