

The Charles Group

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Talking Points for MINDS
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Drugs, Terrorism and Homeland Security

- Drugs are a major funding source for the world's most dangerous terrorist movements (including Al Qaeda, FARC, ELN, Shining Path, KLA, PKK, Hezbollah, Hamas and others)
- Terrorism movements require money (for arms, explosives, travel, surveillance, maintaining op-sec, and potentially WMD – in short, the accoutrements of terror projection)
- Drugs, terrorism and Homeland security are inherently linked. Drugs fund terror. On foreign soil, terrorism protects drug growers and traffickers. Drug interdiction complements and reinforces national efforts at WMD and terrorist interdiction. Drug trafficking intelligence reinforces counter-terrorism intelligence and vice versa. Coordination in drug fighting, when done right, presents the proven template for counter-terrorism coordination – both horizontally across federal agencies and vertically, between federal, state and local agencies. Counter-drug training, particularly that done over the years by the National Guard – both for itself and for law enforcement – compliments and reinforces counter terrorism training goals. Homeland security is dependent upon bringing the best trained personnel to the fight, and many of these and many of these personnel and programs grew up around the counter-narcotics mission. The breeding ground for terrorism – and for terror projection – is a chaotic, loosely governed state, well financed by readily marketable and profitable drugs, in a forbidding physical environment, with poor overall intelligence collection, a resentful, disenfranchised or greedy societal fringe, accessibility of arms, and proximity to the targets of opportunity; Afghanistan presented this combination until late 2001; places like Columbia could arguably present this combination if not properly supported in the future.
- The National Guard's future is tied tightly to counter-narcotics (on both the demand reduction and supply reduction sides of the abacus), counter-terrorism (domestically and abroad) and to Homeland Security. The National Guard must be prepared to be a central, not peripheral, player. Proper recognition in presidential and congressional budgets, and a sustainable means for meeting personnel requirements, must necessarily follow that reality.