

**A Lost Mandate:
The Public Calls for a New Direction in
Afghan Counter-Narcotics Policies**

Polling Results in the UK, the US, Canada and the Netherlands

Eight in Ten (81%) Support Poppy for Medicine Pilot Projects
Three Quarters (74%) Would Use Afghan-Made Morphine
Seven in Ten (74%) Oppose Chemical Spraying of Poppy Fields

London, September 2007

Survey Background and Methodology

During the period 14-30 August 2007, a nationally representative random sample of 1,000 adults in each of the four NATO-partner countries with troops fighting in southern Afghanistan were asked to respond to six questions relating to counter-narcotics policies currently pursued in Afghanistan. They were also asked their thoughts on the “Poppy for Medicine” proposal.

A quantitative telephone interview was conducted in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and the Netherlands with data weighted by gender, age, class and region to ensure comparability with national statistics.

The standard margin of error on the sample size in the four countries varies between $\pm 3\%$ and $\pm 5\%$, meaning that in nineteen times out of every twenty the data will be correct to within these percentage points.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Survey conducted by</i>	<i>Dates survey conducted</i>
UK	ORB - www.opinion.co.uk	24-26 August 2007
USA	Ipsos Reid - www.ipsos.com	21-22 August 2007
Canada	Ipsos Reid - www.ipsos.com	14-16 August 2007
The Netherlands	NIPO - www.nipo.com	30 August 2007

Polling Questions

1. In Afghanistan opium poppy has many uses, including being used in the production of illegal narcotics such as heroin. However, it can also be converted into legal medicine, such as morphine and codeine, which are essential painkillers. To what degree would you support or oppose a “poppy for medicine” scheme which would allow farmers to switch their crop away from the production of illegal narcotics, and towards the production of legal medicines?
2. Some people say that in order for the “poppy for medicine” scheme to work, there needs to be a trial run first. Would you support or oppose the implementation of a pilot project?
3. Do you personally believe that your political leader should support or oppose the implementation of a “poppy for medicine” pilot project in Afghanistan for the next planting season?
4. Would you use Afghan-made ‘fair trade’ morphine if it matched World Health Standards?
5. In order to combat growing poppy for the production of heroin, the international community has begun to eradicate poppy fields throughout Afghanistan, but this causes many poppy farmers to lose their only livelihood and means to feed their families. Now that you know that alternative options for poppy production exist, to what degree do you support or oppose the eradication of poppy fields?
6. Now, some people, in particular the United States, say that these poppy fields should be destroyed by spraying the farmer’s fields with chemicals because it is a more efficient way to eradicate poppies. To what degree do you support or oppose spraying chemicals on Afghan farmer’s fields to kill poppy crops?

Urgent International Public Call: New Approach Required for Counter-Narcotics Policies in Afghanistan

Counter-narcotics policies at a crossroads

The international mission in Afghanistan has reached a tipping point. Failure to develop a fresh approach to the country's unprecedented opium problem will adversely impact the international community's ability to prosecute its security and development strategies.

As stated by the UNODC in its latest Afghan report released in August 2007, the link between drugs and insurgency is now well established. Profits generated from 2007's record opium crop of 8,200 metric tons will swell the Taliban's coffers, enabling it to pay recruits higher salaries and arm itself with increasingly sophisticated weaponry to use against NATO forces in-country.

A sense of urgency is required. The international community has a clear policy choice for Afghanistan: either persist with presently unsuccessful policies and implement even more forceful counter-narcotics measures, or pursue an effective and positive counter-narcotics policy. The public in the UK, the US, Canada and the Netherlands has clearly indicated that now is the time to change direction.

Time for a fresh approach to drug policy in Afghanistan: absence of grassroots support for current policies

NATO-partner states working in Afghanistan, the UK, Canada and The Netherlands must begin to promote alternatives to forced eradication as the polling results show an absence of grassroots support for current policies.

A binary proposition: Poppy for Medicine projects good, eradication bad

There is overwhelming public support for *Poppy for Medicine* projects – which would enable Afghan farmers to switch their crop away from the production of illegal narcotics, and towards the production of legal medicines – as a pragmatic, innovative counter-narcotics response to Afghanistan's current opium crisis. This support is underpinned by strong public opposition to the forced eradication of Afghan poppy crops.

Chemical spraying + no alternative livelihoods= dramatic growth of Taliban insurgency

There is a widespread recognition that the spraying of chemicals on Afghan poppy crops would be disastrous, both for Afghanistan's population and the international community's stabilisation mission. More than two thirds of all respondents were opposed to the spraying of chemicals on Afghan poppy crops. Within individual countries, three out of four British, eight out of ten Canadians, and seven out of ten Dutch and Americans are against chemical eradication.

Governments have a mandate for Poppy for Medicine projects

Public support for forced crop eradication is extremely limited. Instead, across the UK, Canada, the Netherlands and even the US, there is a widespread belief that leaders should support the implementation of pilot *Poppy for Medicine* projects in Afghanistan in the next planting season this autumn.

Extensive potential market for Afghan-made fair-trade morphine

Although their countries do not face problems in accessing essential morphine medicines, respondents in the United Kingdom, Canada, the Netherlands, and the United States indicate that they would willingly use Afghan fair-trade morphine, if available.

Polling Results: Vast Support for a Positive, Coherent Drug Policy in Afghanistan

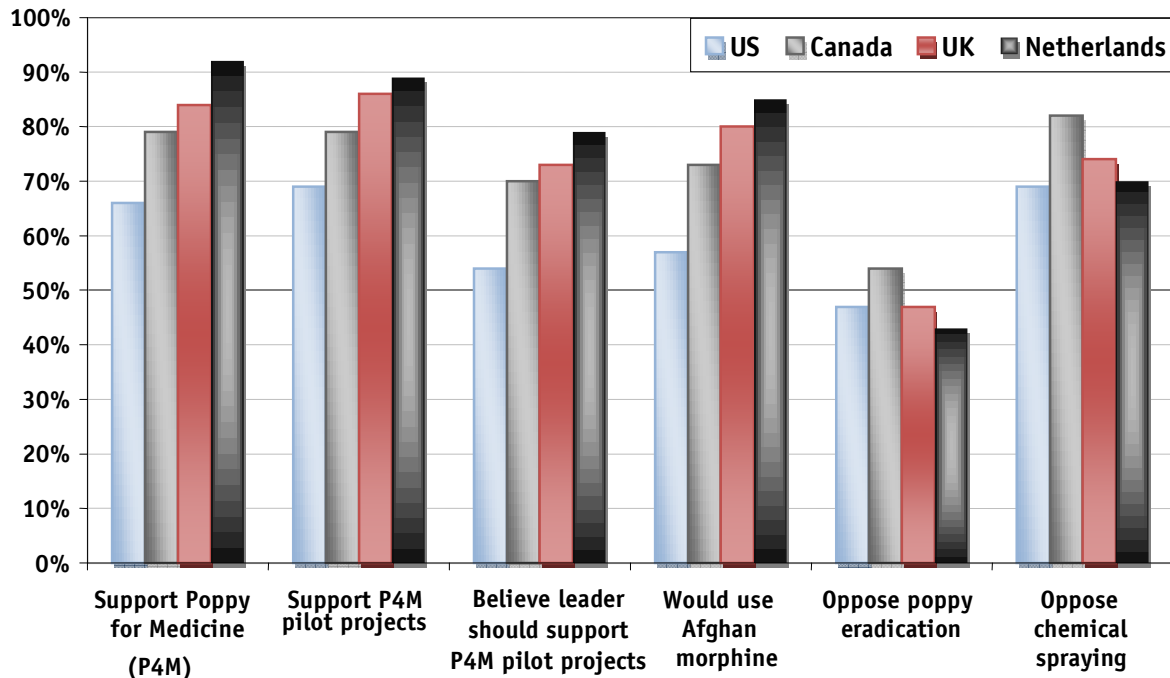
As British, American, Canadian and Dutch troops continue to fight the Taliban under the most difficult circumstances and the international community is battling the illegal opium production forcefully, public opinion at home reveals the need for a complete overhaul of counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan.

Consistent polling results across the UK, the US, Canada and the Netherlands demonstrate an unprecedented support for a new, positive drug policy in Afghanistan. With opium production in Afghanistan having doubled within two years and an inextricable link between Afghanistan’s drugs crisis and the rise in insurgency, eight in ten (80%) have expressed support for *Poppy for Medicine* projects in Afghanistan.

Recognising the adverse effects of chemical spraying of poppy fields, three quarters firmly oppose and condemn the use of this forceful counter-narcotics measure. Instead, explicitly supporting a new, positive counter-narcotics policy, **more than eight in ten call for the implementation of Poppy for Medicine pilot projects for the next planting season.**

Undoubtedly, the polling results in the four NATO-partner countries reflect the urgent need for a new strategic direction of counter-narcotics policies in Afghanistan as well as a broader recognition of the necessity to review the international drug policy framework, which currently advocates forceful and counter-productive strategies.

Table 1: A Lost Mandate: Overall Polling Results



Question 1: Overwhelming support for *Poppy for Medicine* projects

In Afghanistan opium poppy has many uses, including being used in the production of illegal narcotics such as heroin. However, it can also be converted into legal medicine, such as morphine and codeine, which are essential painkillers. To what degree would you support or oppose a “poppy for medicine” scheme which would allow farmers to switch their crop away from the production of illegal narcotics, and towards the production of legal medicines?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Support P4M projects	84%	66%	79%	92%	80%
Oppose P4M projects	11%	30%	19%	6%	17%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	5%	4%	2%	2%	3%

Question 2: High support for *Poppy for Medicine* pilot projects in Afghanistan

Some people say that in order for the “poppy for medicine” scheme to work, there needs to be a trial run first. Would you support or oppose the implementation of a pilot project?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Support P4M pilot project	86%	69%	79%	89%	81%
Oppose P4M pilot project	8%	25%	18%	9%	15%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	6%	6%	3%	2%	4%

Question 3: Political leaders should support *P4M* pilot projects

Do you personally believe that your political leader should support or oppose the implementation of a “poppy for medicine” pilot project in Afghanistan for the next planting season?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Leaders to support P4M pilot projects	73%	54%	70%	79%	69%
Leaders to oppose P4M pilot projects	14%	37%	24%	17%	23%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	13%	9%	6%	4%	8%

Question 4: High potential use of Afghan-made morphine

Would you use Afghan-made 'fair trade' morphine if it matched World Health Standards?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Would use Afghan morphine	80%	57%	73%	85%	74%
Would not use Afghan morphine	16%	38%	24%	9%	21%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	4%	5%	3%	6%	5%

Question 5: Opposition to forced poppy crop eradication

In order to combat growing poppy for the production of heroin, the international community has begun to eradicate poppy fields throughout Afghanistan, but this causes many poppy farmers to lose their only livelihood and means to feed their families. Now that you know that alternative options for poppy production exist, to what degree do you support or oppose the eradication of poppy fields?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Oppose poppy eradication	47%	47%	54%	43%	48%
Support poppy eradication	42%	47%	43%	52%	46%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	11%	6%	3%	5%	6%

Question 6: Widespread opposition to chemical spraying of poppy fields

Now, some people, in particular the United States, say that these poppy fields should be destroyed by spraying the farmer's fields with chemicals because it is a more efficient way to eradicate poppies. To what degree do you support or oppose spraying chemicals on Afghan farmer's fields to kill poppy crops?

	UK	US	Canada	Netherlands	Average
Oppose chemical spraying	74%	69%	82%	70%	74%
Support chemical spraying	18%	25%	15%	28%	21%
Don't know/Refuse to answer	8%	6%	3%	2%	5%