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Other major impediments to meaningful counternarcotics progress include inaction and lack of political will of the Taliban faction, which controls 96 per cent of AFGHANISTAN'S opium growing areas, as well as substantial drug trade involvement on the part of some local Taliban authorities. An estimated 95 percent of Afghanistan's opium poppy cultivation and most of Southwest Asia's MORPHINE base and HEROIN processing laboratories are located in territory controlled by the Taliban.

Moreover, they insist they cannot afford-politically-to crack down on farmers. "We are against poppy cultivation, narcotics production and drugs," says Abdul Hakeem Mujahid, the Taliban representative in the United States. "But we cannot fight our own people. They are the sole source of our authority." That's only a half-truth. The fuller version is that the Taliban also earns taxes directly not just from poppy farmers, but from HEROIN labs. Zuber, the addict who now lives in a Peshavar rehabilitation clinic, says that his lab packed MORPHINE base into bundles that were taxed at about \$ 55 per kilogram (2.2 pounds) by the Taliban. The daily tax revenue at that lab alone could amount to \$ 5,500 in peak season-and the facility was one of 20 or 25 in the vicinity. NEWSWEEK has also examined photographs of official tax receipts from the heroin labs. "Criminal elements, religious elements and official elements are all connected in the heroin trade like rice and honey," says a law-enforcement agent for a Western government who has done undercover work in AFGHANISTAN. Opium is traded at large bazaars in Afghanistan that are the treacherous domain of criminal syndicates. One of the more notorious is located in the town of Sangin, a three-hour drive west of the Taliban capital at Kandahar. "Sangin is known as a dangerous place," says Bernard Fzahi, head of the U.N. drug-agency office in Islamabad, who visited the market town in October. "It is known for people going in and not coming out." Of about 500 shopkeepers crowded along one main street and two or three footpaths off it, he says, almost half sell opium.

The 7.5 tons of MORPHINE base, which can be refined into an equivalent amount of pure HEROIN, is more than five times the 1.4 ton total of morphine base and heroin seized throughout the United States in 1992. A recent multi-ton seizure occurred January 7 near the Suez Canal when Turkish narcotics agents, aided by U.S. intelligence, seized a freighter headed for the southeastern Turkish port of Bodrum and found 2.7 tons of morphine base aboard. On December 15, agents were stymied when a Turkish freighter was scuttled that Turkish intelligence agents had observed being loaded with 170 bags of morphine base weighing 3.8 tons. During this period Turkish agents seized 1.3 tons of morphine base on two

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