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US Probes Allegations of Narcotics Trafficking by Afghan Air Force

By John Glaser

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A preliminary investigation has begun into allegations that some Afghan Air Force (AAF) officials have been using aircraft to traffic narcotics and illegal weapons across the country, [according to U.S. officials](#).

“At this point allegations are being examined,” said Lt. Col. Tim Stauffer, spokesman for the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan. “Authorities are trying to determine whether the allegations warrant a full investigation,” he added, which less likely considering him and his colleagues are responsible for financing and coordinating the AAF.

The allegations were first reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, which also revealed that the U.S. military is looking into whether the alleged transporting of illegal drugs and weapons is connected to an April incident in which an AAF colonel killed eight U.S. Air Force officers at Kabul Airport.

A report from the U.S. Air Force about the deaths said the killer was probably involved in transporting illegal cargo, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

The allegations highlight two failures of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. First, attempts to fight a drug war there have failed: opium production actually [increased 61 percent in 2011](#) over the previous year. Second, the mission to train an autonomous military and security force – which cost American taxpayers \$12 billion from October 2010 to September 2011, has failed:

significant portions of the Afghan forces are illiterate drug addicts; incidents of turning their weapons on their NATO trainers has increased considerably as well.

Even some vehement war supporters have started to lose faith in the mission. Senator Lindsey Graham [said there might be “no hope of winning”](#) after realizing Afghan President Hamid Karzai wants some measure of sovereignty in Afghanistan after the bulk of U.S. troops are withdrawn in 2014.