

Thursday, October 23, 2008

LETTER TO EDITOR: How to succeed in Afghanistan

We must consider two things when thinking about [Afghanistan](#) ("New president to inherit Afghan crisis," Page 1, Wednesday).

First, we cannot allow drugs to be the primary industry in Afghanistan because of its corrosiveness in a democratic process and resulting turmoil.

Second, as Maj. F. Andy Messing of the National Defense Council Foundation said, "we have to resist the urge to surge with conventional forces." U.S. forces in Afghanistan should be very customized for fighting irregular warfare. Giving conventional forces the title of Special Operations Forces does not mean they are suited for irregular warfare. We should mainly use elements like Special Forces (i.e. Green Berets) that understand the soft and hard approach that is important in effective counterinsurgency, and work closely with vetted government forces. Only select conventional forces should support under their command.

Lastly, DEA "Snowcap"-type elements should also be under that umbrella. Unless the next president keeps these things in mind, we will be unsuccessful in Afghanistan.

MARIEL RODRIGUEZ

Arlington

Note: Mariel Rodriguez is a research assistant at the National Defense Council Foundation.