



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 1 January-9 January 2006

The following are summaries of articles related to narcotics and security in the Central Asian 5 and Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, and Europe. Where possible, web addresses for the entire article are provided.

Deputy minister says airport officials involved in drug trafficking

(Cheragh) The deputy interior minister in charge of counter-narcotics work, General Mohammad Daud, has accused some officials at Kabul international airport of involvement in drug trafficking. Addressing a press conference in Kabul on January 2, he said some airport staff were taking part in the smuggling of illicit drugs. He noted the recent arrest of four policemen at one airport. The Afghan government as well as the UN report that opium poppy cultivation fell by 21 per cent last year, and Daud expressed optimism that this year would see a further decline. Meantime, presidential spokesman Mohammad Karim Rahimi stressed on January 3 that the government was firmly committed to the war on drugs.

Cheragh is an independent daily run by the Development and Democracy Association.

Concern at removal of security barriers

(Arman-e-Milli) The Afghan government's decision to remove the concrete barricades originally put in place by international forces in Kabul has given rise to a dispute between Afghan and international security forces. A spokesman for United States-led Coalition forces said the Coalition, ISAF and international agencies have expressed grave concern over the plan. A UN spokesman in Kabul said the barriers are still needed in the present situation. Afghan interior ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanikzai told reporters on January 2 that all barriers would be removed by next weekend. Arman-e-Milli is an independent daily run by a group of journalists.

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 222, 4/1/2006

Afghan government rejects reports of Iranian support for Taleban

(The Kabul Times) The Afghan government on January 3 rejected a report published in a British newspaper alleging that Iran is backing Taleban and al-Qaeda fighters in southern Afghanistan. Addressing a news conference in Kabul, presidential spokesman Karim Rahimi said the report had no substance to it. "We have no proof of Iranian support for the Taleban," said Rahimi, adding that the neighbouring country had always contributed a great deal to Afghan reconstruction. Western regions bordering Iran have been peaceful, unlike the volatile Pakistani-Afghan frontier. Iran's ambassador to Kabul, Mohammad Reza Bahrami, described the report as baseless, saying everyone was aware that lawlessness and insecurity in Afghanistan could not benefit any of its neighbours. A report in the leading British daily Sunday Times, quoting military intelligence officials, said al-Qaeda and Taleban insurgents in southern Afghanistan were preparing for a big offensive with the backing of Iran.

The Kabul Times is a state-run paper published in English every other day.

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 223, 5/1/2006

Editorial: Old tactics, new weapons for the Taleban

(Cheragh) The Taleban, in claiming to have trained 200 suicide bombers, have launched a psychological war which is being taken seriously by ordinary people. By conducting a number of suicide attacks in the recent weeks, the militants

have demonstrated their capacity to continue the insurgency. The new weapon of suicide attacks is in fact just the old tactic of brutalising people. It presents a new security challenge to the government and the foreign troops stationed in the country. It also undermines a prediction made two weeks ago by the head of the commission for peace and national reconciliation that more of the Taleban, including key figures, would surrender to the government. Both the government and its armed opponents are attempting to divert public attention away from reality: the government is procrastinating on a military or political solution to the mayhem, while the militants are using new tactics in an endeavour to revive their presence in the military and political arena. The Taleban's use of the new weapon of suicide attacks raises the question of whether militants are losing their capacity to fight a guerrilla war, or whether they are copying the tactics used by Iraqi insurgents against US forces.

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Editorial: Prospects for the new parliament

(Outlook) For the first time after more than two decades of anarchy and chaos, Afghanistan has its own parliament. Its functions and development will be of momentous import given the continuing ethnic, political and social tensions that have resulted from a prolonged national crisis. The future of parliament is closely tied to our country's past political history. In recent decades Afghanistan has suffered greatly from the lack of a national administration built up and run by an elected leader. Confidence and mechanisms were replaced by ethnic and ideological animosities, and eventually the country was precipitated into indescribable, irreversible turmoil. The attitudes of survivors of this long period of chaos have inevitably been influenced and shaped by it. People from all walks of life and various ethnic groups are strikingly sensitive to the policies of a government ruling a multi-ethnic society which has experienced chronic injustice and rule by one single ethnicity for many decades. Afghanistan has acquired a parliament under a circumstances where ethnic and political antagonisms, together with other issues, have the potential to plunge the country into another period of civil war and conflict.

Outlook is an independent daily published in English.

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 224, 6/1/2005

Drug addicts said on rise in Tajik south

A Tajik paper has reported of an increase in the number of drug addicts in the southern Tajik region of Khatlon. An article carried by the Tojikiston newspaper on 5 January, among other things, said: "The level of drug addiction among the region's population is also increasing. According to available information, the number of drug addicts in the region stands at 932 people, including 24 women. Five hundred and twenty-seven of them take heroin. In all, 1,459 people have been registered as drug addicts, which is a large number."

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 9/1/2006

Seizures and Arrests

Bulgarian customs seize 41 kilograms (90 pounds) of heroin

Bulgarian customs authorities seized about 41 kilograms (90 pounds) of heroin at the Turkish border, officials said Monday.

Associated Press Newswires, 2/1/2006.

Almost 200 kilos of heroin seized in eastern Turkey

Narcotics teams of Van Security Department confiscated 194.8 kilograms heroin in an operation in eastern city of Van, it was reported on Monday [2 January].

BBC Monitoring Newsfile, (Source: Turkish News Agency Anatolia), 2/1/2006

113 Drug traffickers arrested

(The Kabul Times) 113 Afghan drug traffickers have been arrested in India during the recent two months. According to

Interpol chief of the Afghan interior ministry Shah Wali Paktiawal, 13 of them are going to be transferred to Kabul in a week. Paktiawal added that recently a number of foreign citizens holding fake documents had entered Afghanistan. He said most had been arrested accused of drug trafficking.

(The Kabul Times is a state-run paper published in English every other day.)

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 221, 3/1/2006

Heroin factories destroyed at Afghan-Pakistan border

The security forces of [southern] Kandahar Province destroyed four heroine processing factories near the Pakistani border and seized 3,800 kg of hashish.

BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency), 3/1/2006

Afghan police seize chemicals used in heroin production in north

Police claimed overnight seizing two tonnes of chemicals used in heroin along with 29 jerry cans of acid in northern Baghlan Province

BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Afghan Pajhwok news agency website Pol-e Khomri), 4/1/2006

More than 560kg of heroin seized in Tajikistan in 2005

Tajik drug police confiscated over 922 kilograms of drugs, including 561 kilograms of heroin, in 2005, the head of the Tajik drug enforcement agency said Wednesday.

RIA Novosti, 4/1/2006

Over 20 tonnes of drugs seized in Kazakhstan in 2005

More than 20 tonnes of various kinds of drugs were confiscated by Kazakh drug control committee officers last year.

Interfax News Service, 5/1/2006.

Macedonian customs seize 22 kilos of heroin at border crossing

Macedonian customs officers tracked down 22 kilos of heroin at the border crossing of Qafasan, police said.

BBC Monitoring European (Source:Macedonian news agency Makfax), 5/1/2006

Afghan special force destroy 35 heroin labs in eastern province

Thirty-five heroin processing laboratories were destroyed in [eastern] Nangarhar Province yesterday.

BBC Monitoring Middle East (Source: Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency), 6/1/2006

Kyrgyz security officer arrested for drug possession

Police have arrested an officer of the Kyrgyz National Security Service with over 4 kg of heroin.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Kyrgyz AKI press news agency), 6/1/2006

Afghan officials accused on drugs

The security chief at Kabul airport has accused Afghan officials of colluding with drug smugglers and ordering the release of arrested suspects.

BBC News Online, 6/1/2006

Coast Guards recover 10 kg heroin

Coast Guards recovered high quality Heroin from a vehicle at Uthal. According to a report, Coast Guards searched a vehicle at Uthal and recovered 10 Kg high quality Heroin. Three inmates Muhammad Sharif, Wali Muhammad and Atta Muhammad were taken into custody. An investigation has been initiated, report added.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 6/1/2006

Kyrgyz police seize over 2 kg of heroin from Tajik national

Over 2 kg of heroin has been seized from a Tajik national in the northern Kyrgyz Region of Chuy, AKI press news agency reported on 6 January.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 7/1/2006