



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest:16-24 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.

Kyrgyzstan seeks \$50 million for U.S. use of air base

(RFE/RL) A senior Kyrgyz official has said his country wants the United States to pay around \$50 million per year to rent an air base on its territory, RFE/RL's Kyrgyz Service reported. Parliamentary speaker Omurbek Tekebaev said late on 16 January that Kyrgyzstan will charge about \$5 per square meter for the use of the Ganci base. Neither side has disclosed the amount the United States currently pays for using the base at Bishkek's Manas Airport, but Kyrgyz officials were widely expected to seek a significant increase in rent on the facilities. President Kurmanbek Bakiev has said that Washington should pay "tens of times more" for use of the air base, and has cited environmental concerns as a reason to review the rent. The U.S. military has been using the base to support operations in Afghanistan since late 2001.

(<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/1/B4006E70-720A-409C-9D03-0D4CDC6C931B.html>)

RFE/RL, 17/1/2006

Suicide bombings kill 24 in Kandahar

(Anis) Two separate suicide attacks left 24 people dead and more than 20 wounded in the southern province of Kandahar on January 16. In one incident, a man rode a motorcycle into a crowd watching a wrestling match in the Spin Boldak district. The explosion killed 20 and wounded more than 20 others. Only hours earlier, three Afghan National Army soldiers and one civilian were killed in a suicide car bomb attack in the same province. Provincial governor Assadullah Khalid confirmed the incidents, adding that most suicide attackers come into Afghanistan from Pakistan, a country which he blamed for meddling in Afghan affairs and which he said could prevent such infiltration if it wanted to.

Anis is a state-run daily published mostly in Dari.

District chiefs kicked out in Balkh

(Erada) Atta Mohammad Noor, the governor of the northern province of Balkh, has sacked two district chiefs and four other high-ranking officials in the province, accusing them of assisting opium farmers and releasing 48 detainees from prison. The governor insisted it was clear that the sacked men had been heavily involved in helping the farmers cultivate poppy on their lands. He said he had replaced the head of Dawlatabad district, while the chief of Chamtal along with four other officials in that district are under interrogation on charges of releasing 48 detainees who had been involved in poppy cultivation and trafficking. The United Nations says Balkh

currently the third largest producer of opium poppies in the country, after Kandahar and Helmand.

Erada is an independent daily run by the Afghan Media and Resource Centre.

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 227, 17/1/2006

Dushanbe says Hizb ut-Tahrir is stepping up activities

Tajikistan says a banned Islamic group is stepping up activity in the country and trying to establish links with local

organizations. Interior Minister Humdin Sharifov said on 19 January that the number of Hizb ut-Tahrir followers has "lately" been growing in Tajikistan. He noted that the group was "establishing contact" with other parties and movements in the country. Sharifov added that some of the group's arrested members belonged to the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). The IRP fought against the country's secular government in the 1992-1997 civil war, eventually securing a power-sharing agreement. Its influence has decreased in recent years. Tajik authorities announced on 16 January that they had arrested 99 Hizb ut-Tahrir members last year. Hizb ut-Tahrir, or Party of Liberation, calls for the establishment of an Islamic state, or caliphate. Its activities are banned in all Central Asian republics, although the group claims its activities are peaceful.

(<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/1/2BD9EC88-F09A-4B20-B7F7-DBBE3E8C0EAA.html>)

RFE/RL HEADLINES, 19/1/2006

Editorial: Security a major obstacle to gas pipeline project

(The Kabul Times) The proposed gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan is a live issue for the countries involved. Gas-producing countries are striving to reach the Indian market, the second largest gas consumer in the world after the United States. Tripartite negotiations have been under way between Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to build a gas pipeline to Pakistan and India. Separate discussions are taking place on a different project which would see a gas pipeline built from the Mediterranean to Pakistan. However, foreign investors are reluctant to get involved in this project: Iran wants the pipeline to cross through its territory on its way to Pakistan and India. A senior official in the Asian Development Bank, Dan Mison, told a gathering in Washington that the bank was assessing the situation in Afghanistan as well as looking at Pakistan's markets so as to gauge whether investment in the Turkmen-Afghan-Pakistani project could be guaranteed. According to Mison, the project will cost three billion US dollars. Technically, the project was feasible, he said. The first task is to assess whether Turkmenistan is actually able to supply sufficient amounts of gas.

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

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 229, 20/1/2006

Many 'die' in Balochistan clashes

(By Barbara Plett, BBC correspondent, Islamabad) There has been heavy fighting between tribal militias and Pakistani security forces in the province of Balochistan. A tribal spokesman says at least 16 civilians in the town of Dera Bugti have been killed in the past two days. (...) In recent weeks a simmering conflict over resources between the government and Baloch tribesmen has escalated - much of it centring on Dera Bugti. It is the stronghold of a powerful tribal leader. The local government administrator Abdul Samad Lasi, said militants fired around 500 rockets on Saturday at the paramilitary frontier corps. The troops were reported to have bombarded the town with heavy artillery fire. Mr Lasi had no details of casualties although he said it was possible some militants had been killed. But a tribal spokesman, Shahid Bugti, said many civilians had died including women and children. Baloch nationalists accuse the government of launching a full-scale military campaign to suppress their demands for a greater share of the province's gas and mineral resources. The government denies such an operation, saying only that it is taking action against criminals and anti-state fugitives. In the past few years, Baloch rebels have carried out a string of attacks on security forces and infrastructure. (...) The authorities blame the violence on what they say are a few greedy tribal leaders opposed to huge new development projects. But Baloch nationalists say these projects have marginalised the local tribes. They also say they are not getting enough royalties from the province's natural gas. And they opposed government plans to build new military garrisons in the area.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/4636792.stm)

BBC News, 22/1/2006

Call for state role in Afghan aid

Development aid for Afghanistan needs to be channelled through the government and its budget in order to gain maximum benefits, the World Bank has said. In its report Afghanistan: Managing Public Finances for Development, the bank said there needs to be a closer link between donors and the government. The worry is that if the government is circumvented, it will face extra strain and its authority will be undermined. About 75% of foreign aid bypasses state organisations, the bank said. (...) For donors to have a greater willingness to funnel money through the government and

other state bodies, all parts of the budget process need improving and corruption needs to be tackled, the bank said. "To make the most of using the budget process, Afghanistan's vulnerability to corruption must be reduced," the world bank said. (...) "Afghanistan's development depends on building an effective and self-sufficient public finance system," said Stephane Guimbert, the World Bank's chief economist and co-author of the report. "A visionary medium-term framework is needed to ensure that the country moves toward a sustainable fiscal position," he said. Changes are key because even though Afghanistan has accomplished remarkable progress, "challenges remain", the bank said. "Experience demonstrates that channelling aid through government is more cost-effective," said Alastair McKechnie, the World Bank's Country Director for Afghanistan. "Furthermore, the credibility of the government is increased as it demonstrates its ability to oversee services and become accountable for results to its people and the newly elected parliament," he added. The World Bank report comes ahead of the London Conference on Afghanistan scheduled for 31 January.

(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/business/4638272.stm>)

BBC News, 23/1/2006

Seizures and Arrests

Over 1 kg of heroin seized at Tajik airport

Over 1 kg of heroin was seized this evening at the [Tajik] capital's airport on its way to Russia. Officers of the Drug Control Agency under the Tajik president detained a 42-year-old resident of Vahdat District, who was boarding Dushanbe-St Petersburg plane, on suspicion of drug smuggling.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Text of report by Tajik news agency Asia-Plus), 16/1/2006

Young girl detained in Osh with heroin

19 year old unemployed young girl is detained in Osh at the Argymak station, who was leaving to Bishkek. As a result of a personal search, 700 g of heroine with a street value of about \$3,000 was found.

Kabar, 16/1/2006

Over 2 kg of Russia-bound heroin seized in Kazakh east

Border guards have detained two female Kyrgyz citizens at the Auyt Zheleznodorozhnyy [Railway Village] checkpoint in East Kazakhstan Region for an attempt to smuggle 2.7 kg of heroin to Russia.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Interfax-Kazakhstan), 17/1/2006

Criminal Authority' Detained For Keeping Drugs

Employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia have detained S. Chachkhiani, 24, a 'criminal authority' for illegal keeping of narcotics. The Prime-News was told at the MIA that the Police had confiscated 0,17 grams of heroin from Chachiani's flat.

Prime-News (Georgia), 17/1/2006

Tajik tip-off helps shut down two Afghan drug labs - official

Two drug labs producing 30 kilos of heroin a day have been shut down in Kunduz province, Afghanistan, a spokesman for the Tajik Drug Control Agency, Avaz Yuldashev, told the press on Tuesday.

Interfax News Service, 17/1/2006

Tajikistan seized less heroin last year

The amount of heroin seized in Tajikistan, a key trafficking point between Afghanistan and Europe, fell by a fifth last year, a drugs control official said on Tuesday.

Tajik teenager caught with seven kilo of heroin

Officers of the Qurghonteppa police department for combating the illicit drugs trade seized about 7 kg of heroin on 16 January. The Tajik Interior Ministry's department for combating illegal drugs trade told Asia-Plus that 6.5 kg of heroin were found and seized from Tolibjon Usmonov, a 9th-grade student of Qurghonteppa's secondary school No 3. The teenager was detained and a criminal case launched against him. An investigation is under way to establish the owner of the drugs.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Tajik news agency Asia-Plus), 18/1/2006

Albanian police seize heroin, arrest traffickers

Albanian police said Wednesday they seized 6.5 kilograms (14 pounds) of heroin and arrested four persons for allegedly trafficking drugs.

Associated Press Newswires, 18/1/2006

Large batch of heroin seized in Moscow

Moscow drugs police have eliminated 11 routes for trafficking drugs into Moscow and seized over 13 kg of narcotics, including over 9 kg of heroin during the Kanal [channel] operation, the press service of the Moscow directorate of the Federal Service for Control over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances has said.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union, (Source: Russian news agency RIA), 19/1/2006

Turkish police seize 15 kilos of heroin in southeast

Turkish police seized 15 kilograms of heroin in southeastern city of Bitlis, sources said on Thursday [19 January].

BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia), 19/1/2006

Heroin dealers arrested in Moscow

A group of drug dealers has been broken up in Moscow, the Russian news agency ITAR-TASS reported on 20 January quoting the press and information department of the Federal Service for Control over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: ITAR-TASS news agency), 20/1/2006

Eight drug labs destroyed in Nangarhar

Afghanistan's Special Anti-Narcotics Force (ANSF) conducted raids on drug laboratories, chemical stores and opium storage sites in the eastern Nangarhar province on Saturday. The ANSF located and destroyed over 371 kilograms of drugs and eight laboratories containing significant amounts of precursor chemicals, said a press release issued here by the Counter-narcotics Ministry.

Pajhwok Afghan News, 21/1/2006

Tajik agencies net nearly 100 kg of drugs in 24 hours

More than 60 kg of drugs, two-thirds of which is heroin, have been seized on the Farkhor section of the Tajik-Afghan border today, the Tajik State Border Protection Committee has told an ITAR-TASS correspondent.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: ITAR-TASS news agency) 22/1/2006

Tajik border guards say about 44 kilograms (100 pounds) of heroin seized

Tajik border guards detained an Afghan citizen trying to smuggle about 44 kilograms (97 pounds) of heroin, the border service said Monday.

Associated Press Newswires, 23/1/2006.

Turkish police seize over 100 kilos of heroin in Istanbul

Istanbul Security Chief Celalettin Cerrah said on Monday [23 January] that police seized 104.9 kg heroin and 96.2 kg hashish in anti-drug operations in the city.

BBC Monitoring Newsfile, (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia), 23/1/2006

Police seizes 18 kilos of heroin, arrests five suspects in northwest Turkey

Police seized 18 kg heroin in an anti-drug operation in northwestern Kocaeli city, it was reported on Monday [23 January].

BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia), 23/1/2006

Police seize 60 kg of poppy straw and 19.5 liters of opium from 39-year-old woman in Dnipropetrovsk region

Police have seized 60 kilograms of poppy straw and 19.5 liters of acetylated opium from a 39-year-old woman, a resident of Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk region.

Ukrainian News, 23/1/2006