



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 9-16 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.

Karzai: Drug Trade Threatens Existence Of Afghanistan

President Hamid Karzai said Sunday that a booming trade in opium and heroin threatens Afghanistan's existence as a nation-state, and that foreign mafia gangs were working with terrorists to force farmers to grow poppies.

Dow Jones International News, 8/1/2006

Fight against drugs to top London Conference agenda, says UK envoy

British ambassador to Kabul, Dr Rosalind Marsden said Sunday the issue of fight against drugs will be a key point in the agenda of the major London Conference scheduled for late this month to discuss Afghanistan's future.

Pajhwok Afghan News, 8/1/2006

'Zawahiri' strike sparks protest

A missile strike apparently targeting al-Qaeda's deputy leader in a village in Pakistan has prompted Islamabad to protest to its American allies. Ayman al-Zawahiri was not in the village on the border with Afghanistan, Pakistan officials said. But the attack left at least 18 local people dead. The US military has denied knowledge of the attack, which US media reported had been carried out by the CIA. But Islamabad condemned the strike and called the US ambassador to complain. (...) According to preliminary investigations there was foreign presence in the area and that, in all probability, was targeted from across the border in Afghanistan. (...) The raid took place in the village of Damadola in the Bajaur tribal area, about 7km (4.5 miles) from the Afghan border. (...) "According to preliminary investigations there was foreign presence in the area and that, in all probability, was targeted from across the border in Afghanistan," Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement, adding it had complained to the US envoy in Islamabad. A Pakistani intelligence official told Reuters news agency that Damadola was the stronghold of a banned pro-Taleban group, the Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi. The US has about 20,000 troops in Afghanistan, but Pakistan does not allow them to operate across the border. Pakistan has about 70,000 troops in the border region.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/4613108.stm)

BBC NEWS, 14/1/2006

New parliament goes on the offensive

(By Amin Tarzi, RFE/RL) As the newly inaugurated Afghan National Assembly began its first week of deliberations on issues other than its own procedural matters, two significant patterns appeared to emerge: first, that this parliament is prepared to pursue a populist agenda; and second, that it is likely to challenge the executive branch's seemingly exclusive hold on power. One of the first issues raised by the National Assembly's lower house, the People's Council (Wolesi Jirga), concerned security barriers erected around the capital Kabul. Such barricades are employed primarily by foreign diplomatic missions, military units, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) for reasons of security, and they cause enormous traffic jams and make parts of the city inaccessible for residents.

(...) When it ordered the removal of unauthorized security barriers, the Karzai administration essentially conceded that the new parliament can already force issues upon it. If the administration grants exemptions to some of those foreign organizations who seek to negotiate over the removal of security barriers (as some have suggested they will), the executive branch's credibility would almost certainly be challenged by voices inside the People's Council. Moreover, the opposition would be handed a popular issue that pits the parliament against the government and could be interpreted as demonstrating government disregard for the public and weakness in the face of foreign pressure. The lower house can maneuver the government into a similar corner if it decides to curtail the activities of a large number of foreign NGOs. After his selection as speaker of the People's Council in late December, Mohammad Yunos Qanuni resigned as head the unofficial National Understanding Front -- a loose alliance of would-be opposition parties -- and pledged to work constructively with the government. But Qanuni and his allies appear willing and ready to flex their muscles and challenge Karzai's dominance in the Afghan power structure. The first high-profile opportunity to challenge the government will come when the cabinet faces a vote of confidence.

(...) The weekly "Payam-e Mojahed," the official mouthpiece of the Jami'at-e Islami party to which Qanuni once belonged, asserted in an editorial on 4 January that the Afghan political system is "semi-presidential," as the 2004 constitution grants parliament a supervisory role vis-a-vis the executive branch. In a possible sign of things to come, the weekly added that while President Karzai "chairs the cabinet...he does not have full authority to form the cabinet. A vote of confidence from the parliament is required. That is why the next cabinet will be a mixed one" that would include Karzai supporters and opponents alike. Karzai worked hard to avoid the establishment of a parliamentary system with a prime minister and to prevent political parties from gaining a strong foothold. Enter the National Assembly, which may well trumpet its new presence by challenging presidential authority and drawing Karzai into popular contests that he simply cannot win.

RFE/RL Afghanistan Report, Vol. 5, No. 1, 16/1/2006

Seizures and Arrests

Over 20 kg of heroin seized in Kyrgyz south in one month

According to Osh regional interior directorate's press service, officers from the directorate's anti-drug squad detained a certain S. at the 62nd km of the Osh-Bishkek road on 9 December [2005]. A total of 10.4 kg of heroin was found in a hide in his vehicle. The detainee said that the drug was bound to Russia. Sources at the Osh regional interior directorate said that from 4 December 2005 till 4 January 2006, officers of the regional interior directorate seized 17.5 kg of drugs, of which 10 kg and 275 g was heroin.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, Source: Kyrgyz AKI press news agency website, 10/1/2006

Tajik citizen was detained with 2.680 kilos of heroin

Tajik citizen Mirzohodjaev was detained by the MIA Anti-Drug Unit in the village of Aleksandrovka, Moskovskiy district, Chui oblast. He was in possession of 2.680 kilos of heroin.

The Times of Central Asia, 10/1/2006

FSB curbs heroin trafficking channel to Novosibirsk

The Federal Security Service department in the Novosibirsk region has curbed a drug trafficking channel from Yekaterinburg to Novosibirsk. During the operation two drug dealers were detained and two kilograms of heroin were confiscated from them, the public relations group of the Federal Security Service department told Itar-Tass on Wednesday.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 11.1.2006

US-Iranian national detained at Iran airport with opium in toffees

An American-Iranian national has been arrested in Tehran for trying to fly out of the country with 11 kg of opium hidden in toffees, the governmental Iran newspaper said Thursday.

Agence France Presse, 12/1/2006

Tajik police seize 4 kg of Moscow-bound heroin

An illegal attempt of drug trafficking to Russia has been foiled in Qurghonteppa. The operation to find and seize 4 kg of heroin was carried out by personnel from the Tajik Interior Ministry' Transport Directorate.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, Source: Tajik news agency Asia-Plus, 12/1/2006

Tajik border lacks defenses against trafficking - drugs agency

The border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is poorly equipped to prevent the transportation of illegal drugs across it, the head of the Tajik Agency for Drug Control said Thursday.

RIA Novosty, 12/1/2006

Channel of drug deliveries from Kyrgyzstan to Russia stops to exist

Officers of the Department of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service (FDCD) for the Novosibirsk Region have rendered harmless a contraband channel of heroin deliveries from Kyrgyzstan to Russia. Three drug dealers were arrested and 2.5 kilograms of heroin were seized, Itar-Tass learnt at the FDCD regional department on Friday. "This international organized criminal group has been supplying Russian drug dealers with high-quality heroin in unlimited amounts during several years," FDCD representatives said. This criminal group was headed by an unemployed resident of Rostov who had many convictions before. Criminal proceedings were instituted against the detainees who face a 20-year imprisonment.

Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, 13/1/2006

Over 8 kilograms of heroin seized in Krasnoyarsk

Officers of the Department of the Russian Federal Drug Control Service (FDCD) for the Krasnoyarsk Territory have confiscated over eight kilograms of heroin from drug dealers, Itar-Tass learnt at the FDCD press service on Friday.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 13/1/2006

Tajik police seize 70 kg of Moscow-bound heroin

Officers of the Tajik Interior Ministry's Transport Directorate seized a large batch of heroin in Dushanbe last night, the head of the directorate, Jurakhon Zoirov.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, Text of report by Tajik Avesta website, 15/1/2006

Afghan security forces destroy heroin laboratory in eastern province

A quantity of machinegun ammunition, heroin and opium has been recovered from a house in Khogiani District. Providing details of the operation, the deputy commander of eastern provinces border brigade, Col Mohammad Abrar, told Afghan Islamic Press today: "Our forces entered a house in Loya Turmay village in Khogiani District last night. After a brief clash, they discovered 28 kg of heroin, five sacks of opium and 44 boxes of machinegun ammunition during the search."

BBC Monitoring South Asia, Source: Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency, 15/1/2006:

Bulgarian Police Seize 40 Kilograms Of Heroin

The Bulgarian police have seized 40 kilograms of heroin in the capital, Sofia. Police say the 80 packages of heroin, which were found on 16 January in a car driven by a Turkish citizen, were destined for Western Europe. The street

value of the heroin was put at about 1.2 million euros (\$1.45 million). The seizure was the result of a joint operation by Bulgarian anti-mafia officers and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

RFE/RL, (source: AP/ITAR-TASS), 16/1/2006