

Madam Hanifa Mezoui,
Chief NGO Section.

Dear Madam,

On 10th January 2005 we were asked to produce the copies of three documents. I have the honour to submit the copies herewith. These are:

1. Documentation of the briefing session on Religious Minorities in South Asia
2. Research paper titled "Drugs and Arms Trafficking in Central Asia".
3. Financial statement from 13th November 2003 to 31 December 2004

With thanks,

Sincerely,



K.N. Pandita
Secretary General,
Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum

UN, New York Jan 11, 2005

Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum

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Briefing

Accommodating Religious Minorities in South Asia

A variety of views was expressed by many speakers and participants in the briefing which deliberated on strengthening a streamlining democratic institutions and processes in the South Asian countries. One aspect on which much emphasis was laid was that of accommodating the rights of religious minorities. South Asian countries were a mosaic of cultures, languages, traditions and ethnicities. Since historically religion has been of special significance to a large population in the region, the speakers felt that some specific recommendations would be desirable in regard to accommodating the rights of the religious minorities. The following recommendations were suggested:

1. States could consider reservations for the religious minorities in all the three organs, namely executive, judicial and legislative. This should be without prejudice to the rights and obligations of the citizens in general.
 2. States could empower representative bodies of religious minority organizations with a mandate of advising the governments concerned in regard to social reforms and perceptions of the members of the religious minority.
 3. Though separate electorate is not generally perceived a very healthy political dispensation yet in order to bring about cohesion and consolidation in inter-societal relationship, separate electorate for religious minorities could be considered in order to strengthen and streamline the democratic institutions.
 4. A religious minority would also need economic stability so that it is not made vulnerable to political blackmail, which generally surfaces in the politics of majoritarianism. The religious minorities cannot be coerced into falling in line with the majority group as an instrument of intimidation.
 5. Religious minorities need assurances and guarantees for the protection and promotion of their culture, traditions, language, life style etc. These manifestations of civil society have to be incorporated into the principal guidelines for just and good governance.
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Narcotic and Arms Trafficking in Central Asian Region Threat to Peace and Stability

Kashinath Pandita*

The question is: Does trafficking in narcotics and small arms actually imply a serious threat to regional security and stability? There can be two opinions.

On the one extreme those traumatized by 9/11 would be justified in saying it does. But on the other extreme there are Theo.-fascists who paint the criminals as heroes or freedom fighters. They take recourse to their warbled logic.

The issue merits an absorbing debate.

Philosophy

In essence, the aim of narcotics - arms nexus is not to challenge regional security or to destabilize a state. Unlike Theo.-fascists and their militias, narcotics and arms traffickers usually are not committed to any definite political mission. Their primary aim is that of making quick and big money.

In order to achieve that aim, narcotics and illicit arms traffickers are determined to fight and overcome all obstructions in their way. Obstruction comes from the state because a state is required to preserve its laws and protect its civil society. Thus begins an intra - state or inter-state conflict between the philosophies of preservation and destruction. It is here that security, stability and peace in the region are threatened.

Narcotics and arms traffickers usually concentrate on two aspects of their strategy. These are (a) how to circumvent/tackle the law enforcing apparatus, and (b) look out for alternate routes of transporting the illegal stuff.

Enforcement establishment is usually tackled with the instrument of bribe, intimidation or terror, whatever works. And alternate routes are found by creating new conduits and willing operatives. This involves segments of civil society. One half of the total population of Afghanistan is reported to be involved in drug trade.

We say that the traffickers generally do not have a political mission. But terrorist groups with known anti-state political mission need the drug and arms traffickers on their side. The reasons are (i) to neutralize them as possible informers, and (ii) to reinforce the ranks of their underground armed militias, and lastly to induct big money into terrorist activities.

The drug and arms syndicate in conjunction with terrorist outfits is divisible into three categories. (i) exclusively the Mafia itself like the drug barons of Afghanistan (ii) politically motivated terrorist groups empathizing narcotics-arms combine. Al Qaeda and the Taliban could be placed in this category (iii) anti-state group(s) sustained by drug and

arms money and feigning radicalism. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan is one such glaring example in Central Asia. It controlled 70 per cent of drug trade between Afghanistan and Central Asia in 1999, and launched armed incursion under the title of *jihad* for new routes of drug trafficking.ⁱ

Big money is the real source of power and the most effective instrument with the drug traffickers. They bribe corruptible border guards and security personnel along the narcotic route. Corrupted border guards close their eyes to free transshipment of illicit cargo. Bribing important components of enforcement apparatus and echelons of state bureaucracy even up to the highest level of the head of the state (as allegedly in the case of Turkmenistan or the head of the enforcement department in Tajikistan), scuttles state action against the defaulters. The arrest of top ranking officers in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and recently in Tajikistan lends strength to our statement.ⁱⁱ

Source

The war against drugs has to be waged in Afghanistan. "Fight against drugs is fight for Afghanistan", says Afghan President Hamid Karzai. In 2002 poppy products in Afghanistan increased by 6 % taking the total yield to 3600 tons valued at 2.3 billion US dollars. Poppy trade makes more than half of Afghan GDP.ⁱⁱⁱ 75 % of drugs, opium, heroin and morphine brought to European countries comes from Afghanistan. Despite some talk of reducing the areas of poppy cultivation, the picture given by the UNODC is discouraging. It warned of a bumper crop in southern provinces in 2004 that could be 30 to 80 per cent more than what was produced in 2003.^{iv} The total area under poppy cultivation in the Taliban period was estimated at 10,000 hectares, which has increased to over 82,000 hectares now.^v Significantly the area of poppy cultivation near Tajik-Afghan border to the north has increased by over 50 per cent. In Badakhshan province the area of poppy cultivation has increased to 13,000 hectares.

Drug industry of Afghanistan, no doubt a disastrous phenomenon for that country and for the international community, would not have posed real serious threat to the security and stability of the Central Asian region if the drug traffickers had not chosen the Northern Route for smuggling out the stuff.

Routes

Up to 1999, drug traffickers generally used the traditional Balkan Peninsula route to carry narcotics to European countries via Iran and Turkey. But because of very effective implementation of Iran's counter-narcotic programme supported by the UN and western countries and resulting in 85 % of global seizures, drug barons and smugglers explored new routes. Broadly speaking, the new smuggling routes are:

- (a) Northern Route meaning Afghanistan- Tajikistan/Uzbekistan/ Kyrgyzstan/Kazakhstan -/Moscow and finally to the European countries.
- (b) Turkmenistan - the Caucasus route to Europe.
- (c) Southern route via Pakistan/India.

The 1200 kilometer long Afghan-Tajikistan border provides one of the most important transit routes for Afghan heroin. According to UNODC report, Tajikistan accounts for more than 90 % of Afghan drugs seized in Central Asia. This can be gleaned from the quantity of drugs seized in Tajikistan. The figures for the year 2003 are:

opium seized 2,371 kilograms,
heroin seized 5,600 kilograms
possible quantity that might have passed - 23000 kgs

During only one month in 2004, the quantity of drugs seized in Tajikistan was 700 kilograms.^{vi} “ After Pakistan and Iran, Tajikistan ranked third in drug seizures in 2003 capturing 9.6 mt including 6 mt of heroin”, said Major Yuldashov.^{vii}

These alarming facts and figures have come to fore despite many efforts on international level to control the menace. Three UN Drug Control Convention Protocols for a period of 36 months were signed between the Tajik President Imomali Rahmanov and the Director General of UNODC on April 27, 1997. The International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) of the US State

The Caucasus route viz. Afghanistan - Turkmenistan - Caspian Sea - Russia and to Western Europe has become the second important transit route of drug traffickers after the Northern Route. This is substantiated by the sudden proliferation of drug industry, in terms of both home consumption and export, in Turkmen Republic in recent years. The cryptic remark about the strategic position of Turkmenistan in drug transiting is that it is the hub for “chemicals to east and heroin and opium to west”. Obviously, tightening control on Afghanistan - Tajikistan border prompts the drug traffickers to use the Trans-Caucasus route.

Turkmenistan is a somewhat peculiar Central Asian Republic to deal with in terms of drug industry. With a 700 kilometer - long border with Northern Afghanistan, the Turkmen government denies import of Afghan narcotics either into Turkmenistan or through its territory to Turkey and beyond.

But according to UNICEF registered drug users in Turkmenistan grew from 5,953 (or 125 per 10 thousand of population) in 1997 to 13,000 (or 242 per 10 thousand) in 2000.. 20 % of addicts inject drugs intravenously though some experts put it a 30 %. At least unsafe injecting of drugs is widespread in Turkmenistan. James Callahan, head of UNODC in Central Asian regional office said in an interview, “ In general within the Central Asian region the rate of drug addiction is about 1 % of population in Central Asia but it could be different in Turkmenistan.”^{viii} 1 % of official figure makes it 64,000 addicts in a population of 6.4 million Turkmens.

In Hitrovka residential district in Turkmen capital Ashkabad, an injecting dose costs US \$ 1.25 and smoking prices vary between \$ 0.60 and \$1.00. In wedding parties in rural areas, young people offer each other doses of heroin.. The Turkmen government never discloses

any seizures. “ Even UN does not know what they are doing about drug trafficking”, said Kemal Dozmetov, head of Uzbek National Centre for Drug Control.^{ix} International Narcotic Control Board (INCB), an independent UN body monitoring global drug proliferation, criticized Turkmenistan for not cooperating with international community in its fight against drugs. “Ashkabad failed to participate in several regional and sub-regional drug control activities”, it said. This is notwithstanding the UNODC’s national project on border control in Turkmenistan. The growing number of Casinos and luxury cars running along Ashkabad streets indicate the presence of prosperous drug syndicate in Turkmenistan despite all official denials.

Uzbekistan sits astride several routes through which Southwest Asian opium and cannabis reach Russia and western Europe. Watermarks along Uzbek transit route are: Afghanistan - Gorno Badakhshan - Osh (in Kyrgyzstan) - Andijan (in Uzbekistan) - Russia and then to Western Europe. It is noted that the Termez route along Afghanistan - Uzbekistan border is less appealing to drug traffickers. But of all the CARs, it is President Islam Karimov’s government in Uzbekistan that is facing direct and open challenge from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). That terrorist organization makes no bones of its political agenda Its overt and covert hobnobbing with banned radical and armed Islamist organizations and its networking with drug and arms Mafia in vast Central Asian region are not hidden from security and intelligence agencies.

In connection with the south and south - eastern transit routes for trafficking Afghan opiates, India, in her talks with Pakistan, did raise the issue of smuggling of poppy cultivated in Afghanistan and parts of NWFP in Pakistan, through Punjab, Jammu and Rajasthan, and by sea route to Mambai. Its ultimate destinations were South East Asian and also the European countries. India stated that the drug money was used in funding armed insurgency in her part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. ^x

Security question

This brief survey brings us back to the question raised at the beginning of this paper, viz. does narcotics and arms trafficking actually threaten the security of the region and the stability of Central Asian States.? I think we are now in a better position to provide a clear and decisive answer to that question.

It is not only the drug trafficking as the exclusive phenomenon that will account for the insecurity and instability of the region. It is a complex and complicated affair. The entire spectrum will have to be taken into account. By entire spectrum we mean historical, political, economic, social, geographical and topographical factors all closely inter-linked.

The criminals are active because they know that the local regimes are alarmingly weak. Their economies are fragile and the drug capital pumped into legitimate business is distorting their economy. Old networks in Afghanistan have created their Central Asian chapters. Border security guards have been corrupted. High quantum of seizures indicates

steep rise in production of narcotics. Competing drug lords are criminalising society. HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis are on steady rise. 1 % of population in CARs has succumbed to drugs. 1.2 million are afflicted with HIV/AIDS and 20,000 persons die each year of this disease. 83 % of Tajik population lives below national poverty line. 17 % of total Tajik population constitute the destitute.^{xi}

Vast increase in heroin trafficking brings the five Central Asian Republics face to face with destabilization. Drug money fuels corruption and lawlessness, observes Sergei Andreyev of London - based Institute of Ismaili studies.^{xii}

Past century saw commercialization and mass proliferation of drug trafficking and money laundering in vulnerable Central Asian states. Political issues are threatening inter-state relations. Russia and Uzbekistan justify their interference with the Tajik State. A powerful nexus has developed among the drug syndicate, arms dealers, Islamic fundamentalists and terrorist groups. They make common cause with powerful terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, Taliban, Jihad organization, IMU, Lashkar-e-Teyyaba and others.

Commenting on the factor of transnational crime related to drug trafficking in Central Asia, Tamara Makarenko writes^{xiii} that Trans-national crime poses threat to the region (Central Asia). A chain of regional and international players including officials and security personnel in several governments, is actively involved in the industry. Apart from Afghan and Central Asian operatives, there are Chinese, Korean, American and Nigerian criminal groups also active in the trade. Transitional criminals are not necessarily based in Afghanistan They have their network in neighbouring countries like Iran and Pakistan and their stock piles also are outside Afghanistan like in Osh in Kyrgyzstan, Shymkent and Samarkand in Uzbekistan and the NWFP and the region eastwards touching on the western borders of Indian part of Kashmir.

Citing the example of IMU, Tamara states that IMU profited much from transnational crime-terror nexus. “ It is criminal and terrorist in nature because of its direct involvement in drug trade. IMU has openly declared to destabilize the Uzbek government. It wants to keep border disturbed for the conduct of drug trade. IMU entered Balkan , it took hostages in Kyrgyzstan and asked for release of 50 thousand Muslims allegedly held in Uzbek jails. At the end of the day it settled for 50 thousand US dollars.”^{xiv}

I would also like to draw the attention of my readers to the recent statement of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, which came on the occasion of releasing a country report on Afghanistan. He said, “Afghanistan’s illicit drug trade is burgeoning, with at least one initiative by the country’s authorities to eradicate opium poppy fields “largely ineffective”. Corruption caused by the drug trade is also on the rise threatening lasting peace as the country prepares for elections.”^{xv}

Tackling the problem

.We know that most of the countries in the west and the east today have elaborate legal mechanisms to deter illegal drug and arms trafficking. Apart from that they have also anti-drug enforcement establishments doing a commendable job. In addition, we have the anti-drug office at the UN with highly trained and dedicated workers who cooperate with willing countries in curbing drug menace. In some special cases like that of Iran, the results of cooperation have been highly satisfactory and could be emulated by other countries. It provides excitingly useful information and data on the subject.

Yet with all this elaborate arrangement, the poppy cultivation in Afghanistan in 2003 has increased by whooping 12 per cent. This means that drug conduits have either explored new areas for drug proliferation or have intensified the marketing of the commodity to the end consumer. Consequently, it makes the international community re-assess the means and methods it has employed to control the menace. It also means that much remains to be done in this context.

On 11 August 2004, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld paid an undeclared visit to Kabul. He took a short trip to Jalalabad, the important eastern town of Afghanistan on the road to Pakistan. In a brief answer to a question Rumsfeld said that the US was thinking of a “master plan” for effective control of drug trafficking. This revealed the prioritizing of anti-drug programme in US’ agenda for the region. However he did not elaborate the contours of the plan.

In my opinion, the drug and arms trade phenomenon is constituted of three main elements. These are (a) production at the base (b) transportation, and (c) the end consumer element. Let us reflect succinctly on each element.

(a) Poppy cultivation, an old practice with the Afghans, involves half of the total population of the country. Its clandestine export and high return make opium cultivation a cash crop. The industry has given rise to drug barons with close links to warlords who are not only highly influential in government circles but are actually a part of it even in Karzai government. No local regime, therefore, has the power to order stoppage of poppy cultivation. The so-called destroying programme of poppy crop is only an eye wash. The anti-drug programme providing 3.6 million US dollars to cut poppy production to 25,000 hectares in 2003 has not worked. The British-run Central Poppy Eradication Force in Nangarhar, the highest poppy producing province in Afghanistan, has the target of reducing poppy production by 70 % in four years time. But during his visit to Afghanistan in May 2004, the British Foreign Minister said, “ the results are not what we expected.” The drug barons pay a bribe of US \$ 100.00 per acre to overlook poppy cultivation. On an average a farmer cultivating poppy gets about US \$ 3900.00 per crop, which is ten times the salary of a teacher in Afghanistan. The yield per hectare is around US \$ 220. The destroying campaign ultimately did not do more than 8 per cent of promised destruction of poppy crop.

This being the ground situation, some extraordinary steps need to be taken to stem the tide. Given the serious international implications of drug production and subsequent transshipment and marketing, international community could take direct control of

putting an end to its cultivation at the root. This could be done step by step. The first step would be to throw a cordon round a particular drug producing province or district in Afghanistan by virtue of a UN instrument, control all entry and exit routes and disallow cultivation of poppy within the cordoned area. Alongside with cordoning off programme, avenues of alternate employment and earning for the youth of the localities have to be opened by productively investing the funds that otherwise were set apart for bribing the cultivators. Once the message goes round that the international community has taken the matter seriously, it will have its impact.

There is an impression with a section of observers and commentators that the US is not doing enough either to destroy the refining laboratories on Afghan soil or to increase surveillance on the transit routes. The argument is that since the maximum quantity of Afghan drugs is consumed in European countries (to the tune of 90 %) and does not reach the US, therefore US does not feel it necessary to open another front against the Afghans. The thinking is also that induction of some Afghan warlords in tandem with the drug syndicate into the Afghan government is a good riddance for the regime in Kabul. A mechanism has to be evolved to break the jinx.

(b) Transportation of drugs and arms is essentially undertaken by local conduits. They have raised armed gangsters who escort drug and arms consignments along the transit routes. They never hesitate to engage the security guards if they find them obstructing the passage of the stuff they carry. The primary role in preventing shipments rests with the local law enforcing apparatus. The usual reason given by that structure is inadequacy of effective arms and man power. But along with that most modern equipment of tracing and pursuing the culprits has to be provided.

A possible solution would be that of deploying a multi-national anti - drug paramilitary force equipped with latest communication systems, rapid transportation and deployment mechanisms, creation of counter drug trafficking civilian groups of local watchers, informers and messengers who would receive handsome remuneration for their good work.

It should also be possible for the traffic department in each CAR through which transit routes have been established, to provide detailed computerized information of each and every vehicle that passes through the check points. The computerized information could trace the clues to the origin of transportation or transshipment of drugs and arms. It will also expose false and fabricated plate numbers of the vehicles carrying the stuff. This again has to be an international enterprise and cannot be left entirely to the local actors.

(c) And finally we come to the end consumer. Unfortunately, the end consumer, who pays for the drugs with his or her money, health, life and social structure is essentially a citizen of Europe. Maximum Afghan drugs are destined for Europe. As such, there is a big challenge in front of European policy planners, strategists, sociologists, psychologists and economists to sit together and discuss the whole issue objectively. It is they who have to see whether there is something more than what meets the eye in the matter. If they are able to mould the culturally advanced, socially vibrant, politically conscious,

economically stable and intellectually responsive youth of Europe into a healthy frame of mind, it will result in immediate and total collapse of drug monster.

I know that most of the European governments are eager to evolve legal, constitutional and institutional mechanisms to eradicate the menace. But what they are lacking at the moment is the moral thrust to prevent human aberration.

I would like to state a very good example of moral thrust against the curse. His Highness The Agha Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Shias in the world issued an edict in 2002 imposing a ban on drug industry in the Gorno Badakhshan autonomous region of Tajikistan. With this edict in force all drug related activities namely producing, transiting and marketing, came to a dead stop.

Instead of waging a campaign for conversion to their respective faiths, instead of patronizing narrow sectarian ideologies and instead of overtly supporting confrontational postures in the matter of interfaith relationship, Europe's outstanding religious leaders, prominent social figures and dedicated humanists and human rights organizations should join hands to educate and guide the world's most advanced community against committing suicide. The people of Europe should refuse to use drugs. The message should go from house to house and from man to man. This is to usher in a social and psychological revolution long awaited in Europe.

In conclusion, we may say that drug trafficking is a multi-headed monster posing potential threat to our security and stability. It is to be prioritized as the most important and crucial issue facing mankind. As such, it has not to be left entirely to the local regimes, societies and or administrative apparatus. It is an issue in which entire mankind is involved. As such entire world has to play a role in its eradication. Preventive, remedial and reformatory measures all have to be taken together to put an end to this source of threat.

The End

(The author is the former Director of the Centre for Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University, India)

References

ⁱ 'Drug Trafficking in Central Asia', R. Radhakrishnan, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, Article No. 1215, 24 Nov. 2003.

ⁱⁱ Lt. Gen. Ghafor Mirzoyev, former Head of Tajik Anti-Narcotic Agency was arrested during a raid on his house in which 3000 weapons including a Stinger anti-aircraft missile were recovered. IRIN Special web.

ⁱⁱⁱ United Nations Office for Drug Control (UNODC) report released in February 2003.

^{iv} Thomas Pietschman of UNODC, report released February 2003.

^v Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), a UN initiative, IRINnews.org, see Afghanistan

^{vi} Ibid

^{vii} Interview of Major Ayaz Yuldashov of Tajik Drug Control Agency to IRIN. loc.cit.

^{viii} Ibid

^{ix} Interview, IRIN, loc.cit

^x 'Indo-Pak Talks on Terrorism and Drug Trafficking' by Prafulla Ketka, *IPCS* Article No. 1470 of 21 Aug. 2004.

^{xi} World Bank Report on Tajikistan 2003.

^{xii} 'Regional Impact of Afghan heroin trade', Sergei Andreyev, IRIN web special on Central Asia

^{xiii} Tamara Makarenko, 'Crime, Terror and Drug Trade' in *Harvard Asia Quarterly* vol. 6, Summer 2002 pp. 17 - 21.

^{xiv} Ibid.

^{xv} *UN Newsletter*, vol. 59, No. 34, p.2, UN Information Centre, New Delhi,

Asian-Eurarian Human Rights Forum (AEHRF)
Geneva Office (European Chapter)

Financial Statement

From 13th November 2003 to 31st December 2004

CHF

Balance Sheet - 31 December 2004

CCR 17-114165-7 (Post Account)	13,518.20
UBS 240614.294.40C (Bank Account)	1,440.32
Withholding tax	4.85
Total Assets	<u>14,963.37</u>
Expenditures to be paid back to Sophie B.	5,201.35
Expenditures to be paid back to Heidi B.	640.45
Result of the period	9,121.57
Total Liabilities	<u>14,963.37</u>

Incomes

Donations	15,010.00
Interests	13.80
Total Incomes	<u>15,023.80</u>

Expenditures

Administration	1,260.20
Websites	457.95
Club and Org. Membership Fees	499.60
Documentation and Books	237.20
Conferences and Meetings	70.00
Travel expenses	3,316.85
Financial expenses	60.43
Total Expenditures	<u>5,902.23</u>
Total Result	<u>9,121.57</u>

Geneva, 2 Jan. 2005

Sophie L. Barathieu
President

Heidi Barathieu-Brun
Secretary & Treasurer