



10-Nov-2017: Afghanistan - Reported weapons trafficking, increase in US military airstrikes highlights HIGH risk airspace environment below FL260

Open source intelligence reporting from late-October indicates the Afghan Taliban claims to have received Anza Mk-II manportable air defence systems (MANPADS) and HJ-8 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) from weapons trafficking sources in Pakistan. The influx of weapons claimed by the Afghan Taliban coincides with the dramatic increase in US military airstrikes targeting the group, with more airstrikes occurring through just the first 9 months of 2017 than in any year since 2012. Though the Afghan Taliban claims have not been independently verified, documented MANPADS possession and use in Afghanistan by violent non-state actor (VNSA) groups dates back to the 1980s.

Analysis

The most recent MANPADS attack in the country occurred over Kunduz Province in early-October 2015, when Afghan Taliban militants unsuccessfully targeted a US military AC-130 combat aircraft. Of note, Pakistani authorities have recovered three separate weapons caches during 2017 containing Russian-made 9K32 Strela-2 (SA-7 GRAIL) MANPADS in VNSA group hideouts in Pakistan's Balochistan Province, a longstanding Afghan Taliban safe-haven located along the border with Afghanistan. EASA along with the US, UK, French and German civil aviation authorities have each issued warnings regarding the persistent threat posed to civil aviation within Afghanistan due to the enduring conflict zone environment. We continue to assess Afghanistan to be a HIGH risk airspace environment below FL260 due to the presence of VNSA groups equipped with MANPADS.

Risk area recommendation: GO+3 - Comprehensive risk mitigation measures

- Flights below FL260 not advised; essential flights over FL260 via measures below
- Defer diverting from flight plan with the exception of life threatening situations
- Security and operational risk-based identification of pre-planned divert airports
- Reliable and redundant communications with an established communications plan
- Fully-coordinated and robust emergency response plan supplemented by asset tracking

Historic data

10 Nov 2017	Taliban claims receiving HJ-8 ATGMs from weapons trafficking sources in Pakistan	Afghanistan	Helmand
10 Nov 2017	Taliban claims recovering weapons cache containing RPG rounds and rocket launcher	Afghanistan	Parwan
10 Nov 2017	Taliban claims receiving Anza Mk-II MANPADS from weapons trafficking sources in Pakistan	Afghanistan	Helmand
10 Nov 2017	Airstrikes were reported in the area	Afghanistan	Badakhshan
10 Nov 2017	Taliban claims truck bomb attack on 2nd Battalion Base in Bolan area	Afghanistan	Helmand

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10 Nov 2017 Airstrikes were reported in the area

Afghanistan

Chimtal, Afghanistan

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