



## Narcotics, Organized Crime & Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: September 20-26 2004

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

**Quote of the week:** "For foreign policy he gets 100 points, for internal policy zero points. He goes outside the country, speaks English, wears original national clothing, and the ladies like him. But you need internal support to run a country" - Homayoun Shah Assefy, Afghan Presidential candidate, on Hamid Karzai, The Telegraph, 25/09/04.

### **The annual Kanal**

The yearly Kanal drug enforcement effort was undertaken between 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September in Russia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Belarus. As always, it was considered a great success. 15 tons of drugs were seized, 1,223 criminal cases begun and 963 people arrested.

ITAR-TASS, <http://www.itar-tass.com/level2.html?NewsID=1278114&PageNum=0>

### **Addiction on the Uzbek route**

Uzbekistan's southern Sukhandarya province continues to struggle under the burden of bordering Afghanistan. Uzbek officials comment on high rates of crime and addiction there, but maintain that the flow of drugs comes via Tajikistan, not over the Uzbek-Afghan border, which for drug trafficking is "virtually impossible". According to a doctor at a rehabilitation clinic in the border town of Termez, there are at least 2,000 registered addicts in the province, double what the number of three years ago, although he added that "To come to the real number, this figure must be multiplied by six or seven."

IRIN, [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org), "Crime and addiction rising on opium front line", 22/09/04

### **Tajikistan's closing political system**

20 members of Hizb ut-Tahrir were sentenced to prison on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Nine were convicted of active membership and given 14 to 15 years. The other eleven received six months to one year, most for failure to report a crime. In total 70 members have been arrested during the year.

kazinform, [www.inform.kz](http://www.inform.kz), <http://www.inform.kz/txt/showarticle.php?lang=eng&id=94334>

### **The World Bank on Afghanistan**

The World Bank released its first report on the Afghan economy in more than a quarter of a century, characterizing its current state as a vicious cycle. William Byrd, Senior Economic Adviser and lead author of the report, described the Afghan economy as recovering, but doubted development could occur while the vast proportion of activity is informal. For the World Bank's full analysis and recommendations, visit [www.worldbank.org/af](http://www.worldbank.org/af).

M2 PressWire, 23/09/04

## **A long and complex process**

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The upcoming Afghan presidential poll is unlikely to halt opium production quickly, affirmed Doris Buddenberg, the new head of UNODC Kabul. Some experts have suggested that the great positive in the campaign is that drug barons have little direct influence over any of the candidates. Nevertheless, as one diplomat commented anonymously on Karzai, his “natural constituency is the Pashtuns, and Pashtun farmers are the ones growing the poppies”.

Reuters, “Polls unlikely to halt Afghan drug trade – experts”, 26/09/04

## **Continuing confusion on the Tajik border**

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Russian Police General Viktor Cherkosov, head of the Federal Service for Drug Trafficking Control, has weighed in on the debate over handing control of the Tajik-Afghan border to Tajik guards, declaring Dushanbe’s plan to be too high a risk. He also expressed his hope that his service might open a Kabul office in the next few months, pending negotiations with the Afghan Interior and Foreign Ministries

Interfax, via WPS Russian Media Monitoring, 26/09/04

## **Dirty laundry**

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The Tajik Military Prosecutor’s Office has suspended the activities of Olimp Bank, due to suspicion that it was involved in the crimes of former Drug Control Agency head, Ghaffor Mirzoev, currently under trial. The bank’s president assured depositors that they would regain access when the investigation is completed in two weeks, but prosecutors refused to set a date.

Radio Free Europe, [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org), “Tajik officials suspend bank activities”, 24/09/04

## **Just don’t inhale**

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7 tons of narcotics were burnt in Kabul by the Interior Ministry on Thursday, including 2,660kg of opium, 4,100kg of hashish and 170kg of heroin. These were seized in the last 40 days, and the Counter-Narcotics Directorate counts 100 tons of seizures of all drugs in the last six months.

Xinhua, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-09/23/content\\_2013283.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-09/23/content_2013283.htm)

## **Something new in Kazakhstan?**

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8 known drug abusers committed themselves to Tekeli hospital in central Kazakhstan, all of them suffering from poisoning. Doctors couldn’t determine the cause and three died within two hours of arriving, another two later on. Two others were admitted to the central hospital in Yeskeldi district.

[www.cry.ru](http://www.cry.ru), <http://www.cry.ru/text.sthlm?20040921080439.inc>

## **Putin frustrated**

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“They are not doing anything worthwhile to abate even try to abate the threat. Nothing is happening.” So said Russian President Putin of US and British efforts at drug control in Afghanistan, ahead of expected reports from the CIA and the UN of an increase in cultivation.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta, via WPS Russian Media Monitoring, 24/09/04

## **Seizures and Arrests**

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### **At the front line**

On Saturday, three men were spotted by Russian border guards on the Tajik border but managed to flee, leaving behind 16kg of heroin.

A 20 year-old Tajik citizen was arrested on the Almaty-Chelyabinsk train in Kazakhstan on Tuesday with 470g of heroin hidden in his shoes.

[www.cry.ru, http://www.cry.ru/text.shtml?200409211145632.inc](http://www.cry.ru/text.shtml?200409211145632.inc)

### **Arresting your own**

Near the centre of Bishkek, National Security Service officers detained police officers selling heroin. One died of a heart attack, one escaped and the third, a colonel of the regional traffic police, is in custody. The head of the group involved in the operation, Belek Ashurov, said that the arrests were the result of a sting operation carried out by NSS officers.

KyrgyzInfo News Agency, via BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 22/09/04

### **Labs in Nangarhar**

At a news conference yesterday, Afghan Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali reported that police had destroyed 47 processing laboratories in Nangarhar province, seizing 61 tons of drugs and making 12 arrests as part of the operation in the mountainous Chahardara area in Spin Ghar.

Bakhtar News Agency, via BBC Monitoring South Asia, 26/09/04

### **Not drugs, but it deserves a mention...**

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On Thursday, Turkmenistan's citizens were treated to a live broadcast (on all three channels) of Turkmenbashi reciting 90 minutes of his new poetry, a collection entitled the Spring of Inspiration. "I am hoping you will sincerely express your opinion," he said at the end of the event.

ITAR-TASS, [www.itar-tass.com](http://www.itar-tass.com), 23/09/04