



Narcotics, Organized Crime & Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: September 27 - October 03 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: "Lots of money is spent on keeping the people who stop drug trafficking. We have an idea. It would be good to collect money and buy heroin or opium in Afghanistan and destroy it before the eyes of everyone. It would cost us less money than the money that is being spent by all the countries [to fight drug trafficking]," Abdykayym Absatarov, deputy head of the Kyrgyz Customs Service. Channel 31 TV, Almaty, in Russian, 27 September 2004

Presidential elections in Afghanistan: "drug money", "mistakes" in registration of electorate and the return of Taliban to the power

The article stresses on the importance of the upcoming presidential elections in Afghanistan and its consequent effect of the presidential elections in USA. Hence the author of the article argues that for Bush politics it will be of the crucial interest that Hamid Karazai wins the presidential elections in Afghanistan, meanwhile it is tolerated that since the fall of Taliban regime in 2001 the production of opium and heroin has increased up to 70-80% as well as meanwhile the international forces spend tons of finances on fighting the drug producers in Afghanistan, Hamid Karazai in his turn quietly supports the connections with the key figures in this branch and intervenes them into the leading positions in the government.

www.fergana.ru 30.09.2004

Addiction behind the burka: how Afghan women use drugs to cope with legacy of war

Halima first smoked opium to dull the nightmares after her husband's violent death. He was shot at a checkpoint in front of her as they tried to flee fighting in Kabul, leaving her a widow at the age of 27 with three young children and a joyless future to look forward to. In the twilight half-life of an Afghan widow there was little distraction until a neighbour introduced her to a brown paste. Soon she needed to smoke opium in the morning, at lunchtime and at night. Kabul now has an estimated 60,000 drug addicts, their ranks swelled by returnees who picked up the habit in the grim refugee camps of Pakistan and Iran. Doctors in the Afghan capital fear things are going to get much worse.

http://news.independent.co.uk/world/middle_east/story.jsp?story=567154 30 September 2004

Uzbekistan: Tashkent facing drug onslaught as regional heroin production booms

Uzbek law enforcement bodies on Tuesday burned 566 kg of illegal narcotics, including 381 kg of heroin, as part of their fight against illicit drug trafficking. Drug smugglers mostly use Uzbekistan's southern borders, especially in Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya provinces, that touch on both Tajikistan and Afghanistan, en route to Kazakhstan and thence to Russia and Europe. With poppy cultivation in Afghanistan expected to increase by 40 percent this year, drug related crimes may continue to rise, as drug dealers use impoverished people in the Central Asian countries, including women, to smuggle the heroin, experts believe.

IRIN, www.irinnews.org, "Tashkent facing drug onslaught as regional heroin production booms", 28 September 2004

The police in CIS continue joint appeals in fighting the crime

The main goal of Ministers of internal affairs held is to develop plans and programs of co-operation to fight drug-trafficking, international terrorism in Kiev. It was also suggested to organise a regional team in fighting drug-trafficking in Central Asian region.

<http://www.vb.kg/2004/09/30/panorama/3.html>, 30.09.2004

IAF's base in Tajikistan will be ready by 2004

India's first-ever military outpost on foreign soil, located at Farkhor, about 10 km outside Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, is ready to become operational by this year-end, without any fanfare. Reliable sources in the government say the Indian Air Force (IAF) is pressing for an early decision on a suitable aircraft to be stationed at this military base. Operational requirements stipulate at least two squadrons to be stationed there. Logically, experts say, IAF could opt for MiG-29s that are already in its inventory and can be flown in and out of the region. Although Indian officials are not willing to discuss the importance of the Farkhor military base, foreign analysts have noted that the acquisition of the military base in Tajikistan would certainly give the Indian armed forces a longer strategic reach.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/869687.cms> SEPTEMBER 30, 2004

Kyrgyzstan proposes "dubious" idea for fighting Afghan drugs at Kazakh seminar

Kyrgyzstan has put forward its own strategy for fighting Afghan heroin at a session of customs agencies of the countries bordering on Afghanistan in Almaty on 27 September, the Kazakh Channel 31 TV said the same day. "Lots of money is spent on keeping the people who stop drug trafficking. We have an idea. It would be good to collect money and buy heroin or **opium** in Afghanistan and destroy it before the eyes of everyone. It would cost us less money than the money that is being spent by all the countries [to fight drug trafficking]," Abdykayym Absatarov, deputy head of the Kyrgyz Customs Service, said.

Channel 31 TV, Almaty, in Russian 1000 gmt, 27 September 2004

WCO to create belt against drug trafficking around Afghanistan

Secretary General of the World Customs Organisation Francois-Michel Danet called on chiefs of customs organisations in Central Asian states and Russia to create a powerful protective line against drug trafficking from Afghanistan. The operation Tamerlan envisages the creation of national structures for the fight with heroin trafficking in Central Asian states bordering on Afghanistan that will be equipped with modern machinery and well-trained specialists and regional communications structures with the common control centre under the control of the World Customs Organisation. Thirty-five strategic places of heroin trafficking around Afghanistan will be sealed off by new methods of control and management.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 27 September 2004

Seizures and Arrests

Afghanistan: Afghan Police Seize 17 Tons of Narcotics, Destroy 47 Drug Labs

British officials say Afghan special police have seized 17 tons of drugs and 16 tons of chemicals in a series of raids in eastern Afghanistan. The British Foreign Office in London said in a press release that agents of the Afghan Special Narcotics Force also destroyed 47 opium presses. U.N. officials warned recently that the thriving drug industry could turn the war-torn country into a failed narco-state.

VOA News, 27 September 2004

Kazakh was stopped on Kyrgyz border with 11 kilos of hemp.

On the border post Chaldybar a 42 year old Kazakh has been stopped with 11 kg of hemp.

<http://www.cry.ru/text.shtml?200409/20040929091548.inc> 29 September 2004

Tajik policeman to face trial for drug smuggling

Dushanbe, 27 September: The investigation into the criminal case of a detective from Farkhor District's internal affairs department [southern Tajikistan], Nazriddin Nuriddinov, has been completed and sent to court, Avesta has been told by a senior official from the Prosecutor-General's Office. He said the police officer had been charged with drug smuggling from Afghanistan through Farkhor District. "As a result of a joint operation launched by the Tajik Internal Affairs Ministry department for combating drugs and Russian border guards at the beginning of April a citizen of Afghanistan was shot dead and the suspect - a detective from Farkhor District's internal affairs department - was arrested in possession of more than 150 kg of drugs, namely 144.1 kg of heroin and 13.2 kg of raw **opium**," the source said.

Avesta web site, Dushanbe, in Russian, 27 September 2004

Over 3 kg of heroin seized in eastern Kazakhstan

The following is the text of a report entitled "Heroin in socks" by Zhannat Srymbet published in the Kazakh newspaper *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* on 28 September. Customs officers have seized over 3 kg of heroin and 3.5 kg of raw **opium** at the Auyl post of the Semey customs directorate in East Kazakhstan Region. A spaniel called Archi, which has already sniffed tens of kilograms of drugs, sniffed the drugs hidden in cotton socks in a Mercedes car. An investigation was launched into this case against one Uzbek and one Kazakh nationals, the directorate's press service said. Auyl, which is on the border with [Russia's] Altay Territory, is the biggest post in the region. Eight to 10 coaches, four to five lorries and up to 50 cars cross the post daily. Customs officers detained a Kyrgyz national and found 36,703 g of raw **opium** in his car last May.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 28 September 2004

Heroin haul on Tajik-Afghan border

Russian and Tajik security forces seized more than 50 kilograms of heroin on the Tajik-Afghan border that was being smuggled for sale in Russia and western Europe, Russian military officials said Tuesday. The overnight operation resulted in the arrest of one of the three smugglers who were all Tajiks, Aleksandr Kondratyev, spokesman for Russian border guards, told AFP. Tajikistan is the main transit point for heroin from Afghanistan to Russia and on Thursday Russian President Vladimir Putin slammed international troops in Afghanistan for "not doing anything" to stem the drug trade. A US State Department official said the same day that poppy cultivation in Afghanistan was expected to jump by 40 percent this year.

Agence France Presse, 28 September 2004

Kyrgyz operation seizes over 130 kg of heroin, 50 kg of opium

Text of report by Kyrgyz TV on 28 September [Presenter] Three high-explosive bombs, two TNT cartridges, antipersonnel mines and over 2,000 shells and drugs have been seized during the Kanal-2004 (Channel-2004) operation, which the law-enforcement agencies carried out jointly. Our correspondent Rysbek Toktonoliyev gives the details. [Unidentified male voice] In all, 1,483 crimes have been uncovered together with our counterparts from the CST member states. A total of 2,739 kg of narcotic substances of all types, including 131 kg of heroin, 202,190 kg of marijuana, 52 kg of **opium** and also 13 t of precursors have been seized. All the law-enforcement agencies [have uncovered] 73 crimes directly related with drug trafficking, and over 10 kg of **opium** and over 3 kg of heroin, here hard drugs are meant, have been seized. Hashish and marijuana have also been seized. [Correspondent] Agency officers note a sharp increase in drug prices, which testifies to a great shortage of narcotic substances in Bishkek now. This is perhaps a real indicator of our law-enforcement agencies' work.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 28 September 2004

Drug transit through Uzbekistan increased

Drug transit through Uzbekistan is increasing, director of the Uzbek National Information and Analytical Center for Drug Control, Kamol Dusmetov, told Interfax on Monday. "Six hundred and seven kilograms of drugs were detained in

the first half of this year. Nearly 300 kilograms of the drugs were pure heroin, which was 160 kilograms more than a year ago," he said. "Drug expansion in Central Asia can be contained with concrete international cooperation and unified anti-drug strategy for the region," Dusmetov said.

AKIpress, 28 September 2004

Uzbek citizen detained during the attempt to smuggle drug

Bishkek, September 29. (KABAR). Frontier guards of Kyrgyzstan have detained a citizen of Uzbekistan near the frontier post of "Bekabat". The native of Karasuu town of Andijan oblast has tried to smuggle dried leaves of hemp weighing 1,1 kg. The citizen of Uzbekistan has no documents identifying him. The frontier guards transferred the case to customs department of Osh. Besides, the frontier guards at the checkpoint of Tokmok seized 110 gram of **opium** from a citizen of Kyrgyzstan.

Kabar, 29 September 2004

Kazakhstan destroys international drug-trafficking routes

Astana, 30 September: The Kazakh National Security Committee (NSC) together with special services of foreign countries has carried out a number of successful operations to liquidate international drug-trafficking routes. A press release, which was circulated by the NSC today, says that in early September the NSC and the Russian Federal Security Service [FSB] liquidated a route for smuggling cannabis from southern regions of Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation. As a result of the operation, 1,210 kg of marijuana were seized. Also, three members of a criminal group, which included Kazakh and Russian citizens, were detained in Almaty, and 8.4 kg of heroin were seized from them. A member of another criminal group, which was involved in smuggling drugs from Kazakhstan into Russia, was detained in East Kazakhstan Region when he tried to smuggle over 15.5 kg of **opium**.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, 30 September 2004