



## Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 17 – 25 July 2005

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.

### **US 'disappointed' at British failure to stem opium trade**

---

US drug-enforcement officials are "disappointed" and "deeply concerned" about the failure of British-led efforts to fight Afghanistan's heroin trade. The disclosures come ahead of a meeting between Hamid Karzai and Tony Blair in London this week, when the threat posed by the country's "narcocracy" is expected to be high on the agenda. The extent of Washington's unease was revealed during a House of Representatives hearing in Washington last Tuesday, at which Republican legislators branded the situation a "disgrace". Giving evidence, Nancy Powell, an acting assistant secretary of state for the bureau of narcotics, said: "We are not only disappointed but deeply concerned by our results to date." Washington has expressed reservations in the past 18 months over Britain's "softly-softly" approach, which emphasises providing opium farmers with alternative livelihoods. Some believe that this approach has involved too much carrot and not enough stick, although Ms Powell indicated that America was swinging further behind the British approach.

*The Sunday Telegraph, 17/07/05*

### **Farmers in Herat warn they will step up poppy cultivation**

---

Farmers in Herat have warned that they will resume poppy cultivation if the government does not stop importing wheat. The authorities in Herat argue that a shortfall in local crop production forced them to import wheat from neighbouring countries. But farmers rejected this, and said the imported wheat drives down the prices of domestic agricultural products.

*IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No 113, 19/07/05*

### **Blair pledges continued support for Afghanistan**

---

Tony Blair and Hamed Karzai have signed an agreement under which Britain promised to continue helping boost stability, peace and democratisation in Afghanistan. The UK government promised continued economic and military assistance to help combat insurgents and support the counter-narcotics effort.

*IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No 114, 20/07/05*

### **6 million drug addicts in Russia: Illegal drug market in Russia exceeds \$9 billion per year**

---

The annual volume of the illegal drug market in Russia exceeds 250 billion rubles (\$8.74 billion). Yesterday the Russian government unanimously approved the Federal Target Program to Counter Drug Abuse and Illegal Drug Circulation (2005-2009). Poppy straw and marijuana have been identified as the most common illegal drugs in Russia, but they are being rapidly ousted by opium, heroin and cocaine. Meanwhile, public health bodies reported that in 2004 there were 493,000 people in Russia with mental and behavioral disorders caused by drug use. The Federal Service for Control of Drugs Circulation confirms that almost 6 million people are addicted to drugs. The federal program envisages increasing the role of the law-enforcement agencies in combating this "21st century plague," creating a "safety belt" around Afghanistan, introducing measures to prevent drug addiction, introducing new treatment methods

and medical rehabilitation of drug addicts. The goal is to reduce drug use by 16-20% by 2010. Budget funding for the program will be 3.6 billion rubles, and it is planned to obtain an additional 30 million rubles from extra-budgetary sources. This is 100% more than the sum spent in 2002-2004. Last year the police detected over 150,000 drug trafficking crimes, two-thirds of which were serious or very serious crimes.

*RIA Novosti, 22/07/05*

### **New drug route from Afghanistan into Tajikistan**

---

Smuggling drugs from northern Afghanistan to Tajikistan across Amu Darya is cold, wet and dangerous work. But now the traffickers are hoping their job will get easier. The two countries, with United States funding, have begun building a bridge connecting the town of Shir Khan in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province with Panj in Tajikistan. Afghan and Tajik leaders say the bridge will benefit the whole region in terms of trade and transport. No one is looking forward to the scheduled 2007 completion of the 29 million dollar, 672-metre-long bridge more than drug smugglers. Explaining how smuggling is done today, one smuggler told IWPR, "I put 10 to 15 kilos of opium in bags and tie them around my waist, cross the river by tube and get to Tajikistan in 20 minutes. I do this twice a month. (...) This is the best way of doing business because I buy a kilo of opium for 100 [US] dollars from local farmers or shopkeepers and sell it for 200 dollars in Tajikistan," he said. The smugglers are not worried by officials' promises that border security will be tightened when the bridge opens: "We're not concerned about security because the police are our friends," the smuggler added. "It's impossible to smuggle opium without the cooperation of the police. Any time I smuggle opium to Tajikistan, I pay 300 to 400 dollars to the border guards."

*IWPR's Afghan recovery report, No 179, 22/07/05*

### **Afghans to consider legalising opium production**

---

Afghan farmers could from next year be able to grow opium for legal medicinal purposes, under an innovative plan designed to curb illegal production being drawn up by a drug policy think-tank. The Senlis Council, a group that studies narcotics, is in preliminary talks with international organisations and Afghan regional administrations to garner their support for pilot programmes designed to tackle the country's problem with opium by using it to produce the legal painkillers codeine and morphine. The council, due to present in September a feasibility study funded by a dozen European social policy foundations, calculates that Afghan farmers and intermediaries could receive revenues from the scheme that almost match their current earnings from unauthorised opium production for smuggling abroad. The Senlis plan is modelled on programmes in India and Turkey, which have helped reduce illegal opium production through a strictly supervised licensing scheme backed by the US Congress.

*Financial Times, 25/07/05*

## **Seizures and Arrests**

---

### **Justice ministry official arrested for drug trafficking in Tajikistan**

---

A Tajik justice ministry official has been arrested on suspicion of smuggling over four kilograms of heroin, the interior ministry press service said. "The 27-year-old officer was arrested 130 kilometers north of Dushanbe in a mountain pass. During a search, police found packages of heroin stamped with Afghan symbols in his things," the press service said late Saturday. Tajik and Russian border guards seized a record total of 6.5 tonnes of heroin along the 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) Afghan-Tajik border in 2004. Total drug seizures along the border that year amounted to over 8 tonnes.

*AFP, 17/07/05*

### **Customs Officers at Bulgarian-Turkish Border Valued at Lv 4 Mln**

---

Customs officers of the Kapitan Andreevo checkpoint (Bulgarian-Turkish border) prevented the trafficking of 41.340 kg of heroin of some 4 million leva's worth. The drug was found in a Bosnian-registered truck transporting confectionery and traveling from Turkey to Bosnia. The heroin was distributed in 78 packages. The driver was a 41-year old man from Bosnia. A total of seventh cases of preventing heroin traffic at this checkpoint have been registered since early 2005. A total of 177 kg have been seized.

*BTA (Bulgarian News Agency), 17/07/05*

---

## **Police in Kazakh east report drug hauls in first half year**

---

Over the last six months 135 kg of drugs have been seized in East Kazakhstan Region, of which one tenth was heroin, according to the East Kazakhstan regional interior department press service. As has been reported, the second stage of Operation Doping is under way in Kazakhstan and particularly in the country's east. During this period [not specified] 19 offences were registered and 15 criminal cases brought in the region. A total of 144 grams of narcotic substances have been seized. Altogether, 341 crimes relating to illicit trafficking of narcotic substances were registered in the region in the first six months of the year. Of these, 209 were cases of illicit selling and three of smuggling, and three drug dens were discovered.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Text of report by Kazakh news agency Kazinform), 17/07/05*

---

## **About 4 kg of heroin seized in Tajik north**

---

Officers of the Tajik Drug Control Agency have found and seized about 4 kg of drugs in [northern] Soghd Region. During a search operation in Khujand, officers of the agency's directorate for Soghd Region found 3.9 kg of heroin in a carrier bag in back rooms of the house of a Khujand resident.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Text of report by Tajik Avesta website), 18/07/05*

---

## **Tajik policeman held on drug charges**

---

An officer of the Tajik Interior Ministry directorate for combating drug trafficking, Police Cap Abdusalom Yuldoshev, was arrested on suspicion of drug trafficking in Dushanbe last Saturday, 16 July. Yuldoshev had been detained with five kg of heroin during a special raid by the Dushanbe prosecutor's office.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Text of report by Tajik Avesta website), 18/07/05*

---

## **Kazakh police seize heroin in south**

---

Officers of the Almaty interior department's directorate for combating the drug business have detained a 19-year-old resident of Bishkek for possessing 1.89 kg of heroin. The drug courier was detained last Sunday night [17 July] at the Sayran bus station, the interior department's press service said.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Text of report by Interfax-Kazakhstan news agency), 18/07/05*

---

## **Russian police seize 14 kg of drugs in Siberian city**

---

About 14.5 kg of drugs, including 11.6 kg of heroin, arms and ammunition have been seized in Novosibirsk from drug dealers - ethnic Dagestanis, the information group of the Novosibirsk Region directorate of the Federal Service for Control Over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances has reported. The directorate's officers arrested members of an international criminal group which had set up a stable channel for smuggling drugs from Kyrgyzstan to Russia. The group included a Kyrgyz national and two Russians - ethnic Dagestanis, who were temporarily registered in Novosibirsk.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Excerpt from report by Interfax), 19/07/05*

---

## **Russian police seize heroin from Tajik man in Urals**

---

Police in Chelyabinsk have seized 600 g of heroin, Russian news agency ITAR-TASS reported on 19 July. The agency quoted police sources as saying that the heroin was seized from a Tajik fruit trader.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: ITAR-TASS news agency, Moscow), 19/07/05*

## **Problem of Afghani drug traffic looms in Kyrgyzstan**

---

Acting director of the Agency for Drug Control (ADC) of the KR in south region, Colonel Sagynbek Ismailov doesn't rule out that withdrawal of Russian frontiers from Tajikistan can lead to tangible deterioration of the drug situation in Kyrgyzstan. As was reported before, the 117th Moscow Frontier Detachment completed its active service in Tajikistan. All of its structures have been transferred to the Committee for Guard of the State Border under the President of Tajikistan. The Moscow and Piyanj frontier detachments guarded the most difficult 454-kilometer-long border part. The Russian frontiers have carried out about 90% of all the drug detainment operations. The Piyandj River, which runs between Tajik and Afghan territories, is said to be a heroin river among the local people. Answering to the question of what can cause complication of the situation in Tajik-Afghan border, Ismailov named primarily the lack of due professionalism of the trained troops of Tajikistan and financial support. In the first half year, only the Osh Drug Control Department has revealed as many as 266 drug crimes and seized 420 kilograms of drugs of all kinds, 41 kg out of which are Afghani heroin and opium.

*The Times of Central Asia, 19/07/05*

## **Citizen of Kyrgyzstan was arrested with 1 ton of marijuana**

---

53- year old citizen of Kyrgyzstan was arrested with 943 kg of freshly harvested marijuana at the Shu station in Kazakhstan. He acknowledged that he came to Shu to harvest marijuana.

*AKIpress, 19/07/05*

## **Tajik military doctor gets 13 years in prison on drug charges**

---

The head of the military department of the doctors' postgraduate training institute, Sayfiddin Teshayev, has been found guilty of the illegal storage of drugs and sentenced to 13 years in prison. Teshayev was detained on 12 May this year. About 2 kg of heroin was seized from the colonel during a search.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Report by Tajik Avesta website on 20 July), 21/07/05*

## **Some 42 kg of drugs seized from Afghan smugglers in Tajik south**

---

Two residents of Afghanistan's [northeastern] Takhar Province had been detained and 42 kg of drugs seized during a joint operation by officers of the DCA directorate for [southern] Khatlon Region and Tajik border guards in Hamadoni District, close to the border with Afghanistan. A floating facility and three sacks containing drugs, 27 kg of heroin and 15 kg of cannabis, were seized from the trespassers. DCA staff also foiled a case of trading in heroin in the capital. A VAZ-2101 car belonging to a resident of [eastern] Mountainous Badakhshon Autonomous Region was stopped in the capital's Firdavsi district. During a search 1.7 kg of heroin was found in the car and the pockets of a passenger, who is also a resident of the region.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Report by Tajik Avesta website on 20 July), 21/07/05*

## **Tajik agencies seize 50 kg of drugs near Afghan border**

---

About 50 kg of drugs have been uncovered and seized during a joint operation by [Tajik] Drug Control Agency [DCA] officers and servicemen from the [Tajik] State Border Protection Committee, the DCA press service has told Avesta. The source said a cache had been uncovered in the Khuchak valley in Shuroobod District [bordering on Afghanistan] in the course of operational and search measures, and 17.7 kg of heroin, 32 kg of opium and a Kalashnikov assault rifle had been seized from it.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Report by Tajik Avesta website on 21 July), 21/07/05*

## **100 kg of opium destined for Turkmenistan were intercepted**

---

Police in Herat announced that they had foiled an attempt to smuggle 100 kg of opium on July 19. The alleged smuggler has also been arrested. The opium was recovered from secret compartments in a van on the Herat-Torghundi highway. It is believed the consignment was destined for Turkmenistan.

---

### **Tajik police seize 7 kg of heroin from air passenger**

---

Officers of the Tajik Interior Ministry's transport directorate have foiled an attempt at drug trafficking from Dushanbe to the country's north by Abdurashid Saidov, resident of the town of Chkalovsk. The passenger of the Dushanbe-Khujand flight had been detained at Khujand airport. A total of 7 kg of heroin was seized from him.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Report by Tajik Avesta website on 22 July), 22/07/05*

---

### **Turkish police seize over 370 kg of heroin**

---

Turkish police have confiscated 370.2 kg of heroin in operations in Istanbul. The haul was seized in four districts of Istanbul, with 295 kg found in a minibus in Catalca, 27.8 kg in a house in Umraniye, 29.5 kg in a car and a truck in Sultanbeyli and 17.9 kg in Gaziosmanpasa district. Besides the seizure, police also detained 24 suspected people after the operations, added the report.

*Xinhua News Agency, 22/07/05*

---

### **Record drug bust in Upper Austria**

---

As part of a European Union drug clampdown code-named Operation Roots which is aimed at curbing the drug trade from the Balkans, Austrian authorities engaged in the third-biggest drug bust in history on Friday when they discovered 97 kilos of heroin in 100 packages in the fuel tank of a Turkish truck near Suden in Upper Austria's Schärding District. The bust was the result of a two-week-long campaign throughout Southeastern Europe. The heroin had a street market value of around 50 million euros. At the same time, Hungarian authorities found 71 kilos of heroin in a truck in Hungary.

*Austria Today, 22/07/05 and AFP 22/07/05*

---

### **100 kg of heroin seized in Takhar**

---

Police in northeast Takhar province seized 100 kg of heroin on Saturday. During the exchange of fire with the smugglers a quantity of arms including two assault rifles and a vehicle were also confiscated from the band.

*Xinhua News Agency (reported by Cheragh, an Afghan newspaper), 24/07/05*

---

### **Three heroin labs destroyed in Helmand**

---

Afghan police have discovered and destroyed three heroin labs in Helmand province since Saturday. The anti-drug operation has been going on in several districts over the past three days.

*Xinhua News Agency (reported by Arman-e Millie, an Afghan newspaper), 25/07/05*

---

### **Russian police seize over 60 kg of heroin in Moscow Region**

---

Members of a directorate of the Federal Service for Control Over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances have seized 61.806 kg of heroin during a special operation carried out in Moscow Region on 23-24 July. Seven Tajik nationals had been detained on suspicion of involvement in illegal trafficking in drugs. In addition to drugs, weapons and ammunition were also seized from the detainees. 10 people were detained in all, seven of whom are active members of a Tajik organized criminal group which had been involved in supplying and selling heroin in particularly large quantities for a number of years. The retail price of the drugs seized during the special operation is estimated at more than 2m dollars.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Excerpt from report by Interfax), 25/07/05*

