



## Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 14 – 20 February 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.

### **Britain's Straw arrives in Afghanistan for anti-drugs talks**

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British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw arrived in Afghanistan for a one-day visit to discuss the fight against the war-shattered country's booming drugs trade. Straw met President Hamid Karzai, his counterpart Abdullah Abdullah as well as defense minister General Abdul Rahim Wardak, foreign ministry spokesman Naweed Ahmad Moez. During his stay Straw discussed bilateral ties, regional issues and terrorism but the main topic was counternarcotics. British Foreign Office minister Bill Rammell said during a visit to Kabul in December that he believed Afghanistan could turn the tide on opium production within a year.

*AFP, 16/02/05*

### **Indian foreign minister visits Afghanistan**

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Karzai expressed appreciation for India's contribution to reconstruction and said he hoped it would look favorably on a pipeline project to bring gas from Turkmenistan. Natwar Singh, minister of FA of India discussed with both countries transit facilities for Indian goods to Afghanistan through Pakistan. Such trade to Afghanistan currently goes via Iran.

*AFP, 16/02/05*

### **U.S. Accelerates Training of Afghan Army**

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Defense Minister Rahim Wardak and Col. Bob Sharp, a senior official in the U.S.-led coalition, also said Washington and Kabul are considering a long-term security relationship that may include continued American bases. The Afghan national army had been expected to reach its full strength of 70,000, including 43,000 ground troops, by September 2007. Wardak said it was too early to say how long the United States would maintain air bases in Afghanistan, which borders Iran, Pakistan and China, as well as oil-rich Central Asia.

*Stephen Graham, Associated Press, 15/02/05*

### **Afghan amnesty offer excludes Mullah Omar, Hekmatyar**

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In a bid to bolster security in the country and subdue the Taliban-related militancy in the mountainous south, southeast and eastern provinces, the Afghan administration has offered amnesty last year for the armed militiamen but Mullah Omar and Hekmatyar have condemned it as plot. Both of the fugitive men have time and again repeated their opposition to the US-dominated foreign forces presence in Afghanistan by vowing to fight for the foreigners' withdrawal from the country.

*Xinhua, 15/02/05*

### **Iran wants railway line to Pakistan through Afghanistan**

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Iran plans to construct a railway line linking Iran with Pakistan through Afghanistan, a step that will connect Afghanistan to the international market. The 207-km railway will start from Sangan area of Iran to Pakistan through the border city of Islam Qala in Herat."

*Ahmad Ehsan Sarwaryar, Pajhwok Afghan News, 15/02/05*

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## **USDA announces \$125 million in international assistance under food for progress**

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Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced plans for \$125 million in international food assistance under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food for Progress program for fiscal year 2005. In Afghanistan, the U.S. donation to Mercy Corps will benefit around 30,000 farmers and their families by funding plant nurseries, irrigation improvements and research to revive fruit and nut production.

Government of the United States of America, 14/02/05

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## **Thousands choose army after abolition of poppy cultivation**

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Haji Din Mohammad, the governor of Nangarhar said hundreds of thousands of people had become jobless after stopping poppy cultivation or when their poppy fields were destroyed over the last two months. The governor said he was now under pressure from community elders to help thousands of young men join the US-supported and trained new Afghan army. General Mohammad Ibrahim Ahmadzai, the chief of staff in the Afghan National Army (ANA) recruitment command said the massive turnout was a serious challenge to the ANA recruitment centres. Attempts to increase the number of soldiers in the fledgling force have been hampered by a lack of suitable recruits and poor pay and conditions.

IRIN, 17/02/05

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## **Russian border guards not to leave Tajikistan but change status**

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Russian border guards are not pulling out from Tajikistan-the two countries are merely changing their frontier alliance form, reassured Maxim Peshkov, Russian Ambassador to Tajikistan. An operation group to be active in Tajikistan will include Russian advisers. Russia will go on training Tajik border guards in its military schools. Last but not least, the Frontier Service under Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB, will establish a training center in Tajikistan for noncoms and junior experts. Russian border guards passed duties to their Tajik counterparts, November through December last, the Pamir frontier stretch, whose length exceeds 800 kilometers. Total cost of ceded realty and movables made ten million US dollars. More property, to twelve million, will come up as another 400 km stretch goes over to Tajik soldiers from Russia's Pyandzh and Moscow frontier units.

RIA Novosti, 16/02/05

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## **Musharraf to visit Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan**

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President Gen Pervez Musharraf will embark on his first official visit to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the first week of March. It will be the first visit by a Pakistani head of the state to the two Central Asian republics in almost a decade. During the expected four-day trip, the president will hold talks with his counterparts on expanding bilateral cooperation. Pakistan has over 100 agreements with the two countries but the relations have lacked high-level contacts. Pakistan has established joint economic commissions with both the countries. With the Gwadar port, Pakistan will provide the Central Asian states the shortest route to sea. The country also wants access to the Central Asian markets through Afghanistan.

www.dawn.com, 19/02/05

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## **Russian paratroopers to participate in joint maneuvers with Uzbekistan, China and India**

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Russia's Airborne Troops will participate in at least three military exercises in 2005. Russian airborne units will participate in Russian-Uzbek, Russian-Chinese and Russian-Indian military maneuvers. According to preliminary scenarios, Russian paratroopers would perform similar tasks in all three exercises. Paratroopers will be dropped from Russian transport aircraft and participate in maneuvers with live firing.

RIA Novosti, 17/02/05

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## **Seizures and Arrests**

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### **Kazakh customs seize 13 kg of heroin from Russian courier**

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Staff from the Zhezkent customs checkpoint have thwarted the smuggling of 13 kg of heroin and 2 kg of raw opium. The drugs were hidden in the fuel tank of a Mazda 626 car. Employees of the Zhezkent customs checkpoint and dog handlers uncovered the stash in the fuel tank during an inspection of the car on 13 February. There were 12 plastic bottles wrapped with sticky tape and placed in stockings. The press secretary said that heroin had been found in 10 bottles and raw opium in two bottles. A Russian citizen who was heading for Biysk [in Russia's Altay Territory] has been detained.

Kazinform, Astana, in Russian, 14/02/05

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### **561 Kg opium seized in Helmund**

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More than 500 kilograms heroin was seized by the security forces in Helmund province on Sunday. The governor of Helmund Mulla Sher Muhammad said that their security forces on a tip off raided a market at Lashkargha, the provincial capital and recovered 561 kilograms opium from a shop and also arrested a person. The opium was being smuggled from Helmund to Pakistan and Iran frequently and onward to Turkey and European countries.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 17/02/05

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### **Over 20 kg of Afghan drugs seized in southern Kyrgyzstan**

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The Osh police have sized over 20 kg of opium and heroin. The drugs, of Afghan origin, were hidden in a VAZ-21099 car which had a [southern Kyrgyz] Dzhahalal-Abad regional number plate. The police kept tabs on the car for two months.

KyrgyzInfo, 15/02/05

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### **Police confiscated 12.7 kg of heroin in Van**

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Turkish police confiscated 12.7 kg of heroin in Gurpinar town of eastern city of Van. Police stopped a car at Gurpinar check point and found the heroin, and detained three people.

Anadolu Agency, 15/02/05

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### **130 tonnes of narcotics confiscated in Russia last year**

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Law-enforcement bodies confiscated 130 tonnes of narcotics and psychedelic substances last year, including some four tonnes of heroin, which is a 2.5-times increase from the heroin haul in 2003. Simple arithmetic shows that the mass of the confiscated narcotic equals 40 million average one-time doses. The crackdown on drug trafficking sent "black market" prices of narcotics skyrocketing by 20 to 30 percent per dose in a number of regions.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 18/02/05

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### **ANF seizes 1,654-kg heroin, 1,359-kg opium**

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The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) during one and a half months of year 2005 has seized 1654 kilograms of heroin, 1359 kilograms of opium and 3719 kilograms of hashish from drug traffickers during its campaign against drugs. In its campaign against the narcotics and drug abuses during the year 2004 the ANF has seized 7783 kilograms of heroin, 679 kg of opium and 57111 kg of hashish.

Business Recorder, 19/02/05

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### **7.865 kg heroin seized in Pakistan**

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Officials from Pakistani Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) said Saturday that 7.865 kg heroin was spotted from the parcels in Karachi, a southern port city. The parcels booked for Dubai were heroin smuggling attempt through courier service. During the interrogation, the arrested accused revealed that his cousin settled in Dubai had asked him to take over a few parcels from a man and send them to Dubai.

Xinhua News Agency, 19/02/05