



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 16– 22 May 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.

Second phase of transfer of Afghan-Tajik border from Russian forces initiated

An unnamed official from the Russian Border Guard service announced that Tajik guards assumed control of a second 96-kilometer sector of the strategic 232-kilometer of the Afghan-Tajik border on 16 May. The Tajik guards would be provided with \$25 million in assistance from the international community to bolster counter-narcotics enforcement along the border.

Asia Plus, 17/05/05

Afghanistan lacks resources to cope with HIV/AIDS

It is estimated that there are nearly 800 cases of AIDS in Afghanistan, but only 36 cases have been recorded by the health ministry, said Dr Shafiqullah Zahrawi, head of the AIDS control department at the ministry of health. Afghanistan lacks the health education tools which would help it curb a rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

IWPR, Afghan press monitor, No. 72, 17/05/05

Meeting an Afghan drug smuggler

This year the US has more than tripled its funding to fight the Afghan drugs problem, raising it to \$780m. But ranged against the counter-narcotics forces is an industry that may amount to as much as 60% of Afghanistan's GDP. The smuggler said there was little to fear while so many officials within the government and police were profiting from the drugs trade. The smuggler acknowledged that central government efforts had succeeded in closing the major highways to opium traffic. But he said that alternative routes were easily arranged. As the interviewed smuggler claimed that there was no single dominant dealer in Kandahar and Helmand. "There are about 1,000 big smugglers," he said.

BBC News, 18/05/05

Afghan anti-opium workers killed

Six Afghans connected with a US company have been shot dead by suspected Taleban militants, officials say. The men were travelling in a vehicle in the southern province of Zabul, along the main highway linking the city of Kandahar with the capital, Kabul. In Zabul province, Chemonics, the Washington-based company, is running irrigation projects intended to provide alternative livelihoods for opium farmers.

BBC News, 19/05/05

Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency steps up international cooperation

As many as 28 drug-related crimes have been detected, and nearly 40kg of drugs of all kinds have been seized. The latter figure includes over 20 kg of opium, nearly 9 kg of heroin, over 3 kg of hashish, and over 5.5 kg of marijuana. Officials of the Kyrgyz DCA registered 69 drug-related crimes, stopped the activity of 15 drug-dealing groups, and seized over 365 kg of drugs of all kinds last year. Opium amounted to over 66 per cent of the seized drugs, and heroin to 14 per cent. The agreements are expected to be signed with Central Asian and Baltic states, Turkey, and China. The agency has established interaction with the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, and the parties have signed a cooperation agreement.

Interfax-AVN military news agency website, 19/05/05

Tajik DCA opens office in Afghanistan

Tajik Drug Control Agency Director Rustam Nazarov formally opened a local office in the northern Afghan city Kunduz on 18 May during a three-day official visit to Afghanistan. The establishment of the office, strategically situated on the Afghan border with the Tajik districts of Panj and Qumsangir, stems from a bilateral counter-narcotics agreement reached during the late-April visit to Afghanistan by Tajik President Emomali Rakhmonov. Nazarov identified northeastern Afghanistan as a significant producer of opium and, at the December Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Dushanbe, reported that dozens of heroin-producing facilities are operating in the area.

EurasiaDigest, 20/05/05

Polish police officers were selling confiscated narcotics

A gigantic scandal at the Lodz branch of the Central Office of Investigations [CBS]. Police officers of this elite force may have sold as much as 120 kg of narcotics that they stole from an evidence storage warehouse. At the beginning of April it turned out stored packages that were to contain 20 kg of heroin actually contained... baking soda. Officers of the internal affairs division at the Chief Police Headquarters [KGP] are in charge of the case. "We hoped that the heroin affair was just a one-off. Right now, however, we know this is a practice that has been going on for years and the functionaries involved were confident they would not get caught," says our source at the KGP. The practice would probably continue had it not been for the new chief of the Lodz branch of the CBS and the new method of destroying narcotics that he ordered.

BBC Monitoring European, (Gazeta Wyborcza, Warsaw, in Polish 20 May 05), 20/05/05

Afghan president pressed on opium

US officials say Afghan President Hamid Karzai is partly responsible for the failure of poppy eradication efforts in Afghanistan, a US newspaper has said. The New York Times cited a cable sent on 13 May from the US embassy in Kabul to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The cable said: "Although President Karzai has been well aware of the difficulty in trying to implement an effective ground eradication programme, he has been unwilling to assert strong leadership, even in his own province of Kandahar." The Afghan minister in charge of counter narcotics efforts, Habibullah Qaderi, said that lack of cooperation from the governor of Kandahar province - a close confidant of Mr Karzai - had been a factor.

BBC News, 22/05/05

Seizures and Arrests

Turkish police seize 60 kg of heroin in passenger bus in Bolu

The heroin seized in a passenger bus in northwestern Bolu city is composed of 60 kg of heroin and 10 kg of hashish, police said on Saturday. The heroin was put in two suitcases that were hidden in secret parts of the bus (on the way from eastern Van city to Istanbul). Acting on a tip-off, police followed a passenger bus and stopped it when the bus entered the city. Narcotics detention dog found the heroin hidden at the back part of the bus.

Anadolu Agency, 21/05/05

A seizure of 250 kg of drugs in Dushanbe

In Dushanbe in one of the houses in Sino area, during the special operation 250 kg of drugs have been seized by staff from Ministry of Security of the republic. As Ministry of Security of Tajikistan reported, several persons have been arrested with suspicion in illegal drug trafficking activity. Names were not reported due to security reasons.

Cry.ru, 20/05/05

Taliban smugglers are arrested as a result of the joint Tajik-Afghan operation

A joint operation by officers from the Tajik Drug Control Agency and Afghan police on 16 May led to the arrest of two former Taliban commanders in Afghanistan's Kunduz Province, Asia-Plus reported. According to the Tajik Drug Control Agency's Avaz Yuldoshev, the former Taliban leaders were operating an extensive smuggling network into Tajikistan involving a sizable amount of narcotics and weapons from northeastern Afghanistan. The Tajik-Afghan border area has been plagued by drug smuggling and weapons proliferation for over a decade

EurasiaDigest, 20/05/05

600 grams of heroin in the stomach

On 17th May one more attempt of drug trafficking to Russia has been curtailed by staff of the Tajik DCA. As a result of the search operation during the registration of flight Dushanbe-Kazan two residents of Shaartuz region have been arrested. The arrested were trying to transport in their stomachs 90 capsules with heroin, with the total weight 600 grams.

Drug Control Agency of the Republic of Tajikistan, 19/05/05

Three drug dealers detained in Moscow region

Drug policemen detained three drug dealers in the Moscow region. Representatives of the Gypsy diaspora supplied heroin to the Noginsk and neighboring districts of the Moscow region for 18 months. "Owing to a good conspiracy, a strict discipline inside the family, technical equipping and a good distribution of roles, their criminal activity has been unpunished until recently," the information department pointed out. According to drug policemen, the drug dealers have not been caught for such a long time, because they earthed drugs in secret places upon agreement with their clients.

Itar Tass, 18/05/05

Kharan Rifles seize 100 kg heroin

Kharan Rifles a wing of Frontier Corps Balochistan foiled an attempt at smuggling large quantity of heroin in Saindak area close to Pakistani-Iranian border. The team in a successful raid recovered 100 kg heroin. No arrest was made.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 18/05/05

Russian customs seize 5 kilos of heroin on Kazakh border

At least five kilos of heroin have been found in a bus at the customs checkpoint on the Russian-Kazakh border in the Kurgan region. In the course of the inspection the customs officers found packs with cream-white substance. Experts established that the substance was heroin. The Kurgan Customs Office's investigation department has opened a criminal case for contraband. Detectives are searching for the owner and recipient of the illegal drug.

Itar-Tass, 17/05/05

50 kilos of drugs confiscated on Russian-Kazakh border

50 kg of narcotic drugs bound for Chelyabinsk have been confiscated on the Russian-Kazakh frontier. The drugs were found in a metal box in a KamAZ truck fuel tank. The metal box contained 40 plastic bags with heroin and raw opium. The truck driver and passenger, both of them citizens of Uzbekistan, were apprehended. All in all, about 220 kilograms of drugs have been detained in the Urals federal district of Russia this year.

Itar Tass, 17/05/05

Half – ton heroin haul discovered in western Afghanistan

Afghan police, in conjunction with Coalition forces, have seized 479 kg of heroin in the western province of Herat and detained seven traffickers. The contraband, worth 2 million US dollars was destroyed. At the end of April, Afghan

president Hamid Karzai called on the international community to assist the war-shattered nation in its battle against drug cultivation and trafficking. The Afghan National Army currently has 23,400 trained officers and soldiers, with another 5,000 others undergoing training. Under the Bonn agreement, Afghanistan should have a 70,000 strong army by the end of 2006.

IWPR, Afghan press monitor, No. 71, 16/05/05

5 kg heroin seized at the Jinnah International Airport, Pakistan

The Pakistani Customs intercepted a Pakistani passenger who was to board the Emirate Airline's flight for Entebbe via Dubai at Jinnah International Airport and recovered 5 kg heroin hidden in auto parts.

Business Recorder, 15/05/05