



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 28 March – 3 April 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.

Meeting of the law enforcement agencies of Central Asia in Turkmenistan

On 29-30 March the Government of Turkmenistan and the UNODC office organized a regional conference on how to combat the illicit drug and precursors trafficking. The conference attracted law enforcement agents from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, UK and the USA.

Avesta.tj, 31/03/05

The new HIV/AIDS project launched in Uzbekistan

A new project called "Capacity" has been launched in Tashkent on 29th of March. "Capacity" is a five-year project on HIV/AIDS prevention in Uzbekistan with a budget of \$13 mill. provided by USAID.

"Posol SSHA v Uzbekistane otkryl proekt pomoshi", *Ferghana.ru*, 29/03/05

Number of drug addicts in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan

Kazakhstan: More than 50,000 drug addicts, the majority of whom are teenagers, are officially registered in Kazakhstan. Interior Minister Zautbek Turisbekov said that the number of drug addicts fell by 10 per cent against last year mainly thanks to the fact that the problem was widely covered in the media. Eleven ministries and departments aimed at working out new approaches and taking more effective measures to combat drug trafficking in Central Asia's largest country. Specifically, the media will get additional funds and 102 hours of air time will be allocated in the next six months to programmes on anti-drug issues.

Turkmenistan: Turkmenistan, the most reclusive state in Central Asia, disclosed figures on drug seizures for the first time since 1999. The Turkmen law-enforcement agencies seized 266 kg of heroin and 665 kg of opium in 2004, Murad Islamov, deputy head of the Turkmen State Counter-Narcotics Committee, said at a conference on the fight against drugs in the Turkmen capital, Ashgabat. Islamov said opium and heroin seizures in 2004 were "up from 2003." Back in 1999, Turkmen authorities seized 4,600 kg of opium and 240 kg of heroin, official figures showed.

IRIN news, 01/04/05

Afghanistan winning drugs war, but more to do

President Hamid Karzai has declared a jihad, or holy war, on drugs as he tries to stop the country turning into a narco-mafia state that Washington says could become an "enormous threat to world stability." There are signs of improvement compared with last year when Afghanistan. The United States has earmarked \$700 million to fight the Afghan drugs business and Britain has put up \$100 million. An independent report commissioned by the British government said the belief that the government was serious in its intent to crack down had cut opium planting.

Afghannews.net, 31/03/05

Fall in Afghan poppy cultivation

A new survey on drugs in Afghanistan indicates the recent increase in poppy cultivation has been reversed. In most of the country's 34 provinces, farmers are growing alternative crops, the survey by the Afghan government and UNODC says. It is the first time a decrease has been registered since the surge in poppy cultivation that followed the fall of the Taliban. But there is still an upward trend in five provinces, the survey warns. It indicates a significant reduction in

poppy cultivated area in most of the 34 provinces, including Nangarhar, Helmand and Uruzgan. UN and Afghan officials say the new trend is largely because of stricter controls and a policy of providing alternative crops to farmers.

BBC News, 27/03/05

Russian and Finnish Interior ministers meet

Russian and Finnish Interior Ministers Rashid Nurgaliyev and Kari Rajamaki met in Petrozavodsk on Thursday to discuss cooperation. The ministers focused on measures against timber and car smuggling and also discussed in detail cooperation to combat abduction and illegal migration.

Itar-Tass, 31/03/05

Russia keeps Afghan drugs off Europe

Russia is efficiently working to curb Europe-bound Afghan drug traffic, said Antonio Maria Costa, United Nations Deputy Secretary General, and Executive Director of the UNODC. He made the statement while in conference with Victor Cherkosov, Russia's Federal Drug Control Service chief. Russia has just drafted its federal comprehensive program to combat drug abuse and trafficking for 2005-09. It aims to reduce drug abuse by 16 to 20 per cent of the 2003 level, by the year 2010, Mr. Cherkosov said during the conference. As experts are forecasting, program implementation will save 600 to 800 thousand people from the drug danger, added our informants at the Federal Drug Service.

RIA Novosti, 30/03/05

Seizures and Arrests

Over 20 kilos of heroin seized from a citizen of Tajikistan

Some 35 kilos of drugs, including over 20 kilos of heroin, were seized on the Tajik-Afghan border. The incident took place on Saturday evening at a border section, guarded by the Moskovsky border detachment. Guards detained a Tajik citizen who tried to bring drugs from Afghanistan to Tajikistan across the Pyandzh River. Russian guards seized over 30 tonnes of drugs, including more than 11 tonnes of heroin, over nearly 12 years since the establishment of the Russian border administration in Tajikistan.

Itar-Tass, 27/03/05

Pakistani police seizes morphine and arms

Commandant of Chagai Militia was informed that smugglers have dumped large quantity of arms, ammunition and narcotics in Shabian area for smuggling into the interior. It cordoned the area and seized arms, ammunition and drugs: morphine (1000 kg), RPG-7 (5), 82 mm mortar bombs with fuse (5), hand grenades along with fuse (5). No arrest was reported.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 27/03/05

Pakistani court frees two Nigerians earlier held under suspicion of drug trafficking

Lahore High Court while acquitting two Nigerians from charges of drug trafficking expressed its concern on diminishing credibility of a department like Anti Narcotics Force (ANF). ANF was found involved in booking and arresting people under false allegations. Nigerians have undergone imprisonment and languished in the jail for over a period of one year and no one could be suspected to be a smuggler and thus taken into custody merely on the basis that he was a foreigner and had black skin.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 29/03/05

Anti money laundering laws in tact in Pakistan

Government is fully realising the threat of money laundering has set a legal regime to check the menace by implementing the Anti Terrorism Act, which empowers us to prohibit fund raising and money laundering for terrorist financing and initiate action against persons and entities having nexus with terrorism, said Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Addressing the International Seminar Anti Money Laundering, he said that they recognise that money laundering, if remain unchecked, can allow organised crime to infiltrate financial institutions, acquire control of large sectors of the economy through investment, or influence the public officials and indeed, through them, the governments. Similarly,

the Control of Narcotics Substances Act obligates the financial institutions to report suspicious transaction that may involve proceeds from crime.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 29 March 2005

Iranian media reports of opiate seizures

The following is a compilation of reports from Iranian sources on drugs seizures and drug-related arrests from 17-31 March 2005. Between 490 and 500 "bandit groups made up of traffickers and law-breakers" were active inside Iran or in border regions. On 16 March, police reported that 456 kg of opium and one kg of morphine had been seized in the town of Marvdasht (Fars province). Fifteen members of a drug dealing gang had been arrested, and four weapons had been confiscated from them.

BBC Monitoring Middle East, 01/04/05

Large batch of heroin found in the Russian Urals

A batch of about 13.8 kg of heroin has been impounded in Chelyabinsk region during a scheduled operation, the press service of the Federal Service for Drug Trade Control department in charge of Chelyabinsk Region said. The first batch of 13.25 kg was found during the search of a car on the Troitsk - Chelyabinsk motorway. The Volga car carrying five Uzbek nationals was stopped late last night [30 March]. During the search a trained dog sniffed out the drug hidden in the car's mudguards. An examination showed that the heroin found in the hiding place was well-refined. A further investigation established the receiver of the batch. Another 512 gr of heroin were found and confiscated.

Interfax, 31/03/05