



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 4 – 10 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.

Turkmenistan joins the U.N. conventions against transnational organized crime

Turkmenistan became a signatory to "The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime" and all its protocols.

Turkmen TV first channel, Ashgabat, 05/04/05

Turkmenistan plans surprise vote

Mr Niyazov, who was declared president for life, said the country's destiny "should not depend on one person". He urged young candidates to emerge and contest the presidency. Mr Niyazov told a cabinet meeting: "We will certainly hold presidential elections in 2009 on a broad democratic basis so that people themselves can make a choice." "One must go sooner or later. That's why we have to jointly define young [presidential] candidates." It is unclear whether the move is an attempt to boost Turkmenistan's own democratic credentials or whether President Niyazov is considering his eventual retirement.

BBC News, 08/04/05

"Zaslon-2" operation finished in Central Asia

The international operation "Zaslon (Shield)" was conducted from October 1, 2004 to April 1, 2005 and included European, Central Asian and Balkan states. The operation was initiated and funded by the DCA under the U.S. Ministry of Justice and with the technical assistance of Uzbekistan. The main goal of the operation was to eliminate drug trafficking routes starting in Afghanistan. As a result of the operation 158 kg of drugs were seized, including 45 kg of heroin. More than 50 persons from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and abroad were arrested.

Kabar.kg, 08/04/05

The first anti-terrorism training center was opened in Kazakhstan

On April 9, the first anti-terrorism and extremism training center under the Ministry of Interior was opened in Almaty. Zautbek Turisbekov, minister of Interior of Kazakhstan noted that his center is planning to cooperate with the leading anti-terrorist centers in Israel, U.S. and Russia. It is planned to create the electronic database registering movement of emigrants and system of biometric identification of criminals.

"V Almaty otkryt 1-y uchebnyy tsentr MVD Kazakhstana po bor'be s terrorizmom", Habar, 10/04/05

Makhmadruzi Iskandarov was released, but will be rearrested

Mahmadruzi Iskandarov (leader of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan) was released from the detention center (SIZO) in Moscow on April 3. Iskandarov was arrested in Moscow in December 2004 on charges of terrorism and banditry on the request of the Chief prosecutor of Tajikistan. Most of the experts alleged that he was arrested before the parliamentary elections (February 2005) to preclude his participation. Seemingly, Emomali Rakhmonov was very upset about Iskandarov's release and voiced his concerns to Sergei Ivanov (minister of defense). The latter gave an order to the appropriate agencies to re-arrest Iskandarov. Right after his release Iskandarov announced that he would like to run for the presidential elections.

Arkadiy Dubnov, Vremya Novostei, 11/04/05

Pakistan: Mahar seeks cooperation of coalition partners in Balochistan in anti-drug campaign

Ghous Bux Khan Mahar, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control sought help from religious leaders who are coalition partners in Balochistan government to help check poppy cultivation in their respective constituencies. The minister said all arrangements have been finalized for establishment of a modern Rehabilitation Centre at Quetta and Governor Balochistan Owais Ahmed Ghani is providing land for the purpose, while the required assistance from provincial health minister is awaited. He urged the women to play a front line role in controlling drug abuse, adding that a mother and a wife are most influential individuals in the life of a person.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 05/04/05

The U.S. military will provide intelligence to the Afghan anti-drug forces

The U.S. military will take charge of training Afghanistan's police and will provide intelligence and transport for the country's new anti-drug forces, dramatically expanding America's role in combating a booming narcotics trade.

Deseret Morning News, 06/04/05

Russia's new anti-drug policy

The Federal Drug Control Service (FSKN) was set up in 2003 to change the existing focus on drug addiction to the fight against drug cartels. Fifty-four tons of drugs and psychotropic substances were seized in Russia in 2003 and over 129 tons were confiscated in 2004, including 102 tons confiscated by the FSKN. The amount of heroin seized, 3,897 kilograms, in 2004 exceeded the total amount of drugs confiscated in 2002 and 2003. The federal service is increasing efforts to destroy the financial base of drug trafficking. Until recently, such efforts were not made in Russia. Only one crime connected with drug money laundering was solved between 2002 and 2003. However, the current situation is changing. In 2004, law enforcement bodies solved 314 crimes involving the laundering of drug money.

RIA Novosti, 11/04/05

DEA outlines international challenges in combating illicit narcotics

U.S. DEA Administrator Karen Tandy outlined emerging international trends in illicit drug trade. Among the emerging trends Tandy cited are increased Ecstasy seizures in Japan; Colombian traffickers teaming with others to smuggle cocaine into France, Spain and China; and a spike in ketamine conversion labs in the Philippines. The preliminary crop surveys for 2005 -- this upcoming year -- suggests that this year's crops will be lower. And a few weeks ago DEA and Afghanistan police raided three drug production labs in the Nangarhar province. That resulted in more than 2,000 kg of opium, 15 kg of heroin, and 100 of gallons of chemical precursors being seized as a result of that one operation. DEA placed specially trained units in Afghanistan to augment their interdiction and training operations and augment the leading role that the UK.

State Department Press Releases and Documents, 07/04/05

Seizures and Arrests

Illegal drug laboratory in Gulbene District (Latvia) had been in operation seven years

The illegal drug laboratory in Gulbene District, which was uncovered in early March, had been operating for about seven years told Karlis Dombrovskis, the Organized Crime Prevention Bureau's Narcotics Office. According to the police, one-and-half kilograms of methadone can be prepared at the lab in one operation. A total of 10-12 kilograms had been manufactured in one year. The drugs were later mainly sold in Russia, also in Germany and other European countries, an insignificant amount in Latvia. The price for one gram of methadone in Moscow is \$120 to \$150. Two persons were detained. It took about one year to uncover the laboratory, which was specifically producing methadone, a synthetic narcotic substance. A large amount of precursors, used for producing drugs, was also found at the laboratory. Methadone is a synthetic opioid used for the treatment of heroin addicts.

Edmunds Ozolnieks, Latvian News Agency, 06/04/05

Nine kg of heroin recovered at Port Qasim, Pakistan

Preventive Drug Enforcement Cell recovered and seized nine kg of brown and white heroin powder from an export consignment of assorted jeans pants. The heroin was concealed inside the stitched upper lining of jeans pants (where belt is worn). The consignment of assorted jeans pants was heading for Dubai (UAE).

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 06/04/05

Smuggling bid foiled near Pak-Iran border

Smuggling attempt was foiled near Pak-Iran border after an exchange of fire between smugglers and Frontier Constabulary (FC) last week. Report said that two smugglers also sustained injuries when FC Jawans retaliated drug-traffickers who managed to flee and FC recovered 80 kg hashish and 29 kg heroin, Kalashnikovs and bullets.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 08/04/05