



Narcotics and Organized Crime in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 7 – 13 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.

Focus on local efforts to reduce opium cultivation

Officials in Kabul are happy to see such developments in places like Nangahar but insist they will not be sustainable unless rural jobs and infrastructure are boosted. Habibullah Qaderi, minister for counter narcotics, told IRIN in Kabul. The reduction in cultivation in Nangahar followed a series of pledges of support by international donors but so far not much has been achieved. Temporary job creation has been introduced in the southern province of Helmand, where 9,000 people are employed in canal clearance - key to improving irrigation.

www.irinnews.org, 10/02/05

Official denies U.S. involvement in Afghan opium crop spraying

The US Embassy in Afghanistan said there was no evidence to support fresh allegations that mystery planes sprayed Afghan opium poppy crops, amid a bitter row about how to combat the world's largest illegal narcotics industry. Afghan officials said earlier they had sent a team from Kabul to southern Helmand province, a key opium-producing region, to investigate a report from the governor that aircraft sprayed fields there last Thursday. US officials preparing a campaign against Afghan drug barons initially pressed for Colombia-style crop spraying to dent an industry that last year supplied nearly 90 percent of the world's opium, the raw material for heroin.

<http://www.afgha.com/?af=article&sid=47734>, 10/02/05

NATO expands Afghanistan mission

The new troops, for Herat and three other western cities, will help Nato meet its plans to operate in the whole of the country by 2006. Nato has a force of about 8,500 troops deployed in Afghanistan.

BBC, 10/02/05

Seizures and Arrests

Police seize 226 kg of narcotics in northwest Iran

Provincial police officials seized 226 kg of illicit drugs in Maragheh city, East Azarbaijan. Eight drug traffickers were arrested in connection with the haul and handed over to judicial authorities. The drugs were concealed in a truck. Domestic narcotics consumption continues to be a persistent problem with at least two million drugs addicts in the country.

Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, 6/02/05

Anti Narcotics Force seized 570 kg of heroin

Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) seized 570 Kg of heroin near Girdi Jungle (Dalbandin). ANF personnel checked a vehicle near Girdi Jungle which is about 20 Km north of Dalbandin (Chagai District). ANF staff recovered 570 Kg of heroin from the vehicle and impounded it.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 6/02/05

Iranian media reports of drugs seizures, arrests 26 Jan-9 Feb 2005

An international conference of anti-drugs police from 15 countries heard from Iran's drugs tsar Mehdi Abou'ei on 5 February that the authorities had confiscated 260 tons of drugs since March 2004. Twelve tons of the haul were morphine and 74 were hashish. Drugs were seized in East Azarbayjan, in Fars, in Golestan, in Kerman, in Razavi Khorasan, in South Khorasan, Khorasan, in Yazd provinces.

BBC Monitoring research in English, 9/02/05

Frontier Corps of Balochistan captured big cache of narcotics

Kharan Rifles of Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan captured big cache of narcotics close to Pakistan-Iran border. Commandant of Kharan Rifles received secret information that traffickers were planning to smuggle out a big quantity of narcotics from an area close to Pakistani-Iranian border. A team was sent to the area which in a raid recovered 20 kg of Charas.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 10/02/05

Gypsy baron arrested for drug dealing in Russia

A gypsy diaspora leader was arrested in Rostov-on-Don on suspicion of setting up the largest hard-drug dealer network in the whole south of Russia. The search of the arrested man's house produced over 500 grams of heroin. Law enforcement agents noted that the house of a man, whose family has never had a job, resembled a gilded palace of an Indian rajah. According to expert estimates, the real estate of the gypsy baron is worth millions of dollars. The man faces up to 10 years in prison.

RIA Novosti, 8/02/05

German police seize 60 kg heroin, arrest four dealers

During their investigations of an Albanian dealer ring, Kassel police seized a total of 60 kg of heroin and arrested four men. The members of the dealer ring - among them two men aged 25 and 27 - are already in prison. They were sentenced to long prison terms. One of the persons involved, who reportedly smuggled the heroin to Germany, was killed in mid-2004. He had lived in the Albanian capital of Tirana and was known there for his expensive lifestyle.

BBC Monitoring European, 12/02/05

15 kg of Heroin Seized at Kapitan Andreevo Checkpoint on the Bulgarian-Turkish border

Customs officers at the Kapitan Andreevo checkpoint seized 14.660 kg of heroin. The narcotic, divided into 26 packages, was found in a traveling bag lying by a Turkish-registered truck, which had been ordered to go aside for a thorough customs examination. The truck, carrying various goods, was traveling from Turkey to Kosovo.

Bulgarian News Agency, 13/02/05