



## Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest:21-28 February 2006

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.

### **ISAF expands and prepares for long-term stay**

Compiled by Amin Tarzi) The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) begins its expansion into southern Afghanistan in March. ISAF troops will move into Provincial Reconstruction Team bases in provinces like Helmand and Kandahar. NATO officials tell RFE/RL they are preparing to stay in Afghanistan for as long as a decade - provided the UN Security Council agrees to extend the ISAF mandate that long. They say ISAF wants to raise its profile, but they also insist that ISAF troops do not want to take on a counterinsurgency role alongside U.S.-led combat forces in Operation Enduring. ISAF's commanding officer, Italian General Mauro Del Vecchio, says the move to the south by will be "sensitive and delicate."

During the next year, ISAF plans to deploy 6,000 troops into southern Afghanistan. They will be staffing bases for at least four joint civilian-military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in the south. In some areas, ISAF will outnumber the combat troops of the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom. But General Del Vecchio insists that ISAF troops do not want to engage in combat against the remnants of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. As a result of objections by France, Germany, and other European allies, ISAF will limit its work with Operation Enduring Freedom to a support role. Still, the two operations have a joint U.S. commanding officer. Depending on the mission, that commander answers either to ISAF or to U.S. Central Command. Del Vecchio tells RFE/RL that ISAF is preparing to stay in Afghanistan for as long as 10 years -- provided that the UN Security Council continues to extend its mandate. He says ISAF is needed for another decade because it will take about 10 years before the fledgling Afghan National Army reaches 70,000 fully trained troops."The ISAF operation -- the ISAF mission -- probably will remain here in Afghanistan for seven to 10 years. The reason of this presence is linked, of course, to the preparation of the dispersion of the capacity of the Afghan [National Army across the country]," Del Vecchio says. Currently, the Afghan National Army has about 30,000 fully trained men. Del Vecchio says training for those forces has been "very good." But he says the Afghan army is still far from being able to control security across the country without help from ISAF. One NATO officer told RFE/RL that the Afghan National Army and police participate alongside ISAF in about 25 percent of the 600 patrols made by the international force each week.

ISAF PRTs also will soon become more involved in training local police and security forces. The United States already has embedded trainers in each unit of the Afghan National Army. ISAF hopes to do the same. So far, ISAF has lacked the funds and staff needed for such training missions. But it expects money and manpower to become available as expansion into the south unfolds. (...)

*RFE/RL Afghanistan Report, Vol. 5, No. 5, 21/2/2006*

### **U.N. anti-drug chief says organized crime in Balkans threatens much wider region**

Organized crime is becoming more entrenched in the postwar Balkans and threatens stability across a much wider region, including Central Asia, the Caucasus and other parts of the former Soviet Union, the U.N.'s anti-drug chief said. Highlighting one key problem, Antonio Maria Costa said the Balkans has become the most important route for Afghan drugs moving to the rest of Europe.

*Associated Press Newswires, 23/2/2006*

## **Russian, U.S. military bases in Kyrgyzstan on opposite tracks**

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(By Bruce Pannier, originally published on February 18) The future of the two foreign military bases in Kyrgyzstan became clearer last week. During a visit by a Russian delegation, a military official said the Russian base at Kant will be there "forever." Meanwhile, Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiev was quoted by a Russian newspaper on 15 February as saying the U.S.-led coalition can remain at the Manas base as long as there are still security problems in Afghanistan, and as long as the United States agrees to pay 100 times more than it has been asked to previously. The commander of the Russian air forces, General Vladimir Mikhailov, and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Secretary Nikolai Bordyuzha met on 16 February with Kyrgyz President Bakiev and Defense Minister Ismail Isakov to discuss the future of the Kant base. Russian troops are stationed at Kant under a CSTO agreement. Upon his arrival for the talks, Mikhailov said, "Our base is here forever." Russian Deputy Security Council Secretary Yury Zubakov spoke about the new agreement in Bishkek that same day. "As of today, after the ratification of the agreement on [the air base in] Kant by the Russian Duma, the Russian Defense Ministry is beginning to upgrade this air base." (...)

*RFE/RL Central Asia Report, Vol. 6, No. 7, 24/2/2006*

## **Afghan border security conference opens in Qatar**

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A two-day conference on border security in Afghanistan opened Monday in Doha focused on efforts to increase cooperation with the country's seven neighbours, organisers said.

*Agence France Presse, 27/2/2006*

(Additional report published by RFE/RL) A spokeswoman from the German delegation, Ingrid von Stumm, said the gathering will try to raise funds for the country's police force. Security forces are facing a deficit this year of around 30 million euros (\$35.5 million). Germany, which has been involved in training Afghan police since 2002, is cosponsoring the gathering along with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. Interior ministers from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Qatar, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Germany are attending.

(<http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/2/B6572943-542B-4BE5-BCA1-9152295135EC.html>)

*RFE/RL (Source of report: AFP), 27/2/2006*

## **Conspiracy of silence over HIV/AIDS**

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(By Amanullah Nasrat in Wardak) Health officials fear HIV may be spreading rapidly, but ignorance and denial cloud the issue. HIV/AIDS is little-known and misunderstood in Afghanistan. Some healthcare professionals are warning that the conspiracy of silence surrounding the virus could be one of the factors facilitating its spread. "Afghanistan is facing an AIDS crisis," said Dr Sevil Huseynova, who heads the HIV/AIDS section at the Kabul Office of the World Health Organisation, WHO, which has been working in the field of HIV awareness/prevention in Afghanistan since 2003. "It has a very low number of registered cases, but now the disease could spread very quickly," she said. "People do not know anything about it, and there are a lot of factors such as the use of illegal narcotics and the return of refugees from abroad which contribute to the situation." Dr Zalmai Khan Ahmadzai, head of the HIV/AIDS department at the public health ministry, says 51 cases have been recorded in the country to date. Of that number, 17 are women. But according to Dr Abdullah Fahim, an advisor to the health ministry, the real number is much higher. He estimates that there are at least 1,500 people infected with HIV in Afghanistan at present, most of whom are either unaware they are carrying the virus or are hiding the fact out of shame. "HIV/AIDS is spreading very quickly," he said. Ahmadzai says most of the cases involve people who have spent time in emigration. Refugees returning from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran during Afghanistan's decades of war are bringing back foreign ways and disease, say medical professionals. Other factors contributing to the rapid spread of HIV include needle-sharing among drug users; surgery where contaminated equipment is used; sexual relations; blood transfusions; and dirty razors in barber's shops.

*IWPR'S AFGHAN RECOVERY REPORT, No. 204, 27/2/2006*

## **British troops start mission in Helmand**

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(Arman-e-Milli) The British troops have started their first patrols in the southern province of Helmand, officials said on February 25. More than 3,500 British troops are going to be deployed in the province in coming three months, under

the framework of NATO. The British forces have said their major task in the province will be to fight narcotics. Helmand is a major poppy-growing province, accounting for a quarter of the opium produced in Afghanistan. Arman-e-Milli is an independent daily run by a group of journalists.

*IWPR'S AFGHAN PRESS MONITOR, No. 253,27/2/2006*

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## Seizures and Arrests

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### **[10 kg of heroin seized in Nangarhar]**

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(...) (S)ecurity officials in the Spin Ghar district of the eastern Nangarhar province captured 10 kilograms of heroin following an operation in the area.

*Pajhwok Afghan News, 21/2/2006*

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### **Tajik police detain Afghan drug dealer**

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In the course of a special joint operation, officers from the Tajik Interior Ministry and servicemen from the State Committee for Protection of the State Border of Tajikistan [SCPSBT] seized a large batch of drugs in the Farkhor section of the Tajik-Afghan border last night, a source at the SCPSBT has told Avesta. An Afghan drug dealer has been detained. A total of 31 packages of heroin, 13 packages of raw opium and two sacks of poppy seeds were seized from him.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Tajik Avesta website ) 22/2/2006*

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### **Gang of drug traffickers detained in Russia's Samara Region**

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Twenty-four members of a gang involved in drug trafficking have been detained in the city of Tolyatti, ITAR-TASS news agency reported on 22 February, quoting the Samara Region branch of the federal drug control service. A batch of 200 g of heroin and about R1.5m were seized during the operation to detain the gang.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: ITAR-TASS news agency) 22/2/2006*

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### **Three Afghan policemen seized with 800 kg of heroin**

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Afghan authorities have arrested three policemen for allegedly smuggling nearly 800 kilograms (1,760 pounds) of heroin in a police truck, a governor said Thursday. The policemen were seized while on duty at the weekend after security forces in the southern city of Kandahar found the heroin in a police pick-up vehicle, Kandahar province governor Asadullah Khalid said.

*Agence France Presse, 23/2/2006*

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### **Turkish police seize over 10 kilos of heroin, detain about 100 people**

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Turkish police seized 11.5 kilograms of heroin in Istanbul, Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah said on Thursday [23 February]. Cerrah told reporters that 70,076 illicit pills, 9.2 kilograms of hashish, and 1.1 kilograms of cocaine were confiscated in operations launched in Istanbul on 16 February. One hundred and eight people were detained in the operations, Cerrah indicated.

*BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia) 23/2/2006*

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### **Police seize 12.1 kg heroin, 20.7 kg hashish in eastern Turkey**

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Turkish police seized 20.7 kilograms of hashish and 12.1 kilograms of heroin in two separate operations staged in eastern cities of Van and Malatya, sources said. According to the sources, three people were arrested in the operations.

*BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia) 23/2/2006*

### **Dozens of heroin labs destroyed in eastern Afghanistan**

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Police in Nangarhar Province, eastern Afghanistan, have destroyed 15 heroin-processing laboratories and seized 1,755 [kg of] chemical materials in Achin District. (...) The Interior Ministry spokesman told Bakhtar Information Agency that the chemicals included 530 kg of sodium chloride, 695 kg of ammonium chloride, 465 litres of acid and 15 kg of carbon.

*BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Afghan state radio) 23/2/2006*

### **Police seize two batches of heroin in Siberia**

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Police have seized about two kilograms of heroin in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area. "The first batch of heroin was found in the town of Nizhnevartovsk in the possession of a local businessman," a source in the area's law enforcement agencies told RIA on 24 February. He said that 965.13 g of heroin was seized from the businessman. "In the town of Lyantor in the same area police detained a driver in whose Zhiguli car 990.46 g of heroin was found and seized," the source said.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: Russian news agency RIA) 24/2/2006.*

### **Turkey seizes large amount of drug in 2005**

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Turkish Security Department spokesman Ismail Caliskan said on Friday that Turkey seized a large amount of drug in 2005, a considerable increase from 2004. During 2005, 6,000 kg hashish, 6,664 kg heroin, 141 kg base morphine, 34 kg opium, 40 kg cocaine, 1.28 million ecstasy pills, 5.76 million captagon pills and 15,123 other synthetic pills were seized in 5,714 operations, Caliskan told reporters, adding that 11,979 persons were arrested in these operations. The amount of seized hashish increased 38.6 percent, heroin 2.3 percent, synthetic drugs 30.4 percent, opium 34.4 percent and cocaine 67.8 percent in 2005, as compared to 2004, the official said.

*Xinhua News Agency, 24/2/2006*

### **Over 270 kg of opium seized in southern Uzbek district**

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Recently, 272.6 kg of opium was seized by police in Sariosiyo District of Surxondaryo Region, Uzbek TV reported on 25 February. A resident of the district is suspected of bringing in the drugs from Tajikistan's Tursunzoda District and hiding it in his home, the television added.

*BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Uzbek Television First Channel) 25/2/2006*

### **Czech police arrest Macedonian drug dealer at Prague airport**

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Detectives arrested a man from Macedonia, 36, suspicious of organizing pervitine (Czech version of metamphetamine) and heroin trafficking, at the Prague-Ruzyně airport in mid-February, the Czech National Anti-Drug Centre (NPC) told CTK today.

*BBC Monitoring European (Source: Czech news agency CTK) 26/2/2006*

### **Afghan counter-narcotic officers seize 186 kg of heroin**

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[Presenter] The counter-narcotics officials of the Interior Ministry have seized 186 kg of heroin and 90 kg of raw hashish in three different operations in Kabul, Logar and Konduz provinces. My colleague has further details: [Reporter] The counter-narcotics officials seized 132 kg of heroin from the house of a smuggler in Konduz Province. According to another report, officials seized 90 kg of hashish hidden in a garden. Five suspects have been arrested in connection with this case. Another person has been arrested while carrying 54 kg of heroin from Kabul to Kandahar Province. The heroin was skilfully placed in a car. [Passage omitted]

*BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Afghan state TV) 27/2/2006.*

### **International drug dealers detained in Russian region**

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An international criminal group has been detained in Chelyabinsk. It is suspected that the gang was involved in selling drugs in Kazakhstan and Russia. A total of 11 kg of heroin was confiscated from the detainees, ITAR-TASS learnt at the press service of the Chelyabinsk Region directorate of the Federal Service for Control Over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances.

*BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: Russian news agency ITAR-TASS) 27/2/2006*