



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 6-13 March 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.

Afghan opium production likely to increase this year, UN warns

After decreasing by 21% in 2005, the cultivated area of opium in Afghanistan, the world's largest supplier of the drug from which heroin is produced, looks likely to rise this year, a United Nations spokesman said on 6 March.

UzReport.com, 7.3.2006

Government to set up drug rehabilitation centre in Karachi

The government will set up a Model Drug Addicts Treatment & Rehabilitation Centre in Karachi soon and a blueprint of the project has already been prepared, a Narcotics Ministry spokesman said Monday. It will be third such centre in the country, with two already functioning in Islamabad and Quetta. Similar facilities will be gradually established in other major cities, the spokesman said.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 7.3.2006

Profits from Afghan poppy crop sowing terror seeds: secret Canadian report

Afghanistan's lucrative narcotics trade is helping fund terrorist attacks in the struggling country, warns a top-secret Canadian threat assessment. Intelligence analysts have quietly told senior federal officials that proceeds from the burgeoning opium poppy trade are "integral" to assaults by militants. Canadian soldiers and diplomats in Afghanistan have been hit with suicide-bomb raids and rocket-propelled grenade attacks.

The Canadian Press, 8.3.2006

Official reports fall in poppy cultivation in western Afghanistan

Officials of the Herat Province Counter-Narcotics Department say that poppy cultivation has dropped by 40 per cent in Herat compared to previous years. The head of the Herat Counter-Narcotics Department said this in an exclusive interview with Sada-ye Jawan Radio.

BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Afghan independent Sada-ye Jawan Radio) 8.3.2006

Pakistan helicopters gift in heroin fight

The [UK] Government is to give Pakistan's authorities a £6 million helicopter package to tackle heroin smuggling out of Afghanistan. Ministers have agreed to donate two MI17 helicopters and a spares package to the country's Anti-Narcotics Force, Home Secretary Charles Clarke said tonight. "This gift will have a direct impact on HMG's counter narcotics objectives in reducing drugs harms to the UK." He said Pakistan was "critical" to the Britain's global counter narcotics work. "More than half of the heroin imported to the UK transits Pakistan. 'Our main partner in Pakistan is the

ANF, which is small, under-funded but well-led and relatively uncorrupt." The UK last gave Pakistan's ANF helicopters in 1995. Both are now out of service - one crashed late last year and the other is awaiting a major airframe overhaul. Mr Clarke said being airborne was crucial to the ANF's ability to 'survey and then eradicate poppy cultivation" and arrest traffickers.

Press Association Newswire, 8.3.2006

Former Pakistani spy chief says Musharraf living on borrowed time

(Published by Anis) Recent remarks that President Pervez Musharraf has made about Afghanistan indicate that major changes are afoot in Pakistan, the former head of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence, General Hamid Gul, said on March 7. The two countries are engaged in a war of words about cross-border infiltration by insurgents. The Afghans accuse Pakistan of harbouring terrorist cells, while Islamabad has countered by saying Afghanistan is fomenting unrest in border areas of Pakistan. Gul added that Musharraf's remarks show that his recent talks with US president George Bush were unsuccessful. Gul predicted that the United States will "replace" Musharraf in this year's election.

Anis is a state-run daily published mostly in Dari.

IWPR's Afghan Press Monitor, No. 261, 9.3.2006

Tajik drug control chief says no drop expected in Afghan drug trafficking this year

The Tajik drug control chief said Friday that he didn't expect the flow of illegal drugs from neighboring Afghanistan to decrease this year. Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in the impoverished Central Asian nation signed a deal with the Tajik government on Friday, pledging US\$800,000 (euro 670,000) to boost the Tajik police force and improve the fight against drugs.

Associated Press Newswires, 10.3.2006

Two police beheaded in Afghan drug belt

Two policemen were beheaded and their bodies dumped in the desert after being kidnapped from their homes in the heartland of Afghanistan's opium poppy region, an official said Saturday. The violence is the latest to hit southern Helmand province since Afghan security forces launched a massive campaign earlier this week to eradicate hundreds of hectares (acres) of opium poppies, which are used to make heroin.

Associated Press Writer, 11.3.2006

Afghanistan opium poppy production up in nearly half of the country, says U.N. official

Afghanistan is defying international efforts to combat opium poppy cultivation with early indications for this year showing an increase in nearly half of its 30 provinces, the head of a key U.N. anti-drug agency said Monday.

Associated Press Newswires, 13.3.2006

Seizures and Arrests

Tajik police seize opium hauls in capital, south

The Tajik law-enforcement agencies seized 15 kg of drugs in the past 24 hours. A source within the Interior Ministry's directorate for fighting illegal drug trafficking told Asia-Plus agency that a Nexia car driven by a resident of Vose District, Azam Makhmajonov, was stopped at the Shar-Shar [traffic police] checkpoint in the country's south. Over 8 kg of raw opium was found in a bag of his passenger, a resident of the same district, Bakhtiyor Ismoilov. A criminal case has been instigated to establish whether the driver was connected with the drugs. On the same day, about 4 kg of raw

opium was seized in the capital's [Dushanbe] Ispechak-1 district and 2 kg of cannabis in Hamadoni District in Khatlon Region.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Asia-Plus website) 7.3.2006

Student arrested with 25kg of heroin in Laghman

Security officials recovered 25 kilograms of heroin from a car in this capital city of the eastern Laghman province on Tuesday. A provincial intelligence official, who requested not to be named, told Pajhwok Afghan News police recovered the contraband from a suspected taxi car during search at Tergarai bridge. The contraband was neatly concealed in the car's fuel tank, he said, adding police arrested the driver, Yaqub, an 18-year-old student at Roshan School here.

Pajhwok Afghan News, 7.3.2006

Tajik border guards detain three suspected Afghan drug smugglers

Tajik border guards detained three armed Afghans who were attempting to smuggle nearly 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of drugs into Tajikistan, a police official said Thursday. The three men had some 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of opium and more than 4 kilograms (9 pounds) of heroin on them when they were captured Wednesday evening, Drug Control Agency spokesman Avaz Yuldashev said.

Associated Press Newswires, 9.3.2006

Officials say 7,500 acres of poppy destroyed in south Afghan province

Officials claimed on Thursday they eradicated 7,500 acres of poppy crops in southern Kandahar province this last month, as counter-narcotics agents stepped up a countrywide anti-drugs campaign.

BBC Monitoring South Asia (Source: Pajhwok news agency website) 9.3.2006

4 kg heroin worth BGN 729,000 intercepted by Customs

An attempt for illegal export of 4.052 kg of heroin was prevented by customs officers at Vrushka Chouka border checkpoint (on the Bulgarian-Serbian border). The news was released by the Customs Agency Thursday.

Bulgarian News Agency, 9.3.2006

Senate committee given briefing on performance of ANF

Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) is eliminating poppy cultivation and trafficking of drugs across the border, besides holding various preventive and awareness programs at various parts of the country. Brigadier Farooq Abbasi of the ANF Thursday stated this, while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Narcotics Control (SSCNC) here at ANF Regional Directorate. Giving details about operations launched in various parts of the province including Kambar, Dadu and Larkana, he said ANF destroyed around 100 acres of cultivated crop of poppy, besides poppy cultivated on some patches in the same areas during 2005, 2006.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 9.3.2006

Police seize large heroin batch in Russia's Volga region

[Presenter] A large batch of narcotics has been seized in Samara Region. A total of 25 kg of heroin was found in a private garden on the outskirts of Novokuybyshevsk. The powder was packed in polythene bags, 1 kg in each. The garden and the house it surrounds belongs to a Gypsy family. Four people have been detained, a woman who is the owner of the house has admitted to being guilty. In police' view, the criminal group has been delivering narcotics to Samara Region from Tajikistan.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: Russian Channel One TV) 10.3.2006

PRESS DIGEST - Albania - March 10 [A record heroin seizure]

(reported by GAZETA SHQIPTARE) Italian police have seized 43 kilos of heroin in a truck coming from Albania, the biggest quantity in the last five years. The drug packages were stamped with the Turkish crescent and the Albanian eagle.

Reuters News, 10.3.2006

Police seize 2.1 kg of heroin, arrest 3 persons

Police seized on Friday in Tirana 2.1 kilograms of heroin and arrested three persons under "production, possession and distribution of drug" charges. According to Tirana Police's news release, "in the context of the operation coded 'Ujvara' (Waterfall), police forces arrested citizens Nikoll Kolmarku, 37, Orgest Kordha, 20, and Sokol Pareshi, 34, born and residents in Tirana." These persons were detained in the vicinity of "Selman Stermasi" stadium in Benz car with plate Tr. 5214 I, which they used for trafficking the narcotic substance in different areas of the capital. Police sequestered 2.1 kg of heroin, Benz car, 3 mobile phones and money under the quality of material evidence.

Albanian-ATA English News Service, 10.3.2006

About 4.5 kilos of heroin confiscated in Chelyabinsk

A large batch of heroin is confiscated in the Chelyabinsk region. The operation was carried out jointly with the traffic police, a source in the regional department of the Federal Drug Control Service told Itar-Tass on Friday. "A taxi was stopped for a check at one of the entrances to the regional center. Police examined a bag of a passenger who got nervous and found 4.3 kilograms of heroin in it. The passenger was detained, the drugs were confiscated," the source said.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 10.3.2006

U. S. says Kazakhstan makes 'considerable progress' in fighting drug trafficking

Kazakhstan has made "considerable progress" in fighting drug trafficking and drug abuse, said the U. S. Department of State in its 2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report unveiled on March 1, adding that Washington's goal is to pursue long term cooperation between the two countries' law enforcement agencies.

The Times of Central Asia, 10.3.2006

News in brief [a total of 3 tons of drugs seized in Iran]

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) of Iran reported this week that anti-drug police squads had seized over three tons of illegal drugs across Iran. The haul last week included 2,857 kilograms of opium, 318 kg. of hashish, 35 kg. of heroin and 5 kg. of morphine. The official government news Web site of Iran acknowledged a pervasive drug problem in its country.

The Jerusalem Post, 10.3.2006

Uzbek drug courier arrested in Russia with 2.7 kg of heroin

Police have seized a big batch of heroin in Sysertskiy District of Sverdlov Region, a representative of the regional main interior directorate told RIA by telephone. "Traffic police stopped a Lada car driven by an unemployed Uzbek national on a highway. A 2.7-kg heroin batch was found in the car," the source said.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: RIA) 11.3.2006

Turkmen TV says over 1 t of drugs seized near Iran border

Courageous border guards of sovereign and neutral Turkmenistan, who keep vigilant watch for peace and tranquillity in the country, consistently demonstrate their allegiance to the homeland and to our great leader, [President] Saparmyrat

Turkmenbasy [Nyyazow]. Due to the vigilance of the Turkmen border guards, a large amount of narcotics was recently seized near the Sarahs border unit [on the Turkmen-Iranian border]. As a result of a special task group acting quickly, an attempt was stopped to smuggle into Turkmenistan 830 kg of opium and 303 kg of hashish, otherwise known as chars [as heard]. The total weight of the seized drugs is 1,033 [as heard, should be 1,133 kg].

BBC Monitoring Newsfile (Source: Turkmen TV first channel) 11.3.2006

3 kg heroin seized at border with Serbia

Customs inspectors impounded 3 kg of heroin before it could be smuggled outside Bulgaria via the Kalotina crossing on the border with Serbia, the National Customs Agency said on Sunday. The drug was found in the luggage of a Bulgarian national of Turkish descent travelling to the Netherlands in a Bulgarian-registered van. The man told the customs officers he had bought the heroin in Istanbul. /IT/VE

Bulgarian News Agency, 12.3.2006

PRESS DIGEST - Croatia - March 13 [12.7 kg of heroin seized]

(Reported by VECERNJI LIST) - Croatian customs officers found 12.7 kilos of heroin and minor quantity of firearms in a car belonging to a German citizen, after which she was detained, police sources say.

Reuters News, 13.2.2006

Turkish police seize over 167 kg of heroin

Police seized 54 kilograms of heroin in southeastern city of Diyarbakir on Sunday [12 March]. Sources said that police found the heroin hidden in a car which was coming from Yuksekova town of (southeastern city) Hakkari. Police detained three people.

Gendarmerie seized 71.7 kilograms of heroin in Gurpinar town of eastern city of Van on Monday [13 March]. Sources said that gendarmery stopped a group of people, and found the heroin in the flour sacks the group was carrying. Gendarmerie detained five people.

Police seized 42 kilograms of heroin in Marmaris town of western city of Mugla. Mugla Police Chief Mehmet Emin Korpe told Anatolia news agency that Mugla and Istanbul police launched an operation in a hotel in Marmaris and seized the heroin. Police detained 5 people including an Israeli woman (Rachel R.) and a Greek man (Kosta S.) in the operation, and they will be sent to court.

BBC Monitoring Newsfile (Source: Anatolia) 13.3.2006

Turkey: Police seize 132 kg of heroin in Istanbul, arrest 61

Istanbul Police Chief Celalettin Cerrah has indicated that police have seized 132 kilograms of heroin in 30 different operations staged in Istanbul last week, stating that 61 people were arrested.

BBC Monitoring Newsfile (Source: Anatolia) 13.3.2006

Police seize 124 kg of heroin at Macedonian-Bulgarian border

The Macedonian Police and Customs Administration have seized 124 kilograms of heroin yesterday at the Macedonian-Bulgarian border crossing Novo Selo, which was followed by uncovering additional quantities of drugs and weapons in Skopje and Kumanovo.

BBC Monitoring European (Source: Macedonian news agency Makfax) 13.3.2006