



Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia Weekly Digest:6 -14 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.

Russia, Central Asia boost anti-drug cooperation

Russia will continue putting up a "safety belt" along its southern CIS borders with Afghanistan to fight the drug threat, the deputy director of the Russian Foreign Ministry department for new challenges and threats, Aleksey Rogov, told an ITAR-TASS correspondent today. Rogov is a member of the Russian delegation at the Tashkent meeting of representatives of the states signatory to the memorandum on drugs control cooperation, which is opening today.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, (Source: ITAR-TASS) 7/2/2006

Editorial: London conference – the easy part is over

(Outlook) For once, just about everyone seems satisfied. The London Conference held at Lancaster House on January 31 and February 1 has been declared a success. The delegations, including an ostentatiously large contingent from Afghanistan, have packed up and gone home. The world has renewed its promises to Afghanistan: we are not being abandoned, and we have been reassured that there is to be another round of generous aid-giving. The government is satisfied, because irrespective of the murmurings of discontent in parliament at the cabinet's performance, the International community has again placed confidence in the administration of President Hamed Karzai. There were some international figures who supported the government's calls to channel assistance through official institutions rather than wasting it on now-notorious non-government organisations. But how justified is the upbeat mood, and how accurately does all the optimism reflect the state of play in the post-Bonn political process? Predictably, headlines about the conference outcome emphasised the aid commitments. The Afghanistan Compact provides an ideal document by which our parliamentarians can hold the government to account. Perhaps over the next five years, we might see a little less obsession about who holds which ministerial post, as our members of parliament start to concentrate instead on encouraging the government to get on with implementing the ambitious programme of reform it has just signed up to.

(Outlook is an independent daily published in English.)

IWPR'S AFGHAN PRESS MONITOR, No. 242, 10/2/2006

Sweden to head PRT in northern provinces

(Cheragh) The Swedish forces will take over command of Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRTs, in four northern provinces next month. Addressing a press conference in Mazar-e-Sharif on February 11, [Swedish] Colonel Tommy Johnson, who heads the PRT there, disclosed that work was underway on construction of an ISAF base which would be completed in the coming month, at a cost of over five million US dollars. Colonel Johnson added that the forces would take charge of PRTs in Balkh, Samangan, Jowzjan and Sar-e-Pul provinces.

(Cheragh is an independent daily run by the Development and Democracy Association.)

IWPR'S AFGHAN PRESS MONITOR, No. 243, 12-13/2006

Seizures and Arrests

Over 2.8 kg of heroin seized in Tajik north

A new attempt to traffic a consignment of Afghan drugs from Tajikistan to Russia has been foiled by Tajik special services in the north of the country. The Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs has told Avesta that officers of the transport police have detained a 25-year-old resident of Jabbor Rasulov District during the check-in for the Khujand-St Petersburg flight. Over 2.8 kg of heroin was found in his bag and seized during a search.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia, (Source: Tajik Avesta website) 7/2/2006

Tajik heroin smugglers arrested in Moscow

Two citizens of Tajikistan have been detained in Moscow on suspicion of organizing supplies of heroin to the capital, RIA-Novosti has learnt in the Moscow department of the Federal Service for Control Over the Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union, (Source: RIA Novosti) 8/2/2006.

Record heroin haul in France

French police have seized more than 300 kilogrammes of heroin stashed inside a Turkish truck, in one of the largest hauls of the drug ever made in Europe, customs officials said on Wednesday.

Agence France Presse, 8/2/2006

Turkish police arrest eight in drugs busts, seize 51 kilos of heroin

Turkish police seized 51 kilograms of heroin and 378,000 drug pills in anti-drug operations launched in Istanbul, Edirne, Gaziantep and Antalya cities. Totally 12 persons were arrested in the operations.

BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia), 8/2/2006

Central Asian anti-drugs center to be established in Kazakhstan

A center is to be set up in Kazakhstan for countering drugs trafficking in the region, the Foreign Ministry of neighboring Uzbekistan said Wednesday.

RIA Novosti, 8/2/2006

Moscow drug police arrest trans-national criminal group

Moscow drug police have arrested a trans-national criminal group, which has been supplying heroin to Moscow for almost a year, sources from Moscow department of the Federal Service for Controlling Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Circulation told Itar-Tass on Wednesday. "Two drug couriers were detained on the Saratov-Tambov highway several days ago," the sources said. A Russian national from the suburbs of Moscow and a Tajik national "were trying to bring into the capital almost 25 kilograms of pure heroin worth over one million U.S. dollars. It was stashed in car seats," they added.

ITAR-TASS World Service, 8/2/2006

Over 400 kg of heroin seized in Russia in January

Over 400 kg of heroin have been confiscated in Russia since the beginning of 2006, the public relations centre of the Federal Drug Control Service told RIA on Thursday [9 February].

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union, (Source: RIA Novosti), 9/2/2006

U.N. drugs agency welcomes new Central Asia center to combat narcotics

The chief of the U.N. drugs agency praised five Central Asian countries for establishing a regional center to coordinate efforts to combat the illicit narcotics trade.

Associated Press Newswires, 9/2/2006

Tajik agencies net over 70 kg of heroin on Afghan border

Tajikistan's special services seized over 70 kg of "high-quality" heroin following an armed clash on the Tajik-Afghan border early this morning, Avesta news agency reported on 9 February.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Avesta website) 9/2/2006

Two South Africans arrested with heroin at Afghan airport

Police arrested two South African nationals trying to leave Afghanistan's main airport with two kilogrammes (4.4 pounds) of heroin hidden in a photo album, an official said Friday.

Agence France Presse, 10/2/2006

Large heroin batches seized in two Russian regions

Nearly 10 kg of heroin have been seized in Kurgan Region [bordering on Kazakhstan], the press centre of the Russian Federal Security Service's border directorate for the Urals Federal District told RIA-Novosti.

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union (Source: RIA) 10/2/2006

Police seize more than 70 kilos of heroin in eastern Turkey

Turkish security forces impounded 73.1 kilograms of heroin in two separate operations in the eastern city of Van on Friday [10 February]. Acting on a tip-off, security forces stopped and searched an automobile. They found 48.7 kg of heroin with the help of a sniffer dog. In a second operation, security forces seized 24.4 kg of heroin in a house. Sources said that the drug would be sent to European countries. Six people were detained in the operation.

BBC Monitoring European (Source: Turkish news agency Anatolia) 10/2/2006

Russia: St Petersburg media highlights 30 Jan-5 Feb 06

Last weekend (28-29 January) the St Petersburg traffic police and the St Petersburg directorate of the Federal Service for Drug Trade Control seized about four kg of heroin in St Petersburg's suburb of Pushkin. Following an operational report a traffic police crew and staff members of the Federal Service for Drug Trade Control stopped a Ford Transit carrying two men. As a result of a search three paper packets with **heroin** weighing about four kg were found in the car, the St Petersburg traffic police reported. (Source: NTV-St Petersburg "Segodnya-Peterburg"). As a result of an inter-departmental anti-drug operation "Channel" that was carried out in St Petersburg, 16 kg of drugs were seized and 94 criminal cases were opened within two weeks. Forty of them relate to drug trade and in six cases charges were brought against organized criminal groups. (ITAR-TASS St Petersburg news agency)

An illegal laboratory for production of synthetic drugs has been shut down in St Petersburg. The laboratory producing an ephedrine-based drug was located in an apartment on Vasilyevskiy Island. During a test purchase a 24-year old St Petersburg resident was arrested. Earlier he had been convicted of robbery. Compounds unavailable to ordinary people and equipment for the synthesis of the drug were found in his apartment. (Rosbalt news agency)

BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union, 11/2/2006

3 Kg Heroin Seized at Bulgarian-Turkish Border

Customs inspectors at Malko Turnovo border checkpoint at the Bulgarian-Turkish border seized four packages of a total of 3.07 kg **heroin** Saturday morning, the Bourgas Regional Customs Directorate said.

Bulgarian News Agency, 11/2/2006.

133 kilograms of heroin seized in Kabul

The Counter Narcotics Police Sunday arrested an alleged smuggler with 133 kilograms of fully processed heroin in the eighth district of this central capital.

Pajhwok Afghan News, 12/2/2006

Flood of heroin feared as haul seized

A heroin haul worth over €600,000 seized in Dublin this week may be part of a bumper crop from Afghanistan that is flooding Irish streets.

Irish Independent, 14/2/2006

Serbian police seize 111 kilos of heroin hidden in Turkish truck

Serbian police said Tuesday they have seized 111 kilograms (244.7 pounds) of heroin hidden in a truck with Turkish plates.

Associated Press Newswires, 14 February 2006

Number of drug users up in Tajikistan

Over 7,500 drug users were registered in Tajikistan in 2005, a report by the Tajik Drug Control Agency says. According to information by the Health Ministry, a total of 7,576 drug users were registered in Tajikistan last year, which is up by 301 compared to 2004. The number of drug addicts whose diagnosis was established for the first time in their lives was 425 in 2005, three more than in 2004.

BBC Monitoring Central Asia (Source: Tajik Avesta website) 14/2/2006.