

**DRUG TRAFFICKING IN CENTRAL ASIA:
A CASE STUDY OF KYRGYZSTAN**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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July 24, 2006

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “**DRUG TRAFFICKING IN CENTRAL ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF KYRGYZSTAN**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full of any other degree or diploma of any other University.

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*Dedicated
To
My Parents*

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*Sanjeev
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LIST OF ACRONYMS:

ACTTA	Anti-Crime Training and Technical Assistance
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
BOMCA	Border Management Programme for Central Asia
CAC	Central Asian Community
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Control Programme
CAEC	Central Asian Economic Community
CARs	Central Asian Republics
CARICC	Central Asian Regional Information-Coordination Center
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
DCA	Drug Control Agency
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
EXBS	Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HT	Hizb-ut-Tahrir
IDUs	Injecting Drug Users
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IPT	Islamic Party of Turkestan
NADIN	National Anti-Drug Information Network
NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drug and Crime
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER- ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER-ONE

INTRODUCTION

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The emergence of new states and the collapse of the Soviet Union changed the map of Central Asia altogether. These states had to adjust to their new status of independent states and grapple with the existing political and economic realities. The states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan—which constituted as parts of Soviet Union and which were earlier collectively termed Soviet Central Asia, are now independent countries.

These are rugged and remote areas which have long been associated with drug trafficking and drug-motivated terrorism. During the Soviet period, these activities were confined to the region only. By mid-1980s with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, fundamental political changes within the Soviet Union and a growing market for drugs throughout the USSR helped the region to transform the additional, limited narcotics cultivation and cross-border trafficking into a major global problem. Along with the Golden Triangle, the Golden Crescent (with Afghanistan as its preeminent producer) remains the world's main areas for the production of illicit opiates (*Refer Map no 1.1*).

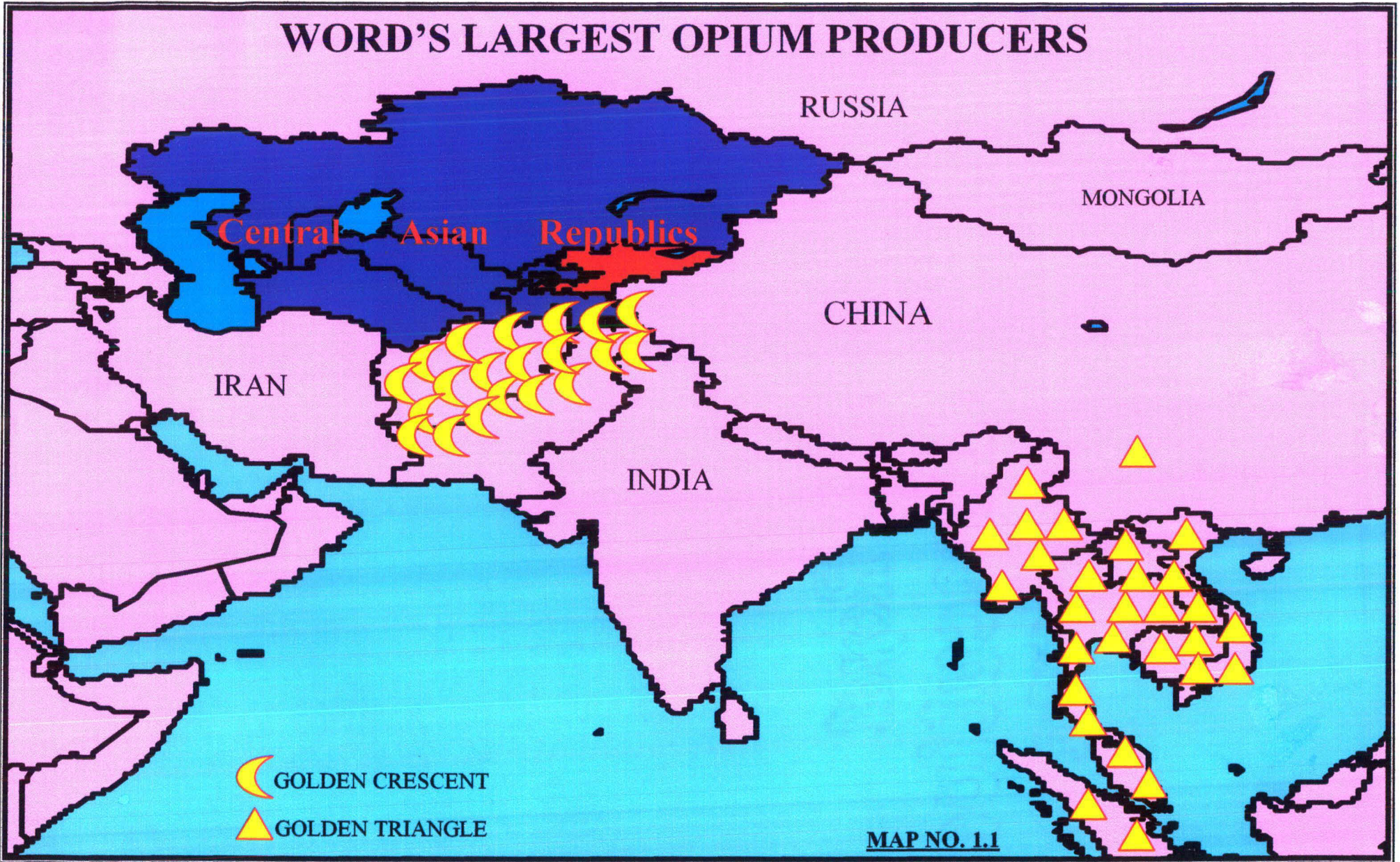
I.1 THE GOLDEN CRESCENT

The Golden Crescent is the name given to Asia's principal area of illicit opium production, located at the crossroads of Central, South, and Western Asia. This space overlaps three nations, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, whose mountainous peripheries define the crescent. In 1991, Afghanistan became the world's primary opium producer, with a yield of 1,782 metric tons (U.S. State Department estimates), surpassing Burma, formerly the world leader in opium production. The Golden Crescent emerged as a modern-day opium-producing entity only in the 1970s, after the Golden Triangle did so in the 1950s.

According to UNODC sources, Afghanistan had reached the 4000 metric ton mark in 1999, thereby becoming the world's leading producer of opium. In 2001 there was a dramatic decrease to 185 metric tons when it was banned by the Taliban rulers. By 2002 it had reached the 3400 metric ton mark. And in 2004 it had once again reached the 4200 metric ton mark¹. Afghanistan's current socioeconomic situation

¹ World Drug Report, (2005), *United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC)*, UN Publication Division, Analysis Vol No 1, p.41.

WORD'S LARGEST OPIUM PRODUCERS



makes opium production one of the country's only available economic means of access to land, labor, and credit².

I.2 THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Another major opium producer has been the Golden Triangle. It is one of Asia's two main illicit opium-producing areas. It is an area of around 350,000 square kilometers that overlaps the mountains of three countries of mainland Southeast Asia: Burma (Myanmar), Laos, and Thailand. Along with Afghanistan in the Golden Crescent (together with Iran and Pakistan), it has been one of the most important opium-producing area of Asia and of the world since the 1950s.

The term first appeared in 1971, referring to the shape of Burma, Laos, and Thailand when taken together. Although the opium production that exists in the Golden Triangle is frequently and erroneously thought to be an old traditional activity, in fact, opium production is an altogether recent phenomenon. The Golden Triangle's opium production exploded in 1989, exceeding 3,000 tons, with Burma alone producing more than 2,500 tons in 1996 (U.S. State Department estimates). At the end of the twentieth century, the Golden Triangle was clearly dominated by Burmese production (800 metric tons in 2002, according to the United Nations), Thailand had suppressed almost all its poppies, and Laos was still fighting the battle³.

History and geography make the CARs attractive areas for drug trafficking. The countries border or are located in close proximity to the countries of the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran) and, via China, have access to the countries of the Golden Triangle (Burma, Laos and Thailand), which are the world's largest producers of illicit opiates. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan border Afghanistan. In addition, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan border China (1,533km, 858 km, and 414 km respectively)⁴. China offers a market for the selling of drugs and also serves as a supplier of ephedrine, which is legal in China but illegal in most of the world. These countries also serve as a conduit for the output of heroin laboratories in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan.

² Pierre Chauvey, (2002), *Drug Trade in Asia*, UNODC, p.4. <http://www.pa-chouvy.org>.

³ Ibid, p.5.

⁴ Martha Brill Olcott and Natalia Udalova, (2000), "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia", *Working Papers*, Russian and Eurasian Program, No. 11, p.5.

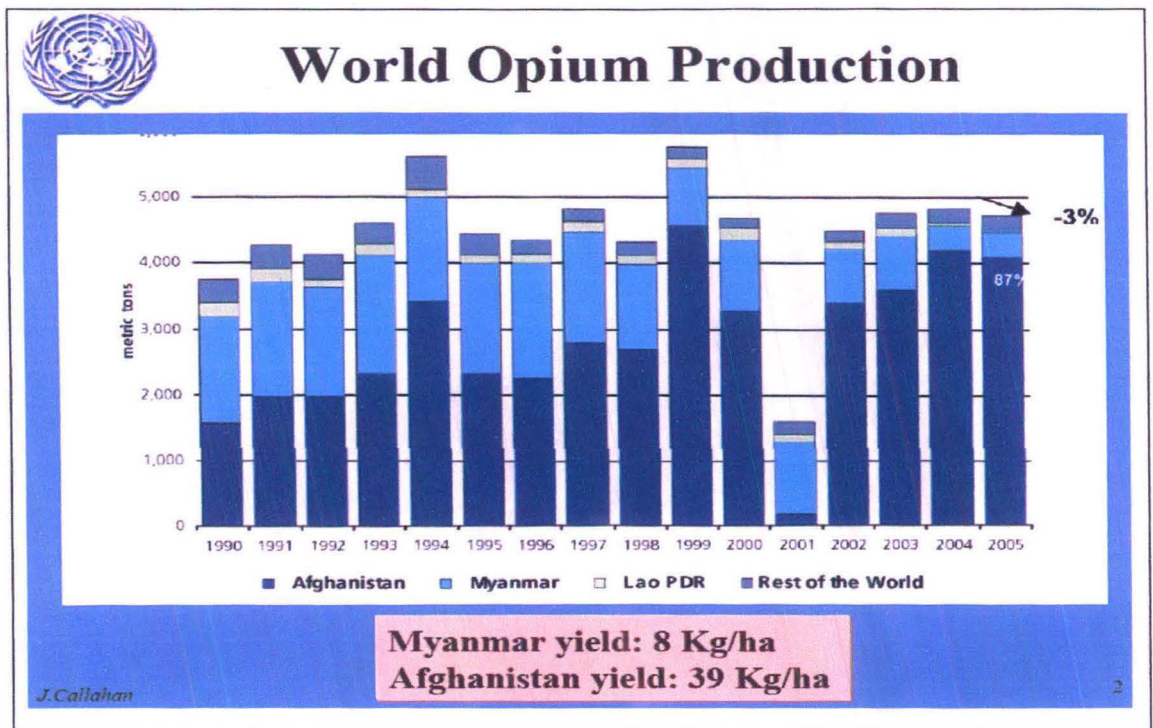
I.3 ILLICIT OPIUM PRODUCTION

The CARs are precariously located around Afghanistan (the largest opium producer in the world) Russia and Western Europe (the biggest and richest consumer markets for drugs). Nearly, 77 percent of global illicit opium production in 2002 took place in Afghanistan, while over 95 percent of heroin consumed in Russia and 70 to 90 percent of heroin consumed in Europe is believed to be of Afghan origin⁵.

Three Afghan provinces, namely Hilmand, Nangarhar and Badakhshan, account for about 60 percent of country's opium production in 2003⁶. The Afghan drugs are trafficked through CARs to Russia then Eastern Europe and further to Western Europe, though some is trafficked east to China and further⁷. In 1994, Afghanistan ranked second to Burma in the global opium production⁸.

Figure No. I.1

WORLD OPIUM PRODUCTION (1990-2005) (in metric tons)



Source: UNODC. Regional Office for Central Asia

As seen in the figure no. 1.1, Afghanistan replaced Burma as world's largest opium producer. In 2001, with the US attack on Afghanistan and with the fall of Taliban, the

⁵ UNODCCP (2002), *Global Illicit Drugs Trends*, New York, p. 11.

⁶ Maral Madi (2004), "Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Structure, Implications and Counter measures", *Central Asian Survey*, December, Vol. 23, No. 3-4, p.257.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 257.

⁸ U.S Department of State, (DoS), Bureau of International Narcotics Matter (1995), *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* Washington D.C: March, p.20.

drug production steeped to an all time low. However, in 2003, Afghanistan produced its second best opium harvest at 3600 tons, which was an increase of 6 per cent over 2002⁹. The political upheavals that took place in Afghanistan were the chief factors for this increase. The removal of the Taliban regime was the strongest impetus to this growth. The lack of a solid legal base that could prosecute and punish drug-related crimes and the state of lawlessness allowed farmers to continue cultivating opium. Opium is still the most lucrative and important cash crop in Afghanistan, constituting between 40 and 60 per cent of Afghanistan's economic production¹⁰. The economy is thus completely dependent on opium.

The CARs are witnessing an incessant flow of drugs from Afghanistan and are thus considered to be the most favorite trafficking territory. Heroin and opium from Afghanistan and other countries of South-West Asia are increasingly trafficked across the territories of the five Central Asian countries. The CARs that lie in the north of Afghanistan are experiencing a growing social, political and economic destabilization, as a result of a vast increase in heroin trafficking from their southern neighbor. Complementing this is the growing demand for opium in Europe and Russia. The constant demand for opium provides a lucrative market for opium production and as a result of this the farmers are more content on growing opium than any other crop (*Refer Map No 1.2*).

I.4 AREA OF STUDY

Kyrgyzstan in particular became a transit zone of Afghan opiates in the mid-1980s, when significant numbers of Soviet soldiers serving in Afghanistan developed opium addiction. However, at that time the scale of trafficking was not that threatening. In Soviet times, about 98 collective farms (*kolkhoz*) in the Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyzstan provided 80% of the Soviet Union's legal supply of opium, or 16% of the world's legal supply roughly during 1916 to 1973¹¹. Kyrgyzstan is at present not considered to be either a main producer or consumer of hard drugs. Instead, it is increasingly being used as a transit territory for Afghan opiates bound for Russia and Europe. However a domestic consumption is gradually developing, leading to the rise

⁹ Maral Madi, op. cit. p.257.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 257.

¹¹ Maral Madi, (2004), *Country Fact Sheets, Eurasian Narcotics, Kyrgyzstan*, p.1, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>.

LOCATION OF KYRGYZSTAN AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

RUSSIA

● CAPITAL



500 0 500 1000 1500 Kilometers

MAP NO. 1.2

of HIV infections and drug related crimes. The CARs have been plagued by an increase in drug trafficking, illicit production and the consumption of unprocessed drugs (raw opium, cannabis). This has long been a part of everyday life for centuries in the region, since conditions are very favorable for the cultivation of the opium poppy and cannabis. However, the past decade has seen the commercialization and mass proliferation of drug trafficking, as well as money laundering and the corruption that facilitates it.

Drug trafficking has become a political issue that threatens tenuous inter-state relations. These details are significant to understand the magnitude of the problem that faces the CARs. This problem has gone out of bounds, as it is not a mere issue of trafficking drugs. Several major issues have emerged from this trafficking which is an open threat to the social, economic, political and security arrangements of the CARs. Right from the deterioration of the public health standards to the increase in crime and drug-motivated terrorism, the CARs have been bearing the brunt of this issue

I.5 SPATIAL LOCATION AND ITS ADVANTAGE

Drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan has increased by the mere fact that it shares a long-standing and poorly guarded border with Tajikistan, which is the main Central Asian entrance hub for afghan drugs. Drug trafficking is also strongly pronounced because of its positioning between Afghanistan, which is the highest producer and Russia and Western Europe, which are the largest consuming markets.

Drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan is facilitated by the existing unresolved border disputes with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The length of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border is 1295 km and as of January 2004, 628 km of that still needed to be demarcated. There are above 70 disputed areas along the 870 km long Kyrgyz-Tajik border¹². The situation is similar with other CARs that are all facing border disputes.

The spatial location of the region has worked to the advantage of the drug traffickers. For example, the Kyrgyz border with Tajikistan is difficult to patrol since large parts of it are more than 13,000 feet above sea level and temperatures fall to -40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter¹³. Only a few roads cut across the region, most of which are badly in need of repair. The traffickers are easily able to evade detection because

¹² Maral Madi, op. cit, p. 260.

¹³ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 6.

of these factors. Tajikistan's Badakshan region encompasses about 40 per cent of Tajikistan's territory and is ill suited to both agriculture and industry. Two mountain roads connect it to Osh and Dushanbe, but these roads are not operational during October to April. The region also has the lowest population density in the country, with 3.2 people per square kilometer¹⁴. Being an underdeveloped area with no industrial production drug trafficking happens to be the only solution to their problems of poverty. Several people traffick drugs from Afghanistan and move them to Kyrgyzstan.

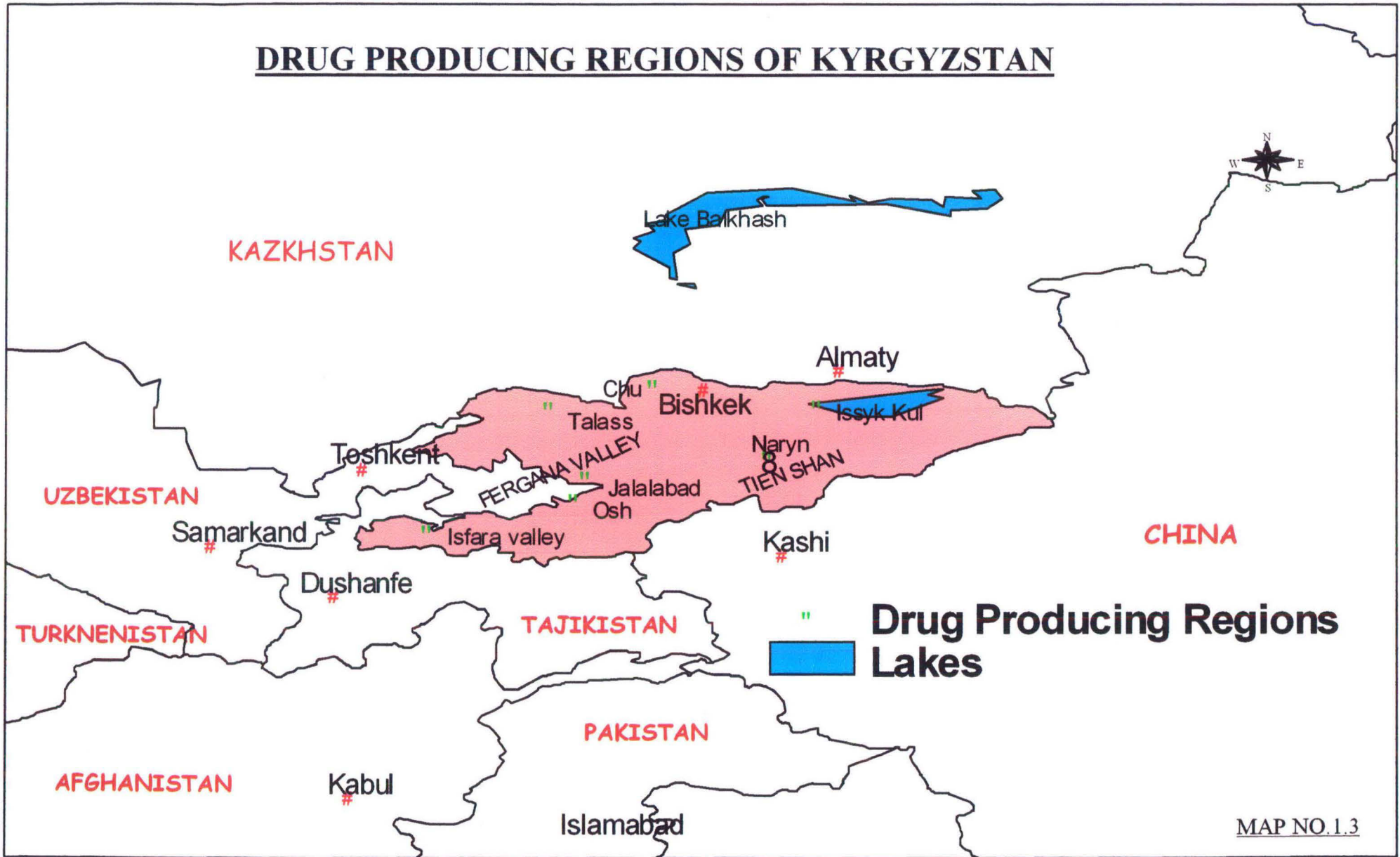
Drug cultivation and processing is not a novelty for Kyrgyzstan. Opium was traditionally smoked or brewed during celebrations and also used as medicine. Opium has long been cultivated in the region and records of opium poppy cultivation go back to 19th century. Opium production began to be used for medicinal purposes during the colonial period. Kyrgyzstan continued to legally grow opium poppy until 1974. The geographical location of this region is much favorable to the cultivation of drugs as it possesses the suitable kind of terrain and climate. In Kyrgyzstan's Osh, Jalalabad and Chu oblasts, the season for cannabis is April 30 to May 30; in Issyk-Kul and Talass oblasts the season is from May 15 to June 15; and in Naryn oblast it is from 15 June to 5 July¹⁵(*Refer Map No 1.3*).

Other benefits that the drug traffickers reaped include the fact that these countries were all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are members of the CIS Customs Union. In addition Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are members of the Central Asian Economic Community (CAEC). Kyrgyzstan is also a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). This arrangement makes drug trafficking easier among these countries, for example, by maintaining a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of the CIS countries, as well as by having various bilateral agreements that facilitate free trade between these countries.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 9.

DRUG PRODUCING REGIONS OF KYRGYZSTAN



10

I.6 TYPES OF DRUGS

Use and abuse are the two facets of the same coin. Drugs which were once used are now being abused. The medicine has now translated into poison. The cure needs another cure now. For centuries the healing power of drugs such as opium, cannabis, cocaine etc. were well known. It has been used for treatment of the mentally ill and other maladies. However, all of them are principal drugs of abuse today. There has been a stupendous increase in the percentage of drug addicts. It is said, "Drugs make the sick healthy and the healthy sick"¹⁶. This generalization is an oversimplification of an essentially complex situation. Drugs may be categorized on the basis of their pharmacological properties and social situation into five categories¹⁷:

Table No: 1.1
DRUG CATEGORISATION

Category	Abuse Level	Dependence	Examples
I	Widespread	Serious	Opium, Cannabis, Heroin
II	Restricted Use	Serious	Morphine
III	Widespread	Less Serious	Marijuana
IV	Restricted Use	Less Serious	Codeine
V	---	Not Known	---

According to pharmacologists, narcotics are drugs that depress the activity of the brain and central nervous system. They are effectively used for the relief of pain. Broader classes of drugs include opium and its derivatives, synthetic drugs, stimulants, sedatives, tranquilizers and hallucinogens. From Table No. 1.1 it can be seen that opium falls in the first category which has a widespread abuse and severe dependence tendency. Opium, cannabis and heroin belong to category one. Morphine which is the main alkaloid of opium belongs to category two. Codeine, another derivative of opium, which is chemically related to morphine, belongs to category four.

¹⁶ Norman Imlah, (1970), *Drugs in Modern Society*, A Vertex Book, Philadelphia, USA, p.1.

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 45-46.

I.7 THE SOCIAL SCENARIO

The therapeutic property of these drugs is well-known. But its widespread abuse is a matter of concern. Drug trafficking has caused a deterioration in the society. Social life and public health is at stake due to increase in drug trafficking. The stigma of poverty ameliorates the situation as more and more people are getting involved in the business of drug production and trafficking. A high percentage of people while cultivating drugs, are also getting addicted to it. As a result of this the public health standards are deteriorating. This also gives rise to harmful diseases including AIDS. There is also a decline in education and other industries. The youth of the region are lured through drugs into terrorism and other illegal activities. The ‘get rich quick’ mentality seems to be gaining momentum.

I.7.1 WOMEN

Women are also increasingly getting drawn into the drug trade as smugglers. Women’s involvement great deal of the trafficking in Central Asia is done by women who are forced or convinced to do so. It has also been a common strategy to sacrifice female traffickers who carry small amounts to get larger shipments through. Since 1997, a high percentage of women have been involved in drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan. Women, predominantly used as couriers, agree to traffic drugs in order to support children, family, and often accept a lower payment compared to the men.

During the last five years, the share of women involved in drug trafficking has increased from 5% to 12%. In 1999, 344 or 12.4% of total drug-related arrests involved women¹⁸. Undoubtedly if the women get drawn into the drug business, either as users or traffickers, the consequences will no doubt be devastating for the family structure and the children of the region. The growing number of women and child traffickers are breaking the notion of traditional family life. Money certainly is the motivating factor for people for indulging into drug trafficking. This is eroding the root pillars of the society of these regions causing a general condition of social instability and deterioration.

I.7.2 HEALTH

There has been a tremendous increase in HIV/AIDS in both the regions of Caucasus and Central Asia. According to the recent figures the HIV/AIDS epidemics among

¹⁸ Maral Madi, *Country Fact Sheet Kyrgyzstan*, op cit, p.1.

addicts is between 55 percent in Russia and 88 percent in Central Asia¹⁹. The health situation is made worse by the lack of medical care in the region. A large proportion of the population in the region lies below the poverty level and are deprived of the medical and rehabilitation facilities. Studies have shown that, human security, have been most affected by drug trafficking in the rise of addiction rates and the increase in cases of HIV/AIDS. Research shows that there is a direct correlation between occurrences of addiction and diseases along the well-known trafficking routes²⁰.

1.8 ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Kyrgyzstan's internal economy has been substantially weakened as a result of drug trafficking economy. Deteriorating economic conditions throughout this region are tailor-made to the needs of the drug industry. Majority of the population of this region lives below the poverty line. Farmers prefer to cultivate drugs rather than agriculture based crops because of the lucrative profits that drugs can bring. It has been estimated ,that a kilogram of opium costs \$ 50 in Faizabad (Afghanistan), \$ 200 in Khorog (Tajikistan), \$1000-\$1500 in Osh (Kyrgyzstan), \$ 5000 in Almaty (Kazakhstan), and \$10,000 in Moscow (Russia)²¹.

According to UNDCP estimate, by the time the heroin reaches New York or London, its price is over \$200,000 per kilogram (*Refer Map No. 1.4*).

Figure No. 1.2

VALUE UP-GRADATION OF DRUGS

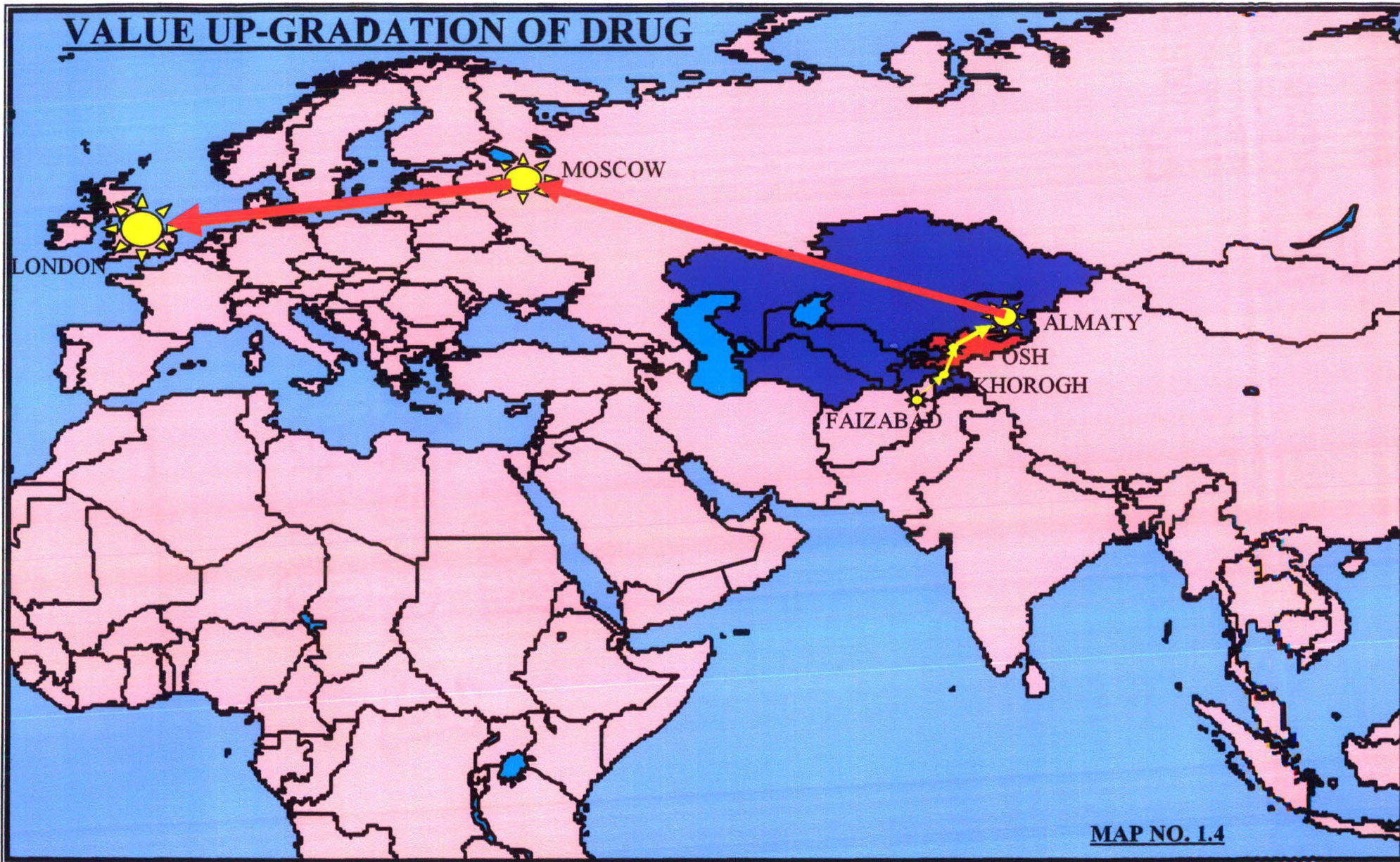


¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, (2003), *Global Illicit Drug Trends*, United Nations, New York, p.119.

²⁰ Niklas L.P. Swanström, (2001), "*Drug trade a threat to security: the cases of Central Asia and the Caucasus*", p.5. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

²¹ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit. p. 13.

VALUE UP-GRADATION OF DRUG



MAP NO. 1.4

Figure no. 1.2 reveals the tremendous monetary value up gradation involved in this illegal business. Those at the bottom of the drug chain—the opium farmers, along with the drug runners in Tajikistan and Afghanistan—receive only a tiny fraction of the money that the drug production and sales generate. As a result of this, the economy is crippled and dependant on production and trafficking of drugs. The actual number of people includes a massive number of the common public involved includes a massive number of the common public who are lured by the leaps bound that the drug money generates. Thus the economy gets totally drug-driven, affecting the global economic scene. The measures taken by the government to control the menace of drug-trafficking has not yielded results.

The chief reason behind this is the deep-rooted corruption that is rampant in Kyrgyzstan. The drug-traffickers carry out their illegal activities smoothly because they are allegedly supported by state officials. As a result of this, the issue of money laundering i.e, when illegal money enters the economy and gets legalized, is another social evil that faces Kyrgyzstan. The privatization and liberalization processes provide an important opportunity for money laundering and converting the illegal drug money into legal investment.

I.9 SECURITY CONCERNS

Drug trafficking in Central Asian region has become a direct source of political instability and terrorism. The intrusion of Islamic terrorists into the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan during the summer and fall of 1999 and 2000 demonstrated this amply²². These terrorists belonged to the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [IMU].

Drug trafficking has become one of the main sources of revenue for existing criminal groups that are also involved in money laundering. The money that is laundered is likely to infiltrate political systems and potentially thwart most of the democracy-building attempts in Kyrgyzstan. According to Interpol, the drug mafia controls governments of at least 12 countries²³. Researchers have argued that drug laboratories producing heroin have identified Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and

²² Kairat Osmonaliev (2005) ,“Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia, Legal and Political Dimensions”, *Silk Road studies Program Central Asia- Caucasus Institute*, Uppsala University Sweden, January , p. 16. www.silkroadstudies.org.

²³ Maral Madi, *Country Fact Sheet Kyrgyzstan*,., op. cit. p.1.

Turkmenistan as the potential “narco-states”, although little evidence is provided²⁴. Drug money also tends to support many separatist, radical religious and terrorist groups. This money is used to buy weapons. Bilateral exchange of drugs and weapons continue in this region while terrorists engage in spreading their networks. Drugs provide the revenue and it also acts as a temptation tool for making the youth join the terrorist outfits.

The Afghan drug trafficking to a large extent influenced the drug situation in Central Asia and the people of the region fell prey to the world’s fastest-growing means of production drug. This has in fact emerged as a major global issue. The trafficking needs to be quickly controlled in order to curb the growing threat to security concerns at the internal and international levels.

I.10 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Drug trafficking effects the environment of the region. More and more people are cultivating opium rather than any other agriculture-based crop. This results in severe soil erosion. Deforestation is another evil outcome. People are cutting trees in greed for more land to cultivate opium. Also the vast amount of drugs that are seized and burned by authorities causes the contamination of the atmosphere.

I.11 DEMOCRACY BUILDING PROCESS

The drug money is a threat to democracy-building attempts in Kyrgyzstan. The drug trade is facilitated by corrupt law enforcement officials. Corruption is rampant right from the grass-root levels. The drug money acts as a temptation for bribing officials and authorities. The vulnerable political fabric is being eroded as drug money fuels corruption and lawlessness. Political and economic reforms are hampered because drug trafficking has weakened the political and legal institutions. Drug trade impedes democratization. Government efforts at reform and democratization also suffer a setback because of drug trafficking. The process of reform and democratization is an uphill battle, since drug trade has become entrenched in the social/political fabric of society.

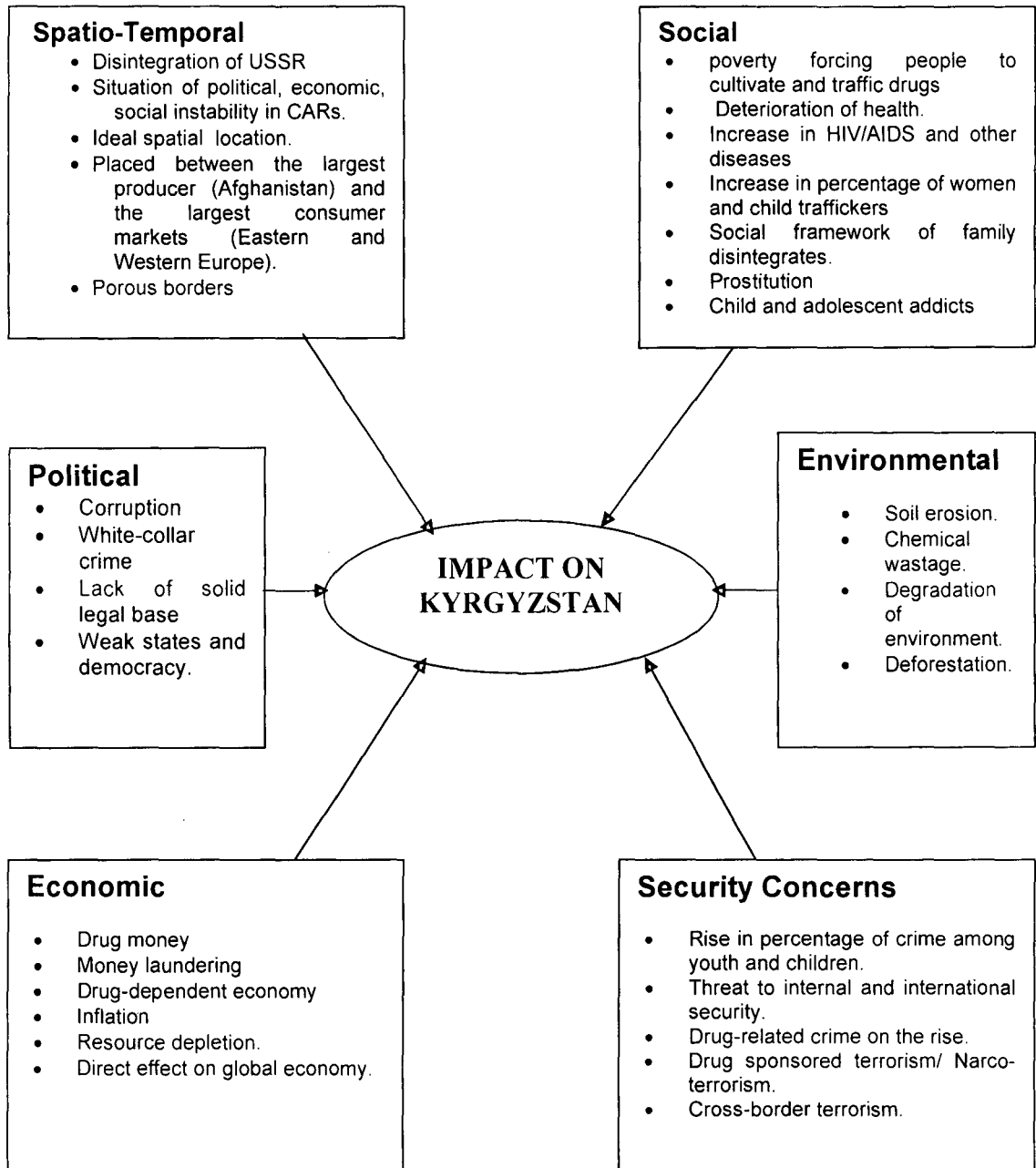
²⁴ Tamara Makarenko, (2002), “Crime, Terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade”, *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Summer.

The vulnerability of Central Asian governments for corruption and infiltration by organized crime is the greatest threat to political stability. Rampant corruption, weak state capacity for dealing with threats, the proliferation of armed and extremist groups and economic stagnation render them unable to stop the drug trafficking. The administrative, financial, legal and political institutions are weak, while promotion of corruption and money laundering pose as serious threats and hamper the transition to democratic processes. Drug trafficking thus cripples the political body and uses it as a tool to achieve its own ends, as can be seen in the case of Kyrgyzstan.

Figure No 1.3 sums up the whole problem. It highlights the impact of drug trafficking on the social, political, economic, environmental as well as security framework of the region. It also traces the impact of this menace historically and also looks at the geographical advantages that make this region a haven for drug traffickers. Kyrgyzstan's spatial proximity to Afghanistan and Europe, and the historical pitfalls of the disintegration of Soviet Union provided the perfect environment for illicit drug trafficking. Combined with this was the existing pathetic socio-economic conditions and political chaos, all of which have been the chief factors for the choice of this region as a transit territory. The political termite of corruption has debilitated the state capacity to tackle the problem of drug trafficking. Poverty and unemployment have compelled the common public to be lured in the quicksand of drug trafficking. From trafficking the problem has gone out of bounds with the rise in drug addicts and HIV cases. Drug trafficking has affected women and youth the most. The perils of drug trafficking have not even spared the economy. Money laundering and drug-dependent economies have risen because of drug trafficking. It has also had a severe impact on the internal security of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs.

Figure No: 1.3

IMPACT OF DRUG TRAFFICKING



I.12 CONVENTIONS AND TREATIES

The Central Asian Republics are all signatories to major UN anti-narcotics conventions such as:

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961),
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs
- Convention against the Psychotropic Substances (1988)
- Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000).

In 1996 the five CARs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between them and the UNDCP thus expanding the regional framework of drug control cooperation. In 1998, Kyrgyzstan initiated the creation of an interstate commission on control of drug proliferation which included Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan²⁵. The Central Asian Community (CAC) has been established in order to increase regional cooperation and strengthening security in the region.

Several cooperative bodies such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) have also been created to combat issues of security in the region. Moreover, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has brought Central Asian states closer together with their southern neighbors in their effort to rebuild Afghanistan.

The Silk Road Diplomacy doctrine proposed by President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan represents a general road map for the region and cooperation among regional states. In April 1998, Kyrgyzstan was the first country in Central Asia to pass a law on 'drugs, illicit narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors', based on the UN anti-drug conventions of 1961, 1971, and 1988 to which Kyrgyzstan is a signatory. In June 2003, Kyrgyzstan established the new Drug Control Agency (DCA) on the basis of the previous State Commission for Drugs Control. The UNODC had provided more than \$6 million for its formation²⁶.

Various military, political and economic organizations in Central Asia have formulated regional policies to promote anti-narcotics efforts in this region. The chief among these are:

²⁵ Olcott and Udalova, *op. cit.*, p.19.

²⁶ Antoine Blua (2003), Central Asia: Is Assistance enough to tackle drug trafficking? p.10. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2003>.

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- Collective Security Treaty Organization
- Economic Cooperation Organization
- Central Asian Community

I.13 LITERATURE SURVEY

Kyrgyzstan cultivates a wide variety of drugs like opium, morphine, ephedrine, cannabis and heroin. Opium and records of poppy cultivation in Kyrgyzstan dates back to the 19th century. Cannabis a lucrative cash crop is easy-to-produce. In Kyrgyzstan's Osh, Jalalabad and Chu Oblasts there are special seasons for the production of cannabis. Scholars like Olcott and Udalova²⁷, Turbville Jr²⁸ and Jackson²⁹ have dealt exhaustively with the drug cultivation and trafficking scenario in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan and other CARs are prominently being employed into the drug trafficking routes for trafficking drugs to and from the region. Madi's³⁰ study depicts an exhaustive outline of some of the popular routes. The chief among these are from Badakhshan to Khorogh-Osh-Ferghana Valley-Kazakhstan- Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and finally to Russia. Another popular route is Kyzyl-Art route, which begins from Murghab district to Khorogh, Osh and to Kyzyl-Art. Olcott and Udalova³¹ had also traced the traditional and new routes that are popular among drug traffickers. Initially, drugs entered Kyrgyzstan via the Osh-Khorogh route and the surrounding territory of Murghab region of the Gorno-Badakhshan region. Later, traffickers shifted to the Altyn-Mazar route which begins at Raushan Plateau and goes through the canyons of the Trans-alai mountain and finally reaches the Chon-Alai valley. In 1998, the Batken route also became popular. It includes mountain passes and crosses from Jergatal and Garm regions of Tajikistan into Batken oblast and Kamadjan district of Osh oblast. The latest popular route is Khujand (Leninabad) route, which encompasses all the highways and roads in Lailak region, and neighboring parts of Uzbekistan. The drug

²⁷ Olcott; and Udalova, op. cit, pp.1-31.

²⁸ Turbville Jr., Graham H. (1992), "Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia: A New Colombia", *Military Review*, Vol.72, No. 12, pp.55-63.

²⁹ Jackson, Nicole (2005), "The Trafficking of narcotics, arms and human in post-soviet Central Asia: (mis) perceptions, policies and realities", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 39-52.

³⁰ Madi, Maral (2004), op.cit, pp.249-273.

³¹ Olcott and Udalova, (2000), op. cit, pp. 1-31.

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trafficking routes have been elaborately discussed by scholars like Jackson³², Lubin³³, Swanstorm³⁴ and Turbville Jr³⁵. MacFarlane and Torjesen³⁶ discuss elaborately the main routes through which drugs and arms are trafficked into Central Asia. Swanstrom³⁷ analyses the reasons that make central Asia a favorite transit region for drug trafficking.

The impact studies of drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan studied by Madi³⁸, Turbville Jr³⁹, Stewart⁴⁰, and Olcott and Udalova⁴¹ relates to the various institutions and provide a general overview of the problem of drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan, with respect to its effects on society and democracy. Madi's chief concern being how the drug trafficking brings about deterioration to democracy-building attempts in Kyrgyzstan. He traces the history of drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan and discusses the factors that motivate the society to opt for drugs as a means of income. Tubville Jr discusses the political loopholes that dampen all anti-drug trafficking measures. Corruption among narcotic officials and an unstable legislative and political system are considered the chief reasons that motivate drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan. Olcott & Udalova voice the same concern. According to them, drug trafficking obstructs the stabilization of democracy and social life in Kyrgyzstan. Studies have emphasized, that the growing drug problem puts a burden on the government budgets, increasing the crime rates and diminishing public safety. It raises the levels of domestic violence, child abuse and costs of health care. Lubin⁴² discusses the attempts made by the UN and the government to reduce the problem of drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan, and its impact on the health of its public.

Drug trafficking has the power to weaken economies, as can be seen in the case of Kyrgyzstan. It produces a criminalized economy, which also in turn affects the

³² Jackson, Nicole (2005) op.cit. pp. 39-52.

³³ Lubin, Nancy (2001), "Drug Trafficking in Central Asia: A matter of survival for some." <http://www.eurasian.org/view-article/html>.

³⁴ Swanstorm, Niklas, "Central Asia as a Transit region for drugs" <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7304>

³⁵ Turbville Jr., Graham H. (1992), op. cit, pp. 55-63.

³⁶ MacFarlane, S.Neil and Torjesen, Stina, "Trafficking, Small Arms Survey", *Occasional Paper* No. 12, pp. 22-25.

³⁷ Swanstorm, Niklas, op.cit.

³⁸ Madi, Maral, (2004), op.cit. pp. 249-273.

³⁹ Turbville Jr., Graham H, (1992), op. cit. pp. 55-63.

⁴⁰ Karen L. Stewart, "How has Drug Trafficking Affected Development in Central Asia?", www.eurasianet.org.

⁴¹ Olcott and Udalova, (2000), op. cit, pp. 1-31.

⁴² Lubin, (2001), op.cit.



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global economy. Madi's⁴³ article gives an exhaustive account of how the economy is affected by drug trafficking. This results in "white collar crime" like money laundering' wherein illegal money from drug trafficking is legalized. This makes the economy totally dependent on drugs. As a result of this there is hardly any chance for other industry-based or agriculture based economy to develop. According to Olcott & Udalova⁴⁴, it is very difficult to persuade the local farmers to switch from illicit drug production to agricultural crops. The amount of money that a farmer gets from cultivating drugs is so vast that they do not feel the need to grow agriculture-based crops.

According to Chandran⁴⁵ "drug trafficking is the most lucrative business with profits higher than that of the entire oil industry and second only to the arms trade". Esfandiari⁴⁶ voices his concern that the narcotic industry is becoming embedded in the regional economy creating a big gap between the rich and the poor.

Of all the factors that motivate drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan, the most pronounced one is the geographical location and climate of this region. These have been explained substantially by Madi⁴⁷ and Jackson⁴⁸. Jackson gives out an explicit account of the geographical position and its borders with Tajikistan and China as the most responsible factors for the increase in drug trafficking. The cold climate prevailing in the rugged, mountainous Tajik-Kyrgyz border makes it difficult for security guards to guard this border. The ideal weather favours poppy production and other narcotics a great deal. These points have been highlighted amply by Jalalzai⁴⁹. Therefore the cold weather is considered a boon in disguise for the drug-traffickers for which this is an ideal route.

The problem of terrorism motivated by drug trafficking has been the concern for many scholars. Makarenko⁵⁰ raises the issue of narco-terrorism. The study states that the term 'crime-terror nexus' refers to a security continuum with traditional

⁴³ Madi, Maral, (2004), op. cit, pp. 249-273.

⁴⁴ Olcott and Udalova, (2000), op.cit. pp. 1-31.

⁴⁵ Chandran, D. Suba, (1998), "Drug Trafficking and the security of the State: A case study of Pakistan",

Strategic Analysis, Vol. No. 22, No. 6, pp. 903-921.

⁴⁶ Esfandiari, Golnaz, (2004), "Central Asia: Drug Trafficking has devastating social, economic impact", http://www.rferl.org/radio_free_europe/central_asia/html.

⁴⁷ Madi, Maral, (2004), op.cit, pp. 249-273.

⁴⁸ Jackson, Nicole, (2005) op. cit, pp. 39-52.

⁴⁹ Jalalzai, Musha Khan (2005), "Silent Killer Drug Trafficking in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia", Publications Institute of Current Affairs, Lahore.

⁵⁰ Makarenko, Tamara (2002), "Crime, terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade", *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol No. 6, No 3. pp. 1-24.

organized crime on one end of the spectrum and terrorism on the other. In the middle of the spectrum is a 'gray area'—where organized crime and terrorism are indistinguishable from one another. Drug trafficking has been the strongest factor for sponsoring terrorism. Shah and Dikshit⁵¹ depict through their study, how the stealthy hand of drug related crimes are disrupting social life. They document the criminal activities perpetrated by drug traffickers. Svante E. Cornell⁵² discusses the relationship between radicalism, narcotics and arms conflict.

Mehanathan⁵³ traces the history of international legal control on drugs and drug-motivated crimes. Osmonaliev⁵⁴ outlines the counter-narcotics policy measures in Central Asia. He says that the Central Asian states have not yet reached a full understanding of their counter-narcotics strategies and policies. Work on demand reduction in society and on managing drug abuse is carried out unsystematically, without due state support. The system of treatment of drug addicts is in a most complicated situation, as the social rehabilitation of drug addicts under state supervision is not being carried out. Makarenko⁵⁵ discusses the drug-terrorism situation. Peuch⁵⁶ provides evidence of a possible Russian military link to drug trafficking in central Asia. Olcott and Udalova⁵⁷ reported that “part of Russian military has been engaged in the illegal sale of weapons. And part of the Russian military seems to have actively facilitated the sale of drugs”. They suspected that the Russian soldiers were helping drug traffickers by providing them with transport facilities. Prabha⁵⁸ defines the concept of narco terrorism as the “nexus between narcotics and terrorism” and examines different aspects of linkage between the two. Marshall⁵⁹ says that the policy makers have ignored this demon of narco terrorism and have failed to see the connection between drugs and terrorism. The author states that

⁵¹ Shah, Giriraj and Dikshit (1996), *Narco-Terrorism*, New Delhi, Siddhi Books.

⁵² Svante E. Cornell (2005), “Narcotics, Radicalism, and Armed Conflict in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan”. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol No. 17, pp. 577–597, Routledge Taylor & Francis Inc.

⁵³ Mehanathan, M.C. (2002), *International Legal Control on Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances*, Lex Pub House. New Delhi.

⁵⁴ Osmonaliev, Kairat, (2005), “Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia, Legal and Political Dimensions”, *Silk Road Paper*, January, www.silkroadstudies.org.

⁵⁵ Makarenko, Tamara (2002), op.cit, pp. 1-24.

⁵⁶ Peuch, Jean-Christophe (2001), “Central Asia: Charges link Russian Military to Drug Trade” <http://www.referl.org/features/2001/06/08062001111711.asp>

⁵⁷ Olcott and Udalova, (2000), op. cit, pp. 1-31.

⁵⁸ Prabha, Kshitij (2001), “Narco-Terrorism: The case of Golden Crescent”, (ed by) V.D.Chopra. *Rise of Terrorism and Secessionism in Eurasia*. Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, pp. 315-322.

⁵⁹ Marshal, Donnie (2002), “Narco-Terrorism: The New Discovery of an old Connection”, *Cornell International Law Journal*, Vol. 35, No 3, pp. 599-604.

this is a serious issue, which needs to be nipped in the bud if the war against global terrorism is to be won. Blua⁶⁰ on the other hand regrets that there has been reluctance on part of the governments' to acknowledge the fact that drug trafficking is the most serious priority of the present times.

There seems to be no dearth of literature with regards to drug trafficking. However most of these do not reflect the impact of drug trafficking in terms of social, economic and political dimension. The impact studies need to be focused within the context of existing laws and treaties, conventions of the United Nations and anti drug-trafficking measures. The present study will investigate the measures existing and their impact in Central Asia with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan.

I.14 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research aims to:

- I.14.1 Identify the areas of production, highlighting factors motivating drug production.
- I.14.2 Trace out the drug trafficking routes in Central Asia with special reference to Kyrgyzstan.
- I.14.3 Study the social, economic and political impact of drug trafficking in Central Asia with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan
- I.14.4 Investigate the national and international legal interventions in combating the trafficking and production of drugs in Central Asia.
- I.14.5 Highlight the relationship existing between drug trafficking vis-à-vis the growth of crime, corruption and terrorism with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan.

I.15 DATA BASE & METHODOLOGY

The study is based on secondary sources of information. The data collected from the secondary sources will be classified and presented in the form of simple tables for easy understanding. Statistical tools like tabulation and classification of data and graphical representation of data will be utilized for better comprehension. Cartographic tools such as flow maps have been extensively used.

⁶⁰ Blua. Antoine (2003), "Central Asia:Is Assistance enough to tackle Drug Trafficking?"

The literature collected through journals, books, articles, seminar reports, including published as well as the unpublished research reports and doctoral theses. All relevant information through UN sources, laws, acts and treaties existing for drug trafficking and relevant information from the concerned ministries, websites and relevant embassies have been studied.

I.16 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study consists of six chapters:

I.16.1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This first chapter will present a general overview of the issues related to drug trafficking in Central Asia with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan. It will highlight the existing spatial, historical, social, economic and political conditions that make the region a favorite among the drug traffickers and motivate drug production. A detailed literature review of relevant material is scanned and discussed. The chapter discusses the objectives of the present study and states the methodology of the research.

I.16.2 CHAPTER 2: TRACING THE TRAFFICKING ROUTES

The second chapter will discuss the various areas of production and the drug trafficking routes. The areas of supply and the markets will be identified and highlighted. A cost-benefit exercise will be worked out to show the benefits reaped by the farmers by cultivating drugs. The spatial location of Kyrgyzstan between the largest producer of drugs (Afghanistan) and the largest consuming markets (Russia and Western Europe) will be analyzed in detail. Its borders with China and other countries, which make it the most favorite transit route, will also be analyzed. The political instability in Kyrgyzstan and the resulting social situation and poverty issues will be dealt with.

I.16.3 CHAPTER 3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT

The present chapter will deal with an analysis of the social, economic and political impacts of drug trafficking in Central Asia with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan. This will be analyzed with the help of data in the backdrop of globalization and the countries structural adjustment programs. A critical analysis of the governmental interventions will be studied.

I.16.4 CHAPTER 4: DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

An attempt has been made in this chapter to study the connection of drug trafficking and the terrorist activities. It is a well known fact that the monetary inputs into sponsoring terrorist activities do not come from legal channels. Historically drug trafficking has been the major source of finance for terrorist outfits leading to criminal activities and corruption. This will be studied in the context of Kyrgyzstan.

I.16.5 CHAPTER 5: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INTERVENTIONS

The chapter will investigate the impact of national and international legal interventions in combating the trafficking and production of drugs in Central Asia. An attempt will be made in this chapter to evaluate the extent and depth of combating the drug menace with the help of legal interventions. In addition the chapter will also deal with the influence of drug trafficking on the internal as well as the global economy and the problem of money laundering.

I.16.6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This chapter summarises the basic findings and will present the final conclusions of the study. An attempt has been made here to suggest possible recommendations.

CHAPTER- TWO

*TRACING THE
TRAFFICKING
ROUTES*

CHAPTER – TWO

TRACING THE TRAFFICKING ROUTES

II.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

II.2 SHIFT TO DRUG PRODUCTION

II.3 THE AFGHAN FACTORS

II.4 AREAS OF PRODUCTION IN KYRGYZSTAN

II.5 TRAFFICKING ROUTES

II.5.1 OPIUM ROUTES OF AFGHANISTAN

II.5.2 DRUG TRAFFICKING ROUTES THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA

II.5.3 ROUTES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN KYRGYZSTAN

II.6 SEIZURES IN KYRGYZSTAN

II.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan is facilitated by a variety of factors. The various historical, geographical, social and political factors have all worked in favor of the traffickers. Drug traffickers have been employing a number of drug trafficking routes over the years. It is as if that the drug traffickers have always been one step ahead of the authorities. Several factors such as geographical, political, economic and ethno-cultural are responsible for the choice of a trafficking route. Political upheavals in Central Asia, Asia and Europe have resulted in the adoption of novel routes for drug trafficking. Since the Berlin Wall came down, the frontiers between East and West have opened up and trafficking of all types has sprung up in a world governed by market forces which often make no distinction between legal and illegal goods¹. This is further aggravated by the ethnic, religious and cross-border conflicts.

II.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

With the governments of this region beginning to acknowledge the menace of drug trafficking and the adoption of various anti-narcotics measures, it has not been an easy day for the drug traffickers. The drug traffickers are constantly trying to outdo the authorities through the adoption of novel drug routes. Due to political, social, moral and cultural factors there has been an increase in the demand for drugs in the West. In order to cater to this constantly rising demand, the producers have to increase supply as well.

There has also been a change in the producers due to the socio-political and economic factors in the Asian region (Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asian countries etc). Before 1979, Iran and Pakistan were the two main producers of illicit opiates in the Golden Crescent². Major political changes took place in Iran which put an end to production. Also the prohibition policy introduced in Pakistan led to a substantial reduction in production there³. Though opium had been grown in Afghanistan for many years, the scale of production increased notably during the Soviet-Afghan war. After the

¹ International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), (2001), "Globalisation and new technologies/challenges to drug law enforcement in the 21st century", Annual Report, New York, 2002, p.8.

² ODCPP, (2001) "Main Centres of Illicit Opium Production" in *Global Illicit Drug Trends*, New York.

³ Pierre-Arnaud Chouvy, Michel Koutouzis and Alain Labrousse, (2003), "Background to the drug routes", *Ministerial Conference On The Drug Routes From Central Asia To Europe*, 21-22 May, Paris, Opening session, p.2.

Soviet withdrawal and the cessation of military aid from the U.S to the mujahedeen in 1991, there was a further dramatic increase in poppy cultivation. By the middle of the decade all the former Soviet Central Asian Republics, as well as Iran and Pakistan were seeing stupendous increase in the amount of narcotics confiscated along their borders⁴.

II.2 SHIFT TO DRUG PRODUCTION

The war in Afghanistan provided the most favourable conditions for the shift in drug production. In fact, in Afghanistan, production, which before the conflict had not exceeded 200 tonnes, increased tenfold during the war. The reasons for this increase were less the need for the mujaheddin to finance their arms purchases (they were already receiving weapons in large quantities), than the lack of State control over the rural areas and the vital needs of peasants and refugees in a country devastated by war. After 1989, the situation was aggravated by the conflicts between various factions⁵. According to the first UNDCP field survey, production was around 3200 t. in 1994⁶.

The Taliban were then content to manage the situation by taxing the peasants and traffickers, which resulted in record harvest in 1999 (4600 t.). The ban announced by Mullah Omar on 27 July 2000, although there were very high stock levels in the country, led to the almost total disappearance of production in the areas controlled by the Taliban⁷. The situation that existed in Afghanistan in the autumn of 2001 meant that the peasants again planted poppies on a large scale. According to UNDCP, at about 3400 ton of opium, the 2002 harvest pushed Afghanistan back into the lead as the main world producer and by 2005 it had crossed the 4000 ton mark⁸.

⁴ International Crisis Group (ICG), (2001), "Central Asia: Drugs and Conflict", 26 November, *ICG Asia Report*, No 25, Brussels. p.1.

⁵ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶ UNDCP /Regional Office for Southwest Asia (1994), "Afghanistan. Opium Cultivation & Production".

⁷ Chouvy, Koutouzis and Labrousse, op. cit, p.3.

⁸ James Callahan, "Drug Trafficking in Central Asia and UNODC Response", United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA). p.1.

II.3 THE AFGHAN FACTOR

By 2004 the UNODC had estimated about 4000 tons of opium is being produced in Afghanistan⁹, making Afghanistan the world's largest opium producer. The vast amount of opium production and trafficking has sounded the death knell for the socio-economic condition of the people of Afghanistan. But this issue has not remained confined to the seams of Afghanistan. The reverberations of this death knell are heard in the neighboring Central Asian Republics as well. So much so, that the drug situation in Afghanistan has directly affected the social, political, and economic health of the people of Central Asian Republics. This is a major concern of not only the local governments but also for the whole international community. Despite the anti-narcotic measures initiated by the regional and international bodies, drugs continue to rule the roost.

Central Asia's strategic location between the world's largest opium producer (Afghanistan) and the biggest consumer markets (Russia and Western Europe) places it as a crossroad not only for trade but also as a crossroad for illicit trafficking. Given the region's proximity to the Golden Crescent of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the closure of the traditional route via the Balkans to the Western markets, Central Asia has become a major transit hub for heroin bound for Russia and Europe. With the disintegration of USSR the Central Asian states inherited a well-established air and road communication system that links them to Russia and the West. The Soviet breakup also led to more open borders and freer foreign travels¹⁰. The fact that all the Central Asian states are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) ensured visa-free travel regime for the citizens of the CIS countries and they also had various bilateral agreements that facilitated free trade between countries¹¹.

Combined with this geographical advantage is the lack of effective border control and presence of weak infrastructure, which has created easily-penetrable borders. Central Asia has become a major trafficking route for heroin produced in Afghanistan and trafficked to Russia, Eastern and Western Europe. Today about three quarters of the

⁹ Ibid, p.3.

¹⁰ Martha Brill Olcott and Natalia Udalova, (2000), "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia", *Working Papers*, Russian and Eurasian Program, No.11, p.10.

¹¹ Ibid, p.11.

world's heroin supply originates from opium cultivation in Afghanistan¹². Iran was the traditional smuggling route for Afghan opium¹³. UN statistics indicate that this Southern route for traffickers which crosses Iran is declining in importance as the Iranian government has been relatively successful in its war against narcotics and has made this route more difficult and therefore expensive for traffickers to transport illicit opium through this route¹⁴. This compelled the traffickers to look for other channels to transit their goods. The vulnerable and weak political fabric of the CARs, the porous borders and other geographical advantages of this region have proved to be a blessing for the traffickers. Also, in economic terms, the transaction costs are relatively low in Central Asia¹⁵. Due to these factors, Central Asia became the obvious choice as the most accessible and easiest transit route to Europe. The Interpol estimates that about 65% of Afghan opiates are smuggled via Central Asia¹⁶. Even within Central Asia there are several routes which are popular because of a combination of factors.

II.4 AREAS OF PRODUCTION IN KYRGYZSTAN

Opium has long been cultivated in the region and records of opium poppy cultivation in Kyrgyzstan go back to the 19th century. At the end of the 19th century an opiates-producing pharmaceutical plant was opened in what is now Shymkent, Kazakhstan. The Kyrgyz continued to legally grow opium poppy until 1974. Some 98 state and collective farms in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul oblast produced 80 per cent of the total licit opium in Soviet Union and 16 percent of the world's supply¹⁷. In Kyrgyzstan's Osh, Jalalabad, and Chu oblasts, the season for cannabis is April 30 to May 30, in Issyk-Kul and Talass oblasts, from 15 May to 15 June; and in Naryn oblast, from 15 June to 5 July¹⁸. Illicit cultivation of opiates is increasing in Kyrgyzstan. In 1998, Kyrgyzstan's drug enforcement agents discovered 1,039 square meters of illegal opium poppy cultivation in

¹² United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), (2002), *World Drug Report*, Vienna, p. 160.

¹³ Niklas Swanstorm, "Central Asia as a Transit region for drugs" <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7304-15.cfm>.

¹⁴ Niklas Swanstorm, *The SouthEast Asian and Chinese connection to Drug Trade in Central Asia*, p. 1.

¹⁵ Niklas Swanstorm, Central Asia as a transit region for drugs, op.cit, p. 26.

¹⁶ www.interpol.int/public/drugs/heroin/default.asp.

¹⁷ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 9.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 9.

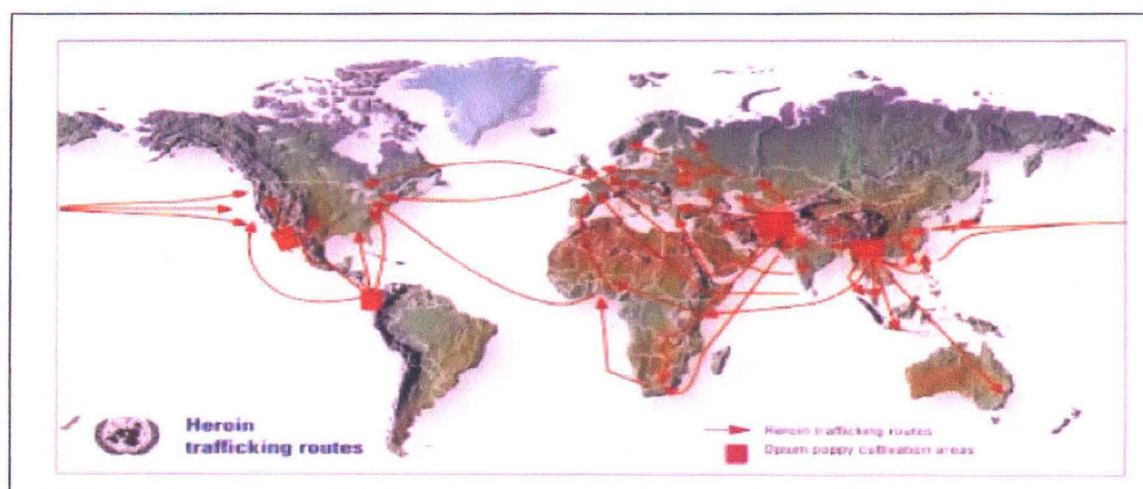
the Issyk-Kul region alone and confiscated 246 kilograms of dry opium poppy that this land produced¹⁹ (See Map No. 1.3).

II.5 TRAFFICKING ROUTES

With the strict enforcement of anti-narcotic measures by governments of Central Asia and other countries, drug traffickers have had a very difficult time. With such law enforcement measures like strict border patrolling, use of sniffer dogs and several other anti-drug measures, drug traffickers have been compelled to leave their favorite and often traditional routes and look for alternative routes. Various factors are responsible for the choice of a particular route or territory for drug trafficking. The safety of the route being the foremost. Most routes are adopted by looking at their geographical advantages. Mostly rugged and mountainous passes, steep valleys and uninhabited or low population terrain are chosen by drug traffickers to evade the authorities. Only when the safety of the route and of the traffickers is threatened, the route is momentarily abandoned for alternative routes. CARs incorporate rugged and mountainous terrain²⁰. Permeable borders also facilitate drug trafficking. For example, the Kyrgyz-Tajik border is difficult to patrol since large parts of it are more than 13,000 feet above sea level and temperatures fall to -40 degrees Fahrenheit in winter²¹. Such factors act as a boon for drug traffickers.

Map No.2.1

WORLD HEROIN TRAFFICKING ROUTES



SOURCE: United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Vienna, Austria, 1996.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.9.

²⁰ Graham. H. Turbville Jr, (1992), "Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia: A New Colombia", *Military Review*, Vol.72, No. 12, p. 55.

²¹ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 12.

II.5.1 OPIUM ROUTES OF AFGHANISTAN

Traditionally most of the drugs from Afghanistan were trafficked through the open Iranian border and trafficked along the 'Balkan Route' i.e., Afghanistan-Iran-Turkey-Balkan States-Western Europe²². Heroin processed from opium produced in Afghanistan reaches Eastern Europe via the Balkans and Hungary, and also via the Baltic States and Scandinavian countries to the West, Switzerland and Union Markets²³.

Two major channels allow opiates from Afghanistan to be transferred to Western Europe:

- In the South, the Iran route, which then becomes the Balkan Route
- The Northern route running from Central Asia to East Europe via Russia and Ukraine²⁴.

The historical Iranian route is the export route which uses roads and trails crossing the borders of Iran and Pakistan via the Iranian provinces of Khorasan and Seistan via Baluchistan Province (NWFP) and Pakistani Baluchistan²⁵.

The second transit route is via Central Asia. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan border Afghanistan (1,206 km, 744 km, and 137 km long borders respectively)²⁶. All three have become major centers of drug trafficking to Russia and Europe. Due to their geographical location Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are outposts on these Central Asian drug trafficking routes²⁷. "There are several major overlapping routes along which heroin enters Western Europe. The Northern roads cover the territory of countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and finally Germany. From there the heroin can be transported further west to the UK, over both land and sea, via the Netherlands and Belgium²⁸. (Refer Map No.2.2)

²² Jackson, Nicole (2005), "The Trafficking of narcotics, arms and human in post-soviet Central Asia: (mis) perceptions, policies and realities", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 1, p. 42.

²³ Chouvy, Koutouzis and Labrousse, op. cit, p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid, p.5.

²⁵ Ibid, p.5.

²⁶ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 5.

²⁷ Chouvy, Koutouzis and Labrousse, op. cit, p. 6.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

DRUG ROUTES FROM AFGHANISTAN TO EUROPE



II.5.2. DRUG TRAFFICKING ROUTES THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA

There are six known trafficking routes operating in Central Asia as per the 2001 sources. Two of them run through Pakistan and Iran and four through Central Asia²⁹. The role of Central Asia has increased as Iran, which had traditionally been an important smuggling route has been relatively successful in curbing the menace of drugs and has made the Iranian route more difficult to use. With weaker political structure and low transaction costs, it becomes more profitable for Southeast Asian and Northeast Asian drug traders to direct their trade through Central Asia³⁰. Of the four Central Asian routes three are in Tajikistan bordering Afghanistan and passing through Kyrgyzstan and one is in Turkmenistan³¹.

Tajikistan is still healing from the wounds of its five-year civil war (1992-1997), which left the country's already impoverished economy into ruins. This combination of social unrest and trafficking of drugs crippled the economy to an extent that it has made Central Asia as the main gateway for Afghan opium and heroin³². Tajikistan - "Central Asia's poorest country"³³ resulted in the contribution to the explosion of drug trade in Central Asia, with both warring sides turning to trafficking in order to finance their military campaigns³⁴. Located in the Pamir Mountains, Tajikistan has a direct access to China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Drugs from Afghanistan flow along two routes: through the mountainous Gorno-Badakshan region in Eastern Tajikistan, then north through the city of Osh in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and onto Tashkent and beyond, or into Southern Tajikistan and from there to the capital Dushanbe, from which they move by rail, truck or air to Tashkent and beyond³⁵. From Tajikistan's Badakshan region drugs go on to Osh and Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, Andijan and Tashkent in Uzbekistan and Almaty in Kazakhstan (Refer map no. 2.3). From there they travel to Russia and rest of Europe³⁶. Drugs enter Tajikistan primarily via Pyandzh region, where Afghan drug dealers sell it to their Tajik counterparts who in turn deliver it to Dushanbe and then send

²⁹ www.uzbekworld.com/news/viewnews.cgi?newsid993927004,76763.

³⁰ Niklas Swanstorm *Central Asia as a transit region for drugs*, op. cit, p. 1.

³¹ ICG report, p.5.

³² Ibid, p.5.

³³ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p.10.

³⁴ www.inthenationalinterest.com/articles/vol2issue18miller.html

³⁵ www.irinnews.org/webspecials/opium/regovr.asp

³⁶ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p.12.

DRUG ROUTE THROUGH KYRGYZSTAN



TO
RUSSIA
EUROPE

KAZAKHSTAN

Almaty

Bishkek

KYRGYZSTAN

FERGHANA VALLEY

OSH

Kashi

CHINA

TAJKISTAN

KHOROGH

BADAKSHAN

PAKISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

Kabul

★ → ★ Drug Route

■ Kyrgyzstan

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MAP NO 2.3.



it to Moscow³⁷. (Refer map no. 2.4) The massive yearly influx of drugs threatens to undermine the security of the whole of Central Asian region.

“ Tajikistan’s Badakshan region encompassed about 40% of Tajikistan’s territory and is ill suited to both agriculture and industry. Two mountain roads connect it to Dushanbe and Osh. These roads are not operational between October and April. The density of population along this stretch is very low and it has been a poor area with no industrial production. The region’s population is largely unemployed. Drug traffickers could not find a more favorable situation. Drug trafficking was an answer to their woes and many citizens started buying drugs in Afghanistan and moving them to Kyrgyzstan.”³⁸ Tajikistan still remains the key area as the gateway for Afghan drugs. The main entry points are the towns of Panj and Moskovkii, in the South West. From Panj the route proceeds to Dushanbe or Khujand. From Dushanbe drugs are usually shipped out to Moscow or Western Europe and from Khujand to Siberian cities such as Novosibirsk, Omsk and other Eastern Russian areas³⁹. The route through Moskovskii goes to Osh, then Kazakhstan and on to Russia⁴⁰. Turkmenistan shares a border of 744 km with Afghanistan⁴¹. It is considered to be another major route. Some 80 tons of heroin is estimated to enter Turkmenistan each year with about 30 per cent staying in the country⁴².

II.5.3 ROUTES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING IN KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan’s location makes it geographically convenient as a transit route for trafficking Afghan and Pakistani opiates northward. Nearly 60 percent of the opiates transited from Afghanistan, the world’s leading producer, are conveyed through the mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Some 50 heroin labs are located on Afghan-Tajik border, from where heroin comes to Osh city, the Kyrgyz Drug Control Agency reports⁴³. Officials report that there

³⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 12.

³⁹ ICG report, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 6.

⁴¹ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 5.

⁴² ICG report, p.6.

⁴³ unodc see eurasianet

DRUG ROUTE THROUGH OTHER CARS



38

MAP NO. 2.4

are several drug trafficking groups operating in the southern city of Osh, who employ a variety of means to smuggle drugs up north⁴⁴.

Drug trafficking through Kyrgyzstan is facilitated by the existing unresolved border disputes between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The length of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border is 1295 km and as of January 2004, 628 km of that still needs to be demarcated⁴⁵. There are 70 disputed areas along the 870-km long Kyrgyz-Tajik border. Most of the disputed areas are located in the Ferghana valley⁴⁶. With the beginning of Tajik civil war in 1992, afghan opium started flowing in mass scale into the Ferghana valley through the Gorno- Badakhshan autonomous region of Tajikistan. According to the Interpol experts this 'Kyrgyz corridor' was considered to be one of the most promising and used routes. Drugs from Badakhshan are further sold over the border to Gorno-Badakhshan and then distributed through many routes, some of which go through Kyrgyzstan's southern parts. The drugs from Kyrgyzstan are further smuggled via Russia and other CARs. The main mode of trafficking is the Bishkek-Moscow train where checking is difficult⁴⁷.

There are 6 distinct drug trafficking routes that travel across Kyrgyzstan and which are a part of the large group of routes known as the Northern or Silk route⁴⁸. The northern route comprises of several routes originating in Afghanistan and passing through CARs. The oldest route is the Osh- Khorogh route, which became one of the first focuses of anti-narcotic measures like the UNODC's "Osh Knot" program. The Osh- Khorogh highway has geographical benefits like located at high altitude (3000-4000 m above sea level) and has not been controlled. A number of gorges, different trails and caches are found along this highway. Majorities of the interception drug shipments in Kyrgyzstan were made in Osh region⁴⁹.

Other major routes (Refer maps No 2.5,26,27) passing through Kyrgyzstan⁵⁰ include:

1. Badakhshan. Khorogh(Tajikistan). Osh. Ferghana Valley. KZ.KG.Russia.

⁴⁴ <http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/opium/regovr.asp>

⁴⁵ Maral Madi (2004), "Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Structure, Implications and Counter measures", *Central Asian Survey*, December, Vol. 23, No. 3-4, p.259.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 260.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 260.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 260.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 260.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 261.

2. Badakshan. Khorogh. Altyn-Mazar.Chon Alai Valley now Batken
3. Badakshan. Moskovskiy. Osh. Kazakhstan. Russia
4. Kyzyl-Art route: Murghab district in GBAO. Khorogh. Osh. Kyzyl-Art
5. Altyn-Mazar route: Raushan Plateau. Zaalay Range. Chon Alai Valley
6. Batken route. Jergatal and Garm. Batken and Kadamjai
7. Khodjend route: all highways from the Lyailyak district and adjacent areas to the
8. Uzbek province center.

Looking at the above routes it is clear that drugs enter Central Asian mainly through Tajikistan. This indicates the porousness of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border. Initially drugs entered Kyrgyzstan via the Osh-Khorogh route. The Osh-Khorogh route is about 750 km long and connects Tajikistan (Gorno-Badakshan) with the southern part of Kyrgyzstan (Sari-Tash and Osh) allowing easy access to Andijan (Uzbekistan). This route is also an important connection with China. Recently more rigid control at the Sari-Tash post on the road forced drug smugglers to change routes and go from the Badakshan region (in Kyrgyzstan) toward Dara-Ut-Kurgan of the Chon Alai region and further down to Kyzyl-Kiya, Uzgen and Jalal-Abad (in Kyrgyzstan) and then to Uzbekistan⁵¹.

But with the UN-sponsored anti-narcotic “Osh-Knot” program, this route was abandoned and drug traffickers shifted to the surrounding territory that bordered the Murghab region of the Gorno-Badakshan region. Further traffickers shifted to the Altyn-Mazar route which begins at Raushan plateau and goes through the canyons of the Transaalai Mountain range till it reaches the Chon-Alai Valley. In 1998 the new so-called Batken route became popular. It encompasses mountain passes used to cross from Jergatal and Garm regions of Tajikistan into Batken Oblast and the Kamadjan district of Osh Oblast. The latest route is towards Khujand (Leninabad) which encompasses all the highways and roads in Lailak region and the neighboring parts of Uzbekistan⁵².

Recent developments indicate that Central Asia is being used as a transit hub not only for Afghan drugs but also for drugs originating in Southeast Asia and China. Southeast Asian traders have taken an interest in the weakened Central Asian region because a porous region decreases their transaction costs. A significant amount of the

⁵¹ Olcott and Udalova, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

DRUG ROUTE THROUGH KYRGYZSTAN



★ → ★ DRUG ROUTES
Kyrgyzstan

MAP NO 2.5

DRUG ROUTE THROUGH KYRGYZSTAN



TO
RUSSIA
AND EUROPE

KAZAKHSTAN

Almaty #

Bishkek #

CHON
VALLEY

KYRGYZSTAN

Toshkent #

FERGHANA VALLEY

OSH

Kashi #

Samarkand #

Dushanfe #

TAJKISTAN

CHINA

KHOROGH

BADAKSHAN

PAKISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

Kabul #

● → ● Drug Route

■ Kyrgyzstan

MAP NO. 2.6

DRUG ROUTE THROUGH KYRGYZSTAN



KYZYL-ART ROUTES
TO RUSSIA

KAZAKHSTAN



CHINA

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

DRUG ROUTE
Kyrgyzstan

MAP NO 2.7.

Chinese drug trade is also directed towards Central Asia⁵³. The new trafficking routes through China and Southeast Asia are aggravating the region's drug problem. The chief reason behind this new development is the political instability. Drug traders can expect less problems and cheaper ways of transportation if regional governments are unable to check their activities.

The relation between political instability and drug trade is clear, as drug trade is expanding mostly in the areas of Central Asia and China that are weak and unruly or in conflict with the central government—Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and parts of China⁵⁴. This is a severe aftermath. It forecasts that Central Asia is on the verge of becoming a global transit hub for drugs not only from Afghanistan but from other parts of Asia as well. From being a mere transit hub the problem can aggravate and it can become a major producer and consumer itself. These developments can have a serious impact on the social and humanitarian condition of this region. More routes imply more drugs which further implies more and more people getting affected.

II. 6 SEIZURES IN KYRGYZSTAN

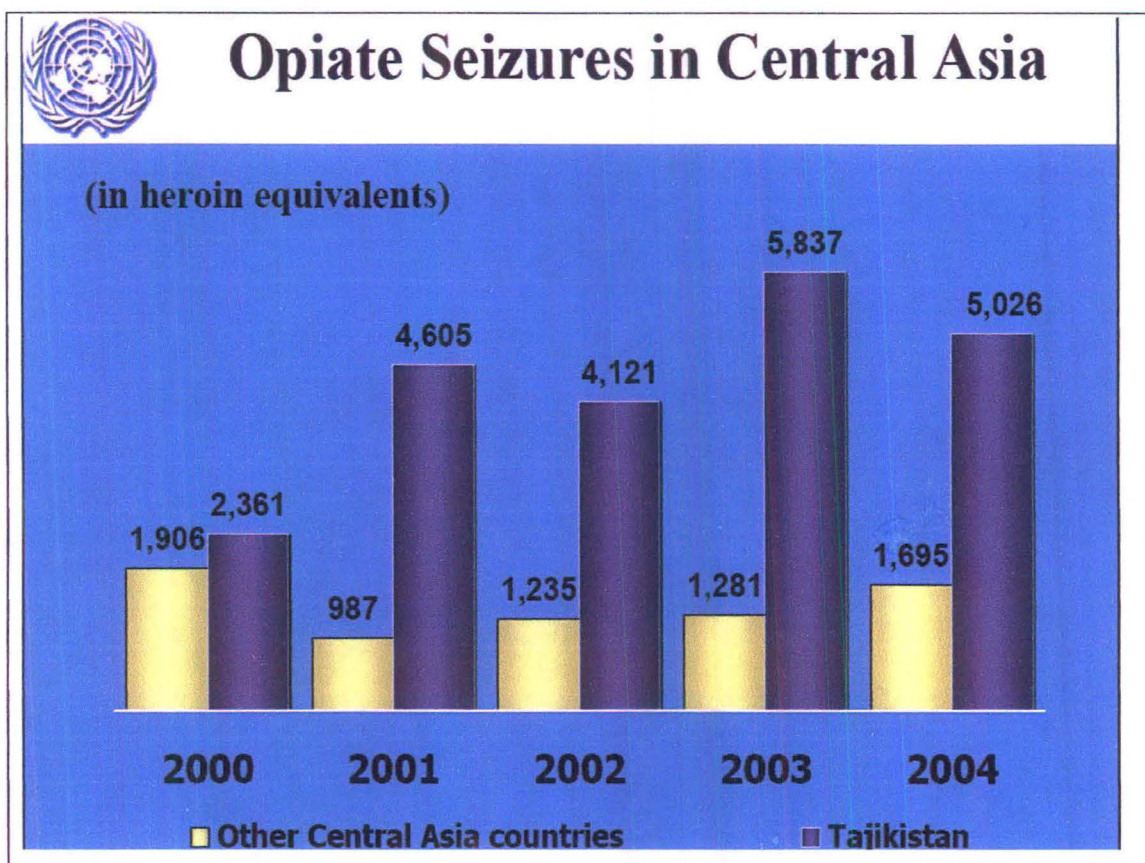
Figure no II.1 shows the consequences of Tajikistan's proximity to Afghanistan. As compared to all the CARs, the percentage of seizures in Tajikistan has been consistently high. Tajikistan is the main entrance hub for Afghan opiates in Central Asia. It is believed that about 60 mt or 60,000 kg of heroin is trafficked annually through the territory of Kyrgyzstan to Europe, which would constitute about 15-20 per cent of the 2002 Afghan opium harvest in heroin equivalent (342 mt or 342,000kg)⁵⁵.

⁵³Niklas Swanstorm, *The SouthEast Asian and Chinese connection to Drug Trade in Central Asia*, p. 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Madi, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

Figure No 2.1

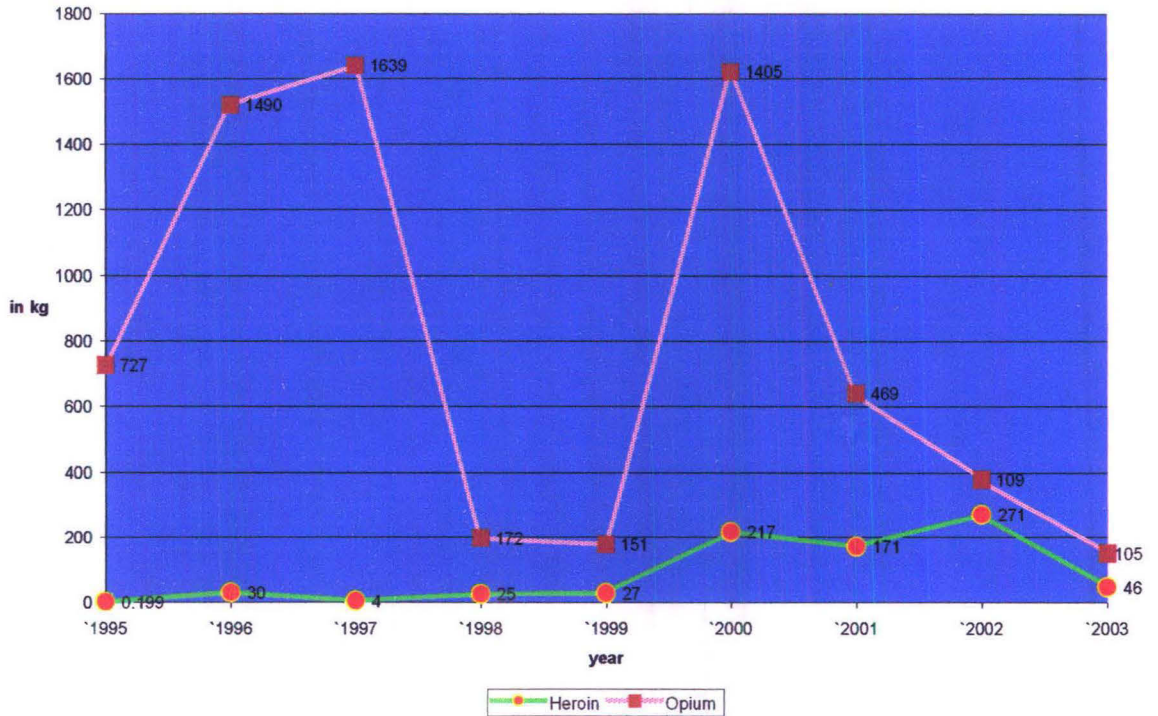


SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Office for Central Asia

As seen in figure no. 2.2, as compared to heroin, the percentage of opium seizures is high. Since opium is cultivated in Afghanistan, in the fields, it is easier to identify such farming and destroy them. Heroin on the other hand is a drug which can be trafficked easily without being noticed. Opium is the chief drug that flows out of Afghanistan through Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. In 2000 Kyrgyzstan recorded the maximum number of seizures. This period was the pre-9/11 period, which was a period of bloom for the Taliban and also for the Afghan opium trade. With the US attack in 2001, there was a decline in drug trafficking from across the Afghan border and hence there was also a decline in the number of seizures, as can be seen from the figure.

Figure No 2.2

Drug Seizures in Kyrgyzstan



Data Source: Maral Madi, Country Fact sheet, Kyrgyzstan.2004.

II.7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The region's drug trade continues to flourish. Geography, porous borders, organizational chaos, local conflicts and wide-scale corruption are among the main factors that have contributed to the explosion of drug trafficking. UN-sponsored anti-narcotic programs have so far been unable to extirpate the growth of drug trafficking through Russia and the Central Asian Republics with its destination being Western Europe.

Both production and trafficking of drugs are intricately linked to the demand of drugs. The high demand from the West induces growth and trafficking of drugs from Afghanistan and Central Asia. The increase of production and trafficking of opium does not only affect the development, political stability and the economy of the countries involved, but also the security, public health and the social well-being of their citizens. The availability and trafficking of drugs along the trafficking routes have devastating consequences for the public health and social conditions of the youth and women.

Countries that used to be considered as transit countries are increasingly becoming major consumption areas as revealed from the statistics. Trafficking is eroding the overall social fabric. The increase in production areas in Kyrgyzstan shows a slow but dangerous transition from it being a transit territory to a producer country itself. This is the greatest threat that faces Kyrgyzstan today. The break-up of the Soviet Union facilitated the transformation of Kyrgyzstan, along with the other Central Asian republics, into trafficking domains. Opium is the chief drug that flows out of Afghanistan through Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. The drug trade will continue to flourish in Central Asia for a variety of reasons, the most obvious stemming from poor economic conditions. The governments' inability to deal with the debilitating effects of the drug trade is having a serious impact on the public health, economy as well as the social framework in Kyrgyzstan and other CARs.

CHAPTER-THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

AND POLITICAL

IMPACT

CHAPTER-THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT

III.1 POLITICAL INSTABILITY

III.1.1 CORRUPTION—A POLITICAL STIGMA

III.2 SOCIAL FABRIC—IN TATTERS

III.2.1 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

III.2.2 WOMEN AND CHILDREN

III.2.3 OTHER DISEASES DUE TO DRUG USAGE

III.3 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

III.4 OTHER DRUG-RELATED CRIMES

III.5 ILLEGAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS

III.6 IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT

III.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present chapter will deal with an analysis of the social, economic and political impacts of drug trafficking in Central Asia with particular reference to Kyrgyzstan. This will be analyzed with the help of data in the backdrop of globalization and the countries structural adjustments programs.

The Central Asia Republics have been affected immensely by the usage of their territory as a transit route for Afghan drugs. This has spelled disaster for the population living along the stretch of the various trafficking routes. In fact, drug traffickers have been able to exploit the deteriorating social and economic condition of this region. The political upheavals and instability in the region have further facilitated this situation. Poverty and high level of unemployment are some of the factors that have compelled the population of this region to turn to the lucrative option of drug cultivation and trafficking. This has had severe repercussions for the social and economic well-being of the population. The social fabric of the society is getting torn as more and more women are entering this business as couriers for drugs are. The youth is primarily being targeted not only for the purpose of trafficking drugs but also inducing them into petty crime and major terrorist activities. The statistics show shocking percentage of drug users along this region. Drug addiction has become another severe menace in the region. This has been further exacerbated by the increase in the percentage of HIV/AIDS in the region. In all, the social standard of the population is extremely devastating.

The poor economic condition of the people has forced them into drug production and trafficking. Although drug trafficking has given them enough to sustain, it is certainly not that lucrative as there are several actors playing between the producer and the cultivator. There is a value up-gradation of a small quantity of drug as it crosses each region to reach the West. This value up-gradation has been disastrous for the economy of the region, as it has been producing drug-dependent illegal economies. This further results in money laundering; wherein illegal money gets legalized. This creates havoc in the economic structure not only of this region but also of the global economic structure. The high level of corruption that is rampant in the region has facilitated drug trafficking and has discouraged all anti-narcotic measures.

III.1 POLITICAL INSTABILITY

The lack of political stability in the region and the weakness of regional states have made this region quite vulnerable for international trafficking. This inner stability provides drug traffickers a clean and smooth path to carry out their illicit business. Afghanistan, whose opium is transited through Central Asia, has had a long history of political conflict and instability. In the last three decades Afghanistan has experienced many political upheavals like the invasion of the soviet union, the coming to power of the Taliban, and the invasion of the United States have all added to the political stagnation and instability in the region¹. These upheavals especially the first two have discouraged the presence of democratic modes of government. This lack of long standing centralized government has hampered the economy of the region. As a result of both lawlessness and the lack of economic alternatives, opium production in Afghanistan skyrocketed throughout the 1990s and developed a “monoculture” whereby the country is dependent on drug trade². This unstable political scenario in Afghanistan has acted as a catalyst for drug trade in Central Asian Republics as well. The states that are trapped in a negative spiral of weaknesses are captured in historical patterns of economic stagnation and political usurpation³.

The disintegration of Soviet Union brought about a political mayhem in CARs. Of all the nations that emerged from this disintegration, the five CARs seemed least prepared both economically and politically⁴. Central Asian leaders did not want to break ties with the Soviet because of their dependence on the empirical center for security, stability and economic support⁵. Central Asia was a burden to the Soviet Union. It was the least economically developed of all of the post-Soviet regions. It was culturally, politically, and religiously different from Eastern Europe and Russian Slavic/Christian center and its relative social and economic isolation from the rest of the former-Soviet Union all made it a burden that needed to be off-loaded⁶. Thus the Republics were jettisoned from the old

¹ Karen L. Stewart, “How has drug Trafficking affected Development in Central Asia?” p. 4, www.eurasia.net

² Ibid, p.4

³ Niklas L.P. Swanstorm, “Drug Trade a threat to security: the cases of Central Asia and Caucasus”, Silk Road Studies Program at Uppsala University, Sweden, p. 5, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

⁴ Karen L. Stewart op cit. p. 31

⁵ Ibid, p. 32

⁶ Ibid, p. 32.

empire in December 1991 almost against their will and without a clearly defined vision of their national interests or strategic direction⁷.

This Soviet legacy led Central Asia into deterioration. They were left with a lack of proper infrastructure, trade/capital investment links and legal and financial institutions which were earlier monitored centrally by the Soviet Union⁸. The CARs were left to stand on their shaky feet after this disintegration. This did not produce much fruit though. The region was further deeply divided along tribal, clan and political lines. Cross-border ethnic relations and conflicts further facilitated this political decay in Central Asia. Organized drug groups prey on such situations and are interested in further destabilizing the situation to make drug trafficking easier. They find receptive audiences among some of Central Asia's opposition groupings. Uzbek opposition groups that were pushed out of Tajikistan and who have now taken refuge in Kyrgyzstan also pose a threat to political stability⁹.

Kyrgyzstan's initial bloom had started fading as the ethnic conflicts burgeoning in its territory got divided. At the political level, Kyrgyzstan is divided by a rivalry between the northern and southern parts of the country¹⁰. Northerners fill up leading positions in the Kyrgyz government, while southerners are often neglected. This dangerous trend intersects with ethnic tensions, given the large Uzbek population of the Osh region in the South of the country. Northerners occupying state positions recruit their protégés in order to ensure their stay in power, thus encouraging nepotism, clan relations and corruption¹¹. Power holders in Kyrgyzstan are not interested in national development, instead are preoccupied by internal clan rivalries and personal enrichment drawn from their power positions. The majority of foreign grants and loans allocated by international organizations were diverted for personal enrichment. The north-south conflict is further worsened, as the writ of the northerner-dominated government does not reach all parts of south. Neither does it have widespread support as a result of its disregard for the region¹².

⁷ Ibid, p. 32.

⁸ Ibid, p..32.

⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

¹⁰ Maral Madi (2004), "Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Structure, Implications and Counter measures", *Central Asian Survey*, December, Vol. 23, No. 3-4, p. 249.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 249.

¹² Ibid, p. 249.

These factors have combined to foster chaos and have brought about decay in the political character of the CARs. These internal ethnic conflicts have disrupted the formulation of democratic governments. This state of chaos and unruly government has been seized upon by drug traffickers as an opportunistic bent and has thus facilitated their operations in the contentious regions. The states had been so engrossed in their own internal ethnic conflicts that the drug traffickers took away the cake, thereby giving a boost to illicit drug trafficking in the region. For quite some time, the CARs did not recognize drug trafficking to be a menace at all. These factors have exacerbated drug trafficking to reach to such unmanageable volumes.

III.1.1 CORRUPTION—A POLITICAL STIGMA

Corruption has been another factor of this political instability whose venom has poisoned almost all governments of the world. Corruption has gnawed the insides of the political and military structure thereby making all anti-narcotic measures futile. Drug trade involves a huge amount of money. Drug traffickers have used this money as a temptation. Corruption, like a termite, has debilitated the edifice of growth and development in the region. “The increased drug trade has been made possible by the high level of corruption and the weak states that inhibit the regions, but the drug trade has also boosted the level of corruption and threatens internal cohesion of the states in the region”¹³. The economic problems and the increased drug trade have increased the levels of corruption in the region to an unprecedented level. Corruption of the societies in the region seems to be endemic and no society or aspect of it is saved¹⁴. The increased corruption is a positive effect for the narcotics networks as it would firmly put large segments of the society under their control, rather than to destabilize a state to the degree that the infrastructure for smuggling would be destroyed they can now buy themselves safety¹⁵.

The estimates from the transparency index show clearly that all the CARs are severely affected by corruption¹⁶.

¹³ Niklas L.P. Swanström (2001), “*Drug trade a threat to security: the cases of Central Asia and the Caucasus*” p.2. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

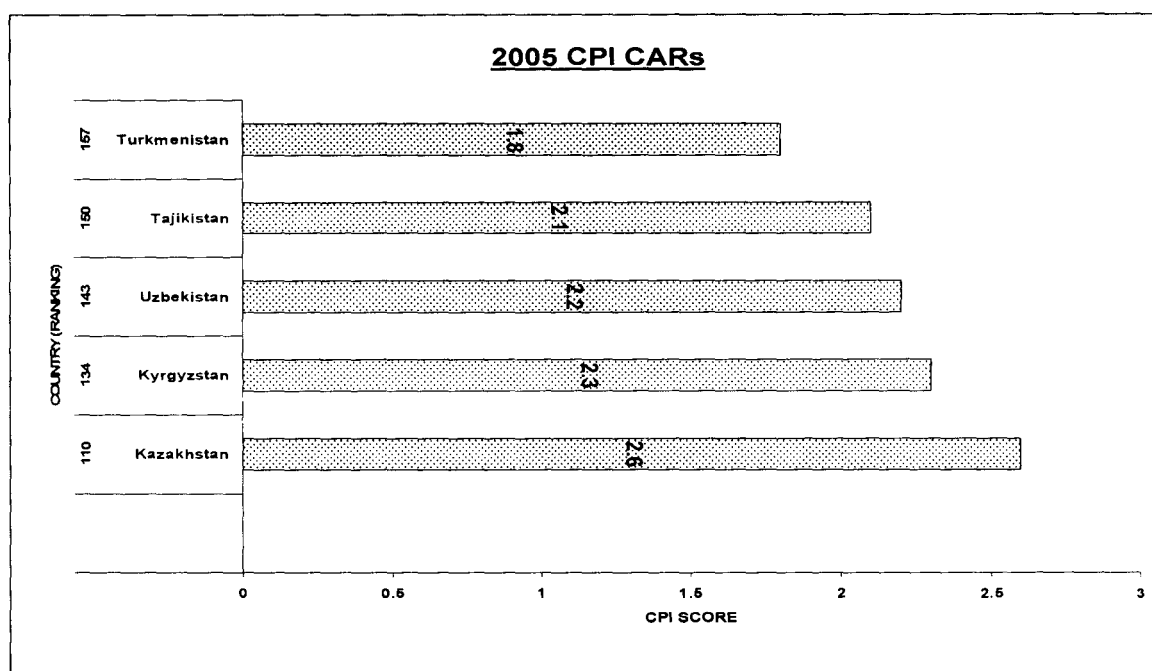
¹⁶ Corruption Perception Index(CPI)http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005

Table No 3.1
WORLD TRANSPARENCY INDEX

Country Rank	Country	2005 CPI Score*	Confidence Range**	Surveys Used***
110	Kazakhstan	2.6	2.2-3.2	6
134	Kyrgyzstan	2.3	2.1-2.5	5
143	Uzbekistan	2.2	2.1-2.4	5
150	Tajikistan	2.1	1.9-2.4	5
157	Turkmenistan	1.8	1.7-2.0	4

Source: UN *World Corruption Index Report*, 2005

Figure No. 3.1



Explanatory notes

CPI= *Corruption Perception Index*

* **CPI Score** relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts and ranges between 10 (highly clean) and 0 (highly corrupt).

****Confidence range** provides a range of possible values of the CPI score. This reflects how a country's score may vary, depending on measurement precision. Nominally, with 5 percent probability the score is above this range and with another 5 percent it is below. However, particularly when only few sources (n) are available an unbiased estimate of the mean coverage probability is lower than the nominal value of 90%.

*****Surveys used** refer to the number of surveys that assessed a country's performance. 16 surveys and expert assessments were used and at least 3 were required for a country to be included in the CPI.

From the above table it can be seen that all the CARs are plagued by corruption. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan are the most corrupt of all CARs. Kyrgyzstan is ranked 134. This index clearly shows how corruption has penetrated the political framework of this region. Corruption has taken the sovereignty of the states as hostages and is controlling internal as well international affairs.

Corruption among police officers and other security officials is on the rise in CARs. A police officer or customs official is likely to make only \$ 20-30 a month, which makes him susceptible to bribes¹⁷. There are several instances of government and security officials accepting bribes to allow shipments pass through their jurisdiction, or instances when the officials themselves are traffickers¹⁸. One source relates cases in which the Tajik Department Head of the DCA, the Tajik ambassador to Kazakhstan, and a former Tajik Deputy Defense Minister were all caught in separate incidents with sizeable shipments of heroin in their cars, homes, and in the last case, in a military helicopter that was in his charge¹⁹. Another account quotes a Tajik security report stating that, “many drug merchants and couriers are members of Tajik State agencies, including law enforcement bodies and security services”²⁰.

Craig Murray, the former British Ambassador to Uzbekistan, in a speech given in November 2004, stated about the drug trafficking problem in Central Asia that “no progress is possible until the real problem is acknowledged...the real problem is participation, at very senior levels indeed, of regime members in the trade. It is not just a question of minor corruption by customs officials”²¹. He goes on to relate how customs officials hold up UN emergency relief vehicles and others for days but allow cars and trucks with black tinted windows (suggesting that they are government vehicles) that are carrying large shipments of drugs to cross the border without even stopping²². The low salaries of law enforcement and customs officials, which average less than \$50 per

¹⁷ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 17.

¹⁸ Karen Stewart, op. cit, p. 43.

¹⁹ Kairat Osmonaliev (2005), “Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia, Legal and Political Dimensions”, *Silk Road studies Program Central Asia- Caucasus Institute*, Uppsala University Sweden, January, p. www.silkroadstudies.org. p 22

²⁰ Karen Stewart, op. cit, p. 44.

²¹ Ibid, p. 44.

²² Ibid, p. 44.

month, make them prone to corruption. About 50 per cent of Central Asia's customs officials may be involved in the drug trade to some extent²³.

In Kyrgyzstan, in accordance with a presidential decree of December 1998, a special coordination council was established to find and prosecute corrupt officials. However there have been no major prosecutions²⁴. In Tajikistan, interior personnel detained on corruption charges in late 1998 were released soon afterward, following threats from high profile interested parties²⁵.

In the last few years there have been a number of arrests of high level security officials and other kinds of police officials in Kyrgyzstan, including the head of a drug-fighting unit in Osh and some of the unit's members. According to reports at least 50 per cent of the country's customs officials collaborate with drug traffickers²⁶.

Most serious are allegations made against those serving in Russia's 201st Motorized Division stationed in Tajikistan facilitating the drug trade, in part by giving over access to military aircraft and other equipment. There are even accounts of Tajik drug dealers using these Russian planes to send drugs to military airports outside of Moscow. In December 1997, 12 enlisted military personnel were detained at the Chkalovsk airport for trying to smuggle in more than 8 kilograms of drugs, including 3 kilograms of heroin. Observers in the region, say that the use of military and military equipment to move narcotics is a frequent occurrence²⁷.

All anti-narcotics measures on part of the government and international bodies prove fruitless on account of the vast amount of corruption in the region. The complicity of so many officials and citizens in the trade makes interdiction extremely difficult²⁸. Corruption has become an integral ingredient of the Central Asian society. The State Department's drug report notes that in several Central Asian states, corruption and bribery are accepted parts of dealing with the government²⁹. Patronage between traffickers and government offices is a part of the "social pathology" including police

²³ International Crisis Group (ICG) Report, (2001), *Central Asia: Drugs and Conflict*. ICG Asia Report No. 25, Osh/Brussels, 26 November, p.8.

²⁴ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 17.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 17.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 17-18.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 19.

²⁸ Osmonaliev, op. cit, p. 22.

²⁹ United States Department of State (DoS), (2003), *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2003/>

officers, judges and officials³⁰. Until the Central Asian states are able to pay a better salary to their legal and law enforcement officers, the temptation to participate in illegal economic activities is likely to remain³¹.

III.2 THE SOCIAL FABRIC

A society with an unruly and unstable political framework and deeply entrenched in the quicksand of corruption is a picture of utter decay and deterioration. This unfortunately holds true for the social fabric of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. There has been decay in the living standards of the population. Drug trade and trafficking has exploited the economically and politically handicapped population of this region. The illicit trafficking situation in Central Asia is exacerbated by a negative societal situation that has intensified a sense of desperation and hopelessness especially among the exposed layers of the population³². “At the same time, cultivation and trafficking is a way of life and sometimes a matter of survival, for many in the region. Opium poppy cultivation has become an integral part of the rural economy in Afghanistan, where many farmers are dependent on such profits to make ends meet. In Central Asia, an increasing percentage of impoverished people are likewise willing to risk the harsh legal penalties of drug trafficking because they view opium as the only ticket to survival”³³. This is the malady that has crippled the development in the entire region.

Trafficking provide crucial income for many in this poverty-stricken region. The amount of money that can be made by even the lowliest on the drug chain is very significant. This is especially true when one considers that the average salary in Kyrgyzstan in 1998 was only \$28 per month and the income of those living in the border areas are lower still³⁴.

³⁰ Karen Stewart, op. cit, p. 45.

³¹ Osmonaliev, op. cit, p. 22.

³² Ibid, p. 4.

³³ Lubin, Nancy (2001), “Drug Trafficking in Central Asia: A matter of survival for some”. p. 1. <http://www.eurasian.org/view-article/html>.

³⁴ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 13.

Table No 3.2

PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYED LABOR FORCE

Country	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2002*
Kazakhstan		7.5	11	13	13	13.7	13.5	12.8	10.4	9.3	9.3
Kyrgyzstan			5.7		5.7	5.9	7.4	7.5	7.8	8.6	8.6
Tajikistan	1.2	1.7	2	2.6	2.7		3	2.7	2.5	2.6	40
Turkmenistan							2.1	2.4	2.6	2.5	NA
Uzbekistan	0.4	0.4	0.4				0.4	0.4	0.4		10-20

* Data for 2002 EIU (*Economist Intelligence Unit*), 2004

The table above shows rates of unemployment throughout Central Asia for the past decade. The data for 1993 through 2002 are official government statistics from each of the countries. While the last column are estimates given by the Economist Intelligence Unit in order to give a measure both of the true economic situation in each country and to demonstrate the official denial of the poor economic conditions. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the government does what it can to save face regarding their economic situation and to hide the effect of their very economic policies. Their rates are widely assumed by the international community to be gross underestimates. The rate in Turkmenistan is very difficult to judge because of the county's isolation. The government does not often release official statistics willingly and when it does, they are not trustworthy. The government of Turkmenistan does not consider itself accountable in any way to the international community or to democratic principles³⁵.

Widespread poverty in Kyrgyzstan since the fall of the Soviet Union has made drug trafficking a temptation for many. The lack of economic alternatives, high unemployment and extremely low salaries has encouraged many people to get involved in trafficking. The chart below gives an idea of just how devastated the economies of Central Asia must be. Poverty rates in most cases are equal to *at least* a third of the total population. In the case of Tajikistan, which has always been the poorest; poverty affects almost two thirds of the population. Kyrgyzstan comes second in this scale. In most cases, (though the data is obviously not extensive enough for a full analysis) the number of people living in poverty seems to be falling, though slow³⁶.

³⁵ 1993-2001 data provided by *World Development Indicators Database*, online at www.worldbank.com.

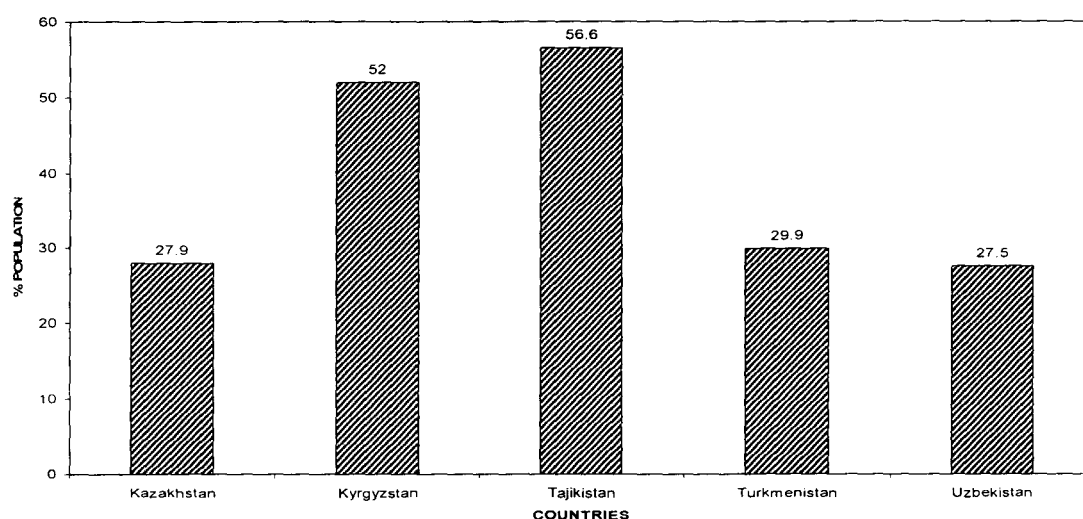
³⁶ 2004 data from World Bank, *Key Indicators for Developing Asian and Pacific Countries*, online at www.worldbankgroup.org, p 52.

Table No. 3.3
PERCENT OF POPULATION LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE

Country	Various years ³⁷	2002	2004
Kazakhstan	35 (1996)	26	27.9
Kyrgyzstan	51 (1997)	55	52
Tajikistan		60	56.6
Turkmenistan		34	29.9
Uzbekistan	28 (2000)	28	27.5

Figure No. 3.2

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING BELOW POVERTY LINE, 2004



The international drug trade is estimated to be worth between U.S. \$400 and \$500 billion per year. These profits are not in a circular rotation within the drug trafficking community. Those that make the most money from participation in the trade inevitably turn around and invest in legal markets, making drug money part of the legitimate. Table 3.3 shows widespread unemployment and poverty in this region. Such factors compel the common population to indulge in drug trafficking. The high level of unemployment shows that the people are not left with much financial options and have to turn towards drug trafficking to sustain themselves and their families. Drug trafficking does not provide them with extra cash, rather it is their only means of income—only hope of survival. Poverty compels them into drug trade and trafficking. Figure no. 3.2 shows the

³⁷ World Bank, World Development Indicators online database. www.worldbankgroup.org.

pathetic condition of the population. The poverty rates mostly are at least a third of the total population although the number seems to be gradually decreasing.

III.2.1 HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The problem of drug trafficking has given birth to another greater threat to human society. The increase in drug trade and trafficking across Central Asia has made the availability of drugs to the common population quite easier. There has been an escalating rise in the percentage of drug users in the region. So through trafficking of drugs, the issue has taken an ugly turn with drug addiction becoming a major threat to civil society. Drug addiction in turn, has given an impetus to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Central Asia, since drug users are prone to HIV. The civil society is caught in the vicious cycle of drug addiction and HIV/AIDS.

From the late 1970s onwards, with the advent of the war in Afghanistan, drug addiction became more widespread in Soviet Union. But with the disintegration of Soviet Union, there was a situation of political and social chaos. Several criminal groups were also active in society and drugs were easy to access³⁸. These factors contributed to the increase in drug users in the region.

According to UNDCP, by 2001 there were about 40 million persons living with HIV/AIDS globally and about 25 million had already died from the disease³⁹. The global percentage is shocking and it poses a direct threat to human stability and security. The map above shows the global scenario of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among IDUs. The percentage in Central Asia, though not the highest, is certainly a cause of concern. The high amount of seizures in this region and easy availability of drugs are some of the issues which can hardly be ignored. By 2003, the figures had reached the level of an epidemic. HIV/AIDS among addicts is between 55 percent in Russia and 88 percent in Central Asia⁴⁰.

Drug users in Central Asian states increasingly choose to inject the heroin (which is more economic) and they often share needles and syringes, which has led to a sharp increase in HIV among intravenous drug users (IDUs)⁴¹. Sharing of needles seems to be

³⁸ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 14.

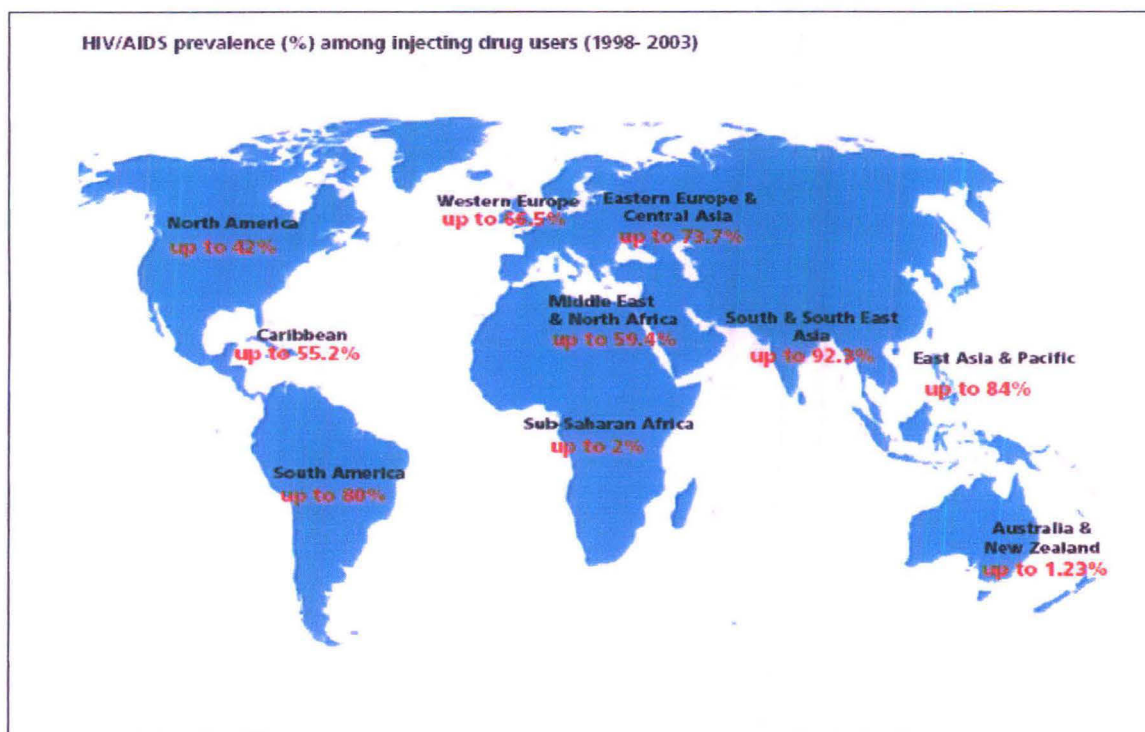
³⁹ Laura Shrestha, (2000), "HIV/AIDS in Central Asia", www.eurasia.net p. 1.

⁴⁰ UNODC, (2003), *Global Illicit Drugs Trends*, UN, New York, p. 119.

⁴¹ Maral Madi, op. cit, p. 264.

the main medium through which AIDS is caused in this region. The regional representative of UNODC, James Callahan states that “between 60 and 70 percent of all the newly registered HIV/AIDS cases are (caused by) transmission by injecting drug users, people sharing needles”⁴². Intravenous Drug Usage (IDU) is a popular medium of taking drugs in Central Asia. Drug addicts in CARs cannot afford to buy heroin for smoking since it is expensive and thus they inject a lesser dose with a similar effect⁴³. At the end of 2001, UNAIDS reported an estimated 40 million persons were living with HIV or AIDS globally and that about 25 million had already died from the disease. That same year saw an estimated 5 million new infections globally and 3 million deaths. The UN Security Council has recognized AIDS to be a serious threat to global stability and security⁴⁴. The map below estimates about 73.7% of IDUs are infected by HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Map No 3.1



Source:UNODC

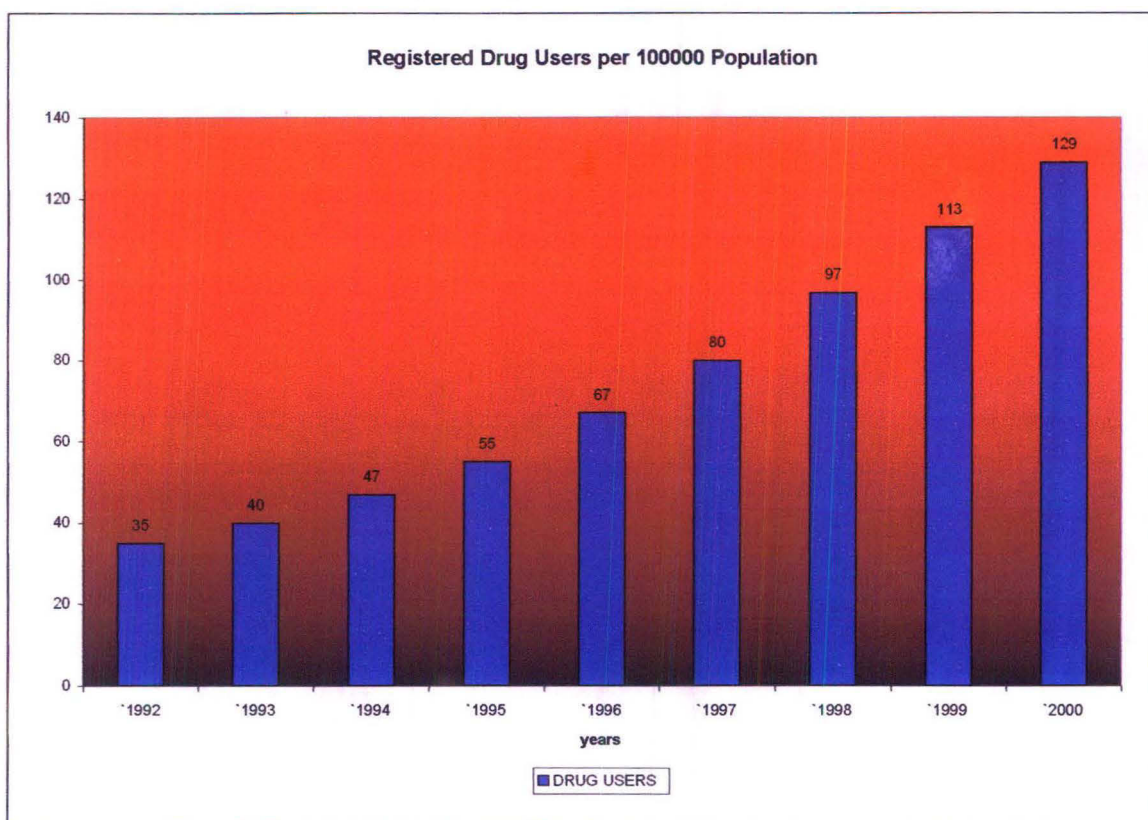
⁴² Esfandiari, Golnaz (2004), “Central Asia: Drug Trafficking has devastating social, economic impact”, http://www.rferl.org/radio_free_europe/central_asia/html.

⁴³ Maral Madi, (2005), “How effective is international anti-narcotics cooperation in Central Asia?” p. 3. www.silkroadstudies.org.

⁴⁴ Laura Shrestha, op. cit, p. 1.

"The UNAIDS and other studies in Central Asia indicate that between 60 and 70 percent of all the newly registered HIV/AIDS are [caused by] transmission by injecting drug users, people sharing needles," said James Callahan, the regional representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime⁴⁵. This is a serious upshot of the drug trafficking situation in Central Asia. Figure no. 3.3 below shows a rapid elevation in the number of drug users in Central Asia in the last decade.

Figure No. 3.3



DATA SOURCE: Maral Madi, *Country Factsheet Kyrgyzstan*

AIDS first appeared in the region in Kazakhstan's Karaganda area. Since then that area has seen a near epidemic among the IDU community⁴⁶. The infection spread so rapidly in the area partly due to ignorance. Until the mid-1990s many people had not even heard of the disease⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Esfandiari, Golnaz, op. cit, p.1.

⁴⁶ ICG Report, op. cit, p.12.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 12.

The first native HIV case in Kyrgyzstan was recorded in 1996 and starting in 2001, HIV spread rapidly with 90 % of cases occurring among IDUs, especially in the Osh region. In 2003 there were 482 registered cases. The real number of HIV infected is believed to have reached 3000, much higher than official statistics. According to WHO, the number of opiate addicts in Kyrgyzstan increased threefold from 1993 to 2001 and among them IDU increased from 14.1 % to 68.8%, in 2003 there were 5,591 officially registered drug users. The estimate of the real number is around 70,000 users⁴⁸.

Figure No. 3.4

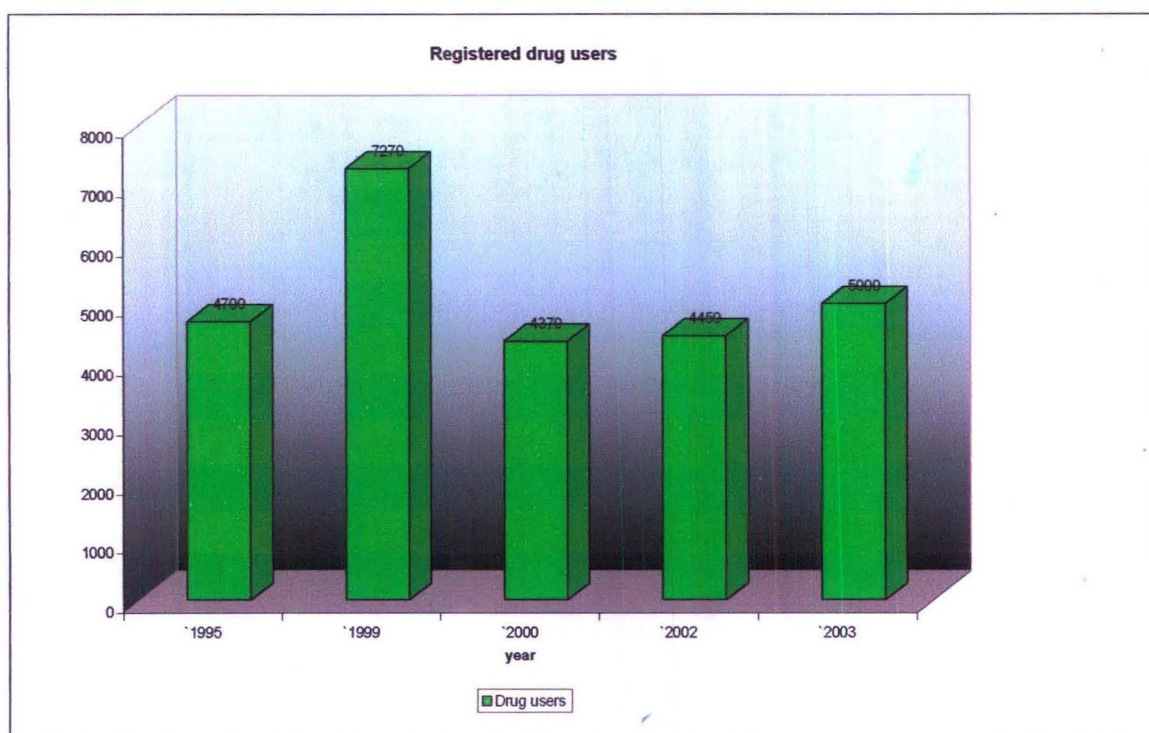


Table No. 3.4

Registered Drug Users

YEAR	1995	1999	2000	2002	2003
DRUG USERS	4700	7270	4370	4459	5000

DATA SOURCE: Maral Madi, *Country Factsheet Kyrgyzstan*

In 2003, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan showed a high rise in registered drug users; 50,000 and 5,000 respectively. The actual number of addicts is believed to be 250,000

⁴⁸ Maral Madi (2004), *Country Fact Sheets, Eurasian Narcotics, Kyrgyzstan*, p.1, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

and 75,000 in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan respectively⁴⁹. Both countries have acknowledged the growing problem of drug addicts and HIV/AIDS epidemics. The most affected areas lie along the heroin trafficking routes, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken regions in Kyrgyzstan, Temirtau, Kostanai town in Kazakhstan, Samarkand, Yangi Yol in towns of Uzbekistan⁵⁰.

As of January 1, 2006, there were 826 registered HIV positive people in Kyrgyzstan, of which 55 were suffering from AIDS. So far 75 HIV+ people have died, of which 48 deaths have been due to AIDS. It is estimated that 80% of reported cases of HIV have been caused by intravenous (IV) drug use. This figure is decreasing as rates infection via sexual contact increase, a situation which is likely to lead to a greater number of women becoming infected. HIV rates are particularly high in prisons, with prevalence running at 776/100,000 in 2002. It is estimated that in excess of 50% of inmates are IV drug users, with 70% of them sharing equipment. Estimates suggest that the real number of HIV+ people in the republic is at least ten times higher than official figures⁵¹.

The main impact has been on the youth. Drug addiction is increasingly becoming especially prevalent among the youth. In Kazakhstan over half of HIV infected persons are aged 20-29. Almost 90% are within the age category 15-39 years and almost 80% are men. Also almost 75% of affected persons were unemployed at the time of infection. In Uzbekistan, more than 85% of the cases were among men and two-thirds were among young people aged 15-34⁵².

III.2.2 WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Women are increasingly drawn into the drug trade as couriers. A great deal of smuggling in Central Asia is done by women that are compelled or convinced to do so⁵³. With women entering the drug scene the framework of family life is put under threat. Women hold the reins of the household and their children. But when they enter the drug scene, it

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Maral Madi, (2005), "How effective is international anti-narcotics cooperation in Central Asia?" op. cit, p. 3.

⁵¹ HIV/AIDS Estimates, <http://www.kyrgyzstan.neweurasia.net/?p=30>

⁵² Laura Shreshta, op. cit, p. 5.

⁵³ Niklas L.P. Swanström (2001), "*Drug trade a threat to security: the cases of Central Asia and the Caucasus*" p.11. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>

can be imagined how badly it affects their children and hence the society. Women are used as pawns by the drug traffickers who are mostly men. Women can cross barriers and check-posts without attracting much attention, as they are considered vulnerable and harmless. The treatment meted out to women is pathetic. It has also been a common strategy to sacrifice female traffickers who carry small amounts to get larger shipments through⁵⁴. Women are exploited even in this trafficking. They often agree to a lower payment than men in order to support children and family.

Since 1997 a growing percentage of women have got involved in drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan. From 1999-2004 the percentage of women involved in trafficking has increased from 5 % to 12%. In 1999, 344 or 12.4% of the total drug-related arrests involved women⁵⁵. In case of arrest, they are less likely to give up their suppliers because of a stronger desire to protect their families and they are more likely to get shorter sentences due to the court's general leniency toward women, particularly toward those with children⁵⁶.

The involvement of women is not limited to mere trafficking, there has been an increase in the percentage of women drug users and HIV infected women. This is a serious sign as it shatters the notion of a family. The increase in women traffickers and addicts is directly connected to the issue of human trafficking that is also going on in the regions and to the attempts to make women first drug addicts before they are sold on to the west as prostitutes⁵⁷. The engagement of IDUs in the commercial sex trade in order to support the drug habit is another grave concern as it increases the spread of diseases and levels of prostitution⁵⁸. This directly threatens both individual and social security.

III.2.3 OTHER DISEASES DUE TO DRUG USAGE

Drug addiction has given rise to several other diseases like Hepatitis B and C, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Hepatitis B and C often spreads due to Intravenous Drug Usage. In Osh, it is estimated that 35-40 per cent of all hepatitis cases

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.11.

⁵⁵ Maral Madi (2004), *Country Fact Sheets, Eurasian Narcotics, Kyrgyzstan*, op. cit, p.1.

⁵⁶ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 18.

⁵⁷ Niklas Swanstorm, op.cit, p. 11.

⁵⁸ Maral Madi, (2005), "How effective is international anti-narcotics cooperation in Central Asia?" op. cit, p. 3.

are contracted through infection. There is a strong possibility that the situation will take epidemic proportions through the combined problem of young addicts, increased levels of usage and prostitution⁵⁹. The region is also facing concurrent epidemics of STIs, which serve as key co-factors for the transmission of HIV⁶⁰. The situation is that STDs spread to non-users in a higher speed. Despite the fact that male drug users have traditionally been in majority, STDs spread to women as well⁶¹. The whole social edifice seems to crumble with women being involved in this business.

III.3 GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The governments of Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan also have over the years acknowledged the epidemic value of HIV/AIDS/STIs that are the byproducts of drug trafficking in this region. By means of several national programs the governments have accelerated their actions against HIV/AIDS/STIs. Since the health sector in Central Asia is not well equipped to tackle this issue, this problem has grown by leaps and bounds. The governments however have tried to overcome their shortcomings and with the help of international bodies like the WHO, have continued their struggle for controlling the spread of these epidemics in the region. “The government of Kyrgyzstan allotted \$25,000 in 2001 for the prevention and awareness program. AIDS and prevention of STIs are both included in the Health Reform Program ‘Manas’ and in the State Program ‘Healthy Nation’. In 1996, the Parliament adopted a Law on AIDS Prevention. The adoption of this Law undoubtedly intensifies HIV prevention activities in the country, ensures the involvement of all state agencies, and facilitates the securing of funds for special programs. The National Program on HIV/STIs Prevention was passed in 1997. The ‘Strategic Plan of National Response to the Epidemic of HIV/AIDS in the Kyrgyz Republic’ was passed in 2000. The general objective of the prevention program is to reduce the number and scale of the spread of HIV and to reduce the incidence of STIs incidence in the Kyrgyz Republic. Five strategies and interventions are identified⁶².

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶⁰ Laura Shrestha, op. cit. p. 3.

⁶¹ Niklas Swanstorm, op. cit. p. 11

⁶² Laura Shrestha, op. cit, p. 6.

- Development of a national policy on HIV/AIDS and STIs;
- Ensuring the safe provision of medical procedures, including prevention of HIV and other infections through blood transmission, invasive procedures, and unsafe injection;
- Prevention of the sexual transmission of HIV and STIs, through the fostering of safe sexual behavior, the provision of condoms, and the provision of medical care for STIs;
- Prevention of the prenatal transmission of HIV by providing the population group of fertile age with information on HIV/AIDS/STIs/ family planning and the provision of condoms; and,
- Provision of medical and social care for HIV-positive patients, AIDS patients and their family members.

Early intervention and awareness are the key factors for preventing the spread of this epidemic. The problem has duplicated from being a mere trafficking issue to a severe epidemic issue. Drug trafficking thus has brought about decay and deterioration of public health in the region.

Figure No 3.5

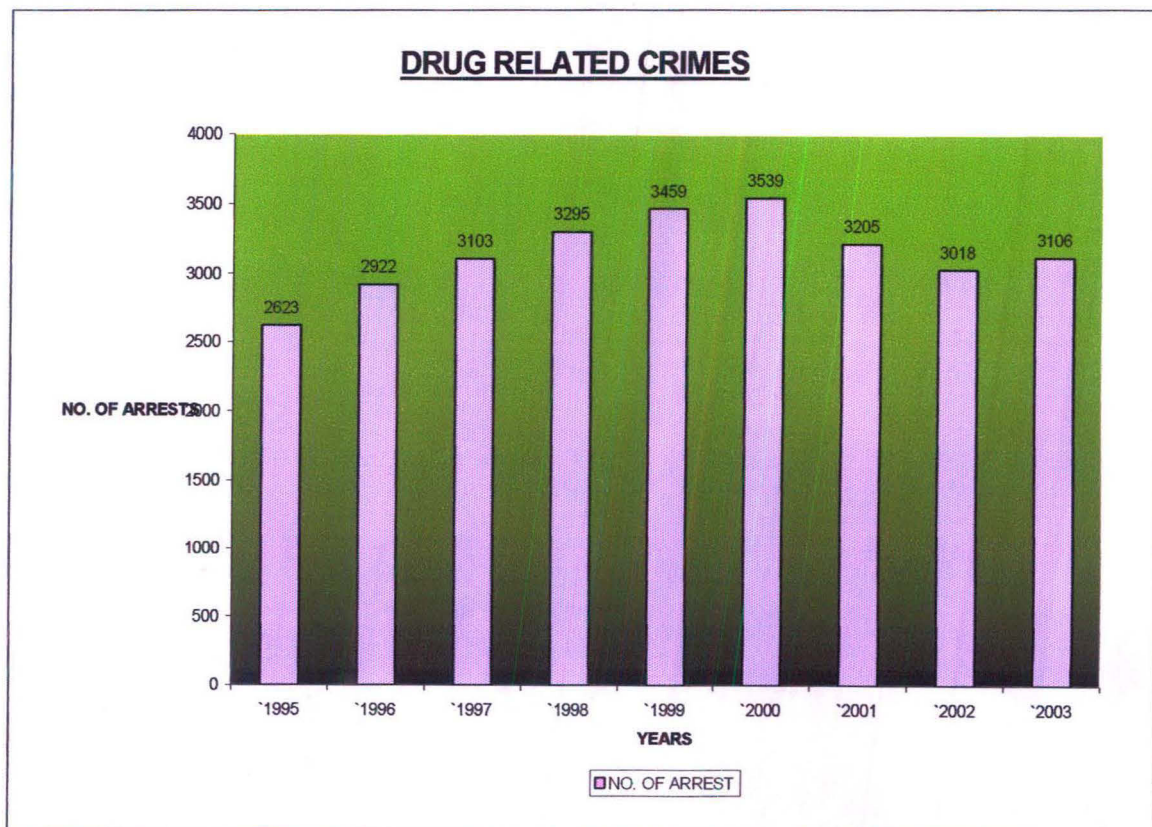


Table No. 3.5

Drug Related Crimes

YEAR	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
NUMBER OF ARRESTS	2623	2922	3103	3295	3459	3539	3205	3018	3106

Data Source: UNODC

III.4 OTHER DRUG-RELATED CRIMES

Figure 3.5 shows how there is a gradual increase in petty drug-related crime over the years. By 2003, the number of arrests in this crime had crossed the 3000 mark. Throughout the 1990s, crime rate has grown from exceptionally low to dramatically high. In 1998, total crimes in Turkmenistan were 13,500 and of that 4,000 were said to be drug related. Ninety per cent of the 700 sentenced to death in 1997 were convicted for drug trafficking⁶³. In the border regions, smugglers frequently take local residents hostages to ensure cooperation. When border guards seize drugs, the dealers often steal cattle and assets from the farmers who help the law enforcement officers. As a result the local residents are uncooperative with law enforcement agencies since it damages their livelihood⁶⁴. Thus drug dealers succumb to hostage taking, kidnappings, killings and even petty thefts in order to get their shipments through. Thereby bringing about chaos and unruliness in society and also threatening the peace and security of local innocent residents.

III.5 ILLEGAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The amount of money that is involved in drug trafficking is certainly high. As the drug moves on from one area to another towards the west there is a value upgradation. The high level of unemployment and poverty bears testimony to the fact that even though a lot of money is involved in the drug business, the farmers and others down the drug chain do not get much. UNDCP estimates that in 1999 opium poppy prices in Afghanistan ranged from \$27-\$72 per kilogram and the total value of the crop at farm-gate prices at

⁶³ ICG Report, op. cit, p. 15.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 14.

harvest time was approximately \$ 183 million⁶⁵. UNDCP estimates that heroin traffickers get 90 per cent of the “value-added” of heroin in the producer country; processors get 2 per cent, farmers get 6 per cent and opium traders 2 per cent⁶⁶. It can be seen that trafficking provides income to many people and hence it is also a temptation for the poor and the unemployed population of the region. Drug trafficking has also gripped the economy not only of the region but also of the globe. The illegal money made from illicit trafficking is further invested in legal markets thereby making drug money part of the legitimate international economy. Money laundering cripples global economies.

Also with the diversification into other legal markets and industries gives criminal organizations a firm footing, making them deeply-rooted in the global scene. The drug trade increases the inflation and resource depletion by bad management⁶⁷. The drug controlled economies cripple legal economies as their contribution to the GDP is low and it decreases the importance of legal markets. On the other hand illegal money is invested into legal market thereby giving drug networks a total control over legal economy. It is a cyclic process. There is an estimated \$300-\$500 billion that is laundered internationally through the international financial systems thereby giving the drug traffickers a need to control the internal and international economies⁶⁸. IMF estimates that drug trade constitutes 1.5-4.5 percent of the world economy and half of this is laundered through international financial institutions⁶⁹.

It is clear that this illegal money is certainly not reinvested in the regions of transport and production but goes to other economies as can be seen from the high level of poverty and unemployment in Central Asia. This economic backlash is harmful for both global and internal economy thereby crippling all development in the region and preventing the growth of legal markets.

III.6 IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT

Resource depletion is another byproduct of this economic backlash. There is an impact on the environment of the region as natural resources are misused and wasted. Deforestation, soil erosion, destruction of water assets that are caused by drug production and

⁶⁵ Olcott and Udalova, op. cit, p. 13.

⁶⁶ Olcott and Udalova, op.cit, p. 13.

⁶⁷ Niklas Swanstorm, op.cit, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

⁶⁹ ICG Report, op. cit, p. 15.

refinement, severely affect the environment of the region. The use of chemicals to process the heroin and fertilizers to grow poppy has increased the use of chemical products which affect the quality of the soil negatively in the long run due to loss of soil nutrients. The use of chemicals like carbide and Calcium carbide and toxins like acetone and toluene are extremely harmful to living organisms and are to a great extent soluble in water which makes it harder to clean the environment without large interventions. This is made more problematic as chemical waste from the production are dumped in the rivers or left at site and then it reaches the ground water. In all cases the quality of the water is severely damaged.

III.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The drug trade has multifaceted implications: deterioration of society, addiction, crime, and epidemics, affects public health and a threat to societal security. As seen in this chapter the menace of drug trafficking has had severe repercussions in the social framework of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. Several factors were responsible for this. The political instability and chaos in the region gave a perfect platform for drug trafficking. Corruption has penetrated the roots of administration and political institutions in Kyrgyzstan. Lack of transparency in administration has given corruption a fertile soil to grow.

Drug trafficking has wreaked havoc in the public health sector of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. The effects of drug abuse go far beyond the individuals concerned and cause incalculable harm to society in health, social and economic terms – including the spread of HIV. The chief reason behind the spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis and STIs is the high intake of drugs through injecting needles and syringes. The rise in the number of women and youth as traffickers is also attributed to high level of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Women play a pivotal role in the family structure. Their involvement in the drug trade spells doom for their children and family. Drug trafficking also affects the economies of the world through money laundering. It gives rise to petty crime and also sponsors terrorist activities, thereby becoming a global threat to security. It causes great harm to the environment as well. In all, it poses an escalating threat to a stable development in the region.

CHAPTER-FOUR
DRUG TRAFFICKING
AND TERRORIST
ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER- FOUR

DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

IV.1 NARCOTERRORISM— AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

IV.2 CRIME-TERROR SPECTRUM—KEY PLAYERS

IV.2.1 DRUG MAFIAS

IV.2.2 TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

IV.2.3 INSURGENT/TERRORIST GROUPS

IV.2.3.1 ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN (IMU)

IV.2.3.2 HIZB-UT-TAHRIR (HT)

IV.3 DRUGS TRAFFICKING AND ARMS TRAFFICKING

IV.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

An attempt has been made in this chapter to study the connection of drug trafficking and the terrorist activities. It is a well known fact that the monetary inputs into sponsoring terrorist activities do not come from legal channels. Historically drug trafficking has been the major source of finance for terrorist outfits leading to criminal activities and corruption. With the bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the western world woke up to the realization that the lives of a whole nation can be taken hostage by a group of people who are bent upon achieving their ends by violent means. The greatest threat facing the nations of the world is terrorism. Terrorism - a global issue has been the one of the chief causes of concern for the United Nations. It is a global security threat impeding development and all peace-keeping efforts by the government. It is the biggest hurdle to the social and political stability of a nation. No country has been spared by the infiltrators of peace. Central Asia too has borne the brunt of this menace. The geographical proximity to Afghanistan has not only made it a major transit territory for Afghan opium, but has also been subjected to the terrorist activities from across the border.

The political upheavals in Afghanistan like the invasion of Soviet Union, the rise and fall of the Taliban rule has had severe repercussions in this already devastated country. The social and economic condition of the region is in tatters and with the lack of a proper administrative authority at the centre, there has been a scenario of lawlessness and chaos in the region. The poverty of the population has further contributed to this deterioration. These were the chief reasons that motivated the production and trafficking of illicit opium in this region, making Afghanistan the world's largest producer in illicit opium. This illicit production of opium has crippled the development in the state and in the neighboring CARs. The drug traders have been able to exploit the poverty of the population. The huge amount of money that is involved in this business is used by drug traders as a temptation apple to lure people in the growing and trafficking of opium. So much so that the economy of the country is totally dependent on illicit opium and this is a big threat to democracy-building processes and to the stability of the civil society. This money has allegedly been used to carry out other clandestine activities—the chief among these being to finance terrorism. The fact that Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden found a safe haven in Afghanistan have raised concerns about the possible emergence of a more

global and pernicious alliance between drug traffickers and terrorists. It continues to be a haven for Islamic insurgent guerillas and terrorists.

Drug trafficking has wreaked havoc on the social, economic and political setup of the CARs. The problem has aggravated and has taken its toll on the civil society in terms of security, as can be seen from the rise in the level of petty street crimes. However the full picture is far more dangerous. The connection between drug trafficking and terrorism has often been ignored by governments. The governments have failed to see the links between the two and as a result of this ignorance both the activities have received full ground to flourish. Even when they have acknowledged the fact that the drug-terror nexus exists, government and anti-narcotics agencies have been reluctant to treat drug traffickers as terrorist organizations and terrorist organizations as drug traffickers. This has turned all the attempts to combat global terrorism and the problem of drug trafficking futile. The clear lines between the international drug trade, terrorism and organized crime are blurring, crossing and mutating. One activity feeds the other and a blend of the two is a current global security threat.

IV.1. NARCO TERRORISM - AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE

Narco terrorism refers to the nexus between drugs and terrorism. On December 9th 1994, the General Assembly of the United Nations issued a Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism wherein it expressed its concern “at the growing and dangerous links between terrorist groups and drug traffickers and their paramilitary gangs, which have resorted to all types of violence, thus endangering the constitutional order of states and violating basic human rights”¹. The UN thus acknowledges this threat as another variant of violence and terror, rather a far more dangerous one. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) of the US defines narco-terrorism as²:

¹ Links between Terrorism and Drug Trafficking: A Case of “Narco-terrorism”?, (2005), January 27, <http://english.safe-democracy.org/causes/links-between-terrorism-and-drug-trafficking-a-case-of-narcoterrorism.html>.

²Asa Hutchinson, (2002), *International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism*, Testimony Before the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Technology, Terrorism and Government Information, Washington, D.C. March 13, <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/2002/9239.htm>.

“A subset of terrorism, in which terrorist groups, or associated individuals, participate directly or indirectly in the cultivation, manufacture, transportation, or distribution of controlled substances and the monies derived from these activities. Further, narco-terrorism may be characterized by the participation of groups or associated individuals in taxing, providing security for, or otherwise aiding or abetting drug trafficking endeavors in an effort to further, or fund, terrorist activities”.

Narco terrorism is a common ground on which both the activities of drug trafficking and terrorism flourish. It is a symbiotic relationship which allows both to feed on each other. Sponsoring terrorism is an expensive affair. The money that is used to fund terrorist activities certainly does not come from legal sources. It comes from illegal and unofficial channels. In terms of profit, the drug trade is the second largest industry in the world second only to the military³. This huge amount of money in illicit drug trade attracts terrorists who establish links with drug traffickers, smugglers and local drug lords in order to meet the expenses of their terrorist activities.

The term “narco terrorism” was introduced by the president of Peru, Belaunde Terry. The illegal drug trade in Columbia, Peru and other Central American countries has been a matter of great concern to the US, as it is the biggest market for narcotics. This term entered international politics at that time. This alliance can pose a threat to the destabilization of governments and the established social order, in order to protect their illegal business and achieve their selfish ends. Drug trafficking exacerbates the terror situation in five distinct ways⁴:

- Cash Transactions
- Chaos and Instability
- Corruption and Intimidation
- Infrastructural help
- Foils all law enforcement efforts

³ Niklas L.P. Swanström, (2001), *Drug trade a threat to security: the cases of Central Asia and the Caucasus*, p.4 <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>.

⁴ Mark A.R. Kleiman, (2004), *Illicit Drugs and the Terrorist Threat: Causal Links and Implications for Domestic Drug Control Policy*, CRS Report for Congress, Domestic Social Policy Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. April 20.

Several terrorist outfits allegedly rely on profits from drug production and trafficking in order to carry out their activities. Money from drugs is used to recruit and train young people in their outfits. For e.g., the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the insurgent group in Central Asia, is believed to finance terrorist activities from drug trafficking, commodity smuggling and contributions from external sources. The IMU reportedly offers new militants up to \$100 a day and commanders can receive up to \$500. Drug money is also used to buy arms and ammunition.

Drug trafficking, as studied in the previous chapters, creates economic, political and social chaos and instability. Terrorists resort to several activities like kidnapping, sabotage etc in the countries that produce, traffick and those that consume drugs, so that an environment of terror prevails making it conducive for terrorist activity.

Drug money is also used to generate corruption in government, military and other civil-society institutions. This works to the advantage of terrorists and traffickers as they can carry out the trafficking of arms and drugs easily. This weakens the political structure and makes all anti-terrorist and anti-narcotics efforts futile.

This money is also used to provide infrastructural help like smuggling capacities, terrorist material, personnel, money laundering, illicit arms acquisition or the production of false identification or other documents. Corruption and instability at the political level which is caused by the drug money foils all law enforcement and anti-narcotics measures. Several military and custom officials have been found involved in drug trafficking. The factors stated earlier give a summary of the terror tactics employed by terrorists with the help of the drug traffickers. These are the dominant mechanisms by which narco terrorism blooms. The situation in Central Asia is no exception to these facts. Over the last decade there has been a rise in terrorist activities in the region. There has also been an increase in the number of radical groups and insurgents who are cashing the drug profits.

IV.2 CRIME-TERROR SPECTRUM— KEY PLAYERS

Drug trafficking bridges the gap between crime and terror in the crime-terror spectrum. Countries that are active in the drug trade have become so as a result of the environment created by the crime-terror nexus. Each of these threats feeds off the others so that it is often true that where one exists, the other two will inevitably exist. Three types of groups

are involved in the regional narcotics trade: drug mafias, transnational criminal organizations and insurgent/ terrorist groups. These groups have developed extensive smuggling networks that supply the growing opiate market in the former Soviet Union and the vast European market⁵.

IV.2.1 DRUG MAFIAS: These mafias are located in Afghanistan and all the CARs. They are a domestic group and their membership is restricted to specific clans and ethnic groups. Their chief role is restricted to the buying of raw opiates from farmers and selling shipments to international buyers. Clearly motivated by criminal intentions, the drug mafias hold one of the extremes poles of the crime-terror nexus. The drug mafias in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, though not so influential in the broader picture as their Afghan counterparts, maintain a degree of community influence, and have established connections with local officials. They are not so powerful for lack of national and international connections.

In Kyrgyzstan's case, there does not exist one 'drug mafia' that controls the transport of narcotics from Afghanistan, or one that controls the production and distribution of narcotics grown at home. During the period since the republic gained independence, several 'drug mafias' have emerged to fight over trafficking profits. One such 'drug mafia' in Kyrgyzstan is controlled by ethnic Russians who established ties with Afghanis during the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. A second 'drug mafia' consists of Turkish criminal organizations cooperating with their Kyrgyz counterparts. Perhaps the most influential and powerful 'drug mafia' in Kyrgyzstan, however, consists of Georgians, Azeris and Chechens who have established rings with Kyrgyz, and other Central Asian groups⁶. These drug mafias tend to use several routes to move narcotics into the Commonwealth of Independent States and then on to Europe. These routes include those that run through Kyrgyzstan into Kazakhstan (often via Uzbekistan), and then to Russia.

⁵ Tamara Makarenko, (2002), "Crime, terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade", *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol No. 6, No 3. pp.3-4.

⁶ Ibid p.4.

IV.2.2 TRANSNATIONAL CRIME: These groups pose a great threat to the region, partly because they are composed of a chain of regional and international players including officials in several governments and their security services. Major players in the Afghan/Central Asian drug trade include a network of Afghan, Kyrgyz and Russian syndicates who move shipments of opiates through Central Asia, Russia, the Baltic states into Western Europe. These groups use corruption and intimidation to establish and exert their influence. As a result they are destructive for state and regional security.

IV.2.3 INSURGENT/ TERRORIST GROUPS: These include the Taliban, the Al-Qaeda, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). They are considered important players because of their capacity for perpetuating violence and instability in the region. The Taliban did gather profits from the drug trade, but this was not its only source of funding. Al-Qaeda also had a limited role in the drug profits. The only group that encompasses the entire range of the crime-terror nexus is the IMU. It is both criminal and terrorist in nature; criminal because of its direct involvement in the drug trade and terrorist because of its explicit political declarations⁷.

IV.2.3.1 THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF UZBEKISTAN (IMU)

Radical Islamic opposition movements have a long history in Central Asia dating back to the Tsarist era. The most recent resurgence of Islamic opposition was spurred by the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Central Asian Muslims sent to fight in Afghanistan gained a new appreciation for their history and religion and drew inspiration from the *mujaheddin* fighters that opposed the invasion. After the 1989 Soviet withdrawal and the subsequent collapse of the USSR, the creation of international Muslim brigades to fight the occupying Soviet forces in Afghanistan set the tone and provided manpower for Islamist insurgents in Central Asia. In 1992-1997, during the Tajikistan civil war, Tajik Islamic opposition forces found a safe haven and staging ground across the border in Afghanistan. At the end of civil war, those who refused to participate in a new united

⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

Tajik government stayed in Afghanistan and joined the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance. Others joined forces with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)⁸.

The IMU was a self-proclaimed radical Islamic and political group, which was formed around 1997 by two ethnic Uzbeks from the Ferghana Valley with the express goal of overthrowing the government of President Islam Karimov and establishing an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. Having been expelled from Uzbekistan in the early 1990s, the two founders of the IMU (Juma Namangani, the group's military leader and a former Afghan veteran, and Tahir Yuldash, its political leader) followed the pattern of other Islamic militant leaders. They traveled variously and separately in Muslim countries including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates—as well as to Chechnya—and established contacts with Islamic movements, financial sources, and intelligence services. After the 1996 Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the IMU founders established close relations with Taliban leaders and were reported to have secured the support and financial backing of Osama bin Laden in their creation of the IMU⁹.

From 1997-2001, using the remote mountainous regions of Tajikistan as its base, the IMU carried out kidnappings, assassinations and other atrocities, including a series of armed raids deep into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan that also targeted foreign visitors and tourists. Eventually, the IMU relocated its base of operations permanently to Afghanistan, extended its mandate to overthrow all regional governments—changing its name to the Islamic Party of Turkestan (IPT)—and threw in its lot with the Taliban. President Bush named the IMU as one of the terrorist movements linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network in his speech to Congress on September 20, 2001. Reports from the region and Western intelligence sources put the numbers of IMU militants somewhere between 3,000-5,000¹⁰.

Even in the lower projected numbers the IMU threatened to overwhelm the capabilities of poorly-trained and equipped Central Asian militaries, and IMU activities seemed ready to turn Central Asia into an extension of the turmoil in Afghanistan, with potentially disastrous consequences. The U.S. intervention in Afghanistan curtailed IMU

⁸ Fiona Hill, (2003), *Central Asia: Terrorism, Religious Extremism, and Regional Stability*, Testimony before the House Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C. July 23, p. 2.

⁹ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

activities in Central Asia. The IMU's military commander was killed in action with the Taliban near Mazar-e Sharif in Afghanistan in November 2001, and its political leader went into hiding. The U.S. overthrow of the Taliban and the demise of the IMU had a great effect on Central Asian security since the collapse of the USSR.

IMU is believed to finance terrorist activities from drug trafficking, commodity smuggling and contributions from external sources. In September 2000, the US State Department added IMU to its black list of 28 terrorist organizations¹¹. The IMU – whose stated political goal is the creation of a separate republic in Uzbekistan's Fergana valley – is believed to finance its activities by a range of illegal activities, including drug trafficking, and gold and gem smuggling. The movement also receives funding from Islamic groups and individuals in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Islamic states. The IMU is known to rely heavily on narcotics trafficking over a number of Central Asian routes to support its military, political, and propaganda activities. This trafficking is based on moving heroin from Afghanistan through Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, into Russia, and then into Western Europe.

According to regional expert Ahmed Rashid, Namangani's group has a close relationship with Al Qaeda: "In the IMU, [Al Qaeda leader Osama] bin Laden cultivated a cult-like group that could act as a bridge to Afghanistan's landlocked, mountainous neighbors—neighbors who were striking deals with American oil and gas companies and looking increasingly to Washington for assistance¹²." In the past two years, Namangani received an estimated \$35 million from Al Qaeda (including \$20 million given personally by Bin Laden) to buy arms and equipment for his organization. According to Rashid, Bin Laden also considered Central Asia as a prime source of new recruits to his cause, and the IMU as a prime instrument in the recruitment process. An avowedly terrorist organization, the IMU has been especially active in areas adjacent to the Fergana Valley, which is the economic and natural resource center of Central Asia. The IMU aims to capture that critical region and establish an Islamic caliphate that would eventually expand to rule all of Central Asia.

¹¹ Swanstorm, op cit, p. 10.

¹² Ahmed Rashid, (2002), *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p.130.

In 1999 and 2000, Fergana, which includes territory of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, was the scene of terrorist actions that included the kidnapping of Japanese, Kyrgyz, and American citizens in Kyrgyzstan. In the same period, IMU fighters were training and recruiting with Taliban forces in Afghanistan, where IMU leaders had established close connections. Before September 11, the IMU was an active participant in the Taliban's struggle to gain full control of Afghanistan against resistance forces in the northeast of that country. Under Namangani's command, an IMU force reportedly 3,000 to 5,000 strong fought beside the Taliban regime against U.S. and Afghan forces in the campaign of late 2001. Some IMU forces reportedly remained with holdout Taliban forces in eastern Afghanistan as late as February 2002. In 1999 stringent security procedures by the Uzbek armed forces, together with pressure from the Tajikistan government to vacate bases in that country, caused the IMU to begin a quiet infiltration into Kyrgyzstan¹³.

Kyrgyzstan also is a primary IMU target because it is the only Central Asian country to allow the activity of Christian missionaries¹⁴. In 2001 the IMU mounted guerrilla attacks in southwestern Kyrgyzstan from sleeper cells already in that country, rather than by moving fighters across the border from Tajikistan as it had in the attacks of 1999 and 2000. This new stratagem is significant because it reduced pressure on the IMU from the Tajikistan government and confirmed a permanent IMU presence in Kyrgyzstan¹⁵. Establishment of a beachhead in Kyrgyzstan has been facilitated by inept and uncoordinated border controls in the region where Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan meet. According to Rashid, the mutual distrust of these three states have for each other and Uzbekistan's unilateral mining of its portion of the border have increased the incidence of smuggling activity, which supports the IMU. It also has disrupted the trans-border trade that is the foundation of the region's economy, thus exacerbating the conditions that foster extremist recruitment¹⁶.

Besides money from Bin Laden and sources in Saudi Arabia, IMU funding is known to rely heavily on narcotics trafficking, using connections that Namangani

¹³ Svante E. Cornell and Regine A. Spector, (2002), "Central Asia: More than Islamic Extremists," *The Washington Quarterly*, 25, No. 1.p. 20.

¹⁴ Rashid, op cit, p. 130.

¹⁵ Ibid, pp.181-182.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 160.

developed in Afghanistan and Tajikistan during his pre-IMU participation in the Tajik civil war (1992-97). Regional expert Frederick Starr has characterized the relationships that have developed as a “potent amalgam of personal vendetta, Islamism, drugs, geopolitics, and terrorism¹⁷.” Both before and after the founding of the IMU in 1998, Namangani developed enclaves stretching from Tavildara west of Dushanbe to the Sukh and Vorukh enclaves, which are tiny territorial islands and hotbeds of radical Islam located in far southwestern Kyrgyzstan, just south of the Fergana Valley. Those enclaves also are centers of hostility among the three states because they belong respectively to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Such hostility, which has been fostered especially by Karimov’s intransigence on a number of regional issues, enables the IMU to play one side against the other, gain influence with corrupt officials on all sides, and stir antigovernment resistance among the regional populations. State corruption has played a role in the IMU’s success. Based on its role in the civil war, the IMU now has “contacts in Tajikistan’s highest echelons of power¹⁸,” which are useful in protecting narcotics routes. The Tajik government still does not exercise significant control outside the immediate area of Dushanbe, relying heavily on Russian troops and border guards.

According to a 2002 analysis, more than half of Afghanistan’s opium exports move through Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Between 1998 and 1999, a critical point at which the IMU was using its network of militants and its contacts with Chechen guerrillas to expand its narcotics sales, the production of opium in Afghanistan nearly doubled. The IMU is known to control opium movement through these Central Asian routes, including as much as 70 percent of the opium trade entering Kyrgyzstan. With constriction of the narcotics route from Uzbekistan’s border with Afghanistan across Uzbekistan through Bukhara and Urgench to Nukus in the western province of Karakalpakstan and thence into Kazakhstan and Russia, the volume of narcotics traffic into Kyrgyzstan increased significantly after 1999¹⁹.

¹⁷ Glenn Curtis et al, (2002), *A Global Overview of Narcotics-funded Terrorist and other Extremist Groups*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., May

¹⁸ Ibid p. 97.

¹⁹ Fiona Hills, op cit, p.3.

In 2001 the IMU reportedly set up heroin refining laboratories in Tajikistan. In July of that year, Russian border guards seized 2.4 tons of raw opium on the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border, a sign that opium was being processed in Tajikistan²⁰. The movement of narcotics through Tajikistan is facilitated by paying off Tajik officials and members of the Russian military. Reportedly, military vehicles returning to Moscow from supply missions in Central Asia are used to transport narcotics to that major center of international trafficking²¹.

The IMU's manpower base was significantly scattered and reduced by the results of the Afghan conflict²². For that reason, the organization's resumption of its campaign to gain control of the Fergana Valley in 2002 is considered doubtful. Although the long-term effect of the Afghan campaign on the IMU is unknown, the organization has lost its military bases and Taliban support in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. However, the IMU reportedly still was recruiting new members, receiving aid from al Qaeda, and fanning anti-American sentiment in February of 2002²³. Kyrgyzstan continued to be an important bastion of the group. Both the U.S. presence in Central Asia and the ongoing economic crisis in the Fergana region contributed to the success of IMU's recruiting campaigns.

IV.2.3.2 HIZB-UT-TAHRIR (HT)

A second Islamic organization, the Hizb-ut-Tahrir (also seen as Hizb-al-Tahrir and the full form, Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami, (HT), has become the most widespread underground Islamic movement in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Founded in 1953 by Palestinians in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the HT espouses the doctrine of jihad in Central Asia that would lead to establishment of Islamic caliphates throughout the Muslim world. The HT is violently opposed to the Shia variety of Islam, which is followed by significant populations in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan²⁴. The HT claims to be the one true path of Islam, and that all other radical Muslim movements will be proven wrong. Experts consider HT "probably the most esoteric and anachronistic of all the radical Islamic

²⁰ Rashid, op. cit. pp. 165-166

²¹ Cornell and Spector, op. cit, p. 15.

²² Olcott and Udalova op. cit. p. 15.

²³ Fiona Hills, op cit, p.4.

²⁴ Rashid, op. cit. p.123.

movements in the world today²⁵.” The Central Asian phase of the movement, which was first identified in Uzbekistan in 1995, is centered in the Fergana Valley among educated urban youth²⁶. The HT also has developed a substantial following among the rural poor in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

However, like the IMU, the HT has been persecuted in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, where thousands of group members have been imprisoned. The HT is organized in secretive, small cells of five to seven members; only the cell chief has contact with the next level of the organization. Unlike the IMU, the HT’s doctrine does not approve violent measures to gain political control in the Islamic world, relying instead on distribution of propaganda materials and personal contact to gain converts. However, the young extremists who increasingly are attracted to HT may react by embracing terrorist activities like those of the IMU. In October 2001, the HT website declared, “A state of war exists between [the United States] and all Muslims²⁷.”

In 2001, some HT members were trained by the Taliban in Afghanistan and were in contact with IMU troops²⁸. The transformation of the HT into a terrorist organization would be a dangerous event in Central Asia for several reasons. First, HT’s secretive and decentralized structure makes its activities very hard to track. Second, the HT has many more members than the IMU (an estimated 60,000 in Uzbekistan and 20,000 each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The HT also has set up offices and proselytized successfully in the United Kingdom and Germany. Third, the chief of the national security forces of Kyrgyzstan has claimed that the HT’s propaganda activities against the Kyrgyz government are funded by laundered money from narcotics sales, aided by al Qaeda’s having “placed the well organized drug trafficking in their [HT’s] service²⁹.” There is little documentation of present HT narcotics activities. The substantial funding behind HT’s well-organized education and indoctrination programs comes mainly from diaspora Muslims, notably those in Saudi Arabia and Western Europe. However, it is speculated

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 124-125.

²⁶ Cornell and Spector, op. cit, p. 21.

²⁷ Fiona Hills, op cit, p.7.

²⁸ Rashid, op. cit, p. 133.

²⁹ Fiona Hills, op cit, p.13.

that some HT cells are engaging in narcotics sales, using the same infrastructure as the IMU and other trafficking organizations in the region³⁰.

Increasingly, the IMU and the HT have a shared identity as victims of repressive Central Asian regimes, whose rhetoric and enforcement strategy has been essentially the same for both groups. In 1999 the Uzbekistan government accused the HT of responsibility for an assassination attempt against Karimov, justifying a wave of arrests that followed. From that time, the Karimov regime and that of President Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan have lumped together the HT and the IMU as terrorist organizations and enemies of their respective states, and the groups have shared the abysmal prison conditions and human rights violations resulting from that status. Both groups have reacted to the recent arrival of U.S. troops in Central Asia with strong anti-American rhetoric³¹.

The IMU remains a major connection between international narcotics and regional terrorism. The HT presents the potential for a second major linkage between narcotics and terrorism in Central Asia, although no major activity by HT has been documented in either area³². It is now as a potential source of threat. These insurgent groups which fall on the crime-terror nexus have the power to destroy current political institutions and a threat to social and political instability. Their reliance on drugs as a sponsor for their terrorist activities is due to several reasons. The chief being the inability to gain support from states as international terrorism is strongly condemned. The narco-terror alliance has another partner in the form of arms trafficking. This dangerous troika is one of the greatest security threats to the international peace.

IV.3 DRUG TRAFFICKING AND ARMS TRAFFICKING

Another dangerous clandestine activity carried out under the guise of drug trafficking by the narcoterrorists is the illegal acquisition and trafficking of huge shipments of arms. The drug industry funding the acquisition of arms has severe implications internationally as well as locally. Small, poor countries with a propensity for corruption are most easily targeted for the ease with which they cater to these industries. The most serious

³⁰ Rashid, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

ramifications for the convergence of arms and drug trafficking lie in countries that host terrorist/insurgent groups³³. What results is instability from a combination of the underground drug market and the proliferation of armed groups. Infiltration within societal institutions and the growth of guerrilla armies are the two most destabilizing elements of the drug trade. Some of the tactics used include intimidation, kidnapping and murder. These tactics have proved especially useful in undermining and crippling the judicial systems of governments, which ensures a path of least resistance for traffickers in the legal system³⁴.

Groups involved in ethnic conflicts are also suspected of using drug trafficking as a significant way of buying arms. Ethnic conflicts provide cover for significant drug trafficking activities. Poverty and political instability in the contentious areas encourage involvement in drug and arms smuggling operations that are run by organized crime groups³⁵. Simultaneous involvement in arms trafficking is one way that drug traffickers acquire the means to protect their interests. The more weapons acquired, the more able traffickers are to undermine the effective functioning of public institutions and attempts at their reform. The growth of the drug market is considered one of the major sources of funding for armed movements in Latin America³⁶. The international community is increasingly concerned about the ties between drug trafficking and organized crime, especially in so far as these issues link to the trafficking of arms, which can be used to undermine governments and create social unease. Drug lords have begun to seek political power in developing countries so that they can better control the circumstances under which they run their businesses³⁷.

In Afghanistan drug trafficking was a vital source of funding for the Mujaheddin's fight against the Taliban³⁸. The Taliban, in turn, also used the large profits that it received from taxing opium production in Afghanistan in order to provide weapons, ammunition, fuel, food, clothing and transport for their armies. It is estimated

³³ Ivelaw L. Griffith, "From Cold War Geopolitics to post-Cold War Geonarcotics," *International Journal*, Vol. 49, Winter 1993-94. p 20-21.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 24.

³⁵ Olcott and Udalova, *op. cit*, p. 8

³⁶ Karen L. Stewart, "How has Drug Trafficking Affected Development in Central Asia?" www.eurasianet.org.p. 22.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 22.

³⁸ Ahmed Rashid, (2000), *Taliban*, United Kingdom: I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., p. 120.

that drug trafficking provided 3 billion in revenues for the Taliban each year³⁹. Experts cite several examples of large quantities of drugs and weapons being exchanged under the noses of government or military officials, specifically in Pakistan, and that drugs acted as currency in the volatile circumstances in and around the Afghan civil war⁴⁰. Drugs are currency, not weapons. The real danger posed by drug trafficking is its immense potential to fund conflicts. Resources (such as weapons) that are obtained by profits from drug trafficking increase the intensity of conflicts and allows groups that are prone to use violence to continually raise the stakes in order to achieve their goals. Guerrilla groups are so well provided by the drug industry that they have been able to establish savings accounts for the sake of funding an enhancement of their military capability should a credible threat arise.

Arm trafficking is the next logical criminal link to drug trafficking. From there, traffickers move into ever-escalating forms of violence, from kidnapping to murder to assassination, in order to control their piece of the market from both competitors and law enforcement officials. Many substate groups become involved with the drug industry solely for the purpose of purchasing weapons needed to forcefully further their cause⁴¹. The greatest fear with regards to Central Asia's involvement in arms trafficking is the possibility that one of the shipments will be a nuclear weapon⁴². The established trading routes from Russia, across post-Soviet territory and into places like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, etc, are now used for all other types of trade and traffick and could be used to transport weapons as well. There is already a healthy trade in smaller weapons that are used by insurgent/terrorist groups. Drug trafficking in Central Asia not only provides routes for arms trafficking, it also provides a significant source of funding for arms trafficking.

Border guards on the Tajik-Afghan border have reported being fired upon by well-armed traffickers. These assailants are not only equipped with light weapons. They also carry larger arms that could be used to carry out terrorist attacks. Several examples

³⁹ Ibid, p. 120.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 123.

⁴¹ Tamara Makarenko, (2002), "Crime, terror and the Central Asian Drug Trade", *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, Vol No. 6, No 3. p. 8.

⁴² Davis, Jacquelyn K. and Michael J. Sweeney, (2004), *Central Asia in U.S. Strategy and Operational Planning: Where do we go from Here?* Washington, D.C.: The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, February, p. 27.

of the weapons that traffickers have been caught with include anti-aircraft rocket launchers, tank shells, mines and grenades. These weapons allow drug traffickers to challenge law and border enforcement agencies with impunity⁴³. The increased availability of weapons has contributed to the rise in local crime rates. Organized criminal organizations have developed locally and taken advantage of the weakness of local government. Poor populations along trafficking routes are also getting caught up in the violence and conflicts that accompany drug trafficking and are increasingly playing a part in it. This has created an environment of instability and chaos in the region thereby making all anti-terrorist and anti-narcotic measures by the government futile.

IV.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Drug traffickers have been using violence as a motivator in order to breed fear and instability within societies. The drug-terror connection is the most dangerous threat to the security and stability of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. As seen in this chapter the terrorists under the guise of a radical ideal, recruit people who are already frustrated by their lack of opportunity and poor prospects for advancement under prevailing political and economic conditions. The drug traffickers and terrorists have been able to exploit the socio-economic condition of this region.

Lack of economic opportunities and frustration with the government has led the public towards the path of terror. Most recruits are not necessarily in favor of the creation of an Islamic state, but are disgusted by wide-spread corruption in local and central government. The huge amount of money given per day to terrorist recruits is extremely tempting for the population in CARs. With interest-based political parties throughout Central Asia variously marginalized or outlawed, or dominated by a handful of individuals, or controlled by powerful elite or business groups, there is little scope for the average politically-aware Central Asian to express these grievances and press governments for change. In the absence of effective interest-based parties, groups like IMU and *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* have filled the void. They have been able to exploit the poverty and unemployment of the people in the drug-dependent economic states.

⁴³ Kairat Osmonaliev (2005), "Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia, Legal and Political Dimensions", *Silk Road studies Program Central Asia- Caucasus Institute*, Uppsala University Sweden, January, p. 21. www.silkroadstudies.org.

Drug trafficking is a fertile soil for corruption, extremism, and terrorism in the entire region of Central Asia. The bulk of the money however comes from consumer countries. It is obvious today that each dose consumed by drug addicts somewhere in London or Moscow feeds more money into acts of terror against their compatriots. But now that drug trafficking is becoming the main source of finance for terrorists, it is important to realize that drug addiction is not merely a human tragedy but also a crime against the state.

This poses significant challenges to law enforcement agencies, which have traditionally targeted terrorism and criminality separately. Terrorism and drug trafficking exact a tremendous cost from society. In order to combat the troika of the terrorist, organized crime, and narcotics trafficking threat there has to be a reshuffle in the anti-narcotics and anti-terrorist policies. International cooperation should target major drug traffickers by combating money laundering, terrorism, arms trafficking and corruption. Governments need to rethink their anti-drug enforcement measures in order to ensure a peaceful environment in the state.

CHAPTER-FIVE

NATIONAL AND

INTERNATIONAL

LEGAL

INTERVENTIONS

CHAPTER - FIVE

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INTERVENTIONS

- V.1 DRUG TRAFFICKING: COUNTER MEASURES IN THE PRE-SOVIET ERA**
- V.2 SILK ROAD DIPLOMACY: REGIONAL/SUB REGIONAL EFFORTS**
- V.3 OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**
 - V.3.1 THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)
 - V.3.2 CENTRAL ASIAN ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CAEC)
 - V.3.3 ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)
- V.4 INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES**
 - V.4.1 UNITED NATION OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)
 - V.4.2 THE ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)
 - V.4.3 EUROPEAN UNION (EU)
 - V.4.4 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)
- V.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The present chapter analyzes the policies of Central Asian governments on drug trafficking abuse, the legal provisions of international drug control, drug control concepts, programs and strategies of Central Asian countries, data of UNODC and other international organizations and relevant drug-related law enforcement bodies in Central Asia. It presents a complete overview of national and legal interventions that have aimed at tackling the issues of drug trafficking and its effects. This chapter seeks to analyze the current drug situation in Central Asia, the underlying concepts and applications of counter-narcotics policies, current problems impeding the successful implementation of drug control programs, and the effectiveness and avenues for improvement of drug control cooperation in Central Asia.

The impact of drug trafficking on the socio-economic and political fabric of Kyrgyzstan has crippled development in the region. The degree of deterioration that has been caused by this evil can be seen from the astonishing details revealed by the UNODC. It has become a malignancy. There is an urgent need on part of the government to extirpate this evil from its roots. The various anti-narcotics strategies that have been employed by the government, demands a major reform. It is also important to treat drug trafficking in Central Asia as an international issue. The governments of the CARs cannot curb this malaise in isolation. International support and cooperation can help redefine the measures. The UN has also played an important role in strategy-building processes and in framing appropriate anti-narcotics measures. A well-balanced approach needs to be adopted in order to tackle this issue. Excessively liberal or excessively repressed policies have failed to generate desired results as can be seen in Netherlands. The repressive policy is a policy based on declaring war on drugs and characterized by very severe punitive measures in order to repress drug circulation and abuse. On the other extreme, the liberal policy focuses on the legalization of drugs. This demands a heavy price from the society and the situation tends to go beyond control of the authorities. Despite the fact that legalization of drugs decreases hidden drug addiction, it also leads to an expansion of overall rates of drug abuse and its huge demand.

The Central Asian states have not yet reached a full understanding of their counter-narcotics strategies and policies. Efforts for reducing the demand of drugs in society, and on managing drug abuse is carried out unsystematically, without due state

support. The system of treatment of drug addicts is in a most complicated situation, as the social rehabilitation of drug addicts under state supervision is not being carried out¹.

Combating the drug problem requires a well-balanced approach, based on a wide use of law-enforcement as well as preventive measures, directed to the achievement of total control of the problem by the state, and resulting in a consistent reduction of its negative social consequences. A successful restrictive counter-narcotics policy uses a variety of harsh and liberal approaches combined with a complex strategy for both demand and supply reduction. Simultaneously, the social condemnation of drug addiction is expressed, which remains the essence of the counter-narcotics measures adopted.

V.1 COUNTER MEASURES OF THE PRE-SOVIET ERA

In the Soviet era the lack of demarcating boundaries between Russia and the present-day CARs provided a lucrative opportunity for drug proliferation and trafficking. The problem then, although grave, was not so much visible as it is post-disintegration. In 1986, there was an alarming growth in narcotics cultivation and processing in some regions of the Soviet Union. This led the Soviet authorities to institute a coordinated drug crop eradication program, code-named *Mak (Poppy)*². The *Poppy* operations involved combined efforts of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), Committee for State Security (KGB), various local organizations and Ministry of Defense (MoD).

The principal goals of these operations were to identify illegally cultivated and wild-growing areas of poppies and cannabis and destroy them by manual and mechanized means, such as burning, and also by chemical eradication³. These operations, thus temporarily suppressed narcotic trafficking in target areas. This was done by arresting cultivators and traffickers, and seizing drugs, money, weapons and other contraband products. *Poppy* operations were scheduled twice a year in the spring (April-June) and fall (September-October) growing seasons. During these periods the law enforcement

¹ Osmonaliev, Kairat, (2005), "Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia: Legal and Political Dimensions" *Silk Road Paper, Silk Road Studies Program* and Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, p.6.

² Graham.H.Turville. Jr, (1992), "Narcotics Trafficking in Central Asia: A New Colombia", *Military Review*, Vol.72, No. 12, p. 56.

³ *Ibid*, p. 56.

personnel block and monitor key routes into and out of major cultivation areas, while eradication groups destroyed identified plots or fields, often in remote areas⁴.

In the late 1980s there came about a major change in the *Poppy* operations as drug traffickers began adopting different approaches. The assumption that poppy cultivation was limited to certain seasons proved wrong in some regions. There was also an increase in the areas cultivating poppy. The closely-knit regional network of drug traffickers began to surface, thereby unveiling the problem in its true magnitude. Previously unknown international dimensions also surfaced, with an increase in trafficking of Soviet drugs to other countries abroad. By 1991, the counter measures had become more pronounced under the Operation *Poppy 91*. These operations though, made an effort at curbing this menace, failed to completely extirpate this issue. As was the case, the drug traffickers and producers would always find innovative ways.

V.2 SILK ROAD DIPLOMACY: REGIONAL/SUB REGIONAL EFFORTS

The states in Central Asia have made efforts to work closer together in their attempt to solve their common narcotics problems. The CARs are all signatories to major UN anti-narcotics conventions:

- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)
- Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)
- Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000).

In 1996 the five CARs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between them and the UNDCP, and in January 1998, they were joined as signatories by Russia and the Aga Khan Development Network, followed by Azerbaijan in 2001, thus expanding the regional framework of drug control cooperation. At the annual meetings held in 1998, Kazakhstan; 1999, Kyrgyzstan; 2001, Tajikistan and 2002, Turkmenistan, the MoU member states reviewed progress in drug control cooperation and discussed prospects for its further development. In 1994, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan formed the Central Asian Economic Commission and pledged to cooperate in the battle

⁴ Ibid, p..56.

against illicit drugs. It was later joined by Tajikistan in 1998. In 1998, Kyrgyzstan initiated the creation of an interstate commission on control of drug proliferation which included Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. However as of May 1999, the functions and jurisdiction of this commission had yet to be negotiated⁵.

The Central Asian Community (CAC) has been established in order to increase regional cooperation and integration toward strengthening security in the region. Under the auspices of one or several great powers, cooperative mechanisms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) have been created. Moreover, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has brought Central Asian states closer together with their southern neighbors in their effort to rebuild Afghanistan.

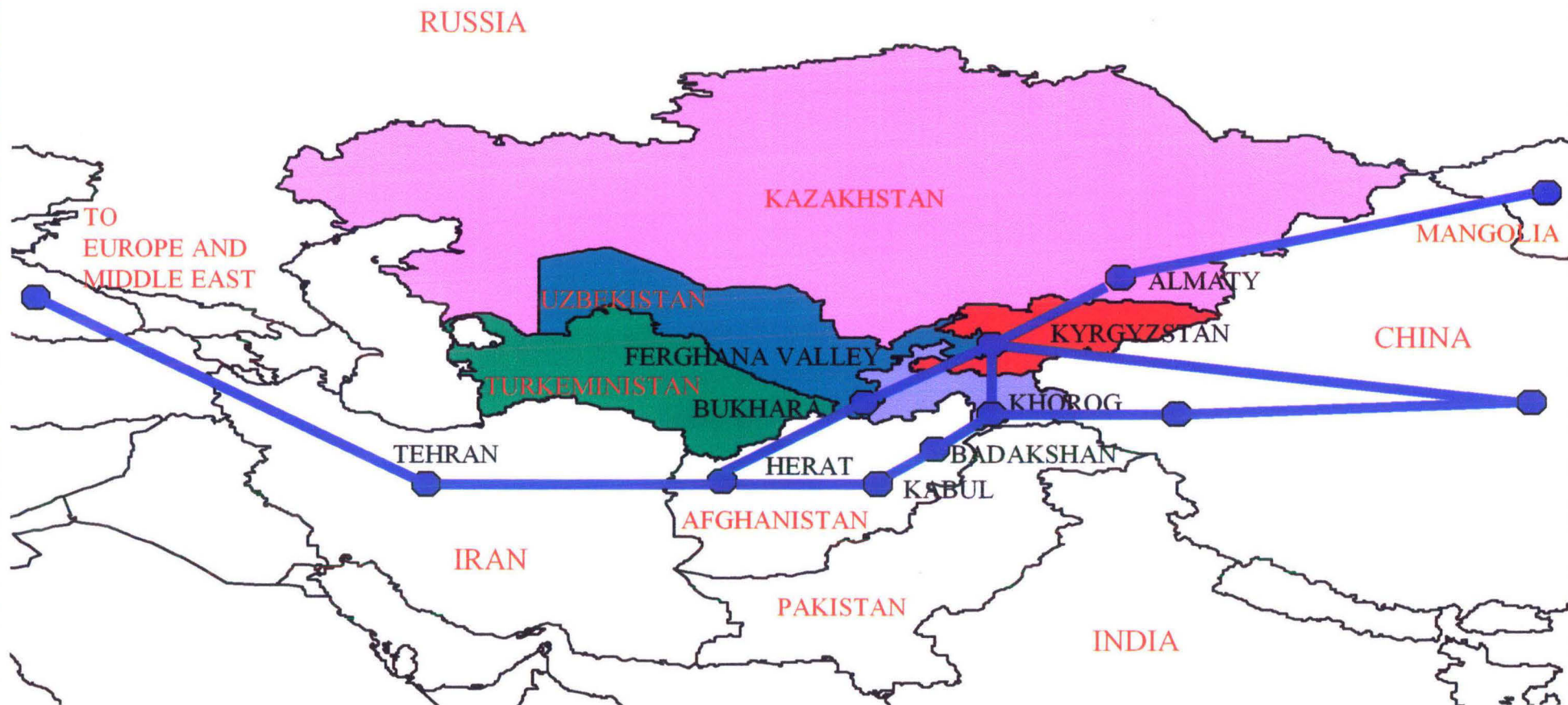
President Akaev of Kyrgyzstan has been a strong crusader in the war against drugs. He has understood the magnitude of the problem at hand and has initiated several anti-drug proposals and measures. In September 1998, he presented his views at the Central Asian Heads of state meeting at Baku, where he introduced his concept of the revival of the Great Silk Road (*Refer Map No. 5.1*). The Silk Road Diplomacy doctrine represents a general road map for the region and cooperation among regional states. In March 1999, Kyrgyzstan was elected to the UN Commission on Drug Control. In the spirit of the UN Political Declaration of 1998, which presupposes the reduction of the world supply and demand of narcotics by 2008, President Akaev used the occasion of an international conference held in Bishkek in May 1999 to propose that all countries of the Great Silk Road create drug-free zones by the beginning of the third millennium⁶. He stressed on the fact that close cooperation, both regional and international, was needed to tackle this problem.

Kyrgyzstan had initiated anti-narcotic measures mostly in the military and political sectors. Steps have been taken to strengthen anti-drug trafficking laws. In April 1998, Kyrgyzstan was the first country in Central Asia to pass a law on 'drugs, illicit narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors' based on the UN anti-drug conventions of 1961, 1971, and 1988 to which Kyrgyzstan is a signatory.

⁵ Martha Brill Olcott and Natalia Udalova, (2000), "Drug Trafficking on the Great Silk Road: The Security Environment in Central Asia", *Working Papers*, Russian and Eurasian Program, No. 11, p. 19.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 19.

GREAT SILK ROUTE



500 0 500 1000 1500 Kilometers



MAP NO.5.1

Kyrgyzstan, along with Kazakhstan was the first to acknowledge drug trafficking as a severe menace. With the cooperation of international organizations, they initiated anti-drug measures to combat this menace. The measures include the formation of several regional bodies to tackle this issue. In June 2003, Kyrgyzstan established the new Drug Control Agency (DCA) on the basis of the previous State Commission for Drugs Control. The UNODC had provided more than \$6 million for its formation⁷. DCA is a coordinating governmental agency. It is the chief body coordinating activities of all agencies combating illegal drug trafficking. The DCA chiefly includes law enforcements agents and researchers and is funded by UNODC, the US and Kyrgyz governments. Its main task is to combat transnational criminal groups involved in regional and international drug trafficking activities. Its new criminal code includes the death penalty for large-scale drug trafficking.

The government has also tried to make reforms at other levels by introducing strict laws. In July 2002, Kyrgyzstan passed a law on banks and banking operations, which imposes a general ban on the use of the accounts for criminal purposes⁸. In 2003 Kyrgyzstan ratified the U.N. Convention against Transnational Organized Crime which obliges the signatories to abide to the convention which includes articles on money laundering, and legalization of the criminal proceeds.

Other initiatives include the strengthening of porous borders which have facilitated illicit drug trafficking over the years. These initiatives were carried out with the cooperation of other CARs. This included setting up customs and control posts and erecting barriers and fences along the borders. Another measure has been an increase in border control, including the erection of electric fences to seal territory from traffickers. In January 2004 two checkpoints were built on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border as a part of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) project on strengthening drug interdiction capabilities⁹. This provision however has several loopholes as the officers employed at these check posts, being mostly corrupt, do not help much to fight the cause.

⁷ Antoine Blua (2003), *Central Asia: Is Assistance enough to tackle drug trafficking?* p.10. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/news/2003>.

⁸ Maral Madi (2004), *Country Fact Sheets, Eurasian Narcotics, Kyrgyzstan*, p.1, <http://www.silkroadstudies.org>.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.1.

Kyrgyzstan has also tried to combat the evil of corruption that has been the stigma of the region's anti-drug measures. In 2003, Kyrgyzstan became the "pilot" country in the project under the Rome agreement, under which Kyrgyzstan requested assistance from the international organizations to fight corruption. Under the auspices of OSCE nearly €300,000 were allocated in 2003 to train police in Bishkek, Osh, and other areas to work with dogs trained to detect drugs smuggled from Afghanistan¹⁰.

V. 3 OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Various military, political and economic organizations in Central Asia have formulated regional policies to promote anti-narcotics efforts in this region. The chief among these are: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Economic Cooperation Organization, and Central Asian Community.

V.3.1 THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which claims to be an economic organization and an arena for security issues consists of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Regular meetings of the heads of these states were held in Shanghai, Moscow, Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe and Tashkent between 1996 and 2004. It was formerly known as the Shanghai Five group, but with the accession of Uzbekistan its name was changed in June 2001. The main issues on its agenda include dealing with terrorism, organized crime, the drug trade and arms and human trafficking. In April 1996 in Shanghai the members signed an Agreement on Enhancing Trust in the Military sphere in Border Areas. This agreement is highly significant, not only for the security of the SCO members but also for peace and security in Asia and worldwide. At the summit held in Bishkek on 25 August 1999 the Bishkek Declaration was adopted, article 6 of which states that the members support President Akaev's "Diplomacy of the Silk Road" doctrine regarding economic development, and the maintenance of peace and stability. In the same declaration the parties emphasized the importance of the effective countering of terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal migration and other forms of transnational organized crime, as well as separatism and religious extremism.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.1.

The parties also acknowledged the fact that with regional cooperation and joint efforts these evils can be tackled. In June 2004 at the regular meeting of heads of member states in Tashkent, the Agreement on Cooperation in Countering Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors was signed. The Collective Security Treaty (1992) was renamed into the CST Organization in April 2003. Currently, this organization consists of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. It was founded with the aim to promote peace, international and regional security, stability, and the collective defense of independence, territorial integrity, and the sovereignty of member states. The organization employs a wide range of means for countering international terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and other threats. Among these are the activities of specific law enforcement agencies, the collective rapid deployment forces in Central Asia and other mechanisms¹¹.

V.3.2 CENTRAL ASIAN ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CAEC)

The Central Asian Organization for Economic Cooperation (CAEC) was founded in early 1994 by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and later admitting Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It was the premier regional organization concerned with economic cooperation in Central Asia. Although the central goal of the CAEC was economic integration, the geopolitical situation forced this alliance to include discussions on regional security, including drug control issues. Thus, on 5 April 1996 an agreement between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on cooperation in combating trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their abuse was concluded. Within the framework of the CAEC, the Interstate Drug Control Commission (IDCC) was established. On Kyrgyzstan's initiative, the first session of the IDCC was held in Bishkek in September 1999.

Unfortunately, due to various reasons, such as a lack of resources, many of the decisions made at these sessions have not been implemented. Moreover, three members made major structural and administrative reorganizations: the Tajik and Kyrgyz State Commissions on Drug Control were transformed into Drug Control Agencies with extended mandates and the Kazakh State Commission was transformed into the

¹¹ Kairat Osmonaliev, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

Committee on Combating Drugs under the Interior Ministry. It is understandable that organizations with different status experience difficulties in conducting joint activities. Several other reasons have undermined the potential for regional cooperation between drug control agencies in Central Asia. Due to its inefficiency, CAEC was abandoned and on 28 April 2002 in Almaty the heads of the respective states signed a treaty to establish the Central Asian Community (CAC).

There were several political and economic reasons for the liquidation of the CAEC but the major one was the differing levels of economic development of its members and the ensuing difference in members' interests. At most sessions the CAC discusses drug-related issues. At its last meeting, on 28 May 2004 in Astana, Kazakhstan, the Presidents exchanged opinions on the situation and the prospects for regional integration towards strengthening security in Central Asia, combating international terrorism, extremism and organized crime, trafficking in weapons and drugs, illegal migration, and the situation in Afghanistan.

V.3.3 ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was founded in 1985 as a trilateral organization by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the promotion of multilateral regional cooperation to facilitate sustainable economic growth in member states. It was later joined by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan joined in 1992. The organization became a unified structure and has an observer status at the UN and in the WTO. On 15 March 1995 ECO and UNODC signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in drug control. In 1996 in Ashgabat the Council of Ministers adopted the ECO Action Plan on the control of illicit drug trafficking, which calls for the creation of a Drug Control Coordination Unit (DCCU). The chief aim of this unit was the development and implementation of programs strengthening national law enforcement agencies and facilitating their cooperation in consultation with UNODC and other relevant institutions. On March 5th 1998 in Vienna the UNODC project "Assistance in creation of ECO Secretariat Drug Control Coordination Unit" was signed. The project aims to promote the coordination of counter-narcotics activities in the ECO region, which will enable ECO to initiate constant

dialogue with member countries on drug control issues and consequently have an opportunity to monitor implementation of the Actions Plan. DCCU started its activities on 25 July 1999¹². Unlike the CAEC's IDCC, the DCCU has sufficient resources to carry out its activities and is funded by the UN. Drug control activities were included as priorities in the Istanbul Declaration adopted at the ECO special session in July 1993.

V.4 INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

Several international initiatives have contributed in combating the menace of drug trafficking in CARs. In the system of regional counter-narcotics policies a special role is played by international organizations such as UNODC, the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Commission and others. The UN, by far has been the most active international presence in CARs. All the CARs (except Turkmenistan) recognize the competence of the UN, its agencies and its institutions in organizing and implementing counter-narcotics programs. They all observe the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988) and the recommendations of the UN General Assembly Special Session (1998). They give high priority to the development and strengthening of international relations and cooperation within the framework of the UN, the OSCE, the ECO, and through other bilateral and multilateral mechanisms as well as with external powers such as the European Union and the United States.

V.4.1 UNITED NATION OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)

The UN has been the key organization in the counter-narcotics battle in CARs. It has played a major role right from providing monetary support to reformation of anti-drug policies. UN anti-narcotics activities in the Central Asian region started with signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Sub-regional Drug Control Cooperation in Tashkent in May 1996 between the governments of the five CARs and UNODC. Within the framework of the Memorandum, the governments expressed their desire for

¹² See website of ECO DCCU at URL: <http://www.ecodccu.org>.

cooperation to solve common problems of drug production, trafficking and abuse. The Russian Federation and the Aga Khan Development Network joined the MoU in 1998, followed by Azerbaijan in 2001, thus expanding the regional framework of drug-control cooperation.

The UNODC has also rendered its significant support to reinforce national Drug Control Agencies (DCA) in Tajikistan in 1999 and in Kyrgyzstan in 2003. Only these two countries have agencies, whereas other three CARs have commissions to combat narcotics. Among other responsibilities, the agency has the authority to develop the country's counter-narcotics policy and monitor its implementation. It is well equipped with modern equipment, possessing a solid financial base and capable of blocking the largest drug delivery channels in the country. Furthermore, it also deals with the suppression of other relevant illegal activity, especially organized crime.

In May 1994 Kyrgyzstan received \$550,000 within the framework of the UNODC Project on "Institution Building and Improvement of Control Measures in Kyrgyzstan"¹³. This budget was used to establish an Information Center under the Ministry of Interior, and for infrastructure and training. The UNODC has granted similar monetary support to other CARs for infrastructure and strategy development which aimed at combating the drug menace.

In July 1997, UNODC launched a regional project on mapping the extent of illicit cultivation of narcotic plants in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, with an overall budget of \$742,660. The main objectives of the project were to obtain detailed cartographical data on the cultivation of opium poppy and wild-growing hemp and ephedra and to develop a regional methodology and training for a group of local experts in monitoring illicit fields in the region¹⁴. The findings of this project have helped in formulating appropriate strategies.

Another UNODC regional project was "Strengthening Law Enforcement Capacities and Cross-Border Cooperation in the Central Asian Region of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan", also known as the "Osh Knot", with an overall budget of

¹³ Kairat Osmonaliev, op. cit, p. 65.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 66.

\$1.8 million¹⁵. This two-year project started in November 1997 and it primarily aimed at creating cross-border cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the neighboring provinces (Murghab in Tajikistan, Osh in Kyrgyzstan and Andizhan in Uzbekistan). It also aimed to strengthen the drug control capacity of border posts and to intensify efforts against narcotics and precursor smuggling along one of the main routes in the region. This begins at the Afghan-Tajik border and passes through Khorog, along the Khorog-Osh highway into Kyrgyzstan and then to Andijan in Uzbekistan. The counter-narcotic units were also equipped with the latest drug detection and communication equipment. Specialized training was provided to the officers. This project was however terminated in 1999 owing to its ineffectiveness and irrational use of funds.

UNODC acknowledges that drug cultivation in Afghanistan is the root of the problem. It continues to pay more attention to supply-reduction by targeting trafficking from Afghanistan. Active suppression of drug trafficking would improve the overall drug situation. The UNODC project “Precursor Control in Central Asia” (budget \$5 million) began in 2000. This project was designed to improve the legal, administrative and law enforcement capacities of the ECO member states so as to reduce illicit trafficking in precursors. There was a positive trend in the 1990s in the shipment of precursors to Afghanistan through and from the territories of the Central Asian countries. The largest seizures of precursors were made in Turkmenistan. There is evidence that processing laboratories in Afghanistan have moved to the northern areas of the country, closer to the Central Asian states, in order to ease precursor deliveries and the return transportation of the processed drugs¹⁶.

Information exchange is the most basic form of cooperation in counter-narcotics and in 2001 the UNODC started the “Strengthening of Potential of Drug Control Law Enforcement Bodies in Data and Information Gathering” project, with a budget of \$ 811,000¹⁷.

In June 2003 the UN Security Council held a session devoted to the drug situation in Afghanistan and the problem of trafficking from Afghanistan was also discussed at the G8 summit in Evian (2003). On May 21-22, 2003 the French government organized an

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 66.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 70.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 70.

international conference to discuss issues of drug trafficking from Afghanistan through Central Asia to Europe¹⁸. These events acknowledge the concern of the international community at the problem of illicit drug trafficking, drug-related organized crime and terrorism.

Another important UNODC Project which is in the pipeline, 'Central Asian Regional Information-Coordination Center' (CARICC), will further strengthen Central Asian drug control cooperation. The center is to become a regional communication agency exchanging and analyzing operational and other information on-line via a network of liaison officers. The Center will also have responsibility for organizing and coordinating joint operations. It is also supposed to be another node in the network of similar centers working against drug-related crime, such as Interpol, Europol etc.

The efforts made by the UN have strengthened the counter-narcotics measures in Central Asia. The bulk of its efforts have been in the direction of preventing illicit trafficking, strengthening border control, ameliorating the law enforcement capacities, strengthening drug demand-reduction policies and reducing drug supply in the Central Asian states. Right from monetary support to developing intelligence and providing training, the UN has played a significant role in helping the CARs combat the menace of drug trafficking.

V.4.2 THE ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

The OSCE has chiefly focused on establishing democratic institutions, improving stability and security and overcoming non-traditional threats to security, such as terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking. The OSCE has been active in Central Asia since 1994, when it established a mission in Tajikistan. In 1995 it extended its presence in the region and opened the Central Asian Communication Bureau in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). In 1999 OSCE began operations in Almaty (Kazakhstan), Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan). In 1996, the OSCE held a regional seminar entitled 'Drugs and Crime: New Challenges in Kyrgyzstan'. In March 2003, it held an

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 71.

international workshop on ‘National and international economic consequences of illicit drug trafficking’ in Tashkent.

OSCE and the Kyrgyz Government signed a MoU in August 2003 to launch a Police Assistance Program. Under this program, the DCA of Kyrgyzstan was allocated euro 300,000 in 2003 to train police personnel in Bishkek, Osh and other areas to work with dogs trained to detect drugs smuggled from Afghanistan. In January 2004 two checkpoints were built on the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border as a part of the OSCE project on strengthening of drug interdiction capacities¹⁹.

The OSCE and UNODC had also organized a joint international conference on ‘Enhancing Security and Stability in Central Asia: an Integrated Approach to Counter Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism’ in Tashkent in October 2000. It is also engaged in promoting regional exchanges of experience and information.

The contribution of OSCE though not so major as the UN, still has helped the counter-narcotics measures of the governments. It has become a catalyst for change in Central Asia’s political processes.

V.4.3 EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

The counter-narcotic measures of the European Union are chiefly implemented by the UN agencies in Central Asia. The chief anti-narcotics initiatives of the EU are Central Asia Drug Control Programme (CADAP) and Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA).

The CADAP covers all the five CARs. It commenced in January 2001. It is budgeted at €11 million and is a part of the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004)²⁰. It consists of two phases (CADAP-1 and CADAP-2). The budget for the first phase was about €3 million and it aimed at supplying the major airports and seaports with drug control equipment and providing training to law enforcement agents on the use of these equipments. Through this step it has tried to control drug interdiction through airports and seaports. CADAP has also equipped training rooms – one example is in the Kyrgyz State

¹⁹ Maral Madi, op. cit, p 267.

²⁰ Maral Madi, (2005), “How effective is international anti-narcotics cooperation in Central Asia?” p. 10. www.silkroadstudies.org.

Commission on Drug Control²¹. Through the National Anti-Drug Information Network (NADIN), which was a database created by the UNDP; it was intended to create regional information systems of free-for-all data on drug addiction basically by providing computer equipment, internet access and fostering connections between experts.

The CADAP-2 consists of a series of projects based on bringing about reforms at the administrative, judicial, intelligence, health and security levels²²:

- “Assistance in Legal Support of Counter-narcotics Policy”, which is designed to bring about judicial and institutional reforms as a bid to increase the efficiency of legal drug-related proceedings.
- “Control of Land Borders”, aims to equip approximately five border checkpoints.
- “Control in seaports and airports” is to establish drug control checkpoints in regional airports and seaports with the equipment provided by CADAP-1.
- “Training of police dogs” is to strengthen the potential of law-enforcement, border and customs services by providing them with sniffer dogs.
- “Improvement of information support to combat drug trafficking” will focus on improving law enforcement information systems in their collection, analysis and exchange of confidential data.
- “Preventive measures in prisons” is aimed at drug addiction prevention in correctional institutions.

The European Union’s Border Management Program for Central Asia (BOMCA) program started in April 2003. The various border disputes between the CARs and poorly-guarded, ill-equipped borders are the chief factors that have facilitated drug trafficking in Central Asia. This project aims to assist the CARs in effective administration of their borders in order to strengthen capabilities of CARs to fight illicit trafficking in drugs, human beings, and arms. The program is funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by UNDP. It is divided into three phases that include thirteen projects. The European Commission allocated € 1.5 million from its Rapid

²¹ Kairat Osmonaliev, *op.cit*, p. 74.

²² *Ibid*, p. 74.

Reaction budget for border management activities. The program will receive in total of € 23.5 million over the next three years²³.

V.4.4 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

Post 9/11 the US has taken a keen interest in the drug trafficking situation of Central Asia as it has recognized that drug trafficking is a potential security threat as the nexus between narcotics and drugs is quite deep. In order to tackle the issue of international terrorism it has to first tackle the drug trafficking situation. As a result, the U.S government initiated the signature of an Agreement on Drug Control and Mutual Legal Assistance with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in December 2001. The Agreement was approved by the decree of the Government of Kyrgyzstan on December 14, 2001 (№481-0) and provided the legal basis for cooperation in counter-narcotics. The purpose of this agreement is to help in the detection and combating of narcotics trafficking across the borders of Kyrgyzstan. The total budget of the initial grant was US\$350,000 and another US\$100,000 was allocated for equipment at a specific customs checkpoint. This checkpoint is strategically located on a juncture of three roads most frequently used by smugglers in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan, and should serve as an effective barrier to the drug flow from Afghanistan²⁴.

Kyrgyz and Tajik Drug Control Agency are financed on funds allocated by the American Government to UNODC. The DCA is structurally similar to the U.S Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and hence it was decided that the management should be carried out by a former DEA officer. The U.S has been the most active international power cooperating with the CARs in the sphere of counter-narcotics, either directly or indirectly (through UNODC).

The U.S. Department of State has launched several projects related to security issues to facilitate anti-narcotics combat in Central Asia, namely Anti-Crime Training and Technical Assistance (ACTTA) and the Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (EXBS) programs. The ACTTA program aims to improve bilateral enforcement cooperation, exchange information, fight against terrorism, narcotics

²³ www.eu-bomca.org/en/areas/overview

²⁴ Ibid, p. 76.

trafficking, and organized crime. The EXBS program aims to enhance the capabilities of border guards and customs agencies²⁵. America's cooperation with the regional states is more important as it provides long-term institution-building rather than short-term projects.

V.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Interventions made by both regional and international organizations although have contributed in interdicting the menace of drug trafficking and its severe consequences, have not been completely successful. As seen in this chapter several regional bodies have initiated cooperative mechanisms in order to increase regional cooperation and integration. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) have played a significant role in strengthening the security of this region. All these organizations and initiatives have instigated efforts to address the issue of drug trafficking. Likewise, numerous other memoranda and agreements between the regional states also aim at providing security and stability.

Of all the international initiatives the UNODC has played a major role in combating this evil. The chief contribution has been the formation of DCAs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These DCAs have played a major role in the building of strong anti-drug strategies and also in the implementation of the norms and rules set out by the UN in its three drug conventions to which Kyrgyzstan is a signatory. The financial and strategic support provided by the US has also facilitated the anti-drug attempts in this region. The EU has also contributed through its innovative border management programs.

Therefore, international cooperation is not only a necessary condition for countering drug trafficking and organized crime, but it is also an important preventive instrument. To achieve the effective mitigation of the problems of drug trafficking and abuse, organized crime, and terrorism, economic growth must be a priority, including a central role for the development of infrastructure and devised social programs.

²⁵ www.soros.org/initiatives/ihrd/articles_publications/publications/20020901/hrn_fall2002.pdf (21 May 2004).

CHAPTER-SIX
SUMMARY
AND
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER- SIX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Central Asian Republics are precariously placed between Afghanistan - the world's largest producer of illicit opium and Russia as well as Western Europe - the largest consumer markets of opium. These republics are located close to the 'Golden Crescent', which has access via China to countries from the 'Golden Triangle'. These two regions have been world's largest producers of illicit opium. The Central Asian Republics with their long borders with China is both a place of demand and supply. It offers a major market for satisfying the demand of drugs and at the same time acts as a supplier for drugs like ephedrine, which is legal in China but illegal in the rest of the world. This proximity has proved to be very dangerous for the social and political well-being of Kyrgyzstan and other Central Asian Republics to the extent that today Central Asia is on the verge of being declared a narcotic state!

As seen in figure no. 1.3, in the first chapter, the region is favored as a transit territory due to a number of factors. Prior to the disintegration of Soviet Union, the problem of drug trafficking was not of such a major concern. The region was still not in a state to adjust to their new found independence. These states had been dependent economically and politically on Russia. They did not have independent revenue-building sources like industries or agriculture. But with the disintegration, the regions were suddenly left alone to stand and support themselves. The administrative reins of these states were not in strong hands. This resulted in a situation of lawlessness and chaos both politically and at a social level. With a rich resource base and major mineral reserves, the region's resource utilization remained incomplete. They could not be utilized to the benefit of people due to lack of stability at the administrative level. As a result of this, these newly-founded states had to depend on other countries for their economic support. The prevailing chaos gave an opportunity for the drug dealers to exploit the socio-economic and political situation existing in the Central Asian Republics.

Earlier the Afghan drugs were mainly transported via Middle-East. Chapter two shows how there has been a shift of trafficking routes from Middle-East to Central Asia. With the governments of these countries enforcing strict anti-narcotic measures, it became more and more difficult for drug trafficking through this region. The political instability

and social decay in the Central Asian region proved to be a blessing in disguise for the drug traders. They stuck to this region instantly and this became an ideal transit territory for the drug dealers. Also they had the choice of various trafficking routes which were mostly rugged and inhabited like the routes passing through Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan shares a long and poorly guarded border with Tajikistan. Tajikistan is the gateway through which Afghan drugs enter Central Asia. This is further exacerbated by the unresolved border disputes between different countries of the Central Asian Republics. The climate of the Kyrgyzstan works to their advantage. In winter the borders which are on a high altitude are very difficult to patrol. The area is unfit for agriculture or industry. It is very thinly populated. The rugged mountainous terrains, poorly-guarded borders, climate of the region and the socio-economic condition of the people of this region have provided the drug traffickers a perfect transit territory on a golden platter. The findings of chapter three reveal how easy it has been for the drug traffickers to transit drug through the territory of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. All the Central Asian Republics are members of the Commonwealth of Independent states (CIS). This has further facilitated the drug trafficking, since it ensures visa-free travel. There are also various bilateral trade agreements between these countries. As a result drugs are easily transported across these countries to Russia.

The greatest devastating factor has been the social condition of the people of this region. The figures (3.2) and tables (3.2, 3.3) in chapter three show how high rates of poverty and unemployment have compelled people to move towards drug trafficking in order to sustain them. Cultivation and trafficking of drugs has become a means of survival for this economically crippled region. The money transaction to even the last person in the drug chain is of extreme significance. The value-upgradation figure (1.2) in the introductory chapter shows how the value of drugs increases by leaps and bounds as it moves from origin to destination. Though the farmers and traffickers receive a very small proportion of the total transaction, it is enough for one to survive and sustain. The upshot of this value upgradation is that the money from this illicit drug trade is not invested for the development of Afghanistan or CARs, rather it is invested in carrying out clandestine

activities like terrorism and arms trafficking. This money is being used by nonstate groups and drug mafias to further their selfish and radical motives.

Another ugly tentacle of drug trafficking is corruption. The per capita income in Kyrgyzstan being low, even the government officials are always on the look out for opportunities to make a little more money. In such a situation the lucrative drug trade attracts all giving rise to the menace of corruption. As revealed by the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) figure (3.1) of chapter three, all the Central Asian Republics are among the highly corrupt states. Kyrgyzstan ranks the second highest corrupt state in Central Asia. Drug money has been used to bribe custom officials, law-enforcement officials, border guards and other ant-narcotics officials. Several instances of the officials being caught red-handed have been reported. They allow major shipments of drugs to cross barriers unhindered. Several diplomats have also been caught carrying drugs themselves. There has also been some evidence of the involvement of the military in this trade. This has eroded the social institutions and has left all attempts by the government and other international organizations a futile exercise. Exacerbating and deepening of governmental corruption causes political instability. The lack of economic alternatives, high unemployment and extremely low salaries has encouraged many people to get entrapped in the drug trade.

Government needs to reconsider its policy and adopt stricter measures. Severe punishments need to be meted out to the corrupt officials. Corruption has penetrated the roots of administration and political institutions. Transparency of the administration and political involvement and commitment of the common public is the immediate need of the hour.

The impact of drug trafficking on the society of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs has been quite debilitating as seen in chapter three. With deeply entrenched corruption, there has not been much development in this region. The common public has borne the brunt of the drug trade in terms of health and security. The youth of the society especially was the worst affected. The data (figure nos. 3.3, 3.4) show growing levels of drug addicts and

HIV cases in Kyrgyzstan. These have been an offshoot of the illicit drug trade. Drug traders lure the youth of the region into trafficking drugs across the region. For a petty amount the youth are easily lured. Not only this, they also become drug addicts themselves. The large number of injecting drug users (IDUs) proves a shocking percentage of young people as addicts in the region. Along the trafficking routes presence of drug addiction and HIV cases show a high positive correlation. Drug trade and trafficking has made drugs easily accessible to the common people. Drug users in Central Asia choose to inject heroin, often sharing and exchanging needles and syringes leading to a sharp increase in HIV among IDUs. Ignorance has been the main contributor for this increase.

It can be derived from figure 3.5 and table 3.5 that addiction leads to an increase in petty crimes, like theft, burglary and kidnappings. Traffickers often resort to petty crime in order to force people into trafficking of drugs or for their protection. The youth of this region are vulnerable and are most susceptible to crime and drugs. From petty crime, they are induced into bigger terrorist activities. Poverty, unemployment and the mistrust in the government has ended up in frustration. Thus the youths, who are volatile and vulnerable, becomes an easy prey for crime and other criminal activities. The insurgent groups recruit young people providing them easy money for performing criminal activities. The youth thus gets employment and the traffickers and terrorist groups get recruits.

Women are increasingly drawn into the drug trade as agents or couriers. A great deal of smuggling in Central Asia is done by women who are compelled or convinced by hook or by crook. It can be concluded from chapter three that with women entering the drug scene the framework of family life becomes under constant pressure and threat. Women usually hold the reins of the household and hence it affects not only their children but also the society at large. Women are used as pawns by the drug traffickers. Women can cross barriers and check-posts without attracting much attention, as they are considered vulnerable and harmless. The treatment meted out to women is usually on sympathetic grounds. It has also been a common strategy to sacrifice female traffickers who carry small amounts to get larger shipments through. They are often willing for a lower

payment than men in order to support children and family. In case of arrest, they are less likely to give up their suppliers because of a stronger desire to protect their families and they are more likely to get shorter sentences due to the court's general leniency towards women, particularly towards those with children. It is found that the involvement of women is not limited to mere trafficking, there has been an increase in the percentage of women drug users and HIV infected women. From the previous chapters it has been deduced that the increase in women traffickers and addicts is directly connected to the issue of human trafficking. Attempts are on to make the women a drug addict first before they are sold on to the west as prostitutes.

Drug trafficking has wreaked havoc in the public health sector. The effects of drug abuse go far beyond the individuals concerned and cause incalculable harm to the health of a society and its economy. The rise in the number of women and youth as traffickers is also as a result of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Women play a pivotal role in the family structure. Drug trafficking has further degraded the judicial system and has undermined the government's ability to provide order and justice. Drug trade has hampered democratization. Government efforts for reforms are prevented by the presence of drug trade. It affects the economy by encouraging money laundering and small-time investments. These investments are chiefly aimed at hiding drug profits and to convert them into legal profits. The illegal money is then invested into legal industries thereby making the economy extremely criminalized. Drug trafficking further affects the growth of legal industries.

Common people are attracted to drug cultivation and trafficking because of getting rich instantly. A kilogram of drugs versus a kilogram of wheat has a vast gap in terms of monetary returns. As a result it is very difficult to convince the farmers not to cultivate drugs. Creating economic alternatives with quick rich dividends need to be worked out. Huge profits that are reaped in the drug industry unfortunately are not invested in the development of the country, but in other criminal activities. The money from drug trafficking is also laundered internationally and invested into legal markets. The lack of legal industrial output brings in less revenue in taxes, thereby throwing the entire burden on the government. The economy of the region therefore gets completely dependent on drug money making the political system weak. A weak state is vulnerable

to political threats and instability. Where the administrative, financial, legal and political institutions are frail, corruption and money laundering pose a serious threat and hamper the transition to democracy. The government and the civil society need to work in close coordination, to make stronger democratic administration.

With globalization the world has become a global village. The demarcating lines between countries, economies, commodities and people have blurred and intertwined. The repercussions of a single event at one place are reverberated at another place. Drug trafficking constitutes one of the largest sources of illegal proceeds. It has created a strong financial base for terrorist organizations to conduct illegal traffic in arms. The international drug trade comes second to arms industry in terms of profit. The drug money is mostly invested in the acquisition of illegal arms by terrorists. The drug-terror combination is a dangerous alliance. It poses the greatest threat to the world. It has no particular national identity and knows no frontiers. It has become a global industry.

Drug trafficking is not just *a* cause of other forms of crime, but that it is *the* main force behind major security threats such as arms trafficking, extortion, kidnapping, and the prevalence of armed groups. These things take a damaging toll on public confidence in their government's ability to provide security and stability. The successes of traffickers in using violence as a motivator further breeds fear and instability within societies. The terrorists under the guise of a radical ideal recruit people who are already frustrated due to a lack of opportunity and poor prospects for advancement under prevailing political and economic conditions. In the absence of effective interest-based parties, political Islamic groups like IMU and *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* have filled the void. They have been able to exploit the poverty and unemployment of people in the drug-dependent economic states.

Central Asia has huge reserves of minerals and natural resources. The government should use this asset to their advantage by setting up industries and improving the infrastructure. This will in turn create more employment for the people and stop the youth from drifting towards the illegal path of drug trade. In this way it will also contribute to the growth of legal economy.

UN-sponsored anti-narcotic programs have so far been unable to extirpate the growth of drug trafficking to Western Europe through Russia and the Central Asian Republics. Both production and trafficking of drugs are intricately linked to the demand

of drugs. The high demand from the West induces growth and trafficking of drugs from Afghanistan and Central Asia. The increase of production and trafficking of opium does not only affect the development, political stability and the economies of the countries involved, but also the security, public health and the social well-being of their citizens. The availability and trafficking of drugs along the trafficking routes has devastating consequences for the public health and social conditions of the youth and women. Countries that used to be considered as transit countries are increasingly becoming major consumption areas as revealed by the statistics.

As discussed different attempts made by both regional and international organizations no doubt contributed in interdicting the menace of drug trafficking and its severe consequences, but it has not been yet achieved the desired results. Several regional bodies have initiated cooperative mechanisms in order to increase regional cooperation and integration. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) have played a significant role in strengthening the security of this region. All these organizations and initiatives have instigated nominal efforts to address drug trafficking, yet practical regional cooperation leaves much to be desired. Likewise, numerous other memoranda and agreements between the regional states aim at providing security and stability.

Of all the international initiatives the UNODC has played a major role in combating this evil. The chief contribution has been the formation of Drug Control Agencies (DCA) in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These DCAs are formed on the framework of international drug control bodies like the one in US. These DCAs have played a major role in the building of strong anti-drug strategies and also in the implementation of the norms and rules set out by the UN in its three drug conventions to which Kyrgyzstan is a signatory. Post 9/11 the US has shown a keen interest in the drug scenario in Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. The financial and strategic support provided by the US has also facilitated the anti-drug attempts in this region. The EU has also contributed through its innovative border management programs. The porous borders of Kyrgyzstan and other CARs have been a major hurdle for anti-drug authorities. The support provided by EU has been significant as the CARs were lacking the know-how of border management.

Reforms need to be made not only at the political, military and economic levels, but also at the grass-root levels of the society. There is also an urgent need to make reforms in the health sector and facilitate the rehabilitation of drug addicts. The socio-economic standard needs to be uplifted in order to bring awareness among the locals. Education and employment opportunities need to be created so that the youth does not get lured into illicit trafficking. Central Asia needs to reform its political and social structures, which can be facilitated by regional and international cooperation.

The realities of globalization and the accompanying shift in threat perception from the national to the international level has meant that cooperation between countries of the region and the wider international community is the need of the hour for keeping the situation within the control. Therefore, international cooperation becomes even more significant as it is a preventive measure in addition to countering drug trafficking and organized crime. Every country must recognize their vulnerability to transnational criminal organizations. To achieve the effective mitigation of the problems of drug trafficking and abuse, organized crime and terrorism, economic growth must be a priority, including a central role for the development of infrastructure and devised social programs. It is obvious today that each dose consumed by drug addicts somewhere in London or Moscow feeds more money into acts of terror against their compatriots. But now that drug trafficking is becoming the main source of finance for terrorists, it is important to realize that drug addiction is not merely a human tragedy but also a crime against the state.

The border between the two worlds is ever more porous, with terror suspects now often imprisoned on multiple charges, both as a criminal and a terrorist. This poses significant challenges to law enforcement agencies, which have traditionally targeted terrorism and criminality separately. The two together, i.e., terrorism and drug trafficking exact a tremendous cost from the society. In order to combat the troika of the terrorist, organized crime, and narcotics trafficking threat there has to be a reshuffle in the anti-narcotics and anti-terrorist policies. International cooperation should target major drug traffickers by combating money laundering, terrorism, arms trafficking and corruption. Governments need to rethink their anti-drug enforcement measures in order to ensure a peaceful environment in the state. They need to consolidate agencies dealing with drugs to

ensure consistent policies and develop a wider range of anti-drug strategies, including harm reduction and anti-poverty programs.

Empowering and instructing law enforcement agencies to cooperate with their counterparts in neighboring states, will give a boost to regional cooperation. In the health sector, the government should cease treating drug users and HIV-infected individuals as criminals, pass anti-discrimination laws, and carry out public education programs to change attitudes. It should make harm reduction measures such as needle exchanges and methadone therapy a top priority to reduce the threat of HIV. The Central Asian nations should step up regional cooperation by making it clear that combating drugs is an essential component of the fight against terrorism and a vital part of efforts to stabilize the region. Lastly, they should consider, when designing anti-drugs programs, the impact on human rights, the repressive capacity of regimes, the impact on women, the poor and the risks to minorities.

The regional geography, porous borders, organizational chaos, local conflicts and wide-scale corruption are among the main factors that have contributed to the explosion of drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan and other CARs. It has exacted huge cost from the society. It has been a two-way process. Initially it was the existing pathetic socio-economic condition and political chaos of the region that motivated drug trafficking in this region and on the other hand due to drug trafficking, the socio-economic and political condition of the region has worsened further. Its impact on the health of the population further anticipates an HIV explosion in the future. If proper anti-drug measures are not enforced at the earliest, then Central Asia will have the problem of drug production and consumption on its hands—which shall be more devastating.

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