

TAJIKISTAN: THE RISE OF A NARCO-STATE

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Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan has experienced an extraordinary and devastating expansion of opiate trafficking and consumption. While heroin was virtually unknown in the country up to the mid-1990s and opium was produced and consumed locally only to a modest degree, in less than a decade Tajikistan has become a key transit country for Afghan opiates bound north- and westwards, at the same time as it has witnessed a rapid growth of domestic heroin use. Tajikistan now rivals Afghanistan for the unenviable title of the country most dependent on the illicit drug industry, with the opiate industry adding at least 30% to the recorded gross domestic product. The opiate trade is so important economically that it corrupts the whole political system. This article therefore argues that since the mid-1990s Tajikistan has become a narco-state, in which leaders of the most powerful trafficking groups occupy high-ranking government positions and misuse state structures for their own illicit businesses.

INTRODUCTION

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan has experienced an extraordinary and devastating expansion of opiate trafficking and consumption. Until the mid-1990s, heroin was virtually unknown in the country, and other opiates were not major sources of concern. But, in less than a decade, Tajikistan has become a key transit country for Afghan opiates bound north- and westwards and a major heroin consumer.

As a result of the skyrocketing development of the illicit opiate industry (and the collapse of the legitimate economy in the 1990s), significant groups within the Tajik population have become dependent on the revenues of the illicit opiate trade. Tajikistan now rivals Afghanistan in being the country most dependent on the illicit

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drug industry. As shown by detailed calculations made elsewhere (Paoli, Greenfield, & Reuter, 2008, forthcoming), it is unlikely that opiate trafficking adds less than 30% to the recorded gross domestic product (GDP).¹ The opiate trade is so important economically that it is central to the political system, which even a decade later is still recovering from five years of bloody civil war. Indeed, the worrying hypothesis this article supports is that, since the mid-1990s, Tajikistan has effectively become a “narco-state,” in which leaders of the most powerful trafficking groups occupy high-ranking government positions and misuse state structures for their own illicit businesses. Coupled with the ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies, this superimposition has led to the emergence and consolidation of relatively large and integrated drug trafficking enterprises controlling an increasing share of the drug-trafficking market—a rare event in the illicit drug industry, signaling lax or nonenforcement of prohibitions against production and trafficking (for comparison, see Paoli et al., 2008, forthcoming).

The first section of the article singles out the main factors prompting the very rapid growth of the illicit opiate industry in Tajikistan. The second pinpoints the main phases of growth and the progressive involvement of ever more regions of the country in the opiate trade. The third section provides a typology of drug trafficking enterprises, showing the growing relevance of large and integrated smuggling enterprises, which are headed by civil war commanders turned politicians. The article ends with a brief discussion of the connection between heroin trafficking and Islamic movements.

This article is part of a larger research project on the world opiate market;² it draws on a detailed report on opiate trafficking prepared by the Analytical Center of the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan (DCA, 2004), a specialized law enforcement agency, which was founded in 1999 and has since been working with the financial support and guidance from the United Nations Drug and Crime Control Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDCP/UNODC). It also rests on a candid report of an experienced and high-ranking Tajik law enforcement officer who carried out detailed field observations and interviews with over 20 of his colleagues specifically for the study but has adopted a pseudonym for fear of retaliation (Khamonov, 2005). As far as possible, the data drawn from Tajik sources have been cross-checked with interviews with officers of international agencies stationed in Tajikistan, secondary sources, and, in particular, through an extensive analysis of English- and Russian-speaking media in Russia and Central Asia.³

THE EXPANSION OF THE ILLICIT OPIATE INDUSTRY: EXPLANATORY FACTORS

Several interrelated geopolitical factors help explain the exceptional expansion of the illicit opiate industry in Tajikistan since the early 1990s, most prominent

among them are geographical proximity and ethnic ties with Afghanistan, the civil war and its aftermath, state failure and the rise of warlords, the problem of border control, corruption, and migration.

GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY AND ETHNIC TIES WITH AFGHANISTAN

The first and perhaps most obvious factor of note is Tajikistan's geographical proximity to Afghanistan, the world's largest supplier of illicit opiates. Tajikistan's southern edge and Afghanistan's northern edge abut, creating a porous border of over 1,200 kilometers. The development of illicit opiate exchanges between the two countries was also facilitated by the common ethnic identities and clan ties of the people, broadly known as "Tajik," living on the two sides of the border. The term Tajik is used locally in both Afghanistan and Tajikistan as a generic expression to indicate the Persian-speaking population and covers a number of groups, which are perceived as distinct by their members. The groups call themselves by regional names, such as Panshiri, Darwazi, or Rāghi, and straddle the Tajik-Afghan border on the river Pyanj (Centlivres & Centlivres-Demont, 1998).

THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS ECONOMIC AFTERMATH

The devastation of the Tajik legitimate economy, which followed the implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent civil war in Tajikistan, provided strong incentives to get involved in the illicit opiate industry. Though it reached its height in 1992, the conflict lasted five years, claiming 50,000 lives and displacing almost one fifth of the country's total population of six million. As a result of the war, natural calamities, and the collapse of economic relations with former Soviet republics, Tajikistan's GDP was 57% lower in 1998 than in 1990. With a per capita GDP of only \$180, it had then—as it has now—the lowest per capita GDP of all the countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).⁴ Today, Tajikistan's per capita GDP is still only about \$290, valued at the official exchange rate and \$1,300, valued in terms of purchasing power parity (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2007).

Given the enduring economic crisis, the temptation to become involved in narcotics-related transactions remains high for large sections of society. Reports of Tajik and foreign law enforcement agencies and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as interviews with both illicit opium traders and law enforcement officers concur in showing that by the late 1990s many tens of thousands of individuals were benefiting from the drug trade (Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan [DCA], 2000; U.S. Department of State, 2005).

STATE FAILURE AND THE RISE OF WARLORDS

The civil war also prompted a complete state failure, thus further enhancing Tajikistan's advantage in becoming a key transit country for Afghan opiates. According to Kirill Nourzhanov (2005, p. 117), the Tajikistan of 1992 resembled the Lebanon of 1975, where "the government does not exist, and whatever part of it exists has no authority, and whoever has authority it is not the government" (see also Zviagelskaya, 1997). Since then, the government of Emomali Rakhmonov, who was elected Chairman of the Supreme Soviet in late 1992 and President of Tajikistan two years later, has made considerable progress in restoring statehood and reestablishing central authority. However, the government personnel and operational procedures are still patrimonial and dominated by interests of a particular regional elite and its changing allies, which leaves them prey to corruption and infiltration by drug traffickers (International Crisis Group [ICG], 2004; Nourzhanov, 2005). Indeed, as we show in the last section, circumstantial evidence suggests that several high-level politicians and state officials head (or have headed) some of the country's largest drug trafficking groups.

Despite being formally included in government structures, some of these civil servants and politicians-cum-traffickers virtually remain warlords,⁵ disposing of their more or less private armies and fiefdoms. The warlords' power is itself a product of the civil war. This not merely entailed an armed struggle between pro-government (former Communist) forces and Islamist and pro-democracy groups, but was also a conflict between sub-ethnic groups of the Tajiks, who represented different regions of the country. The elites and people of Kulob and Gharm, in the south and center of the country, were protagonists of the confrontations, representing the government and the opposition, respectively. Kulobis and Gharmis were respectively aided by ethnic Uzbeks and Hissoris from western Tajikistan and Pamiris from the eastern region of Gorno Badakhshan (Nourzhanov, 2005; Shirazi, 1997).⁶

As the spiral of internal violence unfolded, a variety of more or less ideologically inspired armed groups emerged, which fought each other. Some were based on patronage and consanguineal networks, reviving the traditional custom of blood feud. Others resulted from the splitting up of the former Soviet police and military forces. Still others were veritable criminal gangs, which had engaged in illicit entrepreneurial activities and extortion since the 1980s. By the end of 1992, the real power was in the hands of warlords in most Tajik regions, and these maintained considerable influence over the government restored in late 1992. Rakhmonov's cabinet controlled only 40% of the country's territory and had to fight the now united opposition. Its only available military force was the 20,000 combatants of the People's Front of Tajikistan (PFT), which was under the warlords' command.

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Other warlords, this time from the Gharm and Badakhshan regions, the latter of which straddles the Tajik-Afghan border, were included in the government when Rakhmonov signed a peace agreement with the United Tajik Opposition in 1997. Under the terms of the “General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord,” which was brokered by the United Nations, former opposition leaders were integrated in the government and received 30% of all government positions. Further, their militias became part of the Tajik army and law enforcement agencies.

THE PROBLEM OF BORDER CONTROL

For much of the 1990s, the Tajik state agencies were unable to protect the country borders and to prevent any type of smuggling, including that of opiates (Pasotti, 1997; Zelitchenko, 1999, 2004). Though they have made considerable progress since the start of the 21st century, considerable problems still remain. As noted in the *2003 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* (U.S. Department of State, 2004, p. 462), “the Pyanj river, which forms [a long and most accessible] part of Tajikistan’s border with opium-producing Afghanistan, is thinly guarded, and difficult to patrol. It is easily crossed without inspection at a number of points” (see also McDermott, 2002).

A 1993 agreement with Russia entrusted defense of the 1,200-kilometer long border with Afghanistan to the Russian Border Forces (RBF).⁷ These operated for over a decade in Tajikistan with the support of Russia’s 201st Motorized Rifle Division. Tajik troops took over the full control of the border only in July 2005

MAP OF TAJIKISTAN



(Maitra, 2005). The Tajik forces are considered “unequal to the task” by most observers (U.S. Department of State, 2005, p. 502; ICG, 2004, pp. 17-18), and their takeover has had a negative impact on drug interdiction efforts: heroin seizure decreased by half between 2004 and 2005 (see Table 1 below). In truth, the RBF also lacked sufficient human and technical means to effectively patrol the long Tajik-Afghan border. During the civil war, in particular, many units primarily had to defend themselves from the rioting population, as they supported the Tajik government in their fight against the opposition fighters. They also had to finance their own living, as their salary was not regularly paid (Atkin, 1997; Machmadiev, 2003).

Given their meager salaries, RBF guards were prey to corruption, and, given their inadequate resources and the traffickers’ few restraints in employing violence, they could be easily intimidated (ICG, 2001b; DCA, 2000). Russian soldiers and officials were also repeatedly found to be involved in heroin smuggling attempts into Russia (DCA, 2000; Knox, 2004). Russian military planes were also occasionally used for these purposes (ICG, 2001b; Olcott & Udalova, 2000).

Tajikistan’s borders with former Soviet republics are still less effectively controlled than its border with Afghanistan. Even though Uzbekistan has repeatedly closed and even mined its border with Tajikistan for fear of importing instability, the weakness and limited means of the Tajik border guards and law enforcement agencies and, more generally, the difficulties of establishing effective border

TABLE 1
OPIATES SEIZED IN TAJIKISTAN (KILOGRAMS) 1991-2005

	<i>Opium</i>	<i>Heroin</i>
1991	1.9	-
1992	6.7	-
1993	37.9	-
1994	243.6	-
1995	1,571.4	-
1996	3,411.4	6.4
1997	3,515.5	60.0
1998	1,461.9	271.5
1999	1,269.2	708.8
2000	4,778.4	1,882.9
2001	3,664.3	4,239.1
2002	1,624.1	3,958.2
2003	2,371.3	5,600.3
2004	2,315.6	4,794.1
2005	1,104.4	2,344.6

Source: DCA, 2004; UNODC, 2007.

controls between the countries that once belonged to the former Soviet Union make the smuggling of even large lots of heroin to CIS countries a relatively low risk enterprise (Zelitchenko, 2004; Olcott & Udalova, 2000).

CORRUPTION

Corruption is not only an almost inevitable by-product of wholesale drug trafficking, but also one of its most powerful breeding grounds. In Tajikistan it existed before the development of the illicit drug industry and, as in other CIS states, flourished already in Soviet times and has been further enhanced by the post-Soviet transition (see for example Cokgezen, 2004). In Tajikistan, as in other Central Asian republics, corruption has an “Eastern” character that shows itself in three forms. First, such corruption is very closely linked to traditional social institutions and relations through family, clan, place of work, and compatriots. Even without the flow of bribes, members of the in-group are treated preferentially. Second, corruption has a hierarchical structure. The bribe taker, who has often bought his own post, is required to pass a share of his earning to the boss who helped him. In such a system there is little stigma to a functionary taking a bribe, it is improper only when he takes more than he is supposed to. According to the DCA (2000), for example, as of 2000, the position of head of the Interior Ministry Department in one of the districts bordering Afghanistan cost about \$50,000. With the bribes extorted from drug traffickers, however, the position holder can quickly earn the money paid in advance and give a share of his revenues to his superiors as well (see also ICG, 2001b). Third, moral views of corruption depend on whether it is “our” or “their” group. It is bad to take bribes from “ours” and it is permissible to take them from “theirs” (Reuter, Pain, & Greenfield, 2003).

Such “Eastern” corruption powerfully enhances Tajikistan’s advantage in the world opiate industry. Coupled with the growing means invested in corruption by drug traffickers, it also undermines the consolidation of democratic and accountable state structures. Despite the limited number of Tajik officials charged on corruption or drug offenses,⁸ Tajikistan is regarded as one of the world’s most corrupt countries (e.g., Transparency International [TI], 2005). This perception is confirmed by several high ranking Tajik law enforcement officials interviewed ad hoc for this project. As one official stated:

Nearly all law enforcement and border patrolling officers in the border districts are involved in drug trafficking. Some of them smuggle drugs into Tajikistan; others deliver drugs from border districts to other parts of the country; others still ‘open’ the border to traffickers or provide them with crucial information. In other

parts of Tajikistan the percentage of corrupted officers is lower. In my opinion, eight officers out of ten are corrupted in Dushanbe [Tajikistan's capital]. (Khamonov, 2005, p. 55; for similar assessments, see ICG, 2001b, p. 8; 15; 2001c, pp. 14-15)

Even if there might be some exaggeration in this assessment, the few criminal cases that are brought to court are enough to show the extent of drug-related corruption and the involvement of high-ranking civil servants in drug deals. In May 2000, 86 kilograms of heroin and large amounts of foreign currency were discovered in Almaty, the (then) capital of Kazakhstan, in cars belonging to the Tajik ambassador and trade representative. The latter was then convicted on drug charges, while the ambassador fled Kazakhstan ("Tajik Trade Representative," 2001). In April 1998, a former Tajik deputy defense minister was imprisoned for using a military helicopter to smuggle 89 kilograms of opium from Dushanbe to Pendjikent in the Soghd region ("Tajik drug business," 2002). Moreover, several officers of Tajik law enforcement agencies as well as diplomats have been arrested and charged in Russia and Kyrgyzstan for wholesale opiate smuggling (e.g., DCA, 2004; Sukhravardiy, 2002; Bajun, 2003). Many customs and police officials possess lavish houses and expensive cars, which they could not have bought on their salaries. This provides circumstantial evidence of law enforcement corruption (U.S. Department of State, 2005). General Nustam Nazarov (2005), and the respected director of the Tajik Drug Control Agency himself stated that "corruption in law enforcement bodies became critical and hampered drug control activity."

MIGRATION AS A SOURCE OF TRAFFICKING LINKS

Migration flows have further increased Tajikistan's competitive advantage in becoming a privileged channel for Afghan heroin bound to other CIS countries and particularly to Russia. Between 1992 and 1999 more than 600,000 people left Tajikistan (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2000). At least 60,000 of those immigrants fled into Afghanistan, a flow that not only revived common ethnic identities and clan ties (see above), but also created the basis for future transactions in opiates and other illicit commodities (DCA, 2004).

At the other end of the supply chain, the consolidation of Tajikistan's role as a key transit country for Afghan heroin has been favored by the growth of a large immigrant population in Russia, the principal destination of its heroin exports. It is estimated that over 800,000 Tajiks go back and forth between Tajikistan and Russia—about one third of Tajikistan's labor force. As former Soviet citizens, most of the Tajik citizens living in or regularly visiting Russia speak fluent Russian. Many have either a Russian passport or residence permit. Despite this, their integration

often fails, and many immigrants live in terrible conditions, some turning to drug courier services and prostitution for income (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [RFE/RL], 2003; International Organisation for Migration [IOM], 2001).

Tajikistan's advantage was powerfully multiplied by the dramatic growth of heroin demand in many countries of the former Soviet Union since its collapse in 1991. Russia, a minor consumption market in 1995, became one of the largest in the world by 2000 and today has one of the world's highest prevalence rates of opiate abuse (see Paoli, 2005; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2005). Above-average rates of heroin consumption can also be found in most Central Asian republics and eastern European countries, which are also to a large extent serviced by Afghan opiates smuggled through Tajikistan (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention [UNODCCP], 2002; UNODC, 2004).

THE PHASES OF TRAFFICKING

The interplay of the above-mentioned factors can be seen clearly in the evolution of the illicit opiate industry in Tajikistan since the early 1990s. The industry has grown rapidly in quantitative terms, but it has also undergone substantial shifts in the origin and type of opiates trafficked and in smuggling routes.

DRUG SOURCES: FROM LOCAL TO AFGHAN OPIUM

The first years following Tajikistan's independence recorded the rapid expansion of domestic illicit opium poppy cultivation, particularly in the Panjakent and Ayni districts of the Soghd (previously Leninabad) region close to the Uzbek border. By 1995 about 2,000 hectares were cultivated with opium poppy, and from 1991 to 1995 more than half of all reported drug offences involved the illegal cultivation of drugs (Khamonov, 2005).

Since 1995, however, local opium and its derivatives have been largely supplanted by cheaper and better quality opiates imported from Afghanistan. The smuggling of Afghan opiates began on a small scale as early as 1992, the first full year of independence and the first year following the expansion of opium growing into the northern regions of Afghanistan. Initially the traffic was almost exclusively of opium. This was imported mainly into the eastern, autonomous region of Gorno Badakhshan and from there was smuggled to Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In this mountainous and wild area of the country, opium—as well as other (licit and illicit) commodities—were mainly moved through the Pamir highway linking Khorog, the capital of Gorno Badakhshan to Osh in Kyrgyzstan and Andijan in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan. Despite being primarily involved in defending themselves and the families from the rioting population, in 1992 Russian border guards stationed in Khorog managed to seize the first 17 kilos of opium smuggled from Afghanistan.

Five kilos of Afghan opium were seized in the same year in Kyrgyzstan (Zelitchenko, 1999).

Around 1994, according to our research collaborator, at least 20 tons of opium were trafficked yearly from Afghanistan into Tajikistan, primarily in the Gorno Badakhshan region. This generated few criminal cases: a maximum of 53 drug offenses were recorded yearly in the region between 1992 and 1995 (Khamonov, 2005).

ENTRY POINTS: FROM EAST TO WEST

After the shift from local to Afghan opium, a second shift took place in the mid-1990s: namely, trafficking spread from Gorno Badakhshan to the rest of the country, as Afghan opiates began to be smuggled from Afghanistan into the southwestern Khatlon region, whose main centers are the cities of Kulob and Qurghonteppa. As a result of this shift, Dushanbe and the more populated regions in the western part of the country also became more directly involved in the opiate trade. The lower altitude and better road infrastructure of this region, both in Tajikistan and in Afghanistan, were probably the main factors prompting the shift of routes (DCA, 2004; UNODCCP Sub-Office in Tajikistan, 2000). The shift of routes was accompanied by a further expansion of the volumes of opiates trafficked, which have probably exceeded 100 tons per year since the late 1990s (Khamonov, 2005, p. 12).

DRUG TYPES: FROM OPIUM TO HEROIN

The change of routes and the expansion of the illegal trade were accompanied by a third shift, this time involving the type of opiates smuggled: namely from opium to heroin. Heroin was seized for the first time in Tajikistan in late 1995: 1.9 and 9.9 kilos were recovered in late 1995 by the Russian border guards close to the town of Panj in the Qurghonteppa district of the Khatlon region. In 2000, the UN drug office estimated that about 100 tons of heroin may be smuggled yearly from Afghanistan into Tajikistan (UNODCCP Sub-Office in Tajikistan, 2000). The rule of the thumb is that 10 kilograms of opium are necessary to produce one kilogram of heroin.

The rapid increase in seizures provides further evidence of the rapid expansion of heroin trafficking. Table 1 is based on the data of the Tajik Drug Control Agency reporting opiate seizures in Tajikistan (which for the early 1990s do not include the seizures carried out by the Russian border guards). In 1996, Tajik law enforcement agencies confiscated the first six kilograms of heroin, and in 2003 they confiscated 5,600 kilograms. Confiscations have since declined but have not returned to earlier low levels. In 2003, Tajikistan, a small country of six million people, recorded the world's third largest heroin seizures after China and Pakistan, surpassing even Iran (UNODC, 2005). Opium seizures rose from just a few kilograms in the early 1990s

to almost 4,800 kilograms in 2000 and then declined substantially in the following years, when trafficking primarily shifted to heroin.

By 1998, heroin had flooded the landlocked country of Tajikistan, and its wholesale and retail price had sunk to less than a fifth of its price in 1996. Whereas a kilogram of heroin bound for export cost \$ 17,000 in Dushanbe in 1996, its price plummeted to \$ 3,000 in 1998, to become as low as \$1,000 in 2000 (DCA, 2002).

TAJIKISTAN'S INTEGRATION INTO THE WORLD HEROIN MARKET

With the growing influx of Afghan heroin in the late 1990s, Tajikistan became fully integrated into the world heroin market. The process took only a few years. Whereas most of the opium was consumed locally or at most in the neighboring Central Asian republics, heroin soon became one of Tajikistan's main export goods. In fact, Tajik heroin exports service the whole CIS market, including the booming Russian market and, to a lesser extent, the Eastern and Western European markets as well.

ESTIMATES OF OPIATE FLOWS

In 1999, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB, 1999, par. 354) estimated that “up to 65 percent of all Afghan opium, morphine and heroin is trafficked through Central Asia.” A year later, the UN drug office (UNODCCP Sub-Office in Tajikistan, 2000) put the same figure at around 50% of the Afghan opiates intended for export. The truth is that no one knows even approximately the percentage of Afghan heroin that goes through Tajikistan and the other Central Asian republics; there are no strong methodologies for creating such estimates. However, as explained in detail elsewhere (Paoli et al., 2008, forthcoming), it is plausible that 50 to 95 tons of pure heroin are consumed annually in Russia, the Ukraine, and Central Asia—markets that are served primarily by heroin smuggled through Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and, to a much lower extent, Uzbekistan.

To an unknown degree, Central Asian heroin exports also travel along the so-called “Silk Road” to the European market, which yearly consumes 60 to 80 tons of pure heroin (see also Reuter et al., 2003). The law enforcement officers interviewed in the course of the primary data collection in Turkey and in several Western European countries (France, Italy, Germany, and the United Kingdom) all stressed that the bulk of heroin sold in Western and Southeastern European countries come from Afghanistan through Turkey and from there along the numerous branches of the so-called “Balkan Route.” Official reports confirm this perception (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction [EMCDDA], 2002a, 2002b). Eastern European markets, however, are probably serviced to a larger degree by heroin smuggled through Central Asia. We assume that one third of European

consumption, excluding consumption in Turkey, Russia, and the Ukraine is supplied via Central Asia. Total shipments also include opiates—primarily heroin—that are seized in the markets that Central Asia services. After accounting for those seizures, we estimate that 75-121 tons of pure heroin flow yearly into or through Central Asia (Paoli, et al., 2008, forthcoming).

An unknown but probably not very large fraction of this throughput is smuggled from Afghanistan through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. We assume that one third of the heroin throughput is potentially smuggled from Afghanistan into one of the two countries. As a result of this calculation, 50 to 81 tons in pure heroin equivalent units are left to be potentially smuggled each year into or through Tajikistan, representing about 15-25% of Afghanistan's opium production at the time of our calculation and somewhat less more recently. Without corresponding information on purity for the above-mentioned 100-ton supply-side estimate of the UN (UNODCCP Sub-Office in Tajikistan, 2000) a direct comparison is difficult; however, our range for pure heroin may be roughly consistent.

TAJIK EXPORTERS, COURIERS AND DISTRIBUTORS IN CIS COUNTRIES

In the initial phases of development of the Tajik illegal drug industry, opportunistic smugglers were happy to bring their lots to Southern Kyrgyzstan and sell them there to Kyrgyz and other former USSR citizens. Since Afghan opiates began to flow through Western Tajikistan, Tajik citizens have increasingly become involved in the export and, to a more limited extent, in the distribution of heroin and other opiates in all CIS countries.

Imitating Nigerians, many Tajiks initially mastered the skills of the “swallower,” transporting drugs in their stomachs or alternatively on their body, their personal belongings, and allegedly even by children. Dozens of such cases were discovered yearly by CIS law enforcement agencies and reported by Russian and Central Asian media (e.g., Ministry of the Interior of the Russia Federation [MVD], 2000; DCA, 2000; “Tajik Drug Business,” 2000; “Child Obligated,” 2000). Despite the risks, such trips were quite attractive as a transporter could earn \$200 per trip, a full year's income for the average Tajik (DCA, 2000; Khamonov, 2005).

At the turn of the century, however, Tajiks became somewhat higher-risk drug smugglers. Both in Russia and in Central Asia they received growing attention from customs agents, who had also become more skilled and better equipped. The increased law enforcement pressure led to a two-thirds reduction in the number of “swallowers” detected between 2000 and 2001 at the airport in Domodedovo, Moscow, the principal landing site for airplanes from Tajikistan (Reuter et al., 2003).

Since then smugglers have developed other methods of drug delivery and possibly used transporters from other ethnic groups, as reflected in the decline of Tajik citizens arrested on drug charges in other CIS countries since 2000.⁹ Reflecting changes in trafficking groups (see below), a growing share of drugs also travels in big consignments in cargo trains and heavy trucks, particularly those transporting cotton and aluminum, Tajikistan's main legitimate export goods.¹⁰ Opiates are also frequently transported on buses, particularly those leaving from the Northern Soghd region.¹¹ The smuggling methods are increasingly ingenious. Heroin is no longer simply covered with fruits and vegetables but is transported inside them, for example inside apricot clingstones, apples, and pomegranates (Reuter et al., 2003; Rossijskaja, 2001).

THE RAPID GROWTH OF LOCAL OPIATE CONSUMPTION

During the second half of the 1990s, the growing availability of heroin prompted the rapid spread of heroin use throughout Tajikistan, displacing opium and, to a more limited extent, even cannabis. According to a Rapid Situation Assessment carried out in each of the Central Asian republics by the UN drug office in 2001, there were 45,000 to 55,000 problem drug users in Tajikistan, most of whom were heroin addicts (United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, Regional Office for Central Asia [UNOCCP-ROCA], 2001). The estimate was revised slightly by the Tajik Drug Control Agency at the end of a more detailed survey in 2003 and is now set at 55,000-75,000 problem drug users, 80% of whom regularly use heroin (Khamonov, 2005).

The alarming diffusion of heroin consumption in Tajikistan is described by a long-term drug user, who began injecting heroin in 1998:

We didn't have it before. We didn't know anything about heroin. And there were fewer drug consumers. All drug consumers in the city [Dushanbe] knew each other. Many of us smoked cannabis. But everything has changed during the last ten years. You could buy any drug you wanted. Then heroin appeared and it nearly replaced all other drugs. I suppose that they did it on purpose so that all of us would start using heroin. If you have no job or money, you have no choice left but to deal with drugs. That is why there are so many drug consumers now. (Khamonov, 2005, p. 22)

As implied by this description, during the late 1990s, heroin was sold freely by a myriad of petty dealers belonging to all classes of society. Its attractiveness was also enhanced by the rapid fall of its prices and corresponding rise in purity. Our

research collaborator (Khamonov, 2005) and his interviewees recall that up to the year 2000, a gram of heroin of uncertain purity cost as little as five to six *somoni* (or 5,000 to 6,000 old Tajik rubles, the official currency until October 30, 2000, i.e. about \$2) and a single dose of 0.2 grams could be bought for as little as one *somoni*. Even though this is a considerable sum for most Tajiks with annual incomes of less than \$200, heroin still costs less than a bottle of vodka or beer (DCA, 2000).

The rapid spread of heroin consumption is also shown by the dramatic growth of drug users registered in “narcology” centers, which provide treatment for drug abusers (see Table 2). Within a decade, from 1994 to 2003, their number grew more than tenfold, from 653 to 6,799 (DCA, 2004). The increasing share of heroin users among registered clients can be observed since 1999, as these were not differentiated by type of drug before. In 1999 heroin users represented slightly less than two thirds of the total (62.7%). By 2004 they comprised more than three quarters (76.1%) of the total number of registered users.

As a result of this rapid growth, by 2003, Tajikistan had the eighth highest prevalence of opiate abuse, following Iran, Laos, and several countries of the former Soviet Union. The unenviable peculiarity of Tajikistan and many of the other former Soviet countries is that heroin users today make up the bulk of their addicted opiate users, whereas Iran, Laos and, more generally, South Asian countries also have a substantial number of opium consumers (UNODC, 2004).

There are signs that since the beginning of the new century the heroin epidemic in Tajikistan has stabilized. This is due to several factors, among which the most important may be the growing awareness of the negative consequences of heroin

TABLE 2
DRUG ADDICTS REGISTERED BY TAJIK NARCOLOGY CENTERS

	Registered drug addicts	Of whom are heroin users
1994	653	n.a.
1995	823	n.a.
1996	967	n.a.
1997	996	n.a.
1998	1,459	n.a.
1999	2,703	1,695
2000	4,200	3,108
2001	6,243	4,713
2002	6,840	5,144
2003	6,799	5,171

Source: Tajik Ministry of Health, 1994-2003.

use. To an unknown degree, however, the stabilization of heroin use has also been prompted by changes in the organization of retail distribution, which may have raised retail heroin prices almost fivefold in comparison with 2000 and considerably decreased availability. As a drug user interviewed for this study stated, “You could get any drug quite easily till 2000. Everybody sold drugs. Since 2001 only those who have some power behind them have remained in business.” Paralleling the evolution of drug smuggling organizations (see below), there has been a down selection of retail drug dealers too. Only well-connected drug dealers enjoying the protection of high-level law enforcement officials or politicians remain on the market, and their power is allegedly such that they can afford to select customers and raise heroin prices at the same time as they decrease its purity (Khamonov, 2005; DCA, 2000).

The price increase and the reduced availability have prompted many users to shift from smoking or sniffing heroin to injecting it, sharply fostering the spread of HIV/AIDS. In 2005 Tajikistan was still considered by UNAIDS (2005) to be a country with low prevalence of HIV infection. As of November 2004, 317 cases of HIV infection had been registered in Tajikistan, or 4.9 per 100,000 of the population. However, the official data, which are based on case reports, differ substantially from the UNAIDS estimation. According to UNAIDS, the number of people living with HIV in the country at the end of 2004 was probably around 5,000. What is particularly worrying is that more than 60% of the official cumulative HIV cases were registered in 2004 (UNAIDS, 2005). As it happened earlier in other former Soviet republics, Tajikistan also seems to be on the verge of a major HIV epidemic (see also International Crisis Group [ICG], 2003b).

DRUG TRAFFICKING ENTERPRISES

Three major types of drug enterprises can be identified in the brief, but dramatic development of the Tajik drug industry; the relative importance of each type has tended to shift with the development of the Tajik drug trade.¹²

INDEPENDENT PEDDLERS

During the initial stages of development (1993 to 1995) opiates were very frequently traded by individuals or small, unorganized groups of people who had no previous criminal expertise and for whom opiate trafficking represented a means of survival. Tajik researchers estimate that almost half of the local young adults (aged 18 to 24 years) were involved in the drug business in 1997 (Iskandrov, 1998). Contrary to established patterns in the Western world, many drug dealers were women. These were not only disproportionately unemployed but were also often left as the single heads of their households, as their men were dead, fighting, or had migrated abroad.

From 1996 to 1999, women made up 27% to 45% of all those convicted annually for drug offenses in Tajikistan (DCA, 2000; see also Zelitchenko, 1999).

With virtually no law enforcement, this highly decentralized drug trading hardly needed to involve regular payments of bribes to government officials (though many of them engaged themselves in drug trafficking). The only restraints were moral: apparently, there was considerable resistance among older family members, who considered drug trading discreditable (Reuter et al., 2003).

The independent peddlers were primarily active in the Western region of Gorno Badakhshan, often bringing batches of no more than a few kilograms of drugs directly from the Afghan border to Osh or Andijan. With time, some of them also began to sell drugs on retail markets in Dushanbe or other cities and even to export small quantities of opiates directly into Russia, usually relying on the help of relatives, acquaintances or members of the same village or neighborhood. Though some independent traders still exist, most have been incorporated into larger, more professionally organized trafficking groups (DCA, 2002).

SMALL- TO MEDIUM-SIZED TRAFFICKING GROUPS

Small- to medium-sized trafficking groups appeared simultaneously with the independent peddlers but largely superseded them as heroin smuggling from Afghanistan expanded. There is no precise information on the number of small- to medium-sized trafficking groups operating in Tajikistan; Khamonov (2005) estimates that at least 100 of them are active on the border with Afghanistan.

Despite their higher degree of professionalization, the illegal enterprises belonging to the second category rarely consist of more than 10 to 15 persons. Within each group there is some division of labor, but this is quite rudimentary (DCA, 2000, p. 14). Affiliation is based on extended family ties, locality, or membership in a professional association, sporting group, or other traditional male groups. Trafficking and distributing groups with a mixed regional base can be found primarily in Dushanbe, where people from different Tajik regions are used to living together (Khamonov, 2005). Though Tajiks living abroad are part of some groups, these do not usually have a truly international membership. Many of them are active only intermittently. They come together when opportunity arises, to disband again and possibly reform with a partially changed membership on another occasion.¹³

On the average, the monthly heroin turnover managed by small- to medium-sized trafficking groups is about 20 to 30 kilograms; it rarely exceeds 50 kilograms. These illegal enterprises are usually specialized in a single phase of the industry. Southern groups are frequently responsible for opiate smuggling from Afghanistan; groups based in Dushanbe and other cities take care of the domestic wholesale and retail opiate distribution. Relying on legitimated trade networks, Northern groups

are frequently in charge of their export or wholesale distribution in CIS countries (Khamonov, 2005). Unlike independent peddlers, organized trafficking groups usually enjoy some form of government protection, though this may be limited to connections with a few Russian border guards, local policemen, or customs officers.

CRIMINAL COMMUNITIES: CHARACTERISTICS...

Since the late 1990s, a third group of drug trafficking organizations have gained control of a significant—and probably majority—fraction of the opiate trade. These are large organized criminal groups, which are usually known as “criminal communities,” a term inherited by most CIS countries from the Soviet penal code (see for example, Butler, 1997). The most successful ones are able to deal with over one ton of heroin a month.

Stable and usually high-level government protection has been critical to the success of these large trafficking groups. Almost paradoxically and certainly ironically, the progress in border control and law enforcement that Tajikistan has achieved since the late 1990s—thanks to the support of international agencies and foreign donors—has helped the large groups to achieve their success. By 2001, for example, there were 12 to 13 police and customs posts on the route from Khorog to Osh, a distance of only 700 to 800 kilometers. The roads from the Afghanistan border to Dushanbe are checked even more strictly. Rather than create insuperable barriers to drug transportation, this has generated large payments to border and police officials. Small-time individual smugglers are disadvantaged; apparently, there are economies of scale in corruption (Reuter et al., 2003). This has led to some coalition of corrupted bureaucracy and drug trafficking organizations. Whereas small- to medium-sized trafficking groups rarely enjoy high-level protection, systematic collusion is the characteristic of the organizations belonging to the third category. This variation was candidly described by the DCA (2000, pp. 17-18) in a report on the illegal drug market in Dushanbe:

The leaders of all groups have their own relations or other connections with some governmental structures or law enforcement agencies. In many cases the[se] are paid regularly definite sum[s] of money. In some large groups a leader is either a commander of military troops or law enforcement agency. In the largest groups . . . leader[s] have high position[s] in some governmental structure[s].

Like the smaller groups, some “criminal communities” are usually specialized in one or two phases of the heroin business and, as in the case of smaller groups, their specialization is a function of their location. However, there are also a few large and particularly well connected organizations that involve up to a few hundred individuals, including core members and service providers and operate across a broad spectrum of trafficking activities, from the importation of opiates from Afghanistan up to the wholesale and, occasionally, even retail distribution of opiates in Russia and other former Soviet states.

Most of the latter coincide with the private armies of former civil war commanders turned career or elected public officials. As the DCA states, “there are several large organizations in Tajikistan dealing with deliver[y] of drugs. As a matter of fact they all are subject to commanders of military formations, which were formed during Tajik Civil War . . . some of these formations became parts of armed forces of the country; some are still under the subordination to their commanders and are illegal in their essence” (2000, p. 70; see also pp. 18 and 21-22). Though formulated in more cautious terms, the U.S. Department of State (2002, pp. 128-129) made the same allegations in its *2001 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* (as well as in previous editions of the same report):

The disruption of normal economic activity during the 1992-1997 civil war gave rise to a warlord class whose leaders jostle for control of the lucrative narcotics trade. . . . Influential figures from both sides of Tajikistan’s civil war, many of whom now hold government positions, are widely believed to have a hand in the drug trade. While it is impossible to determine for certain how pervasive drug corruption is within government circles, salaries for even top officials are low and often seem inadequate to support the lifestyles many officials maintain.

Little is known about the recruitment criteria and internal division of labor of Tajikistan’s most successful drug trafficking groups. Their core is usually composed of people united by clan or locality ties; however, people from different backgrounds are involved in the less delicate and more risky tasks. Occasionally these large drug enterprises also develop stable partnerships with trafficking groups of other ethnic origin, to which they sell drugs or from which they buy “protection” services in Russia or other CIS countries (Khamonov, 2005, p. 40). Due to their civil war origins, many of them have a quasi-military organization—a peculiarity which differentiates them from “criminal communities” operating in other post-Soviet countries and from the drug trafficking groups of developed countries with strict

prohibition enforcement. As private armies, they are also well equipped with modern communication means and weapons, including armored vehicles, anti-aircraft rockets and military planes, and operate professionally (DCA, 2000; Osmonaliev, 2005). The largest usually include so-called “protection groups”, i.e., hit men, who take care of the most dangerous operations, and particularly the drug import from Afghanistan and charge protection fees from other trafficking groups, when these groups want to operate on their territory (Khamonov, 2005, pp. 14-15; Nasarov, 2002).¹⁴

. . . AND EXAMPLES

The leaders of Tajikistan’s largest trafficking groups belong to both the former People’s Front of Tajikistan (PFT), which brought President Emomali Rakhmonov to power, and the former United Tajik Opposition (UTO), the PFT’s main opponent, which was included in the government in late 1997.

The founder of the first large-scale Tajik drug trafficking group was probably Yaqubjon Salimov, who started his career as a racketeer in Dushanbe in the 1980s and went on to become the lieutenant to *bobo* (“the grandfather”) Sangak Safarov, a powerful warlord and the founder of the PFT, and then Tajikistan’s Minister of Interior in December 1992 (Nourzhanov, 2005). From then on Salimov began organizing opiate smuggling from Afghanistan via the Southern Vanch district of Gorno Badakhshan, which he controlled through a relative. Opium and then heroin were allegedly transported by military airplanes to Dushanbe and then by planes or trains to the Russian Federation (Khamonov, 2005; DCA, 2000).

Salimov’s drug business long ran undisturbed, as he had control of the police. Along the lines of a popular saying in Tajikistan, “If you put epaulettes on a criminal, you will get a Tajik cop.” The Sixth Department of the Ministry of the Interior in charge of combating organized crime was entrusted to an individual who had spent 17 years behind bars. The rank-and-file members of the police were little better; one third of them were purged from the force after Salimov’s dismissal in August 1995 (Nourzhanov, 2005). Salimov was then made head of the Customs Committee, before siding with an opponent of President Rakhomonov’s in 1997, fleeing into Uzbekistan, being arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison for state treason, banditry and abuse of office in early 2005 (Wetherall, 2005).

Having had to finance their fight with illegal means up to the late 1990s, many opposition commanders are believed to have been even more systematically involved in drug smuggling than the warlords of the PFT. In the absence of hard proof, rumors tend to persist, largely without question—so great is the presumption of wrong doing, irrespective of party affiliations. As a case in point, consider the popular claims that Mirzo “Jaga” Ziyoev, the undisputed military chief of the UTO, is (or at least was) heavily involved in heroin smuggling. As part of the policy of national reconciliation,

Ziyoev became Minister for Emergency Situations, a position which was specifically created for him in July 1998. The ministry has a full-size army brigade on its payroll (consisting exclusively of Ziyoev's men). Though his brigade has been permanently deployed in the northern part of the country, Ziyoev allegedly controls, as if it were his personal fief, considerable parts of the Panj district in Southern Tajikistan, which is one of the most frequent and easiest entry points for Afghan opiates (Khamonov, 2005; Nourzhanov, 2005; Sukhravardiy, 2002)

Other former UTO commanders-turned-statesmen are also suspected of being involved in wholesale drug smuggling.¹⁵ As much as Ziyoev, all these former warlords retain substantial private armies and largely control pockets of lands in Southern Tajikistan, which they consider their patrimony and from which they can organize undisturbed large trafficking deals (Nourzhanov, 2005; DCA, 2000; Khamonov, 2005). Support for these allegations was provided by the drug-related murder of Habib Sanginov, another UTO commander who had acquired the post of deputy Minister of the Interior. According to the prosecution in his murder case, Sanginov was shot dead in April 2001 because he had refused to pay for a delivery of 50 kilograms of heroin worth \$100,000 (Gleason, 2001).

Even if the Salimov's days are gone, drug-related corruption is far from being an exclusive characteristic of former opposition members. Several politicians and officials belonging to the former PFT are (or were) also involved in the heroin trade. Two former PFT commanders, for example, were forced to retire from their posts on the border protection committee in January 2002: though it was not publicly stated, the reason for their dismissal was their systematic involvement in drug trafficking (Khamonov, 2005; ICG, 2004). General Gaffor Mirzoev, the former PFT commander and head of the Presidential Guard,¹⁶ was also said to run a powerful drug trafficking organization up to his arrest on numerous but nondrug related charges in August 2004 (Khamonov, 2005; Abdullaev, 2004; Shvaryov, 2004; BBC, 2004). Russian media sources allege that Mirzoev's long-time business partner was Makhmadsaid Ubaidulloev, who as of 2005 was the mayor of Dushanbe and head of the upper house of the Tajik Parliament (for a review, see Reuter et al., 2003).

Whereas in the above-mentioned cases the identification between drug traffickers and government officials is almost complete, there are also a few large independent trafficking groups, which merely buy "protection" services from corrupt government officials. Among them there is, for example, an organization led by six brothers from the Southern Khatlon region, which is said to export large quantities of heroin in several Russian cities, particularly in the Ural region (Khamonov, 2005).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the basis of the evidence presented so far, one can safely say that Tajikistan has become, in less than 10 years, a veritable “narco-state.” Drug trafficking heavily pollutes the country’s economic and political systems and seriously threatens its recovery from the ruinous civil war of the 1990s. What is even worse, a preponderant part of its drug trade is conducted not by common criminals or terrorist groups, but by gangs headed or protected by high-ranking government officials. In no other country of the world, except perhaps contemporary Afghanistan, can such a superimposition between drug traffickers and government officials be found (see Paoli et al., 2008, forthcoming).

Corrupt high-ranking government officials do not merely represent a few “bad apples,” but carry out on a larger scale what significant portions of the population, including many low-ranking law enforcement agents, also do. The key question for Tajikistan is which fraction of the Tajik population profits from the opiate trade. Despite the consolidation process undergone by the drug industry in recent years, it is fair to assume that the share of the population supplementing their legitimate income with opiate revenues is not insignificant. In addition to those directly involved in the trade, in fact, one has to consider also those who profit from it indirectly, by working in legitimate companies funded with drug money or by supplying goods and services to wholesale drug traffickers and their families. This means that Tajik leaders face a serious dilemma, as cracking down on heroin trafficking would result in a substantial deterioration of living conditions for a considerable segment of their impoverished people.

Given this and the country’s limited means, it is clear that Tajik state structures will not be able to effectively control drug trafficking on their own and will need the continued guidance, supervision, and financial support of the international community.

NOTES

- ¹ Relying on no scientific procedure, Matthew Kahane, the UNDP head in Tajikistan estimated that the drug trade accounts for 30% to 50% of the economy (ICG, 2001c).
- ² Paoli, Greenfield, and Reuter were the principal investigators of the larger project on the world heroin market. This entailed primary data collection in eight countries playing a key role in the market: in addition to Tajikistan, these are China, Colombia, India, Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, and Turkey. In each context, we asked local researchers to prepare detailed reports on market conditions, legal institutions, and the extent and effects of enforcement in their countries on the basis of a common research protocol. The three of us also conducted a more

limited data collection in Europe. The findings of the larger project are being published in Paoli, Greenfield, and Reuter (2008, forthcoming). The project was funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Justice and its Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (known as WODC from its Dutch acronym), the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law. We thank all funding agencies for their financial and logistic support; the views expressed in this article are, however, entirely our own.

³ This case study also builds on a previous research project that addressed the contribution of the drug trade to the Central Asian economy and was carried out by Peter Reuter, Emil Pain, and Victoria Greenfield (2003).

⁴ The CIS includes all the former Soviet Union republics, less Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

⁵ In a nutshell, a warlord is a military leader exercising civil power in a region where the central government is weak. For a thorough discussion of the concept, see Giustozzi (2003).

⁶ The northern elite from Khujand and its province, the Leninobod (now Soghd) *oblast*, which had been predominant under Soviet rule, initially remained neutral and then accepted an ancillary role in the government restored in late 1992 and dominated by Kulobis (Nourzhanov, 2005).

⁷ Tajik citizens composed 71% of the 11,700 RBF's contract soldiers, and 99% of its conscripts, but only 7% of its officers (ICG, 2004).

⁸ According to official data, a maximum of 27 civil servants were charged yearly from 1997 to 2003 for drug offenses in Tajikistan (Khamonov, 2005).

⁹ In 1997, 657 Tajik citizens were arrested in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, or the Russian Federation. Within three years, this figure almost tripled, only to fall back to 669 in 2003 (DCA, 2004).

¹⁰ On June 30 2001, for example, 135 kilograms of heroin were seized in the Russian Astrakhan region on a train transporting raw cotton, which was en route from Qurghontepa to Ilichevsk (Ukraine) and then to Switzerland (Borisov, 2001). In November 1999, over 730 kilograms of opium along with smaller quantities of heroin and cannabis were seized from a truck driven by a Tajik citizen in Uzbekistan (DCA, 2004). In July 2003, 420 kilograms of heroin were seized near Moscow from the hidden compartments of a truck driven by three Tajik nationals ("Value of Heroin," 2003).

¹¹ In late 1999, for example, 40 kilograms of heroin were seized close to the Russian city of Chelabinsk on a bus travelling from Khujand to Yekaterinburg (DCA, 2004).

- ¹² Contrary to what maintained by other scholars (e.g., Cornell, 2004; Engvall, 2005), we have found no evidence proving that several radical Islamist groups are also major players in the Tajik drug industry. True, the most prominent of these groups, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), was involved in the drug trade up to 2001. However, since then the IMU's strength has dramatically declined and even at the height of its power, its role in the regional drug trade was overestimated (ICG, 2001a).
- ¹³ This is a pattern typical of many drug dealing enterprises all over the world: see Paoli et al. (2008, forthcoming) and Paoli (2003).
- ¹⁴ Clashes between smugglers and Russian border guards were reported frequently since the late 1990s and often ended up with heavy casualties on both sides (Osmonaliev, 2005).
- ¹⁵ Among them, there were some who held, as of 2005, the positions of chairman of the State Customs Committee, first deputy Minister of Defense of Tajikistan, deputy chairman of the State Committee of Border Protection, and the chairman of the State Oil and Gas Committee (Khamonov, 2005).
- ¹⁶ For much of the 1990s the Presidential Guard was President Rakhmonov's main militia, though its loyalty lay primarily with Mirzoev, who paid his men out of his pocket, using income from the largest casino of Dushanbe, which his family owned (Nourzhanov, 2005).

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