

Milestones



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JAMES CALLAHAN: "I CERTAINLY WILL NOT BE A STRANGER TO THE REGION"

- Mr. Callahan, you were Regional Representative of the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia from 2004 till the beginning of 2010. The office is the largest UNODC regional office, with sub-offices throughout Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Surely managing such a large and geographically dispersed operation has not been an easy task. How would you assess this period and what were some notable achievements and issues addressed?

It has been an honor and a privilege for me to have served for more than six years as UNODC's representative to the Central Asian region. I inherited a strong regional office from my predecessor, Ms. Antonella Deledda, and found a very capable and experienced staff when I arrived. Working with the ROCA team, I believe we have been able to build greatly upon what was done before and to establish a large, varied drug and crime programme which - despite full reliance on donor funding - is becoming in-

creasingly self-sustainable. In 2008, UNODC developed a well-thought-out regional "Rainbow" Strategy for Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Virtually all of our drug control-related work is in support of this Rainbow Strategy. Since 2003, we have been able to expand the drug control side of the programme to include intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination throughout the region. Our project team's expertise in this area allowed us to extend the programme to Afghanistan. Related closely to this was the establishment of the CARICC in Kazakhstan. One of my instructions from the UNODC Executive Director before I left Vienna in October 2003 was to get CARICC established. It certainly didn't happen overnight and it required an incredible amount of effort and creativity to secure financing, obtain agreement on the venue and obtain sufficient signatures and ratifications. Despite the six-year process, which is

not any longer than it took to establish EUROPOL, we were ultimately successful and a great deal of credit has to go to the project team that we established in Almaty. We have also successfully promoted controlled deliveries and precursor control throughout the region and in Afghanistan. In regard to precursor control, ROCA's Operations TARGET I and II, which extended well-beyond ROCA's accreditation area, resulted in the first seizures of acetic anhydride in the larger region since the year 2000 and was a true breakthrough on precursor interdiction. We have also, with support from a variety of donors, including the European Commission, established Computer-Based Training centres throughout Central Asia and Azerbaijan, and are in the process of exporting the concept to Armenia and Afghanistan. Another important initiative is the NATO-Russia Council training project for Central Asia

Interview



and Afghanistan. Again, recognizing this office's expertise, the NATO-Russia Council in 2006 asked us to implement a pilot training project for the NRC. It has so far trained over 1000 counter-narcotics officers and is considered one of the most successful activities of the NRC. We have also managed and are still managing highly successful projects to improve border security in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and will soon add the establishment of Border Liaison Offices to promote cross border cooperation with Afghanistan on the same borders. I have to mention as well, the great success and professional reputation of the Drug Control Agency of Tajikistan, supported by a UNODC project since 1999, and - if we want to speak of problems - the establishment in 2004 of the DCA of Kyrgyzstan. This turned out to be a very difficult project to manage, in large part because of the unique - to UNODC - requirement that all staff would have to be polygraphed in order to secure their posts. Unfortunately, after a difficult start but when the DCA did seem to be coming into its own, it was abolished by the Government in mid-2009 and absorbed into the Ministry of Interior. The same fate befell the Kyrgyz Mobile Interdiction Unit, established as a first-for-the region multiagency unit under a UNODC project. However, mobile units are working effectively

still in Tajikistan. Another accomplishment has certainly been the greatly enhanced participation and cooperation of the Government of Turkmenistan with UNODC and regional drug control efforts. Coming off of a very negative INCB report on the country in 2004, Turkmenistan has improved its position immensely and we have been implementing successful border control projects there since 2004. In 2008, at the suggestion of the UNODC Executive Director, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, the President of Turkmenistan established the self-supporting State Drug Control Service, patterned on the DCA concept pioneered by UNODC. Closely related to the law enforcement work that we do is the work to promote the implementation of the drug, crime and terrorism-related United Nations Conventions through our senior regional legal advisor, terrorism prevention expert and anti-money laundering mentor. Here, again, there have been significant advances in treaty ratifications, mutual legal assistance, legislative revisions and training of practitioners. In this regard, we have been able to move beyond drug-related crime to launch projects to combat corruption and human trafficking in several countries. Our recently signed MOU with the Uzbekistan Supreme Court and training on torture issues that we have conducted in partnership with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for Uzbekistan penal officials are illustrative of this broadened scope of work. The AML mentors have been very instrumental in the great strides made in the countries of the region to address money laundering through legislation and the establishment of Financial Intelligence Units in several countries. Turning to the soft side of drug control, demand reduction, we have also seen a welcome expansion of our work in prevention and treatment

with several successful, regional prevention projects completed and the launch of TreatNet in 2009. In 2010 there will be a further expansion of these important regional prevention and treatment programmes. UNODC is the recognized authority in this field and with the work of our regional project on HIV/AIDS among injecting drug users and prison populations, we are also now recognized as an authority and reliable partner in the HIV field. Having served as the chairman of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS for Uzbekistan in 2004-2005, I am especially proud of this accomplishment which is very much tied in with our DDR work, since UNODC in this region was seen before 2005/2006 as regressive on HIV issues. During this period as well, I believe another accomplishment has been to raise UNODC's overall visibility and to greatly broaden our resource base. In addition to our biggest donor for Central Asia, the US Government, we now count significant contributions from Canada, Finland, Norway, Russia and Turkey among others. We also are seeing contributions and contracts from nontraditional (for ROCA) donors such as the World Bank, UNDP, the European Commission, the OPEC Fund, and PEPFAR. Of course, all these accomplishments were not without problems. As mentioned, the time-consuming exercise to establish CARICC was fraught with political problems related to agreement on venue, the Framework Agreement, etc. The Kyrgyz projects also were affected by political problems starting with the 2005 coup d'etat and ending with the government reorganization that abolished the agency. In Tajikistan, we went through a rough period when the DCA was put under the directorship, for six months, of an alleged crime figure. Other problems are perennial: fund-raising, sustaining operating costs of project offices, timely recruitment of qualified personnel, procurement delays and so on. These to some extent are in our control and we continue seeking ways to improve administrative operations in these areas. Overall, I feel very proud of our accomplishments in ROCA and certainly proud of the many staff members of ROCA former and current who have



worked together as a great team to make it happen. Considering the number of nationalities involved, including citizens of countries that do not themselves get along politically, I believe that ROCA itself is a great example of regional and international cooperation.

- Do you think that the drug situation in the region has changed substantially during this period?

I believe that with the levels of opium cultivation in Afghanistan which although declining are still at huge levels historically, Central Asia cannot avoid being impacted heavily. While a great deal has been done to address the problem, the high levels of supply have meant that the problem has not been reduced. Drug abuse in the region, according to our studies, is quite high, although it does seem stable. Most HIV cases registered in the region are among injecting drug users and the trend is moving rapidly upward. Recent seizures in the region have been in record amounts up to half a metric ton and more and UNODC's recent reports indicate an increase in the percentage coming through Central Asia in comparison with transit through Pakistan and Iran. It is also clear that large amounts are still transiting into Russia and increasingly to China and European destinations. Of concern is the overall decrease in seizures in the region since 2003, in large part due - in my opinion - to the departure of the Russian Federal Border Service from the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border in 2005. However, there is no doubt that overall the law enforcement authorities in the region, in general, are more professional and better equipped than they were six years ago. They have more of the tools, however, the problem of corruption must be addressed vigorously by the regional governments and law enforcement bodies in order to really improve the situation. Organized crime and high-level traffickers and those who support, harbor or benefit - through bribery - from the traffic, must be

investigated and prosecuted. This is what the CARICC is designed to address and my hope is that we will soon start seeing success. What is also clear is that despite the sometimes disappointing results, we cannot lessen our efforts both on the law enforcement side and on the demand reduction side. I am all too aware of the tragic social and economic consequences that endemic drug trafficking, abuse and related corruption can have on societies.

- What personal lessons have you learned from working in Central Asia?

Having known little about the region before coming to Tashkent, the time has been a period of discovery and learning for me personally. As an amateur historian (my BA was History), I have found Central Asia a fascinating choice for study. I was surprised though about how little has been written in English on Central Asia and that has been a limiting factor. Also as an amateur photographer, Central Asia has provided an amazing canvas for great photos of people and places. My only regret is not having had enough personal time to indulge the hobby sufficiently while here. Having spent my professional life living and working in a variety of countries and with different cultures, I suppose the most important lesson of my time here was the reinforcement of my belief that people are all alike in the most basic ways. Working with the ROCA staff, as well as with government and other counterparts, has been a personal pleasure. I certainly learned as well that my perceptions of Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Tashkent, before arriving in the region, couldn't have been further from reality. And, of course, I never expected to meet and fall in love with someone from the region. With an Uzbek wife and a half Uzbek daughter, along with now the extended family on Umida's side, I certainly will not be a stranger to the region in the future.

BRINGING TAJIK AND AFGHAN COUNTER NARCOTICS OFFICERS CLOSER

From 29th March – 2nd April officers from Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency (DCA) and Afghanistan's Counter Narcotic Police (CNPA) participated in a senior management training course at the Turkish Police Academy (TADOC) in Ankara.

This one week seminar was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime within the framework of the "Strengthening drug law enforcement systems for criminal intelligence collection, analysis and exchange" project.

The course aimed to augment the quality of the management of operational forces within the two agencies and bring senior Tajik and Afghan counter narcotic officers closer, one of the main strategies of the project.

In November 2009, the project organized criminal intelligence analysis training and invited CNPA intelligence officers to DCA Headquarters in Dushanbe where the training took place. Also in 2009, the CNPA attended the Central Asian regional Intelligence Officer's meetings that took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



OPERATION TARCET II



On 30-31 March 2010, the UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia and the UNODC Country Office Afghanistan held a debriefing for the international partners involved in the latest round of operational activity combating precursor chemicals used in the manufacture of heroin. The Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, which had acted as the information and analytical hub during Operation TARCET II, hosted the meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

During the two day meeting, participants from 13 countries and seven international/regional organisations (including the EU, INCB, ISAF, OSCE and WCO) reviewed operational performance, considered results and made recommendations for subsequent joint action.

Operation TARCET II took place in Afghanistan, I.R. of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with the technical support of Paris Pact Partners that included France, Ger-

many, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The operation was made possible thanks to the generous donor support of Canada, the European Commission and the United States. This phase of the initiative resulted in the seizure of approximately 450 tonnes of precursor chemicals that could otherwise have been used for producing heroin. This amount of chemicals would have been sufficient to make 156 kgs of heroin (a quantity that would be worth more than US\$ 37 million on the European market).

The TARCET initiative (which began in 2008 with TARCET I) has widened perceptions in the region of how to tackle the heroin trade by offering an alternative approach to dis-

ruption. No significant seizures of acetic anhydride, the principle precursor chemical, had been reported by countries surrounding Afghanistan in the years following 2001 and little was known about how it was actually reaching the heroin producers. Since the start of the TARCET programme, however, a new focus has resulted in greater intelligence and in major seizures (including 14 tonnes in March 2008, 5 tonnes in July 2009, 15,800 tonnes in March 2010 in Pakistan and 5 tonnes in I.R. of Iran in May 2008).





In the field. Kyrgyzstan



THE EU PRISON REFORM PROJECT STARTED IN KYRGYZSTAN

The project, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNODC, aims at assisting with the implementation of the Rule of Law in Kyrgyzstan with focus on one of the most problematic justice institutions in the country, which is the prison service. The project is made up of the following mutually reinforcing components: reform of the legal/normative basis and relevant strategy for prison reform and alternatives to imprisonment; building the management capacity of the prison service with training and support to the training centre of the Main Service of Execution of Penalties (GSIN); developing policy and program to generate additional income for the prison service and

improving the social reintegration prospects of prisoners, and the implementation of the program in pilot prison colonies; and improving the physical conditions in selected prisons. The project with a total budget of 2,7 mln. EURO will be implemented in a period of 3 years. The main direction in project implementation were discussed between UNODC experts and the Management of the Main Service of Execution of Penalties at the meeting on 9 March in Bishkek. Mr. Aibek Turganbaev, Chairman of GSIN expressed gratitude to the European Union and UNODC for the support of national efforts in reforming penitentiary system.

The meeting was instrumental in identifying priority action to be taken up in coming months as well as on general mechanisms of implementation of a project with such scale and impact.

The meeting between EU delegation in Kyrgyzstan (H.E. Ms. Chantal Hebberecht, Ambassador, Head of delegation, Ms. Colombe de Mercey, Attachee) and UNODC (Mr. Jens Eric Sundby, Regional Representative ad interim in Central Asia, Ms. Tomris Atabay, Criminal Justice Expert and Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva, Project Coordinator) took place the next day to discuss and agree on project implementation modalities.

UN COUNTRY TEAM RETREAT

Mr. Jens Eric Sundby, UNODC Regional Representative ad interim in Central Asia and Ms. Zhuldyz Akisheva, Coordinator, UNODC project office in Kyrgyzstan took part in the UN Country Team Retreat held March 11-12 in Bishkek. This year the UNCT meeting was focused on a discussion of UN cooperation with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in view of recent political and economic changes in the country (e.g. reform of public service), as well as on preparation for the forthcoming visit of the UN Secretary-General to Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan, in particular.

The year 2010 is also a special one for the UNCT in Kyrgyzstan. For the first time UN agencies will implement the One UN Programme, which will be combined with prepa-

ration of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2011-2015 for Kyrgyzstan. All these issues were subject of discussion at the UNCT Retreat.



In the field. Turkmenistan



TRAINING COURSE ON RISK INDICATORS



From March 29 – April 2, UNODC conducted a multi-agency training course on risk indicators led advanced search techniques in Turkmenabat and the Farap port of entry. The

course was designed under Project J92 “Strengthening the Turkmen-Uzbek border in particular at the Farap checkpoint.” 5 experts from Turkish law enforcement agencies shared their

expertise on systematic and risk indicator led vehicle, container, and passenger search techniques.

The one week training course was attended by 20 officers from Turkmenistan’s law enforcement agencies including the State Border, Customs and Drug Control Services and the Ministries of National Security and Internal Affairs. The training included practical exercises at the Farap port of entry.

This course was the first in a series aimed at strengthening border control capacities in Turkmenistan under UNODC national project AD/TKM/J92.

From March 31 – April 2, UNODC, together with the World Customs Organization, conducted a training course on cargo container profiling and the C-Hawk application in Ashgabat. The training was provided under the auspices of the GLOG 80 Global Container Control Programme. The training course was attended by customs officers from the newly established Joint Port Control Units in Ashgabat and Turkmenbashi. The course provides an opportunity to learn internet-based communication tools and applications for container profiling such as Container-Comm and C-Hawk. The UNODC-WCO Container Control Programme is aimed at strengthening the participating states’ capacity to interdict illicit drugs, chemical precursors and other goods concealed in containers while facilitating legal trade.

CARGO/CONTAINERS PROFILING





In the field. Turkmenistan

DONOR COORDINATION MEETING



On March 17, UNODC chaired the first Law Enforcement Donor Coordination Meeting (LEDCM) of 2010 in Ashgabat. In attendance were personnel from the embassies of Japan, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the United States and the United Kingdom as well as staff from UNRCCA, UNDP, OSCE, IOM and development agencies GTZ and TIKa. The meeting served as a platform for attendees to update counterparts on their project activities for the period of January-March 2010. This was followed by an exchange of views on national law enforcement development. To help avoid duplication, participants agreed to hold quarterly meetings to exchange information on their activities.

TO IMPROVE LAW ENFORCEMENT'S ABILITY TO INTERDICT DRUGS AND PRECURSOR CHEMICALS

This project "Strengthening the Termez River Port checkpoint on the Uzbek-Afghan border" was designed to support the Government's current endeavors to increase the capabilities of border guards, customs and other law enforcement agencies at the Termez River Port checkpoint specific to their interdiction abilities relating to both drugs and precursor chemicals. The project provides communication and detection equipment and specialized training in order to update and upgrade the expertise of border guards and customs personnel. It will also be aimed at improving cooperation and coordination between law enforcement serving at the Termez River

Port. The next equipment load scheduled for a hand-over on March 31 includes: endoscopes, inspection and UV flashlights, indi-

vidual and crew toolkits, inspection probes, platform and electronic scales, inspection mirrors and fluorescent markers.



Study tour



BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

UNODC project TD/RER/H22 together with the Italian Police Liaison officer based in Tashkent organized a mission of Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC staff) to Italy to meet with the Italian Police, Financial Guard and Carabinieri. The mission aimed to develop cooperation mechanisms between CARICC and Italian counterparts, agree on secure information exchange channels, discuss perspectives on placing for an Italian Liaison officer in CARICC and involve Italian counterparts in CARICC operations/activities such as the Northern Black Sea trafficking route, West African drug couriers and others. The mission was also an opportunity to study the best practices of Italian authorities in building inter-agency cooperation, especially in augmenting national capacities for intelligence analysis.

Italy is one of the CARICC project's major donors and has had observer status at CARICC since 2009. In late 2008, as a result of UNODC efforts, CARICC signed a Cooperation Protocol with the Central Directorate on Drug Control Service of Italy.

On the mission, meetings were organized with the Central Directorates of the Drug Control Service and Combating Mafia Type Structures, the state police of Rome, the Central Op-

erational Service, the Central Criminal Department of Police, the Carabinieri Department for Rome, the Special Operational unit of the Carabinieri for the Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport and the Maritime Department of the Guardia di Finanza in Civitavecchia. Discussions were held on information collection, analysis and training, international cooperation and joint operations including controlled deliveries.

The capacities of Italian law enforcement agencies in building inter-agency cooperation were thoroughly studied. For example, while the Drug Control Service is physically located in the Ministry of the Interior their staff is comprised of representatives of all the major law enforcement entities of Italy including the State Police, Guardia di Finanza and Carabinieri. These directorates have centralized databases which combine information from all agencies involved thereby realizing the concept of a centralized national database. All entities have operational and strategic analytical units.

Italian laws provide for a wide range of investigative methods, such as undercover operations, infiltration via informant, suspended arrest and seizure, wiretapping, controlled deliveries and organizing shell (fake)

companies. These methods ensure in-depth investigation aimed not only at interdicting drugs and arresting traffickers but also at disrupting criminal organizations. Significant results have been achieved. For example, Italian law enforcement agencies have been able to seize criminal organization assets worth five billion Euros. These methods should be studied for possible implementation in the CARICC region.

The Italian side is also willing to provide experts for the training of CARICC staff, especially in intelligence analysis and operational coordination. During the mission two intelligence analysts from CARICC were trained in the intelligence analysis unit of the Central Directorate of the Drug Control Service. Overall, the meetings demonstrated the capacities of Italian law enforcement agencies and their willingness to cooperate with CARICC and its member states.

Finally, the Italian side was informed that office space for an Italian liaison officer has been allocated in CARICC. This will ensure a presence for Italian Law Enforcement in CARICC and will significantly foster further cooperation between Italy and CARICC.

