



## Narcotics, Organized Crime & Security in Eurasia

Weekly Digest: October 25-31 2004

The following are summaries of articles related to narcotics and security in the Central Asian 5 and Afghanistan. Where possible, web addresses for the entire article are provided...

**Quote of the week:** "Everything is against you if you do not have the propiska. The courts work hand in hand with the government and the police" - one of the many residents of Tashkent expelled by the mayor's order that anyone without residency status leave the city, ostensibly to guard against terrorist attacks, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav102704.shtml>, 31/10/04.

### **Do your laundry in Kazakhstan**

The IMF released a report on Wednesday that was critical of Kazakhstan's regulation of its financial sector. Kazakhstan is "materially non-compliant" or "non-compliant" with 27 of the 34 recommendations made by the Financial Action Task Force, including in its definition of money laundering. The report/comment is available at [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org).

"Republic of Kazakhstan: 2004 Article IV Consultation", IMF.

### **No more window dressing**

Showing his customary modesty, Turkmenistan's President Saparmurat Niyazov declined a proposal by the People's Council to give him a Hero of Turkmenistan award. Amid chants of 'glory to the great leader!' he did, however agree with the suggestion that presidential elections should not be required in 2008.

RFE/RL "Turkmen President declines award, elections", 26/10/04

### **Now classified**

The investigation of Tajikistan's former Drug Control Agency chief, Ghaffor Mirzoyev, is now classified 'top secret'. The term for the investigation was extended to November 20.

Asia-Plus Dushanbe via BBC Monitoring Newsfile, 29/10/04

### **President-in-waiting, country waiting**

With nearly all the votes from Afghanistan's presidential election counted (around 8.2 million), Hamid Karzai has received 55%. Election officials say that the alleged problems of electoral fraud were not significant enough to change the result. The relatively peaceful election and vote-counting have raised hopes that ISAF may be extended beyond Kabul – at the Military Committee meeting of NATO on October 20, officials seemed to suggest that this would happen.

M. Katik, "With presidential election settled, Afghanistan again turns attention to security issues", <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav102704.shtml>, 27/10/04

## **A new Afghan ministry**

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While talking with Tony Blair last week, Hamid Karzai informed him that he intends to set up a ministry for narcotics in order to address the opium trade.

Agence France Presse, "Afghan president tells British PM he will form narcotics ministry", 31/10/04

## **A worrying Iraqi fashion comes to Afghanistan**

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Three UN workers have been confirmed kidnapped and there are reports of two cameramen missing in Afghanistan, in what some are interpreting as trend imported from Iraq. Armed stopped a UN vehicle near the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul and forced the UN officials into a jeep. Two Islamist groups have claimed responsibility. Meanwhile, it is feared that something similar has happened to two cameramen, one British and one Afghan. The latter's home has been ransacked and neither have been heard from for a week. British foreign minister Jack Straw did not see the kidnappings as the start of a trend.

The Guardian, "Kidnapping comes to Afghanistan: three UN workers seized in Kabul", 29/10/04

Yesterday, those holding the hostages released a statement and a videotape, threatening to kill them "in such a way by which Muslims will be happy", unless Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners were released from US prisons by Wednesday.

Reuters, "Afghan kidnap group issues Wednesday deadline", 31/10/04

## **A home-grown effort in Nangarhar**

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Nangarhar Security Commander Hazrat Ali reported that a 200-strong military force will be set up in the province to fight opium cultivation. He said that if it does not prove to be effective, Nangarhar's leaders will look to the National Army and foreign forces.

Kelid radio via BBC Monitoring South Asia, 29/10/04

## **Karaganda customs**

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Kazakhstan currently has 156 active customs posts and 46 inspection stations. It appears that one more is on the way - the chairman of Kazakhstan's committee on the fight against drugs announced that an agreement has been finalized with the US, under which they will supply equipment and \$400,000 for construction of a customs post in Karaganda oblast.

Organisation of Asia-Pacific News Agencies, "Measures taken to fortify custom posts", 28/10/04

## **Swiss advice**

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Last week saw a conference sponsored by Switzerland in Tashkent on HIV/AIDS and drugs. 70 specialists from the region and from NGOs attended and were informed about Switzerland's drug policies. Uzbek specialists told the group that they are implementing a pilot project based on these in Tashkent and Samarkand.

UzReport.com via Factiva, "Central Asian conference on HIV/AIDS and drugs held in Tashkent", 29/10/04

## **Seizures and Arrests**

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### **A heavy load**

Russian guards on the Tajik-Afghan border spotted a group of people making their way across the Panj on inflatable dinghies. They attempted to meet them on the Tajik side but only apprehended one man, a Tajik national, with 13 kg of marijuana and 50 packs of heroin weighing at least 50 kg.

ITAR-TASS via BBC Monitoring Central Asia, "Russian guards seize 50 kg of heroin on Tajik-Afghan border", 28/10/04

## **A big one for the CND**

Nangarhar's Counter-Narcotics Cell seized 70 kg of heroin from a truck on Tuesday, acting on a tip-off.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, "Nangarhar authorities seize 70 kg of heroin", 27/10/04

## **Did you pack your bag yourself?**

On the Almaty-Yekaterinburg passenger train, Kazakh customs arrested a 26 year-old, after a sniffer dog detected the 11 kg of marijuana she was carrying. She claimed she was just transporting the bag for her cousins.

<http://www.cry.ru/text.shtml?200410/20041027071524.inc>, 27/10/04

The day before, Kazakh customs at Jezkent-avto arrested a Russian citizen carrying trying to return to Russia with 13.5 kg of heroin.

<http://www.cry.ru/text.shtml?200410/20041026195205.inc>, 26/10/04

An Uzbek citizen was arrested carrying 5 kg of heroin in Atyrau, Kazakhstan, apparently on his way to Astrakhan. Labels in Arabic and with a brand '777' were found in each packet of drugs.

UzReport.com via Factiva, "Uzbek citizen with 5 kg of heroin detained n Kazakhstan", 31/10/04