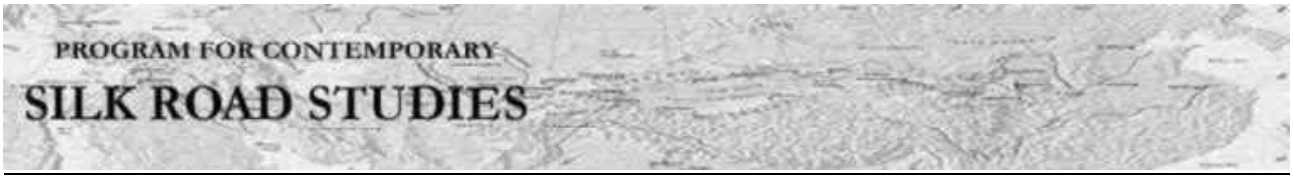

Narcotics, Organized Crime & Security in Eurasia

Weekly Digest: 10 – 16 January 2005

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

Thirty five poppy farmers released in eastern Afghanistan

The police department in eastern Nuristan province released 35 poppy farmers who were imprisoned for one month for failing to destroy their poppy fields. The spokesman for the provincial police department, Mohammmad Safdar Sapi said: "They have promised the tribal elders that they won't grow poppies in the future." According to Sapi nearly 4,500 acres of poppy fields have been cleared so far and the local incentive to destroy poppies continues. But farmer have made their own demands. Forty-five year old resident from Danegam district said that he agreed to destroy his poppy fields because the authorities had pledged seeds and fertilizer in exchange for poppies.

Bashir Gwakh, "Thirty five poppy farmers released in eastern Afghanistan", *Pajhwok Afghan News,* 12/01/05

Afghanistan considers an amnesty for drug lords

The Afghan government is considering offering an amnesty to local drug traffickers as part of its new strategy to fight the opium trade, senior Afghan and western officials in Kabul said. Afghan officials said the government needed to consider unorthodox approaches to combat an industry that had ballooned over the past three years, providing drug traffickers with enormous resources that overshadow those of the government trying to fight them.

Victoria Burnett, "Afghanistan considers an amnesty for drug lords", *The Financial Times*, 12/01/05

Tajik Drug Agency opens second Afghan office

Tajikistan's Drug Control Agency has opened a second office in Afghanistan, Avesta reported on 13 January. The office, which has two employees, will liaise with Afghan forces to combat trafficking and gather information on drug smugglers. In addition to its two offices in Afghanistan, the agency has an office in Kazakhstan.

14/01/05 http://www.rferl.org/newsline/2-tca.asp

Tons of heroin from Afghanistan inundate Russia

Afghanistan is Russia's closest neighbor in the south. Afghanistan's mountainous border on the republic of Tajikistan stretches for 1,300 kilometers. Russian border guards were defending this line for ten years, but the Tajik authorities were not very happy about it. President of Tajikistan stated once that he disliked the idea of foreign military men defending the borders of his state. Russia is currently withdrawing its border guards from Tajikistan, according to a special agreement signed between the two countries.

Pravda, available at Afgha.com, 13/01/05, http://www.afgha.com/?af=article&sid=47539

Seizures and Arrests

Heroin seized in northern Afghanistan

Security officials in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province seized 17 kg of heroin from a car. The heroin was discovered when the car was stopped for a search after police suspected something was wrong. The car was on its way

This weekly digest was prepared by Maral Madi and Anjelika Mamytova

from Takhar province to Kunduz city. Heroin was found under the back seat of the car with a Kabul number plate. The driver of the car however managed to run away due to the carelessness of the police.

Heroin seized in northern Afghanistan, *Pajhwok Afghan News*, 13/01/05

50 kg of narcotics were intercepted in the Kaliningrad region in 2004

Vitaliy Demchenko, Head of the Regional Office of the Federal Service to Control Drugs, said that "we are not satisfied with the results, since situation with drugs did not get better. The situation is deteriorating due to the proximity of Polish and Lithuanian borders – which are the main producers of synthetic drugs in Europe, high purchasing power of Kaliningrad citizens (thus can afford to buy drugs) and another reason is the lack of efficient preventive prophylactics among young people.

CRY.ru, 17/01/05

1 kg of heroin was intercepted in Saint-Petersburg

43 year old citizen of Tajikistan was arrested with 979,3 grams of heroin. Law enforcement officers were tipped about the deal. It is not his first arrest on charges of drug trafficking.

CRY.ru, 17/01/05

Election Frenzy and Winds of Revolution

Karimov rejects Ukraine, Georgia scenario in Uzbekistan

Uzbek President Islam Karimov believes that society will not allow a replay of the Ukrainian or Georgian scenario in his country. "I believe that several factors are inevitably present in such revolutions. I do not think the West plays a leading role in them," he said in an interview published by the Moscow-based Nezavisimaya Gazeta. "The most important factor is the domestic protest potential that accumulates for years. The state's socioeconomic policy is another, "Karimov said. "For this reason, outside interference will not be fruitful until we create the environment for it," he said. Certain techniques have taken shape for the so-called promotion of democracy, Karimov said. "What is going on in Iraq illustrates this. If there is 'deficit of democracy' in a country, then this country is believed to need help so as to overcome this deficit. Money is allocated and strong forces are sent to stage a coup and eliminate the leadership that has created and been cultivating this deficit," he said.

Interfax, 14/01/05

Kyrgyz Government gives new passports to population for voting…right…

On parliamentary elections which will pass on February 27, 2005, except for the passports of 1994 the passports of new sample will be involved. Prime Minister Nikolai Tanaev declared that "We begin free-of-charge distribution of new passports having matrix mistakes (120 thousand passports) for one year. The population can vote during elections in Jogorku Kenesh on these passports. After the expiration of one year the passports will be withdrawn". As Tanaev said, the distribution of passports will be carried out on a voluntary basis. Speaking about the decision of parliament to forbid distribution of passports of new sample, Tanaev said that the Government has law on execution of accepted decisions. "The passports correspond to the international norms and have no defects," - Prime Minister concluded.

Akipress, 11/01/05

President Akaev signs two laws about CEC

President Akaev has signed two Amendments to the Election Code and the Law about the CEC (Central Election Commission). According to the first Amendment, the chairmen and members of the Local Election Commissions may be punished without the consent of the public prosecutor if they are caught red-handed in violation of the Election Code. The second Amendment is directed towards the present law about CEC members at elections and referendums in Kyrgyzstan. In accordance with the Election Code, the Chairman of CEC, nor its members can be detained or arrested without the consent of the President or Jogorku Kenesh, except in the case of them being caught red-handed in violation of the Election Code.

Akipress, 11/01/05

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