



Narcotics and Organized Crime in Eurasia Weekly Digest: 17 – 23 January 2005

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

Officials say Afghan opium crop set to drop sharply

The poppy fields that once crowded every scrap of farmland in this fertile corner of eastern Afghanistan have been supplanted by wheat. Farmers are slashing their cultivation of opium, government and foreign officials say. Nationwide, officials forecast a drop of between 30 percent to 70 percent in this year's crop. In crucial growing areas such as eastern Nangarhar province and southern Helmand, it could be down more than three-quarters, though reliable statistics are not yet available.

www.afghannews.net, 23/01/05

Shot Kazakh envoy dies of wounds

Sapargali Aubakirov, a deputy counsellor at the Kazakh embassy, had been in a coma since being found at his home on Wednesday morning. Police said several people had been questioned over the killing. The weapon used has not been found. Police believe the attack was a criminal rather than political act. The diplomat's car was found to be missing. Mr Aubakirov "died from his wounds at a military hospital in Islamabad" on Friday, the Kazakh foreign ministry said in a written statement.

BBC News, 21/01/05

Tajikistan is asking for an assistance to protect its border

On 19th January, intelligence officers of the Paris Pact participants (Afghanistan, UK, Germany, China, Russia, USA, France and Japan) gathered in Dushanbe to discuss a possibility of a financial assistance to the Tajik border guards once Russia will completely pull out of borders. Nuralisho Nazarov said: "We need 307 million Somonis (\$101 million) in order to buy communication equipment, military outfits, and transportation". Russians were guarding 1,271 km (out of 1,344) Tajik-Afghan border. (Lack of capability to control borders with Afghanistan will have far reaching impact on CARs.)

Reuters, BBC News, 19/01/05

Seizures and Arrests

Over 240 kg of drugs seized in northeast Iran

Iranian anti-drug police seized over 240 kg of illicit drugs in the northeastern province of Khorassan Razavi during the past two days, the official IRNA news agency reported on Monday. Half of the haul was confiscated in the provincial capital city of Mashhad, the report said. Drug addiction and transportation has been a serious social problem in Iran, a country sitting in the crossroad linking drug producing Afghanistan and Pakistan and markets in the Gulf states, Central Asia, western Europe and other regions. According to the official statistics, there are at least 2 million drug addicts in Iran. The country also accounts for 80 percent of the opium and 90 percent of the morphine intercepted worldwide, according to the International Narcotics Control Board. The Islamic Republic spends 5 billion US dollars annually on anti-drug programs, and over 3,100 police have lost their lives in conflict with drug smugglers during the past two decades.

Xinhua News Agency, 17/01/05

ANF recovers 25kg heroin

The Anti Narcotic Force (ANF) Sindh recovered 25 kilograms of heroin. According to an Anti Narcotic Force press release issued on Tuesday, the force had a tip-off that a huge quantity of narcotics had been shifted within the vicinity of the Asif Plaza for its transportation abroad. A special team of the force, after vigilant surveillance, arrested one Khalid Khan son of Sultan, a resident of Peshawar from a Super Highway bus stop, where he had been present to deliver the heroin powder for its smuggling abroad. The accused is said to be a member of the narcotics smugglers' gang and the recovered quantity of heroin was brought to the city by different means on different occasions.

Pakistan Press International Information Services, 18/01/05

4 kg of heroin is intercepted in Samara, Russia

Agents of the State Drug Control service in Samara region arrested two members of the organized crime group involved in heroin trafficking. Two citizens of Tajikistan were arrested with 4 kg of heroin.

Regions.ru, 21/01/05

35 drug related crimes were registered in a single day

On 21st January alone, 35 drug related crimes were registered in 19 regions of Russia. As a result, 4.702 kg of marijuana, 677 gr. of heroin, 146 gr. of opium, 36 gr. of hashish, 6 gr. of pervitine and 3 gr. of MDMA were intercepted.

CRY.ru, 21/01/05

Election Frenzy and Winds of Revolution

Legislative Assembly permits diplomats to participate in parliamentary elections

The Legislative Assembly of the Kyrgyz Parliament accepted an amendment to the Election Code that will allow former diplomats to participate in parliamentary elections. The law was accepted today by 31 votes. On January 18 the law did not collect the necessary amount of votes. The law now needs to be signed by President Askar Akaev to become valid.

Askar Akaev's son and daughter registered as parliamentary candidates

The 29-year son of the President of Kyrgyzstan, Aidar Akaev was registered as a parliamentary candidate for the Kemin constituency on Jan 18. He submitted his application for registration almost simultaneously with his sister, Bernet Akaeva, on Jan 15. In December 2004, Aidar Akaev was elected President of the National Olympic Committee of KR (just like Ilkham Aliev!)

CEC refuses to register Kurmanbek Bakiev as a candidate for parliament

A representative of the National Movement of Kyrgyzstan, Ishengul Boldjurova, reported on the attempted registration of the leader of that movement, Kurmanbek Bakiev as a deputy candidate at the forum for the leaders of opposition movements Democracy Deficiency in Kyrgyzstan. Bakiev is the former prime minister of Kyrgyzstan, and the district election commission recently refused his registration.

"Ar-Namys" political party nominates 8 candidates for parliamentary elections

"Ar-Namys" political party has held its' 4th congress on January 15-16 to discuss nomination of candidates for Parliamentary elections. More than seventy delegates from all regions approved the list of eight candidates - Emil Aliev, Tursunmuhamad Abduraimov, Erkin Bulekbaev, Jypar Jeksheev, Bodosh Mamyryva, Nina Dyrkina, Kubanychbek Turmanbetov, and Kaldan Sultanbaeva. CEC has accepted Emil Aliev's application yesterday. He is a candidate from Bishkek city University district.