

# An American businessman painted in Kazakh press

Menachem "Mark" Seidenfeld, a former Las Vegas resident, is facing trial for embezzlement in Kazakhstan, a charge his international attorneys and American advocates believe is baseless. Seidenfeld has been alternately jailed in Russia and Kazakhstan since December 2005.

This newspaper article, which ran in The New Generation only days after Seidenfeld was deported to Kazakhstan in November, is propagandistic, says Derek Bloom, a former Moscow-based attorney who is helping orchestrate Seidenfeld's campaign from the U.S., pro bono. Word choice and

phrasing in the Russian text prematurely suggest that Seidenfeld is guilty, said Bloom, who believes the American businessman's accuser paid the Kazakh press to print the story. "The article is a weapon," Bloom said, "to turn the public against him."

"The Republic's Weekly Newspaper"

"The New Generation"

Nov. 17, 2006

"THE CONNECTED AMERICAN"

The headline lends itself to a damning double-entendre, according to Bloom. In this usage, "connected" is meant to be read two ways: as a literal reference to Seidenfeld's telecommunications career, and as a subtle slander — "connected" also suggests Seidenfeld has friends in the right places, and not in a positive way.

A quick synopsis of Seidenfeld's story and events to date of publication.

Seidenfeld was transferred into Kazakh custody on Nov. 12. This article, printed five days later, says that Seidenfeld has come to the former Soviet Republic to be sentenced. At that time, however, Seidenfeld had not been formally charged, and he still hasn't. The article prematurely suggests to Kazakh readers that Seidenfeld is guilty, Bloom says.

Seidenfeld's image in the paper

An image of Seidenfeld hovers next to the "DUCAT" logo. DUCAT is a brand name for Arna Inc., the Kazakh telecommunications company Seidenfeld headed from 2002 to 2004.



## A long journey

Seidenfeld was arrested in Blagoveshchensk, Russia, in 2005 on a warrant out of Kazakhstan. After almost a year in Russian custody, Seidenfeld was extradited to a detention center in Almaty, Kazakhstan, where he remains today.

To move between the two countries, Seidenfeld rode in a 3 1/2-by-7 foot cell on a prisoner transport train for 32 days, passing through detention centers in seven cities. Seidenfeld's Russian fiancée followed the train and hired an attorney to check on Seidenfeld in each of the seven cities. Below is a map of the prisoner transport train route, which spans about 3,000 miles.

