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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 14
~~June 26~~, 1971

file

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT'S FILE
FROM: EGIL KROGH, JR. *EK*
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS AND STATE
DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ON INTERNATIONAL
NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, JUNE 14, 1971,
10:10 A. M. - 11:45 A. M.

The President opened the meeting by saying that the presence of senior members of the Cabinet, plus Ambassadors of five countries underlines the importance the President places on the drug problem. The Administration's program will emphasize reduction in the supply of dangerous drugs through the arrest and prosecution of pushers, treatment of addicts and education programs.

The President placed the drug problem in the perspective of a national rather than a military problem. He pointed out that the problem of supply of heroin is outside of the U.S., for the U.S. does not produce any opium poppy.

Mr. John Ingersoll, Director of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, gave an overview of the heroin problem. He reported that the Bureau now estimates that there are 300,000 heroin addicts in the U.S. and that 59% are less than 30 years old.

The President asked if there is more heroin available in the U.S. today than in 1969 despite the increased seizures. Mr. Ingersoll replied that there is more heroin available. The President asked if there were more addicts now than in 1969. Mr. Ingersoll replied that we really do not know. The President retorted that we have poor statistics and speculated that the problem is worse and that the cooperation of foreign countries is needed.

President Nixon stated that he did not intend to be criticizing any departments but merely wanted to point out the problems. He observed that we have either been doing the wrong thing or need to do more of what we are doing correct.

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MEMOS FOR PRES

Central Intelligence Agency Director Helms briefed on heroin smuggling in the tri-border region of Laos, Thailand and Burma. Approximately 500 tons a year are produced in Burma, 300 tons a year in Laos and 200 tons a year in Thailand. There are an estimated 21 illicit refineries in this region. The trafficking is carried out by a 5,000-man irregular Chinese army.

Director Helms reported that there is corruption in the Customs agencies of Vietnam and Laos.

A kilogram of heroin is now worth \$1,780 in this area which is a 45% increase in 8 months. Director Helms concluded that the trafficking could not be stopped.

Ambassador Bunker reported that the use of heroin began in Vietnam in late 1969 and that it has reached alarming proportions. Data shows that in 1969 there were 250 heroin users in Vietnam, in 1970 there were 1,146 and from January to May of 1971 there were 2,189.

In August of 1970, MACV set up a drug task force which implemented drug abuse education programs, drug suppression councils, joint Vietnamese/U.S. narcotics investigation and Customs teams, aerial marijuana destruction missions and expansion of the amnesty program.

Ambassador Bunker asserted that it was clear that unless President Thieu directly intervened, that progress would not be made in suppressing heroin. He told President Thieu that if heroin remained readily accessible to U.S. servicemen, that U.S. support could not be guaranteed.

President Thieu responded quicker on this warning than in any other situation by (1) assigning a senior military officer, General Quang, to direct the Vietnamese campaign, (2) intelligence and enforcement efforts have been improved, (3) the courts have been directed to expedite trials and punishment, (4) inter-ministerial committees were set up, (5) corrupt officials in Customs were removed, (6) police were replaced at airports, (7) pharmacies are not selling dangerous drugs without prescription, (8) tax-free rewards for police who make arrests, (9) some lower House Deputies were arrested, and (10) there is greater interchange of intelligence between U.S. and Vietnamese officials.

Ambassador Bunker stressed the need to patrol the airports, ports and borders of Vietnam. He continued that the Government of Vietnam does not have a sense of urgency nor are there enough competent and non-corrupt people. There are not rapid and impartial prosecutions. President Thieu emphasized military and pacification programs in the past and will now emphasize heroin suppression.

President Nixon asked what proportion of heroin comes from Southeast Asia. He was told that the figure is now approximately 10% and increasing, with 80% coming from Turkey.

Secretary Rogers asked about the use of special courts to process heroin pushers. Ambassador Bunker replied that sentences are 6 months for pushers.

Ambassador Bunker reported that one recent urine analysis test showed 2.5% positive out of 567.

Attorney General Mitchell asked if the Vietnamese Government will move against high officials in that government. Ambassador Bunker replied that the Prime Minister's brother was removed from the Customs Agency and speculated that President Ky's sister may be involved in trafficking.

Secretary Rogers asked if it would be useful to have entertainers go to Vietnam to entertain and educate the troops about drugs. Ambassador Bunker replied that it would be productive.

Ambassador Handley briefed on the subject of U.S./Turkey relations and the long history, dating back to 1932, of negotiations between the U.S. and Turkey on the reduction of poppy cultivation. In 1967, there were 21 provinces in Turkey cultivating poppy. By 1971, the number of provinces was reduced to 7; and in 1972, the provinces will be reduced to 4. It is noted that these 4 provinces are the most productive. Where the Government of Turkey has banned the cultivation of the poppy, this ban has been effective. In fact, the number of acres in production went up from 1970 over 1968.

The U.S. policy is to have Turkey eradicate completely its poppy crop. Prime Minister Demirel tried to do this over 4 to 5 years, but was not successful. Prime Minister Erim also wants to eradicate the poppy crop.

By the end of June of 1971, there will be an announcement from the Government of Turkey that only 4 provinces will be allowed to cultivate the poppy starting in September of 1971. Unprecedented efforts have been made by the Government of Turkey to buy up the crop. Ambassador Handley expressed some reason for optimism.

Ambassador Handley suggested that \$50 million over the next 3 to 4 years would suffice to get Turkey out of poppy production. The Government of Turkey is concerned, however, that the farmer be given a better life.

President Nixon asked whether Prime Minister Erim could move immediately in eradicating poppy cultivation with this \$50 million. The President suggested that we could not wait 3 or 4 years to end poppy cultivation. The President asserted that it is worth \$50 million to the United States if we can get it done. The President asserted that the United States will not be blackmailed, but he is willing to pay the price that must be paid in order to eradicate the poppy.

Ambassador Handley stated that the Prime Minister must give a one-year notice before he can tell the Turkish farmers that they cannot plant the poppy. This is a legal requirement.

Secretary Connally suggested that the crop could be purchased for \$3 million. Ambassador Handley said that the Turks use the oils from the poppies for other industrial purposes and that there is no addiction to speak of in Turkey. He feels that the Prime Minister must be able to offer the farmers something better than poppy production, for instance sugar beets or onion plants. There is also discussion of the possibility of constructing textile plants so that textiles can be shipped to the U.S.

Secretary Richardson stated that the production of poppy has a cultural meaning for the Turks, for in 1969 the U.S. pharmaceutical companies were going to buy up the entire crop. Secretary Richardson asked why, if India can prevent diversion, cannot the Turks.

Ambassador Handley replied that in India a farmer is denied a license if he claims that he had a small crop. The rationale is that the farmer is either a liar or a poor farmer.

Ambassador Handley speculated that within 2 years there should be a total end of production of poppy in Turkey.

President Nixon stated that Congress could cut all foreign aid to Turkey because of the drug problem in the United States.

The President instructed that we explore at the very highest levels:

1. What would be the price to buy the Turkish poppy crop.
2. Will that work to effectively stop illicit diversion.

The President said that we should not pay a high price for something not worth the price. However, the price is cheap now because the price later can be the destruction of our NATO alliance.

Secretary Richardson stated that whatever the cost is, Congress will pay the bill if we can be assured that the crop can be eradicated.

Ambassador Handley stated that the Turks cannot buy the crop and control the crop this year; that we should take the toughest stand next year and demand total secession of production.

The President remarked that Thailand, Laos and Turkey cannot control their own territories and therefore control of production would be difficult. The President admitted that part of the problem is that Americans demand heroin and we must educate our own people. He stated that marijuana gets young people into the drug culture and then it becomes easier to move on to heroin.

Ambassador Handley stated that he was convinced that Prime Minister Erim is trying to manage and curtail poppy production and that Turkey should not be singled out for retribution or criticism.

President Nixon stated that it would be interesting to know how many addicts enter Vietnam and how many addicts leave Vietnam who are not theretofore addicted to heroin.

Ambassador Handley felt that it would not be wise to accept Secretary Rogers' suggestion that the President send a letter to Prime Minister Erim asking that production of poppy be terminated. The Ambassador

felt that the Prime Minister could not comply and therefore there would be needless tension between the President and the Prime Minister.

President Nixon asked that the Secretaries of State, Agriculture and Treasury and the Attorney General get together to decide whether the subsidy being paid by the Turkish Government to the farmers is adequate and whether we can purchase better performance. The President said that he is willing to spend \$50 million in one year if that will do the job.

Mr. Egil Krogh, Jr., Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, briefed on the Special Action Office on Drug Abuse Prevention. He stated that it is now difficult to set a national strategy because of the dispersion of responsibility across the federal landscape. He said that evaluation would be a key element of the new program in order to see what actually works in terms of treatment. He said that one of our goals will not necessarily be to make a man drug free. He discussed the increased resources for rehabilitation.

The President concluded the meeting by saying that the group was brought together because of the high priority he is putting on the drug problem. He forthrightly stated that the drug problem is Public Enemy No. 1 in America. He stated that we must educate our young people and that we should not downplay the eventual dangers of drug abuse. He stated that countries with strength and character take a no-nonsense stance on drugs. He stated that 60% to 70% of those convicted of major crimes are or have been associated with drugs. The President stated that he considers discussions with those countries on the drug problem the Ambassadors' most important diplomatic mission. He ordered the Ambassadors to convey to their host governments that the U.S. means business.

Finally the President stated that stopping the drug traffic is more important than good temporized relations.