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HANDLING INDICATOR

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TO : To All Diplomatic and Consular Posts

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FROM : Department of State

DATE:

SUBJECT : Turkish Ban on Opium Cultivation,
and U.S. Assistance

REF :

The enclosed statements have been prepared for use in responding to numerous inquiries on this subject by members of Congress, the public and the press. They provide accurate orientation on this significant development in international narcotics control, and may be drawn upon in public and private discussions of the subject.

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Enclosures:

1. The Turkish Opium Situation.
2. U.S. Assistance to Turkey in Connection with Turkish Ban on Poppy Growing.

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In Out

Drafted by: S/NM:HRwellman:td	Drafting Date: 5/1/72	Phone No.: 23608	Contents and Classification Approved by: S/NM Nelson Gross
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Clearances:
NEA/TUR - Mr. Ogden

Turkey's Part in the International Illicit Opium Traffic

Authoritative sources estimate that 1,200 tons or more of opium are available for the world's illicit trade. Turkish illicit opium is thought to constitute about 5 to 6 percent of this. From 40 to 60 tons of opium are estimated to be sufficient to supply the annual American illicit demand after processing to produce from 4 to 6 tons heroin. Turkey's geographic location and historical connections with Europe have resulted in European processors obtaining most of their opium supply from Turkey, passing it on through their smuggling teams to consumers in Europe, Latin America, and principally the U.S.

Why is Turkey's decision to ban poppy cultivation so important if great bulk of illicit opium originates elsewhere?

Removal of Turkey as a source of illicit supply will cause serious disruption to established patterns of smuggling of opium and its derivative, morphine base, through Europe. It removes a product particularly high in quality. It forces processors to try to develop new sources of supply, taking additional risks of detection as they are obliged to use new contacts and transport their wares over longer and untested routes. This exposes them to the impact of other aspects of a coordinated program of strengthening enforcement activities throughout the world. Turkey's action also sets an important example which can encourage other nations to act with similar vigor in the common interest of controlling the narcotics scourge.

Why did Turkey declare a total ban?

Turkey has been a party to the international agreements and conventions, principally the 1961 Single Convention, calling for the improved control of narcotics. Successive Turkish Governments have been aware of the need to institute more stringent controls over opium production in Turkey. Legislation which eventually passed in August 1971, had been introduced in the Turkish Parliament in the

summer of 1970 for this purpose. But it became clear that the dimensions of the narcotics problem were expanding much more rapidly than the implementation of fully effective control measures. The Government of Prime Minister Erim therefore concluded that for humanitarian reasons, at the price of giving up Turkey's legal share of production of narcotics to meet legitimate world needs, a total ban would be implemented at the earliest possible date. A total ban could more easily be enforced with the resources available than could any other form of control. By law, the Turkish Government must announce restrictions on poppy cultivation one year in advance, making the announcement in June of one year covering planting anticipated to take place during late summer of the following year. The decree of June 30, 1971, was the strongest and most direct action legally possible for the Turkish Government to take. It confirmed the limitations of the previous forecast, which allowed poppy cultivation in only four provinces, and stated that a total ban would apply thereafter.

What has this decision cost the Turkish people?

The great majority of farmers who have grown poppy are as honest and hard-working as their counterparts anywhere else. They have for centuries grown small plots of poppy, seldom more than an acre or so. Not all poppy grown is incised and bled for opium gum. Normally, perhaps 20 to 30 percent of production is grown for the seed only. The seed is used by many for baked products, and is also used to produce edible oil traditionally used in the region. Residual oil cake is excellent animal feed. Neither seed nor oil has narcotic content. The hulls of the poppy head, once the seeds are removed, are sold for legal export from Turkey to sophisticated processing plants, primarily in Europe, for the extraction of residual alkaloids for legitimate medical purposes. The farmer thus profits from the opium gum, from the seeds and their oil and cake, from sale of poppy head hulls, and from the use of the remaining stalks for fuel. These farmers do not fully understand why they are called upon to abandon what to them is legitimate enterprise, when it is smugglers and the misuse of narcotics in other parts of the world which create untold misery. Turkey itself has virtually

no problem of addiction, with the result that farmers feel the root causes as well as the cures of the drug abuse problem lie with those who abuse the product, not with those who produce it.

The Turkish Decision and International Narcotics Cooperation

The decision of the Turkish Government to serve broad humanitarian interests by a total ban is subject to argument and challenge from a number of sources in Turkey. Some maintain that Turkey should not accept the economic loss without the commitment of massive compensatory assistance. Some say that the promise of additional help from the U.S. has a hollow ring because of the widespread reports of reductions in both economic and military assistance affecting Turkey as well as many other friends of the U.S. A few, in the hope of injuring the fundamentally good relations that exist between the Turkish and American peoples, seek to characterize the situation as Turkish capitulation to purely American pressure, thus preying on valid historical grievances and the, at least partially, consequential Turkish sense of pride and honor. But though such pressures are troublesome, the Government of Turkey and a large segment of informed Turkish opinion understand the broader picture of international cooperation required to break the grip of narcotics hucksters on the youth of the world. The U.S. has pledged substantial financial and technical assistance to Turkey to find ways to develop new sources of income for those legitimate farmers who will suffer the consequences of a total ban on raising the traditional poppy crop.

Poppy Cultivation During the Final Year

The Turkish Government has acted vigorously within its legal limits to be certain that only legitimate growers are allowed to plant poppy, and to make sure that opium gum is turned into government purchasing offices. The Government of Turkey is reinforcing the measures that last year substantially reduced the amount of opium gum flowing into illicit channels, resulting in the collection of the highest percentage of the crop ever obtained. This was achieved as a result of a number of Turkish measures instituted in the spring of 1971, including: (a) substantial increase in the price of government purchases of opium gum;

(b) an increase in the number of collection points in the growing provinces; (c) cash payments to the farmers at the time of gum collections rather than the old voucher system; (d) and the widely publicized fact that legal sales to the government would be the basis for computing the compensation to be paid to farmers following the total ban to assist them through a transition period while new sources of income are developed. In August 1971, a new licensing law was passed by the Turkish Parliament. This further strengthens the government's authority over the growing process. Now farmers legally are required to supply much greater detail about the location and extent of the areas planted. This law provides stiff penalties against those who fail to comply or who knowingly violate the new procedures. The number of farmers planting will be smaller than last year, and although a substantially larger area is being planted this final year, reinforced control efforts by the Government of Turkey are expected to produce positive results.

Revised February 25, 1972

PA/HO, Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

June 22, 2004

U.S. ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY IN CONNECTION WITH
TURKISH BAN ON POPPY GROWING

When the Government of Turkey decided in June 1971 to declare a total ban on growing of opium poppy in Turkey, to take effect at the earliest legally possible date (in effect, following the harvest of the 1971-72 crop), it was clear that both the Government of Turkey and a majority of Turkish farmers would be giving up legitimate sources of income in order to bring an end to illicit production and smuggling. American offers of assistance were formulated with the idea of helping Turkey to meet such legitimate problems. It was anticipated that other nations and international organizations would also contribute in various ways to help in the development of alternative sources of income for Turkish farmers and hopefully for the government as well.

The U.S. pledge of \$35 million, supplemented from the outset by the President's declared intention to make the best technical brains we have available to assist Turkey, is in concept divided into two parts. \$20 million is intended as a financial resource for programs and projects which could in a reasonable period of time produce new sources of income for the poppy farmer and the region in which he lives. \$15 million spread over three to four years to the Government of Turkey will help replace losses in foreign exchange the Government of Turkey would incur as a consequence of no longer being able to market its legitimate opium and related poppy product exports.

With American technical advice and assistance, the GOT has designed a special regional authority for central areas affected by the poppy ban, which will put developmental funds to work on selected activities, most of which are outlined in a joint report prepared in October and November 1971 by a U.S.-Turkish team. The U.S. team was led by former Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford Hardin. During the spring of 1972, the GOT has been establishing a regulatory and legislative base for this new regional development organization and making appointments to its key positions, hoping to utilize this operation as a model for agricultural development perhaps applicable to other areas of Turkey as well. Some American personnel will be recruited to work with this regional authority: \$400,000 in additional grant funds has been made available to the Turkish Government to help meet expenses of such personnel.

In other related areas, the U.S. has also made available \$300,000 to assist the Soil Products Office, the responsible agency under licensing and control legislation passed in the fall of 1971, in mounting an intensified campaign to control and collect the opium harvest during the final growing season ending in August 1972. Under a loan of \$3 million made to Turkey in 1968, the U.S. is assisting Turkish enforcement agencies in equipment and training aimed at detection and apprehension of illicit narcotics traffic. This loan is also supporting certain agricultural research and extension activities connected with crop substitution.

Department of State
April 1972