

Istanbul Confidential: Heroin, Espionage, and Politics in Cold War Turkey, 1945–1960

A long-standing, but often troubled, partnership binds the United States and the Republic of Turkey. Shared national security interests, first brought on by the onset of the Cold War, lies at the heart of this relationship.¹ As “the bulwark” of North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) Middle Eastern defense against the Soviet Union, Washington, under both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, came to invest vast amounts of money and attention into Turkey’s national security.² American support for Turkey’s various military and domestic security services has historically possessed many dimensions. In addition to the building of permanent military bases and the supplying armament and equipment, Washington has dispatched a great host of advisors and trainers to Turkey since the fifties. Comparative cases suggest that the use of advisors as a means of imposing structural reform upon Turkey’s security apparatus has served two general strategic purposes. Providing American know-how in technical or organizational matters clearly has allowed for more direct American influence over elements of Turkey’s domestic and foreign security services. Moreover, the presence of American trainers serves as a means of inculcating local and national officials with American values and methods, thereby further sustaining American interests in the long term.³

This article provides an intimate survey of the construction and early evolution of one element of America’s security relationship with Turkey: the development of joint counter-narcotics operations in the city of Istanbul. In exploring how

1. For a more recent summation of this relationship, see George Sellers Harris, “Turkish-American Relations Since the Truman Doctrine,” in *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (London, 2004), 66–106.

2. Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Turkey (McGhee) February 10, 1952, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954. Vol. VIII: Eastern Europe; Soviet Union; Eastern Mediterranean* (Washington, DC, 1988), 877.

3. For examples in the case of the United States and the role of American civilian advisors in promoting American foreign policy objectives, see Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, “Decolonization, The Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace Corps,” in *Empire and Revolution: The United States and the Third World Since 1945*, ed. Peter Hahn and Mary Ann Heiss (Columbus, OH, 2001), 123–53; Paul Sutter, “Tropical Conquest and the Rise of the Environmental Management State: The Case of U.S. Sanitary Efforts in Panama,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State*, ed. Alfred McCoy and Francisco Antonio Scarano (Madison, WI, 2009), 317–26.

American officials came to influence the policing of narcotics trafficking in Turkey's largest city between the years 1948 and 1960, this piece hopes to contribute to two specific historiographical issues. First, the research presented here adds to the growing body of literature on the history of U.S. antinarcotics policies on the world stage. Secondly, it attempts to shed new light on the relationship between Turkey's narcotics economy and the evolution of the modern Turkish state.

Since the sixties, a number of historians have investigated the international nature of Washington's antinarcotics policies. William O. Walker III has convincingly demonstrated, in the case of American policies in Asia, that geostrategic and security interests have long influenced American approaches toward a global ban on narcotics trafficking.⁴ Early failures and difficulties have not dulled Washington's pursuance of its antinarcotics policies.⁵ Rather, by the beginning of the Cold War, the scope of Washington's efforts to combat narcotics has grown with each passing decade. Accepting American standards and practices toward the drug trade has come to define Washington's approach toward bilateral relations across the globe. Still, as such scholars as Paul Gootenberg, Luis Astorga, and Eduardo Saenz Rovner have noted in different studies in Latin America, American efforts over the course of the twentieth century have repeatedly been met by mixed results.⁶ Studies of American antinarcotics activities in Asia further attest to the lack of tangible progress in halting the production or international trafficking of narcotics.⁷

In spite of the general failure of American attempts at halting the international drug trade, Washington's enduring confrontation with narcotics has provided a vehicle with which other aspects of American national security policy have been addressed. Jonathan Marshall has shown that antinarcotics operations have

4. Walker exhaustive study of British and American policy toward opium in Asia demonstrates that national security concerns both drove and restrained the activities of antinarcotics officers and crusaders. See William O. Walker III, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991).

5. For discussion of the debate and the challenges of criminalization during the immediate aftermath of the Harrison Act of 1914, see John C. McWilliams, "Through the Past Darkly: The Politics and Policies of America's Drug War," in *Drug Control Policy: Essays in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, ed. William O. Walker III (University Park, PA, 1992), 10-13.

6. On law enforcement cooperation with drug traffickers in Mexico, see Luis Astorga, *Drogas Sin Fronteras* (Mexico City, 2003), 283-94; on the FBN's frustration with Peruvian officials and the impact of the Coca Cola company, see Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008), 226-41; on drug corruption in Cuba under Batista, see Eduardo Saenz Rovner, *The Cuban Connection: Drug Trafficking, Smuggling and Gambling in Cuba from the 1920s to the Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008), 113-22.

7. Jonathan Marshall, "Opium, Tungsten, and the Search for National Security, 1940-1952," in *Drug Control Policy*, 89-116; Brian Martin, "The Green Gang and the Guomindang State: Du Yuesheng and the Politics of Shanghai," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (1995): 64-92; Kathryn Meyer and Terry Parssinen, *Web of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies and the History of the International Drug Trade* (Lanham, MD, 1998), 235-66; Fredric Wakeman, "Licensing Leisure: The Chinese Nationalists' Attempt to Regulate Shanghai, 1927-1949," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 54, no. 1 (1995): 19-42.

provided a means to equip and support counter-insurgency efforts in various corners of the world.⁸ Direct American involvement in policing narcotics trafficking abroad also successfully shrouded intelligence gathering and clandestine operations for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Finally, Washington's enforcement of its antinarcotics policies has resulted in an amplification of American influence worldwide as laws and policing institutions produced at home in the United States are replicated abroad.⁹ American advisors and officers, like the ones profiled in this article, are critical to this mimetic process.

The conduct, experiences, and insights of American agents in Istanbul during the early stages of the Cold War provide a compelling case study of the multifaceted nature of U.S. involvement in policing narcotics abroad. Turkey's purported role as the primary sources of heroin consumed by American addicts led to the placing of U.S. officials in Turkey, marking a significant escalation in Washington's commitment to combat narcotics at the source. The initiation of American counter-narcotics operations in Istanbul in the fifties reflected the expanding postwar reach of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), the grandfather to the contemporary Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Geopolitical and national security concerns framed FBN activities in Turkey, seeing the country as a crucial front in fighting the drug trade (which could potentially weaken the United States and its Cold War allies) and the growing transnational threat of organized crime. This mind-set, which entailed the propagation of American law enforcement methods and the promotion of clandestine intelligence operations, defined the movements and goals of FBN agents in Turkey between 1948 and 1960.

There are painfully few studies of the history of Turkish drug trade. Even though the production of opium has long been an important part of Turkey's political economy, there are virtually no studies of how opium producers and traders have shaped the making of modern Turkey. Politicians in Turkey, according to F. Cengiz Erdiñ, have historically paid very little attention to narcotics, in terms of its domestic use, transnational trade, and its effect upon national security.¹⁰ Instead, Turkey's national security interests remain almost exclusively framed in regional diplomatic and military terms or with respect to violent domestic movements.¹¹ Similarly, little attention is paid to narcotics in the few histories of policing in the Republic of Turkey (as well as the Ottoman

8. Jonathan Marshall, *Drug Wars: Corruption, Counterinsurgency and Covert Operations in the Third World* (Forestville, CA, 1991), 11–28.

9. See Peter Andreas and Ethan Nadelmann, *Policing the Globe: Criminalization and Crime Control in International Relations* (Oxford, 2006), 105–64.

10. F. Cengiz Erdiñ, *Overdose Türkiye: Türkiye'de Eroin Kaçakçılığı, Bağımlılığı ve Politikalar* (Istanbul, 2004), 14.

11. See, for example, Hamit Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East: From Political Struggle to Self-Sacrifice* (Princeton, NJ, 2004); Bruce Kuniholm, "Thinking About the Future: Turkey, the US and the World," in *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan (London, 2004), 213–29; Gencer Özcan, "The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey," in *Turkey in World Politics: An Emerging Multiregional Power*, ed. Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi (Boulder, CO, 2001), 13–30.

Empire).¹² The general absence of research into the role of narcotics trafficking and antinarcotics efforts is striking considering the contemporary relevance of both of these issues. In addition to the threats posed by narcotics trafficking to national security (such as the role of drug profits in financing domestic Kurdish terrorism), it is now quite clear that the drug trade has contributed to the building of legitimate right-wing movements and the expansion of Turkey's clandestine security apparatus.¹³

This article is less a study of the success or failure of Turkish antinarcotics operations as it is about the politics of narcotics and mechanics of counter-narcotics efforts in Turkey. At the heart of this piece is the relationship formed between members of the FBN and Turkey's Directorate of Public Security (*Genel Emniyet Müdürlüğü* or DPS). Interactions between these two agencies were contentious from virtually their first meeting. American reports filed between 1948 and 1960 tell of repeated acts of incompetence, duplicity, and brutality on the part of Turkish officers. By their own admission, American agents were hopelessly dependent upon their Turkish counterparts for information or to make arrests. Both agencies, despite their mutual misgivings, used one another to conduct off-the-books intelligence operations. By the time the Turkish military seized power in Turkey in 1960, it is clear that the FBN tolerated and DPS enabled the Istanbul heroin trade as much the two bodies sought to hinder it.

A close reading of how both Turkish and American officials approached narcotics trafficking at this stage in the Cold War affirms the degree to which law enforcement officials (particularly in counter-narcotics efforts) constrained their efforts for the sake of larger national security prerogatives. The case present here in this article provides instructive examples of how the so-called "war on drugs," even at this embryonic stage, ultimately served to promote American hegemony in Turkey and beyond.

SETTING THE SCENE: POLITICS AND POLICING IN POSTWAR TURKEY

The conclusion of the Second World War can rightly be called the beginning of a new era in the Republic of Turkey. Despite having avoided the conflict, Turkey continued to suffer from the political and ideological fallout that accompanied the state's establishment in 1923. A rigid, autocratic one-party system of governance

12. Ali Dikici, "Demokrat Parti Döneminde İç Güvenlik ve Türk Polis Teşkilatı," *Akademik Bakış* 3.5 (Winter 2009): 61–94; Ferdan Ergut, "State and Social Control: The Police in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Republican Turkey, 1839–1939" (New School for Social Research PhD Thesis, 1999); Nadir Özbek, "Policing the Countryside: Gendarmes of the Late 19th Century Ottoman Empire (1876–1908)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (2008): 47–67.

13. Daniele Ganser, *NATO's Secret Armies: Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe* (London, 2005), 224–44; Edward Herman and Frank Brodhead, *The Rise and Fall of the Bulgarian Connection* (New York, 1986), 42–65; Mitchel P. Roth and Murat Sever, "The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) as Criminal Syndicate: Funding Terrorism through Organized Crime, A Case Study," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30, no. 10 (2007): 901–20.

instituted by founding President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk continued to reign at war's end. After holding power for over twenty years, the Republican Peoples' Party had vigorously and often violently sought to transform Anatolian society through a series of nationalizing, modernizing, and centralizing measures meant to undo or erase the land's Ottoman imperial past.¹⁴ In addition to the oppression of Ankara's reforms, two decades of continued economic underdevelopment soured popular perceptions of Republican rule. By 1945, the country was ripe for a change in the political winds.

Among those who helped to steer the emerging postwar order in Turkey was a career bureaucrat by the name of Kemal Aygün. His path to power, as well as his precipitous fall from grace, is both illustrative of his times and critical to the specific history of Turkish–American antinarcotics cooperation. Although little is known about his parents, it is evident that Kemal benefited greatly from the fame and exploits of his uncle, Refik Koraltan, a hero of the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922) and seminal member of the early republican government.¹⁵ Like his uncle, Aygün also chose the budding Turkish bureaucracy as his avenue into politics. After a brief stint working as a district administrator, Aygün entered the Directorate of Public Safety.

Before 1950, it is not clear what sort of duties fell under his purview.¹⁶ As a dependency of the Ministry of the Interior, the DPS managed a broad array of policing concerns exclusive of pedestrian crimes. A significant portion of directorate's interests was of a political nature, including the monitoring of Communists, revolutionaries, foreigners, and minorities (including, but not exclusively, Kurds). The directorate's jurisdiction supposedly did not extend to activities abroad, but one specific branch of the department did collect information from Turkish businessmen, merchants, and tourists venturing out of the country.¹⁷

Kemal Aygün's years in the Directorate of Public Safety speak to the Turkish state's historical obsession with political security. Rebellion, separatism, and banditry were endemic to much of the Anatolian countryside at the outset of the republic's creation. Old Ottoman anxieties toward religious and ethnic minorities

14. On Turkish state-building, see Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley, CA, 2002); Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, 2011).

15. After the establishment of Atatürk's republican government in 1923, Koraltan went on to serve for twenty years in the assembly and at various levels of the provincial government. Most of Refik Koraltan's memoirs, however, are devoted to his contributions to the independence struggle. See Refik Koraltan, *Bir Politikaanın Amları* (Ankara, 1999).

16. Department of State Biographic Information Division, Aygun, Kemal; CIA-RDP86-00269R000400060004-7; CIA Records Search Tool (CREST); National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

17. "Survey of the General Directorate of Public Safety," undated, Turkey, 1951–1952; Subject Files of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, 1916–1970; Records of the Drug Enforcement Administration; Record Group 170; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

persisted into the fifties.¹⁸ The onset of the Cold War and the emergence of a more assertive Soviet Union amplified Turkish paranoia. Turkish participation in the Korean War helped to heighten the potential threat of Soviet aggression.¹⁹ Despite their diminutive size as an official party, Turkish Communists gleaned much attention in the Turkish press.²⁰ With the arrival of tens of thousands of Turkish immigrants forced out Bulgaria between 1950 and 1953, it appears that local law enforcement officials in Istanbul, and elsewhere, seemingly gave greater credence to the native (and largely overblown) threat of a Communist takeover.²¹

DPS anxiety toward Communist activity in Istanbul no doubt weighed more heavily on Kemal Aygün's mind than policing narcotics. Illegal drug use by Turkish citizens appears to have held even less significance. According to both American and Turkish officials, no "drug epidemic" confronted the Turkish state during the postwar period. Those few in Istanbul who were put in prison for smoking hashish or coping a hit of opium tended to come from the seedier parts of town like Beyoğlu, Galata, or Tophane.²² Most of the resources the DPS devoted toward narcotics trafficking seem to have been levied at ports or on Turkey's borders. Towns like Kilis on the Turkish/Syrian frontier thrived off of the illicit trade in opium (as well as the influx of goods forbidden under Turkey's rigid statist economy). Locals in Kilis and elsewhere resisted the constraining trade conditions since borders, as well as the customs and controls that accompanied their imposition, had only recently been established with the breakup of the Ottoman Empire.²³

18. Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 2009); Hans-Lukas Kieser, *Der Verpasste Friede: Mission, Ethnie und Staat in den Ostprovinzen der Türkei* (Zürich, 2000).

19. There is comparatively little on the social history of Turkey during the course of the Cold War. See John Vander Lippe, "Forgotten Brigade of the Forgotten War: Turkey's Participation in the Korean War," *Middle East Studies* 36, no. 1 (2000): 92–102.

20. Nazım Hikmet, a nationalist poet and longtime Communist activist, received particular popular attention in 1950 after he undertook a hunger strike in protest of his false imprisonment. See Saime Göksu and Edward Timms, *Romantic Communist: The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet* (New York, 1999), 212–53. For the evolution of the Turkish Communist Party during the early stages of the Cold War, see Jacob Landau, *Radical Politics in Turkey* (Leiden, 1974), 101–5.

21. Huey Louis Kostanick, "Turkish Resettlement of Bulgarian Refugees, 1950–1953," *Middle East Journal* 9, no. 1 (1955): 41–52; Geoffrey Lewis, "Political Change in Turkey Since 1960," in *Aspects of Modern Turkey*, ed. William Hale (London, 1976), 18; Martin Pera to Charles Siragusa, March 9, 1951, Turkey, 1951–1952, FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

22. During the course of the FBN's tenure in Turkey (1930–1967), State Department officials drafted regular monthly reports on narcotics arrest in the city of Istanbul. The reports are seemingly drawn entirely from local newspapers. Details of the arrests are often minimal but they usually mention the violator's name, the nature of the offense (usually possession or use of narcotics) and the location of the arrest. Most arrests, it appears, occur along the waterfront or in bars or cafes. See, for example, Istanbul to Department of State, "Narcotics Offenses in the Municipal District of Istanbul," January 22, 1951, Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

23. American Embassy Ankara to Department of State, "Smuggling at Kilis, Turkish-Syrian Border," July 23, 1968, no file number, Subject Numeric Files, 1967–1969; RG 59, NAB. The general predicament of enforcing antinarcotics efforts upon the newly created borderlands of the

Aygün's big promotion occurred in June 1950 when he was elevated to head the Istanbul branch of the Directorate of Public Safety.²⁴ It is not a coincidence that such a rise in the ranks of the department occurred within a month of the critical election of 1950. On May 14, Turkish voters swept the Democratic Party into power in the first open election in the country's history. The Democratic victory concomitantly benefited Kemal Aygün's uncle, Refik Koraltan, who helped to establish the Democratic Party in 1946 and, as a result, became president of Turkish Grand National Assembly for the next ten years.

Within two years of assuming leadership over the Istanbul branch, Kemal Aygün would again be promoted, this time to head the entire Directorate of Public Safety. His tenure within the DPS made him a fixture of Istanbul's political landscape, a status that would result in his election as mayor of the city in 1958. Together with the Prime Minister of Turkey, Adnan Menderes, Aygün helped to oversee one of the most dramatic "urban renewal" projects the city of Istanbul had ever experienced.²⁵ The capriciousness with which Istanbul was "modernized" mirrored the Democratic Party's grander ambition to solidify its power over the country. Despite coming to power after decades of autocratic rule under the Republican People's Party, Menderes and the Democratic establishment resorted to many of the dictatorial practices favored by their predecessors (such as rigging elections and curtailing freedom of the press). Such designs earned the Menderes' regime bitter enemies among the Turkish military and elements of the former Republican regime.²⁶

Kemal Aygün's ability to straddle politics and policing in both Istanbul and Turkey made him a pivotal figure in the progression of American and Turkish antinarcotics operations during the fifties. However, his actual contribution to these operations appears more ambivalent than his titles and authority would otherwise suggest.

SPIES AND NARCS: TURKISH DOPE, CLANDESTINE SERVICE AND THE FBN

America's crusade against narcotics predates the FBN's arrival to Turkey by almost a half a century. Despite the significant role played by American merchants and investors in the construction of the global opium trade during the nineteenth century, evangelical and progressive pressure from within the United States compelled Washington to be among the first signatory participants of International

modern Middle East is most recently surveyed in Cyrus Schayegh, "The Many Worlds of 'Abud Yasin; or, What Narcotics Trafficking in the Interwar Middle East Can Tell Us about Territorialization," *American Historical Review* 116, no. 2 (2011): 273–306.

24. "Yeni İdari Değişiklikler," *Milliyet*, June 26, 1950.

25. Murat Gül, *The Emergence of Modern Istanbul* (London, 2009), 140–71.

26. For further background on the significance of the Democratic period and the origins and ramifications of the 1960 coup, see Kemal Karpat, "The Military and Politics in Turkey, 1960–64: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of a Revolution," *American Historical Review* 75, no. 6 (1970): 1654–83.

Opium Convention held in Shanghai in 1909.²⁷ Although the passage of the anti-opiate Harrison Act preceded prohibition on alcohol by six years, Washington was slow to create a specific governmental arm to police the trafficking of opiates and other narcotics. When the Department of Treasury ultimately established such an agency in 1930, responsibility for managing the newly dubbed FBN fell to a one-time railroad investigator and diplomat named Harry J. Anslinger.²⁸

Washington's specific interest in Turkish narcotics production and trafficking first began in the late twenties. As one of the main centers of opium production for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey greeted Western calls for prohibition on opiates with hostility. Through the twenties, Ankara resisted calls from the League of Nations to curtail or ban the production of opium, claiming that legal sales of morphine were a vital national resource.²⁹

American involvement in Turkish opium issues intensified in the thirties. Public lobbying efforts by such crusaders as Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia, who personally identified Turkish opium as a source of addiction in New York City, provided some impetus for this engagement.³⁰ Police investigations and news coverage of high profile traffickers, such as Elie Eliopoulos and August "Little Augie" Del Gracio, also attracted the attention of American officials tasked with policing the flow of narcotics into the United States.³¹ With the FBN's Harry Anslinger in the lead, Washington ultimately forced Ankara to establish a national monopoly on opium production in 1931.³² However, as the thirties progressed, the Turkish opium monopoly proved ineffective and corruptible.

Anslinger's weight as a crusader against narcotics and a Washington insider was further amplified after the outbreak of the Second World War. As the threat of the Axis powers eclipsed all other national priorities, Anslinger furnished the first international American intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services (or OSS), with young agents to train in clandestine operations.³³ Intelligence gathering and clandestine operations were not alien to Anslinger and his bureau before

27. Douglas Clark Kinder, "Shutting Out the Evil: Nativism and Narcotics Control in the United States," in *Drug Control Policy*, 117–42; Üner Turgay, "The Nineteenth Century Golden Triangle: Chinese Consumption, Ottoman Production, and the American Connection, II," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 3, no. 1 (1984–1985): 65–93.

28. Harry J. Anslinger and Will Oursler, *The Murderers: The Story of the Narcotics Gang* (New York, 1961), 8–20.

29. Alan Block, "European Drug Traffic and Traffickers between the Wars: The Policy of Suppression and its Consequences," *Journal of Social History* 23, no. 2 (1989): 320–22.

30. See "Memorandum for Congressman LaGuardia," January 3, 1933; Turkey, 1930–1934; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

31. Harry J. Anslinger to Stuart J. Fuller, December 28, 1932, N800.114N16ELIOPOULOS, ELIE/30, Central Decimal Files, 1930–1939; NAB; Anslinger and Oursler, *The Murderers*, 56–73.

32. Arnold H. Taylor, *American Diplomacy and the Narcotics Traffic, 1900–1939* (Durham, NC, 1969), 244.

33. See John C. McWilliams "Covert Connections: The FBN, the OSS and the CIA," *Historian* 53, no. 4 (1991): 660–72.

the OSS recruited several key FBN agents. Harry J. Anslinger himself possessed a background in espionage, which he acquired during the immediate aftermath of the First World War.³⁴ Even before the outbreak of war in 1941, the FBN worked closely with U.S. Treasury and State Department officials stationed abroad to gather intelligence on drug shipments and other narcotics activities. Anslinger's intelligence network in China assumed particular importance as the U.S. military anticipated a coming conflict with the Japanese empire.³⁵

With the conclusion of the Second World War, the FBN returned to the struggle against narcotics with greater clout and resources. Between 1951 and 1960, Anslinger would commission the opening of permanent FBN offices in Rome (1951), Beirut (1954), and Paris (1959). The establishment of these foreign bases of operation came in recognition of the emerging flow of heroin out of the eastern Mediterranean and of Turkey as the vital source of raw opium production. End of year FBN reports submitted to Congress after 1945 tell of an increase in Turkish opium seized at U.S. ports (eclipsing opium derived from Iran, India, and other sources).³⁶ In April 1950, Senator Charles Tobey of New Hampshire declared that “a vast heroin and cocaine ring operating in the United States had its origins in Istanbul.” Although the claim was officially disputed as an exaggeration, the governor of Istanbul, as well as elements of the Turkish press, admitted that drug trafficking out of Istanbul was indeed a problem meriting greater Turkish study of “American legislation on narcotics offenses.”³⁷

The fight against communism imbued the FBN's approach toward narcotics. Anslinger personally equated the use of illicit drugs with personal susceptibility to communist propaganda.³⁸ Some within the U.S. Congress agreed with this appraisal.³⁹ With respect to the greater Middle East, Anslinger and his subordinates proposed an aggressive transnational policy of containment and intervention in order to halt the trafficking of narcotics and secure support from opium-producing nations. If Washington succeeded specifically in compelling the Republic of Turkey to halt narcotics production and transshipment with its borders, the

34. Douglas Clark Kinder and William O. Walker III, “Stable Force in a Storm: Harry J. Anslinger and United States Narcotic Foreign Policy, 1930–1962,” *Journal of American History* 72 (1986): 908–27.

35. Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine*, 218; Meyer and Parssinen, *Web of Smoke*, 245–46; Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy*, 140–41.

36. *Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs for the Year Ended December 31, 1947* (Washington, DC, 1948), 14–15.

37. American Consulate Istanbul to State Department, “Istanbul Press on Heroin Manufacture,” June 13, 1950, 882.53/6-1350, Central Decimal Files, 1950–1954, RG 59; NAB.

38. In his memoirs, Anslinger posed that it was essential to be “on guard against the use of drugs as a political weapon by the Communist forces in China and elsewhere in the Orient, Europe and Africa. There is every possibility that some of the Commies and fellow travelers may join hands in the world-wide syndicate . . .” See Anslinger and Ousler, *The Murderers*, 295.

39. In questioning Anslinger before the Senate, Senator Carl T. Curtis asserted that it was his understanding that “dope traffic” is believed to be part of “the Communist conspiracy apparatus” in the case of Thailand. See U.S. Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Organized Crime and Illicit Traffic in Narcotics*, Part 3 (Washington, DC, 1964), 687.

threat of mass addiction and, accordingly, Communist infiltration would greatly diminish within the United States, Turkey, and other regional allies (such as Iran).⁴⁰

Key in initiating FBN operations in southern Europe, Turkey, and the Levant was one of the bureau's most promising agents, George H. White. White was a prewar veteran of the FBN whose exploits were the subject of a major Hollywood picture entitled *To the Ends of the Earth* starring Dick Powell.⁴¹ The attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 eventually compelled him, with Anslinger's permission, to join the OSS. Although White spent much of his brief stint in the OSS working on secret "truth drug" experiments (which eventually led to the CIA's notorious MK Ultra program), the FBN's star agent also came into contact with OSS (later CIA) agents who operated in Turkey during the war.⁴² It is perhaps because of these OSS connections that Anslinger chose White for the FBN's first in-country operations in Turkey.

In June 1948, White arrived in Istanbul as a part of an informal operation to gather information on narcotics trafficking in the region. His presence in Turkey was leaked to the press after he took part in a local police sting on a downtown Istanbul home.⁴³ The arrests resulted in a minor publicity coup for Anslinger and the FBN after it was claimed that over a million dollars in heroin was seized in the raid.⁴⁴ White's brief trip to Istanbul also entailed forging local contacts. One of the individuals he met was a journalist by the name of Rıza Çandır, a former OSS informant with ties to the Turkish underworld.⁴⁵ Although not mentioned in his personal report to Anslinger, it also appears that he met with Kemal Aygün.⁴⁶

Aygün's connection to the FBN was reestablished a month after becoming head of the Istanbul branch. Toward the end of July 1950, Aygün met with Charles Siragusa, Henry Anslinger's newest FBN emissary and agent-at-large assigned to Turkey. Charles Siragusa, like White, was also a self-fancied celebrity crime fighter. As the founder of the FBN's Rome office, he played a critical role in the FBN's campaign to nab Charles "Lucky" Luciano, one of the most notorious

40. Garland Williams to Harry Anslinger, April 10, 1960, Iran File, 1958–1960; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

41. For more on White, see Douglas Valentine, *The Strength of the Wolf* (London, 2004), 27–28, 161.

42. For Commissioner of Narcotics Anslinger from White #10, June 10, 1948, George H. White Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Special Collections Department, Stanford University; George White Diary, Entry, June 1, 1948, George H. White Papers, Box 7, Special Collections Department, Stanford University.

43. "Heroin Kaçakçıları," *Akşam*, June 5, 1948.

44. In White's own estimation, the haul was probably worth just \$36,000. See For Commission of Narcotics Anslinger from White #9, June 4, 1948, George H. White Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Special Collections Department, Stanford University. Also see "US Traps 4 in Istanbul," *New York Times*, June 4, 1948.

45. For Commissioner of Narcotics from White #7, May 28, 1948, George H. White Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Special Collections Department, Stanford University.

46. Frank Sojat to H. J. Anslinger, January 5, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

Mafia figures in U.S. history.⁴⁷ Siragusa, like White, joined the OSS during the war. His service in the OSS, as well as his expertise in organized crime, later made him a valued CIA asset.

Charles Siragusa's first meeting with Kemal Aygün did not go well. Although he found the Istanbul chief cordial, Siragusa's hopes of quickly establishing a cooperative relationship regarding antinarcotics operations were dashed. Though hesitant to admit it, Siragusa went so far as to confess to Anslinger that his Turkish counterpart perhaps had set him up before he even arrived to the city. Reports of an impending secret American antinarcotics mission to Istanbul were circulating in local papers on the very day Siragusa landed.⁴⁸ Two days before his meeting with Aygün, local police arrested one of the most notorious traffickers in the city, İhsan Sekban.⁴⁹ However, when Siragusa broached Sekban's apprehension with Aygün, he was flatly told that Sekban would probably never see trial. İhsan Sekban possessed the best lawyers in the city and had friends in high places. In other words, in Siragusa's estimation, the Istanbul police not only betrayed his presence to the press but also placed the city's most notorious trafficker under arrest as a way to save face.⁵⁰

Aygün's assessment of İhsan Sekban's influence in Istanbul was among Siragusa's first lessons in the history and character of Istanbul's drug-trafficking networks. Siragusa knew next to nothing about organized crime in Turkey upon his arrival to the city. His first impressions of the major traffickers in Istanbul and the trade routes used to funnel opium, morphine, and heroin out of the country came as a result of a local CIA briefing.⁵¹ Over the following weeks and months ahead, Siragusa and other FBN agents built upon the CIA's initial intelligence reports through interviews with paid informants and policemen alike. Within two years of the FBN's first arrival to Turkey, agents compiled a fairly detailed picture of Istanbul's heroin underworld.

It is now clear that Anslinger's decision to send White and Siragusa occurred at a critical moment in the history of the FBN. As the threat of the Soviet Union and "the global Communist conspiracy" began to overshadow all other national security concerns during the early fifties, Anslinger sought to maintain the relevance of his crusade against narcotics. Among his chief strategies was to raise both public and congressional awareness of the perils posed by the twin dangers of the drug trade and the growing influence of the organized crime. He would argue that both threats, like Communism, were hazards of international proportions.⁵² Since

47. Meyer and Parssinen, *Web of Smoke*, 281–86.

48. "Beyaz Zehir Kaçakçıları," *Akşam*, July 24, 1950.

49. "Milyonar Eroinci Yakalandı," *Cumhuriyet*, July 25, 1950.

50. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, July 24, 1950, Turkey, 1950; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

51. *Ibid.*

52. See Anslinger, *The Murderers*, 3.

Turkey had long been an epicenter of the global opium trade, Anslinger made it a priority to combat, as well as to understand, the Istanbul underworld.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISTANBUL MOB

FBN reports from the fifties paint the drug-trafficking networks of the period as a small but growing sector of Istanbul's underworld. While cocaine and hashish circulated in and outside of the city, the biggest source of revenue for Istanbul's narcotics syndicates was heroin. Before the Second World War, the sale and transshipment of Turkish opiates was a trade few natives of Istanbul plied. Outside of a slew of international shippers and wholesalers (who included Europeans, Americans, and Japanese), there were only a handful of local merchants and businessmen involved in drug trafficking.⁵³ With the gradual departure of foreign traders and investors from Turkey (who were mostly forced out with the institution of the Turkish state monopoly on opium in 1931), the ranks of locals involved in the trade grew.⁵⁴

According to the FBN, ethnic and regional ties typified the construction of the postwar trafficking milieu. Prominent hoods like İhsan Sekban, as well as other major brokers such as Hüseyin Eminoğlu and Nazim Kalkavan, tended to be individuals drawn from Turkey's Laz minority, a Georgian ethnic group found along the country's northeastern shores.⁵⁵ These three individuals held particular sway over the outflow of refined and unrefined Turkey opiates to western Europe and the United States. Some, like Eminoğlu, worked directly with Lebanese and French-Corsican traffickers in constructing the infamous "French Connection" heroin pipeline from the eastern Mediterranean to North America.⁵⁶ Others involved in the trade operated as freewheeling wholesalers, selling raw and refined opium to seemingly random Western sailors, Syrian smugglers or Iranian importers. Success in the drug trade allowed several wealthy traffickers to diversify their economic interests. Informants claimed that İhsan Sekban dealt in real estate and guns.⁵⁷ Hüseyin Eminoğlu also garnered a noted reputation in local real estate and

53. Block, "European Drug Traffic and Traffickers," 323–27; Erdinç, *Overdose Türkiye*, 87–164.

54. In part the rise in local involvement in narcotics trafficking came as a result of urban migration trends during the postwar period. See, for example, American Consulate Istanbul to State Department, "The Floating Population of Istanbul," March 5, 1957, 882.401/3-557, Central Decimal Files, 1955–1959, RG 59; NAB.

55. See Ryan Gingeras, "Beyond Istanbul's 'Laz Underworld': Ottoman Paramilitarism and the Rise of Turkish Organized Crime, 1908–1950," *Journal of Contemporary European History* 19, no. 3 (2010): 215–30; Oktay Özel, "Migration and Power Politics: The Settlement of Georgian Immigrants in Turkey (1878–1908)," *Middle East Studies* 46, no. 4 (2010): 477–96.

56. Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, March 17, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

57. Frank Sojat to H. J. Anslinger, February 5, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

as a smuggler of nylons, coffee, nuts, and cigarettes.⁵⁸ Perhaps most intriguingly, Nazim Kalkavan's role in the heroin trade came as a result of his ownership of a major shipping line. Despite the company he may have kept as a result of his more nefarious interests, Kalkavan was a graduate of Oxford University and an acquaintance of Ian Fleming, famed writer of the James Bond series.⁵⁹

Compared to Nazim Kalkavan, İhsan Sekban, and Hüseyin Eminoglu possessed more subtle connections to power and legitimacy. At some point before his passing, Eminoglu became a multimillion dollar investor in a state-run art academy in Istanbul. Although local authorities did manage to put him on trial a few times over the course of his career, a two-year prison sentence was perhaps the worst of the punishments Eminoglu ultimately received.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, Hüseyin Eminoglu's partner, Ali Osman Tüter, received virtually no public attention. Although it is unclear what kind of effect it had on his status within the Istanbul underworld, FBN agents conspicuously remarked that Tüter was a former officer in the Turkish military police.⁶¹ İhsan Sekban, it seems, perhaps exercised the greatest amount of influence among legitimate members of the Turkish political establishment. Although Sekban was convicted for heroin trafficking after his July 1950 arrest, he was later released on appeal.⁶² Several officers later confided to their FBN counterparts that Sekban's influence also extended south to Izmir, one of his main bases of operation, where he held both the chief of police and the mayor in his pocket.⁶³

The experiences Siragusa and other FBN agents accrued as investigators in the United States clearly conditioned the ways in which the narcotics underworld in Istanbul was perceived. FBN operations in Turkey occurred precisely at a time when the U.S. government began to publicly assess the strength and nature of organized criminal activity at home. Before the fifties, American scholars and officials used the term "organized crime" to describe a select number of criminal enterprises operated by networks of individuals (be it theft, prostitution or smuggling). "Organized crime" gradually took on a new meaning with the advent of the Cold War. In an era that featured rising waves of hysteria over the threat of Communist infiltrators lurking within the folds of American politics and society,

58. U.S. Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Organized Crime and Illicit Traffic in Narcotics*, Part 4 (Washington, DC, 1964), 882.

59. Azai Yumak to Charles Siragusa, November 12, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; John Pearson, *The Life of Ian Fleming* (London, 1966), 273–74; "Kalkavan Yalı 2.7 Trilyon Liraya Kalkavanlar'a Kaldı," *Hürriyet*, May 29, 1999. It should be noted that Ian Fleming, during the time he became acquainted with Kalkavan in Istanbul, was a member of MI6.

60. Newsday, *The Heroin Trail* (New York, 1973), 32.

61. Charles Siragusa to John Cusack, July 9, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

62. Frank Sojat to Mr. H. J. Anslinger, October 1, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

63. Frank Sojat to Mr. H. J. Anslinger, October 8, 1952, Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

law enforcement officials increasingly adopted the concept of “organized crime” as a term describing discrete bands of individuals perpetrating national and international criminal conspiracies.⁶⁴ In other words, as Michael Woodiwiss puts it, *who* was committing crimes took on greater significance than *what* crimes were being committed.⁶⁵

Henry J. Anslinger, Charles Siragusa, and other key figures within the FBN were among the leading American officials to promote this revised notion of organized crime. As witnesses before Senate investigations on organized crime and narcotics, FBN officials testified that the “American mafia” was a singular organization defined by ethnic (i.e., Italian) ties that controlled a plethora of illegal activities with an almost totalitarian grasp. As an “alien conspiracy” originating outside of the United States, American organized crime, FBN agents pointed out, worked hand in hand with analogous criminal syndicates abroad. Cumulatively, since the sixties, the American definition of organized crime, which emphasizes the centrality of coherent, conspiratorial “ethnic” syndicates that dominate a coterie of illicit trades, has been adopted by foreign governments and international agencies as a model approach in investigating and describing “mafias” worldwide.⁶⁶

In the case of Turkey, Charles Siragusa and other FBN agents came to Istanbul looking for gangs. This approach led American agents in the field to “rationalize” their understanding of the Istanbul underworld. Networks of traffickers, for example, were described as bounded and discrete syndicates with defined chieftains and members (as opposed to looser networks of traders and suppliers). Like “Cosa Nostra” back in the United States, the FBN emphasized the “ethnic minority” Laz character of Turkish narcotics traffickers. FBN intelligence reports at times contradict the perceived ethnic exclusivity of the gangs they pursued. Until the sixties, it appears that several prominent heroin-dealing networks were composed of members drawn from a variety of native and foreign ethnic and religious groups.⁶⁷

To this point, it appears that the FBN witnessed a dramatic transition in the character of the underworld during the fifties. According to one agent in the field, local police officials were supporting the ascendancy of Muslim traffickers in

64. See Lee Bernstein, *Greatest Menace: Organized Crime in the Cold War* (Boston, 2009).

65. Michael Woodiwiss, “Organized Crime – The Dumbing of Discourse,” *The British Criminology Conference: Selected Proceedings*, Volume 3. Papers from the British Society of Criminology Conference, Liverpool (July 1999): 1–10.

66. Michael Woodiwiss, *Organized Crime and American Power: A History* (Toronto, 2001), 362–89.

67. FBN reporting on İhsan Sekban belies its own monolithic understanding of organized crime in Turkey. According to FBN informants, Sekban’s gang comprised both Greek Orthodox Christians and Albanians. It was also rumored that İhsan Sekban was actually of Armenian descent and had converted to Islam. See Frank Sojat to Mr. H. J. Anslinger, November 5, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Martin Pera to Charles Siragusa, April 20, 1951; Martin Pera’s File; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

Istanbul as a way of doing away with the older Christian and Jewish networks.⁶⁸ In hindsight, one could interpret this alleged favoritism shown toward Muslim traffickers as part of a general and long-standing governmental policy aimed at undermining the economic clout of non-Muslims in Turkish society.⁶⁹ Yet from the perspective of those FBN agents then in the field, such machinations were evidence of a much more profound trend. Agents recognized that their insights into the gangs of Istanbul were tempered and guided by the information they received from both DPS officers and local informants. Moreover, Siragusa and others gradually came to understand that their interlocutors often contrived and created the realities presented to FBN agents. In short, as one combs through FBN intelligence files, it is clear that local police (as well as politicians) often worked in unison with the city's local color.

POLICE WORK: THE FBN AND THE DPS RELATIONSHIP,
1948–1960

Relations between members of the FBN and the DPS evolved through the fifties on an ad-hoc basis. None of the American officers stationed in Turkey had any fluency in Turkish. Although translators may have been present for some meetings, most conversations and briefings between the two sides seem to have been conducted in a variety of languages (often Italian or French, two languages some FBN agents spoke with various degrees of fluency). Occasionally, Aygün and other DPS officers passed on original Turkish reports detailing the names, biographies, whereabouts, and activities of major traffickers.⁷⁰ In most cases however, intelligence sharing, as well as coordination of operations, appeared to have been conducted by word of mouth or on the basis of personal relationships.

While in the presence of his American counterparts, Aygün appeared thankful for the support he received from the FBN and repeatedly express interest in adopting more “Americanized” methods of policing. As head of the DPS, he attempted to centralize the directorate's power and increase intelligence sharing among its various branches.⁷¹ He, along with other leading officials in Ankara, voiced support for reforming Turkey's penal laws with respect to narcotics violations.⁷² In return, Charles Siragusa personally invited several of Aygün's men to be

68. Martin Pera to Charles Siragusa, March 5, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

69. See Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve 'Türkleştirme' Politikaları* (Istanbul, 2001); Zafer Toprak, *İttihad-Terakki ve Cihan Harbi: Savaş Ekonomisi ve Türkiye'de Devletçilik* (Istanbul, 2003); Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de "Milli İktisat" (1908-1918)* (Ankara, 1982).

70. See amendment to Frank Sojat to Mr. H. J. Anslinger, October 1, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

71. Frank Sojat to H. J. Anslinger, January 5, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; “Opium Production,” March 16, 1960; Turkey, 1960–1961; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

72. American Consulate General, Istanbul to Secretary State, “Narcotics Report – Turkey,” September 17, 1952, 882.53/9-1752, Central Decimal Files, 1950–1954, RG 59, NAB.

trained in American counter-narcotics methods at a FBN facility in Italy.⁷³ Along side specific changes to the narcotics bureau attached to the DPS, a more general wave of reforms swept over the Turkey's policing infrastructure. Under the direction of an American civilian advisor, the organization, labor codes and equipment of the DPS was upgraded and regularized.⁷⁴

Aygün's pledges to reform policing and legal frameworks along American lines came at a time of dramatic U.S. involvement in political, economic, and military matters in Turkey. American pressure for more open and transparent elections in Turkey may have contributed to the victory of Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party in 1950.⁷⁵ Millions of dollars of direct military aid from Washington led to the construction of large military bases (such as İncirlik in southern Turkey) and the modernization and provisioning of various elements of Turkey's armed forces.⁷⁶ In the hopes of boosting Turkey's agricultural sector, Washington provided American-made capital goods, such as tractors, to Turkish farmers and financed the construction of dams and roads.⁷⁷ Like the reformation of the DPS with respect to policing narcotics, security concerns generally buttressed American aid programs in Turkey. Turkey, American planners reasoned, was safer from a Communist takeover with a more democratic political system, a more robust economy and a stronger military. In turn, the United States and its NATO allies were less vulnerable to Soviet aggression with a generally more secure Turkey as a stable partner.

Yet, from virtually the beginning of the FBN's efforts in Turkey, it was clear that the DPS approached drug trafficking in unsettling ways. George White's escapade in Istanbul in 1948 was the first American experience with the underworld's relationship with the police. The main target in the 1948 case, a pimp and heroin dealer named Vasil Arcan, was specifically suggested to White by the head of the Istanbul narcotics bureau. It was later discovered, after he was released from police custody, that Arcan was a regular police informant.⁷⁸

Other concerns regarding the behavior and methods of the DPS troubled American agents in Turkey. Suspects were habitually beaten while in Istanbul police custody, a fact that often led sympathetic juries to acquit suspects caught red-handed.⁷⁹ Informants working with the FBN agents also had to fear being arrested, harassed or shaken down for money by Istanbul policemen (including

73. Garland Williams to Harry Anslinger, April 20, 1958, Iran File, 1958-1960; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

74. Dikici, "Demokrat Parti Döneminde," 68-70.

75. William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774-2000* (London, 2002), 110-11.

76. Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy*, 123; George S. Harris, "Turkey and United States," in *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition, 1950-1974*, ed. Kemal Karpat (Leiden, 1975), 56-57.

77. Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, 1997), 234-36.

78. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, August 14, 1950; Turkey, 1950; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

79. Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, February 23, 1955; Turkey, 1955-1956; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

those DPS officers already handsomely paid by the U.S. government for collaborating with American agents). American Consul General Fredrick Merrill specifically warned Siragusa and the FBN against dealing with the Kemal Aygün, claiming, “I am not sure I trust any Turkish chief of police, particularly when salaries are so low!”⁸⁰

No venture into the countryside could be undertaken without the presence of at least one of Kemal Aygün’s two most loyal officers in the DPS, Ali Eren and Galip Labernas.⁸¹ The FBN’s reliance upon Labernas and Eren as case-making agents would also be tested (after it was discovered they too browbeat informants for money and information), yet ranking officers like Siragusa made it clear to his subordinates that the two Turks were to be trusted since they were Aygün’s men.⁸²

To counteract the double dealing and incompetence perceived among the Istanbul police, Siragusa and other agents in the FBN relied upon their own initiative to make cases and gather information. In lieu of direct support from law enforcement, paid informants, often active drug traffickers, provided the only medium with which American agents could gain any independent insight into the Istanbul underworld. Charles Siragusa’s favorite informant, a chemist by the name of Hüsni Soysal, was perhaps the chief source of information for American agents in Turkey. Soysal was a member of a large extended family of heroin traffickers based in Istanbul. After Siragusa made his acquaintance in the summer of 1950, American agents protected Hüsni from prosecution (despite DPS pressure and harassment) and believed his claims that he had retired from the drug trade (despite an official DPS police report ranking him among the top traffickers in Istanbul).⁸³

FBN frustration with the services and support offered by Kemal Aygün and the Istanbul branch of the DPS steadily mounted between 1950 and 1955. Repeated pledges to provide more intelligence on drug trafficking to American agents arriving to Istanbul were rarely fulfilled.⁸⁴ In 1952, Ankara appointed Aygün to head the national DPS office. Simultaneously, Aygün also was appointed governor for the province of Ankara. For the next three years, Aygün’s time and commitment to American efforts in Turkey were naturally limited (to the great displeasure of the

80. Fredrick Merrill to H. J. Anslinger, October 23, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952, FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

81. Memorandum: District #17, November 24, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

82. Aygün is first referred to as Siragusa’s “personal friend” in Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, June 18, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

83. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, August 10, 1950; Turkey, 1950; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, August 20, 1950; Turkey, 1950; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Memorandum Report, October 22, 1958; Turkey, 1957–1959; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

84. Frank Sojat to H. J. Anslinger, October 8, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

FBN agents in the field).⁸⁵ Replacing Kemal Aygün as chief of the Istanbul branch of the DPS was another veteran of the force, Alaattin Eriş. It was later asserted that he, like Aygün, received his promotion due to his association with a close compatriot in the capital (namely, Namık Gedik, the Minister of the Interior). Eriş's arrogance and bombast further soured already strained relations with American agents. After five years in country, no one from FBN had put together a case against a major Istanbul trafficker. News from the Turkish countryside was even worse; American agents touring the Anatolian hinterland reported that the government's opium monopoly had little force of law among rural opium producers or sellers. Police in several rural towns, like Kilis, Iskenderun, and Gaziantep, were either powerless to stop the trade or in the pocket of local traffickers.⁸⁶

In September 1955, Kemal Aygün's career received an unexpected boost. Inaction by the police during a series of anti-Greek pogroms in Istanbul resulted in Eriş's dismissal as head of the Istanbul branch of the DPS.⁸⁷ Both Aygün and Siragusa warmly greeted this change in administration. Early that year, it had come to the attention of American officials that a former member of Istanbul's city council, Naki Hıncal, had posed as a police officer and attempted to shake down an FBN informant for money. Officer Ali Eren, a DPS narcotics agent and an Aygün loyalist, informed the FBN that Hıncal and Alaattin Eriş were close allies and that Naki Hıncal was personally invested in the drug trade.⁸⁸ Kemal Aygün confirmed the story and further implicated Eriş as a friend and confederate of İhsan Sekban.⁸⁹ The American reaction to these revelations was fairly muted; one officer in the field had gathered that Eriş had consistently and deliberately hindered FBN investigations in Istanbul.⁹⁰ Yet it was clear to Siragusa that such admissions of official corruption and complicity in narcotics trafficking were not pained confessions for Aygün. Kemal Aygün, Siragusa surmised, hated Eriş and wanted him removed. When an officer friendlier to U.S. interests replaced Eriş, Aygün formally left his position as governor of Ankara to resume full-time duties as head of

85. Frank Sojat to Frank Sojat to H. J. Anslinger, May 13, 1952; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

86. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, March 13, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Memorandum Report, December 13, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

87. Memorandum Report, September 15, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

88. Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, May 1, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB. Hıncal in fact was thrown out of the party and his position for his involvement in drug trafficking. See "İki Mebus D.P.'den İhraç Edildi," *Milliyet*, February 4, 1953.

89. Memorandum Report, June 24, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Memorandum Report, October 27, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

90. Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, April 1, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

the DPS.⁹¹ Once the dust from the September 1955 pogroms settled, Alaattin Eriş also landed a new position within the Ministry of the Interior as a provincial administrator. Before departing Istanbul altogether, Charles Siragusa suggested that Eriş could be hired as a paid informant due to his many contacts within the Istanbul underworld.⁹²

In the run up to Eriş's dismissal, agents based in the city gradually began to lay plans for a new approach toward combating Turkish heroin. Rather than target the main kingpins of the trade, greater investigative resources were devoted to apprehending traffickers transporting and selling raw opium in the countryside.⁹³ Optically, this new tact produced the FBN's first high profile arrest in the country. In December 1954, a joint operation comprising both Turkish and American officers apprehended Ahmet Özsayar and twenty-six other traffickers outside of Adana with over four hundred kilos of raw opium, morphine and heroin.⁹⁴ An "internal trends" report dealing with Turkey explicitly states that the success of the Özsayar case in part hinged on the fact that both Aygün and Eren were minimally involved.⁹⁵ By the end of 1955, the FBN invested virtually all of its resources in developing cases outside of the city.

An ongoing lack of results spawned a detailed internal assessment of the FBN's activities in Turkey in 1958. According to Paul Knight, a veteran of FBN investigations in both Lebanon and Turkey, several factors inhibited American agents from making cases in Istanbul. For one thing, the fact that most top traffickers in Turkey comprised an exclusively set of ethnic Laz migrants prevented outsiders, be they Americans or most Turks, from infiltrating major heroin operations. Problems also beset American attempts to make low-level arrests. Turkish officers in the DPS narcotics bureau made it clear to Knight that their paid informants only ratted out small time competitors while still maintaining a heavy hand in the drug trade. Even a long-time informant like Hüsnü Soysal would never turn over evidence related to high-level traffickers to the FBN since he too was still involved in moving product abroad. Despite the apparent impossibility of the tasks placed upon FBN agents in Istanbul, Knight insisted that a permanent American presence in Turkey was essential in maintaining information on the country's trafficking

91. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, June 27, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

92. Memorandum, October 27, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

93. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, June 27, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, July 5, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

94. U.S. Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, *Organized Crime and Illicit Traffic in Narcotics*, Part 4 (Washington, 1964), 799; Charles Siragusa and Robert Wiedrich, *Trail of the Poppy* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966), 3–32.

95. Memorandum: District #17, 24 November 1955, Turkey, 1955–1956, FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

networks. Turkish officers, it appeared to Knight, were too dilantant to take initiative in handling informants or cases on their own.⁹⁶

SPY VERSUS SPY: AMERICAN AND TURKISH CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

Until the establishment of a permanent FBN office in 1961, the myriad of American narcotics agents rotating in and out of Istanbul operated out of the U.S. consulate. Among the officers to arrive in the late fifties was a seasoned agent named Salvatore Vizzini. Over the course of his career, Vizzini's fieldwork for the bureau would take him all over the world as an undercover operative.⁹⁷ In addition to his work with the FBN, Vizzini's activities also extended into the realm of clandestine operations. While based in Turkey, Salvatore Vizzini regularly collaborated with Harold Fiedler, a CIA operator attached to the Turkish security service who also possessed an office in the U.S. consulate. In 1960, while touring the Turkish–Soviet border under Fiedler's instructions, Vizzini shot and killed two men. Vizzini, in a later interview, stated the shootings were covered up by the FBN and were reported as a “junk deal gone bad.”⁹⁸ Yet no report referencing the incident can be found with the FBN's files. In fact, the CIA is rarely mentioned within any of the reports submitted from Turkey.

Sal Vizzini's off-the-books collaboration with the CIA was not unique or isolated to Turkey. In his autobiography, Vizzini reveals instances during a tour of Lebanon where he personally undertook clandestine operations at the CIA's behest.⁹⁹ Interviews conducted by Douglas Valentine further affirm the often-blurred relationship between the CIA and the FBN. In surveying the history of the FBN, it is generally clear that narcotic agents were useful in providing a veneer of legitimacy for gathering intelligence both abroad, and, more controversially, at home. Furthermore, there is evidence that suggests the CIA coveted the gangsters and smugglers used by the FBN as informants in order to conduct more dubious operations. In 1960, William K. Harvey, a chief in the CIA's intelligence branch, approached Charles Siragusa to help run the QJ/WIN program, an effort to form a unit of gangsters from around the world to be deployed for executive assassination missions. Although Siragusa later testified that he refused the assignment “on moral grounds,” Harvey's role in contracting the services of prominent American gangsters in order to kill Fidel Castro suggests that such a plan was not a one-time affair.¹⁰⁰

96. Memorandum Report, Bureau of Narcotics, District 17 (re: Turkey) October 22, 1958; Turkey, 1957–1959; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

97. Valentine, *Strength of the Wolf*, xvi.

98. *Ibid.*, 278.

99. See Sal Vizzini et al., *Vizzini: The Secret Lives of America's Most Successful Undercover Agent* (New York, 1972), 175–93.

100. Alan Block, *Perspectives on Organized Crime* (Dordrecht, 1990), 214–16; Howard Jones, *The Bay of Pigs* (Oxford, 2008), 91; Valentine, *Strength of the Wolf*, 227.

As the CIA and FBN grew (albeit unequally) in size and scope during the postwar years, the two continued to share tasks rooted in upholding American national security interests. Working within the confines of the FBN, as Sal Vizzini later explained, provided agents a “cover within a cover” that allowed them further immunity from local or foreign surveillance.¹⁰¹

The trade and production of narcotics, as it would turn out, was an element found in a variety of strategically important battlegrounds of the Cold War. As far back as the prewar period, the need to form alliances with pro-American forces abroad often trumped the FBN’s antinarcotics operations. In China, Anslinger personally ignored reports detailing drug dealings among elements of Chang Kai-Shek’s Nationalist forces.¹⁰² With the outbreak of the Cold War, the FBN either ignored or provided political cover for CIA-backed allies in Southeast Asia and Latin America.¹⁰³ Closer to home, both George White and Charles Siragusa provided critical support for the CIA’s “truth drug” experiments with marijuana and LSD in New York and San Francisco.¹⁰⁴ Recently declassified documents suggest that the CIA’s collaboration with (and often appropriation of) narcotics operations continued well into the seventies (a phenomenon that at times roiled drug enforcement officers).¹⁰⁵

Over the course of the fifties, the FBN realized that Kemal Aygün and elements of the DPS also operated under a dual pretense. In late April 1955, FBN agents learned that Aygün was “engaged in covert and political intelligence” while he was simultaneously governor of Ankara and head of the DPS.¹⁰⁶ Over time, it became clear that both Eren and Labernas were a part of Aygün’s small network of spies.¹⁰⁷ It was generally surmised that local Communist activities in Istanbul were the primary focus of the three men. However, Charles Siragusa speculated that joint operations with the FBN may have provided cover for Aygün’s agents abroad. In 1956, the FBN invited Captain Galip Labernas to train with the bureau in Italy. Charles Siragusa suspected that in addition to receiving this training, Labernas was also gathering “political intelligence” on Aygün’s behalf. In conversing with Labernas,

101. Vizzini et al., *Vizzini*, 175. For more thorough discussion of the CIA’s use of narcotics enforcement as cover for clandestine action, see Marshall, *Drug Wars*, 35–62.

102. Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy*, 69.

103. Vizzini et al., *Vizzini*, *passim*.

104. Valentine, *Strength of the Wolf*, 134–47.

105. See inserted documents in Douglas Valentine, *The Strength of the Pack* (Walterville, OR, 2009), 431–40.

106. Charles Siragusa to Kemal Aygun, April 13, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Elmore Gross to Charles Siragusa, June 18, 1955; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

107. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, December 5, 1956; Turkey, 1955–1956; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Memorandum, March 10, 1959; Turkey, 1957–1959; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

Siragusa emphasized that he would “strenuously object” to any Turkish intelligence operations while he was in Italy.¹⁰⁸

Aside from Labernas’ stay in Italy, FBN files give very little indication of American policy toward Turkish clandestine operations in Istanbul or elsewhere. It is even more difficult to contextualize Aygün’s activities within the broader history of the Turkish secret service.¹⁰⁹ While some evidence suggests that Kemal Aygün was aware of official domestic clandestine operations conducted in Istanbul while he was mayor, nothing in the FBN files (or any other public source for that matter) suggests he was a regular agent of the National Security Service (the predecessor to Turkey’s contemporary clandestine service, the National Intelligence Organization).¹¹⁰ In the absence of any clues as to the nature or purpose of his activities, it is reasonable to also suggest that Aygün’s circle of agents formed a personal contingent of spies. The existence and use of private or unofficial intelligence and paramilitary units is a historical phenomenon dating back to the late Ottoman era. Several studies have detailed the degree to which members of the last Ottoman government established networks of spies and assassins in order to promote both government and private interests.¹¹¹ After the empire fell, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk also personally maintained a set of retainers employed for “off the books” actions.¹¹²

The significance of this blending of tasks and interests on the part of American and Turkish narcotics officers and spies exceeds the operational value such alliances may offer. One could reasonably speculate that the utility of employing narcotics officers in an intelligence or clandestine capacity at the very least made up for the failures of antidrug regimes. One could go still further, as other scholars and commentators have suggested, and contend that policing the drug trade is often nothing more than a façade that only partially shields more dubious operations conducted by elements of the state.¹¹³

108. Martin Pera to Charles Siragusa, March 5, 1951; Turkey, 1951–1952; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

109. Most studies of Turkish clandestine operations are rather vague as to the organizational structure and personnel that comprised the three successive spying agencies that have existed in Turkey since 1923. Moreover, it is clear that the Turkish military has long maintained its own network of spies and special operatives since at least the beginning of the Cold War. See İlhan Bahar, *Teşkilat-ı Mabsusa, MIT ve İstibbarat Örgütleri* (Istanbul, 2009); Gültekin Ural, *Teşkilat-ı Mabsusa’dan MIT’e: Abdullah Çath ve Susurluk Olayı* (Istanbul, 1997).

110. Soner Yalçın, *Efendi: Beyaz Türklerin Büyük Sırrı* (Istanbul, 2004), 510. According to Yalçın’s interlocutors, Aygün was a witness to the torturing of prisoners conducted by members of the Turkish National Security Service (*Milli Emniyet Hizmeti*).

111. Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London, 2004), 143–44; Ryan Gingeras, “Last Rites for a ‘Pure Bandit’: Clandestine Service, Historiography and the Origins of the Turkish ‘Deep State,’” *Past & Present* 206 (2010): 121–44.

112. For the case of *Topal Osman*, Mustafa Kemal’s private bodyguard, see Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to the Caucasus* (Providence, RI, 1995), 369–70; Erik Jan Zürcher, *The Unionist Factor: The Role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement, 1905–1926* (Leiden, 1984), 88, 92.

113. In surveying U.S. clandestine support for narcotics-dealing allies in Burma and Thailand in the aftermath of the Second World War, William Walker poses that U.S. policy makers

A POINT OF RECKONING: THE 1960 COUP AND THE FALL OF
KEMAL AYGÜN

Turkey's first decade of multiparty democracy took a violent turn on the first of May 1960. With tanks and soldiers in the streets of cities and towns throughout the country, a collective of military officers seized power that morning. The coup, its leaders declared, was not intended to put an end to democracy but to liberate it from the gross mismanagement and dictatorial tendencies of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes' Democratic Party. It soon became clear to the citizens of Turkey that the regime's leaders and many of its subordinates were to pay a penalty for their supposed crimes. Menderes was placed under arrest alongside the rest of the Democratic Party's top men. The military's retribution extended deep into Turkish society. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of bureaucrats and state officials were rounded up.¹¹⁴ For most of the Democratic Party's erstwhile leaders, the small island of Yasiada, located just off the coast of the city of Istanbul, served as both their place of imprisonment and the setting for their future trials.

Among the higher profile prisoners taken to Yasiada was Kemal Aygün. A month after the coup, the American consulate in Istanbul caught wind of a story regarding Aygün from a trusted informant. A military physician sent to examine Kemal Aygün found that the prisoner had "lost control" and was weeping incessantly. He confessed that he had committed many crimes. Once tried, Aygün was certain he would be rightfully put to death.¹¹⁵

The trials on Yasiada placed Kemal Aygün as a conspirator within a series of crimes, including organizing a plot to kill former Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, launching an attack on student protesters outside Istanbul University, falsely expropriating property in Istanbul and managing a Democratic slush fund.¹¹⁶ In some of these cases, such as the so-called Topkapi plot against İsmet İnönü, it appears that Aygün's guilt was based upon association with other accused figures.¹¹⁷ Other trials, particularly several held outside of Yasiada, painted Aygün as a more direct actor. One such case featured Kemal Aygün as the main organizer of a bribery and extortion scandal involving brothels throughout the city of Istanbul. While mayor, he along with then police chief Ferit Avni Sözen, were

"abetted corruption" and the drug trade in the hopes of maintaining anticommunist efforts in Asia. See Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy*, 220. This thesis is perhaps most thoroughly developed in Alfred McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* (Chicago, IL, 2003).

114. American Embassy, Ankara to Secretary of State, June 7, 1960; Box 2040, Central Dispatch Files, 1960–1963; General Records of the Department of State; Record Group 59; National Archives Building II, College Park, MD.

115. American Consulate General, Istanbul to Secretary State, June 22, 1960, 782.00/6-2260, Box 2040, Central Decimal Files, 1960–1963; RG 59; NAB.

116. American Consulate General, Istanbul to Secretary State, 2 December 1960, 782.00/12-260, Box 2040, Central Decimal Files, 1960–1963; RG 59; NAB.

117. American Consulate General, Istanbul to Secretary State, December 12, 1960, 782.00/12-1260, Box 2040, CD Files, 1960–1963; RG 59; NAB; American Consulate General, Istanbul to Secretary State, March 20, 1961, 782.00/3-2061, Box 2041, Central Decimal Files, 1960–1963; RG 59; NAB.

charged with extracting thousands of lira in payments from pimps and gamblers. Ironically, among those asked to testify against Sözen was Vasil Arcan, the same narcotics trafficker and police informant nabbed by George White back in 1948.¹¹⁸

By the time of his arrest, the FBN had little day-to-day contact with Kemal Aygün. His prosecution, however, did lead to a shake up within the ranks of Istanbul's narcotics bureau. As early as June 1960, U.S. Army intelligence reported a general purge of officers, particularly "hatchet men," within the national police force.¹¹⁹ The coup government's cleansing of the ranks included Aygün's long time retainers in the DPS, Ali Erin and Galip Labernas, who were respectively forced into retirement and transferred out of the office.¹²⁰ Their replacements within the Istanbul branch did make several interesting disclosures regarding Kemal Aygün's tenure and legacy within the Istanbul section of Directorate of Public Safety. According to Hüseyin Çağlar, the post-coup head of the Istanbul branch's criminal section, Kemal Aygün was completely corrupt. He, along with his "lackey," Ali Eren, had long protected the city's top traffickers. Under Aygün's direction, Eren had shielded the worst violators by focusing the bureau's investigative powers on small-time traffickers.¹²¹

Revelations that the FBN's principal partners in Turkey had long been participants in the Turkish underworld appeared to have had no official impact upon Washington's approach toward the Turkish drug trade. When Aygün was sentenced to life in prison in the fall of 1961, Siragusa posted only a brief report to his boss, Harry Anslinger. Aygün, Siragusa declared, was not only "a sincere and effective collaborator," but also "very pro-American and a great admirer of our Bureau."¹²²

As American operations in Turkey entered the sixties, only a scant amount of debate took place when agents proposed creating a permanent FBN office in Istanbul. In response to that prospect, Harry Anslinger replied that such a plan would waste the time of personnel needed for undercover work elsewhere. Opening an office, Anslinger concluded, appeared to be "a little too much empire building" with "no cases in sight."¹²³ Yet an Istanbul office was eventually established in 1961, which was then followed by the opening of a second

118. "Rüşvet Davasında Şahitler Dinlendi," *Milliyet*, March 9, 1961; "Randevuculardan Haraç Toplayan 2 Kişi Tevkif Edildi," *Milliyet*, October 5, 1960.

119. USARMA, Ankara to Secretary of State, June 6, 1960, 782.00/6-660, Box 2040, Central Decimal Files, 1960-1963; RG 59; NAB.

120. John Cusack to H. J. Anslinger, June 23, 1960; Turkey, 1960-1961; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB; Vizzini, 198.

121. John Cusack to H. J. Anslinger, September 22, 1960; Turkey, 1960-1961; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB. The phrase appears as commentary posed by Anslinger along the margins of the reports.

122. Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, September 16, 1961; Turkey, 1960-1961; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

123. John Cusack to H. J. Anslinger, June 30, 1959; Turkey, 1957-1959; FBN Files, 1916-1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

permanent base in Ankara exactly ten years later. By that point, a new American narcotics agency, the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), had assumed the FBN's place after it was disbanded in 1967. The passage of the sixties saw little change to American drug enforcement methods in Turkey. FBN (and later BNDD) officers like Joe Arpaio continued to target producers and sellers of Anatolian opium while largely ignoring the major traders and transporters in Istanbul.¹²⁴ When a news team from New York arrived to Turkey in 1971 to cover the source of America's "heroin epidemic," they were informed that individuals like Hüseyin Eminoğlu and İhsan Sekban were still in business. Their main informant on the status of Istanbul's trafficking underworld was Galip Labernas, who had retired from the DPS.¹²⁵

CONTINUITIES: POLITICS, POLICING, AND HEROIN IN TURKEY, 1960–1980

The story of the FBN's first decade of investigations in Istanbul resonates beyond the borders of Turkey. While establishing operations in Turkey, Charles Siragusa discovered similar patterns of collaboration between politicians, policemen, and drug traffickers in Marseilles and Beirut.¹²⁶ In Iran, FBN advisors worked diligently to maintain a state ban on opium production despite reports that members of the Mohammad Reza Shah's family were involved in the national and international opium trade.¹²⁷

Despite earlier struggles, Washington continued to pressure Ankara to maintain ever-tighter controls on opium production and drug trafficking. Beginning with the Nixon administration declaration of a global "war on drugs" in 1969, American diplomats assumed a much more prominent role in coercing Turkish officials into abolishing the opium production in Anatolia altogether. Early Turkish resistance to such a demand eventually subsided. In addition to accepting substantial financial aid package of \$35 million, Ankara's decision to prohibit domestic opium production in 1971 was accompanied with private admissions that Turkish heroin posed a threat to "American youth and society in general."¹²⁸

124. Joe Arpaio and Len Sherman, *Joe's Law* (New York, 2008), 151–69.

125. *Newsday*, *The Heroin Trail*, 32.

126. Among the many files that detail governmental complicity in drug trafficking in Beirut during the early fifties, see Charles Siragusa to H. J. Anslinger, November 3, 1953; Lebanon Files, 1945–1953; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB. For police corruption and drug trafficking in France, see Charles Siragusa to Barrett McGurn, March 3, 1953; France Files, 1951–1953; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

127. Despite evidence pointing to the involvement of a relative of the reigning queen (as well as Mohammed Reza Shah's sister and lover) in the drug trade, FBN agent Joseph Salm posited that prosecuting such an individual "could jeopardize the position of the Shah of Iran and hence jeopardize the position of the United States in the area." See Memorandum Report, January 6, 1957, Iran Miscellaneous File; FBN Files, 1916–1970; DEA Records; RG 170; NAB.

128. "Memorandum for the President's File," March 21, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States Vol. XXIX: Eastern Europe; Eastern Mediterranean, 1968–1972* (Washington, DC, 2007), 1111.

Despite a rapid expansion of the ranks and a growing operational budget, recently released State Department documents seem to suggest that the BNDD played more of a supporting role in negotiating Turkey's brief opium ban.¹²⁹

Ankara's decision to resume opium production in 1974 did not come as a complete surprise to policymakers and officials in Washington. From virtually the outset of the ban, nationalist activists and opium farmers opposed to the measure were in agreement that the new policy was the result of direct U.S. pressure.¹³⁰ British diplomats also surmised that organized crime also lobbied the Turkish government to rescind the ban.¹³¹

Forging closer ties between Turkish and American counter-narcotics agencies remained an important goal for Washington into the seventies as Turkish traffickers increasingly shifted their attention away from Anatolian opium and became more involved in wholesaling Afghani and Pakistani heroin more directly in Europe. However, obstacles witnessed by FBN agents in the fifties continued to hamper cooperation between American and Turkish officials. DEA officers assigned to Turkey, for example, were largely prohibited from touring eastern Anatolia (where it was surmised that trafficking syndicates were establishing large laboratories for processing raw opium into heroin).¹³² According to classified BNDD documents leaked to the press in 1971, the head of the DPS, Abdullah Pektaş, protected high-profile traffickers and took bribes.¹³³ It was also apparent to American law enforcement officers that Turkish members of the DPS remained more concerned with domestic subversion and terrorism. In an era that featured intense fighting between leftist and rightist political groups around Turkey, the DEA privately advocated that it was essential for Ankara to "raise the overall narcotics effort to the level currently exercised for terrorist activity."¹³⁴

The intensification of America's effort to combat drug trafficking in Turkey clearly did not dull the influence of Turkish smuggling syndicates upon local and national politics. Available evidence suggests instead that relations between various elements of the Turkish state and organized crime grew more intimate. American, French, and Turkish investigations during the early seventies exposed at least two members of Turkish Grand National Assembly as active traffickers.¹³⁵ More

129. Robert Davis to William J. Corcoran and Mark Kleiman, "DEA Draft on Middle East Heroin," January 21, 1980, Subject Files of Attorney General Epstein, Southwest Asian Heroin, RG 60, NAB.

130. Çağrı Erhan, *Beyaz Savaş: Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinde Afyon Sorunu* (Ankara, 1996), 132–38.

131. From A. C. Goodson to R. A. Fyjia-Walker, PRO/FCO 9/2129, July 16, 1974.

132. "Turkey (DEA memo?)," 1980, Subject Files of Attorney General Epstein, Southwest Asian Heroin, RG 60, NAB.

133. Jack Anderson, "Turks War on Poppy-Growing Ban," *Washington Post*, January 8, 1973.

134. "Turkey (DEA memo?)," 1980, Subject Files of Attorney General Epstein, Southwest Asian Heroin, RG 60, NAB. For more discussion on party politics and violence in Turkey in the years preceding the 1980 coup, see Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East*, 66–77.

135. The most famous case of a Turkish MP involved in narcotics trafficking occurred with the arrest of Kudret Bayhan, who was apprehended in March 1972 in France with 146 kilos of

contemporary studies of the right-wing Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi*) have convincingly demonstrated the degree to which traffickers, military officers and student activists collaborated in perpetrating violent acts in the late seventies.¹³⁶ The onset of the seventies, and the changing nature of the heroin trade in Turkey, also led to the formation of alliances between Kurdish narcotics traffickers and nationalist guerillas in eastern Anatolia.¹³⁷ It is during this period of time that individuals such as Behçet Cantürk, a notorious trafficker of the eighties and nineties and future financial backer of the Kurdish Workers' Party, first entered into the weapons and heroin smuggling trade in the vicinity of Diyarbakir.¹³⁸

A series of scandals since the seventies has shed light on the overlying relationship between American and Turkish intelligence and clandestine operations and the drug trade in Turkey. Events such as the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II and the so-called “Susurluk Incident” in 1996 have affirmed the existence of a partnership between members of Turkey’s underworld and various intelligence services associated with NATO. Under the direction of this NATO consortium, dubbed “Operation Gladio,” notorious Turkish gangsters and traffickers such as Abdullah Çatlı and Mehmet Ali Ağca were employed to suppress or eliminate “subversive” leftists or dissidents living in Turkey and abroad.¹³⁹ Çatlı himself visited Miami in 1982 in the company of a known Gladio agent (and Italian neo-Nazi) and was considered “under the protection” of the CIA.¹⁴⁰

All in all, the continuity of events and the behavior of both Turkish and American officials after 1960 affirm several tendencies seen during the early stages of the FBN’s engagement with Istanbul drug trade during the fifties. First and foremost, American national security prerogatives framed Washington’s approach toward narcotics trafficking and the building of its relationship with officers and officials in Turkey. The construction of American counter-narcotics efforts

morphine in his car. See “Şebekenin İstanbul Kolu Fırar Etti,” *Milliyet*, March 8, 1972. Less well known is the case of Abdullah Çilli, another member of parliament, who was identified by BNDD informants as a trader in illicit opium. See American Embassy Ankara to BNDD, “Narcotics Status Report,” June 12, 1972, Ankara 4189, Subject Numeric Files, 1970–1973, NAB.

136. Soner Yalçın and Doğan Yudakul, *Reis: Gladio'nun Türk Tetikçisi* (Istanbul, 2007), 57–69. Most noted is the case of Abdullah Çatlı, one of principle members of the so-called “Susurluk gang” who served as a government-backed hit man during the eighties and nineties. As a youth, he, alongside Mehmet Ali Ağca (would-be assassin of Pope John Paul II), were active members of the right wing Grey Wolves movement of Alparslan Türkeş (founder of the National Action Party).

137. According to DEA and CIA sources, it is clear that much of the trade in opiates had shifted toward the Kurdish borderlands between Turkey and Iran. There Kurds on both sides of the borders were suspecting of both processing, as well as transporting, morphine and heroin derived from Afghan, Iranian and Pakistani opium. See “Turkey (DEA memo?),” 1980, Subject Files of Attorney General Epstein, Southwest Asian Heroin, RG 60, NAB; “The World Opium Situation,” October 1970, CIA-RDP 73B00296R000300060031-9.

138. Soner Yalçın, *Behçet Cantürk'ün Amları* (Istanbul, 2007), 35–38.

139. Belma Akçura, *Derin Devlet Oldu Devlet* (Istanbul, 2006), 34–55; Yalçın and Yudakul, *Reis*, 132–34.

140. Yalçın and Yudakul, *Reis*, 152–56.

served at least four distinct purposes: one, it helped to assure American domestic security; two, it bound Turkey ever closer to the United States and its NATO allies; three, it helped to “reform” Turkey’s legal and policing system along American lines; and four, it provided added means through which clandestine operations could be undertaken. Despite clear evidence that such efforts did not result in an end to Turkey’s role in the drug trade (to the point that it was apparent Turkish officials abetted or profited from the activities of traffickers), the policy course was maintained for the sake of national security.

Trends seen in the fifties also point to the enduring influence of the drug trade and drug traffickers upon the making of modern Turkish politics and governance. Turkish collaboration with American counter-narcotics officials could not mask the corrupt and duplicitous relationships local and national officials forged with members of Istanbul’s underworld. In other words, drug kingpins like İhsan Sekban were active participants in the making of Turkish politics. While individuals like Kemal Aygün superficially agreed that narcotics posed a threat to both Turkish and American security interests, it is clear that other domestic and international fears (such as Communism or the activities of certain minorities) were of greater concern. Moreover, like the United States, heightened attention toward narcotics trafficking offered new venue through which intelligence gathering and clandestine operations could be conducted. In Turkey’s case however, policing the drug trade did not only provide cover for clandestine operations. Since the sixties, it seems clear that Turkish national security interests have made allies out of elements of organized crime and the Turkish state.