

PKK Terrorists Named ‘Drug Kingpins’; Nations Move Against Narcoterrorism

by Michele Steinberg

The murderous Kurdistan Workers Party, known as the PKK, was founded by the jailed former Marxist, Abdullah Ocalan, in 1974, at Ankara University, and has been mislabeled as a “Turkish” problem, or a “Kurdish” problem. But, an examination of the PKK’s history, especially its notorious drug running—some \$50-\$100 million a year income from heroin and opium trafficking—establishes without doubt that the PKK is an enemy of all humanity.

Specifically, the PKK is a British-protected separatist outfit, a drug-funded “narcoterrorist” army, whose only purpose is to destroy the nation-states of Southwest Asia for the British-led modern imperialists. Active in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Iran, the PKK terrorists, who killed some 30,000 Turkish people—mainly civilians—in the 1980s and 1990s, are identical in intent to their sister organizations: in Ibero America, the Sendero Luminoso cult of Peru, and the just-defeated FARC of Colombia; and in Asia, the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers, assassins of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991.

Now, with Turkey at the center of sensitive regional negotiations in defense of republican nation-states (see preceding article), the PKK has been linked to a massive conspiracy to overthrow the Turkish government. The PKK/Ergenekon/Young Turk coup plot would reinfect Turkey with the British disease of the last century—the perpetual running sore in Asia Minor created by the secret Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, in which France and the British Empire, the “victors” of World War I, divided up the region between them, and manipulated ethnic, religious, and tribal groups against one another, and against central governments, to create perpetual war.

This time, however, in the aftermath of the victorious, patient operation against the FARC in Colombia, a resistance against narcoterrorism worldwide has emerged. This is especially so in Southwest Asia, where a heated debate is going on at the highest level of the North Atlantic alliance to recognize that fighting “narcoterrorism” is the only way to defeat al-Qaeda, the Taliban, or the other “new dark age” terrorist forces that have declared war on the modern nation-state. At the same time, the U.S. government has declared the Kurdistan Workers’ Party to be a “drug kingpin” organization, a designation that will put the PKK at the top of the priority list for shutdown of its operations, arrest of its leaders, and seizure of its assets—including bank accounts and property.

This new designation was announced at a meeting of the International Conference on Drug Enforcement in Istanbul, on July 8-10, where 300 law enforcement officials were hosted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Turkish National Police. There, U.S. Ambassador Ross Wilson stated that after the “historic rescue of hostages long held by FARC and the big blow it represented to that organization,” it was time to talk about narcoterrorism.

“It’s a critical topic for Turkey,” said Wilson. “This country has been struggling for over two decades against a terrorist organization called the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK. The PKK funds itself through extortion and trafficking in arms, human beings, and drugs.”

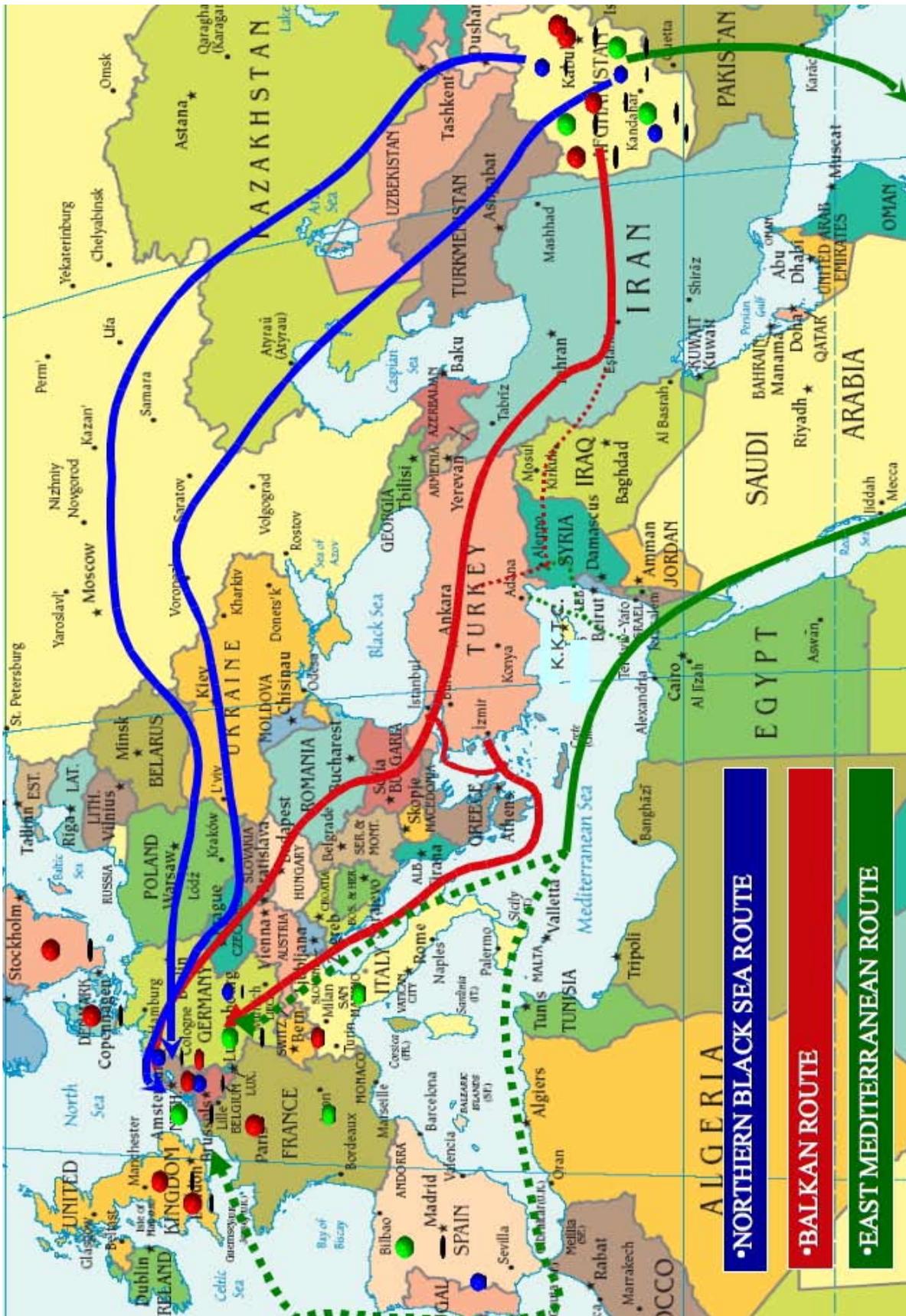
Wilson politely covered up the fact that for nearly two years, the United States had failed to shut down the PKK operations in Iraq, prompting criticism from U.S. Gen. Joseph Ralston, and forcing the government of Turkey to enter Iraq in pursuit of the PKK forces this year. But, Wilson declared, now the United States has “recently opened another front in the campaign” against the PKK, and has designated the terrorist group as a “drug kingpin.” In working closely with Turkish law enforcement, Wilson added, the designation “will allow us to strengthen our joint efforts against PKK narcoterrorists through focussed targetting of the assets of individuals and businesses associated with it.”

A Real Strategy Against Terror

Naming the PKK as a “drug kingpin,” is an important move, but only if it is followed by a *strategic* understanding that *narcoterrorism* is the nature of the beast that civilization is up against, and the aim of the narcoterrorist international is the destruction of the sovereign nation-state, which is a bulwark against the global rule by a financier oligarchy.

In August 1996, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., then running for the Democratic Party Presidential nomination, made this point emphatically in a policy paper entitled “Today’s Echoes of Civil Wars in Ancient Rome,” where he outlined the threat facing Turkey, a threat that is eerily parallel to today’s coup danger. In a section subtitled, “Case Study #2, Turkey, Iran, China,” LaRouche wrote:

“Recently, Prime Minister Erbakan of Turkey has entered into crucial strategic agreements with the Rafsanjani



DEA

The transit routes for opium and heroin out of Afghanistan, 2008. The map was presented by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration at the Istanbul conference.

COMPARING OPIUM PRODUCTION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND REST OF THE WORLD



Year	OPIUM PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN (TONS)	GLOBAL OPIUM PRODUCTION (TONS)	PERCENTAGE OF PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN
1998	2,693	4,346	62%
1999	4,565	5,764	79%
2000	3,276	4,691	70%
2001	185	1,596	12%
2002	3,400	4,491	76%
2003	3,600	4,765	76%
2004	4,200	4,850	87%
2005	4,100	4,620	89%
2006	6,100	6,610	92%
2007	8,200	8,847	93%

Source: UNODC.

government of Iran. To assess this, the subject must be approached on four levels.

“First, Prime Minister Erbakan’s actions echo the 1919-1920 alliance of Turkey’s patriot, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, with Iran patriot Reza Pahlevi, who joined forces to effect the successful defeat of the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale’s Sykes-Picot plot against the people of the Middle East.

“Second, this reflects the common interest among Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, in destroying a London-based, Kurdish (PKK) terrorist operation deployed entirely by London and Paris. . . .

“Third, this represents two vital interests. It represents Turkey’s vital national interest in finding the kind of economic cooperation it requires for national economic reconstruction. It also reflects Iran’s present, crucial close cooperation, in Eurasia Land-Bridge development, with China and central Asia republics. In that specific setting, Turkey’s vital interests demand that it become an integral partner in the extension of this Land-Bridge collaboration. Thus Turkey’s and Iran’s shared interests in ending the power of the Entente Cordiale’s Kurdish operations, coincide with the two nations’ vital interests in economic-development cooperation.

“Fourth, this effort is of vital strategic-political importance, not only for the nations, directly and indirectly, involved. It is of global strategic importance.”

That LaRouche description is even more crucial today, where in the aftermath of the disastrous war against Iraq by the U.S.-British alliance, the region remains in flames.

EIR has learned from well-informed Washington sources that there is now full recognition within U.S. military circles that the commanders of the Taliban, and Taliban’s al-Qaeda

allies, are funding their armies—as *EIR* warned more than a decade ago—with opium and heroin trafficking, as well as a newer, burgeoning empire in hashish production. One U.S. intelligence source stated that more than \$100 million a year, directly from the opium *grown* in Afghanistan alone, goes directly to the Taliban, for its military operations.

The source put the overall monetary value of the Afghan opium trade—now accounting for 93% of the world’s opium production last year—at ap-

proximately \$160 billion—a figure considered high by U.S. law enforcement analysts. But these law enforcement circles will admit that they can no longer precisely calculate what the value of the Afghanistan opium might be.

One reason for the confusion about the cash flow is, “how big is big”? The opium production in Afghanistan in 2007 was a staggering 8,200 tons, out of a total world production of 8,847 tons. In 2006, the Afghan opium production was 6,100 tons out of 6,610 tons worldwide. In perspective, opium production in Afghanistan alone in 2007 is more than *three times greater than Afghanistan’s opium in 1998*, when the United Nations put the figure at 2,693 tons in Afghanistan, and about 4,300 tons worldwide.

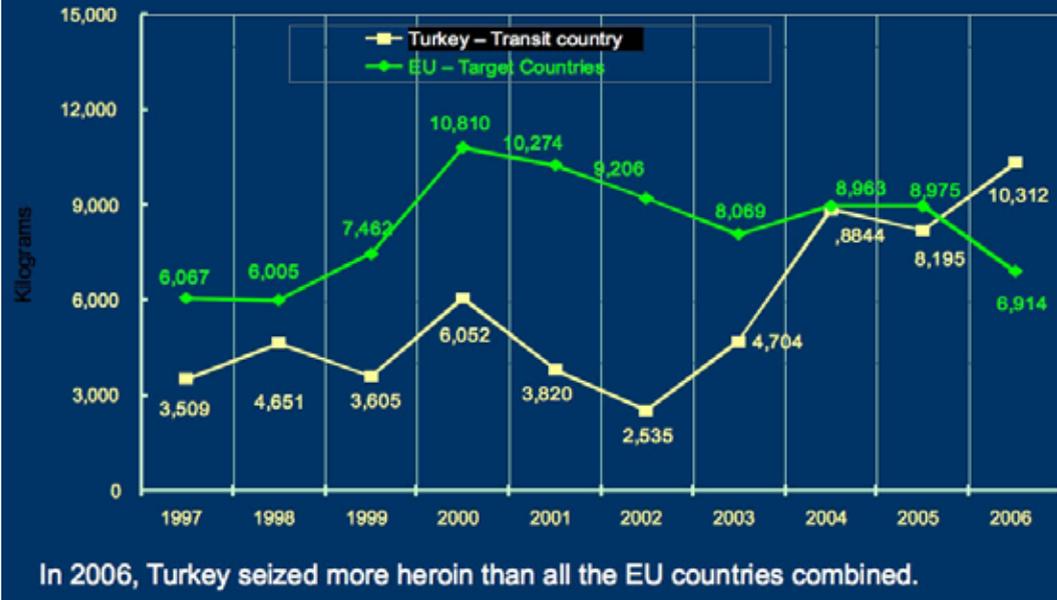
In fact, since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan that drove out the Taliban and al-Qaeda after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the opium production has skyrocketed, growing steadily, year after year, since 2002. And as the opium production has grown in volume, the Taliban has grown in strength and activity.

Any competent military historian knows that logistics in depth is the key to the operations of any army, and that applies more than ever to irregular warfare forces and terrorist armies. So, without eliminating the narcoterrorists’ supply lines, and economic base, it is impossible to defeat them.

Now the discussion is in full force to include the “Narco-Khans” of Afghanistan in the allied war plan there, but the decision has not been finalized.

Defeating the PKK’s dirty war would be a good case study in successful counterterror operations, but this would mean directly taking on the British Empire. In 1996, *EIR* published

HEROIN SEIZURES IN EU AND TURKEY



Source: UNODC.

a memorandum demanding that the U.S. State Department put Britain on the list of sponsors of terrorism. *EIR* listed over a dozen countries, including Turkey, that suffered from London's protection of terrorism. *EIR* wrote: "On Aug. 20, 1996, the Turkish government formally protested to the British government for allowing the Kurdish Workers Party to continue its London-based MED TV broadcasts into Turkey, despite documentation that the broadcasts were being used to convey marching orders to PKK terrorists there."

The Kurdish and PKK Narcotics Role

In May 2003, Steven W. Casteel, the DEA's assistant administrator for intelligence, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Casteel stated: "The Government of Turkey consistently reports that the PKK, as an organization, is responsible for much of the illicit drug processing and trafficking in Turkey. Turkish press reports state that the PKK produces 60 tons of heroin per year and receives an estimated income of forty million dollars each year from drug trafficking proceeds."

From the DEA's own intelligence report, Casteel added that evidence shows that among the PKK's modes of drug-profiteering are producing opium, taxing traffickers who pass through their cross-border territories, and "possibly controlling a significant portion of the heroin markets in Europe."

Shortly after the Istanbul DEA conference this month, a senior Turkish security official described the PKK's drug operations to *EIR* as follows: The PKK has been ideally suited for drug trafficking, since it draws its membership from

various Kurdish tribes whose members overlap the territory of eastern Turkey, northern Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Thus, the PKK has networks already in place to transship heroin from Afghanistan, through Iraq or Iran, into Turkey, and on through Turkey to Europe.

The PKK trafficking activities are interlinked with other Turkish organized crime networks, the official said, and therefore can take advantage of the freight traffic into Europe. Furthermore, with 8 million Turks living

in Europe, half of whom visit Turkey each year, there are tremendous opportunities to take out the drugs and bring in the cash in return.

In a January 1999 article, "PKK heroin cartel threatens Europe," *EIR* published the fundamentals of this story as follows:

"...While the European Union condemns Turkey's war against the PKK as a violation of 'human rights,' the reality is that western Europe has itself become a primary victim of the war, because the PKK and Kurdish mafia are major traffickers of heroin into Europe."

"The evidence compiled by western European, Turkish, and U.S. law enforcement agencies documenting the PKK role, is dramatic. According to published reports by these agencies, Turkey serves as the land-bridge for three-quarters of the heroin transported for use in western Europe, some 60 tons a year, from its origin in Afghanistan. According to several reports, the PKK and its allied Kurdish clan mafia is one of the main groups bringing that heroin into Europe. The PKK's proceeds from this smuggling, and its control of street-level distribution networks throughout western Europe, fund the PKK's war.

"Heroin also provides the basis for the PKK's alliances with other separatist armies operating in the war-zones of Afghanistan-Tajikistan, the Caucasus, eastern Turkey, and the Balkans, which constitute the highway through which the heroin reaches western Europe. Control of the heroin trade has become a primary objective in many of these conflicts.

"Here we summarize some of the evidence compiled by

RECORD HASHISH SEIZURE



In June 2008, a joint operation led to the seizure and destruction of approximately 262 tons of hashish. The hashish was stockpiled in several underground warehouses near Spin Boldak, Afghanistan.

Spin Boldak is reportedly where Osama bin Laden was hiding; in February 2008, one of the largest terrorist attacks in the Afghanistan War took place there.

U.S., western European, and Turkish law enforcement sources which documents this criminal role, supplemented by interviews with their investigators.

“Turkey’s role as the main highway used to transport opium and heroin from the ‘Golden Crescent’ opium poppy cultivation zone in Afghanistan and Central Asia, into western Europe, has long been reported. According to the U.S. State Department’s most recent annual *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, released in March 1998, ‘Turkey’s position astride the main overland trade route between Asia and Europe, makes it a significant transit point for narcotics.’ The report states that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration estimates that ‘between four and six tons of heroin transit Turkey each month,’ and that ‘three-quarters of the heroin abused in Europe transits Turkey.’

“A 1997 internal report of the German Federal Criminal Investigation Office (BKA), leaked to the German magazine *Focus* and cited in its March 3, 1997 issue, makes similar charges. According to the BKA report, ‘80% of the heroin’ used in western Europe, reaches its destination via Turkey.

“Ethnic Kurds, whether from the PKK or Kurdish mafia, are central to this trafficking. ‘Most of the deadly dealers come from the Anatolian province, Van, a Kurdish region,’ the BKA report states. ‘The gangs possess laboratories where they transform morphine base into heroin, and transport it to Istanbul. From there, the dealers smuggle the drugs mainly via Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, and Austria, to Germany.’

“This is not a new phenomenon. According to Interpol, 34% of the 42 tons of heroin seized in continental Europe during 1984-93 was found on Turkish nationals. And of the

503 Turkish nationals seized carrying this heroin, at least 298 were PKK members or were tied to the PKK.

“The German police have calculated [as of 1995] that heroin trafficking brings in more than \$120 million a year for the Turkish Kurdish crime families, both the politically minded and common criminals combined. The British National Criminal Intelligence Service estimated in 1993 that the PKK earned \$38 million from drug-trafficking. Turkish law enforcement sources estimate that the PKK’s annual turnover from heroin and hashish sales is currently \$100 million. For such reasons, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem estimated in November 1998 that the PKK has a \$40 million war-chest.

“Italian authorities concur with these estimates of the importance of Turkish-based drug-running in general, and the Kurdish mafia and PKK in particular.

“The director of the Italian Police Force’s Central Operations Service, Alessandro Pansa, issued a report, ‘New Guide to Fighting Money Laundering,’ on the issue to the Italian Bankers Association in December 1998. He stated that Turkey is the main source of the heroin used in Italy, and that the PKK is the main group behind the heroin trade. ‘Heroin from Anatolia [the Turkish peninsula] has now taken over as the main product on the market,’ the Dec. 15 Italian daily *Il Giornale* quoted Pansa. Moreover, Kurdish networks run it all: ‘Thirty percent of the laboratories for refining heroin scattered around Turkish territory are currently in the hands of the PKK Kurdish rebels; the remainder, on the other hand, is allegedly run by the Kurdish mafia.’

“A 1998 report by the Italian Finance Police, SCICO, came up with similar estimates, *Il Giornale* reported. The police agency determined that the PKK is ‘directly involved’ in ‘international drug-trafficking,’ while also earning illicit proceeds from the ‘immigrant trade’ and the ‘systematic levying of ‘protection’ payments from Turkish businessmen and workers abroad.’

“Turkish law enforcement sources say that the PKK’s heroin and refugee smuggling, and its extortion operations, constitute one integrated business.”

Going after the PKK for its narcoterrorism is long overdue. It has been protected by the British Empire, and by groups like George Soros’s Human Rights Watch throughout the 1990s to the present. Now is the time to say, “It’s over,” and defend nation-states against these killer operations.