

he has become an army major general. In 1994, the year Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, he was promoted to brigadier, and was appointed Commander of the Jordanian Special Forces. The Special Forces were reorganized in 1996 as the Special Operations Command, to include the Special Forces Brigade and the Royal Guard. The missions of this unit, according to the British publication *Jane's Intelligence Review*, include unconventional warfare missions, counterinsurgency, internal security, counterterrorism, counter-sabotage, etc. It is stressed, that these forces carry out assignments in counter-sabotage both inside Jordan and abroad. They are tasked to carry out military operations "beyond the scope and abilities of the conventional Jordanian army," and are responsible for riot control.

The leading international contacts of the Crown Prince are with military: in the United States, with the Pentagon, where he has lobbied for American military assistance to Jordan, and in Israel, with the top brass. He is credited with having promoted normalization, particularly between the two countries' militaries.

One of the considerations made in King Hussein's letter, in motivating his decision to appoint Prince Abdallah, was related to the role of the Army, which has always been central in Jordanian history. The King charged Prince Hassan with having made personnel and other changes. "I have intervened from my sickbed to prevent meddling in the affairs of the Arab Army," he wrote. "This meddling seemed to be meant to settle scores, and included retiring efficient officers known for their allegiance and whose history and bright records are beyond reproach. At the forefront were the Field Marshal and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. . . . I was asking myself, why is there insistence on change in the Army since we know the need for reform and development and the Chairman and myself were busy all the time providing our army with all available experience, local and international. I have used my authority as Supreme Commander of the armed forces to stop any action that would have led to the fragmentation and politicization of the Army. We have ensured that service in the Army would achieve all our ambitions in its continuous development on the strongest basis as a shield for the country and as our pride."

Clearly, in the event of a sustained U.K.-U.S. intervention into Iraq, with or without an act of biological terrorism to "justify" it, the political-social situation inside the Hashemite Kingdom is bound to be explosive, including in the army. Given the evident power struggle which occasioned the King's dramatic actions, the succession process itself may not be smooth. Such factors must have played a role in the decision to give the crown to a man of Prince Abdallah's very special military training and capabilities.

On Jan. 27, the London *Times*, endorsed the selection of the new Crown Prince, saying that King Hussein had "tackled a dynastic challenge that was threatening Jordan's stability."

PKK heroin cartel threatens Europe

by Joseph Brewda

The November 1998 arrest of Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan in Rome, his subsequent release from prison, and his Jan. 16, 1999 flight to parts unknown, has again focussed attention on the scandalous role that western Europe has played in fomenting the Kurdish insurrection in southeast Turkey, in which 30,000 have died since 1984. Among the imperious responses to the arrest was the European Union announcement that it intends to convene a conference on the "Kurdish question," in which Turkey's borders would be subject to proposed revision.

But 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.

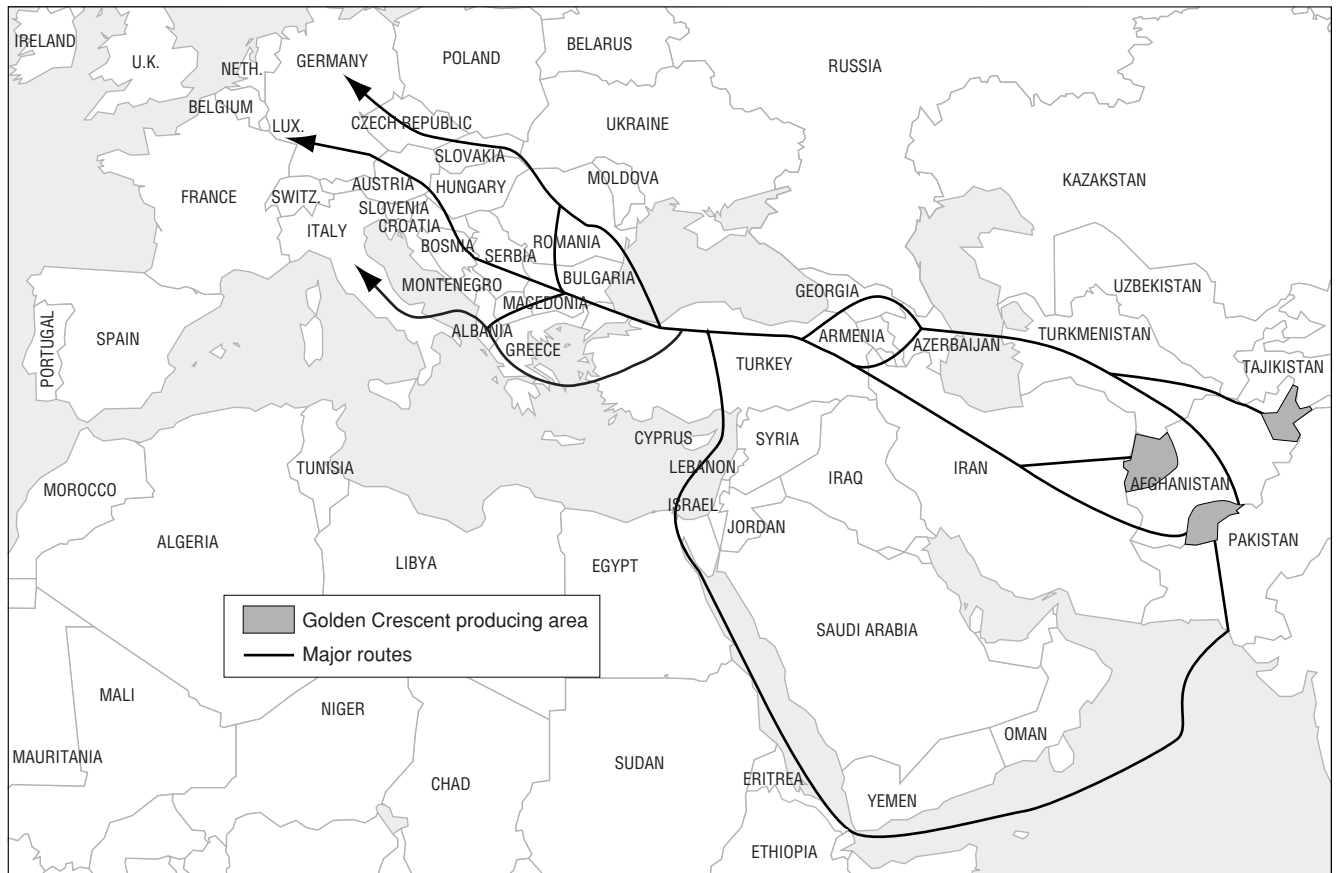
Heroin also provides the basis for the PKK's alliances with other separatist armies operating in the war-zones of Afghanistan-Tajikistan, the Caucasus, eastern Turkey, and the Balkans, which constitute the highway through which the heroin reaches western Europe. Control of the heroin trade has become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

Here we summarize some of the evidence compiled by U.S., western European, and Turkish law enforcement sources which documents this criminal role, supplemented by interviews with their investigators.

The Kurdish and PKK narcotics role

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

FIGURE 1
PKK narcotics-trafficking routes



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 refine 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 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 Financial 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. The PKK smuggles in Kurdish and other refugees into western Europe via Turkey, at the price of \$5-10,000 a head. Once there, many of these Kurds are forced to work as street vendors retailing heroin as part of their emigration agreement; if they find legitimate work, they are subject to “revolutionary taxation.”

Relations with the Kurdish clans

The PKK was spun out of the Federation of Revolutionary Youth of Turkey in 1974, as a Maoist sect professedly dedicated to Kurdish liberation. As such, it condemns the Kurds’ extensive clan system, whereby the Kurdish *aghas*, the landlords, exploit an impoverished peasantry. But such leftist rhetoric has little to do with the PKK’s activities. The relations between the PKK and the old Kurdish clans, and their criminal structure, are actually so closely intertwined that it is impossible to separate one from the other, Turkish security consultant Ali Koknar emphasizes in the Summer 1997 issue of *Counterterrorism and Security International*. Moreover, several of these clans have a history of rebellion against the Turkish state, further deepening the relationship.

These incestuous ties were examined in a 1996 report by the Paris Criminological Institute, entitled “Two Typical ‘Degenerate Guerrilla Groups’: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Kurdish Workers Party.”

Among the examples cited is the Baybasin clan, led by the currently imprisoned Hussein Baybasin, a notorious figure who has been repeatedly incarcerated for heroin smuggling over the last two decades. Two of his cousins, Mehmet Ermin and Mehmet Serif, have close ties with Kurdish separatists, and the latter is known to German police as a PKK arms-trafficker.

Similarly, the Kitay clan. One clan leader, Hakki Kitay, has been tied to 22 cases involving the importation of 1.2 tons of heroin into Germany between 1990 and 1993. His brother, Vahdettin, was the head of a PKK regional guerrilla operation, until he was killed in a clash with Turkish police; his son, Nizamettin, trained at the PKK’s training camp in Lebanon, and is now a cadre in the PKK’s guerrilla unit in Bingol province.

The Sakik clan is another example. Semdin Sakik was the PKK’s number-two leader until his 1998 arrest in Turkey; his cousin, Idriss Sakik, runs the clan’s wholesale heroin sales in Germany.

Some U.S. military observers say that this tangled web of the PKK and clan networks may pose the biggest challenge to Turkish sovereignty, because it has drawn the PKK into ongoing clan wars. Because of repeated PKK attacks on some of these clans, these observers add, the Turkish military has organized loyal Kurdish clans into a village-guard system, to protect themselves and combat the PKK. But, unfortunately, some of these clans have also been implicated in the narcotics trade.

The potential corruption that could result from such a counter-insurgency policy came sharply into focus in November 1996, following a fatal car accident in Susurluk, Turkey. The driver of the car, Hussein Kocadar, was a former deputy police chief of Istanbul. Accompanying him was Sedat Bucak, a Kurdish clan leader and member of Turkey’s parliament whose militias are at war with the PKK. Another passenger was Abdullah Catli, a notorious international drug smuggler, active with the terrorist Grey Wolves, which is also allegedly at war with the PKK.

Narco-routes into Turkey

According to western European and Turkish law enforcement sources, the “Golden Crescent” of Afghanistan is the source of opium that the PKK and other Kurdish mafia networks use to supply heroin to western Europe. That war-ravaged country produces 28% of the world’s illegal opium poppy crop, according to U.S. State Department estimates. This Afghan supply has replaced the PKK’s earlier reliance on opium plantations that it, or allied groups, ran in the Syrian Army-run Bekaa Valley in Lebanon in the 1980s. Since the early 1990s, these sources say, those plantations have fallen under the exclusive control of Lebanese Hezbollah.

PKK trafficking routes from Afghanistan to Turkey, and then to western Europe, are various, all sources report, and depend on shifting alliances with intermediaries. One striking feature of these routes is that they primarily flow through war zones: Afghanistan and Tajikistan in Central Asia; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, and Georgia, on the route through the Caucasus into Turkey; and on through the Balkans from Turkey into western Europe. Control over the narcotics-routes, and hence profits, is a major factor, if not the primary aim, in many of these conflicts, intelligence sources report.

The main route from Central Asia to Turkey, Turkish law enforcement sources report, proceeds from Karachi, Pakistan, which has become a major outlet for Afghan opium, by sea to Turkey. The importance of this route was dramatically revealed in 1992, when a Turkish cargo ship bound from Karachi, the *Kismetim-I*, went down in the Mediterranean during a storm, with more than three tons of morphine base on board.

In order to retrieve the drug from Pakistan, the PKK relies on a network of Kurdish mafia traffickers active there, and also on the far-flung networks of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, a.k.a. Tamil Tigers), which has been waging a bloody war to “liberate” the Tamil region of Sri Lanka since 1972.

The Tamil Tigers are the only “international terrorist” organization which maintains a deep-sea cargo fleet, and sophisticated radar and communications system, which it uses to smuggle opium and heroin from Asia to Europe, often via Turkey, and to smuggle back arms to Sri Lanka. For example, Turkish law enforcement sources say that a Cyprus-based shipping firm, Carleton Trading, is a Tamil Tiger proprietary used to smuggle Afghan heroin to the PKK.

The source of the Tamil Tigers global opium and heroin trade is not only the “Golden Crescent” in Afghanistan, but also the “Golden Triangle” of Southeast Asia, where it also picks up weapons. According to *Regional Security Implications of Sri Lanka Tamil Insurgency*, a 1997 book by Sri Lankan researcher Rohan Gunaratna, the Tamil Tigers maintain secret naval stations on Myanmar and Thai islands in the Bay of Bengal to facilitate this trade. Narcotics from this source is also smuggled to the United States.

The PKK and Tamil Tigers have been closely allied since they were trained together by the Syrian Army in the Bekaa Valley in the 1980s, despite the fact that they have no common ethnic, religious, geopolitical, or ideological basis for their alliance. Rather, the basis for their alliance is that they share common international patrons, and narcotics. Both groups fall under the umbrella of the Revolutionary International Movement, the London-based narco-terrorist international formed by the head of the U.S. Revolutionary Communist Party, Bob Avakian, which has brought together other narco-terrorist groups, such as Peru’s Shining Path and the Nepali Communist Party Marxist-Leninist.

The PKK and Tamil Tigers also maintain ties to other veterans of Syria’s Bekaa Valley training camps, including the African National Congress, now the ruling party of South Africa, which has reportedly provided support to both groups. Both organizations have also forged ties with the Tigray People’s Liberation Front and Eritrean People’s Liberation Front, the current ruling parties, respectively, of Ethiopia and Eritrea, which in turn reportedly give the PKK and the Tigers additional logistical support for their Indian Ocean and Red Sea arms- and drug-smuggling rings.

In addition to this maritime route, there are several overland and air routes from Afghanistan to Turkey.

One of the main overland routes involves transporting opium or morphine base from the Baluch tribal region straddling Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran, through Iran to eastern Turkey. Smuggling into Turkey is made easier by the fact that Kurds are the majority ethnic group on both sides of the Turkish-Iranian border. This is two-way trafficking. According to *Geopolitical Drug Dispatch*, a monthly newsletter published in Paris, the caravans returning to the Baluch tribal

regions are said to carry weapons. Other intelligence sources stress that this tri-state Baluchi area is being primed to become a major new zone of conflict, spreading the Afghan conflict into Pakistan and Iran.

Another route proceeds from Afghanistan through Turkmenistan, and then, via the Caucasus war zone (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Chechnya, or Georgia), to northeast Turkey. Here again, we see how the dope trade helps foster business ties between otherwise warring terrorist and insurgent groups. For example, the PKK and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Dashnag, claim the same vast area of Turkey as, alternatively, “Kurdistan,” or “Greater Armenia.” Nonetheless, they still closely cooperate in trafficking heroin through the region. Similarly, the Grey Wolves, a Pan-Turkic group violently opposed to both the PKK and Dashnag, nonetheless cooperates with both groups in the narco-business.

Onward to western Europe

According to western European and Turkish law enforcement sources, most of the narcotics that arrive in Turkey from Central Asia, come in the form of opium or its derivative, morphine base. It is in Turkey that this opium or morphine is refined into heroin, prior to shipment to western Europe. Most PKK refineries are located in eastern Turkey, bordering Iran, and in northeast Turkey, near Armenia and Azerbaijan. Additional heroin labs are located outside Istanbul in western Turkey, and in Turkish Thrace, bordering Greece. Kurdish mafia refineries that are not under PKK control, are often subject to PKK “taxation.”

After being refined in Turkey, this heroin is shipped to western Europe, its ultimate destination, along several shifting routes.

The primary direct route that the PKK and Kurdish mafia used before the outbreak of the Serbian-Croatian war in 1991, went north through then-Yugoslavia, and then to Austria and points west. This was made easier by the heavy truck transport connecting Turkey to western Europe through the Balkans. Despite the intensity of the wars there, this route is still used when possible. The PKK continues to enjoy good relations with the Serbian military, just as it had with the military of pre-war former Yugoslavia, which was also Serbian-dominated. Serbia, along with Greece, still provides the PKK with sophisticated arms. For example, shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles, which the PKK used to shoot down two Turkish Army helicopters in 1997.

Another, alternative Balkans route, Italian and Turkish law enforcement sources report, goes through Macedonia, closely paralleling the border with Greece, and on to Italy, via civil war-ravaged Albania. Through this route, the PKK has built strong relations with the Albanian mafia. This route is also a major one for smuggling Kurdish and other immigrants into western Europe, and, increasingly, for Albanian-grown marijuana. And through this route, the PKK has also established close business ties with the southern Italian, Pugliese mafia, the so-called Holy United Crown.