

Links Mafia, Viet Gov't in Drug Trade

By Lawrence L. Knutson

WASHINGTON (AP)—South Vietnam's heroin racket is run by three of that nation's top politicians, is linked to Corsican and U. S. Mafia gangsters and is virtually condoned by some U. S. officials, a narcotics researcher told a Senate Foreign Aid panel today.

Alfred W. McCoy of Yale University said that beginning in 1965 members of the Florida-based Trafficante family of the Mafia began appearing in Southeast Asia.

"Santo Trafficante Jr., heir to the international criminal syndicate established by Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky, trav-

eled to Saigon and Hong Kong himself in 1968," he said.

McCoy said sources in the U. S. Embassy in Saigon told him Trafficante had met with prominent members of Saigon's Corsican crime syndicates resulting in increased quantities of Asian heroin being shipped to the U. S.

McCoy said South Vietnam's opium and heroin traffic is divided between the political organizations of President Thieu and former President Ky and Prime Minister Tran van Khiem.

He told a Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee that Gen. Ky's

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sister, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Ly, buys finished heroin in Vientiane, Laos, and arranges its shipment to Cambodia "where it is picked up by transport aircraft belonging to the Vietnamese Fifth Air Division and flown to Saigon."

McCoy, who said he spent 18 months in research and interviews preparing to write on heroin in Indochina, asserted that top military leaders in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand are also heavily involved in the drug trade.

He said that until recently

a person he identified as "an overseas Chinese racketeer named 'Huu Tim Heng' was a silent partner in the Vientiane bottling plant of the Pepsi Cola Co., using his position as a cover to import acetic anhydride, a chemical necessary for the manufacture of heroin.

He said Heng bought raw opium and morphine from Gen. Quane Rattikone, former chief of staff of the Royal Laotian Army.

McCoy claimed that in a three-hour interview Rattikone "admitted that he controlled the opium traffic in northwestern Laos since 1962."

"Most of the opium traffic in northeastern Laos is controlled by Vang Pao, the Laotian general who commands the CIA's mercenary army," McCoy claimed.

"The Thai government allows Burmese rebels, Nationalist Chinese irregulars and mercenary armies to move enormous mule caravans loaded with hundreds of tons of Burmese opium across Thailand's northern border," he said.

He also said "overwhelming evidence of systematic corruption" extends all the way to the top of President Thieu's political apparatus and that some of his closest supporters inside the Vietnamese army "control the distribution and sale of heroin to American GIs fighting in Indochina."

'Concealing Evidence'

In addition, McCoy said American diplomats and intelligence agents have allied themselves with "corrupt" groups, placing no pressure on them to get out of the drug business.

He also accused U. S. officials in Southeast Asia of consciously concealing evidence of narcotics involvement by the nation's allies and at times of taking active part "in certain aspects of the region's narcotics traffic."

McCoy is presently a PhD student in Southeast Asian history at Yale.