

Merry-Go-Round

# Turkey's 'Offer'-- Drugs or Dictators

JAN 8 1973

SFChronicle



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IF THE U.S. wants to keep Turkish heroin off American streets, it had better hope that the present military dictatorship is not replaced by a new democratic government. Either way, the Turks want the U.S. to cough up a whopping \$400 million.

This is the secret warning of Turkish officials who have told the U.S. in effect, that drug trafficking may be the alternative to their military rule.

The \$400 million is sought to finance a substitute crop for opium and pay compensation for foreign currency losses. The U.S. has offered to pay a more realistic \$35 million. But a secret General Accounting Office report declares: "Apparently the \$35 million grant is viewed (by the Turks) only as an initial payment and it can be expected that Turkey will continue to press for increased U.S. contributions."

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THE TURKISH armed forces compelled the ruling Justice Party to give up power in 1971 and replaced it with a council of generals. Thereafter, the military junta quickly approved an agreement with the U.S. to ban all opium cultivation in Turkey, which was growing at least 75 per cent of the heroin entering the U.S.

Now the Turks have warned American officials that the agreement may survive only as long as their military government. States the secret report:

"(American officials) were informed that the ban on poppy growing was issued

by the current military-backed government, which was not dependent on popular support. Whether a freely elected future government of Turkey would continue the ban is an open question.

"Turkish officials made the observation that poppy growing might be reversed by some future government more subject to local pressure and popular support."

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CLASSIFIED documents in our possession also raise the nagging problem of Turkish police corruption. One case involves Turkish narcotics chief Abdullah Pektas. Intelligence reports, stamped "secret . . . no foreign dissemination," say Pektas met with a major narcotics trafficker within recent months.

After the meeting, Pektas directed lower-level Turkish narcotics agents to stop harassing the trafficker. The intelligence reports also suggest the possibility that Pektas may have been paid a bribe, but other officials insist he is honest.

Despite the suspicion over Pektas, U.S. narcotics agents have high respect for the Turkish national police director, Orhan Erbug, whose genius for developing informants netted a recent cache of more than a ton of opium.

Good work by the Turks has also cut black market "leakage" from the 1972 opium crop to less than 20 per cent. On balance, the secret reports show the Turkish poppy-banning experiment seems to be working.