



DRUGS

TURKEY *tackles*

THE COUNTRY HAS BUILT A STRONG PARTNERSHIP *with* THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION

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Intergovernmental relations between the United States and Turkey date to the mid-19th century: The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the U.S. and the Ottoman Empire was signed February 25, 1862 (Yale University, 2011). Since establishment of the Turkish republic, treaties between Turkey and the U.S. have mainly addressed defense and military issues. The first Turkey-U.S. treaty on drug enforcement and criminal justice relations, between the U.S. Treasury Department and the Turkish Ministry of Interior, was signed October 3, 1928. That treaty was the main instrument of cooperation and information exchange for both countries' law enforcement officers until 1979. The three main points addressed are:

- Exchange of information and documents on illicit trafficking, including photographs, fingerprints, criminal records and other evidence;
- Immediately forwarding information about suspected movements of narcotic drugs that might concern Turkey or the U.S.;
- Mutual cooperation in police and investigative work.

According to the treaty, "cooperation should, therefore, consist in the exchange of photographs, information regarding suspected persons, fingerprints, and in exchanging information with regard to the methods employed by smugglers, in order to locate the scene of their activities."

James W. Spain, who served in Turkey in the 1970s as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, stated that, although Cyprus was a dominant issue affecting Turkish-American relations, poppy cultivation was a main cause of increased tensions in the 1970s (Spain, 1975). Turkey was a major poppy cultivator while the U.S. was experiencing high levels of heroin consumption in the late 1960s and 1970s. After Turkey agreed to regulate opium production in the mid-1970s, Turkey and the U.S. signed a new treaty of Extradition and Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters in 1979. It improved information sharing, mutual assistance and effective cooperation in criminal matters and drug offenses, and it specifically addresses cocaine,

cannabis and hallucinogenics. This agreement remains the basis for cooperation of law enforcement officials of both countries.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEA

Long before the U.S. established the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 1973, the country had operated offices overseas to combat drug trafficking. The first such foreign office opened in 1951 in Italy. According to a 2007 U.S. Department of Justice report, the DEA conducted one of its first joint operations with Turkey in the early 1960s.

"U.S. foreign drug agents worked with their foreign counterparts to investigate morphine trafficking out of Lebanon and Turkey to France for heroin production. This international coordination resulted in the Turkish government banning morphine production and led to the dismantling of French heroin trafficking organizations," the report said.

The DEA's rules and objectives can differ from country to country, depending on local policies, cultures, norms, laws and agreements between governments and international treaties. When working with foreign law enforcement officials, DEA foreign objectives are based on five main principals (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007):



Turkish police confiscate marijuana in Eastern Turkey. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

- Conducting bilateral investigations;
- Establishing and maintaining good working relations;
- Promoting and contributing to institution building in partner nations;
- Sharing intelligence and supporting intelligence gathering;
- Providing training.

DEA OFFICES IN TURKEY

The U.S. government established an anti-drug trafficking office in Turkey in 1961 that still operates to this day. Anti-drug offices were opened in Ankara and Izmir in 1971, but Izmir's closed in 1978. Upon its creation in 1973, the DEA inherited these offices. According to the 2007 U.S. Justice Department report, the DEAs Turkish offices "account for three percent of the DEAs authorized foreign workforce" of more than 750 officers in 59 different countries.

DEA offices in Turkey cooperate with three law enforcement institutions: the Turkish National Police (TNP), the Gendarmerie and Turkish Customs. However, according to interviews and the authors' experience, almost 90 percent of that cooperation is with the TNP Department of Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime (KOM). This high-level cooperation benefits from the technical capacity of the police in drug enforcement, lower cultural barriers at the TNP and the staff's language proficiency. Additionally, the TNP is Turkey's most experienced organization in counternarcotics, law enforcement and international cooperation.



Afghan and Pakistani law enforcement personnel attend international counternarcotics seminars in Turkey sponsored by the Turkish National Police and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. UTSAM AND TADOC

The number of DEA staff working in Turkey totaled about 20 in 2006. The regional director for the DEAs Middle East Region is located in Ankara and is responsible for DEA offices in Athens, Greece; Cairo, Egypt; and Istanbul. The establishment of the DEA regional office in Ankara is critical since Turkey is not only a transit route for heroin and chemical precursors but is also a strategic regional hub to foster police cooperation for joint operations among countries such as Albania, Bulgaria, Iran, Romania and Ukraine.

DEA IMPREST FUNDS

Imprest funds are defined by the U.S. Justice Department as "fixed or petty-cash funds held in the form of currency and coins that are advanced to designated cashiers, who in turn advance the funds to employees for mission-related expenses." In other words, it is discretionary cash for officers' use. DEA agents use imprest funds to provide cash incentives for informants and to cover the cost of investigations and other official expenses. The total amount of imprest funds in DEA foreign offices was approximately \$3.18 million in 2007. Many of the foreign offices (except those in Italy) have imprest funds, although Turkey is allotted the least at \$105,000.

ESTABLISHMENT OF KOM

Turkey's Department of Anti-Smuggling was established in 1980. Renamed the Department of Smuggling, Intelligence and Operations in 1983, the department's main objective is combating illicit trade and trafficking, including firearms, tobacco and illicit drugs. In 1995, it became the KOM Department, when its purview evolved to include organized crime, money laundering and corruption. The KOM Department coordinates and maintains drug enforcement operations in Turkey. Although Gendarmerie and Customs combat illicit drug trafficking, KOM is Turkey's primary drug enforcement organization. KOM's foreign objectives are:

- Establishing and maintaining good working relations with international organizations;
- Conducting investigations of transnational organized crimes and drug trafficking;
- Providing international training;
- Sharing information with liaison officers.

The Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC), an in-service training academy established in 2000, is one of the main units of KOM. The academy, which provides national and international training on drugs and organized crime, has joint activities with more than 10 international organizations and more than 85 countries, including the U.S. Through the NATO-Russia Council, KOM/TADOC works with the DEA Academy and the Russian Federation's Domodedovo International Police Academy to develop cooperation with Central Asian countries.

In addition to cooperation in training, since 1997 Turkey has successfully completed 22 controlled delivery operations and arrested 75 suspects in joint operations with the DEA. KOM has also carried out 23 operations with German police (KOM Report, 2012), indicating good working relations between these institutions.

Moreover, KOM and DEA have worked together to fight terror financing by implementing a program to list several members of the Kurdish separatist groups Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Kurdish Communities Union (KCK) under the Kingpin Law with the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC). By the end of 2011, nine PKK/KCK



An International Conference hosted by UTSAM on Combating Terrorism and Transnational Crime in Ankara (2013).

members were listed by OFAC as drug traffickers of a terrorist organization (KOM, 2013, pp.84).

OBSTACLES TO COOPERATION

In 2006, the U.S. Justice Department analyzed 10 DEA offices in five countries: Colombia, Italy, Mexico, Thailand and Turkey. The research aimed to assess the DEA's international activities through analysis of the agency's international operations, cooperation activities and personnel composition. According to the report, the DEA was more successful in some countries than others, owing to limitations and obstacles. Conflict regions, authoritarian regimes and unstable countries had the most negative effect on cooperation. Interviews with DEA agents working in the U.S. and Turkey supported some of the report's findings.

According to the interviews, experiences and analysis, the level of cooperation in drug enforcement varies, depending on countries, organizations and individuals. Generally, there are five types of obstacles:

- Culture (country, people and organization);
- Language;
- Bureaucracy;
- Opposition to the U.S. and liaison officials;
- Legal and organizational differences.

These obstacles can be overcome through trial and error and a "getting to know you period," which make it easier to adjust the policies and procedures of each law enforcement agency. However, it is sometimes difficult to convince appointed or elected officials of the importance of police cooperation in countering organized crime, especially drug trafficking.

It is also important to stress that the work experiences of DEA agents in different parts of the world, from South America to the Middle East and East Asia, provide them with invaluable knowledge and professionalism to create better cooperation. The agents interviewed emphasized the crucial

role of individuals and their attitudes. In fact, they highlighted that the biggest mistake liaison officers make is failing to understand the culture of the organization, and its officers, with which they need to cooperate. Informal relations, rather than formal treaties and agreements, are the most important parameters in creating better law enforcement cooperation. A good example of cooperation between Turkey and the DEA follows:

"During our fieldwork in Turkey, a foreign official told us that DEA provided intelligence helps to speed up local investigations. Turkish officials also told us about recent operations for which the DEA had provided invaluable assistance. For example, a foreign official spoke of a case in which a DEA-paid informant provided information about a heroin shipment, resulting in the seizure of several tons of heroin. In another instance, foreign officials in Turkey were aware of a Turkish shipment of 41 kilograms of cocaine from Bolivia to Iran, but the smugglers were not going to take the narcotics through Turkey. The vessel used for the shipment was from Denmark, and the DEA assisted in the seizure of the narcotics by facilitating communication between Turkey and Denmark officials." (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007)

Historical documents and treaties, the milestones of cooperation, indicate a long mutually beneficial experience between the U.S. and Turkey. Mutual cooperation increases the success of drug enforcement efforts. It is evident that the cooperation level between the U.S. and Turkey should be improved in law enforcement matters through liaison officers, formal treaties, training and projects. □

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