

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 8, 1975

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to Public Law 94-104, discussions have been held with the Government of Turkey on effective means of preventing diversion of the Turkish opium poppy crop into illicit channels. These discussions continue long-standing consultations between the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Turkey on suppression of the illegal international traffic in narcotics.

The Government of Turkey is aware of our concern and that of other nations of the world regarding the terrible plight of drug abuse. This concern has been made known to successive Governments of Turkey by this and previous Administrations, by many other governments, and by the United Nations.

I have been encouraged by reports from our Embassy in Ankara, from the Drug Enforcement Administration and from the United Nations, indicating the Government of Turkey's efforts to keep poppy cultivation under effective control thus far have been successful. I have received no evidence to date that there has been any illicit diversion of the current Turkish crop.

When Turkey permitted the resumption of poppy cultivation in 1974, the production of opium gum was forbidden and the poppy straw harvesting process was adopted instead. At the same time, Turkey implemented stringent inspections and controls of the poppy crop. The poppy straw process makes control of the crop much easier. It has been used successfully in several countries to facilitate efforts to prevent illicit diversion from legal opium poppy growing areas. Turkey has reissued the same control decree to cover next year's crop. We expect the controls to be as effective as before, because of the introduction of more modern communications and surveillance equipment and more experience in administering the controls.

The United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control has provided Turkey with technical assistance in meeting the requirements of the poppy straw process. I believe the United States should continue to support the good work of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control in its assistance to Turkey and other countries in combating the diversion of legally produced opiates from legitimate pharmaceutical uses.

I also share the views of the majority in the Congress that close bilateral cooperation with Turkey is essential to prevent illicit diversion of poppy crops. In July of this year at our meeting in Helsinki, I discussed with Prime Minister Demirel my continuing deep concern about the ravages of drug abuse and the need to suppress diversion of opiates into illicit channels. Prime Minister Demirel strongly concurred in my views and affirmed his personal commitment to the prevention of illicit diversion of opiates from his country.

On October 29, following enactment of Public Law 94-104, I sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Turkey urging that already existing discussions between our two governments on opium poppy controls be intensified in the period ahead. On November 28, Prime Minister Demirel sent me a very positive response confirming his earlier assurance that he fully supports continuing effective poppy controls and maintaining a dialogue between the two governments on this vital subject.

Since the passage of Public Law 94-104, discussion and meetings on poppy controls have been held with Turkish Government officials at many levels. Ambassador Macomber has reviewed the issue with the Turkish Prime Minister. Additionally, the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Embassy Narcotics Control Coordinator have met with the Turkish Foreign Ministry's Director of Narcotics Control Affairs. The U.S. AID poppy specialist in Ankara has held consultations with Turkish Soils Product Office and Agriculture Ministry officials in Ankara, Izmir, and in the poppy growing areas. In addition, the Regional Director of the Drug Enforcement Administration in Ankara has been in continuing contact with high Turkish law enforcement officials. Our Ambassador and his staff will continue these meetings and discussions on poppy controls.

I believe the desire of the Congress that meaningful discussions be conducted with the Government of Turkey on insuring continued effective poppy controls have been met by the actions described above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerald R. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Honorable John L. McClellan  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510