

Syrian forces. However, heroin production from opium and morphine imported through Turkish brokers from Afghanistan and Pakistan continued apace.”

NNICC, 1995: “In the Middle East, opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon significantly declined. As a result of eradication campaigns, less than 90 hectares were available for harvest. In 1994, an aggressive joint eradication program was conducted by Lebanon and Syria, but pre-eradication production levels were maintained by using imported drug supplies.

“To block the flow of hashish from Lebanon, Syrian and Lebanese government forces aggressively increased efforts to eradicate cannabis in 1994. During the spring and summer of 1994, Lebanese officials, in conjunction with Syrian counterparts, mounted a large and effective eradication program. As a result of this program, cannabis cultivation in Lebanon dropped 50%, from 15,700 hectares in 1993 to 8,100 hectares in 1994. Production similarly decreased from 565 metric tons in 1993 to 275 metric tons in 1994.”

INCSB, 1996: “Illicit opium and cannabis cultivation in Lebanon remains significantly diminished due to strict enforcement and highly effective continued eradication efforts

by joint Lebanese-Syria authorities. As a result, there was an appreciable decrease in domestic cannabis cultivation, and almost no opium cultivation in 1995. Nevertheless, Lebanon did not successfully reduce the amount of narcotics imported into the country for purposes of process conversion and re-export. The joint Lebanese-Syrian effort to eradicate cultivation of illicit crops in the Baalbek-Hermel region, which was initiated in 1992, has produced notable results . . . the almost total eradication of these crops and no re-cultivation.

“The almost 20 years of large-scale unimpeded narcotics production activity in Lebanon appears to have ended. The focus now must be set on the downstream aspects of the narcotics trade as opium and morphine base continue to enter Lebanon from Southwest Asia through Syria for conversion into heroin. The heroin labs in the Bekaa Valley are small, mobile, well hidden, and consequently difficult to detect. Further complicating the already difficult efforts at lab discovery is the fact that they are largely in Hezbollah territory.”

According to the same report, Lebanon’s production of opium was 45 metric tons in 1989, 32 in 1990, 34 in 1991, 0 in 1992, 4 in 1993, 0 in 1994, and 1.5 in 1995.

Syria’s Monzer al-Kassar was Bush’s arms partner

Monzer al-Kassar, together with his brother Ghassan, were two of the Syrian regime’s primary arms- and drug-traffickers throughout the 1980s, according to the book *Godfather of Terror*, by a German police investigator writing under the pseudonym Manfred Morstein. The duo were low-level pushers, until Ghassan married the daughter of Gen. Ali Dubah, the head of Syrian Intelligence, who also supervised narcotics production in occupied Lebanon.

In the United States, Monzer al-Kassar was under investigation by the FBI, CIA, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the U.S. Customs Service, for crimes ranging from arms- and drug-trafficking to airline-hijacking and kidnapping. Nevertheless, Vice President George Bush routinely used Monzer al-Kassar to sell arms to the Contras and the Iranians. The arrangement is just one indication of the secret Bush and Assad dope and terror partnership.

As of 1984, the DEA had identified Monzer al-Kassar as the Syrian drug-lord responsible for distribution of heroin and hashish in France, Italy, and Spain. The DEA, other U.S. agencies, and other governments were investigating the al-Kassar family-owned Banco de Bilbao of

Spain. Syria’s General Dubah, Hafez al-Assad, and Rifaat Assad all maintained sizable accounts in the bank.

The DEA and other agencies were also investigating al-Kassar’s ties to Colombian cocaine barons Jorge Luis Ochoa and Gonzalo Rodríguez Gacha, who were then rapidly expanding their European operations, in partnership with Syria.

However, at the same time as al-Kassar was wanted by the DEA and other law enforcement agencies, he was a business partner with Lt. Col. Oliver North in shipping East bloc-made assault rifles to the Contras, on behalf of the Bush-directed secret support apparatus established under National Security Decision Directives 2 and 3. Al-Kassar’s other partners in the venture were Maj. Gen. Richard Secord (ret.), and former CIA official Thomas Clines—both longtime subordinates of former CIA official and Bush Presidential campaign speechwriter Theodore G. Shackley. A number of front companies of the Special Air Services (SAS), the British elite “anti-terrorist” commando force, with Mideast headquarters in Oman, were also involved.

Al-Kassar also proved helpful to Bush in selling arms to Iran. A 1987 investigation into the Italian firm Borletti, on suspicion of running arms to Iran, revealed that the operation was coordinated from Barcelona, Spain by the Bovega company, a front company of Monzer al-Kassar, on behalf of Rifaat al-Assad and his son, Firaas al-Assad.

Monzer al-Kassar later figured as the principal suspect in the 1988 downing of Pan Am Flight 103.