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E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)  
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COPY



REPORT OF THE  
COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES

Opium Eradication Efforts  
In Mexico:  
Cautious Optimism Advised

Departments of State and Justice

On the basis of analyses of selected seizures in 1975, the Drug Enforcement Administration indicated that 89 percent of heroin in the United States was of Mexican origin.

The United States works with the Mexican Government to eliminate the supply at the source. Since previous eradication efforts in Mexico have been unsuccessful in reducing the U.S. supply, the Mexican Government decided in 1975 to use aerially sprayed herbicides to kill opium poppies. This, together with an expanded coverage area and a longer eradication campaign, could considerably increase the number of plants destroyed, which would reduce the amount of Mexican heroin available for smuggling into the United States.

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GGD-77-6

Feb. 18, 1977

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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-175425

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Rangel:

This is our report on opium eradication efforts in Mexico. The review was made in accordance with your request of December 8, 1975. A second report of interest to you concerning law enforcement efforts along the United States-Mexico border will be issued at a later date.

In preparing our report we obtained comments from the Departments of State and Justice and from the Central Intelligence Agency. Their comments were considered in the report.

As agreed, we are providing copies of this report to the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of State; members of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control; the Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration; and other interested Members of Congress and committees.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Stebbins".

Comptroller General  
of the United States

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U.S. INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS ARE INADEQUATE

Under Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1973, DEA is responsible for operating a national narcotics intelligence system. In September 1975 the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force's "White Paper on Drug Abuse" addressed the need for good strategic intelligence in making resource allocation and in evaluating the effectiveness of both supply and demand reduction programs. The report noted considerable DEA progress in some areas of intelligence but stated that DEA was "inadequately equipped to supply the full range of strategic intelligence requirements" due, in part, to a lack of sufficient intelligence analysts. It also cited the need for identifying specific strategic intelligence requirements and the need for greater leadership on the part of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control (CCINC) 1/ in the area of foreign intelligence.

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

We discussed the availability and reliability of intelligence on Mexican poppy cultivation with DEA and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officials in Washington [REDACTED]. Both agencies are actively involved in [REDACTED] strategic narcotic intelligence. We found, however, little data available on the agricultural aspects of Mexican poppy cultivation. Currently, there is no accurate measure of (1) the total areas within Mexico being used to grow opium poppies or (2) the opium gum and heroin yields these areas are producing.

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According to the Department of State, the CCINC Executive Director has taken a personal hand in reviewing existing procedures and recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of foreign narcotics intelligence collection and analysis.

CIA

The CIA Special Assistant for Narcotics Control Operations chairs the CCINC Foreign Intelligence Subcommittee which acts as the interagency coordinating mechanism for overseas intelligence. As such, it provides guidance to the U.S. Missions overseas on narcotics intelligence needs.

In April 1976 the CCINC Foreign Intelligence Subcommittee forwarded to the U.S. Mission in Mexico a comprehensive

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1/A description of CCINC responsibilities is included as appendix I.

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list of intelligence requirements which attempted to consolidate the needs of the intelligence community in one document. These requirements covered all phases of the Mexican drug problem, including questions on Mexican Government programs, opium poppy cultivation, eradication effort, opium processing, and trafficking. In establishing these requirements, the Subcommittee stated that current intelligence information available on illicit narcotics production and trafficking in Mexico is inadequate to meet the needs of Washington policymakers and program managers. Much of the intelligence requested in this document paralleled the type of information needed to prepare production estimates on Mexican opium cultivation and heroin production. During our visit in June 1976, no response had been made to this comprehensive list, although many individual items had been addressed in previous reports and correspondence.

[REDACTED]

One official said he did not believe that attempting to obtain information from individual farmers would be productive, because opium cultivation within Mexico is too fragmented and diverse to form any overall conclusions from their opinions on the scope of production.

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DEA

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

The RIU in DEA's Mexico City regional office was staffed, at the time of our visit, by a supervisor, three intelligence analysts, two special agents, and two secretaries. The RIU supervisor was also designated the narcotics intelligence coordinator for the Embassy and, as such, is responsible for coordinating responses to all requests for information from the United States.

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RIU's primary function is to support DEA's drug suppression efforts in Mexico with operational intelligence. RIU is also responsible for preparing strategic intelligence reports on the narcotics situation within Mexico. One example cited earlier was the report on economic impact of Mexican heroin. RIU has also prepared situation reports on 3 of the 32 States within Mexico. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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In reviewing the RIU program, we noted that relatively few resources have been devoted to developing information on the opium poppy, its cultivation, harvest, and conversion to heroin. Information available on these subjects has been included in the RIU reports, but, according to one DEA agent, most DEA informants are more knowledgeable about individuals and organizations trafficking in heroin than they are about agricultural areas and procedures used to cultivate and harvest opium poppies. This agent felt that, although informants would attempt to answer questions on poppy cultivation, much of their information was hearsay and was not the result of firsthand observation. All DEA agents were requested by management to include specific questions on poppy cultivation in reports of debriefings of cooperating defendants or informants, but we noted only limited compliance with that request when reviewing DEA regional files.

At the headquarters level, DEA recently established an Interagency Drug Intelligence Group for Mexico under the leadership of an interagency policy committee. With CCINC concurrence, this group, which reports to both the Cabinet Committee on Drug Law Enforcement and CCINC, coordinates intelligence projects and will attempt to pool the resources of existing Federal agencies to reduce Mexican heroin in the United States. It will make recommendations to both cabinet committees concerning intelligence needs. The group will have its own analysis and reporting capability and will coordinate the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence needed by the Federal agencies involved in both the foreign and domestic aspects of Mexican heroin suppression.

The staff of the Group will be drawn primarily from DEA's Office of Intelligence and augmented by representatives of other participating agencies. Although CIA is not an active member of the Group, it contributes intelligence dealing with Mexico and is afforded access to information relevant to the narcotics problem in Mexico.

We noted that the Group plans to conduct a series of research projects aimed at developing strategic intelligence information. Part of the research being scheduled will assist in providing the type of information which is currently lacking on opium poppy cultivation in Mexico.

In commenting on our report, DEA noted that the Group had already completed several research reports, including papers on the economic impact of Mexican heroin, the agricultural aspects of Mexican poppy cultivation, and historical progress and trend analyses of the Mexican eradication campaign. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

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CONCLUSION

DEA purchase and seizure evaluations indicate that Mexican heroin availability in the United States has consistently risen over the past 3 years to the point where Mexico has become the number one source country for heroin entering the United States. Despite this growing problem, sufficient resources had not been devoted to developing strategic intelligence information on the growing areas and to researching the growing characteristics and conversion processes associated with the Mexican opium poppy. Without reliable intelligence, accurate estimates of present or potential production cannot be made.

DEA, CIA, State, the Cabinet Committee on Drug Law Enforcement, and the CCINC Foreign Intelligence Subcommittee are aware of this problem and are taking action to see that more resources are devoted to developing better intelligence information. Future reports attempting to quantify the magnitude of Mexican heroin production should benefit from these efforts, but at present the intelligence used to estimate aggregated production is inadequate. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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traffic. The U.S. Mission estimates that Mexico will spend about \$34 million on narcotics control in 1976, \$14 million for the Attorney General's office and \$20 million for Mexican army assistance. In response to the increasing production of Mexican heroin, the Attorney General appointed an executive assistant in November 1975 whose overall responsibility was coordinating eradication campaigns, a major segment of the Mexican narcotics control effort.

#### MFJP and army participation

A 500-man Federal police force is responsible for enforcing all Federal statutes. Since 1974, when we issued a report <sup>1/</sup> on this subject, Mexico has expanded the size and improved the MFJP enforcement capabilities. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, MFJP is being improved by new recruits who are now required to have 2 years of college training and have attended and graduated from a formal training academy established by the Attorney General. The MFJP's first formal drug enforcement training class was completed at the institute in the fall of 1975. Four additional classes had been completed by the time of our visit in June 1976.

Corruption still remains a major inhibitor to more effective law enforcement by MFJP. Although salaries have improved from \$100 a month 6 years ago to \$300 a month presently, they may still be insufficient, and this may lead to a need on the part of the agents to supplement their income.

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In early 1976 MFJP reorganized and established a separate division, of about one-third the total force, exclusively for narcotics enforcement. DEA believes the Attorney General is attempting to include the newly recruited and better trained agents in this division. During the eradication campaigns, about one-third to one-half of the MFJP drug agents were assigned to the opium growing areas to assist in detection and destruction efforts and enforcement and interdiction activities.

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<sup>1/</sup>"Efforts to Stop Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Coming From and Through Mexico and Central America," GGD-75-44, Dec. 31, 1974.

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U.S. ASSISTANCE TO MEXICO HAS ESCALATED  
WITHOUT DETAILED PLANNING

The mechanism for developing and administering U.S. assistance for the narcotics control programs rests with the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control and the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters.

Within the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, the Narcotics Control Coordinating Committee, which is made up of various Mission representatives--including officials of DEA, U.S. Customs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State--meets with the Ambassador to coordinate all aspects of U.S. assistance to the Mexican program for narcotics control assistance. The eradication program has become the first priority within the Embassy, and weekly meetings were held during the 1976 spring campaign to oversee the program's implementation.

On a daily basis, responsibility for the U.S. assistance program rests with the Embassy narcotics coordinator who heads the Embassy's narcotics assistance unit (NAU). Narcotics assistance funds are programmed through NAU, which is staffed by a chief program officer and special advisors who are under contract to the Agency for International Development.

DEA was designated by Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1973 as the Federal agency to deal with foreign drug law enforcement officials under CCINC policy guidance. As part of its overall mission, DEA activity within Mexico has been aimed at reducing the availability of illicit drugs in the domestic and international markets. Over the past 3 years, DEA agents have worked with the Mexican Attorney General in carrying out the eradication program. (CONFIDENTIAL) The DEA deputy regional administrator is the chairman of a three-man steering committee composed of the Embassy narcotics coordinator and the NAU's chief program officer. This committee monitors the eradication program for the United States and coordinates U.S. program assistance with the Mexican Government.

Narcotics control action plan  
and U.S. funding

The Embassy narcotics coordinator annually prepares a narcotics control action plan (NCAP), a consolidation of the U.S. Mission's overall program objectives for narcotics assistance. NCAPs are intended to be the basic planning document

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for activities in individual countries and are the basis for implementing and evaluating bilateral action programs. They represent the Mission's analysis of the drug situation within a country and contain programs which the Mission feels should be implemented to achieve desired objectives. Once approved by CCINC for funding, NCAP serves as the basis for negotiating narcotic control agreements with foreign governments.

We reviewed the last three NCAPs for Mexico. The latest was prepared in August 1975. They present overall program objectives and general statements on the narcotics problem within Mexico, including constraints which work against U.S. objectives. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Interdiction of heroin and eradication of the opium poppy are listed in the latest NCAP as one of the top enforcement goals for Mexico. In outlining program assistance, the NCAP details the type of equipment the U.S. Mission believes the Mexican Government needs to carry out the enforcement goals. Nowhere, however, does the NCAP provide detailed project descriptions or time frames stating what and when the United States expects the Mexican Government to provide in the way of increased resources. The resources would include staff, technical skills, and training to effectively manage, maintain, and utilize the U.S. equipment and assistance provided. DEA and NAU personnel in Mexico expressed concern over the technical expertise of the Mexican pilots and mechanics and indicated continued contract support was needed to accomplish the eradication goals and upgrade the Air Services Section capability. Without a sufficiently detailed description of the timing and nature of expected improvements in the Mexican Government's institutional capabilities to handle increased program assistance, it is difficult to evaluate how well the narcotics control program is meeting its objectives. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Funds programed for equipment and services are formally transferred to Mexico by letters of agreement. Basically, these letters include such provisions as (1) the type and purpose of assistance, (2) the funding ceiling under the agreement, (3) what Mexico will supply, (4) a restriction that the assistance will be used strictly for narcotics control purposes, (5) an agreement that the United States can have access to the equipment to certify its usage and condition, and (6) an understanding that at least semiannual reports will be provided on specific efforts in relation to the purposes and objectives of the agreement.

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In discussing the assistance program with program officials in Mexico City and the State Department, we found that, to date, the United States has not formally conducted an audit of equipment provided and has not received any written documentation from the Mexican Government on the overall use of material assistance. Program personnel maintain that daily liaison with the U.S. Embassy, DEA, U.S. contract advisors, and the Mexican Attorney General's organization assures the NAU that the equipment is being used for the intended purpose of narcotics control and that aircraft use statistics are provided by contractor personnel.

NCAP does not give consideration to income replacement programs for the opium-growing regions. The reason cited is that Mexico has traditionally looked at rural development programs such as crop substitution in the opium-growing regions as rewarding people who refrain from an illegal activity. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~ According to the Department of State, Mexico carries out a continuing and large rural development program which is also applicable to the opium-growing regions. At the present time no U.S. direct assistance has been considered to help resolve this problem, and the Department of State does not believe any future effort in this area would properly be part of the current U.S. assistance program.

We believe, however, that, if illegal cultivation is to be permanently reduced in areas where alternate sources of income are limited, some alternative means of income will, eventually, have to be found.

Total U.S. funding for the Mexican narcotics control program since 1970 is shown below. A list of equipment and services provided to Mexico is shown as appendix III.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Total funding</u>
1970	\$ 1,000,000
1971	-
1972	-
1973	1,305,000
1974	5,578,702
1975	15,879,000
a/1976	<u>10,796,200</u>
Total	<u>\$34,558,902</u>

a/Does not include the transition quarter. State Department budget projections for Mexico include \$3,000,000 for the FY 1976 transition quarter and \$10,942,000 for FY 1977.

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## INCREASING U.S.-MEXICAN ERADICATION EFFORTS

Mexico has conducted opium eradication programs since the late 1940s. Positive results from eradication, while steadily increasing, remained relatively small until about 1970, when, as a result of high-level meetings between the United States and Mexican Governments, a joint cooperative program began whereby the United States supplied aircraft to Mexico for use in narcotics control. Until late 1975, these eradication efforts were carried out manually by Mexican army troops and MFJP with sticks, machetes, and hoes. The introduction of aircraft into the campaign enabled the MFJP to visually spot more fields from the air and move troops more rapidly into the growing areas.

Until 1973, U.S. enforcement efforts in Mexico were aimed primarily at interdiction using road blocks and assisting the MFJP in developing cases against narcotics traffickers. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~ Over the past 3 years, however, DEA has placed greater emphasis on the importance of the eradication effort because it can eliminate the source of large quantities of opium.

The increased U.S. assistance through expanded narcotics control program funding and through DEA's involvement has helped Mexico intensify the eradication program. This year's transition to aerially sprayed herbicides has given the eradication program a new dimension. Currently, DEA and the U.S. Mission give the eradication program the highest priority in narcotics control for Mexico because the results are immediate and the opium crop is destroyed at its source.

Reducing the supply of illicit drugs involves many program efforts, both nationally and internationally, aimed at identifying and disrupting drug trafficking organizations and distribution systems. As discussed in the September 1975 "White Paper on Drug Abuse," prepared by the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force, controlling the production of illicit drugs at the source through crop eradication is only one aspect of the international cooperative assistance program and U.S. supply reduction effort. The opium eradication effort in Mexico is not a total solution but only one part of an overall Federal strategy for curtailing drug abuse.

### Operation SEAM and Clearview SEAM 75

In October 1973 the Mexican Attorney General and the DEA Administrator met in Mexico City to determine methods

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of improving the joint enforcement programs of Mexico and the United States. A joint task force was approved to evaluate enforcement capabilities in eradication, interdiction, and intelligence analysis. DEA entitled this operation "Special Enforcement Activity in Mexico (SEAM)." Although manual eradication was one aspect of this project, also stressed were interdiction and drug traffic disruption operations in the growing areas.

Working with its Mexican counterparts throughout the January through April 1974 campaign, DEA identified many problems, including (1) lack of overall command coordination, (2) poor working conditions for the MFJP and army eradication teams, (3) inadequate destruction methods, and (4) no radio communication systems. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

The 1974 SEAM campaign was directed at four sectors in the States of Sinaloa and Chihuahua with a base of operations at the city of Culiacan where aircraft are maintained and fueled. DEA recommended a continued joint effort, better equipment, and the establishment of three forward bases in the growing areas to eliminate fuel and air time waste and provide living quarters for the eradication teams. Despite the problems encountered, DEA reported 5,503 opium poppy fields destroyed and numerous seizures through interdiction efforts. (See app. II for statistics.)

To achieve additional goals during the 1975 campaign, Operation SEAM was revamped to provide Mexico with additional equipment, including a sophisticated opium poppy aerial detection system; advisors; and law enforcement aids, such as weapons, ammunition, and telecommunication equipment from the United States. This revamping resulted in a joint effort--opium poppy destruction coupled with the interdiction of processed opium gum and heroin--which was subsequently coined "Operation Clearview/SEAM '75."

Operation Clearview SEAM 75 started on January 15, 1975, and continued until May 10, 1975, when all known poppy fields in the northern growing areas of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango had been manually destroyed. As suggested by U.S. officials after the 1974 SEAM campaign, the Mexican Government constructed three forward bases in the heart of the poppy-growing area to serve as operational field offices for the MFJP and the Mexican army. Communications equipment was also installed. U.S.-supplied helicopters transported Mexican troops to the opium fields which the troops manually destroyed.

U.S. participation during this campaign included (1) increased use of DEA's Mexico City regional office personnel,

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(2) a DEA advisor on poppy detection, (3) an AID aviation advisor, and (4) several contract employees to assist with aircraft maintenance.

According to DEA the 1975 eradication effort was more successful than the 1974 campaign. (For campaign statistics, see app. II.) However, DEA noted that insufficient manpower was devoted to tackle the total manual destruction process, and many of the fields destroyed at the end of the campaign had already been harvested. In addition, DEA noted continuing operational problems involving aircraft, equipment, fuel, maintenance, and the general administrative organization and coordination of the campaign. DEA recommended that the next campaign begin earlier with more manpower, equipment, and aircraft support. DEA recommended also that the use of aeriually sprayed herbicides be considered as an eradication tool. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

#### Operation TRIZO

The 1976 opium poppy eradication campaign expanded previous efforts by targeting a much larger area of Mexico encompassing the entire west coast. Three separate "zones" were established covering known or suspected cultivation areas, and Operation TRIZO was coined as the name for the U.S. assistance effort. (See map, p. 28.) The campaign was to begin on November 15, 1975, earlier than any previous undertaking. Before this date, however, an event took place which subsequently changed the complexion of the 1976 campaign, compared to previous campaigns.

Even though the 2 previous years' campaigns were reportedly successful in destroying increasing numbers of fields, the presence of Mexican heroin in the United States was rapidly increasing. Due to this increased availability, a series of high-level meetings took place during late 1975 and early 1976. Mexican officials responsible for the Mexican drug program met with several U.S. Congressmen, State Department officials, the CCINC Executive Director, the Attorney General, the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the DEA Administrator. One of the most important events was a visit to Mexico by Congressman Charles B. Rangel in October 1975.

Prior to Congressman Rangel's visit, it was generally believed that the Mexican poppy crop was planted in the late fall and harvested between January and April. All previous campaigns had concentrated their activity during this harvest period. During his visit, a flight was made over the

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traditional growing areas near Culiacan where he observed opium poppy fields in full bloom.

DEA and U.S. Mission officials consider the Congressman's visit as a major factor influencing the Mexican Government's decision in November 1975 to approve the use of herbicides to speed up the eradication progress. They also consider the high level of U.S. concern and a series of meetings between U.S. and Mexican officials as influential in the Mexican Attorney General's decision to allow an expanded U.S. presence with DEA, NAU, and contract personnel participating in eradication missions and performing aerial reconnaissance operations. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Various chemical herbicides were tested by the Mexican Government during 1975 prior to the decision to use herbicides extensively during the TRIZO campaign. Initially, Gramoxone was selected for use against marihuana and opium poppy fields; however, this herbicide caused concern due to its high toxicity. Eventually the herbicide 2,4-D was selected by the Mexican Government as an effective agent for opium poppy eradication. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Available in a number of commercial herbicides in both Mexico and the United States, 2,4-D is widely used and accepted in both countries for controlling broadleaf weeds. According to U.S. officials, 2,4-D is a more logical choice because of its accepted use in both countries and its lower risk. The chemical ingredients in 2,4-D become inert after 3 to 6 weeks.

Although it is effective in killing the opium poppy, 2,4-D takes up to 4 days before wilting is evident and this has caused problems in verifying whether effective concentrations have been applied. Testing is continuing in Mexico for other acceptable herbicide mixtures which have a more immediate noticeable effect on the plant.

The use of Bell 206 and 212 helicopters to aerially spray opium-growing concentrations in the remote mountain ranges became the primary concern of all campaign personnel. Aerial spraying with an effective herbicide would be an improvement over manual destruction since a helicopter can cover a very large area each day and thus reduce the number of personnel required for the manual operation.

Without the switch to aerial spraying, DEA officials feel the spring campaign would have suffered because the personnel needed for manual eradication were not organized

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and ready to begin in November as planned, and DEA questioned whether sufficient troops would have been available to cover the expanded area.

The late decision to use herbicides created procurement problems for the U.S. Mission since no preparation had been made for aerial spraying. The U.S. Government, on short notice, was able to provide 14 spray rigs for the Bell helicopters.

Because the Mexican pilots had limited helicopter flying experience and no spraying experience, five American pilots were hired by the Mexican Government and paid with U.S. funds to spray the fields and teach the MFJP pilots spraying techniques. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~ Due to these difficulties the full-scale spraying campaign did not begin until January 1976, and U.S. Mission and DEA officials said that the fall opium crop Congressman Rangel saw was harvested before destruction efforts got underway.

Although spraying missions were conducted in the two southern zones, the principal center of the spraying operations was zone I, the traditional growing area. The helicopter spraying missions were based out of Culiacan, Mazatlan, and the three forward bases--San Jose del Llano, Topia, and Choix--established in the earlier campaign. Normally two helicopters conducted a spraying mission with one actually spraying while the other, acting as a cover and spotter ship, pointed out opium fields, provided security for the spray ship, and transported extra fuel and herbicides. For the

most part, American contract pilots flew the larger Bell 212 helicopters with Mexican copilots, whereas the Mexican pilots operated the smaller Bell 206 helicopters. DEA agents participated freely in the operations as observers and accompanied spray teams in the cover ship. In addition, DEA pilots and DEA aircraft flew reconnaissance flights to detect poppy fields and to evaluate spraying results.

During the TRIZO operation, U.S. participation increased from previous years. At various times during the campaign, DEA participation included (1) about 38 agents, pilots, and advisors either from the Mexico City regional office or on temporary assignment from the United States and (2) about 36 narcotics program-funded advisors, either under contract or on temporary assignment, including the 5 U.S.-funded spray pilots, 18 aviation and mechanical personnel, and advisors in communications and poppy detection. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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Phase I of TRIZO was officially concluded on April 15, 1976. Despite its shortcomings, as discussed below, in terms of raw statistics the campaign was undoubtedly much more successful than were previous campaigns. A total of 20,115 opium fields of over 4,359 hectares were reported destroyed. (See app. II for complete statistics.) However, DEA officials told us that these destruction statistics might be overstated by as much as 20 percent for the following reasons:

1. There was a lack of organizational and administrative controls over spraying operations which resulted in some fields being resprayed and counted more than once.
2. Inexperienced Mexican spray pilots did not completely cover fields.
3. Some fields were harvested or partially harvested before spraying operations began.
4. The late decision to use herbicides precluded effective testing of herbicide mixtures. This, along with changing environmental conditions, contributed to the occasional spraying of weak solutions, which allowed some fields to be harvested after spraying.

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Despite these problems the campaign obviously was causing increasing concern among illegal growers. During the latter part of the campaign at least seven helicopters were hit with small arms fire. Pilots also reported that cables were being strung across valleys in an attempt to cause the spraying helicopters to crash.

Narcotics assistance funding has increased the Mexican Government's resources for opium poppy eradication. According to the Department of State, the continuing cost requirement for the Government has been considered and is part of joint discussions between the two Governments. However, in discussing these increased resources with DEA and U.S. Mission officials, it appears that, although the Mexican Attorney General's organization has expanded and is acquiring the management and technical skills needed to carry out a more highly sophisticated program, the progress is slow. The United States concern over Mexican heroin has encouraged increasing amounts of U.S. assistance in the form of sophisticated aircraft and poppy detection equipment which are beyond the present capabilities of the

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Mexican pilots and technicians to effectively utilize and maintain. However, it is questionable whether the U.S. program has adequately considered the continuing cost requirement that the Mexican Government will eventually have to bear for skilled personnel, salaries, maintenance, spare parts, fuel, and consumables if the program is to become independent of U.S. funding. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

To date, problems in the Mexican eradication program-- such as lack of pilot and maintenance expertise, spare parts, and fuel; low salaries; and inadequate program monitoring-- have been alleviated by increased U.S. funding and additional contract personnel. Salaries have been supplemented, fuel costs reimbursed, spare parts furnished, and contract personnel provided to supplement and train the Mexican personnel. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~ In addition, the fleet of U.S.-supplied aircraft has expanded and damaged or destroyed aircraft has been replaced.

Acting on the demonstrated need for a fall campaign, phase II of TRIZO will start in September 1976 and continue through November 20, 1976. DEA, NAU, and contract personnel are scheduled to provide similar training and advisory services as in phase I. U.S. assistance scheduled for this phase will include

- one Bell model 212 helicopter,
- three Bell model 206 helicopters,
- a transport plane,
- additional spray and personnel safety equipment, and
- a portable aircraft maintenance facility at Culiacan.

In addition, the United States will, by request of the Mexican Government, contract for technicians to advise on the operation of one of the two MOPS systems given to Mexico for the detection of poppy fields from aircraft using special photographic equipment.

U.S. Mission officials were hopeful that, with a more efficiently organized fall campaign, the eradication program would have eliminated 75 to 80 percent of the 1976 opium crop within Mexico. DEA headquarters officials are less optimistic and estimate a 50- to 60-percent success rate.

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CONCLUSIONS

This year's campaign is considered by U.S. officials as the most successful one to date. Reasons cited include the involvement of the President, Members of Congress, and top-level U.S. officials from the State Department and the Department of Justice who personally contacted high-level Mexican Government officials and impressed upon them the importance of Mexico's cooperation in this area. This top-level presence was influential in the Mexican Government's decision to (1) use herbicides for the first time in a campaign, (2) allow the contracting of U.S. spray pilots and ground support personnel, (3) permit an expanded U.S. advisory presence to monitor the campaign's progress, (4) expand the eradication area to include new growing areas, and (5) extend the eradication program to a more comprehensive year-round effort with an intensive program in the spring and fall months. In addition, a large investment of U.S.-supplied equipment, personnel, and funds has played an important role in upgrading Mexico's resources to handle this large-scale program.

The ultimate long-range success of the opium poppy eradication program within Mexico, however, depends on a number of factors, including (1) a strong endorsement by the new Mexican Government, (2) effective administration of the eradication program, (3) common agreement on the purposes and goals of the eradication program, (4) a commitment by Mexico to upgrade its narcotics program with the dedicated personnel and resources necessary to organize and carry out a continuing program each year, and (5) the ability of the rural areas of Mexico involved in opium poppy cultivation to develop alternate sources of income.

~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~ According to the Department of State, the incoming Mexican administration has recently pledged its continuing support to the U.S. Government under the eradication program.

The current program of aerial herbicide spraying was implemented on very short notice with considerable U.S. assistance. Indications are that the U.S. presence and funding cannot be reduced in the near future unless the Mexican Attorney General's resources and organizations responsible for all phases of the program are substantially upgraded. ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

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To date major request for material assistance has been denied. Yet no plan exists showing program objectives detailing when the Attorney General's organization will be able to effectively operate and maintain the inventory of equipment currently on hand without continuing U.S. assistance and contract employees. The top priority placed on solving the problem of Mexican heroin has made U.S. officials hesitant about denying any additional resources that are requested for fear that denial might jeopardize the existing cooperation.

Opium poppy cultivation has been a way of life in many rural areas of Mexico, and, as discussed in chapter 2, this crop has been a major part of the economy of these areas. Presently, adequate alternate sources of income do not exist. By mounting continuously successful campaigns, Mexico will be faced with unrest and economic depression in these areas, a problem which could undermine the program's success. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

#### RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Secretary of State, as Chairman of CCINC, require the U.S. Mission in Mexico to develop a more comprehensive narcotics control action plan which will (1) clearly define U.S. program goals for assisting the Mexican Government in developing its own capabilities to carry out narcotics control activities which are practically attainable and acceptable to both Governments and (2) develop specific objectives and criteria to evaluate the progress being made.

#### AGENCY COMMENTS

The Department of State commented that the NCAP provides general guidance, whereas the day-to-day substance of the program is reviewed and receives action between the Department and the Embassy in detailed messages on a continuing basis. According to the Department, the size, substitution, and changing nature of the Mexican program is one that deserves and receives continuing assessment through daily working contact between U.S. Embassy officials and U.S. technical advisors with the staff of the Mexican Attorney General. The Department believes that coordinated plans for the use of increased U.S. assistance

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