

## DOCUMENT RESUME

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The transit of illicit drugs and undocumented aliens across the southwestern border has been the target of law enforcement efforts. There is general agreement that Mexico is the major source of heroin reaching this country. The Federal expenditures employed by the three major enforcement agencies during the period 1971 through 1976 have approximately doubled, and the number of enforcement and support personnel have increased 31%. Border forces interdict only a small quantity of the estimated heroin and cocaine entering the the United States from Mexico; most seizures are of marihuana. Border interdiction efforts have suffered from a lack of actionable intelligence and from deficiencies in operations. A shortage of inspectors existed at four ports-of-entry visited along the border, and the only detection devices available were data from the Treasury's automated system, which is of limited value because it is primarily keyed to vehicle license numbers. Detector dogs are not used to search people, and hard narcotics which come through the ports are believed to be packaged and inserted into the human body. There is a need for an integrated Federal strategy and comprehensive border control plan. GAO has recommended a single agency as the long-range solution. The priority and commitment of the Mexican Government is necessary to disrupting the production and shipment of illicit drugs. (SW)

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STATEMENT OF  
WILLIAM J. ANDERSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
NARCOTICS ABUSE AND CONTROL  
ON  
FEDERAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

As requested, our testimony today deals with the work we performed during the past year relative to drug abuse with particular emphasis on our recent study of law enforcement programs along the United States-Mexico border.

During the past few years we have issued a number of reports dealing with the area of drug abuse. A listing of these reports, and digests from some of the more pertinent reports, are attached to our statement. As a result of our work in this area, during the past year we issued three reports 1/ dealing with our law enforcement efforts in Mexico, methadone deaths in New York

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1/"Opium Eradication Reports in Mexico: Cautious Optimism Advised," GGD-77-6, February 18, 1977.

"Methadone Deaths in New York City," GGD-77-25, February 18, 1977.

"Drugs, Firearms, Currency, and Other Property Seized by Law Enforcement Agencies: Too Much Held Too Long," GGD-76-105, May 31, 1977.

City and the handling of drugs and other property seized by law enforcement agencies. Two of these reports were the result of work we performed at the request of a Member of this Committee.

In addition, we currently have in process reports dealing with (1) efforts to suppress retail level diversion of controlled substances, (2) the use of science and technology to improve drug enforcement, and (3) law enforcement efforts along the United States-Mexico border. As requested, Mr. Chairman, the majority of our testimony will focus on this latter review.

With that brief overview of our efforts in the drug area, the remainder of my remarks will focus on our review of law enforcement efforts along the Southwest border.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOUTHWEST BORDER

As you know, Mr. Chairman, in the past few years law enforcement efforts along the Southwest border have taken on increased significance, mainly, because of the transit of illicit drugs and undocumented aliens across this border. United States authorities estimated that, in 1971, heroin flowing from and through Mexico represented 20 percent of the heroin consumed in the United States. For 1975, it was estimated that 89 percent of the heroin reaching the United States came from poppies grown in Mexico. Although this estimate is subject to question, there is general agreement that Mexico is the major source of heroin reaching this country.

Although meaningful figures on undocumented aliens are hard to come by, INS data on apprehensions of such aliens shows that from 1971 to 1975 the number of apprehensions have increased by about 85 percent. Most undocumented aliens apprehended are Mexican--about 90 percent.

The significance of the above figures is enhanced when one considers that the Federal policy to prevent illegal immigration emphasizes interdiction at the border rather than apprehension of illegal aliens after settlement. For drugs the policy calls for giving priority in both supply and demand reduction efforts to those drugs which inherently pose a greater risk to the individual and to society--heroin is the top priority drug.

#### FEDERAL PRESENCE AND RESOURCES AT THE BORDER

Control of the border is basically a task of controlling the movement of people, vehicles, aircraft, boats, and goods. There are over 400 Federal laws and regulations governing entry and departure of people and goods across the border. While there are other agencies which play a role in controlling the Southwest border--Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF); Department of Defense; Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); Coast Guard; Department of Agriculture; Public Health Service--the principal agencies involved in law enforcement are the Customs Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

From a law enforcement standpoint, the primary responsibilities of these three agencies at the border are

--preventing the illegal entry of persons into the United States,

- preventing contraband from entering the country, and
- investigating narcotics and dangerous drug violations.

In carrying out these responsibilities, both INS and Customs use patrol officers, port-of-entry inspectors, and investigators. DEA is the single Federal agency charged with responsibility for investigation pertaining to narcotics and dangerous drug violators.

Difficult control problems exist at the Southwest border. Some examples of these problems are:

- The increasing volume of legitimate traffic serves to inhibit enforcement efforts necessary to detect contraband and illegal entrants. From fiscal year 1971 through 1976, about 804 million people, 247 million vehicles, and 441,000 aircraft were inspected in the Southwest border area.
- Only 2 percent of the entire Southwest border--40 miles out of a total of 2,000 miles--offers sufficient topographical barriers to make illegal entry unlikely.
- The Southwest contains thousands of square miles of land containing abandoned or little-used airstrips, dry lake beds, and isolated roads where light aircraft can land. Radar coverage exists on portions of the border but is sufficiently limited in detecting low-flying aircraft that undetected entry by aircraft into the United States is relatively easy.
- In San Diego, where 300 to 400 pleasure vessels depart or arrive on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, there are over 120 miles of

waterfront, and it is only 10 miles from the entrance of San Diego Bay to Mexican waters.

To meet this imposing enforcement problem, the Federal resources employed by the three major enforcement agencies increased significantly during the period 1971 through 1976. Estimates prepared by these agencies show that Federal expenditures have approximately doubled, going from about \$70 million in 1971 to just over \$140 million in 1976 (see attachments 6 and 7). Enforcement and support personnel increased from 4,352 in 1971 to 5,707 in 1976--an increase of 31 percent.

#### WHAT IS BEING ACHIEVED

While impossible to measure the deterrent effect of border law enforcement, the available supply of drugs and the estimated number of illegal aliens attest to the fact that it has not been a serious impediment to illegal entry. The substantial Federal investment for enforcement at the Southwest border is achieving only a limited measurable impact on the drug and alien problem.

--Border forces interdict only a small quantity of the estimated heroin and cocaine entering the United States from Mexico.

Most seizures are of marihuana. In fiscal year 1976, Customs and INS seized about 2 percent of the heroin, less than 1 percent of the cocaine and 10 percent of the marihuana estimated to come from and through Mexico. When DEA's border area seizures are added, these totals equal 6 percent of the heroin, 3 percent of the cocaine, and 13 percent of the marihuana. It is fairly obvious that the quantity of drugs being interdicted will not

have a significant effect on the drug problem. This is especially true when one considers that these figures presume the drug seizures to be 100 percent pure while the purity of border seizures are significantly less--usually below 50 percent purity.

Border apprehensions seldom involve high-level traffickers. The overwhelming majority of persons crossing the border in possession of drugs who are apprehended by Customs and INS are drug users, small-time operators, couriers, or low-level members of drug trafficking organizations. DEA's data shows that less than 2 percent of the interdictions, referred from INS and Customs, involve major violators, and about three-fourths of these were marihuana violators.

The results with respect to apprehension of aliens are more impressive but the problem remains serious. More illegal aliens are successful in getting into the United States than are prevented from entering. Many aliens apprehended are repeaters; some have been apprehended as many as 10 times. When one considers the many points along the Southwest border that can be used by aliens to enter the United States, it becomes apparent that attempts to prevent illegal migration at the border, by itself, will not solve the illegal alien problem.

#### PROBLEMS AFFECTING BORDER LAW ENFORCEMENT

Although border control alone will not solve the drug or illegal alien problems, it is a necessary element if the Nation is ever to control these problems. In our opinion, much more could be done if Federal border law

enforcement activities were better planned, coordinated, integrated, and executed. The efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement efforts at the border would be enhanced if intelligence support was improved and the costly overlapping and poor coordination of enforcement activities and support systems were corrected.

### INTELLIGENCE

Under Reorganization Plan No. 2, DEA was tasked with providing nationwide drug intelligence. DEA is currently working on this task and some improvements have been made, but problems still exist. Some examples which illustrate this problem are the lack of factual data to reliably establish the amount of illicit narcotics smuggled across the Southwest border and the lack of actionable intelligence necessary for successful operations along the border.

One step taken by DEA to correct this situation was the establishing of the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC). The purpose of EPIC was to provide an overall intelligence picture of drug trafficking and/or smuggling by land, sea, or air between Mexico and the United States. This would enable DEA to provide tactical intelligence to agencies with border enforcement responsibilities. In the early stages of EPIC's development, progress was slow due to lack of support and agency resistance. Recent progress supports the concept of a single border intelligence center but problems persist.

One such problem is that little intelligence was being developed within Mexico to improve interdiction efforts at ports-of-entry and other locations along the Southwest border. Another problem, which is of long-standing duration, is the extent of cooperation among the major law enforcement agencies.



## OPERATIONS

Not only did border interdiction efforts suffer from a lack of actionable intelligence, but also from deficiencies in operations. These are some of the problems we identified.

- We found that a shortage of inspectors existed at the four ports-of-entry we visited along the Southwest border, even though most seizures of hard narcotics were made at the ports-of-entry. Inspection manpower has a significant impact on the thoroughness of inspections performed at these locations.
- The only detection devices available to assist inspectors at the ports-of-entry are TECS data--Treasury's automated system, which is used by Customs for disseminating intelligence information to inspection and enforcement personnel--and trained detection dogs. The value of TECS data for ports-of-entry interdictions is limited because it is primarily keyed to vehicle license numbers.

Detector dogs are an effective time-saving drug interdiction aid. However, border officials believe that much of the hard narcotics which comes through the ports is packaged and inserted into the human body. Detector dogs are not used to search people, and inspectors are reluctant to perform intensive personal searches.

--The INS Border Patrol and the Customs Patrol have overlapping roles for control of illegal movements across the land borders between the ports. Poor coordination and cooperation between the Customs and INS border patrols, as well as costly overlapping facilities, have contributed to conflicts and tension and produced only marginal results.

Although a Memorandum of Understanding exists between INS and Customs mandating "full cooperation between the two Services," this cooperation does not, in reality, exist. To illustrate, while waiting and watching with a Customs Patrol officer at a border canyon where a sensor hit occurred, the supervisory patrol officer told us that a lack of personnel might cause them to miss the intruder. Right after he made this statement, an INS Border Patrol car cruised slowly by our position, but no attempt was made to contact it and ask for assistance. Patrol officers could not recall a single example of assistance to one agency by the other on an as-needed basis.

--Air and sea operations along the Southwest border have produced only marginal results. Most seizures involved marihuana.

--Since 1975, there have been three intensified interdiction operations along the United States-Mexico border. These were to be cooperative and coordinated efforts among the various Federal agencies. As it turned out, there was minimal or no coordination among the enforcement agencies. In evaluating

one such program--Operation Diamondback--the participants reported a lack of planning, coordination, cooperation, and intelligence. Fundamental planning and coordination never got out of the idea stage. The decisionmaking process was very poor due to confusion as to who had the authority and responsibility for directing actions. In essence, the land, sea, and air units were going their separate ways.

#### Border Needs an Integrated Strategy and Overall Control Plan

Control of the United States-Mexico border is a complex and most difficult task that requires a comprehensive, coordinated effort by all segments of the border law enforcement community.

The executive branch of the Federal Government has not developed an integrated strategy or a comprehensive border control plan to consider all aspects of the problem and establish clear, measurable objectives indicating what it intends to accomplish with the various law enforcement resources. A plan of this type is critical because of the many agencies with overlapping responsibilities.

Over the past few years the Congress, the executive branch, and GAO have issued reports identifying problems among Federal border enforcement agencies and containing suggestions for improving their cooperation and coordination. While some recommendations have been implemented and outward appearances have changed as a result of these efforts, the essential characteristics of the problem remain. Separate agencies with different orientations continue to identify the best means to meet their specific missions,

with limited consideration for the activity of the others. This has led to the development of separate but similar lines of effort that continue to dilute border coverage and impact. Little consideration is given to overall border security.

We believe that sound management principles and the inherent difficulties of multiagency cooperation calls for an integrated Federal strategy and comprehensive border control plan. In our opinion, a single agency makes the most sense, in theory, as the long range solution. Single-agency management was recommended in our report "A Single Agency Needed to Manage Port-of-Entry Inspections--Particularly at U.S. Airports" dated May 30, 1973.

We believe:

- The executive branch should provide the Congress, along with its appropriations requests, an overview of law enforcement along the United States-Mexico border. Included in this overview should be an analysis which brings together the budget requests and law enforcement strategies of the various border law enforcement agencies.
- The Office of Management and Budget, Office of Drug Abuse Policy, and the principal border agencies should develop an integrated strategy and comprehensive operational plan for border control. This plan should consider the various alternatives to managing border operations ranging from the present management structure to single-agency management.

SANCTIONS AGAINST DRUG SMUGGLERS  
NEED TO BE ENFORCED AND STRENGTHENED

Improved interdiction capability can do little by itself to deter smuggling unless the penalties imposed outweigh the benefits derived. Opportunities exist to diminish the incentive to smuggle drugs by enforcing and strengthening criminal and administrative sanctions. Some improvements that could be made are:

- Expansion of the jurisdiction of the Federal magistrates which would enable them to handle minor narcotics cases. Because the District court system is overburdened, most of these cases are not now prosecuted.
- Improved administration of administrative sanctions and the providing of criminal sanctions against pilots smuggling illicit drugs by aircraft.

It should be recognized, however, that criminal prosecution and enforcement of existing administrative sanctions are limited as an effective deterrent because of the large profits involved, the nature of the violators being apprehended, and the ease with which penalties can be avoided by experienced smugglers. Improved effectiveness in stopping smugglers at the border is dependent, in large measure, upon the priority and commitment of the Mexican government to disrupting the production and shipment of illicit drugs.

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This concludes my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman. We believe this Committee's oversight hearings provide the necessary forum for discussing the border control problems. Hopefully, the information contained in our final report will assist the Committee in its oversight function. We would be pleased to respond to any questions.

GAO REPORTS ON DRUG ENFORCEMENT

<u>Title</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Date</u>
1. Efforts to Prevent Dangerous Drugs From Illicitly Reaching the Public	B-175425	4/17/72
2. Federal Efforts to Combat Drug Abuse	B-164031(2)	8/14/72
3. The Heroin Hotline	B-176833	9/26/72
4. United States Efforts to Increase International Cooperation in Controlling Narcotics Trafficking (ID - Secret)	B-176625	10/4/72
5. Efforts to Prevent Heroin From Illicitly Reaching the United States	B-164031(2)	10/20/72
6. Heroin Being Smuggled Into New York City Successfully	B-164031(2)	12/7/72
7. Difficulties in Immobilizing Major Narcotics Traffickers	B-175425	12/21/73
8. Identifying and Eliminating Sources of Dangerous Drugs: Efforts Being Made, But Not Enough	B-175425	6/7/74
9. Congressman Charles B. Rangel House of Representatives (Letter report concerning opium supply/demand.)	B-173123	7/23/74
10. Recission of the Opium Poppy Growing Ban by Turkey (ID)	B-173123	9/9/74
11. United States Economic Assistance to Turkey (ID)	B-125085	9/16/74
12. The Honorable William R. Cotter House of Representatives (Letter report on drug abuse efforts in Hartford, Conn. area.)	B-173123	10/15/74
13. The Honorable Charles B. Rangel House of Representatives (Letter report concerning additional information on opium supply/demand.)	B-173123	11/21/74

14. Efforts to Stop Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Coming From and Through Mexico and Central America (18634)	GGD-75-44	12/31/74
15. Security Control for Methadone Distribution Need Improving (18632)	GGD-75-50	1/30/75
16. Problems in Slowing the Flow of Cocaine and Heroin From and Through South America (Confidential) (18636)	GGD-75-80	5/30/75
17. If The United States Is To Develop An Effective International Narcotics Control Program, Much More Must Be Done	ID-75-77	7/29/75
18. Improvements Needed In Regulating and Monitoring The Manufacture and Distribution of Licit Narcotics (18635)	GGD-75-102	8/28/75
19. Letter Report: Inventory and Security of U.S. Opium Stockpile - (Restricted)	B-173123 LOGCOM	9/6/75
20. Federal Drug Enforcement: Strong Guidance Needed (18640)	GGD-76-32	12/18/75
21. Alleged Improper Personnel Practices At the Drug Enforcement Administration	FPCD-76-27	12/19/75
22. Stopping U.S. Assistance to Foreign Police and Prisons	ID-76-5	2/19/76
23. More Effective Action Needed To Control Abuse and Diversion in Methadone Treatment Programs	GGD-76-51	3/9/76
24. Opium Eradication Efforts in Mexico: Cautious Optimism Advised (Rangel Request) Confidential	GGD-77-6	2/18/77
25. Methadone Deaths In New York City (Rangel Request)	GGD-77-25	3/14/77
26. Drugs, Firearms, Currency and Other Property Seized by Law Enforcement Agencies: Too Much Held Too Long	GGD-76-105	5/31/77

This is an unclassified digest furnished in lieu of  
a report containing classified security information.

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT TO  
THE HONORABLE CHARLES B. RANGEL  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OPIUM ERADICATION EFFORTS  
IN MEXICO:  
CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM ADVISED  
Departments of State  
and Justice

## D I G E S T

The opium poppy, from which heroin is derived, has been cultivated in Mexico for 30 years, despite increasing efforts by the Mexican Government to prevent it. With the disruption of the Turkish-French heroin connection in recent years, more poppies have been cultivated in Mexico to meet the demand for heroin by addicts in the United States. (See p. 1.)

The Drug Enforcement Administration's analyses of selected seizures in 1975 identified Mexico as the source of 89 percent of the heroin in the United States. (See p. 2.) It estimates that 5.2 metric tons of Mexican heroin entered the United States during 1975 and that gross opium production in Mexico totaled between 100 and 110 metric tons.

Conflicting information on opium poppy cultivation exists; and, past estimates--as well as reports used in developing the estimates--may not accurately reflect the current situation. (See pp. 5 to 7.) The Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of State, and the Foreign Intelligence Subcommittee of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control are aware of this and have acted to improve the situation. (See pp. 10 to 13.)

Since 1970 the United States has contributed about \$35 million to assist the Mexican Government with narcotics control efforts. Most of this assistance has been provided to the Mexican Attorney General's Air Services Section for aircraft and related support for improving the mobility of enforcement and eradication personnel. (See app. III.)



Eradicating poppies by aerially spraying them with herbicides has been a priority goal of the narcotics control program since late 1975. This placed greater responsibility on the Air Services Section. (See p. 16.) According to reported results for January through April 1976, about twice as many fields were destroyed during that period as during the 1975 program. (See app. II.)

The narcotics control action plan is to be the basic planning document for narcotics control funding, through the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control. U.S. assistance to Mexico has escalated without sufficient detailed planning. (See pp. 18 to 20.)

A new administration took office in Mexico in December 1976, and its strong endorsement of the eradication program will be necessary for continued improvement. According to the Department of State, the new administration has recently pledged its continuing support of the eradication program.

The Drug Enforcement Administration will analyze U.S. heroin "removal" statistics to evaluate the eradication program. The Drug Enforcement Administration believes that a decline in availability, followed by a rise in price and/or by a drop in purity of heroin at the retail level, will indicate program success. Heroin removal statistics show a 6-month trend of lower purity and higher prices from March through September 1976. The Drug Enforcement Administration expects the trend to continue. (See pp. 34 and 35.)

To insure continued improvement and ultimate success for the opium poppy eradication program in Mexico, the Secretary of State, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control, should require the U.S. Mission in Mexico to develop a more comprehensive narcotics control plan which will

--clearly define U.S. goals for assisting the Mexican Government in developing its own capabilities to control narcotics and

--develop specific objectives and criteria to evaluate progress being made. (See p. 37.)

The Department of State advises that the outgoing Mexican administration prepared a study of the resource needs for the ongoing program which will be reviewed by both governments and that a plan is being developed for identifying program goals and resources needed. (See p. 38.)

Comments from the Departments of State and Justice and from the Central Intelligence Agency were obtained and considered in the report.

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S REPORT  
TO THE PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE  
ON INVESTIGATIONS, SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
OPERATIONS

FEDERAL DRUG ENFORCEMENT:  
STRONG GUIDANCE NEEDED  
Department of Justice  
Department of the Treasury

## D I G E S T

For years Federal drug law enforcement in the United States has not been as effective as it could have been if the agencies responsible had worked together to enforce the drug laws.

The price paid in this country for the lack of a concerted effort in attempting to control illicit drug activities cannot be measured.

The Federal agencies concerned--primarily the Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Customs Service--have statistics on drug arrests, convictions, and seizures. However impressive these appear, they are not necessarily accurate indicators of how effective drug enforcement is.

True, statistics show increased arrests, convictions, and seizures. Law enforcement has not necessarily improved. Drug abuse is considered one of the most serious and most tragic problems in this country.

In his Reorganization Plan No. 2, of 1973, the President intended the Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Customs Service, and the FBI to cooperate and coordinate their forces into a cohesive and powerful instrument for drug enforcement. They did not do so.

The Drug Enforcement Administration must obtain more valuable and reliable intelligence to assist the U.S. Customs Service in catching smugglers at border inspection posts. (See pp. 23 to 28.)

Since the 1973 reorganization, the Drug Enforcement Administration and the FBI have interpreted the FBI role in a narrow sense and have not materially changed their working relationship.

GGD-76-32

The Drug Enforcement Administration headquarters has not provided the FBI with names and information about drug traffickers. If the FBI was supposed to play a larger role in drug enforcement, it seems logical that the Drug Enforcement Administration would have provided the FBI with names and information about certain major traffickers. (See pp. 34 to 41.)

A recommendation that problems be solved by action at the highest level was made by the Domestic Council Drug Abuse Task Force in September 1975. Its chief recommendation said:

"The task force recommends that the President direct the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury to settle jurisdictional disputes between DEA and Customs by December 31, 1975, or to report their recommendations for resolution of the matter to the President on that date."

GAO endorses this recommendation. History shows, however, that establishing inter-agency agreements alone usually will not solve problems.

It is questionable whether such agreements ever will work without a clear directive on the part of someone acting on the President's behalf to compel agencies to comply.

The Drug Enforcement Administration considers the purchase of evidence and information as one of the most effective tools available in narcotics investigations.

The use of funds for purchase of evidence and information has been controversial. The effectiveness of the use of these funds is difficult to assess. GAO recommends that the Attorney General develop better policy and criteria governing their use. (See pp. 43 to 57.)

GAO did not obtain written comments from either the Department of Justice or the Treasury; however, the Drug Enforcement Administration, FBI, and U.S. Customs Service reviewed the report and their comments and suggestions were considered.

COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

IF THE UNITED STATES IS  
TO DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE  
INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL  
PROGRAM, MUCH MORE MUST BE DONE

D I G E S T

U.S. policy on eliminating opium production and illicit narcotics trafficking is not always clear to those who must follow it in attempting to carry out international narcotics control programs.

With U.S. and international encouragement, Turkey halted all opium production--the growing of opium poppies--in June 1971, but 3 years later, Turkey rescinded the ban. During the same period, the United States supported India's increasing its opium production for medicinal purposes. (See pp. 8 and 9.)

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State, as Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control:

- Clarify U.S. opium policy. (See p. 22.)
- Assess U.S. drug control activities abroad. (See p. 35.)
- Define U.S. narcotics control objectives. (See p. 64.)

GAO makes a number of other recommendations to improve specific aspects of the narcotics control program.

GAO also suggests that the Congress complete its consideration of enabling legislation to permit the Senate to consider ratifying the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. This Convention is aimed at curbing unlawful diversion and illegal international trafficking of psychotropic--or mind-altering--drugs. (See p. 76.)

Annual worldwide illicit opium production is estimated at 1,130 to 1,520 metric tons.

Most comes from regions where opium cultivation is illegal but governments lack effective political control to enforce the laws. (See pp. 23 and 24.)

In 1974 there were four large international narcotics trafficking networks. Enforcement efforts have partly succeeded in restricting trafficking through these networks, but much remains to be accomplished. (See pp. 24 to 28.)

Foreign governments' cooperation is crucial to the success of the U.S. international narcotics control program. This cooperation generally has been good, but the United States needs to strengthen diplomatic initiatives and gain greater cooperation from some countries. (See p. 47.)

The United States could improve narcotics control by supporting programs for educating, treating, and rehabilitating addicts in other countries to reduce production, use, and trafficking of illicit narcotics. (See p. 58.)

Although the United States continues to give top priority to international narcotics control, (1) it was not included among U.S. objectives in some narcotics-problem countries and (2) some U.S. embassies' officials were uncertain as to whether it was an objective in their countries. (See p. 80.)

International operations of the Drug Enforcement Administration have increased steadily and contributed to foreign government narcotics enforcement capabilities. Continued expansion of the agency's overseas activities, however, should be carefully considered in terms of potential problems with foreign government sovereignty, possible displacement of indigenous police functions, and appropriate development of foreign government enforcement capabilities. (See pp. 33 to 35.)

Most U.S. efforts have been directed toward short-term enforcement measures. Long-term measures, such as crop substitution and income replacement, will require changes in

traditional economic and social conditions and establishment of political control over areas presently uncontrolled. (See p. 36.)

If a country's development priorities do not include replacing the opium poppy, crop substitution and income replacement are unlikely to follow without strong urging and assistance from outside sources. (See p. 41.)

The 1961 U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs provides the mechanism for continuous international cooperation on narcotic drug control through essentially voluntary restraints on the cultivation, production, manufacture, and import and export of opium and its products. (See p. 66.)

The 1971 Psychotropic Convention was aimed at limiting the manufacture, distribution, and use of psychotropic drugs, including LSD, mescaline, amphetamines, barbiturates, and tranquilizers, to legitimate medical and scientific purposes. Although the United States has been a leader in sponsoring and negotiating international drug control treaties, it has yet to ratify the 1971 Psychotropic Convention. (See p. 66.)

The U.N. Fund for Drug Abuse Control was established in March 1971 as a coordinated international program against drug abuse. However, it depends on voluntary contributions from governments and private sources, and its progress has been slow because of a shortage of funds. (See p. 67.)

The Department of State, the Agency for International Development, and the Drug Enforcement Administration have indicated in their comments (see app. II) that positive actions are being or will be taken in response to GAO's recommendations. However, they do not agree that U.S. opium policy is unclear to those who must follow it. (See pp. 18 to 22.)



COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S  
REPORT TO THE CONGRESS

EFFORTS TO STOP NARCOTICS AND  
DANGEROUS DRUGS COMING FROM AND  
THROUGH MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA  
Drug Enforcement Administration  
Department of Justice  
Department of State

D I G E S T

WHY THE REVIEW WAS MADE

The flow of narcotics and dangerous drugs from and through Mexico to the United States is increasing.

In 1971 about 20 percent of the heroin, 90 percent of the marihuana, 80 percent of the dangerous drugs, and much of the cocaine consumed in this country came from and through Mexico. By late 1973 heroin flowing from and through Mexico to the United States had increased to about half the total consumption.

In September and October 1974, Drug Enforcement Administration officials estimated that

- 70 percent of all heroin reaching the United States comes from poppies grown in Mexico;
- virtually all the marihuana seized comes from Mexico and the Caribbean;
- about 3 billion tablets of dangerous drugs, valued at more than \$1.6 billion on the illicit market, comes from Mexico in a year; and
- cocaine, which is becoming a preferred drug of abuse, passes through Mexico on its way from South and Central America.

Central America is also a potentially important transshipment point for drugs coming to the United States.

Accordingly, GAO examined U.S. programs designed to reduce the flow of drugs coming from and through Mexico and Central America.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The United States is trying to stop the flow of drugs from Mexico by:

- Forcibly preventing shipment of drugs to the United States (called interdiction).
- Eliminating illicit production in Mexico.
- Assisting the Mexican Government's antidrug efforts.

The U.S. Ambassador, as the President's representative, is responsible for seeing that U.S. objectives are achieved. In the drug area he is supported by

- the Drug Enforcement Administration, the prime U.S. enforcement agency, maintaining liaison with Mexican Government narcotics enforcement agencies, and
- drug control committees in each country. (See pp. 2 and 3.)

Progress

Since 1969 the United States and Mexican Governments' antidrug efforts have:

- Increased drug seizures, opium and marihuana eradication, and arrests.
- Provided better information on drug trafficking.
- Improved Mexican capability through material assistance grants and training.
- Increased cooperation and discussion at high diplomatic levels. (See pp. 15 and 16.)

### Problems

Even with this progress, increasing amounts of drugs continue to reach the United States.

Factors which have hindered greater effectiveness in reducing the flow of drugs to the United States include

- lack of full cooperation between the two Governments regarding drug information and extradition and
- limited technical resources and manpower. (See pp. 20 to 25.)

### Cooperation

One way to reduce the flow of drugs to the United States is the exchange of accurate data about the activities of known and suspected drug traffickers between the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Mexican Federal police. The Drug Enforcement Administration, however, has had only limited opportunity to interrogate persons arrested by the Federal police for drug crimes and sometimes was denied access to information the police obtained. (See p. 20.)

Immobilization of drug traffickers is further hindered because drug

traffickers who flee to Mexico are not prosecuted and incarcerated. Mexico readily grants citizenship to persons having Mexican parents or background, regardless of the solicitant's place of birth. Some of them, before becoming Mexican residents, lived in the United States until they were convicted or suspected of violating U.S. drug laws.

The Administration estimates that more than 250 such persons now live in Mexico. Some still traffick in drugs. Because they are Mexican citizens, the Mexican Government refuses to extradite them to the United States for prosecution.

In a few cases, Mexican citizens have been convicted in Mexico for drug violations in the United States. Greater use of this procedure might deter Mexicans who have violated U.S. drug laws from using Mexico as a sanctuary from prosecution. (See p. 28.)

### Material assistance

Mexico is not only a major transshipment area but also an indigenous source of drugs. Its sparsely populated and rugged mountains make location and eradication of clandestine cultivation areas difficult and time consuming.

Its extended border with the United States and two long coastlines afford traffickers virtually unlimited locations for smuggling. This, in turn, makes it harder for its ill-equipped police to locate trafficking routes. (See pp. 6 and 25.)

Since 1970 the United States has given Mexico \$6.8 million in

equipment, such as helicopters for troop transportation. Additional equipment has been approved by the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control. (See p. 26.)

More than 250 of the 350-member Mexican Federal police force have been trained in drug enforcement procedures by the Drug Enforcement Administration; this training is continuing. (See p. 26.)

The United States is also providing equipment and training to the Mexican Customs Service. (See p. 27.)

#### Other matters

DEA has had some success in locating and eliminating narcotics laboratories in other countries by publicly offering rewards for information about drug traffickers.

Though the Administration has had information for a number of years that heroin laboratories are operating in at least eight areas in Mexico, no significant laboratory had been seized until February 5, 1974. Since then six other laboratories have been seized.

DEA believes that publicly offering rewards would increase the identification of illicit laboratories, but the Mexican Government has not agreed to offer rewards for information, despite repeated U.S. requests.

Although the Drug Enforcement Administration recognizes that many oceangoing vessels and aircraft are used in moving drugs from Mexico illicitly, it had not monitored the use of oceangoing vessels and aircraft by drug traffickers. (See pp. 18 and 20.)

The Mexican Government recognized that corruption exists at many of its levels, including the Mexican Federal police, and developed plans to overcome this problem, such as reorganizing the police. This reorganization was to begin in January 1973, but no action had been taken as of September 1974. (See p. 18.)

#### Central America

Central America is not currently considered a prime source in transporting drugs to the United States; however, it does offer traffickers many of the same benefits as does Mexico.

As enforcement improves in Mexico, the Drug Enforcement Administration expects traffickers to make greater use of the Central American countries. Plans are being developed, and the Administration plans to assign agents to these countries. (See p. 34.)

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Attorney General, in cooperation with the Secretary of State, should improve information gathering and cooperation in Mexico by encouraging the Mexican Government to

- share information obtained during interrogation of suspected drug traffickers and
- prosecute traffickers fleeing to Mexico within the Mexican judicial system if Mexico continues to refuse extradition.

AGENCY ACTIONS AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Department of Justice

The unclassified version of the Department of Justice's comments are included in appendix I. A copy of the Department's classified response will be made available to authorized persons upon request.

The Justice Department

--agrees with GAO's analysis of extradition problems and the possibility of prosecuting people in Mexico for violations of U.S. statutes and

--recognizes the merit of some observations concerning enforcement operations.

However, the Department believes GAO's findings, conclusions, and recommendations have serious weaknesses. The Department believes the report is a random collection of observations and includes items of secondary importance and that it ignores some significant issues, such as (1) investigative procedures used by the Mexican Judicial Police, (2) lack of operating agreements between the Drug Enforcement Administration and local Mexican police officers on custody and prosecution of arrested carriers, and (3) problems created for U.S. border investigations by the policy of the Government of Mexico which requires that known narcotics and dangerous drugs being smuggled out of Mexico be seized in Mexico. (This policy prevents the identification of U.S. traffickers by keeping the drugs under surveillance until they are delivered.)

GAO recognizes that many problems affect the efforts to stop the flow of narcotics and dangerous drugs into the United States and that these problems and their seriousness change from time to time.

At the completion of GAO's fieldwork in late 1973, GAO's findings were discussed with appropriate U.S. agency officials in the field and in Washington. At that time GAO had not identified, nor had agency officials recognized, the three above areas mentioned by the Department as causing major problems.

If the Department has sufficient evidence to identify these areas as causing real problems to their efforts to stop the flow of narcotics and dangerous drugs into the United States, no additional work by GAO to develop these problems should be necessary. GAO suggests that the Department continue to work with the Government of Mexico to overcome these problems.

The Department also commented extensively on how it believed (1) the Government of Mexico could improve its drug enforcement activities and (2) U.S. operations on the border could be improved. It said that actions had been or were being taken to improve activities in both areas but that more efforts were needed.

The Drug Enforcement Administration's comments on specific actions planned or being taken on GAO's recommendations are included in the

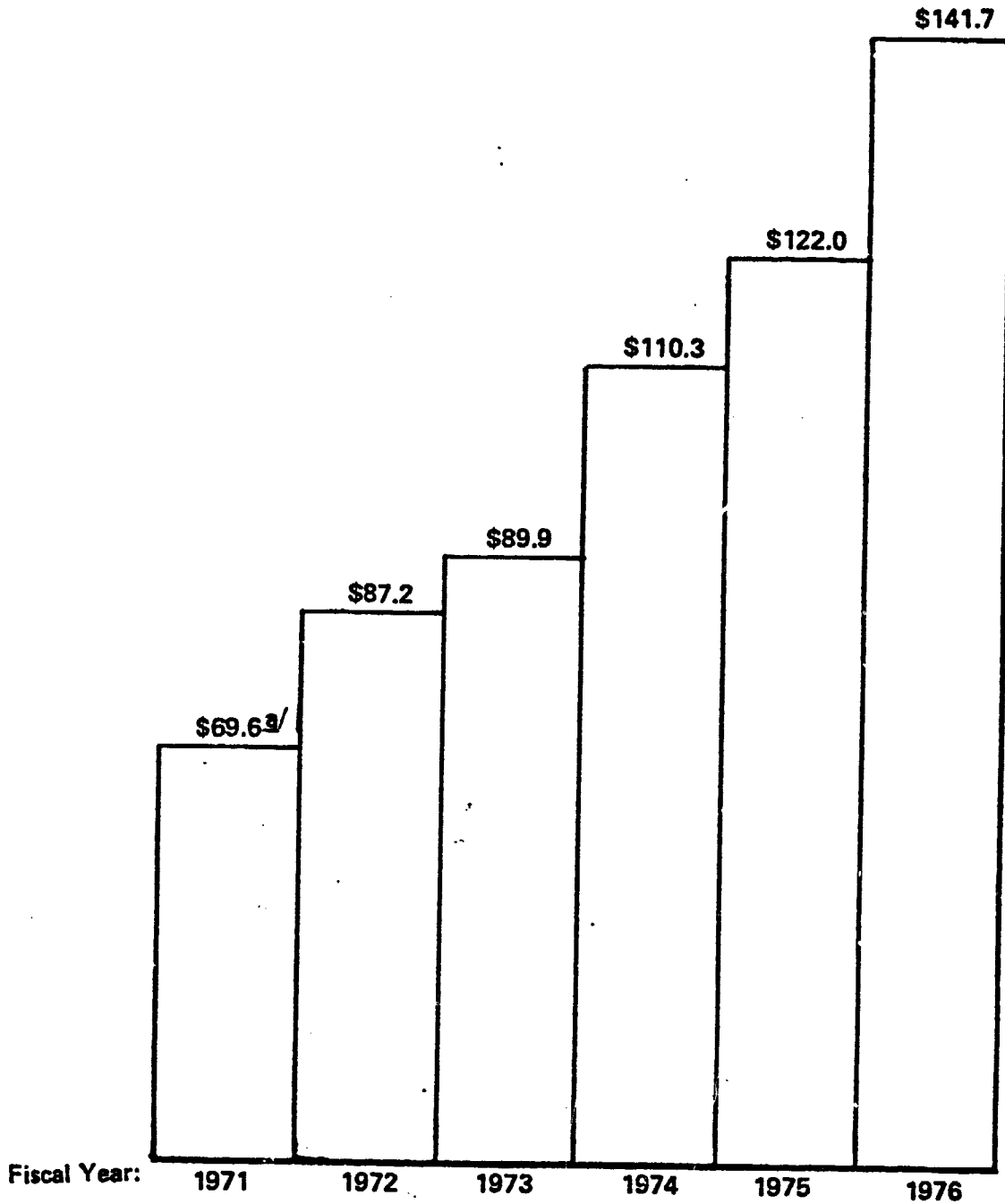
body of the report. (See p. 22 and 31.)

Department of State

The Department of State (see app. II) endorsed the recommendations and said actions are underway and will be pursued. These actions are included in the body of the report. (See p. 32.)

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION  
BY THE CONGRESS

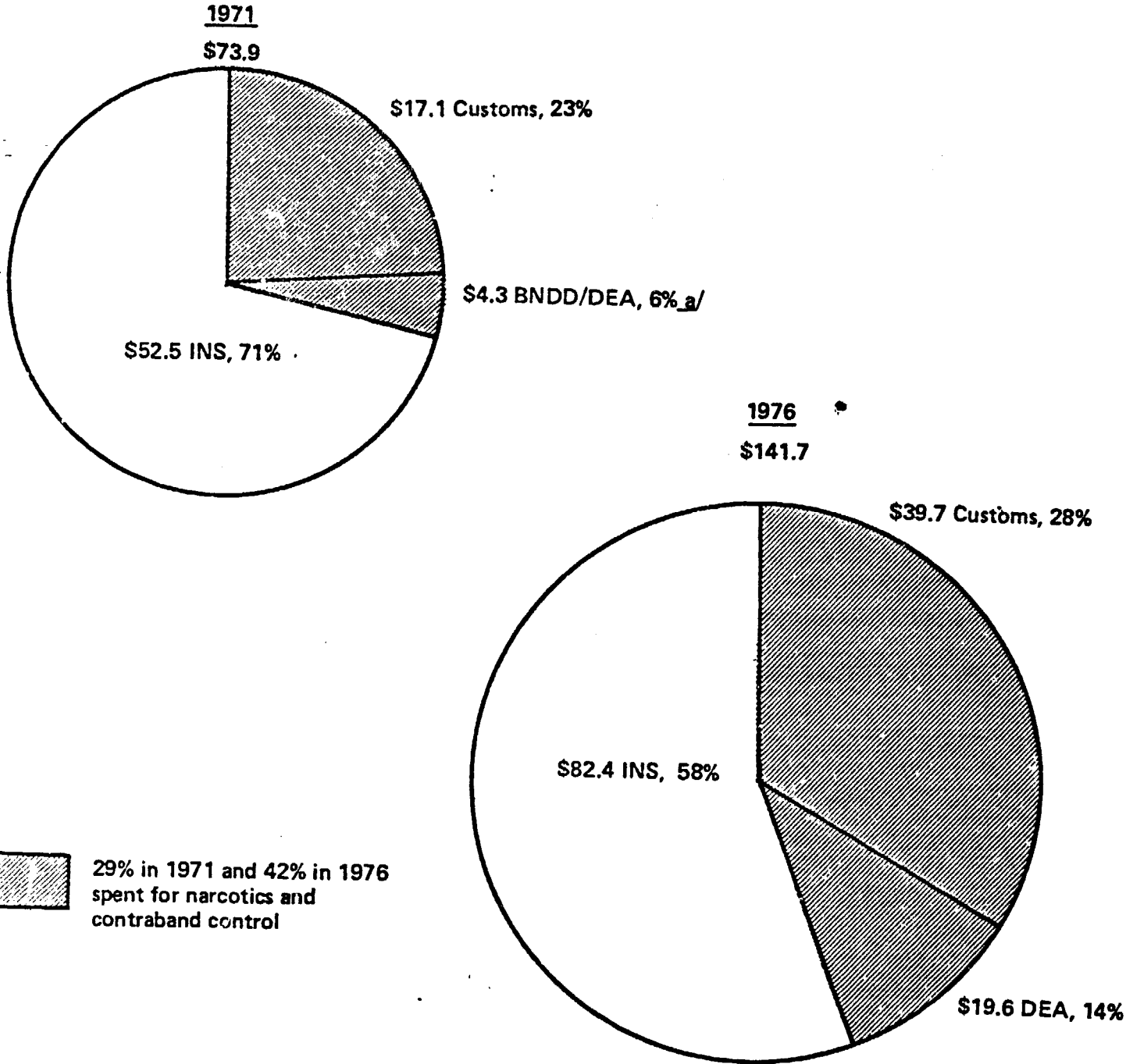
This report is being sent to the Congress to advise it of efforts needed and being taken to reduce the flow of drugs into the United States from Mexico and Central America. The report should be useful to those committees having oversight responsibilities in this area.



Customs, INS, and Bureau of Narcotics  
and Dangerous Drugs/DEA Expenditures  
(Millions)

<sup>3/</sup>No cost for BNDD/DEA was included since such data was unavailable.  
BNDD/DEA estimated cost for 1972 was \$4.3 million.

The following chart illustrates the mix and general purpose for which these expenditures were made.



Customs, INS and BNDD/DEA Expenditures  
fiscal year 1971 and 1976  
(dollars in millions)

<sup>a/</sup> Since BNDD/DEA cost estimate for FY 71 unavailable, FY 72 cost for BNDD/DEA was used