

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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S/NM FOR AMB. VANCE; SER/INC FOR WAMPLER;

DEA EO1 CUSACK

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR/MEX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: A) MEXICO 10020; B)ALBERTI-AMB. VANCE-DUGSTAD

TELECON, NOV. 13

1. SUMMARY: AS NOTED IN REF (A), AG HELD HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AT NOON NOV. 13. IT LASTED ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS, ABOUT EVENLY DIVIDED BETWEEN AG'S PRESENTATION AND Q AND A SESSIONS. IN IT, AG STATED GOM WOULD USE HERBICIDES IN UPCOMING CAMPAIGN. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS, BASED ON NOTES OF USIS REPORTER WHO COVERED CONFERENCE. MOST WERE REPORTED IN REFTELCON. END SUMMARY.

2. AG CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE TO INFORM REPORTERS ABOUT MANNER IN WHICH INTENSIFIED PHASE OF OPIUM ERADICATION CAMPAIGN WILL BE CARRIED OUT, PRINCIPALLY

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IN N.W. MEXICO AND STATES OF OAXACA, GUERRERO, AND

MICHOACAN. AS FOR THE GOM'S PERMANENT CAMPAIGN, WAGED WITH THE HELP OF STATE AUTHORITIES, THE RESULTS ARE BETTER EACH YEAR, HE SAID.

3. THE GOM ACCEPTS "SYMBOLIC" MATERIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. GOVT. BUT IF U.S. CONGRESS ATTACHES TOO MANY STRINGS, THIS AID MAY HAVE TO BE REJECTED IN FUTURE.

4. THE INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN WILL BEGIN NOV. 15 AND WILL LAST THROUGH MARCH, 1976. THE CAMPAIGN CO-ORDINATOR WILL BE DR. ALEJANDRO GERTZ MANERO. THERE WILL BE EIGHT OPERATIONAL ZONES, COMPRISED AS FOLLOWS:
(1) OAXACA; (2) GUERRERO; (3) COLIMA, MICHOACAN;
(4) COLIMA, NAYARIT, JALISCO; (5) DURANGO, SINALOA;
(6) SINALOA, SONORA; (7) CHIHUAHUA; (8) BAJA CALIFORNIA.

5. BEFORE 1974, THERE HAD BEEN A FEW FEDERAL POLICE TRAINED EACH YEAR IN THE U.S. BUT WITH THE NEW MFJP TRAINING ACADEMY, THEY HAVE GRADUATED TWO CLASSES TOTALLING 200 AGENTS, FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 530 AGENTS IN ALL.

6. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON HERBICIDES, AG SAID HE WANTED TO CALL ATTENTION OF U.S. GOVT. TO FACT THAT MEXICO WILL USE ONLY HERBICIDES THAT HAVE BEEN PROVEN NON-DAMAGING TO THE ECOLOGY AND ARE IN COMMON AGRICULTURAL USE. MEXICO WILL NOT BE USED AS A PROVING GROUND FOR EXPERIMENTATION WITH UNTESTED CHEMICALS. ASKED ABOUT NAPALM, AG SAID HE WOULD NOT USE IT IN WARFARE, MUCH LESS AGAINST POPPY FIELDS.

7. IN GENERAL, MEXICO WILL NOT ACCEPT PRESSURE FROM ANYONE. THERE HAS BEEN, HE CHARGED, AN ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN (BY UNSPECIFIED PARTIES) TO MAKE MEXICO LOOK BAD CONCERNING THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. DESPITE THAT, MEXICO HAS ACHIEVED IMPRESSIVE RESULTS. THE WHITE PAPER ON DRUG ABUSE HAS RECOGNIZED THIS, PRAISING GOM'S ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS.

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8. AS LONG AS THERE IS A U.S. DEMAND FOR NARCOTICS, THERE WILL BE PRODUCERS TO SATISFY THIS MARKET. THE MAIN WORLD PRODUCER OF HEROIN IS STILL THE "GOLDEN TRIANGLE" OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE U.S. ITSELF HAS NOT MADE NOTABLE SUCCESS IN CONFISCATING HEROIN, SINCE ONLY SOME 400 KG WERE REMOVED LAST YEAR.

9. THE AG GAVE LENGTHY REVIEW OF GOM'S OPIUM DESTRUCTION

METHODS, INCLUDING USE OF MACHETES, FLAMETHROWERS AND STICKS.

10. THE CAMPAIGN WILL MAKE USE OF EXPANDED AIRCRAFT FACILITIES. THERE ARE NOW 39 AIRCRAFT, GIVING AG LARGEST CIVIL AIRFORCE IN GOM. THIRTEEN OF THESE ARE BELL 212 HELICOPTERS, CAPABLE OF CARRYING 12 SOLDIERS EACH. THERE WILL BE DAILY FLIGHTS BY REMOTE SENSING AIRCRAFT TO SPOT POPPY FIELDS; FROM ADVANCED BASES, TROOPS CAN BE PUT IN ANY FIELD WITHIN 20 MINUTES; AFTER DESTRUCTION OF THE POPPIES, THE REMOTE SENSING AIRCRAFT WILL AGAIN OVERFLY THE AREA TO VERIFY THE SUCCESS OF THE DESTRUCTION. THE NEW CAMPAIGN WILL ALSO MAKE USE OF 35 ROADBLOCKS, 11 ADVANCED BASES AND 4 OTHER BASES.

11. ON MARIJUANA, AG STATED TENDENCY OF SOME U.S. STATE LEGISLATURES TO TOLERATE MARIJUANA POSSESSION IS IN CONFLICT WITH SINGLE NARCOTICS CONVENTION, WHICH HOLDS POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA TO BE A CRIME. HE SAID U.S.G. SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS TENDENCY; MOVES TOWARD DECRIMINALIZATION OR LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA MAKE MEXICO'S ENFORCEMENT JOB MUCH MORE DIFFICULT, SINCE THE SAME TRAFFICKERS ARE OFTEN INVOLVED IN BOTH HEROIN AND MARIJUANA.

12. IN THE U.S., HE SAID, LESS THAN ONE-HALF PERCENT OF THE POPULATION HAS A HEROIN PROBLEM, WHILE SOME 10 PERCENT HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH AMPHETAMINES.

13. MEXICO HAS SOME 15,000 OPIUM POPPY PLANTATIONS, WITH TOTAL AREA OF ABOUT 5,000 HECTARES(ABOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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13,000 ACRES). NOTE: WE CONSIDER THIS ESTIMATE TO BE ON THE LOW SIDE.)

14. GOM IS COMMITTING LARGE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO CAMPAIGN. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST YEAR 60 MILLION PESOS (ABOUT FIVE MILLION DOLLARS) WERE SPENT BY GOM ON AIRCRAFT SUPPORT; ALONE; IN COMPARISON, ONE BELL 212 COSTS "ONLY" ABOUT 800,000 DOLLARS.

15. ON U.S. PRISONERS, AG ANSWERED QUESTION CONCERNING LOST ANGELES T.V. INTERVIEW IN WHICH TWO U.S. CITIZENS SAID THEY WERE NOT TRAFFICKERS, HAD FINALLY TO BE RELEASED BY GOM FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE. AG REPLIED THAT THOSE ARRESTED ESPECIALLY AT AIRPORT, WERE ARRESTED PUBLICLY WITH EVIDENCE

CLEARLY PROVING THEIR GUILT. ALTHOUGH MANY MAY
HAVE BEEN DUPED BY FRIENDS, THEY NONETHELESS
WERE GUILTY OF CRIME.

16. CONCERNING CONFISCATED AIRCRAFT, AG SAID
THE CLAIMS CASES MUST BE MADE BY INSURANCE COM-
PANIES TO U.S. G. WHICH IN TURN WILL APPROACH GOM.
BUT IN MOST CASES, THE COMPETENT JUDGE MUST
RENDER THE DECISION ON WHETHER TO RETURN THE AIRCRAFT.
OF SOME 200 CONFISCATED AIRCRAFT MOST ARE CASES
WHERE OWNERS WILL HAVE DIFFICULT TIME PROVING THEIR
LACK OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE NARCOTICS CRIME.

17. EMBASSY/DEA PLAN TO REPORT VERBATIM TEXT OF
PRESS CONFERENCE ASAP.
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