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# International Narcotics Situation Report

*Special Issue: 1990 in Review  
and Challenges Ahead*

January 1991

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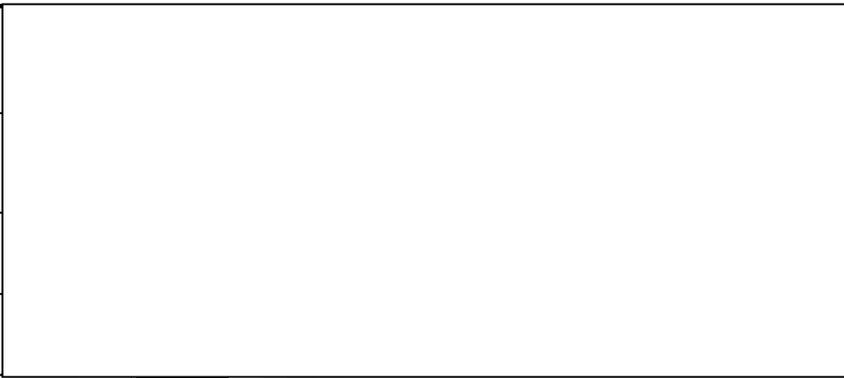
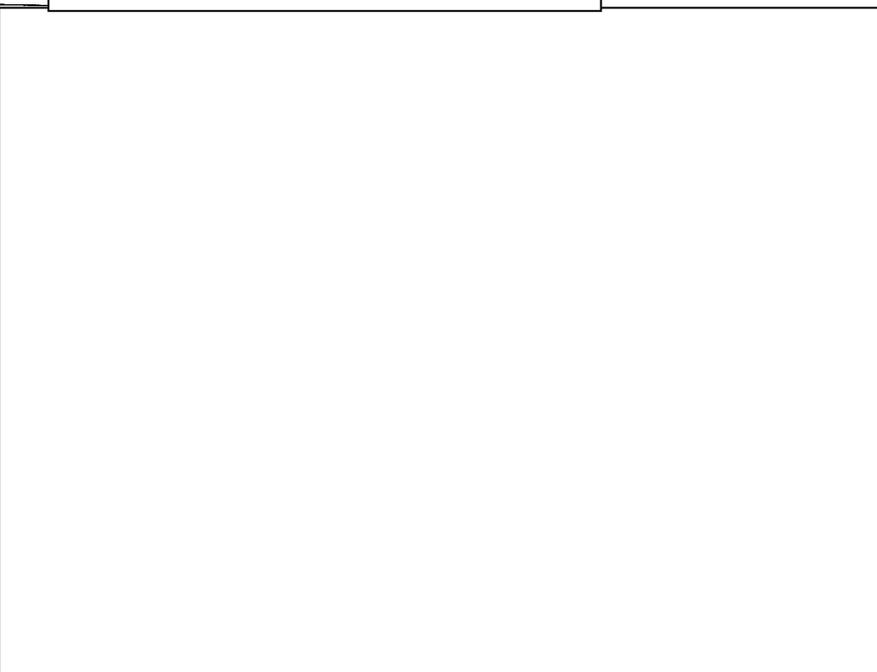
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**International Narcotics  
Situation Report** 

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Mexico

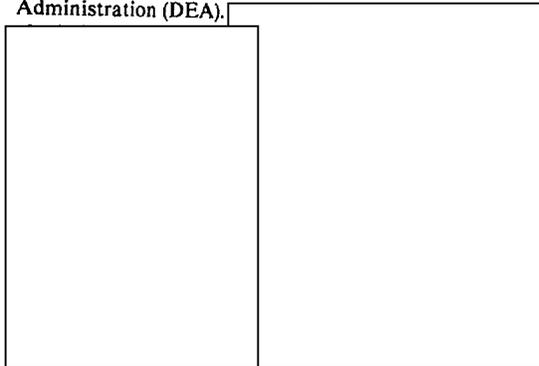


Intensified efforts against the drug trade by the Salinas government achieved some significant results in 1990, but Mexico continues to pose one of the premier narcotics threats to the United States. Mexico has been the primary transshipment country for South American cocaine traffickers for at least the last two years. In addition, Mexico's extensive cultivation of opium poppy and marijuana continues—it has been a major supplier of these drugs to the United States for nearly two decades. We expect that, within certain limits, Salinas is prepared to further intensify the Mexican antidrug effort, including greater cooperation with Washington as long as there are clear benefits for Mexico.



**Heroin and Marijuana**

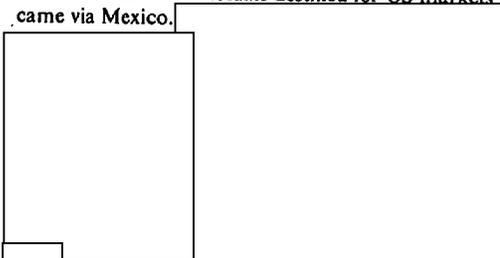
Mexican heroin still supplies about 30 percent of the US market, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).



**The Threat**

**Cocaine**

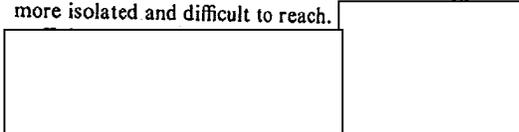
Our preliminary analysis indicates that between 330 and 550 metric tons of cocaine may have moved into Mexico intended for the United States in 1990 via general aviation aircraft. We estimate 70 percent of the South American cocaine destined for US markets came via Mexico.



Transshipment of cocaine to Mexico by traffickers has not been without some risk, however. The confiscation of costly trafficker aircraft—high-performance turbocommanders and other twin-engine aircraft—record cocaine seizures, and an increased military presence in the northern border states forced some traffickers to alter their operating areas in 1990, albeit probably temporarily and without abandoning old routes and contacts.

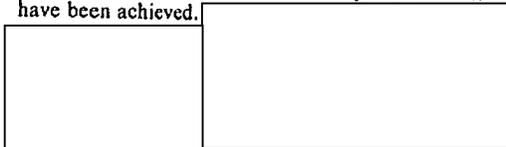


Narcotics cultivators have become increasingly sophisticated in their cultivation practices and concealment methods. Cultivation areas have become even more isolated and difficult to reach.



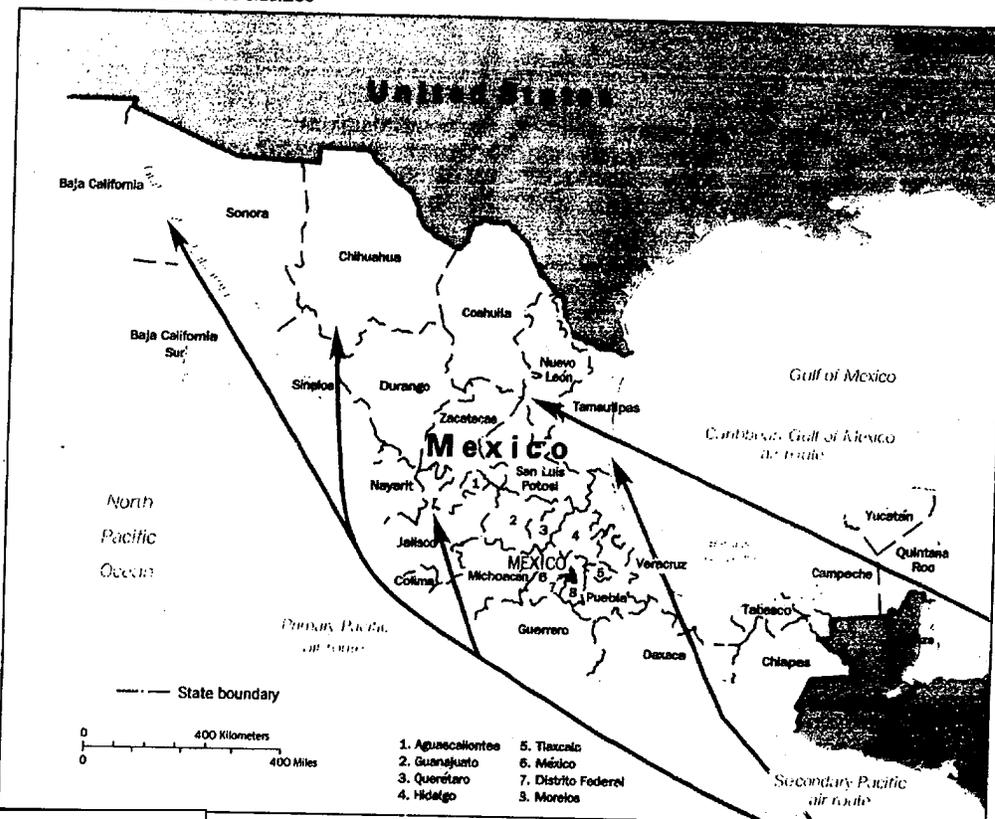
**Mexican Antidrug Efforts**

Mexico expanded its counternarcotics efforts in 1990. The program was propelled by President Salinas' strong leadership based on his belief in the national security implications of the drug trade, its potential threat to political stability and public health, and the importance of counternarcotics to Mexico's relationship with the United States. Some impressive results have been achieved.



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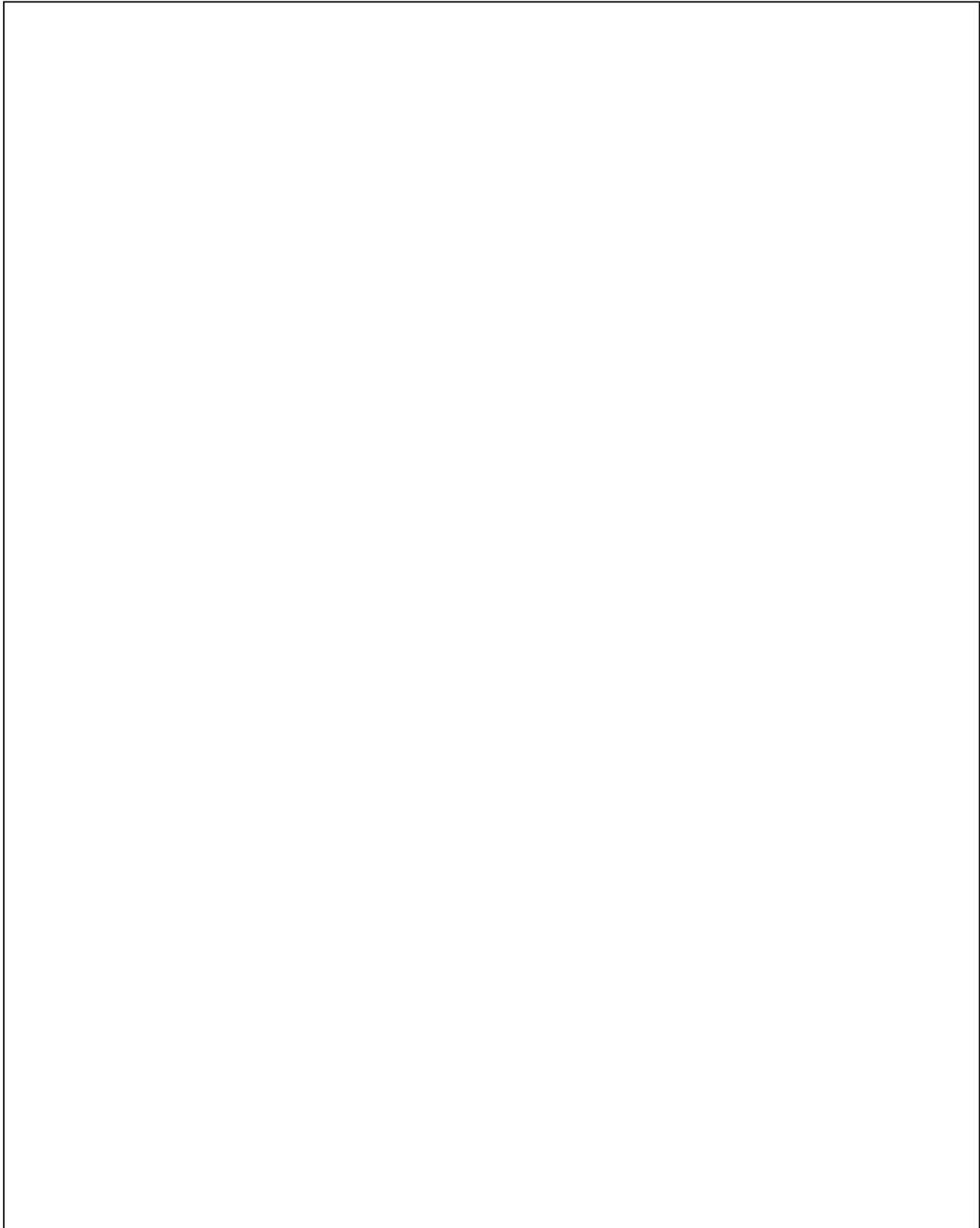
### Narcotics Air Routes to Mexico



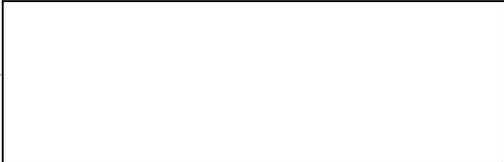
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**Challenges Ahead**

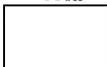
In our view, Mexico will continue to be the path of least resistance for narcotics traffickers trying to smuggle drugs to the United States:

- The numerous well-established overland smuggling routes traditionally used to transport Mexican marijuana and heroin into the United States provide cocaine traffickers the flexibility to alter routes easily—a characteristic not found elsewhere—and to offset law enforcement initiatives.

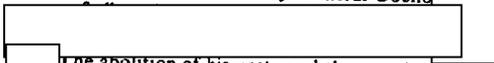


- The country's strategic location in relation to the drug distribution centers in the western United States (Houston, Los Angeles, and Phoenix) makes it a natural conduit.
- The air infrastructure in Mexico—probably the best in all of Latin America—provides traffickers with a myriad of smuggling options.
- If more interdiction pressure is applied to land and air smuggling routes, narcotics traffickers can still take advantage of the maritime smuggling options available along the coasts of Mexico.

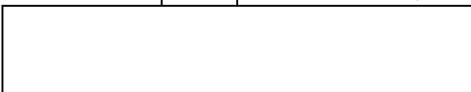
Despite these daunting problems, President Salinas is likely to continue his strong support for antinarcotics programs and to agree to more cooperation with Washington as long as he perceives Mexico as the beneficiary. Salinas is likely to point to Mexico's successes in the drug war and to the increased resources that his government is spending on the struggle to underline his commitment and to seek additional concessions from Washington.



On the domestic front, we believe that the Attorney General's office will remain the dominant player in Mexico's counternarcotics effort, despite the dismissal in October of Deputy Attorney General Coello



the abolition of his post, and the creation of a new national-level position—Coordinator of Narcotics Matters—to oversee civilian and military counternarcotics efforts, appears to be an effort to fashion closer cooperation among military and civilian agencies and improve the national anticorruption drive. The leadership ability of the man named to the new post—retired Army Brig. Gen. Jorge Carrillo—will be crucial in determining the course of future counternarcotics efforts.



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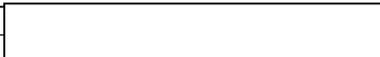
### Significant Narcotics-Related Events in Mexico, 1990

January

The head of Mexico's Federal Judicial Police special antinarcotics unit is replaced . . . Luis Soto Silva, experienced police official and key player in drug kingpin Felix Gallardo's arrest, appointed to post.



The Customs Service and decentralized.

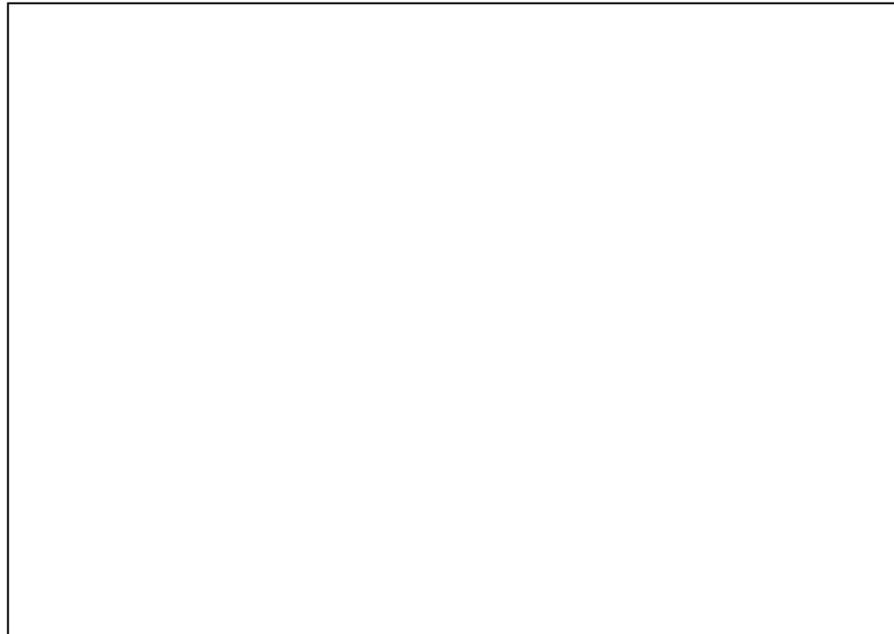


is reorganized

February

Ex-Interpol chief Miguel Aldana Ibarra is arrested in Mexico City and indicted by a US Federal Grand Jury in the 1985 murder of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent Enrique Camarena.

March



April

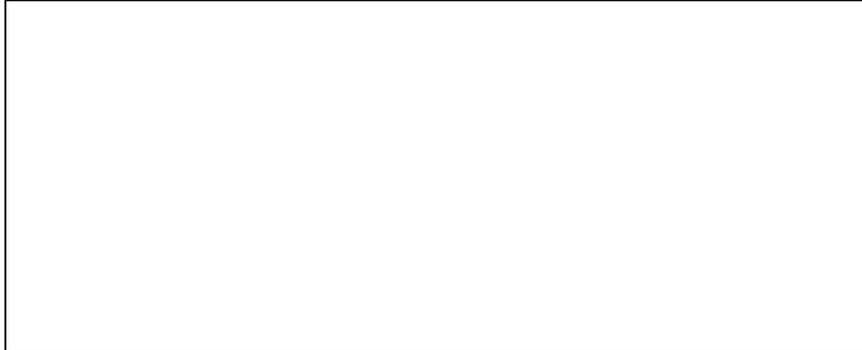
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June

July



Salinas orders the removal of all internal antidrug checkpoints, in response to public complaints about police abuses of human rights.



Mexican Government continues its pursuit of major Mexican narcotics violators with the arrest of Alberto Caro-Quintero, reported brother of convicted drug baron Rafael Caro-Quintero.

August

September



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**October**

In a surprise move, Salinas replaces controversial drug czar Javier Coello amid increasing criticism that Coello was doing little to crack down on human rights abuses committed by antidrug police.



**November**

President Bush travels to Mexico to meet with President Salinas . . . summit treats narcotics cooperation as a positive in US-Mexico relations.

**December**



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