

FEATURES



"INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL: A HIGH-PRIORITY PROGRAM" Address by Sheldon B. Vance. Department of State Bulletin, January 27, 1975.

LATIN AMERICA: MAJOR SOURCE OF HARD DRUGS FOR U.S. The New York Times, April 21 - 24, 1975.

The attached articles are for your background information and are primarily intended to supplement case officer knowledge regarding international production of and traffic in hard drugs and the efforts of the U.S. and other governments to curb both production and traffic.

The address by Ambassador Vance is a general view of anti-narcotics actions taken by the U.S. Government in cooperation with other governments in major narcotics producing/trafficking areas, and also U.S. participation in international efforts to combat narcotics activities.

The series of four New York Times articles, each with a related supplementary article, points out how and why Latin America has become the chief source of drugs for the U.S. market. Some of the reasons are: increase in the popularity of cocaine; decline in the availability of French produced heroin, with subsequent increase in the demand for Mexican heroin; huge profits derived from smuggling; and the cooperation of local corrupt officials in smuggling efforts. The series also includes information on the operations of drug rings within the U.S. and the key role played by women in Latin American drug trafficking. The third article in the series is devoted to the activities of the Argentine drug king, Amando Nicolai, and the last covers anti-narcotics activities of the U.S. Government, with some coverage of the role of CIA.

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1 May 1975

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International Narcotics Control: A High-Priority Program

*Address by Sheldon B. Vance*¹

Alcohol and drug problems are genuine concerns of anyone with management responsibilities, and in this sense my personal involvement is not new. However, my interest has been more immediate and full time since early this year when Secretary Kissinger named me his Senior Adviser on Narcotics Matters.

The Federal international narcotics control program is a combined effort of several U.S. agencies, operating within the framework of the Cabinet Committee on International Narcotics Control, which is chaired by Secretary of State Kissinger. I also serve as the Executive Director of the Cabinet Committee and therefore direct or coordinate, under the President's and Secretary's control, what our Federal Government is attempting to do abroad in this field, whether in the enforcement, treatment, or prevention areas.

My remarks today will not address alcohol abuse, not because we believe alcohol a lesser or insignificant problem—we definitely do not—but because our international narcotics control program does not extend to alcohol. The Cabinet Committee was, in fact, formed largely in response to the tragic victimization of American youth by heroin traffickers in the late 1960's and early 1970's. As you know, the same period also saw a sharp rise in the abuse of other drugs over which we seek tighter controls, including marihuana, hashish, cocaine, amphetamines, barbiturates,

tranquilizers, and LSD and other hallucinogens. Poly-drug abuse, the mixing or alternating consumption of different drugs, also emerged as a problem requiring special attention.

The American drug scene is not confined to our borders. It extends to our military forces and other Americans residing abroad, as well as to tourists. As of September 30 of this year, 1,289 U.S. citizens were languishing in foreign prisons on narcotics charges, principally in Mexico, Germany, Spain, and Canada. The 1,289 compares with the figure of 242 in September of 1969.

However hard we fight the problem of drug abuse at home, we cannot move significantly to solve it unless we succeed in winning and maintaining comprehensive and effective cooperation of foreign governments. Some of the key drugs of abuse originate in foreign countries. There is a legitimate need for opium as a source for codeine and other medicinal compounds, but illicit opium—from which heroin can be processed—has been produced in such countries as Turkey (prior to its ban), Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, Laos, and neighboring Mexico. Opium is also being produced legally in India and Turkey for export and in Iran and a number of other countries for domestic medical and research utilization.

Some idea of the dimensions of our problem can be gained when we consider that the world's annual legal production of opium is close to 1,500 tons and illegal production is estimated at 1,200 tons. Similarly, the cocaine used in the United States is of foreign origin, produced as the coca plant princi-

¹ Made before the North American Congress on Alcohol and Drug Problems at San Francisco, Calif., on Dec. 17. Ambassador Vance is Senior Adviser to the Secretary of State and Coordinator for International Narcotics Matters.

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pally in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador. Colombia transforms more coca paste into cocaine than other countries. Cannabis, from which we get marihuana and hashish, is both imported and grown in the United States; the biggest supplier of the U.S. market is Mexico, followed by Jamaica.

We have had our problems with U.S.-manufactured amphetamines, barbiturates, and other mind-bending drugs. We are attempting to deal with the U.S. sources through domestic measures, but for the foreign substances we must look to other governments for cooperation. Frequently, it has been a case of persuading them that the problem is not just ours but is also theirs.

We have been increasingly successful in these efforts since mid-1971, when stopping the flow of narcotics to the United States—with emphasis on heroin and cocaine—became one of our principal foreign policy objectives. At that time, the Department of State was assigned the primary responsibility for developing an intensified international narcotics control effort and for managing the expenditures under the program.

To encourage cooperation from other governments and to assist them and international organizations to strengthen their antidrug capabilities, we have provided an annual average of \$22 million in grant assistance over the past three years. Our request for international control funds for the current fiscal year is \$42.5 million. Our bilateral programs emphasize cooperative law enforcement and exchange of intelligence. The major categories of grant assistance are training programs and equipment for foreign enforcement personnel and financial assistance for crop substitution and related agricultural projects. We are also exploring useful cooperative ventures in the fields of drug abuse education, treatment, and prevention.

During the past two months, I visited many of the countries in Latin America, the Near East, and Asia to examine our programs and look for ways to strengthen them. I can report that all of these governments expressed a sincere willingness to help stamp out illicit production and trafficking. But

these governments also face serious internal problems. The opium poppy, for example, usually flourishes in the more isolated areas where central government control is weak or nonexistent. In many areas it is the only cash crop of unbelievably poor tribesmen, and it also provides their only medication and relief from serious disease and hardship.

On my trip I saw something of the poppy-growing areas in Afghanistan in Badakshan and Nangarhar Provinces and of the Buner and Swabi poppy-producing areas of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province when I drove from Kabul, Afghanistan, to Peshawar, Pakistan, through the Kabul Gorge and Khyber Pass and then went on to Islamabad by Pakistani Government helicopter. I also helicoptered over the northern mountains of Thailand, where the Meo hill tribes grow opium like the tribesmen in the neighboring mountains of Burma and Laos in what is called the Golden Triangle.

The experience vividly demonstrated to me the conditions which make it very difficult for these governments—despite a genuine desire to stamp out illegal opium—to control production effectively any time soon. We and producing countries cannot expect to see a high degree of success in our cooperative enforcement efforts until significant adjustments are made in the social attitudes and economic conditions in the opium-growing areas.

Western Hemisphere Control Programs

Mexico—Today, the number-one priority country in our international narcotics control efforts is Mexico. The Mexican opium crop and heroin laboratories are the current source of more than half of the heroin on our streets. The so-called Mexican brown heroin has not only moved into our largest cities but is also spreading to some of the smaller cities throughout our country. When President Ford met with President Echeverria in October, narcotics control was very high on their agenda and they agreed that an even more intensified joint effort is needed.

The Mexican Government under President

Echeverría has assigned high priority to its antidrug campaign and has directed Attorney General Pedro Ojeda Paullada to coordinate its eradication and control efforts.

We are helping them by providing aircraft, mainly helicopters, to assist in the eradication of opium poppy cultivation in the western mountains. This cultivation is illegal in Mexico, and there is no question of the Mexican Government offering income substitution to the farmer. There is also a crash program to strengthen antismuggling controls on both sides of the border. Our crooks smuggle guns and appliances into Mexico, in coordination with their crooks who supply ours with heroin and marihuana. U.S.-Mexican cooperative measures are paying off, but much remains to be done before illicit trafficking can be reduced in a major way.

For fiscal year 1975, about \$10 million, or almost one-quarter, of our international narcotics control funds are being allocated to the Mexican program. Our Mexican neighbors are spending much more. My colleague John Bartels, Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and I meet three or four times a year with our friend Pedro Ojeda Paullada, either in Mexico City or Washington, in order to coordinate our respective efforts.

Colombia—A country with extensive coastlines and huge land areas, Colombia is the major transit point for illegal shipments of cocaine entering the U.S. market. The Colombian Government has launched a great effort to eliminate the criminal element, to combat drug trafficking, and to crack down on the laboratories processing coca base smuggled in from Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Chile. The United States is moving forward with an assistance program tailored to help the new Colombian Government thrust. We are furnishing such enforcement items as jeeps, motorcycles, radios, and laboratory equipment. We are also providing antinarcotics technical training for the Judicial Police, the National Police, and Customs.

Jamaica—This Caribbean island has emerged as a major supplier of marihuana

to the United States, surpassed only by Mexico. Moreover, there is evidence that Jamaica is a transit point for the smuggling of cocaine and heroin to our country from South America. Within the past year, the Jamaican Government has undertaken major steps to curb illicit drug activities. In response to urgent requests for assistance from the Jamaican Government, U.S. technical assistance and equipment was extended to a Jamaican task force set up to intercept boats and aircraft engaged in narcotics smuggling, to disrupt trafficking rings, and to destroy commercial marihuana cultivation. Well over 600,000 pounds of commercially grown marihuana have been destroyed thus far. U.S. support consists of loaning of helicopters and transfers of communications equipment and investigative-enforcement aids together with training and technical assistance.

The Situation in Turkey

Turkey—In 1971, with the realization that a substantial amount of opium legally produced in Turkey was being diverted to illicit narcotics trafficking, the Turkish Government concluded that a total ban on poppy growing would be the most effective way to stop the leakage. However, the Turkish Government which assumed office in January 1974 reconsidered the ban, amid great internal political debate, and on July 1 rescinded it on the grounds that what is grown in Turkey is a sovereign decision of the Turks.

In high-level dialogue between our two governments we have made clear our very deep concern at the possibility of a renewed massive flow of heroin from Turkish opium to the United States. We stressed our hope they would adopt effective controls. A special U.N. team held discussions on this subject in Turkey on the invitation of the Turkish Government, which has stated publicly many times that it will not allow its resumption of poppy cultivation to injure other peoples.

In mid-September, the Turkish Government issued a statement that it would adopt

a method of harvesting the poppies called the poppy straw process, which involves the collection by the Turkish Government of the whole poppy pod rather than opium gum. This was the procedure recommended by the U.N. experts. Traditionally, the opium gum was taken by the farmers through lancing the pod in the field, and it was a portion of this gum that was illegally bought by the traffickers.

Last month I talked with senior Turkish Government officials and with police officials. The word has moved all the way down the chain to the poppy farmer that opium gum production is definitely prohibited, and the enforcement mechanism is moving into place. Turkey and the U.N. narcotics organization are cooperating fully in this effort, and all will be watching closely to endeavor to prevent and to head off diversions into the illicit traffic.

Joint Efforts in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia—The Golden Triangle area, where Burma, Laos, and Thailand come together, is the largest source of illicit opium in the world, with an estimated annual production of 600–700 tons. Most of this production is consumed by opium or heroin smokers in Southeast Asia. Since 1970, when heroin processed from opium in Golden Triangle refineries began to become widely available to U.S. troops in Viet-Nam, we have been concerned that heroin from this source would increasingly reach the United States, especially as the ban on opium production in Turkey and disruption efforts along the way dried up the traditional Middle Eastern-European route to the United States.

For the past three years, therefore, we have made Southeast Asia a major object of our international control efforts. We have devoted a significant share of our suppression efforts and resources to our cooperative programs in Thailand, Laos, Viet-Nam, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. The biggest concentration has been in Thailand, which serves as the major transit area for Burmese-origin opium. A recent series of agreements for

U.S. assistance to Thailand include helicopters, communications equipment, vehicles, and training programs. Important steps were also taken on the income-substitution side, including the approval of an aerial survey of northern Thailand, where opium is grown by the hill tribes. In Burma, the government has stepped up its antinarcotics efforts. For fiscal year 1975, Southeast Asia will account for over \$10 million of our international narcotics control funds.

While our joint suppression efforts are making some headway in Southeast Asia, we should not view the situation there through rose-colored glasses. Antinarcotics efforts in Southeast Asia run up against several unique problems. Burma and Thailand are threatened by insurgent groups which control or harass large areas of the opium-growing regions. The governments have limited resources and few trained personnel available for narcotics control. In addition, the lack of internal security hampers police action and intelligence operations against traffickers. The Government of Burma, for example, does not have effective administrative control over a significant portion of the area where most Asian poppies are grown.

The topography of the Golden Triangle area is mountainous, wild, and uncontrollable. When one smuggling route is uncovered and plugged by police and customs teams, the traffickers can easily detour to alternate routes and modes of transportation. We need only look at the difficulties that our own well-trained and well-equipped law enforcement agencies have in blocking narcotics traffic across our clearly defined peaceful border with Mexico to gain a better appreciation of the difficulties in Southeast Asia.

Moreover, use of opium has been tolerated in the area, and opium has been regarded as a legitimate commodity of commerce for centuries under both colonial and indigenous governments. For the hill tribes, opium is still the principal source of medicinal relief for endemic diseases and is also the most lucrative crop to sell or barter for basic necessities. We are actively seeking alternative crops and other sources of income for these

peoples, in close cooperation with similar efforts by the U.N. narcotics organizations; but progress will be slow, as a way of life of primitive and remote peoples must be modified.

And so the situation in Southeast Asia is complex and long term.

Multilateral Approaches

Concurrently with our bilateral action programs, we have given full support to the multilateral or international efforts in the fight against illicit narcotics production and trafficking.

For example, the United States was a leading proponent of the establishment of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control. To date, we have contributed \$10 million of the \$13.5 million made available to the Fund by all countries. In Thailand, the Fund is assisting in a comprehensive program designed to develop alternate economic opportunities for those who grow opium; the Fund has a similar project in Lebanon for the development of alternatives to cannabis production. Within the past year, the Fund has financed a World Health Organization worldwide study of the epidemiology of drug dependence which we hope will contribute toward clarifying the nature of the problem we seek to solve. It is also financing treatment and rehabilitation activities for drug addicts in Thailand, fellowships and consultancies in rehabilitation in various countries, and seminars on community rehabilitation programs in Europe.

The U.S. Government has also taken a leading role in formulating two major pieces of international narcotics legislation. The first relates to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. I am happy to report that the U.S.-sponsored amending protocol, which would considerably strengthen controls over illicit production and trafficking, has been ratified by 32 of the 40 countries necessary for its coming into force. The United States was one of the first countries to ratify the protocol, on November 1, 1972.

The second major area of international legislation pertains to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, which would provide international control over LSD and other hallucinogens, the amphetamines, barbiturates, and tranquilizers. The administration submitted the convention to the Senate in mid-1971 with a request for its ratification. We are now waiting for congressional approval of the proposed enabling domestic legislation that would pave the way for ratification of this essential international treaty. U.S. approval of the Psychotropic Convention would strengthen our hand in obtaining cooperation from other governments in controlling the classic narcotic substances.

The approach to a successful antidrug program cannot, of course, relate to supply alone. Nor is an attack on the demand side alone the answer. Only through a combined effort can the job be done. Thus the initial objective of our international program has been to reduce availabilities of illicit supplies so that addicts will be driven into treatment and others will be deterred from experimentation. We are also examining ways to foster international cooperation in the fields of treatment and prevention to augment awareness that drug abuse is not exclusively an American problem but one that seriously affects developing countries just as it plagues the affluent. We also hope to demonstrate our progress in treatment and prevention and to learn from other countries the methods that they have found effective.

As many of you know, we have several cooperative treatment and research projects with a number of concerned governments throughout the world. For example, with the Government of Mexico through Dr. Guido Belsasso's organization, the Mexican Center for Drug Dependency Research, we have provided some assistance to the Mexican epidemiological study and we are jointly studying heroin use along our common border.

I think we can point with pride to our role over the past three years toward a tightening of international controls. Worldwide seizures and arrests of traffickers have become more

and more significant as other countries have joined in the battle. And there has been a move in the direction of more effective controls through treaty obligations. However, the job is far from done. It should be apparent to us all that abundant supplies of narcotics—both in storage and under cultivation—quickly respond to illicit high profits. Our task, then, is to further strengthen the international control mechanism to reduce illicit trafficking.

On October 18, John Bartels, the Administrator of DEA, Dr. Robert DuPont, Director of the Special Action Office for Drug Abuse Prevention, and I met with President Ford to review the U.S. drug abuse programs. The President stated that he had personally seen examples of the human devastation caused by drug abuse and said he wanted every appropriate step taken to further the U.S. Government's drug abuse program both at home and abroad. On the international front, the President specifically directed that all American Ambassadors be made aware of the prime importance he attaches to our efforts to reduce the flow of illicit drugs to the United States and requested that each Ambassador review the activities of his mission in support of the drug program.

Thus, drug control continues to be a high-priority foreign policy issue. In cooperation with our missions abroad and the governments to which they are accredited, we shall carry on with our efforts against the scourge of drug abuse.

NEW YORK TIMES
21 April 1975

Latins Now Leaders Of Hard-Drug Trade

Operators of Rings Supplying U.S. Virtually Immune From Prosecution

By NICHOLAS GAGE

In the last two years, Latin America has become the major source of hard drugs entering the United States. Much of it is being supplied by rings controlled by businessmen and professionals who have grown so politically and economically powerful that they can operate with virtual immunity from arrest and prosecution.

Latin America now supplies all of the cocaine sold in the United States, where the demand for the drug has risen so sharply that the price of coca leaves, from which cocaine is extracted, has soared 1,500 per cent since 1973 in some Latin countries — from \$4 to \$60 a bale.

In addition, Mexico has now replaced France as the main supplier of heroin to the United States, increasing its share of the illegal heroin market from 20 to 60 per cent in the last five years.

The increasing market for drugs from Latin America, which is centered in New York, Miami and Los Angeles, is supplied by traffickers who can buy protection by bribing poorly paid police officers, judges and other officials. In some cases, corrupt policemen and public officials in Latin America have gone into the profitable drug traffic themselves.

New Networks Formed

The shift of the drug flow from Europe to Latin America also has brought into power new criminal networks in New York and other cities in the United States that are dominated by Colombians, Cubans and Mexicans.

The Federal Drug Enforcement Administration has identified about 250 Latin Americans as controlling the rings that supply cocaine and heroin to the United States market. Some of them are so influential po-

litically that they are considered "untouchable" in their native countries.

Typical of the situation is the case of Luis Rivadeneira of Ecuador, who was arrested there last Dec. 16 with two kilos (4.4 pounds) of cocaine paste in his possession. Soon after his arrest, according to authorities, Adm. Alfredo Poveda Burbano, Ecuador's Minister of Government, who directs all law-enforcement agencies in the country, called the police and ordered them to change the evidence against Mr. Rivadeneira so that the charges against him would have to be dismissed.

"Admiral Poveda explained his order by saying that Rivadeneira was a close relative of a friend of his—another admiral," said a police captain.

The police complied.

If drug traffickers can't use political influence to stop investigations against them, they can often successfully bribe police officers or judges.

Traffickers have so much available cash, for example, that in Colombia judges sometimes compete to try major narcotics cases because of the potential payoffs involved.

Eduardo Dávila, reputed to be a major cocaine trafficker from the city of Santa Marta, was arrested late last year on charges of murdering a policeman. According to the Colombian national police, three judges have already tried to get his case.

Traffickers often find the police even easier to corrupt than judges because throughout Latin America they are so badly paid. Police salaries range from about \$60 a month in Bolivia to \$250 a month in Argentina.

In Mexico, some high police officials are known to have become millionaires by taking bribes. When some police officers are transferred from one district to another, they sell to their successors the list of narcotics traffickers who paid them on a regular basis.

The New York Times has conducted a two-month investigation in eight Latin American countries to explore how the drug traffic works there, how narcotics reach the main market in New York, who the major dealers are and what the United States and Latin American nations are doing about the problem. This is the first in a series of four articles and supplemental reports on that investigation.

Extortion Is Practiced

Some Latin American policemen who won't take bribes are not averse to arresting drug traffickers and then extorting money from them—a practice called *volteo*, which means "rolling."

Last year a United States citizen was arrested trying to buy two kilos of cocaine for \$7,000 from Maj. Oscar Zeballos of a Bolivian narcotics unit who was posing as a trafficker. Major Zeballos seized the money, keeping \$5,000 for himself and letting two younger officers split the rest.

His mistake was not sharing the money with the informant who had originally put him on to the North American. The irate informant told the officer's superiors and Major Zeballos was quietly dismissed from the police force, losing all his benefits.

The astronomical profits of the drug trade sometimes prove so tempting to some underpaid Latin American policemen that they go into the business themselves.

Last year, for example, a DC-3 flying from Peru to Colombia had mechanical trouble and was forced to land on a military base in Colombia. There were five people inside. The head of the group identified himself as Lieut. Benhur Benavides of the Colombian narcotics unit of F-2—the detective division of the national police. Nevertheless, the commander of the military compound had the plane searched and inside he found 100 kilograms of cocaine paste.

Resisting Easy Money

Despite the temptations, many policemen remain honest. "I've met cops making \$60 a month who wouldn't take a nickel from anybody," said Louis Bachrach, the Drug Enforcement Administration's regional director for South America.

Many government officials also are unmoved by any personal or political considerations. When the Bolivian police arrested the socially prominent Maria Malky Farah with 15

kilos of cocaine in her possession, the judge on the case dismissed the charges against her. But the Minister of the Interior, Juan Pereda Asbún, had both Miss Malky, whose family he knew, and the judge jailed on corruption charges.

Several factors have put Latin America on the crest of the wave of profitable drug traffic.

In recent years cocaine has become the most fashionable drug in the United States and Europe because it is less expensive than heroin, it is not physically addictive and it has a reputation as a sexual stimulant. One indication of the drug's growing popularity is that cocaine seizures in the United States have increased 700 per cent since 1969.

The huge profits to be made by transporting cocaine from Latin America to New York also make it clear why so many are willing to take the risk. In New York City a kilo of cocaine is sold on the street for between \$75,000 and \$100,000. In La Paz, Bolivia, that same kilo would cost only \$4,000; in Lima, Peru, \$5,000; in Quito, Ecuador, \$6,000; in Bogotá, Colombia, \$7,500, and in Buenos Aires, \$8,500. (North American customers are charged 15 to 30 per cent above these going rates.)

French Source Weakened

While cocaine has been growing in price and popularity, heroin from France—the traditional source—has been declining in availability because of international law-enforcement pressure on French traffickers. This has left a gap that is increasingly being filled by Mexican heroin.

Mexico began producing heroin for the United States market during World War II. "When the war dried up the supply of heroin from Europe, several New York Mafiosi—Tom Gagliano, Frank Livorsi, Joe Bonanno—went to Mexico and set up a new source of supply," said John T. Cusack, head of the Drug Enforcement

Administration's international operations. "Until then only a few Chinese immigrants were growing poppies in Mexico."

Today the Federal authorities estimate that Mexico produces 15 tons of opium base, from which heroin is made, every year. It comes from thousands of cultivation sites situated principally in the states of Sinaloa, Durango, Sonora and Guerrero. The heroin refined from Mexican poppies is brown in color while French heroin, refined by more sophisticated methods, is white.

Mexico is now employing soldiers to seek out and destroy fields of opium poppies. "So far this year we have destroyed 6,000 poppy fields and have detected another 2,000," said Pedro Ojeda Paullada, Mexico's Attorney General, who is directing the eradication program.

But so far the drive has not slowed up poppy cultivation to any noticeable degree. When one field is destroyed, the campesinos (peasant farmers) plant again elsewhere.

Last year Mexico passed a law that provided for confiscation of land used for cultivating opium poppies. But the campesinos worked around that by planting the poppies on Federal lands—often on mountainsides that are too steep for army helicopters to land on and hard to reach on foot.

'Like the Old West'

In Mexico, the investigation of narcotics traffickers is just one of many responsibilities of a 340-man Federal police force. The Federales are led by 20 comandantes and enforcement apparently depends largely on the competence of individual commanders.

"It's like the Old West," said Robert Eyman, the Drug Enforcement Administration's regional director in Mexico. "If you have a strong Marshal Dillon, you get good enforcement."

United States officials estimate that there are four Marshal Dillons among the 20 comandantes. Some of the others are said to be simply indifferent, but several are thought blatantly corrupt, having become millionaires on a job that pays about \$500 a month.

To combat such problems, Mr. Ojeda-Paullada uses select comandantes, such as Salvador Del Toro and Ismael Díaz Laredo, to carry out special missions. He also periodically shifts comandantes from one post to another to keep them from establishing ties with traffickers.

Nevertheless, many traffickers retain their power, protected not only by the police, but also by public officials. Some narcotics dealers, in fact, are public officials themselves.

Among the 70 major drug traffickers United States agents have chosen as primary targets in Mexico, is a high official in a major ministry.

Attorney General Ojeda-Paullada has tried to fight such corruption by dismissing or reassigning corrupt officials in several provinces, promoting mandatory sentences for major drug traffickers and setting up a school to provide professional standards for the Federal police.

But thus far the Mexican Government's efforts have not been enough to inhibit heroin production in Mexico. Nor have they succeeded in discouraging the use of the country as a transshipment point for cocaine from South America.

Crop From Andes

Cocaine is derived from the leaves of the coca plant, which grows at elevations of 2,000 to 8,000 feet on the eastern slopes of the Andes mountains.

Because of the large quantity of leaves required to produce cocaine—more than 300 pounds for one kilo—the leaves are processed by campesinos into "coca paste" in primitive stills close to the growing areas. These stills are no more than oil drums containing a solution of potassium carbonate, water and kerosene in which the leaves are allowed to soak.

The paste, which resembles moist flour, is then shipped to laboratories throughout Latin America to be processed into cocaine. Processing cocaine does not require the sophisticated chemistry needed to produce heroin. A cocaine laboratory can be set up with about \$1,500 worth of equipment.

Peru and Bolivia are the only two Latin American countries where the cultivation of coca leaves is legal. In Peru, new coca planting has been forbidden since 1964, but production of coca has increased 20 per cent a year. Last year Peru produced 20 million kilograms of coca leaf, only 4 million of which were used for such legitimate purposes as export for chemical use and for chewing by local Indians.

When the Peruvian Government clears jungle land for farming and turns it over to the campesinos, they almost always plant coca on the land. The Government winks at this practice, however, because it allows the campesinos, who are mostly Indians, to support themselves without any training or financial support.

"The Peruvian Government has no unified policy on coca," said an American official in Lima. "Many ministers feel that cocaine is an American problem and not a Peruvian responsibility."

Crop Test in Bolivia

Unlike Peru, Bolivia has been trying harder to bring coca production under control. Bolivia is now participating in an \$800,000 United States pilot project to find crops that the campesinos would be willing to grow instead of coca. Many observers are doubtful about the project's chances of success, however, pointing out that coca requires little attention and provides three to four harvests a year, attributes that few other crops can offer.

"I've got as much skepticism about the project as anyone," said William Stedman, the United States Ambassador to Bolivia. "But we've never tried crop substitution down here and an experimental effort should be made."

A year ago Bolivia enacted broad narcotics legislation calling for the control of coca production, stiff prison terms for drug dealers and unified police action against major traffickers. But implementation of the law has been extremely slow and the narcotics unit has made few significant arrests or seizures.

Col. Luis Carrasco, director of the Department of Narcotics, has attributed the lack of progress to organizational problems.

"We want to set up an effective unit and find honest, able men for it," he said. "This takes time."

But other officials wonder whether the lack of progress is not related to the political influence that some major traffickers are said to have in Bolivia.

For example, when Alberto Sánchez Bello, a courier for one of Bolivia's major cocaine traffickers, Carlos Balderama, needed diplomatic papers to facilitate carrying a cocaine shipment to Canada last year, he was able to go to Edwin Tapia Frontanilla, secretary to the presidency. Mr. Sánchez was arrested in Canada and Mr. Tapia's role in the affair was exposed, forcing his dismissal from office.

The centers of the narcotics traffic in Bolivia are La Paz, the capital, sprawling across the slopes of a canyon 12,000 feet above sea level, and Santa Cruz, the country's commercial center on the eastern lowlands.

Bolivian traffickers process coca paste, which they buy from the campesinos at \$350 a kilo, at a handsome profit. They also export it at \$1,000 a kilo to laboratory operators in Argentina, Paraguay, Brazil and Chile.

So much coca paste is sent from Santa Cruz to northern Paraguay and western Brazil that the area is called "the Silver Triangle" to compare it to the center of opium traffic in Laos, Cambodia and Thailand known as "the Golden Triangle."

Until 1973, Bolivia exported most of its coca paste to Chile. "Chile has always had the best cocaine chemists in South America," said Col. Guido López of the Bolivian national police. "It was the Chileans in fact who first taught the Bolivian campesinos how to make paste from coca leaves."

Junta Cracks Down

But the military junta that seized power in Chile in 1973 has acted against major traffickers, jailing them, expelling them to the United States or forcing many of them to flee the country. Many dealers went to northern Argentina, where they are now setting up new laboratories. But they are moving cautiously because they have alien status and therefore are subject to expulsion.

Those remaining in Chile operate mostly around the northern city of Arica, which is near the borders of both Bolivia and Peru. The traffickers in Arica apparently still are entrenched enough to command police protection.

"When we have a case in Arica, we never tell the police what we're up to," said a lieutenant in the Carabineros in Santiago. "We've been burned too many times."

Peru, the other coca-producing country in Latin America, exports most of its coca paste to its northern neighbors, Ecuador and Colombia.

In Ecuador the major cocaine rings operate out of Quito, the capital, and Guayaquil, the principal port. Ecuadorian traffickers now send more than 100 kilograms of cocaine a month to the United States, according to Walter White, head of Drug Enforcement Administration's office in Quito.

A Faltering Effort

The police in Ecuador have not been considered effective against the drug traffickers. As is customary throughout the country's various police forces, officers in the narcotics unit are transferred to other duties every four months and they are never on the job long enough to learn how to make major drug cases.

A reorganization law for the police was drafted more than a year ago that established two-year tours of duty for narcotics work. But the law keeps bouncing from ministry to ministry without being implemented.

Even when major dealers are arrested in Ecuador, they often

are able to avoid prosecution.

"If a trafficker is a landowner or a lawyer or an important man, many judges will dismiss the charges against him no matter what the evidence," said Col. Tarquino Núñez, director general of narcotics enforcement in Ecuador. "A professor was caught with three kilos of coca paste last September and the judge released him only because of his position."

Ecuador not only processes cocaine, it also produces opium poppies. Acres of poppies are planted every year in remote mountain fields, usually mixed with other crops such as corn or barley.

"Heroin is not a serious problem in Ecuador now, but the potential is here," Mr. White said.

His immediate concern, he said, is to persuade Ecuadorians to strengthen controls along their borders with Peru and Colombia.

"Tons of paste come up from Peru with little interference and a lot of it moves on up to Colombia," he said. "If we could do something about the borders, we would disrupt the cocaine traffic not only here, but also in Colombia, which sends more of the stuff to the United States than any country in South America."

Federal authorities believe Colombia now has between 60 and 80 major criminal organizations engaged in the cocaine traffic. "Half of them are as

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Herrerias Among Biggest Of Cocaine Organizations

One of the biggest rings supplying the New York market with cocaine is the Herrera organization of Colombia, which has its headquarters in Cali, the flourishing city southwest of Bogotá.

"The Herrerias send out an average of 40 kilograms of cocaine a month, mostly to New York and Miami," says Octavio González, head of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration office in Bogotá. "At wholesale prices that add up to a \$14-million a year business."

Like most Latin-American criminal groups dealing in drugs, the Herrera organization has a family as its nucleus—seven brothers, two sisters, cousins and in-laws.

sophisticated and as disciplined as our own Mafia families," said Octavio González, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration's office in Bogotá. "They have ample capital resources, large organizations of from 50 to 100 people and layers of authority that effectively insulate their leaders from prosecution."

These groups are based in Colombia's major cities—Medellín, the industrial capital; Bogotá, Cali, Barranquilla, Santa Maria and Cartagena. They employ their own chemists to process cocaine in sophisticated laboratories outside the main cities, own fleets of planes, trucks and automobiles, and can call on scores of couriers to transport their product.

Colombian drug rings send at least 300 kilograms of cocaine a month to the United States, mostly to New York and Miami, according to Federal law-enforcement agency estimates.

Like many Latin-American countries, Colombia has several police forces fighting the narcotics trade—the security police; F-2, the detective branch of the national police; and the customs police. The F-2 narcotics unit is considered to be the most effective.

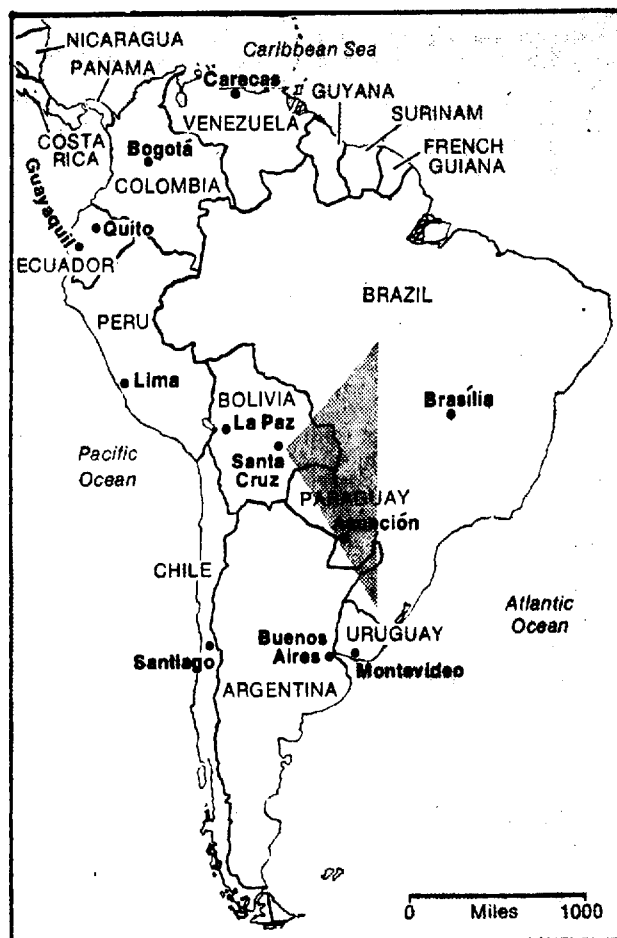
But police action alone, no matter how intensive, cannot destroy the narcotics traffic in Latin America. "There are too many loopholes in our laws and not enough cooperation between countries," said Capt. Theodoro Campo Gómez, the 31-year-old commander of the F-2 narcotics unit in Colombia. "We have to change."

Outsiders chosen for their professional skills bring the organization's membership to a total of 92.

A Daring Escape

United States and Colombian authorities say the nominal head of the organization is 34-year-old Benjamin (Negro) Herrera. They say it is indicative of the organization's power that the Herrerias arranged for Benjamin's successful escape from the Federal penitentiary in Atlanta, where he had been sentenced to five years in 1970 for trying to smuggle heroin into the United States.

After his escape, Benjamin returned to Colombia, which is one of a number of Latin-



So much coca paste, which is processed into cocaine, is snipped from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to northern Paraguay and western Brazil that the area is called "The Silver Triangle," to compare it to the center of opium traffic in Southeast Asia called "The Golden Triangle."

American countries that will not extradite its own citizens. Later, however, he made the mistake of visiting Peru. At the request of United States officials there he was arrested and expelled to the United States. He is now back in prison in Atlanta.

In Benjamin's absence, leadership of the family has been taken over by his brother Gustavo, according to the Colombian police. Ramiro, another brother, is in charge of importing coca paste from Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

Informants say the paste is often flown to the international airports at Cali and Bogotá in ordinary suitcases and rushed through customs without inspection by accommodating officials on the organization's payroll.

Authorities say the Herrerias have several well-equipped laboratories in Colombia where, under the supervision of the organization's chief chemist, Carlos

Alvarez, the coca paste is refined into cocaine. These laboratories are usually within 10 to 15 miles of Colombia's main cities—Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla.

Last Dec. 16 the Colombian police raided a laboratory outside Cali supplying cocaine to the Herrera organization that was capable of turning out 50 kilos of cocaine in one batch. Of the eight persons arrested, one was a professor of chemistry at Santiago University in Cali and another was a captain in the Cali fire brigade. The police also found a 25-ton press used for packing the cocaine into fine sheets, 700 gallons of acetone used in the chemical process and other equipment and materials valued at \$800,000.

Elaborate Courier System

Although the Herrerias may lose a lab once in a while, their business still expands. After Herrera laboratories

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Drug-Smuggling Logistics Bizarre and Often Fatal

Second of four articles on why Latin America is now the major source of hard drugs entering the United States.

By NICHOLAS GAGE

process the paste, the finished cocaine is distributed to Emilio Herrera in Barranquilla, Carlos Herrera in Bogotá and David Herrera in Medellín. They, in turn, export it by "mules" (couriers) in small amounts of two to four kilograms each. Larger quantities are sent on commercial vessels through the ports of Turbo and Buenaventura to Atlantic coast harbors in the United States.

Couriers for the Herreras sometimes pose as students. They are given student visas and they are supplied with books that have sheets of cocaine secreted in them. The "students" are paid from \$500 to \$1,000 plus expenses and are given new clothes for carrying the cocaine to New York.

The authorities say false documents for these couriers are usually procured by Aura Monsalve, a cousin of the Herreras, and Francisco Martinez, who also serves as a liaison to several of the group's North American buyers.

It is unlikely that an organization as large as the Herreras could function without police and political protection. Authorities say the organization's protectors include not only influential officials in the police, customs and the judiciary, but also several leading members of Colombian society who have invested in the lucrative cocaine trade.

The rainy season has ended in Chulumani, Bolivia, and on the steeply terraced mountainside, Juan Mamani is crouching in his small plot of coca plants, beginning to strip the tiny green leaves that will be his first crop of the year. He will pack the leaves into bales, called tambors, and sell the 300 pounds he harvests for \$250.

In Jackson Heights, Queens, drug dealers are waiting for new supplies of cocaine from South America. The 300 pounds from Juan Mamani's small plot will produce one kilogram of the drug (2.2 pounds). Although he will get \$250 for his crop, the kilo of cocaine will bring in at least \$75,000 in the New York City retail market.

The huge profit between New York and Latin America, which has become the major source of hard drugs entering the United States, is what makes thousands of men and women willing to take the risks involved in smuggling cocaine into the United States.

The methods they use are imaginative, bizarre and sometimes fatal to the couriers, who have been known to soak their clothes in cocaine or to swallow drugs stuffed in a prophylactic pouch.

Every conceivable container has been used by couriers to secrete drugs coming in from Latin America—false-bottomed wine bottles, frames of paintings, hollow ski poles. Carmen Moreno, a member of the Alberto Bravo organization in Colombia, one of the leading narcotics rings, was captured when she was about to fly from Toronto to New York with a kilo of cocaine hidden in a hollow wooden hanger.

Large quantities of cocaine—over four kilograms—are usually sent by ship or plane. Crew members on ships are recruited by the Latin-American drug organizations to

carry narcotics on their vessels into American ports. The drugs then may be carried ashore or dropped overboard in harbors to be picked up by scuba divers.

In Colombia, major drug organizations often use private planes flown by their own pilots. A pilot will rent a plane in the United States and fill out a false flight plan. Then he will fly to Colombia, where the drugs are waiting.

"In northeast Colombia there is a desert area called Guajira that is so flat that planes can land just about anywhere," said Octavio González, head of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration office in Bogotá. "The area is controlled by Indians and there is little local law enforcement.

"When they have a shipment, Colombian traffickers will pick a time and place for the landing and hire Indians to guard the area. There will be 20 to 50 Indians armed with R-15 carbines. The plane lands, picks up the cargo, and takes off within 45 minutes."

Large shipments of drugs—usually cocaine and marijuana—can be moved on these flights, according to Mr. González. "Some of these planes are big: B-26's, B-25's, twin-engine Cessnas and, in one instance, a Lockheed Constellation. And then the planes return to the states and land at designated small airports, sometimes in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia."

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Colombian narcotics organizations have highly sophisticated logistical equipment to assist these flights, including fuel depots and elaborate ground-to-air communications equipment. If one of their planes does get into trouble or if the pilot discovers that authorities are tracking it, the standard procedure is to throw the drugs overboard.

Smaller amounts of cocaine—under four kilos—are carried generally by couriers, who account for the greatest part of the traffic. Many of

the couriers come from Colombia, which sends more cocaine to the United States than any other Latin-American country. Of the 165 cocaine couriers arrested in the United States during the second half of last year, 117 were Colombians.

Latin-American drug traffickers find it isn't difficult to recruit their countrymen as couriers, called "mules," because if they are caught, many judges in the United States will give them only suspended sentences and deport them in the belief that they are not hardened criminals.

"When the couriers go back home, they're walking advertisements for the recruiters," said John R. Bartels Jr., the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Fees Are High

Couriers, who usually earn from \$500 to a \$1,000 a kilo plus expenses for each trip, have used many methods to conceal drugs. One of the most ingenious is to soak their cotton clothing in a liquid solution that contains cocaine and on their arrival in the United States to put the clothes in a solution that releases the drug. Detection is difficult.

"They start with cocaine base (the stage before pure cocaine) that they dissolve in pure alcohol," explained Eugene Castillo, a Drug Enforcement Administration agent stationed in Bolivia. "Then they take an article of clothing, soak it in the solution and let it dry."

"When they get to the States they take the article, soak it in acetone for 10 to 15 minutes, wring it out, and run the solution through filter paper. Then they pour the solution into a flat container and let it dry. This process not only conceals the drug, it also refines the cocaine base into finished cocaine. For every 300 grams of base they soak this way, they get 100 grams of cocaine."

Another one of the more effective methods of hiding drugs also is the most dan-

gerous: couriers fill prophylactic pouches with the drug and then swallow it before crossing the border. They intend to regurgitate the pouches later. But in at least four instances, United States citizens who went to Latin America to buy drugs, swallowed the pouches and then were stricken when their digestive juices caused the pouches to burst.

Three men—in Bolivia, Colombia and Panama—died as a result of this method of smuggling. A partner of the man in Bolivia also was stricken and went into convulsions, but his life was saved.

Key City Areas Cited

When the cocaine reaches the New York metropolitan area, it goes to major distribution rings centered in areas with large Latin populations, such as Jackson Heights in Queens, the South Bronx, Washington Heights and Union City, N. J., according to Arthur Grubert, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration's intelligence unit in New York. "Union City is known as Cocaine City in some quarters," he said.

The growth of the cocaine market in New York has created important rings to supply it. These rings are dominated by Colombians and Cubans, Mr. Grubert said.

Many of the rings are closely bound through family relationships, and disputes are generally settled by discussion, he said. Violence is used to maintain discipline, he said, but not as often as in Mafia groups.

"Latin criminal groups maintain much closer ties to the main organizations back home than American Mafia groups do with their Sicilian counterparts," Mr. Grubert said.

Mafia groups in New York have not become active in the cocaine traffic, Federal officials believe, because they do not have well-established relations with suppliers in South America.

New York cocaine dealers are doing a booming business, which has not been affected by the economic recession since many of their customers are from affluent circles where snorting cocaine has become increasingly popular.

Ounce Sells for \$1,000

When the New York rings receive the cocaine, they sell it to wholesalers in kilo lots, and they, in turn, market it in ounce portions. Mr. Grubert said that their "stores" are often Latin bars and restaurants throughout the city.

An ounce of high quality cocaine (more than 95 per

cent pure) sells at these "stores" at between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

The retailers who buy the ounce then cut the cocaine three or four times and sell the diluted Cocaine for \$50 a gram. Their gross for one ounce thus ranges between \$4,200 and \$5,600.

Arrests of Latin traffickers in New York has disclosed that many of them had entered the United States on forged passports and that most of them had police records back home as petty thieves.

The rings that handle cocaine distribution in the city include scores of members. Last October, for example, Federal agents and the New York police arrested 150 persons that they said were part of just one ring, the Alberto Bravo organization.

The Bravo group was said to have imported 300 pounds of cocaine in 1974 alone. Important figures in the group, according to narcotics agents, included Mario Rodriguez of Forest Hills, Queens, in whose apartment the police said they found nine pounds of cocaine, and Domingo Fernandez of Jackson Heights, now a fugitive.

But, the organization's leader, Alberto Bravo, remains at large in Medellín, Colombia. His chief lieutenant in charge of maintaining smuggling operations to New York, Bernardo Roldan, also remains free in Medellín. They have been indicted in New York on conspiracy charges, but Colombia will not extradite its citizens to the United States.

To keep its vast New York network adequately supplied, authorities say the Bravo organization shipped cocaine to it through a variety of routes, including Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Miami. One shipment was first flown to Munich and then to New York, where it was said to have been delivered to Mario Rodriguez.

The authorities contend that New York distributors for South American traffickers are not restricted to Latins. For years, one of the biggest drug traffickers in Bolivia, Jaime Hergueta, sent almost all of the cocaine he processed to James A. Austin, who operated out of Manhattan and the Bronx, according to narcotics officials here.

Mr. Austin, who the police say accumulated four apartments, three Mercedes Benz automobiles and a 67-foot yacht during his alleged association with Mr. Hergueta, was arrested on narcotics charges last Dec. 16 at Kennedy Airport as he stepped off a plane from Peru. He still awaits trial.

New York gets all of its

cocaine, but less than 20 per cent of its heroin, from Latin America, according to Federal agents. Mexican heroin in New York has surfaced primarily in Greenwich Village, where it is said to be running 17 per cent pure compared to about seven per cent for French heroin.

But outside New York, Federal agents say Mexican heroin dominates the market, taking an 80 per cent share in Chicago, a 70 per cent share in Houston, a 60 per cent share in Los Angeles and a 50 per cent share in Denver.

Los Angeles is the source city for most of the Mexican heroin sold in the United States, according to Abraham L. Azzam, the Drug Enforcement Administration's deputy regional director in California. Dealers from other cities go to Los Angeles to pick up their supplies from wholesalers there who deal directly

with Mexican traffickers, he said.

Unlike the French heroin traffickers, who prefer to send drugs in big lots, the Mexican suppliers use the "human wave" approach. They send a multitude of couriers carrying small amounts on the theory that if some are apprehended, the majority will get through.

"The biggest seizure of French heroin we ever had was 412 kilos," said John T. Cusack, head of international operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration. "But our biggest seizure of Mexican heroin was only eight kilos."

If a Mexican drug trafficker wants to send a heroin shipment of more than three kilos to the United States, he will usually have it driven across the border in a special "load" car or flown over in a private airplane.

At checkpoints on the Mexican border, United States Customs agents use computers into which they feed the license number of any suspicious car that passes through. If any information is recorded about the car, it scores a "hit" on the computer and is pulled aside and searched.

Drug traffickers will often send an empty car across the border to see if it scores a "hit." If it is passed through, they will bring it back and load it up with heroin.

Border Vigilance Difficult

Because the border between Mexico and the United States is both big (2,000 miles) and busy (25 million crossings last year) it is virtually impossible to police it thoroughly. This has tempted some United States residents to buy cocaine in Latin America and try to smuggle it to the United States

through Mexico.

Those who are apprehended carrying narcotics in Mexico, however, run the risk of serving at least five years in a Mexican prison.

As of last February, there were 509 United States citizens in Mexican jails, 420 of them there on narcotics charges. Of these 420, some 123 were women.

Conversations with some of them in a Mexican prison showed that they generally believed they would soon be deported by the Mexican government in response to pressure from the United States Government.

"They seem to be convinced that they'll be allowed to go home if they just push their Congressmen a little harder," said Peter J. Peterson, the United States Consul General in Mexico City. "They often fabricate complaints and it makes it difficult for us to handle legitimate grievances."

Asked about the Americans in prison, Pedro Ojeda-Paulada, Mexico's Attorney General, said, "I can tell you categorically that Mexico will not deport anyone until he completes his sentence. We are totally committed to the law and any person bringing drugs into Mexico faces five to 15 years in our prisons."

Although most of the other Latin-American countries have equally stiff drug laws, recruiters of "mules" in the United States assure them that the Latin-American countries don't enforce those laws. The fact is, only Colombia consistently deports North American drug violators and it holds them about a year first.

Latin-American drug traffickers like to recruit "mules" from among the most innocent and honest-appearing United States residents they can find.

Two grandmothers from California, Jeanne McMichael, 61 years old, and Elizabeth Lankton, 52, were intrigued when they were approached by a woman they knew who offered them free vacations to South America plus \$6,000 each for bringing back cocaine.

The two grandmothers successfully carried cocaine back from Colombia and Bolivia. But on March 24, 1974, they were arrested going through customs in Mexico City and subsequently convicted of carrying six kilograms of cocaine in false-bottomed suitcases.

The women have been in custody for more than a year now, but they have not been sentenced yet. Because of the mandatory drug laws in Mexico, they are certain to spend at least five years in a Mexican jail.

No Antiwoman Job Bias In the Narcotics Trade

Women have a prominent place in Latin America's illicit drug traffic, filling every role from "mule" (courier) to head of a criminal organization.

A short, stocky, middle-aged woman of Chilean descent who owns three wig shops in Buenos Aires is considered by American officials to be one of the major sources of narcotics brought into the United States.

Yolanda Sarmiento, who is 46 years old, has a long history of narcotics involvement.

"She's one of the sharpest dealers anywhere," said Rhyn C. Tryal, head of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration's office in Buenos Aires.

On April 15, 1970, the New York police raided a West Side apartment allegedly used by Mrs. Sarmiento and seized 72 kilograms of heroin and 47 kilograms of cocaine with a wholesale value of \$3.5-million.

A few days later, the police arrested Mrs. Sarmiento along with her lover, Emilio Díaz González, who is a native of Spain, and two other men outside a New Jersey motel. Federal agents say they were traveling by car from Miami to claim the narcotics that had been stashed in the apartment.

Escapes City Jail

Mrs. Sarmiento's bail was set at \$100,000. She posted the bail and then fled the United States, leaving Mr. Díaz and his associates in custody in New York.

Several months later, on Jan. 24, 1971, Mr. Díaz escaped from the Federal House of Detention in Manhattan. Investigators in New York believe that Mrs. Sarmiento had helped plan and finance his escape.

The pair were next seen in Buenos Aires where Mr. Díaz was seriously wounded in a gunfight with the Argentine police on Dec. 2, 1972. He escaped and his whereabouts are unknown, but Mrs. Sarmiento was apprehended.

The United States tried to have her expelled from Argentina to New York to stand trial. But the Argentine courts ruled that since her children were born in Argentina, Mrs. Sarmiento was entitled to the rights of an

Argentine citizen and so could not be expelled.

Unlike Mafia wives who avoid involvement in their husbands' rackets, Latin women often work closely with their men in the narcotics traffic. When two brothers, Juan and Roberto Hernández, were imprisoned in Mexico for drug smuggling in 1970, their wives continued their work.

On Oct. 17, 1974, the Mexican federal police investigated their activities in the La Mesa State Penitentiary in Tijuana and discovered evidence showing that the Hernándezes had continued to run their drug ring even behind bars. Also busy in the traffic from her cell was Roberto's wife Helen, who had been apprehended earlier.

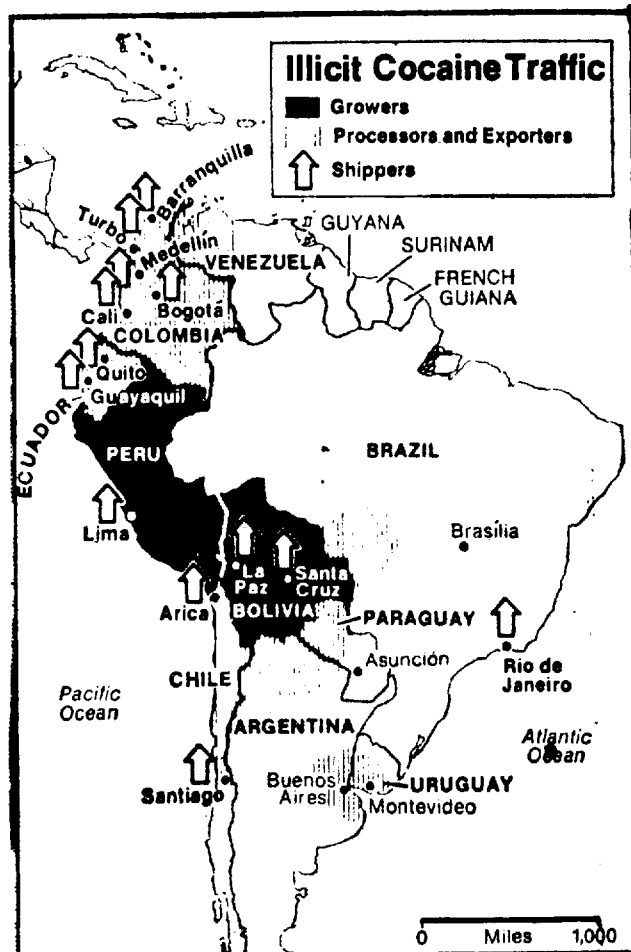
A month later, Mexican authorities arrested Juan's wife Patricia in a Tijuana motel as she was delivering a kilo of heroin to a customer from the United States. They found in her possession family records documenting extensive real-estate holdings and a balance in Hernández bank accounts of about \$20-million. She also was convicted.

But the risks for women in the narcotics trade are not always confined to law-enforcement agents. Consider the harsh fate of Ruth Godamez of Chile, who was a dealer in cocaine with her lover, Selim Valenzada. United States narcotics agents had made Miss Godamez a major target and placed her under surveillance.

Mr. Valenzada saw Miss Godamez speaking to someone whom he thought was a narcotics agent and decided that she had become an informer. He shot her five times in the stomach, but she survived the wounds.

Later Mr. Valenzada was expelled from Chile to the United States, where he had been under indictment on a narcotics charge. As he was led to detention, he asked narcotics agents, "Was she talking or did I waste the bullets?" No one answered his question.

Miss Godamez did not "turn"—become an informant—but after several months in jail, Mr. Valenzada has decided to cooperate with the government.



Map indicates where illicit cocaine originates and moves in Latin America.

The New York Times/April 22, 1975

NEW YORK TIMES
23 April 1975

Argentine Filled Key Role In Latins' Drugs Network

Third of four articles on why Latin America is now the major source of hard drugs entering the United States.

By NICHOLAS GAGE

The one man in South America whom drug enforcement officials say they would most like to see behind bars is Armando H. Nicolai, a 46-year-old Argentine who has been under indictment on narcotics conspiracy charges in New York since 1971.

"Nicolai is the only man down here with the reputation, contacts and know-how to reorganize the South American Connection," said Frank Macolini, the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration's deputy regional director for South America.

Until 1972, 35 per cent of all the French heroin smuggled into the United States every year was sent through the Latin-American networks of European fugitives, most of them French Corsicans.

At its peak, the French Connection controlled much of the heroin supply for the United States, but it lost its hold on all its market except New York. Even in the city, the French traffickers fared poorly for a long spell, but authorities report that French heroin is plentiful on the streets again. [Page 53.]

The South American Connection, in its powerful days, was composed primarily of two major groups of Corsican traffickers.

One organization, based in Paraguay, was led by Auguste Joseph Ricord, a 64-year-old naturalized Argentine citizen who served as an agent of Gestapo in France during World War II. The other was headed by Lucien Sarti, the fugitive murderer of a Belgian policeman, who arrived in South America in 1966, when he was 29, to look into the narcotics trade. Mr. Nicolai was an important member of the Sarti organization.

Beginning in 1972, a barrage of extraditions, shootouts and seizures broke up the lucrative South American Connection.

Most of the leading principals, including Mr. Ricord, were expelled to the United States, where they were convicted of narcotics violations and imprisoned. Others fled to their native Europe. Authorities say the only major figure who managed to avoid their net was Armando Nicolai.

Mr. Sarti and Mr. Nicolai met when the Corsican and his associates began courting native contrabandistas—South Americans who made a living by smuggling various goods across borders for the black market.

Mr. Nicolai had already become a legend among the contrabandistas. Part of his fame was due no doubt to his physical size and strength, for in a country where great height is uncommon, Mr. Nicolai is 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighs well over 230 pounds.

In one instance, in 1962, when he and a group of associates were arrested by the police, Mr. Nicolai broke his handcuffs with his bare hands and beat up seven policemen while his cohorts escaped. "After that, every contrabandista in Argentina looked up to him," said Rhyn C. Tryal, the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration's district office in Buenos Aires.

Mr. Nicolai has an aristocratic appearance that hints of his Italian heritage. His strong profile, with an arched nose, suggests an ancient Roman bust, and his hair, worn fairly long, is dyed reddish brown. He walks with a decided stoop.

Mr. Nicolai was attracted by the huge profits to be made by smuggling hard drugs, and, thanks to his natural leadership ability, he soon rose to a position in the organization equal to that of Mr. Sarti.

He did not, however, share the almost fanatic Spartan discipline of Mr. Sarti and his French Corsican associates, some of whom formed a group called the "Pietra Forte" (hard rock), a Mafia-like organization that specialized in extortion and bank robbery in addition to heroin dealing.

Mr. Macolini of the Federal drug agency said that the group, whose members included François Rossi, Benzo Rogai

and François Chiappe, practiced giving one another shock treatments to train themselves to withstand torture if they were seized and questioned by the police. Mr. Sarti himself was admiringly referred to by his cronies as "Iron Head."

Informants say that Mr. Nicolai regarded these activities of the Pietra Forte with some amusement. He considered himself merely a "businessman" in the smuggling business and had no taste for robbing banks or exchanging shock treatments.

As a contrabandista, Mr. Nicolai had accumulated a large number of contacts and associates throughout Latin America who were in a position to ease his passage across borders and through customs.

Informants say that after he got into the heroin trade he used the enormous amounts of money he was making to extend his influence within the government, judiciary and the police in half a dozen Latin-American countries.

He moved his headquarters from Buenos Aires to Montevideo, Uruguay, where he lived in luxurious style, entertaining influential politicians at his apartment near the presidential palace and overseeing his fleet of automobiles and private planes, staffed by his own pilots.

Informants maintain that Mr. Nicolai's contacts were so good that he would fly to France himself to pick up shipments of heroin and carry them in suitcases to South America. In addition, he would be allowed through customs without having his bags examined.

Mr. Nicolai was doing very well in the heroin-smuggling business when, on July 8, 1971, a young man from Panama named Rafael Richard, was arrested at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York after it was discovered that his suitcases contained 70 kilograms (154 pounds) of heroin.

Mr. Richard had refused to open his suitcases, maintaining that he had diplomatic immunity because his father was Panama's Ambassador to Taiwan. But the inspector opened them anyway and when Mr. Richard was taken into custody, he agreed to cooperate with the authorities.

Mr. Richard said he had made five earlier smuggling trips to the United States and another to Brazil and Argentina, most of them with his uncle, Guillermo González, or in one case with his aunt, Nelva Jurado de González. In Buenos Aires, he said, his aunt gave a package to a man named Armando, who gave her money in return.

Two other informants subsequently said that Guillermo González was closely linked with Armando Nicolai, and that the association between them dated back 10 years when Mr. González was an air controller in Panama and would clear planes for Mr. Nicolai that contained contraband.

As a result of this information, Mr. Nicolai was indicted in New York for conspiracy in connection with the heroin Mr. Richard attempted to smuggle into the United States. Mr. Richard and Mr. González were convicted and sent to prison.

A Prime Target

After the Richard arrest, Mr. Nicolai became a prime target of United States narcotics agents posted in South America. When informants leaked the information that something big was brewing in the Sarti-Nicolai group, United States narcotics agents got permission from Uruguayan officials to put a tap on Mr. Nicolai's telephone.

In early 1972, Lucien Sarti traveled to La Paz, Bolivia, in the company of a friend named Jean-Paul Angeletti and Housep Caramian, a Buenos Aires businessman who had been introduced to the heroin traffic a few years earlier. Traveling with the men were Mr. Sarti's common-law wife and Mr. Angeletti's girlfriend. All were using false identities.

Informants say the group went to Bolivia to buy a 6,000-acre plantation on which to grow their own coca leaves so that they could branch out into cocaine. They carried with them \$380,000 in a case, which they had with them when they were arrested at their hotel. The police had been called by an astute bellhop who remembered Mr. Sarti from a previous visit and who noticed that on this trip he had registered under a different name.

Armando Nicolai's lawyer in Buenos Aires, Mario Contorno, promptly turned up in La Paz and attempted without success to obtain their release. Next to arrive, however, was Helena Ferreira.

Miss Ferreira had flown to La Paz from her native Brazil, where she had been living for a time with Mr. Sarti. Pretending to be his sister, she persuaded the Bolivian officials to release Mr. Sarti and all his associates except Mr. Caramian. But when they left La Paz, informants say, they no longer had the \$380,000 that had been in their possession when they arrived.

The group traveled first to Peru, where they were picked up by Mr. Sarti's pilot, Julio

Luján who flew them to Mexico. Miss Ferreira, however, was not with them; she had been arrested in Peru and detained on a currency charge. The arrest may have saved her life.

When Mr. Sarti arrived in Mexico, he telephoned Armando Nicolai in Montevideo. The narcotics agents who were tapping Mr. Nicolai's phone heard Mr. Sarti (whom they had not yet identified) tell him that he must come at once to Mexico City. Mr. Sarti wanted him to meet with two French Corsicans who were suppliers of heroin and some representatives from Mafia families in New York who were presumably to be the buyers.

There was going to be a conference to set up future sales, Mr. Sarti indicated, as well as to settle a deal for 70 kilograms of heroin that he had already on hand.

"Nicolai made reservations half a dozen times for Mexico, but each time he held off," recalled Mr. Macolini, the narcotics agent heading the investigation of Mr. Nicolai. "He drove us crazy."

Although he could not put his finger on what was wrong, Mr. Nicolai apparently sensed that there was danger afoot and he was reluctant to join Mr. Sarti in Mexico City. It was just one example of Mr. Nicolai's sixth sense for danger that authorities say has made him the only survivor of the South American Connection.

Lucien Sarti and his associates were all using aliases during their stay in Mexico City and in their telephone conversations with Mr. Nicolai. The eavesdropping narcotics agents were desperately trying to find out their real identities.

The Agents Move In

The break came when, in the course of a conversation with Mr. Nicolai, Mr. Sarti mentioned his own daughter's name, Veronica.

The name was telegraphed to Washington, where Jerry Strickler was then heading the Federal drug agency's Latin American desk. Mr. Strickler was known for his computer-like memory and soon he was able to identify Lucien Sarti simply from his daughter's first name.

After repeated telephone calls to Mr. Nicolai, saying that the Frenchmen were now in Mexico City and waiting for him, Mr. Sarti gave up and decided to go ahead with the meeting without him. At that point the police decided to move against the principals.

On April 27, 1972, the Mexican police approached Lucien Sarti as he was getting into an automobile with his wife and young daughter. Mr. Sarti, who probably realized he would be identified as the fugitive under sentence of death for killing a policeman in Belgium, pulled out a Colt Cobra and opened fire. The police shot him dead.

Immediately the police moved in on the hotel room of Mr. Sarti's companion, Jean-Paul Angeletti. They expected another shootout, but when they entered the room Mr. Angeletti was in bed with his mistress, Georgette Viazzi, and his Colt Cobra was out of reach on the night table.

After the death of Lucien Sarti, all of his associates in Mexico were deported. Mr. Angeletti and Mr. Sarti's wife, Liliana Rous Viallet, were sent back to France. Within the next several months most of the European-born traffickers involved in the South American Connection were arrested or deported and the Sarti and Ricord organizations had collapsed.

Armando Nicolai alone had survived the purge, but shortly after, he faced a new threat. The Drug Enforcement Administration had organized "Operation Springboard," which was designed to persuade Latin American countries to expel to the United States traffickers who were not natives of the country if they were under indictment in the United States.

Mr. Nicolai realized that he was no longer safe in Uruguay and so he returned to his native Argentina. Authorities there say he made some efforts toward reorganizing the drug traffic from Buenos Aires. But they add that he knew he was a prime target of the police and that the knowledge evidently was working on his nerves.

In February, 1973, during a state of siege in Argentina before Juan Perón had returned to power, the police picked him up in a general round-up. They say he was so rattled that he shouted to the arresting officers, "I give up! Don't kill me!"

Elements of the Argentine police were said to be so eager to get Mr. Nicolai out of their country that they arranged to hold him incommunicado until the Federal drug agents arranged for a plane to come and take him to the United States.

But once again Mr. Nicolai second-guessed them. He had made arrangements with his family and friends that he would call them every couple of hours. If they did not hear from him, they were to assume he had been arrested.

Within two hours of his arrest, Mr. Nicolai's lawyer, Mario Conterno, had contacted the police, saying that a writ of habeas corpus was on its way and demanding that his client be produced.

Within four hours the writ arrived—not from a local court, but from the Supreme Court of Argentina. The police realized that they would never be able to spirit away Mr. Nicolai to the United States. On May 25, Mr. Nicolai was released in a general amnesty. By this time, some Argentine

police officers were so frustrated at not being able to act against Mr. Nicolai that they approached United States agents with an offer: If the United States consented, they would have him killed.

The offer was rejected. "We didn't want him that bad," said the United States official to whom the offer was made.

Mr. Nicolai is now maintaining a very low profile in Buenos Aires, conscientiously living the life of a middle-class merchant in leather goods. He lives in a modest apartment in Barrio Once, the old Jewish section of Buenos Aires, with his wife Angela and two sons, Ernesto, 20, and Angel, 12.

According to Mr. Conterno, an aristocratic, handsome, well-spoken lawyer, reports of such involvement in the heroin trade are "fantasies." He said that Mr. Nicolai has categorically denied any involvement in the drug charges against him in the United States.

When it was pointed out that Rafael Richard and other convicted drug traffickers have named Mr. Nicolai as the source of their drugs, Mr. Conterno said, "When a man is facing 20 years in jail and you give him a guitar and tell him that if he

sings well he might get out earlier, you'd be surprised how many arias he'll make up."

He contended that the "persecution" of Mr. Nicolai by United States agents is "a water-closet scandal. It's like Watergate and it stinks."

Underworld informers suggest, however, that Mr. Nicolai, is considering two very tempting deals.

After Lucien Sarti was shot in Mexico City, his pilot, Julio Luján was said to have flown back to Uruguay with a cache of 90 kilos of heroin that Mr. Sarti had on hand. Mr. Luján is now serving a prison term and Mr. Nicolai would like to think of a way to sell that heroin, the police said.

In addition, Mr. Sarti is said to have hidden another 100 kilos of heroin in several places and Mr. Nicolai is trying to find it.

Meanwhile, both American and Latin American narcotics agents are eagerly trying to find something—anything—on which they can convict Mr. Nicolai in Argentina. They believe his freedom constitutes the biggest threat that the South American Connection might once again be revived.

French Connection Stays Dominant in Market Here

The French Connection has lost its hold on the heroin market in most of the country, but it still dominates in New York.

After a long dry spell, Federal authorities here say that French heroin is plentiful again in the city, as demonstrated by the fact that it's averaging close to seven per cent pure on the street, up from four per cent a year ago.

"It's a buyers' market again," said John Fallon, the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration's regional director here.

Until 1971 heroin processed in France was flowing into the United States at the rate of 10 tons a year and bags sold on the street were running as much as 15 per cent pure. But in the next year the French heroin suppliers began suffering a series of devastating reversals.

A Global Assault

First the South American route, which was handling 25 per cent of all French heroin shipments to the United States, was demolished with the arrests of the major French-Corsican traffickers in Latin America.

Then United States narcotics agents began intercepting huge shipments of heroin being sent directly to North

American cities, including one totaling 412 kilos (908 pounds).

Back in France, the police, acting under international pressure, started convicting major traffickers, identifying laboratories and making big seizures of both finished heroin being shipped out of the country and opium base from Turkey being shipped into France to be processed.

The law-enforcement pressure was enhanced by Turkey's decision in 1972 to prohibit further cultivation of poppies.

All these factors forced French suppliers to cut back sharply on the amount of heroin they sent to the United States.

"They decided to concentrate on their main market, the East Coast from Richmond to New York, and leave the rest of the country to the Mexicans," said John T. Cusack, the Drug Enforcement Administration's chief of international operations.

But the harassed French suppliers could not provide enough heroin even for their narrowed market, and local wholesalers were forced to cut their supply so much that by 1973 what was sold on the street was only two per cent pure.

Unsatisfied with the heroin available, Mr. Cusack said,

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Lack of Treaties Hinders U.S. Effort to Curb Drugs

Last of four articles on why Latin America is now the major source of hard drugs entering the United States.

By NICHOLAS GAGE

The United States has indicted more than half of the 200 active drug traffickers in Colombia for narcotics violations in this country, but under existing international agreements they cannot be extradited from Colombia or prosecuted at home. So these dealers continue in business, supplying much of the cocaine sold in New York and other major cities.

The lack of adequate extradition agreements and treaties with Latin American nations to allow the prosecution of major drug traffickers in their own countries has been a major stumbling block in the efforts of United States agents to stem the rising flow of narcotics from Latin America.

Many law enforcement officials involved in those efforts are critical of the State Department for not pushing to achieve such agreements and treaties.

What is missing from the United States effort in Latin America, they say, is the kind of concerted drive the United States Government made at its highest levels a few years ago to persuade France to go all out against what had then been the major narcotics traffic into this country.

The heroin traffic from France was seriously disrupted, they remember, after France responded to such pressure by expanding its own narcotics enforcement units, establishing close investigative cooperation with United States agencies and agreeing to prosecute French traffickers on evidence gathered in the United States.

"We started off strong with Latin America, too," said one official, who, like others, requested anonymity because of his professional relationship with State Department. "But with all the Watergate problems, Washington's interest faded and we lost the momentum. We haven't got it back yet."

A number of agencies are involved in the United States

narcotics effort in Latin America, but the most active are the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Agency for International Development.

Individual agents work under the supervision of the United States ambassador in the country in which they are posted. The over-all narcotics effort, however, is directed from Washington by the Cabinet Committee of International Narcotics Control, which is headed by the Secretary of State and which has among its members the Attorney General and the Secretaries of Agriculture and Defense.

But officials from several participating agencies believe that Secretary of State Kissinger has little interest in the narcotics effort and that, as a result, many American diplomats in Latin America haven't devoted themselves wholeheartedly to it either.

Kissinger Is Defended

A State Department spokesman denied such allegations. "Obviously he's been busy with other problems," he said of Secretary Kissinger. "But if he didn't have a strong interest in narcotics control, he wouldn't remain as chairman of the cabinet committee."

Evidence of the Secretary's concern with the narcotics problem, the spokesman said, is the strong support Mr. Kissinger has given the committee's executive director, Ambassador Sheldon Vance, a career diplomat who coordinates United States narcotics control efforts throughout the world.

The United States declared narcotics control a "major" foreign policy goal four years ago, but some diplomats to South America concede they have not yet given it that kind of attention.

"I must admit I haven't registered our concern about narcotics sufficiently with the top people here," said one ambassador. "We've had so many little crises."

Another diplomat said, "We could jeopardize our relations by pushing too hard on narcotics. These countries don't have

a drug problem themselves. There's no mutual interest to work with."

While some narcotics officials have been grumbling about lack of support from the State Department, the most active and visible of the agencies fighting narcotics abroad—the Drug Enforcement Administration—has come under its own share of criticism, much of it from the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations headed by Senator Henry M. Jackson.

'Ineffectiveness' Is Explored

The subcommittee is now conducting an investigation of the agency and will hold hearings later this spring. But a spokesman for Senator Jackson said that the subcommittee has collected information showing that the agency has been "ineffective" on several fronts in Latin America and that its agents have been involved in situations that threaten to embarrass the United States.

"No one person from the subcommittee has come down here to see what we're doing," countered Louis Bachrach, the Drug Enforcement Administration regional director for South America.

The spokesman for Senator Jackson said the subcommittee may send investigators to South America later, but that it was now concentrating on studying the agency's files.

Mr. Bachrach and his staff maintain that the agency's achievements in South America have been significant. Since the Drug Enforcement Administration was formed in July, 1973, he said, cooperative efforts with the police in South America have resulted in the destruction of 73 cocaine laboratories, the arrest of 457 important traffickers and the seizure of more than 1,300 kilograms of cocaine and cocaine base.

Furthermore, Mr. Bachrach said, agents in his region should be credited for wiping out the South American Connection, the rings headed by Corsican gangsters that formerly handled 35 per cent of all the French heroin entering the United States.

The South American Connection collapsed after a series of arrests, extraditions and expulsions of the major Corsican traffickers operating in Latin America.

Cocaine Gains Cited

Another achievement cited by Mr. Bachrach was the disruption of cocaine production in Chile. Shipments of cocaine to the United States from Chile have now been reduced from more than 200 kilos a month to less than ten, he said.

many addicts here switched to methadone, went into treatment centers or slowly detoxified themselves because the heroin they were buying was increasingly diluted. "As a result, the number of heroin addicts on our streets declined considerably," he said.

In the last year, however, authorities believe the French traffickers have reorganized and have found new ways of sending heroin here. One method, according to Federal agents, involves sending shipments to the Midwest, where they're less likely to be intercepted, and having them forwarded East from there.

The reorganization of the traffickers in France and the decrease in customers here have made heroin more available again, authorities say, and that, in turn, has resulted in the higher purity of what is sold on the street. The degree of purity is seen as a measure of availability.

Some narcotics specialists believe the increased availability is due to the release of heroin stockpiles compiled by the traffickers three years ago when Turkey announced its ban on further cultivation of opium poppies.

The traffickers stockpiled the heroin, the theory goes, in anticipation of soaring prices once the ban was felt in the illegal drug market, and they released the stockpiles when Turkey announced last year that it would resume cultivation of poppies.

A New Worry

Mr. Cusack and Arthur Grubert the chief of intelligence in the Drug Enforcement Administration's office in New York, do not believe that significant stockpiles ever existed.

"If the French had that much heroin available, they would have broadened their market again, but they haven't," Mr. Cusack said.

But officials of the Drug Enforcement Administration are very concerned that the French traffickers will start to do big business again once the poppy crops in Turkey are harvested.

Mr. Cusack pointed out that Turkey first said it would allow 70,000 farmers to cultivate opium poppies, but it has now quietly increased that number to 103,000.

"If each farmer holds back just one kilo for the illegal drug market, that's 100 tons of opium," he said. "That can bury us."

The important advance in fighting narcotics in Chile came after the military coup against President Salvador Allende, Mr. Bachrach said. The junta that overthrew him agreed to expel 19 Chilean traffickers to the United States, where they faced narcotics charges, even though they were Chilean citizens. Most of the other traffickers, fearing similar action against them, fled the country, he said.

Chilean officials cite several factors for taking such unusual action against the traffickers. "We don't want to wind up with a big drug problem like the United States has," said Lieut. Col. Luis Fontaine, head of the narcotics unit of the Chilean Carabineros. "We want to nip it in the bud."

"There is evidence that supporters of Allende have been involved in narcotics," Colonel Fontaine added. When pressed to discuss such evidence, he said that he hadn't seen it himself, but that the junta's intelligence agency was in possession of it.

Unit Is Eliminated

Despite its energetic prosecution of narcotics traffickers, the Chilean junta did not hesitate to eliminate the Customs Investigative Agency, by all accounts the most effective police unit fighting narcotics in Chile. It is believed that the junta did so because the unit had been identified closely with President Allende.

The head of the unit was Luis Sanguinetti, a friend of President Allende's. He and his top assistants were arrested immediately after the coup and his body was later found in the hold of a ship taking political prisoners to an island prison.

The junta said that Mr. Sanguinetti committed suicide by jumping head first into the hold. His two assistants were shot while allegedly trying to escape from detention, and two others were killed in a shootout with the police.

Another accomplishment which Mr. Bachrach cited in response to criticism of his agency is the removal of 57 fugitive Latin American drug traffickers to the United States through a campaign called "Operation Springboard."

The operation was conceived as a means of getting around the refusal of almost all Latin countries to extradite their own nationals. Since existing treaties do not allow for evidence collected in the United States to be used against traffickers in their native countries, drug enforcement agents in Latin America decided to coax traffickers to third countries and to try to persuade authorities there to expel them to the United States.

The Drug Enforcement Administration calls "Operation Springboard" a success. But a number of the expelled traffickers have appealed their convictions in Federal courts, maintaining that their rights under due process were violated because they were kidnapped.

The Federal Court of Appeals has upheld the contention of one defendant, Francisco Toscanino, an alleged associate of Lucien Sarti and Auguste Joseph Ricord of the South American Connection. Mr. Toscanino said his rights were violated because he was tortured by the police in Brazil, the country that expelled him.

The Government now is appealing the Toscanino decision to the Supreme Court. It has been upheld thus far on all other appeals by defendants extradited from Latin America and later convicted of drug violations here.

Mr. Bachrach said that if Mr. Toscanino was tortured in Brazil, it was done without the knowledge of his agents. "Our men are instructed to get the message to local police that torture is not professional or productive and cases in which torture is used will not stand up in the States," he said. "We have a vested interest in discouraging torture."

Building Some Bridges

Although they cannot make arrests in Latin America, Federal narcotics agents there develop cases and turn them over to the local police. When the police then go to make arrests on the cases, the agents accompany them.

"Too many things happen to foul up the case when we don't," said an agent in Ecuador.

The task of drug enforcement agents is complicated by the fact that many countries have more than one police force—sometimes three or four—working on narcotics, and the various police units are sometimes fervent rivals.

To keep on good terms with the different police groups, drug enforcement agents from the United States try to distribute the cases they develop to all the various local police units.

But the potential hazards of police rivalry within Latin American countries were illustrated in March when United States narcotics agents heard that a 23,000-pound cache of marijuana was hidden in a spot 180 miles south of Bogotá.

Two drug enforcement agents told the Colombian customs police about the marijuana and accompanied them in a private plane to the spot. Unknown to the agents, however, the Colombian security police also had been informed of the same cache of marijuana and were already there.

When the plane arrived with the United States agents in it, shooting broke out, with each police group thinking the other was the traffickers.

Although no one was killed, newspapers in Colombia labeled the incident a "Keystone Kop raid" and back in Washington, Senator Jackson termed it "greatly disturbing."

Mr. Bartels, the Drug Enforcement Administrator, thought his men performed well under the circumstances. "Although under attack neither of them fired their guns," he said. "And they got 23,000 pounds of marijuana."

'Buy and Bust'

The drug enforcement agents in Latin America also are criticized by Senator Jackson and others for allegedly relying excessively on the "buy and bust" method of getting indictments. In such cases, an agent works under cover to buy drugs and when the sale is made, the local police arrest the seller, the undercover "buyer" somehow managing to escape.

The buy-and-bust method could prove politically embarrassing to the United States, an aide to Senator Jackson said, if the agent is exposed or shot during an arrest. Or what would happen, he asked if the agent shot a national in his own country.

Agents in Latin America maintain that they don't rely on the buy-and-bust method frequently, but have developed other techniques that allow them to keep a low profile.

In eight of the 12 Drug Enforcement Administration offices in South America, "special action units" patterned on similar groups maintained by the Central Intelligence Agents, have been established.

The agents in these units hire local investigators, some of them police officers, to conduct surveillance, observe arrests and perform other functions that the United States agents cannot do without risking exposure.

Some of the special units are said to be quite effective. In Buenos Aires, for example, when terrorists began kidnapping diplomats, the United States ambassador asked the head of the narcotics agency's special action unit to set up a security company to provide protection for high officials in the embassy.

The Drug Enforcement Administration also has been criticized by members of the Jackson committee for failing to cooperate with the Central Intelligence Agency in developing a unified attack against narcotics traffickers.

Mr. Bartels acknowledged that differences between the two agencies did develop at one time over the handling of informants.

"They [the C.I.A.] were so protective of their informants, we couldn't make cases with what they gave us," he said. "But in the last year we've settled our differences."

The C.I.A. was asked to join the campaign against narcotics by President Nixon in 1971, but apparently its agents in South America have never taken fully to the idea.

One of the reasons given for the C.I.A.'s discontent is that while agency missions in South America have been given extra funds for narcotics work, they have not received additional men, except in Argentina.

Some drug enforcement agents said that the C.I.A. has helped them on several levels in South America, providing them with intelligence reports on the narcotics traffic in each country and on political power structures.

"If we want to coax a fugitive trafficker to a third country to expel him to the States," one narcotics agent explained, "they can tell us if he's got enough pull in that country to beat us there."

Effort Is Impaired

The drug agency's effort was impaired earlier this year, however, when it acknowledged that it had hired 53 former C.I.A. agents. The disclosure upset many South American officials, who maintained that it would be impossible to tell narcotics agents from spies.

As a result, Mr. Bartels said, the agency has found resistance in trying to open four new offices in South America—two in Colombia and two in Brazil—which were considered necessary for adequate coverage of the continent.

Mr. Bartels said that none of the former C.I.A. agents now with the agency is serving as a drug enforcement agent in South America.

In an attempt to reassure South American officials, Mr. Bartels said he intended to invite Latin narcotics agents to come to the United States and work with his own men here.

"We want them to see that we're not C.I.A. and that we don't mean narcotics cooperation to be a one-way street," he said.

Intelligence Area Lags

Ironically, the Drug Enforcement Administration effort in South America probably needs improvement most in an area that is the strength of the C.I.A.—intelligence gathering and coordination. For example, in the agency's regional headquarters in Caracas, only one staff member handles intelligence duties for all of South America.

"We've had three more people waiting to go down for months, but the C.I.A. furor has held us back," Mr. Bartels said.

Narcotic Agent Living a Boyhood Dream

In addition to enforcement efforts, American agencies in Latin America are trying to fight narcotics through a variety of training and assistance programs. Over the last three years, the United States has provided an average of \$22-million annually in grant assistance for fighting narcotics.

The largest chunk of assistance for narcotics control in Latin America—\$12-million last year—has gone to Mexico reflecting the high priority given in Washington to diminishing the flow of Mexican heroin to the United States.

In South America, many of the narcotics assistance programs are being implemented by the Agency for International Development. The agency operates training classes for narcotics and customs police and arranges for material assistance, such as communications equipment, vehicles and weapons.

Picking the Priority

Still, the assistance programs and the enforcement efforts have not appreciably stemmed the flow of drugs to the United States.

The best way to stop the drug traffic, enforcement officials believe, is to go after the major traffickers in their own countries.

They point out that the cocaine traffic in Chile and the heroin traffic in France were disrupted when major traffickers in those countries were either expelled or prosecuted, even when the evidence was gathered elsewhere.

"As long as traffickers feel safe in their own countries," said Frank Macolini, the Drug Enforcement Administration's deputy regional director for South America, "they're going to keep sending drugs to ours."

From the time he was a young boy, the son of the local constable in the sleepy Texas town of Palacios, George Frangullie "always wanted to be a cop."

Now, at 37 years old, he is the special agent in charge of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration office in Santiago, Chile, and an important component in the United States narcotics effort in Latin America.

Mr. Frangullie is a man who clearly enjoys his work. But there have been problems. He had an assistant, Charles Cecil, until eight months ago when Mr. Cecil and his wife were shot at while driving home from a movie. Mr. Cecil was transferred to Colombia and now Mr. Frangullie must break in a new man.

In addition, he must cope with the frustrations every Federal narcotics agent faces in Latin America. He has to maintain a low profile, stay on good terms with operatives from rival police forces and let local authorities make cases he has developed. Nevertheless, Mr. Frangullie delights in trying to get around these problems.

"There are two ways to work as a cop," he says. "You can use traditional methods or you can try to come up with new ideas."

Transforms Situation

Mr. Frangullie's skill in developing new ideas has helped to transform the drug situation in Chile in the two years he has been posted there. Today most of the traffickers in Chile have

either been expelled or have fled the country as a result of one of Mr. Frangullie's untraditional methods.

Latin-American countries generally will not extradite their own nationals who have been indicted on drug violations in the United States. But after the overthrow of the government of Salvador Allende in 1973, Mr. Frangullie found the situation there more "flexible."

He discovered a loophole in the law through which he has so far threaded 19 major Chilean drug traffickers. As he tells it, "A friend of mine came to my office with the official gazette and showed me an article about a new law that had gone into effect. It said that any person—alien or Chilean—who threatens the security of the state, can be expelled from the country.

"At 4 the next morning, it hit me that we could use that law to expel major Chilean traffickers to the United States where they were under indictment. I had a meeting with the Minister of the Interior and pointed out to him that profits from cocaine could be used by radical groups to buy arms and ammunition. The minister said 'Go' and we chartered a Boeing 707 to take nine traffickers to New York."

Mr. Frangullie and the six Chilean police officials who accompanied the traffickers found the ride an eventful one. Mr. Frangullie knew that most of the cases against these men had been developed years before by Thomas Duggan, an experienced Federal agent in New York who

had since given up all hope of seeing them brought to justice.

Mr. Frangullie arranged to have Mr. Duggan at the airport in New York so he could see his face when the Chileans were brought off the plane.

Most Traffickers Curbed

Since then 10 more traffickers have been expelled to the United States from Chile under the same law and most of the remaining traffickers under indictment are believed to have fled the country in fear of meeting the same fate.

The hard line taken against traffickers by the ruling junta has made Mr. Frangullie's job easier. "But I made good cases under Allende," he says. "I've received good cooperation ever since I got here."

Mr. Frangullie spent two years in college before leaving to join the Houston police force. He found a tour of duty in the narcotics division so stimulating that he joined United States Customs in 1964. Four years later he switched to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, which became the Drug Enforcement Administration in 1973, the same year he was sent to Chile.

His wife, Anita, whom he met in a Texas drugstore, has found it difficult raising two children—a boy of 11 and a girl of 6—in a foreign country. So Mr. Frangullie has asked for a stateside assignment at the end of the year. But as he talks about moving, it's clear he doesn't look forward to it.