

**Statement by General Barry R. McCaffrey,  
Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy  
Submitted for the Record to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
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I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today on the problem of drug trafficking on our Southwest border. Having worked with the Congress and the Members of this Committee for five months now, I appreciate and share your concern about the timeliness of this issue.

Priorities.

The purpose of this statement is to identify strategic and operational priorities that will lead to more unified Federal, State and local efforts to protect the American People from illegal drugs. While several of the measures are unilateral, it is imperative that we work cooperatively with Mexico along our 2,000-mile Southwest border. We need to:

- Develop and promote clear goals and a unifying strategy for our Southwest border.
- Make a long-term budgetary commitment to provide adequate resources on the border.
- Improve cooperation with Mexico, based on bi-national enforcement.
- Continue to improve Federal, State and local cooperation.
- Redesign the counterdrug intelligence architecture.
- Improve the means to deter and eliminate corruption on either side of the border.
- Develop technologies to improve our effectiveness against smugglers.

Summary.

Drug trafficking is a major problem along the length of our 3,326 kilometer-long Southwest border. DEA estimates suggest that up to 70% of the cocaine entering the U.S., 50% of the marijuana available in the U.S., and 5% of the heroin sold in the U.S. comes across the Southwest border. These drugs are moving by all modes of conveyance across the border for eventual distribution throughout the United States. Smugglers are using the cover provided by increasing legitimate cross-border commerce and traffic. The Southwest border is the busiest border in the world. In 1995, 2.8 million trucks, 84 million cars, and 232 million people crossed it through 38 separate points of entry.

The violence, corruption and human misery associated with drug trafficking and drug abuse affects Mexico as well as the United States. Drug trafficking has become a major issue in our bilateral relation with Mexico at a time when our broader interests coincide as they have never done before.

Drug trafficking on the border is not a problem that can be addressed in isolation. It is interwoven with illegal immigration, the economies of both our countries, the vitality of legitimate trade, the persistent demand for drugs, and a growing propensity among the young on both sides of the border to resort to extreme violence. Our ability to deal with drug traffickers can also be limited by the corrosive corruption that is the by-product of the enormous sums of money passing through the hands of traffickers. If we are to be effective, we can brook no tolerance for corruption.

### ONDCP Actions.

The National Drug Control Strategy provides the overarching framework for our counterdrug activities on the Southwest Border. Two of our five strategic goals involve international and interdiction efforts which come together on the Southwest border:

- Goal 4: Shield America's air, land and sea frontiers from the drug threat.
- Goal 5: Break foreign and domestic drug sources of supply.

Since assuming this position in March, ONDCP has focused on the Southwest border problem. In early July, we hosted a Southwest Border Counterdrug Conference in El Paso, Texas. Secretary Rubin, Attorney General Reno and I, along with concerned agency and bureau chiefs, listened to the frank views of more than three-hundred Federal, State and local enforcement officials. Those officials sent a clear message: While recent increases in resources and innovative practices have made a difference, we have not turned the tide. The four most significant Mexican drug trafficking organizations have developed complex criminal networks. With increasing boldness, more arms and greater violence, drug traffickers challenge the rule of law on both sides of the border.

We have, however, made progress over the past several years. We have begun a series of initiatives that make an observable difference in controlling the border and deserve to be further developed:

- The Border Patrol has grown from 4,000 to 5,700 agents in five years.

-- The Border Patrol Operation Hold the Line in El Paso proved that we can control the border, given adequate resources.

-- In San Diego, the Border Patrol's Operation Gatekeeper combined fencing, lighting and surveillance equipment to turn the least-controlled stretch of the border into the best-controlled.

-- The Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Border Patrol have begun deploying IDENT, a computer system to track illegal border crossers. By identifying repeat offenders and criminal aliens, this system has already made a positive local difference and deserves border-wide deployment.

-- The U.S. Customs Service successfully deployed a prototype X-ray machine for cargo vehicles, along with a suite of smaller X-ray machines and hand-held sensors. Combined with a rigorous system of pre-clearing trucks, these tools will facilitate growing trade under NAFTA while insuring legitimate cargo is not used to conceal contraband.

-- Use of technology to support counterdrug and border-control operations has increased dramatically. 3,000 new sensors have been procured since 1993. In the same period, the Border Patrol acquired 119 long-range infra-red night vision devices. Additionally, National Guard support to the border mission has increased the available level of technology.

-- The National Guard erected border fencing where appropriate and built access roads where they were needed. This construction program is continuing.

-- The Imperial Valley Project demonstrated how Federal, State and local enforcement agencies can work with our legal system to cut drug trafficking and reduce crime.

-- The Drug Enforcement Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation, working with other Federal and State and local agencies achieved unprecedented successes against Southwest border-based trafficking rings that had spread across the United States.

-- DEA and FBI have developed a binational counterdrug task force program with their Mexican counterparts.

-- The Southwest Border High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program has brought together Federal, State and local counterdrug agencies and officials to achieve unprecedented levels of cooperation.

-- Only today, U.S. Government officials and Mexican officials met in the most recent meeting of the High-Level Contact Group on Drug Control. We reported our joint conclusions to the Vice President this morning and reaffirmed our commitment to progress in the fight against drugs.

We are working to achieve better organization, better intelligence, and better technology. In the near-term, we have sought additional personnel. Increases requested for Fiscal Year 1997, if approved, would add:

- 988 Immigration and Naturalization Service and Border Patrol officers.
- 657 Customs agents and inspectors.
- 70 regionally-deployed FBI agents.
- 54 regionally-deployed DEA agents.
- 91 attorneys for U.S. attorney's offices.
- 45 deputy marshalls for the U.S. Marshall's Service.
- 300 critical support personnel for technical and administrative assistance.

In support of Southwest border counterdrug efforts, ONDCP will:

-- Produce a comprehensive Southwest Border Strategy by July, 1997. It will stress a unified effort with decentralized execution.

-- Further develop the extremely effective (HIDTA) program to foster Federal, State and local counterdrug cooperation.

-- Offer concrete designs for streamlining and integrating the counterdrug intelligence network.

-- Keep the focus on the Southwest border until we make a decisive difference.

-- Continue to work with Mexico to assert the rule of law along the border.

Seizures at the Border.

The good news is that our agents and inspectors are seizing huge amounts of illegal drugs before they can hurt our citizens. Seizures on the Southwest border climbed dramatically from 1991 to 1995:

-- Cocaine seizures rose 50%, from 31,269 kg. to 46,008 kg.

- Heroin seizures rose 100%, from 56 kg. to 112 kg.
- Marijuana seizures rose well over 150%, from 111,037 kg. to 287,578 kg.
- Methamphetamine seizures went from zero to 695 kg.

Interdiction clearly works. These seizures are expensive to the traffickers, our successes hurt them. The sobering news is that only about a third of the drugs in the pipe-line are seized before entering the U.S.. This underscores the need to implement the 1996 National Drug Control Strategy with its balanced approach to the supply and demand aspects of the problem.

However, the patterns of smuggling continue to evolve. Most illegal drugs are crossing the Southwest border by vehicle through the major crossing points. These are our most vulnerable points of entry because of the volume of commerce and movement, the paucity of adequate detection or information technology, and the great demands placed on our inspectors and law enforcement officials. The successes we have had, however, caused the traffickers to probe for weaknesses elsewhere. Ranchers along the Rio Grande report bolder armed smugglers. The level of rural violence on the border is consequently increasing. Smugglers are also using boats and bringing in limited amounts of drugs by air. Clearly, the trafficking organizations will continue to seek new routes and means of entry in response to our successes. We must anticipate them.

#### Mexico: Indispensable to counterdrug success.

Mexico's significance as a transit country has increased because of our successful interdiction efforts elsewhere. As we turned the tide against drug smuggling in the Western Caribbean and South Florida,, Colombian traffickers shifted their operations to Mexico, permitting Mexican middlemen to create criminal empires. Today, Mexican drug traffickers now reportedly receive payment in kind for delivering cocaine to the U.S. -- one kilogram for each kilo delivered to Colombian distributors in the U.S. Their profits and greed are largely responsible for the corruption and violence that the Mexican authorities are struggling with. Mexico cannot solve these drug-related problems alone. Nor are we likely to stop the flow of drugs across our common border by ourselves. When we fail to work cooperatively, the traffickers use the border and sovereignty issues to their advantage. We can and must work together for our mutual interests are broad and growing:

-- Mexico is our third largest trading partner after Canada and Japan, \$107 billion in two way trade in 1995. The rate of growth in our trade is swifter than that with Canada or Japan. Trade with China, which receives more public attention, totaled only \$57 billion in 1995- -half the total of our trade with Mexico.

-- Mexico is the second-largest economy in Latin American, after Brazil. It is also a major destination for U.S. Foreign Direct Investment.

-- Our Southwest border States are principal beneficiaries of the increasing cross-border trade. About half of our exports to Mexico pass through or originate in Arizona, California, New Mexico, or Texas.

-- President Zedillo has an obvious commitment to political, legal and institutional reform, and is dedicated to fighting drug trafficking which he has identified as the principal threat to Mexico's national security. Under President Zedillo, Mexican drug seizures have increased notably, with marijuana seizures up 40% over 1994 and opium-related seizures up 41%. Cocaine, methamphetamine and precursor chemical seizures also rose significantly. Finally, legislation to address money-laundering is being enacted.

-- Mexico is also cooperating with the United States in the area of deportations and extraditions. In 1995, five fugitives were handed over to U.S. justice. To date this year, that number is up to 10.

-- Mexico has also participated in multinational counterdrug operations with Central American countries that have resulted in multi-ton seizures of cocaine.

-- Worker level bi-national task forces along the border have already realized counterdrug successes, and bi-national enforcement teamwork has significant growth potential.

-- Any unilateral actions that undermine Mexican counterdrug efforts will aggravate the drug trafficking problem along the Southwest border.

-- ONDCP recognizes that developing effective cooperative drug law enforcement programs is a 10-year challenge for the United States and Mexico. We must build on the base of cooperation we are establishing with President Zedillo's Administration.

#### Unique environment, unique problems.

Our border with Mexico is simultaneously the meeting point of two sovereign states and a zone of transition between two mutually influential cultures. The Southwest border also demonstrates great regional contrasts, from the San-Diego/Tijuana area, which is the heaviest-transited and most densely-populated border region in the world, to remote stretches of West Texas, where the population density is extremely low on both sides of the border. This border

is alternately cosmopolitan and rich, rural and poor. Counterdrug programs that work well in El Paso may not be the answer for the Imperial Valley. In forging tools to enhance our counterdrug efforts in the region, it is essential that we listen to the voices of our officials and citizens from the border itself. They know their home ground, and numerous local solutions have already made a positive impact on the illegal drug trade.

In the Tijuana area, a border fence reduced local crime by 20 percent. Illegal immigrants moved east into rougher terrain, but the crossing became harder, attempts less frequent, and the local Border Patrol became even more effective. In El Paso, Texas, increased manning levels reduced the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants, cutting crime rates. In Southern California, an innovative Federal prosecution program went after higher level smugglers and middlemen and put more of them in prison than ever before. There are extremely talented and dedicated men and women serving our country along the Southwest border, but there are not enough of them and they are under-resourced.

#### Outlook for the Future.

Despite the challenges along our Southwest border, there is reason for optimism. The Federal effort is becoming better organized, and the FY 1997 budget provides for meaningful reinforcement of our agencies and bureaus serving on the border. Federal, State and local enforcement cooperation has never been better. Our agents and officials have been learning by doing. The Government of Mexico wants to work with us on this problem, and we are in the process of building the healthiest, most mutually beneficial relationship we have ever had. As a nation, we are finally paying adequate attention to the problems created by the illegal drug trade along our Southwest border.

In summary, we believe that:

-- Drug trafficking organizations on our Southwest border pose a significant threat to the security and welfare of the United States.

-- The problem demands leadership, clear goals, adequate resources and a long-term commitment.

-- We have made meaningful, demonstrable progress over the last several years.

-- The counterdrug budget must move to a five-year cycle to insure continuity of effort and to allow effective planning.

-- This is a bipartisan issue.

-- We can and must continue to cooperate with Mexico in our counterdrug efforts.

-- We can break the major drug trafficking organizations responsible for the bulk of the drug trafficking across our Southwest border.