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Mexicans arrest 3 in kidnap of agent

By Ed Rogers
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Mexican police have arrested three suspects, including a former Mexico City transit chief, in connection with the kidnapping of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency investigator on a street in the city of Guadalajara, the Associated Press reported yesterday.

The Mexican Federal Judicial Police identified the suspects as Enrique Gonzalez Aguilar, the former transit official; Tomas Morlett Borquez, and Eduardo Ramirez Ortiz, believed to be a former Mexican security agent.

Angel Billa Barron, a police spokesman, said a fourth person, who was unidentified, was in custody in Guadalajara.

There was no word about the fate of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena Salazar, who was last seen Feb. 7 when four men threw him into a car and vanished.

DEA officials in Washington and San Diego told The Washington Times that most of their information had come from news reports of a press conference the Mexican police held yesterday in Tijuana, about 20 miles south of San Diego.

The Mexican government has not officially reported the development to the United States through embassy channels, so far as was known last night.

"Basically, the information concerning this incident will be channeled to our embassy in Mexico City and, in turn, that information will go to DEA headquarters in Washington," Special Agent Larry McKay said in a telephone interview.

Mr. McKay said he could not comment on the reason agents decided not to attend the press conference or on what action DEA agents in Mexico may have taken in response to the new development.

The abduction touched off intensive searches of cars entering the United States at checkpoints along the Mexican border. These involved the joint efforts of the DEA, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Customs Service.

These searches were relaxed last Sunday. It could not be learned whether this had any connection to Mexican police activity. It was believed the suspects were arrested late Sunday or early yesterday.

DEA Administrator Francis M.

Mullen Jr. has complained that the Mexican police aided the escape of an alleged marijuana grower who was believed to have been involved in the kidnapping.

This suspect, Rafael Caro-Quintero, was allowed to board a plane in Guadalajara late Saturday as the Mexican judicial police sought to detain him with a warrant, Mr. Mullen said last Sunday on David Brinkley's ABC-TV show.

"We have now learned he had as protection members of the [Mexican] Department of Federal Security," Mr. Mullen said. That agency is a Mexican counterpart of the FBI.

"This concerns us, and we wonder why he was allowed to leave," Mr. Mullen added.

Barnard Kalb, a State Department spokesman, said U.S. officials have urged Mexican authorities to look into the possibility of "lower level official malfeasance" in this incident.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, said yesterday that he has received infor-

mation that the kidnapped DEA agent was only one of seven Americans who have been reported missing in Guadalajara since December.

Mr. Bentsen wrote to Secretary of State George Shultz, urging him to warn American visitors to Mexico of the dangers of traveling in the area of Puerto Vallarta and Guadalajara.

"This information is cause for alarm and certainly grounds for warning Americans who may be planning to travel to either of these two cities of the dangers that may be involved," Mr. Bentsen wrote the secretary.

The State Department acknowledged last week that seven Americans have disappeared and are believed to have been kidnapped in the Guadalajara area.

"Compounding this situation are reports I have received of complaints by friends of these missing Americans that police in Mexico show a lack of interest in their cases," Mr. Bentsen said.

The concern for the safety of DEA agents within the United States has been intensified by reports of threats and other reports that a "hit squad" has entered the country from Colombia.

Robert Feldkamp, a DEA spokesman, said on a radio show Sunday that the agency tightened security at all its installations several weeks ago in response to threats.

"We have — as we've said the last several weeks — a good intelligence, some of it originating in Colombia and some of it confirmed by sources in the United States, that such threats are viable given the recent cocaine bust in the Boston area," he said.