

Page Denied

Next 1 Page(s) In Document Denied

SAN DIEGO UNION
Nov. 19, 1986

CIA zeros in on Mexico corruption

Wiretaps called confirmation of charges of dishonesty in police, elected officials

By Jon Standefer
and J. Stryker Meyer
Staff Writers

The CIA has been conducting a wiretap operation in Mexico that has corroborated allegations of corruption among law enforcement and political officials in that country, *The San Diego Union* has learned.

The CIA's cooperation in drug investigations is a recent departure from its traditional role of intelligence-gathering, sources say, and resulted from pressures generated by the kidnap-torture slaying of Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena Salazar last year in Guadalajara.

Policy differences recently surfaced between the CIA, which began passing information relating to drug-related corruption to the DEA, and Department of Justice lawyers, who are planning future prosecutions.

The CIA passed along the incriminating conversations for "intelligence purposes only," said one source, while the Justice Department wants to use the wiretapped conversations as evidence in any court trials that arise from the current investigations.

The wiretap operation was done without the knowledge of the Mexican government, the sources said, because of fear that the operation would be endangered.

U.S. Attorney Peter K. Nunez was

called to Washington, D.C. last week to discuss the case, the sources said. Nunez would not comment on his trip, but other sources said the spy agency is no longer providing information to the DEA.

The extent of the wiretap operation could not be confirmed. Although one source in the intelligence community said it involved taps on the telephones of several high government officials, others said the information passed to the DEA came from a tap on the Mexico City telephone of a U.S. citizen in contact with numerous police officials, state officials and drug traffickers.

"If the CIA is doing more, they're not telling DEA," said a Justice Department official who would not speak for attribution.

A spokesman for the CIA yesterday had no comment.

The wiretap of the American citizen raises a legal question.

For wiretap evidence gathered in a foreign jurisdiction to be used in a U.S. court, a Justice Department source said, the wiretap generally must be in accordance with that country's laws. However, the source added, in the case of Mexico — where vast numbers of government officials are believed to be in league with drug traffickers — to apply for a legal wiretap might be tantamount to alerting the suspects.

See WIRETAPS on Page A-18

Wiretaps: CIA targets Mexico corruption

Continued from A-1

The source said there was no dispute between the CIA and Justice Department, but merely discussion about how far the CIA would be willing to go publicly, including possible disclosure of methods of operations, to authenticate the wiretaps. The Justice Department needs to know that information before any prosecution is undertaken, the source said.

Another source said the wiretapped conversations gathered in Mexico are notable for their candor.

"There's no pretense, no subtlety," said the source. "They just say, 'Bring 20 kilos of s--- (heroin) here by tomorrow or I'll have your b---s cut off. No cute talk like in the U.S. where people might say, 'How many oranges do you want?'"

The cooperation of the CIA in a drug investigation has been a rarity until recently.

Many DEA field agents and supervisors who have worked in foreign countries relate stories about past cases where a drug trafficker has been targeted, only to have the CIA intervene and discourage the investigation on grounds that the trafficker was working for the spy agency.

That was possible because law enforcement agencies working in a foreign country must report the names of their foreign informants to the CIA station chief at the country's U.S. embassy.

This massive investigative effort was undertaken after the kidnapping and torture-slating of DEA agent Camarena, who was seized on a Guadalupe street on Feb. 7, 1985.

"Operation Leyenda" is the name of the year-and-a-half investigation into the Camarena murder. "Leyenda" is Spanish slang for "lawman," a nickname by which the gung-ho Camarena was known to his colleagues. The investigation included presenting evidence before a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., last year. The probe recently shifted to a federal grand jury in San Diego and is headed by two special prosecutors from Department of Justice headquarters.

Sources say U.S. investigators in Mexico reached and otherwise developed so many contacts that they did not keep the CIA fully informed of their activities.

After high-level discussions, the sources say, the DEA agreed to make the CIA aware of their informants and the spy agency, in turn, agreed to provide to the DEA information it developed pertaining to the Camarena killing or to drug-related corruption in Mexico.

The interagency cooperation comes nearly five years after President Reagan signed Executive Order 12333 on Dec. 4, 1981, authorizing the CIA to "collect, produce and disseminate intelligence on foreign aspects of narcotics production and traffick-

ing."

But the order includes clear limitations on what the CIA can do when its surveillance involves a U.S. citizen in a foreign country.

It requires the CIA to use "the least intrusive collection techniques feasible" and expressly prohibits the use of such techniques as "electronic surveillance, unconsented physical search or monitoring devices unless they are . . . approved by the attorney general."

The order states that such approval is not to be granted "unless the attorney general has determined in each case that there is probable cause to believe the (surveillance) technique is directed against a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power."

A Justice Department spokesman yesterday refused comment on this.

CIA spokesman George Lauder yesterday said the agency has a standing policy against discussing its operations and, therefore, would not comment publicly on the wiretap allegations.

But a senior intelligence official said the U.S. intelligence community, including the CIA, collects information on narcotics and passes it on to other government branches, including the DEA.

The official, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified, said: "Narcotics in Mexico is not (the CIA's) cupcake. Other organs of the

United States government are deeply enmeshed in it."

The State Department and DEA lead the U.S. anti-drug effort in Mexico, including the gathering of narcotics-related intelligence, the official said, adding that the CIA's role is to provide narcotics information that other agencies cannot get.

The official declined to say whether that includes information from wiretaps, electronic intercepts or other forms of surveillance.

An administration official familiar with U.S. intelligence activities in Mexico said yesterday, "You bet . . . (the CIA) collects information on narcotics (there and in other nations). It's one of the agency's priorities." The administration official also declined to be identified.

White House spokesman Don Mathis said he is absolutely certain there is an exchange of drug-related information between the State Department, the National Security Council and the DEA. But he had no comment on any CIA role.

DEA Administrator John Lawn was in Palermo, Sicily, yesterday and could not be reached for comment. DEA Public Affairs spokesman William Alden said the agency would make no comment.

Contributing to this story were Copley News Service Washington correspondents Benjamin Shore and Marcus Stern.

XEROX TELECOPYER 295 : 11-19-86:11:16 AM: 619 299 7520
11/19/1986 08:23 SAN DIEGO TRIBUNE NEWS#*# 619 299 7520
2023939643 : # 2
P. 02

Wednesday, November 19, 1986

SAN DIEGO UNION

CIA zeros in on Mexico corruption

Wiretaps called confirmation of charges of dishonesty in police, elected officials

By Jon Standefer
and J. Stryker Meyer
Staff Writers

The CIA has been conducting a wiretap operation in Mexico that has corroborated allegations of corruption among law enforcement and political officials in that country, *The San Diego Union* has learned.

The CIA's cooperation in drug investigations is a recent departure from its traditional role of intelligence-gathering, sources say, and resulted from pressures generated by the kidnap-torture slaying of Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena Salazar last year in Guadalajara.

Policy differences recently surfaced between the CIA, which began passing information relating to drug-related corruption to the DEA, and Department of Justice lawyers, who are planning future prosecutions.

The CIA passed along the incriminating conversations for "intelligence purposes only," said one source, while the Justice Department wants to use the wiretapped conversations as evidence in any court trials that arise from the current investigations.

The wiretap operation was done without the knowledge of the Mexican government, the sources said, because of fear that the operation would be endangered.

U.S. Attorney Peter K. Nunez was

called to Washington, D.C., last week to discuss the case, the sources said. Nunez would not comment on his trip, but other sources said the spy agency is no longer providing information to the DEA.

The extent of the wiretap operation could not be confirmed. Although one source in the intelligence community said it involved taps on the telephones of several high government officials, others said the information passed to the DEA came from a tap on the Mexico City telephone of a U.S. citizen in contact with numerous police officials, state officials and drug traffickers.

"If the CIA is doing more, they're not telling DEA," said a Justice Department official who would not speak for attribution.

A spokesman for the CIA yesterday had no comment.

The wiretap of the American citizen raises a legal question.

For wiretap evidence gathered in a foreign jurisdiction to be used in a U.S. court, a Justice Department source said, the wiretap generally must be in accordance with that country's laws. However, the source added, in the case of Mexico — where vast numbers of government officials are believed to be in league with drug traffickers — to apply for a legal wiretap might be tantamount to alerting the suspects.

See WIRETAPS on Page A-13

SAN DIEGO (UNION)
WEDNESDAY, NOV 19, 1986

Wiretaps: CIA targets Mexico corruption

Continued from A-1

The source said there was no dispute between the CIA and Justice Department, but merely discussion about how far the CIA would be willing to go publicly, including possible disclosure of methods of operations, to authenticate the wiretaps. The Justice Department needs to know that information before any prosecution is undertaken, the source said.

Another source said the wiretapped conversations gathered in Mexico are notable for their candor.

"There's no pretense, no subtlety," said the source. "They just say, 'Bring 20 kilos of s--- (heroin) here by tomorrow or I'll have your b---s cut off.' No cute talk like in the U.S., where people might say, 'How many oranges do you want?'"

The cooperation of the CIA in a drug investigation has been a rarity until recently.

Many DEA field agents and supervisors who have worked in foreign countries relate stories about past cases where a drug trafficker has been targeted, only to have the CIA intervene and discourage the investigation on grounds that the trafficker was working for the spy agency.

That was possible because law enforcement agencies working in a foreign country must report the names of their foreign informants to the CIA station chief at the country's U.S. embassy.

This massive investigative effort was undertaken after the kidnapping and torture-slating of DEA agent Camarena, who was seized on a Guadalajara street on Feb. 7, 1985.

"Operation Leyenda" is the name of the year-and-a-half investigation into the Camarena murder. "Leyenda" is Spanish slang for "lawman," a nickname by which the gung-ho Camarena was known to his colleagues. The investigation included presenting evidence before a federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., last year. The probe recently shifted to a federal grand jury in San Diego and is headed by two special prosecutors from Department of Justice headquarters.

Sources say U.S. investigators in Mexico reached and otherwise developed so many contacts that they did not keep the CIA fully informed of their activities.

After high-level discussions, the sources say, the DEA agreed to make the CIA aware of their informants and the spy agency, in turn, agreed to provide to the DEA information it developed pertaining to the Camarena killing or to drug-related corruption in Mexico.

The interagency cooperation comes nearly five years after President Reagan signed Executive Order 12333 on Dec. 4, 1981, authorizing the CIA to "collect, produce and disseminate intelligence on foreign aspects of narcotics production and traffick-

ing."

But the order includes clear limitations on what the CIA can do when its surveillance involves a U.S. citizen in a foreign country.

It requires the CIA to use "the least intrusive collection techniques feasible" and expressly prohibits the use of such techniques as "electronic surveillance, unconsented physical search or monitoring devices unless they are... approved by the attorney general."

The order states that such approval is not to be granted "unless the attorney general has determined in each case that there is probable cause to believe the (surveillance) technique is directed against a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power."

A Justice Department spokesman yesterday refused comment on this.

CIA spokesman George Lauder yesterday said the agency has a standing policy against discussing its operations and, therefore, would not comment publicly on the wiretap allegations.

But a senior intelligence official said the U.S. intelligence community, including the CIA, collects information on narcotics and passes it on to other government branches, including the DEA.

The official, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified, said: "Narcotics in Mexico is not (the CIA's) cupcake. Other organs of the

United States government are deeply enmeshed in it."

The State Department and DEA lead the U.S. anti-drug effort in Mexico, including the gathering of narcotics-related intelligence, the official said, adding that the CIA's role is to provide narcotics information that other agencies cannot get.

The official declined to say whether that includes information from wiretaps, electronic intercepts or other forms of surveillance.

An administration official familiar with U.S. intelligence activities in Mexico said yesterday, "You bet... (the CIA) collects information on narcotics (there and in other nations). It's one of the agency's priorities." The administration official also declined to be identified.

White House spokesman Don Mathis said he is absolutely certain there is an exchange of drug-related information between the State Department, the National Security Council and the DEA. But he had no comment on any CIA role.

DEA Administrator John Lawn was in Palermo, Sicily, yesterday and could not be reached for comment. DEA Public Affairs spokesman William Alden said the agency would make no comment.

Contributing to this story were Copley News Service Washington correspondents Benjamin Shore and Marcus Stern.

NOV 20 1986 11:55 U. S. CUSTOMS SAN DIEGO DIST/DIRECTOR

Goodwill meeting is called off

Tijuana mayor cancels session; wiretaps cited

By Martin P. Houseman
Staff Writer

Tijuana Mayor Rene Treviño Arredondo, angered by reports in *The San Diego Union* of CIA electronic eavesdropping in Mexico, canceled a joint Tijuana-San Diego city council meeting set for today that was to have ushered in a new era of mutual trust and close cooperation between the two cities.

Treviño personally telephoned Mayor Maureen O'Connor with his decision yesterday. She informed the council at a session called to narrow the field of nominees for appointment to Uvaldo Martinez's Eighth District seat.

"It is a sad day for me to make this announcement," said O'Connor, who launched an attempted rapprochement with Tijuana in a highly successful goodwill visit to Treviño and the Mexican border metropolis on Oct. 3.

Treviño said through his spokesman, Luis Manuel Serrano, that he considered the reported CIA action a violation of Mexico's national sovereignty.

The CIA denied the reports yesterday.

A front-page story in yesterday's *Union* reported that a CIA wiretap operation in Mexico had corroborated allegations of corruption among law enforcement and political officials there. The report cited one source as saying he believed the wiretaps were on the phones of high-ranking Mexican officials. Another source said the taps were on the phone of a U.S. citizen in Mexico City in contact with numerous police officials, state officials and drug traffickers.

A-30 *The San Diego Union*



Thursday, November 20, 1986



The San Diego Union

Tijuana Mayor Rene Treviño Arredondo and San Diego Mayor Maureen O'Connor during a meeting last month.

CIA cooperation in drug investigations was a departure from its traditional intelligence-gathering role and resulted from pressures generated by the February 1985 kidnap-torture slaying of Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique Camarena in Guadalajara, the account said, citing unnamed sources.

The operation was conducted without the knowledge of the Mexican government out of fear that it might be compromised, the sources said.

Treviño was not available for comment yesterday, Serrano said, because he was working on his final State of the City report and preparing for the Dec. 1 transfer of office to Mayor-elect Federico Valdes Martínez.

In Washington yesterday, CIA spokesman George Lauder said the *Union* article was false and misleading.

"The CIA doesn't normally comment on stories concerning alleged

Meeting S. D. Tijuana goodwill talks called off

Thursday, November 20, 1986

The San Diego Union

Continued from A-1

CIA activities," Lauder said. "We are making an exception in this case because *The San Diego Union's* story is false and misleads the American public. The suggestion that the CIA has been targeting Mexican officials in connection with narcotics trafficking is false."

Department of Justice spokesman Patrick Korten said, "Any suggestion that we have targeted Mexican political officials or police in wiretapping operations is simply not true ... it is not true that any taps have been placed, that we're aware of or at our behest, on high Mexican government officials."

Korten said the department would have no comment on any other aspect of the Union story, including a report that an American was the target of a CIA wiretap in Mexico.

Serrano told the Union on behalf of Mayor Treviño:

"The information you published today indicates a clear violation of Mexico's national sovereignty by the CIA. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to attend this (joint council) meeting where (the two mayors) would talk of good neighborliness, of good relations and of mutual respect.

"Under the circumstances, Mayor Treviño would not feel disposed to talk of being good neighbors when there has been a violation of Mexico's national sovereignty."

Serrano said the CIA action has had a "reverberating effect" on local Mexican officials. He speculated that it would take "some type of correction of these violations" to cause a thaw in relations.

He emphasized that Treviño did not blame the Union, Mayor O'Connor or the city of San Diego for what happened — "only the CIA."

For her part, O'Connor said she believed that federal officials in Mexico City were responsible for cancellation of the joint council session.

"I think Mayor Treviño was told there was to be no meeting. It's so unfortunate," she said. "We're hopeful that this is just a temporary setback. Our two cities need to be in communication. There is a whole agenda pending: sewage, tourism, new ideas. We will make our offer

once again, and hope the new mayor accepts."

She said the City Council and staff had put a great deal of effort into planning for the day's activities and were very disappointed. She said she was especially sorry that the incident occurred just before Treviño leaves office so that San Diego cannot reciprocate the hospitality bestowed upon the San Diego party during her Oct. 3 visit to Tijuana.

She added that she didn't blame the newspaper, "which has to do its job."

Earlier, the mayor told the council, "It is with great regret that I must announce the cancellation of tomorrow's scheduled joint meeting — the first one ever in the city — of the San Diego and Tijuana councils. Mayor Treviño called me personally to express his greater concerns over allegations made in this morning's *San Diego Union* regarding CIA wiretapping in Mexico."

Plans called for Charger fan Treviño and a party of 30 or 40 Mexican officials and guests to attend tonight's Chargers-Raiders game. O'Connor announced that those individuals and firms who had given up their tickets for the Mexican entourage could recover them.

O'Connor's overtures to Tijuana City Hall, and the warm response by Treviño had led to hopes on both sides of the border that for the first time in 10 years, going back to the Pete Wilson era, the cities would collaborate and make progress on common problems.

Jorge Bustamante, Tijuana's leading academic on cross-border relations, said recently, "It's long overdue for San Diego and Tijuana mayors to have more efficient communication to avoid problems ... San Diego and Tijuana are two of the most separated cities along the whole border. You find better bilateral relations almost everywhere else."

—Contributing to this story was Copy News Service Washington correspondent Benjamin Shore.