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Border agents charge Mexican police escort drug traffickers to U.S.

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Members of a respected group of U.S. border agents are charging that Mexican Federal Police, "armed with automatic weapons," have been escorting drug traffickers across the border into Texas, an internal memo revealed yesterday.

The charges came in an internal memo attached to a letter sent to Rep. Glenn English, D-Okla., from the Fraternal Order of Border Agents, a group of mostly retired law enforcement officers who served at least three years on the Mexican border.

John Van Diver, a former Drug Enforcement Administration official and president of the group, said the allegations were brought out in a discussion at the organization's recent convention in El Paso.

"Some of these agents and their drug-trafficking associates have purchased and now occupy ranches and riverside houses in Starr and Zapata counties in Texas," the memo said.

He said he could not confirm the accuracy of the charges.

The memo read, in part, "Trained Mexican federal agents, using the latest in radio and scanner-equipped cars and armed with automatic weapons, have been providing transit security for huge loads of domestically produced marijuana, and heroin and in-transit cocaine.

"Some of these agents and their drug-trafficking associates have purchased and now occupy ranches and riverside houses in Starr and Zapata counties in Texas," the memo said. "These places are used as havens for the drugs being successfully smuggled at night in this area."

A spokeswoman for the Mexican Embassy in Washington said officials there did not know of the memo or any such incident, and would have no comment.

The memo, attached to a letter that expresses concern about an alleged shortage of anti-drug agents on the border, said that in mid-August a large load of marijuana and cocaine was smuggled below Falcon Dam in Starr County

of "knowledgeable people. They are pretty well thought of," Jim Mahan, a Customs Service spokesman, said the agency had begun investigating the allegations.

Bill Deac, a DEA spokesman, said the agency "is aware of the letter and the incident mentioned ... but we're not elaborating."

But when asked about the truthfulness of allegations that Mexican authorities had escorted drug smugglers across the border, Ken Miley, DEA's assistant special agent in charge in McAllen, Texas, said, "I'm familiar with it. It has happened."



Forrest puts the finishing touches on a pumpkin at his home in Winterport, Maine.

subpoenaed in agent's espionage trial

testified earlier in Mr. Miller's trial that the FBI would never use one of its own agents to infiltrate the KGB.

Mr. Barron, who wrote "KGB Today — The Hidden Hand," testified that the FBI avoided using infiltrators because, if discovered, the agent could release vital information during interrogation.

The subpoena had apparently not yet been served on Mr. Webster, as no government motion had been filed to quash it. A subpoena and affidavit were in the hands of a court security officer and are not available to reporters.

In earlier testimony, an FBI supervisor testified that Mr. Miller's boss asked him to consider the moral and spiritual consequences of committing espionage against the United States.

During five days in which agents questioned Mr. Miller, fired him and searched his home one year ago, Mr. Miller had several office meetings with Richard Bretzing, special agent in charge of the Los Angeles FBI office, said P. Bryce Christensen, Mr. Bretzing's assistant.

Christensen was called to the stand by defense attorneys to explore Mr. Miller's state of mind during the time he was questioning for allegedly handing

FBI documents over to Soviet KGB agents.

Mr. Miller, 48, is accused of passing the classified documents to Svetlana Ogorodnikov, a Soviet emigre who became his lover, in a deal for \$65,000 in cash and gold. If convicted he could face life imprisonment.

Mrs. Ogorodnikov and husband, Nikolay, pleaded guilty during their trial and are serving prison terms.

Under questioning by defense attorney Joel Levine, Mr. Christensen described a meeting that Mr. Miller had with Mr. Bretzing three days before his Oct. 2 arrest on espionage charges. The FBI had already questioned Mr. Miller for two days on whether he had indeed handed any documents to Mrs. Ogorodnikov.

"Mr. Bretzing requested that Mr. Miller consider the moral and spiritual consequences of his actions," said Mr. Christensen, who like Mr. Miller and Mr. Bretzing is a member of the Mormon church.

"Mr. Bretzing talked about the process of repentance and the necessity of restitution," Mr. Christensen said, noting that was about three days before Miller's arrest.

"By the process of repentance, you mean a type of action within the Mormon church?" Mr. Levine asked.

"Yes, I do," Mr. Christensen responded. The next day, Mr. Christensen said, Mr. Bretzing asked Mr. Miller if he had thought over their conversation.

"Mr. Bretzing also stated that Mr. Miller had come forward voluntarily [about his association with Mrs. Ogorodnikov] and if he had done what the allegations said he did ... he should consider telling the government so a damage assessment could be done," Mr. Christensen testified.

The FBI charged Mr. Miller with espionage two days later, on Oct. 2, 1984, but Mr. Miller's defense attorneys now say his statements about handing secrets to the Russians were given under duress, that he was coerced by pressure from his Mormon superiors.

The defense has also suggested that despite a poor career record, Mr. Miller's membership in the church may have spared his career.

At the time of his arrest, however, Mr. Miller had been excommunicated from the church, allegedly for having an affair with another woman, other than Mrs. Ogorodnikov.

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