

Dateline Mexico by Josefina Menéndez

Shakeup in security and intelligence

The President gave orders to deepen the probe into DEA agent Camarena's death—and heads are rolling.

In the coming weeks, the government of the Mexican Republic will announce the creation of a new national agency for intelligence and national security which will have the name of Investigations and National Security Directorate. It will combine the functions previously fulfilled by the Federal Security Directorate and the Political and Social Investigations Directorate, which were both under the Interior Department (Gobernación).

The idea behind setting up this new agency is to correct the manifest failings of the previous security and information agencies, and to develop an efficient and modern entity capable of giving the government solid estimates and evaluations at times of international and regional crisis.

Although various names of important persons in Mexican national life have been mentioned, the majority of informed sources indicate that the head of the new administration will be a politician, and not a military man. But the name of the director is still a matter of speculation.

The reorganization is being carried out in the aftermath of the world-notorious political and police scandals that wracked the Federal Security Directorate (DFS) and Political and Social Investigations, after it was discovered that several important directors of these agencies were involved in protecting top-ranking drug bosses such as Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo, Rafael Caro Quintero, Miguel Felix Galardo, and the Colombian-Honduran,

Matta Ballesteros.

The scandal led to the fall of the director of DFS, Antonio Zorrilla Pérez, and to the forced or voluntary resignations of 400 agents of the agency as well as the hasty exit of the main national directors and state directors, some of whom fled to the United States, where they are apparently basking in the sun, on "vacation."

The scandal arose due to investigations into the assassination of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent, Enrique Camarena Salazar, and his Mexican colleague Alfredo Zavala Avelar, at the hands of the aforementioned mafia bosses. The investigations led to the discovery of collaboration of elements of the police in protecting the dope mobsters.

Mexican President Miguel de la Madrid intervened personally to ensure that the investigations into the participation of police elements in organized crime would go deeper, and would lead to a reorganization of the police agencies involved.

As for the Political and Social Investigations Directorate, known in Mexico as IPS, it had fallen to the lowest level since its creation when Oscar de Lasse became its director.

De Lasse is a political scientist with no experience in either intelligence or security, who brought in with him a series of Jesuit-oriented, technocratic "whiz kids," utterly inexperienced in the field.

As a result, IPS's evaluations were tossed into the trash basket when they

arrived at the desks of the federal government's decision makers. It was widely known that the reports written in IPS were sold to the highest bidder, including to the opposition National Action Party (PAN), a Nazi-communist formation which is an asset of foreign forces, from the Soviet KGB to the moneyed European oligarchical families.

The reorganization which the government is now carrying out has had a special emphasis on the Mexican Attorney General's office, which is responsible by law for fighting drug-trafficking. Since the assassination of DEA agent Camarena, dozens of agents and ex-agents of the Federal Judicial Police under the Attorney General's office have been arrested for having been implicated in drug-trafficking.

Although it was for other reasons, three weeks ago the chief of the Federal Judicial Police Manuel Ibarra and the national coordinator of the campaign against narcotics trafficking, Antonio Sam López, both left their jobs. Earlier, the top assistant attorney general, Fernando Baeza, had resigned from his position. He was a crony of Oscar Flores Sánchez, who was attorney general in the last six-year presidential administration.

Both Baeza and Flores Sánchez are originally from Chihuahua (a northern state bordering the United States), where on Nov. 10, 1984, federal security forces detected and raided the biggest marijuana plantation ever discovered in the history of drug trafficking in Mexico, and probably in the world.

Chihuahua is also one of the strongholds of the treasonous National Action Party (PAN), and various voices have accused former Attorney General Flores Sánchez of having promoted the rise of the PAN in that state.