

Dateline Mexico by Carlos Cota

Under new management

The "CIA's man" was replaced by a nationalist at the helm of the war on drugs, and a shakeup is expected.

On Oct. 15, Mexico's "war on drugs czar," Deputy Attorney General Javier Coello Trejo, was fired by presidential decree. The decree also eliminated his department, Investigation and Combat of Drug Trafficking, which had been the coordination center for all the police and military forces in the anti-drug effort.

Coello Trejo was known as "the CIA's man in Mexico." Backed by an immense and corrupt police apparatus, Coello had operated on the general premise that the bigger the violation of human rights, the greater the success in the war on drugs. On this basis, his "boys," as he called his policemen, committed all kinds of moral, political, and constitutional violations.

Coello Trejo's removal may be attributed to reactions from diverse forces within Mexico's political system and its police and military sectors. They reacted to the fact that under the pretext of "fighting narcotics traffic," Coello had permitted U.S. security and intelligence services to meddle at all levels of the Mexican government.

His successor is the former chief of Investigations and National Security, Col. Jorge Carrillo Olea, whose actions during his long career with the national security forces led him to be catalogued as an "anti-CIA" nationalist. He is associated with the 1970-76 presidency of Luis Echeverría. In discussions with the Foreign Press Club and with the editors of *El Nacional*, the official daily, he outlined how the war on drugs will now be fought.

The starting point for Colonel Car-

rillo's concept of national security is that "Mexico does not have foreign military enemies"; the country's main problems are "the people's unsatisfied demands." However, he recognizes that many problems "originate outside" the country.

Carrillo *does* want to cooperate closely with the United States and other countries to nail drug smugglers. He called for "setting up an international intelligence network so we would know where they take off, how many there are, where they are going. They should be followed by radar in the Caribbean; we should be told where they are going to enter our national territory so we can intercept. This downed a plane carrying a ton and a half of cocaine base."

He seeks an agency "with an executive body which would meet every three or four months and a permanent staff which would receive the intelligence. . . . It would have to have its operations center on some small island. . . . A more specific, selective, war must be waged."

He referred to internal support for the drug mafia: "The problem would be—or already is—not to have to fight on two fronts. . . . If we can keep our backs protected, then, gentlemen, we can throw ourselves into combat. . . . But I can't figure out how to fight this battle without knowing which way is the front and which way is the rear."

Questioned as to whether the new strategy was an alternative to the way U.S. Army troops were being used in Bolivia, he responded, "They are well equipped, but quite inefficient."

Carrillo added, "The United States has two postures. The line it projects abroad is morality, integrity, exigencies, and meddling. And domestically: passivity. For the past two months, more or less, we have been seeing that the U.S. government has not taken a single step in terms of narcotics trafficking, because they are coming to elections. And if we add it up, who knows how many voters are linked in some way to addictions?"

"Thus, for the moment, *silence*. Then, suddenly in some international forum, they accuse Mexicans of being 'corrupt.'"

For the first time, a Mexican official explained to the public how the narcotics business actually works. Carrillo said that although they are illiterate, the majority of the drug traffickers "are big financiers, operators, organizers." He described one of the films he has of a drug bust: "Several planes land. Waiting for them are ten pickup trucks, ten men, two fuel trucks to pump them up. The planes land, protected. They are loaded, splitting up the cargo. The fuel trucks arrive, refuel the planes, and they take off."

"Where do you get the fuel trucks? Where do you get the fuel for them? The trucks? The protection? The air control to know where they come from, when they are going to land? This is an efficient deployment. . . . Where is the brain for all this? But then you figure out that it can't be one brain; it has to be many. . . . Obvious! It is a company."

Questioned whether he felt his new post was a job change, Carrillo responded, "No. I'm just going into the operational part. I could tell you that I spent so many months, since April, trying to pull together a plan for integral combat against narcotics trafficking."