

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Letter to You From Mexican Foreign Minister on  
Operation Intercept

In the handwritten letter at Tab B, the Mexican Foreign Minister asks you to take steps to correct the "excesses" of Operation Intercept, the narcotics control measure we are enforcing along the length of the US-Mexican border. The Foreign Minister states that:

- the operation is doing great harm to the economy of the border region and creating serious frictions without, as far as he can ascertain, being especially effective in stopping marijuana traffic.
- it has disturbed the Mexican people who cannot understand how, what they believe to be a drastic and unfriendly measure could be taken two weeks after you met with President Diaz Ordaz.
- he has talked about this to Secretary Rogers, who was attentive and sympathetic, but that you are the one who has the authority.

The Minister acknowledged the unorthodox nature of such a letter and asks your pardon, but stresses the unusual nature of the situation. This unusual step does, in fact, underline the intensity of the Mexican feeling about Operation Intercept. As you know, President Diaz mentioned this "somber curtain" over US-Mexican relations during his toast for the astronauts at the official luncheon he hosted September 29.

A great deal of the intensity of the feeling is due, I believe, to the belief that the U. S. is cooling off toward Mexico, and that our attitude toward them will be basically unfriendly. After years of a very warm relationship, this is traumatic to them. It does appear, in short, that the operation is becoming a serious problem in our relations with Mexico.

In his talk with Secretary Rogers, the Minister suggested a bilateral meeting to review the operation and see what could be done to ameliorate the excesses.

Justice has agreed to bilateral talks, and we have instructed Embassy Mexico City (cable at Tab C) to inform the Mexican Government of this and to suggest that the Mexican Assistant Attorney General communicate directly with Deputy Attorney General Kleindienst to work out a time, place, and agenda.

I attach a brief acknowledgment to the Minister's note at Tab A, pointing out that in response to his suggestion we are prepared to enter into bilateral consultations on this problem. This is a longer and warmer letter than might normally be sent to a Foreign Minister, but I think the occasion calls for it.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

Attachments