

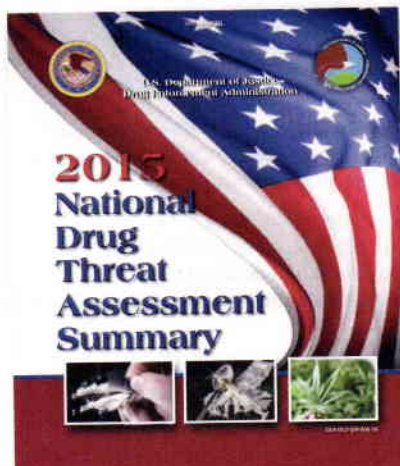
Chronicles

Mexicans Use U.S. Business/Tourist Visas To Smuggle Drugs Through Border

For those who believe the Southern Border is plenty secure, federal agents in one Texas sector seized more than 1,700 pounds of marijuana, 90 pounds of cocaine and 17 pounds of liquid methamphetamine in just one week. In separate incidents, the same Border Patrol sector arrested three international gangsters — including members of the Mexican mafia and the notoriously violent Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) — during the same period. Hundreds of miles to the west, agents in California snatched nearly 842 pounds of narcotics over a weekend, a chunk of it brought in by Mexican citizens with American business and tourist visas.

It has been well-documented by federal law enforcement agencies that the majority of illegal drugs in the United States comes from Mexico, and Mexican traffickers remain the greatest criminal threat to the United States. Mexican cartels — classified as Transitional Criminal Organizations (TCOs) by the government —

DEA's "2015 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary" report



have for years smuggled in enormous quantities of heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine and marijuana. In its National Drug Threat Assessment, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) confirmed that Mexican cartels are in a class of their own, that “no other group can challenge them in the near term.” They are sophisticated operations that function like businesses.

“These Mexican poly-drug organizations traffic heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, and marijuana throughout the United States, using established transportation routes and distribution networks,” the DEA report states. The DEA report continues:

“They control drug trafficking across the Southwest Border and are moving to expand their share of U.S. illicit drug markets, particularly heroin markets. National-level gangs and neighborhood gangs continue to form relationships with Mexican TCOs to increase profits for the gangs through drug distribution and transportation, for the enforcement of drug payments and for protection of drug transportation corridors from use by rival gangs.”

The National Drug Intelligence Center, dismantled by the Obama administration after nearly two



A border patrol agent inspects a man-made tunnel near Notalas, Arizona.

JOSH DENMARK

decades of operation, published equally alarming figures regarding the Mexican drug crisis. In a detailed report published by Judicial Watch, the now-defunct agency revealed that in 2009, thousands of metric tons of heroin, meth, marijuana and cocaine were smuggled into the United States from Mexico and that tens of billions of dollars in drug proceeds flowed back south. At that point, much of the smuggled drugs came through the Tohono O’odham Indian Reservation in Arizona, so the problem is spreading like wildfire across the vast and famously porous Southern Border, which spans around 2,000 miles.

Many hoped the situation would improve under the Trump administration, but apparently that is not the case. Frustrated Border Patrol agents interviewed by Judicial Watch say little has changed since Trump was

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Drugs

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KRIS GROGAN



A table full of fentanyl and other designer drugs seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection

sworn in, even though he vowed to tighten border security. The recent figures at just two sectors situated along the Mexican border support that assessment. A total of 1,700 pounds of marijuana, 90 pounds of cocaine and 17 pounds of liquid methamphetamine were confiscated by the agency's Rio Grande Valley division during a week in mid-November. Federal authorities estimate the cocaine to be worth more than \$2.7 million and the marijuana \$1.3 million, according to a press release. The liquid meth is estimated to have a value of over half a million dollars. "The seizures were results of Border Patrol operations along the river and at Border Patrol checkpoints," the agency writes in the statement.

The weekend stash discovered in San Diego, California, has a value of \$8.3 million, according to the Border Patrol. It includes fentanyl, heroin, cocaine and methamphetamine. The drugs were found in 15 separate smuggling attempts and were hidden in various areas of vehicles such as the gas tank, trunk, battery, floor, quarter panels and tires. Two of the smugglers were Mexican citizens with B-1/B-2 visas granted by the United States to foreigners for business, tourism or a combination of both. The first was a 53-year-old man who got busted with 10 wrapped packages

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Frustrated Border Patrol agents interviewed by Judicial Watch say little has changed since Trump was sworn in, even though he vowed to tighten border security.

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of fentanyl in a compartment on the floor of his sports utility vehicle. The drugs have an estimated street value of \$736,000, according to the feds. The other Mexican smuggler with a U.S. visa was a 56-year-old man driving a commercial bus with 382 pounds of cocaine worth nearly \$5 million hidden in the gas tank. **JW**

Harassment

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in a breakdown of payouts to settle discrimination complaints against House lawmakers from the past five years released last month by the Office of Compliance, which approves the payouts," the article states. "That total included only one payment to resolve a sexual harassment claim — \$84,000 paid to settle a complaint against Texas GOP Rep. Blake Farenthold."

This indicates there's no telling how much the government is spending through various accounts and agency divisions to settle sexual harassment cases. The public may never know the magnitude of the problem, especially since most politicians will never come clean. Even after his secret settlement was exposed, Hastings denied harassing Packer and told a newspaper in his South Florida district that he knew nothing about the settlement. "I am outraged that any taxpayer dollars were needlessly paid to Ms. Packer," the congressman said.

In the meantime, the legislator's unscrupulous behavior hasn't changed. In 2017, Hastings was in hot water after a watchdog revealed he gave his girlfriend the maximum taxpayer salary for five consecutive years to work in a field office. Top congressional salaries are supposed to go to the Washington, D.C.-based chief of staff. **JW**

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