

Paraguay Drug Traffickers Named

By Jack Anderson

In the impoverished little land of Paraguay, there is an old saying about dictator Alfredo Stroessner that "never a bird falls without his knowing about it."

This reputed omniscience has kept the burly El Presidente in full control of Paraguay for 18 years while his opponents have died mysteriously or fled into exile.

Thus, the American embassy in Asuncion was astonished when Stroessner, of all people, confessed to our Ambassador Raymond Ylitalo that he would like more information about the narcotics traffic in Paraguay. Stroessner claimed he wanted to stamp it out.

The efficient Ylitalo forwarded the request to the State Department, and the Central Intelligence Agency obligingly included it in a detailed, secret summary of drug operations in Paraguay.

The memo declared that Stroessner was up to his jackboots in smuggling, though there was no proof he dealt in drugs. His tight little dictatorship, however was described as "the Heroin Crossroads of South America," with much of the dope going to the U.S.

We published the secret details on April 22. The dictator promptly sent word to us through his Ambassador to Washington, Dr. Roque Avila, that he was surprised at the allegations and asked for the

names of those behind Paraguay's drug trade.

We have now supplied Avila with the names. The CIA memo, for instance, mentioned a "secret police" official who reportedly was "heavily involved in the (drug) traffic." The CIA didn't name him, but we told Avila the suspect is none other than Stroessner's trusted chief of investigative police, Pastor Coronel.

Generals Involved

The CIA also alleged—again without names—that "two... important generals" were deep in narcotics.

We identified one as Gen. Andres Rodriguez, the sternly handsome commander of 3,000 American-equipped troops based near Asuncion. His troops stand guard over contraband warehouses, and he controls aircraft for smuggling.

The other is Gen. Patricio Colman, a light infantry commander, whose troops put down an armed liberation movement in 1960, slicing off tongues, ears, heads and other parts of prisoners. Colman thereafter gained a smuggling franchise, considerable wealth and control of cross-country buslines.

We have also uncovered the identities of other high Paraguayan figures, who are directly controlled by Stroessner and are responsible for the drug trade. These men,

whose names we have also given Avila, include:

- Sabino Augusto Montanaro, grey-haired interior secretary, and his right-hand man, National Police Chief Gen. Francisco Brites. No large-scale dope trade in landlocked Paraguay would be possible without their acquiescence.

- Gen. Leodegar Cabello, the spiffily-uniformed defense minister, who is aware of the narcotics dealings of Gens. Rodriguez and Colman and is suspected of sharing their loot.

- Gen. German Martinez, a pale, garrulous artillery commander who controls contraband in and around Paraguari. With his smuggling proceeds, he has purchased model farms and raises thoroughbred cattle.

- Vice Adm. Hugo Gonzalez, chief of Paraguay's river gunboat navy, who earned his exalted rank by babysitting Stroessner's children. His gunboats protect the dope trade along the Paraguay and Parana rivers separating Paraguay from Brazil and Argentina.

- Air Force chief Gen. Vicente Quinonez, who supervises Asuncion airport and dozens of smaller fields. These are also used for drug shipments.

- Raul Sapena Pastor, the secretary of state, who personally approves every official

and diplomatic passport. He has granted passports to known smugglers. Even diplomatic pouches are used for smuggled goods.

These are some of the names my associate, Les Whitten, provided Ambassador Avila during an hour-long meeting with him at the modest Paraguayan Embassy. The envoy insisted he knew nothing about their alleged dope activities.

Footnote: On March 20, President Nixon called narcotics America's "number one domestic problem." Three days later, the U.S. gave 12 helicopters to Paraguay. U.S. military aid to the "Heroin Crossroads of South America" runs around \$2 million a year.

Connally's Mission

Sources close to Treasury Secretary John Connally say his secret mission after leaving the cabinet will be to rally the Lyndon Johnson wing of the Democratic Party into the Nixon camp in November.

Richard Nixon and John Connally have developed a close personal bond. Both are backroom operators and political infighters. They practice the same pragmatic politics.

During their political bull sessions, Mr. Nixon and Connally foresaw the increasing possibility that George McGovern could win the Democratic presidential nomination.

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