

The U.S. Customs Bureau announced in Washington on Tuesday [22 Jun] that it has reached an agreement with the U.S. Postal Service for the opening of sealed mail suspected of containing narcotics, contraband or merchandise on which duty should be paid. Letters and packages weighing up to four pounds can be searched by government agencies without permission from the receivers of the mail before opening them. The announcement said that previously those conspiring to smuggle narcotics or other valuable merchandise through letter mail simply refused permission to open, knowing the mail then would have to be returned unopened to the sender abroad.

The U.S. Commissioner of Customs, Miles Ambrose, said, "It would be inconsistent with the government's stepped-up attack on narcotics smuggling to subject arriving cargo, passengers and their baggage to intensive examination, while at the same time leaving a technical loophole in the postal examination system." Chief postal inspector, William Carter, said that the amended regulations specifically forbid any Customs employee to read correspondence which may be contained in any mail of this type, unless a search warrant obtained in advance authorizes such action.

See also "Seizure of antiwar mail to G.I.'s ordered in Vietnam," NYTimes 31 Mar 71, this file.

See also this file 15 Mar 70, 31 Mar 70, 17 Apr 70, May 70