Salinas Administration Plans New Airport Expenditures To Cope With Increase In Passenger & Cargo Traffic

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Salinas Administration Plans New Airport Expenditures To Cope With Increase In Passenger & Cargo Traffic

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In mid-October, the state-run Airport and Support Services (Aeropuertos y Servicios Auxiliares, ASA) announced plans to spend an additional 226.5 million nuevo pesos (US$68.6 million) over the next year for expansion, maintenance, and repair of Mexico's busiest air terminals. ASA deputy director Jorge de la Madrid Virgen said the funds will be provided to airports in Cancun, Puerto Vallarta, Tijuana, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Mexico City. Of the total, about 144.5 million nuevo pesos (US$43.8 million) will be allocated for construction projects such as lengthening of runways and expansion of airplane parking areas, while another 82 million nuevo pesos (US$24.8 million) will be used for maintenance and conservation purposes. De la Madrid reported that annually, 15.3 million passengers equal to about 40% of all air travelers in Mexico--use the Benito Juarez airport in Mexico City. Guadalajara was next with slightly more than four million travelers per year, followed by Cancun with 3.9 million; Tijuana with 1.8 million; Monterrey with 1.7 million; and Puerto Vallarta with 1.6 million. According to Alberto Abed, director of Transportes Aeros Ejecutivos (TAESA) airline, currently only about 5% of the Mexican population travels by air. Speaking at a tourism seminar in Mexico City, Abed predicted that competition will intensify among Mexican airlines as they attempt to attract more domestic passengers, which will result in fare wars similar to those seen in the US. Mexican airlines have also been forced into heavy competition with US carriers for traffic between the US and Mexico. According to a report released in early October by the Transportation Secretariat (Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transporte, SCT), a total of 4.38 million passengers used US carriers (American, Continental, Delta, Alaska, Northwest, Key, and America West) to travel between the two countries in 1992. In contrast, during the same period, 4.09 million passengers used Mexican carriers for US-Mexico travel, including Aeromexico, Mexicana, TAESA, Aerolitoral, Aeromonterrey, Aeromar, and Leo Lopez airlines. Because of the high passenger and cargo traffic in the largest cities, new airports have been proposed for Guadalajara (Jalisco) and for Linares (Nuevo Leon), which is near Monterrey. In Guadalajara, city authorities have petitioned the SCT to allow construction of a new facility to replace the Miguel Hidalgo Airport. According to Francisco Martinez, president of the Tourism Development Council (Consejo de Fomento Turistico) in Guadalajara, the current airport is overcrowded and located in an area where industrial pollution and fog combine to reduce visibility. Meanwhile, Nuevo Leon Governor Socrates Rizzo told reporters in early October that the Linares international airport, to be located near the Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon border, will be used mostly for cargo shipments. In a press conference in early October, Rizzo said construction of the new airport coincides with new investment plans of foreign auto markers Chrysler and Volvo in the area. (Sources: El Financiero International, 10/04/93, 10/11/93; La Jornada, 10/17/93; Notimex, 10/25/93)