

2-4-1998

Former Jalisco Governor Romero de Velazquez Arrested on Drug Charges

LADB Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex>

Recommended Citation

LADB Staff. "Former Jalisco Governor Romero de Velazquez Arrested on Drug Charges." (1998). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/sourcemex/3856>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in SourceMex by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Former Jalisco Governor Romero de Velazquez Arrested on Drug Charges

by LADB Staff

Category/Department: Mexico

Published: 1998-02-04

In mid-January, the Procuraduria General de la Republica (PGR) announced the arrest of former Jalisco governor Romero de Velazquez on charges of money laundering and assisting the drug trafficking operations of prominent cartel leaders Roberto Gaxiola and Jorge Abrego Reyna. Romero's arrest comes as a surprise because of his reputation for upholding anti-crime and drug trafficking laws during his term in office in 1977-1983. He also represented the governing Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) for three terms in the federal Chamber of Deputies.

The PGR said Romero's arrest followed a five-month investigation, which was begun after the former governor solicited a bribe from a government official. The investigation later revealed Romero's links with Gaxiola and Abrego Reyna. "The investigation, arrest, and jailing of Flavio Romero de Velasco show once again that no one, no matter their economic, social or political status, can feel above the law," the PGR said. Romero is also under investigation to determine if he played a role in at least a dozen drug-related assassinations in Jalisco state over the past several years.

Federal drug enforcement director Mariano Herran Salvatti said the investigation is focusing particularly on whether Romero ordered the killing of former Jalisco state police chief Hector Alfredo Ixtlahuac Gaspar. Authorities said Romero has amassed a fortune in cash, real estate, and other holdings through his dealings with Gaxiola and Abrego. Gaxiola and Abrego Reyna are wanted in both the US and Mexico on drug trafficking charges.

Romero is the second prominent government official arrested on charges related to drug trafficking during the past year. In February 1997, the government detained former drug enforcement director Gen. Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo and two of his assistants on charges of accepting bribes to protect prominent drug trafficker Amado Carrillo Fuentes (see SourceMex, 01/26/97). Carrillo, who was the head of the Juarez Cartel, died after plastic surgery in July (see SourceMex, 07/16/97).

Opposition leaders urge investigation of all ex-governors

Some critics contend the high-profile arrests may be a token attempt to appease the US government, which is pressuring Mexico to increase its anti-drug trafficking efforts. "We hope this latest arrest is not merely an attempt to clean up the president's image," said Andres Lopez Obrador, head of the center-left Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (PRD).

Lopez Obrador and Felipe Calderon, president of the center-right Partido Accion Nacional (PAN), both urged the Zedillo administration to open investigations against all former state governors and their families to determine if they have been involved in drug trafficking, corruption, or money laundering. "We cannot allow this kind of impunity to continue existing in Mexico," said Lopez Obrador.

Some PRI leaders are also concerned that recent arrests have involved current or former leaders of the party. "We are going to launch a campaign to inform the Mexican people that a PRI-led government is leading the fight against drug trafficking," said party secretary general Marco Antonio Bernal. (Sources: Spanish news service EFE, 01/23/98, 01/25/98; Associated Press, The Dallas Morning News, Los Angeles Times, 01/26/98; The News, 01/26/98, 01/27/98; Novedades, 01/27/98; Excelsior, 01/26/98, 01/29/98; El Universal, 01/26/98, 01/27/98, 01/29/98; La Jornada, 01/27/98, 01/29/98; Siempre, 01/29/98; Notimex, 01/24/98, 01/26/98, 01/30/98)

-- End --