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## **Mexico: U.S. Immigration Service Reports Illegal Border Crossings Up For First Time Since 1986**

*by Barbara Khol*

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On Oct. 5 in Los Angeles, Verne Jervis, a spokesperson for the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), told reporters that for the first time since the Simpson- Rodino law went into effect in 1986, annual illegal border crossings have increased. In fiscal 1990, over 1 million undocumented persons, mainly Mexican workers, were apprehended. In FY1986, a record 1.6 million undocumented persons were apprehended. The Immigration Reform and Control Act imposed fines on employers who knowingly hired "illegal aliens"; provided for legal status for over 3 million foreigners who had resided in the US without official permission since 1982; and, authorized major increases in the number of Border Patrol officers and INS investigators. The latter was not fully funded due to federal budget cutbacks. The number of border apprehensions dropped to 1,122,067 in FY1987, 940,670 in FY1988 and 854,057 in FY1989. Border Patrol officials estimate that at least one undocumented person crosses the border undetected for each one caught. In a 1988 report, Wayne A. Cornelius, director of the Center for US-Mexican Studies at the University of California at San Diego, said "32% of the immigrant workers whom we have interviewed...admitted that they had purchased or used fake documents to gain employment." The author added that the actual figure was likely higher because "many undocumented migrants regard the use of bogus documents as an unsavory business" and are embarrassed to admit that they have them. (Basic data from Washington Post, 10/06/90)

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