

3-27-1992

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Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Update On Drug Trafficking Developments." (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/7254>

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Update On Drug Trafficking Developments

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, March 27, 1992

Feb. 22: Edmond Mulet, president of the Guatemalan congress, told reporters that Guatemala serves not only as a drug trafficking "bridge" between South America and the US, but also as "a center of [drug] consumption and money laundering." According to Mulet, Guatemala has become the fifth largest poppy producer in the world. March 3: Guatemalan police spokespersons reported that a plane loaded with cocaine crashed near Tilapa, San Marcos department, killing all three men aboard. An unspecified quantity of cocaine was removed from the crash site. Costa Rican Interior Minister Luis Fishman reported that residents of Cuajiniquil, located 27 km. from the Nicaraguan border, were found to be in possession of about US\$11 million worth of cocaine. Fishman said the cocaine was abandoned by Colombian drug traffickers Jan. 29 at Playa Murcielago, near Cuajiniquil, after police intercepted several Colombian boats. Fisherfolk and other residents discovered and hid the drug shipment. March 8: Costa Rican Interior Minister Fishman reported that police seized 320 kg. of cocaine, valued at over US\$3.6 million, at Playa Blanca, located on the Pacific coast. According to Fishman, the cocaine was being transported by a Colombian boat discovered in the Pacific, 420 km. northwest of San Jose. A Costa Rican police spokesperson reported that the cocaine seized at Playa Blanca was probably from a different shipment than the cocaine which was abandoned Jan. 29 at Playa Murcielago. March 10: Panamanian police director Jaime Abad told reporters that police seized 250 kg. cocaine and 50 kg. of crack, worth approximately US\$4 million. Abad said the traffickers pertained to the Caribbean group of the mafia based in Cali, Colombia. (Basic data from Agencia Centroamericana de Noticias-Spanish news service EFE, 02/22/92, 03/03/92, 03/09/92; Agence France-Presse, 03/09/92, 03/10/92)

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