

**DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION  
MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES - 10-27-2006  
S/A ROBERT NIEVES - S/A DAVID GADDIS - 6-6-06**

03:13:03:15 MS: Today, good. My name is Sean Ferns, I'm here on the Museum staff, I'd like to welcome you today to the first in a new series of presentations here at the Museum. We're beginning a new series today that focuses on DEA around the world, both past and present.

03:13:19:28 We were planning for this series... back a few months ago when the IDEC Conference, International Drug Enforcement Conference planning was underway and it struck us that many folks in DEA headquarters, indeed many folks around the country, don't really appreciate just how significant an international presence DEA has and has had for many decades.

03:13:40:19 So today we begin by looking at South America and we will continue with three more of these in the fall, one looking at Southeast Asia, one in Southwest Asia and one in Europe. I have to give all the credit to Katie Drew our education coordinator here on the Museum staff for putting these together today.

03:14:00:28 We have two guest speakers, we're honored to have Dave Gaddis, the current regional director for the Indian

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Region as well as Robbie... Bobby Robert Nieves, the former head of International Operations for DEA now retired. He's the happy photo on the screen... I'm sure he will talk more about that, he'll talk more about that.

03:14:21:00 Let me tell you a little bit about Bobby, I'm going to introduce both of them before they come up. Bobby is the owner and founder of Berg Associates, a consulting firm, located here in Washington. He currently resides in Bethany Beach. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, earned his bachelor of science degree in marketing and business administration at St. John's University.

03:14:41:24 And then he was sworn in as a special agent with the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs in 1969. During his 26 years with DEA, Bobby rose through the ranks to the highest levels of the agency, retiring in October 1995, as I said, the Chief of International Operations. Mr. Nieves served as the director of major investigations for DEA, managed and coordinate DEA's global attack on the Columbian king pins, that

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included both the drug trafficking and the money laundering operations.

03:15:14:08      And then his other overseas assignments included San Jose, Costa Rico and a group supervisor in the Caribbean region. As I said also joining us is Dave Gaddis, currently regional director for the Indian Region, came on the job with DEA in 1986, spent half of his DEA career in foreign affairs with a focus on Latin America.

03:15:38:22      His assignments overseas have included Costa Rico, Mexico, Columbia and a substantial amount to TDY throughout Latin America. His domestic assignments include Atlanta, Miami, Charlotte and here in Washington, DC. As regional director for the Indian Region, he supervises DEA operations in Venezuela, Columbia, Ecuador and Peru.

03:16:00:11      It's also worth noting that he will certainly and shortly be moving from the Indian Region to become the regional director for Mexico/Central America. So please join me, we're going to first start out with Bobby Nieves with a look at the past followed by Dave

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Gaddis and a look at the present. And then we'll reserve the last 15 minutes or so questions. Welcome.

**ROBERT NIEVES**

03:16:27:11 RN: Thank you, appreciate that. The fellow on the left in this picture is in a high stress executive position at DEA. He looks serious. The fellow on the right is retired, okay, there's a lot be said for that. For those of you contemplating it, I'm in the pool, the water's fine.

03:16:49:15 I've been asked today to participate in this discussion, I'm happy to do it. Do you folks hear me okay? Okay I was told I had to... the least amount of people they've had at these exercises is 30, the most 85, so I think we're about 50 so we're in good shape. We're going to talk about my perspectives and follow it up by Mr. Gaddis, on the South America region.

03:17:11:27 In the 20 minutes that I have to discuss this during my career, let me say that's a... it's really not enough time to really get into it in depth. So what I thought I'd do is I'd go back to 1970 when I began

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working... South American cocaine trafficking and then bring it up to 1995 when I retired.

03:17:28:12      And that'll serve as a good segue for Mr. Gaddis who will follow on. Probably one of the most amazing stories of the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, let me get rid of this... slide here. One of the probably most amazing stories of recent drug enforcement history is the rise of the Columbian cartels.

03:17:52:12      How this group of misfits from the beginning cartels would move from being small time operators to controlling the international traffic in cocaine and probably perfecting the cocaine trafficking business. To really kind of analyze how all that happened, we need to go back to the 1970s.

03:18:16:14      Now these Columbian cartels when they ultimately reached the peak of their power, they were able control elections in Columbia, murder presidential candidates, have input into the writing of a new constitution, eliminating extradition and so forth. So these are people that had real power in Columbia by the time 1990 came around.

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03:18:37:21 First time I really came across organized cocaine and organized cocaine smuggling was around 1970 working in New York City. At that time the people that controlled the cocaine were Chileans. Cocaine was generally accepted as a benign drug, abused by the wealthy, Hollywood types and want-to-be's.

03:18:56:25 Cocaine snorting was glamorized by Hollywood, it was nothing to see a movie, any movie, and people were snorting cocaine and everybody was going about the business of... of abusing cocaine and it was fine. Even President Carter's drug policy advisor, Peter Borne, stated, "Cocaine is probably the most benign of illicit drugs currently in widespread use. At least a strong case could be made for legalizing it as for legalizing marijuana.

03:19:24:02 Short-acting, not physically addicting and acutely pleasurable, cocaine has found increasing favor at all socio-economic levels." So it's clear to see why our drug policy at that time wasn't really focused on cocaine. The fact is that people treated cocaine like it was marijuana or alcohol.

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03:19:43:24      It was there, it was illegal, but we can't pay very much attention to it. In New York City at the time, like I said, the cocaine business was just beginning to become a problem. In those days we would see seizures of one kilo, two kilos, three kilos, the people that were involved mostly as the wholesale and importation level were Chileans, Columbians, some Bolivians and some Peruvians.

03:20:07:22      Bolivia and Peru figured prominently in the manufacturing of the base and small mom and pop type labs existed in places like Columbia and Chile. And those people controlled the business, actually I think it's safe to say, the Chileans really were the predominant cocaine traffickers of the day.

03:20:26:04      People didn't quite understand Columbians very well and they didn't really like doing business with the Columbians as much as they did business with the Chileans. When we first began to look at Columbians and by 1974 we had indicted this list that you see on the board there and many of you folks that have good

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memories probably recognize some of these names as being prominent drug traffickers in the '70s.

03:20:56:19      It helps to understand who these people were and how they got there. In 1973 the Ienday (ph.) government in Chile was toppled in a coup. I think it's safe to say at that point in time, they began to round up every criminal that they could find, drug traffickers and others, bring them into the stadiums where they were dealt with.

03:21:18:07      Chileans were effectively put out of the cocaine business at that time and poised to take over when they left the cocaine business were the Columbians. By that time, certainly knowledgeable enough to establish and take over the business from the Chileans, and so they did.

03:21:35:26      Many of these people we were able to identify by going to the New York City police department pick-pocket squad. We were working with the NYPD in those days closely. In fact the case that resulted in the indictment of all these people was a joint NYPD/DEA case in New York.

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- 03:21:55:03      How did we identify these people, we took the witnesses at the pick-pocket squad and just went through reps. For those of you that remember the way old photo file cabinets were, they were kind of these drawers with the flip cards, some of you people who aren't youngsters might actually remember that.
- 03:22:10:22      No computers, nothing of the sort and we had the witnesses sit there for three days in a row, just pulling out trays and flipping cards. And she'd say yeah, that's Peppe Guerra, yeah that's this guy, yeah that's that guy. And that's how we went about identifying the people that were at that time controlling the cocaine business in New York City.
- 03:22:30:03      They were organized, the cops had seen these people in places like Madison Square Garden, Times Square on New Year's Eve, sporting events and venues. They weren't selling cocaine in 1969, 1968, 1967, they were picking pockets. They worked in teams, they were very well organized and they schooled each other.

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03:22:48:21      One witness told me that these people could probably take the wrist watch off your wrist without you knowing it, that's how adept they were. So they were organized and they found a new commodity, cocaine and they were busy. They were successful because they planned their actions well, they worked in teams, they controlled the business from Medagene (ph.).

03:23:09:20      They had people on the ground in the States, places like New York, Miami, Houston, LA. But the bosses, the bravos in Reselda Blanco never traveled to the United States unless they absolutely had to. They worked the phones. These were the traffickers who ran the business. They were competing with the Chileans for awhile as I said, and then they were poised to take over the business.

03:23:31:27      What were they moving in those days, early '70s, one to five kilos, a big load was 10 kilos and maybe that was two or three people on the same flight with some type of concealment. The kind of concealments we saw in those days, hollowed out coat hangars, double sided suitcases... concealed within any type of commodity,

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kids' toys, toothpastes, you can see in the photo here.

03:23:57:00 These were the big traffickers in 1975, these were the guys that were selling in places like Queens, New York that would later become the epicenter for the cartels. By mid-'70s we began to see a shift, cocaine abuse was now rampant. This whole notion that it was safe, everybody was using cocaine.

03:24:26:03 It was common to see people walking around the city with a coke spoon hanging off a necklace on their neck, making it easier for them to snort cocaine. It was sheik, it was what the in people did and so... by the mid-1970s to the late 1970s, we begin to see shipments of 20 to 100 kilos, the jumps astronomical and we're wondering what's going on here?

03:24:56:09 Now they'd have a half a dozen couriers on a flight, everybody had double sided suitcases or a shipment of flowers, whatever the case was, the shipments were increasing in size and the money was increasing as well. We began to see light aircraft being used in

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places like the Bahamas, going into South Florida, using the light aircraft with the fast boat.

03:25:19:13      And so they'd do an air drop and the guys in the fast boat, the cigarette boat would pick it up and bring it into South Florida, some place, usually in the Keys. Once they landed it on some barren Key, then they'd drive it up... to... to Miami. And so the business was changing right before our eyes, but we as an agency weren't really paying attention.

03:25:40:10      In fact the drug policy in New York was, that we couldn't work cocaine cases. To be honest, the DEA office in New York could not spend money and put together cocaine cases, we were focused on heroin and dangerous drugs. The reason for that was obvious, Washington didn't think it was a problem in New York.

03:26:02:17      And the politics of the day under President Carter was such that this was a benign drug. By 1980 and so the... the SAC in New York at the time basically said a policy was that we couldn't spend money working cocaine cases. The task force thankfully could and so those guys that were working with the cops were able

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to spend money, make buys and all that intelligence that they were gathering in those days, would ultimately help us later on as we started to put together some more complex conspiracies.

03:26:28:18 By 1980 I transferred to San Juan, whole different picture there. The SAC was 100 percent into the cocaine program. And cocaine was a huge problem in San Juan and thankfully we could work the cases, we could penetrate undercover, we could spend money to put together the kind of cases that would give us the intelligence we needed to be successful.

03:26:48:01 It became obvious to me at that time, that DEA was controlled, indeed every agency at the law enforcement level, federal law enforcement level, was controlled by regional directors who basically decided how to spend their local money. There was no direction from headquarters, no national level program that really directed funds.

03:27:10:05 The funds were directed by each SAC and if they SAC had priorities in heroin, that's where the money went. In South Florid and Puerto Rico, the money was focused

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on cocaine. By the early 1980s Miami and South Florida had become a hub for cocaine drug barrens. It wasn't long before we began to witness violence in the streets, bloodshed, shootings at... shopping malls, machine gunnings, numerous people killed, some of them dirty, some of them innocent citizens.

03:27:38:17 And whatever the case was, it was problematic. And... the cocaine was coming in more then ever now and the light aircraft, fast boats, palletized cocaine and so now we're seeing seizures in the hundreds of kilos by the early 1980s. Really becoming a problem, the violence in Florida is becoming a problem. The citizenry is getting upset.

03:28:04:01 If it sounds like Al Capone, it was, South Florida was Chicago, the similarities, big money, big commodity that they had to sell, cocaine versus alcohol, huge market, violence attendant to territorial disputes between traffickers. And so that was... there was a confluence of things happening in South Florida at that time that made it a very interesting place to be.

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03:28:31:00 To complicate matters, Fidel Castro opens the gates and Jimmy Carter begins to accept the Mario boat people. So who does Castro open the gates to, every prison... in Cuba and he begins to release his worse criminals, his hardened criminals, onto boats and send them to the United States.

03:28:53:15 These guys hit the ground running in Miami, they're looking to become millionaires and this whole notion of the Mario gangster... finding his way into organized crime in South Florida is very well documented and Hollywood made a big deal about it in the "Scarface" movies that you... you may recall.

03:29:12:11 But... suffice to say that the violence in the streets, coupled with the Mario boatlift people, coupled with these light aircraft, fast boats, bringing in cocaine made Miami a very tough place to work. They called it the Cocaine Cowboys, it was the era of the Cocaine Cowboy and it was going on before our eyes in South Florida.

03:29:39:08 And so we can see that... how we were broken down in those days, the SAC had investigative discretion,

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deciding how and when to spend his money. Focus on national, international level conspiracy cases wasn't really a DEA priority in terms of policy organizational makeup. There was no prohibition, but the idea of having some central office in Washington kind of directing where we should be focusing our energies, was non-existent.

03:30:05:05      Indeed we had drug desks and we were broken down by region in those drug desks. Even the South Florida task force which President Reagan reacted to the South Florida citizenry when they were screaming about these shootings at Dagland (ph.) Mall and people dying in the streets and all these cocaine cowboys running around in the Lambergunis and so forth.

03:30:25:27      How does he react, he creates a South Florida task force, it wasn't led by Elliot Ness like the attack on Al Capone, it was led by the Vice President. So we're operating at a White House level in South Florida. But the idea was, this is not a South Florida problem folks, this is a national problem, indeed it's an international problem.

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03:30:43:08 But we're putting a... a South Florida fix in place. And so they did and for awhile the violence went down... the shootings went down, the amount of cocaine coming directly into South Florida went down. We weren't seeing airplanes landing on the highways anymore when they ran out of gas.

03:31:00:01 We weren't seeing the Coast Guard bringing in hundreds of... mother ships and things of that nature into Miami Port. The people were happy but the problem had disbursed and all that energy in South Florida just moved it some place else. And so we were bogged down in regional efforts, often laced with inter-agency rivalries, I can tell you.

03:31:22:04 There were times you weren't even talking to customs and we'd be working the same people, we'd bump into each other on surveillance and we wouldn't compare notes. It was a problem and then America discovered crack... Crack as all of you know is a smokeable form of cocaine. The only difference is, it's not benign, it's highly addictive.

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- 03:31:48:10      And so now we were faced with this problem of people cooking cocaine in their own kitchens, in their home, creating crack cocaine which is a smokeable form of rock which is highly addictive and although it began in inner city and that's where we saw most of the initial impact, it would later spread across the country and people were smoking crack everywhere.
- 03:32:14:03      Cheap, easy to make, smokeable and highly addictive. So we could see... that this notion that it was benign and the belief that the White House even had in the late 1970s that it was a benign drug, pleasurable, should be in the same category as marijuana, was bogus, it couldn't have been more incorrect.
- 03:32:37:23      But because we were focused in terms of policy, in the belief that this was a benign drug, we wind up in the 1980s with this epidemic exploding underneath us, violence in the streets and so on. While we were reacting to all of these things and now everybody's in motion, now there's all kinds of policy statements coming out of Washington.

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03:33:05:07 We have to something about this cocaine problem and so here at Washington we're starting to better organize ourselves as an agency. We're creating special operations, Operation Pipeline, Operation Calico, Operation whatever, focusing on those people that we know to be controlling the traffic.

03:33:24:13 Now the heat is on, now the White House is definitely involved but they're all over us like a new suit. We have to do something about this cocaine problem, it's "out of hand". So we did, by the 1990s we knew exactly who the traffickers were... those of you that were around then obviously know, Pablo Esquibar, Carlos Slater, the Americano, Richard Gessgotcha (ph.), Puertio Chilla and others, based in Medagene, more in the mode of Al Capone.

03:33:54:00 These guys were traditional gangsters, bad guys. Pablo Esquibar in the last years of his life was probably more a terrorist than he was a drug trafficker, a billionaire, extremely powerful but a man on the run, scared, violent. Guys from Callian on the other hand, much more business people, violent but not gratuitous violence.

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- 03:34:20:25      Much rather negotiate and pay for privilege then to kill for privilege and so they got a lot of privileges. By the 1990s these guys were in charge, they were all billionaires, DEA has the records to show that they were billionaires, this is not one of these numbers that somebody pulled out of a hat.
- 03:34:38:17      These guys genuine... billionaires that had perfected the cocaine business and how the business is done and how the business continues to be done today. All fugitives, all indicted by that time and on the run because DEA and the Columbian national police want to arrest them for extradition.
- 03:35:02:22      In 1991, that all changes through influence, when they're having a constituent assembly in Columbia to rewrite the constitution, when the final document is written, extradition is outlawed. So now these guys can surrender and there's all kinds of beneficial programs that allowed them to get more involved and integrated into Columbian criminal society so to speak and "surrender".

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03:35:23:11      And many of them do, others continue to run and get killed in fire fights with the police and yet others get arrested and incarcerated. Whatever their method of going to jail or dying by the mid-1990s they're done. Criminal organizations that we know as the Columbian cartels were over, but their legacy continued.

03:35:47:22      During the 1990s we weren't talking hundreds of kilos anymore, now we're talking tons, these people had so dominated the business that it was nothing to see multi-tons being smuggled in jet aircraft into Mexico. Moving across the United States in tractor trailers filled with ton quantities of cocaine and seizures in place like Miami, Houston and LA and New York, multi-ton seizures.

03:36:11:09      Sometimes in conveyances other times in stash apartments. One seizure in Silmar (ph.), California, I think 27 metric tons in one place, this is a lot of cocaine feeding this monster crack addiction that the United States is suffering from. The Columbian cartels made important alliances with Mexican

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trafficking organizations and I believe all that still continues to today.

03:36:37:28      And so it was very easy, much easier for them to smuggle into Mexico and then have it go across the border then for them to try and manager that whole business themselves. And so this unholy alliance between the Columbians and Mexicans for us was a real problem because it shifted to this huge border between the United States and Mexico.

03:36:55:17      In 1990 we were told, I was transferred to headquarters and my instructions from then administrator was, put together a program and let's address these people, so we did. And we put together what's called the King Pin strategy and basically it incorporated an important international component and that is having good partners in Columbia.

03:37:18:01      And so we began to work closer with the Columbians on a strategy that would allow us to put as much pressure as we could on the cartels. And in 1992 Administrator Bonner embraced the King Pin strategy and said, let's

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get busy. There were numerous things that were part and parcel of the King Pin program.

03:37:39:27 Targeting funding and coordination of cases involving approved and selected king pins was all done through headquarters, if you can imagine, the SAC's weren't real happy about that. More than one SAC that had a huge budget would find his budget cut and money brought back to headquarters so we could better direct where they were spending that money.

03:38:00:02 And we targeted the main vulnerabilities in the cartels, first and foremost, we made it personal, wanted posters, things of that nature. Interviews on television. Pablo Esquivar is a top gangster and Medegene, he's a killer, he's a murderer, he knocks down Avianca jets, he blows up shopping malls.

03:38:17:09 This is a guy we have to put in jail. And so we made it personal and made everybody aware that these were the people who were being targeted. Cartel lab operations and the chemicals they need to produce cocaine were also targeted. We focused on their transportation networks and DoD played a big role here

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in helping us to better organize to interdict... the cocaine as it was making its way from Columbia to the United States, especially the route through Mexico.

03:38:44:02 Aggressive interception here in the US and abroad of cartel communications, in those days, most phones. Today I'm sure... something entirely different including phones. And we went after their money, I can recall in one seizure over one weekend we tied about \$73 million in Chepa Santa Cruz's money.

03:39:02:07 Did it put him out of business, no. Did it piss him off, yes. But he shook it off and he said, hey, we go forward, \$73 million, not bad. When you can shake that off, you're making big money. Although this change was viewed as radical by the SAC's, they still had discretion within the areas of responsibility to set their priorities.

03:39:26:17 But where we had a King Pin organization identified, those priorities were set by headquarters and headquarters would work closely with the divisions to do the appropriate targeting. Initially, we chose a

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small group of targets, Medegene, Calli and on the heroin side a few people in Asia.

03:39:46:18 By the mid-1990s most of the leadership of the Medegene and Calli cartel were either dead or in prison, having been apprehended or surrendered to Columbian authorities or killed in firefights. Their (unint.) influence changes in government, corrupt elections, terrorized their own nation and controlled the cocaine traffic was in large part diminished.

03:40:04:27 We eliminated the threat to the US but cocaine trafficking continued. The King Pin program obviously no longer exists, but SOD which was created in the midst of all of that continues today. So what did we learn from this experience? We need good international partners, vetted, well-equipped and well funded and God knows and Dave knows this better than I do.

03:40:27:10 The Columbians were always excellent partners to DEA, then and I'm sure now. Headquarters coordination to targeted organizations is essential. Although the SAC really does know what's going on in his AOR, these

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cases are beyond any area of responsibility. They generally take on a national and very often nowadays, an international aspect.

03:40:49:13      You need an all source targeting system and have policies that are flexible as to targeting and resources. I mentioned SOD but obviously there was an important intelligence component that went into that as well here in DEA headquarters, an ability that allowed us to take all sources, crunch data, combine the analysis of that with the NAVIS database and then go about generating and developing leads that would help the operations division do their job.

03:41:18:00      These policies on the intelligence side and the operation side have to be flexible, your targets can move, politics can change and policies can change and so you have to be able to retarget and you have to be able to reallocate resources. And to do that you need state of the art intelligence and evidence collection capabilities.

03:41:38:21      And so that's what... I learned in my 26 years and I'm happy to pass the... the podium to Dave Gattis who's

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going to continue bring you up to date on today. So I understand we're going to have time for some questions after and I'll be happy to participate. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

**DAVID GADDIS**

03:42:14:26 DG: Good morning I'm Dave Gaddis, it's a pleasure to be here with all of you. Very pleased to come back to DEA headquarters online. Only I stand between you and lunch and keeping that in mind I will be brief. Mr. Nieves was not kidding when he explained his position and his role in establishing a new strategy, a very innovative strategy called the targeted King Pin organization strategy or TKO back in 1992.

03:42:52:24 I was in Costa Rico as an agent doing investigations and with that one of the first TKO targets that we... focused on was the Rodriguez-Allawaya (ph.) brothers because they were shipping via container cargo tons of cocaine from Buena Ventura out of Columbia directly into the Pacific and Atlantic ports in Coast Rico.

03:43:22:18 And... I have to say... innovative trend setters... are usually considered a bit archaic when their products

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or their ideas are found in a museum and you can find Mr. Nieves' ideas in our DEA Museum, but make no mistake, he's not archaic by any stretch of the imagination.

03:43:45:29 I would like to spend a second to make a tribute to Bobby Nieves because he had cleared paths for people like myself and others to walk through where we find ourselves looking and using the priority targeting organization, PTO strategies and the Justice CPOTS, consolidate priority organizational target strategy, which is now the full adult of the TKO strategy which he created.

03:44:17:20 And I want to personally say thank you for that. Now what I would like to do briefly, is to... provide an introduction to current DEA foreign operations for some of you who may not be that familiar with it. We'll focus on Latin America and I would like to do that by answering the three principal W's: where we are, what we are and why are we there?

03:44:50:00 Additionally I'd like to provide an inside peak of what we do and the good that results. Now here is the

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face of DEA foreign operations, it's quite impressive isn't it? I've always been impressed when I've seen our global positions, by DEA. We're in over 80 offices worldwide.

03:45:17:09      DEA takes the fight to the enemy. This is a doctrine that has been practiced by our agency for decades. Over the last five years or six years, it's a doctrine that has been practiced by other agencies in our government or our government at large, but DEA has been doing it practically the entire existence and it's a doctrine that works.

03:45:43:26      In 2001 we went back to the regionalization program and you'll see those where the stars are at. Mr. Nieves had made mention of regional... regional directors and regionalization years prior, we got out of it and we found that we really needed in this global environment, in the sense of transnational crime and how fluid criminal networks operated, we needed to get back to regionalization.

03:46:18:12      In the last five years we've been working to that end and it has been very successful. Number one, we're a

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more efficient force and we're providing a more effective threat to our enemy. In the age of technology... you have satellite communications, commercially acquired very easily, you can go to a store with the money the narcos have, they can be satellite communications.

03:46:51:19 They can use... wireless communications quite easily, almost anywhere in the world. Internet, encryption devices, text messaging, graphic imaging, all of this stuff has actually enhanced the capability of our enemy, international drug trafficking organizations to work simply from country to country, from region to region, around the globe.

03:47:17:20 And this is resulted in two upsetting trends, number one, they do not recognize any borders from country to country, and number two, they have no respect for national sovereignties. Quite frankly, we see everyday trafficking organizations working between Columbia for instance, through Central America, the seven countries of Central America, into Mexico and then over into the United States.

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03:47:43:00 Or we might see someone, some trafficking organization from South America working over through Africa into Western Europe. I'll give you a quick example of... how modern times has influenced drug trafficking. Exactly 15 days ago, in Columbia about an hour outside of Calli, we had a unit of Behene (ph.) police officers which is the national judicial police, who we work quite, quite well with.

03:48:20:06 We have trained them... they were out on a... anti-narcotics raid, they had an informant with them. And they were showing up a farm where there were various storage facilities or collaitas (ph.) in this... in this farm. As they got to the property and about to open up the property and... and execute their search warrants they were ambushed by a group of about two dozen Columbian Army soldiers who happened to be on the payroll for a major trafficker, a king pin named Diego Montanez Sanchez.

03:49:00:11 All of these officers were killed, they were killed instantly. Within 10 days, the feaqalier (ph.) or the Columbian attorney general's office, working with DEA, was able to identify who had place the order to kill

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these officers and exactly how the plan went out. And we didn't do it with informants, we didn't do it with eye witnesses, we intercepted text messages.

03:49:31:13 The colonel of the Army unit was sending text messages over... over air to the other, to the lieutenant and the sergeant who were preparing for the ambush and we had those text messages delivered over to the (Unint.) office and then sent it to the judge and that's how we ended up arresting... many of the military officials who were involved in this conspiracy to (unint.) for the police.

03:49:56:27 And this happened an hour outside of Calli, I mean this is an extremely rural area, but that's the kind of technology you see. The drug threats for the 21<sup>st</sup> century... are drug trafficking, are precursor chemical movements and money laundering. We can see the hot areas right now.

03:50:21:03 And you may realize that the presence of DEA globally is somewhat overlapping where the threats are, so the process seems to certainly be working. Now I'd like to discuss quickly with you a couple of examples of

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what we're seeing. Over 90 percent of the cocaine is still being manufactured and exported from Columbia or very close to Columbia in the Andean region.

03:50:49:01      What we used to see most of, if not all of the cocaine, going to the United States. It's not like that anymore. We have other players, other consuming nations in... in the world. Western Europe right now is consuming record amounts of cocaine, they're competing with the addiction or the addict population of the United States.

03:51:12:23      Per capita Spain is using more cocaine than the United States, per capita. What we find is that Columbia still remains the... the epi-center for cocaine trafficking. But you can see from the routes and this is a typical example, the routes that are used, sending it through Mexico to the US in ton quantities or perhaps going through Brazil and over the Atlantic Ocean to Africa where it's staged.

03:51:47:20      There are a number of nations that are quite poor in Africa... they're quite easily infiltrated, the governments, and then staged off to Western Europe.

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It's a global problem and of course we can't forget the drug trafficking now has been influencing so much other criminal activity worldwide, to include terrorism.

03:52:08:13      And that might be one reason why we're seeing more and more cocaine transiting to Western Europe. Another example is heroin, you could see the number of countries right now that are... that are involved in this... this example. They will utilize every possible vulnerability that's out there, not just one airline, they'll use every airline.

03:52:34:04      They'll use containerized cargo, they'll use go-fast vessels to fishing boats... it's amazing at the imagination that these trafficking organizations with regard to Columbian heroin have in moving their product to destined markets. We have found that... that one of the most common forms now is embedding it, permeating it into clothing and then just shipping cargo loads of clothing where the receivers in the US would take it, mix it with chemicals and then pull out the heroin.

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03:53:09:05      Very difficult when you have loads and loads of clothing to actually pick what has heroin and what doesn't. Another area... for smuggling has been... sewing it into all kinds of different commodities, everything from golf bags to statues, home decorative items and such.

03:53:35:25      Now if you thought these two were confusing, take a look at this, the money laundering threat. Money laundering is as fluid of an activity as you'll ever find. You can move hundreds of thousands of dollars if not millions of dollars in the course of minutes. And we find it extremely challenging to keep up with the drug money movement.

03:54:00:27      You can see that the United States is connected to Latin America, Latin America is connected to Europe. Asia is connected to the United States, it's this seamless continuum of transfer of cash that's oftentimes mixed with other forms of commodities and I'll give you a quick example of what I mean.

03:54:21:22      In Columbia where I work, we have what we call the black market peso exchange. It's a parallel economy

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to the banking industry and the... the authentic economy to Columbia. It's, excuse the Spanish here, but I can quite easily explain what I'm talking about here. The narco trafficker or the narco terrorist as we have in Columbia, sends his drugs in a variety of ways to the United States or to destined markets in Western Europe.

03:54:56:16 In order for... to get the money back into the traffickers' hands, they need to return it back often time in pesos in order for it to be washed. The way they do that is they find a way to get it into Columbia and into the black market peso exchange. They use brokers to do that, they use... monetary exchange houses to do that.

03:55:17:26 They use false companies that are exporting and importing... legitimate commodities and what they call free zone... tax free zones, or (Unint.) in Columbia. In fact we just had an example about two and a half three weeks ago where \$5.8 million was seized on a vessel that was transporting washing machines, I'm not kidding.

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03:55:42:11 Now that's laundered cash. And we also seized the washing machines too, that gave us another couple hundred thousand dollars on our SSF. And... we found that... that the cash was brought in... from Central America on a boat. It was coming into the Caribbean Coast where it was going to be brought into a unit that belongs to the right wing para-militaries who are primarily responsible for cocaine trafficking right now.

03:56:14:01 We're currently serializing, copying all \$5.8 million so that we can track, work with financial operations to find out exactly where the... federal reserve, the last federal reserve is located that... transited that US cash. Now what's... what's the real reason that we're out, regionalized and working across the globe?

03:56:42:03 Number one, it's saves lives, every time we arrest a major narco and we put him in jail, then he has to... his organization has to step back, reassess where they're going, and it takes... it takes... months, it takes years oftentimes to have that kind of power replaced.

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03:57:07:20      Second, interdiction save lives. Every kilogram of cocaine or heroin that does not enter its destined markets is... terribly important to us because we know, I mean this is preaching to the choir, but we know the impact of... and social cost of drug... drug abuse in our country and elsewhere.

03:57:28:02      A second reason which is very important to me from where I stand is the stabilization of democracies worldwide. If you'll look at this... South America view, you see that the fires are flaring up in a number of South American countries. These are leftist regimes that are seeming to catch popularity from country to country in South America alone.

03:57:55:09      We have our friend Hugo Chavez north of Columbia that's reeking havrack... havoc and unfortunately he has... he has the... the oil caches that allow him to influence a number of other... people, not only in Venezuela but in the region. We actually dodged a bullet when... on Sunday Alan Garcia won the election as opposed to Humala (ph.) who as a leftist regime and would have probably completely deteriorated the national police of Peru which would have set DEA back.

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03:58:32:19 We have other influences from the left in Brazil and (Unint.) and Chile and of course in Bolivia where Able Morales had... had won an election earlier. So it's important for DEA to be in place. Our liaison, our constant engagement and interface with the national police agencies of these countries, does stabilize, does maintain and sustain the sense of stabilization to these democracies.

03:59:01:04 Even when you're dealing with leftist regimes, the counter-drug mission is a common goal. Sometimes they don't quite understand like with Hugo Chavez or they're not quite... motivated because of the political issues associated with their beliefs. Nonetheless they can't refuse because the influences from surrounding countries are such that narco trafficking must be stopped. And we have to work together to do it.

03:59:30:26 So it's important, it's important that we stay in these countries and that we continue to support these police agencies and I'll give you an example of where it works. In the 1980s we had a number of problematic

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governments in this region of Central America. In Guatemala we had insurgents.

03:59:51:19 In El Salvador they had an 11 year war with insurgency. In Nicaragua when Mr. Nieves was in Costa Rico, they were still dealing with the Sandinista government and... and there was a great deal, I mean amazing amount of destabilization and leftist rule in this region.

04:00:12:23 And who could forget Manuel Noriega from Panama, although not a leftist, he was a dictator, he was a... drug trafficker sympathizer, conspirator and he ultimately had to pay the price for it. But now here we are in 2006, in Mexico sure, there's an amazing drug threat there, but we have worked with the Esente Fox quite easily.

04:00:41:29 In Guatemala we're working with an extremely favorable government. In El Salvador, DEA has never been stronger. The US Government, now the embassy's never been stronger. In Nicaragua we have great dialogue and work well politically with the government, Honduras... Panama and Costa Rico as well.

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04:01:06:28      And that's why we stay in these countries and do what we do. DEA is on the frontlines, we're taking the fight to the enemy. It's... it's probably one of the most exciting parts of DEA and... my career, working overseas. It's not because we're working the fastest, biggest fish in the barrel, it's not because we are dealing with multi-national... extremely high-level and well-organized criminal syndicates.

04:01:54:03      It's not because we're keeping or contributing to the stabilization of democratic nations, it's because the agents, analysts and administrative personnel who are overseas are given the opportunity to represent DEA to people from foreign governments who have no concept of what we, what our country's like, what our culture's like, our laws, our norms.

04:02:24:03      And... in talking to an audience that supports what we do overseas... I want to let you know that the nine, maybe ten percent... of the DEA employees who are representing you overseas are doing it with pride and... with pleasure and they're really doing a good job and we need to thank you for being where you are and doing

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what you do because I'm looking at faces here that I know directly benefit what I do in Columbia.

04:03:04:25     And... quite frankly it's been a tremendous pleasure to represent you, thank you very much.     [APPLAUSE]

Not always clear who is answering the questions.

04:04:02:21     Q:     Inaudible.

04:04:08:04     DAVE GADDIS:     I think that's kind of question that we could both answer because... you look at your career in two ways, you look at your career halfway, up to halfway and then perhaps on the latter part and... although there are advantages and benefits to going overseas... in both areas they might be different, the reasons might be different.

04:04:34:18     And I can tell you from... the first half of one's career, the experience that you encounter by working with people of other US Government agencies who operate in entirely different cultures like the US State Department... you have economic folks, you have

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political, commerce, you work with the military oftentimes that have their own unique culture.

04:05:08:23 And... just having that kind of exposure to people in the US Government who share your mission which is to... to benefit the US Government as... you know with respect to that country and it's a tremendous experience. Now you also just have a lot of fun overseas quite frankly from both a professional and a personal level.

04:05:36:08 I mean professionally you really do work some great cases and you get some awesome travel involving to support those cases and you meet... you meet so many different interesting people which is a lot of fun and I don't know Bobby if you want to... add to it.

04:05:53:11 BOBBY NIEVES: I endorse every that Dave said, I think he's on point there. A couple other observations, one, there's a lot to be said for having your boss 4000 miles away... that's a huge plus. I can't tell you how many times I took a phone call from headquarters in those days in Costa Rico and if it was going to be one of those... bad conversations, start hitting the

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phone, saying I can't hear you very well, I think the line's breaking up.

04:06:19:13 We'll have to talk about this tomorrow, that's one. The second thing is, it's a family decision and you really shouldn't apply for an overseas position... alone. Everybody's going to have their own way of how you break that to the family, I just brought it up at dinner.

04:06:34:20 I brought it up in this way, I said... with my transfer to Costa Rico, we had been in Puerto Rico five years and then I got transferred to headquarters in 1984. And we arrived in Baltimore in February with six inches of snow on the ground and we hadn't had winter coats in five years.

04:06:53:03 And so... my kids actually thought it was fun to see snow until they ran outside in the Baltimore Airport... the parking lot and touched it and realized it was about 30 degrees and they said, this isn't for me. Looks good in pictures, it was what my son said at the time.

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04:07:11:05 But you really did... do need to make these decisions... with your family, especially if you're going to a place like Latin America which can occasionally be hostile to families and so... we came home, we had a chat with the family, everybody said yeah, let's go and so we went.

04:07:25:15 But it's important that you share that because you're going to be sharing that experience, whatever it, tow, four, six years and your family members are going to be living it together with you so... that's the only thing I would add to Dave's comment. Any other questions? Yes ma'am.

04:07:43:01 Q: Inaudible.

04:07:52:12 MS: How would Mr. Gaddis chara... let me preface that by saying you know in my tenure we had found... that all these issues generally were personality dependent. If you had the right personality in the right job you could get things done.

04:08:06:21 If you had the wrong personality... you weren't so successful in getting those things done. And so in my

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time, we... we had... I'm talking about the '80s now, we had a lot of consternation between the outfits, competition that went too far. By 1990 that was all... forgotten and we were really getting along well.

04:08:27:22      And so I think it's... it really has a lot to do with those personalities in the key jobs that at that time. The ongoing issues with customs... or legacy customs now DHS are... quite challenging to overcome. In 19... in the 1990s there were some memorandums of understanding, some agency-to-agency guidance in how the two agencies would play off one another.

04:08:59:22      And... and along with... I would agree with Bobby that along with... personality driven issues, you could get along and make cases... in a parallel way, very successfully. With... with the 9/11 development and the creation of DHS, there have been a number of... issues surfacing that tore down... many, many years, perhaps a decade or so of... of work in agreeing who would do what.

04:09:41:06      And... and how there would be interface between the two agencies. And I'm not... I'm just going to be quite

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frank with you, it has... it has really set us back in working as well together as we had in the past and as we would like. Overseas that... that... we're impacted as well.

04:10:02:00 Now that's one issue, another factor is... simply we, DEA has become very involved with anti-money laundering work and we had not done that for a number of years and... now that we're back into that game and that's the type of... of counter-drug works that legacy customs had focused on for many... many years while we were out of the game.

04:10:29:03 Now that we're back in, so we have crossed wires with respect to... to those types of investigations as well, it's creating some problems.

04:10:39:00 MS: And let me say in 1973 President Nixon solved this problem by creating DEA. [LAUGHTER] True... absolutely true.

04:10:48:21 MS: That's right.

04:10:52:16 MS: Comments, questions, yes?

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04:10:54:20 Q: Inaudible.

04:11:43:25 BOB NIEVES: So, somebody want to answer that? I'll take a shot, I have nothing to loose... I was a product of some of that... and so I can say that... you know it's a coin toss, you really... there's no such thing as creating the great diplomat you know. And in many embassies in my time and maybe even today, DEA is often viewed by political officers as cowboys you know.

04:12:14:18 And so sometimes that's a stigma you carry going into an embassy. In other embassies where ambassadors and political officers have had good experiences with DEA, then you know we're treated on... on an equal basis. And certainly a place like Bogotá where the primary mission of the embassy is drugs... he's got to have a power seat in what's called the country team.

04:12:35:21 You know I don't know that there's any... anyway to really make... establish a career path for... a special agent or even an intelligence officer that dictates how good he's going to be as a country attaché or as a

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top intell person in an embassy. Just a... just a... hard to day.

04:12:57:28 I think what DEA got away from and... and maybe what they need to do a little bit more of is... in my time, back in the '80s, they did have... instruction that DEA agents that were being posted overseas had to go through that kind of walked them through that whole cultural... situation that exists in embassies.

04:13:18:16 There's no magic to being an embassy and the Department of State doesn't have a lock on being great stewards of our diplomacy overseas, I think DEA does a fine job. And... there again I think personalities play a key role in that. If a guy's a... a zero in terms of management and people skills here in the United States, no amount of training is going to make him a better... people skill person overseas.

04:13:44:07 Likewise if he's... got good people skills here, chances are he's going to use those people skills well in an embassy. So I don't really know that you can create a path, but I'll put you in the hot seat.

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04:13:56:00      DAVE GADDIS: No, I second everything that... that Bobby's saying. I would however prefer that... that the investigator cadre of agents have adequate experience in the domestic arena being assigned overseas, not the supervisors, but the actual investigative and analytical personnel.

04:14:19:14      They should have an adequate experience, a minimum I believe of five years... in the domestic arena, so that they really learn the job from a domestic standpoint for a number of reasons. It's very complicated to work overseas...

**TAPE CUTS OUT HERE MID-SENTENCE**