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- [Press Releases](#)
- [Speeches and Statements](#)
- [Testimony](#)
- [Multimedia](#)
- [Contacts](#)

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Secretary Napolitano Highlights U.S.-Mexico Cooperation on Cocaine Seizure in Mexico City

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano commended today the seizure of 630 kilograms (0.69 tons) of cocaine by Mexican customs officials at Mexico City International Airport using non-intrusive screening equipment also utilized by DHS and training provided by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—part of a major transnational cooperative effort to combat international drug smuggling and deter drug-related violence along the U.S.-Mexico border.

“Over the past several weeks, we have stepped up our efforts to stop Southwest border violence at its source—the trafficking of drugs, guns and cash. This seizure illustrates how DHS is working closely with Mexico to share best practices and expertise to ensure that both countries are taking action to secure the border,” said Secretary Napolitano. “As we strengthen relationships between DHS, Mexico and our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners along the border, we will continue to deter these illegal activities and make our countries safer.”

Mexico Customs discovered the cache of cocaine hidden in a shipment of polyethylene plastic rolls when abnormal characteristics were revealed by a non-intrusive inspection on May 11. The inspection technology used at Mexico City International Airport is similar to that employed by DHS for inspections along the Southwest border, and CBP and ICE are currently engaged in technical assistance and training programs to help implement advanced screening techniques in Mexico.

The President's Southwest Border Initiative, announced on March 24, deployed additional personnel and new technology along the U.S.-Mexico border while emphasizing closer coordination with the Mexican government—including Mexico Customs. This seizure is the latest in a series of successes as a result of the initiative.

On May 10, CBP seized \$200,000 in U.S. currency during outbound inspections in Progreso, Texas, when officers detected anomalies while performing a routine X-ray scan on a pickup truck. Following a canine inspection, the officers discovered 18 heat-sealed packages of U.S. currency hidden in a roaster oven inside the vehicle.

In addition, on May 2, CBP officers and ICE agents in Laredo, Texas, seized more than \$302,000 in American currency hidden in boxes of detergent during a joint outbound operation.

The Administration's security cooperation efforts with Mexico, including the Southwest Border Initiative and the Merida Initiative, are designed to support Mexico's war against violent drug cartels by limiting the flow of cash, firearms and ammunition from the United States to Mexico, increasing coordination with Mexican authorities and state and local law enforcement partners in the United States and enhancing Mexican law enforcement capability.

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U.S. Department of Homeland Security