



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AFFAIRS

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Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss our important partnership with the Government of Mexico. Through this unprecedented partnership forged between our two governments over the past seven years, great progress has been made in strengthening the capacity of Mexico's justice sector to counter organized crime and protect our shared border. And working in partnership with the Peña Nieto administration, we are continuing our strong collaborative efforts with the Government of Mexico to advance our shared citizen security objectives.

In 2008, at the start of the Merida Initiative, drug cartel-related violence in Mexico had been increasing dramatically, corruption was a threat to rule of law, and Mexican institutions were not able to deal effectively with the impunity of these powerful criminal networks. The people of Mexico had little confidence in their institutions, and the unmitigated flow of illicit money and narcotics clouded the prospects of Mexico's licit economy. In 2008, Mexico took the important first step of passing constitutional reforms to overhaul its entire justice sector including the police, judicial system, and corrections at the federal, state and local levels. Mexico's institutional reforms and its objective of building strong institutions that its citizens can depend on to deliver justice provided a foundation for U.S. cooperation.

Since 2008, our assistance under the Merida Initiative has helped advance Mexico's implementation of these reforms. To date, the U.S. government has delivered approximately \$1.2 billion worth of training, capacity building, and equipment. By no means do we go it alone: the Government of Mexico has contributed billions of its own resources, outpacing our own, to our shared security goals. And because our assistance is designed jointly with the Government of Mexico, many programs form integral parts of Mexico's justice sector reforms and enjoy a high level of sustainability.

Our partnership with Mexico has demonstrated results, through it we have: helped advance the transition to the accusatory justice system through the training of over 8,500 federal justice sector personnel; augmented the professionalization of police units by providing training to more than 22,000 federal and state police officers, 4,000 of which are federal investigators; improved the capacity and security of its federal prisons, supporting the expansion of secure federal facilities from five with a capacity of 3,500 to 14 with a capacity of 20,000; provided civic education and ethics training to more than 700,000 Mexican students; and improved the detection of narcotics, arms, and money at the border, reaching nearly \$3.8 billion in illicit goods seized. In addition, since 2009, Mexico has

apprehended more than 70 senior and mid-level drug trafficking organization (DTO) leaders, notably Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman Loera, significantly disrupting all major Mexican DTOs. These are noteworthy outputs that, with continued collaboration and political commitment, will help enhance security for citizens on both sides of the border.

The Initiative continues to be structured around the four pillar framework: 1) Disrupting the operational capacity of organized crime; 2) Institutionalizing Mexico’s capacity to sustain the rule of law and protect human rights; 3) Creating a 21st century border; and 4) Building strong and resilient communities. This framework, combined with the shift toward training and an emphasis on building capacity at the state and local level, is the basis for our security cooperation with the Peña Nieto Administration going forward.

When President Peña Nieto took office in December 2012, he and his Administration took a close and deliberate look at the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship, including our security cooperation. After a careful review, the Government of Mexico has committed to continuing our collaboration on security issues under the four-pillar Merida framework, with a sharper focus on crime prevention and rule of law. The Peña Nieto Administration has laid out its long-term plans for improving citizen security through its ten-point security strategy that includes crime prevention and effective criminal justice, police professionalization, transforming the prison system, promoting citizen participation and international coordination on security, transparent statistics on crime rates, coordination among government authorities and regionalization to focus efforts, and strengthening of intelligence to combat crime. These elements track well with the planning and direction of the work that I manage, International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) programming, which aims to help build professionalized and credible civilian security.

In recent months, we have reached agreement with the Government of Mexico on areas of programmatic focus for our security cooperation under Merida. We have launched a robust process for getting security assistance programs green lighted that consists of joint executive level meetings between INL Mexico and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and the Ministry of Government (SEGOB). Since November 2013, 78 projects, totaling more than \$430 million have been approved through this process. These projects span all four pillars of Merida with a focus on bilateral priority areas – assistance to the states in law enforcement capacity building, support to the Government of Mexico’s efforts on its southern border strategy, and justice sector reform.

In seeking to further justice sector reform, the Attorney General's Office (PGR) has demonstrated commitment to advancing the transition to the accusatory justice system and recently agreed to several programs supporting this transition at the federal and state level. We will continue building the skills of prosecutors, investigators, and experts, enhancing the technical capacity of courtrooms throughout the country to handle oral trials, and helping to train law school students in crucial oral trial skills. Additionally we are working with the PGR's criminal investigation arm, akin to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, to enhance its human and technological capacity to pursue complex investigations.

To help Mexico build policing capacity for its communities, we are putting in place the building blocks to expand police training to the state and municipal level. We have strengthened police academies in the states of Chihuahua, Sonora, Nuevo Leon, and Puebla, enabling them to serve as the backbone for training programs and to conduct regional training. We are building our joint state training program around this regional structure but expanding it to reach all of Mexico's 31 states and the Federal District. Some programs will be regional in their application, enhancing cooperation between law enforcement officials in neighboring states as they implement reforms. Contending with transnational crime and violence against communities takes collaboration and partnerships. And that is why, in addition to regional training academies, we are supporting task forces at the state level to better develop and share police intelligence, augmenting local capacity to combat criminal organizations.

Building on the Peña Nieto Administration's agenda for police professionalization, we will work with the Government of Mexico to enhance and professionalize existing law enforcement institutions to develop federal standards for Mexican officials in the areas of recruitment, training, discipline and promotion. Drawing upon expertise here at home, U.S. Federal, state, and local partners will help to advise their Mexican counterparts on policing standards and best practices, and facilitate regional working groups that integrate state, local, and federal entities. Police professionalization, greater observance of civil and human rights, and greater trust among the Mexican public in its police will result.

Greater border security capacity, along Mexico's northern and southern borders is also a significant bilateral priority. Our governments have committed to further enhancing the Government of Mexico's ability to interdict illicit narcotics, arms, and money as well as strengthen control of porous border areas. Using the train the trainer method to multiply the impact of our assistance, we have already provided specialized training for police, military, and Mexican Customs officials

that address advanced border security and import/export processing techniques and methodologies. On Mexico's southern border, we expect that our assistance programs will help to improve communications among Mexican law enforcement, immigration, and community officials, increasing their interoperability and capacity to share information to adapt to evolving criminal tactics. This is important to Mexico's national security and it is to ours as well. It goes without saying that strengthening Mexico's capacity to control its border with Belize and Guatemala, which Mexico is already taking steps to do, will improve security on our own southern border.

In addition to new programs that we expect to have underway in the year ahead, we continue to build on the success of several ongoing programs. For example, Mexico's federal corrections system continues to be a recognized international leader in corrections reform, with eight federal facilities already certified by the independent American Correctional Association. The reforms already underway, including the creation of an objective prisoner classification system and the construction of new facilities, are making great strides. Mexico's success in reforming the corrections systems at the federal level can serve as the launching point for supporting similar reforms at the state level, where significant challenges remain. We will support Mexico in assessing state facilities and in its efforts to undertake similar reforms at the state level.

We will also continue supporting Mexico's efforts to improve information sharing among its agencies involved in the fight against money laundering and illicit finance, a priority area for the Peña Nieto administration. Enhanced Mexican interagency coordination will lead to more prosecutions and cash seized. We have already provided funding for the training of the Financial Intelligence Unit's (FIU) personnel, sophisticated financial analysis software, and the accompanying computer hardware. Given the expanded responsibilities of the FIU under the new anti-money laundering legislation passed in late 2012, we are providing additional support for upgrades and expanding their data center.

Complementary to our assistance at the institutional level, we will also continue to support local communities by promoting behavioral changes for improving rule of law from the ground up, such as through our Culture of Lawfulness program. This program offers a civic education curriculum to schools throughout Mexico, professional ethics education for the federal and state police as well other public officials, and informs citizens on the process for reporting crime and collects feedback on their experience of reporting crime through on-site monitors at local public prosecutors' offices in Mexico City.

These examples of past, current, and future security collaboration with Mexico are just that, examples. Building strong and able justice sector institutions capable of dealing with organized crime and the accompanying violence and corruption is a difficult and long-term endeavor. It takes years of dedicated and sustained work across numerous institutions and sectors, the political will to affect change, and the resources and stamina to see it through. This is the path toward secure and safe communities and secure and safe economies. Our work with Mexico over the past seven years has achieved far reaching results and I am confident that our collaborative efforts will continue.

Thank you, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel and other distinguished Members for your time. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.