

**Testimony of Christopher A. Landberg,
Senior Bureau Official of State for
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House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere
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“Mexico’s Relationship with the Region”**

Chairwoman Salazar, Ranking Member Castro, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss how the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, also known as INL, is advancing President Trump’s mission in Mexico to secure our homeland from deadly drugs and dismantle the foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) trafficking them.

After years of neglect, the threats from our Southwest border expand across our nation. The recently-published National Security Strategy directs the U.S. government to re-establish full control of our border and protect our nation from cross-border threats including unchecked illegal migration, narco-terrorism, and drugs, in line with President Trump’s day-one Executive Orders on Securing Our Borders and Protecting the American People Against Invasion. INL is at the center of this mission, in partnership with all U.S. national security agencies comprising the national and regional Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTF) established to combat transnational criminal organizations, gangs, and smuggling networks. Under the President’s leadership, reasserting American sovereignty and defending our people is our top priority. We have secured our borders and continue to prevent fentanyl and other drugs, which killed over 80,000 Americans last year, from entering our homeland.

During his September trip to Mexico City to meet with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, Secretary Rubio launched the Security Implementation Group, a framework for swift, decisive bilateral action and also highlighted that security cooperation has reached a historic level.

I just returned from Mexico City, where I joined a U.S. delegation instructed by the Secretary to deliver on this commitment. The results of the President’s leadership on these issues speak for themselves: Mexico has extradited or transferred 133 major cartel figures wanted by U.S. authorities to the United States this year to stand trial for their crimes. This includes Rafael Caro Quintero, who tortured and murdered Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Agent Kiki Camarena in 1985.

The Trump Administration is holding these criminals to account and seeking justice for the American people.

INL delivers targeted training, equipment, and technical expertise to enable Mexican security authorities to work with the HSTF law enforcement agencies to stop crime before it hurts American citizens. INL's approach delivers three critical outcomes: degrading and dismantling cartels so they no longer present a threat to the homeland; stopping fentanyl and other drugs at the source to prevent American overdose deaths; and securing the border to stop the flows of illicit goods and illegal aliens.

INL-trained anti-money laundering units are identifying illicit financial networks and seizing cartel assets. Our vetted units of highly selected and trained Mexican officers are working alongside U.S. law enforcement agencies participating in the HSTF – including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement-Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI), DEA, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) – and are producing major wins.

This year, INL-supported ICE-HSI vetted units of Mexican officers dismantled 29 synthetic-drug producing clandestine labs. In September, an INL-supported vetted unit worked with ICE-HSI and its Operation Hydra to divert and seize a single shipment of over 316,000 kilograms of methamphetamine precursors—enough to produce 190,000 kilograms of meth valued at \$569 million. That one operation prevented the Sinaloa Cartel from flooding American communities with deadly drugs and dealt them a significant financial blow.

In October, through the HSTF, an INL-supported FBI vetted unit of Mexican officers conducted undercover fentanyl purchases in Mexico that led to the first U.S. indictment of a Jalisco New Generation Cartel-affiliated trafficker, with 150,000 fentanyl pills seized. In November, an INL-supported HSI vetted unit of Mexican officers seized assets from Iván Archivaldo Guzmán Salazar, a leader of Los Chapitos, and son of El Chapo.

In Sonora, again through the HSTF, INL and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) helped launch Mexico's first dedicated state-level border patrol unit, which is already disrupting cartel lookout sites and trafficking routes along the Arizona border. We are also training Mexican forces to counter the threat of weaponized drones. Narco-terrorists already widely use unmanned aircraft

systems to transport drugs and conduct surveillance and INL is supporting both U.S. and Mexican law enforcement to take them down.

As you have heard already today, INL coordinates closely across the U.S. government to advance the HSTF mandates and ensure a unified approach that maximizes results and avoids duplication. For example, INL, the Department of War (DoW), and U.S. law enforcement agencies work together to build Mexican security force interoperability, operational proficiency, and lethality.

While we are providing security support, we are also insisting on greater burden sharing. Mexico must invest more in its own security infrastructure and sustain these capabilities on its own. Our assistance is catalytic, not perpetual. It is also imperative for Mexico to root out corruption within its institutions and bring the full force of its justice system upon the criminals who have brought death and destruction to our Hemisphere.

The cartels remain a powerful and lethal force in Mexico, and the fentanyl and other synthetic drugs that continue to flow across our Southwest border still take far too many American lives. Under President Trump's leadership, the U.S. interagency is working with our Mexican partners to urgently address this threat with unprecedented results. This is what America First security cooperation looks like: swift action, measurable outcomes, and a commitment to protect American lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions, and to continuing to work closely with this committee.