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Mexico, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Justice Announce Initiative to Bolster Investigative Cooperation

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Press Release August 13, 2009



San Antonio, Tex. — Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano, Mexican Attorney General Eduardo Medina-Mora, Mexican National Public Security System Executive Secretary Jorge Tello Peón, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Assistant Secretary John Morton and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Acting Director Kenneth E. Melson today signed a Letter of Intent to develop a coordinated and intelligence-driven response to the threat of cross border smuggling and trafficking of weapons and ammunition.

"Enforcing our laws at the border requires close collaboration with our international and domestic allies to ensure our mutual security," said Secretary Napolitano. "This arrangement underlines our continued commitment to working with Mexico to stop violence and deter criminal activity that threatens safety on both sides of the border."

"The Letter of Intent illustrates our unconditional commitment to improve public safety in the United States and Mexico, and strengthens our determination to investigate and share intelligence to combat international firearms trafficking and violent crime," said Deputy Attorney General David W. Ogden. "Law enforcement agencies in both nations recognize the importance of tracing every crime gun recovered on the Southwest border to help determine trafficking patterns and potential traffickers of illicit firearms."

The arrangement signed today, supported by President Obama and Mexican President Felipe Calderón, will leverage the combined investigative capabilities of ICE, ATF and the Attorney General of Mexico to combat violence and criminal activity along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Letter of Intent recommends a joint strategic implementation plan to develop cooperative protocols to govern weapons and ammunition trafficking investigations in the United States and Mexico and improve information sharing between the two countries to better identify smuggling and trafficking trends and support bilateral investigation efforts.

Secretary Napolitano also publicly announced the formation of the first-ever Mexico-based Border Enforcement Security Task Force (BEST), the latest expansion of the effective BEST initiative to coordinate intelligence sharing on both sides of the border to bolster investigations and crack down on illicit trafficking activities. The Mexico BEST, comprised of approximately 40 personnel representing four Mexican law enforcement agencies, will work with ICE Attaché Mexico City and other U.S. government agencies to utilize intelligence from seizures by the Government of Mexico to respond to leads generated by U.S. law enforcement agencies, including the ten existing Southwest border BESTs.

Secretary Napolitano signed the Letter of Intent following her remarks at ICE's 2009 BEST Conference. In her remarks, she discussed the importance of DHS coordination with Mexico on all aspects of border security and highlighted the BEST teams and other cooperative security efforts—including the arrangement signed today—as examples of the unprecedented coordination between the two nations.

Today's announcement is the most recent arrangement between DHS, the Government of Mexico and other federal agencies. In June, Secretary Napolitano joined with Mexican Secretary of Finance and Public Credit Augustín Carstens to sign a Letter of Intent to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two nations in increasing security and facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and trade.

DHS and the Department of Justice recently enhanced coordination between ATF and ICE to combat international firearms trafficking and between DEA and ICE to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations.

Speech by Attorney General of Mexico, Eduardo Medina Mora, at the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Conference (BEST)

San Antonio, Texas, August 13, 2000



I am delighted to be here this morning with Janet Napolitano, as said a solid rock partner in law enforcement, and a true friend. Thank you.

The Friday before last I sat on the wooden bench of Judge Copsy's drug court in Boise, Idaho, as I listened to a woman named Tracey tell us about her journey through meth addiction and how she clings everyday to the expectation of staying clean. A week earlier we were taken aback by the news of a dozen federal police officers that had been sequestered and executed in cold blood in Michoacan by a criminal group that calls itself, in an abominable way, La Familia. A month ago, Mexican Navy marines were pulling cocaine out of frozen sharks inside a maritime container in Progreso, Yucatan.

Everyday there is a new, appalling, strange expression of the drug trade and other activities of organized crime that hurt our societies so much. It is not easy to make sense of it all, of condensing into a rational and logical explanation what we are striving for. Is our objective simply to enforce the rule of law? Or should we aim to get back the peace and security that our communities demand? How exactly is it that we succeed every time that a drug kingpin is put behind bars, especially when he is efficiently replaced within days of his arrest? Is the interdiction of 10 tons of pseudoephedrine being smuggled in a maritime container a net loss for the drug trade or will the supply chain replace the loss in a few weeks because of their ability to supply whatever the drug market will bear?: With inelastic demand this is a very resilient phenomena. There are certainly no easy answers for us as prosecutors and law enforcement officers.

And, can we imagine, if we are in the thick of it, with the best available information and analysis, still struggling to understand and to assess, what it is like for the average citizen? As I once heard from a Washington DC official, reality is classified, and therefore the perception of reality that our societies acquire from fragmented and oddly presented information seldom helps us to garner their support. This is particularly true when our confrontation with organized crime and the incredibly violent clashes amongst rival criminal groups generates a relatively high, but very visible death toll.

Nevertheless, the simple answer is yes, we have to do it all. We need to help extract addicts from their own private hell, hunt down the murderers of our officers, interdict drugs and get kingpins behind bars. The key though, is not to carry out these duties as isolated missions performed by fragmented agencies, but to integrate the overall effort into a coherent process that makes two plus two add up to much more than four; for the whole to be much more than the sum of its parts. We need to understand why do seemingly rational people fall for drugs, why was their drug use not rejected forcefully enough by their peers, what happens to the money that is payed for drugs, how is it collected, moved, changed

Speech by Attorney General of Mexico Eduardo Medina Mora, at the Border Enforcement Security Task Force Conference (BEST)

into higher denomination bills, what part of the profits stays in the distribution centers, how are the street gangs organized to market millions of individual doses of illegal drugs in hundreds of cities and towns. We need to understand our enemy and his environment. And we need to learn fast, because if we linger for too long reflecting on that knowledge, reality will mutate on us before we know it and we will be back at square one. Not long ago Mexico took the lead in prohibiting the import and marketing of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine by its pharmaceutical industry, so it could not be diverted. These chemical precursors came from China and India. Traffickers quickly moved to alternative manufacturing methods and now use phenilacetic acid, now coming from the United States, to produce meth.

It is a major vulnerability that we collectively still have such major gaps in our knowledge of organized crime and the drug trade. How much of that is because we don't know and how much of our ignorance stems from our not sharing individual pieces of knowledge. We will all be able to make a difference if we focus on consolidating intelligence and use it to guide our actions and invest our resources.



Our bilateral cooperation is part of this notion and the border region between our two countries is exactly where, as the phrase goes, the rubber meets the road. This border is in good measure where things happen for organized crime, but it is also a space where many, many more good things happen on a daily basis, many positive things like our trade, our tourism, the relationship between cities and towns. We need to free our border communities from being harrassed and bullied by organized crime, we need to recover control and give it back to the citizens of both our countries. The border is also the most natural area for bilateral cooperation in law enforcement and prosecutions as it physically brings together both of our national jurisdictions. It is also the working environment where it becomes most evident that none of us is going to succeed if the neighbour doesn't also succeed in defeating organized crime.

That is why the BEST taskforce concept makes sense, because it brings together our need to understand, it offers the possibility of merging all the relevant pieces of intelligence, it brings together the major law enforcement stakeholders and entices them to communicate, it is focused on the specific challenges generated by the border itself and from its inception it has included a presence from the Mexican federal government. Still, for all of these possibilities to actually take place, a lot of leadership will need to be provided by all participants. At a more aggregate level, EPIC's success is the result of three decades of perseverance. Our two countries will have the ability to work better together if well thought out programs like BEST bring us together. The shared feeling of concrete investigative and prosecution successes will open the way for more ambitious projects. Acting forcefully against gun smuggling is exactly the case in point.

After many, many years of not being able to engage bilaterally on the issue of weapons smuggling, I believe that our two governments have finally agreed to focus on gun smuggling as a critical piece of our cooperation and as a shared responsibility.

In just two years we have seized almost 52,000 firearms in Mexico, of which, more than 27,000 are assault weapons. In 2009 63% of total weapons seized are assault rifles. This volume of firearms is equivalent to five times the number of weapons seized from the FARC by Colombian authorities in the year 2008 and over three times the total number of weapons in the hands of El Salvador's FMLN when civil war ended in that country in 1992. The unrestricted arms market in the U. S. is affecting not only the security of Mexico, but of the border region. In BEST I am sure we will find a strong instrument to significantly reduce this particular aspect of crime.

We have to do it all, drugs interdiction, weapons, bulk cash, demand reduction, rehabilitation, arresting and prosecuting criminals. We have to recover the right of citizens to live in peace and harmony with their families in their communities. Presidents Calderon and Obama understand this very well. They are committed. We owe our children and citizens. We have to grab the opportunity and face this enormous challenge successfully. Let's do it together.

Thank you very much.

During the Crisis, Federal Government's Measures Prevented a Drop in Employment: President Calderón

Tuesday, August 11, 2009 | Special Events/Communications Office of the Presidency

- **President Calderón Launches General Motors Transmissions Plant Operations in San Luis Potosí**
- **Declares that Mexico is more competitive today and is showing signs of recovery, which has made specialized firms decide to invest.**



San Luis Potosí, Mexico.-President Felipe Calderón declared that the Federal Government has not stood idly by during the international economic crisis, since the measures it implemented prevented it from reducing employment in Mexico, as borne out by the nearly 35,000 new jobs created during the June-July bimester.

"In other words, we prevented the crisis from doing away with nearly 10% of the country's jobs. And on the contrary, in June, we began to record new jobs in the country. The same thing happened in July.

So in two months, we have created nearly 35,000 jobs, even though this worldwide crisis is still not over," he said.

On tour in San Luis Potosí, in the municipality of Villa de Reyes, the President launched operations at the General Motors Transmission Plant. There he acknowledged that several specialized firms have determined that Mexico is in the most competitive position, not only in comparison with Latin America and Europe, but also with regards to China and India.

Accompanied by State Governor Marcelo de los Santos Fraga, President Calderon reported that the General Motors plant reflects a \$300 million dollar investment, of which the Federal Government contributed up to seven million dollars as part of the Programs to Support Industry. It will also create 600 jobs.

The President added that Mexican workers were another reason why General Motors decided to invest: "Because, as the company is well aware, it is not only a question of generosity or philanthropy, it is a business decision. It knows that it is in its interest to have young, efficient, hardworking workers that will make this plant as or more competitive than the firm's other plants anywhere else in the world," he said. President Calderón repeated the fact that economic crises present enormous challenges as well as opportunities for the automobile industry, which is one of the pillars of Mexico's development and progress. He stressed that despite certain forecasts that predicted that the country would not be able to withstand the adversity it has faced, there are already signs of recovery, that will make it possible to refocus Government actions on integral development with justice within the Mexican economy.

President Felipe Calderón Congratulates Mexican Soccer Team on Victory

Wednesday, August 12, 2009 | Special Events/Communications Office of the Presidency

Mexican President Felipe Calderón telephoned Manager Javier Aguirre this afternoon from Colombia to congratulate him on the Mexican team's victory against the United States. He asked him to congratulate every team member on his behalf.

The Mexican president told the team manager that he watched the football match on his trip to Colombia, adding that the players' perseverance and enthusiasm during the ninety minutes of the match were crucial to the final score. He added that the Mexican team's achievement is proof that working as a team and with confidence in a better future makes it possible to overcome adversity and achieve the goals we have set as a nation.



U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Mexican Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Decide to Strengthen Conservation Cooperation in Big Bend Area of the U.S. - Mexico Border

U.S: Department of Interior News Release August 11, 2009

Washington, D.C. and Mexico, D.F.--In conjunction with the North American Leaders Summit held in Guadalajara, Mexico, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and Mexican Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Juan Elvira announced today their commitment to strengthen conservation along the U.S. - Mexico border.

The Secretary and the Minister will develop a plan to enhance coordination in the Big Bend and El Carmen area of the border and report to Presidents Barack Obama of the United States and Felipe Calderón of Mexico in six months. The proposed plan will take advantage of national parks and protected areas already designated in the Big Bend and El Carmen region, without prejudice to each country's existing legislation, border security, and rights.



“Building upon our shared history of ecosystem and species conservation, the plan will develop a model of bi-national cooperation for the conservation and enjoyment of shared ecosystems for current and future generations,” said Secretary Salazar. With more than 268 river miles and 3 million acres of contiguous parks and protected areas on both sides of the border benefitting under this proposal, 14 percent of the entire U.S.-Mexico border will enjoy strengthened conservation coordination.



The joint announcement marks the renewal of a bilateral process to develop one of the most significant conservation initiatives considered by Mexico and the United States at the border, while also taking into account border security. Sixty-five years ago, the Presidents of the United States and Mexico exchanged letters on the creation of the Big Bend National Park in the United States, wherein they envisioned the conservation of the shared ecosystems on both sides of the Rio Grande in the Big Bend region of Texas in the United States and Chihuahua and Coahuila in Mexico. Mexico later established Cañon de Santa Elena and Maderas del Carmen protected areas in Chihuahua and Coahuila. Over the years, park rangers, scientists, volunteers, landowners and local communities on both sides of the border have diligently conserved the spectacular landscapes, wilderness, and habitats in both countries, in one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world.

The June 2009 designation of Ocampo Protected Area by President Calderón completed a critical piece of this vision, forming a contiguous set of protected areas across from Big Bend National Park in the United States. Additional United States protected areas adjacent to Big Bend National Park include: Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River, Big Bend Ranch State Park, and Black Gap Wildlife Management Area, all in Texas.

“The U.S.-Mexico bilateral process is expected to highlight the biodiversity of the region, to consolidate environmental cooperation between the two countries, and could eventually constitute a symbol of the new era of the relation between Mexico and the United States with respect to bilateral cooperation in the conservation area” commented Mexican Minister Elvira. He added that “the Secretaries of the Interior and of the Environment and Natural Resources recognize in this mandate the vision of the Governments and trust that a proposal can be developed soon for further consideration by the Presidents.”