

April 12, 1989

A 15-POINT PROGRAM TO STEM THE FLOW OF DRUGS FROM MEXICO

INTRODUCTION

Narcotics trafficking threatens the security of Mexico and the United States. International drug cartels undermine economic, political, and social stability by spreading violence, crime, and corruption. While Washington and Mexico City cooperate increasingly to eradicate the production and trafficking of illegal drugs, Mexico still remains the largest source of narcotics entering the U.S.

The problem is not that Mexican leaders fail to recognize that measures need to be taken to stem the flow of narcotics. Mexico's newly elected president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, says that he will make sweeping changes in his country's narcotics laws and will wage war against the corruption and violence that the drug trade generates. He calls the defeat of narcotics trafficking a Mexican "national security objective of the highest priority."

Stepped-Up Efforts. Salinas's new vigilance against drugs is paying off. Because of stepped-up efforts by his administration to eradicate and interdict illegal drugs, Mexico last March was awarded U.S. presidential certification

This is the twelfth in a series of Heritage studies on Mexico. It was preceded by *Backgrounder* No. 694, "U.S.-Mexican Economic Ties" (March 6, 1989); *Backgrounder* No. 688, "The Security Component of U.S.-Mexico Relations" (January 26, 1989); *Backgrounder* No. 679, "A Review of 150 Years of U.S.-Mexican Relations" (October 31, 1988); *Backgrounder* No. 638, "Evolution of Mexican Foreign Policy" (March 11, 1988); *Backgrounder* No. 611, "Privatization in Mexico: Robust Rhetoric, Anemic Reality" (October 22, 1987); *Backgrounder* No. 595, "Keys to Understanding Mexico: The PAN's Growth as a Real Opposition" (July 29, 1987); *Backgrounder* No. 588, "Deja Vu of Policy Failure: The New \$14 Billion Mexican Debt Bailout" (June 25, 1987); *Backgrounder* No. 583, "For Mexico's Ailing Economy, Time Runs Short" (June 4, 1987); *Backgrounder* No. 581, "Mexico's Many Faces" (May 19, 1987); *Backgrounder* No. 575, "Mexico: The Key Players" (April 4, 1987); and *Backgrounder* No. 573, "Keys to Understanding Mexico: Challenges to the Ruling PRI" (April 7, 1987). Future papers will examine other aspects of Mexican policy and development.

under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986. This annual certification is granted by the U.S. government to countries heavily involved in narcotics production and trafficking that cooperate fully with Washington in the international fight against drugs. Certification entitles those countries to receive U.S. economic and military assistance, loans, trade preferences, and other economic advantages.

Despite Salinas's tough anti-drug message, however, some U.S. officials believe that the Mexican government lacks sufficient resolve in combating the flow of narcotics into the U.S. The Mexican drug trade, they argue, is on the upswing, production is steadily increasing, and extensive improvements still need to be made in Mexico's drug eradication programs. U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents and other U.S. anti-narcotics personnel add that drug-related corruption continues to plague most levels of the Mexican government, armed forces, and police, and that many Mexican officials remain unwilling or uncommitted to attacking the problem.

Expanding Coordination. There is considerable merit to these criticisms. As such, the Bush and Salinas administrations will need to work much harder to reduce drug trafficking and corruption in Mexico. Anti-narcotics coordination between the U.S. and Mexico needs to be expanded to eradicate the production and flow of illegal drugs into the U.S. This is in the interest of both governments and should be pursued as aggressively as possible.

To protect U.S. security interests and strengthen U.S.-Mexican anti-narcotics efforts, the Bush administration should:

- ◆ ◆ Make anti-narcotics cooperation a major issue in U.S.-Mexico relations.
- ◆ ◆ Encourage the Salinas government to improve its drug control capabilities to wage war on internal drug trafficking, cultivation, and corruption.
- ◆ ◆ Establish a more effective joint narcotics interdiction campaign with the Mexicans along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- ◆ ◆ Improve U.S. and Mexican cooperation in measuring the progress of Mexican efforts to destroy drug crops.
- ◆ ◆ Urge the Salinas government to escalate the war against drugs, but do so in a way that does not threaten Mexican sovereignty and national pride.
- ◆ ◆ Reduce the U.S. demand for illegal narcotics.

DRUG PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING IN MEXICO

Mexico ranks as the fourth largest exporter of illegal drugs in Latin America. With its 1,933-mile border with the U.S., Mexico supplies

approximately 40 percent of the marijuana and heroin smuggled into the U.S. and serves as a major shipment route for as much as half of the South American cocaine entering the U.S.¹ Severe poverty has forced increasing numbers of Mexican farmers to cultivate illegal drug crops for the profitable international narcotics trade. Drug cultivation becomes an attractive alternative to poor Mexican farmers because financial rewards for growing opium-producing poppy plants and marijuana far outweigh the benefits from cultivating such traditional crops as corn.

Mexico also has become a major route for the shipment of cocaine to the U.S. Although the "coca" plant is not indigenous to Mexico and is not grown there, as much as 50 percent of the South American cocaine entering the U.S. is now shipped through Mexico. Washington earmarks over 60 percent of its overseas narcotic control budget to fighting cocaine trafficking and considers it the most serious narcotics threat to the U.S.

Potent "Black Tar." Last year, Mexico took significant steps to improve its programs to eradicate the production of opium poppy, the plant from which heroin is derived. Nevertheless, Mexico remains the largest single country source for heroin entering the U.S. Last year, Mexican growers cultivated approximately 7,740 hectares (19,118 acres) of opium and produced between 45 and 55 metric tons.² The bulk of Mexican heroin is cultivated in the Pacific coast states of Chihuahua, Jalisco, and Sinaloa, which form the Mexican equivalent of Asia's "Golden Triangle," one of the world's largest opium-producing regions. Using the routes taken by illegal aliens to cross into the U.S., Mexican drug traffickers have replaced Southwest Asian smugglers as America's leading suppliers of a highly potent version of heroin called "black tar."³

Mexico is the second largest producer of marijuana entering the U.S., surpassed only recently by Colombia. Last year, 9,000 hectares (22,230 acres) of marijuana were cultivated in Mexico, yielding over 5,600 metric tons.⁴ The cannabis plant which produces marijuana is grown in virtually every Mexican state. Several large trafficking organizations have directed most of the cultivation. These organizations have taught small Mexican farmers how to increase yields by using improved irrigation techniques and better seeds and fertilizers.⁵

1 Brook Larmer, "Colombians Take Over the 'Coke' Trade in Mexico," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 9, 1989, p. A1.

2 United States Department of State, "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report," Executive Summary, March 1989, p. 15.

3 Matt Lait, "Heroin Traffic Shifts to the West," *The Washington Post*, January 4, 1989, p. A4.

4 International Narcotics Strategy Report, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

5 National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee, "The NNICC Report 1987," April 1988, pp. 11-12.

THE EMERGING COLOMBIAN CONNECTION IN MEXICO

Over the past two years, a marked resurgence of narcotics activity and violence has occurred in Mexico, largely attributable to a recent significant proliferation of Colombian drug cartel activity in the country. Many U.S. drug experts believe that the Colombians are quickly taking over the Mexican cocaine trade and could pose a serious security threat to the Salinas government and lead to increased violence along the U.S. border.

Haven for Colombians. U.S. and Mexican anti-drug personnel estimate that at least five major Colombian drug rings now operate in Mexico. These groups previously had functioned in Mexico with the permission of Mexican narcotics traffickers. Now the Colombians are apparently establishing independent operations. Not only can the Colombians export up to one ton of cocaine across the U.S. border each week, they also can stockpile enormous quantities of refined, or "street ready," cocaine in northern Mexico before shipping it to their traffickers in the U.S. Last October, a Mexican Army unit in the northern state of Chihuahua discovered 4.8 tons of cocaine hidden in a remote cave; it was the largest cocaine cache discovered in Latin American history.⁶

In early 1986, the two largest Colombian drug organizations, the Medellin Cartel and Cali Cartel, began changing their cocaine shipment routes to take advantage of the easily accessible U.S.-Mexican border. The Colombians opened these new cocaine pipelines because the U.S. had increased efforts to seize illegal drugs, mostly of Bolivian, Colombian, and Peruvian origin, in the Gulf of Mexico. The Mexican traffickers have been trading their expertise in moving drugs across the U.S.-Mexican border in exchange for weapons and a share of the profits from the Colombians. It is estimated that some 40 major Colombian drug traffickers have established operations in Mexico in the past two years.⁷

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING

The production and trafficking of illegal drugs is an enormous security threat to the U.S. and Mexico. The narcotics trade generates crime, corruption, terrorism, and death in the U.S. and Mexico, and it also threatens many of Latin America's fragile democracies because of close links between narcotics traffickers and leftist guerrillas. Because of the continued escalation of drug trafficking in the Americas, Mexico today faces unprecedented challenges to its security with sweeping implications for the U.S. and the entire Western Hemisphere.

If drug cartel-sponsored political unrest in Mexico were to approach the levels that exist in many of the Andean countries of South America, or if the

6 Larmer, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

7 "Mexico, New Point of Entry for Drugs," *The Washington Times*, November 2, 1988, p. 8.

new Salinas government were to be undermined by narcotics traffickers and widespread corruption, the consequences for the U.S. and Mexico would be substantial. If political strife were to develop in Mexico, or if the Mexican economy continued to degenerate, as many as ten million Mexicans could flee across the U.S. border. This could create serious security problems for Washington. Among other things, millions of new illegal immigrants could increase the flow of narcotics across the Rio Grande and could provide cover for terrorists entering the U.S.

Gangland-Style Shootouts. As drug cultivation and trafficking levels increase in Mexico, so too does the level of drug-related violence. For example, a marked resurgence in drug trafficking activity in the city of Guadalajara, a major drug trafficking “nerve center” in the state of Jalisco, has triggered a sharp increase in the number of drug-related murders. It is estimated that at least 50 execution-style murders took place in this city last year, many of the bodies bearing signs of torture. Gangland-style shootouts among rival trafficking groups armed with automatic weapons also have become almost commonplace. Many Mexican officials are becoming concerned that certain regions in Mexico are taking on the characteristics of Colombia, where drug-related terrorism is widespread.⁸

Throughout Latin America, narcotics traffickers are combining their resources with leftist subversive groups and other terrorist organizations to undermine political, judicial, and military efforts launched against them. While terrorism does not currently exist in Mexico in the traditional sense of an alliance between narcotics traffickers and political insurgents, such a partnership could soon develop. Acts of violence and terrorism do occur, however, and threats are increasing against U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration personnel.⁹

Guns for Drugs. The dramatic escalation of Mexican drug-related violence and terrorism has coincided directly with the expansion of Colombia-sponsored cocaine trafficking through Mexico. The expanding Mexican cocaine connection in turn has contributed to an increased flow of such heavy weapons as AK-47 and AR-15 assault rifles into Mexico. Mexico is, in fact, a major recipient of illegal arms from the U.S., Colombia, and the Soviet bloc. In just four raids last year, approximately 500 AK-47 and AKM assault rifles from the U.S. were seized by Mexican authorities. Many of these and other weapons, it is believed, are part of a “guns for drugs” trade initiated by South American drug cartels.¹⁰

8 William Branigin, "Mexican Drug Kingpins Recovering from Crackdown After DEA Killing," *The Washington Post*, December 19, 1988, p. A34.

9 See International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, March 1989, p. 108.

10 See U.S. Narcotics Control Programs in Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Mexico: An Update, Report by the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. House of Representatives, February 1989, p. 29.

Torture and Executions. Several Mexican cities including Guadalajara, Mazatlan, and Hermosillo in the key drug-producing states of Jalisco, Sinaloa, and Sonora have become so violent that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has labeled them as among the most hazardous zones in the world for its agents to operate.¹¹ In some cases, the DEA has been forced to curtail anti-drug operations because the U.S. and Mexican governments do not provide adequate protection for agents and family members. In the past few years, three regional DEA office chiefs have been evacuated because of threats, and the DEA has identified at least two posts that are considered so dangerous that no family dependents are allowed. It also is estimated that in 1988, at least one DEA informant in these regions was tortured or killed per month. To make matters worse, U.S. drug agents are provided with virtually no security guards, no armored cars, and no diplomatic immunity outside of Mexico City, and they are not permitted legally to carry firearms.¹²

In 1985, the torture and murder of DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena Salazar highlighted the gravity of the Mexican narcotics-related terrorism and crime problem. Working under cover in Guadalajara to identify that city's major drug traffickers, Camarena was abducted and brutally slain by Mexican drug traffickers and corrupted law enforcement officials.

The subsequent 1986 illegal arrest and torture of U.S. Special Agent Victor Cortez by the Jalisco State Police demonstrated the security threat facing U.S. anti-drug personnel in Mexico. This crime added further friction to an already strained U.S.-Mexican relationship, thereby complicating bilateral anti-drug, terrorism, and corruption efforts.

MEXICO'S ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS

President Salinas's first concrete step to combat narcotics trafficking in Mexico was to create a 1,200-member anti-drug unit under the control of the Deputy Attorney General's Office. This office, headed by Javier Coello Trejo, will organize and direct Mexico's anti-narcotics efforts. Since last December 1, Salinas has ordered a 175 percent expansion in the budget for Mexico's anti-drug program, resulting in a substantial increase in drug arrests, seizures, and eradication efforts.¹³

Calling Out the Army. Despite significant cutbacks in other government spending, the Mexican Attorney General's budget for drug crop eradication climbed from \$19.5 million in 1987 to \$23.1 million in 1988. It is forecast to exceed \$26 million this year, or approximately 60 percent of the office's budget. With almost 100 aircraft, Mexico deploys the largest fleet of aircraft dedicated to destroying drug crops in the Third World. Salinas also is

11 For more information see Elaine Shannon, "Desperados," *Time* magazine, November 7, 1988.

12 U.S. Narcotics Control, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

13 Larry Rhoter, "Mexico's Anti-drug Efforts Are Emphasized for Congress," *The New York Times*, March 1, 1989, p. A8.

expanding the Mexican Army's role in anti-drug efforts. Approximately 25,000 troops, 25 percent of the Mexican military's total manpower, are trained to spray and burn crops. As many as 50,000 Mexican troops have been engaged in drug crop destruction during peak growing and harvesting times.¹⁴

Since Salinas's inauguration last December 1, almost 2,000 people have been arrested on serious drug offenses, over 2,000 acres of opium and marijuana have been eradicated, and at least 70 pounds of pure heroin, 92 tons of marijuana, and almost 2.5 tons of cocaine base have been seized.¹⁵ The Mexican government is installing its \$40 million radar net to cover its southern border. The string of radars, purchased from the U.S. last year, will be operated by the Mexican Air Force and will be pointed toward Guatemala and Belize. It will be used to locate and intercept aircraft from Central and South America suspected of carrying drugs into Mexican airspace.

Arresting Drug Kingpins. During 1988, Mexican authorities arrested over 13,000 individuals on drug-related charges, including such major traffickers as Miguel Quintero Paez, Filemon Medina, and Juan Lizzaraga; these are some of the most powerful members of Mexico's drug underworld. Drug kingpins Rafael Caro Quintero and Ernesto Fonseca Carrillo, who were indicted in U.S. courts for the 1985 kidnapping and murder of U.S. DEA Special Agent Enrique Camarena Salazar, were convicted last September on drug trafficking charges by a Mexican court and are likely to be found guilty.

In recent years, there have been three key U.S.-Mexican anti-narcotics efforts: Operation Alliance, Operation Vanguard, and the 1987 Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). Disagreements between Washington and Mexico City over sovereignty issues and the effectiveness of the programs, however, have hindered these efforts.

Curbing Agency Feuding. Operation Alliance, launched in 1986, is a drug control program on the U.S.-Mexican border. Lack of Mexican cooperation, however, prevents it from being a genuine bilateral program. Essentially, Operation Alliance coordinates the activities of the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and local law enforcement departments in combating narcotics trafficking in the southwestern U.S. By diminishing competition and feuding between these U.S. federal and state agencies, and by sharing information and resources, Operation Alliance has won some battles in the war on drugs on the U.S. side of the frontier. Mexican participation would make the operation more effective through sharing of drug-trafficking intelligence and allowing U.S. agents to engage in hot-pursuit chases of drug smugglers across the border. One reason the Mexican government refuses to cooperate fully with Operation Alliance is that it still is uncomfortable with allowing U.S. anti-drug personnel open-ended rights to pursue traffickers into Mexican territory.

¹⁴International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, *op. cit.*, March 1989, p. 107.

¹⁵William Branigin, "Mexico, U.S. Envoy Cites Antidrug Gains As Certification Nears," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1989, p. A20.

Operation Vanguard was a U.S.-Mexican cooperative program established to conduct aerial reconnaissance on drug cultivation and to monitor the eradication of drug crops in Mexico. The program involved the use of U.S.-financed aircraft to survey the extent of crop destruction after drug fields had been sprayed with herbicides. U.S. participation in the program recently was terminated, however, because of disputes within the DEA over the program's effectiveness. In addition, there also was growing concern for the safety of the DEA participants involved in the project because heavily armed drug traffickers were increasingly becoming a threat. U.S. anti-drug agencies, however, are considering reactivating this or launching a similar program.

Fear of Leaks. The MLAT, or Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, was signed by the U.S. and Mexico in December 1987. The MLAT establishes the legal grounds for improving U.S.-Mexican cooperation on narcotics matters, including the investigation and prosecution of drug-related crimes, the speedy extradition of drug traffickers wanted by the U.S., and the sharing of information on narcotics trafficking. The Mexican government has ratified the treaty; the U.S. Senate has not. The U.S. lawmakers do not want U.S. anti-drug officials to share sensitive information with their Mexican counterparts. The Senators fear leaks.

An enormous roadblock in the battle against narcotics trafficking is corruption in the Mexican government, armed forces, and police. In Mexico, as in much of Latin America, anti-narcotics campaigns have been hampered by payoffs, intimidation, and apathy on the part of officials. Says a U.S. Drug Enforcement agent: "Corruption has penetrated all levels of the Mexican government. It's lateral, it's horizontal, and it's total."¹⁶ Several top anti-narcotics and law enforcement officials in the new Salinas government, for example, are suspected of having ties to major narcotics traffickers and other criminal figures. One of these is Mexico's new Attorney General, Enrique Alvarez del Castillo, who was the former Governor of Jalisco, a major drug producing and trafficking state. While serving as Governor, Alvarez was very uncooperative in the Enrique Camarena murder case investigation in which Jalisco state police were implicated. He has been accused of withholding evidence related to the case and of tolerating drug trafficking.¹⁷

New Ethics Code. Another official suspected of being tied to major narcotics traffickers is Miguel Nazar Haro, who recently was forced to resign as head of the intelligence department of the Mexico City police. Nazar Haro, who has been indicted in the U.S. on charges of leading a car theft and smuggling ring, reportedly was pushed aside by top Salinas officials because of his past involvement in human rights abuses and possibly even narcotics trafficking. Some U.S. anti-narcotics officials feel that by removing officials

¹⁶Elaine Shannon, "Why We're Facing a World of Noriegas," *The Washington Post*, October 23, 1988, p. C4.

¹⁷William Branigin, "Newly Named Mexican Officials Linked to Drugs," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1989, p. A15.

like Nazar Haro, Salinas is quietly attempting to reduce drug-related official corruption in the highest levels of the Mexican government. Salinas, in fact, vows to "make life miserable" for officials involved in the drug trade. Already a new code of ethics has been drawn up requiring senior Mexican government officials to make an annual financial disclosure statement. In addition, hundreds of anti-narcotics personnel have been replaced or prosecuted.

NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING STRAINS U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS

The narcotics problem surpasses even the foreign debt question as the most divisive issue in U.S.-Mexican relations. Senator Jesse Helms, the North Carolina Republican, for example, charges that the Mexican government is not doing enough to eradicate crops, interdict shipments, and arrest traffickers. Helms and other Members of Congress argue that drug-related corruption in the Mexican government, police, and armed forces impairs the anti-drug campaign. Mexico, in turn, argues that it is the enormous U.S. demand for drugs that escalates drug trafficking, and that Washington is unwilling to take the measures necessary to reduce this demand.

Setting the Tone. Strained relations over narcotics trafficking impede improved U.S.-Mexican relations in other areas. These include negotiating a solution to Mexico's huge debt to U.S. banks and cooperating more fully on stemming illegal immigration. Establishing a positive working relationship with the Salinas government on the drug war may help set the tone for improved relations in these other areas.

Under the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, the U.S. President is required to certify by March 1 of each year that major drug producing and trafficking countries are "fully cooperating" with the U.S. in the crackdown on the drug trade. Countries not certified lose U.S. economic and military aid, trade preferences, loans, and other economic advantages. The President may waive the regular standards for certification to certify countries on grounds that U.S. national interests require that they receive U.S. assistance.

Strong Public Stance. This March 1, George Bush certified Mexico as cooperating with Washington in attempting to stem the flow of drugs into the U.S. Bush was reassured by the Salinas government and the U.S. State Department that "much had been accomplished in 1988" in the war on drugs in Mexico. While it was noted that much still needed to be done, Bush emphasized that "a strong positive tone for bilateral relations was set in [his] early meeting with President Salinas...and that he is encouraged by [Salinas's] strong public stance against drugs."¹⁸

¹⁸Presidential Determination Statement [on certification], No. 89-11, February 28, 1989.

FIFTEEN POINTS TO STRENGTHEN U.S.-MEXICAN ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS

To improve U.S.-Mexican anti-drug efforts and to protect U.S. security interests, the Bush Administration should:

1) Devise a strategy to cut drug consumption in the U.S.

As long as U.S. demand for narcotics remains high, drug trafficking will to spread. The most effective assistance the U.S. can provide Mexico in combating the narcotics trade is to crack down on U.S. consumption. This effort has begun with the appointment of William Bennett as Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

2) Repeal the certification process.

The annual certification process strains U.S.-Mexican relations without giving Washington leverage to gain greater Mexican cooperation in narcotics control. While it is important to have a system to identify nations that refuse to cooperate with the U.S. in drug control matters, certifying or decertifying foreign governments is the wrong approach. Sanctions, in almost every case, have been imposed on countries to whom the U.S. does not provide assistance, or with whom Washington does not maintain relations. Examples: Afghanistan, Iran, Laos, Panama, and Syria. In these cases, therefore, the sanctions are meaningless; they even make the U.S. look foolish.

In the case of Mexico, the only U.S. bilateral assistance is approximately \$15 million in anti-drug funds, largely to maintain the fleet of Mexican airplanes and helicopters used to destroy drug crops. If this assistance were terminated because of the denial of certification, more Mexican drugs would flow into the U.S. U.S. decertification, meanwhile, would be viewed in Mexico as an insult to the Salinas government and could cause Mexico to cease cooperating with Washington on drug control and other areas such as illegal immigration. Mexicans from both the left and right of the political spectrum call the U.S. certification process “an affront to their national sovereignty.”

Instead of annual U.S. certification, Washington should issue a yearly report – as is done by the State Department on international human rights and on nation’s voting records at the United Nations – to monitor foreign cooperation in fighting the international drug trade.

3) Highlight drug eradication and interdiction issues during the first Bush-Salinas summit.

The two leaders are expected to meet within the next six months. Before the summit, Bush should state publicly that he will bring the drug issue to the forefront in his discussions with Salinas and will work together with Mexico’s new leader to develop concrete U.S.-Mexican drug control proposals. Bush also should welcome Salinas’s “get tough” policy on drug control and offer to expand U.S.-Mexican bilateral efforts to combat narcotics traffickers in Mexico.

4) Establish a U.S.-Mexican commission for the narcotics problem.

To identify where cooperation can be increased and bilateral security promoted, the U.S. and Mexico should create a joint commission on narcotics trafficking. This commission could address issues like border control, eradication and interdiction efforts, and the sharing of intelligence on drug dealers. It could comprise members of the U.S. Department of State, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Customs Service with senior Mexican officials from the Attorney General's Office and the Secretariats of Foreign Affairs and National Defense.

5) Reemphasize to the Salinas government the need for bringing to justice those responsible for the 1985 death of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Enrique Camarena Salazar and for the torture of U.S. Special Agent Victor Cortez.

Until these cases are resolved in a manner agreeable to Washington, progress in U.S.-Mexican anti-drug cooperation will be weakened.

6) Increase U.S.-Mexican border patrol activities and capabilities and encourage expanded U.S. coordination with Mexican border officials.

The U.S. should increase its border patrol personnel by at least 50 percent. Greater numbers of patrol aircraft and vehicles and surveillance materiel such as radars, ground sensors, and night vision equipment should be deployed. Washington also should seek Mexican participation in Operation Alliance to coordinate joint anti-narcotics efforts along the border.

7) Give the Salinas government increased technological, materiel, and training assistance for combating drug trafficking and cultivation in Mexico.

U.S. assistance, estimated at \$15 million this year, should continue to help Mexico expand and maintain its anti-drug aviation fleet. This fleet, the largest of its kind in the developing world with almost 100 aircraft, destroys drug crops by spraying herbicides on them. The current size of the air fleet seems to be adequate for Mexico's eradication needs. To improve the fleet's performance, however, the U.S. should help Mexico to increase the number of in-flight hours for the fleet, improve the maintenance and functioning of the spray equipment, improve crop destruction verification measures, improve spare parts inventory and procurement control, and provide stepped-up training to Mexico's anti-drug air fleet personnel.

8) Reactivate Operation Vanguard or a similar U.S.-Mexican program to intensify and expand the joint collection of data on the production, cultivation, and eradication of drugs.

Aircraft are critical to the war on drugs in Mexico. They spray drug fields and photograph those crops that have been destroyed to verify the program's effectiveness. Verification missions to gather information on drug crop destruction should once again be carried out by joint U.S.-Mexican teams, as was done during Operation Vanguard.

9) Expand the U.S. State Department Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) programs with Mexico.

INM and DEA activities and funding in Mexico should be expanded to keep up with the expanding drug trade. These activities should include increased INM funding for such things as herbicides, aviation fuel, tools, and other equipment to maintain Mexico's aerial eradication efforts and DEA activities, such as recruiting informants and collecting intelligence.

10) Increase U.S. intelligence-gathering capabilities to assist in the war against drug cartels and traffickers.

As the narcotics traffickers in Mexico become more sophisticated, U.S. intelligence capabilities will have to be expanded; the number of U.S. personnel operating in Mexico will have to be increased. These personnel, however, must be given full protection by Washington and Mexico City. In the past, U.S. agents have not been provided with full diplomatic immunity, the ability to carry firearms legally, security guards, and armored transportation. U.S. interests would be better served if U.S. anti-drug personnel were exposed to less unnecessary risk. The U.S. also should assist the Mexican government with narcotics-related law enforcement and intelligence-gathering training by sending instructors to Mexico to demonstrate sophisticated U.S. drug control techniques.

11) Negotiate an overflight and hot-pursuit agreement with the Mexican government.

The U.S. should press for the right to chase an airplane, boat, or motor vehicle suspected of carrying drugs into Mexican territory if it is under hot pursuit. Currently, drug traffickers fleeing into Mexico cannot be chased by U.S. authorities and often are not apprehended by Mexican law enforcement officials. At the least, there should be an agreement to pass on information about a fleeing suspect rapidly and efficiently to Mexican officials so that they can take up the pursuit after the suspicious boat, plane, or vehicle has entered Mexican territory.

12) Increase anti-drug coordination and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican Attorney General's offices.

Salinas's creation of a new Deputy Attorney General's Office for Narcotics Matters demonstrates his determination to take the drug war seriously. If nothing else, it should help improve cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico on streamlining extradition procedures, sharing criminal and financial records, and improving law enforcement techniques. During this week's meeting in Washington between Mexican Attorney General Enrique Alvarez del Castillo and U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, the initial guidelines should be established on how the two offices can better cooperate in the war on drugs. U.S. concerns over Alvarez's past anti-narcotics record also should be addressed.

13) Seek U.S. Senate approval of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) signed with Mexico and ratified by its government in December 1987.

This treaty provides for coordinating efforts between U.S. and Mexican law enforcement agencies. It could establish the guidelines by which drug-related financial and criminal information could be shared and extradition procedures enhanced between the U.S. and Mexico. To address concerns that the treaty will allow classified information to fall into the wrong hands, the Bush Administration should emphasize that the information being provided will be meticulously determined, that those Mexican officials with whom the information is shared will be carefully selected, and that the sources of the information will not be disclosed.

14) Assist the Mexican government in providing economic alternatives to drug cultivators in Mexico through specifically focused and supervised U.S. development assistance for Mexican farmers.

Drug interdiction and crop destruction efforts should be combined with crop substitution and educational awareness programs for Mexican farmers. While no U.S. assistance is earmarked for such programs, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) should consider targeting funds for the development of these projects. Economic development and crop substitution efforts, when combined with vigorous law enforcement and eradication programs, have had substantial impact in reducing drug cultivation in other countries, most notably Thailand and Turkey. Rural Mexicans need to be convinced that they can make a living growing legal crops and to be made aware of the dangers posed by illegal narcotics.

15) Provide U.S. assistance for Mexican drug prevention, treatment, and educational programs.

While still limited, domestic drug abuse in Mexico is spreading. The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) should assist the Mexican government with its anti-drug public awareness, educational, and treatment programs. These agencies should provide assistance for the development of anti-drug media campaigns, narcotics abuse information for Mexican schoolchildren, and construction of drug abuse clinics and related facilities. Currently, no such U.S.-sponsored programs exist.

CONCLUSION

Narcotics trafficking challenges both the U.S. and Mexico. By spreading violence, crime, and corruption, drug cartels and their clients destroy lives and undermine democratic institutions to promote their multibillion dollar business. The accession of Carlos Salinas de Gortari to Mexico's presidency, however, may provide the Bush Administration with an opportunity to improve U.S.-Mexican anti-narcotics efforts.

Salina's Pledge. Much needs to be done. Mexico remains the largest single source of heroin and marijuana entering the U.S., and as much as 50 percent of the cocaine entering the U.S. flows through Mexico. Vowing that the defeat of narcotics trafficking is a "national security objective of the highest priority," Salinas has stepped up Mexico's war on drugs by destroying more crops and interdicting more drug traffickers than ever before. Increased Mexican drug control cooperation with the U.S. also has been pledged.

To improve anti-narcotics efforts between Washington and Mexico City, Bush and Salinas must continue to make the war on drugs a major issue in U.S.-Mexico relations. The U.S. should continue assisting Mexico with its battle against drug trafficking, cultivation, and corruption and must encourage greater cooperation along the 1,933-mile U.S.-Mexican border. This increased cooperation, however, must not come at the expense of Mexican sovereignty and national pride. For this reason, Mexico should not be singled out for punishment or recertified as a nation refusing to cooperate with the U.S. in controlling illegal drugs.

Limiting U.S. Demand. Finally, it must be admitted that most of the blame for the U.S. drug problem rests at home. No amount of anti-narcotics cooperation with Mexico will make much difference unless the U.S. first reduces demand for drugs within its own borders. Efforts to limit supply, by themselves, do not substantially reduce the availability of drugs or significantly inhibit drug use.

As long as U.S. demand is so high, efforts to diminish narcotics production and trafficking in one country will only result in its moving elsewhere. Thus, the U.S. should do everything it can to reduce its own demand for illegal narcotics; otherwise Salinas's vigorous commitment to defeating Mexican drug trafficking may be in vain.

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