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**CHARLES UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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**“U.S.-Mexican Counter-drug Security Cooperation:  
The Merida Initiative a Possible Solution?”**

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## **Abstract**

Mexico and the United States share not only an approximately 3000 km border but also important roles concerning drug trafficking. With the U.S. as the major consumer and Mexico as its principal supplier, they make the perfect supply and demand equation. As a result, they share the threats related to drug traffic which affects the political, social, and economic level of both countries. During the last decade, the Mexican drug cartels have gained control of the drug entering the United States, so Mexico is a crucial issue in drug matters to their American neighbors. Currently, both nations accepted a shared responsibility in drug traffic cases and are working hand in hand to limit the capabilities of DTOs, but there remains the open question if such efforts are significantly useful. This thesis presents an analysis of the U.S. influence on the escalation of the fight against illicit drugs in Mexico during Bush and Obama administrations and the effectiveness of the counter-drug assistance program: the Merida Initiative. I argue that the Merida Initiative has been successful improving the U.S.-Mexican relations regarding bilateral counter-drug policies. However, the Mexican drug cartels have reached their momentum and seem to be leading the drug market. Besides, it is necessary to pursue a critical assessment of Merida programs including clear indicators to determine the Initiative's achievements. It is the time to open room for alternative methods that will put an end to the War on Drugs.

## **Keywords**

Drug trafficking, Mexico, the United States, War on Drugs, Counter-drug policies, Merida Initiative

**Range of thesis:** 149.549 characters, minimum range 80 pages, 25.469 words.

## **Declaration of Authorship**

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, July 2017

Leandra Matilde Paulino Rosario



**FACULTY  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
Charles University

**Thesis Project**

**“U.S.-Mexican Counter-drug Security Cooperation: The Merida Initiative a Possible Solution?”**

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**Supervisor:** PhDr. Francis Raška

**Defense Planned:** 2016/2017

Mexico not only shares the border with the U.S but also shares the threats related to drug trafficking. It is estimated that Mexico is one of the primary providers of heroin, marijuana, and cocaine to the U.S. Besides, the violence of the drug cartels has resulted in more than 80,000 victims since 2006. My thesis will analyze the U.S. influence on the escalation of the fight against illicit drugs in Mexico during W. Bush and Obama administrations and the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative. I will include the former president Calderon and continue with the current Mexican government of Enrique Peña Nieto. I decided to focus on the period between 2006 and 2015 because in the recent years the bilateral cooperation has increased due to the implementation of anti-crime and counter-drug assistance programs. It was during Calderon's administration that the U.S.-Mexican relations dramatically changed regarding counter-drug offensive from conflict to cooperation with the implementation of a new assistance program for Mexico and Central America. Therefore, in 2008, the Merida Initiative was implemented.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it is necessary to measure the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative to consider its prospect.

I argue that the Merida Initiative has been successful improving the U.S.-Mexican relations regarding bilateral counter-drug policies. However, the Mexican drug cartels have reached their momentum and seem to be leading the drug market. Therefore, the current Mexican-American bilateral response success is either intermediate or lower since the empowerment of the Mexican drug cartels has not reduced significantly during the implementation of the Merida Initiative. Besides, the United States administration should pay particular attention to the issue of reducing the demand for drugs in their country, as well as, a matter of legalization of narcotics. Furthermore, the more cooperation and coordination between the US-Mexican administrations, for instance, the intelligence services, the army and border control, the better the prevention of smuggling drugs into the US.

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Ribando Seelke, C., & Finklea, K. (2013, June 12). U.S. –Mexican security Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond. . Retrieved from [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)



My main research questions are concerned with The U.S. role in the Mexican War on Drugs during Calderon and Peña Nieto administrations and the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative as a counter-drug bilateral policy and its prospect:

- Is the Merida Initiative an effective policy concerning U.S. domestic security and drug traffic interest?
- Is the Merida Initiative an effective policy to reduce violence and drug traffic from Mexico to the United States?
- How is the U.S. measuring the effectiveness of Merida Initiative?
- Is Mexico meeting the human rights conditions placed on the Merida Initiative?
- What is the prospect for the continuation of the Merida Initiative?

To address the research questions, I will analyze quantitative and qualitative data, primary sources, expert literature. Moreover, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, official websites, books, articles, journals, think tanks, online newspapers and the media will be analyzed with the goal of determining to what extent the Merida Initiative is accomplishing its four pillars and goals, and how the U.S government is measuring its effectiveness. Furthermore, I will compare the U.S.-Mexican administrations and how they have implemented the Initiative. I will examine the security situation in Mexico to determine if the country is meeting the human right conditions placed on the Initiative.

The thesis will be organized in three chapters. The first chapter describes the development of the U.S-Mexican relations and drug trafficking. I focus on current issues related to drug production in Mexico, the Mexican drug cartels and the threats cartels posed to the security of both nations. Then, the second chapter provides an overview of the current counter drug policy implemented by the U.S. and Mexico. It presents the negotiation process of the Merida Initiative, its characteristics as well as Bush and Obama approach towards the war on drugs in Mexico. Finally, the third chapter primary aim is to measure the effectiveness of Merida programs on both sides of the border. It also compares Mexican and

American administrations' attempt to drug and security through the Merida Initiative.

## **Structure**

### **Chapter I**

#### **❖ Introductory part:**

#### **U.S. - Mexican Relations and Drug Traffic**

- ❖ Drug trafficking in Mexico
- Current issues in Southern Mexican border
- Drug production in Mexico
- Mexican drug cartels
- Threats posed by Mexican drug cartels
- Current issues in the Mexican southern border
- Homeland security: drug trafficking and border enforcement

#### **❖ Chapter II**

#### **The Merida Initiative**

- The previous United States counter drug policies in Latin America
- The negotiation process
- The characteristics of the Merida Initiative
- The Bush and Obama Administrations approach to the War on Drugs in Mexico
- Implementation of the Merida Initiative in Mexico: Calderon and Pena Nieto Administrations.
- Human rights condition and the Merida Initiative

### ❖ Chapter III

#### **The Merida Initiative- Failure or Success?**

- ❖ Measuring the effectiveness of Merida programs on both sides of the border
- Impact on the trafficking of illegal narcotics from Mexico to the U.S.
- Domestic security in the US. During its implementation
- Drug related violence in Mexico
- Compare Calderon and Peña Nieto attempt to drug and safety through the Merida Initiative
- Compare Bush and Obama attempt to drug and security through the Merida Initiative
- The issue of legalization and decriminalization of drugs
- Prospect of the agreement

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## **List of abbreviations**

American Correctional Association's (ACA)

Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO)

Cartel Jalisco-New Generation (CJNG)

Centro Católico Multimedia (CCM)

Correction Programs (CP)

Development Assistance (DA)

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA)

Department of Homeland and Security (DHS)

District of Columbia (DC)

Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs)

Economic Support Fund (ESF)

Fiscal Year (FY)

Foreign Military Financing (FMF)

Global Health and Child Survival (GHCS)

Government Accountability Office (GAO)

Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI)

International Military Education and Training (IMET)

International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE)

International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCSR)

Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)

La Familia Michoacana (LFM)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Merida Initiative Culture of Lawfulness (COL)

México Unido Contra la Delincuencia A.C. (MUCD)

National Action Party (PAN)

National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH)

National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC)

Neuro-Developmental Treatment Association (NDTA)

Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, and Related Programs (NADR)

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX)

Tijuana/Arellano Felix Organization (AFO)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



## **Introduction**

Mexico is considered by many as the bridge between two worlds in one continent: on one side the South, the Latin American countries, and poverty, on the other the North and the United States of America. Currently, particular issues are affecting the U.S-Mexican relations, but unquestionably the major ones are related to trade, immigration and last but not least, drug trafficking. On the one hand, the bilateral relationship is struggling to improve in the field of immigration. It has been impossible for the U.S. Congress to pass an immigration reform that would decide the fate of approximately 11 million immigrants living illegally in the U.S. On the other hand, the bilateral relationship has improved regarding trade and drug trafficking policies. “On May 19, 2010, the United States and Mexico affirmed the importance of our shared border by issuing a Joint Declaration on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border Management.” The Joint Declaration was introduced as a way to speed up trade and improve bilateral relations. The main aim relates to economic issues, trade, and border enforcement in general.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, Mexico not only shares the border with the U.S. but also shares the threats related to drug trafficking. It is estimated that Mexico is one the major provider of heroin, marijuana, and cocaine to the U.S. In addition, another problem related to Mexico and drug trafficking organization is the escalation of violence which has resulted in approximately more than 100,000 murdered since 2006 in Mexico. Thus, the security of the population on both sides of the border is a major concern. For instance, high profile cases like the controversy in September 2014 about the 43 students that disappeared, and were killed in the city of Guerrero. The way in which everything happened has drawn attention to the problem of corruption and impunity for human rights abuses in Mexico. The case of journalists murdered, which has risen in Mexico in the last ten years, seems to be directly related to organized crime and corrupt authorities. The problem is that it hinders not only the freedom of speech but also the fact that justice has failed to do much about the investigation and trial. Let’s also point out the danger of corruption as a result of drug trafficking. The current situation is a threat to the

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<sup>1</sup>U.S-Mexico 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border Management (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.trade.gov/nacp/21border.asp>

country on the political, social and even economic level especially in Mexico where drug cartels have gained their momentum and damage all that they get in contact.

Therefore, the last Mexican and American Administrations have recognized the need for effective bilateral counter-drug efforts. During former Calderon's administration (2006-2012), the bilateral relationship was focused on counter-drug policies instead of immigration issues. Calderon did not want to focus his agenda on immigration, as the previous president Vicente Fox (2000-2006) because he believed it would not improve the bilateral relationship since this is an area that has foster conflict and not cooperation. He was interested in improving relations and cooperation with the United States. One of his administration's top priorities was fighting drug trafficking and organized crime. As a result, he declared the war on drugs in Mexico to design a strategy against the Drug Trafficking Organizations. Also, during Calderon's administration, the U.S.-Mexican relations dramatically changed concerning counter-drug offensive from conflict to cooperation with the implementation of a new assistance program for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. In 2008, during W. Bush and Calderon administrations, the Merida Initiative was implemented. The Initiative is a bilateral partnership launched in 2007 for which Congress appropriated nearly \$2.5 billion from Fiscal Year 2008 to FY2015. It is at the moment the main counter drug policy implemented between the United States and Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the prospect and effectiveness of the Merida Initiative are issues that must be considered.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

My thesis presents the current issues in the counter-drug policy implemented by the U.S and Mexico; I will focus on their bilateral cooperation against drug traffic and the threats posed by the Drug Trafficking Organizations to the security of both countries. I decided to focus on Mexico because the country not only shares the border with the U.S. but also shares closely the threats related to drug trafficking and domestic security. Moreover, the Mexican drug cartels have

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<sup>2</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2015). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues. *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

reached their momentum and are a threat to the safety of both nations. Consequently, my thesis will analyze the U.S. influence on the escalation of the fight against illicit drugs in Mexico during Bush and Obama administrations, and the effectiveness of the United States counter-drug assistance program. I will include the former president Calderon and continue with the current Mexican government of Enrique Peña Nieto. Besides, I choose this period because in the recent years the bilateral cooperation has increased due to the implementation of anti-crime and counter-drug assistance programs like the Merida Initiative.

My main research questions are concerned with the U.S. role in the Mexican War on Drugs during Calderon and Peña Nieto administrations and the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative as a counter-drug bilateral policy and its prospect:

- Is the Merida Initiative an effective policy concerning U.S. domestic security and drug traffic interest?
- Is the Merida Initiative an effective policy to reduce violence and drug traffic from Mexico to the United States?
- How is the U.S. measuring the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative?
- Is Mexico meeting the human rights conditions placed on the Merida Initiative?
- What is the prospect for the continuation of the Merida Initiative?

To address the research questions I will analyze quantitative, qualitative data, and primary sources. Besides, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, official websites, books, articles, journals, think tanks, online newspapers and the media will be analyzed with the goal of determining to what extent the Merida Initiative is accomplishing its four pillars and goals, and how the U.S government is measuring its effectiveness. Furthermore, I have compared the Bush and Obama administrations and how they have implemented the Initiative. I have examined the security situation in Mexico to determine if the country is meeting the human rights conditions placed on the Initiative.

Nevertheless, a shortage of my work is the fact that it is tough to find first-hand information about cartels. Also, the reliability of the exact data about the amount of drugs produced and seized, plus the finances of drug trafficking is questionable.

I argue that the Merida Initiative has been successful improving the U.S.-Mexican relations regarding bilateral counterdrug policies. However, the Mexican drug cartels have reached their momentum and seem to be leading the drug market. Therefore, the current Mexican-American bilateral response success is either intermediate or lower since the empowerment of the Mexican drug cartels has not reduced significantly during the implementation of the Merida Initiative.

## **Structure**

The thesis is arranged into three chapters. The first chapter describes the development of the U.S-Mexican relations and drug trafficking. I focus on current issues related to drug production in Mexico, the Mexican drug cartels and the threats cartels posed to the security of both nations. Then, the second chapter provides an overview of the current counter drug policy implemented by the U.S. and Mexico. It presents the negotiation process of the Merida Initiative, its characteristics as well as Bush and Obama approach towards the War on Drugs in Mexico. Finally, the third chapter primary aim is to measure the effectiveness of Merida programs on both sides of the border. It also compares the American administrations' attempt to drug and security through the Merida Initiative. The conclusion presents answers to the research questions and main findings of the thesis. Also, it discusses the issue of legalization and decriminalization of drugs and the prospect of the agreement.

## **1. U.S. - Mexican Relations and Drug Traffic**

In this chapter, I will describe the development of the U.S-Mexican relations and drug trafficking, as well as current issues related to drug production in Mexico, and the Mexican drug cartels. First, a brief country profile of the United Mexican States is presented. Moreover, details of current issues in the bilateral relationship such as immigration, trade and drug trafficking are offered. Following, I will describe Mexico's illicit supply role to the United States' market and the drug production in Mexico. Then, I will move on the problem of violence faced by the last two Mexican administrations of Calderon (20016-2012), and Peña Nieto (2012-2018). Finally, a list and a brief description of the main Mexican drug traffic organizations, their area of operation and current leaders is provided.

### **1.1 The United Mexican States: Country Profile**

Ciudad de Mexico is the Capital city of the United Mexican States. The Federal Republic consists of 31 states including Aguascalientes, Baja California, Baja California Sur, Campeche, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila de Zaragoza, Colima, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Mexico, Michoacan de Ocampo, Morelos, Nayarit, Nuevo Leon, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosi, Sinaloa, Sonora, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Tlaxcala, Veracruz de Ignacio de la Llave (Veracruz), Yucatan, Zacatecas, and Ciudad de Mexico or Distrito Federal. While Spanish is the official language, Nahuatl has survived in a country with an approximate population of 123,166,749 from which around only 3% speaks an indigenous language. Regarding religion, it is estimated that the majority of the population is Roman Catholic 82.7%, Pentecostal 1.6%, Jehovah's Witness 1.4%, other Evangelical Churches 5%, other 1.9%, none 4.7%, unspecified 2.7% (2010 est.)<sup>3</sup> (see annex 1)

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<sup>3</sup>The World Fact book: MEXICO. (2017, January 12). Retrieved January 23, 2017, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html>

Moreover, “Mexico has 4,301 kilometers of international land borders: 3,152 kilometers with the United States, 956 kilometers with Guatemala, and 193 kilometers with Belize.”<sup>4</sup> With no doubt, Mexico is a country strategically located like a bridge between the North and the rest of the American continent. The countries’ total area of about 1,943,945 square kilometers of land and 20,430 square kilometers rich in natural resources such as petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas, and timber.<sup>5</sup> Mexico’s economy is oriented towards oil production and the manufacturing industry. The country has become the United States’ second-largest export market and third-largest source of imports. It is estimated that only in the year 2014 two-way trade in goods and services exceeded \$590 billion.<sup>6</sup> The state-owned oil company *Petróleos Mexicanos* holds a monopoly on the production in the country.<sup>7</sup> PEMEX is responsible for roughly 20% of the government revenues.

As mentioned before, Mexico is a Federal Republic comprised of the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Nevertheless, the country’s political system has concentrated authority in the executive branch since State, and local governments rely heavily on the federal government for revenues.<sup>8</sup> According to the Article 83 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917, “the President will begin his tenure on October 1st and will last six years in office.”<sup>9</sup> First, in 2000, Vicente Fox, a candidate of the National Action Party (PAN),<sup>10</sup> was elected as President of the United Mexican States. The election of an opposition candidate brought a turning point in Mexican politics because the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)<sup>11</sup> held power for 71 years. Then, in 2006, Felipe Calderon, the candidate of the PAN, succeeded Fox. Finally, it did not take long for the PRI to go back to power. In 2012, Enrique Peña Nieto was elected to the presidency of Mexico.

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<sup>4</sup>Bradley, R. C. (2010). *Mexico: Background and Issues*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

<sup>5</sup>Where is Mexico? (2015, October 02). Retrieved January 29, 2017, from <http://www.worldatlas.com/na/mx/where-is-mexico.html>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup>*Petróleos Mexicanos*. (2017, March 24). Retrieved March 30, 2017, from <http://www.pemex.com/ri/Publicaciones/Paginas/IndicadoresPetroleros.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Bradley, R. C. (2010). *Mexico: Background and Issues*. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Nova Science Publishers, Inc

<sup>9</sup>Mexico's Constitution of 1917 with Amendments through 2015. (n.d.). Retrieved March 28, 2017, from [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mexico\\_2015.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Mexico_2015.pdf?lang=en)

<sup>10</sup>Partido Acción Nacional. Retrieved January 20, 2017, from <https://www.pan.org.mx/#>

<sup>11</sup>Partido Revolucionario Institucional. (2016). Retrieved January 20, 2017, from <http://pri.org.mx/SomosPRI/>

## 1.2 Current Issues in the U.S-Mexican Relations

Mexico's location makes the country a bridge between North and South America. However, one cannot ignore that geography does not define every part of a relationship. As a result, Mexico and the United States are not only linked by the approximately 3,142 km border but also due to the issues that take place on it and are important for both nations. When it comes to the U.S. Mexican relationship certain matters cannot be ignored; from the illegal and legal immigration from Mexico to the United States, to trade and security issues, and finally, the drug agenda. These are some of the key topics that cannot be disregarded when it comes to the bilateral relationship. Payan has apparently argued that illegal drugs, undocumented migration, and homeland security are "three different problems interrelated mostly by the fact that they happen on the border" or as he calls them "the three border wars." Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that each one of the issues is different although there is room for points of interceptions, but apparently there should not be treated as one.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.2.1 Trade under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

First, Mexican-American relations on trade are quite considerable. Besides, cooperation in this field has been possible given that it is a priority for both partners that trade prosper. "Canada and the United States implemented a free trade pact in 1989. In 1994, NAFTA broadened the free trade area to include Mexico."<sup>13</sup> Since 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement governs trade between Mexico and the United States and due to NAFTA trade between both countries has increased to extraordinary levels. "Trade between Mexico and the United States increased from some \$80 billion in 1993 to \$250 billion in 2001."<sup>14</sup> "U.S. exports to Canada and Mexico grew from US\$134.3 billion (US\$46.5 billion to Mexico and US\$87.8 billion to Canada) to US\$250.6 billion (US\$105.4

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<sup>12</sup> Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.20)

<sup>13</sup>Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, & N. (2008, April 01). North American Free Trade Agreement. Retrieved March 23, 2017, from [http://www.naftanow.org/facts/default\\_en.asp](http://www.naftanow.org/facts/default_en.asp)

<sup>14</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.92)

US\$145.3 billion respectively).”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, through the years that NAFTA has been implemented trade has been allowed to flow. “Mexican exports to the United States reached over US\$138 billion, while Mexican exports to Canada grew from US\$2.7 billion to US\$8.7 billion, an increase of almost 227%.”<sup>16</sup> (see annex no. 2)

“NAFTA allowed Mexico to become the U.S' third-largest trading partner after China and Canada in 2014 when total bilateral trade reached USD534 billion. The U.S is Mexico's main trade partner accounting for about 80% of its total trade.”<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, NAFTA’s implementation came with a burden too. First, the volume of trucks produced by NAFTA is very high. “There are 42 crossing points throughout the U.S-Mexico shared border and the administrations of U.S President Obama and Mexico's Peña Nieto have worked together to improve trade flows.”<sup>18</sup> Since NAFTA hundreds of trucks pass the border which makes it hard to control every one of them.

The creators of NAFTA focused mainly on the positive side and the possibility to foster the economy through its implementation, but “its most negative effects: an overburdened infrastructure; the more efficient flow of drugs; the congregation of undocumented migrants pushed by the development gap between the two countries and pulled by opportunities for employment in the United States” were ignored.<sup>19</sup> Thus, since the implementation of NAFTA trade between both nations has unquestionably benefited, but its adverse effects, especially in the border, cannot be ignored. “The social and economic dislocations in México have turned to security problems on the border for the United States.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as stated in the IHS country report: “the entering into force of NAFTA

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<sup>15</sup>North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). (2016, April 11). Retrieved March 23, 2017, from <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta>

<sup>16</sup>Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Country Reports - Mexico, IHS Economics and Country Risk. (2015, June 24). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ea718f9-3628-46a6-bdd5-21b0a4cb6caa%40sessionmgr104&vid=6&hid=103>

<sup>18</sup>Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.131)

<sup>20</sup>Ibid (p.132)



in 1994 boosted cross-border trade between Mexico and the U.S, but alongside legal trade, the opening of the border allowed illegal trade to flourish, facilitating drug trafficking and people smuggling which continues to date.”<sup>21</sup>

### **1.2.2 The Bilateral Relation and the Conflict on Immigration**

When the Mexican-War erupted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, border disputes started between both countries. Nowadays, territorial disputes over certain states such as Texas, California and New Mexico do not set the tone when it comes to the border; one of the issues at hand is illegal immigration to the United States through the Mexican border. Although plenty of unauthorized immigrants entered the American territory legally and overstayed in the country, much attention is put on the Southern border as a safe haven for illegal immigration.

From 1943 to 1964 hundreds of Braceros supplied the demand in American soil for agricultural work in cotton fields and other crops. It is estimated that during that period 4.6 Mexican Braceros entered the American territory.<sup>22</sup> When the program was canceled, and workers were still needed, it is easy to do the math. The aftermath of the cancellation of the Bracero program resulted in the increase of the undocumented workers coming from Mexico to the United States. Thus, the immigration dilemma between Mexico and the United States is an area of conflict for the bilateral relationship that continues rising since the United States ended the Bracero program in 1964. The last report from the Department of Homeland and Security (DHS) estimated that “11.4 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States in January 2012 compared to 11.5 million in January 2011.”<sup>23</sup> According to Pew Research data, there are around 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States from which Mexicans made up roughly 50%. In 2014, “5.8 million Mexican unauthorized immigrants living in

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<sup>21</sup>Country Reports - Mexico, IHS Economics and Country Risk. (2015, June 24). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ea718f9-3628-46a6-bdd5-21b0a4cb6caa%40sessionmgr104&vid=6&hid=103>

<sup>22</sup>Bracero History Archive. Enseñanza Introducción e Información Histórica para Maestros. (2017). Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <http://braceroarchive.org/es/ensenanza>

<sup>23</sup> Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population ... (n.d.). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Unauthorized%20Immigrant%20Population%20Estimates%20in%20the%20US%20January%202012\\_0.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Unauthorized%20Immigrant%20Population%20Estimates%20in%20the%20US%20January%202012_0.pdf)

the U.S. down from 6.4 million in 2009.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the report shows that “the U.S. civilian workforce included 8 million unauthorized immigrants in 2014, accounting for 5% of those who were working or were unemployed and looking for work.”<sup>25</sup>

Historically bilateral relations were negatively affected by immigration issues. Currently, the debate on immigration is an area of conflict to the U.S.-Mexican relations. Vicente Fox (2000–06) focused his agenda on immigration issues, but the September 11 attacks increased tensions in that area. On the other hand, Calderon (2006-2012), made the War on Drugs a priority for his administration. Besides, the U.S. Congress blocked any effort of the Bush administration (2001-2009) to pass an immigration bill. During his administration border security measures increased and more than ever the rhetoric criminalizing migrants was spread across the country ignoring the contributions that undocumented migrants labor brings. Hence, the debate about unauthorized immigration focuses mostly on the burden those undocumented migrants bring than on their contributions. Also, the push and pull factors of illegal immigration should not be ignored.

The Obama (2012-2016)-Peña Nieto (2012-2018) years were not full of achievements when it came to immigration solutions. During his administration Obama deported more than 2 million unauthorized immigrants reaching record numbers of deportation done by an American Commander in Chief. Moreover, progress was not accomplished on immigration reforms. He issued an executive order in 2014 that found objection in many States. The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) would spare millions of parents of legal permanent residents from deportation and would provide them with work permits. <sup>26</sup> However, the equally divided SCOTUS ruled against Obama in the *United States vs. Texas Case*.

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<sup>24</sup>Krogstad, J. M., Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2016, November 03). 5 facts about illegal immigration in the U.S. Retrieved March 25, 2017, from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/03/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>

<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup>Supreme Court Tie Blocks Obama Immigration Plan. (2016, June 23). The New York Times. Retrieved June 24, 2016, from [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/24/us/supreme-court-immigration-obama-dapa.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/24/us/supreme-court-immigration-obama-dapa.html?_r=0)

### 1.2.3 The Mexican-American War on Drugs

It is impossible to know exactly the profits generated by drug traffic. The profits are high, and the risks are worth taking. On the other hand, it is possible to state that “drug trafficking is the most profitable organized crime in the world and America is the most important market for illegal drugs.”<sup>27</sup> Concerning the United States-Mexican relations and drug traffic, both nations share the need to put the problem under control. In the 1980s and 1990s, drug traffic was a source of tension in the bilateral relationship. It was considered by many as “the most disruptive” problem between Mexico and the United States. On one hand, the U.S. public blamed Mexico from bringing drugs to the country. On the other hand, the Mexican public accused the U.S. due to the violence that drug production brought to their country.

In addition, other concern that deteriorated the bilateral relationship took and continues occurring in the political arena. “The subject of drugs is often used by political and bureaucratic groups as an instrument for influencing aspects of the U.S.-Mexican relations that are not directly related to drug issues.”<sup>28</sup> This rhetoric deteriorates the relationship because it increases conflict and complexity in the bilateral negotiation process. In the United States, mostly “political manipulation of the drug problem has been used to attract votes and to achieve a high level of national consensus on other foreign policy and internal political issues, such as immigration.”<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, the term “War on Drugs” is nothing new. We could consider it as the longest war the United States is still fighting. It started with President Richard Nixon (1969-1974) War on Drugs campaign and continues until today. Shortly after his inauguration, Calderon (2006-2012) declared the War on Drugs in Mexico. The administration considered that drug trafficking was a huge problem that requires a broad solution. Therefore, Calderon asked for help to his immediate neighbors. Since the declaration of the War on Drugs in Mexico, the cooperation between both nations when it comes to drug traffic has fostered.

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<sup>27</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.25)

<sup>28</sup>González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California. (p.1)

<sup>29</sup> Ibid p.6

Nowadays, the United States provides financial help to the United Mexican States' War on Drugs. Unquestionably, both nations share the issue of drug traffic closely: the United States on one side of the chain with the demand and Mexico on the other with the supplier role. Moreover, it is impossible to deal with the drug topic and ignore the border since "it has for a long time experienced what it is like to be caught in the middle of a sustained effort to stop the manufacturing, trafficking, and consumption of illegal drugs. The big difference now is that this war has been elevated to a war of national security."<sup>30</sup>

### 1.3 Drug Production and Mexico's Illicit Supply Role

The specific amount of narcotics entering the United States is a mystery, and we only can estimate depending on the seizures every year. For instance, in 2006, approximately 28,286 Kilograms of cocaine was seized in Southern and Northern borders, 491 Kg of heroin, 1,150,864Kg of marijuana, and 2,799kg of methamphetamine.<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the fact that Mexico became a safe haven for drug trafficking is unquestionable. Nowadays, the country plays the supply and producer role. In 2015, Mexican authorities burned almost 140 tons of seized drugs across the country. Since 2012, "authorities have seized more than 2,539 tons (527 thousand pounds) of drugs, and also nine million pills in operations throughout Mexico."<sup>32</sup> However, due to the illegality of drug trafficking, it is impossible to know the exact amount of drugs not only coming through but also produce in the United Mexican States. Moreover, "Mexico has a long history of exporting drugs to the US, progressing over 85 years from cannabis to cocaine and heroin, and more recently to methamphetamine."<sup>33</sup> Again, accuracy is unattainable when it comes to drug trafficking. Furthermore, many questions remain open: who started the drug boom in Mexico, how much drug is

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<sup>30</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.25)

<sup>31</sup>Drug Movement Into and Within the United States. (2010). Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs38/38661/movement.htm>

<sup>32</sup>Mexico burns 140 tons of seized drugs. (2015, August 19). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/mexico/11811303/Mexico-burns-140-tons-of-seized-drugs.html>

<sup>33</sup>Country Reports - Mexico, IHS Economics and Country Risk. (2015, June 24). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=6ea718f9-3628-46a6-bdd5-21b0a4cb6caa%40sessionmgr104&vid=6&hid=103>

produced and supply to the United States, how much of that drug is manufactured in Mexico, and how much profit is obtained.

### **1.3.1 Mexico's First Opium Production: from the 1920s to the 1940s**

It is estimated that Mexico's drug "business" relies on Cannabis and heroin, also methamphetamine and undeniably cocaine. "Opium cultivation and production in Mexico apparently began in the 1920s in the states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango."<sup>34</sup> As a result, the drug production in Mexico did not start yesterday; it is a situation that has evolved from almost a century since "the cultivation of cannabis in Mexico can be traced to at least the nineteenth century."<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it seems that the opium business was brought to Mexico from China. "Chinese immigrants to Sinaloa and Sonora became the nation's first opium growers," but the production of heroin in Mexico during that time was not that significant. "In the 1920 and 1930s the Mexican supply of heroin was not more than 10-15 percent of the total, but its share increased substantially when the European and Asian sources became inaccessible during World War II."<sup>36</sup>

One cannot ignore the United States' drug prohibition consequences in Mexico. Due to drug prohibition the prices went high, the risks were worth taking due to the price incentives. The Mexican government took part on the ban too, and "prohibited marijuana cultivation in 1923, and in 1927 banned its exports."<sup>37</sup> Thus, it was the right moment for Mexico to supply the United States when World War II was declared. It was the event that changed the United States posture towards Mexico and drugs. Before, the United States took a strict stance when it came to drug production, but "now the U.S asked the country to grow cannabis and poppy, although it continued to try and curb illicit cultivation and trafficking."<sup>38</sup> Besides, "hemp was needed to manufacture ropes, and poppy was

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<sup>34</sup>González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California. (p.52)

<sup>35</sup>Walker, W. (1981). *Drug Control in the Americas*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. (p.43). Quoted from González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid p.42

<sup>37</sup>Ibid p.48-49

<sup>38</sup> Ibid (p.120-130)

needed to produce medical morphine.”<sup>39</sup> Then, in the 1940s the drug production was already out of control. “Cultivation of both products increased dramatically, and by 1943 opium had become Sinaloa’s largest cash crop.”<sup>40</sup> It was due to the United States demands that Mexico became the supplier and as writes Gonzales and Tienda, “gradually Mexico tightened controls over opium, heroin, cocaine, and cannabis production and trade.”<sup>41</sup>

### 1.3.2 Eradication Efforts and Heroin Boom

Although in the 1940s opium was produced in a smaller scale that was not the case for cannabis which was produced beyond the northern states. Therefore, eradication efforts started in 1948 when Mexico launched its first “Gran Campaña” with nationwide raids and the destruction of opium and marijuana plantations in Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Guerrero.<sup>42</sup> According to the U.S Congress estimates, during the 1950s and 1960s, the Mexican heroin supply was less than 15 percent of the United States’ market.”<sup>43</sup> However, the cannabis drug production growth was unstoppable no matter Mexican or American eradication efforts. “In the 1950s and 1960s, the issue of Mexican cannabis pitched the U.S against Mexico.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, “by the late 1960s and early 70s, drug use in Mexico, was no longer restricted to minority groups but had extended into other sectors of the population, and drug abuse by the young was an undeniable problem.”<sup>45</sup> The situation did not change for the best in the 1970s because the Mexican supply of heroin to the United States raised its highest point. Geography played a major role, and the smuggling business started to pick along the border. From 1972-1975 the supply of heroin from Mexico increased from 10-15% to 80%

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<sup>39</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.57)

<sup>40</sup>González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California. (p.72)

<sup>41</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.57)

<sup>42</sup>Craig, R. (1978). La Campana Permanente: Mexico's Antidrug Campaign. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 20(2), 107-131. doi:10.2307/165432.

<sup>43</sup>González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California. (p.8)

<sup>44</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.57)

<sup>45</sup>Secretaría de la Salud, Programa Contra la Farmaco Dependencia. Procuraduría General de la República, Campana, p.14 Quoted from Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.57)

of the total amount, calculated at more than six metric tons. Thus, during the 1970s, “Mexico was a major supplier of marijuana and heroin, particularly Mexican brown heroin. Cocaine came mostly from Colombia via the Caribbean.”<sup>46</sup>

Then, one must wonder how Mexico became its neighbor’s major heroin supplier. The answer is as ambiguous as the exact amount of drug that was smuggled during that time. However, “there is consensus among drug experts that Mexico filled the gap left by Turkey and the French connection.”<sup>47</sup> According to the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC) reports, by the year 1980, the Mexican supply was estimated at only 25% which proves the success of eradication efforts. In the 1980s, the United States Eradication efforts took place in the Caribbean too as a response to the increase of cocaine business from Colombia. Nevertheless, those same eradications efforts contributed to the flow of cocaine to Mexico the fore coming years. “In response, the Colombians began to look for different routes to smuggle their cocaine, thus expanding the drug war strategic game. They discovered Mexico, whose location and open border with the United States could be remarkable assets.”<sup>48</sup> Besides, the NNICC data shows the increase in the Mexican supply of cannabis to the United States to 32% in 1985, and increase in opium and heroin in Mexico too.

### **1.3.3 From a Tran-shipment Country to Domestic Use.**

In the 1990s, Mexico replaced Miami as the major trans-shipment country for the cocaine coming to the United States. It is estimated that 70 percent of the cocaine trafficked to the United States was coming through Mexico. Furthermore, the indoor cultivation of cannabis in the United States increased, and eradication efforts took place in Mexico like never before due to the boom of domestic use during the decade. “Over 700 000 persons are estimated to have abused one or more drugs in Mexico City. Cannabis remains the most abused drug followed by

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<sup>46</sup>Murphy, M & Steele, R . The World Narcotics Problem: the Latin American Perspective. Report of special study mission to latin America and the federal republic of germany.p.237. Quoted from Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.28)

<sup>47</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.58)

<sup>48</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.28)

tranquilizers and inhalants. A rising trend was also noted in the illicit demand for cocaine and heroin.” The eradication efforts by the Mexican government resulted in roughly hundreds of cocaine seized and the destruction of more than 9000 hectares of poppy and cannabis cultivation, the arrest of traffickers as well as the death of more than 76 public servants in the fight against drug trafficking.<sup>49</sup>

According to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) data, the trend of escalation of domestic drug abuse continued during the decade with an increase of approximately 30 percent in drug addiction between 1993 and 1998. By 1998, “over 700 000 persons are estimated to have abused one or more drugs in Mexico City. Cannabis remains the most abused drug followed by tranquilizers and inhalants. A rising trend was also noted in the illicit demand for cocaine and heroin.”<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, the number of seizures, drug destroyed and drug-related arrests in Mexico decreased by the end of the decade. The report also recognized the displacement phenomenon. “Noting that Mexico has strengthened its drug control efforts, the Board is of the opinion that drug trafficking groups may be avoiding the territory of that country and shifting their operations to other Latin American countries and to the Caribbean.”<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, during the 1990s, specifically in 1994, the drug trafficking organizations found in NAFTA a new path for their “modus smugglandi.” With millions of trucks crossing the U.S-Mexico border every year, it is impossible to inspect every single truck crossing the border. “NAFTA is turning out to be a heaven-sent blessing to the drug cartels that rely on trucking as the primary conveyor belt of illegal drugs across the border.”<sup>52</sup> This trend has continued during the following decades.

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<sup>49</sup>Report of the International Narcotics Control Board 1991. (1992). United Nations Publications Sales No. E.91.XI.4 ISBN 92-1-148086-8 ISSN 0257-3717. Retrieved March 02, 2017, from [https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR1991/AR\\_1991\\_E.pdf](https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR1991/AR_1991_E.pdf) (p.36)

<sup>50</sup>Report of the International Narcotics Control Board 1999. (2000). United Nations Publications Sales Sales No. E.00.XI.1 ISBN 92-1-148123-6 ISSN 0257-3717. Retrieved March 02, 2017, from [https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR1999/AR\\_1999\\_E.pdf](https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR1999/AR_1999_E.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> Ibid (p.38)

<sup>52</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.34)



### 1.3.4 Facing the Supply-Demand Equation of the New Millennium

Eradication efforts have continued in the last decade and alliance between both nations has been reinforced. In 2015, for instance, “The Government of Mexico reported eradicating up to 26,000 ha of opium poppy compared with the eradication of over 21,000 ha in 2014 and 14,622 ha in 2013.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the Government of Mexico efforts to eradicate cannabis has resulted in approximately 5,700 ha in the year 2013. When it comes to methamphetamine, according to the available data by customs officials in the United States, “in 2014, Mexico was the main country of departure for seizures.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, “the Governments of the countries in North America are addressing the situation by combining policies to reduce illicit drug supply with policies to reduce illicit drug demand.”<sup>55</sup> The Alliance is taking place too between drug trafficking groups in North America which facilitate the expansion of drug distribution. “Mexico-based organizations also increased their cooperation with criminal gangs based in the United States. In 2009, the mid-level and retail-level distribution of illicit drugs in the United States was largely controlled by about 20,000 street gangs.” Consequently, when there is a demand that promises high profit, there will be someone able to fill the gap if the risks are worth taking.<sup>56</sup>

A remarkable situation of the last decade is the first steps to the legalization of controlled substances not only in the United States but also in Mexico. In June 2016, the article “25 states now call marijuana “medicine.” Why doesn’t the DEA?” was published by the Washington post. That same day Ohio’s Medical Marijuana Bill was signed into law. In 2016, Ohio became the 25<sup>th</sup> state that authorized marijuana for medical purpose. If we count the District of Columbia (DC), that will make 26<sup>th</sup> states in the American soil that have signed marijuana bills.<sup>57</sup> “On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the states of Arkansas, Florida and

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<sup>53</sup>Report of the International Narcotics Control Board 2016. (2017). United Nations Publications Sales No. E.17.XI.1 ISBN: 978-92-1-148289-8 eISBN: 978-92-1-060065-1 ISSN 0257-3717. Retrieved March 05, 2017, from

[https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2016/English/AR2016\\_E\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2016/English/AR2016_E_ebook.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup>Payan, T. (2006). *The three U.S.-Mexico border wars: drugs, immigration, and Homeland Security*. (xv, 164 s.) Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International. (p.63)

<sup>57</sup>25 states now call marijuana “medicine.” Why doesn’t the DEA? (2016, June 09). *The Washington Post*. Retrieved June 15, 2016, from [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/09/25-states-now-call-marijuana-medicine-why-doesnt-the-dea/?utm\\_term=.0ff537058e8d](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/09/25-states-now-call-marijuana-medicine-why-doesnt-the-dea/?utm_term=.0ff537058e8d)

North Dakota voted in favor of authorizing the use of cannabis for medical purposes.”<sup>58</sup>

In addition, the Mexican Supreme Court decision in the case *No.237/2014* based on the respect for individual personality and personal freedom ruled that the four plaintiffs were allowed to possess and cultivate marijuana for non-medical purpose.<sup>59</sup> Although the decision did not legalize marijuana use for non-medical purpose in Mexico, it set a precedent in the controversial dilemma in such a conservative country when it comes to drug consumption. Thus, during the new millennium, the demand for drugs in the United States continues. Mexico has kept its role as a producer and supplier to the United States’ market. The equation is easy: the United States is the major country of destination and Mexico has a significant role as its principal supplier. The Mexican government has taken law enforcement to combat the increase in drug trafficking and the drug trafficking organizations has responded with unprecedented violence.

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<sup>58</sup>Report of the International Narcotics Control Board 2016. (2017). United Nations Publications Sales No. E.17.XI.1 ISBN: 978-92-1-148289-8 eISBN: 978-92-1-060065-1 ISSN 0257-3717. Retrieved March 05, 2017, from

[https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2016/English/AR2016\\_E\\_ebook.pdf](https://www.incb.org/documents/Publications/AnnualReports/AR2016/English/AR2016_E_ebook.pdf)

<sup>59</sup>Corte dice Si a La Marihuana. (n.d.). *El Universal*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/nacion/sociedad/2015/11/5/corte-dice-si-marihuana#imagen-1>

## 1.4 The Escalation of Violence in Mexico during the last Decade

*"I came here for the security my country cannot provide for me. The fear will never go away. What I experienced is a fear that will last a lifetime."* Marisol Valles Garcia, former Police Chief in the border town of Praxedis, Guerrero <sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately the story of the former Mexican female police chief, “the bravest woman in Mexico,” is not an exceptional case. Since the War on Drugs was declared in 2006, the violence in Mexico has reached remarkable figures, and some public officials had to ask for asylum due to the constant death threats. According to data from INEGI,<sup>61</sup> 20,726 was the number of homicides in Mexico in 2015 which represents a significantly increased if we compared the figure of 8,867 in 2007; Moreover, in 2008, the number of murders almost double with 14,006 that year. Thus, it estimated that organized crime related violence in Mexico had claimed more than 100,000 lives including citizens, politicians, journalists, police officers, public officials or anybody who stands in their way.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, it seems that the questions of human rights in Mexico remains open because the government has failed to control the violent situation in which even Mexican police, military, and public officials have been involved. (see annex no.5)

### 1.4.1 Calderon and Peña Nieto Years and the Alarming Increase in Violence

On his speech at the Mexican Museum of Anthropology, the former President of Mexico Felipe Calderon (2006-2012), defended his strategy against narcotraffic: “If we had not done anything, the country would be completely dominated by cartels, crime would have grown up to the point that state institutions had stopped working and the state institutions would have been at their [the cartels] service.”<sup>63</sup> Although the level of violence increased in Mexico,

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<sup>60</sup>Lavandera, E. (2011, June 6). 'Bravest woman in Mexico' seeks asylum in United States. *CNN*. Retrieved April 14, 2016, from <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/americas/05/23/mexico.female.police.chief/index.html>

<sup>61</sup>Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía

<sup>62</sup>Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI). (n.d.). Retrieved April 10, 2017, from <http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/olap/proyectos/bd/continuas/mortalidad/defuncioneshom.asp?s=est>

<sup>63</sup>Camarena, S. (2011, September 03). Calderón mantendrá la guerra contra el 'narco' hasta el final de su mandato. *El País*. Retrieved January 10, 2016, from

[http://elpais.com/diario/2011/09/03/internacional/1315000807\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2011/09/03/internacional/1315000807_850215.html)

the former President Calderon continued with the War on Drugs until the last day of his administration in 2012. “Based on statistics from the Reforma newspaper, considered a conservative tally, the number of drug trafficking-related homicides doubled between 2007 and 2008, rose by more than 20% in 2009, and surpassed 11,000 in 2010 alone.”<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, Calderon’s administration kingpin strategy contributed to the escalation of violence since cartels use it not only to affirm their leadership but also to dominate smuggling routes and to impose fear on the population. It is impossible to agree on the exact amount of homicides related to drug trafficking due to the unreliability of the available data. However, during Calderon’s administration, the yearly average of homicides increased from 8,000 to 20,000 as a result of Mexico’s tough anti-drug campaign which led to the Mexican’s population anxiety when it comes to public safety.

After taking office, the current President Enrique Peña Nieto launched a strategy against street violence and kidnappings. His plan has focused mostly on reducing violence efforts. Moreover, “the Secretary of the Interior Miguel Angel Osorio Chong announced that between December 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013 murders related to organized crime dropped by 17 percent.”<sup>65</sup> However, the reliability of such data is questionable and suggests that the figures are manipulated. According to La Vanguardia, the current administration’s figure for murders is 90,000 related to organized crime, and the article asserts that during Enrique Peña Nieto years, the level of violence has increased to the level of reaching record numbers. He will leave a Mexico as bloody as his former ruler.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, According to data from INEGI, 25,967 was the number of homicides in Mexico; the amount reduced to 20,762 in 2015. Thus, it is not possible to assert any figure, but it could be estimated that since the War on Drugs started in 2006, more than 100,000 has been hit by the violence in Mexico.

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<sup>64</sup>Beittel, J. S. (2011). Mexico’s Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of the Rising Violence. *Congressional Research Service* 7-5700. R41576, 1-30. Retrieved 2015, from [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)

<sup>65</sup>Ibid

<sup>66</sup>En 50 meses de Peña Nieto, los homicidios escalan a 90 mil 694; la estrategia fracasó, critican. (2017, March 12). *La Vanguardia*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/articulo/en-50-meses-de-pena-nieto-los-homicidios-escaln-90-mil-694-la-estrategia-fracaso-critican>

### 1.4.2 High Profile Cases and Human Rights Concern in Mexico

In February 2016, El Papa Francisco visited Mexico. The Pope's visit represented for many Mexicans, mostly a Catholic nation, a sign that there is still hope in the cruel situation that the country is living.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, for the Catholic Church, and the country in general, the violence has bitten harshly with record numbers of homicides related to drug trafficking. In September 2016, the Catholic Priest José Alfredo López Guillén was shot to death in the state of Michoacán. He was not the only Priest that felt under the gun of violence that month; Alejo Nabor Jiménez Juárez and José Alfredo Juárez de la Cruz were executed in the state of Veracruz too.<sup>68</sup> In the previous year, the community of Puebla woke up with the disappearance of their Priest Erasto Pliego de Jesus. Part of his body was found with sign of torture, and the other was incinerated. He was kidnapped and then tortured to death. "During the former Mexican President administration, seventeen Catholic Priest and approximately seven members of the church were killed. "By the end of his administration, the Government of Felipe Calderon was considered as the most disastrous for the protection of Priests' and Catholic Religious' human rights." During the current Mexican administration of Peña Nieto, 11 Catholic Priests were killed in 2016, and two were added to the list of the desaparecidos in Mexico.<sup>69</sup>

Mexican Journalists are suffering due to the spread of violence. They have been kidnapped, have received a death threat, and in the worst scenario killed. According to Article 19 report,<sup>70</sup> it is estimated that between 2006 and 2012, 74 journalist and media-support workers were killed and from 2012 to 2016, the figure reached to 24. Besides, the report claims that most of the attacks against press came from public officials and not DTOs itself. However, the most alarming issue is the impunity because in most of the cases nobody is acquainted and the

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<sup>67</sup>Fernandez, M. (2016, February 17). Pope Francis Visits U.S. – Mexico Border. *The New York Times*. Retrieved February 20, 2016, from <https://www.nytimes.com/live/pope-francis-at-us-mexico-border/>

<sup>68</sup>Imparables asesinatos y extorsiones a miembros de la Iglesia Católica. a 23 casos violentos ha subido la cifra en lo que va del sexenio. (2016, October 05). *Centro Católico Multimedia*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from [http://www.ccm.org.mx/jccm/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=5058](http://www.ccm.org.mx/jccm/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=5058)

<sup>69</sup>Gallegos, Z. (2016, February 12). México es el país más peligroso de América para ser sacerdote. *El Pais*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/02/05/mexico/1454632692\\_426474.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/02/05/mexico/1454632692_426474.html)

<sup>70</sup>Article 19, organización defensora de la libertad de expresión

journalist deaths are regarded just as another simple act of violence.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, Journalist rights are disrespected, and the freedom of speech in Mexico is at high risk.

It was early in the morning on September 26, 2014, when the students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers College of Ayotzinapa<sup>72</sup> started their journey to Iguala, Guerrero. They went to Iguala to protest against what they considered biased for the Mexican educational system. However, not all of them came back home that same day, and they might never do so. "They were taken alive, we want them back alive."<sup>73</sup> Since that fatal day, the number 43 is etched into people's minds; it is spray-painted onto walls and lamp-posts, and shaved on to protesters' heads. <sup>74</sup> The students were lost, but their cause was not silent because many people continue protesting for them. For instance, in Mexico City, after a year of the Ayotzinapa disappearance, 15000 marched demanding justice.

There are different versions of what actually happened, and none would ever be confirmed, but the painful reality is that 43 students that same day disappeared. On their way back from Iguala, the local police opened fire to the buses they were traveling in claiming that they kidnapped the buses. The surviving students' testimony is just the opposite, and they stated that the drivers gave them a lift. "Police also mistakenly fired on a bus carrying a local football team, killing its driver and one of the players on board. A woman traveling in a nearby taxi was also killed by a bullet." Two students were shot on the spot. Another one was found mutilated the next day, but what happened to the remaining 43?<sup>75</sup> According to the investigation, corrupt police officers handed them to a local gang. Then, the group killed and burned them into a rubbish dump. Finally, they dropped the remaining in the nearby area. The former Mayors of Iguala and Cocula, as well as police officers and gang members are under arrests.

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<sup>71</sup>Altamirano, C. (2016, August 05). En México es asesinado un periodista cada 26 días, denuncia Article 19. *El País*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/08/05/mexico/1470380660\\_849673.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/08/05/mexico/1470380660_849673.html)

<sup>72</sup>The 43 studied in Ayotzinapa at an all-male teacher training college that has a history of left-wing activism and the students regularly took part in protests.

<sup>73</sup>Watson, K. (2015, September 30). Missing students: Mexico's violent reality. *BBC*. Retrieved April 02, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-34377805>

<sup>74</sup>Ibid

<sup>75</sup>Mexico missing students: Knowns and unknowns. (2016, February 10). *BBC*. Retrieved April 02, 2016, from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35539727>

The member of the Mexican National Human Rights Commission José Larrieta Carrasco said that “the facts released today could constitute clear evidence of the co-opting of municipal institutions by criminal organizations in Iguala, Cocula and, now with the information being released, probably Huitzuco.”<sup>76</sup> “In the same way, it could be an example of the alleged involvement of federal police officers.”<sup>77</sup> In 2016, the investigation was reopened, but until today many questions remained unanswered, the students have not been found, and the human rights situation for Mexican citizens has not changed, if not aggravated.

### **1.5 Contemporary Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations**

According to the available data, before the Mexican War on Drugs, there were four main DTOs:

- The Tijuana/Arellano Felix Organization (AFO)
- The Sinaloa Cartel,
- The Juárez/Vicente Carrillo Fuentes organization (CFO)
- The Gulf cartel.

After the War on Drugs was declared, the DTOs fragmented into many groups. Currently, at least nine Major DTOs were identified by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA):

- ❖ Tijuana/Arellano Felix Organization (AFO)
- ❖ Sinaloa DTO
- ❖ Juárez/Carrillo Fuentes Organization
- ❖ Gulf DTO
- ❖ Los Zetas
- ❖ Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO)
- ❖ La Familia Michoacana (LFM)
- ❖ Knights Templar
- ❖ Cartel Jalisco-New Generation (CJNG)

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<sup>76</sup> Federal police witnessed abduction of 43 missing Mexican students – witness. (2016, April 15). *The Guardian*. Retrieved April 02, 2017, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/14/missing-mexican-students-witness-federal-police-involved>

<sup>77</sup>Ibid

### 1.5.1 Tijuana/Arrellano Felix Organization (AFO)

The Arrellano Felix Organization, also known as the Tijuana Cartel, not only controls the city of Tijuana, Mexico's largest border city, but also the surrounding border of Baja California. The Arrellano Felix Brothers and sisters took control of the organization after their uncle was arrested for the murder of Enrique Camarena in 1989.<sup>78</sup> The AFO was powerful during the 1990s and 2000s. However, the kingpin strategy and the fight against the Sinaloa Cartel hindered his supremacy. Since 2009, the organization is believed to have made a truce with the Sinaloa Cartel and has since operated quietly.<sup>79</sup>

### 1.5.2 Sinaloa DTO

“The Sinaloa DTO controls crime in at least five Mexican states: Baja California, Sonora and the “Golden Triangle” of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua, although analysts have disputed its current reach within Mexico.”<sup>80</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Justice, it traffic all kind of illicit drugs to all regions of the United States. Its “modus operandus” as a network of smaller organizations through Mexico and the United States works well. Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman built a drug empire that made him the most famous drug traffic leader in the world. He was also famous for his magnificent ways to escape from prison in 2001 and 2014. He was finally recaptured in 2015. The Sinaloa DTO controls more or less 40% to 60% of the drug industry in Mexico with a profit of 3000 million dollars.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Enrique Camarena was a special DEA agent killed by the AFO.

<sup>79</sup>Mexico's major drug cartels A guide to Mexico's most significant criminal organizations fighting each other and the authorities. (2014, January 15). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/mexico/10575135/Mexicos-major-drug-cartels.html>

<sup>80</sup>Beauregard, Luis, (27 February, 2014) Mexico Braces for Fresh Drug Violence After Sinaloa Cartel Chief's Capture. *El Pais*. The “Golden Triangle” contains three of four Mexican states where opium poppy and cannabis are primarily grown.

<sup>81</sup>Park, M. (2016, August 19). Los carteles del narcotráfico más importantes de México. *CNN en Español*. Retrieved April 04, 2017, from <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2016/08/19/los-carteles-del-narcotrafico-mas-importantes-de-mexico/>



### 1.5.3 Juárez/Carrillo Fuentes Organization

The Juárez Organization, as its name states, controls the city of Juarez and parts of the state of Chihuahua. It was very powerful during the 1980s and 1990s controlling routes in Texas. “The cartel was founded by Amado Carrillo Fuentes, known as the “Lord of the Skies” for his large fleet of aircraft used to smuggle drugs. He died under mysterious circumstances following a botched plastic surgery in 1997.” The fight between the Juarez and Sinaloa DTO turned Ciudad Juarez into one of the most violent cities in the 2000s costing approximately 10,000 lives.<sup>82</sup>

### 1.5.4 Gulf DTO

The Gulf DTO has been operating since the 1920s in the northern state of Tamaulipas. In 2010, the organizations leader, Antonio “Tony Tormenta” Ezequiel Cardenas was killed, and leadership of the Gulf went to Jorge Eduardo “El Coss” Costilla Sanchez, he was arrested in 2012. “The Gulf DTO was the main competitor challenging Sinaloa for trafficking routes in the early 2000s, but now battles its former enforcement wing, Los Zetas, over territory in northeastern Mexico. It has reportedly split into several competing gangs.”<sup>83</sup>

### 1.5.5 Los Zetas

The Zetas were founded by former elite airborne special force members of the Mexican army who worked for the Gulf DTO as their “sicarios” until they became independent. Unquestionably they will be remembered by the violence and cruelty they infringed. They uploaded videos of their “guisos,” set someone alive on fire, to the internet, as well as how they tortured their victims. They were determined to make a statement of what would happen if you dare to challenge them.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Data from the *Neuro-Developmental Treatment Association (NDTA)* 2011. (August, 2011).

<sup>83</sup>Beittel, J. (n.d.). Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations. *Congressional Research Service 7-5700 R41576*. Retrieved July 22, 2015, from [crs.gov](http://crs.gov).

<sup>84</sup>Park, M. (2016, August 19). Los carteles del narcotráfico más importantes de México. *CNN en Espanol*. Retrieved April 04, 2017, from <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2016/08/19/los-carteles-del-narcotrafico-mas-importantes-de-mexico/>

### **1.5.6 Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO)**

The Beltran Leyva Organization split from the Sinaloa Cartel after accusing his leader, “El Chapo” of giving information to the authorities about Alfredo Beltrán Leyva, a key figure in the DTO. The cartel was weakened due to arrests and internal fights. It controls the Mexican Pacific coast and the northern state of Sinaloa. Hector Beltran Leyva has led it since the death of his brother Arturo at the hands of Mexican marines in December 2009 and the arrest of Carlos Beltrán Leyva. “Following the split from the Sinaloa Cartel, the Beltran-Leyva Organization was split in two as Hector Beltran Leyva battled Edgar “the Barbie” Valdez until his capture in August 2010. The organization then allied with their former rivals, Los Zetas, and declared war on the Sinaloa Cartel, which it has been fighting since.”<sup>85</sup>

### **1.5.7 La Familia Michoacana (LFM)**

Since the 1980s, the LFM controls the area of Michoacan, a place famous for Marijuana and poppy seed production. It mastered the art of LFM symbolic violence from the Zetas. Moreover, it claims a commitment to “social justice” and developed a pseudo-ideological or religious justification for its existence that draw of international observers and the proximity to the Lazaro Cardenas port facilitated the smuggling of Cocaine from Colombia. Nevertheless, the LFM was hardly hit by the murder of their leader Nazario “El Chayo” Moreno Gonzales in 2014.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Mexico's major drug cartels A guide to Mexico's most significant criminal organizations fighting each other and the authorities. (2014, January 15). *The Telegraph*. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/centralamericaandthecaribbean/mexico/10575135/Mexicos-major-drug-cartels.html>

<sup>86</sup>InsightCrime. (2016, October 10). Familia Michoacana. Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <http://es.insightcrime.org/noticias-sobre-crimen-organizado-en-mexico/familia-michoacana-perfil>

### **1.5.8 Knights Templar**

The Knights Templar fragmented from the LFM in 2011, and it also claims a commitment to “social justice” in Michoacan and developed a pseudo-ideological or religious justification for its existence. It controls the Lazaro Cardenas port with, a great route to smuggle cocaine from Colombia. Besides, the Knights “tax” locals with "cuotas de protección," extortion to business and farmers, a very effective tactic. The assassination of its leaders in 2014 and 2015 weakened the DTO, so its future is uncertain.<sup>87</sup>

### **1.5.9 Cartel Jalisco-New Generation (CJNG)**

A small group of members of the extinct Milenio Cartel established the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion; the DTO considered the most important in Mexico today. In 2015, one of his leaders, Abigael González Valencia, "El Cuini," was captured, but he DTO's activities continued operating under the leadership of Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, "El Mencho." With links all over America, Europe, and Asia, it has rapidly grown its operation due to its strategic activity on the southeast border of the United States and northeast border next to Vancouver. Furthermore, “the CJNG has extended their organization's area of influence from their bastion in Jalisco to 14 states across the country, controlling parts of the southeast (Chiapas), the northeast (Baja California), the center (Aguascalientes), and the east (Tamaulipas and Veracruz), with an even stronger presence in Pacific states.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>InsightCrime. (2016, October 10). Los Caballeros Templarios. Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <http://es.insightcrime.org/noticias-sobre-crimen-organizado-en-mexico/caballeros-templarios-perfil>

<sup>88</sup>InsightCrime. (2016, October 10).Cartel Jalisco New Generation. Retrieved April 14, 2017, from <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/mexico-cartel-jalisco-new-generation-extinction-world-domination>

## **Summary**

The American-Mexican relations have evolved around the fields of trade, immigration, and drug traffic; different issues that historically have been treated as one by the American administrations. Mexico's location as a bridge between the United States and the rest of Latin America makes it a nation of great importance to their American neighbors. The border that daily witness the flow of legal and illegal "goods and people," makes it a source of conflict of cooperation for both nations. When it comes to trade, efforts have been driven by an economic interest that has resulted in agreements such as NAFTA that increased trade between Mexico and the U.S making then trade partners. However, the growth of commerce came with the burden of a high volume of trucks crossing which resulted in delays and difficulties to control border crossing.

In addition, territorial disputes are part of bilateral relationship pass, but since the Bracero program was ended the demand for cheap labor and the ability of Mexican legal and illegal workers to supply has resulted in a conflict that until today is worsening the relationship. The supply and demand equation also applies to drug traffic matters since the United States is the primary consumers of drugs and Mexico is a major producer and transit country of the drug entering the American land. Thus, both nations share the threats related to drug trafficking which has facilitated cooperation, but at the same time has been a source of conflict.

Mexico has supplied the American market before the prohibition era, a role that has gradually increased due in great part to certain issues such as displacement and unquestionably their closest neighbors demand. The supplier role has come with a price since the level of violence has increased considerably in Mexico, an issue of great concern to their American neighbors whose fear the spillover violence increased too. In the last decades, the drug business has developed in Mexico, and Mexican drug cartels are the lords of an industry whose profits are incalculable. Tons of drugs have been seized; tons of crops have been eradicated since Nixon declared the War on Drugs, the longest war in today's America, a war in which Mexico join its ranks during Calderon era.

## **2. The Merida Initiative: from the American War on Drugs to Mexican War on Drugs.**

In 2006, former Mexican President Felipe Calderon made the War on Drugs a priority for his administration. Calderon actions were seen with good eyes by Bush, and during Calderon-Bush years the negotiation process of which turn into the current Mexican-American counter-drug policy started; former American and Mexican presidents signed the Merida Initiative. However, this was not the first time the term was coined. In 1971, Richard Nixon declared the War on Drugs in the United States. The declaration was followed by several events that have shaped the United States' policies against drug trafficking.

First, this chapter offers a background of the policies implemented by previous American administrations which have shaped current American counter-drug stance. Moreover, the chapter is divided into two parts: the first focused on the United States counter-drug policies through history. Then, the second provides an overview of the current counter drug policy implemented by the U.S. and Mexico. It introduced the negotiation process of the Merida Initiative, its characteristics, as well as Bush and Obama approach towards the War on Drugs in Mexico, and how Calderon and Peña Nieto implemented the initiative. Finally, the human rights condition placed in the Merida Initiative is discussed.

### **2.1 The Nixon Years: from the Declaration of the War on Drugs to Operation Condor**

Richard Nixon was elected the 37<sup>th</sup> president of the United States in 1969. He is remembered as the only president to ever resign the office due to Watergate scandal, as the president that improved relations with the U.S.S.R. and China, and as the first who coined the term “War on Drugs.”<sup>89</sup> In 1971, Nixon’s “Special Message to the Congress on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control” brought in drug abuse as a national emergency. The speech also introduced the Administration’s commitment to deal with the drug problem. In addition, Nixon pointed out the need to address the demand side of the problem. He stated: “we must rehabilitate the drug user if we

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<sup>89</sup>Richard M. Nixon. (2017, March 08). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/presidents/richardnixon>

are to eliminate drug abuse and all the antisocial activities that flow from drug abuse.”<sup>90</sup> As a result, during Nixon’s presidency, due to domestic pressure to reduce narcotics consumption and the flow of drugs entering the American soil, certain events that had adverse consequences for the U.S.-Mexican relations took place.

First, “on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1969, 200 US officials, to the surprise of Mexico and even the US State Department, began intense searches of people and vehicles crossing the border from Mexico.”<sup>91</sup> It was just the beginning of Operation Intercept that aimed to show the Nixon’s administration determination to fight drug trafficking at home and abroad. Although during the seventeen days that Operation Intercept lasted only a few drugs were confiscated, it was considered a success by the American government. The Nixon administration argued that “it had shown the US’s determination to reduce drug supplies and had forced Mexico to commit itself to this goal.”<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, its achievements can be questioned. The border was almost closed during its implementation which affected the economy of border regions. Furthermore, due to Operation Intercept the U.S.-Mexican relations worsened and unquestionably “it constituted a benchmark in U.S.-Mexico narcotics diplomacy and a turning point in Mexico’s anti drug campaign. “ Then, the Nixon Administration changed it to Operation Cooperation, this time with the Mexican government participation.<sup>93</sup>

## **2.2 From the Mexican-America Extradition Treaty to the Reagan Years**

During the Reagan years not only drug trafficking was declared a threat to national security, but also certain policies such as the National Security Decision Directive 221, the Certification Process and the Defense Authorization act were implemented. Unquestionably, in the 1980s the United States’ efforts against drug trafficking moved to a higher level, in part due to the increase of drug consumption in the country, especially cocaine and the introduction in the U.S

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<sup>90</sup>Richard Nixon: "Special Message to the Congress on Drug Abuse Prevention and Control.," June 17, 1971. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved April 01, 2017 from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3048>.

<sup>91</sup> Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.58)

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup>González, G., & Tienda, M. (1989). *The Drug connection in U.S.-Mexican relations*. (xi, 137 s.) San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California. (p.74)

market of crack cocaine. In addition, throughout his campaign, Reagan benefited from the American concern about drugs since “many conservatives American saw drug problems as symptomatic of a decline in family, community, and religious values and they hoped that Reagan would re-establish moral order.”<sup>94</sup> As a result, the Administration’s determination to decrease and fight drugs as a national security problem was emphasized in the campaign.

Moreover, an important event for the Mexican-American relationship concerning of drug trafficking took place before Reagan was elected. On May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1978 in Mexico City, President Jimmy Carter and Jose Lopez Portillo signed the 1978 Extradition Treaty. As the agreement clearly states on his first pages, “desiring to cooperate more closely in the fight against crime and, to this end, to mutually render better assistance in matter of extradition,” it was a clear statement of both governments’ acknowledgment that the increasing crime and drug offenses were not exclusive of either part, but a shared problem.<sup>95</sup>

However, an event that deteriorated the Mexican-American relations took place during the Reagan years. In 1985, the DEA Mexican born agent Enrique Camarena was kidnapped and killed by Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, considered one of the drug lords of that era. Many experts believe Camarena’s murder as the major diplomatic crisis between Mexico and the United States in recent history. Feelings of distrust between Mexican-American governments reached the highest point in the fight against narcotics.<sup>96</sup> From members of Congress, drug policy bureaucrats, and the public in general, animosity was the rule for the bilateral relationship concerning drug trafficking affairs. Amicable relations were impossible to reach between both nations. As Walker claimed, “Tensions across

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<sup>94</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.79)

<sup>95</sup>Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and The United Mexican States, 1978" (May 4, 1978), 3-7. Retrieved November 25, 2015. From Organization of American States. [https://www.oas.org/juridico/mla/en/traites/en\\_traites-ext-usa-mex.pdf](https://www.oas.org/juridico/mla/en/traites/en_traites-ext-usa-mex.pdf).

<sup>96</sup>Nájar, A. (2013, August 23). Kiki Camarena, el caso que México no puede olvidar - BBC Mundo. Retrieved May 01, 2017, from [http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/08/130821\\_enrique\\_kiki\\_camarena\\_salazar\\_caso\\_dea\\_narcotrafico\\_mexico\\_caro\\_quintero\\_an](http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2013/08/130821_enrique_kiki_camarena_salazar_caso_dea_narcotrafico_mexico_caro_quintero_an)



the border had not been so great since the oil expropriation controversy began in 1938.”<sup>97</sup>

Then, in 1986, neither the process of Certification nor the National Security Decision Directive 221 (NSDD) improved the difficulties of the bilateral relationship. The first was a source of major complications as Smith cleared stated in his Book *Talons of the Eagle*; “certification” was a major source of aggravation for the bilateral relationship.<sup>98</sup> For the American part, Certification was a means to force countries to cooperate with the U.S. anti drug policy. Otherwise, they would lose economic assistance which would be detrimental to their economy. Nevertheless, some considered Certification as arrogance, hypocrisy and an example of the American imperialism and own way of doing. For instance, in 1988, Bill Spencer on his article “Drug Certification” wrote:

“The certification process is resented in Latin America and elsewhere as a unilateral, sometimes arbitrary and hypocritical exercise by the world’s largest consumer of illegal drugs.”<sup>99</sup>

Besides, Reagan’s proclamation of expanded sanctions to the War on Drugs with his National Security Decision Directive 221 set more pressure to the bilateral relationship. “Reagan intended NSSD221 to signify the integration of anti drug policy into the overall matter of hemispheric security.”<sup>100</sup> Whereas the NSSD221 primary purpose was domestic, it unquestionably dealt with foreign issues. It stated on his purpose the need “to identify the impact of the international narcotics trade” and “to direct specific actions to increase the effectiveness of U.S. counter-narcotics efforts.”<sup>101</sup> Thus, the policy focused on law enforcement and criminalizing drugs and its implementation linked foreign

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<sup>97</sup>Walker, W. (1993). The Foreign Narcotics Policy of the United States since 1980: An End to the War on Drugs? *International Journal*,49(1),48.doi:10.2307/40202913. Retrieved November 27, 2015. From <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40202913>

<sup>98</sup>Smith, P. H. (2000). *Talons of the eagle: dynamics of U.S.-Latin American relations* (2. Ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>99</sup>1998., B. S. (1998, September 01). *Foreign Policy In Focus*. Retrieved May 8, 2017, from [http://fpif.org/drug\\_certification/](http://fpif.org/drug_certification/)

<sup>100</sup>Walker, W. (1993). The Foreign Narcotics Policy of the United States since 1980: An End to the War on Drugs? *International Journal*,49(1), p.48 . doi:10.2307/40202913 Retrieved November 27, 2015. From <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40202913>

<sup>101</sup>Reagan, R. (2005, April 20). National Security Decision Directive 221. Retrieved March 15, 2017, from <https://reaganlibrary.archives.gov/archives/reference/Scanned%20NSDDS/NSDD221.pdf>

assistance to interdiction efforts. Although the 1980s decade was full of tension for the bilateral relationship, the Mexican-American governments accomplished some “understanding.” In December 1987 both parties signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Its main aim was to enhance bilateral legal assistance for the persecution, prevention, and investigation of criminal activities.<sup>102</sup>

### **2.3 From NAFTA to Plan Colombia**

As described previously, in the first half of the 1980s the United States’ Administrations escalated the drug problem to a national security one. Afterward, “from the mid-1980s, drug problems seem to have increased in the western Hemisphere, leading to a greater US commitment to address the problem.”<sup>103</sup> President Bush followed his predecessor approach towards drugs emphasizing law enforcement efforts. Referring to drugs, in his address to the nation in 1989, he made clear that for his administration it was “the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today.”<sup>104</sup> Also, Bush Rhetoric’s revealed his determination to pursue coercive actions against drug problems and his focus on supply reduction measures. He said that “all of us agree that the gravest domestic threat facing our nation today is drugs” and proclaimed an “assault on all fronts.”<sup>105</sup>

Besides, Bush fought for and negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was later signed into law (as discussed in the previous chapter).<sup>106</sup> NAFTA eliminated trade barriers between member nations, and it incremented the flow of vehicles and people crossing the border. NAFTA negotiators avoided the negatives effects that it would bring in regarding the flow

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<sup>102</sup>Arzt, S. "U.S. - Mexico Security Collaboration: Intelligence Sharing and Law Enforcement Cooperation," In *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime*, ed. Olson, E.L, Shirk, D.A, Selee, A. p.352. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from <https://es.scribd.com/document/59013118/Shared-Responsability-US-Mexico-Policy-Options-for-Confronting-Organized-Crime>

<sup>103</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.11)

<sup>104</sup>Blachman, M., & Sharpe, K. (1989). The War on Drugs: American Democracy under Assault. *World Policy Journal*, 7(1), p.135. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40209141>

<sup>105</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.83-84)

<sup>106</sup>See more at: <https://bush41.org/biography#sthash.2ZHp90Bx.dpuf>

of illegal immigration and drug trafficking from Mexico to the United States. For instance, for the Mexican DTOs, it was the perfect scenario to smuggle more drugs into their neighbor country due to the increase of trucks crossing the border. It was the right moment for Mexican DTOs to gradually establish as the leading supplier of the drugs entering the United States.

Then, during President Zedillo (1994-2000) and Clinton administrations, the bilateral relationship had its ups and downs. Efforts to develop the bilateral relation concerning counter-drug policies led to various declarations: the Declaration of the United-States Mexico Alliance against Drugs (1997) and the Mexico-U.S. Bilateral Strategy of Cooperation against Drugs (1998).<sup>107</sup> Moreover, “The course of US drug control under Clinton essentially remained the same, with coercion at home and abroad receiving priority over non-coercive strategies.”<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, certain events hindered the progress of the relationship. For instance, Zedillo appointed General Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo as the highest official in the fight against drug trafficking. Gutierrez Rebollo was an official with a long, brilliant military career. Nevertheless, in 1997, he was accused of not only accepting bribes but of working hand in hand, and protecting the head of the Juarez Cartel Amado Carrillo. The scandals of corruption in the highest Mexican organization against drug trafficking again hold back the bilateral relationship.<sup>109</sup>

It is necessary to point out that during the second half of the 1990s Colombia was the biggest concern for the United States since almost all the U.S demand was supplied with Colombian product. Therefore, the Colombian and American governments signed Plan Colombia in 2000.<sup>110</sup> The initiative aimed to foster cooperation between both governments against drug trafficking. As with

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<sup>107</sup>Arzt, S. "U.S. - Mexico Security Collaboration: Intelligence Sharing and Law Enforcement Cooperation," In *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime*, ed. Olson, E.L, Shirk, D.A, Selee, A. p.352. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from <https://es.scribd.com/document/59013118/Shared-Responsability-US-Mexico-Policy-Options-for-Confronting-Organized-Crime>

<sup>108</sup>V., Calderon. (2013, December 24). Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, el corrupto zar antidrogas. *El Pais*. Retrieved May 8, 2017, from [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/12/24/actualidad/1387905574\\_552706.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2013/12/24/actualidad/1387905574_552706.html)

<sup>109</sup>Friesendorf, C. (2007). *US foreign policy and the war on drugs: displacing the cocaine and heroin industry*. (xii, 230 s.) London: Routledge. (p.123)

<sup>110</sup>Plan Colombia. (n.d.). Retrieved May 08, 2017, from <https://www.dnp.gov.co/programas/justicia-seguridad-y-gobierno/Paginas/plan-colombia.aspx>

previous policies, Plan Colombia focused on crop eradication and received funds from the United States. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of Plan Colombia can be questioned since drug production continued in Colombia despite the crop eradication efforts. Moreover, the balloon effect pushed the transit routes to other countries including Mexico.<sup>111</sup>

The new millennium brought a huge change in the political arena in Mexico since after decades a candidate from the opposition party PAN won the presidential election. When Vicente Fox took office the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2000, he ended the seventy years ruling of the PRI party. Concerning to the bilateral relationship with their northern neighbors, Fox pushed for an immigration reform.<sup>112</sup> Unfortunately, the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks ended any possibility of the agreement since the War on Terror was the priority for the United States during Fox and Bush years. Again, drug trafficking was not a priority for the United States agenda, but the situation would change under the next Mexican leader.

#### **2.4 Calderon Declaration of War and the Negotiation Process**

“The only law that narco-terrorist do not break is the law of supply and demand”  
Virgilio Barco (1990)

The 2006 Mexican elections resulted in Felipe Calderon Hinojosa as the victorious candidate. The PAN candidate claimed that the issue of drug trafficking and the escalation of violence was a priority for his administration. Therefore, he launched an aggressive drug strategy from the very beginning of his administration. Nevertheless, data from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) shows that when Calderon took office the average of murder in Mexico was eight per 100,000 inhabitants. The statistics dramatically changed and in 2007 the average of murder rate rose from eight to twenty-four per 100,000

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<sup>111</sup>Rosen, D & Zepeda, R. La guerra contra el narcotráfico en México: una guerra perdida (p.157)  
The War on Drugs in Mexico: A Lost War. Rev. Reflexiones 94 (1): 153-168, ISSN: 1021-1209 / 2015  
Retrieved December 20, 2015 from <http://www.scielo.sa.cr/pdf/reflexiones/v94n1/1659-2859-reflexiones-94-01-00153.pdf>

<sup>112</sup>Presidentes.mx. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2015, from <http://presidentes.mx/vicente-fox-quesada>

inhabitants, a number that continued increasing until the end of Calderon's administration.<sup>113</sup> (see annex 3)

First, the PAN candidate claimed that drug consumption in Mexico had increased, and such a situation required a fast solution, but the statistics proved him wrong. According to la Encuesta Nacional de Adicciones, the increase in Mexican drug consumption from 2002-2008 was only of 0.4% due in part to the growth of population. Also, as Wolf and Celorio claimed in 2011, drug use in Mexico was lower than the United States, Europe, and other Latin American Countries, but the available data did not stop the elected president.<sup>114</sup> As Luhnnow described in his article, ten days after taking office Calderon sent 6000 soldiers to his hometown Michoacan to fight drug trafficking believing that the army would be able to hinder drug gangs.<sup>115</sup> It was just the beginning of Calderon's War on Drugs, a war that has lasted for more than a decade, a war that has cost unprecedented amount of lives in the Mexican soil, a war that many regard as a lost one.

Then, since Calderon aimed to portray a sharp image when it came to drug and security, he needed sources to develop his War on Drugs. As a result, "he increased Mexico's security budget from roughly \$2 billion in 2006 to a reported \$9.3 billion for 2009."<sup>116</sup> Calderon's efforts resulted in thousands of soldiers fighting against drug trafficking hand in hand with the federal police. He has also established record numbers of checkpoints around Mexico and interdiction efforts have increased, but still, the former Mexican president felt that more could be done, so he looked for the opportunity to knock at his neighbor's door.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Castañeda, R. A. (2012, October 17). La guerra antinarco, el gran fracaso de Calderón. Retrieved April 13, 2017, from <http://www.proceso.com.mx/322831/la-guerra-antinarco-el-gran-fracaso-de-calderon>

<sup>114</sup>Wolf, S., & Morayta, G. (2011). LA GUERRA DE MÉXICO CONTRA EL NARCOTRÁFICO Y LA INICIATIVA MÉRIDA: PIEDRAS ANGULARES EN LA BÚSQUEDA DE LEGITIMIDAD. *Foro Internacional*, 51(4 (206)), 669-714. Retrieved October 27, 2015, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337568>

<sup>115</sup>Luhnnow, D. (2010, May 19). Felipe Calderón defiende la guerra contra el narcotráfico. Retrieved October 27, 2015, from <http://www.seguridadjusticiaypaz.org.mx/temas-de-interes/narcotrafico/180-felipe-calderon-defiende-la-guerra-contra-el-narcotrafico>

<sup>116</sup>Vaughne, I. (c2010). *The Merida Initiative: U.S. counter-drug and anticrime assistance for Mexico*. (x, 170 p.) New York: Nova Science Publishers. MEXICO- Latin American Political, Economic, and Security Issues : Merida Initiative: U. S. Counter-drug and Anticrime Assistance for Mexico. (p.4)

<sup>117</sup> Ibid

Finally, Calderon's aggressive anti-drug strategy had direct consequences since as a response to the government's pressure the level of violence in Mexico increased significantly. "As violence increased, so did U.S. concern about its neighbor and most important trading partner, as well as trepidation about the impact of violence on communities along the U.S. side of the border."<sup>118</sup> Thus, it was the perfect scenario for the Mexican government to pledge for cooperation, and everything started in March 2007 when Calderon and Bush met in Yucatan, Merida. Both leaders agreed about the threat that drug trafficking poses to both nations, especially the violence that goes beyond borders. Also, they highlighted the importance of cooperation between the Mexican and American government to intensify the War on Drugs. They also discussed issues regarding the border and considered the matter as a shared problem.

In conclusion, Calderon's rhetoric of shared responsibility and cooperation in drug matters in Merida, as well as his actions against drug trafficking during the first year of his administration worked to get his American neighbors support. It resulted in the United States willingness to use the opportunity to not only cooperate with the Mexican War on Drugs but also as a way to enhance the bilateral cooperation. After the meeting in Merida, the Mexican and American presidents started the negotiation process of what became the Merida Initiative. The same year Bush presented to the Congress the request to provide massive economic assistance to Mexico and Central America.<sup>119</sup>

In 2007, Bush and Calderon signed the Merida Initiative; "As proposed, it was to provide some \$1.4 billion in assistance, largely in the form of equipment and training, from FY2008 through FY2010."<sup>120</sup> According to Wolf and Celorio, the secrecy of the negotiation process and the results from the meetings previous to the formal announcement of the Merida Initiative inflamed the mistrust of

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<sup>118</sup>Olson, E. L., & Wilson, C. E. (2010, May). Beyond Merida: The Evolving Approach to Security Cooperation. Retrieved November 10, 2015, from [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond\\_merida.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond_merida.pdf) ( p.2)

<sup>119</sup>Wolf, S., & Morayta, G. (2011). LA GUERRA DE MÉXICO CONTRA EL NARCOTRÁFICO Y LA INICIATIVA MÉRIDA: PIEDRAS ANGULARES EN LA BÚSQUEDA DE LEGITIMIDAD. *Foro Internacional*, 51(4 (206)), 669-714. Retrieved November 27, 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337568> (p.67)

<sup>120</sup>Vaughne, I. (c2010). *The Merida Initiative: U.S. counter-drug and anticrime assistance for Mexico*. (x, 170 p.) New York: Nova Science Publishers. MEXICO- Latin American Political, Economic, and Security Issues: Merida Initiative: U. S. Counter-drug and Anticrime Assistance for Mexico. (p.17)

Mexicans and Americans counterparts. On one hand, in the United States, a Democrat-dominated Congress raged the voice and criticized Bush's lack of coordination with the Congress.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, members of the U.S Congress made reference to the failure of Plan Colombia against drug trafficking. As stated by Lendman, neither Bush nor Calderon regarded the failure of the militarization as a tool against drug trafficking in Colombia and continued to pledge for "Plan Mexico."<sup>122</sup> Members of the Congress were skeptical of giving a blank check to fund the Mexican War on Drugs due to the failure of Plan Colombia. Abbot stated that Congress wanted "to avoid the same pitfall associated with what was widely perceived as a failed counter drug strategy" funded with billions of U.S. tax dollars since 2000.<sup>123</sup>

On the other hand, Mexican armed forces expressed their opposition to what they considered "interventionist" measures of the Merida Initiative since they feared that the United States would interfere with the Mexican sovereignty once more. The Mexican government response was the immediate elimination of the surveillance of civil society and the reform of Mexican military judicial system.<sup>124</sup> Besides, certain factors influenced the U.S Congress to soften the conditions on the Merida Initiative finally. Celorio and Wolf stated the three most important factors that persuaded the American Congress to sign an Initiative that did not seem perfect, but could be the starting point to enhance cooperation with Mexico regarding security. The factors were lobbying, the Bush administration's pressure, and the execution of six Mexican police Chiefs during the negotiation process.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Wolf, S., & Morayta, G. (2011). LA GUERRA DE MÉXICO CONTRA EL NARCOTRÁFICO Y LA INICIATIVA MÉRIDA: PIEDRAS ANGULARES EN LA BÚSQUEDA DE LEGITIMIDAD. *Foro Internacional*, 51(4 (206)), 669-714. Retrieved November 27, 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337568>

<sup>122</sup>Rosen, D & Zepeda, R. La guerra contra el narcotráfico en México: una guerra perdida (p.157) *The War on Drugs in Mexico: A Lost War*. Rev. Reflexiones 94 (1): 153-168, ISSN: 1021-1209 / 2015 Retrieved December 20, 2015 from <http://www.scielo.sa.cr/pdf/reflexiones/v94n1/1659-2859-reflexiones-94-01-00153.pdf>

<sup>123</sup>Abbott, Philip. (2011). The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counter-drug Policy? *Small Wars Journal* , 1-11. Retrieved November 20, 2015, from [smallwarsjournal.com](http://smallwarsjournal.com).

<sup>124</sup>Wolf, S., & Morayta, G. (2011). LA GUERRA DE MÉXICO CONTRA EL NARCOTRÁFICO Y LA INICIATIVA MÉRIDA: PIEDRAS ANGULARES EN LA BÚSQUEDA DE LEGITIMIDAD. *Foro Internacional*, 51(4 (206)), 669-714. Retrieved November 27, 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337568>

<sup>125</sup>Ibid (p.68)

Another issue that played a prominent role in the negotiation process, by Americans and Mexicans interest groups, was the human rights. Human rights defenders were determined to make their voice heard and eagerly push for measures that “would safeguard human rights, strengthen civilian institutions, and curb domestic drug demand.”<sup>126</sup> Abbot claimed that U.S. and Mexican human rights organizations joined to lobby their concerns.<sup>127</sup> Their primary goal was to push the support package away from Mexican military arguing that the institution has a long record of human rights abuses. The human right dilemma was not strong enough to hinder Bush and Calderon efforts. Hence, Bush and Calderon were eager to influence every single area of their government to pass the Initiative. On summer 2008, after a rocky start full of mistrust on both sides of the border, “the Bill became a Law,” the Merida Initiative was approved by the U.S Congress.

## **2.5 The Merida Initiative: Goals and Funding under Bush and Calderon**

As previously stated, Calderon’s pledge for help to endure his War on Drugs was more than welcome by Bush, who after been absorbed by the War on Terror seized the opportunity to enhance the bilateral relationship with his Mexican neighbors. After many hearings, and the Congress expressing their concern of not being an active member during its development, the Congress passed the legislation to fund the Merida Initiative in 2008. As writes Ribando Seelke, the legislation H.R. 6028 funding the Merida Initiative was adopted by a vote of 311 to 106 showing bipartisan support in the House.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, some conditions were made to pass the initiative especially concerning human rights violations, which will be discussed later on. Accordingly, the Merida Initiative during Calderon and Bush years was promoted as a policy to enhance bilateral cooperation and to show both nations commitment to share the responsibility to fight drug trafficking threats. Thus, the Initiative’s focal points were to deliver

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<sup>126</sup>Abbott, Philip. (2011). The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counter-drug Policy? *Small Wars Journal* , 1-11. Retrieved November 20, 2015, from smallwarsjournal.com. (p.6)

<sup>127</sup>Ibid

<sup>128</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. (2009). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, (p.7). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>



equipment, promote the rule of law, and enhance judicial reform emphasizing security issues as well as border policies.

### **2.5.1 Goals during the First Phase of the Merida Initiative: FY2008-FY2010**

The creators of the Merida Initiative not only aimed to hinder drug trafficking organizations but also to enhance the bilateral relationship. As data from the report delivered to the Mexican Congress in 2007 shows, from the very first stage the Merida Initiative aimed “to bolster Mexican and American domestic efforts, and to expand the bilateral and regional cooperation that addresses transnational crime.”<sup>129</sup> Thus, during its first phase, the Mérida Initiative was intended to pursue four strategic goals: <sup>130</sup>

1. Break the power and impunity of Criminal Organizations

2. Assist the Governments of Mexico and Central America in Strengthening border, Air, and Maritime Controls.

3. Improve the Capacity of Justice Systems in the Region

4. Curtail Gang Activity and Diminish the Demands for Drugs in the Region

The first and fourth goals were mostly focused on law enforcement efforts. For instance, the first aimed to weaken and finally destroying criminal organizations while the fourth focused on removing the drug profits and educate the public about the harmful effects of drug consumption. The third goal evolved around law enforcement and enhancement of the Mexican judicial system to foster human rights protection whereas the second goal dealt with securing the borders. As a result, the Merida Initiative aimed to reform Mexican judicial system and foster border security, but the primary goals evolved mostly around law enforcement and military actions consisting of training and equipment of Mexican

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<sup>129</sup>Merida Initiative a New Paradigm for Security Cooperation (2007). “Documentos entregados por la secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores a esta H. Cámara de Diputados por medio de la Comisión de Relaciones Exteriores de esta LX Legislatura, el día 31 de octubre de 2007.

<sup>130</sup>FY Supplemental Appropriations Spending Plan . (2009, April 09). Retrieved May, 2016, from <http://securityassistance.org/sites/default/files/080904meri.pdf> (p.16)

forces. Nevertheless, the most remarkable achievement of the first stage was the shared responsibility and the improvement of the bilateral relationship from previous conflicts to cooperation.

### **2.5.2 Funding the Merida Initiative**

Although the Initiative was deemed as a copy of Plan Colombia, considered a failure by some experts, and later on called Plan Mexico, it was implemented in its first phase (FY2008-2010) as a tool to assist not only Mexico but also Central America, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic to fight drug trafficking. However, the FY2008 Supplemental and FY2009 Bridge Appropriations Spending Plan funding confirms that Mexico was the main target since from the \$465 million funds only \$65 million were provided to Central America, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. (see annex 4)<sup>131</sup> As assessed by Ribando, “The Mérida Initiative was designed to complement domestic efforts to combat drug demand, drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and money laundering. These domestic counter-drug initiatives are funded through regular and supplemental appropriations for a variety of U.S. domestic agencies.”<sup>132</sup>

Moreover, funds were divided between the Economic Support Funds (ESF), the Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement (INCLE) according to the data from the FY2008 Supplemental and Appropriations Spending Plan. The ESF funding of \$20 million, with its motto “Governing Justly and Democratically,” focused on the improvement of Mexican Judicial system. It aimed “to promote the rule of law” by supporting Mexico’s new judicial reform, which started that same year and was due to be implemented in 2016 and to encourage the respect of human rights. For instance, it included training, technical support as well as exchanges between Mexican and American judges.<sup>133</sup> Whereas the FMF and the INCLE shared the motto “peace and security,” the funding of \$116.5 and \$180 million respectively, aimed to accomplish different goals. The First funded the purchase of equipment

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid (p.3)

<sup>132</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. (2009). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, (p.33). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40135.pdf>

<sup>133</sup>FY Supplemental Appropriations Spending Plan . (2009, April 09). Retrieved May, 2016, from <http://securityassistance.org/sites/default/files/080904meri.pdf> (p.4)

for Mexican Navy and air force while the second funded interdiction efforts and illegal immigration practices. Also, the INCLE funds aimed to improve Mexican justice system with \$24 million for “administrative and operating expenses related to program planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.”<sup>134</sup>

The implementation of the Merida Initiative during its first phase experienced certain challenges. First, due to the problem of impunity and corruption in Mexico, 15% of funds were subject to human right conditions for approval. As previously mention, the cases of violence and corruption in Mexico are a significant concern for the United States. Therefore, part of the funds would be released only after a positive report from the State Department. However, human rights advocates claimed that Mexico had a poor human rights record, and criticized the State Department’s report authorizing the funds. For instance, data from Human Rights Watch illustrates many cases showing that Mexico is not meeting the human rights conditions.<sup>135</sup> Although the cases of impunity and corruption already mentioned, in 2009 and 2010 the State department positive reports endorsed on hold funds for Mexico.<sup>136</sup> Then, funds were not delivered as fast as expected. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports to the Congress, funds were provided at a slow speed. By 2009, only \$830 million was granted by the State Department, and from that amount, only \$26 million of those funds were spent.<sup>137</sup> “The pace of implementation has accelerated since that time, particularly in Mexico, but implementation challenges remain.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Ibid (p.6-7)

<sup>135</sup>Mexico Events of 2015. (2016, January 27). Human Rights watch. Retrieved June 24, 2017, from <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/mexico>

<sup>136</sup>See <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10837.pdf>

<sup>137</sup>U.S. Department of State, *Mexico-Merida Initiative Report*, September 2, 2010. Quoted from Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, (p.33). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>138</sup>Vaughne, I. (c2010). *The Merida Initiative: U.S. counter-drug and anticrime assistance for Mexico*. (x, 170 p.) New York: Nova Science Publishers. MEXICO- Latin American Political, Economic, and Security Issues : Merida Initiative: U. S. Counter-drug and Anticrime Assistance for Mexico. (p.2)

In conclusion, the first phase of the Merida Initiative was not “a new paradigm for security cooperation” as stated in the Joint Statement on the Merida Initiative, but it enhanced the bilateral relationship.<sup>139</sup> It also represented a turning point regarding funds provided to Mexico for counter-drug efforts since “U.S. assistance to Mexico rose from \$65 million in FY2007 to almost \$406 million in FY2008.”<sup>140</sup> Moreover, Merida funds made possible the acquisition of equipment such as aircraft, helicopters and ion scanners to support Mexican military and navy activities making Mexico the main recipient of Merida funds. However, it seems that the first phase of the implementation lacks emphasis in the goals of improving the Mexican judicial system. It could have been because the time limit for the transition was until 2016 or because support for the military by training and providing equipment was the priority. The question that could be raised now is if that trend would continue under the new Administrations or if any changes would be introduced during the second phase of the Merida Initiative.

## **2.6 The New Merida Initiative Strategy: Obama and the Four Pillars.**

Unquestionably, Calderon state visit to Obama on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010 could be taken as a reference to both Administrations’ commitment to continue improving the bilateral relationship.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, as writes Ribando and Seelke, Calderon’s previous visit in January 2009 for the pre-inaugural meeting, “which has become somewhat of a tradition for recent U.S. presidents, demonstrated the importance of strong relations with Mexico.” As a result, the Mexican and American Administrations showed their commitment to continue working together to hinder drug trafficking when they agreed to develop the second phase of the Merida Initiative.<sup>142</sup> Tekin refers to “Beyond Merida” as a refinement of the Merida Initiative pointing out efforts to make it more efficient and fruitful.<sup>143</sup> However,

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<sup>139</sup>Joint Statement on the Merida Initiative: A New Paradigm for Security Cooperation. (2007, October 22). Retrieved July 19, 2016, from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/oct/93800.htm>

<sup>140</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2011). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>141</sup>Visits by Foreign Leaders of Mexico. (n.d.). Retrieved May 13, 2017, from <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/visits/mexico>

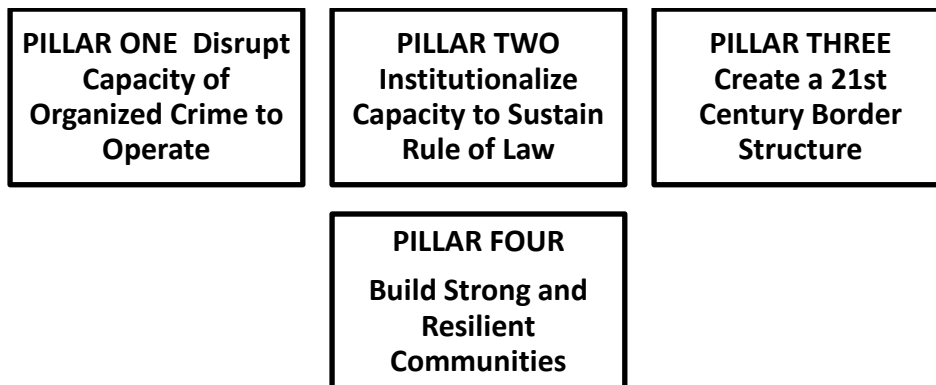
<sup>142</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2011). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> (p.1)

<sup>143</sup>Tekin, Yasemin (2015) "The U.S. and Mexican Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond," *Pepperdine Policy Review*: Vol. 8, Article 5. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/ppr/vol8/iss1/5> (p.6)

besides the introduction of four pillars, which are almost equal to the previous goals, including the emphasis on improving social conditions, and the implementation of separate initiatives for Central America and the Caribbean, no revolutionary changes were introduced to the second phase of the Merida Initiative.

Since funds for the Merida Initiative were approved until FY2010, the Obama Administration budget request for the second phase was compulsory. First, the Obama Administration asked for \$310 million in Merida Initiative funding for FY2011 including \$310 million for Merida-related programs in Mexico: \$292 million in INCLE funds, \$10 million in ESF, and \$8 million in FMF respectively. For the following years, the Obama Administration kept requesting fund for the Merida Initiative, and the Congress continued approving his demands. Finally, for the FY2016, Congress authorized \$139 million in help for the Merida Initiative. As a whole, Congress appropriated more than 2 billion from FY2008 until FY2016 showing their commitment to the Mexican War on Drugs.<sup>144</sup> (see Annex 4)

Furthermore, data from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Mexico outlines that the Beyond Merida strategy is based on the following pillars:<sup>145</sup>



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<sup>144</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> (p.1)

<sup>145</sup>The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

### **2.6.1 PILLAR ONE – Disrupt Capacity of Organized Crime to Operate**

The first pillar primary goal is to damage the DTO's organization to diminish their power. It focuses on a "kingpin strategy" to incarcerate leaders and reduce drug traffic revenues. "Through equipment, technology, and training, the Merida Initiative will support better investigations, more captures and arrests, successful prosecutions, and shipment interdiction."<sup>146</sup> Thus, actions to hinder drug trafficking profits and an increased in the number of extraditions have been taken place during the second phase of the Merida Initiative. Tekin describes how this pillar recognizes the need to views cartels as corporations, and to implement a strategy that seeks to interrupt the profits of the business. For instance, Clare and Ribando note down that since 2014 the Mexican government has set limits on the amount of U.S. dollars exchange and monthly deposit aiming to obstruct money laundering practices. Also, the Mexican Congress approved an anti-money laundering law in 2012 that subject industries to new reporting standards, and new criminal offenses levels for money laundering practices.<sup>147</sup>

### **2.6.2 PILLAR TWO – Institutionalize Capacity to Sustain Rule of Law**

As discussed previously, the Merida Initiative aims to enhance the Mexican institutions and promote the rule of law. Therefore, the second pillar focuses on "enhancing Mexican public security, border, and judicial institutions to sustain the rule of law." As a result, a priority for the pillar was to assist during the transition to the New Mexican Criminal Justice System and to fight corruption.<sup>148</sup> Recognizing the need to reform Mexican Police and Judicial system, "Mérida funding has supported state-level academies and training courses to state and local police in officer safety, securing crime scene preservation, investigation

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<sup>146</sup>Ibid

<sup>147</sup> LEY FEDERAL PARA LA PREVENCIÓN E IDENTIFICACIÓN DE OPERACIONES CON RECURSOS DE PROCEDENCIA ILÍCITA (n.d.) Retrieved December 23, 2015, from <http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LFPIORPI.pdf>

<sup>148</sup>The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

techniques, leadership and supervision, and law enforcement intelligence-gathering.”<sup>149</sup>

Although Mexico met the deadline to transition from a closed-door process to a public trial one, the judicial system still carries much burden. For example, Mexicans generally don't trust the system and complain about the high rate of impunity. Some even prefer not to report the crime. It was expected that under the reform, Mexico would move from a closed-door process based on written arguments to a public trial system that would include oral arguments, and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. As Olson and Wilson stated efforts under this pillar allocates more money for civilian institutions aiming to maintain the rule of law and to promote justice.<sup>150</sup>

### **2.6.3 PILLAR THREE – Create a 21st Century Border Structure**

The third pillar deals with the modernization of the Mexican-American border. To accomplish its aim of modernization, Merida funds have been provided to strengthen and modernize border security. As the website of U.S. Embassy in Mexico explains, this pillar intends to “facilitate legitimate commerce and movement of people while curtailing the illicit flow of drugs, people, arms, and cash.”<sup>151</sup> Consequently, as part of the Merida Initiative, a Twenty-First Century Border Bilateral Executive Steering Committee (ESC) was created in 2010.<sup>152</sup> As Olson and Wilson stated, “the pillar focus on “changing the very concept of the border from simply being a geographic line to one of secure flows.”<sup>153</sup> Since NAFTA trade between the U.S and Mexico has increased. Thus, the pillar also

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<sup>149</sup> Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> Tekin, Yasemin (2015) "The U.S. and Mexican Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond," *Pepperdine Policy Review*: Vol. 8, Article 5. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/ppr/vol8/iss1/5>

<sup>151</sup> The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

<sup>152</sup> Olson Eric, L & Wilson C. (2010) Beyond Merida: The Evolving Approach to Security Cooperation. Woodrow Wilson Center at the Mexico Institute. Retrieved from [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond\\_merida.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond_merida.pdf)

<sup>153</sup> Tekin, Yasemin (2015) "The U.S. and Mexican Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond," *Pepperdine Policy Review*: Vol. 8, Article 5. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/ppr/vol8/iss1/5> (p.5)

aims to avoid delays in the ports of entry. Unquestionably, the pillar deals with economic matters.

#### **2.6.4 PILLAR FOUR – Build Strong and Resilient Communities**

The last of the pillars includes a new character of the Merida Initiative that focuses on crime and violence prevention. As described Ribando and Seelke, the pillar focuses on social development to strengthen Mexican communities and prevent civilians from involving in drug trafficking. “It seeks to empower local leaders, civil society representatives, and private sector actors to lead crime prevention efforts in their communities.”<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, by strengthening the communities with “job creation programs, engaging youth in their communities, expanding social safety nets, and building community confidence in public institutions,”<sup>155</sup> the Initiative tries to undercut the power of DTOs reducing their influence on the communities, creating communities that could resist the pressures of crime and violence. Olson and Wilson stated how “the last pillar represents an expanded view of the issues in play and a significant evolution from the original Merida Initiative vision.

#### **2.6.5 The Second Phase and the Change of Power in Mexico**

The United States was not the only one that experienced a change of control during the second phase of the Merida Initiative. In 2012, Enrique Peña Nieto was elected the president of the United Mexican States bringing the PRI back to power.<sup>156</sup> His agenda has focused on improving Mexican security and to promote the respect of human rights. Furthermore, as part of his plan to enhance peace in Mexico, he launched a strategy to reduce crime and violence. The “Pact for Mexico” was based on five pillars: reducing violence; combating poverty; boosting economic growth; reforming education; and fostering social

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<sup>154</sup> Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2016). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=765713>

<sup>155</sup>The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

<sup>156</sup>Enrique Peña Nieto. (n.d.). Retrieved May 19, 2017, from <http://www.gob.mx/presidencia/estructuras/enrique-pena-nieto>



responsibility. Besides, the strategy “Mexico in Peace” was launched in October 2012 with the principal goal of protecting human rights and enhancing security. It also followed a six pillars approach: 1) planning; 2) prevention; 3) protection and respect of human rights; 4) coordination; 5) institutional transformation; and 6) monitoring and evaluation.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, despite the Mexican government efforts, experts agree that there is still much room for improvement since the administration has struggled to prevent torture, enforced disappearances and other issues concerning to human rights.

In addition, Obama reaffirmed his commitment to continue with the four pillar strategy. The Mexican government regarded Obama's visit to Mexico as a way to show the American administration commitment towards Mexico. Peña Nieto wrote that the visit confirmed the importance and aimed to enhance the bilateral relationship.<sup>158</sup> As writes Clare and Ribando, from the very beginning, both governments shared their willingness to push for the continuation of the Merida Initiative. “The U.S. and Mexican governments then agreed to focus on justice sector reform, money laundering, police and corrections professionalization at the federal and state level, border security both north and south, and piloting approaches to address root causes of violence.”<sup>159</sup> During Obama and Peña Nieto years, no significant changes were introduced to the Initiative. Beyond Merida funding was done through Consolidated Appropriations acts until the FY2016, and funds continued to be subject to withholding human rights requirements. The United States support has focused more during this phase on improving the Mexican government institutions and assisting during the Mexican’s judicial system transition which was completed in 2016. However, individual events such as “El Chapo scandal” are worth discussing.

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<sup>157</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2013). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> (p.4)

<sup>158</sup>¡Bienvenido, Presidente Barack Obama! (n.d.). Retrieved May 2, 2017, from <https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/articulos/bienvenido-presidente-barack-obama-13248>

<sup>159</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2013). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

First, Under Peña Nieto government, Mexico transitioned to an accusatorial justice system, but it is still struggling to make the system work efficiently. The process that started during Calderon's administration in 2008 was finally fully implemented all over the country in 2016. During the reform inauguration speech, Peña Nieto called it as "the most transcendental judicial transformation in the last 100 years."<sup>160</sup> The new accusatorial system aims to improve the trial process and to reduce its costs. Also, it makes emphasis on human rights respect as well as the implementation of the presumption of innocence.<sup>161</sup> As a result, the new judicial system seeks to fight corruption and promote the rule of law. It made their American counterparts glad that after many years of cooperation, they are finally able to see the results of the new reform system. Nevertheless, it is too soon to reach any conclusion about its implementation, but unquestionably there is still room for improvement when it comes to Mexico jails, courts, corruption, and human rights abuses.

Then, as historically has always happened with the U.S.-Mexican relations, the Obama and Peña Nieto years experienced an event which not only put Mexico in the eyes of the international community but also brought tension to the bilateral relationship. However, at the end the capture, escape and recapture of "El Chapo," didn't damage the relationship. Unquestionably, the capture of the most wanted drug lord, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was considered a huge victory in the War on Drugs. In February 2014, after 13 years of his escaped from "Puente Grande" in 2001, "El Chapo" was recaptured in Sinaloa and brought to "el Altiplano" maximum security jail.<sup>162</sup> Shortly after the capture, the U.S. pledged for Guzman's extradition, but Mexico refused. However, the drug lord did not last long in prison. His escape through the 1.500 meters tunnel in 2015 from "el Altiplano,"

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<sup>160</sup>Altamirano, C. (2016). México inaugura su sistema de justicia penal acusatorio. *International el País*. Retrieved June 22 2016 from

[http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/06/18/mexico/1466268324\\_944192.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2016/06/18/mexico/1466268324_944192.html)

<sup>161</sup>See Reforma penal 2008-2016 El Sistema Penal Acusatorio en México (n.d) Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Penales Magisterio Nacional núm. 113, Col. Tlalpan, Del. Tlalpan, C.P. 14000, Ciudad de México. ISBN: 978-607-8447-60-2

<http://www.inacipe.gob.mx/stories/publicaciones/novedades/ReformaPenal2008-2016.pdf>

<sup>162</sup>Salazar, J. C. (2014, February 24). Así fue la captura de "El Chapo" Guzmán - BBC Mundo. Retrieved May 22, 2017, from

[http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2014/02/140223\\_mexico\\_joaquin\\_chapo\\_guzman\\_asi\\_fue\\_captura\\_jcps](http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2014/02/140223_mexico_joaquin_chapo_guzman_asi_fue_captura_jcps)

was a source of tension in the bilateral relationship.<sup>163</sup> Consequently, Guzman's escape, was a source of controversy that hindered the bilateral relationship. Guzman's escape was broadcast all over the world. As Martinez article from the local Mexican newspaper "El Pais" claimed, it is hard to believe that a tunnel which required months of work could have been completed without internal support.<sup>164</sup>

Moreover, the escape query how Mexicans are in a weak position against their current biggest enemy, and critics were harsh on the Mexican authorities. For instance, the historian Enrique Krauze wrote how there was no law in a system full of corruption. He even claimed that Guzman's escaped from "the safest prison in Mexico" proved the need to reform the Mexican system from head to toe.<sup>165</sup> Finally, "El Chapo" dilemma ended in 2017 when he was extradited to the United States. According to Najjar's article, the extradition of the Sinaloa cartel lord might be regarded as a victory, but it came with a bloody price.<sup>166</sup> It has resulted in the increase of violence because other cartels seen his extradition as a sign of weakness of the Sinaloa cartel and as the right moment to crown themselves as the next drug industry leaders.

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<sup>163</sup> Aguiar, R. (2015, August 16). Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán se fuga de prisión por segunda vez. Retrieved May 22, 2017, from <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2015/07/12/joaquin-el-chapo-guzman-se-fuga-de-prision-de-maxima-seguridad/>

<sup>164</sup> Martinez, J., Ahrens. (2015, July 13). Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán se fuga de la cárcel por un túnel de 1.500 metros. Retrieved May 23, 2017, from [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/07/12/actualidad/1436683448\\_468552.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/07/12/actualidad/1436683448_468552.html)

<sup>165</sup> Neuman, W., Archibold, R. C., & Ahmed, A. (2015, July 14). Fuga de El Chapo aumenta frustración y cinismo en México. Retrieved May 23, 2017, from [https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/universal/es/mexico-joaquin-guzman-loera-el-chapo-prison-escape.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/universal/es/mexico-joaquin-guzman-loera-el-chapo-prison-escape.html?_r=0)

<sup>166</sup> Najjar, A. (2017, February 27). Por qué la extradición de Joaquín "el Chapo" Guzmán a Estados Unidos dejó una ola de violencia en México - BBC Mundo. Retrieved May 23, 2017, from <http://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-39111060>

## **Summary**

Nixon's War on Drugs was followed by individual events that shaped the United States counter-drug stance. Unquestionably, the United States has focused on supply side policies, interdiction, eradication, law enforcement and criminalization of drugs. Thus, drug traffic has been considered a national security threat worth imposing the American way of doing things without taking into account other nations' interest. Mexico was not the exception to the rule, and certain events, such as the murder of an American DEA agent in Mexican territory, has influenced the U.S-Mexican relations concerning drug traffic. Historically it can be observed not only clashes but also cooperation since bilateral agreements were signed although the War on Drugs was not a priority like the Cold War or the War on Terror to the American agenda.

Besides, the fight against drug traffic was a priority for the former Mexican president who led to the Mexican War on Drugs declaration, an event that was welcomed by his American counterpart. Calderon's declaration of war was followed by a pledge for assistance to the United States, a commitment that led to the signature in Merida of the current biggest counter drug assistance policy to Mexico. The agreement signed between Calderon and Bush was continued during the Obama and Peña Nieto tenure. Billions of dollars have been expended hoping that Merida would considerably hinder the DTOs capabilities. Nevertheless, some authors have criticized the Initiative's effectiveness claiming that it is not an effective way to end up with drug traffic.

### **3. The Merida Initiative-Failure or Success? Measuring the Effectiveness of Merida Programs**

Almost a decade has passed since Bush and Calderon met in Merida to accept both nations responsibility to fight drug trafficking. During the following years, Bush and Obama's administrations approved the Merida Initiative and implemented as the main counter-drug assistance to the Mexican War on Drugs. Since 2008, millions have been spent on border modernization; equipment has been provided, drug lords have been killed or extradited to the USA, crops have been eradicated as well as drug seized has taken place in Mexico. Efforts to enhance human rights conditions and to create resilient communities are part of the American and Mexican governments to guarantee citizens security, but how are all these practices hindering the capabilities of Mexican DTOs. This section analyzes the implementation of the Merida Initiative during Bush and Obama terms taking into account how funds have been spent on the four pillars. It also compares Mexican and American administrations' attempt to drug and security through the Merida Initiative. Finally, the third chapter principal aim is to measure the effectiveness of Merida programs to impact drug trafficking and enhance citizen's security.

#### **3.1 Implementation of the Merida Initiative during Bush and Obama Terms**

U.S. - Mexican shared responsibility against drug trafficking through the Merida Initiative has lasted more than a decade. The bilateral agreement that started in 2007 during Calderon and Bush tenure has been continued by the next Mexican and American organizations. Now it is the moment to describe how the strategy has been implemented. First, it is necessary to sum up the funding provided to the Mexican government. Then, the extraditions from Mexico to the United States will be presented followed by the efforts against money laundering and the cooperation for the transition to the Mexican judicial system. Finally, some of the programs developed during the Obama administration to build resilient communities are presented and efforts to create a 21st-century border.

### 3.1.2 Funding and Equipment

As described previously, the request for funding the Merida Initiative had a rocky start in the American Congress, so the slow delivery of funds during the first phase affected the Initiative's implementation. However, when Obama presented the request for Beyond Merida it was a different scenario, but still, human rights conditions were not only placed but also cut during his Administration. Data from a 2015 CRS Report states that "between FY2008 and FY2015, Congress appropriated roughly \$2.5 billion for Mérida Initiative programs in Mexico. Of that total, more than \$1.3 billion worth of training, equipment, and technical assistance has been provided."<sup>167</sup> For instance, both parties regarded the Merida Initiative Aviation Program as a valuable tool for interdiction and law enforcement efforts. Thus, a considerable amount of funds were expended to acquire aircraft. According to the website of U.S. Embassy in Mexico, the following equipment has been delivered:<sup>168</sup>

#### **History of U.S. Aviation Deliveries:**

##### Mexico's Secretariat of Public Security (SSP)

- Six Blackhawk UH-60M helicopters have been delivered
- One Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Dornier 328-JET aircraft contract is underway for the SSP

##### Mexico's Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA)

- Eight Bell 412 helicopters have been delivered

##### Mexico's Secretariat of the Navy (SEMAR)

- Three Blackhawk UH-60M helicopters were delivered in 2011
- Four CASA 235 maritime surveillance aircraft have been delivered to the Mexican Navy.

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<sup>167</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. (2015). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, (p.1). Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>168</sup>The Merida Initiative. (2012). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/mexico/310329/merida-sept-2012/Aviation-june2012.pdf>

According to data gathered by Ribando and Seelke, “From FY2008 to FY2017, Congress appropriated nearly \$2.8 billion for Mexico under the Mérida Initiative.”<sup>169</sup> Moreover, it can be affirmed that funds have been expended mostly in INCLE, ESF, and FMF programs, but ESF hardly ever received more than 10 percent. (see Annex 4). As a result, most funds went to supply and training in Mexico. Olson also presented some figures showing how much of Merida funding has been distributed among INCLE and FMF programs showing how training and equipment are a priority for the Merida Initiative according to funds appropriated. (see Annex 5-6) Consequently, the Initiative’s priorities are the first two pillars.

### **3.1.3 Border Modernization and Money Laundering**

After the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, border security against the terrorist threat was a priority for the Bush administration. During the implementation of the Merida Initiative, the United States was mostly concerned with the “spillover violence” from Mexico. As Olson argues, “over time, these two concerns proved to be less pressing as violence was not “spilling over” from Mexico to the United States in significant amounts — U.S. border cities are some of the safest in the country — and no publicly known terrorist attack in the United States has used Mexican territory as an entry point.”<sup>170</sup> Thus, for the Obama Administration, the creation of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Border was a pillar included in the second phase of the Merida Initiative that aims not only to secure but also to promote border modernization which ensures the flow of commerce between both nations. Moreover, efforts to improve Mexico’s Southern border aimed “to improve border infrastructure, force mobility, and security and immigration personnel. Additionally, funds have been used to provide new technology, such as “mobile bio-kiosks” to improve the processing of migrants.”<sup>171</sup> The biggest accomplishment concerning shared responsibility was the joint declaration that established the Twenty-First Century Border Bilateral Executive Steering

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<sup>169</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>170</sup>Olson, E. L. (2017, March 30). The Mérida Initiative and Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations. Retrieved May 30, 2017, from <https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/after-the-storm-in-u-s-mexico-relations/the-m-rida-initiative-and-shared-responsibility-in-u-s-mexico-security-relations/>

<sup>171</sup>Ibid

Committee that set concrete actions to curb drug trafficking activities.<sup>172</sup> For instance, actions against drug trafficking include the use of EPIC and e-trace System that improve the capacity of Mexican Federal Police to share data with their American counterparts.<sup>173</sup>

### 3.1.4 Extraditions

The Merida Initiative has followed a kingpin strategy which resulted not only in the capture of the head of the Sinaloa cartel but also in a high number of extraditions. First, Calderon War on Drug handed approximately 100 individuals per year to their American neighbors. Then, Pena Nieto has extradited fewer people than Calderon with 54 in 2013 and 79 in 2016. It is a sign of the Mexican government's efforts to diminish the power of the DTO's and at the same time to please the American government.<sup>174</sup> Finally, as we can observe, since the implementation of the Merida Initiative the numbers of extraditions picked during Calderon administration but reduced during current Mexican administration.<sup>175</sup> (see annex 7)

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<sup>172</sup>"Declaration by The Government Of The United States Of America and The Government Of The United Mexican States Concerning Twenty-First Century Border Management," The White House: Office of the Press Secretary (2010, May, 19). Retrieved May 30, 2017 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/declaration-government-united-states-america-and-governmentunited-mexican-states-c>.

<sup>173</sup>"U.S. - Mexico 21st Century Border Initiative: Proposed 2013 Action Items," From Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved May 30, 2017 from <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21cb-2013-action-plan.pdf>.

<sup>174</sup>Data from Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf>

<sup>175</sup>Ibid



### 3.1.5 Promoting the Rule of Law and Building Resilient Communities

As discussed previously, the second phase of the Merida Initiative encourages citizens' involvement in the drug war. "Merida Initiative Culture of Lawfulness (COL) programs aim to instill a sense of individual responsibility to uphold the rule of law in Mexico, with the larger goal of reducing crime and corruption." COL programs focus on five main areas:

1. Instilling a Culture of Lawfulness in Mexican Youth
2. Increasing Government Transparency and Accountability
3. Training Law Enforcement and Public Servants to Promote the Rule of Law
4. Coordinating COL Programs with the Private Sector and Civil Society
5. Anonymous Citizens Complaint Program<sup>176</sup>

For instance, México Unido Contra la Delincuencia A.C. (MUCD) is one of COL projects that promote high school students and teacher training in approximately 31 states.<sup>177</sup> COL programs activities aimed to enhance accountability for crimes motivating citizens to file complaints and training officials for better performance. "Over 8,500 officers in Baja California, Nuevo León, Chihuahua, and Coahuila have received COL education. During the first half of 2014, NSIC has trained 1,150 Federal Police who are to become members of Mexico's new Gendarmerie."<sup>178</sup> Therefore, COL main aim is training civilians to play a more active role in the War on Drugs, and training officials for better performance that would enhance citizens' security and reduce cases of human rights violations.

Besides, the strategy "Todos Somos Juarez" was created as a response to the rise of criminality in Ciudad Juarez. The plan was set up as a direct response to the difficult situation in Ciudad Juarez, a city dominated by DTOs' violent actions. It included 160 concrete actions in the city which aimed to show results in less than 100 days. It included the three key features of Citizens participation, the integrity of public politics, and co-responsibility and participation of the three

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<sup>176</sup>Cultura de la Legalidad. (2012). Retrieved November 25, 2015, from <http://www.culturadelalegalidad.org.mx/>

<sup>177</sup> The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

<sup>178</sup>Ibid

levels of government.<sup>179</sup> Even if this concept looks good on paper, critics claimed disappointment of such strategy. The National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) declared that “if not a failure, it has not delivered the expected results.”<sup>180</sup> Thus, it is necessary to determine if the achievements of creating resilient communities programs would last in the long-term and if they considerably impact the dynamic of the communities.

### **3.1.6 Reforming Mexico’s Judicial System : Merida Correction Programs**

Mexico’s judicial system was deemed of highly ineffective. As a result, the American government pushed for a judicial reform that was completed in 2016. No matter the efforts to capture DTO members if the court system is weak and incapable of responding to the challenges of the War on Drugs. As an attempt to improve Mexico’s prison system the Merida Initiative Correction Programs have been implemented. The Correction Programs (CP) goal is “to more effectively manage its inmate population and conduct meaningful reforms at the federal, state and municipal-level prisons and jails to prevent transnational criminal organizations from operating from penitentiaries.”<sup>181</sup>

Furthermore, Correction Programs seek to accredit Mexican prisons with the American Correctional Association’s (ACA) International Standards. According to the Embassy of the United States in Mexico site, eight federal correctional facilities and the correctional training academy have received ACA Accreditation. The website also offers a list of the major accomplishments under the Merida Initiative including the opening of the Mexican National Academy of Penitentiary Administration opened in Xalapa, Veracruz in May 2009 which has focused on training officials. (see annex 7).

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<sup>179</sup>Todos somos Juarez (n.d) Estados Unidos Mexicanos. Retrieved November 26, 2016, from <http://www.sep.gob.mx/work/models/sep1/Resource/889/2/images/todossomosjuarez%281%29.pdf>

<sup>180</sup>Chong, J. (2011, February 18). 'Todos somos Juárez' no resulta: CNDH. Retrieved from <http://www.noticiasmvs.com/#!/noticias/todos-somos-juarez-no-resulta-cndh-240>

<sup>181</sup>The Merida Initiative. (n.d.). Retrieved November 15, 2015, from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>

### 3.1.7 Actions against Money Laundering: the Wachovia Scandal

The best way to hinder a successful business such as drug traffic is to cut its profits, so a crucial part of the War on Drugs is the fight against money laundering. From crossing the border to the use of banking system, DTOs always try to find better ways of smuggling money. For instance, the Wachovia bank scandal was one of the biggest successes against money laundering during the implementation of the Merida Initiative, but again it is hard to measure to what extent Merida actions helped. The bank failed to perform rigorously anti-money laundering measures that allowed Mexican transactions around 370 billion dollars including wire transfers, traveler's cheques, and cash shipments. In the Wachovia case, justice was not rigorously either since the payment of fines was more than enough and nobody faced charges for the unlawful practices. "It paid federal authorities \$110m in forfeiture, for allowing transactions later proved to be connected to drug smuggling, and incurred a \$50m fine for failing to monitor cash used to ship 22 tons of cocaine."<sup>182</sup>

Although Wachovia was a big success, the case proved the capabilities of DTOs concerning money laundering and how authorities were not severe to such a high profile case. An article from the Guardian claimed that "criminal proceedings were brought against Wachovia, though not against any individual but the case never came to court."<sup>183</sup> The decision in the Wachovia case will not serve as an example to other institutions since paying the penalty seems to be the worst punishment in such cases. As Farah stated, "give the stated priorities of both governments to enhance the money laundering structures and halt bulk cash shipments, it is striking that direct funding for such efforts is a very small part of the Merida Initiative."<sup>184</sup> Significant measures against money laundering should be an important aspect of the Merida Initiative since it will translate into less money

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<sup>182</sup>Vulliamy, E. (2011, April 3). How a big US bank laundered billions from Mexico's murderous drug gangs | World news | The Guardian. Retrieved 20, December 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/03/us-bank-mexico-drug-gangs>

<sup>183</sup>Ibid

<sup>184</sup> Farah, D. (2010, October). Money Laundering and Bulk Cash Smuggling: Challenges for the Merida Initiative in Shared Responsibility US-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime. In *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options for Confronting Organized Crime*, ed. Olson, E.L, Shirk, D.A, Selee, A. p.352. Retrieved May 8, 2017 from <https://es.scribd.com/document/59013118/Shared-Responsibility-US-Mexico-Policy-Options-for-Confronting-Organized-Crime> (p.141)

for bribes, payment of DTO members, even less weapon purchase that will directly hinder DTOs capabilities.

### **3.2 Compare Bush and Obama attempt to drug and security through the Merida Initiative**

First of all, it is necessary to point out that Bush and Obama approach towards drug trafficking during the implementation of Merida Initiative could be defined as a policy with little difference and characterized by continuity. Obama continued what Bush started on the subject of enhancing the bilateral relationship and promoting shared responsibility against drug trafficking. Bush pushed for a Merida Initiative that included Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico receiving most of the funds. Whereas Obama separated the Initiative by region, Mexico kept its priority position. It is understandable since Geography is destiny, and because it is estimated that most of the drug entering the U.S soil comes from Mexico.

Moreover, Obama's pillars are not very different from the goals introduced by Bush. The innovation of the Obama administration was the introduction of the concept of resilient communities. As Olson writes, "as outlined in speeches and policy documents, the promotion of "community resilience" became a fourth key priority or pillar for cooperation under the Merida Initiative in 2009, the first year of the Obama administration."<sup>185</sup> Nevertheless, with a majority in Congress, it could have been easier for the Obama Administration to make significant changes or not requesting more funding for the Initiative. Thus, "the Obama administration decided to rethink and reorient some of the strategy but not dramatically alter it."<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>Olson, E. L. (n.d.). The Mérida Initiative and Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations: After the Storm in U.S.-Mexico Relations | The Wilson Quarterly. Retrieved from <https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/after-the-storm-in-u-s-mexico-relations/the-m-rida-initiative-and-shared-responsibility-in-u-s-mexico-security-relations/>

<sup>186</sup>Ibid

For instance, Obama made emphasis on the modernization of the border to face the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges and the importance of creating “resilient communities” in Mexico. It was considered an important part of the Initiative’s second phase. Furthermore, “it is a significant evolution of the original Mérida Initiative vision from a primarily security-based approach to a social preventative approach”<sup>187</sup> Both administrations focused on promoting the rule of law and fighting corruption in Mexico. Therefore, assistance was provided during the transition of the Mexican Judicial system that was finally completed in 2016.

Human rights restrictions were part of the agenda during both phases. During the first phase, human rights funding was authorized, but during the second Mexico lost some funding. As previously discussed, a favorable report from the Secretary of State was necessary to release funds subject to human rights conditions, but for the FY 2014, no report was issued. “The Secretary of State took the unusual and largely symbolic decision in October to transfer \$5 million in counter-narcotics assistance for Mexico to Peru.”<sup>188</sup> Therefore, both presidents recognized the importance of the Merida Initiative to enhance the bilateral relationship and were faithful to cooperate with Mexico to fight drug trafficking. They both fought for funding, provided equipment and financial support mainly to the Mexican institutions such as the military since for both governments security was a priority.

Finally, unquestionably, for both administrations regarding counter-drug policies, Mexico was and continues being a priority. As a result, concerning American assistance against drug trafficking Mexico receives the biggest part of the cake in Latin America. However, since continuity is the rule of the day, it is necessary to evaluate how effective the policy has been.

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<sup>187</sup>Ibid

<sup>188</sup>Ibid Olson, E. L. (n.d.). The Mérida Initiative and Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations: After the Storm in U.S.-Mexico Relations | The Wilson Quarterly. Retrieved from <https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/after-the-storm-in-u-s-mexico-relations/the-m-rida-initiative-and-shared-responsibility-in-u-s-mexico-security-relations/>

### **3.3 Evaluating Merida's Effectiveness**

It has been more than a decade since former Presidents Calderon and Bush met in Merida to start what has been described as a shared responsibility policy against drug trafficking. Throughout the years, the main concern has been to hinder the power of the DTOs operations which was expected to translate in fewer drugs crossing the borders. Thus, since the first phase, the Merida Initiative seeks to impact the trafficking of illegal narcotics from Mexico to the United States as well as enhancing citizens' security and prevent the spillover of violence. To accomplish its goals, it has implemented actions following four pillars which need to be considered to evaluate the Initiative's effectiveness better.

The primary purpose of this section is to answer the question of how the United States is measuring the efficiency of the Merida programs. First, since citizen's security and human rights conditions were placed, it is necessary to evaluate how the Merida Initiative is enhancing domestic safety and the well being of citizens as well as the human rights in Mexico. Moreover, since one of the main focuses of the Initiative is to impact the trafficking of illegal narcotics, it is necessary to evaluate how its major accomplishments have hindered the DTOs operation and profits. Unquestionably, the DTOs has developed the ability to adapt through the years, hence to evaluate if the Initiative is adapting to the new challenges posed by the DTOs, and if the Merida Initiative is helping the Mexican government respond to new challenges of securing its Southern border is needed.

### 3.3.1 The Merida Initiative as a Shared Responsibility

Historically, the relationship between Mexico and the United States has always swung between conflict and cooperation. Furthermore, as described in the previous chapter, the relationship has also been determined by events that mostly hindered the bilateral relationship. As writes Wolf and Celorio, even with the background of mistrust, Bush was eager to accept the opportunity to enhance the bilateral relationship when Calderon pledge for help develop his War on Drugs.<sup>189</sup> The agreement between Bush and Calderon to pursue a bilateral counter-drug policy and to recognize a shared responsibility against the drug traffic threat could be considered the biggest achievement of the Merida Initiative. During the Bush and Obama administration, regarding counter-drug policies, cooperation and not conflict was the rule of the day. Nevertheless, the fact that cooperation has been enhancing through the Merida Initiative does not translate into effectiveness as a whole, and there is still much room for improvement.

### 3.3.2 Merida Lacks Indicators

As previously discussed, the implementation has been driven by four pillars aiming to conduct actions to address the rising DTO threat. However, the Merida Initiative lacks clear indicators to measure the effectiveness of its programs. On his research, Hughes pointed out disadvantages of Supply Side policies. For instance, “authors state that current anti-drug policies lack proper mechanisms for evaluation and feedback regarding their effectiveness, which is a crucial item in assessing true progress.”<sup>190</sup> For instance, GAO reports measuring the performance of anti-drug policies states that “strategic documents lack certain key elements that would facilitate accountability and management.”<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup>Wolf, S., & Morayta, G. (2011). LA GUERRA DE MÉXICO CONTRA EL NARCOTRÁFICO Y LA INICIATIVA MÉRIDA: PIEDRAS ANGULARES EN LA BÚSQUEDA DE LEGITIMIDAD. *Foro Internacional*, 51(4 (206)), 669-714. Retrieved November 27, 2015 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337568>

<sup>190</sup>Hughes, M. C. (2013). *MÉRIDA INITIATIVE AND EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY-SIDE POLICY* (Master's thesis, Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive DSpace Repository). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/34680>

<sup>191</sup>U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO]. (2007). *Merida Initiative the United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anti-crime Support But Needs Better Performance Measures* (No. GAO-10-837). Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10837.pdf>. Quoted from Jhenson, W. T. (2013). *Breaking Bad: U.S.-Mexican Counterdrug Offensive, the Mérida Initiative and Beyond* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/13521> (p.23)

Thus, the Merida Initiative falls into this category, and the need for clear indicators to measure its effectiveness is a deficiency that could not be ignored by policy makers because no clear ways of assessing performance hinder the possibility of improving implementation. As Seele claimed since the crucial documents of the Merida Initiative do not establish clear parameters, it is not possible to accurately measure the impact of the policy, and “it is this inconsistency that has led analysts to debate over how bilateral efforts should be evaluated.”<sup>192</sup> Besides, as Seelke and Finklea claimed, policy makers ignore that it is hard to determine the success that can be straightforward attributed to Merida.<sup>193</sup> For example, how would policy makers assess if more drug seizures are directly related to Merida efforts? This scenario shows another problem of how to access the effectiveness of Merida programs.

### **3.3.3 Equipment and Training**

Although the Merida Initiative was divided into four pillars that pursue different goals, funds have not been distributed so evenly. For instance, first and second pillars have received most of the funds showing how interdiction and law enforcement methods are a priority. Furthermore, even the novelty of resilient communities introduced by the Obama administration that has been claimed as major component of the Initiative’s aims has not received as much funding as pillar one and two. Consequently, the purpose of enhancing civil society is present, but concrete action that proves its importance is lacking.

Besides, the United States has provided equipment to the Mexican government, but data of how such material has been used is missing. Moreover, as described before, during the first phase of the Merida Initiative funds and equipment were delivered at a low pace. Back in 2007, the GAO pointed out the need of necessary tools to measure the performance of the program because training and equipment would be performed without specific steps for

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<sup>192</sup>Seele, A., & Olson, E. L. (2011). *Steady Advances, Slow Results: U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation After Two Years of the Obama Administration*. Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars. Retrieved from [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/steady\\_advances\\_slow\\_results.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/steady_advances_slow_results.pdf). Quoted from Jhenson, W. T. (2013). *Breaking Bad: U.S.-Mexican Counterdrug Offensive, the Mérida Initiative and Beyond* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/13521>

<sup>193</sup>Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2013). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> (p.24)



accountability.<sup>194</sup> The situation could have been handled in a better way if, for instance, a timetable to deliver equipment would have been set. Thus, the U.S. has failed to follow up if the Mexican government is giving the best use and how this equipment has impacted the fight against DTOs. The same scenario was found with training. The Merida programs have trained a great deal of Mexican official. However, there are no indicators of such agents performance on the fight against drug trafficking.

### 3.3.4 Drug Consumption and Interdiction Efforts

First of all, to evaluate the effectiveness of the Merida programs, it is necessary to take a closer look at how it had affected drug prices, consumption, and the business profits. As Hughes claimed, as a Supply Side policy, “we would then witness increased retail prices for illegal narcotics, as well as a decreased drug use globally, particularly in the United States.” Accordingly, if the Merida Initiative is successful, its efforts should result in an increase in drugs prices that will translate in significantly less consumption. Data from the United Nations World Drug Report shows that overall drug use remains stable globally. It shows “a global prevalence of 5.2 per cent (range: 3.4-7.0 per cent), suggesting that drug use has remained stable in the past three years, although the estimated number of drug users has actually risen by 6 million to 246 million (range: 162 million-329 million) owing to the increase in the global population.”<sup>195</sup>

Furthermore, eradication is an important tool of the War on Drugs that has been carried out from its early stages until today, but one could also raise some questions regarding the accomplishments of eradication techniques. For example, according to the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCSR) Report in 2014, approximately 21,425 ha of opium poppy were eradicated showing a significant increase compared to the 14,419 ha destroyed in 2013. Also, the

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<sup>194</sup>U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO]. (2007). *Merida Initiative the United States Has Provided Counternarcotics and Anti-crime Support But Needs Better Performance Measures* (No. GAO-10-837). Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10837.pdf>. Quoted from Jhenson, W. T. (2013). *Breaking Bad: U.S.-Mexican Counterdrug Offensive, the Mérida Initiative and Beyond* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/13521> (p.23)

<sup>195</sup>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Drug Report 2015 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.XI.6). Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2016/vol1/253288.htm> (p.21)

Government of Mexico also reported eradicating 5,679 ha of cannabis in 2014, a slight increase over the 5,096 ha eliminated in 2013.<sup>196</sup>

Mexican and American governments consider such amount as a tremendous achievement, but eradication has proved not to be successful in the long-term. First, eradication does not significantly affect the availability of drugs since after a crop is eradicated another one is planted, and due to the illegality of drug production, it is impossible to compare the achievements with the amount of existing. Second, once more due to the illegality of drugs, one could wonder how reliable sources with the number of crops eradicated are or how bias the data from the reports are. For instance, as Hughes claimed sources such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is influenced by the U.S. government since most of the World Drug Report figures are taken from U.S. agencies or their affiliates in partner nations.<sup>197</sup> Consequently, no matter the eradication techniques implemented by the United States drug consumption continues rising and no significant change is observed when it comes to drug use reduction. Hence, it shows how impractical such achievements are since the probability of bias figures is extremely high.

As discussed in previous chapters, Mexico is a transit and producer country, so there remains the issue of the effectiveness of Merida efforts to hinder drug production in Mexico. According to the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy (INCSR), roughly 143 labs were dismantled in 2014, 11.7 more than in 2013.<sup>198</sup> As the U.S. Department of State claimed, “the Mexican government has been unable to quell the production of meth and adequately dismantle clandestine labs.”<sup>199</sup> One can conclude that it is impossible to determine or compare if the dismantling of clandestine labs is significant and in fact impacting drug

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid

<sup>197</sup>Hughes, M. C. (2013). *MÉRIDA INITIATIVE AND EFFECTIVENESS: AN ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY-SIDE POLICY* (Master's thesis, Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive DSpace Repository). Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/34680>

<sup>198</sup> Data from Jhenson, W. T. (2013). *Breaking Bad: U.S.-Mexican Counterdrug Offensive, the Mérida Initiative and Beyond* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/13521>

<sup>199</sup>Bonner, R.C. (2010). The New Cocaine Cowboys: How to Defeat Mexico's Drug Cartels. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~kmcm/Articles/The%20New%20Cocaine%20Cowboys.pdf>. Quoted from Jhenson, W. T. (2013). *Breaking Bad: U.S.-Mexican Counterdrug Offensive, the Mérida Initiative and Beyond* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/13521>

production in Mexico. Besides, the Mexican and American governments use drug seizure as an indicator of the success of the Merida Initiative hoping that more money invested would translate in more drug seized. Thus, they claimed that the funds invested and the amounts of drugs seized are clear indicators of success.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, they ignore that higher amount of drug seized does not directly mean less production or less use.

Undeniably, seizures hinder the drug business, but is it really impacting the DTOs production. Although a higher amount of narcotics are seized, the problem is that production continues and drugs are available for consumers. Moreover, a greater amount of drug seized could be a sign of expansion of the drug market. These are issues that cannot be ignored by policy makers when assessing the effectiveness of counter-drug policies, but the equation for success is focused on drug seized and ignored that it does not necessarily translate into less use or fewer profits for the drug lords.

### **3.3.5 The Kingpin plus Extradition Equation**

To measure the effectiveness of the Merida Initiative the Mexican and American government added to the equation the capture, extradition, and killing of DTOs leaders. They present these achievements as the result of information sharing and inter-agency cooperation between both nations as a success of the Merida Initiative efforts. Following a kingpin strategy, notorious leaders such as Arturo Beltran Leyva and lastly “El Chapo” Guzman were killed or extradited to American soil. However, the kingpin strategy ignores DTOs organization and what follows after a drug lord is taken out of the equation. Once a leader is eliminated the battle to take his place starts and DTOs continues their operations without hesitation. Nevertheless, this could lead to increase of violence due to intra and inter violence within DTOs. Lastly, if the Merida Initiative aims to enhance citizens’ security and at the same time hinder the operations of the DTOs, by capturing the drug leaders it does not significantly impact drug trafficking, but it contributes to the increase of violence in Mexico which translates in more risks for the population.

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid

### **3.3.6 The Human Rights and Corruption Battles**

Human rights conditions were placed from the beginning of the Merida Initiative as a tool to enhance the well being of Mexican citizens. What's more, the United States and Mexican governments worked hand in hand to achieve the transformation of the Mexican judicial system as part of Merida efforts to promote the rule of law and domestic security. However, data from INEGI shows how homicides have increased since the implementation of the Merida Initiative. (See annex 3) As previously discussed, high profile cases such as the killing of 43 students in Iguala, Mexico, journalist disappeared, and the increase of kidnapping practices shows the insecurity that citizens are living in Mexico. Also, the display of military to the War on Drugs has translated in more cases of human rights abuses which are detrimental to citizens' security.

According to human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Mexico is not meeting human rights conditions. Although sanctions were placed during the Obama administration due to human rights violations, a vast amount of sources were delivered to the Merida Initiative. It shows how the human rights subject is not a priority for the government to continue providing funds, and even if the amount of human rights violation cases, killing and kidnapping continue in Mexico, funds for the Merida Initiative are not significantly cut. Besides, efforts to improve Mexican Judicial system resulted in a successful transition. However, such a novelty achievement still cannot be measure and time will show how efficient the new judicial system is. So far cases of impunity continue, and many cases do not make it to the court because Mexicans, generally speaking, don't trust the system and got the feeling that their voice will not be heard. For this reason, efforts to combat corruption and to foster human rights and citizens' security should receive more attention, and concrete action should be taken.

### 3.3.7 Obama's Resilient Communities: Adapting to New Challenges

As discussed in the preceding chapter, the Obama Administration introduced the notion of resilient communities during the second phase of the Merida Initiative. The four pillar efforts aimed to reduce the possibility of people joining the DTOs, but once more, as Olson pointed out, “there has been little analysis of whether Pillar IV efforts have lived up to their promise. More importantly, there has been little attempt to systematically evaluate the responses of Mexican society—and the evolution of Mexican civil society—in response to the country’s ongoing security crisis.”<sup>201</sup> Although programs to create resilient communities have been implemented all over Mexico, the programs lack data of how they have impacted the participants’ lives and improving the communities, the society in general. For example, the programs require follow up measures to determine if participants are putting the knowledge acquired to practice and if such programs are preventing them from joining the DTOs.

Here comes the open question of how the United States is measuring the success of such programs. If the main aim of such programs is to keep youth away from the DTOs, it is necessary to obtain data showing the programs' significant success. There is a need to evaluate if these programs are making an impact in such communities since DTOs continue to flourish and actions against them do not seem to make a huge impact. Consequently, the Merida Initiative fails to adjust to the new challenges and adaptability of DTOs. It ignores alternative methods that could hinder the capabilities of DTOs since harm reduction of drugs and the issues of legalization are out of discussion instead interdiction, law enforcement and criminalizing are the rule of the day.

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<sup>201</sup>Olson Eric, L & Wilson C. (2010) Beyond Merida: The Evolving Approach to Security Cooperation. Woodrow Wilson Center at the Mexico Institute. Retrieved from [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond\\_merida.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/beyond_merida.pdf)

## **Summary**

The Merida Initiative is a bilateral agreement between Mexico and the United States that aim to hinder the capabilities of Mexican DTOs which would translate to a significant reduction of drug traffic from Mexico to the United States. It was introduced by Calderon and Bush and was continued by the Obama and Peña Nieto term. Although Obama baptized it as “Beyond Merida,” the second and first phases had more similarities than differences. Goals were changed to pillars, Central America and the Caribbean got their initiatives, but Mexico continued as a priority receiving most of the funding. Besides the introduction of resilient communities, no significant changes were introduced during the second phase.

Moreover, the Merida Initiative enhanced the notion of shared responsibility, and both former American administrations pushed the Congress to continue funding Merida programs that include training, equipment and technical assistance to the Mexican military, police and other institutions. From extraditions to border modernization efforts and the novelty of resilient communities, billions of dollars have been expended to fund Merida. Against critics on both sides of the border, the policy is far from its end. Thus, the prospect for the continuation of the Merida Initiative that lasted during Bush and Obama administration seems favorable because it appears that shortly a divorce from the current supply side approach is scarce.

The Initiative is an obvious example of current counter drug assistance policies implemented by the United States whose effectiveness is good questioning. It lacks clear indicators of how its actions have impacted DTOs’ capabilities. For example, drug seized and crop eradication are used as clear indicators of success. However, it is difficult to measure to what extent Merida actions have influenced the War on Drugs achievements such as the Wachovia bank case or “El Chapo” capture and extradition. Consequently, besides the shared responsibility and how it has enhanced the bilateral relations concerning drug traffic, the Merida Initiative has proved not to be the most useful tool in today’s longest American War.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this work was to analyze not only how the United States is measuring the effectiveness of Merida programs, but also to conclude if such policy is effective in the fight against drug trafficking in Mexico. Moreover, the possibility of the continuation of such policy was considered to find out if it is the correct road to follow when it comes to hinder the capabilities of DTOs. First, I found that the Initiative lacks clear indicators to measure how its efforts are hindering the capabilities of DTOs and reducing violence in Mexico. Instead, massive amounts of drug and cash seized, a high number of extraditions and the capture of drug lords, increased of drug prices, and reduced amount of consumers are mostly considered as a way to verify the success of Merida.

Unquestionably, drug and cash seized hinder the DTOs, but the accomplishment is not significant since the drug business continues to be worth taking its risks, and due to the illegality of drugs it is impossible to correlate it with the number of narcotics flowing to the American soil. Moreover, it could not be ignored that after a drug lord is captured another one is ready to start the fight, as it happened before in Mexico, to sit on the throne. However, the Mexican and American governments fail to accept the consequences and fail to prepare for the violence that follows up. The increase in prices does not directly translate into less consumption as we have observed in the data provided in this work. Better ways that focus on the direct impact of Merida programs in Mexican institutions such as the improvement of military performance after receiving training would be a better way to measure if Merida efforts are effective.

Then, the aim of creating resilient communities shows a change in direction during the second phase of the Initiative, but these programs also lack the tools to measure if it represents an impact on the number of youth who are saved from joining the DTOs or if such programs are a successful tool for prevention. Thus, clear indicators which focus not only on interdiction and law enforcement matters but also on issues such as the performance of Mexican officials and how Merida programs are lowering the capabilities of DTOs to hinder communities must be considered as an alternative way to measure the efficiency of Merida programs.

Also, if creating resilient communities were a priority, more funds would have been expended. It would have proved a real change in the dynamics, but most of the funds are still destined towards interdictions, eradication, military –centered practices, and law enforcement efforts. It is compulsory to pursue a critical assessment of such practices because they have been implemented for too long without the expected results.

Besides, the Merida Initiative efforts haven't considerably helped Mexico to improve citizens' security. Violence continues spreading with record numbers of people that have lost their life since Calderon's War on Drugs started including high profile cases such as the Iguala students, Mexican officials, Majors, priest, and even journalist which directly hinder the freedom of speech in the Mexican soil. As described in this work, funding for the Initiative has continued although human rights organizations agreed that Mexico did not meet human rights conditions placed on the Initiative, and even a favorable report for funding was not issued during Obama tenure. Funds were held but again not significantly because, from the rest of current Latin American Initiatives against drug trafficking, Mexico continues receiving most of the funding. It could not be ignored Mexico's importance to their American neighbors. Nevertheless, it could also not be overlooked that billions of dollars have been expended to fund a policy that prays to reduce the violence but has resulted in record numbers of human loss.

Having that said, what is the prospect of such a system to continue as the major American assistance policy against drug trafficking? Before answering the question, it is necessary to mention Plan Colombia, which is an obvious example of current U.S. stance to combat drug trafficking in Latin America. Due to its similarities, and because it has influenced its development, the Merida Initiative has also been called Plan Mexico. The issue is that policies such as Plan Mexico and Plan Colombia have proved to be considered as the best tool for American assistance in the fight against drug traffic practices in Latin America. This trend has continued since the Andean Counterdrug Initiative that assisted South American nations during the 90s, but no significant changes have been introduced,



and still, the United States is focusing on supply side anti drug policies ignoring alternative options which prove that the divorce from Supply Side policies is far from happening. Therefore, it could be concluded that policies like Merida will continue.

However, policy makers must divorce from military, interdiction and eradication centered policies towards alternative methods. Future policies should consider certain factors such as issues that inflow drug trade like demand, and critically analyze the success and failure of such Initiatives to implement a new strategy that adapts to the changing nature of DTOs. For instance, it seems that creators of the Andean Initiative ignored the phenomenon of displacement commonly called, but creators of the Merida Initiative assisted other Latin American countries. Also, during the second phase of the Merida Initiative, the need to focus on Social matters was put on the table. Nevertheless, the amount of funding provided does not seem to be enough and if the same ineffective efforts are implemented no significant progress would be done in the region. Consequently, the Mexican and American governments must think about the failure of current counter drug policies. They should accept that it is time to shift from a total prohibition stance towards a more tolerant approach that include legalization, and even decriminalization as alternative methods in the War on Drugs because it seems that contemporary counter drug policies are making the War on Drugs a lost war.

Despite the efforts against money laundering, it has not hit the business profits significantly given that an increase in prices has failed to translate into significantly less consumption of drugs. Thus, the best way to stop the business is to impact its profits significantly. A successful anti drug policy must include clear ways for evaluating progress, efforts to reduce demand, and must be open to alternative methods such as decriminalization and legalization. The American and Mexican Governments fail to accept that until there would be somebody able to pay a high price for the product, there would always be someone able to take risks to supply the demand.

Finally, after an in-depth analysis, I have concluded that the Merida Initiative's biggest achievement was the fact that both governments accepted a shared responsibility when it comes to the issue of drug trafficking. It helped to enhance the bilateral relationship regarding drug matters, but it is not an effective policy to considerably hinder the capabilities of Mexican DTOs and improve citizens' security. Furthermore, the Initiative does not respond to the new challenges that drug traffic poses since it fails to adapt to the dynamics of the changing organization of DTOs. It focuses only on the supply side of the problem without significant efforts to reduce demand. The shared responsibility approach must continue, but it is time to open room for alternative methods that will put an end to the War on Drugs.

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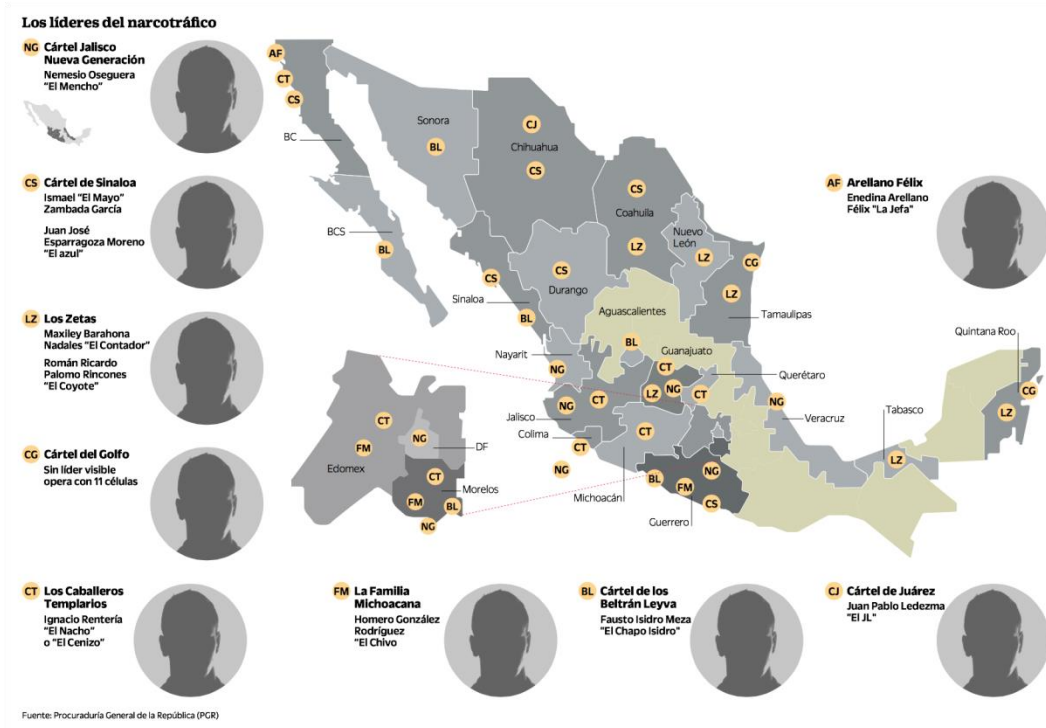
## Annex 1 Mexico Maps

### Mexico Maps



Source: The World Fact book. Retrieved January 23, 2017, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mx.html>

# Drug Lords and Their Areas of Influence



Source: Storybench. Retrieved January 23, 2017, from <http://www.storybench.org/visualizing-mexicos-drug-cartels-roundup-maps/>

## Annex 2 NAFTA

### 1994 : U.S. trade in goods with Mexico

*NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Table reflects only those months for which there was trade.*

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 1994	3,799.0	3,496.2	302.8
February 1994	3,682.1	3,613.5	68.6
March 1994	4,378.2	4,207.0	171.2
April 1994	3,822.3	3,828.0	-5.7
May 1994	4,380.9	4,032.7	348.2
June 1994	4,416.9	4,193.6	223.3
July 1994	4,207.0	3,614.3	592.7
August 1994	4,455.1	4,355.4	99.7
September 1994	4,381.2	4,376.5	4.7
October 1994	4,499.7	4,581.3	-81.6
November 1994	4,557.1	4,929.9	-372.8
December 1994	4,264.0	4,265.3	-1.3
<b>TOTAL 1994</b>	<b>50,843.5</b>	<b>49,493.7</b>	<b>1,349.8</b>



### 2016 : U.S. trade in goods with Mexico

*NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding. Table reflects only those months for which there was trade.*

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2016	18,014.7	22,386.8	-4,372.1
February 2016	18,114.7	23,177.7	-5,063.0
March 2016	19,268.2	24,757.5	-5,489.3
April 2016	19,290.2	25,080.0	-5,789.7
May 2016	18,983.1	24,835.3	-5,852.2
June 2016	19,419.5	24,891.9	-5,472.4
July 2016	18,246.0	23,021.6	-4,775.6
August 2016	19,959.9	25,561.5	-5,601.6
September 2016	19,691.7	25,135.9	-5,444.2
October 2016	20,146.8	26,358.3	-6,211.5
November 2016	19,514.7	25,372.0	-5,857.3
December 2016	19,052.2	23,477.5	-4,425.3
<b>TOTAL 2016</b>	<b>229,701.7</b>	<b>294,055.9</b>	<b>-64,354.1</b>

Source: United States Census Bureau. Retrieved March 20, 2017 from <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c2010.html>

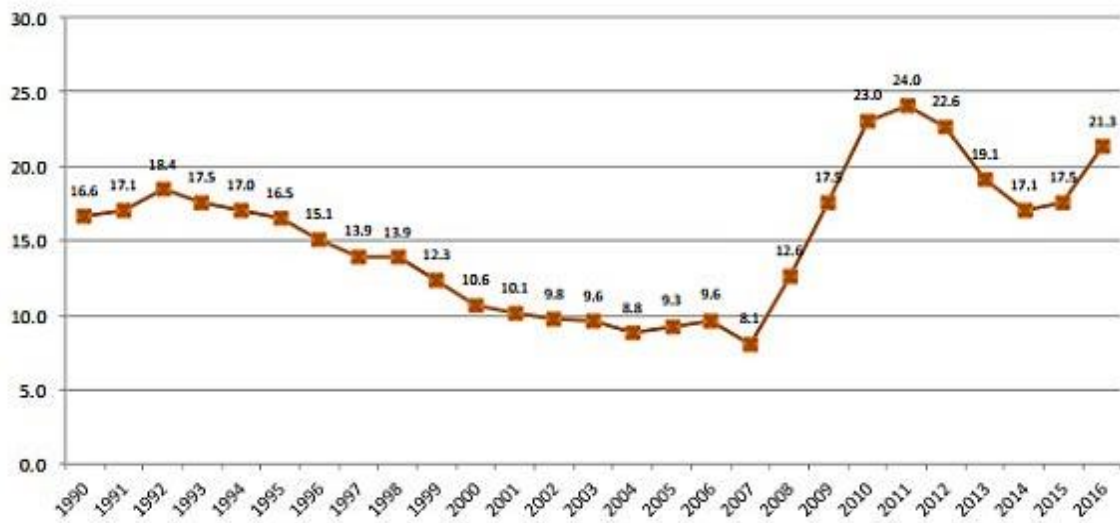
### Annex 3

#### Deaths from Homicides in Mexico 2005-2015

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	9,921	10,452	8,867	14,006	19,803	25,757	27,213	25,967	23,063	20,01	20,762
Mexican	9,813	10,334	8,782	13,857	19,601	25,476	26,977	25,75	22,864	19,824	20,568
Foreign Nationals	108	118	85	149	202	281	236	217	199	186	194

Source: INEGI Statistics. Retrieved from March 25, 2017 <http://www.inegi.org.mx/>

#### Homicides Rate in Mexico (Per 100,000), 1995-2016



Source: The University of San Diego. Data from INEGI and CONAPO. Retrieved from <http://www.sandiego.edu/>

## Annex 4

### Estimated Mérida Initiative Funding: FY2008-FY2017 (Request)

(\$ in millions)

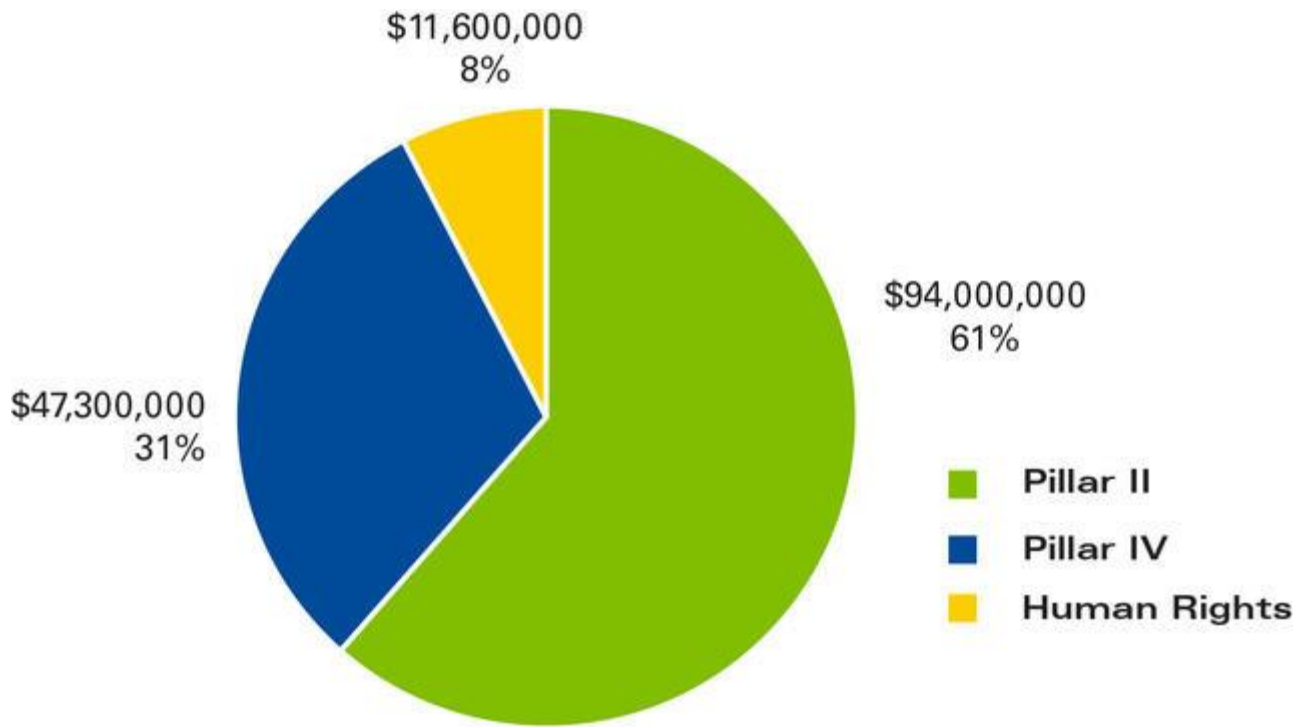
Account	FY2008	FY2009
DA	8.2	11.2
ESF	34.7	15.0
FMF	116.5	39.0
GHCS	2.7	2.9
IMET	0.4	0.8
INCLE	263.5	406.0
NADR	1.3	3.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>412.6</b>	<b>478.8</b>

Account	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017 Estimated
<b>DA</b>	10.0	25.0	33.4	26.2	0.0	0.0	10.5	0.0
<b>ESF</b>	15.0	18.0	33.3	32.1	46.8	46.1	39.0	49.0
<b>FMF</b>	265.2	8.0	7.0	6.6	6.6	4.7	7.0	5.0
<b>GHCS</b>	3.5	3.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>IMET</b>	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>INCLE</b>	365.0	117.0	248.5	195.1	148.1	110.0	100.0	90.0
<b>NADR</b>	3.9	5.7	5.4	3.8	3.9	2.9	2.2	2.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>657.6</b>	<b>178.2</b>	<b>329.6</b>	<b>265.0</b>	<b>206.8</b>	<b>165.2</b>	<b>160.2</b>	<b>147.7</b>

Data from Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues. *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> Sources: U.S. Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations FY2009-FY2017; “FY 2016 653(a) Allocations – Final,” provided to CRS in August 2016. Figures for INCLE are from: U.S. Department of State, “Mérida Initiative Update for CRS,” November 18, 2016. Notes: DA = Development Assistance; ESF = Economic Support Fund; FMF = Foreign Military Financing; GHCS = Global Health and Child Survival; IMET = International Military Education and Training; INCLE = International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement; NADR = Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, and Related Programs.

**Annex 5**

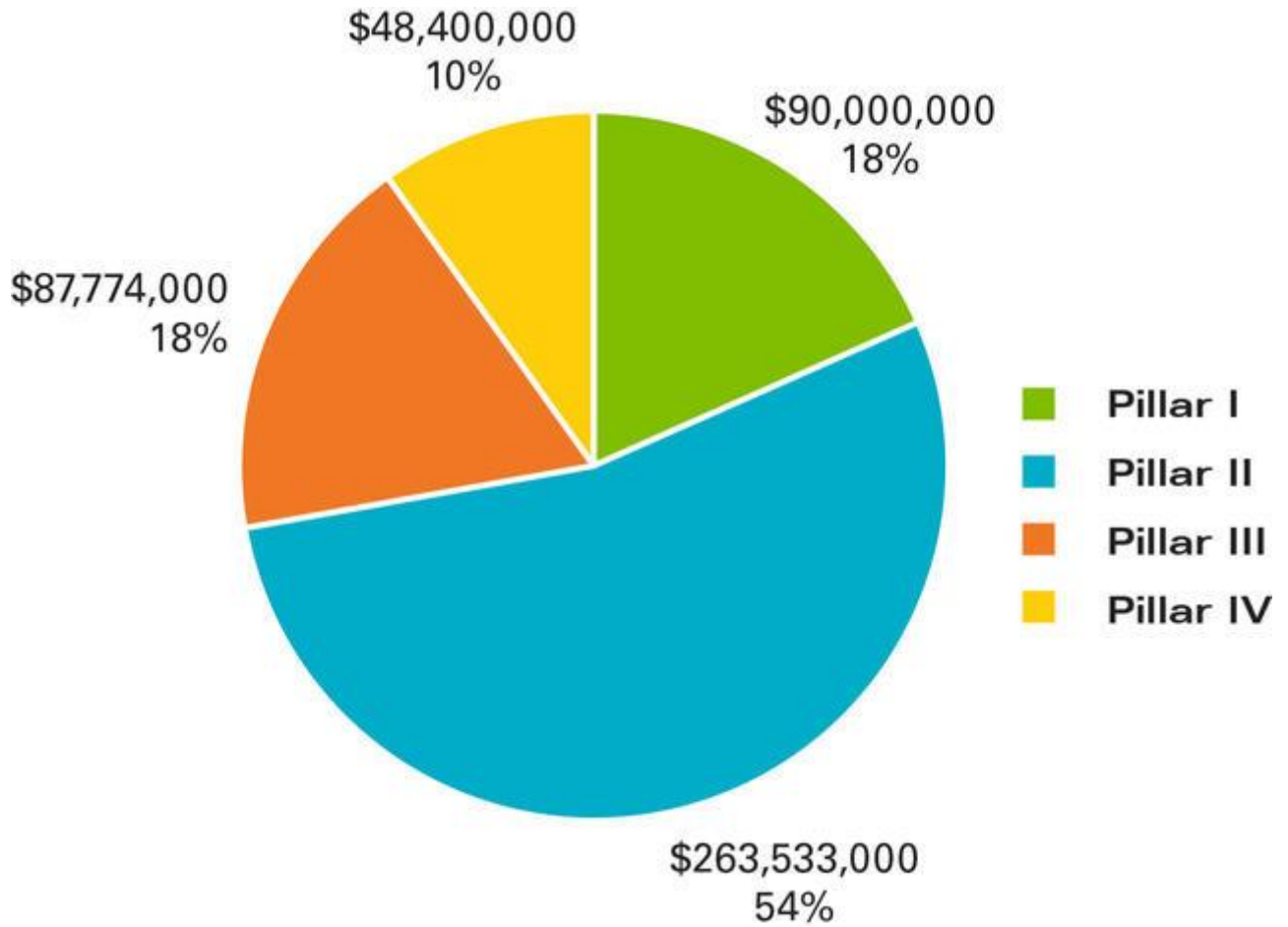
**PILLARS: USAID FY 2012–16 Total Mérida Initiative Funding**



Source: Olson, E. L. (n.d.). The Mérida Initiative and Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations: After the Storm in U.S.-Mexico Relations | The Wilson Quarterly. Retrieved from <https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/after-the-storm-in-u-s-mexico-relations/the-m-rida-initiative-and-shared-responsibility-in-u-s-mexico-security-relations/>

Annex 6

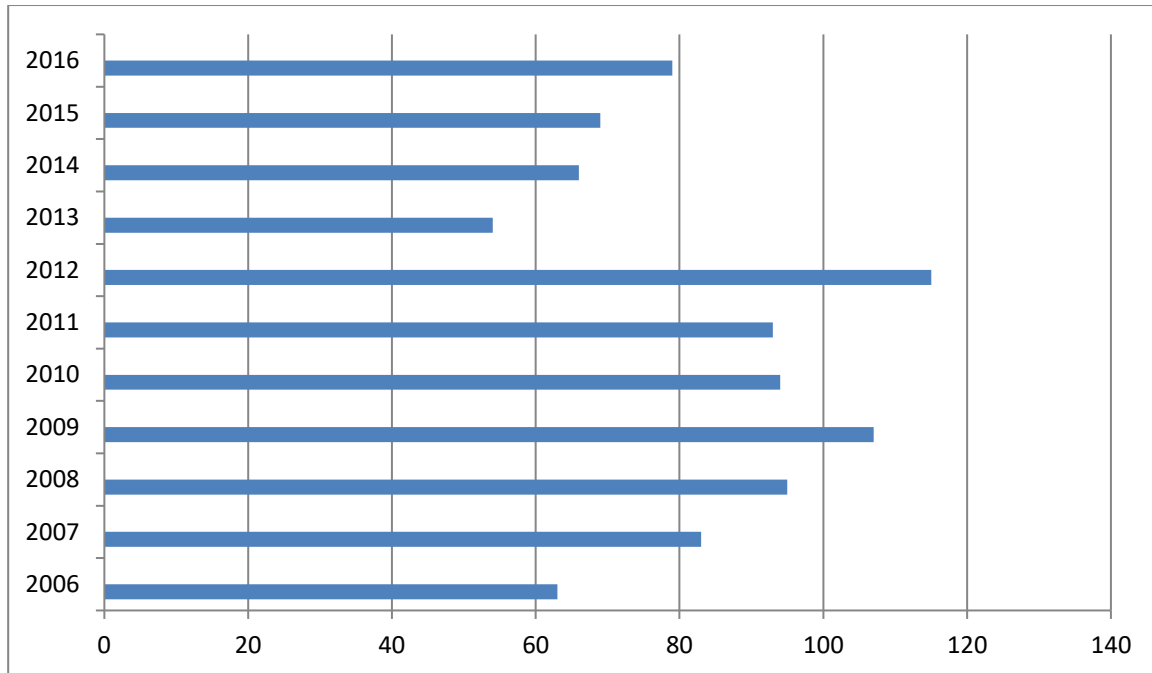
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**Source:** Olson, E. L. (n.d.). The Mérida Initiative and Shared Responsibility in U.S.-Mexico Security Relations: After the Storm in U.S.-Mexico Relations | The Wilson Quarterly. Retrieved from <https://wilsonquarterly.com/quarterly/after-the-storm-in-u-s-mexico-relations/the-m-rida-initiative-and-shared-responsibility-in-u-s-mexico-security-relations/>

## Annex 7

### Individuals Extradited from Mexico to the United States (2006-2016)



Data from Ribando Seelke, C. & Finklea K. (2017). Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues . *Congressional Research Service*, Retrieved from <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41349.pdf> Sources: U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of State.

## **Annex 8**

### **Major Accomplishments of Merida Correction Programs**

- The Mexican National Academy for Penitentiary Administration opened in Xalapa, Veracruz in May 2009. The Academy has trained 7,519 newly recruited officials.
- Training and certification for corrections instructors at the New Mexico Corrections Academy. Since 2009, 452 new corrections instructors have been trained and certified.
- 216 federal and state correctional officers of the Transportation Unit have received training at the Colorado Department of Corrections. Additionally, ten prisoner transport vans, two 12-inmates transportation units, one 26-inmates transportation unit, and ballistic and protection equipment were delivered to the Prisoner Transportation Unit.
- 200 mid- and senior-level federal and state corrections staff have received Leadership training from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons and the National Institute of Corrections. One hundred twenty one corrections staff have been trained on First Line Supervisor techniques. Two Advanced Leadership Training Courses have been provided to upper level correctional officials in Denver, Colorado.
- 132 corrections employees have received Security Threat Group/ Intel training at the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.
- 32 female correctional staff received Female Offender Management Training in Colorado.

Source: The Merida Initiative Facts sheets. (2014). Retrieved from <https://mx.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/the-merida-initiative/>