

RELEASE IN PART B7(E)

From: svcSMARTMFI  
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Subject: NARCOTICS AFFAIRS SECTION MEXICO MONTHLY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2009

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Date/DTG: Mar 17, 2009 / 172208Z MAR 09  
From: AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
Action: SECSTATE WASHDC, ROUTINE  
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TAGS: SNAR, KCRM, KJUS, PGOV, PREL, MX  
Captions: SENSITIVE  
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Reference: MEXICO 00000640, MEXICO 00000505, MEXICO 00000472, MEXICO  
Pass Line: STATE FOR INL AND WHA/MEX  
TREASURY FOR ENFORCEMENT SECRETARY  
DOJ FOR BSWARTZ/KBLANCO DEP ASSIST ATTY GEN  
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Subject: NARCOTICS AFFAIRS SECTION MEXICO MONTHLY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2009

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STATE FOR INL AND WHA/MEX  
TREASURY FOR ENFORCEMENT SECRETARY

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Don Holm, Senior  
Reviewer

DOJ FOR BSWARTZ/KBLANCO DEP ASSIST ATTY GEN  
FBI DIR FOR LA/CU, OC/DB, OIU, CID  
DEA FOR OD, OF, OFC, AO, DO, NPSM  
CUSTOMS FOR LA OPS AND FOR OIA/WHB

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: SNAR, KCRM, KJUS, PGOV, PREL, MX  
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REF: MEXICO 00000640, MEXICO 00000505, MEXICO 00000472, MEXICO  
00000540

1. (U) THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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#### INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

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2. (U) The war waged by the Calderon administration against the cartels showed no sign of abating in February. The escalation of violence in the border state of Chihuahua led the National Security Council to dispatch an additional 5,000 troops and 1,600 federal police agents to the city of Ciudad Juarez to reinforce patrols and intelligence missions. The drug-related death count for this border city during 2008 was estimated at 1,600, the most violent urban area in the country.

3. (U) The Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) is expected to commit another 5,200 troops to various strategic points nationwide. On average, SEDENA has dedicated 25% of its force to the fight against organized crime, with approximately 20,000 troops involved in their eradication program in the states of Sinaloa, Durango, Jalisco, Guerrero, Oaxaca and Michoacan. This proposed shift in paradigm will likely weaken SEDENA's modest eradication program, relocating troops from these posts to urban areas throughout the country.

4. (U) The Attorney General's Office (PGR) convened a master conference of officials from State Attorney Generals' offices, State Justice Courts, ministerial police forces, bar associations and business councils to define a new strategy to combat "narcomenudeo" or small-scale drug-trafficking. The PGR's approach to crimes involving small quantities of narcotics will focus on five major areas: prevention, intelligence, treatment, citizen participation and legal reform.

5. (U) Drafts of the legal reform have circulated both chambers since 2008. The "ley de narcomenudeo", which will set a threshold for federal intervention in narcotics crimes, continues to be debated in this legislative session in what many have hailed as partisan conflict between the ruling National Action Party (PAN) and the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Lead PRI Deputy Emilio Gamboa anticipates a version of the bill will be approved before the end of this session, April 30.

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#### MERIDA INITIATIVE

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6. 6. (SBU) The Second Bilateral Merida Implementation Meeting took place in Mexico City on March 2, chaired by SRE Undersecretary Carlos Rico, National Security Council Advisor Sigrid Arzt, and Charge Leslie Bassett. All U.S. and Mexican agencies involved in

Merida were present, about 25 on each side. The special working groups gave the following reports:

- Baselines and metrics: held their first meeting in which US side offered a proposal; GOM will respond with a counterproposal.
- Public Affairs: Presidencia is preparing a proposal that it will present in the group's first meeting (date TBD).
- Facilitation of Incoming Equipment and Services: Working Group met once and GOM side has done follow up. Will meet with full bilateral team in March.
- Bilateral Implementation Office: Has met to discuss GOM proposal that Mexico hold the lease. US needs to brief GOM on landlord response and discuss parameters for the facility.
- Calendar for Activities: US side proposed a new system utilizing project management software for tracking projects and deconflicting programs. GOM concurred.
- The GOM side also asked that we form a working group on biometrics in order to better coordinate our approaches.

7. (SBU) The bulk of the meeting was spent covering working group progress on individual projects. Most GOM agencies have now provided names for the working groups. SSP continued to insist on a single POC for all projects which is anticipated as a bottleneck for implementation of their projects. About half of the projects have functional working groups which have met, some of which have produced bilateral plans and a few of which have begun implementation. The meeting also served to initiate meetings for groups that have not yet met. Dialogue was collegial and more detailed than previous forums of the same size. Inconsistency in project development highlighted staffing concerns on both sides but further indicated that a number of projects, such as NIIE, are poised to move forward. The delegation agreed to focus on projects that are ready for movement. The next meeting will be held March 31 (REF: MEXICO 00000640).

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#### PROFESSIONALIZATION AND TRAINING

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8. (SBU) The following training courses were held in February

- Ongoing NAS training provided the PGR, SSP and other Mexican law enforcement institutions with training courses in Conflict Mediation and Criminal Investigation.
- DEA training courses for the PGR, SSP and State Police Agencies included Drug and Criminal Investigation, Basic Drug Identification, Highway Interdiction, and Methamphetamine and Clandestine Labs.
- NAS funded travel for DEA instructors to participate and provide training at the Chemical Precursors Seminar in Belize.
- NAS funded travel for 5 participants to attend the ILEA Anti-Gangs Prevention, Prison Management Workshop in San Salvador, El Salvador.
- NAS began hosting the USG Inter-agency Canine Training Working Group in January. Attendees include ATF, CBP, and MIST. This meeting will be held biweekly to prepare for Merida Initiative bilateral meetings with GOM counterparts.

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#### AVIATION SUPPORT

9. (U) NAS, in coordination with SSP's Air Transport branch, prepared a Statement of Work for UH-60 Blackhawk pilot and non-rated crewmember training.

10. (U) NAS funded the participation of 2 SSP Blackhawk pilots to attend a month-long UH-60 simulator currency course at Ft. Rucker, AL.

#### INTERDICTION

— February 2 - San Bruno, Baja California: Seizure of 2.3 tons of marijuana from a fishing vessel.

— February 5 - Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua: Officials found 1,720 kilograms of marijuana packaged for individual sale in a warehouse that was the site of a quadruple homicide days before.

— February 9 - Nuevo Laredo, Nuevo Leon: A shootout between cartel members and troops yielded 210 kilograms of cocaine, small bags of heroin and marijuana as well as approximately \$150,000 USD, 16 weapons and 6 fragmentation grenades.

— February 7 - San Blas, Nayarit: Federal police seized 3.4 tons of marijuana and weapons from a residence.

— February 9 - Guasave, Sinaloa: AFI agents found 210 kilos of marijuana hidden in a shipment of tomatoes en route to Tijuana.

— February 11 - Zinacantepec, Estado de Mexico: State officials seized a shipment of 100 kilograms of cocaine destined for McAllen, Texas.

— February 13 - Tijuana, Baja California: An anonymous report led to the seizure of 2 tons of marijuana and the arrest of one suspect.

— February 6 - Salina Cruz, Oaxaca: US Coast Guard intercepted a fishing vessel carrying 7.5 tons of cocaine in international waters.

— February 19 - Mazatlan, Sinaloa: AFI agents and troops discovered 21 kilograms of cocaine hidden in the rims of a pickup truck.

— February 21 - Queretero, Queretero: 17 kilograms of marijuana were found hidden in the Queretero bus station.

— February 22 - Manzanillo, Sinaloa: SEMAR discovered and destroyed approximately 10,275 square meters of marijuana cultivation.

— February 25 - Ciudad Altamirano, Guerrero: AFI agents seized 7 kilograms of methamphetamines and one kilogram of heroin aboard a passenger bus.

— February 28 - Culiacan, Sinaloa: Military seized \$3,465,000 USD from a small private jet en route from La Paz, Baja California.

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#### DEMAND REDUCTION

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12. (SBU) National Network for Technological Transfer in Addiction (RENADIC): NAS and INL/Demand Reduction met with CONADIC to discuss the distribution of funds under the Merida Initiative Demand Reduction program. The majority of funds (\$6.5m of \$11m) will support the GOM's efforts to design, acquire and install a national data center (RENADIC), incorporating a network for massive storage and the various pieces required to manage and secure this database. This project will enhance CONADIC's information technology program already in place. NAS, in coordination with INL/Demand Reduction and INL/RM, will begin movement on developing an assessment to directly target the areas where assistance is needed.

#### MANAGEMENT

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13. (SBU) NAS expansion within the Embassy remains on schedule with renovation work programmed to begin on newly acquired office space later this month. The estimated completion date is in May.

14. (SBU) Embassy continues negotiations on the Reforma 265 lease. INL and OBO will finalize the A&E design MOU so that work can begin as soon as the lease is signed. The Landlord was not willing to have the GOM as the lease-holder, but we hope that a sub-lease arrangement will satisfy GOM political and legal issues with use of the facility.

15. (SBU) Status of new USPSC personnel:

- Offers have been accepted for the Drug Interdiction and Deputy IT Program Coordinator positions.
- Offer pending for Law Enforcement Program Coordinator.
- Deputy Drug Interdiction Program Coordinator PD is under revision.
- Applicants for the Corrections Reform, Deputy IT and Deputy Law Enforcement Program Coordinator positions are undergoing Technical Evaluation.
- Deputy Border Security, IT Assistant, Logistics Advisor and Financial Advisor are currently advertized on FEDBIZOPPS
- SOW in ARIBA for Border Security PC and Three Contracting Officer Reps

16. (SBU) Visits

- NAS hosted the visit of CODEL Lowey February 13-16. Chairwoman Nita Lowey was accompanied by Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-TX), Ben Chandler (D-KY), Marion Berry (D-AR), Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Ander Crenshaw (R-FL). Among other activities, the delegation met with President Calderon and visited the SSP Command Center (REF: MEXICO 00000505).

- Representatives Eliot Engel (D-NY), Jean Schmidt (R-OH), Virginia Foxx (R-NC), John Salazar (D-CO), Mark Souder (R-IN), Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), and Henry Cuellar (D-TX) visited post February 16-18. They met with President Calderon, as well as a group of Mexican senators, to discuss the growing economic and security challenges faced by both countries (REF: MEXICO 00000472, 00000540).

#### ISSUES FOR WASHINGTON

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17. (SBU) We appreciate the attention given to our various personnel issues over the past week. As our ability to implement Merida programs continues to be determined by the quality and number of personnel on board in Mexico City, we ask for continued high-level attention to speeding the process for new personnel, and in the meantime to bringing on several high-quality TDY personnel who can implement projects in the IT and general program areas.

BASSETT

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Drafted By:

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