Working with Mexico on Counter-Narcotics and other Cross-Border Crime

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Important Ties with Mexico

- U.S.-Mexico ties touch more U.S. lives daily than any other country via trade, border connections, tourism, and family ties as well as illicit flows. The same is even more true for Mexico.
- An estimated 35 million U.S. citizens are of Mexican heritage.
- The shared 1990-mile border (3,201 km) creates overlapping security, economic and environmental interests.
- 2010-2016, government-to-government collaboration, including against crime, was unprecedented.
US-Mexico Trade

Mexico is the US’:

- 2nd largest export market
- 3rd largest trading partner
- 3rd largest Ag export market: $19 billion in 2017
- 1st or 2nd export market for 28 U.S. States
- 1st export market for U.S. Southern Border States
US-Mexico Trade

2018 Trade in goods and services:

$678 Billion

Export: $300 Billion
Import: $378 Billion

Over 1 million dollars per minute that supports 5 million US Jobs

Currency in USD. Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2019
US-Mexico Border Crossings

Each day there are over 1 million border crossings.

Source: Bureau of transportation statistics, 2016
Serious Challenges to Address

- U.S. drug demand and cross-border criminal networks
- Finalizing USMCA
- Strengthening Mexican law enforcement institutions and bilateral cooperation
- Negative public perceptions
- Migration & border Management
- Surging Criminal Violence in Mexico
- Central American migrants
- Potential Terrorism
- Countering Corruption
- Reducing poverty in Mexico
U.S.-Mexico Border States

• In 2017, the U.S.-Mexico Border States’ GDP reached $5.07 trillion

• GDP from both sides of the border would constitute the 3rd economy in the world and represents over 25% of both countries total GDP.

Source: Mexico Institute calculations based on the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2018 and INEGI, 2018

Largest economies in the world (2017)
- United States: $19.49 trillion
- China: $12.01 trillion
- Japan: $4.87 trillion
- Germany: $3.7 trillion
Border Management: Licit and Illicit Flows
Moving toward Co-Management of the Border
Trucks Crossing the US-Mexico Border

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2017
2012-2016 from blame to “shared responsibilities”

- Making the border more open to legitimate travel and commerce.
- Working to align customs regulatory frameworks; increase joint use of customs facilities on the border.
- New mechanisms to communicate, coordinate and more effectively counter illicit trade and travel: drugs, guns, money and people.
- Steps to increase security and reduce cross-border violence.
- New programs to share information on potential border crossers.
- Working to create a Trilaterial Trusted Traveler Program.
Migrant Flows

- Mexican immigrants to the U.S. are at the **lowest levels** since the 1990s.
- Numbers of Undocumented Mexican immigrants in the U.S. **have been dropping** since 2007.
- In FY 2018, apprehensions of Mexican unauthorized immigrants declined **20.18%** from FY 2016.

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2019
Addressing Central American Migration

The US and Mexico enhanced cooperation in response to the 2014 surge of child and family migrants, including work at Mexico’s southern border against smuggling of people & drugs.

In 2017, the US and Mexico hosted a Conference on Prosperity and Security in Central America. Commitments include:

- U.S. FY 2018 budget request for $460 million for the Northern Triangle (NT).
- Create a migration observatory to study and share information on regional migration flows.
- Improved cooperation to combat transnational criminal organizations.
- $53 million from Mexico for three NT infrastructure projects.

Mexico’s Senate condemned U.S. policies in June 2018 and called the government to end security and immigration cooperation.

In December, U.S. & Mexico agreed a long term strategy; June forged a broader accord.
Sharp Rise in U.S.-Mexico border apprehensions

- In 2018: **467,000 border apprehensions**, most since 2012.
- In 2019, **record numbers** of migrant families crossing: breaking records.
- **109,000 unauthorized migrants** in April and over **140,000** in May.
- Need to implement June US-Mexico agreement, which includes deploying more Mexican National Guard to southern Mexico.

**Apprehensions at the southwestern border 2016 - 2019**

Cooperation Against Crime: Pending Review

Source: CDC Wonder Database; CDC Provisional Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths, 2019
Driver: Homicides in Mexico

Source: Secretaria Ejecutiva de Seguridad Nacional, 2000-2018
Homicides in Mexico: Criminal Surge

33,341 homicides in 2018; with an average of 90 homicides a day.


Violence cost up to 24% GDP.

Cartels fighting for territory and routes; types of crime expanded and affects more states. But key driver:

$19-30 billion to criminal groups from US illegal drug sales

Source: Secretaria Ejecutiva de Seguridad Nacional, 2018; El Pais, 2018; Mexico News Daily, 2019.
Mexico’s Peace Index 2019

Least Peaceful States
1. Baja California
2. Guerrero
3. Colima
4. Quintana Roo
5. Chihuahua

More Peaceful States
1. Yucatan
2. Campeche
3. Tlaxcala
4. Chiapas
5. Hidalgo

- Peacefulness in Mexico declined by 5%, the third consecutive year.
- Economic impact of violence increased by 10% last year to 5.16 trillion pesos (US$ 268 billion).

US-Mexico Law Enforcement/Security Cooperation

- Mérida Initiative Programs & Agency-to-Agency Cooperation
- Defense Dialogues & Cooperation
- Security Coordination Group
2017 US-Mexico Agreements on Illicit Drugs

- Partner against criminal organizations – “Unprecedented” cooperation.
- Address demand for illicit drugs among US citizens as well as supply.
- Necessary tools: physical barriers, technology, patrolling, eradication, enhanced law enforcement cooperation, anti-addiction programs.
- Go after all elements in the chain: means of production, cross-border distribution networks, flows of profits, weapons procurement.
- In 2018, AMLO ordered a review of Mexican policies & cooperation with the U.S. Mexico is implementing a new public security policy. AMLO questions Merida cooperation. Mexico’s review of it still underway.
1. Disrupting the operational capacity of organized crime.
2. Institutionalizing reforms to sustain the rule of law and respect for human rights in Mexico.
3. Creating a “21st Century Border”.
4. Building strong and resilient communities.

$2.9 billion appropriated by the US since 2008.

$1.6 billion already spent on training and equipment via over 100 programs to bolster Mexican capacity.

Mexico has spent over 10 times more.
AMLO’s Security Proposals and Goals

Security Proposals:
• End to the War on drugs and “prohibitionist” policy.
• Consider reforms in treatment of currently illegal drug production and use.
• Weaken crime’s social base with social, education and jobs programs; provide alternatives to illicit income from drug cultivation and fuel theft.
• Generate peace though non-violent methods, transitional justice and amnesty.
• Establish a Council on Peace Construction; Emphasize human rights.
• Reduce homicides and car theft by 50%.
• Strengthen the judicial system: close wage gaps for employees.
• Deploy up to 140,000 National Guard Officers across 226 regions.
• Reduce crime rate by 15%.
• Reduce the public perception of insecurity from 80% to 39.4%.
• Boost World Justice Project’s Rule of Law Index score from 0.45 to 0.60 by 2024.

Source: Wilson Center’s Mexico Institute, 2019
Key Work Areas for U.S.-Mexico Relations

Trade:
• Complete USMCA approval; begin implementation.
• Renew work to enhance facilitation of trade and travel.

Bilateral Security Cooperation:
• Avoid further deterioration in cooperation.
• Better manage migration; integrate and pursue AMLO’s development ideas.
• Deepen support for Central America to address root causes of migration.
• Review/Renew/Energize cooperation against organized crime and support Mexico’s efforts to reduce crime and violence.
• Continue close cooperation against terrorism.

Improve Competitiveness:
• Revive a bilateral and North American agenda to enhance economic competitiveness.

Rebuilding Confidence:
• Take steps to rebuild trust; avoid becoming “Distant Neighbors” again.