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Reducing Drug Violence in Mexico: Options for Implementing Targeted Enforcement

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Disclaimer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2006 and 2012, drug-related violence in Mexico escalated to unprecedented levels. During this time, five of the top ten most violent cities in the world were found in Mexico, and over 60,000 Mexicans were killed at the hands of Violent Drug Trafficking Organizations (VDTOs). This reign of terror has expanded to include other types of violence, such as extortion, robbery, kidnapping, and spectacular public displays of violence. Most alarmingly, VDTO victims increasingly include ordinary citizens, journalists, law enforcement and military, and other government officials.

To date, enforcement efforts in the United States (U.S.) have focused almost exclusively on reducing the flow of drugs from, and through, Mexico. Violence reduction has been a secondary concern, and has been mostly considered as a potential side-benefit of flow reduction policies. Until recently, Mexican authorities have focused their attacks on the upper leadership of major organized crime groups as a method of reducing flows, and in an effort to address threats to public safety. However, freshly elected President Enrique Peña Nieto has indicated that his administration will shift focus away from drug flows, in order to prioritize crime prevention and violence reduction. Given that both the Bush and Obama Administrations have acknowledged that the U.S. market for illegal drugs is largely responsible for fueling the Mexican drug trade, and that the U.S. has a strategic interest in Mexican security, the U.S. may have a currently-unexploited opportunity to reduce violence in Mexico.

In this project, we explore *whether* the adoption of targeted enforcement in the United States could theoretically effect a reduction in violence in Mexico, and, if so, *what form* that strategy might take. We consider the operational and informational requirements for implementation, as well as the information a decision-maker would require in order to elect targeted enforcement as a strategy for addressing the security problem in Mexico.

Targeted enforcement is novel in several respects. While it is not inconsistent with flow-reduction goals, the strategy leverages enforcement resources *in the United States* to effect *violence reduction in Mexico*. Furthermore, because it is a deterrent strategy, targeted enforcement requires authorities on both sides to *clearly and publicly* identify the target and communicate that violence will no longer be accepted as a method of conducting business. Finally, the target will encompass entire VDTOs, and not just individual offenders, which increases the cost of individual offending through *internal organizational pressure*.

Keeping in mind current budgetary constraints, we develop four design options for violence-focused U.S.-side targeted enforcement. We evaluate our options with reference to the potential for crime and violence reduction, intelligence demands, implementation and political feasibility, and community impacts.

Through a series of interviews with experts in the field, and an exhaustive review of secondary sources, we find that not only is U.S. adoption of targeted enforcement possible within existing

frameworks, but that this approach has great potential for reducing Mexican-side violence. Our findings suggest:

- First and foremost, we note that the adoption of a targeted violence-reduction approach need not conflict with current U.S. efforts to reduce drug flows; thus, there should be no cost in terms of drug abuse in the U.S.
- While a short-term surge in violence is possible, attacking drug-trafficking revenues in the U.S. could incentivize VDTOs away from using violence to advance their drug-trafficking interests. Authorities would need to better understand the revenue portfolios of VDTOs in order to estimate how responsive organizations might be to attacks on revenues, and measure the cost-effectiveness of such a strategy.
- Successful implementation requires sophisticated intelligence, and while there is some indication that both the U.S. and Mexico possess the capacity to gather this intelligence, this capacity would likely need to be refined and/or expanded.
- The necessary administrative and enforcement infrastructures appear to be in place in the U.S., though resources would need to be reallocated, and additional funding might be necessary.
- In the U.S., policies targeting drug flows are popular due to a perception that they decrease drug consumption; a shift towards violence reduction would probably require intensive outreach to educate stakeholders. In Mexico, current distrust in government would require clear and public communication about target selection and the role of Mexican authorities in U.S.-side enforcement.
- Finally, a number of possible community impacts exist, and U.S. and Mexican authorities would need to establish mechanisms for collecting data and tracking trends in order to respond to negative externalities.

We emphasize the timeliness of this approach. While President Peña Nieto has clearly indicated that his administration will focus on violence reduction, he has yet to articulate an approach for achieving that goal. Adoption of targeted enforcement in the U.S. would allow Mexican authorities to independently engage in parallel violence-reduction efforts, in addition to pursuing other ongoing social reforms.

Regardless of whether the U.S. were to adopt this vision of targeted enforcement, a shift towards a set of violence-focused policies would send a clear message of support to the Mexican government, and could go a long way in addressing the incredible violence that is devastating our southern neighbors.

INTRODUCTION

During the six years of President Felipe Calderón's administration, from 2006 to 2012, the Mexican government responded to escalating levels of drug trafficking-related violence by deploying enormous military power against all Violent Drug Trafficking Organizations (VDTOs) to minimize illegal drug flows. Unfortunately, this strategy was not successful in mitigating drug flows, or in curbing the attendant violence. Between 2006 and 2010, trafficking-related homicides increased by more than eighty percent,ⁱⁱ and an estimated 60,000 Mexicans died in drug-related violence between 2006-2012.ⁱⁱⁱ While the overall homicide rate in Mexico remains lower than in other Latin American countries,^{iv} five of the top ten most violent cities in the world were in Mexico in 2011.^v

Mexico's previous policies for addressing the violence focused on military assaults on all VDTOs, reduction of illegal drug flows, and decapitation of top trafficking kingpins. (Refer to Appendix A for a discussion of Calderón's five-part strategy for combating Mexican drug-trafficking organizations and assistance from the United States via the Mérida Initiative.) These efforts have not been successful for a variety of reasons. VDTO presence in poverty-stricken areas and the lack of economic opportunities for Mexico's growing youth population provide strong incentives for VDTO participation among Mexican youth.^{vi} Additionally, the corruption of Mexican police undermines Mexico's capacity to single-handedly counteract VDTOs.^{vii} Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the massive military efforts of the Calderón Administration against VDTOs have reduced the existence of illegal drugs in Mexico or their flows to the United States (U.S.).^{viii}

When current Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto took office in December 2012, he announced that his administration would focus on reducing violence rather than minimizing illegal drug flows. A central element to this strategy should be the commitment to shared responsibility between Mexico and the U.S. to coordinate efforts against drug-trafficking organizations. Indeed, while the violence occurs on the Mexican side of the border, both the Bush and Obama Administrations publicly acknowledged that the U.S. market for illegal drugs continues to fuel the Mexican drug trade.^{ix}

For these reasons, the U.S. has an opportunity to play a more active role in addressing Mexico's security problem. Our project considers the use of targeted U.S.-side enforcement on illegal drug revenues from only the most violent VDTOs or Mexican regions. By focusing enforcement in this way, it is possible to provide strong disincentives against continued violence.

The Client

The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS) is a non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to the advancement of scholarly research on national and international affairs. Within the WWICS, the Mexico Institute serves to promote original public policy research, analysis, and discussion on issues between Mexico and the U.S.

Purpose of the Project

In conjunction with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, we explore the potential for addressing the security problem in Mexico using a strategy of targeted enforcement. Keeping in mind current constraints caused by the ongoing budget crisis in the U.S., we develop and evaluate the feasibility of four design options for violence-focused U.S.-side enforcement. We evaluate our options with reference to the potential for crime and violence reduction, intelligence demands, implementation and political feasibility, and community impacts. Through this project, we hope to play a role in the urgent and ongoing work to restore Mexican security.

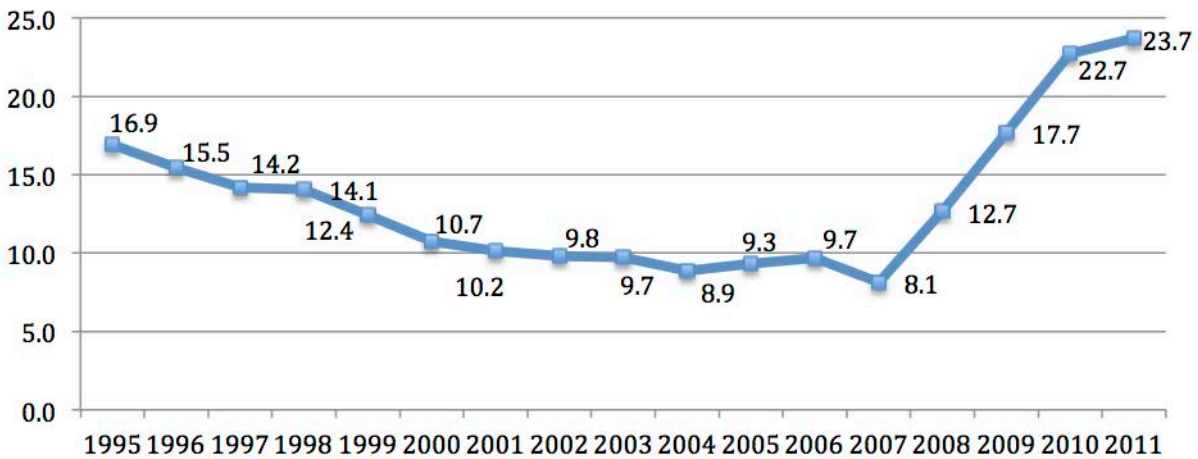
Methodology

Given the potential safety risks and dangers associated with collecting primary data on the operations of Mexican VDTOs, and because the policy options we consider have never been implemented in this context or on this scale, we rely on qualitative, rather than quantitative, data-gathering techniques. Specifically, we assess the feasibility and potential outcomes under each of the four targeted enforcement design options based on interviews with preeminent experts in the field and a review of secondary sources, including academic reports, government documents, and media resources.

BACKGROUND

Drug-related violence in Mexico reached record levels during Calderón’s administration (2006-2012). The overall number of homicides in Mexico rose sharply between 2007 and 2011 (see Figure 1), after which it appears to have stabilized or declined.^x Some estimates indicate that as many as 125,000 total homicides occurred during Calderón’s administration.^{xi} Although it is difficult to measure the exact share of total homicides that is attributable to organized crime, some data sources and homicide trends suggest that between 60,000 and 65,000 drug trafficking-related homicides occurred during Calderón’s tenure.^{xii}

Figure 1: Mexican Homicide Rate per 100,000 (1995-2011)



SOURCE: UNODC, Intentional homicide, count and rate per 100,000 population (1995 - 2011).

(Source: *Trans-Border Institute*^{xiii})

Despite these increases in violence, Calderón maintained focus on restoring security in Mexico through the end of his administration in 2012. Using a “kingpin” strategy, the Calderón Administration “sought to destroy[] the upper leadership of major organized-crime groups and break their organizations into ‘smaller, more manageable’ pieces for law enforcement to tackle.”^{xiv} However, this strategy of non-selective arrests of criminal organization leaders increased fragmentation of cartels and conflict among the organizations.^{xv,1} Between 2006 and mid-2011, the number of Mexican cartels increased from six (Sinaloa Cartel, Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Golfo Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, and Milenio Cartel) to sixteen, seven of which play a major role in the drug-trafficking business (Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, Golfo Cartel,

¹ “The arrest of top organized crime bosses disrupts their operations temporarily, but eventually new leaders emerge and networks are reconfigured, often through violent conflicts within the organized crime group or as a result of competition from rival organizations eager to expand their operations.” See Molzahn, C., O. Rodriguez Ferreira, et al. (2013). *Drug Violence in Mexico: Data Analysis through 2012*. San Diego, CA, Trans-Border Institute: 38.

Juárez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel, Los Caballeros Templarios, and Pacífico Sur Cartel) and nine of which exercise less influence in the drug market (Los Incorregibles, La Empresa, La Mano con Ojos, La Nueva Administración, Cártel Independiente de Acapulco, Cártel del Charro, La Resistencia, Cártel de Jalisco-Nueva Generación, and La Nueva Federación para Vivir Mejor).^{xvi} Geographical dispersion of homicides also increased between 2007 and 2011, but decreased significantly between 2011 and 2012.^{xvii} In 2012, homicides tied to drug trafficking and organized crime were “most concentrated in the central and eastern border regions,” including the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Nuevo León, and mainland states along the central Pacific Coast, including Sinaloa and Guerrero.^{xviii}

Figure 2: Mexican Cartel by Areas of Dominant Influence



(Source: *The Economist*^{xix})

Data also suggest changing trends in the nature of violence and the victims of criminal organizations during Calderón’s administration. For example:

- The share of victims showing signs of torture rose significantly between 2008 and 2012, and there was a slight rise in the percentage of victims who were decapitated;
- Leaving “narco-message[s]’ directed to government officials or rival cartels,” often

naming particular organized crime groups or their members, with victims' bodies became more common between 2008 and 2012;

- The assassination of mayors and former mayors peaked in 2010 and 2011, and continued into 2012;
- Mexico became “one of the world’s most dangerous places for journalists”; and
- Violence targeting military personnel and local police officers peaked in 2010, with police being the more likely target.^{xx}

Increasingly, ordinary Mexican citizens, unaffiliated with the drug trade, have become victims of homicide, extortion, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and other crimes, as drug-trafficking organizations diversify their criminal activity portfolios.^{xxi} Ongoing drug violence and threats also caused an estimated 1.6 million Mexicans to flee their homes between 2006 and 2011, leaving a landscape of more than 20 “ghost pueblos” in the place of once-prosperous farming communities.^{xxii} Unfortunately, some of the cities to which they fled have neither the jobs nor the social services to support the influx of Mexicans who had spent their entire lives in the countryside.^{xxiii}

On July 1, 2012, Mexican voters elected as their new president Enrique Peña Nieto, whose central campaign promises included a shift in drug war strategy.^{xxiv} Since his inauguration on December 1, 2012, Peña Nieto has made clear his plan to abandon Calderón’s “kingpin” strategy and reliance on military personnel and, instead, prioritize crime prevention and violence reduction.^{xxv} The Pacto por México (Pact for Mexico), signed by Peña Nieto and other major political party representatives and introduced in January 2013, sets forth his intention to focus on reducing homicides, kidnappings, and extortion,^{xxvi} which most directly affect the daily lives of Mexican civilians.^{xxvii} Although Peña Nieto’s plans for achieving his goals remain somewhat vague, principles of “shared responsibility,” which provided the foundation for U.S.-Mexico collaboration during Calderón’s administration via the Mérida Initiative, likely will guide U.S. engagement in whatever security strategy Peña Nieto’s administration decides to pursue.^{xxviii,2}

² Both Presidents Bush and Obama have publicly acknowledged that the lucrative market for illicit drugs in the U.S. has increased the power of Mexican drug-trafficking organizations and escalated and exacerbated the violence in Mexico by providing cash profits and firearms to drug-trafficking organizations. See Olson, E. L. (2013). *The Future of U.S.-Mexico Security Collaborations*. Washington, D.C., Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Mexico Institute: 15.

THE CASE FOR TARGETED ENFORCEMENT

A Group-Based Policing Strategy from the “Pulling Levers” Model

In May of 1996, the City of Boston began a program called Operation Ceasefire to counteract the growing number of gang-related homicides. In the face of limited resources, the city consolidated its efforts on deterring homicides. The ensuing months witnessed a remarkable decrease in violence and there was not a single gun-related homicide among Boston youth during the entire month of November.^{xxix} Over the next two years, the city experienced a two-thirds decrease in youth violence and a fifty percent reduction in homicides.^{xxx} The effectiveness of the operation prompted other cities across the nation to pursue similar strategies. In fact, some form of the strategy has been employed with success in cities including Minneapolis, Portland, Stockton, Winston-Salem, Dalton, Baltimore, and Los Angeles.^{xxxi}

The success of the operation hinged on a new strategy of targeted enforcement against gang-related homicides in which entire gangs were arrested for an individual member’s actions. While the operation certainly did not condone other types of gang activity, it focused available resources on increasing the cost of committing homicides dramatically, and the number of homicides promptly plummeted.

Operation Ceasefire differed from previous deterrence strategies in two primary ways. First, the enforcement was targeted on the violence rather than on the gang activities and their drug sales. Second, prevention was prioritized over prosecution, and law enforcement agents had numerous conversations with gangs to inform and warn them of the severe consequences.^{xxxii}

Operation Ceasefire is one example of a *group-based, offender-based policing strategy*,^{xxxiii} in which policing strategies and efforts are focused primarily on repeat offenders and their organizations.^{xxxiv} The idea is that “pulling” the right “levers” to “impose costs on offenders across the many dimensions of vulnerability created by chronic offending” can drastically reduce their criminal activities.^{xxxv} These costs include the “full range of legal sanctions” against the primary perpetrators of crimes.^{xxxvi}

While Operation Ceasefire was the first initiative to implement this strategy, U.S. law enforcement has utilized offender-based policing strategies in a number of other initiatives across the country, including the Department of Justice’s Strategic Approaches to Community Safety Initiative (SACSI) in 1998 to replicate Operation Ceasefire in ten other cities; Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) to further reduce gun violence in 2001; and High Point/Drug Market Intervention (DMI) to reduce drug dealing in High Point, NC in 2004.^{xxxvii} A similar strategy might be used to target the drug-related violence in Mexico today.

The Inability of Flow Reduction Strategies to Reduce Violence in Mexico

Inasmuch as drug-related violence is commonly understood to be a byproduct of the illegal drug trade, there are two primary strategies for its reduction. The first involves policies that focus on reducing the activity generating the violence, which results in flow-reduction policies. The

second utilizes policies aimed at reducing the violence itself.

In the past, Mexican and U.S. policies both focused on flow reduction. While the goal of enforcement in the U.S. has been to reduce illegal drug flows into the U.S., the goal of Mexican enforcement has been to reduce drug-related violence in Mexico. Evidence suggests, however, that flow-reduction policies have not been successful in reducing the drug-related violence in Mexico. Alternatively, a violence-reduction strategy in the U.S. might reduce the brutality in Mexico without affecting current enforcement efforts against drug flows in the U.S.

Supply-side reduction strategies for flow reduction in the U.S. rely on two primary mechanisms: increasing the marginal cost of illegal drug production, and reducing the number of suppliers in the market. Notably, supply-side reduction can be obtained irrespective of the mechanisms for increasing the marginal cost of production, or the targeted selection of suppliers in the market. As violence reduction through targeted enforcement ultimately reduces the number of suppliers in the market for illegal drugs, it is consistent with current U.S. flow reduction goals. Furthermore, to the extent that U.S. flow reduction strategies do not distinguish between drug flows from violent and non-violent organizations, U.S. policies are indifferent between targeted and untargeted selection of drug flows.

Therefore, we propose violence reduction as an alternative strategy that is consistent with current U.S. flow reduction goals, but which also has the potential to drastically reduce drug-related violence in Mexico.

An Overview of Targeted Enforcement

Just as the City of Boston successfully employed targeted enforcement to reduce gang-related homicides, a coordinated bi-national approach could reduce drug-related violence in Mexico by targeting existing U.S. resources against illegal drug revenues for only the most violent VDTOs or Mexican regions. Such a strategy deters drug-related violence through the credible threat of U.S. sanctions on the worst offenders in Mexico. These sanctions include, but are not limited to arrest and prosecution, and drug and asset seizures.

A targeted enforcement strategy relies on the accurate attribution of violence to specific VDTOs or Mexican regions, and the ability to link VDTOs to their U.S. wholesalers. Evidence for reliable attribution appears promising.^{xxxviii} Indeed, if violence exists primarily as a byproduct of competition over drug-trafficking routes in Mexico, then the violence ought to be observable, and Mexican law enforcement should be able to identify the VDTOs responsible for drug-related crimes. Additionally, conversations with U.S. officials suggest that U.S. law enforcement can link specific VDTOs to their U.S. wholesalers.^{xxxix}

In the absence of VDTO attribution, however, geographic attribution might still allow indirect targeting of violent VDTOs in Mexico.^{xl} If we can trace U.S. drug supplies to specific Mexican regions, and if attribution information exists among the VDTOs, then regional targeted enforcement may result in self-enforced violence reduction.^{xli} When VDTOs operating in a Mexican region are responsible for the violence there, geographical targeting of revenues from those regions affects those VDTOs directly. Furthermore, when VDTOs external to the region are responsible for the bloodshed, the VDTOs operating within the region might be able to exact

penalties on external organizations until the regional violence subsides.

In both cases, targeted enforcement imposes punitive sanctions on the most violent VDTOs, providing strong economic incentives against continued violence. Although short-term consequences might include increased competition and violence over temporary power vacuums, repetition of the strategy provides strong incentives against continued violence to the remaining VDTOs. In particular, while we expect continued violence among VDTOs as a side-effect of the illegal drug trade, evidence suggests that we can also expect a significant decrease in VDTO-sponsored attacks on civilians.^{xliii}

To the extent that business motives sustain VDTOs, a policy designed to make drug-related brutality extremely unprofitable disincentivizes violence. Indeed, due to the corruption of some Mexican police^{xliiii} and the ineffectiveness of monetary incentives against corrupt behavior^{xliiv} in Mexico, VDTOs may be most vulnerable to punitive sanctions on the U.S. side of the border.^{xlv}

Four Distinctive Features of Targeted Enforcement

The targeted enforcement strategy we describe has four key distinctive features. In this section, we present a summary of these principal elements.

- **Focus on Violence Reduction.** The first distinctive feature is the focus on violence reduction rather than flow reduction. As we previously described, both of these methods are consistent with U.S. flow reduction goals as both are aimed at increasing the cost of illegal drug production and reducing the number of suppliers in the illegal drug market. Violence-focused enforcement, however, has the added benefit of potentially drastically reducing the drug-related violence in Mexico.
- **Utilizes U.S.-side enforcement against U.S.-side VDTO revenues.** Targeted enforcement, as defined here, requires only U.S.-side enforcement. Thus, the strategy complements the ongoing Mexican efforts for civil society and police reform. As previously discussed, adopting a targeted enforcement strategy should not detract from the goal of reducing drug flows,^{xlvi} and drug trafficking (even non-violent trafficking) would remain subject to enforcement.^{xlvii} VDTOs engaged in violent trafficking in Mexico would simply be the target of differential enforcement in the U.S.^{xlviii}
- **Group-Based Policing Strategy.** Operation Ceasefire employed punitive sanctions against entire gangs so that the gangs would pressure their members to cease homicide violence. In the same way, targeting entire VDTOs, and not just individual offenders, increases the cost of individual offending through group social pressure in addition to the traditional legal sanctions against violence. This is not a novel approach as it is currently being used in Mexico. Nonetheless, we mention it here because it is a salient feature of this strategy. While it is beyond the scope of our report, Mexican authorities could complement U.S.-side targeted enforcement by focusing their enforcement on the specific individuals responsible for particularly brutal acts.
- **Clear and Transparent Warnings to VDTOs.** In contrast with current U.S. and Mexico policing efforts, targeted enforcement is a deterrence strategy and, accordingly,

the emphasis is on prevention rather than prosecution. Consequently, an important element of the strategy requires clear warnings to VDTOs of the severe consequences for continued violence. These public warnings would further increase political transparency related to the enforcement process, dispelling concerns that VDTOs may be exerting undue influence over Mexican law enforcement officials.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TARGETED ENFORCEMENT STRATEGY

Design Options

In considering the adoption of a targeted enforcement strategy, we identify four options for implementation. Each option can proceed independently of the others, and, alternatively, a hybrid model allows for additional responsiveness to information and priority changes. Each option possesses unique strengths and weaknesses in addressing the prioritization of different evaluative dimensions, as described below.^{xlix} The first two options (Options A and B) are organization-specific, whereas the last two options (Options C and D) are geography-specific.

Option A: Organizational All-In

This first option is the framework described in existing literature on targeted enforcement in this context.¹ Under an “organizational all-in” approach, Mexican authorities identify the most violent VDTO as the target, and communicate that choice to their American counterparts. The U.S. then focuses its enforcement efforts on that VDTO’s specific revenue outlets and wholesale dealers in the U.S. The goal is to disincentivize U.S. dealers away from doing business with the targeted VDTO, such that the VDTO no longer has a U.S. market for its drugs. Once that VDTO is out of business in the U.S., Mexican authorities identify the next most violent VDTO, and the process is repeated, sending a clear message that violence is “bad for business.”^{li}

Option B: Organizational Proportional

Similarly, in an “organizational proportional” approach, Mexican authorities identify the top two or three most violent VDTOs as the targets. Multiple targets might be appropriate where several VDTOs are equally violent, if significant uncertainty exists over attribution,³ or to reduce the ability of VDTOs to manipulate the scoring system by altering their behavior.⁴

The U.S. then focuses its enforcement efforts proportionally on the two or three targeted organizations. The goal is to disrupt U.S. revenues, but the response is targeted across multiple organizations.

Option C: Geographic All-In

Under a “geographic all-in” approach, Mexican authorities identify the most violent region in Mexico as the target, and communicate that choice to their American counterparts. The U.S. then focuses its enforcement efforts on the American cities/regions receiving drugs from the target region and/or the sections of the border through which those drugs flow.

³ For example, it may be that Mexican authorities can identify the top two or three most violent organizations, but due to imperfect attributional data, cannot precisely rank those VDTOs. In such a case, the U.S. could apportion its enforcement equally among those top offenders.

⁴ For example, if in scoring violence, Mexican authorities give greater weight to violence against law enforcement than to kidnappings, VDTOs might be incentivized toward engaging in more kidnappings in order to lower their violence-ranking.

The goal is to incentivize VDTOs in the targeted region to self-enforce violence reduction. If the organization responsible for the violence is also that which is responsible for the drugs, then the mechanism would be the same as in an organizational approach. However, if the organization responsible for the violence is not necessarily the same as that which is responsible for the drugs, then the mechanism would be slightly different. It seems reasonable to assume that even if law enforcement cannot attribute the violence to specific VDTOs, the organizations themselves can identify the perpetrators. If that is the case, then the VDTO responsible for the drugs might be incentivized to put pressure on the offending organization to stop using violence in order to protect its revenues.^{lii}

Option D: Geographic Proportional

Finally, in a “geographic proportional” approach, Mexican authorities identify the top two or three most violent regions in Mexico as the targets. Targeting multiple regions might be appropriate where several regions are equally violent, or if specific regions are strategically important.

The U.S. then focuses its enforcement efforts proportionally on the American cities/regions receiving drugs from the target regions and/or the sections of the border through which those drugs flow. The goal is still to either directly disrupt U.S. revenues or force VDTOs to put downward pressure on one another, but the response is targeted across a greater number of geographies.

Steps for Targeted Enforcement

In the following section, we present an adaptation and elaboration of previously proposed steps for implementing a targeted enforcement strategy.^{liii} These steps apply to each of our four policy options.

Step 1: Agreement between U.S. and Mexico

The first step in initiating this strategy is to secure agreement from relevant agencies on both sides of the border. Although this strategy utilizes U.S. enforcement, scoring and identifying the most violent VDTOs depends on Mexican intelligence. Thus, support from both the U.S. and Mexico is necessary for this strategy.

Step 2: Develop a scoring system for violence

The second step requires creating and publishing a “scoring system” for violence by which the most violent VDTO or geographic area will be selected.^{liv} Possible measures of violence for consideration might include the following:

- **Homicides.** A measure of homicide activity includes VDTO-linked homicides, or homicide rates per 100,000 residents for geographical areas.
- **Nature of violence.** Given the priority on establishing a robust civil society in Mexico, the nature of the violence should make significant difference in the violence scoring. For

instance, we may want to weigh VDTO brutality against law enforcement agents, government officials, and civilians more heavily than violence among VDTOs.

- **Other violence.** In recent years, VDTO violence has expanded to include many other kinds of violence, including extortion, kidnapping, and torture of civilians. These acts also seriously undermine Mexico's civil society and should be weighted accordingly.
- **Spectacular outrages.** This includes mass executions, public displays of gratuitous violence, and other acts designed to terrorize and intimidate the public.

After the full list of violent offenses for scoring is obtained, a single quantitative score can be attributed to each VDTO or geographic area through a weighting of the factors. The assignment of weights to each of these offending acts can be determined through a process of interviews and conversations with experts. The reliability of the scoring system is contingent upon continued quality intelligence from Mexican law enforcement agencies. Periodic review of the scoring system will allow flexibility in responding to changing priorities in Mexico. (For more on a potential weighting process, refer to Appendix B.)

Step 3: Inform and warn VDTOs

Targeted enforcement is a deterrence strategy, and prevention is thus prioritized over prosecution. Consequently, it is necessary that VDTOs are explicitly warned that the most violent offender(s) will be selected for economic destruction in the U.S. market for illegal drugs. Government officials can issue warnings through formal channels, such as standard media, or through informal channels, such as prison communication networks.

Determination of the most violent VDTO(s) or geographic region(s) ought to utilize a transparent, accurate, and credible scoring system. Public support for the strategy requires an apolitical determination process. Therefore, both the method of scoring and the institution performing the scoring should be politically independent. Additionally, both governments must commit to protecting the scoring institutions and personnel from potential retaliation.

In order to reduce opportunities for perverse incentives, such as intentional false flagging and VDTO collusion, VDTOs should not have access to live scoring results prior to determination of the worst offender(s). Live information might provide incentives for VDTOs to frame competing organizations for gross brutality or to collude in collective violence increase.

Step 4: Publicly announce results of violence scoring

After the scoring period, which may be as long as several weeks, the results of the scoring need to be publicly announced.^{lv} Once the identity of the targeted organization(s) or most violent geographical area(s) is(are) known, the U.S. must publicly commit to imposing the sanctions necessary for destroying revenues from those targets.^{lvi}

Step 5: Destroy targeted VDTO in U.S. market for illegal drugs

Once the most violent offender(s) or region(s) is (are) identified, U.S. officials must inform domestic distributors of illegal drugs that business transactions with the targeted organization(s)

or organizations from the selected region(s) will result in sanctions,^{lvii} in the same way that aiding and abetting known terrorists is a federal crime.

If this step proves successful, the first (top) target(s) or target(s) from the worst regions(s) will no longer have a market for drugs in the U.S.^{lviii} Although its (their) members may re-affiliate, or the organization may turn to alternative criminal activities for revenue, its (their) primary source of revenue will have been eliminated.^{lix}

Step 6: Repeat the violence scoring and attribution process

In order to maintain the deterrent effect, this process must be repeated and both governments must publicly announce that the target selection process will begin anew. The continued and credible threat of economic destruction in the U.S. market for illegal drugs gives remaining VDTOs strong incentive to be less violent than their rivals.^{lx}

Repetition must continue until VDTO violence is restored to acceptable conditions, as agreed upon by both governments.

Assumptions Underlying the Targeted Enforcement Strategy

Several key assumptions underlie the targeted enforcement strategy. We present and discuss each of them below.

- **High levels of violence are non-essential to the drug-trade in Mexico.** Although there is a long history of drug trafficking in Mexico, the drug-related violence only reached record levels in recent years. Thus, our first assumption is that high levels of violence are not required to sustain the drug business. We further assume that VDTO-related violence in Mexico is a side effect of the illicit drug trade there. Even when violence appears unmotivated by profit, opportunities for these incidences originate from the prevalence of weapons in the drug trade.
- **Centralized decision-making within VDTOs.** Additionally, our design options require a clear hierarchy for decision making within VDTOs. Indeed, while the strategy can still work even when VDTOs are not centrally ordered, it requires that VDTO leaders are able to order a cessation of continued violence, or alternatively, to cut off non-complying members from the business.

Ultimately, targeted enforcement is a deterrence strategy and VDTOs must be able to respond immediately to strong disincentives against continued violence.

- **VDTO vulnerability to U.S. sanctions.** A strategy of targeted enforcement against the U.S. revenues of the worst offenders in Mexico further requires the assumption that VDTOs are vulnerable to drastic reductions in their U.S. revenues from illegal drugs. Assuming that VDTOs exist primarily for business profit, this is a reasonable assumption as the U.S. market for illegal drugs constitutes the largest proportion of revenues for some VDTOs.^{lxi}

Thus, the success of the strategy requires that VDTOs are not driven by other motives, and that they cannot easily substitute towards non-U.S. revenues. The notion of the amount of economic loss that VDTOs are able to sustain in the U.S. without significant damage can be referred to as their *acceptable loss*. The effectiveness of the strategy requires a threat of economic sanctions exceeding their level of acceptable loss.

A strategy of targeted enforcement on VDTO revenues can only succeed when business interests motivate VDTO actions, particularly VDTO violence against civilians.

- **Attribution of violence in Mexico to specific VDTOs.** Both organizational options require accurate, reliable, and transparent attribution of violence in Mexico to specific VDTOs. Inability to do this prevents us from targeting enforcement on specific VDTOs. This process requires access to reliable data and reporting on violence in Mexico.
- **Sourcing U.S. drugs to regions in Mexico.** Both geographical options require the capacity to link regions in Mexico to U.S. border crossings or to drugs on the U.S. side of the border.
- **Attribution of U.S. illegal-drug supplies to specific VDTOs.** Perhaps one of the most important assumptions in this strategy is that U.S. law enforcement agencies have the requisite data and intelligence to link wholesale suppliers of illegal drugs in the U.S. to specific VDTOs in Mexico. As described previously, considerable evidence suggests that this attribution is possible.

Operational Procedures

The administrative and enforcement infrastructure for a targeted enforcement strategy already exists within the U.S. While not all of the agencies and/or programs described below would necessarily be involved in our vision of targeted enforcement, their existence demonstrates that the U.S. has the operational capacity to adopt such a strategy.

Since 1982, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) Program has existed for the purpose of coordinating federal, state, and local enforcement against drug-trafficking and money laundering organizations.^{lxii} In the words of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), “the OCDETF Program is the centerpiece of the United States Attorney General’s drug strategy to reduce the availability of drugs by disrupting and dismantling major drug trafficking organizations....”^{lxiii}

Designed with the understanding that local enforcement agencies lack the ability to counteract VDTOs in isolation from the rest of the nation, the OCDETF Program “combines the resources and expertise of its seven federal agency members — the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS); the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) — in cooperation with DOJ’s Criminal Division, the 94 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, and state and local

law enforcement, to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the drug-trafficking and money laundering organizations most responsible for the Nation’s supply of illegal drugs and the violence the drug trade generates and fuels.”^{lxiv}

Through its vast network of U.S. agencies, OCDETF has the ability to devastate the “financial infrastructure of drug organizations by emphasizing financial investigations and asset forfeiture, redirecting federal drug enforcement resources to align them with existing and emerging drug threats, and conducting expanded, nationwide investigations against all the related parts of the targeted organizations.”^{lxv} As such, this inter-agency task force is uniquely positioned to coordinate and implement a strategy of targeted enforcement against the most violent VDTOs. Indeed, implementation of the strategy only requires a shift of priorities within the existing OCDETF framework to focus enforcement against the most violent VDTOs.

Additionally, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 established the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program through the Office of National Drug Control Policy to provide timely and reliable data collection and sharing, resources, and coordination assistance to federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts against drug-trafficking activities.^{lxvi} Currently, there are 28 HIDTAs and 57 Intelligence and Investigative Support Centers across the nation.^{lxvii} Each HIDTA has autonomy to annually assess regional drug-trafficking threats, “develop[]... strategy[ies] to address th[e] threat[s], design[] initiatives to implement the strategy[ies], [and] propose[] funding [for] the initiatives[.]”^{lxviii}

Finally, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is a Department of Treasury office that “administers and enforces economic and trade sanctions based on US foreign policy and national security goals against ... international narcotics traffickers.”^{lxix} These sanctions block the assets of the target and restrict trade between U.S. persons and the target unless those transactions are authorized by OFAC.^{lxx} In 2011, President Obama signed an Executive Order identifying Los Zetas as an OFAC target, recognizing Los Zetas as a trans-national drug-trafficking organization that engages in “extortion, money laundering, intellectual property theft, and human smuggling.”^{lxxi} A number of its members have already been indicted in federal district courts for violating U.S. narcotics laws, and those indictments further allege that Los Zetas has engaged in murder, kidnapping, and torture.^{lxxii}

Together, these organizations and programs demonstrate the capacity of the U.S. to mobilize and coordinate legal and extra-legal sanctions against VDTOs through all three branches of the U.S. government on the federal, state, and local levels.

EVALUATIVE DIMENSIONS

One or more of these design options might be preferable, depending upon U.S. and Mexican priorities and capacities. We identify five categories of considerations that might inform that choice: crime and violence, intelligence demands, implementation and political feasibility, and community impacts.

Crime and Violence

Though targeted enforcement has been successful in other contexts, it has not, to our knowledge, been attempted on a scale of this size. Because violence reduction is the overarching goal, the potential for impacting a reduction on crime and violence is an obvious dimension for evaluating and choosing among the four options. Evidence from Operation Ceasefire suggests that criminal organizations can reduce overall levels of violence in response to well-designed incentives. Likewise, a strategy of targeted enforcement requires that VDTOs respond to attacks on revenue.

If VDTOs are economically driven, then it follows that they might respond to an attack on revenue. Thus, a clear understanding of how VDTOs are incentivized is crucial to developing an understanding of how violence might be affected by targeting their businesses. To complicate matters, different VDTOs may operate in very different ways. For example, by some accounts, Los Zetas do not draw a large portion of its revenues from drug trafficking in the U.S. and, instead, rely on other revenue streams, such as extortion and money-laundering.^{lxxiii} If that is the case, or is true for any other organization, then disrupting drug revenues in the U.S. may not provide a sufficient disincentive against violence. Likewise, while the Sinaloa Cartel has historically been more willing to negotiate with other groups to cohabit space in a way that is mutually beneficial,^{lxxiv} there is some evidence that it has begun to adopt Los Zetas' more violent tactics.^{lxxv} Insofar as the use of violence is ideologically driven, as it seems to be in the case of Los Zetas, targeted enforcement may be less appropriate. In other words, this strategy will likely be more effective where the target is a business-oriented organization.⁵

The potential impact of targeted enforcement would also need to be considered from a short- and long-run perspective. It is entirely possible that any new strategy, including targeted enforcement, could result in a surge in short-term violence (see Community Impacts). Likewise, lawmakers will need to consider potential shifts in the types of violence in which VDTOs are engaged. Presumably, confrontation between VDTOs is more acceptable than VDTO attacks on civilians or on government officials and law enforcement personnel (see Community Impacts).

⁵ Although this is outside the scope of our report, there may be other points of VDTO vulnerability that could be exploited in the U.S. See Appendix C for a descriptive table of different types of cartel activity. This could be informative in developing alternative points of U.S.-side vulnerability.

Intelligence Demands

The ability of both U.S. and Mexican authorities to attribute violence and to source drugs is critical (to varying degrees) for all four of our design options. The type of information that is available and the intelligence capacities in both countries is a critical consideration.

While it is indisputable that violence in Mexico has risen dramatically over the last decade, observers disagree about whether the latter half of 2012 saw a leveling off (or possibly a slight decline) in levels of violence.^{lxxvi} Experts also disagree about the availability of quality data on this topic. Some have attempted to cobble together homicide data using a combination of government sources and media reports.^{lxxvii} Others contend that while quasi-private organizations collect administrative data on such dimensions as household income and access to guns, the Mexican government has remarkably little data on measures as “simple” as total homicides.^{lxxviii} The ability of the Mexican government to track levels of violence (however “violence” is defined) is a critical underpinning to each of our four design options.

Either organizational approach would require two crucial pieces of data. First, the Mexican government (probably with U.S. assistance) would need to be able to attribute specific acts to specific VDTOs. Again, there is some disagreement about whether this is currently possible. Some experts believe that Mexican authorities can attribute violence to specific organizations, partly because VDTOs have been using “narco-messaging” to intimidate other VDTOs, law enforcement, and the public.^{lxxix,6} Others suggest that only ten percent of homicides have an attached message, and that “narco-messaging,” therefore, can only be used as one component in attributing violence.^{lxxx} Furthermore, in the absence of a trustworthy judicial system, the Mexican government has been hesitant to attribute crimes to specific VDTOs without the ability to pursue criminal prosecutions.^{lxxxi}

Collecting information on indicators such as type of firearm used, the presence of large quantities of drugs and/or money, the modus operandi for disposing of corpses, and whether the incident can be connected to a specific event, could be helpful in developing attribution data more thoroughly.^{lxxxii,7} In addition to collecting more information using traditional sources, such as police reports, information also can be obtained via data-mining techniques such as web-scraping.^{lxxxiii} While VDTOs might be incentivized to manipulate data mining results by using messaging to shift blame or to falsely flag acts of violence, data validation techniques, such as those employed in current software,^{lxxxiv} may mitigate this problem.

Second, U.S. authorities would need to be able to source drugs in the U.S. to specific VDTOs. Here, again, there is conflicting evidence. In 2009, “Operation Xcellerator” resulted in the arrest

⁶ VDTOs have also increasingly been using social media and the internet to advertise their deeds. For an especially graphic example, see: <http://www.mund0narco.com/>.

⁷ “If a ‘scoring system’ proved infeasible politically or organizationally, an . . . alternative would be to announce in advance that the next organization to carry out a major, publicized outrage – such as the May 2012 massacre near Monterrey for which Los Zetas claimed responsibility [] – would become the target.” Kleiman, M. A. R. and S. Davenport (2012). “Strategies to Control Mexican Drug-Trafficking Violence.” *Journal of Drug Policy Analysis* 5(1): 4.

of 52 alleged Sinaloa Cartel operatives and the seizure of more than 23 tons of narcotics and \$59 million in cash.^{lxxxv} Law enforcement officials also have confirmed that it is possible in some cases to source drugs to a specific VDTO.^{lxxxvi} (See Table 1.) However, some observers believe that U.S. intelligence is not sufficiently fine-tuned to identify specific drugs as sourced to specific VDTOs.^{lxxxvii} Furthermore, criminal organizations are adaptable and evolve quickly in response to both Mexican and U.S. enforcement strategies.^{lxxxviii}

Table 1: VDTO Drug and Regional Activity

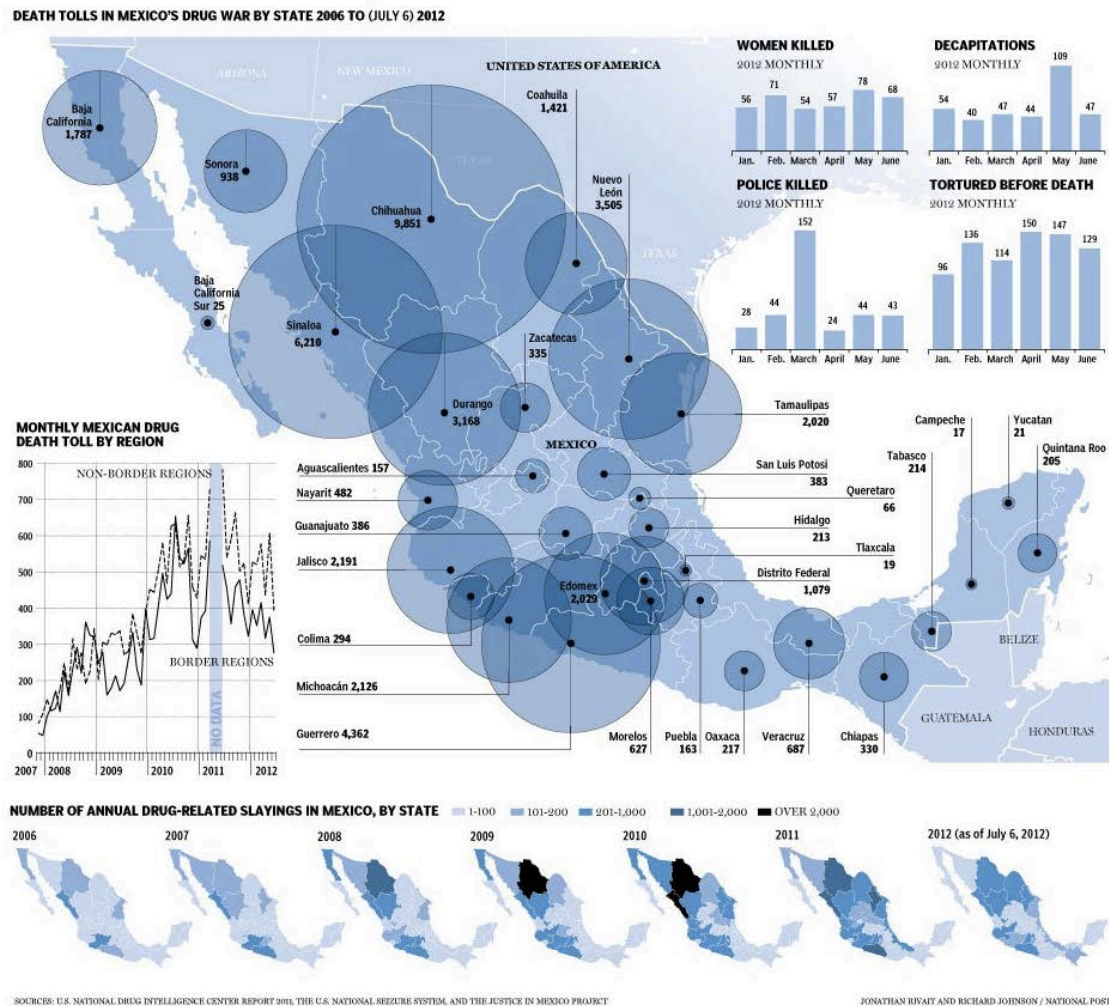
VDTO	Primary Drugs	Primary OCDETF Region
Sinaloa Cartel	Cocaine Heroin Marijuana MDMA Methamphetamine	Florida/Caribbean Great Lakes Mid-Atlantic New England New York/New Jersey Pacific Southeast Southwest West Central
Los Zetas	Cocaine Marijuana	Florida/Caribbean Great Lakes Southeast Southwest
Gulf Cartel	Cocaine Marijuana	Florida/Caribbean Mid-Atlantic New England New York/New Jersey Southeast Southwest
Juárez Cartel	Cocaine Marijuana	Great Lakes New York/New Jersey Pacific Southeast Southwest West Central
Beltran Leyva	Cocaine Heroin Marijuana	Southeast Southwest
La Familia Michoacana	Cocaine Heroin Marijuana Methamphetamine	Southeast Southwest
Tijuana Cartel	Cocaine Heroin Marijuana Methamphetamine	Great Lakes Pacific Southwest

(Source: Department of Justice^{lxxxix})

If attributing violence to a particular organization or sourcing drugs back to specific organizations proved impossible or infeasible, a geographic approach might be preferred. This is not to say that there are not similar informational demands. As with the organizational approach, a geographic approach (either “all-in” or “proportional”) would require two major pieces of data. Authorities would need to identify the most violent regions in Mexico, which seems fairly

straightforward (see Figure 3). Unfortunately, it also seems likely that there is at least some “hidden violence” as evidenced by the revelation over the last several years of mass graves and large numbers of missing persons.^{xc}

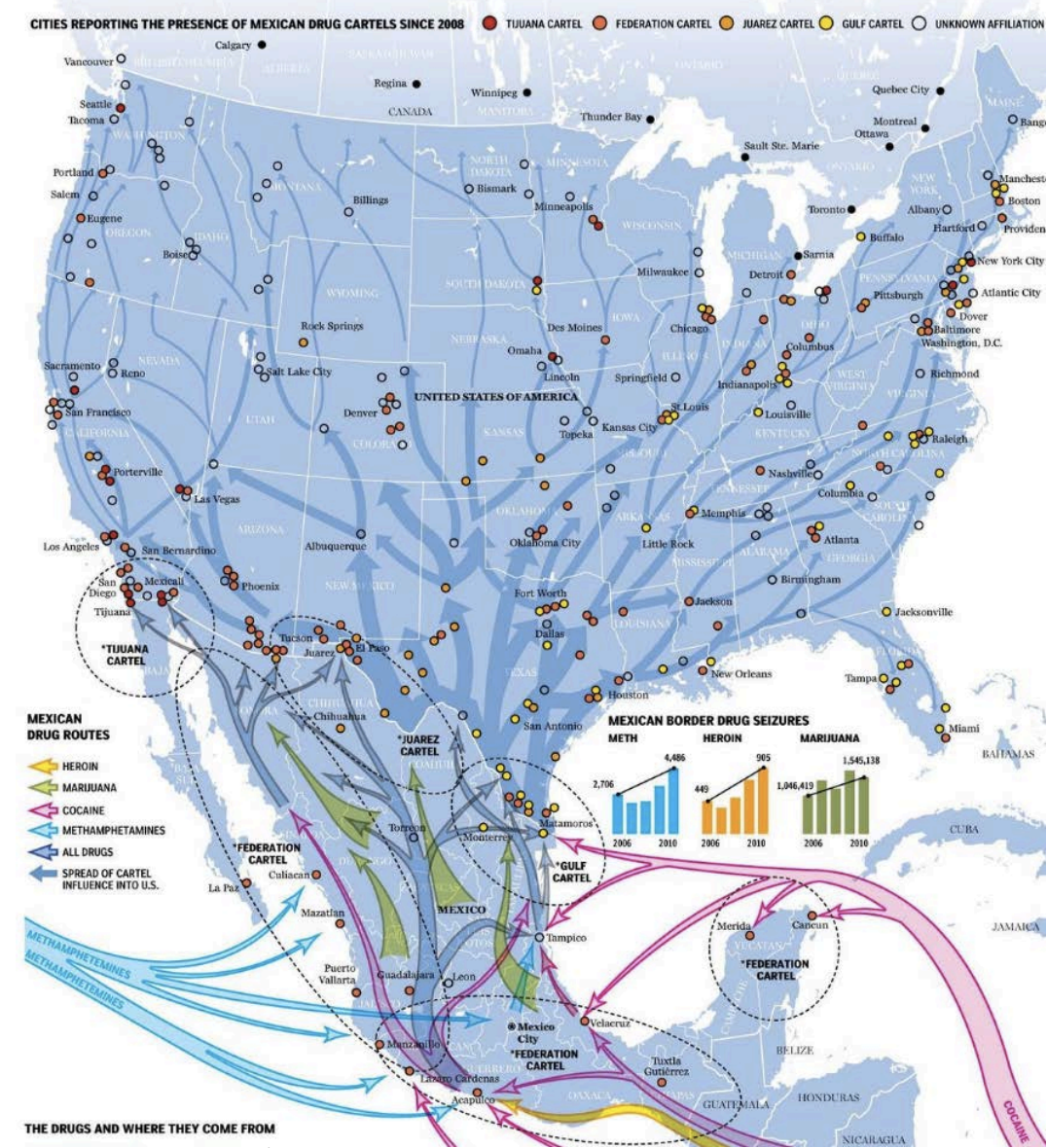
Figure 3: Mexican Deaths by Region (2006-2012)



(Source: National Post^{xcii})

On the U.S. side, authorities would need to be able to source drugs on this side of the border to the geographic region targeted by Mexican authorities as the most violent. Public reports and records of drug seizures suggest that this, indeed, is possible, and much research has been conducted that also supports this contention (see Figure 4).^{xciii} However, other sources suggest that once drugs have entered the U.S., it is extremely difficult to trace those drugs beyond the U.S.-Mexico border because there are so many wholesalers and dealers on the American side.^{xciii}

Figure 4: Drug Flows into the United States



(Source: National Post^{xiv})

Implementation Feasibility

Targeted enforcement requires a high degree of logistical flexibility and cooperation across agencies in both countries. Logistical feasibility and cost (including opportunity cost) could be constraints on implementation.

All four targeted enforcement options would require a great deal of flexibility, coordination, and cooperation between federal, state, and local agencies within the U.S., and with their

counterparts in Mexico. As previously noted, OCDETF could provide the mechanism for achieving effective coordination of law enforcement agencies under any of the four options.^{xcv}

The OCDETF Program's existing intelligence, coordination and cooperation "infrastructure" appears to provide precisely the knowledge, expertise, and enforcement jurisdiction necessary for carrying out any form of targeted enforcement. The DEA – the most active member agency, consistently participating in at least eighty percent of OCDETF investigations – plays a key role due to its "vast experience in th[e] field, its knowledge of international drug rings, its relationship with foreign law enforcement entities, and its working relationships with State and local authorities[.]"^{xcvi} Other member agencies – FBI, ICE, USCG, USMS, ATF, and the IRS – also provide necessary expertise and jurisdiction.^{xcvii}

Targeted enforcement efforts under all four design options would also benefit significantly from existing OCDETF Program components that facilitate information sharing among member agencies, as well as OCDETF's cooperative relationship with state and local law enforcement authorities. The OCDETF Fusion Center (OFC) is:

[A] comprehensive data center containing all drug and related financial intelligence information from all seven OCDETF-member investigative agencies, and the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, as well as relevant data from many other agencies. The OFC is designed to conduct cross-agency integration and analysis of the data, to create comprehensive intelligence pictures of targeted organizations, including those identified as Consolidated Priority Organization Targets (CPOTs) and Regional Priority Organization Targets (RPOTs), and to pass actionable leads through the multi-agency Special Operations Division (SOD) to OCDETF participants in the field, including the OCDETF Co-located Strike Forces. These leads ultimately result in the development of better-coordinated, more comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional OCDETF investigations of the most significant drug-trafficking and money laundering networks.

OCDETF Co-located Strike Forces have been established across the U.S., in New York, South Texas, Boston, Atlanta, Tampa, Puerto Rico, San Diego, Arizona, El Paso, Chicago and Denver.^{xcviii} These Co-located Strike Forces target the highest-level drug-trafficking organizations, serve as a focal point for intelligence-gathering and communication of investigative leads between OCDETF agents and prosecutors across the nation, as well as state and local law enforcement and prosecutors, and respond to OFC leads.^{xcix} They "produce some of the largest and most successful cases against national and international level drug trafficking organizations."^c

The results of "Operation Xcellerator" demonstrate successful coordination of U.S. law enforcement efforts under the OCDETF Program. The DOJ's SOD⁸ coordinated the operation, and OCDETF contributed more than 200 federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement resources.^{ci}

⁸ SOD is a multi-agency body comprised of Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and U.S. Marshals Service.

Figure 5: OCDETF Regional Map



(Source: U.S. Department of Justice^{cii})

The DEA and HIDTA Task Forces coordinated a similar operation, “Project Delirium,” which was a targeted strike against La Familia that resulted in 1,985 arrests, the seizure of \$62 million, and the seizure of thousands of kilograms of narcotics.^{ciii} “Project Delirium” was a surgical strike intended to “disrupt and destroy one of the most violent Mexican cartels...La Familia,” which was “responsible for recklessly and violently destroying countless lives on both sides of the border,”^{civ} arguably demonstrating that U.S. authorities have both a willingness and an ability to adopt a strategy that targets the most violent VDTOs in Mexico.

The success of “Project Delirium” also supports the notion that cooperation between countries is not only possible,⁹ but also desirable, and that systems are already in place to facilitate that cooperation. Upon completion of the operation, Mexico’s Secretary of Public Security, Genaro Garcia Luna, said, “Due to increased information sharing and collaboration with the DEA, these efforts have resulted in successful and significant arrests and seizures of drugs and money.”^{cv} ICE director, John Morton, said, “Law enforcement officials here in the U.S., in Mexico and all around the world are cooperating at unprecedented levels. There is a willingness like never

⁹ “[F]orty percent of OCDETF’s investigations are international in scope, those investigations where there is active participation by, and coordination with, a foreign government.” U.S. Department of Justice (2013). *Interagency Crime and Drug Enforcement Congressional Budget Submission*. Washington, D.C.: 31

before to work hand-in-hand to fight the cartels, the criminal enterprises, and the violent gangs that threaten the peace and security of people on both sides of the border.”^{cvii}

With respect to target selection under the four design options, OCDETF’s CPOT and RPOT designations could potentially be expanded to include the results of the proposed violence scoring system for determining the target VDTO in Mexico. Currently, the OCDETF Program annually requires its member agencies to nominate targets for inclusion on the CPOT and RPOT lists.^{cviii} The CPOT and RPOT lists include “‘command and control’ elements of the most prolific international drug trafficking and money laundering organizations” and “organizations whose drug trafficking and money laundering activities have significant impact in a particular OCDETF Region,” respectively.^{cxix} The existing organizational focus appears to favor the organizational options over the geographical options. Including the highest-ranked VDTOs in Mexico according to a violence scoring system on these lists would allow OCDETF member agencies to focus enforcement and investigative efforts on the target VDTOs’ revenue sources in the U.S.¹⁰ Because the OCDETF Program allocates its resources, in part, based on how well OCDETF members focus enforcement efforts on the designated CPOTs and RPOTs,^{cxix} it appears that the Program would provide appropriate enforcement incentives under the organizational design options.

The cost of implementation, and the opportunity costs associated with a shift in resources or expansion of priority targets, is also an obvious factor in evaluating the four design options. Cost considerations would necessarily require an analysis of current capacity and distribution of resources, but it at least seems possible that pursuing a targeted enforcement strategy under any of the four design options would not require an increase in funding, extensive shifting of resources among agencies, or movement of personnel. The U.S. spends approximately \$15 billion annually on drug control,^{cx} and the OCDETF Program Budget Request for FY 2013 includes 3,282 positions and \$524,793,000 in funding.^{cxii} (See Appendix D.)

Although the organizational and geographical options are hypothetical (in the sense that none of them has been implemented at all or on a large scale), the operational requirements for implementing a targeted enforcement strategy are not significantly different from the drug enforcement strategy that is currently being pursued in the U.S. Thus, none of the four options necessarily would require additional funding; instead, the U.S. could allocate existing resources in such a way as to pursue one or more of the four design options while continuing to work towards reducing drug flows.^{cxiii}

Nonetheless, it should be noted that the OCDETF Program’s FY 2013 Budget Request reduced funding in the amount of \$12,500,000 for 49 agent positions and one support position within the DOJ’s Criminal Division to assist the U.S. Attorney General in “fund[ing] higher priorities within the Department.”^{cxiiii} Additionally, because OCDETF investigations rely heavily upon participation by state and local law enforcement agencies nationwide, “[c]hanges in the fiscal

¹⁰ Under the targeted enforcement options proposed in this report, nominations for CPOTs and RPOTs that address violence levels in Mexico might need to be submitted on more or less than an annual basis.

posture or policies of state and local governments can have dramatic effects on the capacity of state and local agencies to remain effective law enforcement partners.”^{cxiv}

Finally, while current OCDEF investigations focus on targeting leaders of organizations to increase the chances of having a “lasting impact against significant organizations and their operations,”^{cxv} the organizational design options proposed in this report would require OCDEF to focus enforcement efforts on the target VDTO(s)’ specific revenue outlets and wholesale dealers in the U.S. to disrupt revenues. However, any inconsistency may be only illusory given that “[t]he goal of every OCDEF case is to continually work up and across the supply chain to make connections among related organizations nationwide.”^{cxvi}

Political Feasibility

Political feasibility could potentially be a significant consideration on both sides of the border for both an organizational and a geographical targeted enforcement approach. In the U.S., there could be pushback from officials and/or the public. Prosecutors who “make a living” putting kingpins behind bars may be reluctant to shift their priorities away from arresting and prosecuting VDTO heads.^{cxvii} Furthermore, both prosecutors and other law enforcement personnel could sense that this is an edict from higher up that tampers with local law enforcement priorities, and that does not align with local priorities.^{cxviii} To address these concerns, there would be a real need for clarity and education at the higher political levels about what constitutes targeted enforcement.^{cxix}

At the public level, there could be pushback as people ask why they should care about reducing violence in Mexico. Beyond a purely humanitarian argument, there are a number of reasons that the U.S. should, in fact, care about violence in Mexico. First, the U.S. has deep economic ties with Mexico. Strategically, economic stability is important for U.S. interests, but violence also increases the cost of doing business in Mexico.^{cxx} Second, there is a concern about “spillover” violence, whereby the violence in Mexico could conceivably begin spilling in American territory. Thus far, this fear is mostly unfounded.^{cxxi} Finally, the U.S. has moral obligations as a neighbor, and should recognize that the mayhem in Mexico is “due in no small part to our policies as a neighbor and a country.”^{cxxii}

As previously noted, Peña Nieto has indicated a desire to shift the Mexican strategy away from flow-reduction towards one that has a greater chance of reducing violence. Any proposal will have to take into account the political climate in Mexico. For example, there is currently an extremely high level of corruption and related distrust in government and law enforcement.^{cxxiii,11} Going after the most violent VDTO could be read as an implicit deal that Mexican authorities are not enforcing the laws against other VDTOs or that a particular VDTO has deciding authorities

¹¹ Mexico ranked 105th out of 176 on Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, which “ranks countries/territories based on how corrupt a country’s public sector is perceived to be. It is a composite index, drawing on corruption-related data from expert and business surveys carried out by a variety of independent and reputable institutions.” See Transparency International. (2012). “Corruption by Country/Territory.” Retrieved February 13, 2013, from <http://www.transparency.org/country#MEX>.

in its pocket.^{cxxiv} To combat these perceptions, the Mexican government would need to be very transparent with whatever mechanism it uses to choose a target or targets.^{cxxv}

Community Impact

Pursuing a strategy of differentiated enforcement could have a range of impacts, including a number of possibly undesirable consequences and other externalities. In addition to the already mentioned dimensions, some additional considerations might include:

- **Vacancy chains.** When the leaders of VDTOs are targeted in a sequential manner, there is a competitive opportunity within and between VDTOs to increase their territories.^{cxxvi} Likewise, if the U.S. were to successfully disrupt the distribution networks of one group through targeted enforcement, you would likely see a struggle to replace the targeted VDTO, with the potential for accompanying violence.^{cxxvii} This problem probably would be especially pronounced in an organizational approach, where the goal is not necessarily to disrupt an entire market based on geography, but instead on the operations of one or more specific VDTOs.
- **Balloon effect.** The opposite problem could occur in a geographical approach. If the U.S. were to put pressure on drug markets based on geography, VDTOs may adjust to simply take their business to other markets.^{cxxviii} Even though it takes time to build networks, VDTOs have proven to be extremely adaptable in responding to enforcement efforts.^{cxxix}
- **Fragmentation.** Partially as a result of unstable leadership structures (because of Mexican/U.S. targeting of kingpins), there has been an increase in the fragmentation of VDTOs into smaller factions.^{cxxx} Thus, the violence is no longer limited to traditionally strategic regions for drug trafficking, but has expanded into previously peaceful areas of the country.^{cxxxi} The same fragmentation could occur in response to a strategy of targeted enforcement, as targeted VDTOs are dismembered.
- **Diversification.** Obviously, where targeted enforcement looks to disrupt revenues, a possible consequence could be to make smuggling narcotics much more expensive for all VDTOs. If selling narcotics becomes too expensive, VDTOs may diversify their activities to include other profitable crimes. A diversification towards other revenue sources could result in an increase in the type of crime that more directly affects non-VDTO actors. Already, Mexican VDTOs have demonstrated an ability to diversify into other crimes such as “kidnapping, assassination for hire, auto theft, operating prostitution rings, extortion, money-laundering, software piracy, resource theft, and human smuggling.”^{cxxxii} This is especially concerning because these crimes affect Mexican civilians more profoundly than conflicts directly related to drug trafficking.^{cxxxiii}
- **Increased violence due to camouflaging perpetrator/false flagging.** Under an organizational approach, if Mexican authorities were to rely, even in part, on “narco-messaging,” VDTOs would have an incentive to stop publicly claiming their violent acts.^{cxxxiv} Alternatively, VDTOs might also be incentivized to make it look as though the

acts they are perpetrating should be attributed to another VDTO, while using informal or subtle means to send a message to other VDTOs, the public, and law enforcement.^{CXXXV}

- **Migration.** As a result of drug violence over the last decade, more than 1.6 million Mexicans have left their homes.^{CXXXVI} Though they may have escaped the violence, these individuals are often faced with financial hardship and heartbreak, and often move to regions without sufficient social services to support mass migration.^{CXXXVII} If the adoption of a targeted enforcement strategy results in a short-term surge in violence, problems associated with internal migration could be exacerbated.

DISCUSSION

The following section presents a summary of the findings along each of the dimensions considered. The ensuing table offers a compact summary of these findings.

Crime & Violence

While a targeted enforcement strategy under any of the organizational or geographical design options disincentivizes Mexican VDTOs from committing violent acts by attacking drug-trafficking revenue generated in the U.S., the deterrence effect of a targeted enforcement approach on crime and violence depends on VDTO reliance on U.S. drug revenues.

Unfortunately, not all Mexican VDTOs derive a substantial portion of their revenues from drug trafficking into the U.S. or commit violent acts to advance their drug-trafficking business interests. A targeted enforcement strategy might consequently be more effective when the VDTOs that are responsible for the violence in Mexico also heavily rely upon drug-related revenues generated in the U.S. and engage in violent activity to maintain or increase those revenues. The deterrence effect of a targeted enforcement approach on crime and violence is likely to be more successful when these VDTOs rely more heavily on U.S. drug revenues, and are likely to be more responsive to U.S.-side attacks on revenue.

In addition to the deterrence effect, the targeted enforcement approach also entails significant possible spillover effects on crime and violence. In fact, implementing a targeted enforcement strategy could result in a surge in violence, at least in the short term, and/or shifts in the nature (e.g., VDTO-VDTO violence, VDTO-government/law enforcement violence, VDTO-civilian violence) or types (e.g., extortion, kidnapping, torture of civilians) of VDTO violence.

Before committing to a targeted enforcement approach, the U.S. and Mexican governments will need to invest resources towards understanding the revenue portfolios of Mexican VDTOs. This includes an understanding of the sources and amount of VDTO revenues from trafficking drugs into the U.S., extortion, kidnapping, human smuggling, money-laundering, auto theft, and other criminal activities, and comparing these revenue amounts to total VDTO revenues for each organization. Additional resources will also be needed to understand how Mexican VDTOs are incentivized. For instance, whether and how Mexican VDTOs use violence to advance their U.S. business interests.

Intelligence Demands

Any implementation of a targeted enforcement approach depends on the ability of both U.S. and Mexican authorities to track and attribute violence (to either specific VDTOs or geographic regions), and to source drugs (to varying degrees). While attribution to specific VDTOs remains necessary for the organizational options, experts disagree about the degree to which attribution of

specific violent acts and sourcing drugs in the U.S. to specific VDTOs is possible. Although a geographical approach requires less information since attribution to specific VDTOs is not required for these options, there are still several major intelligence concerns. For instance, “hidden violence” such as the discovery of mass graves and missing persons poses significant challenges to identifying the most violent regions in Mexico. Additionally, tracing drugs to particular geographic regions in Mexico might be particularly difficult once the drugs cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

If sufficient information to pursue both organizational and geographical approaches to targeted enforcement exists or is developed over time, then employing a combination of all the different options could provide the greatest flexibility in responding to evolving VDTO behavior and changing levels of government intelligence.

Before committing to a targeted enforcement approach, attribution information methods and processes require further development. For instance, the Mexican government will need information on violence-related data, indicating patterns within the drug trade (e.g., type of firearm used, presence of large sums of money or quantity of drugs, VDTO modus operandi, etc.). Methods for this data collection might utilize traditional sources, such as police reports, as well as data-mining techniques. Meanwhile, the U.S. government will require additional information and methods to trace drugs entering the U.S. from regions in Mexico beyond known border crossings.

Implementation Feasibility

If the necessary intelligence demands can be met, existing U.S. agencies and law enforcement already have the capacity to implement a targeted enforcement approach. In fact, the OCDETF Program could provide mechanisms for achieving effective coordination of law enforcement agencies and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico under any of the four targeted enforcement options. Although any of the four design options may be feasible, it is useful to note that OCDETF’s existing organizational focus, via CPOT and RPOT designations, appears to favor the organizational approaches to targeted enforcement.

Furthermore, the operational requirements for implementing a targeted enforcement strategy do not appear to be significantly different from the drug enforcement strategy that is currently being pursued in the U.S. Most significantly, the four design options might not require additional funding; instead, the U.S. may be able to reallocate existing funding towards one or more of the design options.

Before committing to a targeted enforcement approach, the U.S. Department of Justice will need to make a determination about whether additional funding is necessary to implement a targeted enforcement strategy, and whether existing funding and resources can be reallocated.

Political Feasibility

Although a targeted enforcement approach can be easily implemented using existing U.S. frameworks and resources, there are still several concerns for its political feasibility. In particular, U.S. prosecutors, law enforcement and the American public might be reluctant to shift

existing strategies and priorities to pursue a targeted enforcement strategy aimed at reducing violence in Mexico. Additionally, given the extremely high level of corruption and related distrust in government and law enforcement in Mexico, the process of selecting the most violent VDTO could be read as an implicit deal that Mexican authorities are not enforcing the laws against other VDTOs or that a particular VDTO has decided authorities “in its pocket.”

Prior to committing to a targeted enforcement approach, U.S. authorities may utilize outreach efforts to inform law enforcement authorities and the public on the benefits of focusing U.S. domestic law enforcement efforts and resources toward reducing violence in Mexico. Specifically, these efforts may want to highlight the fact that the strategy does not conflict with (or negatively impact) existing drug enforcement efforts aimed at reducing the availability of drugs in the U.S., as well as the shared economic interests and responsibility for drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico. Along the same lines, the Mexican government may wish to ensure the Mexican public that the target selection process is legitimate and free of corruption.

Community Impacts

A targeted enforcement strategy could result in a number of undesirable consequences in Mexico. These include vacancy chains and their attendant violence; a balloon effect, as VDTOs respond to enforcement efforts by taking their businesses to other markets; fragmentation, as targeted VDTOs are dismembered; diversification into crimes affecting non-VDTO members as targeted enforcement increases the cost of drug trafficking; increased violence due to camouflaging perpetrator/false flagging; and exacerbation of migration problems.

In order to allow for successful monitoring of these externality effects, the Mexican government (possibly with U.S. assistance) may wish to establish mechanisms for collecting data and tracking trends related to the community impacts of targeted enforcement. Such information may allow the Mexican and U.S. governments to modify the targeted enforcement strategy (or, specifically, the scoring system) as necessary.

Table 2: Summary of Findings and Recommendations

DIMENSIONS	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS
Crime & Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A targeted enforcement strategy under any of the organizational or geographical design options disincentivizes Mexican VDTOs from committing violent acts by attacking drug-trafficking revenue generated in the U.S. ▪ Not all Mexican VDTOs derive a substantial portion of their revenues from drug trafficking into the U.S. or commit violent acts to advance their drug-trafficking business interests. A targeted enforcement strategy might be more effective where the VDTOs that are responsible for the violence in Mexico heavily rely upon drug-related revenues generated in the U.S. and engage in violent activity to maintain or increase those revenues. These VDTOs might be more responsive to U.S.-side attacks on revenue. ▪ Implementing a targeted enforcement strategy could result in a surge in violence, at least in the short term, and/or shifts in the nature (e.g., VDTO-VDTO violence, VDTO-government/law enforcement violence, VDTO-civilian violence) or types (e.g., extortion, kidnapping, torture of civilians) of VDTO violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The U.S. and Mexican governments should invest resources toward understanding the revenue portfolios of Mexican VDTOs (e.g., revenues from trafficking drugs into the U.S., extortion, kidnapping, human smuggling, money-laundering, auto theft, and other criminal activities) and how Mexican VDTOs are incentivized (i.e., whether and how Mexican VDTOs use violence to advance their U.S. business interests). ▪ The costs of investing these resources should be considered in determining whether to pursue a targeted enforcement strategy.
Intelligence Demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ability of both U.S. and Mexican authorities to track and attribute violence and to source drugs is critical (to varying degrees) for all four targeted enforcement design options. ▪ With respect to the organizational options, experts disagree about the degree to which attribution of specific violent acts and sourcing drugs in the U.S. to specific VDTOs is possible. ▪ With respect to the geographical options, “hidden violence” (e.g., discovery of mass graves and missing persons) poses a challenge to identifying the most violent regions in Mexico, and tracing drugs to particular geographic regions in Mexico might be difficult once they have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border. ▪ If, as some sources indicate, sufficient information to pursue both organizational and geographical approaches to targeted enforcement exists or is developed over time, then employing both approaches could provide the greatest flexibility in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mexican government should improve attribution information by collecting violence-related data indicating patterns within the drug trade (e.g., type of firearm used, presence of large sums of money or quantity of drugs, VDTO modus operandi, etc.) via traditional (e.g., police reports) or data-mining techniques. ▪ The U.S. government should increase its capacity to trace drugs entering the U.S. from regions in Mexico beyond known border crossings. ▪ Acquiring this intelligence will probably require additional resources.

DIMENSIONS	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS
Implementation Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The OCDETF Program could provide the mechanism for achieving effective coordination of law enforcement agencies and cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico under any of the four targeted enforcement options. ▪ OCDETF’s existing organizational focus, via CPOT and RPOT designations, appears to favor the organizational approaches to targeted enforcement. ▪ The operational requirements for implementing a targeted enforcement strategy do not appear to be significantly different from the drug enforcement strategy that is currently being pursued in the U.S. The four design options might not require additional funding; instead, the U.S. may be able to reallocate existing funding towards one or more of the design options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The U.S. DOJ should determine whether additional funding is necessary to implement a targeted enforcement strategy or existing funding and resources could be reallocated.
Political Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ U.S. prosecutors, law enforcement and the public might be reluctant to shift existing strategies and priorities to pursue a targeted enforcement strategy aimed at reducing violence in Mexico. ▪ Given the extremely high level of corruption and related distrust in government and law enforcement in Mexico, the process of selecting the most violent VDTO could be read as an implicit deal that Mexican authorities are not enforcing the laws against other VDTOs or that a particular VDTO has decided authorities “in its pocket.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a targeted enforcement strategy is pursued, U.S. authorities should conduct outreach efforts to educate law enforcement authorities and the public as to why the U.S. should focus domestic law enforcement efforts and resources toward reducing violence in Mexico. If confirmed, they should highlight that the strategy does not conflict with or negatively impact existing drug enforcement efforts aimed at reducing the availability of drugs in the U.S., as well as the shared economic interests and shared responsibility for drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico. ▪ The Mexican government should ensure and make it clear to the public that the target selection process is legitimate and free of corruption.
Community Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A targeted enforcement strategy could result in a number of undesirable consequences and other externalities in Mexico, including: vacancy chains and their attendant violence; a balloon effect, as VDTOs respond to enforcement efforts by taking their businesses to other markets; fragmentation, as targeted VDTOs are dismembered; diversification into crimes affecting non-VDTO members as targeted enforcement increases the cost of drug trafficking; increased violence due to camouflaging perpetrator/false flagging; and exacerbation of migration problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Mexican government (possibly with U.S. assistance) should establish mechanisms for collecting data and tracking trends related to the community impacts, which will allow the Mexican and U.S. governments to modify the targeted enforcement strategy (or, specifically, the scoring system) as necessary.

POST-IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Although our report focuses on developing and evaluating the feasibility of options for targeted enforcement on the U.S. side of the border, we identify several short- and long-term indicators that the Mexican and U.S. governments could use to measure the post-implementation success of the strategy. We emphasize that a successful targeted enforcement strategy need not be exclusively tied to any one of the four design options discussed in our report. Rather, all four of the options could be used concurrently and applied adaptively as VDTOs respond to the threat of sanctions and differential enforcement in the U.S.

In the short term, the foremost measure of progress would be a quantifiable drop in crime and violence in Mexico, particularly among those who are unaffiliated with the drug trade. Reliable and consistent collection of data on incidents of crime and violence, as well as contextual information (e.g., whether the victim was affiliated with a VDTO, a member or a family member of Mexican law enforcement, government or the judiciary, a civilian/bystander with no previous affiliation with the perpetrator(s) or involvement in the drug trade, etc.), would help to inform the violence scoring system, evaluations of the effectiveness of the targeted enforcement strategy in reducing violence, and decisions regarding whether and how the selected strategy should be modified in response to changes in VDTO behavior and violence trends.

In the longer term, experts note that evaluating the success of a targeted enforcement strategy requires consideration of more than just a sustained reduction in crime and violence in Mexico.^{cxxxviii} It requires a more holistic view of how implementing the strategy affects the Mexican public's perception of personal security, as well as the legitimacy, integrity, and effectiveness of the law enforcement and justice systems (i.e., that they work in the way that they are designed to work^{cxxxix}). For example, long-term indicators of progress might include the extent to which the targeted enforcement strategy reduces the level of fear and intimidation among the Mexican public, journalists, and law enforcement and local government officials,^{cxl} reduces accusations and instances of post-arrest/pre-conviction human rights abuses by government actors, and increases the public's confidence in government institutions and law enforcement. Measuring these indicators may require an independent evaluation, possibly by international organizations, of effective government and fair judicial systems,^{cxli} in addition to surveys of public opinion and research on self-censorship by journalists. A number of development and economic indicators might be used as indirect measures of improvements in the public's perception of security in the long run (i.e., "second round effects"), including increased immigration into Mexico, decreased emigration from Mexico, a reduction in the number of displaced families within Mexico, increased foreign direct investment in Mexico, and increased tourism.^{cxlii}

CONCLUSION

Despite the urgency of the drug-related violence in Mexico, current strategies promise little in mitigating the growing security problem there. Violence-focused targeted enforcement is an alternative that appears consistent with U.S. flow-reduction goals, and which may also complement ongoing Mexican enforcement and reform efforts to accelerate progress towards a peaceful Mexico.

We considered four variations of a U.S.-side, violence-focused targeted enforcement strategy, each with unique requirements, advantages, and disadvantages. We evaluated each of the options with regard to potential for crime and violence reduction, intelligence demands, implementation and political feasibility, and community impacts. We find that not only is U.S. adoption of targeted enforcement possible within existing frameworks, but that this approach has great potential for reducing Mexican-side violence.

We highlight the timeliness of this strategy. While President Peña Nieto has clearly indicated that his administration will focus on violence reduction, he has yet to articulate an approach for achieving that goal. Our report indicates that a U.S.-side targeted enforcement strategy could complement the many ongoing Mexican reform endeavors supported by the Peña Nieto administration. Most important among these are Mexico's efforts to mitigate the corruption of its police force and to develop a stable and robust criminal justice system, which are necessary prerequisites for long-term violence reduction in Mexico.

At this time, we cannot claim that U.S.-side, violence-focused targeted enforcement will be an effective strategy, but it certainly has significant potential and deserves careful consideration. Our report may be the first step in developing detailed operational plans allowing decision-makers in both countries to arrive at a responsible decision.

We emphasize again that a strategy of targeted enforcement in the U.S. is not designed to work in a vacuum. Rather, the U.S. and Mexico should both consider continuing normal law enforcement efforts against drug trafficking organizations, and supporting the ongoing reform efforts in Mexico. Regardless of whether the U.S. were to adopt this vision of targeted enforcement, a shift towards violence-focused policies would send a clear message of support to the Mexican government, and might go a long way in mitigating the drug-related violence devastating our southern neighbors.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Calderón’s Five-Part Strategy and the Mérida Initiative

Following his inauguration on December 1, 2006, Mexican President Felipe Calderón pursued a five-part strategy for combating Mexican drug-trafficking organizations and the threat they posed to national security, including:

- “Using the full power of the state, including federal police and armed forces, to support local governments threatened by organized crime;
- Weakening the financial and operational capacities of criminal gangs through seizures of unprecedented amount of drugs, money, and weapons;
- Rebuilding institutions and security forces, particularly at the federal level;
- Transforming the justice system to provide more transparency and efficiency; and
- Implementing social programs to prevent Mexican youth drug use, addiction, and membership in criminal gangs.”^{cxliii}

Under Calderón, the Mexican government invested heavily in building security forces, spending \$2.5 billion in 2007, nearly \$4 billion in 2008, and \$9.2 billion in 2010.^{cxliiv} By 2011, the Mexican government had deployed nearly 50,000 military personnel to combat drug-trafficking organizations, more than ten times the number of troops that had been deployed in 2008.^{cxlv}

On October 22, 2007, Calderón and President George W. Bush announced a bilateral security partnership dubbed the Mérida Initiative.^{cxlvi} At the outset, Mérida assistance from the U.S. primarily focused on providing equipment and technology that Mexican security forces needed to combat organized crime^{cxlvii} and on law enforcement activities,^{cxlviii} including strengthening border, air, and maritime controls, breaking “the power and impunity of criminal organizations,” and curtailing gang activity and reducing the demand for drugs in Mexico and Central America.^{cxlix}

Although the Mérida Initiative initially was intended to last through Fiscal Year 2010, President Barack Obama subsequently indicated that his administration would support its continuance beyond 2012, in a second phase that has been called “Beyond Mérida” or “Mérida 2.0.”^{cli} The four “pillars” of the new strategy are to: (1) disrupt the operational capacity of organized criminal groups; (2) institutionalize the rule of law in Mexico; (3) create a 21st century border; and (4) build strong and resilient communities.^{cli} Collaboration via the Mérida Initiative entails information- and intelligence-sharing and expanded interaction between the law enforcement agencies and militaries of both countries.^{clii}

Appendix B: Mexican Violence Scoring System

Mexican Violence Scoring System Summary

Establishing a reliable and transparent “violence” scoring system to determine which VDTO or region will be selected as the “most violent” is critical to the legitimacy and success of the differentiated enforcement strategy. The following section outlines a process by which this scoring system could be created and who would have a hand in its development. These weights, in essence, would communicate how much Mexico cares about each dimension when determining the target.

Dimensions to Consider

When establishing a weighted scoring system to help the Mexican targeting collaborative determine the most violent VDTO(s), the following dimensions could be considered:

- **Homicides.** A measure of homicide activity includes homicide counts for VDTOs, or homicide rates per 100,000 residents for geographical areas.
- **Nature of violence.** Given that we are primarily concerned with civil society in Mexico, the nature of the violence should make significant difference in the violence scoring. For instance, we may want to weigh VDTO brutality against law enforcement agents and civilians more heavily than violence among VDTOs. Greater weight should be given to violent acts against civilians and law enforcement agents because their safety is essential for civil society.
- **Other violence.** In recent years, VDTO violence has expanded to include many other kinds of violence, including extortion, kidnapping, and torture of civilians. These acts also seriously undermine civil society and should be weighted accordingly.
- **Spectacular outrages.** This includes mass executions, public displays of gratuitous violence, and other violent acts designed to terrorize and intimidate the public.

Delphi – An Expert Elicitation Exercise

Designing a ranking system for evaluative dimensions could be done effectively with the Delphi method.^{cliii} It is ideal for assigning weights to things that are important.^{cliv} This method would allow for the identification of 5-20 evaluative dimensions, to which experts would assign weights according to their relative importance; consensus in those assignments would indicate a good set of weights.^{clv}

Outline of Delphi Methodology

Delphi is a method that could be used for weighting and ordering the targeting elements for the violence scorecard.

The Delphi method was developed at RAND in the 1960s. While the technique has been refined over the years, the fundamental premise remains the same. Experts individually make assessments or provide input and then offer written justification for those assessments. These experts are then given the opportunity to privately review the

justifications offered by other participants and revise their assessments based on lines of reasoning that they had failed to include in their own initial calculations and assessments. The result is a consensual set of expert assessments based on more information than any single expert would have initially considered. Because participants work in private and remain anonymous to each other, final evaluations are reached without any of the psychological pitfalls of committee work, such as “specious persuasion, the unwillingness to abandon publicly expressed opinions, and the bandwagon effect of majority opinion.”^{clvi}

The Delphi method recently was used in a 2011 RAND study on urban instability, counterinsurgency, and defense-sector reform. It “involved the use of an expert elicitation exercise (using classic Delphi methods) to complete scorecard assessments of the contemporary Mexican security situation.”^{clvii}

By definition, an expert elicitation is only as good as the experts elicited. An initial list of candidate participants was generated in consultation with senior RAND managers and RAND colleagues involved in research on Mexico and by considering authors of recent books, reports, studies, and articles on Mexican security issues. An initial list of 29 candidates emerged from this process. Of these 29, 14 initially agreed to participate and completed the first round of the exercise. Twelve of them completed the entire exercise, with two participants withdrawing due to unanticipated time constraints. . . .^{clviii}

[P]articipants were asked to provide justifications only for their minority positions, lest a great quantity of volunteered time be consumed generating justifications for positions about which the entire panel was in complete agreement. In the second phase of each round, participants whose score on a factor differed from the group mean (either lower or higher) were informed that theirs was a minority position and asked to justify it. In this way, the discussion remained focused on the contentious factors rather than being diluted with justifications of factors about which there was already significant concordance.^{clix}

Who Should Participate in Delphi Targeting Score Weighting Survey

Reporters, news managers, think tank principals, independent analysts, police and intelligence authorities, human rights (official and nonprofit) leaders, court officials, and NGO principals could provide a strong coalition.^{clx} Involving a range of stakeholders would help to build the necessary level of trust. It would demonstrate that this scoring effort was not just a show on the outside that was being manipulated on the inside. Process would be important. Having a group of that size and diversity could get buy-in and could dispel doubts that might be associated with a small group of drafters.

To begin, a small group of participants with a sophisticated understanding of the problem could be called upon to develop an initial set of dimensions. After the weighted scoring system is utilized for a period, an evaluation should be performed to determine the continued relevance and relative importance of the previously established metrics.^{clxi}

“In addition to the specific scorecard scores and associated findings, the expert elicitation can produce a rich and interesting discussion of the various factors and sub-factors in the scorecards,

and their presence, absence, or applicability to Mexico.”^{clxii} In the 2011 RAND study, anonymity was key for the scorecard participants.^{clxiii}

With the successful creation of a weighted scoring system, Mexican authorities can proceed with collecting homicide and other relevant criminal data that can be combined with these weights to score the violence levels of the different VDTOs.

Appendix C: Description of Cartel Activity

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	ORGANIZATIONS
National Cartels	Cartels control or maintain presence along routes of several drugs. They also operate important international routes to and from Mexico. These DTOs keep control of drug points of entry and exit in the country. However, they are interested in expanding their control of new points of exit along the northern border, and this is why they currently sustain disputes with other cartels to control these border localities. These DTOs are present in broad areas of the country and have sought to build upon the profits they receive from drug trafficking through diversifying their illegal activities towards human smuggling and oil and fuel theft.	Sinaloa, Los Zetas, and Gulf cartels (although Gulf has a significantly less important role than the other two).
“Toll Collector” Cartels	These are the cartels whose main income comes from toll fees received from the cartels and regional cartels that send drug shipments through their controlled municipalities along the northern border. Given that these cartels are largely confined to some border municipalities, they cannot diversify their illegal activities as actively as the national cartels. If these cartels eventually lose control of their respective border areas they will either intensify their diversification efforts to other business (such as extortion or kidnapping) or they will disappear.	Tijuana and Juárez cartels
Regional Cartels	These DTOs keep limited control over segments of drug trafficking routes that pass through their territory. Like the toll collector cartels, the regional cartels play a secondary role in the drug trading business and receive small profits from it and have limited capabilities to diversify to other criminal businesses like human smuggling or oil and fuel theft.	The Knights Templar and South Pacific cartels

(Source: Congressional Research Service^{clxiv})

Appendix D: Drug Spending in the U.S.

Drug Control Spending (Supply Side) (in \$ millions)

Drug Control Policies	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Domestic Law Enforcement	9,143	9,358	9,419
Interdiction	3,977	3,592	3,681
International	2,028	2,088	1,962
Total	15,148	15,038	15,062

(Source: Executive Office of the President^{clv})

Interagency Crime and Drug Enforcement, FY 2013 Summary of Resources (in \$ thousands)

Estimate by Program	FY 2011 Actual				FY 2012 Enacted				FY 2013 President's Budget			
	Perm. Pos.	Agents/Atty	WY	Amount	Perm. Pos.	Agents/Atty	WY	Amount	Perm. Pos.	Agents/Atty	WY	Amount
Law Enforcement:												
Drug Enforcement Administration	1,309	967	1,309	202,797	1,309	967	1,309	203,151	1,285	943	1,285	198,673
Federal Bureau of Investigation	857	540	857	139,926	857	540	857	140,171	834	517	834	137,081
United States Marshals Service	41	39	41	8,668	41	39	41	8,683	40	38	40	8,492
Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives	54	53	54	11,662	54	53	54	11,683	53	52	53	11,423
Immigration and Customs Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Internal Revenue Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
U.S. Coast Guard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OCDETF Executive Office (OFC)	1	0	1	11,752	1	0	1	11,430	1	0	1	11,304
Subtotal:	2,262	1,599	2,262	374,805	2,262	1,599	2,262	375,118	2,213	1,550	2,213	366,973
Prosecution:												
United States Attorneys	1,027	555	975	144,719	1,027	555	975	144,973	1,027	555	975	146,760
Criminal Division	14	10	14	2,072	14	10	14	2,072	13	10	13	2,097
Threat Response Unit	6	5	5	797	6	5	5	797	6	5	5	808
Subtotal:	1,047	570	994	147,588	1,047	570	994	147,842	1,046	570	993	149,665
Transnational Organization Crime Investigations:												
IOC2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3,000
Administrative Support:												
Executive Office	22	7	21	5,119	22	7	21	4,552	22	7	21	5,155
Subtotal:	22	7	21	5,119	22	7	21	4,552	22	7	21	5,155
TOTAL OCDETF:	3,331	2,176	3,277	527,512	3,331	2,176	3,277	527,512	3,282	2,128	3,228	524,793

(Source: U.S. Department of Justice^{clvi})

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