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The Mexican Hydra: How Calderón's Pursuit of Peace Led to the Bloodiest War in Mexican History? Will the Mexican People Inherit a Failed State in 2012?

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CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE

THE MEXICAN HYDRA: HOW CALDERÓN'S PURSUIT OF PEACE LED TO THE BLOODIEST
WAR IN MEXICAN HISTORY. WILL THE MEXICAN PEOPLE INHERIT A FAILED STATE
IN 2012?

SUBMITTED TO

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AND
DEAN GREGORY HESS
BY
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"And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will
save his people from their sins." - Matthew 1:21 (NIV).

To all those whose voices are all too often drowned out and forgotten.
May God Bless you and give you peace in the reality that one day we
will all live united as human beings.

A mi abuelo "Chuso" quien sigue vivo en mi mente y en mi corazon. Este
triunfo es suyo abuelito.
Jesus "Chuso" Piñon y Prieto.

To my uncle Nick Farah. Thank you for your constant love and support.
"Mexico lindo y querido, si muero lejos de ti, que digan que estoy
dormido, y que me traigan aqui..."

"Siete leguas, el caballo, que Villa tanto estimaba..."

"Que van a hacer para garantizarnos que 35 mil mas Mexicanos no mueran?
Que van a hacer para garantizar que Mexico sea libre otra vez? Que van
a hacer para decirle al narco que ya no tiene casa en nuestro pais?"

A mis hermanos y hermanas Mexicanos, cuanto mas vamos a tener que
sufrir? Que Dios nos bendiga, y que Mexico sea nuestro. Fuera con el
narcotrafico, fuera con la corrupcion, fuera con la violencia!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Hypotheses:

The aim of this thesis is to determine whether or not the drug war in Mexico will cease as a result of the Mexican government's current anti-narcotic operations and strategy. Furthermore, it will investigate the feasibility of maintaining the current strategy as is, and if so, is this morally responsible to do? So long as the current levels of violence show no signs of slowing, it does not appear that any semblance of "victory" can or will be achieved by the Mexican government anytime in the foreseeable future. I propose that, if the violence continues to escalate at its current rates, Mexico will become a failed state by the end of President Felipe Calderón's term and the next presidential transition of power, after the 2012 election. I will argue that this is evidenced by increased death tolls, increases in gruesome crimes, a blatant disregard for authority by the cartels¹, as well as the increase in diversification of criminal activity of these organizations.² Furthermore, another area of alarm is that of the increasingly "cross-border" nature of the violence. That is, the Mexican drug organizations are demonstrating an increased presence in not only the Mexican trafficking industry, but also within the central and Latin-American drug supply industry.³

¹ This disregard for authority and consequences can be seen clearly in the organizations' pursuit of assassinations of government officials and cartel leaders, as reported frequently in the press.

² Such as extortion, kidnapping, assassination, as reported in STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels: Government Progress and Growing Violence," (December 11, 2008); 10.

³ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 2.

In order to determine whether or not Mexico will, by my definition, become a failed state, I will investigate to what extent the drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) have infiltrated Mexican society. I will demonstrate that their domain extends well beyond the political arena, into those of: 1) law-enforcement, 2) the religious lives of Mexicans, and 3) the mainstream cultural avenues of expression. I believe that such an extensive infiltration of Mexican society effectively eliminates the government's ability to adequately govern and protect its citizens.

The thesis will be divided into five chapters: 1) introduction and background, 2) the military and its role in the conflict, 3) the Catholic Church, its silence in regards to the violence, and religion's role in the violence in general, 4) the "narcocorrido" as a cultural expression and political indicator and 5) initial findings, future implications, and conclusions. Through these chapters, my hypotheses will be investigated and tested based on the various research questions I have posed in writing each chapter.

In discussing the military, I have determined that long-term success cannot take place under a counter-drug strategy primarily dependent on military might. Unfortunately, the Mexican military, I believe, is entirely ill equipped and trained to pursue an all open engagement of the DTOs in a conflict that more closely resembles guerilla warfare than conventional war. In order to determine whether or not this is the case there are several important questions that must be asked as the driving force behind the research, for the military these include: Is corruption an issue in the Mexican military and other law enforcement agencies? How do their arsenals compare to those of the cartels? Are the armed forces adequately financed for this type of

conflict? What training are the soldiers receiving in anti-guerilla warfare? Where are the cartels' weapons coming from? How will the military phase itself out in order to prevent Mexico from becoming a military state? What role should the United States play in the conflict?

Alarmingly, the Catholic Church has been relatively silent throughout the violence, although they have become more vocal recently. In my opinion, there could be tremendous progress if the Church were to frequently speak out against the violence and encourage reconciliation between the government and the cartels. When addressing this topic one must ask why they have remained so silent. Furthermore, are they obligated to speak out in the face of injustice and violence? Are they violating the very promises they made in both conferences of the *Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano* (CELAM) in Medellin and Puebla? What role does religion play in the daily lives of Mexican people? What is the appropriate role for the Church in the modern political sphere with regards to the drug war? What is the current state of Church-DTO relations?

In the final chapter to be investigated, the issue of "narco-cultura," or drug culture, is the focus. I believe that the rise of the "narco-corrido," (drug song) has had a tremendous impact on the nature of the drug war itself. As a result of the idolization and admiration shown to the cartels and their members in this particular genre of music, it is possible that the general population's opinion towards the cartels has changed significantly. One cannot be too quick to dismiss the power of such a widespread media outlet; the musical adoration given to the cartels has certainly infiltrated the minds of Mexican people and is potentially capable of creating a general feeling of

indifference towards the drug trafficking organizations. That is not to say that people outright support the industry, it simply suggests that due to this combination of indifference and fear, "el pueblo" is not necessarily vehemently opposed to the cartels either. The questions that must be asked are then: Is it morally wrong for the government to permit the playing of "narco-corrido" on the radio? Can one truly blame violence on the music people listen to? Is it morally wrong to sing about the "narco" in a positive light? How can the government provide the protection necessary to its people in order to combat the effects of "narco-cultura" in general? What role does the "narco-corrido," have in forming and expressing Mexican identity? How reliable of a source is the genre for relating historical, and other factual occurrences,

The tragedy of the nature of the conflict in Mexico is that, when the dust has settled, a desire for wealth and territory determines the behavior and actions of the drug-trafficking organizations. That is, money, property, and land are deemed of greater worth than human life. It is in this tragic reality that one encounters the biggest obstacle facing any chance of reconciliation or end to the current violence; there can be no victory through moral accusations and pleas alone.

Finally, once the initial investigation and analysis has been completed, potential solutions can be discussed. However, in order to appropriately address potential strategies, or modifications to current strategy, for combating the cartel warfare that continues in Mexico, one must gain a certain understanding concerning the underlying causes of the conflict. Reluctant to accept the majority of the blame for the rise of the conflict, "the Mexican government [claims], the cartel wars are not a result of corruption in Mexico or of economic and societal dynamics...Instead, the cartel wars are due to the insatiable American

appetite for narcotics and the endless stream of guns that flows from the United States into Mexico and that results in Mexican violence.”⁴ Whichever of these two accusations, if either, prove to be more truthful is entirely immaterial given the fact that they do nothing to promote reconciliation.

This statement demonstrates both the American and Mexican lack of responsibility and willingness to accept their role in aggravating the issue in the past decades. This is only worsened by the fact that the war has grown to such an extent as to appear to some to be a lost cause. Without question, there is truth in both elements; the Mexican government is far from innocent in terms of its historical corruption and gross economic inequality, while American demand for drugs and relatively loose gun regulation laws has definitely contributed significantly to the growing violence. All of this is not to say that understanding underlying causes and reasons for which the cartels grew to such strengths is pointless. Quite the opposite, only by determining what flawed regulations and unforeseen circumstances could have contributed to this situation, can a more complete understanding of the history of the DTOs' rise be achieved. In so doing, one will be more adequately prepared to develop and offer up potential solutions and political compromises of policy in order to best address the cartel violence.

What is a failed state?

⁴ Scott Stewart, *Mexico's Gun Supply and the 90 Percent Myth*, February 10, 2011, http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110209-mexicos-gun-supply-and-90-percent-myth?utm_source=SWeekly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=110210&utm_content=readmore&elq=90fa42b6c4b24fa3afa8beld2elfe139. According to this STRATFOR report, the number of American-made weapons brought into Mexico is highly questionable.

The definition I have chosen in order to prove my thesis that Mexico is approaching "failed state" status at an alarming rate is the following: A nation becomes a failed state once it loses the ability to protect its citizens and the rights afforded to them by its constitution from foreign or domestic threats. The *Fund for Peace* (FFP), the organization responsible for producing the "Failed States Index," (FSI) uses several characteristics to determine a state's potential for failing, including economic, political, and social categories.⁵ In the *Fund's* own words, "one of the most common [characteristics of a failed state] is the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force."⁶

According to FFP's index, Mexico received a score of 75.4 in 2010, earning it the 98th rank on the FSI.⁷ Of the 12 categories, the two in which Mexico received their highest score were categories I-4 and I-5, Chronic and Sustained Human Flight (7.0) and Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines (8.2), respectively.⁸ Meanwhile, the scores received in "Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State," (I-7) and "Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights," (I-9) received two of the lower scores for Mexico's total, 6.8 and 5.5 respectively.⁹ As seen by Mexico's ranking of 98 on the FSI, these scores are not indicative of the precarious situation that the Mexican government finds itself in with regards to its ability to govern and maintain the confidence and

⁵ Foreign Policy, *The Failed States Index 2010*, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings.

⁶ The Fund for Peace, *Failed States Index FAQ*, http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#3. For further explanation of the FSI see **Appendix A-1**.

⁷ Foreign Policy, *The Failed States Index 2010*. For a full breakdown of Mexico's scores on each individual category see **Appendix A-2**.

⁸ The Fund for Peace, *Failed States Index FAQ*,

⁹ *Ibid*.

trust of the general population. Furthermore, as per the focus of my investigation, I believe that the scores given to economic categories are far less indicative of a state failing than political and military factors.

It is my expectation that the research will demonstrate that the two scores on which I will focus (I-7 and I-9) are entirely too low and therefore misrepresent the reality of the decaying security situation in Mexico today. Furthermore, while the FFP uses a total of 12 categories, I have chosen to address the two mentioned above for the reason that my definition of a failed state is one that focuses on cases in which a state has suffered in terms of legitimacy and its ability to maintain "the Rule of law," category I-9. Furthermore, I agree with Max Weber's understanding of a failed state, as mentioned by José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, that a State can only remain a state if it "successfully upholds a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order."¹⁰ Ortega Sánchez for why this one particular criterion is so important in using the case of Zimbabwe. He writes that Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe has been "a gross violator of human rights," however it cannot be considered a failed state because "the dictator Mugabe has not lost the monopoly of violence."¹¹ It is precisely this claim that demonstrates why Mexico is rapidly approaching the status, if it does not already deserve it, of being declared a "failed state." That is not to imply that the Mexican government and its efforts are futile and that the country is in total anarchy, but rather that the government no longer possesses the

¹⁰ Idea taken from José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2010), 19. Quote taken from Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 154.

¹¹ José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2010), 18.

necessary "monopoly of violence," necessary to govern and protect its citizens.

It appears, after initial investigations that the Mexican government has also lost the trust of a significant portion of its citizenry and has ultimately become more "delegitimized," category I-7. Additionally, there have been several reports concerning gross violations of human rights, such as the femicide occurring in Juarez, at the hands of the cartels and even some claims of military abuse of citizens. If these claims prove to be substantiated, then one must carefully look back at the methodology that the FFP uses in compiling the Failed States Index. Furthermore, a revisiting of these scores could alter Mexico's standing on the list and ultimately the way the global community approached the violence in Mexico.

The Mexican Hydra

As with any policy formation and implementation, one must decide the proper way to commence the process. The Mexican government had to make a decision between three umbrella approaches to its anti-narcotics policy: 1) top-down, 2) bottom-up, and 3) multi-tiered. Needless to say, all three will have their own challenges and pitfalls, however it is the responsibility of the host government to determine which one carries the smallest risk to the lives and livelihood of its people. In order to properly analyze and discuss Mexico's anti-drug policy under President Felipe Calderón, one must understand what these three options entail and what potential consequences each carry.

The first approach to be discussed is that of top-down, which seems to most appropriately fit the current strategy under the PAN

controlled presidency of Calderón. When operating under this strategy, the aim is to dismantle the cartels and cripple their ability to operate by eliminating the head of the "beast". While this certainly has its strengths in that it weakens the organization by taking out the primary shot-callers and planners, it is far from being an appropriate strategy. In fact, I will argue later that this strategy is one of the primary reasons for the staggering death toll and the shocking increases in violence in Mexico. The reasoning behind this is that it inevitably creates a power vacuum, which can become more deadly and problematic for the government than the initial enemy was. With several individuals vying for supremacy within their own cartels, the violence can become even more guerilla-like and difficult to combat since identification of cartels has become more complex. I believe that due to this dynamic, an opportunity for Mexico to be thrust into the category of failed states presents itself.

To further illustrate this, I have developed the concept of the "Mexican Hydra". This refers to the creature from Greek mythology whose defining characteristic was its ability to have its head cut off, only to grow two in its place. The elimination of various cartel leaders by the Mexican government is similar to the ancient story if one allow the cartels to assume the role of the monster, and the government to be the "hero" combating it. With this in hand, one can see the problem in two steps: 1) the original monster has *x heads (one for each cartel)*, and 2) the government tries to kill it by decapitating it. Unfortunately, not only did they fail to consider the monster's special ability, but over time they also chose to cut off multiple heads at once, resulting in a doubling of the original number. The *x-headed monster has now become the 2x-headed monster*. David Galula echoes my thoughts by

writing that "guerrillas [DTOs in this case], like the heads of the legendary hydra, have the special ability to grow again if not all destroyed at the same time."¹² Mexico has failed to do this, thus allowing the beast to recover and grow stronger. I fear that this deadly trend will only worsen as more vacuums are created, more factions are formed, and more violence is carried out in Mexico.

Turning to a bottom-up approach for combating the Mexican DTOs, the understanding is that the government's policy to eliminate the cartels is by taking out foot soldiers and lower-ranking members of the organization before pursuing the leaders themselves. Essentially, it is an all-out attack on the lifeblood of the cartels. At first glance, this approach appears to be more flawed than the top-down policy in that it does nothing to debilitate the cartel's ability to conduct its business. Low-ranking members are easily replaced, so long as the "brain" of the organization is still intact and functioning. Furthermore, by only pursuing the lower-ranking members of the organization, the leaders and directors are given ample time to defend and prepare themselves, as well as to establish a firm order of succession and plan of action should they be killed or arrested. Therefore, this policy does little to bring violence to a minimum; in fact it is more of a façade of combating the cartels than anything else. Ultimately, this approach would be futile since it would involve the government pursuing an endless stream of cartel soldiers with little progress being made as to the weakening of the organizations as a whole. Furthermore, it would likely do little to curb the increasing death toll. This policy would allow the cartels to continue operating as normal with little fear of retribution from the authorities since

¹² David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), 107.

the high-ranking members are relatively free from persecution and prosecution.

The final strategy involves a combination of the prior two and will be referred to as a multi-tiered approach. This strategy is necessary if any victory is to be achieved, however that is not to say that it does not come laden with its own flaws. A multi-tiered approach is perhaps the most complex strategy to develop and implement since no blueprint for success exists. One must carefully analyze and make decisions on the following: a) when to commence attacks, b) where to begin (top or bottom?), c) how much of each strategy to implement and at what times to make necessary changes, among many other difficult decisions. While this is the most needed umbrella strategy for the Mexican government if they are to achieve victory over the drug trade in Mexico, one of its biggest setbacks appears to be a lack of resources available to the Mexican government, financial and military. Further hindering the possibility of implementing a strategy of this sort is that, "Mexican security institutions are often locked in a zero-sum competition in which one agency's success is viewed as another's failure, information is closely guarded, and joint operations are all but unheard of;"¹³ the problem here is that the strategy depends entirely on cooperation and "joint operations." It would be difficult to envision the Mexican government successfully carrying out such a complex, expensive counter-strategy without the financial and military assistance of the United States or another major global power; a politically and ethically dangerous position for any of these powers to enter into voluntarily.

¹³ Quote of "John Feeley, deputy chief of mission at the American Embassy and Mexico City," taken from Elisabeth Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/americas/04wikileaks-mexico.html>.

What is a "drug-related death"? Definition and Statistics

Before one begins to analyze and understand the staggering numbers linked to "drug-related" violence in Mexico, a clear definition has to be reached as to what can be considered "drug-related". As will be shown below in the words of *Reforma*, one must be careful to ensure that the numbers do not include all forms of violent crime, so that the statistic actually provides relevant and pertinent data to the drug industry and its conflict with the Mexican government.¹⁴ While there are several ways of defining the term, the best overall definition comes from *Reforma*, as reported by the Trans-Border Institute at the University of San Diego in the figure below:

In terms of methodology, *Reforma* attempts to avoid the conflation of other homicides (e.g., those committed by drug users) that do not reflect the kind of high impact violence associated with organized crime. Instead, *Reforma* classifies drug-related killings as "narco-executions" (narcoejecuciones) based on a combination of factors related to a given incident:

- use of high-caliber and automatic weapons typical of organized crime groups (e.g., .50 caliber, AK- and AR-type weapons);
- execution-style and mass casualty shootings;
- decapitation or dismemberment of corpses;
- indicative markings, written messages, or unusual configurations of the body;
- presence of large quantities of illicit drugs, cash or weapons;
- official reports explicitly indicting the involvement of organize crime.

Fig. 1 Characteristics of drug-related deaths as reported by *Reforma* in Trans-Border Institute, "Drug Violence in Mexico."¹⁵

Part of the difficulty in recording and compiling these numbers is that there are several different figures being reported by varying news sources. Therefore, one often has to deal with ranges of death

¹⁴ Trans-Border Institute, "Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis from 2001-2009," *Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego*, January 2010, 3.

¹⁵ Ibid. See the article for graphs, charts, and data from The Trans-Border Institute's findings.

tolls, rather than exact numbers.¹⁶ However, even taking this potential source of uncertainty into account, "from 2006 to the present [January 2010]: over 16,000 killings,"¹⁷ have resulted from the Mexican drug-war. With information from 2010 coming to light, it is now a reality that the Mexican drug war has claimed the lives of "more than 30,100 people,"¹⁸ with "the federal attorney general's office [reporting that](my own modification) 12,456 people were killed through Nov. 30 [2010]."¹⁹

Another statistic demonstrative of the extent to which the violence has gripped the nation in the past 5 years is found in the list of cities with the top 10 murder rates in 2009. In that year, three Mexican cities were included in this list: 1) Juarez, Chihuahua, the murder capital of the world with a murder rate of 191 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, 2) Culiacan, Sinaloa, home state of Sinaloa Cartel leader Joaquin "El Chapo Guzman," with a rate of 69 deaths/100,000, and 3) Chihuahua, Chihuahua, with a murder rate of 63 murders/100,000.²⁰ Not only have these murder rates skyrocketed, but another issue of note is that of the percentage of murders that can be attributed to DTOs and organized crime. Ortega Sánchez reports that in 2001 7.80% (1,080/13,855) of murders in Mexico were listed under the "executions,"

¹⁶ These ranges and differing media reports can be seen in Trans-Border Institute, "Drug Violence in Mexico: Data and Analysis from 2001-2009," *Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, University of San Diego*, January 2010, 2.

¹⁷ Trans-Border Institute, "Drug Violence in Mexico," 4.

¹⁸ CNN Wire Staff, "Mexican drug war deaths surpass 30,100," *CNN.com*, December 17, 2010. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/12/17/mexico.violence/>.

¹⁹ Ken Ellingwood, "Mexico Under Siege: More than 12,000 killed in Mexican drug war this year, officials say," *Los Angeles Times*, December 16, 2010. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-mexico-death-toll-20101217,0,3176872.story>.

²⁰ Data and rates provided by Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal A.C. in graph 4 found in José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido? Propuestas para evitar el colapso del país* (Mexico D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2010), 61.

or "organized crime," category, while that percentage grew to 52.06% (9,635/18,509) in 2009.²¹

Furthermore, Ortega Sánchez notes in relation to these rates, "Juárez is also 3 times as violent as Medellín [Colombia], the city that until now had the highest murder rates in the world for at least the past 30 years."²² The significance of this comparison is that Colombia has only recently emerged from a long-standing conflict between its government and its drug-producing industry. In Juárez alone, from 2007 to 2009 "there was an increase in murders by 1,284%. What this means: there is no precedent of such an increase in Mexico or even in the world."²³ He points out that "not even Medellín [which reached a murder rate of 347 deaths/100,000 inhabitants in 1991] comes close to what has happened in Juárez."²⁴ Despite the difference in the increase of murder rates in these Mexican cities and those of Colombia, perhaps Mexico could benefit from a discussion with those involved in the Colombia victory over their drug cartels.

When analyzing this data it is important to note, as Beatriz Paredes Rangel stated, that the drug conflict in Mexico is "regional," in nature²⁵, given that the majority of the violence is concentrated in these regions (Chihuahua, Sinaloa). Furthermore, as noted by the *Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios Sobre la Inseguridad (ICESI)*²⁶, a majority of all murders in Mexico during 2010 took place in Chihuahua,

²¹ Table 5, "Porcentaje de las ejecuciones dolosas en total de homicidios dolosos en México (1998-2009)," Ortega Sánchez compiled data from 1998-2009. Data from 2001-2009 taken by Ortega Sánchez from Procuraduría General de la Republica, Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, and the newspapers *El Universal*, *Milenio*, and *Reforma* and reported in *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?* 45, 47 and data on back cover.

²² Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?*, 60.

²³ *Ibid.*, 40.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Beatriz Paredes Rangel, "The PRI in 21st Century Mexico," talk given at Claremont McKenna College, Marian Miner Cook Athenaeum, April 7, 2011.

²⁶ Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios Sobre la Inseguridad, *Homepage*, <http://www.icesi.org.mx/>.

Durango, Guerrero, and Sinaloa.²⁷ One must be careful not to take Paredes Rangel's statement as indicative of the conflict having no impact on the rest of Mexico or that it is in any way less severe than initially thought. In fact, it can be argued that such a high volume of murders in so concentrated a section of the nation count as evidence of the extremity and severity of the conflict. It would be far less troubling to many to imagine 30,000 murders over a period of four years in all of Mexico's states combined, than it is to recognize that a significant portion are taking place in three major cities and their respective trade routes.

It should be noted that Mexico, despite the drug war, has a lower homicide rate, at 18/100,000²⁸, than Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil.²⁹ Interestingly, the countries mentioned are all in Latin America; why is it that Latin American countries are trending towards greater levels of violence in the past year? It seems that the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is correct in suggesting that there have been increasing homicide rates in the Latin American region as a result of "increases in transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and gang activity."³⁰ These findings demonstrate

²⁷ Instituto Ciudadano de Estudios Sobre la Inseguridad, "Homicidios Dolosos," http://www.icesi.org.mx/documentos/estadisticas/estadisticasOfi/denuncias_homicidio_dolos_o_1997_2010.pdf. From this table the total number of murders for these states is as follows, Chihuahua: 3,514, Durango: 1,025, Guerrero: 1,500, and Sinaloa: 2,251.

²⁸ ICESI, "Homicidios Dolosos," http://www.icesi.org.mx/documentos/estadisticas/estadisticasOfi/denuncias_homicidio_dolos_o_1997_2010.pdf.

²⁹ The idea to discuss these differences and the initial list of countries obtained through personal correspondence with Roderic Ai Camp on April 12, 2011. Homicide rates for these countries compiled using the following sources: Honduras: 77/100,000 (<http://m.elheraldo.hn/17128/show/5e096bbd956b10d363006f4970de4741&t=24d71aa81bef2b9f5da41043d25b5826>) El Salvador: 69.9/100,000 (<http://www.contrapunto.com.sv/ultimas-noticias/bajo-la-tasa-de-homicidios-en-2010>) Venezuela: 48/100,000 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/noticias/2011/02/110209_venezuela_asamblea_inseguridad_cifras_jp.shtml) Colombia: 32/100,000 (<http://www.americaeconomia.com/politica-sociedad/politica/ministro-del-interior-reconoce-altas-tasas-de-homicidios-en-venezuela>) Brazil: 25.2/100,000 (<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1363697-la-extrana-violencia-carioca>).

³⁰ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global homicide rates stable or decreasing, new UNODC report says*, <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/February/global-homicide-rates-stable-or-decreasing-new-unodc-report-says.html>.

how despite the fact that the Mexican drug conflict may be "regional," in many ways, it certainly carries national and international implications.

The Nature of the Beast, Initial Thoughts and Further Investigation

It is not difficult to see just how deadly and tragic the situation has become in Mexico as a result of cartel warfare. The sheer number of deaths is enough to instill fear in most people, a fear that is all too visible in Mexico today. Sadly, the conflict is not only going to take a toll on the country in terms of bloodshed, but it will also certainly extend into many other spheres. For example, one of Mexico's primary sources of national revenue is tourism. However, with the situation as it stands, it would not be surprising to continue seeing fewer people travel and vacation to Mexico. As former American Ambassador to Mexico Carlos Pascual reported, "it is damaging Mexico's international reputation, hurting foreign investment, and leading to a sense of government impotence, Gutiérrez said."³¹ The implications of a phenomenon like this are quite damaging, in that it would significantly decrease one of the nation's primary sources of income with which they can invest, purchase, and otherwise stimulate their economic growth and development.

Not only would their own ability to economically interact be restricted, but also, as mentioned, there is the likely scenario that other investors would be hesitant to enter into a business agreement

³¹ Elisabeth Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/americas/04wikileaks-mexico.html>. According to Malkin's article, the Gutiérrez quoted is Mr. Gerónimo Gutiérrez, a former "deputy secretary in the ministry [Department of Justice] in charge of domestic security."

with a nation that is perceived to be in a state of chaos. New foreign investment is unlikely, since it seems rational to assume that most firms would be uncomfortable conducting business in a nation where they are vulnerable to extortion and violence. In the case of firms currently invested in Mexico, it is very possible that they would move their business elsewhere, somewhere in which they don't run quite the same risk to business and life.

These are very real threats to Mexican stability, and they demonstrate that the fight Calderón and his administration must fight is not simply a physical one; they must continue to fight for the hearts and minds of the Mexican people if they hope to achieve a true victory over the cartels and the drug industry. How they are to do this is, as they say, the million-dollar question? Mexico is verging on a major collapse of government legitimacy if they do not quickly figure out a way to deal the decisive blow to the DTOs.

Chapter 2: The Military

Opening Thoughts

This chapter's focus is on the political and military machine involved in the war against the cartels. However, that is not to say that its focus will only be on the government's side of the militant nature of the conflict. In fact, the training and equipment of the cartels and their army-like branches will be carefully analyzed and discussed in contrast to that of the Mexican government. Hopefully, this will produce a deeper understanding of the challenges facing the government when developing and attempting to implement anti-narcotic strategy and policy.

Guerrilla Warfare in Mexico?

Che Guevara's description of "guerilla warfare" requires that the fight be defined as "a war of the masses, a war of the people. The guerilla band is an armed nucleus."³² While the violence in Mexico is certainly not a fight between "the people," and their government, it does appear that his description of the "guerilla band" is appropriate for the Mexican cartels. The DTOs, herein referred to as insurgents and guerillas interchangeably, are concentrated units with tremendous military force. Furthermore, they are actively resisting the government in order to engage in battle where the "struggle is a means to an

³² Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 9-10.

end.”³³ As David Galula writes, first and foremost, if “the insurgent ever hope[s] to pry the population away from the counterinsurgent [government]...the first basic need...is an attractive cause.”³⁴ For the DTOs the cause, or “end”, appears to be, quite simply, profit. While they do not necessarily have the support of the people, which is crucial according to Guevara, the DTOs do operate as guerrilla fighters, and they certainly do have a cause that they subscribe to, that of self preservation and power.

One would not say that the Mexican DTOs are operating a guerrilla war for any ideological gain or Revolutionary ideals; however they have adopted elements of the guerrilla movement in their resistance of the Mexican government. When one thinks of guerrilla warfare, the first thoughts that come to mind are usually small, contained conflict in which the strength and numbers of the government’s forces are relegated to being non-factors based on the guerrilla’s intimate relationship to “the surrounding countryside, the paths of entry and escape, the possibilities of speedy maneuver, good hiding places.”³⁵ This relationship has demonstrated itself in the case of the Mexican DTOs when, it is reported that “some of those gangs have responded with the weaponry and strategies of war, including preemptive ambushes against Mexican forces and efforts to control territory.”³⁶ That is, the guerrilla’s strength is not in numbers, nor in firepower, but rather in their ability to exploit the few advantages they do have over the

³³ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 142.

³⁴ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 18.

³⁵ Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 10-11.

³⁶ Juan Forero, “Colombia stepping up anti-drug training of Mexico’s army, police,” *The Washington Post*, January 22, 2011. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/21/AR2011012106325.html?nav=emailpage>. The individual quoted in the article is “Steven Dudley, co-director of InSight, a think tank that tracks organized crime in Colombia and Mexico,” according to Forero.

government. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, the DTOs in Mexico have found ways in which to accomplish just that.

It should be noted that the government does have a "cause" that it promotes as well, "to reinforce the state and so defeat the internal threat."³⁷ However, David Kilcullen notes that "the nature of counter-insurgency is not fixed, but shifting: it evolves in response to changes in insurgency."³⁸ That is, the role of the government as the "counter-insurgent," is extremely complex in that there is no perfect, pre-determined solution to this form of war and conflict. Regardless, the responsibility to protect citizens falls on the government, however in the face of such powerful opposition, as is the case in Mexico, how this is to be accomplished is unclear. Essentially, it seems then that in order to successfully combat this insurgency, a government must be fluid and adaptable to the changing complexion of the fight.

The situation in Mexico is further complicated by the reality that it is one of a handful of Latin-American states to never have succumbed to authoritarian military rule. Given this reality there exists a precarious relationship between the military and the political leadership. Relegated to inferior standing after the Revolution of 1910, David Ronfeldt writes that it was not until the:

"Revisionist studies of the 1970s thus found that the army- largely because it could operate behind the scenes to facilitate political communication and conflict resolution in favor of the governing elites-had continued to fulfill 'residual political

³⁷ David Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency *Redux*," in *The Use of Force*, Seventh edition, ed. Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), 487.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

roles,' which may be essential for preserving Mexico's political system."³⁹

From his writing, it becomes apparent that the Mexican military has slowly been reincorporating itself into the political affairs of Mexico. However, their entry into this sphere of Mexican life must be conducted carefully and privately, as seen in Ronfeldt's choice of the phrase "behind the scenes," in the quote above.

Furthermore, beginning in the "mid-1970s-particularly the large counterinsurgency and anti-narcotics campaigns conducted in Guerrero and other provincial areas,"⁴⁰ the Mexican military has slowly started "becoming a more visible, respected, and modernized partner of Mexico's ruling institutions."⁴¹ Ultimately, the incorporation of the military into a more active political role appears to stem from their increased operations in maintaining order within Mexico as well as the increased need for a military that can adequately respond to issues of "internal security,"⁴² such as "small-scale electoral, student, labor, and agrarian disturbances."⁴³ To this list of issues that the Mexican government can rely on support from the military for, one must provide support to the government one must add the violence and chaos that has arisen as a result of the drug-war.

Ronfeldt argues that the relationship between the military and the government is one in which "the military is more visibly active as an instrument and symbol of the state's authority," rather than a body

³⁹ David Ronfeldt, "The Mexican Army and Political Order Since 1940," Rand P-5089-1, August 1975, reprinted in Abraham F. Lowenthal (ed.), *Armies and Politics in Latin America*, Holmes & Meier, New York, 1976. As quoted in David Ronfeldt, "The Modern Mexican Military," in *Armies and Politics in Latin America*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 225.

⁴⁰ David Ronfeldt, "The Modern Mexican Military," in *Armies and Politics in Latin America*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal and J. Samuel Fitch (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 225.

⁴¹ Ronfeldt, "The Modern Mexican Military," 225.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 230.

interested in "usurping civilian authority."⁴⁴ He ends his essay by posing a question for future Mexican military-state relations: "will the modern Mexican military continue to fulfill its security and development roles responsibly and in subordination to civilian authority?"⁴⁵ This is precisely one of the issues that this chapter will investigate, however it is clear at this point that 20 years after Ronfeldt posed his question, the military has certainly remained "subordinate," to the state in that the ends it seeks are those of the Mexican government, and by extension the Mexican people.

Calderón's Anti-DTO strategy

John Bailey's statement that the drug war in Mexico is "the greatest threat to its democratic governance from internal violence since the Cristero Revolt,"⁴⁶ is haunting; the catastrophic death rates speak for themselves. Bailey claims that the threat is multiplied due to a combination of the following factors: 1) "politically savvy, hyper-violent drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs)," 2) "a civic culture marked by comparatively little confidence in the police-justice system," and 3) "a crisis of political legitimacy and state capacity."⁴⁷ In order to combat this long-standing problem of drug trafficking in Mexico, the Mexican government under President Felipe Calderón formulated a strategy that involved a multi-stepped process.

According to Bailey's analysis of both the government's strategy and operations the plan was as follows: first the government would

⁴⁴ Ronfeldt, "The Modern Mexican Military," 234.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 249.

⁴⁶ John Bailey, "Combating Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking in Mexico: What are Mexican and U.S. Strategies? Are They Working?" *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Mexico Institute* (April 2010): 3.

⁴⁷ Combination compiled from 1st paragraph of Bailey, "Combating Organized Crime," 3.

deploy the Army to particular regions in order to openly combat and “disrupt their [cartel] activities.”⁴⁸ Then “at some undetermined point, the armed forces would return to a secondary, back-up role in police functions and the reformed police-justice system would take the lead,”⁴⁹; unfortunately police reforms have historically been difficult to implement in Mexico. The major obstacle to this strategy is that Calderón failed to adequately prepare instructions and orders for the military operations that were desperately needed to “buy time to implement a long menu of institutional reforms,”⁵⁰ which would allow the police to take over the long-term strategy.

One must be wary of the challenge facing Calderón when implementing any long-term policy: it requires time that Mexico simply does not have. Bailey, in regards to this strategy, states that “as a result we should expect a hybrid institutional work-in-progress: a police intelligence system shaped by military influences, and a military that is adapting to police roles.”⁵¹ As mentioned, this type of long-term institutional reform “requires decades, even in the best of circumstances.”⁵² Given the increasing death tolls, and spreading violence, this is simply too deadly an enterprise.

A security brief published by STRATFOR Global Intelligence in 2008 echoes Bailey’s initial explanation. The report states that Calderón’s strategy has been to depend “on the military only over the short term,”⁵³ while “target[ing] only one cartel at a time.”⁵⁴ Unfortunately for the President, his hope of seeing “police reforms,”⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Bailey, “Combating Organized Crime,” 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵² Ibid., 4.

⁵³ STRATFOR, “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 2.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 2.

that would facilitate military operations has not become a reality; leaving many wondering whether or not the strategy is worth pursuing any further as "the country's security situation has continued to deteriorate at what appears to be an unstoppable rate."⁵⁶

Fox vs. Calderón and beyond the 2012 elections

This conflict, this war, is a product of Calderón's desire to establish himself as the authoritative leader of Mexico⁵⁷ after having been elected by a mere difference of 0.56% of the overall vote.⁵⁸ In light of the close electoral results declared by *la Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* (TRIFE) of 14,916,927 votes in favor of the PAN's Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa and 14,683,096 votes in favor of the PRD's Manuel Lopez Obrador,⁵⁹ Calderón found himself without a decisive victory or approval from his fellow Mexican citizens. In a country with the political history such as Mexico's, it seems that authority and commanding respect are crucial to maintaining order; remnants of the PRI and its political succession system, the "dedazo".⁶⁰ Therefore, it is no surprise that he chose to take on one of Mexico's biggest problems head on in hopes of dealing it a lethal blow, thus decisively winning the approval of the Mexican people not only for himself, but also for the still young ruling party of Mexico, the PAN.

⁵⁶ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 2.

⁵⁷ Roderic Ai Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs: Public Perceptions and Institutional Challenges," *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Mexico Institute* (April 2010): 12. For Camp's brief discussion of this see footnote 31 in his article.

⁵⁸ Alejandro Moreno, "The 2006 Mexican Presidential Election: The Economy, Oil Revenues, and Ideology," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (January, 2007): 15.

⁵⁹ Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación, *Dictamen Relativo al Computo Final de la Eleccion de Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Declaracion de Validez de la Eleccion y de Presidente Electo*, September 5, 2006, 35.

⁶⁰ These opinions are my own, having formed them from various discussions and classes taken with Professor Roderic Ai Camp at Claremont McKenna College from 2008-2010.

Unfortunately, Calderón's pride and stubbornness have gotten in the way of his ability to govern his country effectively through this period of violent conflict. As STRATFOR states in its security report "despite the costs, Calderón has shown no sign of letting up,"⁶¹ even in the face of a clearly flawed and failing national anti-drug strategy that is leaving thousands of Mexicans dead every year. Calderón is quickly losing the legitimacy of the Mexican government as the sovereign guarantors of the Mexican Constitution, a score-receiving category on the FSI. Furthermore, according to Pascual, "Mr. [Gerónimo] Gutiérrez⁶² and Jorge Tello Peón ['Calderón's top intelligence official'] believed "that the government 'must succeed in Juárez because Calderón has staked so much of his reputation there, with a major show of force that, to date, has not panned out.'"⁶³ Could a fear of losing support be the motive behind his reluctance to concede that his strategy has failed?

The anti-drug policy developed under the Calderón administration is described by Roderic Camp as "aggressive, pro-active strategy, temporarily reassigning large numbers of troops where the problems are most intense...including Tijuana and Ciudad Juarez."⁶⁴ Camp goes on to discuss the results of such a strategy in terms of the effect it has on the levels on violence. He argues that "to the extent that this strategy has been successful in capturing cartel leaders and their lieutenants, the *government* has exacerbated the internal battles among

⁶¹ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 2.

⁶² Mr. Gutiérrez is a former "deputy secretary in the ministry [Department of Justice] in charge of domestic security." Information from Elisabeth Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/americas>.

⁶³ Carlos Pascual was the United States Ambassador to Mexico at the time of Mr. Gutierrez and Tello Peón's comments. Elisabeth Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, With Frustration," *The New York Times*, December 3, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/americas>.

⁶⁴ Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs," 12.

the cartels [emphasis added];"⁶⁵ the Mexican Hydra. It is noteworthy that Calderón's predecessor and first PAN President of Mexico, Vicente Fox, advised his compatriot against the use of military force in the war on drugs⁶⁶, however as one can see, Calderón has disregarded this warning. This serves as further evidence in favor of the argument that Calderón's pursuit of this policy was politically driven and aimed at building his credibility and authority, rather than being derived from a desire to rid Mexico of DTOs.

While Calderón is the first president to openly combat the cartels and the drug-operations in Mexico, the situation before the PAN assumed the presidency in 2000 seems to have been much worse in that there are allegations of government and military tolerance, as well as outright support for the cartels. Jorge Castañeda, the former "foreign minister of Mexico,"⁶⁷ under Vicente Fox, writes of "the *modus vivendi* that the government, society, and the cartels had over the past 50 years."⁶⁸ He explains that "there was no explicit deal or negotiation, but there was an understanding...followed by all sides."⁶⁹ Castañeda's words provide an insider's confirmation of what many have suspected for years, that the Mexican government had a peaceful coexistence with the cartels, which is partially responsible for their having "reached a level of power, wealth, violence, and penetration of the state that made the situation untenable."⁷⁰ Interestingly, Castañeda does not discuss the aforementioned "*modus vivendi*," as simple a past reality, rather, he believes and argues that "we need to go back to [it]."⁷¹ Such

⁶⁵ Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs," 12.

⁶⁶ Ibid. For Camp's brief discussion see footnote 31 of his article.

⁶⁷ Jorge Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," *CATO Institute Economic Development Bulletin* 13 (May 2010): 1.

⁶⁸ Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1.

⁷¹ Ibid., 3.

an attitude towards the cartels is defeatist, and it is precisely because of this mindset that the DTOs rose to such heights in the first place.

Camp provides another useful example of the government's tolerance of cartels and the drug industry when he references the story of General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, in which "the general...openly associated with drug traffickers for years."⁷² What is so alarming about these allegations is that General Gutiérrez Rebollo served as "drug czar" under President Ernesto Zedillo,⁷³ the last PRI president of Mexico. Such revelations indicate that the cartels have infiltrated the highest levels of Mexican authority. One must agree with Camp's reluctance to accept that "Mexican military and civilian intelligence," as well as "the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency," were entirely blind to these happenings.⁷⁴ Such allegations raise the question of whether the Mexican government tolerated, or even showed outright support, for the drug industry and the DTOs.

Tolerance or Outright Support?

Some may say that Castañeda's words are not honest enough, and that in fact there were times where the government not only tolerated the existence of the cartels but also supported their continued existence. There have been several claims made against Vicente Fox and his administration's relationship with certain cartels, including ones later affirmed by American agencies. As reported by Anabel Hernández in *Los Señores del Narco*, Guillermo Eduardo Ramírez Peyro, an insider of

⁷² Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs," 11.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

the Vicente Carillo Fuentes (VCF) cartel "before and during its time with the [Sinaloa] *Federation*,"⁷⁵ confirmed that "the government of Vicente Fox offered protection to the organization...when they were still associated with Joaquin Guzman Loera."⁷⁶ Ramirez Peyra, who became an informant, also reports that "local authorities in Chihuahua, federal [authorities], and the Mexican army...were involved in the transport [of drugs] in Mexican naval ships or vehicles belonging to the PGR."⁷⁷

These claims are alarming to say the least, since they provide evidence of direct involvement by members of a government agency in drug trafficking; the reach of the cartels power is astounding. Furthermore, Ramirez Peyro also became aware of the fact that "Fox...consulted with the cartel de Juarez. He [Fox] was going to attack the enemy cartels like the Tijuana and Gulf; that way, the Juárez cartel would operate...without the government...on top of them."⁷⁸ If these claims proved to be truthful, there are serious repercussions for Mexico. First, it further complicates the war on drugs since it will have been shown that Mexican authorities have, in some extreme cases, been under the employ of the cartels themselves. Second, it demonstrates just how enmeshed the cartels have made themselves within the necessary Mexican agencies so as to facilitate their operations.

Ramirez Peyro's accusations would be less damaging to the government had they not been "affirmed by the investigations of a DEA agent in Mexico in May of 2006."⁷⁹ These findings provided the nail in the coffin, so to speak, of Fox's relations with the cartels,

⁷⁵ Anabel Hernández, *Los Señores del Narco* (Mexico D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010), 393.

⁷⁶ *Dallas Morning News*, October 15, 2006 quoted in Anabel Hernández, *Los Señores del Narco* (Mexico D.F.: Grijalbo, 2010), 393.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* The PGR stands for Procuraduría General de la República, a department similar to the American Attorney General's office, this taken from PGR, *Homepage*, <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 394.

especially that of "El Chapo". The agent confirmed that "the government of Vicente Fox gave protection to Joaquin Guzman Loera and his associates."⁸⁰ Sadly, it seems to be the case that the Ramirez Peyro accusation, as reported by the DEA agent, that "the Mexican government, the police, the military...they are the cartel," has been the reality in Mexico for quite some time.⁸¹ Hernández agrees with Ramirez Peyro and adds her own damaging claim that "the public servants have become employees of the drug-traffickers."⁸² It becomes a mystery how one can then be surprised that the cartels became so powerful and influential when the Mexican government pre-Calderón was supportive of their operations. The question then becomes, was Calderón aware of this? Was he prepared to face the beast that had already infiltrated his own government?

Calderón's Decision

From 2003 until 2008, the two most prominent cartels active in Mexico were the Gulf Cartel and the Sinaloa Federation.⁸³ STRATFOR reports that the "primary causes of the increasing violence in 2006 and 2007," were violence between the two cartels clashing over territory within Mexico.⁸⁴ When Calderón assumed office in 2006, he chose the Gulf Cartel and their paramilitary branch, Los Zetas, as his first major target by "deploying large numbers of military troops," in Tamaulipas.⁸⁵ While this strategy may initially seem appealing, one can quickly see

⁸⁰ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 394.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

its fatal flaw, the Sinaloa Federation "went relatively untouched."⁸⁶ This only served to provide more power, territory, and military might to Forbes' 60th most powerful man in the world, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman,⁸⁷ the feared leader of the Sinaloa Cartel. To appreciate just how powerful Guzman is, one must understand that he was ranked on the same Forbes power list as Presidents Barack Obama (USA), Hu Jintao (PRC), and Pope Benedict XVI.⁸⁸

As a result of Calderón's pursuit of the Gulf cartel, there has been an increase in "turf battles and power struggles."⁸⁹ Furthermore, it has created "a vacuum of power,"⁹⁰ that, according to STRATFOR, has led to "splits within these organizations and a resurgence of previously obsolete cartels."⁹¹ Such developments are concrete examples of the Mexican Hydra concept; Calderón pursued the beast and attempted to cut off one of its heads (Gulf), later realizing that this single act would lead to the growth, reappearance, and reawakening of many others. This strategy is responsible for STRATFOR's earlier statement that "the country's security situation continues to deteriorate at what appears to be an unstoppable rate,"⁹² due to the fact that "the violence that so worried Mexican officials at the end of last year has spread, becoming more entrenched than ever."⁹³ This "deterioration" can be seen by: 1) a significant increase in death tolls each year from 2006-2010⁹⁴, 2) the increase in violence directed at both the police and military,

⁸⁶ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 11.

⁸⁷ Forbes Magazine Online, "The World's Most Powerful People 2010", <http://www.forbes.com/wealth/powerful-people/list>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 11.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 2.

⁹¹ Ibid., 11.

⁹² Ibid., 2.

⁹³ Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/04/world/americas>.

⁹⁴ According to the Trans-Border Institute, "Drug Violence in Mexico," 4, Fig. 1. Death tolls in 2006: 2,120, 2007: 2,280, 2008: 5,153, 2009: 6,587. As reported in Ken Ellingwood, "More than 12,000 killed," *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 16, 2010, 2010 death toll: 12,456.

3) the targeting and "assassinations of high-ranking government officials," and 4) "an expansion of the cartels' arsenals."⁹⁵ These realities force one to ask two questions: can this strategy remain in place under a newly elected Mexican president, starting in 2012? Can the Mexican people stomach more death?

La "Traicion"

While Calderón focused in on the Gulf cartel for his initial anti-drug operations, the Sinaloa Federation also suffered due to internal conflict, leading to increased intra-cartel violence within Guzman's organization.⁹⁶ The initial composition of the Sinaloa Federation was an alliance of sorts, led by "El Chapo", between a) Guzman's Sinaloa Cartel, b) Arturo Beltran Leyva's Beltran Leyva Organization, and c) Vicente Carrillo Fuentes' Juarez Cartel (VCF).⁹⁷ In 2008, the Juarez cartel separated from the federation, a move that may have something to do with one of its leader's, Vicente Carillo Leyva⁹⁸, ties to the Beltran Leyva cartel who had severed all formal ties with Guzman in early 2008.⁹⁹

In perhaps one of the most storied acts of the cartel conflict, "el Chapo" established himself not only as "the most wanted drug lord in Mexico,"¹⁰⁰ but also as the single most hated cartel leader "as he has come under attack from nearly every other cartel...[and] the Mexican

⁹⁵ The reasons for the continued worsening of Mexico's "security situation" were compiled from STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 15-16.

⁹⁶ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 11.

⁹⁷ Information concerning composition of Sinaloa Federation alliance compiled from Ibid., 7-8 + 11.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 7-8.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 6.

government.”¹⁰¹ With tensions between Guzman and the Beltran Leyva organization running extremely high, Guzman committed “la traicion”, or the betrayal, in which he facilitated the capture of his former ally Alfredo Beltran Leyva, by his having “provided information to the authorities.”¹⁰² Guzman however, did not escape this allegation unscathed; on January 9, 2008, the Beltran Leyva family ordered the murder of Guzman’s son, Édgar Guzmán López.¹⁰³ These betrayals and acts of violence would only be the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, of the increasing violence and disregard for human life taking place today in Mexico between DTOs. As STRATFOR summarizes, “the increased turbulence in intercartel relations has produced unprecedented levels of violence that show no sign of abating.”¹⁰⁴ Such realities call Calderón and the Mexican government’s legitimacy into question given the fact that such statistics demonstrate how “human rights,” are frequently violated and “rule of law” is slowly becoming more theoretical and less of a reality. Just one example of the “unprecedented levels of violence” is the violence occurring between the VCF and Sinaloa cartels, which “has left more than 2,000 dead in Chihuahua state so far this year (2008),”¹⁰⁵; roughly 5 Sinaloa-VCF cartel related deaths per day.

¹⁰¹ STRATFOR, “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 7.

¹⁰² Ibid., 11.

¹⁰³ Plan to murder “el Chapo’s” son by Beltran Leyva family obtained from STRATFOR “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 11. Date of murder obtained from Javier Valdez Cárdenas, “Sinaloa, en jaque por la violencia tras ser asesinado hijo del Chapo,” *La Jornada*, January 9, 2008, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2008/05/10/index.php?section=politica&article=003n1pol>.

¹⁰⁴ STRATFOR, “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 12.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 8.

Passing of the Guard

As mentioned, until 2008 the Gulf Cartel and Sinaloa Federation were the two most prominent drug-trafficking organizations in Mexico.¹⁰⁶ However, since Calderón's offensive against the Gulf cartel, it now remains unclear as to "whether[or not] the cartel is even intact," anymore.¹⁰⁷ Perhaps one of the reasons for their decline in power and relevance in the drug-trafficking industry could be due to their separation from former allies, los Zetas, after Gulf leader Osiel Cardenas Guillen was extradited in 2007.¹⁰⁸ STRATFOR analysis goes so far as to suggest that "Los Zetas were the primary reason for Gulf's power."¹⁰⁹ Such an observation indicates that the government has begun to lose its grip on the "monopoly of violence," mentioned earlier by Ortega Sánchez. Since the decline of the Gulf cartel, the Sinaloa cartel has been swift to capitalize on their counterparts' misfortune. It is said that the Sinaloa Cartel remains "the most capable,"¹¹⁰ as well as the "the most active smuggler of cocaine [to the U.S.],"¹¹¹ Furthermore, it appears to be the only Mexican drug-trafficking organization capable of "establish[ing] operations in previously unknown areas,"¹¹² and is "the most active in diversifying its export markets[to]...Latin American and European countries."¹¹³ These findings point to the increase in the DTOs' operating capabilities and are a testament to their power and dominion over the drug industry.

While "El Chapo's" Sinaloa cartel is still the biggest threat to the Mexican government and the other cartels themselves, the Beltran

¹⁰⁶ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid. STRATFOR report indicates these operations are taking place in "Peru, Paraguay, and Argentina," among others.

Leyva organization seems to have risen to a much more prominent role over the past few years. STRATFOR concludes that they are now "capable of trafficking drugs and going toe-to-toe with the Sinaloa cartel,"¹¹⁴ and that they have developed a penchant for "order[ing] targeted assassinations of high-ranking government officials."¹¹⁵ What is so alarming about this activity is that it demonstrates just how little the DTOs respect or fear the authorities in Mexico. In light of this reality it seems fair to say that the Mexican government has lost a certain level of legitimacy if the cartels are free to continue their heinous crimes and acts of violence against government authorities. Furthermore, one can assume that it is also an indication of "rule of law," being called into question if the legal system, as an institution, is not fulfilling its duty.

Just as Guzman's insatiable desire to control the primary corridors to the United States has led him to openly engage and massacre both the Juarez and Tijuana cartels¹¹⁶, the Beltran Leyva cartel's desire to compete with and match the Sinaloa Cartel has led to blatant acts of aggression towards the Mexican government. Both of these forces are examples that demonstrate a total lack of respect for human life. Furthermore, this phenomenon becomes abundantly clear in the 15,273 reported drug-related deaths in 2010.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 6.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Information concerning Sinaloa aggression towards Juarez and Tijuana cartels acquired from STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 8-9.

¹¹⁷ José de Córdoba and David Luhnnow, "In Mexico, Death Toll in Drug War Hits Record," *Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 2011.
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703889204576078363012731514.html?mod=google_news_ws.

U.S. Involvement; Merida Initiative

Any long-term victory Mexico is to have over the drug-trafficking industry that makes its home within Mexico's borders will depend significantly on U.S. financial and intelligent support. According to the STRATFOR security report, shortly after his election, Calderón allowed a greater "number of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) offices in Mexico and to acquire[d] new forensic technology from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives to better track gun purchases."¹¹⁸ This decision was a risky move on Calderón's part, given "Mexico's historic reluctance to allow the United States to establish a stronger security presence on its territory."¹¹⁹ As reported in *The New York Times* in early December 2010, "the United States government provides Mexico with intelligence to pinpoint where top drug lords are hiding out, trains elite troops, and American officials discuss strategy to try to quell the violence in Ciudad Juárez, which has become ground zero in the drug war."¹²⁰ Such reports indicate that the United States is attempting to equip the Mexican authorities with sufficient training so as to get as close as possible to direct American involvement without actually having to encroach on Mexican soil, something the Mexican government would simply never allow.

One sign of this plan's success, according to the same security report, is the amount of narcotics and firearms discovered by Mexican officials.¹²¹ As reported, "Mexican Attorney General Arturo Chavez Chavez...noted that authorities have seized about \$11.2-billion worth of drugs and secured more than \$420 million while clamping down on money

¹¹⁸ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁰ Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War."

¹²¹ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 9.

laundering operations during Calderón's administration."¹²² Two examples of this took place in: 1) 2007, "customs officials in Manzanillo, Colima state, seized 26 tons of cocaine from a Hong Kong-flagged ship that had sailed from Colombia...the largest in Mexican history,"¹²³ and 2) 2007, "federal police near Guadalajara, Jalisco state, uncovered the largest synthetic drug production facility ever found in the country, recovering some 8,000 barrels of ephedrine and acetone, two key ingredients in the manufacture of crystal methamphetamine."¹²⁴

According to Castañeda, "the Mexican authorities claim-all of the violence and all of the killing is done with American guns. In fact, we only know with certainty that about 18 percent of guns come from the United States."¹²⁵ Furthermore, he also claims "the rest is surely coming from Central America, countries of the former of Soviet Union, and beyond...you don't need a border with the United States to gain easy access to guns."¹²⁶ To Castañeda's claim, one must raise a challenge. STRATFOR research indicates that, in fact, "in 2008...some 3,480 (87 percent) [of guns] were shown to have come from the United States."¹²⁷ Furthermore, this number too, is far from conclusive since it is skewed by the fact that "the 3,480 guns positively traced to the United States equals less than 12 percent of the total arms seized in Mexico in 2008 and less than 48 percent of all those submitted by the Mexican government to the ATF for tracing."¹²⁸ While the STRATFOR claims are the figures to be trusted over those of Castañeda, one must also take away

¹²² CNN Wire Staff, "Mexican drug war."

¹²³ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 9-10.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹²⁵ Rubén Aguilar V. and Jorge G. Castañeda, *El Narco: La Guerra Fallida* (Mexico City: Punto de Lectura, 2009), p. 68, quoted in Jorge Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," *CATO Institute Economic Development Bulletin* 13 (May 2010), 3.

¹²⁶ Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 3.

¹²⁷ Stewart, *Mexico's Gun Supply*.

¹²⁸ Ibid. As stated in this article, the ATF is the "U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives."

that part of the problem is that the precise number of American weapons that make their way into DTO hands remains unclear. Educated assumptions can be deduced based on the data at hand, however, at this point it seems impossible to get a complete understanding of the true extent of the U.S.-Mexico illegal firearm trade.

The implications of these findings will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, however it must briefly be noted that if Mexico is going to find any way to decrease cartel operations, it seems as if the proper place to start would be to control illegal firearm flow to Mexico. How this task is to be carried out will be investigated later, but based on the information provided by Castañeda and STRATFOR, it is difficult to imagine such an operation being successful without American cooperation.¹²⁹

Another major milestone in the Mexican-U.S. partnership towards a victory over the cartels and drug-trafficking industry is the signing of the Merida Initiative. This plan is unique in that the American contribution is dependent on the needs of the Mexican government.¹³⁰ As Bailey discusses, the Merida Initiative was developed "by the executive branches in both countries (Mexico and the U.S.) in 2007 in response to Mexico's preferences. The US Congress subsequently negotiated specific provisions,"¹³¹; he is quick to note that the Mexican legislative branch did not partake in the development of the Initiative since it "was considered an executive agreement and not a treaty."¹³² Bailey also notes that "the Obama administration (2009-2013) maintained the basic thrust of Merida, but made significant adjustments, e.g., to engage in social

¹²⁹ Castañeda argues that "we should find other solutions with the United States," in Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 3.

¹³⁰ Bailey, "Combating Organized Crime," 4.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid. Quote taken from Bailey's own words in footnote 3 of his article.

development programs and pilot projects in border cities.”¹³³ This demonstrates a continued effort, through the terms of at least two American Presidents, on behalf of the American government to help the Mexican government combat the DTOs.

The Merida Initiative, according to STRATFOR, is “a U.S. counternarcotics assistance plan that is projected to give Mexico some \$900 million over two years in the form of equipment and training.”¹³⁴ Furthermore, the Initiative is reported to provide “\$1.4 Billion...to combat the trans-border war on drugs, fight organized crime, and counter terrorism throughout Mexico and Central America.”¹³⁵ Involved in the “equipment and training” segment of the Initiative are: “basic helicopters, canine units, communications gear, and inspection equipment...training and technical advice on vetting new local police officers, as well as case-management software to track and carry out orderly investigations.”¹³⁶

Another indicator of increased cooperation between Mexico and the U.S. has been Calderón’s “increase in extraditions of drug trafficking suspects to the United States,”¹³⁷; he had “granted more than 150,” by December 2008.¹³⁸ STRATFOR reports that “this approach makes it far more difficult for drug traffickers to continue operating their businesses from behind bars.”¹³⁹

Unfortunately for Calderón and the Mexican government, while these are certainly signs of improvement, and indeed minor successes,

¹³³ Bailey, “Combating Organized Crime,” 4.

¹³⁴ STRATFOR, “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 10.

¹³⁵ Maria Delle Donne and Laura Starr, “Does the *Merida Initiative* Represent a New Direction for U.S.-Mexico Relations, or Does it Simply Refocus the Issue Elsewhere?” *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, December 19, 2007, <http://www.worldpress.org/Americas/3020.cfm>.

¹³⁶ Donne and Starr, “*Merida Initiative*.” For a more detailed breakdown of Initiative’s distribution of funding read “The ‘*Merida Initiative*’ Proposal” section of article.

¹³⁷ STRATFOR, “Mexican Drug Cartels,” 10.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

they pale in comparison to the reality of the power the DTOs possess. First, while U.S.-Mexico cooperation is necessary if victory is to be achieved, the \$1.4 Billion of the Merida Initiative are insignificant when compared to the estimated "\$13.8 Billion [of revenue] in 2006,"¹⁴⁰ retained by the cartels and Mexican drug-trafficking industry. To even suggest that a plan, which only provides financial assistance equivalent to 10% the revenue of the cartels, can make a meaningful dent in the cartels' operations would be foolish. The Initiative is severely limited in what it is capable of accomplishing, given that American involvement in Mexico is controversial since it carries consequences for the Mexican president who allows it.¹⁴¹ However, the United States will have to play a sizeable role it seems, if the violence is to cease or the cartels' operating abilities are to be restricted.

Evidence of the conflict being more than simply a "Mexican problem," is the aforementioned confiscation of "8,000 barrels of ephedrine and acetone,"; products necessary for the production of crystal methamphetamine.¹⁴² As reported in a July 2008 STRATFOR security report, "methamphetamine production is one of the most profitable enterprises in which Mexican drug cartels are involved...responsible for an estimated 80 percent of the methamphetamine on the streets in the United States;"¹⁴³ so long as there is a demand, there will be supply.

¹⁴⁰ William Booth and Steve Fainaru, "Cartels Face and Economic Battle: U.S. Marijuana Growers Cutting into Profits of Mexican Traffickers," *The Washington Post*, October 7, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/06/AR2009100603847.html>. Data mentioned in Camp article "Armed Forces and Drugs," in footnote 30.

¹⁴¹ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 10. As STRATFOR states in their security brief, "Given Mexico's historical wariness of Washington, this relationship represents a careful balancing act for Calderón, who must consider the domestic political cost of allowing greater American influence in Mexico while relying on the United States for resources, training and intelligence sharing."

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ STRATFOR, "July 28, 2008 Security Memo," 2. The Memo was reproduced in a word document, therefore the pagination is not the same as the original.

Castañeda also touches on the issue of American demand for a Mexican-supplied product. He writes "since then [1969], every American president has recognized the need to do something about drug demand, but nothing has happened because it's not feasible."¹⁴⁴ Again, one sees a defeatist attitude from a formerly high ranking member of the Mexican government. It no longer seems such a mystery how the DTOs managed to gain so much power.

When analyzing Calderón's increase in granting extradition requests, one can quickly see the problem in calling this a success. First, while it certainly may affect the prisoner's ability to conduct international drug-trafficking operations from an American prison cell, it speaks much more to the power wielded by these individuals in Mexico. That is, if they are capable of continuing in their position as leaders of major cartels while imprisoned in Mexico, they must have both the respect and power necessary to bypass the obstacles (police, lack of communication, restricted activity and movement) provided by a prison environment. This phenomenon also speaks to another stereotyped problem facing Mexico's war on drugs, corruption in the police and judicial systems. If an individual can continue to run a cartel from prison, one suspects the police and judicial systems must be somehow involved, or at the very least indifferent to that individual's activity. Second, this policy of increased extradition to the U.S. cannot be maintained long term. While it certainly may have an effect on the cartels' operations by imprisoning their leaders in the United States, one cannot argue successfully that it is acceptable or feasible for Calderón and his successor to ship all drug-related criminals to the United States.

¹⁴⁴ Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 3.

Signs of Improvement?

When discussing the level of success that President Calderón's strategy has had against the growing violence between cartels and the government, one must also look to see the effects that the strategy is having directly on the operating abilities of the cartels in Mexico. In terms of this measure, STRATFOR lists two primary means by which one can analyze the amount of success the Mexican strategy has had: 1) price of drugs in the United States and 2) types of criminal activity conducted by cartels.

As STRATFOR reports, "it is, of course, impossible to know the true amount of illegal drugs entering the country, but one indicator is the street price of substances."¹⁴⁵ In a U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy report issued in November 2007, "the average price of powder cocaine in many American cities increased nearly 50 percent over the year. This suggests that a decreased supply through Mexico has driven the price up."¹⁴⁶ While this is certainly a plausible explanation for the reported increase in cocaine prices, it does not seem to be the likely explanation. That is, while economic theory does suggest that a decrease in supply leads to an increase in price, this explanation is far from complete or satisfactory.

The more likely explanation is simply that street prices have increased since the government offensive against the cartels began due to an increase in risk to the cartels and producers. Put simply, the costs of production, not only financial but also political, have increased tremendously over the past 5 years since Calderón's strategy began. Evidence of this cost of is the change in transportation methods of the drugs from Latin America, through Mexico, and eventually into

¹⁴⁵ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 10.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

the United States. While the preferred method of transport for the traffickers has long been "airborne,"¹⁴⁷ and "maritime,"¹⁴⁸ since the implementation of the current drug policy, the cartels have been forced to become more creative in their methods in order to counter "the far greater scrutiny."¹⁴⁹In light of these new challenges, the Mexican DTOs have turned to more non-conventional methods including "smuggl[ing] on commercial flights,"¹⁵⁰ and "semisubmersible vessels to bring multiton shipments of cocaine to Mexico's shores."¹⁵¹ It should be noted that the drug trafficking industry is a lucrative one, and that those who benefit from its financial returns (the cartels) are not likely to decrease supply to the United States so easily. Rather, the fact that the violence has become so overwhelming should count as evidence in favor of their continued trafficking activity and continued ability to provide the necessary quantity of illegal drugs to American consumers.

Furthermore, these organizations seem capable of increasing the street prices almost entirely at will, knowing that this will likely increase their total revenue as one would not expect cocaine and other drug-addicts to respond to a dramatic increase in cost. That is, in my opinion the demand for narcotics to an addict is almost perfectly inelastic; it will not be sensitive to or respond highly to changes in price. Therefore, it would be far from wise to assume that a valid indication of Calderón's success is the street price of drugs in the United States. However, if a comprehensive and reliable study were to be conducted regarding the actual quantity or weight of narcotics entering the United States each year directly due to the Mexican drug

¹⁴⁷ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 13.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

trafficking organizations, one could begin to use it to assess the success or failure of an anti-drug policy.

The second indicator discussed by the STRATFOR report is that "many drug traffickers have turned to other illegal activities to supplement their incomes."¹⁵² This implies that the cartels are doing several things: 1) new criminal activity and 2) as mentioned earlier, potentially diversifying their consumer base to "Latin American and European countries."¹⁵³ In terms of the first point, STRATFOR notes that organizations such as "Los Zetas...have become increasingly involved in extortion and kidnapping for ransom,"¹⁵⁴ and one would certainly have to agree that this suggests that some organizations have diversified their criminal activity in order to continue to prosper in the face of "a more difficult operating environment."¹⁵⁵

When turning to the second point, that of the cartels expanding their consumer base to include new geographic markets in order to break from their dependence on American consumers, the Mexican cartels have quickly become "the central figures in the drug trade in the Western Hemisphere."¹⁵⁶ The danger in this reality is two-fold: first, if the cartels can diversify their clientele, the task of defeating them becomes a multi-national problem, and second, there is the potential for further growth and strengthening of the cartels themselves. Both of these issues pose serious threats to the Mexican government and people as this implies that the cartels have succeeded in becoming both wealthy and militarily powerful, international organizations that are no longer confined by the borders of a single nation. The risk then

¹⁵² STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 14.

exists of further cross border violence, that could in turn, spark further human rights violations and death rates at numbers still inconceivable. Again, one recalls that issues of human rights violations are used as indicators by the FSI to determine a nation's risk of failing.

Despite the fact that the DTOs have become more complex and sophisticated organizations, there have been tangible claims of success made by the Mexican authorities in the past year. For example, according to the PGR "more than half of the 37 most wanted crime bosses...have been captured or killed," which implies that there has been concrete governmental success against the cartels and their operations.¹⁵⁷ President Calderón was quick to celebrate this fact by noting that it was a significant triumph by exclaiming "19 [cartel leaders] are no longer in charge of their cartels, [that's] more than half."¹⁵⁸ While Calderón does make a compelling argument, one need not look very far to see that it does not stand in the face of other statistics. For example, despite the increase in captured cartel operatives, Calderón still has to stand against the reality that more than 30,000 Mexicans have died on his watch; the rising death toll shows no signs of slowing.

¹⁵⁷ Randal C. Archibold, "In Mexico, Massacres and Claims of Progress," *The New York Times*, February 1, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/02/world/americas/02mexico.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Proceso Staff Writer, "Presume Calderón captura de 19 de los 37 capos más buscados del país," *Proceso Online*, January 7, 2011, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/rv/modHome/detalleExclusiva/87060>. For a list of these individuals on the PGR list see **Appendix B-1**.

U.S. Military Involvement?

Such attacks on the leadership of Mexican DTOs draw parallels to American "dealing[s]...with terrorists in Pakistan;"¹⁵⁹ Representative Silvestre Reyes argues "the U.S. needs to join Mexico's fight...[by] taking out the heads of cartels," even suggesting that "drone missile strikes" could potentially be used.¹⁶⁰ What is confusing about Rep. Reyes remarks is that this is precisely what the Mexican strategy has been up to this point in time, to eliminate the leadership of the cartels, as evidenced by Calderón's aforementioned statement, concerning the capture of many DTO leaders. Furthermore, it is inconceivable that any Mexican administration would ever permit American air strikes, manned or unmanned, on Mexican soil; this would be seen as an act of aggression and forced involvement by "el gigante del norte," or the "giant of the north," and its government. Ultimately, the Mexican government would be dealt a catastrophic blow to its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens if it were to allow for American military operations using unmanned missiles to occur in Mexico. Furthermore, any direct U.S. military involvement in Mexico will be a clear indication that "legitimacy," and "rule of law," have been lost and suspended, respectively, in Mexico. Only in such a case would it be remotely possible for the United States military to act as an occupying force in the sovereign Mexican state. That is, Mexico will have failed, as a state, if the United States decides to intervene.

Despite Carlos Pascual's claim that "longstanding impunity, not Mr. Calderón's offensive, should be blamed for the violence,"¹⁶¹ it is

¹⁵⁹ Staff Writer, "Reyes: Take Out Mexican Cartel Heads; U.S. Rep. Thinks Drone Missile Strikes Possible," *ABC News*, April 4, 2011, <http://www.kvia.com/news/27425764/detail.html>.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. According to article, Representative Reyes is a "D-Texas."

¹⁶¹ Archibald, "In Mexico."

simply undeniable that the staggering death toll has occurred exclusively since Calderón's decision to go after the cartels with force. That is not to say that the tension and conditions for inter-cartel war were not present prior to Calderón's administration, or even that the violence would not have occurred otherwise, however his policy is intrinsically linked to the outbreak and increase in violence. Ultimately, it is a reality that the violence emerged under the anti-narcotic policy of Calderón, but that does not excuse those who claim it was entirely his fault that the war began. In reality, the setting has been ripe for conflict, all that was needed was the proper offense to set it off.

One must also be careful when approaching statements made by Pascual during his tenure as ambassador, especially since particular comments were recently brought to light and are said to be responsible for his resignation from the post in March 2011.¹⁶² Pascual and his officials were especially critical of Mexican government in saying that there was "'widespread corruption' in Mexican security agencies."¹⁶³ What is so unusual about this comment is that it is in direct opposition to his prior statements placing the blame of the violence on "longstanding impunity."¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, Pascual criticized and "described the Mexican army as 'slow' and 'risk averse',"¹⁶⁵ only serving to further strain his already damaged relationship with Calderón. Such inconsistency between public and private statements certainly played a role in Calderón's growing frustrations with American intervention and participation in an

¹⁶² CNN Wire Staff, "U.S. Ambassador to Mexico resigns," *CNN.com*, March 20, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/03/19/mexico.ambassador.resigns/index.html?hpt=T2>.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Archibold, "In Mexico."

¹⁶⁵ CNN Wire Staff, "U.S. Ambassador."

issue that "does not concern him [Pascual]." ¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, Calderón must be careful when publicly reprimanding American interventions since, after all, this is a Mexican problem that requires international cooperation and assistance as the conflict extends from the U.S.-Mexico border down to Colombia.

Stronger than the Military?

In order to successfully combat the government's anti-narcotic strategy, the cartels must be extremely well equipped and trained in warfare, especially in mobile, guerilla tactics. As Camille Rougeron writes, it is "when individual armaments became increasingly portable and easy to hide, regular armies benefited less than their adversaries." ¹⁶⁷ As will be seen in the data to be discussed shortly, the Mexican DTOs have reached a level of fire power and organization that does rival that of the government, one in which it seems reasonable to assume that they are capable of conducting problematic and damaging operations using guerrilla tactics. Precisely as Rougeron writes, the DTOs stand to gain more than the government from newer, more advanced technology that allows them to exploit the few advantages they hold over the military. Quite simply, if they were not capable of this, the war could not have been drawn out over the last five years; the military would have quickly dealt with and quieted the cartels.

One way to understand the real capacity of conducting a counter-government strategy wielded by the cartels is to examine the amount of weapons confiscated and seized by the Mexican government. One of the

¹⁶⁶ CNN Wire Staff, "U.S. Ambassador."

¹⁶⁷ Camille Rougeron, "The Historical Dimension of Guerrilla Warfare," in *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan*, ed. Gérard Chaliand (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 39.

most alarming demonstrations of the cartels' military might can be seen in a July 26, 2009 release by the online Spanish news website *Milenio*. The article reports a PGR seizure of cartel weapons under the title of "PGR takes arsenal with anti-aircraft capabilities from narco."¹⁶⁸ In this informative account, the SIEDO¹⁶⁹, Mexico's organized crime specialty unit, claimed they "confiscated foreign made weapons with the capacity to take down planes, [technology] that we do not have in our country."¹⁷⁰ The weapons seized included, "18 rocket launchers, five .50 caliber rifles considered to be anti-aircraft capable, 29 .50 caliber Barrett rifles...two grenade launchers, 49 submachine PS90 guns capable of penetrating any type of armor, 142 Five Seven pistols, called "copkillers" for their ability to penetrate light armor, on vests and helmets."¹⁷¹ Such a find surely calls into question the government's ability to "successfully upholds a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order," as Weber argues is necessary for a state to exist,¹⁷² since the cartels are in some cases better equipped than the government forces.

A seizure of this nature not only provides insight into the sheer strength of the cartels and their soldiers, but it also sheds light on the magnitude of the uphill battle the government is facing. One need not have an extensive understanding of military history and weapons in order to see just how problematic a seizure such as this one truly is. As reported by *Milenio Online*, the "Attorney General's office recognized that organized crime is currently a step ahead of the

¹⁶⁸ *Milenio Online*, "Quita PGR al narco arsenal antiaéreo," July 26 2009, <http://impreso.milenio.com/node/8614185>.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. SIEDO stands for Subprocuraduría de Investigación Especializada en Delincuencia Organizada, the Attorney General office's special anti-organized crime unit.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Idea taken from José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2010), 19. Quote taken from Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 154.

federal government [of Mexico] in terms of weapons and technological advances used for conducting their illegal activity and that they also have anti-aircraft capability."¹⁷³ Echoing this statement, one police officer admitted that "the traffickers frequently have far more power than the police."¹⁷⁴ This reality does bode well for future government success.

Wielding such power and capacity for violent response, the cartels are in an excellent position to use extortion, laundering, and other fraudulent enterprises. One can now assume that, amidst several threats to governors, and other political authorities, the DTOs can potentially threaten their way out of prosecution and legal troubles. Given the choice between: 1) cracking down on the DTOs and their operations with a very real threat to one's life, and 2) turning the blind eye to their illegal operations in order to survive, it is not difficult to understand the moral dilemma facing Mexican authorities today. They are essentially presented with two options from the cartels: "Door 1, you cooperate; Door 2, we're doing it anyway."¹⁷⁵ This dilemma will prove to be instrumental in understanding the emotion and message expressed in Javier Sicilia's "Carta abierta a políticos y criminales,"¹⁷⁶ to be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

¹⁷³ *Milenio Online*, "Quita PGR al narco."

¹⁷⁴ Forero, "Colombia stepping up anti-drug training."

¹⁷⁵ This quote was directed at the American Government's takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, however the sentiment of the expression applies directly to the mentality of Cartel threats to Mexican authorities and business owners. Taken from Andrew Ross Sorkin, *Too Big To Fail: The inside story of how Wall Street and Washington fought to save the financial system-and themselves* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 227.

¹⁷⁶ Javier Sicilia, "Carta abierta a políticos y criminales," *Proceso.com.mx*, April 3, 2011, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/rv/modHome/detalleExclusiva/89858>.

Corruption in the ranks?

Mexican politicians and law enforcement have long battled the stigma of being accused of widespread corruption. However, stereotypes must originate somewhere and unfortunately, it is true that Mexico is no stranger to crooked politics and policing. Furthermore, corruption within the organizations dedicated to battling the DTOs in Mexico is potentially one of the biggest obstacles that must be overcome if victory is ever to be achieved. That is, ties between the cartels and government agents pose a serious threat to the possibility of success for the government and the Mexican people. In order to understand just how connected the two parties are, and to what extent cartel operations have on intra-governmental decision-making one must look at the confirmed examples of government agents and agencies, and their complicity in the drug-trafficking industry.

First, Anabel Hernández reports that in testimony given before the "United States Appellate Court from the 8th District,"¹⁷⁷ there had been several occasions in which "federal, state, and municipal," officers had engaged "in 'illegal killings' and...executions conducted by rival cartels."¹⁷⁸ This claim, if true, is devastating to the credibility of and faith the Mexican people have in the government's ability to protect them from this domestic danger. Furthermore, it is reasonable to ask: how can anyone expect the government to succeed in their anti-DTO mission if they cannot even maintain a common anti-DTO sentiment within their own agencies? This further raises the question of the government's legitimacy. Therefore, it becomes clear from examples such as this one that the government not only faces the task of defeating the DTOs and their ability to operate, but it also must simultaneously

¹⁷⁷ Taken from footnote 83 in Hernández, *Los Señores*, 395.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 394.

defeat the DTOs' influence and operating abilities within the government agencies themselves.

Second, Hernández brings up another issue from Guillermo Eduardo Ramirez Peyro's interaction with the aforementioned 8th Circuit Court of Appeals. As reported by Hernández, Ramirez Peyro "made the accusation that at all levels within the Mexican police force, there are illegal connections with drug-trafficking."¹⁷⁹ The most damning statements made regarding this accusation came when he singled out "the AFI [Agencia Federal de Investigaciones]¹⁸⁰- then led by Genaro Garcia Luna-which he accused of having revealed to the drug-traffickers the names of 'protected witnesses' in order to have them assassinated."¹⁸¹ However far-fetched such an accusation may seem, "the judge found *Lalo's* [Ramirez Peyro] testimony to be credible."¹⁸² How can a government be found to have complete control over the "rule of law," and maintain their "legitimacy," in the face of such alarming discoveries?

Obama's Opposition to Stricter Gun Control

The United States has taken a firm stance on gun control as a means by which to facilitate the Mexican anti-narcotic mission. As reported by Jorge G. Castañeda and Rubén Aguilar V., "in response to a reporter's question upon his first visit to México, President Barack Obama was very clear: his government would not alter the Second

¹⁷⁹ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 395.

¹⁸⁰ AFI stands for Agencia Federal de Investigaciones, which translates to Federal Agency for Investigations. This Agency is dedicated to "investigating and prosecuting those responsible for committing federal offenses as well as issues that fall within the civil sector that have an impact on national security or at the federal level." This information taken from PGR, *Agencia Federal de Investigación*, <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/Combate%20a%20la%20Delincuencia/Agencia%20Federal%20de%20Investigacion/Agencia%20Federal%20de%20Investigacion.asp>.

¹⁸¹ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 395.

¹⁸² "8th Circuit Court of Appeals, record number 08-2657" as quoted in footnote 83 in Hernández, *Los Señores*, 395.

Amendment of United States Constitution...nor would it propose stricter legislation to regulate its [firearms] purchase through an extension of the Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2004.”¹⁸³ This statement from the American President serves to affirm what Castañeda and Aguilar label one of their chapter headings, “the United States [is capable of, but] does not want to,” control the illegal firearm trade to Mexico.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, despite “no denial that its [the U.S.] laws concerning purchasing weapons are permissive,”¹⁸⁵ these authors provide three more examples of what they deem evidence of the United States continued disregard for their cooperation in the international fight against the illegal arms trade. They cite the following as examples: [1] “the government of the United States has not wanted to ratify the Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in 2000,¹⁸⁶ [2] nor has it signed the Interamerican Convention against the Production of and Illicit Trafficking of arms [ammunition, explosives, and other related materials]¹⁸⁷, ratified by 30 of the 34 member nations of the OAS.¹⁸⁸ [3] in early 2009, UNODC asked President Obama to place an

¹⁸³ Quote from Rubén Aguilar V. and Jorge G. Castañeda, *El Narco: La Guerra Fallida* (Mexico D.F.: Punto de Lectura, 2006), 65-66. The Assault Weapons Ban of 2004 includes the following ban: “It shall be unlawful for a person to manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic assault weapon.” While there are a myriad of exceptions in the actual bill, the most notable is the following: “the manufacture for, transfer to, or possession by the United States or a department or agency of the United States or a State or a department, agency, or political subdivision of a State, or a transfer to or possession by a law enforcement officer employed by such an entity for purposes of law enforcement (whether on or off duty);” Both of these points from the AWB taken from Library of Congress website at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c103:l:/temp/~c1032mlIjc:e643945>. For full text of the AWB see **Appendix B-2**.

¹⁸⁴ Aguilar V. and Castañeda, *El Narco*, 65.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁸⁶ The basic idea of this convention included “three Protocols...the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition.” Taken from UNODC website at <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html>. For further explanation of this convention see **Appendix B-3**.

¹⁸⁷ Organization of American States, *Multilateral Treaties*, <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-63.html>.

¹⁸⁸ This convention was established due to the fact that the member states of OAS had become, in their own words, “AWARE of the urgent need to prevent, combat, and eradicate

embargo on arms in order to restrict their illegal trafficking to Mexico," which did not occur due to the U.S. citing that it would be "incompatible with its internal legislation."¹⁸⁹

However, Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano has said that "the U.S. had to do a better job stopping the flow of American guns smuggles south to fuel Mexico's drug war."¹⁹⁰ The question is not then should the United States play a part in bringing about the end of the drug war in Mexico, but rather how should the U.S. combat the avenues through which DTOs acquire American weapons? This question must be asked given the fact that there appears to be at least some amount of discord between high-ranking American government officials on the issue.

U.S. Involvement in cartel weapon acquisition

The question: from where the Mexican DTOs have been accumulating their arsenals is as of yet unclear. There have been some links established between arms dealers and others that remain murky even 5 years into Calderón's war against drugs. However, there are indications that a decent amount of these weapons are coming from the United States through several sources. One example of the routes the cartels take to acquire American weapons was reported when "federal authorities indicted 20 men Tuesday [January 25, 2011] on charges of buying an

the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials, due to the harmful effects of these activities on the security of each state and the region as a whole, endangering the well-being of peoples, their social and economic development, and their right to live in peace;" taken from OAS website at <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-63.html>. For further explanation of this convention see **Appendix B-4**. OAS stands for the Organization of American States.

¹⁸⁹ All three examples from Aguilar V. and Castañeda, *El Narco*, 66-67.

¹⁹⁰ Will Weissert, "Napolitano touts safety of US border communities," *Associated Press*, January 31, 2011, http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110201/ap_on_re_us/us_border_napolitano.

estimated 700 weapons in Arizona," with the apparent intent to deliver them to the "Sinaloa drug cartel."¹⁹¹ The report added that this development is part of a greater investigation, which has discovered "as many as 60,000 weapons seized in Mexico and traced to U.S. sources."¹⁹² In this case, there was the example of one particular trafficker Uriel Patino who purchased 70 AK-47s from March to August 2010.¹⁹³ Needless to say, it is becoming apparent that the cartels are having little, if any, difficulty acquiring the weapons to protect themselves and their industry. How one is to go about combating the avenues the cartels take to arm themselves is not a simple question to answer. There are those who argue for stricter U.S. government regulation of arms movement, and there are also those who fear any government regulation would encroach upon their understanding of the rights protected by the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.¹⁹⁴

One potential solution proposed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives would involve "include[ing] long-barreled weapons in the requirement for gun sellers to report multiple weapon sales to a single buyer."¹⁹⁵ Seeing this a potential abuse of congressional authority over the 2nd amendment, the National Rifle Association (NRA) and its supporters have argued that the majority of American weapons acquired by the cartels were from "weapons stocks officially supplied by the U.S. government to Mexico."¹⁹⁶ One need not get into a technical debate concerning the protections afforded to

¹⁹¹ Both quotes from Kim Murphy, "20 arrested in gun smuggling case," *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 2011, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-gun-smuggling-20110126,0,3179205.story>.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ The 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution reads as follows: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Taken from National Archives, *The Bill of Rights*, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html.

¹⁹⁵ Murphy, "20 arrested."

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

American citizens under the 2nd amendment in order to discuss the merits of both sides of the argument.

In order to enter into such a discussion it must be stated that the process by which these weapons are delivered to the DTOs is known as "straw purchasers[ing]," and that these individuals are "legal residents of the state who buy the weapons from licensed gun dealers and certify that they are for their own use, but end up selling the guns to the drug cartels."¹⁹⁷ It seems, therefore that the best way to combat this trade would be to establish a system that prevents these weapons from getting into the hands of "straw purchasers," who intend to sell them to Mexican and other DTOs.

Whichever side of the 2nd amendment debate one falls on is, quite frankly, irrelevant since the 2nd amendment applies to American citizens privately owning weapons, not to foreign nationals and organizations. Therefore, the NRA's concerns of an abuse of congressional authority are unfounded in that the government could regulate the purchasing of firearms so as to restrict the number of weapons being supplied to Mexican DTOs without infringing on the American people's "right to bear arms". That is to say, all can certainly agree that the American government has the obligation to protect its citizens, as well as a responsibility to those global citizens affected by American weapons, which can be accomplished by not allowing American weapons to be purchased for and supplied to organized crime and any activity or organization related to terrorism.

¹⁹⁷ Murphy, "20 arrested."

Crossing the border?

As the violence increases in Mexico, there is also an increase in the prevalence of the fear that it could potentially spill over into the United States. Understandably, one should be concerned over the potential for Mexican DTOs and their violent arms to extend beyond the border between Mexico and the US in order to further establish their grip over the continent's drug routes. To these concerns, the United States has had a very clear response, this has not yet become a reality. Secretary of Homeland Security [Janet] "Napolitano told an audience, that it's 'inaccurate to state, as too many have, that the border is overrun with violence and out of control.'"¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, Napolitano also noted that "this statement, often made only to score political points, is just plain wrong."¹⁹⁹ Ultimately, one must take this concern into account, especially when analyzing the delicate relations between Mexico and the US.

Should the violence spill over into the southwestern American states, and the US does in fact provide "an overwhelming response,"²⁰⁰ the situation will have escalated from a primarily domestic conflict between cartels and Mexican authorities, into one between Mexican cartels, Mexican authorities, and the United States politico-military machine. Such a scenario is not desirable for any of the three parties. The cartels do not have the military and financial capacity to carry out a successful conflict against the Mexican government, each other, and the United States military simultaneously. Additionally, one assumes that the Mexican government does not wish to destabilize the historically tense relationship and diplomatic balance between asking

¹⁹⁸ Weissert, "Napolitano touts."

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

for American assistance without jeopardizing their own sovereignty and autonomy.

Despite Napolitano's claims that border violence is not as bad as is often reported by the media, it appears that the situation is in fact deteriorating. The increase in the cross-border nature of the violence can be seen in two examples: 1) the killing of an American ICE²⁰¹ agent and 2) a recent U.S. government sweep of DTO members operating within the United States. On February 15, 2011, an American ICE agent, was killed and his partner injured in an attack carried out by Mexican DTO "Los Zetas".²⁰² However, according to a statement made by Mexican army Col. Ricardo Trevilla "that event occurred because of the characteristics of the vehicle, given that they (the suspects) thought it was being used by members of a rival criminal group."²⁰³ While one should take into account the potential that this attack was in fact a misunderstanding as to who was being attacked, the troubling reality is that crimes against authorities of all backgrounds are taking place with increasing regularity.

The second example is related to the first in that it demonstrates how Napolitano's statement that any violence crossing into the US would be met with "an overwhelming response,"²⁰⁴ may be more than political rhetoric. While the violence in this case did not take place on American soil, it did cost the life of an American Government agent, something the U.S. government needs to maintain awareness of and sensitivity to. Napolitano's words appeared to be followed through on as "U.S. authorities launched a nationwide sweep of drug trafficking

²⁰¹ ICE stands for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, taken from E. Eduardo Castillo, "Mexico army: Suspect says ICE agent slain in error," *Associated Press*, February 24, 2011, http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110224/ap_on_re_la_am_ca/lt_mexico_ice_agents_shot.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Weissert, "Napolitano touts."

suspects...[in which] more than 100 suspects were arrested in nine cities."²⁰⁵ What these two examples demonstrate is that five years in, the US government is actively pursuing the DTOs and their operations within the United States, as a means by which to facilitate their demise within Mexico. As Agent Derek Maltz sums it up "if you attack a U.S. law enforcement officer, we are not going to back down."²⁰⁶

In a surprising move that echoed Secretary Napolitano's earlier comments, the President "Obama...acknowledged that the U.S. must stem the flow of cash and guns to Mexico that have aided the cartels."²⁰⁷ Contrary to the sentiment expressed earlier by Castañeda and Aguilar, this is a tremendous step in the right direction for the United States administration towards recognizing the need for their support if the cartels are to be defeated. The President went so far as to say that "we [the U.S.] are very mindful that the battle President Calderón is fighting inside of Mexico is not just his battle, it's also ours."²⁰⁸ It is not surprising that this new vigor for a cooperative effort against the cartels comes shortly after the death of an American agent in Mexico as discussed. Furthermore, it is unlikely that this renewed interest in cooperating with Mexico is unrelated to an event in which the drug-related violence has directly affected American interests.

²⁰⁵ Brian Bennett, "Drug trafficking sweep launched in response to agent's death," *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 2011, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-cartel-arrests-20110225,0,6169725.story?track=rss>.

²⁰⁶ Derek Maltz is a "special agent in charge of special operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration," taken from Bennett, "Drug trafficking sweep," <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-cartel-arrests-20110225,0,6169725.story?track=rss>.

²⁰⁷ Julie Pace, "Obama, Calderón pledge cooperation on drug wars," *The Washington Post*, March 3, 2011, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41886131/ns/politics-white-house/>.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Conclusions

Given the fact that the Mexican military is fully entrenched in the drug conflict, and there appears to be no slowing of the violence, how is the Mexican government supposed to continue its strategy of eliminating the DTOs? First, there must be a consensus between the government, military, and police as to what exactly the strategy is and when each phase must be complete. Urgency and understanding are crucial to the success of the Mexican people over the cartels. Second, the U.S. does not necessarily have to become involved militarily, but their extensive cooperation with the Mexican mission is of the utmost importance if Mexico is to overcome the growing unrest and violence.

Ultimately, such staggering death tolls and the increasingly violent tendencies of the DTOs have created a chaotic existence in the afflicted areas in Mexico. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the violence is concentrated in a few particular regions, however one must realize that despite this fact the issue has national implications, which cannot be overlooked. The difficulty facing Calderón and his successor is maintaining government control over Mexico. That is, he must find a way to establish and preserve the citizens' confidence and belief in the mission and operations of their government; without such confidence, the government will almost certainly fail in their role of protector and guarantor of the Constitution and the rights afforded to its citizens. Such a task becomes increasingly difficult given the fact that "analysts have implicitly equated the expansion of military functions with greater political influence, which results in a deterioration of respect for

civilian authority.”²⁰⁹ Such statements further complicate the situation facing Mexico and its dangerous approach towards the realm of failed states.

One must keep in mind that as mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is no end-all solution for every conflict within a nation that includes elements of guerrilla warfare. However, there are certainly several indicators as to the level of success that a particular counter-insurgency strategy is having. Galula provides “eight steps,” towards triumphing over insurgents aiming to destabilize a state.²¹⁰ While the DTOs are not necessarily attempting to overthrow or destabilize the Mexican government, some of these steps are useful for understanding the Mexican conflict. In his book, Galula writes of “The First Step: Destruction or Expulsion of the Insurgent Forces,”²¹¹ which the Mexican government clearly hopes to achieve in its war against the DTOs. This is simply one potential step and indicator of success out of many, however it does seem reasonable to expect that a state engaging internal enemies would have as its primary goal to eliminate that group of enemies. This is far from an all-inclusive analysis and discussion of potential solutions, however the path to success for the government will almost certainly be dictated by how fervently they pursue Galula’s “First Step.”

Ambassador Pascual’s accusation that Calderón’s government and its authorities were both “slow,” and “risk averse,”²¹² simply does not stand against the facts. Calderón made the unimaginably “risky,” decision to engage the DTOs by “deploying some 50,000 military and

²⁰⁹ Roderic Ai Camp, *Las Fuerzas Armadas en el México Democrático* (Mexico, D.F.: siglo xxi editores, 2010), 482.

²¹⁰ Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 107-135.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

²¹² Both accusations printed in CNN Wire Staff, “U.S. Ambassador.”

federal forces," against them while his presidency was in its infancy.²¹³ Certainly this campaign has not been "slow," nor "risk averse;" 35,000 Mexicans have been killed as a result of the Presidential decision. That is not to place the entirety of the blame on Calderón, only to note that it was not until his administration that the Mexican government formally pursued the elimination of the drug-trafficking industry in Mexico. However, it is clear that Calderón and his successor must continue to approach the situation with caution and calm, being that any miscalculation will certainly result in more deaths and further questions concerning the legitimacy of his government.

²¹³ Sara Miller Llana, "Mexico drug war death toll up 60 percent in 2010. Why?" *Christian Science Monitor*, January 13, 2011, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0113/Mexico-drug-war-death-toll-up-60-percent-in-2010.-Why>.

Chapter 3: The Catholic Church

The Church as a moral guide

The Catholic Church has been a long-standing political actor in Mexico, which has served to forcefully influence the moral and ethical leanings of a majority of Mexican people. Considered one of the most valued aspects of Mexican life, most Mexicans are religious with "97 percent, believed in God," and "between 81 and 88 percent," are Catholic.²¹⁴ Furthermore, Roderic Camp found that "contrary to common beliefs, younger Mexicans are slightly more Catholic than older people."²¹⁵ It is therefore not surprising that "the one social institution that posed the greatest ideological challenge to the secular state [was and is]-the Catholic Church."²¹⁶ Evidence of the Catholic Church's influence in Mexican life can be seen in the early electoral success of the PAN party in the late 1980s and early 1990s have been attributed to their championing of Catholic values.²¹⁷ One would then assume that the Church would also have vested interest in maintaining civilian support and confidence in them in order to continue wielding the influential political and personal power they have for centuries.

²¹⁴ Roderic Ai Camp, *Crossing Swords: Religion and Politics in Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 111.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Jean Meyer, *La Cristiada: El Conflicto entre la iglesia y el estado, 1926-1929* (México, D.F.: Siglo veintiuno, 1973), 44-47, cited in Anthony Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion in Mexico: The 1992 Constitutional Reforms in Historical Context," *Journal of Church and State* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 762.

²¹⁷ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 110.

In a poll conducted in 2009 by the *Sistemas de Inteligencia en Mercado y Opinión*, 75 percent of Mexicans claimed to have "much or some confidence" in the Church; the only institution to receive a higher percentage of respondents' confidence were schools, with 80 percent.²¹⁸ Given this data, it is puzzling that the Church, a behemoth of an institution, has remained all but dormant with regards to the violence until recently. However even in light of the newer developments, one asks how much of a difference this new position has made. At first glance, it seems impossible to envision any sort of victory over the "narco" without any direct Catholic Church involvement.

CELAM: What Promises Were Made?

In light of the two Conferences of Latin American Bishops (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, CELAM)²¹⁹ held in Medellín and Puebla in 1968 and 1978, respectively²²⁰, several questions arise. First, does the Catholic Church have an obligation to not only speak out against the violence but also to physically act in order to relieve some of the ills caused by the conflict? Furthermore, one must also ask if they are openly disregarding the promises made at both CELAM conferences, and consequently becoming indirect contributors to continued human rights violations in Mexico today. It is my belief that the answer to both of these questions is yes. The Catholic Church has failed to deliver on its promises to the people of Latin America and, therefore, has worsened the impact the violence is having. While such an answer is

²¹⁸ Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs," 17.

²¹⁹ Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano, *Quienes Somos?*, <http://www.celam.org>.

²²⁰ Dates of both CELAM conferences in Medellín and Puebla acquired from various sources, however primary source used was Renato Poblete, S.J., "From Medellín to Puebla: Notes for Reflection," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (Feb. 1979): 31, published by Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Miami.

saddening, one must also seek to understand what possible justification the Church could have for its lack of action and silence.

In the words CELAM, it is the organization of Latin American Catholic Bishops with "the extremely important mission...of communion and service," in the Latin American community.²²¹ As recorded by Mons. Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, with regards to what "CELAM has contributed to the development of the Kingdom of God,"²²²:

"g) It has provided a new pastoral dimension, which favors a greater consciousness of the specific problems of Latin America as well as a greater understanding of the concrete realities within the continent, with regards to evangelization.

h) It has raised awareness, in a Christian continent, for a more just society, for the effectiveness of evangelization."²²³

Such statements demonstrate an interesting balance that the Church feels it must maintain. Yes, they are pursuing justice, and specific Latin American issues, however it appears that this pursuit is based on the return the Church desires for itself. One wonders, would the Church pursue such ideals, or at least publicly claim to do so, if evangelization was not feasible under these circumstances?

Turning to the specific discussions and decisions made by the CELAM conference attendees in Medellín one must understand why, in the first place, did the Church decide to hold the conference? What purpose did they hope to achieve? The answer to this question is summed up by Mons. Lopez Trujillo who explains that "Medellín[is]...the concretion of

²²¹ Cardinal Eduardo F. Pironio, *Naturaleza y misión del CELAM*, en *Actas XIV Reunión ordinaria* (Sucre, Bolivia) November 15-23, 1972, 4, as quoted in Mons. Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, *Medellin: Reflexiones en el CELAM* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1977), 6.

²²² Cf. McGrath, Marcos. *Balance del CELAM en sus veinte años: Boletín CELAM 9* (1976), 20 as quoted in Mons. Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, *Medellin: Reflexiones en el CELAM* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1977), 8.

²²³ Mons. Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, *Medellin: Reflexiones en el CELAM* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1977), 9.

an ecclesiastic promise, of which we have provided the vision and goals, but not a finished map [or blueprint]."²²⁴ One of these major goals was to fulfill the Church's relationship to the poor of Latin America given the reality that "our people suffer from hunger and misery, oppression and unjust dependence, marginalization and institutional violence."²²⁵ From such statements it becomes clear that the Catholic Church is fully aware of the existing social injustices occurring in Latin America. Furthermore, given this acknowledgement, one cannot use ignorance as an excuse for inaction; inaction given this reality is comparable to a direct contribution to the injustice.

It was affirmed at Medellín that the Church could no longer ignore the "profoundly Latin American," violations of "peace and justice."²²⁶ With respect to these issues of human rights and "peace and justice," the CELAM bishops decided that it was the Church's responsibility to "condemn those responsible for gross [human rights] violations (torturers, kidnapers, and any form of terrorist)."²²⁷ Given the data presented in prior chapters, there is no doubt that "torture, and kidnapping," have taken place frequently at the hands of DTOs. Therefore, the Church must either deny that such events have taken place, a claim they likely would not be willing to make, or provide an explanation for their silence in the face of such realities.

Continuing the mission started at Medellín, the bishops of CELAM gathered again at Puebla to further the development of and their commitment to the ideals set forth in Colombia roughly a decade earlier. In a correspondence between Pope John Paul II and the United Nations, the pontiff stated that "the Church is profoundly grieved to

²²⁴ Mons. Lopez Trujillo, *Medellin*, 12.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

see 'the sometimes massive increase in violations of human rights in many parts of the world...I refer to such rights as...the right to life...the right to peace, freedom, and social justice.'"²²⁸ Archbishop Marcos McGrath argues that "despite its lack of personnel and resources, the Church has intensely promoted...defense of human rights."²²⁹ Furthermore, in the documentation produced in Puebla it is clear that the Church has confidence in the power of its parishioners as agents of change. CELAM issued a statement that "young people...have proved that they can win out and regain possession of their just rights and claims."²³⁰

An emotional call to action is made in the Puebla document when the bishops exclaim:

"From the depths of the countries that make up Latin America a cry is rising to heaven, growing louder and more alarming all the time. It is the cry of a suffering people who demand justice, freedom, and respect for the basic rights of human beings and peoples...The cry might well have seemed muted back then. Today it is loud and clear, increasing in volume and intensity, and at times full of menace. The situation of injustice described in the previous section forces us to reflect on the great challenge our pastoral work faces in trying to help human beings to move from less human to more human conditions."²³¹

This statement provides insight into not only the Church's belief that it does bear the responsibility to defend the rights of all, but also

²²⁸ Pope John Paul II, "Opening Address at the Puebla Conference, 'John Paul II, Message to the United Nations 2 December, 1978,'" taken from John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, ed., *Puebla and Beyond* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 68.

²²⁹ Archbishop Marcos McGrath C.S.C., "The Puebla Final Document: Introduction and Commentary," in John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, ed., *Puebla and Beyond* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 92.

²³⁰ Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano, *Puebla: Evangelization at present and in the future of Latin America: conclusions/ Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1980), 41.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

into how it views its divine mission in Latin America. The imagery brings God right to the forefront of the argument by showing that, as mentioned above, the "cry is rising to heaven," and that God's ear is attentively listening to those who are suffering. One would assume then that, by extension, those who neglect to care for these individuals and alleviate such suffering in their communities are acting in opposition to the will of God. If this is in fact the case, it poses serious theological and moral implications in light of the Church's continued reluctance to publicly act on behalf of those who cannot.

In a telling narrative, the CELAM conference at Puebla produced the reaffirmation of the Medellín principles of "the defense of human rights."²³² It also recognizes the difficulties and shortcomings of their plan in that there "is insufficient effort invested in discerning the causes and conditionings of social reality."²³³ That is, the Church has recognized that it must dedicate more resources and time to understanding the complex circumstances that Latin America, specifically Mexico, finds itself in. Only when it deepens its understanding of such phenomena will it be able to adequately address said issues with practical and appropriate solutions.

After presenting evidence from the documents produced at both Medellín and Puebla, it will be of value to highlight the statements and analysis made by commentators and scholars concerning the practical applications and implications of these documents. W.E. Hewitt comments regarding the conference at Puebla that "they [the Bishops] met not only to celebrate their faith but also to translate that faith into social action, to solve the material problems affecting them, and to

²³² CELAM, *Puebla: Evangelization*, 55.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 146.

help the poor and oppressed to achieve justice and equality."²³⁴ That is, the Bishops were meeting in order to determine the appropriate ways for the Church to make practical and tangible moves in the direction of changing the system, which for so long was exclusive of those who needed the assistance the most. The question then becomes: why has this "social action," still not manifested itself as the standard Church response to human rights violations?

The Mexican Church made a statement concerning its duty to protect the rights of all in "'Christian Social and Political Options' in October 1973...that priests 'as all men, should denounce social, economic, and political injustice.'"²³⁵ Additionally, Thomas G. Sanders writes that "the Church did have a responsibility to use its influence to improve society and bring about structural changes," in light of the CELAM conference in Puebla.²³⁶ Furthermore, it should be noted that the Catholic Church does believe its mission to include easing "Mexico's transition to democracy."²³⁷

It is important to note that the Mexican Bishops' approach to the CELAM conferences was markedly different than that of its fellow Latin American Bishops. In the words of Manuel Pérez Gil, "I remember that we [Mexican bishops attending CELAM] felt somewhat strange in the Colombian environment because our own experiences were so different from that of the Colombians...the Argentineans and Chileans and even the

²³⁴ W.E. Hewitt, "Christian Base Communities (CEBS): Structure, Orientation, and Sociopolitical Thrust," *Thought* 63, no. 249 (June 1988): 164, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 90.

²³⁵ Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, *Compromiso cristiano ante las opciones sociales y la política*, 26, quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 68.

²³⁶ Thomas G. Sanders, "The Puebla Conference," *American Universities Field Staff Reports*, no. 3, South America, 1979, 4, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 68.

²³⁷ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 69.

Brazilians."²³⁸ He continues to explain that the Mexican Church suffered a more serious "period of persecution," that other Churches simply did not have to combat²³⁹, making a clear reference to the Constitutional restrictions placed on the Church in the Mexican Constitution of 1917. Despite this perceived isolation of the Mexican Church at the CELAM conferences, the Mexican representatives were present at both Medellín and Puebla. This dedication established a precedent for future members of the Church in Mexico in terms of their commitment to issues concerning "social justice," and human rights. Interestingly, in Mexico, despite the efforts made at CELAM conferences and "the Pope's visit in 1979," it was "the religious orders, not the diocesan clergy, [who] took the lead in Mexico's Catholic human rights movement," establishing various human rights agencies and programs during 1980s and 1990s.²⁴⁰

It is alarming that the Church has remained silent concerning the drug war since, as far back as the early 1990s, they issued formal statements proclaiming "that 'the promotion and defense of human rights, particularly religious liberty, has to be one of our principle tasks.'"²⁴¹ In light of the developments at CELAM and statements such as the one cited above, the Church itself believes that it not only has the responsibility, but the obligation, to pursue justice and freedoms for all. This reality becomes clear when reading the words of Archbishop Adalberto Almeida Merino of Chihuahua, who declared "the Church...is completing its mission, entering into the defense of human

²³⁸ Personal interview with Archbishop Manuel Pérez Gil [by Roderic Ai Camp], Tlanepantla Archdiocese, Tlanepantla, México, February 18, 1991, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 88.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 81.

²⁴¹ Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, "The Declaration of Mexican Bishops Concerning the New 'Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship,'" Plenary Assembly of the CEM, August 13, 1992, 4; *Mexico Report*, November 4, 1992, 5, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83. For statements made by various Mexican Bishops see **Appendix C-1**.

rights."²⁴² Such a statement is concrete evidence of how the Church perceives its contribution to the human rights arena as not only one particular branch of Church activity, but in fact as a necessary pursuit for "completing of its mission," throughout the world. Surely, with such a mission, one expects the Church to be not only vocal, but also physically active in protecting and defending the rights of all people.

Silence? Corruption?

The reality is that the Church has the sphere of influence and authority to make statements concerning the morality of the war and how one is to conduct themselves with respect to human life. Furthermore, this implies that they have consciously chosen to remain almost entirely invisible. Whether or not people will respond and change their actions due to Church proclamations is unclear, however that does not provide a loophole for the Church to remain uninvolved. Why exactly they have remained silent is not easily deduced. However, there are several potential explanations that have been suggested and can be investigated through careful examination. Of these reasons, the following seem most compelling: 1) Fear and 2) bribery and corruption in general. The former being a convincing one, and the latter being a very serious problem if found to be true.

In the case of fear, one can hardly be surprised by the Church's hesitation to speak out against the violence and drug trade. It has been seen that the cartels will seemingly stop at nothing to survive

²⁴² Jaime Pérez Mendoza, "Por petición de Bartlett El Vaticano ordenó que hubiera misas en Chihuahua," citing Archbishop Adalberto Almeida Merino, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

and to continue to conduct their operations; what would cause them to stop at the Church? It is a possibility that violent behavior against the Church would not be completely out of the question when it comes to the current conflict; however, taking the history of the Church in Mexico into account, it seems that if the violence were to stop somewhere, it would be at the parish door.

Fr. Edward Cleary of Providence College mentioned in an interview that the protection the Church may once have had could be disappearing, citing the death of Juan Jesus Cardinal Posadas Ocampo of Guadalajara.²⁴³ As reported in the New York Times (NYT), the Cardinal was killed in Guadalajara on May 24, 1993 "when gunmen believed to be involved with drug traffickers opened fire outside the airport."²⁴⁴ It was reported that "the Cardinal's car...was riddled with 26 bullet holes,"²⁴⁵ an excessive amount of ammunition by any standards. This discovery leaves one to wonder if Fr. Cleary was on to something by asking, "was this a warning to the Bishops?"²⁴⁶ The investigation now turns to conflicting theories surrounding Cardinal Posadas Ocampo's death.

Phil Davison records the words of "Eduardo Valle, a former special adviser to the Mexican Attorney-General,"²⁴⁷ who stated that "whether or not it was deliberate, the killing of Cardinal Posadas was the first signal of maximum alert that drug lords had become a state within a state..Mexico has long become a narco-democracy."²⁴⁸ Such a reality is a sign of Mexico's potential for being classified as a failed state. This statement, published in 1995, is increasingly true

²⁴³ E-mail correspondence with Fr. Edward Cleary, O.P., November 22, 2009.

²⁴⁴ Tim Golden, "Cardinal in Mexico Killed in a Shooting Tied to Drug Battle," *The New York Times*, May 25, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/25/world/cardinal-in-mexico-killed-in-a-shooting-tied-to-drug-battle.html>.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ E-mail correspondence with Fr. Edward Cleary, O.P., November 22, 2009.

²⁴⁷ Phil Davison, "Cardinal killed 'in police plot'," *The Independent*, April 15, 1995, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/cardinal-killed-in-police-plot-1615700.html>.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

today, as the cartels continue to gain strength and territory as the war progresses. Phil Davison, who reported Valle's comments, concludes that the Cardinal's death was an "elaborate plot set up by corrupt policemen, and not by mistake,"²⁴⁹ which leaves him asking "who ordered the killing of the cardinal and why?"²⁵⁰ On the other hand, "the PGR²⁵¹ believes Posadas Ocampo died in a hail of bullets because he had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time,"²⁵² during a confrontation between the organizations of "Joaquin 'Chapo' Guzman and the Ramón and Benjamin Arrellano Felix brothers."²⁵³

The results of the PGR investigation "rejected the theory put forward by the Jalisco state government that a plot was hatched to assassinate...Ocampo."²⁵⁴ Ultimately, both theories are certainly plausible, which is what makes determining the truth so complex a venture. However, it seems that the PGR could potentially have incentive to provide evidence of the cardinal's death being accidental, since it would likely be damaging to the government and its judicial branches if it were to be discovered that one of the highest-ranking members of the Catholic Church in Mexico has been targeted by the drug-trafficking organizations.

There also exists within the Catholic Church a debate as to whether or not the death of Ocampo was intentional or not. The *Guadalajara Reporter* states in a July 2000 article, "Posadas Ocampo's successor, Juan Sandoval Iniguez, says he believes a plot did exist but

²⁴⁹ Davison, "Cardinal killed."

²⁵⁰ Ibid.,

²⁵¹ The PGR stands for Procuraduría General de la República, a department similar to the American Attorney General's office. <http://www.pgr.gob.mx/que%20es%20pgr/historia.asp>. Or, as the *Guadalajara Reporter* translates it, "the Federal Prosecutor's Office," *Guadalajara Reporter*, "No New Light Shed On Cardinal's Murder," July 28, 2000, <http://guadalajarareporter.com/news-mainmenu-82/regional-mainmenu-85/3756-no-new-light-shed-on-cardinals-murder.html>.

²⁵² *Guadalajara Reporter*, "No New Light Shed On Cardinal's Murder."

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

other Roman Catholic Church leaders are skeptical."²⁵⁵ Ultimately, whether the Cardinal was murdered, or accidentally killed during a gunfight, may never be fully known. However, it is clear that as early as the mid-1990s, the cartels had gained enough power as to be able to survive being implicated in the death of a high-profile clergyman without ever being convicted of the crime.

Although this particular crime occurred nearly 20 years ago, one can already see the trend towards more gruesome and violent crime conducted by members of the DTOs. Is it possible then, that part of the reason for the Church's silence in today's context is that there is fear of retribution from the cartels? This might in fact be the case, as difficult as it is to accept that the Church has lost all influence and sway over the Cartels and the Mexican people in general. It looks like Fr. Cleary's initial question is a great starting point; however it must be amended if it is to allow us to adequately answer the umbrella question: can the Church do anything to quell the violence and promote reconciliation? It follows then that the most appropriate way to approach this issue is to ask Fr. Cleary's question alongside others: was this [Posadas Ocampo's death] a warning to the bishops? Are the bishops currently at risk of retribution from the cartels should they choose to speak out against the violence?²⁵⁶ An initial answer to this question is found in statements made by the Archdiocese of Mexico City, in which they acknowledge "that some Catholic bishops have been threatened by the criminal group known as La Familia,"²⁵⁷ a DTO

²⁵⁵ *Guadalajara Reporter*, "No New Light."

²⁵⁶ The first half of this questioning comes from personal e-mail correspondence with Fr. Edward Cleary, O.P., November 22, 2010. The second half is an original asked by myself in order to get a more complete picture of the potential or real threat facing the members of the Church in the context of the Mexican Drug War.

²⁵⁷ Staff Writer, "Archdiocese of Mexico rejects cartel threats against bishops," *Catholic News Agency*, June 3, 2009,

known for its religious tendencies. However, the archdiocese is quick to note "that despite the harassment, the bishops have not bowed to the pressure from these criminals."²⁵⁸

In this same NYT article, it is reported that "Catholic Church officials have [in the mid-1990s]often been publicly critical of the drug trade and its effects on Mexican society [emphasis added]."²⁵⁹ This outspoken nature of the Church contrasts nicely with their actions during the current drug-related conflict in which it has been notably missing from the conversation. If in fact they were more vocal in the past, why then have they chosen to silence themselves with regards to the current conflict? The author continues to note, in a somewhat negative tone, "their opposition has been moral rather than practical."²⁶⁰ What is perplexing about the way in which this statement is presented is that, it is difficult to imagine how the Church could issue purely "practical" advice. According to Ivan Vallier, "a bishop [was]...a moral guarantor of religious values in society."²⁶¹ Additionally, Camp argues that "bishops...argue for 'developing a sense of coordination between religious beliefs and the way people actually live,'" in a way that is supportive of "their 'official' mission statement."²⁶² Therefore, one of the Church's most important responsibilities is to explicitly teach and provide spiritual and moral guidance, which both apply to the context of the drug war.

The Church need not worry about overextending itself or its boundaries by publicly condemning the violence and the drug-trafficking

http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archdiocese_of_mexico_rejects_cartel_threats_against_bishops/.

²⁵⁸ Staff Writer, "Archdiocese of Mexico rejects cartel threats."

²⁵⁹ Golden, "Cardinal in Mexico."

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ivan Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, 1970), 87 quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 289.

²⁶² Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 289.

industry as a whole, since these are issues that cannot be separated from morality. When thousands upon thousands are dying as a result of the drug industry, one cannot escape the fundamental and necessary presence of morality and ethics as the driving forces behind the development of potential solutions. Therefore, it bears repeating, the Church is not only justified, but obligated by its own mission to speak out against the violence.

Moving past this possible justification for silence, one arrives at the potential for bribery in exchange for Church inaction. If this proves to be true, it is a truly alarming notion with severe repercussions and dangerous implications. As Ted Galen Carpenter suggests in a 2005 article with the Cato Institute, there have been "allegations that the Catholic Church has willingly been the recipient of contributions from known drug traffickers."²⁶³ If these allegations proved to be without merit, there would be little cause for concern; however, Galen refers to a specific case in which the government considered the accusation to be serious enough to pursue more complete criminal investigations. He briefly mentions the case in which "Cardinal Juan Sandoval [Posadas Ocampo's successor] of Guadalajara had his bank records subpoenaed."²⁶⁴ There is also the statement of Bishop Ramón Godinez who admitted that the Church did accept contributions from drug traffickers, but that "it was not the Church's responsibility to investigate the source of donations."²⁶⁵

One can conclude with absolute certainty that money from the drug-trafficking industry has and most likely still does enter and

²⁶³ Ted Galen Carpenter, "Mexico is Becoming the Next Colombia," *CATO Institute Foreign Policy Briefing* no. 87 (November, 2005): 5.

²⁶⁴ Mary Jordan, "Inquiry Reignites Talk of Church's Drug Ties," *The Washington Post*, October 1, 2003, quoted in Ted Galen Carpenter, "Mexico is Becoming the Next Colombia," *CATO Institute Foreign Policy Briefing* no. 87 (November, 2005): 5.

²⁶⁵ Carpenter, "Mexico is", 5.

circulate within the Church walls; however whether or not the individual priests and parishes are fully aware of what money is drug money is a completely different matter. It is difficult to argue that the Church should not accept any money that could potentially be tainted since that policy would be entirely self-destructive. Furthermore, there is an element of truth to Bishop Godinez's statement in that it is not unethical for the Church to accept money that is potentially drug money so long as they are not knowingly soliciting and accepting direct, non-anonymous contributions from DTOs or their members.

The controversy surrounding the alleged murder of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo discussed earlier, does not disappear upon his death. His successor, Cardinal Juan Iniguez Sandoval is no stranger to political controversy "in a country in which church leaders hardly dared speak in public for generations because of harsh anti-clerical laws."²⁶⁶ The Cardinal had managed to spark political controversy by publicly proclaiming that there must have been a conspiracy to kill the Cardinal and furthermore that, "Cardinal Posadas was killed because he knew about contacts between drug traffickers and high-level politicians."²⁶⁷ Sandoval is also quoted as saying he is certain that Ocampo was assassinated because "I [he] knew from people who were very close (to the shooting) that this had been a murder."²⁶⁸ Worth noting is that Cardinal Sandoval was no stranger to legal troubles himself; while charges were dropped due to "lack of evidence,"²⁶⁹ in 2003 Sandoval was involved in an "investigation which was sparked by an accusation of

²⁶⁶ Jason Lange, "Mexican cardinal is outspoken, uses media well," *Catholic News Service*, April 1, 2005. <http://www.catholicnews.com/jpii/cardinals/0501874.htm>.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Both "lack of evidence," quote as well as date of investigation and accusations (2003) taken from Lange, "Mexican cardinal is outspoken."

[his] connections with drug trafficking and money laundering."²⁷⁰ The reality that this Cardinal was connected to alleged criminal activity shows that the Church is not as safeguarded as it was initially thought to be. Furthermore, if a Cardinal can be accused of such crimes, the potential for corruption and criminal activity at the lower levels of the clergy in the Mexican Catholic Church must be addressed. This would require a greater investigation into the financial and political activities of the Mexican clergy in general if their contribution to the Church's silence is to be discovered.

A Political Church? Not Legally

As briefly mentioned earlier, the Church in Mexico has a long history of tension with the government. The state even went so far as to establish "anti-clerical laws [that] have limited the role of the church in public life since the 19th century."²⁷¹ The "anti-clerical," laws include:

Article 3: " Instruction is free; that given in public institutions of learning shall be secular...No religious corporation nor minister of any religious creed shall establish or direct schools of primary instruction."

Article 24: "Every religious act of public worship shall be performed strictly within the places of public worship, which shall be at all times under governmental supervision."²⁷²

Article 27, section II: "The religious institutions known as churches, irrespective of creed, shall in no case have legal capacity to acquire, hold, or administer real property...Places of

²⁷⁰ *Catholic News Agency*, "Mexican Bishops denounce Attorney General's Handling of Cardinal Sandoval's innocence," February 13, 2004, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/mexican-bishops-denounce-attorney-generals-handling-of-cardinal-sandovals-innocence/>.

²⁷¹ Lange, "Mexican cardinal is outspoken."

²⁷² According to H. N. Branch, LL.B. translation, this particular point is "drawn largely from 'Leyes de Reforma' of December 14, 1874," pg. 15. Branch writes that "the 'Leyes de Reforma' constitute a group of organic laws which, as their name indicates, aimed to bring about certain social reforms, foremost among which was the complete separation of church and states...Its provisions form the basis of articles 3, 5, portions of 27, and Art. 130 of the Constitution of 1917," pg. 116. United Mexican States, *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with The Constitution of 1857*, trans. H. N. Branch, LL.B. (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917).

public worship are the property of the Nation, as represented by the Federal Government, which shall determine which of them may continue to be devoted to their present purposes."

Article 130: "Marriage is a civil contract...The law recognizes no juridical personality in the religious institutions known as churches...No ministers of religious creeds shall, either in public or private meetings, or in acts of worship or religious propaganda, criticize the fundamental laws of the country, the authorities in particular or the Government in general; they shall have no vote, nor be eligible to office, nor shall they be entitled to assemble for political purposes."

Fig. 1 A brief list of the articles pertaining to the Catholic Church was used, to gain a general understanding of which articles were useful to my thesis, from the *Mexico Church-State Relations* website found at, <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-8728.html>. The idea to organize and list the articles being discussed taken from Plutarco Elias Calles, "Church and State in Mexico," *An Irish Quarterly Review* 15, no. 59 (Sep. 1926):488-492. Calles' listing is much more inclusive and complete, however for the purposes of this section of my thesis, these were the necessary articles.²⁷³

What is perhaps most bizarre about these provisions which call for a definite and complete separation of church and state in Mexico, is found an article by Richard Roman, in which he writes that "the Revolution of 1910-1917 did not start with anticlericalism as a significant issue."²⁷⁴ Why then, were there such major restrictions and harsh prohibitions against the Catholic Church and its clergy when the Constitution was written?

Roman suggests that the answer is found in "the Constitutionalist thrust for a relatively sovereign and cohesive nation-state...expressed itself in a concern over hegemony, or ideological domination. It is this drive for liberal hegemony that led the delegates at the Constitutional Congress to see church-state relations as the fundamental question."²⁷⁵ It is ultimately this political mentality, says Roman, which allowed for the dynamic between Church and state to be the

²⁷³ All phrasing and wording of Constitutional provisions from United Mexican States, *The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with The Constitution of 1857*, trans. H. N. Branch, LL.B. (Philadelphia: The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1917), 2, 15, 19, 103-107 respectively.

²⁷⁴ Richard Roman, "Church-State Relations and the Mexican Constitutional Congress, 1916-1917," *Journal of Church and State* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 73, <http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org>.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

issue that "most animated the delegates at the congress."²⁷⁶ One can see, even with a preliminary reading over some of the "anticlerical" provisions, that Anthony Gill is correct in writing, "'separation of church and state' meant, in practice, church subordination to the state."²⁷⁷ Despite this legal separation, the Church continued and continues to exert significant and quantifiable political influence. One need only recall that 75% of Mexicans expressed "confidence in the Church,"²⁷⁸ and that "'between 81 and 88 percent[of Mexicans]' are Catholic."²⁷⁹

This tension was at least partially relieved when "on January 1992, the Mexican national legislature approved changes to the 1917 Constitution,"²⁸⁰ which would be a necessary first step towards reconciliation and cooperation between the church and state. After decades of state-sponsored restriction of the Catholic Church²⁸¹, the legislature passed measures that would allow significantly more freedom to the Church in Mexico. In response, the church was quick to praise the Mexican government when "Jerónimo Prigione (the papal nuncio)"²⁸² issued the following statement: "We [the Catholic hierarchy] are sincerely appreciative and thankful for...the concern of the President [Carlos Salinas], a wise statesman,...for opening new horizons in the relations between the Church and State, channeling the forces of the

²⁷⁶ Roman, "Church-State Relations," 74.

²⁷⁷ Anthony Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion in Mexico: The 1992 Constitutional Reforms in Historical Context," *Journal of Church and State* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 762.

²⁷⁸ Camp, "Armed Forces and Drugs," 17.

²⁷⁹ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 111.

²⁸⁰ Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion," 761.

²⁸¹ Paraphrasing of argument found in Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion," 761.

²⁸² Jerónimo Prigione, "Mensaje Inicial," in Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (CEM), *La Iglesia Católica en el Nuevo Marco Jurídico de México* (México D.F.: Ediciones de la CEM, 1992): 24, quoted in Anthony Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion in Mexico: The 1992 Constitutional Reforms in Historical Context," *Journal of Church and State* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 761.

two societies towards the service of social and religious peace."²⁸³ Would this increased harmony between church and state lead to increased Church activity and visibility in the political arena? Furthermore, where is the Church in the current pursuit of social peace?

Although many of the early restrictions placed on the Church have been eased in the past 30 years, there still exists a delicate balance that the Church and State both must maintain when interacting with and allowing each other to exert any influence over the other. As Camp notes "the most significant one [church-state issue] for Mexicans is the role of the Catholic Church in secular affairs, specifically politics,"²⁸⁴ with most individuals believing that the Church's least important responsibility is to become involved in politics directly.²⁸⁵

Silence Broken and Government Pleas

Despite the apparent silence of the Church during the current anti-drug strategy of the Mexican government, they have in fact made several statements concerning the violence. Furthermore, there are several notable priests who have raised their voices against the violence and human rights violations in Mexico today. In the final weeks of 2010, from the CEM (Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano), Bishop Constancio Miranda of Chihuahua pleaded with the cartels and asked them to once and for all say "no to weapons, no to drugs, no to

²⁸³ Jerónimo Prigione, "Mensaje Inicial," in Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (CEM), *La Iglesia Católica en el Nuevo Marco Jurídico de México* (México D.F.: Ediciones de la CEM, 1992): 24, quoted in Anthony Gill, "The Politics of Regulating Religion in Mexico: The 1992 Constitutional Reforms in Historical Context," *Journal of Church and State* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1999): 761.

²⁸⁴ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 118.

²⁸⁵ "1 percent," felt the Catholic Church had the responsibility "to form political parties," taken from Catholic Church, Diocese of Tijuana, *Plan Pastoral, 1989-1994, hacia una iglesia nueva*, 260, quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 118.

money earned through immoral means, no to vengeance, and no to short-lived power."²⁸⁶

In this statement, this Church leader and his colleagues fulfilled their role as "moral authorities," and publicly condemned all involved in the violence and drug trade in general. It is certainly an important step that could potentially lead to a renewed surge of Mexican unity against the DTOs. Bishop Miranda used powerful language in describing the effect that the violence and DTOs have had in Mexico, referring to them as a "poison to Mexican society." His contemporary in Saltillo²⁸⁷ commented that "the Mexican people 'are victims, they are hurt and injured by the war (against organized crime), by injustice, corruption, negligence, violence and impunity."²⁸⁸ Further commenting on the issue is Archbishop of Acapulco Carlos Garfias²⁸⁹ who asked for "peace" and stated that "[people] have the greatness of humility to recognize that they have followed dark paths...but that they repent."²⁹⁰

Similar statements have been issued by other major Church figures from various Mexican states. The President of the CEM, Carlos Aguiar, recognized that the government's decision to engage the cartels "is a necessary fight and we should accept it in order to confront organized crime, because it simply cannot be allowed...that this [organized crime] takes control."²⁹¹ Aguiar went on to praise Calderón and his strategy for its ability to be conducted "with intelligence," as it aims to defeat

²⁸⁶ *El Herald de Chihuahua*, "Pide Iglesia a cárteles dejar armas, droga y venganzas," December 26, 2010.

²⁸⁷ Bishop Raul Vera, from *El Herald de Chihuahua*, "Pide Iglesia," December 26, 2010.

²⁸⁸ *El Herald de Chihuahua*, "Pide Iglesia," December 26, 2010.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Gema Reyes, "La muerte de civiles en la guerra contra el narco, el precio que se tiene que pagar," *La Jornada Michoacán*, December 17, 2010, <http://www.lajornadamichoacan.com.mx/2010/12/17/index.php?section=politica&article=006nlp01>.

the DTOs.²⁹² Furthermore, he proclaimed "we should not be afraid, although violent acts scare us; as a society we will succeed. The Church knows that good defeats evil and we are convinced that this will happen sooner or later...even though they threaten us."²⁹³ Unfortunately, even the leader of CEM had to concede that death, specifically "civilian deaths...is the cost that must be paid, given the circumstances."²⁹⁴ Such statements are encouraging examples of the Church standing tall in the face of fear, anxiety, and chaos as a "beacon," of hope and strength for the Mexican people; this is precisely what it promises to be.

The Church has not only been critical of the cartels, but they have also urged the government to examine themselves given the alarming death tolls. In 2010, CEM urged Calderón's administration "to reconsider its strategy...[since] 'with the passage of time, the participation of the armed forces in the fight against organized crime has provoked uncertainty in the population.'"²⁹⁵ Furthermore, the statement issued claimed that "this environment of violence and insecurity in which we are living denotes a sense of the loss of God,"²⁹⁶ indicating that it is because of the spiritual crisis connected to the violence that the Church wishes to become involved. The Church has gone so far as to criticize the government for "prefer[ring] to acquiesce to extortion rather than see the security of their businesses or families subjected to extortion."²⁹⁷

²⁹² Reyes, "La muerte de civiles."

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ David Agren, "Bishops ask Mexico to reconsider strategy against drug cartels," *Catholic News Service*, February 16, 2010, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1000667.htm>.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Staff Writer, "Archdiocese of Mexico."

Despite these criticisms, the Church has sided with the government and has "offered its support to the federal government."²⁹⁸ In this same proclamation, "Bishop Gustavo Rodriguez Vega of Nuevo Laredo...expressed embarrassment that 'there are baptized men and women...in the ranks of organized crime,'" before recognizing the fact that the Church has not followed through on behalf of those affected as well as it should have.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera recognized the need for the Church to become involved, stating "that the Church has the obligation to help because 'society expects that the Church contribute to solving such a grave problem.'"³⁰⁰

The Church in Mexico has not been the only Catholic body to publicly denounce the DTOs and their operations. In the "International Seminar on Corruption," held by CELAM in Ecuador in 2010, those present published that "there has been a 'geometric' growth [in Latin American corruption] in the last period. We find this in the growth of the organized webs of drug-trafficking organizations."³⁰¹ This group, sponsored by CELAM, also identified a major "challenge that faces us,"³⁰² which can be applied to the Mexican struggle against DTOs:

"The laws must be clear in order to disrupt money laundering operations by drug-traffickers, the market for weapons, trafficking of people, or any other offense that affects the dignity of the people, and of the town, which are often associated with corruption."³⁰³

²⁹⁸ Staff Writer, "Archdiocese of Mexico."

²⁹⁹ Agren, "Bishops ask Mexico."

³⁰⁰ Staff Writer, "Cardinal Rivera encourages priests to respond to drug lords' threats with continued care for their people," *Catholic News Agency*, March 2, 2007, http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/cardinal_rivera_encourages_priests_to_respond_to_drug_lords_threats_with_continued_care_for_their_people/.

³⁰¹ CELAM, *Seminario internacional sobre corrupción*, <http://www.celam.org/principal/index.php?module=Contenidos&func=viewpub&tid=4&pid=225>.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

The findings and suggestions made by CELAM at the "Seminar" in Ecuador have major implications in the Mexican fight against its DTOs in that it provides important ideas for improving the system so that it does not foster corruption. After all, it appears that a corrupt system is one in which there are few consequences for dishonest government, and furthermore one in which the setting is perfect for organized crime to develop into an influential force.

In late 2010, President Calderón made a plea to the religious leaders in Mexico, "Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant", asking them for help in combating the cartels' growing influence over the country.³⁰⁴ Calderón believes that "their involvement will facilitate the repair of the social fabric [what holds society together], not only maintaining the youth within a positive frame of values with regards to their contribution to society, but also keeping them away from the reach of organized crime."³⁰⁵ This plea seemingly affirms the original hypothesis of this chapter, which maintained that it seems impossible to envision any sort of victory over the "narco" without any direct Catholic Church involvement.

Conclusions

Why then did the Church remain relatively silent for so long? Furthermore, why were the statements made by certain priests and organizations so few and far between? Ultimately, it does appear that there were very real threats of retribution and harm being made to the Church as a whole by the DTOs themselves, however, as seen in this

³⁰⁴ Jorge Ramos Pérez, "FCH pide ayuda a iglesias contra el narco," *El Universal*, August 4, 2010, <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/notas/699578.html>.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

chapter, the Church was quick to stand firm against such threats. Despite a rejection of these threats, they could still have tremendous impact on the actions made by individual priests as to their public stance on the drug trade. That is, while publicly the Church may condemn such threats, the individual priests and bishops may still fear the potential consequences for condemning the drug war openly, in letters, or even sermons at their local parishes. Perhaps the silence may even have been partially caused by a level of uncertainty as to the expected duration and nature of the conflict. It would have been difficult for anyone in 2006 to conceive of a conflict, which five years later had claimed the lives of 35,000 people. One hopes that if the reality of the situation had been fully grasped from its onset, the Church would have been the leading institution to speak out and condemn the violence; they still can be.

Statements such as those made by specific priests, bishops, and councils are precisely what the Church must do to combat the spreading indifference and tolerance of the expanding operating abilities of the Mexican DTOs. It is encouraging to see a moral authority such as the Catholic Church making beginning to make formal pleas to the people of Mexico, those involved with and those not involved with DTOs alike. Ultimately, I believe that their message of "repentance" and second-chances is the safest way they can make statements without alienating the cartels and therefore exposing the Church to acts of violence. That being said, it is apparent from my research and findings that my hypothesis concerning the Catholic Church's ability to influence the actual violence between cartels and the government proved to be incorrect. That is, I was proposing an idea under the assumption that the Catholic Church was still seen as impenetrable and perfectly

removed from the DTOs and the drug industry. After investigation I have come to the conclusion that the Catholic Church should become more vocal about the violence out of its responsibilities to its parishioners and humanity in general, however in light of the increasingly gruesome nature of the conflict and the extension of DTO spheres of influence what impact their statements would have remains unclear.

This leads one to the question of why, if Mexicans identify as Catholic in such high numbers, is the Church's stance no longer seen as authoritative in Mexico? I believe the answer lies in the words of a well-known Mexican actor, Gael García Bernal: Mexico has become an increasingly secular nation in which many people who identify as Catholic are in reality "'culturally Catholic' and 'spiritually agnostic'."³⁰⁶ The implications of such a phenomenon demonstrate how Mexico, a nation whose history is intrinsically linked to the efforts and advances of the Catholic Church under Spanish rule, and her citizens are beginning to turn to other mediums as a source for their understanding and action in the political sphere. No longer is the Church the absolute and final authority on all issues moral, but rather this younger Mexican generation is becoming more inquisitive in its pursuits while simultaneously preserving their cultural and religious heritage within the Catholic Church.

Finally, the promises made at CELAM conferences call for the Church to stand by all people, wealthy or poor, and defend those who are suffering from human rights violations. It is in this particular issue that one finds a major source of tension between the Mexican government and the Church, since often times the Church's actions in

³⁰⁶ Fabiana Gilardi, "Gael Garcia Bernal," *Vogue Italia*, March 16, 2011, <http://www.vogue.it/en/uomo-vogue/look-of-the-day/2011/03/gael-garcia-bernal>.

pursuit of the CELAM ideals, clashes with the desires of those bearing political power. This conflict manifests itself best in the Camp's writing that one "view of the Church...stresses its role as a builder of human values rather than as an advocate of the interests of less fortunate Mexicans."³⁰⁷ This view is in direct opposition to former Mexican President Luis Echeverría's, who argued that the Church's role in politics is to be "an institution focusing on societal morality...the Church lives with political and economic power, but Christianity is for the poor."³⁰⁸

Perhaps its decision to remain relatively silent in the face of growing violence and crime in Mexico since the beginning of the drug war has to do with the threats made against them by the cartels. Fear of retribution from the DTOs could stem from the fact that the Church's "interpretations associate his [Cardinal Posadas Ocampo] with his denunciation of drug trafficking."³⁰⁹ However, these potential threats and acts of aggression towards the Church are not adequate excuses for inaction. That is, certainly the Church was aware of these possible outcomes when they made the decision to combat the very systems that fostered them. By choosing to take on violations of social justice and freedom, they inherently were taking on a system in which aggression and violence were the norm; they chose to be the voice for those who are too often forgotten and unheard, as Mons Lopez Trujillo worded it "de ser voz de los sin voz."³¹⁰ Ultimately, the responsibility of the Church under its own decisions made at Puebla and Medellín obligate it

³⁰⁷ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 285.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 84. See footnote 47 in Camp's "Moral and Spiritual Challenges," chapter for examples of other clergy's opinions on the death of Cardinal Posadas Ocampo.

³¹⁰ Mons. Lopez Trujillo, *Medellin*, 40.

to "advocate [for] the interests,"³¹¹ of all people regardless of the potential for retribution and regardless of whether or not this action is in line with that of the ruling parties in Mexico.

Despite these words and proclamations of dedication to the protection of the rights of all people, the Church's actions do not fully line up with their public stances. How can the Church remain relatively silent in the face of not only a growing death toll, which has eclipsed the 35,000 mark in 6 years³¹², but also increasingly gruesome and indisputable violations of human rights? For example, the recent discovery of "a collection of pits holding 59 [Mexican] bodies," in Tamaulipas, where in 2010 "drug cartel gunmen...massacred 72 migrants from Central and South America."³¹³ Furthermore, the murder of Javier Sicilia's, "a poet and columnist," son caused the elder to publish a letter publicly condemning the violence between cartels and the government.³¹⁴ This murder and the fact that Sicilia "called for protests," provided "a key catalyst for organizing nationwide protests set for Wednesday [April 6, 2011] against crime and violence."³¹⁵ Why did it take "a poet" to motivate people to rise up and act against the DTOs? Why did it take a scholar to begin the work that the Church claims to be its very mission?

In light of these clear violations of the same human rights the Church so strongly embraced starting the late 20th century, it is alarming and perplexing to see that there has been little in the way of

³¹¹ Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 285.

³¹² Miller Llana, "Mexico drug war death toll up 60 percent." Article states that 34,612 people have been killed in drug-related violence since 2006, the 35,000 mark is inferred from this info.

³¹³ Katherine Corcoran, "Mexican cops checking abductions find mass grave," *The Dallas Morning News*, April 7, 2011, [http://hosted2.ap.org/txdam/633c954da7d9434f9de7ed15f38075aa/Article 2011-04-07-LT-Drug-War-Mexico/id-7b5481f887c44c2c96d4b6706e98941a](http://hosted2.ap.org/txdam/633c954da7d9434f9de7ed15f38075aa/Article%202011-04-07-LT-Drug-War-Mexico/id-7b5481f887c44c2c96d4b6706e98941a).

³¹⁴ Sofia Miselem, "Tired of violence, Mexicans ready for mass protests," *AFP*, April 6, 2011, http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iHLCDO-e3lTtmkIxOxUu2E5_ruA?docId=CNG.692381365d745fc505df40c97673c9ec.991.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

concrete Church action to encourage dialogue and denounce the DTOs and violence in general. Could it be that Calderón and this author's belief that the Catholic Church could still exert a real influence over the hearts and minds of the Mexican citizens, specifically the drug-trafficker, is nothing more than a pipe dream; a remnant of an older time in Mexican history when the pulpit was the source of moral wisdom and truth?

Regardless, as the Puebla writings state, "much remains to be done, of course, if the Church is to display greater oneness and solidarity;"³¹⁶ unity and consensus will be necessary if the Church, the State, and the People are to overcome the ills posed by the drug war and bring peace and safety back into Mexican life. The Church must continue to "confront the concrete reality of drugs through pastoral work that reclaims family values and supports the region's poor,"³¹⁷ in order to maintain its place as a defender of human rights and supporter of peace. Bishop Raul Vera added that "confronting the violence...is the responsibility of all Mexicans. We must all act now."³¹⁸ The Church has begun to reiterate old as well as make new promises to the people of Mexico concerning the defense of human rights, the question remains as to whether or not Bishop Vera's words will become a reality.

³¹⁶ CELAM, *Puebla*, 49.

³¹⁷ Staff Writer, "Cardinal Rivera encourages."

³¹⁸ Agren, "Bishops ask Mexico."

Chapter 4: El Narcocorrido

"After the zeta, there is nothing"³¹⁹

"Soy el Jefe de Jefes señores, me respetan a todos niveles, y mi nombre y mi fotografia, nunca van a mirar en papeles, porque a mi el periodista me quiere, y si no mi amistad se la pierde."³²⁰

These words provide a glimpse into the world of the cartel leaders and how they operate. The lyrics above issue a chilling threat in saying "the journalist loves me, and if he doesn't he loses my friendship."³²¹ While the words may not explicitly make violent threats, one only needs little knowledge of the major themes and ideas espoused by cartels in Mexico. Few things are as valued as loyalty, dedication, and honor; to violate any of these ideals can lead to serious consequences. In fact, one of the most notable things about the "narcocorrido" genre is the genuine affection it shows to its protagonists, men like "El Chapo," and his fictitious contemporary "Emilio Varela". Anabel Hernández writes that when the lyrics do not show the cartels in a positive life, "the musicians can pay for the trespass with their life...[like the case of] Valentin Elizalde."³²² To demonstrate just how important the genre is to Mexican culture today, one only need know

³¹⁹ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 399

³²⁰ Los Tigres del Norte, *Jefe de Jefes* (song).

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Hernández, *Los Señores*, 398.

that the government sees it to be such a threat as to offer to its soldiers a course titled "Analysis of the content of narcocorridos."³²³

Hernández opens a chapter in her book with the lyrics of a popular narcocorrido dedicated to the criminal organization known as *Los Zetas* titled "Escolta suicida," which translates to "suicide escort".³²⁴ The Zetas, as mentioned earlier in the chapter on the military, were initially the armed force of the Gulf cartel. The lyrics reflect an oath of sorts taken by the members of the organization to dedicate themselves to their trade. The lyrics include "I am one of the Zetas who protects the chief, we are the twenty man escort, nothing but loyal and courageous, we are willing to lay down our lives, to serve the boss,"³²⁵ and "we are twenty men in the Zetas, united as a family, the twenty of us are the force, with diplomas for suicide."³²⁶ These words reflect the determination and disregard for human life possessed by the individuals who make up the DTOs in Mexico. The sole objective is to deliver the product and protect the leader. How does an organization like los Zetas come to achieve a level of such power as to be worthy of commemoration in a song? According to Hernández, they are primarily made up of "former members of the Mexican military...then they recruited members of the elite Guatemalan military force known as *kaibiles*."³²⁷

Needless to say, it is not surprising that this organization is militarily able seeing as it is comprised of former highly trained military men. To understand just how committed these individuals are expected to be upon inclusion in los Zetas, one need only read the

³²³ This course is "offered at the Army and Air Force Studies Center," as quoted in Hernández, *Los Señores*, 398.

³²⁴ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 397.

³²⁵ "Escolta suicida" performed by Beto Quintanilla and quoted in Hernández, *Los Señores*, 397.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 399.

words of one of the original members of the group, Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano.³²⁸ Lazcano, when responding to questions concerning the origin of the name of the organization, stated that it was because "after the zeta [letter z] there is nothing."³²⁹ Furthermore, the inclusion of such a violent, murderous group of individuals into Mexican folklore and history through the avenue of the "narcocorrido" demonstrates just entrenched the DTOs and "drug culture" in general have become in Mexican society.

El Narcocorrido is "Mexico"

In order to fully understand the impact that the narcocorrido has on the Mexican people and their relationship to the drug-trafficking organizations one has to understand where the genre fits into current Mexican life and culture. Furthermore, one must take this understanding into account when determining if it is in the government's best interest to ban, or regulate the consumption of this particular cultural expression. To appreciate the place that this unique cultural indicator has in the context of the drug-war, one must turn to the history and rise of the "corrido," as an outlet that "narrates the Mexican epic."³³⁰ As one expert puts it, it is an outlet for expression and transmission of information that comes from "the people's need to know things."³³¹

Additionally, Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta added that recently, "since 2006, the so-called war against the narco, the most

³²⁸ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 399.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina, December 22, 2010, Palacio de Gobierno, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

³³¹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera, December 23, 2010, Palacio de Gobierno, Chihuahua, Chihuahua.

important change in my opinion, is that there is a return to the 'epic'."³³² The use of the word "epic" to the professor means a return to stories concerning conflict "between drug-traffickers and police."³³³ He explains that prior to this development the narcocorrido had turned into a "festive song that spoke of women, being with women, having expensive cars, expensive trucks, drinking the best alcohol, taking drugs, partying," and that this occurred since there was a period of "relative peace between the different factions of drug trafficking, the different cartels, as well as between these and the government."³³⁴ One can quickly see the social effect that such a medium can potentially have. If an individual is faced with the opportunity to partake in an extravagant, low-risk lifestyle, why would they not take it?

The narcocorrido is not a new development or style of music, but rather it is a continuation, a new phase in the "Mexican epic," that like its umbrella genre (corrido) is born out of "the corrido of the Mexican revolution, which is the people's need to tell stories."³³⁵ Furthermore, as Ramón Gerónimo Olvera states, this need is derived from the government's inability to provide "satisfactory answers, if there were satisfactory answers, there would be no need for the corrido or narcocorrido."³³⁶ What Olvera means by this is that, "on the hand it [the government] censors, but on the other it benefits from this genre."³³⁷ He believes that despite the fact that "politicians always come out against," the narcocorrido, their behavior is often contradictory.³³⁸

³³² Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, April 15-16th, 2010.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.,

³³⁵ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

Olvera provides two concrete examples from politicians in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico: 1) Carlos Borrueal, PAN gubernatorial candidate in 2010, and 2) Jose Reyes Baeza, PRI governor of Chihuahua 2004-2010. In the case of Borrueal, the candidate made the "moral accusation,"³³⁹ that it was "music free from values...but at his campaign closing party he brought the Tucanes de Tijuana," a well-known band in the narcocorrido genre.³⁴⁰ In the second example, Reyes Baeza, also a fan of the "moral accusation, on the 'dia del grito' [Mexican Independence Day] had two bands who exclusively played 'narcocorridos'."³⁴¹ These two examples begin to show the conflicted nature of the genre and those who consume it: while the message may be controversial, it is deeply entrenched in Mexican life.

Before proceeding to a discussion of potential bans of the genre, it is worth mentioning data concerning the spread of the narcocorrido and Mexican society's opinion of it. According to studies conducted by *Parametría* in 2011, a Mexican research and analysis firm³⁴², "only 2 out of 10 Mexicans are not familiar with narcocorridos."³⁴³ Furthermore, the report indicated that roughly 70 percent of respondents "who knew of narcocorridos believed that they reflected reality, whereas 24% felt that these songs distort real events." This data is important to keep in mind given the eventual analysis of "truth" in narcocorridos, to be discussed later in this chapter.

One of the most revealing pieces of data provided in the study is that "one third of the population (33%), does not consider the drug-

³³⁹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Taken from *Parametría, Somos*, <http://www.parametria.com.mx/Mobile/Somos.php>.

³⁴³ *Parametría, Los narcocorridos en México*, <http://www.parametria.com.mx/Mobile/DetalleEstudio.php?i=4265>.

trafficking leaders to be criminals."³⁴⁴ While this is not a majority, it is significant that this many people see no problem with the activities and operations of the cartels and their leaders. Finally, the study provided concrete data on 1) why the cartels have gained so much power and 2) how they have managed to maintain a portion of the population at the very least indifferent to them. In the final data presented in the study, it is reported that "at the national level, 27% [of respondents felt that]...were it not for the violence, trafficking would be a beneficial activity for the state."³⁴⁵ Such findings demonstrate that not only are many Mexicans indifferent to the DTOs and their illegal activity, but also that nearly 30% of Mexicans believe that they are in fact a positive addition to the country, the violence notwithstanding.

What good will a ban do?

With recent attempts to ban the narcocorrido from the radio in Mexico, one wonders what impact such a reality could have on Mexican social and political sentiments towards the drug-trafficking industry. The first example of such a ban took place in 2002 in Michoacan when "the president of the Cámara Nacional de la Industria de la Radio y la Televisión (CIRT), Arturo Herrera Cornejo, stated that 42 radio stations in the state had decided to discontinue their circulation of the *narcocorrido*."³⁴⁶ Another example took place in the state of Chihuahua, home to two of the deadliest cities in Mexico, Juarez and Chihuahua. In this case, it was the "[local] Congress, in 2002, who

³⁴⁴ Parametría, *Los narcocorridos en México*.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, "Del corrido de narcotráfico al narcocorrido: Orígenes y desarrollo del canto a los traficantes," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 21.

issued a decree, which banned the broadcasting of narcocorridos on state radio stations."³⁴⁷ These are two very powerful examples of government intervention in a popular cultural form of expression that has been a vital component to Mexican history.

Before analyzing these potential outcomes, it must be debated whether or not the ban will serve any purpose in the first place. As Rubén Tinajero Medina states, "to ban or not ban it, well, is not very clear to me, because the corrido is a form of expression that is entirely Mexican. It would be as if we banned the tortilla. The corrido is born with 'mexicanidad'."³⁴⁸ This concept is said to "be relatively recent, since it was during and after independence [1821] that it began to develop conceptually, and people were beginning to become aware of it."³⁴⁹ Like the corrido is said to have contributed to the formation of a Mexican identity post-Revolution, Carlos Valbuena Esteban argues that "the narcocorrido demonstrates the life and existence of a popular culture that seeks its identity and symbolic construction of the heroic, in the sphere of illegality...to exalt a different model of a hero."³⁵⁰ This genre and its narratives has manifested itself so deeply within the heart of Mexican culture as to reach "all the way to the marrow [of Mexico's bones], all the way to the core of Mexican popular culture; we cannot rid ourselves of it."³⁵¹

Here lies the first problem; the corrido is a fundamental part of Mexican history. How then can banning it create any positive outcome that brings the general population together against the drug-

³⁴⁷ Taken from footnote 1 in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, "Del corrido de narcotráfico al narcocorrido: Orígenes y desarrollo del canto a los traficantes," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 39.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina.

³⁴⁹ Rubén Tinajero Medina and María del Rosario Hernández Iznaga, *El Narcocorrido: ¿Tradición o Mercado* (Chihuahua, Mexico: Colección Textos Universitarios, 2004), 21.

³⁵⁰ Carlos Valbuena Esteban, "Narcocorridos y Plan Colombia," *Revista Venezolana de Economía y Ciencias Sociales* 10, no. 3 (September-December 2004): 35.

³⁵¹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

trafficking organizations? As Olvera points out, the ban may have had a greater effect in the past, but that "today with all the digital outlets, the internet, youtube, well, the ban helps the 'narcocorrido' industry...the top selling cds today carry the label 'censored narcocorridos'."³⁵² Ramirez-Pimienta echoes these comments by adding that "banning the narcocorrido from the radio, really would not serve a purpose...it gives credibility to the narcocorrido."³⁵³ He also provides the example of a marketing scheme in which a "cd was advertised using the title 'the songs you can't hear on the radio.'"³⁵⁴

Ultimately, Ramirez-Pimienta also stated that "the way in which these corridos are disseminated is the internet...the power that the radio has to disseminate music is really small."³⁵⁵ Therefore, it can be said that this opposition to the consumption and production of the genre is, in fact, its most powerful marketing campaign. This is precisely what Luis Omar Montoya Arias and Gabriel Medrano de Luna express when they write that "prohibiting it [the genre] does not address the root of the problem, it only creates demand,"³⁵⁶ for the controversial music. Luis Astorga agrees, adding that a ban "may multiply the amount of material that can be censored, it fails to solve the real problems."³⁵⁷ It seems that many scholars are in agreement that a ban would serve little purpose, and perhaps it could be best viewed as a ploy by a frustrated government looking for any tangible sign of their gaining control over the situation.

³⁵² Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³⁵³ Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Luis Omar Montoya Arias and Gabriel Medrano de Luna, "Del corrido revolucionario al narco corrido," *Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa* and *Universidad de Guanajuato*, 10.

Article obtained through personal correspondence with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³⁵⁷ Luis Astorga, "Notas críticas: Corridos de traficantes y censura," *Región y Sociedad* XVII, no. 32 (2005): 163.

Additionally, during an interview with Professor Ramirez-Pimienta, Enrique Franco argued that a widespread ban of the genre "affects the weak [bands], the groups without a name...who is going to ban the strong groups?"³⁵⁸ That is, it seems what Franco is implying is that certain groups are already so well known that a ban would not prevent anyone from knowing who they are or what songs they perform. Therefore, the idea that a ban could actually serve as a marketing scheme in order to further advance one's career is certainly plausible, and in fact likely for those bands that have already established themselves within the genre.

How to Combat the Narcocorrido?

If anything should be done about the popularity and impact of the narcocorrido in Mexico, one must be fully prepared to alienate a significant portion of the Mexican population. Attacking the corrido, as a means for historical storytelling and preservation could be politically catastrophic to the individual daring, or foolish enough to take on this task. Furthermore, attempting to restrict this cultural phenomenon would involve going after an institution, the corrido, that has "existed since the beginning of 'mexicanidad'."³⁵⁹ Ultimately, it would be irresponsible and dismissive to place any blame for the increase in violence and drug-related activity on the narcocorrido. That is, as Tinajero Medina states "the essence of the problem is found in drug-trafficking itself...[the narcocorrido] is a reflection of that

³⁵⁸ Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta and Jorge Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido la voz de nuestra gente?; Una entrevista con Enrique Franco," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 46. According to the article, "Enrique Franco was the artistic director and primary composer for *Los Tigres del Norte* over a period of 15 years," taken from page 43 of the article.

³⁵⁹ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina.

reality."³⁶⁰ How does one continue from this point then? There are two overarching ideas that have been suggested as driving forces behind the development of a potential compromise and solution: 1) discussion, and 2) long-term societal and cultural change.

In terms of the first idea of discussion, Tinajero Medina argues that a ban would create problems of "freedom of speech," and that instead there should be a movement towards, "serious discussion forums, academically sustained in order to provide an answer...it is not black and white."³⁶¹ While this notion is surely driven by good intentions, it is unclear how much good it could do in practice. Debate and intellectual conversation are necessary in order to deepen understanding and awareness of a particular issue, but they do little in terms of providing a real, functional, solution. This however, would certainly be an appropriate and long-overdue starting point.

Turning to the second issue, which is inescapably tied to the first, is long-term societal and cultural change. Tinajero Medina's contemporary Ramón Gerónimo Olvera discusses the dilemma Mexican people find themselves in, in terms of their musical expressions. He states, "if we want the popular songs to focus on other subject matter, it is necessary that the singer has a different reality to exist in...he sings what he sees...why don't societies like Switzerland, Sweden,[sic]develop the narcocorrido? Well, because they don't see that reality."³⁶² As *Los Tigres del Norte* have stated, "in Mexico, you can no longer produce corridos about Pancho Villa or even of the Mexican Revolution, because we live in different times, with different dramas, events, and moments

³⁶⁰ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina.

³⁶¹ Ibid..

³⁶² Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

that cannot be avoided nor hidden."³⁶³ Ultimately, *Los Tigres* and Gerónimo Olvera are correct, one cannot expect the musical reflection of a reality to change until the reality itself had started changing. However, this change has to start somewhere before it can be reflected in cultural expressions, herein lies the appropriate place for intellectual debate. The conversation should not focus so much on why the current situation is wrong or unfavorable, but rather it should be geared towards answering the questions of "what specifically needs to change?" and "How do we, as a people, go about pursuing this new vision?"

A variety of arguments in favor of a ban have been made, of these perhaps the most convincing and worthy of attention is that of a concern for "the ethical obligation to protect children and youths," from a particular type of "music which they [local government and branches of CIRT] consider to be harmful."³⁶⁴ While these concerns are certainly valid, they can be successfully countered with the belief of Tinajero Medina, already quoted and presented in this chapter, that the genre is a fictional representation of reality. Therefore, the harm to the youth actually comes from the drug industry itself, not from the music alone, and such a ban loses a significant portion of its merit.

Luis Astorga raises the question of what a ban will eventually lead to in terms of freedoms afforded to Mexicans. He argues that a ban or any type of censoring due to the illegal nature of DTOs, could snowball and quickly develop into a "red scare," of the genre, so to speak. Astorga asks "will a time come when they will have to imprison

³⁶³ "Los Tigres del Norte defienden el contenido de sus canciones en España," WWWterra.com/ocio/articulo/html/oci34579.htm, as quoted in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, "Del corrido de narcotráfico al narcocorrido: Orígenes y desarrollo del canto a los traficantes," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 21.

³⁶⁴ Astorga, "Notas críticas."

composers and performers of corridos about traffickers...Those who compose, perform or listen to that music: will they be accused of partaking in organized crime?"³⁶⁵ Such legislation has been suggested by "PANista Óscar Marín Arce, who proposed['in 2008'] jail time for those who reproduced or distributed songs that exalt criminals. The initiative was not approved."³⁶⁶ While Astorga's fears and Arce's legislation are extreme and highly unlikely scenarios, they are important to take into account when discussing potential government action against any cultural form of expression. How far is the government allowed to go in order to combat an evil if its actions control the musical and cultural preferences of its citizens? According to its constitution, no such power exists for the Mexican government to dictate individual tastes.

Before proceeding to the next issue, I pause to reflect on the fact that until this point my discussion has focused exclusively on a scenario in which the government should act against the narcocorrido. It is at this juncture that I would like to return to Tinajero Medina's concern of government action posing a problem to Mexicans' ability to express themselves. Furthermore, I would like to introduce the idea that any attempt by Mexican officials to ban or censor the genre is a violation of their own constitution and also that it could ultimately result in promoting the music more than restricting it.

The Mexican Constitution, as written in 1917, states in Article 6: "The expression of ideas shall not be subject to any judicial or administrative investigation, unless if offends good morals, infringes

³⁶⁵ Astorga, "Notas críticas."

³⁶⁶ Parametría, *Los narcocorridos en México*. The firm cites the following for obtaining this information: Staff Writer, "RTC libra su batalla contra los narcocorridos," *Milenio*, January 1, 2009, <http://impreso.milenio.com/node/8515021>.

the rights of others, incites to crime, or disturbs the public order.”³⁶⁷ Immediately, one can see the potential for confusion and misunderstanding as the wording of the Constitutional provision is extremely vague. While it protects the ability to express oneself and one’s beliefs, it does leave significant room for the government to intervene and restrict that right, rather arbitrarily. For one, what is the measure for determining if something “offends good morals?” Second, how does one attribute “crime,” to any particular form of expression?

In the case of the Mexican drug war, the narcocorrido is certainly an “expression of ideas” that should be protected by the Constitution of Mexico. However one could argue that it is guilty of “offending good morals,” as well as contributing to the rise of crime in Mexico. Ultimately, one must concede that the narcocorrido is a protected form of expression in Mexico and that it is not in violation of any of the contingencies presented in Article 6. Certainly, one cannot restrict or prohibit a medium of expression for simply being a “reflection of that [drug-trafficking] reality,”³⁶⁸ and not the actual reality itself.

The Narcocorrido and the search for truth

Professor Ramirez-Pimienta comments that the genre should be maintained because there exists a market among “some professionals[who] consume (some) narcocorridos because we distinguish between the different messages of the song and we focus on the positive values of

³⁶⁷ Pan American Union, *Constitution of Mexico 1917* (Washington D.C.: General Secretariat, Organization of American States, 1968), 3.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina.

the protagonist, courage, loyalty, generosity."³⁶⁹ Ramirez-Pimienta's thoughts are valid in that they demonstrate how a ban or restriction of the music in any way is to severely limit the understanding one can gain from studying such an important and relevant cultural indicator. Furthermore, he points out the danger of a government ban since he believes the genre is a necessary "narrator," of Mexican history; it counteracts the "state's monopoly on the portrayal of what has taken place."³⁷⁰ In a strongly critical statement, Ramirez-Pimienta continues by noting that the government's view of the conflict "is not reliable. Its narratives (the government's) are sometimes as fantastic as the most fantastic narcocorrido."³⁷¹

This statement from Ramirez-Pimienta brings to mind another famed narcocorrido, "El Jefe de Jefes," also performed by *Los Tigres del Norte*. During the first few seconds of the song, the following exchange takes place:

"I like *corridos* because they are the real deeds of our people."

"Yeah I like them too because they sing the pure truth."³⁷²

This constant search for truth is becoming an increasingly difficult task given the chaotic nature of Mexico's drug war. However, it is clear that both the government and the DTOs are conscious of the way they are portrayed to the general public; such a recognition demonstrates the importance that a positive view in the eyes of the people is a crucial component for either side to emerge victorious.

³⁶⁹ Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² *Los Tigres del Norte*, "Jefe de Jefes." The idea to discuss this song is original however, a greater understanding of the song, as well as its wording and translation came from Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta and Jose Pablo Villalobos, "Corridos and *la pura verdad*: Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad," *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 129-30. Article provided in Personal Correspondence by Professor Ramirez Pimienta. The authors of this article use the quotes from *Jefe de Jefes* on page 130 of their article in reference to their use "in the short digitized video accessed through the link title, "What is a *corrido*?""

Furthermore, as Professors Jose Pablo Villalobos and Ramirez-Pimienta wrote, even though there is a journalistic and government provided account of historical events "the *corrido* traditionally offers a contesting rendition of these same events...thought skewed by the lens of hegemonic political power."³⁷³

Adding to the role that the narcocorrido plays in pursuing truth, Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos argue that the narcocorrido genre "continues to speak and create memory for the voiceless, albeit a violently powerful contingency that is anything but downtrodden."³⁷⁴ Here one can see that the people, and the DTOs share a common enemy, so to speak, the government. Both have been targeted as outcasts and undesirables in a sense. One can therefore, assume that perhaps this contributes to the lack of public condemnation of the genre. Furthermore, as these two authors continue to demonstrate, "the drug lord, therefore, is a victim of society, whose only recourse for survival and full-fledged participation in consumer culture is to enter the illicit underworld of trafficking."³⁷⁵ Viewed from this perspective, as flawed as it may be, there are few people who would be as quick to condemn the drug-trafficker as many government officials in Mexico have been thus far.

The veracity of the claims made by various narcocorridos is an important issue to discuss and take into account given that the genre is said to provide a counterweight to the government's claims of factual accuracy. However, even within the community of artists there is uncertainty as to the level of truth presented in the individual corridos as well as the necessary amount of embellishment needed to

³⁷³ Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos, "Corridos and la pura verdad," 129.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 135.

effectively share the message of the song. Ramirez-Pimienta points out how *Los Tigres del Norte* have given contradictory accounts of truth and its relation to the narcocorrido. He writes that *Los Tigres* have said both that "narcocorridos- are imaginary,"³⁷⁶ and "that it is the narcocorrido that relates real events."³⁷⁷ One can only imagine the difficulty in determining the proper role for the genre as a historical narrative, given that there is confusion on the part of performers as to its truthfulness.

Historical truth is said to be written by the victors, however I would venture to say that in the case of the narcocorrido, history and truth are written by those who can afford to have it written. In their article, Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos cite Helena Simonett's finding that, "the business of the *narcocorrido* has become an industry sponsored and financed, in part, by the drug trafficker-and having a *corrido* telling of your exploits has become a marker for success in the drug underworld."³⁷⁸ Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos argue that "*la pura verdad* as an ideal begins to fade and is corrupted by the self-fashioning fancies of the underwriter financing the project."³⁷⁹ That is to say that the cartel leaders can have a significant impact on what events or ideas are portrayed as truth in narcocorridos by financially

³⁷⁶ "Los Tigres del Norte defienden sus historias." In *Zeta* 1496, from November 29 to December 5, 2002, as quoted in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, "Del corrido de narcotráfico al narcocorrido: Orígenes y desarrollo del canto a los traficantes," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 22.

³⁷⁷ "Perduran los narcocorridos, pues la gente los busca: Teodoro Bello." In *La Jornada*, January 3, 2003, <http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2003/ene03/030118/06anlesp.php?origen=espectaculos.html>, as quoted in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta, "Del corrido de narcotráfico al narcocorrido: Orígenes y desarrollo del canto a los traficantes," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* XXIII (2004): 22.

³⁷⁸ Helena Simonett, "Narcocorridos: An Emerging Micromusic of Nuevo L.A.," *Ethnomusicology* 45, no. 2 (2000): 315-337, as quoted in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta and Jose Pablo Villalobos, "Corridos and *la pura verdad*: Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad," *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 136.

³⁷⁹ Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos, "Corridos and *la pura verdad*," 136.

supporting and rewarding individuals who produce songs in the genre that depict the drug-trafficker in a positive, almost heroic light.

One example of such a case is found in Ramirez-Pimienta and Villalobos' article is that of well-known Mexican singer, Lupillo Rivera. According to an interview with the singer, he answered yes to the question of whether or not "he had ever been commissioned to compose *corridos* for traffickers...[and] that in return for these songs he received expensive watches and gold plated guns and rifles."³⁸⁰ Furthermore, despite his desire to have his stories told through this medium, the drug trafficker made it clear that such singers could relate the event "but no personal names," could be used. Ultimately, this reality reinforces the importance that silence and respect play in the DTO world; it is a trait and value of the utmost importance.

Interestingly, Franco would disagree with labeling songs written and performed without specific details, like those of Rivera, as part of the greater corrido genre. He states that "in the first place, the corrido has names, dates, places and a song does not;"³⁸¹ effectively he argues that the corrido, by definition, requires factual, historical truth in order for it to exist as part of the genre. Furthermore, Franco believes that it the fundamental change in the corrido to the narcocorrido is found in the point of view from which the story is told: "corridos weren't all about me and me. It was a narrative," of people and events.³⁸² Ramirez-Pimienta follows up by saying that the

³⁸⁰ "Lupillo Rivera respeta a los narcos: 'ellos también son humanos.' dice," *La Jornada*, June 10, 2000, as quoted in Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta and Jose Pablo Villalobos, "Corridos and la pura verdad: Myths and Realities of the Mexican Ballad," *South Central Review* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 136.

³⁸¹ Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 47.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 48.

transition has been from a more "third person...[to] first person," narrative.³⁸³

"El Narco": The Mexican Robin Hood or "Jack the Ripper?"

The corrido has a long history in Mexico, however the narcocorrido specifically is a more recent development, one that Franco feels corresponds to the time of "Mexican Drug King Rafael Caro Quintero."³⁸⁴ Caro Quintero is perhaps best known for a famous statement of his, in which he said "just let me be and I will pay off Mexico's foreign debt."³⁸⁵ It is during this period, the 1980s, that Caro Quintero was one of the most powerful cartel leaders and subsequently was arrested in Costa Rica as he hid from authorities.³⁸⁶ Franco indicates that it was at this point that the corrido changed and the drug trafficker "was made almost a hero, anything he said," was no longer reprehensible, but rather valuable and worthy of admiration.³⁸⁷ Such a transformation in the nature of the genre would eventually lead to major changes in the way in which individuals and society in general viewed the drug-trafficker and the drug industry.

Olvera has stated that "before this whole war against the 'narco', which has been a disgrace for Mexico, all of these [sic] narrate the story of a drug trafficker seen as Robin Hood. That does, that does sell drugs and everything, but who also helps the people, who has a code of values."³⁸⁸ Furthermore, Olvera ventured to argue, that the modern view of the drug trafficker is "entrenched with the imaginary

³⁸³ Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 48.

³⁸⁴ Staff Writer, "Costa Rica: El Chapo TRACKED DOWN," *Time*, April 15, 1985. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,966217,00.html>.

³⁸⁵ Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 45.

³⁸⁶ Staff Writer, "Costa Rica."

³⁸⁷ Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 45.

³⁸⁸ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

musical construction that was made of Pancho Villa," in that one struggles with the moral dilemma of supporting the glamorization of the "narco," and simultaneously condemning his actions.³⁸⁹ Ramirez-Pimienta argued that part of the power of "el narco," is that he is depicted in "the corrido of the generous bandit. This is the corrido of someone who opposes the unjust government."³⁹⁰

Olvera goes on to note that this image of the drug trafficker would eventually change as "at the end of the day, along with the significant increase in violent crimes being committed since the major cartel splits, there came about the notion "of the narcotraficante as merciless, someone without principles, someone who tortures...this also something that was happening in reality, the codes were broken...there used to be certain codes that were respected among the cartels."³⁹¹ Olvera provides a partial list of such codes: 1) "don't kill in front of the general population [civilians]," 2) "don't kill civilians," 3) "don't go after each other's families," 4) "don't involve your family...my wife and kids are not a part of this game, they are not to be touched."³⁹²

Olvera reflected and referenced the lyrics of what is perhaps the quintessential "narco-corrido," made famous by *Los Tigres del Norte*, "Traición y Contrabando," (Betrayal and Contraband).³⁹³ The line referenced reads, "la traición y contrabando, son cosas incompatibles," which translates to "betrayal and contraband are mutually exclusive."³⁹⁴ The understanding gained from this classic line is that the cartels recognized the incompatibility of their business and "backstabbing," at

³⁸⁹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³⁹⁰ Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta.

³⁹¹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ *Los Tigres del Norte*, "Traicion y Contrabando." Lyric referenced in interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

least until Guzman's betrayal. Put simply, Guzman and his contemporaries' actions completely violate the understanding and decree issued in the words of "Traición and Contrabando." It has also been reported that "the rules of the game are becoming stricter. Now the boss will kill their soldiers for minor offenses, in order to prevent betrayal."³⁹⁵ No longer is loyalty a trump card in the face of an angered cartel leader. In light of this, it is not surprising that the death toll in Mexico due to DTOs continues to rise; if a cartel member is expendable for a minor offense, why wouldn't an enemy or even a civilian be?

Such conflicting realities concerning the person, "el narco," raises a very serious moral dilemma for the Mexican people: can they continue to support and enjoy music that carries a positive message concerning an increasingly evil industry? It seems that it is in this dilemma that one finds a major reason for the difficulty in the government's current strategy, the people seem to have taken a long time to choose a side. That is not to imply that the Mexican people support the drug industry, however it becomes increasingly evident that there is a certain level of loyalty to the idea of "victimized trafficker," felt by the general population. Why this is the case is best explained by Ramirez-Pimienta who expressed that:

"the people are capable of distinguishing between the different messages of the narcocorrido. To me, the narcocorrido works...not because most listeners are drug traffickers or sympathize with drug trafficking, but rather because the message of the narcocorrido is one of empowerment."³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 587.

³⁹⁶ Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta.

From this statement, one can understand that it is not so much the case that the population is indifferent, as it is that they see highly valued qualities present in the world of the drug trafficker. These qualities can provide hope and strength to those who feel they are often neglected or abused by their own country; characteristics and traits like those mentioned by Ramirez-Pimienta earlier in the chapter.³⁹⁷

"Narcocultura", Lucha Libre as a metaphor for Mexican politics

The narcocorrido is not the only major Mexican cultural indicator that can be viewed as a reflection or fictional representation of reality. There is another medium, which is perhaps better known internationally, through which Mexican identity and culture is established and expressed, lucha libre.

Mexican wrestling is distinguished by bouts involving "burly combatants in bikini briefs and colorful masks," who perform a carefully orchestrated sequence of moves set to resemble a genuine fight between individuals.³⁹⁸ Like the narcocorrido, Lucha libre is a tremendous popular force in Mexico today, however it has been free from DTO influence in a country where "'narcocultura'...has penetrated every other element of Mexican pop culture, from movies and music to TV and religion."³⁹⁹ This reality is simply perplexing, there does not appear to be an apparent reason as to why this is the case; however Sandra Granados of the World Council of Lucha Libre suggests that it could possibly be "that lucha

³⁹⁷ These traits, as stated by Ramirez-Pimienta are quoted earlier in the chapter as follows: "courage, loyalty, generosity."

³⁹⁸ William Booth, "As drug life pervades culture, masked men keep it out of the ring," *The Washington Post*, January 3, 2011, sec. A.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

is more innocent."⁴⁰⁰ What Granados means by this is not clear as she does not provide further comment.

Jorge Chabat argues that the reason is far simpler: "the government has told them they cannot."⁴⁰¹ Chabat continues by saying that "the lucha is a very powerful weapon in the popular culture'" and that he doesn't believe the government of Mexico would ever allow wrestlers to use names and themes suggestive of drug culture.⁴⁰² To such a claim arises a single devastating response: if the government is capable of preventing drug culture from entering the wrestling arena, why can they do no such thing in the musical world as well? Seeing the prevalence of the "narcocorrido" in Mexican music, it appears to be evident that the government is simply not able to prevent the spread of drug culture into everyday Mexican cultural expression. Chabat then poses a chilling question to the observer about the potential threat he sees to the government's mission should wrestlers embrace the drug culture: "what if the audiences really applaud?"⁴⁰³ This question is tremendously alarming and if such a wrestler were indeed cheered for, the Mexican government would rightfully have reason to be fearful.

Ultimately, it seems that Heather Levi⁴⁰⁴ makes one of the most compelling arguments regarding the role of lucha libre in a society that is increasingly affected by the drug culture. She explains that while lucha is representative of Mexican culture in that because it "does offer a window into the country's soul but not as a direct social commentary on the daily news,"⁴⁰⁵ it is not as powerful an indicator as

⁴⁰⁰ Booth, "As drug life."

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. As Booth writes, Jorge Chabat is "a professor at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics in Mexico City."

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ According to Booth, Heather Levi is "an anthropologist at Temple University." Taken from Booth, "As drug life," *The Washington Post*, January 3, 2011, sec. A.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

commentators have suggested the narcocorrido to be. Furthermore, she provides an excellent explanation as to why lucha is such a beloved tradition in Mexico by referring to it as "the joke that everyone gets...it is a subtle parody of the system as a whole—the masks, the secrecy, double-crossing, official corruption."⁴⁰⁶ This microcosm of Mexican government and societal interactions appears then to provide brief respite from the tiring and constant accusations of corruption and dishonesty against Mexican institutions and officials who do not live up to people's expectations.

El Narcocorrido as a cultural indicator

It is important to gain a greater understanding of the "narcocorrido," and its role in Mexican society in order to better comprehend the complex relationship maintained between the government, the people, and the "narco." The genre is invaluable to the student of Mexican politics, not just of the drug war, in that, as Olvera states, "at the end of the day, it continues to be a thermometer for how much the theme of 'el narco' has varied."⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, it is important for the government to understand the manner in which its citizens interact with and respond to the music, lyrics, and ideology presented in this genre of Mexican folk music. As one author suggested, "the government has, what I will call, a problem of schizophrenia. It confuses reality and fiction. A 'narcocorrido', at the end of the day, is fiction."⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, Olvera believes that a potential solution to the drug

⁴⁰⁶ Booth, "As drug life."

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

problem in Mexico would be "if the farmers [and the poor] could live off the land with dignity, honor, and without problems."⁴⁰⁹

Taking a critical stance towards Calderón's government's current strategy, it has been suggested that "the government forget about that foolish idea of censoring that which takes place in fiction, and focus on that which occurs in reality, it's evasive."⁴¹⁰ Certainly Olvera is correct in pushing for the government to address the issue based on the reality of the violence committed and power wielded by the cartels, however it seems far-fetched to suggest that the government is in fact ignoring this in favor of fantasy. However, it is necessary that the government recognize the importance of understanding the causes of and sentiments expressed in such a cultural phenomenon as the narcocorrido. Howard Campbell concludes that "drug trafficking...even though it is not fully accepted, it is not considered an unusual form of life."⁴¹¹ To demonstrate just to what extent the industry has infiltrated everyday Mexican life, he writes that "drug traffickers are students in middle school, high school, universities, manual laborers, grandparents...waiters, professors, and government employees."⁴¹² Campbell's findings echo the data provided by *Parametría* in that it shows how there is a significant portion of the Mexican population that is accustomed to and may even look favorably upon the drug-trafficking industry. Again, to reiterate *Parametría's* study, this did not include a support for the violent aspect of the industry.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Howard Campbell, "El Narco-Folklore: Narrativas e Historias de la Droga en la Frontera," *Nóesis. Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 16, no. 32 (July-December, 2007): 67.

⁴¹² Ibid.

"El Tamal"

There are many examples of narcocorridos that depict the government agencies as corrupt entities and the drug-trafficker as the "misunderstood," and "abused," hero. However, I would like to provide just one example and focus in on the words and implications of such a song. "El Tamal," by *Los Tigres del Norte* tells the story of a drug-trafficker, Juan, who finds himself caught by the police. Instead of being arrested and taken away, Juan is told to hand over his "tamal" of cocaine to the police chief. To this request, Juan responds with the following:

"I don't regret carrying it. I know that you also enjoy it, I am happy to share it with you. But if you want all of it, with your men, I will kill myself."⁴¹³

Clearly, Juan is committing an illegal act; however it is the police chief who ends up looking corrupt by demanding the cocaine for his own personal use. Furthermore, in this narrative Juan is demonstrating two important qualities: a willingness to die for his trade, and a willingness to share with the authorities in order to further implicate them in his business. Through these words, Juan turns the listener's anger and disapproval away from him and onto the police chief. This phenomenon can contribute significantly, consciously or not, to the general population's opinion of the drug-trafficking industry by blurring the lines between right and wrong, and good and evil.

The ending of the song tells of the chief's decision to threaten Juan and Juan's reaction is as follows:

"Before he [the chief] could continue, Juan shot him. The agents shot at Juan, but not with precision. They did not catch Juan, he

⁴¹³ *Los Tigres del Norte*, "El Tamal," (song).

got away from them that day. The chief is dead because of a *tamal* that he wanted."⁴¹⁴

Again, the listener is presented with a drug-trafficker who has committed a blatantly violent, illegal, and evil act in killing the police chief in order to escape. However, the listener is conflicted as the story reflects poorly on Mexican authorities by depicting them as selfish, and corrupt individuals who abuse their power. Furthermore, drawing on the idea of the drug-trafficker as a "victim" discussed earlier, Juan can be seen as an honest man who is forced to participate in the drug trade as his only way of earning a living in an increasingly corrupt world.

A final point of note ties together the story of Juan in *El Tamal* and that of the song quoted at the beginning of this chapter, *Jefe de Jefes*. Both of these songs were made famous by the same band, *Los Tigres del Norte*, and as one begins to listen to a greater quantity of the groups songs, it becomes apparent that they are telling one large narrative with a variety of recurring characters and story lines. Catherine Héau Lambert and Gilberto Giménez make the astute observation that "in corridos about drug trafficking the lines between police and criminal are blurred, since both groups are obedient and subservient to the same mysterious man: *el jefe de jefes*."⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁴ *Los Tigres del Norte*, "El Tamal."

⁴¹⁵ Catherine Héau Lambert and Gilberto Giménez, "La representación de la violencia en la trova popular mexicana," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 66, no.4 (October-December, 2004): 657.

Conclusions

The "Narcocorrido," is an invaluable piece of evidence, which brings to life the inner conflict facing many Mexicans today. Through this social medium of expression, one can begin to understand why the conflict with the DTOs has been one that has drawn tremendous criticism from the Mexican people as the death toll rises. Furthermore, it's ability to maintain the sentiment as an anonymous one, in that it is not directly attributed to any one individual, provides a safe and open forum from which Mexicans can express their fears, hopes, and desires. The narcocorrido is a medium through which an opposing interpretation of reality and history can be preserved and disseminated to the population. The genre itself acts as an indicator of how the government, the drug-trafficker, and the people are constantly interacting with and in spite of each other. Ultimately, the government seeks to put down the individuals glorified and promoted in the narcocorrido, while "el narco," desires a positive view of his qualities and attributes. The final, and perhaps most important, actor in the drama is the general population who identify with the trafficker as an outcast, as someone who is often abused and persecuted by the government while simultaneously refusing to accept the trafficker as an exemplary, model citizen.

It is important to take into account that bands who perform narcocorridos often include a variety of different genres in their performances and repertoire. Ramirez-Pimienta cites the fact that "many of the Tucanes' hits are cumbias. Los Tigres del Norte have had hits with corridos about politics, of migrants, just as they have had hits

with songs about falling in and out of love.”⁴¹⁶ Ultimately, the narcocorrido is just one of many styles and forms of musical expression, however due to the prevalent nature of the drug conflict today in Mexico it is not surprising to see an increasing tendency of individuals to analyze the narcocorrido. That is not to say that it is not a profitable or highly demanded commodity, quite the opposite. The corrido, as a major medium for the transmission of the “Mexican epic,” as various scholars refer to it, cannot be ignored as a force in influencing the attitudes and pursuits of the Mexican people. It becomes quite apparent that a ban on the genre would serve little, if any, purpose. In fact, it would only serve to strengthen the marketability and legend surrounding these individuals who have created so much controversy. Certainly, the Mexican people would prefer that the government focus its energies on perfecting its strategy in order to bring about a swift end to the violence and a return to peace, instead of spending time debating the merits of banning or restricting a single form of cultural expression.

Finally, it is the case that the narcocorrido is not the reality in and of itself, but rather one of many ways in which that reality can be expressed. To the concern that the “narcocorrido is the origin of the problem,” Olvera strongly responds by adding “no! The origin of the problem is impunity and the infiltration of drug trafficking in [sic] the government.”⁴¹⁷ Furthermore, it is difficult to imagine that the Mexican people are supportive of any strategy that has already claimed the lives of 35,000 of their compatriots. While they may be vehemently against the drug industry and the cartel violence, it is not necessarily the case that they are fully behind the military option. As

⁴¹⁶ Ramirez-Pimienta, “Del corrido de narcotráfico,” 37.

⁴¹⁷ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

Olvera expressed, the war against the DTOs, and the narrative developed through the narcocorrido tell of a "war that, by the way, we didn't ask for and we don't understand."⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁸ Interview with Ramón Gerónimo Olvera.

Chapter 5: Findings, implications, and conclusions

Initial Findings and Thoughts

More than 35,000 Mexican people killed from drug-related violence, a Church struggling to find its voice, a government plan that incites more violence, and a social medium glamorizing the lives of the so-called "narcos." These are the realities facing Mexico today; these are the obstacles to a Mexican success against the cartels. This examination has been brief, yet informative in that it provides an initial glimpse into the complex relationships that currently exist in the Mexican state. Long accused of government corruption and ineptitude, the Presidency seems to be fighting a constant uphill battle for the support and confidence of the people. As evidenced by a poll taken in 2010, "60 percent of respondents said violence had increased over the past six months, and 56 percent of respondents said the federal government's crackdown on narcotics trafficking had made the country 'less secure'."⁴¹⁹ This complex poker game over the trust of the Mexican public is one which impacts the role of the Church in the political world and is often expressed and analyzed via the social medium of the narcocorrido.

From this research several initial findings were made. First, the government's decision to pursue the DTOs with full military force has created a war with guerrilla-like features, very similar to that

⁴¹⁹ Data compiled "by the Mexico City polling firm Buendia y Laredo" as stated in David Agren, "Bishops ask Mexico to reconsider strategy against drug cartels," *Catholic News Service*, February 16, 2010, <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1000667.htm>.

formerly encountered by Colombia. While the administration of Calderón certainly has the responsibility to its people to protect them and provide for a safe, free environment within the country, it is beyond doubt that the military option has created more chaos and conflict than tangible success. This being said, one must recall that the nature of the violence in Mexico is concentrated and could even be referred to as a "regional," conflict. However, that in no way implies that the issue is not one that afflicts the entire nation, or even other states since the drug-trafficking industry has now crossed borders from Mexico all the way down to Colombia. Furthermore, it must be noted that there has been a historical wariness of granting the military greater involvement in political issues, given that Mexico is one of a handful of Latin American countries to have successfully avoided military rule. Ultimately, the military option has failed in its purpose, ridding Mexico of the cartels.

Certainly Calderón and his administration would and have argued that they have gained significant ground by having captured "more than half," of the major Mexican drug lords.⁴²⁰ Unfortunately, what Calderón fails to comment on, is that despite such "successes," the violence continues to rise, with death tolls showing no sign of declining in the near future. The simple reality is that, given the lucrative nature of the drug trade, there exists an almost endless pool of applicants for the job. Enrique Franco feels the key to supplying this pool is to capitalize on disenfranchised youth, as many other illegal movements have.⁴²¹ He states, "they[DTOs] use young kids. Only a young

⁴²⁰ Proceso Staff Writer, "Presume Calderón."

⁴²¹ Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 45.

[impressionable] kid shoots a Cardinal. Only a kid is capable of what you can barely fathom. Someone my age thinks twice."⁴²²

For every leader captured, at least one new individual rises to replace them. If is this were not the case, one would find a significant decrease in the operating abilities of the DTOs, which the data simply does not support. If the capture of high-level "narcos" was truly having an impact on the war, it would be difficult to imagine that the cartels could not only continue to operate, but also that they could have diversified their crimes and expanded their base of operations to new countries. Surely operating solely in Mexico is becoming increasingly difficult and high-risk, but that alone does not suggest that the government is triumphing.

Second, when investigating the silence of the Church in the face of severe violations of human rights, it was demonstrated that there has been a significant amount of speaking out by various priests and bishops, however there remained widespread silence within the Church. It became apparent that there were a variety of reasons for its silence and lack of unified nationwide action. Initially, there came the claim of corruption, which proved to be true in the cases of a couple major authorities within the Mexican Catholic hierarchy. However, it is difficult to confirm, let alone imagine, that any significant portion of the Church was in the employ or under the influence of the DTOs. Quite simply, the accusations of corruption are minor stumbling blocks when compared to the great power for good wielded by the Church.

The investigation also shed light on the way in which the Church has lost its power as supreme and sole moral guide in Mexico. This reality is best reflected by the fact that the Church and individuals

⁴²² Ramirez-Pimienta and Pimienta, "Todavía es el corrido," 45.

within the Church have been openly threatened by the DTOs. To these threats, not surprisingly, the Church has stood strong and called for their parishioners and their clergy to reject fear tactics as a legitimate means by which the DTOs seek to accomplish their goals. While such threats do demonstrate that the Church is no longer as "untouchable," as once thought, their defiance in the face of the cartels' demands equally show that they have not completely fallen from their place at the top of Mexican life.

Given the gross violations of human rights, and widespread violence, the Church most definitely does have a responsibility to speak up and act on behalf of those afflicted and those who are often neglected by society at large. These were the promises made in the post-Vatican II Church at both CELAM conferences in Medellín and Puebla. Such hesitation from the Church when it comes to representing those they claim to speak for is a clear violation of their own mission and words made nearly 50 years ago. The initial hypothesis of the chapter, it seems impossible to envision any sort of victory over the "narco" without any direct Catholic Church involvement, proved to be false given the decreased influence and role of the Church in Mexican thought. However, it does appear that the government, the Church, and the people all recognize that the Church still has a responsibility as a moral guide to become involved in the conflict and pursue a peaceful solution in which death is no longer commonplace in Mexico and the people are free to live.

Finally, in the case of the narcocorrido, the investigation found that the genre is a major force in Mexican culture. Through this genre Mexican history is recorded and shared with various generations. Many scholars have argued that the genre is often too harshly criticized by

government officials as a way of ignoring the real issues plaguing the nation. By placing the blame for the violence and corruption on the music, many problems are forgotten and the government is able to paint itself in a much better light. However, it is noteworthy that this genre, which for so long has been critical to the preservation of Mexican history, is now viewed as a threat by an administration who is struggling to find a way to defeat the cartels. Despite attempted and successful bans, the narcocorrido is thriving and has also benefitted from the prohibitions placed on it.

It seems that the "narco," as depicted in these narratives, is one who identifies with a large portion of the Mexican people because of their common claim to being outcast and abused by the government. Furthermore, some of the qualities exhibited by the drug-trafficker are highly valued and desired in Mexican society. For example, one scholar mentioned that the narratives and tell of individuals who have "courage, loyalty, generosity."⁴²³ Such traits portray the drug-trafficker in an even better light, given that these are often seen as absent in government authorities. Such interpretations of the genre present an obstacle to the government plan in that they simply do not have the full support of the people. While most Mexicans want peace and are against illegal activity, the situation is far from black and white in a country where the government is still recovering from nearly 70 years often ignoring the demands of its people. The genre cannot be blamed for the violence; such an accusation is foolish and naïve. To reiterate Don Olvera and Tinajero Medina's thoughts, the real problem

⁴²³ Personal correspondence with Professor Juan Carlos Ramirez-Pimienta.

is found elsewhere, while the narcocorrido is nothing more than a "reflection of that reality."⁴²⁴

It seems then that the Church is no longer the sole moral compass and guide in Mexico, the people themselves have accepted this role. Through their social expressions and cultural understanding of their surroundings they are capable not only of moving with greater consensus towards a more fluid understanding of right and wrong, but also of providing an environment in which the government does not hold sole possession of claims to truth. The narcocorrido finds a great source of strength in its pursuit of truthful and historically accurate representations of government-cartel engagements. It is the people who are capable of facilitating an end to the drug war in Mexico, in fact they are the largest missing factor from the conflict. It will be the Mexican people rising together as one and proclaiming "no more violence, no more death, no more drug-trafficking," which will create a new Mexico. One in which the government and the drug trafficker are both held accountable for their flaws as well as their virtues.

"Narcoterrorism?"

It has been suggested that a possible way to more effectively combat the cartels would be through a somewhat controversial process of officially giving them a label of "terrorist." Although Representative Michael McCaul is correct in stating that "Mexico is in danger of becoming a failed state controlled by criminals,"⁴²⁵ his call to label

⁴²⁴ Interview with Rubén Tinajero Medina.

⁴²⁵ Todd J. Gillman, "U.S. House panel debates whether U.S. troops should fight Mexican drug war," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 31, 2011, <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/washington/20110331-u.s.-house-panel-debates-sending-u.s.->

Mexican DTOs as "foreign terrorist organizations,"⁴²⁶ would be a naïve and poor policy choice for both the U.S. and Mexico. The argument behind such a legislative move is that it would facilitate the take-down of both cartels and their American arms suppliers by "expose[ing them]...to charges of supporting terrorism," a very serious offense.⁴²⁷ According to McCaul's legislation, this label would permit the U.S. "to levy up to 15 additional years...and a federal death sentence if deaths resulted from the cartels' actions."⁴²⁸

Joining McCaul's call for harsher labeling of DTOs, STRATFOR has also suggested that the cartels be "categorized as 'narcoterrorist' organizations...['such a label'] could reduce public tolerance for many of their activities in the country."⁴²⁹ What is most revealing from such a statement is that STRATFOR and others have recognized the role that public opinion plays in the conflict. Without the support of the population at large, the war simply cannot be won by the Mexican authorities, success will only come if Mexicans as a whole embrace the government mission and support them wholeheartedly. While this type of legislation could certainly deter American arms producers and suppliers from providing weapons to the DTOs in Mexico, although it is doubtful that it will be enough to completely eliminate the lucrative trade, it still comes laden with its own shortcomings and problems.

First, it must be noted that the United States State Department were clear to state that "no known international terrorist

[troops-to-fight-mexican-drug-war.ece](#). According to this article, "McCaul, [is] an Austin Republican."

⁴²⁶ Stewart M. Powell, "McCaul seeks to have cartels designated as terrorists," *The Houston Chronicle*, March 30, 2011, <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/7498544.html>.

Taken from Powell article, the cartels that would receive this label are: "Arellano Feliz, Beltran Leyva, La Familia Michoacana, Los Zetas and Sinaloa and Gulf cartels."

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Carmen Flores, "Etiquetar de terroristas a narcos reduciría violencia," *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, December 28, 2010 Sec. B.

organizations had an operational presence in Mexico and no terrorist incidents targeting U.S. interests and personnel occurred on or originated from Mexican territory."⁴³⁰ Certainly, the violence in Mexico is trending towards more heinous and gruesome incidents, however to label them in the same league as the international terrorist organizations would be problematic and plainly, incorrect.

Second, as Senator John Cornyn of Texas argued, DTOs are not like terrorist organizations in that "cartels are in it for one thing—money."⁴³¹ Furthermore, it is necessary to be exercise caution when considering how to label the international beast that the Mexican DTOs have become in the past 10 years. As stated by the Mexican Embassy in Washington, echoing Cornyn's words, "let's call it like it is: truly violent, transnational organized crime, operating on both sides of our border, that pursue neither an ideological or political agenda but rather seek a simple but powerful objective: profit."⁴³² Ultimately, one would be remiss to ignore the reality that the ideological pursuit of an organization is crucial to determining what its purpose and identity are. Mexican DTOs are nothing more than a profit pursuing industry that is not hesitant to use force, and violence to achieve their goals. To say that they have some sort of political pursuit would simply be false.

Third, Mexico would not allow an American ground troop presence on Mexican soil. It would be seen by the Mexican people as an act of submission and weakness of the Mexican government, an issue the government is already combating as it finds itself increasingly entrenched in a war it cannot win. Finally, with two ongoing wars, a

⁴³⁰ Powell, "McCaul seeks."

⁴³¹ Ibid.

⁴³² Ibid.

staggering deficit, and an increasingly polarized government, the United States is not in a position to become actively involved in what they for so long have deemed a Mexican problem.

Estamos metidos?

Calderón's strategy, at the surface, appears to be part of the problem of worsening conditions. However, more research must be conducted and more time must pass in order to make a conclusive decision on whether or not the president's strategy was in any way truly successful in the long-term. That being said, it is clear that Calderón underestimated the nature of the beast that is the drug-trafficking industry, and furthermore, that he was ill equipped to develop and implement a successful anti-drug policy in Mexico. Perhaps Castañeda says it best, that Calderón "thinking it was a problem of appendicitis, he opened the patient up and found that the entire abdominal cavity was invaded by cancer. He had no option other than to go in with everything he had to fix it."⁴³³ As extreme as his language may sound, it is a spot on declaration of the problem of Calderón's strategy. Not only were the size and extent of the cartels' operations overwhelming, but also its resistance to any treatment was difficult to have conceived of in advance.

Calderón decided to engage in a battle with the intent of using brute force to achieve his desired outcome. One can see that the situation is far more complex than this, and therefore requires a careful understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the DTOs if any positive outcome will be achieved. As a doctor treating the patient

⁴³³ Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 1.

described by Castañeda must plan and develop the perfect treatment needed to solve this unique case, the Mexican government must carefully craft the correct strategy that attacks the cartels at their foundation so that their operating abilities are severely weakened before considering an outright military war against these organizations. To continue the surgeon analogy, operating should have been the last choice of treatment once all other less invasive strategies proved ineffective. Furthermore, Calderón and future Mexican presidents find themselves facing the following dilemma: can they change their strategy this far into the conflict? That is, have they invested too much time, energy, and resources to change course now? One could argue that a change in course would provide the cartels with a "moral victory," of sorts and in effect deliver the decisive blow to an already struggling government strategy. However, the argument can also be made that, since the current strategy is not yielding the expected results, a change in course is necessary. At what point do they cut their losses, so to speak?

Where do we go from here? Lessons from Colombia

If the Mexican government is to triumph over the drug-trafficking industry in Mexico they must find a strategy in which they can successfully, in the words of Bailey, "at some undetermined point, the armed forces would return to a secondary, back-up role in police functions and the reformed police-justice system would take the lead."⁴³⁴ That is, so long as the military continues to be the primary opponent of the cartels and primary actor on behalf of the government, the

⁴³⁴ Bailey, "Combating Organized Crime," 4.

Mexican government will continue to take a hit on its claim to legitimacy. Understandably, a nation's citizens lose faith and confidence in a government that depends on military intervention within its own state. Therefore, Bailey is correct, a tell-tale sign of the Mexican government's success will be whether or not they find a way to disengage the military and formally pass authority down to federal and local police, whose purpose includes preserving and maintaining the "rule of law." Furthermore, it will be at this point that the government can fully function as it was designed to: the executive and legislative establish law, the judicial interprets, and the police enforce and defend.

The conflict in Mexico will call for extraordinary effort from the police given that the criminals in this case are heavily armed and extremely well financed. It would be irresponsible to assume that, under any circumstances, the government could potentially expel the entire drug industry from within its borders. However, there certainly exist ways in which they can regain the upper hand and control the violence that has taken place as a result of the cartel-government conflict. In one of the wisest moves made by Calderón's government, a partnership has been made between Mexico, Colombia, and the United States involving "training thousands of Mexican policemen as well as soldiers and court officers to help contain drug gangs."⁴³⁵ This is an encouraging reality, given that Colombia just recently began to emerge from a bloody battle against "cocaine cartels and Marxist guerillas...now in its 47th year."⁴³⁶ Such a partnership is an example of the common bond felt by Latin American nations who understand the suffering that drug-trafficking can bring upon a nation. In the words of Colombia's

⁴³⁵ Forero, "Colombia stepping up anti-drug training."

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

President, Juan Manuel Santos, "Mexico has what we had some years ago, which are very powerful cartels. What we can provide is the experience that we have had dismantling those cartels."⁴³⁷

This new approach to equip the Mexican authorities with the necessary knowledge and skills to properly combat the DTOs comes in the shadow of a delicate history of Mexican-American relations. Camp points out that "the Colombians are the logical proxy," given the reluctance from Mexico to allow the U.S. greater military and political involvement in the issue⁴³⁸, which has been explored in detail throughout this investigation. He adds that this cooperative effort allows the United States to "indirectly do a lot more through the Colombians than they politically could do directly."⁴³⁹ The purpose of this effort is not only to train Mexican authorities in their response to increased violence, but also to "discuss legal reforms that Mexico can implement to give the state more leverage in seizing assets tainted by drugs."⁴⁴⁰ One can assume that such reforms would also aim to facilitate the government's attempt to maintain rule of law and political legitimacy.

This type of united international front against the Mexican drug war is just one example of the power of sharing intelligence and lessons learned, which will be necessary for success. In the words of William R. Brownfield "they just have experience in stuff that others don't have: experience in dealing with kidnappings, experience in explosives, experience in taking down powerful narcotics organizations."⁴⁴¹ These specific issues have become commonplace in Mexico since 2006 and are extremely complex problems that require

⁴³⁷ Forero, "Colombia stepping up anti-drug training."

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ According to the Forero article, William R. Brownfield is "a former U.S. ambassador to Colombia who now heads the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs." Taken from Forero, "Colombia stepping up anti-drug training."

carefully crafted plans of action in order to resist the power wielded by the cartels through such methods of violence. One thing is certain, Mexico cannot succeed if it is abandoned by its neighbors and allies, the drug war never has been and never will be simply a Mexican problem, it is by nature an international one.

Worth noting are potential strategies for developing a solution to the drug-war in Mexico. Before proceeding to the next section, I would like to briefly mention suggestions made by George W. Grayson: 1) "Continue the War on Drugs," until a decisive victory has been achieved, 2) "Reach a Modus Vivendi with the Cartels," 3) "Focus on Demand Side: Education and Treatment," and 4) "Thinking about the Unthinkable: Decriminalization."⁴⁴² While the first two ideas are relatively self-explanatory, the latter two are more abstract. Grayson states, with regards to point 3, that "only when U.S. officials accept co-responsibility with Mexico by placing as much weight on curtailing consumption as they do on reducing supply will progress take place."⁴⁴³ With regards to his final point, he mentions the widespread "off-the-record," support for the "decriminalizing, if not legalizing,[of] the possession of marijuana for personal use by adults," as well as the idea of "treating cocaine and heroin addiction as a health concern-not as criminal behavior."⁴⁴⁴ Each of these suggestions comes along with a plethora of flaws, however they each have meaningful ways in which they can contribute to a more peaceful, healthy environment for Mexicans and Americans impacted by drug use or Mexican drug-related violence. Ultimately, it seems that it will only be through some combination of

⁴⁴² George W. Grayson, *Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 251, 258, 260, 260 respectively.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Grayson's suggestions, as well as those of others, that true victory will be achieved by the Mexican people.

Have the people had enough? Javier Sicilia's emotional plea

A major sign of a potential swing in a new direction for the government and its strategy can be seen in the wave of protests that took place in Mexico shortly after the publication of Javier Sicilia's "Carta abierta," or open letter. Sicilia's son was murdered by DTOs, which triggered an angry and emotional response from the well-known Mexican writer. He writes that:

"I do not, in this letter, want to talk about the virtues of my son, which were immense, nor do I wish to speak of those of the other young men I saw flourish by his side... that you have destroyed... For that kind of pain there are no words-only poetry is capable of coming close to it, and you know nothing of poetry-
 ."⁴⁴⁵

Sicilia continues by adding that his motivation for writing is not a complicated one, he argues that "we are quite simply sick and tired, we have had enough."⁴⁴⁶

In his letter, the author does not take the side of the government in order to condemn the DTOs, but rather his letter is an emotional condemnation of the entire situation; it reads like a plea for Mexicans to reclaim their country and reject the false notions that they are a nation plagued by corruption and evil. Quick to condemn the government, he starts by lecturing the authorities by writing:

⁴⁴⁵ Sicilia, "Carta abierta."

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

"we have had enough of you, politicians...because in your fight for power you have destroyed the social fabric of the country, because in the middle of this war, which has been poorly formulated, poorly carried out, poorly driven, this war that has put the country in a state of emergency, you have been incapable of...creating the consensus the nation needs to find unity, without which there is no exit [from the war]." ⁴⁴⁷

Sicilia's words are strongly critical of what he sees as a government failing to do its job. They have failed to protect their people, they have failed to do the good they promised, and they are doing nothing but hurting and dividing the people of Mexico. In Sicilia's letter it becomes apparent that the author is demonstrating the widespread lack of trust that many Mexicans feel towards their political system. He writes the letter as a Mexican, not as a scholar, or author. His focus is to encourage his fellow Mexicans to rise up and fight for what they deserve: freedom, safety, opportunity, and political transparency.

He is equally critical, if not more, of the cartels and their actions since the beginning of the war. In this portion of the letter he launches into a tirade against the growing levels of violence and lack of respect for human life. He writes:

"We have had enough of you, criminals, of your violence, of your loss of honor, your cruelty, your nonsense. You used to have codes of honor. You were not so cruel about account balances and you did not touch civilians or their families. Now you make no distinction...You have even lost the dignity to kill...We have had enough because your violence has become *infracuman*, *not animalistic-animals don't do what you do-, but rather subhuman*,

⁴⁴⁷ Sicilia, "Carta abierta."

demonic, senseless. We have had enough because your desire for power and riches humiliate our children and destroy them and produce fear and terror."⁴⁴⁸ (Emphasis added).

In this tirade, Sicilia goes so far as to compare the DTOs to the "Sonderkommandos nazis," in their use of violence.⁴⁴⁹ His words express the confusion and pain felt by Mexicans all over the nation who have been affected and hurt by the violence plaguing their homeland. His anger is not directed solely at the government, but also at the cartels, both of which he blames for bringing pain and suffering into Mexico.

While Sicilia's comments are perfectly appropriate representations of the sentiments felt by many Mexicans today, including this author's, it is difficult to stand behind his opinion of what the government should do given their failure to eliminate the presence of DTOs in Mexico. He continues his letter by saying "in the wise words of [Jose] Martí to those who govern: 'If you can't do it, resign'."⁴⁵⁰ Surely the government stepping down is not the solution needed in Mexico today; in fact it would only drive Mexico further into chaos and the grip of the DTOs. Despite this outburst of his, one can agree with his declaration that such a "statement should be accompanied by large civilian movements that force them [the government], in these times of national emergency, to get together to create an agenda that unifies the nation and creates a state of true governance."⁴⁵¹

As a result of Sicilia's publication, Mexico has seen the reinvigoration of Mexican unity against the violence in the nation, unity against the actions of both government and cartels. This energy,

⁴⁴⁸ Sicilia, "Carta abierta."

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. For full original and translated text of Sicilia's letter see **Appendix D-1**.

provided initially by Sicilia, has brought forth "a new movement sweeping the nation[and] is demanding an end to criminal impunity as well as a fundamental change of course in the so-called drug war."⁴⁵² Sicilia's words have clearly struck a nerve in the collective heart of Mexico, as there have been numerous protests throughout the country since his letter was released. Evidence of this new direction can be seen in the fact that "as many as 40,000 people staged an April 6 march through the streets of Cuernavaca," and that "on the same day...[there was] a Mexico City demonstration of 10,000 people," with various others occurring throughout the country on a lesser scale.⁴⁵³ Such mass mobilization on the part of everyday Mexican citizens calling for an immediate end to the violence is an encouraging development, one that will hopefully drive the government officials to be more honest and be held accountable for their actions. I must pause to speak candidly as a Mexican at this point. Finally, someone put our feelings, our fears, our pain, our suffering, our joys, our desires, our confusion, and our resolve to reclaim Mexico into words.

Future US Involvement; more questions than answers

As a result of this investigation it has become clear that the United States is willing to assist Mexico in a few specific ways, such as financing and training. The lack of past cooperation on the issue is not so much a result of the U.S. having no desire to help, although this must be called in to question, but rather that Mexico is unwilling to allow an increased American presence on their soil. They view the

⁴⁵² Staff Writer, "Mexico: The Hour of the Poet," *Salem News*, April 16, 2011, <http://www.salem-news.com/articles/april162011/mexico-poet-hour.php>.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

drug war simultaneously as a purely Mexican problem when they need to explain their wariness of American involvement, and as an international issue when they need greater assistance. One can quickly disregard the idea of American predator drone strikes over Mexico as folly. No Mexican administration would permit American military explosives to be detonated in Mexico, especially in light of growing concerns over the accuracy of these strikes and the potential for civilian casualties. The question then becomes how does the U.S. contribute meaningfully without alienating or offending the Mexican government?

The idea of labeling the cartels as "narcoterrorists," seems to be gaining support across borders and could certainly contribute to forming a more comprehensive and complete plan of action for the government, one which includes the cooperation of legislative, executive, judicial, police, and civilian authorities. Such a label could potentially play a role in international support for the Mexican cause, in that it could push certain nations with similar "terrorist," threats to contribute with financial and training support to Mexico. Much like the case of Colombia's assistance, an international front advocating for the sharing of experience and knowledge in dealing with non-conventional armed forces would be invaluable for countries with security situations like that of Mexico. The question here is how obligated would world powers, namely the U.S., feel to Mexico and to assisting them in the war against the drug industry?

A recent development in U.S.-Mexico Relations has been to implement a cross border trucking agreement that was initially discussed "under the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement,"⁴⁵⁴ This plan has been a contentious issue since its inception; however the new

⁴⁵⁴ Pace, "Obama, Calderón pledge."

agreement has been attributed to both administrations being "eager to show signs of a productive partnership,"⁴⁵⁵ and can be a step in the direction of greater understanding and cooperation in other areas of controversy and strain in Mexican-American relations. Before lavishing this idea with praises it is important to note two particular issues: 1) the access such a plan grants to DTOs and the drug-trafficking industry, and 2) the question of why now?

The first issue is that, given the power, money, and access already exhibited by the cartels, why would one not expect them to capitalize on this new avenue through which to transport drugs across the American border? Certainly, these trucks will be under extreme scrutiny if the plan is to take effect, however the very fact that the DTOs have managed to transport their product using planes, boats, submarines, and cars should demonstrate their resilience and competency. Furthermore, this appears to potentially be creating an easier route for them to move the product, they simply need to continue to threaten, pay off, and kill all who stand in the way of their industry and their profit.

The second issue is a question of timing. Why did the U.S. and Mexico come to this agreement 16 years after it was originally proposed? Perhaps it was simply two administrations that finally saw the mutual benefit of such a plan and decided to push forward on it. However, this seems highly unlikely, rather I believe the timing has more to do with, as Stephen Johnson argued, the fact that "it was critical that Obama and Calderón meet before tensions escalated further."⁴⁵⁶ That is, given the recent death of an American agent, the rising death toll due to the drug war, and the clear need for American

⁴⁵⁵ Pace, "Obama, Calderón pledge."

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

assistance, the two nations had to come to a mutual agreement on at least one major issue in order to save face.

Furthermore, in a somewhat suspicious stance, this author believes that the concession was made by the American government in order to counter their reluctance to take responsibility for their contribution to the growing drug trade in Mexico. That is, the U.S. was eager to assist their neighbor Mexico, given that they have not been able to contribute as much as the Mexican government expects of them with regards to combating DTOs. By this understanding the agreement loses its political meaning in that it becomes nothing more than a red herring, so to speak, that distracts from the reality that the U.S. has been perceived by scholars and Mexican government officials as not pulling its own weight in the drug war taking place in Mexico. This complex and at times inconsistent relationship between the two countries seems to create more questions than any concrete answers. One can only wonder what will happen when a new administration, likely to be from a party other than the PAN, takes over in Mexico in 2013.

Failed States Index

When comparing Mexico's standing on the FSI to countries with higher overall scores, one encounters a baffling piece of evidence: Mexico has higher death tolls (intentional homicide rates) than most of the top nations. However, despite this violence that is largely brought about by the drug war, Mexico still receives lower scores on categories I-7 and I-9, "Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State," (I-7) and "Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and

Widespread Violation of Human Rights.”⁴⁵⁷ While economic and social categories are important indicators of a state’s propensity to failing, it is irresponsible to ignore the political factors.

Using Weber’s understanding of what being a state entails, surely categories I-7 and I-9 are the most accurate and informative ones as to whether or not a state is or has failed. That is not to say that these other categories are unimportant, but rather that a distinction must be made between a nation that is failed in the economic sense and one that has failed politically. In the case of economic failure, it has not truly failed as a state, it has simply become an impoverished one, which is a tragedy nonetheless. However, if a nation fails politically and militarily it has lost its right and ability to rule, govern, and defend its citizens.

I have chosen 6 of the top 10 nations on the FSI in order to compare them with Mexico based on their death tolls and rates. These nations are Somalia, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th).⁴⁵⁸ The countries chosen for comparison had rates as follows (I-7 and I-9 scores, respectively)⁴⁵⁹: Somalia 3.2/100,000⁴⁶⁰ (10.0, 9.9), Zimbabwe 8.44/100,000⁴⁶¹ (9.8, 9.9), Sudan 27.2/100,000⁴⁶² (9.8, 9.8), Iraq 7.3/100,000⁴⁶³ (9.0, 9.3), and Afghanistan 3.4/100,000⁴⁶⁴ (9.8, 8.8). It is important to note that the data from these countries has been hard to confirm recently as they are war torn nations

⁴⁵⁷ The Fund for Peace, *Failed States Index FAQ*.

⁴⁵⁸ The Fund for Peace, *Failed States Index 2010*.

⁴⁵⁹ All scores taken from The Fund for Peace, *Failed States Index 2010*.

⁴⁶⁰ Last data available for Somalia from 2004 and retrieved from UNODC, *Homicide Statistics, Criminal Justice and Public Health Sources-Trends (2003-2008)*.

⁴⁶¹ Last data available for Zimbabwe from 2004 and retrieved from UNODC, *Ninth United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems*, 9.

⁴⁶² Last data available for Zimbabwe from 2004 and retrieved from UNODC, *Homicide Statistics, Criminal Justice and Public Health Sources-Trends (2003-2008)*.

⁴⁶³ Last data available for Somalia from 2004 and retrieved from UNODC, *Homicide Statistics, Criminal Justice and Public Health Sources-Trends (2003-2008)*.

⁴⁶⁴ Last data available for Somalia from 2004 and retrieved from UNODC, *Homicide Statistics, Public Health Sources-Latest available year (2003-2008)*.

struggling to establish any semblance of legitimate government. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Mexico currently has a death rate of 18/100,000 and has suffered the deaths of 35,000 people due to drug-related violence and has received I-7 and I-9 scores of 6.8 and 5.5, respectively.

Before comparing the scores I offer a disclaimer, this analysis is not aimed at proving that Mexico is somehow worse off than any of the nations listed. Rather, the purpose is to see if Mexico's ratings are fair and appropriate given how the data stands up to that of other notoriously struggling states. Surely, it would be foolish to suggest that the Mexican government is less legitimate than that of Somalia, a country with no official government, run by warlords and pirates. However, it is questionable how a country with such a staggering death toll and conflict such as that of Mexico can be given scores as low as half and two thirds of those received by the FSI's highest rated nations.

The death rates certainly appear to have risen in these other nations since the last confirmed data was released however, without a doubt Mexico remains a nation with one of the most alarming death rates due to one particular form of violence in the western world. Furthermore, the I-7 and I-9 categories have to do with government legitimacy, rule of law, and human rights, all of which are severely suspect in Mexico at this moment. As has been seen, the DTOs have severely damaged the already weak image of the Mexican government in the eyes of the people by proving themselves able to compete and at times outgun the government.

The government's legitimacy is still strong in terms of its ability to remain in power and effect policy, however its legitimacy as

the representative and defender of the people is beginning to crumble. Rule of law, in the regions most affected (Juarez, Chihuahua, Sinaloa), is effectively suspended. Although the police and military still exist and operate to prevent illegal activity, the DTOs quite simply can often act as they please with little fear of punishment or even of discovery. Finally, a death toll of 35,000 which shows no signs of stopping is certainly a violation of human rights, in the very least of "the right to life" as discussed by various scholars throughout this investigation. This combination of factors and realities demonstrate that the situation in Mexico may still appear to be under control, however below the surface it does seem that the Mexican government is losing control over the nation and the criminals who terrorize it.

Despite the lack of up to date information concerning death tolls and rates in the five countries mentioned, the fact is that even in 2004 when the last data was available for these nations, Mexico still had a higher rate than four of them. In 2004, Mexico had an intentional homicide rate of 11.2/100,000⁴⁶⁵, the highest of the nations in question, save Sudan's. This rate has continued to climb along with the overall drug-related death toll, and continues to increase every year. While the nature of the war is still guerrilla-like, soon will come a time when it falls under the title of a full-fledged civil war. If this proves to become Mexico's reality, one will find it extremely difficult to maintain that the state has not failed. It is not that these scores need be altered in order to unfairly criticize the Mexican government, whose intentions certainly appear to be honorable, or equate the situation in Mexico to other tragic global realities, but rather it is important in order to ensure that the situation in Mexico is given the

⁴⁶⁵ UNODC, *Homicide Statistics, Criminal Justice and Public Health Sources-Trends (2003-2008)*.

attention it deserves. Hopefully, with the world watching, other nations will continue to step in to assist the Mexican government in its pursuit of a Mexico free of DTOs. Mexican state failure could prove catastrophic to the Central American region, as Mexico remains one of its economic and political giants.

Conclusion

Given the findings of this project one can begin to develop an answer to the original question posed of "will Mexico become a failed state by the end of Calderón's presidency in 2012?" Surely, the answer to the question of whether or not Mexico is currently a failed state is no. However, it is certainly slipping closer to obtaining that status. How can such a statement be made given comments, such as those made by Paredes Rangel, in which she states that the institutions and infrastructure exists in Mexico to protect and guarantee the constitution.⁴⁶⁶ She cites the frequency of and success of holding elections in Mexico, as well as the relationships and balances between the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of the Mexican government.⁴⁶⁷ While Ms. Paredes Rangel is correct that this infrastructure does exist in Mexico and has shown signs of improvement and greater transparency since the election of Vicente Fox in 2000, it would be foolish to assume that their mere existence is sufficient evidence to declare Mexico a fully functioning state. That is, the institutions certainly may exist and operate well, however that does not by any means indicate whether or not they have emerged from corruption and ineffectiveness.

⁴⁶⁶ Paredes Rangel, "The PRI in 21st Century Mexico,"

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

The Mexican government is losing its ability to rule and govern the nation effectively due to the perfect storm of a) the DTOs increasing ability to outgun the Mexican military forces, b) the Church's decreasing influence and sway as a moral guide over the nation, c) the moral dilemma facing Mexicans as to their ability and desire to stomach more violence and death as seen in the rise of the narcocorrido, and d) the struggle to maintain legitimacy and credibility in a nation where the government and authorities have long had their integrity and aptitude questioned and challenged. Without a doubt, the Mexican government under Calderón has failed to "successfully uphold a claim to the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force in the enforcement of its order."⁴⁶⁸

The expansion of the Mexican cartels' operations, particularly their "presence...in Central America," has to date been "the most noteworthy shift,"⁴⁶⁹ in the structure and function of these organizations. Furthermore, as STRATFOR reports, in a region that was formerly dominated by Colombian drug organizations, "it is the Mexican traffickers...who are conquering new turf and even expanding to other markets."⁴⁷⁰ What makes this so alarming is that it is clear proof of the tremendous financial and military might that the cartels wield since they are capable of "conquering" land outside of their home country and conducting business from foreign soil. It is developments such as these that have led many to grow frustrated and cynical with regards to the future of the conflict. Castañeda voices this sentiment at the conclusion of his article stating, "Mexico is paying an enormous price

⁴⁶⁸ Idea taken from José Antonio Ortega Sánchez, *México: ¿Rumbo al Estado Fallido?* (México, D.F.: Editorial Planeta, 2010), 19. Quote taken from Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 154.

⁴⁶⁹ STRATFOR, "Mexican Drug Cartels," 13.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

to fight a war which is going nowhere, which we are not winning, which we cannot win."⁴⁷¹ Such a pessimistic view of the conflict leads one to believe that the cartels are so overwhelmingly powerful that they simply cannot be defeated. It is precisely this defeatist approach, already discussed in this investigation, which provides the DTOs with license to act as they wish with little, if any, fear of repercussions.

The future of the conflict in Mexico is not improving in any quantifiable way. In the words of the previously quoted Mr. Gutiérrez, "we [Mexican government] have 18 months [from "October 2009"]and if we do not produce a tangible success that is recognizable to the Mexican people, it will be difficult to sustain the confrontation into the next administration."⁴⁷² If the Mexican government does not find a way to curb the climbing death toll, soon will come the day when Mexico has to stomach a total that could climb as high as 100,000 or more. Such a number is years, perhaps even a decade, away at the current rate; however it is a potential reality nonetheless. If this does in fact manifest itself the result is simply unacceptable morally and politically. Mexico will undoubtedly have to take on the label of "failed state," and be known as a nation that is incapable of providing the basic human rights of "life" and opportunity to its citizens. How then will they be able to prevent such a dismal future given that the cartels have become so powerful that, as Anabel Hernández reports, "*El Chapo's* [and by extension, the drug industry's] era will last as long as he wants it to?"⁴⁷³ Calderón and his administration's time is running out.

⁴⁷¹ Castañeda, "Mexico's Failed Drug War," 3.

⁴⁷² Gerónimo Gutiérrez was "a deputy secretary in the ministry in charge of domestic security." His statement and background from Malkin, "U.S. Aided Mexican Drug War."

⁴⁷³ Hernández, *Los Señores*, 587.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

A-1 FAILED STATES INDEX taken from FFP website at:

http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=102&Itemid=327#3.

What does "state failure" mean?

A: A state that is failing has several attributes. One of the most common is the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Other attributes of state failure include the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community. The 12 indicators cover a wide range of state failure risk elements such as extensive corruption and criminal behavior, inability to collect taxes or otherwise draw on citizen support, large-scale involuntary dislocation of the population, sharp economic decline, group-based inequality, institutionalized persecution or discrimination, severe demographic pressures, brain drain, and environmental decay. States can fail at varying rates through explosion, implosion, erosion, or invasion over different time periods.

Methodology of FSI taken from Foreign Policy website at:

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_faq_methodology.

Q: What methodology was used to generate the scores?

A: The Fund for Peace uses its Conflict Assessment System Tool (CAST), an original methodology it has developed and tested over the past decade. CAST is a flexible model that has the capability to employ a four-step trend-line analysis, consisting of (1) rating 12 social, economic, political, and military indicators; (2) assessing the capabilities of five core state institutions considered essential for sustaining security; (3) identifying idiosyncratic factors and

surprises; and (4) placing countries on a conflict map that shows the risk history of countries being analyzed.

For the Failed States Index, the FfP focused solely on the first step, which provides snapshots of state vulnerability or risk of violence for

one time period each year. The data used in each index are collected from May to December of the preceding year. The CAST software indexed and scanned more than 90,000 open-source articles and reports using Boolean logic, which consists of key phrases designed to capture the variables measured.

Full-text data are electronically gathered from a range of publicly available print, radio, television and Internet sources from all over the world, including international and local media reports, essays, interviews, polling and survey data, government documents, independent studies from think tanks, NGOs and universities, and even corporate financial filings. The software determines the salience of the 12 indicators as well as hundreds of sub-indicators by calculating the number of "hits" as a proportion of the sample for a given time period. Quantitative data is also included, when available. Subject-matter experts then review each score for every country and indicator, as well as consult the original documents, when necessary, to ensure accuracy.

Q: What are the 12 indicators of state vulnerability?

A: The 12 indicators are: Demographic Pressures, Refugees/IDPs, Group Grievance, Human Flight, Uneven Development, Economic Decline, Delegitimization of the State, Public Services, Human Rights, Security Apparatus, Factionalized Elites, and External Intervention.

A-2 BREAKDOWN OF MEXICO'S SCORES IN 12 FSI CATEGORIES taken from FFP website at:

http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=140.

MEXICO (98th rank on FSI)

Social Indicators

I-1 Mounting Demographic Pressures-7.0

I-2 Massive movement of Refugees or Internally Displaced Persons creating Complex Humanitarian Emergencies-4.3

I-3 Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Group Paranoia-5.9

I-4 Chronic and Sustained Human Flight-7.0

Economic Indicators

I-5 Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines-8.2

I-6 Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline-6.1

Political Indicators

I-7 Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State-6.8

I-8 Progressive Deterioration of Public Services-6.0

I-9 Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights-5.5

I-10 Security Apparatus Operates as a "State Within a State"-7.0

I-11 Rise of Factionalized Elites-5.0

I-12 Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors-6.6

Appendix B

B-1 PGR Most Wanted List (taken from http://www.puentelibre.com.mx/not_detalle.php?id n=14839.)

"A. Cártel del Golfo-Zetas

1. Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano, alias "El Lazca"; "Z-14"; "Z-3"; "El Verdugo"; "El Bronce"; "El Pitirijas"
2. Jorge Eduardo Costilla Sánchez, alias "El Coss"
3. Ezequiel Cárdenas Guillén, alias "Tony Tormenta"
4. Miguel Angel Treviño Morales, alias "L-40"; "Comandante 40"; "La Mona"
5. Omar Treviño Morales, alias "L-42"
6. Iván Velázquez Caballero, alias "El Talibán"; "L-50"
7. Gregorio Saucedo Gamboa, alias "El Goyo"; "Metro-2"; "Caramuela"

B. Cártel del Pacífico

1. Joaquín Guzmán Loera y/o Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán Loera, alias "El Chapo"
2. Ismael Zambada García, alias "El Mayo Zambada"
3. Ignacio Coronel Villarreal, alias "Nacho Coronel"
4. Juan José Esparragoza Moreno, alias "El Azul"
5. Vicente Zambada Niebla, alias "El Vicentillo"

C. Cártel Beltrán Leyva

1. Arturo Beltrán Leyva, alias "El Barbas"
2. Mario Alberto Beltrán Leyva y/o Héctor Beltrán Leyva, alias "El General"
3. Sergio Villarreal Barragán, alias "El Grande"
4. Edgar Valdez Villarreal, alias "La Barbie"

D. Cártel de los Carrillo Fuentes

1. Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, alias "El Viceroy"; "El General"
2. Vicente Carrillo Leyva

E. Cártel "La Familia"

1. Nazario Moreno González, alias "El Chayo"
2. Servando Gómez Martínez, alias "El Profe"; "El Tuta"
3. José de Jesús Méndez Vargas, alias "El Chango"
4. Dionicio Loya Plancarte, alias "El Tío"

F. Cártel Arellano Félix

1. Teodoro García Simental, alias "El Teo"; "El Lalo"; "El 68"; "El K-1"; "El Alamo 6"; "El Tres Letras"
2. Fernando Sánchez Arellano, alias "El Ingeniero"

II. Hasta de \$15'000,000.00 (Quince Millones de Pesos 00/100 Moneda Nacional), a quien o quienes proporcionen información útil, veraz y oportuna que auxilie eficientemente a la localización y detención efectiva por cada una de las personas siguientes

A. Cártel del Golfo-Zetas:

1. Sigifredo Nájera Talamantes, alias "El Canicón"
2. Ricardo Almanza Morales, alias "El Gori"
3. Eduardo Almanza Morales, alias "El Gori"
4. Raymundo Almanza Morales, alias "El Gori"
5. Flavio Méndez Santiago, alias "El Amarillo"
6. Sergio Peña Solís y/o René Solís Carlos, alias "El Concord"; "El Colosio"
7. Raúl Lucio Fernández Lechuga, alias "El Lucky"
8. Sergio Enrique Ruíz Tlapanco, alias "El Tlapa"

B. Cártel Beltrán Leyva

1. Francisco Hernández García, alias "El 2000"; "El Panchillo"
2. Alberto Pineda Villa, alias "El Borrado"
3. Marco Antonio Pineda Villa, alias "El MP"
4. Héctor Huerta Ríos, alias "La Burra"; "El Junior"

C. Cártel de Juárez y/o de los Carrillo Fuentes

1. Juan Pablo Ledesma y/o Eduardo Ledesma, alias "El JL"

Las recompensas que se ofrecen conforme a las fracciones a quien o quienes proporcionen información relevante y útil, que auxilie eficientemente para la localización y detención de las personas anteriores, se entienden por cada una de las personas señaladas. Todas cuentan con orden de aprehensión librada en su contra por autoridades judiciales del orden federal, o bien, con orden de localización y presentación emitida por el Ministerio Público de la Federación. Por razones de seguridad, a fin de evitar filtraciones que pongan en riesgo las investigaciones, así como las acciones de coordinación entre las autoridades competentes, se omiten en el presente Acuerdo los datos de identificación de los procedimientos penales en que se han librado las órdenes judiciales y ministeriales respectivas, así como de las autoridades correspondientes.

B-2 Assault Weapons Ban (taken from Library of Congress Website at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?c103:1:./temp/~c1032m1Ijc:e643945:..>)

H.R. 3355

Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Enrolled Bill [Final as Passed Both House and Senate] - ENR)

Subtitle A--Assault Weapons

SEC. 110101. SHORT TITLE.

This subtitle may be cited as the 'Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act'.

SEC. 110102. RESTRICTION ON MANUFACTURE, TRANSFER, AND POSSESSION OF CERTAIN SEMIAUTOMATIC ASSAULT WEAPONS.

(a) RESTRICTION- Section 922 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

(v) (1) It shall be unlawful for a person to manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic assault weapon.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to the possession or transfer of any semiautomatic assault weapon otherwise lawfully possessed under Federal law on the date of the enactment of this subsection.

(3) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to--

(A) any of the firearms, or replicas or duplicates of the firearms, specified in Appendix A to this section, as such firearms were manufactured on October 1, 1993;

(B) any firearm that--

(i) is manually operated by bolt, pump, lever, or slide action;

(ii) has been rendered permanently inoperable; or

(iii) is an antique firearm;

(C) any semiautomatic rifle that cannot accept a detachable magazine that holds more than 5 rounds of ammunition; or

(D) any semiautomatic shotgun that cannot hold more than 5 rounds of ammunition in a fixed or detachable magazine.

The fact that a firearm is not listed in Appendix A shall not be construed to mean that paragraph (1) applies to such firearm. No

firearm exempted by this subsection may be deleted from Appendix A so long as this subsection is in effect.

`(4) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to--

`(A) the manufacture for, transfer to, or possession by the United States or a department or agency of the United States or a State or a department, agency, or political subdivision of a State, or a transfer to or possession by a law enforcement officer employed by such an entity for purposes of law enforcement (whether on or off duty);

`(B) the transfer to a licensee under title I of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 for purposes of establishing and maintaining an on-site physical protection system and security organization required by Federal law, or possession by an employee or contractor of such licensee on-site for such purposes or off-site for purposes of licensee-authorized training or transportation of nuclear materials;

`(C) the possession, by an individual who is retired from service with a law enforcement agency and is not otherwise prohibited from receiving a firearm, of a semiautomatic assault weapon transferred to the individual by the agency upon such retirement; or

`(D) the manufacture, transfer, or possession of a semiautomatic assault weapon by a licensed manufacturer or licensed importer for the purposes of testing or experimentation authorized by the Secretary.'

(b) DEFINITION OF SEMIAUTOMATIC ASSAULT WEAPON- Section 921(a) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

`(30) The term 'semiautomatic assault weapon' means--

`(A) any of the firearms, or copies or duplicates of the firearms in any caliber, known as--

`(i) Norinco, Mitchell, and Poly Technologies Avtomat Kalashnikovs (all models);

- `(ii) Action Arms Israeli Military Industries UZI and Galil;
- `(iii) Beretta Ar70 (SC-70);
- `(iv) Colt AR-15;
- `(v) Fabrique National FN/FAL, FN/LAR, and FNC;
- `(vi) SWD M-10, M-11, M-11/9, and M-12;
- `(vii) Steyr AUG;
- `(viii) INTRATEC TEC-9, TEC-DC9 and TEC-22; and
- `(ix) revolving cylinder shotguns, such as (or similar to) the Street Sweeper and Striker 12;
- `(B) a semiautomatic rifle that has an ability to accept a detachable magazine and has at least 2 of--
 - `(i) a folding or telescoping stock;
 - `(ii) a pistol grip that protrudes conspicuously beneath the action of the weapon;
 - `(iii) a bayonet mount;
 - `(iv) a flash suppressor or threaded barrel designed to accommodate a flash suppressor; and
 - `(v) a grenade launcher;
- `(C) a semiautomatic pistol that has an ability to accept a detachable magazine and has at least 2 of--
 - `(i) an ammunition magazine that attaches to the pistol outside of the pistol grip;

- `(ii) a threaded barrel capable of accepting a barrel extender, flash suppressor, forward handgrip, or silencer;
- `(iii) a shroud that is attached to, or partially or completely encircles, the barrel and that permits the shooter to hold the firearm with the nontrigger hand without being burned;
- `(iv) a manufactured weight of 50 ounces or more when the pistol is unloaded; and
- `(v) a semiautomatic version of an automatic firearm; and
- `(D) a semiautomatic shotgun that has at least 2 of--
 - `(i) a folding or telescoping stock;
 - `(ii) a pistol grip that protrudes conspicuously beneath the action of the weapon;
 - `(iii) a fixed magazine capacity in excess of 5 rounds; and
 - `(iv) an ability to accept a detachable magazine.'

(c) PENALTIES-

- (1) VIOLATION OF SECTION 922(v)- Section 924(a)(1)(B) of such title is amended by striking `or (q) of section 922' and inserting `(r), or (v) of section 922'.
- (2) USE OR POSSESSION DURING CRIME OF VIOLENCE OR DRUG TRAFFICKING CRIME- Section 924(c)(1) of such title is amended in the first sentence by inserting `, or semiautomatic assault weapon,' after `short-barreled shotgun,'.

(d) IDENTIFICATION MARKINGS FOR SEMIAUTOMATIC ASSAULT WEAPONS- Section 923(i) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following:
`The serial number of any semiautomatic assault weapon manufactured

after the date of the enactment of this sentence shall clearly show the date on which the weapon was manufactured.'.

B-3 The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

and its Protocols (taken from the UNODC website at:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html>):

"The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, is the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime. It opened for signature by Member States at a High-level Political Conference convened for that purpose in Palermo, Italy, on 12-15 December 2000 and entered into force on 29 September 2003. The Convention is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Countries must become parties to the Convention itself before they can become parties to any of the Protocols.

The Convention represents a major step forward in the fight against transnational organized crime and signifies the recognition by Member States of the seriousness of the problems posed by it, as well as the need to foster and enhance close international cooperation in order to tackle those problems. States that ratify this instrument commit themselves to taking a series of measures against transnational organized crime, including the creation of domestic criminal offences (participation in an organized criminal group, money laundering, corruption and obstruction of justice); the adoption of new and sweeping frameworks for extradition, mutual legal assistance and law enforcement cooperation; and the promotion of training and technical assistance for building or upgrading the necessary capacity of national authorities.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, was adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25. It entered into force on 25 December 2003. It is the first global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons. The intention behind this definition is to facilitate convergence in national approaches with regard to the establishment of domestic criminal offences that would support efficient international cooperation in investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons cases. An additional objective of the Protocol is to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons with full respect for their human rights.

The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25, entered into force on 28 January 2004. It deals with the growing problem of organized criminal groups who smuggle migrants, often at high risk to the migrants and at great profit for the offenders. A major achievement of the Protocol was that, for the first time in a global international instrument, a definition of smuggling of migrants was developed and agreed upon. The Protocol aims at preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants, as

well as promoting cooperation among States parties, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants and preventing the worst forms of their exploitation which often characterize the smuggling process.

The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition was adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/255 of 31 May 2001. It entered into force on 3 July 2005. The objective of the Protocol, which is the first legally binding instrument on small arms that has been adopted at the global level, is to promote, facilitate and strengthen cooperation among States Parties in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. By ratifying the Protocol, States make a commitment to adopt a series of crime-control measures and implement in their domestic legal order three sets of normative provisions: the first one relates to the establishment of criminal offences related to illegal manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms on the basis of the Protocol requirements and definitions; the second to a system of government authorizations or licensing intending to ensure legitimate manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms; and the third one to the marking and tracing of firearms."

B-4 Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (taken from OAS website at:

<http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-63.html>):

THE STATES PARTIES,

AWARE of the urgent need to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials, due to the harmful effects of these activities on the security of each state and the region as a whole, endangering the well-being of peoples, their social and economic development, and their right to live in peace;

CONCERNED by the increase, at the international level, in the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials and by the serious problems resulting therefrom;

REAFFIRMING that States Parties give priority to preventing, combating, and eradicating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials because of the links of such activities with drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, and mercenary and other criminal activities;

CONCERNED about the illicit manufacture of explosives from substances and articles that in and of themselves are not explosives--and that are not addressed by this Convention due to their other lawful uses--for activities related to drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime and mercenary and other criminal activities;

CONSIDERING the urgent need for all states, and especially those states that produce, export, and import arms, to take the necessary measures to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials;

CONVINCED that combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials calls for international cooperation, exchange of information, and other appropriate measures at the national, regional, and international levels, and desiring to set a precedent for the international community in this regard;

STRESSING the need, in peace processes and post-conflict situations, to achieve effective control of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials in order to prevent their entry into the illicit market;

MINDFUL of the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on measures to eradicate the illicit transfer of conventional weapons and on the need for all states to guarantee their security, and of the efforts carried out in the framework of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD);

RECOGNIZING the importance of strengthening existing international law enforcement support mechanisms such as the International Weapons and Explosives Tracking System (IWETS) of the International Criminal

Police Organization (INTERPOL), to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials;

RECOGNIZING that international trade in firearms is particularly vulnerable to abuses by criminal elements and that a "know-your-customer" policy for dealers in, and producers, exporters, and importers of, firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials is crucial for combating this scourge;

RECOGNIZING that states have developed different cultural and historical uses for firearms, and that the purpose of enhancing international cooperation to eradicate illicit transnational trafficking in firearms is not intended to discourage or diminish lawful leisure or recreational activities such as travel or tourism for sport shooting, hunting, and other forms of lawful ownership and use recognized by the States Parties;

RECALLING that States Parties have their respective domestic laws and regulations in the areas of firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials, and recognizing that this Convention does not commit States Parties to enact legislation or regulations pertaining to firearms ownership, possession, or trade of a wholly domestic character, and recognizing that States Parties will apply their respective laws and regulations in a manner consistent with this Convention;

REAFFIRMING the principles of sovereignty, nonintervention, and the juridical equality of states,

HAVE DECIDED TO ADOPT THIS INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION AGAINST THE ILLICIT MANUFACTURING OF AND TRAFFICKING IN FIREARMS, AMMUNITION, EXPLOSIVES, AND OTHER RELATED MATERIALS:

Appendix C

C-1 Statements from Mexican Bishops made concerning the Church's role in human rights defense. Taken from Roderic Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

"All bishops, in my opinion, believe that it is the obligation of the Church to protect human rights. Many times these abuses are contrary to our constitution, and these too have to be regularized in terms of theory versus practice...I don't think there's any bishop who doesn't believe in these rights."

Cardinal of Guadalajara

Personal interview with Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo [by Roderic Ai Camp], Guadalajara Archdiocese, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico City, February 20, 1991, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

"When we defend human rights we are defending liberty and human dignity independently of the posture of political parties. This is part of the Church's mission, because he who doesn't encounter God in man will not encounter him anywhere. We are the children of God, we are brothers, and to attack the dignity of man is to offend God. For this reason, the Church, with complete rights, is completing its mission, entering into the defense of human rights."

Archbishop of Chihuahua

Jaime Pérez Mendoza, "Por petición de Bartlett El Vaticano ordenó que hubiera misas en Chihuahua," citing Archbishop Adalberto Almeida Merino, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

"I think the role of the Church in this area of human rights is definitive. They are defending the rights of God in the realization of human welfare against the abuses and excessive behavior of others. Our position would be firm on the moral issues but in politics, no."

Bishop of Texcoco

Personal interview with Bishop Magín Camarino Torreblanca Reyes [by Roderic Ai Camp], Texcoco Diocese, Texcoco, México, July 12, 1993, as quoted in Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

"I think the motivation for human rights is stronger today, but it always has been a traditional role of the Church in the past. The right of association, social justice, and other concepts, these are part of the evangelical function. We are now cooperating with other civil institutions and the United Nations' organizations. We must help people in a transcendental sense to focus on all human values."

Bishop of Aguascalientes

Personal interview with Bishop Rafael Muñoz [by Roderic Ai Camp], Aguascalientes Archdiocese, Aguascalientes,

Aguascalientes, Mexico City, July 15, 1993, as quoted in
Camp, *Crossing Swords*, 83.

Appendix D

D-1

Taken from <http://www.proceso.com.mx/rv/modHome/detalleExclusiva/89858>.

Javier Sicilia: Carta abierta a políticos y criminales
Javier Sicilia

MÉXICO, DF., 3 de abril (Proceso).- El brutal asesinato de mi hijo Juan Francisco, de Julio César Romero Jaime, de Luis Antonio Romero Jaime y de Gabriel Anejo Escalera, se suma a los de tantos otros muchachos y muchachas que han sido igualmente asesinados a lo largo y ancho del país a causa no sólo de la guerra desatada por el gobierno de Calderón contra el crimen organizado, sino del pudrimiento del corazón que se ha apoderado de la mal llamada clase política y de la clase criminal, que ha roto sus códigos de honor.

No quiero, en esta carta, hablarles de las virtudes de mi hijo, que eran inmensas, ni de las de los otros muchachos que vi florecer a su lado, estudiando, jugando, amando, creciendo, para servir, como tantos otros muchachos, a este país que ustedes han desgarrado. Hablar de ello no serviría más que para conmover lo que ya de por sí conmueve el corazón de la ciudadanía hasta la indignación. No quiero tampoco hablar del dolor de mi familia y de la familia de cada uno de los muchachos destruidos. Para ese dolor no hay palabras -sólo la poesía puede acercarse un poco a él, y ustedes no saben de poesía-. Lo que hoy quiero decirles desde esas vidas mutiladas, desde ese dolor que carece de nombre porque es fruto de lo que no pertenece a la naturaleza -la muerte de un hijo es siempre antinatural y por ello carece de nombre: entonces no se es huérfano ni viudo, se es simple y dolorosamente nada-, desde esas vidas mutiladas, repito, desde ese sufrimiento, desde la indignación que esas muertes han provocado, es simplemente que estamos hasta la madre.

Estamos hasta la madre de ustedes, políticos -y cuando digo políticos no me refiero a ninguno en particular, sino a una buena parte de ustedes, incluyendo a quienes componen los partidos-, porque en sus luchas por el poder han desgarrado el tejido de la nación, porque en medio de esta guerra mal planteada, mal hecha, mal dirigida, de esta guerra que ha puesto al país en estado de emergencia, han sido incapaces -a causa de sus mezquindades, de sus pugnas, de su miserable grilla, de su lucha por el poder- de crear los consensos que la nación necesita para encontrar la unidad sin la cual este país no tendrá salida; estamos hasta la madre, porque la corrupción de las instituciones judiciales genera la complicidad con el crimen y la impunidad para cometerlo; porque, en medio de esa corrupción que muestra el fracaso del Estado, cada ciudadano de este país ha sido reducido a lo que el filósofo Giorgio Agamben llamó, con palabra griega, zoe: la vida no protegida, la vida de un animal, de un ser que puede ser violentado, secuestrado, vejado y asesinado impunemente; estamos hasta la madre porque sólo tienen imaginación para la violencia, para las armas, para el insulto y, con ello, un profundo desprecio por la educación, la cultura y las oportunidades de trabajo

honrado y bueno, que es lo que hace a las buenas naciones; estamos hasta la madre porque esa corta imaginación está permitiendo que nuestros muchachos, nuestros hijos, no sólo sean asesinados sino, después, criminalizados, vueltos falsamente culpables para satisfacer el ánimo de esa imaginación; estamos hasta la madre porque otra parte de nuestros muchachos, a causa de la ausencia de un buen plan de gobierno, no tienen oportunidades para educarse, para encontrar un trabajo digno y, arrojados a las periferias, son posibles reclutas para el crimen organizado y la violencia; estamos hasta la madre porque a causa de todo ello la ciudadanía ha perdido confianza en sus gobernantes, en sus policías, en su Ejército, y tiene miedo y dolor; estamos hasta la madre porque lo único que les importa, además de un poder impotente que sólo sirve para administrar la desgracia, es el dinero, el fomento de la competencia, de su pinche "competitividad" y del consumo desmesurado, que son otros nombres de la violencia.

De ustedes, criminales, estamos hasta la madre, de su violencia, de su pérdida de honorabilidad, de su crueldad, de su sinsentido.

Antiguamente ustedes tenían códigos de honor. No eran tan crueles en sus ajustes de cuentas y no tocaban ni a los ciudadanos ni a sus familias. Ahora ya no distinguen. Su violencia ya no puede ser nombrada porque ni siquiera, como el dolor y el sufrimiento que provocan, tiene un nombre y un sentido. Han perdido incluso la dignidad para matar. Se han vuelto cobardes como los miserables Sonderkommandos nazis que asesinaban sin ningún sentido de lo humano a niños, muchachos, muchachas, mujeres, hombres y ancianos, es decir, inocentes. Estamos hasta la madre porque su violencia se ha vuelto infrahumana, no animal -los animales no hacen lo que ustedes hacen-, sino subhumana, demoniaca, imbécil. Estamos hasta la madre porque en su afán de poder y de enriquecimiento humillan a nuestros hijos y los destrozan y producen miedo y espanto.

Ustedes, "señores" políticos, y ustedes, "señores" criminales -lo entrecomillo porque ese epíteto se otorga sólo a la gente honorable-, están con sus omisiones, sus pleitos y sus actos envileciendo a la nación. La muerte de mi hijo Juan Francisco ha levantado la solidaridad y el grito de indignación -que mi familia y yo agradecemos desde el fondo de nuestros corazones- de la ciudadanía y de los medios. Esa indignación vuelve de nuevo a poner ante nuestros oídos esa acertadísima frase que Martí dirigió a los gobernantes: "Si no pueden, renuncien". Al volverla a poner ante nuestros oídos -después de los miles de cadáveres anónimos y no anónimos que llevamos a nuestras espaldas, es decir, de tantos inocentes asesinados y envilecidos-, esa frase debe ir acompañada de grandes movilizaciones ciudadanas que los obliguen, en estos momentos de emergencia nacional, a unirse para crear una agenda que unifique a la nación y cree un estado de gobernabilidad real. Las redes ciudadanas de Morelos están convocando a una marcha nacional el miércoles 6 de abril que saldrá a las 5:00 PM del monumento de la Paloma de la Paz para llegar hasta el Palacio de Gobierno, exigiendo justicia y paz. Si los ciudadanos no nos unimos a ella y la reproducimos constantemente en todas las ciudades, en todos los municipios o delegaciones del país, si no somos capaces de eso para obligarlos a ustedes, "señores" políticos, a gobernar con justicia y dignidad, y a ustedes, "señores" criminales, a retornar a sus códigos

de honor y a limitar su salvajismo, la espiral de violencia que han generando nos llevará a un camino de horror sin retorno. Si ustedes, "señores" políticos, no gobiernan bien y no toman en serio que vivimos un estado de emergencia nacional que requiere su unidad, y ustedes, "señores" criminales, no limitan sus acciones, terminarán por triunfar y tener el poder, pero gobernarán o reinarán sobre un montón de osarios y de seres amedrentados y destruidos en su alma. Un sueño que ninguno de nosotros les envidia.

No hay vida, escribía Albert Camus, sin persuasión y sin paz, y la historia del México de hoy sólo conoce la intimidación, el sufrimiento, la desconfianza y el temor de que un día otro hijo o hija de alguna otra familia sea envilecido y masacrado, sólo conoce que lo que ustedes nos piden es que la muerte, como ya está sucediendo hoy, se convierta en un asunto de estadística y de administración al que todos debemos acostumbrarnos.

Porque no queremos eso, el próximo miércoles saldremos a la calle; porque no queremos un muchacho más, un hijo nuestro, asesinado, las redes ciudadanas de Morelos están convocando a una unidad nacional ciudadana que debemos mantener viva para romper el miedo y el aislamiento que la incapacidad de ustedes, "señores" políticos, y la crueldad de ustedes, "señores" criminales, nos quieren meter en el cuerpo y en el alma.

Recuerdo, en este sentido, unos versos de Bertolt Brecht cuando el horror del nazismo, es decir, el horror de la instalación del crimen en la vida cotidiana de una nación, se anunciaba: "Un día vinieron por los negros y no dije nada; otro día vinieron por los judíos y no dije nada; un día llegaron por mí (o por un hijo mío) y no tuve nada que decir". Hoy, después de tantos crímenes soportados, cuando el cuerpo destrozado de mi hijo y de sus amigos ha hecho movilizarse de nuevo a la ciudadanía y a los medios, debemos hablar con nuestros cuerpos, con nuestro caminar, con nuestro grito de indignación para que los versos de Brecht no se hagan una realidad en nuestro país.

Además opino que hay que devolverle la dignidad a esta nación.

Esta carta se publica en la edición 1976 de la revista Proceso, ya en circulación.

Javier Sicilia: Open letter to politicians and criminals. Translated by Marco Antonio Pinon-Farah with the minor assistance from www.translate.google.com.

Mexico, DF., April 3, 2011 (Proceso)-The brutal murder of my son Juan Francisco, of Julio César Romero Jaime, of Luis Antonio Romero Jaime and of Gabriel Anejo Escalera, adds to the many other young men and women who have similarly been murdered throughout the country as a result not only of the war brought about by Calderón's government

against organized crime, but also the rotting of the heart that has gained control over the poorly name political and criminal classes, that has broken its codes of honor.

I do not, in this letter, want to talk about the virtues of my son, which were immense, nor do I wish to speak of those of the other young men I saw flourish by his side, studying, playing, loving, growing, to serve, like so many other youths, this country that you have destroyed. Speaking of such things would not serve any purpose other than to move that which has already been moved within the heart of the people to the point of indignation. I don't want to talk about the pain of my family and of the family of each of those young men. For that kind of pain there are no words-only poetry is capable of coming close to it, and you know nothing of poetry-. What I do want to tell you today from those mutilated lives, from that pain that doesn't even have a name because it is the product of that which doesn't pertain to nature-the death of a child is always unnatural and for that reason it lacks a name: therefore it isn't an orphan nor widower, it is simply and painfully nothing-, from these mutilated lives, I repeat, from that suffering, from the indignation that these deaths have provoked, it quite simply is the case that we have had enough.

We have had enough of you, politicians-and when I say politicians I do not mean any one in particular, but rather a good portion of you, including those who make up the parties-because in your fight for power you have destroyed the social fabric of the country, because in the middle of this war, which has been poorly formulated, poorly carried out, poorly driven, this war that has put the country in a state of emergency, you have been incapable-because of your pettiness, your struggles, your lack of judgment⁴⁷⁴, of your fight for power-of creating the consensus that this country needs in order to find unity, without which this country will not find the way out; we have had enough, because the corruption of the judicial institutions generates complicity with crime and the impunity to commit it; because, throughout this corruption that shows the failure of the State, each citizen of this country has resigned themselves to what the philosopher Giorgio Agamben called, with the Greek word, zoe: unprotected life, the life of an animal, of a being who can be subjected to violence, kidnapped, abused and murdered with impunity; we have had enough because you only have the imagination for violence, for weapons, for insults and, with this, a profound hatred for education, culture and the opportunities for honorable and good work, which is what makes countries good; we have had enough because this weak imagination is allowing our young men, our children, to not only be murdered, but also, afterwards, criminalized, falsely blamed in order to satisfy that imagination; we have had enough because another part of our youth, because of the absence of an adequate government plan, don't have opportunities to educate themselves, to find dignified work and, thrown to the periphery, they are potential recruits for organized crime and violence; we have had enough because as a result of this the people has lost confidence in their government, in their police, in the military, and they are scared and hurting; we have had enough because the only thing that matters to you, besides impotent power that only serves the

⁴⁷⁴ This word translated using the Spanish definition of "grillarse," from www.wordreference.com.

purpose to administer disgrace, is money, fostering competition, your *fucking* "competitiveness" and of limitless consumption, which are other names for violence.

We have had enough of you, criminals, of your violence, of your loss of honor, your cruelty, your nonsense.

You used to have codes of honor. You were not so cruel about account balances and you did not touch civilians or their families. Now you make no distinction. Your violence can no longer be identified because it doesn't even, like the pain and suffering it causes, have a name or reason. You have even lost the dignity to kill. You have become cowards like the miserable Sonderkommandos Nazis who murdered, for no human reason, children, young men, young women, women, men and the elderly, that is, the innocent. We have had enough because your violence has become inhuman, not animalistic-animals don't do what you do-, but rather subhuman, demonic, senseless. We have had enough because your desire for power and riches humiliate our children and destroy them and produce fear and terror.

You, "gentlemen," politicians, and you, "gentlemen," criminals-I use quotes because this epithet is reserved only for honorable people-, have your omissions, your arguments and your acts that vilify the country. The death of my son Juan Francisco has raised solidarity and the cry of indignation- that my family and I appreciate from the bottom of our hearts- of the people and the mediums. That indignation again brings the wise words, that Martí directed to those who govern, to our ears: "If you cannot do it, resign". By bringing it to our attention again-after the thousands of anonymous and non-anonymous bodies that we carry on our backs, that is, of so many innocent who have been murdered and vilified-, those words should be accompanied by large civilian movements that force them, in these times of national emergency, to come together in order to create an agenda that unifies the nation and creates a state of true governance. The civilian networks of Morelos are planning a national march Wednesday April 6 that will start at 5:00 PM from the Paloma de la Paz monument all the way to Government Palace, demanding justice and peace. If the citizens do not unite and imitate them constantly in all cities, in all municipalities or delegations of the country, if we are incapable of doing so in order to obligate you, "gentlemen," politicians to govern with justice and dignity, and you, "gentlemen," criminals, to return to your codes of honor, and limit your savagery, the spiral of violence which you have generated will take us down a horrific path of no return. If you, "gentlemen," politicians do not govern well and don't take it seriously that we live in a state of national emergency that requires your unity, and you "gentlemen," criminals, don't limit your actions, will end up triumphing and gaining power, but you will govern or reign over a bunch of caskets and frightened beings whose souls have been destroyed. A dream that none of us envy you for.

Albert Camus wrote that there is no life without persuasion and peace, and Mexico's history of today only knows intimidation, suffering, lack of trust and fear that one day another son or daughter of another family will be vilified and massacred. We only know that what you ask

of us is death, as this is happening now, it becomes an issue of statistics and administration to which we should all get used to.

Because we do not want that, next Wednesday we will go out to the street; because we do not have one more youth, a son of ours, murdered, the civilian networks of Morelos are planning for national civilian unity that we should maintain alive in order to break through the fear and isolation that your inability, "gentlemen," politicians, and your cruelty, "gentlemen," criminals, wish to instill in our bodies and souls.

I remember, in this sense, a few of Bertolt Brecht's verses about the horror of Nazism, that is, the horror of the installation of crime in the everyday life of a nation, it was announced: "One day they came for the blacks and I said nothing; another day they came for the Jews and I said nothing; one day they came for me (or for a child of mine) and I had nothing to say". Today, after so many supported crimes, when the destroyed body of my son and of his friends has made the people and the media mobilize again, we should speak with our bodies, with our walking, with our cry of indignation so that Brecht's verses do not become a reality in our country.

I also believe we must return dignity to this country.

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