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FEATURED Q&A

Does the White House's Mexico Initiative Go Far Enough?

Q Last month, the Obama administration announced a plan to send hundreds of additional federal agents and more equipment to the US border with Mexico in support of President Felipe Calderon's fight against the cartels and spiraling drug violence. The next day, members of the US Senate Homeland Security Committee expressed support for the plan but also raised doubts that it has a large enough scope. Will the currently proposed plan be effective in reducing drug trafficking and drug-related violence? Is more needed? Is the partnership between the US and Mexico on fighting cartels improving?

administration has focused on the issue and is scrambling to pull together a strategy, resources and an associated border defense. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made a huge, positive impact during her official visit to Mexico by acknowledging US responsibility to deal effectively with US drug addiction. Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano are now also involved. US substance abuse at 7 percent is down dramatically since its peak in 1979 at 13 percent of population. Nonetheless,

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A **Guest Comment: Barry R. McCaffrey:** "Mexico is in trouble. Ten thousand have been murdered in this epic struggle against the drug cartels. The economy is tanking because of the combined impact of global recession, falling oil prices and production levels, and the rapid fall in tourism and foreign investment caused by huge levels of street violence among the criminal gangs. Mexico needs the support and resources of the United States in its struggle to establish the rule of law in the battle against these vicious internal threats. Weapons and laundered drug money from the United States make us complicit in Mexico's national pain. Our own country is rapidly being affected by dozens of American cities caught up in the massive criminal penetration of Mexican drug gangs. The Obama



Venezuela, Iran Sign Oil Field Participation Agreements

The governments of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (L) and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (R) agreed to several accords during Chavez's visit to Iran, including ones on oil development. See story on page 2.

Photo: Venezuelan Government.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Venezuela's Chavez Says He Wants to 'Reset' US Relations

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez told Venezuelan state television Saturday that he wants to "reset" relations with the United States, the Associated Press reported. Chavez, speaking during his state visit to Iran, said he hopes this month's Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago will help bring Washington and Caracas to a "rational level." In the interview, Chavez said, "I'll be willing to press the reset button. I hope that will be the policy of President Obama."

Argentina Blocks Telecom Italia Voting Rights Over Anti-Trust Case

The Argentine government's anti-trust agency on Saturday ordered Italian firm **Telecom Italia SpA** to stop exercising its voting rights in **Telecom Argentina SA**, the country's second-largest phone provider, due to concerns that 1.8 percent of the local company's shares can be traced to Spain's **Telefonica**, which also owns Argentina's largest telecom, **Telefonica Argentina SA**, reported Dow Jones. Telecom Italia CEO Franco Bernabe called the decision "completely unfounded" and said he hoped the Argentine government would intervene to resolve the situation.

Chilean Volcano Spews Ash Into Neighboring Argentina

A volcano in southern Chile has spewed a column of ash four miles high, extending 62 miles southeast of the volcano into neighboring Argentina, reported Reuters on Monday. Eruptions at the Llaima volcano, located about 435 miles south of Santiago, have led to the evacuations of 71 people from the surrounding area since they first began on Jan. 1.

Political News**Obama Administration to Ease Cuba Travel, Remittance Restrictions**

The administration of US President Barack Obama plans to further ease travel and remittance restrictions for Cuban-Americans, *The Wall Street Journal* reported Friday, citing a senior official in the administration. The changes would

“The intent is to try to test the waters and see if we can get Cuba to move in another direction.”

— *Obama administration official*

allow Americans with family in Cuba to visit the island as often as they wish and send unlimited amounts of money. The president has the power to ease the travel and remittance restrictions without congressional approval. Easing the restrictions would affect approximately 1.5 mil-

lion Americans with relatives in Cuba. Obama is not planning to call for lifting the 47-year-old trade embargo against Cuba, which would require congressional approval. Last month, Obama signed legislation to ease some travel and remittance restrictions, which had been tightened by former President George W. Bush. Currently, Americans with relatives on the island can visit once each year, stay as long as they want and spend as much as \$179 daily, the Associated Press reported Saturday. Lifting the travel and remittance restrictions would fulfill one of Obama's campaign promises, administration officials said. "The intent is to try to test the waters and see if we can get Cuba to move in another direction," an official said. "One way of getting the regime to open up may be to let people travel, increase exchanges and get money flowing to the island." The administration is expected to formally announce the easing of the restrictions before the Summit of the Americas, which will occur April 17-19. During his campaign, Obama said easing the travel and remittance restrictions for Cuban-Americans was a priority. "It's time to let Cuban-Americans see their

Featured Q&A

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Mexico provides 90 percent of the cocaine, most of the terrible methamphetamines, eight tons of heroin and 10,000 metric tons of marijuana consumed by the US addict population of some 5 million abusers. Now is the time for joint action based on deference to Mexican sovereignty and a sense of US co-responsibility for these problems. Mexican leadership has been courageous and bold from President Calderon, Attorney General Medina-Mora, Secretary of Public Safety Luna, as well as the federal police and armed forces. This problem is going to get worse in the coming weeks. Our own national interests are strongly served by serious levels of resources and cooperation."

A Board Comment: Andrés Rozental: "It is too early to make a judgment as to whether the measures announced by

Secretaries Hillary Clinton and Janet Napolitano will be sufficient to be truly effective in adding human, material and financial resources to the fight against drug cartels and violence in Mexico. It was certainly very positive and reassuring to hear the constant statements coming out of Washington and during Hillary Clinton's trip to Mexico about shared responsibility and the need to do much more on the US side of the border to reduce the flow of arms and cash into Mexico. But as always in these cases, the devil is in the details and we won't have a clear idea for some time about exactly how, by what means and the extent to which the Obama administration will commit the necessary resources for this. There are early indications that increased manpower has been sent to the major border crossings to bolster the existing agency presence. There is also talk of

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mothers and fathers, their sisters and their brothers," Obama said last May in Miami. "It's time to let Cuban-American money make their families less dependent on the Castro regime." Easing US restrictions on Cuba remains a divisive issue. Some members of Congress, including Sen. Mel Martinez (R-Fla.), criticized legislation that would end Cuba travel restrictions for all Americans, arguing easing restrictions would only help the Castro regime.

As Trial Nears End, Fujimori Blasts Former Peruvian Presidents

As his 15-month trial nears its end, former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori on Friday blasted other former presidents of the South American country, saying the charges against him amount to a double standard, the Associated Press reported. In a statement to a packed Lima courtroom, Fujimori said he was being persecuted since he is the only president who served during the 20-year conflict with Maoist guerrillas to be placed on trial. "What's the difference? Why are Alan Garcia and Fernando Belaunde innocent and Fujimori is guilty? Why the double standard?" Fujimori said in court. Fujimori told the court that current President Alan Garcia was not tried for massacres that allegedly occurred during his first presidency, from 1985 to 1990. Fujimori also said former President Fernando Belaunde, who was in office from 1980 to 1985, was never tried for deaths and abductions that happened after he unleashed Peru's military on the Shining Path rebels in 1983. Fujimori is on trial for allegedly authorizing death squads to kill 25 people during two massacres in the early 1990s. He is also accused in the kidnapping of a journalist and businessman in 1992. A verdict is expected to be handed down Tuesday. During the trial, no witness testimony directly linked Fujimori to the killings or abductions,



Fujimori

File Photo: Peruvian Government.

but several did make accusations before the trial began. However, prosecutors have argued that Fujimori and his spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos built an "apparatus of power" that used terror to fight terror. Garcia, who fought the Shining Path during his first term, denies responsibility for any violations of human rights that occurred during his presidency.

The Dialogue Continues

What Are Uribe's Chances for a Third Term in Colombia?

Q With a little over a year to go before Colombia's presidential elections, it remains unclear if President Alvaro Uribe will be able to, or even wishes to, run for office again. What are the chances for a constitutional amendment to allow him to run for a third term? What are Uribe's alternatives if the amendment effort fails?

A **Guest Comment: Bruce M. Bagley:** "At 70 percent or above favorability ratings, President Uribe is the most popular Colombian president in memory. His popularity is rooted in his hard-line democratic security policies that have reduced homicides, kidnappings and extortion by some 70 percent since he took office in August 2002. If he can overcome the constitutional hurdle to running for a third term, there is little doubt that he would win in a landslide. There is no other candidate on Colombia's political horizon with anything like his appeal to the majority of Colombians. And there is no question that President Uribe would like to run, despite his public coyness on the subject. The key issue is whether or not he will be able to amend the Colombian Constitution for a second time to permit him to run for a third consecutive term. Given his control over the majority of Colombia's congress, the extreme fragmentation of the opposition parties and his overwhelming popular support, it is highly likely that he will manage to run again. If he cannot or does not run, the leading candidate to replace President Uribe (and until recently one of his closet collaborators) is Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos. If Uribe does not run in 2010, it is almost a sure thing that he will run again in 2014."

Bruce M. Bagley is professor and chair of the Department of International Studies at the University of Miami.

Editor's note: the above is a continuation of a Q&A published in the April 2, 2009 issue of the Advisor.

fields in Iran, Bloomberg News reported Saturday, citing a Venezuelan government statement. The agreements were signed

The agreements include joint study of Iran's Dobokubi oil field.

during Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's visit to Iran. PDVSA added it would participate in development of the South Park oil block in Iran. The two countries signed agreements to jointly study the Dobokubi oil field in Iran. Chavez and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also signed accords to cooperate in the areas of mining, agriculture, science and technology.

Company News

Venezuela's PDVSA, Iran Sign Oil Field Participation Agreements

Venezuela's state-owned oil company, PDVSA and Iran have signed agreements for PDVSA to participate in work at 17 oil

Featured Q&A*Continued from page 2*

urgently putting in place the technology required to scan vehicles and people before they cross into Mexico, as well as to substantially increase the surveillance of armories and gun shows that feed much of the weaponry that goes from the

included in this effort. For example, the Southwest Border Prosecution Initiative is an excellent partnership between federal and state prosecutors in handling drug cases effectively. This initiative allows federal prosecutors to refer drug cases to state prosecutors while they concentrate on the more serious drug offenses. I do

“We must ... focus on drug treatment programs that assist drug addicts and casual users of illegal drugs.”

— *Jaime Esparza*

US to Mexico. During a recent appearance on CBS, President Obama disappointingly stopped short of committing to review the issue of banning assault rifles, even though it is well documented that these are the preferred weapons of the drug cartels, as well as of the people in the US that attack schools and kill innocent bystanders on a recurring basis. The visits by Secretary Napolitano and Attorney General Eric Holder to participate in bilateral discussions on the arms trafficking issue, together with President Obama's trip in the middle of this month, will give us a clearer idea of what specific commitments the US is willing to make. Felipe Calderon has mentioned tens of billions of dollars as the probable cost of dismantling the cartels and seriously impacting the flows of drugs, arms and money. It will be interesting to see whether anything like these amounts will be brought to the table.”

A Guest Comment: Jaime Esparza: "In assisting Mexico in its fight with the drug cartels, I wholly support the proposed actions of President Obama in deploying additional federal agents and equipment to our southern borders. A coordinated effort by state and federal agents in stopping the flow of guns and cash into Mexico is an excellent first step. The criminal justice system must also be

not support deploying the National Guard or any other troops to the border. Militarizing the border is not the answer. Militarizing the border would unnecessarily characterize our efforts as a military action rather than police action designed at stopping criminal conduct. The vast proliferation of drugs in our country is what provides the funds that sustain the drug cartels. We must, therefore, focus on drug treatment programs that assist drug addicts and casual users of illegal drugs. In El Paso, for example, we have achieved enormous success with our drug court. This court is designed not just to punish drug violators but to also address the issue of drug dependency."

Barry R. McCaffrey is the president of *BR McCaffrey Associates*, a retired US Army four-star general and was director of the *White House Office of National Drug Control Policy* from 1996 to 2001.

Andrés Rozental is a member of the *Advisor board*, president of *Rozental & Asociados* and former deputy foreign minister of Mexico.

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