



October 14, 2011

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
SUBMITTED BY GENERAL BARRY R. McCAFFREY (USA, Ret.)**

**U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management
Hearing on:**

“A Call to Action: Narco-Terrorism’s Threat to the Southern U.S. Border”

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Keating, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the situation at the Southern U.S. Border. I recently joined MG Bob Scales, USA (Ret.) to complete a strategic assessment of the border security situation in Texas (*Texas Border Security: A Strategic Military Assessment*), which comprises two-thirds of the U.S. Mexico border. This assessment was conducted on behalf of the Texas Department of Agriculture. I request that the assessment be introduced into the record of this hearing. Principal findings of this assessment include:

- Mexican drug trafficking organizations are active in Texas and their tentacles extend throughout the United States.
 - Mexican criminal organizations are a major producer and supplier to the United States of heroin and methamphetamines.
 - Mexican cartels supply much of the marijuana consumed in the United States. Mexico is also the vector for more than 95% of the cocaine sold across the United States.
 - Mexican drug trafficking organizations are the predominant organized criminal groups in more than 280 U.S. cities. They have displaced the Colombians and other foreign and domestic criminals as the principle threat to the rule of law in the United States. The National Drug Intelligence Center states the cartels represent the greatest organized crime threat to the United States today.
 - Mexican criminal organizations procure weapons and ammunition in the United States (as well as from the international arms market) and employ them in the bloody assault on Mexican law enforcement and the Mexican Armed Forces.

- \$19- \$39B of drug profits are repatriated each year by these trafficking organizations to Mexico from the United States. Cash has become a blow torch of corruption in both Mexico and the United States.
- Individual Mexican Cartel ‘soldiers’ are recruited from prison gangs in the U.S. border States to act both in the United States and in Mexico.
- Criminal gangs in Texas are essentially ‘subcontractors’ to Mexican cartels, transporting drugs into the United States.
- Given that Texas straddles two-thirds of the U.S. – Mexico border and has transportation corridors that lead to major drug markets throughout the United States, Mexican cartels are especially active throughout the state.
- Despite significant reductions over the past decade in the numbers of illegal crossers of the U.S. – Mexico border, federal agencies have yet to establish effective operational control of much of the border.
 - Criminal drug trafficking across our border with Mexico has not diminished.
 - Mexican drug trafficking organizations are increasingly involved in the smuggling of aliens into the United States and often force border crossers to carry drug loads.
 - Incidences of drug-related violence and intimidation of residents are becoming more common in Texas’ rural counties and communities adjacent to the border.
 - Residents of communities and counties adjacent to the U.S. Mexico border live under constant threat of drug traffickers and are on our “front line” so to speak. Many believe they are increasingly vulnerable and inadequately protected by U.S. Federal authorities.
 - The inadequately resourced law enforcement and public safety agencies at the local and county level along the border are frequently overwhelmed by the activities of Mexican cartels. They do not have the manpower to maintain the rule of law or the budgets to deal with the consequences of criminal cross-border activities (e.g. burying the dead, conducting homicide investigations, conducting autopsies).
- The state of Texas has taken effective action since 2006 to enhance security along its border with Mexico.
 - The Texas Legislature created a Border Security Council to provide strategic direction to the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Rangers, Texas Highway Patrol, and other state law enforcement agencies.
 - Tactical operations have demonstrably affected drug trafficking activities and suppressed levels of violence.

- Texas law enforcement has deployed low-cost and relatively low technology surveillance and information sharing systems that can be replicated elsewhere along the border.
- The tactics and inter-agency cooperation systems developed by Texas law enforcement agencies can be instructive to other border states and, indeed, to federal border protection agencies.
- However, the State of Texas lacks adequate resources to confront the drug threat unilaterally and remains dependent on the Federal Government to secure the border, interdict drug trafficking, and prevent Mexican cartels from operating within the United States.

The security situation in Texas (and along the entire U.S.-Mexico border) is obviously affected by the evolving struggle in Mexico, where over 40,000 individuals have been murdered over the past five years by crime-related violence. Much of this violence is between rival drug trafficking organizations. However, the cartels have also targeted the Mexican Armed Forces, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, government officials, journalists, and civilians and committed brutal murders to intimidate the public and convince the government not to go after them. This violence is also driving increases in crimes such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and extortion.

Mexico is involved in a desperate struggle for its future. We have never had greater cooperation between U.S. and Mexican authorities to counter this enormous criminal menace from the seven principle cartels. The rule of law throughout the country – not just along the U.S. – Mexico border – is at stake. President Calderón and his courageous administration have demonstrated their resolve and commitment in confronting these crime cartels. While U.S. support of the Mexican Government has increased over the past decade, it remains in my judgment less than adequate. The resources we have expended in Afghanistan (\$400 billion) are multiple orders of magnitude greater than the effort we have committed to Mexico via the Mérida Initiative.

It is not in the U.S. national interest to have the next Mexican President and Administration conclude that the bloody struggle against the cartels is not sustainable and allow these criminal groups the freedom of action to smuggle drugs and control large areas of Mexico and Central America. The United States must be a more effectively resourced partner to the Government of Mexico. We must substantially increase budget for training, intelligence, aviation, and

technology required by Mexico – as well as providing a major increase in manpower and resources to: Customs and Border Protection, the DEA, and the Coast Guard.

Our steady support over the past twenty years of the Colombian government in its efforts against major drug cartels was important to their success in dramatically reducing a grave national security threat, expanding the rule of law -- and strengthening human rights, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. An appropriately resourced and long-term commitment to support Mexico will similarly increase the likelihood of a positive outcome in that nation. Such support to Mexico is a prerequisite for a more secure U.S.-Mexico border and for the safety of our citizens in rural communities along the border.

In summary, we cannot allow local U.S. Sheriff's Departments and State Authorities along our two thousand mile border with Mexico to bear a disproportionate responsibility for defending America from large, violent, well-resourced criminal organizations that menace the rule of law throughout all fifty states. The dedication and courage of Federal law enforcement agencies and their greatly increased manpower and technology over the past fifteen years have prevented a disaster on our frontiers. However, it is clear that these efforts are not adequate.

In closing, we must also recognize that our economy is fundamentally dependent on more than ten million illegal migrants now in the United States. They are essential to U.S. agriculture, construction, meat packing, and the service industry. They are currently not receiving the protections of minimum wage, OSHA safety standards, and in too many cases the ability to keep their children in school. They cannot go to the local police if menaced by Mexican cartels. We must rationally and fairly both strictly enforce control of our borders with robust Federal law enforcement – as well as providing legal guest worker status to these millions of hard working honest people who are central to our economic well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement and testify at this hearing. My purpose is to strongly urge Congress to resource our partnership with Mexico to more effectively protect the American people from the growing threat of these lethal and malignant criminal organizations.