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This paper examines the growing U.S. security concerns along the US – Mexican border due to the crime and violence brought on by the drug trade. Analysis of the drug trade and its impacts on security indicate that the Merida/Beyond Merida Initiative by itself is not increasing security along the southern border. This paper identifies an integrated approach along three lines of effort (LOE) as a more effective means of increasing security on the border. LOE 1 examines Mexican institutions; LOE 2 examines the flow of weapons and money to drug trafficking organizations; while LOE 3 examines U.S. drug demand. The paper goes on to explains how each LOE contributes to the integrated approach and provides recommendations along each LOE to increase its effectiveness and improve border security.

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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE**
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# U.S. Border Security: An Integrated Approach

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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## Contents

## Abstract

This paper examines growing U.S. security concerns along the U.S. – Mexican border due to the crime and violence brought on by the drug trade. Analysis of the drug trade and its impacts on security indicate that the Merida/Beyond Merida Initiative by itself is not increasing security along the southern border. This paper identifies an integrated approach along three lines of effort (LOE) as a more effective means of increasing security on the border. LOE 1 examines Mexican institutions; LOE 2 examines the flow of weapons and money to drug trafficking organizations; while LOE 3 examines U.S. drug demand. The paper goes on to explains how each LOE contributes to the integrated approach and provides recommendations along each LOE to increase its effectiveness and improve border security.

## Introduction

According to a Brownwood, Texas article, on 9 June 2011, U.S. Border Control and Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens engaged Mexican drug smugglers as they attempted to move approximately 1,500 pounds of marijuana across the Rio Grande. Although the law enforcement officers wounded three of the smugglers, they were unable to capture any before they fled back into Mexico. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety director, this was the 55th time in the last 18 months that law enforcement officers had thwarted drug smugglers.[1] To combat the drug trade and strengthen border security, the U.S. and Mexico developed the Merida Initiative and its successor program Beyond Merida. Although designed to increase bilateral cooperation and assist Mexico in adequately addressing the drug trade and security, it is not an adequate means of securing the border due to its lack of funding, its flawed focus and its inability to address the underlying issues leading to border insecurity. Rather to secure the border adequately, the U.S. must develop an integrated strategy that not only strengthens Mexico's ability to combat the drug trade, but also addresses the high U.S. drug demand and the flow south of weapons and illicit cash. To support this thesis, this paper will examine border security and the Merida Initiative, suggest lines of effort for the U.S. to follow to address border security, and recommend changes to the Beyond Merida Initiative and U.S. policy to improve border security.

## Background

The primary Mexican border related threat to U.S. security is the drug trafficking organizations (DTO) and organized crime elements operating in Mexico. These

1. Texas Department of Public Safety, "Public Safety Commission Hears Report on Mexican Border Incident," *Brownwoodnews.com*, 17 June 2011, http://www.brownwoodnews.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5502:public-safety-commission-hears-report-on-mexican-border-incident&catid=53:state-news&Itemid=74 (accessed 18 September 2011).

organizations threaten U.S. border security through their drug and human trafficking, weapon and cash smuggling, and increased violence. According to a Rand study, an estimated $25-30 billion in illegal drugs cross into the U.S. from Mexico every year.[2] Furthermore, the reach of Mexican DTOs is expanding, with connections between DTOs and American drug gangs existing in numerous cities from Texas to New York to Alaska.[3] The Rand study also identified organized crime and drug smuggling as two of the main national security concerns emanating from Mexico.[4] Likewise, the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) states that addressing the threats presented by transnational criminal organizations is required to secure the U.S. borders, yet such actions must also allow the free flow of goods, services and people between the U.S. and Mexico. The NSS further states that the "stability and security of Mexico are indispensable to building a strong economic partnership" and "fighting the illicit drug and arms trade".[5] The Merida Initiative and especially Beyond Merida were attempts to secure not only the border but also ensure the free flow of goods and services.

The Merida Initiative was a three year, $1.4 billion program that provided equipment, training and technical support to Mexico. Merida focused on four objectives, which if successful would help secure the border. These four objectives were: 1) attack the drug trafficking and organized crime organizations; 2) toughen border controls; 3) assist with judicial and police reforms; and 4) reduce drug trafficking activities and use.[6] Merida was also a partnership designed to increased coordination between the two countries by jointly

2. Agnes Gereben Schefer, Benjamin Bahney, and K. Jack Riley, *Security in Mexico: Implications for U.S. Policy Options*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2009), 22.
3. Ibid., 45-46.
4. Ibid., 21.
5. U.S. President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: White House, 2010), 42-43.
6. Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristen M. Finklea, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation: The Merida Initiative and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 15 August 2011), 8.

developing strategies, processes, and projects to counter the growing organized crime threat.[7] Furthermore, this partnership required the U.S. to address those aspects of the drug trade, which originated in the U.S., specifically weapons trafficking, bulk money transfers and the huge drug demand problem.[8] As this program neared its end, the Obama administration decided to develop a follow-on program, which not only continued its primary objective of border security, but also expanded it to address some of the underlying conditions behind border insecurity.

In March 2010, the Beyond Merida initiative replaced the original Merida Initiative. Beyond Merida, like its predecessor, had four goals or objectives called pillars. According to the Office of National Drug Control, Pillar One (Disrupt the Operational Capacity of Organized Crime) focuses on dismantling the DTOs by removing leaders, training and equipping forces, and reducing drug production and profits. Pillar Two (Institutionalizing the Rule of Law in Mexico) focuses on improving the rule of law by continuing efforts to improve and/or reform the military, police and judicial system. Pillar Three (Creating a 21st Century Border) works to facilitate the free flow of goods, services and people, while interdicting drugs, weapons and bulk cash. Pillar Three will do this by improving the infrastructure and capabilities of border security forces and increasing the use of technology. Finally, Pillar Four (Building Strong and Resilient Communities) focuses on various education and demand reduction programs to build stronger communities capable of moving beyond the current crime and violence.[9]

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7. Roberta S. Jackson, *Western Hemisphere and Caribbean: Mexico and the Merida Initiative*, State Department Press Release, (Washington, DC: White House, 19 March 2009), 1, http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/rm/2009/120684.htm (accessed 26 August 2011).
8. Ibid., 1
9. Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Mexico,* (Washington, DC: ONDCP), 3-4, http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/mexico (15 September 2011).

**Analysis**

Concerns about the security of the U.S. – Mexican border have grown in recent years, first in reaction to the events of 9-11 and, more recently, due to the crime and violence occurring in Mexican due to the drug trade. While many officials consider the possibility of a terrorist crossing into the U.S. to be slight, it is the DTOs and organized crime elements engaging in the drug and arms trade that present the most direct threat to U.S. border security.[10] Several different DTOs compose this threat, the most powerful of which are the Zetas and the Sinaloa cartels.[11] These DTOs are fighting to control the drug trade routes and have become increasingly violent since 2006, with upwards of 40,000 deaths being attributable to the drug trade.[12] The DTOs are using weapons smuggled from the U.S. to target and at times "overpower Mexican federal or local police".[13] Likewise, the massive drug proceeds from the U.S. market enable DTOs to bribe police and other officials for information, cooperation or just to look the other way.[14] The U.S. has been unsuccessful in reducing the flow of illicit cash south, intercepting only $260 million dollars in 2010, which represents less than 1% of the estimated $10 billion smuggled annually across the border.[15]

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10. Schefer, *Security in Mexico*, xv.
11. "Two Powerful Cartels Dominate in Mexico Drug War," Foxnews.com, 1 October 2011, http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/10/01/2-powerful-cartels-dominate-in-mexico-drug-war/%22%20+%20dotomiDmm%20+%20%22?intcmp=obnetwork, (accessed 14 Oct 2011).
12. Ibid.
13. Colby Goodman and Michel Marizco, "U.S. Firearms Trafficking To Mexico: New Data And Insights Illuminate Key Trends And Challenges," in *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options For Confronting Organized Crime*, Ed. Eric L. Olson, et al. (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, October 2010), 199.
14. Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation,* 21.
15. Ray Walser, U.S. Strategy Against Mexican Drug Cartels: Flawed and Uncertain, Heritage foundation, 26 August 2010, http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2010/04/us-strategy-against-mexican-drug-cartels-flawed-and-uncertain, (accessed 1 Oct 11), 10. See also US Embassy Mexico, *Fact Sheet: Combating Money Laundering*, Mexico City, May 2011, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/mexico/310329/16may/Money%20Laundering %20May%202011%20Final.pdf (accessed 15 September 2011).

To combat the DTOs and increase border security, efforts to reduce the availability of weapons and money must be made.

While the U.S. can address the flow of weapons and money coming from the U.S., unless a member of a DTO crosses the border, it must rely on the Mexican government to directly confront the DTOs. The U.S. can and is providing equipment, training and funds to assist the Mexican Government increase its ability to deal with the DTOs, but it must be careful not to overstep its boundaries given Mexico's concerns over U.S. encroachment on its sovereignty.[16] Since President Calderon took office in 2006, Mexico has followed a strategy of direct confrontation with the DTOs in an attempt to reduce their power and improve security. He has extensively used the military to combat the DTOs, while also initiating a series of security and judicial reforms aimed at increasing the professionalism and capabilities of the police, and improving the effectiveness of the Mexican Judicial System to mete out justice.[17] Distrust of the police force and the high rate of criminal impunity made these reforms a necessity.[18] Unfortunately, the implementation of these reforms will take time, and President Calderon's ambitious goal of completing judicial reforms by 2016 is unlikely.

While the DTOs are a primary concern for the Mexican government, the drug trade and its associated violence are also being driven and supported by the huge drug demand in the America. According to the results of the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use, approximately 8.9% of the population or 22.6 million people aged 12 and older were

16. Schefer, *Security in Mexico*, 52.
17. Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 21-22. See also David A. Shirk, "Justice Reform in Mexico: Change and Challenge in the Judicial Sector", in *Shared Responsibility: U.S.-Mexico Policy Options For Confronting Organized Crime*, Ed. Eric L. Olson, et al. (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, October 2010), 205.
18. Shirk, "Justice Reform in Mexico," 206.

addicted to illicit drugs.[19] While only a slight increase over 2009, it was the highest rate since 2002, and although overall U.S. drug use has declined during the last 30 years, 22.6 million addicts are still too many.[20] The U.S. is combating this demand through a strategy that incorporates both supply-side and demand-side efforts. Supply-side efforts involve disrupting and interdicting the flow of drugs into the U.S., eradicating drug crops, and increasing law enforcement efforts, while demand-side reduction involves the prevention and treatment of, and recovery from drug use.[21] The 2011 U.S. drug control budget provided $15.2 billion for supply-side efforts and $10.5 billion for demand reduction efforts.[22] While this is an increase over the previous years, the growing number of addicts suggests that this strategy is not working.

To address these concerns, the U.S. needs to combat the DTOs along three lines of effort (LOE). LOE 1 is assisting the Mexican Government secure their side of the border through equipment, training and institutional development thereby enabling the Mexicans to more effectively combat the DTOs. LOE 2 is reducing the flow of weapons and money from the U.S. to the DTOs to reduce their power and influence. LOE 3 is addressing the underlying reason for the drug trade; the huge drug demand in the United States. It is this

19. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings,* NSDUH Series H-41., HHS Publication No. (SMA) 11-4658, Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2011, 9.
20. Ibid., 19, and Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Obama Administration Releases Blueprint to Reduce Drug Use and Its Consequences*, (Washington, DC, ONDCP, 11 July 2011), 2, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/Fact_Sheets/20110711_national_release.pdf (accessed 17 October 2011).
21. Seelke, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation,* 12. See also Office of National Drug Control Policy, *U.S. Demand Reduction Efforts Fact Sheet*, (Washington, DC: ONDCP, May 2011), 2-4, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/ondcp/Fact_Sheets/demand_reduction_fact_sheet_5-31-11.pdf (accessed 15 Oct 2011).
22. Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Budget FY 2012 Funding Highlights*, (Washington, DC: ONDCP, February 2011), 3, https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=10113 (accessed 14 October 2011).

high demand that is fueling the drug trade and its resulting violence and reducing border security. Significant efforts along these three LOEs will in time increase border security.

LOE 1 recognizes that border security is dependent on the Mexican government's ability to combat and prosecute DTOs effectively. This requires that that Mexican security forces be adequately trained and properly equipped to secure the border. In addition, Mexico must possess strong rule of law institutions to arrest, try, and imprison members of the DTOs, while ensuring the personal security of its people. This necessitates a trained and professional police force and an effective judicial system, efforts the Mexican government is currently pursuing through a series of reforms. Improvements in these institutions will not only enable the Mexican Government to better combat DTOs but also improve personal security concerns and increase confidence in the police and judicial systems. This is especially important given that 80% of local citizens say they do not trust the police, while only 37% say they have confidence in their judicial system.[23] Furthermore, the Mexican people's level of concern regarding personal security is high and is reflected in a survey by the Citizen's Institute for Security Studies which found that 71% of people do not feel safe in their homes and 72% do not feel safe in their cities.[24] Beyond the personal security and corruption aspects, judicial sector reform is needed to significantly reduce the 98.5% of crimes that go unpunished.[25] Thus, any program aimed at securing the border should have a component that involves supporting the Mexican government's institutional reform efforts.

While efforts to improve the rule of law in Mexico are required to increase U.S. border security, so too are efforts to reduce the power and influence of DTOs along LOE 2.

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23. Schefer, "*Security in Mexico," 20, and* Shirk, "Justice Reform in Mexico", 206.
2 4. Schefer, "*Security in Mexico,"*, 6.
25. Kevin Casas-Zamora, "Mexico's Forever War", *Foreign Policy*, 22 December 2010, http://www.foreign policy.com/articles/2010/12/22/mexico_s_forever_war?page=full (accessed 26 August 2011).

Currently, the DTOs are benefiting from the flow of large amounts of weapons and money from the US. President Calderon reiterated this during his September 2011 UN speech, where he stated that approximately 85% of the weapons used by DTOs and captured by Mexican forces originated in the United States.[26] Likewise, between $19 and 29 billion a year are thought to reach Mexican DTOs from the America.[27] DTOs use this money to pay members, bribe officials and ultimately to expand their influence. Reducing the flow of weapons and cash to DTOs weakens their ability to influence people and resist the Mexican security forces, helping to increase border security. Thus, U.S. efforts to increase border security should include programs designed to reduce the flow of weapons and money going from the U.S. to Mexico.

Ultimately, however, efforts to increase U.S. border security must be made along LOE 3 to reduce U.S. drug demand. This demand is the driving force behind the DTOs and organized crime elements and is the underlying cause behind the border security problem that exist between the U.S. and Mexico. The U.S. is the world's largest drug market and destination of the vast majority of drugs coming from Mexico. Without this massive drug demand and the huge amounts of money it generates, the DTOs would not be fighting for control of the drug routes and crossing points into the U.S. [28] This drug demand must be significantly reduced if border security is to improve in the long run.

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26. Judson Berger, "Calderon Appeals for More US Focus on Drug War Amid Fresh Violence", *Foxnews.com*, 21 September 2011, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/09/21/calderon-appeals-for-more-us-focus-on-drug-war-amid-fresh-violence/ (accessed 7 Oct 11).
27. Clare Ribando Seelke, *Mexico-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress*, (Washington, DC: CRS, 15 February 2011), 17-18.
28. STRATFOR, "Organized Crime In Mexico", *STRATFOR.com*, 11 March 2008, 1, 5, www.stratfor.com/analysis/organized_crime_mexico, (accessed 13 Oct 11).

**Counterarguments**

As discussed above, efforts to increase border security must contain elements of all three LOEs, and although the Merida/Beyond Merida Initiative falls short, it is still a useful program that, with changes, could lead to increased border security. However, not everyone believes that Beyond Merida is an effective or worthwhile program. Rather, they believe that building a wall between Mexico and the U.S. will more effectively secure the border. In Arizona, for example, efforts are underway to secure private donations to build a fence to stop people from crossing into the state.[29] This fence would augment the existing federally built pedestrian fence and require approximately 246 miles of additional fence to secure the 370-mile Arizona border.[30] These donations would augment the $3.6 billion in appropriated funds already provided by the Department of Homeland Security between 2006 and 2009 under the Secure Border Initiative to build border fencing.[31] As of January 2010, this initiative has constructed approximately 643 miles of pedestrian and vehicle fencing along the border.[32] The fence is only a partial solution to border security since DTOs can dig tunnels under the fence, cut holes through the fence, or shift their crossing points to locations without a fence. Regardless of how long or high the fence is, as long as the drug demand in the U.S. remains high, DTOs will find a way over, under, around or through it to reach their market and secure their profits.

Others effort to secure the border include using National Guard troops to augment the Border Patrol. National Guard troops currently on the U.S-Mexican border perform

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29. Alia Beard Rau, "Arizona Now Can Build Border Fence With Private Donations," *USAToday.com*, Updated 20 July 2011, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2011-07-20-arizona-border-fence_n.htm (accessed 26 September 2011).
30. Ibid.
31. "US-Mexico Border Fence / Great Wall of Mexico Secure Fence," *Global Security.org,* http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/systems/mexico-wall.htm (accessed 26 Sep 11).
32. Ibid.

primarily observation duties, where they inform the Border Patrol of suspicious activities. In May of this year, Senator Michael McCaul (R-Texas) called for more National Guard troops to help secure the border.[33] He contends that the border has "…never been more violent or dangerous than it is today" and that the troops are needed to better secure the border.[34] Following Sen McCaul's plea, President Obama extended the 1200 National Guard troops for three additional months to continue their augmentation mission.[35] Once again, this solution merely addresses the symptoms, not the root causes of border security problems. As Andrew Selee, the director of the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, stated, the National Guard deployment may assist in securing the border temporarily, but their funding would be more useful if it supported more effective long-term border security initiatives.[36]

Others argue that the best way to improve border security is to legalize drugs. This argument believes that by legalizing drugs, the profits generated by the drug trade will be significantly reduced or eliminated, with the government reaping the benefits.[37] They also point to the fact that although billions of dollars have been spent trying to stop the drug trade, it has really had little impact and that drug use has actually risen.[38] President Calderon even hinted at this during his September speech to the United Nations. During his speech, he stated that cutting drug demand was the best way to reduce drug violence in Mexico, but if

33. Cindy Saine, "Congressional Panel Questions Security of US Border with Mexico," *Voice of America*, 11 May 2011, http://www.voanews.com/english/news/usa/Congressional-Panel-Questions-Security-of-US-Border-With-Mexico-121665264.html (accessed 26 September 2011).
34. Ibid.
35. "National Guard to Stay on Mexico Border at Least Three More Month," *Foxnews.com*, 18 June 2011, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/06/17/national-guard-on-mexico-border-at-least-3-more-months/ (accessed 26 September 2011).
36. Ibid.
37 Ryan Hoskins, Mexican Drug Violence: Why the Merida Initiative, Gun Bans and Border Controls will Fail and Drug Reform is the Solution, *New Voices in Public Policy*, Vol IV Spring 2010., 10.
38 Ibid., 9-10.

that was not possible, then countries should "…look for other ways, including market alternatives…" to reduce drug trafficking violence.[39] Although he never said legalize, he clearly hinted that legalization should at least be on the table. Unfortunately, past efforts to legalize drugs have shown that drug use will increase, not decrease. In 1975, Alaska legalized marijuana and the resulting increase in teen usage forced the state to criminalize it again in 1990.[40] Likewise, the increased use of drugs brings with it an increase in crime and violence not necessarily from the drug trade, (although that would still be present unless all drugs, no matter how dangerous, were legalized) but from the effects of the drugs themselves.[41] While legalizing drugs may reduce the drug trade some, it would not completely eliminate it, and the impact of increased drug use associated with the legalized drugs would merely shift the violence from the border to the interior of America.

**Recommendations**

To increase border security, the U.S. should follow an integrated approach, which includes specific recommendations within each of the three LOEs discussed above. Within LOE 1, these recommendations include the continuation and expansion of the Beyond Merida Initiative to assist the Mexican Government in developing their police and judicial institutions through increased training and education programs. While Beyond Merida has begun to shift the focus of U.S. efforts from the federal to the state and municipal level, and from equipping to training and institution building, the pace of this change and its level of effort need to be increased.[42] In the 17 months since the signing of Beyond Merida, the U.S.

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[39] "Mexico: Calderon Urges Drug-using Nations to Seek New Path," *LA Times*, 22 September 2011, http://latimesblog.latimes.com/world_now/2011/09/mexican-president-drug-war-legalization-decriminalization.html (accessed 26 September 2011).
[40] Drug Enforcement Agency, *Speaking Out Against Drug Legalization*, (Washington, DC, DEA, 2010), 46.
[41] Ibid., 50-51.
42. Schefer, *Security in Mexico,* 20, 52-53.

has yet to determine how to execute training at the state and municipal level. Assistant Secretary of State, William R. Brownfield, of the U.S. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs stated at the recent 2011 Border Security Conference that the new focus on training at the state and local level was needed, since 90% of the work done by the police and courts occurs at these levels.[43] He also acknowledged that discussions regarding training at these levels were still ongoing and that a way ahead had yet to be determined.[44] Yet, if the U.S. really wants to effectively assist Mexican institution building, then increased efforts are needed to develop training and education programs for state and municipal personnel. Likewise, the pace of the shift away from equipping to training needs to be increased, given that approximately 60% of the $500 million being spent during the remainder of FY11 are designated for equipment purchases.[45] The sooner these changes are made, the sooner state and municipal Mexican security and judicial personnel can receive training.

In addition to increasing the pace of developing the training plan at the state and municipal levels, the U.S. needs to increase the number of U.S. training and education programs available to Mexican security and judicial personnel. These training and education programs should expand upon current initiatives and programs, which addressing training in crime scene procedures, advance police methods, "Culture of Lawfulness," and Mexican criminal code and adversarial proceedings.[46] An increase in training programs is required to meet the large number of police and judicial workers still requiring training. For example,

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43. Transcript of William R. Brownfield's Remarks on the Merida Initiative, *El Paso Times*, 17 August 2011, http://www.elpasotimes.com/newupdated/ci_18700828?source=pkg (Accessed 27 Sep 11 ).
44. Ibid.
45. U.S. Embassy Mexico, *Fact Sheet: The Merida Initiative – What's Coming in 2011*, Mexico City, July 2011, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/mexico/310329/26Julio11/2011_Major_Deliveries_July.pdf (accessed 15 September 2011).
46. U.S. Agency for International Development, *U.S. Foreign Assistance Performance Publication, Fiscal Year 2009*, (Washington, DC, USAID, 2009), 2-3, and Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation,* 28-30.

according to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico some 36,100 police and judicial personnel have received U.S. sponsored training to date, yet this is only a small fraction of the huge number of police, and judicial personnel requiring training.[47] While the U.S. should not be attempting to train all Mexican police and judicial personnel, additional training programs can increase the number of personnel receiving training and help Mexico more quickly reach its reform goals, and thereby increase its capabilities to confront the DTOs and raise security.

In order to expand training and education programs, Congress needs to increase funding for Beyond Merida. Even at its inception, the Merida initiative provided only a small percentage of funding for U.S.-Mexico border security. Its initial $1.4 billion dollar budget equated to only 6% of the $26 billion that the Mexican government spent on border security and public safety during this same timeframe.[48] Furthermore, instead of U.S. funding increasing, it has gone down under the Obama administration. In FY11, Congress only appropriated $143 million of the $310 million requested for FY11, and funding will likely be just as small in 2012 given the administration's request of only $282 million in Merida funding and the ongoing fiscal crisis.[49] If the Merida Initiative is to be one of the mechanisms for increasing border security, then the budget should be increased to at least the same levels as the original Merida Initiative ($500 million per year) and preferably higher, given that DTOs are making at least $40 billion a year.[50] The above recommendations to the Beyond Merida Initiative will help Mexico grow its security and judicial institutions, and increase security in the long run.

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47. "Merida Initiative: Success/Accomplishments," Question Taken at the September 14, 2011 Daily Press Briefing, U.S. Embassy Mexico Press Release, http://mexico.usembassy.gov/press-releases/ep111916-qnda.html (accessed 20 October 2011).
48. Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 2.
49. Ibid., 2.
50. STRATFOR, "Status of the Merida Initiative," *Mexico Political Memo*, *STRATFOR.com*, 2 February 2011, www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110202-mexico-political-memo-feb-2-2011 (accessed 16 September 2011).

Within LOE 2, the following recommendations are made to address the flow of weapons and illicit cash south. First, Congress should increase funding for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), as well as increase ATF agents and staff to improve interdiction of weapons along the U.S.-Mexican border.[51] Second, Congress should reconsider and pass the Department of Justice (DoJ) initiative to have federally licensed gun dealers report when unlicensed individuals purchase multiple long barreled semi-automatic weapons within five consecutive days.[52] Third, Congress should reinstate the 1994 assault weapons ban.[53] Fourth, the ATF should follow the DoJ's Office of the Inspector General recommendation and focus their efforts on high-level weapons traffickers and not on "low-level straw purchasers".[54] Fifth, individual states should develop laws against straw purchases and/or take action against straw purchasing under existing "fraudulent schemes" laws.[55] Implementation of these recommendations will help reduce the flow of weapons, thereby eventually reducing the power and influence of DTOs and increasing border security.

Recommendations to reduce the flow of illicit cash south across the border include continuing and expanding ongoing bilateral efforts, including the Bilateral Money Laundering Working Group; "Operation Firewall", a joint U.S. and Mexican program designed to increase operations "against bulk cash smuggling"; and efforts to modernize, equip, and expand border crossing points.[56] Furthermore, the Department of Treasury (DoT)

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51. Goodman, "U.S. Firearms Trafficking To Mexico," 201.
52. Seelke, U.*S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 14.
53. Sabrina Abu-Hamdeh, "The Merida Initiative: An Effective Way of Reducing Violence in Mexico?" *Pepperdine Policy Review*, Spring 2011, 49.
54. Seelke, U.*S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 14.
55. Goodman, "U.S. Firearms Trafficking To Mexico," 202.
56. Seelke, U.*S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 18-19, and U.S. Embassy Mexico, *Fact Sheet: A 21st Century Border Vision*, Mexico City, May 2011, http://photos.state.gov/libraries/mexico/310329/16may/21st%20Century%20

should introduce regulations that require individuals to declare the amount of money on stored value cards and add equipment at border crossing points to read these cards to counter their use in moving large amounts of money across the border.[57] Finally, DoT should approach Mexico and suggest that measures similar to the U.S. Kingpin Designation Act be enacted to deny persons benefiting from the drug trade from accessing funds residing in Mexican financial institutions.

Finally, within LOE3, the U.S. should implement the following recommendations to address the massive drug demand in the United States. First, the U.S. needs to change its current drug control strategy from a supply-side focus to a demand-side focus. While both supply-side and demand-side efforts are needed to address drugs in the U.S., the effort is and has been skewed towards supply-side interdiction, eradication and law enforcement efforts. Unfortunately, these efforts are aimed at the symptoms of the drug trade and not the underlying reasons for the drug trade, customer demand. As stated above, the drug trade exists to supply the U.S. with drugs to meet this high demand. Regardless of how many police or how tight the border is, DTOs will find a way to get their product to the U.S. customers. Furthermore, studies have shown that drug prevention and treatment efforts are between fifteen and twenty times more effective than other methods in combating the drug trade.[58] By focusing on demand-side efforts such as treatment and counseling, the U.S. can better addresses its drug demand.

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Border%20Vision%20May%202011%20Final-.pdf (accessed 15 September 2011).
57. Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 17-18.
58. Phillip K. Abbott, "The Merida Initiative: A Flawed Counterdrug Policy?" *Small Wars Foundation,* 6 January 2011, 8, http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/640-abbott.pdf (accessed 9 September 2011).
Also see Bryan Stevenson, "Drug Policy, Criminal Justice And Mass Imprisonment", (working Paper, Global Commission on Drugs, Geneva, 24-25 January 2011), http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/Arquivos/Global_Com_Bryan_Stevenson.pdf (accessed 7 Oct 2011).

In addition to changing to a demand-side strategy, funding must also be increased. Despite the Obama administration's 15% increase in the drug prevention budget and his goal to reduce youth drug use by 15% within 5 years, drug demand reduction funding is still only 40% of the overall drug control budget.[59] Congress should reverse the demand and supply budgets and give the preponderance of funding to demand-side efforts. By significantly increasing this funding, many more than the 2.6 million people (out of 23.1 million) requiring treatment for drug or alcohol abuse would be able to received it.[60] This would allow the U.S. to still address security and supply side efforts, and over the long run reduce drug demand in the U.S.

**Final Remarks**

Drug trafficking organizations and the drug trade are threatening U.S. security on its border with Mexico. Despite increased collaboration and the development of the Merida and Beyond Merida initiatives, this threat has not diminished. This requires the U.S. to reexamine its policies and efforts and refocus them on areas that will increase security. To accomplish this, the U.S. should follow an integrated approach that involves the three lines of effort described above. Efforts to expand and refocus Beyond Merida to better support Mexico's institutional reform, combined with increased efforts by the U.S. to better interdict the flow of weapons and cash, and a reorientation of U.S. efforts to combat drug demand will lead to increased security. While these efforts will not result in immediate changes, over time security will increase.

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59. Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Fact Sheet: US Demand Reduction Efforts,* 1, and Seelke, U*.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation*, 12.
60. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 14.

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