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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

**Dancing with the Devil:
The Politics of Drug Control in U.S.-Mexico Relations 1980-1998**

By

Gabriela D. Lemus

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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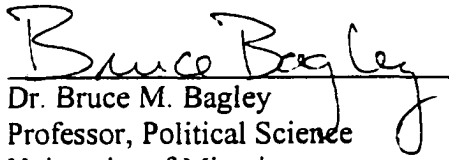
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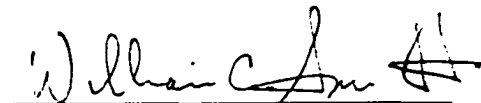
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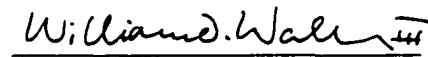
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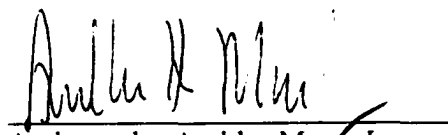
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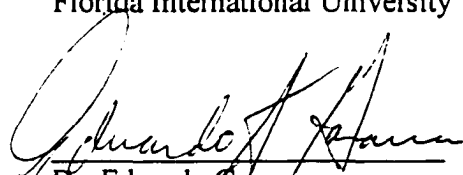

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Mexico is a significant producer of both marijuana and opium poppy. In 1995, U.S. officials estimated that Mexico produced between 70 to 80 percent of all foreign marijuana and 35 percent of the heroin destined for the U.S. market (INCSR 1995). Mexico is also estimated to transit somewhere between 60-80 percent of the cocaine routed from South America's Andean region (INCSR 1998). This dissertation examines the evolution of the Mexican drug trade, the development of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in Mexico, and the impact these have had on U.S.-Mexican relations. The principal time frame for this study spans the period 1980-1998.

The rationale behind this study is that the growth of the illicit drug trade threatened Mexico's stability and its political institutions. It presents a potential threat to U.S. cities. The theoretical undergirding for this issue is the juxtaposition of the differences between a developed and less developed country, especially given the partially protected border which they share. Some research analysts and many U.S. policymakers have approached the drug problem in Realist terms however I will observe it from an interdependence perspective.

The research implications of this study have lead me to believe that the emergence of TCOs has made drug policy implementation problematic in Mexico and caused problems for the larger bilateral relationship, especially in light of Mexico's inclusionary political system which has to some extent institutionalized corruption.

Furthermore, Mexico's political institutions are weak and highly centralized. Even if Mexico were completely willing to aggressively attack TCOs, the institutional weaknesses of the system do not permit Mexico to fully engage against traffickers despite U.S. pressures for it to do so. Mexico is limited by a variety of institutional and economic constraints. In light of Mexico's interdependence with the United States, their shared border, growing integration and rapid rate at which technology has expanded and virtually nullified the blocking role of the border, the United States has been placed in a vulnerable position to which it has responded by trying to close its border or applying economic pressure.

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This dissertation is the sole and exclusive product of the author. I assume full responsibility for any errors of commission or omission that may appear in its pages.

DANCING WITH THE DEVIL
The Politics of Drug Control in U.S. Mexico Relations 1986-1998

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INTRODUCTION

One of the more critical sets of questions about U.S.-Mexican relations in the 1980s and 1990s concerns drug control: How do drug trafficking and drug control relate to other issues on the bilateral agenda and vice-versa? What have Mexico and the United States established as goals and objectives for drug control? Are these perspectives compatible, conflictive or contradictory? U.S. policy decisions established by legislation such as the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988 determined that cooperation in drug control bore directly on other aspects of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico, as well as with the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean. In its attempts to establish a regional drug control regime, the United States applied a series of coercive measures that linked economic assistance with national security. Unlike the rest of Latin America, however, Mexico was able to mitigate U.S. pressure because of its ability to balance the drugs issue within its bilateral agenda with the United States.

This study is an attempt to explain the theoretical and ideological underpinnings of both U.S. and Mexican drug control policy in view of Cold War philosophies by focusing on five issues:

- The significance of globalization processes to the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship
- The growth of transnational crime organizations involved in drug trafficking
- The power of territorial contiguity
- The limits to cooperation as related to national sovereignty
- The interrelationship between domestic constraints and foreign policy

National sovereignty in this scenario is viewed from the perspective of a territorial trap, where states are viewed as fixed units of sovereign space, in which the domestic and foreign

are regarded as something polarized, as opposed to interrelated; and where states are largely "containers" of society (Agnew 1994).

A series of distinctions are generated between narcotics control at the larger bilateral level, in contrast to the pragmatic approaches applied at the regional level, specifically on the U.S.-Mexico border. Ultimately, the task is to understand the forces that moved the U.S. and Mexican governments toward greater institutional cooperation in the drugs issue given their long tradition of mutual distrust.

Comparative historical evidence of the 20th century demonstrates that conflicts of interest between Mexico and the United States surfaced regularly because U.S. policy reflected both a combination of benign neglect of Mexico's basic interests in the bilateral relationship, as well as direct disregard for Mexico's national sovereignty. But, tensions were also exacerbated by a mutual lack of understanding and misperceptions on the part of policymakers about what the intentions were in the other country. The internal pressures and limitations of the Mexican government were often misunderstood by U.S. policymakers, but the converse was also true.

Many of these conflicts played out on the shared border between the two countries. Until the 1990s, the United States only sought active engagement with Mexico when it felt a negative economic and/or social impact related to Mexico's policies or events occurring there. Moreover, drugs control demonstrated that differences in the definition of the problem often contributed to breakdowns in regional cooperation. Mexico's tendency has been to view the issue from a demand-side perspective. Decrease the demand and supply will diminish. While the United States has generally looked outward for a solution and emphasized military response.

This study is based on several key assumptions. First, drug control efforts in the Western Hemisphere have been largely predicated on U.S. perceptions of how trafficking organizations affect its security and economic interests. Second, U.S. policymakers were able, for the most part, to ignore the social forces and processes of the countries affected by U.S. policies largely because of their vulnerable condition and weaker position within the intra-hemispheric hierarchy. Third, in contrast to the region, Mexico's position is unique because of the extent of integration vis-à-vis the United States combined with territorial contiguity. Mexico has been able to manage the drug control portion of the equation with relative success (success defined as more autonomy in managing its drug control program and less intervention from the United States in comparison to the Andean region). Fourth, territorial contiguity contributed to the establishment of a U.S. border policy that mirrored the hemispheric drug control system in its heavy military and law enforcement emphasis.

Yet, by the mid-1990s, integration among the border states predicated that the region possessed a limited ability to maintain distance from bilateral squabbles thus placing an emphasis on the functionality of the border, as opposed to its role as a territorial demarcator. Conversely, because of new, as yet to be institutionalized, coordinating mechanisms on the border, regional disputes are increasingly contained from becoming stumbling blocks for the larger bilateral relationship. Moreover, limitations to the development of cross-border law enforcement cooperation are largely the result of the

political engagements that take place at the national level and include relationships among policymakers, the media, and special interests in both countries.

Lastly, the basis of drug control policy is "fundamentally a study of culture"¹ (Walker 1996). Culture contributes to the understanding of why the United States chose to pursue a set of policies that emanated from Cold Warrior perspectives. This type of policy worked largely against producing and transit countries in the period 1984-1994, and seemingly against U.S. long-term economic and security interests. Moreover, it ignored the economic issues related to globalization processes by placing such a heavy emphasis on punitive methods, as opposed to multilateral responses based on cooperation and shared regional concerns. Culture also serves to contextualize Mexico's responses to U.S. pressures and explain its perception of U.S. behavior given both its global position and domestic constraints.

The first two chapters set up the theoretical conditions behind why U.S. efforts to establish a coercive drug control regime with Mexico fails. Chapter one offers a critical analysis of drugs control given globalization processes, power asymmetries, and territorial contiguity. Chapter two examines U.S. efforts to establish a bilateral drugs control regime

¹ Drug cultures could not have persisted as long as they have were they not adaptive, even as they remained distinctive, within their larger societies. Their very dynamism has enabled them to compete with prohibitionist and proscriptive cultures to create a legitimate place for themselves, though one that dominant cultures may recognize only tacitly. As understood here, society -- as both an abstract idea and a real phenomenon - is synonymous with the nation, an entity that is comprised of many cultures within generally fixed geographic boundaries. At issue is how cultures come to be included in widespread popular perceptions of what is meant by "nation" (Walker 1996: xiv).

by examining the historical background of the issue so as to provide a foundation for analysis. Chapters three and four offer empirical evidence about the politics of drugs control in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship in the period 1982-1994 to apply the analytical framework established in chapters one and two. Chapter five examines the regional outcome of the larger bilateral policies as they are expressed in the shared border region. Chapter six views Mexico's current limitations given the dramatic changes that have taken place politically and economically, which in turn have transformed it into an equal, though junior partner of the United States. Lastly, Chapter seven summarizes the theoretical, analytical, and policy lessons that can be taken from the examination of the drugs issue in U.S.-Mexico relationship and offers some conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

DRUG CONTROL IN U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Latin America's first significance for the United States is economic...Latin America's second importance is its effect on major problems facing American society. The most dramatic example is narcotics. Latin American countries supply almost all the cocaine, most of the marijuana and an increasing share of the heroin that enters the United States. Although the drug curse can ultimately be reduced only by cutting domestic demand, an effective anti-narcotics campaign will also require enduring cooperation from the Latin American nations where narcotics are cultivated, processed and trafficked (Lowenthal 1993: 90).

The Cold War and U.S. Drugs Control Policy

Theoretical Premises Underlying U.S. Drugs Control

The examination of the effects that drug policies have on the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship requires several levels of analysis. First, the drug agenda is largely political and responds primarily to domestic politics, both within the United States and without. Second, over the last three decades, global processes made Mexico and the United States more important to one another. It became clear that certain trends had grown that responded to a wide range of interests between the two countries that were based on the cyclical impacts of the relationship, the enormous interchange of people and goods, and dependent financial systems (Reynolds 1984; Craig 1989).

The relationship between Mexico and the United States is often described as "asymmetrically interdependent." Interdependence as a notion became a popular trend in international relations theory in the 1970s and evolved out of liberal institutionalism. It

argues against Realism's assumptions that states are central, unitary-rational agents. Modern states had undergone a transformation and had begun to decentralize authority from within, a process that was transferred internationally (Grieco 1990: 5). Liberal institutionalism has three distinct phases: 1) Functionalist integration theory (1940s- early 1950s) presupposed that specialized international agencies and their technical experts were key actors in international relations (Haas 1964). 2) Neofunctionalists (1950s-1960s) key actors were labor unions, political parties, trade associations, and supranational bureaucracies. 3) The interdependence school (1970s) argued that new key actors were the multinational corporations, along with transnational and transgovernmental coalitions (Keohane and Nye 1977).

Third, in the case of Mexico, the contiguity of territory with the United States further contextualized the problem because the bilateral relationship is much more intense. Moreover, the border region became the frontline of the U.S. drug war which in turn created a potential point of conflict in an area of mutually shared space.

Lastly, Mexico and the United States traditionally considered the management of the drug problem from distinctly different premises. For the United States, source and transit countries should control their problem at home. For Mexico, the problem is largely U.S. consumption. Neither perspective takes into consideration other equally important implications beyond posing a national security threat for the United States, such as the impact that large cash influxes have on the international political economy and the potential threat

that unregulated illegal drugs pose for public health. The drugs question only becomes a national security threat to the United States under extreme scenarios, such as if Mexico were to destabilize and civil war were to break out on the border due to corruption and/or drug-related violence. These complexities denote the need for an inclusive geopolitical drug control strategy based on cooperative agreements to address the growth of trafficking organizations.

Instead, throughout the 1980s, the United States pursued a policy of unilateral pressure on Mexico which did not take into account changing economic capabilities, power relations, territorial contiguity, and the positive disposition of the Mexican government headed by the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), towards the establishment of bilateral approaches to the resolution of problems (Reynolds 1984). Notwithstanding, in order to adopt such a geopolitical policy, it would be necessary to arrive at a clearer definition of the drug problem. Moreover, it becomes important to understand the interactions that occur between structure, ideology and domestic interests and what these signify when the additional variable of territorial contiguity arises.

For approximately 40 years, the Cold War defined policymaking in the United States and it became a leading proponent of the realist paradigm,² the dominant frame of reference in international relations in the post-World War II period. As a theory, Realism was bolstered by the behavior of the great powers in the post-Second World War period in great part because of the escalation of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union, the epitome of a classic case of 'security dilemma.' Realism played down the normative/ethical issues of politics because these did not apply to the 'reality' of the situation, but to some seemingly unattainable goal for a utopian society. Morality was considered effective only to the extent that it was enforced by physical power. The tendency among the dominant world powers was to adopt international practices that threatened, disciplined and did violence to others (Smith 1995: 3). Powerful states consistently violated the autonomy

² . Realism dominated international political theory since at least the end of World War II. Realism consists of three basic assumptions. First, the state is the major actor in world affairs. Second, states are severely penalized by the international environment if they fail to protect their interests or if the objectives which they pursue are beyond their means. This implies that there is a sensitivity to costs and that they behave as "unitary-rational agents." Third, the international system in which states act is anarchical and thus conditions external preferences and actions of states (Waltz 1979; Morgenthau 1973; Grieco 1990). According to Grieco, "realists have developed two major propositions concerning international cooperation. First, realists argue that states are preoccupied with their security and power; by consequence, states are predisposed toward conflict and competition, and they often fail to cooperate even when they have common interests. Second, realists claim that international institutions can mitigate the inhibitory effects of anarchy on the willingness of states to cooperate only marginally" (Grieco 1990: 4). For realists, security was synonymous with the security of the state against external dangers, which was to be achieved by increasing military capabilities (Tickner 1995).

and integrity of weaker states despite the rule of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other states (Krasner 1994: 16).

It is within this context that in the 1960s, the United States became concerned with the growth of drug trafficking organizations in the region. Initially, U.S. drug policy responded to domestic consumption which had grown exponentially in tandem with popular counter-culture. Moreover, the proliferation of low politics into the arena of high politics, the nature of the actors involved, along with the diversity of goals among the actors produced a more complex set of modes of interaction between states (Cox 1986). These changes in practice however, also made apparent that states faced great challenges in their ability to assure the security of their borders and every individual within them.³ The expansion of drug trafficking networks combined with their ability to empower themselves in various producing and transit countries posed a new challenge to inter-American relations. By its very nature, the drug question would not permit a distinct separation between foreign policy and domestic interests.

³ J. Ann Tickner argues that national security thinking in the United States had run its course and made individuals feel insecure reaching its height in the 1980s when the Reagan administration's Strategic Defense Initiative made it clear that there was no real security against nuclear warfare (Tickner 1995: 177).

The Decline of the Cold War

In the mid-1980s, as issues related to the Cold War and the relative importance of communism declined for Latin America,⁴ consideration of the role of drug control became highly relevant to an understanding of the politics between Mexico and the United States. The Cold War as a concept represented a specific historical condition, as well as an ideological expression of parochial interests within the global community, most specifically within the United States.⁵ As a historical condition, it provided the context within which international relations theory was constructed (Walker 1993) and framed the management of international relationships.⁶ At the same time, it masked the transitions that had taken place within the structures of the international system which represented specific consequences of a combination of related historical conditions that were treated as more or less universal and eternal (Walker 1993: 105), such as balance of power and the permanence of the transcendence of the state in international relations.

⁴ . Except for Central America.

⁵ . R.B.J. Walker argues that the structures of the international system which neorealists treat as more or less universal and eternal are, in fact, the specific consequences of particular historical conditions (1990: 105). Yet, historical conditions have more often than not been deleted almost entirely from the analysis or relegated to a minor role in the name of instrumental rationality (Dahl 1967; Cox & McCubbin 1993).

⁶ . What international theory rarely accepts, although there have been important, and always marginalized, exceptions throughout its history...is that our rationalization of the international is itself constitutive of that practice. The selfsame 'reason' which rules our thinking also helps constitute international practice. In short, international theory is implicated in international practice because of the way that theory, in the main, divorces ethics from politics, and instead promotes understanding via a 'reason' separated from ethical or moral concerns (Smith 1995: 3)

In part because of the relative novelty of this threat, U.S. policy determined that a military/law enforcement response to drugs and transnational crime at the source was the most appropriate manner to eradicate the problem. The military/law enforcement emphasis did not take into consideration many of the other inter-related issues that surrounded the drug question, such as cultural preferences and traditions of the countries designated to adhere to an international drug control regime. Moreover, U.S. policy did not fully embrace the idea that the actors (transnational crime organizations, their suppliers and clients) and the environment (global economic system) were continuously in flux. Because TCOs are considered illegitimate actors, they have not been recognized from a cultural value perspective, as understood by the United States. Conversely, policymakers were ill-equipped or simply not able to accept many of the changes that were in progress and related to the Cold War because the nature of power was always being recontextualized and altered. Theories of international relations were equally stalwart and rarely addressed phenomena outside the regular practices related to inter-state relations. Illegitimate actors were generally perceived as social outsiders who were the responsibility of the state. However, transnational crime organizations became significant participants in the global arena, albeit

unacceptable ones that threatened the inviolability of the sovereignty of states, the foundation for international affairs.⁷

As U.S. drug policy evolved, there was considerable disagreement as to whether or not the United States adopted a response that was appropriate to the nature of the problem. But, what exactly defined the drug problem? In the United States, the drug policy debate ranged from legalization to a full-blown 'war against drugs,' but because each of the arguments was grounded in a different point of departure, synthesis was impossible and the debate became little more than a polemical controversy over mutually exclusive concepts (Reuter 1992). Generally speaking, the political rationale for U.S. policymakers is defined by their electorate, therefore, their interest in the drug question tends to remain in the rhetorical realm.

Moreover, U.S. drug control policy was essentially an outgrowth of traditional U.S.-Latin American relations and from the perspective of the United States, these relations were primarily concerned with the survival of U.S. national interests and called for Latin American law enforcement and economic policies to subsume themselves to U.S. standards of operation. Part of the concern for U.S. policymakers lay in the perceived decline of the

⁷ . Claims to sovereignty involve very concrete political practices, practices that are all the more consequential to the extent that they are treated as mere abstractions and legal technicalities. Moreover, these practices are exercised quite as much within disciplinary discourses about international relations as they in the routines of state-craft (Walker 1993: 13).

United States' global and regional position and the potential threat this presented to U.S. security (Keohane 1974; Kennedy 1989).

The United States followed a two-pronged strategy towards Latin America that sought to guarantee hemispheric security from destabilizing forces, as well as maintain markets open for U.S. companies and investors (Kennedy 1990). In contrast to the late 1960s, transnational crime organizations expanded into sophisticated global distribution networks by the 1980s. Consequently, the United States perceived that its interests were threatened on at least two levels. First, TCOs undermined the ability of the state to control its inhabitants and thus threatened hemispheric stability. Second, TCOs potentially threatened the transparency of economic transactions fundamental to liberal/neoliberal economic behavior and tradition.

As a result, in 1986, the United States reevaluated its security interests to include illegal drugs and outlaid a significant amount of resources in related military and law enforcement aid, particularly in the Andean region where the problem was perceived to be at its worst.⁸ Security was understood to depend upon each of the state actors understanding the interstate system in the same manner (Cox 1986: 212). From an ideological perspective, the drug policy that evolved was patterned on the Reagan administration's general belief in supply-side economic policies and anti-communist tactics.

⁸ . For more than a decade the main foreign targets in the war on drugs have been the Andean cocaine-producing countries (Andreas, et.al, 1991-92: 108).

By institutionalizing a certification process as part of its foreign policy for the region, the United States placed drugs producer and transit countries under U.S. oversight, thus reenforcing its position as the regional warden. Moreover, the policy later evolved and included a law enforcement component that expanded U.S. hegemony rather extensively, unilaterally granting extra-territorial rights for both the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), meaning that either group could enter any hemispheric country and arrest and/or abduct individuals considered to have transgressed the laws of the United States (Petras & Morley 1990: 26).⁹ Furthermore, because the perception in the United States was that Latin American states, particularly Mexico, were largely uncooperative with U.S. drug control efforts, U.S. policy explicitly established linkages between economic aid and development projects to drugs control, while it simultaneously sought to strengthen military and law enforcement programs throughout the hemisphere. Mexico, in contrast, pursued a more *ad hoc* strategy of dealing with the drug question in its bilateral relationship with the United States.

Projecting U.S. Perceptions

Although in a sense, the United States attempted to level the playing field by strengthening law enforcement and military control in the region, it did so through its own lens (Strange 1995). The United States actively sought to superimpose a law enforcement

⁹ . The Case of Alvarez Machain - Supreme Court decision that it was constitutional to seek criminal transgressors abroad.

system throughout the Americas that matched U.S. procedures, norms, rules, and institutional standards (Nadelmann 1993; Walker 1990), even though these were often in conflict with the national interests of the weaker state actors. Nevertheless, the United States' ability to sustain a coercive drug control regime in the hemisphere was mitigated by social and economic constraints, particularly in Mexico. Furthermore, because of the nature of the constraints inherent in U.S. legislation on drug control, bilateral relations were privileged over multilateral negotiations anyway.

Throughout the 20th century, U.S. foreign policy interests for the region were largely based on three basic principles. First, the state must remain stable at all costs. Second, any regime that undermines the future stability of a state should be discouraged (including ideological, economic, and/or political), unless the regime in power can guarantee the control of the police and military forces, then they should be supported until they are no longer considered viable. Viability is interpreted here from the perspective that the U.S. government considers the individual or government in question anathema to its interests. Third, although the ultimate goal is to spread democracy through the world, democratization processes are fairly limited in their real significance. They will be subsumed in the interest of the state if they in any way threaten the stability of the system, interfere with U.S. interests or challenge U.S. models of development (Petras & Morley 1990). However, these premises do not fully embrace the complexity and nuances of the drug question in U.S.-Mexican relations. Moreover, they serve to obfuscate the real nature of the problem.

Defining the Drug Problem: Political Economy vs. National Security Interests

The Growth of Transnational Crime and Economic Development Processes

In an attempt to define the parameters of the global drugs trade and its connection to international relations over the past thirty years, two themes become apparent. First, the late twentieth century has been an era of intense social change, one that has been greatly affected by the processes of globalization and the end of the Cold War. Second, transnational crime organizations responded to these trends and were able to take advantage of them to grow in size and strength. What is the significance of these two separate, but interrelated events? And, what has it implied for U.S.-Mexican relations?

In the 1960s, for the first time Cold War interests were challenged and political economy issues grew in importance as capital, commodities, and trade transactions became more liberalized (Agnew 1994; Smith & Booth 1995). Increasingly, the capitals of the industrialized world coordinated their economic policies and brought down barriers. Interdependence between the different parties involved grew at different rates, and created an environment that required positive coordinated efforts in multilateral economic decisionmaking for its upkeep (Cox 1986).

The need to fight the Cold War justified an intellectual investment both in the diplomacy of trade and money and in the academic analysis of the economic issues that threatened to divide and therefore weaken the affluent capitalist alliance (Strange 1995).

But, the sustained focus on the ideological priorities of the Cold War served to cover the challenges being presented by new phenomena, such as the rise of large transnational criminal networks.

Although governments were aware of the rise of powerful transnational crime organizations, the Cold War provided both a cover for TCOs to grow while it also kept them from expanding by neutralizing large expanses of territory behind the iron curtain (Clawson and Lee 1996: 62). Drug traffickers in particular were essentially overlooked unless they became too visible (Lupsha 1991) or too adept at challenging state control over government institutions. TCOs with terrorist connections were considered the greater threat in the hierarchy of potential dangers.

In Mexico's case, drug trafficking organizations were relatively small family enterprises that operated within the system (Lupsha 1991). The United States paid little attention to these organizations until the early 1960s when trafficking organizations began to expand the market and to eliminate the more marginal traffickers. Nixon established the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to track traffickers but the threat remained primarily in the realm of domestic law enforcement. U.S. government officials were primarily concerned with the eradication of marijuana and opium production, the drugs of choice at the time. Cocaine was only of secondary importance. Therefore, early on, U.S. policy targeted Mexico.

From an economic perspective, the internationalization of production contributed directly to the massive expansion and deregulation of international financial flows in the 1960s, which accelerated in the 1970s and eventually contributed to the Latin American debt crises of the 1980s (Petras & Morley 1990: 193; Strange 1995). As the threat from the Soviet Union to Europe diminished and as Japan grew in power, economic issues were re-prioritized. For a time, policymakers in industrialized states attempted to keep economics and politics separate, but increasingly linking took place to maximize absolute gains in bargaining. In addition, external change in the security structure was inevitable because it became obvious that the maintenance of a superior war-system was expensive and ultimately unsustainable as it did not guarantee safety and therefore could not continue to justify its maintenance.¹⁰

As Latin America struggled to develop with the help of foreign financing and then to pay the accompanying debt, state governments complied with International Monetary Foundation (IMF) rules and began to implement neo-liberal economic policies and formulas on the labor force which marginalized a large number of the population. Throughout the region, real wages fell sharply, especially in Mexico, and created the space for alternative sources of capital accumulation. Drug trafficking and the rise of transnational crime organizations (TCOs) roughly paralleled the growth of this globalization process and in the

¹⁰ . Nuclear disarmament - START talks, SALT talks (1970s) - U.S. loss of confidence with Vietnam.

late 1970s, a handful of powerful transnational drug rings emerged which treated the sale and distribution of narcotics much the same way as transnational corporations (TNCs) operated their businesses.

Organizations surfaced in Latin America and the Caribbean that not only produced marijuana and cocaine products, but marketed them through sophisticated distribution networks, particularly to the United States. These groups were able to take advantage of the new channels available for the circulation of capital, such as the Eurodollar market and dummy banks on Caribbean islands which linked and masked international banking practices. But in the 1970s, traffickers although successful, did not yet possess the levels of power and sophistication that they would evolve into. As they grew stronger, their economic power, ability to buy protection and growing violence began to create tensions world-wide, particularly where they were able to obtain certain legitimacy. Large influxes of capital related to drugs were introduced into regional economies which pressured local governments to respond at a time when they faced also underdevelopment, a debt crisis, and growing social unrest.

...the disintegrating effects of the market have spawned a whole stratum of speculators, externally funded intellectuals, and drug dealers, each with their entourages, who can be counted upon to keep the political within conventional boundaries. Crime, religious revivalism, internal migration, and subsistence barter networks are other options for the masses punished by the market (Petras & Morley 1990: 25).

By the 1980s, the international stage included a multiplicity of actors and evidence that rapid social changes demanded a less orthodox approach in international politics. Stagnant economies and weakening political mandates in producing and transit countries made room for drug bosses to run their businesses, particularly in Mexico where drug traffickers could take advantage of newly opened markets and state divestitures of public enterprises, along with the Mexican economic and political elite.

The combination of the weakness of Mexico's government institutions and liberalization processes created the space for the TCOs to expand. Because of the combination of vast economic power and violent practices, TCOs had begun to undermine the ability of the countries in which they resided to apply rule of law. Moreover, drug traffickers challenged state interests by offering alternative options to those marginalized by failed economic practices, but traffickers also challenged the regime's ability to control the police and military because of the vast sums of money available for payoffs.¹¹

Exacerbating domestic tensions, especially in the Andean region and in Mexico, the United States expected Latin American countries to adapt their national economic policies, as well as drugs programs to U.S. standards. The combination of domestic needs and U.S. pressure contributed to the establishment of a hemispheric system whereby national security

¹¹ . According to Petras and Morley, "American policy toward the Third World focuses on the notion of violence as the ultimate arbiter of power and guarantor of basic U.S. interests - political, economic and strategic. Hence, the composition and control over the coercive apparatus (army and police) is a more basic concern to the White House and State than who dominates the legislative and executive bodies" (1990: 111-112).

and economic policies were, if not coordinated to correspond to U.S. interests, at least influenced by U.S. government decisions. In addition, while TCOs grew, Latin America as a whole, and Mexico in particular were in a condition of worsening indebtedness to international financial institutions.

Transnational Crime and U.S. National Security

Despite repeated demands for caution by critics, the United States engaged in a drug war and increased the scope of its supply-side strategy and tactics. However, drugs represented a different type of challenge to the United States because they were not state-driven and responded primarily to marketplace, not ideology. To mitigate this factor, the United States pressured every government to take responsibility for the growth of these crime organizations on their territory, especially in the Andean region and in Mexico.

The United States attempted to establish an international drug control regime by engaging producing and transit countries to sign formal accords to institutionalize cooperation. One of the most important goals of U.S. policy was to guarantee that state structures remain in place that were compatible with U.S. interests. But the emphasis was on a political and military response which was then justified because it was included as part of the legitimate issues of U.S. national security. Invariably by interpreting the drug situation as such, it assured greater receptivity to military involvement within the domestic arena in the United States (Petras & Morley 1990).

The emphasis on a security perspective resounded to the fact that drug traffickers did not respect space or territory. They transcended it by looking away from national entities and translating space into markets: old and new. Trafficking organizations became institutions, albeit informal and illegal ones, which act outside the rule of law while at the same time interacting with it at both an economic and political level. They are similar to other non-governmental organizations in that they wield some form of power but in order to operate they must have government protection. They are even more similar to transnational corporations and their style of operation. The drugs market is purely capitalistic and depends consistently on the market.

Nevertheless, the United States, ignored or subsumed these other important aspects of the growth of transnational criminal organizations to the high politics of national security. However, by de-emphasizing the importance of the market aspects of the drug issue, the United States failed to acknowledge that market structures were also determining processes along with the state on at least two levels: the drug market itself and the technological market.¹² Because the United States placed so much emphasis during the Cold War on the security aspects of its relationships along with an emphasis on open trade and financial

¹² . Power is derived from all four pillars of political economy: the security structure, the financial structure, the production structure, and the knowledge structure . Although the state could sometimes alter the manner in which a market operated, once established, the market was able to place constraints, impose risks or offer opportunities to those who desired to participate. (Strange 1988)

policies, drug trafficking networks were able to negotiate within the vacuums that were created by oversight and they expanded.

Since the main focus of the United States was on the security aspects of its market structures, TCO's were able to insinuate themselves into the financial market while they were also taking advantage of the technological market structures that were left open to enhance their ability to evade law enforcement forces globally. Moreover, traditional security concerns also became affected by the structure of the market itself because access to advanced 'conventional' weapons remained open and state-supported enterprises became fiercely competitive for market shares (Strange 1995), especially as the Cold War scaled down. Drug traffickers and terrorists alike were able to gain access to state-of-the-art conventional weapons, and began to threaten civil society in both producing and consuming countries.¹³

In the case of Mexico, however, one of the basic premises of U.S. drug policy based backfired because it was incompatible with other realities of the situation. Although the relationship between the United States and Mexico is asymmetrical, the asymmetry of power

¹³ . Even in the security structure, which states (because of their monopoly of legitimate violence) appeared to dominate, the structure of the market increasingly affected security outcomes. Market access to nuclear weapons and nuclear technology was at least partially restricted. But access to even the most advanced 'conventional' weapons was open and state-supported enterprises were fiercely competitive for market shares; access to small arms was virtually unregulated. The results of this market structure can be plainly seen in recent times in the insecurity of families in Northern Ireland, in U.S. inner cities, in Bosnia or in Bombay. it could not be explained simply by the structure of power in the inter-governmental political system (Strange 1995: 166).

did not necessarily imply that the United States was consistently capable of either coercing or pressuring Mexico into cooperation. A combination of other factors condition the relationship that contribute to its unique status.

Explaining Bilateral Cooperation: Conditioning Variables and the Significance of Power Asymmetries

Asymmetry in economic and political power does not by itself dictate a specific mode of behavior by either country...Each country's response is conditioned by the other (Weintraub 1990: 55).

The relative strengths of the leading nations in world affairs never remain constant, principally because of the uneven rate of growth among different societies and of the technological and organizational breakthroughs which bring a greater advantage to one society than to another (Kennedy 1989: xvi).

Given the stronger position of the United States and the domestic constraints felt by the Mexican government the question then becomes, why do Mexico and the United States cooperate sometimes, while at other times they are unable to reach any concrete agreement? In order to approach the answer, it is important to understand the relative position or power of each state in view of its relationships both with each other, as well as with other states and actors in the region, as well as its domestic conditions.

The Power of Asymmetries

The definition of politics is much broader than simply the analysis of the state and its government. The actors are profuse, the range of stakes is extensive, the goals pursued are diverse, and the modes of interaction along with the institutions where the action takes place is more complex (Cox 1986). The framework for action changes and it becomes important

to understand these changes. Therefore, it becomes impossible to separate politics and economic structures when examining relationships because those engaged in economic exchanges are also engaged in political negotiation (Strange 1995: 169-170).

Power as a concept becomes something larger, something beyond mere coercion and the command of resources, even when it is primarily perceived as such.¹⁴ Moreover, power is not a fungible asset, but has to be differentiated according to the contexts in which a state tried to be influential and with an understanding of the domestic political, economic and social factors (Cox 1986: 222-223).

In its quest to establish a hemispheric drug control regime, the United States used its more powerful position vis-à-vis Latin America and urged that a uniform response be implemented throughout the region (Walker 1995). President Ronald Reagan approved legislation which changed the weight of the drug question on the hemispheric agenda. As mentioned previously the tactics had a coercive element and the penalty was economic in nature. In the 1980s, the region continued to suffer from the debt crisis.

The United States was able to use that vulnerability as leverage to get the attention of the producing and transit countries. In addition, the consensus in the United States during that time period placed the culpability of the drug problem on the backs of source countries.

¹⁴ . The definition of power has been extended from direct coercive power, to structural power, power to set agendas but also to shape institutions - as well as power in the realm of ideas or the knowledge structure. Strange argues that a fourth level includes involuntary power or the power of markets which as a system on those who operate in the market in comparison to international society which confers power on the constituent states (Strange 1995: 170).

The prevailing philosophy was that if there was no supply, demand could not be met and would eventually extinguish itself. Consequently, any other type of option, such as selective decriminalization and/or legalization would probably incur a high political cost. Nevertheless, U.S. strategy has oscillated between intermittent pressure to force drug producing countries to cooperate under U.S. terms and tolerance over the selective application of penalization of drug producers by these same countries (González 1996): the Andean region (Bolivia, Colombia, Peru) and Mexico.

Critics argue that the reproduction of power asymmetries in drug control reduces the incentives for producing and transit states to cooperate on two levels. On the one hand, because the interests and preferences of the more powerful state in the relationship prevail in the definition of priorities and strategies, there is no reciprocal element in the presentation of interests. On the other hand, the distribution of related costs and benefits associated with practices established during negotiations has tended to be unequal and favors the stronger power (González 1994: 406-409). But, the defining elements of the asymmetry are always changing and forming new combinations thus allowing the weaker party some room for maneuverability. However, although power asymmetries do not necessarily impede cooperation, they do place restrictions on cooperative efforts, as well as on levels of stability and the institutionalization of possible accords (González 1994: 407).

Mexico as a Weaker Power: The Role of Integration and Territorial Contiguity

For Mexico, the combination of economic and political pressure from the United States lacked credibility and sufficient legitimacy to engage fully in any kind of permanent mechanisms for political cooperation. There was a disjuncture between the extreme force in drug control and the relative tolerance of consumption (González 1996). As a result, all agreements were continuously open for re-evaluation and renegotiation (González 1994: 410). Moreover, adhesion to international conventions does not necessarily imply that the conditions are sufficient to translate them into national policy. A combination of political will and capability are also necessary.

Because of different historical conditions, the Mexican government has at times been able to place its needs and values ahead of U.S. interests, or at least mitigated circumstances which were unfavorable, such was the case during the North American Free Trade Agreements (NAFTA). Mexico has cooperated with U.S. policy objectives not only because of pressure, but because domestically it also proved expedient¹⁵, while at the same time it incurred relatively high rewards externally. Since at least 1960, the United States has provided new military equipment to Mexico that included helicopters, training for pilots, weapons, and other sophisticated equipment, such as computer systems and aerial radar systems.

¹⁵ . "Foreign Policy has long offered Mexican political leaders opportunities to resolve some of the tensions inherent in their political situation" (Krasner 1985: 5).

However, Mexico and the United States have been at opposite poles in terms of their policy objectives regarding drugs. Whereas, Mexico has spent much of its more recent efforts attempting to delink issues to maximize its relative gains in the relationship, U.S. policy deliberately built a drug war on the backs of law enforcement cooperation and economic assistance. The difference in perception as to what the drug problem entails is the most fundamental aspect of the inability to coordinate drug control policies.

For Mexican government officials the problem lies in the overwhelming demand of the U.S. market. For the United States, the onus is on the producing and transit countries. Moreover, the differences in political systems combined with institutional vulnerabilities further complicates any negotiations. Mexico's sensitivity over its sovereignty is very much a product of the more powerful position that the United States has. However, every change in nuance in drug control efforts gets played out at the negotiating table. For the most part, Mexico has been fairly successful in maintaining U.S. sights focused on the Andean Region and away from its front porch.

How has Mexico, a relatively weaker state, been able to promote its interests, while at the same time taking into consideration the interests of its powerful neighbor? A combination of conditions contributes to answer this question. First, domestic constraints and costs, such as social pressures, institutional weakness, economic stagnation and reprisals from drug traffickers, limit the extent to which Mexico can fully respond to U.S. pressures, even if the political will were present to do so. Moreover, domestic constraints define

Mexican interests in foreign policy. Second, the intense complexity of the overall relationship contributes to Mexico's ability to negotiate a better situation for itself. Third, historically, Mexican governments have recognized that to a certain degree their position with regard to the United States is more privileged than that of the rest of the hemisphere because of the mutually shared border.

Conversely, the United States is also sensitive to the shared border and considers other related issues equally as threatening, such as large influxes of undocumented immigrants crossing over should Mexico fall into chaos. The interplay along the border then became the focus for all of the negative and/or controversial aspects of the relationship. Fourth, the environment in which Mexico and the United States negotiate with each other is continuously in flux and therefore different vulnerabilities can be exploited at different times, by either side. However, the relationships in the border region, by necessity, retain a functional factor that commands cooperation and continuous dialogue in order to prevent the above-mentioned controversial aspects.

Mexico's response, although varied, has generally followed the United States' lead and accepted the increased punitive nature of a drug war. Over the years, Mexican government policies included the establishment of a permanent campaign on drugs, formal acceptance of international conventions, and the establishment of laws to penalize drug traffickers. However, because of its relative position to the United States, Mexico's options are variegated in how it has chosen or been able to respond to U.S. requests. One of Mexican

policymakers chief goals is to maintain control over any drug control program established on Mexican territory, with as little interference from U.S. military and law enforcement personnel as possible (Toro 1990). With regards to Mexico, the United States has tended to seek out new levers of oversight for itself to ensure strict adherence to U.S. standards of application, such as the establishment of regular inspections of ongoing eradication or pilot programs.

In several of these cases, Mexico sought a counterbalance in that it sought to establish its own national programs to remove U.S. sensitivity over the issue. It then became a diplomatic game of saving face or of open recrimination. Nowhere is this more evident than on the shared border. However, whereas power asymmetries impede cooperation because the strong don't have to listen and the weak do not wish to enter into a losing negotiation, territorial contiguity forces a *modus vivendi*.

The Politics of the Border Nation: Defining Spaces¹⁶

The Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch... (Anzaldúa 1987: Preface).

The border is an arena of conflict and cooperation, of example and animosity, of opportunity and frustration, and of separation and blending -- in each case to a degree that does not exist generally in either nation (Weintraub 1990: 155).

An important element of the U.S. drug control strategy was to seal off its borders to drugs. Mexico was expected to cooperate and coordinate its law enforcement efforts with that of U.S. officers. The question of overflights was often raised, but Mexico firmly refused to allow U.S. aircraft to enter Mexican airspace.¹⁷ It became increasingly clear that the dividing line between U.S. policy and Mexican cooperation was ideological, as well as

¹⁶ . In 1989, a conference was held in El Paso by the governors of Texas and bordering Mexican States to examine the state of Texas-Mexico higher education. It then continued over several years and on March 26, 1993, the Rio Bravo Association was officially established in Monterrey, Nuevo León to promote exchange, communication and research related to the Texas-Mexico border area. The Association sought to promote regulations and policies among educational, commercial, and governmental agencies to improve the academic environment in the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande region. From these efforts it became clear that an identification process had begun to form and the individuals involved in the organization began to refer to the area as "the Border Nation," an area committed to a bi-national approach to find solutions for the problems that they shared that ranged from architecture/planning; agriculture/veterinary medicine to bi-lingualism/language shifts and public policy.

¹⁷ . Overflights into Mexican territory traditionally represent a problem for U.S.-Mexico relations. But, the level of acrimony reduced considerably. For example, most recently, in May 1998 at the BLM on Public Safety in San Diego the issue of U.S. helicopters incurring over Mexican territory at both Tecate and Mexicali was brought to the attention of U.S. agencies participating in the meeting. The Consul General mentioned it and wrote a memo to his superiors at the SRE. The use of the BLMs prevented a major incident. Memo from the Mexico Consulate in San Diego to the Sub-Dirección de América del Norte y Europa. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. June 12, 1998.

physical. How does each country really see its shared borderlands? What is its significance to the bilateral relationship? How does the larger issues of the bilateral relationship affect the border region? Do the interactions on the border differ in any way from that of the bilateral relationship?

The Border: Limitation vs. Function

First, the structural factor of territorial closeness makes it imperative to cooperate and coordinate bilateral efforts. Second, because of the drug questions, there has been a reevaluation of physical borders. The border region became more important than it had been in recent history. Moreover, as U.S. border policy became increasingly punitive and militarized, it became clear that a dichotomy existed between national interests and the border states. The management of local issues was considered as separate from the bilateral despite the dialectic that occurred in the border region on a daily basis.

As a spatial entity, the U.S.-Mexican border region is an area of active exchange and a significant component of the bilateral relationship. The border highlights the distinct asymmetries between the two countries and the confrontation of cultural perspectives. It is the place where foreign policy and domestic issues make contact. It is both a separate entity and a delimitation of distinct nation-states. The dual role reflects the intensity of the dual nature of the border: crossroads vs. barrier. In other words, the border apart from being a politically delimited area, becomes a function. There are several functions that a border can undertake, depending on the legitimizing reasons and goals provided by each nation-state.

These functions shift slightly depending on the type of policy being pursued and the success or failure of its implementation by the respective nation-state. The functions can be multiple depending on the issue being addressed, undocumented workers or truckloads of cabbage, however, one or more of the functions generally dominates (Morehouse 1994: 55).¹⁸

As its own entity, the border region has a given value, definition, and purpose for its inhabitants. By implication then, border inhabitants were integrated into an area that is often referred to within the context of its own territorial space, one that is on some level separate from the governments of the United States and Mexico. In theory, border inhabitants, reside in an area labeled as being part of a different whole, an integrated border region or region-state sometimes denominated "Amerexico" or the border nation (Andreas 1994). In the denomination as such, the individual is induced to think of him or herself as part of a spatial and social conceptualization that is regionalized, separate or different from the central sources of identification as defined by the nation-state. Individuals choose to live in certain spheres or environments because of their needs, traditions, perceptions, or desires (Soja

¹⁸ . Morehouse breaks down the boundary functions into seven types. 1) **Shell**: it is invoked to establish a territorially based identity; 2) **Net**: It is invoked to establish control or jurisdiction of specified phenomena occurring within the defined space; 3) **Facilitator**: To establish or improve administrative efficiency in managing a defined area; 4) **Filter**: To prevent specified phenomena from crossing a boundary into a defined space; 5) **Gate**: To restrict passage into a bounded space to those people or goods that have not met specified transaction criteria (e.g., payment of a tariff); 6) **Panopticon**: to engage in surveillance within (or outside the boundaries of a defined area) to prevent or monitor activities, behaviors, etc.; 7) **Fulcrum**: to balance opposing demands or forces, usually when no other solution can be agreed upon (Morehouse 1994: 56).

1989; Arreola and Curtis 1993). The concept of space aligns political and social classifications.

Once disaggregated, however, the concept of "Amerexico" or a border nation implies a certain level of unity across national lines, as well as a certain homogeneous acceptance of the entire 2,000 or so mile long border. By implication, it qualifies the U.S.-Mexican border as a region-state with stronger ties to the global economy than to the respective host-nations (Sweedler 1994). However, it does not differentiate between the issues of the various regions on the border, or between the relationships among the actors located in the area.

Irrespective of what the borderlands share, borders continue to define the very physical territorial delimitations of the nation-state. A material interpretation of spatiality counsels that space cannot be separated from ideology and politics because space has traditionally been both a political and strategic concept. Therefore, the border cannot be separated from its origins as the determinant of sovereignty (Soja 1994).

To try to conceive forms of politics other than those framed as a spatial distinction of here and there, self and other, is to recognize that even the imagination of an alternative politics is constrained by accounts of escape that keep us firmly where and what we are (Walker 1990).

A border area is an intrinsically politically and strategically delimited space.

The structure of organized space is not a separate structure with its own autonomous laws of construction and transformation, nor is it simply an expression of the class structure emerging from social (and thus aspatial?) relations of production. It

represents, instead, a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial (Soja 1989: 78).

In this context, the border represents a crossroads between nations where people and trade move fairly fluidly. But, the border also represents a barrier to illegal activities and to perceived and real national security threats. The border then becomes a sometimes not so invisible wall intended to protect national interests by preventing the undesirable from crossing over to the other side: economically-driven, illicit activities that juxtapose undocumented laborers with money launderers, weapons traffickers, and the illegal drugs trade. The contradictory elements of the border thus create an environment of indeterminate duality that when translated into a specific policy becomes especially evident. In sum, the combination of its interdependent nature and its role as a delimiter of spatial relations has inevitably created tensions and limitations to the expansion of cross-border policy cooperation and coordination.

Drug Control and Economic Development: an Integration Problem

Drug control issues frequently reflect this problem at a range of levels because although their purpose is to create an environment of deterrence for the drug trafficker, situations arise that derive from the solution to the original problem. The solution poses a potential threat to the local population on both sides of the border, for example increased human rights violations and/or racial discrimination by law enforcement authorities who seek

to deter drug traffickers or to stop undocumented workers who are often equated with criminals (America's Watch 1992).¹⁹

Furthermore, in many cases, the enacted policies themselves appear to be at cross-purposes with one another. For instance the pursuit of a Free Trade Agreement and the establishment of stricter border crossing regulations as exemplified by unilateral, combined U.S. military and law enforcement operations such as Alliance and Gatekeeper seem at odds with one another (Andreas 1995: 75-87; Lemus 1994). Spatial relations in this context, therefore, are dictated as much by national political and economic interests, as they are by local relations of social production and culture. Any economic or political upheaval on the Mexican side of the border has generally warranted attempts by the U.S. side to tighten border controls, and thus to create roadblocks in the formation and maintenance of cross-border linkages.

Moreover, languaging plays an elemental role in the types of outcomes that breakdown or crisis situations create. On the U.S. side, the language used to describe the situation at the border has often overlapped with political rhetoric that pertains not only to the bilateral relationship, but also to electoral cycles at the local, state and national levels. The terminology chosen by U.S. government officials tends to express combat-readiness, as

¹⁹ . The Latino community San Diego newspaper Ahora/Now reported that while Christine Sale, the Adjunct Commissions for the INS denied that the United States was experiencing a racial backlash against foreign workers, in San Diego County, undocumented workers were hunted in the fields by young, armed U.S. citizens. Local activists signaled that this type of behavior is a reflection of U.S. immigration politics (Ahora/Now 1996: 1,3).

if the border with Mexico represented a battleground for drug traffickers and undocumented workers who willfully seek to violate U.S. laws. In turn, border dwellers fear that their well-being is jeopardized by geographic contiguity with a foreign nation and by the criminal element that it contains.²⁰

Nevertheless, U.S. border states are dependent on the Mexican side whether for trade, labor, or cash influxes and it is at this juncture where integration is most expressed. Further complicating the picture, is the perception of nationals who reside in non-border areas which tend to equate the border states with the original frontier, with little awareness of the area's history and its links to Mexico: the frontier mentality argued that the borderlands were uncivilized territories meant to be conquered (Pike 1992).

The ensuing policies and implementation efforts suggest that the nature of the border in many ways, defines the types of policies and jobs that should be created and made available for the movement of goods and people, both legal and illegal, who find it essential to cross back and forth between the two countries for sustainability. The alignment of categories involves the contrasting objectives of the facilitation of legal movement and the prevention of illegal movement that is triggered by national policies on both sides of the

²⁰ . Although the perspective of the newspaper Voz Fronteriza is radical, when broken down to its basic elements the argument that is offered reflects the sentiment of a vocal minority in the San Diego Latino community. "The laws which are being created keep our people colonized while asking us to respect them...They want us to respect these laws as though we voted this system in, when in fact it imposed itself on our people. We did not ask the system to come into our region and build the concrete wall that separates our Mexico into two distinct regions. There was never an election which asked our communities whether we wanted a border that would cut our culture in two halves" (Prado 1996: 5).

border. The border States represent the critical juncture where prevention and cure are sifted together.

A specific example is generated from the tradition of law enforcement as represented by Customs officers and immigration control in the border States. These officers are directly linked to the nature of the territorial space while simultaneously, their existence responds to larger national political and economic policy decisions, trends, and broader social realities. In other words, the officers represent the concrete and subjective interpretation of how space on the border has been socially translated, transformed, and experienced. The dual nature of the job reflects the dual nature of the border and adds to the confrontational polemic between those who regulate and those who are regulated.

Contrasting Views of the Border

For Mexico, the political process of space organization on the border has been largely dictated, at least since the early 1960s, by the regional economic necessity of its northern states to which the Mexican national government responded with development programs to establish a new base for industrialization with little emphasis on the restriction of movement.²¹ As a result, the increase in opportunities in the border area effected a migratory movement of peoples from central and southern Mexico to the northern border states.

²¹ . Edward W. Soja has argued that "At every scale of life, from the global to the local, the spatial organization of society was being restructured to meet the urgent demands of capitalism in crisis - to open up new opportunities for super-profits, to find new ways to maintain social control, to stimulate production and consumption" (1993, third ed.: 34).

Since its inception in 1961, the flows of people and goods crossing the border steadily increased in direct correlation to Mexican government programs such as the *Programa Nacional Fronterizo* (PRONAF) and its 1965 outgrowth, the Border Industrialization Program (BIP).²² Both PRONAF and BIP were major catalysts in the expansion of the population of Mexican border cities, as well as the growth of industry and trade.²³ Moreover, PRONAF and BIP also recognized the needs of the U.S. manufacturing community and its propensity to establish sites in Mexican border cities to procure low-skilled, lower priced manual labor to maximize corporate profits (Tamayo and Fernández: 1983). As a result, national government decisions to both facilitate economic growth and expand the flow of goods, services, and investment while interdicting illegal activities on both sides of the border generated high expectations for the law enforcer, for the border crosser, and the border

²² . The Mexican government's 1965 maquiladora program was developed to generate economic development along its economically depressed border with the United States. The program permits maquiladoras to import raw materials, components, and machinery free of import duties as long as the plants export most of the products after they have been assembled.

²³ . According to Sidney Weintraub, "The border industrialization programs of the 1960s, which gave birth to the *maquiladora*, or assembly plants, had as one of its motivations to populate the northern region against further U.S. encroachment" (1990: 55). The U.S. agenda has historically included Mexico in its sights as one of its most important and immediate zones of influence. The Mexican government's usually weak position in view of the U.S. agenda has generally caused intense reactions not only in the Mexican press, but at the negotiating table.

resident.²⁴

In the context of a growing sense of interdependence, law enforcers in the border regions have been expected to work together across the national boundary against a common enemy: drug traffickers. However, progress has been limited and the processes are arduous, having evolved from the combination of policymakers perceptions and personal, day-to-day contacts. Institutionalized cooperation has been largely confined to periodic official bilateral meetings, Binational Liaison Mechanisms (BLMs) and personal relationships. Informal law enforcement border associations have not become the norm, although they are growing. Because of distrust on both sides of the border, until the mid-1990s, cooperation between U.S. and Mexican authorities was limited and sporadic as it largely responded to trends in the media. The United States developed a more unilateral and defensive approach, while the Mexican government maintained its focus on the region that it considered most at risk, its southern border.

²⁴ . For the Mexican, the border with the United States has often represented a certain ambiguity. In this respect, Mexico is broadly divided along three lines of thought about what its northern border with the United States represents. In the south, the U.S. border represents a land of prosperity where the harsh conditions of their lives can be mitigated by crossing over to the other side. Networks of migrants from Oaxaca and Chiapas travel the long trek and act as support groups for one another once arrived in the United States. Northern Mexico is but a stepping stone on the way towards the final destination. Central Mexico views the northern Mexico and its people as alien to the national culture. They are often considered to bear closer similarities to the United States than to Mexico. In contrast, *Norteños* view themselves as Mexicans whose border existence is a simple reality of daily life, but one which reaffirms their Mexicanness as distinctly different from U.S. traditions and culture. However, since the northern border states have a larger middle class, have well-established and diverse urban centers, as well as a broader economic base with strong connections to the United States, they do share some similarities with U.S. citizens.

As a result, the region has adopted new and innovative methods that respond to the dynamism of the border region and demand a certain amount of autonomy from the centers of power.²⁵ Although, local and institutional responses began in an *ad hoc* manner, since 1992, it became clear that in order to limit chaos on the border and improve public safety it was important to create cooperative mechanisms and institutionalize them for the maintenance of open lines of communication. Nevertheless, at all times the institutions and individuals involved are aware that national sovereignty places limits on the extent of cooperation.²⁶

Conclusions:

In this chapter it was argued that because of its hegemonic power in the region, the United States has been largely able to pressure Latin American states into complying with U.S. law enforcement strategies as related to drug control. However, Mexico has been able to manage the drug control part of the bilateral agenda with a certain amount of autonomy. Although the United States is considerably more powerful than Mexico, the combination of territorial contiguity and complex interdependence offers Mexico the ability to withstand U.S. pressures when they harm or threaten domestic arrangements. Moreover, the United States is forced to reconsider how it interprets Mexico's drug control efforts and political scene.

Whereas throughout the 20th century, Mexico was generally neglected by the United States, in the 1980s, the relationship became more important as a result of globalization

²⁵. Interview with Luis Herrera Lasso, Consul General of Mexico in San Diego. June 7, 1998.

²⁶ . Interview with Luis Ortiz Rocha, Consul General of Mexico in El Paso. June 10, 1998.

processes combined with the technological revolution. The frequency of economic impacts increased along with the growth of social contacts, particularly on their shared border. At the same time that Mexico's economy afflicted the U.S. economy, Mexico's beaches became the playground of the U.S. middle class. Cross-border contacts, both legal and illegal, increased accordingly. The ultimate result was that Mexico's role for the United States changed dramatically, which led to the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexico became an equitable partner in U.S. affairs. The intensity of the economic relationship overshadowed Mexico's position in the security paradigm, but the security paradigm overshadowed the drugs question. Whereas one type of relationship is dependent on cooperation, the other is reliant on force.

However, because of its transnational nature, the most effective outcome against transnational crime requires coordinated law enforcement efforts between the countries affected by the problem. Coordinated law enforcement to a certain degree requires the relaxation of national sovereignty concerns and similar ground of departure. However, national sovereignty still places limits on cross-border cooperation. Differences in philosophy further complicate the problems related to the creation of a regime led by a hegemonic partner. Moreover, the weaker partners contend with a set of problems that include institutional weakness, nascent democratic processes, and economies vulnerable to extreme fluctuations. In contrast, Mexico, despite its vulnerabilities, can use its relative

power to ensure the existence of a special relationship with the United States to gain concessions and create trade-offs for other issues on the bilateral agenda.

Lastly, this chapter also argued that the politics of spatiality also play a role in the bilateral relationship. Because of its territorial contiguity, the U.S.-Mexico border region can sometimes turn away from the larger bilateral issues and look to itself for answers. Moreover, with the growth of globalization and the impact it has had on the border, the region sometimes needs to act autonomously from the center on the basis of the function it is playing, such as the facilitator of movement. Challenges then are created for the border region because on the one hand it, in effect, becomes a borderless geography because of international trade, technology, and the integrated nature of the communities. However, the border remains a deliimiter of political territory and national sovereignty and thus, irrespective of integration factors, limits are still placed on cross-border cooperation.

CHAPTER 2

ESTABLISHING A REGIME OR COERCIVE COOPERATION?

This chapter begins with a brief analysis of U.S. efforts to build a drug control regime in the 20th century with Latin America, and more specifically with Mexico. It examines the four phases of U.S. narcotics policy and the gradual changes that take place in the U.S. approach to drugs control that ultimately set the tone for the Mexican approach to its drugs problem.

Drugs control policy hardly affected the bilateral relationship until 1969, when President Nixon implemented Operation Intercept on the U.S.-Mexico border. The purpose of Intercept was to pressure Mexico to comply more rigidly with the United States to prevent illegal drugs (marijuana and opiates) from crossing over. Since that time, the United States has adopted an ever more punitive policy which reached its apex in the mid-1980s with the passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, National Security Directive 221 (NSDD221), and the later passage of the 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act.

Limits to Regime-Building in U.S.-Mexico Relations

Since the passage of the 1914 Harrison Act criminalized the abuse of controlled substances, the United States sought to establish control over the production and distribution of illicit narcotics in the Western hemisphere through a combination of economic and military incentives shrouded in moral overtones. In the late 1890s, its stronger economic and military position converted the United States into the undisputed hegemon of the Western Hemisphere and cemented its influence in the region (Paterson and Rabe 1992). In an effort to stop the flow of drugs, U.S. government officials sought to superimpose U.S. institutional standards and cultural values on producing and transit countries, particularly in relationship to military and

law enforcement forces.

In its efforts to establish a hemispheric drug control regime to address the issues voiced by a concerned U.S. electorate, the United States often ignored social forces and processes in those countries targeted to participate. Western Hemisphere producing and transit nations were largely unable to circumvent U.S. demands because of their low prominence in U.S. foreign policy goals. In contrast to other producing and transit nations, Mexico was more often in the public eye in the United States because of its relatively unique position, the result of the added criterion of territorial contiguity. This positioning generated multiple economic, political, social contacts and interactions that carried implications for both sides of the border (Bagley 1988).

Since the annexation of Mexican territory in 1848, U.S. perspectives have tended to dominate the U.S.-Mexico bilateral agenda. After the Mexican-American War, Mexico was essentially left to its own devices, as long as the United States could rely on its stability and it maintained its role as a secure buffer zone, ally, and trading partner. But, as the century progressed, changes in the international political economy affected both the United States' ability to dominate and Mexico's subsequent ability to resist.

The changes were gradual but significant. Although the relationship between the United States and Mexico was vastly asymmetrical, Mexico was able to exert influence on the United States precisely because of the innumerable and varied points of contact between them, as well as because of constraints related to U.S. priorities. The combination of complex interdependence and territorial contiguity permitted Mexico to maneuver within the parameters of the bilateral agenda and enabled it to negotiate a more positive response to its needs when dealing with the United States, creating a greater balance despite power asymmetries.

For all of its power, the United States has had to respond to the influences exerted by Mexico while at the same time, it has had to negotiate with U.S. domestic and international constituencies, as well as deal with heavy media coverage. Moreover, the nature of the illicit drugs business demanded a concerted effort among all countries affected. As the 20th century closes, the combination of the rapid globalization of the world economy, technology's revolutionary advances and widespread availability, particularly in the areas of telecommunications and transportation; the largely unmonitored mobility of advanced weaponry, along with the vast resources of money created by sophisticated trafficking networks undermine any one nation's attempt to fight back without multilateral cooperation.

In effect, territorial boundaries began to lose some of their saliency (Del Rosso Jr. 1995), an issue of great concern to U.S. officials. The inability of the United States to control and limit consumption of psychotropic drugs in combination with the widespread availability of illicit narcotics created the need for a hemispheric regime to manage non-state actors, such as drug trafficking cartels that respect no border. In an effort to address the open nature of its border with Mexico, the United States pursued a layered strategy. On the one hand, the United States enacted unilateral efforts that essentially clustered drug trafficking with immigration, and attempted to seal off the border. On the other hand, the United States and Mexico adopted a series of cooperative mechanisms across the border, referred to as Binational Liaison Mechanisms (BLMs) to maintain dialogue with Mexican officials and which for the first time opened the possibility for joint operations on a limited basis.

Setting up Shop: The Rationale for a Drug Control Philosophy

A Game of Chess: Coercion or Cooperation?

Despite philosophical differences about which party is more responsible, the producer or the consumer, the United States and Mexico share a long history of cooperation in fighting drugs. In exchange for full participation in eradication and interception programs, the United States provided Mexico with sophisticated military equipment and Special Forces training throughout the 20th century. The United States has traditionally preferred to address control of production and trafficking at the source of origin, as opposed to tracking shipments once they crossed into U.S. territory. As the largest consumer of illicit drugs in the hemisphere, once the drugs reach U.S. soil, the distribution networks are multiple, shipments are comparatively smaller, and more difficult to track.

As a result, U.S. drug policy focused on looking outside the country, instead of adopting a demand-side approach. In contrast, Mexico's position has been that the drug problem is one whose source of origin is U.S. consumption. In other words, if the market were strictly controlled, there would be only limited production and distribution. Because of its perspective, Mexico has often found itself in a defensive position. Mexico frequently sees itself in the role of scapegoat for U.S. inability to control its drug problems internally and is suspicious over U.S. motives behind increased law enforcement presence in Mexican territory.

The United States as the dominant power has traditionally attempted to exercise its might over Mexico, a weaker state, to influence its policy objectives. Mexico, in turn, has reacted rather defensively to this leverage and attempted to enhance its more limited power, sometimes more successfully than others (Toro 1987). U.S. perceptions of Mexico's efforts

to curb drug cultivation, trafficking, and related violence and corruption within Mexico has often affected the relevance of drug trafficking on the bilateral agenda. In acknowledgement, Mexico then attempts to balance the agenda by placing an emphasis on the broad nature of the overall relationship and by calling attention to its role for the United States.

Although the order of the bilateral agenda is dynamic and responds to a wide array of concerns, the United States has commonly linked together issues for its political gain, with the added incentive of the threat of economic penalties should U.S. proposals not be satisfactorily complied with. In addition to perceived U.S. domestic and strategic interests (e.g., anti-communism, economic crisis, political stability, etc.), the position held by illicit drugs production and shipment in the U.S.-Mexico bilateral agenda shifts in order of importance owing to other agenda imperatives, such as Mexico's industrial and infrastructure development. Conversely, Mexico can use its development needs as a counterpoint to U.S. influence.

The United States added a new tactic to its drug control arsenal when it combined coercion with cooperation by legislating multilateral cooperative measures with international financial organizations' ability to provide loans and approve aid in return for efficient drug control.²⁷ The United States rarely hesitated to apply forcible measures in the form of economic coercion for non-compliance with U.S. national security interests, and even institutionalized the behavior with the passage of the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, in order to

²⁷ . The United States requested that Mexico demonstrate its solidarity with U.S. policy by participating more actively in drug control measures in two ways: 1) to support U.S. initiatives in international fora to require that international financial organizations maintain authorization over loans for projects determined to fight drug production and the control of distribution networks; 2) The United States recommended that countries seeking financial aid that were not efficiently controlling drug flows would not receive the funding they requested. Telegram. February 9, 1977. Geneva, Switzerland. V/591.5(72)/23404-AR.

achieve its policy goals.²⁸

Increasingly, the United States sought to institute a carrot and stick approach in the establishment of a drug control regime in Latin America based on bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and backed by economic sanctions. Despite these efforts, the United States was limited in the extent it could monitor Mexico's drug control and foreign policy. It was increasingly circumscribed as much by its own position in the global system, as by Mexico's internal situation that potentially posed a threat to the United States, both economically and socially.

Limits of Globalization

In the 1970s and 1980s, U.S. intelligentsia and political leadership repeatedly argued that the United States was a hegemon in decline, that it was losing power (Kennedy 1989; Nye 1991; Reich 1994). This argument was a recognition that many policy decisions responded to economic and technological globalization processes, not just to the Cold War. The division between international and domestic issues was shrinking. Whereas during the Cold War, an issue like drug control was subsumed by ideological and security concerns, the regulated atmosphere that once divided the communist East from the capitalist West disappeared with the collapse of the Berlin wall in 1989.

The illegal drugs market and the organized crime elements that controlled it

²⁸ William O. Walker III outlines this situation thus: "During the 1980s the White House employed counternarcotics policy in a failed attempt to bolster U.S. hegemony throughout the region. That endeavor...had its roots in the 1960s when traditional drug control policy and Washington's quest to define a common security agenda for the Americas initially coincided. The close association of drugs and security with the political economy of hegemony did not long endure and provided an ironic denouement to the war on drugs in the 1980s. That is, the more the United States managed to join drug control and security policies, the greater the autonomy Latin American leaders from Mexico to the Andean nations had to pursue antidrug policies of their own making" (December 1993).

began to replace the ideological premises of the Cold War. The "enemy" was no longer another nation-state but something less clear, powerful non-state actors that fell outside of state control because of their secretive nature. The net result has been a drug war that departs from the premises of confrontation with a traditional enemy but misses the mark because conceptually, it addresses the wrong problem. Drug cartels and international criminal organizations are not clearly visible and represent a nonmilitary phenomenon that does not fit in conventional definitions of security. Because they are like secret societies, they must be infiltrated. In direct contrast to that logic, U.S. drug policy penalizes states for their inability to control transnational crime organizations. Moreover, U.S. drug policy tends to emphasize sanctions over cooperation and militarization over economic development.

The view of international relations in the 1980s revealed not only a more complex agenda of issues that ranged from global environmental change to shifting demographic trends, to the shortage of capital to develop the underdeveloped world, but reflected an increased interrelationship between them (Roberts 1992). This view became clear in 1988, when the Salinas administration assumed control of government, the United States was challenged by a changing world order in which it was not clear what its priorities should be.

The United States had become more vulnerable to both Mexico's economic crisis and the possibility of political instability. The vast array of state and non-state actors involved in the decisionmaking process, their ability to influence policymakers on both sides of the border, as well as the transnationalization of issues on national agendas demonstrated the extent to which the state was increasingly limited in its behavior, a point equally significant for Mexico as it was for the United States.

Lastly, the policies pursued by the United States have responded more to its domestic

perceptions -- U.S. constituents require visible and tangible results -- rather than to the reality of the conditions under which drug traffickers operate. It was hard for the public to understand that the nature of the drug problem is a social phenomenon that tends to be transnational, fluid, and economically driven. As a result, U.S. response has typically been of a realist character with a heavy emphasis on interception and military responses (Bagley & Tokatlian 1994), as opposed to targetting demand.

Although demand-side responses were more long-term, they held two downsides for any politician who supported them. First, they were more expensive and the results were not immediately visible. And, second, in an era of growing conservatism, to send drug addicts to get treatment and counseling carried with it the implication of indulgence. The 1980s began the era of tough love in U.S. drug control policy.

Although the evolution of Mexican drug control policy ran parallel to that of the United States and in many ways responded to it, it is helpful to examine the historical precedents of Mexican policy in order to understand the interrelationship of factors that contributed to that decisionmaking process. Mexico's strong nationalist pride and determination to wield power internationally in its own right, along with its economic relationship with the United States and location served as a counterweight to U.S. power.

Four Phases of U.S. Anti-Narcotics Policy

Historically, the United States government's overriding concern with the creation and implementation of Mexican drug control strategies has been the effect that these have on U.S. domestic concerns, and/or security and economic interests (Craig 1989). Although the narcotics question was part of the bilateral relationship throughout most of the 20th century, the relative importance of drug control only gained a prominent position in the larger agenda

in the post-World War II period. More specifically, it grew after 1969 when the Nixon administration staged the first war on drugs. The Nixon administration's actions were officially attributed, in large part, to the increased internationalization of the drug market and the subsequent control of production and distribution by organized crime networks during his tenure as President (González 1989)²⁹.

U.S. drug control policy in the 20th century can be broken down into four large phases:

1914-1940s: The creation of law enforcement institutions reinforced the moralization and criminalization of drug consumption.

1940s-1960s: The regionalization of the drug trafficking process in view of the disruption of global trafficking patterns as a result of World War II and the geographical division between East and West.

1960s-1980s: The modernization of international drug control law enforcement.

1980s-to present: Heavy emphasis on the paramilitarization of law enforcement and the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border through the passage of punitive legislation and the elevation of the drugs problem to a national security concern targeting producing and transit countries through economic sanctions.

Phase I: Moralizing Consumption (1914-1940s)

The first phase of U.S. drug control policy began in December 1914 when the United States passed the Harrison Narcotics Act which criminalized drug abuse and, to a lesser extent, regulated the narcotics industry.

The Harrison Act required all people who imported, manufactured, produced, compounded, sold, dispensed, or otherwise distributed cocaine and opiate drugs to

²⁹ . The movie The French Connection highlighted the growth of international crime in drug trafficking, as well as the internationalization of law enforcement. The movie was based on an actual operation that targeted a heroin trafficking ring with links between Marseilles, Turkey, and New York. In great part because this operation was brought to light, the United States was able to pressure Turkey into banning opium production. As a result, Mexico, which had a long history of opium production, stepped in and filled the gap.

register with the Treasury Department, pay special taxes, and keep records of all transactions (Inciardi 1986: 15).

In order to enforce these new laws, several agencies were created and the distinction between law enforcement and social reform was somehow transmuted³⁰. Drug abuse was regarded as a moral disease and attempts to regulate and control the dispensing of drugs met with limited success. Success was limited because demand for narcotics remained and their sale resulted in the creation of a subterranean economy with vast profit-making possibilities, as well as the creation of a new realm for law enforcement to administer social mores.

Antidrug activity would thereafter become part of the emerging pattern of scientific management of national reform issues... (Walker 1990: 16).

By the 1930s, the consumption of drugs was largely an underground activity associated with low morals, Jazz bars and minority groups. Marijuana, in particular, became associated with the image of the Mexican "wetback" and was targeted for its potentially corrupting effect on "white society" (Inciardi 1986). Marijuana was placed in the same category as other narcotics and was widely perceived to require legislative control. Harry J. Anslinger, the Commissioner of the Treasury Department's Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) from 1930 to 1962, took advantage of this situation and joined forces with civic groups with the purpose of signing into law the Marijuana Tax Act.

Anslinger's ability to elevate the drugs issue to a new moral standard resulted in the equal elevation of the FBN to national prominence, and solidified the internationalization of

³⁰ . In the 1920s, U.S. drug policy gained momentum, although this had little effect on Latin American countries. In 1922, the Federal Narcotics Control Board (FNCB) was established. The work was divided between the departments of state, treasury, and commerce. The Treasury Department and its Narcotic Division of the Prohibition unit was responsible for the "day-to-day work." In 1927, Congress established the Prohibition Bureau and the responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of the Harrison Act changed hands (Walker 1990).

the Bureau via supply-side oriented anti-narcotics efforts (Nadelmann 1993: 94). Anslinger's achievements guaranteed a permanent place for his Bureau in the Federal government, as well as the funding necessary for it to pursue its mandate. Anslinger also guaranteed that drugs control became a fixture in inter-American relations and an added policy tool for the United States.

The policies and procedures of the Bureau of Narcotics were firmly entrenched by the late 1930s, thus placing it in an unchallenged position of authority to define certain substances as antisocial and immoral (Walker 1990). This position not only reveals the nature of the bureaucratic atmosphere that existed at that time, but it highlights the extent to which law enforcement increasingly became the arbiter of social norms not only for the United States, but throughout the Western hemisphere (Walker 1990). Not unlike its position today, Mexico provided the Bureau with one of its more prominent challenges given its history as both a drug producer and a transit country (Nadelmann 1993: 95).

Phase II: Regionalization of Drug Trafficking (1940s-1960s)

In the 1940s, despite efforts by Commissioner Anslinger to convince the American public that the Japanese were "systematically attempting to addict its enemies...to opium, in order to destroy their civilization" (Epstein 1990: 33), the issue of drug control lost most of its saliency, as the flow of drugs from Europe and Asia was largely disrupted, a result of World War II. Drug trafficking became a more regional affair, as well as a point of estrangement in the U.S. relationship with Mexico. Mexico had become a replacement source for opiates, although on a much smaller scale and of a lower quality.

The relationship was further strained when Mexico's president, Lázaro Cárdenas, antagonized key U.S. business leaders with the nationalization of Mexico's petroleum industry

in the late 1930s and evicted many foreign investors from their properties.

From 1936 to 1940 United States drug diplomacy threatened to exacerbate the sensitive state of affairs existing with Mexico and accordingly brought into question the reciprocal nature of the Good Neighbor Policy of the Roosevelt administration (Walker 1990: 119).

In actuality, U.S. drug policy contrasted sharply with the purposes behind the Roosevelt administration's Good Neighbor Policy. It was overshadowed by distrust and lack of reciprocity.

A growing problem was exemplified by the simple fact that although U.S. drug enforcement agents could cross into Mexico in hot pursuit of suspected traffickers, Mexican officers were denied similar access to the United States. Nevertheless, despite such contretemps and lack of good faith, Mexican officials increased drug control activities on their side of the border and created a centralized narcotics administration that was placed under the direction of José Siurob. He became the Chief of the Department of Public Health and was a man trusted by most U.S. agents (Walker 1990).³¹ It was therefore quite a surprise for U.S. officials when the Mexican government altered its drug control campaign.

On February 17, 1940, statutes came into effect in Mexico to create a drug monopoly with the purpose of dispensing narcotics to addicts. Commissioner Anslinger was caught off guard. The Mexican perspective that drugs represented not a moral disease problem, but a health problem was clearly evident in their decision to control the market. The logic behind

³¹ . In 1937, the results of a fourteen year study undertaken by Leopoldo Salazar Viniegra, a member of the Federal Narcotics Service were presented. The study findings indicated that marijuana usage did not cause criminal behavior, nor did it have any deleterious effects beyond the psychological. Furthermore, Salazar felt that U.S. drug control efforts were excessive and did not address the addict's problem. This information did not suit Commander Anslinger and he responded by increasing pressure on Mexico to fall in line with U.S. policies (Walker 1990).

such a policy was that in the creation of a monopoly of distribution would control the expansion of the drug market far better than interdiction tactics and moralizing. Moreover, it would limit the number of individuals who became addicted to drugs.

Although the United States had asked Mexico to grow opium and hemp during the war effort, its response to Mexico's 1940 policy shift was to cancel all shipments of medicinal drugs to Mexico with the intention of compelling Mexico into abandoning its statutes. The United States clearly demonstrated that it systematically intended to use narcotics control as a leverage to influence the Mexican government to achieve an end desirable to the U.S. government. These events also revealed the types of antagonism that could potentially arise from the issue of drug control in the bilateral relationship, antagonism created by a difference in perceived needs and philosophies.

The relationship with Mexico changed dramatically on November 19, 1941 when the conflict with the United States over the petroleum expropriations was settled. Mexico declared war on the Axis powers on May 25, 1942 after two Mexican vessels were sunk by German submarines. Thereafter, the bilateral relationship was completely subsumed by the war effort. Mexico became the chief provider of replacement labor and natural resources for the United States during war time. It also reorganized its industries, agriculture sector, as well as its military in its role as ally. Mexico even allowed the United States to conscript Mexican citizens for the war effort and formed part of the Joint Mexican-United States Defense Commission. The United States agreed to use the war to help industrialize Mexico and improve its infrastructure, and became deeply involved in the management of the Mexican economy (Niblo 1995: 105). Drugs became a low priority on the agenda.

By the 1950s, drug control was an issue again and the FBN began to interdict Mexican

origin traffickers by stationing agents, who at times worked in conjunction with U.S. Customs agents, at the border. Alternatively, FBN agents would be stationed in Mexico to develop leads, oftentimes under cover. Once the agents were in-country, generally two oppositional scenarios were created. The U.S. embassy was required to house U.S. law enforcement officers who carried badges and guns, oftentimes without the knowledge of the local government which increased the likelihood of a diplomatic mishap.

However, since there were few restrictions on U.S. agents' activities and their role in Mexico was somewhat unclear, agents were better able to develop effective links between themselves and the law enforcement communities where they were residing as expatriates (Nadelmann 1993).³² The net result was that the relationship that law enforcement officers developed among themselves responded to a personalized code of behavior between individuals who had to overcome stereotypes and mistakes at the national level, as opposed to institutionalization of methods of cooperation.

Phase III: The Modernization of Law Enforcement (1960s-1980s)

In *Cops Across Borders*, Ethan Nadelmann referred to the 1960s as the beginning of the "modern era of international drug enforcement" (Nadelmann 1993) because two major reorganizations of the federal drug control bureaucracy took place. First, in 1965, the FBN was transferred from the Treasury Department to the Justice Department. There, it was

³² . As a result of their activities and in order to further legitimize themselves and maintain an ambiguous status, FBN agents began to join Interpol, and international policing effort. The logic behind joining Interpol was to provide a cover for law enforcement agents who technically were not supposed to pursue their trade in Mexico, or in any country for that matter. Interpol provided them with an international brotherhood of officers, and had the net effect of rendering allegiance among them (Nadelmann 1993).

merged with the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control (BDAC)³³ under the auspices of the Justice Department (Kinder 1991). The outcome was the creation of the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD). As a result of increased turf battles between the newly created BNDD, the drug section of the Customs agency, as well as between two new drug enforcement agencies, the Office of National Narcotics Intelligence (ONNI) and the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE) established in 1972, all drug control offices and intelligence agencies involved in narcotics were merged, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) was formed in 1973, inaugurating a new era in drug enforcement (Nadelmann 1993; McWilliams 1991).³⁴

The Nixon administration elevated the rhetoric related to narcotics control and further internationalized the war on drugs by increasing the emphasis placed on source countries (McWilliams 1991). In addition, the "Nixon Doctrine" called for governments to assume more responsibility for their national security and rely less heavily on U.S. forces, a policy that included the drug war (Nadelmann 1993).

In the 1970s, the main focus of U.S. drugs policy was the growing heroin trade. Turkey, estimated at producing 80 percent of the heroin worldwide, was alternatively pressured and cajoled by the U.S. government to ban opium poppy production, which Turkey agreed to do

³³ . The BDAC was created in 1966 to regulate barbiturates, amphetamines, hallucinogens, and counterfeit drugs, and formed part of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). It was joined with the FBN because of the frequent conflicts they had encountered with each other (Nadelmann 1993: 140).

³⁴ . It has been suggested that the Nixon administration's rationale for an intensified drug war and its expansion of law enforcement was to develop a guise for the establishment of a White-House run intelligence office and law enforcement corps. ODALE was basically a private police force run by J. Gordon Liddy that reported directly to the President. ONNI was created to monitor drug traffickers internationally, a task that the CIA was unwilling to participate in as they did not wish to become associated with law enforcement (Epstein 1990; Kruger 1980; McWilliams 1991).

in June 1971 (Musto 1973). A vacuum was created on the market and Mexico, along with the countries from Southeast Asia, began to produce larger quantities of heroin for export to U.S. customers.

By 1975, it was estimated that 28,000 acres of poppies were being grown in the hard to reach areas of the Sierra Madre mountains in Mexico, an area that not only provided heavy cover against detection, but that in order to be successfully eradicated, required spraying every season.³⁵ Once processed into heroin, the drugs were then shipped North across the border along the colloquially referred to "Heroin Highway." In confirmation of this information, *Newsweek* ran a story on Mexican drug trafficking on March 15, 1976 entitled "The Mexican Connection," which asserted that according to the DEA, Mexico the chief purveyor of approximately 80 percent of all the heroin entering the United States, an estimated 10 tons.

In the 1970s, the Ford and Carter administrations' approach to drug control differed from that of the Nixon administration in that the rhetoric that commonly surrounded drug policy, especially with regards to the Mexican government, softened. Efforts were made to try to establish more formal cooperative methods with countries involved in the production and transshipment of illegal drugs. In September 1975, the Domestic Council on Drug Abuse Task Force issued a *White Paper on Drug Abuse* recommending a change in strategy towards the drug issue. The White Paper recognized that the likelihood of eliminating drug abuse in the United States was questionable. Moreover, the Domestic Council differentiated between types of drugs by the degree of danger they posed to the user.

³⁵ . This information was provided by the DEA and Customs agencies to the Illinois Legislative Investigating Commission in June 1976 for a report entitled "Mexican Heroin: A Report to the Illinois General Assembly." At that time, the National Institute on Drug Abuse estimated that there were between 250,000 and 600,000 heroin addicts in the United States that required between five and 12 tons of pure heroin per year.

President Ford endorsed the report in December 1975, and began to orient U.S. drug control policy in the direction of strengthening international cooperation. With this in mind, the Ford administration made contacts with President Luis Echeverría in Mexico, as well as with Lopez-Michelsen in Colombia and Prime Minister Demeril in Turkey (Illinois Legislative Investigating Commission 1976). In addition, President Ford also directed the Domestic Council to continue its study and to make recommendations for controlling drug trafficking along the Southwest border, in light of his particular interest in the traffic of Mexican heroin. The Ford administration elevated the drug issue to greater prominence on the bilateral agenda, one that required sensitivity on the part of the United States. President Ford directed Secretary of State Kissinger to go to Mexico with the purpose of expressing his concern over the drug issue and to explore "opportunities for improved control" (Illinois Legislative Investigating Commission 1976: 2).

The Carter administration also preferred a more diplomatic approach towards drug control, as well as a greater emphasis on demand-side prevention and treatment strategies. The drug problem had grown in the United States, along with organized crime. Therefore, in March 1977, before the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, officials from the DEA, Customs, and the Departments of State and Justice supported decriminalization for certain amounts and types of drugs. The White House, in turn, supported the decriminalization of limited quantities of marijuana. The de-emphasis on the criminal aspects of drug policy was short-lived, however, and drug control policy was dramatically altered with the election of Ronald Reagan as President in 1980. Mexico's success in the 1970s had begun to taper and the threat of institutionalized corruption loomed large for both countries.

Phase IV: The Militarization of the Drug War (1980s-present)

The 1980s are commonly referred to as the lost decade in Latin America. The region was marked by debt problems and by a growth of democratic processes. Ironically, in its attempt to control the drug problem, the United States pressed for increased militarization and expanded law enforcement, while at the same time it promoted a policy of economic diversification and the expansion of non-traditional agricultural exports (NTAEs) to be shipped worldwide, but primarily to the United States as a development alternative. This type of production was supposed to diversify the region's export structures away from traditional products and as a result, increase foreign exchange reserves (Conroy, Murray, and Rosset 1996). In this manner, the United States felt it could not only create new sources of revenue that would in theory dissuade farmers from producing illicit crops, but also guarantee that there was a military-law enforcement infrastructure in place to combat drug traffickers and left-wing insurgents.

In contrast to its Central American brethren, Mexico was not besieged with insurgents. Mexico's threat was that it bordered Central America and could be the final domino should the region become communist according to CIA analysts (Latell 1984). Moreover, in 1982, Mexico was plagued by the onset of a debt crisis that limited its borrowing capacity and placed constraints on the government's ability to satisfy internal political pressures because economically what was available for distribution had shrunk (Frieden 1991). Disgruntled sectors began to shift their loyalty from the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) which had been in power since 1929.

Recognizing that Mexico's ability to combat the drug war in a manner that was in tune with U.S. policy and that the country faced a potential political crisis, as well as an economic

one, the United States began to converge its goals in Latin America, but more specifically in Mexico. By the mid-1980s, the U.S. government converted the drugs issue into a national security question and passed legislation that placed economic sanctions on countries that were thought to not have cooperated fully with the Drug War. Essentially, the United States pursued a policy of militarization whereby aid and/or multilateral loans were tied to drugs eradication and interdiction. Mexico was expected to expand its military involvement and to strengthen its law enforcement capacity to as high a standard as possible. Although Mexico refused aid from the United States, it did receive - and continues to receive - extensive training and exchange of military materiel to actively participate in the U.S.-led drug control regime.

Drug Control Policy: A Mexican Perspective (1900s-1982)

Philosophical Differences

For most of the 20th century and with few exceptions, the Mexican government has demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the United States in its efforts to prevent illegal drugs from crossing the border into U.S. territory (Walker 1993-94). Alternatively, it has agreed to produce limited quantities of hemp and opium for U.S. wartime needs. For Mexican officials, drugs were primarily an U.S. problem. Mexico was a signatory at both the 1909 Shanghai Convention and at the 1911 The Hague Opium Convention. The significance of becoming a signatory to these conventions was that Mexico agreed to impose controls over licit opium production and to prevent its export from Mexico.

Following the international trend of increased prohibition, by the 1920s, Mexico banned the importation of opiates and by the 1930s, it no longer permitted the export of marijuana or heroin from its territory (Craig 1989). In an about-face from the increased

prohibition of the first half of the century, during World War II, the Mexican government was encouraged by the United States to cultivate hemp and opium to help the Allied cause. This policy, however, initiated an unexpected precedent that would plague the United States well into the 1990s: producing states such as Sinaloa and Sonora became heavily dependent on the cultivation of these crops, and more importantly, a tradition was created.³⁶

As the dust settled in the post-war era and the demand for hemp and opium decreased, Mexico was once again pressured by the United States to control its production, but not exceedingly so. U.S. national security priorities emphasized the worldwide containment of communism, especially in its hemisphere where it presented the greatest threat to American society. Part of that national security net included a stable and friendly Mexico on its southern flank.³⁷

The drugs issue was temporarily placed on the backburner. Whereas in the 1950s, Mexico had trouble complying with U.S. demands to impede the flow of drugs because of lack of aircraft, spare parts, and skilled pilots. By the early 1960s, despite having begun to acquire the necessary equipment from Washington (Craig 1989), the Mexican government opposed U.S. requests for a formal cooperative framework. The Mexican government concluded that

³⁶ Mexican officials often make the following point. First, the Mexican government agrees to go along with a U.S. policy, then when the U.S. policy changes, Mexico is expected to immediately alter its own policies without any alternative proposal for those whose livelihood has become dependent on that particular policy. This argument has been commonly used to explain the production of opium poppies in the State of Sinaloa (Garcia Ramirez 1989).

³⁷ According to Sergio Aguayo Quezada, in order to understand why Mexico played such a vital role in the U.S. security apparatus, it is necessary to place it in the proper context. The U.S. security doctrine included a Grand Strategy which was based on the ability of the military to be able to deploy forces outside of its own hemisphere because the United States held economic power over the Caribbean Basin and Mexico. As a result, Mexico's stability was fundamental to this Grand Strategy. Aguayo divides U.S. interest in Mexico into two time periods: End of World War II to 1977, and 1977 to the present. In the former period, Mexico was basically ignored, while in the second, a series of events had taken place that had increased U.S. vulnerability to world events (Aguayo Quezada 1990: 108).

a "Mexican-American Joint Commission on Narcotics Traffic" would only open Mexico to U.S. interference in its internal affairs (Toro 1987). Mexico was concerned about its national sovereignty.

New Rules of the Game

In 1961, the rules of the game for drug enforcement policy between Mexico and the United States were redefined for both sides, although they remained flexible. Mexico positively responded to U.S. requests to expand their drug control efforts and made a point of reminding the United States of that fact. The Mexican Attorney General, López Arias, traveled to Washington to discuss drug trafficking in early March 1961. The Mexican government became more actively involved in drug control both internationally and domestically, despite its apprehensions about U.S. interference in Mexican affairs.

On March 30, Mexico signed the 1961 Unique Convention on Narcotics at the United Nations in New York, amended in Geneva on March 25, 1972, as well as the April 18, 1961 Convention on Diplomatic Relations in Vienna. Furthermore, on June 26, 1961, in response to a recommendation made by the Narcotics Commissioner, Harry J. Anslinger, the Mexican government agreed to sign an accord with Washington for the acquisition of equipment for the exclusive use of its anti-narcotics police force (PGR 1994b).³⁸

³⁸ . In 1961, the Narcotics Commission of the U.S. Department of Treasury recommended that the Mexican government enhance the effectiveness and expand the use of its National Police force in controlling the production and distribution of narcotics. The Mexican government obtained equipment, as well as the intensified training through the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), the Mutual Security Act and the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. After much deliberation between the U.S. State Department and the Department of Treasury, an agreement was signed between the two countries. The project was denominated "special" and required President John F. Kennedy's specific approval. The Mexican government had to agree that the equipment was solely for police activities, including internal security, and was not to be transferred by police authorities to other agencies or relinquished without the prior consent of the U.S. government. Memoranda between the SRE, the Mexican Embassy in Washington, and the Department of the Treasury from 18 November 1960 to June 26, 1961. Acervo Histórico Diplomático, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

The parties agreed to cooperate in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of the National Police in Mexico in the control of the production and distribution of narcotics that included intensified training and guaranteed a broader utilization of the National Police force for that purpose.³⁹ Moreover, for the first time, the PGR acquiesced to U.S. requests to designate a liaison officer to work with U.S. law enforcement officials, attached to the embassy in Washington and stationed in Los Angeles, CA.⁴⁰ Although U.S. officers moved with few restrictions through Mexico and carried weapons, Mexican officers were denied similar privileges.

Whereas in 1961, notes were exchanged at the level of the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) and the Attorney General's office, by 1965, signatures were required from the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations, Antonio Carrillo Flores, and the U.S. ambassador, Fulton Freeman. Drug control had entered a new realm of diplomatic exchange. However, in order to maintain flexibility, a conscious effort was made to ensure that the mechanisms used to get equipment to the Mexican government never required U.S.

³⁹ . Project Agreement between the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) an Agency of the Government of the United States of America, and el Procurador General de la República, an Agency of the Government of Mexico. June 26, 1961. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁴⁰ . The State of California had pressured Washington to gain greater support from the Mexican government. On April 6, 1961 the California legislature resolved to pressure both the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to consider the negotiation and adoption of treaties with the purpose of controlling more effectively the import, export, manufacture, and use of heroin and marijuana. It also asked that the President and Congress consider the enactment of legislation, including but not limited to, legislation requiring visas or identification, as well as legislation improving the surveillance of border traffic in order that law enforcement authorities could better cope with the narcotics problem. Also included was a statement saying: "I hope you will soon be able to announce the acquisition of equipment and the stationing of a man in Los Angeles. This would serve to quiet a lot of this propaganda." This information was passed on to Dr. Rabasa, the Director of Narcotics for Relaciones Exteriores in a notecard dated April 11, 1961. Unfortunately, the notecard is not signed. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores.

Congressional approval.

Law enforcement agencies were concerned about reducing the possibilities of politicizing equipment transfers. Notwithstanding, over time, the Project Agreements began to bear a different weight in light of the increasingly large sums of money involved and the nature of the equipment being transferred to Mexico. In addition, the potential for controversy that might be generated because of Mexico's combined use of the military and the Judicial Police grew exponentially. Therefore, the United States established a Trust Fund in May 1965 which set forth conditions by which the Agency for International Development (AID) would administer dollar contributions to the project by the Government of Mexico.⁴¹

In essence, the 1965 agreement was much the same as the exchange of notes that took place in June 1961, the chief difference was that Mexico would advance funds that would be held in trust. The AID would maintain the records of all disbursements and the Mexican government would purchase equipment under the project title: Cooperative Program for

⁴¹ . The Trust Fund was established for the transfer of equipment for the use of the Mexican National Police Force. It was effected by the exchange of notes signed at Washington on June 26, 1961, and at Mexico on May 11 and May 25, 1965, and Project Agreement 523-12-710-154 made pursuant on June 26, 1961. The Mexican government delivered to the U.S. government \$80,000.00 to be held in trust by the United States in the name of the AID which would disburse the money on behalf of the Mexican government to cover the cost of aircraft to be supplied by the United States. Trust Account Agreement between the Agency for International Development and the Government of the United States of Mexico. May 25, 1965.

International Control of Narcotics.⁴²

Between 1966 and 1968 questions began to arise as to the usefulness of the equipment being provided by the U.S. government. The chief of air transport at the PGR suggested that some changes could be made. In order to improve their efficacy, the PGR wanted access to better equipment that would allow for more flexibility in difficult terrains and could carry more passengers.⁴³ Moreover, accidents were beginning to occur, especially after the Mexican government extended and intensified its drug campaign from Sinaloa, Durango and Chihuahua in 1968, to include Jalisco, Michoacán, Guerrero, San Luis Potosí, and Nuevo León where the Mexican government had detected an increase in production.⁴⁴

With the upcoming Olympics in mind, on April 10, 1968, the Mexican Ambassador to Washington, Hugo B. Margain, suggested to the U.S. Secretary of State that either the old Project Agreement be refurbished or that a new agreement be drawn. Mexico had requested equipment so that it could begin a permanent campaign against drugs. The Mexican

⁴² . The Consultor Jurídico for Relaciones Exteriores, Amb. Oscar Rabasa pointed out that the original language of the Narcotics agreement suggested that the cooperative program in narcotics control be terminated. Rabasa added that "the program had been initiated in 1961 at the request of the United States Government, that it was primarily of interest to the United States, and that the continuation of it would require continuing United States cooperation." The Counselor for the U.S. Embassy, Mr. Wallace W. Stuart said that the Embassy's instructions had been categorical that a statement along the lines of that contained in the agreement be included and that the Embassy obtain confirmation from the Secretariat of its understanding of the paragraph. Mr. Stuart explained that AID "has for some time desired to terminate its support of the programs, which it views as outside its normal scope of activity. The paragraph in questions simply made it explicit that the AID would consider the project completed when action contemplated in Amendment No. 3 had been taken and that Agency would not thereafter provide assistance to the Narcotics Control Program. The Mexican government was not to interpret this as a lack of interest on the part of the United States government to continue close cooperation in narcotics control. Memorandum from the Embassy of the United States, Mexico D.F. to the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, May 24, 1965. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. Mexico.

⁴³ . Memoranda. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. Mexico. 1966.

⁴⁴ . Memoranda. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. Mexico. 1968.

government considered that it was within their rights to expect additional equipment because in the period 1965-1967, the Mexican government had spent approximately \$680,000.00 dollars in comparison to U.S. expenditures of \$296,874.51 for the drug eradication projects that were primarily for U.S. interests. Moreover, Lic. Antonio Carrillo Flores, the Secretary of Foreign Relations had received letters of appreciation from both Harry J. Anslinger and from Dr. Jean Mabileau, a French government representative, that attested to Mexico's contribution to the fight against drugs.⁴⁵

The Politicization of the Drugs Question

In contrast to the rather ad hoc manner in which drug control had been treated in the 1960s, substantial changes began to take place in Mexico's drug control program in the 1970s. Mexico responded because of pressure from the Nixon administration's September 20, 1969 Operation Intercept, as well as because of the expansion of drug production in concentrated areas of Mexico where communist guerrillas were suspected to reside. On October 10, 1969 a Convention was signed in Washington D.C., followed by a bilateral meeting held on the 27, 28, and 29 of the same month to discuss the drug issue. At the October meeting, the two delegations ratified a Joint Communiqué that had been drafted on June 10, 1969 in Mexico City. The communiqué represented a mutual agreement that officially transformed Operation Intercept into Operation Cooperation.

The net result of Operation Intercept was that the United States brought the Mexican government to the negotiating table to discuss the intensification of Mexican efforts and

⁴⁵ . Harry Anslinger not only thanks the Mexican government on the part of the United States and rendered homage to those police officers who lost their lives in drug eradication efforts, but Anslinger comments on press reports released in California, and referred to them as "unscrupulous." Letter to Antonio Flores Carrillo from Harry J. Anslinger. June 1969. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Mexico was presented with materials relative to U.S. interests in the area of drug control. The Mexican government maintained a firm stance, however, with regards to personnel. The Mexican government was obliged by its Constitution, as well by its policies to only use Mexican police in any intensification of the drug program to be undertaken in Mexico. The U.S. delegation responded that it understood Mexico's position perfectly.⁴⁶ The pattern that was established was increasingly one of rhetorical games as nationalist reactions began to grow in Mexico that specifically targeted the joint drug control efforts being sought by the U.S. government.

In March 1970, the United States and Mexico agreed to further intensify the drug campaign in Mexico, as had been outlined in the October government talks related to Operation Intercept, and Mexico signed a convention with the United States.⁴⁷ Although the Mexican government would not agree to joint policing efforts with the United States, it did finally agree to form part of a Joint Working Group. On March 11, 1970 the Joint Working Group on Narcotics, Marijuana and other Dangerous Drugs issued a bulletin that was later approved on August 21, 1970, by Attorneys General, Julio Sánchez Vargas and John N. Mitchell, who met in Puerto Vallarta to discuss Mexico's intensified drug campaign. The Joint Working Group became a fixed element in the bilateral relationship and continues meeting to

⁴⁶ . Joint Declaration of the Mexican and U.S. Delegations. October 30, 1969. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁴⁷ . The United States agreed to provide Mexico \$1,000,000 to establish an eradication program, as well as to furnish equipment for the destruction of marijuana and opium fields. The two governments agreed to operate jointly to locate and dismantle clandestine drug laboratories, as well as warehouses to store drugs. The Mexican government agreed to establish roadblocks that focused on highways leading to the U.S.-Mexican border. U.S.-Mexican cooperation was also extended to include information sharing; increased interaction of law enforcement agencies; and joint training programs (El Panama America: March 11, 1970).

this day.

On June 15-16, 1972, Presidents Echeverría and Nixon met to discuss additional resources for Mexico's drug war. Throughout the 1970s, the U.S. government provided Mexico with helicopters and other equipment, including hangars to maintain the Mexican fleet. It trained Mexican officers as pilots and mechanics. All of the equipment was for the sole use of the PGR. Because of increased capabilities, the Echeverría administration instituted manual eradication and aerial spraying programs that began to impact opium and marijuana production, respectively (Walker 1989, 2d edition).

More specifically, in 1972, the Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional in coordination with the Attorney General's office (PGR) formulated a tactical plan denominated the DN-PR-I to establish fixed operational bases in key drug production areas from which the military could activate its eradication missions. The United States was basically satisfied with the Echeverría administration's final efforts to eradicate Mexico of its opium fields, and was particularly impressed by Attorney General, Oscar Flores Sánchez, who was in charge of coordinating the efforts of the PGR with those of the Army (Craig 1980: 350).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ . Mexico and the United States exchanged several letters of agreement in the period 1973 to 1974. On December 3, 1973, the United States agreed to provide material assistance consisting of four Bell 212 helicopters at a unit cost of \$900,000 each, including an appropriate package for spare parts. The United States also provided a training program for 16 Mexican helicopter pilots and eight mechanics at the Bell Corporation facility in Fort Worth, TX. Another exchange of letters took place on February 1, 1974 between the Mexican First Deputy Attorney General, Lic. Manuel Rosales Miranda, and Ambassador Joseph John Jova by which an agreement was effected whereby the U.S. Government provided 4 Bell 206 helicopters for the use of the PGR in its anti-narcotics campaign. On June 10, 1974, John Jova, once again proposed to enter into additional cooperative arrangements with the Mexican Attorney General, Lic. Pedro Ojeda Paullada to increase joint efforts between the two governments. The United States provided a multi-spectral aerialphotographic system capable of detecting opium poppy cultivation, as well as the technical support for the organization and planning of the system's use. It also provided technical advice in all phases of the operation. The Mexican government was to receive, protect, manage and operate this system for approximately 10 months per year, insofar as possible, to detect and map the locations in Mexico where opium poppy was cultivated and harvested, as well as provide the raw data and analysis of those data to the U.S. Embassy in Mexico. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. 1973-1974.

On December 3, 1973, the United States and Mexico exchanged Letters of Agreement in which the United States agreed to continue providing material assistance. In turn, the Mexican government agreed that, at the request of the U.S. Embassy, the Attorney General's office would provide U.S. personnel access to the equipment for the purpose of verifying its usage and condition of service. It was also agreed that both the U.S. government and the PGR would exchange information in writing on a semi-annual basis about the specific efforts undertaken in relation to the purposes and objectives of the agreement.⁴⁹

However, by 1975, the United States began to focus on the drug issue. Mexico had replaced the dismantled "French Connection" as the primary source of heroin bound for the United States. Ninety percent of the samples of confiscated heroin in 13 cities in the United States were of the "Mexican Brown" variety as compared to 1972, when only 40 percent were Mexican processed (Washington Post October 28, 1975: A11).⁵⁰ In contrast, the Mexican government began to complain about the rise of gun smuggling into Mexico that originated from the United States and was increasingly connected to drug trafficking (Washington Post, October 28, 1975: A5)

Mexican Attorney General, Lic. Pedro Ojeda Paullada, received a visit from Mr.

⁴⁹ a appropriate package of spare parts. The U.S. government would also provide a training program for 16 Mexican . The U.S. government provided the PGR with 4 Bell 212 helicopters at a unit cost of \$900,000.00 each, including helicopter pilots and eight Mexican mechanics at the Bell Corporation facility in Forth Worth, TX. The Mexican government would take title to each helicopter at such time as that helicopter was first used for in-flight training of a Mexican pilot. The total costs was not to exceed \$3,644,000.00, and it was understood that the helicopters were only to be used by the PGR to interdict the flow of drugs and to locate and eradicate opium poppy and marijuana fields. Acervo Histórico Diplomático, Relaciones Exteriores. Exchange of letters between Robert H. McBride, U.S. Ambassador and Lic. Pedro Ojeda Paullada, the Mexican Attorney General.

⁵⁰ . The Encyclopedia Britanica claimed that "the trouble is the drug trade generates such enormous profits that some countries' economies depend on it. In the mid-70s, it was estimated that heroin was Mexico's most valuable commodity, accounting for 6 percent of its gross national product." Laurance, Jeremy. 1985. "The Heroin Epidemic Spreads." Encyclopedia Britanica. American edition. 185-186.

Webster B. Todd, Jr., General Inspector for Foreign Assistance, Department of State and from Joseph John Jova, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, in March 1975. Their purpose was to help Mexico change its image regarding its campaign against drugs.⁵¹ By November 15, 1975 the PGR had initiated a new phase in its drug campaign with equipment provided by the United States, and by June 1, 1976, many of the related programs of the campaign were considered permanent.⁵² Nevertheless, U.S. criticism increased and the Mexican government's sensitivity grew accordingly over U.S. demands that Mexico take care of the drug problem. Mexican officials openly criticized the DEA for inefficiency and lack of cooperation.⁵³

On September 30, 1976, Flores Sánchez and Secretary of Defense, General Félix

⁵¹ . At the meeting Lic. Ojeda Paullada, reiterated Mexico's position on the drug matter: 1) Drugs were a health issue to be resolved by the sovereign state; 2) International cooperation is fundamental only in terms of exchange of information and experiences. Ojeda also stated that the only reason Mexico had accepted equipment from the United States was as a symbol of collaboration, and that in no way did the receipt of equipment have any relation to Mexico's decision to combat illicit activities. Ojeda Paullada then authorized a trip to Mexico's northeastern territories for Mr. Todd. This meeting was followed by a letter from Mr. Todd in which he wished to compliment the Attorney General personally on what he had seen in the field. "The spirit, competence and effectiveness of the operations conducted under your direction bears out the determination you expressed to me to make headway in a difficult area...I and my office stand ready to assist your efforts in every possible way to further the spirit of cooperation which currently exists and which, properly supported, will lead to resolution of the narcotics which plague both our countries." Memoranda. April 3, 1975. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁵² . The intensified campaign included 2 major zones of concentration: Yucatan, Chiapas, Campeche and Tabasco in the Southeast, as well as Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas, in the Northeast. The overall program divided the country into micro-zones of control in order to review the total area likely to grow drug crops. An electronic localization program was begun to detect illegal crops more effectively, and once localized, a routine was established for the destruction of the crops whereby each section was overseen by a chief of operations in charge of planning, eradicating, and administering available equipment. The PGR also devised interception programs that covered major highways, airports, clandestine airstrips, and territorial waters. Specially trained dogs were introduced, as well as help from the Mexican navy and a computer system. The PGR assigned officers to work in DEA operation centers in the United States to act as direct liaisons; as well as to control the information that was arriving from DEA agents accredited in Mexico. PGR announcement. November 1975. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁵³ . The Mexican government began to react sharply to U.S. criticisms. In the words of Alejandro Gertz, the head of Mexico's then newly-organized anti-drug campaign, "The drug rings are in the United States, the money is there, and the market is there. Yet the United States accuses us daily of our inability to break their market...in terms of the importance and the number of people arrested here and the quantity of the drugs seized, our police have been many times more efficient" (Simons 1976: A30).

Galván López implemented Plan Cóndor in the *triángulo crítico* (Zone VI) of Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Durango (Craig 1980), followed by Plan CANADOR⁵⁴ to eradicate production of marijuana and poppy in 36 military zones. By October 1977, Peter Bensinger, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, commented that he believed that the available quantity of heroin originating in Mexico had decreased (Washington Post 1977).

But, the U.S. government began to find new ways to pressure Mexico and expressed to Mexican government officials that they could be helpful in a different way, by applying one of two methods. First, they would ask for support of U.S. initiatives at international fora to authorize international financial institutions to provide funds for designated projects to combat production, control systems, and distribution of narcotics. Second, the United States would try to prevent countries which did not actively participate in drug control from receiving financial aid from any international lending institutions.⁵⁵

Drugs were not the predominant issue on the bilateral agenda during the late 1970s-early 1980s, although they continued to play an important role. The U.S.-Mexican bilateral agenda was heavily prioritized by the Central American crisis and petroleum prices. The López Portillo administration adopted an activist strategy and was enabled to do so in large part because of the discovery of large oil deposits in southern Mexico. These rich deposits not only provided additional income to the Mexican economy, but "in principle, countered the erosion of U.S. security as signified by the 1973 oil embargo" (Aguayo Quezada 1990: 109).

⁵⁴ . CANADOR is the acronym for Cannabis and Adormidera, or marijuana and the opium poppy.

⁵⁵ . Incomplete telegram for the Secretary of Foreign Relations from Mexican delegate in Geneva. February 9, 1977. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Concern over the drug issue abated somewhat because of Washington's larger consideration that Mexico could become the final domino in the wave of Latin American countries that were either turning communist or demonstrated socialist tendencies (Latell 1986; Aguayo Quezada 1990: 111). Also, Mexico was basically cooperating with the United States. Between 1977 and 1978, the destruction of opium and marijuana crops increased. Moreover, the average retail purity of heroin analyzed in DEA laboratories had declined by 20 percent and street prices had increased by 31 percent.⁵⁶

However, in March 1978, despite a U.S. investment of approximately \$35 million in equipment to eradicate Mexican opium-poppy fields, the Mexican government refused to allow U.S. DEA agents to regularly participate in eradication efforts. Furthermore, the number of personnel assigned to monitor poppy fields destroyed by herbicide spraying was cut by two-thirds. According to the U.S. embassy in Mexico City, the prime purpose of DEA participation was to confirm to the U.S. Congress that the \$35 million contributed to Mexican drug control efforts was being spent adequately to curtail the estimated ten tons of heroin produced in Mexico annually. This type of cooperation had been taking place since Mexico began its herbicide program under the Echeverría administration at the behest of U.S. officials. The common practice was for DEA agents to be assigned to fly on reconnaissance and verification missions along with Mexican Federal Judicial Police, virtually, on a daily basis. Mexican Attorney General, Oscar Flores Sánchez, was in favor of the maintenance of close relations with the United States and offered to permit U.S. agents to ride with Mexican officers, but only on the basis of specific requests.

⁵⁶ . UPI. 1977. "Drug Agency Chief Says Heroin Supply is Shrinking in U.S." The Washington Post.

At the time of these events, it was assumed in the United States that "official Mexican sensitivity" over joint drug control operations had been prompted by a combination of situations that had developed. First, Washington had failed to approve paying Mexico's asking price for the sale of natural gas to U.S. firms. It was assumed that Mexico was reacting to the increased animosity over illegal immigration to the United States during a time of high unemployment. Third, U.S. farmers protested over Mexican imports of vegetables and beef thus blocking their entry into the U.S. market (Wiedrich 1978).

The U.S. Congress had become alarmed by Mexico's reaction. On April 19, 1978, the Sub-committee on Juvenile Delinquency held a hearing, "U.S. Efforts to Prevent the Importation of Heroin and for its Eradication in Mexico." The Hearing was presided over by Senator John Culver (D-IA) and served mostly to discuss the efforts being made by the DEA, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and Office of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). The purpose of the Hearing was to safeguard the U.S.-Mexican border to prevent drugs from crossing into the United States. Senator Culver expressed that although the U.S. presence in Mexico could be reduced without causing much disruption in eradication efforts, he felt that it was necessary to continue with joint-ventures as it was a priority for U.S. international relations with Mexico. Senator Culver emphasized the need for a more aggressive border policy while trying to avoid duplication of efforts. The White House chose to evaluate the organization of the offices that worked on the border.⁵⁷

In December 1978, the PGR prepared a Memorandum for the Ad-Hoc U.S.-Mexican

⁵⁷ . Memorandum from Mexican Embassy to the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. April 1978. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Commission in which it critiqued U.S. drug control efforts.⁵⁸ The memo clearly stated that one of the very important factors in controlling drugs was international cooperation, particularly with the United States. The Mexican government emphasized that in terms of the Permanent Campaign to control the cultivation, production, and harvesting of opium and marijuana in Mexico, collaboration between the two countries had been excellent. However, the Mexican government expressed concern because it was becoming a transit country for drugs coming from Central and South America and that the United States was not doing enough to detain or capture traffickers within its own borders.

Mexico complained about the U.S. inability to watch and control aircraft carrying drugs crossing their border from Mexico. The Mexican government proposed that a radar system be established on its border with Guatemala, as well as two radars that could cover 200 kms over the Caribbean and the Pacific. The logic behind the placement of a radar screen or net in Southern Mexico was that it was a much smaller area to cover than the 3,000 kms. of the U.S.-Mexican border area, therefore it was more practical and less expensive.

Unidentified aircraft were to be intercepted by a Mexican fleet. In addition to the establishment of a radar net on its southern flank, the Mexican government suggested that U.S. officials better coordinate their activities within the United States, because each agent worked individually and thus caused difficulties in the coordination with Mexican agents. They also suggested that the United States begin to adopt policies that attacked the demand-side aspect

⁵⁸ PGR Memorandum. December 1978. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

of the drug issue.⁵⁹

In sum, after 1979, the amount of heroin and marijuana entering the United States from Mexico began to escalate. Moreover, in the final 18 months of the López Portillo administration, DEA agents in Mexico had been virtually confined to the U.S. embassy in Mexico City, in essence, rendering them impotent. However, López Portillo's commitment to the drug war had been considered dubious even prior to his becoming president.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, his administration had basically cooperated with U.S. officials. At a joint session before the Judicial Committee and the Committee for Interamerican Affairs held on March 30, 1981, Joseph Linnemann, the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, and Peter Bensinger, Director for the DEA, praised Mexico's efforts to eradicate the cultivation and trafficking of drugs. They qualified Mexico as an example of what cooperation can accomplish.⁶¹

Conclusions

In previous decades, Mexico had cooperated extensively with the United States.

⁵⁹ . The language of the memorandum is very subtle. It does not say for instance that the Mexican government was opposed to the establishment of a radar system on its border with the United States. When it discusses the nature of the coordination problems between U.S. law enforcement officials, it refers to the difficulties that the Ambassador has, etc. Furthermore, it never mentions the Central American crisis that was brewing. Memorandum. December 15, 1978. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁶⁰ . On January 29, 1976, a childhood friend, Arturo Durazo Moreno, was accused of cocaine trafficking in a Miami court. On August 17, the U.S. Department of Justice dropped the charges against him. Despite receiving information about the charges from the U.S. ambassador, Joseph John Jova, President elect López Portillo hired him as the Security Chief for the duration of his campaign, then appointed him Mexico City's Chief of Police once he was President. The motives behind the dropping of the charges were alleged to stem from an agreement made between himself and President Gerald Ford to guarantee an improvement in the bilateral relationship (Maza 1985b: 9-12).

⁶¹ . Press release. 1982. "Cooperación en materia de lucha contra el cultivo y tráfico de estupefacientes." Carpeta Reunión de la Madrid-Reagan. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. Mexico. October 8.

Even President Lázaro Cárdenas acknowledged that his country was inexorably linked to the United States for reasons of security (Niblo 1995: 76). The reality however, was that Mexico and the United States had become mutually dependent on one another. After the 1982 debt crisis, it became clear to the United States that it could not pretend that Mexico was not important to its survival. In effect, in an attempt to mitigate that factor, the United States government chose to establish policies that they perceived would give them a greater leverage in Mexican affairs by converging economic decisions with the drug war. However, they did not foresee Mexico's ability to link and de-link issues to their advantage.

Moreover, the U.S.-Mexico border became a frontline for the larger bilateral relationship, whereby daily occurrences often gained crisis proportions. The traditional perspective of the border as a political demarcation lost some of its saliency, but none of its rhetorical value. Increasingly, regional dependencies demanded a broader outlook, as well as more cross-border cooperation and coordination. In addition, because of the vast amount of traffic that begun to move across the border, coordination among state, local, and federal agencies also grew on both sides of the border. Nevertheless, the process was slow and arduous, and by the 1970s, the drugs issue had become highly politicized. Although efforts to build a drugs control regime had taken off, they relied more heavily on coercive elements than on a real recognition of the mutual need for cooperation.

CHAPTER 3

U.S. DRUG CONTROL POLICY AND MEXICO: 1982-1988

The Reagan administration is largely attributed for having raised the visibility of the drugs issue for U.S. relations with Latin America overall, and with Mexico in particular in the years 1982 to 1988. Like most of his predecessors, in the quest to lower the damage committed by drugs on U.S. society, Reagan sought answers outside of the country among the producing and transit nations. The Reagan strategy was essentially elaborated through the application of a realist approach. First, drugs were combined with the threat of communism in the hemisphere and treated from the perspective of a war. Second, the Reagan administration simply followed through with that line of thinking and prioritized drugs as a national security issue, passing legislation and a national security directive to that effect.

The first element of the strategy targeted the Caribbean corridor in 1981-1982, which created a balloon effect and opened the door for Mexico's role as a transit nation. In 1982, Mexico not only was faced with a devastating economic crisis which increased its vulnerability towards the United States and global financial markets, but was also faced with the prospect of growing U.S. pressure for its role in drug production and trafficking. Although Mexico cooperated with the United States, it did not seek to install a comprehensive approach to the drug problem until after 1988, when Carlos Salinas de Gortari became president.

The Reagan Legacy: Drug Control as Ideology

In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration's policy towards Latin America concentrated on the polemic of the Cold War and the doctrine of the "containment" of communism, especially as it related to Central America.

The Cold War altered the basis of inter-American relations, elevating the concept of "national security" to the top of the U.S. agenda and turning Latin America (and other Third World areas) into both a battleground and prize in the conflict between communism and capitalism...the Soviet Union and the United States (Smith 1995).

In other words, the U.S. relationship with Latin America was largely dictated by its national security agenda and focused little on economic issues. In contrast, Latin America placed greater emphasis on socioeconomic progress, especially as regarded debt problems and development. These disparate outlooks tended to create breakdowns in dialogue, if not actual hostility. The interdependence of inter-hemispheric interests was not clearly acknowledged by either side.

Neither Latin America nor the United States was fully willing to accept the need for concerted actions because they were as yet unable to fully acknowledge the extent of their interrelationship with one another. Whereas, the United States was concerned with maintaining its place on the global scene and with the maintenance of stability in the hemisphere, Latin America retained strong nationalist sentiments which created boundaries or limits on the extent to which each country could cooperate with one another. The combination of misperceptions held by policymakers in Latin America about the United States and vice-versa, the tendency to mirror the actions of the other against oneself, combined with fears that one's national sovereignty would be violated contributed to tensions in the region. The issue of drug trafficking and the politics which surrounded its control demonstrate this breakdown rather clearly.

As part of its anti-communist crusade, the Reagan administration provided support to groups throughout the region that opposed left-wing insurgencies, considered a threat to U.S.

security interests as they endangered political stability in the area.⁶² While Central America was the focal point of U.S.-Latin American relations in that time period, Washington also began a parallel policy signaling that countries producing marijuana, cocaine, and heroin (i.e., Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico) were accountable, if not to blame for the United States' drug consumption problem. In what appeared to be an effort to combine these two otherwise non-related policies, Washington adopted the concept of "narcoguerrilla" as a means to discredit Central American left-wing rebels in the eyes of the American public, as well as within their own countries (Muñoz 1987).⁶³

The net effect of this two-prong approach was essentially threefold. First, Washington pressured countries of the region to develop strong police and military forces to combat the drug problem, as well as the guerrillas. Second, in terms of economic development, few alternatives were offered as incentives to withdraw from the production and/or transit of illicit narcotics. Third, By the mid-1980s, U.S. aid to the region was primarily military, and focused on the provision of equipment and training. Because of its intense law enforcement and military focus, U.S. policy was shortsighted. It did not consider cultural differences in institutional structures. It did not consider the outcome that such militarization could have on

⁶² . The principle behind the Reagan containment doctrine was the "domino theory," which basically maintained that communism would insidiously filter into the governments of Latin America, in this case Central America, and that the governments would begin to fall like dominos until communism reached the U.S. backdoor via Mexico (Latell 1986).

⁶³ . President Reagan accused leading officials of the Sandinista government of being involved in drug trafficking. This statement appeared in a March 31, 1986 article in Time magazine. Two days later, the DEA felt obliged to clarify that there was no definite proof linking the Sandinistas to drugs, however, there was evidence that some of the Contras, U.S.-supported counterinsurgent forces, had trafficked narcotics to secure money for arms.

fledgling democratic processes or on the economic development of these countries, and on Mexico in particular.

In contrast to the United States, Mexican officials commonly perceived that much of the problems regarding drug control were rooted in ideological differences between the Mexican and U.S. governments over the situation in Central America. The Mexican government supported the idea of a Central American peace plan for a diplomatic resolution of the problem in the region, in contrast to U.S. policy which maintained that the left-wing movements were illegitimate (Lindau 1987; Lemus 1994). The Mexican government perceived that the United States was using the issue of drug trafficking as a way to pressure them into adopting a foreign policy that was in concert with its own, irrespective of Mexico's stand about the Central American dilemma or Mexico's own national security interests.

Moreover, the traditional discourse regarding the drug problem in Mexico was premised on the idea that it stemmed from the large demand within the United States. In contrast U.S. perceptions denoted that the availability of illegal drugs was the root cause of consumption in the United States, and therefore the responsibility of the producer country (González 1989; García Ramírez 1989). Mexico's outlook on drug control was further influenced by the virtually non-existent levels of domestic cocaine consumption, and the low levels of addiction to marijuana and heroin produced within its territorial boundaries.⁶⁴ As a result, conflict often evolved in the relationship because although Mexico considered that

⁶⁴ . In 1984, the Mexican government, along with the United States, decided to survey the extent of drug addiction in Mexico. The reason for the study was the growing concern of Mexicans regarding the growth of drug consumption in Mexico. (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985d: 6-7.)

it managed the drug situation with suitable alacrity and met its own requirements, the United States considered that Mexico's efforts were insufficient, and therefore, not serious.

Reagan and Mexico: Patterns of Behavior

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Mexico made significant efforts to eradicate marijuana and poppy fields which earned it the reputation of being a model for enforcement cooperation with the United States with only occasional disruptions in the overall relationship. Notwithstanding, Mexico had a reputation of being less successful in its efforts to interdict drugs in transit, in the seizure and dismantling of laboratories, or in the apprehension and arrest of known traffickers, a problem during most of the Reagan administration.

As a result, over time a pattern of action and reaction was unchained whereby Mexico expressed outrage over U.S. efforts to intervene in their internal affairs versus outrage in the United States over Mexican intransigence towards U.S. concerns. Mexican officials generally did not understand U.S. political constraints (i.e., the relationship between the White House, Congress, and the electorate). Nor did Mexican officials believe the seriousness of U.S. government's concerns regarding the growing cocaine problem and the expansion of organized crime. In addition, Mexican officials were unaware as to the limitations that the U.S. government had with regards to control of the media. For Mexico, the United States appeared to be enacting a policy based on moral overtones and Cold War realist rhetoric that placed culpability on the producing and transit country with little acknowledgement of U.S. active participation in the drug trade.

In contrast, the United States did not take into account that it created political pressures for Mexico by pursuing a real-politik type of policy that essentially placed limits on Mexico's

willingness and ability to cooperate. Although it paid verbal acknowledgement, the United States did not demonstrate any real understanding about Mexico's sensitivity about U.S. violation of its national sovereignty. Moreover, the United States was unable to fully grasp the balancing act that had to take place in Mexico in terms of resources, especially after the 1982 debt crisis. Mexico was simply unable to bear greater expenses than it already did for a problem it considered to be a demand-side issue.

However, despite its limited fiscal capacity and in comparison to previous presidencies, the Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado administration (1982-1988) began to experience certain transformations on at least three levels. First, the relationship between the United States and Mexico was notably altered as Mexico increased in importance and visibility for the United States: issues became more interconnected and the number of actors involved increased. Second, both the Mexican public and the government's outlook on the drug issue changed because the nature of the problem began to change with the introduction of cocaine and a more sophisticated style of organized crime which ultimately posed a threat to Mexican society. Third, as a result, gradual modifications began to occur regarding how Mexico responded to drug trafficking, although not without resistance.

The de la Madrid Administration: A Balancing Act

The period of the de la Madrid administration coincided with U.S. President Ronald Reagan's two terms as president during which time Reagan elevated drug trafficking as a preeminent issue in the U.S. relationship with Mexico. For most of Latin America, circumstances in the early 1980s were circumscribed primarily by the Central American crisis

and the waning days of the Cold War, as well as by the region-wide debt crisis.⁶⁵ As the gravity of the Cold War dissipated, the urgency for the United States to eliminate drug traffickers from the hemisphere increased as a matter of course. The United States renewed its efforts to wage a war on drugs and placed more pressure on Latin American producing nations to further constrain drug traffickers.

For Mexico, the 1980s was a time of growing turbulence in which both its international and domestic agendas began to align themselves more acutely, especially as witnessed in its contacts with the United States. During this time, U.S.-Mexico economic and political interdependence grew at a rapid rate (Heller 1990). However, it was a relationship that was often grounded in distrust and confusion over mixed messages sent by the many actors that had begun to influence the decisions being made on both sides of the border. The actions of the de la Madrid administration were further constrained not only by its inability to reduce U.S. pressures, but also by the surge of anti-American attitudes accompanied by demands for political change, moral renovation, and economic transformation occurring within Mexico.

At issue between the United States and Mexico was the difference in emphasis that Presidents Reagan and de la Madrid assigned to matters of concern to both nations. Drug control perspectives typified a divergence that challenged the overall relationship, and was

⁶⁵ . During the first half of the De la Madrid administration, the U.S. government was at invariable odds with Mexican policy. At an August 1983 meeting held between the two presidents in La Paz, B.C., the recurring themes were: bilateral economic relations and the conflict in Central America. Whereas the economic question was basically met with mutual interest, the Central American question was more difficult. It is basically at this point, that the United States and Mexico agree to disagree, but Mexican President De la Madrid insisted that the dialogue required expansion in order to avoid further acrimony. By 1984, the economic situation had worsened and Mexico charged the United States of practicing protectionist policies and accused it of increased arms proliferation, harassment, and the intensification of the regional conflict in Central America which threatened the entire hemisphere (*Crónica* 1986).

later compounded by the death of Enrique Camarena (Lindau 1987).⁶⁶ Although many issues formed part of the complex agenda, the United States was divided between the obvious importance of Mexico's relationship and Mexico's credibility over its efforts to curb drugs trafficking. President de la Madrid successfully compromised and increased drug eradication efforts, but did not seize the initiative to develop a comprehensive Mexican drug policy that stringently addressed the other aspects of the drugs question, such as its growing role as a transit country for U.S. bound cocaine.

Special Operations to Reduce Drugs Production in Mexico (1982-1985)

Enforcement methods were established in Mexico that changed little over the 30-year period after the 1969 Operation Intercept, but were significant, in the words of Richard B. Craig:

Equally manifest during the earlier years of Mexico's *campana antidroga* were four facts which still hold true today. First, the remote and often inaccessible areas where marijuana and opium poppies are grown make the utilization of aircraft a requisite to any degree of success. Second, without the extensive use of herbicides, a truly successful campaign against the cultivation of opium and marijuana will prove impossible. Third, any effort to control or eradicate the cultivation of and traffic in Mexican drugs will be met with violence. Fourth, every new and accelerated government effort would produce an innovative trafficker response, renewed production, and pressure from Washington (1989).

On December 1, 1982, the newly installed de la Madrid administration instituted a series of special operations in diverse parts of the country to increase the results of the original

⁶⁶ . Jorge Chabat refers to the period 1985-1988 as the "poisoned years." But, he also states that this poisoning effect could not be attributed to drug trafficking alone. "In reality what provoked the growing concern of the United States about its southern neighbor was...a feeling of vulnerability with respect to the consequences of an economic and political collapse in Mexico" (Chabat 1994: 377).

eradication campaigns established in the 1970s. These improved special operations initially contributed to Mexico's reputation as an exemplar nation in drug control for at least the period December 1982 to February 1985.

Operations Cóndor and CANADOR established during the Echeverría administration became important components of the revitalized *Campaña Permanente*. The results yielded between December 1, 1982 and March 1, 1985 by Operation Cóndor were the destruction of 72,605 poppy plants over an area of 6,229.23 hectares, as well as 11,144 marijuana plants in 778.95 hectares. Although effective in eliminating crops in targeted areas, Cóndor and CANADOR simply caused a shift in the cultivation of opium and marijuana into areas of the country that had no previous record of drug production.

In response to this phenomenon, eleven special eradication operations (Puma, Pantera, Dragón, Lince, Tigre, Jaguar, Costera, Gavilán, Aguila, Halcón and Azor) were operationalized in the states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Durango, Jalisco, Michoacán, Guerrero, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and Oaxaca. The PGR was placed in charge of inspecting eradicated fields and fumigation, as well as the localization of new cultivation sites for destruction. By 1985, the PGR had acquired 46 helicopters, 20 small aircraft, and five transport airplanes that were solely devoted to these efforts.

Whereas these programs were initially effective in destroying crops and basically met U.S. demands, growers responded by simply adapting their methods, concentrating on smaller plots. The growers shifted their crops from the traditional northern areas, to more secluded, discrete zones deeper in the Sierra Madres that were better camouflaged by local vegetation and/or where plantings could be concealed among legally cultivated crops. By the early

1980s, production of both marijuana and opium was scattered to even more remote and difficult to access areas. Notwithstanding, the production of marijuana and opium declined in the early 1980s because of two prevailing reasons. First, the United States funded paraquat eradication programs that targeted marijuana in Mexico. These programs were successful and subsequently replaced Mexican marijuana production with product from Colombia.⁶⁷ Second, the consumption of heroin in the United States plateaued which placed a ceiling demand and therefore on the cultivation of the opium poppy and the production of heroin in Mexico.

Extenuating Circumstances Affecting the Drug Issue

The task of eliminating drug production in Mexico was compounded by the extent of the damage caused by the economic crisis. The de la Madrid administration was faced with a 100 percent inflation rate that threatened to become hyper-inflationary; deficits in the public sector; a zero percent growth rate; a large public and private debt; extensive capital flight; and high under- and unemployment rates, all which were aggravated by the weakness of the international economic system.

Moreover, Mexico's debt crisis brought to light the extent of government corruption and the abuse of power that had been exercised by government authorities under the López Portillo administration. President de la Madrid began a moral renewal campaign to reform the laws and create a system of transparency in order to prevent future officials from the fraudulent use of their position for their own personal financial gain. To accomplish these

⁶⁷ . Washington Post data indicates that marijuana production within the United States rose considerably during that time period from 2.5 million lbs. in 1981, to 7.7 million in 1988 (Washington Post July 3, 1988).

goals, the *Secretaría de Contraloría General de la Federación* (SECOGEF) was created and de la Madrid gave orders to prosecute those government officials for whom there was proof that fraud had been committed. Two cases stood out: Jorge Díaz Serrano, the former Director of PEMEX and Arturo Durazo, the former Chief of Police for Mexico City under President López Portillo.⁶⁸

In 1984, heroin production not only improved in quality, it increased in quantity. Pressure against Mexico was on the rise because U.S. officials perceived that Mexico's Narcotics Control Program had eroded in effectiveness for a variety of reasons. First, it was feared that a downturn in the Mexican economy placed pressure on farmers to either enter into or extend drug production operations. Second, an abundant rainfall contributed to bumper crops of both marijuana and opium. Third, according to U.S. intelligence sources, Mexican law enforcement at all levels demonstrated evidence of growing corruption. For U.S. officials, it signified that Mexican drug control efforts were being undermined and had become less efficient in eradication and interception.

Members of the Subcommittee on Crime, the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, as well as select law enforcement officials traveled to Latin America and Asia to study the drug problem in August 1983 and January 1984. The result was a study entitled "Study Mission on International Narcotics Control," in which stated that Mexican heroin was once again crossing over into the United States in large quantities. The Department of State

⁶⁸ . Arturo Durazo Moreno was arrested in Puerto Rico on June 29, 1984 and sent to state prison without bail, after the Mexican government had requested his arrest on March 28 because of arms trafficking, contraband charges, fiscal fraud, and the carrying out of threats (*Crónica* 1985: 452-457).

recommended providing aid to Mexico in order to increase its capacity to detect the production of opium and marijuana crops including the use of special aircraft or satellites. In essence, the program proposed a joint Mexican/U.S. operation that concentrated on reconnaissance and verification missions. These missions would then provide the bases for recommendations that would be made on the method and time of destruction of opium poppy and marijuana fields. The proposed program emphasized information gathering regarding the effect of the eradication campaign, information regarding opium cultivation patterns, time of planting, flowering stages, harvesting practices, cultivation stages, field concentrations, size of fields, effects of herbicidal sprayings, location of clandestine airstrips, etc.⁶⁹

The Mexican government's response to the proposed program was generally favorable. However, as with earlier programs, reservations were expressed by both Attorney General Sergio García Ramírez, and the Secretary for Foreign Relations, Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor over the active participation of U.S. DEA officials in the project. They felt that it would be more convenient if U.S. officials were only occasionally invited as observers after the eradication had taken place, so that they might view the success of the project, as opposed to flying with the Mexican pilots. Moreover, in response to the U.S. government proposal to lend

⁶⁹ . Historically, the bulk of the eradication efforts were concentrated in the Pacific coastal areas because of its propensity to supply the major portion of the raw material utilized in the manufacture of "Mexican brown." Moreover, traditionally there were two major growing seasons. But, the U.S. government had gathered evidence that both marijuana and poppies were being grown year-round. The evidence also indicated that a new variety of poppy, one smaller and with a shorter maturation period, had been introduced to the Mexican market. This variety of poppy posed a challenge to the newly restructured Mexican eradication program. It was therefore concluded that a new operational method was called for, a program of reconnaissance and verification. Memoranda between the U.S. government, the PGR, and Relaciones Exteriores, dated from June 12, 1984 to October 2, 1984. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

the necessary equipment to Mexico, Mexican officials preferred to buy the aircraft outright. One other issue that placed limits on cooperation was that Mexican officials were unclear as to the "aim" of U.S. officials in suggesting that narcotics personnel from both governments get together "to determine goals and objectives, as well as to plan weekly strategies."⁷⁰ It seemed to Mexican officials that to accept such a specific proposition from the U.S. government would allow them far too much leeway in directing the Mexican campaign against drug trafficking, and too much liberty to interfere with Mexican decisionmaking. Despite these concerns, a Letter of Agreement for \$1.4 million was signed for the procurement of aircraft and the provision of operational and maintenance support, to be used in Mexico in the Mexican Government's "Permanent Campaign" against narcotics cultivation and trafficking.

Efforts and Roadblocks to Bilateral Cooperation and Understanding Mechanisms for Change

Because of the nature of the problems that resulted from inevitable breakdowns in communication and mutual distrust, the United States and Mexican governments began a series of quarterly meetings between the Attorneys General that included representatives of State, Justice, and Treasury. These meetings were extended to include law enforcement officers in the spring and summer of 1985, to explore initiatives on eradication, trafficking, fugitives, and mutual legal assistance with the purpose of expanding cooperative efforts. U.S. government officials felt that Mexican eradication efforts had become less proficient.

⁷⁰ . Correspondence between the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores and the PGR, dated October 2, 1984 to October 31, 1984. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

An emphasis was placed on providing assistance to the Mexican Attorney General's office through Operation Vanguard, in which U.S. observers from the DEA accompanied verification elements of the Mexican Attorney General's office to corroborate the eradication of marijuana and poppy fields (House of Representatives July 22, 1986). In the words of Jerrold Mark Dion, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, U.S. Department of State:

Operation Vanguard, a verification program, is one part of the overall eradication program...which began in 1974 with a fleet of aircraft for aerial eradication of drug crops in the fields...It was generally conceded to be a very successful program until the early 1980s. Beginning in late 1983 and early 1984, it began to lose its effectiveness, partly because of the downturn in the Mexican economy, partly because of inefficiency, and that includes problems of personnel.

However, resources were a growing problem.

Attorney General, Sergio García Ramírez met with members of the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, House of Representatives on August 8, 1983, to discuss the evolution of drug production and trafficking in Mexico. U.S. officials complained to García Ramírez that they did not feel that Mexico was addressing the problem adequately. Resentment in Mexico was growing over this accusation, and García Ramírez responded that it was Mexican soldiers and police who were risking death and injury during the eradication of crops (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985b: 10-11). García Ramírez disclosed at the meeting that Mexican government funds were insufficient to combat drugs in the manner prescribed by the U.S. government. Moreover, the Mexican government was aware that U.S. concerns over the drug situation were growing, while its economic capacity to control it was also shrinking.

García Ramírez was followed by Manuel Ibarra Herrera, the Director of Mexico's Federal Judicial Police since 1982, who traveled to the United States to appear before the U.S. Congress on May 22, 1984. At the Hearings held in Washington, Ibarra testified that 280 new members had been added to the PJF forces on June 1, 1984, to specifically watch over the border.

Much like García Ramírez, the main thesis of Ibarra's testimony was that the United States should expect a considerable increase in the production of marijuana and opium in 1984. Whereas in 1983, the Mexican government had money to provide grain to the peasants for alternative development, the money was spent and the program had to be discontinued. Furthermore, according to Ibarra, one of the reasons for the boom of marijuana production along the U.S.-Mexican border was that the peasants were attempting to lower their transportation costs to increase their profits (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985b: 6-9). In response, the Mexican government agreed to proceed with a massive drug control campaign that responded to U.S. parameters only if it received more money from the American government. However, to not place additional stress on the possibilities for cooperation, the public was not informed about either trip until 1985.

By the end of 1985, a renewed spirit of cooperation tentatively emerged between Mexico and the United States that conveyed an improvement in the relationship (Rico 1989), in large part because of the U.S. government's attempts to help Mexico out of its debt problems through the Baker Plan. Nevertheless, the more open attitude was short-lived because as the threat of communism waned, the Reagan administration came to adopt the rhetoric of the Cold War to fight the drug war.

The Honeymoon is Over

The honeymoon period did not last. By 1986, misunderstandings erupted frequently between the United States and Mexico over a wide array of issues such as debt, immigration, organized crime, mutual distrust. The manner in which these misunderstandings were expressed demonstrated the extent of the complex relationship that had developed between the two nations, as well as the differences in perception in the definition of the drug problem. The Mexican government judged that the drug issue did not bear as much political importance for itself as it did for the United States. As far as it was concerned, the Mexican government had an established record in drug eradication and interception programs which the Attorney General, Sergio García Ramírez strongly defended.

Despite improved relations, repeatedly, the Mexican government expressed its disappointment, and later aggravation over what it basically considered to be interference by the United States in Mexican domestic affairs (Castañeda 1985: 12-15),⁷¹ and therefore of its

⁷¹ . Complaints were often made about U.S. Amb. John Gavin's judgmental comments about Mexican affairs which was a violation of Mexican foreign policy principles, as well as of Article 41 of the Vienna Convention for Diplomatic Relations. Gavin's comments were characterized as "antidiplomatic, insolent, and interventionist" (Ortega Pizarro 1985: 30). Furthermore, other allegations of more direct U.S. intervention came about during the 1986 elections in Chihuahua, in which the United States government was judged to be attempting to influence the electorate to the side of the PAN.

sovereign rights to govern itself.⁷² Furthermore, at that specific juncture in time, the United States was concerned that with its global position which the Reagan administration countered by adopting ultra-conservative economic and social policies, as well as by placing additional pressures on Mexico.

Immigration was a growing problem. Hotly debated in Congress, it provided additional justification for the militarization of the U.S. side of the border as a deterrent to illegal crossings. The U.S. Congress made efforts to establish stricter control with the Simpson-Rodino Bill to further manage the movements of the migratory work force and deter additional undocumented workers from crossing over into the U.S. labor market. Lastly, the debt crisis continued, and even appeared to become more acute in Mexico, posing a threat to U.S. businesses and engendering an economic downturn in the United States (*Crónica* 1986). Adding to the complex interrelationship of issues and because of U.S. success in blocking the Caribbean routes, a relatively new phenomenon began to occur. Mexican territory began its role as a transshipment point for cocaine, particularly the border States of Sonora and

⁷² . Mexican officials in the early 1980s were particularly concerned with U.S. intervention, especially as regarded U.S. intervention in Latin American affairs. On June 7, 1982, at the height of his presidential campaign, Miguel de la Madrid spoke to the First Consultative Meeting of the Commission for International Issues where he expressed the inviolability of Mexican foreign policy. "Mexico will continue to respect the will of nations to participate in the political system of their choice, and consequently, rejects any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of the different nations of the world...Mexico has always been regarded by the world as consistent in its disposition to demonstrate through actions its international solidarity and its desire to strengthen cooperation among nations...We will continue to receive positive influences from the outside, but also we will be pressured, unbalanced, and perturbed. Therefore, we must be ready to react by establishing a solid, long-term project without prejudice for our ability to respond before circumstantial occurrences and events. The best defense and protection lie in the viability and application of our principles and our success depends on our capacity to overcome the dispersion of mechanisms and instruments and the dedication of energy with which we articulate our efforts in the interior of Mexico" (de la Madrid 1982).

Chihuahua where longstanding Mexican marijuana and heroin rings had forged links to the Colombian Medellín Cartel (Gutiérrez 1993: 26-28).

The heightened rhetoric eventually carried serious implications for Mexico (Walker 1994: 395-422). In light of the consequences that evolved from the torture and murder of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena by Mexican drug traffickers in February 1985 and the mishandling of the evidence for the case by Mexican law enforcement officers, Mexico inadvertently found itself in a serious situation.⁷³

The Camarena Affair

The lowest ebb in the bilateral relationship occurred after the kidnapping and murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena Salazar in Guadalajara, Jalisco and attributed to drug trafficker Rafael Caro Quintero.⁷⁴ Prior to the Camarena affair, the de la Madrid government had an established drug control program that the United States considered it inadequate. Likewise, Mexico had undertaken few major initiatives without U.S. persuasion. Again, at

⁷³ . On February 7, 1985, DEA agent, Enrique Camarena and the DEA contract pilot Alfredo Zavala Avelar were abducted in Guadalajara, Mexico. The abductors were members of the drug cartel headed by Miguel Angel Felix-Gallardo, an international heroin trafficker targeted by DEA's 1983 Operation Padrino which focused on heroin distribution networks working in Mexico. Felix-Gallardo was determined to have joined forces with Honduran based cocaine trafficker Juan Ramón Matta-Ballesteros with the purposes of establishing a cocaine network in Mexico. The organization had distributed several thousand kilos of cocaine in the United States, and in June 1984, over \$11.5 million in cash was seized. In addition, seizures of cocaine identified as belonging to the organization were made in Arizona and California that totalled approximately 929 kilos. It was strongly believed by the DEA that Camarena's abduction was a retaliatory measure against the effectiveness of Operation Padrino by traffickers with the assistance of former and current Mexican police officials. Operation Padrino was established by the DEA in 1983 to combat heroin trafficking, particularly along the U.S.-Mexican border. The actual kidnapping was undertaken by Rafael Caro-Quintero, another trafficker and sub-altern of Felix-Gallardo, who actually ordered their torture and murders. Caro-Quintero was apprehended then escaped with the help of Mexican police (House of Representatives, July 17, 1986).

⁷⁴ . Rafael Caro Quintero was a native of Sonora where he maintained large plantings of marijuana.

issue was the difference in perception regarding the extent of the danger presented by the drug problem and of the seriousness of U.S. intentions.

On February 12, five days after the Camarena kidnapping, Ambassador John Gavin and DEA chief Francis Mullen held a press conference at the U.S. embassy in which they announced that there were 75 drug chiefs who managed 18 powerful trafficking organizations in Mexico and that the drug capital in Mexico was Guadalajara, Jalisco (Cabildo 1985: 12-17). The PGR claimed no knowledge of this information, although the spokesperson, Francisco Notario Fonseca, did communicate that the information obtained by the U.S. embassy was highly respectable (Cabildo 1985a: 14). Mexican officials committed a tactical error in judgment by misunderstanding the actual importance of the Camarena affair to U.S. interests, a situation that would henceforth periodically emerge. As a result, the Mexican government was slow to react and did not give the Camarena situation high priority.

The Justice Department and its DEA operatives refused to let the issue slide into oblivion. On February 14, 1985, cooperation turned to acrimony when the U.S. Attorney General's office closed border crossings at nine ports of entry because of Mexican inactivity over the DEA agent's death, as well as Juan Matta Ballesteros's escape from Mexican custody. Matta Ballesteros was accused by the DEA of masterminding Camarena's kidnapping and murder, however, Mexican officials denied knowledge of any linkage between him and the Camarena affair. On February 16, 1985, the United States implemented Operation Camarena, a strenuous Customs inspection along the border that essentially halted border movement of all types, with the purpose of finding Camarena should the kidnappers attempt to transport him back into the United States. According to Larry Atkins, Chief Customs Inspector in San

Ysidro, a list that contained the names of 20 suspects who were being sought by the DEA had been issued to border agents.

The Mexican government was skeptical about this procedure, not only because it seemed improbable that the kidnappers would ever attempt to do such a thing, but on a more negative note, because the Mexican government perceived the action as another attempt to strong-arm Mexico into complying with U.S. drug enforcement priorities. The logic of U.S. recriminations evaded Mexican government officials and the Camarena affair attained crisis proportions.

On the one hand, the de la Madrid administration was directly confronted with evidence that Mexico's law enforcement officers in charge of narcotics control had lost all credibility, both in Mexico and the United States. On the other hand, Washington sent Mexico confusing signals.⁷⁵ Whereas members of the U.S. Congress, Under-Secretary of State Elliot Abrams, and the DEA were angry with Mexico's ability to find and arrest the culprits who

⁷⁵ . Lars Schoultz notes in his book, National Security and United States Policy toward Latin America, that U.S. policy is largely determined by the manner in which one fact, instability, is simplified when it is perceived by U.S. policymakers. They simplify because of their series of beliefs about the causes of instability and its consequences for U.S. security. Schoultz argues that up until the 1980s, "almost all officials held similar about instability, and the result was a consensus; today Washington policy makers have sharply differing beliefs about instability, and the result is dissensus....In fact, some officials will often argue that there is no reason to worry, that instability in Latin America does not threaten the United States, while others will be extremely concerned about the potential impact of instability" (Schoultz 1987: 11). In the case of drug trafficking, President Reagan declared it a security threat. In contrast, congressional leaders hold a variety of opinions and often their conclusions about the same problem are dissimilar. In effect, the result has been an erosion of clarity regarding what indeed represents a security threat, as well as an expansion of the definition along partisan lines frequently causing sharp divisions, thus stagnating any debate as to the most effective and feasible solutions to drug trafficking (Reuter 1992).

murdered Camarena, other officials at the State Department and Secretary of State, George Schultz made friendly overtures to reduce tensions between the two governments.⁷⁶

In fact, the Camarena case was viewed in the United States as the "first visible sign of...growing problems with Mexico in the areas of drug production and trafficking" (House of Representatives July 17, 1986: 3). Ann B. Wroblewski, the Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, Department of State asserted that the Camarena case was deemed particularly meaningful to the bilateral relationship, not only because of the murder of a U.S. Special Agent,

"but because the ensuing investigations disclosed the scope of derioration of the Mexican [drug control] program at the Federal, State, and local level, and especially the degree to which corruption had permeated key sectors of the system" (House of Representatives July 17, 1986: 67).

Ambassador Gavin warned the Mexicans that if they did not become more concerned about controlling drugs, inevitably the country risked destabilization because of the corrupting effect that accompanies the illegal narcotics industry. At the time of the announcement, the DEA estimated that approximately 38 percent of all heroin entering the United States was of Mexican origin, as compared to 33 percent in 1983. But once again, U.S. government officials sent mixed signals. Whereas during the press conference Gavin implied that Mexican and U.S. forces were working closely, several days later he and DEA Chief Francis Mullen let it be known that they did not feel that the Mexican police forces had acted with sufficient dispatch.

⁷⁶ . According to William O. Walker III, policymakers under Reagan could be divided into three groups: 1) the hardliners who "wanted to punish Mexico in some way" because Mexico was perceived as insufficiently aggressive in its attempts at drug control; 2) those who advocated "constructive engagement who knew that a major dispute over drug policy would be counterproductive both to control at the source and to the interdiction of illicit traffic"; and 3) those who were contemptuous of Mexico's drug control programs, but who acknowledged the need for cordial relations (Walker 1994: 400).

They alluded that the Mexican officers may have even been involved in the Camarena case. Moreover, Arizona Senator Dennis DeConcini contended that corruption was so extensive in Mexico that the government was afraid to pursue drug traffickers because of the implications it held for government officials. DeConcini endorsed a policy whereby the United States should simply implement economic sanctions to force them into action (Cabildo 1985b: 18-21). In view of U.S. accusations of Mexican corruption and inefficiency, Attorney General García Ramírez retorted in an interview with CBS reporter George Natanson on March 6, 1985:

In truth, with so many soldiers and police involved in drug control there may have been isolated instances of inappropriate conduct or corrupt behavior, but the individual cases cannot annul the fact that without the efforts that were made, larger quantities of drugs would have entered the United States, which represents the largest world market, with its consuming population numbering approximately 25 million persons (García Ramírez 1985).

For the Mexican public, the Camarena affair brought to light U.S. police activities in Mexico of which they had been, for the most part, unaware. The PGR denied that U.S. agents were active on Mexican territory. However, given the press conference held by Ambassador Gavin and DEA Chief Mullen, it was difficult to deny their assertions that approximately 30 agents were working in Mexico on a full-time basis and that the DEA located its largest office in Guadalajara. In effect, the press conference had a negative effect for the United States. Once the Mexican public became aware of DEA activities, the Mexican government was constrained in its ability to cooperate more fully with U.S. law enforcement efforts.

Gavin insisted that the DEA's presence in Mexico was legitimate, and affirmed that an accord had been signed between Mexico and the United States regarding the placement of U.S.

officers on Mexican territory (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985: 16). According to the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* (SRE), however, the only accord that existed was signed in 1930 to establish the parameters for cooperation and exchange of information between U.S. and Mexican officers in charge of drug control. The Mexican press, as well as the Senate, questioned the validity of the placement of U.S. law enforcement officers on Mexican soil given that no legal document existed to justify these actions, much less one that explained the implementation of a drug control campaign on Mexican soil: Operation Padrino (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985: 21).⁷⁷ The United States had not considered the negative impact of its activities on the Mexican public.

Mexico Adopts a Defensive Posture

Mexican authorities presented a different version of Camarena's kidnapping. In November 1984, two large drug seizures had taken place. The first occurred on November

⁷⁷ . According to Mexican sources, Operation Padrino was an extension of Operation Janus established during the López Portillo administration that set the parameters for bilateral cooperation and signed by the U.S. Department of State and the PGR through the agencies of the DEA and Federal Judicial Police (PJF). In the last 18 months of the López Portillo administration, the U.S. government sent a congressional narcotics committee headed by Charles Rangel to Mexico to develop a series of recommendations for both the DEA and the State Department because of concern over cooperation. The DEA organized Operation Padrino with DEA agents based out of Guadalajara, one of which was Enrique Camarena. According to *Proceso*, the DEA worked illegally in Mexico and broke Article 32 of the Mexican Constitution. Crimes committed on Mexican soil are the exclusive domain of the military or the PJF. The DEA was in violation when it pursued the drug traffickers accused of killing Camarena (Rodríguez Castañeda 1985: 22-23). Mexicans were enraged when DEA Chief Francis Mullen announced that DEA and FBI agents in Mexico watched over the drug mafias headed by Rafael Caro Quintero, Miguel Félix Gallardo and Carlos Fonseca, but also kept an eye on the Mexican police forces in charge of tracking the traffickers. Mullen accused elements of the Federal Security Directorate of the Secretariat of Government of protecting Rafael Caro Quintero and of helping him escape. Shortly thereafter, Francis Mullen resigned from his position (Ortega Pizarro 1985: 19-20).

5, 1984 in Nuevo Laredo when Mexican agents impounded 300 kgs. of cocaine.⁷⁸ The second occurred on November 8 and 9, 1984 the Mexican government destroyed approximately 10,000 tons of marijuana at El Búfalo and in Los Juncos, Chihuahua.⁷⁹ These two events represented the largest confiscation of either drug that had ever occurred in Mexico to date. In Attorney General García Ramírez's opinion ties existed between those seizures and the fact that three months later, on February 7, Camarena and his pilot disappeared, and were later found murdered (García Ramírez 1989). The deaths of the agent and the pilot established a downward spiral of mutual recriminations and finger-pointing that lingered well beyond the final days of the de la Madrid administration.⁸⁰

In contrast to the elevation of drug trafficking as a threat to U.S. national security interests and U.S. outrage over the Camarena incident, the de la Madrid administration did not initially alter its drug control strategy or even indicate that the drug issue had become an overriding concern to the Mexican government. Mexico's response appeared uncoordinated, not credible, and lacking resolve because of the many discrepancies that continuously arose

⁷⁸ . The single largest cocaine seizure prior to this one, had taken place on September 28 at the International Airport in Mexico City: 27 kgs. en route from Lima, Peru (*Crónica* 1985: 672). These large cocaine seizures attested to the fact that increasingly Mexico was becoming a corridor for Colombian cocaine.

⁷⁹ . On November 6, 1984, 170 PJF agents and 270 soldiers from the 35th Battalion squad surrounded three encampments where marijuana was grown and processed. Not only was all the marijuana in the warehouses destroyed, but 2,000 tons of marijuana under cultivation was eradicated. The workers came primarily from the states Sinaloa, Oaxaca and Guerrero (*Crónica* 1985: 672-673).

⁸⁰ . According to Lic. Victor Corzo Cabañas, the General Director of Legal and International Matters at the PGR, drug matters in Mexico were never the same after the Camarena affair. It was the one event that broke absolute U.S. control over Mexico's drug control policy. The United States came to realize that it was unable to coerce Mexico because "with force, the United States would never be able to accomplish anything" (Interview, June 21, 1995).

regarding to the Camarena investigation. Despite the fact that drugs increasingly cast a discordant note over Mexico's relationship with the United States and that the Mexican public was demanding to know more about the activities of the PGR's Judicial Police, the PGR remained silent regarding the accusations being made of it.

As U.S. pressure increased on the Judicial Police to find Camarena, their actions became increasingly abusive and violent.⁸¹ Mexican public opinion was divided between horror over the behavior of Mexican law enforcement and concern over U.S. police actions in Mexico, largely considered forms of intervention and in violation of Mexican territorial laws. In addition, the feeling was widespread that much of the pressure being imposed by the United States was related to Mexico's stand with regards to Contadora and Central America, not because of real concern over Camarena's death (*Crónica* 1986: 172).

Intellectuals of the Mexican Left accused the United States of purposefully seeking points on which to belittle Mexico. This sentiment was exacerbated when Mexico was aggressively pursued by the U.S. media because Mexican officials had not brought Camarena's

⁸¹ . The Aguila team, part of the PGR's anti-narcotics efforts, was assigned the task of finding Camarena. They suspected that both Camarena and his pilot, Alfredo Zavala were located on the ranch "El Mareño" in Michoacán. 100 agents from both the Aguila team and the Jalisco preventive police force raided the ranch and killed the owner, Manuel Bravo Cervantes, a former municipal leader, and his family. According to the PGR, Mr. Bravo Cervantes was accused of homicide, arms trafficking, and suspected of links with known drug traffickers. The DEA denied that Bravo Cervantes had anything to do with Camarena's kidnapping. The PGR denied the DEA's version and claimed that upon arriving at El Mareño, they identified themselves and were confronted with bullets. Later, they admitted to the mistake. The ranch was searched but the bodies of Camarena and Zavala were not found. The PJF abandoned their search on March 5. On March 6, the bodies were found by a farmer exactly where the Police had been searching. The PGR informed the press that the murders had been committed by Bravo Cervantes who had shot them in the back of the head. A conflicting report was issued by the U.S. embassy. In the U.S. media, the Mexican police were presented as having colluded with drug traffickers who had participated in Camarena and Zavala's murders, and then letting the perpetrators free. The PGR remained silent until March 5, when Assistant Attorney General, Celestino Porte Petit asked the U.S. embassy for proof of their allegations (*Proceso* March 11, 1985: 6-12).

killers to justice. Moreover, Mexican officials and policemen were accused of corrupt behavior and of accepting money from drug traffickers. The Mexican reaction was one of incredulity at the display of such virulence over one dead DEA agent, particularly since dozens of Mexican police and DEA informants had been tortured and killed for the U.S. drug war with little acknowledgement from U.S. government authorities.⁸² In effect, circumstances became aggravated when Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor, Secretary of Foreign Relations, issued a statement that he did not understand why the death of one DEA agent merited so much indignation when Mexico had lost hundreds of soldiers and officers in its drug control efforts (Castañeda 1985b: 18-22).

Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations, Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor complained to U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, John Gavin, about the closure of the nine ports of entry at the U.S.-Mexican border. The Mexican government then presented a diplomatic note of protest to Secretary of State, George Schultz, on February 19, in which it complained about the United States' unilateral action to close the border without any warning.⁸³ On February 22, the Mexican government issued a press release which stated that Presidents de la Madrid and Reagan had discussed the border closing and that President de la Madrid suggested that the Attorneys General from both countries should meet exactly one month later, on March 22, 1985

⁸² . Between 1982 and 1987, 154 Mexican law enforcement officials were killed in engagements with drug traffickers (CSIS 1989:7).

⁸³ . Four points stand out in the letter: 1) The Mexican government was unclear as to the exact reason for the border closing; 2) Mexican officials felt that it was a unilateral act that provoked unnecessary discomfort for the border areas; 3) It was not an effective way to fight drug trafficking; and 4) The Mexican government reaffirmed its firm desire to fight drugs. Diplomatic note. February 19, 1985. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

to discuss the narcotics problem in Mexico along with the Camarena case. The press also noted that the Mexican president suggested that the two presidents should meet to discuss the state of the bilateral relationship at a later date (Cabildo 1985b: 18).

Notwithstanding, on March 10, Secretary of State George Schultz and Bernardo Sepúlveda Amor gave an interview in which they expressed the position of their respective governments. Whereas Sepúlveda noted that Camarena's murder was a police matter, Secretary of State Schultz emphasized its political ramifications. Sepúlveda emphasized the multilateral nature of drug trafficking and added that in order to contain it, it was necessary to develop instruments based on multinational cooperation and to eliminate the concept of interception (Crónica 1986: 172). That same day, Ambassador Gavin gave a televised address in which he accused the Mexican police of protecting traffickers, while simultaneously, the Reagan administration requested a 25 percent increase in funding from Congress to help Mexico in its fight against the production and trafficking of drugs (Crónica 1986: 177).

At the March 22 meeting, both newly appointed Attorney General, Edwin Meese and Sergio García Ramírez agreed that the search for solutions should bring the two countries closer together. The meeting was important for two fundamental reasons. First, Sergio García Ramírez announced that further DEA participation in the Camarena investigation would be limited to information only. DEA Director, John Lawn, attempted to allay the fears of the Mexican press and public and admitted that the DEA had actively investigated the murders on Mexican territory, and would no longer do so. Second, Sergio García Ramírez and Edwin

Meese agreed to design a system in which information could be shared equally by both governments to combat trafficking, thus to work cooperatively (Correa 1985: 10-11).

Despite bilateral efforts at damage control, U.S. media accounts continued to place Mexico in a very negative light, catalyzing demonstrations in the streets of Mexico City. Moreover, the United States had targeted the Judicial Police as major perpetrators in the crime and demanded that they be prosecuted. The United States also accused the Director of the *Dirección Federal de Seguridad* (DFS), José Antonio Zorrilla Pérez, of playing a part in Mexican drug trafficking.⁸⁴ The Attorney General's office did not immediately remove police commanders from their posts, although it did expel approximately 1,500-2,000 members from the police force by the end of the year.⁸⁵

The Role of the Earthquake

On September 19 and 20, 1985, Mexico City was hit by two earthquakes that lasted approximately 90 seconds and measured 7.8 and 6.5 degrees, respectively, on the Richter scale. Much of the City was destroyed and from the rubble of the earthquake, evidence surfaced that positively implicated the Mexican police of endemic use of torture. The bodies

⁸⁴ . Proceso revealed information that the DEA at the U.S. embassy suspected José Antonio Zorrilla Pérez of being a key to deciphering Mexico's drug trafficking organizations. Upon being arrested, members of the Caro Quintero organization suspected of murdering Camarena and Zavala had been found with DFS identification credentials that had been signed directly by Zorrilla. The Secretaría de Gobernación exonerated Zorrilla of violating penal law, but did state that his administrative performance had been inefficient. He was replaced by Pablo González Ruelas. Moreover, Gobernación arrested and imprisoned three of its agents; 19 were replaced; and a total of 427 employees were removed from service (Ortega Pizarro 1985: 6-11).

⁸⁵ . After his capture, Caro Quintero denounced the Dirección Federal as his protectors and employees. Despite accusations that Armando Pavón Reyes, the Chief of the PJJ, did not prevent Caro Quintero from escaping, Pavón was not apprehended, but merely dismissed from office. According to the DEA, Pavón was in charge of the raid on El Mareño and was bribed by Caro Quintero to let him go (Ortega and Ramírez 1985: 10-14).

of several Colombian nationals showing definite signs of physical abuse were found beneath the crumbling *Procuraduria de la Justicia* in Mexico City on September 19, 1985 (Cabildo 1985: 20-21). As the public became aware of the extent to which torture was practiced by the Mexican police,⁸⁶ the Mexican Senate brought to the floor a motion to pass the Federal Law to Prevent and Sanction Torture which was approved on December 18, 1985. Moreover, the Attorney General in Mexico City, Victoria Adato de Ibarra resigned on December 26 among declarations of inefficiency and was replaced by Renato Sales Gazque, a long-time political figure (Campbell 1985: 22-26). In sum, the year 1985 marked a turning point for the Mexican political system and more specifically for drug control.

The Militarization of the Drug War

The New Era: Drugs as a National Security Priority

One of the effects of the Camarena affair was that a space was opened through which the United States would attempt to impose its criteria for efficiency on Mexico's drug control program via a unilaterally imposed certification process that, in effect, abrogated the efforts at drug control that had been demonstrated by de la Madrid at the beginning of his administration (Arriaga Weiss 1989). In 1986, U.S. President Ronald Reagan declared that the drug scourge would stop and sanctioned a war on drugs that differed from the war declared by the Nixon administration, one with moral overtones meant to assist the United States in regaining its "predominant role in world affairs" (González 1989: 5) which led President

⁸⁶ . "Torture is a common practice in all of the police organizations in Mexico. The methods range from merely hitting - the "warm up" - to the "well" and even electric shock. Officially, police authorities deny that torture is used in its investigations; the Human Rights Commission of the Senate Chamber admitted however...that it is used as a "resource of police investigation" (Cabildo 1985e: 16-19).

Reagan to sign National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 221 on April 8th, 1986 (Doyle 1993).

The Reagan administration elevated the issue of drug control from a purely law enforcement concern into a major U.S. foreign policy objective.⁸⁷ NSDD 221 officially placed drug trafficking on the U.S. national security agenda because of the substantial threat it constituted to the United States and, therefore, by implication to the Americas and Mexico (Walker 1993-94; Walker 1994; Doyle 1993). The directive broadened the array of actors to participate in drug control efforts and further emphasized military involvement by including the Departments of Defense, Treasury, Justice, and Transportation, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Agency (Doyle 1993). For Mexico, the significance of NSDD 221 was that the United States would scrutinize Mexican drug control policy even more scrupulously than it had previously.

One of the main purposes of NSDD 221 was to provide an emphasis and direction to all Federal departments and agencies that were to participate in the national anti-drug campaign. Furthermore, the directive contained guidelines for the Defense Department to maximize assistance with particular emphasis on training exercises, many of which take place along the U.S.-Mexican border and include flight surveillance, as permitted under Public Law 97-86, without violating the parameters of the 1870 Posse Comitatus Act which prohibits military elements from arresting civilians.

⁸⁷ . It is not to say that NSDD 221 eliminated drug control from law enforcement, however, it gave the military a more active role as a support agency with the purpose of providing "a range of international counternarcotics activities" that included intelligence gathering, aerostat monitoring, training foreign military agencies, mounting large international drug control operations (Doyle 1993).

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986

In combination with NSDD 221, U.S. national policy became law with the passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 signed on October 27 by President Reagan, which officially implemented the following: 1) that trade policy be used as an incentive, as well as a sanction in dealing with drug producing countries; 2) the establishment of a radar network on the Southwest Border to track and intercept drug traffickers; 3) an enhanced role for the military in drug interdiction; 4) an increase in criminal penalties for drug trafficking and dealing with mandatory minimum sentences; 5) and an increase in the availability of drug abuse treatment and prevention efforts through education (House of Representatives, October 3, 1986).⁸⁸

The National Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 also authorized the establishment of national Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence Centers (C3Is) to provide tactical coordination for interdiction efforts, although they were not actually developed until 1989. Furthermore, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 directed the Reagan administration to enter into negotiations with the Mexican government to establish a Mexico-U.S. Intergovernmental Commission on Narcotic and Psychotropic Drug Abuse and Control.

⁸⁸ As a tool to gain leverage over foreign antinarcotics efforts, the Omnibus Drug Enforcement, Education, and Control Act of 1986 (PL99-570) authorizes that Congress approve an annual certification by the U.S. president in which the efforts of major drug-producing countries are assessed. There are three category ratings for certification: 1) full cooperation certification; 2) certification on the grounds of national interest (the implication here is that the levels of cooperation are not satisfactory, but because of a special relationship status, decertification is mitigated); and 3) decertification. Should the nation in question not be certified, one-half of their U.S. foreign aid is automatically dismissed and U.S. representatives in multilateral lending agencies must vote against financial support.

The Militarization of Law Enforcement: A New Border Strategy

A Department of Defense (DoD) Task Force on Drug Enforcement was established and the military acquired a role in the national campaign to suppress the control of drugs. As it was first defined, one of the main roles for the Department of Defense in drug control was to provide surveillance information on land, sea, and air drug trafficking by making available sophisticated equipment to law enforcement authorities. In 1986, the Attorney General's office forwarded a National Drug Enforcement Policy Board proposal that called for the Navy to loan four state-of-the-art E2C airborne early warning aircraft for use by law enforcement authorities on the southern U.S. tier.

The Air Force procured five tethered Aerostat radar systems for the Customs Service to operate and maintain along the U.S.-Mexican border. Furthermore, NSDD 221 expanded the role of the DoD in drug control by transitioning it from an equipment supplier to an active source of tactical surveillance and intelligence information. Intelligence gathering and dissemination became one of the chief means of DoD support, and the DoD forwarded to the Drug Enforcement Policy Board a list of 16 initiatives for law enforcement agencies to be able to maximize their abilities to be more effective in interdicting drugs.

Reactions in the United States government were mixed, however, because on the one hand, the militarization of the border seemed inevitable. On the other hand, it was generally acknowledged by Customs and by members of Congress that it was unrealistic to close down the border given the magnitude of the economic flows. Furthermore, the border strategy in its initial stages was largely uncoordinated and addressed the drug problem in a piecemeal fashion. Although there was a national drug control policy, there was no national strategy

concerning the specific situation on the border. Cocaine flows across the southwest border continued to increase, especially in light of the pressure placed on South Florida since 1982 that caused several major trafficking organizations to shift their operations.

1986: The Height of Acrimony

Insults and Injuries

As demonstrated by the passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 and NSDD 221, U.S. pressure did not abate in 1986, on the contrary, it increased. The United States issued a "Travel Advisory" that warned tourists to be careful while travelling through Mexico because of a series of unresolved murders, robberies, and abductions of American citizens that had occurred that year. The travel advisory gravely damaged the Mexican tourist industry, one of the country's chief sources of foreign income. The timing of the report was particularly harmful given Mexico's ongoing economic troubles. Once again, both Mexican government officials and the intelligentsia perceived this action as part of a concerted effort on the part of the United States to pressure Mexico into further complying with the parameters U.S. officials had established regarding the Camarena investigation, specifically, and U.S. drug policy more generally.

During 1986, the principal medium of communication in the United States systematically transmitted news that repeatedly doubted Mexico's efficiency, morality, and sincerity in its approach to not only the drug war, but to the overall U.S.-Mexican bilateral relationship. The Mexican government's legitimacy and its right to govern itself were brought

into question (Ojeda 1987).⁸⁹ Mexicans perceived the strong reaction in the press, in combination with the Travel Advisory as a deliberate insult and a direct reflection of the views held by the White House. Mexico believed that the U.S. government manipulated the American media, much in the same manner that it had traditionally been controlled in Mexico. These events caused a period of almost open confrontation which was exacerbated by U.S. Congressional hearings against Mexico.

Jesse Helms: More Misunderstandings and Récriminations

Víctor Flóres Olea, sub-secretary for Multilateral Issues at Foreign Relations (SRE) expressed that over a period of several months, it appeared to him that there was some kind of concerted effort among the U.S. media to purposefully penalize Mexico and its efforts to control drug trafficking within its territory.⁹⁰ Furthermore, U.S. media reports repeatedly stated that the fundamental cause for Mexico's economic, political, and social problems was its corrupt and inefficient leadership (Newsweek March 17, 1986).

Increasingly, separate issues on the bilateral agenda had conjoined and threatened to seriously damage relations between the two countries. Although Mexico had increased its

⁸⁹ . Mario Ojeda, "El papel de los medios de comunicación en las relaciones Mexico-Estados Unidos," Foro Internacional, XXVII-4, April-June 1987.

⁹⁰ . In correspondence dated from December 1985 between the Mexican ambassador to the United States, Jorge Espinosa de los Reyes and members of the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), the ambassador expressed concern over how unfairly Mexico was treated in the U.S. media, Mexican officials were particularly sensitive to the articles written by Elaine Shannon and Angus Deming for Newsweek magazine. In a telex to then Attorney General, Sergio García Ramírez, the ambassador stated that "some DEA agent must be behind the article." Furthermore, some lack of clarity appeared to be at play because at the same time as these articles appeared in the press, the U.S. embassy issued a press release (12/12/85) which stated that corruption, existing on both sides of the border is one of the obstacles to achieving better results, and that it was unfortunate and premature to make anonymous criticisms based on biased information provided by unidentified officers.

cooperation with U.S. authorities, both the media and members of the U.S. Congress, as well as other high-ranking officials in the administration continued attacking the sincerity of Mexico's efforts. These attacks were largely perceived in Mexico to be intrusive of its national sovereignty. Both the Mexican government and many of its intellectuals expressed outrage over U.S. behavior and protested these confrontations.

The Mexican government was particularly outraged over the Hearings held by South Carolina Senator, Jesse Helms on May 12 and 13, 1986, before the Senate Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs. Only three of the nine-subcommittee members attended, along with several officials from the executive branch participated, while the Democrats flatly refused to take part. On May 14, 1986, Mexican Ambassador Jorge Espinosa de los Reyes sent a formal and energetic letter of protest to Secretary of State George P. Schultz regarding the supposedly secret hearings. The letter accused the U.S. government of purposefully issuing disinformation about Mexico and that the information had been leaked to the media undermined Mexico's image. Furthermore, the Mexican ambassador was particularly vexed because Senator Helms had received three or four phone calls from Mexican embassy officials which urged him to not make the hearings public because of the potential damage that inappropriate treatment of such a sensitive issue could engender on the bilateral relationship.⁹¹

In addition to the Hearings, one other major point of contention for Mexico was the statement issued by Sub-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Elliot Abrams on May 13. He not only declared that Mexican authorities had not adequately cooperated with U.S. drug

⁹¹ . Correspondence between the Mexican embassy and the White House. 1986. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

control efforts, but also presented the PRI as a political monopoly that kept itself in power through a process of continuous electoral fraud which could seriously undermine Mexico's ability to govern itself during a crisis.⁹² Furthermore, the statements made by both DEA Director, David Westrate and the Director for Customs, William Von Raab claimed that they had given Mexican authorities evidence that the Governor from the State of Sonora, Félix Valdés was hiding Félix Gallardo, an important drug trafficker. Von Raab and Westrate then asserted that the Governor was the owner of four ranches which were guarded by the military and in which he was growing opium (*Crónica* 1986: 375-376).

Mexican officials reacted strongly and issued a letter of diplomatic protest. This action a radical step of last resort, but one that was necessary given Mexico's ire over the declarations made at the Helms hearings which were considered: "interventionist, slanderous, in violation of Mexico's sovereignty, and contrary to the spirit of respect and cooperation of

⁹² . Although they were very negative, Abrams comments require perspective. In the latter half of 1985, Mexico had run into problems with regards to its ability to pay its debt because of the decline of oil prices on world markets. U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker announced a new plan at the annual IMF meeting in October 1985 at Seoul, Korea in which the United States recognized the problems with its previous debt plans. The Baker Plan to restructure Mexican loans brought greater visibility on the viability of Mexico's political system because if Mexico were to destabilize, repayment of Mexico's debt would be jeopardized. Therefore, when Mexico held its elections in 1986 in Chihuahua, Durango, Michoacán, Zacatecas, Baja California, and Campeche, the United States watched carefully. The United States was particularly interested in the elections being held in the border states, and even more specifically in Chihuahua where the PAN had demonstrated a strong possibility of winning. Expectations had been raised during the 1983 municipal elections when the PAN had won several seats. Much debate had taken place throughout 1985 and the PAN fought hard to change electoral laws in Chihuahua and to ensure that when the elections were held that they would be free of electoral fraud and corruption. On July 6, the elections were widely covered by both the Mexican and U.S. media. The PRI won the Governorship and the PAN staged a non-violent and peaceful protest march, as well as hunger strikes to denounce the results, events which were also widely covered by the U.S. press. In Mexico, U.S. government officials were suspected of trying to help the PAN win in Chihuahua because during the Helms hearings a document was released by the PAN which, according to Deborah Freeman, a Democratic Senate Candidate for the State of Maryland, rendered proof that the PAN and the U.S. government were in collusion to destabilize the Mexican political system in order to give the PAN an advantageous position in Chihuahua and perhaps even win the elections (*Crónica* 1986: 385; 461-483).

the bilateral relationship" (*Crónica* 1986: 376).⁹³ Furthermore, the Governor of Sonora threatened to begin proceedings against Von Raab in U.S. courts for defaming his character without proof. On May 16, Attorney General García Ramírez petitioned U.S. ambassador Gavin to release documentation that proved which Mexican officials were implicated in drug trafficking in order to prosecute them. John Gavin refused because he was afraid it would endanger his sources (Maza 1986: 13). In an effort to smooth tensions, on May 29 the White House announced that the U.S. embassy had sent formal apologies to the Governor of Sonora (*Crónica* 1986: 589).

The Breakdown of Political Will or the Need to Build Trust

Unfortunately, the Helms hearings set the tone for the XXVI U.S.-Mexican Interparliamentary Meetings held between May 30 and June 2, 1986 in Colorado Springs, CO. The meetings began with statements from the two delegation heads, U.S. Senator Phil Gramm and Mexican President of the Senate Antonio Riva Palacio. Both Senators expressed the need to find solutions to bilateral problems in an environment of respect and dignity, and without recriminations.

⁹³ . The letter of protest stated more specifically that the Mexican government did not accept that U.S. officials make statements regarding Mexican domestic political matters that were only of concern to Mexicans and over which no government had the right to pronounce value judgements. "Therefore, [the Mexican government] categorically rejects the slanderous accusations that were made against Mexico during the Hearings. The extent of the slander and the political irresponsibility is surprising. Throughout its independent history, Mexico has invariably demonstrated its loyalty to the principles and norms of international conviviality...Moreover, it demands respect for the sovereignty of others...If bilateral cooperation in the different aspects of the relationship is to be effective, then it requires a climate of confidence and mutual respect. The Hearings held by the Senate's Subcommittee of Western Hemispheric Affairs tend to mutilate that climate of coordination and the understanding that we seek. These actions engender tendencies toward unilateral responses to [bilateral] problems..." (*Crónica* 1986: 377).

Notwithstanding, Senator Riva Palacio stated that the Interparliamentary meetings provided the only valid and legitimate forum in which bilateral problems could be reviewed objectively. Senator Gramm responded that the U.S. Congress had the right to freedom of expression and that perhaps the Helms hearings reflected the frustration felt by U.S. government officials as they faced the growing corruption of Mexico's police forces. Gramm's comments had a negative effect and the environment for discussion soured considerably thereafter. Only one joint declaration was made upon which both sides agreed: the formation of a bilateral commission for drug control, an agreement to which the Mexican government had previously declined.

The failure of the meeting marked a milestone in the deterioration of U.S.-Mexican relations. A very concerned White House announced that it would revise its Mexican policy and acknowledged that, thus far, it had behaved inconsistently given that the different bureaus of the U.S. government appeared to be following diverging policies. In an effort to avoid the complete disintegration of the relationship, on June 5, 1986, Ronald Reagan removed John Gavin as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico and replaced him with Charles Pilliod⁹⁴ (*Crónica* 1986: 385-386). U.S. efforts to force Mexico into cooperation had two effects. First, it lowered

⁹⁴ . Charles Pilliod had been President of Goodyear Tire and Rubber between 1974 and 1982. Although his appointment was fairly well-received in Mexico, there was some speculation as to his ability as an Ambassador given that he had never held any government or diplomatic position. Ambassador Gavin had been widely criticized for his frivolity and intolerance. The Mexicans were pleased that the White House made efforts to lower the animosity between its Ambassadorial representative and Mexican government officials (*Crónica* 1986). Despite Gavin's reputation, the Mexican government had restrained itself in asking for his dismissal or removing his diplomatic credentials because they felt that it would endanger the bilateral relationship (Hinojosa 1985: 31).

Mexico's political will to cooperate. Second, it gave Mexico some leverage to maneuver by threatening to not cooperate.

Mixed Messages

Secretary of State George Schultz underscored the seriousness of the situation by emphasizing the extent to which he considered narcotics control to affect the whole of the bilateral relationship (House of Representatives July 17, 1986). However, a dichotomy began to occur between the language employed by the State Department, Department of Justice, Members of Congress, and of the White House. Each reacted to Mexico in terms of their function and the ultimate response each wanted from Mexico. The former addressed the Mexican government as being committed to success in its counternarcotics problem and referred to Mexico as a good neighbor. The latter, Congress and members of the White House, elevated their rhetoric. In the interim, Accords were signed as part of a joint effort to identify critical weaknesses in the eradication operation and a special campaign for an intensive spraying program against opium poppies was established in the tri-state area of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua, the nucleus of the heroin industry in Mexico.⁹⁵

Furthermore, in 1986, at a summit meeting between President Reagan and President de la Madrid, concrete promises were made by Washington that it was committed to helping Mexico with both its economic and social problems. Tensions resumed, however, when the

⁹⁵ . As part of the accords, an aerial survey of opium poppy cultivation took place and spraying operations were enhanced with the supply of six high-speed Thrush aircraft to supplement the PGR's Bell 212 spray helicopters. Furthermore a training seminar was offered to the zone coordinators and it was suggested that a more effective formulation of the herbicide 2, 4-D be used to destroy the poppies and a new cooperative venture on data sharing and analysis was initiated to improve management and monitoring (House of Representatives, July 17, 1986: 77).

drug issue resurged and the U.S. government accused Mexico of corruption at high levels, and then further deteriorated when the U.S. Congress passed the Immigration and Reform Control Act (IRCA), actions that were perceived as systematic attempts to undermine the Mexican government (Lowenthal 1989). In effect, the drug issue had been linked to the question of undocumented immigration. The rationale behind the linkage between immigration and drug trafficking was that given the number of Customs seizures at the border of automobiles and pedestrians who carried drugs, a strong immigration bill would impact the influx of heroin and other drugs. Any restriction would necessarily have a positive effect (House of Representatives, July 22, 1986).

The combination of efforts to improve cooperation and effectiveness, and recriminations against the Mexican government indicated marked differences in perception of how to handle the growing crisis in Mexico. By the summer of 1986, Mexico was largely being referred to as "the most corrupt nation on earth" and "a problem area of immense proportions" with outflows of heroin, marijuana, amphetamines, and cocaine that were considered to have reached epidemic levels.⁹⁶ Furthermore, U.S. government officials were expressing grave concern because of widespread rumors in Washington and among academic circles that Mexico was "virtually in a state of collapse, not only economically, but socially

⁹⁶ . Congressional hearings in 1986 reveal an intensification in the rhetoric used to describe the problem of drug enforcement in Mexico. "It is estimated that as much as one third of the cocaine entering the United States transits through Mexico...we are making very little progress in suppressing that flow. In short, our joint 2,000-mile border is out of control; it is a virtual sieve, and our two nations are reeling under the onslaught of narcodollars that are corrupting the political, the economic, and social institutions of both of our nations" (House of Representatives July 17, 1986: 3).

and politically" (House of Representatives, July 22, 1986: 4). In the words of Representative, James H. Scheuer:

Mexico is going through the most grave internal convulsions now as a result of the elections between the PRI and PAN with allegations, widely accepted allegations, of systematic and widespread fraud, widespread citizen unrest. That Government is on the knife's edge... We've got to do some contingency planning for what happens in the event that the social compact is stretched beyond the breaking point. There are many serious people who predict the collapse of the Mexican Government and the Mexican political system under the stresses of corruption, the inefficiency, and the emerging unacceptability of that as far as the public is concerned... We have to think about the implications of what might happen... what is going to be the effect of that on the integrity of our border, what is going to be the effect of that on the integrity of even the failing level of cooperation between Mexico and the United States on drug interdiction efforts now (House of Representatives, July 22, 1986: 4)

Events had reached such crisis proportions that both the Mexican and U.S. governments felt a need to reexamine and reconceptualize how to best respond to the many problems they were encountering in order to improve the bilateral relationship. President de la Madrid scheduled a visit to Washington, D.C. in August 1986 to discuss a wide array of issues with President Reagan. During his trip, on August 13, 1986, U.S. citizen Victor Cortéz was seized by Mexican judicial state police in Guadalajara, Jalisco where he worked as a member of the U.S. Consulate.

Cortéz was arrested in the company of Antonio Garrate Bustamante, who was supposedly a DEA informant. It had been reported that Miguel Angel Félix Gallardo, Juan Matta Ballesteros and Rafael Caro Quintero had ordered the police agents to murder Cortéz (Proceso August 25, 1986). However, Cortéz was released shortly after his arrest, but only after the U.S. Consul to Guadalajara, Irwin Rubinstein identified him as an agent of the DEA. Two days later on August 15, 1986, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese denounced the

Mexican police and claimed that Cortéz had been seized illegally and tortured. Both the Governor of Jalisco and the State Attorney General denied that Cortéz was tortured, although it was agreed that an investigation would take place. Once again, the DEA was in the Mexican press for behaving inconsistently with Mexican law.

The DEA as a Roadblock to Cooperation

When news of DEA activities in Mexico reached the press, the Mexican Senate demanded that they be investigated, as well as that the conventions between the government of Mexico and the DEA be reexamined. As with the Camarena affair, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) asserted that only one convention existed between Mexico and the United States that dated to 1930 and was limited to the exchange of information about drugs. Nowhere in the convention did it mention that DEA agents could actually carry out investigations within Mexican territorial boundaries (Proceso August 25, 1986: 15). This information was countered by the Guadalajara U.S. Consulate Spokesperson, John Roney, who asserted that a treaty had been signed between Mexico and the DEA in 1960 and renewed in 1970 that guaranteed that U.S. agents could work in Mexico.⁹⁷ Despite these contretemps, the presidential summit was declared a success: relations were improving and cordial.

⁹⁷ . On August 19, the PGR indicated that the DEA had permission from the Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) to investigate in Mexico. Furthermore, DEA agents were accredited as diplomatic or consular personnel and their sole function was to exchange information with responsible authorities over individuals being investigated. The U.S. embassy emphasized that the DEA operations were restricted to the rules established by the SRE and reiterated that no DEA agent participated in police type activities. The Mexican President issued a statement in which he negated the possible expulsion of the DEA, but which affirmed that the DEA would be placed under continuous review to ensure that agents obeyed Mexican laws (Crónica 1987: 674).

A statement was released to the press that stated that the United States and Mexico would join forces in a \$266 million emergency program to curb drug trafficking along their mutual border. Operation Alliance, as it would be known, involved a combination of federal officers, radar aircraft and balloons, weapons and other equipment at the cost of approximately \$100 million phased over a two-year period (The Times August 15, 1986). The DEA, however, would remain under scrutiny in Mexico, while accusations of Mexican corruption continued.⁹⁸

Mexico and the Media

Mexico was convinced that the United States government had concerted efforts with the press to undermine Mexico's image and to interfere in Mexican affairs, but also expressed confusion because of continued contradictory statements issued by U.S. government officials. In September, the San Diego Union Tribune printed an article in which the Secretary of Defense, Juan Arévalo Gardoqui was accused by an unidentified FBI agent as one of 45 upper level government officials who were supposedly involved in drug trafficking.

⁹⁸ . Indeed, from 1986 to 1988, the issue of DEA accreditation was a recurring theme in drug control operations. It appears that although the SRE and PGR had authorized the presence of DEA agents, they were not fully aware of the extent of their activities nor of the change in status that the U.S. embassy had granted them. Sometime in 1986, the U.S. embassy began to issue all of its DEA personnel and family with Diplomatic passports. Then, it proceeded to request that any member who was already legally in Mexico re-request new diplomatic visas in place of the more common tourist visas which they already had and which were still valid. All individuals granted diplomatic status were supposed to appear on a list of accredited personnel destined for Protocol. Beginning in 1987, the SRE gave instructions to avoid the release of diplomatic and official visas to administrative technical personnel at the U.S. embassy according to the statutes and definitions of the General Directorate of Protocol. Even if the U.S. embassy were to insist on diplomatic status for their personnel, it would not be granted if they were listed as technical administrative personnel. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. February 3, 1987.

In contrast, the U.S. embassy issued a bulletin that not only exonerated the General, it denied the availability of any such proof. On September 17, Attorney General Edwin Meese and INS Director Alan Nelson issued a statement that connected the movement of illegal immigrants with drug traffickers.⁹⁹ By October 1986, the Mexican government filed two notes of protest, this time regarding the passage of the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, U.S. legislation which specifically addressed Mexico in a manner that the Mexican government felt negatively affected its interests, and the second regarded the taxing of imported oil. The de la Madrid administration voiced the opinion that instead of visibly and vociferously penalizing Mexico in the media and in Congress,¹⁰⁰ that the United States should dialogue with Mexican officials as had taken place on December 16 and 17, 1985 to discuss any differences.

The Mexican Congress Adopts a New Role

One unexpected outcome of the drug issue was the reaction of the Mexican Congress. The Second Section of the Foreign Relations Commission of the Mexican Congress held two special sessions in 1986 with regards to drug trafficking. The first one was held on October 31 with members of the PGR. The Senators called the Hearing in reaction to current events and matters of which they had been largely kept in the dark with regards to U.S. drug control

⁹⁹ . The INS had activated a drug control operation along the border in which it seized 200 million dollars worth of drugs from illegal immigrants and "polleros." The purpose of this was to pressure Congress to pass Simpson-Rodino (*Crónica* 1987: 676).

¹⁰⁰ . On October 16, 1986 Congress approved a resolution entitled "Sense of the Congress" in which it affirmed that Mexico's response to drug trafficking had been inadequate. The resolution proposed that economic sanctions be applied to Mexico, as well as that travel warnings be issued to tourists planning to visit. On October 17, Simpson-Rodino was passed and President Reagan signed legislation which would charge 11.7 cents per barrel one oil imports. On October 18, the Senate passed the Anti-Narcotics bill which formally approved the Certification Process (*Crónica* 1987: 673-680).

activities in Mexico. It was expressed at this meeting that U.S. officials begin to act on a quid-pro-quo basis. In other words, Mexican officers should have the same rights in the United States that U.S. agents had in Mexico.¹⁰¹

On November 12, they gathered again to discuss the role of the United States in Mexican drug control and requested clarification regarding U.S. participation from the Foreign Relations office.¹⁰² Although the Mexican Congress rarely articulated any policy motivations from their part, members of the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores had become concerned over the combination of their negative reaction with that of the press, and public opinion regarding DEA activities in Mexico. The Secretaría was afraid that congressional reaction could directly affect U.S. cooperation with Mexico. It was clear from the questions asked that the Senators remained concerned that the United States had excessive leverage over decisions being made in Mexico, as well as over the juridical status of DEA agents located in Mexico. Another issue the Mexican Congress addressed regarded the differences between U.S. and Mexican legal systems and the confusion that these engendered. The Mexicans felt that part of the problem lay with U.S. tolerance for individuals caught consuming drugs. Moreover, the Mexican Senators were upset with the U.S. passage of the 1986 Drug Abuse Act and wanted to know whether the Foreign Relations office was considering evaluating U.S. participation. The Foreign Relations office was placed in the unusual position of defending U.S. efforts in Mexico, along with the decisions it had been carrying out for the past 30 years. Never before

¹⁰¹ . Memorandum. Direccion para Asuntos Bilaterales. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores. October 31, 1986.

¹⁰² . Memorandum. April 8, 1987. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores.

had the SRE had to account for its actions before a congressional body. The issues brought up at the congressional meetings would recur until the end of the de la Madrid administration.¹⁰³

The 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act

The Reagan administration continued to apply pressure on Mexico. Reagan chose not to decertify Mexico that year only because of a special justification as related to national security reasons and in light of the extent to which the Mexican government had devoted financial and human resources to drug control, it was felt that it should not be punished. President certified that Mexico had cooperated fully in drug control efforts, but only under the condition that in 1988, the Mexican government demonstrate positive results in the reduction of heroin and marijuana production in the fields and at the border.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ In May 1988, Senator Gonzalo Martinez Corbala submitted a proposal to the Mexican Congress that rejected the notion that the United States government could certify Mexican efforts at drug control on the grounds that such behavior demonstrated interference in Mexico's domestic affairs. Furthermore, Corbala argued that reciprocity was fundamental to how the drug situation should be handled and he urged the U.S. Congress to assume its role in joint efforts as agreed to in the Intergovernmental Commission established in 1986. Senator Corbala reflected that the United States sanctioned any country where drugs were produced or trafficked, but it did not effectively persecute those who financed and distributed drugs within the United States (Garcia Solis 1988: 18).

¹⁰⁴ On April 14, 1988, the Senate voted (63-27) to disapprove the Presidential certification, but the House did not take similar action. Jerrold Mark Dion, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics Matters, Department of State at a hearing: "U.S. Foreign Policy and International Narcotics Control - Part II" before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control on March 29, 1988 testified that "Perhaps no other region of the narcotics world is more volatile than the land mass between the Rio Grande and the Panama/Colombia border. The shift in this decade has been pronounced. Mexico, a principal supplier of heroin and marijuana to the United States, made the greatest strides in eradication of any nation in the 1970s, but has seen its program fail to keep pace in the 1980s, despite some solid improvements... Mexico needs to take aggressive action against the growing traffic in cocaine from South America. Traffickers must be apprehended, tried and convicted and their assets should be seized. For Mexico to restore the effectiveness of its campaign is one of two keys to more successful narcotics control throughout the region. The second, we believe, is to shut off the traffickers access to the Panamanian banking system." p. 31-32.

Although Mexico made greater efforts to control traffickers and participated in bilateral efforts, there was also a sense of anger reflected in the Mexican media as a result of the implicitly critical certification. Moreover, the certification process reflected the pressures of U.S. electoral dynamics, as well as domestic political pressures, especially in light of the increased use of Mexico as a major transshipment area for cocaine destined for the United States, a situation which expanded in the period 1987-1988.

The evolving situation was encapsulated by John C. Lawn, Administrator for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control on March 29, 1988, as follows:

Colombian cocaine trafficking organizations have become aligned with Mexican traffickers to take advantage of the Mexicans' smuggling and distribution networks already in place... Leaders of both countries have supported a strengthening of bilateral law enforcement efforts by increasing the effectiveness of crop eradication programs and improving drug interdiction initiatives.¹⁰⁵ We expect that bilateral enforcement efforts will also be enhanced as a result of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty that has been signed by the Attorney General of Mexico and the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico... The treaty will serve as a mechanism through which each government may request and expect formal cooperation and assistance regarding the collection of evidence, witness testimony, and other investigative and judicial procedures.

Nevertheless, despite intensive efforts to control drugs at the border, as well as to coordinate and increase cooperation with Mexican drug enforcement officers, drug traffickers were still able to operate effectively and to increase their bases of operation.

¹⁰⁵ The U.S. backed crop eradication project, Vanguard, did not gain much ground. It was said to be plagued by mismanagement, red tape, corruption, and it strained U.S.-Mexican relations. Whereas the United States had contributed 92 aircraft, and in 1987, had paid \$14.5 million for maintenance, parts, and pilot training, many clashes erupted over the choice of aircraft, salaries, work slowdowns, and shortages of replacement parts. Furthermore, the United States was dissatisfied with the results which despite destroying some 6200 acres of opium poppy according to Mexican sources, failed to destroy the remaining 15,000 acres (Penn 1988: 1, 10).

In large part because of the ongoing economic crisis in which average per capita incomes declined by 20 percent or more, drug traffickers were able to increase drug production sufficiently to offset aerial and hand eradication of crops. With the continuation of Mexico's economic crisis, conditions were in place to encourage a parallel drug economy alongside the legal economy that began to provide a counterweight to problems related to the larger crisis. Furthermore, drug traffickers' extensive financial resources and ability to procure arms, aircraft, electronic surveillance, and sophisticated means to transport drugs and evade detection not only opened venues for corruption and intimidation of government and law enforcement officials, but permitted them to counter any interdiction effort simply as an aspect of doing business.

In addition, the modus operandi of drug traffickers has traditionally been to threaten to kill any official who could not be corrupted or intimidated, a practice commonly referred to in Mexico as, "*plomo o plata*." Such practices have had the tendency to produce unconventional security threats, whereby powerful drug mafias demonstrate an ability and willingness to destabilize government and jeopardize social stability, at least insofar as it benefits them. As witnessed in Colombia throughout the 1980s, the violence engendered by

drug trafficking had the potential to threaten Mexican stability,¹⁰⁶ and as a result, represented a threat to U.S. national interests.

In order to address the problem from a regional perspective, Congress passed Public Law 100-960, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 which contained a number of multilateral initiatives and attempted to establish a hemispheric drug control regime. The 1988 drug bill urged the U.S. President to convene a Western Hemispheric Summit with heads of state and high-ranking government officials from every government in the region to hold an "International Conference on Combating Illegal Drug Production, Trafficking and Use in the Western Hemisphere." The Secretary of State was assigned the task of forming a regional plan against the growing cocaine trade.

The Office of National Drug Control Policy was created and a Director, William J. Bennett, (the "Drug Czar") was appointed to develop policy and coordinate both the supply and demand aspects of drug control, largely because of congressional frustration at interagency rivalries that impeded drug enforcement. However, resolution of international narcotics control issues continued to be the responsibility of the Department of State, which would also act as the lead agency for international drug control matters and coordinate the activities of

¹⁰⁶ . If parallels could be drawn between Colombia and Mexico, the situation that might evolve in Mexico was indeed threatening. Violence related to the drug cartels became endemic in Colombia and threatened that country's ability to govern itself. For example, in 1984, the Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was murdered. Followed by a shoot-out in 1985 in which 11 Supreme Court Justices were killed by guerrillas paid by the Medellin Cartel after seizing the Palace of Justice and burning the extradition files related to cartel members. In 1986, the editor of *El Espectador*, Guillermo Cano Isaza, was assassinated in his office as a result of his opposition to traffickers. That same year both the former Chief of Anti-Narcotics Operations, Colonel Jaime Ramirez Gomez and Colonel Jose Augustin Ramos Ramires, Chief of Special Operations of the National Police were gunned down near their homes. In 1987, 14,000 murders were committed in Colombia, or one in every 2,000 people, and so on.

other agencies involved in overseas drug control efforts, i.e., the DEA, the U.S. Customs Service, and the Coast Guard.

Furthermore, Congress instructed the President to direct the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) to examine the possibilities of establishing a Latin American Regional Anti-Narcotics Force and strategy. The United States would provide the equipment, training, and financial resources to support the establishment and operation of such a force, whereas those nations most affected by drug cartels would provide the manpower. In addition, the 1988 drug law also suggested that a Caribbean Anti-Narcotics Training Center be established, as well as an International Criminal Court. Albeit, it was only after 1988-1989 that substantial seizures of cocaine shipments from Colombia began to take place in Mexico, the size of which caught Mexican government officials somewhat by surprise.¹⁰⁷

Transitions in Drug Control: de la Madrid's Final Year as President

During de la Madrid's final year as president, drug control in Mexico evolved strategically and technologically. Mexico implemented a system of air defense in the region bordering Belize and Guatemala to protect its national sovereignty against drug traffickers and illegal contraband of arms and goods. The exact purpose of the system was to establish a radar net to watch for, detect and intercept illegal aircraft crossing Mexico's southeastern airspace. The political reasons behind this decision were probably many, but two stood out. First, to use the radars as a strategic tool to reduce U.S. pressure and criticism. Second, to

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Jorge Tello, the Director of National Security from the Secretaría de Gobernación. The interview took place on June 22, 1995. In 1989, the Mexican government seized 38.1 mt of cocaine. In 1990, they seized 48.5 mt and in 1991, 50.3 mt. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report. 1993. According to Tello, "in 1982, we seized maybe 400 kgs. of coca, by 1992, we had seized around 100 tons, an approximate 1000 percent increase. This really took us by surprise."

remove any rationale or justification regarding U.S. insistence for permission to enter Mexican territory when in hot pursuit of potential drug traffickers.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, the Mexican National Defense Forces designated the area as strategically significant because it bordered Guatemala and Belize, and given the instability that those countries were experiencing. Along with the rest of Central America, the area was considered the principal gateway for the introduction of socialist, anti-constitutional politics and constituted a constant threat for those industrial, demographic and military centers located in the area.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, National Defense judged that the region was the most likely to experience aggressive intrusions from the south and east of the country.

The topography of the area (a combination of jungle, swamps, and mountains) made the use of large ground forces impractical and facilitated irregular operations, therefore, it was considered that air operations were the most logical response. The decision was made to acquire three Westinghouse radar systems (TPS 63 and TPS 70), along with five King-Air 90s from Beechcraft and transport vehicles to move ground crew. Furthermore, special air squadrons were to be stationed in Tabasco, Yucatán, Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Quintana Roo as back up to intercept the planes detected by the radar system.

¹⁰⁸ . Informational memorandum regarding Intersecretarial meeting for the development of an Integral System for the Defense of Mexican Airspace. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. July 18, 1988.

¹⁰⁹ . At the same time, there was some concern specifically about Guatemala's reaction to the establishment of a radar net that would cover most of its territory. Some officials expressed that perhaps the Latin America and Caribbean sections of the Secretaría should be consulted because of recent Guatemalan military incursions into Mexican airspace while in the hot pursuit of guerrillas without permission. The Mexican embassy, as a result, had presented notes of diplomatic protest to the Guatemalan government. It was feared that as a precedent, the situation could cause "delicate susceptibilities" in Guatemala. Memorandum. Lomas de Sotelo, DF. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. July 18, 1988.

The technical aspects for financing the radars were unclear and could have potentially derailed the actual implementation of the air defense system. The Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público was in charge of the financing, while NAFINSA was designated as the actual financial agent to activate the necessary credits from EXIMBANK in the United States. In order to obtain the credits, the radars had to be denominated for "civilian use," not military.¹¹⁰ But the use of the radar was clearly military and constitutionally had to be denominated as important to national security in order for the President to be able to grant funding for them. To facilitate the process with the EXIMBANK, it was decided to draft two contracts, one applicable for the civilian radar consisting of the two bidimensional, TPS-63, and a separate one for the tridimensional TPS-70.¹¹¹ The logic behind this decision was that if the EXIMBANK refused to fund the TPS-70, then Mexico would simply buy the radar outright from Westinghouse.

With the help of Ambassador Pilliod, Westinghouse lowered its price for the two radar systems from \$39 million to \$37 million. The EXIMBANK would pay 15 percent of the total up front and the rest over the next ten years, with a two-year grace period. Lastly, additional equipment would be included and the first components of the equipment would be delivered

¹¹⁰ . The project was backed by a General Fletcher who interceded with the EXIMBANK through the auspices of the State Department. Internal correspondence. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. December 1, 1988.

¹¹¹ . TPS-63 radars are for civilian aircraft, while the TPS-70 is undeniably military.

by plane to Mexico.¹¹² The radar system was delivered on November 2, 1988 to Mexico's Military Base No. One. After many years of trying, the Mexican military had finally established a radar net in the southeast corner of Mexico. Although not resolved fully, problems regarding the drug question were reduced for the incoming president.

Conclusions

In sum, by the end of the Reagan administration, more than \$21 billion had been spent on drug control. But, the Reagan administration had adopted a supply-side strategy, one that was considered an "abysmal failure" from a variety of perspectives. By 1989, more drugs were available on the U.S. market, and at cheaper prices, than there had been at the outset of Reagan's tenure as President. According to testimony presented by Dr. Bruce M. Bagley before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control on April 26, 1989, the supply-side approach had been derived from a faulty framework: the realist paradigm.

Adoption of the realist interpretation, in effect, inexorably led to the supply-side strategy and unilateral escalation tactics...as central components of the U.S. antidrug campaign. Realist paradigms unquestionably inspired the successive antinarcotics bills passed by Congress during the 1980s. The new laws explicitly sought to provide the economic resources, personnel, administrative structures, and policy guidelines whose absence, insufficiency, or ambiguity their supporters believed had hobbled the Reagan administration's ability to carry out the war on drugs effectively. Notwithstanding Washington's perennial optimism, however, none of the various legislative initiatives approved over the decade were efficacious in resolving the nation's drug problems. (Bagley & Tokatlián 1992).

The drug problem escalated and Latin America continued to bear the brunt of pressures from both drug traffickers and the U.S. government, neither of which appeared to regard the

¹¹² . Ambassador Pilliod facilitated the sale because Mexico received a better counter-offer from the French Thomson Corp. than the one from Westinghouse. Moreover, financing could be managed through the French-Mexican protocol with little trouble and be paid in pesos. Memorandum. SRE. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. August 17, 1988.

national sovereignty of those countries as singularly important.

In the case of Mexico, the use of the realist approach to drug control was particularly inconsistent and inappropriate because of the hierarchy of competing interests on the bilateral agenda given the complexity of the relationship. Whereas on the one hand, the Reagan administration placed drug trafficking on the national security agenda and used decertification as a strategy to leverage Mexico and other drug producing countries into responding to U.S. pressures. Other issues such as debt repayment proved more important and in fact derailed the process, despite deep dissatisfaction with Mexican drug control efforts. Moreover, in contrast to other Latin American countries, however, Mexico had the added advantage of territorial contiguity that gave it some space within which to maneuver against pressures created by the drug war.

Furthermore, the U.S. Congress demonstrated signs of growing disillusionment with U.S. drug policy performance and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 reflected those feelings.¹¹³ The legislation made provisions began to focus on demand-side strategies as evidenced by the symbolic increase in the percentage of the funding of these from 30 percent to 50 percent out of a U.S. drug budget which then totalled \$9.3773 billion (Bagley 1992: 3). It was under these conditions of tentative transition in drug policy that President George Bush assumed office in January 1989.

By the end of the 1980s, there were clear indications that the militarization of the drug

¹¹³ . The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 made special reference to Mexico. Section 4304 limited international narcotics control assistance to Mexico to \$15 million and called on the Mexican government to prosecute those responsible for the Camarena case, while at the same time requiring that the President take into consideration whether or not Mexico responded favorably to U.S. proposals to establish joint air operations and joint air surveillance operations (Storrs 1989).

war was negatively affecting Latin American countries, particularly the Andean region, where it was felt that economic aid, as opposed to military aid, would be more beneficial. Nevertheless, the United States Congress was insistent about increasing military involvement in drug control efforts. It became apparent that the drug war had been categorized a low-intensity conflict mission and that counter-narcotics was included as one type of counter-insurgency operation within the U.S. military agenda. Such actions appeared to have little recognition of concerns over either human rights or for the relative strength that military organizations could potentially gain in Latin America that could alter or outright disrupt democratic processes. (WOLA 1991).

For Mexico, U.S. militarization and increased law enforcement presence on Mexican territory signified additional political constraints in its ability to cooperate. Given the PRI's beleaguered position, its growing inability to control the media, and the subsequent exposure of DEA activities in Mexico, Mexico's response was circumscribed. The PRI had to balance domestic pressures for political opening and moral renovation, with U.S. pressures to increase law enforcement and military participation in drugs control while it was economically strapped. Moreover, criticism from the U.S. media combined with mixed signals from the U.S. government created confusion as to U.S. intentions. Mexican law enforcement became defensive. Their reaction to criticism essentially opened the door to more aggressive behavior. Without adequate funding or overall training they were vulnerable to the corruptive elements of the drugs traffickers.

Moreover, U.S. pressure aggravated an already tense situation. The Mexican people were not particularly receptive to what was perceived as U.S. interference in their

internal affairs. This specific problem only serves to aggravate future cooperation measures. It is not to say that Mexico will stop cooperating with the United States, but as you will note in the following chapters, the drug issue will be played down in the bilateral relationship with the net effect that it will grow.

CHAPTER 4

1988-1992: CYCLES OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Bush and Salinas: A Convergence of Ideas and Priorities

This chapter analyzes the multiple changes made in Mexico's drug control policy in the years 1988-1994, and the correlation between the domestic aspects of the problem and Mexico's bilateral relationship with the United States. It also examines the challenges faced by President Bush given the growing dichotomy between his administration trying to maintain cooperation with Mexico and the U.S. Congress which was highly critical of Mexico's drug control efforts and accused it of corruption. Moreover, the Bush administration was committed to the creation of an international drug control regime, but it continued with Reagan's policy to strongly emphasize the militarization of the drug war.

Although the evolution of Mexican drug control policy has run parallel to that of the United States, there have been limitations that affected Mexico's decision to restructure its drugs control program. The interrelationship of factors that contributed to the decisionmaking process included internal pressures for political opening and the need for economic restructuring. In the case of the United States, the Bush Administration was also caught between its domestic and foreign policy agendas in the sense that Congress and constituents demanded accountability.

Salinas Takes a New Tack

Carlos Salinas de Gortari inaugurated his presidency by adopting an aggressive posture against corruption to bolster the weak mandate he received from the Mexican

electorate in the July 1987 presidential elections.¹¹⁴ In so doing, President Salinas demonstrated his political acuity with the removal of powerful rivals while at the same time, he strengthened his political ties within Mexico. To demonstrate his commitment to the drug war, one of the government's first targets was drug trafficker, Miguel Felix Angel Gallardo, arrested in April 1989 in connection with the Enrique Camarena case, a major sticking point for U.S.-Mexican relations since 1985.

Shortly thereafter, the Salinas administration followed its crackdown on corruption with the development of the first National Program for Drug Control.¹¹⁵ The program was founded on the premise that Mexico's national security was threatened by drug trafficking, but had the parallel intention of reducing U.S. pressure on Mexico.¹¹⁶ Why after a history of denying that drug trafficking was a threat for Mexico did the Mexican government reverse its stand?

As a means of answering this question, and of establishing a historical foundation,

¹¹⁴ . Carlos Salinas de Gortari was not the clear and obvious winner of the 1988 presidential elections. There are many who claim that the election was actually won by Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, candidate for the Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD).

¹¹⁵ . The drug control program was based on Mexico's tenets of foreign policy: respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the legislative bodies of every country.

¹¹⁶ . The definition given to national security brings up an important point. According to Jorge Chabat, in his article, "Seguridad nacional y narcotráfico: vínculos reales e imaginarios," when the United States discusses drug trafficking as a national security problem, it refers primarily to the large drug consumption problem it has and its accompanying problems, such as organized crime and money laundering. When Mexico and Colombia refer to drug trafficking as a national security threat, they refer to the effects of U.S. drug control politics, especially in reference to the potential for U.S. military and police intervention, and violation of national sovereignty (1994b).

this chapter examines the drug control discourse in Mexico during the Bush and Salinas administrations, while it explores the interrelationships between the political, social and economic events in both an international and national context. Two events partially account for why this policy reversal took place in the particular timeframe that it did. First, the decision to actively pursue a free trade agreement between Mexico and the United States; and second, the transformation of the drug trade when cocaine was introduced by Colombian traffickers into Mexico in the mid-1980s.¹¹⁷

Domestic factors also played a central role in the Salinas administration's decision to "Mexicanize" its drug control program. The direction of Mexican drug control policy changed not only in response to U.S. pressures and the conditions of the global economy, but also because of demands made by major socioeconomic forces within Mexico to restructure the Mexican government, coupled with the growth of social tensions. For the first time, since the PRI came to power in 1929, these demands presented a viable threat to its ability to rule. However, the modifications in drug policy took place primarily within the larger context of Mexican foreign relations and brought about changes in the framework at the level of the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), the military, and the national security apparatus: the *Secretaría de Gobernación*.

Until the late 1980s, Mexico had dealt with matters related to the control of drug

¹¹⁷ . Several of the central themes that emerge in this chapter initially developed from discussions with my colleague Guadalupe González at the Center for U.S.- Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego. I am profoundly grateful to Guadalupe for sharing her extensive knowledge of the ins-and-outs of the Mexican political situation and for her insights into the drug trade.

production and trafficking predominately in response to U.S. pressure. Domestic factors bore little effect on drug policy decisions, except perhaps to reinforce nationalist tendencies by responding in a manner that could be interpreted by the Mexican public as preventing the United States from interfering in Mexican affairs.¹¹⁸

The domestic component added to the complexity of the problems created by illegal narcotics. In particular, human rights groups and opposition parties began to question the Mexican government's behavior in operationalizing drug control policy. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights groups became increasingly important and visible in Mexico because of their disputes regarding certain controversial figures at both the policy and law enforcement levels, such as Deputy Attorney General in charge of narcotics matters Coello Trejo, appointed by the President to oversee drug control in Mexico.

Moreover, drug trafficking-related incidents during both the de la Madrid and Salinas administrations escalated in violence and began to spread to the civilian population. The outbreak of violence presented a potentially significant threat to President Salinas's efforts to reduce Mexico's debt and restructure the economy for growth because

¹¹⁸ . The drug issue had become extremely contentious during the period 1985-1986, during which time, the Mexican public reacted strongly to U.S. pressures. Furthermore, as different circumstances were revealed, such as the activities of the DEA in Mexico, the human rights abuses committed by the Federal Judicial Police, etc., not only did the Mexican public become aware, but it became alarmed. Moreover, the U.S. media continuously bashed Mexico, while the U.S. government showed signs of intervening in Mexico's domestic affairs, events which unleashed a backlash of anti-Americanism that additionally constrained the Mexican government's ability to respond to U.S. pressures (Proceso February 11, 1985; Proceso February 18, 1985; Proceso March 4, 1985)

of the conceivable danger that organized trafficking organizations posed to social and political stability, and the doubt that it cast over Mexico's ability to restructure itself economically and to maintain the country in balance.

Mexico's overall foreign policy agenda under President Salinas was broadly based on two premises: to expand Mexico's economic opportunities and lessen its dependency on the United States, as well as to delink the sets of issues that formed part of the U.S.-Mexican bilateral agenda and included drug control (Chabat 1994). In other words, the Salinas administration sought to prevent differences over specific concerns such as drugs, from becoming stumbling blocks for other elements of the complex relationship with the United States in an attempt to reduce its levels of susceptibility to U.S. influence.

In contrast to the attempts to de-link issues from one another at the bilateral level, the more the Mexican public became aware of the extent of the drug problem in Mexico, the more the tendency grew to couple drugs to other issues being raised on the Mexican domestic agenda. Human rights abuses, political corruption, and violence represented trends that also contributed to the decision to establish a national drug control program.

Pseudo-Multilateralism: Bush and the Drug War

During the Bush administration, the United States sought to institute a drug control regime in Latin America based on bilateral or multilateral cooperation. Notwithstanding, the United States rarely hesitated to apply forcible measures in the form of economic coercion for non-compliance with U.S. national security interests, and even

institutionalized the behavior with the passage of such legislation as the 1988 Anti Drug Abuse Act, in order to achieve its policy goals. However, the ability for the United States to behave as a monitor of Mexico's foreign policy, in the late 1980s-early 1990s, was increasingly circumscribed as much by its own position in the global system, as by Mexico's internal situation which conceivably posed a threat to the United States.

At the juncture in which the Salinas administration assumed control of government, the United States was challenged by a changing world order in which it was not clear what its priorities should be, which in turn, increased its vulnerability to both Mexico's economic crisis and its potential for political instability. Additionally, the view of international relations in the period 1989-1994 revealed not only a more complex agenda of issues that ranged from global environmental change to shifting demographic trends, to the shortage of capital to develop the underdeveloped world, but reflected an increased interrelationship between them (Roberts 1992).

Moreover, the multiplicity of actors involved in the decisionmaking process and their ability to influence policymakers on both sides of the border in combination with the transnationalization of issues demonstrated the extent to which the state was increasingly limited in its behavior. This point was equally significant for Mexico as it was for the United States. Lastly, the policies pursued by the United States have responded more to its domestic perceptions - U.S. constituents require visible and tangible results - rather than to the reality of the conditions under which drug traffickers operate. The nature of the drug

problem is that of a social phenomenon that tends to be transnational, fluid, and economically driven. In contrast, U.S. response has typically been of a realist character with a greater emphasis on interception and military responses (Bagley & Tokatlian 1994), as opposed to targeting demand at home.

The Changing Face of U.S. Policy in Latin America

An Evolution in Geostrategic Interests and Foreign Policymaking

The electoral rhetoric and media coverage during the 1988 presidential campaign, as well as unfolding events in Latin America elevated the drug issue to the forefront of public awareness in the United States. One of the explanations for this occurrence was an absence of general themes that produced an issue vacuum that was filled in part by the drug control question (Bagley 1989). This vacuum was a partial effect of the cessation of the Cold War and the subsequent discontinuation of containment as a viable hemispheric policy. The traditional value of U.S. geostrategic policy to exclude extra-hemispheric rivals had lost its utility at the end of the 1980s with the failure of communism as a counterpoint to U.S. ideological thinking (Schoultz 1994). A new security paradigm was needed.

For the past several years, policy makers in Washington have been quietly struggling to re-conceptualize the meaning of security for inter-American relations. It, therefore, is important to understand that much more has changed than the policy of Cold War containment that dominated U.S. thinking about Latin America for the half-century following World War II. What has been lost is the relevance of exclusion, the basic value governing the thinking of all prior generations of U.S. policymakers (Schoultz 1994).

Two sets of concerns emerged in U.S.-Latin American relations that were relevant to the subsequent formulation of policy for the region. Latin America in general and Mexico more specifically, became autonomously able to affect the United States. Because of the problems that evolved related to the debt crisis, uncontrolled immigration, and the drug trafficking problems that grew in the 1980s and early 1990s, new types of threats were created that brought into question the U.S. ability to guard its borders, and consequently to protect its sovereignty. These threats combined with a weakened economy created fear and served to enhance the militarization of the drug war and increased surveillance at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Domestic politics in the United States began to play a larger role in the making of foreign policy as reflected in the transnationalization of citizen participation in the policymaking process. As a result, the role played by Congress in foreign policy also expanded given the growing interest of their constituencies (Schoultz 1994). Mexico, a neighboring country where middle-class American tourists spend their vacation dollars, was specifically targeted. Not only was there a growing Mexican population within U.S. borders, but the country seemed to always be in financial trouble. Mexico was viewed as corrupt and a producer of drugs, but worse, when the Mexican economy suffered, the United States was directly impacted and jobs were lost.

These concerns came to have an effect on the Bush administration's drug policy which continued with the supply-side strategy begun under the Reagan administration in

spite of extensive criticism from demand-side proponents, including members of law enforcement and government officials. Its rudimentary efforts to reduce demand in the United States were limited and insufficiently comprehensive to be considered effective. The onus was still on the producing and transit countries to solve the drug problem in the United States. In order to respond to the multiplicity of issues and actors that emerged from the new trends in U.S.-Latin American relations, three general strains developed during Bush's tenure as president.

First, the Bush administration reacted by militarizing the drug war in Latin America well beyond the levels established during the Reagan presidency and reinforced the notion that a demonstration of resolve to win an all-out war on drugs would guarantee victory against traffickers. Second, the Bush administration subdued the rhetoric against producing and transit countries, while simultaneously it made greater efforts to establish multilateral agreements and provide aid for performance in the drug war, as well as sanctions in accordance with the 1986 and 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Acts. Third, it was officially recognized by the Bush administration that a comprehensive approach to the drug problem implied addressing both the demand and supply-side aspects of the drug problem, even if more in form than in function (Tokatlián 1994).

The net result was a policy that was inherently composed of costs and benefits. They were ineffective in bringing about the desired political results and only paid lip-service to the needs of producer and transit countries which were widely viewed as either

being unwilling or unable to seriously engage in antinarcotics efforts (U.S. House of Representatives, February 1989). As a result, although the United States began to adopt a more realistic perspective regarding the many facets of the drug problem, its failure to establish an effective drug control regime in the hemisphere signified that it would probably continue to unilaterally finance, implement, and/or supervise antinarcotics ventures regionally. Moreover, despite general unanimity among Latin American countries that the cartels behind drug production, distribution, and consumption were posing threats to national security and the welfare of society throughout the region, U.S. efforts to establish a hemispheric anti-drug regime generally provoked alienation and conflict because of its heavily punitive nature.

Overall U.S. interest in drug control in Mexico was mitigated by other concerns that were considered of weightier importance: the rise of the left as a viable challenge to the PRI and the ongoing problems with the Mexican economy (Rosenfeld 1988: A21). Analysts in the U.S. State Department discerned that the unpredictability of the PRI, combined with the wide array of issues on the bilateral agenda could contribute to significant economic and social threats for the United States. In effect, this type of analysis reinforced the Bush administration's inclination to broaden the military's role which was eventually expressed in both a militarization of the U.S.-Mexican border area and in the deployment of state-of-the-art surveillance satellites over Mexican territory to chart drug cultivation without permission from the Mexican government. Although these acts were

aggressive, somehow they did not disrupt the overall relationship between the two countries because Mexico's economic problems overshadowed sensitivities about national sovereignty.

A positive disposition toward cooperation was established early on, when the two Presidents-elect met in Houston, TX at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center on November 22, 1988, to informally discuss bilateral issues and concluded that there was room for mutual understanding (Diaz Ontiveros 1988: 55; Chabat 1994). With new administrations in office, both President Salinas and President Bush expressed resoluteness not to allow tensions over the drug issue to flare-up and spill over into other, more sensitive areas such as economically related issues like NAFTA (Rohter 1989f: 4).

Assessing the Drug Threat: 1989

From the outset of the Bush administration, a variety of articles appeared in the press indicating that Colombian drug cartels had created new supply lines by shifting their operations to the northern section of Mexico from the Caribbean to introduce cocaine into the United States. It was alleged that high-level present and former Mexican officials had provided them assistance in their smuggling efforts (Larmer 1989: 1,2; Branigin 1989a: 13A, 16A; Estrella de Panama 1989: 2B). Drug abuse was considered "domestic problem number one" (U.S. House of Representatives, September 14, 1989) hence, George Bush's first nationally televised speech in September 1989 focused on the serious threat presented to the American public by drug traffickers.

In this speech, President Bush outlined the first National Drug Control Strategy (September 1989)¹¹⁹ mandated by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. The Act was intended to form the basis for a national dialogue on the drug crisis in the United States and had as an objective the reduction of shipments of addictive drugs, such as cocaine, heroin, and other dangerous drugs into the United States by 50 percent over a ten-year period. In sum, President Bush's Drug Control Strategy called for an increased focus on source countries, an increase of military sources along the U.S.-Mexican border, as well as a more active international role for the United States to engage other nations into this effort. According to William J. Bennett, the first appointed Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy established by the 1988 Drug Abuse Act:

Th[e] first National Drug Control Strategy describes a balanced plan of attack for all levels of government, for private industry, and for all American citizens... The first goal of our strategy...is to reduce in the number of Americans who choose to use drugs. To that end, the President's Strategy stresses the principle of user accountability. The Strategy calls for increased focus on source countries and a more active international role by the United States to engage other nations in this effort. Interdiction efforts would be maintained. Major priority is placed on increasing the capacity of the drug treatment system and making it more accountable for results (House of Representatives, September 14, 1989: 14-15).

Instead of implementing a strong demand-side strategy, U.S. drug policy became heavily dependent on criminal law and punitive enforcement. Supporters of such

¹¹⁹ . From 1989 onward, the ONDCP would provide a National Drug Control Strategy with the intention of further refining the War on Drugs. The INCSR report acts as a country-by-country review for the previous year and supplements the Strategy which designs the course to be taken in the year to come.

policies¹²⁰ managed to massively increase the national budget for drug control from \$1.7 billion in fiscal year 1981 to just over \$13 billion by FY1994 (National Drug Control Strategy 1991; National Drug Control Strategy 1994). Despite verbal emphasis on demand side reduction, the federal drug control budget continued to allocate 70 to 80 percent of its funds to enforcement programs, only 20 to 30 percent of total expenditures were apportioned to treatment and prevention programs.¹²¹

Furthermore, although State and local governments spent more in total than the federal government, and allocated even less to treatment and prevention than the latter. Peter Reuter estimated that in 1990, for example, state and local governments spent approximately \$18 billion on drug control, of which 80 percent went to enforcement thus suggesting that in 1990 the national drug control budget was actually \$28 billion, including

¹²⁰ . Peter Reuter divides the drug policy debate into two: legalization versus supply-side and demand-side advocates, a debate on how to manage the drug problem. Reuter borrows from an essay by Nye, Allison, and Carnesale on approaches to prevent nuclear war and combines the two drug policy debates into a three-sided discussion. The first, supply-side hawks seek a continued expansion of punitive responses to drug use because "it is a lack of clarity about values that leads to so many young people becoming regular users of psychoactives." The second stance promotes legalization, and refers to the position held by the doves, who "believe that individuals use psychoactive substances because they provide pleasure and that society should minimize the harm that results from the use of such substances without criminalizing the choice of a particular substance." The third division refers to the owls who focus on the damage that arises from heavy drug use, as well as the complications arising from enforcement. "One wants the lowest level of enforcement compatible with keeping initiation down and encouraging the dependent to seek treatment" (Reuter 1992).

¹²¹ . The National Drug Control budget includes domestic enforcement, international and border control, as well as demand reduction. The logic behind placing more emphasis on supply reduction activities is that they also have a profound impact on demand reduction because of their deterrence qualities. Furthermore, in the view of decisionmakers, a more demand-side approach was the purview of schools, churches, and communities and were not thought to require federal interference, or extra funding (National Drug Control Strategy 1991: 134).

the \$6.7 billion for the federal government, and that 75 percent of that money was disbursed to law enforcement (Reuter 1992: 21).

The Justification for Militarization: A Growing Crime Emergency Situation

According to Drug Czar, William Bennett at the Hearing on the National Drug Control Strategy in September 1989, the rationale behind adopting stronger law enforcement efforts was the growth of a crime emergency situation that required immediate redressment. Although prevention and treatment were the root of the problem that needed to be contended with, "good, honest people...want relief." In his own words,

When law and order breaks down in the suburbs, people don't say first let's get to the root causes. They call the police so that decent people can function again without fear. When law and order breaks down in the inner-city we need to restore order too, or we will not be consistent (U.S. House of Representatives, September 14, 1989: 20, 21).

Hence, Federal law enforcement was expanded and targeted to receive \$3.113 billion in 1990, or \$334 million more, a 12 percent increase in funding from 1989, of which approximately \$20 million were to be apportioned to interdiction for the border patrol, for personnel, dogs, and other assets to monitor and arrest individuals coming across the border from Mexico. DEA was given funds to support the operation of seven new state and local task forces, as well as strategic and operation intelligence efforts such as Southwest border activities, etc. The FBI was asked to play a supporting role and target an increased number of the known major drug trafficking organizations, assessed at 450 networks in the United States alone.

The Organized Crime Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) permitted the INS to participate more actively in major interagency drug and organized crime investigations, while expanding apprehension and deportation efforts against criminal aliens and providing support to U.S. Attorneys and the ATF, which enhanced its ability to target drug organizations that used violence and firearms in their drug trafficking activities (House of Representatives, September 14: 48-49). Furthermore, a greater emphasis was placed on the punishment of drug offenders and Mr. Bennett suggested that more jails be constructed and that alternatives to incarceration, such as boot camps, be implemented.

Additionally, the role of the military was expanded to include the training of law enforcement elements both within the United States and throughout the hemisphere. Congress assigned DoD a statutory mission to take the lead for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of drugs into the United States with the passage of the FY 1989 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 100-456, September 29, 1988) which reinforced Ronald Reagan's NSDD 221. Congress authorized the DoD to spend \$300 million in fiscal year 1989 and to include its counter-drug role as a part of its overall mission. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney determined that drug control activities as a high priority national security mission for the military.

The Act enhanced the expanded use of the Army and the Air National Guard in supporting drug control activities. A minimum of \$40 million of this money was used by the National Guard in support of law enforcement agencies, particularly as back-up to U.S.

Customs along the border. As a result, by September 15, 1989 over 96,054 man-days were provided by the National Guard in 53 separate states and territories, and their activities included cargo searches at land border entry points and seaports; aerial and radar surveillance of borders and select air corridors; training; transportation support; ground reconnaissance of border and isolated air strips; and communications support.¹²²

The FY 1989 Authorization Act also directed the Secretary of Defense to integrate the command, control, communications, and technical intelligence assets (C3I) of the United States dedicated to drug control with the purpose of establishing a secure interoperable, interagency communications network to be run by Coast Guard and Customs. for which some \$60 million of the \$300 million that was appropriated by the military would be used for equipment. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), in consultation with the National Security Agency (NSA) was made responsible for the intelligence portion of the C3I programs.

The DIA's responsibilities included developing a collection strategy for the DoD and the law enforcement agencies, to increase the production of finished intelligence, and to establish a coordination mechanism for intelligence with law enforcement agencies, DoD agencies, and non-intelligence agencies. DIA was also supposed to provide

¹²² . One of the most successful operations, according to the National Guard, was Operation Border Ranger II which took place in California and involved a 30-day sustained effort along California's border with Mexico and coordination between the National Guard, the Customs Service, the Border Patrol, the California Department of Corrections, the Marine Corps, the Army, and local sheriffs' departments (House of Representatives, October 17, 1989: 77).

intelligence assessments and to develop a resource application framework to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of drug intelligence operations (GAO Testimony, October 17, 1989: 188).

The remaining \$200 million was designated for the interdiction mission or the drug detection and monitoring mission in FY 1989. The regional execution of the mission was ordered by the Chairman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff who made USCINCLANT, USCINCPAC, CINCNORAD, and USCINCSO responsible for DoD's anti-drug operations within their respective functional or geographic areas of responsibility. Three joint task forces, Joint Task Force 4 (JTF4) in Key West, FL; Joint Task Force 5 (JTF5) in Alameda, CA; and Joint Task Force 6 (JTF6) in El Paso, TX, were then created and dedicated to anti-drug surveillance.¹²³ Once fully-operational, JTFs were to collect sensor and intelligence information, then consolidate it for interdiction purposes primarily for the U.S. Customs and Coast Guard. JTF6, however, was designed differently from JTF4 and JTF5 which were sea-based.

JTF6 was land-based, could not gather intelligence, had no assets to order and

¹²³ . The purpose of the four CINCs in the drug war is to gather and process multi-source tactical intelligence information, make use of data available from limited fixed surveillance assets, and coordinate or direct the application of mobile tactical surveillance assets to fill in gaps in radar coverage, conduct surge operations, and extend radar surveillance. Each regional commander then established a regional intelligence apparatus to obtain current tactical information on drug trafficking within their areas of responsibility with the purpose of sharing it with other Federal agencies. This information was based on the testimony provided by the Honorable Stephen M. Duncan, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and the DoD coordinator for Drug Enforcement Policy and Support at the Hearing before the Subcommittees on Legislation and National Security and Government Information, Justice, and Agriculture, House Committee on Government Operations held on October 17, 1989 (House of Representatives October 17, 1989: 71-82).

limited authority, and for no reason could anyone from JTF6 cross the border into Mexico. Instead, JTF6 was meant to be a planning and coordinating body to fulfill requests for support made by Federal, State and law enforcement agencies. The requests for support had to come through Operation Alliance, which was designated the chief coordinator for all law enforcement activity along the border.

Part of the funds apportioned to DoD were applied to the construction of a radar fence that consisted of tethered aerostat balloons across the U.S.-Mexican border as a warning system to U.S. officials that illegal aircraft were crossing into U.S. territory. The aerostat is a balloon with a radar inside it that flies at approximately 12,000 feet and with a diameter coverage of 300 miles. Aerostats require a minimum of four hours of maintenance per week and can be locked into place within a 20-minute time span. However, the aerostat is susceptible to high winds, more than 60 knots, as well as to thunderstorms that contain lightning, both which occur frequently on the border.

The effectiveness of aerostats was and continues to be a hotly contested issue in drug interdiction. The crux of the problem has been that aerostats are only available for active use between 55 and 65 percent of the time, due to their vulnerability to weather conditions. Hence, it was the DoD's intention to supplement the radar fence with long-range radar aircraft such as AWACs, which by summer 1989 numbered 13.3 aircraft, to cover the gaps between aerostats and provide flexibility over various geographic locations and differing time periods (House of Representatives October 17, 1989: 89-90).

More Source Country Strategies

As part of its source-country response, the 1989 National Drug Control Strategy implemented the Andean Initiative which targeted the cocaine industry in Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. The long-range goal of the strategy was to significantly reduce the supply of coca leaf and cocaine products, while the near-term goals were the major disruption of the cocaine industry within and among those countries, as well as the dismantling of the cartels in control. To achieve those goals, the ONDCP developed a phased approach meant to comprehensively attack the problem for the region as a whole.

The first major element of the strategy was to encourage and assist Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia to increase the use of their military and law enforcement within the key cocaine producing areas. The objectives included the isolation of the producing areas through interdiction by air, road, and river traffic both of drugs and precursor chemicals, as well as the destruction of processing laboratories and infrastructure for trafficking. The United States would provide increased levels of technical and logistic support, as well as intelligence support, military and law enforcement training, and operation planning assistance.

The second element of the strategy was to implement a vigorous coca plant eradication program, along with the provision of funds to support crop substitution. The provision of economic assistance was considered key to the success of the Andean strategy, however, it was not meant to be enacted until 1991, after the United States

carefully reviewed whether or not the Andean nations had assisted sufficiently and effectively enough in their anti-narcotics efforts. The Department of State, the Agency for International Development (AID), the DoD and the Department of Justice, as well as the Director of the CIA contributed to the design and implementation of the plans to support the strategy.

The Andean strategy was not limited to source countries alone, and provided for the assistance of transit countries, such as Mexico, to bolster their ability to seize cocaine. Joint Information Coordination Centers (JICCs) were established in several Caribbean and Central American nations to improve information collection capabilities.¹²⁴ With the exception of Mexican radar operations which were nationally owned, the centers were organized and operated by the host government with the advice and assistance of both the DEA and the INM with the purpose of collecting information from all local counter-narcotics agencies on the movement of aircraft, vessels, and individuals suspected of drug trafficking. The centers would then transmit the information to EPIC, which would send them data back.

The rationale behind the establishment of a fully compatible, international cooperative program, the SENTRY system was to improve ground-based detection and

¹²⁴ . By January 1991, Mexico had three operational radar locations that were nationally owned: San Cristobal, Ixtepec, and Emiliano Zapata. The radar worked in conjunction with strategically placed Caribbean Basin Radar (CBR), mobil, and Aerostat units from the United States, as well as with SOUTHCOM operations located at Howard AF, Panama, and the Colombia National Surveillance in Bogotá. Together these resources provide the groundbased detection and monitoring capability for the region (U.S. House of Representatives March 5, 7, 12, and 13 1991).

monitoring capability for the region. In addition to the radar network, Special Enforcement Operations (SEO) were implemented to immobilize major trafficking syndicates outside the Andean region considered to provide Andean cartels with support.

For example, SEO Columbus targetted the controllers of cocaine traffic in Mexico. SEO Columbus focused not only on Mexican traffickers with established heroin and marijuana routes who offered their services to Colombian cocaine cartels, but also on independent Colombian traffickers operating in Mexico. SEO Columbus was tasked with initiating and coordinating all DEA investigations related to cocaine trafficking, 197 cases in 1989, and involved five countries and 28 DEA offices. However, unlike the pressure being placed on the Andean nations to participate in the U.S. war on drugs, the pressure on Mexico was reduced, but not extinguished. Domestic politics interfered again, and the United States sent mixed signals to Mexico, whereas the administration emphasized cooperation and praised the Salinas government's efforts, Congress adopted a more acerbic view.

Bush and the Border

Territorial contiguity with Mexico contributed to U.S. insecurity over its southern border. Of greater concern to the Bush administration than its drug control efforts, was Mexico's political and economic stability that could greatly affect U.S. national security. Having become accustomed to a relatively secure Southern flank, U.S. policymakers, especially in Congress, tended to ignore Mexico except in times of crisis. As

Representative Jim Kolbe, AZ summarized before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives on June 7, 1989:

Despite the important progress being made in Mexico and in our bilateral relationship, Congressional thinking about Mexico is most often guided by parochial concerns. This is not unusual for a body that is preoccupied with domestic matters... The problem is not a deliberate neglect of Mexico's problems, but rather a lack of awareness and understanding of the growing importance of Mexico in our lives... We have for too long focused only on Mexico in times of crisis... Too often, and for too long, our attitude in the United States toward Mexico has been one of benign neglect. Mexico is far too important in both economic and strategic concerns for this to continue... What is at stake for the nation as a whole is the future of our third largest trading partner, the very security of our borders and of the hemisphere, and the economic competitiveness of the U.S. and North America in an intensely competitive global economy.

Social and economic forces in Mexico had begun to challenge the status quo politically. Essentially, changes evolved in Mexico along two basic themes: economic and political reform. Since 1982, Mexico had been plagued by a debt crisis¹²⁵ that was attributed to ineffectual economic policies, corruption, as well as to macroeconomic factors, particularly the drop in world oil prices placed great social pressures on the political system controlled by the PRI. At the same time, the PRI was experiencing additional challenges from an electorate which was demanding open elections, decentralization, and a more participatory role in government, which was widely considered to be the corrupting element that was creating the country's economic problems.

¹²⁵ . By the end of 1988, Mexico's foreign debt was estimated to have reached \$107.6 billion, or nearly 75 percent of Mexico's Gross Domestic Product (U.S. House of Representatives June 7, 1989).

As awareness grew in the U.S. Congress that Mexico could no longer be benignly neglected, a debate emerged as to what position the United States would adopt.

The First Year of the Salinas Regime

Mexico's Challenges: Political and Economic Reform

Carlos Salinas de Gortari was the official winner of the controversial 1988 presidential election in which the candidate for the *Corriente Democrática* (CD), Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas, unsuccessfully challenged the PRI candidate for the presidency.¹²⁶ After his questionable election, President Salinas was compelled to demonstrate to both the United States and Mexico that despite a fragile mandate and lack of popularity, he was committed to and able to reform his country.¹²⁷

The most pressing concerns for President Salinas were to correct the economy, address corruption in government, maintain political stability, and reduce narcotics trafficking while keeping U.S. law enforcement officers from violating Mexican territorial

¹²⁶ . According to official findings, Carlos Salinas de Gortari won the 1988 elections with 50.4 percent of the vote, the lowest percentage in the history of the PRI. Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas of the National Democratic Front (FDN), a coalition of leftist parties and the left-wing of the PRI, received 31.1 percent of the vote, while Manuel Clouthier of the National Action Party (PAN) received 17.1 percent. Accusations were rampant that the elections had been fraudulent and that Cárdenas was the real winner. There were also intimations that the amount of fraud was less than it had been in previous elections, and therefore by implication, the results were admissible. Furthermore, an unprecedented number of opposition candidates won congressional seats, including four seats in the Senate. This information is based on a statement made by Rep. Jim Kolbe -AZ before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives. June 7, 1989.

¹²⁷ . Salinas had been the Minister of Finance under President de la Madrid Hurtado, as well as the individual to whom it was largely attributed with helping Mexico out of its economic difficulties. President Salinas enacted most of the policies proposed by the IMF, as well as did his utmost to improve Mexico's relations with the "Colossus to the North."

integrity. The Salinas administration adopted neoliberal economic reform policies, coopted the PAN to counter the influence of the PRD, and developed a comprehensive national drug control program. In so doing, Salinas addressed the dynamics between socio-political and economic groups within Mexico, as well as U.S. interests regarding drugs while balancing the demands of Mexican decisionmakers.

The Mexican drug policy acquired special salience in the 1980s and 1990s, at times overwhelming the bilateral agenda. Because drug trafficking was a major pressure point for U.S. relations with Mexico, other more important issues were placed on the backburner. It was clear that in its dealings with the United States, there was a need for more balance among issues. Mexico verged on economic and political chaos since 1982 when the petroleum-based economy crashed due to the drop in oil prices on the world market, as well as the steady rise of the country's debt burdens that grew along with interest rates. Commodity prices dropped and Mexico was forced to restructure its economy through the removal of subsidies for basic foodstuffs, transportation, and energy, as well as the reduction of government spending for health and education. These decisions impacted the poor most heavily.¹²⁸

In light of these assessments, U.S. government response to President Salinas' election was generally pessimistic as there was much speculation, both within and without

¹²⁸ . One of the theories behind the growth of the cocaine industry in Latin America in the 1980s, is that as they faced the double threat of reduced export earnings and growing debt, sectors of society had become dependent on the income generated from the export of cocaine. The illicit trafficking was estimated to have generated US \$110 billion within the United States alone (Roddick 1988: 10-11).

Mexico, regarding its political stability and outstanding debt obligations, both publicly and privately held and estimated at between \$102-105 billion, as well as about the Salinas government's commitment to drug control and immigration (House Concurrent Resolution 86), issues widely considered to be symptomatic of larger structural difficulties. The U.S. Congress, in particular, either adopted an attitude of benign neglect, or publicly rebuked Mexico over specific items on the agenda with little concern or interest in efforts being made by the Mexican government to counter the problems (House of Representatives June 7, 1989).

The media used the drug issue to punish Mexico psychologically, while the U.S. government sought to coerce Mexico financially for its ineptitude or unwillingness to participate in joint drug control programs. Alternatively, the United States used the drug issue as a carrot to grant Mexico access to military equipment, funding, and state-of-the-art training for its law enforcement forces, or as a stick threatening to withhold economic assistance.

Many U.S. experts, such as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), William Webster, concluded that the combination of economic stagnation, inequitable distribution of resources, extensive corruption, and authoritarian behavior by the PRI signified potential unrest and violence (Rohter 1989: 2; House of Representatives June 7, 1989). Such conclusions, however, underestimated the PRI's flexibility and Salinas' political aptitude to balance Mexico's problems. They also underestimated the Mexican

people's ability to withstand the pressures placed on them by the downward spiral of the economy and their unwillingness to degenerate into social chaos.

Despite fears of destabilization, the Bush administration continued the war on drugs unabated and proved to Latin American producer and transit countries, but particularly to Mexico, that although the United States was the most concerned party regarding drug interdiction, the responsibility remained on them to implement U.S. plans or risk political and economic sanction by U.S. decisionmakers and multinational lending institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). During the 1980s, often referred to as Latin America's "lost decade", this type of leverage proved especially difficult for most of the region's countries to counter.¹²⁹ Mexico stood out in its ability to maneuver.

From his first day as president, the Salinas agenda was prioritized by the need to restructure Mexico's economy. One of the most pressing tasks was to urge for the renegotiation of Mexico's \$104 billion debt, nearly 25 percent of which was owed to U.S. banks.¹³⁰ Along with the renegotiation of the debt, the economic plan included the

¹²⁹ . This term has primarily referred to the inability for Latin America to grow or develop. In general, this phenomenon is attributed to the devastating effects of the overwhelming debts incurred in the 1970s regionwide and the subsequent inability of these countries to repay, beginning with Mexico's declaration that it would default on its loans in 1982. This event caused sharp reactions from the worldwide banking community which ensured that debtor countries at least make interest payments by persuading the creditor governments to pressure them politically and economically. "Between 1980 and 1986 the Third World as a whole transferred to the developed countries about US \$321 billion in repayments of principal and US \$325 billion in payments in interest, equivalent to about five percent of their annual GNP since 1982" (Roddick 1988: 3).

¹³⁰ . The economic plan included reducing transferences of Mexican resources abroad; economic growth by selling parastatal industries; diversifying Mexico's trading and investment partners; reducing the value of the existing debt; and securing new loans without annual uncertainty (Moffett 1988: 2A).

privatization of state-controlled industries, as well as the diversification of investment and trading partners to counterbalance the influence exerted by the United States over Mexico.¹³¹ In his first year, however, global events constricted Mexico's abilities to garner foreign capital from alternative sources.

President Salinas altered the course of his policies and instead, submitted that a North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) be established between Mexico, the United States and Canada, an idea originally proposed by Ronald Reagan. In order to achieve a rapprochement of the sort implied by a free trade agreement, the problems presented by ancillary issues such as drug control in the bilateral relationship had to be reduced to avoid a repeat of the acrimony that persisted throughout much of the administrations of José López Portillo and Miguel de la Madrid. Moreover, Mexico began to change its perception about the drug problem for three internal reasons:

- 1) Health - Drug traffickers began to pay in kind which led to an increase in addiction within Mexico.
- 2) National Security - Mexico was threatened because its institutions were being corroded by drug money.
- 3) International Coordination and Solidarity - it was very important that Mexico not

¹³¹ Efforts to diversify Mexico's economic relationships began in the late 1970s and continued throughout the de la Madrid administration. Mexico concentrated on both Japan and Europe not only as a means of increasing its commercial partners, but because both Europe and Japan were dependent on oil from the Middle East and they did not wish to experience another oil crisis such as that which took place in 1973. Economically, Mexico was incapable of developing a counterweight for U.S. hegemony because neither Japan nor Europe were prepared to play that type of role (Gonzalez Galvez and Kerber Palma 1990; Lajous 1990).

be viewed as the lone resister to change.¹³²

In an attempt to respond to the drug problem, Mexico placed a greater emphasis on fostering institutional cooperation between the various government agencies participating in drug control, (i.e.: the *Secretaría de Gobernación*, the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE), the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), and the military), as well as with U.S. drug control agencies. Moreover, between 1988 and 1989, the Salinas administration increased the Attorney General's budget from 44 billion Mexican pesos to 122 billion, almost three times the previous amount.¹³³ Twenty-five percent of the Mexican Army forces on active duty were assigned to drug control.

At the same time, President Salinas had to balance necessary economic reforms that included a wage and price freeze with additional challenges brought on by the Mexican electorate for more representative democracy, as well as a loosening of the controls that had kept PRI forces in power since 1929 (House of Representatives, June 7, 1989). The 1988 elections had clearly demonstrated that traditional bases of power and support for the PRI, labor and the rural peasant population, had begun to erode. The failure of PRI to incorporate the urban middle class was reflected in their demand for a more active role in the formulation of national policies. The erosion of the PRI's political support was largely

¹³² . Interview with Jorge Tello. Director de Seguridad Nacional. Secretaría de Gobernación. June 22, 1995.

¹³³ . Paper presented by Eduardo Hector Miguel Flores, C. Consejero at American University, Washington, DC on April 11, 1990.

attributed to both political corruption and the economic mismanagement of the country by earlier administrations.

The realignment of social forces and its expression through political agitation demonstrated the extent to which societal responses were linked to the economic recession and austerity measures introduced by the government. Furthermore, a new dynamic emerged in Mexico whereby individuals turned away from the bureaucracies created by centralized power, and attempted to resolve their problems at the regional and state levels without reliance on the Federal government (Aguilar Zinser 1989).

In his pursuit of "political modernization," President Salinas appeared to favor a governing style based on a tenuous equilibrium that neither completely satisfied any one sector of society, nor totally alienated any (Rohter March 28, 1989). However, Salinas was able to broaden his political space, in part, because of the failure of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas to forge his ideologically diverse movement into a coherent political party with a clear agenda. This result prevented Cárdenas from capitalizing on the electoral gains that had been made by his movement as the representatives of the left-wing opposition during both the presidential and congressional elections. Salinas' political space was further enlarged when it appeared that an amicable understanding had been reached with the leadership of the PAN which was also undergoing a phase of internal rifts.

Despite domestic political pressures and against all U.S. expectations, President Salinas continued with the neoliberal economic policy reforms established by his

predecessor, which included economic austerity, the reduction of the state's role in the economy via privatization, the liberalization of Mexico's foreign investment regulations, and the ability of foreigners to own a majority share in businesses (Purcell 1988). Salinas also cracked down on political corruption and drug trafficking. These actions improved Salinas' image in Washington from that of an impotent president to "an almost all-powerful, superhuman one" (House of Representatives June 7, 1989: 62).¹³⁴ By the summer of 1989, the mood in the United States began to swing from pessimism to overarching optimism, as it was widely perceived that Salinas would be able to resolve Mexico's political, economic, and social problems.

The drug issue officially became part of the national security agenda in 1988,¹³⁵ converting it into a matter of socio-political and strategic importance to the Mexican

¹³⁴ The "superman" reputation was further enhanced by President Salinas' dramatic arrest of the powerful leader of Mexico's Oil Workers' Union, Joaquin "La Quina" Hernández Galicia, on weapons charges in a military assault that included the use of rocket launchers and automatic weapons. The arrest on January 10, 1989 clearly signalled Salinas' intentions to curb the power of the corrupt and authoritarian oil union and its hold over Mexico's petroleum industry (Treaster 1989: A1, 6). One month later, four directors of the Operadora de Bolsa and Mexival Casa de Bolsa firms, including Eduardo Legorreta Chauvet a member of one of Mexico's wealthiest families, were arrested and indicted for trading in fraudulent treasury notes, stock fraud, and other irregular operations. Legorreta was considered to be one of the "intocables" or an untouchable (Rohter 1989: Y25, 29).

¹³⁵ Miguel De la Madrid was actually the first Mexican president to state that drug trafficking was a state concern and a threat to Mexican national security on May 6, 1987 during the inauguration of the Second Meeting of District Judges. At which time he asked those gathered from the legislature and the judiciary to collaborate with each other. The difference between de la Madrid's statement and President Salinas' initiative was that Salinas actually made drug control part of the national security agenda and apparatus. Furthermore, President Salinas developed a drug control program, as well as created a special branch within the Attorney General's office that dealt solely with drug trafficking issues and widened the network of radar systems used for tracking aircraft crossing Mexican air space, efforts which began at the end of the de la Madrid administration.

government. The shift in policy resulted in a reorganization of the national security apparatus, as well as the formation of an independent national human rights commission to maintain vigilance over law enforcement forces reported of violating human rights while on drug control missions. This two-pronged strategy enabled Salinas to achieve several goals. First, the potential for the drug problem to disrupt relations with the United States was reduced. Second, the United States began to address the drug issue more independently from other issues on the bilateral agenda. Third, the strategy satisfied Mexican domestic human rights and political critics sufficiently to temporarily divert media attention from those participating in drug control. Fourth, as a result, Mexico was able to improve its image abroad and domestically.¹³⁶

In sum, these decisions had the effect of further enlarging the political space within which President Salinas could pursue the neoliberal economic policies he felt were necessary in a more expedient manner, while maintaining the PRI in power and slowly bringing some measure of political reform to the system.¹³⁷ President Salinas sought to

¹³⁶ . Members of Salinas' cadre consistently demonstrated great concern over Mexico's image not only in the media, but also before the U.S. government. This information is based on official correspondence from the Acervo Histórico y Diplomático de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Mexico D.F. dated from the period 1985-1992.

¹³⁷ . According to Haggard and Kaufman, the progression of political and economic opening or restructuring may play an important role in regime change and the political characterization of an emerging democracy (1992). According to Cook, Middlebrook and Molinar Horcasitas, "if economic liberalization leads to more rapid growth, an authoritarian regime may bolster its performance-based legitimacy sufficiently to prolong its hold on power...Over the longer term, market reforms may gradually promote the development of a more densely textured civil society in which autonomously organized interest groups mobilize to demand increased opportunities for political representation and greater accountability on the part of state authorities" (1994: 1-2).

correct the asymmetry of Mexico's position with the United States and was able to manipulate the results as a tool for his domestic agenda by appealing to Mexican nationalism which he sought to weaken. In order to implement a wide range of neoliberal economic policies - policies which would inevitably bring Mexico closer to the United States - Salinas sought to redefine Mexican nationalism to gain acceptance for them and thus eliminate the structural problems of a mixed-economy. The premise for the redefinition was that an improved economy would limit Mexico's dependency on the United States, and therefore, constrain U.S. ability to interfere or intervene in Mexican affairs.

Maintaining Critics at Bay

Mexico's image was enhanced in the United States by President Salinas' apparent willingness to tackle issues that traditionally had been proscribed by nationalist feelings, such as aiding the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to step up their investigative activities in Mexico, along with an anti-corruption drive aimed at abolishing Immigration and Customs officials, and police who profited from extortion (Rohter 1989c).¹³⁸ Whereas President Salinas' 1988 inaugural message declaring drug trafficking a

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In an unacknowledged policy shift, the Salinas administration via the Federal Police and Interior Ministry expanded its cooperation with the INS to deter the flow of undocumented aliens into the United States. Mexico permitted U.S. agents who were aided by the Mexican Federal Police to apprehend more than 500 Mexicans and Central Americans along the border. The agents operated from the U.S. embassy in Mexico City, as well as from consulates in Monterrey, Guadalajara, Tijuana, and Ciudad Juárez to monitor international smuggling rings and traffic along the most popular routes (Miami Herald March 17, 1989). However, after a strongly adverse public reaction, especially from immigration and human rights non-governmental organizations on both sides of the border, the INS was forced to suspend its program

national security threat and that he would "make life miserable for drug traffickers...and pursue with redoubled energy those who promote trafficking whoever they may be" was received with some scepticism in the United States (Rohter 1988:4),¹³⁹ by 1989, Salinas' efforts to combat narcotics production were widely praised by the State Department's Bureau of Narcotics (Maykuth 1989: 18A).

Additionally, in order to defuse complaints regarding human rights abuses, President Salinas agreed to pardon over 400 political prisoners. He moved simultaneously to pressure Miguel Nazar Haro, the head of the Mexico City police intelligence division, to resign.¹⁴⁰ Irrespective of Salinas' efforts to tackle corruption and human rights, U.S. conservatives led by Senator Jesse Helms undertook a campaign to reject certification of

(Rohter 1989b), while Mexican Foreign Minister Fernando Solana backtracked, denying that operations between Mexican Police and the INS had taken place (Lira 1989: 1,6).

¹³⁹ Salinas appointed Alvarez del Castillo Attorney General of the PGR. He had been Governor of the State of Jalisco in 1985 when DEA agent Enrique Camarena was abducted, then tortured and murdered. U.S. officials often complained privately that Mr. del Castillo discounted the importance of the murder and then "dragged his feet" on the investigation. Many at the State Department and at the DEA felt his appointment was a "slap in the face" and a "wrong signal to send" (Rohter 1988a).

¹⁴⁰ In February 1989, at Immigration Board hearings in Montreal, Canada, a Mexican Army soldier admitted to having been part of a secret military unit that executed at least 60 political prisoners in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Osorio was granted political refugee status in part because of allegations he had made that Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios the deputy Minister of the Interior and Miguel Nazar Haro, then head of the Federal Security Directorate were involved in the murders, and therefore he had broken his oath of silence and was in danger of reprisal (Rohter 1989d: 1, 10). In addition, in 1982, Mr. Nazar Haro had been indicted in the United States in connection with a car theft ring operating in the San Diego-Tijuana area while head of state security (Bussey 1989: 14A). Furthermore, a government witness in a San Diego trial of seven cocaine traffickers testified that Nazar protected drug smuggling operations and profited from the sale of confiscated narcotics (Miller 1989: 1, 13). Mr. Nazar Haro's resignation coincided with the March 1 certification hearing scheduled in the U.S. Senate on Mexico's progress in its drug control efforts.

Mexico's antinarcotics efforts and submitted a list of 14 top Mexican officials suspected of having links to drug traffickers, including five members from President Salinas' cabinet (Branigin 1989b: 29A, 35A).

However, the delicate balance between the political space created to keep the United States at bay versus the political one required to implement neoliberal economic policies hinged on Mexican nationalist tendencies. Whereas for the United States it was imperative that Mexico lower its anti-American rhetoric, for the Mexican people, it was important that the United States discontinue interference in Mexican affairs. This situation was most evident with regards to DEA agents permitted to function overtly in Mexican society.¹⁴¹ To balance the two, it became very important that the Mexican government establish precise norms for DEA operations in Mexico, both in terms of their accreditation and their functions. In an agreement with the Departments of Justice and State, the DEA could only place 41 agents in Mexico.

Mexican government officials were concerned with DEA operations for both judicial and diplomatic reasons. The SRE was concerned primarily because U.S. agents were entering and exiting Mexico without notification or permission. The PGR was

¹⁴¹ . Once again it is necessary to revisit the Camarena affair, if only briefly. The Camarena situation, along with the Cortés apprehension, brought to light the fact that the U.S. DEA was running agents in Mexico. It was generally admitted by officials that it was necessary to maintain a low profile if they were to be able to continue doing so. However, once Amb. Gavin announced to the press this fact, the Mexican public reacted very strongly and forced the Mexican government to place greater restraints on DEA agents. From 1985 to 1989, the Mexican government and the United States tried to work out different methods to keep track of U.S. agents, ranging from issuing reports and analyses to special visa grants.

concerned that U.S. operatives were behaving unconstitutionally and breaking Mexican laws. Therefore, in the future, each time an agent was changed or moved from one state to another, the Mexican government was to receive notification through the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. In order to function on Mexican soil, the DEA was required to forward a list to the SRE on monthly basis with the exact assignment of each agent, while the PGR would receive a detailed report of DEA activities taking place on Mexican soil.¹⁴²

Throughout Salinas' first year as President, efforts to put Mexico's house in order reflected the priority of Mexican foreign policy: to avoid potential disagreements on matters not related to the debt (Moffett 1989: A19). Finance Minister Pedro Aspe made three trips to the United States before Foreign Minister Fernando Solana paid his first visit to Washington, suggesting that the SRE ministry's traditional role of negotiating international treaties was being transformed into one of indirect support (Rohter 1989g). In effect, the Salinas administration attempted to decentralize and diversify the manner in which Mexican foreign policy was formulated and then implemented along the lines of the specialization of each ministry, thus reducing the role of the Foreign Ministry.

Mexican analyst Adolfo Aguilar Zinser noted:

The central issue of Mexican foreign policy today is the debt, and on that question I think Solana recognizes he has been supplanted by Aspe... The President's people are very conscious of what they want, and they do not want to pollute their

¹⁴² . Series of memoranda between the PGR, the SRE, the DEA and the U.S. embassy dating from October 31, 1986 to February 27, 1991. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

objective with sideshows (Rohter 1989g).

President Salinas' preoccupation with cleaning up Mexico's image internationally and to separate issues included a campaign against drug traffickers. However, a shift also occurred in perception. The drug issue changed from combatting drugs to controlling drugs in 1989-1990. There was a need for greater integration, a joint attack against consumption, as well as production.¹⁴³

The First Shift in Drug Control

On Saturday, April 8, 1989, Mexican agents captured Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo considered to be the kingpin of the largest cocaine trafficking operation¹⁴⁴ in the world and the person who was alleged to have ordered the 1985 kidnap-murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena (Bussey 1989b: 12A). In addition to Gallardo's arrest, the entire police force of the city of Gallardo's hometown, Culiacán, Sinaloa, was also arrested. All of the officers were eventually released with the exception of the Police Chief, Robespierre Lissaraja and the State Police Chief, Arturo Moreno who remained in military custody

¹⁴³ . Interview with Jorge Tello. National Security Director. Secretaría de Gobernación. June 22, 1995.

¹⁴⁴ . Mr. Gallardo was considered to be one of the most important traffickers in South America. He was reputed to have a very direct relation with the Medellín Cartel in Colombia, as well as with groups in Peru and Bolivia. His organization was estimated to move four tons of cocaine into the United States each month, primarily to the West Coast. After his arrest, Felix Gallardo named six senior police and judicial officers in Sinaloa who had protected his drug ring including the police chief of the state, Arturo Moreno Espinosa and the attorney general's drug enforcement deputy in the city of Culiacán, Gregorio Enrique Corza Marin to whom he paid 24,000 over two months for information regarding drug investigations (Miller 1989b: 1, 6).

(Miami Herald 1989b: 5).

U.S. government officials responded favorably to the news of Mr. Gallardo's arrest, although it was widely speculated that the renewed anti-narcotics efforts were linked to a U.S. Congressional vote that took place on Thursday, April 13, 1989, in which the Senate would certify whether or not Mexico was fully cooperating with U.S. drug control policy (Rohter 1989h; Moffett 1989; Miller 1989b). Although Mexico was not receiving foreign aid from the United States, other than \$14.5 million for drug eradication, it had sought several billion dollars in loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank with U.S. backing.¹⁴⁵

Shortly after capturing Mr. Felix Gallardo, the Mexican government mobilized 3,000 soldiers and policemen to reinforce 85 checkpoints along the U.S.-Mexican border. Between August 1988 and March 1989, Mexican authorities had captured almost eight tons of Colombian cocaine in transit, including a 4.8 ton shipment, the largest ever captured in the world (Estrella de Panama 1989: 2B). Furthermore, President Salinas created a new area in the Attorney General's office dedicated exclusively to drug control.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ . The annual certification process was a sticking point for U.S.-Mexican relations in large part because it was considered by many in Mexico as an affront to national sovereignty. Although the decertification of Mexico was unlikely, the political costs for the Salinas administration were potentially high because he could not appear to accommodate American demands. Assistant Attorney General, Javier Cuello Trejo noted that the Mexican government rejected "the pretension of a foreign power to go about handing out certificates of conduct to other countries... We and only we will carry out our effort and decide our own destiny" (Rohter March 1, 1989: 4).

¹⁴⁶ . On December 23, 1988, the Salinas administration established the Subprocuraduría de Investigación y Lucha Contra el Narcotráfico. It remained in effect until October 15, 1990.

The elite squad was trained at the National Institute of Penal Sciences and included approximately 1,200 trainees from a diverse cross-section of Mexican society, some of which formed part of the mobilization along the border (Rohter April 13, 1989: 4Y). As part of that same effort, the Government stepped up its recruitment and training of other sections of the Federal Judicial Police according to Fernando Ventura, commander of Anti-Narcotics Operations (Rohter 1989: 4Y). In order to limit corruption, the Government attempted to insulate the special group by paying them higher wages comparable to U.S. counterparts.

The government of Mexico committed itself to working more closely with the United States to build a coordinated hemispheric response to drug trafficking. It could be presumed that President Salinas felt that it was in Mexico's best interests to cooperate in this manner with the United States because of his concern with not only improving the Mexican economy, but in establishing closer trade relations with the United States as demonstrated by the reforms he enacted that included liberalization, privatization and deregulation of state-owned companies, and especially in pursuit of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).¹⁴⁷ In 1989, under a bilateral anti-narcotics agreement, the U.S.-Mexican Permanent Commission was established and met for the first time on September 7, 1991. In addition, the Subprocuraduría was created in 1989 within the PGR

¹⁴⁷ . The Salinas administration's economic restructuring program reduced inflation from 170 percent in 1989, to 7 percent in 1994 (Salinas 1994).

as part of a restructuring program in order to increase the coordination between the military and the PGR.¹⁴⁸

Implications for U.S. Policymakers

As regarded Mexico's drug control policy, the U.S. Ambassador in Mexico and the Bush administration praised the Salinas administration's efforts, however, opium and heroin availability did not diminish in 1989 and corruption of Mexican forces was considered a serious impediment to program effectiveness. Prior to the annual certification process, the new administration in Mexico had made visible attempts to address the drug problem from a more coordinated and comprehensive perspective, yet U.S. officials remained speculative.

In the United States, the dichotomy between administration officials and congressional opinion was growing. U.S. congressional leaders remained unconvinced of the Mexican government's commitment, however, or in the words of the Chair of the Task Force on International Narcotics Control, Mr. Lawrence J. Smith: "I and the rest of this Committee will be looking at the certifications with the same kind of jaundiced eye we had before" (U.S. House of Representatives February 28, 1989). Congress was becoming disenchanted with the certification process which not only irritated the countries under scrutiny, but was increasingly becoming a tool for political leverage between legislators

¹⁴⁸ . Whereas the PGR focuses primarily on investigation procedures, the military focuses on eradication. Coello Trejo is named the Deputy Attorney General for the fight against drugs and he inaugurates the "Guerra al Delito." He's referred to as the Ironman. Interview with Jorge Tello. National Security Director. Secretaría de Gobernación. June 22, 1995.

and administration policymakers.

On March 1, 1989, President Bush certified Mexico in its drug control efforts but the certification contained a statement of explanation because Mexico's opium and marijuana eradication programs had expanded in 1988, although its cocaine seizures and arrests of major figures in drug trafficking rose sharply. Moreover, the 1989 certification hearings reflected Congressional dissatisfaction with the inactivity regarding Mexico's aerial surveys and their refusal to allow U.S. pilots to accompany Mexican officers on their excursions.¹⁴⁹ The Department of State budget presentation indicated that among the reasons there had been no aerial survey was that the U.S. contractors which would conduct it required extensive clearances from a variety of Mexican government agencies that were not always forthcoming.¹⁵⁰

Another sticking point for congressional leaders regarded the extradition of Mexican nationals indicted for violations, often drug-related, in the United States, as well as a dearth of information regarding the possibility that Mexican officials were providing

¹⁴⁹ . There had not been an aerial survey performed in Mexico since 1986 (U.S. House of Representatives February 28, 1989).

¹⁵⁰ . Traditionally, the following Mexican government agencies were required to grant approval to private U.S. contractors which would perform the aerial surveys: the Ministry of Defense; the Ministry of Transport and Communications; the Naval Office; and the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information Systems. Unlike its predecessor, the Salinas administration had demonstrated a more open attitude toward determining the extent and location of drug fields in Mexico. Moreover, in a manner untypical of previous administrations, the Mexican government requested U.S. assistance in pinpointing areas where opium poppy and marijuana were being cultivated (Responses from the Department of State to questions submitted for the record at the Hearings for the Review of the 1989 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report before the Committee on Foreign Affairs. House of Representatives. February 28, 1989).

safe havens or otherwise providing help and/or operational support to drug traffickers.

These issues did not appear in the 1989 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR)¹⁵¹ report and some members of Congress, particularly the conservative Chair of the Committee, Rep. Lawrence Smith, accused the State Department, the INM, and the DEA of attempting to white-wash Mexico for certification purposes.

Ann Wroblewski and David Westrate, the Deputy Administrator for Operations, DEA, however, felt that the actions taken by the new Mexican administration were significant and they were encouraged by the signals coming from Mexico. Moreover, they expressed that since there was a new administration, it should not be handicapped from the beginning by criticism from the United States, and that unless there was solid evidence, U.S. officials should refrain from attacking Mexican appointments. Mr. Westrate summarized his perspective on the seriousness of the Mexican commitment to drug control and the U.S. certification process as follows:

The certification process, I think, has to be looked at in its entirety. And, of course, here we have a situation where there is a new administration. Our new President has met with their new President. Assurances have been given. I think one of the

¹⁵¹ . INCSR reports began in 1984 to track not only drug cultivation, production, and trafficking, but also to systematically relate efforts made by those countries considered major illicit producers of drugs, and/or transit countries. A major illicit drug producing country means one that produces, during a fiscal year, more than 5 tons of opium or opium derivative, 500 metric tons or more of coca, or 500 metric tons or more of marijuana. However, the report fostered certain differences of opinion among policymakers. Members of Congress expressed that the INCSR report became a political document because of the unwillingness of administration officials to decertify countries. In the eyes of Congress, the purpose of the INCSR report and the certification process was to give teeth to drug enforcement efforts. In contrast, members of the Department of State depicted the INCSR report as important because it was considered a foreign policy document, as well as an action document that embedded drugs as a foreign policy issue (House of Representatives March 1, 1990).

key things in Mexico has been, from my perspective at least a realization of the seriousness of what is going on in terms of the cocaine and the Colombian traffickers that are now in Mexico. And I think that the Mexican government has taken a decision that it is going to do something about this, and we are going to have to wait and see. So, in a sense, perhaps alot of the things we are talking about are historical. I certainly would not sit here and tell you in the next year they are going to eliminate corruption in relation to drugs in Mexico, because that is not going to happen. It will not happen there. It will not happen in many other countries, including our own.

1990: Fall Out and Consequences

The Alvarez Macháin Abduction

In 1990, the United States and Mexico had a major falling out for two reasons. First, DEA agents arranged for the kidnapping of Alvarez Macháin. Second, the U.S. embassy established an anti-narcotics tactical unit in the embassy without consulting the Mexican government. In the first instance, on April 2, 1990 Humberto Alvarez Macháin was kidnapped from Mexico and brought to the United States to face charges of participating in the torture and murder of DEA agent Enrique Camarena. The DEA initially refused to explain if it was involved in the kidnapping, as well as denied that it had offered a \$100,000 reward for his capture (Shenon 1990). In contrast, Jorge Covarrubias Manriquez, a former Mexican police officer arrested by the Mexican Attorney General's office in connection with the Macháin kidnapping reported that he had been directed by a DEA agent in Los Angeles, CA to deliver Macháin to DEA agents waiting in El Paso, TX.

Mexico's initial reaction was to leak the names of some 90 agents residing in Mexico to the press. The Mexican government then clamped down on the activities of

DEA agents stationed in Mexico and initiated action by offering the United States a draft of "Informal Rules of Accreditation and Work Methods for Officials in Charge of the Exchange of Information, Between Mexico and the United States with Regards to Drug Trafficking."¹⁵²

The U.S. Embassy immediately responded with two documents which they believed could facilitate further progress in narcotics matters. The first was a suggested public statement of mutual cooperation. The U.S. embassy then drafted a paper on mutual understanding that established a confidential guideline for the two governments.¹⁵³ The concern was that by not restoring and enhancing the effectiveness of U.S.-Mexican narcotics cooperation, opponents to NAFTA might be able to derail the process. In essence, by kidnapping Macháin, the DEA strengthened Mexico's negotiating position with the United States with regards to drug control.

The second set of problems was created in June 1990, when Douglas Jehl and

¹⁵² . Essentially, the document establishes clear limitations not only in terms of the quantity of officers allowed to work in Mexico, but the type of visa they would be allowed to carry, exactly what their functions would be. Most importantly, the DEA would be required to present the SRE with a monthly report about their activities in Mexico. Reglas de Acreditación y formas de trabajo de los funcionarios encargados del intercambio de información, entre México y los Estados Unidos en relación con el tráfico internacional de drogas. June 6, 1990. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

¹⁵³ . The document was not intended for public consumption. However, the U.S. government expressed that on the basis of the guideline, other operational aspects of DEA operations in Mexico could be worked out in regular contacts between the two governments. The informal draft sent by the Mexican government to Ambassador Negroponte caused serious concern. It was felt that the rules did not adequately protect DEA operatives, or insure DEA operational effectiveness. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. June 12, 1990.

Marjorie Miller of the Los Angeles Times published an article titled "U.S. Military Unit in Mexico Aids Drug War." The SRE immediately contacted the U.S. embassy because the Bush administration had never consulted with Mexico over its decision to establish a military unit in its embassy to combat drugs and transmit intelligence information.¹⁵⁴ The Mexican government was particularly concerned with the sophisticated communications equipment that was installed in the embassy to receive and interpret intelligence information from various military sources, including SOUTHCOM in Panama.

The U.S. embassy responded that the sole purpose of the Tactical Unit was to compile, collate, and coordinate information on drug trafficking already available in the United States in order to provide it to the appropriate Mexican authorities for their use in anti-narcotics interdiction operations. The U.S. embassy issued a disclaimer regarding the Tactical Analysis Team (TAT) that denied that it was a military unit. The embassy described it as "a small inter-agency group staffed by three Department of Defense civilians, two Drug Enforcement Administration civilians, and one Customs Service civilian on temporary assignments to Mexico...the TAT will retain its civilian mission and remain under the control of the United States ambassador."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ . Apparently the United States had only discussed the matter with the office of the Attorney General and had completely bypassed the Foreign Ministry and the Office of the President. Officials in those branches were reported to be enraged that they had not been consulted on the matter (Jehl and Pine. June 13, 1990: 10A).

¹⁵⁵ . Letter from the U.S. Embassy, Mexico City to the SRE. June 14, 1990. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Bush administration officials feared that the U.S. military team would be banned from assisting in anti-drug efforts because they feared a public outlash that would leave President Salinas little choice but to take a tough, reactive stance (Jehl and Pine. June 13, 1990: 10A). A compromise was reached on June 14, 1990. The Mexican government sent a diplomatic note to the U.S. embassy which indicated that Mexico would not accept U.S. military personnel as part of any "TAT" unit. However, if they were accredited as military attaches forming part of the diplomatic mission, they could function in Mexico.¹⁵⁶ Presidents Salinas and Bush announced that they would begin to work on a free-trade agreement and that they planned to begin discussions in early December when President Bush intended to visit Mexico.

Despite Setbacks, Bush Pushes Ahead...

The Bush administration continued with its vision of an international drug control regime in 1990, while at the same time targeting worldwide production and distribution regionally. The 1990 National Drug Control Strategy specifically addressed bilateral expanded cooperation to reduce drug production, control money laundering, increase interdiction efforts, and develop demand reduction programs, as well as the expansion of international cooperation through

¹⁵⁶ . Diplomatic Note to the U.S. Embassy. June 14, 1990. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

multilateral organizations such as the Dublin Group¹⁵⁷. Moreover, the 1990 strategy emphasized support for law enforcement throughout the hemisphere via increased support, cooperative intelligence, and mutual legal assistance treaties (MLATs).

Given its interest in establishing a drug control regime, the United States took it upon itself to direct bilateral and multilateral efforts against trafficking organizations, money laundering, and diversion of precursor chemicals (1990: International Narcotics Control, 7). Although, the 1990 Drug Control Strategy focused specifically on Mexico, the emphasis was primarily on cooperative efforts and on interdiction along the border, elements which reflected qualitative changes in the U.S. administration's new approach to Mexico.

In contrast to the administration's position, the themes of corruption and lack of cooperation continued to echo in the U.S. Congress despite the prevailing attitude at the White House and State Department, and irrespective of President Salinas' declaration that drug trafficking was a top priority for his country because it endangered its national security. Reports were released that several officials from the de la Madrid government, including Miguel Aldana Ibarra, the INTERPOL Chief in Mexico, had been indicted in Los Angeles in relation to the Camarena murder, and although Mr. Aldana had been captured,

¹⁵⁷ . At the urging of the United States, the 17-nation Dublin Group was formed to assist participating governments of developed countries to develop and coordinate strategic plans and drug control programs. The group includes the United States, EC member states, the European Community Commission, Japan, Australia, Sweden, and Canada. The group met twice in 1990 to discuss activities at both the global and regional levels (1990: International Narcotics Control).

the Mexican government refused to extradite him.¹⁵⁸

Congress had also received notification that Mexico's National Criminology Institute, a branch of the Office of the Attorney General, issued a report on February 5, 1990 that concluded that most of the country's dangerous criminals had once been members of Mexico's federal police (House of Representatives March 8, 1990). Moreover, on May 9, 1990, a 90-day Report to Congress on the status of human rights abuses in Mexico was issued which named a variety of abuses being committed by members of the Mexican Federal Judicial Police (MFJP). As in previous occasions, difficulties arose between the Department of State and Congress over the nature of the information that was reported.¹⁵⁹

Whereas narcotics-related corruption had been described in previous INCSR reports in more stringent terms, in the 1990 INCSR report only a passing reference to corruption was made. Congressional leaders felt that the White House was focusing too much on the economic aspects of the bilateral relationship, as well as the potential negotiation of a free trade agreement, and that as a result, the administration was not demonstrating sufficient aggressiveness over the issues of corruption and human rights abuses (House of Representatives, September 12, 1990).

¹⁵⁸ . Mexico's extradition policy did not permit any Mexican national to be sent to the United States.

¹⁵⁹ . The Office of International Narcotics Matters admitted that its estimates of Mexican marijuana and opium production had been flawed during the previous six years. The declaration came after the INM developed a new, more sophisticated method of calculation based on the total amount of hectareage cultivated which revealed that, compared to previous evaluations, Mexico's cultivation was nine times higher.

Furthermore, Mexican human rights abuses became an issue in 1990 in light of economic issues such as the renegotiation of Mexico's foreign debt, initial movements toward a free trade agreement, and other efforts to stimulate Mexico's economy; as well as increased cooperation to curb drug trafficking. Amnesty International, Americas Watch, and the Minnesota Lawyers International Human Rights Committee reported MJFP violations of individuals in cases related to drug trafficking, both against those who were suspected traffickers, as well as against those who denounced Mexican policy with regards to drug trafficking and/or accused MFJP officials of committing abuses (House of Representatives, September 12, 1990; Americas Watch 1991).

In FY 1990, the United States provided Mexico with \$15 million in international narcotics control funds and approved a defense draw down of \$17 million for helicopters for Mexico's newly established Northern Border Response Force (NBRF),¹⁶⁰ as well as a small defense grant to train Mexican military personnel to operate and maintain equipment (House of Representatives, September 12, 1990: 72). At the time, it was largely considered that the most serious abuses of human rights in Mexico were taking place in the context of drug interdiction, a policy widely perceived in Latin America as one in which the United States had a very large stake.

¹⁶⁰ . Once fully operational, NBRF consisted of seven response teams positioned at strategic sites throughout Mexico to interdict smuggling aircraft. NBRF was supported by a Tactical Analysis Team (TAT) composed of members of the DoD, DEA, and U.S. Customs personnel and located at the American Embassy in Mexico City. The support provided by the TAT consists of assimilating intelligence acquired from a variety of sources and disseminating the information to the Mexican response teams to intercept suspect aircraft (U.S. House of Representatives March 5, 7, 12 and 13).

Human rights organizations became concerned that increased funding to both the police and security forces in Mexico would have a negative impact on human rights if these monies were not accompanied by U.S. government pressure for Mexico to observe strict guidelines set by international law. The human rights organizations' central criticism of U.S. policy was that human rights abuses in Mexico had been largely minimized and that other geopolitical interests had taken precedence over the human rights situation.

In light of the increased bilateral cooperation in narcotics control, as well as President Salinas' visible presence and initiative in regional and multilateral drug control efforts, the Bush administration began to target domestic areas of drug supply and money laundering centers. Interdiction efforts focused even more exclusively on the border area between the two countries, as opposed to unilaterally pressing the Mexican government, with the purpose of identifying major drug trafficking organizations to disrupt and dismantle them.

Changes in Attitudes

In sum, U.S. focus on the bilateral relationship in the period 1989-1990 revolved primarily around the improvement of economic conditions in Mexico and the maintenance of political stability. This pattern of behavior dominated throughout the remainder of the Bush administration, 1991-1993, during which debates regarding a North American Free Trade Agreement commanded the agenda, but also brought Mexico's political and electoral

system under closer scrutiny in the U.S. Congress.¹⁶¹ Whereas in the time period 1989-1990 the Bush administration had focused on designing and implementing a Latin American drug control regime, the period 1991-1993 focused more on refining the technical aspects of law enforcement cooperation.

The major emphasis of the Bush administration's drug strategy was to focus on cocaine and hence to block the chokepoints at either end of the international chain: on the three source countries in the Andean region, and on the primary transit countries of Mexico and the Bahamas. The next line of defense was the U.S.-Mexican border which became, for all intensive purposes, militarized as a result of it being denominated the frontline of the drug war, hence a key interdiction area for drugs entering the United States.

In contrast to the Andean Strategy which focused on the militarization of the drug war in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia, the Bush administration adopted a policy based on bilateral cooperation and did not discourage the Salinas administration in its pursuit to construct a drug control policy that was more responsive to Mexico's domestic perceptions, as well as discontinued its practice to unilaterally pressure Mexico over the drug problem (Chabat 1994).

In other words, to a certain extent U.S. policy had become more flexible toward

¹⁶¹ . The leaders of Canada, Mexico and the United States announced on February 5, 1991 that they would negotiate a North American Free Trade Agreement with the purpose of creating a North American economic identity based on global competition. Mexican President Salinas de Gortari requested a free trade agreement with the United States in June 1990. The first substantive meeting was held on June 12, 1991, to form working groups on market access, trade rules, services, investment, intellectual property and dispute settlement (Baer 1991).

Mexico, while Mexico had become pragmatic in its dealings with the United States. Concomittantly, it is also at this juncture that U.S. officials began to focus on Mexico as a transit country, as opposed to as a source country (U.S. House of Representatives December 9-13, 1990 and March 5, 7, 12 and 13, 1991). Technically, the blame could be placed elsewhere. The administration adopted an interdiction policy that focused on the U.S.-Mexican border, and began to accept Mexico as independently able to design and manage its anti-narcotics program.

Because of the political and economic reforms enacted by the Salinas administration, Mexico was increasingly treated as an equal partner and praised because it had changed its attitude toward the United States. In addition, the more heated the debates over the NAFTA accords became, the more the Bush administration iterated that before President Salinas assumed office in Mexico, cooperation on international drug control measures had not been a major concern to the Mexican government and strongly praised the Mexican government's reorganization efforts (U.S. House of Representatives March 26, 1992 and March 5, 7, 12, and 13, 1991).¹⁶²

Although allegations of corruption continued along with accusations of extensive

¹⁶² . In 1991, Mexico destroyed approximately 6,545 hectares of opium poppies, or 64 percent of the crop and a 41 percent improvement over 1990. The result was that Mexican potential heroin production was cut from 6.2 metric tons to 4.1 metric tons. Marijuana eradication increased from 6,750 hectares in 1990 to 10795 hectares in 1991. Furthermore, Mexican officers seized 50 tons of cocaine in 1991, 30 tons of which were credited to NBRF. In addition, Mexico began to develop a national antinarcotics intelligence center (CENDRO) and seized over \$1 billion in trafficker assets between 1990 and 1991 (U.S. House of Representatives March 26, 1992).

human rights abuses, the Bush administration was reluctant to raise these issues publicly and forcefully because they were mitigated by the larger stated concern of U.S. national security. In fact, the Bush administration largely ignored human rights abuses in Mexico for the rest of his tenure as President, especially as they related to anti-drug activities primarily because the result of expanded cooperative anti-narcotics measures was increased harassment and disruption of cocaine trafficking organizations, and a corresponding reduction in their ability to do business¹⁶³ (U.S. House of Representatives October 16, 1991; U.S. House of Representatives March 5, 1991).

Moreover, the Bush administration lamented the loss of Javier Coello Trejo who was reassigned following numerous charges that the Federal Judicial Police under his command were among those most guilty of extensive human rights abuses (Miller 1990: 11A). The establishment by the Mexican government of a National Human Rights Commission, along with the implementation of legislative and judicial reforms to reduce human rights abuses was widely praised by the Bush administration, and little else was said about the matter. By the end of the Bush administration, Mexico was primarily dealt with in relation to the NAFTA accords. Drug control with regard to Mexico increasingly focused on intercepting drugs at the border, along with the development of cooperative

¹⁶³ . In 1990, Mexico seized 46.5 metric tons of cocaine, second only to seizures in Colombia. Furthermore, the Mexican government significantly increased resources to the Attorney General's office from \$37 million in 1989, to \$53 million in 1990, to \$77 million in 1991 thus demonstrating how important drug control was to the Mexican government, and the extent to which the Attorney General's office had become the lead agency in drug control (U.S. House of Representatives March 5, 1991).

operations such as the Northern Border Response Force (NBRF).

The Mexicanization of Counter-narcotics Efforts

A Comprehensive Response: Reforming the Mexican Drugs Control Strategy

In February 1992, Salinas attended the San Antonio Summit, where he urged other Latin American countries to take greater responsibility to fight drug trafficking, in contrast to the prevailing sentiments in Mexico, and to a certain extent, the rest of Latin America (INCSR 1993: 162). In response to both domestic and international concerns over human rights abuses committed by Mexican Federal agents, the PGR created a citizens' advisory group to monitor drug enforcement activities, as well as initiated efforts to professionalize the officer corps by requiring that they attend refresher training courses and that they be tested for drug abuse. Later that year, the Salinas administration officially initiated the Mexican National Center for Planning the Control of Drugs (CENDRO) under the direction of the Office of the Attorney General (PGR). CENDRO's purpose was to strategically plan, coordinate and evaluate drug interdiction operations and the exchange of information among all Mexican agencies involved in counter-narcotics efforts at the national level (INCSR 1993: 163).

To further demonstrate Mexico's commitment to control the drug trade, the Salinas administration undertook policy initiatives that expanded upon systemic improvements of Mexico's judicial system and ranked the drug issue as a national security priority. Salinas then called upon Mexico's Governors to develop programs at the state-level that

complemented the national plan and paid close attention to demand and supply reduction, as well as to economic development. A Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) was established with the purpose of strengthening both Mexico's and the United States' capacity to prosecute individuals involved in criminal activities on both sides of the border.

The Mexican government remained concerned that its drug program would be constricted by the decisions of the U.S. Congress. Therefore, in July 1992, the Mexican government announced that it would no longer accept U.S. aid amounting to \$19 million in its campaign against drugs because of the "unwarranted interference" that accompanied it (Golden 1992). Counternarcotics efforts were "Mexicanized" (INCSR 1993) with the purpose of moving the drug control relationship between Mexico and the United States to one of cooperation, as opposed to one of donor-recipient. The Mexican government agreed to assume financial support to sustain the programs that had previously been funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) and continued to participate in joint counternarcotics efforts, while the United States continued to provide specialized training and technical support.

The decision by the government to Mexicanize its drug control efforts, took place within the context of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling that U.S. law enforcement officers were within acceptable parameters of the law when the DEA abducted Alvaro Macháin in 1990 from Mexican territory. Also because of the Macháin case, the Salinas administration revised the rules under which the DEA could operate within Mexico.

Nevertheless, bilateral cooperation continued and little conflict evolved from the decision to no longer accept U.S. narcotics assistance, in effect, demonstrating the extent to which drug control had been separated from the other issues on the bilateral agenda.

By 1993, Mexico fully assumed full financial responsibility for funding the maintenance of key programs in its drug control efforts. Initial figures indicated that Mexican cocaine seizures increased from 38.8 mt in 1992 to 46.2 mt in 1993. Marijuana seizures also increased in 1993 to 494.7 mt from 404.6 mt in 1992. However, seizures of opium and heroin decreased, from 0.17 in 1992 to 0.13 in 1993, and from 0.097 in 1992 to 0.062 in 1993 respectively (INCSR 1994: 163), and the Mexican government indicated that an increasing amount of land was being cultivated with marijuana and opium poppies. In June 1993, the Mexican government established the National Institute to Combat Drugs (INCD). INCD is responsible for "planning, executing, supervising, and evaluating all counternarcotics activities in Mexico" (INCSR 1994: 159), including the activities of CENDRO. INCD also graduated a first class of narcotics investigative police cadets, who then received specialized training from the DEA funded by the Mexican government.

Salinas also supported proposals to implement reforms in the Mexican Criminal Code after the narcotics-related murder in May of Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas Ocampo in the Guadalajara airport. A reform package was presented to the Mexican Congress that included extending jail sentences and revoking the right of bail for drug traffickers, expanding the period for evidence-gathering against a detained suspect, and permitting the

seizure and sale of assets belonging to a convicted trafficker. The reform package was passed into legislation in December. Salinas also addressed corruption in 1993 and appointed Jorge Carpizo McGregor, the chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, as Attorney General. Carpizo began his tenure by announcing a campaign to clean up the corrupt elements within the PGR. As a result of investigations, eight commanders were removed from their posts because of loss of confidence and three Hermosillo judges, as well as a Supreme Court Justice, were charged with corruption. These efforts did not necessarily curtail the operations of Mexico's most powerful traffickers.

Drugs-Related Violence Grows in Mexico

In 1993, the drug trade was "bursting violently back into view" (Golden 1993: A3). In the state of Sinaloa, for instance, 80 drug-related slayings were reported in a two-month period (January-March 1993). After four years of Salinas pledging to making life miserable for drug traffickers, traffickers responded by adapting and simply moving their routes and altering their methods of shipment, just as they had done in the 1970s when the eradication programs began. It was estimated that because of the joint United States-Mexican air-interception program established in 1990 (Operación Halcón), smugglers began to ship more than half of the cocaine through southern Mexico via the Guatemalan highlands or airdrop their cargo along the eastern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula, or via remote areas in Chiapas or Tabasco (Golden 1993: A3).

Moreover, the traffickers were fighting back. Mexican government officials claimed that the violence was limited, but citizens' movements were growing, especially in areas like Culiacán, Sinaloa, where residents felt threatened by the savage manner in which traffickers carried out their affairs. Drug wars no longer affected only the members of drug cartels and law enforcement officers, but had expanded and increasingly included the use of indiscriminate violence against the general population, such as the event that occurred in May 1992, when two car bombs exploded in downtown Culiacán, killing a private guard (Golden 1993). As the ratification of NAFTA approached, Citizens' grassroots movements were growing and they demanded that the government put an end to the violence incurred by drug traffickers.

NAFTA and the Drug War: Implications for Mexico

NAFTA turned out to be a double-edged sword, not only for the Mexican government, but also for narcotraffickers. On the one hand, NAFTA brought with it the idea of economic growth via the opening of the U.S. marketplace for Mexican goods and economic liberalization. On the other hand, NAFTA implicitly carried with it the expectations for greater political opening. Political opening implied that the government, in this case the PRI, could no longer maintain a closed system of government. Furthermore, in terms of the drug cartels, the general perspective was that NAFTA would provide them with increased cover to traffic their goods. In order to be effective, a cartel requires protection at both the political and law enforcement levels. NAFTA, however, plausibly

endangered the livelihood of the cartels specifically because of the drive for increased political transparency that accompanied its implementation.

1994, Salinas' final year as president of Mexico, proved to be one of increased fragmentation and structural challenge for Mexico. On January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA officially came into effect, Mexico's stability was threatened by the rebellion of indigenous groups in Chiapas led by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). The rebellion represented a crisis in political legitimization for the Salinas administration. The EZLN demanded a redressment of political and economic policies, especially with regard to NAFTA.

The indigenous populations were convinced that NAFTA represented a "death certificate" for them (Harvey 1994: 2) and that the Salinas administration considered their existence expendable. Furthermore, the EZLN demanded that Salinas be deposed and that a transitional government be installed with the purpose of organizing free and open elections. Lastly, the EZLN opposed the agricultural and institutional reforms that had taken place in Chiapas. They called for the redistribution of latifundios (privately-held estates) and the repeal of the reforms that had taken place in 1992 regarding the statutes governing land tenure: Article 27 of the Constitution (Harvey 1994).

In addition to the problems in Chiapas, in March 1994, PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio was gunned down at a political rally held in Lomas Taurinas, Tijuana, BC. Colosio's murder was followed by the murder of Jose Francisco Ruiz

Massieu, the second-ranking member of the PRI, on September 28, 1994. The Chiapas crisis and the murders culminated in lack of confidence in the Mexican stock market, which was further aggravated by the November 1994 devaluation of the peso. The country plunged into crisis on December 20th. These last events, coincided with the beginning of Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon's term as President of Mexico.

Conclusions

This chapter examined the patterns of change and continuity in the evolution of Mexican drug control policy in relation to that of the United States in order to explain the rapprochement that occurred between the two countries during the Salinas and Bush administrations, after many years of acrimony and distrust. Drug control did much to affect the U.S.-Mexican bilateral relationship and by the mid-1980s, it became a fixture of the agenda, as opposed to a cyclical event. As the U.S.-Mexican relationship increased in interdependence and as the United States became more vulnerable to events taking place in Mexico, the drug issue served to shift the balance of power between the two countries, at least temporarily. Whereas drug control had primarily been treated from the perspective that it was more important for the United States than for Mexico throughout most of the century, under Salinas the drug control program was Mexicanized.

Conversely, this chapter also explored the domestic politics of U.S. drug control policy and their impact on Mexico. Whereas, drug control had traditionally been an issue of cyclical concern that often caused acrimony in the overall bilateral relationship, with the

advent of the Salinas administration a period of cooperation began that largely satisfied U.S. officials. It had often been stated that Mexican sensitivity over its national sovereignty had frequently complicated bilateral anti-drug cooperation, however, the Bush and Salinas administrations made special efforts to build up mutual trust and confidence.

Furthermore, the trafficking situation in Mexico worsened during Salinas' tenure as President because of alliances formed between Colombian cocaine cartels and Mexican traffickers, as well as increased heroin and marijuana production. However, the United States was less reactive precisely because of the newly achieved levels of cooperation between the different U.S. agencies and the PGR and the Mexican military. On an agency-by-agency basis, direct relations with the PGR, the agency responsible for coordinating all Mexican anti-narcotics efforts, were strengthened and a number of joint programs were established at the levels of interdiction, eradication, and demand reduction. Moreover, a variety of issues converged during the Bush-Salinas administrations, such as the U.S. fears of Mexican instability and Mexico's efforts to restructure its economy which created the political space for increased cooperation.

As regards the restructuring of the Mexican drugs control program, the Salinas administration was not concerned solely with U.S. reaction when it so drastically changed the organization of its anti-narcotics institutions. The rationale behind the change in Mexican policy was also domestically driven to resolve a bilateral problem. The qualitative changes in Mexican drug control policy could not have taken place without

domestic support for these, especially at the level of the elites. Part of the explanation lies in the vision of the Salinas administration to transform Mexico from a nation at the semi-periphery into a nation at the core.

In order to meet this challenge, Salinas had to establish a foreign policy that not only was concomitant with that of the United States as hegemon, but that would improve his political base within Mexico. Given the tendencies toward decentralization that began in the early 1980s, the Salinas administration sought a method to manage the potential destabilizing effects of drug trafficking in the outlying regions of Mexico, and hence of maintaining control over the concerns of the more conservative elements of the PRI.

However, 1994 demonstrated the extent to which the Salinas efforts to restructure the economy and open up the political system met with opposition. First, Salinas did not sufficiently consider the powerful voices of resistance that were harbingers of the future of Mexico. Second, it became obvious to the rest of the world that much of the change that had taken place was done in an environment of smoke and mirrors. The reality was that Mexico had a long ways to go before it would be safely out of danger, both politically and economically. Incoming president Ernesto Zedillo faced a difficult set of circumstances. More than ever, Mexico had to play the balancing act between domestic concerns and U.S. demands. Nevertheless, because of the passage of NAFTA, Mexico did have one advantage, it was a partner with the United States. Despite asymmetries, it could now take the lead in cooperation-building, particularly along its border with the United States.

Chapter 5 DRUG CONTROL AND THE U.S.-MEXICO BORDER

A Framework for Understanding

Trends on the U.S.-Mexico Border

One of the most important goals of this chapter is to detail the special difficulties related to the contiguity of nations from the 1980s forward, especially in the case of the United States and Mexico, a world economic and political power, and a developing nation. This chapter seeks to answer two sets of questions. First, what crosscutting incentives apply to policymaking at the national and international levels regarding drugs control in the United States and Mexico? Second, why have the resulting policies rarely achieved their targeted goals once implemented on the U.S.-Mexican border? In short, life on the border is regimented both by national policies and local accommodations to those national policies, as well as by local actors and agencies located on the border.

Although there are as many ways to approach the study of borders as there are borders, border regions are generally conceptualized as containing elements of one or more of the following three categories: "Transboundary ecosystems" with shared environmental, economic, and social problems that sometimes filter into the political arena (Herzog 1990); Region-states not defined by political fiat, but drawn by global markets (Sweedler 1994),¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ "Region-states tend to be linked to the global economy more strongly than with their host nations. Region-states tend to have between five million and 20 million people, must be small enough for its people to share common economic interests and large enough to justify adequate infrastructure for competition on the global scale. Clearly such a description could be applied to the U.S.-Mexico border region" (Ohmae 1993: 78).

and, the consequence of interactions between "periphery-center" (Sweedler 1994).¹⁶⁵

Keeping these definitions in mind, in order to create an environment of coordination, trust, and cooperation in the larger bilateral relationship, policies should theoretically respond to the needs of the border region because often they are at the root of bilateral tensions. The border became a focal point because of the dynamic changes related to globalization processes that have taken place along the border since the 1980s - the transnationalization of technology and the subsequent movement of things and people. The intense response of U.S. officials to seal the border with Mexico against illegal activities, in combination with the fundamental philosophy that a successful border is a well-regulated border, disrupted the every day life of the communities located there. Moreover, because of the unilateral nature of the law enforcement policies adopted by the United States that stood in direct contrast to NAFTA and the integrated nature of the region, local conflicts were often blown out of proportion and dealt with only at the larger bilateral level. Many of these conflicts could have been averted with dialogue at the local level.

Part of the problem can be attributed to the viewpoint that borders represent boundaries for fixed sovereign states containing societies, where the domestic and international are polarized (Agnew 1994). Regional cross-border life at the periphery is traditionally subsumed to the demands of the center. However, despite this conventional perspective of what borders represent, current events and the problems created by

¹⁶⁵ . In a periphery-center framework, the border region is peripheral to the more central regions of the country. "Many of the issues and problems in the border zone are seen as a consequence of the interaction between the border region and the center of power. Complicating this dynamic, is the fact that not only is there interaction between the border region (periphery) and the national capital, but also with the border region of the neighboring state which must also interact with its own national center" (Sweedler 1994: 3).

confrontational policies which ignore the integrated nature of the region have necessitated a new vision for the management of cross-border interactions and more autonomy from the center to solve local problems unique to the region.

In an attempt to mitigate these factors, regional actors have increasingly pressured their respective government institutions with demands for solutions to the problems created by the intensification of points of contact related to rapid commercial expansion and demographic growth. Although they cover a wide spectrum of opinion and include bilateral and international committees, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with oversight, there are still breaches in the conversation between center and periphery. Although there are many success stories, effectiveness is limited by the structural, institutional and political constructs of each individual situation.

For example, in 1981, a Binational Commission was established to address general bilateral problems, however, institutional coordination between the United States and Mexico remained limited and difficult to achieve.¹⁶⁶ As regards drug control, the net outcome was a

¹⁶⁶ . According to a 1991 U.S. General Accounting Office Report to the Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate, U.S.-Mexico Trade: Survey of U.S. Border Infrastructure Needs, "a comprehensive plan coordinating how growth should take place along the border is lacking...[Border planning is focused within individual communities, and no one entity considers what is happening elsewhere along the border...A borderwide plan could facilitate coordination among U.S. and Mexican authorities and better align operations and the infrastructure on both sides of the border. Although the Interagency Committee on Bridges and Border Crossings meets on a regular basis with its Mexican counterparts to discuss current and future implementation of specific capital improvement projects, this group has not addressed borderwide issues. It also does not have the authority to commit resources, according to committee members. Only the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) has jurisdiction all along the border, but its authority is generally limited to addressing irrigation, sewage treatment and other water issues" (GAO/NSIAD-92-56: 51). Efforts by Mexico to establish a United States-Mexican Intergovernmental Commission on Narcotics and Psychotropic Drug Abuse Control as an effective coordinating group between both governments lingered in the hands of the U.S. State Department. The original intent of the Commission was watered down to an interparliamentary conference, despite U.S. legislation having been passed to enter into negotiations to establish the commission and appoint members (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, August 5, 1987: 20-24; 48).

combination of

rather localized efforts that sometimes succeeded in meeting short-term priorities, such as the capture of a specific drug lord or the destruction of certain marijuana fields, but have not necessarily reflected the extent of the accommodations that had taken place between cross-cutting local and

national interests.¹⁶⁷ In addition to transnational organizations, military and law enforcement officers often work side-by-side because for the United States, drug trafficking and undocumented immigration represent unconventional security threats. Law enforcement forces along the U.S. Mexico border receive military assistance and training, both in the United States and in Mexico.¹⁶⁸

The tensions created by the juxtaposition of center-based policies with regional needs are reflected in the media and in the political rhetoric of border officials. In effect, since the mid-1980s, the relationship between U.S.-Mexico border drugs control policy and the media demonstrated a significant reciprocity. The media's examination of the drugs issue, reflects the inherent contradiction of the current philosophical underpinnings regarding drugs control in an integrated region: the oppositional nature of national security and globalization.

¹⁶⁷ Barbara Geddes described crosscutting interests or incentives in developing countries in terms of the desire to reform political bureaucracies. I have adopted this concept to explain changes that have occurred in border life with regard to cooperation in drug control reform. "Their interest in reform remains latent; it does not spontaneously develop into politically compelling demands... New cooperative solutions compete not with what individuals can achieve through their own unaided efforts, but rather with what they achieve by cooperating in small, informal clusters. In order to cooperate to achieve a collective good for some large, impersonal group, individuals must forgo the benefits produced by cooperation in small, informal networks...they must bear the costs their past allies will impose on them as punishment for desertion" (Geddes 1994: 35).

¹⁶⁸ The Border Patrol is trained by the military, works with Special Operations forces and is the principal interdicting force between ports of entry.

It is not surprising that border policy reforms about drugs control are largely formulated and/or peak in the U.S. broadcast and print news media during election years or in reaction to exceptional violations, such as the cases of Enrique Camarena and Alvarez Machain. However, when economic incentives are at stake, the media also tones down its presentation of drugs-related issues to facilitate other imperatives on the bilateral agenda. During the period preceding the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the media heavily praised Mexico's drug control efforts.

Border Regions and Capital Cities: A Struggle for Control

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the overall trend in drug control policy on the U.S.-Mexico border favored implementation that responded more to concerns voiced in Mexico City and Washington D.C. about political, security, and economic interests deemed more important to the overall bilateral relationship and the respective national governments. This tendency to favor the capitals' perspective initially created more conflict and less cooperation, in contrast to the more integrated perspective required to live in a transnational border community. Integrated border communities which historically had been left to their own devices were suddenly in the spotlight of the bilateral relationship because of the tensions related to the defensive nature of the policies implemented on the border.

In as much as drug policy on the border is consistent with broader policies established by the two national governments, the results have often been inconsistent with the expectations generated by the policy reforms in the border areas. Whereas both countries directed funding to the shared border to combat drug traffickers, harsh realities demonstrated that the border remains porous, and is dictated by norms that relate to the nature of borders: crossroads versus barrier. The policies undertaken by the two countries about issues like drug trafficking tended

to generate distrust and/or extreme nationalist reactions in both countries. These tensions contributed to breakdowns in the coordination of bilateral border policies because it is difficult to establish barriers in an area that traditionally has been a relatively open point of contact and exchange, and which in the long term, requires international cooperation.

The operationalization and implementation of national drug control policies in Mexico and the United States in the period after 1986, illustrate the multiple plans, both unilateral and bilateral, that focused on halting the flow of illegal drugs and immigration. These plans were largely U.S.-led and were supposed resolve the problems related to the porous nature of the border, including the issue of undocumented workers. As discussed in the previous chapters, this analysis draws on variations of two broad frameworks to describe the nature of border regions and their role regarding transnational issues such as drug trafficking: ¹⁶⁹ an international political economy framework which focuses on global inequalities, the economic linkages between supply and demand countries including the movement of capital, in the case of drug trafficking through money laundering juxtaposed with a framework which focuses on state drug control policies as shaped by concerns over internal stability and international security.

However, the net outcome of either explanatory framework once applied in a realistic setting has been a failure to institutionalize transboundary cooperation, at least insofar

¹⁶⁹ . Borrowing liberally from Myron Weiner's essay "Security, Stability, and International Migration" on the approaches to migration flows, the effort here was to adapt his definitions of political economy and security/stability frameworks to the drug control issue. The two frameworks have much in common. Both turn the reader's attention from individual decision-making to the larger social, political, and economic context within which individuals act; both frameworks are interactive and emphasize links between global processes and local ones; both play close attention to state behavior and to the importance of borders, although a security/stability framework generally places more importance on state decision-making than does a political economy approach, which "more often views the state as a weak actor buffeted by larger global forces." He warns that "although the two frameworks are at times complementary, the frameworks often yield different outcomes" (Weiner 1992/93: 91-126).

as concerns drugs control and despite multiple efforts to develop the mechanisms to do so. In large part, the contrasts between the two frameworks are greater than their similarities. In addition, neither framework takes into consideration differences in cultural characteristics and responses. The defined national boundaries, differences in political systems, and cultural diversity of the border region contribute to an overall lack of consensus on the development of formal structures for cooperation and coordination of policies.

The logic of interdependence and mutual problem-solving frequently clashes with ideologies of national sovereignty and institutional barriers created by international "asymmetries" between transboundary actors (Wesley Scott 1993: 40).

Furthermore, since the United States declared drug trafficking a security/stability threat, policy responses have relied much more heavily on repressive strategies along the border that stand in sharp contrast to the integrated aspects of its nature.¹⁷⁰

Lastly, the manner in which both countries choose to respond to the mutual problem of drug trafficking on the U.S.-Mexican border demonstrates the complex system between private and public relationships. Interdependence has numerous expressions including cooperation in law enforcement. In general terms, drug trafficking should be dealt with on the principles of international cooperation in both preventing consumption, as well as in the interdiction and prosecution of illegal trafficking organizations.

International law created the environment, norms, and formal rules of the game necessary for transnational cooperation, but it also created problems of jurisdiction.

¹⁷⁰ . "The underlying consensus on supply-side strategies in Washington's design and implementation of the war on drugs during the 1980s flowed directly from the core assumptions and internal logic of "realist" analyses of the international system - and of the U.S. role within it - widely accepted by U.S. foreign policy elites from both parties" (Bagley & Tokatlián 1992: 216).

Sensitivities over jurisdiction increase the likelihood for misunderstanding, especially in a situation where the expressed interdependence is of an asymmetrical nature such as is the case between Mexico and the United States. Therefore, the likelihood that long-term cooperative measures can be installed on the border decreases, especially when one country is invariably in a weaker position, as much a security threat, as a partner in a system of free trade and economic integration. Without the institutionalization of cooperative mechanisms, border communities must rely on the personalities and political will of those in charge of regulating cross-border interactions.

Unilateral Solutions: The First Phase of U.S. Border Policy

Drug trafficking between the United States and Mexico from Mexico to the United States is out of control. Our borders are out of control. It's not an exaggeration to say that the borders are virtually nonexistent, they're so porous. James H. Scheuer, Acting Chairman, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. July 22, 1986.

The borders were not secured because they could not be. Janet Reno, U.S. Attorney General. Press Conference. February 7, 1995.

The Border as a Focal Point in Bilateral Relations

Given that at some point, the border itself becomes the focal point for drug control policy debates and the bilateral relationship, the logical question would be, what types of relationships are established that directly appertain to the role played by the border in bilateral drug control efforts? For the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, events along its border with Mexico tended to trigger larger national trends and policies that not only related drug control to immigration, but responded to these two issues with compelling pressure through an increased law enforcement and military presence. In contrast, for Mexico, although its border with the United States was always important, the focus for Mexican border integrity

and national security has traditionally targetted its southern flank, particularly the territories contiguous to Guatemala and Belize (Piñeyro 1994: 754-772). This contrasting allocation of prioritization has at times generated conflicts for the bilateral relationship, and negatively affected the daily and mundane interactions of daily life between border communities.

Four significant events meaningfully impacted border residents and highlighted the confrontational nature of past U.S. policy decisions. First, the 1969 Operation Intercept, a border initiative to interdict drug traffickers and reprimand Mexico for its weak stance on drug control. Second, the February 1985 closure, when U.S. DEA and Customs initiated a stringent search in key border stations for kidnapped Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) agent "Kiki" Camarena and his abductors. Third, the establishment of Operation Alliance in 1986 and the subsequent militarization of the border region. Fourth, in October 1994, Operations Gatekeeper and "Hold the Line" were implemented to halt illegal flows of undocumented workers and secure the borders in coordination with efforts to combat drug trafficking. All four events hindered the freedom of movement to which border communities were accustomed and aggravated an already tense atmosphere. Moreover, the presence of U.S. military personnel in determinedly law enforcement applications, specifically between the National Guard and Customs, as well as an enlargement of the role of the U.S. Border Patrol adversely affected the space required for cooperative efforts.¹⁷¹

Closer examination of these instances reveals the growth of several larger trends on

¹⁷¹ . Beginning in the fall of 1986, the Border Patrol was given full responsibility over all ground interdiction efforts along the border between ports of entry. The Border Patrol's primary mission, however, is to prevent and detect the entry of undocumented foreign-born individuals into the United States. Border Patrol agents also provide air support by continually searching for U.S. cultivated marijuana fields and then report their findings to the appropriate agencies (U.S. Senate, Caucus on International Narcotics Control August 17, 1987).

the U.S.-Mexico border. First, the combination of border closings and an increased law enforcement and military presence heightened tensions in border communities and created difficulties in crossing the line. Second, until the mid-1990s, the measures that were adopted by the U.S. government were increasingly unilateral, with little or no formal or informal discussion with Mexican counterparts. Third, border closings and the strengthening of security measures were primarily related to the drugs trade, but were also linked in some manner to immigration policy. Fourth, The underlying premise of these unilateral measures evolved from the perception that the Mexican government is unreliable in either its desire to pursue drug traffickers, or in its ability to do so. Therefore, maximum precautionary measures were justifiable.¹⁷² This latter assumption often caused repercussions for the larger bilateral relationship, and for all intensive purposes, penalized the border communities.

Smuggling and the U.S.-Mexico Border

Beginning in the 1800s, smugglers traveled across the U.S.-Mexican border to exchange restricted or illegal goods for economic gain and thereby established the infrastructure for the drug traffickers who followed. From the early 1930s through the mid-1960s, Mexico supplied at least 94 percent of the marijuana bound for the United States, as well as approximately 15 percent of the heroin (House of Representatives, Select Committee

¹⁷² . In 1986, the Acting Chairman for the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, James H. Scheuer testified that "Mexico has...failed to initiate an effective narcotics enforcement program to investigate, arrest, prosecute, convict, and incarcerate important drug traffickers...to confiscate clandestine drug laboratories, and...to prevent international traffickers from using Mexico as a transit base to smuggle illegal drugs into the United States. Underlying the collapse of Mexico's narcotics eradication and enforcement programs and the breakdown of narcotics cooperation with the United States is, of course, rampant corruption...The administration, however, shares responsibility for the ground lost in Mexico for failing to demonstrate leadership in developing a comprehensive foreign policy to address narcotics problems in Mexico and the host of social and economic problems that foster the drug trade" (July 22, 1986: 3)

on Narcotics Abuse and Control 1986). By the 1980s, smugglers who had traditionally trafficked in marijuana and opiates in the 1960s and 1970s, were joined by Colombians who trafficked in coca paste to be manufactured into cocaine and later crack. This phenomenon changed Mexico's status from a primarily drug-producing country to the major transshipment point for cocaine from South America bound for the United States.¹⁷³

The U.S.-Mexican border became the "frontline" for the U.S. "War on Drugs."¹⁷⁴ This qualitative change in Mexico's status from a producing country to a transshipment point for cocaine initiated a build-up of combined law enforcement and military forces on the U.S.-Mexican border, primarily on the U.S. side. Despite many voiced reservations and the posse comitatus law, U.S. government officials decided to involve its military personnel in drug control efforts along the border.¹⁷⁵

The Defense Authorization Bill for FY 1986 contained an initiative to establish for the first time, a permanent drug interdiction assistance mission within the Department of

¹⁷³ . In January 1986, the U.S. Congress began to hold hearings regarding Mexico's role in drug trafficking largely because of the Camarena kidnapping. At that time, it was estimated by U.S. Embassy officials that 42 percent of the heroin and 35 percent of the marijuana consumed in the United States was produced in Mexico, and that 30-35 percent of the U.S. bound cocaine transited through Mexico (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, January 12-19, 1986: 11). By 1995, U.S. government officials estimated that more than 50 percent of all cocaine entering the United States crossed through Mexico, and that Mexico was supplying 20 percent of the heroin seized in the United States, along with 60-80 percent of the foreign grown marijuana available in the U.S. market (INCSR 1995: 140).

¹⁷⁴ . According to U.S. estimates, approximately 50 percent of all cocaine entering the United States crosses the Mexican border. (INCSR 1996).

¹⁷⁵ . The inclusion of drug trafficking as a national security concern warranted that the United States government place it near the top of its agenda given that "national security interests always rank highest on national foreign policy agendas, and threats to national security emanating from the international system warrant the use of the full range of national power resources (including force) to obtain desired responses from hostile or uncooperative nation-states: self-help is both a right and the ultimate recourse of every sovereign nation in defense of its national interests and security" (Bagley and Tokatlián 1992: 216).

Defense.¹⁷⁶ Whereas prior to 1986, the U.S. government periodically refurbished its border control efforts with additional Border Patrol agents or INS inspectors, or alternatively established temporary State and local task forces, the efforts to stem the flow of drugs and crime became sustained operations after 1986, in large part because of the Camarena affair.¹⁷⁷

Sealing the Border

1986 was a turning point for the Reagan administration's drug war at the international level, and more specifically on the border with Mexico. Moreover, with the passage in 1986 of both the Immigration Reform and Control Act and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act,¹⁷⁸ and the

¹⁷⁶ . In a letter dated April 18, 1986 from Senator Dennis DeConcini and U.S. Representative, Glenn English to Vice-President George Bush, the congressmen delineated how the military would fit into the Reagan administration's plans for a concerted effort at drug control. The letter was very clear that the drug threat to the United States' southern border dictated that the military be brought into the confines of the Posse Comitatus restraints imposed by law. According to the two Congressmen, the members of the President's Commission on Organized Crime concurred. Essentially, the plan was to establish seven full scale aerostat radar surveillance balloons along the Southwest border, particularly in Arizona, along with an Air Force Wing. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

¹⁷⁷ . In April 1983, however, one notable exception was established, "Operation Padrino." The DEA had initiated Operation Padrino to investigate and immobilize what was suspected to be a major heroin network. It was determined shortly thereafter that Juan Ramón Ballesteros, a well-documented international cocaine drug trafficker from Honduras, had joined forces with Miguel Ángel Félix-Gallardo, a well-known Mexican heroin trafficker, for the purpose of distributing cocaine into the United States. It was widely assumed at the time that Operation Padrino had contributed to Agent Camarena's abduction and subsequent murder. Testimony introduced by Thomas V. Cash, then the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations, Drug Enforcement Administration before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, U.S. House of Representatives, July 22, 1986.

¹⁷⁸ . As mentioned in Chapter 1, the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act originated in response to common perception that there was a need for a national commitment to a comprehensive anti-drug policy, especially one which targetted eradication of drugs in source countries and aggressive enforcement to halt drugs at the border. Up until 1980-81, only two programs existed involving drug eradication in source countries, but by 1986, the number of eradication programs numbered 14. The 1986 drug bill included provisions for the use of trade policy as an incentive, as well as a sanction, in dealing with drug producing countries. The perception was that by using the power to sanction, it would enhance U.S. drug eradication efforts in source countries. Furthermore, the bill provided for a radar network on the Southwest border to track and intercept drug traffickers, as well as an increased and more aggressive role for the U.S. military to participate in drug control operations. Opening Statement of Charles B. Rangel, Chairman, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, for Hearing on "The Federal War on Drugs: Past, Present, and Future." October 3, 1986.

implementation of Operation Alliance to secure the border, Mexican government officials were convinced that their U.S. counterparts increasingly associated drug trafficking with Mexican undocumented laborers. Mexico was greatly concerned that the United States would choose to resolve the problem with a greater show of force.¹⁷⁹ Their fears were justified.

According to U.S. officials, the border was in a state of crisis because of drugs related crime and corruption.¹⁸⁰ With growing apprehension, U.S. officials examined the efficacy of interdiction at the Mexican border because of its vulnerability to both land and air smuggling. Because of the effectiveness of "Operation Hat Trick" in the Caribbean traffickers were diverted to Mexico in the early 1980s. Smugglers were reportedly building new landing strips in Mexico less than 100 miles south of the U.S. border, along with storage warehouses to guarantee the availability of a steady flow of narcotics. The focus on the border was both a recognition of the changes that took place in Latin America over the last twenty-five to thirty years and a reflection of Washington's changing security concerns given shifting international power relationships and technological advances (Lowenthal 1987).

In other words, as regional solidarity broke down, U.S. security in a broader sense -

¹⁷⁹ . The Mexicans concluded that U.S. officials were associating drug trafficking with undocumented workers after Attorney General Edwin Meese III and INS Commissioner Alan Nelson gave a press conference at the Department of Justice in Washington on September 17, 1986. Basically, the two government officials concurred that drug trafficking and illegal aliens were related problems and that the only way to resolve the problem would be to place more agents and resources on the U.S.-Mexican border. Telex from the Dirección General para America del Norte to the Mexican Ambassador in Washington. October 10, 1986. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

¹⁸⁰ . William (Blue) Logan, the Regional Commissioner for Customs for the Southwest Region, described the southwest border area as a "modern-day horror story" (1986a: 55). In his presentation before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime on May 22, 1986, Mr. Logan acceded that the reason for the expanding crisis on the U.S. Southwest border related to growing corruption in Mexico, increased acts of violence, increased seizures of narcotics, the increased presence of Colombian traffickers, and evidence of large increases in cash activity within the financial institutions located in U.S. border towns (House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, May 22, 1986: 56).

"the capacity to protect the individual and collective welfare of this country's citizens" (Lowenthal 1987: 55) - was threatened, especially in light of the growth of international organized crime and drug trafficking.¹⁸¹ The perception that the border was the frontline on drugs demonstrated the insecurity felt by the United States because of its inability to control the problem at the source, despite the course of its policies.¹⁸²

Interdiction was widely determined the most effective method to prevent drug traffickers' from operating successfully, and thus to curtail the proliferation of smuggling activities. The U.S. government initiated Operation Alliance, a joint interagency cooperation and coordination effort along the U.S.-Mexico border between DEA, U.S. Customs, INS, FBI, Border Patrol, National Guard, Coast Guard, DOD, ATF, and IRS, as well as with State and local law enforcement (Lemus 1994). The rationale behind the plan was that it was far more economical to interdict the flow of drugs along the U.S.-Mexican border than to pursue massive law enforcement efforts within the United States.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ . According to Abraham F. Lowenthal, "What is at stake for Washington...is not so much national security but, rather, "national insecurity": the discomfort of coping with loss of control even when control may not be worth as much as it used to be, and even when it is very costly to retain" (1987: 64).

¹⁸² . According to Bagley and Tokatlán, "U.S. efforts to "impose" an "antidrug" national security regime during the 1980s proved ineffective in halting drug cultivation, processing, and trafficking in the hemisphere because from the perspective of most Latin American and Caribbean leaders, the U.S.-inspired regime lacked legitimacy, credibility, and symmetry" (1992: 214-215).

¹⁸³ . Although drug interdiction at the border was determined to be the most effective and least expensive method, conservative officials determined that interdiction at the border was necessary because Mexican officials were corrupt. Moreover, corruption was determined to be an example of why the United States should not establish cooperative mechanisms with Mexico. William von Raab, the Commissioner, U.S. Customs Service stated that "corruption is pervasive through the [Mexican] law enforcement, military systems. This corruption has effectively precluded Customs working with Mexican authorities on interdiction and has inordinately increased the number of resources we're forced to commit to the southwest border...Our border is still being violated at will and it is a serious national security concern" (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control March 29, 1988: 30).

Planning for Alliance began in April 1986 when Attorney General Meese appointed Francis A. Keating, II as Chairman of the Southwest Border Committee to the National Drug Enforcement Policy Board, along with co-chairmen Jack Lawn and Al Nelson.¹⁸⁴ As a result of 1986 legislation, by fiscal year 1987, a substantial portion of the military expenditure for drug control was tagged for interdiction at the border (Reuter, Crawford, and Cave: 1988). A significant part of the plan included the establishment of an electronic "Maginot" line that consisted of aerostat balloons, EC3 aircraft, and AWACS to both identify air smugglers and to enable U.S. air support to pursue them, following the suggestions of congressional leaders in 1986.¹⁸⁵ However, a crucial part of the plan backfired when Mexican authorities refused to cooperate with U.S. demands to allow its pilots freedom to incur into Mexican territory in cases of hot pursuit in large part because such permission would represent what they considered a loss of control over their side of the border and a violation of Mexican national sovereignty.

¹⁸⁴ . Operationally, the U.S. Customs was appointed the lead agency at ports of entry, with support from the INS. Between ports of entry, the U.S. Border Patrol was appointed the lead agency with support from mobile strike forces headed by U.S. Customs. Investigative and intelligence functions were divided between the DEA and FBI, with assistance from Customs with investigative authority cross-designation. Lastly, the participating agencies contributed substantial resources, including 384 agents from Customs with detector dog teams, 75 FBI agents, 100 IRS agents and support personnel, as well as the creation of a special Southwest Border Intelligence Task Force by the DEA. Operation Alliance became operational on July 1, 1986. (Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, House of Representatives. October 3, 1986).

¹⁸⁵ . Initial results of the combined efforts of Operation Alliance and the establishment of a radar net on the southern border initially yielded unexpected results. The Consul General for El Paso, TX met with the directors of Operation Alliance and was told that even though more cocaine had been seized on the border, the percentage of Mexican citizens involved in the trafficking of it was minimal. Furthermore, the directors pushed aside any notion that the drug trafficking issue was related to arms trafficking. Letter from the Dirección General para América del Norte to the Supervisor General de Servicios Técnicos y Criminalísticos, Procuraduría General de la República. Acervo Histórico Diplomático. Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores.

Limits to Cross-Border Cooperation: Operation Alliance

Originally, Alliance was intended to include participation from both Mexican and U.S. law enforcement forces, hence the name. In time, it became obvious that coordination between the military and law enforcement on both sides was difficult to envision, if not impossible to accomplish.¹⁸⁶ U.S. officials participating in Alliance developed approximately a dozen different law enforcement initiatives for joint cooperation and participation between Mexico and the United States. The Mexican government flatly refused to participate in any of them. Thus, Alliance came to mean an inter-agency alliance across U.S. southwestern state lines, as opposed to transborder law enforcement. Nevertheless, Alliance's task was not an easy one. There was much infighting between the different local, state, and federal agencies, especially since they were often in competition with one another for limited federal funding (Lemus 1994).

The increase in narcotics smuggling activity along the border resulted in large increases of drug-related violence in Mexico as traffickers fought turf wars, with spill over to local communities within the United States. Historically, Mexico represented a safe haven for criminals avoiding capture by U.S. enforcement agencies. From the U.S. perspective, Mexico's close proximity increased border communities' vulnerability to criminal gangs and drug trafficking organizations. Indeed, U.S. officials were confronted with more organized and sophisticated Mexican smuggling rings which were in competition for the increased traffic

¹⁸⁶ . To date, the confusion between U.S. political goals and Latin American security concerns has made it impossible to develop a hemispheric security regime that is capable of sustaining democracy and peace in the hemisphere. Also contributing to this deficiency are the diversity of security paradigms, the crisis of the cold war era- hemispheric security system, and the increasing differences among Latin American countries' position in the military arena (Varas 1992: 59).

(United States Senate, Caucus on International Narcotics Control, August 17, 1987: 7). Moreover, Mexican border cities experienced an influx of U.S. gangs into their territory.

Although the efforts of Operation Alliance were considered productive, the results had only a limited effect on smugglers' operations. There continued to be an overabundance of cocaine in the marketplace that subjected the product to competition in the "free enterprise" system. As a result, prices were rapidly and drastically reduced in order to clear out stockpiled inventories. Production outran demand because of the ease and low overhead costs in the production of cocaine and the potential for enormous profits, regardless of the street sale price. U.S. officials concluded that the competitiveness of the market reduced the probability that cocaine distribution was controlled by a single cartel or a few organized crime families. The availability of the drug was far too prevalent and widespread to meet the qualification of systematic control. According to Thomas J. Agnos, Assistant Police Chief, Criminal Investigations Division for the Phoenix Police Department:

If traditional organized crime elements were in control of importation and distribution, we would have experienced at least a price stabilization and, more likely, even an increased rather than a decreased cost (U.S. Senate, Caucus on International Narcotics Control, August 17, 1987: 24).

As in U.S. drug control efforts to stop drugs at their source, Operation Alliance's realist response gravely underestimated the relative autonomy of international market forces and drug smugglers' capacity to circumvent, adapt to, or defy state efforts to regulate or eradicate their profitable enterprises (Bagley and Tokatlián 1992: 218).

Mexico is not the United States...

The realist interpretation of the U.S. anti-drug campaign left little room for anything but a supply-side strategy and unilateral responses. The implementation of these policies

invariably created an environment that was not inclined to emphasize cooperation in the classic diplomatic sense. Instead, U.S. drug control policy created a confrontational stance that would come to rely on elements of coercive cooperation whereby links were clearly established between developmental and military aid, and a country's drug control efforts. Combined with the backlash in the United States because of the Camarena affair, there was very little room for Mexico to maneuver and save face domestically. In essence, the United States attempted to corner Mexico into complying with U.S. demands and instead triggered nationalist and anti-American feelings which resulted in resistance to U.S. proposals, especially since Mexican officials largely believed that illegal drugs were essentially a U.S. problem. Furthermore, the combination of law enforcement and military tactics adopted on the Mexican border indicated to Mexico a vote of no confidence and thereby further reduced incentives to participate in U.S. led operations. Despite reduced incentives to collaborate, Mexico did not cease to cooperate with the United States in long-established opium and marijuana eradication efforts, or the bilateral verification program, Operation Vanguard.

Although the Mexican government chose not to allow its law enforcement officials to participate directly in transborder operations related to Alliance, the Procuraduría did agree to try to coordinate efforts at the level of the Attorneys General. In 1986, meetings began between the Mexican Attorney General for the State of Sonora, Carlos Robles Lausteneau and the Attorney General for the State of Arizona, Stephen M. McNamee, along with other prosecuting and law enforcement agencies in an effort to further develop cooperation between the two bordering states. Attorney General Robles approached Arizona officials because he was interested in establishing some type of relationship between Federal, State, and local people and their counterparts in Mexico.

These initial contacts were expanded across the border and were followed by more decisive working meetings in San Diego and south Texas to discuss the problems being experienced in Mexico. Mexican authorities were primarily concerned with the steady stream of weapons that entered into Mexico from the United States. These efforts were a far cry from the original intentions and expectations generated by Operation Alliance, and demonstrated the extent of difficulties that surrounded such sensitive questions. It became clear that though these micro-efforts evolved from necessity, interdependence frequently clashed with national ideologies regarding sovereign rights.

The Growing Complexity of Cross-border Cooperation

Building Community Support for Law Enforcement and Military Actions

Through a parallel policy to law enforcement operations, the U.S. government attempted to lessen opposition in producing and transit nations with efforts to build community and political support for enforcement actions. Limited AID instituted narcotics awareness projects were established throughout Latin America, and specifically in Mexico. The primary objective of the AID projects was to develop consciousness within local communities that drugs posed a negative impact on the individual, the family, and society.

The Mexican AID project was initiated in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua across from El Paso, TX. The narcotics awareness project was based on the premise that the political price of cooperating in interdiction and eradication had generally been extremely high. There were serious problems with both narcotraffickers issuing and carrying out death threats, as well as from a political standpoint. Many countries, Mexico included, were of the opinion that only industrialized countries, the United States in particular, were affected by drug production

and trafficking. The awareness program was an effort to generate consciousness among the communities and general public regarding the impact that drugs were having on local social structures. The program survey revealed that the Mexican border was experiencing an increase in drug consumption due to the greater availability and relatively cheap price of cocaine (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, August 5, 1987: 34-35).¹⁸⁷

The Border as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

As a consequence of its inability to seriously dent the transit of illicit substances across the border, the National Drug Control Strategy designated the region a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in January 1990.¹⁸⁸ At that point, both EPIC and military intelligence estimated that approximately 80 percent of all narcotics were coming across the Mexican border (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Appropriations, July 30, 1990: 11). The

¹⁸⁷ . The Ciudad Juárez project consisted of three related but discrete activities. The first part included operations research to survey 3,000 individuals to determine the percentage and characteristics of drug abusers and their habit patterns disaggregated by age, sex, education, social status, and employment. The project developed, tested, and evaluated social communications programs to reach the broadest spectrum of Juárez society. The second component of the project included plans for design of alternative treatment programs. Lastly, the government subcontracted Johns Hopkins University to design a "popular song-based media program using vocalist personalities selected to appeal to the teen-age/young adult population" to reach adolescents concerning individual responsibility (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control August 5, 1987: 97-102).

¹⁸⁸ . The goal of the HIDTA program was to take concerted action in the areas designated as high intensity drug trafficking zones to identify and dismantle drug trafficking organizations. The HIDTA program was intended to be a mobile operating group, not meant to operate permanently in a given location. The intention behind a HIDTA designation was not to replace or substitute the comprehensive approach of the National Drug Control Strategy, because a major emphasis of the strategy was a demand-reduction program and HIDTA is a supply operation. Instead, HIDTA was intended to have a specific law enforcement focus and objective. ONDCP was designated the coordinator of the implementation of HIDTA programs, however since ONDCP was not an operational agency, it was reluctant to become involved in day-to-day operations. Rather, the coordination of day-to-day operations was left to the two committees in charge of HIDTA: the metropolitan committee headed by the Department of Justice, and the Southwestern Border Committee headed by the Department of the Treasury (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control May 6, 1992: 8-9).

underlying purpose of the high intensity drug trafficking area designations was to identify areas experiencing the most serious drug trafficking problems and to determine the most pressing need for Federal intervention.

The HIDTA strategy was supposed to contain many very practical and needed improvements to the existing situation to accomplish the goal of effective border control through multi-agency task forces. The strategy was conceptualized as a single, but long-term effort, one which would require months or years to put into place and require significant funding to implement, at a time when funding sources were limited (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, July 30, 1990:4-5).¹⁸⁹

Moreover, since the implementation of Alliance, an immense amount of intelligence had been collected, but the program lacked the enhanced resources to analyze and disseminate the material. Therefore, it was suggested that instead of creating a new multi-agency tactical response force, that existing multi-agency task forces in the border counties be enhanced with additional personnel resources and equipment.¹⁹⁰ HIDTA funds were used to create and fund Narcotics Information Systems in each border state with the ultimate goal of connecting the four systems in a networking capability to improve intelligence along the border.

¹⁸⁹ . The HIDTA border program was scheduled to receive \$25 million in 1990 and \$50 million in 1991. Both congressmen and law enforcement officers complained that the amounts were too small in order "to get the job done" (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations July 30, 1990: 2).

¹⁹⁰ . The Representative for the State of Arizona was appreciative of his state's HIDTA designation, but he criticized the plan for not allowing Arizona representatives' the opportunity to participate in the development of the HIDTA strategy. The proposed plan was considered to lack knowledge about what was already occurring in Arizona regarding drug control efforts. State and local comment was only solicited after the plan was developed. Rex M. Holgerson, Executive Directory, Arizona Criminal Justice Commission stated, "The proposed plan, quite frankly, appears to re-invent the wheel. We probably need a bigger set of tires, but our wheels are in place and working" (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, July 30, 1990: 5).

As it was originally conceptualized, HIDTA represented a duplication of efforts, despite conscious attempts to keep the operations streamlined. However, in its favor, the HIDTA strategy contributed significantly to interagency cooperation, both laterally and vertically, among Federal, State, county, and local agencies, a heretofore virtually impossible task.

1990 also marked the one-year anniversary of the military's operation of Joint Task Force - 6 (JTF-6) headquartered at Fort Bliss, TX. JTF-6 was created in response to the national drug control strategy and was clearly designed to work in support of law enforcement as a supply-side effort.¹⁹¹ The commander of JTF-6 is the single point of contact for DOD regional counterdrug support along the southwest border.¹⁹² In addition, the Department of Defense assigned military personnel to support INS drug enforcement operations. The military staffed and operated a drug detection and monitoring network (DDAM) that consisted of three or four military intelligence personnel at Border Patrol Sectors.

The purpose of DDAM was to establish an effective border-wide system for

¹⁹¹ . JTF-6 had no assets and had to be sensitive to legal restriction on using the military for law enforcement purposes. It was primarily a planning and coordinating body which fulfilled the requests for support made by Federal, State, and law enforcement agencies. The requests for support went through Operation Alliance, which was designated the chief coordinator for all law enforcement activity in HIDTAS (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, December 9-13, 1990).

¹⁹² . JTF-6 covers a full spectrum of services in support of Federal, State, and local law agencies which include manned listening and observation posts, ground surveillance radars, remotely monitored battlefield sensors, aerial reconnaissance, air and ground transportation of drug law enforcement agency agents, marijuana eradication support, intelligence analysis, linguistic translation support, tunnel detection, engineer construction, and mobile training teams. Until 1993, DOD was prevented from continuous surveillance and reporting of personnel along the border due to interpretation of the posse commitatus law. The Fiscal Year 1993 Defense Authorization Act authorizes JTF-6 to detect and report traffic within 25 miles of the border only if initial detection occurred outside of the U.S. border and surveillance continues. DOD is prohibited from entering private lands without owner's prior permission U.S. Senate, subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, February 25, 1993: 129)

intelligence collection, evaluation, analysis and dissemination. Border Patrol Intelligence Agents were trained to apply military intelligence techniques to increase the production and use of intelligence in strategic and tactical planning of INS drug interdiction and border control operations.

The Southwest Border Strategy

Despite the increased organization provided by Alliance, the HIDTA strategy, and JTF-6, the southwest border continued to be heavily impacted by drug smuggling and drug related crime.

The trafficking of drugs over the border has put a great strain on local criminal justice systems. Heroin trafficking is on the increase and while Federal officials claimed in mid-year that the price of cocaine rose and its purity fell indicating a shortage, recent seizures and trends appear to show no diminution in the cocaine traffic from South America via the Andes across the border (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, December 9-13, 1990: 2).¹⁹³

To improve coordination, Operation Alliance solicited the participation of all involved agencies in the preparation of a Southwest Border Strategy. The strategy was designed with the intention of allowing it to grow and undergo modification as strategic assessments changed in response to drug traffickers' behavioral modification. The Southwest Border Strategy continued to emphasize interdiction and enforcement efforts to deter the introduction of drugs into the United States, as well as the flow of money, arms, and contraband to Mexico from the United States. However, the strategy also began to acknowledge and include as part of its agenda the money laundering issue. The border was targetted because of the increase in

¹⁹³ U.S. officials determine reductions in the supply of cocaine and heroin based on two indicators: an increase in price and a reduction in purity (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, December 10, 1990: 24). In 1984, undercover agents could negotiate a kilo of cocaine for \$50,000 to \$60,000 dollars. In 1990, the same cocaine was available for \$12,000 to \$15,000 dollars (House of Representatives, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, December 10, 1990: 72).

funds that were flowing through the *casas de cambio* or money exchange houses which were prevalent along the border and largely unregulated. Drug organizations moved into the area's banks, real estate markets, and purchased legitimate businesses to launder money because they were both a convenient and safer alternative to Mexican banks and the unstable peso. The large influxes of cash began to impact the southwest border and multi-agency task forces were developed to disrupt the financial aspects of drug trafficking operations.

The 1992 National Drug Control Strategy designated the Border Patrol as the primary law enforcement agency tasked with drug interdiction between the ports of entry along the international borders between the United States and Mexico and between the United States and Canada. The Border Patrol was to directly bolster national drug control through detection and prevention of the illegal entry of persons and contraband between ports of entry. To fulfill its duties, the Border Patrol began to put into action a variety of operational activities and utilization of many force-multiplying technologies, such as electronic sensors, low-light level television systems, and infrared equipment to improve night vision.

Part of its plan was the development of Operation Linewatch. Linewatch constituted the first line of defense against aliens seeking to enter the United States illegally. The Border Patrol determined which areas possessed the greatest potential for illegal activities and they would adapt their enforcement activities accordingly. In addition, the Border Patrol established traffic checkpoints to serve the dual function of overall immigration law enforcement and to counter the activities of drug smugglers. The increase in narcotics interdiction by Border Patrol was closely associated with the shift during the mid-1980s in the standard movement of narcotics from South America through the Caribbean to movement through Mexico. Moreover, in the eyes of the Border Patrol, there existed a direct nexus

between the apprehension of undocumented workers and narcotics interdiction.¹⁹⁴

Mexico's Response to Northern Border Problems

Wake-up Call: A Growing Consumption Problem

By the late 1980s, Colombian traffickers had overtaken Mexican smuggling routes and developed sophisticated alliances with local Mexican traffickers to ship cocaine into the United States. Illicit drug production increased in Mexico, and as was demonstrated through the AID program, Mexico faced a serious, though regionally limited, domestic drug abuse problem. The communities most vulnerable were those located along the U.S. border. The newly established presence of Colombian organized crime, accompanied by an increase in drug abuse and U.S. pressure because of the Camarena affair forced the Mexican government to re-evaluate its domestic drug problem for the first time since the 1950s.

Despite a strong nationalistic backlash against the United States resulting from its increased pressure, the Mexican government, through the Procuraduría, initiated a series of domestic, bilateral, and multilateral efforts to mitigate international preoccupation with what appeared to be a state system racked with corruption and ill will. Many of these efforts targeted the northern border states not only because of their proximity to the United States, but because of their role in the production of marijuana and heroin, as well as in cocaine trafficking. Moreover, the rapid rise in consumption that resulted from the growing presence of illegal narcotics in the border States and accompanying indiscriminate violence alarmed Mexican officials.

To respond to growing domestic drug abuse, the government developed *Atención a la*

¹⁹⁴ . Around 1985, the Border Patrol began to notice an increase in the number of undocumented workers acting as narcotics couriers in order to pay smugglers to guide them across the border.

Farmacodependencia (ADEFAR) and the *Centros de Integración Juvenil*. Both programs intended to increase prevention and education activities at the grassroots level. The basis for the program was the collaboration between parents, teachers, and local community centers to attempt to reduce drug abuse among young people, especially the two border cities with the highest consumption rates, Tijuana and Ciudad Juárez. Northern border States were targeted because they were at higher risk given the increase in the supply of marijuana, opiates, and cocaine (*Programa Estatal para el Control de Drogas*, Chihuahua, 1992). Mexican Attorney General, Sergio García Ramírez attributed the growth of Mexican drug consumption to:

overpopulation, the lack of socially productive activities, disorganization, the absence of culture, insufficient means for material satisfaction, increased scarcity of resources, housing problems, information and recreation that leads to hedonism and violence, the decline of traditional measures for social control (García Ramírez 1989: 67).

In other words, the Mexican social fabric was threadbare as a result of economic and social stress related to Mexico's ongoing economic conditions. Drugs were not only attractive because they were profitable, they also provided a method of escape. The Mexican government could no longer claim that there was no consumption problem in Mexico, although they did express that it was still relatively small.

A Mexican Northern Border Strategy

The Salinas administration responded to Mexico's growing drug problem with the establishment of a comprehensive, multi-faceted national drug control strategy. The first step was to intensify its interdiction and eradication efforts, along with expanded drug prevention, education, and treatment. It also established community awareness and alternative economic development programs to encourage farmers to reduce drug production.

The Mexican government began two major programs with emphasis on border states,

one to eradicate opium and marijuana and the other to address domestic drug abuse. The eradication programs, Operations Pacífico begun in 1984, focused on the border states of Chihuahua and Sonora, as well as Sinaloa and Durango on the Pacific coast.¹⁹⁵ These four states represented the major producers of marijuana and opium poppy in Mexico, especially Chihuahua and Sonora which border the United States. On June 18, 1986, the United States Department of State offered to provide assistance to the Pacífico operation in the form of \$1.5 million dollars to partially fund the effort, funds which the Mexican government agreed to match. However, the promised U.S. funds never arrived although the project was implemented anyway and was fairly successful.

The Mexican government increased the budget of the office of the Attorney General (PGR), the lead agency in drug interdiction, from \$37 million in 1989 to \$100 million in 1992. By 1993, the Mexican government assumed the full cost of its drug control program and the U.S. role in Mexican drug control became limited to training and technical assistance. Cooperation also continued in investigations, information sharing, crop eradication efforts, and joint programs in demand reduction through the AID.

As part of its more integrated approach, the Mexican federal government also targetted the issue of agrarian reform and began to establish projects for integrated rural development in regions that were most likely to produce illicit crops. The key region of the Sierra

¹⁹⁵ The largest marijuana and opium plantations are located in the Tepehuana region where the States of Chihuahua, Durango and Sinaloa meet, as well as Sonora. The state of Chihuahua, has the largest potential productive areas where sowing takes place far from the urban zones. Marijuana is mainly cultivated between the months of July and November, and poppy between October and April. The area is referred to as the Golden Triangle because it provides the best conditions for the production of marijuana and opium poppy. By 1992, the eradication campaigns in the Pacific region represented 88.45 percent of the marijuana and 97.31 percent of the poppy destroyed nationwide (Drug Control in Mexico, National Program 1989-1994: Evaluation and Follow-up, February 1993: 48)

Tarahumara was particularly important because of its relative isolation and drug traffickers' ability to influence indigenous groups to participate in marijuana and opium poppy production. In the state of Chihuahua, the state government created specialized programs and formed the office of the Tarahumara Coordinator in order to improve their living standards and prevent their incorporation into narcotics trafficking.

The *Secretaría de la Reforma Agraria*, along with the *Escuela Superior de Agronomía "Hermanos Escobar"* and the Banrural joined together to establish agricultural programs that included sustainable development, technology transfers, and assured credit to successfully promote crop substitution and the reassignment of seized properties (*Programa Estatal para el Control de Drogas*, Chihuahua, 1992). New legislation was passed so that properties seized from known smugglers were to be provided to the *Secretaría de Reforma Agraria* to dispense among peasants in need of land.¹⁹⁶

Operación Halcón: The Northern Border Response Force (NBRF)

In an attempt to disrupt cocaine traffickers headed for the United States, the PGR established an air interdiction program known in the United States as the Northern Border Response Force (NBRF) or Operación Halcón in 1990 as part of a Department of State, DOD and DEA training program which included state of the art equipment and intelligence for the

¹⁹⁶ . According to article 27 of the Constitution, property should serve a social function. Agrarian reform included changes in agrarian law which permitted the seizure of property to be redistributed as the Commission saw fit. Agrarian Law 85 states that any ejido or commune which permits the use of their land for illegal drug production will lose their rights to cultivate that land. Furthermore, article 27, emphasizes that the nation has the prerogative to impose the modality which is considered most relevant for the preservation of the land's social function and public interest. The land is turned over to the *Comisión Agraria Mixta* which in turn, hands it over to needy peasants (García Ramírez 1989: 376).

new force.¹⁹⁷ NBRF was originally denominated the chief interdiction agency on the U.S.-Mexican border. The objectives of the program were to detect drug-laden aircraft, interdict the aircraft as it lands in Mexican territory, arrest the traffickers, seize both aircraft and narcotics, and conduct follow-up investigations to collect evidence that can be used to dismantle trafficking groups.¹⁹⁸ Originally, the plan was to include seven self-contained operations bases that were to be placed in a limited well-defined area along the U.S.-Mexican border.¹⁹⁹

The NBRF program was initially successful because until that point no system existed to detect smuggling aircraft entering Mexican airspace and the traffickers were caught unawares.²⁰⁰ Once traffickers became conscious of the new program, they modified their smuggling methods and began to introduce cocaine through Mexico's southern frontier, as well as by sea for later transportation by land or air, or by depositing small packages off-shore to

¹⁹⁷ . "Initially, NBRF is extremely successful because up to that point, there had never been so much trafficking, nor had there been such high levels of cooperation and coordination on the part of the police. There were five groups working together. These no longer have a name." NBRF is now only referred to as Operación Halcón in Mexico, however, the U.S. Embassy continues to refer to the group by its original acronym, NBRF. Halcon's focus was shifted to the south in 1994 in response to the smugglers change in tactics. Traffickers moved their operations to Central and Southern Mexico. Interview with Alejandro Alegre. Secretario General. Secretaria de Gobernación. June 23, 1995.

¹⁹⁸ . The United States leased 21 U.S. Army UH-1H helicopters for transport of NBRF interdiction teams to the destinations of aircraft suspected of smuggling drugs. GAO/NSIAD-93-152.

¹⁹⁹ . According to U.S. embassy officials in Mexico City, drug traffickers smuggled cocaine through three primary air routes from Colombia to Mexico: 1) the western Caribbean corridor; 2) the eastern Pacific corridor; and 3) the central corridor along the Central American land mass. The latter route often required that traffickers make intermediate stops in Guatemala or Belize to either off-load drugs for land or marine transport, or to refuel their aircraft before entering into Mexican airspace (GAO/NSIAD-93-152: 10).

²⁰⁰200. Between the period April 1990 when it was begun to 1992, NBRF was responsible for seizing over 80 metric tons of cocaine (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations February 24, 1993: 66). The NBRF also provided information and intelligence to non-NBRF Mexican agencies and drug interdiction organizations of neighboring countries which resulted in the seizure of an additional 18 metric tons of cocaine in the period 1990-1992 (GAO/NSIAD-93-152: 18).

be picked up by boat. These methods quickly made the original purpose of the NBRF program obsolete (GAO/NSIAD-93-152). Furthermore, although NBRF's seizures of cocaine appeared impressive, when interdictions were compared to the number of suspected narcotics flights tracked through Mexico, it was evident that the vast majority of flights were transiting through Mexico without being interdicted.²⁰¹

In addition to the problems presented by drug traffickers, the NBRF program itself was flawed. Although in theory NBRF appeared to be a sustainable operation, the concept of establishing self-contained mobile bases of operations was never fully validated because no base of operation was ever actually established. In addition, although the UH-1H helicopters were regarded highly, they were not the appropriate tool to fulfill the desired function given their limited range once drugs smugglers changed their routes. Moreover, there were numerous delays and significant implementation problems which compounded NBRF's ability to function as designed. In the first place, the U.S. government had trouble filling Mexico's order for 21 UH-1H's or in providing sufficient replacement parts because Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm represented a higher priority issue on the U.S. agenda. Of the nine UH-1Hs which were delivered, only five were fully operational during 1991 because of delays in equipment delivery. Because radios and auxiliary fuel tanks were unavailable, these were not installed until after the equipment arrived in Mexico, further delaying the program.

²⁰¹ The Rand Corporation reported that approximately 92 percent of more than 100 suspected trafficking aircraft transiting Mexico, before the initiation of the NBRF concept, succeeded in landing their cargos. According to information developed by the U.S. embassy's Information Analysis Center in Mexico City, 107 of the 339 acquired tracks in 1991 landed in Mexico. Of the 107 suspected flights, 23, or 21 percent were interdicted. An acquired flight track indicates an assumed trafficking flight because it meets the profile by which smugglers are most commonly identified. These flights cannot be pronounced to be smuggling drugs with 100 percent certainty unless they are interdicted (GAO/NSIAD-93-152: 19).

In March 1992, the second shipment of twelve helicopters was delivered, but again without the necessary radios and parts required to install auxiliary fuel tanks (GAO/NSIAD-93-152: 20). In addition, the concept of maintaining seven self-contained mobile operation bases was hindered by the Mexican government's inability to retain the required number of qualified helicopter pilots and mechanics given their low compensation as compared to that of the private sector.

In response to the relocation in traffic, the Mexican government determined that it required a response force that could cover all of Mexico, thus the range of NBRF's activities was expanded. In 1993, Mexico shifted its priority from the northern border area to its southern border with Guatemala and Belize with the purpose of preventing South American cocaine from entering into Mexican territory. Given their limited range, the NBRF decided that the helicopters should be used to saturate a particular area or known trafficking corridor and then move with the traffickers as they continue to shift their operations.

However, the NBRF as an interdiction force relies heavily on the information provided by U.S. detecting and monitoring assets given the lack of appropriate equipment available in Mexico. These assets cover Central and South America, in addition to the western Caribbean region. As a result, they are overextended and insufficient to provide a 24-hour watch over the major trafficking routes in Mexico. Therefore, there are lengthy gaps in detecting and monitoring capabilities which adversely affect NBRF interdiction efforts (GAO/NSIAD-93-152: 33).

In addition to the programmatic change in the NBRF program, the Salinas government consolidated the Integrated Interception System, by means of which the Ministries of Defense, the Navy and the Department of Communications and Transport could form an inter-agency

alliance in order to take maximum advantage of limited resources. Moreover, the Salinas administration sought to reinforce its control over drug trafficking organizations ability to occupy spaces where they could expand their market and increase their profits by exploiting areas where law enforcement was not present. The government also sought to increase coordination and consolidate participation between Federal, state, and local officers to overcome weaknesses in the programs.

To accomplish these tasks, the Mexican Air Force implemented a radar network in southern Mexico that was intended to become the foundation for Mexican air surveillance and to provide information to a Counternarcotics Coordinating Center (CENDRO). CENDRO was established by the PGR and is tasked with coordinating the activities of all civilian and military organizations involved in the Mexican drug control program. Despite all of the structural changes, Mexico still did not have the necessary assets available or in place to detect or counter the ever changing drug smuggling tactics used by traffickers. Moreover, breakdowns in cross-border cooperation were still the norm.

Regional Needs Command Attention

Cross-Border Efforts to Create Cooperation

Since 1992, in order to mitigate the confrontational aspects of policy responses on either side of the border, Mexico and the United States engaged in a policy of granting the border areas more autonomy in their actions, to seek local answers to local problems. It was a belated recognition of the integrated nature of the area and of the need to not allow integrated regional issues to poison the larger bilateral relationship, and vice-versa. This is not to say that decisions stopped being made in the capital cities. Policies are still passed in Washington

D.C. and Mexico D.F., oftentimes, irrespective of the effect they might have on the border region.

The border is also not yet a model of cooperation. On the contrary, efforts to create more coordinated responses and to maintain open the doors of dialogue remain in a process of institutionalization. The personalities and attitudes of the local actors still play an important role in the outcome of cross-border cooperation. In addition, the mechanisms being established are not consistent across the 2,000-mile long border. Yet, in all cases, the mechanisms represent an awareness at both the national and regional levels that problems can be handled locally without an escalation into major conflict.

Binational Liaison Mechanisms

There are currently eight BLMs in place along the U.S.-Mexico border (Tijuana/San Diego, Mexicali/Calexico, Tijuana/Calexico, Nogales/Hermosillo, Ciudad/El Paso, Laredo/Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros/McAllen, and Matamoros/Brownsville). Their shapes, systematization and characteristics vary from region to region. The institutional virtue of the BLMs is that as a mechanism, they are superb at establishing better relations between the actors in charge of border issues and maintain a dialogue between the agencies located on the border. Nevertheless, the BLMs are not intended to be policymaking institutions and they must work within the parameters of respect for national sovereignty.

Originally, the BLMs were established as a method to deal specifically with border violence, much of which was related to drugs and migratory problems. At present, they address a full range of issues and include a plethora of actors. The San Diego/Tijuana BLM is among the most sophisticated. It acts as an umbrella for the offshoots that include Working Group for Public Safety for Tijuana-San Diego, the Working Group on Migratory Matters and

Consular Protection, and the Border Ports Council. The San Diego model is unique in comparison to the other BLMs because of its complexity, but also because of its geographic breadth. It includes the entire California-Baja California border region because of the jurisdiction of the regional immigration directors on both sides of the border.

Although the BLMs are not intended for policymaking, they do inform policy. In their function as spaces for cross-border dialogue, they bring together the leaders of the different law enforcement organizations to discuss the issues and problems they are faced with. In some cases they are problem-solving tools, but in the case of San Diego-Tijuana, the BLMs have become long-term planning mechanisms. Increasingly, the BLMs in San Diego have engaged in proactive measures, as opposed to reactive. In so doing, they have attempted to mitigate the problems of the past.

Nevertheless, there are roadblocks to cross-border cooperation. One of the most difficult to overcome is distrust among agencies. Less problematic, but equally important, is the lack of familiarity with each other's legal systems, agencies, and procedures. Without intra-agency cooperation the potential for chaos and its multiplier effect on the border communities grows exponentially in large part because criminals can easily cross over to either side. Thus they avoid from either ever being caught, or they can delay proceedings because of national sensitivities over extradition and the legal difficulties in actually doing so. Moreover, because of the manner which the drug issue is being handled, drugs are rarely discussed in any of the BLMs. Although they continue to cross the border, drug control is still being managed from the capital cities. However, consequences related to drugs have enjoyed a spillover effect because of the openness and dialogue created by the BLMs in other issue areas.

Conclusions

The most important foreign policy issues in the bilateral relationship tend to be spinoffs from domestic issues.

It is evident that foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy, but the point merits particular emphasis in the U.S.-Mexico context because of proximity and integration. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a significant "internal" economic issue in the United States that does not have repercussions in Mexico. It is equally difficult to imagine a social issue in Mexico that does not affect the United States. The integration of the two countries has become so extensive that it cannot be avoided even when internal decisions are made in each country (Weintraub 1992: 57).

Drug trafficking is a basic or durable issue which often affects the short-term relationship. Its importance is derived from its constancy. On the border, the constancy of drug traffic and its relationship to immigration has become the most prominent issue for the American Southwest and the Mexican North, along with water, environmental, and infrastructure concerns. Nevertheless, in the last decade, U.S. officials involved in drug control have argued that Mexican law enforcement is too corrupt to trust and therefore difficult to cooperate with.²⁰²

U.S. economic policies stand in sharp contrast to the purposes of law enforcement targetted at drug trafficking. Despite the political rhetoric to do something about the border, resources for the border have traditionally been limited and only one in 20 smugglers that choose an overland route are usually caught according to Border Patrol estimates. U.S. Customs services have been hampered by inadequate resources in its ability to search enough vehicles that enter the United States. The former Coordinator of the Southwest High-Intensity

²⁰² . It is not to say that U.S. law enforcement officers do not cooperate with Mexican officers. For example, the Border Patrol has responded to unique border crime problems along with local law enforcement agencies, and often these have been coordinated efforts with Mexican officers. One such instance was the Border Patrol's participation in the Border Crime Prevention Unit with the San Diego Sheriff's Office to control the activities of border bandit groups which were in the habit of assaulting and robbing undocumented workers attempting to enter into the United States (U.S. Senate, Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, December 10, 1990: 104).

Drug Trafficking Area for the Department of the Treasury, Warren Reese, commented that he felt that the drug situation on the border was something akin to a guerrilla war because traffickers have flexibility, mobility, and versatility given their financial resources, manpower, and equipment.

In sum, the similarities between Mexican processes and U.S. processes are greater than the dissimilarities. The two countries follow drugs control policies that are supply-side oriented. But there are changes. The United States does not pay for Mexican drugs control expenses. Although Mexico pays for its drug control programs, it continues to receive materiel and training from the United States. The United States is the primary source of both low and high-tech equipment for Mexican law enforcement and armed forces. The implication here is that any U.S. weakness to detect drug smugglers becomes a Mexican weakness given its dependency on U.S. surveillance assets and training.

Mexico has one additional problem. Mexican people crossing into U.S. territory feel unsafe and are often threatened because of the implementation of a sequence of policies and attitudes that view them as potentially dangerous. Law enforcement officers participate with military units to implement a policy that, intentionally or unintentionally, equates the drug trafficker/criminal with the undocumented worker by placing them on the same level. In other words the perception of what represents a security risk has changed considerably in the United States since 1986. Moreover, because of the intense pressure created by operations like Hold the Line and Gatekeeper, many of these individuals die in their attempt to cross to the other side because they are forced into physically treacherous areas where not only they suffer from overexposure, but there is no water.

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, as the United States attempted to seal off its

borders to stave off the powerfully alluring inducements of the drug trade and to deter illegal migration, it simultaneously provided financial backing for Mexico. The magnitude of the stakes is enormous and created two related problems for the bilateral relationship. First, Mexico has neither been able to prevent drug trafficking related corruption, nor has it been able to satisfy U.S. policymakers' reservations about its ability and willingness to do so. Second, Mexico is placed at risk systemically, and its ability to weather other non-related crises seems dubious, both at a national and international level. As a result, the incentive for the United States to continue its pursuit of policies to physically seal its borders to Mexico remains unfettered and the Mexican government must find a way to dialogue with the United States to consider the humanity of its undocumented workers, while constantly proving its seriousness in combating the drugs trade.

The dialogue between the two countries becomes surrounded by distrust about the motives and sincerity of the other side. The border becomes a flashpoint for the larger bilateral relationship. Alternatively, the larger bilateral relationship creates a difficult playing field for those actors who try to establish any form of cooperation or attempt to coordinate policies in this economically integrated region. Moreover, despite efforts to institutionalize cooperative mechanisms, the public is rarely informed of cross-border successes. The media still focuses on what sells papers: scandal and strife.

It becomes clear that in order for the border to function successfully, the political will to do so must be present. Both Mexico D.F. and Washington D.C. need to fully acknowledge the integrated nature of the region and continue to create the space for local answers to local problems irrespective of national sovereignty questions and specific political interests. Personalities therefore are important to this initial phase of transboundary cooperation,

especially as the institutionalization of coordinating mechanisms are still in a process of transformation.

Because of its unique position, as a crossroads between containers of societies, a border region tends to blur the line between what denotes a local or domestic problem and what denotes an international problem. The political demarcations of territory create obstacles to cooperation and obfuscate the regionality of issues. Moreover, in the case of the U.S.-Mexico border, it is necessary to recognize that there are regional distinctions that are unique to it, both culturally and topographically. This phenomenon demands flexibility, but also places emphasis on the need for dialogue because there is no one answer to problems related to living in a cross-border environment. Whereas the capital cities are concerned with regulation, border regions are concerned with facilitation of movement.

Lastly, there is absolutely no way that any one transborder issue or set of actors can be examined without consideration of its relationship to other transborder issues or sets of actors. The emphasis of each agency involved on the border must simultaneously look to law enforcement and cooperation-building. In each case, the institutions in charge of these roles, both governmental and non-governmental come together in response to their respective functions on the border. The challenge then is that not only are these agencies and local actors faced with two different legal systems, but also with different management styles and philosophical outlooks. Each institution carries with it its own culture and often their jobs overlap.

In sum, the U.S.-Mexico border demonstrates the dynamics of globalization and the limitations of national sovereignty. Although it is an integrated region, it must still respond to policies created in the capital cities. However, if the capital cities do not respond to the

unique nature of the border region and its needs, its long-term future is circumspect. Costly mistakes can only be avoided with dialogue, planning, and standardization of procedures.

Chapter 6

DRUGS-RELATED CORRUPTION AND POLITICAL OPENING IN MEXICO²⁰³

Two things happened to Mexicans under Salinas: He made us believe in government, and he anesthetized us to corruption...Now, Zedillo has made us see the corruption, and the result is, we don't believe in government anymore. This is why we all want Zedillo to succeed. Guadalupe Loaeza, Mexico City columnist, 1995.

The Nature of the Problem

The Argument

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, to examine the growth of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs)²⁰⁴ in Mexico from the mid-1980s to the 1990s. Second, to examine the political ramifications of the drug trade on the Mexican government in the 1990s. The main argument offered in this chapter is that Mexico's drug lords gained power through the cocaine trade and have since increased their ability to periodically challenge the U.S. - Mexico relationship and to negatively impact the impulse towards both free trade and greater political opening in Mexico.

The primary source of power of the drug lords lies in their capacity to undermine the

²⁰³ . I would like to thank Elena Alvarez, Bruce M. Bagley, Guadalupe González G., and Peter H. Smith for their advice and comments on this paper.

²⁰⁴ . Jorge G. Castañeda suggests that it is not impossible to think of the Salinas regime as having established a not so tacit special understanding with the Mexican narcotraffickers at the beginning of his "*sexenio*." Castañeda surmises that there were three indispensable goals that would be mutually beneficial, as well as healthy for Mexico overall. First, narcotraffickers would have to invest in Mexico to assure balance of payments. Second, drug traffickers would have to guarantee that their activities would not harm the bilateral relationship with the United States. Primarily, traffickers would have to be discrete and not place the Mexican government in ridicule. Third, as a result, drug traffickers, at least the more modern components, would be guaranteed that they could operate with minimal interference. Castañeda suggests that this was especially obvious after Salinas appointed Enrique Alvarez del Castillo, the former Governor of Jalisco ("cuna de los cárteles"), and Javier Coello Trejo, the former Government Secretary of the State of Chiapas. Both were tainted by allegations of drug trafficking during previous administrations (Castañeda 1994).

rule of law through the ability to corrupt officials at all levels of government in any country.²⁰⁵

Corruption is not only exacerbated by drug trafficking, it becomes a direct impediment to effective law enforcement. In the case of Mexico, allegations that intimate associates of former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) accepted millions of dollars in drugs profits and participated in political assassinations seriously threatened the integrity of the Mexican political system and the leadership of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), in power since 1929.²⁰⁶

Three key factors help to explain why drug-related corruption in Mexico increased since the mid-1980s. First, U.S. interdiction efforts in the Caribbean during the early 1980s closed off Miami as a port of entry. As a result, Colombian traffickers sought new routes to bring cocaine into the United States, primarily through Mexico. The effects of increased cocaine trafficking through Mexican territory diversified options for Mexican drug traffickers

²⁰⁵ . Drug traffickers are equal opportunity corruptors. In the United States recent investigations demonstrated that corruption is on the rise. In the past three years, 39 local, state and federal officials were indicted in federal court on corruption charges related to both drug trafficking and immigration. In 1995, a multi-agency Border Corruption Task Force was created in San Diego to address corruption along the border (Arrillaga 1997).

²⁰⁶ . In their article, "Quest for Integrity: The Mexican-U.S. Drug Problem," Peter Reuter and David Ronfeldt argue the following: "Everything is permissible in Mexico so long as it is Mexican. The activity must be done nationalistically, it must be useful to at least part of the ruling system of elites and institutions, and it must be independent of international connections. This appears to define the upper limits of toleration. The limits are apparently breached when the activity jeopardizes the revolutionary mystique and Mexico's image at home and abroad, embarrasses Mexican leaders in power, weakens central government or party control in some significant area, or gets subordinated to non-Mexican actors...but it is a different matter when producers and traffickers become political gangsters and begin to wield greater local and regional power than the government and its *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (the PRI); when they try to impose appointees and nominees who are not preferred in Mexico City; when they make officials do what they want and not what the president wants; when they channel funds into opposition parties and radical movements; when they acquire ever larger arsenals of weapons for paramilitary operations; when they seem prepared to threaten Mexico's leaders with assassination and terrorism if things do not go their way; when they attract international attention that harms Mexico's image; when they seem more responsive to foreigners than to Mexico City; and when they, in fact, are foreigners operating in Mexico, competing with Mexicans, and trying to cut them out of business" (1992: 100).

to increase their trade, as well as substantially expanded their wealth allowing them to become more sophisticated. The resources available to corrupt government officials on both sides of the border and the need to do so given the large quantities of drugs that were entering the country from Colombia also increased.

Second, the drive for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) created an environment that positively favored economic opening and liberalizing policies which created greater possibilities for traffickers to infiltrate legitimate businesses and financial circles. Third, the political opening process which accompanied NAFTA created a dilemma for the PRI because it was no longer able to maintain control over information leaked to the press by members of its own institutions, and even less so, from its political opposition.

In addition to these factors, Mexico's relationship with the United States was intensified by the free trade agreement and created heightened expectations both in the United States, as well as in Mexico that not only the economy would grow and the political system would become more transparent, but that drug-related corruption could be curbed even if it was not a direct part of the NAFTA agenda.

Behind the NAFTA Curtain

In November 1994, Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León became the lame-duck president of a nation in crisis, still reeling from the unresolved issues from earlier in the year. Although his predecessor Carlos Salinas de Gortari had made significant structural changes in the economy in addition to the infrastructural development necessary to lure support for foreign investment in Mexico, issues such as drug trafficking and corruption were largely avoided so as not to affect domestic politics or compromise Mexico's position with the United States and the passage of the NAFTA (Lupsha 1994). In April 1995, no longer able to ignore Mexico's

unfolding drama,²⁰⁷ both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate reviewed the status of Mexico's national drug control program and seriously questioned that government's commitment to control the influence exerted by drug traffickers. In sharp contrast to the Andean coca producing nations- Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia - which were also under scrutiny, Mexico stood apart not only because of its participation in NAFTA, but because of the intensification of the "special relationship" with the United States during the Salinas administration.²⁰⁸

Despite calls for caution and outright criticism of NAFTA during the trade negotiations (Castañeda and Heredia 1992; Reding 1991), Mexico was fully embraced as a free trade partner by the United States. The tables began to turn, however, as accusations of widespread drug trafficking-related corruption echoed in both Washington and Mexico City. In the United States critics charged that corruption in Mexico had been covered up or ignored by the Salinas

²⁰⁷ . Following events in Chiapas and the murder of presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, in September 1994, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, Secretary-General of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), was assassinated in Mexico City. Investigations into the murder led to a money trail, which led to a mid-level politician, then to a major drug cartel, and ultimately to Raul Salinas de Gortari, the former president's brother. Mario Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the Secretary General's brother, was deputy attorney general under President Salinas and was assigned to investigate into his brother's death. He unveiled a plot which involved high officials of the PRI. By Zedillo's term, speculation was that Mario Francisco had covered up the chief plotter, Raul Salinas, who was jailed on charges of aiding in the assassination of José Francisco. Mario Francisco fled to the United States where investigators discovered U.S. bank accounts containing tens of millions of dollars, allegedly from drug trafficking-related payoffs (Robberson 1995: 10-12).

²⁰⁸ . Although Mexico and the United States have always had a special relationship because of Mexico's proximity, it was not until the Salinas administration that the Mexican government sought to establish an extensively close working relationship with the United States. In turn, the United States, historically, left Mexico on the backburner despite its role as a security linchpin because Mexico was generally stable and though sympathetic to the left, there was never any real threat that Mexico would fall to communism (Parkinson 1974). As a result, the relationship experienced cycles of attention vs. inattention. The Salinas administration was able to adopt an aggressive position because of the convergence of several factors: domestically, Salinas had a clear political mandate; internationally, the world economy was becoming increasingly regionalized and the United States was experiencing a period of recession.

administration because of the country's ongoing economic crisis and the desire for the passage of NAFTA. After the November 1994 crash of the Mexican economy and the accompanying devaluation of the peso, the Clinton administration provided Mexico with a \$40 billion dollar rescue package that stood in stark contrast to the goals of the newly arrived Republican Congress: 1) its pledge to balance the budget and 2) to disentangle the United States from international commitments.

In a sense, NAFTA became a double-edged sword for the Mexican government. On the one hand, it enlarged the possibilities for economic growth via the opening of the U.S. marketplace for Mexican goods, along with economic liberalization. On the other hand, NAFTA implicitly carried with it the expectations for greater political opening and increased transparency in Mexico's political system. The implications from NAFTA were that the Mexican government could no longer maintain a closed and centralized system of authority without a challenge.

Some critics of the free trade agreement also perceived that NAFTA would inadvertently provide drug traffickers increased cover and facilitate their ability to move their product because of infrastructural improvements along the U.S.-Mexican border. Moreover, corruption would also increase because in order to be effective, a criminal organization requires protection at both the political and law enforcement levels. Although NAFTA potentially threatened the livelihood of the cartels because of the drive for increased political opening that accompanied it, instead, the cartels were able to use the existing fissures within the political system, along with the opportunities provided by increased economic liberalization to further their hold on Mexico's political and economic institutions. Moreover, consumption in the United States was showing signs of intensification, especially the

methamphetamine market and heroin markets. The environment was created for drug trafficking to expand in Mexico.

Drug Production in Mexico

By 1995, U.S. narcotics officials estimated that Mexico produced between 70 to 80 percent of all foreign marijuana and 35 percent of the heroin destined for the U.S. market (INCSR 1995). In contrast, the previous year, Mexico was estimated to have supplied around 20 percent of the heroin and 60 percent of the foreign-grown marijuana available on the U.S. market. Over the years, the combination of its proximity to the United States, the world's major consumer of illicit drugs, and Mexico's long lived economic crisis has contributed to the expansion of drug production into regions which traditionally did not cultivate illicit crops, such as Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Michoacán, states which became important opium producing areas. Moreover, the traditional Golden Triangle of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, and Durango, in combination with Guerrero essentially merged into one single growing area that now extends from the northernmost Sierra Madre Occidental in the border states of Sonora and Chihuahua, down the west coast of Mexico to Chiapas and into Guatemala (Drug Enforcement Administration 1991: 3).

Cannabis cultivation is widespread and takes place in almost every state, but primarily in the border states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Although production declined significantly in the 1980s,²⁰⁹ by 1992, marijuana production began to increase again. Favorable growing conditions and renewed U.S. demand for Mexican product contributed significantly to that growth. In addition, new strains of marijuana were introduced in major producing states, which are now reported to grow a more potent variety of cannabis introduced from Afghanistan. In comparison to opium cultivation yields which are fairly consistent, cannabis yields vary widely. According to U.S. sources, most growing areas yield 250 kg of marketable marijuana per hectare, while certain areas, such as Guerrero and Michoacán can yield as much as 800 kg per hectare. Between 1989 and 1993, the Mexican eradication program targetted these trends in cultivation and the Mexican government was estimated to have reduced potential marijuana production by as much as 75 percent.

Besides the traditional marijuana and opium crops, another growing export is the production of dangerous substances such as methamphetamines, commonly referred to as "speed" or "ice" in their crystallized form. Mexican trafficking organizations have replaced U.S.-based motorcycle gangs as the principal distributors in the United States of methamphetamines where it has become the drug of choice in parts of California, and is on its way to becoming the drug of choice in many other U.S. cities in the West and Southwest, as well as in Iowa, Florida, and Georgia. As a result, Mexico has also become a key importer

²⁰⁹ . According to William O. Walker III, marijuana production in Mexico decreased in the 1980s primarily because there was little demand for the product. In the mid-to late 1970s, the Mexican government enacted extensive marijuana eradication programs using the herbicide paraquat. As word spread in the United States that this was potentially dangerous for the consumer, U.S. demand decreased accordingly. Moreover, U.S. production increased to offset the difference in availability (Walker 1989: 194-196). Currently, the United States is estimated to produce approximately between 70 and 80 percent of the cannabis for domestic consumption.

of precursor chemicals such as ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, elements in the production of methamphetamines, despite its own domestic production.²¹⁰ The PGR/DEA bilateral working group on precursor chemicals determined that the Mexican drug cartels find the ephedrine/methamphetamine business attractive because the profit margins exceed those of cocaine and allows them independence from Colombian cartels (INCSR 1995: 143).

Economic Liberalization and Transnational Crime

The Current Status of the Cocaine Problem

The art of smuggling goods to and from the United States through Mexico dates back at least to the early 1800s. The growth of transnational criminal organizations, however, represents a new phenomenon that only dates back to the mid-1980s when traditional drug smuggling groups established links with the powerful Cartels from Colombia to transit cocaine through Mexico.²¹¹ Colombian cartels began to use Mexican territory in direct relation to the Reagan administration's policy to eliminate the more commonly used sea routes in the Caribbean. Until the early 1990s, Mexican crime organizations were considered subordinate to the larger cartels established worldwide.²¹² Notwithstanding, their subordinate position

²¹⁰ . Ephedrine is primarily exported from Europe and Asia. In and of itself it is not an illegal substance as it is used in legal medications. Drug producers obtain their precursors from a variety of sources through both phoney businesses, as well as licit ones. They divert quantities of the precursors and then produce their final product which is primarily destined for the U.S. market. Increasingly, however, due to the economic crisis, other more commonly used drugs such as heroin and cocaine have been replaced by the consumption of speed in Mexico (Benavides Ortiz 1995: 37)

²¹¹ . Peter Lupsha dates the growth of transnational crime organizations to the 1970s, specifically to 1973 when Honduran Juan Ramón Ballesteros connected Mexican Alberto Sicilia Falcón to Colombian trafficker Benjamin Herrera Zuelta the forerunner of the current Cali cartel leaders (Lupsha 1994: 9).

²¹² . In his book, *Política y Narcopoder en México*, José Luis Trueba Lara divided supply organizations into six groups: 1) Sicilian Mafia families; 2) the Chinese Triads; 3) La Cosa Nostra, an arm of the Sicilian mafia; 4) the post-communist Mafiyas from the former Soviet bloc; 5) the Japanese Yakuza; and 6) the Colombian drug barons (1995: 13-15).

changed in the early 1990s, as their role as transshippers/wholesalers of Colombian cocaine became more autonomous.

Mexican drug traffickers initiated independent business transactions with the Colombian cartels in which drugs were exchanged for services, instead of charging a direct fees for their role as mules at \$2,000-5,000 per kilo.²¹³ Today, the major Mexican transnational crime organizations are reported to earn as much as half of any large load and are able to distribute it across a network that has expanded to include most of the western United States, parts of the South, much of Chicago and pockets of New York (Golden 1995b: 1). Colombian cartels control the rest of the U.S. market (Fainaru 1995: 24). According to the Director of the DEA, Thomas Constantine, in essence, the distribution of cocaine destined for the United States is handled by two parallel criminal organizations: the Mexican gangs and the Colombians organized crime syndicates.

According to the 1995 National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee (NNICC) report, approximately 820 to 855 metric tons of cocaine were produced in Latin America in 1994. Of this amount, a total of 303 metric tons were seized worldwide in the same year, leaving between 517 and 522 tons of cocaine for export. The DEA estimated that at least 300 tons of cocaine entered the United States in 1994, of which approximately 200 tons entered through Mexico (U.S. Senate, Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs March 28, 1996).

Organized Crime in the NAFTA Era

The dramatic rise in Mexican organized crime paralleled the opening of the Mexican

²¹³ . At retail prices in the United States, a kilo of cocaine can bring up to \$200,000 per kilo (The Economist 1995: 39).

economy during the Salinas administration. Salinas' privatization of state-owned industrial complexes not only revolutionized the economy, but it also opened the country to foreign investment, including that of the Colombian drug cartels.²¹⁴ They reportedly began to establish factories, warehouses and trucking companies in Mexico to exploit cross-border commerce and to set up fronts for drug trafficking and money laundering (Weiner and Golden 1993: 1).

The maquiladora industry was of particular interest to the drug lords because under a program established in 1965, the sector received special tariff exemptions and the goods produced were subject to minimal inspection by U.S. Customs officials. In addition to increased opportunities for money laundering, NAFTA also provided easier entry into the U.S. market. One of NAFTA's flaws was that the pact that evolved did not address law enforcement issues related to trade, despite the fact that both U.S. and Mexican officials had foreseen and publicly warned their respective governments of the possibility that drug traffickers might take advantage of the free trade agreement (Weiner & Golden 1993: A2).

DEA analysts compare Mexican drug trafficking groups to a loosely structured federation rather than a series of cartels such as the organizations established in Colombia (Golden 1995b: A8).²¹⁵ The power of the drug bosses stems more from their ability to operate across international boundaries through the patronage of government officials, as opposed to control over fixed territories. According to the DEA, Mexican drug traffickers are headed by

²¹⁴ . According to Peter Smith, "President Salinas was consummating a reconfiguration of the power structure in Mexico, and one of the elements in that power structure was international billionaires. People who qualify for membership in that group include the leaders of drug cartels" (Fineman and Rotella 1995: A17).

²¹⁵ . As the polydrug trafficking groups operating in Mexico gained an independent foothold in the cocaine business, they banded together and formed "the Federation" (Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, U.S. Senate, March 28, 1996).

bosses to whom lower-ranking "division heads" ally themselves (Golden 1995: 8).

In certain aspects, the federation of drug bosses is comparable to the system of *caciquismo* that has long been a part of the Mexican system of leadership and authority, whereby the *cacique* is the *de facto* head of an area who mediates disputes among members of his or her region of control. The trafficking groups operate within a fluid, flexible, and elastic system where alliances shift as shake-ups occur within the hierarchy. These shifts usually occur when there is a divergence in interests and tend to result in violence against crime bosses, recalcitrant political leaders, and snitches.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) estimates that the Mexican Federation of drug traffickers is composed of 19 major transnational crime organizations. The Mexican organizations, combination with the Colombians are responsible for the transit of 70 percent of the cocaine into the United States. In comparison, in all of South America it is reported that the total number of organizations equals fifteen and is headed by the Cali Cartel. The Mexican Federation not only distributes cocaine, but it reportedly administers large ranching and agricultural properties situated directly on the Mexican side of the border for a variety of activities. The properties are used as landing strips, to warehouse stolen vehicles and weapons, to stockpile drugs for shipment to the United States, as well as to facilitate illegal migrant crossings (Estévez 1995: 1, 20).

Mexican organized crime groups are also reported to have access to large transport and warehouse services both along the U.S.-Mexico border and within the United States which transship the drugs destined for key distribution sites within the United States such as Los Angeles, Dallas, and New York. They employ a variety of methods for transport including commercial trucks and private pick-ups; rail cargo; air transport both commercial and private;

as well as commercial and private boat services.

In addition to the 19 largest crime organizations, a vast network of subordinate organizations at the secondary and local levels of distribution are reported to operate under the direct orders of the core level. These organizations traffic in tobacco products, alcohol, manufactured goods, stolen vehicles, and illegal migrant workers, sometimes turning the latter into mules for drug transport. The role of the Mexican organizations for the Colombian drug lords is to guarantee the shipment of cocaine and marijuana through Mexico for major distribution networks within the United States (Estevez 1995a: 1, 20).

Generations of "Narcos"

The four major Mexican drug organizations include the Juan García Abrego operation in Matamoros, Tamaulipas; Amado Carrillo Fuentes' group in Guadalajara, Jalisco; the Arellano Félix family based in Tijuana, BC; and the Sonora cartel, headed by Miguel Caro Quintero. The main drug groups are said to have divided up Mexico by region. All four of the organizations are reputed to have been in operation in Mexico since the late 1970s and represent outgrowths from contraband chains. But, over the last decade the trafficking syndicates grew in size, became increasingly violent and more powerful. In his book Política y Narcopoder en México, author Trueba Lara divides the history of Mexican narcoindustry into three periods: 1970-1982; 1982-1988; and 1988-1994.

The 1970-1982 period marked the first generation of *narcos*. They bought small companies, jewelry stores, and auto distribution centers to launder the proceeds gained primarily from smuggling opiates and marijuana.

The following phase witnessed the consolidation of the trafficking organizations, especially in Mexico's northern frontier states. The second generation transnationalized their

operations and diversified production to include cocaine distribution. To facilitate money laundering, traffickers purchased major tourist centers and money exchange houses along the U.S.-Mexican border.

The third phase coincided with the liberalization of the Mexican economy; a growth in transborder trade; as well as the general globalization of the economy. In this phase, traffickers became more sophisticated and independent in both smuggling operations and money laundering (Trueba Lara 1995: 75-77). It is this latter generation which has been reported as the most able to infiltrate and undermine the Mexican political and law enforcement systems.

Moreover, U.S. anti-narcotics officials are increasingly concerned that Mexican smugglers have begun to expand their trafficking networks and built alliances with Asian and European trafficking organizations (Robberson & Farah 1995: 11). Should these alliances consolidate, Mexican drug lords have the potential to become more powerful than the Cali cocaine cartel in Colombia ever was. Mexican drug organizations are expected to begin trafficking directly into Asia and Europe, although at present, they are working in cooperation with the Colombians.

In exchange for the ability to enter new markets, the Mexican organizations have begun to also forge ties with branches of the Italian mafia, as well as to upgrade the quality of their heroin because of growing competition from Colombia. Ironically, over the past five years, Mexican producers were rumored to have sent expert technicians to help the Colombians develop their own heroin industry. However, the Colombian poppies produced a higher quality opium and overtook the U.S. market, thus creating conflict between the Mexican traffickers and their Colombian partners (Robberson & Farah 1995: 11).

The Corrosive Effects of Drug Trafficking:

The combination of a political system that is widely denounced as corrupt, the physical dangers that drug traffickers pose to law enforcement and society at large, as well as Mexico's lop-sided economic development have frustrated the Zedillo administration's attempts to present a credible image before both its domestic and international critics. Many of Mexico's drug control officials are reportedly corrupt, from the top of the hierarchical ladder to the bottom where policy is implemented. As a result, foreign investors have demonstrated an unwillingness to enter the Mexican market because they are increasingly unsure about the stability of the Mexican government and the viability of doing business there.

The economic scale of Mexico's drug industry has been estimated as being equivalent to, or even greater than its petroleum industry, or approximately \$6-7 billion per annum. In a June 1990 study by the RAND Corporation, it was estimated that marijuana and opium/heroin production accounted for between 1.25 percent and four percent of gross national product (GNP) or between about six percent to 20 percent of recorded export earnings in 1988 (Reuter & Ronfeldt 1992: 95). These revenues were primarily generated from sales made to U.S.-domiciled importers, as opposed to sales generated within Mexico. It is likely, however, that since 1992, the amounts have changed given the increased Mexican activity in cocaine trafficking.

The Dangers of "Narcopolitics"

Since 1995, reports of high-level drug corruption in the Salinas government helped popularize the notion that Mexico was in the process of becoming a "narcodemocracy,"²¹⁶ and thus its political stability was questionable. Accusations were particularly virulent after the arrests of two "*intocables*" or untouchables, the former chief narcotics investigator, Mario Ruiz Massieu, and Raúl Salinas, the elder brother of Carlos Salinas, both suspected of having established links to Mexican drug organizations.

The combination of *narcopolitics*, or the collusion, based on converging financial interests of traffickers and the elite of the Mexican power structure, and U.S. pressure alarmed President Zedillo into authorizing Attorney General Antonio Lozano, the first member of the opposition to hold a Cabinet post, the freedom to crack down on corruption.²¹⁷ Raúl Salinas de Gortari was charged with ordering the assassination of the PRI's Secretary General, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu. An investigation was opened that sought evidence as to whether or not there existed ties between the Salinas family and Mexico's drug bosses.

In addition to the kickbacks received by the political elites, drug corruption is widely believed to pervade law enforcement forces. In order to run a drugs smuggling business, it is

²¹⁶ . This term was coined by Eduardo Valle Espinosa, a former Mexican prosecutor who worked for Attorney General Carpizo in the Salinas administration. The term reflects the apparent contradiction of a nation governed by elected officials and a democratic constitution falling under the influence of international drug cartels (Fineman & Rotella 1995: A16).

²¹⁷ . Family members of the García Abrego clan claim that García Abrego became an embarrassment to the Mexican government because of the information that he had on the political and financial interests which helped him grow and for which he did the dirty work. "It has to do with a national security threat to the Zedillo administration: García Abrego did not act alone and he, as the representative of those [involved], by virtue of knowing who was involved became an element for destabilization" (Venegas 1996: 12).

important that traffickers maintain contacts with key political and law enforcement groups, such as the Attorney General's office where Federal and State police also play a role in the drug trade.²¹⁸ Some have estimated that there have been times when up to 95 percent of the Policía Judicial has been under the influence of drug trafficking organizations.

Police officers have been reported to collude with the drug lords and serve as protection by not only maintaining a blind eye to actual transactions in their territories, but they have been documented to actively participate committing murders, guarding drug bosses, as well as escorting huge loads of drugs to the United States border. According to U.S. law enforcement authorities, Mexican federal officials protect smuggling operations in hub cities and receive percentages of drug profits.

It is estimated that the Mexican drug bosses spend as much as \$500 million a year on bribery.²¹⁹ The estimate is based on an internationally accepted formula that assumes that for each kilogram of cocaine smuggled through a country there is a proportionate \$1,000 in payoffs or kickbacks (Fineman and Rotella 1995: A17). In comparison, the Mexican Attorney General's office, the PGR, has a budget of approximately \$200 million for all of its activities, approximately 80 percent of which is targeted for drug control.

²¹⁸ . The García Abrego organization was accused by Eduardo Valle Espinosa of having infiltrated the PGR, especially during the period 1988-1990 when it was headed by Javier Coello Trejo. In 1994, Francisco Pérez Monroy, García Abrego's cousin and personal secretary for 13 years, testified in a U.S. court that he had personally delivered gifts of both cash and expensive clothing to Coello Trejo, his wife, and men to protect drug shipments in the state of Tamaulipas (Paternostro 1995: 44).

²¹⁹ . According to Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*, García Abrego had an arrangement with the PGR police forces, both the Federal and State, in which he paid them \$130,000 per month (Venegas and Carrizales 1996: 1, 12).

Money Laundering

The drug bosses not only have the power to corrupt government officials, but they have been able to infiltrate key sectors of the Mexican economy, including banks, stock exchange transactions,²²⁰ and money changing outlets. Proceeds are laundered primarily through the tourism industry, construction and transportation sectors.²²¹ It has been reported that as much as half of all hotel tourist revenue in 1994 came from traffickers who laundered millions of dollars by making reservations of rooms for fictitious guests over extended periods of time. The drug bosses are believed to have used the troubled Mexican economy to their advantage, and were able to convert their dollar revenues into pesos and buy assets.

Mexico's rapid liberalization, grand-scale privatization, as well as the reduction of barriers related to NAFTA began to attract money launderers from Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The U.S. Department of Treasury estimated that one quarter of the funds for the acquisition of recently privatized Mexican banks could be attributed to illicit sources (Garduño Espinosa 1995: 40). Instead of avoiding Mexican banks,

²²⁰ . DEA, Chief of Operations, Harold D. Wankel, testified before the U.S. Congress on February 28, 1996 that Mexican drug lords bought seats on the boards of Mexican banks to help them launder their profits. According to Mr. Wankel, many banks kept two sets of books while some bank examiners were paid off by corrupt bank officials, although no names were specified. The DEA surmises that much of the money that goes back to Mexico is invested in the infrastructure of the Mexican economy (Reuter Information Service 1996).

²²¹ . According to Peter Lupsha, drug traffickers are interested in developing close contacts with high-level political figures in Mexico City, but especially in the Cabinet Office of Communications and Transport. "[It] is critical because of the evolution in the transportation patterns and methods of the Cali cartel. In 1991, Cali aircraft transit patterns shifted from northern to southern Mexico. In 1992, Cali increased its shift from small general aviation aircraft and air drops to maritime containerized loads, to commercial air via Panama and San Andrés Island and low profile vessels and semi-submersibles. Cali's new transportation methodology requires commercial airports, business fronts, the use of ports, free trade zones, container facilities trailer trucking firms, and railroads. In short, it requires access, information, official forms, and seals that only an Office of Communication and Transport can provide" (1994: 11).

traffickers began to buy Mexican money along with works of art, luxury automobiles, and yachts with the purpose of then selling these abroad for dollars. Traffickers' dollars acquired an automatic 30 percent greater net worth after the devaluation.

The evolution of Mexican drug lords and their participation in the economy, however, is part of a larger phenomenon. In 1995 alone, drug traffickers were thought to have generated \$300 billion worldwide, the equivalent of two-thirds of all central bank reserves. Approximately six percent of that amount is reportedly controlled by the Mexican drug bosses (Trueba Lara 1995: 73). The United Nations asserted that in the last 50 years, drug trafficking increased globally by 50 percent and created a veritable narcoeconomy which is not only double in size to OPEC, but is ten times greater than that of arms sales worldwide.

Other factors which contributed to the increase of global drug trafficking include the fall of the Berlin Wall which created new capitalist markets, but left the cash-starved former eastern bloc countries open to becoming major money laundering centers, as well as the restrictions imposed by world lending institutions. Alain Labrousse, Director of the Geopolitical Drugs Observatory in Paris, argues that the narcoeconomy has become an alternative option for development in lesser developed countries in part because of their need to compensate for the rigorous demands established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In Mexico, for example, the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR) reported that profits in Mexico from its exports of both petroleum and non-petrochemical products in combination with maquiladora profits in 1990 equal the gross income of drug traffickers who operate in Mexico (Control de drogas en México 1992).

Mexico became increasingly vulnerable to drug control problems in part because of its relatively unregulated economic liberalization process and the political pressures related

to NAFTA. In the early 1990s, the United States tightened reporting requirements and pressed legitimate banks to avoid money-laundering schemes. Drug traffickers had to find new methods to repatriate their profits to their country of origin (DePalma 1996: A6).

Mexico's financial institutions were particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon because there was no legal code to require Currency Transaction Reporting (CTR) from banks regarding acquisitions related to money exchange, bank deposits, or wire transfers (Venegas 1995a: 24). The lack of such a code decreases law enforcement's ability to follow the very complex paths taken by drug money as it moves from the streets into the financial system. One additional factor that contributed to the rise of Mexico as a money laundering capital was that it was not a criminal offense in Mexico, only a tax violation (DePalma 1996: A6). By 1996, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City announced that Mexico had become the largest money laundering center in the world for Mexican and Colombian cartel leaders.

According to DEA analysts, the means used to launder proceeds from the United States into Mexico are relatively simple and direct. Bulk shipments of U.S. currency are concealed and transported by courier or cargo, either over land or by air, often using the same vehicles used to transport drugs into the United States. For example, in 1995, Mexican authorities made three major seizures of U.S. currency that totaled nearly \$20 million.²²² Banks are required to file suspicious financial transaction reports, however, there are no penalties for failure to do so. Once in the banking system, it is relatively easy to transfer funds anywhere in the world, including the United States where it is then invested.

²²² . In April 1995, \$6.2 million was discovered inside an air conditioner shipment destined for Colombia at the Mexico City Airport. In May 1995, \$1.5 million was seized from a Colombian money launderer. In October 1995, Mexican officials discovered \$12 million inside suitcases taken from a private plane that was believed to belong to the Carrillo-Fuentes organization.

Each year, over 500,000 bank drafts drawn on Mexican banks enter the United States that were not subject to U.S. reporting requirements. An Arizona bank determined that the average Mexican bank draft was valued at \$65,000, although it was not unusual to clear drafts in excess of \$200,000 to \$400,000 (House of Representatives, Banking and Financial Committee February 28, 1996). Problems often arise because banks are also the source of legitimate letters of credit for private corporations to buy items such as heavy equipment, agricultural equipment, large volumes of grains and animal feeds, and other primary resources. The merchandise is exported primarily from the United States to Mexico where it is then sold, legitimizing illegal drug trafficking gains and granting them the appearance of correct financial transactions (Estévez 1995b: 34).

Mexican political analyst, Luis Rubio argues that the transformation of the Mexican political economy has provoked a deterioration of the central system of control resulting in the growth of illicit activities, especially in relation to the drugs trade. As the economy changed and as long as there were few financial controls, Mexico became increasingly attractive for money launderers.

El Reto de Zedillo

Inherited Political Chaos

1994, Salinas' final year as president of Mexico, proved to be one of increased fragmentation and structural challenge for Mexico. On January 1, 1994, the day that NAFTA officially came into effect, Mexico's stability appeared to be threatened by the rebellion of indigenous groups in Chiapas led by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN). The uprising of the EZLN was followed in March 1994, by the assassination of PRI

presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, gunned down at a political rally held in Lomas Taurinas, Tijuana, BC. Miguel Eduardo Valle Espinosa, known to many as *El Búho*, testified that Colosio had been assassinated by "polinarcos" or "narcopolíticos."²²³ Valle had been the special counternarcotics advisor to Attorney General Jorge Carpizo, where he became familiar with Mexico's drug trafficking mafias.²²⁴ Although Valle's allegations have not been proven true beyond a shadow of a doubt, they indicated the extreme apprehension that existed regarding the suspected corruption of many of the Mexican government's offices and collusion with drug traffickers.

Colosio's untimely death, followed by the murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the second-ranking member and Secretary General of the PRI, on September 28, 1994 raised concerns about the stability of Mexico's government. The brother of the slain politician, Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu was assigned the position of chief investigator into the assassination. Massieu resigned after presenting evidence that he felt substantiated allegations that the Attorney General's office was attempting to cover-up information leading

²²³ . Polinarcos or narcopolíticos are individuals who are either political appointments or government employees with suspected links to drug traffickers (Marín 1994).

²²⁴ . Valle argued that he had warned Colosio that Humberto García Abrego, brother of known drug trafficker Juan García Abrego, often compared to Colombia's Pablo Escobar, had been invited to attend a campaign luncheon being held in Colosio's honor by major contributors and politicians. Colosio quickly disinvited Mr. Abrego, however, other individuals alleged to be in contact with García Abrego were on Colosio's security team when he was assassinated, two days before he was scheduled to meet with Valle to discuss Mexico's drug problem (Marín 1994).

to the conviction of the perpetrators, Manuel Muñoz Rocha and Abraham Rubio Canales.²²⁵

Ruiz Massieu also accused a former PRI governor, Enrique Cárdenas González, and a legislator from the state of Tamaulipas, Manuel Garza González, of leading an anti-reformist political group and of having ordered his brother's murder (Hughes 1994: 22A).²²⁶ He argued that the political will necessary for reform did not exist, and that a conspiracy to block political reform was in place (Hughes 1994: 22A). Later, Massieu was charged with covering up for the principal orchestrator of his brother's murder, Raúl Salinas de Gortari, and was investigated for drug-related corruption.

Mario Ruiz Massieu had been the chief anti-narcotics officer under Salinas, and thus held one of the most coveted positions in law enforcement. As Deputy Attorney General, it was he who decided where police chiefs would be assigned throughout Mexico. With his

²²⁵ . When Mario Ruiz Massieu began to investigate his brother's murder, he ordered a raid on PRI headquarters and seized file cabinets full of documents which were delivered to the Attorney General's office. Ruiz Massieu issued an arrest warrant for Manuel Muñoz Rocha, a former federal legislator from the state of Tamaulipas. Muñoz Rocha had found out of the imminent arrest and allegedly fled with the aid of then-Attorney General Humberto Benítez Treviño and the two top leaders of the PRI. Ruiz Massieu never opened the files that he had seized from PRI headquarters. On December 1, 1995, Attorney General Lozano, accompanied by President Zedillo located the files in the basement of the PGR and found scores of letters and documents which connected Raul Salinas de Gortari to Mario Ruiz Massieu. The records indicated that Raul Salinas had made payments to Muñoz Rocha to murder José Francisco and then threatened anyone who might have known about it. As Zedillo's investigators continued their search, they discovered a series of transcripts of testimony from witnesses who had named Raul Salinas as the mastermind of the assassination and remarked that someone had attempted to remove Salinas's name from the documents. Salinas was arrested on February 27, 1995 and Ruiz Massieu was brought in for questioning and confronted with evidence against him on March 2, 1995. Ruiz Massieu denied all allegations and was allowed to go home. On March 3, Massieu departed for the United States carrying \$46,000 in currency where he was arrested for an improper declaration by U.S. Customs Service agents who had been tipped off by Mexican authorities (Robberson 1995: 11).

²²⁶ . According to Abraham Rubio Canales, related by marriage to García Abrego's right hand man, Raúl Valladares del Ángel, Manuel Muñoz Rocha considered the murdered Ruiz Massieu to be an enemy who aimed to change the PRI. The changes orchestrated by Ruiz Massieu threatened the position of old-timers like himself (Paternostro 1995: 42).

appointment, Massieu inherited an alleged kickback scheme whereby Mexican federal prosecutors and police commanders paid up to \$1 million for assignments in lucrative border cities and major transit zones, such as Tamaulipas or Ciudad Juárez (Robberson and Farah 1995: 11). Evidence pointed that Ruiz Massieu had participated in such deals when U.S. investigators discovered \$9.4 million in Texas banks and an estimated \$10 million more in accounts elsewhere that had been deposited for him during his nine-month tenure as chief narcotics investigator (Adams 1995: 1, 4A).

Preserving Economic Viability

All of these events culminated in lack of confidence in the Mexico stock market and contributed to the November 1994 devaluation of the peso that plunged the country into crisis on December 20th. Not only did Zedillo face a downward spiralling economy, but on his first day as President, he received a confidential report from the *Instituto Nacional para el Combate a las Drogas* that warned him about the dangers of the drug cartels. The Mexican Federation was represented a threat to national stability which could ultimately render the country ungovernable. The traffickers' ability to infiltrate the government and financial structures was considered to be at the root of the political crisis, the emerging economic disaster, as well as at the root of the multiple assassinations that had taken place under the Salinas administration.

The power of the drug trafficking organizations could lead to situations of ungovernability, using whatever political or economic space in which institutions show weakness or inattention; the advance of drug-trafficking promotes impunity and uncertainty in the institutions, justifies violence, and increases intimidation of the authorities (Fineman and Rotella 1995: 1).

One of Zedillo's greatest challenges has been to preserve the positive changes of the economic restructuring process begun under Salinas, while at the same time dismantling the

corrupted elements within the government. After the November 1994 devaluation of the peso, Mexico's exports were reduced in value as well, only drugs and petroleum were spared (Reding 1995: M2). Zedillo is faced with the possibility that a powerful attack against drug lords during a time of economic crisis could seriously undermine the country's political stability. Although in the short term narco-investment provides hard currency, in the long term it corrupts the integrity and structure of the economy and banking system.

Mexico Seeks a Path Against Drug-Related Crime

Since Zedillo's accession to office, Mexico altered its approach and focus on how best to control drug-related problems. The Zedillo administration released a five-year anti-narcotics strategy: The National Drug Control Program, 1995-2000. Its purpose was to offer an integrated strategy that included consumption, production, as well as trafficking and money laundering. Under the plan, the PGR was given overall responsibility for the coordination of Mexico's anti-drugs campaign, along with an increase of military presence in drug-related law enforcement.²²⁷ The most recent Mexican drug control program emphasized two elements: First, to increase the use of military participation, even to the extent of replacing corrupted law enforcement troops with military units. Second to place legislation on the books to serve as a deterrent to money laundering by shifting responsibility onto the banks and private investors. In addition, on the bilateral level, the United States and Mexico have come to recognize that the adoption of a hardline posture towards one another on the drugs issue can only serve to undermine economic progress. In effect, because of this, in the border region, the drug issue

²²⁷ . Mexico's strategy to combat drug-related corruption in its law enforcement bodies has been to send military officers to replace federal police forces. This has been suggested in both the states of Baja California and Tamaulipas, key drug producing and transit areas (Associated Press: March 4, 1997).

rarely interferes with the day-to-day agenda. A new combination of tactics is being sought out that relies more heavily on law enforcement cooperation by breaking down trust barriers and information sharing at the federal level, despite inherent limitations.

The Military Factor

Critics argue that Mexico's increasingly militarized approach to drug control could cause a reversal from political opening to increased authoritarianism, as well as increase the exposure of military units to corruption. Since at least 1993, the United States has pressured the Mexican government to revise its interdiction approach (GAO/NSIAD-93-152) and encouraged Mexico's actions to expand the role of its military in drug control. Ironically, U.S. soldiers only participate in drug control to assist police agencies because of the belief that to use soldiers as police could be bad for military morale and potentially opened a dangerous chasm between the Army and civilian society (Sullivan 1996).

Nevertheless, the Department of Defense under the International Military Education and Training program plans to train and equip the Mexican military on how to conduct effective searches of both vehicles and crime scenes to enhance their skills in law enforcement (WOLA 1996). In large part, the rationale behind the intensification of the role of the military in drug control is that corruption problems within the ranks of the PJF are overwhelming. In contrast, it is generally perceived that the Mexican military is far less corrupted and that because of the military's overall *esprit-de-corps*, they are assumed less likely to be corrupted. These changes in the structure of the Mexican drug control program began in October 1995 when the Mexican government passed legislation that expanded the role of the Mexican military in narcotics control and public security matters. The main thrust of the new law was to provide a framework for the Zedillo administration's proposed anti-narcotics campaign.

The first step was to create a National Public Security System (NPSS) to coordinate public security matters, including anti-crime and anti-narcotics efforts. However, the new law carried with it an unexpected and potentially negative clause. According to the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA):

The proposal to establish the NPSS included the creation of a National Public Security Council that would include several ministries, including the National Defense Secretariat and the Navy. This reform would, for the first time, give Mexico's military a role in decision making and policy-setting in important domestic public security matters (Olson 1996: 3-4).

Notwithstanding the Mexican military's long tradition of responding to civilian rule, it has a notorious reputation for violating basic human rights and committing atrocities against civilians and law enforcement officers. Moreover, the armed forces have a history of denying involvement in abuses and when they have been forced to admit that an atrocity was committed, they generally have not been made accountable to civilian authorities.²²⁸

Money Laundering-Related Legislation

Along with military-related changes, the Zedillo administration has attempted to create the necessary juridical mechanisms, so that in extreme and/or exceptional cases it would be possible to break open bank secrecy laws with the purpose of bringing together evidence

²²⁸ On November 7, 1991, seven Mexican anti-narcotics special agents were reported to have been purposely gunned down by Mexican soldiers who were allegedly protecting a 370 kilo Colombian cocaine shipment at "La Vibora" in Tlalixcoyán, Veracruz (San Diego Tribune, November 20, 1991: 10A). In incidents where both military and civilian elements are involved, according to section II, article 57 of the Military Justice Code, members of the Armed Forces are tried by a Military Tribunal, while civilian law enforcement officers are tried by Federal Judges. Should any element from the Armed Forces while on duty violate a state or federal law, the Military Tribunal is expected to respond according to the type of illicit act committed and to uphold the Mexican Penal Code. The only official oversight body for human rights in Mexico, the *Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (CNDH) can only make recommendations as to how they wish the National Defense Secretary to respond. The Secretary has a given time period in which he is to inform the CNDH of the results of the Military Tribunal's investigation. Should the Secretary not contact the CNDH, then they release the information to the public via whatever manner the Commission decided was most suitable (*Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, Recomendación 126/91: 97-104*). In the Tlalixcoyán case, the CNDH acted primarily as an investigative and advisory body, without seeking restitution.

against those presumed guilty of white collar crimes (González 1995b: 36). The Mexican government has also proposed legislation to set penalties for banks who fail to report suspicious transactions, as well as a reversal of the burden of proof in asset forfeitures related to drug cases.

The defendant would have to prove that his or her possessions were derived from legitimate sources. However, thus far, the laws on the books are still weak and the Zedillo administration does not even appear to be able to implement what it has. Moreover, Mexican business leaders have resisted because of fears that currency controls will limit their ability to move legitimate money (DePalma 1996: A6).

New Bilateral Efforts to Build Law Enforcement Cooperation

In March 1996, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the *Procuraduria General de la República* (PGR) created the High Level Contact Group on Drug Control to discuss bilateral strategies in counternarcotics. A 1996 Memorandum of Understanding was signed that agreed to establish bilateral Border Task Forces (BTFs) composed of members of the PGR and Special Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The BTFs have not yet been fully activated as the Mexican officers are still in the process of being vetted and are receiving training at FBI headquarters. Moreover, U.S. agents are still in the process of receiving official-acts immunity and cannot begin their work until this process is completed.

In May 1997, Presidents Zedillo and Clinton held a working meeting to discuss the course of counternarcotics cooperation and reached agreement on the nature of the drug threat in the United States-Mexico Bilateral Drug Threat Assessment. The two presidents then signed the Declaration of the U.S.-Mexico Alliance Against Drugs. In so doing, they

established counterdrug objectives for the development of new instruments of cooperation. Moreover, for the first time, the two governments are working together to develop a bilateral strategy.

Despite these new efforts to create a coordinated bilateral drugs control strategy, one of the most critical elements to the effectiveness of both national and bilateral drug control efforts is information-sharing. There is still a wide gap in this area. The U.S. government established an Information Analysis Center (IAC) in the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City to develop strategic intelligence for use by U.S. and Mexican law enforcement officers. However, U.S. officials remain distrustful of their Mexican counterparts because of the powerful hold of the drug federation.

Concern for Human Rights

Both the U.S. State Department and the *Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos* have also reported atrocities committed by the Mexican military. In May 1994, military units stationed Chiapas were reported to have injured and/or killed individuals suspected of involvement in the EZLN movement with impunity. Moreover, the Mexican military was reported to have used equipment provided by the United States for the Mexican anti-narcotics campaign to counter the Zapatista rebels.

According to U.S. law, counter-narcotics equipment can only be granted to the Mexican military on the grounds that they will not use it for any other purpose than drug control, such as against counterinsurgency efforts. Chiapas is a major focus-point of Mexican anti-narcotics efforts, especially several of the areas of conflict. The United States, however, cannot easily monitor the use or misuse of the equipment because of the inaccessibility of the area, as well as because of difficulties related to the proximity of the anti-narcotics campaign

to the primary Zapatista holdings.

In addition to increasing military participation in drug control, the Zedillo administration also sought to pass legislation to combat organized crime and terrorism that would probably weaken due process protections. In combination with the legislation for the NPSS, the likelihood for the military to become involved in actions against political opposition within the country also increase. According to WOLA, in May 1996, two alleged members of the EZLN were tried and sentenced as terrorists. The government later threatened to arrest all Zapatistas for terrorism after the EZLN spoke out against the arrests and sentencing, and almost broke off the peace talks with the government.

In addition, private homes could also be searched if there was sufficient grounds for suspicion. Once the NPSS became operational, on March 1, 1996, one of the first efforts to implement the new program was a joint operation between the Mexican Army and the PGR in Tijuana, B.C. The two launched a massive, coordinated surprise campaign to locate and apprehend traffickers related to the Arellano Félix brothers. Hundreds of soldiers and federal police driving armored vehicles, broke down the doors of approximately 20 private homes, including those of prominent business people, without warrants (Allen and Solis April 12, 1996: A1).

Conclusions

President Zedillo's government is faced with very difficult choices in an important election year. Half of Mexico's congressional seats, six governorships, and the Mexico City mayorship will be contested in July 1997. In addition, the Zedillo government has been widely criticized for its inability to ensure that laws are respected. In order for Mexico to move forward out of its current crisis situation, Mexico must root out corruption and boost

confidence in the justice system, while stabilizing the economy.

The implications for Mexico are primarily twofold: 1) drug trafficking related criminal activity has the potential to derail the beneficial aspects of NAFTA; and 2) the transition to a more democratic system of government is imperiled, not only because of the nature of the drug business itself, but also because of the conceivable possibility that the Mexican government will respond to the drug problem in an increasingly authoritarian manner. Moreover, the exposure of the military to drug traffickers appears to have equally corrupting effects on them as it does on law enforcement.

In February 1997, the Director of Mexico's anti-narcotics program, Gen. Jesús Gutierrez Rebollo was arrested and charged with taking payoffs from one of Mexico's most powerful traffickers.²²⁹ In March, Brigadier Gen. Alfredo Navarro Lara was the second senior military official in a one-month period to be arrested in a drug-related case. He was accused of drug trafficking, bribery and criminal conspiracy (Associated Press: March 18, 1997).

There is no doubt that drugs-related problems have considerably exacerbated domestic tensions within Mexico. The effects have been wide-ranging and recent drugs related arrests in Mexico have created an institutional crisis for the one-party political system. Opposition leaders, as well as leading political analysts on both sides of the border have repeatedly argued that the PRI's domination over most aspects of national political life has

²²⁹ . In December 1996, Attorney General, Antonio Lozano was fired amid charges of evidence-rigging and bribery of witnesses. In February 1997, General Jesús Gutierrez Rebollo was arrested after two months as head of the National Institute for Drug combat (INCD), accused of having accepted payoffs from drug lord Amado Carrillo Fuentes in return for information and protection. In March 1997, the entire PJF force in Baja California was replaced by Mexico City military forces because of the extent of corruption among their ranks. In addition, just hours after the United States certified Mexico, authorities admitted that Humberto Garcia Abrego, the brother of jailed Mexico Gulf Cartel chief Juan Garcia Abrego, escaped from the National Institute for Combating Drugs. capture and arrest of Oscar Malherbe de León, the acting leader of the Gulf Cartel.

fostered corruption and weakened institutions, as well as accommodated the more powerful drug traffickers.

In Baja California, captured members of the Arellano Félix gang revealed that not only are law enforcement officers bribed to look the other way, but they are directly paid off to help assassinate fellow officers; guard drug shipments; tip off the brothers about upcoming investigations, as well as provide the brothers with names of witnesses who might go against them. The brothers have a reputation for regularly relying on intimidation and violence.²³⁰

At the same time, the Zedillo government is also constrained by the closeness of its relationship with the United States. Not only have U.S. officials rebuked the Mexican government's efforts at drug control, but Mexicans of all political stripes have been offended that U.S. officials unilaterally attempt to meddle in Mexico's affairs without taking responsibility for the demand aspects of the drug policy equation.

Perhaps the United States should reconsider its certification provision because many aspects of the process are counterproductive to the creation of a multilateral, cooperative approach to drug control. Moreover, the credibility of the certification process is undermined because despite the strong language and harsh sanctions, the United States's interest with regards to Mexico are primarily strategic and economic. The United States needs a stable Mexico on its back doorstep.

As a result, the United States is also circumscribed in the types of responses that it can

²³⁰ For example, in 1996, twelve senior counter-narcotics officials or former officials based in Tijuana were killed. Half of the murders were directly attributed to the Arellano Félix brothers. Ernesto Ibarra Santes the federal government's top anti-narcotics officer in Tijuana at the time had made a national public statement that he intended to capture the brothers and had publicly labeled many law enforcement officers as aiding and abetting their crimes. he was gunned down in Mexico City shortly after his statement.

make. The latest certification round held in March 1997²³¹ demonstrated that Mexico's proximity, the fact that it's the United States' third largest trading partner and its economic problems outweighed its role as a major drugs producer and cocaine transit route. Mexico is a country suffering from grave economic inequalities and a political system whose credibility is increasingly under fire. The U.S. certification process only exacerbates already existing tensions both within Mexico and in the bilateral relationship, creating a war of words. If the United States should ever decide not to certify Mexico's drug control efforts, it is probable that Mexico's drug control cooperation with the United States would also decline.

In sum, the combination of corruption, violence, and a weakened economy have all contributed to the ability of the Mexican drug lords to expand their operations throughout Mexico. The regionalization of markets and the increased globalization of the economy have also worked in favor of transnational criminal organizations by providing them with a ready market for laundering the proceeds of their illicit activities. It is therefore imperative that the Mexican government pass legislation that better addresses issues such as financial and chemical controls while, creating the transparency necessary to ward off further institutional corruption.

Simultaneously, it is possible that in its anxiety to rid itself of the violence engendered by drug trafficking and its ability to damage the economy, the Mexican government begin to

²³¹ . The certification process was created as a result of the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act. It requires that the President send Congress an annual list of major drug-producing or drug-transit countries that have failed to cooperate in drug interdiction efforts. Once decertified, a country is no longer able to receive U.S. assistance funds, unless the president determines that it is in the "vital national interest" to waive the sanctions. Government institutions, like the Export-Import Bank must deny investment credits to any country which has been decertified and U.S. directors of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank must vote against any petition for multilateral loans.

enforce new laws by resorting to undemocratic, repressive measures. Moreover, if Mexico's responses are to be credible, once captured, both drug traffickers and government miscreants must be held accountable for their actions and punished accordingly. In the words of President Zedillo, "Mexico must become a country without impunity" (Cormier 1997: A25).

Chapter 7 OBSERVATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Argument

The study presented here proposed some ideas as to why U.S. efforts to establish an international drugs control regime in Latin America overall, and with Mexico specifically, has largely failed. The purpose of the study was twofold. First, to propose and analyze a series of generalizations about U.S. national security attitudes regarding the growth of Transnational Crime Organizations (TCOs) in juxtaposition with the realities of globalization processes. Second, to examine Mexico's ability to engage with the United States from its weaker position within the power asymmetry, and achieve the goals that it required for its benefit. In both cases, national sovereignty served as a limit to cooperation, in essence creating a "territorial trap" despite greater economic integration between the two nations.

International Political Economy is the theoretical basis of this study, with a focus on how domestic politics correlate to decisions affecting the U.S.-Mexico bilateral relationship because of territorial contiguity. Empirically, this study examined the formation of drug control policy in the United States and Mexico from 1982 to 1998. By observing the reactions of the two countries to their interconnected drug problem, the applicability of international political economy set forth an alternative definition of the drug issue, in contrast to the adoption of a national security response system.

Globalization processes involved many more actors and brought together a plethora of issues to bear on policymaking. No one issue could be examined without taking into

consideration the other issues that were on the agenda. In addition, technology advanced and the end of the Cold war opened doors for movement of people and things that had heretofore been prevented from freely crossing borders. Although smuggling has existed as long as there were borders establishing political demarcations and tax systems, in the latter half of the 20th century the stakes increased exponentially. Technology alone changed the ability of smugglers to cross merchandise, human beings, and money illicitly into national boundaries. Moreover, with the end of the Cold War, the availability of new technologies originating from advances that were created for the military added to the complexity of the equation.

As world economies changed and the Cold War dissipated, military technology came onto the open market. With the rationale of the Cold War gone, corporations came up with pragmatic uses for their technologies. Moreover, the need for enormous armies also declined, former members of the military now needed jobs. In correlation with this downsizing, not only did the TCOs grow, but so did the demand for law enforcement. By 1997, in the United States alone, Bill Clinton would propose to add 100,000 new law enforcement jobs to protect U.S. citizens from criminals.

Observations

U.S. Hegemony

Throughout the 20th century, the United States has been able to use its more powerful position to pressure the hemisphere into complying with its law enforcement strategies, especially as it concerns drug control. Ironically, the United States has the largest drug consumption problem in the hemisphere. Yet, it seeks to establish a coercive

regime of cooperation whereby it ties together economic incentives with penalties that relies on militarization and law enforcement. It is able to do so because the region is largely dependent on U.S. markets for their exports and on U.S. capital for investment. Investors generally reject areas where the potential for instability exists.

Unfortunately, the transnational drug problem requires more than just coercion, it requires intense cooperation in order for it to be addressed comprehensively. Drug traffickers have no respect for national sovereignty nor on the impact that they have on economic structures or political systems. As a group, they tend to be highly organized and capable of moving freely. In order for states to achieve greater cross-border law enforcement cooperation to address TCOs, there is a need to relax national sovereignty issues, not violate them. In its role as the stronger partner, however, the United States often ignores sovereignty questions and thus limits the political will and ability on the part of the weaker partners to participate. In some cases, penalized states simply withdraw from U.S. certification processes, such as the case of Colombia which though decertified managed to continue to participate in global markets.

Mexico's Comparative Advantages

Unlike the other producing and transit nations, Mexico has been relatively successful in maneuvering itself away from the penalization aspects of U.S. drugs control legislation. Its success is marked by its ability to obtain certification despite intense disagreement on the floor of the U.S. Congress and intense media scrutiny. Moreover, Mexico's efforts to restructure its economy and maintain political stability also affect the extent to which the United States will pressure Mexico.

Territorial contiguity plays a large role for Mexico in comparison to the rest of Latin America, not only because of the obvious reasons, such as an economic crisis in Mexico could unleash a massive exodus of workers or alternatively contribute to the growth of drug trafficking, but also, because the two countries share a 2,000-mile border region. The presence of this shared territory opened the space for new methods of dialogue which allowed for the local to inform the international agenda in the bilateral relationship.

In so doing, Binational Liaison Mechanisms (BLMs) were created in 1992 to resolve local problems without resorting to diplomatic channels except in extreme circumstances. The net result was a border region that ran more effectively because of greater inter-agency and cross-border cooperation. Not only were local problems prevented from becoming international issues, but the converse was also true. Troubling questions on the international agenda were largely prevented from becoming stumbling blocks in regional interactions. Since the enactment of the BLMs, drug trafficking rarely affects the coordination and cooperation of other priorities in the regional program, such as the related question of public safety in border communities.

Implications for the Bilateral Relationship

Limits to Cooperation

Since the mid-1980s, U.S. attempts to coerce a drug regime created multiple tensions in the relationship with Mexico. The U.S. supply-side and realist approach in many ways violated the tenets of national sovereignty because of habitual problems - such as unauthorized overflights over Mexican territory, abductions of Mexican citizens, etc. - and created a nationalist backlash in Mexico. Fear of loss of autonomy generally creates

roadblocks to cooperation.

In many instances, Mexican officials simply refused to participate in joint operations with the United States because they presumed that to do so would give the United States too much leeway to interfere in Mexican affairs, such was the case with Operation Alliance in 1986. In fact, U.S. operations actually constrained Mexico's ability to cooperate, especially in view of the PRI's beleaguered position, the inability to control leaks to the media, and the subsequent exposure of U.S. actions in Mexico - especially as regards the DEA which acted covertly and without the consent of Mexican authorities during times of peace.

One of the biggest differences between the Reagan and Bush administrations was that the Reagan administration was able to ignore the hierarchy and competition of interests on the bilateral agenda by emphasizing so heavily on the national security aspects of the drug war, especially as they related to Cold War principles. Because of economic and political changes on the global scene, however, the Bush administration had to adopt a much more realistic strategy because it became obvious at that point that the relationship was intensely complex, especially after the passage of NAFTA.

The new realities of the 1980s and 1990s created the need to redefine U.S. security interests for the region as a whole. Traditional outlooks of keeping extrahemispheric actors out were no longer valid (Schoultz 1994). The debt crisis and rapid advances in technology brought Latin America overall, and Mexico specifically, closer to the United States. Events in the region strongly affected U.S. domestic interests. The implication then is that despite its perceived security interests, the United States could not ignore the extent to which it was dependent on a stable and economically healthy region. In Mexico, at

least, the drug war was subsumed to economic interests.

In addition, the drug war is expensive. If the United States was going to sustain its fight against drug traffickers, then it would have to be more sensitive to the economic impact that its policies have on the region as a whole, and on Mexico in particular. Although Mexico was generally willing to participate in a cooperative anti-narcotics strategy, it simply could not allocate the resources that required to improve its law enforcement and military without incurring a cost on some other issue on its domestic agenda.

To present the Mexican economy remains weak. In a political system that is dependent on the distribution of economic benefits in return for political support, problems are generated for the system when there is not enough money to go around. Unfortunately, it opens the door for corruption and graft. Despite a puritanical heritage, the United States therefore had to acknowledge this factor and work within the parameters of sensitivity required of a partner in hemispheric integration. Mexico in turn was forced to acknowledge that its political and economic structures were in a state of flux.

Of course, one set of problems that any allegation of corruption brings up is suspicions and distrust of other's motives. U.S. government officials, both at the political and operational levels, tend to view Mexico with apprehension. Allegations over the past two decades of high-ranking Mexican officials enabling the drug trafficking process and of disrupting law enforcement operations have created an environment of disbelief that occasionally erupts into a war of recriminations. Mexico, for its part, is highly suspicious of any efforts the United States makes to establish coordinated or cooperative law enforcement operations. It tends to view these efforts as an attempt to intervene in its

domestic affairs.

In large part, domestic politics also limit the extent of cooperation in foreign policy, especially as regards the drugs war. U.S. constituents have increasingly demanded accountability from decisionmakers about the rationale behind their policies. Mexican citizens have also become more cognizant of this aspect, especially in view of the sustained economic crisis their country has been under since 1982 when its debt problem exploded. As individuals became more intensely aware of the effects of globalization processes on their lives, they also came to understand the interrelationship of foreign policy with the domestic.

In the United States, the reaction was often to turn to a more isolationist policy. In Mexico, the tendency was to turn to a more nationalist stance. However, increasingly the line between domestic and foreign is blurred. This last issue is particularly relevant for the border communities which represent region-states defined by the global system, as well as transboundary ecosystems. If anything, the border region has turned toward itself and demanded more autonomy from the centers of power because they feel that they have more in common with one another than with their capitals.

Future of Drug Control

The growth of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in the 1990s clearly points to a problem with the current efforts to address the drugs question. If the United States does not somehow manage to reduce demand, there will always be someone willing to take a risk and supply the product. At their most simplistic, the laws of business dictate that the higher the risk, the greater the profit. The greater the profits the more enabled a drug trafficker becomes to corrupt those in power, or to threaten them through a greater

show of force.

Weapons trafficking is a parallel to drug trafficking, and one of Mexico's greatest concerns. The subsequent violence that ensues increases the likelihood that the public safety of the communities where traffickers reside will be endangered. This aspect is particularly obvious in the shared border communities which are essentially transit zones for drugs and guns. One aspect of the drug war that is not really advertised is that once a power vacuum is created, some one or some group will try to fill it. Generally, rivaling TCOs will compete for the head spot. Invariably, there will be innocent victims.

There are economic dangers that also must be addressed. Because of the inordinate sums generated by the drugs market, drug traffickers have the ability to damage the integrity of the economic system of any country or region. This problem is equally relevant for the United States as it is for a developing country like Mexico. Measures like Operation Casa Blanca initiated by the Department of Customs in 1998, essentially ignored the role of U.S. banks in the money laundering operation. Not only did this send a poor message to Mexico, but it sent an equally relevant message to drug traffickers and money launderers. The point then is that policies when implemented need to be even-handed and that there needs to be a conversation between the two sides.

One large difference between Mexico and the United States is that Mexico's political system is highly centralized and until very recently has tended to be closed. The lack of political transparency, in combination with economic restructuring, created the space in which drug traffickers could operate in Mexico. Although, the United States is hardly a paragon of openness, it is a system that contains sufficient checks and balances to create a few more roadblocks in illegal operations. Nevertheless, the implication here is that both

sides need to create greater systems of internal liabilities to be able counter infiltration.

At the operational level, little by little there is a growing depth to cooperation. There are still limits however, especially because there is little trust between agents. Ultimately, fighting drugs is a risky business. It is important then to understand that both the United States and Mexico have something to lose. Elements like the Binational Liaison Mechanisms (BLMs) are particularly useful because although they do not act as policymaking institutions, they do open a space for dialogue. Trust can emanate from that experience. It may not be a trust based on friendship, but it is a trust based on need.

Mexico and the United States do not have to like one another in order to work together. The parallel is the same for law enforcement agents. However, once they are aware that they can work together, they generally start to see that they have more in common than they originally thought. Fingerprinting will never create a drug control regime.

Mexico and the United States Look Ahead

Looking towards the future is always difficult, but if the past is any indicator, what we see then is that Mexico and the United States have managed to create more balance in the bilateral agenda. Part of the reason for that balance relates to domestic political constraints, as well as to international economic structures. The future of drug control for Mexico and the United States must be one of partnership. Efforts being made at present to define mutual problems such as immigration and drugs from a similar departure point are important to the creation of better forms of cooperation.

The transitions of the world economy have made Mexico and the United States partners, for better or worse. The two share a common border which is essentially an

integrated region and which cannot be detached. U.S. fears that its border will be overrun by drug traffickers and undocumented workers are matched by Mexican fears of U.S. intervention.

Moreover, Mexico is in a stage of transition. Economic stagnation and crisis has made the Mexican people impatient. Their real wages have declined to levels that were sustained prior to the 1970s, but their buying power is even lower. They are largely unhappy with NAFTA and feel aggravated by U.S. pressures to escalate the participation of the military in the drug war. Human rights violations are still a problem that must be countered. In addition, the PRI has lost power, but it still retains a fair share. Political opening is an important factor in what will happen to the drug war. The Mexican people will decide their fate, irrespective of U.S. pressures. The implication here is that the United States will have to treat Mexico the same as it treats any of its other major economic partners should there be a transition of power they do not view favorably.

Lastly, in order to mitigate the powerful TCOs, the United States and Mexico will have to institutionalize mechanisms for cooperation. As of yet, these are in a process of definition. Therefore, at present, personalities remain important to the bilateral relationship, especially on the border where points of contact are multiple and dynamic. As both countries establish policies regarding drugs in capitals, they must be particularly aware of the impact that these have on their shared border region. Much of operationalization of these policies occurs in that area. Whereas in the past, the two centers may have been able to ignore regional demands, this is no longer the case. The border is a clearly visible expression of the dynamics of globalization. Bilateral cooperation can only be enhanced by taking the innovative practices into consideration.

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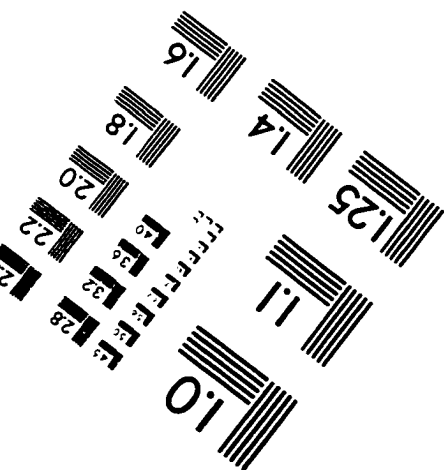
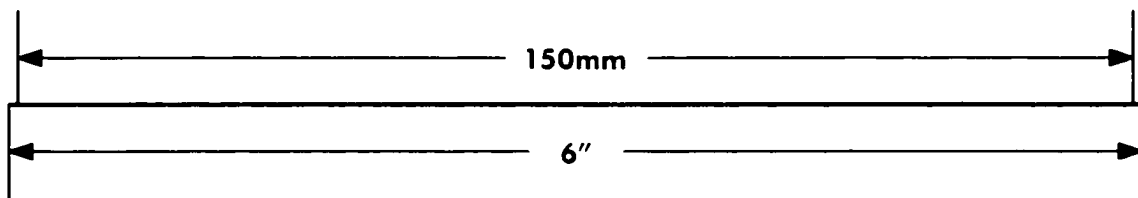
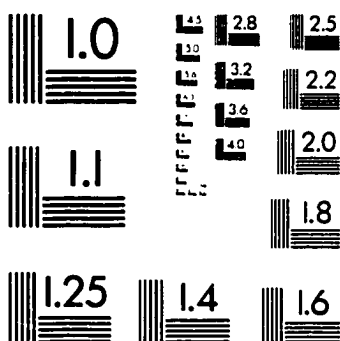
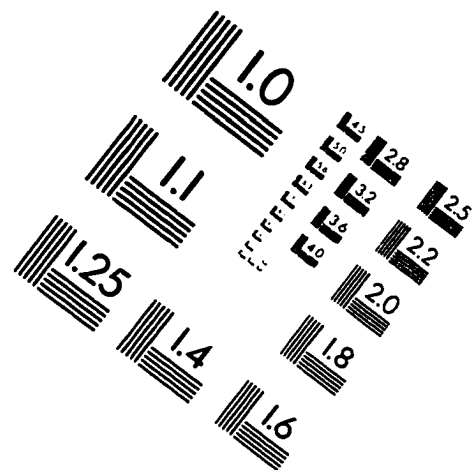
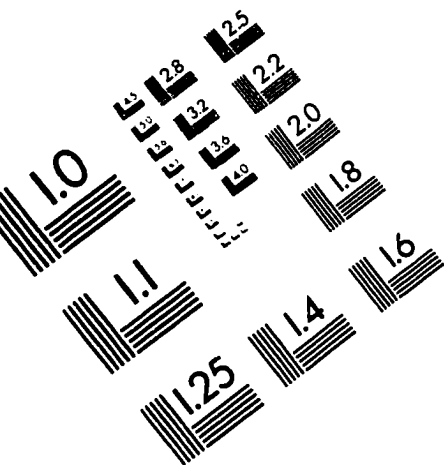
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