

JoMUN XV

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The Situation of the Mexican Drug War

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INTRODUCTION

The Mexican Drug War (11 December 2006 to present) is between the Mexican Government and many drug syndicates. Mexico has been a hotspot for transshipment of narcotics between the United States and Latin America for many years from the Prohibition in the US. Mexico is a major drug transit and producing country. It is the main foreign supplier of cannabis and an important entry point of South American cocaine and Asian methamphetamines to the United States (Cook). The Mexican government has made minimal success with this war and have only encouraged cartels to make newer methods of financial gain, allowing them to have more control over the communities.

Major drug cartels such as the Los Zetas, involved themselves in more than drug trafficking and have also been connected to human trafficking, pipeline trafficked oil theft, extortion, and trading unlicensed CDs.

The Sinaloa Cartel is an international drug trafficking, money laundering, and organized crime syndicate According to the U.S. Attorney General, the Sinaloa Cartel is responsible for importing into the United States and distributing nearly 200 tons of cocaine and large amounts of heroin between 1990 and 2008 (Reuters).

The Juárez Cartel controls one of the primary transportation routes for billions of dollars' worth of illegal drug shipments annually entering the United States from Mexico. The cartel has less influence now as they were unable to fight against the Sinaloa attacks in 2011.

In December 2006, just after taking office, Mexican president Felipe Calderon deployed Mexico's military to the cities and countryside to take on the country's drug trade. "There's a lot of dissatisfaction," said Mike Vigil, a former chief of international operations for the US Drug Enforcement Administration, "because the use of the military to conduct law-enforcement operations actually goes against the Mexican constitution." (Woody).

The methods undertaken by President Calderon resulted with the Mexican military either capturing or killing twenty-five of the top thirty-seven most wanted kingpins in Mexico. Though this only succeeded to create sixty to eighty smaller drug trafficking groups (Renwick). There was an increase in drug-related deaths and violence and many cartels turned to kidnapping and extortion to supply their actions. During the counter-cartel strategies, nearly one hundred mayors and former mayors were killed (Lee).



Figure 1: Map of Mexican drug cartels (Wikipedia)

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Transnational Criminal Organization (TCOs)

Exploit the borders as a passageway for contraband and as a method for consolidation of power.

Narco-corruption

Mexico's power structure defined by leaders who guide TCOs' behaviours, receive payoffs, manipulate government resources, and align public policies with legislation that will further their personal and political objectives. (Grayson).

Government Transparency

In a free society, transparency is government's obligation to share information with citizens. It is at the heart of how citizens hold their public officials accountable.

Organized Crime

Organized crime is a category of transnational, national, or local groupings of highly centralized enterprises run by criminals who intend to engage in illegal activity, most commonly for money and profit.

PRI

The Institutional Revolutionary Party (Spanish: Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) is a Mexican political party founded in 1929, that held power uninterrupted in the country for 71 years from 1929 to 2000, first as the National Revolutionary Party, then as the Party of the Mexican Revolution.

PAN

The National Action Party (Spanish: Partido Acción Nacional, PAN), founded in 1939, is one of the three main political parties in Mexico.

Hierarchization

The act or result of hierarchizing; the establishment of a hierarchy.

Clientelism

A social order which depends on relations of patronage.

Merida Initiative

The Mérida Initiative is a security cooperation between the United States and the government of Mexico and the countries of Central America. It was approved on June 30, 2008, and its stated aim is combating the threats of drug trafficking and transnational crime.

Operation Michoacán

A joint operation by Federal Police, and the Mexican military, to eliminate drug plantations and to combat drug trafficking.

Narcoculture

It is the criminal culture of the drug cartels.

Narcorridos

Narcorridos are Mexican country songs glorifying the lifestyles of drug lords.

Anti-narcocorrido

Songs that denounce drug lords and drug trafficking.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

Major factors that contribute to the drug war happening, one of which being poverty. The government has failed to provide legal means of earning a living even with nearly 46% of Mexicans are living in extreme poverty. Mexico being second in economic disparity in the very rich and the very poor in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. In 2012 it was estimated that Mexican cartels employed over 450,000 people directly and a further 3.2 million people's livelihoods depended on various parts of the drug trade (Chew Sanchez). In cities like Ciudad Juarez, up to 60% of the economy depended on illegitimate money making (Bowden).

Another factor in the drug trade is the unsuccessful educational system, even with Mexico having spent 5.3% of their GDP on education. The issue is not with the amount of money invested but rather how the resources are utilized by the individual districts. The combination of high levels of poverty, the misuse of resources and high corruption levels result in major opportunities for cartels to attain employees.

The cartels target groups of people who are in said conditions to influence. A group of people who are called "los ninis" an underclass of several million dropouts who ni trabajan ni estudian (neither work nor study), of whom many ended up as combatants on behalf of the cartels (Longmire). The cartels use religious propaganda to threaten their rivals and influence the community to the point where the word, "Narco", which means drug trafficker, has been deeply integrated into Mexican culture.

The problem with the drug war is the number of casualties involved. The security of the communities is compromised and even with government intervention, the loss of life is too high. It has gotten to the point where foreign investment has declined due to the dwindling levels of security within the country. Nearly 1% of the GDP is decreasing annually in South America's second largest economy (Gould). With such amounts of money, there is a high chance of corruption to take place. Especially with a country that was ranked in the top 75 most corrupt countries in the Corruption Perception Index in 2015. Under the Calderon Administration, this administration focused on "war on organized crime" in order to eradicate the cartels and the drugs. During which there was an increase in the deaths of politicians involved in the drug war against the cartels. By doing so, they are able to influence the living officials to do their bidding and allowing cartels to have even more power in governmental offices and expand their criminal agendas. They then integrate themselves within the community and normalize the drug culture within them.

The cartels not only seek allegiance with the politicians but also with journalists. With them, they are able to control the information that the community receives. This too normalizes and creates the idea that the cartels are helping the community in such ways that the government cannot. Drug cartels use propaganda to advertise their lavish lifestyles and entice potential investors and employees to join into that lifestyle. They also use it to intimidate their rivals and gain control over the Mexican society as much as possible. From posters to new media to music, each financed by the cartel to glorify them as much as possible.

If the cartels do not sway reporters to share information that they want, they take to violent approaches. Between 2000 and 2012, several dozen journalists, including Miguel Ángel López

Velasco, Luis Carlos Santiago, and Valentín Valdés Espinosa, were murdered there for covering narco-related news (Tuckman).

There were many negative repercussions with the methods taken and thus changed strategies to decrease levels of corruption. He changed the personnel recruitment process to be selective and changed many aspects of the Federal police to be more technical as to reduce error in dispatching police officers (Guerrero).

The reasons for the changes were that citizens claimed that the armed soldiers who were associated with TCO's initiated illegal searches, unwarranted arrests, beatings, theft, rape, and torture thereby deepening the issues of crime within the country. Such behavior increases the countries levels of lawlessness through human rights violations. The idea behind this tactic was to mimic the results in Colombia with the arrest of Pablo Escobar where the cartel ran by him became less violent and less of a threat than it was when Pablo was in charge. Though in the such an area like Mexico, the void created by the leader dying or arrested leads to different leaders taking the roles and an increase in smaller drug trafficking groups.

In many Mexican institutions, officials are bribed by TCO's for minimal interferences in their activities and they in return receive political favors. This system is allowed to flourish as the there is a lack of government transparency and checks and balances have permitted corruption to continue. Even the move to Pena Nieto Administration, the problems from the previous administration continued on to the new one where TCO violence remained high, local clientelism persisted, and the drug market continued to be profitable (Forbes) even with the priority of national security in the "war on drug trafficking". The administration struggled with attaining legitimacy with the public especially when Pena Nieto, his wife and Luis Videgaray bought multimillion dollar houses. An investigation was launched, led by Virigilio Andrade who was a close personal friend of Pena Nieto, which was more scandalous as it was, "an executive branch investigating itself" (Latin Times). When certain journalist reported on the housing scandal, they were immediately fired directly afterwards ignited more questions about the legitimacy of the government. As of August 2016, only 23% of Mexicans approved of how Peña Nieto was dealing with corruption. by January 2017, the number had decreased to 12% (Cuddington).

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

United States

Started the Merida initiative that declared their goal of combatting drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and money laundering.

Colombia

Working alongside Mexico and Guatemala to rethink a new global policy on drugs.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

2006	In the first few weeks of the government crackdown on drug trafficking, 62 people are killed. (Mexican government, April 2010).
September 2008	During an Independence Day celebration in Morelia's town square, grenades are thrown into the crowd, killing eight people. The incident has

	been described as the first terrorist-style attack on innocent bystanders in Mexico's drug war.
2009	The Mexican government reports 9,635 deaths in 2009 in the drug war. (Mexican government, April 2010).
January 2011	The Mexican government says that 34,612 citizens have been killed during the four-year drug war.
April 2011	Several mass graves holding 177 bodies are discovered in Tamaulipas, the same area where the bodies of 72 migrants were discovered in 2010.
January 2012	The office of Mexico's Attorney General releases a statement saying that nearly 13,000 people were killed in drug violence between January and September 2011.
October 2014	Mexican police capture Hector Beltran Leyva, head of the Beltran Leyva drug cartel, in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

The following resolutions outline some of the operations and strategies undertaken by the government of Mexico and the United States to tackle the issue.

Resolution S-30/1

A joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem.

Resolution A/RES/71/211

International cooperation to address and counter the world drug problem.

Resolution 59/6

Promoting prevention strategies and policies.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Minimizing Weapons Distributed to Mexico and Surrounding Countries

The increase in the death toll within Mexico by gun related violence is escalated to nearly 57 deaths per day last recorded in 2016. The goal is to protect the citizens and neutralize the drug trafficking influence within many of the communities within Mexico. By limiting the access to such weapons, there may be a decrease in gun related violence and give the government a chance at an advantage against the drug cartels.

Mainstream a Culture of Nonviolence Within the Small Communities

After the disbandment of a major drug cartel, there was a rise in smaller predatory groups within the communities. These groups are mainly youth of the community who commit crime from petty theft to murder as well as drug trafficking. Due to the increase in these smaller gangs, there is a rise in gun

related violence and wars for territory. By education and raising awareness, this can minimize the chances of more drug trafficking in the future.

Relocation of the People Living in Area where Drug-Related Activities are Common

The need to develop and implement comprehensive drug use prevention programs, using a multiagency approach, such as through health, education and law enforcement authorities, has risen. Often in gang related violence, there are many civilians who end up in the fray and are the victim of these crime. By providing safer locations to reside in, it would limit children's exposure to crimes happening all around.

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APPENDIX OR APPENDICES

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