



U.S. - Mexico At a Glance

The Merida Initiative

September 2008

“When Presidents Calderon and Bush met last year in Merida, they spoke frankly about the need to work together to fight this common threat and change the paradigm under which we work together.

“For the first time, Mexico and the United States sought to overcome sensitivities about security cooperation and jointly address the problem of narcotics trafficking and organized crime. ...

“After that conversation between presidents, the Merida Initiative was born and later developed through the collective efforts of the U.S. and Mexican executive and legislative branches, as representatives of the millions of citizens of Mexico and the United States who want to defeat organized crime and drug trafficking.”

*Antonio O. Garza
U.S. Ambassador
June 30, 2008*

Since President Calderon took office two years ago, Mexico has taken decisive action to fight drug trafficking and criminal organizations. Following a request from President Bush in late autumn of 2007, the U.S. Congress passed the Merida Initiative with wide bi-partisan support. President Bush signed the Merida Initiative into law on June 30, 2008.

Acknowledging the shared responsibility of the United States and Mexico to combat international drug trafficking and related violence, the Merida Initiative is an historic program of cooperation to counter the drug-fueled criminal organizations that operate without regard to borders and that threaten the security of the citizens of both our countries. In this first stage of a multi-year program, the Merida Initiative will provide \$400 million to Mexico and \$65 million to Central America and the Caribbean.

Funding in this first stage of the Merida Initiative will provide:

- Helicopters and surveillance aircraft to support interdiction and rapid response of Mexican law enforcement agencies.
- Non-intrusive inspection equipment, ion scanners, and canine units for Mexican customs, the new Mexican federal police and the military to interdict trafficked drugs, arms, cash and persons.
- Technologies and secure communications systems to improve data collection and storage, thereby ensuring that vital information is accessible to law enforcement agencies.
- Technical advice and training to strengthen the institutions of justice: to improve vetting for the new Mexican police force; to provide case management software to track investigations through the legal process; to support offices of citizen complaint and professional responsibility; and to promote the establishment of witness protection programs.



Presidents Bush and Calderon at a press conference in Merida, Mexico. March 14, 2007.

U.S. Embassy Mexico City • 5080-2000
Public Affairs Section (PAS)
mexico.usembassy.gov