



**One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515**

April 27, 2011

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

The purpose of this letter is threefold; first, to bring to your attention the conclusions reached as a result of our March 31, 2011, Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management hearing, "The U.S. Homeland Security Role in the Mexican War Against Drug Cartels;" second, to encourage your support of H.R. 1270, designating certain Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations; and third, to request that your Department develop a comprehensive strategy with the overall goal of assisting the Mexican Government in their effort to win the war against the drug cartels. I would be happy to work with you in this effort in any way appropriate.

Our hearing and countless studies have concluded that since 2006, there have been over 35,000 drug-trafficking-related deaths in Mexico. On March 13, 2010 the killing of three individuals connected to the U.S. Consulate in Juarez, Mexico raised concerns about the Mexican government's control over the drug cartels. On June 28, 2010 Tamaulipas gubernatorial candidate, Rodolfo Torre Cantu, was killed by thugs associated with a drug cartel--the highest-level political assassination in 15 years. Between January and October 2010, 12 Mexican mayors were killed. These mayors were either executed because they refused to cooperate with the drug cartels or were victims of drug-gang related rivalries. On February 15, 2011, Immigration and Customs Enforcement Special Agent Jaime Zapata was killed and his fellow Special Agent Victor Avila was wounded by "Los Zetas," believed to be the most violent drug cartel operating in Mexico.

According to the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, "The massacres of young people and migrants, the killing and disappearance of Mexican journalists, the use of torture, and the phenomena of car bombs have received wide media coverage and have led some analysts to question if the violence has been transformed into something new, beyond the typical violence that has characterized the trade. For instance, some observers have rained the concern that the Mexican [Drug Trafficking Organizations] DTOs may be acting more like domestic terrorists." This increased violence towards the Mexican Government, legal system and media threatens the very foundation of that nation. The threat of Mexico becoming a lawless haven should cause this

Administration to seek the tools it needs to ensure the security of our border and provide assistance to our ally in the south.

It is clear violent actions taken by the Mexican drug cartels have evolved and are acts of terrorism. These cartels should be classified as terrorist organizations. Federal law defines an "act of terrorism" as an activity that involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life that is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State; and appears to be intended--(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping.

Historically, Mexican drug cartels have been considered criminal organizations, the purpose of which has been financial gain. But with increased brutality targeted toward government officials, law enforcement officers, and civilians, the cartels' motivated goals have evolved beyond just monetary gain, and now include more violent activities to achieve political, economic and geographic influence. By placing the Mexican drug cartels on the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list our law enforcement officers would have additional authorities to limit the cartels' financial, property, and travel operations. Additionally, such a designation would apply to an entire organization, not only its leaders. It is in the interest of the United States and Mexico to prosecute individuals conducting such brutal acts of terror occurring almost daily across our border. As you know, there is precedent for such a designation under President Clinton in the 1990's involving the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

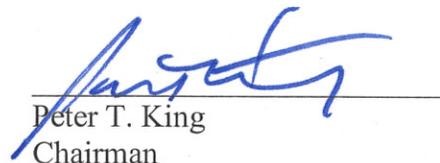
Further, it is essential a comprehensive strategy be developed and implemented to help Mexico win the war against drug cartels. This strategy should include plans to expedite funding for resources to Mexico for intelligence, training, and technical assistance programs. The strategy should pull valuable lessons from Plan Colombia, as there are certainly feasible aspects of Plan Colombia that could be adopted when developing a plan of action. According to the Associated Press, as of March 22, 2010, the United States has spent only \$364 million of the promised \$1.5 billion in Merida Initiative funding. It should be a priority of the United States to ensure Mexico has the resources it needs to win the war against the Mexican drug cartels.

The Mexican drug cartels present a dangerous threat to the national security of the United States. I strongly urge you to use every capability of the U.S. Government to counter this growing threat to our economy, our security and well being of our citizens. Equally as important, we must make sure Mexico does not become a failed state and yet another haven for terrorists. Our Subcommittee will have follow-up hearings to address this growing crisis along our borders and we look forward to your Agencies' participation. Our staff point of contact is Dr. R. Nicholas Palarino, Subcommittee Staff Director for Oversight at (202) 226-8417.

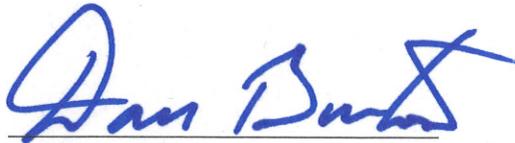
Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight,
Investigations, and Management



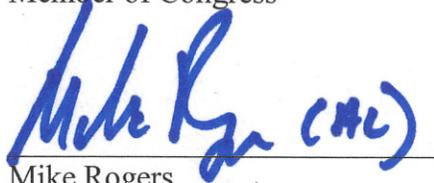
Peter T. King
Chairman



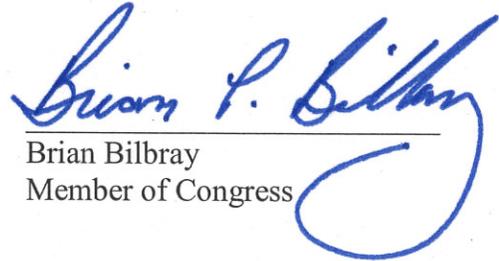
Dan Burton
Member of Congress



Sue Myrick
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



Brian Bilbray
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice
Mr. Thomas Donilon, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs