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**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**

**TWO WARS: OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS AND THE WAR ON
DRUGS**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.

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ABSTRACT

The 9/11 attacks created many new challenges and controversies regarding the War on Drugs (WOD) and Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) formerly known “War on Terror.” An evolving argument is the potential impact of the OCO on the WOD or vice versa. Some critics have argued that the U.S. cannot win both wars simultaneously, while others theorize that the efforts against terrorism are positively impacting the WOD.

This thesis examines terrorism and drug trafficking in the pre and post 9/11 era, theorizing that the United States change in priority has impeded the efforts of the “WOD,” particularly as it relates to the Southwest Border (SWB). The Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) with their sphere of influence have corrupted Mexican political and law enforcement officials and threaten the stability of the Mexican state thereby creating a direct threat to the national security of America.

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INTRODUCTION

On September 11, 2001 America came under siege. It was a day of “unprecedented shock and suffering” when hijackers commandeered four commercial passenger jetliners and orchestrated one of the most devastating attacks in the history of America.¹ Two of the hijacked planes were deliberately crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, while the third crashed into the Pentagon. The fourth plane crashed into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The hijackers destroyed the lives of 3,016 innocent civilians representing about ninety countries and impacted countless others.²

The directors of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency met immediately following the events and reported to President Bush that Al Qaeda, a terrorist organization, was responsible for the attack. On the night of September 11, 2001, President Bush addressed the nation and stated “our country, way of life, and freedom came under attack by the deadly terrorist acts.”³ The investigation by the 9/11 Commission would reveal huge gaps in America’s security. In response to their findings, the President established the White House Office of Homeland Security to develop and coordinate a comprehensive national strategy to secure the homeland. Subsequently, under the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Congress created an executive

¹ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, (New York: Norton, 2004).

² Ibid.

³David Kohn, “The President’s Story, The President Talks in Detail About His Sept. 11 Experience,” CBSNews.com, Sept. 10, 2003, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/09/11/60II/main521718.shtml> (accessed March 28, 2010).

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) responsible for the unified efforts of twenty-two agencies under one roof and one chain of command in a coordinated defense of the U.S.⁴

The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2002 is the largest government reorganization since the National Security Act of 1947, and is aimed at taking on the new threats faced at home and abroad.⁵ A key agency amongst several absorbed by DHS is the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) whose functions were divided into two separate enforcement and services functions: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS). Additionally, the border enforcement functions of the INS, Customs Service, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service were consolidated into a new agency under DHS: U.S. Customs and Border Protection.⁶

The 9/11 National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, also known as 9/11 Commission was partly responsible for the creation of the new DHS.⁷ Created officially in November 2002, the Commission was tasked with preparing a full description of the facts and circumstances relating to the terror attacks to include a final set of recommendations. The 9/11 Commission Report found that events surrounding the

⁴ U.S. Congress, Homeland Security Act of 2002, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office 2002, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ296/pdf/PLAW-107publ296.pdf>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, (New York: Norton, 2004).

attacks exposed repeated communication failures (stove piping) between the CIA and the FBI, and as a result, the Bush administration was confronted by the Commission's recommendations to force key agencies to work cohesively to protect America's borders.

The creation of DHS brought many new challenges and controversies. An evolving argument is the potential impact of the Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO), formerly "Global War on Terror (GWOT)," on the "War on Drugs" (WOD) or vice versa. Some critics have argued that the U.S. cannot win both wars simultaneously, while others theorize that the efforts against terrorism are positively impacting the WOD. This observation generates a number of questions. Have Overseas Contingency Operations, been a hindrance or help to the WOD? Have the WOD policies been relegated to secondary status as compared to the OCO policies, or have they created some positive changes of the Department of Defense and Homeland Security joint operations?

This paper will argue that despite interagency cooperation against terrorism and drug trafficking in the post 9/11 era, the United States change in priority has impeded the efforts of the "WOD," particularly as it relates to the Southwest Border (SWB). The diminished WOD efforts have emboldened the activities of Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in the region, which are increasingly posing a direct threat to United States national security. The research will conduct a comparative analysis of the U.S. government's approach to the Overseas Contingency Operation and the WOD. It will examine the creation of DHS and the realignment of other government agencies, as well as their impact on the WOD. The study will also investigate drug seizure activities at the Southwest Border (SWB) Ports of Entry (POE) before and after 9/11. It will also

analyze the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations' (DTO) corruption of military and law enforcement agencies in Mexico, and their sphere influence in the United States.

The Mexican DTOs have been empowered by their control over the illicit drug trade from Columbia into the United States, and have already corrupted political and law enforcement agencies in Mexico. They are working aggressively to exercise the same level of control in the United States. Thus, in order to combat the threats from the Mexican DTOs and to protect America's national security, the United States must fight the WOD with the same vigilance as the OCO. Mexican DTOs are expanding their sphere of influence by penetrating key American institutions such as the U.S. military and law enforcement agencies posing an immediate threat to national security. There have already been several occurrences of military members working with drug-trafficking organizations, and many law enforcement officials are being forced out or prosecuted for their illicit involvement in the drug trade as well. With both military and law enforcement members being involved as front-line fighters in the WOD, and with closer coordination between drug cartels and terrorists it is uncertain who is corrupting or controlling our forces.

Reportedly, there are up to twelve million Hispanic illegal aliens living in the U.S., many of whom reside across the Southwest Border (SWB), and are potentially susceptible to bribes or outside influences because of their status.⁸ They also provide the Mexican DTOs with a ready pool of recruits for their various drug trafficking operations. The illegal aliens have to survive and the cartels offer a much better deal with their unrestricted salaries. The current U.S. Government efforts are ineffective to stop the

⁸ Jeffrey Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *Mexican Immigrants: How Many come? How Many leave?* July 22, 2009, <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=112> (accessed March 28, 2010).

outflow of cash and weapons as much as they had problems stopping the inflow of drugs. This is particularly due to the government's change in priority in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

Since 9/11 the U.S. perception of drugs and terror has drastically changed. Principally, the U.S. government regards the War on Terror and the WOD as one entity, narcoterrorism. Narcoterrorism is described as the utilization of the coca and poppy cash crops to support those "designated terrorist organizations" that seek to destroy the U.S.⁹ Of particular concern are Afghanistan and other areas in Southwest Asia that provide safe haven for terrorist organizations, and where the illicit drug trade is being used to finance their extremist activities.¹⁰ Hence, the U.S. has shifted its focus, and has taken drastic measures to meet demands of the new war, narcoterrorism. The government's new actions, however, have created setbacks for the WOD, especially along the Southwest Border where tons of illicit drugs continue to enter the U.S. via the porous U.S.- Mexico border. It is within the SWB region that the Mexican DTOs powers are felt as they undoubtedly create multiple problems for counter narcoterrorism efforts as well as good governance.

While there has been additional funding and employment of military assets to fight narcoterrorism and the Drug Trafficking Organizations in Columbia, Mexico and Afghanistan, there has also been a decrease in resources, corporate knowledge, and personnel essential to fight the overall "War on Drugs." Shortly after 9/11, the lead drug

⁹ U.S. Joint Counterdrug Operations, Joint pub, 3-07.4, (Washington, DC, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS50022> (accessed November 10, 1999), I-11

¹⁰ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Congressional Testimony, *Narcoterrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism – a Dangerous Mix*, May 20, 2003, (Statement by Steven W. Casteel, Assistant Administrator for Intelligence), <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct052003.html> (accessed March, 26, 2010).

interdiction agency, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), underwent a major mission change from drug enforcement to fighting narcoterrorism, and approximately 150 DEA agents were shifted to air marshal roles or intelligence analysts with the FBI.¹¹ Similarly, the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the lead agency for maritime counter drug interdiction, shifted almost three quarters of its personnel and boats from drug interdiction to antiterrorist patrol.¹² In the 2011 budget, the USCG is scheduled to receive \$75 million dollars less than 2010, which will result in net reduction of 773 full time positions.¹³ The impact of such dramatic shifts in policies and resources has placed the United States ability to effectively fight drug cartels while fighting “terrorism” or for that matter “narcoterrorism” in doubt.

The paper discusses the background of the OCO, formerly the GWOT. It also provides an overview of the 9/11 attacks and President Bush’s response with the creation of the 9/11 Commission, and subsequently, the Department of Homeland Security. In addition, the paper focuses on the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security, and the realignment of twenty-two government agencies. It examines how the OCO have impeded the United States long-standing efforts on the WOD, especially as it relates to the Southwest Border Region. These actions undermine narcoterrorism efforts and have created further threats to United States national security.

Chapter one analyzes the United States drug and terrorism policies in the pre 9/11 era. It argues that in the pre 9/11 era America’s number one enemy was not terrorism but

¹¹ “Drug Traffic Up as DEA Focus Shifts,” *South Bend Tribune*, October 18, 2001.

¹² Neal Peirce, “Can’t Win War on Terror Fighting a War on Drugs,” *Houston Chronicle*, November 4, 2001, <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/1104-07.htm> (accessed June 7, 2010)

¹³ U.S. Coast Guard, “All Hands Messages, FY11 Budget,” http://www.uscg.mil/COMDT/all_hands/message47.asp (accessed March 6, 2010).

drugs, and that over the decades the United States government implemented several anti drug strategies, and spent billions of dollars to combat the supply of and the demand for drugs in America. Chapter one also analyzes the roles of the various Federal agencies in eradicating drugs, particularly on the Southwest Border Region. This chapter argues that during pre 9/11 era United States government officials placed little priority on terrorism and failed to grasp the imminent threat terrorist organizations presented to the U.S. national security. This chapter will examine pre 9/11 terrorism “policies” such as Presidential Directives 30 and 32, the 1998 Five-Year Interagency Counter Terrorism and Technology Crime Plan, and President Clinton’s attempt to create a national security strategy that focused on terrorist threats, the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century. These documents indicate an absence of a comprehensive counter-terrorism policy during this period, as well as efforts to implement one.

Chapter two examines U.S. drugs and terrorism policy since of 9/11. This chapter argues that in the aftermath of 9/11, terrorism has taken a higher precedence in United States National Security than drugs, hence the realignment of the various Federal agencies to fight terrorism and by extension “narcoterrorism.” Examined in this chapter are the “Bush Doctrine” and the OCO, formerly the GWOT and what this mean for the WOD. Also analyzed are the U.S. Drug control policies implemented since 9/11, and their impact on the Southwest Border Region. Chapter three asserts that despite efforts to incorporate the WOD with the OCO, vast amounts of illegal drugs continue to be smuggled into the United States via the Southwest Border Region. Furthermore, the shift in priority to fighting narcoterrorism has also emboldened the activities of the Mexican drug cartels in the area, as personnel and knowledge essential to fighting drugs are shifted

to the East and Southwest Asia regions.

Chapter three will offer an analysis of the findings conducted in this study. In addition, a proposed recommendation will be made based on the analysis of pre and post 9/11 terrorism and drug policies. The current approach to WOD as it relates to the Southwest Border Region is highly ineffective. Illicit drugs continue to enter the United States via the porous borders, cocaine prices continue to decrease, and the Mexican DTOs continue to exercise their influence in the region. The current strategy therefore must be re-evaluated. Based on all the research and arguments delineated in this thesis, Chapter four will summarize a conclusion.

Prior to the 9/11 attacks, past administrations did not perceive terrorism as a major threat to the national security of the United States. The next chapter points out that in the decades preceding 9/11 the United States government took very little initiative, or so it seemed, to protect the country from terrorist attacks. In fact the government acted leisurely in developing any comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that would have prevented such events from occurring. As one critic aptly points out, when it comes to terrorism during the pre 9/11 era, the United States policies were “ad hoc, reactive and non-effective.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Carolyn W. Pumphrey, *Transnational Threats: Blending Law Enforcement and Military Strategies*, November, 2000, www.intelligenceisthefuture.com/Transnational%20Threats%20Blending%20Law%20Enforcement%20and%20Military%20Strategies.pdf (accessed March 29, 2010),198.

CHAPTER 1

Pre 9/11 Terrorism and Drug Strategies

Pre 9/11 Terrorism Strategies

DOD's Joint Publication 1-02 defines National Security Strategy as:

*The art and science of developing, applying, and coordinating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, military, and informational) to achieve objectives that contributes to national security.*¹

In this context, it is fair to assert that prior to the September 11, 2001 tragedies, the United States did not possess a national security strategy that would incorporate the all fundamentals described above as they related to terrorism. According to Carolyn Pumphrey, rather than possessing a national security strategy on terrorism, the nation had a “loosely coupled set of plans and specific programs that aim, individually to achieve certain particular preparedness objectives.”² Hence, though polices such as the Presidential Decision Directives 30, an attempt by President Reagan to prepare for armed attacks on U.S. citizens or assets by developing and assigning to various executive agencies specific responsibilities when terrorist incidents occurred; Presidential Directive 62, which focuses on integrated response and critical infrastructure protection;³ the Attorney General's December 1998 Five-Year Interagency Counter Terrorism and Technology Crime Plan, which addresses strategies to strengthen state and local capabilities to respond to terrorism, and identify critical technologies for targeted research and

¹ U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1972), 360.

² Pumphrey, *Transnational Threats: Blending Law Enforcement and Military Strategies*, Nov. 2000, 198.

³ U.S. President, “Presidential Decision Directive-PPD-62,” May 22, 1998 <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd-62.htm> (accessed October 15, 2009).

development efforts;⁴ and the Annual Report to Congress on Combating Terrorist collectively represented the U.S. national strategy, they failed to “individually or collectively” achieve a national security strategy, as they lacked critical elements needed to be effective.

Prior to President Clinton’s administration, previous United States Security Strategies did not focus on terrorism. In fact, as the 1990s began, the United States was concerned with maintaining continued international security, maintaining a balance of power with the Soviet Union, and supporting new democracies and fostering economic development in Eastern Europe.⁵ This is evident when in November 1989 President George W. Bush signed into law a legislation authorizing \$938 million in assistance to support democracy in Poland and Hungary. Also, in the Fiscal Year 1991 budget President Clinton proposed an additional \$300 million to expand programs to new Eastern European democracies.⁶ Other areas of international concerns during this era were the Gulf Crisis and Middle East Conflicts.

With regard to terrorism, President Clinton’s administration witnessed an increase in Islamic attacks, most somehow connected to Al Qaeda, on U.S. interests both here and abroad. There were bombings of the World Trade Center in New York (February 26, 1993, Islamic terrorists with possible links to Al Qaeda), the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia (June 25, 1996, Hezbollah, possibly assisted by Iran and al Qaeda), the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda), and the U.S.S Cole in

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, *Five Year Interagency Counter Terrorism and Technology Crime Plan*, September 1999, www.justice.gov/oip/docs/crime-plan.pdf (accessed March 29, 2010).

⁵ Executive Office of the President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, 1990), 7, 11.

⁶ Ibid.

Yemen (October 12, 2000, Al Qaeda). On August 20, 1998, the administration responded to the embassy bombings by launching missile strikes against Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and a suspected chemical plant in Sudan. These actions by the Clinton administration however, were reactive rather than proactive and, furthermore, proved ineffective in deterring terror groups such as Al Qaeda from inflicting fear on the United States.

In response to Congressional direction, on December 30, 1998, the Attorney General in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Director of Central Intelligence, submitted to Congress a Five-Year Interagency Counter-Terrorism and Technology Crime plan intended to serve as a baseline strategy for coordination of national policy and operational capabilities to combat terrorism in the United States and against American interests overseas.⁷ The plan outlined specific steps the U.S. needed to take to enhance federal resources and to work with state and local authorities to improve counter-terrorism capabilities. A March 2001 General Accounting Office (GAO) report stated that the current plan mostly resembled a national strategy, but additional work was needed for a comprehensive national strategy to combat terrorism.⁸

In an effort to thwart terrorist groups, or individuals with the intent of using unconventional methods or weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against the U.S., in May 1998 President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive-62 (PDD-62) to

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, *Five Year Interagency Counter Terrorism and Technology Crime Plan*, September 1999, www.justice.gov/oip/docs/crime-plan.pdf (accessed March 29, 2010).

⁸ U.S. General Accounting Office, *Combating Terrorism, Comments on Counterterrorism Leadership and National Strategy, testimony before the subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, International Relations, Committee on Government Reform*, (Washington, DC: U.S. House of Representatives, 2001).

achieve a new level of integration in the fight against terror. While attempting to make terrorism a top national security priority, PDD-62 established the Office of the National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism to oversee the broad variety of relevant policies and programs including such areas as counter-terrorism, protection of critical infrastructure, preparedness and consequence management for weapons of mass destruction. The National Coordinator was tasked with working within the National Security Council, to report to the President through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and produce for him an annual Security Preparedness Report.⁹ This directive created a new and more systematic approach to fighting the terrorist threat in an attempt to achieve the President's goal of ensuring that we meet the threat of terrorism with rigor.¹⁰

In 1998, the Clinton administration took U.S. national security in a new direction when it created the U.S. Commission on National Security for the 21st Century (USCNS/21), also called the Hart-Rudman Commission. Headed by Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, the Commission was formulated to make “sweeping strategic recommendations” on how the United States could better ensure its security in the 21st century.¹¹ Considered to be the most exhaustive review of the United States national security strategy, the Commission was tasked to analyze the national security environment, develop strategies appropriate to that environment, assess the various

⁹ U.S. President, “Presidential Decision Directive-PPD-62,” May 22, 1998, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd-62.htm> (accessed March 29, 2010).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ U.S. Commission on National Security for the 21st Century, *Road Map for National Security Imperative for Change: the Phase III Report of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century*, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/nssg/> (accessed March 5, 2010).

security institutions, and to recommend necessary adjustments.¹² A crucial element in the Commission's report was the creation of a new department, the National Homeland Security Agency, which would be responsible for planning, coordinating, and integrating various government activities that relates to the national security of the homeland. The Commission submitted its final report to Congress in February 2001.

The creation of the USCNS/21 appears to have been a drastic move in the direction of national security on the part of the Clinton administration. Nonetheless, the administration has been criticized for not acting swiftly in creating the Commission. In his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Terrorism and Technology, former co-chair of the Commission, Senator Gary Hart, stated that it was a struggle to convince President Clinton of the need for such a commission. Hart further points out that even though he urged President Clinton to address terrorism in 1994 and 1995, the President did not take actions until 1998.¹³

The Clinton administration's actions undoubtedly point to the climate regarding U.S. national security strategy during this era; a climate that seemingly placed low priority on national security and the threats from terrorism. This was further highlighted in the Washington Times when it noted that in the Commission's forty five thousand word document submitted to Congress on terrorism, no mention was made of Al Qaeda,

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jake Tapper, "We Predicted It; a Bipartisan Commission Warned the White House and Congress that a bloody attack on U.S. soil could be imminent. Why didn't anyone listen?" Salon.com, September 12, 2001, <http://www.salon.com/politics/feature/2001/09/12/bush/> (accessed March 6, 2010).

and Osama Bin Laden was referred to by name only four times.¹⁴ One could conclude, therefore, that the Clinton administration's actions in tackling the threats from terrorism, even after several attacks on American interests, aptly portrays the sentiments that prevailed in America during the pre 9/11 era.

Like the Clinton administration, President George W. Bush's White House has also been criticized for its slow approach to overhauling the U.S. National Security Strategy prior to 9/11. It has been noted that prior to the 9/11 tragedy, both co-chairs of the USCNS/21, Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, lobbied for the White House to devote more attention to the "imminent threats of terrorism." Instead, according to Hart and Rudman, the Bush administration "failed to embrace any of the recommendations" pertaining to preventing terrorism that were presented earlier that year. Despite Hart and Rudman's pleas, the Bush administration insisted on putting aside the USCNS/21 recommendations, and embarked upon its own mission, and in May 2002, President Bush announced his plan to assign Vice President Dick Cheney to supervise the development of a national counter-terrorism plan.¹⁵ Such actions by the President only further delayed the implementation of a national security strategy. Moreover, it points to yet another administration's failure to recognize the urgent need to formulate a national security strategy to effectively protect the homeland.

It is quite apparent that during the pre 9/11 era, United States government officials failed to grasp the imminent threat terror organizations presented to U.S. national

¹⁴ "Al Qaeda Absent from Final Clinton Report," *Washington Times*, April 6, 2004, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/apr/6/20040406-121654-1495r/> (accessed October 15, 2009).

¹⁵ Tapper, "We predicted It; a Bipartisan Commission Warned the White House and Congress That a Bloody Attack on U.S. Soil Could be Imminent. Why Didn't Anyone Listen?"

security. As a result, the government placed low priority on fighting terrorism. In fact, before 9/11 there was no single government agency in charge of securing the homeland, and the government was in no hurry in creating one. However, this would later change, when in the aftermath of 9/11 President Bush created the Department of Homeland Security. What was noticeably of higher precedence, during this earlier period was the defeating one of America's greatest menace: drugs.

Pre 9/11 Drug Strategies

According to William Walker, the history of America's drug problem and the WOD is not a new phenomenon. It has been documented that as early as the 1600s the British brought marijuana plants to America, which remained a cash crop up until the Civil War.¹⁶ One scholar, Edward Brecher, notes that at the end of the nineteenth century America had become "a dope fiend paradise," where not only was marijuana widely used, but also heroin was easily accessible via department store catalogs such as Sears Roebuck.¹⁷ Throughout the years, Americans have continued to use some form of illegal drugs, be it heroin, marijuana or cocaine, and the government has been in constant conflict against an enemy so impossible to conquer.¹⁸ This clash over the sale and use of illicit drugs has been aggressively fought over several administrations in what came to be known as, at least in the pre 9/11 era, the "War on Drugs." This war has been fought vigorously spanning several administrations, each with the ultimate goal of eradicating drugs in America.

¹⁶ William O. Walker III, *Drug Control Policy: Essays in Historical & Comparative Perspective*, (The Pennsylvania University, 1992), 8.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

As early as the 1960s America's insatiable appetite for drugs prompted President Richard Nixon to identify drug abuse as a "serious national threat," and in 1971 he referred to drugs as "public enemy number one."¹⁹ In 1973 Nixon declared war on this great enemy and created the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to deal with America's growing drug problem.²⁰ Since the creation of the Office of National Drug Control Strategy, six different administrations have presented the nation with nineteen different drug control strategies, and thousands of public and private sector stakeholders have been consulted on how to improve and redefine drug control efforts. Hence, since Nixon's declaration, America's drug war has undergone extensive overhaul as each new administration either presented new initiatives or modified existing ones to fight the WOD.

In the 1980s President Reagan followed Nixon's aggressive lead and also declared war on drugs. With the Cold War coming to an end, the United States no longer perceived Eastern Europe as a threat. President Reagan then focused his attention on the drug peril and declared illicit drugs a national security threat.²¹ During this time several initiatives were implemented and millions of dollars were spent to fight the drugs.²² One of Reagan's more forceful actions against illicit drugs was the creation of a cabinet-level task force, led by then Vice President George H.W. Bush (Vice President's Task Force

¹⁹ National Public Radio, "Timeline Americas War on Drugs," <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9252490> , (accessed March 6, 2010).

²⁰ U.S. General Accounting Office, *DEA Strategies and Operations in the 1990s*, www.gao.gov/archive/1999/gg99108.pdf (accessed March 5, 2010).

²¹ Coletta A. Youngers, and Eileen Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2004), 3.

²² Leif Rosenberger, *America's Drug War Debacle*, (Aldershot, Hants, England: Avebury, 1996), 26.

on South Florida), to combat the drug crisis created by the Columbian drug cartels in South Florida. The task force combined agents from the DEA, United States Customs Service (USCS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Army and Navy to mobilize against drug Columbian drug traffickers.²³ In addition, the 1989 National Defense Authorization Act designated the Department of Defense as the lead agency for the detecting and monitoring aerial and maritime traffic attempting to bring drugs into the United States; this led to the creation of the Joint Task Force, which later became the Joint Interagency Task Force – South (JIATF-S) in 1994.²⁴ As a result of these initiatives, Columbian drug cartels were forced to seek alternate transshipment entry zones for drugs destined for the U.S., a move that later led to the Southwest Border crisis.

In addition to the South Florida task force, Reagan also created other regional task forces throughout the country. One such task force was the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, HIDTA, instituted in the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1988.²⁵ This task force was initiated by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to provide Federal assistance to areas that were the center of illegal drug production, manufacturing, importation, or distribution in order to disrupt major channels of drug distribution in the

²³ Public Broadcast Service, “Thirty Years of America Drug Wars,” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/cron/> (accessed March 5, 2010).

²⁴ “JIATF-S: Blueprint for success,” *Government Industry*, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0KNN/is_42/ai_n16609366/ (accessed February 22, 1010).

²⁵ Patrick Murphy, *Improving Anti-Drug Budgeting*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2007, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2007/MR1262.pdf (accessed March 29, 2010).

U.S.²⁶ The ONDCP's primary goal was to reduce the demand for drugs through treatment and prevention, and increased focus on source countries to identify smuggling modes and routes. HIDTA was one of ONDCP's attempts at reducing drug production and dismantling criminal enterprises responsible for the drug supply and increased money laundering.

In 1986, Reagan also implemented another key strategy in the WOD when he tailored the Posse Comitatus Act of 1876 making it easier for the military to assist in the drug effort. Whereas the previous Act prohibited the Department of Defense (DoD) from carrying out domestic law enforcement duties, with Reagan's modification, the new AntiDrug Abuse Act of 1986 granted the Department of Defense the authority to aid federal law enforcement officers in the areas of counter-drug cooperation/operations.²⁷ Utilizing America's military to combat drugs not only indicated the seriousness of the drug threat, but also such actions points directly to the high precedence the Reagan administration placed on fighting the WOD.

Like Reagan, President H.W. Bush also took aggressive measures against the drug war when he labeled illicit drugs a "direct threat to the sovereignty and security of our country."²⁸ In efforts to combat drugs, in 1988 President Bush appointed America's first

²⁶ "Assessment of the HIDTA Program, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, June 30, 2001," <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/194118.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2010).

²⁷ Office of National Drug Control Strategy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1986), 1.

²⁸ Peter Dale Scott, and Jonathan Marshall, "Cocaine Politics Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America," <http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=6829> (accessed November 5, 2009), 2.

Drug Czar, William Bennett, who vowed to put an end to the drug scourge.²⁹ The creation of the ONDCP under President Reagan and later the appointment of a Drug Czar was yet another crucial step in making the WOD a number one priority for the United States government during the pre 9/11 years. Like his predecessor, President Bush also increased funding for the WOD. In 1991, for instance, President Bush's total drug budget of an estimated \$11 billion made it one of the largest government programs.

Another strategy that the Bush administration initiated and which was continued through the Clinton years is the Andean Strategy. The Andean Strategy was developed and implemented in 1989, as part of President's Bush's National Drug Control Strategy, and was intended to stem the flow of cocaine into the United States. The goal of the strategy was to reduce drug production and trafficking in principle against cocaine source countries like Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.³⁰ In addition to reducing the cocaine flow into the United States, the key tenets of the strategy were to strengthen the capability and effectiveness of these countries to disrupt and dismantle the trafficking organizations. The Andean Strategy provided funding, military and economic assistance, law enforcement, and support from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.³¹

In addition to continuing Bush's drug strategies, President Clinton also implemented new measures to combat drugs. His administration particularly aimed at dismantling drug cartels and their ability to export drugs to America. In 1994, President

²⁹ William O. Walker, *Drug Control Policy: Essays in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 1.

³⁰ U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Andean Initiative: Objectives and Support*, March 1994, <http://www.cbo.gov/doc.cfm?index=4885&type=0> (accessed February 10, 2010).

³¹ *Ibid.*

Clinton identified international narcotics control as a major U.S. foreign policy objective and mandated that the Department of State and other agencies work together to respond to the international narcotics problem. He highlighted a new strategy that stressed greater multilateral efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and making them more effective in fighting international trafficking syndicates. Clinton utilized the International Emergency Powers Act to freeze drug cartel members assets in the United States; he spent millions of dollars in assistance to source countries such as Peru, Columbia, and Bolivia; and in 1993 issued the Presidential Decision Directive 14, “The Andean Strategy,” which continued to target narcotic production in the Andean Region of South America.³²

In 1999, President Clinton signed into law the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act, which allows the President to designate individuals and corporations as drug traffickers, freezing foreign bank accounts and penalizing people for doing business with them.³³ Clinton’s administration also implemented Plan Columbia, an initiative designed to eradicate coca cultivation and heroin production in Columbia through widespread spraying, as well as military and economic support to the Columbian government. In 1995, the Clinton administration requested \$13.2 billion for drug control efforts, a one billion dollar increase over 1994.³⁴ In fiscal year (FY) 2000 the Federal drug control

³² U.S. Congress, Senate, *Andean Drug Initiative: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and International Operations*, 102d Congress, 2d Session, February 20, 1992, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 7-8.

³³ U.S Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control, *The Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act*, <http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/programs/narco/drugs.pdf> (accessed February 21, 2010).

³⁴ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1994), 1.

spending increased to approximately \$18.5 billion compared to an estimated \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 1981. This number is quite an increase over the \$65 million spent on the WOD during the Nixon era.³⁵ During his administration, Clinton also targeted the Southwest Border Region by budgeting an additional 657 Customs staff and 105 Border Patrol officers to reduce the flow of drugs into the United States along this region.³⁶ These actions indicate that in the years preceding 9/11 the United States government fought vigorously to eradicate drugs.

Though the successes of America's War on Drugs have been debatable, it is undeniable that drug was a primary concern for the United States government in the years preceding 9/11. From Nixon's declaration of drugs as "public enemy number one" to President Clinton's various initiatives, the United States government's fight against illicit drugs has been unyielding. During the pre 9/11 era the United States government implemented several anti drug strategies and spent billions of dollars in this effort. Equally instrumental in the drug war efforts during this period were the various government agencies responsible for carrying out the strategies designed to eradicate or reduce the supply and demand of drugs in the United States.

³⁵ John Carnevale and Patrick Murphy, "Matching Rhetoric to Dollars: Twenty-Five Years of Federal Drug Strategies and Drug Budgets," *Journal of Drug Issues*, Vol. 29, Iss.2, (Tallahassee, 1999), 8.

³⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1996), 64.

Roles and Responsibilities of Government Agencies in Combating the War on Drugs

Throughout the years preceding 9/11, multiple government agencies such as the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), United States Customs Service (USCS), United States Coast Guard (USCG), Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) worked vigorously to combat the WOD, especially in source countries in the regions of South America, and the various transshipment zones in the Caribbean and the United States-Mexico Border. Though these agencies performed varying roles, and at times worked “across purpose,” their primary mission in the drug interdiction effort was to strengthen the U.S. borders by improving detection and interception of illicit drugs.³⁷ The lead agency in this cause was the DEA.

As previously mentioned the DEA was created under President Nixon’s administration to coordinate all federal efforts related to drug enforcement outside the Justice Department, especially the gathering of intelligence on international narcotics smuggling.³⁸ The DEA’s main goal prior to 9/11 included: investigating major drug traffickers operating at interstate and international levels and criminals and drug gangs; coordinating and cooperating with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies on mutual drug enforcement efforts; managing a national drug intelligence system; seizing and forfeiting drug traffickers’ assets; and working on drug law enforcement programs

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ U.S. General Accounting Office, *DEA Strategies and Operations in the 1990s*, <http://www.gao.gov/archive/1999/gg99108.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2010).

with its counterparts in foreign countries.³⁹ In essence, the DEA was a “superagency” designed to enforce and regulate drug laws, and to bring traffickers to justice.

Since its creation in 1973, the DEA has had constant increases in funding and personnel. In its first year of operation, for instance, the DEA operated with 1,470 Special Agents and a budget of \$74.9 million. In 1990 the DEA drug control funding was \$548.4 million, and employed 2,504 Special Agents assigned to fighting the WOD.⁴⁰ For FY 2001, just prior to the 9/11 tragedies, the DEA drug control funding was \$1.605 billion.⁴¹ The DEA implemented several initiatives to combat illicit drugs at home and abroad. In 1992 DEA instituted the Kingpin Strategy to attack the drug organizations by restricting access to the chemicals needed to process the drugs, their finances, transportation, communications, and leadership infrastructure here in the United States. The program was quite effective in intercepting drugs and taking down major drug trafficking rings.⁴²

Another key agency in America’s WOD is the United States Customs Service (USCS). Prior to 9/11, the USCS was (the primary border enforcement agency) and responsible for controlling, regulating and facilitating the movement of carriers, persons,

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1991), 23-24.

⁴¹ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2002).

⁴² U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *A Tradition of Excellence, 1973-2003*, http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/history/history_part1.pdf, (accessed March 5, 2010)

and commodities at the port of entries between the U.S. and other nations.⁴³ In fact, during the 1980s, President Reagan's administration instructed the USCS to make drug interdiction a top priority. Hence, the administration increased the resource for USCS to expand operations, which included new facilities, and extended authority to investigate and inspect suspected drug smugglers.⁴⁴ The USCS employed several strategies such as the Organization Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) to combat drugs and to bring drug traffickers to justice.

Created in 1982, the OCDETF is a federal multi-agency task force designed to identify, investigate, and prosecute criminal enterprises engaged in high-level drug trafficking and related enterprises.⁴⁵ This task force operates in coordination with the United States Attorney's Office. Customs OCDETF Coordinators work in collaboration with other federal law enforcement agencies, as well as Chiefs of Police and State Attorneys. Customs Coordinators also actively participate in highly complex OCDETF investigations targeting major drug smuggling organizations.

Like other government initiatives, the OCDETF received increased funding, and prior to the 9/11 tragedies the president requested approximately \$316 million for OCDETF for fiscal year 2000. The USCS drug budget has also shown constant increase in the pre 9/11 era as well. In 1990 for example, the USCS drug operation budget was \$664.9 million and employed 1,034 special agents. In 2001, just prior to 9/11, the USCS

⁴³ U.S. Congress, House, *Drug Trafficking on the Southwest Border: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 107th Cong., 1st sess., March 29, 2001, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001).

⁴⁴ John Carnevale and Patrick Murphy, "Matching Rhetoric to Dollars: Twenty-Five Years of Federal Drug Strategies and Drug Budgets," 5.

⁴⁵ Assessment of the HIDTA Program, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, June 30, 2001, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/194118.pdf>, (accessed March 5, 2010).

drug budget was \$707 million, with 5,244 special agents.⁴⁶ These steady increases in funding, indicates that the WOD has certainly been a primary concern for the U.S. government even during the months preceding the 9/11 tragedies.

The United States government also increased funding for the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). As the lead agency for maritime drug interdiction, the USCG plays a key role in the WOD, and received a sizable increase in funding to carry out its mission. According to the 1991 National Drug Control Strategy, the USCG national drug control budget in 1991 was \$665 million of which \$661 was allocated to drug interdiction, and employed 4,645 civilians to fight the WOD.⁴⁷ In fiscal year 2000 the budget was increased to \$4.26 billion and \$4.73 billion in 2001.⁴⁸

Funding for the FBI to combat drugs was also an instrumental component of America's drug war strategy. Prior to 9/11 the FBI targeted major "multi-jurisdictional" drug trafficking organizations to dismantle their operations, forfeit their assets, and bring drug dealers to justice, although the FBI's primary responsibility was not drug trafficking investigation. The FBI also received constant funding for its drug war efforts. For instance, the National Drug Control Strategy indicates that in 1990 the FBI had a drug control budget of \$138.7 million. The budget was increased to 707.5 million in fiscal year 2001, again indicating the FBI received constant funding for its drug war efforts.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2002).

⁴⁷ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Budget Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 1991).

⁴⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy, *National Drug Control Strategy Summary*, (Washington, DC: Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2002).

⁴⁹ Ibid.

It is quite apparent that prior to 9/11 the United States government utilized various strategies and agencies to combat the illicit drug trade. Despite these efforts, however, the Mexican DTOs continued to be a strong force in smuggling narcotics into the U.S. In a congressional hearing in March of 2001, DEA administrator Donnie Marshall stated that during his 30 years of experience, the DTOs have always been a force, and have become more predominant in the market because of the Colombian cartels contracting their dirty work (transportation) to the Mexican DTO in order to reach more U.S. drug markets.⁵⁰ He also indicated that he believed that 62-63 percent of drugs were entering the U.S. at the SWB and that the organizations posed an increasing threat to the national security of the U.S., “with its voluminous amount of drugs, violent crime, and associated corruption of public officials in Mexico.”⁵¹ Pre/911 SWB enforcement efforts, therefore, focused on the utilization of advanced technology, intelligence gathering, and investigative operations as a more effective and comprehensive response to the innovative, and resilient drug trafficking organizations that threaten the SWB of the United States. According to statistics from the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) in CY-2000, authorities seized 17,660 kilograms of cocaine, 619 kilograms of heroin, 1,645 kilograms of methamphetamine, and 998,180 kilograms of marijuana along the U.S./Mexico Border.⁵²

Likewise, the agencies were instrumental in seizing millions of dollars from the illicit drug sales destined for Mexico. According to a Congressional hearing on the

⁵⁰ U.S. Congress, House, *Drug Trafficking on the Southwest Border: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess., March 29, 2001, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001).

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid

Southwest border, prior to 9/11, the Mexico government changed its currency reporting regulations to mirror that of the U.S., which requires the reporting of \$10,000 U.S. equivalent or more into or out of Mexico. This change greatly enhanced U.S. efforts to interdict money being exported to Mexico via the SWB.⁵³ The following chart indicates U.S. Customs seizures of unreported currency bound for Mexico prior to 9/11:

Table 1: Customs seizures of unreported currency bound for Mexico prior to 9/11⁵⁴

Fiscal Year	1998	\$14,466,186
Fiscal Year	1999	\$16,542,761
Fiscal Year	2000	\$17,089,183

Despite efforts to combat drug problems during the 1980s and 1990s, the United States found itself battling two wars in the wake of the 9/11 catastrophic events: the WOD and the OCO. As America continued to battle the production, sale and consumption of illicit drugs, it also sought to demonstrate the link between illicit drugs and terrorism. Consequently, the war on drugs took on a new name: narcoterrorism. As previously stated, narcoterrorism was coined to describe the utilization of the coca and poppy cash crops in supporting those “designated terrorist organizations” that seek to destroy the United States.⁵⁵ Though there are two types of narcoterrorism, narco-driven terrorists and narco-supported terrorists, the United States government focuses primarily

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Steven L. Taylor, “When Wars Collide: The War on Drugs and the Global War on Terror,” *Strategic Insights*, Volume IV, Iss.6, (June 2005).

on the latter. According to the U.S. government, narco-supported terrorist organizations benefit from or use drug trafficking to further individual or group terrorist activities.⁵⁶ With the new focus on narcoterrorism, specifically narco-supported terrorists, the WOD took on a new direction and resources, policies and manpower were realigned to fight with this “new war.” What, if any, were the effects of this new approach on the WOD especially as it relates to the Southwest Border Region?

⁵⁶ U.S. Joint Counterdrug Operations, Joint Pub, 3-07.4, (Washington, DC, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS50022> (accessed November 10, 2009), I-20.

CHAPTER 2

Post 9/11 Terrorism and Drug Strategies

Post 9/11 Terrorism Strategy

As previously stated, approximately 3,000 people were killed on September 11, 2001, when four hijacked airliners crashed into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington and a field in Pennsylvania and changed Americans perception of terrorism profoundly. Not only did the terrorists succeed in their missions, but also their actions further damaged the U.S. economy, which was already in decline.¹ President Bush's reaction was to declare the attacks as "war" rather than a criminal act and cast states that harbor or assisted terrorist as terrorist themselves, as he attempted to garner help from the international community.² The U.S. rhetoric was that you are either with us or against us, and America called on global partners to promote democratic ideas and help fight the Global War on Terror (GWOT).³

The GWOT and the U.S. rhetoric sounded familiar to what so many previous presidents alluded to as "War on Drugs." President Bush also initiated the "Bush Doctrine" which included four key elements: preventive war, confronting the nexus of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and catastrophic terrorism, "regime change" for

¹ Julianne Smith and Thomas Sanderson, *Five Years After 9/11: An Assessment of America's War on Terror*, (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006), 7.

² Mary Buckley and Robert Singh, *The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism: Global Responses, Global Consequences*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 17.

³ Smith and Sanderson, *Five Years After 9/11: An Assessment of America's War on Terror*, 7.

“rogue states,” and democracy promotion.⁴ Key elements of the Bush Doctrine were later incorporated in the 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS represents the U.S. attempt to codify a broad foreign policy approach in a single document, as well as “a succinct and clear statement of the [Bush] doctrine in its multifaceted dimensions.”⁵ The 2002 NSS also addresses concern over the changing security climate in America and the need to implement new ideas to combat terrorist challenges in the wake of 9/11, “pre-emptive actions.”⁶

In addition to the 2002 NSS, the Bush administration developed and published several other strategies to form a more cohesive and comprehensive framework to combat terrorism. The strategies include: National Strategy for Homeland Security, 2002; National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT), 2003; National Military Strategy of the United States, 1997;⁷ National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, 2002; National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Money Laundering Strategy, 2002; National Strategy to secure Cyberspace, 2003; National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets, 2003; National Drug Control Strategy, 2002.⁸ The 2003 NSCT, founded on the 4D strategy (Defeat, Deny, Diminish and Defend), calls for defeating terrorist organizations of global

⁴ Buckley and Singh, *The Bush Doctrine and the War on Terrorism: Global Responses, Global Consequences*, 12.

⁵ *Ibid*, 12.

⁶ *Ibid*, 153.

⁷ Though not created by the Bush Administration, the National Military of the U.S., 1997 was also incorporated into President Bush’s comprehensive framework for combating terrorism. For further reading see the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, 2003.

⁸ U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 2003.

reach through the direct or indirect use of diplomatic, economic, information, law enforcement, military, financial, intelligence, and other instruments of power.⁹ During his presidency, Bush also signed into law the U.S. Patriot Act, which provided broad new powers to various agencies of the federal government, particularly in the area of intelligence gathering.¹⁰ The United States also made notable strides in its anti-terrorism policy when it created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC).¹¹

After the 9/11 attacks domestic security became a priority for the Bush Administration, and under Executive Order 13228 President Bush created the Homeland Security Council (HSC) and the Department of Homeland Security.¹² As an advisory group within the White House, the HSC's mission is to assess objectives, commitments, and risks of the United States, and make recommendations to the President with respect to homeland security policy. According to a New York Times report in March 2009, since taking office the Obama administration saw no need to keep the agencies separate and brought the HSC into the NSC fold to address homeland security threats such as organized crime and narco-trafficking.¹³ DHS is primarily responsible for managing the

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Michael W. Ritz, Ralph G. Hensley, and James C. Whitmire, *The Homeland Security Papers Stemming the Tide of Terror*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, USAF Counterproliferation Center, 2004, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS57123>, (accessed February 16, 2010), 163.

¹¹ Smith and Sanderson, *Five Years After 9/11: An Assessment of America's War on Terror*, 16

¹² Ibid, 9.

¹³ Helen Cooper, "In Security Shuffle, White House Merges Staffs," May 26, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/us/27homeland.html> (accessed March 6, 2010).

sharing and analysis of intelligence among federal government homeland security stakeholders.

The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) was also created under the Homeland Security Act for bridging the gap between CIA, FBI, and other intelligence community players, thus addressing one of the major contributing factors of the 9/11 attacks, sharing intelligence.¹⁴ However, as recent as December 25, 2009, the attempted terrorism plot to blow up a Delta airline jet flying from Amsterdam to Detroit reveals that the U.S. law enforcement and intelligence community have a long way to go in improving information sharing to stay ahead of terrorist organizations.¹⁵

Nonetheless, to combat the new threats to commercial air travel Congress, under the Transportation and Security Act of 2001, created the Transportation Security Administration and strengthened the Federal Air Marshals program.¹⁶ The TSA's primary mission is to protect America's transportation systems, look for bombs at checkpoints in airports, inspect rail cars, and patrol subways with other law enforcement partners. Under TSA, the government also federalized security screenings at all airports and air terminals, and hired about 60,000 employees to take over passenger and baggage screenings from private companies. The government also implemented the Federal Air Marshals Program with armed air marshals, armed pilots and barricaded cockpit doors on airplanes.¹⁷ It should be noted that despite all the changes in commercial aviation

¹⁴ Smith and Sanderson, *Five Years After 9/11, An Assessment of America's War on Terror*, 21.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland*, (Washington, DC, February 2010), 1.

¹⁶ Smith and Sanderson, *Five Years After 9/11, An Assessment of America's War on Terror*, 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 18.

security, TSA has been criticized for screening less than 15% of the cargo in the belly of commercial airlines for explosives. Additionally the TSA does not have sufficient body scanners in place at various airports to identify explosives on passengers.¹⁸

The post 9/11 era witnesses a massive overhaul of U.S. National Security Strategy as it relates to terrorism, a move that has surpassed any previous rearrangement of government policies and agencies. The transition would also undermine other ongoing policies, such as the WOD efforts, that had hitherto been a number one priority for the U.S. government. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 tasked DHS with many responsibilities: preventing terrorist attacks within the United States, reducing the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism, minimizing the damage from attacks and assisting in the recovery from terrorist attacks that occur within the United States. The Act also created an important task for DHS in monitoring the connection between illegal drugs trafficking and terrorism (narcoterrorism) while coordinating efforts to sever such connections and interdicting illegal drug trafficking.¹⁹ Much of this effort, though, was focused on South and Southwest Asia where terror groups utilize funds from illegal drug trade to finance their activities. As a result, the Southwest Border Region continues to be a hotbed for crime and drug trafficking as Mexican DTOs, at least in the years subsequent to 9/11, continue to exercise dominance over the drug trade and instill fear the hearts of many.

¹⁸ Ibid. 17.

¹⁹ Office of Management and Budget, The Executive Office of the President, *Department of Homeland Security*, Washington, DC, 2004, www.whitehouse.gov/omb/rewrite/budget/fy2004/homeland.html (accessed September 27, 2009).

Post 9/11 U.S. Drug Strategies on the SW Border

*Economic freedom is a moral imperative. The liberty to create and build or to buy, sell, and own property is fundamental to human nature and foundational to a free society... It expands the free flow of ideas; with increased trade and foreign investment comes exposure to new ways of thinking and living....*²⁰

Globalization has offered unprecedented opportunities for the Mexican DTOs along the U.S./Mexican border to conduct their illegal activities. While it is true that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provided immense economic benefits for Mexico, it has also had the unintended consequences of increasing the opportunities for DTOs to smuggle illicit drugs into the U.S. According to testimonies before the Congressional Committee on Crime, the Southwest Border Region is the primary point of entry for people and merchandise entering the U.S. from Mexico and many South American countries, as well as an overwhelming amount of the drugs that crosses the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border.²¹ Due to the trade opportunities facilitated through NAFTA, the Southwest Border presents numerous challenges to the WOD efforts as illicit drugs from South America are easily smuggled across the Mexico-U.S. border within legitimate shipping containers or packages. Adding to the NAFTA phenomena

²⁰ Executive Office of the President, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, 1990).

²¹ U.S. Congress, House, *Drug Trafficking on the Southwest Border: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess., March 29, 2001, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001), 23.

are the hundreds of miles of open desert, rugged mountains, the Rio Grande and other physical factors that make it easy to smuggle drugs into the U.S.²²

According to the Justice Department, the Southwest Border Region is the most significant national-level storage, transportation and transshipment area for illicit drug shipments destined for drug markets throughout the United States.²³ It is estimated that ninety percent of the cocaine entering the United States transits through Mexico. In fact, the Southwest region boasts more seizures of illicit drugs than any other arrival zones in the United States. Furthermore, the Justice Department has noted that the Mexican DTOs have established and maintained influence in the region through sophisticated and expansive drug trafficking networks stretching from the Southwest border to various regions in the United States.²⁴ The Mexican DTOs activities in the region have already undermined Mexico's security and stability, and if left unchecked, could present serious threats to the United States national security.

The drug war along the Southwest Border Region has been fought over many decades, and many critics have argued it is a failed war. The statistics on drug the seizures and price of drugs, for instance, indicates that very little has changed since Nixon declared war on drugs in the 1970s. Specifically, the price of illicit drugs has decreased, which many critics have linked to the wide availability of drugs on the streets. Also despite the U.S. government's efforts, large amounts of illicit drugs continue to make its way into the U.S. via the porous U.S. Mexico border. Hence, in the wake of

²² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Assistance Has Helped Mexican Counternarcotics Efforts, But the Flow of Illicit Drugs into the United States Remains High*, (Washington, DC, 2007).

²³ Southwest Border Region—Drug Transportation and Homeland Security Issues. www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs25/25921/dtos.htm last accessed 31 March 2010.

²⁴ Ibid.

9/11, the U.S. government has taken on a new approach to combat the WOD by incorporating the drug war with the OCO under the new name, narcoterrorism.

Narcoterrorism is defined as the method employed by drug traffickers who use terrorist tactics against noncombatants to further their political agenda and protect their drug trade. There are two types of narco-terrorist that are linked to the drug trade; narco-driven terrorist and narco-supported terrorist.²⁵ Narco-driven terrorists are drug traffickers who conduct terrorism to further their drug trafficking as is commonly exhibited by the Mexican DTOs. Narco-supported terrorists, on the other hand, are terrorist who benefit from or use drug trafficking to further individual or group terrorist activities and is commonly displayed with such terrorist groups as Al Qaeda.

Narcoterrorism is indicative of the U.S. government shift from a pure WOD that dominated the pre 9/11 era to one that is now embedded in a bigger war, the OCO. This transition has yielded somewhat mixed results for the WOD on the Southwest Border Region.

One of effects of the new focus on narcoterrorism is that the U.S. government has enacted new policies to combat drugs on the Southwest Border. On June 5, 2009 the Obama Administration and the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released the 2009 National Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy (NSWBCS). This strategy outlines the Administration's collective approach to stem the flow of illegal drugs and their illicit proceeds across the SWB, as well as to reduce drug related crime and violence in the region. Under the NSWBCS Federal agencies are directed to increase coordination

²⁵ U.S. Joint Counterdrug Operations, Joint Pub, 3-07.4, (Washington, DC, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998, <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS50022> (accessed November 10, 2009), I-20.

and information sharing with state and local law enforcement agencies, and to intensify national efforts to interdict the southbound flow of weapons and bulk currency destined for Mexico. The policy also calls for continued close collaboration with the government of Mexico in its efforts against drug cartels.²⁶

Prior to the NSWBCS the U.S. government had made strides in fighting drugs in the region. For example, drug expenditure for the SWB Region indicates that since 9/11 there has been a steady increase in funding for the WOD drugs efforts. In particular, the overall funding for the Southwest Border and Andean Region of Latin America has increased and new initiatives, most notably the Merida Initiative, have been implemented. Started under President George W. Bush, the Merida Initiative provides the Mexican government (as well as some Central American and Caribbean states) assistance with law enforcement through monetary aid (over \$1.5 billion over three years in equipment such as helicopters and communications technology) and training to military, police and government officials.²⁷ The Merida Initiative primary objective is to strengthen cooperation and build trust among countries in the region to better combat drug trafficking and organized crime.²⁸ According to Andrew Selee, the Merida Initiative is a central element in the growing cooperation between the United States and Mexico to

²⁶ Kumar C. Kibble, speaking for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, “Combating Border Violence: The Role of Interagency Coordination in Investigations,” on July 16, 2009, before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism, *111th Cong.*, 1st sess.

²⁷ Clare Ribando Seelke, *Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues*, (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009).

²⁸ Seelke, *Meridia Initiative*.

address the security threats presented by the Mexican DTOs.²⁹ To date, the Obama administration has decided to continue with the Merida initiative and on June 25, 2009 Obama signed into law a Supplemental Appropriations Act that includes \$420 million in funding for the Merida Initiative in Mexico.³⁰

Since 9/11 the United States Congress has approved millions of dollars in funding for Mexico and the Southwest Border Region. The United States counter-drug aid for Mexico has shown that since 2001 this region has received a steady increase in funding, particularly in military and police assistance through the Merida Initiative.³¹ President Bush continued to thrust more funding into Plan Columbia that started during President Clinton administration. Although the new initiatives lend financial support to the Mexican government, a GAO report notes that government stove-piping has impeded the disbursement of funds to the region. Of the \$1.5 billion in appropriated funds for the Merida Initiative for instance, as of September 30, 2009, only 2 percent or \$26 million has been expended.³² The new initiatives, nonetheless, play a vital role in the United States efforts to reduce the supply of drugs entering the country via the Southwest Border. The program also strengthens the United States and Mexico's efforts in combating the illegal drugs trade, and to defeat the Mexican DTOs, their prevalence, and their criminal activities in the region.

²⁹ Andrew Selee, *Overview of the Merida Initiative*, (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2008) <http://www.wilsoncenter.org> (accessed January 20, 2010).

³⁰ Embassy of United States, Mexico, "President Obama Signs Supplemental Budget, Increasing Merida Initiative Funding for Mexico to \$1.12 Billion," June 25, 2009, http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/eng/releases/ep090626_Merida.html (accessed January 20, 2010).

³¹ Youngers and Rosin, *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of U.S. Policy*, 273.

³² U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Status of Funds for the Merida Initiative*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009), 8.

Other initiatives that have been implemented since 9/11 are “Armas Cruzadas” and “Project Gunrunner.” There is no question that over the years the Mexican DTOs have become heavily armed and are a force to be reckoned with. For this reason, to stem the flow of arms into Mexico from the U.S., the DHS has implemented “Armas Cruzadas,” a bilateral law enforcement and intelligence-sharing operation. Since its inception in June 2008, operation Armas Cruzadas has seized 1,600 weapons, more than \$6.4 million in cash, and 182,668 rounds of ammunition, and arrested 395 individuals on criminal charges.³³ Likewise, firearm trafficking has been the focus of Project Gunrunner. Implemented by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Agency, “Project Gunrunner” utilizes investigative, intelligence and training resources to suppress firearms trafficking to Mexico, thereby dismantling the Mexican DTO’s ability to carry out terror in the region. These operations further point to the nature of challenges from organized crime confronting the U.S. and Mexico, and the successful law enforcement efforts to cripple the DTOs and their ability to inflict terror in the region.³⁴

Although the U.S. government has implemented several policies to combat drugs on the SWB Region since 9/11, the Mexican DTOs continue to be a major force in the region. As previously mentioned, their success stems from the outsourcing to them of the drug trade from the Columbian drug cartels. During the late 1980's and early 1990's, Columbian drug trafficking routes in South Florida and the Caribbean were substantially restricted by successful U.S. law enforcement efforts. Unfortunately, one of the effects of that success was to make the U.S.-Mexico border more attractive for smuggling

³³ Kibble, “Combating Border Violence.”

³⁴ Ibid.

marijuana, cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. Since then, despite the United States support to Mexico, the DTOs have maintained dominance over the illegal drug trade, and the SWB continues to be a major transshipment point for drugs destined for the U.S.. The following chart depicts the prevalence of illicit drugs along the Southwest Border Region in the post 9/11 era:³⁵

Table 2: Cocaine Seizures in the U.S. Arrival Zone, in Metric Tons, 2001-2005

Arrival Zone Area	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Southwest Border	20	23	15	20	23
Puerto Rico/U.S. Virgin Islands	6	2	8	7	4
U.S. East Coast	11	9	9	5	4
U.S. Other	0	0	0	3	0

Source: Interagency Assessment of Cocaine Movement.³⁶

As the chart indicates, the Southwest Border region continues to be the leading source for illicit drug activities boasting more drug seizures than any other arrival zones in the U.S.. Statistics show that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers assigned to the southern border seized more than \$40 million in illicit cash from mid-March through the end of September 2009, nearly double the amount intercepted during the same period in fiscal year 2008. The bulk of those seizures involved cash that was ultimately destined for Mexico.

³⁵ Liana Wyler, *International Drug Control Policy*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 23, 2008), 13.

³⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, *National Drug Threat Assessment 2007*, <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs38/38661/swb.htm#Top> (accessed February 21, 2010).

Combating the drug war is becoming increasingly difficult especially since federal law enforcement agencies have been reprioritized to fulfill Homeland Security mission. According to an *Issue Brief for Congress* report, since 9/11 the FBI reorganization has shifted 518 field agents from such activities as drug investigations to counterterrorism, and plans to reduce the number of special agents involved in drug investigations. Likewise, the U.S. Customs Service, Coast Guard, and other federal agencies have undergone mission change from drug investigations to counterterrorism.³⁷

Since 9/11 the U.S. government has drastically changed its outlook on threats from terror groups and has taken major steps to combat those threats. This shift in priority has indeed hampered the efforts on the drug war on the Southwest Border Region. What has ensued is the merger of two wars that should be fought separately. As Gary Fisher, former ONDCP employer, points out while it is true that terrorist organizations use the illegal drug trade to fund their cause, the illicit drugs that enters the United States primarily comes from South America and Central America and not from Southeast or Southwest Asia where the focus of terrorist activities are formulated.³⁸ Why then are valuable resources essential to fighting the WOD being reallocated to fight drug production in Asia, while the Mexican DTOs and their expansive drug network continues to cause m  le in America's backyard?

Who are the Mexican DTOs?

³⁷ U.S. Congress, Domestic Social Policy Division, *War on Drugs: Legislation in the 108th Congress and Related Developments*, (Washington, DC, April 4, 2003), 8-9.

³⁸ Gary L. Fisher, *Rethinking Our War on Drugs: Candid Talk about Controversial Issues*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 165.

In the mid 1980s President Reagan launched the South Florida Drug Task Force to combat threats from the Columbian drug cartels in South Florida. The success of the initiative led the Columbian drug cartels to seek an alternate route for smuggling drugs into the United States. According to John Walsh, Senior Associate for the Andes and Drug Policy, Mexico's location, its close ties to the United States, coupled with the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), made it advantageous for smugglers to transport drugs into the United States.³⁹ Hence, since the demise of the Columbian cartels in South Florida, not only has Mexico become a major producer and transit country for illicit drugs, but also Mexican drug cartels have dominated the drug trade in Mexico and the United States.⁴⁰ A CRS Report for Congress notes that currently there are approximately seven drug cartels known to U.S. and Mexico law enforcement officials operating in Mexico: the Gulf, Sinoloa, Tijuana, Juarez Cartel, Colima, Oaxaca and Valencia Cartels. To control the drug trade, these cartels ferociously compete to carve up territory throughout Mexico. They frequently engage in illicit activities such as murder, kidnappings, infiltration and corruption of law enforcement and other government agencies, human and weapon smuggling to further their illicit drug trade.

Corruption and infiltration of Mexican law enforcement, military and government institutions are key tools cartels utilize to further their illegal drug trade. Corruption in Mexico is not new, and many critics consider such activities a national pastime. In April 2002, a United Nations Special Reporter on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers

³⁹ John M. Walsh, Senior Associate for the Andes and Drug Policy, Washington Office on Latin America, "Assessing Drug Policy," October 15, 2009, to House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, 9.

⁴⁰ Colleen W. Cook, *Mexican Drug Cartels*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, February 25, 2008).

published a 52-page report that estimates 50 percent to 70 percent of Mexican judges are corrupt. The same month, a separate report estimates that 7 percent of Mexico's Gross Domestic Product is siphoned off via corruption.⁴¹ President Calderon stated that since taking office in December of 2006, he discovered that at least 11, 500 public officials have links to drug cartels.⁴²

The Mexican DTOs have the ability to work their way into Mexico's law enforcement and political realm, and there are numerous instances in which top officials charged with fighting the DTOs have been found to be corrupted by them. Mexican DTOs generate large profits from illicit drugs smuggled into the U.S. and money from the drug trade is then smuggled back into Mexico. The money enables DTOs to corrupt Mexican law enforcement and public officials either to curtail the other DTOs activities or to actively support or protect them.⁴³ In 2008, for instance, elite units known as SIEDO were involved in a scandal in which monies were paid for sensitive information relating to antidrug activities, resulting in 35 officials and agents fired or arrested. That same year, the EFE News Service, the largest Spanish new station in the world, reported that the former head of SIEDO and two former head of Interpol in Mexico were arrested for accepting bribes from several cartels.⁴⁴ According to a Los Angeles Times report, several high-ranking officers with alleged links to organized crime have been arrested,

⁴¹ Global Integrity, "Independent Information on Governance and Corruption, 2006 Reports," <http://www.globalintegrity.org/reports/2006/mexico/timeline.cfm> (accessed March 5, 1010).

⁴² June S. Biettel, *Mexican Drug Related Violence*, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, May 27, 2009).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Mexico's Former Interpol Officials Face Trail for Drug Links," *Indo-Asian News Service*, January 17, 2009. Available from LexisNexis Academic.

including the longtime police liaison to U.S. law enforcement, Javier Cardenas.⁴⁵ In 2009, in one of the largest dragnets of Mexican public officials, ten mayors (none of whom have been charged) and 18 other government and public officials including state prosecutors, and heads of state municipal police were detained for having illegal ties to the drug cartels. Due to the widespread corruption of local, state and federal law enforcement personnel, President Calderon has deployed the Mexican armed forces to carry out counternarcotics operations.⁴⁶

Besides using corruption as a means to further their drug efforts, the DTOs are also widely affiliated with gangs. The cartels fight for possession of what is described as “plazas,” or drug smuggling routes.⁴⁷ In an effort to control the more lucrative routes, the DTOs utilize gangs to launch attacks on each other as well as the Mexican military and police. They aggressively compete for areas and corridors from which gangs produce, store or ship drugs, often charging a percentage to those who wish to utilize it.⁴⁸ A CRS Report has documented that competition over territory and smuggling routes accounts for some of the current violence in Mexico.⁴⁹ Two particular DTOs, the Gulf and Sinaloa cartels have been identified as key rivals for territories and smuggling routes. In addition to dominating the U.S. drug market, the Mexican DTOs also desire to dominate the retail drug market in Mexico. For example, the Juarez cartel, which is in a war with

⁴⁵ Richard Marosi, “Tijuana's Security Chief Needs All of It He Can Get,” *Los Angeles Times* <http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war> (accessed February 13, 2010).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Cook, *Mexican Drug Cartels*, 14.

⁴⁸ George W. Grayson, *Mexico's Struggle with Drugs and Thugs*, (Amherst Junction, Wisconsin Foreign Policy Association, 2009), 19.

⁴⁹ Cook, *Mexican Drug Cartels*, 14.

the Sinaloa cartel over drug turf, is backed by a local street gang the Aztecas, while the Sinaloa is backed by the gang Artistas Asesinos.⁵⁰ Not only are they battling for control of the smuggling “plazas” but also are fighting for control of every street corner in Juarez, Mexico. As DTOs fight for control over drug turf, their actions pose major threats to Mexico’s security and stability as the rivalries and their turf wars fuel violence throughout Mexico and this mobility presents a potential threat to the U.S.

Since December 2006, President Calderon has deployed 45,000 troops and 5, 000 federal police along the U.S.-Mexico border as well as deeper inside Mexico.⁵¹ Many critics argue whether President Calderon Strategy of fighting the DTOs with the Mexican military and federal police is being effective. Nonetheless, with his stepped up efforts to engage in an all out counternarcotics fight against the cartels, he has had some record success in 2008 only to be confronted similarly with widespread violence again in 2009.⁵²

The cartels are fighting the local authorities and battling for access to the U.S. drug markets.⁵³ According to reports, it appears that the Mexican military is the only force capable of carrying out effective counternarcotics strategy and the only ones who can match the cartels’ firepower if they are not corrupted or compromised.⁵⁴ The last three months of 2008 saw an explosion in violence and a dramatic increase in the number

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Vanda Felbab-Brown, *The Violent Drug Market in Mexico and Lessons from Colombia*, The Brookings Institute, Policy Paper, No.12, Washington, DC, March 2009

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ “Mexico Under Siege, “The Drug War at Our Doorstep,” *Los Angeles Times*, <http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war> (accessed February 25, 2010).

⁵⁴ Stratfor, Global Intelligence: Mexico Security Memo, January 18, 2010.

of organized crime-related deaths across Mexico. Not only have the levels of violence seen at the end of 2008 persisted into 2009, but they have gradually worsened. While the violence of 2008 was characterized by dramatic waves of killings as conflicts flared up in geographic areas like Tijuana and Juarez, the violence of 2009 has been far more consistent, resulting in an annual trend of steadily increasing bloodshed. Hence, by 2009, the estimated annual toll of organized crime-related deaths in Mexico ranged from 6,900 to more than 7,300 far surpassing the previous annual record of approximately 5,700 deaths.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ “Mexico Under Siege, The Drug War at Our Doorstep,” *Los Angeles Times*, <http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war> (accessed February 25, 2010).

Mexican DTOs: Activities in America

*There have been verifiable instances where people were directed to C.B.P. to apply for positions only for enhancing the goals of criminal organizations. They had been selected because they had no criminal record; a background investigation would not develop derogatory information.” James Tomsheck, Assistant Commissioner for Internal Affairs at CBP*⁵⁶

There is no denying that America has had a long appetite for illicit drugs, and the Mexican DTOs are willing to do whatever it takes to fulfill this demand. As CBP IA Commissioner, James Tomsheck indicates, the DTOs have been making attempts to infiltrate United States law enforcement and military personnel. Law enforcement officials have also noted that DTOs “research potential targets...exploiting the cross-border clans and relationships that define the region, offering money, sex, whatever it takes...”⁵⁷ Law enforcement officials also believe that DTOs have even solicited some of their own operatives to apply for jobs with the law enforcement communities. As a result, the law enforcement community is at risk of becoming tainted with corrupt officials. Should terrorist groups implant their connections, this presents serious counterintelligence and counterterrorism threats to the Nation’s national security.

Mexican DTOs corruption of law enforcement officials in the United States is not a new phenomenon, but nonetheless is on the increase and is quite visible in various facets of the law enforcement community. In a New York Times report, for instance, the Department of Homeland Security inspector general’s office has noted that the overall

⁵⁶ Randal C. Archibald, “War Without Borders, Hired by Customs, but Working for the Cartels,” *The New York Daily News*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/18/us/18corrupt.html> (accessed March 1, 2010).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

arrests of Customs and Border Protection agents and officers have increased 40 percent in the last few years, outpacing the 24 percent growth in the agency itself.⁵⁸ This growing trend has led to the arrest and prosecution of numerous CBP employees for accepting bribes or having affiliation with cartels. In 2009 for example, Border Patrol Agent Raquel Esquivel, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for tipping smugglers about border guards patrol patterns and suggesting how they could avoid getting caught. At her trial, a drug trafficker with ties to Mexican DTOs described how “he had enticed the agent, a close friend from high school...to join his crew smuggling tons of marijuana into Texas.”⁵⁹ In 2008, Customs Inspector Luis Alvarid was arrested for allegedly “waving in trucks from Mexico carrying loads of Marijuana and illegal immigrants.” He also allegedly accepted thousands of dollars in cash and gifts from DTOs. Another inspector, Margarita Crispin, pleaded guilty in April 2008 and received a 20-year prison sentence for helping the cartels to smuggle thousands of pounds of marijuana into the United States. In 2009, a CNN special showed CBP officers waving DTO members into the country through the designated POEs after they kidnapped a U.S. citizen in Mexico. There may be stronger loyalties being shown to DTO members based on familial or clannish reasons rather than respecting the law.

There has also been evidence of the Mexican DTOs efforts to infiltrate the U.S. state, local, and military personnel. In 2005 for instance, Sheriff Conrado Cantu of Cameron County Texas pleaded guilty to federal charges of running a criminal enterprise involved in extortion, drug trafficking and bribery. In October 2008 FBI agents arrested

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Starr County Sheriff Reymundo Guerra, who later pleaded guilty to a drug trafficking charge for accepting thousands of dollars in exchange for passing information to a former Mexican law enforcement contact whom he knew was working for Mexico's Gulf Cartel.⁶⁰ In El Paso, Texas, U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Jackson Apodaca was charged with capital murder in the slaying of an individual who was shot multiple times outside his home. According to reports, Apocada acted as the hit man for the Juarez cartel.⁶¹

As the WOD rages on, and with the U.S. taxpayer shelling out billions of dollars to pay for it, organized criminal gangs here in the U.S. have merged with Mexican drug cartels. The Bloods, Crips, MS-13, and other U.S. gangs are suspected of having direct ties to the Mexican DTOs.⁶² The cartels have now forged alliances with other American street gangs, giving these Mexican DTOs a deep reach into American life. Through alliances with American gangs, the drug network gives the DTOs control over most of the multi-billion dollar American drug trade, the largest in the world. This new cooperation creates an ever-increasing threat to U.S. interests.

⁶⁰ Martha Mendoza and Christopher Sherman, "Arrests of Corrupt Border Police Rise," www.msnbc.msn.com, (accessed August 9, 2009).

⁶¹ "U.S. Army Soldier Michael Jackson Apodaca Arrested for Contract Kill in Mexican Drug Cartel," *The New York Daily News*, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/2009/08/11/2009-08-11_us_soldier_.html#ixzz0hQ9Mr0V7 (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁶² Michael Webster, "Mexican Drug Cartels Forming Alliances with American Street Gangs," *Laguna Journal*, (June 15, 2008).

Mexican DTOs: Current Threats to America

According to a CQ Politics article, prior to 9/11 and leading up to the Obama administration, the United States international policy was focused primarily on the Middle East. The CQ also notes that when it comes to Mexico, the U.S. primarily concerns itself with trade and immigration, and made little mention of the drug war in the region. Since Barack Obama's presidency, however, military and intelligence officials have begun to recognize the events in Mexico as a national security threat.⁶³ No longer are the drug war policies that predate the 9/11 era focused primarily on Columbia, Bolivia and Peru. In fact, there has been a new awakening among many within the government that has prompted new talks about the drug war. The sentiment many officials share is that the drug wars in Mexico pose a potential threat to the Mexican and United States governments. Former Clinton drug czar, Gen. Barry McCaffrey for instance recently warned of the potential development of a "narco-state" on the United States southern border if Mexico fails to contain its drug war.⁶⁴

Current drug war problems in Mexico are immense, and from the outset it appears as though the Mexican and United States governments are losing. Some experts in the region have even theorized that currently the magnitude of the drug war in Mexico and its danger to the United States far exceed the reach of existing federal policies. So far millions of dollars have been spent over several decades to fighting drugs, and thus far it appears that neither the U.S. nor Mexico can claim victory, as the turf war over drugs

⁶³ Jonathan Broder, *Mexico's Drug War, Violence Too Close to Home*, cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm (accessed February 14, 2010).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

continues to be a nightmare for Mexico's government. Mexico's drug war, if unchecked, could lead to significant problems for the United States.

There is no denying that the activities of the Mexican DTOs threaten the stability of the Mexican government. We have seen how the DTOs have caused serious damage to Mexico's law enforcement by their keen ability to infiltrate the police, judiciary and other facets of government. The DTOs have also put up fierce resistance against the Mexican military and police. According to a Los Angeles Times report, in 2006 when President Calderon first deployed 6500 Mexican troops to take on the cartels they were operating in about seven Mexican states. Today, the DTOs have expanded their activities to eighteen states within Mexico threatening the stability of the country. The violence led the CIA in 2008 to add Mexico to its list of crises to watch, alongside longstanding problems like Al Qaeda.⁶⁵

According to a former CIA official, Houston has been identified as a prime target for Al Qaeda because it controls major portion of U.S. gasoline refineries, natural gas distribution and has one shipping channel.⁶⁶ The SWB is the primary entry point for drugs and undocumented aliens from Mexico and Central America. Alien Smuggling Organization (ASO) often pays fees to Mexican DTOs for the right to operate along their smuggling routes.⁶⁷ Several individuals from special interest countries have been interdicted along the SWB, but none have been documented to be known or suspected

⁶⁵ Tom Bowman, "CIA and Pentagon Wonder: How Could Mexico Implode? December 1, 2008," www.npr.org (accessed October 15, 2009).

⁶⁶ J.J. Green, "Houston Could be in Al-Qaida's Crosshairs," December 10, 2008, <http://www.wtop.com/?nid=251&sid=1544165> (accessed March 27, 2010).

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, "*National Drug Threat Assessment 2010*," <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/pubs38/38661/swb.htm#Top> (accessed March 30, 2010).

terrorists.⁶⁸ Can the U.S. afford to take the chance of Al Qaeda tapping into the DTOs and their smuggling routes to smuggle people in the U.S.? This remains a major vulnerability for the U.S.

Mexico's stability is of vital importance to United States national security. With its close proximity, massive population, and its many extended family ties in the U.S., an unstable narco-terrorist run Mexico would present a direct threat to America. If Mexico becomes a failed state the U.S. will encounter numerous problems such as influx of refugees from Mexico, the potential for foreign-born terrorist to enter the U.S., and the likelihood of narco-state being established in Mexico.⁶⁹ Therefore, as long as the Mexican government fails to effectively control the activities of the cartels, the United States will sooner or later become deeply involved in order to bring stability to the region and protect its national interests.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Bowman, "CIA and Pentagon Wonder: How Could Mexico Implode? December 1, 2008."

CHAPTER 3

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis

Mexico finally is fighting the war on drugs that the U.S. government has demanded for decades; a frontal assault on drug barons, their organizations and their merchandise using the police and military in concert with U.S. intelligence... And the result in the United States? No noticeable drop in the supply of cheap drugs—and an actual decline in the price of cocaine... Mexican criminal organizations dominate operations, controlling most of the thirteen primary drug distribution centers in the U.S.¹

It is unquestionable that drugs are dangerous and harmful. Drugs destroy the U.S. moral fiber by creeping into individuals' lives, which leads to the social erosion of a society. Drugs have been identified as a direct threat to the sovereignty and security of the U.S. Illicit drugs are nothing new, and for years have had a direct effect on the drug abuser as well as those who are associated with them. Since the 1970s the U.S. has endeavored to combat drug use, abuse, and all of the other negative circumstances associated with them, through special programs, the criminal justice system, public and private stakeholders and even the military, none of which seem to work. During this period the U.S. has also tried various drug control policies, to include changing the drug laws to combat the drug problem, but somehow it appears that those policies and drugs laws have failed.

Though the numbers may vary, many experts estimated that prior to 9/11 the Mexican DTOs were quite active in the Southwest Border Region, and were responsible

¹ Fisher, *Rethinking Our War on Drugs and Thugs: Candid Talk about Controversial Issues*, 153-154.

for over sixty-five percent of the drugs entering the U.S.² The creation of the ONDCP has proven to be a crucial step in the drug war as the U.S. continues to pour billions of dollars at the problem. Nonetheless, illicit drugs from Mexico continue to present problems for the Mexican and U.S. governments. Though the U.S. has increased its expenditure in the region and has accomplished some degree of success, the war on drug still rages on with no end in sight, as the DTOs continue to seek alternate smuggling routes for their market.

Many, to include the U.S. government, believe that if the activities of the Mexican DTOs go unchecked Mexico is in danger of becoming a failed state.³ Not only have the DTOs infiltrated the levels of Mexican government, but also in an effort to continue to the illicit drug trade in America, they have already corrupted U.S. law enforcement and military officials, posing a threat to national security. With U.S. increased security on the border and the hiring of 10,000 border patrol agents starting in 2006, the DTOs have responded and also beefed up their efforts to corrupt U.S. border police personnel.⁴ Several law enforcement officials within DHS state and local agencies as well as the military have already been arrested for helping the Mexican DTOs continue their drug smuggling activities in the U.S. In today's climate where terror organizations are constantly seeking alternate ways to attack the U.S., the Mexican DTOs and their unscrupulous activities cannot go unchecked as they present grave threats to U.S. national security. The U.S. government needs to be more aggressive in its efforts to combat the drug cartels and to ease the conflict in the SWB region.

²U.S. Congress, House, *Drug Trafficking on the Southwest Border: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 107th Cong., 1st Sess., March 29, 2001. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001.

³ Broder, "Mexico's Drug War, Violence Too Close to Home."

⁴ Archibald, "War Without Borders, Hired by Customs, But Working for the Cartels."

After 9/11, the U.S. government focus was geared towards Southeast Asia with the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Simultaneously, the Mexican DTOs began and have continued an upward spiral becoming more and more powerful. The DTOs with their considerable amount of funds began to expand their empire even within the U.S. despite U.S. government attempts to increase border security. A 2005 RAND Corporation study stated that drugs on average is a \$60-billion-per-year industry patronized by at least 16 million Americans.⁵ It appears as though the U.S. government's limited resources are of no match to the Mexican DTOs unrestrained funds, which are used to further their drug trafficking activities.

Over the years the Mexican DTOs have gotten more sophisticated with their activities and have substantial amounts of funds to finance the drug trade. This has created major problems for the United States on the Southwest Border Region. A Rand report writes:

“Because drugs are worth many times their weight in gold, the financial rewards justify using quite sophisticated means of camouflaging the contraband. Attempts to shut down prevailing supply routes and means can be circumvented at modest cost by use of alternate routes and means.”⁶

How can the U.S. with its limited funding combat the Mexican DTOs? At present the U.S. spends disproportionately more on the OCO than it does on the WOD. Hence, agencies such as the U.S. Customs, Border Patrol and the DEA continue to experience obstacles with drug interdiction and prosecution on the Southwest Border. A 2001 drug trafficking hearing before the Subcommittee on Crime revealed that staffing and funding

⁵ Jonathan P. Caulkins, Peter Reuter, Martin Y. Iguchi, James Chiesa, *How Goes the War on Drugs, An Assessment of U.S. Drug Problems and Policy*, www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2005/RAND_OP121.pdf (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

needs were major concerns for agencies in the region.⁷ This problem was intensified in the aftermath of 9/11 when valuable resources were shifted to fight narcoterrorism in Southwest and South Asia. With such skewed policy, drug related crimes in Mexico continue to increase dramatically since 9/11. The U.S., therefore, should reevaluate the effectiveness of its current spending policies as it relates to the Southwest Border Region and Mexico.

While the U.S. has taken several bold steps to combat the drug problem on the SWB, large amounts of drugs continue to line U.S. streets. One of the anti-drug measures the U.S. has implemented since 9/11 is the renewed focus on connection between drugs and terrorism, a war now being fought under the context of narcoterrorism. The emphasis on narcoterrorism aims at disrupting the monetary source that terror groups use to fund terror campaigns. Some might argue that in fact the new war, narcoterrorism, has been quite beneficial to the WOD with millions of new dollars being allotted to the drug effort. On the other hand, however, the WOD has also been negatively impacted as millions of dollars and essential personnel are realigned to fighting narcoterrorism particularly in Southwest and Southeast Asia. Even the DEA, the superagency charged with drug investigations, has shifted its mission from the WOD to fighting narcoterrorism, thus further weakening U.S. anti-drug efforts on the SWB Region. In a 2004 DEA Congressional testimony, Administrator Karen Tandy notes, “the DEA will continue to assign the highest priority to investigating any information

⁷ U.S. Congress, House, *Drug Trafficking on the Southwest Border: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 107th Congress, 1st Sess., March 29, 2001. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001.

linking drugs to terrorism.”⁸ As Gary Fisher points out, even though terror organizations use illegal drug trade to fund their cause, the illicit drugs that enter the U.S. comes primarily from South America and not from Southeast or Southwest Asia, the hotbed for terror groups.⁹ Hence while the U.S. shifts its priority to fighting narcoterrorism the Mexican DTOs continue to wreak havoc, as America lacks a single agency in charge of fighting drugs on its borders; a move that has undoubtedly embolden the activities of the Mexican DTOs in the region

Since 9/11, the U.S. government implemented several initiatives and strategies in addition to those that were already in place to help curb the violence displayed by the Mexican DTOs, as well as to reduce the flow of drugs entering the U.S. and money and drugs heading south into Mexico. Of note, the National Southwest Border Counter Narcotics Strategy (NSWBCS) and the Merida Initiative, provides Mexico and some Central American and Caribbean states assistance with law enforcement through monetary aid. However, this funding is insufficient to combat the problems in the region. It has been reported that as of December 2009, only two percent of the \$1.4 billion aid package to Mexico has been provided due to administrative bureaucracy.¹⁰ In an effort to help stem the outbound flow of guns and money that has embolden the DTOs, Operation “Armas Cruzadas” and “Project Gunrunner” have showed only minor victories in money and guns seizures, as crime in Mexico continues to increase at an alarming rate. A

⁸ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, *United States Policy Towards Narcoterrorism in Afghanistan, February 12, 2004*, <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct052003.html> (accessed March 26, 2010).

⁹ Fisher, *Rethinking Our War on Drugs and Thugs: Candid Talk about Controversial Issues*, 165.

¹⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Status of Funds for the Merida Initiative,” Washington, DC: U.S Government Accountability Office, 2009), 3.

recent report indicates that the U.S. government seizes only twenty-five cents of every hundred dollars of the Mexican DTO profits that is destined for Mexico.¹¹ To effectively combat the WOD, the U.S. needs to bring a halt to the supply of funds DTOs use to further their illicit activities. Thus far, the U.S. drug policies have not been very effective at this effort, and the Mexican DTOs continue to wield their influence over the region.

What makes the Mexican DTOs so influential is their uncanny ability to infiltrate their way in to the Mexican social, political and law enforcement systems. Like the Taliban, in Afghanistan, the Mexican DTOs utilizes violence and unlimited amount of disposable income to win the minds and souls of the local populous. In Mexico, corruption and military abuses continued to hamper President Calderon's administration as the law enforcement personnel easily succumb to drug money. Since taking office many high-ranking members of the local, state and federal police have been arrested for links to the Mexican DTOs. The increased corruption has created a very uncomfortable scenario for President Calderon and his U.S. backed strategy of using a quarter of the Mexican military to confront the cartel. Many have even questioned the effectiveness of this strategy as the violence in Mexico continues to increase at an alarming rate. According to a Washington Post article Calderon is calling for a new strategy of pulling the military away from law enforcement and replacing them with federal police supported by several hundred of the newly U.S.-trained investigators from the police academy.¹²

¹¹ Martha Mendoza and Jacques Billeaud, "Money and Drugs - U.S. Drug War Crackdown Misses the Money," *ABCNews*, December 17, 2009, <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory?id=9359520> (accessed March 6, 2010).

¹² William Booth, "U.S. Agents to Embed with Mexican Drug Units," *The Washington Post*, February 24, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/23/AR2010022305560.html> (accessed February 24, 2010).

While drugs received significant attention prior to 9/11, the U.S. focused very little on terrorism. However, under the Clinton administration, the U.S. was provided with a bird's eye view of Islamic terrorist attacks both in the U.S. and overseas, which were attributed to Al Qaeda. The U.S. responded by bombing several training camps, but appeared to be more in a reactive mode as opposed to taking a proactive approach to confronting this new terror group that was on the rise. The lax attitude of the U.S. government towards terror threats would all change in the wake of 9/11.

The 9/11 attacks took over 3,000 lives and President Bush declared the attack as war as opposed to a criminal act and the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), formerly Global War on Terror (GWOT) was born. The President, with support from the international community, initiated the "Bush Doctrine," which was later incorporated into the 2002 NSS. Contrary to President Clinton's reactive stance on terrorism, President Bush wanted to take a different approach, pre-emptive actions. These actions, however, have impacted the WOD as the OCO took precedence over the ongoing WOD. Even as the United States increased its funding for the drug war, most of the monies went to Afghanistan. In the 2006 budget for instance, over half of the International Narcotics Control & Law Enforcement funds were devoted to Afghanistan, mainly for eradication of poppy fields.¹³ Though the United States has not had a terrorist attack since the 9/11 incidents, it appears that some of these changes need to be readdressed. Many believe that even with the heightened security measures, the public is still nervous about the lapse in our system, as was last demonstrated in the attempt

¹³ Fisher, *Rethinking Our War on Drugs and Thugs: Candid Talk about Controversial Issues*, 153.

bombing of a jet liner flying from Amsterdam to Detroit in December 2009.¹⁴ The U.S. government has taken an unyielding position on terrorism, while the losing WOD still continues to resonate with many Americans. Why did our government choose to give terrorism a higher precedence than the drug fight, while it is simultaneously a threat to U.S. national security?

Recommendations

The observations obtained in this research indicate that the current U.S. strategies for combating the OCO and the WOD, narcoterrorism have not effectively reduced the supply of drugs into the U.S. from the SWB Region, or weakened the power of the Mexican DTOs. The Mexican DTOs are diversified organizations that make money by trafficking drugs and weapons, and to a lesser degree people, through a system of sophisticated networks. The U.S. failure to effectively address the problems on the SWB Region has enabled the DTOs to use each other's resources to become more powerful. Most importantly, the US approach has been to throw money at the enforcement/prevention side and not fully address other key issues such as poverty. Military and law enforcement actions by itself are not the answer and the US needs to implement an all out approach to combat the issues of poverty and its ills: drugs, human trafficking, illicit weapons, and the corrupted political leaders who support the cartels.

As indicated through the various strategies implemented since Nixon's 1973 declaration on the WOD, there are no quick fixes to the U.S. - Mexico drug problem. Most recently, in March 2010, after the recent assassination of two Americans,

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Report: A Strategic Framework for a Secure Homeland*, February 2010.

a cast of senior security officials traveled to Mexico to address the violence associated with the DTOs. Similar to the past administrations it was the same rhetoric, increase funding for law enforcement efforts and reducing the demand for America's appetite for drugs.¹⁵ In order to achieve success in the region, the U.S. must overhaul its "doing business as usual" drug interdiction approach and move drastically to implement more unconventional strategies that include a more radical "cause-effect" approach.

Firstly, since the United States government considers the WOD and the OCO one entity (narcoterrorism) the U.S. should make drugs, like terrorism, the number one priority or even completely incorporating the WOD and the OCO as one war. As previously mentioned, current narcoterrorism policies focus primarily in regions where drugs are used to finance terror organizations. As a result, narcoterrorism efforts are skewed towards those regions that breeds terrorist with the intention of destroying the United States. According to Steven Casteel, DEA Assistant Administrator for Intelligence, in the wake of 9/11 drug trafficking and terrorist activities are "visibly intertwined...[and] investigating the link between drugs and terrorism has taken on renewed importance."¹⁶ Absent from this link, though, are the Mexican DTOs and their uncanny ability to exercise influence over Mexico's vulnerable political, judiciary, and law enforcement sectors. The United States government, to achieve success in the region, must reevaluate its policies on the WOD and the Mexican DTOs, and the potential danger they present to the nation's national security.

¹⁵ MSNBC, "Drug Demand Fuels Mexico Cartels," *The Associated Press*, March 23, 2010 http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35996797/ns/world_news-americas/ (accessed March 26, 2010).

¹⁶ U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Congressional Testimony, *Narco- Terrorism: International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism-a Dangerous Mix*, May 20, 2003, (Statement by Steven W. Casteel, Assistant Administrator for Intelligence), <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/cngrtest/ct052003.html> (accessed March 26, 2010).

After the 9/11 attacks the U.S. government created the 9/11 Commission to make recommendations to combat terrorism; such approach is equally essential to combating the WOD especially as the DTOs continue to threaten Mexico's stability creating a direct threat to U.S. national security. A commission on the WOD would be an effective means to address the various facets of the drug war, most notably the limited role of the ONDCP's drug czar. The U.S. should recognize that aid to fight Mexico's drug problem is largely underfunded when compared to money being expended to eradicate drugs in Afghanistan or even parts of South America. If the U.S. wants to effectively combat narcoterrorism it should reassess and reallocate more drug aid to Mexico so as to prevent it from becoming a failed state that certainly would brew terrorists. Let us have a single "Overseas Contingency Operations" with unified inter-agency assets, while firmly establishing Department of State, CIA, and USAID at the helm, backed by elements from DoD, DEA and needed IGO/NGO assets identified by DOS leadership. Such a task force can identify issues seen or unseen, and recommend specific short and long-term courses of action.

Secondly, to combat the DTOs and their sophisticated networks, the U.S. should implement a more uniformed approach to the WOD and more stringent punishment for offenders. One factor operating against the current U.S. drug policy, for instance, is the absence of a drug czar responsible for all drug policies and funding. America's drug policy is fragmented across agencies and states, and the drug "czar" has limited power. A Rand report points out that the drug "czar" has no control over the drug programs in federal agencies other than his own, and accounts for only a fraction of the drug control budget. Furthermore, the czar has no influence over drug policies at the state and local

levels either.¹⁷ How then can the United States with its fragmented drug policies effectively combat the DTOs and their highly structured drug networks?

Besides policy changes, the ultimate solution to this devastating drug war is rooted in strong political action. Thus far the U.S. policy focuses primarily on law enforcement efforts. Law enforcement can only scratch the surface; politicians must frame a potent and lasting action plan. There are two principal actors in the WOD: The Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and State (DOS). These departments must synergize their efforts in an unprecedented manner. The Government Accountability Office gives some insight into the successes of Mexican-American cooperation, but it also cites some specific barriers such as the constraints levied on U.S. Maritime interdiction.¹⁸ This is one of many lingering issues outside the DHS' scope of control that must be aggressively remedied. It is also an area where the DOS need take more forceful stance on the Mexicans, in support of their DHS colleagues. As a key team member searching for an antidote to the drug war, more intervention is needed at the "prevention" end of the WOD spectrum. Hence, the Departments of Homeland Security and State must join forces in an unprecedented manner.

Lastly, advocating a rehabilitation program similar to the U.S. witness protection program: if the State Department agrees to rehabilitate international informers with new identities then DHS could exploit this loophole and commit a fraction of the funds currently being expended. In addition, the DOS must aggressively challenge foreign

¹⁷ Caulkins eds. "How Goes the War on Drugs, An Assessment of U.S. Drug Problems and Policy."

¹⁸ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Assistance Has Helped Mexican Counternarcotics Efforts, but the Flow of Illicit Drugs into the United States Remains High*, (Washington, DC, 2007)

governments to root out their own internal corruption to break the “domino effect.” This phenomenon is currently being played out in the international standoff between the Jamaican and U.S. governments over a reputed Jamaican drug lord the U.S. is seeking to extradite.¹⁹ The pervasive fear is that the kingpin, if extradited, could potentially embarrass if not totally destabilize the Jamaican political machine through implications among the island’s high-ranking officials. Thus, U.S. could implement drastic measures such as threats that range from loss of financial aid to stringent immigration restrictions. These are severe measures because they are tantamount to political blackmail, but they are justifiable when weighed against the devastating human toll triggered by our pandemic drug problems. After all, the U.S. is not the only nation with drug problems, but it is the largest and most lucrative drug market. The U.S. needs unconventional intervention, and it is needed now. If the Jamaican experiment materializes, there are convincing arguments to apply this formula to the more devastating Mexican WOD.

¹⁹Howard Campbell, “United States vs Its Backyard – Washington Always Wins,” <http://www.jamaica-gleaner.com/gleaner/20100314/lead/lead3.html> (accessed March 21, 2010).

CHAPTER 4

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the rapidly expanding WOD and the OCO, formerly the war on terror. Critics on either side of the spectrum have done considerable justice in highlighting the primary concerns of the two wars. The paper's main focus was to highlight the need to intensify WOD efforts, while rooting out terrorist threats around the world. Additionally, there are specific and far-reaching recommendations to re-shaping the United States' domestic and foreign policies, as the nation struggles to combat the harmful effects of failed policies on our resources and the growing threat to national security. The WOD and OCO are wars we must win, and our victory should be predicated on learning from our past mistakes and plotting a cohesive course of action to stop the proliferation of these threats. The catalyst behind these changes will be the United States ability to think and operate unconventionally, as we take a fresh look at the effectiveness of our policies.

The mandates prescribed by the "Bush Doctrine" demand that we root out terror wherever it hides, it is also imperative that we do the same with the Mexican DTOs. The latter have been a force to reckon with. They have infiltrated various government agencies in Mexico and are working to have the same effect here in America. If the United States continues to prioritize the OCO over the WOD, Mexico remains at risk of becoming a failed state, ultimately presenting even more serious threats to America's national security, as effects of the collapse cascades across our borders. Since President Nixon's, declaration of the WOD the U.S. has implemented a plethora of strategies ranging from crop eradication in source countries, interdiction of smugglers and

prosecution, and disruption of street markets and drug treatment. Results have ranged from marginally to completely ineffective. If 3,000 deaths (at the WTC) can convince the U.S. government to fight the OCO with more vigor and limitless amount of resources, then the impetus should be there to fight a war in its backyard that is destroying the lives of thousands of Americans. Should the American public wait for a catastrophic event emanating from the Southwest Border Region before the government take more serious actions? The traffickers have evolved into narcoterrorist groups, and are willing to resort to extreme measures to continue to reap the benefits of the illicit drug trade. We simply cannot abate this threat without directly attacking its political benefactors. It is time the American governments elevates the WOD, or face the dire consequence of explaining to Americans what went wrong.

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VITA

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Mr. Dixon also served as a Supervisor Special Agent for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Office of Investigations (ICE/OI), Washington, DC, responsible for direct oversight of all contraband smuggling investigations conducted in the U.S. Prior to becoming a Program Manager for (ICE), Mr. Dixon worked as a SA at SAIC/Baltimore where he conducted numerous investigations targeting criminal networks that seek to exploit the nation's immigration and customs laws. Mr. Dixon is married with two children.

