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# THE IMPACT OF PRESIDENT FELIPE CALDERÓN'S WAR ON DRUGS ON THE ARMED FORCES: THE PROSPECTS FOR MEXICO'S "MILITARIZATION" AND BILATERAL RELATIONS

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George W. Grayson

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE



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**George W. Grayson**

**January 2013**

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## FOREWORD

Respondents to public opinion polls have long ranked the Army among Mexico's most respected institutions, along with the Roman Catholic Church and universities. There has not been a president with a military background since 1946, no retired or active duty officers hold a governorship, and—above all—the armed forces obey civilian leaders. Unlike many Latin American nations, Mexico has not suffered a coup d'état for nearly 100 years.

In the absence of honest, professional civilian law-enforcement agencies, President Felipe Calderón assigned the military the lead role in his nation's version of the "War on Drugs" that he launched in 2006. While the armed forces have spearheaded the capture and/or death of several dozen cartel capos, the conflict has taken its toll on the organizations in terms of deaths, corruption, desertions, and charges by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of hundreds of human rights violations. The nation's Supreme Court has taken the first step in requiring that officers and enlistees accused of crimes against civilians stand trial in civil courts rather than hermetic military tribunals.

As if combating vicious narco-syndicates were not a sufficiently formidable challenge, the government has assigned such additional roles to the Army and Navy as overseeing customs agents, serving as state and municipal security chiefs, taking charge of prisons, protecting airports, safeguarding migrants, functioning as firefighters, preventing drug trafficking around schools, establishing recreational programs for children, and standing guard 24-hours a day over boxes of ballots cast in recent elections. Meanwhile, because of their discipline, training, and skill with fire-

arms, security firms are snapping up men and women who have retired from active duty.

The sharp expansion of the armed forces' duties has sparked the accusation that Mexico is being "militarized." Contributing to this assertion is the Defense Ministry's robust, expensive public relations campaign both to offset criticism of civilians killed in what the Pentagon would label "collateral damage" and to increase contacts between average citizens and military personnel, who often constituted a separate caste.

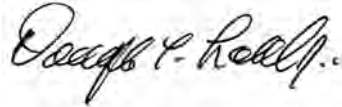
This campaign is evident in recruiting videos, advertisements in *Twitter*, and the portrayal of combat successes on *YouTube*.

Creativity infuses the outreach programs, which are aimed at average people and often take place in connection with parades and other ceremonial extravaganzas. Obliging pilots encourage adults and children to hop into the seat of a recently-landed helicopter; other wide-eyed youngsters grasp the controls of anti-aircraft weapons; admiring onlookers are invited to shake hands and have photos taken with nationally prominent military athletes; in Veracruz and other ports, residents are given tours of ships, landing craft, and submarines.

The Army has gone out of its way to tout opportunities for women, who traditionally filled posts as nurses, secretaries, translators, doctors, and dentists. Now the Defense Ministry has opened all of its instructional institutions, including the Heroic War College (Mexico's version of West Point), to females.

Dr. George W. Grayson examines the ever wider involvement of the armed forces in Mexican life in addressing the question: "Is Mexican society being

'militarized'?" If the answer is "yes," what will be the probable impact on relations between the United States and its southern neighbor?

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr." in a cursive script.

DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GEORGE W. GRAYSON, who is the Class of 1938 Professor of Government Emeritus at the College of William & Mary, has made more than 200 research trips to Latin America. In addition, he is a senior associate at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), an associate scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a board member at the Center for Immigration Studies, and a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Dr. Grayson lectures regularly at the U.S. Department of State, the National Defense University, the National Intelligence College, the Naval War College, the U.S. Northern Command, and at universities throughout the United States and Mexico. He served as a Democratic member of the Virginia state legislature for 27 years. Besides preparing two dozen books and monographs for CSIS, he has written: *The Executioner's Men: Inside Los Zetas, Rogue Soldiers, Criminal Entrepreneurs, and the Shadow State They Created* (co-authored with Sam Logan, Transaction Publishers, 2011); *The Threat Posed by Mounting Vigilantism in Mexico* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2011); *La Familia Drug Cartel: Implications for U.S.-Mexican Security* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2010); *Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?* (Transaction Publishers, 2009); *Mexico's Struggle with Drugs and Thugs* (Foreign Policy Association, 2009); *Mexican Messiah* (Penn State University Press, 2007); *Mesías Mexicano* (Random House-Mondadori, 2006); *Mexico: the Changing of the Guard* (Foreign Policy Association, 2001); *Strange Bedfellows: NATO Marches East* (University Press of America, 1999); *Mexico: From Corporatism to Pluralism?* (Harcourt Brace, 1998); *Oil*

*and Mexican Foreign Policy* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988); *The North American Free Trade Agreement: Regional Community and the New World Order* (University Press of America, The Miller Center, University of Virginia, 1995); *The United States and Mexico: Patterns of Influence* (Praeger, 1984); and *The Politics of Mexican Oil* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1980). His articles have appeared in the *Commonweal Magazine*, the *Harvard International Review*, *ForeignPolicy.com*, *Foreign Policy*, *Orbis*, *World Affairs*, the *Baltimore Sun*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*, *Reforma* (Mexico City), the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He is a frequent commentator on the Cable News Network (CNN), National Public Radio (NPR), and NPR-affiliated stations. Dr. Grayson holds a J.D. from the College of William & Mary, and a Ph.D. from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University.

## SUMMARY

Poet and essayist Javier Sicilia, whose son was captured, tortured, and murdered by thugs in 2011, wrote an open letter “To Mexico’s Politicians and Criminals” in which he accused politicians of complicity in the criminal activities. “We cannot cry out,” he said, “because this government is the same as members of organized crime and can think only in terms of violence and the wish to militarize the country. . . .” The problem lies in Mexico’s seldom if ever having had an effective, uncorrupted, and professional police force whose members knew their communities, could referee barroom fights and other minor disputes, and could gain the confidence of the citizenry to assist in fighting crime. In the 19th century, dictator Porfirio Díaz (1876-1911) relied on the brutal “Rurales” to repress opponents. The Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which dominated the political system from 1929 to 2000, created some 3,000 municipal, state, and federal law-enforcement agencies, according to analyst Benjamin Reames. However, venality, extortion, poor training, incompetence, and low pay characterized most of the 350,000 elements in these units. PRI officials often deployed these policemen to spy on opponents, settle scores with foes, and operate as bagmen for payoffs from narco-traffickers and other denizens of the underworld.

As a result, Presidents Vicente Fox (2000-06) and Felipe Calderón (2006-12) relied heavily on the men and women in uniform to combat the cartels that import, store, process, sell at home, and export drugs. Although involved in drug eradication for 4 decades, soldiers are trained to pursue, capture, and kill – with little experience in urban settings. The violence asso-

ciated with these activities had taken more than 47,000 lives by the time Enrique Peña Nieto was inaugurated on December 1, 2012.

This monograph explores whether Mexico's protracted drug war has "militarized" the country. In the United States, when politicians cannot resolve a thorny issue such as teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, obesity, poor nutrition, environmental awareness, latch-key youngsters, etc., they often assign responsibility to the public schools. Such is the case of Mexican leaders with respect to criminality. In many cases, they have either expanded existing functions carried out by the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA) and the Navy Ministry (SEMAR) or thrust new tasks upon them.

Law-enforcement is a case in point. For years, retired officers have served as state and municipal public security officials or police chiefs—typically with the approval of the National Defense Secretary. The number of such appointments has mushroomed in recent years. The number of military men performing these roles in states and major cities has shot up from six in February 2009 to approximately 50 in mid-2012.

Meanwhile, local officials who have purged contaminated police departments recruit military retirees to fill their places. After ousting half of the city's 400 policemen in Santa Catarina, a city in metropolitan Monterrey, the mayor made clear his determination to hire "elements with a military profile" to undertake patrol and surveillance duties. In essence, politicians have more confidence in men and women who have learned discipline, order, and team work in the armed forces.

Formerly, there were limited contacts between civilians and the military except at the highest levels of

government and on ceremonial occasions. The fight against drug-inspired criminality has changed this situation. Now in Tijuana and Ensenada, Baja California, the Army and Navy regularly hold sessions with representatives of the state government and the tourism sector. In other areas, so-called “purple groups” have sprung to life to enable political and civic activists to meet regularly members of the Army, Navy, and Federal Police.

Private security firms that have mushroomed in number are increasingly reaching out to the military. In recruiting body guards, skilled drivers, technical experts, and consultants, private security firms often seek former military personnel not only because of their training and discipline, but also because they have the legal right to carry firearms.

The Army and Navy have ever more interaction with civilian functionaries who are vulnerable to being suborned. Recent presidents have sought to mitigate the corruption that flourishes within the Mexico’s Customs Administration — a Herculean challenge in view of princely payoffs. Enter the armed forces. In mid-August 2009, they took over functions of the Fiscal Police in 49 land ports along the northern border. For its part, the Navy began overseeing customs operations in seaports. Two years earlier, the Army assumed the inspection of passengers at the airport in Mexicali, capital of Baja California, because Federal Policemen were suspected of facilitating cocaine shipments by the notorious Sinaloa Cartel to the United States.

Military men have also been drawn into guarding and, in some cases, operating prisons. In mid-August 2009, General Felipe de Jesús Espitia, commander of the Fifth Military Zone, announced that troops would

replace civilian administrators and guards at the penitentiary in Aquiles Serdán. Officers also serve as directors of the penal facilities in the three largest cities in Quintana Roo even as they control access to three large Monterrey penal facilities.

Abuses arising from the pursuit of drug lords may alter a tradition that dates to the Middle Ages; namely, trying Army and Navy personnel accused of crimes in military courts or *fueros*. Early in Calderón's term nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) inveighed against the trampling of human rights, homing in on the 200,000-member Army. Mexico's zealous National Human Rights Commission claimed to have received 5,055 complaints, many against the military, while asserting that 5,300 people had disappeared amid assaults on crime families.

The drum beat of international outrage finally grabbed the attention of Mexico's brass, which created the position of General Director for Human Rights in its command structure in what one observer labeled "a milestone that passed relatively unnoticed by most media and analysts." In response to freedom-of-information petitions, SEDENA has begun to shed light on judicial actions. In February 2012, it reported that 344 members of the Army were behind bars, while others were either standing trial or under arrest. In August 2012, newspapers carried front-page stories of the incarceration of five generals in the Almoloya high-security prison in Mexico State. In mid-2012, Mexico's Supreme Court, or SCJN, was considering what cases, if any, involving members of the armed forces would be heard in civil tribunals.

In light of charges of wrongdoing by their members, SEDENA and the SEMAR have moved into the public relations arena. To herald both positive

achievements and attract more volunteers, the Army began running advertisements on television, *Twitter*, and *YouTube*, along with brief recruiting videos before the beginning of motion pictures. Outlays for this advertising soared to 46 million pesos (approximately \$3.5 million) in 2011.

An additional effort to close the chasm between the armed services and the population found Army and Navy personnel mixed with the crowds following the September 16 Independence Day marches. "Look, Papa!" shouted a 9-year-old boy, who sat proudly in an armored vehicle with both hands grasping the controls of an anti-aircraft weapon.

SEDENA has also attempted to broaden its appeal to the citizenry and overcome its *machista* image by opening to females all of its 17 specialized schools, including those for combat instruction, basic and advanced military police training, preparation of sergeants, and the formation of officers for the Heroic War College. Greater chances for women spring from social and international pressure, the presence of more skilled women prepared to enter the armed forces, and the need to recruit more elements in an institution plagued by desertions. One leftist deputy even looked to the not-too-distant future when a woman could become secretary of defense — a will-o'-the-wisp for decades to come.

In a further endeavor to strengthen the esprit de corps and discourage desertions, SEDENA has raised salaries, initiated 21-gun salutes at burials, made certain that military bands were on hand to honor the fallen, provided a memorial flag to the wife, authorized a life pension for widows, and furnished broader insurance coverage. Furthermore, it has erected a monument to soldiers who died while serving their country.



The mayhem afflicting parts of the nation and the death of some 30 mayors has required more military participating in guaranteeing the security of elections. Leonardo Valdés Zurita, president of the Federal Electoral Institute that organizes elections, formally invited the Army to help safeguard the mid-2012 balloting. So narrow was Calderón's 2006 victory that the soldiers still guard the ballots cast in that bitter showdown.

Although completely loyal to civilian leaders, key officers have spoken out on political matters—a sign of their greater participation in national life. General Sergio Aponte Polito, a regional commander in northwest Mexico, publically excoriated the ubiquitous involvement of elected and appointed officials in drug trafficking in the Tijuana area. He claimed that the police were cooperating with migrant smugglers, bank robbers, and drug lords. “What he’s doing is completely unprecedented,” stated Roderic Ai Camp, an expert on the Mexican military at Claremont McKenna College. Aponte Polito’s persistent criticism upset the National Action Party administration in Baja California and led to his being transferred to Mexico City.

At the same time, General Galván and his subordinates make no secret of their desire to amend the Code of Military Justice to unambiguously justify the military’s profound involvement in the drug war. Generals and admirals want protection against NGOs who have accused senior officers of war crimes before the International Court of Justice and other tribunals. If convicted, these officers would be unlikely to prosper and would prove an embarrassment to services proud of their reputations.

The drug war and new tasks have expanded the Army's budget, size, and stock of equipment. Regrettably, contact with the underworld has corrupted numerous enlistees and officers and questions have arisen over the acquisition of armaments. Such sensitive questions aside, Washington can assist Mexico's crusade against crime syndicates at the margins—with intelligence, training, equipment, and monetary oversight. Mutual security concerns will lead to more and closer contacts between the U.S. military and security agencies and their Mexican counterparts even as SEDENA and SEMAR reach out to Canada, Colombia, and other countries for training, specialized arms, intelligence, and instruction in cyber security.

The U.S. Northern Command can also be helpful by furnishing language training, information, radars, night goggles, and other used surveillance equipment to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol and other organizations such as the Texas Department of Public Security. The accelerated flow of drugs and drug-merchants across the 2,000-mile binational frontier and the southward cascade of weapon have multiplied the tasks of both agencies.

Ultimately, the key players have to be our neighbor's political, economic, and social establishment. As things stand now, many of the privileged outside the country's North live cocooned from much of the bloodshed, thanks to sophisticated security systems, trained drivers, skilled bodyguards, the resources to educate their youngsters abroad, and the wherewithal to move their families to Texas and other border states.

The Mexican *nomenklatura* must comprehend that even if a miracle took place and narco-activities disappeared overnight, their nation would still be home to a deadly nether world whose ruthless inhabitants

are adept at murder, torture, kidnapping, extortion, money laundering, loan-sharking, prostitution, human smuggling, and a score of other crimes. Above all, U.S. civilian and military decisionmakers must avoid hubris and recognize the severe limitation on ameliorating, much less solving, formidable problems in other countries unless local leaders challenge the miscreants in their midst.

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**MEXICO'S MILITARIZATION?**

**Introduction.**

President Felipe Calderón's Mexican version of the "war on drugs" has unleashed criticism that he is "militarizing" the nation by deploying tens of thousands of troops against Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs). Anthropologist Abel Barrera Hernández, director of the Human Rights Center of Tlachinollan, has excoriated the "violence expressed in militarization and the seizure of land and natural resources" in impoverished, indigenous areas. Poet and essayist Javier Sicilia, whose son was captured, tortured, and murdered by thugs, has accused politicians of complicity in the criminal activities. "We cannot cry out," he said, "because this government is the same as members of organized crime and can think only in terms of violence and the wish to militarize the country. . . ." Along the same lines, students in Cuernavaca formed the National Coordinating System against Militarization and sponsored a forum titled "Young People and the National Emergency."<sup>1</sup>

Alexandro Poiré Romero, former technical secretary of the National Security Council and later Interior Secretary (Gobernación), denied any trend toward militarization. He insisted that most of their operations do not involve fighting criminal bands. Additionally, Poiré stated that:

Neither the Army nor the Navy . . . is supplanting police agencies. At present the elements deployed, together with the Federal Police, are temporarily . . . assisting civilian authorities, not acting alone, he affirmed. The use of the Armed forces to combat organized crime will be less necessary when local police forces improve their professionalization and [achieve] certification.<sup>2</sup>

Improving the quality of local police is a slow process at best, a chimera at worst. Much of the political elite, often for self-serving reasons, fiercely oppose a national police force similar to those in Chile, France, and Spain, and young people recoil from a career in law enforcement. The lion's share of governors and mayors remain adamantly against melding their own forces into a national structure. Members of the Army brass have quietly registered misgivings, fearing that (1) attempts to establish a first-rate national police force would reduce the armed forces budget, (2) military police would have to train the recruits, and (3) at the end of the process, corruption would remain ubiquitous and virulent.

The problem lies in Mexico's seldom, if ever, having had an effective, uncorrupted, and professional police force whose members knew their communities, could referee barroom fights and other minor disputes, and could gain the confidence of the citizenry.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Presidents Vicente Fox (2000-06) and Calderón (2006-12) have relied heavily on the men and women in uniform to combat the cartels that import, store, process, sell at home, and export drugs. Although involved in drug eradication for 4 decades, soldiers are trained to pursue, capture, and kill—with little experience in urban settings. The violence associated with these activities, which took more than 47,000 lives during the 6 years of his administration, appears

destined to rise even higher under Enrique Peña Nieto, who donned the presidential sash on December 1, 2012. This monograph (1) provides an overview of the military's participation in Mexico's version of the crusade against drugs, (2) focuses on the recruitment of military men to serve in traditionally civilian law enforcement posts, (3) indicates tasks that the armed forces have assumed or expanded in recent years, and (4) examines the longer term impact of the Army's ever-enlarging role in the country's affairs as a result of battling DTOs.

### **Overview of the Military's Role in Drug War.**

President Fox committed an average of 19,293 troops annually to battling drug trafficking. This figure soared 133 percent to 45,000 during the Calderón *sexenio*. In 2009 alone, the Army assigned 48,750 men to combating narcotics syndicates—with approximately one-quarter of these cadres involved in joint operations with the Navy, the Federal Police, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S. Homeland Security Department, and other agencies.<sup>4</sup> The emphasis on the military produced mixed results. The National Defense Ministry (SEDENA) announced that, between December 1, 2006, and late December 2011, it had arrested 41,023 suspects, while killing 2,321 criminals.

In a separate report, SEDENA published an annual review of criminals whose lives it had taken: 2007 (22), 2008 (78), 2009 (211), 2010, (734), and through December 20, 2011 (1,246).<sup>5</sup> As part of the government's "Kingpin Strategy," the military apprehended or killed several dozen important capos, whose names appear in Figure 1. The Navy (SEMAR), which has

substantially increased its participation in battling narcos, came away with a collective red face in June 2012 when it touted the arrest of the son of the nation’s most-wanted kingpin, Sinaloa Cartel head, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán Loera. It turned out to be a case of mistaken identity, and they had taken a Felix Beltrán León, 23, an automobile salesman, into custody.<sup>6</sup> In all fairness, the two men bore a striking resemblance, and the Navy reported that Beltrán León had a large cache of weapons and money in his possession. Ever-cynical critics of the drug war claimed that these items were planted to justify the capture.

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2012</b>			
Heriberto Lazcano Lazcan	Commander of Los Zetas.	Oct. 8; captured in Coahuila (COAH).	Navy/Marines
Barajas, José Ricardo	Los Zetas (allegedly involved in the May 13, 2012, massacre of 49 to 60 innocents in Cadereyta, Nuevo León [NL]).	July 31; Santa Catarina, NL.	Army
Guizar Cárdenas, Mauricio “El Amarillo”	Los Zetas; assumed leadership in Tabasco (TAB), Veracruz VC), Chiapas (CHIS), Campeche (CAMP), and Quintana Roo (QR) after the arrest of “Lucky” Lechuga in Dec. 2011.	July 26; captured Huejotzingo, Puebla (PUE).	Navy
Villarreal Barragán, Sergio Enrique “El Grande”	Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO).	June 6; captured PUE.	Navy

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed by the Army, Navy, and Federal Police from 2007 to mid-2012.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2012 (cont.)</b>			
Elizondo Ramírez, Daniel “El Loco”	Los Zetas (allegedly involved in the May 13, 2012, massacre of 49 to 60 innocents in Cadereyta, NL).	May 18; captured Guadalupe, near Monterrey, NL.	Army
Pérez Casanova, Luis Alberto “Casanova”	Alleged chief of a group of bodyguards for Los Zetas in central VC.	May 3; captured Colonia Las Ánimas de Xalapa, VC.	Navy as part of the coordinated operation called “Veracruz Seguro”
Cázares Zambada, Sergio and Zambada Apodaca, Omar Israel	Sinaloa Cartel; nephews of Ismael “El Mayo” Zambada García, number two in the Sinaloa Cartel, headed by the notorious Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán Loera.	April 24; Tijuana, Baja California (BC).	Tijuana Municipal Police and Army
Domínguez Vélez, Romero “El Chaparro”	Los Zetas Plaza chief in Coatzacoalcos, Tamaulipas (TAMPS).	April 25; captured Coatzacoalcos, VC.	Army
Fragoso Martínez, José Carmen “El Conchas”/ “El Comandante Reyes”	Activist for Los Zetas in a dozen VC municipalities; arrested with several comrades.	April 18; captured Minatitlán, VC, along with the mayor of Chinameca and four accomplices.	Army
Medina Mejía, Francisco “El Quemado”	Zeta leader who master-minded the Aug. 25, 2011 fire-bombing of Monterrey’s Casino Royale.	April 5; captured on the border of TAMPS and NL.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**



<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2012 (cont.)</b>			
Serna Padilla, José Guadalupe or Hernández Muñiz, Oswaldo “El Zopilote”	A leader of the New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG).	March 18; captured Zapotiltic, Jalisco (JAL), along with Óscar Pozos Jiménez.	Army
Valencia Salazar, Eric “El 85”	CJNG	March 9; captured Zapopan, JAL.	Army
Ramírez Cuenca, Valentín “El Comandante Balón”	Los Zetas Plaza chief in La Comarca Lagunera.	March 7: captured Gómez Palacio, Durango (DGO).	Army
Guerra Valdez, Gerardo “El Guerra”/ “Z-15”	Plaza chief in Nuevo Laredo since Aug. 2, 2011 when he replaced Jorge Luis de la Peña Brizuela, aka “Pompín,” who was killed.	March 1; killed Nuevo Laredo, TAMPS.	Army
Sarabia Ramón, José Luis “El Pepito”	Los Zetas ranking Zeta; Formerly Plaza chief in San Luis Potosí, which oversaw the killing of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agent Jaime Zapata.	Jan. 11; captured on border between Coahuila (COAH) and NL.	Army
<b>2011</b>			
Rodríguez Olivera, Luis “El Güero”	Head of Los Güeros and supposedly linked to the Sinaloa Cartel.	Dec. 27; captured Distrito Federal (DF) Airport	Federal Police
Cabrera Sarabia, Felipe “El Inge”	Sinaloa Cartel “El Chapo” lieutenant.	Dec. 23; captured Cuiacián, Sinaloa (SIN).	Army
Hernández Lechuga, Raúl “El Lucky”/“Z-16”	Los Zetas; member of original cadres; linked to disappearance of 9 Navy personnel; regional leader for southeast part of the country.	Dec. 12; captured Córdoba, VC.	Navy

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2011 (cont.)</b>			
Cárdenas Rivera, Ezequiel “El Junior”	Gulf Cartel; son of Leader Antonio Ezequiel “Tony Tormenta” Cárdenas Guillén.	Nov. 29: captured Matamoros, TAMPS.	
Ramírez Morales, Santos “El Santo Sapo”	Los Zetas Plaza chief in Chiapas and Tabasco.	Nov. 24: capture announced Ocozocoautla, CHIS.	Army
Vega Pacheco, José Augusto “El Pino”	Los Zetas; recruited police for Los Zetas in Hidalgo and linked to 8 murders.	Nov. 21; captured Pachuca, Hidalgo (HGO).	Hidalgo Public Security Police
Alemán Narváez, Alfredo “El Comandante Alemán”	Los Zetas; active in San Luis Potosí.	Nov. 15; captured Fresnillo, Zacatecas (ZAC)	Army
Orozco Favela, Juan Gabriel “El Gasca”	Knights Templars Plaza chief in Morelia.	Nov. 13; captured Morelia, Michoacán (MICH).	Army
Limón Sánchez, Ovidio	Sinaloa Cartel	Nov. 9; captured Culiacán, SIN.	Army
Sillas Rocha, Juan Francisco “El Sillas”/ “El Rueda”	Tijuana Cartel Arellano Félix Organization (AFO); key lieutenant to cartel chief Fernando “El Ingeniero” Sánchez Arellano.	Nov. 5; captured Tijuana, BC.	Army
Rodríguez Báez, Héctor Russell “El Toro”	La Familia	Nov. 5; captured Chalco, Mexico State (EDOMEX).	Federal Police
Oliva Castillo, Carlos “La Rana”	Los Zetas	Oct. 12; captured Saltillo, COAH.	

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2011 (cont.)</b>			
Salgueiro, Noel "El Flaco Salgueiro"	Founder of La Gente Nueva (gang linked to Sinaloa Cartel).	Capture announced Oct. 5; Culiacán, SIN.	Army
Solis Solís, Saúl "El Lince"	Knights Templars; cousin of one of organization's top leaders, Enrique Plancarte Solís.	Sept. 19; captured Mújica, Nueva Italia, MICH.	Army
Moreno Flores, José Carlos or Héctor Adán Rubalcava Rivera "La Calentura"	Sinaloa Cartel chief operator in Guerrero.	Sept. 18; captured Tlalpan, DF.	Army
Flores Borrego, Samuel "El Metro"	Gulf Cartel Plaza chief in Reynosa and ranking member of syndicate.	Sept. 2; Army announced finding the body; killed by Los Zetas.	Los Zetas
Benítez Servín, Ricardo "El Mudo"	BLO Lieutenant for Guerrero's "Costa Grande."	Aug. 13; captured QR.	Army
De la Peña Brizuela, Jorge Luis "El Pompín"	Los Zetas	Aug. 2; killed Nuevo Laredo, TAMPS.	Army
Quintanilla Soriano Valdemar "El Adal"	Los Zetas financial operator	Aug. 2; captured Saltillo, COAH.	Army
Beltrán Coronel, Martín "El Águila"	Guadalajara Cartel and allied with Sinaloa Cartel.	Capture announced May 13; Zapopan, JAL.	Army
Manuel de Jesús Palma Morquecho Manuel de Jesús "Macario"	Cártel del Pacífico; specialized in drug shipments in Sonora. Plaza boss for Nogales, Agua Prieta, Naco, and Cananea.	July 28; captured Agua Prieta, Sonora (SON).	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2011 (cont.)</b>			
Abarte Arreaga, Javier “La Jaiba”	Los Zetas; believed to have participated in the Aug. 2010 assassination of Santiago, NL, Mayor Edemiro Cavazos Leal.	Capture announced July 10; Santiago, NL.	Army
Mora Cortes, Sergio Antonio “El Toto”	Los Zetas	Capture announced Feb. 28; Saltillo, COAH.	Navy (Marines)
Zapata Espinoza, Julián “El Piolín” or “Tweety Bird”	Los Zetas; involved in attack on two agents of the U.S. ICE.	Feb. 23; captured San Luis Potosí, SLP,	Navy (Marines)
<b>2010</b>			
Beltrán Leyva, Arturo “El Barbas”	BLO	Dec. 16; killed Cuernavaca, Morelos (MOR).	Navy (Marines)
Cárdenas Guillén, Ezequiel “Tony Tormenta”	Gulf Cartel	Nov. 5; killed Matamoros, TAMPS.	Navy (Marines)
Poveda Ortega, Harold Mauricio “El Cornejo”/“El Flaco”	BLO; link with Colombian Norte de Valle cartel.	Nov. 5; captured DF.	Federal Police
Valdez Villarreal, Édgar “La Barbie”	Independent Cartel of Acapulco (CIDA).	Aug.10; captured near DF.	Federal Police
Coronel Villarreal, Ignacio “Nacho”	Guadalajara Cartel and allied with Sinaloa Cartel.	July 29; killed Zapopan, JAL.	Army
Villarreal Barragán, Sergio Enrique “El Grande”	BLO	Sept. 12; captured PUE.	Navy (Marines)
Martínez López, Erick Alejandro “El Motokles”	Los Zetas QR.	March 27: captured DF.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2010 (cont.)</b>			
Estrada Sánchez, José Antonio “El Cuevo” and Lara Hernández, Julio César “El Piñata”	Los Zetas Palenque, CHIS.	March 14: captured on highway between Chancalá, CHIS, and Emiliano Zapata, TAB.	Army
Salazar Rodríguez, Jesús Alejandro “El Tin”	Gulf Cartel; active in Guanajuato; captured with 2 accomplices.	Feb. 3: captured Cancún, QR.	Army
Simental García, Teodoro “El Tio”	Formerly Tijuana/AFO.	Jan. 2; captured La Paz, Baja California Sur (BCS).	Federal Police
<b>2009</b>			
Carlos Beltrán Leyva	BLO	Dec. 30; captured Culiacán, SIN.	Federal Police
Amdaya Espinoza, Floriberto and/or García González, José Luis “El Ricochet”	Gulf Cartel Auditor for San Luis Potosi (SLP), Aguascalientes, and Zacatecas; captured with three comrades.	Dec. 29; captured Saltillo, COAH.	Army
Acosta Saucedo, Julio Arturo Acosta Vargas, Julio Arturo	Los Zetas; assassins of Marine Melquisedet Angulo Córdova.	Dec. 22; captured Villahermosa, TAB.	Army
Rodríguez Trejo Emilio and/or Avendaño Rivera, Pedro “El Pery”	Gulf Cartel Plaza chief in Coatzacoalcos, VC; captured with 11 accomplices.	Dec. 10: captured Coatzacoalcos, VC.	Army
Altuzar Cortez, Fred “El Negro”	Gulf Cartel; active in Mexico-Guatemala frontier.	Oct. 29; captured Chicomuselo, CHIS.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2009 (cont.)</b>			
Nava Valencia, Óscar Orlando “El Lobo”	Valencia Cartel; close to Ignacio Coronel Villarreal.	Oct. 28; captured Guadalajara, JAL.	Army
Ramos Garza, Pedro “El Güero”	N.A.	Oct. 5: captured San Pedro Garza García, NL.	Army
Ruiz Tlapanco, Sergio Enrique “El Tlapa” and Dominguez Macías, Ana Georgina “La Conta Gina”	Gulf Cartel money handlers.	Sept. 8; captured Coatzacoalcos, VC.	Army
Hernández del Real, Gerardo “El Moreno”	Juárez Cartel/La Línea gang.	Sept. 1; captured Ciudad (Cd.) Juárez, Chihuahua (CHIH).	Army
Carranco Salazar Juan Daniel “El Colosio”	Gulf Cartel	Aug. 8: captured Cancún, QR.	Federal Police/Army
Romo Alcaraz, Guillermo “El Meme”	AFO	July 25: captured Tijuana, BC.	Army
Jurado Zarzoza, Juan Manuel “El Puma”/“El R”	Gulf Cartel Cancún Plaza chief captured with three accomplices.	June 12: captured Cancún, QR.	Army
Parra Ramos, José Filberto “La Perra”	Ex-AFO; aligned with Teodoro García Simental.	June 11: captured Tijuana, BC.	Army and Navy
Cárdenas Medina, Mario Alberto “El Betillo”	Gulf Cartel; nephew of Osiel Cárdenas Guillén.	June 9; captured Matamoros, TAMPS.	Army
Arteaga, Sergio Raúl “El Coccocho”	Gulf Cartel	June 1; captured Monterrey, NL.	Federal Police/Army
Beltrán Burgos, Roberto “El Doctor”	Sinaloa Cartel lieutenant in Culiacan.	May 29: captured Culiacán, SIN.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2009 (cont.)</b>			
Camacho Pérez, Félix Or Hernández González José “El Boti”	Gulf Cartel Plaza chief Cancún, QR.	May 26: captured Cancún, QR.	Army
Garza Lozano, Nelson “El Luchador”	Gulf Cartel Plaza chief in Cd. Victoria, TAMP. S.	May 20: captured Ciudad Victoria, TAMP. S.	Tabasco Ministerial Police
Godoy Castro, Isaac Manuel “Dany” or “Martín”	AFO captured with six accomplices.	April 21: captured Tijuana, BC.	Army: Assistant Attorney General's Office for Special Investigations on Organized Crime (SIEDO)
Granados Vargas, Rubén “El Nene”	BLO	April 13: captured San Luís la Loma, Guerrero (GRO).	Army
Carrillo Leyva, Vicente	Juárez Cartel	April 2: captured DF.	Federal Police
Huerta Ríos, Héctor “La Burra”/“El Junior”	BLO; active in Monterrey.	March 24: captured Monterrey, NL.	Army Special Forces
Nájera Talamantes, Sigifredo “El Canicón”	Los Zetas	March 20: captured Saltillo, COAH.	Army; SIEDO
Zambada Niebla, Vicente “El Vincentillo”	Sinaloa Cartel; son of Ismael Zambada García.	March 18; captured DF.	Army
Mendoza Aguirre, Napoleón de Jesús “El Napo”	Gulf Cartel	March 12: captured Cancún, QR.	Federal Policy/Army
Fariás Álvarez, Juan José “El Abuelo”	La Familia Michoacán	March 4; captured Tepalcatepec, MICH.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2009 (cont.)</b>			
Almanza Morales, Octavio “Gori 4” Narro López, Ashly “Comandante Bonbón”	Gulf Cartel	Feb. 9: captured Cancún, QR.	
Rivera García, Adrián “El Primo Rivera”	BLO	Jan. 6; captured Tlapa de Comonfort, GRO.	Army
<b>2008</b>			
Espinosa Barrón, Alberto “La Fresa”	La Familia Michoacán	Dec. 29; captured Morelia, MICH	Army
Romero de los Santos, Luis Antonio “El Chavo”	BLO; captured with several accomplices.	Dec. 23; captured Zihuatanejo, GRO.	Army
Díaz Ramón, Javier “El Java Díaz”	Gulf Cartel	Dec. 22; captured Veracruz, VC.	Army
González Durán, Jaime “El Hummer”	Los Zetas	Nov. 7; captured Reynosa, TAMPS.	Grupo Especial De Operaciones (GOPES) Public Security Ministry (SSP)
Arellano Félix, Eduardo	AFO	Oct. 26; captured, DF.	Army
Zambada Reyes, Jesús “El Rey”	BLO	Oct. 22; captured DF.	Federal Police
Arellano Félix, Eduardo “El Doctor”	Tijuana Cartel/AFO	Oct. 25; captured Tijuana.	Federal Police and Army (Special Forces)
Sánchez Arras, Pedro “El Tigre”	Juárez Cartel; important lieutenant.	May 17; captured DF.	Army

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**



<b>Leader</b>	<b>Cartel</b>	<b>Date and Place Captured/Killed</b>	<b>Agency Responsible for the Take-Down</b>
<b>2008 (cont.)</b>			
Díaz Cellar, Rogelio or Díaz Contreras Rogelio "El Rojo"/"El Roger"	Gulf Cartel Plaza chief in Cd. Victoria, TAMPS.	April 24; captured Cd. Victoria, TAMPS.	Army/Federal Police
Peña Mendoza, Sergio "El Concord"	Gulf Cartel	March 14; captured Reynosa, TAMPS.	Federal Police
Araujo Ávila, Alfredo "El Popeye"	AFO	Jan. 25; Tijuana, BC	Army
Beltrán Leyva, Héctor Alfredo "El Mochomo"	BLO	Jan. 21; captured Culiacan, SIN.	Army/Federal Police
<b>2007</b>			
De la Cruz Reyna, Juan Carlos "JC"	Los Zetas	Aug. 28: captured DF.	Army/SIEDO
Reyes Enriquez, Luis "El Rex"/"Z-12"	Los Zetas	June 16; captured Atotonilco El Grande, HGO.	Army/SIEDO
Gallegos Alemán, Jorge Alberto de Jesús	Gulf Cartel Captured with 12 accomplices.	June 14: captured Torreón, COAH.	Federal Police/Army
Colín Ortega, Alfredo "El Gordo"	AFO	June 8: captured La Paz, BCS.	Army
Vargas García, Nabor "El Debora"	Los Zetas	April 18: captured Ciudad del Carmen, QR.	Army/SIEDO

**Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.**

Note: I am indebted to Nicole K. Shuman, a rising Senior at the College of William & Mary, for incredible assistance with this and other figures.

Sources: "Javier Torres Félix, Operaba en Sinaloa and está considerado al nivel del 'Chapo' Guzmán o 'El Mayo Zambada'" ("Javier Torres Félix Operates in Sinaloa and is Considered at the Level of 'Chapo' Guzmán or 'El Mayo Zambada'"), *Esmas*, January 27, 2004; "Cae operador de Los Zetas en Tamaulipas" ("Zeta Operator Falls in Tamaulipas"), *El Universal* March 14, 2009; "Los grandes capos del Narcotráfico que faltan por caer" ("The Large Narco-trafficking Capos Who Remain at Large"), *El Universal*, August 31, 2010; "Destaca 2010 como año productivo en caída de capos" ("2010 Stands Out as a Productive Year in the Fall of Capos"), *El Universal*, December 2, 2010; "Policías estatales detienen a presunto reclutador de 'Zetas' en Hidalgo" ("State Police Detain Suspected 'Zeta' Recruiter in Hidalgo"), *CNNMéxico*, November 22, 2011; "Capturados y presentadas" ("Captured and Arraigned, November of 2011"), *Terra*, November 25, 2011; "Detienen a Ezequiel Cárdenas Rivera 'El Junior'," hijo de 'Tony Tormenta'" ("Ezequiel Cárdenas Rivera 'El Junior,' son of Tony Tormenta' Detained"), *Univisión Noticias*, November 29, 2011; "Los 10 capos mexicanos que cayeron en el 2011" ("The 10 Mexican Capos Who Fell in 2011"), *CNN en Español*, December 31, 2011; "Cae capo; lo ligan a 50 muertes" ("Capo Falls Who Was Linked to 50 Murders"), *Reforma*, January 13, 2012; and "Detienen a líderes, armamento y droga" ("Leaders Arrested with Arms and Drugs"), *Reforma*, January 22, 2012; "Capturan a líder de Zetas en La Laguna" ("Zeta Leader in La Laguna" Captured"), *Reforma*, March 9, 2012; "El Ejército detiene al presunto líder del Cártel de Jalisco" (Army Captures Presumed Leader of Jalisco Cartel"), *CNNMéxico*, March 9, 2012; "Desata bloqueos captura de capo" ("Road Blocks Broken . . . Capo Captures"), *Reforma*, March 10, 2012; "Mexico: el Ejército detiene a jefe de Los Zetas en región del norte" ("Mexico: the Army Arrests Zeta Chief in Northern Region"), *Infolatam*, March 11, 2012; "Capturan en Jalisco a otro líder del cártel" ("Another Cartel Leader Captured in Jalisco"), *Reforma*, March 19, 2012; "Achacan a golpe de suerte la caída de 'El Quemado'" ("Lucky Break Leads to Fall of 'The Burned One'"), *Reforma*, April 6, 2012; Rubén Mosso, "Aprende Marina a 10 'matazetras' en Veracruz" ("Marines Capture 10 'Zeta-Killers' in Veracruz"), *Milenio*, April 16, 2012; "Cae Edil panistas con jefe de zetas" ("PAN Mayor Falls with Chief of Zetas"), *Reforma*, April 19, 2012; Roberto Sosa, "Ejército detiene a jefe de sicarios" (The Army Detains Boss of Gunmen"), *Diario Xalapa*, April 25, 2012; "Detienen con droga a sobrinos del 'Mayo,'" ("Nephews of del "Mayo" Captured with Drugs," *Reforma*, April 27, 2012; "Captura Semar a jefe 'Zeta' en

Veracruz" ("Navy Captured 'Zeta' Chief in Veracruz"), *Reforma*, May 4, 2012; Con captura de *El Loco* termina un reinado de terror en Cadereyta" ("The Arrest of *El Loco* Ends a Reign of Terror in Cadereyta"), *Excélsior*, May 12, 2012; Raúl Flores, "Cae El Chilango, zeta viculado a muerte de 4 marinos" ("Arrested Mexico City Resident Tied to Death of Four Marines"), *Excélsior*, May 12, 2012; Arrested "Detienen a capo rival de La Barbie" "Capo Who Was La Barbie's Rival Arrested"), *Blureport*, June 7, 2012; "Cae líder de Zetas en sureste del País" ("Zeta Leader in Southeast of Country Falls"), *Reforma*, July 27, 2012; and various press bulletins from the Attorney General of Mexico (PGR) and SEDENA.

### Figure 1. Major Capos Arrested/Killed, cont.

During the conflict, the Army has suffered kidnappings and deaths of its own elements, as reported in Figure 2.

Year	Deaths	Wounded	Kidnappings
2011	22 (Through May 18)		59 (Through December 7)
2010	88		69
2009	44		34
2008	54		28
2007	22		6
Total	267	744	196

Source: Benito Jiménez, "Crecen levantones . . . pero de militares" ("Kidnappings Increase . . . but of Military Personnel"), *Reforma*, January 2, 2012; "Mueren 18 sicarios por cada militar" ("18 Gunmen Killed for Each Member of the Military"), *Reforma*, December 20, 2011; Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Estado Mayor).

### Figure 2. Deaths, Woundings, and Kidnappings of Army Personnel, 2007-December 2011.

## Law Enforcement.

Various states and large cities have recruited ex-members of the armed forces to fill traditional civilian posts in law enforcement—appointments usually recommended and approved by National Defense Secretary Guillermo Galván Galván. Figure 3 illustrates this phenomenon. The number of military men in these roles has risen from six in February 2009 to 36 in April 2012, with six officers in charge of state police forces. Of the 12 governors elected in 2010, seven opted to install a general at the head of the State Security Ministry: Carlos Lozano de la Torre (Aguascalientes), Roberto Borge Angulo (Quintana Roo), Mario López Valdéz (Sinaloa), Egidio Torre Cantú (Tamaulipas), Mariano González Zarur (Tlaxcala), Javier Duarte de Ochoa (Veracruz), and Miguel Alonso Reyes (Zacatecas).

State/ Municipality	Position	Incumbent	Date Appointed
Acapulco (Guerrero)	Secretary of Public Security	Col. (Ret.) Manuel Paz Espinosa  Gen. (Ret.) Héctor Paulino Vargas López (took over after Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Serafín Valdéz Martínez resigned on Feb. 16, 2010)	Late July 2011
Aguascalientes	Secretary of Public Security	Civilian  Div. Gen. (Ret.) Rolando Eugenio Hidalgo Eddy	Oct. 6, 2008
Armería Colima	Director of Municipal Police	Capt. (Ret.) Jorge Mario Mercado Larios	Feb. 3, 2011

**Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts as of January 1, 2012.**

<b>State/ Municipality</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>
Baja California	Director of State Ministerial Police	Brig Gen. Florencio Raúl Cuevas Salgado; former commander 2nd Military Zone headquartered in Tijuana	March 27, 2008
	Director of State Preventative Police	Lt. Col. (Ret.) Eusebio Alecio Villatoro Córtez	Feb. 20, 2009
Boca del Río Veracruz	Director of Transit	Rear Adm. Saúl Cotarelo Díaz	Jan. 23, 2012
Chiapas	Secretary of Public Security	Maj. Rogelio Hernández de la Mata	Dec. 30, 2010
Chihuahua	Director General of Unified State Police	Div. Gen. (Ret.) Julián David Rivera Bretón	Oct. 3, 2010
Ciudad Juárez	Director of Public Security	Lt. Col. Julián Leyzaola Pérez*	March 10, 2011
	Police Chief	Div. Gen. Julián David Rivera Bretón	March 16, 2009
	Director of Security Operations	Col. (Ret.) Alfonso Cristóbal García Melgar	March 16, 2009
Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas	Chief of Public Security	First Capt. Rafael Lomelí Martínez	April 18, 2011
	Chief of Public Security	Gen. (Ret.) Ubaldo Ayala Tinoco	Jan. 1, 2011
Coahuila	Director General of State Investigative Police	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Jesús Ernesto Estrada Bustamante	Aug. 12, 2008
	Undersecretary of Prevention and Social Readaptation	Gen. José Luis García Dorantes	Feb. 24, 2009

**Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts, cont.**

<b>State/ Municipality</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>
Colima	Chief of the State Preventative Police (Equivalent to Secretary of Public Security)	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Raúl Pinedo Dávila	Dec. 6, 2010
	Coordinator of Intelligence in the Center of Control, Command, Computation, and Communications (C-4)	Adm. Andrés Humberto Cano	Dec. 6, 2010
Ensenada, BC	Commissioner (in charge of security and Director of Municipal Police)	Div. Gen. (Ret.) Florencio Raúl Cuevas Salgado	Sept. 21, 2011
		Div. Gen. Juan Heriberto Salinas Altés (Ret.); former Army Chief of Staff	April 1, 2011
Federal District	Secretary of Public Security	Rear-Adm. Manuel Mondragón Y Kalb (Physician)	
Gómez Palacio (Durango)	Director of Municipal Public Security	Lt. Col. (Ret.) Antonio Horacio Ramírez Morales	Feb. 14, 2008
Guadalupe (Nuevo León)	Secretary of Public Security	Col. (Ret.) Enrique Alberto Sanmiguel Sánchez	April 6, 2011
	Director of Police	First Sgt. (Ret.) Florencio Santos Hernández	
	Coordinator of C-4	Capt. (Ret.) Alejandro Almazán Hernández	
	Coordinator of Recruitment, Instruction, and Training	Paymaster (Ret.) Hermelindo Aquileo Sánchez Castellanos	

**Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts, cont.**

<b>State/ Municipality</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>
Guanajuato	Secretary of Public Security and Civil Protection	Civilian Ramón Almonte Borje, who promised to promote tourism in by hiring 18- to 25-year-old female cops dressed in sexy uniforms for beach patrol duties in Acapulco	April 1, 2011
		Div. Gen. Juan Heriberto Salinas Altés (Ret.)	April 1, 2005 to April 1, 2011
Matamoros (Tamaulipas)	Secretary of Public Security	Lt. Col. Gabriel López Ordaz	Jan. 18, 2011
	Operations Director of Secretary of Public	Lt. Rafael Antonio Huerta Méndez	Jan. 18, 2011
	Security Director of Transit	Lt. Roberto Guerrero Roldán	Jan. 18, 2011
Michoacán	Secretary of Public Security	Div. Gen. (Ret.) Manuel García Ruiz	Aug. 8, 2010
	Coordinator of State Preventative Police	Capt. (2nd) Manuel García Ruiz	Oct. 26, 2010
Monterrey		Gen. (Ret.) José Pablo Leonel Vargas Martínez	Jan. 4, 2012.
Morelos	Secretary of Public Security	Div Gen. (Ret.) Gilberto Toledano Sánchez**	April 10, 2011
		Div. Gen (Ret.) Gastón Menchaca Arias, former commander of 10th Military Region (Yucatán)	May 17, 2009
Nuevo Laredo	Secretary of Public Security	Brig. Gen. (Active) Manuel Farfán Carreola	Jan. 1, 2011
Nuevo León	Secretary of Public Security	Div. Gen. Jaime Castañeda Bravo	Feb. 3, 2011
Oaxaca	Secretary of Citizen Protection	Lt. Col. (Ret.) Javier Rueda Velásquez	March 31, 2008
Puebla	Secretary of Public Security	Div. Gen. Mario Ayón Rodríguez (Ret.); former director-general of personnel for National Defense Ministry	March 1, 2005

**Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts, cont.**

<b>State/ Municipality</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Incumbent</b>	<b>Date Appointed</b>
Querétaro	Secretary of Public Security	Capt. Adolfo Vega Montoto	Oct. 4, 2009
Quintana Roo	Secretary of Public Security	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Carlos Bibiano Villa Castillo***	April 5, 2011
		Vice Adm. Miguel Ángel Ramos (Replaced Salvador Rocha Vargas who was arrested on charges of cooperating with drug traffickers)	Sept. 4, 2009
Rosarito, BC	Secretary of Public Security	Maj. (Ret.) Magdaleno Vázquez Ruiz	Nov. 26, 2010
Saltillo (Coahuila)	Director General of the Municipal Preventative Police	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Marco Antonio Delgado Talavera	Jan 29, 2009
San Luis Potosí	Secretary of Public Security	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Heliodoro Guerrero	Jan. 15, 2011
Tabasco	Acting Secretary of Public Security	Maj. (Ret.) Sergio López Uribe	Feb. 1, 2009
Tamaulipas	Secretary of Public Security	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Ubaldo Ayala Tinoco	Dec. 30, 2010
Tijuana, BC	Municipal Secretary of Public Security	First Capt. (Ret.) Gustavo Huerta Martínez****	Nov. 26, 2010
Tlaxcala	Secretary of Public Security	Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Valentín Romano López *****	Jan. 15, 2011
Veracruz	Secretary of Public Security	Lt. Arturo Bermúdez Zurita *****	July 3, 2011
	Director of Public Transit	Rear Adm. Rodolfo Pallares Herrán	Feb. 23, 2012
Zacatecas	Secretary of Public Security	Gen. (Ret.) Jesús Pinto Ortiz	Sept. 11, 2010
	Director of State Preventative Police	Gen. (Ret.) Víctor Manuel Bosque Rodríguez	Nov. 3, 2010

**Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts, cont.**



Notes:

\* Leyzaola replaced Col. Laurencio Rodríguez.

\*\* Replaced Div. Gen. (Ret.) Gastón Menchaca Arias (14 days after seven people were killed in the state, including the son of writer and social activist Javier Sicilia.

\*\*\* Bibiano replaced Vice-Adm. Miguel Ángel Ramos Real.

\*\*\*\* Replaced Lt. Col. (Ret.) Julián Leyzaola Pérez, who became secretary of public security in Ciudad Juárez.

\*\*\*\*\* Replaced Div. Gen. José Leopoldo Martínez González (Ret).

\*\*\*\*\* Replaced Div. Gen. Sergio López Esquer: former zone commander for the states of Coahuila, Baja California, Baja California Sur, and Veracruz.

Sources: Jéscica Zermeño, "Toman generales mandos policiacos" ("Generals Assume Police Responsibilities"), *Reforma*, February 15, 2009; Jéscica Zermeño et al. "Optan estados por mando militar" ("States Opt for Military Leaders"), *Reforma*, February 15, 2009; "Encabezan los hermanos Ayón Rodríguez mandos policiacos en el país" ("Brothers Ayón Rodríguez Lead Military Posts in the Country"), *E-consulta*, February 15, 2009; "Gastón Menchaca, de Yucatán a Morelos, siempre en acción" ("Gastón Menchaca, from Yucatán to Morelos, Always in Action"), *NotiSureste.com.mx*, May 17, 2009; Silvia Hernández, "Nombran a militar titular de SSP en Q. Roo" ("Military Man Named Head of Public Security Ministry in Quintana Roo), *El Universal*, September 5, 2009; Roberto Aguilar, "Torre Cantú nombra a general titular de la SSP" ("Torre Cantú Names General as Head of Public Safety Ministry"), *El Universal.com.mx*, December 31, 2010; Mauro de la Fuente, "Asume militares policía de Matamoros" ("Military Officers Take Control of Police in Matamoros"), *Reforma.com*, January 19, 2011; "Nombran a militar titular de policía de Armería, Colima" ("Military Man Named Head of Police in Armería, Colima"), *Guerra Contra el Narco*, February 4, 2011; Juan Cedillo, "NL: general asume cargo de titular de Seguridad" ("Nuevo León: General Assumes Head of Public Safety"), *El Universal.com.mx*, February 5, 2011; Óscar Guadarrama, "El gobernador de Morelos cesa al secretario de Seguridad pública" ("Morelos Governor Fires Secretary of Public Security"), *CNN México*, April 10, 2011; Andro Aguilar, "Militarización sin resultados" ("Militarization without Results"), *Reforma* ("Enfoque"), April 10, 2011 (the author relied heavily on

this source); Édgar Ávila Pérez, “Arturo Bermúdez Zurita fue designado a la dependencia luego de la renuncia del general Sergio López Esquer” (“Arturo Bermúdez Zurita Was Designated as Head of Ministry after General Sergio López Esquer Stepped Down”), *El Universal*, July 3, 2011; and “Toma General mando de la Policía regia” (“General Takes Over Nuevo León Police”), *Reforma*, January 4, 2012; and “Asumen marinos Tránsito en Veracruz” (“Marines Assume Control of Transit in Veracruz”), *Reforma*, January 23, 2012.

### **Figure 3. Military Personnel in Public Safety Posts, cont.**

Meanwhile, men with military backgrounds hold the position of the secretaries of public security in 36 percent of the municipalities with the most homicides in the country, according to the National System of Public Security. Retired generals have assumed this role in the five cities that have registered the most killings: Acapulco, Chihuahua, Ciudad, Juárez, Culiacán, and Tijuana. On January 13, 2011, nine retired officers were named chiefs of nine municipalities in war-torn Tamaulipas: Altamira, Ciudad Victoria, Madero, Mante, Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, Río Bravo, and Tampico.

While by no means new to Mexico, this approach appeared to offer several advantages. First, the military men fill a void opened by the execution or resignation of 19 state and municipal security chiefs in dangerous posts. Three officials stepped down in Nuevo León municipalities: Allende, and Linares; another five civilians died at the hands of narco-traffickers.

Second, many of the officers selected have commanded one or more of the Army’s 12 regions and/or 45 zones, and boast years of experience struggling against drug mafias. Third, they are likely to have

ties to—and the confidence of—current regional and zonal military chiefs with whom they often coordinate assaults on DTOs. Fourth, whether retired or on leave, military officers may be familiar with the tactics of Los Zetas, the original contingent of which served in the Army's elite Special Forces Airmobile Group. General Rolando Eugenio Hidalgo Heddy, Public Security Secretary in Aguascalientes, headed these comandos. Nuevo León's safety chief, Jaime Castañeda Bravo, had previously served on SEDENA's general staff, headed armored regiments, and functioned as commander of the 38th and 43rd Military Zones.<sup>7</sup>

Fifth, generals, admirals, colonels, and majors have emerged from a culture of discipline that needs to be inculcated in civilian police.<sup>8</sup> Members of police forces have often acted in a venal, free-wheeling manner—to the point that thousands of serious kidnappings and other felonies go unreported because many citizens believe that the cops are in league with the miscreants. Even if military leaders cannot change behavior, they can oust incompetents and malefactors. For instance, General Salinas Altés removed 200 elements of Acapulco's Municipal Preventive Police when he took over as security boss in Guerrero, a poverty-stricken state plagued by lawlessness. Soon after becoming security chief in Monterrey, General José Pablo Leonel Vargas Martínez arrested 106 policemen and prosecutors who were accused of "*halconeo*"—that is, acting as "falcons" or lookouts for cartels.<sup>9</sup>

Sixth, officers are in a good position to recruit active-duty or retired members of the armed forces as policemen in the jurisdictions that they serve. Seventh, every public-opinion survey shows that the armed forces enjoy a much better reputation than do the police. Such praise centers on their efforts in di-

saster relief, as well as their anti-crime missions. As one anonymous source indicated, “even if military security chiefs are as corrupt as their civic counterparts, they give a psychological lift to the public.”

Finally, in light of the relatively low pensions received by retired officers, assuming a civilian post supplements their income and reduces pressure to increase retirement income. Overall security expenditures have sky-rocketed; and Mexico’s Finance Ministry reported that the military budget shot up 74.2 percent between 2007 (MEX\$ 32,200 billion) and 2012 (MEX\$ 55,610 billion).<sup>10</sup>

### **Preliminary Results.**

How have the officers in mufti fared? Upon taking office, retired generals, colonels, or captains often clashed with local police forces, especially when they attempted to cleanse their ranks. In fact, as described in Figure 4, by November 2009, military units had clashed with local, state, or federal law enforcement agencies at least 65 times—up from two confrontations in 2008.<sup>11</sup> After all, Los Zetas, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Knights Templars, and other cartels often demand the appointment of a “reliable” security chief in municipalities that lie along trafficking routes. Soon after reaching Tijuana to head the municipal police on March 10, 2009, Lieutenant Colonel Julián Leyzaola Pérez oversaw the dismissal or resignation of 600 law enforcement agents, including 84 who were arrested for allegedly cooperating with organized crime. Meanwhile, 2,325 people, among them 43 policemen, died during these 3 years. The crime rate did fall on his watch due to a confluence of factors: the city’s population is relatively compact; Governor José Guadalupe

Osuna Millán (2007-13) cooperated in the fight against DTOs; and the increasing dominance of the Sinaloa Cartel, which supplanted the Arellano Félix Organization, contributed to stabilizing the sprawling border city. The drop in violence aside, the state human rights commission and the National Human Rights Commission charged the police chief with torture before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. In addition, the nongovernmental organization (NGO), Human Rights Watch, criticized Leyzaola for 390 disappearances, including four young *tijuaneses*.

Date/Place	Police Agency	Military-Agency	Nature of Conflict	Outcome
January 4, 2011 San Nicolás, NL	Municipal Police	Army	Police officers helped members of crime group escape by obstructing the military chasing the armed suspects.	Three military personnel were hurt; one civilian killed.
March 25, 2011 San Luis Potosí	Municipal Police	Army	Mexican Army detained three police officers San Luis Potosí Direção-Geral dos Serviços Prisionais (DGSP) for involvement in a robbery of two civilians; police allegedly took 32,330,000 pesos.	Not Available
November 22, 2010 Apodaca, NL	Municipal Police	Marines	Suspicious activities led Marines to investigate police officers.	Three outlaws and four policemen were arrested.
October 26, 2010 Monterrey, NL	Municipal Police	Army	The Army stopped to investigate four policemen from Monterrey accused of following the military personnel of the Public Security Ministry and the Federal Investigative Agency.	Only one policeman was taken into custody because he was carrying illegal radio equipment.
October 3, 2010 Monterrey, NL	Municipal Police	Army	Army investigated Guadalupe police for helping criminals escape after they threw a grenade into the city's main plaza.	Twelve people hurt.
August 20, 2010 Santiago, NL	Municipal Police		Police accused of spying on, kidnapping, and killing Mayor Edelmiro Cavazos Leal.	Six municipal police arrested.
July 29, 2010 Veracruz	Municipal Police	Army	Federal judge in Veracruz ordered military to arrest 40 municipal police officers, 16 ministerial officers, and 6 former law enforcement officials suspected of involvement in organized crime.	

**Figure 4. Examples of Clashes between Military and Civilian Police.**

<b>Date/Place</b>	<b>Police Agency</b>	<b>Military-Agency</b>	<b>Nature of Conflict</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
January 13, 2010 Monterrey, NL	Municipal and State Police	Army	Policeman arrested for supposed involvement in a kidnapping; after his incarceration, the suspected sought help from fellow officers, who stopped the Army from taking the detainee to a military facility.	After exchanging verbal insults and a nearly 5-hour traffic stoppage, state police allowed the municipal officer to be taken to the Attorney General's Office (PGR); after the incident the, Nuevo León Secretary General Javier Treviño, claimed that the state police arrived to support the military.
August 31, 2009 Monterrey, NL	Municipal Police	Army	Municipal police accused of supporting criminal; Army detained an armed man with drugs; law enforcement officers interfered with troops transporting suspect to a military camp.	One police officer tried to flee the scene and was shot in the leg by a soldier and transported to military camp; three police officers arrested a couple of days later.
September 2, 2009 Monterrey, NL	Municipal Police State and Federal	Army	After an incident in August, military inspected documents of law enforcement agent.	Municipal cop incarcerated for not having proper ID.
June 16, 2009 San Pedro de la Garza, NL	Municipal Police	Army	Army took away firearms from police employed by the local Public Security Ministry.	
May 9, 2009 Cuernavaca, Morelos	Municipal Police	Army	Army arrested 27 police officers from Yuatepec, including the secretary of Public Security; believed to be protecting drug sellers.	
May 5, 2009 Aguascalientes	Municipal Police	Army	Police officers and military officers found associated with the Gulf Cartel; the Assistant Attorney General for Specialized Investigation of Organized Crime (SIEDO) in DF stepped in to investigate the situation.	Six policemen and 12 military men arrested.

**Figure 4. Examples of Clashes between Military and Civilian Police, cont.**

Date/Place	Police Agency	Military-Agency	Nature of Conflict	Outcome
April 13, 2008 Municipal of Monterrey and Escobedo, NL	State Police	Army	The local police sought to thwart an inquiry sparking a fight in Escobedo; on a different occasion, state police resisted an investigation and surrounded four military units in Monterrey.	Six injured; during the second encounter, four police suffered injuries; some state police were arrested; an arrangement allowed release of the police officers; as the military left the scene, police officers yelled insults. Police officers were later taken into custody and handed over to a military court.
April 8, 2008 Ciudad Juarez	Municipal police	Army	Army shot at a police vehicle after it failed to stop for inspection; police were attending to an emergency; Army arrested municipal cop.	One police officer received a gun shot in the head and was in critical condition; the other two officers disappeared.
June 6, 2007 Mexicali, BC international airport	PFP (Federal Preventive Police)	Army	Military took control of the airport; PFP agents had allowed a smuggler to bring 26 kilograms of cocaine into the country; 14 people were investigated.	The military arrested seven officials of the PFP and three agents of the National Migration Institute (INM); suspects turned over to SIEDO.

**Figure 4. Examples of Clashes  
between Military and Civilian Police, cont.**

Sources: “Ejército detiene a tres policías de SLP” (“Army Detains Three Police in SLP”), *El Universal*, March 25, 2011; “Narcobloqueos en cuatro municipios de Nuevo León por la detención de un capo” (“Blockades by Municipal Police in Four Nuevo León Municipalities to Arrest Capo”), *La Jornada*, November 22, 2010; “Ejército Mexicano detiene a 27 policías en Morelos” (“The Mexican Army Detains 27 Police Officers in the State of Morelos”), *Televisa*, May 9, 2009; “Ejército retira armas a policías de San Pedro Garza, NL” (“Army Takes Firearms Away from Police Officers of San Pedro Garza, NL”), *Televisa*, June 16, 2009; “Ejército revisa armas de 500 policías en NL” (“Army Inspects Firearms of 500 Po-

lice Officers in NL”), *El Universal*, November 28, 2011; “Policías y Militares se enfrentan en Nuevo León” (“Police and Soldiers Confront each Other in Nuevo León”), *El Universal*, January 13, 2010; “‘Cacería’ de policías espías en la metrópoli” (“Hunt for Spying Police Officers in the City”), *revistacodigo21* (magazine), October 26, 2010; “Investigan a policías por narcoterrorismo en Guadalupe; se recuperan heridos en granadazo” (“Police Investigated for Narcoterrorism in Guadalupe, Injured Recover After Granada Explosion”), *revistacodigo21* (magazine), October 3, 2010; “Confirman autoridades detención de 56 policías” (“Authorities Confirm Detention of 56 Officers”), *El Mexicano*, July 29, 2010; “Reportan balacera entre policías y militares en Nuevo León” (“Shootout between Police Officers and Military Soldiers Reported in Nuevo León”), *El Informador*, August 31, 2009; “Controlan los ‘Zetas’ a la policía de Aguascalientes,” (“The Zetas Control the Police in Aguascalientes”), *Entre Lineas*, May 5, 2009, “Enfrentamiento entre militares y policías en Monterrey deja seis heridos,” (“Confrontation Between Military and Police in Monterrey Leaves Six Wounded”), *Chihuahua al Instante*, April 13, 2008; “Militares balean a policías de Ciudad Juárez,” (“Military Shoot Police in Ciudad Juárez”), *La Jornada*, April 8, 2008; and “Arraigan a agentes federales adscritos al aeropuerto de Mexicali,” (“Federal Agents Assigned to Mexicali Airport Detained”), *La Jornada*, June 6, 2007.

#### **Figure 4. Examples of Clashes between Military and Civilian Police, cont.**

“The case of Julián Leyzaola is a rare mirage in which tough action in response to a security crisis has other costs: human rights’ abuses. He has transgressed the fundamental principle of democracy whereby civil authority must control the military,” stated Erubiel Tirado Cervantes, a security specialist at Mexico City’s IberoAmerican University.<sup>12</sup> These accusations did not prevent the convulsed city of Ciudad Juárez from hiring Leyzaola as its public security secretary on October 10, 2011, in a latter-day example of a sheriff facing desperados at High Noon. In this office, he leads a force of 1,800 police, working in six crime-rid-



den districts where 456 murders had been recorded by June 1, 2011. Almost a year later, Calderón announced a 60 percent fall in homicides as drug-related deaths declined from 300 each month to 120 deaths as part of the “We are all Juárez” initiative, which involves economic, social, political, and safety elements.<sup>13</sup> No deaths occurred in early December 2012.

Although conditions vary from state to state, overall the presence of military men in top security roles has not diminished the violence afflicting their areas of responsibility (see Figure 5). In view of venal police forces, governors and mayors may have had no choice other than to reach into the barracks for public safety czars. Such appointments also enable state and municipal executives to appear to be “tough on crime” even as they cut deals with cartels or turn a blind eye to illegal activities. One problem facing the retired officers is that they assume the civilian position without the benefit of the staff members who assisted them when they were on active duty.

When troops attempted to stop a suspicious looking SUV that was being escorted through Monterrey, they found themselves under fire from state policemen, who enabled the suspects to escape. “The moment they shoot at us, get in our way, use their guns to protect criminals, they become criminals themselves,” said General Guillermo Moreno Serrano, the regional commander in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León, which lie along the Texas border.<sup>14</sup>

A *WikiLeaks* publication of a conversation between Galván and a U.S. official revealed the defense secretary’s attitude toward the law enforcement agencies. He complained about joint operations with the police because “leaks of planning and information by corrupted officials have compromised past efforts.”<sup>15</sup>

State	Percentage Change of Robberies	Percentage Change of Kidnappings	Percentage Change of Homicides	Raw Number of Executions
Aguascalientes	13	-54	1	85
Chiapas	20	92	-6	n.a.
Chihuahua	4	-39	-3	1,008
Coahuila	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Colima	18	518	73	n.a.
Guanajuato	-7	-55	9	128
Michoacán	7	18	46	216
Morelos	7	160	15	433
Nuevo León	12	n.a.	27	n.a.
Querétaro	32	60	28	21
Quintana Roo	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
San Luis Potosí	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Sinaloa	-3	278	1	n.a.
Tamaulipas	-3	123	-9	n.a.
Tlaxcala	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Veracruz	-37	-100	-37	357
Zacatecas	3	27	17	18

Source: Monthly reports of the Executive Secretariat of the National System of Public Security (SESNSP) as compiled by Andro Aguilar, “Militarización sin resultados” (“Militarization without Results”), *Reforma* (“Enfoque”), April 10, 2011.

### **Figure 5. Crimes Committed in States with Military Law Enforcement Chiefs.**

Moreover, in Nuevo Laredo, the Los Zetas sadistic paramilitary cartel hire unofficial “police” – an estimated 3,000 young people – that far outnumber the regular force. These ubiquitous “spotters,” as local residents refer to them, prefer crew cuts, adorn themselves with gold chains and earrings, press cellphones to their ears, and wear shorts below their waists.<sup>16</sup>

Torreón's muscular Public Security Director Carlos Bibiano Villa Castillo also believes in an ultra hard line toward law-breakers. A Pancho Villa descendent and one of 36 children, the retired general told a reporter that he preferred to kill members of organized crime rather than interrogate them. "I like to feel the flow of adrenaline. On patrol, when I capture a Zeta or Chapo, I kill him. Why interrogate him? Here we beat the hell out of a bad actor. I have no confidence in the Federal Police because they do not kill [suspects], only arrest them. The Army and Navy kill them," he said 6 days after the March 2, 2011, confrontation with cartel gun men.<sup>17</sup> Either because of or despite his stance, the mustachioed retired brigadier general was appointed secretary of public security by Quintana Roo's new governor Roberto Borge Ángulo.

Upon leaving Torreón, he emphasized his loyalty: "my father is the Army, my mother is the Patria," he affirmed. He also claimed to have been "sleeping with the enemy . . . of the 1,100 elements under his command, 1,000 were corrupt; they sold uniforms; they sold gasoline; even when on patrol they carried out their dirty business everywhere," he stated.<sup>18</sup> Soon after arriving in Cancún, a "narco-message" threatened death to the general. It was signed by the "Zetas Special Forces."

### **Militarization Denied.**

On May 6, 2011, the federal government launched a campaign to attract candidates for 422 positions in a new Accredited State Police (Policía Estatal Acreditable [PEA]). "We believe that with your talent, your ethical integrity, you, young people . . . can contribute to this force that is so important to the Mexican State . . ." averred ex-Education Secretary and presi-

dential aspirant Alonso Lujambio Irazábal. The students explained their lack of interest in terms of “corruption,” “bad image,” “fat,” “drug addicts,” “danger,” and other pejoratives.<sup>19</sup>

Just as Los Zetas have relied on Guatemala’s tough-as-nails Kaibiles for training and support, the Mexican government has backed “Project Sparta,” which reportedly involves the L-3 MPRI paramilitary consortium based in Alexandria, Virginia. The respected *Reforma* newspaper indicated that the corporation has deployed ex-U.S. military personnel, who will establish 12 “Virtual Military Training Centers” where they will teach counterinsurgency, urban warfare, infantry tactics, and defense against improvised explosive devices. When contacted by telephone, Rick Kiernan, the company’s Senior Vice President of Strategic Communication, denied that his firm had an arrangement with Mexico and that: “There has been no contract awarded that I know of.”<sup>20</sup>

### **Street Patrols.**

In addition to naming former armed forces chiefs to top security posts, mayors and governors are sedulously recruiting new law enforcement officers from the ranks of military retirees. After purging half of the city’s 400 policemen in Santa Catarina, a city of 260,000 in metropolitan Monterrey, Mayor Gabriel Navarro Rodríguez made clear his determination to hire “elements with a military profile” to undertake patrol and surveillance duties. In essence, politicians have more confidence in men and women who have learned discipline, order, and team work in the armed force.<sup>21</sup>

## **Informal Military-Civilian Groups.**

In several areas, local leaders have initiated combined civilian-military groups. For example, at the naval base in Tapachula, Chiapas, weekly meetings focused on combating drug crimes include the navy, army, state attorney general, and elements of the business community. Similarly, in Tijuana and Ensenada, Baja California, the Army and Navy regularly hold sessions with representatives of the state government and the tourism sector. Mexico State Governor Eruviel Ávila Villegas has penned an accord with the Secretary of Gobernación to establish a coordinating body formed by the commanders of Military Zones 1 (Tacuba, DF), 22 (Santa María Rayón, Mexico State), and 37 (Santa Lucia, Mexico State), a representative of the Attorney General's Office (PGR), a representative of Mexico's version of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security and Investigation Center (CISEN), along with four state officials: the governor, secretary of citizen security, government secretary, and attorney general.<sup>22</sup>

In other areas, so-called "purple groups" have been formed, which strive to overcome "stove-piping" by scheduling regular gatherings of the Army, Navy, and Federal Police. At land crossings, the Army frequently cooperates with—or oversees the functions of—Mexican customs agents, who are often subjected to bribes.

## **"Collateral Damage" and Human Rights Violations.**

Professional policemen are taught to separate adversaries, listen to their complaints, negotiate, bargain, and compromise before using force against trouble-

makers. In contrast, soldiers learn to pursue, capture, and kill. The result is what the Pentagon euphemistically calls “collateral damage” – that is, the inadvertent wounding or killing of innocent civilians. Early in Calderón’s drug war, NGOs inveighed against the trampling of human rights in Mexico. They homed in on the 200,000-member Army, as well as the government’s indifference with respect to the approximately 140,000 migrants apprehended at the country’s border in 2010, not to mention the tens of thousands who avoided capture. The Mexico’s zealous National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) claimed to have received 5,055 complaints, many against the military, during Calderón’s tenure. The same group asserted that 5,300 people disappeared in this period.<sup>23</sup>

A statement by the Washington Office on Latin America epitomized the ever more caustic invective:

For years, organizations and shelters in Mexico have documented the abuses suffered by migrants traveling through the country. Every day along the principal transit routes, migrants, primarily Central Americans, are beaten, extorted, sexually abused, and/or kidnapped by criminal groups, at times with the direct participation or acquiescence of Mexican authorities.<sup>24</sup>

The drum beat of international outrage finally grabbed the attention of Mexico’s brass, who instituted human rights training for soldiers and opened the door a crack on tribunals before which members of the armed forces stand trial. In 2008, Mexico’s National Defense Ministry (SEDENA), created the position of General Director for Human Rights in its command structure, “a milestone that passed relatively unno-

ticed by most media and analysts.”<sup>25</sup> In 2011 Mexican lawmakers approved a new statute that guarantees the rights of migrants, regardless of their immigration status. The legislation, whose purpose was to prevent misconduct toward foreigners, created a 180-day visa for illegal aliens. The law also called for a new border-police force to prevent crimes and conduct surveillance at airports, ports, bus terminals and frontier areas. How effective this statute will be remains to be seen.

Pollsters for the *Reforma* newspaper found that a majority of citizens (58 percent) and opinion leaders (67 percent) recognized that the Army committed human rights abuses. Indeed, 72 percent of the latter claimed to have known a crime victim. At the same time, average people (81 percent) and elites (64 percent) favored deploying the armed forces against criminal organizations.<sup>26</sup>

### **Public Relations: Outreach.**

Even though the populace backs its fight against DTOs, the Army suffered a slight decline in support for this role—from 83 percent in 2009 to 80 percent in 2010. In early 2012, 70 percent of respondents to a *Consulta Mitofsky* survey favored the military’s continuing to pursue criminal organizations, and 78 percent supported incorporating soldiers into the police. The results bristled with irony inasmuch as 49 percent of interviewees called Calderón’s anti-cartel policy a “failure.”<sup>27</sup>

Among institutions combatting drug cartels, respondents to a September 2011 National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security, expressed the greatest confidence in the Navy (51 per-

cent), followed by the Army (46 percent), the Federal Police (19 percent), state police (13 percent), the judiciary (11 percent), prosecutors (10 percent), municipal police (8 percent), and transit police (7 percent). Figure 6 indicates the perceived effectiveness of these institutions.

Institution	Effectiveness %
Navy	47
Army	43
Federal Police	15
Judiciary	11
Ministerial/Judicial Police	9
State Prosecutors	8
Municipal Preventative Police	5
Transit Police	4

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), reported in “La percepción de la inseguridad en México aumentó en 2010: INEGI, (“Perception of Insecurity in Mexico in 2010: INEGI”), *CNN México*, September 20, 2011.

### **Figure 6. Effectiveness of Government Agencies Fighting the Cartels.**

As shown in Figure 7, in mid-2012, the Pew Research Center found that four out of five Mexicans backed using the Mexican Army against DTOs, although a slight majority (49 to 47 percent) believed that the government was either losing ground or making no progress. Those interviewed favored U.S. training police and military (75 percent) and Washington’s provision of money and weapons (61 percent). Yet only a third of respondents endorsed the deployment of U.S. troops in their country.<sup>28</sup> The Americans



came out well in areas of cooperation. Enrique Peña Nieto, candidate of the once-dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), is now Mexico's new chief executive. Late in the campaign, he named a tough-as-nails Colombian as his security adviser. The selection of General (Ret.) Oscar Naranjo Trujillo, nemesis of the Medellín and Cali Cartels and ex-director general of the Colombian National Police (2007-12), was met with silence in SEDENA. However, Josefina Vázquez Mota, candidate of Calderón's National Action Party, emphasized her faith in Mexico's armed forces and underlined that the country did not require "foreigners" in public safety posts.<sup>29</sup>

Use of Mexican Army to Fight Drug Traffickers	2011 Percent	2012 Percent
Support	83	80
Oppose	14	17
Don't Know	3	3
Campaign against Drug Traffickers is . . .		
Making Progress	45	47
Losing Ground	29	30
Same as Past	25	19
Don't Know	1	3

Source: Pew Research Center, "Mexicans Back Military Campaign against Cartels," Pew Global Attitudes Project, June 20, 2012.

### **Figure 7. Mexican Attitudes about Drug War.**

To preserve its approval rating, SEDENA and SEMAR (Navy Ministry) have sought to curry favor with the population. After the September 16, 2009, Independence Day parade, naval personnel mixed with the crowd, with la Calle de Sevilla between Reforma and Avenida Chapultepec in downtown Mexico City

becoming a “gigantic photography studio.” A mob of children, men, women, tourists, and whole families clamored to have their pictures taken with some 200 obliging members of the armed forces and their 40 vehicles. “Look, Papa!” shouted a 9-year-old boy, who sat proudly in an armored vehicle with both hands grasping the controls of an anti-aircraft weapon.

What may have begun spontaneously now forms an integral part of the annual march through the heart of the capital when the armed services show off their precision drills, new equipment, and recently acquired technology. Some youngsters even color their faces with combat grease and clamp on helmets. During the bicentennial of independence in 2010, the president announced that the armed forces would present miniature Mexican flags to every household in the country to symbolize their unity with the people.<sup>30</sup>

In early February 2011, the Army and Air Force again attempted to win friends and influence people. They sponsored an exposition of “The Great Force of Mexico” at the old Military College at Popotla, outside of Mexico City. At this event, children and adults strapped on parachutes, stepped into the cockpits of helicopters, and mounted Humvee personnel carriers. Some youngsters darkened their faces with cream worn by soldiers in jungle combat, wriggled into field jackets, rappelled a low wall, and even took target practice. “The lack of confidence serious faces inspire that usually characterizes contacts between civilians and the military disappeared. Little boys like Fernando enjoyed being made up and being called ‘soldiers.’ Smiles were the common denominator,” according to a journalist on the scene.<sup>31</sup>

In 2011, paratroopers cradling automatic weapons dropped from 10,000 feet to land in the Plaza of the Constitution, which is surrounded by the National Palace; the Finance Ministry; the Antiguo Palacio del Ayuntamiento, or mayor's office; hotels; and small shops. Early in the same year, the Defense Ministry opened the Campo Militar Número 1 to bicyclists during the first three Sundays each month. Located in Mexico City, the expansive facility is headquarters to the Armed Parachute Brigade, Special Forces, the Infantry, a tank unit, an Armored Brigade, Military Police, and the Motorized Cavalry. The facility also houses the Military Region's Military Prison, which had 420 inmates.<sup>32</sup> On February 10, 2011, the Air Force, an arm of the Army, invited spectators to observe from outside its Santa Lucia headquarters, north of Mexico City, some 71 aircraft. Their pilots planned to perform aerial acrobats, fly close wing-to-wing formations, and launch air-to-ground missiles. President Calderón was invited to a luncheon for 2,500 guests to celebrate the service's 97th anniversary. Inclement weather forced cancelation of the exercise, which was rescheduled.<sup>33</sup>

To promote both their achievements and recruitment, the Army has hired *Servicios Profesionales y Asistencia Creativa*, a Mexico City public relations firm headed by Alejandro Fernández Carrillo, and McCann World Group, whose clients include multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola and the U.S. Army. As a result, it is running television advertisements, trumpeting achievements on *Twitter* and *YouTube*, and airing brief recruiting videos before the beginning of motion pictures. In 2007, SEDENA earmarked 111,246 pesos (approximately \$11,000) for promotional activities in the media – with most of the funds dedicated to

videos and TV and radio commercials. Moreover, the polling firm of Beltrán y Asociados has conducted survey research. Outlays for these advertising soared to 46 million pesos in 2011 (approximately \$3.5 million), as evidenced in Figure 8.

Year	Outlays on Publicity (in Pesos)	% Increase
2007	111,246	
2008	47,000,000+	421.49
2009	43,138,000	(8.95)
2010	14,688,000	(193.70)
2011	46,000,000	213.18

Source: Luis Brito, “La SEDENA invierte más en publicidad para mejorar imagen ante ciudadanos” (“SEDENA Invests More in Publicity to Improve its Popular Image”), *CNN México*, September 7, 2011.

### **Figure 8. SEDENA’s Expenditures on Publicity.**

Acclaimed director Rafael Lara is making a film depicting the valor of the soldiers in the May 5, 1862, Battle of Puebla in which General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguín led the Mexican Army to an unlikely triumph over the French. SEDENA is assisting the venture with guidance, vintage uniforms, and extras.<sup>34</sup> They have also publicized athletic achievements of men and women in uniform: Corporal Marisol Guadalupe Romero Rosales (2011 Panamerican Games; runner); Horacio Nava Reza (2011 Panamerican Games; runner); José Layver Ojeda (2011 Panamerican Games; runner); and Uriel Avigodor Adriano Ruiz (Tae Kwon Do).<sup>35</sup>

These efforts appeared to have succeeded when spontaneous applause greeted soldiers who marched in the September 2011 Independence Day parade. Earlier in the year, Cardinal Norberto Rivera, the Archbishop of Mexico City, invited worshippers to pray for the generals, chiefs, officials, and troops of the Mexican army, reaffirming their vocation of peace and assistance to a society that they serve with honor and loyalty. Meanwhile, he excoriated those who had “negated the love of God by abusing and mistreating boys and girls. . .”<sup>36</sup>

SEDENA’s public relations have not been limited to the Mexico City area. On October 21, 2011, it opened a large exposition called “Mexico’s Great Force” (“La Gran Fuerza de México”), which showed off the daily activities of the Army and Air Force. Visitors were especially attracted to an exhibit demonstrating how trained dogs and horses participate in Plan DN-III-E disaster relief.

As part of the DN-III-E initiative, launched in 1966, Army units in the North are rebuilding houses, rendering medical care, and providing dental services. On a given day in a northern city, Army professionals register 397 medical check-ups, conduct 110 dental examinations, and distribute 847 pharmaceutical drugs. They also carry out projects involving masons (112), plumbing (38), electricity (21), carpentry (524), and haircuts (962). A SEDENA spokesman indicated that they “instruct 148 youngsters in military music” so they inspire “love in our national symbols.”<sup>37</sup>

The military also hosted a 1-month long interactive museum, known as “El Trompo Mágico” or “Magic Tub” in three major cities. The exhibition drew large crowds in Mexico City (283,956), Monterrey (425,621), and Puebla (330,428).<sup>38</sup> Rafael Moreno Valle Rosas,

Puebla's state governor, said: "When the Mexican Army and the Mexican people are together and put aside ideological and political differences in favor of the interests of the Patria, no enemy can triumph."<sup>39</sup>

General Raymundo Balboa Aguirre co-chairs an organization called Unidad de Vinculación con la Ciudadanía (UNIVIC) or Citizens Relations Unit. Officially, this body, which includes former Social Alternative Democratic Party Deputy Marina Arvizu Rivas (an acquaintance of General Galván), seeks to bolster collaboration between the Army and civilians, promote respect for human rights, and resolve conflicts arising from the drug war. In fact, it sprang to life to dampen criticism of the military after a fragmentation grenade killed two youngsters, aged 5 and 9, aboard a pick-up truck in a confrontation between the Army and cartel members on the Guerrero-Ciudad Mier highway in Tamaulipas on April 3, 2010. A human rights activist claimed that soldiers reconfigured the scene in an effort to absolve themselves of responsibility for the deaths.<sup>40</sup> Incidents such as this may explain why no folk ballads—the so-call *corridos* that often extol the merits of traffickers—have circulated that laud the armed forces. In all fairness, UNIVIC has made reparations to victims, paid for funeral expenses, covered medical expenses, and funded psychological therapy.<sup>41</sup>

## **INCREASING ROLE OF WOMEN IN MEXICO'S ARMED FORCES**

This ceremony also provides an opportunity for the military to showcase the ever-greater visibility of women in uniform. Only in 1938 did the Army admit women and then just to the Military Nursing School—

followed by the Military Medical School (1973) and the Military Odontology School (1976). For years, assignments were limited to the medical arts, secretaries, translators, drivers, communications specialists, and other support personnel. Females gained admission to the *Colegio Heroico Militar*, Mexico's version of West Point, for the first time in 2007 when, of 537 general officers, only five were women.<sup>42</sup> As seen in Figure 9, the Defense Ministry claims that opportunities have increased substantially.

Year	Number of Women in the Army	Total Number in Army	Percent Females
2006	6,309	196,767	3.21
2007	6,831	196,710	3.47
2008	7,980	202,355	3.94
2009	8,714	206,013	4.23
2010	10,234	206,013	4.97
2011	10,301	206,013	5.00
2012	11,810	211,000	5.60

Source: "Pide diputada una mujer al frente del Ejército mexicano" ("Deputy Asks for a Woman to Head the Mexican Army"), *El Universal*, December 16, 2008; Secretaría de Defensa Nacional, *Fourth Annual Report*, 2010; "Exaltan labor de mujeres militares" ("Work of Female Military Personnel Praised"), *Reforma*, March 6, 2012; and "Impulsan sin plazas a mujeres militares" ("Few Posts Open for Women"), *Reforma*, April 23, 2012.

**Figure 9. Women in the Mexican Army in Recent Years.**

Under SEDENA's "Equal Opportunities Program for Women and Men, 2008-2012," distaff members may enroll in all of the army's 17 schools, including

those for combat instruction, basic and advanced military police training, preparation of sergeants, and the formation of officers for the Heroic War College. The Defense Ministry has also organized conferences, seminars, and courses to raise the consciousness of troop with respect to gender equality.

On December 16, 2011, the military launched a magazine titled *Observatorio para la Igualdad entre Mujeres y Hombres en el Ejército y Fuerza Aérea Mexicanos* to highlight the steps taken to advance the careers of female members of the armed forces and to eradicate violence and discrimination against them.<sup>43</sup> Greater chances for women in the *machista* Army spring from social and international pressure, the presence of more skilled women prepared to enter the armed forces, and the need to recruit more elements in an institution plagued by desertions. Leftist Deputy Maricela Contreras Julián even looked to the not-too-distant future when a woman could become secretary of defense—a will-o'-the-wisp for decades to come.<sup>44</sup>

Female recruits and officers still face discrimination. While recognizing the advances accomplished by them, Colonel Clementina Espíndola Zetna, who entered the military medical school in 1973, stated: “The atmosphere was extremely difficult . . . [and] hostile. In the beginning, we were soundly rejected: ‘women [should] remain in the home and wash dishes’ . . . ‘you belong in the kitchen,’ but as time went by integration [of women into the military] progressed.”<sup>45</sup>

The Army has had a difficult time placing women, and only six females, five of whom have retired, number among the institution's 541 generals. The National Defense Ministry attributes the slow mobility to the military's lack of expansion. Spokesman General Ricardo Trevilla Trejo emphasized that distaff soldiers and officers must wait until men leave the service to



obtain assignments and promotions. As a result, it took 8 months to incorporate 1,852 trained women into the ranks, and the objective, announced in 2007, of doubling the number of females in uniform by the end of 2012 remains illusory.<sup>46</sup>

Few reports have surfaced about sexual harassment, a headache for the U.S. Armed Forces. The small number of women in combat and fear of turning in abusers may explain the situation. Human rights organizations regularly report that Mexican soldiers humiliate, strip, grope, and have sexual relations with vulnerable females, especially migrants and indigenous girls. The Foreign Relations Ministry asserts that there are a few such transgressions. In late July 2012, 50 military personnel, including a captain, sergeants, and corporals, participated in a group marriage ceremony in the southern states of Chiapas and Tabasco. Volunteer coordinator Yolanda Martínez explained that the mass wedding would ensure that the brides would enjoy the benefits to which military families were entitled.<sup>47</sup>

In a somewhat related subject, the status of gays in uniform is in limbo. Homosexuality is not considered a crime, and the Army follows a “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. In the past, openly gay soldiers and officers faced dismissal and, no doubt, taunts and worse from macho comrades.<sup>48</sup>

## **MILITARY PERSONNEL AND CIVILIAN COURTS**

NGOs have long complained that trials of Army and Navy personnel in military tribunals are secret, the punishment lenient, and the results often unknown. Article 13 of the Mexican Constitution specifically provides for military jurisdiction over all

military crimes and indiscipline; military tribunals execute jurisdiction over military personnel in accord with the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). At the same time, Article 129 stipulates that “in peace time military authority can discharge only functions that are directly connected to military discipline.” In July 2011, Mexico’s Supreme National Court of Justice (SCJN) ruled that such members of the armed services accused of torture, extrajudicial killing, and other abuses should be tried in civilian courts. “This is a very significant advance,” said Andrés Díaz, a lawyer for the Migue Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center in Mexico City. “It creates very clear principles for Mexican judges.”<sup>49</sup>

Enacting a law or rendering a judicial finding does not ensure resolution of the problem at hand. A cause célèbre involved Lieutenant Colonel Alfredo Bravo Alcaraz, who on March 19, 2009, opened fire with a sub machine gun on a vehicle carrying two civilians, one of whom died. When the survivor tried to escape, the colonel asked why a lieutenant had failed to shoot him, saying, “Fucking mothers! Why are you bringing him in alive? Take him over there and kill him,” which the subordinate did.<sup>50</sup> The SCNJ’s ruling aside, Bravo Alcaraz remains incarcerated in a military prison under an *arraigo* or detention order. With respect to the case, SEDENA issued the following statement:<sup>51</sup>

The Defense Ministry assures society in general that it will in no form tolerate actions contrary to the military laws and regulations, and when one of its members fails to conform to the Law, his behavior will be investigated . . . and he will be punished according to the strict application of the law without regard to his rank, assignment, or commission without impunity nor opaqueness.

At the early February 2012 “Loyalty March,” a military ceremony, General Galván admitted that the armed forces had made mistakes during the drug war even as he praised the chief executive as “an intelligent, brave, honest commander who has identified himself with the troops.” At the same time, defense minister urged clarification of the legal framework in which troops battled organized crime. Article 129 of the 1917 Constitution, which specifies that: *No military authority may, in time of peace, perform any functions other than those that are directly connected with military affairs,*” has cast doubt on the legality of the military’s involvement in fighting criminal organizations. No doubt Galván and other top brass are concerned lest their critics seek legal action to embarrass them now that the Calderón administration has left office.

In late November 2011, Netzai Sandoval, a Mexican human rights lawyer, filed a complaint with the International Criminal Court in The Hague, urging an investigation of the deaths of hundreds of civilians at the hands of the military and drug traffickers. The petition, signed by 23,000 Mexican civilians, named Calderón, Sinaloa Cartel boss Guzmán Loera, Public Security Minister, Genaro García Luna, and the commanders of the Army and Navy.<sup>52</sup> Activists’ pleas aside, legislators from the PRI have blocked reform of the Code of Military Justice that would transfer jurisdiction over alleged crimes against civilians by members of the armed forces to civil courts. In late April 2012, the chairman of the Justice Committee in the Senate claimed that SEDENA does not want the change, and that his incredibly influential PRI colleague, Manlio Fabio Beltrones, posed the most formidable obstacle to change.<sup>53</sup>

In response to freedom-of-information petitions, SEDENA has begun to shed light on judicial actions. In February 2012, it reported that 344 members of the Army were behind bars, while others were either standing trial or under arrest. This figure, which did not include deserters, embraced five generals, two colonels, six lieutenant colonels, and five majors. General Manuel de Jesús Moreno Aviña was convicted after subordinates testified that he had ordered the execution of civilians, their torture, and clandestine burials. He committed these crimes, along with collaboration with narco-traffickers, when commanding the military garrison in Ojinaga, Chihuahua, between April 2008 and August 2009.<sup>54</sup> Thirty-one other members of the Army were convicted because of links to organized crime, and 19 of these were tried in response to recommendations from the CNDH. Several generals joined their ranks. In mid-March 2011, military authorities arrested Pedro “El Guacho” Toga Lara in Saltillo, where he reportedly served as Los Zetas’ number two in the city. He and 16 colleagues were incarcerated when their names were found on the payroll or “*narcolista*” of Los Zetas. In addition to the chief of the General Staff for the military zone, those taken into custody included Sargent Evencio “El Batman” Castillo, a former member of the Special Airborne Forces Group (GAFES), from which the original Zetas deserted. Reportedly, El Batman recruited for Los Zetas who, in return for information about troop movements, received 3,000 pesos or more every two weeks at an OXXO convenience store, a 7-Eleven, or a WalMart. The prisoners alleged that they confessed only after being tortured.<sup>55</sup> Figure 10 portrays notable cases of military personnel arrested, charged, or convicted of crimes.

Individual	Date Arrested	Crime/Alleged Crime	Trial Court	Current Status
General Ricardo Escorcía Vargas (commander of 24th Military Zone in Morelos) and Lt. Col. Silvio Hernández Soto.	May 18, 2012	Provided information to the Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO) in late 2007 when they were allies of the Sinaloa Cartel.	Military (Yet to stand trial)	Incarcerated in Almoloya high-security prison in Mexico State on July 31, 2012.
Retired Div. Generals Ricardo Escorcía Vargas and Tomás Ángeles Dauahare (formerly Number Two in SEDENA); Brig. General Roberto Dawe González; commanded an elite unit assigned to the 20th Military Zone headquartered in Colima.*	May 15, 2012	Provided information to the BLO in late 2007 when they were allies of the Sinaloa Cartel.	Military (Yet to stand trial); Ángeles Dauahare has produced documents indicating he was in Germany at the time of the alleged crime.	Incarcerated in Almoloya high-security prison in Mexico State on July 31, 2012.
Gen. Manuel de Jesús Moreno Aviña; ex-commander of garrison in Ojinaga, CHIH on the Texas border.	Jan. 30, 2012	Collaboration with narco-traffickers in torture, execution, and clandestine burials of civilians.	Military	Pending
Brig. Gen. Rubén Pérez Ramírez	N.D.	Aiding narco-traffickers	Military	Imprisoned
Maj. Iván Reyna Muñoz (represented Mexico in Panamerican Games in 1991 and 1993.)	Nov. 2011	Extortion; accused by Édgar “La Barbie” Valdez Villarreal of cooperating with the BLO.	Military	
A captain, four lieutenants, and two sergeants.	Mid-Oct., 2011	The Army accused them of warning the BLO of pending military operations against the cartel in Morelos.	Military	Confessed and were confined in the federal prison in Villa Aldama, VC.
Carlos Fidel Ábrego	2011	Altering the scene where soldiers, working with Nuevo León police, killed an innocent young man, Jorge Otilio Cantú on April 18.	Civilian court placed him under the jurisdiction of a military tribunal.	Seeking amparo from Mexico’s Supreme Court (SCJN).
Sgt. Evencio “El Batman” Castillo; ex-member of GAFES special forces.	March 17, 2011	The only GAFES soldier captured in connection with safeguarding Los Zetas in COAH; he allegedly received 3,000 pesos (\$240) every 2 weeks for reporting troop movements.	Military	Imprisoned

**Figure 10. Examples of Military Personnel Accused, Arrested, Charged, or Convicted of Crimes.**

Individual	Date Arrested	Crime/Alleged Crime	Trial Court	Current Status
Pedro “El Gaucho” Toga Lara	March 12, 2011	Recruited 21 military personnel, including a general in the 6th Military Zone in Saltillo, COAH, to protect Los Zetas in return for generous bribes.	Military	Imprisoned
Retired military officers Francisco Ortega Zamora and Juan Carlos Cruz Espinoza who served, respectively, as police chief and assistant police chief in Tijuana, BC.	Feb. 2010	Allegedly protected notorious killers and traffickers José Manuel “El Teo” García Simental and Raydel “El Muletas”/“The Crutches” López Uriate.	N.A. (Retired officers still come under the jurisdiction of military tribunals).	N.A.
Major Elfego José Luján Ruiz; commander 35th Infantry Battalion in Nuevo Casas Grandes, CHIH.	March 2010	Eye Witnesses claimed that he ordered two deserters smothered and their bodies burned.	Military; seeking an amparo or injunction from SCJN.	Imprisoned in military penitentiary in DF.
Lt. Col. Alfredo Bravo Alcaraz; subcommander of 35th Infantry Battalion in Nuevo Casas Grandes, CHIH.	March 10, 2010	Committed atrocities against civilians.	Military; seeking an amparo from SCJN on the grounds that he was following orders; case under consideration.	Imprisoned in military penitentiary in DF.
Sgt. José Félix Flores Camacho	2007	Killing three people while driving a military vehicle in EDOMEX.	Seeking an amparo from SCJN.	Pending
Silvia Hernández Tamari (military nurse)	N.D.	Sexual abuse of a minor.	Military (after a PGR investigation).	No information

**Figure 10. Examples of Military Personnel Accused, Arrested, Charged, or Convicted of Crimes cont.**

Note: \*Major Iván Reyna Muñoz, subordinate of Escorcia Vargas, was convicted for the same crime and imprisoned in Querétaro; Defense Secretary Galván, who was unaware of the investigation into Dawe’s activities, had planned to promote the general.

Sources: Gustavo Castillo García, “Militares acusados de ejecutar a 7 en Chihuahua buscan apoyo de SCJN” (“Officers Accused of Executing 7 in Chihuahua Seek Support of SCJN”), *La Jornada*, May 20, 2012; Benito Jiménez, “Suman 290 militares presos por abusos” (“Total of 290 Military Prisoners Charged with Abuses”),

*Reforma*, May 12, 2012; Benito Jiménez, "Tienen en prisión a cinco Generales" ("Five Generals are in Prison"), *Reforma*, February 19, 2012; "Pagaba a General narco en Coahuila" ("Narco-traffickers Paid a General in Coahuila"), *Reforma*, February 18, 2012; "Ordenó quemar a dos desertores" ("Two Deserters Ordered Burned"), *El Heraldo de Chihuahua*, February 15, 2012; Randal C. Archibold, "Mexican General Is Charged in Killings and Abuses," *New York Times*, February 1, 2012; Abel Barajas, "Planeaba Sedena ascender a Dawe" ("Defense Ministry Planned to Promote Dawe"), *Reforma*, July 28, 2012; and Víctor Fuentes, "Prevé Corte acotar el fuero militar" ("Court Indicates That It Will Set Boundaries for Military Tribunals," *Reforma*, July 28, 2012); and Benito Jiménez, "Transladan a Generales a penal" ("Generals Transferred to Prison"), *Reforma*, July 31, 2012.

### **Figure 10. Examples of Military Personnel Accused, Arrested, Charged, or Convicted of Crimes, cont.**

While moving slowly to put its house in order, the Army still encompasses senior brass who have at least one foot, if not two, planted in the past. This was evident when SEDENA held a ceremony in the Distrito Federal's Military Camp No. 1 to pay homage to General Mario Acosta Chaparro, who died at the hands of an assassin in Mexico City on April 20, 2012. During 45 years in the military, the deceased retiree had commanded parachutists, infantry battalions, the 27th Military Zone in Guerrero, and the Judicial Military Police. Still, his career was tainted by persistent accusations that he had protected the enormously powerful drug-trafficker Amado "Lord of the Skies" Carrillo Fuentes. He was also linked to the disappearance in Guerrero of 143 alleged subversives during the "dirty war" of the 1970s. A colonel who had served under Acosta spoke at his memorial service and stated that: "I wish that many generals were like him."<sup>56</sup>

Apart from brutal killings and collaboration with the enemy, the Army has been cited for the mismanagement of funds. The Superior Auditor of the Federation (ASF), Mexico's version of the U.S. General Accounting Office, has charged a SEDENA agency that handles \$64 million with letting large no-bid contracts. In addition, the Defense Ministry paid Russia approximately \$1 million to void an order to repair five helicopters. A Ukrainian firm received \$1.6 million to transport the aircraft, but cancelled the agreement without paying a penalty. In 2009 the Army purchased 54 Humvees, which had been used only two times as of July 2010.<sup>57</sup>

Invoking national security, the Defense Ministry rejected a request from the Mexican Academy of Science to test the GT200, a molecular detector purchased from the United Kingdom's Global Technical LTD. The Army (738) and other security agencies have purchased 940 of these devices, known as the "Devil's Ouija" at a cost of \$28 million for use in anti-narcotics operations. Physicist Dr. Luis Mochán Backal asserted that proponents were only describing the GT200's positive qualities, while omitting its "failures."<sup>58</sup> (See Figure 11.)

To strengthen the esprit de corps and discourage desertions, SEDENA has initiated 21-gun salutes at burials, made certain a military band was on hand to honor the fallen, provided a memorial flag to the wife, authorized a life pension for widows, and furnished broader insurance coverage. Furthermore, it has erected a monument to soldiers who died while serving their country.<sup>61</sup>



Year	Budget (Millions of Pesos)	Increased Pay for Combat Troops	No. of Desertions
1997	28,456		11,122
1998	27,435		18,861
1999	30,311		19,849
2000	20,375		22,205
2001	22,424		15,870
2002	22,705		15,503
2003	22,831		14,744
2004	23,332		18,267
2005	25,002		20,224
2006	26,031	4,000 pesos	16,405
2007	32,200	26.9%	16,641
2008	34,861	41.2%	8,280
2009	43,632	68.6%	6,879
2010	43,632	92.2%	4,398
2011	50,039	118.5% (8,000 pesos)	1,394 (Through May 31)
2012	55,610	N.A.	N.A.

**Figure 11. Military Budgets and Desertions.**

Notes:

\* Juan Arvizu and Andrea Merlos, "Este año van 18 mil: diputados," *El Universal*, December 4, 2008.

\*\* Jorge Alejandro Medellín, "A la baja, reclutamiento para Ejército mexicano," *El Universal*, February 8, 2009.

\*\*\* Desertions between December 1, 2000 and August 31, 2008: the number between January 2007 and June 2011 was 40,179, according to "Con mejor salario baja desertión en fuerzas armadas," *Milenio.com*, September 11, 2011; of this number, 17,758 were soldiers, 119 officers,<sup>59</sup> and eight "jefes" (ranking officers); see "Más de 100 mil soldados han desertado en siete años, dice el Ejército" ("The Army Says that More than 100 Thousand Soldiers have Deserted in Seven Years"), *Diario Las Americas.com*, January 23, 2008, available from [www.diariolasamericas.com/news](http://www.diariolasamericas.com/news); and January 1 through November 27, 2008; Benito Jiménez, "Refuerza Ejército plan de reclutamiento" ("Army Reinforces Recruitment Plans"), *Reforma*, February 7, 2008.

\*\*\*\* Between 1995 and September 2008, 1,559 GAFES deserted; between March 2009 and March 2011, some 121 Special Forces went absent without leave (AWOL) between January 2007 and November 30, 2011, 92.43 percent of the 69,315 deserters were common soldiers, many of whom had no idea of the rigors of military life.<sup>60</sup>

Sources: [www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2007/marzo\\_2007.pdf](http://www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2007/marzo_2007.pdf); [www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2011/febrero-2011.pdf](http://www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2011/febrero-2011.pdf); [www.infomexorg.mx/gobiernofederal/moduloPublico/rMedioElectP.action?idFolioSol=0000700017811&idTipoResp=6#](http://www.infomexorg.mx/gobiernofederal/moduloPublico/rMedioElectP.action?idFolioSol=0000700017811&idTipoResp=6#); [www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2011/junio-2011.pdf](http://www.sedena.gob.mx/pdf/ifai/2011/junio-2011.pdf); “Recompensan a militares” (“Compensation of Military Men”), *Reforma*, February 19, 2012.

### **Figure 11. Military Budgets and Desertions, cont.**

To compensate for desertions, the Army has also reached out to young peasants, who have been devastated by their country’s sluggish economic growth amid a recession in the United States. Although training may be rigorous and assignments challenging, campesinos from extremely poor states like Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Chiapas experience a better quality of life in the military. “There is recruitment throughout the Republic, principally in marginal and economically vulnerable areas to take advantage of the human resources necessary for integrating the [recruits] into the Army as soldiers,” said Brigadier General Sergio García Vera, subdirector general of personnel at SEDENA. He reported recruiting 80,808 elements during the first 4 ½ years of Calderón’s administration.<sup>62</sup> (See Figure 12.)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>Number of Members of the Army*</b>	<b>Number of Members of the Navy</b>
1980	102,975	102,975	N.A.
1985	158,661	124,497	34,164
1990	192,994	151,178	41,816
1991	198,955	155,218	43,737
1992	203,829	157,147	46,687
1993	210,241	162,169	48,072
1994	216,943	168,773	48,170
1995	225,080	171,952	53,128
1996	232,166	179,038	53,128
1997	236,575	182,328	54,247
1998	235,894	182,328	53,566
1999	237,301	182,329	54,972
2000	237,552	182,329	55,223
2001	234,308	185,143	49,165
2002	238,169	188,143	50,026
2003	238,447	191,143	47,304
2004	236,459	191,143	47,316
2005	238,787	191,143	47,644
2006	244,238	196,767	47,471
2007	246,742	196,710	50,032
2008	254,035	202,355	51,680
2009	258,992	206,013	52,979
2010	259,237	206,013	53,224
2011	259,237**	206,013	53,224
2012	259,630**	206,013	53,617

**Figure 12: Composition of Mexico's Armed Forces.**

\*A partial breakdown of personnel is 115,095 soldiers (regular soldiers); 8,506 corporals, 757 second sergeants, 283 first sergeants, 661 second lieutenants, 462 first lieutenants, 52 second captains, 40 first captains, 32 majors, and 10 lieutenant colonels.

\*\* Tentative Figures.

Sources: Secretaría de Defensa Nacional; Secretaría de Marina; and Presidencia de la República, *Quinto Informe*, Anexo: “Recursos Humanos and Profesionalización de los Miembros de Las Fuerzas Armadas” (Fifth State of the Nation Address, Annex: Human Resources and Professionalization of Members of the Armed Forces).

### **Figure 12: Composition of Mexico’s Armed Forces, cont.**

SEDENA has not followed César Duarte Jáquez’ recommendation that it draft so-called “Ni-Nis” – the roughly 7.5 million young Mexicans who neither work nor study, but live aimless, sometimes violent, lives. In making this proposal, Chihuahua’s governor asserted that these youngsters were “easy marks to be recruited by organized crime. . . .” Former Secretary of Education Alonso Lujambio quickly rejected the idea, stating that there were only 285,000 such young people and stressing the importance that these individuals pursue educational opportunities.<sup>63</sup>

Security firms in Mexico are doing a brisk business. In recruiting body guards, skilled drivers, technical experts, and consultants, they often look to former members of the military not only because of their training and discipline but also their legal right to carry firearms. Ricardo de León Dorantes, president of the National Council of Public Security (CNSP), which embraces 200 firms, estimated that 40 percent of body guards hired by private parties are former members of the armed forces, while half are ex-policemen. In late 2008 their salaries ranged from 12,000 pesos (\$1,200) to 20,000 pesos (\$1,667) per month. In 2010, outlays on private security increased 11 percent over the previous year nationwide – with a 33 percent rise in states along the U.S.-Mexican border.<sup>64</sup> Although security

providers are supposed to register with authorities, hundreds of such corporations ignore this requirement, which gives them greater flexibility to hire cashiered cops and soldiers.

On a day-to-day basis, average citizens often hand over modest sums to informal attendants. These *franeleros*, who often use sidewalks as parking places, keep an eye on their vehicles while they are running errands, shopping, or dining.

## MANUFACTURING

The Army has expanded its manufacturing of munitions, uniforms, shoes, and other items. In August 2010, a SEDENA spokesman indicated that the military was 90 percent self-sufficient in the output of much of its equipment. In addition, the SEDENA Military Factories in Mexico City produce, under license, the Heckler and Koch family of small arms and light weapons. They have begun turning out the FX-05 Xihucóatl assault rifle, as well as moving away from the 7.62 mm G-3 to smaller and more effective caliber weapons. The factories are also assembling the Oshkosh SandCat protected patrol vehicle, a 4x4 armored truck renowned for its speed and maneuverability.<sup>65</sup>

If it is not already doing so, SEDENA will produce its own version of a homemade armored tank, nicknamed El Monstruo 2011, employed by Los Zetas for urban warfare. The steel-plated "Monster," also referred to as the "Batimóvil," operates at up to 68 miles per hour, carries a dozen shooters, and provides small openings through which they can fire high-powered weapons. "El Monstruo 2011 is a homemade armored tank, the latest weapons innovation from Los Zetas, one of Mexico's largest and most brutal drug trafficking organizations."<sup>66</sup>

In mid-2012 *El Universal* reported that the ministry signed a contract for \$5,000 million pesos (\$379 million) to purchase state-of-the-art communication interception equipment from Security Tracking Devices, a Jalisco-based firm. The agreement raised questions because of its secrecy, the potential for the Army to eavesdrop on innocent civilians, and the inability of journalists to find the contractor's alleged office in Mexico City.<sup>67</sup>

## POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Although Mexico's generals have obeyed rather than deliberated, the absence of coups d'état does not mean that the Army is indifferent to political decisions. Traditionally, they have expressed their views to the president or secretary of interior behind closed doors. Such sub rosa contacts ended during the Fox administration (2000-06) when Defense Secretary de la Vega formally presented the activities of SEDENA to a congressional committee. Rather than visit Congress, General Galván has invited legislators to meet with him on military installations.

Key officers have spoken out on political matters. General Sergio Aponte Polito, commander of the Second Military Region in northwest Mexico, publically excoriated the ubiquitous involvement of elected and appointed officials in drug trafficking in the Tijuana area. He claimed that the police were cooperating with migrant smugglers, bank robbers, and drug lords. "The jowly, silver-haired 64-year-old general speaks in severe tones and writes as if he's inscribing his epitaph," observed a seasoned journalist. "What he's doing is completely unprecedented," stated Roderic Ai Camp, an expert on the Mexican military at Claremont

McKenna College.<sup>68</sup> Aponte Polito's persistent criticism upset the National Action Party administration in Baja California and led to his being transferred to Mexico City.

Three years later, another commander of the Second Military Region was less reticent to condemn unprofessional behavior. After the September 16, 2011, Independence Day celebration, General Alfonso Duarte Múgica publically upbraided Government Secretary Cuauhtémoc Cardona Benavides. At a gathering organized by the military, Duarte said "I do not want to see [Cardona] in any military installation, he is an ugly and disrespectful drunk." Both Governor Osuna Millán and a television camera crew observed this contretemps.<sup>69</sup>

President Fox's defense secretary, General Gerardo Clemente R. Vega García (2000-2006), followed the practice of civilian cabinet members by appearing before a congressional committee to discuss his ministry's interests, goals, and performance. In contrast, General Galván shuns the public sessions for private meetings with legislators from various parties in his headquarters. He has not shied away from upbraiding politicians on their performance. "I understand that political power is complex and involves various forms, objectives, and interests. Nevertheless, at all times and under all circumstances [elected officials] the national well-being must take precedence," he said after the 2010 Loyalty March celebration.<sup>70</sup>

## **PENITENTIARIES**

The government euphemistically calls a number of its prisons "Centers of Social Readaptation" (CERESOs). Wardens, their subordinates, and guards

nominally control Mexico's penitentiaries, especially the nine high-security federal facilities. In reality, pay-offs by inmates to their keepers, combined with the proliferation of organized gangs behind bars, give well-heeled convicts unparalleled influence. Wealthy "deluxe prisoners" grease the palms of guards, who—for the right price—will permit them to exit the facility for a few hours to conduct business, love-making, or criminal ventures. They will use every tactic to include fear, intimidation, money, sex, etc., to compromise the prison staff and the administration.<sup>71</sup>

Inmates sometimes settle scores with adversaries behind bars—most notoriously exemplified in the 2004 murders of El Chapo's brother, Arturo "El Pollo"/"The Chicken" Guzmán Loera (December 31) and his associate Miguel Ángel "Ceja Güera"/White Eyebrow" Beltrán Lugo (October 6) inside La Palma prison. At the same time, drug lords carry on negotiations behind bars. The late Assistant Attorney General José Luis Santiago Vasconcelos acknowledged that Los Zetas' patron, Osiel, cut a deal to cooperate with Tijuana Cartel honcho, Benjamín Arellano Félix, to decimate the Sinaloa Cartel while both were "locked up" in La Palma prison near Mexico City.<sup>72</sup>

In January 2005 gangsters seized six employees of the Matamoros penitentiary and handcuffed, blindfolded, and shot them, leaving their cadavers in a white sport utility vehicle parked opposite the facility. This savagery may have been a response to the siege 6 days earlier of La Palma prison by 750 Federal Police and military. Clearly, drug dealers had corrupted the guards and were overseeing violent networks from inside. In early December 2008 enemies are believed to have executed two Zetas in the Mazatlán detention center.<sup>73</sup>



Thanks to widespread access to cell phones, prisoners find it easy to engage in extortion. A committee of the Chamber of Deputies estimated that convicts had extorted 186,620 million pesos from 2001 to 2007. The equipment installed in 2007 to block telephone signals in 11 prisons fell into disrepair and no longer functions.<sup>74</sup> This situation prompted Mexico State to invest 10 million pesos (roughly \$770,000) to block telephone signals in its four largest penitentiaries, Neza-Bordo (Nezahualc6yotl), Barrientos (Tlalnepantla), Chiconaultla (Ecatepec), and Almoloya de Ju6rez (Santiago).<sup>75</sup>

Just as in the United States, drugs flow freely inside Mexico's prison walls. Of the 37,000 inmates in Mexico City's penal institutions, an estimated 25,900 are addicts. Authorities admit that the availability of the substances, which may generate 15.5 million pesos a month, represents a convenient way to minimize melees and curb other violent outbursts. As a prison official told a city councilman: "Sir, if I cut off the flow of drugs, there will be a mutiny the next day."<sup>76</sup> In late 2008, authorities discovered 51 packets containing 119 kilograms of marijuana covered with sacks of toilet paper and boxes of soft drinks aboard a truck seeking to enter the capital's Reclusorio Sur.<sup>77</sup> So ubiquitous were drugs in the Detention Center (CEDES) of Reynosa that it gained fame as a "*narcopenal*," which was run by the convicts. "La Suburban," a gang linked to Los Zetas, not only handled the intramural drug trade, but extorted money from their foes who lived in an adjoining structure known as "the Sinai" in the two-building compound.<sup>78</sup>

Overcrowding accentuates turmoil. Of Mexico's 439 federal, state, and local penal institutions, 228 are stuffed with an excessive number of inmates. In Mex-

ico City's Reclusorio Oriente, 70 prisoners occupy one six-by-five square meter cell. They must sleep standing up, lie in hallways, vie for green spaces to stretch out, or pay for access to a bunk.<sup>79</sup> Exacerbating the crisis is that 80 percent of federal prisoners (34,952) are in state prisons—with the remainder (9,494) in federal institutions. In 2010 Mexico had 222,771 men and women behind bars, according to the Ministry of Public Safety.<sup>80</sup>

In Zacatecas on May 16, 2009, an especially brazen escape occurred, and all of it is available for public viewing on *YouTube*. Before dawn, 30 or more heavily armed thugs believed to be Zetas, riding in trucks adorned with AFI logos, stormed into the Cieneguillas penitentiary as one of their helicopters whirred overhead. In the blitzkrieg assault, they extricated 53 prisoners, including Zetas, members of the Beltrán Leyva crime family, and other narco-felons. State and federal authorities immediately began apprehending escapees even as they investigated the director and his 50 subordinates to determine who fostered the escape.<sup>81</sup> One of several recaptured was Osvaldo “The Vampire” García Delgado, a kidnapping specialist whose Los Cotorros gang coordinates activities with Los Zetas in the state of Hidalgo.

When incarcerated, Los Zetas threaten to beat other convicts if they do not fork over 5,000 pesos or more. In addition, the paramilitaries provide women, drugs, and food to these inmates who are forced to pay off debts incurred behind bars by working for Los Zetas even after they have completed their sentences. “There are few cases when men exit prisons clean,” explained one expert. “I can assure you that practically no one under 30 does so.”<sup>82</sup>

In October 2009, actions of Los Zetas precipitated a riot in the Topo Chico prison in Nuevo León that the state police had to put down. Some 100 Zetas virtually controlled the 400 other inmates in the facility through extortion and shake downs for protection. Before the uprising, PRI Governor Natividad González Parás had brushed off friction in the penitentiary as: “A squabble between one group of friends against another group of friends over personal problems.”<sup>83</sup> As in other facilities, Los Zetas practice virtual “self-governance” in the federal prison in Apodaca, Nuevo León (Cereso), where they attack members of the Gulf Cartel and other foes.<sup>84</sup>

Such conditions have prompted the government to dispatch Army units to conduct searches in penitentiaries and sometimes take control of the institutions. Examples abound: in early June 2009, elements of the Army and Federal Police riding in small tanks, armored vehicles, and troop transports swept into Xalapa’s Ignacio Allende prison, one of the oldest detention centers in Veracruz. The authorities did not disclose how many of the serious felons were moved to other facilities.

In mid-August 2009, General Felipe de Jesús Espitia, commander of the Fifth Military Zone, announced that troops would replace civilian administrators and guards at Cereso of Aquiles Serdán, located in the heart of Chihuahua state. This action followed the resignation of the warden after three of his bodyguards were killed. During the night of August 29, 2010, units of the 24th Military Zone took charge of Morelos’ Atlacholoaya Cereso after a series of violent incidents that took the life of the facility’s director. Soldiers also assumed control of district jails in Cuautla, Jojutla, Jonacatepec, Telecala, and Pueten de Istia.<sup>85</sup>

Military men now serve as directors of the penal facilities in the three largest cities in Quintana Roo. In late April 2011, General Carlos Bibiano Villa Castillo, the state's secretary of public security, placed officers in charge of the Cereso in Chetumal (Captain José de Jesús Moreno Abad), the Cereso in Cancún (General Eulalio Rodríguez Valdivia), and the jails in Playa del Carmen (Second Captain José Luis y Peniche Novelo) and Cancún (Captain Higinio Sánchez Baltazar). The state director of prisons is a civilian attorney, Ricardo Tejada de Luna.<sup>86</sup>

Army personnel now control access to the principal entrances to three Monterrey area penitentiaries — Topo Chico, Cadereyta and Apodaca — inside of which more than 50 killings have taken place.<sup>87</sup> Military police have also taken over security duties for the PGR's Center of Federal Investigations in Mexico City where some 250 suspects were being held in mid-2012.<sup>88</sup>

In a volt-face, Defense Secretary Galván ordered 52 soldiers held prisoner at the Campo Militar 1-J be transferred to a federal penitentiary in Villa Aldama, Veracruz, in April 2011. He feared that their underground allies might attempt to free the inmates from the SEDENA prison in Mexico City.<sup>89</sup>

## CUSTOMS

In recent years, presidents have sought to fight corruption among customs agents — a Herculean challenge that they have lost because of the lucrative payments to officials who either close their eyes to smuggling or take part in the crime. In mid-August 2009, the armed forces took over the functions of the fiscal police in 49 land ports across the northern border. For its part, the Navy has begun overseeing customs

operations in seaports. Two years earlier, the Army assumed the inspection of passengers at the Rodolfo Sánchez Taboada airport in Mexicali because of suspicion that seven Federal Preventative Police agents were facilitating cocaine shipments to the United States.<sup>90</sup>

## GUARDIANS OF ELECTIONS

The Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), a citizen-run body that registers voters, organizes the balloting, and announces the preliminary results, formally requested that the Army guarantee the security of elections in 2012, as it has done in previous balloting. Not only did the presidential showdown take place on July 1, but all 500 federal deputies and 64 of 128 senators were chosen on that date. In addition, there will also be gubernatorial and city council contests in 14 states—with a local election in Coahuila set for October 21.<sup>91</sup> Leonardo Valdés Zurita, president of the IFE, stated that conditions appeared favorable in Mexico City, but that “a very complex situation” existed in Chihuahua, Guerrero Monterrey, Michoacán, and Tamaulipas. The military has provided security for past elections, but given the violence afflicting the nation, it sent more troops into the streets last year, especially in the vicinity of polling places.<sup>92</sup> So narrow was Calderón’s 2006 victory that the Army still guards cast ballots night and day, 7 days per week, in the nation’s 300 voting districts. In Querétaro alone, 21 soldiers fulfill this assignment.<sup>93</sup>

The vulnerability of politicians to narco-assassins became evident in the mid-2010 contest for governor in Tamaulipas, a state highlighted by fighting between Los Zetas and a group of syndicates supporting the Gulf Cartel. In the run-up to the July 4 election for the

statehouse, Los Zetas executed PRI candidate Rodolfo Torre Cantú as he was traveling to the Ciudad Victoria airport on his final campaign swing. Although any politician may be targeted, the syndicates are especially eager to influence the voting in municipalities in which they store, process, and transport drugs.<sup>94</sup> During Calderón's administration, 28 serving mayors have died at the hands of cartels. PRI Federal Deputy Francisco Moreno Merino, whose constituency service office in Cuernavaca was fired upon and burned in March 2010, has requested that the military protect him and his family.<sup>95</sup>

## **FIREFIGHTERS**

On August 25, 2011, a group of Los Zetas set fire to the Casino Royale in Monterrey. The conflagration took 53 lives. In the aftermath of the tragedy, SEDENA announced the formation of a brigade of fire fighters. Although the Army has long acted in accordance with its DN-III strategy of disaster relief, these efforts have typically focused on floods, volcanic eruptions, forest fires, tropical storms, earthquakes, and other catastrophes. The tragedy in Monterrey produced a broader view of this function, and involved activating an Immediate Response to Disasters and Emergencies Team (ERIED), composed of seven officers and 45 enlisted volunteers, which was formed in the aftermath of the September 1985 earthquakes that struck Mexico City and adjoining areas.<sup>96</sup>

## **SOCCER SOLDIERS**

The Army and Federal Police were on hand to ensure the safety of players, officials, and fans when Torreón's Santos Laguna (Lagoon Saints) and Mon-

terrey Rayados (Rays) competed in the Mexico's Soccer Finals on May 2012. The tight security enabled the Torreón team to win 2 to 1—with no the only disturbances coming from disgruntled Monterrey aficionados.<sup>97</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Several observations flow from this analysis. First, President Calderón gave the Mexican military an assignment for which it lacked proper training, preparation, and equipment. The more than 47,000 drug-related deaths during the previous chief executive's tenure are more an indictment of dirty, incompetent civilian police agencies than of the armed forces, which have managed to capture dozens of important traffickers. The drug war and new tasks have expanded the Army's budget, size, and stock of equipment. Regrettably, contact with the underworld has corrupted numerous enlistees and officers, while using security concerns to justify the purchase of a new presidential airplane at twice the cost of Air Force One.

Second, as it amplifies current functions, the Army (and, to a lesser extent, the Navy) will have greater contact with civilians. While military personnel may not socialize widely with men and women outside the barracks, it is likely that their status as a caste marginal from the rest of society will diminish.

Third, Peña Nieto has unveiled a six-point security initiative. The document is ripe with shibboleths about "transparency," "cooperation," and "accountability." More important is his plan to shift the primary focus of Mexico's drug wars from that of hunting down cartels and their capos to preventing and curbing murders, kidnappings, and extortion. His *Gobernación Secre-*

tary, Miguel Osorio Chong, argued that Calderón's "kingpin" approach failed miserably—with abductions soaring 83 percent, violent robberies 65 percent, and extortion 40 percent during the past six years. To improve anti-crime efforts, the new government has announced the creation of a paramilitary "National Gendarmerie (GN)," initially composed of 10,000 elements with the possibility of boosting the number to 40,000 civilians and military. This force, which is analogous to Chile's Carabineri or Spain's Guardia Nacional, will be deployed in hotspots where violence and instability are the greatest. The Ministry of Public Security (SSP) will be folded into Gobernación, which will spearhead the new version of the war on drugs. It will oversee intelligence collection and add 15 units to the Federal Police to concentrate solely on kidnapping and extortion. The government will continue to upgrade the quality of law-enforcement personnel—61 percent earn just over \$300 a month and nearly two-thirds have only a elementary school education, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Such forces are anathema to shady politicians such as governors and mayors who want to preserve their grip on cops in their jurisdictions. Although the 10,000 elements mentioned initially for the National Gendarmerie appear formidable, the number of men and women available at any given time shrinks when taking into consideration eight-hour shifts, illnesses, vacations, training exercises, and desertions. It remains to be seen whether SEDENA will supply its best and brightest to a force that it doesn't control. Meanwhile, Mexico's leaders will have no alternative but to depend heavily on the armed forces in combating DTOs for the next few months.



Fourth, Peña Nieto seeks to return thousands of soldiers to the barracks – a move that SEDENA is likely to applaud in light of NGO criticism of human rights abuses and corruption, as well as the prevalence of mental illness among troops.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, the involvement of the Navy and the Support Forces of the Federal Police could grow in light of their success in fighting criminals. The future of the Federal Police Support Forces, also known as GOPES is uncertain. Under Calderón, this agency was headed by General (Ret.) Rodolfo Cruz López within the SSP and did a commendable job providing “assistance to civil authorities to combat organized crime and threats to the security of the nation.”

Fifth, if the past is prologue to the future, strengthening Gobernación, creating the GN, and reconfiguring police functions will engender friction between and among these agencies and the Defense Ministry. Such tensions militate against amending the Constitution to place a single secretary over the Army and the Navy. Nor is it likely that the Army and Navy will configure a joint general staff. At the same time, the military will renew its effort in Congress to amend the Code of Military Justice to unambiguously justify the military’s profound involvement in combatting cartels. The armed forces want protection from NGOs who have accused senior officers of war crimes before the International Court of Justice and other tribunals—as has already occurred with charges against President Calderón.

Sixth, no matter which agency leads in fighting narco-criminals, the next Mexican chief executive will be under pressure to rely less on boots on the ground and more on informants, wire-taps, drones, surveillance cameras, computer analysis of communications,

more rigorous gathering and examination of intelligence, and monetary oversight. There is a creative element to interservice rivalry, which finds the Army improving its intelligence gathering, analytic capability, and professionalism.

Seventh, domestic and international groups will force the armed forces to increase transparency and proclaim their firm opposition to human rights abuses – to the point of possibly allowing civil courts to try military personnel accused of certain crimes against non-combatants.

Eighth, in the same vein, the Army and Navy will continue to publicize the ever-more visible presence of females in the armed services even as *machismo* remains alive. Little or no future growth in SEDENA's numbers means that distaff officers and enlistees must still scramble for positions and promotions.

Ninth, the military will pursue its public relations campaign to downplay the corruption arising from interaction with cartels. The services will continue to employ media advertisements, survey research, and special events to ingratiate themselves with the public, which supports the men and women in uniform despite highly publicized bribetaking, thefts, misallocation of funds, and human rights violations.

Tenth, the northward flood of Central American emigrants and the southward thrust of Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel make it crucial for Mexico to accept the difficult task, sometimes akin to herding cats, of coordinating social and anti-crime policies with its southern neighbors.

Eleventh, mutual security concerns will lead to more numerous and closer contacts between the U.S. military and security agencies and their Mexican counterparts even as SEDENA and SEMAR reach out

to Canada, Colombia, and other countries for training, specialized arms, intelligence, and instruction in cyber-security.

Twelfth, Peña Nieto's appointment of General Oscar Naranjo as his security guru could signal that DTOs that maintain a low profile, avoid eye-catching sadistic acts, and refrain from attacking citizens might become a low priority for pursuit and capture. Rather than throwing large units at the enemy as Calderón did, the Colombian four-star favors well-trained, highly mobile, relatively small squads.<sup>99</sup>

The U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado and better known as NORTHCOM, can also be helpful by furnishing language-training, information, radars, night goggles, and other used surveillance equipment to the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and other organizations such as the Texas Department of Public Security. Both agencies' responsibilities have mushroomed with the accelerated flow of drugs and drug-merchants across the 2,000-mile binational frontier, and the southward cascade of weapons.

Operation NIMBUS, supervised by NORTHCOM, epitomized an effective Joint Task Force initiative. In mid-February 2012, active-duty soldiers from Fort Hood and Fort Bliss deployed to southern New Mexico and Arizona to bolster CBP's security efforts.<sup>100</sup> In the past, National Guard units have successfully bolstered protection of porous, vulnerable areas. Operation JUMP START, which involved a 2-year assignment of guardsmen to the Yuma Arizona sector, won praise from then-governors Arnold Schwarzenegger (California), Bill Richardson (New Mexico), and Janet Napolitano (Arizona), who wanted the mission extended.<sup>101</sup>

Finally, Washington can assist Mexico at the margins with intelligence, training, equipment, and vigilance of money flows. Ultimately, the key players have to be our neighbor's political, economic, and social establishment. As things stand now, many of the privileged outside the country's north live cocooned from much of the violence thanks to sophisticated security systems, trained drivers, skilled bodyguards, the ability to educate their youngsters abroad, and the wherewithal to move their families to, and run their enterprises from, Texas and other border states. As indicated earlier, far too many governors either collaborate with cartels or close their eyes to crimes.

Mexico's *nomenklatura* must comprehend that even if a miracle took place and narco activities disappeared overnight, their nation would still be home to a deadly nether world whose unscrupulous denizens are adept at murder, torture, kidnapping, extortion, money laundering, loan-sharking, prostitution, human smuggling, and a score of other crimes. In contacts with Mexican interlocutors, U.S. civilian and military officials must avoid hubris and recognize the severe limitation on ameliorating, much less solving, formidable problems in other countries unless local leaders challenge the miscreants in their midst.

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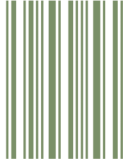
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