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# PRESIDENT PEÑA NIETO'S NEW SECURITY STRATEGY:

# IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S.-MEXICO COOPERATION

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. NEGROPONTE: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. Thank you all for coming today, as we both launch a book, *the End of Nostalgia*, a book which covers critical issues in the Mexican relationship and within Mexico, and looks to the exciting future of Mexico -- and, also, a book by my colleague, Kevin Casas, who is now at the OAS, and whose monograph we would like to share with you.

This afternoon, we have a remarkable panel, the biographies of which are in your program, and I do not intend to repeat them.

But what I want to stress is the following: A shared responsibility exists between the U.S. government and the Mexican government. Secretary Clinton was perhaps the first to enunciate that, but since that time, senior officials from Washington have repeated that commitment -- that the violence in Mexico is also our violence, and, due to the fact that we are the largest market for the illicit products which move towards our border, and that our inability to control the southward movement of arms and bulk cash make this a joint enterprise.

That joint enterprise was very close during the Calderón administration. And David Johnson, who's with us this afternoon, was the Director of that department within the State Department which managed the Mérida Initiative. And we're very grateful, David, for you joining us this afternoon.

An election, a new President, and a new policy is what we are seeking to understand. The situation is dynamic, and, for many of us, it is uncertain. Therefore, we have asked senior official from the Mexican government, as well as the Mexican Ambassador to the United States licenciado, Eduardo Medina-Mora, who is sitting here today, but in the front seat of the audience -- a citizen this afternoon -- for the moment --

to join us to explain, what is this dynamic new security policy? Because if there's a shared responsibility, we need to understand the shifts that are occurring.

We also want to present and share with you the response from the U.S. government, and we await the arrival of Assistant Secretary Alan Bersin, from the Department of Homeland Security, because he has the border, he has the customs, and the immigration in his bailiwick. I sincerely hope that Mr. Snowden has not detained him somewhere, and that he will, at any moment, slip in through this door.

I'm going to start off this afternoon asking Ariel Moutsatsos, the Minister for Special Affairs at the Mexican Embassy here in Washington, to present to us the Mexican strategy.

Thank you.

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Well, thank you very much for having us here. Thank you, Diana, and, certainly, thank you to everyone for being here.

Eduardo, it's a pleasure to share a panel with you. I'm sure that you all understand that our great Ambassador has a very unique sense of humor, and that's why he got me here, up in the stage, instead of him. So, I thank you also -- the Ambassador -- for this opportunity.

President Peña Nieto has stated in recent months that he was not going to be a new strategy, but, rather, more like a public security state policy, a justice policy, that can follow up in what has been done, but, certainly, that stays as a general line to address the issues of security and justice in Mexico.

We used to have a more reactive approach, prior to this administration, and the new approach of this state policy for security and justice is to address the roots and causes of crime, rather than just its consequences.

In Mexico -- and in many parts of the world -- there are two preconditions for full development of a country. The first one is macroeconomic stability. When I was 18 years old, I heard all over the press and the media in Mexico that there was an economic crisis in 1994, and we didn't know if we should dollarize our economy -- because the peso was not very stable back in those days. And there were debates in the media, in the cafes, in the policymakers, and in the press on this issue.

In the end, we did our homework, and today, we have one of the most solid economies in the world.

We implemented a state policy for economy, and we (inaudible) our country macroeconomic stability.

We are looking now to fulfill the second precondition for full development in Mexico, which is security and justice.

President Peña Nieto has pointed out six lines of action to do so. The first one is planning. We are not looking to have much improvisation here, but, rather, a more planned approach towards this issue.

The second one is, of course, prevention -- social prevention of crime. The National Program for the Prevention of Violence and Crime was already presented a few months ago. It focuses on 57 municipalities or the locations where 30 percent of crimes take place, and some additional actions in 251 municipalities -- of the more than 2,400 municipalities that we have in Mexico -- are being taken. They are actions to restore social fabric, and rebuild communities, to bring economic and education opportunities, and, certainly, also related to treatment.

In terms of human rights, we also have made important progress, but we have certainly, as well, a lot of plans. We have a new victims' law, a new Undersecretary

for Human Rights, and, regarding the military jurisdiction, we do not have more trials under military jurisdiction, for events or situations where civilians are participating -- or military personnel that is off-duty is participating.

Coordination is also an important factor -- coordination between our agencies at the federal level, between the federal and the state authorities and institutions, between state and municipal authorities, and, certainly, we have divided the country in five regions, to approach from a better perspective, and from a more tailored manner, the problems of security and justice there. We are privileging intelligence over force.

A few years back, the federal government effectively was kind of substituting the way that we approached the problem -- substituting the governors -- because we were having an approach where the federal government would just go to the states, and take over the situation -- take charge of the situation, of the enforcement there, and try to improve the security situation there.

This is not what the Constitution mandates, and it is certainly not the approach right now. We are currently embracing a more shared approach, where the federal government is supporting governors to do their work -- and, certainly, supporting, also, municipalities through that scheme. And we are confident that that will make -- and it's already been very, very positive for improving the situation -- and it will make a difference in our country.

Maybe the most one -- if it's one that is more important than the other -- is institutional transformation. In the beginning of my presentation, I said that we were to address the roots and causes of crime, rather than just its consequences. Well, behind all the problem of organized crime lies institutional weakness.

In Mexico, we have a very strong state. We have a very strong state regarding education, regarding health. We are among the very few countries in the world with universal health coverage. We are also economically very strong. Our social programs are very good.

But in terms of security and justice, we are not yet there. We need to make more regarding security and justice in our country. We need to strengthen our institutions, to rearticulate, in that sense, our cooperation with the United States, on which we will talk about a bit later.

And finally, the last line of action is assessment and feedback, because this is certainly something that we'd like to just enrich and assess on the process.

Diana has asked me to talk a bit about the progress on justice reform. We will make -- we have a deadline in 2016, when our system, our criminal system, has to go from inquisitorial -- the one that we have right now, in (inaudible), or a more oral adversarial and accusatorial system.

This is, certainly, to ensure due process, and to ensure, also, the presumption of innocence, expedite trials, ensure equality, damage repair, and the other characteristics that you are, right now, reading in the screen.

It's been fully implemented in Chihuahua, Morelos, and the State of Mexico. And 29 other states are taking actions to achieve its inception. It's especially made progress in 20 of them.

And we are also looking to embrace an alternative justice criteria for minor felonies, to avoid processing and imprisoning people unnecessarily, to expedite the damage repairing and safeguarding the interests of the victims.

And, certainly, this new criminal justice system does not include yet

organized crime, but it will include all types of crime in the long term.

Regarding police and police reform, as you know, we have more than 2,000 police corporations in the country. This is because we have almost one corporation for every of our 2,438 municipalities. There are municipalities where we don't have police corporations.

Police-building is a matter of creating critical mass. The numbers are very important. We need them, also, to be reliable, certainly, and effective. But creating critical mass, it's of the essence, because that improves reaction, that improves the capability of them to operate in a wider and bigger area -- let's call it jurisdiction, until, technically, it's not jurisdiction, because it's not investigative police; it's a rather preventive model of police.

And, at the same time, it's very important to secure peace and tranquility for the citizens in their communities, and that the territory is well-controlled by the police.

Each state will assess its municipal police forces, and the state of those forces, if they require, to become a single command force in a state -- or, if they will stay as municipal police forces, but they will be reformed. 30 municipalities in 10 states have already transferred public safety functions to -- and, of course, the single command to state governments. And there is in place an initiative to create a subsidiary single police command in our country.

Regarding the gendarmerie, which is a subject that has been, in recent weeks, in the media, and in the minds of the people who follow these subjects very closely--the gendarmerie, essentially, is a work in progress, and it's still in planning stages.

But what we do know is that it will be a deployment force, to have

presence where the state is weaker -- territorial presence. This is about territorial presence. It seeks to recover gradually public security tasks by police forces. It will have military and police training and structure, civilian command and duties.

It will be a revision of the federal police -- constrained to his legal mandates and power. This means that he will not be a substitute to the federal police, like it was said or I read somewhere. It's not. It will be a division within the federal police, with police aims and rules of engagement.

He will have arrest authority and investigative duties, and it will start with 5,000 elements. Currently, the federal police has 37,000 elements, approximately. And we have deployed -- sometimes more, sometimes less -- around 45,000 armed elements from our armed forces.

So, this reaches, more or less, 90,000 elements. And we believe that it's necessary to have 100,000 elements in our territory, in terms of a federal force.

The President has stated its intention to take the federal police force from 37,000 to 50,000 elements, and if the gendarmerie grows to that number, we would be reaching around 100,000 elements, and then we could think about the gradual recovery of public security tasks by police forces, rather than the military.

Regarding international cooperation, we had some coordination problems in recent years, especially in terms of cooperation -- intelligence cooperation and exchange. So, we have already set a single point of contact to exchange intelligence. This is, certainly, to avoid duplication of efforts regarding international cooperation, to give order, direction, and effectiveness to government actions -- but, most, importantly, to avoid competition.

In the past, our cooperation was based on a best-friend basis. And the

agencies in Mexico and the agencies in the United States would choose mutually with whom to cooperate or exchange intelligence. This is not so, and will not be so anymore, for the case of intelligence against organized crime.

We will have a single point of contact so that we can have more coordination and more organization of that, and, certainly, in terms of training, technical assistance, and cooperation, that will continue on a one-to-one basis.

The special focus of this new approach will be on money laundering and weapons trafficking -- and not, as I said, only in addressing the consequences.

And this is very interesting. The federal budget for the Fiscal Year 2013, approved by the Mexican Congress, is -- let me say this correctly; it's a big number -- $13,505,120,831. That stands for 1.06 percent of our GDP. This is to prevent crime, fight addictions, rescue public spaces. This is also for the judiciary branch and the Contributions Fund for public security of the states and the Federal District.

But this does not include the budget of every state -- that every state is, of course, focusing on security and justice. This is only at the federal level, and it includes the aid or the assistance provided by the federal government to the states.

So, taking this into consideration -- and, also, bearing in mind that, in the Mérida Initiative, the U.S. committed to transfer a total of $1.4 billion -- well, we can certainly reach the conclusion that Mexico, regarding security and justice, is investing $13 for every dollar that the United States destines to these matters.

If we were to take in consideration what the states are also, you know, destined to this, well, we will reach probably a relation of around 20:1, if not more, for security and justice that's been invested by the Mexican government, in comparison to the Mérida Initiative.

Now let's make this very clear: This is not assistance. This is more like a shared responsibility, because it's a shared problem, and we need to seek a shared solution to this.

And the United States, for us, what they are putting into the Mérida Initiative is, of course, very meaningful and symbolic, but, at the same time, it provides services and other types of -- well, services and equipment, but, certainly, training that we cannot find in the market anywhere else.

So, that's more important than the money itself. It's a matter of cooperation and providing training more in kind than in cash.

I know that the time is short, but this is more or less of a breakdown. I'm not sure if you can see this very clearly on the screen, but this is a breakdown of the federal budget for the year 2013 that I just talked about. This information will be available through Diana.

And, in brief, just to wrap up, we are talking about a new, integral, preventive, holistic approach that strengthens security and justice institutions, that completes the deployment and presence of the state throughout the country, in terms of security and justice, that institutionalizes the solution to the problem of violence and organized crime, and disrupts the ability of the criminal groups to reproduce their model in time and geography.

The bottom line is that we are seeking to assure peace and tranquility for Mexican families in their communities. From December 2012 to April 2013 -- and I'm sure that Eduardo will address this more thoroughly -- there have been a total of 5,296 homicides allegedly linked to organized crime.

The same measure, in the last five months of the previous

administration, reached 6,432. So, when comparing these consecutive periods, well, there has been a decrease of 1,136 homicides. That stands for 18 percent decrease in that. One is too many, but 18 percent, for the first months of the administration, I think it's quite a good output.

For Mexico, enforcing the law is certainly an unavoidable obligation, like our President said.

With this, I thank you very much for your attention, and I look forward to the other presentations, and the commentaries and questions in this regard.

Thank you very much.

MS. NEGROPONTE: I'm now going to ask the Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security -- otherwise known as DHS -- Alan Bersin to please to respond.

Alan, you don't have a (inaudible), do you?

MR. BERSIN: I don't -- never touch the stuff.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Can we turn off this PowerPoint, so that we get some of the focus on Mr. Bersin?

MR. BERSIN: Thank you, Diana, and thank you, Brookings, Mr. Ambassador. Ariel, thank you for that presentation.

My job today is to describe at least -- or outline the response of the Department of Homeland Security -- and, by extension, the United States government -- to the transition that has taken place in Mexico.

And in the context of any transition, whether it be Mexican or in the United States, when you go from one administration to the next, there is a tendency to emphasize the new and the different. And, of course, in any transition, there will be

changes.

But what I suggest to this group is that we need to step back and take a look at the long-term strategic change that has taken place in the United States -- of Mexico relationship over the last 12 years -- certainly, over the last six years -- and even more pronounced over the last 3.5 years -- because I think, in that long-term -- in that recognition of the long-term strategic change, we actually begin to understand and can project what is likely to happen over the next half generation -- certainly, the next decade.

And, frankly, the large change that will not see any alteration is in a fundamental shift that's taken place in the way the United States government and the Mexican government view problems -- both at the border, but, also, in the interior of both countries.

From a history, recognizing that, since the U.S.-Mexican War in the 19th century, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, we have had a demilitarized, unguarded border in the sense of military forces stationed on the border, which characterizes border checkpoints in most of the rest of the world.

As with Canada, the United States, in its border with Mexico, has been blessed by the absence of armed enemies. And we have had a friendly relationship in the context of comparison to much of the rest of the world.

Having said that, for much of U.S. and Mexican history, there was basically a courtesy and a determination to emphasize the positive, but in terms of real cooperation, substantive cooperation on matters of security and working together -- for most of our bilateral history, that was conspicuous by its absence, because it was only at the U.S.-Mexican border that there was a genuine equality based on sovereignty -- that is that by going from one country to the next, it was at the border that the asymmetry in the

relationship could be minimized -- and, in fact, the national pride and power of Mexico be asserted.

That translated in the practical world into the absence of cooperation, for the most part -- in terms of the kind of cooperation that I believe now has been built into the DNA of the relationship -- because, unlike the past, what we now have is a theory of action that is genuinely accepted by both governments.

And that theory of action is the recognition of Responsabilidad Compartida -- co-responsibility, shared responsibility for problems -- so that, whereas in the past, you would have seen -- and we certainly did hear -- with regard to the major problems separating our countries and the sources of periodic tension -- whether it be migration, or drugs, or violence -- there was a tendency to point fingers at one another.

The problem of migration largely was attributed from the U.S. side to the Mexican inability to provide employment for most of its people. Reciprocally, Mexicans would point at the United States, and indicate that migration issues were largely a function of the American hypocritical desire for safe borders but cheap labor.

With regard to narcotics, we tended to see the same blame game, so to speak, with regard to Americans asking Mexicans why they could not control organized crime within their country, and prevent the transfer of drugs across the border -- and Mexicans replying quite strongly that, were Americans not the largest consumers of narcotics in the world, perhaps the problem of supply for Mexico would be put in context.

And so on and on, in terms of the way in which we dealt with these issues.

Remarkably -- and, I think, irrevocably -- that has faded from the scene, and what you see is a strategic understanding on the part of the Mexican and U.S.

governments that these are shared problems.

And once there was an intellectual recognition that the problem of narcotics coming north, migrants coming north, guns going south, and cash going south, that this was not an occasion for finger-pointing or blaming, but, rather, a common, vicious cycle of criminality that affected both countries, the foundation -- or the platform, if you will -- for shared solutions became possible for the first time in our bilateral history.

And to an extent that I can only tell you for someone who has been involved, both as a *un fronterizo* living on the border, but, also, someone who has been honored to be involved with Mexican colleagues for two decades, the change in the bilateral relationship in the last five years, in the last seven years, in the last three years, with the growth and the cooperation increasing with each development of relationship, has been nothing short of remarkable -- a genuine transformation in the bilateral relationship, based on the notion of shared responsibility and a recognition that we must develop common approaches to these shared problems.

It has revolutionized the relationship -- so much so that I would not lose my focus on those strategic principles of cooperation. As we see, as will happen in any change in administration, a different approach to how one sovereignty chooses to organize its affairs -- particularly security affairs -- those changes -- a measured, disciplined approach that has been laid out is something that will not affect, but, rather, I submit to you, more successfully lead to implementation of solutions to these common problems, as we move forward.

What I'd like to talk about in terms of impact on the United States government are border coordination, interior cooperation, and then the job that I see for both nations, going forward, in terms of the next 10 years -- a work which will need to

begin in the next two, and then continue.

With regard to the border, our shared border has always -- for those of us who live and work on the border, we have recognized the wisdom of our Mexican neighbors' reference to the border region as *el tercer pais*, the third country -- neither here nor there -- in which a whole variety of influences, whether it has to do with food, or music, or culture, or familial relationship, just as a blend across this *linea* -- that, for those who live and work there, is less important than for many people who live far from the border, both in Mexico City and in Washington.

But the fact of the matter is, the border has been an occasion in the context of our relationship, even one of cooperation, where a use-of-force incident -- taking one example -- tends to derail the cooperation, and becomes a source of contention. And both governments recognize that.

And, I believe that, going forward, the border violence prevention protocols that were developed in the context of first the Bush-Calderón administration, and then the Calderón-Obama relationship will, with President Peña Nieto and President Obama, actually lead to a development of mechanisms and modes of cooperation and communication that will actually put that history of incidents -- each of which is a complicating factor -- will not actually confront them by ignoring them, but, rather, develop the kinds of mechanisms that have been absent to be able to work through the problems of any particular case. I see that as an important point, going forward.

I also see, as we begin to recognize the huge, enormous changes that have taken place in the Mexican economy -- now the 13th largest economy in the world; $1.16 trillion of gross domestic product -- projected by the OECD to be a larger economy than Germany's one generation from now -- 2042, one generation -- Mexico projected to

have a larger economy than Germany by the OECD.

The increasing democratization of the Mexican political system -- the fact of the matter that more than 50 percent of Mexicans today, by any measure, any demographic, economic, quality-of-life measure, are firmly moving in or firmly moving toward the middleclass.

This has changed the nature of our border relationship, consistent with President Obama and President Peña Nieto saying -- and insisting that we turn, and face, and look to the economic dimensions -- the continental competitiveness dimensions of our two economies. That gives impetus to look at the border -- not as an occasion for division, but, rather, as a source of strength to build this competitiveness -- because the way in which the United States and Mexico actually compete with East Asia, compete with the Indian subcontinent, compete with Brazil, and Indonesia, and Turkey, is by lowering our costs -- not on labor, but on cross-border transactions.

The shared production platforms that exist between the United States and Mexico -- for automobiles and a variety of other instruments and appliances -- requires that we make the crossing of the border -- sometimes in a production before final assembly, a part in an automobile has crossed the United States-Mexican border -- Mexican-United States border -- four, or five, or six times.

That requires that we actually lower the transaction costs. We lower the wait times. We focus on making the border as seamless a place as we can.

And in the three minutes that I have left, let me turn to the interior cooperation, and then the job of the next generation.

It seems to me, with regard to the -- whether it's the Ventanilla Única -- the single window, the cooperation -- what the Peña Nieto administration has done is

organized its security affairs, as Ariel has laid out, and the Ambassador will comment.

The United States will work to adjust with our Mexican partners, with those with whom we share responsibility, to develop the mechanisms that we need to make this work, where bilateral cooperation is important.

Every one of the programs that was described is something that will contribute to the security of Mexico -- and, by definition, therefore, to the security of the United States.

So, I do not think that the focus on the elements of transition -- and the frictions that occur in transition -- are actually very productive. And recognizing we're only seven months into the new administration -- and Mexico in six months into the second administration of the Obama term here in the United States -- I believe that we will see a focus on the strategic importance of the relationship, and a diminution in the number of stories that talk about the differences that exist as the friction subsides.

So, the major job, I submit, for the Obama and Peña Nieto administrations going forward, is to pick up on two initiatives that the Peña Nieto administration has focused on, among the others that were mentioned.

The first is the notion that there is a regionalization, and the need for regional cooperation -- looking at North America as stretching from Columbia to the Arctic, and that, in fact, Mexico will play an increasing role in leadership with regard to Central America, and the problems that have risen in Central America, and the United States welcomes that leadership, and looks to cooperate with Mexico in meeting it.

The second is to cooperate, as we are asked to do, when we are asked to do, with regard to the southern border of Mexico -- the border with Belize and Guatemala, where many of the issues of -- as success tends to -- Mexican efforts to

control organized crime, we begin to see the impact in Central America, in Guatemala, and in other Central American countries, and the strengthening of the border infrastructure in the south of Mexico is a project with which I think you will see significant cooperation.

And then, lastly, the job for the next 10 years -- and over the next generation -- is to institutionalize the work that we have established bilaterally. We need to build institutions. The most successful institution, actually, in terms of the U.S.-Mexican relationship that is ongoing, is the IBWC -- that deals with such dreary matters as boundaries and water. That was not always the case at the U.S.-Mexican relationship.

If you go back to the 19th century, you see that water and boundaries were a big source of contention between our societies and our peoples. Now it's a matter of technical adjustment -- problem arises with regard to a meet or a bound in a particular boundary, it's referred to the IBWC and handled. Water issues are dealt with as technical issues.

I look forward, *ojalá*, to the day when the issues that take up so much of our time on the border have been reduced to technical matters, and the U.S. and Mexican people focus on the job of economic competitiveness/prosperity for both of our peoples -- all of our peoples, in a new relationship -- the seeds of which are clearly sprouting now, and are visible to those who will look.

Thank you very much.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Eduardo Guerrero is now going to give the private security (inaudible). And you have a PowerPoint, I believe.

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Well, yes, there are some slides. I brought

some slides.

Well, first of all, it's really a pleasure to be part of a dialogue with such a distinguished panel.

The main reason I'm here is the publication of this book, a Brookings Institution book in which I contribute with a security chapter. The book is edited by Diana Negroponte. Thank you, Diana, for your diligent and meticulous editorial work; that really improved the chapter.

I also appreciate the press and so for Mr. Bersin, Ariel, and the Ambassador, Medina-Mora, who, as you may know, is one of the most notable -- has better knowledge of the security situation in Mexico.

He has been head of the intelligence agency in Mexico -- or Minister of the Public Security, and, also, Attorney General; it's really an exceptional career in the security sector.

Well, I will start by recapping some of the main findings which I describe in the security chapter of the book, as I told you, about organized crime and violence in Mexico, in recent years.

Next, I will point out some salient features of the current landscape of the organized crime-related violence in Mexico, and some of the President Peña Nieto's security policies.

From 2008 to 2010, homicide rates throughout Mexico spiked. In 2008, homicide rates increased by 50 percent, and another 50 percent in 2009. This sharp increase in violence is puzzling. It was a sudden change, and it reversed a downward trend in violence which dates back to the '90s.

A central idea, which I discuss in the chapter, is that the federal

government security strategy, particularly an unprecedented numbers of captures and killings of drug trafficking organization leaders, was one of the factors that led to the violence crisis.

The decapitation of criminal organizations was nonselective. All major cartels were targeted, despite the fact that they did not engage in violence and predatory crimes with equal intensity -- and, thus, they posed different threat levels to the Mexican people. Thus, the impact of these captures was not to deter violence, but to foster uncertainty and instability within organizations which operate on the basis of personal reputation.

The hypothesis has been highly contested in Mexico. Factors different from the government's strategy may have also contributed to triggering violence. However, I have not come across any other compelling explanation for that dramatic increase in violence, starting 2008.

It is noteworthy that most high-profile captures were performed on the basis of information provided by the U.S. government. Thus, the Mexican government had only a limited ability to employ many strategies more attuned to domestic interests.

An important consequence of widespread violence was a parallel increase in extortion, which was recorded by both official statistics and victimization service. Violation promoted a demand for what scholars called illegal protection -- hence, mafia-style organizations appeared in several regions. Unlike DTOs, which may operate through a relatively compact network, mafias usually deploy large groups of gunmen and informants, and may even have enjoyed support from broad sectors of population -- for instance, in communities where these mafias are large employers.

Much of the violence that we currently face in Mexico is not fueled by

drug trafficking or other transnational criminal activities, but by conflicts between local mafias -- or even by their quotidian activities as enforcers.

By mid-2011, the federal government shifted from a nonselective to a selective law informal strategy. It specifically targeted the Zetas, the most violent among Mexican large drug-trafficking organizations. This shift in the federal government's strategy may have provided an important incentive for other criminal organizations to use less violent methods. Thereafter, organized crime-related violence initiated a moderate but steady downward trend.

It is too soon to assess the new government's strategy. As you can see -- I will show you some graphs.

As you can see, violence in Mexico has had a steady downward trend since mid-2011. This is quarterly periods during the last years.

Violence shows a moderate decline during the first six months of the administration of Peña Nieto. This is my graph. The data I used is the one that is collected by my team in the consultant firm in Mexico City. We collect, on a daily basis, information about homicides related to organized crime, from (inaudible) sources -- mainly newspapers -- local and national newspapers.

But we have a reduction, if we compare the last semester of Calderón with the first summer of Peña Nieto, a 9.2 reduction.

The states that have registered the larger violence reductions are the following: Guerrero, with a very important variation, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Michoacán, Nuevo León, and Sinaloa. What is important about this is that all these states registered very high levels of violence during the Calderón government.

You can see, this is the graph for the evolution of violence in Monterrey

metropolitan area -- and it's notorious, the reduction of violence during the last months.

However, there are other states that are registering increases, important increases, in violence. Here, a very worrying case is Jalisco -- also, Puebla, Sonora, Guanajuato, the Stato Federale, and Quintana Roo. These states registered medium or low levels of violence during Calderón.

So, the message of this graph is that violence is moving from high-intensity violence areas to what were previously low-intensity violence areas.

Here, you have the graph for Guadalajara. In my opinion, Guadalajara is the most worrying case, because it's a really important metropolitan area in Mexico.

Here, this is the graph for the Mexico City metropolitan area. This includes estado de Mexico -- not only the Federal District.

So, the landscape of violence in Mexico is mixed. Although there is a national decline of violence, if we look at the state data, there are some places where violence is still increasing.

Why the violence has decreased in Mexico during the last two years, probably? I think there are four factors. The first one has to do with that the federal government shift from a nonselective to a selective law enforcement strategy, as I told you before.

The second factor has to do with an increasing social demand to put a stop on violence. There are now, in Mexico, broad social movements that are demanding to the government, stop violence.

The third factor is more effective interventions by the federal government and some state governments. Without any doubt, there has been institutional learning during the last years, so now, the state governments and the federal government are

more effective to intervene in certain violent areas.

And finally, there is reduced availability of new recruits. Many local gangs that previously were recruited by the cartels now refuse to have this link, because they know of the danger, of the great risk that represents to collaborate with the cartels.

Well, regarding Peña Nieto's strategy, the most noticeable change so far has taken place in the government's communication strategy. Mexicans have been spared the nonstop propaganda about captures, seizures, and joint operations, which were the trademark of President Calderón's administration.

Overall, this change has been positive, and topics different from organized crime and violence have gained momentum. However, providing too little information could also be harmful, especially in areas where mafias are stronger. The perception of an absent state may contribute to population and business migration -- or the appearance of paramilitary groups, such as those that already exist in several communities in Guerrero and Michoacán.

The government has also engaged in a national program to prevent violence through social interventions. Interventions of this type, if they are adequately targeted, have a large potential in Mexico, in the long term. It will be critical to their success to establish a clear distinction between general poverty alleviation, policies, and violence prevention strategies.

On the other hand, I believe that we need a stronger emphasis on law enforcement strategies aimed at reducing violence through deterrence. I describe alternatives to such policies in my chapter of the book.

Unfortunately, the ability of Mexican law enforcement institutions to implement such policies is still very limited.

The general gendarmerie, which is one of Peña Nieto's most important bets regarding security, could contribute to overcoming these limitations. However, little information has been disclosed about the specifics of the gendarmerie.

Moreover, it is also necessary to strengthen domestic intelligence collection at all government levels. As long as Mexican high-profile law enforcement relies on U.S. sources, it will not be possible to implement timely and effective violence reduction interventions.

Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: This is the moment when we ask for citizen number one in the front row of the audience, Ambassador Eduardo Medina-Mora, to comment.

Thank you.

MR. MEDINA-MORA: Thank you very much. I am only an ordinary citizen -- have to tell you.

And, actually, I'm an accidental Ambassador, Diana, because I am a political appointee, not a career Ambassador. So, when my term or function as Ambassador to the U.S. ends, I will no longer be an Ambassador -- just a human being, an ordinary citizen.

So, thank you very much, and thank you for inviting me.

I'll also recognize my dear friend, Alan Bersin. Perhaps no one more knowledgeable of the border than he, who has lived there, worked there, suffered the consequences of being on the border, and, of course, planning and working together with his Mexican counterparts.

Also very happy to see David Johnson here. We worked together in the

Millennia Initiative since his inception.

And, of course, just to comment briefly -- the current administration is adjusting the strategy. And it's adjusting the strategy together at the same time with adjusting the narrative. And this is important, because we have learned from our own mistakes -- and, certainly, from our successes. And we have learned from other countries' mistakes and successes.

And if any organization, or government, or company, or business concern wants to stay successful in the market, you have to adjust your strategy.

And, first of all, the most important component here is that (inaudible) security being the basic obligation of the state. This is what the state is for -- to provide ordinary citizens with certainty, with regard of their safety, and the opportunity to unfold their talents, and opportunities in their communities with their families.

So, in this sense, President Peña Nieto's administration has designed a new institutional architecture, an array. This has essentially focused in on reorganizing and rearticulating the coercive power of the state, in terms of what the Mexican Constitution establishes as federal, state, and municipal (inaudible) under the principles of co-responsibility and coordination.

In the past, maybe we have devoted too much effort into the federal buildup of security, and too little on the state's. And maybe, in a way, we left the states outside of the equation. And this was, I would say, proven as a mistake, in the sense that it didn't provide the results that we were actually looking for.

So, in this sense -- first of all, in the federal level, the President has delegated the narrative and the strategy implementation to his home secretary, the Ministry of Interior (inaudible), for everyday task management -- which provides for a

better coordination within the federal agencies.

We have to say that the Secretary of the Interior has, on its own, a very strong responsibility on this, because he heads the (inaudible). He also serves as the National Security Council Executive Secretary, and takes the role of the President when the President's not present. He also heads, together with the President, the National Public Security Council, which gathers together the governors, the federal institutions, and civil society around building up public policy around public security.

So, the Secretary of the Interior has (inaudible) role here, by law, by legal mandate. And it's for him to actually carry out this everyday task management and coordination.

So, with this better coordination within federal agencies, the Interior Ministry also is responsible for carrying the relationship of the federation with the state governments, with the legislative branch, and the judiciary. This is his role, according to the Constitution.

And this is, in many senses, a political problem, in the sense that you have to align the efforts, and responsibilities, and mandates of the federal government, the state governments, and the municipalities, together with Congress and the judiciary around this basic objective -- which is to provide Mexican citizens and their families with certainty -- to provide them with the opportunity to live in peace and tranquility with their families in their communities.

This, in that sense, has actually provided the space for much better coordination between the federal government and the states, and helping the states to really build up their own security institutions, particularly the police force and their justice institutions, together with this national objective to go for an adversarial accusatory oral

system, which is already mandated by the Constitution, and which has to be in place by 2016.

President Peña has agreed with the governor that we will not change this date. We better move faster in terms of the implementation of this justice system major reform towards an accusatory adversarial oral system.

And we cannot leave the governors outside this equation. We have to give them and provide them with support, and, certainly, help them build up their own state institutions, so we have much better coordination. And from coordination and shared responsibility nationally, we can then move forward, towards having a much better result in this strategy.

In this sense, the international cooperation comes from this better arrangement of the national institutions around this objective. I have to say that maybe from the narrative we've developed in the past, we were maybe being seen as using the U.S. as a scapegoat of our own issues -- and, of course, the U.S. is to be blamed for what is to be blamed. But this is common, really, in Mexico, from institutional weakness.

And I have to say that in my view -- and this is something which is in the center of the new narrative -- is that our main problem is not drug trafficking. Our main problem is security -- the absence of the state, the weakness of the state, inability of the state to provide security to its own citizens in the territory.

Drug trafficking makes it much worse, because it gives these criminal concerns a tremendous economic power, and the access to tremendous firepower that actually threatens the ordinary citizens across the board -- and, of course, builds up obstacles for building up this more sound institutional framework.

But the basic approach is to build up the security institutions that Mexico

requires, and Mexican citizens are entitled to. So, in this sense, I would say that the cooperation between the federal government and states, the cooperation between Mexico and the U.S. is essentially based on providing the best of our resources and abilities to this institutional buildup effort, in order to provide the Mexican state with this ability to provide certainty to its own citizens.

In this sense, I would say that the Mexican government has no confusion. We have moved away, maybe, from the narrative of only focusing on kingpin arrests or fighting drug trafficking. There is no confusion, there is no conflict between this new holistic approach, which is also based on prevention, institutional buildup, and law enforcement actions, which are more targeted geographically and group-based, in terms of what is the source of violence, but, also, in terms of what Alan mentioned as shared responsibility and mutual trust in the basis of the international cooperation, particularly with the United States of America and the law enforcement agencies in the U.S.

This is a shared problem, in the sense that it, of course, has to be seen as a value-added chain for drug trafficking, and we have to actually take actions in every single element of the value-added chain. But we have to see, essentially, that our main responsibility and job is to build up sound institutions, sound police institutions in Mexico, and sound justice system in our country, to really make the Mexican state able to provide the certainty that it's obliged to give to its own citizenship.

Thank you very much, and, certainly, I am willing to participate in this. Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Ambassador, thank you very much. Thank you.

I'm going to invite, please, the speakers to come up. Ambassador, we allow you to return to your citizen function for a few minutes. Come.

We have kept you focused for over an hour, and I'd now like to open this up to (inaudible) questions and answers, asking that you identify your name and your affiliation -- and if you could please wait for a microphone, because this is still being recorded by CSPAN.

Since there are a number of questions, let's take three at a time. So, you, gentleman behind you, and then (inaudible).

MR. ZERON: Thank you so much. My name is Jorge Zeron. I am a Mexican international student here in the States.

My main question is, even though in this dialogue, we have been hearing the issues about the strategy, to solve this violence and insecurity in my country, there is, in my belief, an aspect that we have not yet talked about. That is what is popularly believed to be the silver bullet, the thing that will solve the issue. That is, in fact, legalizing -- the legalization of narcotics.

In my opinion -- and this is --

MS. NEGROPONTE: Can we keep to a question? Because there are many people behind you --

QUESTIONER: Sure.

MS. NEGROPONTE: -- waiting their turn.

QUESTIONER: Sure, sure, sure. If there is to be future legalization in Mexico, who will be the entity that will regulate it? Will it be the government? Will it be the corporations? Will it be a third party?

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much. The gentleman behind --

MR. SCHNEIDER: Good afternoon. My name is Dan Schneider. I'm a Professor at the School of International Service at American University. And I'm currently

working on a three-year project concerning obstacles to cooperation between Mexican and American law enforcement agencies working to combat Mexican-based organized crime.

During a recent visit to Mexico City in March, two separate high-level Mexican officials -- I cannot give their names -- described Mérida with the following words: The Mérida Initiative, they said, was an example of U.S. penetration and infiltration -- really raising the -- and whether one agrees or not with that assessment, nonetheless raising the issue of kind of internal political fighting between the pre- and the pan- that might continue to this day, concerning the nature of Mérida, and how it is to be perceived.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Okay, thank you.

MR. SCHNEIDER: So, I just want any comment on that.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you -- Ambassador Towell.

MR. TOWELL: I'm Timothy Towell, a retired U.S. diplomat, 30 years -- and a friend of Mexico forever.

Before I throw out my question, I want to say to the Ambassador -- Mr. Ambassador, whether you're a political appointee or career, you're an Ambassador. You're an Excellency forever. If I run into you for an (inaudible) in Mexico City in 10 years, I'll call you Mr. Ambassador.

My question is for the Assistant Secretary. I've sounded off before about how it's our fault; we're the consumers of drugs. And I hate to pick on Wall Street today, because the Dow is down tremendously, but our institutions are the money launderers of profit for this.

The third part of the triad, though, is our Second Amendment. We love

our guns. I love my gun. What are you doing to shut down the millions of bucket shops along the frontier that are illegally -- against the U.S. law, against Mexican law, against international law -- to shut down this traffic in illegal weapons, sir?

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. I'm going to ask the panel, please, to address this.

Ariel Moutsatsos, would you address the question of Mérida? You prefer to do --

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Well, no. However, I --

MS. NEGROPONTE: -- the legalization of Mérida?

Eduardo, would you address the legalization question?

And you are an Ambassador person -- your question is already directed to you.

MR. BERSIN: Okay.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Ariel --

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Well, the Mérida Initiative is -- since you don't name your sources, I will take the liberty of accrediting to you -- or to your readings -- these kind of concepts on the Mérida Initiative.

The Mérida Initiative is an agreement for cooperation between the United States and Mexico, as we already know. That has four pillars that are not only based on law enforcement, which is what I take from your question -- and it's not only based on assistance in terms of equipment; it also includes building capabilities. That is, institutional transformation. In Mexico, it also deals with preventive measures in both of our countries.

So, this is a good moment to tell you that never before -- in our recent

history, at least -- President Peña Nieto's strategy has been aligned with the United States strategy regarding drug policy.

The Office of National Drug Control of the White House released, a few months after Presidnet Peña Nieto's release of our own strategy, the 2013 strategy of the ONDCP, which has a very similar approach that relies on prevention, and, you know, restoring social fabric, rebuilding communities. It certainly has more focus on health, because this is a country where consumption is higher.

But, conceptually, they are both very much alike. They're very similar, and I think that this is a great opportunity to use Mérida, which will continue, to rearticulate our bilateral cooperation, to profit or benefit from this new alignment of approaches to the problem.

So, it is far from being an infiltration or a penetration of the United States services, as you stated.

Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Eduardo Guerrero --

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Well --

MS. NEGROPONTE: -- is there a silver bullet? And if so, is it legalization?

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: I don't think this is the political moment for legalization in Mexico. It's really polemic -- and, also, for the United States, I don't see the political viability of this initiative, of this measure.

But I think that in Mexico, what we have been experimenting during the last years is violence -- during the last months is violence (inaudible) generated by gangs in Mexico City and other parts of the country, like Acapulco, because of drug-building.

And what we need now in Mexico, more than legalization, I think, is to have some intelligent measures to disrupt open-air markets, drug markets. And we have to do that in the touristic cities, like Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, Cancun, that is now having an important increase in violence -- and, also, in Mexico City.

The situation now in Mexico City is worry. It's place like Tepito, Zona Rose, et cetera. We have to disrupt these open-air markets. That would be, like, my proposal.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. Alan Bersin --

MR. BERSIN: Mr. Ambassador, your passion is shared by many, but, often, the world is not constructed to permit solutions at particular points of time -- which does not mean that there will not come a time when the legal framework makes a more concerted approach to the problem you suggest more viable.

I will say that, in keeping with the doctrine of shared responsibility, with regard to guns going south, seeing it as part of this vicious cycle of organized criminality that affects both countries, that more has been done with regard to the inspection of southbound traffic than had previously been the case.

The Obama administration's position with regard to certain changes in the gun law is a matter of record.

Part of the richness and the relationship, the fabric of the relationship, between the United States and Mexico is that we recognize that there are conditions within each of our countries that make certain things less likely than other things. And yet, whereas in the past, that was the occasion for conflict and dissention, it is now, I think, part of the respect, the genuine respect that exists between government officials, and, frankly, between the people of these two nations.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. I'd now like to take the next round from the back of the audience.

And there is a lady with her hand up -- Patricia Escamilla -- your question.

MS. ESCAMILLA: Thank you, Diana. Well, thank you for interesting presentations.

There's mentions of the Enrique Peña Nieto strategy in (inaudible). And one question that I'm making myself, for quite a few months -- and I hear in many circles here in the United States, as well as in Mexico -- is, how do these objectives of Mexico, of Peña Nieto, and of the U.S. government, in particular, on (inaudible), coincide to the (inaudible) had as its main goal to dismantle criminal organizations -- particularly drug-trafficking organizations.

Now the goal of the Mexican government is to reduce violence. Can you help us understand if they coincide, if there's the same to reduce violence as to dismantle criminal organizations? Or if there are differences, what are those differences?

Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much, Professor (inaudible).

Yes, gentleman just near the camera, in the middle of the room --

MR. ZAMORANO: Thank you -- Jose Lopez Zamorano, Mexican News Agency. I have a question for Ambassador Bersin.

The Obama administration has said that the U.S.-Mexico border is more secure than ever. However, as we speak, the Senate is voting the (inaudible) Amendment -- include $30 billion of additional resources, plus 20,000 additional border patrol agents, plus resources to fund the completion of 700 miles of fences and new walls

in the border.

Does the U.S. need that kind of resources and manpower, or is it an overkill?

MS. NEGROPONTE: And the final question from the back -- there is a lady in the middle, on your left -- hand up. There you are. Yes?

MS. MEYER: Hi -- Maureen Meyer, from the Washington --

MS. NEGROPONTE: Maureen, my apologies --

MS. MEYER: -- excuse me.

MS. NEGROPONTE: -- for not recognizing you. I need glasses.

MS. MEYER: Maureen Meyer, from the Washington Office on Latin America. My question is on Michoacán.

Given the security situation there in the last few months, and the decision of this government to, again, send both the military and federal police in a higher level to that state -- so both -- I think for both Mexican presenters today, how would you distinguish what this government is doing in light of the situation in Michoacán, as compared to what former President Calderón did in the same state, in December of 2006?

Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Maureen, thank you.

I'm going to ask Ariel to answer the first question. Ambassador Bersin, you've already been directed. And Eduardo Guerrero, if you'd address the third question.

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Well, either Patricia Escamilla is very interested in Mexico, or she's one of Alan Bersin's spooks, because she follows me everywhere.

Every time that I talk on security, Patricia is there. So, in both cases, I'm very grateful. It's a good idea to be thankful for that. Thank you, Patricia.

Well, let me tell you something. The Mérida Initiative is not entirely -- neither entirely nor mainly focused on what you just mentioned. It has four pillars: the disruption of organized criminal organizations -- what you stated -- institutionalization of the rule of law, construction of a 21st-century border, and development of strong, resilient communities that can withstand the pressure from criminal organizations.

Having said that, the difference -- or you asked more about the objectives -- how do they coincide? Apart from what I just stated regarding both strategies -- the ONDCP and President Peña Nieto's strategies -- that are coinciding, there is an important difference, and there is an important opportunity here. And it's called holistic approach.

Before, we didn't have a holistic approach -- neither in Mexico -- at least not something that we could identify as actionable -- and, certainly, not very much in the United States. This is the first time that the holistic approach that addresses the causes of crime, rather than just its consequences, is being implemented in both countries.

And in that sense, the first pillar of the Mérida Initiative can be considered as part of our bilateral cooperation approach, but not as the only one -- because we still have other three that we can also work on.

And, as I said, I think this presents a unique first-time opportunity to align with both countries -- between both countries, our efforts of bilateral cooperation -- and to attack this problem in its roots and in its costs.

I don't know if I -- I'm answering what I understood from Patricia's question.

Thank you.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. Ambassador Bersin, the border?

MR. BERSIN: Yeah. If you continue to call me an Ambassador, I'm going to have to become diplomatic, and not answer questions (inaudible).

So, this monumental piece of game-changing legislation, from the very beginning, has involved three elements that the President has made clear in his statements from the White House -- and the so-called Gang of Eight has articulated from the very beginning.

There are three major dimensions. The first is border security. The second is a path to regularized status, a normalized status for the 11 million estimated persons who lack that status at this point. The third is to effect a system that would demagnetize the job market in terms of the attraction of legal migration to this country.

When dealing with a massive transformational framework of the kind that we are discussing, there will be differences of views as to how each of those elements should best be dealt with.

That is what the substance of the discussion that's going on in the Senate is today about, and I would note that while people will disagree about specific elements, at end, if there is to be an immigration reform -- which the President is supporting, and the many, many Senators from both parties, and many Congressmen, I submit, from both parties, will support -- the debate over any of those elements will be had.

But the important thing is that, in a democratic society, that there be sufficient consensus reached, of such that the larger transformation legislatively occurs.

So, as the debate continues, people will feel differently about any one of

those elements and the many other dimensions. I think, as Secretary Napolitano said, she supports the concept of border security, and recognizes that there are many ways to supplement and strengthen it, including the proposal that is now under consideration.

MS. NEGROPONTE: I think we put you in a very hot seat -- and perhaps you'd give another answer in the quiet of the back of this room, where the press are not here.

MR. BERSIN: Not if I'm an Ambassador.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Caught by my own game. Eduardo Guerrero --

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Yes (inaudible).

MS. NEGROPONTE: -- Maureen Meyer's question.

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Michoacán is one of the most troubling states in terms of security in Mexico, where (inaudible) and Guerrero, I think, because it combines two factors. The criminal organizations have a great social basis, and there is great, also, institutional -- the institutions are really weak -- the police institutions, et cetera.

So, that situation has given place to the (inaudible) probably authentic organization of these community police corps that are really trying hard to protect the communities -- the communities of systematic attacks of the criminal organizations that are always trying to extract money by extortion of these communities.

And in the last weeks, what has happened is that some criminal organizations simulate to be community police. And they are trying to perform, to work with this appearance -- false appearance of community police.

So, the great challenge of the government now, the federal government, is to distinguish between the authentic community police corps and the ones that are

criminal organizations but simulate to be community police.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. We've got time for one quick round, but I would just ask if we could have short questions.

The lady here; gentleman there.

QUESTIONER: (inaudible) get us in trouble.

MS. NEGROPONTE: And the final gentleman, here.

QUESTIONER: Okay. So, my name is Christina. I study international relations in Mexico.

And my question is that the problem of security shared by Mexico and the United States is also shared by Central America. And, like, how should the two governments address the problem in Central America -- or what is their responsibility that they have on this region?

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much, Christina.

Yes?

MR. GALLARDO: My name is Luis Gallardo. I am currently a student at Harvard University. My question goes back to legalization.

A lot of the times, when the solution like legalization is posed, just the answer given by many is just, "It's not politically viable." Is it just that it's not politically viable, or do you also think it's not a very effective solution?

MS. NEGROPONTE: Thank you. And, finally, my fellow author in this book, Christopher Wilson.

MR. WILSON: Thanks so much, Diana, for today, the event you put together, and, also, your support on the book.

MS. NEGROPONTE: You have to tell the audience who you are, and

where you come from.

MR. WILSON: Chris Wilson, from the Mexico Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

And my question follows a little bit on Maureen's, but I'd like to think about it a little bit more broadly, also -- the idea of -- I really appreciate the focus that's been given to the importance of the coordination between the federal and state governments throughout Mexico, and I think that's a really important piece of any strategy, going forward.

How can that function -- what is the best way for the federal government to be able to interact, especially with the weaker states in Mexico? There's sort of a broad range of capacities, everywhere from the Federal District to some of the states that we've been talking about.

What can the federal government do to improve the capacity of some of the more challenged states -- not only challenged by organized crime, but challenged by their own ability to build up their institutions for the rule of law.

Thanks.

MS. NEGROPONTE: Alan Bersin, I'm going to let you off the hook on this round, and ask Ariel to, this time, address the legalization, and Eduardo to do the final question about fed/state. But I'm going to take the Central American answer, since I have just published, also, a book about Central America.

Both Mexican and the U.S. government recognize that these small, weak but democratic states face a great challenge from criminal organizations. They are too small, their budgets are too little, and they do not have the capacity on their own to fight transnational criminal organizations.

Honduras is now swamped by drug traffickers moving planes in, with pickup trucks taking the stuff -- whatever it is -- onto the next stage. Alone, they will suffer more homicides, more extortion, and the disintegration of their society.

So, it requires the combined help of the U.S. government, the Mexican government, and the Colombia government.

We have both the intelligence-gathering capacity -- and I'm not talking PRISM, but we have the capacity to share the movement of these aircraft and the movement of these illicit substances through these countries -- and, particularly, with Colombian help -- to train and support law enforcement elements in those countries, to withstand and capture the leaders of these transnational criminal groups.

But the fundamental answer is for citizens within those countries to stand up and say, "We will not accept anymore." And that requires neighborhood groups. That requires citizens who notice what's happening, and have sufficient trust to be able to report it. Trust is missing, and how you restore that trust is a challenge for the citizens of those countries, and, to the extent we can, support from us.

So, now I turn to Ariel on legalization.

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Well, thank you for your question, first of all.

I'd like to say that in this and in other things, I envy Eduardo, because he can give his own personal opinion on the matter, and I am a diplomat and part of our government. And our job is to enforce the law -- and here is to represent the Mexican government.

However, I could say that it's not a matter of being politically viable or an effective or not solution. I don't think that we should get caught up in the debate between legalization or not legalization. I think that what we need to address is a debate on drug

policy and on organized crime policy.

And then we have before us many options. That debate could be, certainly, one where society is involved, like it has happened before -- where intellectuals and analysts are involved, where academics are involved, and certainly, also, the authorities.

But in the end, it has to be a debate far from emotions, because, probably, emotion is what got us to the war on drugs in the first place -- maybe. And it could lead us into another emotional approach that is not for sure going to work. We don't know that for sure.

So, we would have to have a debate that is nonemotional, and based on scientific evidence, and on what has happened, rather than just advocating for legalization or not legalization.

And let me tell you something else very quickly -- if we hypothetically were to regulate or legalize drugs, we would still need strong institutions to regulate them. So, in the end, it's about institutional weakness, and strengthening the institutions we already have for whatever we want them to do.

MR. NEGROPONTE: Eduardo Guerrero, you have only a few seconds, so -- Christopher Wilson's good question.

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

MR. MOUTSATSOS: Sorry about that.

MR. GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. I think just the federal government can help the weakest states in terms of security with two kind of actions.

First, social problems -- concentrating on the juvenile gangs that are usually recruited by the criminal organizations -- and military and police interventions.

But these efforts have to be articulated. I think now the military effort is just reactive, and the police is reactive to some problems, to solving some problems, and the social policy is in its own way. So, these two measures have to be better coordinated and articulated.

MS. NEGROPONTE: I want to ask everybody here this afternoon to thank our panel for their excellent presentations.

Thank you.

And this concludes our meeting.

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