Narco Terrorism In Mexico:

**Violence, Drugs, Corruption and the Road to Democratization.**

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Mexico has experienced a dramatic increase in violence and crime in the last decade. Much of the violence is related to competition between drug cartels for market share of the profitable drug trade. However, drug cartels and the drug trade have existed before this dramatic increase of violence of the 2000’s. Contemporary drug cartels are heavily armed with military weapons that overwhelm Mexican authorities. Drug cartels will do anything to make sure their drugs make it north of the border because of the high profits involved. In this research project I will show that two factors have directly contributed to enormous drug-related violence in Mexico in the last decade and a half. First of all, the drug market moved from Columbia to Mexico in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, when Columbian cartels were slowly dismantled by the collaboration between U.S and Columbian authorities. Secondly, in the late 1990’s Mexico Political landscape became a lot more competitive after the PRI’s seventy year monopoly on the Mexico’s politics was finally broken. Political parties like the PGR began to have success in local elections and then finally in the year 2000, the PAN won the national election beating the PRI out of office after several decades of winning every election. The democratization process has weakened the stat’s capacity by introducing new political actors who have little institutional connection with the cartels and criminal element. A more competitive political landscape due to democratization along with drug trafficking moving from Columbia to Mexico led to enormous increase in drug-related violence in Mexico. The United States war on drugs have resulted in not only greater violence in Mexico, it may also make Mexico’s transition to consolidated democracy very difficult.

According to an article by the New York Times since President Felipe Calderon began a military assault on criminal cartels in 2006, 47,515 people have been killed in Mexico due to drug-related violence (Cave). Violence is not in any way a new phenomenon in Mexico but since the late 2000’s, the violence has dramatically increased. Thousands of people have been murdered and others have fled the country to escape the violence. The Drug cartels or DTO’s (Drug Trafficking Organizations) are heavily armed with military weapons that overwhelm Mexican authorities. This phenomenon that Mexico faces is described by many as Narco-terrorism. According to Sylvia M. Longmire and Lt. John P. Longmire, “The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) defines a narco-terrorist organization as an organized group that is complicit in the activities of drug trafficking in order to further, or fund, premeditated, politically-motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets with the intention to influence (that is, influence a government or group of people) (Longmire and Longmire 38).”

These DTO’s are holding the Mexican people and the Mexican government hostages with their violent tactics. This outbreak in violence has led to thousands and thousands of people being murdered and others fleeing the country to escape this violence. Modern day drug cartels are heavily armed with military weapons that overwhelm Mexican authorities. However, not only are Mexican authorities being targeted but also American authorities have felt the wrath of Mexican cartels. Drug cartels will do anything to make sure their drugs make it north of the border, thus enhancing drug related violence in the U.S. Therefore, this concerns both Mexico and the U.S because as easy as drugs travel through the Mexican American border, so can the ongoing violence. Mexican DTO’s are to blame for the violence Mexico faces.

However, changing political dynamics have contributed to the dramatic increase in violence, especially since DTO’s have been operating in Mexico for some time now. There are two factors that have directly contributed to increase in violence. First, after the power of the Columbian cartels began to decline in the 1990’s, the power of Mexican cartels was on a rise. The alliance of Columbian and American authorities against Columbian cartels had an unexpected outcome when drug markets moved from Columbia to Mexico in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. Second in 2000, Mexico experienced a political transition from a one party rule to a more competitive political environment. The political party called the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) no longer controls the political landscape or criminal organizations. Therefore, criminal organizations have to make new connections with politicians and police personal. According to Viridiana Rios, “when state and local electoral victories brought politicians from opposing parties into power starting in the 1990’s previously established bargains with the drug-trafficking organizations were rejected or renegotiated by new, independent political actors who lacked the connections or ability to enforce previously established corruption agreements” (Rios 141). This in turn created more competition and put cartels at odds with each other. The political diversity in the 1990’s and in 2000, after the PAN’s presidential victory meant that “the state no longer served as an effective mediator, and criminal organizations began to splinter and battle each other for turf” (Rios 141) The DTO’s establish new political/government connections with bribery or acts of violence. The combination of these two factors has led to the dramatic increase in crime and violence in the mid 2000’s and to what Mexico is experiencing now.

The Drug War moves to Mexico after crackdown on Columbian cartels**.** Until the 1990’s Columbia, not Mexico was the country known for a drug production or drug trafficking problem. For example, at one point in time, according to David Pedigo, the two most powerful cartels were the Cali and Medellin cartels that controlled Columbia’s drug trade (Pedigo 114). During the 1980’s Columbia was notorious for its problems with drug trafficking and drug production mostly for cocaine that became very popular and widely available in the U.S.

The Columbian cartels were flooding American streets with cocaine until the U.S decided it would attempt to stop the supply of drugs by collaborating with Columbian authorities (Pedigo 113). President Reagan publicly stated that drug trafficking directly threatened U.S National Security. He implemented a plan known as the Andean Initiative with the purpose of reducing the supply of drugs to the United States (Pedigo 113). However, the drug problem proved not to be as simple to fix as many believed. The world quickly learned that “the global market for drugs, it seemed, functioned in the same way as any other global commodity market: when one source becomes compromised another one emerges (Pedigo 113).” The result was not the diminishing of the drug trade but rather a shift in the location, from Columbia to Mexico.

The United States was not successful at reducing the trafficking of drugs to the U.S. According to Tomas Kellner and Francesco Pipitone, with American intervention, Columbia was to be able to cripple the powerful cartels that were operating in their country. For example, Columbian commandos were able to assassinate Pablo Escobar Gaviria the notorious leader of the Medellin Cartel with the assistance of the United States. Columbian commandos were also able to capture brothers Gilberto and Miguel Rodriguez Orejuela ( Kellner and Pipitone 29). In some respects it was as if, “the Mexican problem is the result of Columbia’s successful war on the Cali and Medellin cartels in the 1990’s ( Kellner and Pipitone 29).”

As the power of the Columbian Cartels continued on a downward spiral, the power of Mexican cartels was on the rise. Mexico experienced the birth of many drug organizations during this period. Some of the most powerful Mexican cartels came to existence during this period. At the time, Columbian cartels seemed to understand that they no longer could single handedly control the drug trade, so they began to make alliances with newly established Mexican Cartels. As Kellner and Pipitone put it,

“The Columbian and Mexican trafficking groups established a new deal allowing the Mexicans to receive a percentage of the cocaine in each shipment as payment for their transportation services. This payment-in-product agreement enabled Mexican organizations to become involved in the wholesale distribution of cocaine in the United States. This ended the Colombians monopoly and set the stage for the war that followed (Kellner and Pipitone 30).”

 This collaboration still did not place Mexico as the top drug trafficking and drug production in the world right away but rather according to Louise Shelley, “Mexicans ceased to be middlemen and facilitators for the Colombian drug organizations and themselves became major exporters of drugs to the United States (Shelley 219).” Due to mainly its location, the addition of “the Mexican cartels expanded their control over the drug supply chain, revenues exploded (Kellner and Pipitone).” For example, “in 2002, former U.S Attorney General John Ashcroft described the size of the U.S. drug market, reporting that Americans spent $62 .9 billion on drugs in 2000(Kellner and Pipitone 30).”

 Soon after, Mexican cartels were no longer simple middlemen for Columbian cartels. Shortly after Columbian cartels lost power, Mexican cartels became the powerhouse in the drug trade. Mexican cartels have been running the drug trade for years and they show no sign of slowing down. Mexican authorities are very ill-equipped to be able to stop these powerful drug organizations. The decline in power by Columbian cartels has caused Mexico to become the largest trafficker of drugs and one of the largest producers of drugs in the world. According to Shelley,

“Mexican drug trafficking organizations control the production of many forms of narcotics, including methamphetamine, marijuana, and heroin. They corrupt officials on both sides of the border to move their commodities and launder their proceeds. Mexico is the largest source of foreign marijuana bound for the United States. It is also the largest source of methamphetamines, particularly those bound for the western United States. It is a major transit point for the movement of potassium permanganate, which is used in the purification of cocaine. Although Mexico produces only 2% of the world’s opium, nearly its entire harvested crop is converted into heroin and shipped to the United States (Shelley 219).”

After acknowledging that Mexico has been in the drug business for some time now, why was the violence and crime not as big a deal as it is now? As discussed earlier, two major factors occurred in Mexico that has shaped the country to what it is now. Mexico becoming the powerhouse in the drug trade after the demise of Columbian cartels was only the first factor. This phenomenon by itself would not have produced the chaos that the country has experienced recently. However, the overlap between this and the political changes that Mexico began to experience in the turn of the century set the stage for the explosion of drug-related violence. Accordingto my research, during the PRI monopoly Mexico had higher corruption but lower violence. PRI’s Corruption kept violence contained because of the monopoly they had on the country, which eventually led to a sort of partnership with the DTO’s operating in Mexico. Mexico with a political monopoly and higher corruption managed to stay a more stable country. For example, Stephen D. Morris says,

 “During the PRI’s 71-year reign, Mexico suffered from endemic corruption and drug trafficking flourished, but at least there was a type of stability, since a small group of powerful trafficker’s and PRI government officials maintained relatively predictable relationships. According to this widely-shared view, Mexican traffickers operated for years under a single hierarchy with public officials essentially extorting from them while organizing and protecting them (Morris 205).”

 There is no doubt that Mexico underPRI control was a lot less violent because corruption helped keep violence at a low level. David Pedigo makes similar arguments that “while Mexico has been a relatively stable democracy for decades, its political scene was completely dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) until the election of Vicente Fox in 2000. Before then, the PRI-led government, having been in power for 70 years, had established strong ties with many drug cartels, allowing them unhindered territorial control as long as they kept violence to a tolerable level (Pedigo 114)”.

The Mexican government during the PRI control worried more about collaborating with the DTO’s as a way to keep things under control than actually implementing the law. This is return created a type of partnership that went untouched for several decades. As Shannon O’Neil put it, “under PRI, the purpose of government policy was to assert power rather than govern by law (O’Neil 72).” Therefore, the PRI set up a system that “limited violence against public official’s, top traffickers, and civilians; made sure that court investigators never reached the upper ranks of cartels; and defined the rules of the game for traffickers (O’Neil 65).” This corrupt partnership was able to keep violence and crime in Mexico under control.

The PRI and the drug organizations under their umbrella had a functioning system where each side had something to gain from being associated with the other. Drug trafficking organizations were given protection from being prosecuted by the law, while the political system gained stability by managing the violence that usually comes with illicit activities. Therefore, “a trafficker could gain protection and warning information; the police could gain credit, praise, and promotions; the political system gained campaign monies and control; and the US, statistics, to justify a job well done (Snyder and Martinez 65).” In addition, according to Snyder and Martinez,

“The ability of state officials to construct protection rackets is strengthened when they can credibly commit not only to non-enforcement of the law for their criminal “partners,” but also to apply enforcement selectively against the rivals of their partners. Hence, protection in state-sponsored rackets has two faces: on one hand, state officials supply selective non-enforcement, that is, protection from the state itself; on the other hand, they also supply selective enforcement against rivals, that is, protection from competitors (Snyder and Martinez 66).”

Unexpectedly, after the year 2000, Mexico experienced a political transition from a one party rule to the current more competitive electoral system. Leading up to the elections of the year 2000, everyone expected the usual outcome that occurred in every election in Mexico, the PRI would sweep the election. However, instead, “the majority of the middle-class and educated urban citizens surprised the political pundits in summer 2000 and voted against the PRI candidate in the national as well as many regional elections (Shelley 222).” This change really took people by surprise, “for many, the victory of the PAN’s charismatic Vicente Fox in July 2000, stood as the crowning achievement of Mexican democratization, placing Mexico onto a new and long sought after path (Morris 2).”

After his presidential victory, President Fox did not waste any time in implementing reforms to strengthen democracy in the country. For example, after Fox’s win there was a greater emphasis freedom of expression in relation to Mexican scholars, journalist, and political activist saw an increase, and lastly, press obtained new freedoms during this period than ever before (Morris 5). In addition, President Fox would not shy away from acknowledging that corruption was a problem in Mexico and launched an anticorruption program (Morris 5) In other words, President Fox was implementing reforms that would help Mexico democratize. It is said that democracy is the only thing that deters corruption, this seemed to be Fox’s idea for Mexico. However, I do not believe president Fox took into consideration what his reforms would cause during the process to reach a consolidated democracy. The grey area between a one party controlled Mexico to a consolidated democratic Mexico is where the country finds itself at the moment.

Violence dramatically increased as a result of President Fox’s reforms, which caused greater freedoms to the Mexican people and challenged corruption, and was further fueled by President Calderon’s declaration of war on the drug cartels in 2006. However, many people would argue that less corruption and more democracy means more stability and not the other way around? Research shows that democracy does in fact help reduce corruption and help the stability of a country in the long run (Morris 7). However, in the short term greater democracy can result in distress and greater violence (Morris 8). The democratization process led to greater violence because old political ties linked to corruption were no more. For instance, according to Phil Williams,

“ the violence in Mexico has grown as the Mexican government moved from acquiescence and even tact support for the drug trade under the PRI to confrontation with the traffickers by the PAN Presidents, Fox and Calderon. Consequently, Mexico is suffering from what might be described as transitional violence: comfortable and collusive relationships between organized crime and the state have broken down, and alternative relationships have not been institutionalized. The attacks by trafficking organizations on police chiefs, Officials, and soldiers can be understood as an attempt to pressure the state to move away from confrontation and to give the trafficking organizations space in which to operate (Williams 2).”

The growth of violence since presidents of the PAN took over cannot be denied. There is a great correlation of corruption declining after President Fox took office while violence increased in certain areas where the PRI began to lose influence. When looking at the evidence it seems that it may very well be true. For example according to O’Neil, “Mexico’s drug-related violence rose first in opposition- led states. After the PRI lost its first governorship, in Baja California in 1989, for example, drug-related violence there surged. In Chihuahua, violence followed an opposition takeover in 1992. When the PRI won back Chihuahua governorship in 1998, the violence moved to Ciudad Juarez a city governed by the National Action Party (PAN) (O’Neil 65).”

The war on drugs and war on drug cartels initiated by president Calderon in 2006 only added fuel to the fire to an already complex situation. Prior to President Calderon, President Fox single handedly altered Mexico’s “perfect dictatorship”, this referred to the PRI’s seventy year control of Mexico. At the same time, corruption began on the decline in Mexico during President Fox’s term. This put Mexico on very thin ice when it came to stability because of the transition from authoritarian rule to a more diverse democratic system. The war on drugs and the war on drug cartels in Mexico single handedly broke through that thin ice and made the country into a war zone. Direct confrontation became very counter-productive when Mexico’s murder rate shot up to numbers never seen before.

Head to head conflicts with DTO’s by the Mexican government has put Mexico in a cycle they seem to not be able to get out of. According to Rios, Mexico is stuck in a cycle he calls a self-reinforcing violent equilibrium. This he explains happens “when battles for turf result in outbreaks of drug-related homicides. The spread of this type of violence affects the electorate, and generates pressures within the political system to prosecute those who are elevating homicide rates. Enforcement operations in charge of reestablishing the rule of law are then conducted with the hope that in the long-run, enforcement will weaken drug-trafficking organizations enough to inhibit their operations and ability to initiate future violent acts. Yet, in the short-run, enforcement actually triggers violence by further increasing battles for turf. In each cycle of interaction, violence grows (Rios 142). ” Mexico is showing all three factors needed for this cycle to be possible. For example, a competitive drug market that leads to violence because of the competition due to the profits involved, and also, enforcement operations for the government in their attempt to deter the violence but simultaneously increases it by adding fuel to the fire.

**“Self-reinforcing violent equilibrium”**



Mexican DTO’s have been forced to adapt to the new structure since the old one perished after the year 2000 elections in Mexico. No longer can they rely on a political party with a monopoly on the country to help them carry out their business, now Mexican DTO’s focus on “buying off or intimidating local authorities in order to ensure the safe transit of their goods (O’Neil 66).” However, even the way they accomplish these new ties has changed. For one, they have definitely become more violent because of how complex the Mexican political system has become. For example, DTO’s use one of two ways to corrupt officials: bribery and intimidation, and they accomplish this by using their favorite ultimatum, which involves giving officials one of two choices: *Plata o Plomo* (Silver or Lead). This means that officials are initially offered money as a way of bribery, however if that fails, cartels move to the second option that involves violent acts as a way of intimidation. In other words, “whenever one method fails the other one will almost certainly prevail (Pedigo 123).”

Mexican DTO’s are making the most out of their newly established connections with local authorities to get protection for their organization and use the authorities against their competitors. Not only has the political landscape in Mexico broadened and become more complex but so have the Mexican DTO’s. Therefore, it is not a surprise for “one criminal organization to use payoffs to get state officials not only to refrain from enforcing the law against that group, but in turn to enforce it selectively against a rival organization using state violence (Morris 204).” This phenomenon makes tackling the issue of violence and drug organizations all the more difficult because not only are DTO’s competing against each other but local police institutions are competing with them.

The transition to consolidated democracy can be a perilous journey. Less corruption in Mexico’s political system at first might be seen as a true accomplishment; however, the outcomes that have followed do not reflect that. At this time, Mexico continues to fight the DTO’s that operate in their country but have yet to be successful because of how violent and complex they have become. Cartels not only engage in battles with government officials but with other cartels as they battle for control of territories. Mexico’s richest and most powerful cartels consist of the *Sinaloa cartel* that “operates up Mexico’s Pacific coast and along the U.S border from Tijuana in the west, to Ciudad Juarez and Nuevo Laredo in the east (Kellner and Pipitone 31).” The *Sinaloa cartel* is considered the most powerful cartel in Mexico and its leader *El Chapo Guzman,* according to “*Forbe*s magazine estimates his wealth at 1 billion (Kellner and Pipitone 32).” The U.S government was offering $ 5 million for his capture until he was captured earlier this year in the state of Sinaloa where his cartel mainly operates.

In addition, cartels like the *Gulf cartel* and *Los Zetas* are also a menace to deal with for Mexican authorities and when these three cartels cross paths, it seems as if Mexico is truly a war zone. The type of weapons at the cartels disposal contributes to this phenomenon. For example, “a 2008 government raid on the Gulf Cartel seized a cache of anti-armor weapons, cluster grenades, anti-aircraft missiles, armored HUMVEES, and even chemical protective suits. (Kellner and Pepitone 32).” This type of armed opposition has resulted with “some 45,000 Mexican troops, about a quarter of the standing army, are engaged in a domestic war with drug cartels, which shows no signs of abating anytime soon (Kellner and Pipitone 31).”

As mentioned, Mexican DTO’s control most, if not all the drugs that enter the U.S in recent years, even though drug laws are being enforced more and more with the “ war on drugs”. For example, “in 1991, 50 percent of U.S-bound cocaine came through Mexico; by 2004, 90 percent of U.S-bound cocaine (and large percentages of other drugs) did (O’Neil 66).” The “war on drug cartels” and the” war on drugs” in general, were both the U.S and Mexico’s response to tackling the drug trade. Nevertheless, a lot of time has passed and those actions have not served its intended purpose. In some respects, the war on drugs has only added fuel to the fire because the more illegal drugs are in the U.S, the more profitable drug trafficking becomes. In other words, the “war on drugs” has helped DTO’s more than it has hurt them. In today’s environment, any drug whether it’s one of the most expensive like cocaine or one of the least expensive like marijuana, all create immense profits for DTO’s due to the “war on drugs”. For example, a pound or kilo of drugs when on the Mexican side is worth nothing compared to when it’s crossed north of the border. This explains why Mexico has such a drug trafficking problem and why DTO’s are willing to kill to keep their market up and running.

If drug trafficking wasn’t bad enough, in recent years other forms of crime have begun to surface in Mexico. For example, since DTO’s have “access to the large illicit markets of the United States has resulted in more diversified crime groups in Mexico than in Columbia. Although these groups are most recognized for their lucrative narcotics trade, many smaller groups also traffic in human beings, waste, weapons, endangered species, and art ( Shelley 219).” One of these smaller trafficking groups *Los Zetas,* are a cartel who engage in other forms of crime because bigger cartels like the *Sinaloa Cartel* dominate the drug trade. For example, “in early 2008, a wave of kidnappings spread across the state targeting the children of prominent businessmen. By this time, *Los Zetas* had perfected the art. Kidnapping, especially in wealthy and relatively drug-free states, can be a more immediate source of liquid funds than trafficking in drugs (Kellner and Pipitone 33).”

At the end of my research,there is no doubt thatthe overlap of Mexico’s control of the drug trade and the political change with the corruption that goes along with it, has resulted in the outbreak of violence in Mexico. With the PRI no longer in control of the political landscape, criminal organizations are now forced to make new political connections with bribery or violence known as Plata o Plomo, meaning politicians and police official either accept money or get led. During the PRI monopoly corruption was higher but violence and crime was kept under control. The end result of the decline of corruption due to a more competitive political landscape, which is the product of greater democratization, was not what people expected, as Diane E. Davis put it, “as democracy has deepened, the security situation has worsened, citizens are more politically disenfranchised than ever, and few are turning to their democratic leaders to solve the problems (Davis 80).”

Mexico continues to struggle in battling the Mexican DTO’s, even though they have captured top leaders; it seems as if they barely make a dent when it comes to winning the war against drug cartels. The power and money the cartels posses make it almost impossible to compete against. Mexico continues to grow its man power by expanding its domestic military efforts and its nationwide police efforts. This on paper would seem like a great initiative to deter the DTO’s. However, when implemented these efforts become very counterproductive. For instance, “one hundred thousand soldiers also deserted the army between 2000 and 2006, providing experienced new recruits for the cartels ( Pedigo 119).” This has really complicated the Mexican governments attempted at deterring DTO’s because cartels are recruiting these ex-military personal. Therefore, the Mexican government finds itself fighting not simple groups of vigilantes but rather organized and military trained organizations. This explains much of the bloodshed and countless homicides that Mexico has experienced in recent years, which continues to this day.

Besides direct confrontation with DTO’s the war on drugs by both Mexico and the U.S has largely contributed to the outbreak and violence in Mexico. The war on drugs in the U.S in particular has largely contributed to the growth in power of DTO’s. A lot has to do with the way the drug market is structured and a lot to do with geography. For instance, Cocaine that is cultivated in South America particularly in Columbia and Bolivia is worth little to nothing compared to what it cost when trafficked to the U.S by DTO’s. When cocaine arrives to Mexico its worth multiplies a considerable amount. However, nothing compares to the increase on value when trafficked north of the Mexican-American border. Large profits are what drives the motivation of drug traffickers and what has helped them become so rich and powerful. The fact that drugs are so illegal in the United States and a very high priority for American law enforcement makes them all the more profitable.

The drug war has created a beast. There is no way around this fact. Mexico is feeling most if not all the effects of this “beast”. Since the beginning of the 21st century Mexico has took a crack at democratization. However, the war on drugs on both sides of the Mexican-American border is making this process more difficult than it should be. The war on drugs in the U.S has made drugs so profitable that it has only encouraged DTO’s in Mexico to traffic the most drugs possible. In addition, the drug war in Mexico has led to direct confrontation with drug cartels that has sky rocketed homicide rates is Mexico and has overall been counterproductive. The drug issue that has created the powerful DTO’s is keeping Mexico from becoming a stable democracy.

Scholars whose workI researched not only gave insight on what has caused such a peek in violence but also proposed some possible solutions. For example, O’Neil suggest that “ the United States should expand Merida’s focus to incorporate local and state-level initiatives and training, including vetting mechanism similar to those envisioned for federal agents, training for local crime labs, training for judges and lawyers, and support for community policing programs ( O’Neil 73).” This he suggests will help reduce the corruption in Mexico’s law enforcement a step in the right direction. Similarly, Kellner and Pipitone suggest the “elimination of the country’s 2,022 municipal police agencies, with the intention of folding them into the state police forces, which would (in theory) have greater oversight of training and tactics ( Kellener and Pipitone 37).”

In my opinion, all the proposals by scholars just mentioned sound good on paper but the actual implementation might result in a different outcome. This seemed to be the cause when Mexico expanded its domestic military effort that led to unexpected consequences. Mexico has in fact begun to implement some type of solutions to clean up their police force, similar to what scholars have suggested. For instance, “background checks and polygraphs are being conducted on all federal prosecutors, police agents, forensic experts, and pilots assigned to counter-drug duties. These are major steps toward reducing corruption ( Shelley 220).”

What can’t be denied is the fact that this is an issue that affects both the U.S and Mexico and should therefore work side by side toward a possible solution. However, in many instances, “Americans blame Mexicans for corrupting the American system without acknowledging that American conditions (our demand for drugs) helped gives rise to the drug trade. Corruption of American law enforcement on our borders facilitates both the trade in drugs and human trafficking. Furthermore, American financial institutions play a key role in the Mexican drug trade by helping to launder money (Shelley 225).” This type of tensions doesn’t benefit Mexico or the U.S as they attempt to battle the DTO’s. Instead, the efforts should be a two way street, were each country does its fair share and work as one to detour the powerful Mexican DTO’s. Will this comprehensive partnership actually happen any time soon? In my opinion only time will tell.

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