Fact Sheet

The Mérida Initiative- Major Deliveries in 2011

In December 2008, Mexico and the United States signed the first Letter of Agreement (LOA) for the Mérida Initiative, marking a new era of bi-national cooperation. The Initiative has led to a new architecture for bilateral security cooperation, provided tangible support to Mexico's new security and judicial institutions and helped to galvanize U.S. efforts to stop the flow of weapons, money and the demand for drugs.

With $1.6 billion in appropriated funds from the U.S. Congress, the Initiative has delivered $766 million in equipment and training to date. The United States and Mexico have worked hard to accelerate Merida Initiative related activities. As a result of these efforts, a half billion dollars in equipment and capacity building programs were delivered in 2011. Implemented under the strategic framework of the Four Pillars, some of the Mérida Initiative programs and deliveries for 2011 included:

PILLAR ONE – Disrupt Capacity of Organized Crime to Operate

- Three UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters were delivered to the Mexican Navy (SEMAR) worth $110 million. Within two days of delivery, these helicopters were deployed in a successful operation against the Zetas in Nuevo Laredo.
- A UH-60M Blackhawk helicopter was delivered to the Federal Police (SSP) for $20 million, the fourth such aircraft delivered to the SSP under the Merida Initiative. These aircraft have proven invaluable to the SSP in confronting criminal organizations who would otherwise have used the advantage of difficult terrain to operate with impunity.
- The first of four CASA 235 maritime surveillance aircraft, valued at $50 million, was delivered to SEMAR. The CASA is a maritime patrol aircraft that will allow the Mexican Navy to further increase vigilance and control over their territorial waters.
- A secure, cross-border telecommunications system between ten U.S. and Mexican border sister cities, valued at $13 million dollars, has been established and is providing public security forces on both sides of the border the capability to request and exchange information regarding active criminal investigations.
- As the result of a $9.8 technology initiative, the SSP now has the ability to more effectively detect criminal activity through the use of a complex tool that helps analysts solve cases more quickly. Relations between people, arms, stolen vehicles and other elements, can be found within minutes instead of hours or days and help analysts effectively manage their cases.
- $1.1 million dollars was provided to install license plate recognition equipment at 73 toll booths throughout Mexico's major highways to detect stolen and suspicious vehicles and link the data to Plataforma México, Mexico's criminal justice system database.

PILLAR TWO – Institutionalize Capacity to Sustain Rule of Law

- $2.5 million worth of biometric equipment was placed in the federal penitentiary system to capture and store the identification of criminal offenders, making the facilities safer by knowing the true identity of all inmates. Another $2 million worth of training equipment was delivered to the new Mexican National Academy for Penitentiary Administration in Xalapa, Veracruz, and $700,000 was contributed for the creation of two new units being formed to track gang activities and development of proper classification of inmates to ensure appropriate facility assignment based on risk levels.
- Three new Integrated Ballistics Identification Systems (IBIS) were delivered to the Attorney General's (PGR) office worth $2.1 million. IBIS technology is able to link bullets and casings to weapons to build cases against criminals. Additional forensics lab equipment worth over $6 million dollars will be delivered to the PGR and SSP.

- $3.3 million worth of IT equipment to support "Control de Confianza" centers, a major effort by the Government of Mexico to vet law enforcement personnel, stamp out corruption and build trustworthy institutions, was delivered to various law enforcement agencies.
- As Mexico transitions to an oral accusatorial judicial system, the Merida Initiative supported the development of mock courtrooms, virtual classrooms and courseware development, key training elements worth an estimated $2.5 million dollars.
- Merida sponsored training was provided to some 3,000 investigators and other personnel in the PGR in organized crime, human trafficking, anti-kidnapping, money laundering, fugitive apprehension and forensic sciences in 2011.
- The Merida Initiative began a major push to reach Mexico's states and municipalities in 2011, working to improve regional and state academies in Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosi, Chihuahua, and elsewhere while working closely with partners in the SSP to provide training in investigations, intelligence analysis, operations and leadership to members of the new model police units being established throughout the country.

PILLAR THREE – Create a 21st Century Border Structure

- In addition to the 95 canines trained in the detection of narcotics, weapons, ammunitions and currency already delivered, 73 additional canines were delivered in 2011.
- The U.S. designated $6 million dollars toward the expansion of False Document Labs equipped with the critical technology necessary to support immigration officers in the detection of false immigration credentials and passports to Cancun, Guadalajara, Tijuana and Monterrey, Mexico. There was previously only one false document lab for the entire country.
- The acquisition and use of non-intrusive inspection equipment (NIIE) continue to be a critical component to securing the borders of Mexico in the fight to detect and prevent the flow of illicit goods. Under the Merida Initiative, the U.S. has delivered $97 million worth of NIIE. Over $75 million in NIIE equipment was delivered in 2011, including but not limited to:
    - **CT-30 Detection Kits:** One hundred fifty five (155) kits worth $2.54 million were delivered to the Government of Mexico (GOM).
    - **All-Terrain Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems (VACIS):** Twenty-two (22) VACIS worth $28.7 million dollars were delivered and distributed to the:
        - Secretariat of Defense and
        - Federal Police.
    - **ZBV Backscatter Vans (ZBVs) :** Twenty ZBVs valued at $21.4 million dollars were delivered to:
        - the Federal Polic and
        - Mexican Customs Agency (SAT).
    - **Portal FullScan VACIS**: Four were delivered to SAT. (units valued at approximately $6 million.)
    - **IP6500 X-Ray VACIS:** Two were delivered to SAT worth $6.2 million.
    - **M6500 Mobile VACIS:** Three units worth $9 million were delivered to SAT.
    - The following was provided with Pre-Merida funds:
        - Three ZBV Backscatter Vans, twenty CT-30 Detection kits and safety equipment worth $4 million were delivered to the Mexican Navy.
        - An X-Ray Pallet worth $75,000 was delivered to SAT.
- Additionally, 733 personnel from the GOM have been trained in the use and operation of non-intrusive inspection equipment through joint and cross-training between law enforcements agencies and military institutions.

PILLAR FOUR – Build Strong and Resilient Communities

- Two grants totaling $2.3 million were awarded to the University of Miami and to the GOM National Institute of Psychiatry for joint work in establishing a Clinical Trials Network in Mexico to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of addiction treatment.
- *Centros de Integracion Juvenil* (CIJ) received a $1.3 million grant to equip and train staff for a residential drug abuse and community center in Ciudad Juarez. This center will serve as a model for future centers along the border.
- *Compañeros* received a $1 million cooperative agreement to establish anti-addiction community coalitions in Tijuana, Nogales, and Ciudad Juarez that will build locally-tailored campaigns engaging youth on drug prevention and awareness.
- An $18 million contract was signed and work began in 2011 for outfitting and networking of 330+ Centros Nueva Vida nationwide. This network enables better data collection, analysis and best practice sharing among the facilities.
- The 9th annual Binational Drug De mand Reduction conference was held in Mexico City in June 2011. Mexican First Lady Zavala and ONDCP Director Kerlikowske chaired the conference, which hosted several expert panels on the science of addiction, successful social networking campaigns combating drug abuse, and policy development among other topics.
- The Merida Initiative supports the 2011 *Jóvenes en Acción* youth exchange program that offers Mexican high school students the opportunity to develop leadership and civic engagement skills through intensive workshops in the U.S. with emphasis on community problem-solving and grassroots action, particularly ways in which youth might address problems associated with violence and drugs. For their capstone projects, student teams develop their own local community service projects to be implemented upon their return to Mexico, incorporating Culture of Lawfulness principles.
- The Mexico City-based NGO, Mexico Unido Contra la Delincuencia launched a comprehensive Culture of Lawfulness program in 2011, focusing on school-based education, outreach through Internet and other media, training programs for private and public institutions, and a citizens' watch program to improve the process for reporting crimes. The nearly $2 million, 2-year effort supported by Merida will continue through 2012.