



Press Release United States Embassy

U.S. and Mexican Government Officials Meet to Coordinate Efforts to Combat Arms Trafficking and Money Laundering

October 5, 2010, Mexico City - The Mexican Attorney General's Office and the U.S. Department of Justice hosted a workshop, in Mexico City, that brought together law enforcement officials from both countries to discuss on how to broaden the coordination and bilateral cooperation efforts to investigate and prosecute two key elements of transnational organized crime: arms trafficking and money laundering.

The Mexican Secretariat of International Affairs Undersecretary for North America Julián Ventura, and the Ambassador of the United States in Mexico Carlos Pascual, opened the one-day workshop.

Undersecretary Ventura acknowledged the commitment of the U.S. Government against drug trafficking and money laundering, at the time of underscoring the importance of enhancing United States' efforts to interdict weapons destined to organized crime. Undersecretary Ventura also highlighted the importance of enforcing U.S. law related to weapon trafficking and the urgency of reviewing legislation related to assault weapons. He also emphasized the need of reinforcing internal and bilateral controls on money laundering, to avoid illegal fluxes of money and to strengthen mechanisms for shared financial intelligence.

In his introductory remarks, Ambassador Pascual recalled that President Obama and Secretary Clinton have acknowledged the co-responsibility of the United States in the shared threat of international organized crime. He noted that the United States is making greater efforts to reduce demand for illegal drugs, and is also going after illegal money and reducing the southward flow of arms. He made clear that money flows and weapon trafficking at massive scales for international crime organizations, makes bilateral cooperation paramount.

Mexican participation in the workshop was made up by representatives of the Attorney General's Office (PGR) and the Secretariats of Governance (SEGOB), International Affairs (SRE), Defense (SEDENA), Navy (SEMAR), Public Security (SSP) and Finance (SHCP).

The U.S. delegation was led by Assistant Attorney General from the Department of Justice, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Deputy Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department, Chief of Financial Operations for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and Assistant Commissioner for Intelligence & Operations Coordination at Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The arms trafficking discussions focused on the means and manner of transportation of firearms and explosives into Mexico; border interdiction of firearms and explosives; and the implementation of Spanish e-Trace in Mexico.

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The money laundering discussions focused on bulk cash smuggling and money laundering issues, including: the flows of bulk cash; the financial tools available to combat money laundering; and the investigative tools used to combat money laundering.

During the course of the day, Mexican Attorney General Arturo Chávez y Chávez (PGR) and ATF Deputy Director Kenneth Melson signed a memorandum of understanding, allowing Mexican access to the eTrace system for tracking firearms. E-Trace allows law enforcement agencies to submit and monitor electronic firearms trace requests, retrieve completed trace results, utilize crime mapping software and query firearms trace-related data.

The Mexican Attorney General and the Secretariat of Public Security signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice on sharing forfeited assets.

The governments of Mexico and the U.S. reaffirm their commitments with strategic and tactic bilateral cooperation to effectively combat transnational organized crime.

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