



Action Plan Between the Department of Homeland Security of the United States of America and the Secretariat of Governance of the United Mexican States to Combat Border Violence and Improve Public Safety

With a vision of shared responsibility, the Governments of the United States and Mexico reiterate our commitment to address the challenges we face at our border to prevent incidents that threaten the lives and physical safety of citizens of both nations.

The Presidents of Mexico and the United States have pledged our respective Governments to a new vision of our shared border and our larger North American community. This spirit of cooperation is affirmed in the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America, announced on March 23, 2005, by the Presidents of Mexico and the United States and the Prime Minister of Canada.

With respect for the sovereign right of each nation to formulate and enforce its own laws, the Secretary of Governance of Mexico and the Secretary of Homeland Security of the United States are committed to an aggressive approach based on the fundamental principle that preserving law and order along our border is a shared responsibility that requires mutual commitment and the highest possible level of cooperation between the law enforcement officials of each country.

Both governments recognize the value of the Border Liaison Mechanisms (BLMs) as appropriate local forums to discuss and address the challenges we face along our border.

No criminal should be allowed to exploit the dividing line between our nations and our law enforcement jurisdictions to escape justice or to prey upon our honest citizens. No one, regardless of their immigration status, should be subjected to criminal violence. Our Governments seek a transformed relationship to prevent incidents of violence and to investigate vigorously any incidents that do occur.

In order to achieve these goals, both governments are committed to coordinating and strengthening procedures between Federal law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border to respond to different scenarios that present risks to those who live, work, or travel at our common border.

To help prevent such incidents, our Governments endorse the following cooperative steps:

I. Stopping Border Violence and Crime

The Secretaries of Governance and Homeland Security should work to coordinate with other interested Federal agencies of their respective governments to ensure an effective response to incidents of cross-border violence and crime.

A Border Security and Public Safety Working Group, led by the Secretariat of Governance and Department of Homeland Security but including other relevant agencies, is to be established. This operational group is to work within the Border Liaison Mechanism (BLM) structure to facilitate coordination and operational requirements and should coordinate with each BLM, to include the Consuls General or Principal Consuls at the U.S. and Mexican Consulates located on the Border. This working group should carry out the following tasks.

1. Establish detailed operational protocols expanding upon the pilot programs established in Arizona/Sonora and Laredo/Nuevo Laredo to facilitate immediate communication between first responders when incidents of border violence or crime, or unauthorized crossings by government personnel, arise.
2. Establish written operational protocols, which will be reviewed as required but at least every six months, for Federal law enforcement response on both sides of the border.
3. Establish, as necessary and appropriate, mechanisms and procedures to ensure immediate apprehension and detention of persons suspected of border violence or crime, and preservation of evidence on our respective sides of the border.
4. Ensure, where appropriate, bilateral coordination of investigations and follow-up actions with all relevant Federal agencies.
5. The participating agencies should conduct regular exercises to ensure coordination protocols are updated and consistent with law enforcement procedures and regulations on both sides of the border.

II. Preventive Actions

In addition to the procedures regarding incidents of border violence and crime mentioned above, both nations undertake to do the following:

1. Promote appropriate patrolling of the border region as necessary, ensuring key information is shared with the other party as necessary and permissible. Confidentiality of this information is to be protected as appropriate or as governed by other agreements.
 - a) On behalf of Mexico, the Federal Preventive Police and the Beta Groups, or other entities as relevant, may be designated to participate in this effort along the land border.
 - b) On behalf of the United States, Customs and Border Protection is charged with managing, controlling and securing the border at and between U.S. Ports of Entry.
2. Ensure that each nation has a common understanding of binational landmarks or other border markers known to both sides, such that first responders may quickly arrive on scene.
3. Establish the appropriate mechanisms for exchange of information to prevent and fight border violence.
4. Both governments are to take adequate actions to ensure information from the incident is accurate and timely.

III. High level contacts

1. In addition to the operational mechanisms discussed above, both governments plan to designate a high level point of contact to receive periodic updates from the mechanisms defined in this Action Plan.
2. These high level points of contact should be immediately informed by the Border Security and Public Safety Working Group leading officials when an incident of high significance happens, in order to ensure the appropriate response to and follow up of such an incident.

Both countries recognize the need to work in a coordinated manner with all law enforcement agencies at all levels of government in both countries, to fulfill these proposed actions, and to achieve the objectives contained in this Action Plan.

The Secretary of Governance of Mexico and the Secretary of Homeland Security of the United States intend to work to ensure that the appropriate law enforcement agencies of our respective Governments work together to accomplish the tasks and to achieve the goals set forth in this Action Plan. With these steps, the Secretaries hope to strengthen the foundation of cooperation and advance the security goals set forth in the Security and Prosperity Partnership for North America.

Signed at Brownsville, Texas this third day of March of the year two thousand six, in two original versions, Spanish and English.

Michael Chertoff – – Carlos Abascal

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March 3, 2006