

The Mérida Initiative

*U.S. – SICA Dialogue on Security
December 11-12, 2008
Washington, DC*

U.S. Department of State





- *Background*
- *The Threat*
- *Programs*
- *The Future*

“ ... the Mérida Initiative is one of the most important initiatives the United States, Mexico, and Central America have ever launched. It’s historic. It will make America more secure, but it will, of course, most importantly, make our regional partners more secure, in the shared space we have ...”

*Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
October 2008*

The Mérida Initiative



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- *On June 30, 2008, President Bush signed HR. 2642, which created the Mérida Initiative*
 - Multi-year program in partnership with Mexico, the nations of Central America, the Dominican Republic and Haiti.
 - *“To combat drug trafficking and related violence and organized crime...”* which undermine public safety and erode the rule of law.
 - FY2008 funding of \$60M for Central America and \$5M for Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

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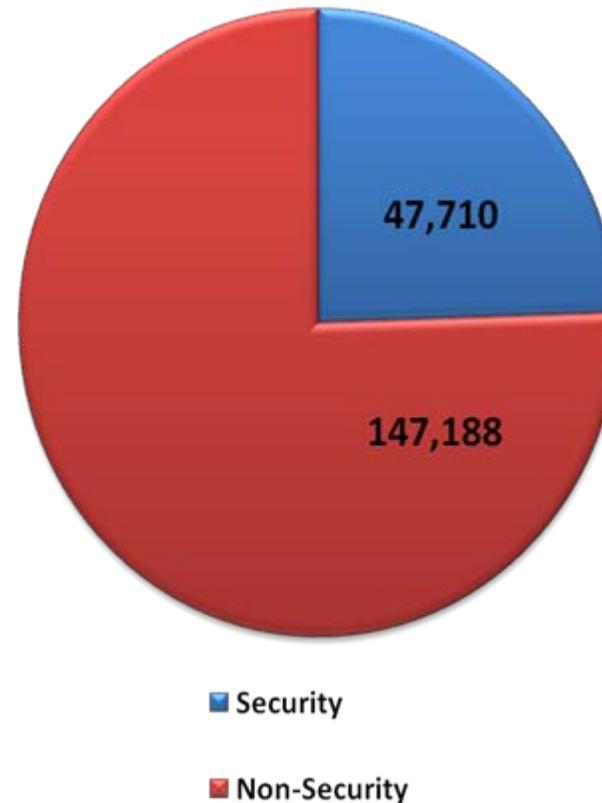
- *The Mérida Initiative is providing partner nations with:*
 - Equipment and training in support of law enforcement and security operations.
 - Economic and social development funds to provide vulnerable populations with alternatives to gangs and crime.
- *The Mérida Initiative is envisioned for three years of funding (FY08-10)*
 - FY08 appropriated \$465M as part of an Emergency Supplemental Appropriation – seen as critical interim funding to address the regions immediate challenges.
 - FY09 request of \$550M submitted to Congress - \$100M for Central America.
 - FY10 request being developed by the Department of State.

The Mérida Initiative

In FY 2008, the U.S. provided nearly \$200M in total foreign assistance to Central America

Non-Security (\$147M): Including \$41M to bolster economic growth; \$18.9M for agriculture, \$7.4M to promote trade/investment; \$10M+ for environmental programs.

Security Assistance (\$47M): Including \$21M+ for Stabilization Operations and Security System Reform; \$16M to combat transnational crime; \$5.8M for counter-narcotics operations.



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Mérida Initiative funding comes from:

- *International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Programs (INCLE)*
 - **Funding disbursed through means of Letters of Agreement (LOA) between the U.S. and participating governments.**
- *Economic Support Funds (ESF)*
 - **USAID administers ESF funds by contracts and grants. Some Merida Initiative projects that are expansions of existing USAID programs will be able to begin in the immediate future.**
- *Non-Proliferation, Anti-Terrorism, Demining and Related Projects (NADR)*
 - **Programs implemented through Inter-Agency Agreements with U.S. federal agencies, which are charged with program implementation. No LOAs with participating countries required.**
- *Foreign Military Financing (FMF)*
 - **Participating governments submit formal Letters of Request (LORs) to the USG; based upon the LORs, the USG develops Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs).**

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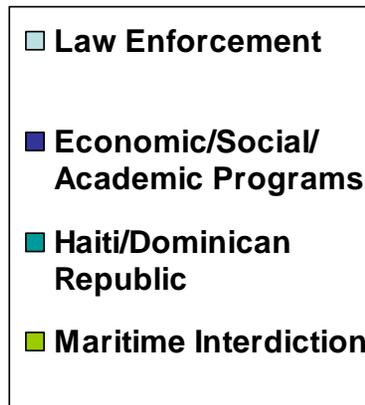
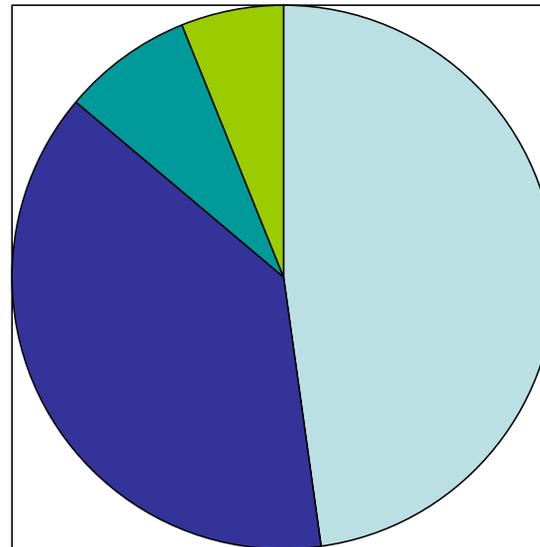
*\$65M in FY 2008 for the Mérida Initiative -
Central America, Haiti and the Dominican Republic*

\$31M – Support Activities for Law Enforcement, Border Security, Firearms Interdiction Assistance, Prosecutor Capacity Building, Vetted Police Units, Information Exchange Programs

\$25M – Economic and Social Development Funds/Academic Exchanges

\$5M – Haiti and the Dominican Republic

\$4M – Maritime Interdiction Support



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- *Drug and arms trafficking, gangs and other criminal organizations continue to grow in size and strength.*
- *They aggressively seek to undermine, corrupt and intimidate government institutions in Mexico and Central America.*
- *They substantially weaken governments' ability to maintain public security and expand the rule of law.*
- *Gangs, traffickers and organized criminal organizations threaten national security and imposes mounting economic and social costs on all nations and citizens.*

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- *Partner nations are being provided with a FY2008 “package” of U.S. support programs, including:*
 - Equipment for police and law enforcement
 - Border, airport and port security assistance
 - Maritime asset acquisition, repairs and communications
 - Firearms interdiction and stockpile management assistance
 - Narcotics interdiction and personnel vetting support
 - Access to US technologies and databases
- *Providing the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA- San Salvador) with funding for regional Mérida training opportunities.*
- *USAID and the Department of State are providing targeted economic and social development funds to populations at risk.*

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The Mérida Initiative

- *The Mérida Initiative involves the participation of several U.S. Cabinet Departments, Agencies and International Organizations.*



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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The Mérida Initiative

- *Central American Mérida Initiative bilateral and regional programs include:*

- ✓ *Improved Border Inspection & Equipment (\$2.1M - CBP)*
- ✓ *Firearms Stockpile & Management (\$1.3M - OAS)*
- ✓ *Port, Airport & Border Security Training (\$1.1M - OAS)*
- ✓ *Regional Firearms Advisor (\$1M - ATF)*
- ✓ *Firearms Interdiction Training (\$.5M - ATF)*
- ✓ *Vetted Units (\$4M - DEA)*
- ✓ *Transnational Anti-Gang (\$3.4M - FBI)*
- ✓ *Improved Prison Management (\$3M - DOJ)*
- ✓ *Central American Fingerprinting System (CAFE) (\$1.5M - FBI)*
- ✓ *Improved Policing/Equipment (\$7.1M - State INL)*
- ✓ *eTrace (\$.2M - ATF)*
- ✓ *ILEA Training (ILEA - \$1.5M)*
- ✓ *Drug Crime Information Sharing (\$1M - DEA)*
- ✓ *Improved Information on Criminal History (\$1M - DHS/DOJ)*
- ✓ *Prosecutor Capacity Building (\$1M - DOJ)*
- ✓ *International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (\$1M via UN)*
- ✓ *Training, Equipment and Communications for Maritime Assets (\$4M - DoD)*
- ✓ *Economic & Social Development Funds (\$20M - USAID)*
- ✓ *Exchanges Programming (\$5M - State Bureau of Educational & Educational Affairs)*
- ✓ *Transnational Crime U.S. - SICA Dialogue (\$.25M - SICA)*

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Improved Border Inspection Program

- *Will provide recipient countries with enhanced border inspection capabilities to detect the cross-border flow of narcotics and bulk-cash movements.*
- *U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) will visit 35 land Ports of Entry (POE) throughout the region.*
- *USCBP will conduct assessments on border inspection practices and capabilities.*
- *Based upon assessments, POEs will be provided with density meters, fiber optic probes and related tools and user training.*

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U.S. Customs and
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ILEA (San Salvador) Regional Training Programs

- *Regional Mérida Initiative funding will enable students from partner countries to attend high-quality courses in topics such as:*
 - *Criminal justice management*
 - *Anti-gang*
 - *Post-blast investigation*
 - *Small arms trafficking*
 - *Incident command*
 - *Advanced forensics*
 - *Tactical safety*
 - *Chemical precursors*
 - *Combating economic fraud*

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Main Building



USAID Economic and Social Development Funds

- *USAID will administer \$20,000,000 in Mérida Economic Support Funds for Central American countries.*
- *Funding will promote economic and social development and good governance in targeted areas vulnerable to drug trafficking, gang violence and organized crime.*
- *Programs will focus on job creation, education for youth at risk, vocational training programs, small community infrastructure projects, community policing, and community participation in crime prevention and detection programs.*

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Regional Firearms Advisor Program

- *The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) will assign a Regional Firearms Advisor who will be resident in Central America.*
- *The Advisor will work with law enforcement personnel in each Central American country to conduct national assessments of firearms trafficking threats and national firearms policies/regulations.*
- *The Advisor will work to develop a regional firearms plan with Mérida partners.*

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- *The challenges presented by gangs, organized crime and trafficking organizations represent critical regional problems that require a regional solution.*
- *The Mérida Initiative represents an opportunity to comprehensively address these problems with partners, both on a bilateral and regional basis.*
- *Success requires a joint commitment by all parties to fully support the Mérida Initiative by committing sufficient staff, resources and political capital to achieve our collective, desired results.*

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