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S. RES. 72

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding drug trafficking in Mexico.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 10, 2009

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DODD, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding drug trafficking in Mexico.

Whereas Mexico is 3 times the size of the State of Texas and has a population of approximately 110,000,000 people;

Whereas Mexico has the 12th largest economy in the world, with an annual gross domestic product of just under \$1,000,000,000,000;

Whereas Mexico is the 8th largest exporter of crude oil in the world and provides approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the oil imported by the United States;

Whereas Mexico is the 2nd largest buyer of exports from the United States;

Whereas Mexico has the largest Spanish-speaking population of any country in the world;

Whereas there is a tragically consistent demand for heroin, marijuana, methamphetamines, and cocaine from drug users in the United States;

Whereas the Government of Mexico is locked in an extremely violent struggle against drug trafficking organizations that produce and transport narcotics;

Whereas the drug trafficking organizations in Mexico are well organized, heavily armed, and wealthy criminal enterprises, with estimated criminal earnings of more than \$25,000,000,000 every year;

Whereas it is estimated that Mexican drug trafficking organizations produce 8 metric tons of heroin and 10,000 metric tons of marijuana each year;

Whereas, in confrontations with the Government of Mexico and with each other, the drug trafficking organizations have adopted tactics intended to intimidate the public at large, corrupt law enforcement officials, and create a perception of increased violence among the people of Mexico;

Whereas, in 2008, approximately 6,200 people in Mexico died as the result of violence related to drug trafficking, more than twice as many as in 2007;

Whereas drug-related killings continued in Mexico during 2009, and on February 9, 2009, a total of 35 people were killed in drug-related violence in Mexico;

Whereas drug trafficking organizations in Mexico have brazenly targeted and executed many high-ranking public officials in Mexico;

Whereas more than 800 police officers and soldiers in Mexico have been killed in the line of duty since late 2006;

Whereas efforts by the Government of Mexico and the United States Government to combat drug trafficking organizations and power struggles between the drug trafficking organizations themselves have resulted in growing violence along the 2000-mile border between the United States and Mexico;

Whereas drug-related violence affects cities and towns on both sides of the border, as drug trafficking organizations from Mexico form partnerships with criminal organizations based in the United States;

Whereas law enforcement authorities in the United States have reported an increase in the number of killings, kidnappings, and home invasions linked to Mexican drug trafficking organizations in a number of cities in the United States, some of which are thousands of miles from the Mexican border;

Whereas a 2008 report by the Department of Justice indicated that Mexican drug trafficking organizations now operate in 195 cities in the United States;

Whereas the 2008 National Drug Threat Assessment by the Department of Justice identified drug organizations from Mexico as the greatest criminal threat to the United States;

Whereas the Government of Mexico is strengthening the institutions of a democratic state that adheres to the rule of law, supports a free press, and is committed to human rights;

Whereas the inauguration of President Felipe Calderón in December 2006 represented another step forward in the process of strengthening institutions in Mexico;

Whereas President Calderón has made defeating drug trafficking organizations a top priority of his administration, increasing the security budget of Mexico from \$2,000,000,000 in 2006 to \$4,000,000,000 in 2008 and deploying nearly 36,000 federal troops to carry out anti-drug operations;

Whereas the Government of Mexico has undertaken reforms that, together with significant changes to the code of criminal procedure and the penal code, could transform the justice system in Mexico to be more open and transparent, protect human rights, and devote resources to investigating and prosecuting crimes;

Whereas President Calderón has taken significant steps to crack down on corruption within the police forces and other government institutions of Mexico;

Whereas officers of the Government of Mexico have succeeded in seizing record quantities of narcotics from drug trafficking organizations;

Whereas law enforcement officials in Mexico are cooperating with law enforcement agencies in the United States at unprecedented levels, with Mexico extraditing 83 major drug traffickers to stand trial in the United States in 2007, and another 93 major drug traffickers in 2008;

Whereas the police and army units of Mexico are often outgunned by members of the drug trafficking organizations, who employ heavy machine guns, high-powered assault weapons such as the AK-47, 0.50 caliber sniper rifles, military hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and sophisticated technology like night vision goggles and communication interception devices;

Whereas a large majority of the weapons and ammunition used by the drug trafficking organizations come from sources in the United States, particularly gun dealers and gun shows in Texas, Arizona, and California;

Whereas approximately 90 percent of all firearms recovered at crime scenes in Mexico are illicitly trafficked across the border from the United States to Mexico;

Whereas the people of Mexico and the military and civilian officials of the Government of Mexico have demonstrated tremendous courage in confronting the drug trafficking organizations;

Whereas the United States Government, along with law enforcement agencies in the United States and Mexico, has escalated its efforts to disrupt the trafficking of narcotics, money, people, and arms across the border and to combat drug trafficking organizations;

Whereas the United States Government can and should do more to reduce the demand for illegal drugs in the United States and stop the illegal exportation of money and weapons;

Whereas the efforts by the United States Government to combat trafficking are outlined in the National Drug Control Strategy (2008), the Southwest Border Counter-narcotics Strategy (2007), and the U.S. Strategy for Combating Criminal Gangs from Central America and Mexico (2007);

Whereas, on October 22, 2007, the United States Government and the Government of Mexico announced a multiyear security agreement called the “Merida Initiative”, which is intended to combat drug trafficking and

other criminal activity along the border of the United States and Mexico and in Central America; and

Whereas Congress has appropriated \$465,000,000 for the Merida Initiative, allocating to the Government of Mexico a total of \$400,000,000 in equipment, technical assistance, and training in fiscal year 2008, which is now in the process of being delivered: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) Mexico is a key strategic partner of the
3 United States;

4 (2) a secure, prosperous, and democratic Mex-
5 ico is indispensable to the goal of the United States
6 to have prosperity and peace throughout the Amer-
7 icas and the world;

8 (3) the people and the Government of Mexico
9 have launched a sustained attack on drug trafficking
10 organizations based in Mexico;

11 (4) the increasing violence and criminality of
12 drug trafficking organizations threaten the well-
13 being of the people of the United States and Mexico
14 and pose security challenges to cities and towns in
15 the United States;

16 (5) drug-related violence is a “cross-border”
17 problem that requires close cooperation between the
18 Government of Mexico and the United States Gov-
19 ernment;

1 (6) the United States Government and the Gov-
2 ernment of Mexico have a shared interest and re-
3 sponsibility in defeating drug trafficking organiza-
4 tions, and a comprehensive strategy, jointly con-
5 ceived and executed, is required for significant
6 progress to be made;

7 (7) the Senate applauds and fully supports ef-
8 forts by President Felipe Calderón, the people of
9 Mexico, and the Government of Mexico to confront
10 the drug trafficking organizations, apprehend their
11 members, and bring them to justice;

12 (8) the Department of State should—

13 (A) ensure prompt delivery of the equip-
14 ment, technical assistance, and training for
15 which Congress appropriated funds in fiscal
16 year 2008 as part of the Merida Initiative;

17 (B) continue to support the Government of
18 Mexico in its efforts to strengthen institutions
19 and the rule of law, root out corruption, and
20 protect human rights; and

21 (C) ensure full accountability for all assist-
22 ance and equipment provided by the United
23 States Government to the Government of Mex-
24 ico; and

1 (9) the United States Government should em-
2 ploy its broad diplomatic and law enforcement re-
3 sources, in partnership with the Government of Mex-
4 ico and governments throughout the Americas, to
5 defeat drug-related criminal enterprises.

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