

to be achieved quickly.

First, all the Afghan drug lords have to be eliminated from the scene physically through capture. If they resist, they should be considered as war combatants.

Once the elimination of the drug lords takes off, the farmers will be “liberated.” At this point, a well-organized and well-thought-out plan to eradicate the opium poppy must be implemented. The eradication has to be followed by paying compensation to the farmers that would last them a year at the least.

In a series of article last year, *Middle East Times* writer James Emery pointed out that most of the processing labs are located in southern Afghanistan. These labs are close to opium sources and are jointly protected by the Taliban and the drug lords. Smaller refineries, including mobile labs, are scattered around the country. Taking out heroin-processing labs will help curtail the market for opium.

The UNODC’s “Winter Afghan Opium Report” of 2008 noted that a massive quantity of opium is being stockpiled for future sales. The report said that even if the entire 2008 Afghan opium crop were eradicated, heroin labs would remain busy, unless opium warehouses were located and destroyed

Acetic anhydride is the essential precursor used for converting opium into morphine base and heroin. Its sole use in Afghanistan is in drug refineries that have increased their annual demand from about 200 tons to 1,330 tons during the last six years.

None of the precursors are manufactured in Afghanistan. In all, some 11,000 tons of chemicals were required to process opium during 2007. The chemicals are smuggled into Afghanistan from China, India, Pakistan, and the Central Asian Republics, Emery pointed out. The main opium markets in Helmand province are in Musa Qala and Sangin, which were under British control, reportedly for a while, in 2007. Each of the two districts has numerous heroin labs.

It is imperative that Washington engage in serious discussions with the countries from which the precursors come into Afghanistan, and work out a surveillance system at the manufacturing places themselves.

These are the basic requirements to rid Afghanistan of this menace and prevent the region from becoming a safehouse for the terrorists. The only way to defeat the terrorists is to starve them of the opium cash that helps them to proliferate. That would also help the United States earn some respect in the region.

Mexico’s Descent into Hell Can be Stopped

by Cynthia R. Rush

Retired Gen. Barry McCaffrey, former drug czar in the Clinton Administration, wrote an *After Action Report* on an early December 2008 visit to Mexico, in which he described the drug hell into which Mexico is rapidly descending. The southern neighbor of the United States “is on the edge of the abyss,” he warned, and “could become a narco-state in the coming decade.”

For well over a year, the Mexican and international press have documented that descent on a daily basis, with horrifying accounts of beheadings, random kidnappings, and torture of military and police personnel; shootouts among rival gangs; and psychological terror aimed at the general population.

Moreover, Mexico’s drug cartels appear to operate with total impunity, and demonstrate the same level of bestiality that Dope, Inc.’s employees like George Soros use to argue for drug legalization. The war on drugs is unwinnable, they insist, so take your pick: Silver or lead?

If you make a deal, as Soros demands, you get silver—you cash in on some drug money. “Tax and regulate” the marijuana crop, and the drug violence will end, the story goes. But if, like current Mexican President Felipe Calderón, you choose to fight, and enlist the Army to do so, you’ll get the “lead”—and you will lose, they say.

One example of the lead was delivered on Feb. 1, when cartel hitmen kidnapped Brig. Gen. Mauro Enrique Tello Quiñones (ret.) in downtown Cancún, hideously tortured him, and then killed him. Tello was an experienced veteran of the war on drugs, sent into Cancún in late January by the Office of the Defense Secretary, to clean out a nest of cartel collaborators inside the local police.

On Nov. 5, 2008, a plane crash in Mexico City had killed Calderón’s close collaborators in the war on drugs, Interior Minister Juan Carlos Mouriño and the



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Lyndon LaRouche has called on the Obama Administration to forge an alliance with Mexico, premised on respect for Mexico's sovereignty, to shut down the murderous drug traffic. Shown: Mexican soldiers detain a man following a deadly gun battle in Apatzingan.

former Deputy Attorney General for the war on drugs, José Luís Santiago Vasconcelos. Although the crash was deemed an accident, there is lingering suspicion that it was caused by the drug cartels as a warning to Calderón to abandon his anti-drug strategy.

U.S.-Mexico Cooperation

Many Mexicans bridled at McCaffrey's talk of a "narco state," viewing the general as the typical arrogant Yankee imperialist, who is looking for any opportunity to attack—or invade—Mexico. They also recall the constant discussion of "failed states" during the Bush years, as a justification for the Bush policy of trying to terminate the institution of the sovereign nation-state altogether.

But McCaffrey has repeatedly stressed that the only way to conduct a successful war on drugs is with U.S.-Mexico cooperation, based on full respect for Mexico's sovereignty. And he placed the full measure of blame on the U.S. government—the Bush Administration, to be precise—for allowing the uninterrupted flow of weapons across the border into Mexico, which keeps the drug mafias armed with weaponry far more sophisticated than anything the underfunded Mexican Army has.

Why is there such "callous disregard" from the U.S. side, McCaffrey asked, "for a national security threat to

a neighboring democratic state?" If the situation were reversed, he argued, "we would consider it an act of warfare from a sanctuary state if we were the victim."

The U.S. Department of Justice's National Drug Threat Assessment, published in mid-December 2008, also stressed the logistical and technological sophistication that Dope, Inc. has deployed along the U.S.-Mexico border. "Mexico's DTOs [drug trafficking organizations] maintain cross-border communication centers in Mexico near the U.S.-Mexico border to facilitate coordinated cross-border smuggling operations," they wrote. They use "Voice over Internet Protocol, satellite technology (broadband satellite instant messaging), encrypted messaging, cell phone technology, two-way radios, scanner devices, and text messages to communicate with members. In some cases DTO

members use high-frequency radios with encryption and rolling codes to communicate during cross-border operations."

The Department of Justice report stated that the DTOs use gang members in U.S. cities, "which insulates DTO cell members from law enforcement detection," noting that the total number of gang members in 2006 was estimated at 785,000, but in 2008 it "may be significantly higher."

But a political commitment on both sides of the border could mobilize even more sophisticated means to be used by the United States and Mexico to defend their citizens from these predators.

Lyndon LaRouche has called on the Obama Administration to forge an alliance with Mexico to fight drugs, premised on respect for Mexico's sovereignty. It's possible to wage war against the cartels using non-lethal means—high-technology, science, and economic development plans, LaRouche said. "Drugs will be fought," he emphasized, "but it is preferable to do it largely peacefully, with economic alternatives to what will otherwise be chaos." LaRouche pointed to the proposed Northwest Hydraulic Plan (PLHINO), a huge infrastructure project that would greatly expand land under cultivation in three northern Mexican states, as an example of the kind of projects Mexico needs.