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**Mexico, Drug Trafficking Organizations, Realism, and Human Security**

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Before traveling to Mexico, citizens of the United States are advised to check travel warnings for the country. Violence due to the war on drugs is causing people to be weary of visiting ruins from complex pre-Colombian cultures and enjoying the rich tourist industry Mexico provides. In place of cultural and economic highlights, it is now heavily associated with drug trafficking organizations and the violence associated with them. Much of this is due to the war on drugs, declared by President Felipe Calderon in 2006, which escalated the conflict between the state and the drug traffickers and drew increasing worldwide media attention to the issue. In light of these facts, we must question the strategy and effectiveness of Calderon's campaign and its effect on the global community's perceptions of the country. The theories of Realism and Human Security both offer insight on how Mexico is attempting to regain complete sovereignty over the nation and how the drug trafficking organizations are viewed on both national and international stages.

One of the major causes of the drug problem is the border Mexico shares with the United States. The border is both advantageous and detrimental; while it allows Mexico to receive aid and trade with the current world power, it is also a magnet for drug trafficking. While it allows for Mexico to receive aid and trade with the current world power, it is also a magnet for drug trafficking. Smuggling drugs across the United States – Mexico border is not a recent phenomenon. Illegal drug trades began during the United States' Civil War (1861-1865) when opiates came into popular use; since the war "...farmers in northwest Mexico had grown the opium poppies that satisfied part of this demand" (González, 72). The drug trade became big business during Prohibition (1917-1933) and it was at this time that smoking cannabis leaves was introduced by seasonal migrant farmers. Even later, Mexico also exported cocaine during the 1950's and 1960's to New York and Hollywood during the height of on-set filming (González, 72), during this time, however, Mexico's drug trade never made headlines as the drug traffickers kept their business low-key.

It wasn't until the advent of the Colombian drug trade in Central America that Mexico saw the rise of powerful cartels and a new and prominent position in the international drug trade. In the 1980's and 1990's the Cali and Medellín cartels of Colombia were the most feared and powerful in the world. Many of their routes were from Colombia through the Gulf of Mexico to Florida; Mexico was virtually nonexistent in the cocaine trade between Colombia and the United States. The drug trade from the 1940's to 1990's was relatively unknown to the public since the "...Mexican government...pursued what analysts have dubbed a 'live and let live' approach. This system [was] characterized by a working relationship between some Mexican authorities and drug lords" (González, 73). However, the lax relationship changed in 1984 when the Colombia-Florida route was shut down by the United States. Colombia then turned to Mexico to begin smuggling cocaine across the border. Within a few years, 80-90 percent of cocaine smuggled into the United States was through Mexico. As Colombia's drug trafficking organizations began to lose power due to military reinforcement from the United States, Mexico's largest drug trafficking organizations - the Gulf, Sinaloa, Juárez, and Tijuana, began their rise to power (Bonner, 35). The countries were beginning to see a shift in power between producers and distributors which would quickly put Mexico on the map of powerful drug trading countries.

The 1990's also introduced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA, which was implemented on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, "...required the phasing out over 15 years of import tariffs and quotas that have partially shielded Mexican producers from competition from cheaper US food and feed grain. Tariffs on maize and beans, the country's most important staples, were scheduled for elimination by 2008" (McAfee, 150). Maize, which is one of Mexico's most predominate crops, was affected extensively; by 2004 NAFTA "...had driven 1.2 million farmers off the land" (Ross, 47) and Mexico "now imports 22% of its corn...from US growers" (47). These changes in economic policy were ironically almost directly responsible for massive growth of the cartels. Because NAFTA changed trade policies and phased out tariffs, many farms – which supported 13.7% of the work force at the time – became nonviable. Many people turned to the illegal drug trade in order to maintain financial stability and put food on the table. The government did little to prevent the

cartels' growth; "...the major trafficking organizations began reaping enormous profits from the cocaine trade. Mexico's one-party political system, which was dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) for 70 years, permitted these major drug trafficking organizations to increase their influence and power" (Bonner, 35). Despite NAFTA's goal to improve the standard of living across all three nations, in reality its displacement of farmers and growing unemployment in the agricultural sector coincided with the growth of the drug cartels to make Mexico a center of illegal activity and increasing violence.

The Mexican government was forced to take action against the powerful, dangerous drug trafficking organizations it had inadvertently helped to create. In 2000, the National Action Party (PAN) took power from the PRI when Vicente Fox assumed office. Fox and his administration slowly shifted and reformed the relationship between government and drug trafficking organizations as he moved forces into Nuevo Laredo to combat the Zetas and Gulf organizations, who threatened to take over the city (Bonner, 35). With violence escalating "...Fox implemented an operation involving 1,500 federal police officers in Mexico-US border cities. In this context, the conflict intensified and started mutating into the bloody spectacle that Mexicans witness today" (González, 73). The next large step in Mexico's war on drug trafficking organizations came in December 2006, when Felipe Calderón was elected to office. Shortly after assuming the presidency he controversially began to use the military in the war on drugs which included "...a series of large-scale operations that by the end of 2008 had involved close to 40,000 troops and 5,000 federal police" (74). These actions were the first large-scale actions against the drug trafficking organizations.

The effects of these operations have been mixed. Violence escalated after 2006, "...an average of 10,000 organized crime related murders per year will have taken place in each year of [Calderón's] term if current projections hold" (Beittel, 1). Analysts say the violence signifies progress as the government's actions are "destabilizing the drug trafficking organizations and denying them access to areas in which they used to operate with complete impunity" (Bonner, 35). Increased pressure from the Mexican military has driven armed conflicts with cartels out of periodically violent regions into new areas. This is one of the reasons why many argue the drug trafficking organizations are winning the psychological war with increased violence (González, 75), despite quantitative evidence of the government's progress. For example, as of March 2012, "...Mexico had succeeded in capturing or killing 22 out of 37 of Mexico's most wanted drug traffickers identified by the Mexican government" (Beittel, 1). The level of violence in the country and the danger to Mexican citizens is such that an explanation of the military campaign that has escalated conflict is necessary in order for one to understand and support the war on drugs.

One way to justify the war on drugs in Mexico is by viewing it through the lens of Realism. Those who call themselves Realists generally "...view security as the key issue in international affairs. They often share a pessimistic view of both human nature and inevitability of war" (Smallman & Brown, 40). This may lead one to believe the Fox and Calderón are realists given that they started using military force in order to protect the security of the nation in a seemingly pessimistic manner against powerful drug trafficking organizations in an inevitable power struggle for the control of the nation. Realism supports Mexico's military campaign since states are morally obligated to protect their citizens from harm, including domestic threats. According to this philosophy, the Mexican government and administration was provoked by the drug trafficking organizations' violence and rise to power. In order to protect themselves, they were forced to deploy the military as a power play.

However, Realism is also "...a philosophy that puts national interests ahead of moral concerns" (Wolfowitz). In this case, the use of the military to attempt to evict the drug trafficking organizations from the country was the logical thing to do, despite moral concerns as evidenced by possible human rights violations. Furthermore, Realists argue that using the state military was necessary not only in Mexico, but in any nation "...undergoing bloody internal struggles in which the

objective is to gain control of whatever national machinery there is..." (Jervis, 981 - 982). For Mexico, control consisted of using the military in a strategic campaign to regain control of Mexico's security, economy, and to rid the country of corrupt administration and governance.

The military strategy that a Realist would approve of is providing results. Since Realist authors argue that "...globalization [has] not fundamentally changed security issues and that states remained the key actors in security affairs" (Smallman & Brown, 49) then the military's progress as they take action through permission and guidance of the state is to be expected. The strength of Realism can be witnessed across the United States - Mexico border where both countries are witnessing a decrease in violence and crime. The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently reported that crime rates across the border have decreased from 2004 to 2011. From state to state, "Arizona saw the most significant decline, of 33 percent over the seven-year time period. Other decreases were seen in Texas (30 percent), California (26 percent), and New Mexico (eight percent from 2005 onward)" (Cawley). In the country of Mexico, Ciudad Juárez is transforming into the poster child of military and police force success. The border city was one of the greatest areas of drug violence, "[w]ith 3,097 homicides in 2010, Juárez was not only one of the most violent cities in the world, but its murder rate alone was on par with violence in Afghanistan, a country with an intense insurgency and counterinsurgency campaign" (Felbab-Brown, 8). The drug violence was clearly taking control of the city.

Ciudad Juárez once claimed the title of murder capital of the world but due to military strategy the city has recently seen a steep decline of homicide and other crimes such as extortion, carjackings, kidnapping, and theft. The declines began in March 2011 when Julian Leyzaola, a lieutenant colonel who came out of retirement, assumed the position of police chief in Ciudad Juárez and began using a confrontational method in which his police force arrested people involved in suspicious activities. While many criticize this method for infringing on human rights, Ciudad Juárez has moved from its peak of nearly 10 homicides a day in January 2011 (269 homicides total for the month) to only 26 homicides in January 2013 (Dudley). As the chief example, the Realist strategy of protecting a city with military force is proving successful with as Ciudad Juárez's declining murder rates show.

Furthermore, the Mexican public approves of the military strategy. According to Pew Research Center, "[i]n 2012, 80% in Mexico polled supported using the Mexican army to fight in the drug war" (Kohut, 1). Furthermore, 47% of Mexicans polled in 2012 believed the campaign against the drug trafficking organizations were making progress - a 2% increase from 2011. Concern for drug violence dropped from 77% to 75% over the same year (Kohut). These statistics convincingly demonstrate that the Mexican public believes the military strategy deployed by Calderón in 2006 is making progress - even if it has taken the majority of five years for progress to be noticeable.

On the other hand, Realism contains several weaknesses when applied to the war on drug trafficking organizations as well. Bonner, the Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration from 1990 to 1993 and Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection from 2001 to 2005, wrote "...the military is taking the lead in the war against the drug trafficking organizations. They are doing so out of sheer necessity, but it is a stopgap solution. The country desperately needs to reform and overhaul its hundreds of separate state and municipal police forces" (Bonner, 35). The reformation that Bonner calls for is primarily due to corruption and human rights violations concerning the military strategies and methods combating the drug trafficking organizations. Applying what some may consider an outdated philosophy to a changing, globalizing world will not battle the drug trafficking organizations properly. Mary Kaldor, a professor of Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Co-Director of LSE Global Governance states:

Many people live in very insecure situations. They are insecure because they might be in the middle of a conflict, because of human rights violation, because of violent crime like drugs in Mexico City. I think the real problem today that there are large

parts of the world that are deeply, deeply insecure and yet our security capabilities which are based on military forces, conventional military forces, are completely ill adapted for dealing with these situations. (Kaldor)

The ability of Mexican citizens to feel safe in the current state of Mexico is impossible with a war on drugs occurring in their backyards.

One of the insecurities Kaldor refers to here is the human rights violations committed by military forces. For example, while Ciudad Juárez is a prime example of why Realism tactics are working to defeat the drug trafficking organizations, it is also a prime example of why Realism is outdated. A case study in Ciudad Juárez reveals human rights infractions in the story of Victor Ramon Longoria Carillo. Victor was an "identified suspect" who was said to be previously involved with a carjacking and containing illegal guns in the house. Police entered his house without a warrant, beat him while putting a bag over his head, and finally brought him to the police station where the beatings continued. However, the location of Victor's house was not near the carjacking and no illegal firearms were found (Dudley). Along with human rights, Victor's legal rights were broken as well; His house was searched and he was seized without warrant. On this topic, Kaldor states that military force is not using their power and privilege in the right method. Instead, the military should be "...about protecting people and protecting the law. At this moment, there's a huge problem in that military forces think they're fighting enemies when "actually, their job is protecting people and enforcing the law. We tend to focus on threats that involve enemies...this way on focusing on terrorism makes it worst. It doesn't help us" (Kaldor). The military needs to focus on the security of the country, which includes civilians that would otherwise have no protection from violence caused by turf wars amongst the drug trafficking organizations and other violence that has risen along with the war on drugs. The security of individuals includes an "...estimated 22,000 drug-related murders [that] have occurred since Calderón took office, with nearly 9,000 in 2009 alone" (Bonner, 35). The Realist-proposed military solution may prevent civilians from believing that reclaiming sovereignty of their country from the cartels is an achievable prospect. The war on drugs has resulted in increased casualties among citizens, including violations of their human and legal rights making citizens doubt progress and future success.

While Realism defends Mexico's military campaign against drug trafficking organizations problem, it also does not take into account the fact that the drug trafficking organizations are spreading their reign across the Mexican borders. While drug trafficking and smuggling over the Mexican - United States border has been part of the organizations business for nearly a century, Mexican drug trafficking organizations' routes expanding overseas is a new occurrence. For example, there was a recent discovery of the trade route from Mexico through the United States to Australia. A convicted man that was working for the Sinaloa cartel "...said that his organization would move millions of dollars from Australia to the US, use the funds to buy cocaine, then move it back to Australia. Individual A was later arrested by authorities and agreed to become an informant. He collaborated in the capture last year of Chicago-based Sinaloa Cartel collaborator, Jose Mares Barregan" (Pachico). This case contains the collaboration of three nations; Mexico as the providing country, Chicago serving as the transportation point, and Australia as the buyer. The evidence clearly points to the drug trafficking organizations being more than nation-state issues within the borders of Mexico. Furthermore,

The Illinois case serves as further indication of the increased role that Mexican cartels are playing in the international transshipment and distribution of cocaine. Mexico groups like the Sinaloa Cartel have now replaced Colombian criminal syndicates as the primary global distributors of cocaine, while the Colombian role now mainly consists of selling product to the Mexican groups. (Pachico)

With Colombia now replaced by Mexico, other nations receiving drugs from the Mexican cartels need to be involved in the fight on drugs as well - which

Where Realism seems to falter in justifying the military approach in human violation rights and not accounting for drug trafficking organizations expanding over the border, Human Security presents its strengths through accounting for protecting individuals in all aspects of the war on drugs. The Human Security theory can account for drug trafficking organizations expanding over the border and making contacts within other nations, including the United States, in order to make their transactions more efficient. The theory of Human Security "...relocates the referent of security away from the state and toward 'people' or 'individuals'" (Gómez, 385). In other words, the priority is no longer that of protecting the state from outside threats but instead it "...[stretches] both vertically and horizontally to include actors and threats that had been partially ignored by traditional approaches to the study of security" (385).

When analyzing the concepts of Human Security, the United Nation's Trust Fund for Human Security sets further standards in defining the theory and what it intends to accomplish. The fund requires that projects receiving money for projects must be people-centered and security issues must focus on populations that are endangered. This concept consists of people stating their security needs and being active in identifying their issues and adapting Human Security to the specific identified issue. Overall, the United Nation's Trust Fund for Human Security defined Human Security as "protection from above and empowerment from below" (389). Because Human Security prioritizes the desires of a population as problems are identified, it is more apt in handling the ideological framework of how to contain the Mexican drug trafficking organizations when it comes to their expansion across borders. Since the theory has the premise of shifting "...the security discussion away from an exclusive focus on states and toward the welfare of individual human beings" (Furtado, 405), individuals outside of Mexico and outside of the drug trafficking organizations are being affected by the criminal activity; it is not exclusive to those involved via the state, military, and drug trafficking organizations.

Mexico's relations with other nations, particularly the United States, are being greatly affected by the war on drugs. Since the United States is offering aid and assistance in the war, Mexico cannot consider itself the sole actor. According to Human Security, Mexico must consider how to better utilize their military campaign since "...the internal makeup of states has a huge effect on their external behavior" (Wolfowitz). Beittel notes that Mexicans are not the only ones who have been affected by the violence in Mexico seeing as

U.S. citizens have also been victims of the security crisis in Mexico. In March 2010, three individuals connected to the U.S. consulate in Ciudad Juárez, two of them U.S. citizens, were killed by a gang working for one of the major DTOs operating in that city. In February 2011, two U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were shot, one fatally, allegedly by Los Zetas, one of Mexico's most violent DTOs. In the U.S. Congress, these events have raised concerns about the stability of a strategic partner and neighbor. Congress is also concerned about the possibility of "spillover" violence along the U.S. border and further inland. (Beittel, Summary)

In other words, Mexico needs to focus on individual security since those who are being targeted are not only those involved in the war against drug trafficking organizations, but citizens from multiple nations as well. Further evidence supporting Human Security is observable in the unnecessary occupational hazards journalist face while working in Mexico. While the military may be attempting to eradicate and remove the drug trafficking organizations, they forget to protect those who need it most. Through the "[v]iolent crimes targeting journalists, and high levels of impunity for perpetrators of those crimes [...] Mexico [is] ranked among the most dangerous places in the world to work as a journalist" (Beittel, 24). The violence against journalists goes as far as murder which "...often causes journalists to self-censor their work and news outlets to stop publishing or broadcasting stories on violent crime" (24). An approach that followed the guidelines of Human Security by protecting the individual, specifically in this case the journalist, would prevent these needless deaths and perhaps provide more accurate information about the drug cartels in the media. Protecting journalists through the Human Security theory's perspective could lead to more

information about drug trafficking organizations' patterns and whereabouts. In turn, the military could use the uncensored information to aid in drug eradication and to capture kingpins.

However, Human Security's views on violence among non-combatant populations – such as journalists and citizens – are not supported by statistics on the violence in Mexico. According to Kaldor the "...nation states are losing their monopoly of legitimate violence...[Those who believe in Human Security] don't think it can be reconstructed any long on a national basis. It has to be reconstructed at a global basis. That's why global governance is so critical" (Kaldor). Kaldor continues to argue that the only legitimate source of violence today is only that which is approved by the United Nations, as it represents the international community. Since the violence caused by the military involvement was not approved by the United Nations, one can begin to see a crack in the Human Security theory. Violence is one of the key issues that Human Security does not address, as "[t]he Mexican authorities maintained in July 2010 that more than 90% of the casualties (those who have died since President Calderón's crackdown in December 2006) were individuals involved with or linked in some way to the criminal activities of the DTOs" (Beittel, 22). The violence does affect those outside of the drug trade, such as journalists, civilians caught in the cross fire, and the occasional tourist. However, Mexico stands firm in the statement that the violence is primarily within the drug trafficking organizations or against the military and government, which is evidenced by statistics. Therefore the issue should be kept in a Realist stance and Mexico should continue to use their military campaign against the drug trafficking organizations.

Human security also does not account for the argument that Mexico's drug trafficking organizations should be solved by Mexico itself. As a Realist would argue, nation-states find themselves in the position of politicking to make alliances and power balances in order to survive. Although they may appear to be acting out of moral and ethical concerns, they are acting out of national interests – doing otherwise would be unrealistic (Smallman & Brown, 40). Although alliances are needed between nation-states are required in today's vastly globalized world, "...international politics becomes a survival system in which each state has the burden of looking after its own security and well-being. Even more than in the case of the individual, the ultimate value for the state is unprotected by legal institutions hence, the state must look for its own devices – war diplomacy, military alliances etc. – to protect itself" (Spegle, 86). In other words, while legal institutions may provide structure and guidelines, it is still a system of anarchy and the state must continue to be vigilant in protecting its own citizens.

Human Security does not account for the desire of aid from the United States. With the drug trafficking organizations' main customer base in the United States, it only seems logical that the United States would be involved in fighting the war against drugs in Mexico. Nonetheless, instead of fighting the war on the United States' side of the border by curbing drug use, cracking down on people buying from the drug trafficking organizations, and finding more collaborators such as Jose Mares Barregan in Chicago, the United States is offering aid by entering into Mexico for training purposes and supplying guns to military forces. As for bringing this alliance into the country itself, many Mexicans are unsure. Surveys from the PEW research center reveal mixed feelings of the United States entering into Mexico which would make it a true transnational security issue. The polls reveal that

[i]n order to combat the drug cartels, three-quarters of Mexicans would support the U.S. training Mexican police and military personnel. About six-in-ten (61%) would also approve of the U.S. providing money and weapons to the country's police and military. However, there is much less enthusiasm for deploying U.S. troops within Mexico's borders. Only a third would welcome such a move, while a 59% majority would oppose it. (Beittel, 3)

As stated in the poll, Human Security does not take into account the collective feeling of Mexican citizens. While Mexico more than welcomes aid from the United States, having troops and military presence from the bordering nation is not favorable. This does not allow the Human Security to expand beyond borders or to rely on global governance in order to force aid into Mexico. While Human Security may account for the drug trafficking organizations expanding over borders, it does not take into account the sovereignty Mexico wants to keep for itself.

Mexico may still have a long path ahead of it in order to contain and defeat the drug trafficking organizations. With a long history of smuggling drugs across the United States –Mexico border, Mexico needs to evaluate its strategies for national security. According to Realism, the military involvement may be proving to reduce violence, such as in Ciudad Juárez. However, the military tactic supported by Realism does not account for the drug trafficking organizations' expansion across borders nor does it address human rights issues that may be infringed in some of the military's "no tolerance" policy. Human Security, on the other hand, makes the drug trafficking organizations an issue that needs to be addressed by multiple nations that are buyers and suppliers, not just Mexico. It also takes into account those who are affected by the drug trafficking organizations, such as citizens and journalist, outside of the military, government, and crime organization war. Nonetheless, neither Realism nor Human Security theory are able to account for and justify solutions that encompass protection of citizens while simultaneously making progress in decentralizing the rising power and influence of the drug trafficking organizations. If Mexico can combine tactics involving both theories - a military presence to reduce violence and take away the power from the drug trafficking organizations while protecting citizens in an individual manner while enlisting other affected countries in the war - it may have a chance of regaining complete control over the nation-state.

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