



UNCLASSIFIED United States Department of State

Assistant Secretary of State
for International Narcotics Matters
Washington, D.C. 20520

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Michael A. Wermuth
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Drug Enforcement Policy
Pentagon, Room 2E538
Washington, D.C. 20301-1510

Dear Mike:

At the September 13 Core Group meeting, you expressed some remaining concerns about the NBRF program. I believe I can allay those concerns.

The Government of Mexico (GOM) has proven itself a dependable partner in the anti-drug effort, proven that it is prepared to make the financial and physical sacrifices to move ahead, and proven that it can absorb the additional assets we believe are necessary to increase the impact of its air interdiction effort. The Embassy and USG agencies which work most closely with Mexico and with this effort are completely satisfied that the operational concept/plan has proved to be effective and, thus, valid.

I believe the following sequence, repeated time and time again, serves to validate the concept/operating plan:

- The USG detection and monitoring systems successfully pass information to the Tactical Analysis Team (TAT) at the Embassy;
- The Embassy and the GOM have established effective communications channels to relay the information;
- The GOM launches fixed-wing aircraft to intercept and track suspect targets;
- Helicopters are alerted and launched when GOM officials determine they could intercept suspect aircraft at projected landing sites;
- As soon as the landing site is identified, to begin the criminal investigation and gather intelligence;

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- Tons of cocaine have been seized and narco-traffickers have been arrested (the arrest rate has increased notably with the increased use of helicopters)

Beyond validation of the concept, we have seen broader results. When the traffickers began to suffer losses to the NBRF/Halcon teams in northern Mexico, it forced them to move their operations south. The flexible response of NBRF allowed the GOM to reposition operating bases to counter shifting narco-trafficking patterns.

There is no doubt that additional assets will enhance the program's ability to respond and successfully interdict drug traffickers. I believe it is time for us to move forward on plans to deliver the next 12 helicopters in the first quarter of FY-92.

I have asked the Embassy to amplify its periodic reporting on NBRF operations which, I hope, will assist us monitor their progress.

On a related matter, I thank you for arranging the temporary duty assignment of three talented officers from the Center for Low Intensity Conflict (CLIC) to assist the Drug Enforcement Administration in developing the "NBRF Diagnostic Checklist". I have reviewed the checklist and believe it can serve many purposes. I commend the CLIC team members for what is, clearly, the product of a lot of hard work and careful thought.

The checklist will assist the U.S. Embassy and the GOM improve overall program management and effectiveness. I was particularly pleased to read in the accompanying report the team's favorable review of the NBRF's operational concept and plan.

Again, thank you for your continued support of this most important national security endeavor.

Sincerely,

Melvyn Levitsky

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