

DAS Creamer Mtg with SACFO staffer Tim Rieser
Monday, 9/26/16

(Other participants: INL- (b)(6) and (b)(6) PPC- (b)(6) H –
(b)(6) MEX (b)(6)

Key Points:

- TR made it clear he strongly disagreed with the conclusions of the 15% report. But he was more frustrated and disappointed than angry. He noted several times that human rights NGOs had expressed to him their disagreement with our decision to submit the report.
- He affirmed that he has written off the EPN administration in terms of its commitment to human rights, asserting it will take a different government to make progress on these issues.
- Most important issue for him: torture
- After noting there was no 15% requirement in the FY-16 appropriation, Rieser indicated he might look at ways to toughen up the conditions in FY-17 (noting the withholding requirements for CENTAM countries were much higher than 15%).
- Rieser (while acknowledging the task of reforming Mexico’s justice institutions required a long term effort) wondered if another approach was needed (i.e., something other than the current 15% withholding requirement and report).
- In this connection, he proposed an off the record meeting with Ambassador Jacobson and the Department, human rights NGOs, and himself to talk over “how to make the conditions work better.” How can we reshape our approach to get the human rights results we want to see? (b)(5)
(b)(5)
- While he disagreed with the basic conclusion of the 15% report that the GOM was taking steps to meet the criteria in the law, he did not/not mention the word “hold.”

Other Points made by SACFO/Rieser:

- Going back to the origins of the Merida Initiative, Rieser criticized the one dimensional nature of Merida (i.e., in the beginning), and the failure of the (Bush) Administration to consult with Congress on the design of the initiative. There had to be some conditions, some indicators of progress. Congress could not just give the GOM a blank check – hence the 15%

requirement. But he noted the conditionality in the appropriation bills had been toned down in deference to Mexican sensitivities.

- He thought there were solutions (including re-programming the withheld funds) other than giving Mexico a “pass” and submitting the 15% report (DAS Creamer responding that the report did not give Mexico a pass and that the report described problems and shortcomings, including some of the concerns/criticisms expressed by the Iguala Experts).
- He asserted that the submission of the report was ill-timed referring to the anniversary of Iguala, and recent developments/news articles on key cases such as Tanhuato and San Salvador Atenco (Note: again, the timing of the report is related to the end of the fiscal year).
- Rieser was very critical of the GOM’s HR performance: the EPN administration is “corrupt and abusive.” The GOM is a “criminal enterprise.” They “obstruct justice, destroy evidence” (a reference to Iguala and the GIEI experts). There is a “pitiful response to the victims of crime.” Torture, disappearances, mistreatment are “rampant.” The army is “unaccountable.” In comparison to the scope of the human rights problems facing Mexico the GOM has responded in a “de minimis” fashion
- He recalled that there is no withholding/report requirement for FY-16 (“Mexico dodged a bullet”) but indicated that for FY-17 conditions could be much tougher.
- Given GOM actions (or lack of actions) and acknowledging the GOM’s “defensiveness, he wondered out loud what steps we should take moving forward. If the 15% withholding/report is not working, not achieving the results we want, what approach should we take? What do we do differently to get results?
- In this connection, he suggested that Ambassador Jacobson and State meet with him and NGOs to review strategies and look at alternative approaches to achieve human rights objectives. (b)(5)