



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

ANTONIO O. GARZA, JR.
AMBASSADOR

January 26, 2005

Dear Sirs:

I would like to raise with you both an issue of growing concern to me personally and to the United States Government. I refer to the current wave of violence along the border, and its impact on American citizens. While violence in the border cities is not a new phenomenon, the escalating fighting among drug cartel elements has meant a sharp increase in murders and kidnappings.

Although Americans do not appear to be the specific targets of the crimes, the elevated level of violence generally has resulted in greater risks to the thousands of American citizens visiting and passing through the border region every day. Increased numbers of murdered and kidnapped Americans in recent months bear this out.

I am sure you are familiar with the several articles that have appeared over the past week in major U.S. newspapers about this issue. We continue to receive many other requests for information and comment from U.S. news media, as well as concerns from citizens and U.S. authorities.

I worry that the inability of local law enforcement to come to grips with rising drug warfare, kidnappings and random street violence will have a chilling effect on the cross-border exchange, tourism and commerce so vital to the region's prosperity. I applaud the strong expressions of concern voiced by President Fox to date, and hope that commitment will make a difference at the state and local levels.

We certainly do not want at this time to advise Americans to refrain from traveling to Mexico by land or to avoid the border areas, but it is our responsibility to alert them to the enhanced risks and to provide guidance on how best to protect themselves. Consequently, we are revising the State Department's Consular Information Sheet and issuing a Public Announcement.

The Honorable,

Dr. Ernesto Derbez Bautista, Secretary of Foreign Relations;
Gral. Rafael Macedo de la Concha, Attorney General of the Republic,
Mexico City.

Working together, the Fox and Bush Administrations have made enormous strides in making the border both smarter and more secure, and in improving law enforcement cooperation to the benefit of citizens in both our countries. I hope this current challenge can be faced with similar resolve and success. I respectfully request that your offices continue to aggressively work with the states along the border to ensure the protection of both American and Mexican citizens. Please let me know if there is any additional cooperation that the U.S. Government could provide to your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Antonio O. Garza, Jr.