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security forces, particularly at the federal level; transforming the justice system to provide more transparency and efficiency; and implementing social programs to prevent Mexican youth drug use, addiction, and membership in criminal gangs.” (U.S. Senate, 2011)

There was small doubt that this plan was built around a martial framework. Under President Calderón, the Mexican government invested heavily in building security forces, spending \$2.5 billion in 2007, nearly \$4 billion in 2008, and \$9.2 billion in 2010 (U.S. Senate, 2011). By 2011, the Mexican government had deployed nearly 50,000 military personnel to combat drug-trafficking organizations, more than ten times the number of troops that had been deployed in 2008 (U.S. Senate, 2011).

President Calderón was not alone in wanting to address this regional issue and its illicit roots. On October 22, 2007, President Calderón and President George W. Bush announced a bilateral security partnership dubbed the Mérida Initiative (Bagley, 2012). At the outset, Mérida assistance from the U.S. primarily focused on providing equipment and technology that Mexican security forces needed to combat organized crime (Olson, 2013) and on law enforcement activities, (U.S. Senate, 2011) including strengthening border, air, and maritime controls, breaking “the power and impunity of criminal organizations,” and curtailing gang activity and reducing the demand for drugs in Mexico and Central America (Seelke and Beittel, 2009).

Though time has passed, the cooperative approach the United States put forth with Mexico appears not to have eroded. Although the Mérida Initiative initially was intended to last through Fiscal-Year 2010, President Barack Obama subsequently indicated that his administration would support its continuance beyond 2012, in a

