




U.S. Government and Top Mexican Drug Cartel Exposed as Partners

For over a decade, under multiple  administrations, the U.S. government had a secret agreement with the ruthless Mexican Sinaloa drug cartel that allowed it to operate with impunity, an [in-depth investigation](#) by a leading Mexican newspaper confirmed this week. In exchange for information and assistance in quashing competing criminal syndicates, the Bush and Obama administrations let the Sinaloa cartel import tons of drugs into the United States while wiping out Sinaloa competitors and ensuring that its leaders would not be prosecuted for their long list of major crimes. Other [revelations](#) also point strongly to massive but clandestine U.S. government involvement in drug trafficking.

Relying on over 100 interviews with current and former government functionaries on both sides of the border, as well as official documents from the U.S. and Mexican governments, Mexico's *El Universal* concluded that the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the U.S. Justice Department had secretly worked with Mexican drug lords. The controversial conspiring led to increased violence across Mexico, where many tens of thousands have been murdered in recent years, the newspaper found after its year-long probe. The U.S. agents and their shady deals with Mexican drug lords even sparked what the paper called a "secret war" inside Mexico.

The newspaper's investigation also confirmed long-held suspicions that U.S. authorities were signing secret agreements with Mexican drug cartels — especially Sinaloa, which CIA operatives [have said](#) was a favorite for use in achieving geo-political objectives. Supposedly without the knowledge or approval of officials in Mexico, ICE and DEA, with a green light from Washington, D.C., made deals with criminal bosses allowing them to avoid prosecution for a vast crime spree that has included mass murder, corruption, bribery, drug trafficking, extortion, and more. In exchange, cartel leaders simply had to help U.S. officials eliminate their competitors — certainly a win-win scenario for crime bosses who prefer to operate without competition or fear of prosecution.

As *The New American* [first reported](#) in early 2011, a high-ranking operative with the Sinaloa cartel had outlined elements of the criminal agreements with U.S. authorities in official court documents. "The government of the United States and its various agencies have a long history of providing benefits, permission, and immunity to criminals and their organizations to commit crimes, including murder, in exchange for receiving information against other criminals and other organizations," trafficker Jesus Vicente "El Vicentillo" Zambada-Niebla argued in U.S. court filings cited by *El Universal*. *The New American* has also [reported extensively](#) on the Zambada-Niebla case and what it reveals.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on January 14, 2014

Experts quoted in the Mexican paper echoed other analysts who have spoken out in recent years, saying that the U.S. government scheming handed the Sinaloa cartel de facto status as the primary powerhouse. In fact, during the period when *El Universal* says the relationship between American officials and Sinaloa chieftains was most active — 2006 through 2012 — drug war-fueled violence in Mexico surged to unprecedented levels. There are numerous indications that despite official denials, top Mexican officials may have been aware of the schemes, or even involved in them.

Also part of the U.S. government deal with Sinaloa, analysts and Zambada-Niebla have said, was the Obama administration's "Fast and Furious" gun-running program to arm Mexican cartels at U.S. taxpayer expense. Most recently, a whistleblower from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) said that U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry, killed with a Fast and Furious gun, was [murdered by criminals working for the FBI](#). "It is clear that some of the weapons were deliberately allowed by the FBI and other government representatives to end up in the hands of the Sinaloa Cartel," stated a motion filed in U.S. court by Zambada-Niebla's defense team, adding that the U.S. government has documents showing that the weapons were provided by authorities pursuant to the agreement with Sinaloa.

According to former officials and drug kingpins, the agreements between Sinaloa and Washington also allowed the criminal empire to ship multi-ton quantities of hard drugs across the border into the United States. In all, *El Universal* said there had been at least 50 meetings in Mexico between U.S. government agents and senior Sinaloa bosses, along with many more phone calls and e-mails. The criminal syndicate's leaders "were given carte blanche to continue to smuggle tons of illicit drugs into Chicago and the rest of the United States and were also protected by the United States government from arrest and prosecution," Zambada-Niebla's court filings state, adding that the U.S. government has the documents proving it. "Indeed, United States government agents aided the leaders of the Sinaloa Cartel."

Unsurprisingly, none of the American federal agencies implicated in the machinations would comment on the revelations. However, citing court documents and official records it published online — as well as numerous interviews with federal agents, convicts, and analysts — the paper was able to conclusively confirm what experts and even officials have been arguing for years: The U.S. government is deeply intertwined with the drug trade. It was not clear what statutory or constitutional authority Washington, D.C., believes would authorize its functionaries to participate in, protect, and facilitate wanton criminal activity.

Mexican authorities, meanwhile, were reportedly kept largely out of the loop surrounding DEA meetings and agreements with top leaders in Mexico's most notorious criminal syndicates. Officials in Mexico also claimed to be in the dark about the Obama administration's program to arm the cartels with U.S. weapons. According to analysts quoted in the *El Universal* report, if it is true that Mexico City was unaware, that only adds to the troubling implications of the unlawful scheming between U.S. officials and criminal bosses from Mexico and Colombia to Afghanistan and Southeast Asia.

Among other concerns, experts highlighted violations of human rights, infringements on the sovereignty of other nations, and more. It also helped fuel the devastating violence that has plagued the nation and claimed the lives of between 50,000 and 100,000 people in less than a decade. If Mexican authorities in fact approved the U.S. government's drug-running schemes in Mexico, they broke the law, too, legal experts told the paper, saying the Mexican Constitution could not be trumped by bilateral agreements or anything else.



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The latest revelations in the *El Universal* report came just days after the emergence of more explosive information implicating the CIA in drug-trafficking yet again. In an investigative article for *Narco News* entitled "[DEA Case Threatens to Expose US Government-Sanctioned Drug-Running](#)," veteran drug-war journalist Bill Conroy highlights another U.S. government investigation that, perhaps inadvertently, ended up implicating the infamous American intelligence agency in major cocaine trafficking operations once more. Citing official documents and numerous U.S. officials, the piece also notes that CIA-sponsored drug running has been a persistent and ongoing problem.

In fact, it would not be the first time that the DEA has stumbled on major CIA drug-running operations. Even former DEA chief Robert Bonner, during an [explosive interview with CBS](#), revealed that his agency had learned that the U.S. intelligence outfit unlawfully imported a ton of cocaine into the United States in cooperation with the Venezuelan government. According to the agency's inspector general, the CIA was indeed working with traffickers but received a "waiver" from the Justice Department purporting to allow the government crime spree to remain secret. More recently, a Mexican official accused the CIA of "[managing](#)" the global drug trade.

The Mexican investigation follows decades of explosive revelations and accusations, many documented by *The New American*, suggesting that Washington, D.C., plays a crucial role in facilitating the international drug trade. In fact, more than a few officials, drug lords, and analysts have even said that [the CIA and other secretive U.S. and foreign agencies actually run the global trade in narcotics](#), laundering the profits, and more. The DEA was even investigated by Congress last year for [helping to launder drug money](#), while the ATF was exposed [supplying U.S. weapons to Mexican cartels](#). ICE has reportedly been [allowing cartel hit men into the United States to murder](#). So far, none of the high-ranking officials responsible for the lawlessness have truly been held accountable.

Photo shows alleged hit men working for Sinaloa drug cartel along with grenades, automatic weapons, and body armor: AP Images

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