



STRATEGIC THINKING
INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY CONSULTANTS

A COOPERATION SCENARIO BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE U.S.

Fernando Jiménez Sánchez

The beginning of Donald Trump's presidency and the emphasis he has placed on security and border issues with Mexico indicate that the security landscape for both nations is changing. Everything suggests that a new reality is beginning to take shape—one that could be leveraged to improve bilateral security.

The security relationship between Mexico and the U.S. is complex. Ideally, both nations would make efforts to create an intergovernmental institution for cooperation and coordination with operational powers, similar to the European Union's Europol and Eurojust. However, at the moment, there appears to be no interest from decision-makers in developing such an entity.

Intergovernmental institutions are a response to the increasing legal, structural, and operational needs required to consolidate cooperation between nations within a formal, institutional, professional, and stable framework. Despite the emergency situations both countries have faced, none of the presidents have proposed such an initiative. Implementing one would require high levels of conviction, interest, and investment of political capital, as well as financial and human resources.

Presidents Sheinbaum and Trump seem to have a clear understanding of the priorities for joint cooperation: combating fentanyl for the U.S. and controlling the trafficking of high-powered weapons for Mexico. Based on this, both parties appear willing to use their respective national resources to address these issues. For now, both nations have deployed thousands of military personnel to monitor the border, intensified inspections, and reduced the margin for drug trafficking operations between the two countries.

Domestically, Mexico is investigating, dismantling, detaining, and neutralizing activities and actors involved in the production and trafficking of fentanyl and other synthetic drugs. In the U.S., there also appear to be ongoing operations against individuals and cells dedicated to fentanyl, with some arrests, seizures, and convictions.

Regarding weapons, a balanced commitment is less clear. Mexico continues operations against criminal



groups, seizing weapons throughout the country, increasing border inspections, and establishing checkpoints. Meanwhile, in the U.S., the level of concern does not seem to be the same. While investigations against specific actors exist, there has yet to be an extraordinary effort to curb the flow of weapons.

Although it is still too early to conclude that the U.S. is not taking action, results should become evident in the short term. U.S. authorities face different challenges compared to Mexico. Containing arm-trafficking requires criminal investigations since, unlike in Mexico, the U.S. does not deploy military forces for surveillance or conduct random inspections of individuals and goods to facilitate seizures and arrests.

Other crimes that affect both nations receive little attention. At this point, the agreement seems focused solely on combating these two criminal activities, despite discussions of a more comprehensive security vision. If the cooperation between President Sheinbaum and Trump were to expand, in the coming months, we could see operations targeting other transnational crimes such as child sexual exploitation, smuggling and counterfeiting of goods, human trafficking, cybercrime, scams, fraud, and extortion.

Although little is known about the ongoing agreements, we do know that high-level meetings between officials from both nations will soon begin. These meetings are expected to facilitate the exchange of information and data, prosecutable and non-prosecutable intelligence, and the possible creation of joint investigation and operational teams between civilian and military institutions in both countries. This will undoubtedly yield positive results in containing fentanyl trafficking and the smuggling of high-powered weapons in the short and medium term—at least until political priorities change in either nation.

For this reason, public officials from Mexico and the U.S.—even if it means confronting their own

Strategic recommendation

Although the current moment may not seem ideal given President Trump's agenda, it could still present an opportunity for the Mexican government to proactively propose the initiation of bilateral efforts aimed at creating an intergovernmental security organization. Such an institution would enable a shift in narrative and help break away from the current frameworks that negatively impact the security of both nations and their communities.



political class—must push forward the creation of a stable intergovernmental instrument, independent of political shifts and interests. The major security and violence challenges on both sides of the border demand it. For decades, we have attempted to curb drug trafficking without success and have witnessed the increasing sophistication of criminal organizations and transnational illicit markets.

The framework proposed by Presidents Sheinbaum and Trump is not new. While it has helped ease political and electoral agendas, it has had little impact on reducing criminal activities. Although there is still not enough information about the specific instruments that will be agreed upon, it would be beneficial for both leaders to think beyond the current circumstances and propose a stable mechanism for bilateral coordination and cooperation to contain and investigate at least a dozen transnational crimes.

Last call

Last week, U.S. Vice President Vance attended the Munich Security Conference to discuss security issues and the transatlantic relationship between his country and Europe. The first surprise was his statement that mass migrations represent the most significant security crisis today. The second was his emphasis on preserving values, democracy, and freedom of expression as the main challenges facing Europe. Regarding other topics, he made few comments: on Ukraine, he mentioned that an agreement would be reached, and concerning other global challenges, he merely stated that Europe must take responsibility for its own security and defense, allowing the U.S. to focus on other regions of the world that are at risk.

Fernando Jiménez Sánchez

Is a CIS Strategic Thought collaborator; SECIHTI-El Colegio de Jalisco researcher; El Colegio de Jalisco Interinstitutional Working Group on Metropolitan Security, GTISM, coordinator; Citizen Security Council of Jalisco Advisor; SNII-1 and University Seminar on Studies on Democracy, Defense, Dimensions of Security and Intelligence of the UNAM member. He is a Strategic Report Podcast commentator and holds a PhD from the Carlos III University of Madrid, a Master's degree from the Rey Juan Carlos University and a Political Scientist from the UNAM.



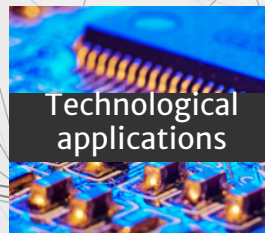
@fjimsan

Listen to Strategic Report





CIS Strategic Thinking services



CIS PENSAMIENTO ESTRATÉGICO AUTHORIZES THE DISTRIBUTION AND/OR DISSEMINATION OF ALL OR PART OF THIS DOCUMENT. WE APPRECIATE THAT CREDITS BE GIVEN TO THE COMPANY, THE AUTHORS AND CO-AUTHORS.