

Who Is Behind the Mexican Drug Cartels?

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President Donald Trump has declared that the “Drug Cartels” in Mexico are terrorists, intimating that America should wage a new “war on terrorism” in Mexico modelled on America’s counter-terrorism initiative in the Middle East against Al Qaeda.

What do the Mexican Drug Cartels and Al Qaeda have in common? They are covertly supported by US intelligence. They serve US interests.

Below Dean Henderson’s carefully researched article on the Mexican Drug Cartels first published in 2013.

By the time George W. Bush moved into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in 2001, his Harken Energy scam had been brushed under the dirty rug that passes for history. But his allegiance to Big Banking and the Houston oil giants never wavered.

Bush stressed the importance of Latin America throughout his campaign and touted his Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), an extension of the [North American Free Trade Agreement](#) (NAFTA), signed with Canada and Mexico in the 1990’s. FTAA would create a free trade zone from the Yukon to Tierra del Fuego and would be a [Big Oil](#) bonanza. One of its biggest promoters was Bechtel.

Oil began frequenting the offices of PEMEX – the Mexican national oil company. Thomas Clines’ and Ted Shackley’s Houston-based API Distributors sold PEMEX oil drilling equipment and gathered intelligence for [Big Oil](#). Deals proceeded, including one that called for PEMEX to keep the [US Strategic Petroleum Reserve](#) fully stocked. Exxon bought Mexico’s *Compania General de Lubricantes* in 1991. [1]

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Bush met with Mexican President Vicente Fox, former Coca-Cola executive who owns a vast commercial farming empire, before meeting any other foreign head of state. While Bush touted FTAA, Fox hyped his Puebla to Panama free trade scheme for Central America. Key to the latter plan is construction of a dry canal across the Tehauntepec Isthmus from the oil port of Coatzacoalas on the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific port of Salina Cruz. Financial backing for the plan is pledged by the World Bank, World Trade Organization and US

Treasury Department. [2]

The plan would set up *maquiladoras* in southern Mexico, just as Fox's predecessor Ernesto Zedillo had done along the US-Mexican border following the 1995 implementation of NAFTA. Increasing worker demands and labor unrest at the northern plants had multinationals looking south. Wages there averaged 40% less and neighboring Guatemala could supply even cheaper labor. By the end of 2002, ninety-two [maquiladoras](#) set up shop in southern Mexico. The new canal would be their shipping outlet.

Another part of Puebla to Panama calls for [Big Oil](#) to move into the southern Mexico states of Tabasco and Chiapas, where a unique geological formation holds promising oil reserves and vast reserves of natural gas. Funding is forthcoming for oil and gas pipelines which will service the petro-expansion. Monsanto covets the incredible biodiversity of Chiapas in their quest to monopolize the world's genetic resources. [3]

In 1993 indigenous revolutionaries calling themselves [Emiliano Zapata Liberacion Nacional](#) (EZLN) launched a brief offensive on the Chiapas capital of San Cristobal de las Casas. The *Zapatistas* held the town for a short while, then retreated into the Lacondon jungle where their mysterious leader Subcomandante Marcos launched a sophisticated internet campaign blasting globalization and revealing the history of genocide which Indians throughout Mexico have suffered at the hands of the Mexican government, hacienda oligarchs and multinational corporations.

The *Zapatistas* took their name from [Emiliano Zapata](#), who in the early 20th century launched guerrilla attacks against Four Horsemen oil facilities in Veracruz. Zapata's small band of revolutionaries gained massive public support, leading to the nationalization of the Mexican oil industry by President Lazaro Cardenas. The *Zapatistas* resurrected the ghost of Emiliano Zapata and stood squarely in the path of [Big Oil](#) plans to seize Chiapas' extensive oil and gas reserves.

Chase Manhattan Bank's Mexico policy expert Riordan Roett penned a report advocating martial law in Mexico to attract foreign investors. Roett singled out both the *Zapatistas* and democracy as obstacles, arguing that the Mexican government must, "eliminate the opposition in Chiapas and should consider carefully whether or not to allow opposition victories (even) if won fairly at the ballot box". [4]

President Ernesto Zedillo heeded the Chase Manhattan call, sending 70,000 Mexican Army troops – one-third of *all* Mexican forces – into Chiapas, establishing *de facto* martial law in the region.

In December 1997 fifty-six Totil Indians were gunned down by paramilitaries trained by the Mexican Army at Atial refugee camp near Ocosingo. The massacre was part of a counterinsurgency program called the Chiapas Strategy Plan, which aimed to foment trouble among indigenous peoples. The divide and conquer campaign was supervised by General Mario Ramon Castillo, *magna cum laude* graduate in Counterinsurgency from the US Center for Special Forces at Fort Bragg. [5]

In 2001, with atrocities in Chiapas mounting, the *Zapatistas* led a caravan to Mexico City that grew bigger each kilometer. They arrived 10,000 strong to cheering throngs of supporters. Marcos and other *Zapatista* leaders addressed an audience of over 100,000 people and lobbied (in ski masks) Mexico's Congress. They demanded implementation of

the 1996 [San Andres Accords](#), which promised to redress their grievances with the Mexican government. One section known as the Autonomy Provisions gives tribes control over natural resources in their region, directly threatening Four Horsemen control over Chiapas oil and gas reserves.

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Marcos insisted,

"There will be no plan, nor project, by anyone, that does not take us into account. No Puebla-Panama Plan, no Trans-Isthmus Project, nor anything else that means the sale or destruction of the indigenous peoples' home. I am going to repeat this so they can hear us all the way in Cancun."

Marcos was referring to a gathering of the [World Economic Forum](#) in Cancun, where Vicente Fox was glad-handing the *Illuminati* banking elite in hopes of obtaining funding for his grand scheme. At least one Mexican governor said Marcos' message had been heard loud and clear at the Mexican mega-resort - built for North American tourists at the expense of thousands of Yucatan peasants, who were sent packing when the gaudy Cancun resort was built. The Governor explained, "Without being present, Marcos set the framework for the meeting...and the topics of Chiapas and the EZLN passed like ghosts through the hallways of the Westin Regency Hotel". [6]

Albanian President Sali Berisha may have been IMF darling of Europe, but he couldn't hold a candle to Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Elected in 1988 as candidate of the [Institutional Revolutionary Party \(PRI\)](#) - which until the election of National Action Party (PAN) President Fox in 2000, held a four decade monopoly over the Mexican Presidency - Salinas lasted only one term. But in those six years he overturned decades of safeguards which Mexico had enacted to protect its national sovereignty from multinational prospectors. And the people of Mexico were poorer for it.

Salinas came to power promising to raise the standard of living in Mexico and modernize the country. But he was a tramp for international capital. His name became synonymous with corruption in the collective mind of Mexico. Salinas was implicated in the biggest drug trafficking scandal in Mexican history. He was kicked out of Mexico and fled to the US, where he found a sympathetic crowd and a job as a member of the board of Dow Jones & Company, which publishes the *Wall Street Journal* and *Barron's*.

Salinas wasn't the first Mexican narco-dictator. President Miguel Aleman allowed JFK's Perminex assassins to be trained in Mexico. Today he owns a big chunk of Acapulco, where the Canadian Pacific coca-express manages his hotel interests. Aleman made a living trafficking in drugs through his TAMSA Group, Mexico's fifth largest conglomerate. The director of TAMSA is Bruno Pagliai, cousin of Princess Beatrice of the Italian House of Savoy.

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Aleman's personal banker was Max Schein of *Banco Mercantil de Mexico*, whose correspondent bank is Israel's Bank Leumi – subsidiary of Silver Triangle power broker Barclays and financier of the Asquelon diamond trade. Schein also chairs *Sociedad Technion de Mexico*, a branch of the Israel Technician Society (ITS), which serves as Mossad's overseas scientific espionage arm. British MI6 operative and Kennedy assassin Colonel Louis Mortimer Bloomfield is an ITS board member. [7]

Aleman aide Gonzalo Santos was a business partner of Alberto Sicilia Falcon, a Bay of Pigs and CIA Operation 40 veteran who was trained at Fort Jackson. Falcon worked with Ted Shackley's Trak II program in Chile, then moved to Mexico where he created an overnight empire moving Sinoalese heroin. Business partners included Chicago mob boss Sam Giancana. "Big Sam" fled to Mexico when the heat came down in the US, but Mexico agreed to extradite him to France. Giancana was nabbed during a Houston stopover and murdered. The Mexican Interior Ministry says the CIA killed him. [8]

The DEA sent agent Enrique Camarena and an elite special narcotics force to Mexico to help the government try to apprehend Sicilia Falcon. Camarena was tortured and killed by Enterprise *contra* arms supplier/CIA Laos veteran Raphael Quintero when he got too close to Falcon.

When Falcon was arrested in 1975 he said he was working for the CIA and that part of his drug proceeds went to fund Latin American counter-revolutionary groups. FBI documents revealed that the CIA had been trying to destabilize the government of Mexican President Luis Echevarria due to his nationalistic stance towards an IMF plan to privatize PEMEX on behalf of [Big Oil](#). [9]



Salinas moved to dismember PEMEX, a symbol of Mexican pride since President Lazaro Cardenas, heeding the battle cry of Zapata, expropriated the assets of the Four Horsemen in 1938. [10] The Gulf Coast city where PEMEX has its largest operations is named Lazaro Cardenas.

In 1992 Jose Manzo, chief of the Department of Liquid Gas & Polymers for the PEMEX international branch PMI, charged company officials with doing "damage to the natural resources" after PMI entered into shady contracts with Lyondell Petroleum, an [ARCO](#) subsidiary which is now part of [BP Amoco](#). [11] Salinas ignored Manzo, instead ordering the

arrest of numerous leaders of the Oil & Petrochemical Workers Union (OPWU), who also saw a [Four Horsemen](#) takeover of PEMEX looming. In 1989 OPWU leaders, including union head Joaquin Hernandez, were arrested at the Salina Cruz PEMEX refinery when they protested its privatization.

The Salinas family secrets began to see daylight following the March 23, 1994 assassination of PRI front-runner Luis Colosio at a PRI political rally in Tijuana. Colosio had made overtures to the *Zapatistas* and railed against the privatization of Mexico's economy over which Salinas presided. He bucked the PRI old guard to emerge as front-runner through sheer charisma, but his increasingly populist rhetoric made the PRI dinosaurs nervous.

Baja State's PRI Governor Xicotencatl Leyva was forced from office after it was found that he had opened up a Tijuana corridor for the Sinaloa-based Arrellano Felix drug cartel, which had taken over the Sicilia Falcon network. Leyva's expulsion was ordered by the Colosio reformist faction of PRI, which promised to clamp down on drug cartels.

On the day of his Tijuana rally, Colosio was surrounded by elite PRI bodyguard squadrons TUCAN and *Grupo Omega*. *La Culebra* played on the sound system, its lyrics ringing out, "the snake is going to get you, better move your feet". A shot rang out. Colosio was dead. Vicente Mayoral, a member of TUCAN standing near Colosio, grabbed a 23-year-old mechanic named Mario Aburto and pronounced him the killer. Aburto began screaming that he saw Mayoral pull the trigger. Many in the crowd later corroborated his story.

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Stories were planted in the Mexican media that Aburto had connections with the *Zapatistas*. Salinas used the rumors to order a massive military deployment into Chiapas. President Clinton extended a \$6.5 billion credit line to Salinas within 24 hours of the assassination. Tijuana Police Chief Federico Benitez took charge of the investigation. Within days he was gunned down at Tijuana's Airport, less than five minutes from where Colosio had been shot.

Years later Special Prosecutor Miguel Montes revealed the final results of his investigation. He found that four members of TUCAN, including Vicente Mayoral, were involved in the Colosio assassination. TUCAN boss and PRI Security Chief Rodolfo Rivapalacios was implicated – described by the report as a, "well-known torturer". He had received a check from deposed PRI Baja Governor Leyva on the morning of the assassination. Montes' report stated that CISEN, a top-secret Mexican Interior Department police unit with CIA ties, may have been involved. Rivapalacios, the only official to get jail time, was released from prison after serving only one month. [12]



Ernesto Zedillo – another in a line of IMF subordinates – became the new PRI front-runner. Zedillo faced a serious challenge from Cuahtemoc Cardenas of the leftist [Democratic Revolutionary Party \(PRD\)](#), which had the support of the oil unions and has long been the party of Mexican workers and peasants.

The 1994 Presidential vote was close, but from their windowless *Barranca del Muerto* (Ravine of Death) vote-counting dungeon in Mexico City, the PRI made sure Zedillo emerged victorious. According to the Mexican business newspaper *El Financiero*, the PRI complex has two separate vote-count systems on its Unisys mainframe computer. One system reflects the actual vote count. The other is automatically stacked in favor of the PRI candidate. In both 1988 and 1994 electoral fraud was rampant.

The PRI launched campaigns of intimidation during both elections. Cardenas had run against Carlos Salinas in 1988. During both campaigns his chief aides were gunned down just prior to the elections. In 1994 an election monitoring group called the Civil Alliance had its members terrorized.

Member Amando Avendano was invited to a PRI function in Tuxla Gutierrez. *En route* with three other members, his car was run off the road by a 75-ton Kenworth truck. His three passengers died. Avendano was in a coma for six months. The driver of the truck left the scene and was never found. Mexican police declared the ordeal an accident. PRD President Munoz Ledos' son was kidnapped prior to the 1994 election and a student leader whose group supported Cardenas was kidnapped and tortured. [13] PRI candidate Zedillo narrowly won the 1994 election.

In 1995, just as NAFTA kicked in, the Mexican peso was severely devalued making *maquiladora* labor even cheaper for multinational corporations. Mexico's banking system was privatized. State-run industries were given away to US multinationals in return for debt relief from international bankers through a flurry of crooked debt-equity swaps.

In December 1994 the Mexican stock market crashed, precipitating the Mexican debt crisis. In 1995, just as NAFTA kicked in, the Mexican *peso* was severely devalued making *maquiladora* labor even cheaper for multinational corporations. Mexico's banking system was privatized. State-run industries were given away to US multinationals in return for debt relief from international bankers through a flurry of crooked debt-equity swaps.

President Jose Lopez Portillo had nationalized Mexico's banking system in 1982, citing the international bankers' betrayal of Mexico through encouragement of flight capital from the Mexican elite. Lopez Portillo stated that the IMF remedy was to "deprive the patient of food".

The international bankers received a \$50 million front-end fee just for sitting down to negotiate with debt-ridden Mexico. JP Morgan Chase and Citibank handled the debt negotiations, led by Citibank insider William Rhodes. The US Treasury kicked in \$50 billion to get the bankers off the hook, allowing them to pass their Mexican losses on to US taxpayers, while taking ownership of Mexican companies. One part of the secret deal ensured the Four Horsemen a 15% discount on all future Mexican crude oil purchases. [14]

[PEMEX](#) was looted and the money stashed away in those same US banks. One debt-equity swap saw the Rockefeller-controlled ASARCO, one of the biggest mining companies in the world and long-time Chase client, awarded the Mexican National Cement Company and other state mineral assets in exchange for a debt write-off from Chase.

ASARCO has a lead mining subsidiary in Peru known as Southern Peru Copper. During the 1980's there were allegations in the Montana press that Southern Peru was shuttling more than just lead to ASARCO's East Helena, MT lead smelter. Lead ore is a favorite of drug smugglers due to its opaque nature. Workers at ASARCO's Hayden and Globe, Arizona smelters claim to have witnessed cocaine being processed there. Both smelters and two more at Morenci, AZ and Silver City, NM sit on the 33rd parallel.

The Mexican people, who wanted to believe Salinas' promises of better days, were now more disillusioned than ever. The now-bankrupt middle class joined the protests of the poor, creating the radical 1 million strong *Barzonistas*. JP Morgan and World Bank President Lewis Preston may not have known he was echoing the comments of Mexican nationalist Jose Lopez-Portillo when he said of the 1990's Mexican debt negotiations, "Deprivation of the population they were prepared to do."

The Mexican people's bout with disillusionment had only just begun. The economy headed further south in 1999 with the US stock market crash. And Colosio's assassination was just the tip of the iceberg in exposing PRI ties to the drug trade. In the mid 1980s forty-five Mexican police officers were given lie detector tests on the question, "Did you ever take money from narco-traffickers". Not one passed.

In 1991 Mexican soldiers in the oil city of Veracruz gunned down local police who were trying to stop a plane from refueling. Its cargo was Columbian cocaine. Mexico's police and military were infamous for their corruption, but when the PRI's #2 official Jose Ruiz Massieu was gunned down in 1995 the white powder trail led all the way to the door of the President.

Brother Raul and His Bankers

After a lengthy investigation it was found that Ruiz' death was ordered by Raul Salinas - brother of President Carlos Salinas. Raul was laundering drug money through Texas Commerce Bank, where he had over \$20 million on deposit. Texas Commerce had branches all along the US/Mexico border. Major stockholders included James Baker and Robert Mosbacher. Jeb Bush worked at the bank. Board members included Mosbacher and Warren Commission goon/President Gerald Ford.

In 1993 Chemical Bank bought Texas Commerce. Dick Cheney joined Exxon's Lawrence Rawl, Mobil's Hartwell Gardner, Conoco's Constantine Nicandros and Amerada Hess' John Hess on Chemical Bank's board. Cheney also joined the board at Morgan Stanley, which made a bundle on the Mexican debt scam. There he joined Mobil Chair Allen Murray, who also sat on the board at Chase Manhattan. In 1993 Chemical Bank boasted \$150 billion in

assets. Then it was swallowed up by Chase Manhattan. The old Texas Commerce signs lining the Mexican border now read simply, “Chase”.

According to a November 1, 1996 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, Citibank was also laundering some of Raul’s drug proceeds. Vice-President Amy Elliot received over \$80 million in Citibank deposits from Salinas. Elliot worked in Citibank’s private banking department, which specializes in helping the global elite set up offshore corporations and other instruments to avoid paying taxes. [15]

Elliot testified during a House of Representatives inquiry that the bank hadn’t followed a “prudent path” in checking out the source of Salinas’ loot. Citibank retained former Clinton Whitewater counsel Robert Fiske. Neither Elliot nor Citibank were charged.

Swiss investigators found that Raul Salinas had over \$100 million in that country’s banks which they believed were drug profits. They found thirteen accounts worth \$123 million in Geneva, Bern, London, New York, Houston and Hamburg. [16] French authorities questioned Enrique Salinas, brother of Raul and Carlos, for stashing another \$120 million in drug proceeds in French banks. As the Salinas investigation widened bankers ran for cover.

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Aptly-named fugitive banker Carlos Cabal, who financed the political career of PRI Tabasco State Governor and [Big Oil](#) friend, Roberto Madrazo, controlled *Banco Union* and *Banca Cremi*. He was chairman of Fresh Del Monte Produce. [17] In 1994 drug trafficker Rogoberto Gaxiola testified that he moved millions through international banks, including Chase Manhattan.

In October 1996 a series of drug money deposits were routed from *Banca Serfin*, Mexico’s third largest bank, through Cabal’s *Banco Union* to Chase Manhattan in New York. Chase forwarded the cash to Mercury Bank & Trust in the Cayman Islands, a subsidiary of Mexico’s largest bank *Bancomer*, itself a subsidiary of JP Morgan Chase. [18] Mexico’s second largest bank *Banamex* is owned by HSBC.

In 1997 Mexican Drug Czar [General Jose Gutierrez](#) was indicted for aiding the Gulf Cartel, run by Monterrey business tycoon Amado Carrillo. A month earlier Gutierrez’ US counterpart in the war on drugs, General Barry McCafferty, who earlier headed the US Southern Command in drug-ridden Panama, was in Mexico saluting Gutierrez for his attack on the Mexican drug trade. DEA gave Gutierrez full access to its database despite the fact that files detailed his involvement with drug traffickers and cover-ups. [19]

CIA had access to those same files and also gave the general a clean bill of health. The day he was indicted, an arrest warrant for Amado Carrillo was mysteriously lifted. The US certified Mexico as a drug war partner and one day later Carrillo’s bagman – Monterrey business tycoon Humberto Garcia – disappeared from Mexico’s National Anti-Drug Institute where he was being held. [20] Garcia’s brother Juan ended up in a Houston jail on drug trafficking charges. Carrillo mysteriously died in 1997 after undergoing plastic surgery. But

the Mexican media would not let the scandal die.

Proceso did an investigation of the Garcia brothers and found extensive business ties to the Salinas family going back decades. The magazine implicated the entire Salinas family in the Mexican drug trade, revealing their long-standing ties to Columbia's drug cartels.

Mexican authorities were forced to issue a narcotics warrant for Mexican telecommunications billionaire Carlos Peralta, whose [Grupo Iusacell](#) conglomerate is one of Mexico's largest. Peralta had close ties to the Salinas family, once loaning Raul \$50 million without even asking for a receipt.

In November 2002 the highest Mexican military court – the Council of War – convicted two high-ranking generals of working with the Amado Carrillo syndicate. General Francisco Quiros and Brigadier General Arturo Acosta were accused of using military aircraft to transport cocaine. [21]

US authorities were now forced to move. They seized \$9 million from a Texas Commerce account held by Mexico's top drug prosecutor and PRI insider Mario Ruiz Massieu. Ruiz had spearheaded the cover up of the involvement of fellow Texas Commerce Bank client Raul Salinas in ordering his brother Jose's death. Just before US authorities seized his money, Ruiz had received \$1 million and five luxury cars as hush money from Gulf Cartel boss Amado Carrillo. Someone in the US government had to have tipped Carrillo off that Ruiz was about to go down. Initially, a US magistrate refused to extradite Ruiz, who was hiding in the US. [22]

When he finally appeared in a Mexican courtroom the cartel hush money had no effect. Apparently repentant over his brother's death, Ruiz sang. His testimony led to the arrest of Raul Salinas and the eviction of Carlos Salinas from Mexico in 1997.

At memorial services for seventeen campesinos massacred by Guerrero State Police in Coyuca de Benitez, the [Ejercito Popular Revolucionario \(EPR\)](#), another group of armed leftists in Guerrero state; accused the Mexican government, military and oligarchy of running the Mexican drug trade. The EPR also stated that the recent replacement of civil police by federal troops on the streets of Mexico City is a prelude to martial law in the country. [23]

Prior to the Mexican Presidential Elections of June 2006, PRD Candidate and Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador led all polls. But the *Barranca del Muerte* dungeon worked its magic. After a three day delay PRI Candidate Felipe Calderon was declared the winner. Leftist protests sparked up across Mexico as Obrador refused to accept the results. With EPR and *Zapatista* guerrillas prepared to die to protect the oil and natural gas that is their birthright from the onrushing Four Horsemen, the Guerrero revolutionaries appeared to have it right on both accounts.

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[Dean Henderson](#) is the author of four books: [Big Oil & Their Bankers in the Persian Gulf: Four Horsemen, Eight Families & Their Global Intelligence, Narcotics & Terror Network](#), [The Grateful Unrich: Revolution in 50 Countries](#), [Stickin' it to the Matrix](#) and [Das Kartell der](#)

Federal Reserve.

Notes

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