

US military chief backs counter-insurgency for Mexico

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, March 07, 2009

[Reuters](#) 7 March 2009

Region: [Latin America & Caribbean](#)

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. military is ready to help Mexico in its deadly war against drug cartels with some of the same counter-insurgency tactics used against militant networks in Iraq and Afghanistan, the top U.S. military officer said on Friday.

Navy Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, also said the Defense Department was moving quickly to provide the Mexican military with equipment, including helicopters, under a \$1.4 billion U.S. aid initiative.

"They have an urgent need. We all have a sense of urgency about this. And so we're all going to push pretty hard to deliver that capability as rapidly as possible," Mullen told reporters in a conference call as he returned from his first official visit to Mexico as Joint Chiefs chairman.

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Mexico's bloodiest drug war city is Ciudad Juarez, across the border from El Paso, Texas, where the Mexican government this week sent hundreds of heavily armed soldiers to take over anti-drug efforts from police tainted by corruption and links to drug traffickers.

Mullen, who visited Mexico on Friday as part of a five-nation Latin American tour, said the U.S. military is already providing some intelligence support to Mexico. He gave no specifics.

In talks with top Mexican defense and military officials, he said he emphasized the Pentagon's readiness to provide new intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance help, such as unmanned drones to spy on armed drug gangs, especially along the U.S. border.

"They need intelligence support, capabilities and tactics that have evolved for us in our fight against networks in the terrorist world," Mullen said. "There are an awful lot of similarities."

He said the Mexican leadership is taking steps to eliminate problems posed by official corruption that could compromise counter-narcotics efforts.

"Best I can tell, the leadership in Mexico is aware of the problem and is addressing it," Mullen said. "I haven't seen anything on the military side at this point that would indicate that that's a limiting factor."

The admiral said he and his Mexican hosts did not discuss the possibility of placing U.S.

troops on the U.S.-Mexican border, an idea suggested by Texas Gov. Rick Perry.

He also visited Brazil, Peru, Chile and Colombia.

(Reporting by David Morgan, editing by Anthony Boadle)

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