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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 MEXICO 000083

SIPDIS
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EO 12958 DECL: 2020/01/29
TAGS PGOV, PREL, PHUM, SNAR, KCRM, MX
SUBJECT: Scen setter for the Opening of the Defense Bilateral Working
Group, Washington, D.C., February 1
DERIVED FROM: DSCG 05-1 B, D

Classified Secret.

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Summary: The inauguration of the Defense Bilateral Working Group (DBWG) on February 1 comes at a key moment in our efforts to deepen our bilate
Summary

[¶2.](#) (SBU) The DBWG is an important component of our overall bilateral Merida strategy for 2010. We ended 2009 with an unprecedented commitment from the M
Political and Economic Context

[¶3.](#) (SBU) It is a challenging moment to address some of the institutional weaknesses that dot the Mexican political landscape and which periodically impe

[¶4.](#) (SBU) Meanwhile, the opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) is in the ascendancy, cautiously managing its illusory unity in an effort to
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strategy best described as political pragmatism, PRI insiders indicate that the party is unlikely to support any major reform efforts over the next severa

Security Challenges

[¶5.](#) (C) Calderon has aggressively attacked Mexico's drug trafficking organizations but has struggled with an unwieldy and uncoordinated interagency and

[¶6.](#) (S) The failure to reduce violence has focused attention on the military's perceived failures and led to a major course change in January to switch

[¶7.](#) (C) Below the surface of military professionalism, there is also considerable tension between SEDENA and SEMAR. SEMAR succeeded in the take down of A
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[¶8.](#) (C) The DBWG is just one mechanism for addressing the challenge of modernization. SEDENA's shortfalls are at times quite noticeable and serve for d

[¶9.](#) (C) Currently, the military is the lightning rod for criticism of the Calderon Administration's security policies. We are having some success in i

[¶10.](#) (C) Military surges that are not coordinated with local city officials and civilian law enforcement, particularly local prosecutors, have not worked

[¶11.](#) (SBU) SEDENA lacks arrest authority and is incapable of processing information and evidence for use in judicial cases. It has taken a serious beatin
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Change on the Horizon

[¶12.](#) (SBU) Calderon has undertaken serious reforms since coming to office, but he also must tread carefully in dealing with the Mexican military. With ou

[¶13.](#) (C) These steps reflect the GOM's willingness to respond to public pressure and to focus on building strong, civilian law enforcement institutions

[¶14.](#) (C) USG assistance has been crucial to these efforts, and we are looking ahead to ensure that we help Mexico build its most key institutions with se

Military Modernization Key

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[¶15.](#) (S) In this context, it is absolutely necessary that we intensify our efforts to encourage modernization of the Mexican military. General Galvan Gal

[¶16.](#) (C) Our engagement on human rights in the DBWG must also be carefully structured. Presentations from the U.S. side on how human rights play into our

[¶17.](#) (C) SEDENA and SEMAR still have a long way to go toward modernization. The DBWG can go a long way in addressing a number of key points. We have seen