



# MEXICO

## Faces Challenges

MAP BY GENE THORP — THE WASHINGTON POST

### INSIDE

**15** Drugs,  
Guns, Reality  
Check

**16** Army  
Takeover Quells  
Violence

**25** Young  
Adults at  
Risk

**32** Unraveling  
Swine Flu  
Mystery

## An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

## A Word About Mexico Faces Challenges

Three times the size of Texas, Mexico is a country of contrasts. From towering mountains to coastal lowlands, tropics to deserts. A country of World Heritage sites preserving a rich history and culture, and leaders in Mexico City moving it into the 21st century. Ranked by the World Bank as the twelfth largest economy in the world, it is experiencing deep recession.

Mexico is a country of large cities of millions and dusty villages. It is a country of cathedrals, wayside shrines and devout respect for life facing drug cartels and violence. It is the latter that was the original focus of the May guide. Following the meeting of presidents Obama and Calderón in Mexico, *Post* photographers, writers and Foreign Service correspondents were covering the violence that has resulted from the flow of U.S.-made firearms south and drugs north of the shared border in a series called Mexico at War: On the Front Lines.

As the epidemic of violence was joined by a flu epidemic, our guide expanded. The articles, commentary and informational graphics follow ten days of *Post* coverage. Read the well-researched articles and watch how the same team handles breaking news. These story strands will continue. We urge teachers to encourage students to continue reading the articles and commentary on the health, economic, policy, cultural and personal impact of these events.

A reminder to *Post* INSIDE program teachers: If you plan to use articles in this guide in the e-Replica format more than three months after their publication date, remember to bookmark them. “Listen to e-Replica” in this guide gives students instruction in using the audio feature of the e-Replica *Post*.



**Lessons:** Mexico, a country with a rich cultural heritage and history, remains closely tied to the U.S. Lessons in economics, global health provisions and international policy are abundant as Mexico confronts the epidemics of drug trafficking, violence and the A/H1N1 virus. For journalism teachers, the coverage of these issues by *The Post* provides lessons in depth reporting and breaking news coverage.

**Level:** Mid to High

**Subjects:** U.S. History, Journalism

**Related Activity:** Economics, World History, Health

### NIE Online Guide

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### Contributing to This Guide:

Jeannine Cotner, Herndon (Va.) Middle School, provided the “Stock Performance” worksheet.

## An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

## Mexico Faces Challenges

*How closely the stories of Mexico and the U.S. are intertwined was evident in Post coverage of drug trafficking across the U.S.-Mexican border and the emergence of the H1N1 strain of the influenza virus. The following suggested activities may be used with the Washington Post articles found in this guide as well as today's Post.*

### Locate Mexico

Use a world map or globe to locate Mexico. Ask students to indicate its location using such terms as "hemisphere," "continent," and geographic relationship to other countries.

A map of Mexico is provided in this guide. Use it to locate places mentioned in news, commentary and other articles.

### Do a Crossword Puzzle

The crossword puzzle, "Shades of Mexico," includes names and words associated with current and historic Mexico. After students have completed the puzzle, teachers could ask students to select four to six words to include in a paragraph about Mexico.

The answers to the puzzle are found at the end of these suggested activities.

### Get Acquainted

Ask students who have lived in Mexico or visited Mexico to share their memories of the people, architecture, food and daily life. Were they only in resorts or did they stay in the city or countryside? Did they eat Mexican foods? Did they see American products?

Read "The Southern Colony," a book review written by a former *Washington Post* Mexico City bureau chief. The author of *In the Shadow of the Giant* presents his view on the Americanization of

Mexico after NAFTA. Discuss the pro and con of its impact on the culture, economy and lifestyle.

### Do Research

To acquaint students with the rich cultural heritage of Mexico and its history, students may be asked to prepare reports on different topics. "Research From A to Z" provides some of the people, events and organizations that may be researched.

To introduce the project, teachers may play a Jeopardy-inspired game to test students' knowledge of Mexico. Areas covered would include:

- Formal name of Mexico (Estados Unidos Mexicanos, United Mexican States)
- Official language (Spanish)
- Geographically largest nation in Latin America (Brazil; 2nd, Argentina; 3rd, Mexico)
- Divides Mexico into temperate and tropical zones (Tropic of Cancer)
- Celebrates defeat of French by General Zaragoza at the Battle of Puebla (Cinco de Mayo)

The research reports could be collected to form a background file on Mexico. As students read articles about Mexico note where facts about history, culture, economics, events and people have been included to provide

## On the Web

[www.explorandomexico.com/about-mexico/5/89/](http://www.explorandomexico.com/about-mexico/5/89/)

### Mexico's World Cultural Heritage Sites

UNESCO preserves cultural identity "of a country rich in natural resources and owners of an architectural, religious and artistic tradition"

[www.ecultura.gob.mx/patrimonio/index.php?lan=2](http://www.ecultura.gob.mx/patrimonio/index.php?lan=2)

### Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes

Links to heritage sites, includes UNESCO Heritage of Humanity, Historical Monuments, Archaeological Zones, museums and cultural tourism (virtual tours).

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mxtoc.html>

### Country Study: Mexico

Library of Congress study includes history, profile and economy

[www.loc.gov/rr/international/hispanic/mexico/mexico.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/hispanic/mexico/mexico.html)

### Portals to the World

Library of Congress resources range from business to culture to history and religion and philosophy

[www.history.com/content/mexico](http://www.history.com/content/mexico)

### The History of Mexico

History Channel highlights, photographs and videos, maps

[www.kidsculturecenter.com/mexico/mexico.htm](http://www.kidsculturecenter.com/mexico/mexico.htm)

### Mexico

Culture (ancient culture, holidays, recipes), resources, events, and Kids Page (images to download).

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_970.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_970.html)

### Mexico

U.S. Dept. of State country information

[www.museohistoriamexicana.org.mx](http://www.museohistoriamexicana.org.mx)

### Museo de Historia Mexicana

In Spanish. Mesoamerican to contemporary Mexico

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perspective on the contemporary story.

**What's the News?**

What characteristics make a story “news”? What factors play into editors’ judgment of what makes an A1 story? The 5 Ws and H — Who, What, Where, When, Why and How — are essential to presenting the details of news. Concepts such as Firsts, Life, Hate, Greed and War may be news. Timeliness, proximity, magnitude, impact on readers and beyond, uniqueness and human interest are factors in defining and determining news and deciding its placement in coverage.

Take a closer look at the changing news coverage of Mexico during ten days in April 2009. *The Washington Post* maintains 15 bureaus for international coverage. Before William Booth became bureau chief in Mexico City, he wrote for science and Style desks of *The Post*. South American correspondent Joshua Partlow is stationed in Rio de Janeiro. Note their bylines.

Reporters in late April covered the impact of drug trafficking. On April 21, “An Army Takeover Quells Violence in Mexico,” was an A1 story. Written by Steve Fainaru and William Booth, it was datelined Ciudad Juarez. On April 22, a World Digest brief reported “Mexican Army to Stay on Streets for Years” in order to stop drug cartel killings. On April 23, Booth reported from Mexico City: “Mexican Drug Cartel Leaves Dire Calling Card.”

On April 25, an A1 story written by *Post* science reporters Rob Stein and David Brown was headlined “Swine Flu Found in Mexican

Outbreak.” They reported: “An unusual strain of swine flu has been detected among victims of a large outbreak of a severe respiratory illness in Mexico, prompting global health officials, fearful of a potential flu pandemic, to scramble yesterday to try to contain the virus.”

On the same day, an A8 story reported that the Pentagon and Homeland Security Department were developing plans to send National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexican border “to expand the U.S. military’s role in the drug war.”

The stories, commentary, maps and graphics in this guide reflect the priority that flu coverage took as numbers of confirmed cases and deaths took place in Mexico and expanded to other countries, including the U.S.

The articles that were selected for inclusion in this guide are presented in order of publication. In addition to discussing the information in them, students could be asked to

- Identify the news judgment indicated in the articles;
- Consider the importance of having experienced reporters in international bureaus;
- Debate the importance of having reporters trained in science and health; for example, *Post* science reporter David Brown is a physician;
- Discuss the unfolding of details about the flu and other parts of the story;
- Consider diction in stories, tone of the articles and use of data;
- Examine the use of maps and other graphics to relate the story;
- Reflect on Mexico’s prominence in the larger story of H1N1 virus.

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**Research From A to Z**

*Explore the history, economy and culture of our neighbor to the south. Select a topic to research.*

Alamo  
 Authentic Labor Front (FAT)  
 Aztec empire  
 Benito Juarez  
 Cinco de Mayo  
 Cortés’s expedition  
 Laura Esquivel  
 Foreign investment since 1900  
 French occupation  
 Frida Kahlo  
 Carlos Fuentes  
 Gadsden Purchase  
 Maximilian I  
 Mayans  
 Mexican-American War  
 Moctezuma II (Montezuma)  
 NAFTA  
 Olmec  
 Narcotics trafficking  
 Pancho Vila  
 Religion  
 Diego Rivera  
 Santa Anna  
 Spanish colonization  
 Sugar, silver, oil and other products  
 Tourism since 1970  
 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo  
 Guadalupe Victoria  
 Women in Mexican revolutions  
 Zapatista

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**Explore Drug Enforcement**

Before reading “An Army Takeover Quells Violence in Mexico,” discuss the reasons for maintaining a civilian police force and for using military police in civilian roles. Locate El Paso and Ciudad Juarez on a map and provide some demographic information.

- Why has Juarez received the distinction of being the “most violent city in Mexico”?
- Give reasons why the activation of the army to take responsibility for civil law has been/not been successful. For example, is a “cockroach effect” an example of success?
- What evidence of civil rights infringement is included in the article?
- Explain why you do/do not agree with the decision of President Calderón.

Not control of illegal immigration, but drug-related violence is the reason given to begin a \$350 million initiative. Read “Plan Would Deploy Guard Near Mexico.” This article reports what is being planned. How does this fulfill one of the missions of a free press?

Discuss the first five paragraphs:

- Who are developing the plans? Why would these two departments work together?
- Who announced this project? Why is this source interesting? (See paragraph 15)
- Who proposed the initiative?
- What does the proposal wording ask for?
- What happens if the proposal monies are not spent by September 2010?

Divide the class into those who support and those who do not agree with the proposal. Give students

time to re-read the article looking for positions and reasons for the different stands taken. Have students on both sides meet to post what they have found.

**Stage a Public Affairs Show**

After doing the above activity, hold a public affairs program. This could be for your class alone or with other history, government and journalism classes as a current events project. Broadcast students could get practice taping the show.

Question: We do/do not need U.S. National Guard troops on the U.S.-Mexican border. Give some of the students placards (include Joy Olson, Gov. Richardson, Adm. Mullen, Ricardo Alday, Sec. of State Clinton, a National Guard trooper, resident of El Paso, President Calderón, President Obama, several reporters). They are to be ready to voice the position and concerns of their assigned individuals. The first five could form a panel to present the issues and their positions. The reporters could interview the others listed.

After hearing the above, open mics for the “studio audience” to ask questions and to state their views.

**Take a Stand**

Review the following words before reading Eugene Robinson’s column: “cartel,” “extort,” “indictment,” “insatiable,” “insurgency,” “narco-state,” “pulverize,” and “Sisyphean.”

Distinguish the purposes of news stories, editorials and columns. Give students “Drugs, Guns and a Reality Check” to read. Eugene Robinson won the 2009 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary. He stated in his remarks after winning that “the

**Mexico in The Post**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/interactives/mexico-at-war/index.html>

**Mexico at War**

*Washington Post* correspondents report from the frontlines as the Mexican government has launched a war against powerful drug traffickers. A series of articles, graphics and multimedia. Links to previous articles on Mexico’s drug war include “An Army Takeover Quells Violence in Mexico: Drug Killings in Juarez Plummet, but Rights Complaints Surge,” “A Conversation with Terry Goddard, Attorney General of Arizona,” and “Mexican Leader Vows to Press Fight Against Cartels.”

**INTERACTIVE MAP**

Shows federal troop presence, main drug-entry states, the flow of cocaine and drug-related deaths since 2007

**MULTIMEDIA****Mexico Drug War**

Life and Death in Ciudad Juarez

[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2005/04/13/LI2005041301527.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2005/04/13/LI2005041301527.html)

**Mexico Travel Stories**

Archives of *Washington Post* Travel section articles. Topics include a search for the ultimate quesadilla, a dance for the ages, learning Spanish by immersion and finding a muse.

[www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/custom/2006/03/31/CU2006033101407.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/custom/2006/03/31/CU2006033101407.html)

**The Immigration Debate**

*Post* coverage of the immigration issue are archived under the main headings of The Washington Region, The Political Debate, and The Border and Beyond. In addition to articles find photos, graphics and maps.

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great thing about a column is that you have a license to feel.”

As students discuss the column, they may consider:

- What is the news peg of the column?
- What is Robinson’s point of view on the topic?
- In what ways does he balance the past with the present?
- How does he organize facts and his opinions?

Ask students to be columnists for a day. Take a stand on one of the ideas presented in this column. These would include American responsibility, the application of the economic principle of supply and demand, legalization of some or all drugs, drug cartels, and violence associated with trafficking.

### Understand Discovery of the H1N1 Virus

Unlike what happens on TV, it takes more than an hour to get test results. Miguel Ángel Lezana, director of the National Center for Epidemiology and Disease Control in Mexico, sent saliva swabs and lung samples to Winnipeg when the laboratory in Mexico City could not identify the new strain found in La Gloria. He waited seven days until May 23 when a conference call from the U.S. and Canada confirmed the previously unknown swine flu virus.

Read the articles in this guide, beginning with the April 25 article, “Swine Flu Found in Mexican Outbreak.” See “What’s News?” (page 4) for some questions to apply to the articles. In what ways does “In Mexico, Young Adults Appear Most at Risk” answer questions about how a city of 20 million and surrounding valley at the epicenter are living with the

threat? What other questions do these two articles answer? What questions remain to be answered?

### Debate a Case Study

“Little Boy at the Center of a Viral Storm” humanizes the story. It also presents some questions of ethics in reporting.

- Why was Édgar Enrique Hernández from La Gloria on the front page of *The Washington Post* on April 29?
- Describe the village that is Édgar’s home.
- Note the verb tense in the lede sentence: “may have helped launch.” Is this a red flag to readers? Does this indicate speculation rather than fact?
- The mother of the five-year-old states “the people are thinking that this was all my son’s fault.” What does this communicate about the impact on the family?
- When we read further into the article what do we learn about the villagers’ concerns?
- What information in the article questions Édgar being singled out for this distinction? Note the fifth paragraph (“the link is far from certain”) to begin discussion.
- Did Joshua Partlow report a story that is circulating? Does he provide factual perspective on the story?
- What understanding of the flu do *Post* readers gain from this article?
- Also reported that day on pages 6 and 7: tools to fight disease, differences in the flu’s severity, educating D.C. area residents to avoid contracting the virus and a Q and A. If you were editor of *The Post*, which story about the flu would you have put on page 1?

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## Flu Resources in *The Post*

[washingtonpost.com/swineflu](http://washingtonpost.com/swineflu)

### Swine Flu

Articles, updates, timeline, multimedia and interactive map to track the spread of swine flu cases locally and worldwide. Resources link to other main sources following the A/H1N1 virus.

### Endemic, Epidemic or Pandemic?

[www.washpost.com/nie](http://www.washpost.com/nie), Lesson Plans, June 1, 2006, Post INSIDE program guide Concerns about a virulent spread of avian flu provide opportunity to explore public health, privacy rights, economic decisions and the Spanish Flu of 1918 that killed more than 50 million people around the world. Stories, commentary and graphics that give perspective, worksheets (“Too Much, Too Little or Just Right?”) that still apply and resources.

### Government’s Role in Health and Economic Decisions

[www.washpost.com/nie](http://www.washpost.com/nie), Manual, Business section

Scroll to page 43 of this section of the online INSIDE program manual for teachers. Three lessons on SARS to focus on public health from the business side: “When Health Concern Interrupts Supply and Demand,” “When Market Economy vs. Traditional Economy vs. Public Safety,” and “When Government and Public Health Face Disease.” Articles (“Bird Flu Upends Industry, Livelihoods in Thailand,” “Fearing SARS, China Begins Mass Killing of Civet Cats”) and study questions.

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**Get Graphic**

Maps and informational graphics are important parts of telling the story. Two infographs are included in this guide. They were published on April 29 and May 3, respectively, after enough information could be verified with reliable sources to produce them.

Discuss the information and design of both. "A Virus With Pandemic Potential" provides information about the flu virus and the H1N1 virus. "Unraveling the Swine Flu Mystery" uses a circle graph to follow the chronology of U.S. cases and CDC work. Is the circle graph more efficient than a timeline to convey the information?

Use information in the articles in this guide and articles in more recent *Post* coverage to create an informational graphic about the H1N1 virus in Mexico and/or other countries.

**Explain Economic Impact**

With a country already in recession, the Mexican government faces many challenges. *The Post* articles on the violence associated with drug trafficking and the April 26 Travel section article on travel in Mexico's wine area highlight existing challenges to tourism.

Read "Swine Flu Outbreak Could Deepen Mexico's Recession." What additional demands on the economy come with the discovery of the H1N1 virus?

Complete "Health Affects the Economy" activity to explore the impact of health and illness on a country's economy. Teachers may wish to review previous bird flu concerns and SARS impact to provide perspective.

"Stock Performance" worksheet is provided to collect data for the Take Stock part of the activity. Dates

have been ghosted so the time period will reflect teachers' assignments.

Teachers may wish to discuss what portion of a company's market is in Mexico and how the total financial picture may be impacted.

Companies respond in order not to lose business or public relations. For example, *The Post* reported in the "ComingandGoing" column on May 3 that "Carnival cruises departing out of Miami substitute Nassau, Belize, Honduras or Key West, Fla., for Cozumel." The company was also offering a generous cancellation policy.

**Contrast Travel Articles**

Two Travel section articles are included. Both focus on travel in Mexico and on food and beverage. The writers are eyewitnesses who live(d) in Mexico as *Washington Post* bureau chiefs. They use description, interviews and facts. The tone in each is very different.

Discuss the details in Roig-Franzia's article that make one want to join him in the market. Why is Nick Gilman an excellent choice to join the quest for the "consummate quesadilla"? Annotate the three paragraphs that describe the culinary experience at Antojitos Doña Celia. Roig-Franzia might have concluded his article here. What do the remaining paragraphs add to the reader's experience and purpose of a travel article?

Students might be asked to write a description of their favorite restaurant and item(s) on the menu. If these are near the school, they might be combined into a guide to good eating in your area.

The April 26 article by William Booth was written before the H1N1 virus was discovered, the Travel section printed before the April 25 public reporting of it, and related to *Post* coverage of the impact of drug trafficking. Since its focus is on wine

and it contains descriptions of the "hot spot in Mexico's drug war" south of Tijuana that must be crossed before getting to the wines of Baja California, teachers may not wish to use this article.

Teachers of older students will find in Booth's travel article reporting on the economic flatline and insight into developing a new tourist attraction and economic base in Mexico. Journalism teachers have an example of balancing the downside and dangers of travel with the benefits.

**Reflect on a Journalist's Job**

At this point, teachers are aware of the diverse topics and types of articles that a reporter, especially one in a foreign bureau will be called upon to write. They may also be asked to take photographs and tape interviews for print and Web coverage.

Select one of *The Post's* Foreign Service reporters to follow. Discuss the topics, sources, travel and depth of research needed to write the articles included in this guide. Follow that reporter's work in print and online ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) for a month. Some of the writers will also appear on television to give reports from the field.

**Listen to Articles**

*The Post* e-Replica edition has an option that allows readers to listen to articles. Use "Listen to e-Replica" instructions to set up audio. This feature is especially helpful for students whose first language is not English, those who need remedial reading work and sight-impaired students.

**Follow Up Stories**

This guide includes news articles, commentary, travel articles, a book

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## An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program



BY MARCO UGARTE — ASSOCIATED PRESS

The attorney general's office says it is unable to disclose how many drug-trafficking suspects remain in custody or whether they have been charged.

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review, maps and graphics. We focused on the ten days from April 21-30. The stories continue.

On May 1, the A1 headline read: "Swine Flu Spreads Across D.C. Region," and on page 8 reporters covered the readiness of states and communities to respond to viral outbreaks, and Booth and Partlow reported how residents in Mexico City are responding.

In *The World* coverage on the same day, Booth and Steve Fainaru ("Mexican Drug Fight Nets 60,000 Suspects") reported the "first public accounting of the government's offensive against Mexico's drug cartels." The photograph accompanying this article showed handcuffed suspects and police all wearing masks — blue surgical masks.

Read *The Washington Post* daily, check online or create an e-Replica alert to follow up on drug enforcement, the H1N1 virus and cultural events taking place in Mexico. ■

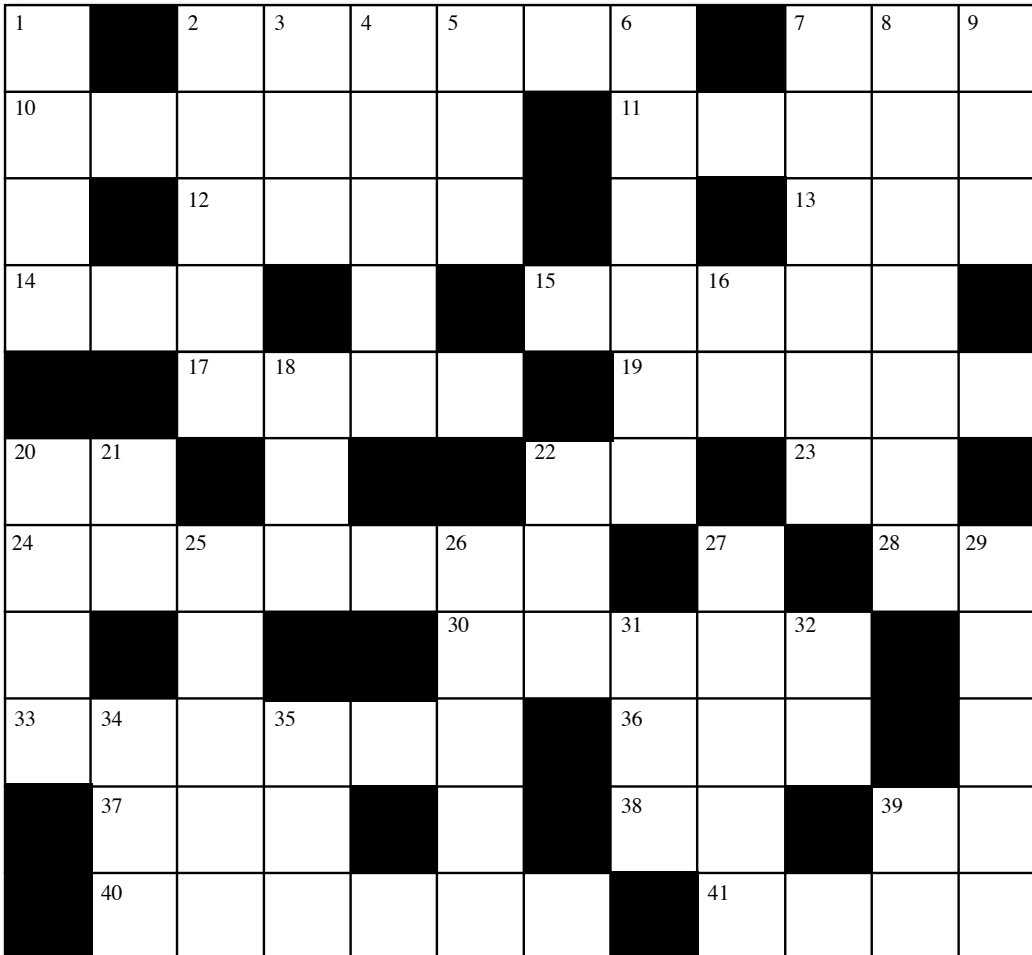
## Puzzle Answers

1	A		2	G	3	R	4	A	5	N	6	D	7	E		8	J	9	A	R
10	B	E	L	I	Z	E					11	L	A	U	R	A				
	L			12	I	O	T	A				P			13	A	R	T		
14	E	N	D			E				15	M	A	D	R	E					
			17	E	T	C	H			19	S	M	E	A	R					
20	S	O			I					22	D	O			23	Z	R			
24	Y	U	C	A	T	A	N			27	E			28	S	M				
	N		A				30	N	U	31	E	V	O			A				
33	C	I	U	D	A	D				36	M	E	X			N				
		37	N	C	I		E			38	U	N		39	A	G				
		40	D	A	M	A	S	K			41	T	A	C	O					



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Shades of Mexico

Many of the terms in this crossword puzzle are related to Estados Unidos Mexicanos.


### ACROSS

1. First letter of the alphabet
2. Rio \_\_\_\_
7. Water kept in a clay \_\_\_\_ stays cooler.
10. One of two countries on Mexico's southern border
11. Author \_\_\_\_ Esquivel
12. Small amount
13. Wood-carved folk \_\_\_\_
14. Opposite of begin
15. Sierra \_\_\_\_, Mexico's principle mountain system
17. To wear away the surface with an acid, art form
19. They \_\_\_\_ on suntan lotion in Cancun.
20. She has never been \_\_\_\_ happy.
22. To take action
23. Zirconium (abbr.)
24. Peninsula in southeastern Mexico
28. Small (abbr.)
30. New in Spanish
33. City in Chihuahua
36. Mexico, briefly
37. National Cancer Institute (acronym)
38. United Nations (acronym)
39. Attorney General, briefly
40. Woven fabric with a pattern
41. Traditional Mexican dish

### DOWN

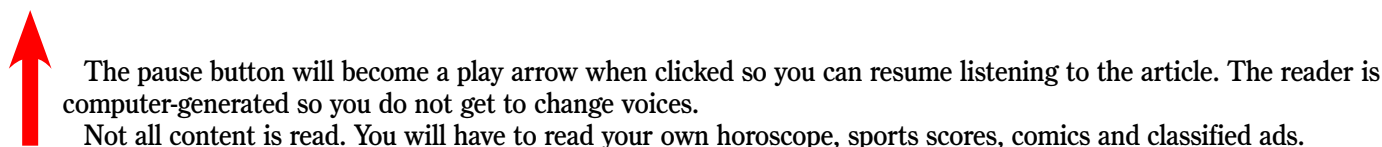
1. Has skill to accomplish something
2. Move smoothly
3. \_\_\_\_ Grande
4. The capital city of the \_\_\_\_ empire was Tenochtitlan-Tlatelco, today's Mexico City
5. National Endowment for the Arts (acronym)
6. American city on the Rio Grande
7. City across the border from El Paso
8. Behind in making a mortgage payment
9. Long-tailed rodent
16. Deutsche Mark (abbr.)
18. Aunt in Tiaxiaco
20. Moving in \_\_\_\_
21. AEI \_\_\_\_
22. Do Not Understand (acronym)
25. River in western Columbia
26. Longest mountain chain
27. A happening
29. Tropical fruit or Spanish fashion label
31. Large flightless bird of Australia
32. Often found in teams
34. Instituto Nacional de Deportes (acronym)
35. Not bright
39. Alternating Current (acronym)

You can do the dishes, polish your shoes, or brush the dog — and read *The Washington Post* at the same time. This is made possible through the e-Replica feature allowing you to have articles read to you.

 Listening to articles requires Windows Media player to be installed with the most recent upgrades (i.e., all Microsoft patches) as this feature utilizes the software already present in Windows to work. Mac users will need Windows Media Player for Mac OS X or Flip4Mac. Please note that for the audio feature to work, the e-Replica issue must have the “smart” navigation features enabled.

The image below is the window that will be activated when Listen is selected. The article read is highlighted both in the thumbnail view as well as within the list of articles on the right.

To pause an article, simply click on the pause button — circled in the image below:



**Map of Mexico** and Southern U.S. Border States

BY GENE THORP — THE WASHINGTON POST

**Location of La Gloria**

THE WASHINGTON POST

**Location of Ciudad Juarez**

BY LARIS KARKLIS — THE WASHINGTON POST



## Health Affects Economy

On May 3, *The Post* Business section looked at seven stocks. The introduction stated:

Worries about swine flu swept through a variety of sectors after the outbreak became public a week ago. Food companies were hit by concerns — later called unwarranted — that the virus could be contracted by eating pork. Hotels and airlines suffered as business travelers and tourists were told to stay home. Some drug companies got a boost because they sell, or are developing, products that counter flu strains.

### Take Stock

Select seven stocks to see how they reflect the market's response to swine flu from April 25 to yesterday.

On a separate sheet graph the data.

1. Carnival (cruise line)
2. Genex Biotechnology
3. Smithfield Foods (North Carolina company whose swine farms are located in Mexico)
4. Airline that services Mexico (you choose)
5. Company that exports fresh fruit and vegetables from Mexico (you choose)
6. Company with hotels in Mexico (you choose)
7. Pharmaceutical company (you choose)

### Mexico as a Case Study

The personal health of citizens and a country's economic health are inter-related. Mexico has no unemployment insurance program; most Mexicans are employed in the service sector. Mexico was already experiencing a recession when news of the discovery of the A/H1N1 virus went public.

1. Agree or disagree with this statement:

Even if Mexico's economy were healthy, widespread illness would have an impact.

2. Underlined are four areas that have been influenced within ten days of the reporting of the new virus.

*Under each, a list of examples has been started. Add two more specific examples to each of the areas.*

#### Exports/Demand for Products Made in Mexico

- Cancellation of pork shipments from Mexico
- 
- 

#### Tourism

- Travel advisories
- Cancellation of cruise ship stops — Name at least two ports:
- 
- 

#### Medical

- Cost of providing medicine to citizens
- Investment in more advanced medical technology
- 
- 

#### Cancellations and Closings

*Add specific examples of each:*

- Arts
- Cinco de Mayo celebration
- Place of employment
- Schools
- Sports
- 
-







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EUGENE ROBINSON

# Drugs, Guns and a Reality Check

It's an indictment of our fact-averse political culture that a statement of the blindingly obvious could sound so revolutionary. "Our insatiable demand for illegal drugs fuels the drug trade," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told reporters on her plane Wednesday as she flew to Mexico for an official visit. "Our inability to prevent weapons from being illegally smuggled across the border ... causes the deaths of police, of soldiers and civilians."

Amazingly, U.S. officials have avoided facing these facts for decades. This is not just an intellectual blind spot but a moral failure, one that has had horrific consequences for Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and other Latin American and Caribbean nations. Clinton deserves high praise for acknowledging that the United States bears "shared responsibility" for the drug-fueled violence sweeping Mexico, which has claimed more than 7,000 lives since the beginning of 2008. But that means we will also share responsibility for the next 7,000 killings as well.

Our long-running "war on drugs," focusing on the supply side of the equation, has been an utter disaster. Domestically, we've locked up hundreds of thousands of street-level dealers, some of whom genuinely deserve to be in prison and some of whom don't. It made no difference. According to a 2007 University of Michigan study, 84 percent of high school seniors nationwide said they could obtain marijuana "fairly easily" or "very easily." The figure for amphetamines was 50 percent; for cocaine, 47 percent; for heroin, 30 percent.

At the same time, we've persisted in a Sisyphean attempt to cut off the drug supply at or near the source. When I was *The Washington Post's* correspondent in South America, I once took a nerve-

racking helicopter ride to visit a U.S.-funded military base in the Upper Huallaga Valley of Peru. It was the place where most of the country's coca — the plant from which cocaine is processed — was being grown, and the valley was crawling with Maoist guerrillas who funded their insurgency with money they extorted from the coca growers and traffickers. Eventually, the coca business was eliminated in the Upper Huallaga. But now it's flourishing in other parts of Peru, and last year authorities there seized a record 30 tons of cocaine — meaning, by rule of thumb, that at least 10 times that much was probably produced and shipped.

In Colombia, I saw how the huge, brutally violent Medellin and Cali cocaine cartels threatened to turn the country into the world's first "narco-state." The Colombian government, again with U.S. assistance, managed to pulverize these sprawling criminal organizations into smaller units, but the business continues to thrive — and to provide most of the cocaine that finds its way to the American market. Last year, Colombian authorities seized 119 tons of cocaine. Money from the drug trade sustains the longest-running leftist insurgency in the hemisphere. Ever inventive, the Colombian traffickers have gone so far as to build their own miniature submarines to smuggle illicit cargo into the United States.

And now Mexico has become the focal point of the drug trade, with its cartels blasting their way to dominance in the business of bringing marijuana,

methamphetamine, cocaine and other drugs to the American market. Violence among drug gangs, not just along the border but throughout the country, has reached crisis levels. The government's strategy is to break up the big cartels, as the Colombians did. But even if authorities succeed, the industry will live on.

In the case of Mexico, there's a complicating factor: This is a two-way problem. While drugs are being moved north across the border, powerful assault weapons — purchased in the United States — are being moved south to arm the cartels' foot soldiers. Clinton's statement about "shared responsibility" recognizes that if we expect Mexico to do something about the flow of drugs, we're obliged to do something about the counterflow of guns.

First, though, let's be honest with ourselves. This whole disruptive, destabilizing enterprise has one purpose, which is to supply the U.S. market with illegal drugs. As long as the demand exists, entrepreneurs will find a way to meet it.

The obvious demand-side solution — legalization — would do more harm than good with some drugs, but maybe not with others. We need to examine all options. It's time to put everything on the table, because all we've accomplished so far is to bring the terrible violence of the drug trade ever closer to home.

— March 27, 2009



**Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at TecMilenio University in Monterrey, Mexico, yesterday.**

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# An Army Takeover Quells Violence in Mexico

## *Drug Killings in Juarez Plummet, but Rights Complaints Surge*

By STEVE FAINARU AND WILLIAM BOOTH  
*Washington Post Foreign Service*

• Originally Published April 21, 2009

CIUDAD JUAREZ, Mexico — A few months ago, the mayor of the most violent city in Mexico would sometimes sleep across the border in El Paso for safety. Now, with the military firmly in control of Ciudad Juarez, an entire day can pass without a single drug-related killing.

Violence has plummeted here since President Felipe Calderón dispatched thousands of soldiers to take over public security, a strategy designed to crush the drug gangs that turned Juarez into a symbol of lawlessness.

In the first two months of this year, 434 people were killed in drug violence in the city, accounting for nearly half of all homicides nationwide. After 5,000 additional troops were sent to Juarez in early March, the number of deaths

dropped to 51 last month. Twenty-two people have died in drug violence so far in April.

The military occupation of Juarez, an industrial city of 1.3 million across the Rio Grande from El Paso, is the most extreme example of Calderón's high-risk strategy of using the army to confront Mexico's powerful drug cartels. Besieged city officials signed an agreement

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BY SARAH VOISIN — THE WASHINGTON POST

**Military police stand outside a Ciudad Juarez bar after a killing thought to be drug-related. President Felipe Calderón sent thousands of soldiers to crush drug gangs in the city.**

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surrendering responsibility for civilian law enforcement to the military.

The Juarez police department is now under the command of a retired three-star general and a dozen top military officers handpicked by Mexico's defense secretary. Soldiers are the cops — they write traffic tickets, investigate domestic disputes, arrest drunks and run every department, including the jail, the training academy and the emergency call center.

More than 10,000 soldiers and federal agents patrol Juarez's gritty streets. Dressed in green camouflage and carrying automatic weapons, they stage raids, detain suspects, and search travelers at the airport and border crossings, assuming unprecedented law enforcement duties.

The steep decline in killings here has been accompanied by a spike in human rights complaints. A Juarez government office created last month to monitor the army's conduct received 170 complaints in its first three weeks, including allegations of illegal detentions and beatings. Last week, the attorney general opened separate investigations into the cases of two men who were killed while allegedly in the army's custody.

"Ciudad Juarez, right now I'd say it's the safest city in Mexico," said Jorge Alberto Berecochea, a former lieutenant colonel in the air force who was called out of retirement last month to run one of the city's six district police stations.

Berecochea and other officials described a "cockroach effect" in which drug traffickers have scattered under the glare of the military. One night last week, he led a patrol through Casas Grandes, a slum where smeared blood and splintered glass still cover the floor of a guard station where a police officer was killed in December by assailants firing AK-47 assault rifles.

Next to the abandoned kiosk, where someone had scrawled "Ha Ha Ha" on



**After 5,000 more troops arrived, the death toll fell to 51 in March from a total of 434 in January and February.**

the facade, young men played basketball on a lighted court while families walked the streets.

"The cartels are basically wiped out here now," Berecochea said. "They're not operating, at least not in Juarez."

The lull in violence may be temporary. On Thursday, a 32-year-old man was killed — shot 10 times in front of his family's house a few hundred yards from the U.S.-Mexico border. Later that night, in a commando-style raid at a popular nightclub, hooded assassins ordered patrons to the floor, then took the manager to the pantry and executed him. On Friday, four more men were slain.

"The surge by the military has made a profound difference. They do serve as a deterrent. Crime is a fraction of what it was. That is the good news," said Tony Payan, an expert on Mexico's drug trade at the University of Texas at El Paso. "The bad news is: What is going to happen when the army returns to the barracks? I think the situation remains very precarious."

Centrally located, with access to U.S. interstates, Ciudad Juarez is the most coveted "plaza" of the Mexican drug trade, which funnels 90 percent of all cocaine entering the United States. Last year, the Mexican news media dubbed it the "city of terror." Headless torsos hung from highway overpasses, severed heads were dumped in the central plaza, and

masked assassins executed prosecutors in broad daylight. The four refrigerated vaults in the city morgue overflowed with unclaimed bodies, some of which were being buried in common graves last week.

In 2008, 863 people died in drug-related violence in Juarez, according to Milenio, a media network that keeps a running total of drug-related violence throughout the country. Chihuahua, the arid northern state where the city is located, had 2,052 killings, or 36 percent of all drug-related homicides in Mexico last year.

"The stakes are very high. We know this," Mayor José Reyes Ferriz said during an interview in his office overlooking the U.S. border. "This is something that has never been tried before in Mexico: to have the army take over the police so completely."

Reyes said Calderón and his drug war cabinet, including Defense Secretary Guillermo Galván Galván, are involved in every major decision regarding security in the city. "They selected the officers. They designed the strategy," Reyes said. He described Juarez as a "national model" for other Mexican cities whose weak and corrupt police forces are useless against the cartels.

Many Juarez residents have greeted the army — and the sudden, surprising calm — as if they have been liberated from a siege.

Julio Salazar, who runs a youth sports program in Casas Grandes, said: "You can't really imagine how it was here before: the violence, people selling drugs out in the open. There isn't so much chaos anymore."

"The violence is pretty much gone," said Agustín Vargas, a thin, 24-year-old soccer player who described himself as a reformed ex-gang member. "There used to be murders all over the place, people shooting. It's changed."

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Calderón sent in the army after the rule of law appeared to break down entirely in Juarez. Local traffickers had succeeded in forcing out the police chief by threatening to kill one of his officers every 48 hours until he resigned.

At the time, Berecochea, 42, had been retired from the Air Force for three years, following a 20-year career. He was living in Pachuca, the capital of the south-central state of Hidalgo, running a company that makes steel blades for cutlery and farm equipment, when he received a phone call summoning him to the army's headquarters in Mexico City.

The army's chief of operations addressed a meeting of about 100 inactive and retired officers. "He told us that it was a very critical situation in Juarez," Berecochea said. "He said it had reached the point where the security of the nation was at stake."

Berecochea had a 2-year-old son. His wife was five months pregnant with their second child. "I could have refused, but what would I tell my kids when they asked me what I had done for Mexico?" he said.

Berecochea, a burly man with thick brown hair, was given a blue police uniform with three gold clover leaves across the shoulder and assigned to run the Aldama district police station in Juarez. Camouflaged soldiers patrol the roof of the building, which was strafed by automatic weapons fire last year. As blue-and-white squad cars and Ford pickups file out of the parking lot, they pass a sign reading: "Be careful. Your family is waiting for you."

While on patrol, Berecochea's men — nine soldiers, some wearing masks, and three uniformed officers — slowly weaved their vehicles through the dark neighborhoods, shining lights into windows and alleys and watching for suspicious activity. At one point, the squad searched a parked car as its owner stood by with several friends.

"Keep your noses clean, boys," said Berecochea, smiling as he walked away.

Calderón's deployment of the military to fight the cartels has dramatically changed the way law enforcement works in Mexico. The army is authorized to make arrests only when a suspect is believed to be in the process of committing a crime.

However, the government has erected a largely secret legal apparatus that allows commanders to conduct raids, arrest suspects and initiate wiretaps after presenting evidence to local prosecutors. The prosecutors, in turn, submit petitions for arrest and search warrants over a secure Web site to a panel of anonymous judges in Mexico City.

"We know [the judges] exist, but they work in a place that is unknown to the public," said Héctor García Rodríguez, a representative of the federal attorney general's office in Juarez. "I don't even know who they are."

According to the attorney general's office, the army detained 1,465 people in Juarez over the past year.

The army is required to immediately turn over detainees to local authorities. But Javier Pérez Chávez, a public defender whose office represents four out of every five suspects arrested by the military, said at least half have reported that they were held for periods of a day or two to more than a week. He said nearly all have reported being beaten while in the army's custody.

"The army has turned Juarez into an occupied city in which all citizens are presumed to be drug traffickers," said Gustavo de la Rosa, the state human rights commissioner.

Last week, Javier Eduardo Rosales, 21, a former X-ray technician, was found beaten to death on a motorcycle trail outside the city. Another man, Sergio Fernández, told Rosales's family that while buying beer, he and Rosales were detained by soldiers, blindfolded and taken to an unknown location, where they were beaten. Fernández said that he and Rosales were doused with gasoline

while a soldier stood by with a match and that they were finally left on a hill about midnight the following day.

Rosales's mother, Margarita Rosales, said Fernández told her that her son was beaten more savagely because he had serpent tattoos that led the army to believe he was a member of Los Aztecas, a local gang whose members serve as enforcers for the Juarez cartel. She denied that her son was a member. Fernández was in an El Paso hospital under protection.

"They are doling out their own brand of justice," said Rosales's aunt, Ana Maria, "and it's the same kind of justice as the people they are supposed to be protecting us against."

The army has denied responsibility for the slaying. A military spokesman said organized criminals have been donning army uniforms and impersonating soldiers to sow mistrust and anger against the armed forces.

The military operation will be evaluated in September, said Reyes, the mayor. He said he hopes a civilian police department will be ready to replace the army and federal police by the end of the year.

The new department is being formed from the graduating classes of cadets moving through the police academy, where all the instructors have been replaced by active or retired military officers.

On a recent afternoon, the cadets were lined up with AR-15 rifles, while a drill instructor shouted at them about the importance of using the safety. When the classes were over, the cadets — 280 young recruits, including 93 women — marched single file into the cafeteria for lunch.

"Without military discipline, none of this will work," said Fernando Oropeza, a retired army captain.

Asked about the prospects of keeping the recruits free of corruption, Oropeza said, "We're working very hard on that challenge." ■

MANUEL ROIG-FRANZIA

# The Southern Colony

When I traveled to Mexico City in 2005 to check out my new digs as *The Washington Post's* bureau chief there, Mexican friends recommended that I shop for groceries at Walmart. Never mind that there was a beautiful, traditional open market offering luscious, tree-ripened mangoes and other delights within walking distance of our house in Coyoacan, one of the city's oldest neighborhoods. Also within walking distance were two Starbucks, as I found out when Mexican sources frequently suggested meeting there. I wanted authentic Mexican experiences; they wanted Frappuccinos.

Joseph Contreras, author of the provocative and highly informative *In the Shadow of the Giant*, discovered much the same. A longtime foreign correspondent who is now a U.N. public information officer in Sudan, Contreras served two tours of duty as *Newsweek's* Mexico City bureau chief. During his first, in the mid-1980s, there was precisely one McDonald's in all of Mexico, he notes. When he returned on a reporting trip in 2000, there were 292.

An seismic event, of course, had occurred in the interim: The North American Free Trade Agreement had taken effect in 1994 and vastly increased commerce between Mexico and its richer northern neighbor. Contreras, perhaps reaching just a bit, asserts that the pact has transformed Mexico into "a de facto economic colony of the United States."

By 2006, when he moved back to Mexico City, Walmart was Mexico's largest private employer. Citigroup owned one of the country's largest banks. About 400,000 Americans had bought second homes in Mexico. And Mexicans, he notes, were slurping Coca-Cola at a higher per capita rate than consumers in any other country, including the United States. "Invaded," he writes. "That single word best captures what is happening to Mexico in the twenty-first century. In varying degrees American fashion, food, phrases, status symbols, social diseases, department stores, tourists, pensioners, religious denominations, and belief in the gospel of free trade have all established firm footholds inside today's Mexico."

The son of Mexican immigrants, who grew up in a Los Angeles suburb, Contreras despairs when Mexican friends order frozen margaritas, "an Americanized travesty of a national treasure." He laments the destruction of the elegant Casino de la Selva hotel in Cuernavaca, which figured prominently in the classic novel *Under the Volcano*, to make room for a Costco.

But he is most troubled that Americanization "has infected" Mexico with "three quintessentially American social diseases": HIV, illegal drug use and obesity. He asserts that Mexican airline workers brought HIV to Mexico from the United States, although he rightly praises Mexican health officials for fostering progressive prevention

strategies that have kept the infection rate among the lowest in the region.

He is less impressed with Mexicans' eating habits, blaming American-style fast food and junk snacks for the fact that more than half of Mexican women between the ages of 18 and 49 are now overweight. At the same time, America's "insatiable demand" for illegal drugs has given rise to cartels responsible for thousands of killings in Mexico each year. Inevitably, some of the drugs headed for the United States stay in Mexico, leading to huge increases in addiction rates and making drug trafficking one of "the nation's top growth industries." "That grim outlook won't improve," he writes, "until Washington either legalizes narcotics such as cocaine and marijuana or undertakes a concerted effort to reduce illegal drug use."

Overall, however, Contreras believes that Americanization has done Mexico more good than harm. He credits U.S. influence with promoting rights for Mexican women and gays, advancing judicial reforms and strengthening the nation's democracy after decades of one-party rule. Still, he worries that the U.S. political establishment will always view Mexico as "a problematic neighbor" and "the international equivalent of an appendage."

— March 29, 2009

*Manuel Roig-Franzia was The Post's Mexico bureau chief from 2005 to 2008 and now writes for the Style section.*

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# Plan Would Deploy Guard Near Mexico

## *\$350 Million Effort Aimed at Drug War*

By MARY BETH SHERIDAN, SPENCER HSU  
AND STEVE FAINARU  
*Washington Post Staff Writers*

• Originally Published April 25, 2009

The Pentagon and Homeland Security Department are developing contingency plans to send National Guard troops to the U.S.-Mexican border under a \$350 million initiative that would expand the U.S. military's role in the drug war, according to Obama administration officials.

The circumstances under which the troops could be deployed have not been determined, the officials said. They said the proposal was designed to give President Obama additional flexibility to respond to drug-related violence that has threatened to spill into the United States from Mexico and to curb southbound smuggling of cash and weapons.

The initiative, which was tucked into the supplemental budget request sent to Congress this month, has raised concerns over what some U.S. officials perceive as an effort by the Pentagon to increase its counternarcotics profile through a large pot of money that comes with few visible requirements.

The broadly worded proposal does not mention troop deployments, stipulating only that the military is to receive up to \$350 million "for counter-narcotics and other activities ... on the United States' border with Mexico."

If the contingency plans go unused, the money would be retained for military operations and maintenance after September 2010, an administration official said.



BY SARAH VOISIN — THE WASHINGTON POST

**Mexican troops check for guns or drugs coming from the United States. A contingency plan is being prepared to give President Obama flexibility to address drug violence and smuggling near the border, officials say.**

The proposal is being closely monitored by the State Department, which administers the \$1.4 billion Merida Initiative, a three-year aid package to fight drug trafficking in Mexico and Central America. The new funding would be nearly as much as the 2009 budget for Merida, and some observers said they fear that the military could use the money to set up a parallel counternarcotics program with little oversight.

"The real question is what happens if this morphs into something else," said a U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

House and Senate committees began

receiving briefings from White House budget staff this past week. Some lawmakers and aides said they were unaware that the funds would be allocated to deploy troops.

"Frankly, I'm baffled that an additional \$350 million has been requested under the defense appropriation," Rep. Nita M. Lowey (D-N.Y.), a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, said Thursday.

Joy Olson, executive director of the Washington Office on Latin America, which promotes democracy and human

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rights in the region, said the request lacks the accountability provisions included in the Merida Initiative, which was passed after more than a year of debate in both countries.

"They may say that this is for the National Guard, but the way it's written, it is really a blank check for the Defense Department to do whatever it wants on counter-drug issues at the border — and it doesn't say which side of the border," Olson said.

The administration did not seek additional funding under Merida because the new assistance is targeted only on the U.S. side of the border, said an administration official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the plan is still being formulated. A second administration official said \$250 million is for the deployment of National Guard troops if they are needed, and the remaining \$100 million would go to protect unaccompanied minors found crossing the border.

The funds are to be available until the end of September 2010. The proposal also authorizes the secretary of defense to transfer up to \$100 million to other federal agencies.

"We wanted to make sure he [Obama] was in a position that, if the facts on the ground warranted it, that he had resources at his disposal to be able to enhance the capacity on the ground through the use of National Guard troops," another administration official said.

The contingency plan to deploy National Guard troops appears to mark a shift for Obama.

More than 10,000 Mexicans have died in drug-related violence since President Felipe Calderón took on the cartels after

taking office in December 2006. Amid indications that the violence could spill into the United States, some officials have intensified calls for Washington to beef up security along the border.

In early March, the president brushed off calls to deploy troops, saying: "I'm not interested in militarizing the border." His comments were echoed by Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said last week while visiting the border region: "There are [no plans] that I am aware of or that I would talk about" to increase military activity.

On Wednesday, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer (R), New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson (D) and Texas Gov. Rick Perry (R) sent a joint letter to the Senate and House leadership requesting additional troops for the four southwestern border states under the National Guard Counterdrug Program.

Expanding the program "provides a good opportunity to minimize perceptions that anyone is militarizing the border by enabling National Guard personnel already familiar with drug trafficking to use their expertise and skills to support the direct services underway by law enforcement," the governors wrote.

The issue is especially sensitive in Mexico, where any perceived threat of military intervention is greeted warily. Mexican officials said they have received assurances that Obama has no immediate plans to send troops to the border.

A spokesman for the Mexican Embassy in Washington, Ricardo Alday, said the Mexican government believes that other U.S. law enforcement agencies "are a more effective tool than National Guardsmen in shutting down

transnational organized crime operating on both sides of our common border."

The Bush administration spent more than \$1 billion to deploy as many as 6,000 Guard troops on the border in Operation Jump Start, which began in 2006 and ended two years later. The focus was stemming the tide of illegal immigration.

This time, the roles of Guard troops probably would be similar, administration officials said.

As before, no U.S. troops will operate in Mexico, the officials said, and any National Guard forces assigned would not engage in domestic U.S. law enforcement, a role that is broadly constrained under a federal law known as the Posse Comitatus Act, Obama aides said.

Guard troops would operate border detection systems, provide communications, analyze intelligence, build roads, and provide air and ground transport, freeing up law enforcement agents to perform other duties, they said.

"It would be mobility. It would be the counternarcotics surveillance work they already do, consistent with existing missions," one official said. "They . . . would not be opening trunks and arresting people."

The official stressed that circumstances that would trigger deployments are still to be determined, that the funding request was intended to preserve the president's flexibility and that it should "by no means be seen as presupposing the use of Department of Defense assets."

The U.S. military and Guard conduct ground and air surveillance along the border, relay data to law enforcement agencies and aid long-standing counternarcotics efforts. ■

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# Swine Flu Found in Mexican Outbreak Illness Raises Alarm Among U.S. Officials

## *Illness Raises Alarm Among U.S. Officials*

BY ROB STEIN AND DAVID BROWN  
*Washington Post Staff Writers*

• Originally Published April 25, 2009

An unusual strain of swine flu has been detected among victims of a large outbreak of a severe respiratory illness in Mexico, prompting global health officials, fearful of a potential flu pandemic, to scramble yesterday to try to contain the virus.

At least 1,004 people have been sickened and at least 68 have died, primarily in the sprawling capital of

Mexico City, triggering officials to close all schools and universities, museums and libraries and to begin screening air travelers for symptoms before they leave the country.

Officials warned millions of residents to stay home, avoid public places and take other protective measures, such as resisting greeting people with handshakes or kisses. Drugstores reported being inundated with customers seeking face masks, and some subway riders were spotted wearing rubber gloves.

"We are very worried," Angelica Padilla, 38, a mother of a 5-year-old girl

and an 8-year-old boy, said in a telephone interview from Mexico City. "This is bad."

The outbreak heightened alarm among health officials in the United States, where at least eight cases of swine flu have been detected along the U.S.-Mexican border, and elsewhere.

"It's alarming and very concerning," said Sari Setiogi, a spokeswoman for the World Health Organization in Geneva, which began an investigation of the cause and scope of the outbreak.

President Obama has been briefed about the illness, spokesman Reid Cherlin said, adding: "The White House is taking the situation seriously and monitoring for any new developments."

The illness appeared to be primarily striking young, healthy adults, a highly unusual pattern that conjured images of the devastating 1918 flu pandemic.

Officials stressed that there were no signs that anything of that scale had begun, but Setiogi said, "This is another reason we are highly concerned," noting that it is the very old and the very young who are usually most vulnerable to common seasonal flu.

The Spanish flu, which circled the world in 1918 and 1919 and killed at least 50 million people, was of the same general subtype, H1N1, as the virus in California and Mexico.

In 1976, a strain of swine flu caused illness in 13 soldiers at Fort Dix in New Jersey, killing one. Fearing a pandemic, the federal government began a mass immunization campaign, but it was



BY DAVID LOPEZ-MILLS — ASSOCIATED PRESS

**People wearing surgical masks enter the general hospital in Mexico City, where the majority of cases of an unusual strain of swine flu have been found among victims of a large respiratory illness outbreak in the country.**

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halted when the virus did not spread and some vaccine recipients developed a rare neurological disorder.

The WHO dispatched a team yesterday from its Washington office to Mexico City to assist authorities, ratcheted up efforts to detect the virus elsewhere and was mobilizing to take other steps if necessary.

"We are preparing for rapid containment to prevent this outbreak from spreading further," Setiogi said.

Canadian officials confirmed that 18 of 51 specimens it received from Mexico were swine flu, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta confirmed that seven of 14 samples it received were also the unusual swine flu. A preliminary genetic analysis indicated that the Mexican samples matched those taken this week from people in Southern California and Texas.

An earlier analysis from the first seven U.S. cases found that the virus was a never-before-seen hybrid of North American and Eurasian swine flu, a North American bird flu and a North American human flu.

Flu viruses mutate easily. Small genetic changes can "tune" a strain to its new host if a virus jumps species. The result can be a strain that is more easily transmitted — and in some cases, more virulent — than when it first arrived. The mutations, however, can occur only if the virus is spreading and replicating, which is why stopping chains of transmission early is so important.

The CDC had dispatched investigators to California and planned to send a team

to Texas to help officials identify cases and trace their contacts. Officials urged doctors to be on alert for more cases. The CDC had also taken preliminary steps to create a vaccine for the virus.

"We do not know whether this swine flu virus or some other influenza virus will lead to the next pandemic. However, scientists around the world continue to monitor the virus and take its threat seriously," Richard E. Besser, acting director of the CDC, said in a telephone briefing. He also confirmed the eighth U.S. case — a child in San Diego County who recovered.

The CDC issued an "outbreak notice" alerting U.S. citizens traveling to Mexico and recommending that they take steps to protect themselves, such as washing their hands frequently. The government has not warned people against going there, but officials said the public should be vigilant.

"I think it's very important people pay attention to what's going on. The situation has been developing quickly," Besser said. "This is something we are worried about and we are treating very seriously."

In both countries, the virus has tended initially to cause typical flu symptoms, including runny nose, cough, fever and sore throat. But in Mexico, the infection is frequently progressing to severe pneumonia, requiring hospitalization. Experts are puzzled about why the disease has caused relatively mild sickness in the United States, where only one patient has been hospitalized and none have died, and severe illness in Mexico.

"That is part of the unanswered questions," the WHO's Setiogi said.

Besser noted that other respiratory viruses are circulating in Mexico and that it remains unclear how many cases and deaths were caused by the swine flu.

"Sorting out what is caused potentially by the swine flu virus and what could be caused by co-infection — those are important public health questions," he said.

The virus is resistant to two older drugs designed to fight flu, but two more recent medications, including Tamiflu, seem to be effective.

Most of the cases and 59 of the deaths were in Mexico City, but at least three deaths occurred in the central Mexican town of San Luis Potosi and at least four cases were reported on the Baja peninsula, Setiogi said.

There was no indication that the victims had contact with pigs. In the United States, a father and daughter and two boys who attended the same school were infected, leading officials to conclude that the virus was spreading from person to person.

In Mexico City, news of the outbreak and steps to contain it prompted widespread concern, even though officials reassured residents that they had adequate medical supplies. Movie theaters voluntarily closed.

"We are very angry because of this," said Eleessia Galindo, 44, whose 10-year-old daughter's school classes were canceled. "I could not go to work because my kids didn't have school today, and who is going to stay with them? I will have a problem for this at my job. Now the government will use the vaccines for the doctors and what about us? This just shows the bad planning of our bad government." ■

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# Swine Flu Outbreak Could Deepen Mexico's Recession

By ANTHONY FAIOLA  
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Originally Published April 27, 2009

Amid serious concerns that the swine flu outbreak could worsen an already-deep recession in Mexico, the World Bank yesterday moved to provide that nation with millions in emergency aid and set up a special fund for longer-term assistance.

Stung by the credit crunch and weaker demand for its products in the United States and beyond, Mexico is set to suffer a worse downturn than the one in the United States this year, with the International Monetary Fund predicting this week that its economy would contract by 3.7 percent.

Adding to those troubles, Russia, the world's second-largest pork importer, yesterday suspended all pork shipments from Mexico, as well as from three U.S. states, despite assurances from international health officials that the flu could not be transmitted through exposure to pork. Other countries have intensified screening of pork imports. And several nations have issued travel advisories to Mexico just as resorts there are gearing up for summer bookings.

Speaking at the close of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund biannual meetings in Washington yesterday, Mexican Finance Minister Agustin Carstens warned that the outbreak could have an "important" economic impact.

"This issue can have an important impact on the economy, although the most important impact is the one on human life and human well-being," Carstens told reporters. He added that the outbreak was a "very serious matter" with "a high potential for [economic] disruption."

Earlier this decade, the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and bird flu strains in Asia dealt economic blows to more than a dozen nations, forcing airlines to cancel flights, hotels to slash rates and depressing consumer demand. In the case of bird flu, Asian farmers additionally had to cull tens of millions of poultry from their flocks.

Mexico — and perhaps even the United States if a full-blown outbreak were to spread north of the border — could face similar problems just as it is struggling with the global financial crisis. Earlier this month, Mexico established a new \$47 billion credit line with the IMF,

funds that may provide an important cushion if its financial situation sharply deteriorates.

The World Bank yesterday said it would roll out \$25 million to Mexico in emergency funds for medicine and equipment, including for devices to detect the new strain of swine flu that has killed up to 86 people there. In addition, it said it was prepared to draw on an additional \$180 million to help finance other needs related to the outbreak.

The Mexican assistance came just as the World Bank warned yesterday that health programs in poor and middle-income nations were being severely hit by the financial crisis that started in the United States. A new report from the bank, for instance, indicated that in March eight countries were reporting shortages of HIV- and AIDS-related drugs and treatments, and an additional 14 said they expected to see disruptions in the coming weeks and months.

Robert B. Zoellick, the World Bank's president, yesterday said the institution was offering Mexico advice about how other nations have dealt with similar health crises. He noted that there would be a time to account for the economic toll, "but for now, the focus is on people's lives." ■



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# In Mexico, Young Adults Appear Most at Risk

## *Capital Grinds to a Halt as Suspected Deaths Rise to 103*

By JOSH PARTLOW  
Washington Post Foreign Service

• Monday, April 27, 2009

MEXICO CITY, April 26 — Six days a week, Luis Enrique Herrera rode his bicycle to work, a round-trip journey of nearly 20 miles. He worked with his hands as an auto mechanic and seemed to his relatives a healthy 35-year-old man, which is why they did not feel overly worried when he had to go to the hospital. “We thought he had a

common cold, something normal,” said his younger brother, Gabriel Herrera.

It was 12 days ago that Luis Herrera walked into this city’s National Institute for Respiratory Illnesses with a fever of more than 102 degrees, aching bones and breathing problems. Now he is isolated, uncommunicative, bedridden and breathing through a tube. His doctors have not confirmed which strain of flu he has contracted, but his family fears it is the deadly new swine virus that has virtually shut down this city of 20 million people.

“He just kept getting worse and worse and worse,” Gabriel Herrera said. “His condition now is really very grave.”

The anxiety over the virus has vastly altered the rhythm of Mexico City, with millions of people staying home and many of those who venture out doing so wearing masks. On Sunday, Catholic Masses across the city were canceled. One of the most popular Mexican professional soccer teams played a game in an empty stadium that can seat more

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BY RODRIGO ABD — ASSOCIATED PRESS

Commuters wear face masks as a precaution in the subway in Mexico City.

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than 100,000 people. Mayor Marcelo Ebrard said he might have to shut down all public transportation if the crisis worsens.

The question of who contracts and ultimately dies from this virus has become a matter of central concern in Mexico. And the answers that are beginning to emerge as the death toll rises have been ominous. Relatively young adults, presumably among the population's most healthy, have been the first to succumb. Sunday afternoon, Mexico placed the death toll at 86, and a Health Ministry official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said all the dead were ages 25 to 50. The ministry later raised the toll to 103.

Fifteen people in Mexico City who are suspected to have died from the virus were 25 to 37 years old, Ebrard said in a radio interview Sunday.

The high proportion of young adults among the fatalities is one of several mysteries about this virus. The same pattern emerged during the 1918-1919 Spanish influenza epidemic, which killed at least 50 million people, and it remains unexplained in that case as well.

One theory is that the virus triggers an excessively aggressive immune response that destroys the throat and lung tissue. Young adults, with the most robust immune systems, may be especially at risk.

The greatest concentration of cases and deaths have been in Mexico City, the surrounding state of Mexico, and the state of San Luis Potosi to the north. Health Secretary José Ángel Córdova said 30 suspected swine flu cases are spread across 17 other states.

Most of the fatal cases involved extensive lung damage, requiring doctors

to prescribe mechanical breathing assistance. Exactly what caused the lung damage is not known.

Justino Regalado Pineda, an epidemiologist with the Health Ministry, said adults would be more likely to contract the flu simply because they tend to congregate more in public places, such as at their workplaces.

He speculated that one reason people have died in Mexico as opposed to the United States is that the life span of the virus could have been longer in Mexico.

After flu infections, people can develop an additional bacterial "superinfection" that could be lethal, said Brian Currie, an infectious-diseases doctor and director of clinical research at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. Currie said it remained a mystery why people in Mexico were dying while the cases reported in the United States have been relatively benign.

"You've got to remember, this is a strain of flu nobody has seen before," Currie said.

Even though there is no known vaccine for humans for this strain of swine flu — which combines genetic material from more common types of pig, bird and human flus — Mexican officials have stressed that it is curable. President Felipe Calderón said Sunday that of the 1,324 patients with flulike symptoms as of Saturday, 929 have been treated and released from the hospital.

Mexican officials said there is no shortage of antiviral medication. The difference between who lives and dies seems largely linked to how quickly patients receive treatment, officials said.

"With a sickness like this, if you don't take it seriously, if you don't go to the doctor right away, it can have very grave consequences," Calderón said in

a televised address Sunday. Calderón gave a national lesson on public health, instructing people to wash their hands regularly, wear surgical masks, cover their mouths when they cough and avoid sharing food. Officials in Mexico City have handed out 6 million masks.

"Everyone, absolutely every Mexican, needs to make a special effort to avoid contacting other people who could potentially be infected with the virus," the president said.

Jorge Francisco Guzmán Suárez, a 24-year-old who died Saturday at the National Institute for Respiratory Illnesses, was initially treated by a private doctor for a stomachache, rather than the flu, his aunt, Herminia Guzmán, told the Reforma newspaper.

"We are devastated," the aunt told the paper. "The miracle did not arrive."

An outdoor market in the colonial neighborhood of Coyoacan on Sunday was a shadow of its usual self. Candelaria Villanueva, 72, a vendor of jewelry and blouses, said sales have plummeted. She was worried, she said, because her 20-year-old granddaughter recently got sick and was told by a doctor that it was "just the flu."

"I think you have to have faith in God," she said.

A double-decker tour bus was nearly empty. Bus worker Karla Yañez said people are scared to ride.

"Everybody's inside, places are closed, the parks are closed, people don't go out," she said. "Mexico is a social place — people like to go out and be together. The sickness has taken that away." ■

*Staff writer David Brown in Washington and special correspondent Jonathan Roeder in Mexico City contributed to this report.*

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*The World Health Organization raised its pandemic threat level from 3 to 4 on Monday — two levels below a full-scale pandemic — in response to a unique virus not seen in pigs or humans before. A look at what is known about the virus.*

## A Virus With Pandemic Potential

### HOW THE FLU VIRUS MUTATES

The genetic machinery of the flu virus lacks a mechanism to correct errors when it replicates. As a result, it mutates at a high rate, allowing it to evade the body's natural defenses, vaccines and drugs.

**Seasonal flu strains that circulate every winter generally have minor changes** from those of the previous year. But people who have been exposed to flu in the past usually retain a measure of immunity.

### HOW THIS FLU VIRUS IS DIFFERENT

The pandemic threat arises from another trick of the flu virus, called genetic reassortment. When different strains infect the same host at the same time, it allows them to exchange whole sections of their genetic code.

**Scientists think the current virus strain combines genetic material from pigs, birds and humans.** Segments from the three different viruses have created a reassorted virus that has not been seen before.

**Why is this virus killing healthy people?**

One theory is that the virus triggers an excessively aggressive immune response that destroys the throat and lung tissue. Those with robust immune systems may be especially vulnerable.

### How a flu virus works

The genetic code of the flu is contained in eight strands of RNA.

A protein on the virus binds to receptors on healthy cells in the airways and lungs, causing the virus to open and release its RNA.

The RNA moves to the cell nucleus, where it is incorporated in the cell's machinery, directing the cell to make copies of the virus.

... either into the airway to find another cell to infect or ejected by a cough or sneeze and launched to find a new host.

### Fighting the Flu

#### PREVENTION: VACCINE

Vaccines teach the body's immune system to make antibodies to kill the virus. A weakened form of the virus is grown in hens' eggs, purified and killed with a chemical. Creating a new vaccine takes at least six months and requires hundreds of millions of eggs.

#### INTERRUPTION: ANTIVIRAL DRUGS

Relenza and Tamiflu, both shown to be effective against this current virus, stop it from budding out of the cell if administered soon after symptoms appear. Antivirals can also be given to people in contact with an infected person to prevent the disease from spreading.

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, World Health Organization

BY BRENNA MALONEY AND LAURA STANTON — THE WASHINGTON POST



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# Little Boy at the Center of a Viral Storm

*5-Year-Old Identified as Earliest Swine Flu Case in Mexico Says, 'I Feel Good'*

By JOSH PARTLOW  
Washington Post Foreign Service

• Originally Published April 29, 2009

LA GLORIA, Mexico, April 28 — One person who may have helped launch a rapidly spreading flu outbreak likes to draw hearts and flowers in the dirt outside his home. He likes to climb trees and give hugs and play with his soccer ball. And despite a persistent cough, he does not, he insists, feel sick.

"Not anymore," said Édgar Enrique Hernández, a smiling 5-year-old Mexican boy who tested positive for the deadly new strain of swine flu in this windswept valley surrounded by pig-breeding farms. "I feel good."

Although authorities have not determined that swine flu started in La Gloria, a village of about 2,500 people in the state of Veracruz, Édgar, who got sick in late March, is the earliest confirmed case of the virus in Mexico. He was just one of several hundred people from La Gloria and surrounding areas that fell ill around that time in an unexplained outbreak that left two children dead and prompted authorities to fumigate the entire village.

"I don't have words, I don't have answers," said Édgar's mother, María del Carmen Hernández, as she cried under a portrait of Jesus in her living room. "I feel terrible about all of this, because the people are thinking that this was all my son's fault. I don't think this is anyone's fault."

This dust-strewn hamlet of dirt streets surrounded by desert cactus and scrub brush has become a focus of attention for the spread of the virus because of the

prevalence of pig farms in the area, and because of Édgar. But the link is far from certain, and infectious-disease specialists stressed that no one has located a pig infected with this particular virus, so proximity between people and pigs may not be all that's required to contract the disease. The strain appears, in fact, to be Eurasian in origin, further adding to the mystery of where it began.

Miguel Ángel Lezana, the head of Mexico's National Center for

Epidemiology and Disease Control, said there was an outbreak of respiratory illness compatible with influenza in La Gloria between March 9 and April 10 — and that Édgar was a late case. Lezana said the boy showed symptoms on April 1, which was several days after two patients in California showed symptoms. Édgar was found to have been infected with swine flu after Canadian researchers

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Édgar Enrique Hernández, at home in the village of La Gloria, Mexico, still has a cough but has regained some of his energy after falling ill in late March.

BY MELINA MARA — THE WASHINGTON POST



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confirmed the results April 23. "We don't know where it started, California or Mexico," Lezana said.

Lezana said that none of Édgar's relatives worked near or at the area's industrial hog farms, and that tests of pigs so far have not shown any signs of the virus.

Some residents of La Gloria blame the farms for their illnesses, saying the open-air waste pits dry out and the hot winds blow dust through nearby villages.

Scientists, however, say it is more likely that people who worked with pigs became infected and passed it on to other people. "Influenza in pigs is a respiratory disease, so there is much less risk associated with pig waste," said Andrew Pekosz, an associate professor of microbiology and immunology at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health. "The primary risk is from swine [flu]-infected people, and not swine or any swine products."

The farms around La Gloria are run by Granjas Carroll de Mexico, which is partly owned by Smithfield Foods, the largest producer of hogs in the United States. Smithfield said in a statement released Monday that it did not believe its operations were in any way connected to the outbreak because it had found "no clinical signs or symptoms of the presence of swine influenza in the company's swine herd or its employees at its joint ventures in Mexico."

Residents said the children of La Gloria often come down with colds and flus, but this year was different. The outbreak, which began in mid-March, led more than 800 people to seek medical attention, said

the mayor of nearby Perote, Guillermo Franco Vázquez. Lines formed outside the

La Gloria health clinic with children and parents suffering from fevers and body aches.

"It happened in one week. It was worse than normal," said Valentino Fernández, 32, who was at the clinic with his sick daughter Tuesday. "It was the contamination from the farms, from the pigs. It comes in the air."

Vianney Guerra, a doctor at the clinic, said she was not authorized to talk about the flu outbreak. "We are taking preventive measures, we are informing the population, we are going house to house giving vaccines," she said. "Édgar is fine. He's in his house."

Mexican Health Secretary José Ángel Córdova said Monday that officials were not aware of swine flu during the outbreak in the La Gloria area. Once the new strain became known, he said, they retested some people and just one of them, a 5-year-old boy, tested positive for swine flu. But residents said two young children died of their illnesses last month and were buried in a flower-strewn cemetery in the village.

After the outbreak, authorities here fumigated the streets and houses, gave checkups to the patients and distributed vaccines, though officials have not identified a vaccine for swine flu. Health officials said 35 of the people who fell ill were tested for swine flu, so others might be infected.

Hernández, like Lezana, said her son Édgar was one of the last children in the village to fall ill. When he did, the disease moved quickly.

She walked him to the village health center, she said. Édgar was treated with amoxicillin and other medications, and

after four bedridden days, his illness disappeared as quickly as it had started, she said.

After he had recovered, Hernández said, other doctors continued to come home to test Édgar. But they always said the boy was fine, she recalled.

Édgar's 3-year-old brother, Jonathan, was briefly sick but not as seriously, and his mother thought the worst was over. Because she does not have a car, a computer, a phone or a radio, and dislikes the television news because it broadcasts only tragedies, she heard very little about the disease that began killing people by mid-April in Mexico City and spreading around the globe.

On Monday, all that changed. The governor of Veracruz, Fidel Herrera Beltrán, arrived at her one-bedroom concrete house at the intersection of two dirt streets and informed her that tests in the United States showed that Édgar had swine flu. The mayor of Perote has also visited, as well as an official from Granjas Carroll de Mexico, she said. She said one doctor continues to tell her that Édgar never had swine flu. "I feel powerless," she said. "Why did the other children not have it and my child did? He was one of the last to get sick."

Édgar still has a cough, but he has regained his energy and on Tuesday he ran around happily.

"My children have always been healthy," she said. "My children are a blessing, they are a blessing from God." ■

*Staff writer William Booth and special correspondent Gabriela Martinez in Mexico City and staff writers Shankar Vedantam and Ceci Connolly in Washington contributed to this report.*

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# Diseases Travel Fast, But So Do Tools to Fight Them



BY ENRIQUE MARCARIAN — REUTERS

**Quick dissemination of health information around the world allows workers like these at a restaurant in Buenos Aires airport to take proper precautions.**

By KEVIN SULLIVAN AND MARY JORDAN  
*Washington Post Foreign Service*

• *Originally Published April 29, 2009*

LONDON, April 28 — Teenagers in New Zealand, honeymooners in Scotland, high-schoolers in New York and tourists in Israel all are sick from the same bug caught just days ago on trips to Mexico.

Their illnesses are the latest example of how diseases, from influenza to tuberculosis to cholera, are spreading

ever more quickly in an increasingly globalized world. But so, too, are the tools necessary to combat outbreaks of disease: expertise, medicine, money and information.

“Things move incredibly fast; there has been an exponential rise in the numbers of people who move around the world,” said Scott Dowell, a physician and head of global disease detection and response for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Although global pandemics are as old as history itself, diseases and the people

who carry them have never been able to move so far, so fast. The number of international air travelers grew fivefold, to 824 million passengers per year, from 1980 to 2007.

Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés transported smallpox and measles to Mexico on long sea voyages in the 16th century. The current strain of swine flu leapt from Mexico to the far corners of the world on jumbo jets in a matter of hours.

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"That makes it incredibly harder to manage these outbreaks," said Dowell, who is overseeing the CDC's assistance to Mexico on the swine flu case. In New Zealand, for example, officials were trying to track down all 350-plus passengers who were on the same flight as the infected high-schoolers (Air New Zealand Flight 1 from Los Angeles to Auckland on April 25).

Although the world is more vulnerable to the rapid spread of disease, many experts say, it has never been more prepared.

Advances in the understanding of disease, stockpiling of vaccines and global networks of medical surveillance have better equipped health professionals to deal with outbreaks. Instant communications have allowed information on diseases to move faster than the bugs themselves. The swine flu page on the CDC's Web site lets users sign up for e-mail alerts, podcasts and news feeds; more than 36,000 people have signed up for CDC Twitter alerts.

"It's a very different world than it was even 10 years ago," said Robert F. Breiman, a physician and coordinator of the CDC's Global Disease Detection Division center in Nairobi.

The Nairobi center is one of six maintained by the CDC around the world; the others are in Egypt, Thailand, Kazakhstan, China and Guatemala. In each, CDC medical professionals work with local officials to detect disease outbreaks in the region and coordinate their responses.

The centers were established in the wake of the 2003 outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, which caused hundreds of deaths around the world.

Dowell said that five CDC staffers, including infectious-disease specialists

from the Guatemala office, are in Mexico, and that six more are likely to head there soon.

The CDC also works with the World Health Organization's Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network, which coordinates efforts among health officials around the globe.

"There is no such thing as a local outbreak," Michael Ryan, a physician who runs the WHO's global outbreak program, said in an interview before the epidemic in Mexico.

A report issued by a committee in the British House of Lords last year concluded that dramatic global population growth was a key factor in spreading infectious disease.

It said the world's population has risen from 2.5 billion in 1950 to more than 6 billion now and is projected to rise to 9 billion by 2050. And the population is growing fastest in many of the poorest countries with the biggest health problems.

Mass migrations have turned such places as Lagos, Nigeria, and Rio de Janeiro into megacities where overcrowding and poverty create ideal conditions for the spread of diseases such as dengue fever. An outbreak in Brazil killed at least 100 people last year.

Several thousand Bolivians have immigrated to Switzerland in recent years, and with them has come Chagas disease, a parasitic illness that can cause heart problems. Chagas, once confined to rural Latin America, also has spread with migrants to the United States and Asia.

The British report noted that rising populations are forcing people to push deeper into previously uninhabited land to live and grow crops. Going deeper into jungles and forests has led to closer contact with wild animals, which can carry new pathogens that lead

to previously unknown illnesses, the report said.

Such contact with animals, particularly primates, has often been documented in African outbreaks of Ebola, the acute hemorrhagic fever.

Climate change is creating droughts and floods where they were not common before, and that is also altering patterns and flows of disease. In warming temperatures, mosquitoes are migrating to new areas, carrying diseases once confined to the tropics.

Chikungunya, a tropical disease from Africa and Asia that causes severe joint pain, showed up in Italy in 2006 and has infected several hundred people there. A tourist who visited Kerala, India, is suspected to have carried the virus home. Then the Asian tiger mosquito, which is working its way north as temperatures rise, carried it from one infected person to the next.

Robin Weiss, a British virologist who has written about the globalization of disease, said instant global communication can rapidly spread helpful information, but it can also have downsides, such as needlessly alarming people with a flood of texts, e-mails and news bulletins.

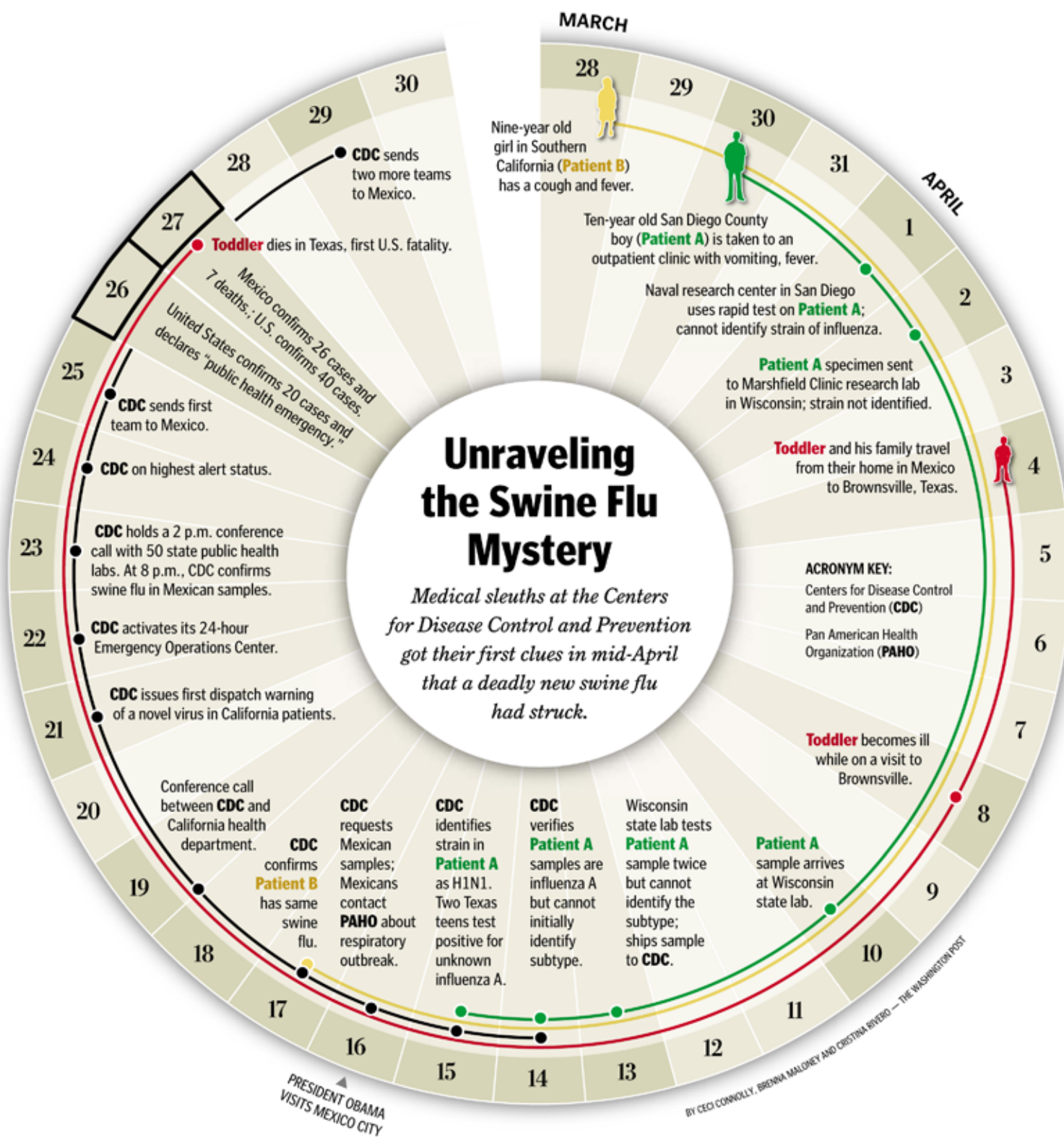
"There are good and bad effects of globalization" on infectious disease, said Mario Raviglione, a top tuberculosis official at the WHO in Geneva.

Raviglione said the globalized economy means that money flows to poorer countries to help them improve health systems and fight high-profile diseases such as HIV/AIDS. But when the banking system falters in one country and drags down financial systems around the globe, that has a direct effect on how much families and governments can spend on fighting disease.

"We all live in a global village," Raviglione said. ■



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# The Dish on Mexico City's Markets

## *Two Champion Eaters Pursue the Ultimate Quesadilla and Other Delights*

By MANUEL ROIG-FRANZIA  
Washington Post Foreign Service

• Originally Published September 7, 2008

A cartload of bagged white corn kernels blocked the narrow aisle. A woman in an apron danced to salsa rhythms, shimmying her hips seductively. Half a dozen guys with shopping bags stood stalled and frowning.

I'd hit gridlock in the diffuse light of El Mercado de la Merced, Mexico City's super-size, bigger-than-life, positively steroidal central market.

"Just push," my friend Nick urged behind me.

Timidly, I jammed my hip into the small of a man's back, and presto, we all popped through the bottleneck like a cork launched from a magnum of champagne. Far from being angry, the man seemed grateful.

I'd come to La Merced in search of the perfect traditional-market quesadilla. I've been eating in Mexican markets for years, swooning over piles of cilantro-flecked shrimp at the archetypal Tostadas Coyoacan in the market near *The Post's* bureau in southern Mexico City and gorging on all manner of grilled pork tacos. There may be no better way to get to know this city, and my visitors and I have never had even a hint of stomach upset. But I'd never nailed the consummate quesadilla, a ubiquitous dish, a foundational Mexican treat made all the more complex by its utter simplicity.

I needed help. And that's why I called Nick Gilman.

I call Nick the "professional urban dweller." A transplanted New Yorker,

he has lived most of the past 20 years in Mexico and knows this city's hidden nooks like no one I've ever met. Last year, Nick self-published a book about his obsession, *Good Food in Mexico City: A Guide to Food Stalls, Fondas and Fine Dining*, that has developed a kind of cult following in the foodie world. He's always up for the game.

I set a fast pace in La Merced, weaving past fragrant stalls piled with garlic and epazote, the pungent Mexican herb that is said to have taken its name from the Aztec words for "stinky animal." But Nick is loitering.

"Look at these!" he calls out, cupping to his nose a strange mushroom that looks a bit like a chanterelle but denser. "French people would go crazy! So inexpensive."

A few more steps and we are running our fingers through mounds of chipped wood that the proprietor promises will make a tea that cures ulcers, kidney problems, nerves, insomnia, high blood pressure and ... low blood pressure.

"What kind of wood?" I ask.

"Secret," the man says, retreating to the back of his stall.

I might have stuck around to press him (I am a reporter, after all), but I catch a whiff of grilling meat. We must be close to the hidden quesadilla stand Nick has been telling me about. I press on.

That's when I meet Gerardo Ramirez. He nods approvingly as I plant myself on a plastic stool next to the counter at "Antojitos Doña Celia" (Doña Celia's Snacks), a five-stool stand at the western edge of the market's main building. The handwritten menu offers quesadillas with brains, quesadillas with stewed pork stomach and quesadillas with pickled

pork fat. I am feeling adventurous, but not that adventurous. I opt for a squash-flower quesadilla, and it doesn't disappoint. Nick chooses a quesadilla made with huitlacoche, an inky black corn fungus that smells of truffles and earth, and I'm grateful he lets me have a big bite.

Folded over, my quesadilla is 10 inches long, seared on a comal (a flat, cast-iron cooking surface) and blue, made from blue corn. Inside, the chewy white Oaxacan cheese — think string cheese, but not as dense or as salty — oozes to the edge of the tortilla. The squash flower has been toasted lightly on the comal, but not so much that it loses its clean, refreshing glint, a nice complement to the hint of salt in the cheese. I top it with Gerardo's salsa, a silky puree of red chilies, onions and garlic.

"The secret is the cheese: There are only one or two places in the whole city where you can get the real stuff, the real Oaxacan stuff," Gerardo tells me. But I can barely focus. I was in quesadilla nirvana, far from the under-grilled tortillas of my past, from the barely melted cheese, from the watery salsa.

Nick snaps me out of my dreamlike state. He wants more, and I am happy to be pulled along.

We pick our way through the thicket of stalls, winding around stacks of banana leaves being sliced up for tamales and battalions of young women shaving the spines off the paddle leaves of nopal cactus, which Mexicans saute until they are soft and have the gooey texture of okra. We stop under an orange tarp for

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rib-meat tacos with a plank of grilled nopal sticking out the ends, but we don't linger long.

We loop down the stairs of the subway station that pops up in the center of the market. Three stops later, we are tracking toward the San Juan Market, Mexico City's swankiest, a place where French diplomats contemplate the giant "chocolate" clams and housekeepers loaded down with bags trail after finely coiffed Mexican society matrons.

We beeline for the market's southwest corner, Stall No. 283. There, behind a basin-size ceramic bowl, Manuela Serrano swirls a long spoon through a smoky, simmering pot of something mysterious and wonderful.

Serrano, a restaurant-trained chef, is here every Saturday morning. The smart crowd knows to show up early or they'll miss her pozole, a rich, chili-infused broth with strands of stewed chicken meat and marble-size kernels of white corn that resemble hominy.

There are all kinds of pozole: green pozole, white pozole, Jalisco-style red pozole. But Serrano's is the deepest red I've ever seen.

"It's like paint," Nick coos as he scoops another spoonful.

We might have lingered, but not this afternoon. We are rolling and still ravenous. In the market center, we stop to see José Juárez, who charmed my

parents last Christmas with his endless samples of fine imported cheese. Juárez is always surrounded by regulars who know they can practically make a meal out of the hunks of bread and cheese he doles out at no cost, and the oaky Spanish wine he pours.

Juárez, who is developing a new generation of artisanal Mexican cheesemakers by giving classes at a local creamery, cuts me a hunk of Mexican goat cheese. My tongue lingers on a creamy, salty morsel that tastes more like a first-class brie than the goat cheese I'm used to.

"The French, the Swiss — this is just as good," he crows, and he's not far off.

Warmed by Juárez's charm and by the heat of the pozole, you would have thought we'd had enough. But there was more eating to do.

We head for the chic Roma neighborhood and its Medellín market, an airy, light-filled space so named because it specializes in Colombian and other regional fare, along with the Mexican classics. We race past the Peruvian Inca Cola and the Colombian empanadas, then settle in at La Morenita Ostionera, a favorite that has grown in the past five years from a mere stand to a full-fledged restaurant with waiter service and more than a dozen tables.

La Morenita has its own version of a quesadilla, but it's nothing like the one at La Merced or like any quesadilla we'd get in the States. We select a

shark-meat quesadilla. It arrives in a deep-fried shell. The mild meat is chopped, sautéed simply in a fish broth with grilled onions and garnished with chopped tomatoes and white onion chunks. One other thing: It has no cheese. Go figure. We throw in shrimp seviche for good measure.

I'm tucking into my second quesadilla when something whizzes just past my ear. I look up and see a man with a 100-pound side of beef slung over his shoulders. I realize that the thing whizzing past me was a cow's hoof.

"Well, we are in a market," Nick says, shrugging.

We're both champion eaters, but finally it appears we've reached our limit. We rise and head for the door, but an ice cream man catches my eye. He stuffs a scoop of rum-raisin ice cream, creamier than anything I've ever had in Mexico, and sweet, made in the style of his native Cuba. I am transported to Havana, one of my favorite cities.

I down it in minutes and think back on our day. We've eaten grilled quesadillas and fried quesadillas, tacos, pozole, seviche and ice cream, not to mention all Juárez's cheese samples. And it cost a grand total of \$22 for both of us. I once paid that much for a single vodka tonic in Miami. I consider our culinary marathon, and I feel, suddenly, like a professional urban dweller ... and very, very full. ■

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

# Violence Keeps Visitors From Mexico Wine Country

BY WILLIAM BOOTH  
*Washington Post Foreign Service*

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These are not happy hours for the world's winemakers. The real estate slump has slapped the smug out of California's Napa Valley. Global sales of French champagne are flat; the Italians are drowning in unsold Chianti Classico. There is a grape glut in Chile, a fire sale in South Africa. Even the Australians are drinking less chardonnay.

Now try selling Mexican wine. In a war zone.

For many imbibers, the words "Mexico" and "wine" go together like cheddar and flounder: They don't. According to surveys done for producers here, even connoisseurs admit they are surprised to learn that Mexico makes wine — let alone drinkable wine — but it does.

"The climate, the soil, the place is perfect for wine," said vintner Hugo D'Acosta, whose family farm bottles a crisp \$20 table white at its Casa de Piedra winery, an hour's drive south of the border. "Unfortunately, there are the other challenges."

Those challenges include the fact that Mexico's wine country is located just south of Tijuana, a hot spot in Mexico's vicious drug

war, which last year claimed the lives of more than 725 people in Baja California alone. While the wine country has been relatively calm, Americans heading down for a visit must pass through Tijuana and Rosarito, scenes of daylight firefights, headless torsos and a spider web of military checkpoints. At the nearby beach town of La Mision, Mexican authorities in January arrested Santiago Meza López, a.k.a. El Pozolero (the Stewmaker), who confessed to using caustic soda to dissolve the bodies of 300 enemies executed by a local drug-smuggling cartel. Last week, a Rosarito Beach police officer was found with his head cut off. Late Monday, authorities discovered a corpse dumped

on the outskirts of Tijuana. The body was on fire.

The drug war has had many casualties. Tourism has flatlined in Tijuana. Oscar Jesús Escobedo, Baja California's tourism secretary, estimates that 800,000 potential visitors decided not to come to the state last year because of the violence. Fancy beach resorts, started during the real estate boom, stand as half-built skeletons along the Pacific Coast highway, including the luxury hotel-condo Trump Baja, which went bust. In addition to the drug violence, a February travel advisory by the U.S. State Department noted that

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BY STEVE DRYDEN

**Baja California's soil, warm days and cool nights are ideal for making red and white wines. Production peaked two decades ago at 4 million cases. Now the region sells about 1.5 million cases, but the quality is generally higher.**

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“robberies, homicides, petty thefts, and carjackings have all increased over the last year across Mexico generally, with notable spikes in Tijuana and northern Baja California.”

Yet there is a small, growing and, until now, flourishing wine-producing region in Baja California, which cradles a bucolic valley of deep granite soils, with warm, sunny days and nights cooled by the nearby Pacific — ideal conditions for making reds and whites. The vintners here were hoping their little valley could be the next magnet for wine nuts.

“Many Americans have told me this was the best-kept secret in the wine world,” said Hans Backhoff, a co-founder of Monte Xanic and one of the area’s leading vintners.

But the Americans are staying away. “In all my life, security has never been so bad,” Backhoff said. “Not here, but to the north. The guy from San Diego? He’s not coming anymore. We haven’t seen that many American tourists recently.”

Soon after the Spanish conquest, the missionaries planted vines and casked wine in Baja California. Later, pacifist Russians fleeing service in the czarist army immigrated here and also made wine. Then came Mexicans like Backhoff, who grew up in nearby Ensenada and began growing grapes in the 1980s.

Wine production peaked here two decades ago at 4 million cases. The region sells about 1.5 million cases a year now, almost all of it for consumption in Mexico. Although there is less wine than there used to be, the quality is generally higher.

In recent years, American and Mexican tourists discovered the region, and wine writers, perhaps after a few too many glasses of Backhoff’s cabernet franc, began comparing it to Napa Valley in the old days. The Mexican government promoted the area, with its pretty wineries set amid postcard-perfect rows of grapevines, posting “Ruta del Vino” signs and supporting a seasonal wine festival that drew 30,000 visitors last year. Alongside the RV parks and taco vendors, there are now a couple of premier bed-and-breakfast resorts and at least one destination restaurant. Yet there is also plenty of rural squalor. Washboard dirt roads lead to the vineyards, and visitors are warned not to drive after dark.

“The violence has been bad for business, at our store in town and for the tours at the winery,” said Mayra Sanchez, public relations coordinator for Casa Pedro Domecq, which cranks out 400,000 cases of wine a year. “It has been bad because the Americans don’t want to come to Mexico, to cross through Tijuana. In the rest of Mexico, with our distribution networks, business is good. But here in the valley, not good.”

The challenges to the industry are not limited to the drug war and the global economic crisis. “Mexico is a beer-and-tequila country,” D’Acosta said. “Mexico is not a wine country. Even in the beginning, the Spanish drank some, but not much. They used wine in the churches, wine for the sacrament, but never really much. My generation never drank wine. Not at all. But then, very slowly, things started to change.”

As D’Acosta sees it, the wine business in Baja California represents “the new

Mexico,” a dynamic country that is part of the larger world. That is the market the region’s 35 wineries are seeking. In fact, very little Mexican wine is exported, and with walk-in sales dropping in the valley, most of the high-end wine is sold to the beach resorts in Cancun and Cabo San Lucas and to the pricey restaurants in Monterrey, Acapulco and Mexico City.

“When I started, no wines from Mexico were on the wine lists. They were, like, ‘Lock the door, forget it, go away,’ “ D’Acosta said. “Now, if you open a high-level restaurant in Mexico City, you must serve Mexican wine.” He takes a long view of the current violence and its impact on his business. “If you’re going to be in wine, it’s a decision for the life. To have five, six, seven bad years? That is normal. If we make good wine, they’ll keep drinking it.”

Steve Dryden, an American wine writer who leads tasting tours through the region and is opening his own wine bar in Ensenada, said he is as busy as ever.

“Some people don’t pay attention to all the bad news,” he said. “Once you get past the Tijuana-Rosarita corridor, you’re quite safe. If you read the papers, you’d think they’re killing hundreds of Americans a day.”

The challenge, according to Dryden, is not cartel violence, but ignorance. “Most people don’t even know Mexico makes wine,” he said. “But the word is getting out.” He describes a delicious grenache made by the Vinedos Malagon winery, which a reviewer from Wine Spectator magazine loved.

“You’d think you were drinking Napa or Sonoma,” Dryden said. “Yes. The future looks bright.” ■

*For more information on Mexico’s wine country, visit [http://www.discoverbajacalifornia.com/wine\\_country/index.html](http://www.discoverbajacalifornia.com/wine_country/index.html). Specific information on wineries mentioned in this story can be found at the following Web sites: Casa de Piedra (<http://www.vinoscasadepiedra.com>), Monte Xanic (<http://www.montexanic.com.mx>), Vinedos Malagon (<http://www.vinedosmalagon.com>).*



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## Academic Content Standards

*This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.*

### Maryland

**History:** Examine the emergence, growth and decline of empires in the Americas (Indicator 2). a. Describe and trace the development of political and social structures of the Incas, Mayans and Aztecs (Grade 6, Standard 5)

**History:** Analyze the growth and the development of the United States (Indicator 1). b. Evaluate Manifest Destiny and its impact on territorial expansion of the nation (Grade 8, Standard 5)

**History:** Analyze the emerging foreign policy of the United States (Indicator 2). d. Explain causes and effects of the Mexican-American War (Grade 8, Standard 5)

**English:** Read critically to evaluate informational text (Indicator 6). c. Verification of information across multiple sources (Grade 8, Standard 2)

The Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Content Standards can be found online at <http://mdk12.org/assessments/vsc/index.html>.

### Virginia

**World History:** The student will demonstrate knowledge of major civilizations of the Western Hemisphere, including the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan, by  
a) describing geographic relationships, with emphasis on patterns of development in terms of climate and physical features;  
b) describing cultural patterns and political and economic structures. (WHI.11)

**World History:** The student will demonstrate knowledge of cultural, economic, and social conditions in developed and developing nations of the contemporary world by  
b) assessing the impact of economic development and global population growth on the environment and society, including an understanding of the links between economic and political freedom;  
c) describing economic interdependence, including the rise of multinational corporations, international organizations, and trade agreements;  
d) analyzing the increasing impact of terrorism. (WHII.16)

**U.S. History:** The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801 to 1861 by describing territorial expansion and how it affected the political map of the United States, with emphasis on the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark expedition, and the acquisitions of Florida, Texas, Oregon, and California. (USI.8, Expansion and Reform: 1801-1861)

Standards of Learning currently in effect for Virginia Public Schools can be found online at [www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml](http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml).

### Washington, D.C.

**U.S. History and Geography:** 8. Relate how and when California, Texas, Oregon, and other western lands became part of the U.S., including the significance of the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War (5.1, Grade 5, The Nation's Westward Expansion, 1790-1860)

**U.S. History and Geography:** Students explain important domestic trends of the 1950's and 60's; 4. Describe the Mexican Bracero program and the unprecedented migration of Puerto Ricans to take part in the invigorated industrial economy (5.13, Grade 5)

**U.S. History and Geography I:** 9. Describe the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War, including territorial settlements, the aftermath of the wars, and the effects the wars had on the lives of Americans, including Mexican-Americans today (8.9, Grade 8)

**U.S. History and Geography II:** 8. Describe the impact of drug trafficking on and movements of people to the U.S., their monetary and affective connections to their homelands, and return migration to Latin America (10.13, Grade 10)

**U.S. History and Geography II:** 7. Trace the importance of trade and regional treaties (e.g., NAFTA, MERCOSUR and CAFTA, CARICOM) (10.13, Grade 10)

**U.S. History and Geography II:** 7. Describe relations between the U.S. and Mexico in the 20th century, including key economic, political, immigration and environmental issues (e.g., North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA) (11.14, Grade 11)

Learning Standards for DCPS are found online at [www.k12.dc.us/dcps/Standards/standardsHome.htm](http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/Standards/standardsHome.htm).