

February 02, 2018 | By Christine Clark

UC San Diego Conference to Address Alternatives to the U.S.-Mexico War on Drugs

The War on Drugs has been ongoing for several decades, yet its failure can be felt on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. In the last sixteen years, the opioid epidemic has claimed close to 125,000 lives in the U.S., whereas in Mexico the war on drugs has produced an estimated 200,000 deaths and over 30,000 disappearances in the last decade.



Courtesy of wiki commons

The [Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies](#) at the University of California San Diego's [School of Global Policy and Strategy](#) is hosting on Feb. 9 conference on "[Rethinking the War on Drugs and U.S.-Mexico Security Cooperation](#)" that will discuss transnational and local challenges, and will seek to propose practical solutions for policymakers in the U.S. and Mexico.

"The cooperation of the U.S. and Mexico is more critical now than ever," said Rafael Fernández de Castro, director of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. "In recent months, the U.S. has publicly embraced unilateral policies to cross-border challenges while Mexico has de-prioritized security issues. As the two countries have turned away from bilateral cooperation, the complex and region-wide factors driving and exacerbating the U.S and Mexico's most pressing security issues have continued unabated."

From a former White House Advisor, to former directors of Mexico's Intelligence Agencies, and members of the national media, the conference participants also include top policymakers and scholars from both sides of the border. The panelists' topics will evaluate Mexico's many forms of victimization, examine region-wide factors for the resurgence of violence and the status of current U.S.-Mexico security cooperation.

“This conference is especially timely with the upcoming elections in Mexico and we hope the event can propose solutions for key stakeholders,” said Cecilia Farfán-Méndez, a visiting fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies. “Our goal is to propose a new framework beyond the Mérida Initiative that truly privileges cooperation and shared responsibility rather than confrontation between the U.S. and Mexico”

The daylong conference is free and open to the public and will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Feb. 9 at the Village Building 2, located on the UC San Diego campus. See the full agenda for the day’s event below:

9:30 a.m. — Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Rafael Fernández de Castro, UC San Diego
- Cecilia Farfán Méndez, UC San Diego

9:30 to 10:45 a.m. — Panel 1: Beyond Homicides: The Many Faces of Violence

- Vanda Felbab-Brown, Brookings Institution
- Azam Ahmed, The New York Times
- Froylán Enciso, Crisis Group
- Vidal Romero, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México
- Chair: Dan Restrepo, Former White House advisor on Latin America

11 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Panel 2: The Resurgence of Violence in Tijuana: Challenges and Strategies

- Sandra Dibble, The San Diego Union-Tribune
- Anthony DaSilva, Deputy Attorney General California
- Jaime Arredondo, UC San Diego
- Nimbe Durán, Mexico’s Interior Ministry
- Chair: David Shirk, University of San Diego Justice in Mexico director

12 to 2 p.m. — Working Lunch

- Keynote: Alfredo Corchado, Dallas Morning News

2 to 3:15 p.m. — Roundtable 1: Latin American Drug Markets and the U.S. Opioid Addiction Crisis

- Joshua Partlow, The Washington Post
- José Díaz Briseño, Reforma
- Kimberly Grinberg, Syracuse University
- Gretchen Burns-Bergman, Moms United to End the War on Drugs
- Chair: Cecilia Farfán Méndez, UC San Diego

3:30 to 4:30 p.m. — Roundtable 2: Beyond Mérida: Building a New Regional Security Framework

- Clare Ribando-Seelke, Congressional Research Service
- Eric Olson, Woodrow Wilson Center
- Jorge Tello Peón, Former director of Mexico's Intelligence Agency
- Guillermo Valdés, Former director of Mexico's Intelligence Agency
- Chair: Rafael Fernández de Castro, UC San Diego

4:30 p.m. — Closing Remarks

- Rafael Fernández de Castro, UC San Diego
- David Shirk, University of San Diego
- Cecilia Farfán Méndez, UC San Diego

The event is co-sponsored by the School of Global Policy and Strategy's Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of San Diego Justice in Mexico Project, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México and Southwest Airlines. To learn more or register, click [here](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Christine Clark, 858-534-7618, ceclark@ucsd.edu

UC San Diego's [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.