



For immediate release
March 27, 2008

Contact: Gilbert Gallegos
(505) 476-2217

Governor Bill Richardson Praises Mexican Response and Cooperation to Stop Violence along Border with New Mexico

SANTA FE – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson praised the strong response and the cooperation from the Mexican federal government to stop the violence along the border between Mexico, New Mexico and Texas. The Mexican government is sending more than 2,000 Army soldiers, 180 vehicles, 3 aircraft, 425 federal police agents and 30 prosecutors to the border region as part of the Chihuahua Joint Operation.

About 100 Mexican soldiers will be specifically be deployed to the border town of Palomas, Mexico, which borders the New Mexico town of Columbus.

“The government of Mexico and the state of Chihuahua moved decisively to restore law and security to Palomas and the entire border region,” said Governor Richardson. “I expressed my concerns to high-level officials in Mexico City over the past several days, and I welcome this strong and decisive action by the Mexico government.”

Governor Richardson said he is pleased that President Felipe Calderon sent his National Security Cabinet, which includes the Attorney General, Secretary of Government and Secretary of Defense, to Ciudad Juarez today to discuss the border violence and announce the troop deployment.

Governor Richardson had been in contact with Mexican leaders, including Mexican Ambassador to the United States Arturo Sarukhan, to discuss the violence, and welcomed today’s announcement of a significant commitment of Mexican soldiers and federal police that will protect the people in the Palomas areas. Chihuahua Governor Baeza was also instrumental in working with the Mexican government to coordinate a response to the violence.

In addition to the troop deployment, Mexican officials are also creating a joint intelligence center in Ciudad Juarez to coordinate the efforts to attack the violence.

Violence has escalated recently in the border region on the Mexican side, reportedly linked to a power struggle between rival drug cartels. Governor Richardson urged a

strong response to protect the hundreds of the people of Palomas, which include many children who are U.S. citizens and attend school in Columbus and Deming.

“We have long been working together with local, state and federal officials in Mexico to combat criminal activity in the border area,” Governor Richardson said. “This response by Mexican authorities is just the latest move in this joint effort.”

Governor Richardson and Ambassador Sarukhan will be meeting in Washington, D.C., in the coming weeks to hold further discussions about plans to work cooperatively to stop the border violence.

#30#