

Dear Senator Shapleigh and Eduardo,

I hope you had a great trip to Vietnam. It will be very interesting to hear your observations. I've never been there, but would love to go.

We are returning to El Paso on Sunday. There will be a large group of law enforcement officials meeting at JTF-N to discuss the plan for CJ. I'll be leading a much smaller group to discuss socio-economic challenges. The meetings all week are meant to build upon our first visit. The Ambassador may fly up on Friday and listen to our summary, but it would be just up and back if he does come, and I think it may not happen. But there's something else happening that I think you'll be happy to hear.

DHS and the Mexican counterparts are to meet March 8 and 9 to discuss many of your border recommendations. Sec Janet Napolitano and her senior team like many of the recommendations (and of course the Ambassador endorses them!!), so they want to discuss how to make them a reality. On March 10 they will have a meeting in DF and invite many Mexican and US officials, federal and state elected officials, and I've nominated you at the top of the list. So if you get a call or invitation from Assistant Secretary Alan Bersin, you'll know what it is about. This would be probably the best time to meet our Ambassador, but after our meeting this morning with A/Sec Bersin, I am really encouraged that something is finally going to happen.

As for this coming week. President Calderon came to CJ Feb 10 and it was a disaster. The parents of the kids who were killed were furious that he had called them criminals, as far as we can see from all sources, they were just plain good kids. He had to apologize to the families, and the mother of the 2 brothers that were killed stood 4 feet in front of the president and gave him the most moving criticism I've ever seen. With her heart breaking, she told him he was not welcome in Juarez. She was amazing. There were lots of ugly protests outside the 4 hour meeting, and Sec Gomez Mont really looked uncaring in front of the protestors.

The President returned to CJ on the 17th, and it went a little better. But he's asked the social cabinet to rapidly deploy assistance to Juarez. It is far worse than most federal officials could have imagined. There are people starving (and those are their words to me), over 100,000 people have lost their jobs, hundreds of teen pregnancies, only 25% of the kids graduate from high school, over 100,000 homes abandoned, and that many families have abandoned CJ.

Young men are stealing cars for 500 pesos, and killing people for 3,000. there are medical clinics that have no medicine, no supplies, and no medical professionals. Some of the federal officials with whom I work are shocked.

The President appointed 3 individuals who I don't know to be his liaisons in CJ. The young 36 year old Harvard MPA Antonio Vivanco is now my main counterpart, but he's asked for a week to get himself familiar with their plan in Juarez. So we are coming up with low expectations of bilateral discussions, so we will focus on meeting folks in El Paso. I hope you can meet with some of us. We'll have Liz Bauch who you recall, some people from AID/Washington, the ONDCP White House, Northcom, and others from my staff. Liz and I would love to talk to you about the March meeting in DF and future plans.

I'll be arriving Sunday and hope we can schedule some time during the week.

My best regards,  
Rodger