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Border School Training Conference Held in California

By [Robert Bunker](#)

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Border School Training Conference Held in California

Border School was held 26-27 June 2012 in Rancho Cucamonga, California. Sponsors of this training were the Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (LA HIDTA) in coordination with the Southwestern Border Sheriff's Coalition, Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition, Coalition for a Drug Free California, and Chabot Strategies, LLC.

The training conference was attended by over one-hundred representatives from local, state, and federal police in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas as well as cleared personnel engaging in US national policy formulation. Topics addressed included Mexican cartel history and symbol identification; the role of plazas (illicit economy distribution points into the US); cartel use of physical violence (torture/killing), psychological operations taking place in Mexico and the spillover into the US; linkages between transnational gangs, the cartels, and terrorist organizations; international (black market) cartel weapons sources; the early years of gang enforcement on the streets of Los Angeles; and countermeasures and response strategies derived from law enforcement operations and use of technology.

A public corruption panel was convened to address how to identify cartel takeover of cities within the United States through the corruption of individual public servants, US law enforcement, politicians, and judges. A special evening screening of the document *Drug Wars: Silver or Lead* and a question and answer session with the producer and other panelists also took place.

The speakers at the training conference were Sgt. Richard Valdemar, Ret. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD); Dr. Robert Bunker, Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (LA HIDTA); Dr. Paul Chabot, Chabot Strategies, LLC; Sheriff Sigi Gonzalez, Southwestern Border Sheriff's Coalition; Donnie Reay, Texas Border Sheriffs' Coalition; Rusty Flen *Drug Wars* producer; Mr. Ian Rainsborough, Chabot Strategies, LLC; and Sheriff Larry Dever, Southwestern Border Sheriffs' Coalition.

Key high points and lessons learned from the training conference were as follows:

- What happens on the border doesn't stay on the border.
- The Mexican cartels and their associate drug and street gangs now have operations in well over 1,000 US cities throughout the country. Public corruption on the US side of the border is increasing and almost invisible in media stories. Concerns regarding the 'Colombianization of Mexico' and the paramilitary, terrorist, and criminal insurgent tactics of the Mexican cartels were evident in many of the training sessions.
- Training now exists to help allow patrol officers to identify the presence of Mexican personnel that they may encounter during traffic stops and during domestic disputes in their homes. Also

training exists to help identify businesses that are fronts for cartel activities in neighborhoods and towns that have been corrupted by the cartels.

- Stretches of the Southwestern US border are being increasingly called 'Almost America' by many the ranchers and rural residents whose families have lived there for generations. US law enforcement is increasingly unable to protect those residents from armed cartel enforcers and operatives leading narcotics loads and human trafficking groups over their private lands. If those residents attempt to report such Cartel intrusions to law enforcement or defend their property rights, they face lawsuits by deep pocket interests, or even worse, physical violence directed at themselves and their families in retaliatory Cartel paramilitary operations.
- US residents in border towns and cities occasionally hear gunfire and explosions taking place on the Mexican side of the border. In some extreme cases, heavy caliber (50 cal) and smaller arms fire (7.62 and 5.62 mm) bullets have struck buildings on the US side from firefights taking place in Mexico. In another instance, an entire town was burned down on the Mexican side of the border by the cartels, and the glow from the fires and smoke from the burning structures could be seen from the US. They had given the residents 72 hours notice of this event, which created a massive refugee traffic jam on a small bridge leading to the United States.
- A special guest appearance by actor Steven Segal, a Sheriff's Deputy with Hudspeth County, Texas, served as a reminder that some Hollywood stars fully back the work of US law enforcement.

Border School will be held in El Paso, Texas on September 22, 2012. Over five-hundred attendees are expected. There are discussions about Border School returning to California later in the fall.

For US law enforcement, governmental, and military inquiries, contact Mrs. Pam Faraone, Director, via <linkamerica@sbcglobal.net>. For information on this and other counter-narcotics/counter-cartel training programs in Southern California go to www.lahidtatraining.org.

About the Author

Robert Bunker

Dr. Robert J. Bunker holds degrees in political science, government, behavioral science, social science, anthropology-geography, and history. Training taken includes that provided by DHS, FLETC, DIA, Cal DOJ, Cal POST, LA JRIC, NTOA, and private security entities in counter-terrorism, counter-surveillance, incident-response, force protection, and intelligence. Dr. Bunker has been involved in red teaming and counter-terrorism exercises and has provided operations support within Los Angeles County.

Available online at : <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/border-school-training-conference-held-in-california>

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