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WHA Press Guidance
September 13, 2010

MEXICO: Arrest of Drug Kingpin Sergio Villarreal Barragan, "El Grande"

Q: Do you have any comment on Mexico's capture of drug kingpin Sergio Villarreal Barragan?

- **Mexican authorities arrested Sergio Villarreal Barragan on Sunday, September 12 in Puebla, Mexico.**
- **We congratulate the Mexican government on this important step forward and are confident that Mexican authorities will continue making progress in its efforts to dismantle drug trafficking organizations.**
- **We refer you to the Mexican authorities for further details.**

Q: (IF ASKED) What can you tell us about the U.S. role in the arrest? Did the USG provide intelligence or assist in any way?

- **The successful operation conducted against Sergio Villarreal demonstrates the determination of Mexico and its increasing capability to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat the drug cartels that threaten the security and well-being of citizens of both our nations.**
- **While our longstanding practice of information sharing is clearly contributing to Mexico's recent success, U.S. personnel do not participate directly in Mexican law-enforcement activities. These are Mexican operations, planned and executed by Mexican authorities.**
- **The United States stands firm on our commitment for total cooperation and shared-responsibility in this fight against a common enemy.**

Q: (IF ASKED) Was there a reward offered by the State Department for Villarreal's capture?

- **Sergio Villarreal is not listed as a target on the Narcotics Rewards Program.**

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Background:

On Sunday, September 12, Mexican marines arrested Sergio Villarreal Barragan, a presumed leader of the Beltran Leyva cartel and one of the country's most-wanted drug traffickers. Barragan, alias "El Grande," was captured in the state of Puebla.

Villarreal's capture is the fourth major blow to drug cartels by the government of President Felipe Calderon in the past year. Arturo Beltran Leyva, the top leader of Beltran Leyva cartel, was killed in a raid outside Mexico City on Dec. 16, 2009; Ignacio "Nacho" Coronel, the Sinaloa cartel's No. 3 capo, was killed by soldiers on July 29; and Edgar Valdez Villarreal, alias "La Barbie", was captured by federal police in late- August.

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