

**Deputy Commander  
of the Armed Forces  
MEXICO**

## General Background

It is the fall of 2023. The previous two years have seen a number of dramatic developments in the state of New Mexico. The state's economy has been hit hard by massive cuts from Washington in defense spending and the planned closing of major air force and army bases, which have disproportionately impacted New Mexico. All of the bases inside of New Mexico, including the famed White Sands missile base, have been slated for closing by end of 2015. The closings alone would nearly double the number of unemployed New Mexicans, which was already near the highest in the United States at almost 20%. More than one-third of New Mexicans are already at or below federal poverty levels.

Despite significant economic recovery in the rest of the country, New Mexican private industry has suffered its own set of financial issues. New U.S. agreements with India and China have limited many New Mexican technology companies from growing their business with Mexico and South American partners. A trade embargo on Venezuela earlier this year has put three of New Mexico's largest manufacturers on the brink of bankruptcy.

In addition, new and stricter immigration policies that were enacted in spring of 2014 have been very unpopular with the majority of New Mexico's residents. Many of the Mexican-American residents in the state were put in the position of having to deport some of their relatives or face criminal charges. Recent discussions in Congress on establishing English as the official national language also deeply rankled the New Mexican populace and leadership.

Everything came to a boil last year at the state's centennial celebration. The Vice President and other U.S. dignitaries were literally booed off the stage. Hours later, federal marshals and secret service agents were summoned to help defend the IRS office three blocks away after a small group had fire bombed the building. Four New Mexican residents were killed by one of the trucks carrying federal marshals. The four had attempted to prevent the truck from pulling into the parking area by lying down in the street. The driver of the truck claimed that he did not see them because of the smoke and darkness, although it was 3:00 in the afternoon.

The response from Washington did not ease tensions. Washington took a hard line against calls from New Mexico to provide assistance ("we must continue to act in accordance with what benefits all of the citizens of the United States and not play favorites"). During a press conference, the President failed to acknowledge the deaths of the four residents and instead called on the people of New Mexico to resist "violence and terrorism" and to "abide by the laws of this great country."

After two more incidents of fire bombing (one at a postal station in Santa Fe and another attack at a small IRS office in Roswell), additional federal marshals were ordered to guard other federal facilities throughout New Mexico. Federal troops were stationed at the state borders on federal interstates to inspect trucks entering the state. Outraged at the level of federal intervention, the New Mexican congressional delegation submitted their joint resignations the next day.

Incredibly, within a matter of weeks, the state government began to consider seriously the extraordinary possibility of seceding from the United States. The Governor went on state-wide internet broadcast to explain how the U.S. federal government has now made life in New Mexico impossible under “its tyrannical stranglehold.” The state legislature, buoyed by 80% poll numbers in favor of secession by New Mexican residents, enacted special legislation and officially seceded from the United States. Last month, in a historic, state-wide special referendum, the citizens of New Mexico voted more than three to one to finalize their independence as a fully autonomous, separate nation.

This development has been very difficult for the remaining United States. The current administration still considers New Mexico part of its sovereign nation and has not recognized New Mexico as an independent country. The rest of the world, on the other hand (which has been monitoring the situation closely for the past few months), has embraced New Mexican independence and has tried to put pressure on the United States to relinquish its claims to New Mexican assets. As one leader of a prominent Middle Eastern nation put it, “if we are to promote democracy across the planet, we must be willing to promote it inside of our own borders.”

Tensions between the new nation and its parent country have heightened since the formal secession vote last month. Many international observers worry about the real possibility of formal conflict between the two countries. Of particular concern is that New Mexico, by virtue of Los Alamos, White Sands and other former United States military facilities and weapons systems, is now the third largest nuclear weapons power in the world, behind the United States and the Russian Federation.

A number of specific actions have also contributed to the anxiety. The United States has deployed nearly 10,000 National Guard troops along the interstates and U.S. highways that connect New Mexico to its neighboring states. Another 7,500 troops are guarding the New Mexico – Mexico border. The troops have been ordered to block all trucks from entering or exiting the new nation, effectively blockading all ground transportation to and from New Mexico. In addition, the United States has frozen the banking assets of companies that claim New Mexico as their home country (which includes some major aerospace and defense companies with important ties internationally).

On the other side, there have been two attacks on U.S. military bases in Arizona where explosives were used against empty transport equipment. These attacks were carried out by militia who claim loyalty to New Mexico (but disavowed by New Mexico leadership). There has been reported sniper fire on some of the U.S. troops patrolling the New Mexican border, but no reported injuries. There is real concern that more conflict could erupt.

The United Nations has appointed a delegation (bypassing a threatened Security Council veto from the United States) to try to broker some sort of agreement to reduce the current tensions. The delegation has asked representatives from each country to attend meetings this afternoon.

## **Confidential Information for the Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces, MEXICO**

The following is a brief description of your role. Please read and consider the information carefully. Note that you have both individual and team goals. You may not share this document with any other class member (whether or not they are on your team), but you are free to share or withhold this information as you see fit during discussions or in written correspondence.

You are the deputy commander of the armed forces and a two star general in the army of Mexico (Estados Unidos Mexicanos). You work for the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and have been a member of the military for decades. You have been asked to serve as part of the Mexican negotiation team. Your negotiation team is new to you, and you have never worked together before. The team has been granted full authority to make whatever agreements are appropriate in light of the information below.

You have been warned that the foreign minister will be part of the team. You are worried that the foreign minister will be a barrier to coming to any agreement. You have been told that the foreign minister is only interested in self promotion and would sacrifice national interests in exchange for getting some international pub. You are also concerned that the foreign minister will strive to antagonize the United States to play to the growing anti-American political base in Mexico.

Mexico is in a precarious spot here. Mexico was the first country in the world to recognize New Mexico as an independent country. Mexico has already established a number of treaties with New Mexico, including a reciprocal defense agreement. Under that agreement, Mexican military resources are committed to the defense of New Mexico in the event of foreign hostilities. At the time of the signing, it seemed like only a symbolic gesture, but given the events of the last few weeks, there is real concern that the Mexican army could be dragged into a potential conflict with the United States.

Other than the possible presence of the foreign minister on the team, you have been given very little direction or information on what exactly will be taking place. From your perspective, your main goal is to prevent any type of conflict involving the Mexican military. First and foremost, the United States must remove its 7,500 troops from the New Mexican – Mexican border. The presence of these troops could provoke hostilities or retaliation from both the New Mexican and your Mexican troops (or other militia groups). And it is a national humiliation to have them there.

The presence of these troops is also threatening to expose and even undermine covert Mexican action supporting New Mexican military operations. The Mexican army has been secretly working directly with New Mexican National Guard members on creating new bases along the borders with Arizona and Texas. In addition, Mexican military advisers are already working with a number of New Mexican military leaders on getting the former U.S. bases fully

operational. If the United States were to find out that Mexico is deeply involved in these efforts, it could set American-Mexican relations back more than a century.

The Supreme Commander made it clear to you: your role in the talks is to ensure that there is a peace agreement of some sort signed between the U.S. and New Mexico – and fast. And any such agreement must include the removal of troops from the Mexican border. Anything short of that could be disastrous strategically and politically. This does not have to be a final, long-term deal that is twenty pages long. All that is required is at least some brief non-aggression pact that gives both sides some breathing room.

You are also worried about what sort of military presence the United Nations intends to impose. You are not excited about having U.N troops (who would come from different countries) parading around your border either. Plus, it would also be humiliating to the Mexican army to have foreign troops intervene. Instead, perhaps the Mexican army can play a role as the peacekeeping force on its own, doing things like monitoring roads and highways and inspecting military bases nearby.

This could be quite an opportunity to promote the role and prestige of the Mexican military. You can just imagine the press conference announcing the nonaggression pact between New Mexico and the United States that was brokered by Mexico, with your boss at the podium and you on his right-hand side.

You want to make sure that Mexico has a key role in taking credit for any agreement. You will need to ensure that you are part of the drafting committee of any press announcements or statements, and have some control over the public relations of the discussion's outcomes.