

Gary J. Hale de los Santos
U.S.-Mexico National Security and Intelligence Policy Expert



Mr. Hale is a policy expert who has completed a 37-year career with the U.S. federal government and who specializes in Mexico national security and U.S.-Mexico border issues.

Hale began his career as a Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) Operator with the U.S. Army Security Agency and worked on Soviet, Communist Bloc, Middle East and North Africa issues while stationed at a classified facility in Europe (1972 -1977.) During his last assignment he served as an Executive Agent for the National Security Agency at the U.S. Air Force School of Applied Cryptologic Sciences, Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, Texas (1977-1978.) Hale joined the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 1979 and rose to the rank of the senior-most DEA Intelligence Official operating on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border during his last posting in Houston where he was reported to the DEA and to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in Washington, D.C.

Hale was the Embassy Intelligence Coordinator, U.S. Embassy La Paz, Bolivia from 1987-1990. In 1990 Hale received the DEA Administrator's Award, the agency's highest recognition, for conceiving and implementing Operation SCREAMING EAGLE that led to the seizure of hundreds of general aviation aircraft involved in cocaine transport throughout Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. He also directed a tactical operation that resulted in the capture of Roberto SUAREZ-Gomez, known as Bolivia's "King of Cocaine." Hale also received a Special Act Award for his participation in pre-invasion intelligence operations (Operation BLUE SPOON) and during the invasion of Panama and the arrest of Panamanian dictator Manuel NORIEGA (Operation JUST CAUSE.)

Hale had various assignments in Washington, D.C. (1990-2000) including assignment as Chief, DEA HQs Intelligence Publications Unit where he authored, edited, proofed, laid-out and published national-level strategic analysis publications such as the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report; the National Narcotics Intelligence Consumers Committee Annual Assessment; the Worldwide Cocaine Situation Report; numerous Country Profiles; the Laboratory Lexicon - A Guide to Cocaine Laboratory Terminology and others. Hale served on a multi-agency fact-finding panel of intelligence experts commissioned by Attorney General Janet Reno to assess the drug, crime and security situation in the Caribbean as it related to the overall threat to the U.S. Hale subsequently authored and briefed a theatre-wide assessment to General Reno and other policy makers.

As Chief, Sensitive Operations Unit Hale served as DEA's National SIGINT Officer and graduated from the National Senior Cryptologic Course (CY-600) at NSA-Ft. Meade, MD. In this capacity, Hale managed DEA's worldwide SIGINT collection programs, coordinated unilateral and bilateral collection operations with NSA and sanitized and disseminated SIGINT products to DEA offices worldwide. He developed policy by formulating a Target Specific Information (TSI) protocol that provided a legal mechanism for federal law enforcement agencies to request support from the National SIGINT system.

In 1993, Hale served a tour of duty at the U.S. Embassy Bogota, Colombia where he participated in the capture of Pablo ESCOBAR and the demise of the Medellin Cartel. In 1995, Hale was recognized by Attorney General Janet Reno as a "Hispanic Hero Serving America." In 1997-1998 Hale served at the U.S. Embassy Mexico City where he participated in the capture of head of the Juarez Cartel, Amado CARRILLO-Fuentes, also known as the "Lord of the Skies." He also led the hunt for Agustin VASQUEZ-Mendoza, a federal fugitive who killed a DEA Agent in Phoenix in 1994 and who was hiding in the mountains of the state of Michoacán.

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As Chief of Intelligence, DEA Houston Field Division (2000-2010,) Hale authored drug policy papers including the first-ever DEA submission to the Presidential Daily Brief; conceptualized and developed an Alternate Futures - Red Cell Analysis for Washington policy makers; served as a speaker and panel member for bi-lateral drug policy plenary sessions in Cuernavaca, Washington, San Antonio and Houston with U.S. and Mexico Cabinet members, agency heads and members of the U.S. Congress.

In November 2008 Hale served as a Mexico expert for the Obama Presidential Transition Team by providing policy direction on the issue of cross-border, or spill-over violence from Mexico to the U.S. In this role, he crafted the federal government definition for spill-over violence and assisted the intelligence community with preparing a briefing for president-elect Obama.

Hale was the keynote speaker at DEA Hispanic Heritage Ceremonies in Dallas (2002) and Houston (2008, 2009) and was a featured speaker and panel member at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy regarding drug strategies employed in the U.S. and Mexico (2008, 2010.) In 2009 Hale served as a keynote speaker at 29 venues during which he addressed drug enforcement, border violence, terrorism and homeland security issues for approximately 2000 law enforcement, security, intelligence and policy professionals in the U.S. and Mexico. Hale retired from DEA in July 2010 and was appointed as a Drug Policy Fellow at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy in December 2010. In this capacity he has authored numerous publications regarding U.S. and Mexico security issues.

In January 2011, Hale joined the U.S. Embassy Mexico City as the Law Enforcement-Intelligence Program Coordinator for the Merida Initiative. Hale worked closely with U.S. and Government of Mexico (GOM) officials to aid in the analysis of law enforcement intelligence needs and to determine and help define and document program requirements, activities and functions. Hale assisted in the development of intelligence requirements, all-source intelligence-gathering and fusion, development of data collation structures, conduct of research and analysis; development of reporting and dissemination procedures and products, operational planning; force structure and personnel specializations; training and career development; ethics, corruption, vetting, internal affairs, and polygraph.

His knowledge and experience in these areas assisted the development of concepts of operations, programmatic elements, budgetary estimates and implementation and policy strategies for U.S. involvement in the development of Mexican counter-drug forces including the Federal Police (Secretaria de Seguridad Publica – SSP) Army (Secretaria de Defensa - SEDENA,) the Navy (Secretaria de la Marina - SEMAR,) the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduria General de la Republica – PGR) and the national Intelligence Service (Centro de Investigación y Seguridad Nacional – CISEN.) Hale conducted liaison, coordinated, advised, and mentored GOM officials to assist them in better understanding law enforcement intelligence principles and implement effective intelligence-gathering and analytical strategies. In this capacity Hale managed several multi-million dollar budgets out of a 1.6 billion dollar enterprise that were used to provide equipment, training and other law enforcement-intelligence capacity assistance to GOM agencies that performed counter-drug missions. Hale provided support by developing intelligence units in numerous Mexican states with emphasis on U.S.-Mexico Border States such as Sonora, Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas and other areas designated by the U.S.-Mexico bi-lateral High Level Group (HLG) in Washington, D.C. and Mexico City.

In July 2012, Hale separated from the U.S. Embassy to serve as an independent intelligence and national security consultant to the Presidential Transition Team of Enrique Peña-Nieto, then president-elect of Mexico. Hale was tasked with reviewing the national intelligence requirements of the GOM, and the national threat assessment provided during the transition to President Enrique Peña-Nieto by the Calderon administration, to determine what areas need immediate attention, what areas need improvement and what areas need development. Hale provided ideas and proposals for the consideration of the Transition Team including proposals that draw on existing capabilities.

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Hale recommended the formation of Intelligence Fusion Centers to better track and prosecute drug trafficking, terrorist or other criminal targets. Hale also recommended that intelligence sharing agreements be revised, formalized and written to ensure that national sovereignty is respected and that Mexico receives the value of intelligence collected by other nations with which it collaborates. As a result of recommendations made by Hale, the GOM began taking steps to establish a “Comando Unico” or Unity of Command between federal and state law enforcement agencies. This structure will be further developed by the creation of the Gendarmería Nacional of first-ever Mexican National Guard. When implemented, the Comando Unico structure will lend itself to passing intelligence methods down to the state level and thereby further increase the intelligence capacity of the various participants throughout the Mexican government, thereby leading to a more secure U.S.-Mexico border.

In October 2012, Hale formed The Center for Trans-Border Security Policy as a forum for Mexican and U.S. academics, jurists, business leaders, students, statesmen and government officials to monitor, assess and analyze Trans-Border Spill-Over Incidents from San Diego to Brownsville. The Center provided objective data analysis and reporting with policy recommendations; produced policy recommendations for maintaining safe borders while ensuring security, continued economic growth and sound immigration policies; advocated for U.S. and Mexico victims of cross-border violence by way of providing information and facts; reviewed and assessed the alleged terrorist-cartel links and their impact on the U.S. Mexico border; provided training and education recommendations to state and federal law makers in order to enact legislation sensitivity training on migrant and other issues a requirement for all local, state, federal and military agents assigned to any border states - northern and southern borders, and served as a resource for U.S. and Mexico local, state and federal agencies operating on the border. Hale sponsored the inaugural conference of the Center for Trans-Border Security Policy in Laredo, Texas on October 26, 2012 where numerous military, state, federal and other policy makers attended and provided their monetary and political support for moving forward. Later, in March 2014, the Center for Trans-Border Security Policy was adopted by the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy where Hale became a founding member and expert at the newly formed Mexico Center.

Hale holds a B.S.in Computer Sciences from Franklin Pierce University, Nashua, New Hampshire and an M.S.in Law and Judicial Policy from the Universidad de Almería, Spain. Hale is an alumnus of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government and the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Leadership. Hale is a native of Laredo, Texas, is a polyglot who speaks English, Spanish, German and beginner level Arabic.

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Gary J. Hale de los Santos – México Scholarly Publications 2004-2014

- Indications and Warnings Template for Force Protection; February 2004
- Drugs and Terror Vulnerability Assessment of the U.S.-Mexico Border; April 2004
- Los Zetas: An Organizational Overview and Threat Assessment; October 2005
- Situation Report: Changing Landscape of Nuevo Laredo; October 2005
- Predictive Intelligence, Potential Zeta Threat; December 2005
- Cocaine Flows and the Strategic Impact of U.S. Pressure on Mexico; July 2007
- Force Projection - Force Protection on the U.S.-Mexico Border; April 2008
- Red Cell – Mexico, A Direct Challenge to Mexican National Sovereignty; June 2008
- U.S.-Mexico Border Overview and Situational Analysis; October 2008
- The Nexus between Drugs and Terrorism; October 2008
- Car Bombs and IED's in Mexico; October 14, 2010
- Americans Are Under Attack - In Mexico; November 1, 2010
- The Demise of the Gulf Cartel; November 6, 2010
- Mexican Media Yield to the Cartels; September 26, 2010
- La Familia Michoacána Seeks Terms for Surrender; November 10, 2010
- Exodus of Victims Evacuate War Zone; November 13, 2010
- The Perfect Storm is Brewing in Northeast Mexico; November 22, 2010
- Zetas Threaten a Nation-State; December 30, 2010
- The Re-Appearance of La Nueva Federación; January 3, 2010
- La Nueva Federación Brings Anarchy to Nuevo León; January 9, 2011
- A "Failed State" In Mexico: Tamaulipas Declares Itself Ungovernable; July 26, 2011
- Drug Cartel Communications 101; December 13, 2011
- The Mexican Government Begins to Re-take Northeastern Mexico; December 9, 2011
- Mexico is a Friend, Not an Enemy; February 16, 2012
- Paramilitary Power in Mexico: A Strategy Shift in Mexico's Drug War; July 25, 2012
- Corruption: A Lethal Weapon, Too; August 29, 2012
- Legalization of Marijuana: When, Not If; September 19, 2012
- Targeting Criminals, Not Crimes: The Kingpin Strategy Works; October 24, 2012
- What is the Best Regulatory Framework for Legalized Marijuana? - January 31, 201
- Vigilantism in Mexico: A New Phase in Mexico's Security Crisis - April 18, 2014
- Autodefensas, Vigilantes and Self-Policing in Mexico: Civilian Dominance over Public Safety Policies? June 23, 2014
- Gary Hale: Pot Legalization Is No Longer A Trend, its Policy - July 16, 2014
- A Paradigm Shift on Federal Marijuana Policy - August 15, 2014

<http://bakerinstitute.org/personnel/fellows-scholars/ghale>

<http://gruposavant.com/>

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