



**CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**
Tijuana B.C., Mexico

April 10, 2010

Gilda Vilaplana
President, Fundacion Esperanza de Mexico

Dear Gilda:

Thank you for meeting with me to provide a snapshot of the fine humanitarian work that the Fundacion Esperanza performs and the excellent volunteer opportunities that it offers to American young people. I am sorry to hear that the revised Travel Warning issued by the U.S. Department of State last month is prompting the families of some of your prospective volunteers to reconsider their participation. There are clearly misconceptions about this Travel Warning. In light of this, you asked me to furnish a fuller clarification, and I am happy to do so below.

As I explained during our meeting, the U.S. Government has an obligation to inform our citizens about travel safety in foreign countries, but we only issue only one document concerning travel conditions for any single foreign country. That document – whether a “warning”, an “alert”, or a simple notice – must broadly reflect conditions throughout that country. In a country as large as Mexico, this is obviously a difficult task considering that security and travel conditions can vary widely from one region to another.

The changes appearing in the recent Travel Warning were not directed specifically towards Baja California, but instead were largely the result of growing security concerns in other areas of Mexico bordering the United States. As we all know, the violence among organized crime cartels -- and between those cartels and law enforcement agencies – has become quite severe in Chihuahua, Durango, Coahuila, and Nuevo Leon in recent months. Victims have included American citizens, such as the employees of our Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez who were killed at the beginning of last month. The revised Travel Warning was issued primarily in response to events in those areas. For this reason, it “urge[s] U.S. citizens to delay unnecessary travel to parts of Durango, Coahuila and Chihuahua states,” however, **it makes no such recommendation regarding travel to Tijuana or other parts of Baja California.**

The language concerning crime and insecurity in Baja California in this recent Travel Warning is essentially unchanged from all of the previous travel notices over the past two years. We acknowledge those problems, but we also recognize that authorities at the federal, state, and municipal levels have made progress in combating crime and have scored some important successes here.

I hope that you will find this clarification useful and that the Fundacion Esperanza will continue to benefit from the involvement of American volunteers.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steven Kashkett'.

Steven Kashkett
Consul General