

March 10, 2009

Carlos Flores Vizcarra  
Consul General of Mexico  
1990 West Camelback, #110  
Phoenix, AZ 85015

Dear Consul General Flores:

Your February 23, 2009 letter to the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors lodged several complaints about the treatment of inmates at Tent City. This came as a great surprise and even greater disappointment to me. To add insult to injury, I learned of your letter through local media outlets and not through you directly, as professional courtesy dictated.

Furthermore, your letter was penned only hours after you and I had just shared a cordial meal. During that breakfast, you never once outlined any major concerns you had with how I am handling the incarceration of illegal aliens. This leads me to believe you had some hidden political motive for writing this complaint letter and that you are simply echoing the false allegations routinely made by critics of my illegal immigration policies and programs.

In any case, let this letter serve to outline the facts:

- a. We moved 200 inmates, all of whom are convicted on state charges, most of whom have holds for other agencies, on February 4<sup>th</sup>. They were chained and walked from one jail to another, a distance of about 400 yards. The road is inside the Durango Jail Complex and is used for detention related matters. This is our common practice for moving inmates. We have made several such inmate transfers over the years and with no public outcry. We do not conduct secret inmate transfers. Why do you suggest these illegal alien inmates require special treatment? They do not. I also have an open door policy with the media. They are notified about changes in policy or notable events which take place in the Sheriff's Office. However, it is up to the media to decide whether to cover such events.
- b. It is not my practice to consult with foreign governments about my jail policies. Still, we did have you in mind when we decided to house these inmates separately. Our hope was to make visitation by your agency's staff a little easier. We also believed it would help immigration authorities (ICE) to have one central location to come to when they routinely pick up these inmates after their sentences are completed. We believe both objectives were met by this change. Your letter refers to this decision as "a sham and clearly disingenuous." How unfortunate that you feel that way given we had your best interest in mind.

**CONSUL GENERAL CARLOS FLORES**  
**PAGE TWO**  
**MARCH 10, 2009**

- c. Contrary to your letter's assertions, your staff has not been restricted from visiting Tent City nor have any of them expressed concerns to our staff members. From February 5<sup>th</sup> to March 5<sup>th</sup>, your staff has made several visits to Tent City. Each time my Captain asked if there were any issues or concerns that required attention. Each time he was told no. If your own employees have not complained, why are you?

I assure you that the inmates being held in Tent City are treated fairly and humanely. This is something that the country of Mexico surely cannot claim. As the former regional director of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), stationed in Mexico, I know only too well how prisoners, both Mexican citizens and foreigners, are treated while confined in that country's prisons.

Consul General Flores, I am placing you on notice of other immediate changes. We will seek full reimbursement from the Mexican government for every Mexican citizen determined to be in this county illegally who is incarcerated in Maricopa County jails. On average, there are 2000 illegal immigrants from Mexico housed here at any given time for various crimes from violating drunken driving laws and drug possession to kidnapping and murder.

As you must know, the State of Arizona is facing unprecedented financial woes. I am forced to look for ways to lessen the burden on citizen taxpayers. You must certainly agree, it is unfair to ask hard working Americans to continue to pay for housing, feeding and medically tending to your country's criminals. I do hope you and your government colleagues will understand my position.

Secondly, your staff has long enjoyed a "most favored nation" status in my jails which allowed them 24 hour access to incarcerated Mexican national inmates. This practice will now be suspended and your employees will be treated like any other governmental entity visiting their jailed citizenry.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Arpaio  
Sheriff, Maricopa County