

## Cable sobre los contactos de DEA y FBI

La embajada de Estados Unidos en México revela su preocupación por los ataques del crimen organizado contra su personal e instituciones en el país; también señala el inicio de una escalada de la violencia en 2008.

S E C R E T MEXICO 000193

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DNG: CO 01/22/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: THE BATTLE JOINED: NARCO VIOLENCE TRENDS IN 2008

REF: A. CIUDAD JUAREZ 22

B. MEXICO 3586

C. MEXICO 2371

D. MEXICO 3498

E. MEXICO 3779

F. MEXICO 1766

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Charles V. Barclay.

Reason: 1.4 (b), (d)

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Summary  
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1. (C) 2008 set a new record for organized crime-related homicides with more than 6000 killings. Violence in Mexico suddenly provided fodder for U.S. and international media with commentators suggesting worse to come. While the death toll is already at disturbing levels, and there are no signs violence will taper off anytime soon, we will continue to evaluate information or evidence that would suggest the cartels have decided to up the ante significantly by undertaking mass-casualty attacks on civilians, systematically attacking GOM officials or institutions or targeting USG personnel. Internecine struggles among the cartels and GOM counter narcotic successes have increased the costs of doing business and account for most of the up-tick last year. Frustrated traffickers, seeking to diversify profit-making activities through kidnappings and extortion, account for more. End Summary.

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Drug-Related Homicides on the Rise  
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2. (C) Few killings in Mexico are thoroughly investigated, and determining which are truly related to organized crime remains an inexact science, but Mexico's Attorney General's office's year-end estimate stands at 6262. Other GOM authorities put the toll from organized crime slightly higher. SEDENA reports that drug-related killings represented roughly 17% of all homicides last year, while the National System of Public Security (SNSP -- part of the Public Security Secretariat (SSP)) estimates a total of approximately 10,700 intentional homicides.

(S/NF) Table I: Organized Crime-Related Killings, By Year\*

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2005	1855
2006	2489
2007	3038
2008	6380

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\*Source: SEDENA

(S/NF) Table II: 2008 OC-Related Killings, By Month\*

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Jan	282
Feb	283
Mar	417
Apr	320
May	496
Jun	531
Jul	540
Aug	587
Sep	526
Oct	847
Nov	843
Dec	708

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\*Source: SEDENA

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Spike in Violence Concentrated at the Border

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3. (C) Violence continued to be concentrated in a few key states, and in 2008 there was a spike in drug-related killings in the northern border territories. An estimated 41 percent of these homicides took place in Chihuahua and Baja California states and largely in two urban areas, Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana. (see MEXICO 3586). Sinaloa continued to rank among the most violent states with approximately 1048

(or 18%) of these killings. The surge in violence along the border stems largely from the intensified struggle among cartels over a few lucrative land crossings to the U.S. In particular, the January 2008 arrest of cartel leader Alfredo Beltran Leyva sparked a serious rift among the Gulf, Juarez and Sinaloa (Pacific) cartels, which is being played out viciously in Ciudad Juarez. (See MEXICO 1766) In Tijuana, rival factions of the weakened Arellano Felix Organization, one of which is backed by the Sinaloa cartel, are battling for control.

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Changes In Cartel Behavior  
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4. (SBU) Beyond its broadened scope, the nature of cartel violence changed in 2008: organized violence was characterized by significantly increased brutality, a callous disregard for the potential for collateral damage and more frequent targeting of soldiers and police. Mexico's drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) have also more frequently orchestrated violence to send intimidating messages to security forces, the Mexican public and the body politic.

5. (SBU) Incidents, such as the August beheadings of 12 in Yucatan, the execution style killing of 24 on the outskirts of Mexico City in September, late fall killings of soldiers in Monterrey and Guerrero in late December contributed to growing public unease here and garnered media attention abroad. Several first-time-ever incidents involving grenades and improvised explosive devices (such as the notorious Independence Day grenade attack in Morelia, the shooting and undetonated grenade attack on the US Consulate in Monterrey, the use of improvised explosive devices in downtown Mexico City and Sinaloa, and a grenade attack on police cadets in Jalisco) demonstrate that not only have the cartels successfully expanded their arsenals, but at least some elements have developed a tolerance for inflicting civilian casualties.

6. (SBU) Cartels have also expanded their use of violence to intimidate. Beheadings and the prominent placement of dismembered bodies in public places, relatively rare two years ago are now common throughout the country. The late night grenade/shooting attack on our consulate in Monterrey was obviously designed to send a message, although no individual or group has ever claimed responsibility. More explicit was the January assault on the Monterrey offices of

Televisa, accompanied by a message telling the broadcaster to do a better job reporting on corrupt public officials.

Attacks such as these remain sporadic so far, and we have insufficient indications whether they mark a new trend or not.

7. (SBU) Despite these sporadic attacks, Mexico's drug war continues to primarily impact security forces and those linked directly or indirectly to the drug trade. The civilian population in some urban areas along the border remains bunkered down with some of those who have the money either sending their children to school in the U.S. or relocating entirely to minimize risk. In much of the rest of the country, though, the civilian population not involved in the drug trade remains essentially insulated from the violence, though not from its effects.

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Police Killings Increase Along With Overall Death Toll  
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8. (SBU) SEDENA estimates that at least 522 civilian law enforcement and military personnel were murdered last year, compared to 315 in 2007.

(S/NF) Table III: Drug-Related Military/Police Homicides:  
2007\* 2008\*\*  
(% of total)

AFI	22 (6.9)	5 (1.0)
PFP	12 (3.8)	37 (19.7)
State		
Police	62 (19.8)	110 (21.1)
Ministerial		
Police	63 (20.0)	14 (2.7)
Municipal		
Police	120 (38.0)	305 (58.4)
Military	27 (8.6)	51 (9.8)
Other	9 (2.9)	Unavailable

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Total 315 522

CENAPI (Mexico's Center for Information, Analysis and Planning) statistics

\*\*SEDENA statistics

9. (C) Increased confrontations between security forces and criminals is one explanation for the increasing killing of security forces personnel. GOM authorities argue that killings are no longer just score-settling among bad cops,

but increasingly the consequence of the government's aggressive fight against the cartels. Some analysts we have spoken to agree. However, they also note that with few exceptions the majority of deaths are not the result of direct confrontations. They argue that the crackdown on police corruption has put compromised police officials in the position of either being prosecuted or breaking their established agreements/arrangements with the cartels. Hence, some of those who presumably choose the latter course are being punished brutally. (See MEXICO 2371, 3498)

10. (SBU) It is worth noting that police victims (at all levels of government) represented eight percent of all 2008 killings believed to be drug-related, a figure slightly lower than the percentage in 2007. The vast majority of victims continue to be state and municipal law enforcement officers. Senior level, federal police killings were still rare occurrences in 2008. The most high-profile death remains the May killing of Edgar Millan Gomez, the country's highest-ranking federal police officer.

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Targeting of Soldiers An Ominous Sign  
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11. (S/NF) There have been notable incidents of horrific violence against soldiers, including a string of slayings of enlisted men in Monterrey in October and the systematic decapitation of seven troops in Guerrero (see MEXICO 3779). The theory that those killed in Guerrero were rogue soldiers involved in drug trafficking has been discounted, suggesting the cartels have begun to target soldiers to exact revenge for successes registered by the military and attempt to undermine the institution's resolve. The Monterrey and Guerrero killings immediately followed successful military operations in the respective regions resulting in seizures and arrests. Whether such tactics will have a chilling effect remains to be seen. Sources tell us that while some soldiers are more fearful, many others are keen to strike back at the cartels with greater resolve. SEDENA and SEMAR have instructed regional commanders to implement force protection counter-measures to reduce the risk of future incidents.

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U.S. Personnel and Institutions Targets?  
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12. (C) We have observed a significant up-tick in threats,

as well as incidents of surveillance, against USG personnel and properties over the last three months. All threats are treated seriously and precautions taken; fortunately, none has come to fruition.

13. (S/NF) On October 12, unknown persons fired gunshots and tossed an un-detonated grenade at the U.S. Consulate in Monterrey. The attack occurred after hours, no one was injured, and little damage occurred. No message was left and we have uncovered no useful intelligence regarding the authors or their motives. One unsubstantiated report cited a source claiming a senior Gulf cartel leader ordered the attack. However, with little hard evidence, no attempt to claim credit and no follow on incident to date, the possibility remains that this was an isolated, possibly even impulsive, attack not likely undertaken at the behest of senior cartel leaders.

14. (C) While the cartels have not yet directly targeted USG law enforcement or other personnel, they have shown little reticence about going after some of our most reliable partners in Mexican law enforcement agencies. Ten close DEA law enforcement liaison officers have been killed since 2007, seven of whom were members of Special Vetted Units. Similarly, within the past two years 51 close FBI contacts have been murdered. More than sixty of Mexico's best law enforcement officers in whom we have placed our trust and with whom we have collaborated on sensitive investigations, shared intelligence and in many cases trained and vetted have been murdered by the cartels. We do know from sources that cartel members have at least contemplated the possibility of doing harm to both our personnel and institutions, but we frankly don't know enough about how DTO members think and operate to know what factors might trigger a decision to mount such an attack, but the potential threat is very real.

15. (C) We assess that the threat to U.S. personnel could increase if the violence continues to escalate and more high-level government officials and political leaders are targeted. Also, a reaction may be triggered if traffickers perceive their losses are due to U.S. support to the GOM's counter-narcotics efforts. We will continue to monitor potential threats to U.S. personnel from organized criminal gangs and be alert to information that suggests drug traffickers increasingly see the U.S. hand as responsible for their losses.

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## A Measure of Success?

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16. (C) While attributing last year's significant spike in violence to its own successes marks an effort by the Calderon administration to put the best face possible on a grim situation, there is also considerable truth to the assertion. President Calderon's counter-narcotics team has scored significant successes, particularly in the last 12 months. Record numbers of weapons and drugs have been seized, key members of drug cartels have been arrested and/or extradited, cartel sources inside government institutions have been arrested ) including a former Deputy Attorney General and the head of Interpol in Mexico. The GOM has disrupted cartel operations in meaningful ways; in year-end reports SEDENA and SEMAR reported that together they have reduced the maritime trafficking of illicit drugs by 65 percent and cut direct air transit of illegal drugs from Colombia by 90 percent. According to collaborative sensitive reporting, the January 2008 arrest of Alfredo Beltran Leyva split the Pacific Cartel, and accentuated antagonism between that DTO and the Gulf organization which caused the spike in violence in Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Baja California (see also MEXICO 1766). In addition to these rifts, frustrated traffickers have turned to kidnappings and extortion to compensate for the loss in drug-trafficking revenue, expanding their reach and impacting a greater number of bystanders who have no involvement in DTO activities. These kinds of impacts bring home to ordinary Mexicans the nature of the struggle here.

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## Outlook

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17. (C) Mexican authorities and law enforcement analysts predict that violence will likely get worse before it gets better. Recent truce rumors notwithstanding, there is currently no indication that the violence will soon abate; CENAPI reports 280 killings for the first 20 days of January. The cartels have shown themselves to be remarkably innovative, vicious, and resilient when aggressively confronted. Given their powerful weaponry and deep penetration of the country's security institutions, further attacks against security forces and government officials seem all but inevitable. However, while violence remains at unacceptably high levels here, we have no reason to believe at this point that it will escalate either quantitatively or qualitatively.

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O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 002676

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR DIRECTOR RESTREPO; DEPT FOR WHA DAS JACOBSON AND MEX OFFICE DIRECTOR LEE AND DSTAFF CUE.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: MEXICO: PROMISING FIRST TALKS WITH SEDENA ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gustavo Delgado.

Reason: 1.4 (b),(d)

1. (c) Summary: DATT, ODC Chief, DOJ Attache and Pol MinCouns met with officials from the National Defense Secretariat (SEDENA) on September 7 to discuss initiating a human rights dialogue with the Mexican military that would allow us to understand the legal process in the Mexican system of military justice and clarify specific questions with regards to alleged violations. General Lopez Portillo, the Senior Human Rights official in SEDENA and a veteran military prosecutor, was the lead official on the Mexican side, accompanied by a Director General level representative from the Mexican Foreign Ministry (SRE). They welcomed the beginning of a dialogue with the Embassy on human rights matters and proposed regular senior formal meetings (he suggested 2-3 a year) as well as working level discussions to clarify specific cases. (A list of all participants is provided in para 7).

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Willing to Talk but a Dialogue Will Take Work  
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2. (c) Although we previously had provided a list of specific questions on several cases involving alleged human rights violations through official SEDENA and SRE channels, and our meeting had been coordinated a month in advance through the SEDENA Protocol office (S2), Lopez Portillo did not receive our questions before the meeting. This was not an indication

of SEDENA's unwillingness to discuss the cases, but rather reflects a lack of experience in engaging on the human rights topic and their somewhat rigid rules for transmitting information to and within the SEDENA bureaucracy.

3. (c) Unaware of the questions we had provided on allegations related to the specific cases, General Lopez Portillo organized a general and open agenda for the meeting, aimed at facilitating an open and frank discussion on internal legal and judicial procedures within the Mexican military. Throughout the meeting, our Mexican interlocutors were well-disposed to answering our questions and establishing a collaborative dialogue. We noted our interest in reviewing the details of some specific cases as part of an ongoing dialogue on human rights issues that would allow us to understand better how SEDENA and the Mexican legal system handled crimes involving military personnel and civilians. We provided a copy of the questions we had provided prior to the meeting and suggested a follow-up meeting to go over the cases in more detail.

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SEDENA AND SRE SUGGEST A WAY FORWARD  
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4. (c) SRE Director General for Human Rights and Democracy Alejandro Negrin agreed with Lopez Portillo that we should establish a formal and regular dialogue to discuss both the specific cases and larger framework of how the Mexican judicial system works in response to crimes involving military personnel and civilians. He noted relevant legal reforms and the ongoing effort by SEDENA to clarify its procedures and respond to responsible questions. Lopez Portillo noted SEDENA's interest in continuing to do more in this regard and was supportive of establishing a bi-lateral mechanism that would allow us to work together to help clarify allegations. He suggested formal senior level meetings several times a year, with working level meetings in between.

5. (c) Lopez Portillo promised a timely written response to the written questions we had provided earlier. He also undertook to set up meetings to review military legal procedure, particularly with regard to crimes involving military and civilians. He suggested that we work closely and collaboratively to clarify procedures and outstanding allegations, many of which he observed, were designed to cast doubt and dispersion on the Mexican military and not to

establish the truth. Both sides agreed that new questions

MEXICO 00002676 002 OF 002

about additional cases in the future should be provided through SRE channels with a courtesy copy given to SEDENA. The official response to specific cases would be delivered from SEDENA through the SRE. Lopez Portillo said that he was eager to work together with us to ensure that there would be a satisfactory response on all human rights allegations.

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COMMENT

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6. (c) Establishing a productive human rights dialogue with the Mexican military will take some work and considerable fine tuning. This is not an area that the Mexican military has traditionally discussed with any outsiders. While the Mexican military has made some progress in establishing mechanisms to review human rights allegations in response to internal constitutional reforms and Mexico's international obligations, it is still a delicate subject and one they are likely to manage cautiously and not always adroitly. We are encouraged by our initial meeting but much remains to be done. We will follow up promptly with SEDENA and SRE to set up our next meeting. Lopez Portillo provided repeated assurances that SEDENA is prepared to respond in writing -- supplemented by working level discussion to clarify any questions of procedure and translation -- to our questions on specific cases. We will also expand current training and subject matter expert exchanges that could help provide SEDENA with support in their efforts to address human rights issues in a more comprehensive and transparent way.

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PARTICIPANTS

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7. (c) The Mexican side was led by MG Jaime Lopez Portillo and included Col. J.J. Juarez, Section 5 DH, Ltc Marcas Burgos Legorretta, Section 5 DH, Major C.S. Lopez, and Ltc A. Santos, S-2 as well as Alejandro Negrin, the Director General of Human Rights and Democracy in the SRE. The U.S. side included Defense Attache Col. Dan Alabre; ODC Chief Col. Linwood Ham, Department of Justice Attache Tony Garcia and Political Minister Counselor Gustavo Delgado.

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Partnership Blog at <http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/nap/>

PASCUAL

E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 05 MEXICO 003195

NOFORN

SIPDIS

NSC FOR DAN RESTREPO; DEPT FOR WHA DAS JACOBSON, MEX  
DIRECTOR LEE, D STAFF CUE, AND INR HOHMAN.

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [MX](#)

SUBJECT: MEXICO: MORE INTERAGENCY COOPERATION NEEDED ON  
INTELLIGENCE ISSUES

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Gustavo Delgado.

Reason: 1.4 (b),(d).

1. (S/NF) Summary. President Calderon's security strategy lacks an effective intelligence apparatus to produce high quality information and targeted operations. Embassy officers working with the GOM report that Mexico's use of strategic and tactical intelligence is fractured, ad hoc, and reliant on U.S. support. Despite their myriad inefficiencies and deficiencies, Mexican security services broadly recognize the need for improvement. Sustained U.S. assistance can help shape and fortify the technical capacity of institutions and can also create a more reliable, collegial inter-agency environment. End Summary.

GOM Intel Strategy Criticized

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2. (C) Recent criticism of President Calderon's security strategy cites a poorly utilized and underdeveloped intelligence apparatus as a key obstacle to greater improvements in the country's security environment. Calderon's political opponents from both the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) have told Poloff that large-scale joint military-police counterdrug deployments, notably Joint Operation Chihuahua, have failed to make real gains in the war against organized crime due to a reliance on overwhelming numerical superiority of troops absent the strategic and

operational use of intelligence. Critics argue that the more effective use of intelligence would help the security services better cooperate on counterdrug issues, wrap-up more high-level traffickers, and, eventually, curb the country's escalating rates of narco-related violence. Emboffs working with the GOM in counter-narcotics and intelligence matters similarly note that Mexico's use of strategic and tactical intelligence is often fractured, ad hoc, and heavily reliant on the United States for leads and operations.

## The Players

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3. (S/NF) A myriad of GOM agencies have a stake in counternarcotics intel issues, including the Secretariats of Defense (SEDENA) and Marines (SEMAR), the Mexican National Intelligence Center (CISEN), the Public Security Secretariat (SSP), which includes the federal police, and the Attorney General's Office (PGR). Each has a different intelligence mission and varying levels of development and professionalism. As Mexico's primary intelligence agency, CISEN is the natural choice to be the GOM's coordinator of intelligence and analytic efforts. Indeed, it technically has the lead on encouraging interagency coordination and is developing mechanisms to facilitate such endeavors. For the most part, however, CISEN lacks the capacity to effectively direct the inter-agency process, particularly when it includes such institutional giants as SSP, which bureaucratically overshadows CISEN in budget, personnel, and other resource issues. CISEN's inability thus far to serve as a real leader on intelligence operations and analysis has effectively left Mexico without an effective interagency coordinator.

4. (S/NF) SSP is increasingly becoming a major player on the intel block. It is exploring ways to take advantage of new authorities granted under the Federal Police reform legislation passed last year to develop its intelligence capabilities. SSP can now directly solicit telephonic information from phone companies with a judicial order, bypassing the PGR entirely. It is also interested in building its own complete telecommunications intercept capability, the implementation of which has stalled over the past two years because of turf disputes between SSP and the Attorney General's Office. Moreover, as the keeper of Plataforma Mexico -- the massive new criminal database -- the SSP oversees one of the GOM's cornerstone and resource-heavy information-sharing projects.

MEXICO 00003195 002 OF 005

## The Challenges

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5. (S/NF) The GOM faces a number of institutional challenges to more effectively develop, analyze, and use information for intelligence-based operations. One of the most critical of these is the lack of trust between and within GOM institutions. Emboffs report that SEDENA, for example, has well-established intel units that develop targeting packages on cartel kingpins. In general, they do not share information or analysis with forces on the ground deployed to fight counternarcotics, like in Ciudad Juarez. These units will share threat information against military components, but also see local military commands as often penetrated by organized crime. Locally deployed SEDENA forces rarely develop or utilize tactical intelligence. In fact, they have no true intel units that collect information, nor do they have professional intel corps. Military units deployed to hotspots operate virtually blind except for anonymous tips. Particularly given the fallout from the high-level corruption cases uncovered last year, PGR and SSP suffer from similar internal suspicions as SEDENA.

6. (S/NF) Institutions are fiercely protective of their own information and equities and are reluctant to share information with outsiders, in part because of corruption fears, but also because they would rather hoard intelligence than allow a rival agency to succeed. They are under enormous pressure to produce results. Moreover, bureaucratic culture in Mexico is generally risk averse, so intelligence entities would rather do nothing than do something wrong. Corruption fears are well-founded given the number of operations that have been compromised or foiled because of leaks. Emboffs note that constructing an effective intelligence structure in Mexico's northern border area is particularly difficult, as many of the region's security forces are compromised. The rivalry between Attorney General Medina Mora -- recently replaced by Arturo Chavez Chavez -- and SSP,s Genaro Garcia Luna dramatically diminished cooperation and information-sharing between the two services. Leadership and personality conflicts may, in fact, be one of the most significant drivers of whether or not agencies set themselves up as rivals or allies in sharing important

information. Some observers see the new federal police and PGR reforms as unlikely to resolve the zero sum competition, and it is too early to know whether the Chavez appointment will mitigate the specific PGR-SSP problem.

7. (S/NF) There are also some legal and institutional unknowns: SSP, which receives the bulk of the GOM's security budget, now has the legal backing it needs to allow Garcia Luna to move ahead in building a large new intelligence and investigative program. With such indigenous capabilities, SSP probably would have even less incentive to cooperate with PGR. SEDENA, meanwhile, tends to work better with PGR than with SSP, but the Army's efforts are still highly limited and compartmentalized and it remains to be seen how better vetting practices and a stronger SSP will impact those relations. Secretary of Defense Galvan Galvan in a recent meeting with U.S. officials expressed little interest in bolstering cooperation with other agencies. Because of internal strife and mistrust in GOM institutions, Mission law enforcement agencies say that USG elements tend to work with GOM counterparts separately, which may end up indirectly contributing to stovepiping.

#### Taking Steps to Get Smart

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8. (S/NF) There is broad recognition among Mexican security and intelligence agencies, as well as political leadership, that they must do better in developing sources, analyzing information, and using it operationally. They also know that the effective use of intelligence requires more complete collaboration between involved bureaucracies. Despite its deficiencies, the GOM does have some intelligence capabilities, and Emboffs note that when they are deployed in full force, as in Michoacan, they can do good work.

MEXICO 00003195 003 OF 005

9. (S/NF) The GOM is working hard to improve communication among agencies with a stake in intelligence. CISEN is trying to develop mechanisms to facilitate coordination. For example, CISEN has established at its Mexico City headquarters a fusion center that has representatives from every involved agency, including the Finance Secretariat, SSP, PGR, SEMAR, SEDENA, and state and local investigators when they can be trusted. Mexico is also in the process of

establishing a series of Tactical Operations Intelligence Units (UNITOS) at military bases in each state throughout the country. The GOM has established a number of units (reports range from 9 to 27) with participation from the Army, Navy, SSP, PGR, and CISEN, comprising a command section, tactical analysis group, investigations group, operations sector, and a cadre of judicial experts. When properly functioning, the UNITOs provides a centralizing platform for federal forces to work together, share information, and plan operations. It is still unclear as to whether these would be short or long term units, but if implemented correctly, they might serve as a key piece of a revamped GOM intel and operational architecture. So far, the UNITOs are plagued by the same interagency rivals and mistrust that characterize the broader institutional relationships and have not yet reached the point of being effective.

10. (C) The state-level C-4 centers (command, control, communications, and coordination) are, at the low end, glorified emergency call centers. At the high end, they include more professional analytic cells that produce useful analysis and planning documents and also have a quick response time. The more complete C-4s include representatives from national and regional entities, and are the nerve centers for day-to-day information flow, intelligence, and directing operations in the state. They are often also the link to national databases, such as Plataforma Mexico. Huge disparities between state C-4s exist, but many states are working to move their units from merely housing emergency dispatchers to being functional hubs of operations and intelligence. The UNITOs often rely on information fed from good C-4s, in addition to federal databases and platforms.

11. (C) Plataforma Mexico is another important piece of the intel puzzle and continues to expand its presence throughout the country. The mega-criminal database has a wide array of information-sharing and analytical tools that help to track and share information on individuals and organized crime cells, vehicles, air movements, and is linked with an increasing number of surveillance and security cameras. The database is housed at SSP and is being deployed to an increasing number of states, with different tiers of access that are controlled through the vetting system. Not all states have access, mostly because they have yet to comply with federal standards in order to be connected, and some states with access have complained that the system is too slow to be of any use to them. Additionally, Project

Constanza is PGR's new case tracking system for the judicial system, and will include all data related to individual cases of persons apprehended and later charged. Some pieces may be made available to Plataforma Mexico, and PGR would like to have a system for tracking detentions that can be made available to police units when apprehending a suspect. The Mission is actively engaged in trying to plug E-Trace, ATF's powerful arms tracing software, into both systems.

12. (S/NF) Despite myriad challengece, cooperation with the USG on intelligence and counternarcotics issues has never been better. Indeed, Embassy experts say that Mexican authorities often rely on tips from U.S. law enforcement and intelligence organizations, and that many successful captures of important cartel figures are often backed by U.S. assistance. Mexico has indicated interest in improving its collection and use of intelligence with additional U.S. help. For example, in early 2009 the director of the National Security Information Center came to Mexico to, among other things, meet with CISEN Director Valdez (NSIC runs the Merida Culture of Lawfulness project but also works in the field of

MEXICO 00003195 004 OF 005

intelligence structures in democratic societies). He pitched to Valdez a program developed by NSIC to divide a hostile zone into a series of quadrants and assign a team to each that contains four specialties - interviewers (Humint), signals interceptors (Sigint), analysts, and operators - as well as an adequate security contingent to keep the members secure in their safe area and during movement. The teams take up residence in the area, as clandestinely as possible, and begin to develop sources and information that is used to make arrests. At the same time, the team filters raw and semi-processed information to the next level, which has a parallel structure, but more robust operations capabilities and higher level skill sets, especially for analyzing the information. The ideas is to develop strategic, as opposed to tactical, information that can be used to take apart whole networks. Valdez was impressed by the concept, and directed his deputy, Gustavo Mohar, to meet with the Embassy's NAS Director to discuss its viability in U.S. programming. NAS Director and Legatt met with Mohar and suggested that in the training line of Merida it would be possible to pursue such a program.

COMMENT

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13. (S/NF) Mexico is a long way from developing a self-sufficient and expert intelligence apparatus, but the creation of a coherent system is critical for the sustained success of its anti-organized crime efforts. USG-GOM cooperation, while not flawless, has never been better. Close collaboration and assistance in training and improving Mexican security agencies' ability to produce and use intelligence in key counterdrug operations undoubtedly is critical and will pay dividends over time. Perhaps the greatest challenge to lasting progress on intelligence matters is cultivating an environment of trust -- based on high standards of security -- among Mexico's law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies to ensure that information is appropriately collected, shared, protected, and acted upon. Reducing institutional rivalries and encouraging agencies to move past the zero-sum mindset that one entity's success in catching a high-value target is another's loss is also critical to reducing rivalries and distrust on intelligence issues. The growing SSP footprint on intelligence matters has the potential to seriously impact the information-sharing dynamic, a factor that will have to be integrated into our assistance programs to ensure that we do not exacerbate existing institutional tensions, particularly with the PGR. While our Mexican interlocutors recognize the need for greater interagency cooperation, they are reluctant to address the problem: the solution will require sustained U.S. help in fortifying institutions against the corruption, inefficiencies and backbiting that have bred distrust amongst GOM partners.

14. (S/NF) The USG can help Mexico develop inter-agency capabilities, and there are a number of line items in the Merida Initiative that can be employed in this effort. For example: the polygraph program properly pushed out to the states and consistently applied to special units could help produce the core integrity and trust that all good intelligence will depend on; the state-level law enforcement C-4 coordination centers, when done right, can bring all agencies and information together; Plataforma Mexico, the core database for law enforcement information-sharing, is rolling out across Mexico with new resources in 2009 that will enhance its capabilities and accessibility; through law enforcement professionalization, we are training investigators who will be a key piece of the intelligence puzzle as they serve as front-line collectors; we will be supporting vetted units -- among the highest yielding

entities in the GOM for intelligence -- with USD 5 million of FY2009 funding. Perhaps most importantly, these programs can serve as effective carrots to resolve the entrenched mistrust and parochialism of Mexican institutions by ensuring that organizations come to the table together when necessary to support the GOM's efforts to combat rife corruption within its institutions.

MEXICO 00003195 005 OF 005

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MEXICO 000141

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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PASS TO AMCONSUL RECIFE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PASS TO AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PASS TO AMEMBASSY GRENADA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG

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SUBJECT: Mexico's Latin American Unity Summit -- Back to the Future?

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1. (C) Summary: Mexico's ambitious plan to use its final Rio Group Presidency Summit (Cancun 22-23 February) to create a new more operational forum for regional cooperation failed dramatically. The two-day event was dominated by press accounts of ALBA country theatrics and their usual proclivity towards third world, anti-imperialist rhetoric. Nothing practical was achieved on the two pressing regional priorities - Haiti (President Preval did attend but the discussion was an obscured footnote) and Honduras (Pres. Lobo was not even invited in deference to Venezuela/ALBA) - and Brazil and the ALBA countries outmaneuvered the Mexicans, leaving the details of the new organization in the hands of a Latin American and Caribbean Summit (CALC) structure that will be managed by Brazil and Venezuela in 2011. End Summary

2. (C) Notwithstanding President Calderon's best intentions to create a more practical regional forum for regionally dealing with Latin American priorities (ref A), Mexico's Latin American Unity summit in the tourist resort of Cancun (22-23 February) was poorly conceived, inadequately managed, and badly executed. The Cancun Declaration presents a long laundry list of issues without specifying any details on how they will be operationally translated into effective international action. The meeting did not agree on a name for the new organization (see below), on a date for when it will be launched, or on any practical details (secretariat, funding, etc.) that would indicate how the new organization would develop. Worse yet was the press play and unofficial commentary from informed sources, that were downright derisive of the meeting and the contradictory message it sent about Mexico's interests and foreign policy.

3. (C) Already at the ceremonial opening on Monday (22 February) it was clear that things were not going well. Negotiations on the declaration had ground down on the operational details of the communique and Brazil and the ALBA countries were firmly resisting Mexico's proposal that the new forum be constituted immediately with agreement on institutional details. Brazilian President Lula did not want to see the CALC be subsumed before the end of his Presidency and Venezuelan President Chavez wanted to leave his CALC

Summit (Venezuela assumes the CALC Presidency from Brazil in 2011) on schedule, and available for a grand launching of the new forum that, as he said to the press, would commemorate the realization of the Bolivarian themes of Latin American solidarity in the birthplace of the "Great Liberator." Chavez was his usual, over the top self in proclaiming the death of the Organization of American States (OAS), in lending a hand to Argentine President Kirchner's protest against British drilling for oil in the Malvinas, and in almost coming to blows with Colombian President Uribe over the latter's protest of Venezuela's economic embargo against Colombia. Bolivian President Morales played the supporting role as Chavez' factotum, parroting Chavez' speeches and lavishing praise and compliments on Raul Castro's Cuba. Ecuadorian President Correa used the meeting to try and divert money laundering allegations leveled against Ecuador, by suggesting the need for a new "more balanced" regional mechanism to address the issue.

4. (C) Even Calderon's own PAN party officials were privately dismissive of the event. PAN international affairs coordinator Rodrigo Cortez characterized the meeting as a "sad spectacle that does nothing to project our party's views on international priorities and the importance of the relationship between Mexico and the United States." He decried the public images of Calderon "hugging and cavorting" with Chavez, Morales and Castro and was pessimistic from the start that anything practical would come from the meeting. "We did not even invite Honduras, leaving them out of the meeting in order to ensure ALBA participation - a decision that turned the meeting upside down with regard to our concrete security and other interests."

MEXICO 00000141 002 OF 003

5. (C) The low point of the meeting was the verbal exchange between Uribe and Chavez at the opening day official lunch. Uribe raised Venezuela's economic embargo on Colombia, terming it unhelpful and inconsistent with the region's economic interest and at odds with Venezuela's strong criticism of the U.S. Embargo on Cuba. Colombia's Ambassador in Mexico, Luis Camilo Osorio, told the polmincouns that, contrary to press accounts, Uribe raised the issue in a non-confrontational way. According to Osorio and press accounts, Chavez reacted emotionally accusing Colombia of having sent assassination squads to kill him and ended a verbal and physical tirade with "You can go to hell; I am leaving (the lunch)." Uribe responded, "Don't be a coward and leave just to insult me from a distance." Verbal and body language continued to escalate, until Raul Castro stepped in to urge civilized discussion. Outside of the dining room, Venezuelan security officials were scuffling with Mexican security guards in an attempt to assist their President.

6. (C) Osorio was very critical of the Summit, terming it the worst expression of Banana Republic discourse that blames all of the regions problems on others without any practical solutions of their own. Osorio said the Colombians had proposed working jointly on a concrete agenda during Calderon's recent visit to Colombia. The Mexicans, he said, were not interested, confident that they had everything under control. Osorio opined that "Calderon had simply put a bunch of the worst types together in a room, expecting to outsmart them. Instead, Brazil outplayed him completely, and Venezuela outplayed Brazil." There was no practical planning, there was no management of the agenda, and there was none of the legwork that would have been needed to yield a practical and useful outcome.

7. (C) Brazilian DCM Antonio Francisco Da Costa E Silva Neto conveyed his country's view that Brazil had done a better job of managing the summit than the Mexican hosts. Brazil was able to ensure that the new Rio Group would emerge, not from the Summit, but from ongoing discussions in the Rio Group and the CALC, where Brazil could exert its influence. The CALC survived and Brazil would be managing that process as part of the troika when it turned over the presidency to Venezuela.

8. (C) We heard similar themes from ex-Ambassador Jorge Montano, a PRI-connected, former respected senior Mexican diplomat. He echoed Cortez' criticism, channeling it into an elegant but critical op-ed in Mexico daily Universal (Feb 26). Montano's piece, entitled "With or Without the OAS," reviewed briefly the history of Latin American regional forums, also criticizing U.S. lack of attention to the region (e.g. Summit of Americas) but noting the practical achievements realized in the OAS. He called the Summit unnecessary and inconsistent with Mexico's interests and called for immediate damage control. Montano told us that he received separate calls from Calderon and from Foreign Secretary Espinoza, irate over his criticism.

9. (C) The media coverage did not in any way suggest a practical forum and there was a good supply of criticism, in addition to Montano's piece, which was respectful in its choice of words. The most damning criticism was a political cartoon in the leading daily

Reforma (Feb 24) which depicted a large Chavez gorilla, with a small Castro perched on his back playing an accordion labeled "CanCubaZuela Group" with a small image of Calderon dancing to the music and waving marimbas. Osorio told us at a same day Central Bank event with leading Mexican businessmen that there were abundant references to the cartoon and its apt characterization of the Summit's result.

Comment

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10. (C) In the end Mexico was limited to agreement on a new forum but without any specific commitments on institutional details. The Cancun declaration is a bulging rhetorical exercise

MEXICO 00000141 003 OF 003

that reflects the lack of agreement with its general and non-specific language. The press play leaned towards the critical side and even those who recognized Calderon's well-mentioned effort focused more attention on the paltry results. Even on the issues that Mexico argued to us before the summit were reasons for bolstering the Rio Group -- success on Colombia-Venezuela-Ecuador problem - the Summit result was directly contrary to hopes for a new more operational mechanism in the region.

11. (C) We have not had yet received the official GOM post-Summit read-out from our SRE and Presidency sources - they have been busy finishing the Declaration and doing follow up work with the Latin American Missions. We will be shortly following up with their analysis and comments on the way ahead, and their plans for deepening trade and investment through a new arrangement with Brazil, announced at the end of the Summit. Whatever their read out, this is not playing here as a "diplomatic success," except in some very general sense of raising the need for more effective regional action. Unfortunately, the Cancun Latin American Unity Summit was not an example of a new and bold step into the future but rather a reminder of Mexico's at times conflicting message on how it sees the future of the region and Mexico's role as one of its leaders. PASCUAL