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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CA-02	CIAE-00
	OASY-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	ED-01	UTED-00
	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-01	ADS-00	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OPIC-01
	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-10	PRME-01	DRL-04
	G-00	/036W					

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R 092120Z DEC 97
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO
SECSTATE WASHDC 0930

UNCLAS CIUDAD JUAREZ 1377

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: POL, MX, CGEN, PHUM, SOCI

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN- A GROWING POLITICAL ISSUE

1. SUMMARY: HUNDREDS OF WOMEN FROM AT LEAST EIGHT ORGANIZATIONS, ACCOMPANIED BY RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, RECENTLY COMMEMORATED THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. PROTEST MARCHES OCCURRED IN THE FOUR MAJOR CITIES OF CHIHUAHUA STATE. THE WOMEN DEMANDED THAT GOVERNOR BARRIO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN. THE JUAREZ REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL INFORMED US THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED A STATE POLICE GROUP

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TO FOLLOW UNRESOLVED CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN. END SUMMARY.

2. WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS MARCHED THROUGH THE STREETS OF JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA CITY, DELICIAS AND PARRAL, PROTESTING THE 97 CASES OF RAPED, TORTURED AND MURDERED WOMEN THAT HAVE OCCURRED, MAINLY IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, DURING THE LAST FOUR YEARS. THE PROTESTERS CARRIED BLACK CROSSES AND LIGHTED CANDLES WHICH THEY LATER DEPOSITED IN CITY HALLS AND IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. THE GROUPS INCLUDED: THE CENTER FOR ATTENTION TO WORKING WOMEN; THE PRD WOMEN'S COMMITTEE; THE ASSOCIATION OF CHIHUAHUA WOMEN LAWYERS; THE GROUP FOR PROMOTION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR FEMALE CITIZENS; THE BARZON WOMEN AND, THE COMMISSION FOR SOLIDARITY AND DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THESE GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THOSE CONNECTED TO THE PRD POLITICAL PARTY, CLAIM THAT WOMEN HAVE BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE AND CRIME SINCE LEAVING HOME TO ENTER THE WORK FORCE OF THE MAQUILADORA INDUSTRY. ACCORDING TO THEM, CRIME AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS VERY PREVALENT IN THE CIUDAD JUAREZ AREA AND HAS INCREASED OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.

3. ACCORDING TO INEGI'S NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS, HALF OF CIUDAD JUAREZ' POPULATION IS FEMALE. THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY MAQUILADORA PLANTS EMPLOY 155,000 PRODUCTION LINE WORKERS, OF WHOM OVER SIXTY PERCENT ARE WOMEN. GRACIELA DE LA ROSA, RESEARCHER FOR FEMAP'S FAMILY PLANNING INSTITUTION, AND A LOCAL PRD LEADER, REPORTED THAT MEXICAN WOMEN BEGAN ENTERING THE LABOR FORCE TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO AND THIS HAS DISTURBED THE TRADITIONAL MEXICAN FAMILY SYSTEM. ACCORDING TO DE LA ROSA, JUAREZ BLUE COLLAR WOMEN BRING MORE PROBLEMS THAN INCOME TO THEIR FAMILIES, AND SOME HAVE TURNED TO PROSTITUTION. ANOTHER PRD MEMBER, ESTHER CHAVEZ, CLAIMED

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THAT CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN ARE OFTEN MINIMIZED. CHAVEZ STATED THAT POLICE GENERALLY TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT, AND SIMPLY ACCUSE BOYFRIENDS, HUSBANDS, OR ANY OTHER CONVENIENT MALE RELATIVE, OF THE OFFENSE. CHAVEZ AND DE LA ROSA AGREED THAT WOMEN ARE LIVING IN A CHAOTIC SOCIETY, RIFE WITH CRIME, INSECURITY, CORRUPTION AND A LACK OF DEMOCRACY.

4. ASTRID GONZALEZ ESTABLISHED THE CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE

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TO FIGHT AGAINST VIOLENCE IN 1995, AFTER THE SERIAL MURDERS OF 24 YOUNG WOMEN WHO WERE FOUND RAPED, BEATEN AND DUMPED IN EMPTY LOTS. ADDITIONALLY, SEVENTEEN CASES OF RAPE OCCURRED EVERY MONTH DURING 1995, THE WORST RECORD IN THE HISTORY OF JUAREZ. THE STATE POLICE CLAIM TO HAVE SOLVED HALF OF THE CASES BUT ADMITTED THEY WERE OFTEN UNABLE TO ACTUALLY ARREST THE PERPETRATORS. GONZALEZ REPORTED THAT ALMOST ALL THE MURDERED WOMEN WORKED IN MAQUILA PLANTS AND MANY TOOK SCHOOL COURSES AFTER HOURS. GONZALEZ' THEORY IS THAT WOMEN HAVE BECOME NATURAL TARGETS OF VIOLENCE SINCE THEY BECAME FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT AND BEGAN TO MOVE EASILY OUTSIDE THEIR HOMES. GONZALEZ ALSO BELIEVES THAT IT WILL TAKE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL WILL TO TRANSFORM THE POLICE AND GUARANTEE A BETTER LIFE FOR WOMEN. MOST OF THE GROUPS ALSO AGREED THAT THE VIOLENCE SHOWN IN MOVIES AND TELEVISION HAS A DANGEROUS AFFECT, BECAUSE CRIMINALS OFTEN IMITATE WHAT THEY SEE.

5. FEMALE STATE REPRESENTATIVE (PAN) CLARA TORRES STATED SHE DID NOT SEE ANY SPECIAL TREND IN JUAREZ OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN. SHE ADDED THE AMOUNT OF VIOLENCE

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WOULD BE THE SAME IN ANY OTHER METROPOLITAN AREA WHERE THERE ARE ONLY 600 SCHOOLS AND 3,000 PLACES SELLING ALCOHOL. SHE CITED A STUDY BY THE NORTHERN INSTITUTE OF SEXOLOGICAL THAT INDICATE FIFTY PERCENT OF RAPES INVOLVE ALCOHOL, TWENTY PERCENT DRUGS, AND ONLY TEN PERCENT INVOLVE RAPISTS WITH MENTAL DISORDERS. SHE EMPHASIZED THAT WOMEN MUST BECOME MORE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR PERSONAL SECURITY, AND THAT FAMILIES, THE MEDIA AND THE POLITICIANS SHOULD PUSH FOR MORE PROGRAMS TO RAISE THIS CONSCIOUSNOUESS.

6. THE LOCAL STATE ATTORNEY REPRESENTATIVE IN JUAREZ, JORGE LOPEZ MOLINAR, REPORTED TO CONOFF THAT HE IS NOT IN FAVOR OF ESTABLISHING A NEW 'FISCALIA' OR SPECIAL POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR CRIME AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. HIS OFFICE RECENTLY OPENED A DEPARTMENT TO FOLLOW UNRESOLVED CASES OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, WITH THE SUPPORT OF SEVERAL FEMALE COMMUNITY LEADERS.

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HE ADDED THAT JUST RECENTLY, THREE OLD CASES FROM 1994 AND 1995 WERE SOLVED. LOPEZ MOLINAR POINTED OUT THAT IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, EIGHTY-SEVEN PERCENT OF THE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME ARE MEN, AS OPPOSED TO THIRTEEN PERCENT WOMEN. HE ADDED THAT ANY SPECIAL 'FISCALIA' SHOULD THEREFOR BE FOR MEN, NOT WOMEN.

7. PATRICIA RAVELO, PROFESSOR AND RESEARCHER AT CIUDAD JUAREZ AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY, STATED THAT FEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN CHIHUAHUA HAVE SENSITIZED THE COMMUNITY IN THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN IN CHIHUAHUA SOCIETY. SHE POINTED OUT THAT CHIHUAHUA WAS THE FIRST STATE TO REACH A SIGNIFICANT

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LEVEL OF FEMALE REPRESENTATIVES AND POLITICAL CANDIDATES.

8. MANY OF THE GROUPS INDICATED THEY INTENDED TO KEEP PROTESTING, AND TO ARRANGE A SECOND MARCH IN JUAREZ WHERE WOMEN WOULD CARRY THE PHOTOS OF THE MORE THAN SIXTY WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN MURDERED HERE SINCE 1993. THE PRD ORGANIZATIONS SEEM PARTICULARLY DETERMINED TO KEEP THIS ISSUE VISIBLE, DEMANDING SPECIFIC ACTION ON THE PART OF PAN GOVERNOR BARRIO.

STEWART

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