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ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-01	NP-01	AID-00	CA-02	CIAE-00	INL-01
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	ED-01	FBIE-00
	UTED-00	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OIC-02	OIG-03	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00

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R 271349Z SEP 99  
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0220  
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
ALL USCONS MEXICO 0017

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2336

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, MX, CGEN, PHUM, SOCI, KPRP, ELAB  
SUBJECT: SECURITY IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA

1. SUMMARY. KNOWN AS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS  
CITIES IN MEXICO, CIUDAD JUAREZ APPEARS TO BE  
EXPERIENCING A DECREASE IN CRIME, ACCORDING TO  
COMPETING STATISTICS THE STATE GOVERNOR AND CITY  
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MAYOR EACH DEPLOY IN DEFENSE OF THEIR RESPECTIVE  
SAFETY PROGRAMS. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CITY SAFETY  
REMAINS GUARDED, AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS  
CONVINCED THAT JUAREZQ POOR PUBLIC IMAGE INHIBITS  
TOURISM AND INVESTMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. CRIME RATES IN JUAREZ ON DECLINE. FOR A LONG  
TIME, JUAREZ HAS SUFFERED FROM A REPUTATION FOR  
RAMPANT CRIME. ACCORDING TO THE COLEGIO DE LA FRONTERA  
NORTE, THE ANNUAL HOMICIDE RATE IN JUAREZ PEAKED IN  
RECENT YEARS AT 62 MURDERS PER 100,000 IN 1996. THE  
FOLLOWING YEAR THAT RATE DROPPED TO 49 MURDERS PER  
100,000. (AT PRESENT NO HOMICIDE STATISTICS ARE  
AVAILABLE FOR 1998.) THESE FIGURES ARE STILL  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON  
DATE/CASE ID: 30 JUN 2006 200502506

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SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN THOSE OF JUAREZQ SISTER CITY, EL PASO, TEXAS. IN 1997, THE HOMICIDE RATE IN EL PASO WAS 24 PER 100,000 AND DROPPED TO 17 PER 100,000 IN 1998, ACCORDING TO THE UNIFORM CRIME REPORT PUBLISHED BY THE FBI. OTHER TYPES OF CRIME SUCH AS AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS AND REPORTED SEXUAL ABUSE ARE ALSO CLAIMED TO BE ON THE DECLINE IN JUAREZ.

3. STATE GOVERNOR AND CITY MAYOR COMPETE FOR TAKING CREDIT. THE PRI-GOVERNOR OF CHIHUAHUA, PATRICIO MARTINEZ, AND THE PAN-MAYOR OF JUAREZ, GUSTAVO ELIZONDO, INTRODUCED SEPARATE PLANS TO ADDRESS PUBLIC SAFETY. THE GOVERNOR INTRODUCED QZERO TOLELRANCEQ SIX MONTHS AGO, FOLLOWED BY THE MAYORQS QSAFE JUAREZQ ANNOUNCEMENT LAST MONTH. MANY CITY OFFICIALS SEE FEW DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO PLANS, WITH SUPPORT FOR EACH PLAN TENDING TO FALL ALONG PARTY LINES. THE INITIATIVES

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ARE SIMILAR IN SEVERAL RESPECTS: RESTRICTION OF ALCOHOL SALES TO MINORS; EXPANDED SPORTS PROGRAMS TO DIVERT INTEREST FROM CRIMINAL ACTIVITY; AND PROPOSALS TO THE STATE CONGRESS FOR HARSHER CRIMINAL SENTENCES. SOME OFFICIALS SUGGEST THAT ONE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PLANS IS FOCUS. THE MAYORQS PLAN OFFERS PREVENTION PROGRAMS AIMED AT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY WHILE THE GOVERNORQS PLAN TARGETS INVESTIGATION, CONSISTENT WITH PRESIDENT ZEDILLOQS NATIONAL EFFORTS TO CURB CRIMES OF ANY KIND AND AT ALL LEVELS OF ENFORCEMENT.

4. CRACKDOWN ON BARS AND OTHER SOURCES OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF JUAREZ, BARS ARE BEING SHUT DOWN BY THE STATE, SPECIFICALLY BY THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT OF GOBERNACION. BOTH GOVERNOR MARTINEZ AND MAYOR ELIZONDO URGED THESE CLOSINGS WITH THE CITY COUNCIL VOTING UNANIMOUSLY IN SUPPORT. PRESSURE GREW WHEN IT WAS LEARNED THAT SOME BARS SOLD DRUGS. ONE DRUG SEIZURE EVEN INVOLVED A CITY POLICE OFFICER WHO STOLE FIREARMS FROM HIS STATION TO SELL AT THE BARS. NIGHTCLUBS AND LIQUOR STORES ARE ALSO FACING GREATER SCRUTINY FOR VIOLATING THE NIGHTLY CURFEW AND FOR SELLING TO UNDERAGE PATRONS. TWO WEEKS AGO, CITY COUNCIL RECOMMENDED OFFICIALLY TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT THE SHUTDOWN OF 23 BARS. RAUL GARCIA ACOSTA, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE JUAREZ PAN PARTY, STATED THAT EFFORTS TO CLOSE ADDITIONAL NON-COMPLYING BARS WILL PROCEED FORTHWITH.

5. PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD SAFETY. BEYOND THE

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SENTIMENTS OF PRI AND PAN LOYALISTS, THERE IS A  
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GROWING CONSENSUS

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	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OIG-03	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
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	G-00	SAS-00	/025W				

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R 271349Z SEP 99  
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0221  
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
ALL USCONS MEXICO 0018

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2336

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SUBJECT: SECURITY IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA

AMONG RESIDENTS THAT THE CITY IS SAFER THAN IT HAS  
BEEN IN YEARS. HOWEVER, SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES  
STEMMING FROM QSAFE JUAREZQ HAVE DRAWN CRITICISM,  
DIRECTED AT BOTH THE MAYOR AND THE POLICE COMMISSIONER,  
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JAVIER BENAVIDES. IN JULY OF THIS YEAR, A RIOT  
ERUPTED AT THE CITYQS CENTRAL PRISON; LOCAL POLICE  
WERE CRITICIZED FOR RESPONDING WITH EXCESSIVE FORCE,  
AND CLAIMS OF ABUSE ENSUED. TWO WEEKS AGO FOUR  
JUVENILES FLEEING FROM POLICE PURSUIT DROWNED WHEN  
THEIR VEHICLE SLID INTO AN IRRIGATION CANAL.  
CRITICISM MOUNTED FROM ALLEGATIONS THAT OFFICERS

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MADE NO SERIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESCUE THEM.

6. COMMENT: TWO AREAS OF CRIME STILL CAUSE MUCH CONCERN. FIRST, DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO GO UNDETERRED, SUCH AS SHOOTINGS INVOLVING RIVAL GANGS. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CITIZEN PROTECTION, THERE ARE OVER 100 GANGS IN JUAREZ WITH ALMOST FOUR THOUSAND MEMBERS. THE FEDERAL ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAS RECENTLY DRAWN CRITICISM FOR ITS EFFORTS OR LACK THEREOF. TWO WEEKS AGO, DEA OFFICIALS IN EL PASO ANNOUNCED THE LARGEST COCAINE SEIZURE OF THE YEAR TO THE SURPRISE OF A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. JUAREZ HAS 40 SUCH OFFICIALS AND ONLY 16 OF THEM ARE DEPLOYED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING INVESTIGATION. SECOND, THE MURDERS OF APPROXIMATELY 200 WOMEN -- MANY OF WHOM WERE YOUNG MAQUILADORA WORKERS -- IN JUAREZ SINCE 1993 CONTINUE TO DRAW INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION. BUT SINCE THE ARREST OF SEVERAL LOCAL BUS DRIVERS IN MARCH, SUCH ATTACKS HAVE ALL BUT CEASED. EAGER TO SUBSTANTIATE THE SUCCESS OF HIS ZERO TOLERANCE PLAN, THE GOVERNOR MADE PUBLIC LAST MONTH STATISTICS SHOWING LOWER CRIME RATES IN JUAREZ. SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN OCTOBER 1998, THE GOVERNOR CLAIMS THAT HOMICIDES INVOLVING WOMEN HAVE

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PLUNGED 50 PERCENT IN COMPARISON TO FIGURES KEPT FROM OCTOBER 1997 THROUGH AUGUST 1998. SUBSTANTIAL DROPS IN KIDNAPPINGS (75 PERCENT), BANK ASSAULTS (46.2 PERCENT), AND REPORTS OF STOLEN VEHICLES (26.2 PERCENT) WERE ALSO CITED. IN SPITE OF THE ABOVE-CITED REDUCTION IN THE CRIME RATE, PUBLIC CONTEMPT FOR THE POLICE IS A FACT OF LIFE IN JUAREZ. POLICE COMMISSIONER BENAVIDES TOLD THE CONSUL GENERAL RECENTLY THAT HIS BIGGEST PROBLEM IS SIMPLY FINDING RECRUITS WILLING TO JOIN THE POLICE FORCE. IN SPITE OF SALARY INCREASES, THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW POLICE ACADEMY, AND PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, ATTRITION USUALLY OFF-SETS RECRUITMENT, THEREBY INHIBITING ANY GROWTH IN THE FORCE. CIUDAD JUAREZ IS CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED TO HAVE 1.5 MILLION RESIDENTS, WHILE THE TOTAL MUNICIPAL FORCE CONSISTS OF 800 POLICE OFFICERS, WITH ONLY 250 OR SO ON PATROL AT ANY GIVEN TIME. THE INTENSELY POLITICAL WAR CARRIED ON BETWEEN GOVERNOR MARTINEZ AND MAYOR ELIZONDO ALSO INFLUENCES THEIR DEPLOYMENT OF CRIME STATISTICS, WHOSE RELIABILITY IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS. POST IS WORKING WITH A VARIETY OF OFFICIAL, UNIVERSITY AND NGO SOURCES TO CLARIFY THE CRIME PICTURE AND WILL REPORT FURTHER AS WE LEARN MORE. END COMMENT.

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