

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION WHA-01

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	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	ED-01	EXIM-01	E-00	FBIE-00
	FBO-01	VC-01	FRB-00	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01	R-00
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00

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R 141712Z MAR 00  
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0652  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADD TAG, SLUG AND ADDRESSEE

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/13/01  
TAGS: ELAB, PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX  
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ- AN UPDATE

REF: (A) CIUDAD JUAREZ 0839 (B) CIUDAD JUAREZ 0189 (C) 99  
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CIUDAD JUAREZ 2518 (D) 99 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2336 (NOTAL)

1. CLASSIFIED BY CG EDWARD H. VAZQUEZ REASON 1.5
2. (U) SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A TEN-MONTH RESPITE, THE RECENT MURDERS OF THREE WOMEN STIRRED CONTROVERSY AND FEARS THAT THE SEXUAL KILLING OF WOMEN CONTINUES IN CIUDAD JUAREZ. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) CONTINUED TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING ON THE MURDERS. SPECIAL STATE INVESTIGATORS ASSIGNED TO CIUDAD JUAREZ CONTINUED TO DEFEND THEIR RECORD DISPIE INCONSISTENCIES IN THEIR STATISTICS. PRESIDENT

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ZEDILLO PROMISES TO SEND HELP BUT FOR NOW ITS JUST A WAITING GAME. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) THE YEAR 2000 WAS NEWLY ARRIVED WHEN AGAIN WOMEN BEGAN TO DISAPPEAR IN JUAREZ ONLY TO BE FOUND MURDERED IN THE SURROUNDING DESERT AREAS. THE NEW DISCOVERIES BROKE A TEN-MONTH LULL IN KILLINGS AND WAKENED FEARS THAT THE MURDERS OF WOMEN HAVE RESUMED. (MORE THAN 200 SINCE 1993).

THESE NEW VICTIMS MET THE PROFILE OF THEIR PREDECESSORS, THEY WERE BETWEEN 17 AND 25 YEARS OF AGE AND DIMINUTIVE IN PHYSICAL STATURE. LIKE PREVIOUS VICTIMS, THESE WOMEN REPRESENTED THE LOWER END OF THE SOCIO/ECONOMIC SCALE AND THEY TOO HAD BEEN TORTURED AND SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BEFORE BEING STRANGLERED. THEIR BODIES WERE FOUND IN AREAS WHERE OTHERS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE PAST. THE FIRST BODY DISCOVERED IN 2000, WAS THE FIFTH TO BE FOUND IN EJIDO LOPEZ MATEOS IN THE EXPANSIVE JUAREZ VALLEY TO THE EAST. THE SECOND VICTIM WAS LOCATED IN CERRO BOLA, ANOTHER WIDE OPEN

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AREA ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE TO THE WEST AND AN AREA WHERE FIVE BODIES HAVE BEEN FOUND. THE THIRD VICTIM, 17 YEAR OLD MARIA ISABEL NAVA VAZQUEZ WAS DISCOVERED IN LOMA BLANCA, 500 METERS FROM CASAS GRANDES HIGHWAY TO PORVENIR ROAD, WHERE BODIES WERE FOUND IN PREVIOUS YEARS. THESE AREAS ARE IN THE DESERT, FAR FROM THE CITY ZONE. SELDOM PATROLED BY POLICE, THE TERRITORY LENDS ITSELF TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

4. (C) THE DEATHS SET OFF A WAVE OF PUBLIC ANGER ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PROTECT WOMEN. NGOS CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF SULY PONCE, HEAD OF THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE FOR WOMEN'S HOMICIDES. NGOS CONTINUED TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING ON THE MURDERS OF WOMEN.

[REDACTED] SAID THAT, SINCE THE ARRIVAL OF PONCE, THERE HAS BEEN A BLACKOUT OF INFORMATION AND STATISTICS TO NGOS, A CHARGE ECHOED BY [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] ADDED THAT THE STATISTICS THAT ARE PROVIDED BY PONCE'S OFFICE ARE SKEWED AND MISLEADING. SHE ACCUSED PONCE OF LACKING EMPATHY FOR THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS AND CITED AN EGREGIOUS CASE CONCERNING A 1998 VICTIM, KNOWN AS SAGARIO. WHEN SAGARIO'S BODY WAS DISCOVERED, HER FACE AND BODY WERE DISFIGURED AND HER FAMILY IDENTIFIED HER BY CLOTHING LEFT ON THE REMAINS. THE STATE TOOK TISSUE SAMPLES AND SENT THEM AWAY FOR DNA TESTING. A YEAR LATER WHEN THE RESULTS WERE RECEIVED, THE CORONER INFORMED SAGARIO'S MOTHER THAT THE DNA SAMPLES DID NOT MATCH. PONCE THEN SUMMONED THE MOTHER TO INTERROGATE HER ABOUT THE FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP AND

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ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] WAS UNDULY FORCEFUL IN HER QUEST FOR AN ADMISSION THAT SAGARIO HAD BEEN ADOPTED. FINALLY, PONCE

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DECIDED THAT THE BODY SHOULD BE EXHUMED FOR A SECOND SET OF SAMPLES TO BE TESTED. THE MOTHER AGREED ON CONDITION THAT A FAMILY MEMBER BE PRESENT WHEN THE BODY WAS EXHUMED.

HOWEVER, SOON AFTER, ON HER DAILY RITUAL TO TAKE FLOWERS TO HER DAUGHTER'S GRAVE, THE MOTHER NOTICED THAT A NEARBY GRAVE WAS DISTURBED. SHE NOTIFIED PONCE AND MADE CLEAR THAT

SAGARIO WAS BURIED IN GRAVE NUMBER 45, NOT THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN DISTURBED. RESULTS ON SAGARIO'S SECOND DNA TEST ARE

STILL PENDING, WHILE NGOS RAISE FUNDS FOR VICTIMS FAMILIES WHO HAVE DNA TESTING DONE IN U.S. LABORATORIES. ACCORDING

TO [REDACTED] PONCE INSISTS THAT WHEN THE STATE ORDERS DNA TESTING IT DOES SO AS A SPECIAL COURTESY, NOT AS A PART OF ANY INVESTIGATION.

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5. (C) [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT LOCAL AND STATE POLITICIANS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN SCORING POLITICAL POINTS WITH THE MURDERS THAN IN RESOLVING CRIMINAL CASES. SHE NOTED THAT

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THE MURDERS BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER THE PREVIOUS PAN GOVERNOR TOOK OFFICE IN 1992, A FACT CORROBORATED BY OFFICIAL STATISTICS. ACORDING TO [REDACTED] DURING HIS 1998 CAMPAIGN

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THE NOW INCUMBENT PRI GOVERNOR PATRICIO MARTINEZ EMPLOYEED POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT FEATURED THE MOTHER OF A

MURDERED WOMAN ACCUSING THE THEN INCUMBENT PAN GOVERNOR OF FAILING TO MAINTAIN SAFETY IN CHIHUAHUA. [REDACTED] CONTINUED

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THAT ONCE ELECTED, MARTINEZ (1) BOUGHT OFF THE PRESS TO CONTROL INFORMATION ABOUT THE MURDERS, AND (2) CHANGED THE REPORTING METHODS SO THAT IT IS NOW DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER STATISTICS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. FOR

EXAMPLE, [REDACTED] CITED THAT UNDER MARTINEZ' REPORTING METHODS, ONCE A SUSPECT IS DETAINED ON A CASE, THE CASE IS CONSIDERED RESOLVED (REF B). SHE CRITICIZED THE MEDIA FOR

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R 141712Z MAR 00  
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 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0653  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDING ADDEE, SLUG LINE AND TAGS

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
 LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/01  
 TAGS: ELAB, PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX  
 SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ- AN UPDATE

BUYING INTO A LONG-STANDING TRADITION IN WHICH THE  
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 GOVERNMENT PAYS THE MEDIA TO DO ITS WILL.

6. (C) [ ] ASSOCIATED THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STATE PROSECUTOR, ALEJANDRO ASTUDILLO, WITH THOSE OF PONCE, CITING THAT THERE HAS BEEN ONLY ONE CONVICTION. SHE BLAMED THE STATE ALSO FOR A LOW CALIBER OF INVESTIGATIVE WORK WHICH, COUPLED WITH THE LOW RATE OF CONVICTION, HAS FUELED THE PUBLIC'S BELIEF THAT THE PERPRETRATORS ARE IMMUNE FROM PROSECUTION. SHE PREDICTED THAT AS LONG AS THIS PERCEPTION REMAINS THE KILLINGS WOULD CONTINUE. FINALLY, SHE DESCRIBED THE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE ROLES AMONG THE MUNICIPAL, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICE AS AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF KILLINGS. [ ] PROVIDED A TYPICAL SCENARIO: THE SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MUNICIPAL POLICE IS LIMITED TO THE PREVENTION OF CRIME. THEREFORE, WHEN A PATROL IS CALLED TO THE SCENE OF A RAPE, THE OFFICER MAY (1) HOLD THE VICTIM AND/OR THE RAPIST FOR STATE POLICE TO ACCEPT JURISDICTION OR (2) IN URGENT CASES, PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIM SUCH AS TAKING HER TO A CRISIS CENTER OR HOSPITAL. HOWEVER, THE STATE POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUING AN ARREST WARRANT, FOR CARRYING OUT THE ARREST, AND FOR INVESTIGATING THE CRIME. TYPICALLY, THIS TAKES MANY

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MONTHS AND MUCH PASSING-OF-THE-BUCK. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY SUSPECTS ARE NEVER BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, THEY SIMPLY GET AWAY WITH THE CRIME. [REDACTED] SEES THE MUNICIPAL POLICE AS NOTHING MORE THAN GLORIFIED SECURITY GUARDS. IN THE CASE OF FEDERAL LEVEL CRIMES SUCH AS DRUG TRAFFICKING, THE FEDERAL POLICE HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DETAIN SUSPECTS BUT MUST FIRST OBTAIN A COURT ORDER TO DO SO. AGAIN, BECAUSE THE PROCESS IS BUREAUCRATIC AND CUMBERSOME, IT LENDS ITSELF TO DELAY AND CORRUPTION.

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7. (C) Suly Ponce took charge of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Women's Homicides in Ciudad Juarez on November 9, 1998. At the time, she was the fifth appointee in nine months. Ponce used the latter fact to impress upon the listener the exacting nature of her assignment. She admitted that the work is gruesome and intense and she acknowledged that when the work is paired with public criticism, such as the recent demands for her resignation, it takes its toll. In last month's confrontation with NGOs, Ponce was subsequently supported by the Chihuahua Director of Public Safety, who was quoted in local dailies as saying that he saw no need for a new appointee because Ponce was performing well. According to [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] the solution is not to dismiss Ponce. She identified the need to develop creative solutions such as education projects for women; changes in law enforcement; changes in the manner that the courts adjudicate cases against women; changes in Mexican law; more training for police agencies; and the means to stop police corruption.

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8. (U) In her defense, Ponce provided a list of her office's achievements beginning with enhanced surveillance operations. Other measures include: on-site defensive training provided by her office, to female maquiladora manufacturing workers. Participants are selected by means of psychological screening for high risk factors. The families of victims are offered psychological therapy by licensed social workers and the children of victims are provided judicial assistance. According to Ponce, offers for this type of assistance are usually rejected.

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Following the arrest of several maquiladora bus drivers, maquiladoras have updated hiring procedures. Applicants are now screened more closely for police record, drugs and

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FAMILY VIOLENCE. IF HIRED, DRIVERS MUST SUMMIT TO UNANNOUNCED DRUG TESTING. MAQUILADORAS MAINTAIN BULLETIN BOARDS WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEIR BUS DRIVERS SO THAT RIDERS CAN IDENTIFY THEIR BUSES/DRIVERS TO MANAGEMENT.

9. (C) THOUGH SHE ADMITTED THAT THIS YEAR'S KILLINGS FOLLOWED THE SAME MODUS OPERANDI BETWEEN 1993 AND 1998, PONCE BELIEVES THAT MULTIPLE PERPRETATORS AND MOTIVES ARE BEHIND THE MURDERS. WHILE SHE BELIEVES THAT SOME OF THE MURDERS MAY HAVE RESULTED FROM COPYCAT ACTORS, SHE CONTENDS THAT OMAR LATIF SHARIF IS DIRECTING MOST OF THE MURDERS, FROM A PRISON CELL IN CHIHUAHUA CITY. SHARIF IS AN EGYPTIAN CHEMIST WHO PREVIOUSLY LIVED IN THE U.S. HE WAS ARRESTED IN 1995, AND WAS EVENTUALLY CONVICTED ON MARCH 3, 1995 KILLING OF ELIZABETH CASTRO, VICTIM OF A SERIAL-TYPE MURDER. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN ARRESTS OF MAQUILADORA BUS DRIVERS AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF A GANG CALLED THE REBELDES. UNDER INTERAGATION, THE SUSPECTS CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE CARRYING OUT THE ORDERS OF SHARIF. HOWEVER, PONCE SAID THAT MOST OF THE SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN RELEASED BECAUSE THEY WERE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE. AS FOR SHARIF, HE IS ATTRIBUTED WITH HIGH MENTAL FACULTY; HE IS AN EXPERT CHEMIST WHO FROM HIS CELL IN CIUDAD JUAREZ CONCOCTED AN INTOXICATING POTION THAT HE SOLD TO INMATES FOR 5 PESOS (ABOUT .50 USD). WHEN DISCOVERED BY PRISON OFFICIALS, HE WAS IMMEDIATELY AND UNEXPECTEDLY TRANSFERED TO CHIHUAHUA CITY. PONCE SAID THAT SHARIF IS WEALTHY FROM THE ROYALTIES THAT HE RECEIVES FOR  
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	FBO-01	VC-01	FRB-00	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01	TEDE-00
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	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0654  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDING ADDEE, SLUG LINE AND TAGS

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/01  
TAGS: ELAB, PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX  
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HIS PETRO-CHEMICAL PATENTS IN THE U.S. ACCORDING TO HER,  
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THIS STEADY FLOW OF CASH ALLOWS HIM TO CONTRACT KILLERS FROM  
HIS CELL.

10. (C) PONCE SAID THAT WITH A LIMITED STAFF OF 22 AGENTS AND FIVE STATE ATTORNEYS, THE VOLUME OF INVESTIGATIONS IS OVERWHELMING. FORTY-ONE WOMEN WERE MURDERED BETWEEN OCTOBER 1997 AND JANUARY 1998; 21 BETWEEN OCTOBER 1998 AND OCTOBER 1999. CHARTS PROVIDED BY PONCE REFLECT STATISTICS BASED ON THE CALENDAR YEAR: TWENTY EIGHT MURDERS IN 1998 AND EIGHTEEN IN 1999. HOWEVER, THESE FIGURES FAIL TO MATCH THE STATISTICS PROVIDED LAST MONTH BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE: 32 MURDERS IN 1998 AND 19 IN 1999. IN 2000, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVEN WOMEN MURDERED. OF THESE, THREE ARE CONSIDERED RELATED TO THE SERIAL KILLINGS. THE REMAINING VICTIMS DIED AT THE HANDS OF ANOTHER WOMAN, A JEALOUS BOYFRIEND, A HUSBAND, AND SUICIDE. PONCE SAID THAT THE INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS OF THE VICTIMS' FAMILIES TO PROVIDE TRUE FACTS, PRESENTS A MAJOR OBSTACLE FOR INVESTIGATIONS. IN SOME CASES, THE FAMILY KNEW THAT THE VICTIM ENGAGED IN A RISKY LIFE STYLE, SUCH AS ACCEPTING RIDES HOME FROM DIFFERENT STRANGERS. IN OTHER CASES THE FAMILY DID NOT KNOW. ACCORDING TO PONCE, SOME OF THE VICTIMS WORK IN THE SEX INDUSTRY AND IN A 2000 CASE, THE VICTIM WITHHELD FROM HER FAMILY THE FACT THAT SHE WORKED IN A BAR, TELLING THEM INSTEAD THAT SHE SOLD COSMETICS. PONCE FAULTED THE MUNICIPAL POLICE FOR FAILING TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT CRIME. SHE QUOTED THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS AT 1500, MANY MORE THAN THE 22 STATE AGENTS ASSIGNED TO JUAREZ. SHE BELIEVES THAT THE MUNICIPAL POLICE COULD TRAIL THE MAQUILADORA BUSES AND QUESTION THE DRIVER IF THEY OBSERVED SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR.

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11. (C) [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED] IS EQUALLY RESPECTED BY NGOS AND SULLY PONCE AND IS ACCLAIMED BY COLLEAGUES AS THE KEEPER OF THE MOST PRECISE STATISTICS ON THE MURDERS OF WOMEN. SHE GATHERS AND MAINTAINS INFORMATION ON MURDERS OF FEMALES FROM ALL AGE GROUPS. [REDACTED] SORTS DATA BY THE INFORMATION PERTAINING TO EACH VICTIM AS WELL AS BY THE DETAILS OF EACH CRIME, MAINTAINING A WALL-SIZED MAP OF JUAREZ COVERED WITH TACKS TO INDICATE WHERE THE BODIES WERE FOUND. A SIMILAR MAP FOR ALL MURDERS IS MAINTAINED BY POST'S ACS SECTION. [REDACTED] OBTAINS RAW DATA FOR HER STATISTICS FROM THE JUAREZ DAILIES, CONFIRMING THAT PONCE DOES NOT PROVIDE STATISTICS AND THAT GOVERNMENT FIGURES ARE DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER. SHE EMPHASIZES THAT THE FIGURES AVAILABLE FOR 1985 THROUGH 1997 CONSTITUTE OFFICIAL STATISTICS WHILE DATA DEVELOPED DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IS UNOFFICIAL. LIKE PONCE, [REDACTED] SURMISES THAT THE MURDERS ARE PARTLY THE RESULT OF COPYCAT PERPETRATORS. SHE BELIEVES THAT ANOTHER POSSIBILITY RELATES TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS STILL STRONG IN THE SOUTH OF MEXICO. WHEN PERSONS FROM THE SOUTH ARRIVE AT THE BORDER, ALL OF THAT SOCIAL STRUCTURE IS DISMANTLED, AFFECTING MALES IN UNPREDICTABLE WAYS.

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12. (U) IN BRIEF VISITS TO CHIHUAHUA AND JUAREZ LAST MONTH, PRESIDENT ERNESTO ZEDILLO AND PRI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FRANCISCO LABASTIDA PROMISED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN JUAREZ. PRESS CONFERENCES AND PHOTO OPS WERE STAGED IN SEVERAL MAQUILADORAS. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, ATTORNEY GENERAL JORGE MADRAZO ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR AN ELITE GROUP OF FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS TO BE

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 DISPATCHED TO JUAREZ TO REVIEW THE CASES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND EXECUTION STYLE HOMICIDES (REF A)

13. (C) COMMENT: IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCURATELY MEASURE THE RATE OF KILLINGS OF WOMEN IN JUAREZ DURING THE PAST 18 MONTHS. THAT THESE MURDERS HAVE CONTINUED AT THE SAME RATE AS IN THE PAST IS AS GOOD A GUESS AS ANY. THE SHEER NUMBER OF POSSIBLE MOTIVES, POLITICAL AGENDAS AND STATISTICAL REPORTING COUPLED WITH A JUDICIAL/POLICE BUREAUCRACY THAT IS EITHER UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO RESOLVE THE CASES CREATES A SITUATION THAT DEFIES EASY DESCRIPTION OR ANALYSIS.



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14. (C) WHAT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS THE VULNERABILITY OF THE SOCIAL CLASS IN WHICH MOST OF THE MURDERS HAVE OCCURED. THESE WOMEN COME FROM A GROUP THAT IS PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY FRAIL. THEY ARE MADE MORE VULNURABLE THROUGH A CULTURAL UPBRINGING THAT REINFORCES THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL INFERIORITY AND RESULTING SUBMISSIVENESS. MOST OF THESE WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO MIGRATE TO JUAREZ BECAUSE OF POVERTY IN THEIR NATIVE SOUTHERN STATES. DRAWN TO THE BORDER TO WORK IN MAQUILADORAS, THEY MUST LIVE BOTH ON THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE CITY AS WELL AS ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY. THEY LIVE AMONG FELLOW SQUATTERS IN AREAS THAT LACK EVEN THE MOST BASIC SERVICES SUCH AS PAVED ROADS, STREETLIGHTS, POLICE PROTECTION, AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION. SHIFT WORK AT THE MAQUILA PLANTS OBLIGATES THESE WOMEN TO WALK LONG DISTANCES IN DARKNESS TO CATCH THE COMPANY BUS MAKING THEM EASY PREY FOR GANGS, CRIMINALS AND PREDATORS. COLLECTIVELY, THESE CONDITIONS SERVE TO PROMOTE AND CONCEAL A WIDE RANGE OF CRIMES. THIS CLIMATE OF FEAR AND

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0655  
DOL WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

2ND C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN)

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUREZ

UNCLASSIFIED

LABOR FOR ILAB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/13/0

TAGS: ELAB, PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ- AN UPDATE

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UNCERTAINTY COMBINED WITH THE PERCEPTION OF OFFICIAL
INACTION HAS CREATED AS WELL AN INTENSE SUSPICION OF
AUTHORITIES. REGRETTABLY, SINCE ALMOST NO ONE IS EVER EVEN
ARRESTED, MUCH LESS CONVICTED FOR THESE CRIMES, OUR
ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE ODDS OF OPPORTUNISTIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND MURDER CONTINUING ARE QUITE HIGH. END COMMENT. DAVIDOW

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ACTION WHA-01

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INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01 L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 OCS-03 OIC-02 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00
PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SCT-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0652

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/13/01

TAGS: PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ- AN UPDATE

REF: (A) CIUDAD JUAREZ 0839 (B) CIUDAD JUAREZ 0189 (C) 99
CIUDAD JUAREZ 2518 (D) 99 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2336 (NOTAL)

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2. (U) SUMMARY: FOLLOWING A TEN-MONTH RESPITE, THE RECENT MURDERS OF THREE WOMEN STIRRED CONTROVERSY AND FEARS THAT THE SEXUAL KILLING OF WOMEN CONTINUES IN CIUDAD JUAREZ.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS) CONTINUED TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING ON THE MURDERS. SPECIAL STATE INVESTIGATORS ASSIGNED TO CIUDAD JUAREZ CONTINUED TO DEFEND THEIR RECORD DISPIE INCONSISTENCIES IN THEIR STATISTICS. PRESIDENT ZEDILLO PROMISES TO SEND HELP BUT FOR NOW ITS JUST A WAITING GAME. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) THE YEAR 2000 WAS NEWLY ARRIVED WHEN AGAIN WOMEN BEGAN TO DISAPPEAR IN JUAREZ ONLY TO BE FOUND MURDERED IN THE SURROUNDING DESERT AREAS. THE NEW DISCOVERIES BROKE A TEN-MONTH LULL IN KILLINGS AND WAKENED FEARS THAT THE MURDERS OF WOMEN HAVE RESUMED. (MORE THAN 200 SINCE 1993).

THESE NEW VICTIMS MET THE PROFILE OF THEIR PREDECESSORS, THEY WERE BETWEEN 17 AND 25 YEARS OF AGE AND DIMINUTIVE IN PHYSICAL STATURE. LIKE PREVIOUS VICTIMS, THESE WOMEN REPRESENTED THE LOWER END OF THE SOCIO/ECONOMIC SCALE AND THEY TOO HAD BEEN TORTURED AND SEXUALLY ASSAULTED BEFORE BEING STRANGLER. THEIR BODIES WERE FOUND IN AREAS WHERE OTHERS HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE PAST. THE FIRST BODY DISCOVERED IN 2000, WAS THE FIFTH TO BE FOUND IN EJIDO LOPEZ MATEOS IN THE EXPANSIVE JUAREZ VALLEY TO THE EAST. THE SECOND VICTIM WAS LOCATED IN CERRO BOLA, ANOTHER WIDE OPEN AREA ON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE TO THE WEST AND AN AREA WHERE FIVE BODIES HAVE BEEN FOUND. THE THIRD VICTIM, 17 YEAR OLD MARIA ISABEL NAVA VAZQUEZ WAS DISCOVERED IN LOMA BLANCA, 500 METERS FROM CASAS GRANDES HIGHWAY TO PORVENIR ROAD, WHERE

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BODIES WERE FOUND IN PREVIOUS YEARS. THESE AREAS ARE IN THE DESERT, FAR FROM THE CITY ZONE. SELDOM PATROLED BY POLICE, THE TERRITORY LENDS ITSELF TO CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.

4. (C) THE DEATHS SET OFF A WAVE OF PUBLIC ANGER ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO PROTECT WOMEN. NGOS CALLED FOR THE RESIGNATION OF SULY PONCE, HEAD OF THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE FOR WOMEN'S HOMICIDES. NGOS CONTINUED TO BE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING ON THE MURDERS OF WOMEN.

[REDACTED] SAID THAT, SINCE THE

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ARRIVAL OF PONCE, THERE HAS BEEN A BLACKOUT OF INFORMATION AND STATISTICS TO NGOS, A CHARGE ECHOED BY [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] ADDED THAT THE STATISTICS THAT ARE PROVIDED BY PONCE'S OFFICE ARE SKEWED AND MISLEADING. SHE ACCUSED PONCE OF LACKING EMPATHY FOR THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS AND CITED AN EGREGIOUS CASE CONCERNING A 1998 VICTIM, KNOWN AS SAGARIO. WHEN SAGARIO'S BODY WAS DISCOVERED, HER FACE AND BODY WERE DISFIGURED AND HER FAMILY IDENTIFIED HER BY CLOTHING LEFT ON THE REMAINS. THE STATE TOOK TISSUE SAMPLES AND SENT THEM AWAY FOR DNA TESTING. A YEAR LATER WHEN THE RESULTS WERE RECEIVED, THE CORONER INFORMED SAGARIO'S MOTHER THAT THE DNA SAMPLES DID NOT MATCH. PONCE THEN SUMMONED THE MOTHER TO INTERROGATE HER ABOUT THE FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIP AND ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] WAS UNDULY FORCEFUL IN HER QUEST FOR AN ADMISSION THAT SAGARIO HAD BEEN ADOPTED. FINALLY, PONCE DECIDED THAT THE BODY SHOULD BE EXHUMED FOR A SECOND SET OF SAMPLES TO BE TESTED. THE MOTHER AGREED ON CONDITION THAT A FAMILY MEMBER BE PRESENT WHEN THE BODY WAS EXHUMED. HOWEVER, SOON AFTER, ON HER DAILY RITUAL TO TAKE FLOWERS TO

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HER DAUGHTER'S GRAVE, THE MOTHER NOTICED THAT A NEARBY GRAVE WAS DISTURBED. SHE NOTIFIED PONCE AND MADE CLEAR THAT SAGARIO WAS BURIED IN GRAVE NUMBER 45, NOT THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN DISTURBED. RESULTS ON SAGARIO'S SECOND DNA TEST ARE STILL PENDING, WHILE NGOS RAISE FUNDS FOR VICTIMS FAMILIES WHO HAVE DNA TESTING DONE IN U.S. LABORATORIES. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] PONCE INSISTS THAT WHEN THE STATE ORDERS DNA TESTING IT DOES SO AS A SPECIAL COURTESY, NOT AS A PART OF ANY INVESTIGATION.

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5. (C) [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT LOCAL AND STATE POLITICIANS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN SCORING POLITICAL POINTS WITH THE MURDERS THAN IN RESOLVING CRIMINAL CASES. SHE NOTED THAT THE MURDERS BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER THE PREVIOUS PAN GOVERNOR TOOK OFFICE IN 1992, A FACT CORROBORATED BY OFFICIAL STATISTICS. ACORDING TO [REDACTED] DURING HIS 1998 CAMPAIGN THE NOW INCUMBENT PRI GOVERNOR PATRICIO MARTINEZ EMPLOYEED POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT FEATURED THE MOTHER OF A MURDERED WOMAN ACCUSING THE THEN INCUMBENT PAN GOVERNOR OF FAILING TO MAINTAIN SAFETY IN CHIHUAHUA. [REDACTED] THAT ONCE ELECTED, MARTINEZ (1) BOUGHT OFF THE PRESS TO CONTROL INFORMATION ABOUT THE MURDERS, AND (2) CHANGED THE REPORTING METHODS SO THAT IT IS NOW DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER STATISTICS REGARDING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. FOR EXAMPLE, [REDACTED] CITED THAT UNDER MARTINEZ' REPORTING METHODS, ONCE A SUSPECT IS DETAINED ON A CASE, THE CASE IS CONSIDERED RESOLVED (REF B). SHE CRITICIZED THE MEDIA FOR

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ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-01	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CA-02	CIAE-00
	INL-01	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	ED-01
	OIGO-02	FBIE-00	FBO-01	VC-01	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/027W

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R 141712Z MAR 00  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0653

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

FROM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/13/01  
TAGS: PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX  
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BUYING INTO A LONG-STANDING TRADITION IN WHICH THE  
GOVERNMENT PAYS THE MEDIA TO DO ITS WILL.

6. (C) [REDACTED] ASSOCIATED THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STATE  
PROSECUTOR, ALEJANDRO ASTUDILLO, WITH THOSE OF PONCE, CITING  
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THAT THERE HAS BEEN ONLY ONE CONVICTION. SHE BLAMED THE  
STATE ALSO FOR A LOW CALIBER OF INVESTIGATIVE WORK WHICH,  
COUPLED WITH THE LOW RATE OF CONVICTION, HAS FUELED THE  
PUBLIC'S BELIEF THAT THE PERPRETRATORS ARE IMMUNE FROM  
PROSECUTION. SHE PREDICTED THAT AS LONG AS THIS PERCEPTION  
REMAINS THE KILLINGS WOULD CONTINUE. FINALLY, SHE DESCRIBED  
THE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE ROLES AMONG THE MUNICIPAL, STATE AND  
FEDERAL POLICE AS AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE IN THE  
INVESTIGATION OF KILLINGS. [REDACTED] PROVIDED A TYPICAL  
SCENARIO: THE SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR MUNICIPAL POLICE  
IS LIMITED TO THE PREVENTION OF CRIME. THEREFORE, WHEN A  
PATROL IS CALLED TO THE SCENE OF A RAPE, THE OFFICER MAY (1)  
HOLD THE VICTIM AND/OR THE RAPIST FOR STATE POLICE TO ACCEPT

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JURISDICTION OR (2) IN URGENT CASES, PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIM SUCH AS TAKING HER TO A CRISIS CENTER OR HOSPITAL. HOWEVER, THE STATE POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ISSUING AN ARREST WARRANT, FOR CARRYING OUT THE ARREST, AND FOR INVESTIGATING THE CRIME. TYPICALLY, THIS TAKES MANY MONTHS AND MUCH PASSING-OF-THE-BUCK. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY SUSPECTS ARE NEVER BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, THEY SIMPLY GET AWAY WITH THE CRIME. [REDACTED] SEES THE MUNICIPAL POLICE AS NOTHING MORE THAN GLORIFIED SECURITY GUARDS. IN THE CASE OF FEDERAL LEVEL CRIMES SUCH AS DRUG TRAFFICKING, THE FEDERAL POLICE HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO DETAIN SUSPECTS BUT MUST FIRST OBTAIN A COURT ORDER TO DO SO. AGAIN, BECAUSE THE PROCESS IS BUREAUCRATIC AND CUMBERSOME, IT LENDS ITSELF TO DELAY AND CORRUPTION.

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7. (C) Suly Ponce took charge of the Special Prosecutor's Office for Women's Homicides in Ciudad Juarez on November 9, 1998. At the time, she was the fifth appointee in nine  
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MONTHS. PONCE USED THE LATTER FACT TO IMPRESS UPON THE LISTENER THE EXACTING NATURE OF HER ASSIGNMENT. SHE ADMITTED THAT THE WORK IS GRUESOME AND INTENSE AND SHE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WHEN THE WORK IS PAIRED WITH PUBLIC CRITICISM, SUCH AS THE RECENT DEMANDS FOR HER RESIGNATION, IT TAKES ITS TOLL. IN LAST MONTH'S CONFRONTATION WITH NGOS, PONCE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUPPORTED BY THE CHIHUAHUA DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY, WHO WAS QUOTED IN LOCAL DAILIES AS SAYING THAT HE SAW NO NEED FOR A NEW APPOINTEE BECAUSE PONCE WAS PERFORMING WELL. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE SOLUTION IS NOT TO DISMISS PONCE. SHE IDENTIFIED THE NEED TO DEVELOP CREATIVE SOLUTIONS SUCH AS EDUCATION PROJECTS FOR WOMEN; CHANGES IN LAW ENFORCEMENT; CHANGES IN THE MANNER THAT THE COURTS ADJUDICATE CASES AGAINST WOMEN; CHANGES IN MEXICAN LAW; MORE TRAINING FOR POLICE AGENCIES; AND THE MEANS TO STOP POLICE CORRUPTION.

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8. (U) IN HER DEFENSE, PONCE PROVIDED A LIST OF HER OFFICE'S ACHIEVEMENTS BEGINNING WITH ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE OPERATIONS. OTHER MEASURES INCLUDE: ON-SITE DEFENSIVE TRAINING PROVIDED BY HER OFFICE, TO FEMALE MAQUILADORA MANUFACTURING WORKERS. PARTICIPANTS ARE SELECTED BY MEANS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING FOR HIGH RISK FACTORS. THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS ARE OFFERED PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY BY LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS AND THE CHILDREN OF VICTIMS ARE PROVIDED JUDICIAL ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO PONCE, OFFERS FOR THIS TYPE OF ASSISTANCE ARE USUALLY REJECTED.

FOLLOWING THE ARREST OF SEVERAL MAQUILADORA BUS DRIVERS,

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MAQUILADORAS HAVE UPDATED HIRING PROCEDURES. APPLICANTS ARE NOW SCREENED MORE CLOSELY FOR POLICE RECORD, DRUGS AND CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MEXICO 02371 02 OF 04 141708Z FAMILY VIOLENCE. IF HIRED, DRIVERS MUST SUMMIT TO UNANNOUNCED DRUG TESTING. MAQUILADORAS MAINTAIN BULLETIN BOARDS WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THEIR BUS DRIVERS SO THAT RIDERS CAN IDENTIFY THEIR BUSES/DRIVERS TO MANAGEMENT.

9. (C) THOUGH SHE ADMITTED THAT THIS YEAR'S KILLINGS FOLLOWED THE SAME MODUS OPERANDI BETWEEN 1993 AND 1998, PONCE BELIEVES THAT MULTIPLE PERPETRATORS AND MOTIVES ARE BEHIND THE MURDERS. WHILE SHE BELIEVES THAT SOME OF THE MURDERS MAY HAVE RESULTED FROM COPYCAT ACTORS, SHE CONTENDS THAT OMAR LATIF SHARIF IS DIRECTING MOST OF THE MURDERS, FROM A PRISON CELL IN CHIHUAHUA CITY. SHARIF IS AN EGYPTIAN CHEMIST WHO PREVIOUSLY LIVED IN THE U.S. HE WAS ARRESTED IN 1995, AND WAS EVENTUALLY CONVICTED ON MARCH 3, 1995 KILLING OF ELIZABETH CASTRO, VICTIM OF A SERIAL-TYPE MURDER. IN THE PAST TWO YEARS THERE HAVE BEEN ARRESTS OF MAQUILADORA BUS DRIVERS AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF A GANG CALLED THE REBELDES. UNDER INTERAGATION, THE SUSPECTS CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE CARRYING OUT THE ORDERS OF SHARIF. HOWEVER, PONCE SAID THAT MOST OF THE SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN RELEASED BECAUSE THEY WERE UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE. AS FOR SHARIF, HE IS ATTRIBUTED WITH HIGH MENTAL FACULTY; HE IS AN EXPERT CHEMIST WHO FROM HIS CELL IN CIUDAD JUAREZ CONCOCTED AN INTOXICATING POTION THAT HE SOLD TO INMATES FOR 5 PESOS (ABOUT .50 USD). WHEN DISCOVERED BY PRISON OFFICIALS, HE WAS IMMEDIATELY AND UNEXPECTEDLY TRANSFERED TO CHIHUAHUA CITY. PONCE SAID THAT SHARIF IS WEALTHY FROM THE ROYALTIES THAT HE RECEIVES FOR

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INFO LOG-00 MFA-01 NP-00 AID-00 AMAD-01 CA-02 CIAE-00
INL-01 DODE-00 DOEE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00 ED-01
FBIE-00 FBO-01 VC-01 HHS-01 H-01 SSA-01 TEDE-00
INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01 L-00 VCE-00 AC-01 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 OCS-03 OIC-02 OMB-01 OPIC-01 PA-00 PM-00
PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SCT-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-00
SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 ASDS-01 PMB-00 DSCC-00
PRM-01 DRL-02 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /025W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/13/01  
TAGS: PHUM, ASEC, CASC, PGOV, SOCI, MX  
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HIS PETRO-CHEMICAL PATENTS IN THE U.S. ACCORDING TO HER,  
THIS STEADY FLOW OF CASH ALLOWS HIM TO CONTRACT KILLERS FROM  
HIS CELL.

10. (C) PONCE SAID THAT WITH A LIMITED STAFF OF 22 AGENTS  
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AND FIVE STATE ATTORNEYS, THE VOLUME OF INVESTIGATIONS IS  
OVERWHELMING. FORTY-ONE WOMEN WERE MURDERED BETWEEN OCTOBER  
1997 AND JANUARY 1998; 21 BETWEEN OCTOBER 1998 AND OCTOBER  
1999. CHARTS PROVIDED BY PONCE REFLECT STATISTICS BASED ON  
THE CALENDAR YEAR: TWENTY EIGHT MURDERS IN 1998 AND  
EIGHTEEN IN 1999. HOWEVER, THESE FIGURES FAIL TO MATCH THE  
STATISTICS PROVIDED LAST MONTH BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE: 32  
MURDERS IN 1998 AND 19 IN 1999. IN 2000, THERE HAVE BEEN  
SEVEN WOMEN MURDERED. OF THESE, THREE ARE CONSIDERED  
RELATED TO THE SERIAL KILLINGS. THE REMAINING VICTIMS DIED  
AT THE HANDS OF ANOTHER WOMAN, A JEALOUS BOYFRIEND, A  
HUSBAND, AND SUICIDE. PONCE SAID THAT THE INABILITY OR  
UNWILLINGNESS OF THE VICTIMS' FAMILIES TO PROVIDE TRUE  
FACTS, PRESENTS A MAJOR OBSTACLE FOR INVESTIGATIONS. IN  
SOME CASES, THE FAMILY KNEW THAT THE VICTIM ENGAGED IN A  
RISKY LIFE STYLE, SUCH AS ACCEPTING RIDES HOME FROM  
DIFFERENT STRANGERS. IN OTHER CASES THE FAMILY DID NOT  
KNOW. ACCORDING TO PONCE, SOME OF THE VICTIMS WORK IN THE  
SEX INDUSTRY AND IN A 2000 CASE, THE VICTIM WITHHELD FROM HER  
FAMILY THE FACT THAT SHE WORKED IN A BAR, TELLING THEM  
INSTEAD THAT SHE SOLD COSMETICS. PONCE FAULTED THE  
MUNICIPAL POLICE FOR FAILING TO FULFILL THEIR  
RESPONSIBILITY TO PREVENT CRIME. SHE QUOTED THE NUMBER  
OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS AT 1500, MANY MORE THAN THE 22 STATE  
AGENTS ASSIGNED TO JUAREZ. SHE BELIEVES THAT THE MUNICIPAL  
POLICE COULD TRAIL THE MAQUILADORA BUSES AND QUESTION THE  
DRIVER IF THEY OBSERVED SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR.

11. (C) [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] IS EQUALLY RESPECTED BY NGOS AND SULLY PONCE AND IS

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ACCLAIMED BY COLLEGUES AS THE KEEPER OF THE MOST PRECISE  
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STATISTICS ON THE MURDERS OF WOMEN. SHE GATHERS AND MAINTAINS INFORMATION ON MURDERS OF FEMALES FROM ALL AGE GROUPS. [REDACTED] SORTS DATA BY THE INFORMATION PERTAINING TO EACH VICTIM AS WELL AS BY THE DETAILS OF EACH CRIME, MAINTAINING A WALL-SIZED MAP OF JUAREZ COVERED WITH TACKS TO INDICATE WHERE THE BODIES WERE FOUND. A SIMILAR MAP FOR ALL MURDERS IS MAINTAINED BY POST'S ACS SECTION. [REDACTED] OBTAINS RAW DATA FOR HER STATISTICS FROM THE JUAREZ DAILIES, CONFIRMING THAT PONCE DOES NOT PROVIDE STATISTICS AND THAT GOVERNMENT FIGURES ARE DIFFICULT TO DECIPHER. SHE EMPHASIZES THAT THE FIGURES AVAILABLE FOR 1985 THROUGH 1997 CONSTITUTE OFFICIAL STATISTICS WHILE DATA DEVELOPED DURING THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IS UNOFFICIAL. LIKE PONCE, MONARREZ SURMISES THAT THE MURDERS ARE PARTLY THE RESULT OF COPYCAT PERPETRATORS. SHE BELIEVES THAT ANOTHER POSSIBILITY RELATES TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS STILL STRONG IN THE SOUTH OF MEXICO. WHEN PERSONS FROM THE SOUTH ARRIVE AT THE BORDER, ALL OF THAT SOCIAL STRUCTURE IS DISMANTLED, AFFECTING MALES IN UNPREDICTABLE WAYS.

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12. (U) IN BRIEF VISITS TO CHIHUAHUA AND JUAREZ LAST MONTH, PRESIDENT ERNESTO ZEDILLO AND PRI PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FRANCISCO LABASTIDA PROMISED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF VIOLENCE IN JUAREZ. PRESS CONFERENCES AND PHOTO OPS WERE STAGED IN SEVERAL MAQUILADORAS. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, ATTORNEY GENERAL JORGE MADRAZO ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR AN ELITE GROUP OF FEDERAL INVESTIGATORS TO BE DISPATCHED TO JUAREZ TO REVIEW THE CASES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS AND EXECUTION STYLE HOMICIDES (REF A)

13. (C) COMMENT: IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCURATELY  
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MEASURE THE RATE OF KILLINGS OF WOMEN IN JUAREZ DURING THE PAST 18 MONTHS. THAT THESE MURDERS HAVE CONTINUED AT THE SAME RATE AS IN THE PAST IS AS GOOD A GUESS AS ANY. THE SHEER NUMBER OF POSSIBLE MOTIVES, POLITICAL AGENDAS AND STATISTICAL REPORTING COUPLED WITH A JUDICIAL/POLICE BUREAUCRACY THAT IS EITHER UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO RESOLVE THE CASES CREATES A SITUATION THAT DEFIES EASY DESCRIPTION OR ANALYSIS.

14. (C) WHAT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, IS THE VULNERABILITY OF THE SOCIAL CLASS IN WHICH MOST OF THE MURDERS HAVE OCCURED. THESE WOMEN COME FROM A GROUP THAT IS PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY

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AND ECONOMICALLY FRAIL. THEY ARE MADE MORE VULNERABLE THROUGH A CULTURAL UPBRINGING THAT REINFORCES THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL INFERIORITY AND RESULTING SUBMISSIVENESS. MOST OF THESE WOMEN HAVE BEEN FORCED TO MIGRATE TO JUAREZ BECAUSE OF POVERTY IN THEIR NATIVE SOUTHERN STATES. DRAWN TO THE BORDER TO WORK IN MAQUILADORAS, THEY MUST LIVE BOTH ON THE OUTER LIMITS OF THE CITY AS WELL AS ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY. THEY LIVE AMONG FELLOW SQUATTERS IN AREAS THAT LACK EVEN THE MOST BASIC SERVICES SUCH AS PAVED ROADS, STREETLIGHTS, POLICE PROTECTION, AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION. SHIFT WORK AT THE MAQUILA PLANTS OBLIGATES THESE WOMEN TO WALK LONG DISTANCES IN DARKNESS TO CATCH THE COMPANY BUS MAKING THEM EASY PREY FOR GANGS, CRIMINALS AND PREDATORS. COLLECTIVELY, THESE CONDITIONS SERVE TO PROMOTE AND CONCEAL A WIDE RANGE OF CRIMES. THIS CLIMATE OF FEAR AND

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ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-01	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CA-02	CIAE-00
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	FBIE-00	FBO-01	VC-01	HHS-01	H-01	SSA-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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R 141712Z MAR 00  
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0655

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 MEXICO 002371

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UNCERTAINTY COMBINED WITH THE PERCEPTION OF OFFICIAL  
INACTION HAS CREATED AS WELL AN INTENSE SUSPICION OF

AUTHORITIES. REGRETTABLY, SINCE ALMOST NO ONE IS EVER EVEN  
ARRESTED, MUCH LESS CONVICTED FOR THESE CRIMES, OUR  
ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE ODDS OF OPPORTUNISTIC SEXUAL VIOLENCE

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AND MURDER CONTINUING ARE QUITE HIGH. END COMMENT. DAVIDOW

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