CORRECTED COPY (PARAS. 9, 13 AND ADD PARAS. 14-17)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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

SUBJECT: THE MURDERED WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ—FACT AND FICTION

REF: A) JUAREZ 6117 B) 01 JUAREZ 2294 C) 01 UNCLASSIFIED

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BY A SUSPECTED SERIAL KILLER(S) IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ DOES NOT APPROACH THE 270-340 FIGURE HYPED BY SOME MEDIA OUTLETS AND NGO’S. IT IS TRUE THAT APPROXIMATELY 300 WOMEN HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THIS CITY OVER THE LAST DECADE, BUT MOST WERE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, WHILE OTHERS WERE LOST IN THE GRUESOME BODY COUNT IN THE ONGOING DRUG WAR. THE LOCAL PRESS IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PERPETUATING THE INACCURATE BODY COUNT, BECAUSE ESCALATING NUMBERS SELL NEWSPAPERS. NGO’S ACCEPT AND USE THESE INFLATED NUMBERS TO BRING THIS ISSUE TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD.

2. THE NUMBER OF WOMEN MURDERED BY SERIAL KILLER(S) IN CIUDAD JUÁREZ IS ONLY ONE OF THE MYTHS SURROUNDING THIS ISSUE. CONSPIRACY THEORIES ABOUND. OTHER POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS INCLUDE THE BELIEFS THAT: 1) MEXICAN FEDERAL OR JUÁREZ MUNICIPAL POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR JURISDICTION OVER THE CASES; 2) THE FBI IS PLAYING A MAJOR ROLE IN THE INVESTIGATION; AND 3) THE PERPETRATOR IS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN OR LPR WHO COMMITS THE CRIMES AND SEEKS PROTECTION IN THE U.S. THIS MESSAGE IS INTENDED TO DISPEL THE MISCONCEPTIONS AND TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

THE PROBLEM

3. THE CHIHUAHUA STATE POLICE HAVE JURISDICTION OVER THE INVESTIGATION OF THESE MURDERS, SINCE MURDER IN MEXICO IS A STATE, NOT A FEDERAL, CRIME. AS AN ORGANIZATION, THIS POLICE FORCE REPRESENTS THE PRIMARY OBSTACLE TO SOLVING THESE HEINOUS CRIMES. THE CHIHUAHUA POLICE ARE POORLY PAID AND TRAINED, HAVE APPARENTLY TAMPERED WITH EVIDENCE, INTIMIDATED POTENTIAL WITNESSES AND DETAINNEES AND LACK THE MOST ELEMENTARY INVESTIGATORY SKILLS TO SOLVE THESE CRIMES. MOREOVER, FAILURE ON THE PART OF STATE POLICE TO KEEP THE PUBLIC ACCURATELY APPRAISED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASES HAVE ALLOWED BASELESS CLAIMS, ELABORATE SPECULATION AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES TO BE CONSIDERED FACT.

UNCLASSIFIED
R 121620Z FEB 03
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6829
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
INFO ALL USCNS MEXICO 0772
XMT AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLASS SECTION 02 OF 04 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2684

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TAGS: CASC, PHUM, PGOV, SOCI, KWMN, ASEC, MX
SUBJECT: THE MURDERED WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ-FACT AND FICTION
THE CONSUL GENERAL THAT THE MURDERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SOLVED. HE CITED THE NUMBER OF SERIAL
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MURDER VICTIMS AS BEING IN THE RANGE OF 75Q80,
BUT DISMISSED THE KILLINGS OF ALL WOMEN COMMITTED
SINCE HE ASSUMED OFFICE IN 1998 AS UNRELATED TO
THE SERIAL MURDERS OF THE EARLY 1990'S. THE
GOVERNOR STATED THAT HE BELIEVES IT IS
UNNECESSARY TO CONTINUE INVESTIGATING THESE
CRIMES.
5. Since the early 1990's, the issue of women's deaths in Juarez has steadily gained domestic and international press attention. Estimates of the number of women killed over this period vary from 270 to 340. Most of the press attention has focused on a smaller portion of that number that were found dumped in the desert outskirts of Ciudad Juarez, often in groups and in advanced states of decomposition. A fact that receives little attention is that at most 80 of these deaths match a pattern attributable to a serial or copycat killer. To say that 80 women were murdered and dumped in the sand dunes over a decade is horrifying. But it is misleading to use the 270–340 figures. The overwhelming majority of the dead do not meet the profile of those murdered by a serial killer(s). For example, most did not simply disappear off the street. Most of the victims were not raped.

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Most were not found disposed of in the desert. Most of those murders were committed by relatives or acquaintances. Female victims who match the serial,copycat killer profile usually are very poor, very young, live in shantytowns with dirt roads, and walk to central pick-up points to ride early morning or late night buses to maquila plants or school. Most of these victims show signs of mutilation. All were sexually assaulted and either stabbed or strangled.

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THE DETAINED AND THE POLICE
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6. Before the 1990's, sources indicate that there were a handful of murdered women annually in Ciudad Juarez, less than in U.S. cities of similar size at the time. Then the serial type killing began, accompanied by a rise in domestic violence. Violence against women inflicted by relatives, friends, or family members got little press. The law contained few strong sanctions and the underpaid, incompetent police seemed not to care. With the sudden appearance of stranger-
INFLECTED CRIME HOWEVER, THE AUTHORITIES WERE FORCED TO RESPOND IN SOME FASHION. NONE OF THEIR RESPONSES HAS PROVED SATISFACTORY.

7. THE CHIHUAHUA STATE JUDICIAL POLICE ARRESTED EGYPTIAN (AND FORMER U.S. LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT) ABDEL LATIF SHARIF SHARIF IN 1995. ORIGINALLY ACCUSED OF THE RAPE AND KIDNAPPING (NOT MURDER) OF ONE GIRL, HE WAS LATER RELEASED ONLY TO BE ARRESTED AGAIN IN LATE 1995 AND PUBLICLY ACCUSED BY THE STATE JUDICIAL POLICE OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR A DOZEN MURDERS. HOWEVER, SHARIF WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CHARGED WITH THE ATTACK AND DEATH OF JUST ONE WOMAN, AND SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS FOR THAT CRIME. THE CONVICTION WAS SUBSEQUENTLY OVERTURNED IN 2000 BASED ON A LACK OF COMPLETE FORENSIC REPORTS. CHARGES WERE REFILED AND SHARIF REMAINS IN PRISON IN CHIHUAHUA CITY AWAITING SENTENCING.

8. IN SPITE OF A LACK OF EVIDENCE, SHARIF HAS FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE STATE'S CONSPIRACY THEORIES AND SUBSEQUENT ARRESTS OF OTHERS ACCUSED OF WOMEN'S MURDERS. IN EARLY 1996, THE STATE JUDICIAL POLICE ARRESTED 10 MEMBERS OF THE GANG "LOS REBELDES" IN A RAID ON DOWNTOWN JUAREZ BARS.

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ACTION IO-00

INFO LOG-00  COR-01  MFA-00  NP-00  AID-00  AMAD-00  A-00
CA-01  CCO-00  CIAE-00  CTME-00  INL-00  DODE-00  DOHE-00
WHA-00  SPFP-00  DS-00  EB-00  ED-01  FBIE-00  UTED-00
VC-00  OBO-00  HHS-01  TRDE-00  INR-00  LAB-01  L-00
VCE-00  M-00  AC-01  NSAE-00  NSCE-00  OCS-03  OIC-02
OMB-01  OPIC-01  OPR-01  PA-00  PER-01  FM-01  PRS-01
ACE-00  P-00  SCT-00  SP-00  IRM-00  SSO-00  STR-00
TEST-00  TRSE-00  USIE-00  USSS-00  ASDS-00  BCA-00  PMB-00
DSSC-00  PRM-00  DRL-01  G-00  SAS-00  SWCI-00  /015W

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R 121620Z FEB 03
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6830

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SUBJECT: THE MURDERED WOMEN IN CIUDAD JUAREZ—FACT AND FICTION
AND PUBLICLY ACCUSED THEM OF COMMITTING EIGHT MURDERS, SUPPOSEDLY ON ORDERS FROM SHARIF, WHO
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PAID THEM 1000 PESOS (APPROX. 100 USD) TO DO SO TO CREATE AN ALIBI FOR HIM. SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE GANG WERE RELEASED FOR LACK OF EVIDENCE OR BECAUSE THEY WERE MINORS. THE REMAINDER WERE FINALLY CHARGED WITH FIVE MURDERS BUT HAVE NOT BEEN SENTENCED AND REMAIN IN JAIL.

9. SHARIF WAS AGAIN NAMED AS THE MASTERMIND IN 1999 WHEN FIVE MORE BUS DRIVERS WERE DETAINED FOR MURDER. ORIGINALLY ACCUSED OF A DOZEN MURDERS, AGAIN ALL SUPPOSEDLY AT THE REQUEST AND FUNDING (THIS TIME FOR 2500 USD PER HEAD) OF SHARIF, FOUR OF THE DRIVERS WERE FINALLY CHARGED WITH SEVEN KILLINGS AND ONE WAS CHARGED IN JUST ONE CASE IN WHICH THE VICTIM SURVIVED AND POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED HER ATTACKER. BY THIS TIME THE CONSPIRACY THEORY HAD BEEN COMPLETELY DISCREDITED AND THE CLOSEST OBSERVERS AND MOST ARDENT CRITICS OF THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING PROMINENT FIGURES IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS GROUPS, REGARD SHARIF AS A CONVENIENT SUSPECT ON WHICH THE STATE POLICE CAN BLAME MULTIPLE MURDERS AND CLEAR THEIR DOCKET. THE BUS DRIVERS ALL ALLEGE THEIR CONFESSIONS WERE OBTAINED UNDER TORTURE.

10. PRESSURE FROM THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS LED THE MEXICAN NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE. ITS 1998 REPORT DENOUNCED IRREGULARITIES IN THE INVESTIGATIONS. IN RESPONSE THE CHIHUAHUA STATE GOVERNMENT CREATED THE SPECIAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE ON WOMEN'S HOMICIDES.

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11. In spite of the arrests, bodies continued to be found. In November 2001, after eight more victims' remains were discovered near a busy intersection, police arrested two drivers of the bus fleets employed by the maquila industry. Police claimed both had confessed and named their victims. The drivers showed signs of torture after their arrest. An alleged witness backtracked on her initial statement. The drivers' defense attorney was pursued in a high-speed chase and shot to death by members of the state judicial police, who originally claimed he died in a car crash. In February 2003 the state's case was further damaged when a police informant stated that the police knew all along that the person in the car was the attorney. Not surprisingly, an internal police investigation cleared the police of all wrongdoing. Then, also in early February, one of the two accused bus drivers mysteriously died in his cell in Chihuahua. Authorities first stated he died of complications from a hernia operation, later changed to a heart attack. Once again, the credibility of the authorities has been seriously called into question.

THE (LIMITED) ROLE OF THE FBI

12. In 1998, a retired FBI agent under contract to assist Mexican police stated there were one or more serial killers on the loose in Juarez, and speculated that there could be a person crossing the border to commit the crimes, although no evidence to support the latter theory was ever
PRESENTED. IN 1999, THREE PROFILERS WERE SENT FROM THE FBI'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT CRIME IN SUBURBAN VIRGINIA TO REVIEW THE CASES OF THE WOMEN'S HOMICIDES. AFTER A WEEK OF INVESTIGATION, THE TEAM OF FBI AGENTS CONCLUDED

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ACTION IO-00

INFO LOG-00 COR-01 MFA-00 NP-00 AID-00 AMAD-00 A-00
CA-01 CCO-00 CIAE-00 CTME-00 INL-00 DODE-00 DOD-00
WHAM-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00 ED-01 FBJK-00 UTED-00
VC-00 OBO-00 HHS-01 TDE-00 INR-00 LAB-01 L-00
VCE-00 M-00 AC-01 NSA-00 NSCE-00 OCS-03 OIC-02
OMB-01 OPIC-01 OPR-01 PA-00 PER-00 PM-00 PRS-00
ACE-00 P-00 SCT-00 SP-00 IRM-00 SSO-00 STR-00
TEST-00 TRSE-00 USJE-00 USSS-00 ASDS-00 ECA-00 PMB-00
DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-01 G-00 SAS-00 SWCI-00 /015W

R 121620Z FEB 03
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO SECFDA WASHDC 6831
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO 0774
XMT AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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THE ROLE OF NGO’S

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   (WHICH HAS RECEIVED INL FUNDING),
   BEGAN DRAWING PUBLIC ATTENTION TO THE NUMBER OF
   WOMEN’S DEATHS IN JUAREZ. A [REPORT B6]
LISTED APPROXIMATELY 200 MURDERS OF WOMEN SINCE 1993, NOT DIFFERENTIATING AMONG THOSE PERPETRATED BY SERIAL KILLERS OR BY OTHERS. THUS THE HIGHER GENERAL MURDER FIGURE BEGAN TO BE APPLIED TO THE SERIAL MURDER VICTIMS. [ ] HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THE NEED TO DIFFERENTIATE THE CAUSES OF DEATHS OF THE VICTIMS BUT THIS LEGEND HAS ASSUMED A LIFE OF ITS OWN.


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THEORIES

16. THEORIES ABOUT WHO IS BEHIND THE KILLINGS ARE MANY, RANGING FROM PORNO SNUFF FILM RINGS TO
Satanic cults to angry macho men driven to rage by the fact that many women in Juarez are competing in the workforce. Some Mexican government officials even allege rich and powerful men are behind the homicides. Some victims' relatives support that theory, adding that the perpetrators are being protected by corrupt police officials.

17. The one constant most people agree on is the unwillingness and/or inability of the authorities to solve even one of the serial-type murders. By post calculations, supported by the statements of the governor and approximately 80 women have been murdered by one or more serial killers in and around Ciudad Juarez. State authorities, responsible for the investigation of these murders, have not devoted the necessary resources to solve the crimes and lack the expertise and will to do so. Although several suspects have been imprisoned, there are indicators that the killings are continuing, albeit not at the same pace as in the mid-90's. For example, the remains of three women were reported to Chihuahua police in early January 2003. By Monday, February 11, after intense media pressure, the state attorney general released a statement denying any connection of the newly found remains to those attributed to the serial killer(s). The denial was not accompanied by adequate public information to support the attorney general's contention and is widely disbelieved. It is doubtful that there will be closure to this issue until the Chihuahua police and authorities approach this problem in a more methodical, scientific and responsible manner. It is in the best interest of the local authorities to be more forthcoming with the facts and for the Mexican judiciary to reach objective decisions in the cases of those already detained, actions not
LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

PARKER

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