

ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00
	INL-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	ITCE-00	DOTE-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EXME-00	E-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-00	OIG-00	OMB-00	NIMA-00	OPIC-01
	EPAU-00	GIWI-00	ACE-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00
	TEST-00	TRSE-00	FMP-00	BEG-00	EPAE-00	ECA-00	IIP-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00	/002W	

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R 222047Z SEP 04  
 FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ  
 TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
 SECSTATE WASHDC 4577  
 INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE  
 AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ

RELEASED IN FULL

UNCLAS CIUDAD JUAREZ 013021

E.O. 12958: N/A  
 TAGS: ECON, EIND, PGOV, SOCI, KWMN, MX  
 SUBJECT: PRESIDENT FOX MEETS WITH JUAREZ MAQUILA LEADERS  
 REF: CIUDAD JUAREZ 003789

1. SUMMARY: President Vicente Fox spent a morning in Ciudad Juarez as part of a border tour, and spoke at an event highlighting the local maquiladora industry. Speakers by and large stayed positive, avoiding any direct criticism of the administration. However, a local maquiladora leader directly raised the issue of the women's murders in Ciudad Juarez, pleading for security assistance. President Fox acknowledged the issue, and said that his new budget proposes to double the funding for security in the city. Chihuahua Governor Patricio Martinez, who leaves office in October, used the occasion to showcase his achievements, probably with an eye toward future positions in the federal government. END SUMMARY

2. The event took place in a large conference room in a Ciudad Juarez convention center, and was packed with supervisors and chiefs from local maquila plants. The first speaker, Cecilia Levine, CEO of MFI International and a leader in local maquila issues, suggested the federal government assist the maquila industry with more infrastructure investment, less red tape, and more tax incentives. These points, along with simplified import/export procedures, were echoed later in the event by the president of AMAC, the largest maquila organization in Juarez.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON  
 DATE/CASE ID: 06 JUL 2006 200502506

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The most notable moment of the event came at the end of Ms. Levine's speech, when she implored, "as a businesswoman and as a mother," that the federal government assist in the area of security above all else.

3. Fox spoke last, and emphasized his solidarity with the local business community. He highlighted three areas that he considers crucial for growth: a developed energy sector, an extensive transportation infrastructure, and affordable and available housing. He invited the participants to send their most pressing concerns to his office, where he promised a written response within 45 days. While wrapping up his speech, Fox noted that he was accompanied at the event by Guadalupe Morfin Otero, Commissioner to Prevent and Eradicate Violence in Ciudad Juarez, whose position he created in October 2003, charging her with bringing together the different levels of government to prevent violence against women in Juarez (reftel).

He vowed to stay involved in security issues, and said the 2005 budget that he recently submitted to Congress doubles funding for security in Juarez.

4. Governor Martinez spoke longer than anyone else at the event and was unrelentingly positive about the achievements of his administration and the future of Chihuahua State. He said Juarez provides desperately needed employment opportunities for the rest of Mexico, and asserted that Chihuahua State has better jobs and is more industrialized than Baja California and Nuevo Leon, respectively. He also boasted that the state has not experienced any strikes during his time in office. In addition, four companies with large investments in the Juarez maquila industry (Electroservicios, Foxconn, Lexmark, and Visteon) gave short presentations that were little more than advertisements, although all mentioned significant local hiring planned in the near term.

5. COMMENT: The presence of Morfin at the event, Fox's proposed increase in security funding for Juarez, and a brief meeting at the Juarez airport between Fox and members of local NGOs that represent families of murdered women should be well received by local observers. Fox's promise to respond in writing to specific concerns submitted by conference attendees may also placate some local business leaders who have criticized the federal government for complacency in its economic reform agenda. Merely the fact that Fox visited Juarez, only his second visit here during his four years as president, may allay criticism that his administration has ignored the plight of Mexico's 4th largest city. END COMMENT

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