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FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2795
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO 0583
XMT AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLASS SECTION 01 OF 02 CIUDAD JUAREZ 1888

EMBASSY FOR DCM AND LEGATT

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: CASC, SOCI, PHUM, KWMN, MX
SUBJ: JUAREZ ATTORNEY DIES WHILE CHASED BY POLICE

A) CIUDAD JUAREZ 1643  B) 01 CIUDAD JUAREZ 2294

1. (U) SUMMARY: A JUAREZ ATTORNEY, MARIO ESCOBEDO, 29, WAS SHOT TO DEATH ON FEBRUARY 5 WHILE BEING CHASED BY STATE JUDICIAL POLICE AGENTS. ESCOBEDO WAS THE ATTORNEY FOR ONE OF THE BUS DRIVERS

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DRIVERS RECENTLY ACCUSED IN THE WOMENQS HOMICIDES IN JUAREZ (REF B). ON FEBRUARY 6, JESUS QCHITQQ SOLIS, STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL, STATED ESCOBEDO DIED FROM INJURIES RECEIVED IN THE CRASH. THE AUTOPSY REPORT REVEALED ESCOBEDO DIED FROM A GUNSHOT WOUND TO THE HEAD. WHILE POLICE MAINTAIN ESCOBEDO FIRED AT THEM DURING THE CHASE, THE VICTIMS FATHER, ALONG WITH NUMEROUS OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES AND NGOS, CHARGE THAT IT WAS A STATE ASSASSINATION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) MARIO ESCOBEDO JR., ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, WAS KNOWN IN THE COMMUNITY FOR BEING THE DEFENSE ATTORNEY TO GUSTAVO GONZALEZ MEZA, ONE OF THE BUS DRIVERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 05 JUL 2006  200502506

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ARRESTED IN NOVEMBER 2001 FOR THE MURDERS OF EIGHT WOMEN IN JUAREZ, ESCOBEDO HAD OPENLY CRITICIZED THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE (PGJE) FOR FORCING HIS CLIENT TO CONFESSION AFTER BEING TORTURED. ESCOBEDO WAS ALSO REPRESENTING THE MOTHER OF FRANCISCO ESTRADA, A FUGITIVE WANTED FOR THE MURDER OF A STATE JUDICIAL POLICE AGENT. ESCOBEDO'S CLIENT WAS ARRESTED FOR AIDING THE ESCAPE OF HER SON IN VILLA AHUMADA, CHIHUAHUA, A SMALL TOWN SOUTH OF JUAREZ. BOTH ESCOBEDO AND HIS FATHER MARIO ESCOBEDO SR. HAD REPORTED RECEIVING DEATH THREATS FOR THEIR AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE OF GUSTAVO GONZALEZ MEZA.

3. (U) JESUS QCHITQ SOLIS, CHIHUAHUA STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL, (REF A) HAS BEEN THE STATE'S PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN ON THE INCIDENT. HE ASSERTS THAT

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POLICE AUTHORITIES RECEIVED A TIP STATING THE FUGITIVE, FRANCISCO ESTRADA, WOULD BE IN A RED TRUCK AT A CONVENIENCE STORE IN SOUTH JUAREZ. STATE POLICE OFFICERS THAT WENT TO THE SCENE CLAIM TO HAVE FOUND THE ATTORNEY, ESCOBEDO, POSING AS ESTRADA, WHO THEN ATTEMPTED TO FLEE THE SCENE. SOLIS FURTHER CLAIMS THAT ESCOBEDO FIRED SHOTS AT THEM AS HE SPED AWAY AND THAT THEY RETURNED FIRE. ESCOBEDO LOST CONTROL OF THE VEHICLE HE WAS DRIVING AND DIED DUE TO INJURIES FROM THE ACCIDENT, ACCORDING TO THE INITIAL POLICE ACCOUNT. HOWEVER, THE RESULTS OF THE AUTOPSY ISSUED BY THE FORENSICS DEPARTMENT OF THE PGJE ON FEBRUARY 6, GAVE ESCOBEDO'S CAUSE OF DEATH AS CRANIO-ENCEPHALIC LACERATION PRODUCED BY A GUNSHOT WOUND TO THE HEAD.

4. (U) ESCOBEDO'S FATHER HAS VIGOROUSLY DISPUTED THE POLICE VERSION OF EVENTS, CLAIMING THAT HIS SON CALLED HIM FOR HELP ON HIS CELL PHONE WHILE BEING CHASED BY THE POLICE. MARIO ESCOBEDO SR. HAS TOLD REPORTERS THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIS SON TO SHOOT AT THE POLICE WHILE DRIVING AT A HIGH SPEED AND TALKING ON A CELL PHONE SIMULTANEOUSLY. PRESS PHOTOS SHOW MULTIPLE BULLET HOLES IN ESCOBEDO'S PICK UP AND NONE IN THE POLICE VEHICLES AT THE SCENE. HOWEVER, A FEW HOURS LATER, PGJE PHOTOGRAPHS DISPLAY A POLICE VEHICLE WITH A BULLET HOLE ALLEGEDLY CAUSED BY

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ACTION IO-00

INFO LOG-00 AMAD-00 CA-01 WHA-00 DS-00 FBLE-00 UTED-00
TEDE-00 OCS-03 OIC-02 TEST-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-02
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R 081603Z FEB 02
FM AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2796
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
INFO ALL USCONS MEXICO 0584
XMT AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 CIUDAD JUAREZ 1888

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ESCOBEOQS FIRING AT POLICE.

5. (SBU) COMMENT: JUST AS VIRTUALLY NO ONE IN CHIHUAHUA
BELIEVES THAT THE TWO BUS DRIVERS ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY
KILLING EIGHT WOMEN (REF B) ARE THE REAL CULPRITS OF THOSE
CRIMES, NEITHER DO MANY PEOPLE IN THE STATE CREDIT THE
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POLICE ACCOUNT OF THIS ATTORNEYS' DEATH. PAN
POLITICAL FIGURES FROM BOTH JUAREZ AND CHIHUAHUA HAVE BEEN
VEHEMENT IN CHARGING THE STATE POLICE (AND EVEN GOVERNOR
MARTINEZ DIRECTLY) WITH DELIBERATE MURDER OF A MAN WHO
HAD BEEN A STRONG CRITIC OF STATE JUSTICE. THE GOVERNOR
HAS BEEN SILENT, ALLOWING HIS NEW ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE
THE HEAT, WHICH SHOWS NO SIGN OF COOLING YET. THE POLICE
VERSION STRAINS CREDIBILITY IN MANY OF ITS PARTICULARS,
THOUGH THE VICTIM'S FAMILY DOES NOT DISPUTE THE ALLEGATION
THAT HE WAS IN POSSESSION OF A GUN.

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