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B1,1.4(D)

From: Nilson, Jennifer K
Sent: 5/18/2011 5:48:45 PM
To: SMART Core
Subject: Tamaulipas' State Police Deficient in Training and Vetting

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From: AMCONSUL MATAMOROS
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Subject: Tamaulipas' State Police [redacted]

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1. (SBU) Summary: A two-day visit to Ciudad Victoria by Embassy Mexico City Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) staff and Post officials [redacted]

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[redacted] The arrival on May 11 of 500 Military Police (MPs) to serve as state police for one year was cheered by the Governor, who says they will provide breathing -room while the state vets and trains a police force. Their deployment plans are unclear, [redacted]

[redacted] Both the governor and new state Secretary of Public Security expressed eagerness to participate in U.S.-sponsored training activities [redacted] End Summary

Security Structure Struggling

2. (SBU) During a visit to Ciudad Victoria May 11-12, NAS Director Keith Mines, NAS Training Coordinator Mick Hogan, [redacted] CESAREO CARVAJAL, SSP Training Branch Plans Officer Cristina Chapela and Post [redacted]

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[redacted] Newly appointed Public Security Secretary Rafael Lomelí says that he has 1800 officers in the State Police, [redacted]

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Alan Flanigan, Senior Reviewer

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3. (SBU) [redacted]

[redacted] The federal government has not yet certified the state police vetting facilities, but federal officials are working closely with the facility to complete the certification process and the facility is close to achieving national standards. The real problem is not certification but capacity. According to the director, the facility currently can vet about 80 people per month. The director hopes to be able to bring that number to 500-600 per month by the end of 2011 but it is not clear whether they will be able to do so even with the new equipment and new personnel they are acquiring. [redacted]

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[redacted] The director plans to hire and train more personnel and is looking for a temporary space to increase their capacity, but there are no plans for a new building. Vetting needs will run into the thousands over the course of the coming two years as the state builds a new force and reforms existing municipal forces.

4. (SBU) A tour of the state Police Academy revealed that it lacks the facilities and space needed to properly train a large number of recruits. The Academy has six classrooms with capacity for 24 students each, an auditorium, and a simulation room, but lacks outdoor training facilities. It was built as part of the public security complex that includes the vetting center and police headquarters but is now restricted in terms of growth. The onsite barracks have space for only 80 people. The Academy's shooting range is unfinished [redacted]

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Military Police Bolster Ranks of Police

5. (SBU) On May 10, 500 SEDENA Military Police arrived in Tamaulipas to work for one year as state police while the state recruits, vets, and trains new officers. The MPs retain their military long arms, are in state police uniforms, and have been given arrest authority. Though under the overall authority of state officials, they retain their military chain of command within the unit. According to state Secretary of Public Security Lomelí, they are currently being deployed in Ciudad Victoria, but will soon be sent throughout Tamaulipas to work municipal security. Secretary of Government Canseco Gómez reported that the state has been promised 1800 more MPs, but does not know when they will arrive. These will remain in military uniforms and will augment the current force. They have also heard rumor of an additional 500 Federal Police but do not have a clear idea when they might arrive. When asked about additional federal troops promised by President Calderon in February, Governor Torre Cantú said that for now he is just grateful to have the additional 500 officers.

Recruiting and Training Efforts Beginning

6. (SBU) Governor Torre Cantú told NAS and Post officials that the state plans to begin recruiting state police officers from graduating university classes immediately as part of a campaign to create a "scientific" police, that uses intelligence to solve crimes, per the federal Secretary of Public Security's (SSP) new "model police unit" program. Canseco Gómez estimates that in 30-60 days the first recruits will be ready. (Comment: Given that recruitment is just beginning and new officers will need to be vetted before training can begin – a process which in itself takes several weeks – this estimate seems likely to slip. End comment.) Lomelí agreed that new recruits could train at facilities in San Luis Potosí and both he and the governor said that the presence of U.S. trainers in the state's training programs would help with recruiting efforts.

New Security Chief, Same Story

7. (SBU) Governor Torre Cantú replaced Secretary of Public Security retired general Ayayla Tinoco with former Director General of Federal Highway Security Rafael Lomelí Martínez in mid-April. In a meeting with Post and NAS personnel, Lomelí expressed sentiments in keeping with the state's long held practice of using the state police as a reaction force only. For example, Post contacts claim that those arrested in San Fernando, while involved in the bus and auto kidnappings and murders, were not the only criminal actors and that others simply moved their operations to areas receiving less attention. In response to Post concern about the deteriorating state of the Ciudad Victoria-Monterrey highway (near the town of Hidalgo) which has been the site of numerous attacks and hijackings reminiscent of the events preceding the mass graves in San Fernando (Reftel B), [redacted]

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[redacted] immediate action,

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calling the area "complicated."

8. (SBU) Both Governor Torre Cantú and Lomeli appeared eager to participate in Mexican federal government and U.S.-led training programs and say that are committed to professionalizing their police force, but both emphasized that the number of widely-separated population centers in Tamaulipas (five) makes it a unique challenge.

Future Police Training Assistance

9. (SBU) According to NAS, Tamaulipas is one of the three states (in addition to Nuevo Leon and Chihuahua) that the SSP has designated as needing special attention in training and formation of new units. SSP is committed to helping build a new 2,000 person force and Secretary Garcia Luna has met with the Governor and his staff both to secure their commitment to the new model police unit, and to start the recruiting process using the model the SSP used for the San Luis Potosi investigators program. The state has a very long way to go to achieve even modest increases in security but there appears to be the political will and some resources to at least get started. SSP agrees that there is no place to train in the state itself so training will need to be conducted at the federal training base in San Luis Potosi. Courses there for investigators are ongoing and analysts will be added soon. SSP Training Planner accompanying the group admitted that the SSP will very soon exceed its capacity to train these courses given the numbers of trainees inbound from the states, and welcomes U.S. assistance on a fairly large scale. Garcia Luna also suggested that recruiting would be helped if there was the assurance of U.S. participation in the training effort. NAS will continue planning and discussions with SSP on these efforts.

Comment

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The state needs the kind of comprehensive help that has been promised by the federal government and U.S. assistance could play a key role in shoring up this beleaguered state as it confronts increasing lawlessness.

11. This cable was contributed to and cleared by NAS Mexico City and Consulate General Nuevo Laredo.

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