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RELEASED IN PART

STATE OF CARTE 1.4(B),B1,1.4(D),1.4(C) 25X1

Released

For the past several years, most drug-related violence in Mexico has stemmed from cartel-on-cartel conflicts. Upon taking office, President Calderon instituted aggressive anticrime measures and increased the military's antidrug responsibilities including the deployment of military and federal police personnel (now numbering over 45,000) to states where weak and often corrupt state and local police units were unable or unwilling to combat the powerful cartels.

Calderon's strategy focuses on confronting multiple drug gangs simultaneously, an approach that has produced some impressive successes and insulated Calderon from allegations that he has made accommodations with any single cartel. Cartel leaders have been removed, including over the past year, Ignacio Coronel Villareal from the Sinaloa cartel, Arturo Beltran Leyva and Edgar Valdez Villarreal from the Beltran Leyva Organization (BLO) and Teodoro Garcia Simental from Arellano Felix Organization/Tijuana cartel (AFO).

1.4(B)
1.4(C)
1.4(D)
B1

The majority of the drug-related violence is occurring in the border states of Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, and Nuevo Leon where the cartels are battling each other for control of key trafficking routes and fighting government security forces. In Chihuahua, the spotlight is centered on Ciudad Juarez where the VCFO is fighting encroachment by the Sinaloa cartel. On March 13, a VCFO-linked gang murdered two individuals associated with the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez in a possible case of mistaken identity, and on July 15, the same group detonated a car bomb in Ciudad Juarez. This marked the first use of a car bomb by a drug trafficking organization (DTO) since probable elements of the AFO deployed a car bomb outside a Guadalajara hotel in June 1994.

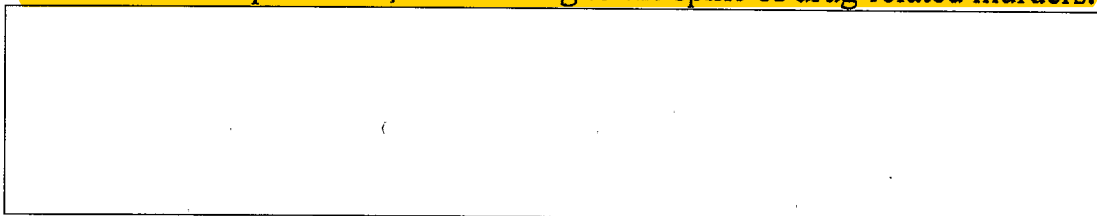
REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior
Reviewer

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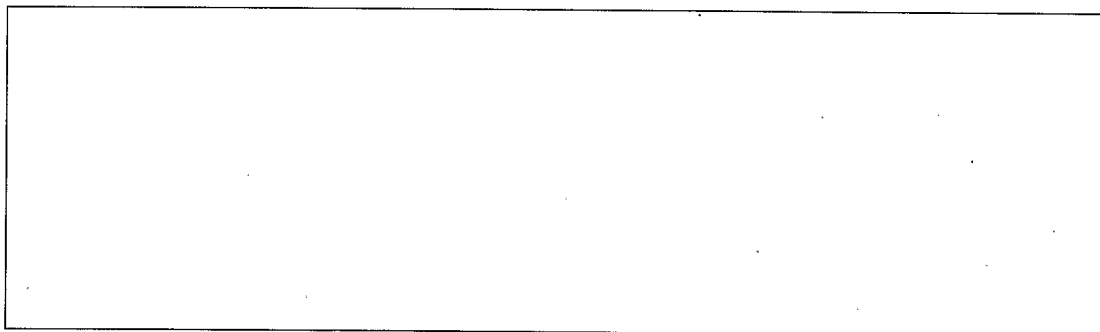
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In the northeast, violence has spiked as a result of intensified conflict between the Gulf and the Los Zetas organizations. Reporting indicates the Gulf cartel has pushed the Zetas out of most of Tamaulipas and is attempting to expel them from Nuevo Leon as well. In June, suspected Zeta gunmen assassinated a gubernatorial candidate in Tamaulipas. Traditionally the cartels have avoided targeting high-level political candidates, and the assassination signals a significant escalation in the cartel's willingness to strike at higher levels of government. In August two additional car bombs exploded in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas.

While Calderon's crackdown has added pressure on the DTOs, it also has resulted in some unintended consequences. For example, the removal of DTO leadership has allowed less experienced and undisciplined personnel to fill the leadership vacuum, contributing to the spike of drug-related murders.

1.4(B)
1.4(C)
1.4(D)
B1

Despite the increased violence, opinion polls show support for Calderon's hard line against the DTOs. A recent survey indicates Calderon still enjoys 70% approval for the campaign against the drug cartels and organized crime. Half, however, reported they believe the government is on the defensive.

1.4(C)
1.4(D)
B11.4(B)
1.4(C)
1.4(D)
B1

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Drafted: **INR/TNC Levi Chavous 7-9473**
Cleared: **INR/TNC Jennifer McElveen**
INR/TNC Jessica Marsh
INR/TNC Suzanne McCormick
INR/WHA Serena Hohmann
INR/OPN Shawn Bird
INL/LP Amy LeMar
WHA/MEX John McNamara
Approved: **INR/FO Philip Goldberg**

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