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From: Mills, Patrick S
Sent: 8/26/2010 4:57:22 PM
To: svcSMARTBTSP05
Subject: Zetas massacre 72 migrants in Tamaulipas
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MRN: 10 MATAMOROS 226
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From: AMCONSUL MATAMOROS
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE IMMEDIATE
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TAGS: ASEC, SNAR, MX, KCRM, SMIG, PHUM, KTIP
Captions: SENSITIVE, SIPDIS
Subject: Zetas massacre 72 migrants in Tamaulipas

1. Per Post conversations with CISEN, the Federal Prosecutor's Office (PGR), State Police, State Forensics office and the Mexican Navy (SEMAR), below is a summary of the events that occurred around the August 22 execution of 72 individuals in the Tamaulipas town of San Fernando, approximately 90 miles south of Brownsville, Texas. Much of the information provided was obtained from GOM interrogation of the sole survivor, an 18 year-old Ecuadorian male, currently in a Mexican Navy hospital:
2. On August 22, approximately 75 migrants from Guatemala, Honduras, Brazil and Ecuador (including one described only as "Hindu"), traveling in three panel trucks on the highway between the Tamaulipas towns of Ciudad Victoria and San Fernando, were stopped by an unknown number of organized crime figures and transported under guard to San Fernando. CISEN believes the hijack point was north of the fixed SEDENA highway checkpoint, and that the migrants avoided that checkpoint by using small rural roads.
3. According to the survivor, the members of the group were offered the opportunity to work for the alleged drug trafficking organization (DTO) Las Zetas for \$500 USD a week. The men were offered the opportunity to become "sicarios" or gunmen while the women were offered the opportunity of work as domestic help. All but one member of the group turned down the offer to work for the Zetas. One female and one child were supposedly separated from this group and their whereabouts are unknown at this time. (Comment: the salary offered seems exceedingly generous and was likely not the actual salary, if any, they would have received if they had agreed to join the organization. End comment.)
4. Upon their refusal, the group was taken to an abandoned warehouse and executed, allegedly with single pistol shots to the head. The photos received show that the victims were bound and some blindfolded. In all, 58 men and 14 women were executed. Two individuals survived the initial shooting, the 18 year-old Ecuadorian male and one Salvadoran male. The survivor stated he lost consciousness and when he awoke later only he and the Salvadoran male were still alive.
5. The Ecuadorian stated that he and the other survivor departed the scene in different directions. He told the authorities that he heard trucks pursuing the other survivor and later heard gun shots, which led him to believe that the Salvadoran had been caught and executed. He then attempted to seek assistance at a nearby house or possibly by approaching a local police officer (accounts differ slightly). Either way, his requests for assistance were refused. He then walked through the night

and arrived at a Mexican Navy checkpoint in the early morning hours of Monday, August 23.

6. On the 23rd, the Mexican Navy made attempts to find the massacre site on the ground and by helicopter. Contrary to press reporting, local SEMAR contacts deny engaging the Zetas via air assault. The ground troops searching for the bodies came upon a group of several Zetas on a ranch and became involved in a gun battle that left one Mexican Marine and three cartel members dead. The number of injured is unknown. In addition, the Navy seized 21 assault weapons, shotguns and long-arm rifles. One Zeta of minor age was apprehended and is in the custody of the Mexican government. The survivor positively identified this subject via photograph as one of the DTO kidnappers.

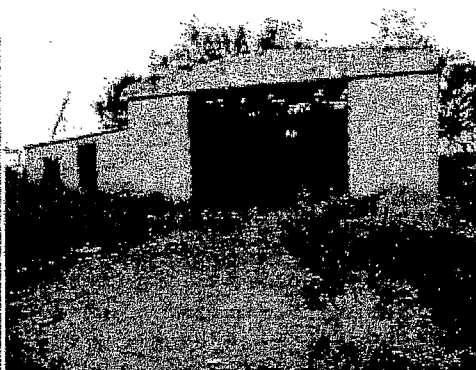
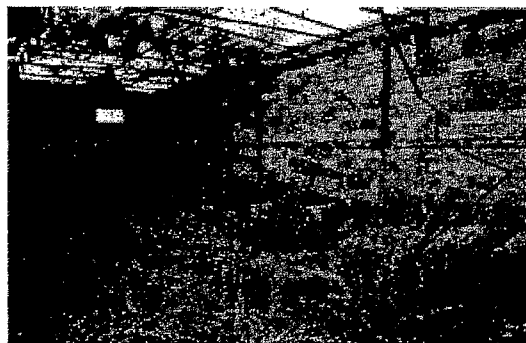
7. On Tuesday, August 24, at approximately 1800 hours, the Mexican Navy found the victims in an abandoned ranch. The bodies appear to have been piled up against the wall of an abandoned barn/warehouse. On Thursday, August 26, the State forensics office stated that the MPF (Public Ministry) had autopsied 24 bodies and the results are consistent with the victims being executed on Sunday, the 22nd. Unconfirmed reports also indicate that one or more of the female victims were pregnant. The victims were found with no identification at all. The three trucks and the migrant's luggage were not recovered.

8. On August 26, Mexican authorities advised that the Director of the Municipal Police in San Fernando was found dead in Mendez with other unidentified bodies, one believed to be the State Prosecutor (MPE).

9. POC of contact for this is RSO Patrick Mills.

10. Comment: If the survivor's account of the murders is accurate, then this represents a new level of violence from the Zetas. It remains unclear how these deaths benefit the Zetas. It seems unlikely that they were kidnapped for ransom as no efforts were made to solicit funds from family members prior to their murders.

Interestingly, the Matamoros papers extensively covered the massacre, an extremely unusual event and a sign that the Gulf Cartel views publicity of the Zetas actions as useful to them.



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Info:

BOGOTA ROUTINE ; MILAN, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ; QUITO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ;
BRASILIA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ; BOGOTA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ;
SAN SALVADOR, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ; TEGUCIGALPA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ;
GUATEMALA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE ; Hohmann, Serena E ROUTINE ; Palazzolo, Angela J
ROUTINE ; COR USNORTHCOM PETERSON AFB, CO ROUTINE ; CIA WASHINGTON DC
ROUTINE

DEA MCALLEN TX ROUTINE ; DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC ROUTINE ;
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HQ NORAD USNORTHCOM INTEL PETERSON AFB CO ROUTINE ;
NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC ROUTINE ;
US CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION WASHINGTON DC ROUTINE ;
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