

Viewing cable 09TIJUANA732, POLICE MURDERS SHOW THE DIFFIUCLTY OF BRINGING DOWN THE DRUG

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09TIJUANA732	2009-07-14 17:29	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Consulate Tijuana

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R 141729Z JUL 09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TIJUANA 000732

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/14/2019

TAGS: SNAR KCRM MX

SUBJECT: POLICE MURDERS SHOW THE DIFFIUCLTY OF BRINGING DOWN THE DRUG

## CARTELS IN TIJUANA

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REASON: 1.4 (b)

1. (C) The evening of July 6, two municipal police officers, one from Tijuana and one from Rosarito, were killed and a third policeman was injured in four separate attacks by presumed drug traffickers (a fourth police officer escaped unharmed). One of the bodies was found with a note threatening to kill five additional police officers each day until Tijuana Municipal Secretary for Public Security Julian Leyzaola resigns. The next day, another police officer, the partner of the injured officer, was killed while keeping guard outside the Red Cross facility where her partner was being treated. (Post has no information regarding additional policemen being killed after July 7). Drug traffickers also sent a message over police radio offering one million dollars for Leyzaola's head (literally). Leyzaola has publicly insisted he will not step down in the face of threats.

2. (C) Attacks against municipal police are not uncommon in Baja California, particularly in Tijuana, and are usually assumed to be linked to the victim's own involvement in drug trafficking or, sometimes, their refusal to be corrupted. However, in the July 6-7 incidents, like another attack in April 2009 in which 13 police officers died, the victims seem to have been randomly selected, and the attacks appeared to be coordinated and aimed at sending the message that the cartels - and not the city's political leadership - control the municipal police force.

3. (C) The attacks on municipal police, at first glance, seem odd considering that the large numbers of arrests of cartel members and drug seizures have not been the work of city police but rather the Mexican Army, the State Preventative Police, and, to a lesser extent, the Federal Police (PFP). However, the dueling factions of the AFO which still operate in Tijuana and Rosarito rely on the cooperation and protection of local law enforcement. Since coming to office six months ago, Leyzaola has fired a number of policemen with links to AFO lieutenant "El Teo", and the April and July police killings are likely a reaction to these efforts. Moreover, according to ARSO-I contacts, Leyzaola, a former military man, has tipped off the Army prior to its arrests of AFO members (an additional eight AFO members linked to "El Teo" were arrested by the Army July 8.) Killing municipal police - a much softer target than the well-armed convoys of military and federal police that patrol city streets - was an easy way for "El Teo" to express his anger.

4. (C) It is tempting to see Leyzaola as the good guy fighting the corrupting influence of the drug cartels, and he does indeed seem intent on modernizing the Tijuana police force, and no one has suggested that Leyzaola himself is corrupt. Unfortunately, though, the picture is a bit murkier. According to some Post contacts, Leyzaola has gone after "El Teo's" allies with such enthusiasm only because he made a "look the other way" agreement with one of "El Teo's" rivals within the AFO. He may believe that the only way to bring peace to the city is to defeat the undisciplined "El Teo" faction in favor of the faction which he believes will be more discreet in conducting its business.

HAAS