

ACTION INL-00

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	GHFS-00	CIAE-00	CPR-00	DOTE-00
	WHA-00	DS-00	AVC-00	OIGO-00	E-00	FAAE-00	UTED-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	L-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00
	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NIMA-00	OPR-00	EPAU-00	GIWI-00	ISNE-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	ASDS-00	FMP-00	EPAE-00	SCRS-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	FA-00	SWCI-00	/001W

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R 181639Z JAN 11
 FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5477
 INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO COLLECTIVE
 WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
 DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ASIA WASHINGTON DC
 NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
 DIR ONDCP WASHINGTON DC
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
 HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
 DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
 HQ USNORTHCOM
 DEA HQS WASHINGTON DC
 EPIC EL PASO TX
 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
 DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
 ATF INTEL WASHINGTON DC
 FBI WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS MEXICO 000176

SENSITIVE

E.O. 13526: N/A
 TAGS: SNAR, KCRM, KJUS, PGOV, PREL
 SUBJECT: Successful Michoacan Operation Used Merida Equipment and Training

REF: A) 10 MEXICO 651;

(SBU) Summary: Merida Initiative-provided equipment and training contributed to the success of recent Mexican Secretariat of Public Security (SSP) Federal Police operations against the La Familia Michoacana (LFM) drug trafficking organization (DTO) in Michoacan. From December 8-12, in the largest air mobile operation that any Mexican institution has conducted to date, approximately 800 federal police deployed to Michoacan. They utilized USG-provided as well as GOM-purchased Blackhawk helicopters, were equipped with first aid equipment and training that saved lives, and benefitted from USG/Merida-provided training in night vision aviation

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operations, tactical and mission planning, and crisis response. In the operations, federal forces dealt a severe blow to one of Mexico's most ruthless DTOs, killing Nazario Moreno Gonzalez, aka "El Chayo," one of the cartel's two main leaders. These operations against LFM are a potent reminder that USG and GOM investments in Mexican law enforcement entities are gaining traction as GOM institutions are emerging with stronger capabilities to effectively combat the violent drug cartels. End Summary.

Brand New Blackhawks Join the Fight

(SBU) Just two weeks after they were formally handed over to the GOM on November 24, the M-qualified SSP aviation crew used three Merida Initiative-funded UH-60M Blackhawk helicopters in the Michoacan operation, substituting one with another as shootouts with LFM gunmen sidelined a helicopter for repairs. Federal forces used tactical training provided under the Merida Initiative to deploy from the helicopters into difficult-to-reach places in Michoacan's rugged mountainous terrain.

First Aid Saved Lives

(SBU) Merida-provided first aid training and equipment also saved lives. According to federal police sources, the first tier police forces took heavy fire while deploying into the landing zones. Several were killed, and four were seriously wounded. Crisis response training for field officers and Improved First Aid Kits (IFAK) provided under Merida saved the lives of those four officers whose wounds would have otherwise proven fatal. These inputs were part of an eight-week paramedics training course that enhanced the crisis response capabilities of Mexican federal police forces.

Merida Resources Integrated

(SBU) U.S. trainers of Mexican federal police say that a big part of the operation's success was how the Mexican forces combined and used their own resources with those from the Merida Initiative. For instance, the Mexican Government used four UH-60L Blackhawks in the operation out of seven that it had purchased with its own funds, in addition to the three M models funded by Merida. Merida funding also supports one of the six Sikorsky helicopter repair technicians working with the Mexican Government who were instrumental in repairing damaged helicopters so that they could rejoin the fight against LFM. The Mexican Government funds the other five technicians, and is training its own cadre of maintenance technicians for the UH-60L models.

Next steps

(SBU) Mexican federal forces integrated Merida Initiative-provided equipment and training into the largest and most complex air mobile operation that the federal police or any other Mexican institution has conducted against organized crime. Initial assessments indicate that the operations have had a major impact in disrupting LFM activities and organizations. The Michoacan operation highlighted the growing success of elements of the Merida Initiative, and the way in which these contributions - combined with GOM investments - are producing new and more capable

institutions. Mission Mexico looks forward to working with the Mexican Government as they fully analyze the lessons from this operation. Increased air mobility is essential to the GOM's efforts to combat DTO's across its large, rugged and mostly rural territory. As they did in Colombia, helicopters, as well as the crews, maintenance and support personnel required to operate them, give the GOM a tactical advantage against the well-armed, well-organized and technologically sophisticated drug cartels.
PASCUAL

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