

2. NONMILITARY SECURITY

NARCO WARFARE – THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

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ABSTRACT

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The Drug Trafficking Organization (DTO), often called Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO), but the name that is most feared worldwide is “The Drug Cartels”. This name is synonymous to extreme violence, blood, and horrific acts. The brutal violence related to the drug cartels has been drastically marked by beheadings, the public hanging of corpses, car bombs, and assassinations of dozens of journalists and government officials. Moreover, these shameless crimes, violence, and organized criminal activities have spread around the globe.

The aim of this article is to analyze the phenomena of Drug Cartels in Mexico, their warfare strategies (known as Drug Wars or Narco Warfare) and to guide the force development at the strategic, operational and tactical levels of the military, security forces, government institutions and civil action to counter this threat. This text will outline the drug cartel’s irregular warfare strategies and Drug Cartel Terror/Violent Gangs Nexus. A comprehensive scenario will be created in order to facilitate the developing of countermeasures to have a better approach to combating the threat of the Cartels.

KEY WORDS

Balkanization, extortion, crime-terror nexus, irregular warfare, terrorism, organized crime, global threat, drug, trafficking, targets, extreme violence, corruption, war on drugs.

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THE DRUG CARTELS

The drug trade in Mexico has been rife with violence for decades, though the level and the severity of violence we are seeing today is unprecedented. Without minimizing the severity of the problems we are confronted with today, it is nonetheless critical to understand the background of the “culture of violence” associated with Mexican DTOs and the cyclical nature of the “violence epidemics” with which Mexico is periodically beset.

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Introduction

In the early 2000s, the unprecedented rise of the Drug Cartels and the excessive violence and attacks within Mexico border was unstoppable.¹ When Municipal (Local) police was unable to reestablish security, it was notorious that the cartels were becoming a great threat and the use of police actions together with the criminal investigation department and the prosecutor office were not going to be enough to deal with these problems. The former President of Mexico, Felipe Calderon, in 2006 launched a full campaign “Operación Michoacán” (Operation Michoacan) and “Operación Baja California” (Operation Baja California). A joint force was created employing the Military and Federal Police in combating the drug cartels and organized crime — criminal organizations that had spread within the border of Mexico, into the United States, reaching the European continent and beyond. The Drug War have begun.

Operación Michoacán – (Michoacan Operation): It is the first stage of the so-called ‘War on Drugs’. From 1993 to 2003 there was a marked and almost constant decrease in violence, the victims went down from 1,446 to 552², and it stabilized in 2004. It was not until 2005 that there was the outbreak of violence and crime in the state of Michoacán. In August 2005 there were 35 murders, and by August 2006 it went to 144. In just one year, the number of homicides quadrupled.³

President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa took the position as President of Mexico on December 1, 2006. On December 4 (same year), in the Forum of Investments

and Spanish-Mexican Business Cooperation, President Calderon declared “be certain that my Government is working hard to win the war against crime”. On the 7th of December, Operation Michoacán was launched, and on December 11, in a joint statement, the first briefings of the operation were announced. The operation would integrate more than 5,000 units among the army, the navy, security forces (local police, federal police) and the federal investigation agency⁴. The joint force was designated to conduct operations in areas under the control of organized crime organizations with the specific tasks of conducting raids, making arrests and establishing checkpoints on primary and secondary roads. Since Operation Michoacán was launched, the tranquility lasted for two years, until the second half of 2009. But in the third quarter of 2009, there was a new wave of violence and assassinations that lasted for one year. Since then, in Michoacán, there has been a slight increase in homicides.

At first, the operation seemed to be successful, many kilograms of marijuana, hundreds of firearms and ammunition, military and police equipment, vehicles, and three yachts were confiscated. After months of directing operations upon organized crime, the joint operation was questioned severely because of human rights violations incurred by specific actions taken by the military among the civilian population of the state of Michoacán⁵.

Mexico’s military, especially the Mexican Army, has been accused of torture and extrajudicial killings in its internal security activities, such as the massacre in July 2014 of some 22 people in Tlatlaya, Mexico, resulting in the arrest

¹ LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, “Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence” US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GDFort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301.

² Carliso Nesa Nestares, “¿La Guerra Contra El Narcotráfico Creó La Violencia En México? Septiembre 2017, p. 6.

³ Carliso Nesa Nestares, “¿La Guerra Contra El Narcotráfico Creó La Violencia En México? Septiembre 2017, p. 6.

⁴ Carliso Nesa Nestares, “¿La Guerra Contra El Narcotráfico Creó La Violencia En México? Septiembre 2017, p. 4.

⁵ La Jornada México, D.F. “CNDH : graves abusos de militares en Michoacán”.

of several soldiers, all of whom were acquitted except one.

Azam Ahmed, "Citizens' Rights at Risk in a Militarizing Mexico," *New York Times*, March 17, 2017.

Nowadays, there have been no new reports or concrete information about Operation Michoacán. The government and the operation Commanders have not revealed the results. In the media, you can see a large number of photographs showing inspections, arrests, assets that have been confiscated by the army, but there is no official amount. The media and political leaders demand clear accountability of results achieved so far to measure the effectiveness of the operation⁶.

- **Operación Baja California – (Operación Baja California):** Operation Baja California (also called Operation Tijuana) was launched on January 3, 2007. The operations are mainly focused on the city of Tijuana, but it also covers the entire state of Baja California. The secretary of the government of Tijuana, Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña, along with the Secretaries of Public Security, Navy, Defense and the Attorney General of the Republic, announced in a press conference, the use of all forces of the State to solve the insecurity problems. The actions taken were coordinated conjointly with the government of the State of Baja California and the president of the Republic of Mexico⁷.

This time, to avoid problems of human rights violations such as those that occurred in operation Michoacán, the operation memorandum of understanding (MOU) dictated that the armed forces would dedicate themselves exclusively to air and mari-

time reconnaissance, as well as integrating joint operations bases with security forces and Public Ministry agents⁸. On the other hand, the security forces (Federal Police and Local Police) would execute interventions, patrol, and incursions in different areas within the cities with a more significant number of criminal activities.

From 2001 to the end of 2006, there was slow and oscillating growth in the number of murders, with September 2006 being the bloodiest since 2000.

- 2004 – two hundred and ninety-four (294) victims;
- 2005 – two hundred fifty-six (256) victims;
- 2006 – three hundred (300) victims⁹.

Since the beginning of Operation Baja California, there has been a considerable decrease in violence and assassinations. In the first period (April-June) there were thirty-nine (39) victims, while the second period ended below ten (10) victims, this being the most peaceful time since 1990,¹⁰ and this period of stability lasted for at least a year. But the peace faltered at the beginning of 2008, the murders started and increased drastically. Bodies began to appear on the streets, and by August the violence was practically unstoppable, ending with two hundred and six (206) victims¹¹.

The operations did not bring the desired results, and from 2007 to 2012, governmental efforts to counter the drugs trafficking and organized crime were in vain, since the extreme violence and murders continued to intensify in different regions. During this time, the Drug Cartels increased their operations and criminal activities, they were

⁸ Cariso Nesa Nestares, "¿La Guerra Contra El Narcotráfico Creó La Violencia En México? Septiembre 2017, p. 10.

⁹ Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, Estadísticas de Defunciones, Gobierno de México.

¹⁰ Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, Estadísticas de Defunciones, Gobierno de México.

¹¹ Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, Estadísticas de Defunciones, Gobierno de México.

⁶ Quinto Informe de Lanores en: Secretaría de Seguridad Pública Federal. Consultado el 01-09-2011.

⁷ Cariso Nesa Nestares, "¿La Guerra Contra El Narcotráfico Creó La Violencia En México? Septiembre 2017, p. 9.

not only engaged in the drug trafficking but involved into the smuggling of people, arms trafficking, kidnappings, contract killing, torture and extortion. Each cartel diversified and specialized in one of these criminal activities, and transformed it into its main business, although they are always linked to drug trafficking.

More than a thousand cities in Mexico have suffered the effects of the Drug Wars, as the result of battles between the cartels, against the military and police forces of Mexico and the United States and the international intervention forces. These battles have created a massive displacement of people, incalculable economic losses and thousands of deaths. According to the Fluminense Federal University (UFF), the war on drugs has resulted in around 200,000 brutally violent deaths, where 60% are linked to the Drug Cartels.

THE “BALKANIZATION”

The “war on drugs” created an unexpected effect, since the first years of the administration of President Calderon, the big criminal organizations, “The Cartels” suffered from “balkanization”.¹² They fragmented into nine dominant groups. The DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) identified the following Drug Cartels as the most dominant ones: Sinaloa, Los Zetas, Tijuana / AFO, Juarez / CFO, Beltran Leyva, Gulf, La Familia Michoacana, Knight Templars and Cartel Jalisco – New Generation. Although, many analysts and security specialists said that in fact the large organizations fragmented reaching a total of 20 criminal organizations¹³. These

nine dominant organizations lead, control and transform the operational environment; they have become a significant challenge by re-shaping strategies, planning and response dynamics of Government, Military and security forces.

- **Tijuana/Arellano Felix Organization (AFO) – Tijuana Cartel:** One of its founding members, Miguel Angel Felix Gallardo, was a former officer of the Sinaloa Police and is considered one of the founders of modern DTOs¹⁴. The AFO has historically dominated the drug smuggling routes between Baja California (Mexico) and southern California¹⁵. Gallardo together with the “Arellano Felix” family and other DTO leaders (Rafael Caro Quintero, Amado Carrillo Fuentes and Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán) and their four sisters created the AFO. But after the arrest of Gallardo for the murder of the DEA Special Agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena¹⁶ in 1989, the seven remaining members inherited the leadership of the organization¹⁷.

Since the 90s and early 2000s, the AFO was one of the dominant cartels that controlled in a brutal and bloody way the drug business in Tijuana¹⁸. The Mexican government and the US took strong and decisive measures against the AFO in the early

¹⁴ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576

¹⁵ John Bailey, “Drug Trafficking Organizations and Democratic Governance,” in *The Politics of Crime in Mexico: Democratic Governance in a Security Trap* (Boulder: FirstForum Press, 2014), p. 121. For an explanation of a tollgate cartel or DTO, see Table 1.

¹⁶ Special Agent Camarena was an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent working in Mexico who was kidnapped, tortured, and killed in 1985. The Guadalajara-based Felix Gallardo network broke up in the wake of the investigation of its role in the murder.

¹⁷ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576

¹⁸ Mark Stevenson, “Mexico Arrests Suspected Drug Trafficker Named in US Indictment,” Associated Press, October 24, 2013.

¹² Balkanization: is a geopolitical term for the process of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states that are often hostile or uncooperative with one another. Balkanization is a result of foreign policies creating geopolitical fragmentation, as has happened in the namesake Balkan region under the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian empire.

¹³ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576

years of the 2000s ending with the arrests and murders of the five brothers involved in drug trafficking at the end of 2008. That same year, the AFO was divided into two factions, one faction allied with the Sinaloa Cartel, and the other tried to seize control of the Tijuana / Baja California – San Diego / California Plaza, a space left by the previous arrests of the AFO's key leaders¹⁹. When these two factions fought for control of the trafficking routes, Tijuana became one of the most violent and deadliest cities in Mexico.

- **Sinaloa Cartel:** is listed as the oldest and most established Cartel in Mexico and is formed by several organizations (it has a centralized structure)²⁰. According to the statistics, for the year 2012, the cartel already controlled 40%-60% of the drug traffic in the country, reaching a tremendous annual profit estimated at around \$ 3 billion.²¹ The Sinaloa Cartel controls crime in at least five states of Mexico: Baja California; Sonora and the so-called "Golden Triangle" of Sinaloa, Durango, and Chihuahua. But its operations are not limited within the borders of Mexico; The DEA reported that the Cartel's dominion extends from the west coast of Mexico, crossing the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and reaching the west of Texas (main area for drug trafficking into the US market). There are also indications of a strong presence in 50 countries across America, Europe, West Africa, and Southeast Asia.²² The Sinaloa

Cartel is very diversified in its criminal activities and specializes in smuggling various types of drugs such as heroin, marijuana, cocaine, and methamphetamines through all means of transportation: using land, sea, and air²³.

The Cartel suffered a tough strategic blow when Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman (most wanted criminal in Mexico) was arrested in mid-2014. But with no expectations and with little chance of escape, he managed to get out of a Mexican maximum-security prison through an elaborate tunnel project in 2015, although the Mexican authorities recaptured him in 2016²⁴. Given the peculiar way in which "El Chapo" managed to escape from prison, many suggested great operational endeavor involving bribery and corruption within the government and prison system²⁵.

- **Juárez/Carrillo Fuentes Organization – Juarez Cartel:** Juarez cartel has its domains in the city of Juarez, a central town in the north of the state of Chihuahua. Between 1980 and 1990 the organization controlled the contraband in the corridor between Ciudad Juarez and El Paso, Texas²⁶. The organization broke relations with the Sinaloa Cartel in 2008, with which it maintained an alliance since 2002²⁷.

The Juarez Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel became great rivals. After many clashes, between 2008 to 2011 the region experienced a wave of murders, extortion, kid-

¹⁹ June S. Beittel "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations" Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576. P.12

²⁰ A hierarchical organisations. One 'mastermind' is located at the top or in the centre, and all lower levels and associated entities are controlled – or at least carefully managed - by that one source.

²¹ Natalie Jennings, "'El Chapo,' by the Numbers," Washington Post, February 26, 2014.

²² June S. Beittel "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations" Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576. p.13

²³ Shannon O'Neil, "The Real War in Mexico," Foreign Affairs 88, no. 4 (July 2009): 65, accessed December 8, 2015, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost.

²⁴ Julie Watson, "Mexico Election Solidifies Democracy," AP Online, accessed March 30, 2016, Newspaper Source Plus, EBSCOhost.

²⁵ Alejandro Hope, "El Chapo's Great Escape," El Daily Post, July 12, 2015.

²⁶ John Bailey, "Drug Trafficking Organizations and Democratic Governance," in *The Politics of Crime in Mexico: Democratic Governance in a Security Trap* (Boulder, CO: FirstForum Press, 2014), p. 121.

²⁷ Alfredo Corchado, "Juárez Drug Violence Not Likely to Go Away Soon, Authorities Say," Dallas Morning News, May 17, 2010.

nappings, and robberies like never before, with ten killings per day²⁸. Ciudad Juarez became one of the most violent and bloody cities in the world. Between 2008 and 2012, the violence in Juarez claimed around 10,000 lives.

Among all this violence, a new organization made its appearance in 2011 "The New Juarez Cartel". This group declared its presence by publishing a series of banners that threatened the chief of police²⁹. Although a new organization was created between 2012 and 2013, the violence decreased and the homicide rate was considerably reduced. Two variants support this decrease in murders: the first one is attributed to the constant police operations as well as President Calderon's socioeconomic program. "Todos somos Juarez" or "We are all Juarez"³⁰. The second one is that the Sinaloa Cartel won supremacy in the battle against the Juarez Cartel after 2012. The Juarez cartel is one of the main marihuana and cocaine traffickers in South America, but according to the DEA, it has also become an active player in the cultivation of opium and heroin trafficking. In the year 2016, violence increased to the levels not seen since 2012, indicating that the drug trafficking route along the Texas border is undergoing a process of change³¹.

- **Gulf Cartel:** In the early 2000s, Gulf was considered one of the most pow-

erful Mexican Drug Cartels. It operates mainly in the border city of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, but also expands its operations in different states of the Gulf of Mexico and transnational smuggling with the use of agents in Central and South America.³² One of its former leaders, Osiel Cárdenas, Guillén, recruited and corrupted units of the Mexican military forces that formed the execution arm of the cartel known as Los Zetas³³.

After Guillen's arrest in 2003, the Zetas broke relations to establish a separate organization and fought against the Gulf Cartel to dominate a part of the territory. Now the organization has two major rivals for Northwestern Mexico, the Sinaloa Cartel (the main competitor for drug trafficking routes since the early 2000s) and Los Zetas (former enforcement wing and Elite Assassins). The conflict between the Gulf Cartel and Los Zetas has been identified as "the most violent in the history of organized crime in Mexico"³⁴.

- **Los Zetas:** This organization is integrated by former elite members of the special air force of the Mexican Army who defected to the Gulf Cartel and became their contracted assassins³⁵ (with two central functions, the first one was to protect and the second one was to hunt enemies) in the late 1990s.

Los Zetas created a specialized unit of tactical operations with the size of a platoon and company linked with full insurgen-

²⁸ Steven Dudley, "Police Use Brute Force to Break Crime's Hold on Juárez," *InSight Crime*, February 13, 2013. Some Mexican newspapers such as *El Diario* reported more than 300 homicides a month in 2010 when the violence peaked.

²⁹ "Mexico Security Memo: A New Juárez Cartel," *Stratfor*, February 1, 2012. The New Juárez Cartel was seen by many analysts as a re-branding effort by the original Juárez DTO and its allies and not an actual new organization. The New Juárez Cartel soon dropped the "New" adjective.

³⁰ CRS Report R41349, *U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond*, by Clare Ribando Seelke and Kristin Finklea

³¹ June S. Beittel "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations" *Congressional Research Service*7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 16.

³² John Bailey, "Drug Trafficking Organizations and Democratic Governance," in *The Politics of Organized Crime in Mexico: Democratic Governance in a Security Trap* (Boulder: FirstForum Press, 2014), p. 120.

³³ LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, "Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence" *US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GDFort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301*, Pag. 5.

³⁴ Eduardo Guerrero Gutierrez is a Mexican security analyst and a former security adviser to President Enrique Peña Nieto. CRS interview in June 2014.

³⁵ June S. Beittel "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations" *Congressional Research Service*7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 17.

cy strikes³⁶. While other Cartels attempted to bribe, this Cartel (based on its military training) – to maintain control over the territory – referred to use intimidation strategies, brutal tactics and violent attacks directed against their enemies to generate fear and psychological damage to disable them in battles. They are present in the eastern States, in Ciudad Juarez (Chihuahua), Pacific States and extended their operations to Central and South America. Although they control most of the drug trafficking in the eastern half of Mexico, their main activity is not drug smuggling but organized violence and killings. They also generate income from crimes, such as fuel theft,³⁷ extortion, human trafficking, arms trafficking, contract killing and kidnapping (crimes that cause more suffering to the public than transnational drug trafficking).

As a very experienced organization, they also use social media to show brutal killings, rapes, attacks, and firepower with the intention of intimidating the Military/Police, people, and rival cartels. The Cartel is linked to numerous massacres and sophisticated attacks like the incendiary bomb in a casino in Monterrey where 53 people died and the bloody mass murders in 2011 of 193 immigrants traveling by bus through northern Mexico³⁸.

The Zetas suffered three major strategic hits, in 2012, units of the Mexican Navy killed the former leader Zeta Heriberto Laz-

cano, alias “El Lazca”, one of the founders of the Zetas, in a shooting in the northern state of Coahuila³⁹. Then there was the capture of his successor, Miguel Angel Trevino Morales, alias “Z-40,” in July 2013, and then Treviño Morales’ brother, Omar, who assumed the leadership of Los Zetas, was arrested in a joint operation between the Mexican federal police and the army in March 2015⁴⁰. Expert analysts argue that the actions against the cartel critically weakened its operability, causing an unexpected effect, the “balkanization” of the organization into independent cells due to internal divisions to gain leadership.

- **Beltrán Leyva Organization (BLO)**

- **Beltran Cartel:** The Beltran Cartel was a part of the Sinaloa Federation and controlled the access to the United States border in the Mexican state of Sonora. Its leaders, the Beltrán Leyva brothers, had significant ties of friendship with the Sinaloa Cartel leader, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán and his family, and other high-level members within Sinaloa Cartel. But in January 2008, Alfredo Beltran Leyva was arrested creating tensions between the organization membership resulting in the detachment and becoming rivals since then⁴¹.

The Beltran Cartel depends on its relations with the Juarez Cartel and units of Los Zetas to move drugs across the border⁴². The governmental operations against the organization were successful in deteriorating their leadership arresting and killing

³⁶ 13 Julie Watson, “Mexico Election Solidifies Democracy,” AP Online, accessed March 30, 2016, Newspaper Source Plus, EBSCOhost.

³⁷ According to media coverage, Pemex, Mexico’s state oil company, announced that it lost more than \$1.15 billion in 2014 due to oil tapping. In early 2017, the Atlantic Council released a report estimating that about \$1 billion of oil revenue is lost annually in Mexico, with Los Zetas controlling about 40% of the market in stolen oil. June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 18

³⁸ George Grayson, *The Evolution of Los Zetas in Mexico and Central America: Sadism as an Instrument of Cartel Warfare*, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA, April 2014, p. 9.

³⁹ Will Grant, “Heriberto Lazcano: The Fall of a Mexican Drug Lord,” BBC News, October 13, 2012.

⁴⁰ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 17.

⁴¹ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 19.

⁴² U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 2016 National Drug Threat Assessment, DEA-DCT-DIR-001-17, November 2016.

their leaders in force engagement. Once again, the blows to the leaders created splinter organizations such as the “Guerreros Unidos” and “Los Rojos” in 2010. Los Rojos operates in Guerrero, the cartel depends on crimes such as kidnapping and extortion, as well as cocaine trafficking⁴³ and Los Guerreros Unidos traffics cocaine into the US reaching the distant City of Chicago. Both organizations are linked to murders, (i.e., the kidnapping of 43 Mexican students by Guerreros Unidos in Guerrero, ending in their killings and burning their bodies afterward.)

- **La Familia Michoacana (LFM):** Previously, La Familia Michoacana had an alliance with “Los Zetas” before the breakup with the Gulf Cartel. This Cartel was formed with the primary task to monitor and protect trafficking routes and fight small trafficker groups in the State of Michoacan,⁴⁴ then in 2006, the alliance between LFM and Los Zetas was broken and they declared that their mission was to protect Michoacan from criminal organizations and drug traffickers (including Los Zetas).⁴⁵ Despite having said that they were going to fight crime, they moved on to the production and trafficking of methamphetamine, while maintaining humanitarian arguments such as helping the population against abuse and injustice.⁴⁶ The organization members were known for making donations of food, medical care,

donations to schools, and other social services to benefit the poor people of rural communities⁴⁷ (in this way the protection and the support of the population were assured). To add more value to their cause, they were recruiting and hiring rehabilitated drug addicts, unemployed youth and disappointed people in the rural areas of Michoacán, telling them that LFM would give them a second opportunity in life by offering higher incomes to have the lifestyle that they deserved⁴⁸.

LFM Cartel from 2006 to 2010, marked its existence by the use of extreme violence as a brand (using military tactics adopted from Los Zetas), excusing themselves for the brutality in their actions with a pseudo-ideological or religious justification⁴⁹. However, in 2010, the cartel made a significant change, the organization proposed a peace truce with the Mexican government and announced that it would dissolve⁵⁰. But why should anyone leave such lucrative business? According to a report by George Grayson from the Institute of Strategies Studies at the United States Army War College, the organization paid its local drug traffickers between \$ 1,500 and \$ 2,000 per day. Daily profits from the sale of drugs alone in the city of Morelia reached 4 million pesos (around USD 330,400) per day. LFM was gaining too much power giving it a very high profile, which attracted too much attention from security forces and rival cartels. Many analysts argue that the criminal organization seeks to reorganize

⁴³ Marguerite Cawley, “Murder Spike in Guerrero, Mexico Points to Criminal Power Struggle,” InSight Crime, May 30, 2014.

⁴⁴ LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, “Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence” US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GDFort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301, p. 6.

⁴⁵ Alejandro Suverza, “El Evangelio según La Familia,” Nexos, January 1, 2009. For more on its early history, see InSight Crime’s profile on La Familia Michoacana.

⁴⁶ LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, “Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence” US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GDFort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301, p. 6.

⁴⁷ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 17.

⁴⁸ Elyssa Pachico, “Familia Michoacana is ‘Completely Dissolved’”, InSight Crime, January 25, 2011. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/familia-michoacana-is-completely-dissolved/>

⁴⁹ William Finnegan, “Silver or Lead,” New Yorker, May 31, 2010.

⁵⁰ Stratfor, “Mexican Drug Wars: Bloodiest Year to Date,” December 20, 2010.

itself into a private underground force⁵¹.

A month after announcing its dissolution, a statement was given in which it was reported that its leader and co-founder Nazario “El Más Loco” Moreno Gonzalez had been murdered, although authorities claimed that his body was stolen⁵². But Moreno Gonzalez mysteriously reappeared in another hostile engagement with the Mexican federal police in March 2014, and this time, his death was officially confirmed.⁵³ Moreno Gonzalez worked on the creation of a new criminal organization, “Los Caballeros Templarios” or “The Knight Templars” and proclaimed to be its leader and successor of the old Cartel (LFM).

- **Knight Templars Cartel:** It is a splinter group from LFM (La Familia Michoacana) that announced its presence in Michoacán in 2011. Like many splinters, the Knights Templar in their beginning proclaimed to be vigilantes and protectors of the residents of Michoacán against social injustices and criminal groups such as Los Zetas. Nevertheless, like any other Cartel, it was linked to many illegal activities, and extortion as was its main business, demanding that companies should pay heavy taxes as a fee for their safety. Furthermore, the Knights Templar have also exerted control over illegal mining, extracting iron from illegally operated mines, using the largest port in Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, located in the south of Michoacán, to smuggle the mineral and other illicit goods.

Due to the insecurity, extreme violence and assassinations that existed at that

moment, a sense of frustration and disappointment was born among the population. The perception of ineffectiveness towards Mexico’s security forces and the application of the law in combating crime grew so much that it produced the creation of “Auto-Defensa” or “self-defense” organization in the region of Tierra Caliente in the southwest of the State. This organization was made up of all kinds of citizens (farmers, ranchers, businesspeople, former agents of DTO, military, police and sometimes gaining recruits who are former migrants returned from or deported from the United States) and their specific task was to fight mainly members of the Knights Templar and other Drug Cartels⁵⁴. The organization was well structured and achieving positive results so that at the beginning of 2014, the Mexican government decided to incorporate members of “self-defense” into the Law Enforcement, giving them the opportunity to be part of the “Rural Police Force”, although there were concerns that these units were corrupted by the cartels, creating paramilitary forces, as it was in Colombia.⁵⁵ Security analysts believe that “Self-defense” has produced good results in the effort to combat criminal organizations, although the conflict between the “self-defense” and the Knight Templars Cartel has also led to violent battles.

The teamwork of the government and the “self-defense” forces resulted in accurate strategic strikes to the Knights Templar, leading to the killing of Nazario Moreno Gonzalez (Leader of the Cartel) and Enrique Plancarte (another leader of high command).⁵⁶ The joint operations create tensions and worries in the organization,

⁵¹ Elyssa Pachico, “Familia Michoacana is ‘Completely Dissolved’”, Insight Crime, January 25, 2011. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/familia-michoacana-is-completely-dissolved/>

⁵² Dudley Althaus, “Ghost of ‘The Craziest One’ Is Alive in Mexico,” InSight Crime, June 11, 2013.

⁵³ Mark Stevenson and E. Eduardo Castillo, “Mexican Cartel Leader Thrived by Playing Dead,” Associated Press, March 10, 2014.

⁵⁴ June S. Beittel “Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations” Congressional Research Service 7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576, p. 17

⁵⁵ Nick Miroff and Joshua Partlow, “In Mexico, Militias Taste Power,” Washington Post, May 12, 2014.

⁵⁶ Olga R. Rodriguez, “Mexican Marines Kill Templar Cartel’s Leader,” Associated Press, April 1, 2014.

creating differences about the leadership, creating another splinter group, the Cartel Jalisco New Generation – CJNG, the last of the nine dominant Cartels.

- **Cartel Jalisco New Generation**

- **CJNG:** based in the State of Jalisco and with operations that extend to other states such as Colima, Michoacán, Mexico, Guerrero, and Guanajuato, CJNG confronts constant battles for the territory domain, and in order to demonstrate power, the organization had to be equally or more brutal than the others. In 2011, CJNG made its appearance killing 35 members of Los Zetas and exhibiting them on the Veracruz city streets;⁵⁷ The Cartel is now known as the “Mata-Zetas” or “Zeta-Killers”. Since 2010 the city of Veracruz has suffered from extreme violence and killings due to the battles between the Sinaloa / CJNG / Gulf Cartel and the Zetas cartels⁵⁸. In March 2017, authorities discovered a grave with 250 bodies and a week later, dozens of skulls were found in another location. Jorge Winckler, State’s Attorney General, called the State as “one big mass grave”⁵⁹.

The Mexican government considered the Sinaloa Cartel as the most powerful in the country; however, security analysts have identified the CJNG as the new strongest Cartel and the only one expanding since 2015.⁶⁰ The United States Department of the Treasury described the group as one

of the “most prolific and violent drug trafficking organizations” in the world⁶¹ and the DEA has identified the Cartel as the wealthiest in Mexico and possessing the best Mexican drug distribution in Canada, Europe, and Asia⁶².

Like the other criminal organizations, the CJNG has diversified its activities in extortion, kidnap for ransom, petroleum theft, human labor, and sex trafficking⁶³. To avoid the risk of arms trafficking through the border with the United States, the CJNG has created an illegal arms manufacturing industry. A clandestine factory of AR-15 was discovered in Guadalajara in 2014. Intelligence reports indicate that the CJNG continues to improve its capabilities in the manufacture of high-powered weapons, as well as the supply of arms to the allies with the purpose of fighting Los Zetas and the Sinaloa Cartel⁶⁴.

The CJNG controls important sea-ports on the Pacific and Gulf of Mexico coasts, key components that have allowed them to import chemical precursors from China and Latin American countries,⁶⁵ allowing them to consolidate the global supply chain of narcotics.

⁵⁷ Miriam Wells, “Jalisco Cartel Announces ‘Cleansing’ of Mexican State,” InSight Crime, September 20, 2013.

⁵⁸ James Bargent, “Violence in Veracruz as Cartels Adapt to New Political Dynamic,” March 16, 2017

⁵⁹ Bargent, “Violence in Veracruz as Cartels Adapt to New Political Dynamic”; Asmann and Thompson, “Veracruz”; Faith Karimi and Julia Jones, “More than 250 Skulls Found in Mass Grave in Mexico,” CNN, March 15, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/15/americas/mexico-mass-grave-skulls-found-veracruz/index.html>.

⁶⁰ Patrick Corcoran, “US Warns of CJNG Expansion from Mexico,” Insight Crime, February 21, 2017. <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/us-warns-cjng-expansion-mexico>

⁶¹ U.S. Department of Treasury, “Treasury Sanctions Individuals Supporting Powerful Mexico-Based Drug Cartels,” press release, October 27, 2016.

⁶² J. Jesús Esquivel, “Se Hacen Visibles Los Cuinis, El Cártel Más Rico Del Mundo,” Proceso, April 11, 2015, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/400944/400944-se-hacen-visibles-los-cuinis-el-cartel-mas-rico-del-mundo>.

⁶³ Christopher Woody, “With ‘El Chapo’ Guzmán Locked up Abroad, the Shift in Mexico’s Cartel Underworld Grinds On,” Business Insider Australia, February 7, 2017, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/sinaloa-jalisco-new-generation-cartel-balance-power-mexico-2017-2>.

⁶⁴ Mexican Cartel Improves Weapons Manufacturing Capabilities,” Cartel Chronicles: Breitbart, February 1, 2018. <http://www.breitbart.com/texas/2018/02/01/exclusive-photos-mexican-cartel-improves-weapons-manufacturing-capabilities/>.

⁶⁵ Stratfor, “Tracking Mexico’s Cartels in 2017,” February 3, 2017.

To understand the capabilities and operations of the Drug Cartels, Eduardo Guerrero, a security analyst, has categorized the organizations into four groups: national cartels, toll collector cartels, regional cartels, and local mafias⁶⁶.

Table 1. Drug cartel typology

CATEGORY	ORGANIZATIONS
National Cartels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control or maintain their presence on numerous drug routes as points of entry and exit along the northern and southern borders. Operate important international routes to and from the country. They actively seek to expand control over new pathways that lead north. Take advantage of the profits they receive from drug trafficking to diversify their operations, mainly towards oil theft, a highly lucrative and low-risk activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jalisco New Generation Los Zetas Sinaloa
Regional Cartels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited control segments of drug trafficking routes passing through their territory. Regional Small Drug trading business. Have aggressively diversified to other criminal activities (extortion, kidnapping, oil theft, smuggling of goods and people, and vehicle theft). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gulf La Familia Michoacana Knight Templars Beltrán Leyva
Toll-Collector Cartels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main income from toll fees received from other organizations that convey drug shipments through their controlled territories along the northern border. Primarily confined to some border municipalities. They cannot diversify their illegal activities. Losing the control of their border areas, they will probably disappear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Juárez (Carrillo Fuentes) Tijuana (Arellano Félix)
Drug Trafficking Cells: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Splinter cells from larger organizations. Locally based (can spread from a few contiguous locations to several states). Their business activities are focused on small-scale drug distribution. Extended their illegal businesses towards extortion, kidnapping, and vehicle theft. 	<p>202 mafia cells have been identified.</p> <p>Tamaulipas (42), Guerrero (25), and Distrito Federal (24)</p>

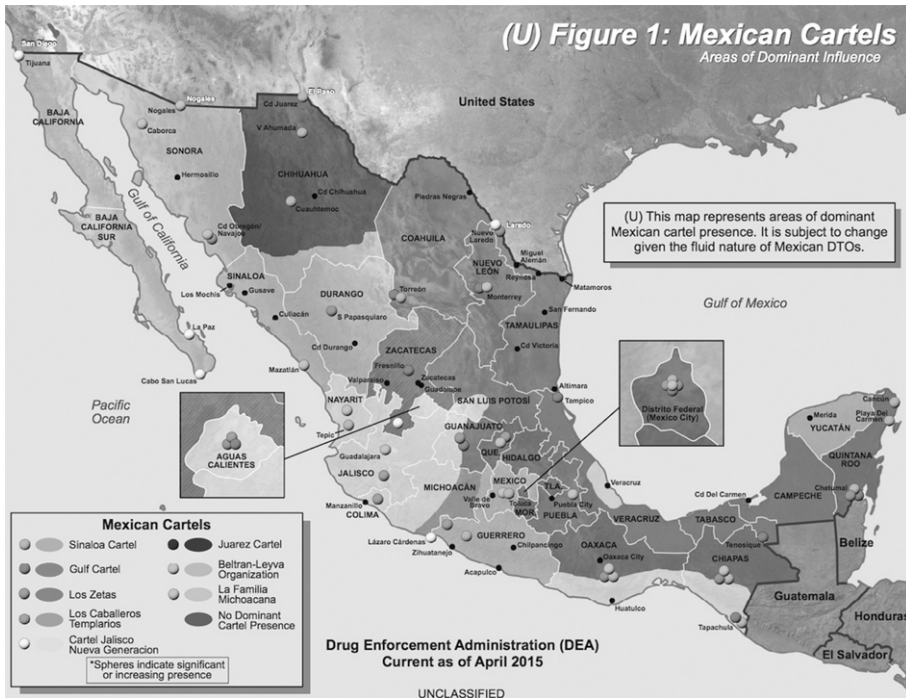
Source: Eduardo Guerrero-Gutiérrez, June 2015.

According to Tristan Reed *“Though continued Balkanization of Mexican organized crime creates an increasingly confusing map, three geographic centers of gravity of cartel activity exist at present: Tamaulipas state, Sinaloa state, and the Tierra Caliente region”*⁶⁷. When the fragile alliances of the Drug Cartels broke, they sought to maintain their dominions and show their capabilities and power through attacks on rival organizations. They began to fight for greater control over smuggling routes into the United States. Although their direct violent attacks are dominant in Mexico and near borders, their illegal criminal activities extend to the Americas, Europe, and distant Continents.

⁶⁶ LCDR Michael A. Teixeira, “Examining the Rise in Mexican Drug Cartel Related Violence” US Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GDFort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301, p. 6.

⁶⁷ Tristan Reed “Mexico’s Drug War: A New Way to Think About Mexican Organized Crime”, Stratfor, Jan 15, 2015.

Figure 1. Territorial domain of the cartel



Source: DEA – Drug Enforcement Administration – To date, the DEA has not shown an updated map of the territorial domain of the Cartels.

NARCO WAR – APPLAY-ING OF IRREGULAR WAR-FARE

Traditionally, the cartels are treated as criminal organizations; therefore, it should be primarily a problem of the application of the law (mainly handled by the Police and prosecution attorney). But there is no doubt that in recent years the activities of the cartels have spread much more than simple criminal behavior, their actions are progressively similar to those of international terrorist organizations and insurgencies defined in the laws of war⁶⁸. They develop new capabilities such as irregular warfare strategies, military training, explosives and IED’s,

increased combat and tactical skills, the handling of sophisticated assault weapons and heavy military power.

To keep showing power and exercise dominance, the cartels created “wings or tactical groups” to carry out attacks and protect their territory. These elite groups were composed of ex-military/police units, and their attacks were based on ruthless tactics to ensure the respect and fear of adversaries.

Trainings and Weapons: With former units of special forces and elite police in their membership, the Drug Cartels have transformed their strategies (new ways to achieve their goals using military and Law

⁶⁸ Carrie F. Cordero, Breaking the Mexican Cartels: A Key Homeland Security Challenge for the Next Four Years, Georgetown University Law Center, p. 292, 2013.

Enforcement actions), obtained new capabilities (combat readiness, sustainable capability and force structure) and developed new defense and combat tactics (ability to use Military Weapons and created Cyber capabilities). They have gone from being small drug trafficking mafias to becoming new actors of irregular warfare (terrorism, guerrilla and insurgencies).

Irregular Warfare:

«adaptive adversaries such as terrorists, insurgents, and criminal networks as well as states increasingly resorting to irregular forms of warfare as effective ways to challenge conventional military powers. Advances in technology and other trends in the environment will render such irregular threats ever more lethal, capable of producing widespread chaos, and otherwise difficult to counter. These threats are enmeshed in the population and increasingly empowered by astute use of communications, cyberspace, and technology, such that their impact extends regionally and globally. Many of these conflicts are essentially contests for influence and legitimacy over relevant populations»

The Countering Irregular Threats Joint Operating Concept (JOC)

Guns have always been part of Mexican culture. At the beginning of 2000, the Cartels added to their arsenal high caliber handguns, automatic rifles, and powerful military weapons. The escalation continued from the addition of heavy weapons such as grenades, grenade launchers and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) until the systematic use of sophisticated explosives (i.e., a water gel explosive, Tovex), which were placed in fixed locations in 2009.⁶⁹ It was not until the year 2010 that the first

⁶⁹ The cartels have access to this type of weapons through corruption and extortion against the security forces.

Mexican Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) appeared (tactic used by many terrorist groups)^{70, 71}.

A factory of “Narco Tanks” was discovered in the North of Mexico, near the border city of Camargo. It is a tactical evolution for the protection and struggles over territories and smuggling routes. The “Narco Tank” called “El Monstruo – The Monster” can be labeled as a non-military device, as a substitute for traditional means to achieve military objectives. It is an asymmetric weapon that could intensify confrontations and create conflicts like those in the Middle East and Africa. The tanks can be used as the “Gun-Truck” employed by the United States forces in Vietnam from late 1967 through late 1972⁷².

Figure 2. The monster “Narco Tank”



Source: Tank Encyclopedia, http://www.tanks-encyclopedia.com/modern/Mexico/Narco_Tanks

[The cartels] use military and terrorist tactics and weaponry ... They employ horrific tactics to intimidate their adversaries and the public such as decapitations, acid baths, skinning people alive, torture and Improvised Explosive

⁷⁰ A (VBIED) is both a lethal shrapnel pack and convenient delivery mechanism for an Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

⁷¹ Gordon Housworth “Narco-Tanks: Mexico’s Cartels Get Asymmetric Weapons”, Insight Crime, June 11, 2011. <https://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/narco-tanks-mexicos-cartels-get-asymmetric-weapons/>

⁷² Gun trucks were essential for convoy security and perimeter defense.

Devices and they have expanded their criminal operations to profit from kidnappings, robberies, human trafficking, extortions, and theft.

Joint Publication 3-24. "Counterinsurgency". 22 November 2013.

Terrorism: Terrorism is a strategic, operational and tactical method of warfare aimed at creating fear by violence (physical or psychological) in order to coerce governments or societies in an effort to affect, and possibly change, a societal behavior or political laws,⁷³ driven by variety of political, social, criminal, economic, and religious ideologies⁷⁴. Terrorist groups operate within transnational networks, small regional groups and others operate alone, the so-called "Lone Wolves".

According to Brian Jenkins, Senior Advisor to the President of RAND Corporation, "Terrorism" is defined according to our perception and point of view, and that is one of the reasons why there is no universal definition of what terrorism is. This situation brings us to the following question: Are the Drug Cartel terrorist organizations? Some governments, intelligence agencies, military and security forces will say yes, others will say they are not, but there is no doubt that the methods of warfare applied by the Cartels are based on violence to achieve their objectives. We can identify some examples of "Narco Attacks" that are similar to terrorist organizations. For example, in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico, a car bomb exploded killing one policeman and wounding three others. The attack is attributed to Los Zetas, in response to the operations carried out by the police against the Cartel. According to police reports, an unidentified corpse was found inside the car, and several flyers with threats addressed

to the police were stuck on the windows. When the officers tried to open the vehicle to carry out the proper procedures, the car exploded⁷⁵. The objective of this attack was to intimidate the police, spread fear among people and show capability and superiority to rival organizations.

Narco Terrorism also amplified the threat of attacks using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Even though, Drug Cartels do not have the technology and technical facilities required for the development of WMD. However, having the support of corrupt officers and civil servants among Mexico governmental institutions and private sector, there is a high risk that they will obtain illegally radioactive (Fissile Material),⁷⁶ chemical or biological elements in order to create a radiological dispersal device (RDD)⁷⁷ to carry out attacks or sell the items to terrorist organizations to generate profits. So far there has been no evidence of such an activity carried out by the Cartels. However, experts do not reject the possibility of an attack using WMD to achieve strategic supremacy.

Guerrilla:

"Military and Para-Military operations conducted in enemy held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous force"

The United States, Department of Defense

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Ramsey, "Second Car Bomb in Mexico Fuels 'Narco-Insurgency' Argument" Insight Crime, January 24, 2011. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/second-car-bomb-in-mexico-fuels-narco-insurgency-argument/>

⁷⁶ Fissile material - Nuclear material, containing a high proportion of fissile isotopes, which is essential for making nuclear explosives. High-enriched uranium (HEU) and weapons-grade plutonium are examples of fissile material.

⁷⁷ Radiological dispersal device (RDD) - A device that involves radioactive materials and some method by which those materials can be spread over a wide area. It can be a variety of sizes, and the radiation can cause contamination, economic and some physical harm. One type of RDD is the popularly named "dirty bomb". A dirty bomb uses the force of conventional explosives, such as TNT, to scatter radioactive material.

⁷³ Definition by Cristóbal Fundora Sittón.

⁷⁴ Joint Publication 3-26 "Counterterrorism" 24 October 2014.

According to reports, two US intelligence officers confirmed that members (around 50 units) of the Cartel Jalisco New Generation were trained by Colombian rebels (FARC).⁷⁸ The groups were trained in assault tactics to be used against members of the armed forces. The Cartel Jalisco New Generation has the title of the most powerful Drug Trafficking cartel in Mexico. So powerful, that they can coordinate simultaneous attacks employing military weapons.

The cartel did not take long to make use of its new guerrilla tactics. On April 7, 2015, the JCNG ambushed an armed police convoy killing 15 law enforcement officers in the state of Jalisco. The attack is considered one of the most lethal till now,⁷⁹ and on May 3, 2015, the cartel was able to shoot down a military helicopter in southern Jalisco with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher (RPG), killing eight Mexican soldiers and police officers. The CJNG has increased its attack force by incorporating drones with connected explosives into its arsenal, demonstrating a new capacity for warfare that appears to imitate the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Insurgencies: According to Joint Publication 3-24, Counterinsurgency, defines insurgency as: *“the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region”*. It is well known that insurgencies use sabotage, political, economic, psychological tools and armed conflict to achieve their goals.

Drug Cartels follow a criminal insurgency strategy (their actions can be described as illegal activities, terrorist operations, functional tactics, and information warfare) divided in a three-pronged attack:

1. Wear down or co-opt law enforcement officers through a campaign of terror.
2. Conduct information warfare (IN-FOWAR) to degrade public and state resolve, intimidate rivals.
3. Martial support; and conduct high profile assassinations of state officials⁸⁰.

They have created a prolonged political-military level struggle and sabotaged all attempts to establish a peace agreement in order to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government while increasing authority of the territory and its legitimacy. The National Cartels and some of the regional ones have created the fundamental characteristics of an insurgency: a strategy, an ideology, an organization, a support structure, the ability to manage information and a supportive environment⁸¹. They even have external support from non-state actors as terrorist organizations and violent gangs from the Americas. But there is a variant in the insurgency of the cartels; they do not want to overthrow the government since they would have to supply the basic needs that people require and exercise the administration of public institutions. The primary objective is to win the support of the people to control the operational environment and continue to increase the business of organized crime. As they say, *“it’s just business, nothing more”*.

Cyber Capabilities *“There is a real war going on in cyberspace, but it is invisible to most of us”*⁸². The Drug Cartels will be involved in all kinds of activities to achieve their objectives, and as a very skilled or-

⁸⁰ John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus. “State of Siege: Mexico’s Criminal Insurgency”. The Small Wars Journal. 19 August 2008.

⁸¹ Each insurgency has its own unique characteristics but they have the following aspects: a strategy, an ideology, an organization, a support structure, the ability to manage information, and a supportive environment. Joint Publication 3-24 “Counterinsurgency” 22 November 2013.

⁸² Gabriel Weimann, “Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges” Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2006.

⁷⁸ David Gagne, “Are FARC Rebels Training Mexican Drug Cartels?”, Insight Crime, May 18, 2015. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/is-the-farc-training-mexican-drug-cartels/>

⁷⁹ David Gagne, “Bloody Attack on Police in Mexico Raises Jalisco Cartel’s Profile”, Insight Crime, April 8, 2015. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/bloody-attack-police-mexico-raises-jalisco-cartel-profile/>

ganization, they recognized the advantages that new information communication technologies (ICT) and social networks offer in cyberspace, and began to exploit them creating and developing a new capability, i.e. "Cyber-Operations". They use social networks based on the internet as a potent tool allowing them to share information with millions of users in real time, anywhere in the world and at the same time. The use of cyberspace by cartels is similar to that of terrorist organizations but on a smaller scale. They perform activities such as:

- **Recruitment:** This gives them the ability to work in an anonymous and secure environment. They have developed interactive web sites and created profiles on Facebook and many social networks as recruitment platforms, where they upload information about their achievements, ideologies, different activities, and operations, allowing them to be more efficient and work faster.
- **Propaganda:** The Cartels use propaganda to radicalize, support and receive funds from supporters through online platforms. Cyberspace and social networks allow them to reach more people (billions) faster and on a global scale.
- **Planning:** Before high-quality images were available only to experts, nowadays, they are a common good and accessible anywhere and by anybody⁸³. Google can be used to gain access to unlimited documents, such as databases, addresses, forums, people profiles to collect information in the form of text, images, MP3s and videos. Google maps can also be used to discover confidential details on critical infrastructures, as well as geographical positions, coordinates, detailed topog-

raphy at different scales, distance and time between objects. With this easily accessible information, accurate intelligence products can be developed for planning and coordinating operations such as evacuation routes for future attacks.

- **Disinformation:** The objective is to affect the perception of audiences by establishing a synchronized and well-developed strategic information campaign (Info-Ops), they shape public opinion, resulting in a change in behavior, giving the opportunity to add more supporters. The government, military and security forces are constant targets of disinformation attacks.
- **Psychological Campaign:** The cartels publish their crimes on web-pages and online blogs (owned by the organization) exposing to the public all kinds of brutal killings of civilians, military and security forces, government servants and members of other cartels to spread fear among people. They also mask their crimes by indicating that other rival cartels are responsible⁸⁴.

Figure 3. CJNG Executions



CJNG Kidnap and execute two federal agents.

Source: www.mundonarco.com

Note: "WARNING" This website is not recommended for sensitive people.

⁸³ Dr. Phillip W. Brunst, Chapter 2 Terrorism and the Internet: New Threats Posed by Cyberterrorism and Terrorist Use of the Internet, 15 October 2009, p. 74.

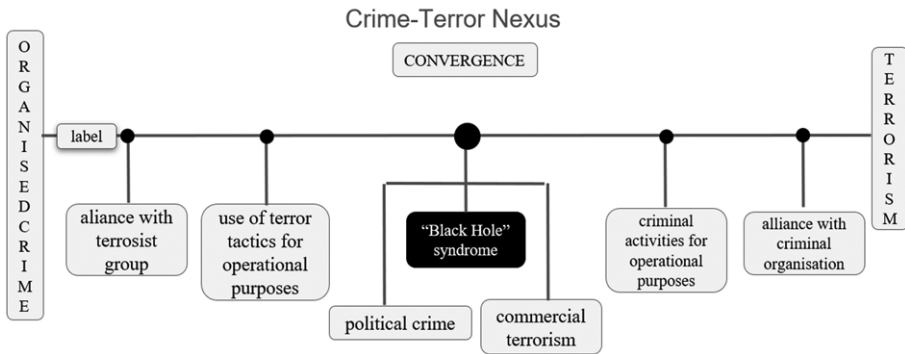
⁸⁴ June S. Beittel "Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations" Congressional Research Service7-5700, www.crs.gov, R41576.

TERROR AND CRIME

Terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations use contraband, drug trafficking, human trafficking, arms trafficking and other illegal activities to finance

their operations. Terrorism and organized crime exist in the same plane; therefore, it is logical that they can converge at some point.

Table 2. Crime-terror NEXUS



Source: Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism” *Global Crime* Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2004, pp. 129-145.

As we can see in the figure above, organized crime and terrorism are located at the extremes of the level, each one of them with different and separate positions. The central point is the point of “convergence” where a single entity simultaneously displays criminal and terrorist acts. Each group can move from one location to another; this means that terrorists can carry out illegal activities and criminal organizations can engage in terrorist tactics depending on the organizational dynamics and the operational environment. The link between these groups starts from the alliances, and specific needs drive these alliances.

According to Anthony P Placido, assistant administrator for intelligence in the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), in the “Triple Border” (South America) Narcotraffickers’ organizations based in the area have links to radical Islamic organizations such as Hezbollah. The terrorist organization has entered into the business of organized

crime. It has significantly expanded its drug trafficking operations to the point where the group can raise more money through illicit cross-border trafficking in drugs than all its other combined funding sources⁸⁵.

Members of the terrorist organization have no ability to move freely across borders. Hezbollah needed to hire criminal organizations to protect the plantations. These criminal groups were trained in war tactics (terrorists can provide specialized training), now the criminals acquired new warfare capabilities while the terrorist organization ensured its illicit revenues (organized crime can provide funds, manual labor, logistics, support and safe haven). This cooperation is an example of how alliances begin due to specific needs among organizations.

“cooperation with terrorists may have significant benefits for organized crimi-

⁸⁵ IHS Defense, Risk and Security Consulting / September 2012.

*nals by destabilizing the political structure, undermining law enforcement and limiting the possibilities for international cooperation*⁸⁶.

Louise Shelley

In 1990 criminal and terrorist groups were looking to “Mutate their structure and organization to assume a non-traditional, financial or political strategy, instead of

cooperating with groups that are already effective in those activities”⁸⁷. Criminal groups nowadays use terrorist tactics as an operational tool, and terrorist groups are taking part in illegal activities as an operational tool. The reason for this evolution in its strategies is mainly to ensure organizational security and to secure organizational operations⁸⁸.

RECOMMENDATIONS	OUTCOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Operations • Enhance Intelligence • Force Generation and Sustainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deter and defeat potential adversaries • Strengthen Force Protection/Response • Multidimensional Maneuver • Reduce force vulnerabilities and increase its mobility. • Enhance situational understanding by describing and assessing the operational environment.
INFO-OPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Effect – Weaken the Criminal “Doctrine” message • Big Impact at Political Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase of Capabilities • Regular Trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible in Operational Planning • Accuracy in Tactical Level
Enhance Technology Among Allies	The technology that allows us to deploy forces in a more powerful way making better use of our resources, both economic and human.
Strengthen Judicial System	Improve Court and Justice Effectiveness

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The actual result of the violence generated by the cartels is difficult to measure due to the limited information from the part of the government and the attempts of the criminal groups to deceive the public. Due to the continuous operations against the cartels, today they are more fragmented, more fluid and much more competitive than in the past. This situation forced them to move from a rigid vertical structure to a more horizontal configuration of little connected groups. Many analysts declared that, although these organizations have suffered “balkanization,” they will be much more difficult to fight. The fragmentation that began in 2010 and accelerated in 2011 redefined the “battlefield” and brought new actors, such as Los Zetas, the Knights Templar,

and the Jalisco Cartel New generation in the foreground, organizations that became the deadliest and most powerful.

Concerning the rapidly developing environment, the nature of conflicts is changing, and we are increasingly confronted with ways that are difficult to distinguish clearly between traditional or irregular warfare. The relationship between transnational organized crime and terrorism encompasses several different sides evolving according to the effective operational environment. The weaknesses within the judicial system and the inequality of force response/assistance, experience, training, tactical capacity, integration of forces and technological advanc-

⁸⁷ Dishman, ‘Terrorism, Crime and Transformation’.

⁸⁸ Tamara Makarenko, “The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism” Global Crime Vol. 6, No. 1, February 2004, p. 133.

⁸⁶ Shelley, ‘Identifying, Counting and Categorizing Transnational Organised Crime’.

es among nations contribute to the capacity of the Drug Cartel to exist and paralyze the ability to respond to this global threat.

The Drug Cartel has regional and global security implications, and its recognition as a new actor of irregular warfare (IW) will significantly improve the level of capability/capacity development, cooperation, force response and training among the States. Policymakers should consider a full campaign of joint operations within the military, law enforcement and intelligence agency such as strengthening the judicial and penitentiary system. Drug Cartels exist and are developed in specific operating environments, and these environments must be understood by governments, intelligence agencies, military, and security forces to apply an appropriate coordinate response.

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