

Los zetas

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



RUNNING HEAD: Los Zetas Nolita Oliveira Wayland Baptist University Dr. Paul Lankford Borderland Beat Reporter Overmex (2010, August 26), reported 72 illegal immigrants from El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador and Brazil, were found dead on a ranch in San Fernando, Tamaulipas, which is 150 km from the U. S. border city of Brownsville. This discovery came from one survivor who found his way to the Navy troops and reported members of the Los Zeta cartel at the nearby ranch. According to the Borderland Beat; 21 rifles, six 5. mm M4 carbines, three 7. 60 mm AK-47, seven 12 gauge shotguns, five . 22 caliber rifles, 101 magazines, two ammunition belts, six thousand 649 cartridges of various calibers, four bullet proof vests, one helmet, four trucks, one with the Ministry of National Defense (SEDENA), were also found at the ranch. With such a rich supply of ammunition and a massacre of men and women with their hands and feet tied, the question remains, how have the Los Zetas become so powerful?

Los Zeta's was originally founded by a group of highly trained Mexican Army Special Forces deserters and has expanded to include corrupted former federal, state, and local police officers hired by Mexico's Gulf Cartel (Los Zetas, 2010, November 22). The group originally consisted of 31 members with the first leader, Lieutenant Arturo Guzman Decena using his Federal Judicial Police radio code to become identified as Z1. This code was given to high-ranking officers for the Commanding Federal Judicial Police Officers in Mexico. Zeta is also named for the letter in Spanish.

Decena was born in 1976 and trained with an elite Mexican military group called Grupo Aeromovil de Fuerzas Especiales (GAFE) which were trained in counter- insurgency and locating and apprehending drug cartel members,

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with Decena came 30 other GAFE deserters. Decena was killed in 2002 and his second-in-command Z2 was captured in 2004 (Decena, 2010, November 27). The current leader is Z3 Heriberto Lazcano. Los Zeta's was originally hired to track down and kill rival cartel members and provide protection for the Gulf Cartel. Their power has grown and their savagery has had no boundaries.

In 2003 Los Zetas negotiated a pact with the Gulf Cartel and the Beltran - Leyva Cartel to engage their own drug shipments (Los Zetas, 2010, November 22). Seven years later after the pact, Los Zetas have violently turned against their former partner, the Gulf Cartel, and have formed alliances with the Juarez Cartel, Tijuana Cartel and the Beltran- Leyva Cartel. The other major faction alignment includes the Gulf Cartel, Sinaloa Cartel, and La Familia Cartel. In response to the Los Zeta's savagery the Sinaloa Cartel hired another armed enforcer gang, Los Negros, to fight back.

Los Negros have also turned their back and become independent are gaining more control of regions. As with other terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda, there are roots to the source of the evil. According to Brookes (2005), it is important to understand the many reasons for the terrorist phenomenon includes radical religious ideology, poor governance, a lack of economic opportunity, social alienation, demographic pressure, and political isolation (page 11). Although Los Zeta's. Los Negros, or other Mexican Cartels have not been listed as terrorist organizations by the U.

S. Department of State their actions are in compliance with the different definitions of terrorism. Narcoterrorist would describe what these Mexican

Cartels are. The statutory definition used by National Counterterrorism Center NCTC states that terrorism is premeditated, politically motivated violence directed against non-combatants (Benjamin, D. 2010, August 5). According to Narcoterrorism (2010, December 6), former Peru President coined the term narcoterrorism when describing terrorist-type attacks against nation's anti-narcotics policy.

The term was originally understood to mean “ the attempts of narcotics traffickers to influence the policies of a government or a society through violence and intimidation and to hinder the enforcement of the law and the administration of justice by the systematic threat or use of such violence (Narcoterrorism). FARC, ELN, Hamas, Taliban, and AUC in Colombia, and PCP-SL in Peru are all known terrorist organizations that engage in drug trafficking activity to fund their operations and gain recruits and expertise.

Describing the horrific killing and torturing tactics Los Zetas use against their countrymen, government, innocent men, women, and children could be best described as simply terrorist, the best term when describing them would be narcoterrorist. Their battle against their own and the United States is not deeply rooted to a religion or some other similar ideology known terrorist organization's base their practice on. These cartels are simply money hungry, power tripping, double crossing, unfaithful to any cause, and will burn their own to reach their desired level.

The War on Drugs is not a new concept simply invented overnight by someone to calm people down or put the fear into those pushing and selling. According to Head (2011), there is a history dating back to the early 1900's

when the Harrison Tax Act of 1914 was enforced to restrict the sale of heroin and cocaine. The Marihuana Tax Act of 1937 attempted to taxmarijuanabecause it was an alleged “ getaway drug” for heroin uses and was popular among Mexican- American immigrants.

President Eisenhower was considered the first president to literally call for a war on drugs and he stressed his determination by establishing mandatory minimum federal sentences for possession of marijuana, cocaine, and opiates. The increase in federal penalties was under the Narcotic Control Act of 1956. Today the war on drugs has made it difficult to determine what is legal and illegal. Depending on the drug and the wording of drug policy legislation, narcotics are illegal except when prescribed to a certain individual.

In 1996 California legalized marijuana for medical use and both the Bush and Obama administration have arrested California medical marijuana distributors (Head). The current strategy for the War on Drugs as determined by President Obama’s drug policy coordinator, which is end War on Drugs terminology and attempt to rebrand federal antidrug efforts as simple harm-reduction strategies (Head). Head also quoted “ you can’t declare war on inanimate objects, social phenomena, moods, or abstractions--- and it’s a rhetorical convention that has determined the way our country views drug policy enforcement (Head). If you can’t declare war on these inanimate objects, social phenomena, moods or abstractions, and you can’t declare war on a country without resources to fight a war, than how do you rid the world of narcoterrorist? It’s simply not possible. Mexico has been the main foreign

supplier of marijuana and methamphetamines to the U. S. Drug cartels have been illegally transporting an estimated 70 % of foreign narcotics such as cocaine, heroin, and other drugs into the United States and other countries but were not transporting in such violent methods as used today (Mexico Drug War, 2011, January 3).

Mexican Drug War also states that Mexico only accounts for a small share of worldwide heroin production but is the major distributor of heroin introduced into the United States. The U. S. Department estimates 90% of the cocaine is mainly produced by Colombia but entered into the U. S. through Mexico. Mexico and the U. S. borders have been used since the mid- 1980's when Mexico had established organizations competent and reliable to transport Colombian cocaine. Mexican cartels were given 30 % to 50 % of the cocaine shipment which led the cartels to become traffickers and distributors.

Although the first few decades after the development of the cartels was passive, since 2006 the Mexican Cartels have turned deadly battling for territory rights and turning on each other. According to Timeline of the Mexican Drug War (2010, December 18), the deployment of Mexican Army soldiers into Michoacan to end drug violence was regarded as the first major retaliation made against cartel violence in Mexico and was regarded as the starting point of the Mexican Drug War between the government and drug cartels.

The war escalated with each increase in military troops making Los Zeta's violence against Mexicans harsher and frequent. It was reported 150 Mexican soldiers and police officers were killed as opposed to the 500 cartel

gunmen killed in 2006. Violence surged and by 2008 there was a record of 5,630 deaths. The kidnapping, torture, and decapitation of seven off duty soldiers and one police commander were included in this death toll. In 2008 high ranking police officials and government officials were gunned down or executed.

The decapitated heads of the off duty police officials were left in a shopping center to be found with a threatening note to the military. Their terrorism tactics have since left their mark to be remembered. With Los Zetas becoming more violent and demanding more plazas the need for outside and local forces free from corruption is highly in demand. Regardless of the attempts to weed out those with possible links to Los Zetas or any cartel will remain impossible to prevent the introduction of new and easily corrupted officials.

This can be said for their recruitment of poor, military, law enforcement and government officials. According to Los Zetas, their main recruits are all corrupted ex- federal, state, and local police officers as well as the poor men and women and former Kaibiles from Guatemala. This group does recruit women to help run the organization. The Kaibiles are special operations force of the Guatemala military and specialize in jungle warfare tactics and counter- insurgency operations (Kaibiles, 2010 November 2).

There is also hierarchy within the group, just like other organized crime organizations. According to Los Zetas there are five groups. The first group consisted of the Los Halcones (The Hawks) and they were responsible for monitoring the distribution zones. The second group is the Las Ventanas (The

Windows) who are bike-riding mid- teens responsible for warning the presence of police and other suspicious individuals near small stores that sell drugs. The Los Manosos (The Tricky Ones) gathered the arms.

Los Zetas employ prostitute women who are called Los Leopardos (Leopards). The Los Zetas also have the Direccion (Command) which consists of 20 communications experts who intercept phone calls, follow and identify suspicious automobiles and are also known to accomplish kidnappings and executions. All of these groups form the composition of Los Zetas (Los Zetas). Los Zetas can also be compared to al- Qaida, in that their myriads of extensive criminal activities.

They kidnap, murder- for- hire, use extortion, money- launder, smuggle humans and are involved with oil siphoning. Like al Qaeda, they have adopted a cell- like structure to limit the information known about members within the organization. Los Zeta's boldness and cells are spread globally and it has been reported that the FBI were warned that a Los Zetas cell in Texas would use full tactical response if they intervened on their operations. Los Zetas have been able to take over and lord over a great deal of territories by battling it out with their enemies.

Los Zetas is mainly based in the border region of Nuevo Laredo and have established lookouts in airports, bus stations, and main roads. They are also along the Gulf Coast region, Tabasco, Yucatan, Quintana Roo, Chiaps, Pacific Coast states, including Guerror, Oaxaca, Michocan, and in Mexico City. Los Zetas hires Mexican gangs such as the Texas Syndicate and MS-13 to carry out their contract killings (Los Zetas). According to the NarcoGuerra Times

the DEA officials in Canada, Italy, and Mexico had arrested 175 members of the Zetas who were connected with the Ndrangheta.

Los Zeta's has been operating in approximately 47 countries and have been said to have established connections with the Italian Calabrian mafia known as Ndrangheta (Narco Guerra Times, 2009, September 19). There is research showing the Zetas and Ndrangheta had been working together for more than two years, since Europe needed the cocaine. The main reason their connection is important is because Ndrangheta is considered a major transnational criminal organization dealing in nuclear waste. Their partnership has also allowed the Zetas to advance their money laundering, real estate and human trafficking into Europe (Narco Guerra Times).

Forming alliances with foreign countries organized criminal divisions will only make it harder for the Mexican government fight their war against the cartels and for these countries to fight their wars on drugs. America has been battling with the war on drugs and so have other countries' making it harder to clean up the streets is becoming more impossible with each cell developed in other locations. Mexico's battle with corruption within all the levels of police departments and constant recruitments with gangs across the border and international waters has made it harder for Homeland Security to fight the battle.

Mexico's war against the cartels seem to only be escalating the issue and although many of the main cartel members throughout the different territories have been brought to justice, it seems their war on that side of the border is not accomplishing much but more blood shed on both sides of the

border. As one of the strongest and dominant countries, America could provide the assistance needed. Many may debate this or feel America has their hand in too many countries affairs but the fact remains the brutality and narcoterrorist tactics used by Los Zetas and other cartels will continue to increase.

This is not saying President Calderon has rejected American help or has been using other security tactics to help prosecute criminals associated with known narcoterrorist organizations. According to Hansen (2008, November 20), Mexico has pursued different methods for security tactics including extraditing alleged criminals to the United States, including the head of the Gulf Cartel. They have also been actively attempting to dismantle illegal methamphetamine labs, cocaine shipments, and eradicate marijuana. This shows promise but only twenty six meth labs were dismantled between 2002 and 2007.

President Calderon developed a 2008 constitutional reform that merged their Federal Preventive Police (PFP) and the Federal Agency of Investigation (AFI). The AFI is similar to the FBI and gathers intelligence and the PFP is responsible for maintaining public order but does not have investigative abilities. President Calderon constitutional reforms of 2008 also called for reforms on criminal procedures. The reforms include oral trials with public proceedings, sentencing based on the evidence presented during trial, judges who are allowed to quickly rule on search warrant requests (Hansen).

Their old ways used written trial procedures that could last for years. These efforts show some willingness to adopt new and effective methods using

foreign help and using modern legal methods but it is still not enough.

According to Hernandez (2010, February 25), the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) based out of Vienna stated that Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina were sending out the wrong messages in their legislative and judicial developments that were aimed to decriminalize the possession of some drugs.

With their declaration Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina rebutted and claimed that the INCB was overstepping their organizations mandated and were unwarranted intrusions in their countries sovereign decision-making and that the INCB has no jurisdiction over police changes made within sovereign nations. In 2009 Mexico decriminalized the possession of small amounts of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine (Hernandez). Brazil replaced prison sentences with education and treatment for small-time drug offenders in 2006.

In 2009 Argentina's Supreme Court declared punishment for possession of marijuana for personal use as unconstitutional. Argentina also called INCB's arrogant for questioning the highest judicial authority of a sovereign state. Hernandez also stated that the INCB was deeply concerned with the United States moving towards legalizing or regularizing the use of marijuana for medical purposes may send the wrong message to other countries. The INCB had a legitimate concern for these countries actions of making it easier for criminals to pursue selling and people using marijuana and other drugs.

In the United States inmates are allowed to pursue an education or gain their GED to help them gain employment when released but this does not prevent

repeated offenders. Taking tough actions and measures is the only way to decrease crime and drug usage. Mexico's President taking two steps forward and then two steps back is only causing confusion for others to know what actions they need to take. The hard core facts that these Mexican narcoterrorist organizations were developed by corrupted ex military or law enforcement officials make it hard for the rest of the world to believe Mexico is competent to battle against the cartels or protect heir citizens from the unthinkable. With Mexico's incompetence comes impatient Americans' willing and ready to battle for their land. When the Arizona rancher was found dead on his land it was automatically assumed illegal immigrants had killed him. Arizona government officials quickly used his death as an example to push forward their Senate Bill 1070. Now other states have developed similar versions for their own stateimmigrationlaws. The growing concern has somewhat shifted fromillegal immigration, to how to battle Los Zetas and other cartels.

Arizona's Bill may have opened people's eyes to the growing problem of illegal immigrants advancing in the United States, but no one in their right mind could have ever imagined seeing those poor immigrants hog tied, gagged, and executed by Los Zetas; for trying to make it across the border. The American people don't want the Mexican's killed, simply accounted for. When talking about Los Zeta's and their narcoterrorist ways, it seems impossible not to think of them as terrorist in the same class as al Qaeda.

They may not share the same fanatical ideology as al Qaeda but their terrorist tactics used against the Mexican and American people is on the

same level. With the vast growth of their cells spreading globally and forming alliances with known organizations handling nuclear waste, the threat they pose to all those against them is even scarier than those threats by al Qaeda supporters living in the United States. Mexico has been using underground tunnels and smuggling drugs, humans, and weapons across both sides of the borders for decades.

There have been reports that al Qaeda has helped train Los Zetas recruits with similar tactics. These Mexican military deserters have trained in the same American military installation, Fort Bragg, as known al Qaedan terrorist members have. The connection is too great and should not be ignored. Los Zeta's is in a country that has a poor economy but extremely rich in the illegal drug trade. The promise of pay, respect, and fear is what appeals to those who join their ranks. This can be said for any organization. The Mexican government will not be able to use only their military forces to combat against these cartels.

Los Zetas has proven they have no loyalty to any one organization but to themselves and their greed for territory and wealth has been fueling their fire. President Calderon should not wait for a full out battle to develop between the cartels and the cartels against the Mexican military. Zetas is growing rapidly and stronger with support and alliances from other countries. Instead President Calderon should call upon Mexico's allies for help battling them and cleaning up their streets. These cartels have gained their intelligence from working on the inside and gaining as much intelligence, expertise, and experience as possible.

Their knowledge, tactics, and alliances will keep them thriving and defining who they are. It is up to the Mexican government to develop solutions to their economic crisis, drug laws, and protection of the people. Their military can only combat so long for so little pay and then they will turn to the darker side. If they paid their people enough salary there would be fewer traitors. It's like a mother developing rules for her children and expecting them to follow without having to actually enforce them. Countries have been known to break down barriers such as Germany.

Countries have also sat by and watched a power hungry Jew hating man murder thousands of innocent people before calling in the big guns. Countries should not sit idly by and watch thousands of people get slaughtered because some men in uniform are greedy for territorial rights and making money by distributing, marketing, laundering drugs, humans, and weapons. There are American military installations located across Border States and if that is what it takes, so be it. References Arturo Guzman Decena. (2010, November 27). In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.

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