

Organization Attributes Sheet: Juarez Cartel (Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization)

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A. When the organization was formed + brief history

- The Juarez Cartel formed in the late 1980s/early 1990s around Rafael Aguilar Guajardo in Ciudad Juarez.¹ Guajardo was a former Mexican intelligence officer who established control of key narco-trafficking routes into the United States from Juarez. The Juarez Cartel became one of the largest trafficking organizations in Mexico.
- In 1989, U.S. agents seized 21 tons of cocaine in a warehouse in L.A. The cocaine was linked to Rafael Munoz Talavera, a member of the fledgling cartel who coordinated the shipment through Juarez and into Los Angeles, California.² The seized warehouse shipment was one of the largest in U.S. history, and an indicator of the strength of the cartel, even its early stages.
- In 1993, Guajardo was murdered while vacationing in Cancun and the organization came under the direction of Amado Carrillo Fuentes. Guajardo's death and the subsequent takeover by Carrillo Fuentes unleashed a wave of violence across Juarez as the Fuentes family struggled to take control of the shipping routes.³
- Under Amado Carrillo Fuentes, the Juarez Cartel continued to expand its operation in Chihuahua operating under the protection of key Mexican officials. In 1997, General Jesus Gutiérrez Rebollo was arrested for colluding with the Juarez Cartel and providing it political protection, and targeting its competitors.⁴
- July 3rd, 1997, Amado Carrillo Fuentes died while undergoing plastic surgery and facial reconstruction. After his death, a power struggle erupted in Ciudad Juarez for control of the shipping routes across the border, violence increased exponentially within the city as cartel members struggled for control. Eventually an alliance between the Vicente Carrillo Fuentes and Juan Esparagoza Moreno (AKA: "El Azul") put an end to the power struggle; however violence remained high in the city.⁵
- In 2002, Joaquin Guzman (AKA: "El Chapo"), Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, Esparagoza, and the Beltran Levya Brothers formed a federation known as "La Alianza de Sangre". Bound by blood ties and family, the federation waged open war against the Gulf and Tijuana Cartels; however by 2004 the alliance was finished after Sinaloa hit-men assassinated Rodolfo Carrillo Fuentes in Juarez and began to move into the territory.⁶
- From 2004 to the present, there has been an ongoing war between the Sinaloa Cartel and the Juarez Cartel leading to a shifting and blurry alliance structure. Currently the Juarez Cartel is losing ground to the federation of Sinaloa, the Gulf, and the LFM. From 2008-2010, violence raged across Ciudad Juarez, seemingly without clear cause or linkages to organized crime groups leading to the deployment of the military within the city.⁷

B. Types of illegal activities engaged in,

a. In general

- Drug Trafficking, Human Smuggling/Trafficking, Kidnapping, protection rackets, murders/hits

b. Specific detail: types of illicit trafficking activities engaged in

- The group moves large amounts of marijuana, cocaine, and MDMA across the border to groups distributing in U.S. markets.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

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| C. Scope and Size | |
| a. | Estimated size of network and membership |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At one point in the past the Juarez Cartel was one of the most powerful groups operating in the state of Chihuahua. The death of Amado Carrillo Fuentes and the later incursion by the Sinaloa Federation into the area has significantly decreased the power and size of the cartel. |
| b. | Countries / regions group is known to have operated in. (i.e. the group's operating area) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chihuahua State, Mexico; Nuevo Leon, Mexico; Sonora State, Mexico; Guatemala; the U.S.; Nicaragua⁸ Texas (Houston, Waco, Tyler, Lubbock, Big Spring, Midland, Odessa, El Paso, Pecos, Fort Stockton, Alpine, Presidio, Mission, Hidalgo) Arizona (Phoenix, Tucson, Douglas) Nevada (Las Vegas) Oregon (Portland) Wyoming (Rock Springs) Colorado (Denver, Colorado Springs, Aurora) Oklahoma (Ponca City, Oklahoma City) Kansas (Kansas City, Dodge City, Liberal, Wichita) Missouri (Kansas City) Minnesota (Minneapolis) Illinois (Chicago) Indiana (Indianapolis) Ohio (Toledo, Hamilton, Cincinnati) Georgia (Atlanta) North Carolina (Charlotte, Raleigh) Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh, Philadelphia) New Jersey (Newark, Atlantic City) Massachusetts (Boston) |
| D. Leader Characteristics | |
| a. | Who is/are the leader(s) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vicente Carrillo Fuentes (AKA: "El Viceroy"⁹) |
| b. | Leadership timeline |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1980s-1993 Rafael Aguilar Guajardo; 1993-1997 Amado Carrillo Fuentes; 1997-Present Vicente Carrillo Fuentes |
| c. | Leadership style (autocratic, diffuse, etc.) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diffuse. While Carrillo Fuentes is listed as the leader of the organization, the group has individual leaders responsible for individual tasks: hits, trafficking, etc. |
| E. Organizational Structure | |
| a. | Topology (cellular, hierarchical, etc.) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are few resources that clearly define the leadership structure of the Juarez Cartel. However, the other name for the cartel is the Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization. What information does exist indicates a hierarchical structure. |
| b. | Membership – is there formal or informal membership in the organization or network? |

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

What role do informal or nonmembers play in trafficking and other criminal activities?

- Formal membership for distributors and bosses; informal membership for sicarios and retailers

c. Command and Control (decentralized or centralized)

- Decentralized. Leaders appear to have some measure of autonomy regarding movement of drugs and potential hits.¹⁰

F. Resources

a. Financial

- In the early 90s the Juarez Organization was one of the most affluent groups operating out of Mexico; however the financial power has waned in the 2000s with the ongoing conflict against the Sinaloa cartel.

b. Human

- Besides distribution and retail personnel the Cartel holds two separate enforcer arms. In Mexico, current and former police and military operatives form the backbone of La Linea and in the U.S. the Barrio Azteca gang provides enforcement support to the organization as enforcers.¹¹

c. Logistical

i. Forgery, safe-houses, etc.

- In order to avoid interdiction, the Juarez Cartel operates a number of safe houses in Ciudad Juarez in both low income and high income neighborhoods.¹² The group also operates what are known as death houses, essentially mass graves hidden in suburban areas of the city to avoid interdiction.¹³

ii. Key routes

- The key routes for the Juarez Cartel are Mexico State Highway 49 running north through Ciudad Juarez and Mexico Highway 200 which connects Mexico with Guatemala.

d. Transportation

i. Land

- When moving product into the United States, the cartel employs overland transport either hidden in small cars, mules, or intermodal containers.

ii. Sea

- Information not found

iii. Air

- When moving product north from Guatemala, the cartel has been known to employ single engine planes to avoid interdiction.¹⁴

iv. Intermodal container

- Intermodal containers are the method of choice for concealing large amounts of product.

G. Trafficking Methods and Modalities

a. Corruption

- In the past, the Cartel relied on the corruption of key members of the government to conceal activities including a former Mexican Drug Tsar. In recent years the cartels have been in open conflict with the state for control of the trafficking routes through Mexico.

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

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| b. | Concealment |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the key methods employed by the Juarez Cartel is that of camouflage/military uniforms when performing hits. |
| c. | Deception |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In recent years the group has used deception less to smuggle drugs across the border and more to wage a turf war against its rivals in the region, especially the Sinaloa Cartel. |
| d. | Circumvention (avoiding border entry points) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most circumvention tactics focus less on avoiding border entry points and more on using tactics to pass through the border sight unseen, including deaf and mute drug mules. |
| H. Prior / Existing Relationships | |
| a. | Other criminal organizations (cooperative and conflictual) |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative: Tijuana, Beltran Levya, Los Zetas. Conflictual: Sinaloa, Gulf, La Familia Michoacan |
| b. | Corrupt politicians, law enforcement , political parties and other state entities, etc. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Juarez Cartel was founded by a corrupt former member of the Mexican Intelligence Services. And in 1997 its ties into the Mexican State were revealed with the arrest Jesus Gutiérrez Rebello. However, since the election of Calderon and his promise to fight the cartels, the group has been in open conflict with state military forces. However, Like the Gulf, the Juarez group uses current and former military and police officers to carry out hits and provide enforcement for the group. |
| c. | <i>Specific detail: Any alliances / past dealings with terrorist groups.</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No source indicates alliances with terrorist groups |
| I. Ideological / Ethnic / Familial Orientation (if any) | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large family based leadership |
| J. Technical Sophistication | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In waging war against Mexican police forces, the Juarez Cartel has employed improvised explosives and military tactics.¹⁵ |
| K. Penchant for Innovation | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to continue to battle the state and the Sinaloa group the Juarez Organization has employed improvised explosive devices, military insurgent tactics, and heavy ordinance. Often Juarez sicarios and hit squads hide in plain sight as either police officers or in upscale Juarez neighborhoods. |
| L. Activities in United States | |
| a. | Includes both criminal and non-criminal activities |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking and distribution |
| b. | <i>Specific detail: trafficking activities ; logistical activities</i> |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking in Los Angeles and the West Coast through various Latin American ethnic gangs. |
| c. | Linkages with US groups |
| i. | Market/transaction links |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barrio Azteca, Bandidos, Crips, Latin Kings¹⁶ |
| ii. | Stable supplier |

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

- The recent conflict with the Sinaloa Group has severely undercut Juarez status as a stable supplier of cocaine to distributors across the border as evidenced by the limited to connections to groups in the U.S.

iii. Franchise arrangement

- Information not found

iv. HQ and Branch office

- Information not found

M. Evaluations

a. Strengths

- The Juarez Cartel is situated on top of a key transit route into the United States and was, at one time, one of the most powerful organizations operating in Mexico.

b. Weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- The ongoing conflict with the Sinaloa Organization and the Mexican state has severely weakened the Cartel's ability to perform day to day operations.

c. Additional insights

- It appears that the Juarez Group is on its last legs and is losing ground to the Sinaloa group. Some accounts say that the Juarez Cartel is actually finished and is fighting a pointless struggle, leading to the more terroristic tactics of IEDS and beheadings.¹⁷

Other Notes

- In terms of relationships with terrorist organizations, the group has no known ties to terrorists. Moreover, it is involved in a fight for its lifeblood, the Juarez highway corridor, and is unlikely to be focused on anything more than military matters. There has been a recent uptick in violence against the state and the use of insurgent tactics including the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDS). This alone, however, does not indicate any interest in the trafficking or use of CBRN materials against either the United States or Mexico.

¹ "Juarez Cartel", *InSight: Organized Crime in America*. <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011).

² "Juarez Cartel" <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011)

³ "Juarez Cartel" <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011)

⁴ "Juarez Cartel" <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011)

⁵ "Juarez Cartel" <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011)

⁶ "Juarez Cartel" <http://www.insightcrime.org/criminal-groups/mexico/juarez-cartel> (May 9, 2011)

⁷ Bowden, Charles *Murder City: Ciudad Juarez and the Global Economy's New Killing Fields* (New York: Nation Books, 2010) p. 27.

⁸ "Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization", *Borderland Beat* September 14th, 2009. <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2009/09/vicente-carrillo-fuentes-organization.html> (May 15, 2011).

⁹ "Vicente Carrillo Fuentes" *FBI Wanted Notice*. <http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/cei/vicente-carrillo-fuentes> (May 15, 2011).

¹⁰ Bowden, p.219.

¹¹ "Vicente Carrillo Fuentes Organization" <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2009/09/vicente-carrillo-fuentes-organization.html> (May 15, 2011).

¹² "High Ranking Juarez Cartel Leader in Custody", *Albuquerque Journal*. <http://www.abqjournal.com/abqnews/abqnewseeker-mainmenu-39/22863-720am-high-ranking-juarez-cartel-leader-in-custody.html> (May 15, 2011).

Information derived from several sources and searchable databases.

All research conducted according to the project manual.

¹³ Bowden, 187.

¹⁴ Hawley, Chris "As drug planes get seized, cartels adapt", *The Arizona Republic* May 17, 2010.
<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/2010/03/16/20100316mexico-drug-smugglers-planes.html> (May 15, 2011).

¹⁵ "Car bomb changes ground rules of drug war" *Associated Press* July 18, 2010.
<http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2010/07/car-bomb-in-mexico-changes-ground-rules.html> (May 16, 2011).

¹⁶ "National Drug Threat Assessment 2010," *U.S. Department of Justice National Drug Intelligence Center* February 2010, p.64-65.

¹⁷ "Car bomb changes ground rules of drug war" <http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2010/07/car-bomb-in-mexico-changes-ground-rules.html> (May 16, 2011).