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**From:** Allison, Robert S  
**Sent:** 12/20/2010 4:45:06 PM  
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**Subject:** Complex Police Operation Nets Michoacan Cartel Leader  
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**Subject:** Complex Police Operation Nets Michoacan Cartel Leader

1. (C) Summary/Comment. On December 8, the Federal Police (SSP) launched an operation against the La Familia Michoacana (LFM) cartel in its stronghold of Michoacan state. As a result, one of the cartel's top leaders, Nazario Moreno Gonzalez, aka "El Chayo," was killed. Although the offensive led to violence across the state in the days after, and caused both civilian and police deaths, it was an overall success for the GOM and a serious blow to LFM. Though this operation SSP demonstrated its growing ability to execute complicated missions

B1

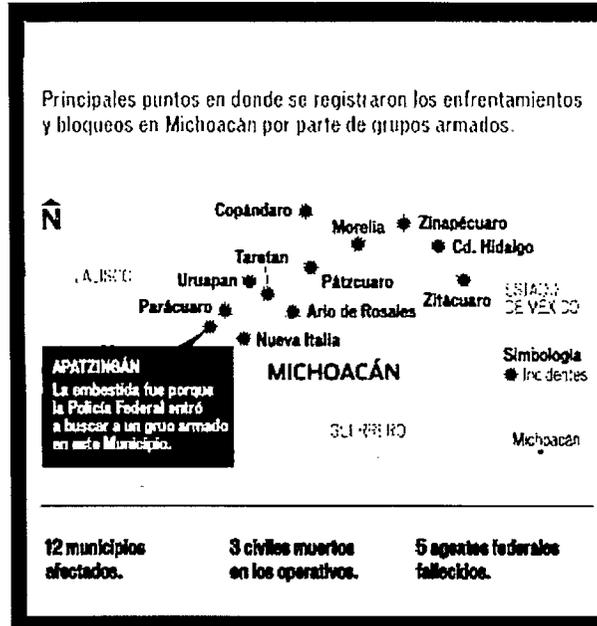
End summary/comment.

The Operation: A Severe Blow to La Familia

2. (S/NF) SSP began the "Coordinated Michoacan Operation" on December 8

B1, B7(D)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ADOLPH H EISNER  
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3. (SBU) On December 12, the Office of the President announced that federal forces had killed Nazario Moreno Gonzalez, aka "El Chayo." Along with Jesus Mendez Vargas aka "El Chango," Moreno was one of La Familia's two main leaders, not only coordinating operations, but also serving as the group's ideological leader by introducing quasi-religious elements into the organization's philosophy. Moreno incorporated Christian spiritualism into the training and indoctrination of La Familia members, earning the cartel a reputation as cult-like. Although authorities did not recover Moreno's body, National Security Council Technical Secretary Alejandro Poire told reporters, "Various sources obtained during the operation coincide to indicate that Nazario Moreno Gonzalez, principal leader and a founder of La Familia, died."

Operation a Needed Win for Calderon

4. (S/NF) The Michoacan operation was a success for the GOM [redacted] [redacted] One regularly harsh critic of President Calderon wrote in a widely respected Mexico City daily that "there may be light at the end of the tunnel" after the death of Moreno, suggesting that some analysts see that Mexico is at a turning point in its battle with organized crime. On the heels of other recent GOM successes against the Beltran Leyva Organization, the Gulf Cartel, and the Sinaloa Cartel, the recent Michoacan operation demonstrates an increased capacity

B1

[redacted]

5. (SBU) While the operation is considered an overall success, public reaction in Michoacan to Moreno's death was mixed, in part indicating the sway of LFM over the state's population. In the days following the government's operation, hundreds of residents of Apatzingán participated in a march for peace, but some protesters held signs saying "Viva la Familia" and "Nazario will always live in our hearts." Multiple press and GOM sources confirm that the protestors were planted by La Familia. However, whether through intimidation or persuasion, the cartel clearly has strong support from some sectors of the population. The mayor of Apatzingán said that, "La Familia does not cause violence, the government does."

[redacted]

B1, B7(D), B7(E)

[Redacted]

B1, B7(D),  
B7(E)

What is La Familia Michoacana and Where Does it Go without El Chayo?

7. (C) Mendez ("El Chango") has already been tapped to assume the top leadership role of LFM, according to press reports. Moreno, however, was the "spiritual leader" of the organization and brainwashed recruits to establish order, respect, and loyalty.

[Redacted] We do not discount the theory that Mendez could face a challenge to his authority from below, but so far the cartel seems unified. Gomez has already spoken out to rally his associates; some press outlets obtained tapes he allegedly recorded in which he tells members, "This is not over, we are going to continue united following what [Moreno] taught us with much love...we continue onward, everything is going to continue the same until victory."

B1

B1

8. (SBU) La Familia rose to national prominence in 2006 when some of its members entered a crowded nightclub in Uruapan, Michoacan, shot into the air, and threw five human heads onto the dance floor. This act of brutality was rare in Mexico at the time and earned the young, Michoacan-based organization a reputation for ruthlessness. The group transports and traffics narcotics, especially synthetic drugs, kidnaps and extorts civilians for profit, and engages in human smuggling. It allegedly has strong ties to many officials in Michoacan. Its leaders, Moreno and Mendez, prohibited cartel members from using the drugs they sold. The integration of Christian philosophy created a cult-like aura around the cartel and members often justified their killings as "acts of divine justice." Occasionally the cartel addresses the government directly through signs and banners, recently offering publicly to disband if the government would provide security to the people of Michoacan. President Calderon rejected this "offer" outright.

Signature: PASCUAL

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Drafted By: POL:Jessica Hall  
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[Redacted]

B6, B7(C)

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