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## Nuevo Laredo Cartel Battle, 16 July 2010

### Cartel Tactics Analysis For Ranger Reconnaissance Team/DPS SWAT

**Purpose:** Inform SWAT/RRT on potential cartel tactics and practices

#### Setting the Stage:

- Limited information available
- Rolling firefight over multiple locations, potentially 2-3 hrs
- Cartel-on-cartel fight with involvement from Mexican forces
- Post-event documentation photos from different locations

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Road blocking tactic used at many intersections in this and other cartel gun battles, utilized both to vector the target(s) in predictable paths and to deter interference from federal elements.

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Security  
Operations  
Center

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Attackers engaged this F-150 from a distance greater than from where the photo was taken (absence of casings on driver's side). No evidence of rushing the vehicle, indicating tactical control and training.



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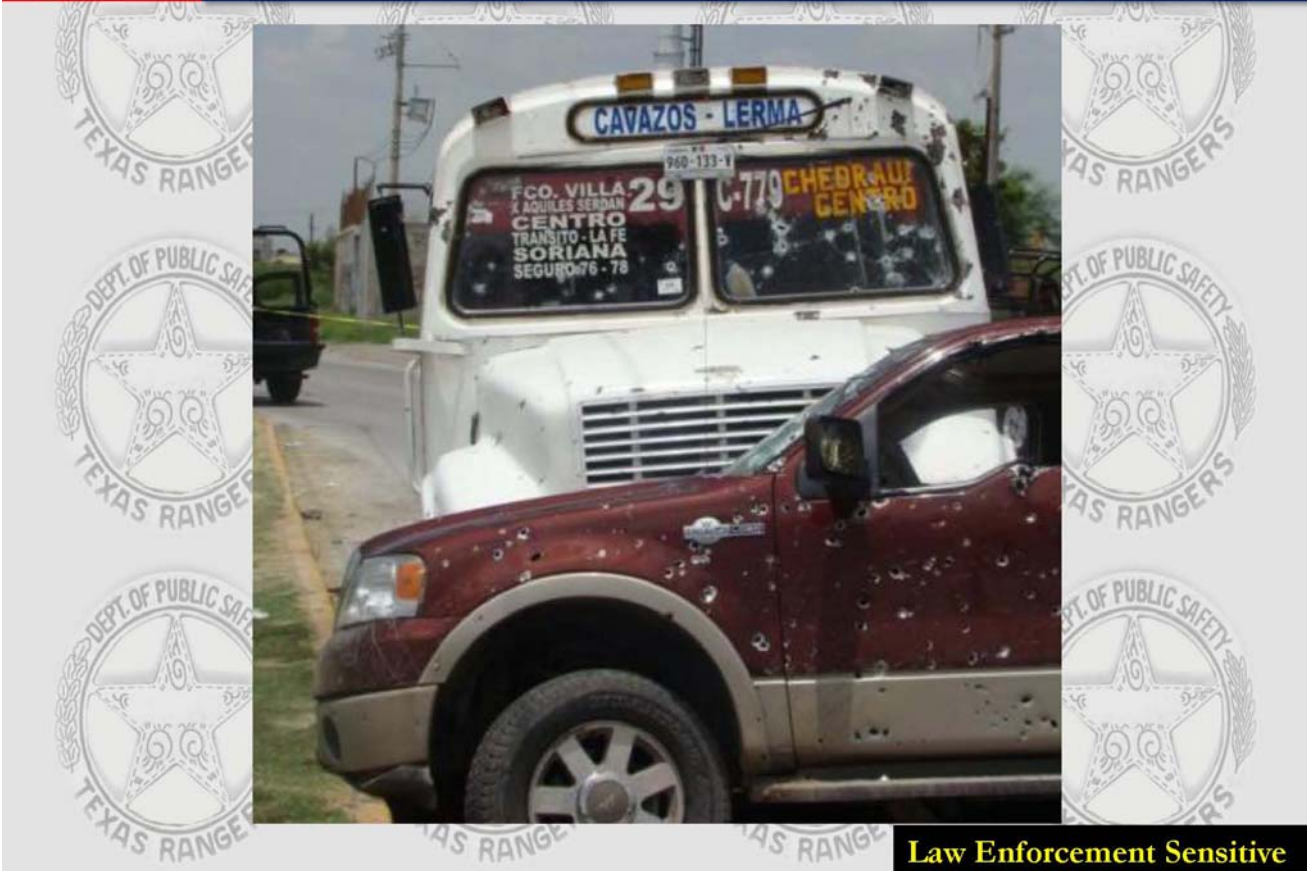
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Operations  
Center

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Live ammunition,  
found around several  
of the bodies.

Several 7.62 x 39  
projectiles on scene.

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Security  
Operations  
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Cover location for the subjects in Slide 6, indicating tactical awareness though eventually overwhelmed by superior firepower from the opposition.

Note the tactical vest.

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Interior penetration damage noted in larger, more robust vehicles like a bus

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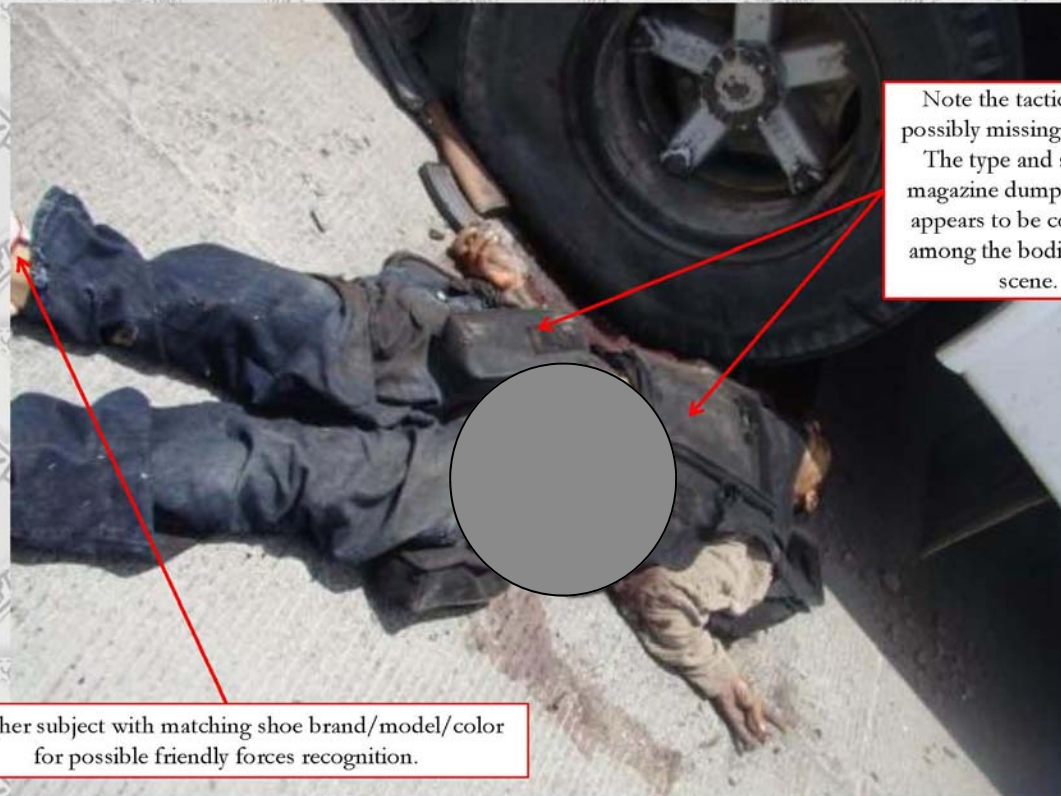
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Operations  
Center

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Note the tactical vest, possibly missing the plate. The type and style of magazine dump pouches appears to be consistent among the bodies at this scene.

Another subject with matching shoe brand/model/color for possible friendly forces recognition.

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Operations  
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Again, note the shoe color scheme, and similarity to those in previous slides.

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Operations  
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Aftermarket stocks (see note below). Most viewed here have replacement butt stocks.

Again the shoe brand/model/color for possible friendly forces recognition.



Note the homemade butt stocks. These potentially are replacements following damage in battle, or from stocks being removed for greater smuggling ease during clandestine import into Mexico. Also note the missing forehand grip (blue) from battle damage or overall condition indicator.

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Operations  
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Note the tactical slings on the M-4s, the 40mm HE grenade (no launcher known to be recovered), and the similar model and design of the radios.

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Operations  
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Duct tape indicates customization of gear during training to a specific person.

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Operations  
Center

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Large amount of battle damaged magazines from scenes with mixed live rounds on ground indicative of training need for magazine change drills, stoppage drills, and transition drills for RRT/SWAT if anticipating engagement with trained cartel forces.

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AK-47 variant on  
the passenger seat.



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Operations  
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Aftermarket extended charging handle.

The presence of food and a radio charger indicates preparation for a long wait time. This vehicle's occupants were the attackers.

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Operations  
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The vehicles used during this engagement are consistent with those employed by Cartel forces historically during assault operations – heavy trucks and full size SUVs.

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Operations  
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#### Take-aways

- Sustained a 2+ hour, multi-location firefight... willingness to continue the fight
- Incident(s) were pre-planned...
  - Stolen support vehicles as a roadblock and ram to disable target vehicles
  - Surveillance
  - Appear to be using common shoe as friendly force identification
- Homemade stocks on multiple weapons... could indicate breakdown for smuggling
- Evidence of common tactical web gear (bulk purchase?), use of vests, gear was personalized and adjusted for the shooter showing level of familiarity and training

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