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Mexican Cartel Tactical Note No. 11: MG 34 Machine Guns Recovered in Nayarit—Hezbollah Arms Transfer Concerns

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Mexican Cartel Tactical Note #11

By [David Kuhn](#) and [Robert Bunker](#)
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Note— This incident is extremely fragmentary and a minor footnote to a larger report by [Borderland Beat](#) and [Borderland Beat](#). Five pictures of recovered weapons, ammunition in plastic bags, and license plates were posted along with the key information. What is significant, however, are the recovered machine guns that appeared in one of the photos.

Key Information: Via Gerardo, "Nayarit update" [Borderland Beat](#) Tuesday, January 17, 2012.
<http://www.borderlandbeat.com/2012/01/nayarit-update.html>:

On Monday the Mexican Army announced the seizure of weapons and vehicles in the municipality of Ixtlan del Rio, Nayarit.

A total of 14 rifles and automatic weapons, 5 handguns, 2 grenade launchers, tactical equipment, 2,573 rounds of ammunition and 3 vehicles, one of which was armored, were secured.

No arrests were announced by the Army.

Who: Unknown cartel or drug gang. Criminal enforcer units operating in the vicinity of the Nayarit plaza are thought to include those belonging to the Sinaloa cartel, Beltran Leyva loyalists, and Los Zetas.

What: Weapons and vehicle seizure by the Mexican Army.

When: Seizure announced Monday, January 16, 2012.

Where: Ixtlan del Rio, Nayarit.

Why: Unknown military action. Part of general offensive promoted by Governor Roberto Sandoval who took office in September 2011.

Photo Analysis:

Weapon / Component Identification – Nayarit Incident

(SEDENA/For Public Distribution)

1. MG 34 Machine gun, 7.92 x 57mm belt-fed, bipod missing, no rear stock.
2. 12 ga. Shotgun, exact model not determined.
3. MG 34 Machine gun, 7.92 x 57mm belt-fed, non-original synthetic stock adapted to fit receiver.
4. 12 ga. Shotgun, SWD mfg., 12-shot with folding stock.
5. Grenade Launcher, 40mm, fitted with an M-4 collapsible stock, origin unknown.
6. Grenade Launcher, 40mm, lower rifle mount.
7. 7.62 x 39mm SKS Carbine, Eastern Bloc.
8. 12 ga. Shotgun, possibly semi-auto with receiver modifications.

9. .30 cal. M1 Carbine action; barrel cut down to approximately 10-inches and set into a hand made stock to make a weapon similar appearance and function to the U.S. made "Enforcer" model produced by the Universal Arms Corp. in the 1960 – 70's.

Note: The MG 34 Machine guns appearing in action in this location in January 2012 are extremely unusual. The MG-34 was originally produced by three companies in both Germany and Austria during WWII for use by German troops. The last ones that were observed in any known conflict appeared in Lebanon in 1975 – 1976 and were utilized by Hezbollah fighters. The MG 34 has a very high cyclic rate; 900 rpm. At this rate of fire, untrained personnel will expend their ammunition quickly. This may, in fact, be evident by the absence of linked ammunition present at the time that the weapons were recovered.

Significance: Cartel Weaponry, Terrorist Arms Transfers (Potentials)

Further Reading(s): David A. Kuhn and Robert J. Bunker. "Just where do Mexican cartel weapons come from?" *Small Wars & Insurgencies* Robert J. Bunker, ed., Special issue "Criminal Insurgencies in Mexico and the Americas: The Gangs and Cartels Wage War." Vol. 22. No. 5 (December 2011): 807-834.

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About the Authors

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David A. Kuhn provides specialized law enforcement and first responder training throughout the United States, focusing on terrorism incident response and threat mitigation. He is a recognized authority in the area of military standoff weapons MANPADS (Man-Portable Air Defense Systems) and forensic analysis of areas where such weapons or explosives have been deployed.

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Dr. Robert J. Bunker holds degrees in political science, government, behavioral science, social science, anthropology-geography, and history. Training taken includes that provided by DHS, FLETC, DIA, Cal DOJ, Cal POST, LA JRIC, NTOA, and private security entities in counter-terrorism, counter-surveillance, incident-response, force protection, and intelligence. Dr. Bunker has been involved in red teaming and counter-terrorism exercises and has provided operations support within Los Angeles County.

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