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NOTE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MYERS

Date: June 23, 2008


**ICE Assistant Attaché Ciudad Juarez - Update - Recovery of Kidnapped Relative of
U.S. Congressman Silvestre Reyes' Wife in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico
Do Not Disclose Outside of ICE**

ISSUE:

On June 22, 2008, ICE Assistant Attaché Juarez reported that kidnapping victim Erika Posselt was recovered by Mexican officials. Ms. Posselt was immediately transported to the El Paso Port of Entry (POE) and paroled into the United States for security reasons.

Assistant Attaché Juarez agents continue to coordinate investigative leads with Mexican officials to identify the subjects of this investigation. Due to the sensitive nature of this incident, please do not disclose outside of ICE.

BACKGROUND:

On June 19, 2008, the Assistant Attaché Juarez was contacted by a Congressional Aide (CA) for Congressman Silvestre Reyes of the 16th District of Texas. Congressman Reyes' aid advised that Erika Posselt, a Mexican national and relative of Congressman Reyes' wife, had been kidnapped in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Subsequently, the ICE Assistant Attaché Juarez requested and received the full assistance of the ICE SAC El Paso office, and coordinated a meeting in El Paso, TX with the Chihuahua State Police to recover the kidnapped victim.

On June 19, 2008, ICE Assistant Attaché Juarez personnel contacted the victim's brother and learned that a group of armed men kidnapped Ms. Posselt from ACCRIPARTS, an auto glass store she owns in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Additionally, agents learned that the kidnappers had called Ms. Posselt's brother and demanded a ransom of \$500,000 in exchange for her safe return. The kidnappers stated that Ms. Posselt would be killed if he contacted law enforcement authorities.

The Assistant Attaché Juarez contacted Patricia Gonzalez, The Attorney General (AG) for the State of Chihuahua, to coordinate efforts to recover Ms. Posselt. Subsequently the Chihuahua Commandant in charge of kidnapping cases contacted the ICE Assistant Attaché Juarez and attended a meeting at the SAC El Paso office with SAC El Paso and Assistant Attaché Juarez agents. Additionally, Assistant Attaché Juarez contacted Technical Operations in Washington, DC to coordinate technical support for this investigation. ICE Attaché Mexico briefed the Deputy Chief of Mission and the FBI Legal Attaché in Mexico City.

On June 20, 2008, Ms. Posselt's brother advised SAC El Paso agents that the family planned to pay \$30,000 to the kidnappers in exchange for her release. Subsequently Assistant Attaché Juarez personnel established a command post with two Ministerio Publico attorneys from Chihuahua, one Chihuahua Commandante in charge of the operation, and Mexican federal agents (SSP) with the SSP Intelligence group including two members from the SSP kidnapping squad. ICE Assistant Attaché Juarez agents,

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acting solely in a support role, provided Mexican authorities with technical and logistical assistance.

During a series of phone calls between the kidnapers and the victim's brother, the kidnapers demanded \$250,000, half of the initial ransom of \$500,000, for Ms. Posselt's release. The kidnapers also stated that they would kill Ms. Posselt if they did not receive the money. Additionally, investigators noted that during one of the phone calls they could hear Ms. Posselt yelling in background. As a result of the negotiations, the kidnapers agreed to accept a ransom of \$100,000 for Ms. Posselt's release, and that she would be released after her brother delivered an initial payment of \$32,000 in combined U.S. currency and Mexican pesos. The victim's brother was also instructed to personally deliver the money.

On June 21, 2008 at approximately 7:00 pm, the kidnapers contacted the victim's brother and advised him to drop off the money at Avendida Las Torres, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. During the drive to the drop location, the kidnapers changed the delivery location twice. The ransom money was ultimately delivered by a "brother-in-law" of victim's brother to two male subjects on a motorcycle. After receiving the money, the subjects sped away. Investigators were unable to maintain surveillance of the motorcycle.

On June 22, 2008 at approximately 3:00 AM, Assistant Attaché Juarez agents reported that the victim had been released and was in the custody of Mexican authorities. The victim was dropped off at a public location along with another kidnapping victim, Eduardo Fernandez, who had paid a ransom of approximately \$56,000 for his release. Ms. Posselt refused medical treatment and was immediately transported to the El Paso POE and paroled into the United States for security reasons.

On June 22, 2008, Ms. Posselt was interviewed at the ICE SAC El Paso office by Ministerio Publico attorneys, Assistant Attaché Juarez and SAC El Paso agents. As a result of the interview, Mexican officials are pursuing leads relating to the possible location where Ms. Posselt was held.

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