

# MORE DETAILS ON THE TRES MARIAS AMBUSH

Matthew Aid linked to FOIAed State Department documents on the ambush of two intelligence officials in August 2012 (the documents were actually released to John Dyer in 2014).

They provide a number of interesting new details about the assault (see my earlier coverage [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

- Although the State Department hesitated to use the word “ambush” publicly for some time after the event, internal documents used that term immediately
- The Federal Police – the same people who conducted the ambush! – brought the Americans to a hospital in Cuernavaca, though there were also army and navy individuals present (note, there had been a shooting in Cuernavaca the previous day)
- There were 152 shots fired at the American car – far more than reported in initial reports; 40% of those were focused on the front seat windows, which not only (according to a cable) are the most vulnerable spots in the armor on the SUV, but also happened to be where the Americans were sitting

- There's a reference to pictures from the phones of the "agents," which seems to be a reference to the victims; this is the one instance where the cables drop the charade that these were general Embassy employees
- Both DIA and CIA were copied immediately on the first cables (DEA was not copied on anything, I don't think)
- An early cable said that our escaping vehicle may have run over one or two of the assailants
- Unsurprisingly, the FBI had the lead on investigating the incident from very early on, despite a public focus on Mexico's Attorney General's role
- A mostly redacted cable complaining about the slow pace of the investigation includes discussion of the US refusing to provide the victims for witness testimony (remember one of the two was on Temporary Duty in Mexico, meaning they hadn't approved him as a credentialed Embassy employee working under official cover)
- The police commander who

ordered the culprits to lie about whether they were wearing uniforms or not had been in appropriately promoted, suggesting he's someone's fixer

More generally, the cables seem concerned with measuring the seriousness with which President Felipe Calderón responded to the attack. For example, this partly redacted discussion relays someone's explanation of Calderón's instructions the day of the attack.

[redacted] President Calderon had been briefed on the incident several times during the day and had issued a clear order that the investigation should be through and the full truth revealed. If people needed to be brought to justice, they should and would be he had instructed. [redacted]

Then, a cable relaying the public apology Calderón gave four days after the attack included these details, including that the apology was not in his written speech.

(SBU) On the evening of 8/27 at a business event, President Calderon privately told the Ambassador that he was very sorry about the 8/24 attack on the U.S. vehicle and its occupants. His 8/28 remarks regarding the attack seemed very sincere and did not appear to be on the text of his remarks (which the Ambassador could see on the teleprompter). After his speech, Attorney General Morales told the Ambassador the President's instructions to her on 8/24 had been very similar to what he said on 8/28.

A description of Ambassador Anthony Wayne's meeting with Calderón on early September is mostly redacted (it also includes details of meetings with Mexico's AG). That description went to – among others – CIA Director David Petraeus, as well as John Brennan (who was still in the White House). And once Enrique Peña Nieto was elected, the Americans seemed pretty enthusiastic about cooperating when they going forward rather than Calderón.

A number of the cables tie the attack closely to the Merida initiative.