New American

Written by **Warren Mass** on April 23, 2019

Mexican Soldiers Stop and Disarm U.S. Troops on U.S. Side of Border

On April 13, "five to six Mexican military personnel questioned two U.S. Army soldiers who were conducting border support operations in an unmarked Customs and Border Protection (CBP) vehicle near the southwest border in the vicinity of Clint, Texas," the U.S. Northern Command said in a statement quoted by both CNN and the *Washington Examiner*.

The *Examiner* reported that the Mexican soldiers carried FX-05 Xiuhcoatl rifles. (The FX-05 Xiuhcoatl is a Mexican manufactured assault rifle issued only to the Mexican Army's Special Forces units and Airborne Infantry Brigade.) The Mexican soldiers detained and questioned the U.S. troops. They took a Beretta M9 service weapon from one American soldier and put it in the CBP vehicle. Officials from the U.S. Northern Command said the Americans complied with instructions from the Mexicans "in an attempt to de-escalate a potential volatile situation."

"Throughout the incident, the U.S. soldiers followed all established procedures and protocols," the statement said.

The two U.S. troops were on the south side of the security perimeter built parallel to the border but still north of the Rio Grande and, therefore, were in the United States, the statement noted.

Officials from the departments of Defense and Homeland Security are demanding an explanation from the Mexican government, but they believe that the actions on the part of the Mexican soldiers was very likely a mistake.

"An inquiry by CBP [Customs and Border Protection] and DOD [Department of Defense] revealed that the Mexican military members believed that the U.S. Army soldiers were south of the border. The statement went on to say, "after a brief discussion between the soldiers from the two nations, the Mexican military members departed the area."

This indicates that the Mexican soldiers became aware of their mistake following the discussion.

The *Examiner* cited an official's statement that the Pentagon is now investigating the incident, an investigation that "will help us modify any instructions that we're giving the troops" about how to deal with such situations in the future.

The Northern Command official defended the presence of U.S. soldiers in that location. The pair had been assigned by Customs and Border Protection to be at those coordinates on the U.S. side of the border. They were one of 150 teams serving on mobile surveillance missions who had been assigned to that location to stake out and monitor surveillance feeds.

The official noted that when the Mexican soldiers spotted the Americans they did not recognize their unmarked CBP vehicle. Likewise, the Americans did not recognize the unmarked truck used by the Mexican soldiers. There was apparently mutual confusion about why either party was at that location.

"That area of the border is kind of confusing," a second Northern Command official told the *Examiner*. "It may have been difficult for them [Mexican forces] to know if they didn't know the area as well or were new or something. I don't think — it definitely wasn't trying to overtake the U.S."

None of the reports explained what the Mexican military was doing patrolling north of the Rio Grande.

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