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TEXT

TAGS: PHUM, PTER, PGOV, MASS, CO  
COMBINE: COMPLETE

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS: CONFERENCES, KILLINGS AND SOUL  
SEARCHING

REF: A) BOGOTA 1230, B) 94 BOGOTA 1656  
C) BOGOTA 0939 (NOTAL)

1. (U) SUMMARY: HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES HAVE DOMINATED MUCH

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.  
() Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify  
Date 8/5/94 Exemption \_\_\_\_\_

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OF THE GOC'S AGENDA OVER THE PAST TWO WEEKS. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, WE HAVE WITNESSED HISTORIC GOC ACTION ON THE REPORT OF THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION (REF A); THE FISCALIA HAS MADE BETTER-THAN-EXPECTED PROGRESS IN ITS PROSECUTION OF THE "LA CHINITA" CASE (REF B); AND THE GOVERNMENT MOVED SWIFTLY TO ADDRESS PEASANT SECURITY CONCERNS IN EL CASTILLO (META DEPARTMENT). AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE NATION WAS SHOCKED BY THE BRUTAL EXTERMINATION OF A FARMING FAMILY IN RIO SUCIO (CALDAS DEPARTMENT) FEBRUARY 3, IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A NON-POLITICALLY MOTIVATED PERSONAL VENGEANCE ATTACK.

2. (C) TO ADD TO THIS COMPLICATED PANORAMA, AN UNEXPECTED PUBLICATION BY EUROPEAN NGO'S ON PARAMILITARISM IN COLOMBIA APPEARED FEBRUARY 2, JUST PRIOR TO THE INITIATION OF SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL FORA THAT WILL EXAMINE THE GOC'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON, BRUSSELS AND POSSIBLY GENEVA. ALL OF THIS SCRUTINY AND ACTIVITY ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT HAVE RESULTED IN A PREDICTABLE SPATE OF PUBLIC SOUL SEARCHING AND PRESS EDITORIALS, HOWEVER, WE DOUBT MUCH OF THIS REFLECTION EXTENDS BEYOND BOGOTA. FOR THE AVERAGE CITIZEN, VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES - BOTH POLITICAL AND NON-POLITICAL - ARE LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT OF DAILY COLOMBIAN LIFE. END SUMMARY.

FOLLOW UP TO TRUJILLO  
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3. (C) THE GOC'S HISTORIC PUBLIC ADMISSION OF STATE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TRUJILLO MASSACRE (REF A) WAS FOLLOWED BY A TENSE MEETING FEBRUARY 2 IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE DURING WHICH THE DECISION WAS MADE TO DISCHARGE AN ARMY LIEUTENANT COLONEL FOR HIS ROLE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN TRUJILLO. AGAINST VEHEMENT OPPOSITION FROM THE GENERAL OFFICERS CONVOKED FOR THE EMERGENCY SESSION, MOD FERNANDO BOTERO USED HIS DISCRETIONARY POWERS AS CABINET MINISTER TO ORDER THE IMMEDIATE DISCHARGE OF LTCOL. ALIRIO ANTONIO URUENA JARAMILLO BASED UPON THE INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE OF HIS PARTICIPATION IN DRAWING AND QUARTERING SUSPECTED GUERRILLA COLLABORATORS IN TRUJILLO DURING APRIL AND MAY 1990. (NOTE: URUENA HAS RECIEVED USG-SPONSORED TRAINING ON TWO OCCASIONS. IN 1976 HE ATTENDED A CADET ORIENTATION AT THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS AND IN FROM DECEMBER 1988 TO JANUARY 1989 HE ATTENDED A DIA-SPONSORED INTELLIGENCE OFFICER COURSE. END NOTE)

4. (U) THE MILITARY HIGH COMMAND ARGUED THAT THE DECISION WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO "MOCKING" THE MILITARY, FISCALIA AND PROCURADURIA INVESTIGATIONS OF URUENA WHICH ALL ENDED IN HIS UNCONDITIONAL ACQUITTAL. ESPECIALLY STRIDENT PROTEST CAME FROM ARMY CHIEF, GENERAL BEDOYA, WHO INSISTED THAT THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION HAD NO LEGAL GROUNDS FOR RECOMMENDING THAT CRIMINAL OR DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS BE REVISITED IN THE URUENA CASE. (NOTE: THESE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE LONG BEEN SIGNED BY HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTS AS PRIME EXAMPLES OF HOW THE GOC "WHITEWASHES"

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HUMAN RIGHTS INQUIRIES AND FOSTERS A CLIMATE OF IMPUNITY FOR ACCUSED POLICE AND MILITARY VIOLATORS. END NOTE) DESPITE THE OBVIOUS DISSENTION OF HIS UNIFORMED LEADERSHIP, THE MOD STATED THAT THE EVIDENCE COMPILED BY THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION WAS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO SHOW URUENA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GRUESOME ATTACKS AND THAT THE GOC HAD TO DISCHARGE HIM TO DEMONSTRATE ITS COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING IMPUNITY.

5. (U) IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE PROCURADURIA ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 3 THAT IT WAS REVOKING ITS PRIOR DECISION TO ABSOLVE URUENA AND OTHERS AND WILL INITIATE A REVIEW OF THE CASE. THE PROCURADURIA IS UP AGAINST A STRICT TIMETABLE SINCE THE FIVE-YEAR STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS IN THE CASE EXPIRES MARCH 29. THE RESULTS OF THE PROCURADURIA'S INVESTIGATION AND DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL MOST LIKELY BE FORWARDED TO THE NEWLY-CREATED HUMAN RIGHTS UNIT IN THE FISCALIA WHERE CRIMINAL CHARGES CAN BE CONSIDERED.

FISCALIA FORGES AHEAD ON LA CHINITA  
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6. (U) ONE YEAR AFTER THE BRUTAL MASSACRE OF SOME 35 BANANA WORKERS AND "REINSERTED" GUERRILLAS IN THE CHINITA NEIGHBORHOOD OF APARTADO, URABA REGION (ANTIOQUIA) (REF B), THE FISCALIA HAS COLLECTED AND PROCESSED ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO LINK A TOTAL OF 43 INDIVIDUALS TO THE ATTACK, 35 OF WHOM ARE ALREADY BEING HELD BY POLICE AND JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES. FURTHERMORE, 19 OF THESE PERSONS ARE ABOUT TO BE INDICTED ON CHARGES OF HOMICIDE IN SUPPORT OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES, TO INCLUDE A FORMER COMMUNIST PARTY (UP) MAYOR AND A UP CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE.

7. (C) A MEMBER OF THE FISCALIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS UNIT, WHILE UNABLE TO DIVULGE PARTICULARS IN THE CASES AGAINST THESE INDIVIDUALS, TOLD US THAT THE FISCALIA'S EVIDENCE AND CONCLUSIONS ARE QUITE SIMILAR TO THOSE OF AN NGO-SPONSORED INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON "LA CHINITA" (REF B). THAT INVESTIGATION DETERMINED THAT THE ATTACK WAS PERPETRATED BY AN ALLIANCE OF REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC) REGULARS OF THE FIFTH FRONT, LOCAL BOLIVARIAN MILITIA MEMBERS, REGULARS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY (ELN) AND DISSENTS FROM THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (EPL). THE LOCAL COMMUNIST AUTHORITIES WERE NAMED AS THE "INTELLECTUAL AUTHORS" OF THE ATTACK, ALLEGEDLY CONDUCTED FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTIMIDATING THE "REINSERTED" GUERRILLA COMMUNITY AND CONSOLIDATING LOCAL POLITICAL POWER.

EL CASTILLO AND THE BLACK SERPENT  
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8. (U) IN A SEPARATE HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENT, APPROXIMATELY 1500 - 2000 PEASANT FARMERS CONVERGED ON THE TOWN SQUARE OF EL CASTILLO (META DEPARTMENT) BEGINNING IN THE MIDDLE OF JANUARY TO PROTEST THE INCREASING INSECURITY

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IN THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE DUE TO VIOLENT PARAMILITARY ATTACKS. FOLLOWING SEVERAL DISAPPEARANCES AND ASSASSINATIONS OF LOCAL WORKERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS THAT STARTED SHORTLY BEFORE LAST CHRISTMAS, THE PEASANTS ABANDONED THEIR SMALL SUBSISTENCE PLOTS OF LAND AND FORMED A "CAMPESSINO" COMMISSION DURING THE LAST WEEK OF JANUARY IN EL CASTILLO'S TOWN SQUARE THAT CALLED ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO TAKE REMEDIAL ACTION.

9. (U) THE COMMUNIST PARTY MAYOR OF EL CASTILLO, JORGE ENRIQUE TENORIO, LED A DELEGATION OF THESE PEASANT LEADERS TO BOGOTA ON FEBRUARY 1 FOR A JOINT MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISOR, CARLOS DE ROUX, MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT HORACIO SERPA, DEFENSOR DEL PUEBLO JAIME CORDOBA, NATIONAL POLICE SUBDIRECTOR MONTENEGRO, ARMY CHIEF HAROLD BEDOYA AND PROCURADURIA DELEGATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HERNANDO VALENCIA VILLA. ALSO IN ATENDANCE WERE NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS AID ABELLA, HERNAN MOTTA AND JESUS ANIBAL SUAREZ. DURING THE REUNION, THE GOC PROMISED TO FORM A SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION TO LOOK INTO THE ATTACKS IN AND AROUND EL CASTILLO. ADDITIONALLY, THE MOG PLEDGED SPECIAL FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR THE AREA FROM THE MINISTRIES OF TRANSPORT, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND COMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER STATE ENTITIES TO ADDRESS THE SERIOUS LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGION.

10. (C) EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED IN MID-JANUARY FAXES FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS NGO "PEACE BRIGADES INTERNATIONAL" WHICH INFORMED US THAT THE GROUP INTENDED TO SEND REPRESENTIVES TO EL CASTILLO TO LOOK INTO THE ALLEGATIONS OF PARAMILITARY AND ARMY VIOLENCE. EMBASSY OFFICERS ALSO MET FEBRUARY 2 WITH MEMBERS OF A SEPARATE U.S.-BASED GROUP, "WITNESS FOR PEACE," FOLLOWING THEIR RETURN FROM EL CASTILLO.

11. (C) THE GROUP CONFIRMED PRESS AND GOC REPORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S QUICK MOBILIZATION OF A HIGH-LEVEL COMMISSION TO MEET AND DEAL WITH THE EL CASTILLO PEASANT COMMITTEE AND EXPRESSED ITS PLEASURE AT THIS DEVELOPMENT. ADDITIONALLY, THEY FORWARDED A LETTER TO MOG SERPA APPLAUDING HIS ACTION AND ENCOURAGING HIM TO PUSH FOR INVESTIAGTIONS AND PROSECUTIONS OF THE PERPETRATORS. GROUP MEMBERS STATED THAT MOST OF THE CAMPESSINO REFUGEES ATTRIBUTED THE VIOLENCE TO A PARAMILITARY GROUP KNOWN AS "THE BLACK SERPENT," ALLEGEDLY SPONSORED BY EMERALD MAGNATE VICTOR CARRANZA. APPARENTLY THE FARMERS BELIEVE THAT CARRANZA, A VIRULENT ANTI-COMMUNIST AND MAJOR LANDOWNER IN THE AREA, IS COMMITTED TO DEBILITATING ANY EFFORT ON BEHALF OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY TO ORGANIZE COLLECTIVELY FOR ECONOMIC OR POLITICAL PURPOSES.

12. (C) WE QUERIED THE GROUP AS TO THE POSSIBLITY THAT THE ATTACKS MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY CARANZA'S OR OTHER LANDOWNERS' DESIRES TO MOVE THE PEASANTS OFF THEIR LANDS FOR CATTLE GRAZING OR NARCOTICS CULTIVATION. THIS HYPOTHESIS SEEMED NOT TO BE JUSTIFIED IN THE GROUP'S OPINION SINCE, FROM THEIR OBSERVATIONS, THE LANDS IN

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QUESTION ARE NOT SUITED TO EITHER OF THESE ACTIVITIES. THEY POINTED TO EL CASTILLO'S LONG TRADITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST LEFTWING POLITICIANS AND ORGANIZERS (TWO FORMER UP MAYORS WERE ASSASSINATED) AND HELD THAT PARAMILITARY AND ARMY CONTEMPT FOR COMMUNIST OR SOCIALIST IDEOLOGIES WAS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE ATTACKS.

13. (U) AS A RESULT OF THE GOC'S MEETING WITH EL CASTILLO'S AND THE UP'S LEADERS, THE PEASANTS HAVE SINCE RETURNED TO THEIR LAND WHERE THEY WILL WAIT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE GOOD ON ITS PROMISES. IN THE MEANTIME, HOWEVER, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT "THE BLACK SERPANT" HAS BEEN RENDERED INOPERATIVE AND FUTURE ATTACKS MAY OCCUR.

THE DIRTY RIVER MASSACRE

14. (U) JUST FOUR DAYS AFTER THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED A COLLECTIVE SIGH OF RELIEVE AT THE GOVERNMENT'S FRANK AND HONEST ADMISSION FOR ITS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE TRUJILLO ABUSES, COLOMBIANS WERE ONCE AGAIN CONFRONTED WITH FRONT PAGE ACCOUNTS OF A GRISLY MASSACRE WHICH LEFT NINE MEMBERS OF A PEASANT FAMILY DEAD, ALONG WITH FOUR UNINVOLVED BYSTANDERS, IN THE RIO SUCIO (DIRTY RIVER) MUNICIPALITY OF CALDAS DEPARTMENT. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, NINE MEMBERS OF THE DIAZ-FAMILY, TO INCLUDE THE 80-YEAR-OLD PATRIARCH, A THREE-YEAR-OLD AND A PREGNANT WOMAN WERE EXECUTED IN GANGLAND STYLE FEBRUARY 3 WHILE PRAYING A ROSARY FOR A RELATIVE WHO HAD BEEN MURDERED TWO WEEKS EARLIER.

15. (U) INITIAL INDICATIONS POINT TO A PERSONAL VENDETTA AS THE MOTIVE FOR THE ATTACK WHICH WAS PERPETRATED BY TWO MASKED MEN CARRYING AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND A SHOTGUN. FLEEING THE SCENE OF THE CRIME, THE ASSASSINS COMMANDERED A VEHICLE WITH THREE PASSENGERS WHOM THEY EVENTUALLY EXECUTED AND INCINERATED WITH GASOLINE FROM THE TRUCK. THE KILLERS ALSO MORTALLY WOUNDED AN INCAPACITATED, OFF-DUTY POLICEMEN IN A WHEELCHAIR, PRESUMABLY AFTER HE RECOGNIZED THEM DURING THEIR ESCAPE. NO SOLID LEADS IN THE CASE HAVE YET BEEN ANNOUNCED BY THE LOCAL OR NATIONAL POLICE AUTHORITIES, HOWEVER, THE GENERAL CONSENSUS IN THE REGION APPEARS TO BE THAT NON-POLITICAL MOTIVES WERE AT WORK IN PROVOKING THE ATTACK.

AND MORE INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

16. (U) THE RIO SUCIO ATTACK COMES AT A TIME WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL NGO COMMUNITY IS ABOUT TO ELEVATE THE LEVEL OF SCRUTINY GIVEN TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN COLOMBIA IN SEVERAL DISTINCT FORA. THE ONE THAT HAS THE GOC MOST WORRIED IS THE "EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA" WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (BUT PRIVATELY SPONSORED) IN BRUSSELS ON FEBRUARY 9 AND 10. A VARIETY OF PRIVATE EUROPEAN HUMAN

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RIGHTS NGO'S LED BY THE DUTCH GROUP "THE NATIONAL COOPERATIVE CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT" WILL EXAMINE THE COLOMBIAN STATE'S ROLE IN FOSTERING OR ABETTING PARAMILITARY AND CONFLICT-RELATED VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE SAME NGO'S UNEXPECTEDLY CALLED FURTHER ATTENTION TO THE ISSUE WITH THE FEBRUARY 3 PUBLICATION OF A REPORT ENTITLED "HIDDEN EPISODES OF THE DIRTY WAR: PARAMILITARISM AND COVERT OPERATIONS IN COLOMBIA."

17. (U) THE REPORT, RESEARCHED AND PUBLISHED BY MANY OF THE SAME GROUPS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE 1994 STUDY ENTITLED, "STATE TERRORISM IN COLOMBIA," ALLEGES THAT, DESPITE THE POSITIVE RHETORIC OF THE SAMPER ADMINISTRATION AND SYMBOLIC GESTURES SUCH AS THE THE SIGNING OF PROTOCOL II AND THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION, THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND FINANCE THE MORE THAN 250 (SIC) PARAMILITARY GROUPS THAT PERPETRATE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

18. (U) TO DEFEND THE GOC FROM THESE CRITICS AND PRESENT THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PANORAMA, THE GOVERNMENT IS SENDING TO BRUSSELS MOD BOTERO, HIS HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISOR PILAR GAITAN, PRESIDENTIAL HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISOR DE ROUX, AND FORMER PROCURADOR GENERAL AND CURRENT COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO HOLLAND GUSTAVO ARRIETA. THE GOC'S AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM, VETERAN DIPLOMAT CARLOS MARULANDA, WILL ALSO BE PRESENT AT THE CONFERENCE.

GAITAN WORRIED  
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19. (C) PILAR GAITAN TOLD US THAT SHE EXPECTS "TO BE CRUCIFIED" IN BRUSSELS AND IS EXTREMELY WORRIED THAT THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT CREATED BY THE NGO'S WILL AFFECT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT THINKING. THIS, SHE CLAIMED COULD HAVE SERIOUS REPRECUSIONS ON INTERNAL MOD POLICIES SINCE, THE UNIFORMED LEADERSHIP IS LIKELY TO ARGUE THAT NO AMOUNT OF GOC-SPONSORED HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM WILL EVER SATISFY "LEFTIST" IDEOLOGUES WHO USE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES TO DEBILITATE THE MILITARY AND SUPPORT THE GUERRILLAS.

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20. THIS WEEK NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN (DEFENSOR DEL PUEBLO) JAIME CORDOBA WILL TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON TO PRESENT TO THE OAS' INTERAMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (IACHR) THE GOC'S REPORT FROM THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION. (NOTE: CORDOBA IS ALSO BEGINNING A THREE WEEK USIS-SPONSORED IV VISIT.) THE PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT IS PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DESIRE TO REACH AN "AMICABLE SETTLEMENT" WITH THE COMMISSION BY SHOWING THAT BODY THAT THE GOC IS WILLING AND ABLE TO ADDRESS ADEQUATELY ITS HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WITHOUT THE NEED FOR OAS SANCTION IN THE INTERAMERICAN COURT.

21. (U) LASTLY, THE GOC CONTINUES TO BE PREOCCUPIED BY

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THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER REMOTE, THAT COLOMBIA MIGHT BE INTRODUCED AS AN AGENDA ITEM AT THE ONGOING SESSIONS OF THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENEVA. AS REPORTED REF C, THE GOC FEELS SUCH ACTION IS TOTALLY UNCALLED FOR AND BELIEVES IT WOULD CRIPPLE THE NASCENT EFFORTS AT HUMAN RIGHT AND IMPUNITY REFORM BEGUN BY THIS ADMINISTRATION.

COMMENT  
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22. (C) THE HUMAN RIGHTS RELATED EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE LED TO A GOOD DEAL OF PUBLIC AND PRESS SOUL SEARCHING. JUST WHEN MOST COMMENTATORS HAD FINISHED PATTING THE GOC ON THE BACK FOR ITS PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY ADMISSION OF GUILT ON TRUJILLO AND BEGUN TO EXHORT COLOMBIANS TO MOVE INTO A NEW ERA OF PACIFIC DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION, THE GRISLY AND DEPRESSING NEWS OF THE RIO SUCIO MASSACRE JOLTED THE NATION BACK TO REALITY.
23. (C) THE ADMINISTRATION, APPARENTLY WORRIED MORE BY EUROPEAN REACTION AND CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS THAN BY SIMILAR U.S. COMPLAINTS, HAS MOBILIZED ITS HUMAN RIGHTS "BIG GUNS" FOR THE MEETING IN BRUSSELS. NONETHELESS, THE GOC IS WORRIED THAT IT IS UP AGAINST INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS AND IS BY NO MEANS CONFIDENT THAT IT WILL EXPERIENCE THE SAME LIMITED SUCCESS AMONG THE RADICAL EUROPEAN NGO'S THAT IT HAS ACHIEVED WITH NATIONAL GROUPS.
24. (C) WE EXPECT THAT COLOMBIA WILL FARE BETTER IN THE IACHR FORUM AS THEY CAN JUSTIFIABLY HOLD UP THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION'S REPORT, THE SUBSEQUENT DISCHARGE OF LTCOL. URUENA AND THE RE-OPENING OF DISCIPLINARY AND CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AS MAJOR ADVANCES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY. THE PROGRESS ON THE CHINITA PROSECUTIONS AND THE SWIFT ACTION ON THE EL CASTILLO SITUATION, STEPS WITH VERY FEW PRECEDENTS IN RECENT HISTORY, WILL ALSO LIKELY BE USED AS LEGITIMATE DEFENSES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S SINCERITY AND COMMITMENT.
25. (C) IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE HORRORS OF RIO SUCIO AND EL CASTILLO SERVE TO DRIVE HOME A FUNDAMENTAL POINT ABOUT THE CRITICAL LEVELS OF VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN COLOMBIA; NAMELY, THAT THE SAMPER ADMINISTRATION'S COMMENDABLE IF OVERDUE EFFORTS TO FOCUS PROSECUTORIAL AND POLICY REFORMS ON ABUSES COMMITTED BY STATE AGENTS, WILL ULTIMATELY ONLY ADDRESS A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE VIOLENT CRIMES THAT ARE COMMITTED DAILY IN COLOMBIA. FRECHETTE

END OF MESSAGE

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