UNCLASSIFIED

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INFO LOG: 00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-05 SS-00 H-01 NSC-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1423

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY QUITO

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

SOUTHCOM SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 19694

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PTER, PINS, SNAR, CASC, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: VIOLENCE UPDATE: MORE NARCOS NABBED IN ATLANTIC COAST; NARCO WARS REACH PRISONS; ARMY AND GUERRILLAS FIGHT SERIES OF ISOLATED ENCOUNTERS; ARMY TAKES APART FARC CELL IN NORTH; COUNCILMAN KILLED IN VALLE DEL CAUCA

1. SUMMARY: POLICE IN THE ATLANTIC COAST NABBED SEVEN SUSPECTED COMPANIONS OF SLAIN NARCO KINGPIN GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA, WHILE SOME OF HIS VENGEFUL FOLLOWERS KILLED FIVE NARCO RIVALs IN A BOGOTA JAIL DECEMBER 19. MEANWHILE, ARMY AND POLICE CONFRONTED INCREASED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE NATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTH. TROOPS FOUGHT THE ELN AND TOOK APART AN
I. NARCO-RELATED VIOLENCE

FOLLOWERS OF RODRIGUEZ GACHA NABBED

2. THE POLICE ELITE CORPS HAS CAPTURED EIGHT SUSPECTED NARCOS IN THE ATLANTIC COAST IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT KILLING OF MEDELLIN CAPO GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA. AUTHORITIES SAID THAT ONE OF THOSE SLAIN ON DECEMBER 15 WITH RODRIGUEZ GACHA IS GILDARDO RENDON HURTADO, WHOM THEY IDENTIFIED AS THE "EIGHTH" MAN IN RANK OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. HIS NEPHEW, GUILLERMO LEON HURTADO WAS CAPTURED DECEMBER 19 IN 'SAN JUAN NEPOMUCENO' (BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT ON THE ATLANTIC COAST), ALONG WITH FOUR OTHER SUSPECTS ACCOMPANYING HIM. ON DECEMBER 17 POLICE CAPTURED THREE SUSPECTED SURVIVORS OF THE POLICE RAID IN WHICH RODRIGUEZ GACHA AND OTHER COMPANIONS WERE KILLED.

NARCO GANG WARS REACHES BOGOTA PRISONS.

3. FIFTEEN INMATES BELONGING TO THE RODRIGUEZ GACHA GANG KILLED 5 FOLLOWERS OF VICTOR CARRANZA, RG'S RIVAL FOR CONTROL OF THE WESTERN BOYACA EMERALD MINES, IN A BOGOTA JAIL DECEMBER 19. THE KILLINGS, COMMITTED IN THE PRISON REFECTORY WITH JAIL-MADE "KNIVES," WAS, ACCORDING TO PRISON AUTHORITIES, APPARENTLY IN RETALIATION OVER RODRIGUEZ GACHA'S DEATH. BOTH GROUPS HAD COEXISTED PEACEFULLY IN BOGOTA'S "MODELO" JAIL UNTIL RODRIGUEZ GACHA WAS KILLED. THE PRISON DIRECTOR TOLD THE PRESS THAT AFTER RG'S DEATH, THE "WAR" ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN JAILED MEMBERS OF BOTH GANGS HAS INTENSIFIED. RG FOLLOWERS BELIEVE THAT THE CARRANZA GROUP COLLABORATED WITH AUTHORITIES IN HUNTING DOWN RODRIGUEZ GACHA. POST CONSULAR SERVICES IS REQUESTING THAT AN AMCIT PRISONER BE TRANSFERRED FROM MODELO JAIL FOR SAFEGUARDING.

II. GUERRILLA-RELATED VIOLENCE
GUERRILLAS KILL FOUR POLICEMEN IN RURAL ATTACKS

4. SUBVERSIVES KILLED FOUR NATIONAL POLICE AGENTS IN RURAL AREAS OF SANTANDER DEPARTMENT (NORTH) AND PUTUMAYO (SOUTH) ON DECEMBER 19. THE FIRST INCIDENT OCCURRED DURING AN INCURSION BY 100 ELN GUERRILLAS INTO SURATA, SANTANDER, WHERE TWO POLICEMEN WERE KILLED DEFENDING THE POLICE POST. SUBVERSIVES FLED JUST BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS. AS IN SIMILAR PAST INCIDENTS, A STALWART BUT UNDERMANNED POLICE CONTINGENT IN A RURAL MUNICIPALITY RESISTED A SUBVERSIVE ATTACK WHILE AWAITING SLOW-TO-ARRIVE REINFORCEMENTS.

5. IN THE PUTUMAYO INCIDENT A GROUP OF EPL GUERRILLAS ATTACKED A POLICE PATROL ESCORTING AN ARMORED VEHICLE TRANSPORTING AGRARIAN BANK FUNDS. SUBVERSIVES KILLED TWO POLICEMEN, WOUNDED THREE, AND PRESUMABLY ABDUCTED TWO OTHERS LISTED AS MISSING.

ARMY UNITS FOIL AMBUSHES BY FARC AND ELN IN NORTH

6. AN ELN UNIT AMBUSHED AN ARMY PATROL AND KILLED AN

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7. FOURTEENTH BRIGADE TROOPS KILLED TWO MEMBERS OF THE FARC’S 23RD FRONT DURING A FOILED GUERRILLA AMBUSH ON AN ARMY PATROL IN THE RURAL AREA OF LANDAUZURI, SANTANDER DEPARTMENT, DECEMBER 18. THE GUERRILLA GROUP HAD PREVIOUSLY ROBBED AND KILLED FIVE EMERALD TRAFFICKERS IN THE AREA. UNCLASSIFIED.

GUERRILLA ABDUCTION OF CATTLEMEN ON INCREASE IN CORDOBA

9. THE PRESS REPORTED DECEMBER 20 THAT THE FARC AND EPL GUERRILLAS HAVE ABDUCTED AND STILL RETAIN AT LEAST 20 CATTLE FARMERS IN CORDOBA DEPARTMENT IN THE NORTH, AN IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL AREA LONG AFFLICTED WITH BANDIT-LIKE GUERRILLA GROUPS. THE SITUATION HAS REACHED THE LEVEL IN WHICH TWO OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY ARE IN THE GUERRILLAS' POWER. IN GENERAL, VIOLENCE IN SUBVERSIVE-INFESTED CORDOBA HAS GONE UP IN RECENT DAYS, WITH A NOTEWORTHY INCREASE IN THE MURDER RATE.

III. OTHER VIOLENCE: ANOTHER COUNCILMAN KILLED

10. UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN KILLED ARGEMIRO CASTELLANOS, A SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE COUNCILMAN FOR CAICEDONIA (VALLE DEL CAUCA IN THE SOUTHWEST), ON DECEMBER 18. SEVERAL THUGS APPROACHED CASTELLANOS BY CAR AS THE VICTIM WALKED HOME IN THE LATE EVENING. CASTELLANOS WAS A RESPECTED CIVIC LEADER AND COFFEE GROWER WHO WAS NOT BELIEVED TO HAVE RECEIVED DEATH THREATS. MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ATTRIBUTED THE KILLING TO COMMON CRIMINALS WHO HAD FAILED TO ELICIT FUNDS FROM CASTELLANOS THROUGH EXTORTIONATE DEMANDS.

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