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DUQUE MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY
8. (C) SOME OF THE DISSATISFIED AREA FARMERS WENT LOOKING FOR A REPLACEMENT THEY COULD TRUST.


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9. (C) WITH PEREZ DEAD AND OTERO IN CALI, THE GOC FEARS THAT OTHERS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE VOID. ASIDE FROM DUQUE, AMONG THE POTENTIAL COMPETITORS TO CONTROL THE AREA ARE EMERALD KINGPIN VICTOR CARRANZA AND CAQUETA NARCO LEONIDAS VARGAS. THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE DUQUE AND CARRANZA ARE ALLIED. A PRESS REPORT QUOTED AN UNIDENTIFIED DISSIDENT AS SAYING THEY HAD RENEWED THEIR FRIENDSHIP WITH CARRANZA, AND THAT HE HAS OFFERED TO SUPPLY THEM WITH ARMS.

GOVERNMENT HAPPY WITH PARTIAL SURRENDER

10. (C) MEANWHILE, NOT EVEN THE SURRENDER OF OTERO'S FORCES HAS BEEN TOTAL. ESCOBAR HAD TOLD POLOFF DECEMBER 4 HE DIDN'T THINK OTERO WOULD TURN IN EVERYTHING; AREA RANCHERS DOUBT THE GOVERNMENT CAN PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SECURITY. VICE MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT HECTOR RIVEROS SERRATO AND PATINO AGREED THAT THOSE WHO HAD SURRENDERED PROBABLY WERE THE FULL-TIME, PAID GUNMEN WHO PATROLLED THE GENERAL AREA, NOT CAMPESINOS WORKING ON INDIVIDUAL FARMS. RIVEROS TOLD POLOFF DECEMBER 16, HOWEVER, THAT THE GOC WASN'T WORRIED THE SURRENDER MAY BE PARTIAL. WHAT'S IMPORTANT, HE SAID, IS THAT THE ASSASSINATION OF...
Perez and the surrender and flight from the area of Otero mean the groups' military command no longer exists.

Impressive arms, ammunition surrendered

11. (C) OTERO

Had given the government impressive computerized lists of the 500 members that would surrender and the 700 arms they would turn in. The surrenders continue at a pace of several a day, only half.
APPROXIMATELY 225, HAVE COME IN SO FAR. ALL THE MEN AND ARMS SURRENDERED ARE LISTED. WHILE THERE WAS NO MUNITIONS LIST, A LOT OF AMMO ALSO HAD BEEN SURRENDERED. INTERESTING, MOST OF THE AMMUNITION DOESN'T MATCH THE ARMS; IT'S FOR LARGER CALIBER WEAPONS. INTEL HAD PICKED UP THAT A LARGE STOCK OF WEAPONS RECENTLY HAD ARRIVED IN CALI. ONE THEORY IS THAT THE GUNS HAVE GONE TO DISSIDENT M-19 GROUPS IN THE CALI AREA. MANY GOOD-QUALITY, SOPHISTICATED ARMS HAD BEEN SURRENDERED. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAD PLANNED TO BURN THE WEAPONS, AS THEY DID WITH THE M-19'S ARMS, THEY NOW ARE LEANING TOWARD DISTRIBUTING THEM TO POORLY ARMED MILITARY UNITS, SUCH AS THE NAVAL MARINES.

GOVERNMENT WILL TRY TO FILL THE VOID

12. (C) THE GOC NEEDS TO FILL THE SECURITY VOID. SAYING THE PROBLEM WITH THE PARAMILITARY GROUPS' PRIVATE JUSTICE/SECURITY IS THAT IT RESPONDS ONLY TO SPECIAL INTERESTS. CALLING NARCOS THE NO. 1 THREAT, THE GUERRILLAS ALSO COULD RETURN TO WREAK HAVOC.

13. (U) TO STOP THE HEMORRHAGING IN THE AREA'S SECURITY

SITUATION, THE GOVERNMENT CONVENED AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF HIGH-RANKING SECURITY OFFICIALS DECEMBER 17 TO DRAW UP A PLAN FOR THE REGION. IN ATTENDANCE WERE DEFENSE MINISTER RAFAEL PARDO RUEDA, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR RICARDO SANTAMARIA, INSTRUCCION CRIMINAL DIRECTOR CARLOS EDUARDO MEJIA (WHOSE AGENCY IS HANDLING THE JUDICIAL ASPECTS OF THE SURRENDERS), NATIONAL REHABILITATION PLAN (PNR) DIRECTOR CESAR MANUEL NINO, COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR GEN. MIGUEL ANTONIO GOMEZ, JUDICIAL AND INVESTIGATIVE POLICE (DIJIN) DIRECTOR COL. LUIS
MONTENEGRO, THE COMMANDERS OF THE TWO ARMY BRIGADES
BASED IN THE REGION (4TH AND 14TH), THE POLICE
COMMANDERS FOR CUNDINAMARCA, ANTIOQUIA AND BOYACA, AND
THE GOVERNORS ELECT OF ANTIOQUIA AND BOYACA. PNR WILL
FUND PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE REINSERTION OF THE
SURRENDERED PARAMILITARY FIGHTERS INTO CIVILIAN LIFE.

COMMENT

14. (C) IT REMAINS UNCLEAR THAT MAJOR NARCOS HAVE
INTEREST IN THE AREA, OR WHAT THAT INTEREST WOULD BE.
THE MAGDALENA MEDIO HAS LOST MUCH OF ITS IMPORTANCE FOR
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The GOC is particularly impressed by the quality of the weapons surrendered. Aside from Duque and obviously the guerrillas, the GOC is concerned that big-time narcos, including Victor Carranza and Leonidas Vargas, may move into the void left by Otero's organization. END SUMMARY.

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