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Page: 1

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B2, 1.4(D), 1.4(B)

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 01 OF 08 112229Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 ACQ-01  
INL-01 OASY-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00 EUR-01 OIGO-01  
TEDE-00 ADS-00 MMP-00 SCT-00 ASDS-01 DSCC-00 DRL-09  
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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5820  
INFO DEA WASHDC  
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD  
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CIA WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
NSC WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 2017  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

STATE FOR INR/IL, ARA/AND, DRL, INL, EUR/RPM (MFITZPATRICK)  
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL  
APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED  
REASON(S): B2, 1.4(D), 1.4(B)  
DATE/CASE ID: 24 MAY 2010 200604350

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON  
CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 10 APR 2022  
DATE/CASE ID: 09 APR 2008 200604350

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 2  
Channel: n/a

PAGE 02            BOGOTA 03463 01 OF 08 112229Z  
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST  
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JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET  
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TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/07  
TAGS: PINR, PHUM, PTER, PINS, PGOV, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA (C-AL7-00269)

REF: A) STATE 58090 B) 96 BOGOTA 11325 C) BOGOTA 3330  
D) 96 BOGOTA 12093 E) BOGOTA 2694 F) BOGOTA 274  
G) 96 BOGOTA 9248 H) 96 BOGOTA 12212

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL/ECONOFF PEG WILLINGHAM. REASON: 1.5(D)

2. ~~(S/NF)~~ REF A REQUESTED ANSWERS TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS REGARDING PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY IN COLOMBIA. POST NOTES THAT OBTAINING SOME OF THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION SOUGHT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. MOREOVER, PARAMILITARISM IN COLOMBIA IS NOT A MONOLITHIC, EASILY-CATEGORIZED PHENOMENON. AS REF B REPORTED, PARAMILITARY PATRONS INCLUDE NARCOTRAFFICKERS, LANDOWNERS, CATTLE RANCHERS, AND OTHERS. MOTIVES FOR HIRING VIGILANTES RANGE FROM WANTING TO DEFEND ILL-GOTTEN GAINS TO FRUSTRATION AT THE GOC'S FAILURE TO PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY IN MUCH OF THE COUNTRY. NO COMMON IDEOLOGY BINDS PARAMILITARIES TOGETHER, ALTHOUGH MANY, SUCH AS THE NOTORIOUS CARLOS CASTANO [REDACTED] FOCUS ON COUNTER-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES.

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PAGE 03            BOGOTA 03463 01 OF 08 112229Z

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARAMILITARIES AND THE MILITARY  
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3. (S/NF) MANY OBSERVERS OF CONTEMPORARY COLOMBIA SUSPECT COLLABORATION BETWEEN PARAMILITARIES AND SOME ELEMENTS OF THE

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

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MILITARY. IT IS OUR ASSESSMENT THAT LINKS LIKELY EXIST AT LOCAL LEVELS. COMMANDERS OF INDIVIDUAL UNITS MAY, AT A MINIMUM, TURN A BLIND EYE TO PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY IN THEIR AREA. ALLEGATIONS OF MATERIAL COOPERATION ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO PROVE, ALTHOUGH SOME MAY BE WELL-FOUNDED, GIVEN THE NUMBER OF STORIES ABOUT THE ISSUE AND THE COMMONALITY OF INTERESTS THAT PARAMILITARIES AND THE MILITARY OFTEN SHARE. GIVEN THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY'S PROBLEMS IN COUNTERING GUERRILLA DEPREDATIONS, IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL FOR THEM TO OPPOSE THE ANTI-GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES OF PARAMILITARIES. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY BELIEVES THAT AS LONG AS ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PARAMILITARIES IS ONE OF TACIT ACQUIESCENCE, RATHER THAN ACTIVE SUPPORT, IT IS NOT VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS. AT THE SAME TIME, MANY COLOMBIANS, DISGUSTED BY GUERRILLA KIDNAPPINGS, USE OF LANDMINES, MURDERS OF CIVILIANS, AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG TRADE, MAY FEEL FEW QUALMS ABOUT PARAMILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST THE INSURGENTS. MANY MEMBERS OF COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ELITE ARE LANDOWNERS. EVEN IF THEY DO NOT ACTUALLY PAY PARAMILITARIES TO GUARD THEIR PROPERTY, AND MIGHT PUBLICLY DENOUNCE PARAMILITARISM, THEY BENEFIT FROM PARAMILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST GUERRILLAS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE OVERRUN THEIR LAND.

1.4(D)

4. (S/NF) HIGH-LEVEL CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS FLATLY DENY THAT SUCH LINKS EXIST, AND IN RECENT MONTHS HAVE ANNOUNCED (WITH NO TANGIBLE RESULTS TO DATE) A GET-TOUGH POLICY AGAINST

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 01 OF 08 112229Z

PARAMILITARIES. ON APRIL 5, PRESIDENT SAMPER ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOC WAS COMMITTED TO COMBATTING PARAMILITARIES AND GUERRILLAS WITH EQUAL VIGOR. (COMMENT: GIVEN THE GOC'S INEFFECTUAL PROSECUTION OF ITS WAR AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS, THIS PRONOUNCEMENT PROBABLY DID NOT WORRY THE PARAMILITARIES TOO MUCH. END COMMENT.) WE BELIEVE THAT

1.4(D)

THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY AS AN INSTITUTION DOES NOT SPONSOR PARAMILITARISM. HOWEVER, THE GOC HAS MADE VIRTUALLY NO EFFORT TO GO AFTER PARAMILITARIES, AND HAS BEEN RELATIVELY OPEN ABOUT PAST COOPERATION. MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY HAVE TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT THEY WORKED WITH SOME PARAMILITARY GROUPS TO COMBAT GUERRILLAS IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO AREA IN THE 1980S. INTERIOR MINISTER HORACIO SERPA, WHILE STOUTLY DENOUNCING PARAMILITARIES AS CRIMINALS WHO MUST BE PROSECUTED, ACKNOWLEDGED IN A LATE MARCH RADIO

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

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Page: 4

Channel: n/a

INTERVIEW THAT THE MILITARY "SOMETIMES" COOPERATED WITH  
PARAMILITARIES IN THE PAST IN PARTICULARLY CONFLICTIVE AREAS.

5. (S/NF) HOWEVER, CONCRETE EVIDENCE OF CURRENT MILITARY-  
PARAMILITARY LINKS IS EXTREMELY HARD TO OBTAIN, IN LARGE PART  
BECAUSE THOSE INVOLVED PRESUMABLY VALUE SECRECY. ANECDOTES AND  
SPECULATION ABOUT THIS ISSUE ARE RIFE,

1.4(D)

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 02 OF 08 112229Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 ACQ-01  
INL-01 OASY-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00 EUR-01 OIGO-01  
TEDE-00 ADS-00 MMP-00 SCT-00 ASDS-01 DSCC-00 DRL-09  
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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5821  
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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 4

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 5

Channel: n/a

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~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~ SECTION 02 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

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PAGE 02           BOGOTA 03463 02 OF 08 112229Z  
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 5

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 6

Channel: n/a

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

SAID THAT

PARAMILITARY CAMPS IN URABA ARE LOCATED NEAR ARMY INSTALLATIONS; IN THEIR VIEW, THE ARMY MUST BE AWARE OF, AND UNCONCERNED BY, THEIR PRESENCE. THE BEST-KNOWN PARAMILITARY GROUP IN COLOMBIA, ACCU (AUTODEFENSAS CAMPEÑAS DE CORDOBA Y URABA), IS HIGHLY VISIBLE; MEMBERS REPORTEDLY WEAR "ACCU" T-SHIRTS AND ARMBANDS AND OPERATE ROADBLOCKS IN WELL-TRAVELLED AREAS. [REDACTED] CITED AS AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE A CASE INVOLVING A MARINE UNIT IN BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT THAT ROUTINELY MANNED A CHECKPOINT BUT ABSENTED

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03463 02 OF 08 112229Z  
THEMSELVES ON THE DAY THAT A PARAMILITARY GROUP MURDERED FOURTEEN PEOPLE.

1.4(D)

6. (S/NF) IN A DECEMBER 3, 1996 INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN "SEMANA" MAGAZINE, PARAMILITARY CHIEF RAMON ISAZA (SEE PARAGRAPH 15) SAID THE MILITARY DECIDED SOME TIME AGO TO STOP "PERSECUTING" HIS ORGANIZATION AND "LET US WORK. THEY SOON SAW THAT WHAT WE HAD DONE WAS THE BEST AND THAT THERE ARE AREAS WHERE THERE ARE "AUTODEFENSAS" THAT THE ARMY DOES NOT NEED TO TOUCH BECAUSE THERE ARE NO GUERRILLAS. WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO THEM..." ISAZA ADDED THAT "OF COURSE SOMETIMES THEY DO MAKE US ANGRY BECAUSE THEY DON'T LET US ENTER SOME AREAS..." [REF C REPORTED ON CREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS

THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OFFICE IN CHARGE OF CONVIVIRS (RURAL SECURITY COOPERATIVES) HAS ILLEGALLY AUTHORIZED WEAPONS SALES TO SUSPECTED PARAMILITARIES AND NARCOTRAFFICKERS. THE ONGOING LEGAL

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

PROCESS AGAINST RETIRED GENERAL FAROUK YANINE AND THE APRIL 1996 SEGOVIA MASSACRE ARE TWO PROMINENT CASES, DOCUMENTED IN OUR 1996 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT, INVOLVING ALLEGATIONS OF MILITARY-PARAMILITARY COOPERATION. ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES, SOME PARAMILITARIES MAY

BE FORMER POLICE OR ARMY MEMBERS, OR EVEN EX-GUERRILLAS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE CREDIBLE ALLEGATIONS THAT SOME ACTIVE-DUTY MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES "MOONLIGHT" AS PARAMILITARIES.

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

7. (S/NF) EVEN IF THERE WERE NO EVIDENCE OF LINKS BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY GROUPS, THE FACT THAT THE GOC RARELY

1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 6

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: SECRET  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 7

Channel: n/a

PROSECUTES OR ENGAGES IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST PARAMILITARIES IS NOTEWORTHY. / SOME OBSERVERS ARGUE THAT THE CLANDESTINE NATURE OF PARAMILITARY ACTIVITIES MAY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE COLOMBIAN ARMY TO ENGAGE THEM MILITARILY. OTHERS, HOWEVER, CONTEND THAT THE

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1.4(D)

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 02 OF 08 112229Z  
COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND POLICE CANNOT HELP BUT BE AWARE OF  
PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY IN THEIR AREAS AND DELIBERATELY TURN A BLIND  
EYE TO ATROCITIES. A COLOMBIAN ACADEMIC TOLD POLOFF APRIL 4 THAT  
THE FACT THAT MEMBERS OF CARLOS CASTANO'S ACCU CAN REPEATEDLY  
TRAVEL FROM CORDOBA DEPARTMENT TO SOUTHERN CESAR DEPARTMENT, COMMIT  
MASSACRES, AND RETURN HOME WITH IMPUNITY STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THE  
ARMY AND POLICE ALLOW THEM TO DO SO.

8. (S/NF) IN A CONVERSATION APRIL 2 WITH POST HUMAN RIGHTS  
OFFICER, [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

[REDACTED] DESCRIBED HOW 50 PARAMILITARIES ARMED WITH UZI  
SUBMACHINE GUNS ENTERED THE TOWN OF ANDAGOYA MARCH 27. [REDACTED] AND  
SOME TOWNSPEOPLE CONFRONTED THE PARAMILITARIES, WHO SAID THEY WERE  
LOOKING FOR GUERRILLAS. ALTHOUGH THE GROUP ULTIMATELY LEFT  
ANDAGOYA WITHOUT HARMING ANYONE, IT PASSED ON TO THE TOWN OF  
ISTMINA, WHERE ITS MEMBERS MURDERED A TOWN COUNCILMAN AND THE TOWN  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT. [REDACTED] SAID THERE WAS NO WAY A GROUP THAT SIZE  
COULD HAVE TRAVELED TO ANDAGOYA WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT  
FORCES. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

1.4(D)

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Current Class: SECRET

Page: 7

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 8

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01            BOGOTA 03463 03 OF 08 112230Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00    ACDA-10    ACDE-00    INLB-01    AID-00    ARA-01    ACQ-01  
         INL-01    OASY-00    SRPP-00    DS-00    EB-00    EUR-01    OIGO-01  
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R 112227Z APR 97  
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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 03 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

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NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS

~~SECRET~~

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 8

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 9

Channel: n/a

~~SECRET~~

PAGE 02            BOGOTA   03463   03 OF 08   112230Z  
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[REDACTED] HAVE DESCRIBED SUCH INCIDENTS AS TYPICAL, STATING THEIR  
BELIEF THAT THE PARAMILITARIES, AT A MINIMUM, MOVE ABOUT SOME  
REGIONS AREAS WITH LITTLE OR NO INTERFERENCE BY GOVERNMENT,  
PARTICULARLY ARMY, FORCES. SOURCES [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] CHARACTERIZE THE ARMY AS FAILING TO ASSIST AND, IN  
SOME CASES, OBSTRUCTING INVESTIGATIONS OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING  
PARAMILITARY FORCES.

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

1.4(D)

9. (S/NF) THE GOVERNMENT CLEARLY LACKS THE WILL TO ENFORCE ITS  
OWN LAWS IN THE CASE OF CASTANO, SUBJECT OF OUTSTANDING ARREST  
WARRANTS FOR MURDER AND FOR WHOSE CAPTURE FORMER MOD ESGUERRA,  
RESPONDING TO PRESSURE FROM HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS, OFFERED A  
MILLION DOLLAR REWARD IN DECEMBER 1996 (SEE REF H). EVEN THOUGH IT  
WAS THE DEFENSE MINISTER WHO ANNOUNCED THE REWARD, MILITARY FORCES  
COMMANDER GENERAL HAROLD BEDOYA HAS DEMONSTRATED NO INTEREST IN  
PURSUING CASTANO. PRESUMABLY SENSING THAT HE HAS NO REASON TO FEAR  
A HIGH PROFILE, CASTANO WAS RECENTLY INTERVIEWED BY THE "NEW YORK  
TIMES" AND OTHER MEDIA. IN ADDITION TO JOURNALISTS, VIRTUALLY  
ANYONE WHO WANTS TO, INCLUDING NGOS AND GOC OFFICIALS UP TO THE

1.4(D)

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PAGE 03            BOGOTA   03463   03 OF 08   112230Z

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 9

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 10

Channel: n/a

1.4(D)

RANK OF VICE MINISTER, VISITS CASTANO IN CORDOBA DEPARTMENT,  
[REDACTED] NO ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO PLACE HIM  
UNDER ARREST.

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

10. (c) [REDACTED] THE EMBASSY RECENTLY OBTAINED A COPY OF A PART OF A  
DOCUMENT PURPORTING TO BE A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE NOVEMBER 1996  
"THIRD NATIONAL SUMMIT OF THE SELF-DEFENSE (AUTODEFENSAS) MOVEMENT  
OF COLOMBIA." THE DOCUMENT DECLARED THAT THE SUMMIT'S PURPOSE WAS  
TO ANALYZE THE GUERRILLA SITUATION AND FORMULATE STRATEGIC PLANS  
FOR DEALING WITH IT. RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE REPORT WILL BE  
DISCUSSED BELOW IN THE SECTIONS RESPONDING TO OTHER QUESTIONS IN  
REF A. REGARDING LINKS WITH THE MILITARY, THE SUMMIT DOCUMENT IS  
FAIRLY CLEAR: "THE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES IN

1.4(D)

OUR OPERATIONS HAS BECOME A HEADACHE; IT SUFFICES TO REMEMBER THE  
CASE OF GENERAL FAROUK YANINE DIAZ AND CAPTAIN NESTOR CANAS IN  
SEGOVIA. FROM NOW ON WE SHOULD WAGE THE WAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE  
OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF EACH REGIONAL GROUP." THE DOCUMENT ALSO  
STATES THAT "THE GOVERNMENT UNTIL NOW HAS SHOWN A GOOD DISPOSITION  
TO RESPECT US AND OPEN WAYS TO UNDERSTANDING." A COLOMBIAN  
ACADEMIC TOLD POLOFF THAT THIS GROWING AUTONOMY DOES NOT  
NECESSARILY MEAN BREAKING WITH THE MILITARY ALTOGETHER, HOWEVER.  
IN HIS VIEW, PARAMILITARIES STILL BENEFIT FROM WORKING WITH THE  
MILITARY, AND VICE VERSA.

11. (S/NF) COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

[REDACTED] FROM PUTUMAYO TOLD EMBOFFS APRIL 2 THEY  
BELIEVED THE RETURN OF PARAMILITARY FORCES TO THE REGION SINCE 1994  
IS A DIRECT RESULT OF THIS LARGER STRATEGY AS DECLARED IN THE  
PARAMILITARY MANIFESTOS, AND DID NOT SUGGEST SIGNIFICANT MILITARY  
INVOLVEMENT.

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 03 OF 08 112230Z

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PARAMILITARIES AS SURROGATES?  
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12. (S/NF) REF A ASKED IF THE MILITARY IS USING PARAMILITARIES  
"AS SURROGATES TO DO THINGS THEY CANNOT DO BECAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 10

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
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Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 11

Channel: n/a

**CONSTRICTIONS."** THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PARAMILITARY SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT "THE OPERATIVE INCAPACITY OF THE ARMED FORCES, DUE TO THE PRESSURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE PROCURADURIA (ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE) AND FISCALIA (PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE), PLACES US IN THE VANGUARD OF THE FIGHT." THE DOCUMENT ALSO SAYS "IT IS DIFFICULT TO RELY ON ANY MILITARY COMMAND ... SOME AVOID GETTING CLOSE TO US FOR FEAR OF THE PROCURADURIA (ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE) AND OTHERS SIMPLY WANT TO USE US, SINCE IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT WE ARE THE ONES IN THE END WHO THROW OURSELVES INTO COMBAT AND IN A GOOD PART OF THE ANTI-GUERRILLA OPERATIONS." IN HIS DECEMBER "SEMANA" INTERVIEW, RAMON ISAZA CRITICIZED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS FOR TRYING TO GET THE ARMY TO "STOP COLLABORATING WITH US AND, ON THE CONTRARY, PERSECUTE

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 04 OF 08 112230Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 ACQ-01  
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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 11

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page: 12

Channel: n/a

-----AEE8C8 112230Z /38

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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 04 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03463 04 OF 08 112230Z  
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US. BUT THANK GOD, UP TO NOW THIS HAS NOT HAPPENED." HOWEVER, HE  
SAID, "TODAY, IF THE ARMY WANTS TO DO THINGS, IT CAN'T BECAUSE IT

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 12

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 13

Channel: n/a

IS HANDCUFFED BY HUMAN RIGHTS."

13. (S/NF) WHILE THIS IS SUGGESTIVE, THE QUESTION POSED IN REF A IMPLIES A LEVEL OF CONTROL BY THE MILITARY THAT IN FACT PROBABLY DOES NOT EXIST. SEPARATE PARAMILITARY GROUPS HAVE DIVERSE AGENDAS, SOME OF WHICH COINCIDE WITH THE MILITARY'S, AND SOME WHICH DO NOT. PARAMILITARIES LIKE CARLOS CASTANO APPEAR TO HAVE "OUTGROWN" THE MILITARY AND ACT WITH INCREASING INDEPENDENCE.

1.4(D)

THAT CASTANO IS DISGUSTED WITH THE ARMY'S LACK OF GRATITUDE FOR HIS "ACHIEVEMENTS" ON ITS BEHALF. CASTANO EVEN ACCUSED THE MILITARY OF KILLING SOME MEMBERS OF ACCU TO SILENCE THEM.

1.4(D)

14. (S/NF) HOWEVER, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT PARAMILITARIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN INCREASING NUMBER OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, AS DOCUMENTED BY OUR 1996 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT AND OTHER SOURCES. FOR EXAMPLE, A RECENT SURVEY OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN COLOMBIA SHOWED

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03463 04 OF 08 112230Z

THAT 35 PERCENT FLED PARAMILITARY VIOLENCE, 29 PERCENT GUERRILLAS, AND 14 PERCENT THE ARMY. THE MILITARY'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS MORE CLOSELY SCRUTINIZED THAN THAT OF PARAMILITARIES, WHO CAN OPERATE MORE FREELY. FURTHERMORE, WHILE THE MILITARY ENGAGES THE GUERRILLAS IN DIRECT CONFRONTATION, PARAMILITARIES TARGET GUERRILLA FAMILY MEMBERS, SUPPORTERS, AND OTHERS FOR INTIMIDATION AND MURDER, ATTACKING GUERRILLAS' VULNERABILITIES AND FORCING THEM TO WATCH THEIR BACKS AT ALL TIMES. HOWEVER, [REDACTED] CASTANO HAS COMPLAINED THAT EVEN HE HAS FELT COMPELLED TO COMMIT FEWER ABUSES BECAUSE OF INCREASING SCRUTINY BY NGOS, THE GOC'S HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, AND THE ICRC. [REDACTED] FOR THEIR PART, NGOS LIKE HUMAN

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

RIGHTS WATCH ARE CONVINCED THAT THE MILITARY IS INDEED LEAVING ITS DIRTY WORK TO THE PARAMILITARIES.

1.4(D)

15. (S/NF) REF A SOUGHT BASIC DATA ON PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS OUTSIDE NORTHWESTERN COLOMBIA. [REDACTED] CARLOS CASTANO'S ACCU SENDS LOCAL COMMANDERS TO CESAR, SUCRE, AND BOLIVAR DEPARTMENTS TO "ADVISE" OTHER PARAMILITARY GROUPS. HOWEVER, HE APPARENTLY DOES NOT COMPLETELY CONTROL THESE OTHER GROUPS AND DENIES RESPONSIBILITY FOR ABUSES THEY COMMIT (ALTHOUGH HE FREELY ADMITS [REDACTED] THAT ACCU COMMITS MURDER AND OTHER CRIMES). AS

1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 13

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 14

Channel: n/a

FOR NUMBERS, IT IS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO CALCULATE WITH ACCURACY HOW MANY PARAMILITARIES OPERATE IN COLOMBIA THAN IT IS TO ESTIMATE GUERRILLA NUMBERS. REF D REPORTED [REDACTED] ESTIMATE OF 4,000 -- 6,000; WE CANNOT COME UP WITH A MORE SPECIFIC FIGURE. [REDACTED] MOST PARAMILITARY MEMBERS ARE INVOLVED ON A PART-TIME BASIS. ALTHOUGH CASTANO CLAIMS THAT HE CONTROLS 2,000 MEN, [REDACTED] ESTIMATES THAT ONLY A FEW HUNDRED ARE FULL-TIME PARAMILITARIES. [REDACTED]

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

1.4(D)

THE FOLLOWING

LIST IS BASED ON

ACCU: LEADERS: CASTANO; "SERGIO," ALSO ALIAS "DOUBLE ZERO," MILITARY COMMANDER OF THE URABA ZONE; "MONO-MANOLO," ALSO ALIAS "TRIPLE ZERO," ACCU COORDINATOR FOR THE CARIBBEAN COAST, EXCEPT FOR URABA; "EL CHIVO;" "PEDRO," MILITARY COMMANDER "FRONTINO AN"; AND "SANTIAGO TOBON," COMMANDER FOR CESAR DEPARTMENT AND ACCU COORDINATOR FOR CESAR AND MAGDALENA DEPARTMENTS. (NOTE: [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF THAT "TRIPLE ZERO" WAS RECENTLY ARRESTED. END NOTE.)

1.4(D)

VICTOR CARRANZA'S ORGANIZATION: ASIDE FROM CARRANZA, [REDACTED] LISTED "GUILLERMO TORRES," ALIAS "SESTAN" OR "DON GUILLERMO," AND "CARLOS CASTILLO." THEIR AREAS OF OPERATION ARE LISTED AS PUERTO LOPEZ, PUERTO GAITAN, EL PORVENIR, RIO TILLAVA, EL DORADO, CUMARAL (ARIARI), VILLAVICENCIO, ACACIAS, AND GUAMAL (META DEPARTMENT), AND MEDINA AND PARATEBUENO IN CUNDINAMARCA DEPARTMENT.

AUTODEFENSAS DE MEDIO MAGDALENA: AFTER CASTANO AND CARRANZA, THIS

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 14

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 15

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 05 OF 08 112230Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	ARA-01	ACQ-01
	INL-01	OASY-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01	OIGO-01
	TEDE-00	ADS-00	MMP-00	SCT-00	ASDS-01	DSCC-00	DRL-09
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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5824  
INFO DEA WASHDC  
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD  
FBI WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
NSC WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 2021  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 05 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 15

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 16

Channel: n/a

STATE FOR INR/IL, ARA/AND, DRL, INL, EUR/RPM (MFITZPATRICK)  
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS

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PAGE 02            BOGOTA 03463 05 OF 08 112230Z  
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX  
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET  
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2  
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR  
TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/07  
TAGS: PINR, PHUM, PTER, PINS, PGOV, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA (C-AL7-00269)

FOIA B2

GROUP'S LEADER, RAMON ISAZA (DOB 30 NOVEMBER 1941, [REDACTED]), IS THE BEST KNOWN PARAMILITARY LEADER IN COLOMBIA. BOTH [REDACTED] AND THE PARAMILITARY SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE SUGGEST THAT HE AND CASTANO ARE RIVALS. THE LATTER DOCUMENT, WITHOUT NAMING ISAZA, STATES THAT THE MAGDALENA GROUP SHOULD STOP CONTACTS WITH GUERRILLAS, GIVE UP PLANS TO NEGOTIATE ITS DEMOBILIZATION, AND "ACCEPT THE COMMAND" OF CARLOS CASTANO. [REDACTED] WHO CHARACTERIZED ISAZA AS "CRAZY," TOLD POLOFF THAT CASTANO [REDACTED] WAS ANGRY WITH HIS RIVAL AND WANTED TO BRING HIM "UNDER CONTROL." HE IS SUSPECTED OF LINKS TO THE NARCOTRAFFICKING GAITAN FAMILY.

1.4(D)

"LA MENCENTA" GROUP: COMMANDED BY "ALIEN BATALAN." THIS APPARENTLY SMALL GROUP OPERATES IN PUERTO BOYACA, BOYACA DEPARTMENT, IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO REGION.

1.4(D)

"RODRIGUEZ GACHA" GROUP: ALTHOUGH THIS NARCOTRAFFICKER HAS BEEN DEAD FOR YEARS, [REDACTED] SAYS THE PARAMILITARY GROUP HE FOUNDED STILL EXISTS AND COOPERATES WITH CARRANZA. IT OPERATES IN SAN MARTIN (SOUTHERN CESAR DEPARTMENT) AND GRANADA (ANTIOQUIA).

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 16

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03463 05 OF 08 112230Z

DEPARTMENT).

AUTODEFENSAS DEL BAJO RIONEGRO: COMMANDED BY "CAMILO" (NFI), THIS APPARENTLY SMALL GROUP OPERATES IN SAN RAFAEL DE LEBRIJA AND SABANA DE TORRES IN SANTANDER DEPARTMENT, [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

AUTODEFENSAS CAMPESINAS DEL CESAR: [REDACTED] THIS GROUP IS A SUBSIDIARY OF CASTANO'S ACCU AND IS LED BY "LUIS EDUARDO RESTREPO" AND "ALFONSO MACIA." IT OPERATES IN SOUTHERN CESAR DEPARTMENT AND EL COPEY, NORTHWESTERN CESAR.

1.4(D)

AUTODEFENSAS DE VALENCIA: [REDACTED] THIS GROUP IS COMMANDED BY SOMEONE NAMED "OSCAR" AND OPERATES IN VALENCIA, CORDOBA DEPARTMENT, PRESUMABLY LINKED TO CASTANO.

1.4(D)

AUTODEFENSAS DE SUCRE: [REDACTED] THIS GROUP IS COMMANDED BY "JAVIER PIEDRADITA" AND OPERATES IN TOLUVIEJO, SUCRE DEPARTMENT, AND ELSEWHERE IN SUCRE. [REDACTED] BELIEVES THIS GROUP MAY BE A SUBSIDIARY OF CASTANO'S ACCU.

1.4(D)

16. (S/NF) [REDACTED] ALSO LISTED "AUTODEFENSAS CAMPESINAS DE ANTIOQUIA" AND "AUTODEFENSAS CAMPESINAS DE ARAUCA" BUT HAD NO FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THEM. [REDACTED] TOLD POLOFF APRIL 7 THAT [REDACTED] BELIEVES THAT SEVERAL CONVIVIRS (LEGALLY-ESTABLISHED RURAL SECURITY COOPERATIVES) ARE IN EFFECT PARAMILITARIES: GROUPS OPERATING IN EL DIFICIL, PLATO, AND SANTA ANA IN MAGDALENA DEPARTMENT, LED BY "EL CHOPE BARRERA"; A GROUP OPERATING IN PUERTO LOPEZ, META DEPARTMENT, LED BY "JUAN DE JESUS PIMIENTO"; A GROUP OPERATING IN PUERTO GAITAN, META, LED BY "DON GUILLERMO" (PRESUMABLY THE SAME "DON GUILLERMO" LISTED ABOVE AS WORKING WITH VICTOR CARRANZA); A GROUP OPERATING IN SAN MARTIN,

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 05 OF 08 112230Z  
CESAR DEPARTMENT, LED BY "ANOUAS SALEMON CARTRA"; AND A GROUP

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UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 18

Current Handling: n/a

Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Channel: n/a

OPERATING IN SAN ROQUE, ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT, LED BY "DARWIN."

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

1.4(D)

17. ~~(S/NF)~~ ACCORDING TO SEVERAL SOURCES, [REDACTED]

A GROUP KNOWN

AS "LOS MASETOS" IS THE MOST PROMINENT PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION IN PUTUMAYO DEPARTMENT. "MASETO" IS ALSO A TERM FREQUENTLY APPLIED TO ANY PARAMILITARY MEMBER, DERIVED FROM "MAS" ("MUERTE A SECUESTRADORES"), A GROUP FORMED IN THE EARLY 1980S BY MEDELLIN CARTEL MEMBERS TO EXACT REVENGE ON KIDNAPPERS AND RIVALS. "LOS MASETEROS" WERE SPONSORED BY THE NARCOTRAFFICKING OCHOA BROTHERS AND CONTINUED TO OPERATE IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO AND ELSEWHERE AFTER THE OCHOA BROTHERS WERE ARRESTED.

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PAGE 01

BOGOTA 03463 06 OF 08 112231Z

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 18

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 19

Channel: n/a

ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 ACQ-01  
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TEDE-00 ADS-00 MMP-00 SCT-00 ASDS-01 DSCC-00 DRL-09  
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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5825  
INFO DEA WASHDC  
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD  
FBI WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
NSC WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 2022  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 06 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

STATE FOR INR/IL, ARA/AND, DRL, INL, EUR/RPM (MFITZPATRICK)  
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03463 06 OF 08 112231Z  
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
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JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET  
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TREASURY FOR FINCEN

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 19

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 20

Channel: n/a

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/07  
TAGS: PINR, PHUM, PTER, PINS, PGOV, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA (C-AL7-00269)

18. (S/NF) THE PARAMILITARY SUMMIT DOCUMENT DESCRIBES "SUCCESSFUL ANTI-GUERRILLA WORK IN CORDOBA, URABA, SOUTHERN CESAR, META AND MAGDALENA MEDIO. IN THOSE ZONES, WE HAVE SNATCHED AWAY FROM THE ENEMY THE AFFECTION OF THE POPULATION AND HAVE MANAGED TO DELIVER IMPORTANT MILITARY BLOWS." THE REPORT PROPOSES "RECONQUERING" THE FOLLOWING AREAS: COFFEE COUNTRY (PRESUMABLY ANTIOQUIA, RISARALDA, AND CALDAS DEPARTMENTS); NORTHERN VALLE DEPARTMENT; THE NORTHWEST OF ANTIOQUIA; LA GUAJIRA DEPARTMENT; NORTHERN CESAR DEPARTMENT; CASANARE DEPARTMENT; THE LOWER MAGDALENA AREA; PUTUMAYO DEPARTMENT; NORTHWEST TOLIMA DEPARTMENT; AND THE EASTERN PLAINS "IN GENERAL."

19. (S/NF) THE DOCUMENT SAYS IT IS A "PRIORITY TO INTENSIFY INTELLIGENCE WORK IN URBAN ZONES LIKE CIUDAD BOLIVAR, BOSA, AND SAN CRISTOBAL (NEIGHBORHOODS) IN BOGOTA; MORAVIA AND ARANJUEZ IN MEDELLIN; THE DISTRICT OF AGUA BLANCA AND EL LIMONAR IN CALI; CRESPO IN CARTAGENA; THE SOUTHEAST OF BARRANQUILLA; AND IBAGUE (CAPITAL OF TOLIMA DEPARTMENT). BARRANCABERMEJA IS A PRIORITY JOB BECAUSE THE SUBVERSION HAS RECONQUERED ZONES THAT WERE ALREADY FREE FROM THIS SCOURGE. ALSO PEREIRA (CAPITAL OF RISARALDA DEPARTMENT),

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03463 06 OF 08 112231Z  
ESSENTIALLY THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF CUBA, AND THE ZONES IN CALDAS (DEPARTMENT) BORDERING ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MIEL HYDROELECTRIC (PROJECT). ANOTHER PRIORITY IS PUTUMAYO DEPARTMENT. IT IS URGENT TO DEPLOY MEN AND RESOURCES FOR THIS MISSION. IT IS THERE THAT THE SUBVERSION HAS MANAGED TO CREATE A PARALLEL GOVERNMENT THAT IS HIGHLY DANGEROUS FOR THE NATION. WE ALSO CANNOT FAIL TO TAKE EQUAL CARE OF THE ZONES OF INFLUENCE OF THE 22ND AND 41ST FRONTS OF THE FARC IN CUNDINAMARCA (DEPARTMENT)."

20. (U) THE MARCH 31 EDITION OF "SEMANA" MAGAZINE REPORTED THAT THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS ARE SUFFERING FROM THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES: ANTIOQUIA, ESPECIALLY URABA; CESAR; SUCRE; ARAUCA; CASANARE; CAQUETA; BOTH SANTANDERS; BOYACA; CAUCA; NARINO; AND COFFEE COUNTRY. ALEJANDRO REYES, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AND EXPERT ON GUERRILLAS AND

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 20

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 21

Channel: n/a

PARAMILITARIES, IS QUOTED AS SAYING COLOMBIA CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS, WITH PARAMILITARIES RULING THE NORTHWEST AND GUERRILLAS THE SOUTHEAST. HE PREDICTED THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE IN AREAS WHERE THESE TWO AREAS CONVERGE: THE SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS AND ENVIRONS; SOUTHERN CESAR DEPARTMENT; BARRANCABERMEJA; THE NORTHEAST OF ANTIOQUIA; VALLE DE CAUCA; CUNDINAMARCA; AND META. ACCORDING TO "SEMANA," THE GOC'S PEACE COMMISSION CALCULATES THAT PARAMILITARIES ARE PRESENT IN 450 OF THE COUNTRY'S MORE THAN 1000 MUNICIPALITIES. BY CONTRAST, GUERRILLAS ARE THOUGHT TO BE PRESENT IN OVER HALF OF THE MUNICIPALITIES, INCLUDING WIDE SWATHS OF TERRITORY THAT ARE ONLY SEMI-POPULATED. WHERE THE TWO GROUPS OVERLAP, BLOOD FLOWS.

21. (S/NF) REF A ASKS UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES PARAMILITARY GROUPS ARE MOST LIKELY TO FLOURISH. AREAS WHERE GUERRILLAS ARE ACTIVE ARE LIKELY TO ATTRACT PARAMILITARIES, ALTHOUGH THE PRESENCE

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1.4(D)

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 06 OF 08 112231Z  
OF LARGE LANDHOLDINGS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OWNED BY NARCOTRAFFICKERS, SEEMS TO BE THE STRONGEST INDICATOR OF PARAMILITARISM. RELATIVELY STRONG ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, SUCH AS CATTLE RANCHING OR OIL PRODUCTION, ALSO SEEMS TO BE A MAGNET FOR BOTH GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES. POOR, SPARSELY POPULATED DEPARTMENTS LIKE GUAVIARE, CAQUETA, VICHADA, GUAINIA, VAUPES AND AMAZONAS ARE VIRTUALLY NEVER MENTIONED IN CONNECTION WITH PARAMILITARISM.

22. (S/NF) REF A ASKS HOW PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS OPERATE AND WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE. THE SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE SAYS "THE AUTODEFENSAS MOVEMENT REMAINS ON THE MARGIN OF THE LAW AND OF POLITICS, EVEN THOUGH MANY OF OUR COLLABORATORS, MANAGERS (GESTORES), HELPERS, FINANCIERS AND GUIDES (ORIENTADORES) FORM A PART OF THE POLITICAL CLASS (AGITADO QUEHACER POLITICO)." AS NOTED IN PARAGRAPH 2, A VARIETY OF PEOPLE SPONSOR PARAMILITARIES: NARCOTRAFFICKERS, LANDOWNERS, CATTLE RANCHERS, AND BUSINESSPEOPLE. BY DEFINITION, PARAMILITARIES ARE HIRED GUNS WHO SERVE ANY MASTER WILLING TO PAY THEM, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PATRONS IS ONE OF MUTUAL SELF-INTEREST. CARLOS CASTANO, BY MOST ACCOUNTS, HAS

1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 21

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 22  
Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 07 OF 08 112231Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	ARA-01	ACQ-01
	INL-01	OASY-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01	OIGO-01
	TEDE-00	ADS-00	MMP-00	SCT-00	ASDS-01	DSCC-00	DRL-09
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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5826  
INFO DEA WASHDC  
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD  
FBI WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
NSC WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 2023

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 22

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 23

Channel: n/a

DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 07 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

STATE FOR INR/IL, ARA/AND, DRL, INL, EUR/RPM (MFITZPATRICK)  
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03463 07 OF 08 112231Z  
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD  
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX  
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET  
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2  
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR  
TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/07  
TAGS: PINR, PHUM, PTER, PINS, PGOV, SNAR, CO  
SUBJECT: PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA (C-AL7-00269)

A CERTAIN CHARISMA AND MAY COMMAND PERSONAL LOYALTY, BUT IN GENERAL  
PARAMILITARIES, EVEN THOSE MOTIVATED BY HATRED OF THE GUERRILLAS,  
ARE MERCENARIES.

1.4(D)

23. (S/NF) IN ADDITION TO PROTECTING THEIR EMPLOYERS AND  
TARGETING SUSPECTED GUERRILLA SYMPATHIZERS, PARAMILITARIES HAVE  
BEEN ACCUSED OF INTIMIDATING AND KILLING PEOPLE INVOLVED IN LAND  
DISPUTES, SUCH AS THE "HACIENDA BELLACRUZ" CASE.

1.4(D)

24. (S/NF) IT IS DIFFICULT TO STATE WITH ACCURACY WHAT KIND OF  
SUPPORT PARAMILITARIES RECEIVE IN TERMS OF MONEY, TRAINING AND  
ARMS. SEVERAL SOURCES SAY THAT PARAMILITARIES, LIKE GUERRILLAS,  
DEMAND PROTECTION MONEY FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS. NARCO MONEY IS  
ANOTHER LIKELY RESOURCE (SEE REF C). ACCORDING TO ACCU

1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 23

UNCLASSIFIED

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EARNs MONEY FROM LAND AND INVESTMENTS AND CASTANO DENIES  
INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG TRADE, BUT CLAIMS HE MAY BE FORCED INTO  
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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03463 07 OF 08 112231Z

DRUG CULTIVATION BECAUSE HE IS RUNNING SHORT ON CASH. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

[REDACTED] PARAMILITARIES OPERATING NEAR THE PANAMA BORDER  
EXTORT PAYMENTS FROM SMUGGLERS OF VARIOUS KINDS OF CONTRABAND,  
INCLUDING DRUGS AND WEAPONS. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

25. (S/NF) AN IMPORTANT COMPLICATING FACTOR IS THAT  
NARCOTRAFFICKERS FINANCE BOTH PARAMILITARIES AND GUERRILLAS,  
DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES, GEOGRAPHY, AND CONVENIENCE. WE WILL  
CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THIS PHENOMENON CLOSELY. [REDACTED] ITS COMPLEXITY IS  
ILLUSTRATED BY THE EXAMPLE OF NORTH VALLE NARCO TRAFFICKER DIEGO  
MONTOKA SANCHEZ ( [REDACTED] ) ACCORDING TO A RECENT  
"WASHINGTON POST" ARTICLE, MONTOKA IS THE PATRON OF A PARAMILITARY  
GROUP. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

FOIA B2

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

1.4(D)

26. (S/NF) IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE MILITARY WOULD PROVIDE  
CASH, SINCE MOST UNITS IN THE FIELD ARE THEMSELVES POORLY SUPPLIED.

1.4(D)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] WE HAVE NO OTHER INFORMATION TO SUGGEST THAT THIS  
IS A WIDESPREAD PHENOMENON. FOR THEIR PART, PARAMILITARY WARLORDS  
DO NOT SEEM TO PROVIDE MUCH TRAINING TO THEIR FOLLOWERS, RELYING  
MORE ON RECRUITING INDIVIDUALS WITH PREVIOUS MILITARY (POSSIBLY  
INCLUDING GUERRILLA) OR POLICE EXPERIENCE. GIVEN THAT 6,000

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 25

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03463 07 OF 08 112231Z

MEMBERS OF THE POLICE HAVE BEEN FIRED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS FOR CORRUPTION AND OTHER CRIMES, IT IS LIKELY THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THEM HAVE USED THEIR SKILLS TO JOIN THE RANKS OF PARAMILITARIES.

~~1.4(B), 1.4(D)~~

27. ~~(S/NF)~~ REF A ASKED IF A CORRELATION EXISTS BETWEEN THE IDENTITY OF SUPPORTERS AND THE TACTICS USED BY PARAMILITARIES. PARAMILITARISM APPEARS TO BE MUCH MORE REGIONAL THAN THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENT, AND SEEMS TO VARY FROM PLACE TO PLACE. THE PARAMILITARIES THAT FLOURISH IN URABA SEEM MORE "PROFESSIONAL" OR "SPECIALIZED," IF SUCH A TERM CAN BE APPLIED TO INTIMIDATION AND MURDER, THAN OTHER, SMALLER GROUPS AROUND THE COUNTRY. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE IDENTITY OF SUPPORTERS AND THE KIND OF TACTICS EMPLOYED, BUT AS REF E REPORTED, TACTICS MAY VARY FROM REGION TO REGION, WITH MASSACRES OCCURRING IN URABA BUT MORE SELECTIVE MURDERS TAKING PLACE IN CASANARE. IN ADDITION TO MURDER, KIDNAPPING, AND SCARING THOUSANDS OF PEASANTS INTO FLEEING THEIR HOMES, PARAMILITARIES HAVE ALSO BEEN ACCUSED OF "SOCIAL CLEANSING," KILLING PETTY CRIMINALS AND OTHER "UNDESIRABLES" IN THEIR AREAS OF INFLUENCE.

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Page: 25

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 26

Channel: n/a

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03463 08 OF 08 112232Z  
ACTION INR-00

INFO LOG-00 ACDA-10 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 ACQ-01  
INL-01 OASY-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00 EUR-01 OIGO-01  
TEDE-00 ADS-00 MMP-00 SCT-00 ASDS-01 DSCC-00 DRL-09  
/026W

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R 112227Z APR 97  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5827  
INFO DEA WASHDC  
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD  
FBI WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
NSC WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 2024  
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 08 OF 08 BOGOTA 003463

STATE FOR INR/IL, ARA/AND, DRL, INL, EUR/RPM (MFITZPATRICK)  
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03463 08 OF 08 112232Z  
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST  
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 26

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 27

Current Handling: n/a

Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Channel: n/a

DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX  
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET  
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2  
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR  
TREASURY FOR FINCEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/07

TAGS: PINR, PHUM, PTER, PINS, PGOV, SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA (C-AL7-00269)

1.4(B), 1.4(D)

Current Class: ~~SECRET~~

Page: 27

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: ~~SECRET~~  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1997BOGOTA03463

Page: 28

Channel: n/a

1.4(B), 1.4(D)



30. ~~(S/NF)~~ WE WILL BE KEENLY INTERESTED IN THE RESULTS OF  
WASHINGTON ANALYSTS' STUDY OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA.  
FRECHETTE

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Page: 28

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