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~~RELEASED IN PART~~  
~~B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)~~

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PAGE 01           BOGOTA 03245 260111Z  
 ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	A-00	ACQ-01
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	OIGO-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
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	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00
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	SWCI-00	/042W					

-----2BA2D5 260112Z /20

P 252039Z MAR 98  
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2136  
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
 SECDEF WASHDC  
 NSC WASHDC  
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 CIA WASHDC  
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 SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
 DEA WASHDC//OF/OFL//

~~SECRET~~ BOGOTA 003245

E.O. 12958: DECL:03/25/07  
 TAGS: PREL, OVIP, SNAR, MASS, MOPS, PINR, PINS, PTER, PHUM, ASEC,

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PAGE 02           BOGOTA 03245 260111Z  
 CO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL  
 APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED  
 REASON(S): B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)  
 DATE/CASE ID: 04 DEC 2009 200604196

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
 CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)  
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 24 MAR 2023  
 DATE/CASE ID: 13 NOV 2007 200604196

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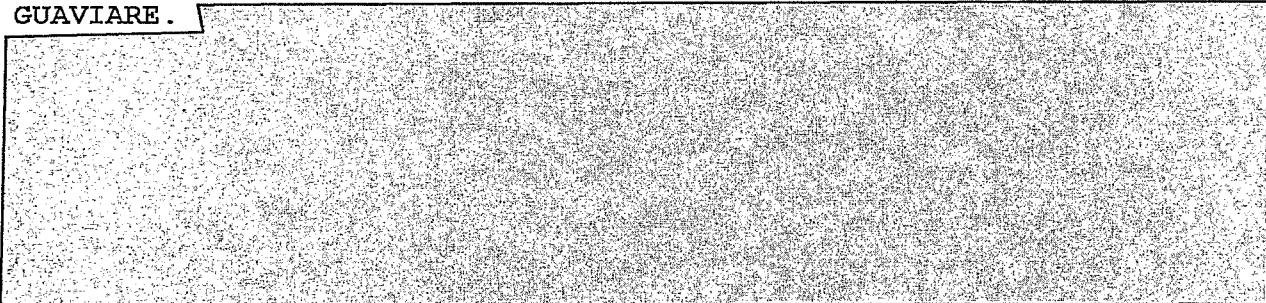
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SUBJECT: SOUTHCOM CINC WILHELM'S MARCH 18-20 VISIT TO COLOMBIA

REF: A) BOGOTA 739 B) BOGOTA 2852

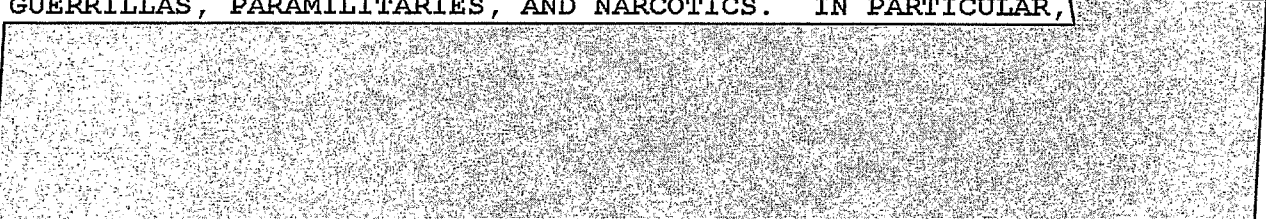
(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN. REASON: 1.5(D)

1. ~~(S)~~ SUMMARY: GENERAL CHARLES WILHELM, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, VISITED COLOMBIA MARCH 18-20. HE SPENT MARCH 19 IN THE FIELD, TOURING COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND POLICE FACILITIES IN TRES ESQUINAS, CAQUETA DEPARTMENT, AND SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE.



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DURING MARCH 20 BRIEFINGS AT EMBASSY, GENERAL WILHELM AND THE COUNTRY TEAM DISCUSSED GUERRILLAS, PARAMILITARIES, AND NARCOTICS. IN PARTICULAR,



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GENERAL WILHELM MET WITH SENIOR COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) LEADERS, WHO GAVE HIM BRIEFINGS ON  
~~SECRET~~

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03245 260111Z  
MARINE RIVERINE OPERATIONS AND POLICE COUNTERDRUG ACHIEVEMENTS.  
END SUMMARY.

2. ~~(S)~~ THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, GENERAL CHARLES WILHELM, ARRIVED IN BOGOTA THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 18 AND MET INFORMALLY THAT EVENING WITH THE AMBASSADOR. ON MARCH 19, THE GENERAL'S PARTY TRAVELLED TO TRES ESQUINAS AND SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE, ACCOMPANIED BY MILITARY FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL BONETT, AIR FORCE COMMANDER GENERAL ZAPATA, COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) COMMANDER GENERAL GALAN, AND ADMIRAL GARCIA, SECOND IN COMMAND OF

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THE COLOMBIAN NAVY. TRES ESQUINAS IS THE HEADQUARTERS AND STAGING GROUND FOR COLOMBIA'S RECENTLY CREATED 5,000-MAN JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTH (FTC-S),

AT SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE, GENERAL WILHELM SAW THE CNP'S LARGEST ERADICATION OPERATIONS BASE, AND THE ARMY SPECIAL FORCES TRAINING SCHOOL AND RIVERINE COMBAT ELEMENTS AT NEARBY BARRANCON.

3. ~~(c)~~ WHILE AT TRES ESQUINAS, GENERAL WILHELM WAS BRIEFED BY THE FTC-S COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL RAFAEL HERNANDEZ LOPEZ.

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8. (C) AFTER THE BRIEFING FROM HERNANDEZ, GENERALS BONETT, GALAN, AND ZAPATA AND ADMIRAL GARCIA ACCOMPANIED GENERAL WILHELM ON A TOUR OF TRES ESQUINAS AND SURROUNDING COCA FIELDS. AFTER LUNCH, THE GENERAL AND HIS PARTY DEPARTED TRES ESQUINAS AND TRAVELLED BY AIR TO SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE. THERE, GENERAL WILHELM TOURED THE CNP BASE AND WAS BRIEFED ON THE CNP'S LARGEST ERADICATION OPERATION AND LAST YEAR'S COUNTERNARCOTICS SUCCESSES. AFTERWARDS, THE GENERAL VISITED THE ARMY'S TWO-YEAR-OLD SPECIAL FORCES SCHOOL AND COLOMBIAN MARINE RIVERINE COMBAT FACILITIES AT BARRANCON, A SHORT HELICOPTER RIDE AWAY FROM THE CNP BASE.

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AND VIEWED A DEMONSTRATION OF JOINT DRUG INTERDICTION TECHNIQUES TAUGHT THERE.

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THE GUERRILLAS  
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9. (C) ON MARCH 20, DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION (DCM) OPENED THE COUNTRY TEAM MEETING BY REVIEWING SOME BACKGROUND ON THE COLOMBIAN GUERRILLAS

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PAGE 07

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THEIR GROWTH HAS SPURRED  
PARAMILITARY ACTIVITY, AND CIVILIANS IN THE MIDDLE ARE DISPLACED OR  
KILLED. AT THE CORE,

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PARAMILITARIES  
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REF: A) BOGOTA 739 B) BOGOTA 2852

16. ~~16~~ POL/ECON COUNSELOR THEN GAVE A PRESENTATION ON THE PARAMILITARY SITUATION. WHILE SOME IN COLOMBIA REGARD PARAMILITARIES AS THE SOLUTION TO GUERRILLA PROBLEMS, IN REALITY THEY ARE AN ACHILLES HEEL, CAUSING MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DAMAGING THE MILITARY'S IMAGE, AND HURTING THE USG'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES. POL/ECON COUNSELOR ESTIMATED PARAMILITARY COMBATANT NUMBERS AT

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4,000 TO 6,000 AND SAID SEVENTY PERCENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED IN COLOMBIA IN 1997 WERE ATTRIBUTED TO PARAMILITARIES. HE NOTED THAT A FORMER PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA RECENTLY LIKENED THE CONFLICT TO A BULLFIGHT, WITH THE POLICE AND MILITARY WATCHING THE GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES ATTACK EACH OTHER.

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REMARKED THAT CARRANZA IS CONSIDERED MORE POWERFUL THAN CASTANO BECAUSE HE IS A BILLIONAIRE; IS TWICE CASTANO'S AGE; CONTROLS MORE PEOPLE UNDER ARMS; AND WON A BLOODY WAR IN THE LATE 1980S AGAINST DRUGLORD GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA. CARRANZA HAS BEEN CONTENT TO OPERATE BEHIND THE SCENES, ALLOWING CASTANO TO PLAY A HIGHER-PROFILE PUBLIC ROLE.

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[REDACTED]  
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21. ~~(S)~~ POL/ECON COUNSELOR SAID THE COLOMBIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
CURRENTLY HAMPERS THE GOC'S ABILITY TO PURSUE GUERRILLAS. [REDACTED]

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24. ~~(S)~~ GENERAL WILHELM, THE COUNTRY TEAM, AND SOUTHCOM STAFFERS THEN MET WITH COLOMBIAN MILITARY COMMANDERS, CNP DIRECTOR GENERAL SERRANO, ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE (DANTI) CHIEF GALLEG0 AND POLICE INTELLIGENCE (DIPOL) CHIEF NARANJO. LTC ORTIZ, COMMANDER OF THE COLOMBIAN MARINE CORPS'S RIVERINE COMBAT ELEMENTS, GAVE A PRESENTATION ON THE HISTORY AND OPERATIONS CONCEPT OF THE RIVERINE PROGRAM. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION ON THE RIVERINE EXPANSION FINANCING PLAN BY MAJOR MCCLERNON, MILGROUP U.S. MARINE

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PAGE 15 BOGOTA 03245 260111Z  
CORPS REPRESENTATIVE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE BRIEFING, GENERAL WILHELM COMMENTED ON THE GENESIS OF CONGRESSIONALLY-DIRECTED FUNDING OF RIVERINE FORCES IN BOTH COLOMBIA AND PERU, AND

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26. ~~(S)~~ BEFORE THE CINC'S DEPARTURE, GENERAL AND MRS. BONETT HOSTED A LUNCH IN HIS HONOR AT THE MILITARY CLUB. OTHER

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PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED THE AMBASSADOR, EMBASSY PERSONNEL, SENIOR COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS, AND OTHER GOC OFFICIALS. KAMMAN

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PTQ0114

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03245 01 OF 05 252128Z  
 ACTION ARA-01

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	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	P-00	CIO-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	DTC-01	SGHD-00
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	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/042W				

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P 252039Z MAR 98  
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2136  
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
 SECDEF WASHDC

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NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DEA WASHDC//OF/OFL//

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 BOGOTA 003245

E.O. 12958: DECL:03/25/07

TAGS: PREL, OVIP, SNAR, MASS, MOPS, PINR, PINS, PTER, PHUM, ASEC,  
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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03245 01 OF 05 252128Z  
CO

SUBJECT: SOUTHCOM CINC WILHELM'S MARCH 18-20 VISIT TO COLOMBIA

REF: A) BOGOTA 739 B) BOGOTA 2852

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN. REASON: 1.5(D)

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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WITH GUERRILLAS IN EL BILLAR, CAQUETA DEPARTMENT, AS A STATISTICAL STANDOFF, CLAIMING TO HAVE INFLECTED ABOUT AS MANY CASUALTIES AS IT TOOK. GENERAL WILHELM MET WITH SENIOR COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) LEADERS, WHO GAVE HIM BRIEFINGS ON

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

PAGE 03            BOGOTA 03245 01 OF 05 252128Z  
MARINE RIVERINE OPERATIONS AND POLICE COUNTERDRUG ACHIEVEMENTS.  
END SUMMARY.

2. (C) THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND, GENERAL CHARLES WILHELM, ARRIVED IN BOGOTA THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 18 AND MET INFORMALLY THAT EVENING WITH THE AMBASSADOR. ON MARCH 19, THE GENERAL'S PARTY TRAVELLED TO TRES ESQUINAS AND SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE, ACCOMPANIED BY MILITARY FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL BONETT, AIR FORCE COMMANDER GENERAL ZAPATA, COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) COMMANDER GENERAL GALAN, AND ADMIRAL GARCIA, SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE COLOMBIAN NAVY. TRES ESQUINAS IS THE HEADQUARTERS AND STAGING GROUND FOR COLOMBIA'S RECENTLY CREATED 5,000-MAN JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTH (FTC-S).

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3. (C) WHILE AT TRES ESQUINAS, GENERAL WILHELM WAS BRIEFED BY THE FTC-S COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL RAFAEL HERNANDEZ LOPEZ.

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Three pages are withheld in full pursuant to Exemption 1.



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8. (c) AFTER THE BRIEFING FROM HERNANDEZ, GENERALS BONETT, GALAN, AND ZAPATA AND ADMIRAL GARCIA ACCOMPANIED GENERAL WILHELM ON A TOUR OF TRES ESQUINAS AND SURROUNDING COCA FIELDS. AFTER LUNCH, THE GENERAL AND HIS PARTY DEPARTED TRES ESQUINAS AND TRAVELLED BY AIR TO SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE. THERE, GENERAL WILHELM TOURED THE CNP BASE AND WAS BRIEFED ON THE CNP'S LARGEST ERADICATION OPERATION AND LAST YEAR'S COUNTERNARCOTICS SUCCESSES. AFTERWARDS, THE GENERAL VISITED THE ARMY'S TWO-YEAR-OLD SPECIAL FORCES SCHOOL AND COLOMBIAN MARINE RIVERINE COMBAT FACILITIES AT BARRANCON, A SHORT HELICOPTER RIDE AWAY FROM THE CNP BASE.

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AND VIEWED A DEMONSTRATION OF JOINT DRUG INTERDICTION TECHNIQUES TAUGHT THERE.

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03245 02 OF 05 252128Z

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Three pages are withheld in full pursuant to Exemption 1.

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PARAMILITARIES  
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PTQ0122

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03245 04 OF 05 252129Z

ACTION ARA-01

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EB-00	OIGO-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	H-01	IM-01	TEDE-00
INR-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00
NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
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SAS-00	SWCI-00	/042W				

-----2B9003 252129Z /38

P 252039Z MAR 98

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2139

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

SECDEF WASHDC

NSC WASHDC

USCINCSO MIAMI FL

DIRONDCP WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//

DEA WASHDC//OF/OFL//

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 04 OF 05 BOGOTA 003245

E.O. 12958: DECL:03/25/07

TAGS: PREL, OVIP, SNAR, MASS, MOPS, PINR, PINS, PTER, PHUM, ASEC,

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03245 04 OF 05 252129Z

CO

SUBJECT: SOUTHCOM CINC WILHELM'S MARCH 18-20 VISIT TO COLOMBIA

REF: A) BOGOTA 739 B) BOGOTA 2852

16. (C) POL/ECON COUNSELOR THEN GAVE A PRESENTATION ON THE PARAMILITARY SITUATION. WHILE SOME IN COLOMBIA REGARD PARAMILITARIES AS THE SOLUTION TO GUERRILLA PROBLEMS, IN REALITY THEY ARE AN ACHILLES HEEL, CAUSING MASSIVE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, DAMAGING THE MILITARY'S IMAGE, AND HURTING THE USG'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES. POL/ECON COUNSELOR ESTIMATED PARAMILITARY COMBATANT NUMBERS AT 4,000 TO 6,000 AND SAID SEVENTY PERCENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

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COMMITTED IN COLOMBIA IN 1997 WERE ATTRIBUTED TO PARAMILITARIES. HE NOTED THAT A FORMER PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA RECENTLY LIKENED THE CONFLICT TO A BULLFIGHT, WITH THE POLICE AND MILITARY WATCHING THE GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES ATTACK EACH OTHER.

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REMARKED THAT CARRANZA IS CONSIDERED MORE POWERFUL THAN CASTANO BECAUSE HE IS A BILLIONAIRE; IS TWICE CASTANO'S AGE; CONTROLS MORE PEOPLE UNDER ARMS; AND WON A BLOODY WAR IN THE LATE 1980S AGAINST DRUGLORD GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA. CARRANZA HAS BEEN CONTENT TO OPERATE BEHIND THE SCENES, ALLOWING CASTANO TO PLAY A HIGHER-PROFILE PUBLIC ROLE.

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21. ~~(S)~~ POL/ECON COUNSELOR SAID THE COLOMBIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM  
CURRENTLY HAMPERS THE GOC'S ABILITY TO PURSUE GUERRILLAS. [REDACTED]

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03245 05 OF 05 252130Z  
ACTION ARA-01

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	INR-00	IO-00	JUSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00
	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	P-00	CIO-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	DTC-01	SGHD-00
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	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/042W				

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P 252039Z MAR 98  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2140  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
SECDEF WASHDC  
NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//  
DEA WASHDC//OF/OFL//

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 05 OF 05 BOGOTA 003245

E.O. 12958: DECL:03/25/07  
TAGS: PREL, OVIP, SNAR, MASS, MOPS, PINR, PINS, PTER, PHUM, ASEC,

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24. ~~10~~ GENERAL WILHELM, THE COUNTRY TEAM, AND SOUTHCOM STAFFERS THEN MET WITH COLOMBIAN MILITARY COMMANDERS, CNP DIRECTOR GENERAL SERRANO, ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE (DANTI) CHIEF GALLEG0 AND POLICE INTELLIGENCE (DIPOL) CHIEF NARANJO. LTC ORTIZ, COMMANDER OF THE COLOMBIAN MARINE CORPS'S RIVERINE COMBAT ELEMENTS, GAVE A PRESENTATION ON THE HISTORY AND OPERATIONS CONCEPT OF THE RIVERINE PROGRAM. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION ON THE RIVERINE EXPANSION FINANCING PLAN BY MAJOR MCCLERNON, MILGROUP U.S. MARINE CORPS REPRESENTATIVE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE BRIEFING, GENERAL WILHELM COMMENTED ON THE GENESIS OF CONGRESSIONALLY-DIRECTED FUNDING OF RIVERINE FORCES IN BOTH COLOMBIA AND PERU, AND [REDACTED]

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 03245 05 OF 05 252130Z

25. ~~10~~ GENERAL SERRANO PROVIDED THE OVERVIEW FOR BRIEFINGS BY GALLEG0 AND NARANJO ON CNP INROADS AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, CULTIVATIONS AND CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN 1998. ACCOMPANIED BY WELL-CRAFTED VIDEOS, THE POLISHED BRIEFINGS PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT SUMMARY OF CNP COUNTERDRUG PROGRAMS AND OFFERED A USEFUL FORUM FOR EMBASSY, SOUTHCOM, COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND CNP ALLIES TO SHARE CONCEPTS, DISCUSS COMPLEX ISSUES, AND RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER'S

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CONTRIBUTION TO THE OVERALL COUNTERNARCOTICS MISSION

BL

26. (SBU) BEFORE THE CINC'S DEPARTURE, GENERAL AND MRS. BONETT HOSTED A LUNCH IN HIS HONOR AT THE MILITARY CLUB. OTHER PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED THE AMBASSADOR, EMBASSY PERSONNEL, SENIOR COLOMBIAN MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS, AND OTHER GOC OFFICIALS. KAMMAN

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