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ACTION ARA-01~~B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)~~

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| INFO | LOG-00  | ADS-00  | AID-01  | INR-05  | SS-01   | OIC-02 | CIAE-00 |
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7574  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
SECDEF WASHDC

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 BOGOTA 11877

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, KJUS, CO  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA -- WIDESPREAD  
ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSES BY THE ARMY

REF: A) BOGOTA 7045 B) BOGOTA 8026 C) BOGOTA 9151  
D) BOGOTA 10045 E) BOGOTA 3705 F) BOGOTA 10662

1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY. A NUMBER OF RECENT INVESTIGATIONS CARRIED  
OUT BY COLOMBIA'S PROCURADURIA, AN INDEPENDENT  
WATCHDOG AGENCY, HAVE EMBARRASSED THE COLOMBIAN ARMED  
FORCES BY LINKING A NUMBER OF JUNIOR AND MID-RANKING

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ARMY OFFICERS TO SEVERAL RECENT INCIDENTS OF GRIEVOUS  
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. MOREOVER, THE EMBASSY HAS  
LEARNED THAT, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE PROCURADURIA IS  
LIKELY TO CHARGE ARMY OFFICERS WITH INVOLVEMENT IN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E SINN  
DATE/CASE ID: 29 APR 2005 200501166

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: 19 SEP 2007 200501166

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ADDITIONAL RECENT INCIDENTS OF VIOLATIONS. A KEY

PROCURADURIA OFFICIAL SAYS THAT ABUSES IN THE MILITARY REFLECT THE ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN AND ARE NOT THE RESULT OF A HIGH LEVEL CONSPIRACY. MOREOVER, SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS SAY THEY ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAVE ISSUED ORDERS THAT THEIR SUBORDINATES IN THE FIELD DO SO. NEVERTHELESS, THE PROCURADURIA'S ALLEGATIONS OF MILITARY ABUSES HAVE LEAD TO A SHARP DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THIS WATCHDOG INSTITUTION AND THE ARMY. THE SHARPLY INCREASED NUMBER OF OFFICIAL ABUSES UNCOVERED BY THE PROCURADURIA REFLECTS A CONSIDERABLE STRENGTHENING IN RECENT MONTHS OF THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION'S CAPACITY TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS CASES AND PUNISH VIOLATORS, NOT NECESARILY AN INCREASE IN SUCH ABUSES THEMSELVES. END SUMMARY.

RECENT EMBARRASMENTS

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3. IN RECENT MONTHS THE COLOMBIAN PROCURADURIA HAS FOUND STRONG EVIDENCE LINKING MEMBERS OF THE ARMY TO A NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT INSTANCES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. IN THE COLOMBIAN SYSTEM THE PROCURADURIA IS AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION CHARGED WITH INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT ABUSES AND WITH ADMINISTRATIVELY SANCTIONING OFFICIALS FOUND TO HAVE ACTED IMPROPERLY.

[REDACTED] RECENTLY TOLD POLOFF THAT,

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OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, HIS OFFICE, WHICH HANDLES ONLY THE MOST SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS OF VIOLATIONS, HAS FILED ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AGAINST GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN SOME 30 CASES OF RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. AFTER CONSIDERING THE ARGUEMENTS PRESENTED BY THOSE ACCUSED [REDACTED] HIMSELF WILL DECIDE WHETHER TO FIND THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED INNOCENT OR GUILTY. (UNDER THE COLOMBIAN SYSTEM THE PROCURADURIA CAN NOT BRING CRIMINAL CHARGES AND THE MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT IT CAN IMPOSE IS DISMISSAL FROM GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT. THE COURTS THEMSELVES, HOWEVER, CAN USE EVIDENCE GATHERED BY THE PROCURADURIA TO SUPPORT CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS. SEE REF E FOR MORE ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE PROCURADURIA.) ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] MOST OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES FILED IN

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THESE 30 CASES, AND THE MOST SERIOUS OF THE CHARGES, ARE AGAINST MEMBERS OF THE ARMY.

4. THE MOST PROMINENT OF THE CASES HAVE ALREADY BEEN NOTED IN EMBASSY REPORTING. IN MAY THE PROCURADURIA CHARGED TWO OFFICERS WITH DERELICTION OF DUTY FOR FAILING TO IMPEDE THE MOVEMENT OF ARMED INDIVIDUALS WHO KIDNAPPED SOME 42 PEASANTS IN THE URABA REGION IN JANUARY OF THIS YEAR (REF A). ACCORDING TO EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY PROVIDED TO THE PROCURADURIA SEVERAL MILITARY MEN ALSO TOOK PART DIRECTLY IN THESE KILLINGS, ALTHOUGH THE WITNESSES WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC OFFICERS OR ENLISTED MEN. ALSO IN MAY, ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES WERE FILED AGAINST FOUR OFFICERS, INCLUDING A COLONEL, FOR ALLEGEDLY TORTURING 16 LABOR UNION ACTIVISTS (REF B). IN JUNE THE HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE CHARGED 11 MEMBERS OF THE ARMY WITH THE APRIL EXTRA-JUDICIAL EXECUTIONS OF SEVERAL RURAL RESIDENTS IN PUERTO VALDIVIA, ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT (REF C). LATER THAT SAME MONTH A JUDGE ASKED THE

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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, KJUS, CO  
 SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA -- WIDESPREAD  
 PROCURADURIA TO INVESTIGATE THE ESCAPE OF AN ARMY  
 LIEUTENANT FROM AN ARMY BASE WHERE HE WAS BEING  
 DETAINED (REF F). SHORTLY AFTER THE ESCAPE THE  
 LIEUTENANT WAS CONVICTED OF PARTICIPATING IN A JANUARY  
 1989 MASSACRE OF JUDICIAL OFFICIALS.

THE TRUJILLO KILLINGS  
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5. IN REF D WE REPORTED THAT THE PROCURADURIA'S  
 OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS HAD UNCOVERED STRONG  
 EVIDENCE LINKING MEMBERS OF THE ARMY AND POLICE TO A

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NUMBER OF DISAPPEARANCES AND MURDERS WHICH TOOK PLACE  
 EARLIER THIS YEAR IN TRUJILLO, VALLE DE CAUCA  
 DEPARTMENT. DURING A RECENT MEETING THE

PROCURADURIA S [REDACTED] TOLD US THAT HE HAD ORDERED  
 DISCIPLINARY CHARGES FILED AGAINST ARMY MAJOR ALIRIO  
 ANTONIO URUENA AND THREE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL  
 POLICE FOR THEIR ALLEGED PARTICIPATION IN SOME 20 OF  
 THE KILLINGS.

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6. ACCORDING [REDACTED] THE KEY WITNESS IN THE CASE  
 WAS DANIEL ARCILA CARDONA, A CIVILIAN ARMY INFORMANT  
 WHO, AFTER APPARENTLY PARTICIPATING IN THE MURDERS,  
 HAD A CHANGE OF HEART. ARCILA CONFESSED WHAT HE KNEW  
 ABOUT THE KILLINGS TO DAS CHIEF MIGUEL MAZA MARQUEZ.  
 MAZA FOUND THE CONFESSION CREDIBLE AND DIRECTED THE  
 WITNESS TO THE PROCURADURIA. AN INTERNAL PROCURADURIA  
 DOCUMENT DETAILING THE INSTITUTION'S INVESTIGATION  
 INTO THESE KILLINGS, A COPY OF WHICH WE HAVE OBTAINED  
 FROM A SOURCE NOT CONNECTED WITH THE PROCURADURIA,  
 CITES THE TESTIMONY OF MORE THAN A DOZEN WITNESSES  
 WHICH TENDS TO SUPPORT THAT OF ARCILA.

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7. ACCORDING TO ARCILA, MAJOR ALIRIO ANTONIO URENA,  
 THE MILITARY MAN WHO FACES CHARGES, PERSONALLY  
 DIRECTED THE TORTURE OF 11 DETAINEES AND THEIR  
 SUBSEQUENT EXECUTION. THE KILLINGS WERE CARRIED OUT  
 BY CUTTING OFF THE LIMBS AND HEADS OF THE STILL LIVING  
 VICTIMS WITH A CHAIN SAW. THE INTERNAL PROCURADURIA  
 REPORT MAINTAINS THAT MAJOR URENA ACTED AS PART OF AN  
 ARMED "SELF DEFENSE" GROUP WHICH WAS HEADED BY TWO

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LOCAL RANCHERS--DIEGO MONTOYA AND HENRY LOAIZA--WHO ARE ALSO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. IT GOES ON TO ASSERT CATEGORICALLY THAT ADDITIONAL ARMY "OFFICERS AND

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NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS" WERE INVOLVED IN THE TRUJILLO KILLINGS, ALTHOUGH THEY CAN NOT YET BE IDENTIFIED. THE RASH OF KILLINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN TRUJILLO BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE ARMY DIED IN A GUERRILLA AMBUSH IN THE AREA. MANY OF THE TRUJILLO VICTIMS WERE APPARENTLY SUSPECTED OF SUPPORTING LEFT-WING GUERRILLA GROUPS OPERATING IN THE AREA.

MORE INVESTIGATIONS UNDERWAY

8. THE PROCURADURIA IS CURRENTLY CONDUCTING A NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS WHICH ARE LIKELY TO FURTHER EMBARRASS THE ARMED FORCES. WE HAVE LEARNED FROM THREE DIFFERENT SOURCES--

AN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, AN OFFICIAL OF "INSTRUCCION CRIMINAL" (THE OFFICE OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION) AND FROM

OF THE PROCURADURIA'S OFFICE OF

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS (WHICH, IN COOPERATION WITH THE PROCURADURIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE, INVESTIGATES THE MOST SENSITIVE CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS), OF AN APPARENT JUNE 7 INCIDENT OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL EXECUTIONS. THE MILITARY REPORTED TO THE PRESS THAT, ON THAT DATE, IT KILLED 9 GUERRILLAS IN COMBAT IN EL RAMAL, SANTANDER DEPARTMENT. THE INVESTIGATION BY INSTRUCCION CRIMINAL AND THE PROCURADURIA STRONGLY SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE NINE WERE EXECUTED BY THE ARMY AND THEN DRESSED IN MILITARY FATIGUES. A MILITARY JUDGE WHO ARRIVED ON THE SCENE APPARENTLY REALIZED THAT THERE WERE NO BULLET HOLES IN THE MILITARY UNIFORMS TO MATCH THE WOUNDS IN THE VICTIMS' BODIES, AND ORDERED THE UNIFORMS BURNED. ACCORDING TO THE PRIVATE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, ALL OF THE VICTIMS WERE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY AND ONE OF THEM, SAID BY THE ARMY TO HAVE BEEN A GUERRILLA, WAS 87 YEARS OLD.

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9. INDIVIDUAL ARMY OFFICERS MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE JULY 4 DISAPPEARANCE OF ALIRIO DE JESUS PEDRAZA, A PROMINENT LEFT-WING HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER. HIS DISAPPEARANCE, WHICH WAS UNUSUAL BECAUSE

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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, KJUS, CO  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA -- WIDESPREAD  
IT OCCURRED IN BOGOTA, RATHER THAN IN A REMOTE RURAL  
AREA, HAS GENERATED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AMONG  
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS. WITHOUT GOING INTO B1  
DETAIL, THE PROCURADURIA S TOLD US THAT THERE  
IS SIGNIFICANT EVIDENCE LINKING MEMBERS OF THE ARMY TO  
THIS DISAPPEARANCE, ALTHOUGH THE WATCHDOG INSTITUTION  
HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC OFFICERS OR  
ENLISTED MEN.            BELIEVES PEDRAZA IS ALMOST  
CERTAINLY DEAD.

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10. THE PROCURADURIA IS ALSO INVESTIGATING THREE

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INCIDENTS THIS YEAR IN WHICH THE ARMED FORCES  
REPORTEDLY BOMBED OR BOMBARDED TOWNS IN THE  
MUNICIPALITIES OF YONDO IN ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT,  
MESETAS IN META DEPARTMENT, AND BECERRIL, IN THE  
PERIJA MOUNTAINS OF CESAR DEPARTMENT. THE AVAILABLE  
EVIDENCE STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT SOME OR ALL OF THESE



BOMBARDMENTS OR BOMBINGS TOOK PLACE, OFTEN FROM HELICOPTERS OR AERIAL GUNSHIPS, BUT THE INDEPENDENT AGENCY IS TRYING TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE TARGETING OF CIVILIANS WAS DELIBERATE OR AN UNINTENDED RESULT OF COMBAT WITH THE GUERRILLAS. [REDACTED] SAYS THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHETHER U.S. GOVERNMENT PROVIDED AIRCRAFT WERE INVOLVED IN THESE INCIDENTS, NOTING THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR UNTRAINED GROUND OBSERVERS TO ACCURATELY IDENTIFY ATTACKING AIRCRAFT.

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MILITARY-PROCURADURIA FRICTION

11. THE PROCURADURIA'S AGGRESSIVE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES HAS CHILLED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE INDEPENDENT CIVILIAN AGENCY. [REDACTED] IS

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CERTAIN THAT ABUSES COMMITTED BY THE MILITARY ARE LARGELY THE RESULT OF INDIVIDUAL OFFICERS ACTING ON THEIR OWN--THERE IS NO HIGH LEVEL ARMY CONSPIRACY TO VIOLATE HUMAN RIGHTS. SENIOR MILITARY MEN, INCLUDING

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RECENTLY APPOINTED ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GENERAL LUIS

EDUARDO ROCCA MACHEL, HAVE PROMISED COOPERATION WITH

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[REDACTED] OFFICE AND ISSUED WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO THE FIELD ORDERING THAT HUMAN RIGHTS BE RESPECTED.

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MOREOVER, THEY HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THEY ARE NOW TAKING SPECIAL CARE TO AVOID INNOCENT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN AERIAL STRAFINGS AND BOMBINGS.

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NEVERTHELESS, THE PROCURADURIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORTS MEET CONSIDERABLE RESISTANCE FROM MIDDLE AND LOWER RANKING OFFICERS. [REDACTED] COMPLAINS THAT THESE OFFICERS SEE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SPECIFIC MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY AS AN ATTACK ON THE INSTITUTION AS A WHOLE. MOST OFFICERS MOVE INSTINCTIVELY TO DEFEND THEIR COLLEAGUES, REGARDLESS OF THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM.

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12. THE MOST SERIOUS CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE PROCURADURIA OCCURRED DURING THE INVESTIGATION OF THE VALDIVIA KILLINGS (REF C). ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] AND OTHER SOURCES A TEAM OF INVESTIGATORS, WHICH INCLUDED MEMBERS OF THE PROCURADURIA, WAS REPEATEDLY WARNED BY THE LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER NOT TO VENTURE INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE, SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE OF THE POOR LOCAL

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SECURITY SITUATION. THE TEAM IGNORED THE WARNINGS, BUT WAS FORCED TO RETREAT WHEN SEVERAL MILITARY HELICOPTERS OPENED FIRE IN THEIR IMMEDIATE VICINITY IN WHAT THE TEAM MEMBERS INTERPRETED AS A BLATANT INTIMIDATION ATTEMPT. IN ANOTHER APPARENT ATTEMPT TO FRIGHTEN OFF THE PROCURADURIA, AN ARMY OFFICER MADE A SHOW OF PHOTOGRAPHING MEMBERS OF THE INVESTIGATING TEAM. PROCURADOR GENERAL ALFONSO GOMEZ MENDEZ PROTESTED THESE INCIDENTS TO SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS.

13. A LESS SINISTER BUT MORE DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE PROCURADURIA OCCURRED DURING A MID-JULY PUBLIC FORUM ON HUMAN RIGHTS. FOLLOWING A SPEECH BY PROCURADOR

A RETIRED ARMY COLONEL APPARENTLY STILL EMPLOYED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE UNEXPECTEDLY ROSE FROM THE AUDIENCE TO VIOLENTLY DENOUNCE AND THE PROCURADURIA. RESPONDED SHARPLY, NOTING THAT HIS OFFICE HAS BROUGHT CHARGES AGAINST SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS, NOT AGAINST THE ARMY AS AN

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INSTITUTION.

14. TOLD US THAT HE IS CONCERNED THAT INDIVIDUALS UPSET WITH HIS HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES MAY

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ACTION ARA-01

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 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7577  
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, KJUS, CO

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA -- WIDESPREAD  
 TRY TO KILL HIM. HE HAS RECEIVED THREATS AND HIS  
 FRIENDS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT HE CHANGE JOBS. A  
 KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE RECENTLY TOLD US THAT PABLO  
 GONZALEZ, HEAD OF THE PROCURADURIA'S OFFICE OF SPECIAL  
 INVESTIGATIONS, AND PROCURADOR GENERAL GOMEZ HAVE BEEN  
 HEAVILY THREATENED IN RECENT MONTHS.

THE PROCURADURIA AND THE POLICE  
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15. THE PROCURADURIA HAS MUCH BETTER RELATIONS WITH  
 THE NATIONAL POLICE AND WITH DAS, A QUASI-POLICE

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AGENCY, THAN IT DOES WITH THE ARMED FORCES. ALTHOUGH  
 ITS MEMBERS ARE HARDLY IMMUNE FROM COMMITTING SERIOUS  
 HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, [REDACTED] SAYS THAT THE POLICE  
 TEND TO BE LESS INVOLVED IN SUCH VIOLATIONS THAN THE  
 ARMY. DAS IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING THE BEST HUMAN  
 RIGHTS RECORD OF ANY OF THE SECURITY FORCES, ALTHOUGH  
 ITS EMPLOYEES ARE ALSO SOMETIMES INVOLVED IN SPECIFIC  
 INSTANCES OF ABUSES. ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] HOWEVER,  
 SENIOR COMMANDERS OF THE POLICE AND DAS UNDERSTAND THE  
 NEED TO DISCIPLINE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS--THEY DO NOT  
 SEE ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSES BY MEMBERS OF THEIR  
 INSTITUTION AS AN ATTACK ON THE INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES.

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16. THE POLICE AND DAS HAVE ALWAYS WORKED CLOSELY  
 WITH CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND HAVE LONG BEEN  
 SUBJECT TO INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT BY THE PROCURADURIA.  
 THEY ARE THEREFORE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE WITH  
 CIVILIANS INVESTIGATING THE CONDUCT OF THEIR EMPLOYEES  
 THAN ARE THE ARMED FORCES. UNTIL SEVERAL YEARS AGO  
 THE PROCURADOR DELEGATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES, WHO  
 HEADS WHAT HAD BEEN THE ONLY OFFICE IN THE  
 PROCURADURIA WITH JURISDICTION TO INVESTIGATE THE  
 MILITARY, WAS ALWAYS AN ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICER.  
 AS A RESULT, THE MILITARY WAS LARGELY IMMUNE TO  
 EFFECTIVE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT.

17. THE NATIONAL POLICE, ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] HAVE  
 AN APPARENTLY EFFECTIVE INTERNAL MECHANISM FOR  
 DISCIPLINING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS. UNDER THIS  
 MECHANISM MEMBERS OF THE POLICE WHO FACE INTERNAL  
 ACCUSATIONS OF IMPROPER CONDUCT ARE SUPPOSED TO BE  
 TEMPORARILY REMOVED FROM THEIR JOBS UNTIL THE

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ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN RESOLVED. THE MILITARY ALSO

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SAYS IT HAS AN INTERNAL MECHANISM FOR PUNISHING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSERS, BUT [REDACTED] REQUESTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS HAVE GONE UNANSWERED.

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OUTLOOK

18. IRONICALLY, THE INCREASING NUMBER OF RECENT REPORTS OF MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IS AT LEAST A PARTIAL REFLECTION OF SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE ON THE LOCAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRONT. FOR YEARS VIRTUALLY ALL HUMAN RIGHTS CASES REMAINED UNRESOLVED, AND MANY ABUSES NEVER CAME TO PUBLIC ATTENTION. NOW, THANKS TO RECENT STEPS TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN THE PROCURADURIA (SEE REF E), AND THE APPOINTMENT OF TWO AGGRESSIVE YOUNG LAWYERS TO HEAD THE INSTITUTION'S OFFICES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED], THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED. MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES WHO PARTICIPATE IN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS MAY NOW FACE PUBLIC HUMILIATION, DESTRUCTION OF THEIR CAREERS, AND, IN SOME CASES, END UP IN JAIL. OVER THE COMING MONTHS WE EXPECT THE NUMBER OF ACCUSATIONS OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES TO GROW AS WITNESSES WHO PREVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE REMAINED SILENT COME TO THE REALIZATION THAT THEIR TESTIMONY MAY NOW HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.

19. MANY OF THE ABUSES COMMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE ARMY HAVE COME IN THE COURSE OF OPERATIONS BY ARMED PARA-MILITARY GROUPS IN WHICH ARMY OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN HAVE PARTICIPATED. LINKS BETWEEN RURAL BASED MILITARY UNITS AND LOCAL PARA-MILITARY GROUPS ARE CLEARLY MUCH LESS NOW THAN THEY WERE IN THE RECENT PAST, HOWEVER. OVER THE PAST YEAR THE ARMY ITSELF HAS

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MOVED TO REMOVE FROM ITS RANKS OFFICERS WITH THE MOST

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NOTORIOUS CONNECTIONS WITH THE PARA-MILITARIES. IT  
HAS BEEN EXTREMELY RELUCTANT, HOWEVER, TO DISCIPLINE  
OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN FOR SPECIFIC RIGHTS

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ACTION ARA-01

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|      |         |         |         |         |         |        |         |
|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| INFO | LOG-00  | ADS-00  | AID-01  | INR-05  | SS-01   | OIC-02 | CIAE-00 |
|      | EB-01   | H-01    | IO-19   | NSCE-00 | NSAE-00 | SSO-01 | HA-09   |
|      | L-03    | LAB-04  | CTME-00 | TRSE-00 | PM-01   | PA-01  | OMB-01  |
|      | STR-18  | SIL-01  | INM-01  | INRE-00 | CG-00   | RP-10  | USIE-00 |
|      | JUSE-00 | DEAE-00 | FBIE-00 | SP-01   | SR-01   | PRS-01 | OIG-01  |
|      | SCT-03  | P-02    | /090 W  |         |         |        |         |

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7578

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY LIMA

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

SECDEF WASHDC

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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, KJUS, CO

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA -- WIDESPREAD VIOLATIONS. MOREOVER, MANY ARMY OFFICERS CONTINUE TO DISCOUNT VIRTUALLY ALL ALLEGATIONS OF MILITARY ABUSES AS PART OF A LEFTIST INSPIRED PLOT TO DISCREDIT THE MILITARY AS AN INSTITUTION.

20. A KEY WEAKNESS OF THE PROCURADURIA IS THAT ITS EFFECTIVENESS IS DEPENDENT ON THE COMMITMENT AND CAPABILITIES OF THE PROCURADOR GENERAL, WHO HAS COMPLETE LIBERTY TO HIRE AND FIRE SUBORDINATE EMPLOYEES. INCUMBENT PROCURADOR ALFONSO GOMEZ MENDEZ, A STAUNCH PROPONENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS SAID HE WILL

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NOT ACCEPT REELECTION WHEN HIS TERM EXPIRES THIS AUGUST (HE WILL LIKELY REMAIN IN OFFICE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS UNTIL HIS YET TO BE CHOSEN REPLACEMENT TAKES OVER, HOWEVER). IT IS BY NO MEANS CLEAR IF THE NEXT PROCURADOR GENERAL WILL SHARE GOMEZ'S INTEGRITY, COURAGE, AND COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS.

21. REGARDLESS OF THE CAPABILITIES OF THE NEXT

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PROCURADOR GENERAL, THE PROCURADURIA CAN NOT TAKE ON THE ARMY BY ITSELF--IT WILL NEED STRONG SUPPORT FROM THE INCOMING GAVIRIA ADMINISTRATION. [REDACTED] MET [REDACTED] B1  
RECENTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND CAME AWAY CONCERNED THAT THE NEW COMMANDER IN CHIEF IS EAGER TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION WITH THE MILITARY. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN [REDACTED] CONCERNS ARE WELL FOUNDED--GAVIRIA'S ADVISORS HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY VIEW HUMAN RIGHTS AS A KEY ISSUE. MOREOVER, AS MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT IN THE BARCO ADMINISTRATION GAVIRIA LAUNCHED A COURAGEOUS PUBLIC ATTACK AGAINST THE PARA-MILITARY GROUPS, WHICH WERE THEN OPERATING IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH MANY LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDERS.

THE EMBASSY'S ROLE  
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22. WE WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE TO HIGH RANKING OFFICERS IN THE ARMED FORCES AND NATIONAL POLICE THE IMPORTANCE WE PLACE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LINK BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONTINUING USG ASSISTANCE TO THE MILITARY AND POLICE. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE OUR CONCERN TO TOP ADVISORS OF PRESIDENT ELECT GAVIRIA. WE BELIEVE THAT U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MESSENGERS TO CONVEY TO THE OFFICER CORPS OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY THE TRUE GRAVITY

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OF THIS ISSUE. IN TWO RECENT MEETINGS WITH TOP COLOMBIAN OFFICERS THE DEFENSE ATTACHE HAS EXPRESSED USG CONCERN ABOUT ALLEGATIONS OF MILITARY ABUSES IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY ABOUT ALLEGATIONS THAT MILITARY AIRCRAFT, SOME OF WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY THE USG, HAVE ATTACKED CIVILIAN TOWNS. THE COLOMBIAN OFFICERS CLAIMED TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROMISED TO GET BACK TO US WITH MORE INFORMATION ON THESE REPORTED INCIDENTS.

MCNAMARA

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