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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01819 261609Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SNM-02 SSO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 INRE-00 JUSE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SY-04 TRSE-00

SS-15 SP-02 /046 W
---------- 058551
O R 261440Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE
DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7258
INFO DEA MIAMI RO

S E C R E T BOGOTA 1819

EMB FOR DEA

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJ: ZE-75-0012

1. ON 2/24, AS PER INFO RECEIVED FROM CRO AND REG 5, BDO CO-ORDINATED A BILATERAL OPERATION WITH THE CUSTOMS NARCOTICS UNIT.
INFO PROVIDED BY REG 5 INDICATED 11 TO 12 TONS OF MARIJUANA WERE LOCATED NEXT TO HOUSE AT CLANDESTINE FIELD. ON 2/24, BDO AGENTS RETRIEVED A MAP FROM BRANIFF FLT A SHARP PINPOINTED EXACT LOCATION OF FIELD. ON 2/24, BDO AGENTS COORDINATED OPERATIONS WITH COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS.

2. AT 12:25 PM ON 2/24, COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS NARCOTICS TEAM COMPOSED OF 11 MEMBERS, SA WM MATTHEWS AND SAIC OCTAVIO GONZALEZ, DEPARTED BOGOTA VIA TANA CHARTERED DC-3 AC WITH DESTINATION NARE IN THE VAUPES DEPT, 180 MILES SE OF BOGOTA.

3. AT APPROX 1450 HRS, CLANDESTINE AIRFIELD IN NARE WAS LOCATED. VISIBLE FROM THE AIR WERE SEVERAL LARGE BURLAP BAGS STACKED NEXT TO HOUSE AT ONE END OF AIRFIELD. FROM AC OCCUPANTS
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WERE ABLE TO SEE SEVERAL MALES RUNNING IN AND OUT OF THE HOUSE.

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4. DC-3 AC LANDED ON FIELD AND TAXIED NEAR TO THE HOUSE. AS PER PREVIOUS AGREEMENT 3 CUSTOMS AGENTS AND SAIC DEPLANED TO OBSERVE TERRAIN AND WHILE DOING SO PRETENDED TO BE CHECKING DAMAGE TO AC. WHILE ENGAGED IN THIS ACTIVITY, APPROX 6 MALES EMERGED FROM THE HOUSE WALKING TOWARDS THE AC AND FORMED A SEMICIRCLE AROUND THE AC. ALL SUBJS WERE ARMED WITH SMALL ARMS, RIFLES AND MACHINE GUNS. AT THIS POINT CUSTOMS AND SAIC RETURNED TO THE AC, FOR CUSTOMS OFFICIALS TO SECURE THEIR LONG RANGE WEAPONS. AT THIS POINT SUBJS ON GROUND OPENED FIRE ON THE AC AND ITS OCCUPANTS. SIMULTANEOUS WITH THIS ACTION AC PILOT PLACED MAYDAY CALL TO BOGOTA. WHILE AC WAS UNDER FIRE PILOT WAS ABLE TO START ENGINE AND TAXI AC AWAY FROM HOUSE. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS DEPLANED AND DEPLOYED THEMSELVES IN A STRAIGHT LINE FACING TMF ATTACKERS AND RETURNED FIRE. FIRE POWER BY CUSTOMS AGENTS PRODUCED PANIC AMONG AGGRESSORS WHO LEFT SCENE, FADING INTO THE NEARBY JUNGLE. CHARTER AC RECEIVED APPROX 20 DIRECT HITS ON FUSELAGE, WINGS AND TAIL SECTIONS.

5. CUSTOMS NARCOTICS TEAM SECURED AREA AND FOUND APPROX 23 THOUSAND LBS OF MARIJUANA IN THE AREA. MARIJUANA WAS STACKED IN PILES, AND SOME OF IT WAS IN 100 LB BURLAP BAGS SECURED WITH METAL BANDS. TWO SUBJS WERE TAKEN BY CUSTOMS INTO CUSTODY.

6. CLOSER INSPECTION OF THE PREMISES BY CUSTOMS AND QUESTIONING OF DEFENDANTS REVEALED THAT GROUND SUBJS WHO FIRST OPENED FIRE ON OCCUPANTS OF AC WERE MEMBERS OF THE DAS RURAL UNIT WHICH COVERS THIS AREA. OFFICIAL PAPERS FOUND AT THE SCENE INDICATED THAT THE DAS UNIT HAD BEEN AT THE SCENE AT LEAST SINCE 2/23.

7. ALL INDICATIONS ARE AT THIS TIME THAT DAS AND CUSTOMS UNITS AT THE SCENE MISTOOK EACH OTHERS IDENTITY AND SIMULTANEOUSLY ASSUMED THE OTHERS WERE TRAFFICKERS. DURING THE BRIEF MOMENTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER AC ARRIVAL, THERE WAS NO CLEAR ATTEMPT BY EITHER UNIT TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES.

8. SINCE THE DAS MEMBERS LEFT THE SCENE, CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AT SCENE PROCEEDED TO DESTROY APPROX 23,000 LBS OF MARIJUANA. AC FUEL AT THE SCENE WAS USED TO BURN THE NARCOTICS. CUSTOMS OFFICIALS PLACED SEVERAL 100 LB BAGS IN AC FOR RETURN TO BOGOTA.
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AT APPROX 1630 HRS AC WITH COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS, DEA PERSONNEL AND 2 DEFENDANTS, DEPARTED THE SCENE. TO THE BEST OF DEA PERSONNEL KNOWLEDGE, THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES NOR INJURIES AS A RESULT OF EXTREMELY HEAVY GUNFIRE AT SCENE. THERS WERE NO SHOTS FIRED BY DEA AGENTS PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION AS OBSE
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,8;3$ 3) *&9';$9 -840945 ?475- -5 1800 S RS AND ALL
OCCUPANTS WERE PLACED UNDER ARREST BY DAY WNITS AT THE AIRPORT.
IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT DAS WAS ALERTED OF INCIDENT BY MAYDAY
CALL BY THE PILOT DURING THE ATTACK. FROM THE AIRPORT DEA PER-
SONNEL, HIGH RANKING CUSTOMS AND DAS OFFICIALS PROCEEDED TO
DAS HQ TO MEET WITH CHIEF OF DAS GENERAL MATALLANA. IN BRIEF
CONVERSATION BETWEEN SAIC AND GEN MATALLANA, THE GEN EXPRESSED
HIS DISPLEASURE AND CONCERN ON THE INCIDENT AND ON DEA COORDINATION
WITH THE CUSTOMS SERVICE. DETAILS OF THIS MEETING AND QUESTIONING
BY DAS OFFICIALS ON THE INCIDENT WILL FOLLOW VIA MEMO. DAS CHIEF
REQUESTED MEETING WITH SAIC OCTAVIO GONZALEZ AND WM MATTHEWS ON
2/26 AT 10:30 HRS. IMMEDIATELY AFTER DEPARTING, DAS HQTS DEA
PERSONNEL PROCEEDED TO THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. AMB WAS BRIEF
IN DETAIL ON ALL RELATED INCIDENTS CONCERNING THIS MATTER. AS
OF THIS TIME, ANDPENDING RESOLUTION OF INSTANT CASE, ALL DEA
OPERATIONS IN COLOMBIA HAVE BEEN CALLED OFF. DEAREG 12 AGENTS
PRESENTLY IN BOGOTA WILL BE REQUESTED TO LEAVE FOR THE STATES
ASAP. BDO WILL MAINTAIN ALL OFFICES ADVISED AS THIS CASE DEVELOPS.
VAKY

NOTE BY OC/T: TEXT AS RECEIVED. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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