Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01874 271619Z

50
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 SCA-01 L-02 PRS-01 PA-01 USIE-00 FBIE-00

/051 W
---------- 078361
O 271520Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7286
INFO DEA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 1874

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJECT: DEA INVOLVEMENT IN INCIDENT BETWEEN DAS AND CUSTOMS

REF BOGOTA 1819

CARACAS FOR DEA

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL, ON FEB 25 THE COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS NARCOTICS UNIT FLEW TO A CLANDESTINE AIRFIELD LOCATED IN VAUPES DEPARTMENT, 180 MILES SOUTHEAST OF BOGOTA, TO INTERCEPT A MARIJUANA SHIPMENT. THE CUSTOMS UNIT ACTED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE DEA. DEA PAID FOR THE RENTAL OF THE PLANE AND DEA AGENTS GONZALEZ AND MATHEWS PARTICIPATED IN THE OPERATION. UPON ARRIVAL THE PLANE WAS FIRED UPON BY A GROUP OF MEN STATIONED ABOUT THE AIRFIELD. AN EXCHANGE OF AUTOMATIC RIFLE FIRE ENSUED. IT LATER TURNED OUT THAT A DAS CONTINGENT HAD INITIATED THE AUTOMATIC WEAPON FIRE. THE DAS, OPERATING ON INFORMATION ACQUIRED FROM ITS OWN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES, HAD ARRIVED ON THE SCENE PRIOR TO THE CUSTOMS. NO ONE WAS KILLED OR INJURED.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01874 271619Z

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

2. WHEN THE RENTED AIRCRAFT RETURNED FROM VAUPES ON THE EVENING OF FEB 25, THE CHIEF OF DAS, GEN MATALLANA, WAS WAITING FOR THE DEA AGENTS. AFTER DEMANDING AN EXPLANATION AND EXPRESSING HIS ANGER, MATALLANA ORDERED SAIC GONZALEZ PLACED UNDER ARREST. GONZALEZ WAS RELEASED A FEW HOURS LATER BY A LESSER OFFICIAL WHEN IT WAS EXPLAINED THAT GONZALEZ HAD DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY.

3. GEN MATALLANA CALLED GONZALEZ AND MATHEWS TO HIS OFFICE THE FOLLOWING DAY, FEB 26. HE EXPRESSED HIS DISPLEASURE AT AMERICAN AGENTS CONDUCTING NARCOTICS OPERATIONS WITH GOC AGENCIES OTHER THAN DAS WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH DAS. THE GENERAL ASSERTED THE PRIMARY NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBLITY OF THE DAS IN COLOMBIA. HE ADDED THAT IN THIS CASE COLOMBIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE HAD NO JURISDICTION AND DEA HAD NO RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN OPERATION. THE GENERAL STATED HE WOULD MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGAINST SAIC GONZALEZ AND S/A MATHEWS. HE ALSO STATED HE WOULD LODGE A COMPLAINT AGAINST THE EMBASSY.

4. IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF FEB 26, THE PRESS SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ISSUED A STATEMENT SIGNED BY BOTH GENERAL MATALLANA AND RICARDO PALAEZ, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CUSTOMS SERVICE. IN ESSENCE THE COMMUNIQUE STATED AS FOLLOWS: ON FEB 23 DAS, ACTING ON PRIOR INFORMATION GATHERED FROM ITS OWN SOURCES, CONFISCATED TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY SEVEN BALES OF MARIJUANA. THE DAS HAD CHOSEN FEB 25 AS THE DAY TO TAKE POSSESSION OF AND DESTROY THE SEIZED MARIJUANA. THIS ACTION WAS PROCEEDING NORMALLY WHEN THE CUSTOMS SERVICE, ACTING ON CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE OF NARCOTICS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES, INITIATED AN OPERATION WITH THE SAME OBJECTIVE. THIS OPERATION WAS NOT COORDINATED WITH OTHER SECURITY AGENCIES WHICH HAVE JURISDICTION IN THESE MATTERS. AS A RESULT OF THIS LACK OF COORDINATION, THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF SHOTS BUT FORTUNATELY NO OFFICIAL PERSONNEL WERE INJURED. THIS INCIDENT WILL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 01874 271619Z

SERVE TO BETTER THE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT ENTITIES WHICH HAVE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPRESSION OF NARCOTICS TRAFFIC. THE CHIEF OF STATE WILL SOON ISSUE A PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE WHICH WILL FIX CONCRETE RULES TO GUARANTEE SUCH COORDINATION.

5. THE INCIDENT ITSELF RECEIVED FRONT PAGE TREATMENT IN THE NEWSPAPERS. THE PRESS RELEASE HAS ALSO BEEN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

PRINTED IN FULL. EL TIEMPO, THE LEADING NEWSPAPER
OF BOGOTA, COMMENTED THAT QTE THE COMMUNIQUE,
HOWEVER, DID NOT MENTION IN ANY WAY THE REASON FOR THE
PRESENCE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF TWO FBI AGENTS WHO
WERE TRAVELLING IN THE COMPANY OF THE CUSTOMS AGENTS
IN THE TANA AIRCRAFT HK-1511, WHICH WAS HIT BY MORE
THAN 35 BULLETS DURING THE EXCHANGE OF FIRE WHICH
LASTED ALMOST ONE HOUR UNQTE.

6. COMMENT: GEN MATALLANA HAS CONSISTENTLY SOUGHT TO ACQUIRE
PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT FOR
THE DAS. WE BELIEVE THIS INCIDENT WILL PROVIDE
HIM WITH THE HANDLE HE NEEDS TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE.
WE EXPECT THAT MATALLANA WILL SEE TO IT THAT AN
OFFICIAL PROTEST IS LODGED AGAINST THE DEA AGENTS AND
AGAINST THE EMBASSY. WHAT CONSEQUENCES WILL FLOW FROM
THIS ADVENTURE ARE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT. IT DEPENDS
ON HOW AGGREIVED MATALLANA IS AND WHAT EFFECT HE HAD
ON PRESIDENT LOPEZ WITH WHOM HE HAD A PRIVATE AUDIENCE
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT. AT A MINIMUM WE
EXPECT SEVERE RESTRICTIONS TO BE PLACED ON THE
ACTIVITIES OF DEA AGENTS AND THE REQUIREMENT THAT
DEA ACQUIRE PRIOR CLEARANCE FROM DAS FOR ANY OPERATIONS
OF ANY KIND. WHILE WE REGRET THE COLOMBIAN REACTION,
WE ARE RELIEVED THAT EARLIER REPORTS TO THE EFFECT
THAT THE GOC WOULD PUBLICLY ATTACK THE EMBASSY AND
DEA HAVE THUS FAR BEEN PROVEN FALSE.
VAKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG TRAFFIC, REPORTS, MARIJUANA, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BOGOTA01874
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750069-0679
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975028/aaaaagzc.tel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BOGOTA 1819
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEA INVOLVEMENT IN INCIDENT BETWEEN DAS AND CUSTOMS
TAGS: SNAR, CO, DEA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006