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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2392
INFO DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 12018

DEPT FOR S/NM AND ARA, AID FOR SER/INC

EO: 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR CO

SUBJ: NARCOTICS: OPERATION KITCHEN, STATUS REPORT

SUMMARY

NARCOR HAS REVIEWED PROGRESS OPERATION KITCHEN IN BOGOTA, MEDELLIN AND CALI, VISITING LATTER TWO-CITIES LAST WEEK FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH DEA AGENTS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS. OPERATION -- NOW AT ITS HALF-WAY POINT-- IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY WITH LOW-PROFILE US INVOLVEMENT DESPITE SOME DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY SLOW ARRIVAL KEY EQUIPMENT AND LOW PRODUCTIVITY ON PART SOME US-BASED CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS. SUPPORT FROM NATIONAL POLICE (F-2) NARCOTICS UNIT IS EXCELLENT. IT APPEARS FROM EVIDENCE AVAILABLE SO FAR THAT KITCHEN WILL BE AT LEAST MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL IN TERMS OF SEIZURES AND ARRESTS OF TRAFFICKERS. OPERATION IS SCHEDULED TO WIND-UP ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 30.

1. OPERATION KITCHEN HAS BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE MID-OCTOBER, AND HAS BEEN IN FULL SWING FOR THE LAST MONTH FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF TDY DEA AGENTS AND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS (CIS) FROM THE UNITED STATES. ONE TDY SPANISH-SPEAKING DEA AGENT IS ASSIGNED TO EACH OF THREE MAJOR CITIES COVERED UNDER THE OPERATION: BOGOTA, CALI, MEDELLIN. THE AGENT WORKS IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY DIRECTLY WITH A COMMANDING OFFICER AND FIVE NATIONAL POLICE (F-2) NARCOTICS SPECIALISTS. THE AGENT IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR DIRECTING--IN CONCERT WITH HIS F-2 COUNTERPART--ACTIVITIES OF CONFIDENTIAL IN-

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FORMANTS SUPPLIED BY DEA-BOGOTA OR OTHER DEA OFFICES. ONE TDY DEA AGENT IS ALSO ASSIGNED TO BOGOTA TO GIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO DEA AND F-2 OPERATIVES ENGAGED IN THE OPERATION. SEVERAL OTHER DEA AGENTS FROM THE UNITED STATES HAVE ALSO PARTICIPATED IN SEGMENTS OF THE OPERATION ON A SHORT-TERM BASIS.

2. IN ACCORD WITH MISSION OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES, THE BULK OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPERATION KITCHEN FALLS UPON THE F-2 NARCOTICS UNIT, WHICH HAS EIGHTEEN FULL-TIME OFFICERS AND AGENTS ASSIGNED TO THE OPERATION AND MORE ON CALL. THE SIX F-2 AGENTS ASSIGNED IN EACH MAJOR CITY CONDUCT FOLLOW-UP INVESTIGATIONS BASED UPON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY DEA CIS OR FROM THEIR OWN INFORMANTS. F-2 ALSO CONTROLS WIRE TAPS--ADMISSIBLE AS EVIDENCE IN COLOMBIA--ON SUSPECTED MAJOR TRAFFICKERS. THE SIX-MAN F-2 NARCOTICS UNITS WORKING ON KITCHEN IN BOGOTA, MEDELLIN AND CALI CAN ALSO CALL UPON SUPPORT FROM THE MAIN, 60-MAN F-2 NARCO UNIT IN BOGOTA. MISSION GUIDELINES PROHIBIT DEA AGENTS FROM TAKING A DIRECT, OVERT PART IN ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS. THEREFORE, THE SUCCESS OF OPERATION KITCHEN IS IN LARGE MEASURE DEPENDENT UPON THE INVESTIGATORY AND OTHER SKILLS OF COLOMBIAN F-2 AGENTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS FAIR TO MENTION THAT F-2 OPERATIVES AND INFORMANTS BEGAN WORKING IN AUGUST 1975 ON AN OPERATION VERY SIMILAR IN CONCEPT TO KITCHEN. THIS INITIATIVE--CENTERED IN MEDELLIN--HAS BEEN CONTINUED WITH DEA AND CCINC SUPPORT AS PART OF OPERATION KITCHEN.

3. NARCOR CONSULTATIONS WITH DEA AGENTS ASSIGNED TO KITCHEN IN BOGOTA, MEDELLIN AND CALI INDICATE THEY ARE ENCOURAGED BY PROGRESS SO FAR. THIS OPTIMISM IS SHARED BY THE COMMANDER OF THE F-2 NARCOTICS UNIT6, CAPTAIN CAMPO. THOUGH ONLY ONE CLANDESTINE COCAINE LABORATORY--THE PRIME TARGET OF THE OPERATION--HAS YET BEEN CLOSED DOWN, KITCHEN INVESTIGATIONS HAVE ALREADY RESULTED IN THE SEIZURE OF MORE THAN 430 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE (PASTE AND HYDROCHLORIDE), ONE AIRCRAFT, SEVERAL VEHICLES AND THE ARREST OF NINE DEFENDANTS. ONE SINGLE SEIZURE TOTALED A RECORD 407 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE PASTE, EQUAL TO OVER 250 KILOGRAMS OF FINISHED PRODUCT. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE--WHICH IS ALSO COOPERATING IN INVESTIGATIONS RESULTING FROM OPERATION KITCHEN--HAS OBTAINED SEALED WARRANTS FOR THE ARREST OF SIX MAJOR COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS. THESE WARRANTS WILL BE SERVED AT A LATER DATE WHEN THE ARRESTS WILL NOT ENDANGER ON-GOING INVESTIGATIONS. IN ADDITION, ATTORNEY GENERAL LAWYERS AND F-2 ARE COOPERATING IN INVESTIGATING LEADS SUPPLIED

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BY DEA INFORMANTS ON HALF A DOZEN CLANDESTINE COCAINE LABORATORIES.

4. DESPITE THE GOOD PROGRESS SHOWN TO DATE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF FULL-SCALE OPERATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE KITCHEN PLAN HAVE DEFINITELY BEEN SLOWED BY SEVERAL FACTORS INCLUDING THE SLOW ARRIVAL OF RADIO PARTS AND THE NON-PRODUCTIVITY OF SOME CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS IMPORTED FROM THE UNITED STATES. THE THREE TDY DEA LIASON OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO OPERATION KITCHEN REPORT THAT SHORT-RANGE RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ARE INADEQUATE FOR SURVEILLANCE AND OTHER OPERATIONS REQUIRING CLOSE COORDINATION AMONG F-2 OPERATIVES. THEY ALSO EXPRESSED THE NEED FOR TYPEWRITERS, TAPE RECORDERS AND CAMERAS, ALL OF WHICH HAVE BEEN ON-ORDER FROM DEA-WASHINGTON FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, BUT WERE APPARENTLY LOST IN TRANSIT. THE WORK OF SOME CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS HAS ALSO BEEN DISAPPOINTING, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE RELATIVELY HIGH TURN-OVER IN INFORMANTS BROUGHT IN FROM THE US. LOCAL INFORMANTS RECRUITED BY DEA BOGOTA, HOWEVER, ARE PERFORMING WELL.

5. THE LOCAL SECURITY SITUATION--PARTICULARLY IN MEDELLIN--IS ALSO HAVING A DAMPENING EFFECT ON KITCHEN. A CONTINUING RASH OF KIDNAPPINGS, BANK ROBBERIES AND OTHER MAJOR CRIMES--SOME OF THEM POLITICALLY MOTIVATED--HAS RESULTED IN GENERALLY TIGHTER SECURITY CONTROLS THOROUGHOUT COLOMBIA. IN MEDELLIN, THIS MEANS MOBILE ROAD BLOCKS ON HIGHWAYS LEADING IN AND OUT OF TOWN, MILITARY PATROLS IN CITY STREETS AND THE FREQUENT USE OF STOP-AND-FRISK METHODS. AS A RESULT, DRUG TRAFFICKERS ARE TAKING MORE ELABORATE PRECAUTIONS TO KEEP FROM GETTING CAUGHT IN THE WIDENING SECURITY NET. THESE PRECAUTIONS ARE, IN TURN, AFFECTING THE ACCESS OF DEA INFORMANTS TO INFORMATION ON THE LOCATION OF CLANDESTINE LABS AND COCAINE CACHES.

6. DESPITE THE GENERALIZED PUBLIC ORDER CRACK-DOWN, THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS INVOLVING F-2 OR DEA AGENTS WORKING OPERATION KITCHEN AND OTHER GOC SECURITY SERVICES. THE HEADS OF ALL GOC SECURITY SERVICES HAVE, OF COURSE, BEEN THOROUGHLY BRIEFED ON KITCHEN BY BOTH THE MISSION AND THE GOC ATTORNEY GENERAL. OUTSIDE KNOWLEDGE OF THE OPERATION HAS SIMILARLY BEEN LIMITED TO THE PRESIDENT AND A HANDFUL OF KEY MINISTERS. PUBLICITY ON ARRESTS AND SEIZURES RESULTING FROM KITCHEN IS ENTIRELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE F-2 AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. PUBLICITY GIVEN TO INDIVIDUAL ARREST CASES MAKES NO MENTION OF DEA OR USG INVOLVEMENT.

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7. MISSION WILL MAKE AT LEAST ONE ADDITIONAL INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT ON OPERATION KITCHEN PRIOR TO JANUARY 30, WHEN THE OPERATION IS SCHEDULED TO END. DEA MAKES SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPHIC REPORTS ON OPERATION KITCHEN, WHICH ARE REPEATED TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR INFORMATION.

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