Declassified Case: NW# 60872 Date: 07-20-2023

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SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR SHELDON VANCE VISITED COLOMBIA JANUARY 20 THRU 23 FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH MISSION OFFICERS AND GOC OFFICIALS ON NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM. VANCE MET WITH MISSION NARCOTICS COMMITTEE AND INDIVIDUALLY WITH AMBASSADOR VAKY, NARCOR [redacted] DEA, AID AND USIS. HE HELD TALKS WITH MINFORNAFFS, MINJUSTICE,

EXECSEC NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DANGEROUS DRUGS, CHIEF NATIONAL POLICE AND ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL. PRINCIPAL TOPIC OF DISCUSSION WAS GOC PLANNING FOR REORGANIZATION OF ITS NARCOTICS INTERDICTION EFFORT UNDER MILITARY COMMAND TO ASSURE EFFECTIVE COORDINATION AND JOINT PRELIMINARY PLANNING FOR ADDITIONAL US NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. VANCE MET WITH GOC FORNMIN LEIVANO FOR TWO-HOUR LUNCHEON SESSION DEVOTED MAINLY TO DISCUSSIONS OF IMPENDING GOC REORGANIZATION ITS NARCOTICS INFORCEMENT PROGRAM. LIEVANO CONFIRMED THAT MINDEFENSE WOULD TAKE-OVER ROLE OF COORDINATING OPERATIONS ALL EXISTING DRUG ENFORCEMENT UNITS IN NATIONAL POLICE (F-2), DAS, CUSTOMS AND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE. HE PROMISED DETAILED MINDEFENSE BRIEFING ON PROPOSED REORGANIZATION NEXT WEEK FOR MISSION NARCOTICS COMMITTEE. HE STATED GOC DETERMINATION TO NAME TOUGH-MINDED MILITARY OFFICER TO MANAGE WHAT HE LABERED GOC "WAR ON DRUGS", AND GOC REQUEST FOR INCREASED US ASSISTANCE IN THE FORM OF HELICOPTERS, FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT FOR SPOTTING, PATROL BOATS AND COMMUNICATIONS TO BACK THIS EFFORT. AMBASSADOR VANCE RESPONDING POSITIVELY, SUGGESTED THAT MAJOR EFFORT REQUIRED SHOULD BE PHASED, WITH FIRST MAJOR PUSH AIMED AT TRAFFICKERS OP- ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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ERATING FROM COLOMBIA'S NORTH (CARIBBEAN) COAST. HE PROMISED SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO SPECIFIC GOC REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT MENTIONED IN SUPPORT PROPOSED REINFORCED DRUG ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. IN THIS CONNECTION VANCE STRESSED NEED FOR BETTER INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION CAPABILITY ON PART COMBINED GOC NARCOTICS STAFF.

2. WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NEED FOR HELICOPTERS FOR FAST REACTION AGAINST IDENTIFIED CLANDESTINE COCAINE LABORATORIES AND TRAFFICKER AIRSTRIPS AND TRAFFICKING ROUTES, MINISTER ASSURED US THAT GOC WOULD SUPPLY FUEL AND AIR FORCE COULD SUPPLY PILOTS, MECHANICS, AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF BOTH HELICOPTERS AND LIGHT FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT. HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT SHORT-TERM MANUFACTURERS SERVICE CONTRACT AND TRAINING WOULD BE OF VALUE TO ASSURE SMOOTH INITIAL PHASE-IN OF ANY NEW EQUIPMENT, PARTICULARLY AIRCRAFT, AND THAT SPARE PARTS SHOULD BE ENVISAGED.

3. TURNING TO OTHER RELATED SUBJECTS, AMBASSADOR VANCE SUGGESTED THAT COLOMBIA SHOULD SPEED ITS RATIFICATION OF THE AMENDING PROTOCOL TO THE SINGLE CONVENTION ON NARCOTICS AND THE PSYCHOTROPIC CONVENTION. HE ALSO SUGGESTED COLOMBIA BETTER CONTROL THE PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND SALE OF PHARMACEUTICALS.

4. THE MINISTER, IN TURN, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR STRONG USG SUPPORT FOR GOC DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMS, MENTIONING DEA TOGETHER WITH OTHER ELEMENTS EMBASSY.

5. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR VANCE, NATIONAL POLICE COMMANDER MAJOR GENERAL HENRY GARCIA PRESENTED CONVINCING ARGU-

MENTS SUPPORTING THE NEED FOR HELICOPTERS AND LIGHT AIRCRAFT FOR USE AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS AND PROCESSORS OPERATING IN AND FROM ISOLATED REGIONS OF THIS MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY. GARCIA NOTED THAT THE POLICE AT PRESENT HAVE ONLY ONE EIGHT-PASSENGER AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE FOR ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS. IMPROVED AIR INTERVENTION AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED, HE SAID, TO SUPPORT EXPANDING POLICE NARCOTICS OPERATIONS. GARCIA NOTED THAT HE HAS GIVEN ORDERS TO BEEF-UP THE EXISTING F-2 NARCOTICS UNIT BY THE ADDITION OF NEW ACADEMY GRADUATES. ADDITIONALY, NATIONAL POLICE HAS OVER PAST YEAR CREATED MORE THAN A DOZEN NEW POLICE FRONTIER POSTS ALONG COCAINE ROUTES LEADING FROM ECUADOR AND PERU.
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6. VANCE'S CONVERSATION WITH ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL MIGUEL SANCHEZ MENDEZ DETAILED US-GOC COOPERATION IN EXCHANGES OF EVIDENCE ON MAJOR TRAFFICKERS, AND PLANNED GOC MODIFICATIONS TO ITS PENAL CODE. SANCHEZ EXPRESSED DETERMINATION TO PRESS AHEAD WITH A TEST COURT CASE AGAINST A COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKER USING EVIDENCE COLLECTED IN THE US. HE BRIEFED VANCE ON PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO COLOMBIA'S CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR PROSECUTIONS IN COLOMBIA OF COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKERS ARRESTED IN THE UNITED STATES. SANCHEZ AND VANCE ALSO DISCUSSED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO FOR CONSULTATIONS ON THE ABOVE AND OTHER PROCEDURAL JUDICIAL ISSUES.

7. FYI. CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN VANCE AND MISSION DAO REVEAL THAT GOC AIR FORCE HAS IN INVENTORY ONLY 15 HELICOPTERS OF WHICH 8 ARE PRESENTLY OPERATIONAL. DAO CONFIRMED THAT AIR FORCE FULLY CAPABLE OF SUPPLYING BOTH AIR CREWS AND MAINTENANCE FOR ADDITIONAL HELICOPTERS. PRESENT AF HELICOPTER FLEET IS, AS WE HAVE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME, FULLY COMMITED TO PRIORITY COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS. LIGHT, FIXED-WING A/C CAPABILITIES SIMILARILY LIMITED.

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