Message Text

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ACTION SNM-02

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NSAE-00 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-03 OMB-01 L-03

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P R 031751Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3816
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 2314

DEA FOR EOIL

CARACAS FOR DEA

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJ: GOC NARCOTICS REORGANIZATION AND AID REQUEST

REF: STATE 40131

1. SUMMARY. REFTEL DOES NOT ADVANCE US VERY FAR. THE TERMS OF THE CABLE IMPLY OR SUGGEST TO US CERTAIN LIMITATIONS AND MIND-SETS AS REGARDS HOW THE DEPARTMENT SEES THE SITUATION HERE WHICH CONCERN US. WE ARE ALSO UNSURE OF THE OPERATIVE MEANING OF SOME OF THE PROPOSALS, AND WE REQUIRE SOME CLARIFICATION. THIS CABLE THEREFORE COMMENTS AND ASKS FOR CLARIFICATION ON A) THE DEPARTMENT'S OPINION OF GOC MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE NARCOTICS EFFORT; B) THE APPROACH TO THE CONGRESS REGARDING A PROGRAM FOR COLOMBIA; C) COLOMBIA'S PRIORITY; D) THE DEPARTMENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF "PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT", WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND WHAT IS DESIRED: AND E) THE PROPOSAL FOR A TWO-STEP CONSULTATION IN THE FIELD. END SUMMARY.

2. I. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT.
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REFTEL SUGGESTS TO US THAT WASHINGTON DOES NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF

MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN THE NARCOTICS EFFORT. PARTS OF THE CABLE SEEM TO WANT TO REDEFINE OR QUALIFY THE SITUATION SO AS TO MINIMUZE THE MILITARY ROLE, E.G. THE LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 2 AND THE LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 7. THE ASSUMPTION IN THE LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 2 IS AN UNSAFE ONE. A MILITARY OFFICER WILL NOT ONLY COMMAND AND COORDINATE, BUT IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT MILITARY UNITS WILL BE INVOLVED TOGETHER WITH, RPT TOGETHER WITH, DAS, POLICE AND CUSTOMS. THE FACILITIES OF ALL RPT ALL SECURITY FORCES WILL BE POOLED, AND MILITARY INPUTS INTO INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, INTERDICTING AND ENFORCING ARE TO BE EXPECTED. WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAST SENTENCE OF PARA 7 NONE OF THE GOC AGENCIES WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ARE SPECIFICALLY TASKED WITH DRUG ENFORCEMENT ALONE. F-2 AND DAS ALSO HAVE GENERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. THEY DO HAVE SPECIALIZED AND DIFFERENTIATED NARCOTICS PERSONNEL, BUT THIS WOULD ALSO OCCUR UNDER THE UNIFIED COMMAND CONCEPT WITH BOTH MILITARY AND POLICE/DAS PERSONNEL.

3. THERE ARE NOT MANY ALTERNATIVES TO THIS ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN. NEITHER THE AG. NOR THE DRUG COUNCIL, NOR JUSTICE, NOR ANY OF THE POLICE ENTITIES THEMSELVES CAN, IN THE GOC LEGAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT, PERFORM THAT UNIFYING, COORDINATING FUNCTION. AND THIS IS THE WAY THE GOC WANTS TO DO IT. THEREFORE, OUR ALTERNATIVES ARE TO ACCEPT WHAT THE GOC WANTS TO DO AND WORK WITH IT OR TELL THE GOC WE CANNOT WORK WITH THAT PARTICULARHUATTERN AND CONTINUE AS WE NOW ARE. WE DO NOT FAVOR THE LATTER BECAUSE A) IT WOULD BE RESENTED AS REFLECTING ON THE MILITARY; B) IT WOULD BE SEEN BY THE GOC AS PRESUMPTUOUS OF US; C) IT WOULD NOT IN FACT BE AS EFFECTIVE AN ANTI-DRUG EFFORT AS AN ALL-OUT COORDINATED ONE; AND D) THE GOC WOULD READ IT AS INDICATING WE ARE NOT REALLY WILLING TO DO ANYTHING MAJOR OR SPECIAL.

4. WE WOULD THERFORE APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S FRANK CONCLUSIONS AS REGARDS THE MOD'S INVOLVEMENT. SHOULD WE PROCEED DOWN THIS ROAD OR NOT? WE UNDERSTAND WASHINGTON'S CONCERNS AS REGARDS HOW THE CONGRESS WILL VIEW IT, THE DANGER OF IT BEING SEEN AS DISGUISED MILITARY AID, ETC. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT WE CAN COMPARTMENTALIZE THE EQUIPMENT PROVIDED AND THAT WE CAN LEGITIMATELY REQUIRE AND RECEIVE A GOC COMMITMENT TO USE IT ONLY FOR NARCOTICS. BUT WE WILL HAVE TO MONITOR ITS USE, AND NO GUARANTEE CAN BE GIVEN IN ADVANCE. (WE VIEW REFTEL'S STATEMENT IN PARA 6 THAT "WE CONFIDENTIAL

MUST BE ABSOLUTELY ASSURED..." AS RHETORICAL EMPHASIS; NO ONE CAN LITERALLY "ABSOLUTELY" ASSURE ANYONE OF ANYTHING.) THE QUESTION IS ARE WE PREPARED TO TAKE THIS CHANCE. WE SHOULD DECIDE THAT NOW.

5. II. CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS.
WE ARE A LITTLE PUZZLED BY THE APPARENT GREAT CAUTION--EVEN TEMERITY--WITH WHICH WE SEEM TO APPROACH THE IDEA OF SUBMITTING A REQUEST TO CONGRESS. WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS, THE OMB STRIC-

TURES, THE MOOD, AND ALL THE NUANCES. BUT WHAT REFTEL SEEMS TO BE SAYING IS THAT REGARDLESS OF HOW LOGICAL OR JUSTIFIED A PLAN ONE MIGHT DRAW UP, WE ARE LIMITING OURSELVES IN ADVANCE BY WHAT WE JUDGE CONGRESS WILL OR WILL NOT DO. OUR QUESTION IS, WHY SHOULD WE NOT PUT IT UP TO THE CONGRESS, AND TEST IT THERE? ALWAYS ASSUMING WE CAN PRESENT A REASONABLE AND JUSTIFIED REQUEST, WHY SHOULD WE NOT PRESENT THE REQUEST EVEN IF HIGHER THAN THE 8-10 MILLION PLANNING FIGURE, AND IF THE CONGRESS VOTES IT DOWN, SO BE IT. BUT IT WILL AT LEAST BE CLEAR WHERE THE ONUS LIES. WE RAISE THIS POINT BECAUSE WE THINK IT RELEVANT IN TERMS OF MINDSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES, AND BECAUSE WE REALY DO THINK THAT A GOOD CASE CAN BE MADE IN THE MAGNITUDES DESCRIBED IN BOGOTA 1671 WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE PLANNING FIGURE (PARA 5 REFTEL).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 2314

DEA FOR EOIL; CARACAS FOR DEA

6. III. COLOMBIA'S PRIORITY.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND OPERATIVE MEANING OF PARA 6 OF REFTEL? HOW FAR IS COLOMBIA DOWN THE LIST FROM OTHER COUNTRIES? DOES THE PRIORITY OF DATE OF AID COMMITMENTS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE PRIORITY OF NEED? ARE WE TO READ THAT PARAGRAPH AS MEANING THAT AN ALL-OUT EFFORT IN COLOMBIA AS THE GOC WANTS TO DO, EVEN IF IT COULD BE EFFECTIVE, IS NOT HIGH ENOUGH ON OUR PRIORITY LIST TO WARRANT THE NECESSARY RESOURCES IF THESE ARE OVER A GIVEN LEVEL?

ABOVE ALL, HOW ARE WE--AND THE CLOMBIANS--TO UNDERSTAND PARAGRAPH 6 IN THE LIGHT OF PRESIDENT FORD'S FEBRUARY 23 STATEMENT (STATE 45483) GROUPING COLOMBIA WITH MEXICO: "I HAVE ALSO MET WITH THE LEADERS OF MEXICO, TURKEY AND COLOMBIA...TO ASSURE THEM OF MY FULL COMMITMENT TO CURBING THE ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN DRUGS. I WAN TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AN ALL-OUT FEDERAL EFFORT TO COMBAT THE DRUG MENACE". THOSE ADJECTIVES ARE UNQUALIFIED.

7. IV. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.
THE TENOR OF REFTEL'S INSISTENCE THAT THERE MUST BE A "REALISTIC CONTROL PROGRAM" AND "CAREFULLY PLANNED AND DESCRIBED APPROACHES", SUGGESTS TO US THAT THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT YET ACCEPT THE OUTLINES OF THE CONTROL PROGRAM THE GOC HAS PROPOSED. IT HAS BEEN OUR VIEW
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THAT THESE GENERAL OUTLINES DO MEET THE CRITERIA IN THE SUMMARY PARAGRAPH OF REFTEL (ITEMS A AND B), ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THAT THESE OUTLINES MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND STAFFED OUT FURTHER.

8. IN THIS CONNECTION WE EMPHASIZE AGAIN THAT THE GOC HAS NOT PUT THE REORGANIZATION INTO EFFECT AND WILL NOT DO SO UNTIL IT KNOWS WHAT AID IS AVAILABLE SO THAT IT CAN KNOW WHAT LEVEL OF NEW EFFORT IT MUST ORGANIZE. THE PRESIDENT WILL NOT ISSUE THE DIRECTIVES NOR TASK THE ENTITIES UNTIL THE BROAD OUTLINES OF OUR COOPERATION ARE ESTABLISHED. FURTHER, THE GOC IS NOT PREPARED TO ESTABLISH IN ADVANCE THE MINUTE DETAILS OF OPERATIONAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES; TO A LARGE DEGREE IT CANNOT DO THIS SATISFACTORITY IN ADVANCE/ IT WILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT "ON THE JOB". WHAT CAN BE DONE IS TO LAY OUT LINES OF AUTHORITY, THE PRINCIPLE OF OPERATIONS, AND THE AREAS OF ATTACK, BOTH GEOGRAPHICAL AND FUNCTIONAL. EQUIPMENT NEEDS CAN BE ESTIMATED WITH SOME ACCURACY KNOWING THESE THINGS. THEREFORE, THE QUESTION ARISED WHAT DETAIL DO WE REALLY REQUIRE?

9. IT IS FRANKLY HARD FOR US TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR BUREAUCRACY HAS BEEN SO TAKEN ABACK BY THE ALACRITY AND AMBITION WITH WHICH THE GOC RESPONDED TO OUR URGINGS FOR INCREASED INTERDICTION EFFORTS, THAT WE ARE NOW SCRAMBLING AROUND TO INSURE IT DOES NOT COST TOO MUCH. WE APPEAR TO BE REQUIRING OF THE COLOMBIANS A PRECIAION IN PLANNING AND ADVANCED OPERATIONAL DETAIL THAT WE WOULD NOT REQUIRE OF OURSELVES. INDEED, REFTEL'S APPROACH IS REMINISCENT OF A DEVELOPMENT LOAN REQUIRING ALL SORTS OF PROOF, ASSURANCES AND PLANNING TO MERIT THE AID. WHEREAS, THIS ASSISTANCE IS BASICALLY FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND WE OUGHT TO BE PREPARED TO PUSH THE PACE AND TAKE SOME ACTS OF FAITH.

10. THE "CHICKEN AND EGG" FORMULATION IS REALLY A SERIOUS ISSUE. WE ARE SAYING THAT THE COLOMBIANS MUST PUT THE NEW PLAN INTO EFFECT AND CROSS ALL THE T'S AND DOT ALL THE I'S BEFORE WE CAN FIGURE

OUT WHAT LEVEL OF AID TO PROVIDE. THEY ARE SAYING THAT THEY CANNOT ELABORATE THE ORGANIZATION AND STRATEGY UNTIL THEY KNOW WHAT LEVEL OF RESOURCES AND AID THEY CAN GET FROM US, AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE CAN "NEGOTIATE" THEM OUT OF THAT STANCE. AND SO WE ARE DANCING AROUND EACH OTHER, WITH EACH SIDE SEEKING TO BE REASSURED OF THE GOOD FAITH OF THE OTHER.

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11. V. FIELD CONSULTATIONS.
WE ARE UNCLEAR AS TO THE PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THE TWO-STEP FIELD CONSULTATION (LAST PARA REFTEL). BEFORE WE CAN CONCUR IN THIS WE WOULD NEED SOME CLARIFICATION. WE WERE SURPRISED AT THE EXPRESSED NEED FOR INFORMATION AS TH THE "NATURE, SCOPE AND INCIDENCE OF THE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC PROBLEM IN COLOMBIA". WE HAD ASSUMED THAT THE NATURE OF THE COLOMBIAN TRAFFICKING PROBLEM WAS UNDERSTOOD BY WASHINGTON. WE ARE NOT CLEAR AS TO WHAT "UP TO DATE ANALYSIS" MEANS OR WHAT IS REQUIRED. WHAT IS IT THAT THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT KNOW OR CANNOT FIND OUT FROM DEA OR US? IS A FIELD VISIT ESSENTIAL TO REASSURE THE DEPARTMENT AS TO THE SITUATION?

12. SECONDLY, WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED TDY TEAM INTEND TO DO HERE AS TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT? IF IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THE TEAM WOULD SEEK TO NEGOTIATE A COMMAND/CONTROL AND OPERATIONAL PATTERN AND STRATEGY, OR MODIFICATIONS THEREIN; IF IT WOULD INTEND TO QUIZ THE GOC AS TO WHY IT DOES NOT BUY HELICOPTERS, AND WHAT RESOURCES IT ENTENDS TO PUT IN; IF IT SEEKS TO DEFINE ROLES WITH AND FOR COLOMBIANS--WE ARE NOT SURE THAT THIS WOULD BE PRODUCTIVE. NOR DO WE THINK WE CAN NEGOTIATE A DETAILED PLAN IN ADVANCE OF SOME INDICATION BY US OF AN AID LEVEL. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE IDEA IS THAT THE EXPERTS WOULD COME TO SEEK HOW WE CAN BEST UTILIZE US AID AND EQUIPMENT IN TERMS OF WHAT THE GOC IS PREPARED TO DO, THEN IT MIGHT BE USEFUL. TO DO THIS, HOWEVER, WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO START FROM SOME PLANNING MAGNITUDE--NOT A COMMITMENT, NOT EVEN A SPECIFIC FIGURE, BUT SOME MAGNITUDE TO BE WORKED UP OR DOWN AS THE DISCUSSIONS INDICATE, AND ALWAYS CONDITIONED ON APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS. WE DO NOT FRANKLY UNDERSTAND THE STATEMENT THAT "WE REGARD THE CITATION OF AN OVERALL DOLLAR AMOUNT AND SPECIFICATION OF EQUIPMENT TO BE PREMATURE" ESPECIALLY IN THE LIGHT OF STATE 13127.
IN ANY CASE WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE WILL SEE ANY MOVEMENT UNTIL WE ARE READY TO REOPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE GOC ON THE BASIS OF SOME APPROXIMATE MAGNITUDE THAT WE ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE (OR TO ASK CONGRESS TO PROVIDE). THAT IS OUR RECOMMENDATION.
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