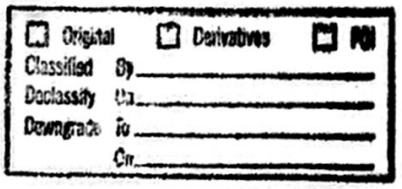
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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1084

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BOGOTA 3560

EXDIS

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: SNAR,CO
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING IN COLOMBIA AND RELATED HIGH LEVEL CORRUPTION

REF: BOGOTA 3471

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1. REFTEL CONTAINED A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF INFOR-
MATION AVAILABLE TO US [redacted] IT WAS CLEARED BY THE SENIOR
STATE, DEA, AID, AND SRF OFFICIALS OF THE MISSION
INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS CONTROL. THIS FOLLOW-UP MESSAGE,
CONCERNING SUGGESTED COURSES OF ACTION, REPRESENTS
MY PERSONAL VIEWS, BASED ON SOME 20 MONTHS OF SUPER-
VISION OF THE MISSIVN'S NARCOTICS PROGRAM AS DCM AND
CHARGE. I THINK THAT THESE VIEWS ARE WIDELY
SHARED BY MY COLLEAGUES HERE BUT I HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED
TO PRODUCE A CONSENSUS NOT TO ACHIEVE AT THE MISSION-
LEVEL AN INTER-AGENCY AGREEMENT TO SPECIFIC COURSES
OF ACTION, BELIEVING THAT THIS SHOULD BE DONE INSTEAD
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AT THE WASHINGTON LEVEL. I HAVE ENCOURAGED EACH OF THE
AGENCY HEADS CONCERNED TO SUBMIT THEIR OWN PERSONAL
COMMENTS, IF THEY WISH, TO THEIR RESPECTIVE HEADQUARTERS.

[redacted]

[redacted]

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AT PRESENT, HOWEVER, [redacted] ARE GOOD.

4. THERE IS ALSO NO DOUBT THAT [redacted] IS WELL AWARE [redacted]

KNOWLEDGE, HOWEVER, [redacted] HAS NOT SPEARHEADED ACTIONS AGAINST SUCH PERSONS. [redacted] HAS OF COURSE BEEN PREOCCUPIES, ESPECIALLY RECENTLY, WITH MANY OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, [redacted] SEEMS MORE INCLINED TO SOMEWHAT DEVIOUS, CONTRIVED,COUNTER-

BALANCED APPOINTMENTS OF OFFICIALS RATHER THATN TO PURGES. [redacted] PROBABLY RATIONALIZES SUCH METHODS AS INGENIOUS OR NECESSARY FOR [redacted] OWN PURPOSE IN RUNNING THIS PERPLEXING NATION BUT THEY STRIKE OUTSIDERS AS EITHER UNFATHOMABLE OR AS SIGNS OF BAD JUDGEMENT IN STAFFING [redacted]

5. THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION, HOWEVER, THAT THE [redacted] IS GREATLY TROUBLED BY THE NARCOTICS SITUATION. [redacted] IS FRUSTRATED BY [redacted] INABILITY TO COPE WITH IT AND SEES MATTERS GETTING MUCH WORSE. THE ANALOGY [redacted] HAS MADE TO CHINA AT THE TIME OF THE OPIUM WAR IS THUS NOT ENTIRELY RHETORICAL. LOPEZ RECOGNIZES THAT THE WEAKNESSES OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM ARE IN LARGE PART RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT SITUATION (WHICH IS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF A BROADER CRIME PROBLEM; SEE 76 BOGOTA 8755) AND [redacted] IS ATTEMPTING TO REMEDY THIS THROUGH JUDICIAL REFORM, THOUGH PROBABLY WITH LITTLE OPTIMISM. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT [redacted] IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE AND DEFENSIVE ABOUT FOREIGN CRITICISM OF COLOMBIA'S NARCOTICS PROGRAM. (INDEED [redacted] HAS A LOW TOLERANCE FOR ANY SORT OF OUTSIDE CRITICISM OF [redacted] ESPECIALLY FROM AMERICANS.)

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WHEN NOT COUNTER-ATTACKING [redacted] FOREIGN CRITICS [redacted] FREQUENTLY EXPRESSES THE VIEW THAT THE FAULT LIES ESSENTIALLY WITH THE US BECAUSE IT PROVIDES AN INSATIABLE MARKET FOR COCAINE. THIS THEORY WAS MOST RECENTLY REIT-RATED IN A DIPLOMATIC NOTE FROM THE [redacted] WHO PERSONALLY SHARES [redacted] THIS TYPE OF REACTION WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY GREET ANY

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ACCUSATORY APPROACH TO [redacted] THAT WE MIGHT CONTEMPLATE. IN ADDITION, [redacted] IS LIKELY TO ASK FOR MORE FUNDS AND COMMODITIES AND TO IMPLY THAT WE DID NOT FOLLOW THROUGH ON PREVIOUS COMMITMENTS. GIVEN THE OTHER DOMESTIC PROBLEMS THE [redacted] HANDS, A HIGH DEGREE OF IRASCIBILITY AND IRRITATION WOULD PROBABLY ACCOMPANY THAT REACTION, AS SOME RECENT EXPLOSION IN OTHER AREAS HAVE RECENTLY ILLUSTRATED.

6. I AM NOT, HOWEVER, SUGGESTING THAT THIS SHOULD BE A TABOO SUBJECT IN HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH [redacted] IS QUITE CAPABLE OF RAISING IT (IF ONLY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE US ROLE). THOUGH CARE IS NECESSARY, WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH OPPORTUNITIES TO CORRECT THE RECORD, REMIND [redacted] OF OUR ASSISTANCE, ENDORSE [redacted] JUDICIAL REFORMS BUT ALSO -- AND THIS IS IMPORTANT -- STRESS THAT WE NATURALLY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE AID WE HAVE GIVEN AND HAVE IN THE PIPE-LINE, AND THAT THE PROVISION OF FUTURE ASSISTANCE MUST BE GOVERNED BY THE DEGREE OF RESULTS WE (AND THE CONGRESS) PERCEIVE. [redacted]

SO THAT [redacted] AND [redacted] CLOSEST COLLEAGUES WILL NOT MISTAKE A DROP OFF IN ASSISTANCE AS A LACK OF INTEREST OR

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ACTION SS-25

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COMMITMENT BUT RATHER AS SOMETHING DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLOMBIAN NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORTS.

7. I AM NOT SANGUINE THAT THIS APPROACH WOULD SPUR THE [redacted] TO MORE DECISIVE ACTION. IT MIGHT DO SO, AND THIS WOULD BE ANOTHER ARGUMENT FOR IT. HOWEVER, [redacted] WITH COUNTLESS PROBLEMS

AND NEARING THE END OF [redacted] IS NOT, IN MY VIEW, CAPABLE OF DOING MUCH TO REMEDY THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING SITUATION ANY MORE THAN [redacted] CAN COPE WITH THE WIDER PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC CRIME, WHICH IS GROWING AT A TERRIBLE RATE (SEE 76 BOGOTA 8755 AND A-95). AND, IF [redacted] THERE WILL BE EVEN LESS LIKELIHOOD OF EFFECTIVE [redacted] ACTION.

8. CONSEQUENTLY, I BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO PURSUE AND SAFEGUARD US INTEREST AS BEST WE CAN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS DEPLORABLE SITUATION SINCE THERE IS, IN MY VIEW, NO FORSEEABLE PROSPECT OF SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGING THESE CONDITIONS. I THINK WE SHOULD HOWEVER, AVOID HAVING THIS PROBLEM POISON OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH COLOMBIA BECAUSE, AS OUR PARM SUBMISSION DISCUSSES, WE HAVE MANY OTHER IMPORTANT INTERESTS HERE. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO TRY TO PRESSURE THE

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[redacted] BY THREATENING OR TAKING REPRISALS IN, FOR EXAMPLE, THE TRADE OR MILITARY ASSISTANCE FIELDS. AS I'VE DISCUSSED ABOVE, THIS COULD NOT LEAD TO A SUBSTIANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE NARCOTICS SITUATION AND IT CERTAINLY WOULD WORSEN OUR RELATIONS IN ADDITIONAL SECTORS AND ENDANGER OTHER USG INTEREST.

9. WITHIN THIS CONTEXT, THEN, I BELIEVE WE MUST, FIRST OF ALL, CONTINUE AND STEP UP OUR NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES IN COLOMBIA. TO THIS END, THE POST HAS ALREADY REQUESTED AND OBTAINED APPROVAL FOR AN ADDITIONAL SRF POSITION ON OUR STAFF. WE HAVE ALSO APPROVED DEA'S PROPOSAL TO SUBSTITUTE AN INTELLIGENCE ANALYST FOR AN AGENT (76 BOGOTA 9745). I HAVE ALSO SEVERAL TIMES URGED DEA HEADQUARTERS TO RESTORE DEA PARTICIPATION IN THE NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE UNIT (BOGOTA 2222). THESE MEASURES WILL LEAD US TO A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE SITUATION WE FACE AND SHOULD LEAD TO MORE EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT ACTION, PARTICULARLY OUTSIDE OF COLOMBIA. WE ALSO NEED TO INCREASE OUR END-USE MONITORING CAPABILITY TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONGOING PROGRAMS AND GUARD AGAINST CORRUPT PRACTICES INVOLVING US-SUPPLIED FUNDS AND COMMODITIES. THE MISSION SOME TIME AGO REQUESTED A THIRD AID NARCOTICS ADVISER TO STRENGTHEN THIS FUNCTION AND WE REITERATED OUR REQUEST RECENTLY (BOGOTA 3319).

[redacted]

[redacted] WE SHOULD ALSO STUDY HOW WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO PROMOTE JUDICIAL REFORM, WHICH IS VITAL TO PROGRESS

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IN NARCOTICS CONTROL IN COLOMBIA WITHOUT OPENING OURSELVES TO CHARGES OF INTERFERENCE IN COLOMBIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. AS LONG AS THE [redacted]
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I BELIEVE WE MUST AVOID ANY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS INVOLVING THE ARMED FORCES, AS INDEED WE HAVE DONE SO FAR. WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS, I WOULD ENVISAGE A MODEST PROGRAM OF NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE IN FY 78 AND LATER WITH A CONTINUING ALERTNESS TO TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY. AS INDICATED IN OUR PARM SUBMISSION, HOWEVER, I ANTICIPATE THAT WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK INCREASINGLY TOWARDS ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF AND AROUND COLOMBIA, USING INTELLIGENCE GENERATED WITHIN THIS COUNTRY AND EXTERNAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, MOSTLY IN THE US, ON WHOM WE CAN DEPEND.
[redacted]

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