SECRET

TALKING POINTS FOR BOURNE/FALCO VISIT TO COLOMBIA

1. Express appreciation for the cooperation of the Colombian Government in fighting the narcotics traffic. The U.S. is interested in continuing to work closely with the Colombian Government on narcotics suppression.

2. In the U.S. the President and the Secretary of State are both keenly interested in the subject and deeply concerned. Mrs. Carter passed along President Lopez's views to her husband. Our President will follow through on our commitment to provide material assistance, but we must meet our obligations to Congress to be sure it is used most effective.

3. We are concerned about the cocaine traffic and disturbed by the proportions it is reaching -- with estimates ranging as high as 50/60 tons a year coming out of Colombia. There have been preliminary reports of Mexicans making contacts with Colombians to promote opium production (You may wish to expand on the Mexican eradication program). Urge the President to take strong measures to wipe out existing fields before the problem grows.

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4. We know from reports in the press that President Lopez-Michelsen shares our concerns. (See Bogota 3278 attached). We have noted the President's statement that the flow of money from the illicit cocaine trade contributes to Colombia's spiralling inflation and could jeopardize his efforts at corrective measures to combat inflation. As Lopez has himself mentioned, the corruption connected with the trafficking threatens the underpinning of Colombia's democracy. Therefore, you have come to explore with him ways of making our joint effort more effective. (Before getting into corruption issue more directly, you may wish to solicit Lopez's views on what he perceives as the major problems and what might be done to correct the deficiencies in our joint effort).

5. One area of particular concern arises from reports indicating that the action of certain corrupt officials are becoming a major impediment to a successful narcotics interdiction program. For that reason, the President and Secretary of State were anxious that the matter be brought directly to President Lopez's attention. We are interested in hearing from him on what we might do together to overcome the problem.

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6. When the helicopter issue comes up, you should state that we have held up delivery until we had had an opportunity to discuss with President Lopez ways of improving the effectiveness of our program. We were particularly concerned about our own requirement vis-a-vis the U.S. Congress. We must be able to assure Congress that when our narcotics assistance funds are expended they will be used effectively.

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