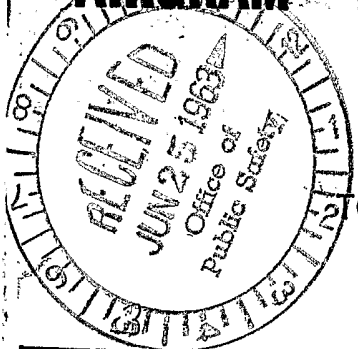


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FROM - Bogotá  
SUBJECT - Special Report on the Rural Security Service, Administrative Department of Security (DAS)  
REFERENCE -

1. So far as is known here the history of the Rural Security Service of DAS, and its Chief, Col. Eduardo ROMAN Bazurto, has never been told, and in view of the valuable experience of this organization in the Eastern Plains, or Llanos, of Colombia and the lessons learned there, it is felt that this special report may be of use. This is especially true in view of present Colombian legislation calling for a plan to expand the Rural Security Service into other areas of Colombia where their special experience in rural intelligence work may be of value.

2. The Llanos of Colombia have a history of extreme violence based upon Liberal vs. Conservative rivalry which goes back many years. The dominant political party in the Llanos is the Liberal Party, and the periods of violence there have resulted in the past from efforts of Conservative Governments in Bogotá to subjugate the area by military force. Periods of Liberal control in Bogotá have resulted in relative tranquility in the Llanos. Sometimes the violence occurred in local districts of the Llanos as the result of acts of the Departmental authorities. For example, in 1949 the Governor of Boyacá sent his Departmental Police into the Prefecture of Casanare, a part of the Llanos, to remove people from the land they occupied. Nearly all of these police were killed in violence which lasted until an army unit was sent to pacify Casanare in April of 1950. This was the "Caballeria Paez", a cavalry unit, which followed a moderate policy and was reasonably well received in Casanare. To the south, however, in July of 1950, the Conservative Government in Bogotá

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PHONE NO. JOHNSON ACT G  
DATE 12 Jun 63  
APPROVED BY Charles P. Fossum, Director

AID AND OTHER CLEARANCES

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sent a group of officers into the Department of Meta who followed a policy of brutal violence until November of 1951. During this period the Llanos were aflame with violence and, according to the version accepted by every one there today, the most brutal atrocities were committed by the military authorities. It is said also that gangs of bandits were put in military uniform and allowed to roam freely in the Llanos. As a result the people formed guerrilla gangs and fought the authorities without quarter. In November, 1951, as the result of a change in government policy, Col. Alfonso ROJAS Martinez, was sent to the Llanos, as Chief of the Civil and Military Government. He immediately established a moderate policy and peace was restored, but in July, 1952, he was removed as a result of becoming identified with Liberal politics. Col. Rojas is the present Chief of DAS. He was retired from the Army in 1952, presumably for political reasons. In July, 1952, after the removal of Col. Rojas, the violence was resumed in the Llanos, and continued until the agreement reached by an amnesty with the then Dictator Rojas Pinilla in September, 1953, under which the guerrillas in the Llanos delivered up their arms and were left in peace on their land. The period which followed this amnesty was marked by complete lawlessness which made life for the people in the Llanos almost as intolerable as during the preceding violence. The officials appointed as mayors and judges by the ROJAS Pinilla government in the Llanos were noted for their ignorance of the law as well as venality, and the Police and Military authorities were not welcome because many of the same officers who were blamed for some of the worst atrocities continued to be received with honor by the Government. This is the period when Col. Eduardo ROMAN Bazarro retired from the Army and came to Casanare to establish himself in civilian life.

3. Col. ROMAN was born in Bogotá in 1914, and served in the Colombian Army from 1935 to 1954. He first served in the Llanos at Tame in 1938. He graduated from the United States Army Infantry School at Ft. Riley in December, 1944. He lost his right hand as the result of an accident and was later sent to the United States for rehabilitation. Col. ROMAN retired from the Army in 1954 and went to Casanare in the Llanos to establish himself in the cattle business. By 1959 he had become such a dominant political figure in Casanare that he was appointed Prefect.

4. As shown above, conditions in Casanare in 1954 were not conducive to the cattle business nor even to human safety, and Col. ROMAN and his neighbors began to consider what measures they could take. Having spent considerable time in the United States ROMAN was familiar with the origins of the Texas Rangers, and this, combined with his military training and experience, made him the natural leader of a group of vigilantes formed along the lines of the Texas Rangers for the purpose of pacifying the area around El Yopál and Agua Azul, where Col. ROMAN has his ranch. These vigilantes were recruited from

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landholders in the area, many of whom had been the foremost guerrillas in action against the Government a short time before. The results were so quick and so satisfying that demands for expansion of the service began to arise from the surrounding areas. Col. ROMAN, however, began to worry about the extra-legal character of his organization and approached the Federal Government in Bogotá, which by then comprised a military junta following the overthrow of the ROJAS Pinilla dictatorship. The junta denied financial support to ROMAN's vigilantes, but gave it official sanction and it continued to expand into neighboring areas. In 1957 President LLERAS Camargo, the first president under the current National Front, and a Liberal, approved a budget for the group to consist of thirty men to be known as the Rural Security Service, but under the organizational control of the Carabineros of the National Police. Thereafter several political factors intervened to have their influence upon the future of the Rural Security Service.

5. The Colombian Intelligence Service (SIC) had been created in 1953, and while it had been of no account as an intelligence service it had not suffered the popular resentment that was bestowed upon the Departmental Police, especially in the Llanos. For this and other political reasons President LLERAS Camargo, in 1960, created out of SIC a new organization, the Administrative Department of Security (DAS), and gave all criminal investigative jurisdiction as well as all other investigative and many non-investigative responsibilities to this newly named organization. Almost, it would seem, as an afterthought he tacked the Rural Security Service on to the DAS organization, but not in the regular line of organizational command. He put it as a special unit directly under the Chief of DAS. And the new chief of DAS was none other than the man who brought peace to the Llanos in 1951 and was forced to retire from the Army in 1952, Col. Alfonso ROJAS Martinez. Thus, under a Liberal President, all police investigative and security functions were consolidated into one organization with a Liberal chief. Under the Conservative President who automatically followed LLERAS Camargo in the National Front, Col. Rojas has managed to put himself in a formidable political position, partly because he holds the key to peace and tranquility in the Llanos, and partly because many of his most competent group chiefs are, like Col. ROMAN, retired Army officers of liberal persuasion. These men, if they wished, could leave DAS in a state of complete turmoil, and undoubtedly President Valencia knows it.

6. Under Decree 414 of February 1961, the Rural Security Service was organized "in partial form" on paper, since no legal definition of the organization had ever been issued. Under this decree the Rural Security Service was assigned jurisdiction over cattle thefts in the Llanos, in addition to its responsibilities as an operating Field Office of DAS. This

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decree further provides that a plan be submitted for the expansion of the Service into other areas having a rural security problem. A rural school is provided at Agua Azul which, by striking coincidence, is where Col. ROMAN has his ranch.

7. The AID/PS investigations advisor spent nine days in May 1963 inspecting operations of the Rural Security Service from its headquarters at El Yopál, utilizing the Cessna 185 airplane operated by the Rurales, as they are called. He toured eight of the sixteen posts of the Rurales in the Llanos, including Orocué on the Meta River where the Rurales ~~having~~ have a launch which they designed and had built especially for operations on the Meta river. This launch cost about \$5,000 and is a flat bottomed steel boat with a projecting bow for running up to the river bank to load and unload horses. It can easily carry eight men and horses fully equipped and draws only two feet of water when loaded. It has living quarters for a crew of four. This launch is said to be the only craft at Orocué which can navigate the river when at low level. They also have two fast speed boats which accompany the launch for operating up the tributaries of the Meta. The Cessna 185 operated by the Rurales is fitted to carry six adults and 300 lbs. of cargo in a capsule underneath. The pilot is a full-blooded indigenous Indian who is well known in the Llanos. The Rurales have their own civic action program in the Llanos where they act in emergencies to carry medicines or move the sick. As a result of the excellent relations which the Rurales have with the cattlemen they maintain very few horses. These are furnished along with food and lodging and other assistance wherever they go. Attached to this report, for Washington, are photos of (a) four Rurales returning to Orocué from a mission, (b) the launch operated by the Rurales on the Meta river, and (c) some Rurales and DAS officials in front of the headquarters of the Rural Security Service at El Yopál.

8. From observations of operations of the Rural Security Service in the Llanos it is evident that they are well led, devoted to their mission, and well accepted by the populace. They are the only law enforcement agency which is active there except for the large towns where the National Police and the Army have units. They have brought to the Llanos a genuine tranquility and good law enforcement which would not exist there without them. They have exercised initiative and daring, and have developed the mobility needed in the area. The headquarters of the Rural Security Service at El Yopál has technical capabilities which are at least up to the level of other DAS Field Offices. As an example, there is attached, for Washington (as Exhibit D) a report of an investigation of a civil airplane accident which occurred near El Yopál, which investigation was handled by the Rurales in the absence of any other authorities.

9. In addition to the political circumstances mentioned in paragraph 5 above, there are several fortuitous circumstances which have contributed to the

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success of the Rurales. The Llanos includes one half the area of Colombia, but has only 2% of the population. The Rurales are only 200 in number, but are still twice as numerous in proportion to the population as are the DAS urban detectives. They enjoy the wholehearted cooperation of almost the entire population of the Llanos. Furthermore they have few crimes to investigate outside of cattle thefts, and very little work arising from other responsibilities assigned to DAS, i.e. bodyguards, foreigner control, certificates of conduct. They are not responsible for frontier control, since DAS has urban field offices along the Venezuelan border. The Rurales have received more than double the per capita budget support of the rest of DAS, mainly on account of the large distances and need for mobility. Combine these facts with the special relationship between Col. ROMAN and the Chief of DAS and the success of the Rurales as compared to the rest of DAS is understandable.

10. Several important weaknesses of the Rural Security Service should be noted. Outside of the headquarters at El Yopál the Service has no technical capabilities, such as fingerprinting and photographing, no radio communications facilities, and must depend on the DAS airplane for communications. Only the headquarters at El Yopál has CW contact with Bogotá. The training school for the Rurales is not yet built and is badly needed. The land has been purchased and one third of the cost of construction (total \$30,000) has been provided. This school should have as its main objective the increase of technical and intelligence capabilities in the Rural Security Service because the production of intelligence at present is very low and the potential is very high. The Rurales do not have sufficient fire power for rural operations, since they now depend mainly on their revolvers, plus a few Madsen machine pistols. They should have some carbines and should consider the shotgun for close operations.

11. Efforts to utilize the Rurales in current violence areas have met with some successes, but numerous problems. Two Departments, Huila and Tolima, have been involved in these efforts and about fifty Rurales remain in Tolima at present. The Investigations Advisor has studied the reports in the Rural Security Service files regarding these actions, and has consulted members of the United States Military Group. There are different versions of the facts regarding operations of the Rurales in these areas, but the following observations seem to be legitimate and valid:

- (a) Rurales from the Llanos cannot expect to operate with equal success in areas where they are not familiar with the terrain and where they are not indigenous to the area.
- (b) The Rural Security Service cannot spare present personnel from the Llanos for service in other areas. Additional budget support and additional recruiting should be provided for other areas.

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- (c) Rurales from the Llanos are a disciplinary problem in other areas, become homesick, demoralized, and become involved in incidents with other authorities. In some instances the Military or National Police personnel may be at fault.
- (d) The Rurales need training in technical and intelligence matters, and must learn better coordination with DAS headquarters, and with other authorities with whom they are working, but they should not be detached from DAS operational control. There seems to be agreement that the Rurales do have the ability to dig out information regarding the bandits and establish contact with them.
- (e) The experience of the Rurales in Huila clearly indicates that they should not enter an area without a clearcut mandate from the local civil authorities to operate against bandits. Bandits in some areas are a political force connected with civil or other authorities. In any case the conditions should be determined by the Chief of DAS.
- (f) It follows from the above observations that the Rurales now in Tolima should be returned to their posts in the Llanos.

12. This brings the report on the Rural Security Service up to date, with the exception of an exposé of the Tolima Plan. The Tolima Plan was devised by Col. ROMAN, Chief of the Rural Security Service, as the result of his conviction that the Rural Security Service, if given adequate funding for 200 men in Tolima, could mop up the bandits in that area within about six months from the time funds actually become available. Col. ROMAN would propose to do this without assistance or interference from ~~police~~ <sup>military</sup> or Col. ROMAN states that he will stake his career on this plan and claims to have bipartisan political support which includes that of the Governor of Tolima. The budget for the six months of the Tolima Plan including personnel, operations, and logistics, is CP\$3,196,442.00 (pesos). This figure includes \$1,270,000.00 (pesos) for equipment and ammunition, and one helicopter. Whether or not the Tolima Plan will ever receive high level support in the Government of Colombia depends on a number of factors, and to a great extent upon the success or failure of present efforts to suppress banditry in Tolima. It is presented here for information only, and is of interest because it offers an inexpensive alternative to the multimillion dollar effort now in operation. Exhibit 'E' is a copy of the budget for the Tolima Plan furnished by Col. ROMAN.

13. Enclosures for AID/Washington, OPS:

- (A) Photo of Rurales of the DAS Rural Security Service, Orocué, Meta river, May 1963.
- (B) Photo of Launch of the Rural Security Service, Meta river, May 1963.

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- (C) Photo of Rurales and DAS officials, Headquarters, Rural Security Service, El Yopál.
- (D) Copy of Investigative Report, Rural Security Service, El Yopál. (reconstruction).
- (E) Copy of Budget, The Tolima Plan.

The Tolima Plan is submitted for the information of AID/W and does not imply Public Safety support or approval of the Plan as presented. The idea of the Rurales having sole jurisdiction in a defined sector of the violence area warrants consideration as a test in the event civilian support is assured. Public Safety, however, although believing that the Rurales working independently in the violence area would be effective, seriously questions the time schedule, number of personnel and budget suggested in the Tolima Plan, particularly in such a large area as Tolima.

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