

OUTGOING TELETYPE

CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL

DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 1992

APPROVED BY: PRIETO, RINEHART, TOFT

DRAFTED BY: MURPHY

CLEARANCE:

DISTRIBUTION: DEA-3, AMB, DCM

AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

ACTION: PS, DO, OF

INFO:

HQS FOR:

E.Q. 12356: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: GFAN-92-9020, THREATS AGAINST DEA EMPLOYEES

CCX: GFAN-88-8001/IE4-CO, OPERATION BOLIVAR
ZE-89-0007/FE4-CO, PABLO ESCOBAR-GAVIRIA

REF:

1. In accordance with the DEA Agent's Manual, Section 6115 (a), the following is in regard to potential threats against three (3) S/A's currently stationed in Colombia, S.A.:

a. POTENTIAL THREAT TARGETS

Javier F. Pena
Bogota Country Office

Gary T. Sheridan - Resident Agent-in-Charge
Barranquilla Resident Office

Ruben S. Prieto - Group Supervisor

Bogota Country Office

b. CASE AGENTS

Stephen E. Murphy - Special Agent
Bogota Country Office
Office - 011-571-285-1300, ext. 350
Home - 011-571-614-6118

Antonio R. Guzman - Diversion Investigator
Bogota Country Office
Office - 011-571-285-1300, ext. 350
Home - 011-571-257-9445

c. BACKGROUND OF POTENTIAL THREAT

Luis Antonio MENESES, aka Ariel OTERO, aka LUCHO, the most recent leader of the AUTODEFENSAS MAGDALENA MEDIO, was tortured and killed on January 10, 1992. The AUTODEFENSAS consisted of approximately 600 armed cattle ranchers and land owners from the Magdalena Medio area of Colombia who openly opposed terrorism (including kidnappings and murders conducted by narco-terrorists) and for the past two (2) years have been in a direct conflict with Pablo ESCOBAR-Gaviria and the MEDELLIN CARTEL. The AUTODEFENSAS officially surrendered to the Government of Colombia (GOC) on November 26, 1991 and disbanded.

There are three (3) possible theories as to who killed MENESES. The first theory is that the CALI CARTEL turned MENESES over to the AUTODEFENSAS to avoid any problems with the AUTODEFENSAS. MENESES was in the company of Jorge VELASQUEZ-Gonzalez, aka NAVIGANTE, on November 26, 1991 when the AUTODEFENSAS surrendered. VELASQUEZ-Gonzalez is a documented member of the CALI CARTEL. Intelligence indicates that MENESES had stolen \$200,000 from the AUTODEFENSAS, and had disbanded the group without the majority approval. Even though the group disbanded, there are still AUTODEFENSAS members active in the Magdalena Medio area. The second theory is that Pablo ESCOBAR-Gaviria ordered MENESES death. ESCOBAR-Gaviria and MENESES had been involved in a deadly struggle for the past two (2) years and ESCOBAR-Gaviria has openly expressed his desire to see MENESES, and other members of the AUTODEFENSAS, dead. The third theory is that MENESES was killed by his own bodyguards. This theory is based on information that MENESES had previously ordered the deaths of some of the bodyguards whom he no longer trusted.

There is currently no concrete evidence indicating which of the above theories is correct.

The relationship between MENESES and the targets of the potential threats is as follows. Approximately one (1) year ago, S/A Pena and RAC Sheridan, who was then assigned as a S/A in Bogota, made contact with Henry de Jesus PEREZ, who was the leader of the AUTODEFENSAS. This introduction was made by members of the CNP/Medellin Task Force and seemed logical since the AUTODEFENSAS were dedicated to the fight against the MEDELLIN CARTEL and the AUTODEFENSAS had been supplying information to the CNP regarding the MEDELLIN CARTEL. PEREZ was a very influential and charismatic person with a great amount of influence in the Magdalena Medio area. PEREZ enjoyed total loyalty from his followers. At that time, MENESES was one of PEREZ' subordinates and was present at this initial meeting. When PEREZ was assassinated on July 20, 1991 by members of the ESCOBAR-Gaviria organization, MENESES took over as the AUTODEFENSAS leader. However, it is important to note that MENESES did not have the same trust and loyalty of his followers as did PEREZ.

Since that initial meeting, S/A's Pena and Sheridan have met with MENESES one (1) other time in Puerto Boyaca and approximately four (4) times in Bogota. All of these meetings were conducted in the presence of the CNP and the meetings in Bogota were conducted with Colonel Gallegos, in locations which did not compromise the identity of the S/As. G/S Prieto was only present at the last physical meeting during August, 1991, and no meetings have occurred since that time.

In addition to the above, S/A's Pena and Sheridan telephonically spoke with MENESES approximately three (3) times, from the BCO, and received approximately five (5) facsimile messages, also in the BCO. At no time did MENESES, PEREZ, nor any other member of the AUTODEFENSAS have the telephone number or address of either of the S/A's. All contact was made through the BCO or the CNP/Medellin Task Force.

d. NATURE OF POTENTIAL THREAT

MENESES was tortured prior to his murder and it is possible that MENESES may have admitted to supplying the DEA with information. It is also possible that MENESES would have given the names of his contacts in the DEA. Currently, there is no indication of a real threat and the enclosed security measures are being taken solely as a precaution to ensure the safety of the S/As.

e. LOCAL SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN

Even though the nature of the threat is speculative and not direct, the BCO has already taken, and will continue to undertake, measures to enhance the security of the S/As involved.

Regarding S/A Pena, on January 31, 1992, his DEA-assigned vehicle was changed and will continue to be changed on a monthly basis. S/A Pena has been assigned two (2) driver/bodyguards to act as escorts to and from work, and has been assigned a mini-Uzi machine gun for additional personal protection. S/A Pena will limit and restrict his personal activities and will utilize the driver/bodyguards whenever leaving his GLQ on personal business. RSO Ray Williams has been contacted about this situation and has agreed to increase patrols around S/A Pena's residence and conduct sporadic surveillance of S/A Pena's neighborhood.

Regarding RAC Sheridan, on January 31, 1992, his DEA-assigned vehicle was changed and will continue to be changed on a monthly basis. RAC Sheridan is currently residing in temporary quarters in Barranquilla, however, he is scheduled to move into permanent GLQ within the next few weeks. Until such time, RAC Sheridan will be escorted to and from work by two (2) driver/bodyguards. Additionally, RAC Sheridan has been assigned a mini-Uzi machine gun for personal protection.

Regarding G/S Prieto, he is currently assigned three (3) permanent driver/bodyguards in Bogota. There is no indication that a current threat exists against G/S Prieto and no action is anticipated at this time. However, G/S Prieto's situation will be re-assessed within two (2) weeks.

f. PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

With the implementation of the above listed precautions, it is felt that these security measures are more than adequate at this time. There is no indication that any members of the AUTODEFENSAS or other potential assassins are aware of the S/As addresses, telephone numbers, or vehicles. This potential threat will be re-assessed in two (2) weeks, or sooner if additional intelligence is received.

At this time, it is not recommended that any of the S/As change residences. RAC Sheridan's residence has not been utilized before, and the threat against G/S Prieto is minimal due to his limited contact with MENESES. S/A Pena's residence is located between the residence of the

American Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission for the American Embassy, the Mayor of Bogota, the residence of the Chinese Ambassador, and several other American Embassy employees. There are numerous CNP officers and American Embassy guards permanently stationed in this immediate area. It is felt that this area is one of the safest and most secure areas in Bogota. Additionally, S/A Pena resides on the fourth floor of his apartment building which maintains a 24-hour security guard. The underground parking garage is locked and is accessible only through the security guard. The elevator will not stop on the fourth floor without the use of a special key, which only S/A Pena has. The door in S/A Pena's apartment which leads to the stairwell contains five (5) separate locks which remain locked at all times. S/A Pena's apartment has no other means of access.

g. REMARKS

This assessment is being made due to a potential threat which may exist based on the recent assassination of Luis MENESES. At this time, the BCO is continuing to attempt to obtain additional intelligence from several different sources in an effort to substantiate or refute the potential threat. The BCO will continually re-assess this situation until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

As information, S/A Pena and G/S Sheridan are single and do not have any family members in Colombia. G/S Prieto is married and resides with his wife in Bogota. Furthermore, G/S Prieto's wife is presently employed in the Embassy. Dependent jeopardy is considered minimal.