

SECRET

PTQ9414

RELEASED IN PART
B3, INA

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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00
	ACQ-01	CA-02	CCO-00	INL-01	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	OIGO-01	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	JUSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00
	OCS-03	OIC-02	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-04	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/029W

-----5EF1B5 132244Z /38

O 132220Z AUG 98
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4600
SECDEF WASHDC
DIRONDCP WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS
DEA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ2/SCJ5/POLAD//
NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 009345

E.O. 12958: DECL:01/09/07
TAGS: MARR, PHUM, SNAR, PTER, PINR, CO
SUBJECT: GENERAL RAMIREZ LASHES OUT AT STATE DEPARTMENT; TWO
MORE GENERALS UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR PARAMILITARY LINKS

REF: A) BOGOTA 292141Z MAY 98 B) BOGOTA 071647Z APR 98
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(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN. REASON: 1.5 (D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) COLOMBIAN PRESS REPORTED AUGUST 12 AN ANGRY DENIAL BY (APPARENTLY-EX) ARMY INSPECTOR GENERAL IVAN RAMIREZ OF CHARGES CONTAINED IN AN AUGUST 11 "WASHINGTON POST" ARTICLE, IN WHICH HE ACCUSED THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF BETRAYAL AND OF MALIGNING HIS "HONOR." IN ADDITION TO REPORTING HIS FOMENTING OF ILLEGAL PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS, THE POST ARTICLE CHARGED RAMIREZ WAS A CIA INFORMANT, AND LINKED HIM TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND

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NARCOTRAFFICKING. ALSO IN THE NEWS ARE GENERAL OFFICERS FERNANDO MILLAN PEREZ AND RITO ALEJO DEL RIO ROJAS, BOTH OF WHOM ARE SUBJECTS OF FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE INVESTIGATIONS INTO ALLEGED LINKS TO ILLEGAL PARAMILITARY GROUPS. THESE INVESTIGATIONS WILL SERVE AS A MARKER TO OFFICERS WHO CONTINUE TO ILLEGALLY ASSIST PARAMILITARY GROUPS. END SUMMARY.

GEN. RAMIREZ ANGRILY DENIES "WASHINGTON POST'S" ALLEGATIONS

2. (U) BOGOTA PRESS CARRIED AUGUST 12 ANGRY DENIALS BY MAJOR GENERAL IVAN RAMIREZ QUINTERO OF ACCUSATIONS CONTAINED IN AN AUGUST 10 "WASHINGTON POST" ARTICLE. (NOTE: ALTHOUGH HE HAS NOT OFFICIALLY RESIGNED, BOGOTA PRESS REPORTS THAT HE "WAS ARMY INSPECTOR GENERAL UNTIL AUGUST 10," AND THAT HE IS "PACKING UP THE BOXES IN HIS OFFICE." END NOTE). THE ARTICLE QUOTED "U.S. AND COLOMBIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS" AS SAYING THAT THE USG HAD BEGUN TO "HEAR OF RAMIREZ'S TIES TO NARCOTRAFFICKERS AND

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PARAMILITARIES," AS WELL AS COMPLICITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN THE MID-1990'S, AND THEREFORE "TERMINATED ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IN 1995." TO THE "POST'S" ACCUSATION THAT HE WAS A CIA INFORMANT, RAMIREZ RESPONDED THAT HE NATURALLY HAD A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH CIA, AS HE WAS DIRECTOR OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE FROM 1991-1994. HOWEVER, HE CLAIMED HIS WAS AN OVERT RELATIONSHIP, AND THAT HE NEVER RECEIVED ANY PAYMENT FROM CIA.

3. (U) THE INFURIATED RAMIREZ BLASTED THE POST'S ARTICLE AS "INFAMOUS PERSECUTION, YELLOW JOURNALISM, AND SENSATIONALISM." HE PUBLICLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE "FARC AND CERTAIN (I.E., LEFTIST) NGO'S" ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM OF INVOLVEMENT IN NARCOTRAFFICKING AND SUPPORT OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS. HE ACCUSED THE USG OF ABANDONING THOSE WITH WHOM IT COOPERATED DURING THE COLD WAR. REFERRING TO THE DEPARTMENT'S HAVING REVOKED HIS VISA IN MAY ON TERRORISM GROUNDS, RAMIREZ SAID HE HAS "COME TO EXPECT ANYTHING FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT." HE ALSO SAID HE IS IN POSSESSION OF "PROOF OF HIS INNOCENCE," BUT DECLINED TO DIVULGE THAT PROOF.

4. (S) COMMENT AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

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RAMIREZ WAS HEAD OF ARMY INTELLIGENCE FROM 1991-1994, AND RETAINED A GREAT DEAL OF INFLUENCE AMONG ARMY INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS AFTER HE LEFT THAT POST TO COMMAND THE 1ST BRIGADE. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE "POST" ARTICLE CITED ONLY PERSONS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND COLOMBIAN INTELLIGENCE

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COMMUNITIES, RAMIREZ AGAIN PUBLICLY TRACED HIS DIFFICULTIES DIRECTLY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT. AFTER HIS VISA WAS REVOKED IN SECRET

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 09345 01 OF 02 132228Z MAY, HE SAID ON BOGOTA RADIO THAT HIS PROBLEMS EMANATED DIRECTLY FROM "TWO MEMBERS OF THE EMBASSY POLITICAL SECTION."

TWO GENERALS UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR TIES TO PARAMILITARIES

5. (U) BOGOTA PRESS HIGHLIGHTED AUGUST 11 THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S INVESTIGATIONS OF TWO GENERAL OFFICERS FOR ALLEGED LINKS TO PARAMILITARY GROUPS. FEDERAL PROSECUTOR ALFONSO GOMEZ MENDEZ PUBLICLY CONFIRMED AUGUST 10 WHAT POLOFFS HAD PRIVATELY BEEN TOLD DAYS BEFORE: THAT BRIGADIER GENERAL FERNANDO MILLAN PEREZ, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY'S FIFTH BRIGADE, WAS FORMALLY UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR PROVISION OF ARMS AND EQUIPMENT TO A PARAMILITARY GROUP IN LEBRIJA, SANTANDER DEPARTMENT. THE GROUP IS SUSPECTED OF COMMITTING ELEVEN MURDERS BETWEEN MARCH AND NOVEMBER, 1997. THE PARAMILITARY UNIT HAD APPARENTLY APPLIED FOR A LICENSE AS A CONVIVIR COOPERATIVE (ARMED, GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED COOPERATIVES WHICH ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE INTELLIGENCE TO GOC SECURITY FORCES AND DETER GUERILLA INCURSIONS). ALTHOUGH THE LICENSE WAS DENIED, MILLAN IS ALLEGED TO HAVE PROCEEDED AS IF THE LICENSE HAD BEEN GRANTED AND ARMED THE MEMBERS REGARDLESS.

6. (U) THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR ALSO CONFIRMED THAT A PRELIMINARY

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INFO LOG-00 ACDA-08 ACDE-00 INLB-01 AID-00 ARA-01 A-00
ACQ-01 CA-02 CCO-00 INL-01 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00
OIGO-01 FAAE-00 FBIE-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00
JUSE-00 L-01 ADS-00 MMP-00 M-00 NSAE-00 OCS-03
OIC-02 PM-00 PRS-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00
STR-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 USSS-00 ASDS-01 PMB-00 DSCC-00
PRM-01 DRL-04 G-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /028W

-----5EF1B8 132244Z /38

O 132220Z AUG 98
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4601
SECDEF WASHDC

SECRET

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D4RONDCP WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS
DEA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ2/SCJ5/POLAD//
NSC WASHDC

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INVESTIGATION OF GENERAL RITO ALEJO DEL RIO ROJAS, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY'S 13TH BRIGADE (BOGOTA), IS ALSO UNDERWAY. ACCORDING TO PRESS, THE GENERAL'S ALLEGED LINKS TO ACCU PARAMILITARIES IN THE URABA REGION WHILE HE COMMANDED THE 17TH BRIGADE FROM DECEMBER 1995 TO DECEMBER 1997 ARE THE SUBJECT OF THE INVESTIGATION.

7. (S) BIOGRAPHIC NOTE: ALTHOUGH BRIGADE COMMANDS ARE GENERALLY ROTATED EVERY YEAR, GENERAL DEL RIO WAS ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN COMMAND OF THE 17TH BRIGADE IN HIGHLY-CONFLICTIVE URABA REGION FOR TWO YEARS, APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN BLOODYING THE FARC'S NOSE DURING THE PERIOD OF HIS COMMAND. HIS SYSTEMATIC ARMING AND EQUIPPING OF AGGRESSIVE REGIONAL PARAMILITARIES WAS PIVOTAL TO HIS MILITARY SUCCESS AT THE TIME. GENERAL DEL RIO HAS LONG BEEN ACCUSED OF LINKS TO PARAMILITARIES: HE WAS INVESTIGATED FOR ALLEGEDLY DELIVERING 100 MP5 SUBMACHINE GUNS IN 1985 TO PARAMILITARIES IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO REGION. HE IS REPUTED TO BE A PROTEGE OF MAJOR GENERAL IVAN RAMIREZ. THANKS TO ACCUSATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES LEVELLED BY NGO'S CINEP (RESEARCH AND POPULAR EDUCATION CENTER) AND JUSTICIA Y PAZ (PEACE AND JUSTICE), DEL RIO'S RELATIONS WITH THOSE AND OTHER NGO'S ARE PARTICULARLY STRAINED. END NOTE.

COMMENT

8. (C) AS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS INVECTIVE, MAJOR GENERAL RAMIREZ TENDS TO SINGLE OUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS THE SOURCE OF HIS TROUBLES. THE "WASHINGTON POST" ARTICLE PROVIDED HIM OCCASION TO MAKE A FINAL JAB AT THE DEPARTMENT BEFORE RETIREMENT. WE ARE UNSURPRISED THAT HE DECLINED TO DIVULGE THE "EVIDENCE OF HIS

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INNOCENCE" -- THE DEPARTMENT FOUND THAT EVIDENCE OF HIS
COMPLICITY IN REPEATED, GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WAS
SUFFICIENT TO REVOKE HIS VISA. HIS APPARENTLY IMMINENT DEPARTURE
FROM THE RANKS OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ITS
ONGOING PROFESSIONALIZATION. SEPARATELY, WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY
THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S APPARENT DILIGENCE IN INVESTIGATING
LINKS BETWEEN SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS AND PARAMILITARIES. THESE
INVESTIGATIONS WILL SERVE AS A MARKER TO THOSE ARMY OFFICERS WHO
CONTINUE TO ILLEGALLY ASSIST OR OTHERWISE WORK WITH PARAMILITARY
GROUPS.

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