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PTQ4293

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~~B1, 1.5(D)~~

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 062342Z
ACTION ARA-01

*(pages 5 - 8 see
log 5)*

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| INFO | LOG-00 | COR-01 | ACDA-10 | ACDE-00 | INLB-01 | AID-00 | AMAD-01 |
| | A-00 | CA-02 | CCO-00 | CG-00 | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | CTME-00 |
| | INL-01 | OASY-00 | DODE-00 | DOEE-00 | DOTE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00 |
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| | MMP-00 | M-00 | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OCS-03 | OIC-02 |
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| | P-00 | CIO-00 | SCT-00 | SP-00 | STR-00 | TRSE-00 | USIE-00 |
| | USSS-00 | ASDS-01 | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 | PRM-10 | PRME-01 | DRL-09 |
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O 022246Z DEC 96 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3201

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 011841

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TAGS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/01
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PTER, ASEC, CO
SUBJECT: 40,000 COLOMBIANS MARCH TO PROTEST WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS;
PARAMILITARY GROUP RELEASES TWO GUERRILLA RELATIVES

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL/ECONOFF PEG WILLINGHAM. REASON 1.5(D).
2. (C) SUMMARY: AN ESTIMATED 40,000 COLOMBIANS MARCHED IN BOGOTA DECEMBER 1 TO PROTEST A RISING WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS. PARAMILITARIES
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CONFIDENTIAL EXTEND CLASSIFICATION

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 062342Z
RELEASED TWO GUERRILLA RELATIVES DECEMBER 1. POLICE INTELLIGENCE CHIEF TOLD EMBOFFS KIDNAPPING REMAINS AN INTRACTABLE PROBLEM DESPITE GOC EFFORTS TO COMBAT IT. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER RIGHT-WING RHETORIC AND "DESPAIR" OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE ANTI-KIDNAPPING MARCH. KIDNAPPINGS IN COLOMBIA ARE UNLIKELY TO DECREASE ANYTIME SOON. END SUMMARY.

3. (U) AN ESTIMATED 40,000 COLOMBIANS MARCHED IN BOGOTA DECEMBER

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DEPT OF STATE APPEALS REVIEW PANEL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A. JOHNSTON
DATE/CASE ID: 19 JUN 2001 200100793
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 22-DEC-2016, REASON: 1.5(D)

| FOIA/PA | Mandated |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Release | <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excise | <input type="checkbox"/> Delet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deny | <input type="checkbox"/> Class. Reversion |

Exemptions

ARP Action Cert. *fwl*

Date 07/11/02

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1 TO PROTEST KIDNAPPINGS PERPETRATED BY GUERRILLAS AND COMMON CRIMINALS, INCLUDING THE ONGOING CAPTIVITY OF 60 SOLDIERS HELD BY THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC) SINCE AUGUST 30. UNDETERRED BY A SMALL EXPLOSION THAT OCCURRED JUST BEFORE THE MARCH BEGAN, FAMILY MEMBERS AND FORMER KIDNAP VICTIMS, AS WELL AS CONCERNED CITIZENS, MARCHED FROM THE NATIONAL PARK TO THE PLAZA BOLIVAR (SITE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AND LEGISLATURE), WAVING PLACARDS AND CHANTING. PARTICIPANTS DEPLORED THE FACT THAT OVER 900 PEOPLE HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED IN COLOMBIA SO FAR IN 1996.

4. (U) THE GOC'S ANTI-KIDNAPPING CZAR, ALBERTO VILLAMIZAR, WAS BOOED WHEN HE READ A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT SAMPER, APPARENTLY IN PROTEST OF SAMPER'S FAILURE TO ATTEND THE RALLY AND BECAUSE THE MESSAGE MADE NO MENTION OF THE KIDNAPPED SOLDIERS. (SEPTTEL REPORTS THE FARC'S REJECTION OF THE GOC'S OFFER TO WITHDRAW FROM A LARGE SECTION OF SOUTHERN COLOMBIA TO FACILITATE THE SOLDIERS' RELEASE.)

5. (C) ALSO ON DECEMBER 1, PARAMILITARY LEADER CARLOS CASTANO ANNOUNCED THE RELEASE OF THE MOTHERS OF TWO GUERRILLA LEADERS, KIDNAPPED SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER BY HIS "AUTODEFENSAS CAMPESINAS DE CORDOBA Y URABA" (ACCU) IN RETALIATION FOR KIDNAPPINGS BY GUERRILLAS. CASTANO MADE THIS GESTURE AT THE BEHEST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC), WHICH HAD BEEN

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 062342Z
URGING HIM TO RELEASE THE CAPTIVES. HOWEVER, SEVERAL OTHER GUERRILLA RELATIVES REMAIN IN ACCU HANDS. ACCORDING TO THE ICRC, CASTANO TIMED THE RELEASE TO COINCIDE WITH THE ANTI-KIDNAP MARCH TO EXTRACT A PUBLIC RELATIONS BENEFIT FOR HIMSELF. THE ICRC BELIEVES CASTANO IS SEEKING TO UPGRADE HIS IMAGE POLITICALLY. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, CASTANO TOLD THE ICRC THAT HE RELEASED THE TWO ELDERLY WOMEN BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO MUCH TROUBLE TO TAKE CARE OF AND "HE WAS TIRED OF RUNNING A HOTEL" FOR THEM.

B1, 1.5(D)

B1, 1.5(D)

6. (C) POLICE INTELLIGENCE (DIPOL) DIRECTOR OSCAR NARANJO TOLD EMBOFFS DECEMBER 2 THAT KIDNAPPING IS ON THE INCREASE AND WILL LIKELY TOP 1,000 REPORTED INCIDENTS BY THE END OF 1996. DESCRIBING THE PHENOMENON AS "OUT OF CONTROL," NARANJO SAID THAT KIDNAPPING IS A COMPLEX PROBLEM, SINCE VICTIMS INCLUDE NOT JUST THE RICH OR POLITICALLY POWERFUL, BUT ALSO POOR AND MARGINALIZED COLOMBIANS. HE SAID THAT PERPETRATORS INCLUDE GUERRILLAS, PARAMILITARIES, AND ORGANIZED CRIMINALS, WHOSE MOTIVES VARIED FROM MONEY (THE MOST COMMON) TO POLITICAL STRATEGY, TO RETALIATION FOR OTHER KIDNAPPINGS. NARANJO LAMENTED THE FACT THAT THE MUCH-BALLYHOOD PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE AGAINST KIDNAPPING, INVOLVING THE

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APPOINTMENT OF KIDNAP CZAR VILLAMIZAR AND A BUDGET OF \$2 MILLION, HAS HAD NO MEASURABLE EFFECT.

7. (C) NARANJO REPORTED THAT 46 FOREIGNERS ARE CURRENTLY IN CAPTIVITY, MOST OF THEM VENEZUELANAS TARGETED BY GUERRILLAS OPERATING NEAR THE BORDER AND SEEKING RANSOM MONEY. THE NEXT LARGEST GROUP ARE ITALIANS INVOLVED IN ENGINEERING PROJECTS LIKE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BOGOTA-VILLAVICENCIO HIGHWAY, WHICH RUNS THROUGH FARC TERRITORY. NARANJO EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT GUERRILLAS HAVE KEPT SUCH A LOW POLITICAL PROFILE IN CONNECTION TO THE NEW TRIBES MISSIONARY CASE, PARTICULARLY SINCE GUERRILLAS TRADITIONALLY

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 062342Z
ACCUSED MISSIONARIES OF BEING INTELLIGENCE AGENTS.

8. (C) NARANJO EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE "RIGHTIST" RHETORIC EMPLOYED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE DECEMBER 1 MARCH, POINTING OUT THAT MANY HAD CALLED FOR THE DEATH PENALTY OR LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR KIDNAPPERS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT COLOMBIANS FEEL "DESPAIR" ABOUT THE GOC'S INABILITY TO PREVENT SUCH CRIMES, BUT HE WORRIED THAT INCREASED PARAMILITARY-GUERRILLA CONFRONTATION WAS INEVITABLE.

WHEN ASKED WHY THE GOC HAS NOT ARRESTED CARLOS CASTANO WHEN HE HAS OPENLY ADMITTED TO KIDNAPPING GUERRILLA RELATIVES, NARANJO SAID THAT FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE KIDNAP VICTIMS REFUSED TO CONTACT THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE (FISCALIA), TURNING INSTEAD TO NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION, NARANJO NOTED SOMEWHAT SHEEPISHLY, THE POLICE "DO NOT ACT" IN THE PART OF URABA UNDER CASTANO'S CONTROL. B1, 1.5(D)

9. (C) COMMENT: KIDNAPPING DOMINATES COLOMBIA'S COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS MORE THAN ANY OTHER NATIONAL PROBLEM, INCLUDING DRUG TRAFFICKING, BECAUSE SO MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY AFFECTED OR FEAR BEING AFFECTED IN THE FUTURE. A HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT TOLD EMBOFF RECENTLY THAT KIDNAPPING SEEMS TO EXACT A GREATER PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL ON VICTIMS AND FAMILY MEMBERS THAN MURDER, INVOLVING MONTHS -- OR LONGER -- OF ANXIETY AND UNCERTAINTY, AS WELL AS FINANCIAL HARDSHIP. YET THE TURNOUT FOR THE ANTI-KIDNAP MARCH WAS PATHETICALLY LIGHT, GIVEN BOGOTA'S SIZE AND THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM. COMPARED TO OTHER LATIN AMERICANS, COLOMBIANS SEEM RELUCTANT TO TAKE TO THE STREETS TO PROTEST SERIOUS SOCIETAL PROBLEMS, PLAGUED BY CYNICISM AND A SENSE OF THEIR OWN INABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHILE THERE ARE GROUPS WHO TRY TO STRENGTHEN

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ACTION ARA-01

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| INFO | LOG-00 | COR-01 | ACDA-10 | ACDE-00 | INLB-01 | AID-00 | AMAD-01 |
| | A-00 | CA-02 | CCO-00 | CG-00 | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | CTME-00 |
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| | INR-00 | INSE-00 | IO-00 | LAB-01 | L-01 | MCO-01 | ADS-00 |
| | MMP-00 | M-00 | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OCS-03 | OIC-02 |
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| | USSS-00 | ASDS-01 | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 | PRM-10 | PRME-01 | DRL-09 |
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O 022246Z DEC 96 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3202

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BOGOTA 011841

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TAGS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/01
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PTER, ASEC, CO
SUBJECT: 40,000 COLOMBIANS MARCH TO PROTEST WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS;
PARAMILITARY GROUP RELEASES TWO GUERRILLA RELATIVES

COLOMBIA'S CIVIL SOCIETY, THEY FACE MANY OBSTACLES. UNFORTUNATELY,
AS LONG AS THE GOC FAILS TO STEM THE RISING TIDE OF KIDNAPPINGS,
GUERRILLAS AND OTHERS WILL CONTINUE TO FIND IT A LUCRATIVE SOURCE
OF INCOME. MOREOVER, KIDNAPPERS WILL NOT BE DETERRED BY A PROTEST
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MARCH. COLOMBIA IS UNLIKELY TO RELINQUISH THE DUBIOUS DISTINCTION
OF BEING HOME OF MOST OF THE WORLD'S KIDNAPPINGS ANYTIME SOON.

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 022248Z
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| INFO | LOG-00 | ACDA-10 | ACDE-00 | INLB-01 | AID-00 | AMAD-01 | A-00 |
| | CA-02 | CCO-00 | CG-00 | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | CTME-00 | INL-01 |
| | OASY-00 | DODE-00 | DOEE-00 | DOTE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00 | EB-00 |
| | FAAE-00 | FBIE-00 | FBO-01 | H-01 | IMMC-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 |
| | INSE-00 | IO-00 | LAB-01 | L-01 | MCO-01 | ADS-00 | MMP-00 |
| | M-00 | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OCS-03 | OIC-02 | OIS-01 |
| | OMB-01 | OPR-01 | PA-00 | PM-00 | PRS-00 | P-00 | CIO-00 |
| | SCT-00 | SP-00 | SSO-00 | STR-00 | TRSE-00 | USIE-00 | USSS-00 |
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3201

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 011841

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/01
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DESPITE GOC EFFORTS TO COMBAT IT. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER RIGHT-
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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 11841 01 OF 02 022248Z
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MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WHILE THERE ARE GROUPS WHO TRY TO STRENGTHEN

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ACTION ARA-01

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R 022246Z DEC 96
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3202
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BOGOTA 011841

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/02/01
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PTER, CO
SUBJECT: 40,000 COLOMBIANS MARCH TO PROTEST WAVE OF KIDNAPPINGS;
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