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ACTION SS-00

RELEASE IN FULL

INFO LOG-00 OASY-00 ADS-00 /000W
-----A5F04A 112013Z /38

R 111742Z MAR 93
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5933
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA

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DEPT PLEASE PASS
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC

EXDIS

CINCSO AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, CO
SUBJECT: THE RACE FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL
NOMINATION: ERNESTO SAMPER

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REF: BOGOTA 3766

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: ONE OF LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL
PRE-CANDIDATE ERNESTO SAMPER'S CAMPAIGN AIDE'S, WEALTHY
BUSINESSMAN CESAR VILLEGAS, PREDICTS THAT THE NEXT
PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA WILL BE EITHER SAMPER OR
CONSERVATIVE ANDRES PASTRANA. AD M-19'S ANTONIO NAVARRO
WOLFF IS LIKELY TO BE THE KINGMAKER IN THE NEXT ELECTION
AND THEREFORE A POWERFUL INDIVIDUAL IN THE NEXT

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Marvin
Russell, Senior Reviewer

3. A KEY CAMPAIGN AIDE TO LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENTIAL PRE-CANDIDATE ERNESTO SAMPER, CESAR VILLEGAS, TOLD POLCOUNS THAT HE HAD NO DOUBTS THAT HIS MAN WOULD TAKE HIS PARTY'S NOMINATION. THE CONTEST IS NOT FOR THE NOMINATION -- "WE WILL GET THAT" -- IT IS FOR THE PRESIDENCY AND THE MAN TO BEAT IS CONSERVATIVE ANDRES PASTRANA, VILLEGAS SAID. "I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE NEXT TWO PRESIDENTS OF COLOMBIA (1994 AND 1998) WILL BE SAMPER AND PASTRANA." "WHAT I DO NOT KNOW IS WHICH OF THE TWO WILL BE ELECTED IN '94 AND WHICH IN '98."

4. LIKE HUMBERTO DE LA CALLE, SAMPER'S CHIEF RIVAL FOR THE LIBERAL PARTY NOMINATION (REFTEL), VILLEGAS WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE INFLUENCE AD M-19'S ANTONIO NAVARRO WOLFF WILL WIELD IN THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION. (COMMENT: BOGOTA'S POLITICAL SAVANTS ARE IN ACCORD THAT BECAUSE THERE WILL BE AT LEAST THREE CANDIDATES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN MAY OF 1994, NONE WILL WIN A
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MAJORITY OF THE VOTES, THEREBY NECESSITATING A SECOND-ROUND RUN OFF BETWEEN THE TOP TWO VOTE GETTERS. ALL ALSO AGREE THAT THE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE, PRESUMABLY PASTRANA, AND THE LIBERAL CANDIDATE (SAMPER IF YOU ASK VILLEGAS, BUT FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE BY NO MEANS DECIDED) WILL MAKE IT TO THE SECOND ROUND. NAVARRO WOLFF WILL THEN BE IN THE ENVIABLE POSITION OF BEING ABLE TO INFLUENCE HIS FOLLOWERS TO VOTE FOR ONE OR THE OTHER, AND NO ONE DOUBTS NAVARRO'S ABILITY TO GUIDE THE SECOND-ROUND VOTE OF HIS FIRST-ROUND SUPPORTERS.)

5. VILLEGAS ARGUED THAT OF SAMPER AND PASTRANA, SAMPER WAS CLOSER TO NAVARRO PHILOSOPHICALLY. NAVARRO SHOULD GO WITH US, HE SAID. HE DID NOT SAY PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY, BUT HE DID SAY HE THOUGHT NAVARRO'S PRICE FOR SUPPORTING SAMPER IN THE SECOND-ROUND WOULD BE THREE MINISTRIES, ONE MAJOR MINISTRY AND TWO LESSER ONES. HE SAID HEALTH AND EDUCATION WOULD PROBABLY BE THE LESSER MINISTRIES. WHAT MAJOR PLUM NAVARRO WILL SEEK, HOWEVER, REMAINS A MYSTERY.

6. VILLEGAS SAID THAT SOMEONE SEEKING NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND A NATIONAL PLATFORM WOULD TRY TO BECOME THE NEXT FISCAL. IF CURRENT FISCAL GENERAL GUSTAVO DE

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GREIFF WERE 45, INSTEAD OF 63, HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE
THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA, VILLEGAS SAID. WE WOULD
NOTE THAT NAVARRO, HOWEVER, IS NOT A LAWYER AND
THEREFORE IS PERSONALLY INELIGIBLE TO BE FISCAL.
FURTHER, GUSTAVO DE GREIFF'S TERM DOES NOT EXPIRE UNTIL
JULY OF 1996 -- THE NEXT PRESIDENT'S SECOND YEAR IN
OFFICE, SO THIS WOULD NOT BE AN IMMEDIATE OPPORTUNITY,
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THOUGH WE CANNOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY THAT DE GREIFF
WOULD RESIGN IF SAMPER, WHOSE COMMITMENT TO THE
COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORT IS VERY SUSPECT, WERE ELECTED
PRESIDENT. FINALLY, VYING FOR THE FISCALIA IS CHANCY.

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THE FISCAL IS SELECTED BY THE SUPREME COURT FROM A LIST OF THREE PERSONS SUBMITTED TO THE COURT BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE JUSTICES ARE QUITE INDEPENDENT.

7. SAMPER PLANS TO RETURN TO COLOMBIA SOMETIME IN APRIL, VILLEGAS SAID, THOUGH HE WON'T OFFICIALLY BEGIN HIS CAMPAIGN UNTIL LATE SUMMER. IF THE GOC FAILS TO GET PABLO ESCOBAR, HOWEVER, SAMPER WILL DELAY HIS RETURN IN ORDER TO DISTANCE HIMSELF TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE FROM CURRENT PRESIDENT AND TITULAR HEAD OF THE LIBERAL PARTY CESAR GAVIRIA, WHOSE PERSONAL POPULARITY REMAINS QUITE LOW IN LARGE PART BECAUSE OF ESCOBAR.

8. VILLEGAS CONFIRMED THAT FORMER PEACE COUNSELLOR HORACIO SERPA WOULD RUN THE SAMPER CAMPAIGN; FORMER COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UN ENRIQUE PENALOSA WILL BE CAMPAIGN TREASURER.

9. VILLEGAS WORRIED THAT ALLEGATIONS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS MIGHT BE LODGED AGAINST HIMSELF, SENATOR ALVARO URIBE (ALSO A KEY SAMPER SUPPORTER) AND SAMPER. HE SAID HE WAS CAUTIONING SAMPER THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAD TO BE DESIGNED TO AVOID TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE SUCH CHARGES.

10. COMMENT: RUMORS OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF THESE THREE WITH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ABOUND, AND ALTHOUGH HARD EVIDENCE IS LACKING IN ALL CASES, WE BELIEVE THERE IS SUBSTANCE TO THE RUMORS. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW CLOSE THE

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DIRECT LINK BETWEEN SAMPER AND THE TRAFFICKERS IS (OR
WAS), BUT WE HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS THAT, IF ELECTED, HE
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WOULD PURSUE COUNTERNARCOTICS WITH THE SAME ENERGY AND
VIGOR THAT GAVIRIA HAS.
BUSBY

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