CONTROLS
STATE FOR DRL, ARA/AND, INL, L/LEI
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS
ONDCP FOR BILL BOZIN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR
TREASURY FOR FINCEN
E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/27/01
/************ THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE ************/

BODY
TAGS: PHUM, PREL, PGOV, SNAR, PINR, KJUS, KCRM, CO
SUBJECT: RETIRED ARMY COLONEL LAMBASTES MILITARY FOR INACTION
AGAINST PARAMILITARIES
REF:
1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL/ECONOFF SUSAN ABEYTA. REASON 1.5(D).
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SUMMARY
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2. (U) RETIRED ARMY COLONEL CARLOS ALFONSO VELASQUEZ, PUBLICLY
DENOUNCED THE ARMY JANUARY 9 FOR FAILING TO COMBAT PARAMILITARY
GROUPS IN URABA. KNOWN AND ADMIRE AS FORMER COMMANDER OF THE
ARMY COMPONENT OF THE SPECIAL ANTI-NARCOTICS TASK FORCE IN CALI
(BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA), VELASQUEZ IS CREDITED WITH UNCOVERING
INFORMATION THAT FORMED THE BASIS FOR CASO 8,000. VELASQUEZ
CLAIMS THAT HE WAS FORCED INTO RETIREMENT BECAUSE OF A HIGHLY
CRITICAL REPORT HE DRAFTED CHARGING THE ARMY WITH INACTION AND
NEGLIGENCE IN THE FACE OF GROWING PARAMILITARISM IN URABA, WHERE
HE WAS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 17TH BRIGADE. END SUMMARY.
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HIGHLY RESPECTED COLONEL PUBLICLY CALLS ARMY TO ACCOUNT
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3. (U) RETIRED ARMY COLONEL CARLOS ALFONSO VELASQUEZ WENT ON
NATIONAL TV JANUARY 9 TO BLAST THE ARMY FOR ITS WILLFUL FAILURE
TO COMBAT PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN COLOMBIA. LOCAL DAILIES GAVE
EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO VELASQUEZ STATEMENTS JANUARY 10, BUT
VELASQUEZ HAD EVIDENTLY BEEN PREPARING TO GO PUBLIC FOR SOME
TIME. AN EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW WITH VELASQUEZ APPEARED IN THE
JANUARY 15-FEBRUARY 15 ISSUE OF "ALTERNATIVA" AS WELL. VELASQUEZ
WAS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE 17TH BRIGADE IN URABA FROM JUNE 1995 UNTIL THE FALL OF 1996. ON MAY 31, 1996, VELASQUEZ SUBMITTED AN INTERNAL REPORT TO THE GENERAL STAFF, CALLING FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF THE 17TH BRIGADE FOR FAILURE OF THE BRIGADE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN URABA. THE REPORT WAS CRITICAL OF THE 17TH BRIGADE COMMANDER GENERAL RITO ALEJO DEL RIO WHO, VELASQUEZ CHARGED, WAS NOT ENGAGED IN FIGHTING PARAMILITARIES AND WHO TOOK SPECIAL MEASURES TO KEEP VELASQUEZ OUT OF THE LOOP WITH REGARD TO KEY BRIGADE ACTIONS. VELASQUEZ SAID HE ALSO WROTE TO GENERAL BEOYA, THE ARMY COMMANDER AND LATER MET WITH HIM. BEOYA WAS NOT SYMPATHETIC, SAID VELASQUEZ. A RESULT, AN INVESTIGATION AGAINST VELASQUEZ HIMSELF WAS LAUNCHED, AS HE TOLD THE PRESS, FOR "INSUBORDINATION AND DISLOYALTY." ON AUGUST 23, THE ARMY GENERAL ASSIGNED TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE ISSUED A RESOLUTION OF "REPRENSION SEVERA" OR SEVERE REPRIMAND AGAINST VELASQUEZ FOR "INSUBORDINATION, BREACH OF SERVICE AND COMRADESHP." VELASQUEZ' EFFORTS TO AKK! AT AN INTERNATIONAL NGO GIVE SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO MONSIGNOR DUARTE CACINO AND MAYOR GLORIA CUARTAS OF APARTADO FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN FAVOR OF PEACE.

4. (U) VELASQUEZ TOLD BOGOTA DAILY "EL TIEMPO" THAT THE ARMY IS NOT CONVINCED THAT PARAMILITARY ELEMENTS CONSTITUTE A DANGEROUS FACTOR IN THE PUBLIC DISORDER AND VIOLENCE IN URABA. HE FURTHER CHARACTERIZED ELEMENTS IN THE ARMY AS BEING EXTREMELY RADICALIZED TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY CONCEIVE THE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS AS PERSONAL ENEMIES RATHER THAN AS ENEMIES OF SOCIETY. FOR HIS PART, VELASQUEZ SAID THE ARMY SHOULD COMBAT EVERY FACTOR THAT CONtributes TO THE VIOLENCE AFFECTING COLOMBIAN SOCIETY. VELASQUEZ WARNED THAT THE TENDENCY TO IGNORE THE PRESENCE OF PARAMILITARIES COULD LEAD IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO A SITUATION ANALOGOUS TO WHAT HE CALLED COLOMBIA'S FORMER "COHABITATION" WITH NARCOTRAFFICKERS. HE TOLD "ALTERNATIVA" THAT THERE WAS NO OBJECTIVE AND IMPARTIAL INVESTIGATION OF HIS ALLEGATIONS, EXPLAINING, "THE ARMY IS SUCH A HIERARCHICAL INSTITUTION THAT /

***** BEGINNING OF SECTION 002 *****/

THERE STILL EXISTS THE PRINCIPLE THAT ONE'S SUPERIOR IS RIGHT ABOVE ALL ELSE, AND FOR THAT REASON THEY GIVE MORE CREDENCE TO THE BRIGADE COMMANDER'S STATEMENT." VELASQUEZ STATED FURTHER THAT ARMY COMMANDER BEOYA HAD REPROACHED HIM FOR SUBMITTING HIS REPORT WITHOUT "INCONTRIVERTIBLE EVIDENCE," TO WHICH HE COUNTERED THE PURPOSE OF THE REPORT WAS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THE
INFORMATION HE PROVIDED WAS SUFFICIENT TO LAUNCH AN INVESTIGATION THAT WOULD PRODUCE HARD EVIDENCE.

An admired and much-decorated officer

5. (U) VELASQUEZ WAS BEST KNOWN AS THE COMMANDER OF ARMY COMPONENT OF THE SPECIAL ANTI-NARCOTICS JOINT COMMAND OR TASK FORCE ("BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA") IN CALI. HECommanded the unit when it conducted raids on the office of the Cali Cartel's former accountant, Guillermo Palomari, whose records revealed the penetration of narcodonations in political campaigns and formed the basis of Caso 8,000. He garnered additional respect among the Colombian public when he stood up to a blackmail attempt by the cartel by going public about an extramarital affair.

Comment

6. (C) [Emboffs who know Velasquez speak highly of his rized]