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ACTION ARA-01

INFO LOG-00, ACDA-00, ACDE-00, INLB-01, AID-00, ACQ-01, INL-01
SRPP-00, DS-00, OIGO-01, TEDE-00, INR-00, ADS-00, PM-00
SP-00, SGHD-00, PMB-00, DSCC-00, DRLD-04, SAS-00, /017W

R 062320Z MAR 98
PM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1841
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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USIA WASHDC 3999
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USCINCFO MIAMI FL
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DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//
NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
DEA WASHDC

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STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PPC, ARA/USOAS, INL, DRL, S/P, PM
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS, TED PICONE, JEFF DELAURENTIS
ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST, BOB BROWN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

SECRET UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL
APPEAL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEASED
REASON(S): B1, L.4(B), L.4(D)
DATE/CASE ID: 15 SEP 2004 200202461

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DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AK
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR
ORCON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/08
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EU: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

REFS: A) BOGOTA 2071 B) "CASE DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF MOD-
H.R. CERTIFICATION" (FAXED TO ARA/AND, MARCH 6, 1997)
C) BOGOTA 1608 (AND PREVIOUS) D) BOGOTA 2035
E) 96 BOGOTA 12758 (NOTAL) F) BOGOTA 2017
G) BOGOTA 1199 H) BOGOTA 589 I) 96 BOGOTA 12432

CLASIFIED BY CHARGE O.P GARZA. REASONS: 1.5(B&D).

1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: IN SUPPORT OF REF A ANALYSIS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS, POST PROVIDES HEREFIN AN OVERVIEW OF KNOWN
RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS CASES INVOLVING COLOMBIAN ARMY UNITS PROPOSED
TO RECEIVE U.S. COUNTER-NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE. THIS SUPPLEMENTS
DATA MATRIX OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL FIFTY CASES
INCLUDED IN THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE'S HUMAN RIGHTS CERTIFICATION
(REF B). IT REVIEWS, WHERE POSSIBLE, CRIMINAL, DISCIPLINARY AND
CIVIL CASES BROUGHT IN RELATION TO SOME OF THESE INCIDENTS. POST
ALSO RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT CONSULT WITH THE OAS' INTER-AMERICAN
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS, NOW IN SESSION IN WASHINGTON -- WHERE
SOME OF THESE CASES ARE LIKELY TO BE UNDER INVESTIGATION AS WELL.
PLEASE ADVISE. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.
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2. (C) REF A PROVIDED POST'S SUMMARY ANALYSIS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS RE PROVISION OF COUNTER-NARCOTICS ASSISTANCE TO

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SIX PROPOSED COLOMBIAN ARMY RECIPIENT UNITS. IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE WASHINGTON WITH THE RELEVANT BACKGROUND NECESSARY TO MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION, THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE KNOW OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION OF EACH OF THE PROPOSED RECIPIENT UNITS, COVERING KEY CASES INCLUDED IN THE MOD’S CERTIFICATION AND OTHER INFORMATION ON THESE OR OTHER CASES POST MAY HAVE. SOME OF THIS INFORMATION MAY OR MAY NOT BE DIRECTLY PERTINENT, DEPENDING UPON HOW THE WASHINGTON COMMUNITY INTERPRETS THE EUM AGREEMENT AND RELEVANT U.S. LEGISLATION AND ANSWERS QUESTIONS SUCH AS, "HOW OLD A CASE IS 'TOO OLD'?" THIS INFO IS INCLUDED, HOWEVER, SO THAT WASHINGTON IS AWARE, IF NOTHING ELSE, OF SOME OF THE LEGAL AND POLITICAL "BAGGAGE" RELATED TO SOME OF THESE CASES AND UNITS, AND TO HELP WASHINGTON RESPOND TO THE INEVITABLE PRESS AND PUBLIC ENQUIRIES IF AND WHEN IT IS DETERMINED TO PROCEED WITH ASSISTANCE TO THESE UNITS.

3. (C) THE PROPOSED AID RECIPIENT UNITS ARE: THE EASTERN SPECIFIED COMMAND ("CEO"), THE 3RD, 7TH, 12TH, AND 24TH BRIGADES, AND THE 2ND MOBILE BRIGADE ("BRIMZ"). THEY WILL BE ADDRESSED NOW IN THE ORDER OF POST’S RECOMMENDATIONS (REF A): "IMMEDIATE AID" (THE "CEO"), "CONDITIONAL AID" (THE 24TH BRIGADE, IF TWO INDIVIDUALS ARE REMOVED FROM THE BRIGADE), AND "WE LEAVE IT TO WASHINGTON" (3RD, 7TH, 12TH AND 2ND MOBILE BRIGADES). WHERE POSSIBLE, WE NOTE THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE VARIOUS FORA RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE HERE: PENAL, EITHER BY THE CIVILIAN "FISCALIA" (PROSECUTOR GENERAL), OR BY THE MILITARY COURTS (COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE IS OVERSEEN BY THE BRIGADE COMMANDER HIMSELF, APPEALS BY THE "TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR"

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MILITARY"); DISCIPLINARY, BY THE "PROCURADURIA" (ATTORNEY GENERAL, BUT ACTUALLY MORE AKIN TO AN INSPECTOR GENERAL); AND CIVIL/REPARATIONS, EITHER CIVIL CASES FILED WITH ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS OR RECOMPENSE MADE UNDER 1996 LAW PERMITTING MONETARY DAMAGES FOR PERSONS WHOSE HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE BEEN VIOLATED. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT ENQUIRE OF THE OAS INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, NOW IN SESSION IN WASHINGTON -- WHERE SOME OF THESE CASES ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION. IN THIS CONTEXT, AND GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF SOME OF THESE CASES, WE
LEAVE TO WASHINGTON TO DETERMINE WHAT CONSTITUTE "EFFECTIVE MEASURES" AND "JUSTICE" -- EITHER BY U.S. OR COLOMBIAN STANDARDS.

THE "CEO"

4. (C) THE UNIT: THIS REGIONAL, NOMINALLY JOINT HEADQUARTERS IS LOCATED AT PUERTO CARRENO, VICHADA DEPARTMENT (ON THE VENEZUELAN BORDER), AND IS CONSIDERED AN OPERATIONAL UNIT OF THE FOURTH DIVISION. ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED IN 1995 AS A UNITED MILITARY COMMAND, IT WAS CONVERTED TO A SPECIFIED (ARMY) COMMAND IN THE SPRING OF 1996. DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO DEAL WITH UNFORESEEN
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1842
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//

NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEA FOR OF, OPL, OC, AX
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR,

ORCON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/08
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES
CONTINGENCIES IN THE BORDER AREA (AN IMPORTANT TRANSSHIPMENT AREA

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FOR NARCOTICS, EVEN THOUGH THE DEPARTMENT'S ENTIRE POPULATION ONLY APPROXIMATES 40,000, THE COMMAND HAS BUT A MINIMAL NUMBER OF FULL-TIME TROOPS ASSIGNED TO IT. WHEN THERE ARE IMPORTANT COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS TO CONDUCT IN THE REGION, BATTALIONS FROM OTHER UNITS ARE "OP-CONNED" TO THE CEO FOR THE DURATION OF LOCAL OPERATIONS. ITS MAJOR GROUND UNIT IN THE VICINITY IS THE 43RD INFANTRY BATTALION "EFRAIN ROJAS ACEVEDO", LOCATED AT CUMARIBO (VICHADA), WHICH OWNS THE COUNTERGUERRILLA COMPANY WHICH PROVIDES MOBILE PATROL SECURITY AROUND THE U.S. GROUND-BASED RADAR SITE AT MARANDUA.

5. (C) THE CERTIFICATION: THE MOD CERTIFICATION INCLUDES NOT A SINGLE CASE AGAINST EITHER CURRENT OR FORMER MEMBERS OF THE CEO (AS NOTED IN REF A).

6. (C) OTHER POST INFORMATION: POST IS NOT AWARE OF ANY CEO-RELATED CASES OR INFORMATION WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN BUT WERE NOT SECRET

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 02520 02 OF 11 062352Z INCLUDED IN THE CERTIFICATION.

7. (C) POST COMMENT: AS NOTED (REF A), WE RECOMMEND IMMEDIATE INITIATION OF COUNTER-NARCOTICS MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

THE 24TH BRIGADE

NAS-SUPPORTED FUMIGATION EFFORTS ARE EXPECTED TO GET UNDERWAY IN THIS BRIGADE'S AREA OF OPERATIONS IN MID-1998 (SEE REF F).

9. (C) THE CERTIFICATION: THE CERTIFICATION INCLUDES NOT A SINGLE CASE INVOLVING ALLEGED GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY PERSONS WHILE SERVING IN THE UNIT. IT DOES, HOWEVER, INCLUDE TWO CASES OF INDIVIDUALS CURRENTLY SERVING IN THE 24TH BRIGADE WHILE UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR GROSS ABUSES (TORTURE AND MURDER) ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED WHILE EARLIER SERVING IN OTHER UNITS. (THE CASES ARE NUMBERS 42 AND 43 ON CASE DOCUMENTATION FAXED TO ARA/AND, REF B.)

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10. (C) OTHER POST INFORMATION: POL/ECONCOUNS RECENTLY RETURNED FROM A TRIP TO PUERTO ASIS, WHERE HE MET WITH, INTER ALIA, THE CURRENT BRIGADE COMMANDER (REF D). COL. DIEGO GANTIVIA ARIAS, WHO HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN HUMAN RESOURCES FROM A U.S. UNIVERSITY, STRUCK POL/ECONCOUNS AS VERY WELL VERSED, AND GENUINELY CONCERNED, IN HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS. (THIS VIEW OF GANTIVIA WAS SHARED BY THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS.) DESPITE THE PUBLIC ALLEGATIONS NOW FLOATING AROUND IN PUERTO ASIS THAT THE ARMY WAS INVOLVED IN TRANSPORTING PARAMILITARIES INTO TOWN VIA OFFICIAL HELICOPTER, POL/ECONCOUNS COULD FIND ABSOLUTELY NO CORROBORATION TO THAT RUMOR (INDEED, THE MAIN SOURCE CITED BY A NUMBER OF INTERLOCUTORS AS SUPPOSEDLY HAVING "SOLID PROOF" TO THAT EFFECT ADAMANTLY DENIED TO POL/ECONCOUNS THAT HE HAD SUCH PROOF OR EVEN BELIEVED THE RUMOR HIMSELF). THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT THINGS ARE NOT DIFFICULT IN PUERTO ASIS: THE MARCH 3 BOGOTA PAPERS ANNOUNCED THAT ALL FOUR RESIDENT PROSECUTORS ("FISCALES") HAVE QUIT THEIR JOBS AND DEPARTED THE AREA DUE TO FEARS FOR THEIR SAFETY.

11. (C) POST COMMENT: AS NOTED REF A, WE RECOMMEND THAT POST BE
UNCLASSIFIED

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1843
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//

NDIC JOHNTOWN PA
DEA WASHDC

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ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST, BOB BROWN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
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JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR

ORCON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/08
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

AUTHORIZED TO PURSUE WITH THE MOD THE OFFER OF IMMEDIATE AID TO
THE 24TH BRIGADE ONCE THE TWO INDIVIDUALS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR
PAST GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE TRANSFERRED TO NON-
RECIPIENT UNITS.

3RD BRIGADE

12. (C) THE UNIT: THE 3RD BRIGADE (OF THE THIRD DIVISION) IS
HEADQUARTERED IN CALI (VALLE DEL CAUCA DEPARTMENT). IT
INTEGRATES 9 BATTALIONS (OR EQUIVALENTS): INFANTRY BATTALION
NO. 7 ("GENERAL JOSE HILARIO LOPEZ", BASED IN POPAYAN, CAUCA);
INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 8 ("BATAALIA DE PICHINCHA", BASED IN CALI);
ARTILLERY BATTALION NO. 3 ("BATAALIA DE PALACE", BASED IN BUGA,
VALLE); ENGINEERING BATTALION NO. 3 ("CORONEL AGUSTIN CODAZZI",
BASED IN PALMIRA, VALLE); MILITARY POLICE BATTALION NO. 3 ("GEN.
EUSEBIO BORRERO ACOSTA", BASED IN CALI); COMBAT SERVICES AND
SUPPORT (AKA, "A.S.P.C.") BATTALION NO. 3 ("POMICARPA
SALAVARRIETA", BASED IN CALI); THE THIRD ZONE RECRUITMENT COMMAND

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(BASED IN CALI); COUNTERTERRORIST BATTALION NO. 3 ("PRIMERO DE NUMANCIA", BASED IN CALI); AND AN ANTI-KIDNAPPING/ANTI-EXTORTION (AKA, "GAULA") GROUP (BASED IN POPAYAN).

13. (C) THE CERTIFICATION: INCLUDES ELEVEN OPEN CASES AGAINST INDIVIDUALS FOR ALLEGED GROSS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED WHILE SERVING IN THE 3RD BRIGADE (CASES 1-11, REF B). IT ALSO INCLUDES FOUR CASES AGAINST CURRENT BRIGADE MEMBERS FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED PRIOR TO SERVICE IN THE 3RD BRIGADE (CASES 34-37). POST ALSO NOTES THAT TWO OF THESE LATTER CASES (CASES 35 AND 37) RELATE TO A SIX-YEAR-OLD CASE OF KIDNAP/MURDER (I.E., "DISAPPEARANCE"), YET THE PROCURADURÍA'S INVESTIGATION IS ONLY AT THE STAGE OF HAVING FORMALLY NOTIFIED THOSE IMPLICATED THAT THEY ARE UNDER INVESTIGATION. STILL, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SOME RECENT MOVEMENT IN THE CASE, AS THE FISCALÍA FILED CRIMINAL CHARGES AS RECENTLY AS DECEMBER 1997 AGAINST ONE PERSON IMPLICATED.

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REPORTED TO HAVE PLACED WEAPONS ON THE PEASANTS AND DRESSED THEM IN GUERRILLA-STYLE UNIFORMS AFTER THE MASSACRE."

15. (C) THE "RIO FRIO" CASE IS CURRENTLY WAITING THE DECISION OF THE MILITARY COURT CONVENE BY THE ARMY'S 3RD BRIGADE (AND PERSIDED OVER BY THE BRIGADE'S CURRENT COMMANDER). WHEN THE CASE WAS TRANSFERRED TO MILITARY COURTS, THE CHARGE AGAINST THE SENIOR-MOST MILITARY OFFICERS WAS DOWNGRADED FROM "HOMICIDE WITH TERRORIST-ENDS" TO "OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE" ("ENCUBRIMIENTO"). THE 3RD BRIGADE CONVOKED A "CONSEJO VERBAL DE GUERRA" (PUBLIC COURT HEARING) ON THE COVER-UP CHARGE, AND CLEARED THE MEN. THOSE DETAINED WERE RELEASED FROM CUSTODY.

16. (C) IN JANUARY 1997 THE TRIBUNAL SUPERIOR MILITAR OVERRULED THE ORIGINAL DECISION BY THE 3RD BRIGADE COMMANDER, AND ORDERED LT. COL. BECERRA BOHORQUEZ AND MAJ. DELGADO RETRIED FOR HAVING FILED FALSE STATEMENTS AND ORDERED THEY BE INVESTIGATED FOR HAVING BEEN PAID (BY NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS) TO COMMIT THE KILLINGS. NONETHELESS, THE CURRENT CHARGE OF "COVER-UP" IS ALL THAT STANDS, AS THE MILITARY COURTS ARGUE (PERVERSELY, IN OUR OPINION), THAT BECERRA BOHORQUEZ CANNOT BE TRIED FOR HOMICIDE UNTIL IT HAS BEEN PROVEN THAT HE CONSPIRED WITH THE MATERIAL
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JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
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USIA FOR AR, I/GAR

ORCON

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AUTHORS OF THAT HOMICIDE, (BUT THE MILITARY COURTS HAVE ALSO
FAILED TO PURSUE CONSPIRACY CHARGES AGAINST BECERRA BOHORQUEZ.)
THE FAMILIES OF "RIO FRIO" VICTIMS HAVE ALSO FILED A CIVIL SUIT,
SEEKING DAMAGES FROM THE GOVERNMENT. THAT SUIT, WE BELIEVE, IS
STILL PENDING.

17. (C) THE INFAMY OF THE "RIO FRIO" CASE IS SUCH THAT FOUR
BOGOTA-BASED HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS BANDED TOGETHER, UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND UNDERTOOK THEIR OWN
INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE. THE RESULTS OF THEIR INVESTIGATION
WERE PUBLISHED IN A DUAL SPANISH-ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOOK (A TRUE
RARITY HERE). THAT REPORT CONCLUDES THAT THE OPERATION "WAS
DESIGNED AND PLANNED IN THE PALACE BATTALION UNDER THE COMMAND OF
LT. COL. LUÍS FELIPE BECERRA BOHORQUEZ (I.E., THE BATTALION
COMMANDER), WITH THE EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE OF HIS IMMEDIATE
SUPERIORS IN THE ARMED FORCES. BRIG. GEN. RAFAEL HERNÁNDEZ
LOPEZ, AND 3RD DIVISION, (MAJOR) GENERAL JESUS MARIA VERGARA."
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MAJOR GENERAL HERNÁNDEZ LOPEZ CURRENTLY SERVES AS INSPECTOR
GENERAL OF THE MILITARY FORCES. END NOTE.) MEMBERS OF THE
POLICE, AS WELL AS SEVERAL CIVILIANS WORKING FOR A MAJOR CALI-
BASED NARCOTRAFFICKER (AKA, "BANANAS"), ARE ALSO BELIEVED TO HAVE
PARTICIPATED IN THE KILLINGS AND THE SUBSEQUENT ATTEMPT TO COVER IT UP... (THEY CLAIMED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE TWO PEASANT FAMILIES, INCLUDING 60- AND 75-YEAR-OLD GRANDFATHERS AND THEIR WIVES, WERE ACTUALLY ARMED ELN GUERRILLAS KILLED IN COMBAT.) 

(SEE FOLLOWING PARAS).

18. (C) It also turns out that Becerra had been denounced for torture in 1979, as well as implicated in the 1988 "La Negra" and "Honduras" massacres of 20 banana workers in the Uraba region of Antioquia (see 1988 Annual Human Rights Report, as well as various Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports covering that period). In the 1988 case, then-maj or Becerra used his personal credit card to pay the hotel bill of the paramilitaries flown in from the Magdalena Medio to perform the killings. (The head of that paramilitary group, Luis Alfredo Rubio Rojas, a former mayor of Puerto Boyaca and long-time enforcer for narcotrafficker Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, was only recaptured this past April -- see 1997 Human Rights Report.)

19. (C) As the case against Becerra Bohorquez proceeded, the first public order judge fled the country after threats on her secret

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Life, only to have her father killed. After the next public order judge assigned to the case was also killed, the La Negra/Honduras case against Becerra was transferred to the military courts. (Note: Because they were not members of the military, the cases against Becerra’s paramilitary co-indictees (including Fidel Castano, the founder of the "ACCU" paramilitaries,) were maintained in the civilian courts. Castano was convicted in absentia and sentenced to a long prison term (never served and now believed to be dead). End note).

20. (C) Becerra, even while under indictment here for the La Negra/Honduras massacre, was sent to Ft. Benning, Georgia, for
U.S. MILITARY TRAINING (ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER HE ACTUALLY UNDERTOOK THE TRAINING ONCE HE GOT TO THE STATES). UPON HIS RETURN TO COLOMBIA, BECERRA WAS ABSOLVED ENTIRELY BY THE MILITARY COURT SYSTEM, PROMOTED TO LT. COL. AND GIVEN COMMAND OF THE PALACE BATTALION -- WHICH SUBSEQUENTLY COMMITTED THE RIO FRIO MASSACRE.

21. (C) THE "RIO FRIO" CASE IS ALSO ONE OF THE CASES OF "IMPUNITY" HIGHLIGHTED BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN ITS 1994 PUBLICATION, "COLOMBIA POLITICAL VIOLENCE: MYTH AND REALITY".

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1845
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC

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Current Handling: n/a
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STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PPC, ARA/USOAS, INL, DRL, S/P, PM
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS, TED PICONE, JEFF DELAURENTIS
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ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST, BOB BROWN
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(SIXTEEN OF THESE CASES BECAME THE BASIS FOR A CONTINUING
EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE MOD ON THE ISSUE OF IMPUNITY
(SEEN REF E: RIO PRIO IS "AI CASE" #15). AS REF E NOTES, SIX
MILITARY PERSONNEL (INCLUDING MAJ. GEN. RAFAEL HERNANDEZ LOPEZ,
THE CURRENT INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MILITARY FORCES), PLUS A

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POLICE OFFICER, ARE STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE PROCURADURIA
FOR THIS INCIDENT. THE MOST THE PROCURADURIA CAN NOW DO TO
BECERRA, HOWEVER, SINCE HE LEFT THE ARMY SHORTLY AFTER THE "RIO-
FRO" INCIDENT, IS A "SYMBOLIC" FINDING OF GUILT.

22. (C) THE FISCALIA CONFIRMED MARCH 4 THAT IT HAS NO SEPARATE
CASE PENDING AGAINST BECERRA BOHORQUEZ, SINCE HE WAS ACQUITTED BY
MILITARY COURTS IN THE LA NEGRA/HONDURAS CASE, AND SINCE IT ALSO
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LOST JURISDICTION OF THE "RIO FRO" CASE TO THE 3RD BRIGADE.
THIS CASE IS LIKELY TO BE ONE OF THOSE UNDER CONSIDERATION DURING
THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN
RIGHTS IN WASHINGTON.

23. (C) THREE OTHERS OF THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL "IMPUNITY"
CASES ALSO INVOLVE THEN-MEMBERS OF THE 3RD BRIGADE. PER REF E,
"AI CASE 2" INVOLVES THE SEPTEMBER 1990 KILLING IN SANTA CRUZ,
NARINO, OF FOUR INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING A SWISS NUN (HILDEGARD
MARIA FELDMAN). ACCORDING TO MOD INFORMATION PROVIDED TO POST
(REF E), A LIEUTENANT AND A SERGEANT WERE DISMISSED FROM ACTIVE
DUTY AS PUNISHMENT. SIXTEEN MEMBERS OF THE 3RD MECHANIZED
CAVALRY BATTALION WERE INVESTIGATED BY THE BRIGADE'S PROSECUTORS
AND COMMANDER; THE LATTER DISMISSED THE CHARGES ON 17 MAY 1991
AND DECLINED TO CONVOLVE A CONSEJO VERBAL DE GUERRA. (NOTE: UNTIL
MID-1991, THE 3RD BRIGADE COMMANDER WAS BRIG. GEN. MANUEL JOSE
BONETT, NOW COMMANDING GENERAL OF MILITARY FORCES. END NOTE.)
THIS DECISION WAS CONFIRMED TWO MONTHS LATER BY THE TRIBUNAL
SUPERIOR MILITAR.

24. (C) AT THE TIME, THE PROCURADURIA'S DELEGATE FOR MILITARY
FORCES (ATTACHED TO THE BRIGADE) SIMILARLY ABSOLVED THE MILITARY
PERSONNEL. BUT IN LATE 1995 THAT DECISION WAS REVOKED BY THE
PROCURADURIA, WHICH SOUGHT AND OBTAINED THE DISMISSAL FROM ACTIVE
DUTY OF A LIEUTENANT AND A SERGEANT - NEITHER OF WHOM HAD BEEN AMONG THE SIXTEEN PERSONS PREVIOUSLY CLEARED BY THE MILITARY COURTS.

25. (C) THE FELDMAN CASE ALSO WAS SUBMITTED TO THE OAS INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, WHICH, IN REPORT 15/95, RULED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA AND RECOMMENDED COMPENSATION SECRET

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BE PAID TO THE ESTATES OF THE DECEASED. IN PART BECAUSE OF THIS CASE, "LAW 288" WAS PASSED IN 1996; FOR THE FIRST TIME IN COLOMBIA, THAT LAW PROVIDES FOR GOC COMPENSATION TO VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. A CIVIL SUIT WAS FILED SEEKING RECOMPENSE, AND THE GOC ORDERED PAYMENT IN 1996. THE BOTTOM LINE IN THIS CASE: THE MILITARY REFUSED TO PURSUE CASES AGAINST ALL IMPLICATED; THE OAS Ruled AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMY'S VERSION OF EVENTS; TWO ARMY PERSONNEL LOST THEIR JOBS; THE ESTATES HAVE PROBABLY BEEN PAID SOME RECOMPENSE; AND, THERE HAS BEEN NO MURDER TRIAL, CIVILIAN OR MILITARY. THE CASE DOES NOT APPEAR IN THE MOD CERTIFICATION BECAUSE GOC AUTHORITIES CONSIDER IT CLOSED.

26. (C) TWO OTHER AI CASES INVOLVING THE 3RD BRIGADE DO NOT APPEAR IN THE MOD CERTIFICATION, ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THERE ARE STILL ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS RELATED TO THEM. "AI CASE 12" INVOLVES THE "NUMANCIA" BATTALION AND KILLINGS WHICH OCCURRED IN PATIA, CAUCA, ON 19 MARCH 1992. MILITARY COURTS ABSOLVED THOSE SIX IMPLICATED OF HOMICIDE AND OTHER CHARGES, RULING THAT ARMED INSURGENTS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS. REP E-NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT A SEPARATE INVESTIGATION BY THE PROCURADURIA FOR MILITARY FORCES WAS STILL ONGOING (AS OF DEC 96). WE ARE SEEKING
To confirm the status of this investigation.

27. (C) The final A1 case not mentioned by the MOD certification is one that Post is certain should have been included: the "Los UVOS massacre." In Cauca Department on 7 April 1991, seventeen unarmed peasants were pulled from a public bus and killed by members of the 3rd Brigade's Jose Hilario Lopez Battalion -- which initially claimed that guerrillas were responsible for the killings. (Indeed, the battalion commander sued a Colombian human rights group for slander when it publicly asserted that the battalion had committed the massacre.) The Procuraduria (which, at most, can apply administrative sanctions and refer a case to the Fiscalia for criminal prosecution) opened disciplinary proceedings against eight battalion members in May 1993. The battalion commander and his deputy/operations officer were charged, inter alia, with providing the weapons and ammunition for the attack as well as subsequently covering up the actions of their subordinates. In 1994, the Procuraduria obtained the secret...

SURE.) A CIVIL SUIT WAS ALSO FILED.


31. (C) THE MILITARY COURT NONETHELESS DID SENTENCE SEVERAL ENLISTED PERSONNEL TO LONG PRISON TERMS (TWO TO SERVE 27 YEARS, AND ONE TO SERVE 18 YEARS). THE ONLY ARMY OFFICER CONVICTED IN RELATION TO THESE CRIMES, LT. JOSÉ EDILBERTO CORTES VALERO, WAS SENTENCED TO 28 YEARS IN PRISON. CORTES VALERO WAS CONVICTED IN ABSENTIA, HOWEVER, SINCE HE FLED MILITARY CUSTODY SOME TIME AGO; HIS CURRENT WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN. POST ALSO NOTES THAT THIS DECISION BY THE 3RD BRIGADE'S MILITARY TRIBUNAL -- CLEARING THE
UNCLASSIFIED

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R 062320Z MAR 98
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1847
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 4005
NSC WASHDC
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FBI WASHDC
DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//

NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
DEA WASHDC

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STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PPC, ARA/USOAS, INL, DRL, S/P, PM
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS, TED PICONE, JEFF DELAURENTIS
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX
JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2

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Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1998BOGOTA02520

Case Number: 200202461

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/08
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

COMMANDERS INVOLVED WHILE INCULPATING LOW-RANKING PERSONNEL COMES SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT RULLED THAT ALL CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE MUST BE TRIED IN CIVILIAN, NOT MILITARY, COURTS. THIS CASE IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THOSE UNDER CONSIDERATION DURING THE ONGOING SESSION OF THE IACHR IN WASHINGTON.

32. (C) THERE IS ONE LAST CASE RELATED TO THE 3RD BRIGADE OF WHICH THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE: "THE TRUJILLO MASSACRE" (AKA, "TRUJILLO I" OR "OAS CASE 11,007" TO DIFFERENTIATE IT FROM THE SUBSEQUENT "TRUJILLO II" MASSACRE). A LANDMARK OF BOTH COLOMBIAN AND OAS JURISPRUDENCE, THE TRUJILLO CASE ACTUALLY INVOLVES A SERIES OF INCIDENTS FOLLOWING A 29 MARCH 1990 ELN ATTACK ON AN ARMY PATROL IN TRUJILLO, VALLE DEPARTMENT. SOME FIFTY PERSONS WERE KILLED DURING A THREE WEEK PERIOD. SOME OF THEM, INCLUDING THE LOCAL JESUIT PRIEST, WERE TORTURED AND CHAIN-SAWed TO DEATH BY MILITARY, POLICE AND PARAMILITARY PERSONNEL ON A FARM BELONGING TO A NATIONAL-LEVEL NARCOTRAFFICKER, DIEGO SECRET

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35. (C) IN ORDER TO AVOID INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR A MASSACRE. PRESIDENT SAMPER PROMISED TO FULFILL ALL THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OAS, INCLUDING: PROSECUTE AND PUNISH THOSE RESPONSIBLE; REVOKE THE WHITEWASHED FINDINGS OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S DELEGATE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS; PURSUE CRIMINAL TRIALS AGAINST THOSE 3RD BRIGADE AND JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES WHO HAD PERVERTED THE INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS; AND, PROVIDE RECOMPENSE TO THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS.

36. (C) THE ONLY ARMY OFFICER INDISPUTABLY IMPLICATED BY THE OAS COMMISSION AS A DIRECT PARTICIPANT IN THE CHAIN SAW MASSACRE WAS ARMY MAJOR ALIRIO ANTONIO URUENA. (OTHERS WERE IMPLICATED IN VARIOUS EXTRA JUDICIAL EXECUTIONS.) DESPITE THE FINDINGS OF THE TRUJILLO COMMISSION, MAJOR URUENA WAS FORMALY ABSOLVED BY THE 3RD BRIGADE'S OWN MILITARY COURT OF ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE MASSACRE. (NOTE: THIS OCCURRED AFTER A KEY WITNESS, A CIVILIAN GUIDE/INFORMANT FOR THE ARMY AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS, WAS HIMSELF MURDERED AFTER HE AGREED TO TESTIFY AGAINST OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE MASSACRE.)

37. (C) THE TRUJILLO CASE WAS NOT MENTIONED IN THE MOD CERTIFICATION, PROBABLY BECAUSE THE GOC CONSIDERS THE CASE CLOSED, ALTHOUGH POST RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT CHECK WITH THE OAS ON THE STATUS OF THE CASE BEFORE THE IACHR. THE CURRENT STATUS OF GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS IN THE CASE IS ALSO THE SUBJECT OF AN INVESTIGATION BY THE BOGOTA OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH IS LIKELY TO INCLUDE THE CASE IN ITS FORTHCOMING REPORT TO THE UNITED NATIONS.
7TH BRIGADE

38. (C) THE UNIT: THE 7TH BRIGADE (OF THE FOURTH DIVISION) IS HEADQUARTERED IN VILLAVICENCIO, META. THE BRIGADE INCORPORATES

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R 062320Z MAR 98
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1848
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
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NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
DEA WASHDC

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STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PCC, ARA/USOAS, INL, DRL, S/P, PM
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS, TED PICONE, JEFF DELAURENTIS
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TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

SEVEN BATTALIONS: ARMOCILE INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 19 ("GENERAL
Joaquin Paris," BASED IN SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE); INFANTRY
BATTALION NO. 20 ("GENERAL ROERGAS SERVIEZ," BASED IN APIAY,
META); AIRBORNE INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 21 ("BATTALON PANTANO DE
VARGAS," BASED IN GRANADA, META); AIRBORNE ENGINEERING BATTALION
No. 7 ("GENERAL CARLOS ALBAN," BASED IN APIAY); COMBAT SERVICES
AND SUPPORT BATTALION NO. 7 ("ANTONIA SANTOS," BASED IN
VILLAVICENCIO), COUNTERGUERRILLA BATTALION NO. 7 ("HEROES DE
ARAUCA," BASED IN VILLAVICENCIO); AS WELL AS AN ANTI-

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KIDNAPPING/ANTI-EXTORTION "Gaula" GROUP AND THE 7TH RECRUITMENT
ZONE COMMAND (BOTH BASED IN VILLAVICENCIO).

39. (C) THE CERTIFICATION: THE MOD'S CERTIFICATION DETAILED SIX
CASES OF OPEN HUMAN RIGHTS CASES AGAINST PERSONS FOR ACTS
ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED WHILE SERVING IN THE 7TH BRIGADE (CASES 12-
17, REF B), AS WELL AS ONE OTHER (CASE 38, REF B) FOR ACTS
COMMITTED PRIOR TO CURRENT SERVICE IN THE 7TH BRIGADE. CHIEF
AMONG THE CASES INVOLVING BRIGADE MEMBERS IS THE JULY 1997
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MAPIRIPAN MASSACRE (CASE 15, REF B). THE OLDEST OF THE CASES
(NO. 16) INVOLVES A 1992 CASE OF TORTURE AND HOMICIDE; YET THE
CASE IS ONLY AT THE POINT OF THE ACCUSED HAVING BEEN INFORMED
THAT HE IS UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE PROCURADURIA.

40. (C) OTHER POST INFORMATION: RE MAPIRIPAN: WHEN THE
PROCURADURIA'S DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED, IT
WERE BEING INVESTIGATED. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHY THE
PROCURADURIA INFORMATION (CASE NO. 15, REF B) NOW INDICATES THAT
ONLY TWO MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE BEING INVESTIGATED (FYI: THE TWO
ARE BRIG. GEN. USCATEGUI, THEN-COMMANDER OF THE 7TH BRIGADE (NOW
REASSIGNED AS CHIEF OF ARMY OPERATIONS), AND MAJOR OROZCO, THEN-
ACTING COMMANDER OF THE BRIGADE'S JOAQUIN PARIS BATTALION AT SAN
JOSE DEL GUAVIARE. ANOTHER GENERAL OFFICER ORIGINALLY UNDER
INVESTIGATION WAS 4TH DIVISION COMMANDER MAJOR GENERAL AGUSTIN
ARDILA (USCATEGUI'S BOSS), WHO RETIRED FROM THE ARMY AFTER HE WAS
REASSIGNED FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THE INVESTIGATION.)

41. (C) IN ADDITION TO THE PROCURADURIA INVESTIGATION, THE
FISCALIA HAS OPENED A CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION. SINCE THE FISCALIA
HAS NOT FORMALLY INDICTED ANY PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS YET, THERE
IS NO FORMAL, PUBLIC LINKING OF THAT INVESTIGATION TO PARTICULAR
MEMBERS OF THE 7TH BRIGADE (OR TO BRIM2, SEE BELOW) --- EVEN
THOUGH THAT IS WHERE FISCALIA INVESTIGATORS PRIVATELY TELL US
THEIR LEADS ARE DIRECTING THEM. AS SUCH, IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE
THAT THE FISCALIA'S INVESTIGATION IS NOT INCLUDED AMONG THE CASES
IN THE MOD'S CERTIFICATION. POST IS ENDEAVORING TO OBTAIN
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INFORMATION ON THE INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE POLICE, THE AIR FORCE AND THE ARMY AND DETERMINE WHEN THAT INFORMATION IS TO BE SHARED WITH THE PROCURADURIA AND FISCALIA -- SECRET

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WHICH HAS NOT YET OCCURRED, MORE THAN SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE MASSACRE.

42. (C) FURTHERMORE, AS NOTED BELOW (UNDER BRIM2), THE 7TH BRIGADE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE ARMY COMPANY AT THE TIME OF THE OCTOBER 1997 MIRAFLORES INCIDENT WAS "ON LEAVE," ONLY TO BE REPLACED (BY HIS OWN ACCOUNTING) BY LT. COL. SANCHEZ OF THE BRIM2 -- A MOST IRREGULAR VIOLATION OF MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND. LT. COL. SANCHEZ HAS ALSO BEEN IMPLICATED SEPARATELY BY THE POLICE AS POSSIBLY HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN FACILITATING THE PARAMILITARY ARRIVAL AT SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE, EN ROUTE TO MAPIRIPAN. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT IN JANUARY LT. COL. SANCHEZ ROTATED TO HIS NEXT ASSIGNMENT, AND NOW SERVES WITHIN THE MOD SECRETARIAT IN BOGOTA.

12TH BRIGADE

=========

43. (C) THE UNIT: THE FOURTH DIVISION'S 12TH BRIGADE IS HEADQUARTERED IN FLORENCIA, CAQUETA DEPARTMENT. THE BRIGADE INCORPORATES SEVEN BATTALIONS: JUNGLE INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 34 ("JUANAMBU", BASED IN FLORENCIA); JUNGLE INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 35 ("HEROES DEL GUEPI", BASED IN LARANDIA, CAQUETA); MOUNTAIN

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JUSTICE FOR CRIM. WARREN, RICHARD AND NDDS/VAN VLIET
FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
USIA FOR AR, I/GAR

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TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PREL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 36 ("CAZADORES", BASED IN SAN VICENTE DEL
CAGUAN, CAQUETA); ENGINEERING BATTALION NO. 12 ("GENERAL LIBORIO
MEJIA", BASED IN VENECIA, ANTIOQUIA); COMBAT SERVICES AND SUPPORT
BATTALION NO. 12 ("GENERAL FERNANDO SERRANO", BASED IN
FLORENCIA); COUNTERGUERRILLA BATTALION NO. 12 ("CHAIRA", BASED IN
FLORENCIA); AND AN ANTI-KIDNAPPING/ANTI-EXTORTION "GAULA" GROUP
(BASED IN FLORENCIA).

44. (C) THE CERTIFICATION: CONTAINED SEVEN CASES (REF B, NOS.
18-24) AGAINST PERSONS FOR CRIMES ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED WHILE
SERVING IN THE BRIGADE AND THREE ADDITIONAL CASES (NOS. 39-41)
AGAINST CURRENT BRIGADE MEMBERS FOR OFFENSES COMMITTED PRIOR TO
SERVICE IN THE BRIGADE. THE OLDEST OF THE CASES (NO. 18) DATES
FROM 1992 BUT IS ACTUALLY QUITE ADVANCED; THE ACCUSED PARTY (A
COLONEL) IS CURRENTLY APPEALING THE PROCURADURIA’S PAST FINDING
OF GUILT AND ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT (THE PUNISHMENT IS NOT
KNOWN TO US).

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45. (S/ORCON/NOFORN/OWNSTATE) OTHER POST INFORMATION: ORA HAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED INFORMATION THAT BRIG. GEN. GABRIEL CONTRERAS AGREED TO SHARE ARMY INTELLIGENCE WITH PARAMILITARIES WHILE HE SERVED AS THE BRIGADE'S COMMANDER IN 1997 (HE HAS SINCE BEEN REASSIGNED TO THE 2ND BRIGADE, BARRANQUILLA). WE ARE NOT AWARE, HOWEVER, OF ANY CONCRETE, CREDIBLE INFORMATION THAT CONTRERAS PERSONALLY COMMITTED, OR ORDERED THE COMMISSION OF, GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THAT SAID, IT DOES NOT TAKE MUCH OF A STRETCH TO IMAGINE WHAT LOCAL PARAMILITARIES DID WITH THE ARMY INTELLIGENCE PASSED TO THEM.

46. (C) POST COMMENT: GIVEN THE MOD'S CERTIFICATION, POST FINDS THAT THERE IS CREDIBLE EVIDENCE OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAVING BEEN COMMITTED BY 12TH BRIGADE MEMBERS. POST ALSO FINDS THAT, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS MADE A NUMBER OF STEPS IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE, WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER SUCH EFFORTS TO DATE AMOUNT TO "EFFECTIVE MEASURES" (IN THE SENSE OF MEASURES WHICH "PRODUCE A DEFINITE OR DESIRED RESULT") AND THUS SEEKS WASHINGTON'S VIEWS/GUIDANCE.

"BRIM2"

47. (C) THE UNIT: LIKE THE 1ST AND 3RD MOBILE BRIGADES, THE 2ND MOBILE BRIGADE RESPONDS DIRECTLY TO NATIONAL ARMY COMMANDERS IN BOGOTA, RATHER THAN TO A REGIONAL COMMANDER, AND CAN BE DEPLOYED ANYWHERE THROUGHOUT COLOMBIA. IN THE EARLY 1990s, FOR EXAMPLE, IT SAW MUCH DUTY IN THE MAGDALENA MEDIO REGION. MORE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, IT HAS DEPLOYED PRINCIPALLY IN AREAS WITHIN "THE BOX", WITH ITS FOUR MOBILE COUNTER-GUERRILLA BATTALIONS BASED OUT OF SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE.
CONSCRIPTS PREDOMINATE. THE MOBILE BRIGADES ARE COMPOSED OF CAREER SOLDIERS WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR "BRIM" SERVICE.


49. (SBU) OTHER POST INFORMATION: FAIRLY OR NOT, THE MOBILE BRIGADES HAVE ACQUIRED A POOR PUBLIC PERCEPTION WITH REGARD TO HUMAN RIGHTS. AFTER THE BUM AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED AND IT WAS KNOWN THE USG WAS CONSIDERING WHICH UNITS TO PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/AMERICAS WENT SO FAR AS TO SEND EMBASSY HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICER A COPY OF THEIR DECEMBER 1993 BOOK, "STATE OF WAR: POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN COLOMBIA" -- HAVING DOG-EARED A 50-PAGE CHAPTER COVERING ALLEGED

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USCINCSC MIAMI FL
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DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//

NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
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STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PPC, ARA/USOAS, INL, DRL, S/P, PM
NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS, TED PICONE, JEFF DELAURENTIS
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ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST, BOB BROWN
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HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED BY THE 1ST AND 2ND MOBILE BRIGADES.

50. (C) THAT REPORT ASSERTS THAT "DESPITE THE GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY'S ASSERTIONS THAT MOBILE BRIGADES DO NOT COMMIT SYSTEMATIC ABUSES, SOME GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS HAVE DOCUMENTED A BROAD, CONSISTENT AND OFTEN SHOCKING PATTERN OF SERIOUS VIOLATIONS." THE REPORT WENT SO FAR AS TO STATE "AMERICAS WATCH BELIEVES THAT SPREADING TERROR AMONG CIVILIANS IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF BRIGADE STRATEGY AND APPEARS TO BE TOLERATED AND SOMETIMES OPENLY ARTICULATED BY BRIGADE COMMANDERS." WHILE THIS BOOK IS NOW FOUR YEARS OLD AND THE JUDGMENTS CERTAINLY DEBATABLE, ITS CONCLUSIONS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE DEPLOYED BY CRITICS OF MILITARY AID IF AND WHEN MILITARY AID IS PROVIDED TO BRIM2.

51. (C) MAPIRIPAN/MIRAFLORES: IN PRIVATE, SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS HAVE PREVIOUSLY POINTED THE FINGER AT SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE BRIM2 AS HAVING COLLABORATED WITH PARAMILITARIES WHO SECRET

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52. (C) LT. COL. SANCHEZ TOLD UN INVESTIGATORS IN MID-FEBRUARY (WHO RAN INTO HIM IN SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE) THAT HE HAD BEEN IN MAPIRIPAN AFTER THE MASSACRE AND THAT "ONLY THREE" PERSONS WERE KILLED AT ALL. THE REST, HE ASSERTED, WAS GUERRILLA DISINFORMATION. THIS IS DIRECTLY CONTRADICTED BY ICRC ASSESSMENTS, AS WELL AS BY MULTIPLE POLOFF INTERVIEWS OF REFUGEES FROM MAPIRIPAN. AS NOTED ABOVE (7TH BRIGADE), THE FISCALIA HAS YET TO FILE CHARGES AGAINST ANY MILITARY MEMBERS, AS THEY HAVE NOT BEEN PROVIDED ACCESS TO POLICE, AIR FORCE AND ARMY INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE TWO CASES. THESE CASES WILL BE RAISED PROMINENTLY DURING A MARCH 9 EMBASSY/MILGROUP MEETING WITH THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE ARMED FORCES, MAJ. GEN. RAFAEL HERNANDEZ LOPEZ.

53. (C) ONE OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S SIXTEEN CASES ("AI NO. 7") ALSO CONCERNS A PARTICULARLY HEINOUS INCIDENT INVOLVING SECRET

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SOLDIERS FROM BRIM2: THE NOVEMBER 7, 1992, RAPE OF SONEBIA PINZON HERRERA AND HER TWO-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, MARCELA, BY SOLDIERS OF THE CIMARRONES BATTALION. (NOTE: THE CASE IS ALSO ONE OF THE CASES REVIEWED IN THE HRW/A BOOK MENTIONED ABOVE. END NOTE.) AI'S BOOK STATES THAT FOUR SOLDIERS WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH RAPE AND CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT A CRIME. THE MOD'S DECEMBER 1996 UPDATE TO THE EMBASSY ON THE AI CASES REPORTED THAT THREE (SIC) SOLDIERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND DISMISSED "FOR BAD CONDUCT" AND THAT MRS. PINZON HAD FILED AN ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT WITH THE MINISTRY TO SEEK COMPENSATION. THE PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION BY THE 2ND BRIM DETERMINED THAT THE CRIMES WERE NOT "ACTS OF SERVICE" AND TRANSFERRED THE CASE TO THE CIVILIAN FISCALIA FOR CRIMINAL PROSECUTION. THE THREE SOLDIERS WERE SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND GUILTY OF ILLEGAL CONSTRAINT (OF THE HUSBAND) AND OF RAPE OF THE WIFE AND TWO-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER. THEY WERE SENTENCED TO SERVE FROM TWO TO EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON.

54. (C) CURIOUSLY, THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMED THE EMBASSY IN DECEMBER 1996 THAT THE PROCURADURIA'S DELEGATE FOR MILITARY FORCES OPENED A SEPARATE DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION, "BUT CONCLUDED THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
ILLICIT ACT BE longed to the category of 'Volunteer Soldier'.

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R 062320Z MAR 98
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1851
INFO DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC 4009
NSC WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD

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ONDCP FOR JANET CRIST, BOB BROWN
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/6/08
TAGS: PHUM, SNAR, MASS, PRFL, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA EUM: ANALYSIS OF SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS CASES

CONDITION FOR WHICH THEY ARE NOT SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINE BY THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE NATION, AS THEY DO NOT HOLD THE STATUS OF
PUBLIC FUNCTIONARIES" (SIC).

FINAL COMMENTS

========= 55. (C) POST NOTES THE CLEAR INTENT OF THE MOD TO COOPERATE IN
THIS PROCESS AND THAT THE MOD HAS INDEED "ISSUE(D) TO THE EMBASSY
A CERTIFICATION FROM THE COMPETENT COLOMBIAN AUTHORITY REGARDING
ANY ONGOING FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS OR PROSECUTIONS" AS REQUIRED
UNDER THE EUM AGREEMENT SIGNED IN WASHINGTON. AS WE READ THE
AGREEMENT, THAT IS ALL THE GOC MUST DO IN GOOD FAITH IN ORDER TO
SEEK THE ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, UNILATERAL U.S. REQUIREMENTS, SUCH

Current Class: SECRET
AS THE NEW LEAHY LAW, CAUSE US TO BELIEVE THAT THE STANDARD IMPOSED ON THE USG BEFORE AID CAN BE GRANTED IS HIGHER. POST STANDS READY TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST THE GOC TO TAKE THE NECESSARY EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT, INDEED, THE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. PLEASE SECRET

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56. (C) POST CONCLUDES BY SIMPLY DRAWING WASHINGTON'S ATTENTION TO WHAT POST REPORTED IN DECEMBER 1996 (REF 1) WITH REGARD TO THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CASES MENTIONED HEREIN: "POST HAS REPORTED ON SOME OF THE MORE WELL KNOWN CASES (THE RIO FRIO, SOGAMOSO, EL CALOTO, LOS UVOS MASSACRES), AND WHEN AI FIRST PUBLISHED ITS LIST IN 1994 WE SAID THAT AI'S BASIC POINTS CONCERNING JUDICIAL IMPUNITY FOR STATE AGENTS COMPROMISED IN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES WERE VALID (94 BOGOTA 7912). CIVILIAN LEGAL AUTHORITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORS HAVE TOLD US RECENTLY (SIC) THAT THE POLICE HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN HOLDING ITS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS TO ACCOUNT."

THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGED THE GOC TO READDRESS THE MASSACRES OF LOS UVOS AND EL CALOTO. IN LIKE MANNER, MANY OF THE CASES REMAIN OPEN OR WERE REOPENED BECAUSE THE INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS/PROSECUTIONS SIMPLY DID NOT MEET STANDARDS OF JUSTICE UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY... WHILE INDICATING THAT COLOMBIA IS AT LEAST AND AT LAST TRYING TO PROSECUTE THESE CRIMES, GOC INTERLOCUTORS ARE CAUTIOUS AS TO THE OUTCOME OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS."

57. (C) BY WAY OF UPDATE TO THAT ASSESSMENT, WE CAN ONLY ADD NOW THAT WHILE THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT RULED IN AUGUST 1997 THAT ALL HUMAN RIGHTS CASES MUST BE TRIED IN CIVILIAN, NOT MILITARY, COURTS, AND THAT A NUMBER OF SUCH CASES HAVE SINCE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE FISCALIA, A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT CASES (E.G., THE LOS UVOS CASE ABOVE) HAVE REMAINED WITHIN THE MILITARY COURTS. WE ALSO NOTE THAT WHILE THE GOVERNMENT HAS DRAFTED A NEW SECRET
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MILITARY PENAL CODE, IT HAS ONLY RECENTLY BEEN SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS FOR CONSIDERATION.

58. (U) PLEASE ADVISE.

GARZA