

(E37)

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ACTION ARA-01

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INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	C-01	OASY-00	DS-00	HA-09	H-01
	INM-02	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
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	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	/040W		

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R 201959Z DEC 93
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4668
 INFO DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC
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 DEA WASHDC
 DOD WASHDC
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 DIA WASHDC
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DEA HQS FOR OF, OFL, DO, AO, A, OK
JUSTICE PASS ICITAP

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, KJUS, PINR, CO,
 SUBJECT: NEW NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF APPOINTED

EXTEND CLASSIFICATION

1. (C) SUMMARY: POLICE GENERAL OCTAVIO VARGAS
 SILVA, WHO HEADED THE SUCCESSFUL ANTI-ESCOBAR
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 TASK FORCE (BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA), WAS APPOINTED
 DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE ON DECEMBER 16
 REPLACING GENERAL MIGUEL ANTONIO GOMEZ PADILLA.
 GOMEZ PADILLA'S RESIGNATION WAS NOT ANTICIPATED
 AND HIS REMARKS AT THE CHANGE OF COMMAND
 CEREMONY SUGGESTED SOME BITTERNESS. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) AFTER 37 YEARS ON THE POLICE FORCE, FIVE
 AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL POLICE, GENERAL
 GOMEZ ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AND RETIREMENT
 ON DECEMBER 16. PRESIDENT GAVIRIA PRAISED
 GENERAL GOMEZ CONTRIBUTIONS IN FIGHTING

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: MELVIN E. SINN
 DATE/CASE ID: 15 FEB 2002 200200107
 CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.6(1), 1.6(6)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 20 DEC 2018

DEPT OF STATE APPEALS REVIEW PANEL Page: 1

FOIA/PA	Mandatory Review
() Release	() Declassify
(<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) Excise	() Declassify in Part
() Deny	() Class. Ret/Renew

Exemptions B1
 ARP Action Cert. me Date 24/1/03

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NARCOTRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS AND IN REFORMING THE NATIONAL POLICE. GAVIRIA NOTED THAT WHILE GOMEZ WAS POLICE CHIEF, THE POLICE DESTROYED THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AND ITS CRIMINAL LEADERSHIP. IN AN EMOTIONAL CONCLUSION TO HIS RETIREMENT STATEMENT, GOMEZ TURNED AND FACED THE PRESIDENT AND SAID WITH EMPHASIS THAT HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN A LOYAL AND TRUSTWORTHY CIVIL SERVANT. AFTER ACCEPTING GOMEZ'S RESIGNATION, GAVIRIA APPOINTED VARGAS SILVA, CURRENTLY VICE DIRECTOR OF POLICE, TO REPLACE HIM.

3. (C) ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE

THE RETIRING POLICE GENERAL WAS ESPECIALLY DISTURBED OVER THE INFLUENCE OF THE CALI CARTEL IN NUMEROUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. GOMEZ, THE SOURCE SAID, HAD SIMPLY HAD ENOUGH OF THE SITUATION.

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4. (U) GENERAL OCTAVIO VARGAS SILVA IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE ARCHITECTS OF THE SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. VARGAS GRADUATED FROM THE THREE-YEAR COURSE AT THE "ESCUELA DE CADETES GENERAL SANTANDER" POLICE ACADEMY ON AUGUST 16, 1959 AS A SECOND LIEUTENANT. RISING THROUGH THE RANKS VARGAS SERVED WITH DISTINCTION AS COMMANDER OF THE DISTRICT IN HUILA, BOGOTA, AND DIRECTOR OF THE SIMON BOLIVAR POLICE ACADEMY. HE SERVED AS DIRECTOR OF POLICE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF BOLIVAR AND NORTE DE SANTANDER. HE WAS ALSO DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, POLICE ATTACHE AT THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY IN QUITO ECUADOR, DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL INSPECTOR GENERAL AND DIRECTOR OF POLICE OPERATIONS. DURING 1993, HE DIRECTED THE JOINT ANTI-ESCOBAR BLOQUE DE BUSQUEDA OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AND PABLO ESCOBAR. HE DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH.

5. (C) COMMENT: VARGAS IS A HARD-WORKING PROFESSIONAL, WITH NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS MOST RECENTLY IN MEDELLIN. HIS CAREER HAS BEEN CLOUDED, HOWEVER, BY PRESS REPORTS WHICH

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ATTRIBUTED PART OF HIS SUCCESS IN HUNTING
ESCOBAR TO ASSISTANCE BY CALI TRAFFICKERS. AS
POLICE CHIEF, HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR
OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTRAFFICKERS THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY, ~~MOST SENSITIVELY AGAINST THE CALI~~

release

BT

~~CARTEL~~ BUSBY

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