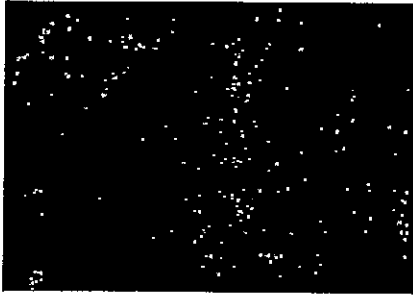


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SERIAL: (U) [REDACTED]

TEXT

COUNTRY: (U) COLOMBIA (CO).

//IPSP: (U) [REDACTED]

COMBINE: COMPLETE

SUBJ: [REDACTED] /FARC GUERRILLA COMMANDERS AND PARAMILITARY
GROUP MEMBERS COMMENT ON THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES (U)
WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED
INTELLIGENCE. THIS REPORT IS CLASSIFIED ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 981209.

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REQS: (U)

SOURCE: ~~(C)~~

SUMMARY: ~~(C)~~ DURING AN INTERVIEW BY A [REDACTED] FARC COMMANDERS COMMENTED ON SALARIES, RECRUITMENT, MILITARY OPERATIONS, AND THE NEGATIVE IMAGE THEY HAVE ACQUIRED FROM KIDNAPPINGS. PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS ALSO INTERVIEWED COMMENTED ON INCREASED OPERATIONS, CONTROL OF MINERAL RICH AREAS, AND POPPY CULTIVATION. TEXT: (U)

1. ~~(C)~~ PAY AND EMPLOYMENT. WITH REGARD TO SALARIES, FUERZAS ARMADAS REVOLUCIONARIAS DE COLOMBIA (FARC) GUERRILLA COMMANDERS DO NOT PAY THEIR SOLDIERS AT ALL. SOLDIERS ARE GIVEN MONEY ON AN AS-NEEDED BASIS. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A SOLDIER WANTS TO GO ON LEAVE TO VISIT HIS FAMILY FOR APPROXIMATELY 10 DAYS, THE SOLDIER MAY BE GIVEN 100.00 U.S. DOLLARS FOR EXPENSES FOR THE DURATION OF THE LEAVE. [REDACTED] --THIS WAS VERIFIED BY SEVERAL GUERRILLA COMMANDERS AS WELL AS BY THE SOLDIERS.) A GUERRILLA COMMANDER ALSO SAID THAT WHEN GUERRILLAS GO TO A TOWN TO BUY SUPPLIES, ONLY ONE MEMBER IS GIVEN MONEY TO PAY THE SHOPKEEPER. GUERRILLA COMMANDERS WERE ASKED WHY TROOPS JOIN THE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS, AND THEY SAID IT WAS BECAUSE THEY HAD NO OTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYMENT, AND ALSO ADDED THAT IT WAS A WAY OF LIFE. UNLIKE THE FARC GUERRILLAS, PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS ARE PAID A REGULAR SALARY. (b)(2)
2. ~~(C)~~ MILITARY STRATEGY. THE FARC GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS EXTREMELY VERTICAL. LOCAL COMMANDERS DO NOT CARRY OUT ATTACKS WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THEIR SUPERIORS. MAJOR ATTACKS REQUIRE APPROVAL AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, THE SECRETARIAT. [REDACTED] THE THREE HIGHEST LEVELS IN THE ORGANIZATIONAL SCHEME OF THE FARC IN DESCENDING ORDER ARE THE SECRETARIAT, BLOCK, AND FRONT.) (b)(2)
3. ~~(C)~~ KIDNAPPING. KIDNAPPING WAS DISCUSSED WITH SEVERAL FARC GUERRILLA LEADERS. THEY WERE TOLD KIDNAPPING WAS GIVING THE FARC A BAD REPUTATION INTERNATIONALLY. ONE OF THE GUERRILLA LEADERS SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THIS, AND THAT HE HAD BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF ABANDONING THIS PRACTICE. THE SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED (NFI). THE GUERRILLA LEADER ALSO SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A GRADUAL DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF KIDNAPPINGS, BUT THERE WAS DISAGREEMENT ABOUT STOPPING THEM ALTOGETHER.
4. ~~(C)~~ PARAMILITARY GROUPS. PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS SAID THEY WERE STEPPING UP THEIR ACTIVITIES. THE PARAMILITARIES ARE CONTESTING THE SOUTHERN BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT [REDACTED] AREA WITH THE GUERRILLAS FOR ITS GOLD AND COAL RESOURCES. PARAMILITARY GROUPS ARE ALSO CONTROLLING THE POPPY CULTIVATION IN THIS AREA. FARC GUERRILLAS HAVE NOW RETREATED FROM THE BARRANCABERMEJA [REDACTED] AREA TO MOVE INTO THE SOUTHERN BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT. THE FARC CLAIMS TO HAVE HAD SEVERAL SIGNIFICANT VICTORIES AGAINST THE PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN THE PAST TWO TO THREE WEEKS (NFI). PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS STATED THAT ONE OF THEIR LEADERS, "RAFAEL", WAS BEHIND THE BARRANCABERMEJA MASSACRE. [REDACTED] THE MASSACRE OCCURRED ON 16 MAY 1998, AND 36 NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY SYMPATHIZERS WERE KILLED BY THE PARAMILITARY GROUP SOUTHERN CESAR AND SANTANDER DEPARTMENT (b)(2)

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SELF-DEFENSE UNIT.)
COMMENTS: (U)

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3. ~~(S)~~

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4. ~~(S)~~

5. ~~(S)~~

6. ~~(S)~~

7. ~~(S)~~ ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE INTERVIEWS WITH FARC AND PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS WERE MADE THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES.

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8. ~~(C)~~ THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES HAVE NOT ACTIVELY PERSECUTED
PARAMILITARY GROUP MEMBERS BECAUSE THEY SEE THEM AS ALLIES IN THE
FIGHT AGAINST THE GUERRILLAS, THEIR COMMON ENEMY.

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(b)(2)

[REDACTED] (U)

9. (U)

10. ~~(C)~~

11. (U)

ADMIN

COLL: (U)

INSTR: (U) U.S. NO.

PREP: (U)

ACQ: (U)

DISSEM: (U) FIELD: NONE. SENT TO: NONE.

WARNING: (U) REPORT CLASSIFIED ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DRV FROM: DHS SCG, OCTOBER 97

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END OF MESSAGE

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