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ENVELOPE

CDSN = CFS494 MCN = 97073/32838 TOR = 970732108
RTTSZYUW RUEKJCS5320 0732112-SSSS--RUEALGX.
ZNY SSSSS

HEADER

R 142112Z MAR 97
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RUEACMC/CMC WASHINGTON DC

[REDACTED]

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

[REDACTED]
RUEADADI/AFOSI IOC BOLLING AFB DC//DTA//

RUDMONI/ONI WASHINGTON DC

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RUDHNS/DIRNAVCRIMINSERV WASHINGTON DC//NAVATAC/22//

[REDACTED]

R 141603Z MAR 97

[REDACTED] (b)(2)

TO RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC//DH-5//

[REDACTED]

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC//ARA/INL//

RUANIOA/DIRJIATF EAST//J2//

RUSKGRD/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHDC

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RUDGUSC/US CUSTOMS SERVICE WASHDC//INTEL//

[REDACTED] (b)(2)

RUWGTCH/DIRJIATF WEST//J2//

[REDACTED]

BT

CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 [REDACTED] (b)(2)

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SERIAL: (U) IIR [REDACTED]

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) COLOMBIA (CO); PANAMA (PM).

SUBJ: IIR [REDACTED]/GUERRILLAS LAUNCH NEW WAVE OF (b)(2)

BOMBINGS IN URABA AND CORDOBA -- PARAMILITARIES RESPOND WITH MURDER AND KIDNAPPINGS (LASER STRIKE) (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 970311.

[REDACTED]

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SOURCES: A. (U) DAILY NEWSPAPER, "EL TIEMPO," BOGOTA, COLOMBIA, 970302, 970305, 970308, 970311 (U), IN SPANISH. WIDELY READ (CIRCULATION 242,000) AND GENERALLY ACCURATE IN REPORTING. SUPPORTIVE OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT.

[REDACTED]

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D. (U) [REDACTED] (b)(2)

SUMMARY: (U) VIOLENCE RETURNED WITH A VENGEANCE TO THE URABA REGION OF ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT IN RECENT WEEKS, AS FARC GUERRILLAS LAUNCHED A NEW CAMPAIGN OF BOMBINGS AND

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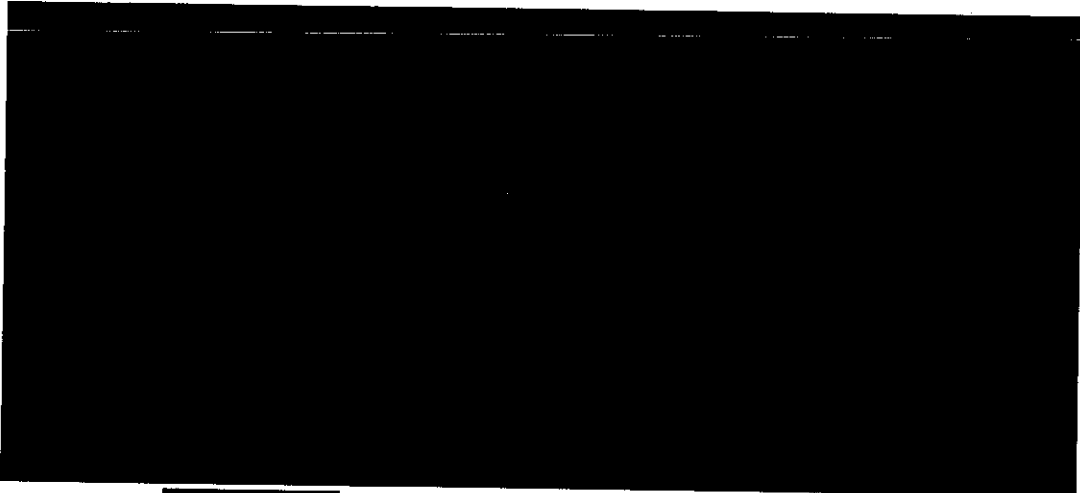
PARAMILITARIES RESPONDED WITH KILLINGS AND KIDNAPPINGS. TEXT: 1. (U) ACCORDING TO SOURCE A ACCOUNTS, THE LATEST ATROCITIES WERE PERPETRATED BY FARC (REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA) GUERRILLAS, WHO MURDERED NINE PEOPLE IN CURRULAO, A SMALL VILLAGE LOCATED BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF APARTADO AND TURBO IN THE URABA REGION OF ANTIOQUIA. SURVIVORS OF THE SLAUGHTER RELATED THAT THE FARC HAD BEEN THREATENING REPRISALS AGAINST THE TOWNSPEOPLE FOR MONTHS, CLAIMING THAT THE VILLAGE SUPPORTED PARAMILITARIES. THE FARC ATTACK OCCURRED BETWEEN 2300 HOURS AND 2400 HOURS (LOCAL) ON 9 MAR, WHEN AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF GUERRILLAS APPEARED AT A LOCAL ICE CREAM PARLOR. A LOCAL MORTUARY WORKER, MARYORI ((PATINO)) OROZCO, REPORTEDLY OFFERED THE FARC LEADER A CUP OF AGUARDIENTE (COLOMBIAN LIQUEUR), WHICH HE ACCEPTED BEFORE SHOOTING HIS WOULD-BE HOSTESS. THE GUERRILLAS THEN BEGAN SHOOTING PEOPLE INDISCRIMINATELY. ACCORDING TO SURVIVING WITNESSES, THE FARC RAMPAGE CONTINUED UNTIL NEAR MIDNIGHT, WHEN MEMBERS OF THE "AUTODEFENSAS" CONFRONTED THE GUERRILLAS AND OBLIGED THEM TO RETIRE. THE GUERRILLAS REPORTEDLY WERE FORCED TO ABANDON A 12-KILO CHARGE OF DYNAMITE, WHICH THEY WERE ARMING INSIDE A PRIVATE GARAGE.

2. (U) ACCORDING TO SOURCE A, BG RITO ALEJO ((DEL RIO)) ROJAS, COMMANDER OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) 17TH BRIGADE AT CAREPA (ANTIOQUIA), CLAIMED THAT THE CURRULAO MASSACRE WAS PERPETRATED BY ELEMENTS OF THE FARC 5TH FRONT, LED BY DUBERNEY ((SANCHEZ)), ALIAS "EL MANTECO." BG DEL RIO ALSO CLAIMED THAT THE CAR BOMB WHICH KILLED 11 PEOPLE IN APARTADO ON 26 FEB WAS ALSO THE WORK OF THE 5TH AND 58TH FARC FRONT, AND WAS A CAREFULLY PLANNED TERRORIST ATTACK ORCHESTRATED BY LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS CONNECTED WITH THE FARC.

3. (S) [REDACTED] REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO FIVE LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN ARRESTED ON VARIOUS CHARGES RANGING FROM MURDER TO REBELLION, AND WERE SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED BECAUSE OF PROCEDURAL ERROR. WHILE [REDACTED] DID NOT NAME THE INDIVIDUALS IN QUESTION, SOURCE A IDENTIFIED THEM AS ANA ((RENGIFO)), PRESIDENT OF A LOCALLY-ORGANIZED HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, "ANDAS" (NFI), MARTHA ((ZAPATA)), EUGENIO ((CORDOBA)), RAMON ((OSORIO)), AND GERARDO ((NIETO)) YANTEN. [REDACTED]

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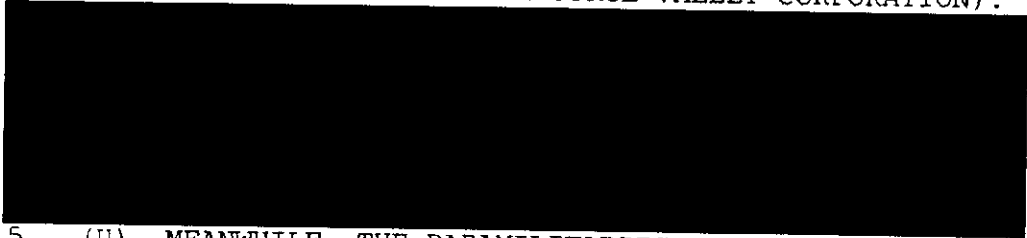
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4. (U) [REDACTED] FURTHER REPORTED A FARC BOMBING IN MONTERIA (CORDOBA) ON 10 MAR THAT LEFT 22 PEOPLE SERIOUSLY INJURED. IRONICALLY, THE 10-KILO BOMB IN MONTERIA ALSO INVOLVED AN ICE CREAM PARLOR. THE BOMB WAS PLACED IN THE BATHROOM OF THE SHOP, ADJACENT TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF "FUNDACION PARA LA PAZ DE CORDOBA" (CORDOBA FOUNDATION FOR PEACE), AN ORGANIZATION FUNDED BY THE INFAMOUS PARAMILITARY LEADERS CARLOS AND FIDEL ((CASTANO)) GIL. THIS WAS THE THIRD TERRORIST BOMBING IN MONTERIA IN RECENT MONTHS. THE MOST DEADLY BLAST OCCURRED ON 17 DEC 96, WHEN FOUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 35 WOUNDED BY A CAR BOMB THAT DESTROYED THE OFFICES OF THE "FONDO GANADERO DE CORDOBA" (CORDOBA CATTLEMEN'S FUND), THE "FEDERACION DE GANADEROS" (CATTLEMEN'S FEDERATION), AND THE "CORPORACION DE LOS VALLES DEL SINU Y DEL SAN JORGE" (SINU AND SAN JORGE VALLEY CORPORATION).



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5. (U) MEANWHILE, THE PARAMILITARIES MADE THEIR PRESENCE FELT WHEN THREE MASKED GUNMEN APPEARED IN THE TOWN OF SAN PEDRO DE LOS MILAGROS (ANTIOQUIA) THE NIGHT OF 10 MAR AND MURDERED FOUR MEN, ALL FROM THE SAME FAMILY. LOCAL AUTHORITIES ATTRIBUTED THE KILLINGS TO AN ELEMENT OF THE "AUTODEFENSAS CAMPESINAS DE CORDOBA AND URABA" (ACCU) (PEASANT SELF-DEFENSE FORCE OF CORDOBA AND

URABA), KNOWN AS THE "JUAN DEL CORRAL," WHICH APPEARED IN THE AREA DURING THE PAST SIX MONTHS. THE SAME NIGHT, FIVE ARMED MEN KIDNAPPED THE 24-YEAR-OLD BROTHER OF JAILED ELN (NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY) LEADER, "FELIPE TORRES" (NFI), IN BARRANQUILLA (ATLANTICO). (FIELD COMMENT--THE "ACCU" IS A NOTORIOUS PARAMILITARY GROUP SPONSORED AND LED BY CARLOS AND FIDEL CASTANO.)

6. (U) SOURCE A REPORTED THAT PARAMILITARIES MURDERED TEN PEOPLE IN THE TOWN OF VEGACHI (NORTHEASTERN ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT) ON 7 FEB, ACCUSING THEM OF SUPPORTING THE GUERRILLAS. ACCORDING TO OPEN SOURCE ACCOUNTS, SOME 60 MEN DRESSED IN MILITARY-STYLE UNIFORMS SURROUNDED THE TOWN, TERRORIZED THE INHABITANTS, AND FORCED A MASKED CAPTIVE TO IDENTIFY GUERRILLA COLLABORATORS FOR EXECUTION. THE ACTING MAYOR, ELKIN ((MANCO)) (NFI), STATED THAT "PROSTITUTION, DRUG ADDICTION, ROBBERY AND ASSAULT, THE GUERRILLAS, AND NOW, PARAMILITARIES, ARE THE ONLY LEGACY THAT REMAINS."

7. (U) THE TERROR WHICH AFFLICTS THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN THE NORTHWESTERN AREA OF COLOMBIA WAS FURTHER ILLUSTRATED BY SOURCE A REPORTS OF A NEW EXODUS OF PEASANTS FROM CHOCO DEPARTMENT, THE SCENE OF BLOODY CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN FARC GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES FOR THE PAST THREE MONTHS. SOME 650 PEASANTS FLED THE OUTLYING AREAS AROUND RIOSUCIO (CHOCO), AND DESCENDED ON TURBO (URABA REGION OF ANTIOQUIA) IN LATE FEBRUARY. IN MID-JANUARY, SOME 1157 PEASANTS ABANDONED THE RIOSUCIO AREA FOR THE RELATIVE SAFETY OF QUIBDO (CAPITAL OF CHOCO DEPARTMENT). THE PEASANTS CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD TO FLEE FOR THEIR LIVES BECAUSE THE FARC ACCUSED THEM OF SUPPORTING THE PARAMILITARIES. ON 9 JAN ELEMENTS OF THE 57TH AND 34TH FARC FRONTS ATTACKED THE POLICE STATION IN RIOSUCIO, LEAVING FIVE DEAD AND SEVEN WOUNDED. IN THEIR RETREAT FROM THE CITY, THE GUERRILLAS PASSED BY THE VILLAGES OF NUEVA LUZ AND LOS MANGUITOS (CHOCO), WHERE THEY DECAPITATED SEVEN PEASANTS FOR ALLEGEDLY COLLABORATING WITH THE PARAMILITARIES.

3.

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PUBLISHED A GRAPHIC COMPARING MURDERS IN THE URABA REGION FOR 1994, 1995, AND 1996, WHICH REVEALED THAT THE NUMBER OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATIONS HAD MORE THAN TRIPLED BETWEEN

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1995 AND 1996 (FROM 105 TO 324). THESE STATISTICS, IF ACCURATE, INDICATE THAT 17TH BRIGADE HAS BEEN FAR LESS EFFECTIVE IN PACIFYING THE REGION

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5. ~~(S)~~ THESE LATEST ATROCITIES INDICATE THAT THE VIOLENCE WHICH HAS LONG AFFLICTED THE NORTHWESTERN DEPARTMENTS OF COLOMBIA IS, IF ANYTHING, ON THE RISE. DESPITE PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM THE FARC AND ELN GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS ASSERTING THEIR ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, RECENT EVENTS IN URABA HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR CAPACITY FOR EXTREME CRUELTY. IF THE PARAMILITARIES HAVE BEEN MORE SELECTIVE IN THEIR KILLINGS, AND SHOWN LESS ZEAL FOR BUTCHERY AND MUTILATION THAN THEIR GUERRILLA ENEMIES, THE EFFECT ON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IS MUCH THE SAME. THE SECURITY FORCES APPEAR TO BE HUNKERED DOWN DEFENDING THEMSELVES FROM WITHIN SMALL ISLANDS OF RELATIVE SAFETY, WHILE THE CIVILIAN

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POPULATION FINDS ITSELF ADRIFT IN A LAWLESS SEA IN WHICH BOTH GUERRILLAS AND PARAMILITARIES KILL WITH IMPUNITY.

6. ~~(S)~~ IT SEEMS AS IF NEITHER OF THE MORE ACTIVE COMBATANTS (THE GUERRILLAS AND THE PARAMILITARIES) IS CAPABLE OF STRIKING DIRECTLY AT ITS ENEMY; THUS BOTH HAVE TURNED THEIR GUNS AGAINST THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IN HOPES OF DENYING THE ADVERSARY ITS BASE OF SUPPORT. THE COLAR IS LEFT TO POLICE UP THE BODIES, BURY THE DEAD, AND DEAL WITH THE MOUNTING NUMBERS OF INTERNAL REFUGEES CROWDING INTO THE RELATIVE SAFETY OF A FEW CITIES WHERE THE MILITARY PRESENCE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO DETER THE MORE MACABRE GUERRILLA AND PARAMILITARY DEPREDATIONS. [REDACTED]

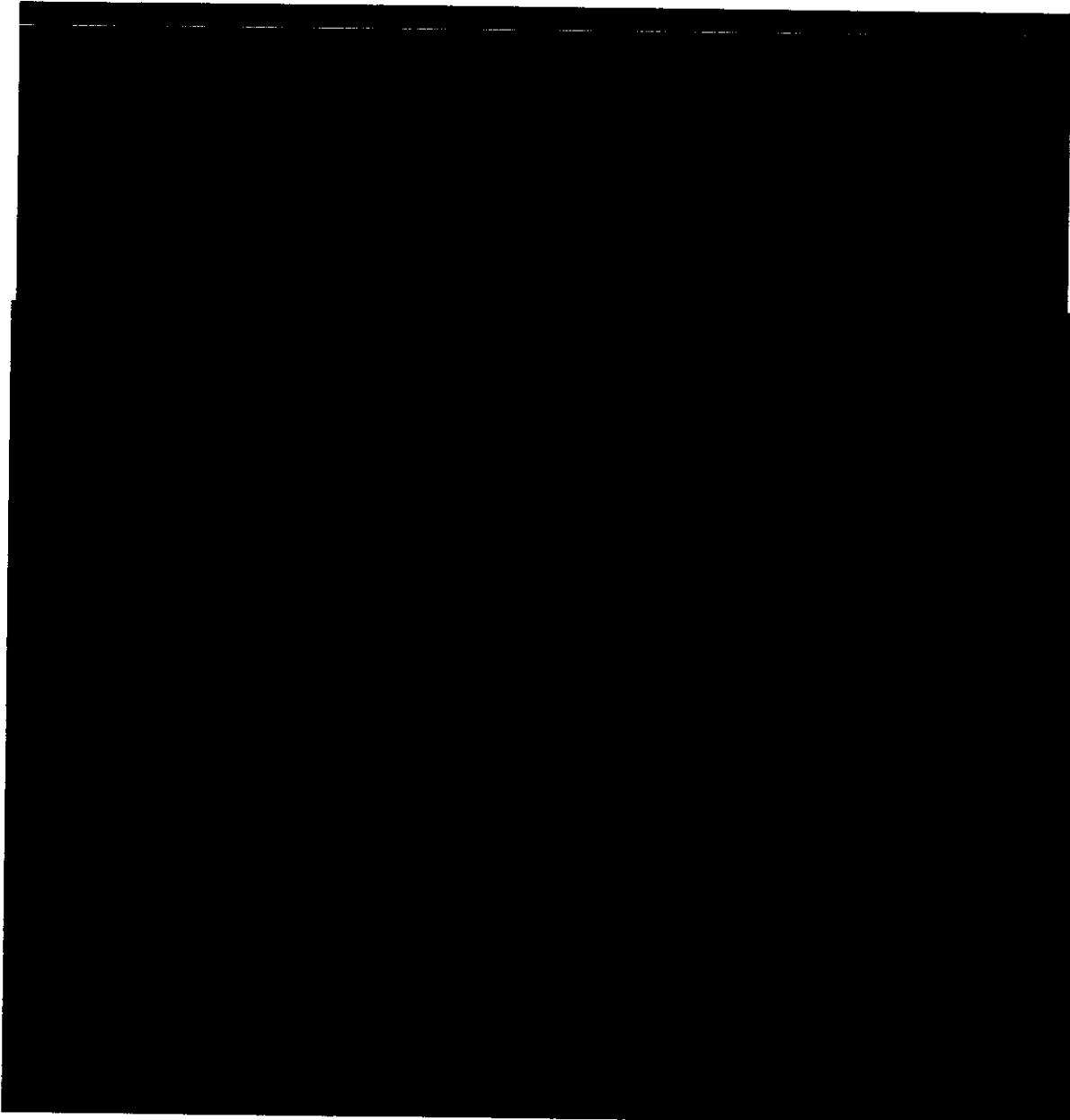
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7. ~~(S)~~ RECENT EVENTS CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH EARLIER 17TH BRIGADE REPORTS CLAIMING THAT URABA HAD LARGELY BEEN PACIFIED. INDEED, THE GUERRILLAS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR CAPACITY TO "DEPACIFY" SELECTED AREAS, EVEN WHERE THEIR LOCAL BASE OF SUPPORT HAS BEEN SEVERELY DISRUPTED. THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF THIS NEW WAVE OF VIOLENCE IN NORTHWESTERN COLOMBIA IS THE FARC'S ADOPTION OF INDISCRIMINATE TERRORIST METHODS. THE USE OF CAR BOMBS, IN PARTICULAR, IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN. AS THE GOVERNOR OF CORDOBA CORRECTLY NOTED IN HIS REMARKS FOLLOWING THE LATEST BOMBING IN MONTERIA, THESE TYPES OF ATTACKS ARE DIFFICULT TO DEFEND AGAINST, AND THE MAJORITY OF THE VICTIMS ARE INNOCENT CIVILIANS. THE FARC'S INCREASED USE OF LARGE EXPLOSIVE CHARGES, AND THE DELIBERATE TARGETING OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE AND INDICATES A MAJOR CHANGE IN FARC TACTICS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF THIS SHIFT TO TERRORIST-STYLE BOMBINGS IS PART OF A LONG-TERM FARC STRATEGY, OR A TEMPORARY TACTIC FOR RETALIATING AGAINST THE PARAMILITARIES FOR DRIVING THEM OUT OF CERTAIN CONFLICTIVE ZONES AND DISCOURAGING THE CIVILIAN POPULATION FROM ASSISTING PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS.

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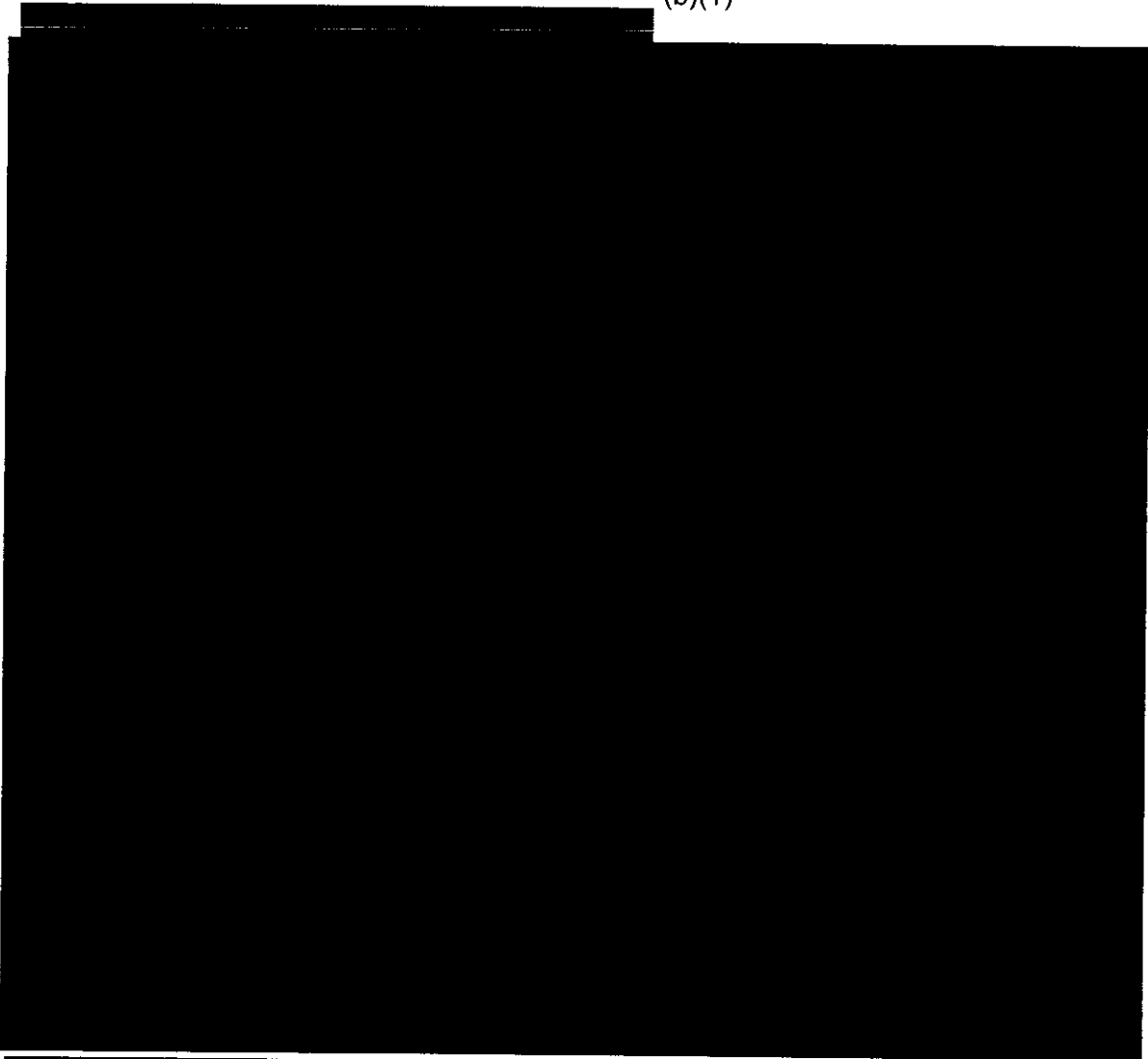
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11. ~~(c)~~ ONLY SINCE EARLY DEC 96 HAS THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PARAMILITARIES ARE A VALID THREAT TO PUBLIC ORDER THAT REQUIRES ATTENTION. ONLY SINCE THE 28 FEB 97 DECERTIFICATION DECISION HAS THE COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT HIMSELF SIGNALED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO TURNING AROUND THE COUNTRY'S MULTIFACETED HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD



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