

Information Paper on "Los Pepes"

1. ~~(S/NF/WN)~~ The "'Pepes" (Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar & Persecuted by Pablo Escobar) evolved as a result of Pablo Escobar Gaviria's (PEG) murder of the Moncada and Galeano brothers, his former partners. Their first recorded violent act against PEG's organization occurred on or about 30 January 1993 with an assassination on the 2nd of February. The group publicly announced their formation on this date and have since announced their disbandment a number of times. Also, the group, possibly known as "Colombia Libre," has been referred to as a vigilante or terrorist group. The "Pepes" are best described as a joint effort by PEG's rivals with a declared goal of his complete demise.

2. ~~(S/NF/WN/OC)~~ The "Pepes" are comprised primarily of Medellin Cartel defectors, spearheaded by the Galeano and Moncada families (former cronies and now victims of PEG), and Fidel Castano, a paramilitary leader from the Medio Magdalena area.

(b)(1)(b)(3)



3. ~~(S/NF/WN/OC)~~ The "Pepes" modus operandi includes bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and intimidation directed at the infrastructure of PEG's organization. Reportedly abandoning its violent pursuit of Escobar on a number of occasions, the group continues to resurface. Although PEG remains at large, the "Pepes" have had a great impact on the once all powerful Medellin Cartel.

(b)(1)(b)(3)



4. ~~(S/NF/WN/OC)~~ Although the "Pepes" primary purpose was to avenge the murders of Medellin Cartel members by PEG, an ulterior motive must be considered. One possible goal would be the creation of a "new" Cartel, filling the vacuum created by the parting of PEG. This could be accomplished by establishing a quid pro quo relationship with the North Coast and Northern Valle del Cauca Cartels. This arrangement would minimize competition, violence, and maximize the use of the established narcotrafficking infrastructure in Colombia.

5. ~~(S/NF)~~ This undertaking will undoubtedly have to receive the approval of Colombia's most powerful cartel in Cali. The success of the Pepes has created a "double edged sword." The Cali Cartel may realize that as long as PEG remains at large, the government will not commit all of its resources against them. In essence, it is in their interest for PEG to remain free, at least in the near term. It is not clear as to which course of action the Cali Cartel may take in this regard, but the hatred of PEG and a desire for

(b)(1)(3)



2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET NOFORN WNIINTEL~~

INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: The "PEPES" (U)

1. (U) PURPOSE: To provide the Federal Bureau of Investigation background data on the anti-Escobar group, "PEPES."

2. (U) DISCUSSION:

a. ~~(S/AF/AD)~~ The "PEPES" (Perseguidos por Pablo Escobar - Persecuted by Pablo Escobar) is a vigilante group committed to the demise of Pablo Escobar Gaviria. The group was formed by various disaffected drug traffickers as well as members of the Moncada and Galeano families in response to the murders by Escobar henchmen of the Moncada and Galeano brothers in July 1992. The "PEPES" is also possibly operating as "COLOMBIA LIBRE." The "PEPES" first recorded violent act occurred in late January 1993 when it bombed a ranch where Escobar's mother had lived, and publicly announced its formation following an assassination on 2 February. The group has since been credited with at least three bombings and as many as 48 murders of Escobar associates. All known "PEPES" operations have occurred in Colombia, [REDACTED]

(b)(1)(b)(3)

b. ~~(S)~~ The "PEPES" is led by the Galeano and Moncada families and comprised primarily of Medellin Cartel defectors. Fidel Castano Gil, a trafficker/paramilitary leader from northwest Colombia, is considered the chief of operations. The "PEPES" modus operandi includes bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and intimidation directed at the infrastructure of Pablo Escobar's organization and his family. The "PEPES" has probably received financial support from the Cali Cartel, and there are rumors of unofficial government support-possibly from the police, and [REDACTED]

(b)(1)(b)(3)

c. (U) Although Pablo Escobar remains at large, "PEPES" has had an impact on both him and his organization by assassinating several of his associates and family members. This impact is exemplified by the exodus of Escobar family members to Europe, Central America, and other South American countries.

~~SECRET NOFORN WNIINTEL~~

~~SECRET NOFORN WRINTEL~~

(1)

3. ~~(S/NF)~~ ANALYSIS: Fidel Castano Gil could pose new and different challenges to the GOC in a post-Escobar era. Although the "PEPES" was formed primarily to avenge Escobar-directed murders, Castano's drug trafficking activities provide him the financing necessary to further an anti-left agenda, which he began in 1981 following his father's death while in guerrilla captivity. Castano has since led several paramilitary operations against such leftist groups as insurgents, political parties, and labor unions. A Colombian court sentenced Castano in abstentia to 20 years for mass killings of peasants and farm workers carried out by paramilitary forces under his control. How actively the GOC pursues Castano may depend more on how his paramilitary agenda complements Bogota's counterinsurgent objectives rather than on his drug trafficking activities.

PREPARED BY: Counterdrug Division
Defense Intelligence Agency

~~SECRET NOFORN WRINTEL~~