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ACTION ARA-01

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
OMB-01 PA-01 PM-02 PRS-01 P-01 SNP-00 SP-00
SS-00 TRSE-00 T-00 USIE-00 /040W

R 201959Z DEC 93
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4668
INFO DEPT/JUSTICE WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
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 QADR
TAGS: PGOV, KJUS, PINR, CO,
SUBJECT: NEW NATIONAL POLICE CHIEF APPOINTED

1. (C) SUMMARY: POLICE GENERAL OCTAVIO VARGAS SILVA, WHO HEADED THE SUCCESSFUL ANTI-ESCOBAR CONFIDENTIAL

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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
NARCOTRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS AND IN REFORMING THE NATIONAL POLICE. GAIVRIA 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, GAIVRIA APPOINTED VARGAS SILVA, CURRENTLY VICE DIRECTOR OF POLICE, TO REPLACE HIM.


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
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 CARTEL. BUSBY  

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