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PTQ0194

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ACTION ARA-01

RELEASED IN PART  
1.4(D), B7(D)

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	A-00
	ACQ-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-01
	DINT-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00
	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00	IO-00	L-01
	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	OCS-03	OIC-02
	OIS-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00
	CIO-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00
	USSS-00	ASDS-01	DTC-01	SGHD-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01
	DRL-04	G-00	MR-00	SAS-00	/033W		

-----3FOAEO 181224Z /38

O 142240Z MAY 98 ZDK/3 TO HCB HC; PLS CLR UR LOGS  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3113  
INFO DIRONDCP WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 4258  
NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
FBI WASHDC

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ONDCP FOR ALLISON MAJOR

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WHITE HOUSE FOR THOMAS F. MCLARTY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/14/03  
TAGS: PHUM, MASS, PTER, PREL, PGOV, PINR, CO  
SUBJECT: ARMY/FISCALIA RAID ON A CHURCH BASED NGO VIEWED AS A  
MAJOR BLUNDER

REF: BOGOTA 5512

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. R. LOHMAN, DAS, A/ISS  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON  
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 14 MAY 2018  
DATE/CASE ID: 15 MAY 2007 200604456

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CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CURTIS W. KAMMAN. REASON 1.5(D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) THE MAY 13TH FISCALIA/ARMY RAID AT THE BOGOTA OFFICE OF THE INTER-DENOMINATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, WHILE LARGELY CONDUCTED WITHIN THE TECHNICAL CONFINES OF THE LAW, WAS DESCRIBED AS A MAJOR BLUNDER BY [REDACTED] A SEARCH WARRANT WAS ISSUED BASED ON INFORMATION FROM THE ARMY THAT JUSTICIA Y PAZ'S COMPUTER FILES CONTAINED PROOF OF AN ELN PLOT TO ASSASSINATE FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER FERNANDO LANDAZABAL. THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE RAID WAS RELATED TO LONG-STANDING FRICTION BETWEEN THE JESUIT DIRECTOR OF THE NGO AND THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY'S 13TH BRIGADE. THE CONTROVERSY OVER THIS EVENT IS LIKELY TO GET WORSE. END SUMMARY.

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

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BACKGROUND  
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2. (U) REFTTEL REPORTS THE MAY 13 FISCALIA/ARMY RAID AT THE BOGOTA OFFICE OF THE INTER-DENOMINATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP, JUSTICIA Y PAZ, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THE WAKE OF THE ASSASSINATION OF FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER FERNANDO LANDAZABAL. UN HUMAN RIGHTS SOURCES SPEAKING FROM THE SCENE TOLD POLOFF VIA CELLULAR PHONE THAT "MINOR IRREGULARITIES" HAD TAKEN PLACE, BUT THAT THE RAID "WAS BEING DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW." THIS RAID WAS ONE OF AT LEAST 40 CONDUCTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LANDAZABAL INVESTIGATION.

3. (U) BOGOTA DAILIES AND THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE REPORT THAT FISCALIA INVESTIGATORS ENTERED THE OFFICES OF JUSTICIA Y PAZ ACCOMPANIED BY 20 MEMBERS OF THE ARMY'S 13TH BRIGADE. THE AUTHORITIES ENTERED THE BUILDING AND MADE THOSE PRESENT KNEEL DOWN WHILE THE OFFICES WERE SEARCHED. (NOTE. THIS IS THE NORM DURING FISCALIA RAIDS. END NOTE.) HOWEVER, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT ARMY PERSONNEL HAD THEIR WEAPONS DRAWN UPON ENTERING THE BUILDING, AND CONTINUED TO BRANDISH THEIR GUNS DURING THE SEARCH. WHILE THERE, SOLDIERS READ CASE FILES (SOME OF WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES), SEARCHED COMPUTER RECORDS, TOOK PHOTOS AND VIDEOTAPED PEOPLE INSIDE AND AROUND THE BUILDING. INITIAL REPORTS INDICATING THAT THE NGO MINGA HAD ALSO BEEN RAIDED WERE INCORRECT (REFTTEL).

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OOPS  
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4. (U) THE SEARCH OF JUSTICIA Y PAZ WAS APPARENTLY BASED ON A VALID WARRANT SIGNED BY THE FISCAL. SOURCES IN THE FISCALIA TOLD  
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JUDATT THAT THEY HAD NOT REALIZED AT THE OUTSET OF THE RAID THAT THE ADDRESS THEY HAD BEEN GIVEN BY THE ARMY BELONGED TO JUSTICIA Y PAZ. THE INVESTIGATOR IN CHARGE CALLED OFF THE SEARCH WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THEY WERE AT AN NGO, AND THAT THE ARMY'S ALLEGATIONS THAT THE GROUP'S COMPUTER FILES CONTAINED PROOF OF AN ELN ASSASSINATION PLOT WERE UNFOUNDED.

5. (U) ON THE EVENING OF MAY 13, VICE-FISCAL JAIME CORDOBA WENT ON THE RADIO TO CRITICIZE THE ARMY, EMPHASIZING THAT THE FISCALIA HAD NO IDEA THAT THE ADDRESS THEY HAD BEEN GIVEN WAS A LEGITIMATE NGO. BY THE MORNING OF THE 14TH, CORDOBA'S STATEMENTS WERE MORE MEASURED, SAYING THAT THE RAID WAS NOT A MISTAKE, AND THAT NGOS ARE NOT "ABOVE THE LAW." HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT "NGOS ARE ENTITIES THAT MERIT THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE."

6. (U) IN ANOTHER LANDAZABAL RELATED DEVELOPMENT, AUTHORITIES ARRESTED AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN TRAVELLING IN A CAR ALLEGEDLY MATCHING WITNESSES' DESCRIPTION OF THE VEHICLE IN WHICH THE ASSASSINS ESCAPED THE SCENE OF LANDAZABAL'S MURDER. HOWEVER, WITNESS REPORTS DIFFER WIDELY AS TO THE PARTICULARS OF THE CAR USED IN THE CRIME, AND IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE MAN WILL BE HELD.

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POLICE TAKE -- OFF THE RECORD  
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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	A-00
	ACQ-01	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	INL-01
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	P-00	CIO-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	DTC-01	SGHD-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-01	DRL-04	G-00	SAS-00	/034W		

-----3E1384 142259Z /38

O 142240Z MAY 98 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3114  
INFO DIRONDCP WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USIA WASHDC 4259  
NSC WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
FBI WASHDC

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ONDCP FOR ALLISON MAJOR  
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7. (C) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE VISIT OF FBI DIRECTOR LOUIS FREEH, THE AMBASSADOR BROUGHT UP THE TOPIC OF THE JUSTICIA Y PAZ RAID WITH [REDACTED]

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

[REDACTED] FOR HIS PART, [REDACTED] GRIMACED AT THE MENTION OF THE WORDS "JUSTICIA Y PAZ," AND TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE RAID ON THE NGO WAS A FISHING EXPEDITION BASED ON AN UNVERIFIED ARMY REPORT. HE IMPLIED IT WAS A SERIOUS MISTAKE.

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

8. (C) [REDACTED] WAS MORE EXPLICIT AS TO HOW THESE EVENTS CAME TO BE. HE TOLD THE AMBASSADOR PRIVATELY THAT THERE IS GREAT DEAL OF EMOTION IN THE MILITARY SURROUNDING THE KILLING OF LANDAZABAL. THIS RAID WAS THE PRODUCT OF THAT EMOTION -- THE MILITARY WENT FORWARD WITH INCOMPLETE AND TOTALLY UNVERIFIED INFORMATION AND DRAGGED THE FISCALIA WITH IT. IN [REDACTED] OPINION, IT WAS ESPECIALLY ILL CONSIDERED AND TOTALLY UNNECESSARY TO INVOLVE THE MILITARY IN THIS KIND OF SEARCH IN AN URBAN AREA. [REDACTED] SAID, "TO INVOLVE AN ANTI-TERRORISM UNIT IN A RAID ON A GROUP OF NUNS

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

1.4(D) FOIA B7(D)

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IN FRONT OF T.V. CAMERAS..." RUNNING OUT OF WORDS, HE ENDED THE THOUGHT WITH A DISBELIEVING SHAKE OF HIS HEAD.

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COMMENT  
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9. (C) COMMENT. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

JESUIT PRIEST FATHER JAVIER GIRALDO WORKED IN URABA DURING THE TIME PERIOD IN WHICH GENERAL RITO ALEJO DEL RIO WAS COMMANDING THE 17TH BRIGADE THERE. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

[REDACTED] RECENTLY, GENERAL DEL RIO WAS REASSIGNED TO HIS NEW, MORE RESPONSIBLE POSITION COMMANDING THE 13TH BRIGADE; THE BRIGADE WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE RAID ON JUSTICIA Y PAZ. [REDACTED]

1.4(D)

10. (C) THE POLEMIC IS LIKELY TO GET WORSE. NGOS HERE, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, ATTRIBUTE THE RAID TO A DESIRE TO COW AND INTIMIDATE

THEM.. POLOFF LEARNED TODAY THAT SEVERAL NGOS HAVE PLANNED TO MEET AND FORMULATE A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO THE RAID, AND FATHER GIRALDO OF JUSTICIA Y PAZ IS PLANNING A FULL SCALE INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN. NEEDLESS TO SAY, PHOTOS OF ELDERLY NUNS BEING SUBJECTED TO QUESTIONING BY THE MILITARY IS LIKELY TO FIND A BROADLY SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE.

11. (C)

1.4(D)



NEVERTHELESS, POST HAS BEEN  
UNABLE TO UNCOVER ANY EVIDENCE THAT MAJOR ABUSES OCCURRED. POST  
WILL MONITOR AND REPORT ON FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. KAMMAN

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