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ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-05 SS-00 H-01 NSCE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1423
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD.

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: PTER, PINS, SNAR, CASC, PGOV, CO
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE UPDATE; MORE NARCOS NABBED IN ATLANTIC
COAST; NARCO WARS REACHES PRISONS; ARMY AND
GUERRILLAS FIGHT SERIES OF ISOLATED ENCOUNTERS;
ARMY TAKES APART FARC CELL IN NORTH; COUNCILMAN
KILLED IN VALLE DEL CAUCA

1. SUMMARY: POLICE IN THE ATLANTIC COAST NABBED SEVEN
SUSPECTED COMPANIONS OF SLAIN NARCO KINGPIN GONZALO
RODRIGUEZ GACHA, WHILE SOME OF HIS VENGEFUL FOLLOWERS
KILLED FIVE NARCO RIVALS IN A BOGOTA JAIL DECEMBER 19.
MEANWHILE, ARMY AND POLICE CONFRONTED INCREASED
GUERRILLA ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE NATION, ESPECIALLY IN
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THE NORTH. TROOPS FOUGHT THE ELN AND TOOK APART AN

United States Department of State
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URBAN CELL OF THE FARC GUERRILLAS IN THE NORTH. GUERRILLA ABDUCTION OF CATTLE FARMERS IS ON THE INCREASE IN CORDOBA DEPARTMENT. ANOTHER SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE COUNCILMAN HAS BEEN ASSASSINATED, THIS TIME IN VALLE DEL CAUCA. END SUMMARY.

I. NARCO-RELATED VIOLENCE

FOLLOWERS OF RODRIGUEZ GACHA NABBED

2. THE POLICE ELITE CORPS HAS CAPTURED EIGHT SUSPECTED NARCOS IN THE ATLANTIC COAST IN THE WAKE OF THE RECENT KILLING OF MEDELLIN CAPO GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA. AUTHORITIES SAID THAT ONE OF THOSE SLAIN ON DECEMBER 15 WITH RODRIGUEZ GACHA IS GILDARDO RENDON HURTADO, WHOM THEY IDENTIFIED AS THE "EIGHTH" MAN IN RANK OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL. HIS NEPHEW, GUILLERMO LEON HURTADO WAS CAPTURED DECEMBER 19 IN SAN JUAN NEPOMUCENO (BOLIVAR DEPARTMENT ON THE ATLANTIC COAST), ALONG WITH FOUR OTHER SUSPECTS ACCOMPANYING HIM. ON DECEMBER 17 POLICE CAPTURED THREE SUSPECTED SURVIVORS OF THE POLICE RAID IN WHICH RODRIGUEZ GACHA AND OTHER COMPANIONS WERE KILLED.

NARCO GANG WARS REACHES BOGOTA PRISONS.

3. FIFTEEN INMATES BELONGING TO THE RODRIGUEZ GACHA GANG KILLED 5 FOLLOWERS OF VICTOR CARRANZA, RG'S RIVAL FOR CONTROL OF THE WESTERN BOYACA EMERALD MINES, IN A BOGOTA JAIL DECEMBER 19. THE KILLINGS, COMMITTED IN THE PRISON REFECTORY WITH JAIL-MADE "KNIVES," WAS, ACCORDING TO PRISON AUTHORITIES, APPARENTLY IN RETALIATION OVER RODRIGUEZ GACHA'S DEATH. BOTH GROUPS HAD COEXISTED

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PEACEFULLY IN BOGOTA'S "MODELO" JAIL UNTIL RODRIGUEZ GACHA WAS KILLED. THE PRISON DIRECTOR TOLD THE PRESS THAT AFTER RG'S DEATH, THE "WAR" ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN JAILED MEMBERS OF BOTH GANGS HAS INTENSIFIED. RG FOLLOWERS BELIEVE THAT THE CARRANZA GROUP COLLABORATED WITH AUTHORITIES IN HUNTING DOWN RODRIGUEZ GACHA. POST CONSULAR SERVICES IS REQUESTING THAT AN AMCIT PRISONER BE TRANSFERRED FROM MODELO JAIL FOR SAFEGUARDING.

II. GUERRILLA-RELATED VIOLENCE

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GUERRILLAS KILL FOUR POLICEMEN IN RURAL ATTACKS

4. SUBVERSIVES KILLED FOUR NATIONAL POLICE AGENTS IN RURAL AREAS OF SANTANDER DEPARTMENT (NORTH) AND PUTUMAYO (SOUTH) ON DECEMBER 19. THE FIRST INCIDENT OCCURRED DURING AN INCURSION BY 100 ELN GUERRILLAS INTO SURATA SANTANDER, WHERE TWO POLICEMEN WERE KILLED DEFENDING THE POLICE POST. SUBVERSIVES FLED JUST BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS. AS IN SIMILAR PAST INCIDENTS, A STALWART BUT UNDERMANNED POLICE CONTINGENT IN A RURAL MUNICIPALITY RESISTED A SUBVERSIVE ATTACK WHILE AWAITING SLOW-TO-ARRIVE REINFORCEMENTS.

5. IN THE PUTUMAYO INCIDENT A GROUP OF EPL GUERRILLAS ATTACKED A POLICE PATROL ESCORTING AN ARMORED VEHICLE TRANSPORTING AGRARIAN BANK FUNDS. SUBVERSIVES KILLED TWO POLICEMEN, WOUNDED THREE, AND PRESUMABLY ABDUCTED TWO OTHERS LISTED AS MISSING.

ARMY UNITS FOIL AMBUSHES BY FARC AND ELN IN NORTH

6. AN ELN UNIT AMBUSHED AN ARMY PATROL AND KILLED AN

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NCO IN THE MIDDLE MAGDALENA REGION, BETWEEN PUERTO
BERRIO AND YONDO DECEMBER 19. THE ARMY UNIT FOUGHT
BACK, HOWEVER, AND SEIZED LARGE AMOUNTS OF ELN MATERIEL,
INCLUDING A DYNAMITE CACHE.

7. FOURTEENTH BRIGADE TROOPS KILLED TWO MEMBERS OF THE
FARC'S 23RD FRONT DURING A FOILED GUERRILLA AMBUSH ON AN
ARMY PATROL IN THE RURAL AREA OF LANDAUZURI, SANTANDER
DEPARTMENT, DECEMBER 18. THE GUERRILLA GROUP HAD
PREVIOUSLY ROBBED AND KILLED FIVE EMERALD TRAFFICKERS IN
THE AREA.

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ARMED FORCES UNCOVER FARC URBAN CELL IN NORTH

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8. FIFTH BRIGADE TROOPS TOOK APART AN URBAN CELL OF THE FARC GUERRILLAS IN CUCUTA, CAPITAL OF NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT IN THE NORTH DECEMBER 19. IN THE ACTION, THE MILITARY CAPTURED TWO MEMBERS OF THE FARC'S "MARISCAL SUCRE" FRONT, AND SEIZED TWO M-125 BAZOOKAS AND A LARGE AMOUNT OF OTHER GUERRILLA MATERIEL.

GUERRILLA ABDUCTION OF CATTLEMEN ON INCREASE IN CORDOBA

9. THE PRESS REPORTED DECEMBER 20 THAT THE FARC AND EPL GUERRILLAS HAVE ABDUCTED AND STILL RETAIN AT LEAST 20 CATTLE FARMERS IN CORDOBA DEPARTMENT IN THE NORTH, AN IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL AREA LONG AFFLICTED WITH BANDIT-LIKE GUERRILLA GROUPS. THE SITUATION HAS REACHED THE LEVEL IN WHICH TWO OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE SAME FAMILY ARE IN THE GUERRILLAS' POWER. IN GENERAL, VIOLENCE IN SUBVERSIVE-INFESTED CORDOBA HAS GONE UP IN RECENT DAYS, WITH A NOTEWORTHY INCREASE IN THE MURDER RATE.

III. OTHER VIOLENCE: ANOTHER COUNCILMAN KILLED

10. UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN KILLED ARGEMIRO CASTELLANOS, A SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE COUNCILMAN FOR CAICEDONIA (VALLE DEL CAUCA IN THE SOUTHWEST), ON DECEMBER 18. SEVERAL THUGS APPROACHED CASTELLANOS BY CAR AS THE VICTIM WALKED HOME IN THE LATE EVENING. CASTELLANOS WAS A RESPECTED CIVIC LEADER AND COFFEE GROWER WHO WAS NOT BELIEVED TO HAVE RECEIVED DEATH THREATS. MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ATTRIBUTED THE KILLING TO COMMON CRIMINALS WHO HAD

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FAILED TO ELICIT FUNDS FROM CASTELLANO THROUGH
EXTORTIONATE DEMANDS.
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