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ACTION ARA-00

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-05 SS-00 H-01 NSCE-00
NSAE-00 SSO-00 HA-09 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10 PA-01
DNB-01 INM-08 INRE-00 CA-02 USIE-00 SP-02 SNP-01
PRS-01 DS-01 SCT-03 P-02 T-01 /051 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1585
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY QUITO
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 19974

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PTER, PINS, SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: RODRIGUEZ GACHA FOLLOWERS STAGE A PRISON MUTINY
AND TWO JAIL BREAKS

REF: BOGOTA 19694

1. (U) A "WAR" ATMOSPHERE CONTINUES TO PREVAIL IN
COLOMBIAN JAILS AMONG IMPRISONED FOLLOWERS OF THE LATE
NARCO KINGPIN GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA (SEE REFTEL,
PARA 3). INMATES GRABBED HOSTAGES AND TOOK OVER THE "LA
PICOTA" JAIL IN BOGOTA, WHILE FIFTEEN ESCAPED FROM TWO
OTHER PRISONS IN VALLE DEL CAUCA AND ANTIOQUIA ON
DECEMBER 25-26.

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2. (U) AT LA PICOTA, TWELVE ARMED MEMBERS OF THE

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United States Department of State
Office of FOI, Privacy, & Classification Review
Review Authority: MOSKOWITZ, SAM
Date: 03/31/95
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PSC #84-3211

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RODRIGUEZ GACHA GANG HELD ELEVEN GUARDS AND FOUR VISITORS HOSTAGE FOR SEVERAL HOURS. THE MUTINEERS THREATENED TO KILL THE HOSTAGES UNLESS THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND OTHER GOC OFFICIALS NEGOTIATED WITH THEM. THE GRIEVOUS WOUNDING OF A GUARD PROMPTED SPECIAL UNITS OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE TO STORM THE FACILITIES. THE POLICE MANAGED TO KILL SEVEN OF THE MUTINEERS AND RESCUED THE OTHER HOSTAGES, WHO EMERGED UNHARMED. DURING THE RIOT, THE INMATES ISSUED A DECLARATION DEPLORING THE RECENT KILLINGS OF MEMBERS OF RODRIGUEZ GACHA'S GROUP. THEY ALSO EXPRESSED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO MEDELLIN CARTEL CAPO PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA. PRISON AUTHORITIES ARE INVESTIGATING THE MEANS BY WHICH THE PRISONERS GOT THE FIREARMS EMPLOYED IN THE RIOT.

3. (U) FIFTEEN INMATES ESCAPED FROM THE BUENAVENTURA JAIL (VALLE DEL CAUCA IN THE SOUTHWEST) AND THE ZARAGOZA JAIL IN ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT DECEMBER 26. ALL THE FUGITIVES WERE SERVING SENTENCES FOR MAJOR CRIMES AND POLICE IN BOTH DEPARTMENTS HAVE INSTITUTED MAJOR TRACKDOWN OPERATIONS TO RECAPTURE THEM

4. (C) COLONEL JOSE LEONIDAS CAMELO OF THE BOGOTA METROPOLITAN POLICE TOLD POLOFF DECEMBER 27 THAT THE LA PICOTA MUTINEERS WERE PROVIDED WITH FIREARMS BY CORRUPT PRISON GUARDS. CAMELO SAID THAT THE RODRIGUEZ GACHA FOLLOWERS RIOTED BECAUSE THEY PROBABLY BELIEVED THAT THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AND THE GROUP LED BY EMERALD TRAFFICKER VICTOR CARRANZA ARE OUT TO KILL THEM. ESCOBAR GAVIRIA, HE SAID, IS ANXIOUS TO PREVENT INCRIMINATION OF HIMSELF AND OTHER CARTEL MEMBERS BY FOLLOWERS OF RODRIGUEZ

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GACHA, WHOM THEY BELIEVE WAS BETRAYED TO THE AUTHORITIES BY ONE OF HIS OWN GROUP. THIS IS THE REASON THAT THE RIOTING INMATES TRIED TO PLACATE ESCOBAR BY ISSUING A DECLARATION EXPRESSING ALLEGIANCE TO HIM, ACCORDING TO CAMELO. HE SAID THAT THE TWO PRISON ESCAPES STAGED DECEMBER 26 ARE PART OF JAIL-BREAKING EFFORTS BY OTHER IMPRISONED FOLLOWERS OF RODRIGUEZ GACHA WHO FEAR THERE IS A PLOT TO KILL THEM IN PRISON. CAMELO SPECULATED THAT THE LA PICOTA RIOT WAS THE RESULT OF THE FRUSTRATION OF INMATES AFTER FAILING TO STAGE A JAIL BREAK.

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