

CONFIDENTIAL

PTQ9368

RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D), B6

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	ITC-01	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/010W	

-----53B6D5 051132Z /25

R 042208Z JAN 02  
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5891  
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
 AMEMBASSY QUITO  
 AMEMBASSY LIMA  
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
 AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
 USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
 NSC WASHDC  
 JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
 SECDEF WASHDC  
 DIRONDCP WASHDC  
 AMCONSUL RECIFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 000129

RECIFE FOR F. FERNANDEZ

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/4/12

TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: BOGOTA BULLETIN (12/24/01-1/4/02)

REF: 01 BOGOTA 8753

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON. REASONS  
1.5 (B, D).

1. (U) THIS MESSAGE IS PART OF A SERIES OF REPORTS  
HIGHLIGHTING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN COLOMBIA'S  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS  
DATE/CASE ID: 06 MAR 2006 200400885

UNCLASSIFIED

CONTENTS:

- NEW POLL PUTS ALVARO URIBE IN CLOSE SECOND PLACE
- POLICE FOIL ANOTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST URIBE
- EVANGELICAL PASTORS, CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER FARC THREAT
- AUC'S CASTANO PITCHES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
- JUDGE RELEASES "EMERALD CZAR" VICTOR CARRANZA
- BAD HOLIDAYS IN CATATUMBO
- DESERTIONS FROM ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS ON THE RISE

-----  
NEW POLL PUTS ALVARO URIBE IN CLOSE SECOND PLACE  
-----

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03           BOGOTA 00129 051131Z

2. (U) INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ALVARO URIBE VELEZ HIRED YANKELOVICH POLLING TO CONDUCT A POLL OF 1000 POTENTIAL VOTERS, FROM ALL SOCIAL STRATA. OF THOSE POLLED, 30.9 PERCENT INTENDED TO VOTE FOR LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HORACIO SERPA, 27.4 PERCENT FOR URIBE VELEZ, AND 19.5 PERCENT FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE NOEMI SANIN. OF THE REMAINING 22 PERCENT, 5.9 PERCENT WERE UNDECIDED, 5.6 PERCENT EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT ROSSO JOSE SERRANO, 4 PERCENT SAID THEY WOULD VOTE BLANK, AND 3.9 PERCENT BACKED LEFTIST CANDIDATE LUIS EDUARDO GARZON. THE POLL'S MARGIN OF ERROR WAS 3.1 PERCENT.

3. (C) COMMENT: THESE RESULTS RUN COUNTER TO THE LAST MAJOR POLL, TAKEN NOVEMBER 22-26, WHICH SHOWED URIBE TRAILING SERPA BY 15 POINTS, AND LOSING TO BOTH SERPA AND SANIN IN ANY RUN-OFF ELECTION. MANY IN COLOMBIA WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE NOVEMBER POLL RESULTS -- SPECIFICALLY SANIN'S INEXPLICABLE RISE IN POPULARITY. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THE PITFALLS OF RELYING ON A POLL GENERATED BY ONE OF THE CANDIDATES, WE SUSPECT THAT THE DECEMBER RESULTS ARE A MORE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT. END COMMENT.

-----  
POLICE FOIL ANOTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST URIBE  
-----

4. (U) ON JANUARY 2, THE CNP DISCOVERED AND FOILED AN ATTEMPT BY THE FARC TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04            BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
CANDIDATE ALVARO URIBE VELEZ. AFTER CONDUCTING  
SURVEILLANCE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, ANTIOQUIA POLICE  
RAIDED A HOUSE IN SAN LUIS, CAPTURING TWO MEMBERS OF A  
FARC URBAN CELL. ONE OF THOSE CAPTURED CONFESSED TO  
BEING A SHARPSHOOTER, CHARGED TO KILL URIBE DURING AN  
UPCOMING APPEARANCE BY THE CANDIDATE IN MEDELLIN. THE  
OTHER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES CONDEMNED THE THREAT, AND  
DEMANDED INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES. THE GOC  
RESPONDED THAT IT HAD ALREADY BEEFED UP SECURITY,  
PROVIDING ARMORED VEHICLES AND ARMED BODYGUARDS FOR  
EACH OF THE CANDIDATES.

5. (C) COMMENT: THIS MARKS THE 14TH PLOT AGAINST  
URIBE'S LIFE WITHIN TWO YEARS, AND THE THIRD PLOT BY  
THE FARC WITHIN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, FOLLOWING THE  
"BIBLE BOMB" AND THE "MULE BOMB" ATTEMPTS OF SEPTEMBER  
AND NOVEMBER 2001. THE DISCOVERY OF THE PLOT WAS  
PRECEDED ON DECEMBER 31 BY A BURGLARY OF ONE OF THE  
CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN OFFICES, WHERE COMPUTER DATABASES  
AND CAMPAIGN DETAILS WERE STOLEN. URIBE CONTINUES TO  
BE CRITICAL OF ANY EXTENSION OF THE DESPEJE WITHOUT  
CONCRETE CONCESSIONS FROM THE FARC, ASSURING THAT HE  
WILL REMAIN A FARC TARGET THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN. END  
COMMENT.

-----  
EVANGELICAL PASTORS, CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER FARC THREAT  
-----

6. (U) A SPOKESMAN FOR EVANGELICAL CHURCH ASSOCIATION  
CHRISTIAN UNION MOVEMENT (MUC) DENOUNCED THE DECEMBER

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05            BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
29 MURDER OF AN EVANGELICAL PASTOR AND THE DECEMBER 30  
KIDNAPPING OF ANOTHER IN CAQUETA DEPARTMENT. ACCORDING  
TO MUC, 61 PASTORS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE LAST EIGHT  
YEARS, AND THE FARC HAS FORCED THE CLOSURE OF OVER 100  
CHURCHES IN THE "DESPEJE." MUC SPOKESMAN VICTOR  
VELASQUEZ COMPLAINED THAT PEACE COMMISSIONER CAMILO  
GOMEZ HAS REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH THE MUC.  
THE FARC REPORTEDLY HAS FORBIDDEN TITHING BY  
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN TOLIMA DEPARTMENT.

7. (C) MUC FOUNDER HECTOR PARDO SAID THAT THE FARC  
TENDS TO TARGET EVANGELICAL CHURCHES AND THEIR MEMBERS,  
NOT ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS, BUT BECAUSE CHURCH MEMBERS

ARE POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND TEND TO REFUSE TO PAY FARC "WAR TAXES," ENGAGE IN COMBAT, OR TO GIVE UP THEIR CHILDREN FOR RECRUITMENT. FURTHERMORE, THE FARC SEES EVANGELICAL CHURCHES -- SOME OF WHICH RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM U.S. OR OTHER FOREIGN CONGREGATIONS -- AS POTENTIALLY RICH TARGETS.

[REDACTED]

B1, B6

ANOTHER PASTOR FROM CUNDINAMARCA DEPARTMENT REPORTED TO POLOFF IN JULY THAT THE FARC HAD, THROUGH DEATH THREATS, FORCED HIM TO CLOSE HIS CHURCH AND A FOSTER HOME FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN, IN ORDER TO EXPROPRIATE THE PROPERTY.

[REDACTED]

B1

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 BOGOTA 00129 051131Z

-----  
AUC'S CASTANO PITCHES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES  
-----

8. (U) ON DECEMBER 23, UNITED SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS OF COLOMBIA (AUC) LEADER CARLOS CASTANO DIRECTED HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE THREE LEADING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, CALLING FOR THE VICTOR TO INITIATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE AUC AND RECOGNIZE IT AS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT. CASTANO CLAIMED THAT THE AUC HAS 15,000 FIGHTERS "COMMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND REMOVED FROM DRUG TRAFFICKING." HE TOLD THE CANDIDATES THAT THE AUC MUST BE A PART OF ANY LASTING NEGOTIATED PEACE. UNDERLINING THE IMPORTANCE OF COCA TO THE GUERRILLA ECONOMIES, CASTANO OFFERED TO TURN OVER COCA UNDER AUC CONTROL (IN ANTIOQUIA, CORDOBA, AND NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENTS) FOR ERADICATION, IN EXCHANGE FOR RECOGNITION.

9. (C) COMMENT: WHILE IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE AUC WANTS POLITICAL RECOGNITION, WHICH WOULD BRING IT AMNESTY AND A DEGREE OF LEGITIMACY, THIS IS THE GROUP'S STRONGEST CALL FOR A "PLACE AT THE TABLE" TO DATE. BY OFFERING TO ASSIST WITH COCA ERADICATION, CASTANO ALSO APPEARS TO BE CURRYING FAVOR WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE NATIONAL MEDIA DID NOT CARRY CASTANO'S REMARKS, WHICH APPEARED ON HIS WEB SITE, AND NONE OF THE CANDIDATES COMMENTED ON HIS PROPOSAL. END COMMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

-----  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 07           BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
JUDGE RELEASES "EMERALD CZAR" VICTOR CARRANZA  
-----

10. (U) ON DECEMBER 26, AN APPEALS JUDGE IN BOGOTA ORDERED THAT INDEPENDENT PARAMILITARY LEADER VICTOR MANUEL CARRANZA -- KNOWN AS THE "EMERALD CZAR" -- BE RELEASED FROM JAIL BECAUSE THE JUDGE HEARING HIS CASE HAD NOT ISSUED A RULING WITHIN THE LEGALLY MANDATED TIME LIMIT. THE COURT ORDERED CARRANZA TO PAY 286 MILLION PESOS (ABOUT USD 128,000) IN BAIL PRIOR TO HIS RELEASE. THE JUDGE HANDLING CARRANZA'S CASE SAID HE WOULD CHALLENGE THE RULING, AND VOWED TO PURSUE THE CASE AGAINST HIM. CARRANZA WAS ARRESTED ON FEBRUARY 23, 1998 AND WAS CHARGED WITH PARAMILITARY CRIMES AND KIDNAPPING. CARRANZA IS NOW OUT ON BAIL, BUT THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM ARE STILL OPEN. HOWEVER, CARRANZA'S RELEASE -- AFTER ALMOST FOUR YEARS IN JAIL WITHOUT BRINGING THE CASE TO TRIAL -- PROBABLY INDICATES THAT THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S CASE AGAINST HIM HAS FALLEN APART.

-----  
BAD HOLIDAYS IN CATATUMBO  
-----

11. (U) UNHCHR STAFF IS WORKING WITH THE OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, THE ARMY, AND THE VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO SORT OUT CONFUSED REPORTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE TROUBLED CATATUMBO REGION IN NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT NEAR THE VENEZUELAN BORDER. THE  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 08           BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
PRESS REPORTED THAT GUERRILLA-PARAMILITARY FIGHTING ON DECEMBER 24 LEFT 14 DEAD IN A RURAL AREA BETWEEN EL TARRA AND TIBU. SO FAR, AUTHORITIES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT 3 PERSONS ARE DEAD IN THE VILLAGE OF LA ARGELIA, NEAR FILO GRINGO, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE VICTIMS WERE COMBATANTS OR CIVILIAN BYSTANDERS. BETWEEN 150 AND 200 PERSONS REPORTEDLY HAVE FLED TO THE TOWN OF EL TARRA FROM FILO GRINGO AND NEARBY VILLAGES, AND A DELEGATION OF THE ICRC AND THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK IS ON THE SCENE TO ASSESS THE SITUATION. ALSO, UNHCHR STAFF IS

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

ATTEMPTING TO CONFIRM A REPORT THAT PARAMILITARIES HAVE KIDNAPPED 30 PERSONS NEAR FILO GRINGO. ACCESS TO THIS REMOTE AND NEGLECTED REGION CONTINUES TO BE DIFFICULT; THE CATATUMBO REGION REMAINS HOTLY CONTESTED BETWEEN THE PARAMILITARIES AND GUERRILLAS, BOTH FOR COCA CULTIVATION AND FOR ACCESS TO THE VENEZUELAN BORDER.

-----  
DESERTIONS FROM ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS ON THE RISE  
-----

12. (U) ACCORDING TO STATISTICS FROM THE ARMY'S OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE, 323 MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS DESERTED IN 2001. THIS REFLECTS A 98 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 2000 FIGURE WHEN 163 MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS DESERTED, AND A FIVE-FOLD INCREASE COMPARED WITH 1999 WHEN ONLY 68 MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS DESERTED. OF THE 323 DESERTERS, 258 LEFT THE FARC, 54 CAME FROM THE ELN, AND SEVEN LEFT THE RANKS OF THE AUC, COMPARED WITH ONLY ONE AUC DESERTER IN 2000. THE 2001  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 09 BOGOTA 00129 051131Z  
FIGURE ALSO INCLUDES 20 CHILDREN WHO TURNED THEMSELVES IN AFTER DESERTING FROM THE FARC, ELN, AND AUC.

13. (C) COMMENT: THE INCREASE IN THE DESERTION RATE OF MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED ACTORS IS DUE IN LARGE PART TO IMPROVED PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS EXECUTED BY THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY. PSYOPS PAID DIVIDENDS IN OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST," WHEN THE COLMIL INFLECTED MODERATE LOSSES ON A FARC COLUMN IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF GUAVIARE AND META IN AUGUST 2001, AND OPERATION "BERLIN," WHEN THE ARMY'S FIFTH BRIGADE DECIMATED THE FARC'S ARTURO RUIZ MOBILE COLUMN IN LATE 2000. IN OPERATION "BERLIN" ALONE, 29 FARC COMBATANTS, 10 OF THEM MINORS, TURNED THEMSELVES INTO THE SECURITY FORCES. MANY COMBATANTS ALSO DESERTED AS A RESULT OF OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST." THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE ALSO BEGUN WORKING TOGETHER MORE EFFICIENTLY, ENABLING THEM TO ROUND UP DESERTERS WITH GREATER EASE.  
END COMMENT.

PATTERSON

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>  
@@@OASYS@@@<CONCATENATED>

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00129 01 OF 03 051103Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	ITCE-00	SRPP-00
	EB-00	EXME-00	E-00	UTED-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00

/009W

-----53B5AE 051103Z /25

R 042208Z JAN 02  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5891  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
AMCONSUL RECIFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 000129

RECIFE FOR F. FERNANDEZ  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00129 01 OF 03 051103Z

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/4/12

TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: BOGOTA BULLETIN (12/24/01-1/4/02)

REF: 01 BOGOTA 8753

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON. REASONS  
1.5 (B, D).

1. (U) THIS MESSAGE IS PART OF A SERIES OF REPORTS  
HIGHLIGHTING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN COLOMBIA'S  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.

UNCLASSIFIED

CONTENTS:

- NEW POLL PUTS ALVARO URIBE IN CLOSE SECOND PLACE
- POLICE FOIL ANOTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST URIBE
- EVANGELICAL PASTORS, CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER FARC THREAT
- AUC'S CASTANO PITCHES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
- JUDGE RELEASES "EMERALD CZAR" VICTOR CARRANZA
- BAD HOLIDAYS IN CATATUMBO
- DESERTIONS FROM ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS ON THE RISE

-----  
NEW POLL PUTS ALVARO URIBE IN CLOSE SECOND PLACE  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03           BOGOTA 00129 01 OF 03 051103Z  
-----

2. (U) INDEPENDENT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ALVARO URIBE VELEZ HIRED YANKELOVICH POLLING TO CONDUCT A POLL OF 1000 POTENTIAL VOTERS, FROM ALL SOCIAL STRATA. OF THOSE POLLED, 30.9 PERCENT INTENDED TO VOTE FOR LIBERAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HORACIO SERPA, 27.4 PERCENT FOR URIBE VELEZ, AND 19.5 PERCENT FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE NOEMI SANIN. OF THE REMAINING 22 PERCENT, 5.9 PERCENT WERE UNDECIDED, 5.6 PERCENT EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT ROSSO JOSE SERRANO, 4 PERCENT SAID THEY WOULD VOTE BLANK, AND 3.9 PERCENT BACKED LEFTIST CANDIDATE LUIS EDUARDO GARZON. THE POLL'S MARGIN OF ERROR WAS 3.1 PERCENT.

3. (C) COMMENT: THESE RESULTS RUN COUNTER TO THE LAST MAJOR POLL, TAKEN NOVEMBER 22-26, WHICH SHOWED URIBE TRAILING SERPA BY 15 POINTS, AND LOSING TO BOTH SERPA AND SANIN IN ANY RUN-OFF ELECTION. MANY IN COLOMBIA WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE NOVEMBER POLL RESULTS -- SPECIFICALLY SANIN'S INEXPLICABLE RISE IN POPULARITY. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE THE PITFALLS OF RELYING ON A POLL GENERATED BY ONE OF THE CANDIDATES, WE SUSPECT THAT THE DECEMBER RESULTS ARE A MORE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT. END COMMENT.

-----  
POLICE FOIL ANOTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST URIBE  
-----

4. (U) ON JANUARY 2, THE CNP DISCOVERED AND FOILED AN  
CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED



UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 00129 01 OF 03 051103Z  
ATTEMPT BY THE FARC TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENTIAL  
CANDIDATE ALVARO URIBE VELEZ. AFTER CONDUCTING  
SURVEILLANCE FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, ANTIOQUIA POLICE  
RAIDED A HOUSE IN SAN LUIS, CAPTURING TWO MEMBERS OF A  
FARC URBAN CELL. ONE OF THOSE CAPTURED CONFESSED TO  
BEING A SHARPSHOOTER, CHARGED TO KILL URIBE DURING AN  
UPCOMING APPEARANCE BY THE CANDIDATE IN MEDELLIN. THE  
OTHER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES CONDEMNED THE THREAT, AND  
DEMANDED INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES. THE GOC  
RESPONDED THAT IT HAD ALREADY BEEFED UP SECURITY,  
PROVIDING ARMORED VEHICLES AND ARMED BODYGUARDS FOR  
EACH OF THE CANDIDATES.

5. (C) COMMENT: THIS MARKS THE 14TH PLOT AGAINST  
URIBE'S LIFE WITHIN TWO YEARS, AND THE THIRD PLOT BY  
THE FARC WITHIN THE PAST FIVE MONTHS, FOLLOWING THE  
"BIBLE BOMB" AND THE "MULE BOMB" ATTEMPTS OF SEPTEMBER  
AND NOVEMBER 2001. THE DISCOVERY OF THE PLOT WAS  
PRECEDED ON DECEMBER 31 BY A BURGLARY OF ONE OF THE  
CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN OFFICES, WHERE COMPUTER DATABASES  
AND CAMPAIGN DETAILS WERE STOLEN. URIBE CONTINUES TO  
BE CRITICAL OF ANY EXTENSION OF THE DESPEJE WITHOUT  
CONCRETE CONCESSIONS FROM THE FARC, ASSURING THAT HE  
WILL REMAIN A FARC TARGET THROUGHOUT THE CAMPAIGN. END  
COMMENT.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ9358

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00129 02 OF 03 051104Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	ITC-01	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/010W	

-----53B5BA 051104Z /25

R 042208Z JAN 02  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5892  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
AMCONSUL RECIFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BOGOTA 000129

RECIFE FOR F. FERNANDEZ

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00129 02 OF 03 051104Z  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/4/12  
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, PGOV, CO  
SUBJECT: BOGOTA BULLETIN (12/24/01-1/4/02)

-----  
EVANGELICAL PASTORS, CHURCH MEMBERS UNDER FARC THREAT  
-----

6. (U) A SPOKESMAN FOR EVANGELICAL CHURCH ASSOCIATION CHRISTIAN UNION MOVEMENT (MUC) DENOUNCED THE DECEMBER 29 MURDER OF AN EVANGELICAL PASTOR AND THE DECEMBER 30 KIDNAPPING OF ANOTHER IN CAQUETA DEPARTMENT. ACCORDING TO MUC, 61 PASTORS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS, AND THE FARC HAS FORCED THE CLOSURE OF OVER 100 CHURCHES IN THE "DESPEJE." MUC SPOKESMAN VICTOR VELASQUEZ COMPLAINED THAT PEACE COMMISSIONER CAMILO GOMEZ HAS REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM WITH THE MUC. THE FARC REPORTEDLY HAS FORBIDDEN TITHING BY EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN TOLIMA DEPARTMENT.

7. (C) MUC FOUNDER HECTOR PARDO SAID THAT THE FARC TENDS TO TARGET EVANGELICAL CHURCHES AND THEIR MEMBERS, NOT ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS, BUT BECAUSE CHURCH MEMBERS ARE POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE AND TEND TO REFUSE TO PAY FARC "WAR TAXES," ENGAGE IN COMBAT, OR TO GIVE UP THEIR CHILDREN FOR RECRUITMENT. FURTHERMORE, THE FARC SEES EVANGELICAL CHURCHES -- SOME OF WHICH RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM U.S. OR OTHER FOREIGN CONGREGATIONS -- AS POTENTIALLY RICH TARGETS.

B1, B6

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED] ANOTHER PASTOR FROM

B1, B6

CUNDINAMARCA DEPARTMENT REPORTED TO POLOFF IN JULY THAT THE FARC HAD, THROUGH DEATH THREATS, FORCED HIM TO CLOSE HIS CHURCH AND A FOSTER HOME FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN, IN ORDER TO EXPROPRIATE THE PROPERTY.

[REDACTED] B1

-----  
AUC'S CASTANO PITCHES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES  
-----

8. (U) ON DECEMBER 23, UNITED SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS OF COLOMBIA (AUC) LEADER CARLOS CASTANO DIRECTED HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE THREE LEADING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, CALLING FOR THE VICTOR TO INITIATE A DIALOGUE WITH THE AUC AND RECOGNIZE IT AS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT. CASTANO CLAIMED THAT THE AUC HAS 15,000 FIGHTERS "COMMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND REMOVED FROM DRUG TRAFFICKING." HE TOLD THE CANDIDATES THAT THE AUC MUST BE A PART OF ANY LASTING NEGOTIATED PEACE. UNDERLINING THE IMPORTANCE OF COCA TO THE GUERRILLA ECONOMIES, CASTANO OFFERED TO TURN OVER COCA UNDER AUC CONTROL (IN ANTIOQUIA, CORDOBA, AND NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENTS) FOR ERADICATION, IN EXCHANGE FOR RECOGNITION.

9. (C) COMMENT: WHILE IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE AUC  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 00129 02 OF 03 051104Z  
WANTS POLITICAL RECOGNITION, WHICH WOULD BRING IT AMNESTY AND A DEGREE OF LEGITIMACY, THIS IS THE GROUP'S STRONGEST CALL FOR A "PLACE AT THE TABLE" TO DATE. BY OFFERING TO ASSIST WITH COCA ERADICATION, CASTANO ALSO APPEARS TO BE CURRYING FAVOR WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE NATIONAL MEDIA DID NOT CARRY CASTANO'S REMARKS, WHICH APPEARED ON HIS WEB SITE, AND NONE OF THE CANDIDATES COMMENTED ON HIS PROPOSAL. END COMMENT.

-----  
JUDGE RELEASES "EMERALD CZAR" VICTOR CARRANZA  
-----

10. (U) ON DECEMBER 26, AN APPEALS JUDGE IN BOGOTA ORDERED THAT INDEPENDENT PARAMILITARY LEADER VICTOR MANUEL CARRANZA -- KNOWN AS THE "EMERALD CZAR" -- BE RELEASED FROM JAIL BECAUSE THE JUDGE HEARING HIS CASE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

HAD NOT ISSUED A RULING WITHIN THE LEGALLY MANDATED TIME LIMIT. THE COURT ORDERED CARRANZA TO PAY 286 MILLION PESOS (ABOUT USD 128,000) IN BAIL PRIOR TO HIS RELEASE. THE JUDGE HANDLING CARRANZA'S CASE SAID HE WOULD CHALLENGE THE RULING, AND VOWED TO PURSUE THE CASE AGAINST HIM. CARRANZA WAS ARRESTED ON FEBRUARY 23,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ9359

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00129 03 OF 03 051105Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	ITC-01	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/010W	

-----53B5BB 051105Z /25

R 042208Z JAN 02 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5893  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
AMCONSUL RECIFE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BOGOTA 000129

RECIFE FOR F. FERNANDEZ

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00129 03 OF 03 051105Z  
E.O. 12958: DECL: 1/4/12  
TAGS: PREL, PHUM, PTER, PGOV, CO  
SUBJECT: BOGOTA BULLETIN (12/24/01-1/4/02)

1998 AND WAS CHARGED WITH PARAMILITARY CRIMES AND KIDNAPPING. CARRANZA IS NOW OUT ON BAIL, BUT THE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

CHARGES AGAINST HIM ARE STILL OPEN. HOWEVER, CARRANZA'S RELEASE -- AFTER ALMOST FOUR YEARS IN JAIL WITHOUT BRINGING THE CASE TO TRIAL -- PROBABLY INDICATES THAT THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S CASE AGAINST HIM HAS FALLEN APART.

-----  
BAD HOLIDAYS IN CATATUMBO  
-----

11. (U) UNHCHR STAFF IS WORKING WITH THE OFFICE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN, THE ARMY, AND THE VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE TO SORT OUT CONFUSED REPORTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE TROUBLED CATATUMBO REGION IN NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT NEAR THE VENEZUELAN BORDER. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT GUERRILLA-PARAMILITARY FIGHTING ON DECEMBER 24 LEFT 14 DEAD IN A RURAL AREA BETWEEN EL TERRA AND TIBU. SO FAR, AUTHORITIES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT 3 PERSONS ARE DEAD IN THE VILLAGE OF LA ARGELIA, NEAR FILO GRINGO, BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE VICTIMS WERE COMBATANTS OR CIVILIAN BYSTANDERS. BETWEEN 150 AND 200 PERSONS REPORTEDLY HAVE FLED TO THE TOWN OF EL TERRA FROM FILO GRINGO AND NEARBY VILLAGES, AND A DELEGATION OF THE ICRC AND THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK IS ON THE SCENE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 00129 03 OF 03 051105Z  
TO ASSESS THE SITUATION. ALSO, UNHCHR STAFF IS ATTEMPTING TO CONFIRM A REPORT THAT PARAMILITARIES HAVE KIDNAPPED 30 PERSONS NEAR FILO GRINGO. ACCESS TO THIS REMOTE AND NEGLECTED REGION CONTINUES TO BE DIFFICULT; THE CATATUMBO REGION REMAINS HOTLY CONTESTED BETWEEN THE PARAMILITARIES AND GUERRILLAS, BOTH FOR COCA CULTIVATION AND FOR ACCESS TO THE VENEZUELAN BORDER.

-----  
DESERTIONS FROM ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS ON THE RISE  
-----

12. (U) ACCORDING TO STATISTICS FROM THE ARMY'S OPERATIONS DIRECTORATE, 323 MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS DESERTED IN 2001. THIS REFLECTS A 98 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE 2000 FIGURE WHEN 163 MEMBERS OF THESE GROUPS DESERTED, AND A FIVE-FOLD INCREASE COMPARED WITH 1999 WHEN ONLY 68 MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS DESERTED. OF THE 323 DESERTERS, 258 LEFT THE FARC, 54 CAME FROM THE ELN, AND SEVEN LEFT THE RANKS OF THE AUC, COMPARED WITH ONLY ONE AUC DESERTER IN 2000. THE 2001 FIGURE ALSO INCLUDES 20 CHILDREN WHO TURNED THEMSELVES

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

IN AFTER DESERTING FROM THE FARC, ELN, AND AUC.

13. (C) COMMENT: THE INCREASE IN THE DESERTION RATE OF MEMBERS OF ILLEGAL ARMED ACTORS IS DUE IN LARGE PART TO IMPROVED PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS EXECUTED BY THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY. PSYOPS PAID DIVIDENDS IN OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST," WHEN THE COLMIL INFLICTED MODERATE LOSSES ON A FARC COLUMN IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF GUAVIARE AND META IN AUGUST 2001, AND OPERATION "BERLIN," WHEN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 00129 03 OF 03 051105Z  
THE ARMY'S FIFTH BRIGADE DECIMATED THE FARC'S ARTURO RUIZ MOBILE COLUMN IN LATE 2000. IN OPERATION "BERLIN" ALONE, 29 FARC COMBATANTS, 10 OF THEM MINORS, TURNED THEMSELVES INTO THE SECURITY FORCES. MANY COMBATANTS ALSO DESERTED AS A RESULT OF OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST." THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF THE SECURITY FORCES HAVE ALSO BEGUN WORKING TOGETHER MORE EFFICIENTLY, ENABLING THEM TO ROUND UP DESERTERS WITH GREATER EASE.  
END COMMENT.

PATTERSON

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

UNCLASSIFIED