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ACTION PM-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	ARA-01
	CIAE-00	COME-00	INL-01	DEAE-00	OASY-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00	OIGO-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	JUSE-00	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NRRC-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OES-01	OMB-01	PA-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR PM/ATEC, ARA/AND, AND INL
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PARM, SNAR, PGOV, PREL, MASS, BEXP, CO
SUBJECT: THE PROPOSED SALE OF UH-60L HELICOPTERS TO COLOMBIA

SUMMARY

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1. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE PROPOSED CASH SALE OF UH-60LS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA IS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE RECENTLY BEEN STRAINS IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING THE DECERTIFICATION OF COLOMBIA FOR INADEQUATE COUNTER-NARCOTICS PERFORMANCE AND THE REVOCATION OF PRESIDENT SAMPER'S VISA, WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO COUNTER-NARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH THE GOC, WHICH THIS SALE WILL ENHANCE. IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF U.S. REGIONAL GOALS AND NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS: IN PROVIDING OPTIMIZED AND READILY AVAILABLE MID-LIFT OF GROUND FORCES

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: WILLIAM E. LANDFAIR
DATE/CASE ID: 5 FEB 2002 200102477

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EMPLOYED AGAINST COUNTER-NARCOTICS TARGETS; IN ALLOWING THE COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) TO SUPPORT MORE EFFECTIVELY NATIONAL POLICE COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE FOR ERADICATION OF ILLICIT CROPS; IN INCREASING COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT PRESENCE IN REMOTE AND ISOLATED AREAS NOW UNDER THE CONTROL OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS; IN ACHIEVING THE CAPTURE OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND THE DESTRUCTION OF NARCOTICS PROCESSING LABS AND OTHER TARGETS; AND IN PROMOTING REGIONAL PEACE BY ELIMINATING SIGNIFICANT COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT WEAKNESSES IN BORDER CONTROL PRESENTLY STRAINING COLOMBIAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORS. THE SALE WILL ALSO HAVE A DIRECT AND BENEFICIAL IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES BY SUPPORTING JOBS AT U.S. COMPANIES AND INCREASING EXPORTS. END SUMMARY.

REASON THE COLAR DESIRES THE SALE OF UH-60LS

2. THE COLAR'S MOST CRITICAL WEAKNESS IS INSUFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COLAR SECOND MOBILE BRIGADE, WHICH CURRENTLY IS ACHIEVING COUNTER-NARCOTICS SUCCESS OPERATING JOINTLY WITH COLOMBIAN MARINE AND NATIONAL POLICE FORCES IN
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GUAVIARE DEPARTMENT, HAS A TOTAL OF EIGHT HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE. OF THESE, TWO ARE BORROWED FROM ANOTHER UNIT AND THREE ARE LEASED RUSSIAN MI-17S WHICH CANNOT BE COMMITTED TO DIRECT COMBAT OPERATIONS. THUS, AN ENTIRE COLAR MOBILE BRIGADE ENGAGED IN DAILY OPERATIONS AGAINST NARCOTRAFFICKERS HAS ASSIGNED LESS HELICOPTER SUPPORT THAN A STANDARD U.S. ARMY INFANTRY PLATOON. TO COUNTER THIS DEFICIENCY, ONE OF COLAR'S MAJOR EFFORTS IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AIR MOBILITY CAPABILITY. THE ACQUISITION OF UH-60L HELICOPTERS AFFORDS THE COLAR A MODERN AIR ASSET THAT WILL PROVIDE THEM WITH LONG-TERM MEDIUM AIRLIFT CAPABILITY. THE UH-60L WILL PROVIDE THE COLAR THE NEEDED FLEXIBILITY TO REACH REMOTE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS IN COLOMBIA WHERE NARCOTRAFFICKERS OFTEN ESTABLISH COCAINE PROCESSING LABS, AND THE DEPENDABILITY OF AN AIR ASSET WITH AN ESTABLISHED U.S. ARMY LOGISTICAL SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE MOVEMENT OF TROOPS AND LOGISTICAL SUPPLIES TO CONDUCT AND SUSTAIN COUNTER-NARCOTICS AND INTERNAL DEFENSE OPERATIONS.

UH-60LS AND THE COLAR'S FORCE STRUCTURE AND MISSION CAPABILITY

3. THE UH-60L WILL ENABLE THE COLAR TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE, RELIABLE AIR LIFT TO MEET THE FOLLOWING MISSION REQUIREMENTS:

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A. MOVEMENT OF PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS IN REMOTE AREAS TO INCLUDE PROVIDING SECURITY FOR COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS AND INTERDICTION OPERATIONS AGAINST COCAINE LABORATORIES, SHIPMENTS OF PRECURSOR CHEMICALS, AND CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIPS USED IN SHIPMENTS OF ILLEGAL NARCOTICS.

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B. RAPID DEPLOYMENTS OF SECURITY FORCES TO MEET OTHER INTERNAL DEFENSE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTINGENCIES, INCLUDING DEALING WITH INCREASINGLY ASSERTIVE GUERRILLA ACTIVITY.

C. MOVEMENT OF LOGISTICAL SUPPLIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

D. SEARCH AND RESCUE.

E. MEDICAL EVACUATION.

F. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

ARMED FORCES-POLICE COOPERATION

4. SINCE SAMPER CAME INTO OFFICE THE ARMED FORCES HAVE NOT BEEN NEARLY AS SUPPORTIVE OF COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS BY THE NATIONAL POLICE AS WE WOULD LIKE, AND WE HAVE CONTINUED TO URGE CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO IN COUNTER-NARCOTICS. NEVERTHELESS, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE GUAVIARE DEPARTMENT OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS ALONGSIDE THE POLICE IS AN AUGURY OF A TREND COUNTRY TEAM BELIEVES WILL BE SUSTAINED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE ARMED FORCES FOR INCREASED SUPPORT OF THE POLICE IN COUNTER-NARCOTICS, WHICH THE ADDITIONAL AIRLIFT CAPACITY OF THE UH-60L HELICOPTERS WILL FACILITATE.

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DOEE-00 SRPP-00 EB-00 OIGO-01 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00
JUSE-00 L-01 ADS-00 M-00 NRRC-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
OES-01 OMB-01 PA-00 PRS-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00
TRSE-00 T-00 USIE-00 DTC-01 SSD-01 PMB-00 DRL-09
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THE ANTICIPATED REACTION OF NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

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5. REGIONAL INSTABILITY IN LATIN AMERICA CAN OFTEN BE CONNECTED TO BORDER PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE INABILITY OF ONE PARTY TO CONTROL ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IN REMOTE BORDER AREAS. IN THE CASE OF COLOMBIA'S NEIGHBORS, THE ALMOST TOTAL INABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA TO CONTROL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS PASSING THROUGH COLOMBIAN BORDERS HAS CREATED CONFUSION, THE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL CONFLICT, AND IN THE CASE OF THE COLOMBIAN-VENEZUELAN BORDER, HAS GIVEN RISE TO ACTUAL VENEZUELAN BORDER INCURSIONS INTO COLOMBIAN TERRITORY. THERE IS EVERY EXPECTATION VENEZUELA WILL BREATHE EASIER WHEN THE COLOMBIAN ARMY IS BETTER ABLE TO EFFECT BORDER CONTROL AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ALONG ITS BORDER. WITH THE UH-60LS THE COLAR WILL BE ABLE TO ASSIST NATIONAL POLICE UNITS AND ITS OWN GROUND FORCES IN BORDER PATROL AND COUNTER-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS IN AREAS WHERE TRAFFICKERS NOW ROAM FREE. THE SAME CAN BE SAID OF THE COLOMBIAN-BRAZILIAN BORDER, WHERE IN 1993 INSURGENT ELEMENTS WITHIN COLOMBIA WERE ABLE TO MOUNT AN OPERATION AGAINST BRAZILIAN SECURITY FORCES. THE SALE OF THE UH-60LS TO COLOMBIA WOULD ALSO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT IN THE COLOMBIAN-ECUADOR AND COLOMBIAN-

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PERUVIAN BORDER AREAS, ALLOWING COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES TO PATROL THE PUTAMAYO, CAQUETA AND AMAZON RIVERS, AIDING RIVERINE FORCES IN COMBATTING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. COLOMBIA DOES NOT HAVE BORDER DEMARCATION DISPUTES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. WE CAN EXPECT ALL OF COLOMBIA'S NEIGHBORS TO SUPPORT AN INCREASED ABILITY BY THE COLAR TO CONTROL THE COLOMBIAN SIDES OF THEIR BORDERS.

GOC ABILITY TO OPERATE, MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT THE UH-60LS

6. THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE CURRENTLY POSSESSES THE LOGISTICAL
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INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED TO SUSTAIN THE UH-60L UNTIL THE COLAR AVIATION BRANCH LOGISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE BECOMES FULLY OPERATIONAL. AN INTERNAL TRAINING PROGRAM IS BEING USED TO ACCELERATE REQUIRED TRAINING FOR THE AIR CREWS. IN ADDITION TO THIS TRAINING, COLAR WILL REQUIRE FORMAL OPERATIONAL, MAINTENANCE, AND LOGISTICS TRAINING VIA U.S. SCHOOLS, MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS AND POSSIBLY EXTENDED TRAINING SERVICE SPECIALISTS.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO U.S. OF THE UH-60LS SALE

7. THIS ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS PLUS SALE WILL BENEFIT THOUSANDS OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN THE U.S. HELICOPTER MANUFACTURING SECTOR. BY PROVIDING EXPORTS, IT WILL HELP OUR TRADE BALANCE. FINANCING IS NOT A PROBLEM; IT IS BEING NEGOTIATED DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE GOC AND SIKORSKY COMPANY.

RELEVANT HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

8. THE COUNTRY TEAM CAN ATTEST TO EFFORTS BY THE COLOMBIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY TO REDUCE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. THE NUMBER OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ATTRIBUTED TO MILITARY UNITS DECREASED IN 1995. IN THE PAST THREE YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HUMAN RIGHTS SECRETARIAT WITHIN THE COLOMBIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY, THE INCORPORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING INTO THE SYLLABUS OF EVERY OFFICER AND NCO SCHOOL IN THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICES AT THE BRIGADE AND, IN SOME CASES, BATTALION LEVELS, AND THE CONTINUED OVERSIGHT OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEY GENERAL OFFICERS OVER MILITARY
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