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	OASY-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	OIGO-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
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O 132254Z JAN 97
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3989
 DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 USMISSION GENEVA
 DEA WASHDC
 NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
 SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//
 DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
 FBI WASHDC
 DIA WASHDC
 CIA WASHDC
 DIRONDCP WASHDC
 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
 NSC WASHDC
 USIA WASHDC 1162
 DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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 NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS
 ONDCP FOR BILL BOZIN
 SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
 DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX
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 FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRU2
 USIA FOR AR, I/GAR
 TREASURY FOR FINCEN

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01-12-01
 TAGS: PREL, PGOV, SNAR, PINR, PHUM, PINS, MASS CO
 SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S JANUARY 12 MEETING WITH NEW MOD DESIGNATE

REF: (A) BOGOTA 226 (B) BOGOTA 209 (C) BOGOTA 275

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POL/ECONOFF MIREMBE NANTONGO. REASON 1.5(D).

2. (U) SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR MET FOR TWO HOURS ON JANUARY 12 WITH THE PROSPECTIVE NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GUILLERMO ALBERTO GONZALEZ MOSQUERA (REF A). DURING THE CORDIAL MEETING OVER LUNCH, GONZALEZ TALKED ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS BROAD INTENTIONS VIS A VIS HIS NEW PORTFOLIO, AND AMBASSADOR BRIEFED HIM ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES OF USG INTEREST WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. GONZALEZ WILL TAKE OVER HIS NEW POST ON FEBRUARY 3. OUTGOING MOD ESGUERRA PLANS TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON JANUARY 18 TO TAKE UP HIS NEW DUTIES AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. END SUMMARY

3. (C) AMBASSADOR MET FOR TWO HOURS ON JANUARY 12 WITH INCOMING MINISTER OF DEFENSE GUILLERMO ALBERTO GONZALEZ MOSQUERA.

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 GONZALEZ CAME ACROSS AS A PLEASANT, FRIENDLY, APPARENTLY STRAIGHTFORWARD PERSON WITH A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR. HE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY TELLING THE AMBASSADOR HOW HE SPENT TWO AND A HALF YEARS OBTAINING A GRADUATE DEGREE IN PLANNING FROM PURDUE UNIVERSITY. RECALLING THAT HE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE U.S. PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA DURING HIS TIME AS COLOMBIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N. THERE, FROM LATE 1993 TO EARLY 1996, HE NOTED HE HAS A "SOFT SPOT" FOR THE U.S. HE SAID THAT IN EARLY 1996 HE WAS INVITED TO ATTEND A CONFERENCE IN CLEVELAND ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE MATTERS. HE HAD A PRIVATE LUNCH WITH FORMER COMMERCE SECRETARY RON BROWN, DURING WHICH THEY TALKED ABOUT COLOMBIA, HE SAID. AFTER SAYING HOW MUCH HE LIKED AMERICANS, GONZALEZ SAID HIS EXPERIENCE IN GENEVA HAD TAUGHT HIM THAT THERE ARE THREE KEY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: NARCOTICS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. "YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME HOW IMPORTANT COUNTERNARCOTICS AND HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCES ARE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. I KNOW," HE SAID.

WHY DID SAMPER CHOOSE GONZALEZ?

4. (C) THE MINISTER-DESIGNATE, WHO IS A TOUCH LOQUACIOUS BUT LESS SO THAN HIS PREDECESSOR ESGUERRA, SAID HE WAS NOT CONTACTED BY

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PRESIDENT SAMPER UNTIL THE NIGHT BEFORE SAMPER ANNOUNCED HIS APPOINTMENT IN CARTAGENA ON JANUARY 9. HE WAS ON HOLIDAY IN CARTAGENA WITH HIS FAMILY WHEN THE NEWS STORY FIRST SURFACED, AND WAS CONTACTED BY A COUSIN WHO TOLD HIM ABOUT IT, HE SAID.
 (COMMENT: GONZALEZ MADE CLEAR FROM HIS COMMENTS TO THE MEDIA, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THE POSITION IF IT WERE OFFERED.
 END COMMENT)

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5. (C) ACCORDING TO GONZALEZ, SAMPER CHOSE HIM FOR THREE REASONS: HE IS A GOOD MANAGER (HERE HE CITED HIS EXPERIENCE IN MANAGING THE STATE-OWNED AGRICULTURAL BANK, CAJA AGRARIA, AMONG OTHERS); HE IS STRONG ON HUMAN RIGHTS (HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS A KEY PART OF HIS PORTFOLIO DURING HIS TENURE AS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N.); AND IS A GOOD NEGOTIATOR. "WITH GOOD WILL, I CAN WORK OUT EVEN VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS," HE SAID.

WILL TAKE CHARGE ON FEBRUARY 3

6. (U) GONZALES SAID HE WOULD RETURN TO CARACAS ON JANUARY 12 TO MAKE HIS FAREWELL CALLS. HE WILL RETURN TO COLOMBIA TO ATTEND A FEBRUARY 1-2 MEETING IN CARTAGENA BETWEEN THE FONMINS OF COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA WITH THEIR BORDER COMMISSION, BEFORE RETURNING TO BOGOTA TO BE SWORN IN BY PRESIDENT SAMPER ON FEBRUARY 3.

BEDOYA TO BE ACTING MINISTER

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3990
 DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
 INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 USMISSION GENEVA
 DEA WASHDC
 NDIC JOHNSTOWN PA
 SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//
 DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD
 FBI WASHDC
 DIA WASHDC
 CIA WASHDC
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7. (U) DURING THE APPROXIMATELY TWO WEEK INTERVAL BETWEEN
 ESGUERRA'S DEPARTURE AND GONZALES' SWEARING-IN, ARMED FORCES
 COMMANDER HAROLD BEDOYA WILL HOLD THE DEFENSE PORTFOLIO AS ACTING
 MINISTER. BOTH ESGUERRA AND GONZALES ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT
 THIS (RATHER THAN HAVING THE VICE-MINISTER ASSUME CHARGE) HAS
 BEEN THE CUSTOM OBTAINING SINCE GOC MINISTERS OF DEFENSE HAVE
 BEEN CIVILIANS.
 WHAT HE HOPES TO ACCOMPLISH

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8. (U) NOTING THAT, AS HE TOLD THE MEDIA, HE INTENDS TO WORK HARD FOR THE MILITARY (PURSUE EFFICIENCY IN SPENDING, SECURE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT, SEEK TO OBTAIN LEGAL INSTRUMENTS TO FACILITATE THE MILITARY TASK, ADVANCE THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE ARMY, ETC), GONZALES SAID THAT HE NEVERTHELESS WILL NOT SPARE ANY EFFORT TO REACH A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN COLOMBIA'S GUERRILLA INSURGENCY. HE STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT HE WAS AGAINST THE PHENOMENON OF ██████████

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 PARAMILITARIES, THAT HE WOULD GO AFTER THEM, AND THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN THEM. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, "YOU HAVE A GOOD FRIEND IN ME ON COUNTERNARCOTICS ISSUES."

HUMAN RIGHTS

9. (C) AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE USG IS VERY MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. HE SAID THAT MINISTER FERNANDO BOTERO, THE FIRST MOD HE WORKED WITH, WAS VERY GOOD ON HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT HIS SUCCESSOR JUAN CARLOS ESGUERRA LESS SO. "HE DID NOT PUSH THE MILITARY. WE HOPE YOU WILL PUSH THE MILITARY," AMBASSADOR SAID. HE REMINDED GONZALEZ THAT SOUTHCOM IS SPONSORING A HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE IN MIAMI IN EARLY FEBRUARY WHICH GONZALEZ PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND, BUT ENCOURAGED HIM TO ENSURE THAT MOD REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED.

END-USE MONITORING

10. (C) AMBASSADOR URGED GONZALEZ TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH ESGUERRA ON END-USE MONITORING AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO THE 506(A) DRAWDOWN. AMBASSADOR NOTED THE STRONG NGO INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS AND EMPHASIZED THAT 506(A) REQUIRES ASSURANCES REGARDING THE END USES OF EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED. BEFORE ESGUERRA LEAVES, HE WILL MEET WITH AMBASSADOR TO WORK OUT THE MAIN LINES OF THE END-USE MONITORING AGREEMENT. "THIS IS THE MOST BURNING ISSUE," SAID AMBASSADOR, ADDING THAT NO 506(A) EQUIPMENT TRANSFERS WILL BE AUTHORIZED UNTIL THE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED.

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 THE 20TH BRIGADE

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11. (S) AMBASSADOR TOLD GONZALEZ THAT THE EMBASSY HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE 20TH INTELLIGENCE BRIGADE MAY HAVE INVOLVEMENT WITH DEATH SQUADS, AND THAT CONTACT AND ASSISTANCE WAS COMPLETELY SEVERED AS SOON AS WE HEARD OF THE POSSIBILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

MILITARY COUPS

12. (C) AMBASSADOR STATED THAT USG POLICY UNEQUIVOCALLY OPPOSES MILITARY COUPS. COLOMBIA IS A DEMOCRACY, HE SAID, RECALLING HIS OWN REJECTION OF CIVILIAN OVERTURES RESPECTING A POSSIBLE COUP IN MID-1995. IN ADDITION, THE EMBASSY HAS MADE A POLICY OF WARNING THE TOP BRASS OF ANY REPORTS IT GATHERS CONCERNING COUP RUMORS, SAID AMBASSADOR.

NO ASSISTANCE WITH GUERILLA INSURGENCY

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3991
DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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SECDEF WASHDC//OCDEPS//
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 13. (C) THERE WILL BE NO USG ASSISTANCE FOR FIGHTING THE GUERRILLAS, AMBASSADOR TOLD GONZALES. HE SAID THE ISSUE RAISES TOO MANY HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AND HAS BEEN A SEARING EXPERIENCE FOR US IN CENTRAL AMERICA. IN ADDITION, AMBASSADOR SAID, THE GOC HAS NEVER PROVIDED ANY EVIDENCE OF HAVING A COHERENT ANTI-GUERRILLA STRATEGY. THE GUERRILLAS CANNOT BE OVERCOME BY FORCE ALONE. WHAT IS NEEDED IS A COMPREHENSIVE ANTI-INSURGENCY STRATEGY WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE MEASURES TO WIN "THE HEARTS AND MINDS" OF COLOMBIAN PEASANTS, SAID AMBASSADOR. IF A PEACE COMPONENT IS DESIRED, THEN IT TOO SHOULD HAVE A COHERENT STRATEGY. ALL WE HAVE SEEN SO FAR IN THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORT IS IMPROVISATION, SAID AMBASSADOR.

COUNTERNARCOTICS

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14. (C) AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT SOME EQUIPMENT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE ARMED FORCES FOR COUNTERNARCOTICS PURPOSES BECAUSE THEY BEGAN, IN 1996, TO STRONGLY SUPPORT THE POLICE COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THE USG POSITION REGARDING GUERRILLAS AND NARCOTRAFFICKING: NOT ALL FRONTS ARE INVOLVED IN NARCOTRAFFICKING AND THOSE THAT ARE CANNOT BE SAID TO CONSTITUTE A CARTEL. IN THE U.S. VIEW, THE NOTION OF THE "FARC CARTEL" WAS PUT TOGETHER BY THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY, WHO CONSIDERED IT A WAY TO OBTAIN U.S. ASSISTANCE IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY. IT HAS NOT WORKED, BECAUSE WE DON'T BELIEVE IT, NOR DO MANY COLOMBIANS, INCLUDING THE POLICE, AMBASSADOR SAID.

15. (C) AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE U.S. IS NERVOUS ABOUT WORKING WITH THE MILITARY ON COUNTERNARCOTICS ISSUES, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF PERVASIVE CORRUPTION IN THE MILITARY. THIS INCLUDES NOT ONLY CORRUPTION IN PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS, BUT MILITARY PERSONNEL THEMSELVES BEING CORRUPTED BY NARCOS. UNLIKE THE POLICE, WHO HAVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS AND A POLICY OF IDENTIFYING AND ELIMINATING CORRUPT ELEMENTS, THE ARMY STEADFASTLY DEFENDS SUCH ELEMENTS, SAID AMBASSADOR.

16. (S) HE TOLD GONZALEZ THE STORY OF [REDACTED] WHO RETIRED IN EARLY 1996 DUE TO U.S. PRESSURE, AND REITERATED THE STORY OF SIMILARLY [REDACTED] WHO HAS NOW BEEN APPOINTED TO SERVE AS CONSUL GENERAL IN [REDACTED]. AMBASSADOR TOLD GONZALEZ THAT HE HOPED HE WOULD PUSH FOR [REDACTED] RETIREMENT FROM THE ARMY BEFORE THE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR [REDACTED] OTHERWISE, HE WARNED, "[REDACTED] WILL BE A CONSTANT THEME IN OUR MEETINGS." IF YOU WISH FOR CREDIBILITY WITH THE U.S, YOU CAN'T HAVE SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO ARE

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TAINED IN THIS MANNER, SAID AMBASSADOR. AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED THAT EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED REPORTS THAT [REDACTED] IS NOT ONLY LOOKING THE OTHER WAY WHEN IT COMES TO PARAMILITARY ABUSES, BUT MAY ALSO HAVE NARCO-TIES. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE DIFFICULTY OF DOING SO, HE ENCOURAGED GONZALEZ TO SEEK WAYS OF PUSHING [REDACTED] OUT OF THE ARMY. ERADICATION PROGRAM

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17. (U) AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED TO GONZALEZ THE PROGRAM CURRENTLY IN EFFECT THROUGH WHICH U.S. PILOTS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE ERADICATION PROGRAM.

MEETING PLANNED FOR GONZALEZ'S RETURN

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18. (U) GONZALEZ THANKED AMBASSADOR FOR HIS BRIEFINGS AND EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO BEGIN WORKING TOGETHER. AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THE TWO MEET AGAIN VERY SOON AFTER GONZALEZ'S RETURN TO COLOMBIA. AMBASSADOR TOLD GONZALEZ THAT, AS SOON AS

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NSC FOR JAMES DOBBINS
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEA FOR OF, OFL, OC, AX
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FBI FOR CID/IRS/IRUZ
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POSSIBLE, HE WOULD TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY OF INTRODUCING HIM TO ALL
EMBASSY AGENCY HEADS WHO WORK WITH THE GOC ARMED FORCES.

PERAFAN SCANDAL

19. (U) AFTER A CEREMONY ON JANUARY 13 WELCOMING 6 HELICOPTERS
FOR THE POLICE, AMBASSADOR WAS BESIEGED BY MEMBERS OF THE
COLOMBIAN PRESS WHO WANTED TO KNOW WHAT HE THOUGHT OF GONZALEZ'S
ALLEGED TIES TO NARCOTRAFFICKER JUSTO PASTOR PERAFAN (REF C).
(COMMENT: THE COLOMBIAN PRESS HAS MADE MUCH OF THE ASSISTANCE
RENDERED BY GONZALEZ TO PERAFAN IN PLACING HIS CHILDREN IN A
SWISS SCHOOL WHEN THE FORMER WAS AMBASSADOR TO THE U.N. IN
GENEVA. GONZALEZ HAS NOT DENIED THE STORY, BUT CALLED IT
"ANECDOTAL" AND HIS ASSISTANCE TO PERAFAN SUCH AS HE RENDERED
VERY FREQUENTLY TO COLOMBIAN CITIZENS ABROAD. END COMMENT).
AMBASSADOR, WHEN ASKED, TOLD REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MEDIA THAT HE

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COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF THE GOC APPOINTING A MOD TAINTED BY
MEANINGFUL TIES WITH NARCOTRAFFICKERS. IF THIS WERE THE CASE,
HOWEVER, IT WOULD HAVE AN IMMEDIATE NEGATIVE EFFECT ON BILATERAL
RELATIONS AND COOPERATION AND WOULD PROBABLY AFFECT THE
CERTIFICATION DECISION, AMBASSADOR SAID.

GONZALEZ FAMILY

20. (C) GONZALEZ TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAS THREE CHILDREN, TWO
DAUGHTERS [REDACTED]
AND A 27-YEAR-OLD SON [REDACTED]
DEPARTMENT AND DRIVES AROUND ALONE IN A PICK-UP TRUCK. GONZALEZ
SAID HE WANTED TO GET HIS SON OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND INTO THE

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U.S. TO STUDY ENGLISH FOR A WHILE, AND ASKED FOR HELP OBTAINING
THE VISA. AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM TO HAVE HIS SON CALL THE EMBASSY
TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT OBTAINING A STUDENT VISA, REMINDING
HIM THAT THERE IS NO "QUICK AND EASY WAY" TO DO SO. FRECHETTE

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