

8784083

TITLE: SUBJ/SPECIAL PSYOP ASSESSMENT: COLOMBIA (U) (PART I OF II)//

ORIGDATE: 199505041800

SOURCE: MILITARY

TEXT:

COMBINE: COMPLETE

MSGID/GENADMIN//

SUBJ/SPECIAL PSYOP ASSESSMENT: COLOMBIA (U) (PART I OF II)//

(b)(1) Sec. 1.4(c)

2. (U) COUNTRY PROFILE.

A. (U) GEOGRAPHY.

(1). (U) COLOMBIA, LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SOUTH AMERICA, IS THE CONTINENT'S FOURTH LARGEST COUNTRY. IT BORDERS VENEZUELA, BRAZIL, PERU, ECUADOR, AND PANAMA. COLOMBIA HAS AN AREA OF 1.14 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS (440,000 SQUARE MILES). THE ANDES MOUNTAINS ENTER COLOMBIA FROM THE SOUTHWEST AND DIVIDE INTO THREE DISTINCT RANGES RUNNING THROUGH THE COUNTRY FROM SOUTHWEST TO NORTH AND NORTHEAST.

(2). (U) SANTA FE DE BOGOTA, WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 6 MILLION, IS COLOMBIA'S CAPITAL. THE COUNTRY IS DIVIDED INTO 32 DEPARTMENTS.

(3). (U) COLOMBIA HAS THREE MAIN TOPOGRAPHICAL REGIONS: THE LOWLAND COASTAL AREAS, THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, AND THE EASTERN PLAINS ("LLANOS").

B. (U) CLIMATE AND CLOTHES.

(1). (U) ALL OF COLOMBIA IS LOCATED IN THE TROPICS. CLIMATIC VARIATIONS ARE RELATED TO SEASONAL CHANGES, AND TEMPERATURES VARY BY ALTITUDE. THE CLIMATE RANGES FROM TROPICAL HEAT ON THE COAST AND THE EASTERN PLAINS TO COOL, SPRING-LIKE WEATHER WITH FREQUENT SHOWERS IN THE HIGHLANDS. THE HIGHLANDS HAVE DRY SEASONS FROM DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY AND FROM JUNE TO AUGUST. NINETY PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY IS CONSIDERED HOT LAND ("TIERRA CALIENTE"), WITH AN ELEVATION OF LESS THAN 2,800 FEET AND TROPICAL TEMPERATURES; 8 PERCENT IS TEMPERATE LAND ("TIERRA TEMPLADA"), WITH AN ELEVATION

BETWEEN 2,800 FEET AND 6,000 FEET AND MORE MODERATE TEMPERATURES. THE REST OF THE COUNTRY IS COLD LAND ("TIERRA FRIA"), WITH AN ELEVATION ABOVE 6,000 FEET AND COOLER TEMPERATURES. BOGOTA IS 2,630 METERS (8,630 FEET) ABOVE SEA LEVEL. THE AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE IN THE CAPITAL FLUCTUATES FROM 9 TO 11 DEGREES CELSIUS (48 TO 51 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT) AND 18 TO 20 DEGREES CELSIUS (64 TO 67 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT).

(2). (U) CLOTHING MADE FROM KNITS AND LIGHTWEIGHT WOOL IS APPROPRIATE FOR THE HIGHLANDS AND BOGOTA. IN WARMER AREAS (THE COAST AND THE "LLANOS"), COTTON AND SYNTHETIC MATERIALS WOULD BE THE MOST COMFORTABLE. IN COLOMBIA, DRESS IS MORE FORMAL AND CONSERVATIVE THAN IN THE UNITED STATES. BUSINESS AND EVENING ENGAGEMENTS REQUIRE A SUIT OR SPORT COAT AND TIE FOR MEN. DURING THE DAYTIME ON WEEKENDS, DRESS REQUIREMENTS ARE LESS FORMAL, BUT THE TYPICAL U.S. COMBINATION OF JEANS, T-SHIRT, AND TENNIS SHOES IS WORN PRIMARILY BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE COLOMBIAN CITIES.

C. (U) HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT.

(1). (U) COLOMBIA ESTABLISHED ITS INDEPENDENCE ON 20 JULY 1810. A REPUBLIC, COLOMBIA ENACTED ITS LATEST CONSTITUTION ON 5 JULY 1991. THE GOVERNMENT HAS THREE BRANCHES: EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, AND JUDICIAL. COLOMBIA'S TWO PRINCIPAL PARTIES ARE THE LIBERAL PARTY AND THE SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY. OTHER MINOR PARTIES INCLUDE THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE/M-19 (AD/M-19, KNOWN AS M-19) AND THE PATRIOTIC UNION (UP). THE RIGHT TO VOTE IS EXTENDED TO ESSENTIALLY ALL COLOMBIANS WHO ARE 18 YEARS AND OLDER.

(2). (U) BIPARTISAN STRUGGLE HAS MARKED COLOMBIA'S HISTORY. AT INDEPENDENCE, SIMON BOLIVAR BECAME THE NATION'S FIRST PRESIDENT, WITH FRANCISCO DE PAULA SANTANDER AS VICE-PRESIDENT. THE TWO PRINCIPAL COLOMBIAN POLITICAL PARTIES, THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE LIBERALS, GREW OUT OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN THE FOLLOWERS OF THESE TWO MEN. BOLIVAR'S SUPPORTERS, PRECURSORS OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY, DESIRED A CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT, STRONG TIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, AND LIMITED VOTING RIGHTS. SANTANDER'S FOLLOWERS, FORERUNNERS OF THE LIBERALS, SUPPORTED A DECENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT, STATE CONTROL OVER EDUCATION AND OTHER CIVIL MATTERS, AND WIDER SUFFRAGE.

(3). (U) COLOMBIA HAS MAINTAINED A TRADITION OF CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND REGULAR ELECTIONS; COLOMBIA'S MILITARY HAS SEIZED POWER ONLY THREE TIMES IN THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY. NEVERTHELESS, COLOMBIAN HISTORY HAS BEEN MARKED BY HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE.

INCLUDING PERIODS OF WIDESPREAD CONFLICT RESULTING FROM THE BITTER RIVALRY BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL PARTIES. IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED THAT DURING THE WAR OF A THOUSAND DAYS (1899-1902) OVER 100,000 LIVES WERE LOST AND THAT DURING THE VIOLENCE ("LA VIOLENCIA") OF THE 1940'S AND 1950'S BETWEEN 200,000 AND 300,000 PEOPLE WERE KILLED.

(4). (U) IN AN EFFORT TO CURB THE WIDESPREAD PARTISAN VIOLENCE, THE TWO MAIN PARTIES ESTABLISHED A "NATIONAL FRONT" IN 1958 THROUGH WHICH THEY GOVERNED JOINTLY. UNDER THIS PLAN, THE PRESIDENCY WAS ALTERNATED BETWEEN THE PARTIES EVERY 4 YEARS, AND PARITY IN ELECTIVE AND APPOINTIVE OFFICES WAS MAINTAINED. WHEN THE NATIONAL FRONT ENDED IN 1974, IT HAD REDUCED PARTY-INSPIRED VIOLENCE, INSTITUTED SOCIAL REFORMS, AND STIMULATED MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

(5). (U) SUBSEQUENT COLOMBIAN ADMINISTRATIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE HAD TO CONTEND BOTH WITH PERSISTENT INSURGENCIES (AT TIMES CUBAN BACKED) THAT HAVE HOPED TO UNDERMINE THE NATION'S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM AND WITH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS WHO OPERATE WITH RELATIVE IMPUNITY WITHIN THE COUNTRY. NARCOTERRORISTS ASSASSINATED THREE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN 1990. THE DEATH OF MEDELLIN CARTEL LEADER PABLO ESCOBAR IN DECEMBER 1993, HOWEVER, HAS REDUCED THE NUMBER OF INDISCRIMINATE ACTS OF VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH THAT ORGANIZATION.

D. (U) POPULATION.

(1). (U) COLOMBIA IS THE THIRD MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY IN LATIN AMERICA. THE COUNTRY HAS A TOTAL POPULATION OF 35.8 MILLION AND AN ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF 1.77 PERCENT. RURAL TO URBAN MIGRATION HAS BEEN HEAVY, WITH COLOMBIA'S URBAN POPULATION INCREASING FROM 57 PERCENT IN 1951 TO ABOUT 74 PERCENT BY 1994 (26 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IS CLASSIFIED AS RURAL). THE COUNTRY HAS MANY FAIRLY LARGE CITIES WITH 100,000 OR MORE INHABITANTS: THE COLOMBIAN POPULATION, HOWEVER, IS NOT EVENLY DISTRIBUTED. THE NINE EASTERN DEPARTMENTS CONSTITUTE ABOUT 54 PERCENT OF COLOMBIA'S AREA, BUT HAVE LESS THAN 3 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION AND A DENSITY OF FEWER THAN 2 PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE.

(2). (U) COLOMBIA'S ETHNIC DIVERSITY STEMS FROM THE INTERMINGLING OF INDIANS, SPANISH COLONISTS, AND AFRICAN SLAVES. THE FIVE MAJOR COLOMBIAN ETHNIC GROUPS ARE CAUCASIANS, 20 PERCENT; MESTIZOS (MIXED WHITE-INDIAN ANCESTRY), 50 TO 60 PERCENT; MULATTOES (MIXED WHITE-BLACK ANCESTRY), 15 TO 25 PERCENT; BLACKS (PRINCIPALLY LOCATED ON THE PACIFIC AND CARIBBEAN COASTS), 4 PERCENT; AND FULL-BLOODED INDIANS (BASED UPON LANGUAGE AND CUSTOMS), ABOUT 1 PERCENT. INDIAN

RESERVATIONS ("RESGUARDOS INDIGENAS") EXIST IN CAUCA, CHOCO, GUAJIRA, MAGDALENA, AND AMAZONIAN DEPARTMENTS. COLOMBIA HAS HAD LESS FOREIGN IMMIGRATION THAN SOME OTHER SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES.

E. (U) ECONOMY.

(1). (U) COLOMBIA'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) IN 1994 WAS U.S.S 50 BILLION. THE ECONOMY'S ANNUAL GROWTH RATE AVERAGED 3.8 PERCENT OF THE GDP DURING 1990-93 AND WAS 5.7 PERCENT IN 1994.

(2). (U) COLOMBIA'S ECONOMY IS STRONG AND VARIED. COLOMBIA WAS THE ONLY MAJOR LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY THAT DID NOT RESCHEDULE ITS EXTERNAL DEBT DURING THE 1980'S. IT POSSESSES LATIN AMERICA'S LARGEST COAL RESERVES AND FOURTH LARGEST OIL AND GAS RESERVES, A HYDROELECTRIC POTENTIAL SECOND ONLY TO THAT OF BRAZIL, AND EXTENSIVE MINERAL RESOURCES.

F. (U) LANGUAGES AND LITERACY.

(1). (U) SPANISH, THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF COLOMBIA, IS SPOKEN BY 99 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. COLOMBIA HAS NOTICEABLY DIFFERENT REGIONAL ACCENTS; THE SPANISH SPOKEN IN BOGOTA ("BOGOTANO") IS CONSIDERED BY COLOMBIANS TO BE THE MOST CORRECT IN COLOMBIA (AND IN LATIN AMERICA). THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ALSO SPEAK THEIR LOCAL LANGUAGES. BETTER-EDUCATED COLOMBIANS GENERALLY SPEAK SOME ENGLISH.

(2). (U) COLOMBIA'S OVERALL NATIONAL LITERACY RATE IS 85 PERCENT. THE URBAN LITERACY RATE IS ABOUT 92 PERCENT, WHILE IN RURAL COLOMBIA IT IS AROUND 66 PERCENT. THE LOWER LITERACY RATE IN RURAL AREAS EMPHASIZES THE NEED FOR FOREIGNERS TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE VERBALLY IN SPANISH IF THEY ARE TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL.

(3). (U) COLOMBIANS TEND TO PLACE GREATER CONFIDENCE IN, AND ARE MORE OPEN WITH, FOREIGNERS WHO SPEAK SPANISH.

G. (U) RELIGION. APPROXIMATELY 85 TO 90 PERCENT OF COLOMBIANS ARE ROMAN CATHOLIC. ALTHOUGH A MUCH SMALLER PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION ACTUALLY ATTENDS SERVICES, COLOMBIANS ARE CONSIDERED (AND CONSIDER THEMSELVES) TO BE DEVOUT CATHOLICS. A SOCIALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE INSTITUTION, THE COLOMBIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE COUNTRY'S ELITE. IT HAS ONE OF THE MOST TRADITIONALLY ORIENTED HIERARCHIES IN LATIN AMERICA. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS, AFTER THE FAMILY, THE MOST IMPORTANT COLOMBIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTION. EVEN WITH A GRADUAL DECLINE IN IMPORTANCE, THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXERTS AN INFLUENCE AT EVERY LEVEL OF SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY IN COLOMBIA'S RURAL AREAS.

H. (U) SOCIETY AND SOCIAL VALUES.

(1). (U) THE FAMILY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOCIAL UNIT IN COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS, AND SERVES AS THE SOURCE OF MANY KEY COLOMBIAN ATTITUDES AND VALUES. THE COLOMBIAN FAMILY IS EXCEEDINGLY CLOSE-KNIT AND PROTECTIVE OF ITS MEMBERS. PRIMARY SOCIAL LOYALTIES ARE TO ONE'S FAMILY--A KINSHIP CIRCLE THAT INCLUDES AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS, NEPHEWS, AND EVEN MORE DISTANT RELATIVES. THE COLOMBIAN NUCLEAR FAMILY IS OFTEN AUTHORITARIAN, WITH THE FATHER OR OLDEST MALE HAVING ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER THE OTHER MEMBERS.

(2). (U) THE VALUES OF PERSONALISM (EMPHASIZING PERSONAL RELATIONS IN PURSUING ONE'S SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL STRATEGIES), INDIVIDUALISM (STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S INTERESTS), FATALISM (THE CONVICTION THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE LARGELY POWERLESS TO CHANGE EVENTS), AS WELL AS PESSIMISM, CYNICISM, AND NATIONALISM, HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE BEHAVIOR OF COLOMBIANS. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CONTACTS ARE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT FOR ADVANCEMENT, MUCH MORE SO THAN IN THE UNITED STATES. COLOMBIAN CYNICISM OFTEN TRANSLATES INTO A LACK OF FAITH IN THE EXECUTIVE, LEGISLATIVE, AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT.

(3). (U) COLOMBIANS ARE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF SKIN COLOR AND CLASS. IN A SOCIAL SENSE, SKIN COLOR IS IMPORTANT: LIGHTER SKIN SHADES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER SOCIOECONOMIC RANKINGS.

(4). (U) THE CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF COLOMBIAN SOCIETY HAVE BEEN STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY TRADITIONAL IBERIAN CULTURE AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM: IN COMPARISON, NATIVE INDIAN AND BLACK AFRICAN CULTURES HAVE HAD LITTLE EFFECT. COLOMBIA'S CLASS SYSTEM IS GROUNDED IN FAMILY BACKGROUND, RACE, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, POWER, AND WEALTH. ALL OF THESE FACTORS MAY LIMIT OR ENHANCE UPWARD MOBILITY. COLOMBIANS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AND OTHERS BASED ON ANCESTRY, PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS. THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND AND FAMILY NAME INCREASES AS ONE ASCENDS THE SOCIAL LADDER.

(5). (U) THE UPPER CLASS--COMPOSED OF WEALTHY LANDOWNERS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TRADITIONALLY UPPER-CLASS FAMILIES--COMPRISES ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. MEMBERSHIP IN THIS CLASS IS GENERALLY SECURED THROUGH BIRTH AND INTERMARRIAGE. IN COLOMBIA, POWER IS VESTED IN THE UPPER CLASS. UPPER-CLASS MEMBERS ARE USUALLY WHITE AND OF SPANISH BACKGROUND: THEY ARE POLITICALLY AND SOCIALLY CONSERVATIVE.

(6). (U) THE MIDDLE CLASS MAKES UP APPROXIMATELY 15 PERCENT OF THE

POPULATION AND INCLUDES PERSONS IN PROFESSIONS, GOVERNMENT, COMMERCE, AND THE CLERGY. IN THE COLOMBIAN COUNTRYSIDE, THE MIDDLE CLASS IS ALSO COMPRISED OF OWNERS OF SMALL- AND MEDIUM-SIZED FARMS (PARTICULARLY COFFEE GROWERS). THE COLOMBIAN MIDDLE CLASS IS ORIENTED TOWARD CAPITALISM AND IS GENERALLY PRO-UNITED STATES. THE CLEAR EXCEPTION IS DRUG TRAFFICKERS (NOT CONSIDERED UPPER CLASS DESPITE GREAT WEALTH) WHO, THREATENED BY U.S. ANTIDRUG EFFORTS, ARE EXTREMELY ANTI-AMERICAN.

(7). (U) THE LOWER CLASS, WHICH CONSTITUTES APPROXIMATELY 80 PERCENT OF COLOMBIA'S POPULATION, CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES: THE FIRST INCLUDES SHOP OWNERS, DOMESTIC SERVANTS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, REPAIRMEN, DAY LABORERS, TAXI DRIVERS, MILITARY CONSCRIPTS, TENANT FARMERS, SHARECROPPERS, AND SMALL INDEPENDENT LANDOWNERS. THE SECOND CATEGORY, ABOUT 30 TO 40 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, IS KNOWN AS "THE MASSES." THIS GROUP CONSISTS OF IMPOVERISHED, ILLITERATE PEOPLE WHO LACK SKILLS, ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND STABLE EMPLOYMENT. THE MASSES, OFTEN FATALISTIC AND PASSIVE, HAVE A CYNICAL VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT. MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP OCCASIONALLY SUPPORT GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS, NOT FOR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS BUT BECAUSE THE INSURGENTS PROVIDE SERVICES (ORDER AND PROTECTION) THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT OR WILL NOT DELIVER.

I. (U) CUSTOMS AND ATTITUDES.

(1). (U) COLOMBIANS FROM THE ANDEAN HIGHLANDS EXHIBIT A STRICTER SOCIAL FORMALITY THAN THEIR LOWLAND COUNTERPARTS. THIS FORMALITY CAN CAUSE AMERICANS TO PERCEIVE ANDEAN COLOMBIANS AS BEING COLD, DISTANT, AND RIGID, PARTICULARLY WHEN COMPARED TO THE RELATIVE INFORMALITY OF THE CARIBBEAN COAST.

(2). (U) MOST COLOMBIANS (ANDEAN AND COASTAL) ARE INDIRECT WHEN DEALING WITH OTHERS. THEY TRY TO AVOID NEGATIVE RESPONSES, WHICH ARE CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE AND RUDE. COLOMBIANS' INDIRECT MANNER OF PHRASING (ESPECIALLY NEGATIVE RESPONSES) SHOULD NOT BE REGARDED AS BEING INEFFICIENT, EVASIVE, OR DISHONEST. INSISTENCE ON DIRECTNESS OF SPEECH WILL BE PERCEIVED BY COLOMBIANS AS A FORM OF INSENSITIVITY.

(3). (U) COLOMBIANS ARE NOT PRECISE IN THEIR THINKING ABOUT TIME. AMERICANS TEND TO BE MUCH MORE LITERAL WHEN MAKING APPOINTMENTS AND MEETING DEADLINES.

(4). (U) COLOMBIANS GREET EVERY PERSON THEY DEAL WITH; IT IS DISCOURTEOUS TO BEGIN BUSINESS BEFORE THIS RITUAL IS COMPLETED.

--IN A SMALL GROUP, COLOMBIANS SHAKE HANDS WITH EVERY PERSON AND SAY

"BUENOS DIAS" (GOOD MORNING), "BUENAS TARDES" (GOOD AFTERNOON), OR "BUENAS NOCHES" (GOOD EVENING OR NIGHT).

--SOMETIMES, IN PASSING, A SIMPLE "BUENAS" IS SAID, ACCOMPANIED BY A SLIGHT NODDING OF THE HEAD AS A SIGN OF GREETING.

--COLOMBIANS ALSO SHAKE HANDS WHEN DEPARTING, AND THEY WISH PEOPLE "ADIOS" OR "CHAO" (TO GOD OR GOODBYE).

--IT IS PROPER TO USE "SEÑOR" BEFORE A MAN'S NAME AND "SEÑORA" BEFORE A WOMAN'S.

--BEFORE CONDUCTING BUSINESS, ASK NONINTRUSIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT A PERSON'S HEALTH AND FAMILY.

--WHEN INTRODUCING YOURSELF, SAY YOUR FULL NAME TO EACH PERSON AS YOU SHAKE HANDS AND THEN SAY "MUCHO GUSTO" (PLEASED TO MEET YOU).

(5). (U) AMERICAN INFORMALITY OFTEN RUNS AFOUL OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "USTED" AND "TU" (FORMAL AND INFORMAL, OR INTIMATE, FORMS OF ADDRESS MEANING "YOU"). THE DISTINCTION IS LINKED TO RELATIVE STATUS. SOCIAL EQUALS BEGIN ADDRESSING EACH OTHER WITH "USTED" AND SHIFT TO "TU" OVER TIME. IT IS CORRECT TO MAINTAIN FORMAL ADDRESS UNTIL VERBAL PERMISSION IS GIVEN TO USE THE INFORMAL MODE.

INDIVIDUALS OF HIGHER STATUS ARE ADDRESSED FORMALLY. THEY IN TURN ADDRESS THOSE LOWER IN THE SOCIAL SCALE IN THE INFORMAL MODE. AGE IS ANOTHER FACTOR: OLDER PERSONS ARE ALWAYS ADDRESSED FORMALLY. FEMALES ARE ADDRESSED FORMALLY: ANY PREMATURE SHIFTING TO THE INFORMAL MAY BE PERCEIVED AS A SEXUAL ADVANCE. CHILDREN ARE ADDRESSED INFORMALLY.

(6). (U) COLOMBIANS SELDOM USE ANIMATED GESTURES OR RAISE THEIR VOICES WHEN EXPRESSING IDEAS OR FEELINGS IN NORMAL CONVERSATIONS. INSTEAD OF DIRECTLY EXPRESSING ANGER, COLOMBIANS TEND TO RESPOND PASSIVELY, FEIGNING NOT TO HEAR OR BEING DELIBERATELY SLOW TO ANSWER. WHEN ANGER IS INTENSE, VOICES ARE RAISED AND STRONG WORDS AND OBSCENE PHRASES ARE USED; ARMS, HANDS, AND BODY LANGUAGE EXPRESS AGGRESSIVENESS; SHOVELS ARE EXCHANGED; AND WEAPONS, IF AVAILABLE, ARE DISPLAYED AS A THREAT.

(7). (U) MALES ARE EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN A DIGNIFIED IMAGE: STRONG, IN CONTROL, AND CAPABLE OF PROTECTING THOSE CLOSE TO THEM. COLOMBIAN MEN MAY RESPOND AGGRESSIVELY IF OTHERS QUESTION THIS SELF-IMAGE. UPPER- AND MIDDLE-CLASS MALES ARE EXPECTED TO BE LESS AGGRESSIVE THAN THEIR LOWER-CLASS COUNTERPARTS.

(8). (U) COLOMBIANS AND AMERICANS APPROACH FRIENDSHIPS DIFFERENTLY. AMERICANS MAKE FRIENDS EASILY. COLOMBIANS ARE VERY CONGENIAL, BUT CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS DEVELOP SLOWLY AND IMPLY

CONSIDERABLE TRUST AND COMMITMENT.

(9). (U) THE CONCEPT OF PERSONAL SPACE VARIES BY REGION. WHILE ANDEAN COLOMBIANS MAINTAIN APPROXIMATELY THE SAME DISTANCE BETWEEN PEOPLE AS DO AMERICANS, CARIBBEAN COLOMBIANS STAND SEVERAL INCHES CLOSER. BACKING AWAY TO FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE DURING SOCIAL INTERCOURSE MAY BE PERCEIVED AS A SIGN OF UNFRIENDLINESS. IN RURAL COLOMBIA, POORER OR SOCIALLY LOWER-CLASS INDIVIDUALS MAINTAIN LITTLE EYE CONTACT; LOWERING OR AVERTING EYES IS A SIGN OF DEFERENCE.

(10). (U) COLOMBIANS TEND TO BE EXTREMELY NATIONALISTIC AND RESENT FOREIGN CRITICISM OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS, SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AND LEADERS. FOREIGNERS SHOULD NOT EXPRESS DISAPPROVAL OF LOCAL CUSTOMS, ESPECIALLY THOSE RELATED TO RELIGION. COLOMBIANS ARE QUICK, HOWEVER, TO CRITICIZE OTHER NATIONS (PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES) FOR REAL OR PERCEIVED FAILINGS. CRITICISM OF THE UNITED STATES AND AMERICANS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN PERSONALLY SINCE IT IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST AMERICANS PRESENT.

(11). (U) COLOMBIANS ARE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT DRUG ISSUES. EVEN THOUGH THE VAST MAJORITY OF COLOMBIANS DISAPPROVE OF THE USE OF THEIR COUNTRY FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING, THEY WILL EMPLOY IRRATIONAL NATIONALISTIC RHETORIC TO DEFEND COLOMBIA FROM OUTSIDE CRITICISM.

(12). (U) DO NOT USE THE TERM "AMERICA" TO REFER TO THE UNITED STATES OR "AMERICAN" TO REFER TO ITS CITIZENS. SOUTH AMERICANS (ESPECIALLY COLOMBIANS) CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE AMERICANS. THE SPANISH WORD FOR SOMEONE FROM THE UNITED STATES IS "ESTADOUNIDENSE," FOR WHICH THERE IS NO ENGLISH EQUIVALENT.

J. (U) COLOR SYMBOLISM AND PREFERENCES. COLORS CAN HAVE MORE THAN ONE SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE FOR COLOMBIANS:

--THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SYMBOLISM HAS AFFECTED COLOMBIANS' PERCEPTION OF COLORS. PURPLE AND BLACK SYMBOLIZE SORROW AND DEATH; FUNERAL WEAR IS BLACK. POSITIVE COLORS ARE GREEN, WHICH SYMBOLIZES HOPE, AND WHITE, WHICH DEPICTS PURITY.

--YELLOW AND WHITE ARE THE COLORS OF THE PAPAL FLAG AND CONSEQUENTLY ARE CONSIDERED POSITIVE.

--RED, BLUE, AND YELLOW TOGETHER ARE POSITIVE, SINCE THESE ARE THE COLORS OF COLOMBIA'S FLAG.

--COLOMBIANS ALSO ASSOCIATE COLORS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES. GREEN REPRESENTS THE ECOLOGY PARTY. M-19 COLORS ARE BLUE, RED, AND WHITE. RED IS SYMBOLIC OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, AND BLUE OF THE CONSERVATIVES.

--IN A PLAY ON THE COLORS OF THEIR FLAG, SOME COLOMBIANS HAVE HUMOROUSLY SUGGESTED THAT YELLOW (GOLD) REPRESENTS THE WEALTH OF

THEIR COUNTRY, WHICH IS SPLIT BETWEEN THE RED AND BLUE (LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE PARTIES).

--RED HAS ALSO COME TO SIGNIFY VIOLENCE.

--MORE VIVID AND BRILLIANT COLORS ARE USED FOR CLOTHING IN THE HOTTER COASTAL REGIONS, AND MUTED COLORS ARE MORE OFTEN WORN IN THE COLOMBIAN INTERIOR.

3. (U) COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE AND THE NARCOTICS SITUATION.

A. (U) COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE.

(1). (U) COLOMBIA IS A PROSPEROUS, FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY THAT UNFORTUNATELY HAS DEVELOPED A TOLERANCE FOR HIGH LEVELS OF VIOLENCE. IN 1990 MURDER SURPASSED CANCER AS COLOMBIA'S LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH. BETWEEN 21 JULY 1993 AND 20 JULY 1994, THERE WERE 30,050 HOMICIDES IN COLOMBIA. A 1994 REPORT NOTES THAT COLOMBIA AVERAGED 18 KILLINGS A DAY.

(2). (U) COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE IS VARIED, COMPLEX, AND REGIONAL. CERTAIN FORMS OF VIOLENCE ARE MORE PROMINENT IN SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTRY THAN IN OTHERS. OVER 70 PERCENT OF THE COLOMBIAN POPULATION LIVES IN URBAN AREAS, BUT MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF TERRORIST ACTS AND MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF HOMICIDES AND KIDNAPPINGS OCCUR IN RURAL COLOMBIA. THE CAUSES OF SPECIFIC INCIDENTS OF COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE ARE OFTEN AMBIGUOUS OR MULTIFACETED. IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE, FOR INSTANCE, WHETHER A PARTICULAR HOMICIDE WAS COMMITTED FOR POLITICAL REASONS, PERSONAL VENDETTAS, DRUG-RELATED MOTIVES, OR A COMBINATION OF THESE REASONS.

(b)(1) Sec. 1.4(c)

PART II FOLLOWS//

DECL/OADR//

END OF MESSAGE

~~SECRET~~

(b)(3):50 U.S.C. § 3507,(b)(3):50 U.S.C. § 3024(i)

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