

37810321

TITLE: SUBJ: NAVATAC SUPPLEMENT - COLOMBIA: ESCALATING DRUG VIOLENCE (U)

ORIGDATE: 198908222218

SOURCE: MILITARY

TEXT:

SUBJ: NAVATAC SUPPLEMENT - COLOMBIA: ESCALATING DRUG VIOLENCE (U)

1. ~~(C/NF)~~ NARCOTICS TRAFFICKER ACTIVITY AGAINST THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO ESCALATE. AS THE SITUATION DETERIORATES THE THREAT TO U.S. INTERESTS FROM THESE ELEMENTS COULD BECOME MORE PROMINENT. THERE IS NO INDICATION DON ELEMENTS WOULD BE TARGETED BUT DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION (DEA) ASSETS, U.S. DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PERCEIVED TO BE AIDING THE U.S ANTI-DRUG EFFORT MAY BE INCREASINGLY TARGETED.

2. ~~(C/NF)~~ ON 18 AUG LEADING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE LUIS CARLOS GALAN WAS KILLED AT A POLITICAL RALLY IN BOGOTA BY ONE OR TWO GUNMEN ARMED WITH MAC 10 MACHINE PISTOLS. THOUGH HE HAD NOT MADE NARCOTICS A CENTRAL THEME OF HIS CAMPAIGN, NARCO-TRAFFICKERS HAD PLACED A \$350,000 BOUNTY ON GALAN BECAUSE HE SUPPORTED THE EXTRADITION OF COLOMBIAN DRUG LORDS TO THE U.S. THIS WAS THE THIRD DRUG RELATED KILLING IN THREE DAYS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. EARLIER ON 18 AUG, MEDELLIN POLICE COLONEL WALDEMAR QUINTERO WAS GUNNED DOWN BY AN EIGHT OR NINE MAN HIT TEAM IN DOWNTOWN MEDELLIN, ONLY TWO BLOCKS FROM HIS HOME. QUINTERO HAD LED SEVERAL DRUG RAIDS AGAINST MAJOR COCAINE LABS AND WAS ACTIVE IN TRYING TO COUNTER THE RIGHT-WING PARAMILITARY GROUPS FINANCED BY TRAFFICKERS. THE "EXTRADITABLES," A GROUP OF NARCO-ASSASSINS WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN 1982, CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK. APPEALS COURT JUDGE CARLOS VALENCIA WAS KILLED IN BOGOTA ON 16 AUG BY SUSPECTED TRAFFICKERS RIDING ON A MOTORCYCLE. HE HAD UPHELD A LOWER COURT INDICTMENT OF MEDELLIN DRUG KINGPINS PABLO ESCOBAR AND GONZALO RODRIGUEZ GACHA FOR THE 1987 MURDER OF A PROMINENT JOURNALIST. IN THE AFTERMATH OF VALENCIA'S MURDER, THE COLOMBIAN LEGAL SYSTEM WAS THROWN INTO DISARRAY WHEN ITS 4000 JUDGES WENT ON STRIKE AND THREATENED TO RESIGN EN MASSE. SEVERAL JUDGES OF THE SUPERIOR TRIBUNAL OF BOGOTA HAVE "RESIGNED" IN PRINCIPLE, BUT IN ACTUALITY ARE WAITING TO SEE WHAT STEPS THE GOVERNMENT TAKES BEFORE RETURNING TO WORK.

3. ~~(C/NF)~~ THIS LATEST WAVE OF VIOLENCE BY THE DRUG ALLIANCE IS ONLY PART OF A LONG CAMPAIGN TO INTIMIDATE THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT INTO A STATE OF ACCOMMODATION. THESE LATEST ATTACKS

WERE DIRECTED AGAINST THE VERY PILLARS OF THE GOC: THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, THE JUDICIARY, AND THE SECURITY FORCES. SO FAR THIS YEAR, THE GOC HAD INFLICTED SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE DRUG TRADE BY SEIZING 30 METRIC TONS OF COCAINE AND 1.3 MILLION GALLONS OF PRECURSOR CHEMICALS, SURPASSING LAST YEAR'S TOTALS AND COSTING TRAFFICKERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS. PRESIDENT BARCO, IN RETALIATION FOR THE ASSASSINATIONS, HAS DECLARED THREE NEW STATE-OF-SIEGE DECREES. HE HAS AUTHORIZED THE SUMMARY EXTRADITION OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS, ANNOUNCED A CAMPAIGN TO SEIZE DRUG ASSETS, AND ESTABLISHED A \$100 MILLION FUND TO PROTECT JUDGES. DURING THIS CURRENT CRACKDOWN OVER 10,000 SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED UP AND LARGE AMOUNTS OF PROPERTY SEIZED, AND THOUGH NONE OF THE KINGPINS HAVE YET BEEN CAPTURED, A KEY FINANCIAL MANAGER OF THE COCAINE INDUSTRY, EDUARDO MARTINEZ ROMERO, WAS ARRESTED. IN RESPONSE, THE TRAFFICKERS HAVE ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE STATING "NOW, THE FIGHT IS IN BLOOD."

4. ~~(CNP)~~ THIS ESCALATION IN THE COLOMBIAN DRUG WAR POSES A CLEAR DANGER TO U.S. ASSETS AND PERSONNEL IN THE AREA. THE DRUG "CARTEL" WILL FIGHT THE EXTRADITION DECREE AS IN 1987, WHEN DEATH THREATS TO THE COLOMBIAN SUPREME COURT CAUSED THAT BODY TO ANNUL THE EXTRADITION TREATY WITH THE U.S. WHEN COLOMBIAN DRUG FIGURE CARLOS LEHDER RIVAS WAS EXTRADITED TO THE U.S. IN 1987, HIS CONVICTION LED TO THREATS AGAINST THE U.S. AMBASSADOR AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS IN COLOMBIA. PRESIDENT BUSH HAS PLEDGED SUPPORT TO PRESIDENT BARCO AND AGAIN PUSHED FOR EXTRADITION OF KNOWN TRAFFICKERS. THE U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL ALSO REITERATED THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION TO "SERIOUSLY CONSIDER" THE COMMITMENT OF U.S. TROOPS TO THE AREA IF REQUESTED BY COLOMBIA, AND A MORE ACTIVE U.S. ROLE COULD CAUSE RETALIATION NOT ONLY AGAINST THE GOC, BUT AGAINST U.S. ASSETS AS WELL. HOWEVER, NO SPECIFIC THREAT AGAINST DON ASSETS HAVE BEEN NOTED. THE THREAT LEVEL TO DON ASSETS IN COLOMBIA REMAINS MEDIUM ON THE FIVE POINT DOD SCALE OF NEGLIGIBLE, LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH AND CRITICAL.

END OF MESSAGE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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

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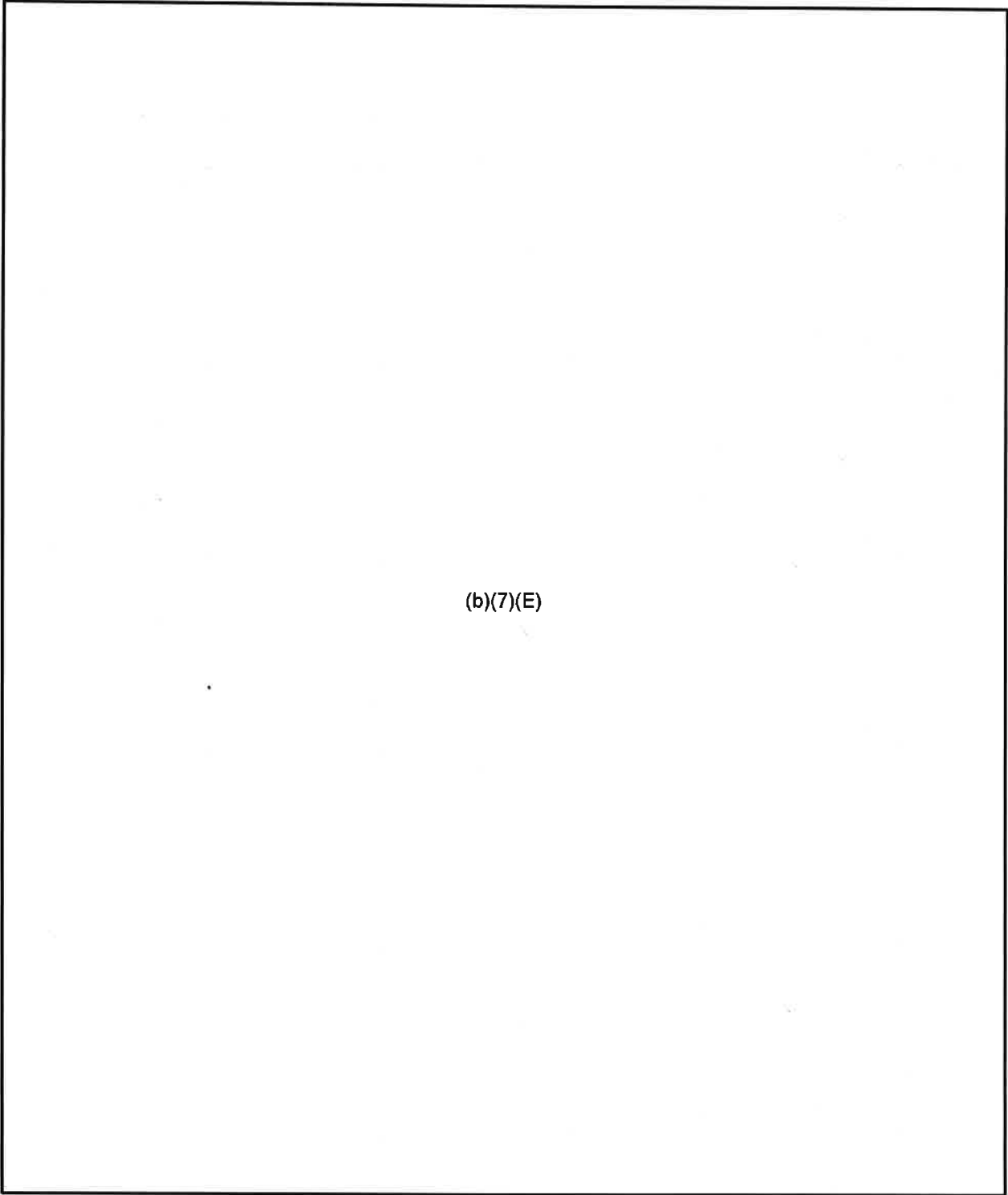
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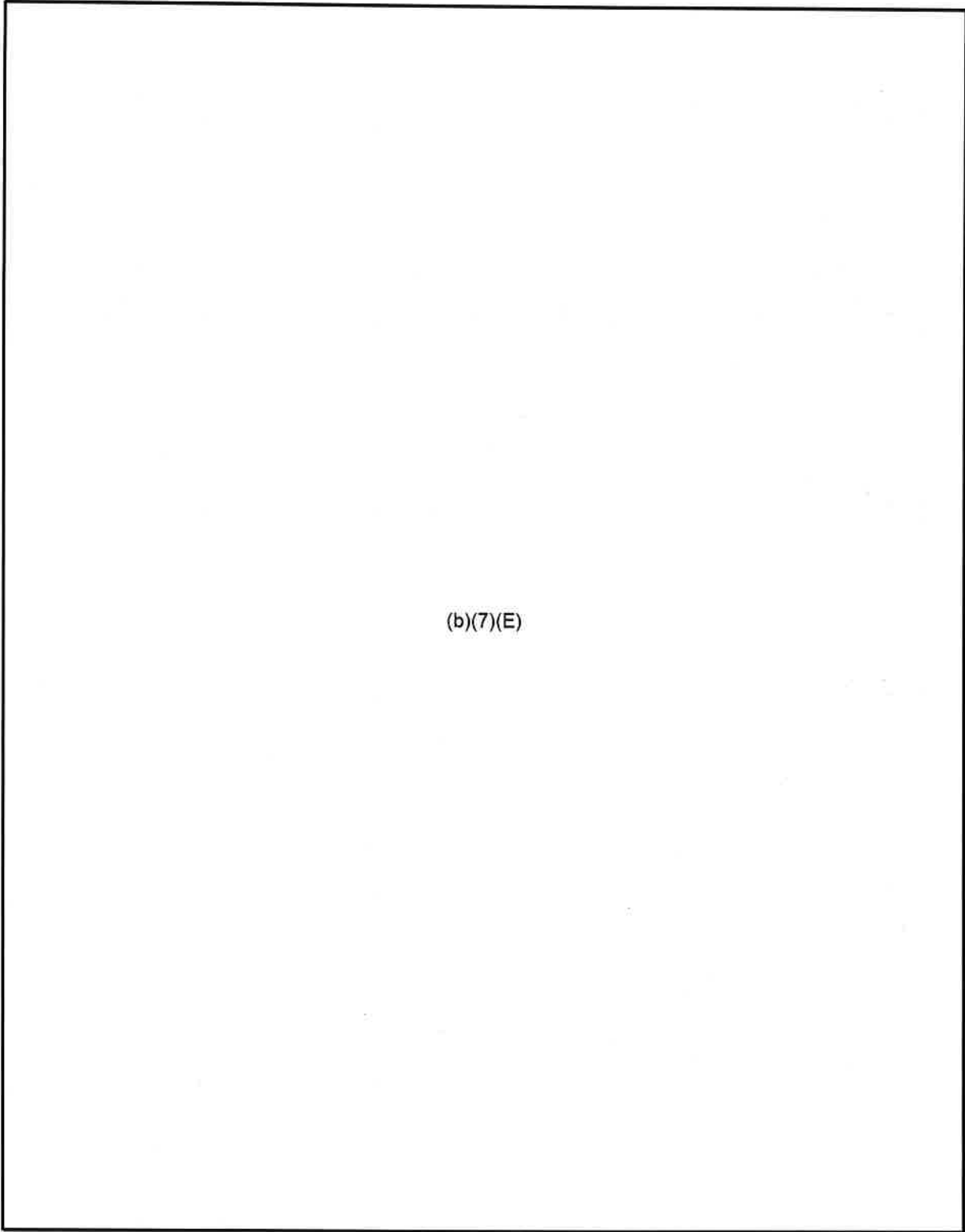
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