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TITLE: SUBJECT: FIRED IV BRIGADE COMMANDER GIVES HIS ERSION

-- OF EVENTS

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COMBINE: COMPLETE

RELEASED IN PART B1,1.4(D),B3  
CIA PERS/ORG

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1. CONFIDENTIAL-- ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THIS CABLE REPORT KEY SEGMENTS OF A LETTER PRESIDENT GAVIRIA GAV THE AMBASSADOR FROM FORMER ARMY 4TH BRIGADE COMANDER BRIG. GEN. GUSTAVO PARDO ARIZA, CHARGED ITH SECURING ENVIGADO PRISON THE NIGHT OF JULY 1. PARDO ARIZA WAS FIRED JULY 27. WHILE PRESIDET GAVIRIA, DEFMIN PARDO, ARMY COMMANDER MURILLOAND JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF HEAD YANINE CLAIM THEI ORDERS TO GEN. PARDO WERE PRECISE (I.E., TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE PRISON) BUT WERE IGNORED, GEN. PADO PAINTS A DIFFERENT PICTURE. IN ANNOUNCING GE. PARDO'S DISMISSAL DEFMIN PARDO OBVIOUSLY DIDNT BUY THE GENERAL'S ACCOUNT OF EVENTS. [REDACTED] END SUMMARY.

1.4(D)  
B1

3. FOLLOWING ARE KEY ORTIONS OF GEN. PARDO ARIZA'S ACCOUNT OF EVENTSCONTAINED IN HIS LETTER TO THE DEFENSE MINISTER:

4. AT 1230, JULY 21, GEN. PARDO ARIZA RECEIVE A CALL FROM ARMY COMMANDER GEN. MANUEL ALBERTOMURILLO ORDERING THAT LT. COL. JOSE MANUEL ESPIIA SOTELO'S 4TH MILITARY POLICE BATTALION BE SET TO ENVIGADO PRISON TO PREVENT ANY AND ALL MOVEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS OR VEHICLES INTO OR OUT OF THE FACILITY (ESPITIA WAS ALSO FIRED JULY 27). GEN. PARDO PROMISES TO

REVIEW  
AUTHORITY:  
James  
Cooper,  
Senior  
Reviewer

Classification Extended on : 08/06/2012 ~ Class:  
CONFIDENTIAL ~ Authority: DSCG 11-1 ~ Declassify  
on: 7/28/2017

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PERSONALLY GO TO THE JAIL TO MAKE SURE THE ORDERS ARE CARRIED OUT.

5. ON ARRIVAL AT THE PRISON, GEN. PARDO FINDS ESPITIA ON THE SCENE. BOTH TOUR THE PRISON'S PERIMETER. ON RETURNING TO THE PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE, PARDO BECOMES AWARE (HOW IS UNCLEAR) THAT DURING THEIR ABSENCE, A GREEN JEEP HAS ENTERED THE FACILITY. ACCORDING THE PARDO, "LT. COL. ESPITIA, APPARENTLY BECAUSE HE WAS WITH ME, HADN'T MANAGED TO GIVE THE ORDERS THAT NO ONE MAY ENTER." AT THAT POINT, WARDEN COL. JOSE HOMERO RODRIGUEZ JOINS PARDO.

6. PARDO ASKS RODRIGUEZ WHO ENTERED THE PRISON. RODRIGUEZ REPLIES PABLO ESCOBAR'S ATTORNEY. PARDO OBSERVES THAT THE PRISONERS SEEM TO MOVE FREELY INSIDE THE FENCE WITHOUT BEING WATCHED BY THE GUARDS, WHO AREN'T IN UNIFORM. AFTER REMINDING ESPITIA OF HIS ORDERS, PARDO RETURNS TO HIS OFFICE, ARRIVING AT ABOUT 1500, AND CALLS GEN. MURILLO, INFORMING HIM HIS ORDERS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT.

7. GEN. MURILLO CALLS BACK AT 1630, ORDERING PARDO TO RETURN TO THE PRISON AND TAKE CONTROL OF ITS INTERIOR. PARDO ASKS MURILLO IF THE ORDERS MEANS HIS SOLDIERS SHOULD REMOVE THE GUARDS AND TAKE DIRECT CONTROL OF THE INMATES; MURILLO REPLIES YES. PARDO SHOULD BE AT THE JAIL BY 1715 TO GREET TWO PERSONS ARRIVING FROM BOGOTA TO COORDINATE THE TAKEOVER OF THE FACILITY. MURILLO ORDERS PARDO TO ASSIGN SOMEONE UNDER HIS COMMAND TO SERVE AS POINT OF CONTACT TO RELAY COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BOGOTA AND THE PRISON. PARDO DESIGNATES A B-2 MAJOR NAMED FONSECA.

8. AT ABOUT 1955, PARDO GREETES JUSTICE VICE MINISTER EDUARDO MENDOZA AND NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF PRISONS GEN.

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HERNANDO NAVAS RUBIO ON THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE FACILITY. THEY TELL HIM THEIR MISSION IS TO TRANSFER PABLO ESCOBAR TO BOGOTA. PARDO TELLS THEM HE UNDERSTANDS THEIR SHARED MISSION TO BE TO COORDINATE A MILITARY TAKEOVER OF THE INSIDE OF THE PRISON. THE THREE AGREE IT'S NECESSARY TO CALL BOGOTA TO CLARIFY THE DISCREPANCY.

9. FONSECA IS ORDERED TO CALL BOGOTA. HE REPORTS BACK THAT HE SPOKE WITH JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF HEAD GEN. FAROUK YANINE DIAZ, WHO CLARIFIED THAT PARDO'S SOLDIERS SHOULD FIRST TAKE CONTROL OF THE PRISON, REPLACING THE GUARD FORCE. (WHILE PARDO DOESN'T SAY, IT PROBABLY CAN BE ASSUMED THAT THE MISSION'S SECOND PHASE WAS TO BE THE TRANSFER OF THE INMATES.)

10. AT APPROXIMATELY 2130, THOSE GATHERED OUTSIDE THE PRISON HEAR BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO A COMMUNIQUE INFORMING THE PUBLIC OF THE INTENTION TO TRANSFER ESCOBAR TO ANOTHER FACILITY. ACCORDING TO PARDO, THEY THEN DECIDE THE OPERATION SHOULD BE PUT INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY. THEY AGREE THAT PRISON'S CHIEF NAVAS SHOULD ENTER FIRST, THEN IF NECESSARY, VICE MINISTER MENDOZA SHOULD FOLLOW. NAVAS THEN ENTERS THE PRISON.

11. AT ABOUT 2140, GEN. YANINE ORDERS THE OPERATION BE COMPLETED THAT NIGHT, BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT'S COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCING IT ALREADY HAS BEEN BROADCAST ON TV.

12. PARDO NEVER SAYS AT WHAT TIME MENDOZA ENTERED THE PRISON. THE FIRST MENTION OF MENDOZA BEING INSIDE IS AT 2230, WHEN PARDO TELLS FONSECA TO INFORM GEN. MURILLO THAT ESCOBAR WAS PRESENT WHEN NAVAS INFORMED THE PRISON'S OF THE GOC'S PLANS, AT WHICH POINT "THE SITUATION TURNED CRITICAL," AND MENDOZA WAS ASKED TO JOIN THEM. ACCORDING TO PARDO, "THE SITUATION INSIDE WAS A CRISIS, WITH (THE INMATES) VERY NERVOUS AND CONTINUING TO SPEAK OF PACTS BETWEEN THEM AND THE GOVERNMENT."

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13. ONE CONFUSING ASPECT OF PARDO'S ACCOUNT CONCERNS THE ARRIVAL OF THE SPECIAL RURAL FORCES AND SPECIAL URBAN FORCES SENT FROM BOGOTA TO ASSAULT THE PRISON. THE GOVERNMENT PARTIALLY BLAMES THE DELAY IN CARRYING OUT THE OPERATION ON THE AIR FORCE'S DELAY IN FLYING THE TWO SPECIAL FORCES (SEPARATELY) FROM BOGOTA. PARDO FIRST MENTIONS THE SPECIAL FORCES IN CONJUNCTION WITH A 2305 COMMUNICATION WITH FONSECA, IN WHICH FONSECA PASSES ON THE MESSAGE FROM GEN. YANINE THAT THE SPECIAL RURAL FORCES WOULD BE BRINGING WITH THEM A PORTABLE MICROWAVE TELEPHONE TO ENABLE PARDO TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH GEN. MURILLO.

14. AT 2305, PARDO TELLS FONSECA TO INFORM BOGOTA THAT MENDOZA IS MEETING WITH THE INMATES, WHOSE POSITION IS NOT TO ACCEPT ARMY CONTROL OF THE FACILITY. MENDOZA IS IN RADIO TELEPHONE CONTACT WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. AT THAT TIME, THEY (MENDOZA, NAVAS, INMATES, ETC.) LEAVE THE AREA OF THE JAIL AND GATHER IN THE WARDEN'S HOUSE.

15. AT ROUGHLY 2320, FONSECA CALLS TO SAY THAT GEN. MURILLO WANTS TO KNOW IF MENDOZA AND NAVAS HAVE BEEN TAKEN HOSTAGE, BECAUSE THAT'S THE IMPRESSION BOGOTA HAS FROM SPEAKING TO MENDOZA. PARDO THEN CALLS THE WARDEN'S HOUSE AND SPEAKS TO NAVAS, WHO SAYS THE SITUATION IS TENSE, BUT MANAGEABLE; THEY ARE NOT BEING HELD HOSTAGE.

16. AT 0210 JULY 22, PARDO IS INFORMED THAT GEN. MURILLO HAS ORDERED THAT HE NOT AWAIT THE ARRIVAL OF

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THE SPECIAL URBAN FORCE (WHOSE DEPARTURE FROM BOGOTA HAS BEEN TERRIBLY DELAYED), BUT RATHER TO CARRY OUT THE OPERATION TO TAKE THE PRISON WITH ONLY THE SPECIAL RURAL FORCE ONCE IT ARRIVES.

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17. AT 0225 PARDO LEARNS FROM MURILLO THERE ARE NO NEGOTIATIONS GOING ON WITH THE INMATES INVOLVING BOGOTA, AND THAT HE SHOULD COMMUNICATE TO MENDOZA AND NAVAS TO LEAVE THE PRISON IF THEY CAN.

18. AT ABOUT 0300, PARDO AGAIN CALLS NAVAS AT THE WARDEN'S HOUSE AND TELLS HIM BOGOTA HAS NO INTEREST IN A DIALOGUE WITH THE INMATES, SO THEREFORE HE AND MENDOZA SHOULD WITHDRAW. AT THAT POINT, NAVAS SAYS THEY ARE BEING HELD AGAINST THEIR WILL.

19. AT 0315, PARDO LEAVES TO TAKE A CALL (FROM WHOM?), RETURNING TO FIND THAT MENDOZA AND NAVAS APPARENTLY HAD BEEN MOVED FROM THE WARDEN'S HOUSE TO THE JAIL.

20. AT 0335, THE SPECIAL URBAN FORCE LANDS AT MEDELLIN'S AIRPORT (IN RIONEGRO).

21. AT 0345, THE MOBILE MICROWAVE EQUIPMENT (CARRIED ON SAME PLANE) IS INSTALLED, ENABLING PARDO TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH GEN. MURILLO.

22. AT 0450, THE FIRST VEHICLE CARRYING MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL RURAL FORCE ARRIVES AT THE TURN-OFF TO THE PRISON. (PARDO NEVER SAYS WHEN THE RURAL FORCE'S FLIGHT ARRIVED IN RIONEGRO.)

23. GEN. MURILLO CALLS AT 0545 TO GIVE THREE PRIORITIES FOR THE OPERATION:

- FIRST, FREE THE HOSTAGES;
- SECOND, ELIMINATE ALL ARMED RESISTANCE;
- THIRD, ESTABLISH CONTROL OF THE FACILITY.

24. AT 0615, THE SPECIAL URBAN FORCE ARRIVES AT THE PRISON.

25. SHORTLY AFTER 0615, THE SPECIAL FORCES ENTER THE

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FACILITY. 10-15 MINUTES LATER, NAVAS CALLS BY RADIO, ASKING THAT THE SOLDIERS STOP SHOOTING BECAUSE THE INMATES ARE READY TO SURRENDER. THE ENTIRE OPERATION TAKES ABOUT 20 MINUTES, ACCORDING TO PARDO, "ENDING IN TOTAL SUCCESS, HAVING ACHIEVED ITS THREE OBJECTIVES."

26. DEPUTY WARDEN JORGE ARMANDO RODRIGUEZ THEN ENTERS THE JAIL TO IDENTIFY THE CAPTURED, WOUNDED AND KILLED, AT WHICH POINT IT'S DISCOVERED THAT 10 OF THE INMATES, INCLUDING ESCOBAR AND HIS BROTHER, ARE MISSING.

COMMENT

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END OF MESSAGE

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&lt;TO&gt;TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7413&lt;/TO&gt;

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RUEHNA/DEA WASHDC

RUEHFB/DIRFBI WASHDC

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