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TITLE: SUBJECT: EFFECT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING ON BODY POLITIC:

ORIGDATE: 198902272103

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 02987

TEXT:

TAGS: KPRP, SNAR, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: EFFECT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING ON BODY POLITIC:

PART I - IMPACT ON THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

INTRO AND SUMMARY

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2. NARCO POWER HAS PENETRATED, BUT DOES NOT CONTROL, COLOMBIA'S CONGRESSIONAL, EXECUTIVE AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES. THE TRAFFICKERS ARE NOT MOTIVATED, AS ARE THE GUERRILLAS, BY A DESIRE TO DESTROY THE GOVERNMENT. RATHER, THE NARCOS WANT TO CONTROL THOSE PARTS THAT CAN IMPACT ON THEIR ACTIVITIES. THEIR METHODS ARE THE SAME AS THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY USED WITHIN THEIR OWN UNDERWORLD -- THE USE OF RUTHLESS FORCE, WEAKENING OPPONENTS, ESTABLISHING CONTROL. THEY THRIVE ON WEAKNESS AND INSTABILITY. GOC ATTEMPTS TO CONFRONT THE STRONGEST CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD HAVE BEEN COUNTERED BY INTIMIDATION AND BRIBERY BY THE MAFIAS.

3. THE PERCEPTION OF CORRUPTION IS COMPOUNDED BY VAGUE CHARGES AND COUNTERCHARGES FUELED BY INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MISTRUST AND ANIMOSITY. HOWEVER, MOST COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY AT THE TOP OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, APPEAR TO BE RESISTING THE NARCOS. BUT THE LEGAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN SEVERELY WEAKENED BY RUTHLESS OUTLAWS WITH VAST SUMS OF MONEY ABLE TO SUBVERT, CORRUPT AND TERRORIZE. COLOMBIA WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST, BUT THE LONG TERM OUTLOOK FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS HERE IS POOR IF THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BRING THE MAFIAS UNDER SOME MEASURE OF CONTROL.

4. THIS CABLE PORTRAYS A COUNTRY UNDER SEVERE ATTACK, BUT ONE FAR FROM DEFEAT. MUCH OF OUR INFORMATION IS NECESSARILY ANECDOTAL, AND, LIKE KREMLINOLOGISTS, WE MUST DEDUCE FROM AVAILABLE FACTS. A COMPANION CABLE ANALYZES THE EFFECTS OF NARCOTRAFFICKING ON SOCIETY AT

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior Reviewer**

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LARGE. END SUMMARY.

GOC POLICIES: MODERATELY EFFECTIVE FITS AND STARTS

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5. THE COCAINE TRAFFICKING CHALLENGE HAS AFFECTED THE GOVERNMENT PROFOUNDLY. IT HAS MOUNTED PROGRAMS, OFTEN AT THE INSTIGATION OF THE USG. SOME ARE EFFECTIVE OTHERS NOT. IT HAS CREATED A MODERATELY CAPABLE ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE, PUSHED A RELUCTANT ARMED FORCES INTO THE FIGHT, ATTEMPTED EXTRADITION AND THEN DISCARDED IT AS TOO DIFFICULT, INSTITUTED STATE OF SIEGE DECREES, CREATED SPECIAL COURTS, PURSUED CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, ATTEMPTED A MAJOR REWORKING OF THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, AND DEVOTED MUCH OF ITS INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROTECTING ITS IMAGE AND SEEKING HELP FOR ITS FIGHT AGAINST THE NARCO INDUSTRY.

6. THE MAJOR TRAFFICKERS, WHO IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES EXPECTED TO BE ACCEPTED INTO COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, ARE FURTHER FROM THEIR GOAL. THERE ARE OUTSTANDING ARREST WARRANTS AGAINST SEVERAL. THEY ARE NOT NOW IN JAIL, AND LIKELY WILL NOT BE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT THEY ARE FUGITIVES AND ARE NOT FREE OF THE THREAT OF CAPTURE. THE PRESIDENT: DETERMINED, FRUSTRATED, CAUTIOUS

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7. THE DECEMBER 30, 1987 RELEASE OF MEDELLIN CAPO JORGE LUIS OCHOA AND THE SUBSEQUENT MURDER OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD A MAJOR IMPACT ON PRESIDENT BARCO. HE INSTITUTED LEGAL AND PERSONNEL REFORMS TO IMPROVE GOC ANTI-NARCO CAPABILITY. HOWEVER, HIS AIDES HAVE TOLD US THAT WERE HE TO REVIVE EXTRADITION, OR EXPELL A MAJOR TRAFFICKER BY DECREE, HE WOULD BE OPPOSED BY THE COURTS AND THE CONGRESS AND, OF COURSE, WOULD BECOME A PRIME TARGET OF THE MAFIAS. HE IS CERTAINLY NOT COWED BY THE PROSPECT, BUT NO ONE KNOWS HOW BARCO WOULD REACT SHOULD A MAJOR CAPO FALL INTO HIS HANDS. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD HE WILL NOT CROSS THAT BRIDGE UNTIL HE COMES TO IT. THERE ARE LEGAL METHODS TO IMPLEMENT EXTRADITION AND HE MAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 BOGOTA 02987

STATE PLS PASS TO AID WASHDC

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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SUBJECT: EFFECT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING ON BODY POLITIC:  
TURN TO ONE OF THEM IF HE BELIEVES THEY CAN BE MADE TO  
WORK.

EFFECT ON SECURITY FORCES: CORRUPTION AND COMPETENCE

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8. THE DEGREE OF CORRUPTION BY THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS ON THE POLICE AND ARMY IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE. FROM LIEUTENANTS UP TO THE DEFENSE MINISTER, THERE IS CONTINUAL SUSPICION AS, FOR EXAMPLE, LOW-PAID ARMY AND POLICE OFFICERS ARE SEEN DRIVING EXPENSIVE FOREIGN CARS. BESIDES THE ACTUAL CORRUPTION, INDIVIDUALS, FACTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS BAND TOGETHER AND SUSPECT AND SPREAD RUMORS ABOUT EACH OTHER.

9. WITHIN THE GOC THE MISTRUST OFTEN MAKES COMMON EFFORTS ON LARGE SCALE OPERATIONS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR FEAR OF COMPROMISE. DESPITE THIS, MAJOR OPERATIONS ARE MOUNTED VIRTUALLY EVERY WEEK AGAINST COCAINE LABS, GROWING AREAS, AND SHIPMENTS, SOMETIMES WITH EXCELLENT RESULTS. HOWEVER, MANY OPERATIONS HAVE BEEN ABORTED BECAUSE OF LEAKS TO THE MAFIAS BY CORRUPT COMMANDERS.

10. PARTICULARLY WORRISOME ARE OFFICERS, ONCE KNOWN AS GUNG HO, ANTI-NARCO WARRIORS WHO SUDDENLY GO QUIET. WHILE THERE MAY BE MANY REASONS -- LACK OF RESOURCES, OTHER MISSIONS -- THE IMMEDIATE PERCEPTION (AND PERHAPS THE TRUTH) IS THAT THE COMMANDER HAS SUCCUMBED TO SEVERE INTIMIDATION AND THREATS AGAINST HIM AND HIS FAMILY. THE NARCOS HAVE MADE EXAMPLES OF SOME WHO WOULDN'T QUIT. COL. JAIME RAMIREZ WAS MURDERED WHEN HE LET DOWN HIS GUARD ONE YEAR AFTER HE FINISHED A SUCCESSFUL TOUR AS CHIEF OF THE ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE.

11. THE SECURITY SERVICES SEEM TO MONITOR EVEN THE UPPER REACHES OF DEFENSE MINISTRY AND POLICE ORGANIZATIONS. BOGOTA 642 DESCRIBES A CORRUPT CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL POLICE TRYING TO NAME HIS MAN TO HEAD THE ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICE. THE PRESIDENT, INSTEAD, FIRED THE POLICE CHIEF.

12. THE RESULT IS THAT MAJOR ANTI-NARCOTICS OPERATIONS CONTINUE AT AN UNPRECEDENTED PACE, AS SEEN BY THE RECENT OPERATION "PRIMAVERA." A US PILOT WHO SPRAYS MARIJUANA FIELDS IN NORTHERN COLOMBIA TOLD POLOFFS THAT IN COMPARISON TO MEXICO, HIS COUNTERPARTS HERE ARE HONEST.

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UNLIKE MEXICO, HE CAN GO AFTER ANY MARIJUANA FIELD HE CAN FIND, WITH NO RESTRICTIONS FROM HIGHER UP.

THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM: MORE TERRORIZED THAN BOUGHT

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13. THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, LACKING THE PROTECTIVE RESOURCES OF THE SECURITY FORCES, SUFFERS PROPORTIONATELY MORE FROM INTIMIDATION, AND IS INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH MAJOR TRAFFICKERS. MURDEROUS THREATS AGAINST OFFICIALS AND THEIR FAMILIES HAVE GIVEN NARCOS VIRTUAL IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION -- "IMPUNITY" IT IS CALLED HERE.

14. PAYOFFS ARE ALSO COMMON. INVESTIGATIVE JUDGES, FOR EXAMPLE, HOLD LOW-PAYING, LOW-PRESTIGE JOBS AND, WHEN FACED WITH MAJOR NARCOTICS CASES AND PRESENTED WITH THE THREAT OF "PLATA O PLOMO" (MONEY OR LEAD), HAVE TAKEN THE MONEY. OTHERS, MORE CONSCIENTIOUS, BUT STILL WEAK, HAVE WALKED AWAY FROM THE MONEY BUT HAVE LEFT THE CASES ALSO. OVER SIXTY THIS DECADE HAVE DIED FOR THEIR HONOR.

15. 88 BOGOTA 13560 DETAILS THE CORRUPTION AND THREATS IN THE CASE OF THE ACCUSED ASSASSINS -- THUGS OF MEDELLIN CAPO PABLO ESCOBAR -- OF FORMER JUSTICE MINISTER RODRIGO LARA BONILLA. IT REVEALS A STRATEGY DESIGNED NOT TO OVERTHROW THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, BUT TO MAKE IT SAFE FOR THE MAJOR CAPOS. THEY WOULD RATHER BUY AN INNOCENT VERDICT THAN KILL A JUDGE. HOWEVER, THE HUNDREDS OF JUDGES KILLED (AT ALL LEVELS, BESIDES INVESTIGATIVE JUDGES) INDICATES THE EXTENT OF THE RESISTANCE. INSTEAD OF A BOUGHT JUDICIARY, THERE IS A TERRORIZED ONE. FOR NOW THERE IS LITTLE PRACTICAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 BOGOTA 02987

STATE PLS PASS TO AID WASHDC

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: KPRP, SNAR, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: EFFECT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING ON BODY POLITIC: DIFFERENCE. BUT ONCE PROTECTED, A TERRORIZED JUDGE CAN TURN ON HIS TERRORIZORS FASTER THAN A BOUGHT JUDGE CAN CROSS HIS PAYMASTERS. AND THEREIN LIES HOPE FOR THE GOC.  
JUDICIAL MINISTRIES: BITTEN AND WARY

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16. BOTH A JUSTICE MINISTER (IN 1984) AND AN ATTORNEY

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GENERAL (IN 1988) HAVE BEEN KILLED FOR ZEALOUS PURSUIT OF NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS. AT TIMES BOTH AGENCIES HAVE BEEN HEADED BY NARCO-INFLUENCED CHIEFS WHO, FORTUNATELY, HAVE NOT LASTED LONG. AFTER THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WAS KILLED BY "LOS EXTRADITABLES" IN JANUARY 1988, THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL IMMEDIATELY CALLED FOR LEGALIZATION OF NARCOTICS AND TALKS WITH TRAFFICKERS. HE BEGAN TO DISMANTLE THE ANTI-NARCOTICS CAPABILITY OF HIS AGENCY. HOWEVER, HE QUICKLY RESIGNED AFTER REVELATIONS OF A FAMILY-OWNED AIRSTRIP USED BY PABLO ESCOBAR. THE CURRENT JUSTICE MINISTER AND THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ARE HONEST, BUT CAUTIOUS. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL HAS PUBLICLY DENOUNCED NATIONALISTIC ARGUMENTS AGAINST EXTRADITION, BUT HAS NOT PRESSED FOR ACTION. EACH PROCEEDS VERY WARILY. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONCENTRATES ON GOING AFTER OFFICIALS CORRUPTED BY THE NARCOS, AND THE JUSTICE MINISTER TRAVELS THE WORLD TO PROMOTE AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO DEFEAT THE TRAFFICKERS. CONGRESS: PERCEIVED NARCO-INFLUENCE IMPEDES TREATY LAW

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17. THE MAJOR THREAT CONGRESS POSES TO THE TRAFFICKERS IS THROUGH TOUGHER LAWS OR NEW IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION FOR THE EXTRADITION TREATY. PRO-EXTRADITION CONGRESSMEN ARE THREATENED AND ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE ON THEIR LIVES. HOWEVER, THE MAIN AVENUE OF NARCO-INFLUENCE IS THE CORRUPTION OF REGIONAL POLITICIANS/CONGRESSMEN WHO THEN WIELD GREAT INFLUENCE WITHIN CONGRESS. THE MOST BLATANT OF THESE IS SENATOR ALBERTO SANTOFIMIO, LIBERAL BOSS OF TOLIMA AND A LONG-SHOT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. FOLLOWING A RECENT ATTEMPT BY THE PRESIDENT TO PASS A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ALLOWING REMOVAL OF CONGRESSMEN SUSPECTED OF LINKS TO NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, SANTOFIMIO IMMEDIATELY LED THE OPPOSITION, CLAIMING SUSPICION IS NOT ENOUGH. THE PROPOSED ARTICLE WAS DEFEATED.

18. THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING EXACTLY WHO OF THE 313 DEPUTIES AND SENATORS ARE INFLUENCED OR CONTROLLED BY NARCOTRAFFICKERS. THE EMBASSY HAS FOUND EIGHT MEMBERS INELIGIBLE FOR VISAS AND INFORMATION ON TEN OTHERS WARRANTS CONTINUING INVESTIGATIONS. DEA LISTS OTHERS IN THEIR SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH OFTEN ONLY INCONCLUSIVELY. MANY

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MORE HAVE SOME TYPE OF CONTACT GIVEN THE NATURE OF COLOMBIAN POLITICS AND TRAFFICKER WEALTH.

19. MOST PEOPLE SIMPLY ASSUME THAT CONGRESS WOULD NEVER PASS ANOTHER LAW IMPLEMENTING THE EXTRADITION TREATY. HOWEVER, FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL CARLOS MAURO HOYOS PUBLICLY CASTIGATED THE PRESIDENT IN JANUARY 1988 FOR NOT SUBMITTING A NEW LAW TO THE CONGRESS. HE SAID THERE WERE JUST AS MANY NARCO CONGRESSMEN IN THE 1982 CONGRESS WHICH PASSED THE ORIGINAL LAW, AND EVERYBODY KNEW WHO THEY WERE THEN AS WELL. HOYOS WAS KILLED A FEW DAYS LATER. AND THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 1982 AND 1989 -- THE NUMBER OF OFFICIALS WHO HAVE DIED DEFENDING EXTRADITION. NEW LEGISLATION IS UNLIKELY SOON.

OUTLOOK

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20. COLOMBIANS ARE AWARE OF THE DANGER TO THEIR WAY OF LIFE, AND ARE INCREASING THE RESOURCES TO FIGHT THE TRAFFICKERS. RECENT DESTRUCTION OF 26 MAJOR COCAINE LABS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF THE GOC'S DETERMINED FIGHT. BUT THERE ARE MANY FACTORS BEYOND GOC CONTROL MAKING LONG RANGE PREDICTIONS RISKY. SHOULD EUROPE BECOME A MAJOR CONSUMER WHILE U.S. CONSUMPTION CONTINUES AT CURRENT RATES, AND SHOULD ERADICATION EFFORTS FAIL, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NOT DEVELOP WAYS TO EFFECTIVELY STOP MONEY LAUNDERING AND

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 BOGOTA 02987

STATE PLS PASS TO AID WASHDC

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

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SUBJECT: EFFECT OF COCAINE TRAFFICKING ON BODY POLITIC: THE FLOW OF PRECURSOR CHEMICALS AND ARMS, THE LONG TERM EFFECT ON COLOMBIA'S DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS COULD BE DEVASTATING.

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END OF MESSAGE

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8