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TITLE: SUBJECT: AFTERMATH OF DIANA'S DEATH -- PRESIDENT VOWS

- TO STAY THE COURSE; MOTHER RAPS GAVIRIA, U.S.

ORIGDATE: 199101261723

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 01327

TEXT:

TAGS: SNAR, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: AFTERMATH OF DIANA'S DEATH -- PRESIDENT VOWS

- TO STAY THE COURSE; MOTHER RAPS GAVIRIA, U.S.

REF: BOGOTA 1135

1. (U) FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF DIANA TURBAY'S DEATH, PRESIDENT GAVIRIA RELEASED A STATEMENT DECLARING THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE IN HIS ANTI-NARCOTICS POLICY. HE REAFFIRMED HIS DETERMINATION TO REFORM THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM SO COLOMBIA'S NARCO TERRORISTS COULD EFFECTIVELY BE TRIED AND CONVICTED IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY, AND REITERATED HIS OFFER OF SURRENDER INCENTIVES (DECREES 2047 AND 3030) TO NARCOS. GAVIRIA DID NOT APOLOGIZE FOR THE POLICE RAID, AND LEFT NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESSURE ON NON-SURRENDERING NARCOS WOULD BE MAINTAINED. "THOSE THAT DON'T VOLUNTARILY SUBMIT TO COLOMBIAN JUSTICE WILL RECEIVE THE MAXIMUM FORCE OF THE LAW."

2. (U) IT IS NOT CLEAR IF PRESIDENT GAVIRIA ORDERED OR HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE RAID. WHAT IS KNOWN, IS THAT AFTER HEARING OF THE RAID, GAVIRIA CONVENED A MEETING OF HIS SECURITY COUNCIL. THE NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) WERE NOT REPRESENTED, ACCORDING TO AT LEAST ONE PRESS REPORT, BECAUSE HIGH-RANKING CNP OFFICERS WERE HUDDLING AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS EVALUATING THE OUTCOME OF THE AFTERNOON'S EVENTS.

3. (C) WE BELIEVE PABLO ESCOBAR, NOT A RESCUE EFFORT, WAS THE ACTUAL OBJECTIVE. POLICE HAD OBTAINED CONSIDERABLE INTELLIGENCE ON THE LOCATION OF MEDELLIN CARTEL HOUSES AND FINCAS FROM THEIR RAID JANUARY 22 ON THE HOUSE OF ESCOBAR'S TOP ASSASSIN, DAVID RICARDO .

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior
Reviewer

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PRISCO (REFTEL). BECAUSE OF THAT AND OTHER INFORMATION, THEY APPARENTLY HAD REASON TO BELIEVE IT WAS ESCOBAR -- NOT THE TWO KIDNAP VICTIMS -- HIDING OUT IN THE HOUSE. THE POLICE SUPPOSEDLY WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THE TWO ABDUCTED JOURNALISTS INSTEAD OF THE CARTEL CAPO.

4. (U) RESCUED TV NEWS CAMERAMAN RICHARD BECERRA, KIDNAPPED WITH DIANA TURBAY, TOLD THE MEDIA THAT TURBAY WAS EXECUTED (SHOT THREE TIMES IN THE BACK) BY THEIR CAPTORS. ACCORDING TO BECERRA, WHEN THEY HEARD THE POLICE HELICOPTERS OVERHEAD, HE AND DIANA WERE ORDERED TO FLEE THE HOUSE WITH THEIR CAPTORS. THEY REACHED A MOUNTAIN AND STARTED TO CLIMB, BUT THE TERRAIN WAS ROUGH, AND TURBAY, WHO WAS WEAK FROM SEVERAL DAYS OF HUNGER-STRIKING, KEPT FALLING. BECERRA, WHO WAS OUT FRONT, HEARD SHOTS BEHIND HIM, LOOKED AROUND AND SAW THAT DIANA HAD BEEN SHOT BY ONE OF THE CAPTORS. ANOTHER CAPTOR THEN APPROACHED BECERRA, AND FIRED AT HIM BUT MISSED. THE CAPTORS THEN RAN OFF. BECERRA THEIR CAPTORS HAD ALWAYS TOLD THEM THAT IF THE POLICE EVER TRIED A RESCUE, THEY BOTH WOULD BE KILLED. THREE OF THE CAPTORS WERE KILLED IN THE ACTION.

5. (U) IN A PRESS CONFERENCE, DIANA'S MOTHER, THE DISTRAUGHT FORMER FIRST-LADY NYDIA QUINTERO DE BALCAZAR, BLAMED PRESIDENT GAVIRIA AND THE UNITED STATES FOR HER DAUGHTER'S DEATH. WHILE CALLING PABLO ESCOBAR AND THE OTHER EXTRADITABLES "INSENSITIVE," SHE SAID GAVIRIA SHARED THE BLAME FOR HAVING IGNORED HER REPEATED PLEAS THAT NO RESCUE EFFORT BE ATTEMPTED. GAVIRIA SHE SAID FEARED "THE INSINUATIONS OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT." QUINTERO ARGUED THAT GAVIRIA HAD DELAYED DECREERING ADDITIONAL NARCO SURRENDER INCENTIVES OUT OF FEAR THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD THINK HE WAS CAVING IN. SHE BLAMED DIANA'S DEATH ON THAT DELAY. HER COMMENTS WERE WIDELY REPORTED BUT WITHOUT REACTION.

MCNAMARA

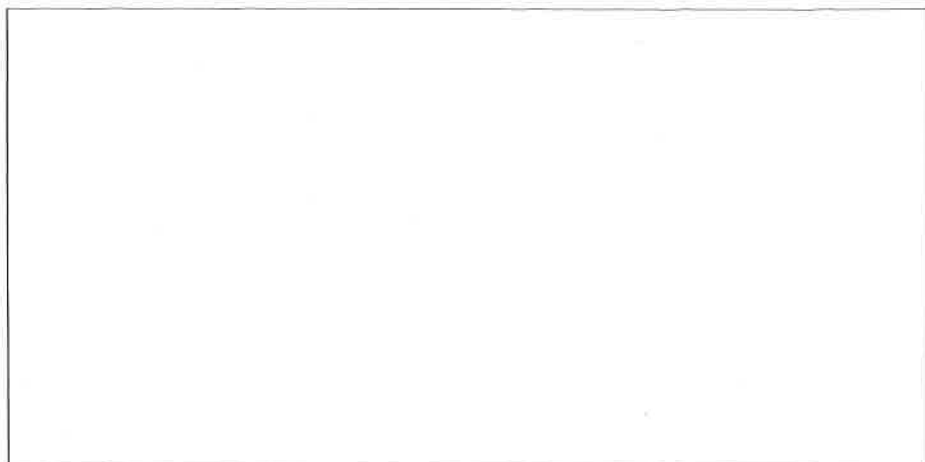
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