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TITLE: SUBJECT: RECENT CNP SUCCESSES CONFIRM SOUNDNESS OF  
PROPOSED MARIQUITA AIRBASE LOCATION

ORIGDATE: 199005222251

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 08133

TEXT:

TAGS: SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: RECENT CNP SUCCESSES CONFIRM SOUNDNESS OF  
PROPOSED MARIQUITA AIRBASE LOCATION

RELEASED IN PART B3 CIA  
PERS/ORG

REF: A) BOGOTA 756, B) BOGOTA 1980

1. (C) SUMMARY: THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE (CNP) ANTINARCOTICS COMPANY OPERATING OUT OF A TEMPORARY FACILITY ADJOINING THE MARIQUITA AIRPORT HAS SEIZED MORE THAN 2.5 METRIC TONS OF COCAINE HCL AND RELATED PRECURSOR CHEMICALS AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT DURING OPERATIONS IN THE MEDIO MAGDALENA ON MAY 7 AND MAY 16. THESE SUCCESSFUL RAIDS UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MARIQUITA BASE IN TAKING BACK THE MEDIO MAGDALENA FROM NARCO CONTROL, AND FURTHER PRESSURING MEDELLIN CARTEL MEMBERS IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE CNP ANTINARCOTICS DIRECTORATE (DAN) FIRST SURFACED THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING AN AIR PRESENCE IN MARIQUITA (05 DEGREES 10' N, 74 DEGREES 55' W) IN JANUARY 1990, REF A. ON APRIL 10, THE CNP AIR SERVICE (SAPOL) MOVED TWO UH-1H HELICOPTERS AND ONE BELL 212 HELICOPTER TO MARIQUITA. THE CNP ALSO MOVED A DAN FIELD COMPANY TO MARIQUITA TO PROVIDE SECURITY AND SUPPORT FOR THE AIRCRAFT, REF B. ON MAY 7, A BELL 212 FLYING RECONNAISSANCE IN THE LAS MERCEDES AREA NEAR MARIQUITA SPOTTED BARRELS THROUGH THE TREES AND CALLED FOR ASSISTANCE. THE TWO UH-1H HELICOPTERS LANDED 24 DAN TROOPS LATER IN THE AFTERNOON AND SEIZED A LARGE LABORATORY INCLUDING 1300 KILOS OF COCAINE HCL PLUS PRECURSOR CHEMICALS AND EQUIPMENT.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior Reviewer

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3. (U) A SIMILAR CHAIN OF EVENTS BEGINNING WITH CNP HELICOPTER RECONNAISSANCE RESULTED IN THE SEIZURE OF ANOTHER LARGE LABORATORY ON MAY 16, LOCATED ONLY SEVERAL HUNDRED METERS FROM THE LAB SEIZED MAY 7. THE MAY 16 SEIZURE INCLUDED 1250 KILOS OF COCAINE HCL, AS WELL AS 450 55-GALLON DRUMS OF ETHER AND ACETONE, 250 GALLONS OF HYDROCHLORIC ACID, 150 GALLONS OF SULFURIC ACID, 110 GALLONS OF AMMONIA, MICROWAVES, GENERATORS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT. DAN TROOPS ALSO FOUND A SOPHISTICATED SYSTEM OF CHEMICAL RECYCLING EQUIPMENT AND FOUR TWENTY-MAN BARRACKS AREAS. THE BARBULA BATTALION OF THE 14TH BRIGADE OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY SUCCESSFULLY RAIDED A THIRD LABORATORY IN THE SAME AREA (05 DEGREES 54'N, 74 DEGREES 39'W) ON MAY 10, SEIZING A LARGE LABORATORY, PLUS 100 55-GALLON DRUMS OF ETHER AND ACETONE AND RELATED EQUIPMENT.

4. COMMENT: THE CNP IS PRESSING HARD TO GET THE MARIQUITA AIRBASE AND FIELD COMPANY UP TO SPEED. THEY WILL HOUSE THE DAN COMPANY NOW STATIONED THERE IN TENTS UNTIL MORE PERMANENT QUARTERS ARE ESTABLISHED. CNP OFFICIALS ARE CERTAIN THAT THEIR CONTINUED STRONG PRESENCE IN THE MEDIO MAGDALENA WILL NOT ONLY DISRUPT SIGNIFICANTLY NARCO PROCESSING OPERATIONS IN THE AREA, BUT WILL ALSO FURTHER DAMAGE THE CAPOS' (I.E. PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA) CLOSE-IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATION. THE CNP CONTINUES TO MOVE STEADILY AND EFFECTIVELY AGAINST NARCO LABORATORIES, EVEN THOUGH RECENT OPERATIONS HAVE OCCURED IN THE SHADOW OF THE HUGE (18 TONS TOTAL) ARMED FORCES SEIZURES AT THE LA PETROLERA COMPLEX. MCLEAN

END OF MESSAGE

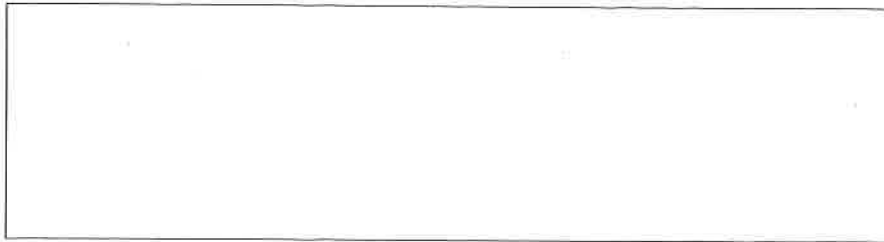
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TOR: 22252Z MAY 90 BOGOTA 08133

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FROM: FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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P <ORIGDTG>22251Z MAY 90</ORIGDTG>

<FROM>FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA</FROM>

<TO>TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5854</TO>

INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RUEABND/DEA WASHDC

RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC

RULSJGA/COMDT/COGARD WASHDC

RULSJGA/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHDC

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TOR: 231143

XREFS: REF: A) BOGOTA 756, B) BOGOTA 1980

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