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22524536

TITLE: SUBJECT: POLL REFLECTS SUPPORT FOR ANTI-SUBVERSION
CAMPAIGN, DISAPPROVAL OF ENERGY RATIONING

ORIGDATE: 199301071350

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 00245

TEXT:

TAGS: PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: POLL REFLECTS SUPPORT FOR ANTI-SUBVERSION
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1. (U) SUMMARY: A YEAR-END PUBLIC OPINION POLL LISTED THE GOVERNMENT'S HARSHER MEASURES AIMED AT COMBATTING THE GUERRILLAS AND NARCOTRAFFICKERS AND ITS PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC OPENING (APERTURA) AS POSITIVE FACTORS FOR COLOMBIA. NEGATIVE FACTORS INCLUDED ENERGY RATIONING, THE RENEWAL OF GUERRILLA/NARCO TERRORISM, AND THE ESCAPE OF PABLO ESCOBAR FROM PRISON. ESCOBAR-AFFILIATED PRIEST RAFAEL GARCIA HERREROS, WHO DIED IN NOVEMBER, WAS NAMED IN THE POLL AS MAN OF THE YEAR, BEATING OUT FISCAL GENERAL GUSTAVO DE GREIFF AND PRESIDENT CESAR GAVIRIA. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) BOGOTA LEADING DAILY EL TIEMPO PUBLISHED JANUARY 2 THE RESULTS OF A POLL CONDUCTED IN LATE DECEMBER BY YANKELOVICH INNOVA OF COLOMBIA. SIX HUNDRED TWO PERSONS FROM DIFFERENT ECONOMIC CLASSES WERE POLLED TELEPHONICALLY IN COLOMBIA'S FOUR LARGEST CITIES, BOGOTA, MEDELLIN, CALI, AND BARRANQUILLA. WHEN ASKED WHAT WERE COLOMBIA'S MOST POSITIVE FACTORS, 30 PERCENT REFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S HARSHER MEASURES TAKEN RECENTLY TO COMBAT THE GUERRILLAS AND NARCOTRAFFICKERS. TWENTY-NINE PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED NAMED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM OF ECONOMIC OPENING KNOWN AS "APERTURA" WHILE 11 PERCENT CITED THE CONTROL OF INFLATION AND 10 PERCENT POINTED TO ECONOMIC INTEGRATION WITH VENEZUELA.

3. (U) FIFTY PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED AGREED THAT ENERGY RATIONING WAS COLOMBIA'S MAJOR NEGATIVE FACTOR

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior Reviewer

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WHILE THE INCREASE IN GUERRILLA AND NARCO-LED VIOLENCE WAS CITED BY 21 PERCENT. FIFTEEN PERCENT NAMED PABLO ESCOBAR'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON AS A MAJOR BLOW TO THE COUNTRY AND SIX PERCENT CENT REFERRED TO KIDNAPPINGS.

4. (U) FIFTY-THREE PERCENT VOICED APPROVAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO CHANGE ITS STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND NARCOTRAFFICKERS AND TO LAUNCH A MORE AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM. THIRTY-FIVE PERCENT DISAGREED WITH THE MOVE, WHICH CULMINATED WITH GAVIRIA'S DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EXCEPTION NOVEMBER 8.

5. (U) WHEN ASKED WHO DESERVED THE TITLE OF "PERSONALITY OF 1992," 44 PERCENT NAMED FATHER RAFAEL GARCIA HERREROS. GARCIA, WHO DIED NOVEMBER 24 AT THE AGE OF 83, WAS THE CATHOLIC PRIEST WHO ACTED AS THE PUBLIC GO-BETWEEN FOR ESCOBAR AND COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES PRIOR TO ESCOBAR'S JUNE 1991 SURRENDER. HE WAS ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN AND MOST LOVED PERSONS IN COLOMBIA FOR HIS MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF TELEVISION PREACHING AND HIS COMMUNITY SERVICE AMONG THE POOR.

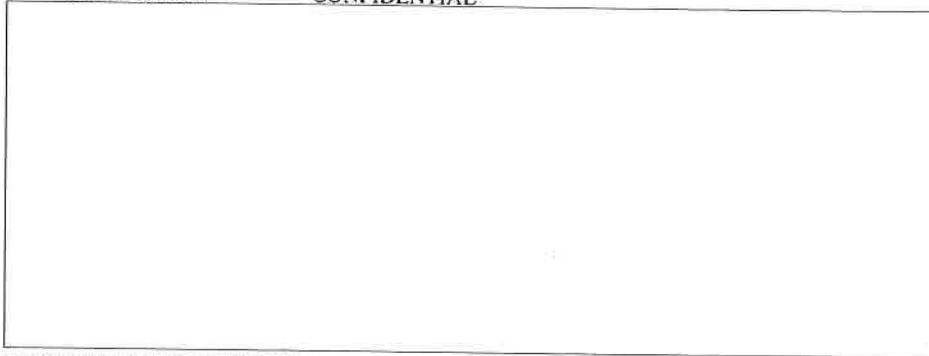
6. (U) ALTHOUGH EL TIEMPO AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS TOUTED FISCAL GENERAL GUSTAVO DE GREIFF AS "MAN OF THE YEAR" EARLIER, HE PLACED A DISTANT SECOND BEHIND FATHER GARCIA IN THE YANKELOVICH POLL. HE GARNERED 15 PERCENT OF THE VOTE WHILE GAVIRIA TRAILED WITH 14 PERCENT. THE COLOMBIAN ARMY CAME IN FOURTH WITH 13 PERCENT.

7. (C) COMMENT: THE RESULTS OF THE POLL CLEARLY INDICATE THE PUBLIC IS FED UP WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND NARCOTRAFFICKERS. IT SERVES AS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR GAVIRIA AND HIS DECISION TO PLAY HARD BALL WITH THEM. EVEN THOUGH GAVIRIA CAME IN ONLY THIRD IN THE POPULARITY COUNT, IT APPEARS HE IS ON THE REBOUND. THE FACT THAT HE WAS EVEN ON THE LIST IS SIGNIFICANT GIVEN HIS LOW POPULARITY RANKING IN A SEPTEMBER POLL TAKEN BY YANKELOVICH. END COMMENT. CRAIG

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DOCPREC: R
DOCST: ACTIVE
DOCTYPE: IN
DOCUMENT_ID: 22524536
DOR: 19930107
FROM: FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
GUIDE-UID: 1012/30jz0f
HEADER: RR RUEAIIIB
ZNY CCCCC ZOC STATE ZZH
MSI8057
RR RUEHC
DE RUEHBO #0245 0071350
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INPUT_ID: 93 0930770

ORIGIN:

PRODUCER: BOGOTA

RECEIPT DATE: 93 093077019930107090021

SOURCE-INFO: STATE IN R BOGOTA 00245 BOGOTA 199301071350

TAGS: TAGS: PGOV, CO

TO: TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3917

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