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E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: KPRP, PINS, SNAR, PHUM, ELAB, ASEC, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE -- IT'S "EVERYONE
VS. EVERYONE" IN A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD

REF: 91 BOGOTA 17238

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1. SUMMARY: COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE HAS GROWN SO COMPLEX THAT IT'S BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS "EVERYONE AGAINST EVERYONE." MANY OF THE PERPETRATORS, VICTIMS, TACTICS AND MOTIVES CHANGE FROM REGIONX TO REGION. THE VIOLENT IN COLOMBIA TEND TO PREY ON ONE ANOTHER, MAKING THE COUNTRY A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD, AND THE VIOLENCE TENDS TO GROW EXPONENTIALLY AS THE VICTIMS -- INCLUDING LANDOWNERS, BUSINESSMEN AND WEALTHY TRAFFICKERS -- TAKE UP ARMS IN SELF DEFENSE. THE GAVIRIA ADMINISTRATION REALIZES THAT A STRONG CAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE IS THE CONTINUING HISTORICAL

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WEAKNESS OF THE STATE, ESPECIALLY THE JUSTICE SYSTEM AND THE SECURITY FORCES. THE GOVERNMENT IS CONTINUING MAJOR EFFORTS TO BEEF UP THOSE AREAS. THE STATE'S INABILITY TO PUNISH THE PERPETRATORS IS A MAJOR PROBLEM. THAT HISTORICAL IMPUNITY AND THE COUNTRY'S SOCIAL ILLS ARE A DEADLY COMBINATION. ACCORDING TO DEFENSE MINISTER RAFAEL PARDO, DESPITE THE FACT THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION LIVES IN CITIES, THE MAJORITY OF THE VIOLENCE OCCURS IN RURAL AREAS, WHERE IN MANY CASES THERE'S NO PERMANENT POLICE PRESENCE. ROUNDING OUT THE MIX OF COLOMBIA'S THREE PRINCIPAL WARRING ADVERSARIES -- THE STATE, THE GUERRILLAS AND NARCO-TRAFFICKERS -- ARE COMMON CRIMINALS. STATISTICS SHOW THAT, WHILE THE INSURGENTS AND NARCOS ARE CLEARLY THE MORE DANGEROUS AND LETHAL AND RECEIVE THE MOST ATTENTION, COMMON CRIME AFFECTS THE POPULATION MUCH MORE. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIETAL CHANGE IS REQUIRED; WITHOUT IT, PEACE WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND THE DEMISE OF PABLO ESCOBAR WON'T EVEN COME CLOSE TO ENDING THE BLOODLETING. END SUMMARY.

THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF VIOLENCE IN COLOMBIA

2. FOLLOWING IS A LESS-THAN-ALL-INCLUSIVE LIST OF VARIOUS TYPES OF VIOLENCE COMMON TO COLOMBIA AT THIS TIME:

-- A VIOLENT POLITICAL SCENE. THE CHRONIC, PERPETUAL (SINCE 1949) POLITICAL WAR BETWEEN THE INSURGENCY AND THE STATE AND ITS SECURITY FORCES.

-- GUERRILLAS WHO OPERATE AS LOCAL WARLORDS. THE VIOLENCE PERPETRATED BY THE GUERRILLAS AGAINST SOCIETY,

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MUCH OF WHICH IS ECONOMIC IN NATURE (E.G., RANSOM KIDNAPPINGS AND EXTORTION) AND SERVES AS A MEANS OF RAISING FUNDS FOR THE SELF-SUFFICIENT INSURGENCY.

-- THE GUERRILLAS' TERRORISM AGAINST THE ECONOMIC AND

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE, I.E., SABOTAGE OF PETROLEUM
INSTALLATIONS, ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS TOWERS, BRIDGES,
ETC.

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- VS. EVERYONE" IN A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD

-- VIOLENCE BY ORGANIZED CRIME (MAFIAS) AGAINST POLITICIANS, JUDICIAL OFFICIALS, POLICE, SOLDIERS, JOURNALISTS, THE ELITES AND SOMETIMES RANDOMLY AGAINST THE GENERAL PUBLIC. MAFIOSOS ATTACK ALL THESE GROUPS TO INTIMIDATE, EXACT REVENGE OR TO ACHIEVE IMPUNITY, WHETHER TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT FOR A SPECIFIC CRIME OR TO AFFECT JUDICIAL OR POLICY DECISIONS AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. WHILE THIS TYPE OF VIOLENCE IS MOSTLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE "NARCO-TERRORISM" OF THE LEADING TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS, IT ALSO HAS BEEN PERPETRATED, IF NOT ON THE SAME SCALE, BY MUCH SMALLER CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS, E.G., THE "GASOLINE CARTEL," WHICH SURREPTITIOUSLY TAPS ECOPETROL'S PIPELINES.

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-- THE CONTINUAL WAR WAGED BETWEEN COMPETING CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS (E.G., BETWEEN THE CALI AND MEDELLIN CARTELS).

-- THE INTERNECINE, DISCIPLINARY AND PARA-JUDICIAL VIOLENCE COMMON TO THE UNDERWORLD AT ALL LEVELS, WHICH INCLUDES MURDER, TORTURE, EXTORTION AND KIDNAPPING.

-- VIOLENT ACTS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, PERPETRATED BY OVERZEALOUS SECURITY FORCE PERSONNEL, USUALLY LINKED TO COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORTS. THIS IS SOMETIMES ACCIDENTAL (E.G., CAMPESINOS LITERALLY OR FIGURATIVELY CAUGHT IN THE CROSS FIRE), BUT SOMETIMES INTENTIONAL (E.G., THE TORTURE AND ASSASSINATION OF GUERRILLA-LINKED POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISTS, INCLUDING TRADE UNIONISTS).

-- THE VIOLENCE OF SELF-DEFENSE AND PARAMILITARY GROUPS. THESE ARE USUALLY SMALL BUT WELL-ARMED PRIVATE ARMIES OWNED AND OPERATED MOSTLY IN RURAL AREAS BY LARGE LANDOWNERS, INCLUDING NARCOS. THOSE GROUPS ARE OFTEN USED BY LARGE LANDHOLDERS AS A WEAPON IN LAND DISPUTES AGAINST CAMPESINOS AND INDIANS. THE TERM PARAMILITARY GROUPS

BECAME POPULAR IN THE 1980S TO REFER TO SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS WITH LINKS TO THE SECURITY FORCES.

-- THE "SOCIAL CLEANING" KILLINGS BY SMALL, ANONYMOUS, ARMED BANDS (SOMETIMES COMPOSED OF POLICE OFFICERS) MOSTLY AGAINST INDIGENTS AND STREET KIDS, BUT ALSO AGAINST LOW-LEVEL DRUG VENDORS, ADDICTS, HOMOSEXUALS, PROSTITUTES AND OTHER "UNDESIRABLES." THE GROUPS SOMETIMES WORK FOR HIRE FOR BUSINESSMEN AND PROPERTY OWNERS TO "CLEAN UP"

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THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS.

-- PROFESSIONAL ASSASSINS (SICARIOS). THESE YOUNG, LOWER-CLASS KILLERS CAN BE HIRED BY ANYONE FROM A JEALOUS HUSBAND TO PABLO ESCOBAR TO KILL ANYONE FROM HIS WIFE'S LOVER TO A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. TRUE "HITMEN," THEY ARE COLD BLOODED MURDERERS WHO WILL TAKE ON ANY CONTRACT IF THE PRICE IS RIGHT.

-- THE POPULAR MILITIAS, I.E., THE NEW-STYLE URBAN GUERRILLA FRONTS CREATED BY THE FARC, ELN, EPL AND M-19 IN LOWER-CLASS NEIGHBORHOODS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP AN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE. THE MILITIAS, WHICH VIRTUALLY CONTROL SOME BARRIOS, OPERATE AS VIGILANTE GROUPS IN THEIR OWN NEIGHBORHOODS. PARTICULARLY IN MEDELLIN, THEY HAVE FOUGHT A WAR TO THE DEATH WITH THE TRAFFICKING-SYMBIOTIC BANDS OF YOUNG SICARIOS AND OTHER HOODLUMS THAT HAVE PREYED ON THE RESIDENTS FOR DECADES. THEY ALSO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR "CLEANUP" KILLINGS OF DEALERS, ADDICTS, RAPISTS AND OTHER CRIMINAL ELEMENTS. FOR FUNDING, THE MILITIAS CLASSICALLY EXTORT LOCAL BUSINESSES FOR PROTECTION MONEY. THE MILITIAS HAVE ACTED AS THE

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SPEARHEAD OF THEIR PARENT GUERRILLA GROUPS' EFFORTS TO
 TAKE OVER THE CITIES, MOSTLY THROUGH TERRORISM. THEY ALSO
 GATHER THE NECESSARY INTELLIGENCE AND CARRY OUT THE
 ATTACKS (OFTEN SMALL BOMBINGS), WHICH OFTEN TAKE PLACE
 OUTSIDE THEIR POOR BARRIOS.

-- RANSOM KIDNAPPINGS, WHETHER BY GUERRILLAS OR COMMON

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CRIMINALS. THIS HIGHLY PROFITABLE INDUSTRY HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED, EXHIBITING A HIGH LEVEL OF SPECIALIZATION IN PLANNING AND EXECUTION. AUTHORITIES REPORT (AND WE BELIEVE) THAT THERE IS COLLABORATION BETWEEN COMMON-CRIMINAL KIDNAP RINGS AND INSURGENTS AND/OR TRAFFICKERS; IN SOME CASES, KIDNAP "SPECIALISTS" CARRY OUT AN ABDUCTION, THEN SELL THE VICTIM TO GUERRILLAS OR

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TRAFFICKERS, WHO IN TURN NEGOTIATE THE RANSOM WITH THE VICTIM'S FAMILY OR EMPLOYER.

-- SIMPLE MURDER FOR ANY VARIETY OF REASONS. MURDER OVERTOOK CANCER AS THE COUNTRY'S LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN 1990, AND CONTINUES TO CLIMB ANNUALLY. AT ALL LEVELS, THIS TYPE OF VIOLENCE IS USED TO SETTLE DISPUTES, EXACT REVENGE, ETC...

-- THE "DIRTY WAR" OF EXTERMINATION AGAINST ACTIVISTS OF THE EX-GUERRILLA GROUP, EPL, BY THEIR STILL-ARMED COMRADES, THE EPL DISSIDENTS, WITH THE HELP OF FARC BOLIVARIAN MILITIAS, PRIMARILY IN THE BANANA-RICH URABA REGION. THIS IS A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN TO SEEK OUT AND KILL ALL EPL MEMBERS WHO "CAME IN" WHEN THE EPL REACHED A PEACE ACCORD WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN 1991.

-- ROAD PIRACY, I.E., THE STOPPING OF TRUCKS ON THE NATION'S HIGHWAYS AS WELL AS IN THE CITIES TO ROB, MOSTLY BY SPECIALIZED COMMON-CRIMINAL BANDS, IS A BOOMING BUSINESS.

-- THE ASSAULT OF BOTH INTER- AND INTRA-CITY BUSES BY ARMED COMMON-CRIMINAL GANGS, TO ROB THE PASSENGERS.

YOU'D NEED A SCORECARD TO TRACK THE PLAYERS

3. THE ABOVE PRESENTS A TRULY FRIGHTENING PICTURE OF THE VIOLENCE IN THIS COUNTRY. A SIMPLE READING COULD LEAD ONE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE COUNTRY IS OUT OF CONTROL. THAT'S FAR FROM TRUE. COLOMBIA IS A PROSPEROUS, FUNCTIONING

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DEMOCRACY THAT TRAGICALLY SEEMS TO HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE WITH A VERY HIGH LEVEL OF MAYHEM. COLOMBIA'S ELITE IS PRO-AMERICAN AND SOPHISTICATED. THE MIDDLE CLASS REPRESENTS AN INDUSTRIOUS, TRAINED WORK FORCE. FOREIGN BUSINESSES AND FOREIGN INVESTMENT ARE WELCOMED. THE ECONOMY IS ROBUST AND CONSERVATIVELY MANAGED, ALTHOUGH AS IN OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, THERE IS A DESPERATELY POOR CLASS. BOGOTA, "THE ATHENS OF SOUTH AMERICA," IS A BEAUTIFUL CLEAN CITY WITH SOME OF LATIN AMERICA'S BEST


UNIVERSITIES. THIS IS NOT BEIRUT, WHERE WAR RAGED IN THE STREETS. IT IS A COSMOPOLITAN PLACE WHERE DEATH IN MANY FORMS LURKS CONSTANTLY FOR THE UNWARY OR UNPROTECTED.

4. A FACTOR MARKING THE EVOLUTION OF COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE SINCE THE 1950S IS THAT IT HAS BECOME MORE MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX; TO THE POINT WHERE IT'S MORE APPROPRIATE TO SPEAK IN THE PLURAL, I.E., OF THE "VIOLENCES." THE VIOLENT AND THEIR VICTIMS HAVE BECOME SO INTERTWINED, THE ALLIANCES SO SHIFTING THAT IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE VIOLENCE HAS REACHED THE POINT OF BEING "EVERYONE AGAINST EVERYONE." ANOTHER FACTOR IS THE REGIONAL NATURE OF MUCH OF THE BLOODLETTING. BECAUSE COLOMBIA IS A COLLAGE OF REGIONS,

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MANY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE VIOLENCE ARE FAR MORE PROMINENT
IN SOME AREAS OF THE COUNTRY THAN IN OTHERS, GIVING A
REGIONAL "TWIST" THAT COMPLICATES ANY ANALYSIS.

5. PART OF THE COMPLEXITY OF THE SCENE IS THAT THE
VARIOUS TYPES OF VIOLENCE AND THEIR PERPETRATORS REFUSE TO
REMAIN SEPARATE AND EASILY CATEGORIZED. THEY TEND TO
COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER, CONVERGE AND COMBINE, AS WELL AS
CONFLICT. MEANWHILE, VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE, LEADING TO
THE FORMATION OF PRIVATE JUSTICE GROUPS SUCH AS THE
RURAL/RIGHTIST SELF-DEFENSE/PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND THE
URBAN/LEFTIST POPULAR MILITIAS WHO CARRY OUT "VIOLENCE
AGAINST OTHER VIOLENCE." ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF THE
COMPLEX LINKAGES ARE THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND OTHER TYPES, E.G., THE DUAL
INSURGENT AND VIGILANTE ROLES OF URBAN POPULAR MILITIAS.

THE THREE MAIN ADVERSARIES: STATE, GUERRILLAS, NARCOS

6. COLOMBIA'S THREE PRINCIPAL WARRING ADVERSARIES AND
THEIR APPENDAGES ARE THE STATE AND ITS SECURITY FORCES,
THE GUERRILLAS AND THEIR POPULAR MILITIAS, AND
NARCO-TRAFFICKERS AND THEIR BANDS OF SICARIOS (AS WELL AS
THE LINKS THAT BOTH THE SECURITY FORCES AND NARCOS HAVE TO
PARAMILITARY GROUPS). THE MAIN ADVERSARIES HAVE
RELATIONSHIPS OF ACCOMMODATION AND CONFRONTATION WITH EACH

OF OTHERS, DEPENDING ON THE REGION AND TIME. ADDED TO THAT MIX IS DRUG MONEY, WHICH HAS HAD A TREMENDOUSLY CORRUPTING INFLUENCE ON EVERYONE IT HAS TOUCHED, E.G., PARAMILITARY GROUPS AND THE GUERRILLAS (INCLUDING APPARENTLY SOME POPULAR MILITIAS). ROUNDING OUT THE PICTURE ARE COMMON CRIMINALS WHO OFTEN GRADUATE INTO MORE ORGANIZED FORMS OF VIOLENCE BY JOINING BANDS OF SICARIOS OR POPULAR MILITIAS.

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TAKING UP ARMS IN SELF DEFENSE

7. MUCH OF THE VIOLENCE RESULTS FROM WHAT COLOMBIANS SEE AS THE LEGITIMATE RIGHT TO SELF DEFENSE. COLOMBIA, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS AND FOR THOSE OPERATING OUTSIDE THE LAW, IS A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD. COLOMBIA'S VIOLENT ACTORS PREY ON ONE ANOTHER. IN THE EARLY 1980S, THE KINGPINS OF THE MEDELLIN CARTEL HELPED FORM THE PARAMILITARY GROUP, "MAS" ("DEATH TO KIDNAPPERS") AFTER THE M-19 GUERRILLA GROUP KIDNAPPED FABIO OCHOA'S

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DAUGHTER. PABLO ESCOBAR'S FATHER WAS ONCE KIDNAPPED BY COMMON CRIMINALS. LEADING TRAFFICKER AND PARAMILITARY LEADER LEONIDAS VARGAS VARGAS (ARRESTED JANUARY 6) HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED TWICE, FIRST BY FARC GUERRILLAS, THEN BY THE M-19. FARC GUERRILLAS IN META DEPARTMENT KIDNAPPED EMERALD KING AND PARAMILITARY LEADER VICTOR CARRANZA'S BROTHER IN 1992. THE FARC'S 6TH FRONT ABDUCTED THE SISTER OF CALI CARTEL KINGPIN JOSE SANTACRUZ LONDONO IN CAUCA IN SEPTEMBER. IT'S NO COINCIDENCE THAT THE OCHOAS, ESCOBAR, VARGAS AND CARRANZA ALL HAVE TURNED TO PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN SELF DEFENSE AND USED THEM TO RETALIATE AGAINST THEIR ENEMIES; WITH BLOODY RESULTS.

UNDERSIZED SECURITY FORCES PROVIDE LITTLE SECURITY

8. THE GAVIRIA ADMINISTRATION AGREES WITH PRACTICALLY ALL OBSERVATIONS THAT A STRONG UNDERLYING CAUSE OF THE VIOLENCE IS THE CONTINUING HISTORICAL WEAKNESS OF THE STATE AND ITS SECURITY FORCES. THE VIOLENCE IS ALL PERVASIVE AND THE GOVERNMENT CAN'T STOP IT. IT IS A GIVEN IN COLOMBIA, A COLLAGE OF REGIONS SEPARATED BY MOUNTAINS, THAT WHERE THE GOVERNMENT PRESENCE IS WEAK OR

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- VS. EVERYONE" IN A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD

NON-EXISTENT, LOCAL VIOLENCE SUPPLANTS THE STATE, LEADING OTHERS TO TAKE UP ARMS IN DEFENSE IN A SPIRAL OF MAYHEM AND INSECURITY.

9. COLOMBIA LONG HAS HAD A RELATIVELY SMALL SECURITY FORCE (IN COMPARISON TO OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES) FOR ITS POPULATION AND TOPOGRAPHY. HISTORICALLY, COLOMBIA'S UNDERSIZED ARMED FORCES HAVEN'T HAD THE CAPACITY TO CONTROL SUBVERSIVE OR OUTLAW GROUPS EVEN WHEN THEY LACKED THE TREMENDOUS FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF TODAY'S TRAFFICKERS AND GUERRILLAS. THE GAVIRIA ADMINISTRATION REALIZES THE PROBLEM, AND HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM, AS WELL AS THE ARMY'S COUNTER-INSURGENCY FORCES. THEY ALSO ARE SYSTEMATICALLY

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EXPANDING GOVERNMENT CONTROL INTO ISOLATED AND UNDERPOPULATED PARTS OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY BY MEANS OF INCREASED SECURITY-FORCE PRESENCE.

IMPUNITY AND A LARGE POOR CLASS: A DEADLY DUO

10. ONE MANIFESTATION OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE STATE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE VIOLENCE IS THE UBIQUITOUS IMPUNITY THAT REIGNS IN THE COUNTRY, WHERE ALMOST NO ONE BELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT CAN GUARANTEE HIS OR HER SECURITY OR THAT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM WILL PUNISH AN OFFENDER. A LEADING COLOMBIAN VIOLENTOLOGIST ONCE TOLD POLOFF THAT AFTER HIS APARTMENT WAS BURGLARIZED, IT DIDN'T EVEN CROSS HIS MIND TO REPORT THE CRIME TO THE POLICE. THE IMPUNITY, BESIDES ENTICING MORE TO TURN TO CRIME, LEADS MANY TO TURN TO VIOLENT PRIVATE-JUSTICE.

11. IMPUNITY AND A CHRONICALLY POOR CLASS ARE A DEADLY COMBINATION. ANOTHER VIOLENTOLOGIST HAS TOLD POLOFF THAT THE INSURGENCY, NARCO-TRAFFICKING, RANSOM KIDNAPPING AND COMMON CRIME ARE ALL CAMPESINO RESPONSES TO THE SAME PROBLEM, RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT. HE JUST AS WELL COULD HAVE EXTENDED HIS VISION TO THE CITIES, WHERE UNEMPLOYMENT ALSO IS A MAJOR PROBLEM. AS WE PREVIOUSLY HAVE REPORTED, THE LINE BETWEEN ARCH-ENEMY NARCO SICARIOS AND GUERRILLA MILITIAMEN IS A FINE ONE. THE TWO GROW UP AND LIVE IN THE SAME POOR BARRIOS, AND THE ACQUISITION OF MONEY IS A DRIVING FORCE; BOTH NARCO-TRAFFICKERS AND GUERRILLA GROUPS PAY A SALARY. INDEED, COLOMBIAN GUERRILLA GROUPS EARN A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM DRUGS. A BOGOTA NEWSPAPER COLUMNIST RECENTLY LABELED ALL OF

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COLOMBIA'S VIOLENT AS "SICARIOS," NO MATTER FOR WHOM THEY
WORK. "THEIR PROFESSION IS TO KILL. THEIR COMPENSATION
IS THE MONEY."

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MOST VIOLENCE OCCURS IN RURAL AREAS

12. DESPITE THE FACT THAT 70 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION
LIVES IN URBAN AREAS, THE GOVERNMENT SAYS THE MAJORITY OF
VIOLENCE OCCURS IN RURAL AREAS. (FYI: HUMAN RIGHTS
GROUPS PERSISTENTLY SAY THAT CAMPESINOS ARE THE MAIN
VICTIMS OF THE VIOLENCE.) DEFENSE MINISTER RAFAEL PARDO,
WHO HAS STUDIED COLOMBIA'S VIOLENCE AND IS AN EXPERT ON
THE PROBLEM, HAS SAID THAT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF
HOMICIDES AND KIDNAPPINGS AND MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF
TERRORIST ACTS TAKE PLACE IN RURAL AREAS. "IT IS RURAL
COLOMBIA THAT WITHOUT A DOUBT IS THE PRINCIPAL SCENE OF
THE VIOLENCE AND INSECURITY IN COLOMBIA," PARDO SAID.

13. OF COURSE AN INFLUENCE ON THE RURAL LAWLESSNESS IS
THE ABSENCE OF A PERMANENT SECURITY-FORCE PRESENCE IN MANY
AREAS. IF THERE'S ONE REALITY SHARED BY COLOMBIA'S
VARIOUS REGIONS, IT IS THE ABSENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	COR-01	AID-01	CG-00	COME-00	CTME-00	C-01
	OASY-00	DS-00	EB-01	OIGO-01	HA-09	INM-02	INR-00
	IO-19	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	OPM-01	PM-02	P-01	SCT-03	SIL-00	SP-00	STR-17
	SVC-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	ASDS-01	FMP-00	/071W	

-----9EC169 221958Z /43/63

R 221919Z FEB 93
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5272
INFO DIRONDCP WASHDC//OR//
NSC WASHDC
DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC
DEA WASHDC
DIRFBI WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
DIA WASHDC
CIA WASHDC
DEPTLABOR WASHDC

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DEPT FOR ARA/PPC AND S/IL
DEA FOR OF, OFL, DO, AO, AX, OC, NK
NSC ALSO FOR RICHARD FEINBERG
CINCSO AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD
DOL FOR ILAB
PARIS FOR VIN CARVER

CORRECTED COPY OF BOGOTA 2676, UPGRADED TO CONFIDENTIAL

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: KPRP, PINS, SNAR, PHUM, ELAB, ASEC, CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE -- IT'S "EVERYONE
- VS. EVERYONE" IN A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD

RURAL AREAS. COLOMBIA'S NATIONAL POLICE FORCE (CNP) IS CONCENTRATED IN URBAN AREAS, AND THOSE STATIONED IN RURAL AREAS ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE COUNTY SEATS. BOGOTA HAS FAR FEWER POLICE PER 100 RESIDENTS THAN NEW YORK, LONDON OR TOKYO, BUT THE PROBLEM IS FAR GREATER IN RURAL AREAS, WHERE IN MANY JURISDICTIONS THERE IS NO PERMANENT POLICE PRESENCE.

PABLO AND TIROFIJO MAY GO BUT THE VIOLENCE WON'T

14. PEACE WITH THE GUERRILLAS AND/OR THE REMOVAL OF PABLO ESCOBAR WON'T END THE CARNAGE. ESCOBAR'S PARTICULAR VIOLENCE, HOWEVER HORRIFIC, WILL PASS WITH HIS PASSING FROM THE SCENE, AND IN ANY EVENT, TENDS TO BE FOCUSED IN

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MEDELLIN AND BOGOTA AND INTENDED TO MAKE THE GOC REDUCE ITS PRESSURE ON HIM AND HIS ORGANIZATION. OTHER TYPES OF

VIOLENCE WILL REMAIN. THE INSURGENCY IS PREDOMINANTLY RURAL AND THERE ARE MAJOR SECURITY PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE THAT WON'T BE SOLVED ANYTIME SOON. EQUALLY VIOLENT ARE THE CITIES, WHERE 70 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION NOW RESIDES. CRIME-RIDDEN AND HOME TO POPULAR MILITIAS, SICARIOS AND VIOLENT TRAFFICKERS, THERE WILL BE NO EASY SOLUTION TO THE VIOLENCE THERE EITHER. THE SPECTRE OF CHRONIC COLOMBIAN VIOLENCE, THEREFORE, WILL BE WITH US FOR A LONG TIME. THE GUERRILLAS, ESCOBAR, OR ANY INDIVIDUAL GROUP REPRESENT ONLY PART OF THE PROBLEM.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** [REDACTED]