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INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 AID-00 INR-07 OIC-02 CIAE-00 IO-19  
NSCE-00 ARA-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 L-03 TRSE-00 OMB-01  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1957  
INFO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3478  
DEAHQS WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE  
COGARD WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
CUSTOMS WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: SNAR, PREL, CU  
SUBJECT: GRANMA EXPOSE ON DRUG SCANDAL

REF: HAVANA 4233

1. SUMMARY: THE COMMUNIST PARTY DAILY GRANMA --  
SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF FIDEL CASTRO, THE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE, THE ARMED FORCES (FAR) AND THE INTERIOR  
MINISTRY (MININT) -- ON JUNE 22 PRESENTED THE  
RESULTS SO FAR OF THE GOC INVESTIGATION IN THE  
OCHOA-DE LA GUARDIA NARCOTRAFFICKING CASE.  
ACCORDING TO GRANMA, OCHOA AND DE LA GUARDIA  
SEPARATELY MADE CONTACTS WITH THE MEDELLIN CARTEL  
BEGINNING IN 1986. OCHOA'S ATTEMPTS TO MAKE A  
SHIPMENT FAILED EACH TIME, BUT THE DE LA GUARDIA  
GROUP, WHICH OPERATED OUT OF MININT, DEALT IN  
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SIX TONS OF COCAINE AND MADE ALMOST 3.5 MILLION  
US DOLLARS IN PROFITS. GRANMA SAYS IT IS UNDER-  
STANDABLE THAT THE CARTEL AND OTHERS WOULD THINK  
THESE OFFICERS HAD APPROVAL FROM THE HIGHEST

REVIEW AUTHORITY:  
Alan Flanigan, Senior  
Reviewer

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LEVELS OF THE GOC, BUT THEY DID NOT HAVE ANY  
SUCH PERMISSION. GRANMA NOTES THE CASE IS A SERIOUS  
BLOW TO THE GOC, BUT THE INVESTIGATION AND INCREASED  
ALERTNESS OF THE CUBAN PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT HAVE  
PUT THE WORLD ON NOTICE THAT THE COUNTRY WILL NEVER  
TOLERATE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. (REFTEL CONTAINS  
ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS.) END SUMMARY.

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OCHOA'S ACTIONS

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2. MINFAR MAJOR GENERAL ARNALDO OCHOA TRIED  
HARD TO GET INTO THE DRUG TRADE SINCE 1986 BUT  
FAILED EACH TIME TO ACHIEVE RESULTS, ACCORDING TO  
GRANMA. (THE PAPER SAYS OCHOA REALLY COULD COUNT  
ON ONLY CAPTAIN JORGE MARTINEZ, HIS TOP AIDE, WHILE  
THE DE LA GUARDIA BROTHERS HAD THE ABILITY TO  
DEVELOP A STRONGER NETWORK WITHIN MININT.) OCHOA'S  
INTEREST HAD BEEN PIQUED BY A REPORT FROM MARTINEZ  
THAT AN ITALIAN-AMERICAN NAMED FRANK MORFA WAS  
INTERESTED IN STARTING A MONEY-LAUNDERING SCHEME  
WITH CUBA. OCHOA, WHO WAS THEN SUPERVISOR OF  
MINFAR'S 10TH DIRECTORATE (RESPONSIBLE FOR FOREIGN  
MILITARY COOPERATION EXCEPT IN ANGOLA AND ETHIOPIA),  
ACCEPTED THE IDEA WITHOUT MUCH THOUGHT. WHEN THE  
DEAL DID NOT PAN OUT, HE ASKED MARTINEZ TO LOOK  
INTO OTHER OPPORTUNITIES. MARTINEZ MET WITH  
REPRESENTATIVES OF MEDELLIN CARTEL BOSS PABLO  
ESCOBAR SEVERAL TIMES IN CUBA AND WENT TO  
COLOMBIA ON A FALSE COLOMBIAN PASSPORT IN MAY  
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1988 TO FIRM UP A DEAL WITH ESCOBAR PERSONALLY.  
NO TRANSACTIONS EVER TOOK PLACE, HOWEVER, FOR  
VARIOUS REASONS.

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3. IN OCTOBER 1988, MARTINEZ WENT BACK TO COLOMBIA  
TO WORK OUT A BETTER PLAN, BUT IT TOO FAILED.  
UNDER THE NEW IDEA, A CHEYENNE PLANE WAS TO LEAVE  
COLOMBIA AT 1900 HOURS, PASS OVER CUBA THROUGH  
THE "MAYA" AIR CORRIDOR, AND DROP DRUGS INTO THE SEA  
AT A POINT SOUTHWEST OF CAYO SAL (NEAR VARADERO).  
THE PLANE WOULD CARRY LESS FUEL SO IT COULD CARRY  
MORE DRUGS, AND IT WOULD STOP AT VARADERO ON THE  
WAY BACK TO REFUEL. THE COCAINE WOULD BE TRANSFERRED  
FROM CAYO SAL TO MIAMI BY FAST BOATS OPERATING  
OUT OF MIAMI. AFTER THAT FELL THROUGH, OCHOA AND

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MARTINEZ (DESPITE EFFORTS AT THE TIME TO BREAK WITH THE DE LA GUARDIA GROUP) ON APRIL 20, 1989, AGREED TO A SCHEME INVOLVING SEVERAL UNIDENTIFIED MEXICANS TO SHIP 2,000 KILOGRAMS OF COCAINE A MONTH. OCHOA GAVE THE CARTEL PERMISSION TO USE THE "GIRON" AIR CORRIDOR (OVER WHICH GRANMA SAYS HE HAD NO AUTHORITY).

THE DE LA GUARDIA GROUP  
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4. THE DE LA GUARDIA GROUP SUCCEEDED IN SHIPPING SIX TONS OF COCAINE AND RECEIVED PAYMENTS UP TO 3.4 MILLION US DOLLARS SINCE EARLY 1987, ACCORDING TO GRANMA. THE GROUP KEPT MOST OF ITS DEALINGS SECRET FROM OCHOA AND MARTINEZ, AND THEY USED AUTHORIZED MININT ACTIVITIES AS COVER. GRANMA SAYS TONY DE LA GUARDIA'S FIRST DRUG-RELATED CONTACT WAS FACILITATED BY AN OFFICER WORKING IN MININT'S "MC" DEPARTMENT (BELOW) NAMED MIGUEL

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RUIZ, WHOSE COUSIN REYNALDO WAS APPARENTLY IN THE TRADE. TONY MET REYNALDO RUIZ IN PANAMA AND CUBA TO FIRM UP THE PLANS, WHICH INCLUDED FLYING COCAINE FROM COLOMBIA TO VARADERO IN IBM COMPUTER BOXES AND TRANSFERRING IT TO TOBACCO BOXES FOR SHIPMENT BY BOAT TO THE U.S.

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5. THE PLAN, IMPLEMENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN APRIL 1987, WAS QUITE SUCCESSFUL, ACCORDING TO GRANMA. FIVE SUCCESSFUL SHIPMENTS WERE MADE IN 1987, WITH ONLY ONE FAILED ATTEMPT. THE DE LA GUARDIA GROUP ALSO PARTICIPATED IN A SHIPMENT OF MARIHUANA BY HAVING CUBAN PATROL BOATS PRETEND TO INTERCEPT A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VESSEL FROM COLOMBIA NEAR CUBA'S PINAR DEL RIO PROVINCE. THESE SCHEMES MET ONLY MODEST SUCCESS IN 1988, WITH ONE COMPLETED COCAINE SHIPMENT EARLY IN THE YEAR AND ONE MARIHUANA SHIPMENT IN JUNE. THREE OTHER ATTEMPTS TO TRANSSHIP COCAINE FAILED.

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6. THE DE LA CUARDIA GROUP'S OPERATIONS MOVED INTO HIGH GEAR IN 1989, WHEN THE GROUP IMPROVED ITS MODUS OPERANDI. PLANES BEGAN DROPPING PACKAGES OF COCAINE INTO CUBAN WATERS NORTH OF VARADERO FOR RETRIEVAL BY FAST BOATS THAT WOULD CARRY THEM TO THE U.S. WHEN THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THE BOATS, OR WHEN THE RISK OF BEING CAUGHT BY THE U.S. COAST GUARD WAS GREAT, THE COCAINE WAS BURIED ON NEARBY KEYS. EIGHT SUCCESSFUL DROPS WERE MADE IN 1989 -- ONE IN FEBRUARY, TWO IN MARCH, THREE IN THE FIRST 20 DAYS OF APRIL, ONE ON APRIL 22, AND ONE ON APRIL 23.

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7. LA GUARDIA'S GROUP BEGAN TO CLOSE DOWN IN THE SECOND HALF OF APRIL 1989, WHEN FIDEL CASTRO ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION INTO RUMORS FROM "FRIENDS OF CUBA," EVEN RUMORS OF LOST CARGOES, AND U.S. ALLEGATIONS ABOUT DRUG OPERATIONS AROUND VARADERO. THE INVESTIGATION CASTRO ORDERED HAD NOT YET UNCOVERED THE NARCOTRAFFICKING BY THE TIME THE OFFICERS WERE ARRESTED ON JUNE 12. GRANMA SAYS "IT IS IMPORTANT TO POINT OUT" THE OFFICERS WERE ORIGINALLY ARRESTED FOR UNSPECIFIED ILLICIT ACTS AND DEALINGS, CORRUPTION AND IMMORALITY.

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8. GRANMA SAYS THE DRUG DEALINGS BECAME KNOWN QUITE QUICKLY, HOWEVER. AFTER THE ARRESTS ON JUNE 12, OCHOA AND TONY DE LA GUARDIA ADMITTED -- WHEN CONFRONTED WITH IRREFUTABLE PROOF -- THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRUG TRADE, BUT THEY REPORTEDLY WERE NOT WILLING TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DETAILS. OCHOA'S AIDE, MARTINEZ, HAS BEEN HELPFUL, ACCORDING TO GRANMA, AND A LETTER FOUND IN HIS HOUSE HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN INVALUABLE TO THE INVESTIGATION. GRANMA EMPHASIZED THAT THE REVOLUTION NEVER HAS AND NEVER WILL USE VIOLENCE TO EXTRACT INFORMATION FROM SUSPECTS.

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G. ACCORDING TO THE PARTY DAILY, ABOUT HALF OF THE GROUP'S PROFITS HAVE BEEN LOCATED. THE GUILTY OFFICERS CLAIM THAT MOST OF THE MONEY WAS HANDED OVER TO THE STATE AS IT WOULD IN A LEGITIMATE (BUT CLANDESTINE) BUSINESS. BUT INVESTIGATORS HAVE FOUND BRIEFCASES FULL OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS, THE VAST MAJORITY IN U.S. CURRENCY, IN THE OFFICERS' HOMES AND THEIR FRIENDS' HOMES. THE GOVERNMENT IS STILL LOOKING FOR 1.3 MILLION U.S. DOLLARS IN DRUG MONEY. (OCHOA ALSO HAD 200,000 U.S. DOLLARS IN A PANAMANIAN BANK IN MARTINEZ'S NAME, BUT GRANMA DOES NOT REPORT HOW HE EARNED IT.)

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TOP LEADERSHIP NOT INVOLVED  
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10. GRANMA ESSENTIALLY DENIED THE TOP GOC LEADERSHIP -- FIDEL CASTRO AND HIS BROTHER RAUL -- WERE AT ALL

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INVOLVED OR APPROVED OF THE NARCOTRAFFICKING, ALTHOUGH  
THE PAPER CONCEDES THAT IMPRESSION MAY EXIST. GRANMA  
NOTES AT ONE POINT THAT OCHOA "DOUBTLESS WOULD HAVE  
SAID HE WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE GOC." IT ALSO SAYS

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THE CARTEL "COULD SUPPOSE -- AS MARTINEZ RECOGNIZES --  
THAT 'HIS BOSSES' WERE TOP LEADERS OF THE CUBAN  
REVOLUTION." GRANMA ADDS, IN REFERRING TO CASTRO'S

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CALL FOR AN INVESTIGATION IN APRIL, "THERE WAS NO QUESTION EITHER THAT SOME PEOPLE WOULD TRY TO TRICK THE NARCOTRAFFICKERS BY PRESENTING THEMSELVES AS HAVING INFLUENCE AND CAPABILITIES (PERSPECTIVAS) TO COOPERATE WITH THEM." THE CLEAR MESSAGE THROUGHOUT THE EDITORIAL, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE CASTROS WERE NOT AT ALL INVOLVED AND WERE SHOCKED TO FIND OUT ABOUT OCHOA AND DE LA GUARDIA'S ACTIONS.

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SOME CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS REVEALED  
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11. IN EXPLAINING HOW THE TRAFFICKERS COVERED UP THEIR NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, GRANMA REVEALED SEVERAL MINOR BUT INTERESTING ASPECTS OF GOC CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS. TONY DE LA GUARDIA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD CREATED THE STORY THAT TRANSFER NEAR CIENFUEGOS WAS AN OPERATION OF MININT'S "MC" DEPARTMENT -- WHICH GRANMA SAYS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACQUIRING U.S. PRODUCTS IN CIRCUMVENTION OF THE U.S. EMBARGO AGAINST CUBA. (GRANMA SAYS THE ACTIVITIES OF MC, WHICH USED TO BE DESIGNATED DEPARTMENT "Z," ARE "ABSOLUTELY JUST AND MORAL.") MC REPORTEDLY HAD CONNECTIONS WITH U.S. CITIZENS WHO HAD BOATS AND PLANES CAPABLE OF CARRYING NEEDED GOODS TO CUBA FOR THE GOC. THE PAPER ALSO SAYS THAT IT WAS AN MC OFFICER IN PANAMA, MIGUEL RUIZ, WHO FACILITATED TONY DE LA GUARDIA'S FIRST CONTACT WITH NARCO-TRAFFICKERS.

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PRAISE FOR GOC; CONFIDENCE EVENTS WILL NOT BE REPEATED  
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12. GRANMA SAYS THE DRUG SCANDAL HAS BEEN A MAJOR BLOW TO THE COUNTRY, AN INSULT TO THE HONOR AND PURITY OF THE REVOLUTION. THE PAPER SAYS THE OCHOA AND DE LA GUARDIA GROUPS HAVE ENDANGERED NOT JUST THE NATION'S PRESTIGE BUT ITS SECURITY AS WELL. GRANMA EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT "ONLY A REVOLUTIONARY COUNTRY LIKE CUBA" CAN APPROACH THIS PROBLEM WITH SUCH "CLARITY AND COURAGE." CUBA HAS ONE OF THE CLEANEST POLITICAL PROCESSES IN HISTORY. IN ADDITION, GRANMA CLAIMS NARCOTICS ARE NOT PRODUCED AND DRUG ABUSE IS "PRACTICALLY NONEXISTENT" IN CUBA.

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13. GRANMA PREDICTS THE GOC'S INVESTIGATION (AND PRESUMABLY PUNISHMENT OF THE GUILTY OFFICERS) WILL MAKE IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT FOR SUCH NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING TO HAPPEN HERE AGAIN. THE PEOPLE, FAR AND MININT "WILL NOW BE MUCH MORE ALERT," THE PAPER SAYS. THE TRAFFICKERS ALSO NOW KNOW CUBA WILL NOT TOLERATE THE NARCOTICS TRADE, ACCORDING TO GRANMA.

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14. GRANMA BRIEFLY CRITICIZES THE U.S., ON THE OTHER HAND, FOR NOT KNOWING HOW TO COMBAT THE CONSUMPTION OF DRUGS. THE PAPER ALLEGES THAT U.S. ACTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA TO STOP NARCOTICS PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING HAVE BEEN "ONLY OF A REPRESSIVE CHARACTER."  
TAYLOR

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