

ENVELOPE

CDSN = CFS723 MCN = 96120/29395 TOR = 961202304
RTTSZYUW RUEKJCS1148 1202304-SSSS--RUEALGX.
ZNY SSSSS

HEADER

R 292304Z APR 96
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC
INFO RUEADWD/OCSA WASHINGTON DC
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC
RUEACMC/CMC WASHINGTON DC

[REDACTED]

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RUEHC /SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

[REDACTED]

RUDMGRD/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN WASHINGTON DC
RUDMONI/ONI WASHINGTON DC
RUDHNIS/DIRNAVCRIMINSERV WASHINGTON DC//NAVATAC/22//
RUEALGX/SAFE
R 292155Z APR 96

[REDACTED]

TO RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC

(b)(2)

[REDACTED]

BT

CONTROLS

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 03 [REDACTED]

(b)(2)

SECRET

SERIAL: (U) IIR [REDACTED]

(b)(2)

/***** THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE *****/

BODY

COUNTRY: (U) COLOMBIA (CO); PANAMA (PM); VENEZUELA
(VE).

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SUBJ: IIR [REDACTED] COLAR 17TH BRIGADE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE URABA ANTIOQUIA REGION (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT

FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 960401.

[REDACTED]

(b)(2)

SUMMARY: ~~(C)~~ THE 17TH COLOMBIAN ARMY BRIGADE IS LOCATED IN THE **URABA** ANTIOQUIA REGION AND IS SUBORDINATE TO THE 1ST COLAR DIVISION. IT INCLUDES TWO INFANTRY, TWO COUNTERGUERRILLA, AND ONE MILITARY POLICE BATTALIONS.

TEXT: 1. ~~(C)~~ THE 17TH COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) BRIGADE (BDE) IS LOCATED IN THE **URABA** ANTIOQUIA REGION AND IS SUBORDINATE TO THE 1ST COLAR DIVISION. IT IS HEADQUARTERED IN CAREPA / [REDACTED] (ANTIOQUIA) AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NORTHERN ANTIOQUIA **URABA** REGION AS WELL AS THE NORTHERN CHOCO REGION THAT BORDERS PANAMA. (b)(2)

2. ~~(C)~~ THE 17TH BDE HAS TWO INFANTRY, TWO COUNTERGUERRILLA, AND ONE MILITARY POLICE BATTALIONS ASSIGNED TO IT. IT ALSO HAS AN ENGINEER COMPANY, A CAVALRY SQUADRON, AN ANTIKIDNAPPING AND EXTORTION UNIT (UNASE), AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICES COMPANY.
3. ~~(C)~~ VELEZ INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 47 HAS THE WESTERN AND SOUTHERN AREA SURROUNDING THE GULF OF **URABA**. VOLTIGUERROS INFANTRY BATTALION NO. 46 HAS THE EASTERN AREA SURROUNDING THE GULF OF **URABA**. COUNTERGUERRILLA BATTALION NO. 33 AND 35 ARE USED THROUGHOUT THE BDE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. MILITARY POLICE BATTALION NO. 17, THE ENGINEER COMPANY, AND THE CAVALRY SQUADRON ARE USED IN THE MAJOR URBAN AREAS IN THE BDE'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.
4. ~~(C)~~ THE CAVALRY SQUADRON IS PART OF RONDON CAVALRY GROUP NO. 2, WHICH IS ASSIGNED TO THE 2D DIVISION. THIS CAVALRY GROUP PATROLS THE EXISTING ROAD NETWORK ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE GULF OF **URABA**, WHICH IS THE MOST DEVELOPED AREA AND WHERE THE BANANA PLANTATIONS ARE LOCATED. THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE GULF HAS NO ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE. MOVEMENT ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE GULF IS BY RIVER, HELICOPTER, OR FOOT. THE BDE HAS NO

HELICOPTERS ORGANIC TO IT AND RELY ON AN MI-8 FROM THE 1ST DIVISION, WHICH IS USED FOR RESUPPLY.

5. ~~(c)~~ BDE UNITS ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT ITS JURISDICTION IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER IN THE AREA. REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC), THROUGH ITS POLITICAL ARM, THE "UNION PATRIOTICA" (PATRIOTIC UNION OR UP) PARTY, AND EX-POPULAR LIBERATION ARMY (EPL) GUERRILLAS, WHO MAKE UP THE "ESPERANZA, PAZ, Y LIBERTAD" (HOPE, PEACE, AND LIBERTY) PARTY, ARE FIGHTING EACH OTHER FOR CONTROL OF UNIONS AND POLITICS IN THE BANANA AREA.

6. ~~(c)~~ PLANTATIONS AND AREAS ARE DIVIDED BY POLITICAL FOLLOWINGS. THE "UP" HAD CONTROLLED THE UNIONS, BUT THE NEW EPL PARTY HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT GAINS. ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF BANANA PLANTATIONS NORTH OF APARTADO

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██████████ HAVE "UP" PARTY MEMBERS AS WORKERS AND THE EPL HAS THE OTHER 50 PERCENT. THIS HAS RESULTED IN FARC MASSACRES AGAINST EPL PARTY MEMBERS TO INTIMIDATE THEM INTO NOT SUPPORTING THE EPL PARTY. WORKERS FROM ONE PARTY CANNOT WORK WITH WORKERS FROM THE OPPOSITION. BANANA WORKERS MAKE APPROXIMATELY 400,000 PESOS (USD 400.00) PER MONTH, WHICH IS A VERY GOOD SALARY FOR UNEDUCATED PEASANTS IN COLOMBIA. FAMILIES IN THE AREA NORMALLY HAVE 5-6 CHILDREN.

7. ~~(c)~~ ANOTHER GROUP THAT THE ARMY HAS TO CONTEND WITH ARE "PRIVATE JUSTICE" OR "PARAMILITARY" GROUPS. THESE GROUPS FIGHT SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS IN THE AREA. THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PARAMILITARY AND SUBVERSIVE GROUPS IS TO THE DEATH. THE BDE COMMANDER, BG RITO ALEJO ((DEL RIO)) ROJAS, STATED THAT PARAMILITARIES ARE THE ONLY INDIVIDUALS THAT SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS FEAR. HOWEVER, THE ARMY DOES NOT SUPPORT PARAMILITARIES.

8. ~~(c)~~ BG DEL RIO ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ALL FACTIONS FROM KILLING EACH OTHER. HOWEVER, HIS TASK IS VERY DIFFICULT SINCE HE MUST TRY TO KEEP UNIONS, WORKERS, AND OWNERS ALL WORKING TOGETHER. FIVE BANANA PLANTATIONS RECENTLY WENT BANKRUPT DUE TO UNION WORKER STRIKES. WORKERS THREATENED TO INVADRE THESE PLANTATIONS AND COLONIZE THE LAND. DEL RIO WAS CURRENTLY TRYING TO PREVENT THIS SINCE IT WOULD CAUSE A SOCIAL NIGHTMARE FOR THE ARMY.

9. ~~(c)~~ THE BDE AND UNIT INSTALLATIONS WERE NOT WELL KEPT AS UNIT SOLDIERS WERE DEPLOYED IN THE AREA

ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN PEACE. UNITS ARE DEPLOYED IN PLATOON OR COMPANY SIZE ELEMENTS AT STRATEGIC POINTS FROM WHICH THEY OPERATE. THE WESTERN PART OF THE SECTOR ON THE BORDER WITH PANAMA HAS VERY LITTLE ARMY PRESENCE. THE PANAMA-COLOMBIA BORDER IS COMPLETELY OPEN. ONLY RECENTLY DID THE ARMY DEPLOY A COMPANY SIZE ELEMENT TO ACANDI [REDACTED] TO ATTEMPT TO DENY FARC ELEMENTS TOTAL ACCESS TO THIS AREA.

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[REDACTED]

10. ~~(C)~~ CAPURGANA / [REDACTED] LOCATED ON THE GULF COAST, IS REPORTEDLY A LOCAL REGIONAL TOURIST AREA WHERE TRAFFICKERS, NARCOGUERRILLAS, AND OTHER ANTIOQUIA BUSINESSMEN GO FOR REST AND RELAXATION. THIS COASTAL VILLAGE HAS A GOOD TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE WITH NICE BEACHES AND IS ACCESSIBLE BY BOAT OR AIR ONLY.

11. ~~(C)~~ VELEZ INFANTRY BATTALION TROOPS DEPLOY INTO THE NORTHERN CHOCO REGION ONLY TO ATTACK SUSPECTED OBJECTIVES AND ONLY WHEN HELICOPTER SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE. BG DEL RIO STATED THAT UNITS DO NOT STAY IN THE AREA SINCE TO DO SO WOULD MEAN DEATH FOR HIS TROOPS. TROOPS HAVE TO FIGHT SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS AS WELL AS NATURE. A PREVALENT DISEASE IN THE AREA IS "PITO OR "LEISMANIASIS" [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

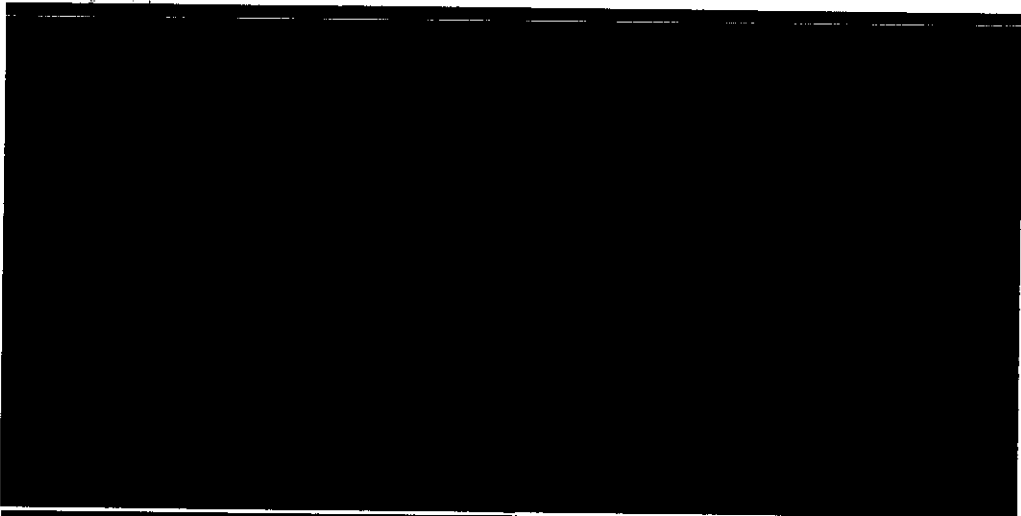
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12. ~~(C)~~ VELEZ INFANTRY BATTALION TROOPS AVOID THE PANAMA-COLOMBIA BORDER SINCE IT IS NOT CLEARLY MARKED. PATROLS AVOID CONTACT WITH PANAMA UNITS TO NOT CAUSE ANY TYPE OF BORDER INCIDENT. THE VELEZ BATTALION COMMANDER STATED THAT AN INCURSION INTO PANAMA, EVEN IF ACCIDENTAL, WOULD GIVE THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT MORE JUSTIFICATION FOR "HOT PURSUIT," WHICH VIOLATES COLOMBIAN SOVEREIGNTY. COMMENTS: 1. (U) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(b)(2)

(b)(1)



(b)(1)



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(b)(2)

ADMIN



INSTR: (U) U.S. NO.

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WARNING: (U) REPORT CLASSIFIED ~~SECRET~~.

DRV FROM: DIA/DHD MSG 291330Z JAN 96

DECL ON: X1

BT

#1150

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