

PTQ6334

RELEASE IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ6334

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ACTION ARA-01

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| INFO | LOG-00 | ACDA-17 | ACDE-00 | AID-01 | CIAE-00 | INL-02 | DEAE-00 |
| | OASY-00 | DINT-01 | DODE-00 | DOEE-00 | EB-01 | OIGO-01 | FBIE-00 |
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| | ADS-00 | M-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OIC-02 | OMB-01 | PA-01 |
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P 212153Z MAR 95
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8175
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY QUITO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 003714

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, PINR, SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH GOVERNOR OF ANTIOQUIA

REF: BOGOTA 3345

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE-TEXT.

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SUMMARY

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Marvin Russell, Senior Reviewer

2. IN CONJUNCTION WITH A VISIT TO MEDELLIN ORGANIZED BY THE FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE AND THE MEDELLIN COLOMBIAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE AMBASSADOR MET MARCH 14 FOR APPROXIMATELY 90 MINUTES WITH ALVARO URIBE VELEZ, RECENTLY-ELECTED GOVERNOR OF THE DEPARTMENT (STATE) OF ANTIOQUIA. THE GOVERNOR (SEE BIO INFORMATION AT PARA 14) AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF OUTLINED PLANS TO DEAL WITH VIOLENCE, NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, KIDNAPPING AND OTHER SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN ANTIOQUIA. THE AMBASSADOR SUMMARIZED THE AREAS IN WHICH THE USG EXPECTS MORE EFFICACY AND GREATER COUNTER NARCOTICS COOPERATION FROM THE GOC, AND THE AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN COOPERATE. A SECOND PART OF THE CONVERSATION (SEPTTEL) DEALT WITH FOREIGN INVESTMENT, TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM IN ANTIOQUIA. END SUMMARY.

FRANK DISCUSSION OF COLOMBIAN-U.S. COOPERATION

3. AFTER A VISIT TO THE NEW RIO NEGRO AIR FORCE BASE, AMBASSADOR AND HIS PARTY WERE TRANSPORTED DOWN TO MEDELLIN BY HELICOPTER AND DRIVEN TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE, AMID VERY TIGHT SECURITY PROCEDURES. GOVERNOR ALVARO URIBE VELEZ RECEIVED THE EMBASSY PARTY IN A LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM, AND INTRODUCED THEM TO HIS CLOSEST ASSOCIATES AND TO THE MILITARY/POLICE SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE TEAM WITH WHICH HE WORKS CLOSELY. THE GOVERNOR EXPLAINED THAT ALTHOUGH PABLO ESCOBAR IS DEAD AND THE SECURITY SITUATION IN MEDELLIN HAS IMPROVED SOMEWHAT, ONE OF HIS GREATEST
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CONCERNS IS STILL IMPROVING THE SECURITY SITUATION AND COMBATTING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING. HE ADDED THAT A HIGH PRIORITY IS ERADICATING ALL ILLICIT CROPS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIOQUIA, AND THAT DEFENSE MINISTER BOTERO HAS ASSURED HIM THAT ERADICATION WILL BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S PLANS. GOVERNOR URIBE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR IF THE USG COULD HELP PROVIDE AIRCRAFT OR HELICOPTERS FOR SPRAYING, OR AT LEAST PUT THEM IN TOUCH WITH A PRIVATE FIRM THAT WORKS IN THAT AREA. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE EMBASSY

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TO ASSIST DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNMENTS, BUT COULD PROVIDE
INFORMATION AND ASSURED THE GOVERNOR THAT THE USG WAS
BEHIND HIS EFFORTS ALL THE WAY. HE ADDED THAT THE ECONOMIC
CONSEQUENCES FOR THE GOC AND FOR COLOMBIA OF
DECERTIFICATION FOR POOR ANTI-NARCOTICS PERFORMANCE, WOULD
BE SERIOUS, AND DESCRIBED THEM IN SOME DETAIL.

4. IN RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNOR'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS, THE
AMBASSADOR ADDRESSED THE BROAD ISSUE OF BILATERAL
COOPERATION IN THE ANTI-NARCOTICS STRUGGLE. HE ASSURED THE
GOVERNOR THAT BILATERAL COOPERATION WILL CONTINUE, DESPITE
DOUBTS GENERATED LOCALLY BY MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE
CERTIFICATION PROCESS, BUT INSISTED THAT THE COLOMBIAN
JUDICIAL SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED, WHICH IN
TURN WOULD GIVE RISE TO GREATER U.S. CONFIDENCE AND
COOPERATION, INCLUDING PERHAPS A RENEWAL OF EVIDENCE
SHARING. THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THE NEED FOR BETTER
AIRPORT SECURITY, ESPECIALLY IN CALI AND SAN ANDRES, AND
THE URGENT NEED TO STOP THE LARGE NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS THAT
ARE TRANSITING THOSE AIRPORTS WITH IMPUNITY.

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5. THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE ISSUE OF REWARDS BEING
CONTEMPLATED BY THE GOC FOR THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF
VALLE DEL CAUCA TRAFFICKERS (REFTEL), NOTING THAT THE USG
IS STUDYING WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN COOPERATE WITH THIS
EFFORT, PERHAPS HELPING TO PROVIDE REWARD MONIES.

6. ON ERADICATION, THE AMBASSADOR INFORMED GOVERNOR URIBE
THAT HE PLANS TO MEET LATER IN THE WEEK WITH DEFENSE
MINISTER BOTERO TO DISCUSS GOC OPERATIONS AND GOALS. HE
ADDED THAT NEW STATISTICS ON THE NUMBER OF HECTARES PLANTED
IN POPPY AND AMAPOLA SUGGEST THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR
THE GOC TO ERADICATE "ALL" COCA AND POPPY CULTIVATION IN
COLOMBIA. THE AMBASSADOR ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE USG IS
WILLING TO NEGOTIATE NEW AGREEMENTS ON ERADICATION WITH THE
GOC, WITH A VIEW TO PROVIDING HELICOPTERS, MONEY FOR FUEL
AND LOCALLY-PRODUCED GLIPHOSATE, PILOT TRAINING AND FUNDS
TO HIRE COLOMBIAN PILOTS. HE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY HAS
BEEN PRESSING FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT SINCE LATE LAST YEAR,
AND THAT THE GOAL OF ERADICATING 60,000 PLUS HECTARES COULD

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BE ACCOMPLISHED IN TWO YEARS. HE STRESSED TO THE GOVERNOR,
HOWEVER, THE NEED TO SET REALISTIC GOALS AND MEET THEM,
NOTING THAT LAST WEEK HE HAD MET WITH EUROPEAN
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNDCP, WHO EXPRESSED A GREAT DEAL OF
SKEPTICISM ABOUT COLOMBIA'S ABILITY TO REACH ITS
ERADICATION OBJECTIVES. FINALLY, HE SPECULATED THAT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BOGOTA 003714

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR

TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PHUM, PINR, SNAR, CO

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH GOVERNOR OF ANTIOQUIA

PRESIDENT SAMPER'S FOUR-NATION VISIT TO EUROPE (WHICH ENDED MARCH 14) MAY PROVIDE HIM WITH A MORE ACCURATE VISION OF EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD COLOMBIA'S DRUG PROBLEM AND MORE REALISM IN SETTING AND MEETING ANTI-NARCOTICS GOALS.

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7. RETURNING TO THE CERTIFICATION ISSUE, THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED TO URIBE THAT WHILE THE AMOUNTS OF U.S. ASSISTANCE UNDER THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT THAT MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY AN EVENTUAL DECERTIFICATION OF COLOMBIA WERE NOT LARGE. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT MUCH OF THIS ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS THAT PROVIDED BY THE DEA, WAS NOT OPERATIONAL -- CONTRARY TO THE IMAGINATIVE ACCOUNTS APPEARING IN THE COLOMBIAN MEDIA -- BUT RATHER IN THE AREAS OF INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPMENT AND EXCHANGE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT. THE AMBASSADOR THEN DESCRIBED THE ECONOMIC AND TRADE EFFECTS OF A DECERTIFICATION, WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THIS YEAR OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL BE ABLE TO "FINE TUNE" OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS COOPERATION IN ORDER TO MAKE IT FAR MORE EFFECTIVE.

8. ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND SOME GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS, RAISED BY THE GOVERNOR, THE AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF USING EFFECTIVELY THE INTELLIGENCE GENERATED THROUGH JOINT COOPERATION. GIVEN THE PERISHABLE NATURE OF MUCH OF THIS INFORMATION, HE STRESSED THE NEED TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS AND SEIZE THE MOMENT. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON TAKING A MORE PROACTIVE ROLE IN EDUCATING AND STAYING IN CONTACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS.

9. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THE GOVERNOR THAT INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, RECENTLY STRESSED BY THE GOC IN ITS REACTION TO THE

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WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE VIENNA CONVENTION, SPECIFICALLY
PASSING THE LAW NOW PENDING IN CONGRESS ON CORRUPTION AND
LAUNDERING OF NARCODOLLARS, AND ENACTING LEGISLATION AIMED
AT THE SEIZURE OF ILL-GOTTEN ASSETS FROM NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKERS. HE STRESSED THAT COLOMBIA'S EFFORTS WILL NOT
BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY UNTIL
THIS HAPPENS, AND POINTED OUT THE PROGRESS MADE BY OTHER
COUNTRIES IN THESE AREAS.

SECURITY, DRUGS AND THUGS

10. RESPONDING TO THE AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS, GOVERNOR URIBE
MADE A BLUNT APPEAL FOR DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE
DEPARTMENTAL GOVERNMENT OF ANTIOQUIA IN MEETING THE
CHALLENGE POSED BY THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE
TRAFFICKERS AND GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS, CHARACTERIZING
THEM AS "INSEPARABLE." HE SAID THAT, AS A LEFTIST LEANING
STUDENT IN THE LATE 60S, HE WAS CONVINCED OF THE
IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE IN
COLOMBIA, BUT THAT TODAY HE IS CONVINCED THAT THEY ARE --
WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS -- LITTLE MORE THAN HIRED THUGS. HE
SAID THAT THE GUERRILLA BANDS IN ANTIOQUIA PROVIDE SECURITY
FOR THE LABS AND TRAFFICKING NETWORKS, AND GET RICH
KIDNAPPING INNOCENT CITIZENS. HE CHARACTERIZED KIDNAPPING
AS A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM.

11. SPEAKING BLUNTLY, THE GOVERNOR TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT
HE HAD THREE YEARS (HIS TERM) TO REVERSE THIS SITUATION,
AND THAT HE NEEDED HELP. HE AND HIS SECURITY PEOPLE
ELABORATED THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT NEEDS HELICOPTERS;

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THAT THE POLICE NEED DESPATCHING EQUIPMENT, RADIOS, AND
VEHICLES TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF DELINQUENCY; AND
ASSISTANCE IN MOUNTING SOCIAL SOLIDARITY PROGRAMS THAT WILL
REDUCE THE APPEAL OF THE TRAFFICKERS, THE GUERRILLAS AND
THE ORDINARY DELINQUENTS FOR ANTIOQUIA'S DESPERATE YOUTH.

12. THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE THEN
PROCEEDED TO EXPLAIN AN ELABORATE SERIES OF CHARTS THAT HAD
BEEN PREPARED TO DESCRIBE THE GOVERNOR'S STRATEGY FOR
COMBATTING DELINQUENCY, TERRORISM AND CRIME IN ANTIOQUIA.
THESE INCLUDE HOT LINES, 800 NUMBERS AND SPECIAL MAIL BOXES
TO DENOUNCE CORRUPTION; STRENGTHENING OF THE DEPARTMENT'S
124 MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS; LOBBYING FOR THE CREATION OF A
SPECIAL ANTI-TERRORISM MILITARY UNIT AT THE RIO NEGRO
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT; AND CREATING A SOCIAL SOLIDARITY
NETWORK TO PROVIDE GREATER SERVICES IN HEALTH, EDUCATION,
RECREATION, JOBS AND SECURITY. THE GOVERNOR AND HIS
SECURITY TEAM MEET EVERY MORNING AT 7:30 TO EVALUATE
REPORTS AND PLAN STRATEGIES, BUT -- THE GOVERNOR LAMENTED
-- HE IS NOT GETTING MUCH HELP FROM THE GOVERNMENT IN
BOGOTA. HE LAMENTED THAT MEDELLIN, LIKE COLOMBIA, LACKS
CREDIBILITY, THAT THEIR IMAGES ARE VERY SERIOUSLY
TARNISHED, AND VOWED THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD REVERSE
THIS TREND. HE THEN SPOKE OF THE NEED TO RESTORE TOLERANCE
IN A HIGHLY POLARIZED SOCIETY AND RECOVER FAMILY VALUES,

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INFO LOG-00 ACDA-17 ACDE-00 AID-01 CIAE-00 INL-02 DEAE-00
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ADS-00 M-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01
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P 212153Z MAR 95
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8177
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BOGOTA 003714

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NOTING THAT THERE ARE OVER 200,000 FAMILIES IN ANTIOQUIA
HEADED BY SINGLE MOTHERS, LARGELY THE RESULT OF
NARCO-GUERRILLA OPERATIONS.

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13. SHIFTING HIS FOCUS, THE GOVERNOR THEN TOLD THE
AMBASSADOR THAT THE TWO MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES HE
CURRENTLY FACES ARE THE CREATION AND FINANCING OF THE
PROPOSED SOCIAL SOLIDARITY NETWORK, AND AERIAL CROP
SPRAYING, TO WHICH HE IS TOTALLY COMMITTED. HE ADDED THAT
IN THE SOCIAL AREA, HE IS FACED WITH A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF
JUVENILE DELINQUENCY -- INCLUDING PARTICIPATION OF MINORS
IN KIDNAPPING, PROTECTION OF DRUG LABS AND FIELDS, AND THE
SALE OF NARCOTICS -- THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COURTS ARE

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ILL-PREPARED TO DEAL WITH. AS MINORS, THERE IS LITTLE THAT THE COURTS CAN DO BUT RELEASE THEM, WHILE THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO OFFER REHABILITATION AND EDUCATIONAL/JOB OPPORTUNITIES TO GET THESE KIDS OFF THE STREETS. FINALLY, IN THE JUDICIAL AREA, THE GOVERNOR LAMENTED THE LACK OF DILIGENCE BY NATIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN IMPLEMENTING AND ENFORCING THE 1991 CONSTITUTION, WHOSE IDEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVE WAS TO BREAK DOWN THE REGIONAL AND PARTISAN BARRIERS THAT SEPARATE COLOMBIANS AND HELP SOCIETY MOVE TOWARD GREATER INTEGRATION AND TOLERANCE. HE LAMENTED THAT THE FISCALIA, IN HIS VIEW, HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY INEFFICIENT IN FULFILLING ITS NEW MANDATE UNDER THE 1991 CHARTER.

A YOUNG LEADER WITH A ROSY FUTURE

14. URIBE VELEZ (42) WAS THE YOUNGEST MAYOR IN MEDELLIN'S HISTORY AND -- ALTHOUGH NOT COMPLETELY WITHOUT TARNISH -- IS A BRIGHT STAR IN THE LIBERAL PARTY FIRMAMENT. A LAWYER BY TRAINING WITH A SPECIALIZATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS, URIBE IS SCION OF A

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POLITICALLY PROMINENT MEDELLIN FAMILY, AND BEGAN HIS CAREER IN THE MEDELLIN JUNIOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. IN 1980 LIBERAL PRESIDENT JULIO CESAR TURBAY AYALA NAMED THE YOUNG LABOR LAWYER DIRECTOR OF CIVIL AVIATION, AND THE FOLLOWING YEAR HE WAS NAMED ONE OF COLOMBIA'S MOST PROMISING YOUNG EXECUTIVES OF THE YEAR. IN 1982 HE WAS APPOINTED MAYOR OF MEDELLIN, AT A TIME WHEN COLOMBIA'S SECOND LARGEST CITY WAS FACING WHAT WAS PERHAPS ITS WORST ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE CENTURY. HE WAS ASKED TO RESIGN BY THE GOVERNOR FOUR MONTHS LATER. URIBE RETURNED TO BOGOTA IN EARLY 1983 AND WAS APPOINTED VICE MINISTER OF LABOR BY TURBAY AYALA. SUBSEQUENTLY, HE WAS ELECTED SENATOR FOR ANTIOQUIA, A POSITION HE HELD FOR SEVEN YEARS. HIS MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO LEGISLATION WERE THE LABOR AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM LAWS OF 1991. IN A HARD FOUGHT RACE HE WON THE GOVERNORSHIP OF HIS HOME DEPARTMENT IN OCTOBER 1994, AND WAS INSTALLED JANUARY 2, 1995. BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY 1952, URIBE VELEZ WAS THE RECIPIENT OF A

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VOLUNTARY VISITOR PROGRAM FOR COLOMBIA IN 1988 AND
SUBSEQUENTLY TOOK A SIX-MONTH COURSE IN THE HARVARD
UNIVERSITY BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM. HE TOLD THE
AMBASSADOR THAT HE HAS INVITED PROFESSOR ROGER FISHER OF
HARVARD TO COME TO MEDELLIN IN APRIL TO CONDUCT A CONFLICT
RESOLUTION SEMINAR FOR SOME 200 COMMUNITY LEADERS, BASED ON
HIS WIDELY RECOGNIZED "GETTING TO YES" TECHNIQUE. THE
GOVERNOR INVITED A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EMBASSY TO ATTEND
THE SEMINAR. URIBE IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER LINA MARIA
MORENO, AND HAS TWO SONS, TOMAS AND JERONIMO.

15. LIKE MANY PROMINENT COLOMBIAN POLITICIANS, URIBE VELEZ
IS SUSPECTED OF HAVING HAD PERIPHERAL INVOLVEMENT WITH
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COLOMBIA'S NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING INDUSTRY. EMBASSY
REPORTING FROM 1992 DESCRIBES URIBE'S UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT
TO NOMINATE, IN A PARTY CAUCUS, A PERSON ASSOCIATED WITH A
KNOWN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING FAMILY AS LIBERAL CANDIDATE FOR
THE MAYORALTY ELECTIONS IN MEDELLIN. WHEN THAT EFFORT
FAILED, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, URIBE THEN PROPOSED THE
CANDIDACY OF AN UNCLE OF DECEASED MEDELLIN NARCOTICS CZAR
PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA, WHICH WAS ALSO SHOT DOWN. ACCORDING
TO ANOTHER EMBASSY REPORT, IN 1993 URIBE AND TWO OTHERS MET
WITH THE WIFE OF NARCOTICS CAPO PABLO ESCOBAR TO TRY TO
NEGOTIATE HIS SURRENDER, A MEETING FACILITATED BY URIBE'S
ALLEGED ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE FAMILY. ANOTHER LIBERAL
PARTY POLITICIAN TOLD THE REPORTING OFFICER THAT URIBE IS
RELQD TO THE OCHOA VAZQUEZ FAMILY, SOME OF WHOSE MEMBERS
ARE CURRENTLY SERVING TIME ON NARCOTICS CONVICTIONS, THAT
URIBE RECEIVED CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THEM, AND THAT
HE FEARED FOR HIS LIFE FOR NOT HAVING "DELIVERED."
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