

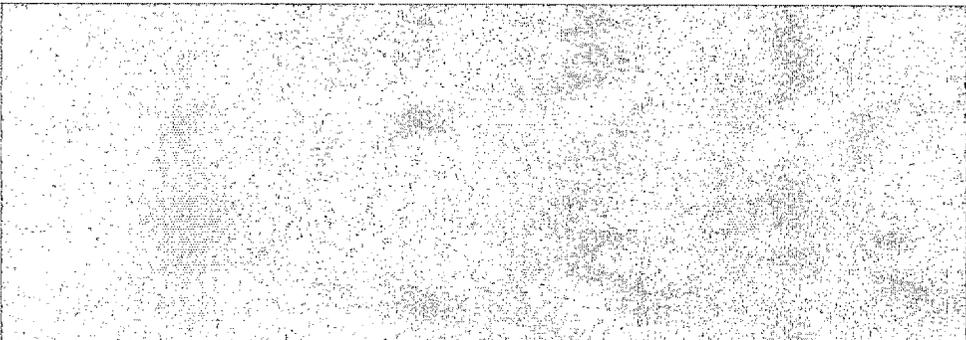
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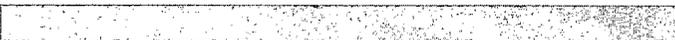
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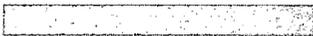


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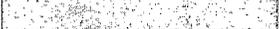
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CONTROLS

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SERIAL: (U) IIR 

(b)(2) (b)(3);
10 USC 424

61121

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

(b)(2),(b)(3):
10 USC 424

BODY

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

SUBJ: IIR [REDACTED] COLOMBIAN PROSECUTOR COMMENTS ON
PARAMILITARIES IN URABA (U)

WARNING: (U) THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT
FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE. REPORT CLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

DOI: (U) 961120; 961126.

REQS: (U) (b)(2) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

D. (U) (b)(2) [REDACTED]

SUMMARY: ~~(C)~~ [REDACTED]

AGREE THAT ILLEGAL PARAMILITARIES IN THE URABA REGION OF
ANTIOQUIA HAVE BECOME A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES, AND
CONSTITUTE A POTENTIALLY GREATER THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT
THAN DO THE GUERRILLAS.

TEXT: 1. ~~(C)~~ [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE ILLEGAL PARAMILITARY GROUPS IN THE
URABA REGION OF ANTIOQUIA HAVE BECOME A LAW UNTO
THEMSELVES. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE PHENOMENON OF PARAMILITARY

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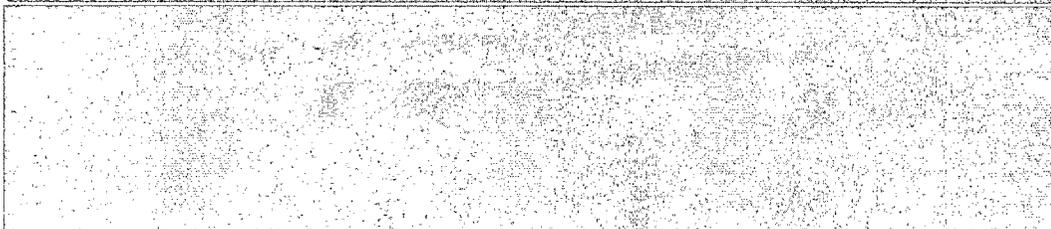
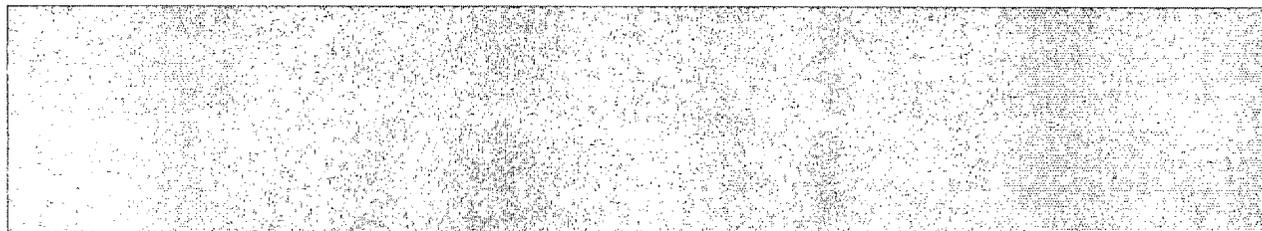
GROUPS IN COLOMBIA IS NOT A RECENT DEVELOPMENT. IT GOES BACK TO THE EARLIEST DAYS OF COLOMBIAN HISTORY BECAUSE OF THE IMMENSE SIZE OF THE COUNTRY, ITS GEOGRAPHIC COMPARTMENTALIZATION, AND THE RELATIVELY LOW POPULATION DENSITY, IT HAS BEEN HISTORICALLY DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY IN MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. NATURALLY, IN THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS TO ENFORCE THE LAW AND PROVIDE SECURITY, CITIZENS HAVE TENDED TO BAND TOGETHER TO PROTECT THEIR COMMON INTERESTS, OFTEN BY ESTABLISHING THEIR OWN LOCAL GROUPS TO COMBAT BANDITRY AND LAWLESSNESS (NOT ENTIRELY UNLIKE HOME-GROWN VIGILANTE GROUPS ESTABLISHED IN THE U.S. IN THE 19TH CENTURY).

2. ~~(S)~~ [REDACTED] THIS HAS OCCURRED ON A LARGE SCALE IN **URABA**, [REDACTED] GRAVE DOUBTS THAT GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES HAVE THE MEANS TO CONTROL EITHER THE GUERRILLAS OR THE PARAMILITARIES. [REDACTED] INDICATED SEVERAL AREAS AROUND CAREPA WHERE [REDACTED] THE LOCAL INHABITANTS OPENLY SUPPORT THE PARAMILITARIES, REFUSING TO COOPERATE WITH GOC SECURITY FORCES IN ANY WAY. [REDACTED] SEVERAL AREAS IN THE SERRANIA (MOUNTAINS), [REDACTED] DESCRIBED AS "PURA GUERRILLA" (PURE GUERRILLA) COUNTRY. IN THE MIDST OF THESE "SEAS" OF GUERRILLA AND PARAMILITARY CONTROL, [REDACTED] THERE ARE A FEW SMALL "ISLANDS" MORE OR LESS CONTROLLED BY THE COLOMBIAN ARMY (COLAR) AND NATIONAL POLICE.

3. ~~(S)~~ [REDACTED] THE PARAMILITARIES' CONFRONTATION WITH THE FARC IN **URABA** IS BASICALLY A TURF WAR TO DETERMINE WHICH GROUP WILL CONTROL THE RICH BANANA-GROWING REGION (AND THE LUCRATIVE ILLICIT NARCOTICS OPERATIONS WITHIN IT). [REDACTED] CARLOS AND FIDEL ((CASTANO)), WHO CONTROL THE ACCU (AUTO-DEFENSAS OF CORDOBA AND **URABA**), ARE INDEED INVOLVED HEAVILY IN NARCOTRAFFICKING AND OTHER ILLICIT ENTERPRISES. [REDACTED] **BG RITO ALEJO ((DEL RIO)) ROJAS**, THE 17TH COLAR BRIGADE COMMANDER, WAS NOT HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE PARAMILITARIES AND THAT THE GENERAL HAD INDEED MADE THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM, IN WHICH HE STATED THAT THE PARAMILITARIES WERE A GREATER THREAT TO THE NATION THAN WERE THE GUERRILLAS.

(b)(1)
1. (S)
(b)(1) 1.4 (c)

(b)(1)
(b)(1) 1.4 (c)
(b)(1) 1.4 (c)



(b)(2)

4. (U) THE PARAMILITARY PHENOMENON HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS IN COLOMBIA. STARTING OUT AS LOCAL VIGILANTE GROUPS ORGANIZED TO COMBAT LAWLESSNESS AND BANDITRY IN THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT CONTROL, THESE ARMED GROUPS TOO OFTEN CAME TO BE CONTROLLED BY CORRUPT INDIVIDUALS WHO PUT THEIR OWN PRIVATE INTERESTS AHEAD OF THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND USED THESE "PARAMILITARIES" TO LIQUIDATE THEIR POLITICAL RIVALS AND ECONOMIC COMPETITORS. IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THE FORCE OF ARMS SUBSTITUTED FOR THE RULE OF LAW, THE LEADERS OF PARAMILITARY GROUPS BECAME LOCAL "CAUDILLOS," OR DICTATORS. THE ONLY WAY TO EFFECTIVELY OPPOSE THE EXCESSES OF SUCH CAUDILLOS WAS TO FORM A RIVAL PARAMILITARY GROUP AND BREAK THE CAUDILLO'S MONOPOLY ON THE USE OF FORCE AND COERCION. BY THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, MOST OF THE REGIONS OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL CITY HAD COME TO BE DOMINATED BY RIVAL PARAMILITARY GROUPS WHOSE SHIFTING ALLEGIANCES SOMETIMES SUPPORTED, AND MORE OFTEN RESISTED, THE ATTEMPTS OF THE GOVERNMENT IN BOGOTA TO IMPOSE ITS AUTHORITY IN OUTLYING DEPARTMENTS.

5. (U) WHILE THE PARAMILITARY RIVALRIES MOST OFTEN MANIFESTED THEMSELVES IN THE FORM OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE LIBERALS, MOST OF THE RIVALRIES HAD MORE TO DO WITH THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF COMPETITION FOR LOCAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DOMINATION THAN WITH THE ABSTRACT POLITICAL CONCEPTS OF FEDERALISM VERSUS CENTRALISM. THUS, IF ONE LOCAL CAUDILLO DECLARED HIMSELF TO BE A "CONSERVATIVE," HIS RIVAL WOULD NATURALLY DECLARE HIS HEARTFELT COMMITMENT TO THE "LIBERAL" CAUSE.

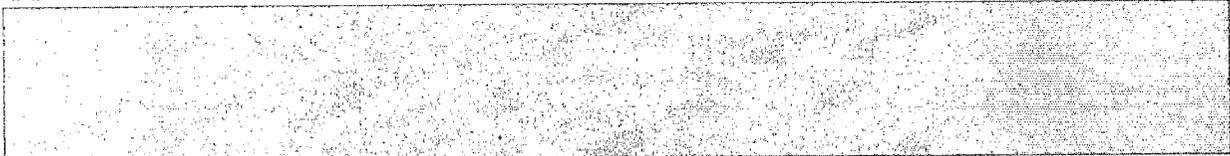
6. (U) IN 1899 THESE RIVALRIES WERE SET LOOSE IN THE

COUNTRYSIDE DURING THE "WAR OF A THOUSAND DAYS," IN WHICH AN ESTIMATED 100,000 COLOMBIANS WERE KILLED. TO PUT THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE, COLOMBIA'S TOTAL POPULATION AT THE TIME WAS ESTIMATED TO BE LESS THAN THREE MILLION PEOPLE. MOST OF THE BUTCHERY OCCURRED IN THE RURAL AREAS, WHERE RIVAL CAUDILLOS (USUALLY LAND-OWNING ELITES) MAINTAINED THEIR OWN PRIVATE ARMIES DEDICATED TO THE DUAL TASKS OF KEEPING THE LOCAL PEASANTRY IN LINE WHILE OPPOSING THE DEPRADATIONS OF RIVAL CAUDILLOS. UNDER THE HIGH-SOUNDING BANNERS OF POLITICAL CAUSES, THE LOCAL CAUDILLOS LIQUIDATED THEIR RIVALS, SETTLED OLD SCORES WITH THEIR PERSONAL ENEMIES, AND GENERALLY INSTITUTED A REIGN OF TERROR.

7. (U) AT THE SAME TIME, THE LIBERAL PARTY FACTION, WITH ITS ORGANIZED ARMY HAVING BEEN DEFEATED AT PALONEGRO, RESORTED TO GUERRILLA WARFARE. THUS, NEW GROUPS OF ARMED MEN EMERGED TO COMPETE WITH THE EXISTING PRIVATE ARMIES AND PARAMILITARIES AND WREAK HAVOC IN THE COLOMBIAN COUNTRYSIDE.

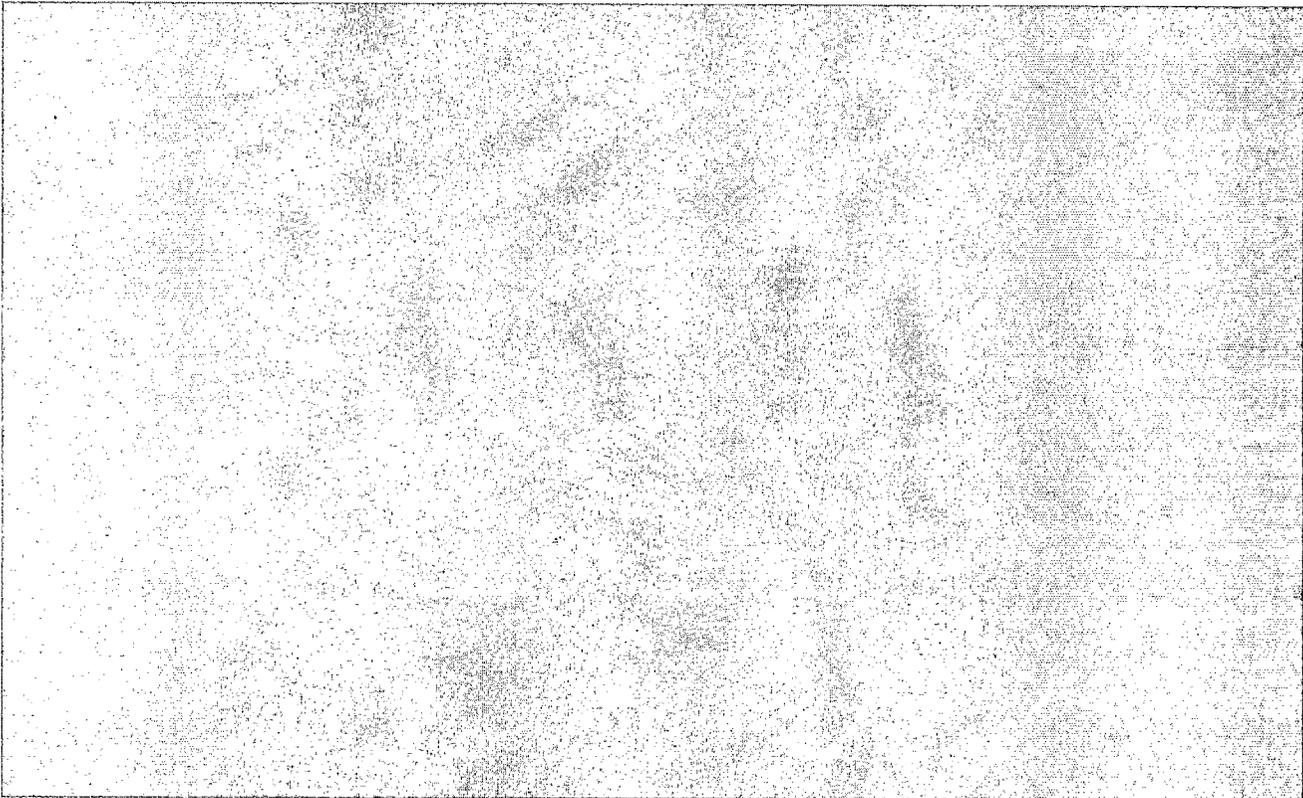
8. (U) THE SAME TYPE OF FACTIONAL CONFLICT ERUPTED IN COLOMBIA DURING "LA VIOLENCIA" (THE VIOLENCE), WHICH MOST SOURCES DATE FROM 1948-57 (SOME SOURCES INCLUDE A SECOND, LESS VIRULENT PHASE OF LA VIOLENCIA FROM 1958-65). DURING THE NINE-YEAR PERIOD OF "LA VIOLENCIA," POLITICAL VIOLENCE CLAIMED THE LIVES OF AN ESTIMATED 200,000 COLOMBIANS, MANY AT THE HANDS OF PRIVATE ARMIES AND PARAMILITARY OR GUERRILLA GROUPS OF BOTH PRINCIPAL FACTIONS.

9. ~~(S)~~ WHILE MILITARY CONNECTIONS TO THE PARAMILITARY GROUPS HAVE LONG BEEN SUSPECTED, AND WOULD BE LOGICAL TO ASSUME, HARD EVIDENCE IS DIFFICULT TO PRODUCE. IN PLACES LIKE URABA, WHERE PARAMILITARIES ARE FIGHTING THE GUERRILLAS FOR CONTROL OF LUCRATIVE NARCOTICS-PRODUCING OR CROSS-BORDER SMUGGLING AREAS, THE PARAMILITARIES MAY INDEED REJECT THE MILITARY'S ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL THEM. THE MILITARY'S INFLUENCE AND CONTROL OVER PARAMILITARIES THAT WE SO OFTEN LOGICALLY ASSUME TO EXIST MAY, IN FACT, BE TENUOUS AT BEST AND NON-EXISTENT IN SOME CASES.



(b)(1) 1.4 (c)

(b)(1) 1.4 (c)



[Redacted line]

ADMIN

[Redacted line]

INSTR: (U) U.S. NO.

[Redacted line]

(b)(2)

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

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