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OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

INFO MEMO

2003 AUG 10 AM 9:51

✓ 8/18
41

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: General Richard B. Myers, CJCS 8/15/03

SUBJECT: Hostages in Colombia (U)

- (U) In response to your question regarding what we should do about the DOD contract hostages in Colombia, the following is provided with USD(P) concurrence.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ The best option to secure the release of the hostages is to strengthen US assistance to the Colombian Government. This would increase Colombian military pressure on the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to sue for peace, release our men, or make a mistake that would lead to a rescue opportunity.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ The current policy approach outlined in NSPD-18 is starting to show successful results. The Colombian military is improving its capability to defeat the FARC as shown by increased joint operations and battlefield successes, increased FARC desertions, lack of large-scale FARC operations and increased urban terrorism.
- (C) The Colombian military is executing a new campaign plan (Plan Patriota) against the FARC that could be aided by US support. On 15 August, the USSOUTHCOM Commander and staff will host a conference with the Colombians to synchronize efforts in support of this plan and to see where added US assistance can be of value.
- (C) Additional support should include providing mobility assets, greater (b)(1), 1.4(c) support, weapons, communications equipment and more training and planning assistance. My staff is working with USSOUTHCOM and USSOCOM to identify specific details of how this can be accomplished.
- (C) In that regard, we should engage Congress to lift or adjust the troop cap. It impedes US ability to support NSPD-18 or capitalize on expanded authorities, both of which were designed to address the broader security crisis in Colombia.

Classified By: LTG Walter Sharp, USA, DJ-5
Reason: 1.5 (a)(d)
Declassify On: 13 August 2013

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- ~~(S//NF)~~ I am opposed to US direct action against the FARC. It is unlikely that we would be able to compel them to release the hostages or deter them from future targeting of US citizens. Instead, the FARC is likely to respond to direct US involvement by killing the hostages and attacking other US interests.
- ~~(S)~~ Timing is critical to help the Colombians maintain current momentum. Only an accelerated assistance package can leverage current successes.

COORDINATION: (U) TAB B

Attachments:
As stated

Prepared By: LTG Walter L. Sharp, USA; Director, J-5; 703-695-5618

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

EF-6266

23 I-03/010302
July 21, 2003

C 8/15

TO: Gen. Myers
Doug Feith

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *DR*

SUBJECT: Hostages in Colombia

What should we do about the DoD contract hostages in Colombia?

I would appreciate it if the two of you would come back to me with a proposal.

Thanks.

Attach.

6/16/03 SecDef memo and 7/18/03 CJCS response re: Message from General Hill

DHR:dh
072103-2

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Please respond by 8/16/03

✓ 8/18

Sir,
Response attached.
Coordinated with
DASD NHA and DASD CN
8/13/03.
VR / CDR Nosenzo
8/15

07-2-03 111

SECDEF CONTROL# U13938 / 03