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INFO MEMO

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FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

24 USDP

OCT 29 2003

FROM: Thomas W. O'Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (b)(6) 10/27/03

SUBJECT: Colombia Update: Hostage Tape Analysis and Death of FARC Commander (U)

- ~~(S/NF)~~ At Tab A is a Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) evaluation of the videotape of the U.S. hostages in Colombia, which CBS aired on October 8, 2003.
- (U) JPRA is a U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Force Activity that is the DOD office of primary responsibility for Personnel Recovery.
- ~~(S/NF)~~ JPRA's analysis will not help in locating the hostages, but it does help determine under what conditions the hostages may be held, and how they may react during a hostage rescue.
- ~~(S/NF)~~ Notable parts of JPRA's analysis include:
 - ~~(S/NF)~~ The hostages appear to be in good health, (b)(6)
 - ~~(S/NF)~~ The hostages will most likely not make escape attempts and, potential rescuers should not expect initial cooperation from the hostages; and
 - ~~(U/FOUO)~~ Apparent value of hostages to the FARC has not diminished.
- ~~(S/NF)~~ JPRA's analysis has been shared with the National Security Council, SOUTHCOM, (b)(1), 1.4 (c) State, and FBI.
- (U) On October 19, the Colombian Army killed Edgar Navarro, Deputy Commander of the FARC's Teofilo Forero Mobile Column. Navarro played a key role in the movement of the hostages and may have participated in the murder of the other American and Colombian crewmembers. (Tab B)
 - ~~(S)~~ This Colombian operation will hurt the TFMC but, foremost, demonstrates the effective use of (b)(1), 1.4(c) and cooperation between Colombian military and police in conducting a high-value interdiction operation.

COORDINATION: Tab C

Attachments: As Stated

Prepared by: (b)(6) SO/LIC SOCT, (b)(6)

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Derived from: Evaluation of the Two-Hour hostage Video Tape
Declassify on: Source marked X1, Date of Source September 21, 2003

29-10-03 09:55 IN

Subject: Evaluation of the Two-Hour hostage Video Tape

1. ~~(S/AF)~~ Purpose. To provide captivity assessment of three U.S. personnel being held hostage by the FARC in Colombia based on the recently released two-hour videotape.

2. ~~(S)~~ General. The two hour video contained several different segments, some of which had been part of the video previously examined by Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) subject matter experts on 8 Sep 2003. Additional footage was included that contained some scenes and exchanges not seen previously. The footage was of relatively poor resolution and appeared to be raw unedited video. The chronological order of the film sequences is unknown. The tape consists of footage recorded at a remote jungle location within a small wooden structure. The focus of the interviews appear to be centered on identification, job descriptions, mission recollection of capture events, and sociopolitical opinions. The JPRA working group assessment of the captivity environments are provided in subsequent paragraphs.

3. ~~(S/NF)~~ Hostage/Terrorist Review. Assessment input regarding requirements for future analysis focuses on two areas, the hostages and FARC personnel.

a. ~~(S)~~ Key hostage observations. Hostages appear to be in good health, i.e. well groomed, clean, medically sound and engaging in psychologically/emotionally appropriate level responses to situational stresses. Hostages appear to have gained some success at humanization, i.e., appropriate social courtesies were regularly exchanged between hostages and captors. The following assumptions can be drawn from this information.

(1) ~~(FOUO)~~ Apparent value of hostages to the captor has not diminished at the time of the filming.

(2) ~~(FOUO)~~ Hostages appear to have limited private interaction with each other, however, they appear to be supportive of each other and to value that camaraderie.

(3) ~~(FOUO)~~ Information/news from outside sources was nonexistent up to the time of filming.

(4) ~~(FOUO)~~ Hostages appear to use the media to support and reinforce their explanation of both their mission, and subsequent events. This assumption may be construed to indicate hostage resolve in maintaining their version of events throughout the episode, as well as group cohesion regarding this information.

(5) ~~(FOUO)~~ Hostages appear to have personal reasons for enduring captivity while sharing group motivations to survive.

Classified by: JPRA/CC
Reason: EO12958 2.5 (a, c)
Declassify on: X1

b. (U) Key Captor Observations.

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- (1) (U) Captors maintained control over the hostages at all times.
- (2) (U) Captors did not rush/interrupt the hostages while speaking or reading.
- (3) (U) Captors appeared to comport themselves as a credible, professional force. Hostage's comments support this finding.
- (4) (U) Captor guard force appears youthful and well supplied/armed.
- (5) (U) Captors appear to deal with the hostages in a systematic, routine manner, i.e., fixed meal times, and bathing periods, etc.
- (6) (U) Captors appear to be patient and confident. Nothing was rushed; movements to the film site, set up of chairs, working through a translator - all activities were accomplished in a calm and relaxed manner.

4. (S/NF) Human Factor Review. All crewmembers appear to be alert and oriented to person, place, time and situation. There is no apparent malnutrition or mistreatment. The crew attributed visible scars to the crash and all wounds appear to have healed by natural closure. All crewmembers appear to have some sort of skin condition consistent with bug bites or heat rash.

a. (S/NF)

(b)(6)

All have been

given a journal and are able to write.

b. (S/NF) All hostages have been conditioned to obey the rules and all made statements

(b)(6)

They appear to be fully aware that two of their crewmembers were alive and well, one with no injuries, and then were killed.

(b)(6)

c. (S/NF) All hostages are very solid about their mission and their duties as SRS crewmembers.

(b)(1), 1.4(d)

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d. (S//NF) The crewmembers are either being held in separate cells, only being allowed to gather for meals, or they have been conditioned to not overtly interact. Mr. Howes's statements evidence this that they "were told not to talk between themselves" and "not allowed to play cards together."

(b)(1),(b)(6),1.4(d)

It may be that they are being overtly or subliminally threatened with death.

5. (S//NF) Language Assessment. The interpreter at the interview interpreted the majority of the conversations accurately. Discrepancies were insignificant and appeared to be unintentional. Additionally, no information was noted from a Spanish language perspective that would enhance or hinder operational support of the hostages.

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2013

TAGS: PTER, PHUM, PGOV, PINR, PINS, CO

SUBJECT: TOP FARC COMMANDER KILLED BY COLOMBIAN ARMY

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR WILLIAM B. WOOD FOR REASONS

1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (S) SUMMARY: ON OCTOBER 19, THE COLOMBIAN ARMY KILLED EDGAR NAVARRO, ALIAS. MOCHO, DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE FARC S TEOFILLO FORERO MOBILE COLUMN (TFMC), ONE OF THE FARC S MOST ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE UNITS. THE OPERATION TO CAPTURE NAVARRO, WHICH ENDED WITH HIS DEATH, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NAVARRO S DEATH IS A MAJOR SYMBOLIC AND TACTICAL VICTORY FOR THE GOC. NAVARRO PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE FEBRUARY KIDNAPPING OF THREE U.S. CITIZEN CONTRACTORS AND MURDER OF A FOURTH, AND WAS WANTED BY GOC JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES ON NUMEROUS CHARGES OF KIDNAPPING, MURDER, AND TERRORISM. HIS LOSS IS A MAJOR BLOW TO THE TFMC. END SUMMARY.

2. (S) FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THE COLOMBIAN ARMY S ANTI-KIDNAPPING UNIT (GAULA) AND THE NATIONAL POLICE IN HUILA DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN COLLECTING [REDACTED] INTELLIGENCE AGAINST THE FARC S TFMC S DEPUTY COMMANDER EDGAR NAVARRO, ALIAS MOCHO. ON OCTOBER 19, THE GAULA USED THIS ACCUMULATED INTELLIGENCE TO LAUNCH AN OPERATION TO CAPTURE AND ARREST HIM. DURING THE OPERATION, NAVARRO S SECURITY DETAIL OPENED FIRE, SPARKING A FIREFIGHT THAT KILLED NAVARRO AND TEN OF HIS MEN. TWO CIVILIANS WERE INJURED IN THE CROSSFIRE.

3. (S) NAVARRO S DEATH IS A MAJOR SYMBOLIC AND TACTICAL VICTORY FOR THE GOC. THE TFMC IS AMONG THE FARC S MOST ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE ELEMENTS, OPERATING AS THE ROUGH EQUIVALENT OF A SPECIAL FORCES UNIT. NAVARRO HAS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN NUMEROUS KIDNAPPINGS, MURDERS, AND TERRORIST ATTACKS, INCLUDING A MASS KIDNAPPING AT A LUXURY APARTMENT COMPLEX IN 2001, A COMMERCIAL AIRLINER HIJACKING, AND THE DETONATION OF A HOUSE BOMB IN FEBRUARY 2003 IN NEIVA, CAPITAL OF HUILA DEPARTMENT. NAVARRO MAY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE FEBRUARY 2003 KIDNAPPING OF THREE U.S. CITIZEN CONTRACTORS AND THE MURDER OF A FOURTH, AND IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN CONTROL OF THE HOSTAGES FOR OVER A MONTH BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND MARCH. AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, NAVARRO WAS IN POSSESSION OF ONE OF THE HOSTAGE S FIREARMS. HIS DEATH IS A SERIOUS SETBACK FOR THE TFMC. IT WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME REPLACING NAVARRO, ESPECIALLY AS THE NATIONAL POLICE HAVE

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ARRESTED SEVERAL OF HIS KEY ASSOCIATES.

4. (S) COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NAVARRO WAS NOT A SENIOR FARC
COMMANDER BY RANK, HIS INFLUENCE AND PROMINENT ROLE IN MAJOR
TERRORIST OPERATIONS MADE HIM ONE OF THE HIGHEST VALUE
TARGETS OF THE COLOMBIAN SECURITY FORCES. THE OPERATION
DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVE USE OF (b)(1),1.4(c) AND
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND POLICE.

WOOD

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