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SOUTHERN COMMAND

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REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
3811 NW 81ST AVENUE
MIAMI, FL 33178-1217

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February 2, 2004

Commander

Honorable Douglas J. Feith
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
2000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-2000

Dear Mr. Feith:

(U) As we recently discussed, there has been a marked improvement in the coordination and cooperation in the use of the Plan Colombia helicopters. It has consistently been a challenge to strike the right balance between use of the helicopters to support both aerial eradication operations and Colombian military counterterrorist operations. In the past, this caused significant tension between the Embassy and the Colombian military, and it required an inordinate amount of my time to resolve differences. However, the procedures recently established by Ambassador Wood and the Colombian military have both relieved tensions and have optimized the use of the helicopters.

(b)(1), 1.4(d)

Classified by: CDR, USOUTHCOM

UN SOUTHERN COMMAND, Room 1400, Miami, FL 33178-1217 ~~SECRET//NOFORN~~


OSD 75393-04

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(U) Another critical issue to be resolved is the future disposition of the Plan Colombia helicopters, specifically the nationalization efforts. Our careful planning must ensure that we set the Colombians up for success and not failure. I hope you will engage the interagency on this and I will provide support and recommendations as you require.

(U) We must maintain our vigilance and support to see through the tremendous progress being made in Colombia against the narcoterrorist threat and in reestablishing security and stability. I look forward to your continued support. This has been coordinated with Ambassador Wood.

Sincerely,



James T. Hill
General, US Army
Commander

Copies Furnished:

Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
General Richard B. Myers, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Ambassador Roger F. Noriega, Assistant Secretary of State, Western Hemisphere Affairs
Honorable Robert B. Charles, Assistant Secretary of State, International Narcotics
and Law Enforcement
Honorable Thomas W. O'Connell, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Special Operations
and Low Intensity Conflict

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