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PTQ7024

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00962 01 OF 02 022335Z  
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	IO-00	L-00	M-00	AC-01	NRCE-00	NSAE-00
	OCS-03	OIC-02	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SCT-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00
	USSS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00

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P 022200Z FEB 01  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9591  
INFO USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC  
NSC WASHDC  
FBI WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 000962

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: PTER, PREL, PHUM, CO  
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00962 01 OF 02 022335Z  
SUBJECT: DECLARING THE AUC A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

1. SUMMARY: THE AMBASSADOR RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE INITIATE EFFORTS TO HAVE THE SECRETARY OF STATE NAME THE UNITED SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS OF COLOMBIA (AUC) AS A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION (FTO). OVER THE LAST YEAR THE AUC HAS ADMITTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR KIDNAPPING, MASSIVE DISPLACEMENT OF POPULATIONS, HOMICIDES AND MASSACRES. ITS ACTIONS IN 2001 TO DATE REPRESENT AN INCREASE IN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. POST BELIEVES THAT PLACEMENT OF THE AUC ON THE TERRORIST LIST WILL SEND AN IMPORTANT SIGNAL TO ILLEGAL SELF DEFENSE GROUPS AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT THEM IN COLOMBIA. END SUMMARY

2. THE AUC, HEADED BY CARLOS CASTANO, IS AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION OF AT LEAST 13 ILLEGAL SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS. THEY WORK IN COORDINATION TO MURDER CIVILIANS THEY ALLEGE ARE

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GUERRILLA SUPPORTERS, DISPLACE POPULATIONS IN AREAS WHERE PARAMILITARIES SEEK DOMINANCE, AND TERRORIZE POLITICAL OPPONENTS AND OFFICIALS. THE AUC IS THE PRINCIPAL PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATION IN THE COUNTRY. COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE REPORT THAT FROM JANUARY-OCTOBER 2000 PARAMILITARY GROUPS CONDUCTED 804 ASSASSINATIONS, 203 KIDNAPPINGS, AND 75 MASSACRES WITH 507 VICTIMS. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ESTIMATES THAT PARAMILITARIES ARE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR 35 PERCENT OF THE FORCED DISPLACEMENTS IN COLOMBIA IN 2000 (ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF DISPLACED IN 2000 RANGE FROM 125,000 TO OVER 300,000).

3. AUC LEADER CARLOS CASTANO IS HIMSELF THE SUBJECT OF AT LEAST 16 SEPARATE COLOMBIAN INDICTMENTS FOR MURDER, EXTORTION, NARCO-TRAFFICKING AND OTHER CRIMES. HE HAS

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 00962 01 OF 02 022335Z  
PUBLICLY ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OCTOBER 2000 KIDNAPPINGS OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBIAN CONGRESS, SEVERAL OF WHOM WERE ACTIVE IN VARIOUS PEACE INITIATIVES. CASTANO RELEASED THE SEVEN ONLY AFTER THE GOC AGREED TO SEND THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR TO RECEIVE THEM. CASTANO ALSO ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DECEMBER 2000 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AGAINST LABOR LEADER AND PEACE ADVOCATE WILSON BORJA IN BOGOTA. IN PUBLIC INTERVIEWS CASTANO HAS FREELY ADMITTED USING HOMICIDE, KIDNAPPING AND TERROR TECHNIQUES TO ESTABLISH PARAMILITARY DOMINANCE IN AREAS WHERE GUERRILLAS WERE PREVIOUSLY INFLUENTIAL. HE ALSO ADMITTED TO TAKING OVER ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES IN THESE AREAS. IN 2001 CARLOS CASTANO ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JANUARY ATTACKS IN CHENGUE, SUCRE WHICH LEFT AS MANY AS 34 DEAD AND DISPLACED MOST OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN. HE ALSO ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARAMILITARY CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE ELN IN BARRANCABERMEJA WHICH HAVE LEFT 50 DEAD IN THE FIRST MONTH OF 2001.

4. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES IN COLOMBIA HAVE LINKED CASTANO AND THE AUC TO A RANGE OF VIOLENT ACTS INCLUDING THE OCTOBER 1999 MURDER OF JOURNALIST AND PEACE ACTIVIST JAIME GARZON. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE IN BOGOTA, PARAMILITARIES ARE SUSPECTED IN MOST OF THE 26 MASSACRES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED THUS FAR IN 2001, IN WHICH 170 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED. THESE MASSACRES CONSTITUTE VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ALSO REPORT THAT PARAMILITARIES TOOK IN AS MUCH AS \$21 MILLION IN 2000 FROM ILLEGAL NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 BOGOTA 00962 01 OF 02 022335Z

5. AUC ACTIONS HAVE HAD REPERCUSSIONS ACROSS BORDERS AS WELL. IN THE LAST YEAR PARAMILITARIES HAVE CROSSED INTO PANAMA AND CONDUCTED SELECTIVE KILLINGS IN AT LEAST ONE PANAMANIAN TOWN. AUC OPERATIVES ARE SUSPECTED BY CIVIL SOCIETY MEMBERS OF PARTICIPATING IN A JULY, 2000 THEFT OF TAPES AND TRANSCRIPTS FROM A GOC-ELN-CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE WHICH TOOK PLACE IN SWITZERLAND. IN OCTOBER PARAMILITARIES FORCIBLY REMOVED A WOUNDED GUERRILLA COMBATANT FROM AN ICRC AMBULANCE, AND SUMMARILY EXECUTED THE GUERRILLA. THE ICRC SUSPENDED HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AS A RESULT OF THIS AND OTHER EVENTS. THE AUC'S EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION IN THE SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT OF PUTUMAYO CONTRIBUTED TO SIGNIFICANT DISPLACEMENT OF LOCAL POPULATIONS, SOME ONLY TEMPORARILY, INTO ECUADOR DURING SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2000 (AS A RESULT OF THE FARC'S ARMED SIEGE INTENDED TO DRIVE THE PARAS OUT). SIMILARLY, A SERIES OF PARAMILITARY MASSACRES IN LA GABARRA, NORTE DE SANTANDER, IN 1999 AND 2000 CONTRIBUTED TO CROSS-BORDER POPULATION FLOWS INTO VENEZUELA. PARAMILITARIES ARE WIDELY BELIEVED TO BE INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFICKING. PARAMILITARIES ARE WIDELY BELIEVED TO EXTORT MONEY FROM INTERNATIONAL AS WELL AS LOCAL BUSINESSES OPERATING IN COLOMBIA. BY MID-2000 PARAMILITARIES HAD CONDUCTED 5 MASSACRES IN THE PORT TOWN OF BUENAVENTURA IN AN EFFORT TO AFFECT SEA TRANSIT OPERATIONS (60 PERCENT OF COLOMBIAN EXPORTS PASS THROUGH THE PORT), ESPECIALLY TRANSPORT OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ7026

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 00962 02 OF 02 022335Z

ACTION WHA-00

- INFO LOG-00 AID-00 A-00 CA-02 CCO-00 CG-00 COME-00
- CTME-00 DODE-00 DOEE-00 DOTE-00 SRPP-00 DS-00 EB-00
- FAAE-00 FBIE-00 UTED-00 VC-00 H-01 TEDE-00 INR-00
- INSE-00 IO-00 L-00 M-00 AC-01 NRCE-00 NSAE-00
- OCS-03 OIC-02 PA-00 PM-00 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00
- SCT-00 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00
- USSS-00 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-01 DRL-02 G-00 SAS-00

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P 022200Z FEB 01  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9592  
INFO USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
CIA WASHDC

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NSC WASHDC  
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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 00962 02 OF 02 022335Z

SUBJECT: DECLARING THE AUC A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

6. GIVEN THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE AUC'S TERRORIST ACTS, POST RECOMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE INITIATE PROCEEDINGS TO HAVE THE AUC AND ITS COMPONENT GROUPS DESIGNATED FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS. POST BELIEVES EXPEDITED PROCESSING OF THIS REQUEST WILL SEND AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARAMILITARIES IN COLOMBIA, BUT ALSO TO THOSE WHO ARE SUPPORTING THEM FINANCIALLY OR OTHERWISE. PLEASE ADVISE IF FURTHER INFORMATION IS REQUIRED.

PATTERSON

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