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	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PM-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
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BRUSSELS FOR BRIAN STICKNEY  
CIA FOR CNC

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## TACTICS, TRAINING, AND WHAT TO EXPECT

1. CLASSIFIED BY VICTOR A. ABEYTA, NAS DIRECTOR. REASON 1.5(B).
2. (C) SUMMARY: DURING CALENDAR 1996 THE JOINT AERIAL ERADICATION TASK FORCE WORKED HARD AT DEVELOPING TACTICS THAT APPEARED TO WORK BEST UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES OF INCESSANT GROUND FIRE AGAINST AIR ASSETS. THE CNP AGREED TO RENOUNCE THEIR TRADITIONAL "THREE RING" TACTICAL PATTERN IN FAVOR OF AIRWING-RECOMMENDED STRAIGHT LINE TACTICS. HITS AGAINST ASSETS CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, FORCING TACTICIANS TO GROUND AIRCRAFT AND TO CONTINUALLY REVIEW AND EVALUATE PROCEDURES AND TACTICS EMPLOYED. IN OCTOBER, 1996 THE JOINT TASK FORCE IMPLEMENTED A COMBINATION OF STRAIGHT-LINE AND TRADITIONAL TACTICS, WITH IMPRESSIVE RESULTS. THREE FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESSSES IN OCTOBER WERE THE INTRODUCTION OF AMERICAN CIVILIAN SPRAY PILOTS, CLOSE HELICOPTER SUPPORT, AND THE PRESENCE OF THE COLOMBIAN ARMY'S (COLAR) SECOND MOBILE BRIGADE IN THE VICINITY OF SPRAY AREAS.
3. (C) IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER THE TASK FORCE RETURNED TO STRAIGHT LINE TACTICS, WITH AN INCREASE IN HITS AGAINST SPRAY AIRCRAFT. THE DEATH OF ROBERT MARTIN ON JANUARY 7, 1997, ALTHOUGH

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 NOT RELATED TO GROUND FIRE, LED TO YET ANOTHER STAND-DOWN FOR YET ANOTHER RE-REVIEW OF TACTICS AND ADDITIONAL TRAINING. RECENT MEETINGS WITH TASK FORCE PRINCIPALS HAVE BROUGHT EVERYONE CLOSER TO THE IDENTIFICATION OF TACTICS THAT APPEAR TO WORK BEST UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. ADDITIONAL TRAINING ON THE SAT-LOC SYSTEM, DUE IN PART TO ITS COMPLEXITY, WAS IDENTIFIED AS AN AREA FOR CONCENTRATION. PASA PETE TRENT WILL CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE AND REFINE THAT ELEMENT OF THE PROGRAM. ALSO, THE SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) TEAMS AND EQUIPMENT, AN INTEGRAL ELEMENT OF OF THE PROGRAM, ARE IN COUNTRY AND ARE OPERATIONAL.

4. (4) AT THIS STAGE WE HAVE COME AROUND FULL CIRCLE ON TACTICS, WITH AGREEMENT REACHED ON RETURNING TO A COMBINATION OF THE TWO METHODS IN AN EFFORT TO THWART CONTINUED HITS FROM GROUND FIRE. THE RECENT TRANSFER OF THE COLAR'S SECOND MOBILE BRIGADE FROM THE GUAVIARE TO CAQUETA DEPARTMENT IS ALSO A FACTOR THE TASK FORCE WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH AS OPERATIONS IN AND AROUND MIRAFLORES ARE RESTARTED. WE HAVE ASKED THE CNP TO REQUEST THE COLAR RETURN ELEMENTS OF THE MOBILE BRIGADE TO ENSURE COVERAGE. END SUMMARY.
5. (C) DURING THE FIVE DAY PERIOD BETWEEN JANUARY 16 AND JANUARY 20, FIVE SPRAY AIRCRAFT WERE HIT FIVE SEPARATE TIMES BY GROUND

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FIRE. ONE AIRCRAFT TOOK 10 NON-FATAL ROUNDS. ONCE AGAIN, THIS LED TO A TEMPORARY STAND-DOWN TO REVIEW TACTICS. IT IS THE CONSENSUS OF THE EXPERTS ON THE GROUND (DYNCORP SAFETY PERSONNEL AND PASA PETE TRENT) THAT TACTICS ONCE AGAIN HAD TO UNDERGO CHANGE AND THAT TASK FORCE PERSONNEL REQUIRED ADDITIONAL TRAINING. ANTI-NARCOTICS DIRECTOR COLONEL GALLEGO AND NAS DIRECTOR VISITED SAN JOSE ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASSIONS TO REVIEW TACTICS AND PROCEDURES IN THE FIELD WITH TASK FORCE PERSONNEL. AIRWING DIRECTOR MCLAUGHLIN ACCOMPANIED THE TEAM TO SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE ON ONE OCCASSION. HE AGREED THAT

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CHANGES AND REFINEMENT WERE NECESSARY. A MAJOR COMPLAINT TABLED BY THE POLICE WAS A FEELING OF BEING LEFT OUT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS. PROPER COMMUNICATION DUE TO LIMITED LANGUAGE CAPABILITY OF A FEW OF THE AMERICAN CIVILIAN PERSONNEL WAS ALSO CITED.

6. (C) CONSENSUS WAS REACHED WITH COLONEL GALLEGO AND HIS STAFF. THEY AGREED, AND ARE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY PLAN, OR COMBINATIONS THEREOF, THAT WILL RENDER RESULTS WITH MINIMAL DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT AND NO LOSS OF LIFE. THEIR CAVEAT, WHICH WE FULLY SUPPORT, IS THAT THE POLICE BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE AS EQUAL PARTNERS. GALLEGO HAS REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT HIS CONCERN IS THE BASIC SAFETY OF PERSONNEL, GOING BEYOND RACKING UP ERADICATION NUMBERS. STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO CORRECT THE ANOMOLIES THAT EXISTED, TO INCLUDE SPECIAL TRAINING TO CIVILIAN AMERICAN PILOTS IN THE USE OF IMPORTANT PHRASES IN SPANISH TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR COLOMBIAN COUNTERPARTS. THE SAR TEAMS AND EQUIPMENT DISPATCHED BY THE AIRWING ARE IN COUNTRY. THEY ARE FULLY INTEGRATED, PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING MISSIONS WITH THE ERADICATION TASK FORCE. WE WERE ABLE TO SEE THEM IN ACTION RECENTLY WHEN ONE TEAM RESCUED THE DOWNED T-65 PILOT JANUARY 27

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 AMEMBASSY LIMA  
 DOSAIRWING PATRICK AFB FL  
 AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
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WITHIN MINUTES OF THE HARD TOUCHDOWN.

7. (C) HAVING REACHED AGREEMENT ON HOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED, THE JOINT TASK FORCE DETERMINED THAT ONLY CLOSE HELICOPTER SUPPORT, COUPLED WITH COLAR SUPPORT ON THE GROUND, WILL ENSURE THE RELATIVE SAFETY OF SPRAY AIRCRAFT. THIS TACTIC WAS EMPLOYED MOST SUCCESSFULLY DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, 1996. THE MOST RECENT MEETING WITH CNP HELICOPTER PILOTS - NOW AN INTREGAL PART OF THE PLANNING PROCESS - PLACED THE REQUIREMENT IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE. THE ENSUING PERIOD - JANUARY 13 THROUGH 31 - HAS BEEN

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USED TO TRAIN THE ENTIRE CADRE OF HELICOPTER PILOTS TO WORK CLOSELY WITH SPRAY AIRCRAFT. BY TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, THE TWO HELICOPTER TEAMS WILL HAVE BEEN FULLY TRAINED. SPRAY AIRCRAFT PILOTS HAVE BUSIED THEMSELVES WITH ADDITIONAL TRAINING ON THE USE OF THE SAT-LOC SYSTEM. FULL SCALE SPRAY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE LARGER FIELDS IN MIRAFLORES, GUAVIARE AND ENVIRONS IS PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 12/13.

8. (C) THE ERADICATION TEAMS EASED INTO SPRAY OPS ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, IN LOW THREAT AREAS CLOSE TO SAN JOSE DEL GUAVIARE. THE PURPOSE WAS TO TRAIN THE TASK FORCE USING CLOSE HELICOPTER

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 SUPPORT TACTICS. ACREAGE SPRAYED HAS BEEN MINIMAL (FIELDS ARE SMALL AND FAR APART) BUT NO GROUND FIRE WAS ENCOUNTERED. TASK FORCE PERSONNEL IN SAN JOSE HAVE REPORTED PROGRESS AS SLOW, AS HELO AND T-65 PILOTS FALL INTO THE RHYTHM OF NEW PROCEDURES. NOW, HOWEVER, THE TEAMS ARE UP AND FULLY OPERATIONAL. A LIMITING FACTOR ONCE THE TASK FORCE MOVES TO MIRAFLORES WILL BE HIGH WINDS THAT USUALLY KICK UP BY MID-MORNING, GREATLY LIMITING SORTIE TIME. ALL SORTIES CONDUCTED SO FAR HAVE BEEN FLOWN SAFELY WITH NO GROUND FIRE.

9. (C) THE DEPARTURE OF THE COLAR'S SECOND MOBILE BRIGADE MAY BE A FACTOR IN THE NUMBER OF HITS RECEIVED BY OUR SPRAY AIRCRAFT. PREVIOUSLY, THE COLAR MAINTAINED ITS TROOPS ON PATROL, AND ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF SPRAY OPERATIONS, THEY ACTED AS A DETERRENT TO THE GUERRILLAS ON THE GROUND. DEPARTING FROM THE PREMISE THAT GROUND TROOPS ARE A NECESSARY INGREDIENT TO RELATIVE SAFETY IN SPRAY AREAS, THE MISSION ASKED CNP DIRECTOR GENERAL SERRANO TO REQUEST THAT ELEMENTS OF THE SECOND MOBILE BRIGADE BE RETURNED TO THE GUAVIARE, AND RETAINED THERE UNTIL THE ERADICATION TASK FORCE ACHIEVES IT GOAL OF MAXIMUM ERADICATION OF COCA FIELDS IN THAT DEPARTMENT. GENERAL SERRANO PROMISED TO EXECUTE THE REQUEST IN WRITING TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE. AS OF THIS WRITING WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE LETTER, BUT WE WERE REASSURED THE REQUEST WILL BE MADE. SUCH A REQUEST WILL ENSURE THE GOC COMMITMENT TO KEEP THE COLAR FULLY ENGAGED IN AREAS OF OPERATION. THE AMBASSADOR WILL ALSO RAISE THIS WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON JANUARY 9.

10. (C) COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: IT IS A GIVEN THE TASK FORCE WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE SMALL ARMS HITS AGAINST AIRCRAFT. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE THAT STEPS TAKEN WILL MINIMIZE THE THREAT,

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ALLOWING THE AERIAL ERADICATION TASK FORCE DO ITS JOB. WHAT IS  
REQUIRED IS OUR CONTINUED UNWAVERING COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT FOR THE  
PROGRAM. END COMMENT.  
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