For 0361-2003/0511-2004/0180-2017 403-1 (i) citations were updated to 3024(i)

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HEADER
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CONTROLS
~~S E C R E T~~
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SERIAL: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIGEST {MID} 101-4A
BODY
SUBJ: (MEC) (U)**COLOMBIA**: TRAFFICKER LEADS PARAMILITARY GROUP
//NOTICE// AUTOMATED MESSAGE ERROR CORRECTION
--------------------------- ORIGINAL MESSAGE TEXT ---------------------------
RAASZYUW RUEKDIA1189 1481910~~-SSSS-~~-RUEALGX.
ZNY ~~SSSSS~~
R 281815Z MAY 02
FM DIA WASHINGTON DC/[redacted] (b)(3):10 USC 424
(b)(3):10 USC 424;(b)(3):50 USC 3024(i)
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~~S E C R E T NOFORN~~
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SERIAL: MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIGEST {MID} 101-4A

SUBJ: (U)**COLOMBIA**: TRAFFICKER LEADS PARAMILITARY GROUP

DOI: 24 MAY 02 (AS OF 1200EST)

TEXT 1. ~~(S//NF)~~ DRUG TRADE MONEY STILL FUNDS GROWTH OF THE UNITED SELF-DEFENSE FORCES OF **COLOMBIA** (AUC). DIEGO FERNANDO MURILLO-BEJARANO, A MEMBER OF THE AUC'S MILITARY HIGH COMMAND AND CURRENTLY THE PACIFIC BLOC COMMANDER, PROVIDES IMPORTANT LINKS TO THE POWERFUL NORTH VALLEY AND CALI DRUG-TRAFFICKING CARTELS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE LEADS AN INTENSE COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF **COLOMBIA** AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY.

2. ~~(S//NF)~~ THE AUC POLITICAL LEADER, **CARLOS CASTANO**-GIL, HAS PLACED PROVEN COMBAT LEADERS IN SENIOR PARAMILITARY COMMAND POSITIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN JUNE 2001, CASTANO CHOSE FORMER MEDELLIN CARTEL SENIOR LIEUTENANT DIEGO FERNANDO MURILLO-BEJARANO, AKA "ADOLFO PAZ" OR "DON BERNA," TO COMMAND THE SELF-DEFENSE GROUPS OF CORDOBA AND URABA'S (ACCU'S) PACIFIC BLOC. SINCE 1999, THE AUC HAS BECOME A MAJOR FORCE ON **COLOMBIA**'S WEST COAST, PARTICULARLY IN VALLE DEL CAUCA DEPARTMENT. PROFITS DERIVED FROM DRUG TRAFFICKING AND SUPPORT FROM SOME POPULATION SECTORS, INCLUDING LEGAL BUSINESSES, ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE AUC'S RAPID GROWTH. AS THE ACCU'S PACIFIC BLOC COMMANDER, DIEGO MURILLO SMOOTHS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TRAFFICKERS AND THE AUC.

(b)(1);1.4 (c)

4. ~~(S//NF)~~ ASSESSMENT. A DEPENDABLE, LONGTIME CASTANO COLLEAGUE, DIEGO MURILLO GIVES THE AUC DRUGTRAFFICKING EXPERTISE AND CONNECTIONS TO THE INTERNATIONAL DRUG MARKET. HE COORDINATES COCAINE-FOR-WEAPONS DEALS WITH DRUG AND ARMS DEALERS OPERATING THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. HIS INVOLVEMENT IN MULTIPLE MURDERS UNDERSCORES HIS EXTREME PROPENSITY FOR VIOLENCE. AS COMMANDER OF THE PACIFIC BLOC, DIEGO MURILLO WORKS WITH REGIONALLY BASED DRUG TRAFFICKERS OPERATING IN THE VALLE DEL CAUCA TO RID **COLOMBIA**'S WEST COAST OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF **COLOMBIA** AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY. IN THE LATE 1990S, REGIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKERS RECOGNIZED THE DIFFICULTIES IN

DEALING WITH INSURGENTS AND SAW AUC ATTEMPTS TO RID THE TERRITORY OF GUERRILLAS AS BENEFITING BOTH GROUPS. DIEGO MURILLO WILL CONTINUE TO BE A KEY FACTOR IN THIS EFFORT.
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5. ~~(S//NF)~~ COFOUNDER OF "LOS PEPES." ONCE A TRUSTED MEMBER OF PABLO ESBOBAR'S DRUG EMPIRE, DIEGO MURILLO - WORKING CLOSELY WITH CARLOS AND FIDEL CASTANO AND RIVAL DRUG-TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS - IN 1992 COFOUNDED THE MEDELLIN-BASED VIGILANTE GROUP "PEOPLE PERSECUTED BY PABLO ESCOBAR," BETTER KNOWN BY ITS SPANISH NICKNAME, "LOS PEPES." THIS VIGILANTE GROUP HELPED DESTROY THE MEDELLIN CARTEL AND LED TO THE DEMISE OF ITS COFOUNDER, PABLO ESCOBAR-GAVIRIA. THE MURDERS IN JULY 1992 OF SENIOR MEDELLIN CARTEL LIEUTENANTS, THE GALEANO AND MONCADA BROTHERS, PROMPTED DIEGO MURILLO TO FORM "LOS PEPES." DIEGO MURILLO HAD A LONG AND CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GALEANO BROTHERS - THEIR MURDERS WERE THE MAIN REASON HE TURNED AGAINST ESCOBAR.
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6. ~~(S//NF)~~ COCAINE-FOR-WEAPONS A COMMON THEME. LIKE OTHER ILLEGALLY ARMED GROUPS IN **COLOMBIA**, THE AUC MAINTAINS A VIGOROUS COCAINE-FOR-WEAPONS BUSINESS. COLOMBIAN LAW ENFORCEMENT PLACES DIEGO MURILLO, AKA "DON BERNA," AT THE CENTER OF MANY INVESTIGATIONS. IN JUNE 2000, THEN ADMINISTRATIVE SECURITY DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR GERMAN GUSTAVO JARAMILLO CLAIMED THAT AUC LEADER "DON BERNA" WAS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR ILLEGALLY IMPORTING 15,000 WEAPONS DESTINED FOR PARAMILITARY FORCES. THESE WEAPONS, PURCHASED FROM CORRUPT ACTIVE OR RETIRED NICARAGUAN MILITARY SERVICEMEN, WERE TRANSPORTED TO **COLOMBIA**'S NORTH COAST.
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(b)(3):10 USC 424

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