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FROM - Bogotá

SUBJECT - Monthly Report of Public Safety Division, Colombia (January)

REFERENCE - U-127

As required by M.O. 3061 and Circular XA 629, the Public Safety Division of this Mission will submit monthly reports on its activity. This is the first of such reports.

1. SITUATION

a. The Chief Public Safety Advisor and the Investigations Advisor arrived at the Post early in January. They will work with the National Police and the Administrative Department of Security respectively. The National Police is under the Ministry of War, and the Administrative Department of Security (which in future reports will be referred to as DAS) is under the Ministry of Government.

b. Meetings were held with the President of the Republic, the Minister of Government, and the Minister of War to discuss implementation of the program of technical assistance. The results of these meetings were reported to AID/W immediately on airgrams.

c. The Public Safety Advisors also met with U. S. Military personnel and interchanged information on Public Safety and MAP. It was agreed that Military and Public Safety personnel will coordinate their activities and will work towards better coordination between Colombian police and military agencies.

d. The Chief Advisor and the Investigations Advisor have been assigned offices, transportation and secretarial assistance by the National Police and DAS respectively.

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APPROVED BY:

Charles P. Fossum, Director

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Col. Vallery

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## 2. OPERATIONS

NATIONAL POLICE

a. The Minister of War suggested that the Public Safety Advisor assigned to the National Police spend several weeks studying police operation in more detail; that at the end of this period he submit a plan for the first year of operation; and that he submit monthly reports of progress. During the past weeks, therefore, the PS Advisor inspected all offices of General Headquarters, several precinct stations in Bogotá, police operation and the training school in the Department of Antioquia, and several special branches of the National Police including the highway police, units assigned to Prisons, a unit assigned to the Bogotá Fire Department, and a unit assigned to Child Protection.

b. As previously reported, the Colombian law requires that, when a member of the police or military forces is outside the country he receives his pay in U.S. dollars at a rate of one to one. Since the normal exchange rate is now about ten to one, a participant trainee receives exorbitant pay during the time he is in training. As long as this problem exists it will be difficult, if not impossible, to plan any participant training. U.S. Military officials have already discussed this problem with the Minister of War who in turn will discuss it with the President. In the meantime Public Safety, insofar as concerns participant training, will concentrate on DAS, which is not affected by this law.

c. PS has discussed with Colonel Camacho, Deputy Director of the National Police and Acting Director at the present time, proposals to be incorporated in the Project Agreement. Colonel Camacho discussed these ideas with the Minister. Both are in agreement with PS proposals and a Pro-Ag will be drafted within a few days.

d. A section of the National Police called the POLICIA DE CONTROL has as its primary responsibility the policing of all members of the National Police. Consideration is being given to developing this group into a task force that would carry the brunt of the operation during manifestations and riots. The commander of this group is greatly interested in riot control and has been given considerable information on this subject by PS.

e. The Public Safety Advisor working with the National Police observed police operation during a recent manifestation and submitted a report to the Mission. Since this report reveals the capabilities and shortcomings of the police in this field, a copy of this report is included herein as an annex.

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ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT OF SECURITY

a. The PS Advisor has inspected several operational sections in Bogotá relating to criminal matters, the Internal Security Group, the Social Security Group (Unions), the Communications Section, the Garage and Shop, the Urban School at Suba, the Judicial Police, and the newly formed Narcotics Control Group. Prior to these inspections, conferences were held with the Chief of DAS, the Minister of Government, and all Department Heads of DAS.

b. Three agents of DAS are being processed for the next general course at IAPA, beginning April 22. In all probability two top officials will be sent to the course on Administration at IAPA in July. Current efforts of the PS Advisor are directed largely towards programming available funds that must be obligated prior to March 1.

c. During preliminary inspections, the PS Advisor has been agreeably surprised at the quality of leadership and level of organization. Present DAS plans for improvement are basically sound. Excellent files and records are found in the Internal Security Group.

d. The key problem is the fact that DAS is trying to fulfill an impossible mission - the investigation of all crimes, subversive activity, and travel of foreigners in a nation of 16 million people - with a total personnel of slightly over 3,000. The creditable work done by DAS is lost in an avalanche of unanswered complaints and unsolved crimes, resulting in criticism and a bad public image.

## 3. EVALUATION

a. Lack of coordination and cooperation, to the point of friction, exists between DAS and the National Police. PS will make every effort to resolve this.

b. Detailed inspections made by PS Advisors during the past few weeks give added support to the conclusions and recommendations of the survey report.

c. Obviously the Carabineros of the National Police have considerable potential in regard to reduction of violence in the rural areas. Although handicapped by lack of mobility and equipment, they are doing an excellent job under the circumstances and are generally held in high respect by the public. A Public Safety Advisor when inspecting police operation in the Department of Antioquia was informed that Carabineros had killed three bandits in gun battles during that week.

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**4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

a. The National Police has a special section whose agents are assigned to trains to protect passengers and cargo. The Commander has requested literature and training materials for this type of work. It is requested that O/PS AID/W try to obtain this type of material and forward it to the Mission.

FREEMAN

Enclosure

(Manifestation of January 18)

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ANNEXSubject: Manifestation of January 18

This report relates to the Manifestation held in Plaza Bolivar, Bogotá, Friday, January 18th. The writer, interested in police methods of controlling disturbances and wishing to see these methods in operation, was shown the police plans for control of this manifestation and then in company of a police official observed the entire affair from the third floor of a building overlooking the plaza.

Manifestations are legal if prior permission is obtained from the government. In this case permission had been granted for a manifestation in Plaza Bolivar between four and six p.m. The primary purpose of the manifestation was to protest increased bus fares and the cost of living generally.

The police prepared a plan of control and distributed copies to all officials and all stations in Bogotá. The plan involved about 800 policemen. Agents and non-coms were armed with revolvers and police batons, while officers carried sabers and revolvers. Tear gas squads were armed and held in reserve. Two squads of Carabineros mounted on horses were detailed to the scene. Trained dogs were taken to the plaza, but this incited the crowd and they were withdrawn. In addition to policemen assigned specific stations in and around the plaza, large numbers of policemen were held in reserve, out of sight but near the plaza. Water tanks were also held in reserve. Detachments of police at intersections around the plaza prevented the entry of small children. A number of police in plain clothes (F-2 of the National Police) infiltrated the crowd. Portable radios were used at strategic locations. It should be mentioned, too, that all police on this detail were under a single command. Normal police patrols, reinforced by patrol vehicles, were maintained throughout the city.

At the Manifestation, speakers were permitted to address the crowd through a PA system from a second floor balcony of the Congressional Building at one end of the plaza. The crowd, estimated at 20,000, started gathering before four o'clock but the manifestation started at 5:00 p.m.

At the start of the Manifestation it was obvious that the extremist group was well organized. It was a very compact and well organized group of several thousand at the front of the crowd near the steps to the Congressional Building. It constantly tried to incite and agitate and used various methods. It burned banners, frequently chanted "Cuba si, Yanquis no", and whistled and shouted in order to drown out the voices of the speakers. At one time this group rushed the cordon of police protecting the steps but was turned back. It had a small table which was held up and which members of the group mounted to address the crowd. At different times three men and

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one girl stood on this table to harangue the crowd.

Until about six o'clock the manifestation was peaceful. The majority of the crowd seemed unexcited and only curious despite the constant attempts of the extremists to incite them. Between 5:45 and 6:10 P.M., large groups of people left the scene, apparently returning to their homes.

Shortly after 6:00 P.M., a relatively small group of young men roughly dressed approached the government building on the southwest corner of the plaza shouting "ratero" and other terms. Their shouting was directed at the "Secretaria de Gobierno". This group took a number of banners and broke up the wooden frames, distributing pieces of wood to be used as clubs. They also started throwing rocks at policemen near this building and at windows. A large number of windows were shattered and occupants of the building endangered by glass fragments. Police near the building tried to drive the demonstrators back and fighting broke out, the police using batons and the demonstrators using clubs. The demonstrators who provoked this were joined by others and the group became quite large.

At this point the police sent mounted Carabineros and squads of men on foot to clear the plaza and break up the demonstration. The police succeeded in clearing the plaza using cavalry and policemen on foot with batons. Water was not used and the writer did not see any tear gas used in the plaza. Just as the plaza was cleared, however, a squad of police armed with tear gas guns and projectiles arrived and started down a side street behind fleeing demonstrators. Numerous police squads were detailed to prevent isolated sets of violence during the night.

The writer believes that much of the violence could have been prevented if the police had started their dispersal action ten or fifteen minutes earlier. It was also noted that when a squad of police was forcing demonstrators toward the exits, occasionally a policeman would leave his squad and run after a group of fleeing demonstrators. When he became separated from his squad, the demonstrators would turn around and severely maul the policeman before his squad caught up with him. The manifestation also pointed out the need for the police to adopt the standard 26 inch police riot stick, which is used so effectively in many countries. The short batons used by the Colombian police make it necessary for the policeman to draw back his arm to strike a blow, thus permitting the demonstrators to close in and grapple with him at close quarters. With the 26" baton, a policeman jabs or delivers short blows with the arm extended that keep the demonstrators at a distance.

The police, however, certainly should be commended for a number of things: (1) They made very effective use of mounted troops; (2) They showed no fear of the huge crowd and acted decisively; (3) The writer at no time

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observed the use of firearms and at no time did he observe a policeman striking blows at the head of a demonstrator. All blows were directed at the body so as to avoid serious injuries; (4) The police sealed all exits but three and dispersed the crowd through these three exists AWAY from the business area; (5) The police cleared the plaza of several thousand people in about twenty minutes and to the best of the writer's knowledge, who was able to view all the action clearly, did so without firearms and without serious injuries despite the fact the demonstrators were armed with clubs and rocks.

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