

FIRST PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT OF SECURITY (DAS)

TO:

His Excellency, President Guillermo León Valencia, Republic of Colombia

FROM:

Office of Public Safety, Agency for International Development,
American Embassy, Bogotá, Colombia

April, 1964

Agency for International Development
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

The report with recommendations of the Office of Public Safety, Agency for International Development, for changes in the Administrative Department of Security (DAS) was accepted by the Minister of Government for President Guillermo Leon Valencia on November 12, 1963. This is a progress report for the subsequent period up to April 1, 1964. It includes an account of the internal improvements accomplished in DAS during that time, and of the progress made toward the necessary legislative changes. Because of the importance of the human resources in DAS there is also a personnel status report which presents the problem facing DAS in assuring that all DAS agents complete a qualifying course of training. The chapter on the integrated communications net for the Ministry of Government, National Police, and DAS is also important.

The concluding chapter summarizes the problems which are delaying the implementation of the plan for DAS which has been approved by the President. It is planned that a quarterly report will be submitted hereafter. Frequent references will be made to the original Public Safety report and its recommendations, which will be referred to herein as the "First DAS Report".

I. THE PRESENT SITUATION IN DAS

During the period covered by this report DAS has continued to function under Décreto Numero 1717, of July 18, 1960, with the inherent problems enumerated in the "First DAS Report." It was clear at the outset that new decrees would be required incorporating the needed changes. With this objective in mind the Investigations Advisor and DAS officials initiated discussions with Dr. Eduardo Leon Crjuela, Chairman of the Sub-committee for a Judicial Police, under the Committee for Judicial Reform, for the purpose of incorporating the needed changes into the impending measures for judicial reform. Some discussions were also had with the Minister of Justice. While this writer cannot predict exactly what kind of measures will be passed effecting DAS, it is felt that during these discussions substantial agreement was reached on the points related to the Public Safety recommendations. If the points agreed upon are subsequently incorporated in the Judicial Reform measures then a substantial legal basis for an effective intelligence service in DAS will have been achieved. Without these measures dealing with the jurisdiction of DAS and eliminating needless and inappropriate functions, the personnel and facilities of DAS, no matter how adequate and well intentioned, will continue to be devoted to other than the intelligence and investigative needs of the executive branch of the government. These measures are of crucial importance to the Colombian intelligence community. They are absolutely essential if DAS is to be enabled to provide the leadership and the coordination so badly needed in the field of domestic intelligence activity. Lacking these measures, there is no doubt that other agencies will feel compelled to fill this urgent need even though they may lack the desired legal basis.

It is important to keep the previous paragraph in mind when studying this report. The internal efforts for improvement in DAS, and the external assistance which is being rendered, can not and will not accomplish the desired results without the recommended functional changes. The generally favorable impression induced by the remainder of this report should not be allowed to obscure this point.

II. OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS AND WEAKNESSES IN DAS

Improvements

Several internal operational improvements have been accomplished within DAS in order to carry out the recommendations of Public Safety as far as possible under Decreto 1717, and in order to efficiently utilize available personnel.

A new section in the Public Order Division has been established for the investigation of terrorist activities. This is extremely important in view of the present and future threat of well coordinated and nationwide terrorist attacks.

A personnel investigative unit has been designated in the Public Order Division to handle investigations of DAS recruits and employees. The importance of this move is further explained in the following chapter.

In the Foreigner Control Division a new desk will handle preliminary investigations of foreigners when there is subversive information or evidence of espionage or terrorist activity. These cases will be turned over to the Public Order Division at an appropriate stage of the investigation.

In the Llanos Orientales the Rural Security Service of DAS has taken over the border offices at Arauca and Puerto Carreño to avoid duplication and to coordinate activities along the Venezuelan border.

The communications plan and other technical improvements as well as training plans will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Operational Weaknesses

It must be stated here that the operational improvements in the DAS organization are largely on paper and cannot be effective until adequate personnel is made available through the legislative changes recommended. For example the supervisor in charge of the new urban terrorism unit in the Public Order Division, a very competent man, has only three or four investigators available to him on a part-time basis, and he himself has a heavy load of other duties. The job of adequately investigating terrorist activities in Bogotá alone would require a full-time supervisor and about ten competent investigators. These are simply not available under present circumstances.

Another severe handicap of DAS operations is the lack of operating funds for incidental transportation and payment of informants. The writer knows of excellent opportunities for informant coverage which

have been lost during the period of this report for lack of operating funds. It is realized that such funds are subject to abuse, but adequate controls can be devised, and it can be positively stated that one good informant can save the cost of several investigators and can provide information that no investigator can ever obtain. The handling of informants should of course be under the control of only the most experienced and especially trained personnel.

A general statement can be made that a concerted effort is taking place at the administrative level in DAS to accomplish the internal improvements which are possible under Decreto 1717.

III. THE PERSONNEL SITUATION IN DAS

The Investigative Force

The "First DAS Report" pointed up the contrast between the quality of administrative personnel in DAS, which is good and has remained quite stable for several years, and the quality of the working investigators, which has been poor on the average and subject to a high rate of turnover. The Chief of DAS was apparently well aware of this problem prior to the beginning of the Public Safety Program and some measures were already under way in January, 1963. The present situation is notably better than in the past but leaves much to be done and the task is formidable. A few statistics will clarify the problem.

DAS currently has 1,090 detectives, plus slightly over 200 rural security agents, and of this number only 257 have completed any kind of training course, leaving 833 working detectives whose qualifications are unknown. The kind of training which has been given from 1963 to the present is broken down as follows:

DAS School for Urban Detectives (5 months)	63
In-Service Training (for incumbent employees)	71
Graduates of the Inter-American Policy Academy	<u>71</u>
Total	<u>205</u>

Thus it is seen that DAS has only 257 agents who were trained prior to 1963. At the present time a group of fifty recruits is about to begin training at Suba and thirty candidates are ready to start the twelve weeks general course at the Inter-American Police Academy which is in the process of being moved to Washington, D. C. So it may be said that one-third of the DAS staff of investigators is assured of basic training in their profession, a notable improvement over the past.

During 1963 and the first quarter of 1964, there was a turnover of 332 agents, dismissed or resigned, and 32 of these were graduates of the basic training course, indicating an overall turnover rate of about 30% in fifteen months. The loss of untrained personnel is of little importance, but the high turnover rate is a serious problem when it affects trained and qualified personnel. A normal turnover rate should not be over 10% yearly among qualified employees. A basic problem in DAS then is the problem of training and qualifying two-thirds of the investigators or replacing them with trained and qualified candidates. Undoubtedly a factor in the high turnover rate is the salary scale, which should be increased somewhat along with improvements in the promotion system.

Several important steps are being taken to reduce the turnover rate and increase the training rate for DAS investigative personnel. The minimum educational qualification has been raised from two years to four years of high school, and will probably be raised still further. The retraining course for the older agents is a recent innovation and

will be accelerated. The newly established personnel security investigations will eliminate a number of undesirables prior to training. The Chief of DAS has taken advantage of all available spaces at the Inter-American Police Academy and has carefully selected his candidates.

It has been stated that quality of the working investigator in DAS is poor on the average. However, the careful selection of candidates by the Chief of DAS for the Inter-American Police Academy has shown that a substantial percentage of the DAS investigative personnel are of the highest quality. Of the 71 graduates thus far there has not been a single failure or case of misconduct. There have been numerous distinctions awarded at the Academy to DAS graduates. In the class graduating on April 1, 1964, a DAS agent, Orlando Padilla Rojas, was selected as "Student of Honor," the highest award given. It is planned that outstanding DAS officials will be invited to the Academy from time to time as guest professors. The following written comment was received by the Office of Public Safety from Mr. Theodore Brown, Director of the Inter-American Police Academy:

"It should be noted that the Colombian officers were by far the most perceptive and most cooperative group in the course and were of uniformly high caliber. It is felt that maximum results were obtained from the IAPA type of training with these individuals."

Another very important observation is that not one of the 71 graduates from IAPA has been lost to DAS through dismissal or resignation.

Personnel security was another important problem brought out in the "First DAS Report." A suitable system of personnel security has now been installed. All candidates for employment in DAS will hereafter be subject to an independent investigation by the Public Order Division of DAS to determine the character, loyalty, background, and qualifications of each candidate. The investigation will cover the candidate's entire adult life and any questionable circumstances will be resolved personally by the Chief of DAS. A group of investigators in the Public Order Division is being especially instructed in this kind of investigation.

It is understood that the Public Safety recommendation for the creation of a new class of "Investigative Officer" in DAS and of a higher level "New DAS Academy" is incorporated into a proposed decree which would also increase the salary scale somewhat and assure a career system. Early consideration of this measure is considered vitally important to the retention of qualified DAS personnel and the recruitment of University level investigators in DAS.

The Rural Security School at Agua Azul is now under construction with the assistance of funds from AID/Public Safety. This school will have a tremendous impact upon the capability of DAS in the gathering of rural intelligence, and will increase the already enviable reputation of the Rural Security Service.

Short courses are being prepared which can be presented to agents in the field offices during their spare hours by qualified instructors in order to increase the level of competence, and to select agents for further training and promotion.

A standard revolver training course similar to that used in the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the United States will soon be given to DAS agents throughout the country. Every DAS agent will be required to qualify periodically. Public Safety will equip and train personnel for a reloading shop to provide ammunition for this program.

The above outlined personnel and training program has an importance above and beyond the skills involved. Its effect upon the morale of the agents, their public relations, and in general upon the political stability of the government will be major accomplishments. The writer hopes to convince DAS officials that as basic educational requirements of DAS candidates are increased the basic training course should be shortened in order to accelerate training. It is vitally important that the goal of a 100% trained investigative force in DAS be reached within one to two years.

The Technical and Identification Personnel of DAS

A great deal of initiative has been evident in the operations of the Division of Criminal Technology in DAS. In preparation for the new classification of "Technical Officer" a number of candidates have been selected and are in training. Preliminary technical investigations in the field and central laboratory work in Bogotá are being improved through training and through the addition of modern technical equipment. A group of nine newly trained technicians were recently sent to the larger field offices to supervise preliminary technical investigations. The central DAS laboratory is acquiring through AID/Public Safety some highly sophisticated analytical instruments and proper training will be provided in their use.

Identification personnel continue to be devoted mainly to the issuing of the certificate of conduct, and until remedial legislation is passed will be unavailable for the more important law enforcement functions enumerated in the "First DAS Report."

The Chief of DAS

With the approval of President Valencia, the Chief of DAS has been awarded a Department of State "Leader Grant" for an extensive official visit to the United States. The trip is expected to take place during the fall of this year. The Chief of DAS plans to take maximum advantage of this trip to observe activities of professional interest in various parts of the United States and Puerto Rico.

IV DAS COMMUNICATIONS

The Ministry of Government-DAS -National Police Communications Net

As the result of a preliminary survey by a Public Safety technician an agreement was reached with the Minister of Government, DAS, and the National Police for a national integrated radio communications network for the three agencies, and it is anticipated that the customs department will also participate. This net will utilize available facilities of all three agencies and of the civic action nets. The available Public Safety funds will then be used to fill the critical needs of the combined network. This net will serve all the participating agencies much better than each could serve itself. It will provide voice and teletype transmission on a twenty four hour basis and will eventually reach every part of Colombia. A fulltime qualified communications engineer has been assigned to Public Safety to implement this project. Already some of the new facilities are in operation and plans are well advanced for the combined communications center in Bogotá which will handle the traffic.

This communications network is a prime example of interservice cooperation which it is hoped will extend into other operations at an early date. DAS is making a substantial contribution to the maintenance and operation of this net and is cooperating wholeheartedly in the whole project. Several DAS technical employees will be sent to the United States for special training. Within two years DAS and the other participating agencies will have a modern, nationwide communications service adequate to all their needs.

V THE USAID/PUBLIC SAFETY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR DAS

The Priorities of Technical Assistance

Experience with Public Safety programs throughout the world has taught that there are three important priorities of technical assistance. These are as follows:

1. Technical Advice
2. Training
3. Commodity Aid

Technical advice is of the highest order of priority since only through competent technical advice can the real needs of a police or security organization be determined. Training is the next priority in order to assure the competence of personnel and to orient them toward the technical advice which has been given. Commodity aid can be effective only if the real needs of an organization are being met and if proper maintenance and control can be assured. Sometimes, to avoid delay, as was done with DAS, some commodity aid is granted at the beginning of a program if there is reason to believe that technical advice will be heeded. Fortunately in the DAS/AID program technical advice was accepted and is being implemented as rapidly as possible, training opportunities are being utilized to the maximum, and as a consequence commodity aid is serving its proper function.

Technical Advice

The first DAS Report and the present DAS Progress Report represent the technical advice from Public Safety, resulting from the efforts of a full time investigations advisor assisted by a communications engineer, and a training advisor on permanent assignment to Bogotá. Technicians on temporary assignment fill special needs from time to time in accordance with the current program agreement.

Training Assistance

Because of the encouraging response in DAS and on the part of the Government of Colombia to the first priority of technical assistance Public Safety has programmed for DAS the largest Public Safety participant training program in the world. One hundred DAS agents have graduated or are definitely scheduled for training at the Interamerican Police Academy. It is planned that from fifty to one hundred more will be scheduled during the coming fiscal year. In addition a number of DAS agents will be sent to the United States for various kinds of communications and other technical training. A senior DAS official is scheduled for the senior course at the International Police Academy in Washington, D. C., during 1964. Openings are available at the National Academy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Quantico, Virginia, as suitable candidates become available.

The Public Safety training advisor is assisting with the curriculum for the DAS Urban School at Suba and the new Rural Security School at Agua Azul, and is also helping to devise training courses for use in the field.

Commodity Assistance

Under the first program agreement for DAS Public Safety furnished 26 vehicles and a quantity of miscellaneous equipment. The vehicles are currently being placed into service. They include eight mobile investigative laboratories, four personnel carriers, and fourteen nine-passenger jeeps. Under the second program agreement for DAS an additional US\$150,000 was made available. This money is being used for critically needed communications equipment, laboratory equipment, assistance in building ~~the~~ Rural Security School, and for arms and ammunition. The latter items include 100 M-1 carbines to give rural patrols more firepower, 200 riot shotguns which are considered by Public Safety the most effective available anti-personnel weapon in close operations, and a quantity of ammunition for the M-1, shotgun, and .38 Special revolver for training purposes. Reloading equipment and training ~~programs provided~~ to assure a continuous firearms training program for all DAS agents.

Commodity assistance under the fiscal year 1965 program within the limits of available funds will depend upon the degree of implementation of Public Safety recommendations which has been attained, and upon the urgent needs which become apparent as the program develops.

VI. SUMMARY OF PROBLEMS FACING DAS

Once the proper legal basis is established for DAS through the pending measures for judicial reform, the way will be clear for real progress in DAS during the next two years. Public Safety's efforts during this period will be directed toward the following problems:

Communications

In addition to the Ministry of Government-DAS-National Police network, the Office of Public Safety is considering the special communications needs of DAS. This includes communications for patrols in rural areas, ground-to-air equipment, surveillance communications, and special mobile communications in certain areas.

Training

The Public Safety recommended training program for DAS has been covered in a previous chapter. In summary, the objective of this program is to assure that every DAS agent completes a basic training course, that every agent qualifies with the .38 special police revolver, and that a substantial number of senior agents receive advanced training and specialization. For advanced training the "New DAS Academy" proposed in the "First DAS Report" is an extremely important project which is still in the planning stage. The program contemplates adequate scientific and technical training for DAS Technical Officers, and for technical maintenance personnel.

DAS Criminal Laboratory

Needed laboratory equipment is on order and additional equipment will be provided by the Office of Public Safety as the necessary skills and experience are acquired by DAS Technical Officers with the objective that DAS will be unequalled in this field in Colombia, and will be enabled to give prompt and expert technical services to other government agencies.

DAS Security

The security of DAS personnel and buildings from subversive penetration will be the object of continuous effort by Public Safety. In this connection the proposed peso loan for completion of the DAS Central Headquarters building would resolve many security problems in addition to providing much needed operational space and detention facilities. It is hoped that this loan will receive favorable consideration.

The Coordination and Dissemination of Intelligence

As DAS intelligence productivity increases, the problem of coordination and dissemination to other members of the intelligence community will become more acute. Public Safety will make recommendations regarding delimitations agreements, reporting, disseminating, and liaison matters.

Expanding DAS Services

When DAS jurisdiction becomes properly defined it will be possible to expand DAS representation into every Colombian community. Public Safety will recommend practical ways of doing this through the use of resident agents and travelling agents.

DAS Public Relations

The Office of Public Safety will recommend various steps to improve DAS public relations. This may include some or all of the following suggestions at an appropriate time:

1. A "top ten" fugitive program or similar project.
2. School contact and recruiting program.
3. Speakers bureau.
4. Guided tours.
5. Magazine and newspaper articles.
6. Youth projects.
7. Educational programs.

Conclusion

The Office of Public Safety feels sufficiently encouraged by the progress made to date in the DAS program to be confident of meeting all of its objectives. The Chief of DAS and his officials have made themselves always available to the Public Safety advisors for consultations, for decisions resolving questions arising almost daily, and to furnish needed information. There has not been a single instance of evasion or unwarranted delay on the part of any DAS official. For this reason, Public Safety believes that following adoption of decrees implementing the recommendations for DAS there will be an impressive period of progress.