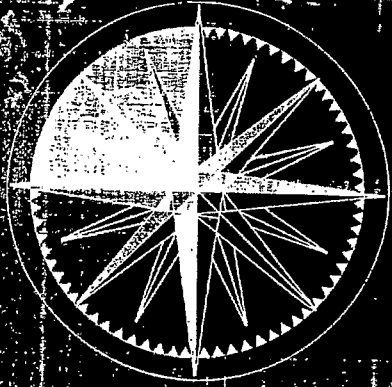


25 September 1964

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WEEKLY SUMMARY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

State Dept. review
completed

DIA review
completed.

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GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic
downgrading and declassification



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Western Hemisphere

COLOMBIAN ANTI-COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN

The Colombian Army is now in the fifth month of its campaign in Marquetalia against the Communist guerrillas led by Tiro Fijo (Sure Shot). In May, the army occupied almost 70 percent of the region under Tiro Fijo's control, and the public began to expect a speedy victory.

Since mid-June, however, the army has not gained any territory and has been subjected to increasingly bitter criticism. Guerrilla ambushes, booby traps, and snipers have caused a number of government casualties. More important still is the problem of declining morale. Some of the criticism stems from ignorance about the nature of the campaign and the enemy.

Tiro Fijo was born on 13 May 1930. He joined a bandit gang in 1954

[Redacted]

In company with many other "political outlaws," he was granted amnesty in 1959 by the Lleras administration. He could find no work except on a road gang, however, so in 1960 he organized his own gang of brigands and soon became the Communist commander of Marquetalia. The gang committed a long series of violent crimes against civilians and the armed forces. The most brazen, perhaps, was the ambush of a helicopter last March and collection of \$200,000 ransom for the release of two crew members.

The army is moving slowly in Marquetalia for a number of reasons. The troops are operating in some of Colombia's most rugged mountains, at altitudes ranging from 9,500 to 14,000 feet. The lack of roads creates supply problems. Furthermore, the army is exercising some caution to prevent Tiro Fijo's retreat into nearby Rio Chiquito or Guayabero, where he could link up with other Communist-directed forces.

The army considers its civic action program at least as important as the conflict with Tiro Fijo. The peasants in Marquetalia, fearful of both bandit reprisals and army brutality, were slow to accept the army's aid in public health and municipal betterment. The Communists themselves have admitted, however, that the army's program now is winning the peasants' confidence.

[Redacted]

The Communists have used "Defend Marquetalia!" as a propaganda cry, especially among students and other susceptible youth groups, but little action has resulted.

[Redacted]

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