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ACTION INL-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-10	ACDE-00	INLB-01	AID-00	AMAD-01	ARA-01
	CG-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DEAE-00	OASY-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	SRPP-00	OIGO-01	FBIE-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	JUSE-00
	L-01	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PM-00
	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	FMP-00
	PMB-00	G-00	/019W				

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O 192147Z SEP 96
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1670
DOSAIRWING PATRICK AFB FL

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FOR INL PDAS JANE BECKER AND INL/C MIKE RYAN FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/98
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJECT: OV-10'S FOR THE COLOMBIA AERIAL ERADICATION PROGRAM

1. CLASSIFIED BY VICTOR A. ABEYTA, NAS DIRECTOR. REASON 1.5(D)
2. (C) EMBASSY IS AWARE THAT DEPARTMENT IS WORKING ON CONVERTING TWO OV-10'S FOR AERIAL ERADICATION. EMBASSY IS ALSO AWARE THAT THE COLOMBIA PROGRAM IS BEING CONSIDERED TO RECEIVE AT LEAST ONE OF THESE AIRCRAFT. IF WE UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY, THE ONLY CAVEAT FOR ASSIGNING THE AIRCRAFT TO COLOMBIA IS WHO WILL FLY THE PLANE. NAS DIRECTOR WAS TOLD THAT IDEALLY, INL WOULD WANT AMERICAN PILOTS TO

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L. MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 29 AUG 2001 200101108

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 FLY THE OV-10. HOWEVER, AND AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THAT
 POSSIBILITY IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY GIVEN GOC ADVERSITY TO DIRECT
 AMERICAN PILOT PARTICIPATION, AS WITH THE T-65S.

3. (C) DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE (FAC) HAS SEVERAL OV-10'S IN THEIR INVENTORY. THE FAC HAS HAD THE AIRCRAFT FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND THEY HAVE A CADRE OF HIGHLY TRAINED PILOTS TO FLY THEM. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE FLIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AIRCRAFT CHANGE SOMEWHAT WITH THE ADDED SPRAY EQUIPMENT AND THAT ADDITIONAL TRAINING WOULD BE REQUIRED. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE (MOD) THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED THAT THE AIRCRAFT MAY RPT MAY POSSIBLY BE AVAILABLE FOR THE COLOMBIA PROGRAM AERIAL ERADICATION SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE. GENERAL SANDOVAL, COMMANDER OF THE FAC, EXPRESSED INTEREST, SAYING SURELY HIS PILOTS COULD FLY THE AIRCRAFT. THE INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE AVAILABILITY OF THE MODIFIED OV-10 WAS IMPARTED TO THE AMBASSADOR ON ONE OF HIS CONSULTATION VISITS TO INL.

4. (C) THE COUNTRY TEAM SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF ADDING OV-10'S TO THE AERIAL ERADICATION FLEET FOR SEVERAL REASONS. PRINCIPAL AMONG WHICH IS THAT THE GOC CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE IT WILL COMMIT MILITARY FORCES DIRECTLY TO COUNTERNARCOTICS ACTIVITIES. OPERATION CONQUEST STANDS AS TESTIMONY TO THAT COMMITMENT AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SERVICES ON COUNTERNARCOTICS.

5. (C) THE ADVANTAGES OF AN AIRCRAFT SUCH AS THE OV-10 FOR THE COLOMBIA PROGRAM ARE MANY. THE MOST IMMEDIATELY IMPORTANT ARE INCREASED SECURITY FOR THE PILOTS, LONGER RANGE AND BIGGER PAYLOADS. THESE ELEMENTS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CRITICAL AS THE NARCO-GUERRILLAS CONTINUE TO TARGET AND SCORE AGAINST ERADICATION AIRCRAFT. AN ADDED BENEFIT MAY BE THAT BECAUSE FAC PILOTS ARE

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 NIGHT VISION GOGGLE TRAINED, THAT NIGHT MISSIONS COULD BE FLOWN. THIS, COUPLED WITH THE USE OF GRANULAR HERBICIDE WOULD MAKE FOR A FORMIDABLE WEAPON AGAINST LARGE AND HEAVILY PROTECTED COCA FIELDS.

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6. (C) EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT INL GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE MODIFIED OV-10'S TO COLOMBIA AND TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ALLOWING FAC PILOTS TO FLY THEM. THE ADVANTAGES ARE EVIDENT. THE TRANSITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM WOULD BE SHORT AND THE SAVINGS WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE SINCE WE WOULD NOT HAVE TO CONTRACT AND TRAIN CIVILIAN PILOTS. IT IS POSSIBLE WITH INL'S PERMISSION TO HAVE TRAINED CIVILIAN COLOMBIAN T-65 PILOTS FLY IN THE BACK SEAT TO OPERATE THE SPRAY EQUIPMENT AND OTHERWISE GUIDE THE AIRCRAFT INTO THE SPRAY AREA.

7. (C) IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THIS MESSAGE WILL SERVE AS THE GENESIS TO BEGIN THE DIALOGUE WE BELIEVE NECESSARY TO GET THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC MOVING AHEAD.
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