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DI

11/24/9

(33)

ec [redacted]
Research Analysts

Not a happy situation.

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BP: KIDNAPPING AND SECURITY

1. [redacted] DSC and [redacted] called to brief me and [redacted] on this case, on 18 September.
 2. The kidnapping took place on 4 September 160 kilometres NE of Medellin just outside Ramedios. A BP contracted Colombian lawyer and a Colombian colleague were taken from their car at an ELN road-block, where they had been targeted. The lawyer had made frequent visits to the area, where he was involved in advising on land purchase contacts between BP and landowners, in advance of pipeline construction; and was therefore known to the local ELN group the Mario Cano front. On leaving his car the lawyer told his driver he would try to escape.
 3. The hostages were taken on a circuitous march to a bush camp. After a day or two the lawyers' colleague was released. Taking advantage of lax security the lawyer escaped by night on 12 September in rainy dark conditions using a torch [redacted]. By this date the ELN had made no contact with anyone about possible negotiations. But the lawyer had been allowed by his captives to send a letter indicating his approximate location. This was an unusual concession, suggesting a possible scam to lure the army into an ambush should the army have decided on a rescue attempt.
 4. [redacted] planned to meet soon with [redacted] Commander 14 Brigade to discuss this case further. Meanwhile [redacted] who were a few days ago handling eight kidnap cases, were now handling four. This included the US mining engineer taken seven months ago near Valledupar by the ELN. The first ELN contact was made after 116 days. [redacted] thought the rural kidnap situation was deteriorating despite government attempts to dress up favourably the statistics.
- [redacted]

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CASANARE: SECURITY

5. The main BP security problem here was the continuing road-blocks imposed by a syndicate of the Seve Patrol Vigilancia Co. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But violence erupted two days ago (16 September). An explosion injured 11 including five police, and killed a syndicate member. There was also small arms fire. Someone trying to throw an explosive device lost an arm. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

19 September 1996

cc [REDACTED] LAD, FCO
[REDACTED] Security Dept, FCO