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Mandatory Review  
Case # NLJ 99-254  
Document # 12a

18 July 1966

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Security Situation in Colombia with Respect  
to Inauguration of President Carlos Lleras  
Restrepo on 7 August 1966

1. The political and security climate of Colombia is more stable now than at any time during the past year and is expected to remain substantially unchanged through the inauguration of President Lleras on 7 August. Bogota has experienced a few isolated terrorist acts, student demonstrations and a "land invasion" (politically inspired squatting), but there have been no major or uncontrolled disturbances in Colombia this year. While the Colombian security forces cannot guarantee foreknowledge of plans or protection against isolated acts of terrorism, it is believed they can control practically all organized disturbances and can detect any major plans for disruptive or terrorist actions by organized groups. Organizations capable of mounting acts of violence in selected areas are the following:

a. The Communist Party of Colombia (PCC), the orthodox, Soviet-line party, with about 7,000-8,000 active members.

b. Communist Party of Colombia/Marxist-Leninist (PCC/ML), the Chinese-line party, with about 2,500 active members.

c. Army of National Liberation (ELN), a pro-Castro revolutionary guerrilla group with about 100 men in the hinterland.

d. Worker-Student-Peasant Movement (MOEC), a pro-Chinese revolutionary group, with about 500 active members.

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e. National Federation of University Students (FUN), which is controlled principally by pro-Chinese Communists but is made up of many kinds of leftist and extremist students. (Students, and especially the FUN, have been the most successful of all Colombian groups in creating disturbances in urban areas, especially Bogota.)

f. Although non-Communist the National Popular Alliance (ANP) of former dictator Rojas Pinilla, which polled almost 30 percent of the vote in the presidential election in May, also has the capability of mounting disorders.

2. Colombia has a background of politically inspired violence which, since 1947, has claimed the lives of perhaps as many as a quarter of a million people. Gangsterism and banditry, principally in highland rural areas, carried on by those who have known no other existence for 15 years, still flourished in 1961 despite efforts at suppression by the police and army. The problem was further compounded by Communist efforts to influence or establish control over bandit groups. Persistent efforts by the military, aided by the police, since 1961 have neutralized the threat to the stability of the government and to the economy of the country posed by the bandits and guerrillas. As indicated above, however, several organizations have the capability of mounting campaigns of violence.

3. There is currently no indication that extremist groups have formulated plans of action for the inauguration, nor have unusual movements or actions by subversive individuals been noted. However, [REDACTED] expects symbolic attacks, demonstrations, "land invasions," and other similar protest actions aimed at the inauguration of Lleras as president. If a high-level official is a member of the U.S. delegation to the inauguration, the principal Communist and extremist organizations could be expected to step up plans for disturbances and terrorist activities. This assessment is based on patterns of activities of these groups in the past.

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4. As of mid-July the security services were just initiating preparations for the inauguration and were awaiting firm indications from the presidential palace concerning plans and schedules. Colonel Jorge Robledo Pulido, Chief of Staff of the Military Institutes Brigade (BIM - Army units responsible for security in Bogota under the present state of siege decree) and former chief of Army Intelligence (E-2), will be the coordinator for all security matters concerning the inauguration. The Administrative Department of Security (DAS) and the E-2 will be responsible for providing intelligence support. The National Police, the BIM troops, and to some extent the DAS agents, are responsible for crowd control.

5. In terms of planning, we may expect the following security measures by the Colombian security forces. The Public Order Division of DAS plans to set up a briefing room for daily meetings with security representatives of the visiting delegations. DAS is also preparing a preventive arrest list such as the one used before the visit of General de Gaulle to Colombia in 1964, when about 300 undesirables were placed under preventive arrest. The security services will probably set up road blocks for controlling travel and possible transport of arms. The Army will place sharpshooters in strategic buildings along the routes used. In addition to Army troops, about 3,000 policemen, plus the traffic police, are available to maintain order in Bogota. An additional 27,000 policemen are located throughout the country. DAS has a total of about 2,000 men, located in key cities and towns.

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