

18155

(15)



Director of Central Intelligence

~~Top Secret~~

NOFORN-ORCON



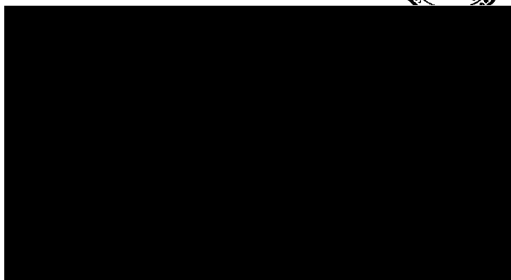
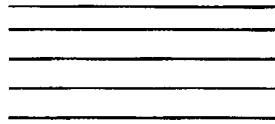
CIA/PASS | NID 98-040CX



National Intelligence Daily

(b)(1)
(b)(3)
(S)

Wednesday, 18 February 1998



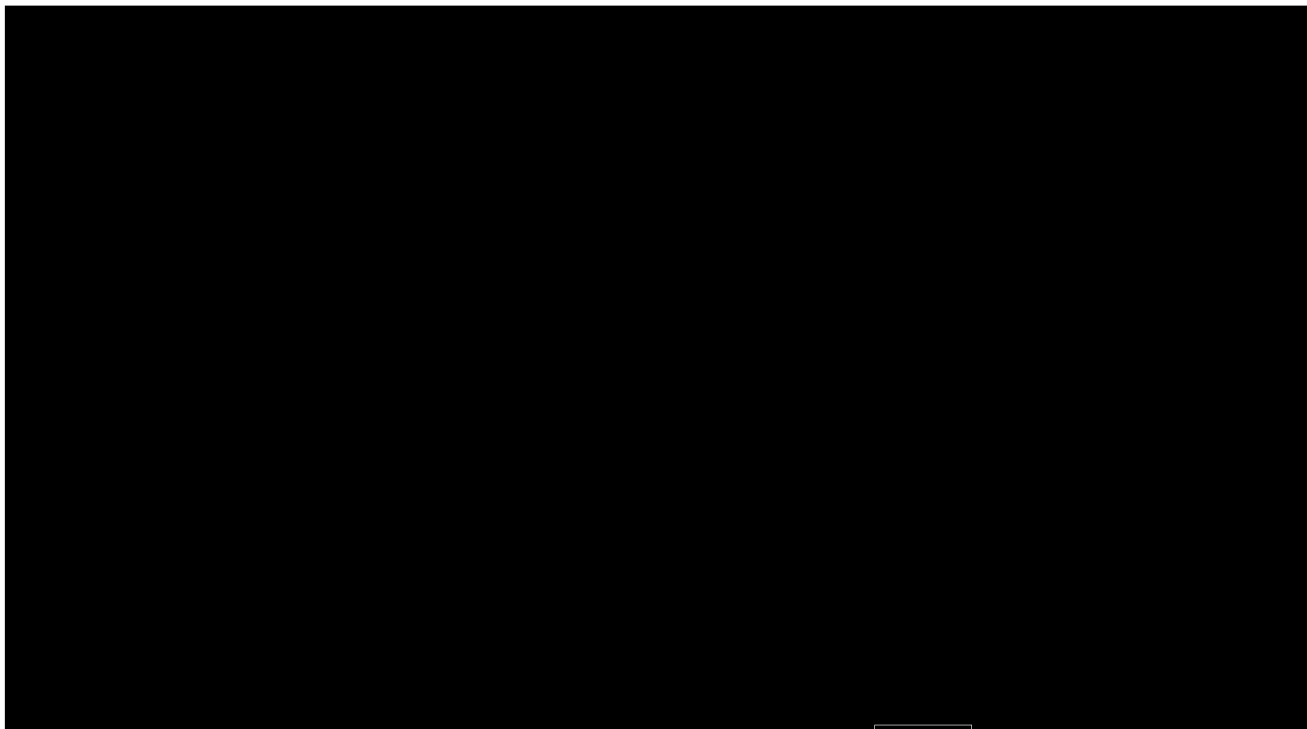
~~Top Secret~~

PASS NID 98-040CX
18 February 1998

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: FEB 2002

~~Top Secret~~

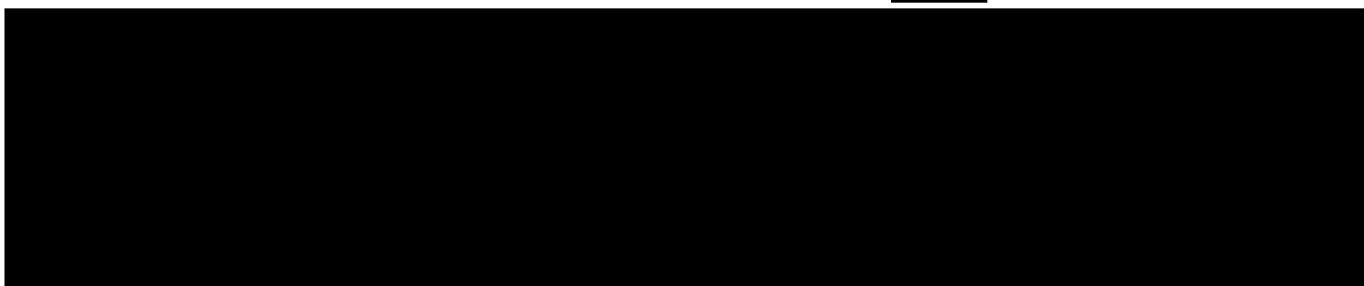
~~NOFORN ORCON~~



Americas

Colombia: Paramilitaries Blamed for Massacre

8



Handle via COMINT Channels

~~Top Secret~~

18 February 1998

AMERICAS

Colombia: **Paramilitaries Blamed for Massacre**

The mayor of Puerto Asis in southern Colombia claims that an illegal paramilitary group led by Carlos Castano—Colombia's most notorious paramilitary leader—killed 38 people near his town during the past two weeks, according to press reports. Witnesses said the heavily armed and hooded killers worked from a list of about 250 people suspected of collaborating with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrillas.

— Castano's group carried out a similar massacre of civilians in Mapiripan last July, according to the US Embassy in Bogotá.

— The mayor also charged that some of the killers were transported in Army helicopters, a charge vehemently denied by Army Commander Galan.

Galan—who is sensitive to accusations of cooperation between the Army and paramilitary groups—has traveled to southern Colombia to conduct his own investigation, as have judicial authorities. Since late last year, Army troops have flooded into western Putumayo Department in search of 18 soldiers captured when the FARC overran a military base in neighboring Narino Department.

— *There is no reporting that these troops were operating near Puerto Asis at the time of the killings or played any role in the paramilitary activity.*