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| Colombia: | Government Explanation of US Hostage Deaths   |
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|           | A Colombian Army spokesman says that the two US missionaries whose bodies were found on Tuesday were killed by the rebels who had been holding them as the latter were retreating after a skirmish with a Colombiar Army patrol.  the Army patrol was not trying to rescue the hostages.  |
|           | — The New Tribes Mission had been trying to negotiate with the rebels for the release of these and three other missionaries but had refused to pay ransom.  |
|           | — The Samper administration appears willing to press for the release of the five remaining US hostages during ongoing peace talks with the rebels. Little progress appears likely in the short term, however, because guerrilla fronts have become dependent on the money they obtain from kidnapping, extortion, and drug trafficking to sustain their operations. |

