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## Colombia: Notes On "drug War"

*by John Neagle*

*Category/Department: General*

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Feb. 3: Gen. Eduardo Nieves, commander of the 8th Army Brigade, said soldiers found more than \$2 million in cash at the estate of deceased Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, located in the town of Guaduas, Cundinamarca department. Gacha, a drug ring leader, was killed in a shootout with police Dec. 16. Feb. 6: Daily newspaper El Tiempo reported police arrested Jesus Humberto Vega Escobar on Feb. 5. Vega, who allegedly controlled a major transport network in Panama, Central America and Mexico for shipments to the US, is wanted on drug charges in the US. The police found in his possession a list that included the name of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. El Tiempo said the list of 28 names headed by Noriega included businesspersons in Panama and Mexico. Feb. 14: President Virgilio Barco said he is willing to listen to proposals by drug traffickers as long as they are not illegal. In discussions with the traffickers, Barco said he would be flexible, which does not imply "negotiation." Meanwhile, Justice Minister Roberto Salazar asserted that the government is not contemplating dialogue nor negotiations with the drug traffickers. "One cannot reach agreements with common criminals," he said. Feb. 20: A news release from the Administrative Security Department, Colombia's secret police, said security forces seized a rocket launcher and 10 French-made shoulder-fired surface-to-air and air-to-air missiles in a raid Monday on a Bogota "drug hideout." The Medellin drug ring, said the release, had been planning to use them against 10 separate government targets in the capital, including the control tower at the Eldorado International Airport. According to AP, the missiles were capable of downing planes. Two men arrested during the raid were suspects in the November killing of TV news anchor Enrique Pulido in the capital city. (Basic data from AP, 02/06/90, 02/20/90; AFP, 02/03/90, 02/20/90; Notimex, 02/14/90; Xinhua, 02/14/90)

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