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Barbara Khol

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Colombia: Pay Hike For Public Employees

by Barbara Khol
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On Feb. 24, President Cesar Gaviria announced a 26.8% pay hike for nearly 700,000 civil servants, police officers and members of the armed forces. Local media reports indicated that the unexpected increase was likely motivated by an attempt to forestall a strike. Police and other public employee groups had publicized plans to stage a strike on Feb. 26-27. The pay hike retroactive to Jan. 1 and to be paid out by March 1 corresponds to the 26.82% consumer price inflation rate for 1991. Gaviria said he would sign a decree authorizing the salary hike by midnight after declaring a "social emergency," a constitutional provision allowing the president to pass emergency measures without ratification by the Congress. Police officers earn approximately US$100 per month. (Basic data from Agence France-Presse, 02/24/92)

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