

Operation

# **WILLING SPIRIT**

Setting Conditions for  
*Operación JAQUE*



by Charles H. Briscoe

The strong American military relationship with Colombia dates to the Korean War. This partnership is a model of U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) long-term engagement. Since the 1980s, the United States has provided significant support to Colombia and other South American countries to attack cocaine production at its source. *Plan Colombia* (1999), presented in English to the U.S. Congress by President Andrés Pastrana Arango, was designed to contain the drug problem in that country. Unfortunately, his demilitarized *FARC-landia* plan backfired. In the wake of 9/11, a charismatic Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez convinced the American legislators that *Plan Colombia* could also restore legitimacy to insurgent-controlled areas in his country, particularly *FARC-landia*.<sup>1</sup>

U.S. funding was increased, and training support was extended beyond the National Police to the new Colombian Army (COLAR) Counter-Drug battalions. The mobility afforded by organic helicopter fleets was key to better successes in the mountainous country—twin-engine UH-1N *Hueys* and UH-60L *Black Hawks* were provided as security assistance.<sup>2</sup> America’s Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) proved a boon to her allies.<sup>3</sup>

U.S. National Security Presidential Directive 18 (NSPD-18) labeled the *FARC* (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*), the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN), and *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) as terrorist organizations in 2002. This enabled the U.S. military to increase intelligence sharing and support Colombian counter-terrorist (CT) operations.<sup>4</sup> However, the counter-drug mission would continue to dominate the American effort in Colombia. The State Department (DOS) contracted DynCorp for aerial spraying and coca eradication while the Department of Defense (DoD) contracted SOUTHCOM Reconnaissance Systems (SRS), a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman, to conduct aerial surveillance of coca-producing regions.<sup>5</sup>

While the *FARC* had been taking hostages for decades (more than 500 military, police, and local government officials) for ransom and political negotiations, it was



Colombian President Álvaro Uribe Vélez (2002-2010) meets U.S. President George W. Bush.

not until they seized three American SRS contractors (Marc D. Gonsalves, Keith D. Stansell, and Thomas R. Howes) that Washington had to deal with the problem. Their SRS single-engine Cessna 208B *Caravan* developed engine problems and crash-landed near the *Cordillera Oriental* mountain range, south of Bogotá on 13 February 2003. The *FARC* executed the injured pilot, retired CW5 Thomas J. Janis, a Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot, and the COLAR observer, Sergeant (SGT) Luis Alcides Cruz, before the terrorist group disappeared into the heavy jungle with their three U.S. hostages.<sup>6</sup>

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) training the COLAR and National Police monitored the aircraft distress radio traffic. They were working 30 minutes *Black Hawk* helicopter flight time from the crash site, but were not allowed to join the Colombian aerial response. U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) rules of engagement (ROE) did not permit American SOF to accompany host nation (HN) forces into *FARC*-dominated territory.<sup>7</sup>

Why not? Latin America had not been designated as a U.S. theater of combat operations. Since SF could not engage in direct combat, there was no U.S. military (USMIL) personnel recovery (PR) plan, nor a quick reaction force (QRF). Since *FARC* strength in the crash site

L to R |

*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* flag (*FARC*);

*Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (*ELN*);

*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (*AUC*).



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Members of the *Compañía Jungla Antinarcóticos*, counter-narcotics police from Colombia, were trained by the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne).



L to R | U.S. hostages held by FARC: Thomas R. Howes, Marc D. Gonsalves, and Keith D. Stansell.

A 'Rewards for Justice' poster solicited information on the three U.S. hostages in Colombia.

**Sus familias y amigos los buscan**

Dé información que permita rescatar a estas personas... Ellos dependen de usted para ser libres.

**¿Sabe dónde están?**



- Estatura: 1.93 m • Ojos: azul grisoso
- Piel: blanca • Contextura gruesa

**Keith D Stansell**



- Estatura: 1.82 m • Ojos: azules
- Piel: blanca • Contextura gruesa

**Thomas R. Howes**



- Estatura: 1.77 m • Ojos: cafe
- Piel: trigueña • Contextura media

**Marc D. Gonsalves**

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**LINEA 146** SEGURA  
Gratis desde cualquier lugar  
EXERCITO COLOMBIANO

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Comuníquese o informe a la autoridad más cercana  
Total seguridad para usted y su familia



U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne W. Patterson.



Army BG Remo Butler, Commander, Special Operations Command, South (SOCSOUTH).

area was unknown, the American ambassador, Anne W. Patterson, and the Special Operations Command, South (SOCSOUTH) commander, Brigadier General (BG) Remo Butler, recently relocated to Puerto Rico from Panama, were reluctant to request authority to commit U.S. forces in Colombia. To further complicate matters, the U.S. policy on hostages did not specify that American citizen (AMCIT) contractors were considered U.S. Government (USG) personnel nor contain anything about assisting in their recovery.<sup>8</sup> With no additional information the fate of hostages was unknown. 'Proof of life' would not come for several months.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the SRS contract flight team continued to search for their lost members between drug surveillance missions. They flew the remaining Cessna *Caravan* until 25 March 2003, when it clipped a tree and crashed in a ravine. The two pilots, James Oliver and Thomas Schmidt, and the sensor technician, Ralph Ponticelli, were killed. That ended the SRS effort.<sup>10</sup>

Washington officials used NSPD-12 to prevent family members from contacting the FARC. The official U.S. policy was not to negotiate with terrorists.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, the official status and rights of USG contractors and USG responsibilities for them had never been delineated despite a proliferation of contractors on 'battlefields' dating to the First Gulf War (Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM) in 1990-1991.<sup>12</sup>

The plight of three Americans held captive in the jungles of Colombia became obscured by the start of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) in 2003, while Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) continued in Afghanistan and the Philippines (OEF-P).<sup>13</sup> In addition, the SOUTHCOM headquarters in Miami was heavily engaged with stability operations in Haiti, and the SOCSOUTH headquarters was departing Puerto Rico for Homestead Air Reserve Base in Florida. Officially, SOCSOUTH could only saturate FARC-controlled areas with 'Rewards for Justice' leaflets seeking information on the status of the three Americans. The Department of Justice and the U.S.

ambassador approved the messaging on these leaflets. ‘Proof-of-life’ was finally received in July 2003. Colombian journalist Jorgé Enrique Botero videotaped his interviews with the captured Americans and former Senator Ingrid Betancourt Pulecio and her campaign manager/vice presidential running mate, Clara Leticia Rojas González. The latter two had been seized on 23 February 2002 while campaigning for the presidency in the Switzerland-sized demilitarized zone of Colombia called *FARC-landia*.<sup>14</sup>

Ironically, two months before Botero was given access to the VIP hostages a U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) CT-trained Colombian SOF (COLSOF) element attempted a daylight direct action rescue assault in the jungle. It failed miserably. Upon hearing the UH-60 *Black Hawk* helicopters hovering as the COLSOF assaulters ‘fast roped’ to the ground, the *FARC* commander ordered his hostages shot. Nine were killed and three wounded (one fatally). Amazingly, one survived unscathed. Remember, *FARC* units had to guard, feed, and constantly move 500 plus hostages in the jungle-clad mountains. President Álvaro Uribe Vélez took full responsibility for the debacle in a nationally televised address.<sup>15</sup> Afterwards, the possibility that a senior Colombian leader would authorize a direct action hostage rescue in the jungle became very remote. The fact that the Colombian military (COLMIL) leadership had categorized direct action rescue as nonviable in 2002 was either unknown, or it was lost on SOCSOUTH.<sup>16</sup>

Subsequent electronic warfare (EW)/signal intelligence (SIGINT) radio intercepts revealed that *FARC* leaders had increased security measures and directed hostage executions when rescue was imminent. For example, an accidental encounter between two different *FARC* elements in the dense jungle led to a firefight and hostages were executed.<sup>17</sup> After the 2002 hostage rescue fiasco, COLSOF redirected their direct action against *narco-trafficante* and terrorist leaders (high value targets [HVT]) to disrupt organizational command and control.

Despite a dearth of actionable intelligence on the whereabouts of the American hostages from 2003-2005, COLSOF did well against HVTs. This effort supported

the suggestion of BG Charles T. Cleveland, subsequent SOCSOUTH commander, who recommended that the *FARC* leadership be inundated with ‘dead or alive’ rewards and specific targeting. He wanted to keep them ‘off balance’ and feed their paranoia about security.<sup>18</sup> COLMIL opened communications with the *FARC* hostage holding groups with their radio program that weekly broadcast family messages (*‘El Voz de Secuestrados’* [Voice for the Abducted]). Allowing the captives to listen was a morale booster. *FARC* commanders adjusted their routines to accommodate broadcasts.<sup>19</sup> After a thorough assessment of the American hostage recovery situation to date, the newly-appointed ambassador, William B. Wood, cabled the White House in November 2004 to request it be given a higher priority.

Army General (GEN) Bantz J. Craddock, the SOUTHCOM commander, shared the ambassador’s request with the Secretary of Defense and directed his staff to draft an execution order (EXORD) for Operation WILLING SPIRIT (OWS). ‘Leaning forward,’ DoD authorized SOUTHCOM to participate in combined (non-combat) sensitive site exploitation (SSE) operations (crime scene forensics) on HVT camps recently targeted by COLSOF. Approval for USSOF to accompany COLSOF reconnaissance teams into *FARC*-controlled regions was withheld. It was May 2005 when the Joint Chiefs of



Cessna 208B *Caravan* flown by SOUTHCOM Reconnaissance Systems (SRS), a subsidiary of Northrop Grumman.

L to R |

U.S. Ambassador  
William B. Wood.

Army General (GEN)  
Bantz J. Craddock, U.S.  
Southern Command.

BG Charles T. Cleveland,  
SOCSOUTH Commander.





Before & after Colombian Police Subintendente Jhon F. Pinchao was released.

Colombian Anti-Narcotics Police *Junglas* recovered Pinchao.

Staff (JCS) approved the OWS EXORD. It had guidance, authorities, and granted access to national defense and intelligence resources to expedite locating and rescuing the American hostages. New ROE also allowed more direct support to the COLMIL.<sup>20</sup>

However, the expanded ROE did not apply to USSOF already committed to counter drug training and military assistance. Despite the OWS EXORD, operations in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility (AOR) remained an economy of force effort. However, when the ARSOF BG Charles T. Cleveland took command of SOCSOUTH in June 2005, he announced that his top priority was the recovery of the American hostages in Colombia.<sup>21</sup>

As Executive Agent for OWS, BG Cleveland adroitly leveraged the authorities in the OWS EXORD, NSPD-18, and Section 1208 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to build greater COLSOF capacity and improve capabilities. Capitalizing on the successes of combined SSE missions, he requested that GEN Craddock authorize the 'imbedding' of USSOF personnel with COLSOF reconnaissance teams working in FARC areas. Capitalizing on his personal and professional relationship with Colonel (COL) Simeon G. Trombitas, Military Group (MILGP), Colombia commander, and the MILGP commander's access to Ambassador Wood, BG Cleveland requested and was allowed to put a small SOC-Forward (SOC-FWD) element in Bogotá to 'operationalize' the OWS EXORD.<sup>22</sup>

In the meantime, the SOCSOUTH staff at Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida, prepared a regional 'playbook' for the high priority countries of Latin America. The Colombia section was the most developed. It had hostage recovery contingencies and assorted task force packages. Among them was a unilateral U.S. direct action rescue option with COLMIL support. SOCSOUTH took this option seriously. It was first rehearsed in Florida before being exercised with COLAR elements at the John C. Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.<sup>23</sup>

COLMIL capabilities and COLSOF capacity had improved significantly with General Cleveland's command emphasis, combined partnering initiatives, information sharing, and the SOC-FWD presence. In June 2006, COLAR SIGINT intercepted a message that the FARC VIP hostage group with Ingrid Betancourt and the Americans had been given permission to relocate to Yari province. Combined reconnaissance (recce) teams were launched. These teams were to 'find and fix' that FARC element location and positively identify the hostages. Despite a lot of COLSOF/SOCSOUTH efforts, the COLAR-dominated *Operación CENTURIÓN* accomplished little more than demonstrating a compatibility for combined operations under OWS.<sup>24</sup>

Sophisticated aerial search platforms were thwarted by the dense, triple canopy jungle-covered mountains of Colombia, especially at night.<sup>25</sup> COLAR human intelligence (HUMINT) was still minimal because

relations with the National Police remained fractured by a competition for resources.<sup>26</sup> The *FARC* element with the VIP hostages was not located, but they were always at the top of essential elements of information (EEI) assigned to the recce teams.<sup>27</sup>

A significant breakthrough came a year later when Colombian police *subintendente* Jhon F. Pinchao escaped after nine years in captivity. He was recovered by National Police Counter-Narcotics jungle commandos (*Junglas*) in May 2007. Several post-rescue debriefings provided vital information on current *FARC* hostage security procedures, physical condition and health of the hostages, and a general location of his 'prison' camp. Pinchao had been held captive with Ingrid Betancourt and the three Americans. A combined inter-agency SSE mission to that camp site yielded evidence to corroborate his story.<sup>28</sup>

Most importantly, the COLMIL and National Police discovered that the leader charged with the VIP hostages was *Cabecilla* (*Sub-Comandante*) Gerardo Aguilar Ramírez (alias 'César'), a subordinate of Victor Julio Suárez Rojas (aliases Jorgé Briceño Suárez and 'Mono Jojoy'), the *FARC* Eastern Bloc commander. The VIP hostages were not controlled by the Southern Bloc commander as originally thought. This gave more focus to SIGINT radio monitoring. *FARC* defectors and former hostages were the sources of HUMINT. The very detailed SSE results caused BG Cleveland to press harder to get USSOF embedded with COLSOF recce elements.

Then, in November 2007, the *FARC* released a second proof-of-life video of the three Americans. At the end of December, the COLAR military intelligence (MI), finished tabulating *FARC* radio communication tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) after years of SIGINT monitoring. The combination of these activities from mid-May to December 2007 inspired the COLMIL to plan another hostage search operation.<sup>29</sup>

*Operación ELIPSE* evolved into a combined Colombian/U.S. operation a week after the COLMIL deployed conventional forces (4 February 2008) to block the *FARC* hostage unit movement to the far west. Nine combined SOF recce teams emplaced ground sensors along a known *FARC* resupply route before starting their searches. Phase One of *Operación ELIPSE* was to 'fix' their location. Phase Two called for the insertion of COLSOF/USSOF elements to surround the *FARC*. Then, once the cordon was established, the area would be blanketed with psychological operations (PSYOP) leaflets announcing that the COLMIL wanted to negotiate the release of the hostages (Phase 3). A direct action rescue might be considered, but only if there was minimal risk to the hostages. Yet, that remote possibility prompted BG Cleveland to begin pre-positioning a SOCSOUTH task force in Colombia.<sup>30</sup>

As U.S. elements arrived in Tolemaida, more combined COLSOF/USSOF recce teams were pushed into field cordon positions. The American task force consisted of

a command and control element, two ground forces, and special operations (spec ops) fixed and rotary wing aircraft. They quickly filled the base to capacity, exceeding the COLMIL population. A huge tent city sprang up overnight to accommodate the growth. Unique American spec ops helicopters, making daylight team insertions and heat injury extractions, alerted the *FARC* hostage element. Even the American hostages recognized these uniquely-equipped helicopters.<sup>31</sup>

Still, on 16 February 2008, a COLSOF recce team reported 'eyes on' three white men speaking English, addressing one another by name as they bathed in the Yapuri River. They were guarded by some twenty *FARC*. For the next four days (17-20 February 2008) the COLSOF recce team continued to report hostage sightings. BG Cleveland wanted 'U.S. eyes on' the hostages and pushed to infiltrate more combined blocking teams. Then, on 20 February, the sightings abruptly ended. The combined conclusion was that the *FARC* group, after being resupplied, slipped away in the night, presumably to the north. Several efforts to helicopter cordon forces ('leap frogging') further north into new blocking positions proved fruitless. The *FARC* had escaped the porous jungle cordon.<sup>32</sup>

On 28 February and 1 March the COLMIL helicoptered more forces into the Dos Rios area. They encountered a small point team from the *FARC* hostage group. Two guerrillas were killed.<sup>33</sup> While the COLMIL continued searching the area, BG Cleveland began to redeploy his task force back to the States on 9 March. Five days later the headquarters departed.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the exodus of the SOCSOUTH Task Force, the COLMIL persisted. *Operación ELIPSE* continued until mid-July 2008. The Special Forces company (20<sup>th</sup> SFG [Army National Guard (ANG)]) with its complement of Civil Affairs (CA), PSYOP and Naval Special Warfare (NSW) elements provided 'embeds' for the COLSOF recce missions and supported COLMIL and National Police training requirements.<sup>35</sup> The SOCSOUTH-arranged national



*Cabecilla* (*Sub-Comandante*) Gerardo Aguilar Ramírez ('César') was in charge of the VIP hostages.



Victor Julio Suárez Rojas (Jorgé Briceño Suárez, 'Mono Jojoy') was the *FARC* Eastern Bloc commander.



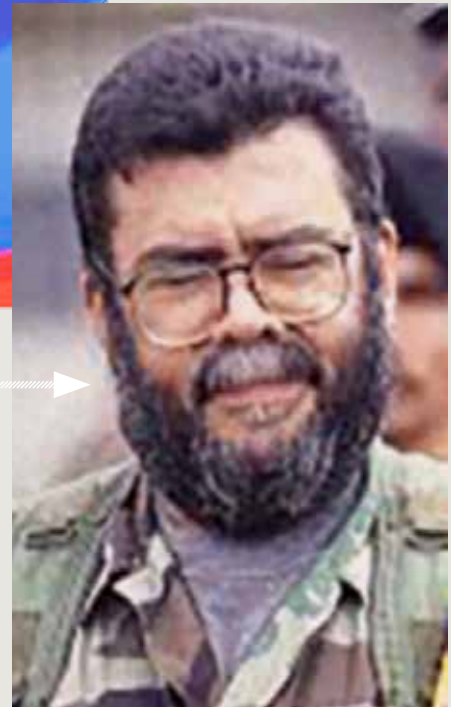
Luís Edgar David Silva, alias *Raúl Reyes*, the *FARC* Southern Bloc commander, was killed along the Ecuador border by COLSOF.



Jose Juvenal Velandia, alias *Iván Ríos* aka *Manuel Jesús Muñoz*, the *FARC* Central Bloc commander, was killed by his security chief for reward money.



Pedro Antonio Marín Marín, alias *Manuel Marulanda Vélez* aka *Tirofijo* (Sure Shot), the founder and supreme leader of the *FARC*, was reported as dead on 26 March 2008.



Marín Marín's second-in-command for twenty years, León Sáenz Vargas, alias *Alfonso Cano*, took command of the *FARC*.

# *Serendipitous Blessings*

As the combined aspect of *Operación ELIPSE* wound down in March 2008, the *FARC* lost three of its seven top leaders, causing major upheaval. First, Luís Edgar David Silva, alias *Raúl Reyes*, one of the seven-member *FARC* Secretariat General and the Southern Bloc advisor, was killed along the Ecuador border by a COLSOF direct action team. Second, Jose Juvenal Velandia, alias *Iván Ríos* aka *Manuel Jesús Muñoz*, who had just taken command of the Central Bloc, was killed by Pablo Montoya, his security chief, for the 'dead or alive' reward. Third, the *FARC* reported the death of its founder and Supreme Leader, Pedro Antonio Marín Marín, alias *Manuel Marulanda Vélez* aka *Tirofijo* (Sure Shot). On 26 March 2008 Guillermo León Sáenz Vargas, alias *Alfonso Cano*, an intellectual on the Secretariat General, who had been second-in-command to Marín Marín for twenty years, assumed the senior leadership. The COLAR SIGINT ploy was to convince César, the *FARC* 1<sup>st</sup> Front commander, to bring the VIP hostages to *Alfonso Cano* for a propaganda video.<sup>37</sup>

intelligence assets remained dedicated to support OWS requirements assessed by the SOC-FWD.

The recent deaths of key FARC leaders (see sidebar) raised the optimism of the COLMIL generals. The PSYOP campaign against FARC leadership, rewards for information program, and integration and amnesty for any surrendering FARC soldiers, was producing results. Venezuelan President Hugo R. Chávez's two FARC 'humanitarian missions' in January and February 2008 effected the release of more hostages. Among them was Ingrid Betancourt's vice presidential candidate, Clara L. Rojas González. Her malnourished, sickly son Emmanuel, had been left at the San José del Guaviare hospital in June 2005 by the FARC. Though the Venezuelan Chávez had overstepped Colombian sovereignty with the 'humanitarian missions,' they triggered some 'out of the box' thinking by junior officers and sergeants in the COLAR EW/SIGINT units.<sup>36</sup>

Unbeknownst to the Americans—SOUTHCOM, SOCSOUTH, SOC-FWD, the 20<sup>th</sup> SFG company and its attachments, the Military Group, Colombia, and the U.S. Embassy—and the majority of the COLMIL, a small cell

personally selected by the Commanding General of the COLAR, General Mario Montoya Uribe, was putting together a highly compartmented 'grand deception stratagem.' It consisted of several smaller deceptions within a much larger one that was perpetrated by unwitting COLSOF, embedded and supporting USSOF, and virtually the entire COLMIL. While that 'grand deception' was underway, a hostage 'sting' operation recovered fifteen VIP hostages without a shot being fired and no one injured.<sup>38</sup>

After the successful 'sting' was executed by COLAR deep cover military intelligence operatives on 2 July 2008, its codename was released. *Operación JAQUE* was a unilateral COLMIL rescue of the FARC VIP hostages: former senator Ingrid Betancourt and fourteen others including the three American contractors. It was accomplished with 97 percent done by the COLMIL and 3 percent by unwitting USSOF rece imbeds, PSYOP assets, and intelligence platform support.<sup>39</sup> *Operación JAQUE* nullified the reason for OWS. The following article, "The Ultimate Deception: *Operación JAQUE*," explains that mission. †

## SUMMARY

- ♦ The OWS EXORD provided expanded authorities needed to improve COLMIL capabilities and capacity to locate and recover the Americans hostages held by the FARC.
- ♦ BG Charles Cleveland, the SOCSOUTH commander, made finding and rescuing the hostages his top priority; he operationalized OWS by establishing a SOC-Forward in Bogotá.
- ♦ SOCSOUTH adroitly used the OWS EXORD, NSPD-18, and Section 1208, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to get dedicated national intelligence assets and forces.
- ♦ Providing counterterrorist (CT) training to COLSOF enabled COLMIL to take direct action against FARC leaders.
- ♦ The PSYOP campaign created dissent in the FARC ranks and encouraged defections.

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## Endnotes

1 Retired COL Kevin M. Higgins, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 16 October 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, hereafter cited by name and date. In late 1998, President Andrés Pastrano Arango had allowed the formation of FARC-landia, a Switzerland-sized demilitarized zone in the heart of Colombia. It was part of his peace overtures to the FARC. Off limits to the Colombian police and military, it became a sanctuary for narco-trafficking, kidnapping and extortion. Arms and drug trafficking yielded hundreds of millions of dollars to expand their army and provide the most modern, lethal weaponry. June Thomas, "Guerrillas in the Midst," 14 January 2002 at <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2002/01/colombian-rebels-prepare-to-leave-farclandia> accessed 10/24/2018.

2 Higgins interview, 17 October 2018.

3 Robert D. Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience, 1998-2008*, Occasional Paper 34 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2009), 55-58; Gregory Wilson, "A Modern Day Trojan Horse—Operation JAQUE and the Use of Stratagem in a Hostage Rescue Operation," in Hy Rothstein and Barton Whaley (eds.), *The Art and Science of Military Deception* (Boston, MA: Artech House, 2013), 385-386.

4 U.S. Government, National Security Policy Directive 18 (NSPD-18), 11 October 2002, 2.

5 Charles H. Briscoe, Barrett F. Lowe, Daniel J. Kulich, and Theodore Mataxis II, White Paper: "ARSOF and Operation WILLING SPIRIT, 2003-2008: Operational Analysis," U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), May 2018), 4, hereafter cited as White Paper.

6 Marc D. Gonsalves, Keith D. Stansell, and Thomas R. Howes with Gary Brozek, *Out of Captivity: Surviving 1,967 Days in the Colombian Jungle* (NY: Harper Collins, 2009), xv-xxii; T. Christian Miller, "American Killed in Colombia Is Buried," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 February 2003 at <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/feb/26/world/fg-colombia26> accessed 6/29/2018.

7 White Paper, 5.

8 White Paper, 5.

9 White Paper, 5.



- 10 James McQuaid, "Flying Blind," New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, 10 November 2003 at [https://www.nola.com/military/index.ssf/2003/11/flying\\_blind.html](https://www.nola.com/military/index.ssf/2003/11/flying_blind.html) accessed 10/3/2018; Mark Bowden, "Flight Risk," *The Atlantic* (July/August 2009) at <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/07/flight-risk/307492> accessed 10/3/2018.
- 11 Victoria Bruce and Karin Hayes with Jorgé Enrique Botero, *Hostage Nation: Colombia's Guerrilla Army and the Failed War on Drugs* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 113; Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, had designated the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia as well as the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) 8 October 1997 and the Executive Order 13224 signed by President George W. Bush after 9/11 (23 September 2001) made the Abu Sayyaf Group subject to terrorist funding constraints. "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, at <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm> accessed 08/22/2018; "Executive Order 13224," at <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/122570.htm> accessed 08/23/2018.
- 12 White Paper, 14-15.
- 13 Briscoe, "Rescuing the Burnhams: The Unspoken SOCPAC Mission," 48. ). OEF-P was originally based on the recovery of three American Citizens (AMCITs) held by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in the Philippines. Ironically, after the ASG kidnapped 20 tourists and hotel employees [3 AMCITs] on 27 May 2001 from the Dos Palms Resort, offshore of Palawan Island, the Philippines, one AMCIT, Peruvian-born Guillermo Sobero from California, was beheaded a few days later. The ASG wanted \$2 million dollars for Gracia and Martin Burnham, New Tribes Missionaries. Their 'proof-of-life' video was released in February 2002 and \$300,000 in private donations was raised...which disappeared after being given to an ASG 'contact.' Only Gracia survived the Philippine Army Light Reaction Battalion assault on their ASG camp on 7 June 2002. Her husband and a Filipino nurse were killed in the firefight. Briscoe, "Rescuing the Burnhams: The Unspoken SOCPAC Mission," *Special Warfare*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (September 2004), 50; "U.S. Hostage Dead in the Philippines," *ABC News* at <https://abcnews.go.com/international/story?id=79955&page=1> accessed 8/23/2018.
- 14 Bruce and Hayes with Botero, *Hostage Nation*, 145-154.
- 15 Ramsey, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque*, 55-58.
- 16 Retired Colombian Army General Mario Montoya Uribe, interview by Briscoe and Kulich, 14 June 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 17 Retired Colombian Army COL Navas\*, interviews by Briscoe and Kulich, 13 September 2017 and 15 June 2018, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 COL Gregory Wilson, SOCSOUTH-Forward Commander, Bogotá, Colombia, "Statement to the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) on Operation WILLING SPIRIT and JAQUE in Colombia," 17 July 2008, *Report of the Activities of the Committee on Armed Services for the One Hundred Tenth Congress, January 3, 2009* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), 63, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited Wilson, HASC Statement.
- 19 Gonsalves, et al., *Out of Captivity*, 248-249; Bruce, Hayes, and Botero, *Hostage Nation*, 174-176.
- 20 Wilson, HASC Statement.
- 21 White Paper, 6.
- 22 White Paper, 7.
- 23 Wilson, HASC Statement.
- 24 Montoya interview, 14 June 2018.
- 25 White Paper, 7.
- 26 Montoya interview, 14 June 2018.
- 27 Montoya interview, 14 June 2018.
- 28 White Paper, 7.
- 29 White Paper, 7.
- 30 White Paper, 7.
- 31 Gonsalves, et al., *Out of Captivity*, 390-393.
- 32 Montoya interview, 14 June 2018.
- 33 Gonsalves, et al., *Out of Captivity*, 390-393.
- 34 Wilson, HASC Statement; Wilson, "A Modern Day Trojan Horse—Operation JAQUE and the Use of Stratagem in a Hostage Rescue Operation," in Rothstein and Whaley, *The Art and Science of Military Deception*, 387-389; LTC Timothy Carns, Deputy Commander, SOC-FWD-Colombia, interview by Lowe, 7 September 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Juan Carlos Torres, *Operación JAQUE: La Verdadera Historia* (Bogotá: Editorial Planeta Colombiana, 2008), 48.
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