

UNCLASSIFIED

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(Handwritten initials)

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ACTION WHA-00

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W				

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O 111048Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5428
INFO OPEC COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 000966

NSC FOR AMB MAISTO
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 1.6X1

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TAGS: ECON, PGOV, PREL, EPET, ETRD, VE
SUBJECT: "PARO" UPDATE/GENERAL STRIKE ANNOUNCED

REF: A. CARACAS 00948

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. SHAPIRO. REASON 1.5 (B)
AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (C) CTV AND FEDECAMARAS ANNOUNCED TONIGHT THAT THE WORK
STOPPAGE IN PLACE FOR THE LAST TWO DAYS WOULD CONTINUE

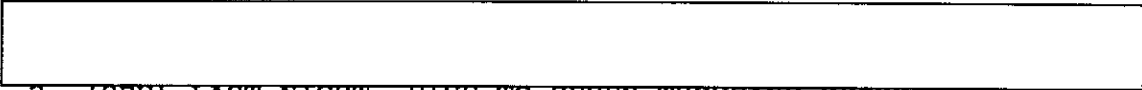
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS
DATE/CASE ID: 30 AUG 2004 200400110

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2. (SBU) LAST NIGHT, FIVE TO SEVEN THOUSAND OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS HELD A LOUD AND JUBILANT RALLY AT PDVSA HEADQUARTERS UNTIL LATE IN THE EVENING. LOCAL TV CARRIED PICTURES OF SPONTANEOUS "CACEROLAZOS" AND DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT CARACAS AND MANY OTHER CITIES. PRESIDENT CHAVEZ GATHERED ONE TO TWO THOUSAND OF THE FAITHFUL AT MIRAFLORES TO DELIVER A SPEECH DEVOID OF ANY CONCILIATION. THE BATTLE OF THE CADENAS CONTINUED WITH THE TV STATIONS RUNNING

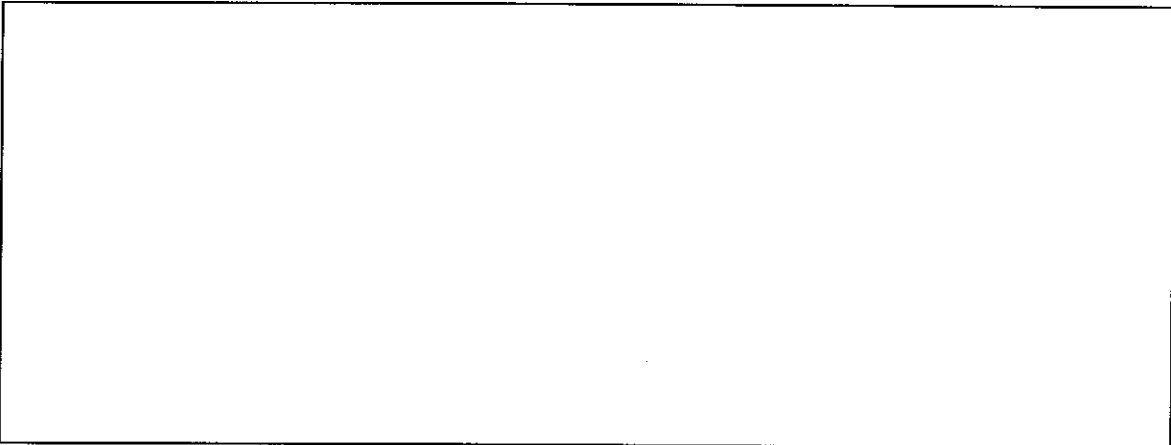
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"SPLIT-SCREENS" WHENEVER A CADENA WAS ORDERED.

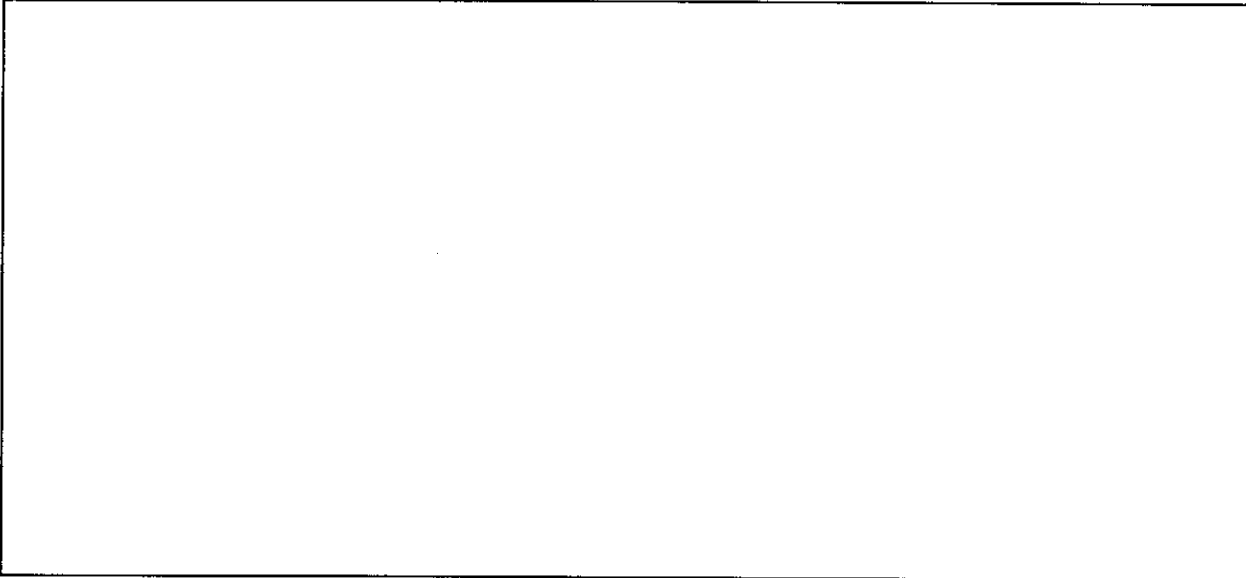
3. (SBU) TODAY, THE "PARO" OR WORK STOPPAGE CONTINUED WITH SUCCESS. A BRIGADIER GENERAL DENOUNCED CHAVEZ'S CONNECTIONS TO THE FARC. A DEMONSTRATION MARCH AT CTV HEADQUARTERS ATTRACTED A LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD AND OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS GATHERED THROUGHOUT THE AT PDVSA HEADQUARTERS. TONIGHT, CTV PRESIDENT CARLOS ORTEGA ANNOUNCED THAT THE WORK STOPPAGE WOULD BECOME AN INDEFINITE GENERAL STRIKE. FEDECAMARAS ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT SOON AFTER. END SUMMARY.

GENERAL STRIKE CALLED - MARCH TOMORROW

4. (SBU) TONIGHT AT 7:30PM, CTV PRESIDENT ORTEGA ANNOUNCED THAT THE WORK STOPPAGE WHICH HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR THE LAST TWO DAYS WOULD CONTINUE INDEFINITELY AS A GENERAL STRIKE. FEDECAMARAS PRESIDENT CARMONA THEN ANNOUNCED THE SUPPORT OF FEDECAMARAS. EARLIER TODAY, FEDECAMARAS AND CTV ANNOUNCED JOINTLY DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT A DEMONSTRATION MARCH WOULD BE HELD TOMORROW (APRIL 11) AT 9:00AM. THE MARCH WILL START NEAR PARQUE DEL ESTE AND END AT THE PDVSA HEADQUARTERS IN CHUAO.



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LAST NIGHT - BIG PARTY AT PDVSA AND LOUD CACEROLAZOS

8. (SBU) A JUBILANT CROWD, ESTIMATED BY ECONOFF TO BE FIVE TO SEVEN THOUSAND STRONG, GATHERED AT PDVSA HEADQUARTERS UNTIL LATE LAST NIGHT LISTENING TO A MYRIAD OF OPPOSITION SPEAKERS AND GENERALLY CELEBRATING WHAT THEY PERCEIVED TO BE THEIR GATHERING MOMENTUM. VIRTUALLY ALL PROMINENT OPPOSITION FIGURES INCLUDING PEDRO CARMONA, ALFREDO PENA, AND CARLOS ORTEGA GAVE IMPROMPTU SPEECHES. CARMONA SEEMED PARTICULARLY ENERGIZED BY THE SIZE AND MOOD OF THE CROWD
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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	DINT-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00
	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00
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	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W				

-----8279D0 111145Z /38

O 111048Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CARACAS 000966

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AFTER APPEARING LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT CONTINUING
OPPOSITION ACTIONS DURING THE DAY.

9. (SBU) THROUGHOUT CARACAS, "CACEROLAZOS" WERE CONSTANT AND
LOUD. MANY PARTS OF CARACAS WERE FILLED WITH PEOPLE
GATHERED ON STREET CORNERS, CARS DRIVING WITH LIGHTS
BLINKING AND HORNS SOUNDING. IT WAS A CELEBRATORY
ATMOSPHERE NOT UNLIKE AFTER VENEZUELA DEFEATED PARAGUAY IN
WORLD CUP QUALIFYING. TELEVISION REPORTED SIMILAR EVENTS IN
MANY OTHER PARTS OF VENEZUELA.

CADENA BATTLE

10. (SBU) THE BATTLE OVER THE GOV ORDERED CADENAS CONTINUED
LAST NIGHT WITH ALL STATIONS USING A SPLIT-SCREEN WITH THE
OFFICIAL CADENA ON ONE SIDE AND COVERAGE OF OPPOSITION
EVENTS ON THE OTHER. (NON-NEWS CHANNELS ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE
OF THE SPLIT-SCREEN AS A SPORTS ONLY CHANNEL CONTINUED
SPORTS COVERAGE ON ONE HALF OF THE SCREEN).

11. (SBU) THROUGHOUT THE DAY TODAY, THE GOV HAD NO CADENAS.
MVR SOURCES SAID THAT CHAVEZ HAD MADE A DECISION TO BACK
DOWN. HE WAS DESCRIBED AS A "BOXER WHO MADE A TACTICAL
RETREAT." INSTEAD, THE GOV LEADERS SPOKE THROUGH TELEVISION
INTERVIEWS THROUGHOUT THE DAY WHICH WERE COVERED AS ORDINARY
NEWS EVENTS BY THE TELEVISION STATIONS.

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 CHAVEZ SPEAKS TO THE FAITHFUL

12. (SBU) LAST NIGHT, PRESIDENT CHAVEZ DELIVERED A LONG SPEECH TO A SMALL CROWD AT MIRAFLORES PALACE. THE SPEECH WAS CARRIED AS A SPLIT-SCREEN CADENA. DURING THE FIERY SPEECH, CHAVEZ DECLARED THE WORK STOPPAGE A COMPLETE FAILURE AND VOWED THE OPPOSITION WOULD NEVER SHUT DOWN VENEZUELA. HE SHOWED NO SIGNS OF ANY CONCILIATION. ANOTHER CADENA SPEECH IS EXPECTED TONIGHT.

 SUCCESSFUL CONTINUATION OF WORK STOPPAGE

13. (C) THE WORK STOPPAGE CONTINUED TODAY WITH GENERALLY GOOD SUPPORT AMONG FEDECAMARAS MEMBERS AND SLIGHTLY LESS SUPPORT AMONG CTV SUPPORTERS. DESPITE THE OPERATIONS OF SOME SCHOOLS, RESTAURANTS AND OTHER BUSINESSES, BOTH FEDECAMARAS AND CTV DECLARED THE CONTINUED WORK STOPPAGE SUCCESSFUL. ECONOFF REPORTED THAT MOST BUSINESSES WERE CLOSED IN CARACAS, BUT THERE WERE CAFES AND RESTAURANTS OPEN, ESPECIALLY NEAR THE GATHERING OF CROWDS. LOCAL PRESS REPORTED THAT TRANSPORTATION WAS MORE SPORADIC THAN YESTERDAY. IN GENERAL, ECONOFF ESTIMATED A 70 PERCENT SUCCESS, DOWN FROM YESTERDAY'S ESTIMATE OF 80 PERCENT.

 ANOTHER GENERAL DENOUNCES CHAVEZ

14. (SBU) AT A NOONTIME PRESS CONFERENCE, BRIGADIER GENERAL NESTOR GONZALEZ GONZALEZ ANNOUNCED THAT CHAVEZ HAD "BETRAYED
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THE COUNTRY" BY ACQUIESCING TO THE INCURSION BY FARC FORCES INTO VENEZUELAN TERRITORY. WHILE HE ALLEGED POSSESSION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE OF THESE REPEATED INCURSIONS, HE DID NOT PRODUCE THEM AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE.

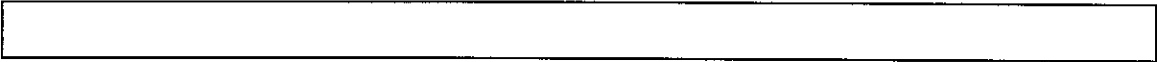
 DEMONSTRATIONS TODAY

15. (C) PDVSA HEADQUARTERS IN THE CHUAO SECTION OF CARACAS HAS BECOME THE PREFERRED GATHERING PLACE FOR OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS. AGAIN TODAY, THOUSANDS GATHERED THROUGHOUT THE DAY AT PDVSA TO MAKE NOISE AND CELEBRATE. NO VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED.

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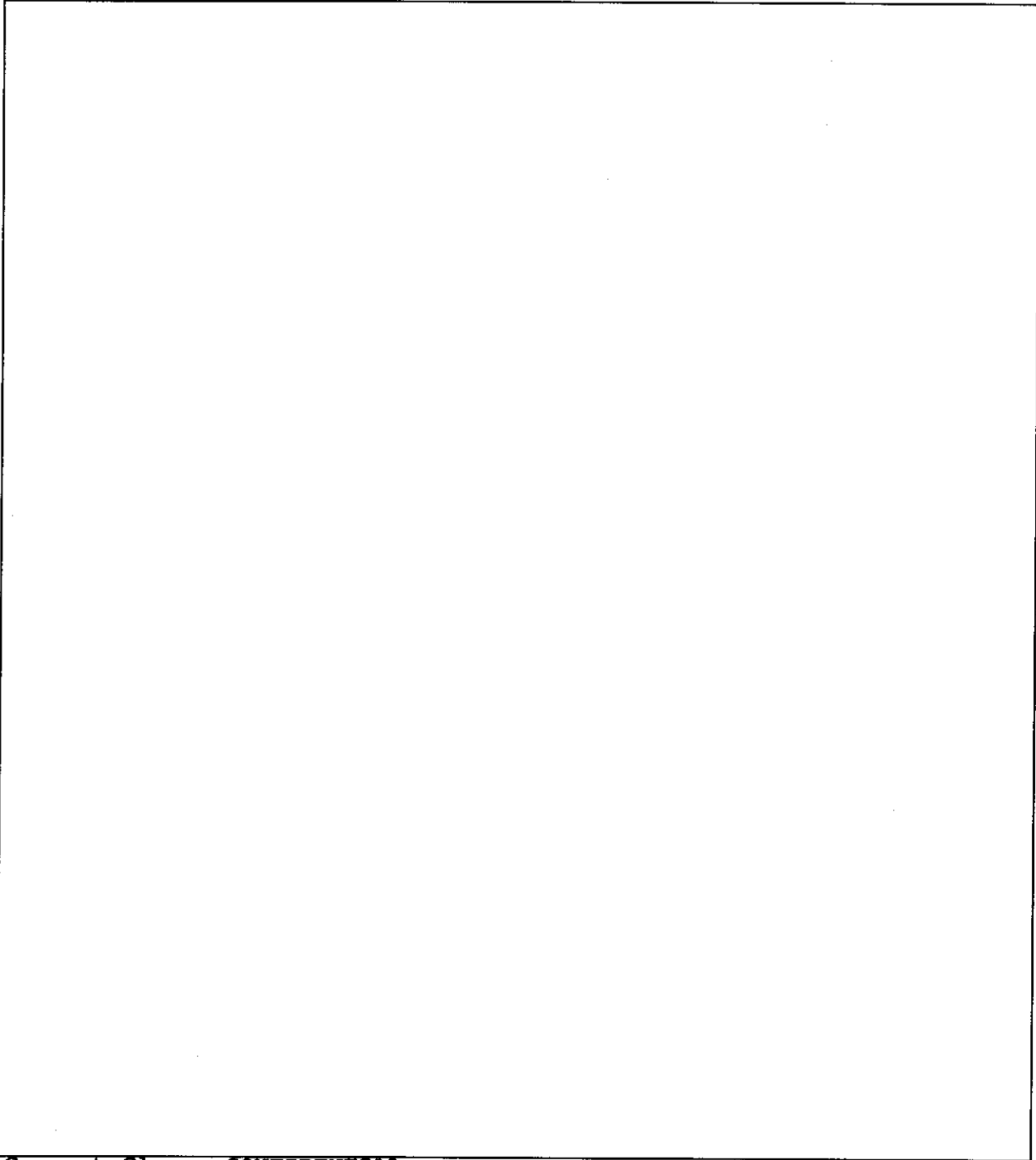
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16. (SBU) THIS AFTERNOON, THE OPPOSITION ALSO HELD A RALLY AT THE CTV HEADQUARTERS IN LOS CAOBOS. THE RALLY WAS ATTENDED BY SEVERAL HUNDRED ENTHUSIASTIC OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS AND FEATURED THE NOW FAMILIAR OPPOSITION LEADERS DELIVERING MOTIVATIONAL SPEECHES. NO VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED.

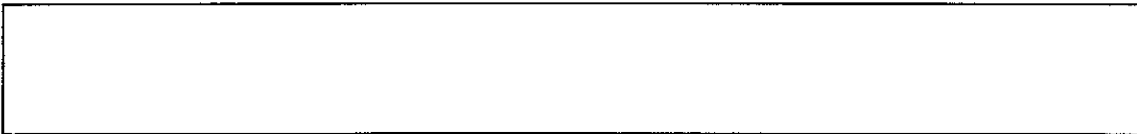


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