

SECURITY ADVISORY SA0002270400

PRIORITY

DTG/RELEASE TIME: 270400Z FEB 00

TO: ALUSI

U N C L A S

SUBJ: BURUNDANGA/"ZOMBIE DUST" KIDNAP/CRIME DRUG

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(1) (U)USE OF BURUNDANGA, KNOWN AS "ZOMBIE DUST", CONTINUES TO INCREASE THROUGHOUT CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA. BURUNDANGA IS A CHEMICAL COCKTAIL OF SCOPOLAMINE (C₁₇H₂₁NO₄), TRANQUILIZERS AND OTHER DRUGS PRIMARILY USED TO INCAPACITATE UNWARY VICTIMS. BURUNDANGA IS INDIGENOUS TO COLOMBIA, BUT ITS USE IS WIDESPREAD ACROSS CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AND MAY BE IN USE IN OTHER FOREIGN LOCATIONS. AS OF 13 FEB 00, COLOMBIA MEDICAL OFFICIALS REPORT AN AVERAGE OF 1000 CASES OF EXPOSURE TO "ZOMBIE DUST" PER MONTH. ACTUAL INCIDENTS MAY BE HIGHER THAN REPORTS BASED ON HOSPITAL INTAKE RECORDS.

ACTIVE CHEMICAL INGREDIENT IN "ZOMBIE DUST" IS A DERIVATIVE OF SCOPOLAMINE, FOUND IN A PLANT OF THE NIGHTSHADE SPECIES AND KNOWN LOCALLY AS "BORRACHERA" (DRUNKEN BINGE). THE PLANT NORMALLY GROWS IN THE HIGH ANDES, BUT CAN ALSO BE FOUND IN LOCAL PARKS IN BOGOTA.

VICTIMS OF "ZOMBIE DUST" ARE RENDERED HELPLESS IN A TRANCE-LIKE STATE, AWAKE AND COMMUNICATIVE, BUT POWERLESS TO RESIST ORDERS. THE DRUG MAY CAUSE EXTREME DISORIENTATION, UNCONSCIOUSNESS AND SERIOUS MEDICAL PROBLEMS. VICTIMS OFTEN DO NOT RECALL EVENTS.

"ZOMBIE DUST" IS SURREPTITIOUSLY ADMINISTERED IN DRINKS IN BARS, CIGARETTES AND GUM IN TAXIS, IN FOOD AND IN POWDER FORM DUSTED ONTO VICTIMS' SKIN. HOUSEWIVES AND BUSINESSMEN HAVE REPORTED FALLING VICTIM TO "ZOMBIE DUST" APPLIED BY CRIMINALS POSING AS DOOR-TO-DOOR SALESMEN INVITING UNWARY SUBJECTS TO SAMPLE PERFUMES AND OTHER PRODUCTS WHICH SECRETLY CONTAIN THE DRUG MIXED IN GASEOUS FORM VICTIMS HAVE ALSO REPORTED ATTACKERS APPROACHING THEM IN RESTROOMS AND BLOWING THE POWDER ONTO THEIR FACES. WOMEN IN BARS AND PROSTITUTES HAVE APPLIED THE DRUG TO THE DRINKS OF VICTIMS AND INTRODUCED IT THROUGH OTHER METHODS.

PRECAUTIONS:

1. DO NOT LEAVE DRINKS UNATTENDED AND DRINK ONLY FROM BOTTLED BEVERAGES. (POWDER CAN BE APPLIED TO GLASSES PRIOR TO USE)
2. DO NOT ACCEPT SOFT DRINKS, GUM, CANDY, CIGARETTES OR OTHER PRODUCTS FROM STRANGERS.
3. BE WARY OF NAPKINS OR LINEN TOWELS IN BATHROOMS THAT CAN BE TREATED WITH THE POWDER.
4. NEVER GO OUT ALONE. TRAVEL WITH TRUSTED COMPANIONS.

PERSONNEL CONDUCTING PROTECTIVE OPERATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER THE SERIOUS THREAT POSED BY "ZOMBIE DUST" TO BOTH SECURITY TEAM PERSONNEL AND PRINCIPAL PROTECTEES. TAKE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS WHEN OPERATING IN AFFECTED AREAS. EXERCISE EXTREME CARE WHEN OFF DUTY.

BT

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