

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE

Date: 12/29/2003

To: Counterterrorism

Attn: Domestic Terrorism
Operations Unit;
Special Events-SSA

Atlanta

Attn: SSA [redacted]

From: Atlanta
Columbus Resident Agency (CRA)

Contact: SA [redacted]

Approved By: [redacted]
[redacted] *SA*

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Drafted By: [redacted] ra

Case ID #: 266D-AT-90739 (Pending) *-64*

Title: SCHOOL OF AMERICAS WATCH;
CGR- FT. BENNING, GA;
UNLAWFUL ENTRY ON A
MILITARY RESERVATION;
11/21-23/03

Synopsis: Post event report of arrests made on Ft. Benning, Georgia by civilian Department Of Army (DOA) police on misdemeanor charges of trespass.

Enclosure(s): List of names of the defendants arrested on misdemeanor charges during the School of Americas Protest (SOA).

Details: The annual pilgrimage and demonstration of the SOA protestors took place as scheduled on the weekend of November 21-23, 2003. The Columbus police estimated approximately 8,000 individuals attended the weekend event. On Sunday, the 23rd of November 2003, forty three (43) persons crossed the military boundaries and subjected themselves to arrest for the crime of Trespass On A Military Reservation. The U.S. Magistrate for the Middle District of Georgia, Columbus division will hear the cases in early 2004.

Other than the cited compliant trespassers, the event was peaceful. The arrestees did not resist being taken into custody. It has been and apparently continues to be the agenda of the SOA WATCH to use the court system as the platform for furthering their cause. The number of trespassers have diminished

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266D-AT-90739-64

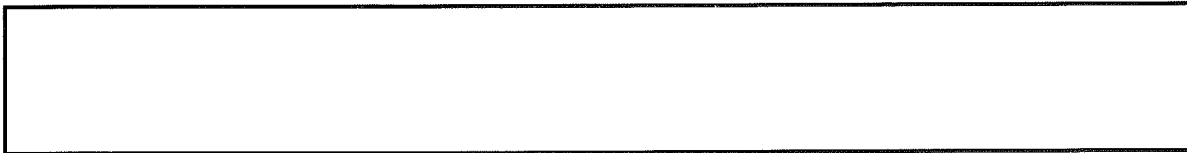
To: Counterterrorism From: Atlanta
Re: 266D-AT-90739, 12/29/2003

from the previous years. One reason for the reduction in the number of individuals willing to be arrested is that they no longer receive the press coverage in Columbus, Ga. Once the weekend event is over, the local press coverage ceased. The coverage picks up during the trials, pleas, and sentencing. Thus far, the national press has not given the proceedings any exposure.

In past years, the SOA WATCH leadership told potential arrestees that a small bond and probation was the limit of their personal criminal liability. This has proven not to be true in the most current cases. The court has imposed fines from \$500.00 to \$1000,00 and prison sentences up to six months for first offenders. As the defendants appear before the magistrate, they are asked if they plan to continue in their illegal actions. If they answer affirmatively, the sentence ranges from six months to the maximum one year in prison.

During the past two years, the arrestees were taken immediately to the Muscogee County jail and kept overnight before their initial appearance. Prior to this, they were given summons to appear in court at a scheduled date and time. This has had a chilling effect on those deciding whether to participate in an overt act of civil disobedience.

Overall, the crowd was peaceful in their actions and the SOA WATCH leadership appear to foster that type of environment. At this years event, a counter-protest was initially set up adjacent to the protestor site. The counter-protestors were expecting several hundred motorcyclist to join their cause. At the last minute, city officials were successful in convincing the counter-protestors to move their site to another location. The city leaders conveyed their concerns of endangerment to citizens to both groups. The counter-protestor leaders heeded the advice and moved their activities to another location.



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LEAD(s):

Set Lead 1: (Action)

ATLANTA

AT THOMASVILLE RA

Enter the attached list of persons arrested into indices.

Set Lead 2: (Info)

COUNTERTERRORISM

AT FBIHQ

For information and appropriate dissemination.

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