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23 February 1993

**COUNTERTERRORIST CENTER COMMENTARY**

**Assessing the Prospects for the American NTM Missionaries:  
FARC Kidnapping Patterns**

*Summary*

*Kidnapped US missionaries Mark Rich, David Mankins, and Rick Tenenoff, presumably held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), are more likely to be released than killed, if the guerrillas follow the pattern they have established in recent years. Although the FARC is both willing to and capable of killing civilians, only one of the 10 foreigners we judge it has taken hostage over the last four years has been killed. The one victim who died in captivity--a British businessman taken by the FARC in October 1992--was killed in a shootout between the captors and Colombian police during a raid.*

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The abduction last month of three US citizens working for the US-based New Tribes Mission (NTM) in rural Panama was probably the work of FARC, although no group has claimed responsibility:

- The hostages were seized in Panama near the Colombian border, in an area where the FARC is active.
- Unlike other terrorist groups operating in Colombia, the FARC does not typically claim credit for kidnappings.

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All but one of the 10 kidnapping victims attributed to the FARC over the last four years have been released unharmed:

- In October 1992, presumed FARC terrorists kidnapped a British business executive of Standard Brands (Dole)

This paper was prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ Counterterrorist Center, and has been coordinated WITHIN CIA. Questions and comments are welcome and may be addressed

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[REDACTED]

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Banana Company. The hostage was killed 24 hours later during an attempted rescue by police.

- In February 1992, suspected FARC terrorists abducted a US geologist working for a Colombian firm. He was released a month later. The company refused to say whether any ransom had been paid.
- In December 1991, a US mining engineer was abducted by FARC guerrillas. He was released a month later, without any ransom demands.
- In August 1991, two Japanese engineers were taken hostage by presumed FARC terrorists. The engineers were released four months later, after the Japanese company paid a large ransom.
- In December 1990, two Swiss citizens conducting a medical tour were kidnapped, but were turned over to the Red Cross two weeks later. No money was paid for their release. FARC representatives claimed to have released the Swiss hostages to demonstrate the FARC's desire to continue negotiations with the Colombian government. [REDACTED]

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The kidnapers of the US missionaries have demanded a steep \$5 million in ransom and have several times threatened to kill the hostages if NTM does not make a monetary counteroffer by a specified date. [REDACTED]

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We conclude that any effort to rescue the hostages is likely to put the NTM missionaries in more immediate danger than that posed by prolonged negotiations or captivity. The only foreign hostage believed held by the FARC that was not released was the British citizen killed during the shootout with police late last year. [REDACTED]

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