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# Senior Executive Intelligence Brief

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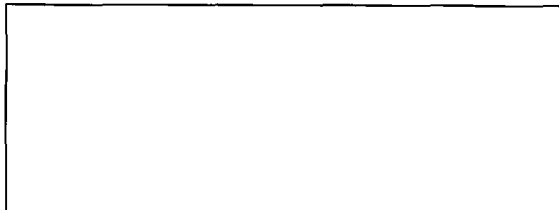
**Wednesday, 17 April 2002**

National Security Information

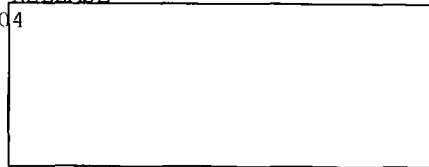
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~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]**AMERICAS****Latin America:****Split Over Venezuela** [REDACTED]

Brazil is discounting a US-backed initiative to send an OAS democracy mission to Venezuela, [REDACTED] arguing that constitutional order has been restored. *Brazil, which thwarted US efforts at the OAS to impose regional sanctions on Peru after rigged elections in 2000, as a fallback maneuver probably would try to water down a prospective OAS mission.*

- Brasilia long has been suspicious of US involvement in the region and is opposed to outside interference in internal political affairs.
- Some Latin leaders, like Argentina's President Duhalde and Guatemala's President Portillo, are worried about their own tenuous domestic situations and vigorously condemned the recent coup; they will be particularly critical of OAS efforts that might legitimize the coup plotters. [REDACTED]

*Other regional leaders, however, are wary of Venezuelan President Chavez's intentions and may quietly welcome the opportunity to use an OAS mission to constrain his ability to retaliate against his foreign or domestic opponents. The Colombian Foreign Minister, for example, had verbally embraced Carmona, and some Colombian officials publicly have expressed concern about future Venezuelan retribution against Colombian interests.*

- El Salvador, Bolivia, and Ecuador suspect Chavez aided opposition movements in their countries. [REDACTED]
- Peru suspects Chavez sheltered now-jailed former spymaster Vladimiro Montesinos last year and hints it may now back an OAS mission similar to the one sent to Peru in 2000, according to press reports. [REDACTED]

*Regardless of the OAS mission's fate, the region's quick rejection of the Venezuelan coup—and its stunning collapse—will give pause to other cliques considering moves against embattled or unpopular governments. Latin governments voted overwhelmingly to invoke the OAS Democratic Charter and levy economic sanctions against the Carmona government, and they issued a Rio Group statement condemning the coup.*

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

In addition, many Latin American governments will take a more jaundiced view of the US commitment to democracy following Chavez's brief ouster and Washington's perceived endorsement of the interim Carmona government. The press in the region is calling US foreign policy "hypocritical." [REDACTED]

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