



UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PUB 02-03**

JANUARY 14, 2003

UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE SUPPRESSES COIN COUNTERFEITING PLANT IN COLOMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On January 9, 2003, the United States Secret Service, working together with the Colombian National Police (DIJIN), suppressed a counterfeit U.S. coin plant and seized \$450 in counterfeit \$1 coins and the metal needed to fill an order for an additional 10,000.

U.S. Secret Service and Colombian DIJIN agents determined that the plant in Bogotá contained dies used to make the “Golden Dollar,” the U.S. \$1 Sacagawea coin, as well as Colombian, Brazilian, Venezuelan, Peruvian and Ecuadorian coins. The coins were intended for distribution in Ecuador, which uses the U.S. dollar as its official currency.

“This unique seizure is an indication of the strong working relationships that the Secret Service has developed with the Colombian National Police,” said U.S. Secret Service Director Brian L. Stafford. “Since 1999, joint anti-counterfeiting operations with Colombian authorities have resulted in the seizure of more than \$91 million in counterfeit U.S. dollars, the suppression of more than 25 counterfeit manufacturing plants and the arrest of more than 100 counterfeiters.”

In addition to the coins, agents also found the machine used to make the coin dies. An individual believed to be the primary manufacturer has been identified, and is being sought by agents and the Colombian authorities.

This is only the second U.S. dollar coin plant ever identified and suppressed by the Secret Service in Colombia. The first coin plant was suppressed in Colombia in July 2002, and was also producing coins intended for distribution in Ecuador.

The Secret Service opened a resident office in Bogota in 1996. As countries throughout South and Central America “dollarize” – adopt U.S. currency as their own national currency – the office expanded its staff and increased its work with Colombian authorities.

The U.S. Secret Service was created in 1865 with the sole purpose of suppressing counterfeit currency. While the agency’s responsibilities have expanded to include presidential protection, its investigative mission still focuses on protecting the infrastructure of the nation’s financial systems.

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