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23 July 1992

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COLOMBIA:

Pablo Escobar Apparently At Large

Pablo Escobar's whereabouts are unknown following a raid Tuesday evening by Colombian forces into Envigado Prison, but he appears to have escaped. [redacted]

[redacted] a government attempt to move Escobar to a military prison erupted in a firefight; troops took control of the prison yesterday morning and freed several government hostages. [redacted]

Nonetheless, President Gaviria publicly acknowledged late yesterday that Escobar had not been found and stated that his life would be spared if he turned himself in. [redacted]

Gaviria made the decision to move Escobar on the grounds that he violated the terms of his surrender, claiming to have strong evidence implicating Escobar in a recent series of kidnappings and murders of his top lieutenants in the Medellin cartel. [redacted]

Escobar, in a taped message to the press, claimed the government reneged on its agreement in attempting to move him. [redacted]

Comment: There is some confusion about the situation at Envigado and Escobar's whereabouts, but there is a growing possibility that Escobar has already fled the prison. [redacted]

[redacted] If he has fled, the government almost certainly will launch a massive manhunt in an effort to save face for Gaviria and apprehend Escobar before he can orchestrate an expected terror campaign. [redacted]

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