

SECRET

38433876

TITLE: SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT  
CONTINGENCY PLANS

ORIGDATE: 198908242248

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: PANAMA 06404

TEXT:

TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, PREL, PM

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT  
CONTINGENCY PLANS

RELEASED IN PART B3 CIA  
PERS/ORG

REF: PANAMA 6304

1. (C) THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC)  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MET ON AUGUST 21 AND  
REVERSED THE PDC POLITICAL COMMITTEE'S DECISION TO  
TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN PARTY OFFICES AROUND THE  
COUNTRY. PDC SECRETARY GENERAL IVAN ROMERO TOLD  
POLOFF PARTY LEADERS STILL FEARED A REGIME CRACK  
DOWN ON THE OPPOSITION -- ESPECIALLY THE PDC --  
AND PLANNED TO SEND A DELEGATION TO MEET PDC  
PRESIDENT RICARDO ARIAS CALDERON AT TORRIJOS  
AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN FROM WASHINGTON AUGUST 24.

2. (C) ROMERO NOTED THAT THE REGIME HAD ARRESTED  
SIMON BALID, AN AUTHENTIC LIBERAL PARTY LEADER FOR  
BOCAS DEL TORO PROVINCE, OVER THE AUGUST 19-20  
WEEKEND FOR DISTRIBUTING OPPOSITION BULLETINS AND  
HAD SEIZED A FAX MACHINE FROM THE OFFICE OF PDC  
ACTIVIST DAVID SANCHEZ IN CONNECTION WITH BALID'S  
ACTIVITIES. BALID WAS FINED 1000 DOLLARS AND  
RELEASED.

3. (S) ROMERO ALSO PASSED ALONG A REPORT THAT  
FUGITIVE COLOMBIAN DRUG TRAFFICKER PABLO EMILIO  
ESCOBAR GAVIRIA AND UP TO 18 OF HIS FOLLOWERS WERE  
HOUSED AT THE PANAMA DEFENSE FORCES (FDP)  
PANAJUNGLA TRAINING CENTER IN BOCAS DEL TORO. HE  
ASSERTED THAT THE U.S. COULD AND SHOULD USE  
MILITARY MEANS TO CAPTURE ESCOBAR AT THIS

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior  
Reviewer

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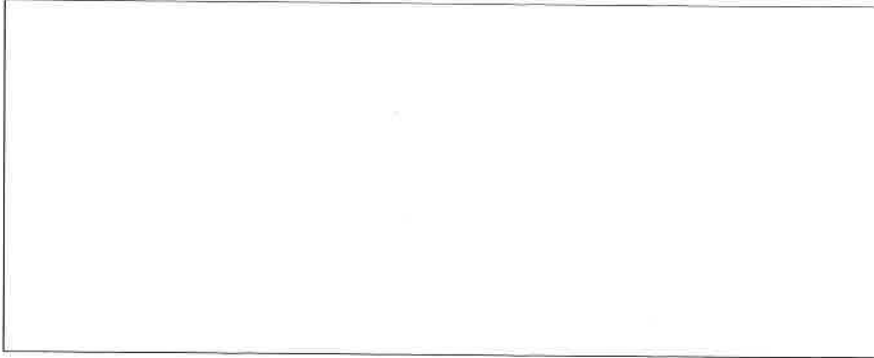
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LOCATION. COMMENT: RUMORS THAT ESCOBAR AND OTHER  
COLOMBIAN DRUG LORDS HAVE GONE INTO HIDING IN  
BOCAS DEL TORO HAVE CIRCULATED WIDELY IN PANAMA  
CITY. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF  
ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALLS TO THIS EFFECT.

MAISTO

END OF MESSAGE

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B3 CIA PERS/ORG

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