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TITLE: SUBJECT: MEDELLIN UPDATE: MORE SURRENDERS, ESCOBAR

-- CRONY KILLED IN PRISON

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TEXT:

TAGS: PTER, PGOV, SNAR, ASEC, CO

COMBINE: COMPLETE

RELEASED IN PART
B7(E), B3 CIA

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REFS: A) BOGOTA 5422, B) BOGOTA 5354

1. (C) SUMMARY: THREE MINOR NARCOS SURRENDERED, AN ENVIGADO ESCAPEE WAS MURDERED, AND THE PEPES (PERSECUTED BY ESCOBAR VIGILANTE GROUP) DENIED HAVING ENDED THEIR CEASE-FIRE, ALL DURING THE TEN DAYS LEADING UP TO AND SURROUNDING THE APRIL 7-11 HOLY WEEK HOLIDAY. THE SURRENDERS ARE INSIGNIFICANT; THE CONFLICTING PEPE COMMUNIQUES COULD BE ESCOBAR DISINFORMATION, OR PEPE ATTEMPTS TO MANIPULATE PUBLIC OPINION. END SUMMARY.

THREE SURRENDEREES

2. (U) THREE MINOR MEDELLIN CARTEL FIGURES SURRENDERED TO COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS. CARLOS ENRIQUE VELEZ RESTREPO ("SUZUKI"), DESCRIBED AS AN ASSOCIATE OF DECEASED ESCOBAR LIEUTENANT MARIO CASTANO ("EL CHOPO," KILLED IN A MARCH 19 SHOOTOUT WITH POLICE) SURRENDERED MARCH 31 TO THE MEDELLIN PROCURADOR'S OFFICE.

3. (C) JORGE DE JESUS PIZANO SANTAMARIA ("ILEN"), WHO ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS IS CHARGED WITH HOMICIDE, TERRORISM AND CONSPIRACY, SURRENDERED APRIL 3 IN MEDELLIN. PIZANO IS APPARENTLY A MEMBER OF PABLO

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper and
Donna M. DiPaolo, Senior Reviewers

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ESCOBAR'S NEW LINEUP OF BODYGUARDS AND SECURITY PERSONNEL. A RETIRED POLICE OFFICER, PIZANO APPEARS [REDACTED] AS A COCAINE DISTRIBUTOR AND MONEY LAUNDERER.

B7(E)

4. (C) FERNANDO LEON LONDONO VELASQUEZ ("NERIS"), WHO SURRENDERED TO THE MEDELLIN PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE APRIL 7, IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TAKEN OVER THE JOB OF DIRECTING TERRORIST ATTACKS FOR ESCOBAR. [REDACTED] HIS BROTHER CESAR ("MANIX") IS LISTED AS A MEDELLIN CARTEL ASSOCIATE.

"TAVO" KILLED IN PRISON

5. (U) ON APRIL 9 GUSTAVO GONZALEZ FLOREZ ("TAVO"), ONE OF THE TEN WITH WHOM ESCOBAR ESCAPED FROM ENVIGADO PRISON IN JULY OF LAST YEAR, WAS KILLED BY ANOTHER INMATE IN MEDELLIN'S BELLAVISTA PRISON. GONZALEZ HAD SURRENDERED LAST OCTOBER AND HAD BEEN IMPRISONED WITH THE OTHER ENVIGADO ESCAPEES IN ITAGUI PRISON. ACCORDING TO LEADING DAILY EL TIEMPO, GONZALEZ WAS TRANSFERRED AT HIS OWN REQUEST MARCH 10 TO BELLAVISTA. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT GONZALEZ'S KILLER, JOSE ADONIRAN PIEDRAHITA LORA, CONFESSED HE KILLED

GONZALEZ OUT OF PERSONAL VENGEANCE.

THE PEPES: ON OR OFF?

6. (U) IN THE MEANTIME, THE VIGILANTE GROUP PERSECUTED BY ESCOBAR ("LOS PEPES") DENIED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE APRIL 5 ASSASSINATION OF THE TWO MEDELLIN CARTEL LAWYERS OUTSIDE BOGOTA'S LA MODELO PRISON (REF A). IN A COMMUNIQUE RELEASED APRIL 8, THE PEPES ALSO DENIED ISSUING THE APRIL 4 COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCING AN END TO THEIR UNILATERAL CEASE-FIRE (REF B). THE LATEST COMMUNIQUE CLAIMS THE PEPES ARE STILL OBSERVING A CEASE-FIRE TO FACILITATE ESCOBAR'S

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SURRENDER, PROMISES TO RESPECT THE LIVES OF NARCO LAWYERS ("AS LONG AS THEIR ACTIVITIES ARE HONEST AND ADHERE TO THE ETHICAL AND MORAL PRINCIPLES REQUIRED BY THEIR PROFESSION"), AND PRAISES THE EFFORTS OF THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL AND THE PROCURADOR (GOVERNMENT WATCHDOG AGENCY), TWO OFFICES CRITICIZED IN THE FIRST PEPE COMMUNIQUE.

COMMENT

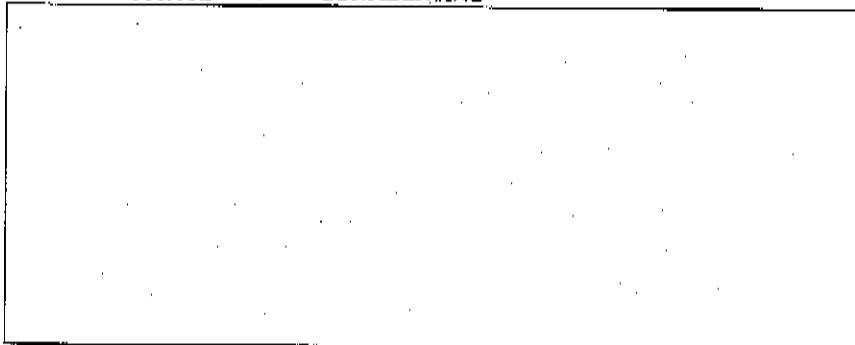
7. (C) THE SURRENDERS ARE INSIGNIFICANT, PERHAPS PERSONAL DECISIONS BY MINOR FRY TRYING TO GET OFF THE HOOK. WE HAVE NO WAY TO KNOW WHICH OF THE PEPE COMMUNIQUE ARE LEGIT. IT IS POSSIBLE BOTH ARE, AND THE ISSUANCE OF A CONTRADICTIONARY COMMUNIQUE MAY REFLECT FEAR OF A PUBLIC OPINION BACKLASH FOR MURDERING THE LAWYERS AND CRITICIZING THE TWO HIGHLY RESPECTED GOC OFFICES. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT CHARGES OF GOC CONCESSIONS IN THE COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCING THE END OF THE PEPE CEASE FIRE WAS DISINFORMATION BY ESCOBAR, WHO WOULD LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN TO PORTRAY THE PEPE AS VICIOUS OPPORTUNISTS.

8. (C) IF THE PEPE HAVE INDEED RESUMED OPERATIONS, IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE THEY CARRIED OUT THE HIT AGAINST GONZALEZ IN BELLA VISTA PRISON. THE MURDER WOULD SERVE AS A REMINDER TO ESCOBAR THAT THE GOC REMAINS UNABLE TO SAFEGUARD ITS PRISONERS.

BUSBY

END OF MESSAGE

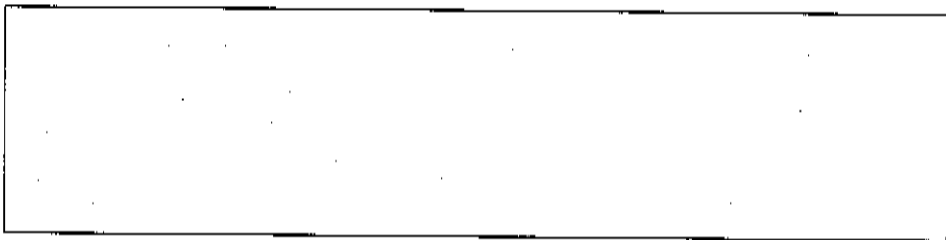
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