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TITLE: SUBJECT: PABLO ESCOBAR'S PRISON CONDITIONS

ORIGDATE: 199107192334

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 11030

TEXT:

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, CASC, CO

COMBINE: COMPLETE

RELEASED IN PART B3 CIA  
PERS/ORG, B6

SUBJECT: PABLO ESCOBAR'S PRISON CONDITIONS

1. (U) SUMMARY: GOC ISSUES REGULATIONS GOVERNING PRISON CONDITIONS FOR JAILED DRUG LORD PABLO ESCOBAR, INSISTING THAT ESCOBAR IS TREATED LIKE ANY OTHER PRISONER, EXCEPT FOR ENHANCED SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

DECONTROLLED

GOC STATEMENT ON PRISON RULES

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2. (U) MAJOR DAILY EL TIEMPO ON JULY 16 CARRIED A STORY, ENTITLED "ESCOBAR, NOW UNDER A COMMON CRIMINAL REGIMEN", WHICH REPORTED ON NEW RULES ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE GOVERNING PABLO ESCOBAR'S PRISON CONDITIONS. EFFECTIVE THIS WEEK, THE STORY SAID THAT ESCOBAR (AND THE 12 NARCOS IMPRISONED WITH HIM IN ENVIGADO) WAS TO BE TREATED LIKE ANY OTHER PRISONER, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ENHANCED SECURITY MEASURES. WHILE ADMITTING THAT ESCOBAR HAD BEEN PERMITTED A COLOR TV, SHORT-WAVE RADIO, AND A REFRIGERATOR, AND OTHER PRIVILEGES, THINGS HAD CHANGED. THE ENVIGADO PRISONERS NOW HAVE TO RISE AT 0700, UNDERGO LOCK-UP AT 2000, MUST SUBMIT A VISITORS' LIST FOR APPROVAL BY A JUDGE, THE FIFTH BRIGADE COMMANDER AND THE PRISON DIRECTOR, AND CAN ONLY RECEIVE VISITORS ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE: WOMEN VISITORS ON SUNDAY (0800-1400), MALE VISITORS ON SATURDAYS, AND MINOR VISITORS EVERY FIRST AND THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH. (ESCOBAR HAD 12 PEOPLE ON HIS LIST, INCLUDING HIS WIFE, CHILDREN, MOTHER AND SISTERS).

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior Reviewer

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IN ADDITION, THE CELL PADLOCKS WOULD BE CHANGED PERIODICALLY, PRISONERS WOULD BE COUNTED IN THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON, AND THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF CRIMINAL INSTRUCTION WAS REQUIRED FOR EACH TRIP OUT OF THE PRISON. ESCOBAR ATE THE SAME FOOD AS OTHER PRISONERS, ALTHOUGH FAMILY MEMBERS CAN BRING IN EXTRA FOOD, SUCH AS FRUIT, A PRIVILEGE ENJOYED BY ALL PRISONERS. THE ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT ESCOBAR HAS NOT ASKED FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.

LUNCH WITH PRISON DIRECTOR GENERAL

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3. (LOU) CONSUL GENERAL, ACS CHIEF AND ACS FSN HAD LUNCH WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PRISONS, LUIS FRANCISCO VARGAS, ON JULY 16, AT CONGEN'S INVITATION. VARGAS WAS QUITE TALKATIVE ON A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS AND BROUGHT UP THE SUBJECT OF ESCOBAR'S PRISON CONDITIONS HIMSELF, BY MENTIONING THE UPCOMING TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES BY GOC OFFICIALS TO STUDY SECURITY MEASURES IN U.S. PRISONS.

CONDITIONS AT ENVIGADO

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4. (LOU) VARGAS DESCRIBED THE SECURITY MEASURES AT ENVIGADO AS "ADEQUATE" BUT SAID THAT THE GOC WANTED TO IMPROVE THEM BY SEEING U.S. MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTITUTIONS. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PRISONERS TUNNELING THEIR WAY TO FREEDOM. VARGAS SAID THAT THERE WAS ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE AT ENVIGADO AND THAT ESCOBAR'S TELEPHONE CALLS AND MAIL WILL BE MONITORED. CONFIRMING THE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE'S INFORMATION, VARGAS SAID THAT ESCOBAR IS ALLOWED VISITORS, BUT IS REQUIRED TO FOLLOW STRICTER PROCEDURES. NORMALLY COLOMBIAN PRISONERS MUST SUBMIT LISTS OF VISITORS FOR APPROVAL TO A JUDGE. ESCOBAR, AND THE 12 OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH HIM IN ENVIGADO MUST ALSO HAVE THEIR LISTS APPROVED BY THE COMMANDER OF THE FIFTH BRIGADE AND THE DIRECTOR OF

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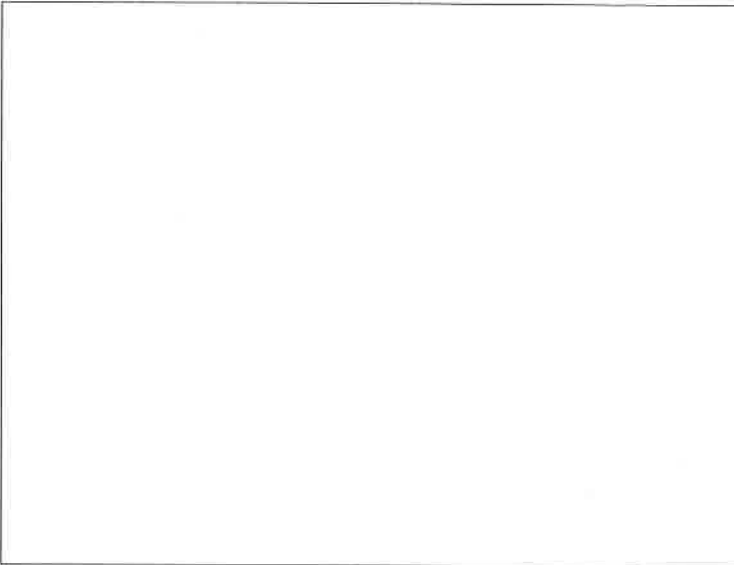
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THE PRISON.

PRISONER EXCHANGE TREATIES

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5. (LOU) VARGAS MENTIONED THAT COLOMBIA HAD JUST SIGNED A PRISONER EXCHANGE TREATY WITH MEXICO (COLOMBIA'S FIRST), WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE 300 PLUS COLOMBIANS IN MEXICAN JAILS (AND THE 10 MEXICANS IN COLOMBIA) TO BE REPATRIATED TO FINISH OUT THEIR TERMS. A SIMILAR CONVENTION WAS BEING NEGOTIATED WITH SPAIN, WHICH HELD ROUGHLY 800 COLOMBIANS IN JAIL AND WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR SWITZERLAND. VARGAS SAID THESE AGREEMENTS WERE BASED ON THE U.S. MODEL. VARGAS DID NOT SUGGEST A SIMILAR ACCORD WITH THE UNITED STATES.



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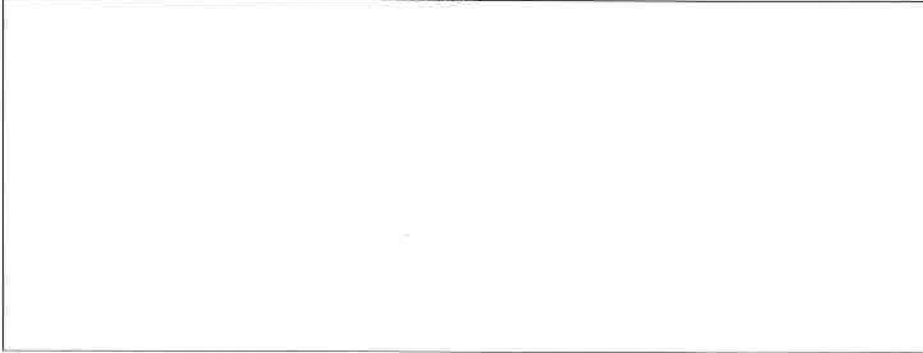
7. (C) COMMENT: THE GOC IS CONCERNED WITH THE PUBLICITY THAT SURROUNDS THE LACK OF CONTROL IN PRISON. THE GAVIRIA GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO DO SOMETHING TO REMEDY THAT SITUATION, BUT IT WOULD APPEAR THAT PRISON DIRECTOR VARGAS IS NOT FULLY IN THE LOOP ABOUT WHAT IS AND WILL BE DONE.

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TOR: 192338Z JUL 91 BOGOTA 11030

CLASS: CONFIDENTIAL  
CONTROLS: CONFIDENTIAL BOGOTA 11030 FOR ARA/AND, CA/OCS/CCS/ARA, L/LEI E.O. 12356: N/A  
DECLASSON: MR  
DOCPREC: R  
DOCST: ACTIVE  
DOCTYPE: IN  
DOCUMENT\_ID: 33743100  
DOR: 19910719  
FROM: FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
GUIDE-UID: 1012/2pfgcf  
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ORIGIN:  
PRODUCER: BOGOTA

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SOURCE-INFO: STATE IN R BOGOTA 11030 BOGOTA 199107192334  
TAGS: TAGS: PREL, PGOV, CASC, CO  
TO: TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7059  
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