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TITLE: SUBJECT: REPERCUSSIONS OF ESCOBAR'S DEATH STILL BEING FELT

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SUBJECT: REPERCUSSIONS OF ESCOBAR'S DEATH STILL BEING FELT

1. (C) SUMMARY: PRESS REPORTING INDICATES THAT MEMBERS OF THE ANTI-ESCOBAR VIGILANTE GROUP, "LOS PEPES" (THOSE PERSECUTED BY PABLO ESCOBAR), OR INDIVIDUALS USING THEM AS COVER, REMAIN ACTIVE AND MAY CONTINUE TO THREATEN MEMBERS OF THE EXTENDED ESCOBAR CLAN. ESCOBAR'S FAMILY HAS AGAIN APPROACHED THE EMBASSY TO REQUEST SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR VISAS, AND AN ESCOBAR COUSIN WAS RECENTLY MURDERED BY UNIDENTIFIED ASSASSINS WHILE ON VACATION IN EASTERN ANTIOQUIA. END SUMMARY.

FAMILY CLAIMS THEY ARE NOT SAFE

2. (U) SEVERAL BOGOTA AND MEDELLIN PAPERS CARRIED STORIES ON JANUARY 19 AND 20 ABOUT AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS OSTENSIBLY BETWEEN "LOS PEPES" AND HERMILDA GAVIRIA DE ESCOBAR, THE MOTHER OF THE LATE MEDELLIN KINGPIN PABLO ESCOBAR. MRS. GAVIRIA AND HER SON'S FAMILY HAVE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SIGNING A PEACE AGREEMENT WITH "LOS PEPES," BUT ACCORDING TO THE STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO THE VIGILANTE GROUP, THERE ARE "REMNANTS OF THE CARTEL WHO ARE NOT THINKING OF PEACE." THE STATED OBJECTIVE OF "LOS PEPES" IS TO PREVENT OLD ESCOBAR ASSOCIATES FROM TAKING UP HIS TERRORIST CAMPAIGN OR TRYING TO AVENGE ESCOBAR'S DEATH, AND THEIR THREATS AGAINST ANY WHO SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ATTACK THEM HAVE BEEN BLATANT.

3. (C) ALSO ON JANUARY 19, PABLO ESCOBAR'S SON JUAN

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior
Reviewer

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PABLO ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY AND ASKED TO SPEAK WITH THE AMBASSADOR. JUAN PABLO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY BODYGUARDS AND POSSIBLY MEMBERS OF THE PROTECTIVE DETAIL ASSIGNED TO THE FAMILY BY THE PROSECUTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE. THE AMBASSADOR DECLINED TO SPEAK WITH HIM, BUT DEA COUNTRY ATTACHE TOFT HAD A SHORT CONVERSATION WITH HIM. JUAN PABLO WAS INTERESTED IN OBTAINING SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR HIS FAMILY TO BE GIVEN VISAS TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S., STATING THAT THEY REMAINED UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF BEING KILLED BY THEIR FATHER'S ENEMIES. JUAN PABLO WAS INFORMED, AS THE FAMILY'S REPRESENTATIVE HAD BEEN IN DECEMBER, THAT THEY MUST PRESENT APPLICATIONS IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR VISAS. JUAN PABLO AND HIS MOTHER REITERATED THEIR FEARS OF REPRISAL IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A GERMAN MAGAZINE, REPRINTED IN THE COLOMBIAN WEEKLY "SEMANA" ON JANUARY 25.

ESCOBAR COUSIN MURDERED

4. (U) ON JANUARY 24 PABLO ESCOBAR'S 36-YEAR-OLD COUSIN, JOSE LUIS GAVIRIA RIVERO--YOUNGER BROTHER OF ESCOBAR'S FORMER RIGHT-HAND MAN GUSTAVO DE JESUS GAVIRIA--WAS ASSASSINATED BY A GROUP OF UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANTS WHILE ON VACATION IN THE EL PENOL AREA OF ANTIOQUIA. AT THE TIME OF THE ATTACK, GAVIRIA WAS AT "EL RECREO", A WELL KNOWN FARM, LONG ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES OF THE ESCOBAR ORGANIZATION, WITH A GROUP OF RELATIVES. LATE ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 24, ACCORDING TO THE SURVIVORS, A GROUP OF ARMED MEN ENTERED THE HOUSE, LOCKED EVERYONE BUT GAVIRIA IN A ROOM, THEN SHOT GAVIRIA TO DEATH.

5. (U) ACCORDING TO ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE TABLOID "LA PRENSA'S" COVERAGE OF THE KILLING, GAVIRIA HAD BEEN

ARRESTED IN 1988 FOR UNSPECIFIED ACTIVITIES AND HAD SINCE BEEN LINKED TO THE ASSASSINATION OF FIVE EX-MILITARY OFFICIALS. THESE INDIVIDUALS WERE ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN A CAR BOMB ATTACK ON THE MONACO BUILDING SEVERAL YEARS AGO--THEN HOME TO PABLO ESCOBAR'S FAMILY--IN THE EL

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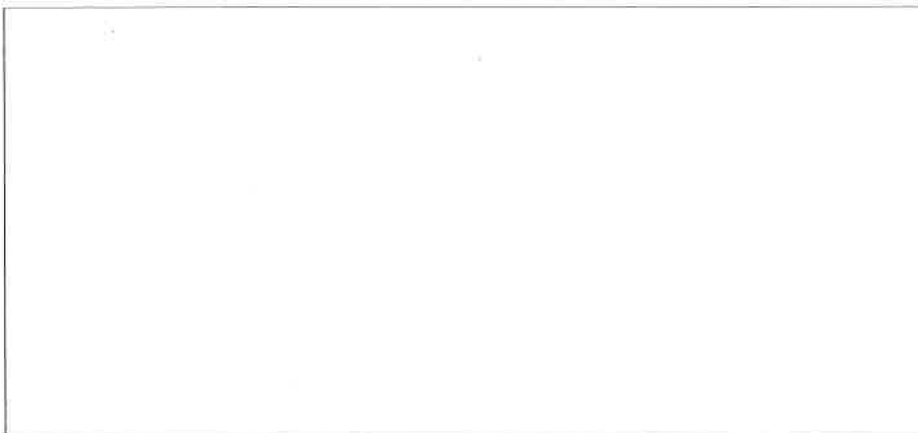
POBLADO NEIGHBORHOOD OF MEDELLIN.

6. (C) COMMENT: IF GAVIRIA'S ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN THE KILLING OF INDIVIDUALS LINKED TO ATTACKS ON THE ESCOBAR FAMILY IS TRUE, IT COULD INDICATE THAT GAVIRIA DEATH WAS A REPRISAL KILLING BY "LOS PEPES." IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT "LOS PEPES" ARE BEING USED AS CONVENIENT COVER FOR KILLINGS AND THREATS CARRIED OUT BY OTHER ENEMIES. MORE THAN LIKELY, HOWEVER, "LOS PEPES"--LED BY SOME OF THE MORE SIGNIFICANT PLAYERS IN THE OLD MEDELLIN CARTEL--ARE USING THREATS, KILLINGS AND THEIR PUBLIC CALL FOR "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" TO EXERT PRESSURE ON ESCOBAR'S REMAINING ALLIES, AS "LOS PEPES" TRY TO RE-ESTABLISH CONTROL OVER WHAT REMAINS OF THE MEDELLIN DRUG TRAFFICKING INFRASTRUCTURE. END COMMENT.

BUSBY

END OF MESSAGE

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