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TITLE: SUBJECT: GOC QUICKLY REJECTS MORE ESCOBAR DEMANDS

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SOURCE: STATE

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TEXT:

TAGS: PGOV, SNAR, PTER, ASEC, CO

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PERS/ORG

SUBJECT: GOC QUICKLY REJECTS MORE ESCOBAR DEMANDS

REFS: A) BOGOTA 00593; B) BOGOTA 00746

1. (C) SUMMARY: IN A JANUARY LETTER TO PROSECUTOR GENERAL DE GREIFF, ESCOBAR ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF AN ARMED GROUP, "ANTIOQUIAN REBELLION," COMPLAINED ABOUT ABUSES BY POLICE, AND DEMANDED THE SAME PEACE CONDITIONS OFFERED TO COLOMBIA'S INSURGENTS. THE GOC QUICKLY REJECTED ESCOBAR'S DEMANDS AND ONCE AGAIN DEMANDED UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) IN HIS SECOND LETTER IN THREE WEEKS MEDELLIN DRUG BOSS PABLO ESCOBAR AGAIN COMPLAINED OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY THE POLICE AND ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO ABANDON HIS LEGAL FIGHT IN FAVOR OF AN ARMED ONE THROUGH THE "ANTIOQUIAN REBELLION" (ANTIOQUIA REBELDE), WHICH HE DESCRIBES AS AN ARMED REBEL GROUP. ESCOBAR REPEATS MUCH OF WHAT HE SAID IN THE FIRST LETTER (REF A), BUT THIS TIME IT IS ADDRESSED DIRECTLY TO PROSECUTOR GENERAL GUSTAVO DE GREIFF. THE LETTER IS DATED ENVIGADO, JANUARY 15, IS HAND-PRINTED AND CONTAINS ESCOBAR'S SIGNATURE AND THUMBPRINT. IT WAS PUBLISHED BY EL TIEMPO, COLOMBIA'S LEADING DAILY ON JAN. 19.

3. (C) IN A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED JANUARY 18 THE GOC REJECTED ESCOBAR'S DEMANDS, CALLING THEM "ATTEMPTS TO CLOAK IN FALSE POLITICAL CLOTHING WHAT IS LITTLE MORE THAN COMMON CRIME IN AN EFFORT TO FOOL PUBLIC OPINION AND OBTAIN CONCESSIONS AND PARDONS FOR THE CRIMES."

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Adolph Eisner, Senior Reviewer

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IN A JANUARY 19 PHONE CONVERSATION WITH POLCOUNS, DE GREIFF CHARACTERIZED ESCOBAR'S LETTERS AS "MORE ESCOBAR BULLSHIT" ("PAJA").

4. (U) FOLLOWING IS AN INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF ESCOBAR'S LETTER:

ENVIGADO, JANUARY 15, 1993

DOCTOR GUSTAVO DE GREIFF
PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF THE NATION

MR. FISCAL:

AS A RESULT OF MY FORCED DEPARTURE FROM ENVIGADO PRISON I TRIED FROM THE BEGINNING TO WAGE A LEGAL BATTLE WITH THE BELIEF THAT THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD GIVE MY LAWYERS AND MY DEFENSE ALL THE GUARANTEES WHICH A CIVILIZED GOVERNMENT HAS TO OFFER.

I DID NOT THINK THAT BARBARIC METHODS SUCH AS KIDNAPPING, TORTURE, DISAPPEARANCES AND MASSACRES WOULD BE USED IN THE EFFORT TO CAPTURE ME, AND I

PROMISED MYSELF AND COLOMBIA NOT TO USE ACTS OF WAR OF ANY KIND.

(BUT) THE METHODS DID NOT CHANGE BECAUSE THE CRIMINAL AND CORRUPT POLICE ARE THE SAME, AND THE GOVERNMENT IS WAGING A BIASED WAR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NARCOTRAFFICKING, AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE SIX THOUSAND SEARCHES AND LOOTINGS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE CITY OF MEDELLIN, WHICH COMPARED WITH SEARCHES OR THE REWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR OTHER NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS, NEED NO FURTHER EXPLANATION.

TO REPORT ACTS OF KIDNAPPING, TORTURE OR MURDER MAKES NO SENSE BECAUSE EVERYBODY KNOWS ABOUT THEM. NOBODY INVESTIGATES OR PUNISHES THE CRIMINAL POLICE BECAUSE THEY WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT IS

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GREEDY FOR MEDALS IN THE DRUG WAR, AND THE ONLY ONES THEY WANT ARE MEDALS FROM MEDELLIN, WHICH THEY OBTAIN BY EMPLOYING ALL THE BARBARIC METHODS PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED.

MY LAWYERS HAVE BEEN SEARCHED, LOOTED, IMPRISONED, THREATENED AND PLANTED WITH GUNS, DRUGS AND DYNAMITE, TO MAKE THEM APPEAR TO BE CRIMINALS AND TERRORISTS.

NOT EVEN UNDER BARCO'S GOVERNMENT DID THINGS LIKE THIS OCCUR. GIVEN THE ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE IS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE THAN TO ABANDON THE LEGAL FIGHT AND WAGE AN ORGANIZED, ARMED FIGHT.

AS A RESULT OF ALL THE ABOVE, I WISH TO INFORM YOU OFFICIALLY AND PUBLICLY, MY INTENTION TO FOUND AND LEAD AN ARMED REBEL GROUP, TO BE CALLED ANTIOQUIAN REBELLION.

INDEPENDENCE FOR ANTIOQUIA WILL NOT BE AMONG THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS GROUP, BECAUSE I WAS BORN COLOMBIAN AND WISH TO REMAIN COLOMBIAN THE REST OF MY LIFE.

AS I HAVE ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, I WILL ALWAYS BE OPEN TO DIALOGUE AND THE SEARCH FOR PEACE, BUT FROM NOW ON THE CONDITIONS OF THIS DIALOGUE WILL BE THE SAME AS THOSE OFFERED TO THE REBELS, WHETHER THEY ARE CALLED SUBVERSIVES OR GUERRILLAS.

PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA
END UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION

5. (C) PRESIDENT GAVIRIA'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
ADVISOR GABRIEL SILVA, DURING A JANUARY 19 MEETING

WITH THE AMBASSADOR, SAID THE GOC BELIEVED ESCOBAR WAS LOOKING TOWARD THE PAST AND THAT HIS MODELS WERE THE LAST ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND THE M - 19'S LAYING DOWN OF ARMS AND INTEGRATION INTO THE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

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6. (C) SILVA EQUATED ESCOBAR'S REQUEST THAT HE AND A NUMBER OF HIS MEN BE INCARCERATED IN LA ESTRELLA (REF A) WITH THE SITUATION WHEREIN M - 19 SPENT MONTHS IN THE TOWN OF SANTO DOMINGO AS FINAL TOUCHES WERE PUT TO ITS LAYING DOWN OF ARMS. HE NOTED THAT THREE SUCCESSIVE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENTS -- BETANCUR, TURBAY, AND BARCO -- HAD MADE POLITICAL DEALS WITH GUERRILLAS. PRESIDENT GAVIRIA HAD HIMSELF FOLLOWED THIS TRACK FOR THE FIRST YEAR AND ONE HALF OF HIS ADMINISTRATION BEFORE ABANDONING IT IN FAVOR OF CONFRONTATION. ESCOBAR WANTS A SIMILAR DEAL FOR HIMSELF; THEREFORE HE IS TRYING TO GET HIS SITUATION TO THE FORE IN THE POLITICAL DEBATE.

7. (C) ESCOBAR CLEARLY NO LONGER BELIEVES HE CAN WORK OUT A SATISFACTORY SURRENDER SCENARIO WITH THE GAVIRIA GOVERNMENT AND IS NOW LOOKING TO THE LONGER TERM, MEANING COLOMBIA'S NEXT PRESIDENT, TO RESOLVE HIS DIFFICULTIES. SILVA BELIEVES ESCOBAR WILL INITIATE TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN BOGOTA IN THE NEAR FUTURE, AND THAT IT WILL NOT BE A "NICKEL AND DIME" EFFORT. ESCOBAR'S FIRST TARGET OF CHOICE IS GUSTAVO DE GREIFF, AND THE GOC, ACCORDING TO SILVA, IS CONVINCED THAT ESCOBAR WILL GO AFTER DE GREIFF WITH THE SAME SINGLEMINDEDNESS AND BRUTALITY THAT HE USED IN 1989 AGAINST THEN DAS HEAD GENERAL MAZA.

8. (C) OTHER TOP CHOICES FOR AN ESCOBAR HIT, IN SILVA'S OPINION, ARE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HUMBERTO DE LA CALLE, CARLOS LEMOS SIMMONDS AND ENRIQUE PAREJO. IN 1989 ESCOBAR CREATED CHAOS DURING THE CAMPAIGN BY HIS ASSASSINATIONS. HE WANTS TO DO THAT AGAIN.

9. (C) SIMULTANEOUSLY, SILVA BELIEVES ESCOBAR WILL BE WORKING UP A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO GIVE HIMSELF SOME POLITICAL CREDIBILITY. AGAIN, HE WILL DRAW FROM HIS EXPERIENCE IN 1989 WHEN THE EXTRADITABLES USED THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE TO TURN PUBLIC OPINION, ONCE OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOR OF

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EXTRADITION, AGAINST EXTRADITION. AS AN EXCLAMATION POINT TO HIS PUBLIC CAMPAIGN, ESCOBAR WILL, IN SILVA'S OPINION, CONDUCT TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST CAREFULLY SELECTED TARGETS WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS. SILVA BELIEVES ESCOBAR WILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO GIVE A

POLITICAL CONTEXT TO HIS VIOLENT ACTS. FINALLY, SILVA SAID THE GOC BELIEVES THE VIOLENCE WILL START VERY SOON. ESCOBAR, HAVING SAID HE WAS BEGINNING AN ARMED REBELLION, MUST QUICKLY PRODUCE ACTION TO DEMONSTRATE HIS CREDIBILITY.

10. (C) SILVA SAID GAVIRIA'S REACTION TO ESCOBAR'S LATEST MISSIVE WAS THAT "I DON'T CARE WHAT HE DOES, MY POLICIES WILL NOT CHANGE." THE GOC COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN RESPONSE TO THE LETTER WILL SET THE TONE FOR THE GOC'S OWN EFFORT TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC OPINION IN SUPPORT OF GAVIRIA'S POLICIES. THE GOC INTENDS TO HIT HARD ON THE THEME THAT ESCOBAR IS A COMMON CRIMINAL AND MUST BE TREATED AS SUCH. THEY ARE ALSO STUDYING THE OVERALL SECURITY SITUATION AND WEIGHING OPTIONS.

11. (C) COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT ESCOBAR HAS NOW REACHED STAGE THREE (TERRORIST ACTS) IN THE PROCESS OF TRYING TO ORCHESTRATE HIS RETURN TO A SATISFACTORY AND SAFE PRISON LIFE. ESCOBAR ALWAYS PLAYS THE GAME ON A NUMBER OF LEVELS, AND IN HIS LETTER HE CAREFULLY AVOIDS AN OPEN DECLARATION OF WAR ON THE GOVERNMENT. HE IS EQUATING HIMSELF WITH A POLITICALLY MOTIVATED INSURGENT, A VICTIM OF GOVERNMENT HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. HIS PRIMARY INTENDED AUDIENCE IS NOT THE GOC, BUT THE PEOPLE OF COLOMBIA, WHOM HE HOPES WILL PRESSURE GAVIRIA TO BACK DOWN. BUT, HE CLEARLY IS STILL CAPABLE OF UNLEASHING ANOTHER WAVE OF TERRORISM LIKE THE ONE IN 1989-90. ESCOBAR MAY ALSO HOPE TO PERSUADE INTERNATIONAL GROUPS TO LOOK INTO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY COLOMBIAN SECURITY AGENCIES AND POSSIBLY EASE THE PRESSURE BY EMBARRASSING THE GOC WITH CHARGES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. (SILVA DENIED EMPHATICALLY THAT THERE WAS ANY TRUTH TO

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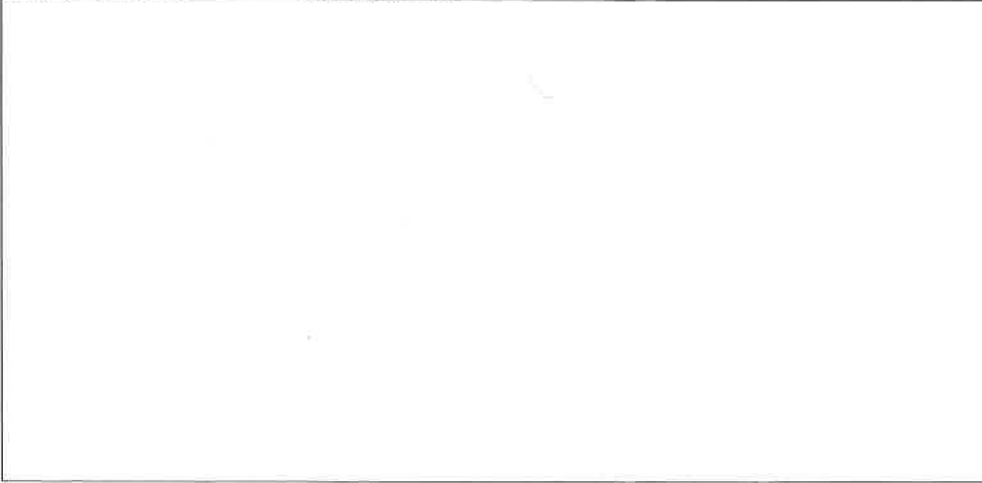
ESCOBAR'S ALLEGATIONS.)

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END OF MESSAGE

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