

CONFIDENTIAL

39838701

TITLE: SUBJECT: ESCOBAR IN PANAMA: AN UNLIKELY STORY

ORIGDATE: 199210071738

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 14983

TEXT:

TAGS: SNAR, PREL, PGOV, CO

SUBJECT: ESCOBAR IN PANAMA: AN UNLIKELY STORY

RELEASED IN PART B3 CIA  
PERS/ORG

REF: PANAMA 9202 (NOTAL)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. REFTTEL PROVIDES TEXT OF "LA ESTRELLA" POLITICAL COLUMNIST LUIS DE JANON'S PIECE ALLEGING MEDELLIN DRUG BOSS PABLO ESCOBAR SPENDS "MORE TIME IN PANAMA THAN IN COLOMBIA." THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THIS OR SIMILAR ALLEGATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE, AND THE EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DEBUNK THE RUMORS PLACING ESCOBAR IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE GLOBE.

3. EMBASSY DOES NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF ESCOBAR'S HAVING ENTERED PANAMANIAN TERRITORY AT SOME POINT FOLLOWING HIS JULY 22 ESCAPE FROM ENVIGADO. HOWEVER, WE FIND IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY HE HAS SET UP BASE THERE, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT HIS FRIEND MANUEL NORIEGA IS NO LONGER IN POWER. ESCOBAR IS MOST COMFORTABLE IN COLOMBIA, WHERE HE HAS SO FAR SUCCEEDED IN ELUDING CAPTURE OR PUNISHMENT THROUGH INTIMIDATION AND BRIBERY. THE ONE PROSPECT THAT TERRORIZES HIM, HOWEVER, IS EXTRADITION TO THE UNITED STATES, A PROSPECT MUCH MORE LIKELY IF HE IS ARRESTED IN PANAMA OR ANYWHERE OUTSIDE COLOMBIA, WHERE EXTRADITION OF COLOMBIAN-BORN CITIZENS IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. FOR THIS REASON ALONE WE DOUBT ESCOBAR WILL EVER LEAVE COLOMBIA OTHER THAN ON SHORT BORDER EXCURSIONS.

4. IN FACT, WE VERY MUCH DOUBT ESCOBAR HAS MADE MORE THAN EXPLORATORY FORAYS OUTSIDE HIS HOME DEPARTMENT OF ANTIOQUIA. THE AREA AROUND ENVIGADO AND MEDELLIN IS

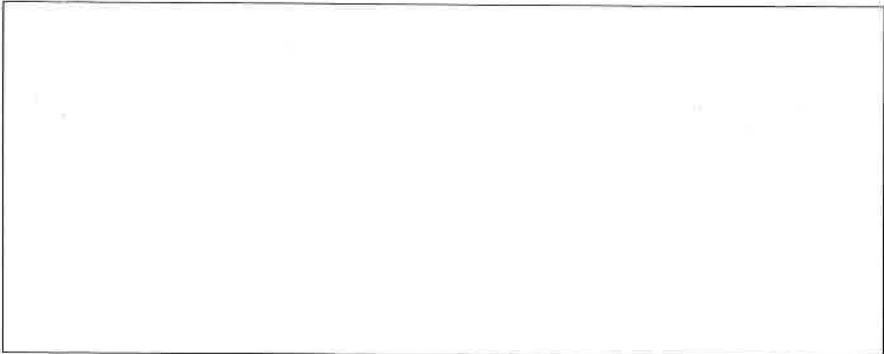
REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior  
Reviewer

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REPLETE WITH PREPARED HIDEOUTS AND POPULATED WITH BENEFICIARIES OF ESCOBAR'S LARGESSE. HE FEELS SAFEST AMONG THESE "LOYAL SUBJECTS," ENSCONCED IN AN AREA WHERE HE HAS DODGED OFF-AND-ON GOC MANHUNTS SINCE 1984. CRAIG

END OF MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL



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92 9890835 SCR PAGE 001 NC 9890835  
TOR: 071742Z OCT 92 BOGOTA 14983

CLASS: CONFIDENTIAL

CONTROLS: C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 14983 NSC FOR AMBASSADORS GILLESPIE AND MCNAMARA STATE FOR INM/LEVITSKY, ARA/ARONSON, ARA/AND, AND DS/I/CT FOR BRAD SMITH ONDCP FOR GOVERNOR MARTINEZ DEA WASHDC FOR OF, OFL, DO, AO, AX, OC, OIOA CUSTOMS FOR OIC/MEEHAN USCINCSO AND CINCLANT FOR POLAD E.O.12356: DECL: OADR

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ZNY CCCCC ZZH

R <ORIGDTG>071738Z OCT 92</ORIGDTG>

<FROM>FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA</FROM>

**REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior Reviewer**

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<TO>TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1694</TO>  
 INFO RUEBWJA/DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC  
 RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM  
 RUEHNA/DEA WASHDC  
 RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0341  
 RUFHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2349  
 RUFHLD/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1840  
 RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 1552  
 RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0533  
 RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0490  
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 RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 0383  
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 RUEKJCS/JOINTSTAFF WASHDC//CNOD//  
 RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
 RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC//CN//  
 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC   
 RUETIAA/DIRNSA FT GEORGE G MEADE MD//G2//DCN LINEAR//  
 RUCBSAA/USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA  
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 RULSJGA/COGARD INTELCOORDCEN W WASHDC  
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 RUEHNA/DEA EPIC EL PASO TX  
 RUEHFB/DIRFBI WASHDC//CID UNIT 6//  
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