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## **Poll Shows Panamanians Distrust Public Police Force**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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In its Aug. 7 edition, La Prensa published results of a poll conducted by the Costa Rican firm Borge and Associates indicating that 73% of respondents believe major changes in the Public Police Force are necessary to avoid a coup. The Force was created following the US invasion in December, or dismantlement of the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) and other public security organizations. Next, over 50% of respondents said they did not trust members of the new security force since many served in Gen. Manuel Noriega's PDF. Leslie Loaiza, director of the Judicial Technical Police, was identified by 27% of respondents as "an officer who should be relieved of his post." Borge and Associates observed that "a high degree of distrust and skepticism regarding the Public Police Force, is accompanied by strong dose of ignorance about its actual structure." The pollsters' sample group consisted of 1,206 Panamanians. (Details on sample characteristics, and the margin of error were not included in the report by EFE.) [Basic data from EFE, 08/07/90]

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