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TITLE: SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION -- A PHANTOM C-130 "NEARLY"  
COLLIDES WITH AN AVIANCA JET; A FUROR ERUPTS

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PERS/ORG**

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION -- A PHANTOM C-130 "NEARLY"  
COLLIDES WITH AN AVIANCA JET; A FUROR ERUPTS

1. THE AUGUST 13 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE U.S. INDICTMENT OF PABLO ESCOBAR BECAME ALMOST A MINOR ISSUE WHEN THE LOCAL MEDIA RECEIVED A REPORT THAT AN AVIANCA JET WITH 135 PERSONS ABOARD "NEARLY COLLIDED" WITH A PHANTOM C-130 SHORTLY AFTER THE INDICTMENT WAS ANNOUNCED IN THE U.S. SEVERAL LOCAL RADIO PROGRAMS IMMEDIATELY LABELED THE MYSTERIOUS AIRCRAFT AS ONE FROM THE U.S.. THIS IN TURN LED TO CHARGES THAT THE U.S. WAS ONCE AGAIN VIOLATING COLOMBIA SOVEREIGNTY. DURING AUGUST 14 RADIO INTERVIEWS, THE PILOT OF THE AVIANCA JET STATED THAT ON ONE HAND, THE MYSTERIOUS AIRCRAFT WAS SO CLOSE THAT ONE COULD HEAR ITS ENGINES, AND ON THE OTHER HAND, ONLY HE AND THE COPILOT SAW THE PHANTOM PLANE. OVER THE LONG WEEKEND (AUGUST 17 WAS A LOCAL HOLIDAY), THIS EVENT BECAME A MAJOR EVENT, AT TIMES CAUSING THE NEWS ABOUT THE U.S. INDICTMENT OF ESCOBAR TO BE SUBORDINATED. ON AUGUST 14, THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE RELEASED A STATEMENT THAT THREE U.S. C-130'S WERE AUTHORIZED TO FLY IN COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE. THEIR TAIL NUMBERS WERE 21294, 21295, AND 37765. ACCORDING TO AN AUGUST 14 COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE STATEMENT, THE AIRCRAFT CLOSEST TO THE AVIANCA JET, NO. 21294, WAS ON A ROUTINE FLIGHT AND WAS NOWHERE NEAR THE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. THE COLOMBIAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY CHARGED THAT ANOTHER U.S. AIRCRAFT, WITH TAIL NUMBER M-122FF, WAS THE CULPRIT. THESE COUNTER STATEMENTS POINT UP THE RIVALRY BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES. (NOTE: THE

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

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LEADERSHIP OF THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY IS BEING PUT UNDER MILITARY CONTROL.) IN THE PAST, IT HAS BEEN NOTICED THAT WHEN AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE DRUG WAR WAS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE, SOME SORT OF AVIATION NEAR MISS SEEMS TO COINCIDENTALLY OCCUR.

2. ON AUGUST 13 AND 14, THE TWO LARGEST RADIO NETWORKS, RCN AND RADIO CARACOL, CARRIED REPORTS ABOUT THE SUPPOSED NEAR MISS. BUT WHEREAS RCN HAD BALANCED REPORTING ABOUT THE EVENT ALONG WITH REPORTS ABOUT THE ARRIVAL OF SEVEN HELICOPTER FROM THE U.S. FOR THE COLOMBIAN NATIONAL POLICE TO USE IN THE DRUG WAR AND ABOUT THE INDICTMENT OF ESCOBAR, RADIO CARACOL RABIDLY REPORTED ABOUT THE NEAR MISS AT THE EXPENSE OF VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER NEWS.

3. FOLLOWING IS THE HEADLINE TREATMENT ABOUT THE INCIDENT THAT HAS COME OUT OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS;

AUGUST 14

A. LEADING DAILY "EL TIEMPO":

SUBHEADLINE -- "AS IT PREPARED TO LAND AT RIONEGRO (AIRFIELD IN MEDELLIN)"

HEADLINE -- "AN AVIANCA AIRCRAFT WITH 135 PASSENGERS ABOARD ALMOST COLLIDES WITH A PHANTOM HERCULES."

B. SECOND LEADING DAILY "EL ESPECTADOR":

HEADLINE -- "ANOTHER INCIDENT IN ANTIOQUIA WITH A MILITARY AIRCRAFT."

SUBHEADLINE -- "A NEAR COLLISION WITH AN AVIANCA AIRCRAFT AS IT WAS ABOUT TO LAND AT RIONEGRO AIRPORT."

C. CONSERVATIVE TABLOID "LA PRENSA":

SUBHEADLINE -- "IT WAS CHARGED (BY THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY) THAT NEITHER THE PILOTS NOR THE CONTROL TOWER HAD BEEN ADVISED ABOUT PROHIBITED ROUTES THAT U.S.

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MILITARY AIRCRAFT WERE USING BETWEEN SOUTHCOM AND PALANQUERO, SOMETHING THAT COULD HAVE PRODUCED A TRAGEDY."

HEADLINE -- "A U.S. HERCULES THAT WAS HUNTING FOR ESCOBAR ALMOST COLLIDED WITH AN AVIANCA AIRCRAFT."

SUBHEADLINE -- "THE (AVIANCA) PILOT DANIEL ZABALETA LOPEZ DID NOT HAVE TIME TO MANEUVER OR GET OUT OF THE WAY OF THE HERCULES WHICH PASSED RIGHT OVER THE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. 'IT IS A MIRACLE WE ARE ALIVE,' ZABALETA SAID."

AUGUST 15  
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A. LEADING DAILY "EL TIEMPO:"

SUBHEADLINE -- "THE INCIDENT IS BEING INVESTIGATED."

HEADLINE -- "CONFUSION BECAUSE OF THE AIRCRAFT MESS."

B. SECOND LEADING DAILY "EL ESPECTADOR":

HEADLINE -- "A DISPUTE OVER THE AVIATION INCIDENT IN ANTIOQUIA."

SUBHEADLINE -- "IT IS NOT CERTAIN WHICH U.S. AIRCRAFT ALMOST COLLIDED WITH THE COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. AVIANCA LODGES A STRONG PROTEST. CIVIL PILOTS ARE WORRIED."

D. CONSERVATIVE TABLOID "LA PRENSA":

1) FRONT PAGE:

SUBHEADLINE -- "COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY BELIEVE THAT THE AIRCRAFT THAT ALMOST COLLIDED WITH THE AVIANCA AIRCRAFT WAS NOT A U.S. AIRCRAFT TRAVELING BETWEEN PANAMA AND BOLIVIA, BUT HERCULES M-122FF WHICH WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO FLY IN COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE."

2) NATIONAL PAGE STORY:

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SUBHEADLINE -- "THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE AND CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY DISCARD THE IDEA THAT U.S. AIRCRAFT N-21294 WHICH LEGALLY TRAVELED THE PANAMA-BOLIVIA ROUTE ALMOST CAUSED THE COLLISION WITH THE AVIANCA JET. THEY SUSPECT THAT THE INTRUDER WAS HERCULES M-122FF, WHICH WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO FLY IN COLOMBIAN AIR SPACE, YET WAS REPORTED IN LETICIA."

HEADLINE -- "THE INTRUDER AIRCRAFT COULD HAVE BEEN HERCULES M-122FF."

SUBHEADLINE -- "ACCORDING TO A REPORT FROM THE PANAMA CONTROL CENTER, AIRCRAFT 122FF WAS IN PANAMA THIS PAST THURSDAY, YET IT WAS REPORTED IN LETICIA AT 2:30 P.M. (EDT) THE SAME DAY. 'IT IS CLEAR THAT THE AUTHORIZED ROUTE FOR THIS MACHINE WAS NOT MEDELLIN, MUCH LESS AT THAT ALTITUDE (17,000 FEET),' SAID A SOURCE IN THE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY."

D. CONSERVATIVE TABLOID "EL NUEVO SIGLO":

1) FRONT PAGE:

SUBHEADLINE -- "AVIANCA PROTESTS."

HEADLINE -- "WHAT AIRCRAFT? THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE ASKS."

2) NATIONAL SECTION STORY:

SUBHEADLINE -- "A STRONG PROTEST FROM AVIANCA."

HEADLINE -- "THE U.S. CREW KNOWS NOTHING OF THE INCIDENT."

SUBHEADLINE -- "THE U.S. CREW DOES NOT KNOW OF ANY INCIDENT, SAYS THE COLOMBIAN AIR FORCE."

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END OF MESSAGE

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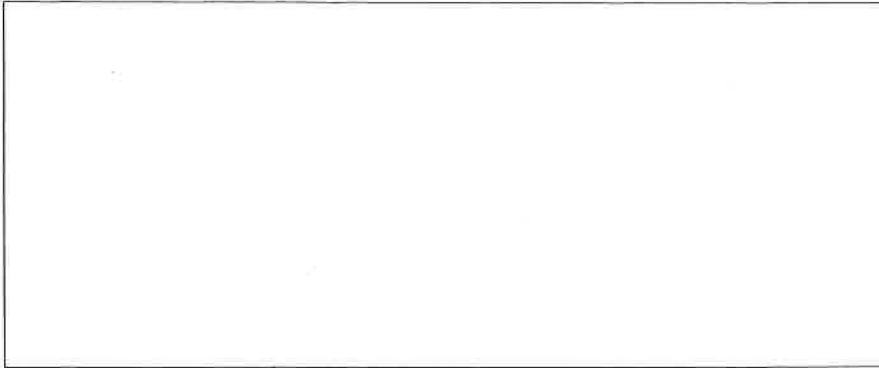


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