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TITLE: SUBJECT: CARTEL RELEASES SECOND CAPTIVE, NEW COMMUNIQUE

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SUBJECT: CARTEL RELEASES SECOND CAPTIVE, NEW COMMUNIQUE

REF: BOGOTA 18862 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: "THE EXTRADITABLES" RELEASED GERMAN JOURNALIST HERO BUSS DECEMBER 11 IN MEDELLIN. BUSS WAS THE SECOND OF NINE KIDNAPPED JOURNALISTS TO BE FREED. TRAFFICKERS, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO HOLD FOUR PROMINENT CAPTIVES, THE REAL TARGETS OF THE KIDNAPPINGS, AS WELL AS OTHER JOURNALISTS. BUSS DELIVERED A NEW CARTEL COMMUNIQUE, WHICH VOWED THAT TRAFFICKERS WOULD CONTINUE THEIR "INDEFINITE, UNILATERAL TRUCE" AND TURN THEMSELVES IN TO COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES UNDER DECREE 2047 AS SOON AS THEY WERE GUARANTEED CERTAIN PROTECTIONS, INCLUDING FREEDOM FROM EXTRADITION TO THE UNITED STATES. BUSS ALSO DELIVERED AN ORAL MESSAGE THAT THE REMAINING CAPTIVES MIGHT BE FREED BY CHRISTMAS. BUSS'S RELEASE MAY A SIGNAL THAT THE TRAFFICKERS WERE PLEASED WITH THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY RESULTS AND THAT INFORMATION EXCHANGES WITH THE GOC ARE PROGRESSING. END SUMMARY.

2. "THE EXTRADITABLES," A GROUP OF MEDELLIN CARTEL TRAFFICKERS LED BY PABLO ESCOBAR, RELEASED GERMAN JOURNALIST HERO BUSS DECEMBER 11 NEAR THE OFFICE OF THE DAILY NEWSPAPER, EL COLOMBIANO, IN MEDELLIN. UPON HIS RELEASE, BUSS FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS CAPTORS, AND ENTERED THE NEWSPAPER'S OFFICE AND MET WITH THE PAPER'S DIRECTOR, JUAN GOMEZ MARTINEZ, THE FORMER MAYOR OF MEDELLIN AND NEWLY ELECTED DELEGATE TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHO IS AN OUTSPOKEN OPPONENT OF EXTRADITION.

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior  
Reviewer

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3. BUSS, WHO WAS FREED AFTER 103 DAYS IN CAPTIVITY, WAS ONE OF SEVERAL JOURNALISTS KIDNAPPED BY THE CARTEL BETWEEN AUGUST AND NOVEMBER IN AN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO PRESSURE THE GOVERNMENT INTO NEGOTIATIONS. BUSS, ALONG WITH DIANA TURBAY (DAUGHTER OF EX-PRESIDENT JULIO CESAR TURBAY) AND OTHERS HAD LAST BEEN SEEN ON AUGUST 30. HE WAS THE SECOND TO BE RELEASED BY THE CARTEL. JUAN VITTA, EDITOR OF THE MAGAZINE, HOY POR HOY, ALSO TAKEN WITH TURBAY AND BUSS, WAS FREED NOVEMBER 26 NEAR GOMEZ MARTINEZ' RESIDENCE (REFTEL).

4. BUSS BROUGHT WITH HIM A NEW COMMUNIQUE FROM "THE EXTRADITABLES" AND SOME POSSIBLE GOOD NEWS. IN THEIR SHORT STATEMENT, CARTEL LEADERS VOWED TO CONTINUE THEIR "INDEFINITE, UNILATERAL TRUCE" IN THEIR WAR AGAINST THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT (REFTEL). THEY ALSO DECLARED THAT THEY WERE READY TO SURRENDER TO COLOMBIAN JUSTICE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF DECREE 2047 (WHICH OFFERS NARCO-TRAFFICKERS IMMUNITY FROM EXTRADITION IF THEY SURRENDER AND CONFESS) AS SOON AS THEY RECEIVE FROM THE GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES THAT "ALL OF THE PROCEDURAL GUARANTEES THEY ARE ENTITLED TO AS COLOMBIAN CITIZENS" WILL BE RESPECTED.

5. THE COMMUNIQUE DENIED THAT THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECEMBER 10 SHOOTING ATTEMPT IN MEDELLIN ON THE LIFE OF MAGISTRATE CARMEN PALACIO. PALACIO, 56, WAS WOUNDED BY TWO GUNMEN ON A MOTORCYCLE WHILE GETTING OUT OF HER CAR IN FRONT OF HER MEDELLIN HOME. PALACIO, WHO IS RECOVERING IN A MEDELLIN HOSPITAL, DREW HER PISTOL AND EXCHANGED FIRE WITH HER UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANTS, APPARENTLY WOUNDING ONE. BOTH ESCAPED. THE PRESS REPORTED COLLEAGUES OF HERS ON THE MEDELLIN BENCH AS SAYING THAT SHE HAD NEVER RECEIVED ANY THREATS. PALACIO'S PREDECESSOR WAS ASSASSINATED LAST YEAR.

6. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER HIS RELEASE, BUSS SAID THAT IN THE CAR WITH HIS CAPTORS ENROUTE TO THE NEWSPAPER'S OFFICE, HE WAS TOLD THAT OTHERS WOULD BE

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RELEASED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND THAT ALL WOULD BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. HOWEVER, BUSS SAID HE HAD LEARNED TO TAKE WHAT HIS GUARDS SAID WITH A GRAIN OF SALT SINCE THEY HAD TOLD HIM HE WOULD BE FREED ON FOUR PREVIOUS OCCASIONS.

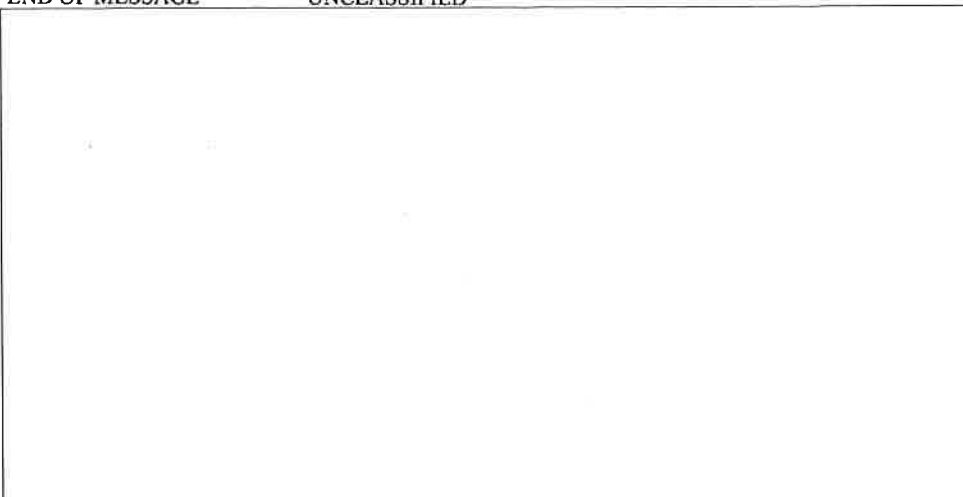
7. COMMENT: HAVING A POTENTIAL HOLD OVER THE

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WAS CERTAINLY ONE OF THE EXTRADITABLES' GOALS WHEN THEY KIDNAPPED THE JOURNALISTS. BUSS'S RELEASE WOULD APPEAR TO SIGNAL THE EXTRADITABLES' WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH A COOPERATIVE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY--THAT IS ONE WHICH WILL INSERT A PROHIBITION AGAINST EXTRADITION IN THE REVISED CONSTITUTION. BUSS'S RELEASE LIKELY ALSO IS A SIGNAL TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT TOP TRAFFICKERS ARE WILLING TO DEAL, THOUGH ON THEIR OWN TERMS. GAVIRIA IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ON GOC POLICY TOWARD THE TRAFFICKERS IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT IT MAY BE ONE THAT DOES NOT MEET TRAFFICKERS EXPECTATIONS. END COMMENT.

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END OF MESSAGE

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