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TITLE: SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TO ESCOBAR SURRENDER

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TO ESCOBAR SURRENDER

1. THREE LA PAZ DAILIES CARRIED EDITORIAL COMMENT JUNE 21 ON THE SURRENDER OF PABLO ESCOBAR. HEADINGS AND BLOCK QUOTES FOLLOW.

2. THE LEAD EDITORIAL IN "EL DIARIO" (CONSERVATIVE PRO-BUSINESS) WAS HEADED "CHANGES IN NARCOTRAFFICKING."

"THE SURRENDER AND IMPRISONMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL COLOMBIAN NARCOTRAFFICKER ... MARKS WITHOUT DOUBT A NEW EPOCH IN THIS FIELD....

"THE COMBINED ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF COLOMBIA AND THE U.S., BY MEANS OF THE EXTRADITION OF NARCOTRAFFICKERS TO OUR NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER TRAPPED THE DELINQUENTS SO THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW--AND EVEN DO KNOW--THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO EXTRICATE THEMSELVES BY MEANS OF THEIR VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION OF AUTHORITIES AND MEN IN CHARGE OF THE SYSTEM OF JUSTICE.... THIS SINISTER PERSON (ESCOBAR), AFTER SEVERAL MEETINGS PREFERRED TO SURRENDER TO THE AUTHORITIES OF HIS COUNTRY, SEEING THE CERTAINTY OF NOT BEING EXTRADITED AND ENJOYING THE GUARANTEE OF A JUST TRIAL AND SENTENCE (NOT CRUEL), ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WORDS....

"WITHOUT DOUBT THE SURRENDER OF ESCOBAR ... IS A NEW POSITIVE SIGNAL IN THE GREAT BATTLE THAT MANY PEOPLE WAGE AGAINST NARCOTRAFFICKING.

"FINALLY, WITHOUT BEING SO INTENDED, THE VERY EXISTENCE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior
Reviewer

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OF EXTRADITION HAS TURNED INTO A POWERFUL WEAPON OF DISUASION, AND IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE IT IN ORDER TO FINISH OFF THE ELEMENTS THAT CORRUPT ENTIRE NATIONS. A PARENTHESIS WILL HAVE TO BE OPENED TO EVALUATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVENT THAT MOVED THE CONTINENT."

3. "PRESENCIA" (CHURCH-OWNED, LEFT-OF-CENTER) PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "THE SURRENDER OF A NARCOTRAFFICKER."

"WITH THE VOLUNTARY SURRENDER OF DRUG TRAFFICKER PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA TO THE COLOMBIAN JUDICIARY, THAT COUNTRY HAS BEGUN A VERY SINGULAR ROAD TOWARDS PACIFICATION. AND IT IS VERY PROBABLE THAT OTHERS IMPLICATED IN THE DIRTY BUSINESS OF DRUGS WILL ACCEPT PRESIDENT GAVIRIA'S OFFER, WHICH CONSISTS OF PUTTING AN END TO EXTRADITION TO THE UNITED STATES AND LOWERING SANCTIONS, PROVIDED THE DEFENDANTS CONFESS THEIR CRIMES. IT IS NOT ACCIDENTAL, THEN, THAT ESCOBAR GAVIRIA TURNED HIMSELF IN AS SOON AS THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DECIDED TO FORBID EXTRADITION OF COLOMBIAN CITIZENS TO BE JUDGED ABROAD....

"APPARENTLY THE DECREES--REDUCTION OF SENTENCES AND AGREEMENT NOT TO EXTRADITE TO THE U.S.--FAVOR THE NARCOTRAFFICERS. BUT ACTUALLY WHAT PRESIDENT GAVIRIA HAS DONE IS RETURN COLOMBIAN JUSTICE TO ITS CENTRAL ROLE DUE IT IN ITS OWN COUNTRY....

"PABLO ESCOBAR GAVIRIA IS ACCUSED OF INNUMERABLE CRIMES, FROM HAVING INCITED THE DEATHS OF A THOUSAND COLOMBIANS TO THE EXPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF THE COCAINE WHICH IS CONSUMED IN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE. HIS METEORIC CAREER IN THE WORLD OF DRUGS AND TERROR HAS TURNED HIM INTO ONE OF THE TWENTY WEALTHIEST MEN IN THE WORLD. BUT ALL THAT ENDED LAST WEDNESDAY--EVEN HIS AURA OF BENEFACITOR WHO SPONSORED A 'MEDELLIN WITHOUT SLUMS'--WHEN, ESCORTED BY THE PRIEST RAFAEL GARCIA HERREROS, HE TURNED HIMSELF IN AND ENTERED THE TOP SECURITY PRISON OF ENVIGADO. THE MAN WHO HAD GREATER DIFFICULTIES WITH THE IMPORT OF EXOTIC ANIMALS THAN

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WITH THE IMPORT OF COCAINE' WAITS AS OF YESTERDAY FOR THE CHARGES AGAINST HIM TO BE PROVED."

4. TABLOID "HOY" (LEFT-LEANING POPULIST) PUBLISHED A LEAD EDITORIAL ENTITLED, "COLOMBIAN STRATEGY AGAINST NARCOTRAFFICKING SUCCEEDED."

"... THE PROCEDURE OF NON-EXTRADITION, CALLED 'SOVEREIGN POLICY,'--QUESTIONED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND FOUGHT AGAINST BY THE AMERICAN PRESS--PUT TO THE TEST THE INTEGRITY OF THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH THROUGH OFFICIAL SPOKESMEN EXPLAINED THE REASONS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR NOT GIVING IN TO THE REQUESTS FOR TRIAL OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS WANTED BY U.S. JUSTICE....

"TO SHOW BEYOND DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT GAVIRIA WENT OVERBOARD IN HIS PACIFICATION EFFORTS, THE PRESS CAMPAIGN IN THE U.S. PAINTED THE PRISON RESERVED FOR ESCOBAR AS A FIVE-STAR HOTEL, FORCING THE AUTHORITIES TO SHOW PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE JAIL AND TO STATE THE RATIONALE AND SECURITY CRITERIA FOR THE PRISON.

"THE RUMORS ARE BEING CLEARED UP. THE COLOMBIAN PRACTICE HAS YIELDED DEFINITE RESULTS, ALLOWING A COUNTRY TORMENTED BY DELINQUENCY, VIOLENCE, AND THE THREAT TO ITS INSTITUTIONS TO OBTAIN WHAT IT COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED IN ANY OTHER WAY: THE DISMANTELING OF THE DRUG TRAFFICKING MAFIA, ITS SURRENDER, AND THE RESOUNDING EFFECT PRODUCED BY THE RESIGNATION OF ITS MOST POWERFUL LEADERS...."

5. COMMENT: IN AN OMINOUS SIGN FOR U.S. EFFORTS TO CONVINCe THE BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT TO SIGN A NEW EXTRADITION TREATY, THESE EDITORIALS SEE EVENTS IN COLOMBIA AS A VINDICATION OF LATIN SOVEREIGNTY. END COMMENT. REGARDS, WHARTON, ACTING

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