

CONFIDENTIAL

37553841

TITLE: SUBJECT: MEDELLIN JOURNAL

ORIGDATE: 199108062251

SOURCE: STATE

DOCNO: BOGOTA 12106

TEXT:

TAGS: PGOV, SNAR, SCUL, ELAB, SOCI, PINR, CO

COMBINE: COMPLETE

RELEASED IN PART B3 CIA
PERS/ORG, B6

SUBJECT: MEDELLIN JOURNAL

REF: A. BOGOTA 6943 B. BOGOTA

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: TWO MONTHS AFTER THE SURRENDER OF PABLO ESCOBAR AND OTHER NARCO KINGPINS, MEDELLIN IS EAGER TO RECOVERATE ITS IMAGE AS COLOMBIA'S MOST FASHIONABLE, ENTERPRISING CITY. CIVIC LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY LABATT ON AUGUST 2 WERE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC BUT FELT THAT THE SEEDS OF VIOLENCE -- THE DECLINE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION, HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, AND SOCIAL RESENTMENTS -- WILL BE AROUND FOR SOME TIME. END SUMMARY.

FLOWER DAYS

3. DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 2 VISIT TO MEDELLIN, LABATT MET SEPARATELY WITH LEADERS IN THE POLITICAL, UNIVERSITY AND BUSINESS COMMUNITIES. THE WHIRLWIND TRIP COINCIDED WITH PREPARATIONS FOR MEDELLIN'S ANNUAL FLOWER FESTIVAL, WHICH "PAISAS" WERE PROMOTING WITH ALL THE INTENSITY OF A POST-WAR CELEBRATION. LASTING IMPRESSIONS GLEANED FROM THE BRIEF STOP WERE THE FIERCE REGIONAL PRIDE, HIGH LEVEL OF ORGANIZATION -- MEETINGS BEGAN ON TIME AND FEW WORDS WERE WASTED -- AND GENUINE DESIRE TO INCREASE CONTACTS WITH THE EMBASSY AND AMERICANS IN GENERAL. BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND CAMPUSES TESTIFIED TO THE CITY'S OPULENCE. THE GUARDS THAT SWARM AROUND BOGOTA WERE LITTLE IN EVIDENCE IN MEDELLIN, INCREASING THE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: James Cooper, Senior Reviewer

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

TEMPTATION TO FORGET IT IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST VIOLENT EPICENTERS. HOWEVER, INTERLOCUTORS DID NOT WAVE THEIR PROBLEMS AWAY.

BREAKING THE DRUG CYCLE

4. FORMER CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DELEGATE ANTONIO YEPES PARRA OBSERVED THAT PUBLIC OPTIMISM HAS SURGED SINCE THE NEW CONSTITUTION WAS SIGNED AND ESCOBAR'S SURRENDER. ANTIOQUIANS HAVE A DEEP BELIEF IN THEIR ABILITY TO MOVE MOUNTAINS AND TURN THEIR FORTUNES AROUND. DISILLUSION WILL COME WHEN PEOPLE REALIZE THAT THE SAME RASCALS ARE RUNNING FOR OFFICE -- AND STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING.

5. YEPES, A FORMER ANTIOQUIAN GOVERNOR AND EDUCATION MINISTER, IS PUTTING TOGETHER A LIBERAL SENATE LIST FOR ALVARO URIBE, DUE TO RETURN FROM HARVARD ON AUGUST 17. (URIBE COULD DECIDE TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR, ALTHOUGH THE CONSERVATIVE/M-19 COALITION PUT TOGETHER AROUND JUAN GOMEZ MARTINEZ WILL BE HARD TO BEAT.) CORRUPT PRO-NARCO POLITICIANS SUCH AS [REDACTED] WHOM YEPES CALLED COLOMBIA'S BIGGEST BANDIT) WILL HAVE AN ADVANTAGE IN THIS ELECTION, DESPITE THE ELIMINATION OF PARTY BALLOTS AND THE SLUSH FUNDS. BUT THE BOSSES WILL HAVE TO RUN FOR THEIR MONEY THIS TIME, AND WILL QUICKLY FIND THAT THE REFORMED CONGRESS DOES NOT HAVE THE ALLURE OF THE OLD. YEPES NOTED THAT THE RESULTS OF ELECTORAL REFORM WILL NOT BE COMPLETELY FELT UNTIL 1994. THE HOPE IS THAT THE OLD POLS' OBSESSION WITH DISTRIBUTING FAVORS WILL GRADUALLY BE REPLACED BY ISSUE POLITICS GEARED TO ADDRESS THE REGION'S PRESSING NEEDS.

B6

6. ENDING THE PLAGUE OF DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE IS A LONG-TERM PROPOSITION. UNEMPLOYMENT (NOW UPWARDS OF 14 PERCENT) AFFECTS MEDELLIN MORE THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER MAJOR URBAN AREA. THOSE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO LAND JOBS ARE USUALLY STUCK IN DEAD-END, MINIMUM WAGE POSITIONS. BY CONTRAST, SICARIOS (HIRED GUNS) DON'T HAVE TO PUNCH CLOCKS, THEY CAN BUY THEIR MOTHERS GOOD HOMES AND AFFORD FLASHY MISTRESSES. YEPES BELIEVES THE DEMORALIZATION OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PUBLIC EDUCATION IS A KEY TO CRIME AND DRUGS. AS LONG AS TEACHERS ARE PAID LIKE JANITORS AND SCHOOLS ARE BATTLE ZONES, THE YOUNG WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO HATE THE

SYSTEM AND ACT OUT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS ON SOCIETY.

ELECTIONS, HO HUM

7. ECHOING THE VIEW THAT EMPLOYMENT IS THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM, CONSERVATIVE COUNCILMAN OSCAR PEREZ PINEDA CITED A RECENT HOUSEHOLD SURVEY WHICH FOUND THAT ONE IN THREE MEDELLIN FAMILIES HAD AT LEAST ONE PERSON SEEKING WORK AND UNABLE TO FIND IT. PEREZ, A CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS, SUPPORTS JUAN GOMEZ MARTINEZ' CANDIDACY FOR GOVERNOR BUT WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT GOMEZ' NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EXTRADITABLES. EXPRESSING ADMIRATION FOR THE U.S., HE SAID THAT ANTIOQUIANS ARE PROUD OF THEIR REPUTATION FOR HARD WORK AND RESOURCEFULNESS. HE ATTRIBUTED THE NARCO BLIGHT TO THE "EXAGGERATED AMBITIONS" OF RECENT URBAN IMMIGRANTS WHO SOUGHT RECOGNITION AND MATERIAL SUCCESS AT ANY COST.

8. PEREZ SAID THAT CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS WOULD TAKE THE BULK OF THE HOUSE SEATS IN THE OCTOBER 27 ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH ANDRES PASTRANA IS POPULAR IN THE DEPARTMENT, MOST CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES PREFER A SENATE TICKET THAT IS REGIONALLY-ORIENTED. AS THE PARTY IN POWER, THE LIBERALS WILL HAVE AN UPHILL STRUGGLE AND MUST ANSWER FOR THE RECESSION. THE M-19 WILL DO WELL TO ELECT ONE DEPUTY, WHILE THE PATRIOTIC UNION (UP) WILL HAVE ONE SEAT ASSURED DUE TO LOCAL STRENGTH IN URABA.

WHITTILING THE LEFT DOWN TO SIZE

9. NICANOR RESTREPO SANTAMARIA, PRESIDENT OF SURAMERICANA INSURANCE AND CHIEF SHAREHOLDER OF MEDELLIN'S LARGEST ECONOMIC GROUP, WAS BULLISH ABOUT THE CITY'S RECOVERY PROSPECTS. IN THE 1970'S AND '80'S, MEDELLIN'S STRONG TRADE UNION MOVEMENT WAS EXTREMELY BELLIGERENT AND IDEOLOGICALLY FANATIC. THE FARC, ELN

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

AND OTHER INSURGENT MOVEMENTS HAD PENETRATED LOCAL UNIONS. NOW THE DREAM OF A UNITED LEFTIST CONFEDERATION IS DEAD, WHILE INDEPENDENT AND LOCALLY-ORIENTED TRADE UNIONS ARE FLOURISHING.

10. RESTREPO TOLD LABATT A CRITICAL FACTOR WAS CHANGING AUTOCRATIC STRUCTURES BY TEACHING MANAGERS HOW TO COMMUNICATE, AND KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON MIDDLE LEVEL SUPERVISORS. THOSE WHO COULDN'T RESOLVE CONFLICTS WITH THEIR SUBORDINATES WERE DUMPED. OTHER SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES USED TO ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE UNION LEADERSHIP INVOLVE PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING, TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN TO KEY POSITIONS. TO TACKLE THE CRIME-UNEMPLOYMENT NEXUS, EMPRESARIOS ARE POOLING RESOURCES FOR A LARGE-SCALE TEXTILE ASSEMBLY ENTERPRISE TO EMPLOY WORKERS FROM THE CITY'S EMBATTLED ZONES.

MACHO SOCIETY SPLINTERED

11. CONTINUING HIS DIAGNOSIS, RESTREPO OPINED THAT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS HAD COINCIDED WITH A CULTURAL BREAKDOWN. A VERY "CLOSED, MACHO, CONSERVATIVE SOCIETY" WAS BLOWN APART BY THE COUNTER-CULTURAL REVOLUTION OF THE LATE 1960'S AND 70'S. TABOOS WERE LIFTED. DIVORCE TOUCHED NEARLY EVERY FAMILY. THE CHURCH LOST ITS AUTHORITY. CHILDREN OF ALL CLASSES EXPERIMENTED WITH DRUGS. NO VALUES HELD. SCHOOL REJECTS AND DAREDEVILS -- WHO STARTED THEIR FORTUNES WITH THE COUNTRABAND TRADE -- TURNED TO THE LUCRATIVE PROFESSION OF DRUG-DEALING TO ELBOW THEIR WAY TO THE TOP OF THE HEAP.

12. RESTREPO NOTED THAT THE GENERATION JUST REACHING 30 HAS OVERCOME ITS TRIAL BY FIRE. DISCIPLINE AND ADVANCED EDUCATION ARE NO LONGER SEEN AS OLD-FASHIONED -- HIS FIRM AND OTHERS IN THE GROUP ARE DOTTED WITH MASTERS AND DOCTORATE DEGREES. FAMILY VALUES HAVE BEEN REAFFIRMED BY THIS GENERATION OF YOUNG PROFESSIONALS, IN PART BECAUSE THEY SAW THEIR OWN CLASSMATES GO TO JAIL OR KILLED FOR TAKING THE FAST TRACK.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

VIEW FROM CAMPUS

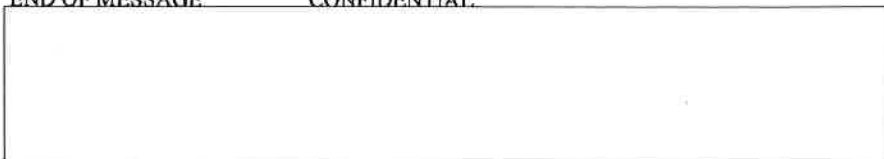
13. TO UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA RECTOR LUIS PEREZ

GUTIERREZ, NORMALALITY MEANS A LEARNING CENTER THAT IS ABLE TO DO ITS JOB. WITH 20,000 STUDENTS, UA IS COLOMBIA'S MOST MASSIVE SINGLE CAMPUS. TORN APART BY STUDENT STRIFE IN THE 70'S AND 80'S, UA HAS NOT SEEN A SINGLE STRIKE FOR TWO YEARS. PEREZ, THE FORMER PLANNING DIRECTOR FOR ANTIOQUIA DEPARTMENT, COMMENTED THAT GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS HAVE LOST THEIR APPEAL AND INTERNATIONAL BASE. ACTIVIST STUDENTS ARE NOW DEDICATED TO SOLVING NATIONAL AND LOCAL PROBLEMS. ONE UA PRIORITY IS DECENTRALIZATION TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION OF ANTIOQUIA'S NINE REGIONS. THE FIRST BRANCH UNIVERSITY WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE NORTHERN REGION THIS MONTH. PEREZ IS WORKING WITH THE KELLOGG FOUNDATION TO INVOLVE THE UNIVERSITY IN LOCAL HEALTH CLINICS AND OTHER SOCIAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS. HE IS ALSO ADVISING THE MINI-CONGRESS ON REGIONALIZATION REFORMS.

14. PEREZ OPINED THAT DESPITE MEDELLIN'S APPARENT CALM, VIOLENCE COULD INCREASE AS LEADERLESS SICARIO BANDS SEEK TO SOLVE THEIR FINANCIAL WOES THROUGH KIDNAPPING AND ROBBERIES. A RECENT UA STUDY OF BELLAVISTA PRISON FOUND THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF INMATES WERE COLLEGE GRADUATES, PROFESSIONALS OR ONE-TIME UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THE UNIVERSITY HAS SELECTED 100 SUCH PRISONERS FOR A PILOT REHABILITATION PROGRAM (RECENTLY PRESENTED TO THE JUSTICE MINISTRY) TO HELP THEM COMPLETE THEIR STUDIES AND REESTABLISH THEIR PROFESSIONAL LIFE. LABATT SUGGESTED COORDINATING WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR MARIA EMMA MEJIA TO SEE IF THE PROJECT COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE ESF-SUPPORTED PROGRAM FOR MEDELLIN.

MCNAMARA

END OF MESSAGE CONFIDENTIAL



B3 CIA PERS/ORG

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



B3 CIA PERS/ORG

91 5094883 SCR PAGE 001 NC 5094883
TOR: 062353Z AUG 91 BOGOTA 12106

CLASS: CONFIDENTIAL
CONTROLS: C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 12106 SOUTHCOM AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD DEPT FOR
ARA/AND, ARA/PPC-MUTH AND S/IL-FREEMAN E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
DECLASSON: MR
DOCPREC: R
DOCST: ACTIVE
DOCTYPE: IN
DOCUMENT_ID: 37553841
DOR: 19910806
FROM: FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
GUIDE-UID: 1012/2tjxcm
HEADER: RR RUEAIIA
DE RUEHBO #2106/01 2182253
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R <ORIGDTG>062251Z AUG 91</ORIGDTG>
<FROM>FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA</FROM>
<TO>TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7550
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9803
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0588
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 9653
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 0071
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 3056
RUEAUSA/DEPTLABOR WASHDC
RUEBWJA/DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

RUCBSAA/USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA</TO>
BT

INPUT_ID: 91 5094883

ORIGIN:

PRODUCER: BOGOTA

RECEIPT DATE: 91 509488319910806195937

SOURCE-INFO: STATE IN R BOGOTA 12106 BOGOTA 199108062251

TAGS: TAGS: PGOV, SNAR, SCUL, ELAB, SOCI, PINR, CO

TO: TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7550

RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 9803

RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 0588

RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 9653

RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 0071

RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 3056

RUEAUSA/DEPTLABOR WASHDC

RUEBWJA/DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHLBAAA/USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM

RUCBSAA/USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

TOR: 195937

XREFS: REF: A. BOGOTA 6943 B. BOGOTA

CONFIDENTIAL

7