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	DPR-01	EB-01	FBIE-00	HA-09	H-01	INM-01	INRE-00
	INR-01	IO-19	LAB-04	L-03	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
	OIG-01	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	SIL-01
	SNP-01	SP-01	SS-01	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	/056W

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R 062251Z AUG 91
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7550
 AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 AMEMBASSY LIMA
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
 AMEMBASSY QUITO
 AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
 DEPTLABOR WASHDC
 DEPTJUSTICE WASHDC
 SECDEF WASHDC
 CIA WASHDC
 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
 USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 12106

SOUTHCOM AND CINCLANT ALSO FOR POLAD
 DEPT FOR ARA/AND, ARA/PPC-MUTH AND S/IL-FREEMAN

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, SNAR, SCUL, ELAB, SOCI, PINR, CO
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 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 RECUPERATE ITS IMAGE AS COLOMBIA'S MOST FASHIONABLE, ENTERPRISING CITY. CIVIC LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY LABATT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: JAMES F COOPER
 DATE/CASE ID: 19 MAY 2009 200705928

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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

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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

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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

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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.)

POLITICIANS SUCH AS BERNARDO GUERRA

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CC [REDACTED] WILL HAVE AN ADVANTAGE IN THIS ELECTION, DESPITE THE ELIMINATION OF PARTY BALLOTS

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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 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

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SYSTEM AND ACT OUT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS ON SOCIETY.

ELECTIONS, HO HUM
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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.

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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
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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 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

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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.

VIEW FROM CAMPUS

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13. TO UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA RECTOR LUIS PEREZ

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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

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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

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IN THE ESF-SUPPORTED PROGRAM FOR MEDELLIN.
MCNAMARA

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