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Colombia: Update On Extraditions, Violence

by John Neagle

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Nov. 4: Guillermo Juan Bueno Delgado arrived in Tallahassee, Florida, the sixth drug suspect to have been extradited from Colombia since Bogota’s crackdown on traffickers began on Aug. 18. Bueno, a hotel owner and investor in Colombia, was indicted in California in 1983 and in Illinois and Florida in 1985 on cocaine distribution, importation and conspiracy charges. The extradition of Colombians to the US has generated considerable opposition. AFP cited an article published Nov. 3 in several Colombian newspapers by Nobel Prize-winning novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who described the extraditions as "shameful." Nov. 7: The Colombian government announced plans to extradite another five suspects to the US. The five are among six traffickers currently incarcerated at the National Police prison in Bogota. The six are Pablo Escobar Gaviria, Jorge Ricardo de la Cuesta Marquez, Victor Eduardo Mera Mosquera, James Sokilowski Salah and Roberto and Diana Caballero Rangel. They were arrested recently in La Quajira, Bucaramanga and Bogota. A group of men attacked a coffee plantation near Quinchia, a town located 120 miles northwest of Bogota, and a bomb was tossed into the owner’s house. Quinchia Mayor Saul Botero told the RCN radio network that six people were killed, and five wounded. Officials blamed guerrillas of the Popular Liberation Army (ELP). Police said they had not determined the motive for an ambush on a rural road near San Luis de Gaceno, a town 90 miles east of Bogota. All six people aboard a truck were killed by men who stopped the vehicle and opened fire. It was not known if the attack was related to a strike by banana plantation workers in northern Colombia. (See article, this issue.) Late Tuesday, Oky Botero, a bullfighter who raised bulls and was a private pilot, was shot to death in an upper-class Medellin suburb, police said. He was riddled with bullets from a passing car while driving a Jeep. In Santador de Quilichao, located about 210 miles southwest of Bogota, unidentified armed men broke into the home of local council president Ruben Dario Fernandez and shot him to death. Dario Fernandez was local head of the Union Patriota (UP) party. Nov. 8: Journalist Jorge Enrique Pulido, director of the TV news program, Mundo Vision, died from injuries sustained Oct. 29 in an attack on a Bogota street. Pulido supported the anti-drug war. On May 16, a bomb partially destroyed the transmitter broadcasting his news program. Pulido is the 41st journalist assassinated in Colombia in the past five years, and the 11th in 1989. A Defense Ministry communique said that on Nov. 7 five rebels of the National Liberation Army (ELN) were killed near the town of Bagre, and three near Simiti, both located north of Bogota. (Basic data from AFP, 11/04/89; Notimex, 11/07/89, 11/08/89; Xinhua, 11/08/89; AP, 11/07/89, 11/08/89)

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