

el Esalador

"El Respeto al Derecho
Ajeno es la Paz"
Lic Benito Juarez

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Latinos in 109th Congress to Hone in on Social Security, Education

By Fresia Rodríguez Cadavid
Social Security reform and immigration are among issues topping priorities of Hispanic members of Congress as federal lawmakers continue to organize their agendas for the 109th Congress.

According to María Mier, executive director for the all-Democratic 22-member Congressional Hispanic Caucus, members are planning to approve a CHC legislative agenda formally next month.

Social Security reform will be among the top issues. "Because the majority of Latinos depend on Social Security as their only safety net, reforms can be made only if it is protected," Mier warns.

On the heels of President Bush's Jan. 11 push to divert personal investments from the fund into personal savings accounts, Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.), the lone Latino on the House Ways and Means Committee, emphasizes, "Social Security has paid benefits in full and on time to every beneficiary every month for the last 70 years. The program works well and can continue to provide 100 percent of its promised benefits for the next 75 years if left to operate under current economic conditions."

Through his proposal, Bush promises to alleviate what his administration calls a potential financial crisis in the fund. A bill is expected in early fall.

Hispanic Republicans generally support the president's plan, says Mario López, executive director of the all-Republican 16-member Congressional Hispanic Conference.

López makes the point: "Rep. Mario Díaz-Balart (R-Fla.) is very interested in

the potential of people to create their own wealth for them and their own children."

In addition to Social Security reform and making permanent tax cuts implemented by Bush in 2003, immigration promises to be a major issue for Latino lawmakers. President Bush has stated he will push the guest worker initiative he proposed last year but did not pursue.

During discussions on the intelligence bill based on the 9-11 Commission late last year, the majority of Hispanic members on both sides of the aisle disavowed the inclusion of any immigration-related provisions that were not proposed by commission into the final bill.

Although they were taken out in final negotiations, House Judiciary Committee chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), reintroduced the measures on the opening day of the 109th Congress. His legislation would ban states from issuing drivers' licenses to undocumented immigrants. Rep. David Dreier (R-Calif.) also introduced bills adding photographs and electronic features to Social Security cards and limiting the number of suits filed by certain undocumented immigrants.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), chair of the Congressional Hispanic Conference, worked to remove the provisions from the intelligence bill, saying, "I am committed to ensuring that the final legislation considered by the House maintains the delicate balance between homeland security, fundamental due process rights, and the principles relating to refugees and immigrants that are at the core of our nation's history."

Hispanic members are committed to the reauthorization of the 1965 Higher Education Act. They are concerned about increases in college tuition and availability of federal aid, Mier says.

The Department of Education has recently come under fire by some education advocates because of its proposed change in the formula used to determine eligibility for low-income students.

Approval of new federal guidelines for higher education is expected in March.



Díaz-Balart



Xavier Becerra



Rubén Hinojosa

Hispanic members of Congress are also eyeing continued implementation of accountability provisions related to the No Child Left Behind Act. They say their local districts do not have sufficient money to meet federal mandates. One of President Bush's proposed changes to the NCLB Act would require yearly state testing in reading and math in grades 3 through 11.

Ciaran Clayton, spokesperson for Rep. Rubén Hinojosa (D-Texas), adds that while the congressman applauds the president's call for more funding to cover costs for the increased testing, low graduation rates among groups of color remain an issue.

Hinojosa plans to re-introduce a bill next month increasing grants to promoting adult literacy and disaggregating data issued by state and local education agencies by race, ethnicity, income, disability and limited-English-proficiency status.

With Mel Martínez (R-Fla.) and Ken Salazar (D-Colo.) serving as the first Latinos in the U.S. Senate in more than three decades, Hispanic leaders say they feel their agenda may get an added push.

Ros-Lehtinen says she expects Martínez to be of great help. "I look forward to working with him to improve the lives of all who call this great country home."

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Los Latinos del Congreso 109 se Dedicarán al Seguro Social, la Educación

Por Fresia Rodríguez Cadavid
La reforma del seguro social y la inmigración están entre los temas de mayor prioridad entre los miembros hispanos del Congreso en la medida en que los legisladores federales continúan organizando sus programas para el Congreso 109.

Según María Mier, directora ejecutiva del Caucus Congresional Hispano, de 22 miembros, todos demócratas, los mismos están planificando aprobar la agenda del Caucus el próximo mes.

La reforma del seguro social estará entre los primeros temas a tratarse. "Por lo que la mayoría de los latinos dependen del seguro social para salvaguardarse, se podrán llevar a cabo reformas sólo si se protege", advierte Mier.

Siguiendo de cerca el impulso del presidente Bush del 11 de enero por desviar las inversiones personales del fondo a cuentas de ahorro personales, el representante demócrata por California,

Xavier Becerra, único latino del Comité de Medios (Ways and Means) enfatiza, "El seguro social ha pagado los beneficios por completo y a tiempo a cada beneficiario durante cada mes de los últimos 70 años. El programa funciona bien y puede continuar ofreciendo 100 por ciento de los beneficios prometidos durante los próximos 75 años si se deja operar bajo las condiciones económicas actuales".

Mediante su propuesta, el presidente Bush ha prometido aliviar lo que su administración llama una potencial crisis financiera del fondo. Se anticipa un proyecto de ley para comienzos del otoño.

Por lo general los republicanos hispanos apoyan el programa del presidente, dice Mario López, director ejecutivo de la Conferencia Congresional Hispana, de 16 miembros, todos republicanos.

Puntualiza López: "El representante Mario Díaz-Balart (republicano por Florida) está muy interesado en el potencial de las personas por crear su propia riqueza, para sí mismos y para sus hijos".

Además de la reforma del seguro social y el hacer permanentes los recortes de impuestos implementados por Bush en el 2003, se vislumbra como tema de gran investigación la inmigración para los

legisladores latinos. El presidente Bush ha declarado que dará impulso a la iniciativa de trabajadores temporeros - llamados braceros en un entonces - la cual propuso el año pasado pero que no siguió. Durante discusiones sobre el proyecto de ley sobre las organizaciones de inteligencia creado en base a la Comisión 9-11 tardamente el año pasado, la mayoría de los miembros hispanos del Congreso - de ambos partidos - desaprueba incluir en la legislación final ninguna provisión relacionada a la inmigración que no fuera propuesta por la comisión.

Aunque se relevaron en las negociaciones al final, director del Comité Judicial de la Cámara, James Sensenbrenner (republicano por Wisconsin), volvió a presentar las medidas el primer día del Congreso 109. Su legislación prohibiría que los estados emitan licencias de conducir a inmigrantes indocumentados. El representante David Dreier (republicano por California) también ha presentado proyectos de ley que agregan fotografías y dispositivos electrónicos a las tarjetas del seguro social y que limitan el derecho a abrir un número de casos jurídicos a algunos inmigrantes indocumentados.

(Continued on Page 5)

New education program for US Hispanics to kick off

The new distance-learning program called EDUCAMEXUS, which educates US Hispanics, including undocumented immigrants, is reported to offer a Bachelor's Degree option this year.

"We are about to reach an agreement so that all the Arizona Latino community, or any other in the US, can be benefited from this university program", Francisco Marmolejo, director of the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC).

He explained the Engineering BD the EDUCAMEXUS program will include in 2005 at the CONAHEC see in the University of Arizona in Tucson, is an online course designed by the Tecnológico de Durango in Mexico.

This course is part of a five more BD's which will try to incorporate to the EDUCAMEXUS program to be taught in classrooms or online.

He also explained the EDUCAMEXUS program, launched last November as a CONAHEC effort, which compounds 140 universities from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada and the National Association of Universities and Higher Learning Institutions in Mexico (ANUIES).

It is also supported by Mexico's Public Education Secretariat (SEP) and the Foreign Affairs Secretariat throughout the Institute of Mexicans Abroad.

EDUCAMEXUS is an Internet portal (<http://educamexus.org>), a free-toll line to which students from anywhere in the U.S. may call to be oriented.

The program also includes courses in Spanish for U.S. Hispanics, including

undocumented immigrants, who wish to finish high school, junior high and soon, the university throughout a revalidation program approved by the Mexican government.

Other courses are computing and educational counseling for Hispanics who was to carry on with their studies but have doubts about it.

The cost of the EDUCAMEXUS services are not high and sometimes "symbolic"

"Our aim is extending the EDUCAMEX operational networks so it can become a national program (distance program) for all Latinos in the United States who wants to keep studying", Marmolejo said.

He remembered that nowadays there are 15 higher learning institutions in Mexico supporting EDUCAMEXUS including Mexico's Autonomous Uni-

versity (UNAM), Universidad Iberoamericana, Instituto Tecnológico de Durango and Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo Leon.

Other universities include Universidad de San Luis Potosí, Baja California, Yucatán, Guerrero, Sonora and Sinaloa.

Marmolejo assured the initial response to the program by the Hispanic community in Arizona has been "very positive" and that some 30 people have enrolled in a course to finish high school and junior high.

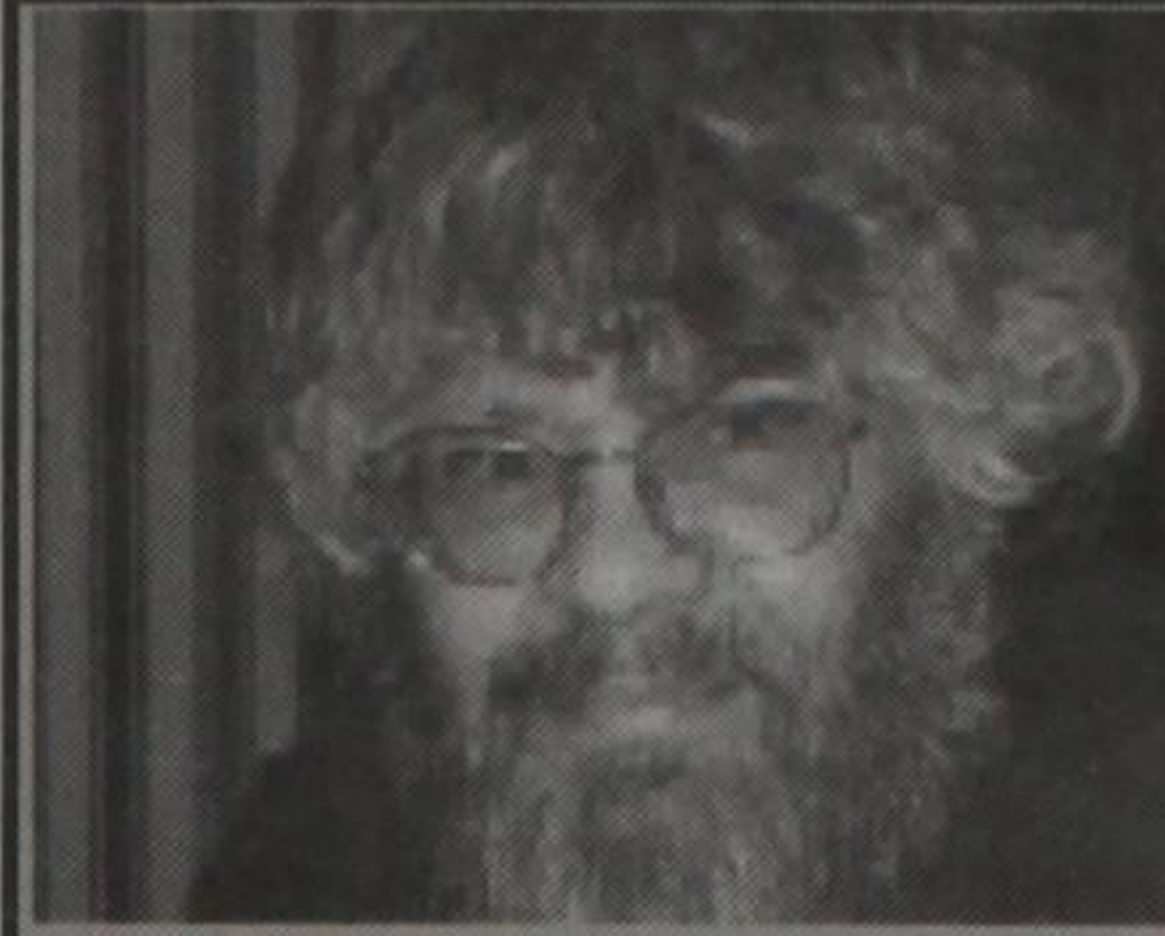
"These people are taking classes in the Tucson facilities but we hope that, as long as the program develops, more Hispanics from other parts of the country join us in distance-learning courses", he concluded.

One the Net - Read eleditor.com

Comentarios

by Bidal Agüero

The following is the second of a series that will discuss the progress of Hispanics in Lubbock and West Texas. We welcome your comments



Hispanics are Hot!

A study of where Lubbock Hispanics stand in today's political world can only be done by first looking at where they were.

Hispanics formally began settling in Lubbock in the early 1900. Not that they hadn't been here before, we all know that it was Hispanics first explored the Llano Estacado or what is now being referred to the "Giant Side of Texas" and we all know that early descriptions of settlers in Lubbock describe a Mexican sleeping under a tree at Singer's store.

As little as 22 years ago, no Hispanics had ever been elected to public office and before that only one, Froy Salinas in 1976. Before 1976, various people had tried to get elected including Frank Carrillo and Paulina Jacobo who ran for County Commissioner. Both were narrowly defeated mainly through the efforts of Democrats who at that time gerrymandered districts to keep out minorities rather than Republicans.

The 1970's also saw the political awakening of Hispanics through the efforts of Raza Unida Party. In Lubbock the Party ran several unsuccessful candidates and statewide the Party was considered to have given rise to a two party system in Texas taking enough votes away from the Democrats to finally give credibility to the Republicans.

Local redistricting suits has also been filed in the early 1970's and after 10 years in court, single member districts were finally approved in Lubbock in 1982.

Hispanics were finally elected to a second public office in 1983 with Maggie Trejo being elected to the City Council and Linda DeLeon to the School Board.

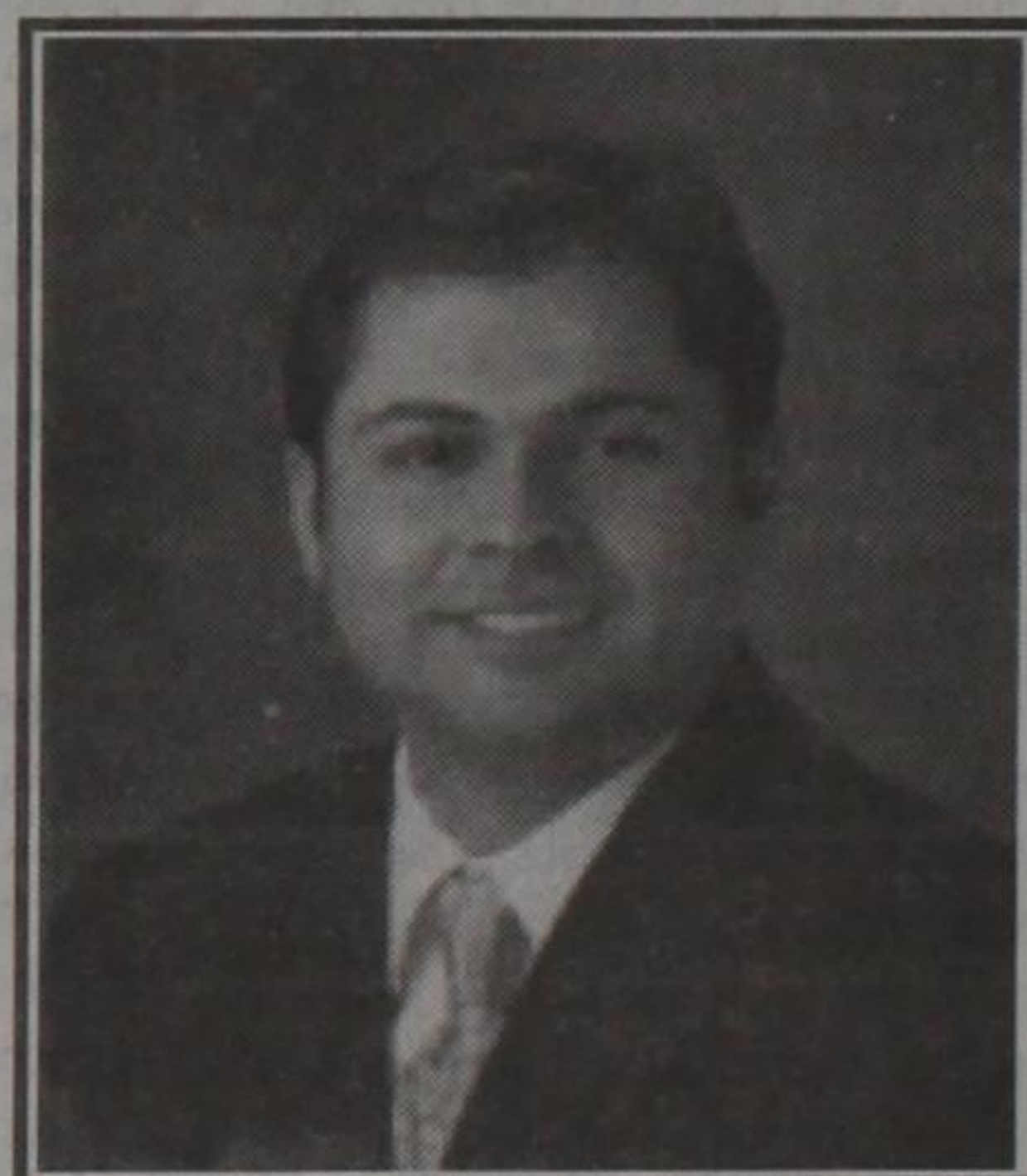
Presently Hispanics still hold one seat on the City Council and one seat on the School Board. Additionally one seat is also allocated to minorities on the County Commissioner's Court, the Justice of the Peace Court and the Constable's offices. Two Hispanics Sam Medina and David Gutierrez overcame the impediment of majority Lubbock not voting for Hispanics and were elected to Countywide office.

The late Irma Guerrero, recently deceased County Chair of the Democratic Party once said that since Hispanics are 29 percent of the City, Hispanics should comprise 29 percent of the elected offices. To date this wish for equal representation has gone unfulfilled with Hispanics still being relegated to one token position not only in public offices but in boards and commissions.

Although the "hotness of Hispanics" has in the past few years been appreciated by many including business, religion and culture, it would seem that the hotness is somewhat lacking in the minds of those who appoint members to important boards and commissions and also the all important individual voter.

Salazar Named V-P of American State Bank

LUBBOCK-W.R. Collier, President and Chairman of the Board of American State Bank, has announced the promotion of Victor Salazar to Vice President of Multi-cultural Marketing and Business Development. The position is unique to American State, with no other financial institution in the region offering such market-specific leadership.



Salazar's duties will include the coordination of ASB's multi-cultural strategic marketing plan and the Bank's involvement in multi-cultural activities and projects in the West Texas area.

Salazar is a native of Abernathy and received a master's degree from West Texas A&M in 1997. His bi-lingual abilities will assist in the promotion and implementation of cultural-specific marketing and business development opportunities for ASB.

He has most recently been coordinator of Sales Development for American State Bank. Prior to that position Salazar served as a Personal Banker.

The Latina Body -- Is it a Shame?

Marisa Treviño

As anyone knows, religion is a personal subject. It ranks high on that list of things you never discuss openly if you want to keep peace in the family.

When someone makes a decision to convert to a particular religion, you expect their reasoning to be based on how spiritually fulfilled their newfound religion makes them feel, not that they won't be seen as sex objects any more.

Yet, that was the reason several Latinas gave to a Christian Science Monitor reporter recently in a story about how more Latinas are converting to Islam.

As it stands now, the Islamic Society of North America says there are only about 40,000 Latino Muslims in the United States. And of the 20,000 who choose Islam as their religion every year, Latinos account for six percent, says the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

The anecdotal evidence is pointing to more young Latinas opting for the head-to-toe fashion statement. The reasons they gave the reporter echoed along the same theme: Islam

made them feel better about their bodies and themselves.

Why?

Well, maybe because everywhere these young girls look — on billboard advertisements, music videos, and print advertisements — Latinas are not only portrayed as hot and sexy, but as expecting men to notice they are.

It is a stereotype of the worst kind.

An infamous advertising campaign last year by Tecate beer enforced such an image with the tagline "Finally a cold Latina." Some Albuquerque high school Latinas saw the billboard every day on their way to school.

These kids exercised their conscience, did their homework and campaigned successfully to convince Tecate to pull its billboards.

Perhaps the worst offender when it comes to promoting archaic depictions of Latinas as dim-witted, over-sexed bombshells can be found on Spanish-language television.

Comedy shows and comic relief characters on telenovelas show the same kind of "old-world Latina stereotypes" that U.S.-born Latinas have been trying to escape.

Yet, we won't be able to forge new images for ourselves and change how others see us unless networks like Univisión and Telemundo start becoming more discriminating in what shows they bring over from Mexico and South America, where most attitudes towards women are still in the Stone Age.

That fact is obvious within 15 minutes of any telenovela where the "attractive" women are dressed suggestively or, if it's a beach scene, with practically nada. The camera always has a way of lingering several seconds too long on someone's bulging bust line or bare backside.

The most common misconception that these Spanish-language networks operate under is that by providing familiar programs to their Hispanic viewers, many of whom are recent arrivals from south of the border, that they are bringing a little bit of home to the homesick.

Has it occurred to the two networks that it isn't just bleak economic conditions that immigrants are escaping?

At least for the women, it could also be a chance to start over in a country that is supposed to be more progressive.

And what about the U.S.-born Latinas or those who spent their formative years here?

The message these kinds of shows send them is that Latinas will never escape the old stereotypes because it makes for either a good laugh or ratings eye-candy.

To top it off, not everything translates well either. Shows funny in Mexico and South America can be offensive to U.S. Latinas. Puerto Rican media unions and community groups are petitioning the Federal Communications Commission to deny a license renewal to the island's largest television station, operated by Univisión, because of "cultural insensitivity."

It's time that the Spanish-language networks realize that the U.S. Latina is a new breed that demands smart, realistic, original programming and doesn't make us want to hide ourselves with shame.

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El Cuerpo de la Latina -- ¿Es Una Vergüenza?

Por Marisa Treviño

Como todos saben, la religión es un tema personal. Tiene mucha categoría entre aquellas cosas que uno nunca discute abiertamente si quiere mantener la paz familiar.

Cuando alguien decide convertirse a una religión en particular, se espera que su razonamiento se base en la satisfacción espiritual que le da la religión que ha descubierto, y no que por convertirse no se le considerará más un objeto sexual.

No obstante, esta última fue la razón que dieron muchas latinas a un periodista del Christian Science Monitor recientemente en una nota sobre cómo hay más latinas que se convierten al islam.

Por lo que es hoy, la Sociedad Islámica de América del Norte dice que hay sólo unos 40,000 musulmanes latinos en los Estados Unidos. Y, de los 20,000 que optan por convertirse al islam cada año, los latinos son el seis por ciento, según el Consejo sobre Relaciones Americanas-Islamicas.

La evidencia anecdótica señala que hay más latinas que optan por esta declaración

estilística, cubierta de pies a cabeza. Las razones que le dieron al reportero tuvieron eco con el mismo tema: El islam les hace sentirse mejor sobre sus cuerpos y sobre ellas mismas.

¿Por qué?

Bueno, podrá ser por lo que por donde miran estas chicas: los anuncios de carteles, videos musicales, anuncios periodísticos, las latinas no sólo se describen como calientes y sexy, sino también como concientes que así las percibirán los hombres.

Es un estereotipo de los peores. Una campaña de publicidad infamante de Tecate el año pasado reforzó tal imagen con el estribillo, "Por fin una latina fría". Algunas latinas de secundaria en Albuquerque pasaban por el cartel todos los días al ir a la escuela.

La televisión puede ser la más ofensiva en cuanto a la promoción de descripciones arcaicas de latinas como mujeronas tontas, super sexuales.

Los programas de comedia y personajes cómicos de las telenovelas muestran los mismos "estereotipos de latinas del viejo mundo" de los cuales las latinas nacidas en los Estados Unidos han estado huyendo.

Sin embargo, no podremos

forjarnos nuevas imágenes ni cambiar cómo otros nos ven si las cadenas como Univisión y Telemundo no se vuelven más discriminatorias al traer programas de México y Sudamérica, donde las actitudes sobre la mujer siguen en la Edad de Piedra.

Se hace obvio este hecho cuando dentro de los 15 minutos de cualquier telenovela en la que las "atractivas" visten sugestivamente, o si se trata de una escena en la playa, visten casi nada. La cámara tiende a pausar varios segundos demás sobre el pecho rebosante o trasero desnudo de algunas.

El malentendido más común bajo el cual operan estas cadenas televisivas en español es que al ofrecer programación conocida a sus videntes hispanos, muchos de los cuales son recién llegados del sur de la frontera, se les ofrece un poquito de casa, la cual echan de menos.

¿No se les ha ocurrido a estas dos cadenas de televisión que no sólo son las condiciones económicas desoladas de las que huyen los inmigrantes? Al menos para las mujeres, podrá

también ser la oportunidad de comenzar de nuevo en un país supuestamente más progresista.

¿Y qué de las latinas nacidas en los Estados Unidos, o las que pasaron aquí sus años formativos?

El mensaje que envía este tipo de programa es que las latinas jamás podrán huir de los viejos estereotipos porque o causan risa o resultan golosina para la vista, sabiendo así los índices de videntes.

Lo que es más, no todo sale bien en la traducción, tampoco. Los programas que resultan chistosos en México y Sudamérica pueden ser ofensivos para las latinas en los Estados Unidos. Los sindicatos mediáticos de Puerto Rico y grupos comunitarios están solicitando que la Comisión Federal de Comunicaciones le deniegue la renovación de licencia a la mayor estación de la isla, que opera Univisión, por carecer de "sensibilidad cultural".

Es hora que las cadenas en español se den cuenta que la latina en los Estados Unidos es de otro cantar que exige programación inteligente, realista y original que no nos haga escondernos de vergüenza. © 2005, Hispanic Link News Service

Gonzales Appointment Latest Step in Browning of Justice

By Roberto Lovato

People living along California's bucolic highway 99 in the San Joaquin Valley are of different minds about Bush Attorney General nominee Alberto Gonzales, a man who will soon be crowned the nation's first Latino Attorney General. Following a recent drive along the 99, I saw some Latinos living in towns along the highway who, like most national Latino civil rights and political leaders -- Democrat and Republican alike -- consider it an act of ethnic fealty to support the Gonzales nomination.

Their sentiments in the Valley resemble those of former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, who expressed his "immense sense of pride" and of newly elected Senator Ken Salazar, who trumpeted Latino triumph as he waxed emotional about Gonzales's "humble beginnings." Senate confirmation panelists, pundits and public-relations people know that talk of tough origins digs deep into the heart of farm workers, farm worker-descended families and other peoples of humble origin in the green Valley and across a browning United States.

But a friend who grew up in the Valley and who was accompanying me on the trip reminded me how a growing number of these same Latinos have sons, daughters, husbands or wives who are housed and growing up in a less-than-idyllic land some refer to as "Prison Valley." She told me that not everyone here is happy that Latinos incarcerated along the more than 200 miles of prisons sprouting along Highway 99 are now an exponentially-growing majority cash crop for businesses, prison guard

unions and local governments in income-starved places like Avenal, Corcoran, and other towns across the country. These towns are reaping millions in prison-related funding and subcontracts for services to the prisons, guards and the incarcerated themselves.

In this sense, Alberto Gonzales represents a milestone in the browning of Justice, which refers to how Latinos are interfacing with and becoming part of the justice system. Young Latinos are the fastest growing and largest population in California prisons -- (36 percent, according to a recent report by the Justice Policy Institute). And they are the fastest growing and largest population being employed in criminal justice jobs, jobs that pay as much as three times a teacher's salary, jobs as police officers, probation officers, and prisons guards that will be administered by Gonzales if he is confirmed.

As current trends continue in California and across the country, increasing numbers of Latinos in police uniforms will send increasing numbers of Latinos to prisons to be guarded by increasing numbers of Latino prison guards.

The implications of browning of justice are huge for Latinos and for the country as a whole. Traditional notions of a united Latino community, a united Latino political family crumble before the gray walls of new prisons that divide the Latino family in unprecedented ways: some Latinos lose money and the chance for a better future because their kids are incarcerated, while other Latinos build on their kids' future with money gained by arresting, prosecuting and jailing Latino youth. At the same time, traditional critiques of "white

man's justice" become problematic when the head cop, head jailer and head prosecutor is a brown man with many brown folks working beneath him. Alberto Gonzales can be seen either as a symbol of justice in a community long left out of the economic and political pie, or as a brown front man for a gray system that imprisons Latinos and others with Soviet-like ferocity.

At a time when Semitic and mestizo features have become a liability to many since 9/11, failure to understand the browning of justice leads to dangerous consequences in what is a radical political moment. As prosecutors in places like the Bronx and police chiefs like L.A.'s William Bratton try feverishly to label, prosecute and imprison Latino and other gang members as "terrorists," having clean-cut Gonzales oversee the domestic application of the Patriot Act and other post-9/11 laws may ironically (or cynically) lead to an even deadlier criminalization of Latinos.

Images of Latino gangs on newscasts, TV shows and in movies are, along with a handful of other cartoonish and now embedded images of hot dancers and "illegal aliens," among the predominant representations of Latinos in U.S. media. In the same way that the Bush administration's global and local attempts to divide "good" and "evil" and "good Arab" from "bad Arab" have resulted in further demonization of Arab, Muslim and South Asian Americans, the browning of justice and its too-clear delineation of "good" Latino cop from

"bad" Latino prisoner draws Latinos even closer to the vortex of the domestic "axis of evil" ideology gripping powerful interests in need of new enemies.

It will be harder to critique the soft-spoken Gonzales on these issues than outgoing Anglo-Evangelical crusader Attorney General John Ashcroft. Liberal-left critics of the Gonzales nomination are right to attack Gonzales' alleged legal facilitation of the torture and abuse at Abu Ghraib. But no one, no Senate panelist, no one in the leadership of the mostly white left organizations, no one in the national Latino civil rights organizations has expressed concerns about the implications of Gonzales' alleged sanctioning of torture for domestic prisons like Corcoran. That's where Amnesty International, the California State Senate and the FBI have reported acts of sexual humiliation, torture and even murder committed by prison guards (some of whom are Latino.) In what may be a smart rightward tilt of the axis of racial and ethnic realpolitik, Gonzales' humble Latino roots may grow into a hard-to-penetrate dark forest obfuscating our view of justice.

Failure to understand and develop new critiques of the browning of justice will lead to devastating and dangerous consequences. Alberto Gonzales' humble origins and ethnic extraction must not divert our attention from a trend that threatens to imprison generations of young Latinos, blacks and others of humble extraction from towns like those dotting Highway 99, where the browning of justice is yielding rotten fruit.

READ ELEDITOR FIRST

Abraham Lincoln and the Iraqi Elections

By Raoul Lowery Contreras

O'me, o'my! What shall we do? Part of the country discloses that no matter what they won't vote for someone they hate. They won't vote because armed men will suppress their vote because the armed suppressors are determined to not allow this very visible minority to vote.

Voting places will be few and badly equipped, thus their vote will be suppressed and they won't have their say in how the country is run.

We know this, they say, because it is the normal method of keeping them suppressed and in a permanent minority situation, a situation without power.

Can any election be fair and open and democratic under such circumstances? Of course!

These complaints were here in the USA before the Presidential Election of 2004 and 2000 by minority Blacks in Florida and Ohio where Blacks live in Jesse Jackson's fantasyland of White Republican suppression of Blacks.

These are pretty much the same complaints by Sunni Moslems in Iraq. They are, of course, the minority in Iraq behind Shia Muslims and Kurds. They ran the country under the Saddam Hussein dictatorship and feel left out of the democratic process now in place in Iraq that will culminate on January 30th, so say their weeping friends in the American press and the Democratic Party of Ted Kennedy.

Aiding and abetting them are their fellow travelers in the United States, the Michael Moore people who exist on lies and tidbits of information that the mainstream press throws at them in the form of tainted red meat propaganda.

We read and see stories in the media every day of bombs blowing up Iraqis and Americans in an effort to derail the January 30th elections.

For example, we are bombarded by stories that Sunnis will boycott the election—some will—some won't—but we don't read that some will and that every political slate on the ballot contains Sunnis, including that of the "Interim government."

We see bomb damage and dead bodies but are not told that strangely enough most days it is just one or two such bombings in a country the size of California. The terrorists know the news cycle and utilize it for propaganda purposes. Reporters who haven't a historical clue about such terror are part and parcel of pushing this propaganda.

In a few words, though major combat ended against the Germans in April of 1945 and in August 1945 against the Japanese, it was not until December 31, 1946 that President Harry Truman declared "hostilities" at an end. The proclamation came 20 months after Germany surrendered and 16 months after the Japanese surrendered unconditionally.

Moreover, elections of any sort were not held in Japan until 1948 and a peace treaty wasn't signed between the USA and Japan until 1951, six years after the Japanese surrender.

So, where is the "quagmire" of Senator Kennedy and the American media are trying to convince the American people we are mired in?

In Afghanistan, elections were held and millions of people, including women trooped out to vote despite death threats from terrorists. They have never voted in their 5,000-year history.

Iraqi elections will be held in days despite the whining of minority Sunnis and their friends in the USA who see the elections as a threat to their opposition to President George W. Bush. These are people who desire the status quo ante of mass murderer Saddam Hussein and his Stalinist rule of Shia and Kurdish Iraqis.

Historically, this exact same situation has existed in recent years. El Salvador where communist rebels controlled far more of their country than the current Iraqi terrorists do and shot up the countryside wherever people tried to vote. They killed voters in all parts of the country. No matter the people turned out and democracy triumphed despite the American media and anti-Ronald Reagan cabal that permeated the media and liberal establishment at the time.

Historically, the 1864 American Presidential election did not include the states of the Confederacy then in rebellion. Nonetheless, President Lincoln was re-elected President and no one can contest the legitimacy of his election. Moreover, in the Presidential election of 1868, the federal American government did not allow Texas and another Confederate state to vote in that election. That election cannot be contested.

Historically also, a political equivalent situation has existed in this country since 1980. Blacks voted overwhelmingly against Ronald Reagan, then cried and whined when he ignored them. In 2000, claiming Republican suppression, Blacks voted 93 percent against President George W. Bush, then complained they weren't allowed to vote, especially in Florida, the state that tipped the election to Bush; Florida, in which they voted in all-time numbers in the 2000 election. Suppression my donkey!

Their complaints were phony and unproven.

Last November, Blacks made the same complaints in Ohio and added silly ones like they had to stand in the Republican-ordered rain, that there weren't enough voting machines in Black precincts, even though Democrat Party election officials made those decisions based on previous vote turnout. They also made silly complaints that so many of their people were stuck in long lines that many people gave up and left the lines before they could vote.

It should be noted that Salvadorans died trying to vote as will some Iraqis. But Ohio Blacks whined that they had to wait in line. None of them died. Go figure...

All of these silly plaintive and juvenile complaints have no basis in fact. All these complainers could have voted absentee ahead of Election Day so that any inconvenience they suffered was their fault not that of election officials.

In the final analysis, almost 90 percent of American Blacks voted against George W. Bush. That might reflect how the Sunnis will vote in Iraq on January 30th either by not voting or by a low turnout. But, who cares?

Voting will be held and votes will be counted. If Sunnis don't vote, they are at fault, not the Iraqi interim government, the United States or Allah.

American Blacks either don't vote, or vote overwhelmingly against the ruling Republican Party, yet manage to exist with better standards of living than anyone including many Europeans, with unemployment almost half that of Germany. They occupy thousands of elective offices throughout the country and staff almost every government body. They work in the highest councils of government.

American Blacks are half the percentage of Sunnis in Iraq and these Americans manage despite being outside the political mainstream. One must wonder "how" the Sunni Arabs are capable of co-existing with 80 percent of Iraq's population, or even existing.

If they opt out and go to civil war, the Sunnis will lose. Better they should vote on January 30 despite their minority status. American Blacks tried violence in the Sixties and Seventies and gave it up for the ballot box. They lose, yet exist and progress despite their minority status as voters.

Sunni Iraqis need to look to the American Black for guidance on how to get along with an overwhelming majority that doesn't care a whit about their votes, their votes for loser after loser.

Contreras' newest book, THE ILLEGAL ALIEN: A DAGGER INTO THE HEART OF AMERICA?? is available at www.amazon.com Contact at:

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WHERE ARE YOU FROM? A COMPLICATED QUESTION IN THE USA

By Victor Landa

Where are you from? I often ask this simple and inoffensive question of people I meet for the first time. These people are usually from Mexico, but sometimes I run into immigrants from Central or South America.

I ask out of personal interest. I have always liked to know interesting things about people who cross my path, even if it's just for an instant.

Beyond this, knowing where someone is from opens doors to broader conversations. As human beings we like to belong, either to a group, to a place or to an idea, and conversations allow us to establish links and find common ground.

Yet, in the United States this simple question gets complicated. It's no longer enough to know where a person is from. From a North American point of view (where we're technically joined by a country and a constitution) and in order to take the census, we find ourselves forced to give more detail.

A journalist from Fort Worth identified 63 instances on the census questionnaire where we describe ourselves. We can choose from six options for race, and a menu of different ethnicities, including the incomprehensible option "other race". Who knows what that means?

When I ask people where they're from I get easy answers. They're from Michoacán, Guanajuato or Tegucigalpa.

Things get ridiculously complicated, though, when that same person from Michoacán has to fill out the census. He or she can be "Hispanic of another race", or white Hispanic or black Hispanic, or any other of the 60 options.

I imagine it all depends on the person's mood and how he or she sees him or herself.

"Other race" was included on the census as an option for people who are Latino but who don't consider themselves white, black, Asian or any other race the census gives us to choose.

In the beginning only a few people chose "other race". The number was so small that the federal demographers had no problem when they distributed numbers and percentages for race and ethnicity.

As time went by, more and more people have checked "other race". So many people have done this that the demographers don't know how to count them.

The government's solution was to eliminate the option.

But Rep. José Serrano (D-N.Y.) opposed eliminating this option from the census. After debates and arguments the option stayed. Some Latino community leaders celebrated the win, saying that the government has no right to tell residents which race or ethnicity to pick.

Now the demographers have a complicated task. So, where are you from?

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Gonzales Backs U.S. Assault Weapons Ban

Attorney General nominee Alberto Gonzales told the Senate on Tuesday that he supports extending the expired federal assault weapons ban.

Gonzales also said he wants Congress to reauthorize the Patriot Act this year, despite complaints that it is too intrusive.

"I believe the USA Patriot Act has greatly improved our nation's ability to detect and prevent terrorist attacks," Gonzales told the Senate Judiciary Committee (news - web sites) in written answers to questions left over from his confirmation hearing.

Gonzales, who served as President Bush (news - web sites)'s lawyer during his first term, is expected to be confirmed when the Senate returns after Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20. He would be the nation's first Hispanic attorney general and replace John Ashcroft.

Democrats, including Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), pressed Gonzales for written answers to several of their questions during his daylong confirmation hearing. Those answers were delivered on Tuesday to the committee,

which planned a Wednesday meeting to consider nominations.

Some Democrats were not happy with Gonzales' answers and said he is being unresponsive.

"Judge Gonzales gives the impression that he feels that he does not have to substantively answer questions before his confirmation, even though he wants to be attorney general," said Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

Congress let the 10-year-old assault weapons ban expire in September. The measure outlawed 19 types of military-style assault weapons, banned certain features on firearms such as bayonet mounts, and limited ammunition magazines to 10 rounds.

Gonzales pointed out that his brother Tony is a SWAT officer in Houston.

"I worry about his safety and the types of weapons he will confront on the street," Gonzales said. "The president has made it clear that he stands ready to sign a reauthorization of the federal assault weapons ban if it is sent

to him by Congress. I, of course, support the president on this issue."

Antigun groups criticized Bush during the presidential campaign for failing to press for an extension of the ban.

Gonzales also said he supports the reauthorization of the Patriot Act, the post-Sept. 11 law that expanded the government's surveillance and prosecutorial powers against suspected terrorists, their associates and financiers.

More than a dozen provisions of the law are set to expire by late October 2005 unless renewed by Congress. These include authority for judges to issue search warrants that apply nationwide, authority for FBI and criminal investigators to share information about terrorism cases, and the FBI's power to obtain records in terrorism-related cases from businesses and other entities, including libraries.

"I believe the sunsets that apply to several provisions of the USA Patriot Act should be repealed," Gonzales said.

Opponents have called the law intrusive and contend that letting

the FBI get library records undermines civil liberties and threatens to let the government snoop into the reading habits of innocent Americans.

Gonzales says people have misunderstood what parts of the Patriot Act does. "I am unaware of abuses under the USA Patriot Act," he said. "For this reason, I welcome an honest and real debate."

Gonzales said he is willing to consider tempering that part of the law.

The statute says business and library records must be "sought for" a terrorism investigation. Opponents have claimed that means the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court — the secret court that approves surveillance and wiretaps for espionage and terrorism cases — had no choice about whether to grant the subpoena.

"I would be happy for the statute to be amended to state the investigators may ask the FISA court for an order requesting the production of documents 'relevant to' an ongoing foreign intelligence investigation," Gonzales said.

Gonzales' Confirmation Put Off



Attorney General-designate Alberto Gonzales will have to wait at least another week before getting a Senate committee vote on his nomination.

Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee decided Wednesday to ask for a one-week hold on the Texan's nomination.

The delay means Senate Judiciary chairman Arlen Specter can call for a vote at the next committee voting session. That will likely come next week when the Senate returns from its January recess.

Massachusetts Sen. Edward

Kennedy said the panel shouldn't vote on Gonzales yet because the nominee hasn't answered all of the Democrats' questions. Democrats have complained that Gonzales has been evasive in his answers to their questions about White House policies on the war on terror.

Gonzales, who served as President Bush's lawyer during his first term, is expected to be confirmed when the Senate returns after Bush's inauguration. He would be the nation's first Hispanic attorney general.



Es la hora de la diplomacia: Rice

Condoleezza Rice, designada para dirigir la Secretaría de Estado, prometió defender el avance de la democracia basándose en la cooperación con otras naciones empujando a la vez los roces surgidos por las diferencias en torno a la guerra en Irak. "Es la hora de la diplomacia", dijo.

"Debemos emplear la diplomacia estadounidense para ayudar a crear un balance de poder en el mundo que favorezca la libertad, y el momento para la diplomacia es ahora", afirmó Rice en el primer día de su audiencia de confirmación ante el Comité de Relaciones Exteriores del Senado como la primera mujer afroamericana en dirigir el Departamento de Estado.

"Nuestra interacción con el re-

sto del mundo debe ser una conversación, no un monólogo", afirmó Rice en respuesta a las críticas y a los temores de que su presencia en Estado sea una continuación de la política de Bush de tomar decisiones sin consultar a la comunidad internacional tal y como ocurrió con la guerra en Irak.

Rice dijo además que prestará especial atención a la promoción de la democracia en América Latina y que acudirá a la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) para "hacer responsables a los líderes que no gobiernan democráticamente incluso si han sido elegidos democráticamente".

De esta forma aludía a varios gobiernos de la región surgidos

continúa en la página 6

¿DE DONDE ES USTED?

Por Víctor Landa

¿De donde es usted?

Es una pregunta simple e inofensiva que muchas veces dirijo a quienes conozco por primera vez. Generalmente las personas son originarias de alguna parte de México, pero de vez en cuando me encuentro con inmigrantes de centro o Sudamérica.

Pregunto por interés personal. Siempre me ha gustado conocer datos interesantes de las personas que atraviesan, aunque sea por solo un instante, mi camino.

Aparte de eso, el saber el origen de una persona abre la puerta a conversaciones más amplias. A los humanos nos gusta pertenecer, ya sea a un grupo, a un lugar o a una idea, y la conversación nos da la oportunidad de establecer lazos y encontrar terreno común.

Pero en los Estados Unidos esa simple pregunta se complica. Ya no es suficiente saber de dónde es una persona. Desde el punto de vista norteamericano (donde técnicamente nos une un país y una constitución) y con el propósito de llevar a cabo el censo nacional, nos vemos obligados a entrar en detalles.

Un periodista de la ciudad de Fort Worth calculó que en el cuestionario del censo tenemos un total de 63 opciones para describirnos. Podemos escoger de entre seis opciones raciales y un menú de diferentes etnias, incluyendo la incomprensible opción de podernos autodenominar "de otra raza." Vaya usted a saber lo que quiere decir eso.

Cuando yo pregunto el origen de las personas recibo respuestas fáciles. Vienen de Michoacán, de Guanajuato o de Tegucigalpa. Pero todo se complica, hasta llegar al punto ridículo, cuando esa misma persona Michoacana llena el formulario del censo. Puede ser "Latino de otra raza," o Latino blanco, o Latino negro, o cualquiera de otras seis decenas de opciones.

Todo depende, me imagino, del humor de la persona y de la manera en la que ella se percibe.

La designación "de otra raza" se incluyó en el censo para dar una opción a las personas que son Latinas pero no se consideran ni blancos, ni negros, ni asiáticos, ni de ninguna otra de las razas que el censo no da para escoger. En el principio solo un pequeño número de personas optaron por la denominación "de otra raza." Era tan pequeña la cantidad que no causaba problema para los demógrafos del gobierno federal quienes sin esfuerzo repartían valores y porcentajes entre las razas y etnias incluidas en el conteo.

Pero al pasar los años mas y mas personas han optado por la designación "de otra raza." Son tantas las personas que así se designan que los demógrafos no saben dónde incluirlos.

La solución del gobierno fue eliminar la opción.

Pero el representante federal José Serrano, de New York, se opuso a la eliminación. Hubo debate y discusión y al final de cuentas la opción de la raza que es "otra" se quedó. Algunos líderes de la comunidad latina celebraron el hecho y dijeron que el gobierno no tiene el derecho de obligar a los residentes a que escojan de las razas y etnias más convenientes.

Los demógrafos tendrán ahora una complicada tarea. Y usted, ¿de dónde es?

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¿TIENES PZEESRNAA?

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Respuesta: línea 6, palabra 5.

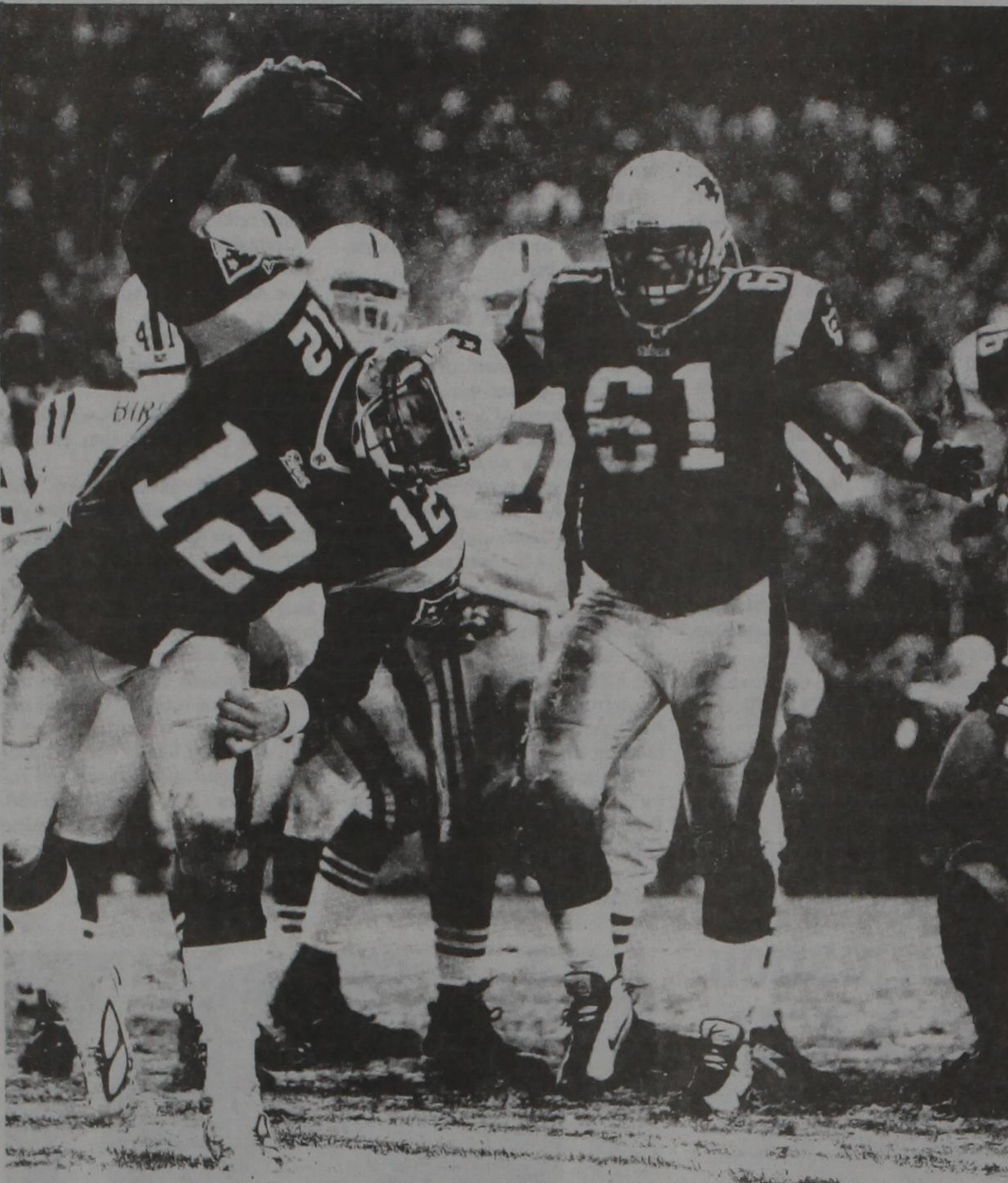
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Síntoma No. 3



Eagles makes it to NFC's Finals after beating the Vikings

The Philadelphia Eagles will be at the NFC's finals for the fourth year in a row after beating the Minnesota Vikings with a 27-14 score, and became the first team in the history of the NFL to get to the NFC's finals.

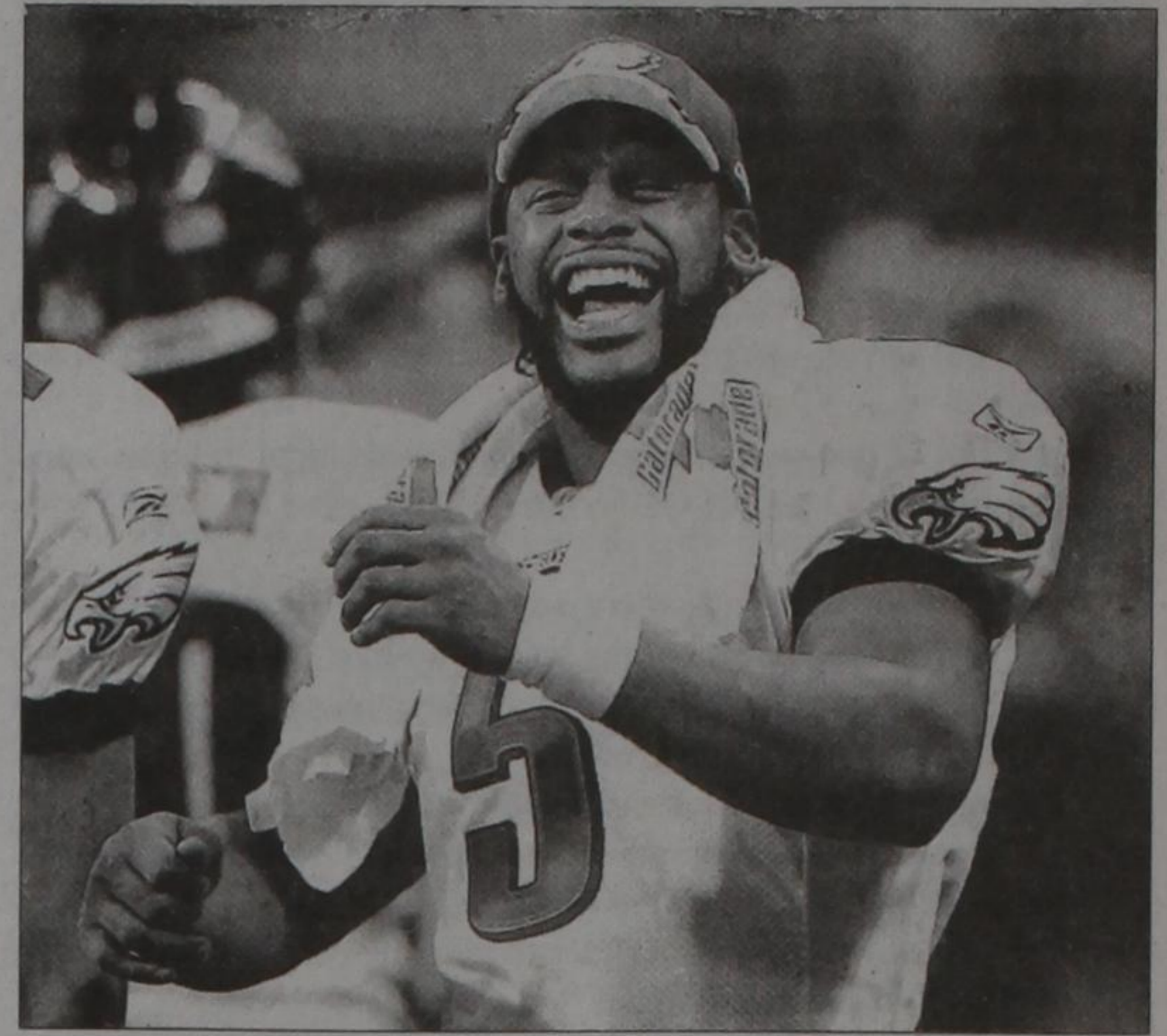
The Eagles will face next Sunday at the National Conference's finals the amazing Atlanta Hawks, who proved to be a tough team to beat after crushing the Saint Louis Rams with a 47-17 score.

Philadelphia did not have its star receiver Terrell Owens, but its quarterback, Donovan McNabb, was supported by Freddie Mitchell and led the score with a two-yard pass.

A ferocious Eagles' defense kept the dangerous Minnesota Vikings behind the line besides putting a lot of pressure on Daunte Culpepper, constantly harassed by Jevon Kearse, who became the main defender of the team since its arrival from Tennessee.

The game seemed to be one-sided, but Mike Tice's pupils reacted and Minnesota scored its first 7 points in a personal run by Culpepper.

The Vikings had the chance to sum points before hitting the showers, something they could not accomplish since the "Purple Gang" decided to go for it in fourth with a field goal take, but things didn't work out and quarterback Gus Frerotte had to throw



the ball off the field.

During the second half, the purple defense made the necessary adjustments and was able to keep the offense led by McNabb for a while, but the mistakes committed by Culpepper, who was intercepted twice, prevented the Vikings from getting the score even.

David Acker got a second field goal in a 23-yard-kick getting the winged team over Minnesota with a 27-7 score, just one step before the XXXIX Super Bowl.

Donovan McNabb wrapped up the game with 21 complete passes

and 33 incomplete passes. he accumulated 286 yards by air since he did not have a spectacular ground work as he usually does but his two scoring passes were very important for his team's victory.

Dante Culpepper, on the other hand, completed 24 out of 46 passes, summed 316 yards, threw a scoring pass and scored another one in a seven-yard personal run, but the two interceptions caused Minnesota to become the target of the attacks during the second half of the game.

Patriots get their ticket to AFC's Finals

The New England Patriots won over the Indianapolis Colts 20-3 at Foxboro's Gillette Stadium, to obtain their ticket to the AFC's finals, where they'll face the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Patriots Head Coach, Bill Belichick, took the game to defensive field, just as it was convenient to apply his third defeat in a row against coach Tony Dungy, including the one of last year's AFC finals, and advance to his

third final of the "young circuit" in four years.

For the locals, quarterback Tom Brady completed a five-yard scoring pass along wide receiver David Givens and turned one with a one-yard personal transport, while kicker Adam Vinatieri scored two field goals of 24 and 31 yards.

On the visitor side, kicker Mike Vanderjagt broke the zero with a 23-yard field goal, while the rest

of the offensive underwent the unspeakable facing weather conditions and the Belichick's offensive strategy.

Brady completed 18 passes in 27 attempts with a gain of 144 yards and a scoring pass, runningback Corey Dillon, on the other hand, added 144 yd in 23 transports and Givens accumulated 26 yards in four catches, one of them in the diagonals.

Hopkins will defend WBC title against Eastman

LOS ANGELES -- Undisputed middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins will defend his WBC title against Howard Eastman on Feb. 19. Advertisement

The once-beaten Eastman, who was born in Guyana and now lives in England, is the WBC's second-ranked contender behind Felix Trinidad.

Hopkins, who turned 40 on Saturday, is coming off a ninth-round knockout of Oscar De La Hoya on Sept. 18 in Las Vegas, Hopkins' 19th successful title defense.

De La Hoya, who has been steadily expanding his role in the sport, is promoting the Hopkins-Eastman bout.

Hopkins, from Philadelphia, is

45-2-1 with 32 knockouts. He hasn't lost in more than a decade, since Roy Jones took an unanimous decision in 1993.

Hopkins' only other loss came in his first pro bout, a four-round majority decision defeat by Clinton Mitchell in 1988.

The 34-year-old Eastman is 40-1 and has 34 knockouts. His only loss was a 12-round majority decision to William Joppy for the vacant WBA middleweight crown on Nov. 17, 2001 in Las Vegas.

Two years later, Hopkins faced Joppy and won an unanimous 12-round decision.

Eastman has stayed busy, fighting eight times in the past two years and stopping six of those foes, including a ninth-

round knockout of former world champion Hassine Cherifi in 2003.

The Staples Center card will include a 10-round bout between two unbeaten middleweights, Daniel Edouard of Haiti and Jermain Taylor of Little Rock, Ark. Edouard is 16-0-2 with nine knockouts, and Taylor is 22-0 with 16 knockouts.

Roethlisberger Shedding Gloves for Game with Patriots

PITTSBURGH -- Ben Roethlisberger is issuing this warning to the New England Patriots: The gloves are coming off for the AFC championship game. Advertisement

Roethlisberger is one victory away from becoming the first rookie quarterback to take a team to the Super Bowl. But since he

threw two interceptions in a playoff victory over the Jets while wearing gloves, Roethlisberger's handwear has become Pittsburgh's No. 1 topic of debate.

To a city that grew accustomed to the tough-guy Super Bowl Steelers of the 1970s, who played in bare sleeves no matter the

weather, it was unsettling to watch a quarterback in gloves.

With snow showers forecast for Sunday night and the likelihood of a wet, sloppy field, Roethlisberger plans to discard the gloves. That should please those Steelers fans who remember Hall of Fame quarterback Terry Bradshaw beating teams barehanded.

"I'm going to try to go without it," said Roethlisberger, who wore a glove on his left hand but not his throwing hand in practice Wednesday. "If it's wet, it makes it worse (to throw). We'll see if we can go without this week."

Maybe Roethlisberger is expecting, ahem, a bare-knuckle brawl against the Patriots, whose perplexing defenses throttled NFL MVP Peyton Manning of the Colts during New England's 20-3 second-round victory.

If a quarterback who threw a record 49 touchdown passes this season can't do anything against a Bill Belichick- and Romeo Crennel-designed defense, how can a raw rookie expect to do much better?

Actually, Roethlisberger already has, throwing for two

scores -- and no interceptions -- during a nearly flawless performance Oct. 31 in a 34-20 Pittsburgh victory that ended New England's 21-game winning streak.

"I didn't think anybody could stop the Colts," Roethlisberger said. "Their offense is so powerful in what they do, but New England obviously finds a way. ... They do so many things, throw so many things at you. If they can slow down that defense, who knows what they can do to ours?"

To keep the pressure off Roethlisberger, the Steelers probably will try to pound the ball from the start with powerful backs Jerome Bettis and Duce Staley, who will split time in an effort to wear down the Patriots.

New England's run defense will be weakened if lineman Richard Seymour, perhaps its best defensive player, can't play. He didn't practice Wednesday because of a sore knee and is listed as questionable.

That's why the Steelers don't necessarily need Big Ben to win the biggest game of his life; instead, he might just need to make he sure he keeps from losing a matchup of streaking quarterbacks. Roethlisberger is 14-0 as an NFL starter; the Patriots' Tom Brady, the two-time Super Bowl MVP, is 7-0 in the playoffs.

"My rookie year, there is no way I could have done what he did," said Brady, who occasionally wears gloves himself to get a better grip on the new footballs used in every game. "I was awful. I couldn't do anything. I was hoping to show up and bring my playbook. He is out there and hasn't lost a game."

Roethlisberger nearly did Saturday, though, throwing one interception that was returned for a touchdown and another that led to Jets kicker Doug Brien's failed game-winning field goal try to end the fourth quarter. Roethlisberger recovered to lead a decisive scoring drive in overtime as Pittsburgh escaped with a that-was-close 20-17 victory.

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Respuesta: línea 6, palabra 5.

Jennifer Peña's "Seducción Seduces Fans at AOL"

(CL) - Contexto Latino had a chance to speak with the talented Jennifer Peña during her "Sesiones @ AOL" show. (AOL's free concert series with Latino stars). Read on to find out how she answered our questions!

After dropping such a successful debut album, was the pres-

sure on? Did you feel that you absolutely had to make your second CD "Seducción" a hit?

I think that it's only natural to feel a little bit of pressure after having experienced so much success with "Libre" and with the "El dolor de tu presencia" single. Of course I wanted to do somethin'



there and that's Obie Bermúdez.

A hottie! How would you go after someone like him?

How would I conquer a hunk? Well I hope to do it with my personality. I hope I don't gotta act a certain way or do a certain thing for him to like me. Just by being Jennifer Peña, I can get a papi. Not even by being Jennifer Peña, just by being Jennifer! (Laughs)

To whom do you dedicate your love songs?

To my fans and to anyone out there who feels like I do when he or she is in love. To all the people that feel that love is something beautiful and something that the world is lacking. And to all the couples in love.

"Quick Survey"

Paulina or Thalia?

Both, but if I had to pick one it would be Paulina.

Fantasy Island or Temptation Island?

Fantasy Island.

Cancun or San Juan?

Oh! Cancun.

Cat or dog?

Dog.

A.B. Quintanilla III or Tego Calderón?

A.B. Quintanilla III.

What turns you on?

Music, good music.

What turns you off?

Ugh! That's a hard question.

Food maybe?

Favorite word in Spanish?

My favorite Spanish word is "amor."

Favorite word in English?

In English, my favorite word is "family."

Biggest wish?

My biggest wish would be to be a superstar with all the talent in the world and to do a little bit of everything.

Favorite motto?

My favorite saying is "Love, Peace and Happiness."

Favorite TV show?

My favorite TV show... I really don't have much time to watch TV. MTV! I always watch MTV in English or in Spanish.

Favorite song?

My favorite song is "Vivo y muero en tu piel"

Jennifer Peña shares her favorite moments with an intimate AOL audience. For more information on Sessions at AOL, visit www.aollatino.com.

Los Latinos del Congreso 109 Se Dedican al Seguro Social, La Educación

La representante Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (republicana por Florida), directora de la Conferencia Congresional Hispana, obró por quitar las provisiones del proyecto de ley sobre las organizaciones de inteligencia, diciendo, "Me he comprometido a asegurar que la legislación final que considere la Cámara mantenga un equilibrio delicado entre la seguridad nacional, los derechos fundamentales a un juicio justo, y los principios relacionados a los refugiados y los inmigrantes que forman parte del corazón de la historia de nuestra nación".

Los miembros hispanos están comprometidos con la reautorización del Acta de Educación Superior de 1965. Les preocupan los aumentos en los costos de la matrícula universitaria y la disponibilidad de asistencia financiera federal, explica Mier.

Al Departamento de Educación recientemente le criticaron algunos luchadores por la educación por su propuesto cambio en la fórmula empleada para determinar la elegibilidad de los estudiantes de bajos recursos para la asistencia federal.

La aprobación de nuevas directivas federales para la educación superior se anticipa saldrá en marzo, con lo cual los miembros hispanos del Congreso también dirigen su atención a las provisiones de evaluación y cumplimiento relacionadas al Acta Que Ningún Niño Quede Atrás. Dicen que sus distritos locales carecen de los fondos para cumplir con el mandato federal. Uno de los cambios al acta propuestos por el presidente Bush requeriría exámenes anuales por estado en las materias de lectura y matemáticas en los grados 3 a 11.

Ciaran Clayton, vocera para el representante demócrata por Texas, Rubén Hinojosa, añade que mientras el congresista aplaude la convocación del presidente por más fondos para cubrir los costos de más exámenes, los bajos índices de graduación entre los grupos de color siguen siendo prioridad.

Hinojosa piensa volver a presentar el proyecto de ley el próximo mes e incrementar los subsidios para la promoción de programas de alfabetización adulta y la desagregación de datos que emiten los estados y agencias locales de educación en las categorías de raza, etnicidad, ingresos, discapacidades y proficiencia limitada de inglés.

Con el servicio de Mel Martínez (republicano por Florida) y Ken Salazar (demócrata por Colorado) como primeros latinos en el Senado de los Estados Unidos en más de tres décadas, los dirigentes hispanos dicen que sienten que su programa podrá recibir un mayor impulso.

Ros-Lehtinen dice que se anticipa a que Martínez sea de gran ayuda. "Me encantará colaborar con él para mejorar la vida de todos los que llaman su hogar este gran país".

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better! I wanted to do some experimenting with my music and grow as an artist all at the same time. I think I did it 'cause I feel that this is a tremendous album with excellent tracks. I had a chance to work with some big-name producers and test out new styles of music without drifting too far from the same genre that I've had since I started. Of course, I felt some pressure; I got to do a better record than "Libre!" And I think I did!

How does singing in front of millions of people at "Sesiones @ AOL" feel?

It's a huge honor for me to be able to perform in front of such a huge crowd at "Sesiones @ AOL". I had a blast! At first, I was a little nervous knowing that so many people were out there watching me, but then I was like "this is a trip!" It's always a good thing for lots of people to see me, at least that's what I've always thought, you know. It was an honor for them to have invited me, and to have performed for all my fans at AOL.

When did you know you had achieved success?

Hmmm, the moment that I felt I had achieved success. Wow, it's just that there are so many times when the labels tell you that you've made it, you know what I mean. Like when you launch your first single, they tell you that

you've made it. There are so many special moments, unforgettable experiences and huge opportunities. And you know what? Deep down I still don't feel that I've made it. I still think that I need to do lots of things. I think that having a number #1 single is an incredible feat for an artist. I remember feeling so proud of myself when they told me I hit number #1, I almost felt like crying! Then I was at number #1 for eight straight weeks and I was like "Wow! Wow! Wow!" It's the way my fans show me love and support, and what love!!!!

How did you spend your first royalty check?

You know, I don't know what I spent my first check on, because my parents handled the money. I mean that they handled it at that age, 'cause I got my first check at 11 or 12, you see. They saved the cash for my education, and right now, I'm spending it on everything career-related. My car was the first real thing that I actually bought.

Really? What do you drive?

A Lexus SE 430.

Who is the coolest person in your cellular phone's address book?

The coolest people in my book are my sisters and my parents.

Who is the biggest celebrity in your book?

I only got one famous person in

'Los Mets'

viene de la pagina 4

House on Jan. 10, Minaya announced Beltran's deal at Shea Stadium the following day. Then he held a news conference on Jan. 12 with Beltran at the Mets' spring training camp in Port St. Lucie, Fla., and another the next day in Puerto Rico.

"He's always looking for the well-being of Latinos and now he's with Tony Bernazard, who comes from the Players' Association," Beltran said. "I'm going to be very well taken care of."

"I've known Omar since I was 18. They came to Puerto Rico to meet with me, which other teams did not do," he said. "That showed me they really wanted me."

Minaya publicly thanked Beltran's wife, Jessica, after the negotiations, clearly understanding her importance in the process.

While Minaya plays down the language and cultural bond he shares with Martínez and Beltran, his strategy to pump up a team that hasn't been to the playoffs since 2000 seems to be working.

Delgado said the Latin influence in the Mets and Minaya's approach makes the team "a little more attractive."

"It's really the person, but the language helps," Minaya said.

Martínez is doing his part in the recruiting effort.

"I explained to Carlos Delgado the plans the Mets have to become a championship team," Martínez said Wednesday. "I've also talked to Sammy Sosa, and he told me that it would be an honor to play with me in New York."

Sosa could be available in a trade at the right price.

New York has a large Hispanic population, one that could help the new regional sports network the Mets intend to start in 2006. Stars attract fans, as the Yankees have shown.

"Diversity is good business," Minaya said.

A 14th-round selection of the Oakland Athletics in 1978, Minaya had a short playing career that included a brief stint in Italy.

He then worked his way up from area scout to scouting director with the Rangers and in 1998 became the Mets' assistant general manager.

He was turned down half a dozen times for GM jobs before his breakthrough in 2002, when baseball commissioner Bud Selig hired him to become GM of the Expos. Montreal, which had been purchased by the other 29 teams, had only a handful of employees left when Minaya took over.

His deals helped keep the Expos in contention into the second half of the season in 2002 and 2003, but by 2004, the second season in which baseball moved some of the Expos' home games to San Juan, there was little front-line talent left. Montreal faded on the field — and into history, too. The Expos became the Washington Nationals last month.

Minaya takes in stride the attention that comes from a high-profile job.

"It's a passing thing. I've been around long enough to know that what's hot today is forgotten tomorrow," he said.

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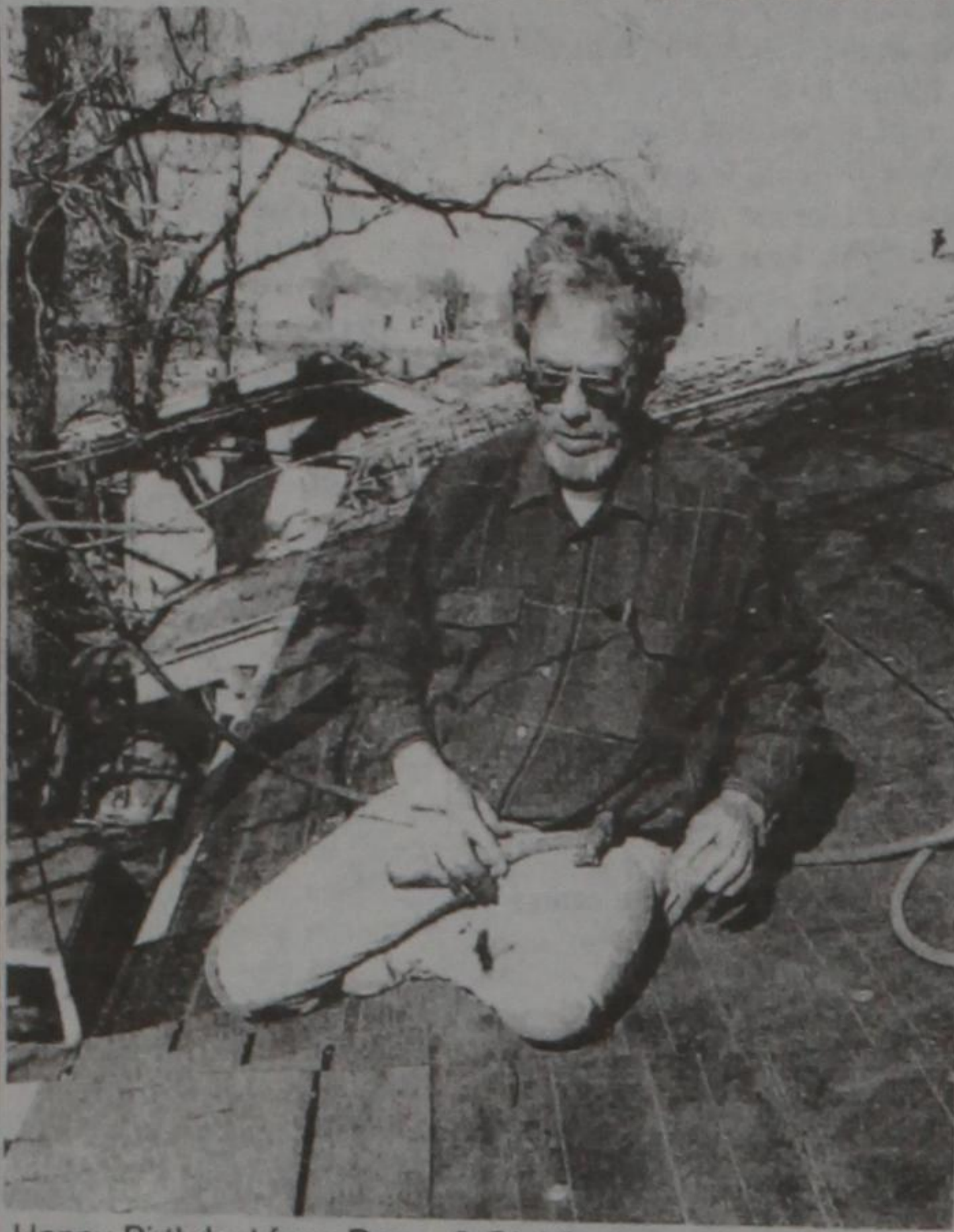
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Supremo no considerará apelación de un yemenita

La Suprema Corte de Estados Unidos rechazó ayer estudiar la apelación de un yemenita preso en Guantánamo para que se pronuncie sobre la legalidad de los juicios militares especiales que Washington ha iniciado contra presuntos terroristas.

Con esta decisión, el máximo tribunal estadounidense evitó manifestar su opinión sobre el discutido sistema de los procesos militares extraordinarios, decidido por la Casa Blanca, pero criticado por organizaciones de derechos humanos.

El caso se refiere a Salim Ahmed Hamdan, considerado por EU como guardaespaldas del líder de la red terrorista Al Qaeda, Osama Ben Laden, y procesado en Guantánamo por conspiración para cometer crímenes de guerra, asesinato y terrorismo.

En noviembre pasado, un juez federal suspendió el proceso militar, ya que lo consideró ilegal, pues Hamdan no ha recibido la protección de las Convenciones de Ginebra sobre prisioneros de guerra.

El Departamento de Justicia recurrió inmediatamente esa decisión a un tribunal federal de Apela-

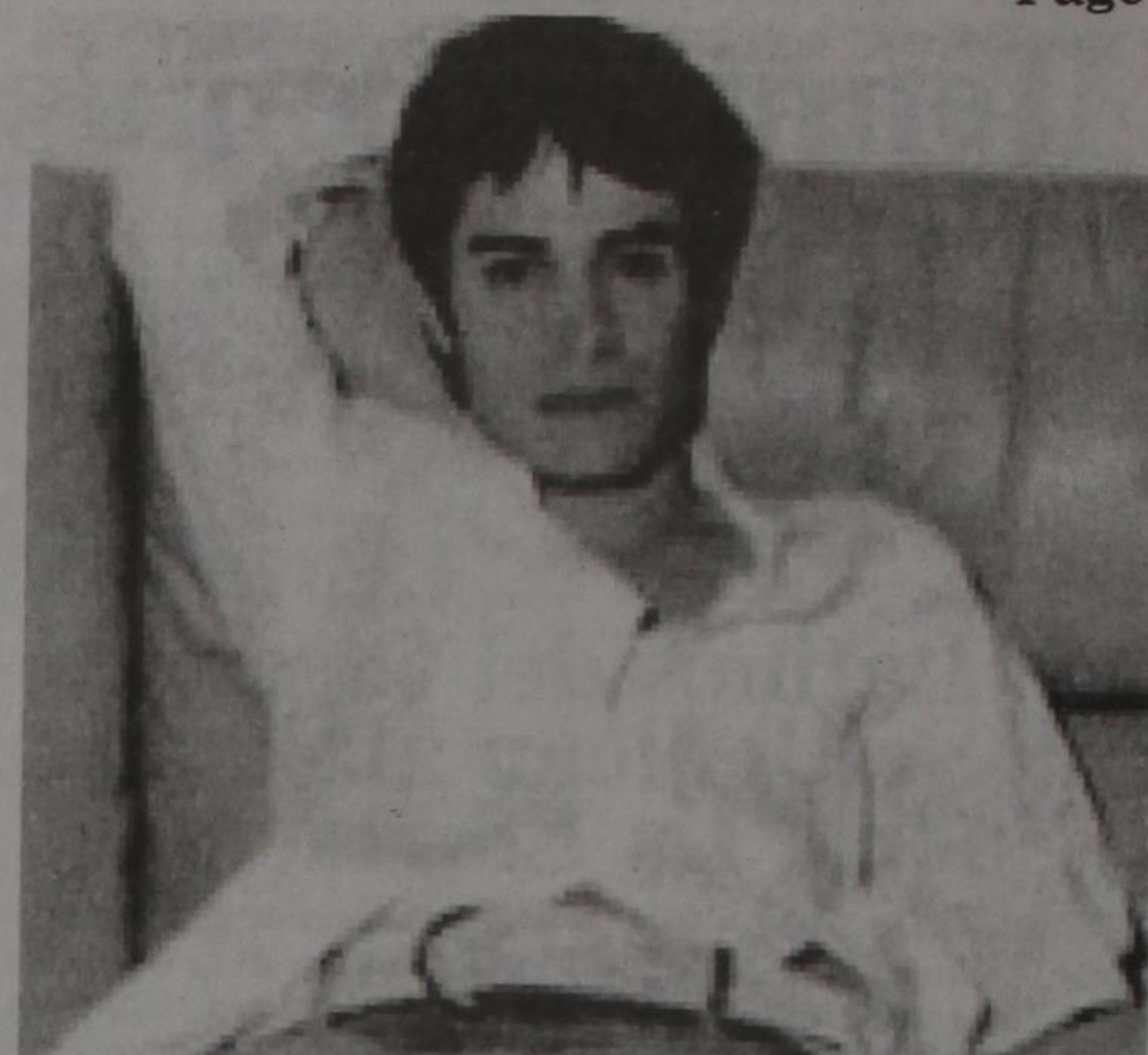
laciones, que tiene previsto emitir una sentencia a comienzos de marzo.

Sin embargo, los abogados de Hamdan presentaron una petición al Supremo para que se hiciera cargo del caso, con el argumento de que, cualquiera que sea la decisión del tribunal de Apelaciones, la parte perdedora apelará a la instancia superior.

En concreto, la defensa quería que el Supremo se pronunciasse sobre si el sistema de juicios militares especiales que tienen lugar en Guantánamo supone un recorte de los derechos de los acusados, que no son ciudadanos estadounidenses.

Pero la Suprema Corte evitó por ahora implicarse en el asunto, sin explicar las razones de su decisión.

Esta decisión del Supremo puede alargar la solución final sobre los procesos militares contra presos en la base naval de Guantánamo, en Cuba, en aproximadamente un año, si finalmente la parte perdedora en el Tribunal de Apelaciones en el caso de Hamdan recurre a la máxima instancia jurídica del país.



Gael García Nominated for a BAFTA Film Award

Mexican actor Gael García Bernal was nominated today for a BAFTA award within the Best Actor category for his role in "The Motorcycle Diaries". The awards will be granted next February 12.

Thanks to his role of young "Che" Guevara, Bernal will be competing against actors Leonardo DiCaprio for "The Aviator", Johnny Depp for "Finding Neverland", Jim Carrey for "Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind", and Jaime Foxx for "Ray".

The British Film Academy stated the film "The Motorcycle Diaries", directed by Walter Salles, is also nominated within other six categories including Best Film, Best Foreign Language Film, and Best Script Adaptation.

Argentinean actor Rodrigo de la Serna was also nominated for Best Supporting Actor. The film could also win the Anthony Aquith award for Best Soundtrack and Best Cinematography.

Other films included in the Best Foreign Language Film are "La mala educación", directed by Pe-

dro Almodóvar and starred by García Bernal as well as Christophe Barratier's "Les choristes" and Jean Pierre Jeunet's "Un Long Dimanche de Fiançailles".

Martin Scorsese's film "The Aviator" reigned the categories with 14. The awards are considered a prelude to the American Oscars.

Mike Leigh's film "Vera Drake" comes right after "The Aviator" with 11 nominations and Marc Forster's feature film "Finding Neverland".

British actress Kate Winslet was also included in the list of nominees. She is competing for the Best Actress award in "Finding Neverland" and Michel Gondry's "Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind".

The Best Film nominees are "The aviator", "Finding Neverland", "Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind" and "Vera Drake", as well as "The Motorcycle Diaries".

Send in your birthday wishes to El Editor
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Rice - Viene de la pagina 3

de acciones fuertes. Uno de esos líderes es el presidente de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez, de quien dijo que "en este punto tenemos que ver el gobierno de Venezuela como una fuerza negativa en la región".

Aunque se anticipa la pronta y segura confirmación del nombramiento por la Cámara Alta, la Secretaria de Estado designada y principal asesora del presidente George W. Bush fue sometida a un largo y duro interrogatorio, particularmente por el bando demócrata en temas como Irak, Irán, Corea del Norte, China, la crisis judeo-palestina y las relaciones con América Latina, entre otros asuntos.

Boxer carga
Sobre este particular, la senadora demócrata por California, Bárbara Boxer, tuvo el intercambio más sonado de la jornada cuestionando que al día de hoy la administración Bush es incapaz de admitir sus errores y decir que mintió al tratar de justificar la guerra que emprendió en contra de Irak hace casi dos años basándose en la existencia de armas de destrucción masiva que nunca fueron encontradas.

"Quizá la declaración más conocida que usted formuló fue la de Saddam Husein atacando a Estados Unidos con un arma nuclear y la imagen de —y cito— una nube nuclear. Esa imagen aterrorizó a todos los estadounidenses haciéndoles creer que Saddam Husein estaba a punto de aniquilarlos si no era detenido, y pondré en el récord de la sesión una lista de citas de este tipo que usted formuló que no han sido consistentes con los hechos", señaló Boxer.

Aún en estos momentos, agregó Boxer, "hay personas que siguen mintiendo".

En tono serio y con voz cortante, casi temblorosa, Rice afirmó que "no le he perdido el respeto a la verdad por el servicio de algo. No es mi naturaleza, no es mi carácter, y espero que podamos tener esta conversación y discutir lo que ocurrió antes de lo que yo dije sin atacar mi credibilidad y mi integridad", le respondió Rice.

"Espero que no esté implicando que me tomo la verdad a la ligera", agregó Rice.

Pero ese fue quizá el único momento de tensión de la audiencia ya que los otros cuestionamientos en torno a Irak de parte de los demócratas se suscitaron sin mayores acusaciones. De varias formas intentaron lograr que Rice ofreciera un estimado de cuándo comenzarían a regresar a casa las tropas estadounidenses. Rice no les dio el gusto.

Todo depende
La nominada recordó que Irak es una nación que apenas comienza a ponerse de pie y que el 30 de enero celebrará la primera de tres elecciones para tomar las riendas de su destino y que la salida de las tropas dependerá de cuán pronto las fuerzas militares y policíacas de Irak sean capaces de mantener el control de su seguridad.

"Me parece que nuestro papel [en Irak] está en proporción directa a la capacidad de los iraquíes [de mantener la seguridad y el orden]", sostuvo Rice.

Cuando Rice declaró que es su intención tapar las brechas que generó la guerra en Irak entre Estados Unidos y sus principales aliados, porque "el momento de la

diplomacia es ahora", el demócrata de más alto rango en el panel, el senador de Delaware, Joseph Biden, le respondió que la hora de la diplomacia fue mucho antes. "A pesar de nuestro gran poderío militar me parece que estamos más solos en el mundo de lo que hemos estado en cualquier otro momento", añadió Biden.

Por su parte, el ex candidato demócrata a la presidencia y senador de Massachusetts, John Kerry, le recordó a Rice cómo la justificación de la guerra pasó de evitar que Irak empleara armas de destrucción masiva en contra de Estados Unidos, a derrocar a Husein para promover la democracia en Irak, y por ende en la región.

En su larga introducción a las preguntas que le iba a hacer, Kerry afirmó que, al igual que hizo en su fallida campaña presidencial, Estados Unidos dejó de lado las opiniones de sus principales aliados, inició una guerra porque podía y no porque tenía que hacerlo y ahora siguen muriendo jóvenes soldados estadounidenses.

El nuevo senador republicano de Florida, el hispano Mel Martínez, trajo a colación el tema del gobierno de Chávez y sus preocupantes relaciones con los gobiernos de Cuba y de Rusia y cómo eso puede ser fuente de desestabilización en América Latina.

Rice dijo que Cuba junto a Bielorrusia, Birmania, Corea del Norte, Irán y Zimbabue es "un puesto de avanzada de la tiranía".

"Estados Unidos está al lado de los pueblos oprimidos de cada continente...No nos cansamos de repetir que 'una persona que vive

en una sociedad del miedo' no puede ser libre", dijo Rice.

Pese a sus fuertes comentarios en torno a Chávez, el senador demócrata de Connecticut, Christopher Dodd, le aconsejó a Rice trabajar con el presidente venezolano de forma constructiva. Después de todo, Estados Unidos tiene intereses petroleros en Venezuela.

La relación entre Estados Unidos y Venezuela es importante, dijo Dodd. "Necesitamos trabajar en ella y espero que usted lo haga", declaró Dodd.

El nombramiento de Rice será fácilmente confirmado para el cargo de Secretaria de Estado, por su llegada al departamento ha sido objeto de preocupación para los funcionarios de carrera de esa dependencia y para muchas naciones que temen que Rice sea un simple sello de goma de las decisiones de Bush.

Sin embargo, Rice espera neutralizar esa percepción llevando a Robert Zoellick, representante comercial de Estados Unidos, a la subsecretaría de Estado.

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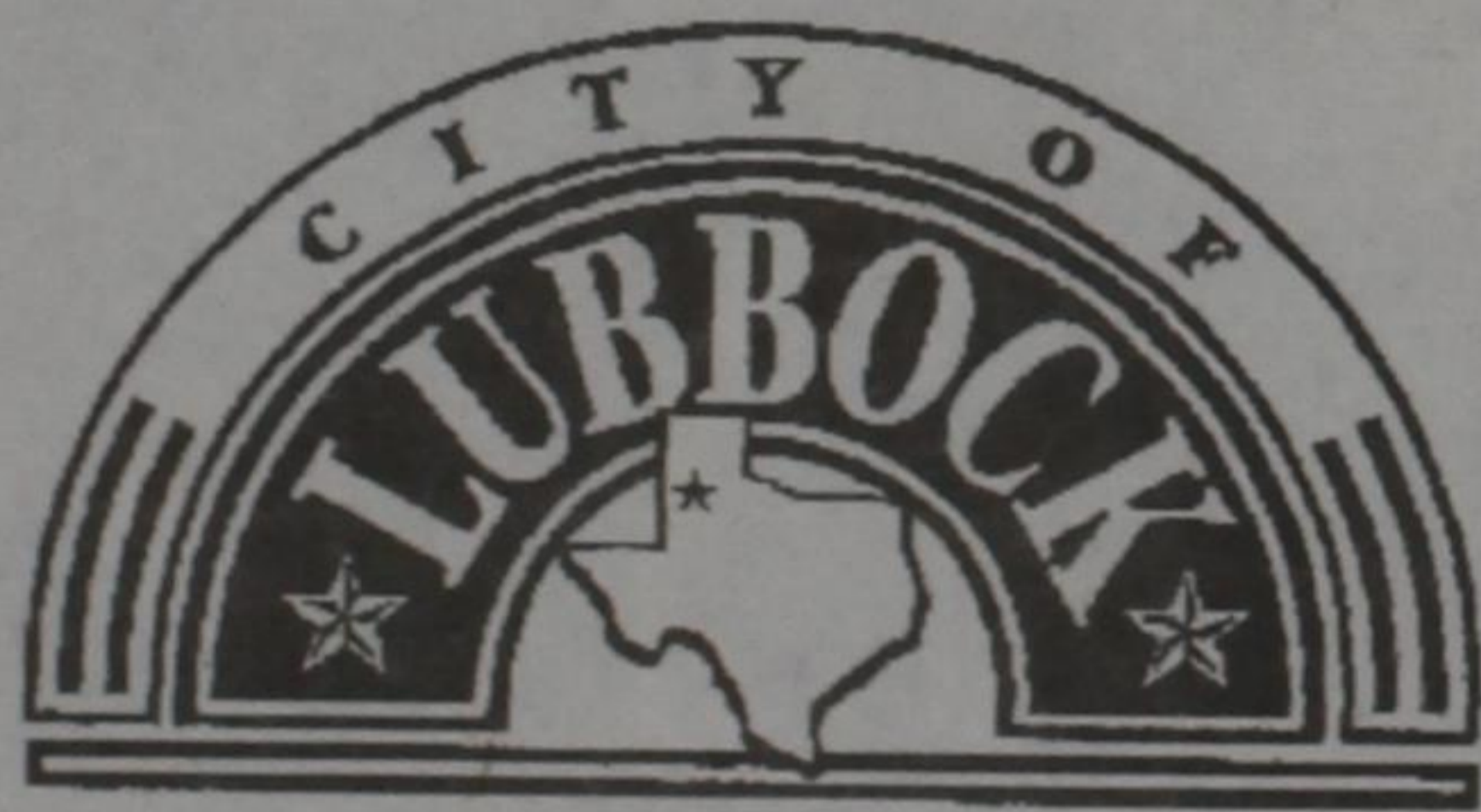
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