

Bush se acerca a México

By: Olivia P. Tallet
Houston (Texas) - Con el próximo viaje a México del Presidente George W. Bush, las relaciones bilaterales "estarían arribando a una nueva era" de cooperación en temas como el narcotráfico y el intercambio comercial, afirmaron analistas políticos.

Cómo primer gesto en su política internacional y tal como lo prometió en agosto tras la visita de Fox a Texas recién asumida su Presidencia, Bush ha enviado con este anuncio un mensaje claro de su prioridad hacia México en asuntos exteriores, según explicó el director asociado del Centro de Estudios Mexico-americanos de la Universidad de Houston, Lorenzo Cano.

Para otros, como Bernard Aronson, antiguo Secretario asistente de Estado para Asuntos Interamericanos durante el Gobierno del ex Jefe de Estado George Bush, el nuevo Presidente "va a trabajar para desarrollar una muy estrecha relación con México, muy parecida a los lazos especiales que disfrutaba Estados Unidos con el Reino Unido y Europa".

Las semejanzas entre los dos nuevos mandatarios también han llamado la atención de los observadores como indicadores optimistas.

Ambos fueron gobernadores, tuvieron la ambición de llegar a la Presidencia y vienen imponiendo un estilo de sombreros y botas en las capitales políticas de las dos naciones.

El encuentro entre los mandatarios el próximo 16 de febrero tendrá lugar en el rancho de Fox en Guanajuato (centro de México), y no en las oficinas presidenciales como manda la tradición, lo que no deja de ser un gesto de intimidad y reciprocidad también a la reunión previa que sostuvieron en la finca de Bush en Texas.

Las empatías de personalidad dejan el terreno abonado para la posibilidad de un diálogo promisorio, si se logran acuerdos en puntos neurálgicos.

Apertura de fronteras

Uno de los aspectos fundamentales en la

agenda de Fox es la flexibilización en la apertura de fronteras para los trabajadores mexicanos y el trato justo para ellos, sobre lo cual lo más posible es que se ponga en práctica un nuevo programa de braseros que podría legalizar la presencia de miles de inmigrantes en Estados Unidos y permitir la entrada

temporal de otros al país bajo ciertas condiciones.

En una reciente visita a Fox por parte de los senadores Phil Gramm de Texas y Pete Domenici de Nuevo México, entre otros, los legisladores aseguraron que apoyarán la aprobación de un programa como éste, pese a que Gramm en particular ha mostrado históricamente posiciones ultraconservadoras.

Fox aspiraría al Tratado de Libre Comercio de Norteamérica (TLC) a un tipo de relaciones similar al que existe entre los países de la Unión Europea, sin barreras de comercio, libre flujo de trabajadores y subsidios a los países más pobres, pero los analistas consideran que, al menos en el corto plazo, esto no será posible.

En las relaciones económicas con su vecino, Bush ha señalado la importancia de "abrir las promesas de NAFTA (TLC) para los pequeños negocios y trabajar en el "desarrollo económico en áreas de México que envían inmigrantes ilegales a este país".

El narcotráfico es otro de los puntos que estarán en la mesa. Fox ha dado señales claras de su intención de expandir la cooperación con Estados Unidos contra los carteles de la droga y el tráfico ilegal, al tiempo que espera que su

vecino del norte termine con la práctica de certificación anual para su país, donde esto es considerado una actitud ofensiva.

"Librarse de la certificación ha sido una meta de México por largo tiempo", declaró Delal Baer, investigador del Centro de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos de Washington.

"Sospecho que habrá un acuerdo cuando escuchemos de México que ellos están dispuestos a embarcarse en operaciones conjuntas que no han estado dispuestos" a asumir en pasados gobiernos, agregó Baer en declaraciones al periódico Houston Chronicle.

Añadió que también se espera que México esté dispuesto a garantizar las extradiciones expeditas de mexicanos que cometen delitos en Estados Unidos, sobre lo cual el Gobierno de ese país ya ha mostrado interés.

En el contexto del alza de los precios del petróleo, el enfriamiento de las relaciones políticas con el Gobierno venezolano, principal abastecedor del crudo para Estados Unidos, y de la crisis energética que atraviesa el Estado de California, este último tema cobrará relevancia en el encuentro presidencial, de acuerdo con analistas.

Para Lorenzo Cano, podría reactivarse la construcción de un gasoducto en el norte de México para la distribución de gas natural en California y el sur de Estados Unidos. "Estoy seguro de que el tema energético será de mucho interés para Bush, quien viene de una familia petrolera, y tomando en cuenta la situación actual en este campo", dijo.

De la parte mexicana, el recién designado asesor de Fox para asuntos estadounidenses, Juan Hernández, ha dicho que "nosotros tenemos muchas cosas maravillosas que ofrecer a Estados Unidos y necesitamos estar más cerca. Estados Unidos es un país al que le gusta mirar hacia el futuro. Los mexicanos estamos esperando mucho de George Bush". Agregó que hay muchas cosas por hacer y que "la mesa ya está puesta. Ahora lo que falta es servir la comida". (EFE)



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Bush to Visit Mexico Next Month

President Bush will travel to Mexico next month, his first trip abroad as president, the White House announced Monday.

Bush will travel to Mexico on Feb. 16, said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. He will meet with President Vicente Fox and return to the United States later that day, Fleischer said.

"This meeting will be an opportunity to begin the process of achieving closer ties between the United States and Mexico and expanding areas of cooperation," Fleischer said.

Fox's office said the meeting will take place at Fox's family ranch in San Cristobal, near the Guanajuato state capital of Leon in central Mexico. Fox spends many weekends there, mixing horseback riding with government business.

Fox and Bush first met last August during a visit that then-President-elect Fox made to the United States after his election July 2. At that time, Bush promised to meet with Fox promptly.

Bush has limited experience traveling abroad. As governor of Texas, he made relations with Mexico a top issue.

Fleischer said the president has not yet scheduled further foreign travels.

Gunmen Help Two Drug Traffickers Escape From Mexican Police

Six gunmen armed with assault rifles attacked a police vehicle and freed two alleged drug traffickers as they were being transported to a prison in the state of Mexico, officials said.

The gunmen, traveling in two pickup trucks, intercepted a police vehicle and, after threatening the seven officers escorting the prisoners, freed two of the three prisoners being transferred Tuesday from a court to Almoloya penitentiary, in the northern city of Juarez, the Mexican Department of Public Safety said.

Police spokesman Pedro Miguel said Enrique Gonzalez Mondragon and Jose Eladio Hernandez, accused of drug trafficking and firearms possession, escaped.

Miguel said the gunmen took three of the seven guards hostage, including the officer in charge of the prisoner transfer.

The gunmen left the other four guards and the third prisoner in the vehicle.

More than 500 police officers have mounted a manhunt to capture the fugitives and free the hostages.

Miguel said roadblocks have been set up on highways near Toluca, the capital of Mexico state, to prevent the fugitives from leaving the area.

The alleged drug traffickers' escape occurred less than two weeks after drug kingpin Joaquin Guzman, known as "El Chapo," escaped from a maximum-security prison in the western state of Jalisco, allegedly with the help of prison guards.

The escape of Guzman, head of the Sinaloa drug cartel, sparked an intense controversy and revealed a network linking organized crime groups and public officials.

Pastrana Offers to Meet FARC Head, Extends Neutral Zone Four Days

Colombian President Andres Pastrana asked FARC leader Manuel Marulanda Wednesday to meet with him to discuss continuing peace talks and offered to extend the neutral zone until the weekend.

The authorization for the neutral zone, an area roughly the size of Switzerland ceded to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to promote peace negotiations, was set to expire Wednesday.

"Peace depends on the will of the insurgency," Pastrana said in a radio and TV broadcast some 16 hours before the neutral zone was due to expire.

Talks with the rebels have been frozen for two-and-a-half months.

"The country requires sincerity from you and from me," Pastrana told the guerrilla leader, proposing a meeting to decide "once and for all if we will continue the peace process you and I initiated, or will we bring it to an end."

"I decided to extend the demilitarized zone until the end of this week, with the sole reason of bringing about the meeting I proposed to Marulanda," the president said, appearing confident that the meeting would serve "to clearly decide if we will continue to negotiate."

Pastrana said the FARC also has a "historic responsibility not to close the doors on peace," reproaching the group for leaving the negotiating table on Nov. 14 and not returning, with the stated intention of forcing the government's hand in the fight against the right-wing paramilitary groups.

"The nation is hurt by each massacre committed by the illegal self-defense groups," Pastrana said, alluding to the position taken by the FARC, the country's largest guerrilla group.

He said that his government had "been fighting the hardest against these right-wing groups" and would continue doing so.

Fed Lowers Key Short-Term Interest Rate to 5.5 Percent

The U.S. Federal Reserve Board's Open Market Committee lowered the key short-term interest rate by a half-point to 5.5 percent Wednesday.

Investors had been expecting the move since early January, when the Fed surprised the financial markets with a half-point cut to bolster the slowing U.S. economy.

The Fed, for the first time in more than two years, lowered its benchmark rate on Jan. 3 from 6.5 percent to 6 percent in an effort to reverse the marked slowdown in U.S. economic growth.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan said last week before the Senate Budget Committee that U.S. economic growth was "close to zero."

The Commerce Department reported Wednesday that the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) grew 1.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2000.

Most analysts had expected the economy to post a growth rate ranging between 1.9 percent and 2.3 percent in the final three months of last year.

The GDP figure was lower than the 2.2 percent recorded in the third quarter and the 5.6 percent posted in the second quarter, and suggests that economic growth may be slowing.

The U.S. economy grew 5 percent in 2000, following 4.2-percent growth in 1999 and 4.4-percent growth in 1998. Last year's GDP growth rate was the highest since the economy grew 7.3 percent in 1984, and marked the 10th straight year of economic expansion.

Consumer spending, which accounts for two-thirds of the GDP, grew at an annual rate of 2.9 percent in the fourth quarter, down from 4.5 percent in the July-September period.

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Mexico Applauds Trade Truck Ruling

By HERNAN ROZEMBERG AND BOB GOLFFEN

The United States violated the North American Free Trade Agreement by barring Mexican trucks from most of its highways, a trade panel ruled Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

But it said the United States can still require Mexican truckers to meet U.S. safety standards.

"We've never made any fuss about U.S. companies coming here. But I welcome this news with open arms. You always hear stories of Mexican companies facing lots of obstacles crossing over. Maybe now we'll get the same freedom that our U.S. counterparts have always enjoyed."

Miguel Pacheco, manager of Transporte USA-MEX, which has offices on both the U.S. and Mexican sides of Nogales. The unanimous ruling by a NAFTA arbitration panel leaves to President Bush the question of how to comply while ensuring the American public does not share roadways with unsafe Mexican trucks.

Mexico estimates that about 14,000 trucks cross the border daily and that it has lost about \$2 billion because of the U.S. policy.

The Transportation Department's Inspector General's Office said 35 percent of Mexican trucks that entered the United States last year were put out of service for significant safety violations.

Arizona trucking companies seem more concerned about the safety factor than the threat of fiercer competition from Mexican truckers.

"I'm fairly confident about competing," said Kevin Knight, chief executive officer of Knight Transportation in Phoenix.

"They have the same issues to overcome, and their costs are pretty much the same as ours. But their infrastructure has a lot of catching up to do. It's questionable as to whether we'd want our equipment down there."

Mexican officials and truckers welcomed news of the panel's decision.

"We've been at a real disadvantage all this time," said Josi Luis Camarena, who is in charge of the Mexican government's car permit center in Nogales. "The deal was to give both sides equal commercial access, but it's been really difficult for Mexican truckers to enter the U.S. side without running into complications. Hopefully, now they'll be able to have free movement."

Miguel Pacheco is keeping his fingers crossed.

The manager of Transporte USA-MEX, with offices on both U.S. and Mexican sides of Nogales, said he has never heard of U.S. truckers complaining about difficulties making their way into Mexico. But stories of Mexican drivers lamenting discriminatory treatment and intimidation from U.S. Transportation Department officials abound, he said.

"We've never made any fuss about U.S. companies coming here," Pacheco said. "But I welcome this news with open arms. You always hear stories of Mexican companies facing lots of obstacles crossing over. Maybe now we'll get the same freedom that our U.S. counterparts have always enjoyed."

An official from the U.S. trade representative's office did not say how authorities would keep

unsafe trucks from entering the country, but said Bush "has made clear he believes the NAFTA trucking provisions should be implemented."

Pedro Cerisola, Mexico's communications and transport secretary, said he welcomed the decision and said his agency will work with truckers on how to take advantage of the opening.

NAFTA, the free trade agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico, called for Mexican trucks to have unrestricted access to highways in border states - Arizona, Texas, California and New Mexico - by 1995 and full access to all U.S. highways by 2000.

The Clinton administration, citing safety concerns, but also under pressure from unions representing U.S. truckers, refused to implement the provisions. Don't expect those unions to

give up their fight just because of the panel's decision.

"Until something is implemented that ensures safety on our highways, we're not going to support this regulation," said Joseph Rhein, vice president of the Teamsters Union in Phoenix. "To throw away decades of work just for the sake of free trade is a huge step backward."

Canada has a truck inspection program similar to the U.S. system, and its truckers are allowed access to all U.S. roadways. Mexico has no such system, and its trucks are only allowed within a 20-mile zone north of the border, where they transfer their loads to American trucks.

The NAFTA arbitration panel included two U.S. representatives, two Mexicans and a neutral member from the United Kingdom.

Castaneda Define El Nuevo Rol De "Iguales"

Ha nacido un nuevo México -- y se comienza a reestructurar el campo político y social no sólo para los 100 millones de nacionales, sino también para los 17 millones de mexicanos y mexicanoamericanos que viven en los Estados Unidos.

Nuestro vecino al sur, cuyos dirigentes políticos han aceptado un rol sumiso a los intereses políticos y económicos de los Estados Unidos durante décadas, está por transformarse irrevocablemente.

Hablando con firmeza, pero diplomáticamente, Jorge Castañeda, el nuevo ministro del exterior nombrado por el Presidente Vicente Fox, así declaró durante una discusión informal, que duró 90 minutos, con un público muy concurrido, de 200 representantes invitados del cuerpo diplomático internacional, los medios de comunicaciones del hemisferio, analistas de instituciones estadounidenses y representantes de los intereses corporativos de los Estados Unidos.

El grupo, que quedó hombre a hombre en una sala de reuniones en la sede de la Fundación Carnegie para la Paz Internacional a unas pocas cuadras de la Casa Blanca, le disparó preguntas que corrían la gama del papel que juegan los latinos de los EEUU en la administración de Fox, hasta las regulaciones del tratado de libre comercio y soluciones para el conflicto de Chiapas.

México y los Estados Unidos están dispuestos a entablar una "relación de socios, más completa, más madura, más equitativa y más estable," dijo Castañeda, quien hace mucho está consider-

ado uno de los importantes voces del país, con ideas liberales y proyecciones a largo plazo.

Después de la reunión Castañeda se dirigió a varias reuniones más con el secretario de estado de los Estados Unidos, Colin Powell, y asesora en

asuntos de seguridad nacional, Condoleezza Rice. Estas sesiones sirven para refinar un programa para la reunión del 16 de febrero en el rancho San Cristóbal de Fox, en Guanajuato, a la que queda invitado el Presidente George W. Bush.

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Castaneda Defines New "Equals" Role for U.S. Talks

By Cynthia L. Orozco

The dawn of a new Mexico has arrived -- one that is starting to reconfigure the playing field not only for that nation's 100 million residents, but for the 17 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans who live in the United States.

Our southern neighbor, whose political leaders have accepted a subservient role to U.S. political and economic interests for decades, is about to change that relationship irrevocably. In firm but diplomatic terms, President Vicente Fox's new foreign minister, Jorge Castañeda, made the point in a 90-minute, free-wheeling discussion Jan. 30 with a standing-room-only audience of 200 invited representatives from the international diplomatic corps, hemispheric media, U.S. and international think-tank analysts, and representatives of U.S. corporate interests.

The group, crowded into a meeting room at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace headquarters a few blocks from the White House, peppered him with questions ranging from the U.S. Latino role in Fox's new administration to NAFTA rules and a solution to the Chiapas conflict.

Mexico and the United States are ready "to have a fuller, more mature, more equitable and more stable partnership," Castañeda, long regarded as his country's liberal, visionary voice, told the group before heading to meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. The sessions were to further refine an agenda for the Feb. 16 meeting at Fox's San Cristóbal ranch in Guanajuato with his invited guest, President George W. Bush.

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PREGUNTAS Y RESPUESTAS

(Por razones de espacio las respuestas se han recortado)

P: ¿Cuáles serán los puntos de discusión que tocará el Presidente Fox con el Presidente Bush?

R: Hay toda una lista de puntos que se discutirán y que continuaremos discutiendo durante la serie de reuniones que se llevarán a cabo. Estos puntos incluyen la inmigración y el problema de la violencia intolerable en la frontera. La documentación de los inmigrantes indocumentados es otro gran problema en los Estados Unidos, y lo es también para nosotros en México. Está también el problema en cuanto a los trabajadores temporales. El año pasado llegaron a los Estados Unidos unos 55,000 mexicanos con dos tipos de visa, H-2A y H 2-B. El crecimiento de este grupo ha sido espectacular en los últimos cinco años. También abordaremos los temas de la categorización de México aparte de las cuotas generales de inmigración para los Estados Unidos.

P: En términos generales, ¿cómo esboza el Presidente Fox su relación con la comunidad latina en los Estados Unidos?

R: Desde su primera campaña para gobernador de Guanajuato en 1991, Fox ha puesto gran énfasis en la enorme importancia de tanto la comunidad mexicana como la comunidad latina en general en los Estados Unidos. La primera reunión pública importante que convocó se organizó en Los Pinos el 3 de diciembre con representantes de las comunidades mexicanas y mexicoamericanas en los Estados Unidos.

Piensa estar consultando con ellos constantemente con referencia a los temas que más les afectan, en particular el tema de la inmigración. No piensa finalizar una posición inamovible en cuanto a ninguno de los temas de la inmigración, sea la amnistía, programas de trabajadores huéspedes, la violencia en la frontera, visas permanentes para los mexicanos, etcétera, sin estar en contacto estrecho con la comunidad latina, sus organizaciones, instituciones, comités políticos además de la comunidad mexicana de los Estados Unidos.

P: ¿Cuáles son las perspectivas de su gobierno en referencia al proceso estadounidense de certificación de narcóticos?

R: El presidente considera que el proceso no es productivo.

Crea problemas innecesarios y fomenta obstáculos innecesarios. Fox piensa que el proceso se debe reemplazar gradualmente por un proceso más amplio de evaluación.

P: ¿Qué posición toma usted con el voto de los mexicoamericanos en los Estados Unidos para el presidente de México?

R: El tema para nosotros son los mexicanos que viven en los Estados Unidos, no son los mexicoamericanos. Desde que el gobierno instituyó la doble nacionalidad con México en 1996, hay un número reducido de mexicanos en los Estados Unidos que tienen también la ciudadanía estadounidense. Consecuentemente surgió también un número reducido de ciudadanos de los Estados Unidos que han vuelto a solicitar la ciudadanía mexicana, unos 14,000 o 15,000. No votaron en las elecciones del 2000 porque la implementación de la ley nunca se aprobó.

Este es uno de los temas principales que el gobierno estará proponiendo al congreso este año. Sería ideal que tuvieran el voto los mexicanos para la lista nacional de congresistas en el año 2003, pero es complicado porque es difícil que los que están en el extranjero voten en elecciones regionales. Estamos seguros que podremos tener todo en su lugar para que en el 2006 los mexicanos en los Estados Unidos puedan votar en los comicios presidenciales y del senado.

P: ¿Podría explicar NAFTA-Plus? ¿Incluye un componente de energía como la idea de la administración Bush para negociar un acuerdo sobre la energía para América del Norte?

R: Se refiere el Presidente Fox a una idea a largo plazo que tiene él con la que durante los próximos 20 a 30 años los tres países que firmaron el Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte comenzarían a asentarse la comunidad norteamericana que en realidad ya está surgiendo. Este tema es uno entre otros que quiere enfatizar para el largo plazo, como por ejemplo la energía, infraestructura, inmigración y cohesión social.

P: ¿Cuál es la mejor forma de proteger y mejorar la vida de los trabajadores migrantes en los Estados Unidos?

R: Nos importa mucho este tema por los mexicanos que actualmente viven en los Estados Unidos y los que están cruzando la frontera de ambos lados en los próximos 10 a 15 años. El Presi-

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dente Fox tuvo una reunión extendida y fructífera con John Sweeney en Davos el 28 de enero. Esperamos que esta reunión sea el punto de partida para un nuevo tipo de diálogo y relación que debe existir entre las autoridades mexicanas y las organizaciones laborales y sindicatos como la AFL-CIO.

No tiene sentido que como gobierno federal nos pongamos inexecutable porque ya hay unos diez estados, como Zacatecas, que están negociando acuerdos con otros estados en los Estados Unidos, por la simple razón que los de Zacatecas quieren trabajar, y los negocios como la industria de frigoríficos de carne en Iowa los necesitan a su vez para el trabajo. No hay ninguna posición legal en los Estados Unidos que fomente esta posibilidad.

Estamos dispuestos a escuchar y conocer los problemas. Sería muy difícil que esto avanzara si se destacara a un solo tema de entre todos los temas de inmigración.

P: ¿Qué piensa usted de la posición de México respecto al mundo y su deseo de asumir posiciones de liderazgo?

R: El presidente quiere que México participe activamente en idear, diseñar, construir y mejorar la nueva arquitectura internacional para el siglo 21. Quiere que México tenga un rol en el mundo que concuerde con su población, el tamaño de su economía, y quizás más importante, con el tipo de ambiciones que tiene para México.

P: ¿Cuáles son las áreas del programa para México y América Latina que se podrán adoptar rápidamente? ¿Cuáles serán los temas más difíciles?

R: Los temas de comercio, como el camionaje, el atún, Telecom, y el azúcar están en vías de negociación. Existen también temas a mediano y largo plazo que tienen que ver más con maneras más efectivas y constructivas de cooperación para el cumplimiento de las leyes sobre narcóticos y temas de inmigración. La brecha entre el déficit del presupuesto, las tasas de interés, etc., sigue siendo muy grande. Nos gustaría ver también la reacción que los Estados Unidos podría tener al movimiento mexicano hacia una convergencia económica a largo plazo.

Además está la noción de que tal vez los dos países hayan llegado a una etapa en su relación legal que les permitiría dismutar de una relación de socios, más completa, más madura, más equitativa y más estable en la que los diferentes temas que siempre

forman parte del programa incluyen también aquellos temas que no sean de naturaleza estrictamente bilateral y que han dividido al hemisferio en el pasado sin haber sido abordados.

P: ¿Qué se espera con Chiapas?

R: Ha habido un cambio respecto a este tema en México que tiene que ver con el hecho que la nueva administración ha decidido enfatizar la importancia de llegar a una solución del conflicto en Chiapas. Esto no es algo nuevo que el gobierno quiera dejar sin resolver. El Presidente Fox se reunió con muchas personas en noviembre que le aconsejaron permitir que el problema continúe tal y como está. El presidente reflexionó sobre este consejo, lo conversó con otras personas, y llegó a la conclusión que el curso de acción más apropiado es el que él seleccionó.

El curso que él divisa es implementar una serie de medidas unilaterales y laterales en Chiapas que intenten reestablecer negociaciones con los zapatistas y poner fin al conflicto. Las medidas incluyen cesar los vuelos militares sobre Chiapas, eliminar más de 50 puestos de inspección de carretera, retirar tropas de cuatro campos militares grandes en el área de presión zapatista, liberar a un gran número de supuestos prisioneros políticos, y eliminar restricciones en las visas para turistas extranjeros que quieran visitar México.

Con estos puntos quiere demostrar que obra en serio. Estas medidas se percibieron como medidas para aumentar la confianza, pasos dados para que los zapatistas pudieran confiar en él y reanudar las discusiones con él. La posición del gobierno es que no hay nada que no sea negociable.

Es parte de la nueva política democrática de México que todos los grupos políticos se pueden integrar al proceso democrático mexicano. El Presidente Fox proyecta que con la nueva política democrática en México los zapatistas, y el mismo Marcos entrarán gradualmente al proceso político mexicano, donde siempre han debido estar. Se deben debatir estos temas, negociarlos y conversar sobre ellos. No se deben usar para pelear.

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QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Q: What types of issues will President Fox discuss with President Bush?

A: There is a whole list of agenda items that we will discuss and that will continue to be discussed throughout the other meetings they will have. They will include immigration and the problem of the intolerable violence on the border. The documentation of undocumented immigrants is a big problem in the United States, as well as for us in Mexico. There is also the problem regarding temporary workers. Last year, there were about 55,000 Mexicans who came to the United States on the two types of visas, H-2A and H-2B. The growth has been spectacular in the last five years or so. There are also issues about placing Mexico in a different category outside of the general U.S. immigration quotas.

Q: What has President Fox outlined in terms of his relationship with the Latino community in the United States?

A: Since his first campaign for governor of Guanajuato in 1991, he has given enormous importance both to the Mexican and Latino communities in the United States.

He has traveled extensively to areas with strong Mexican, Mexican-American and Latino communities. The first important public meeting organized at Los Pinos on Dec. 3 was with representatives of the U.S. Mexican and Mexican-American communities. He intends to be in constant consultation with them on the issues important to them, particularly on immigration.

He does not intend to adopt a final stance on any immigration issues, whether it's amnesty, guestworker programs, violence on the border, permanent visas for Mexicans, et cetera, without being in close contact with the Latino community, its organizations, institutions, caucuses, and also with the Mexican community in the United States.

Q: What are your government's views of the U.S. drug certification process?

A: The president considers the entire process to be counterproductive. It creates unnecessary problems and constructs unnecessary obstacles. He thinks it should be gradually replaced with a broader evaluation process.

Q: What is your position on the Mexican-American vote for the president of Mexico in the United States?

A: The issue for us is Mexicans living in the United States, not Mexican Americans. Since the government initiated dual citizenship with Mexico in 1996, there are a certain small number of Mexicans in the United States who also have U.S. citizenship. There are also a small number of American citizens who have subsequently reapplied for Mexican citizenship, like 14,000 or 15,000.

They didn't vote in the 2000 elections because the implementing legislation was never approved. This is one of the main issues of reform that the government will be sending up to the Congress this year. Ideally we could have Mexicans voting for the 2003 national list of congressmen, but it's complicated because it's difficult to have people from abroad vote in regional elections. We are certain that we will be able to have everything in place so that by the 2006 presidential and national senatorial elections, Mexicans in the United States will be able to vote.

Q: Can you explain NAFTA-Plus? Does it have an energy component along the lines of the Bush administration idea to negotiate a North American energy agreement?

A: President Fox is referring to this long-range vision of his whereby over the next 20 to 30 years the three signatories of the North American Free Trade Agreement begin to build the North American community that is emerging on its own anyway. This has to do with many issues in the context of a long-term vision he is trying to emphasize, including energy, infrastructure, immigration and social cohesion.

Q: How can we best protect and enhance the lives of migrant workers in the United States?

A: This is an issue of great importance to us because of Mexicans currently in the United States and those who will be coming one way or the other over the next 10 to 15 years.

President Fox had a very long and fruitful meeting with John Sweeney in Davos (at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland) on Jan. 28. It was one we hope will set the stage for a new type of dialogue and relationship that

should exist between Mexican authorities and organizations like the AFL-CIO.

There's no sense for us as a federal government to take a very adamant position because literally some 10 states, like Zacatecas, are already negotiating treaties with states in the United States, because the people there want these jobs and the businesses, like the Iowa meat-packing plants need the people from Zacatecas to do the work. There are no legal positions in the United States that make this possible.

We are willing to listen and to know what all the issues are. It would be very difficult for this to move forward if any one specific aspect of the broad immigration agenda were singled out as more important than the others.

Q: What are your thoughts on Mexico's place in the world and its interest in taking some leadership positions?

A: The president wants Mexico to be very active in participating in the crafting, design, construction and improvement of the new international architecture for the 21st century. He wants Mexico to play a role in the world that is consonant with its population, the size of its economy, but perhaps more importantly with the type of ambitions he has for Mexico.

What areas of the Mexican and Latin American agenda can be pursued quickly? Which will be more difficult?

Trade issues such as trucking, tuna, telecom, and sugar that are being negotiated. There are also mid- to long-term matters that have to do with more effective, constructive forms of cooperation on drug enforcement and immigration matters. There's still a great gap on the budget deficit, interest rates, etcetera. We also want to see what reaction the United States could have to Mexico's move to long-term economic convergence.

Also, there is the notion that the two countries have perhaps reached the stage in their legal relationship to have a fuller, more mature, more equitable and more stable partnership where the types of issues that are always on the agenda also include those of a strictly non-bilateral nature that have divided the hemisphere in the past but have not been addressed. Q: What is the outlook in Chiapas?

A: A shift has occurred in Mexico on this matter and it has to do with the fact that the new administration has decided to emphasize the importance of reaching a solution to the conflict in Chiapas. This is not something the new government believes should be left on the back burner.

President Fox met with many people in November who said that the most advisable way to go was just to let matters continue as they were. The president reflected on this, talked about it with others and came to the conclusion that the proper course was the one he chose.

The course he devised was to implement a series of unilateral and lateral measures in Chiapas seeking to re-establish negotiations with the Zapatistas and to put an end to the conflict. The measures include stopping overflights, eliminating more than 50 highway checkpoints, withdrawing troops from four large military encampments in the area where the Zapatistas are present, freeing a significant number of "political prisoners" and eliminating restrictions on visas for visitors from abroad who want to come to visit Mexico.

These gestures are intended to show that he means business. They were seen as confidence-building measures, steps taken to show the Zapatistas that they could trust him and they could resume talks with him. The government's stance is that there is nothing that is non-negotiable.

This is part of Mexico's new democratic politics that there is no political group that cannot be brought into the democratic process in Mexico. This is something that he looks forward to in the sense that it means that the Zapatistas and Marcos himself will be gradually entering the democratic process in Mexico, which is where they should always have been. These issues should be debated, negotiated and talked about -- and not fought over.

(Cynthia L. Oroscó is a correspondent with Hispanic Link Weekly Report in Washington, D.C. She may be contacted by e-mail at cynthia(AT)SIGN)hispaniclink.org(c) 2001, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate International.

The Poet Who Added 12 Years To My Life

By Jorge Luis Romeu

Cuban poet Heberto Padilla, who wrote the book of poems "Fuera del Juego" in the late 1960s and was rewarded with imprisonment by the Cuban government, died recently in relative obscurity at the University of Alabama, where he spent his last years teaching.

Even though we met only a few times, during Cuban-exile literary conferences at Columbia and Rutgers universities, I feel a sadness that is very personal. I owe him a big one.

Padilla was a living indictment for one of the darkest sides of Fidel Castro's regime: intellectual oppression. I know. He and I share some common experiences. In fact, if it had not been for Padilla, the story of my life might have included an additional tragic chapter.

Padilla was born in 1931 in Pinar del Río, a Cuban province known as "The Cinderella." He overcame the poverty and other obstacles of such a region and found his way to Havana. There, in the late 1950s, he began participating in literary circles. At the start of the 1959 Revolution, he joined the group of young artists and writers who formed the UNEAC, the official writers union, and published his first works.

In 1968, Padilla won the Julián del Casal's UNEAC literary competition with "Fuera del Juego." But the award was withdrawn by government "request."

Padilla fell in disgrace. His work was critical of Fidel Castro's Cuba, and wasn't tolerated. Padilla and his wife, Belkis Cuza Male, also a Cuban writer, were arrested and subjected to long interrogations and imprisonment. Finally, in 1971, Padilla was forced to re-

tract the messages of his poetry in public. He did so at a writer's meeting reminiscent of Stalin's era. After that, he accepted what work he could find as a translator until 1980, when, at the request of several international and political figures, the Cuban government allowed him to go into exile.

The year 1968 was one of great political trauma all over the world. In the United States, the nation became divided over the Vietnam War; vicious conflict between the police and protesters marred the Chicago Democratic Convention. In Mexico, student riots resulted in the Tlatelolco massacre. In France there were student revolts; in Prague, there was a drastic change in the communist government, followed by a Russian invasion.

In Cuba, we had the Ofensiva Revolucionaria, the island's version of the Maoist Cultural Revolution, where whatever had been left of small, private enterprise -- mom-and-pop stores, shoeshine stands, bars -- was taken over by the government. These were also the years of mass expulsions of college students, of massive confinements to the UMAP forced labor camps, and of the Camarioca boatlift, the forerunner of the 1980 Mariel boatlift.

In such a politically charged context, it isn't difficult to understand why Padilla's problems were so large. His forced retraction was so repugnant, even some members of the international community of leftist artists, including Sartre, Paz, Vargas Llosa and Fellini, wrote a public letter of protest to Castro.

That letter resulted in Padilla's release, but he re-

mained ostracized until he was able to leave the country years later.

A few years later, in 1979, I was arrested for writing and publishing a book of short stories that dealt with Cuba's social problems. Like Padilla, I had to submit to interrogation. I was threatened with a 12-year prison sentence for my literary activities.

Our lives were about to share another common thread. As one of many college students expelled from the University of Havana in 1965, I had been sent to the UMAP labor camps. There, I spent two years working in the cane fields of Camaguey.

After my release, I wrote a book of short stories about UMAP, "Los Unos, Los Otros y El Seibo." Published in the United States in 1971, it was praised as one of the two best short story books in Dr. Seymour Menton's study of "Prose Fiction of the Cuban Revolution." Menton classified my work, published under the pen name Beltrán de Quiros, with that of the exiled writers.

The nom de plume was one my father had used for many years in Cuban newspapers and magazines. It was tracked back to me and earned me another visit by the Cuban secret police. I can still close my eyes and see my small rectangular cell, with only one small couch, no windows and a constant, searing light at secret police headquarters, Villa Marista. I was allowed only my underwear. I can remember the cold, the air conditioner humming at full blast. A guard would lead me to the interrogator's office.

There, a spotlight in my eyes, I was asked again and again, for hours, how was I able to

get the book out of the country? They just couldn't believe I had sent every story, one by one, in the mail.

At one of the first interrogation sessions, I made a discrete but clear reference to Padilla, and to the fact that I still had other 30 stories outside the country, awaiting publication.

In the end, because of the Padilla precedent and international clamor his long imprisonment generated, I was deemed guilty but released -- *liberado culpable*.

Afterward, I was harassed to the point that even when I obtained a valid U.S. resident visa, my sister had to come from Florida for me in a shrimp trawler during the Mariel boatlift.

My second book, "La Otra Cara de la Moneda," was published a few years later, in 1984.

In my mind, there is no question that, without the Padilla precedent, I would have rotted in the oblivion of a Cuban jail for 12 years. And I have always thought about how hard it must have been for Padilla to denounce his friends publicly and apologize for something he surely was so proud of -- writing his poetry book.

I remember Heberto Padilla as one of Cuba's first peaceful dissidents. And, of course, as a very fine poet.

(Dr. Jorge Luis Romeu, a 1994 Fulbright Senior Scholar to Mexico, is an Emeritus Faculty member of the State University of New York. He directs the Juárez-Lincoln-Martí International Education Project. Romeu may be contacted by e-mail at jromeu(AT)SIGN)cat.syr.edu(c) 2001, Hispanic Link News Service. Distributed by Los Angeles Times Syndicate

Festival Viva Aztlan - March 16-17

Lubbock Memorial Civic Center - Vea Lo Mejor en Grupos de Ballet Folklórico

LHCC Banquet/Gala Event a Success



Left to right: Olga Riojas-Aguero, chairwoman of the banquet committee and husband and founder of the organization Bidal Aguero, Chancellor John T. Montford who was the keynote speaker for the event and his beautiful wife Mrs. Montford. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



The new board of directors were sworn in by the Hon. Judge Aurora Chaides-Hernandez at the Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 27th Annual Banquet/Gala last Friday. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



Mr. and Mrs. Bidal Aguero at the special occasion. Bidal is the founder of the chamber and his wife Olga - chairwoman of the banquet. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



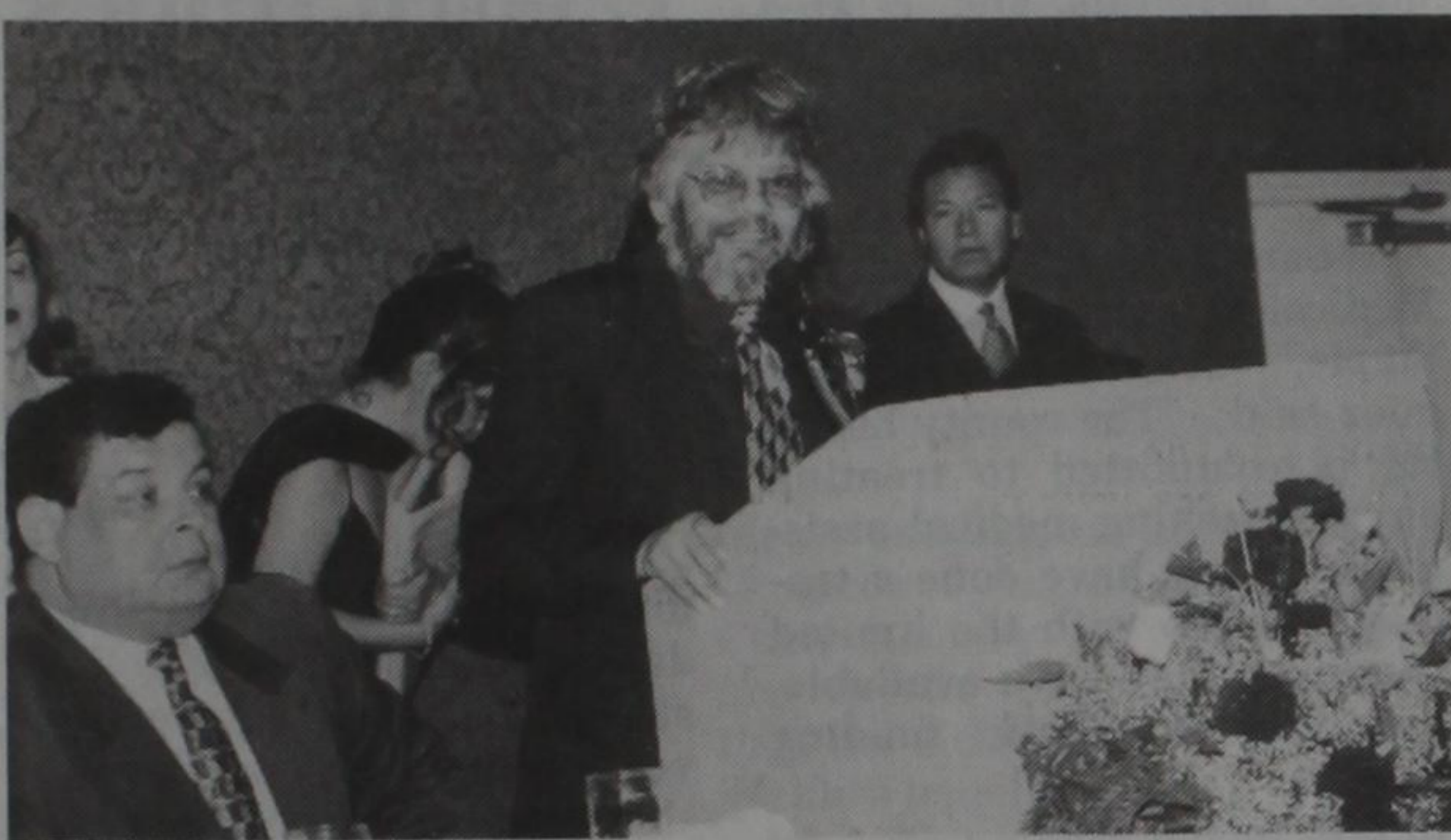
Left to right: Olga Riojas Aguero along with Sam Guzman from Austin who was the master of ceremonies for the special occasion and LHCC president Esther Sepeda. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



Sheriff David Gutierrez (center of photo) sang the National Anthem at the banquet. He and his wife were accompanied by some members of his staff. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



2001-2002 New Board Members of the Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce were very impress with the outcome of the event. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



Bidal Aguero founder of the organization was recognize with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Paula Montoya who was the chairman of the Award committee for the event. A standing ovation was given to Bidal for great vision for the chamber. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)



Last year's board of directors of the Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce received an award in appreciation for their efforts. Left to right: Jim Gomez, Efen Villanueva, Marilanda Cristan, Eva Baiza Garcia, Beto Cardenas and Adam Lara. (Photo by John P. Cervantez 744-1654)

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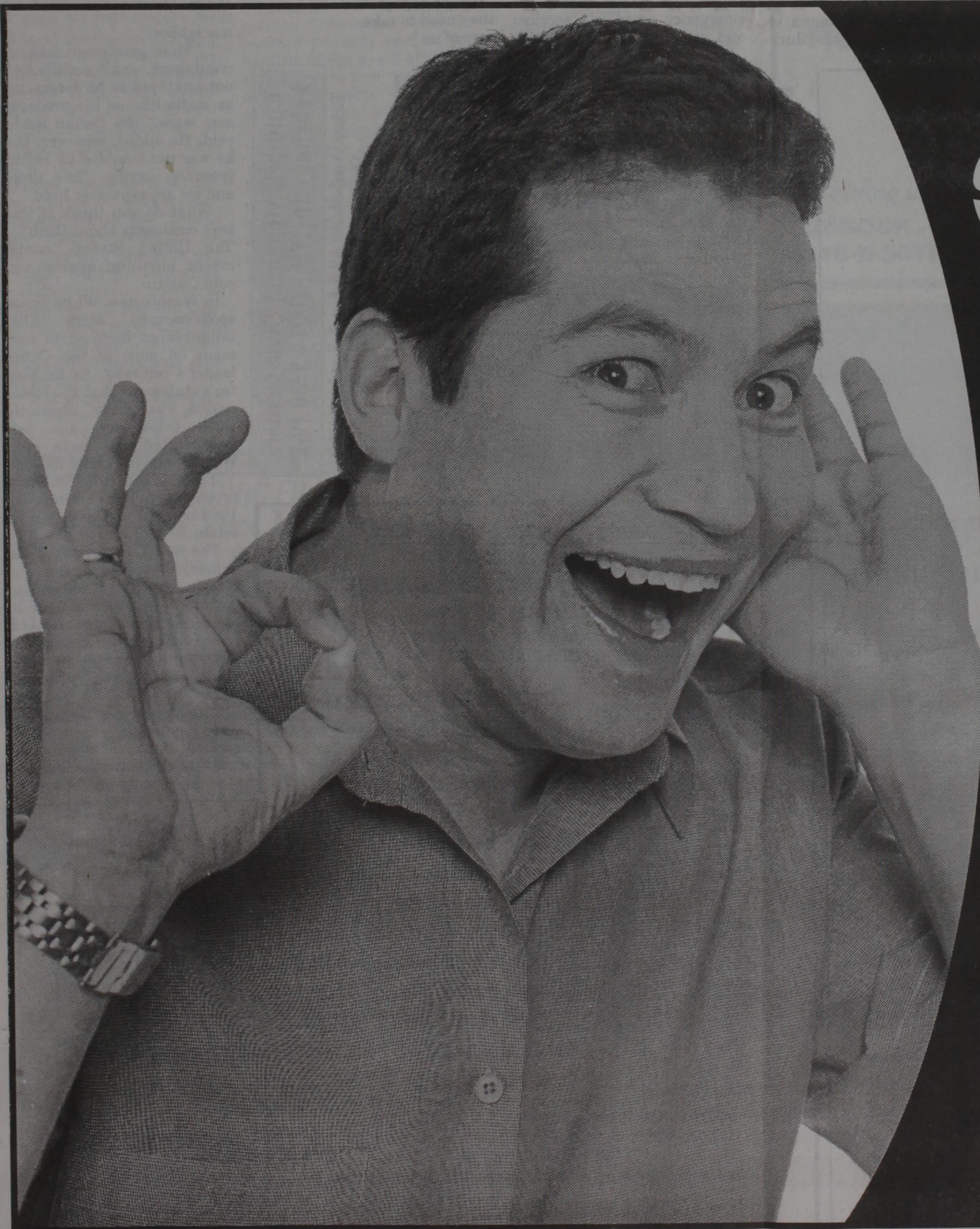
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El Poeta Que Anadio doce Años a Mi Vida

By Jorge Luis Romeu

El poeta cubano Heberto Padilla, que escribió el poemario "Fuera del Juego" a finales de la década de los sesenta y fuera recompensado por el gobierno de Castro con la cárcel, falleció recientemente en relativa obscuridad, en la Universidad de Alabama donde enseñó literatura estos últimos años.

A pesar de habernos visto en solo un par de ocasiones, durante dos conferencias literarias de exiliados cubanos, en Columbia y Rutgers, siento una pena muy personal, pues en cierta forma le debo una.

Padilla fue una acusación viviente contra uno de los aspectos mas nefastos del Castriismo: la opresión a los intelectuales. Me consta: él y yo compartimos experiencias similares. Es mas, si no hubiese sido por el Caso Padilla, mi vida habria podido incluir un capitulo adicional bien triste.

Heberto Padilla nació en 1931 en Pinar del Río, provincia cubana conocida como "la Cenicienta." Logró salvar muchos obstáculos existentes en aquella región y establecerse en La Habana donde, a finales de los cincuenta, comenzó a participar en círculos literarios. Al comienzo de la revolución cubana de 1959, Padilla se unió a los escritores jóvenes que formaron la UNEAC, organismo oficial de los escritores cubanos, y publicó sus primeras obras.

En 1968, Padilla obtuvo el premio Julián del Casals, de la UNEAC, con su libro de poemas "Fuera del Juego." Mas el premio fue "retirado" a petición del gobierno y Padilla cayó en desgracia. Sus escritos, críticos de la situación reinante en la Cuba de Castro, no podían ser tolerados.

Padilla, y su esposa la tambien escritora cuban Belkis Cuza Male, fueron arrestados y sometidos a extensos interrogatorios y detenciones. Finalmente, en 1971, Padilla fue obligado a retractarse publicamente en una reunión de escritores, que nos recuerda a las de Stalin en Rusia. Después, Padilla sobrevivió como traductor y otros oficios menores hasta que, en 1980, gracias al pedido de varios in-

telectuales y políticos internacionales, se le permitió salir al extranjero.

Ese año de 1968 en que comenzó el proceso de Padilla fue también de muchos acontecimientos políticos en todo el mundo. En EEUU, el país se dividió entre los que apoyaban y los que se oponían a la guerra de Viet Nam; fuertes choques entre policías y manifestantes marcaron la Convención Nacional Demócrata de Chicago. En México, los estudiantes fueron masacrados en Tlatelolco; en Francia los estudiantes se sublevaron en las calles; y en Praga, los cambios gubernamentales en favor de una apertura produjeron la invasión Soviética.

En Cuba no ocurrió menos: tuvimos la Ofensiva Revolucionaria, versión tropical de la Revolución Cultural de Mao. Y todo lo que quedaba de libre empresa: zapateros, relojeros, limpiabotas, pequeñas bodegas de barrio, todo fue tomado por el gobierno de Castro. Estos también fueron los años de las expulsiones en masa de estudiantes universitarios, del Puente de camarioca, precursor del éxodo del Mariel, y de los campos de trabajo forzado de la UMAP.

No es difícil comprender que, en este cargado ambiente político, la situación de Padilla fuese muy delicada. Su retractación pública y forzada resultó tan repulsiva que hasta muchos miembros de la comunidad intelectual internacional de izquierda, como Sartre, Paz, Vargas Llosa y Fellini publicaron una carta abierta de protesta contra estos hechos.

Esta carta abierta fue lo que propició que el gobierno de Castro decidiera dejarlo en libertad, aunque en ostracismo, y luego al fin, dejarlo salir al exilio en 1980.

Algunos años despues del Caso Padilla, en 1979, yo también fui arrestado en La Habana por escribir y publicar, en el extranjero, un libro de cuentos cortos sobre los problemas sociales en Cuba. Al igual que a Padilla, se me sometió a extensos interrogatorios y se me amenazó con una sentencia de doce años de cárcel por mis actividades literarias.

Pues, resultaba que, como otros muchos estudiantes universitarios, fui "depurado" de la Universidad de La Habana y luego mandado a los campamentos de trabajo forzado de la UMAP, en Camaguey.

Mas, a mi salida de estos campamentos, donde pasé dos años trabajando en los cortes de caña, escribí un libro de cuentos que narraba la vida en tales sitios, con lujo de detalles. Este libro, titulado "Los Unos, Los Otros y el Seibo," fue publicado en EEUU en 1971 y fue considerado por el Dr. Seymour Menton en su estudio "Prose Fiction of the Cuban Revolution," como una de las dos mejores obras de ficción escritas fuera de Cuba. Como habia usado el pseudonimo "Beltrán de Quiros," utilizado por mi padre en diarios y revistas cubanas, el Dr. Menton pensó que yo también me encontraba fuera de Cuba.

Al cabo del tiempo, el gobierno me identificó y fui detenido y llevado a Villa Marista, el centro de la seguridad cubana. Todavía puedo ver, en mi mente, la pequeña celda, sin ventanas, con solo un pequeño sofá, una perenne luz encendida y el intenso frio del aire acondicionado particularmente fuerte por estar yo en calzoncillos. Un guardia me llevaba por interminables e intrincados pasillos al cubículo de interrogatorios donde, el oficial investigador, con un farol sobre mis ojos, preguntaba incesantemente como habia podido sacar los cuentos -- y no podía creer que los habia mandado, uno a uno, por correos, al extranjero.

En uno de mis primeros interrogatorios, hice una discreta pero clara referencia al Caso Padilla y al hecho de que tenía todavía mas de treinta cuentos inéditos fuera del país.

Pienso que al final, fue este razonamiento y el recuerdo de la mala publicidad que sufrió el gobierno cubano durante el Caso Padilla, lo que logra que me "liberaran culpable," una especie de libertad bajo palabra, y me mandaran a casa.

Pero que me botaran del trabajo y no me dejaran salir del país a pesar de mis papeles y visados de EEUU, y que fuera necesario que mi hermana viniese en un camaronero, dura-

nte el Exodo del Mariel, para poder salir.

Mi segundo libro de cuentos, "La Otra Cara de la Moneda," fue publicado con el mismo pseudonimo en 1984. Y desde entonces mantengo una columna en los periódicos.

Para mi está claro que, sin el Caso Padilla, me habrían metido en alguna prisión olvidada, por al menos doce años, como a tantos otros disidentes cubanos. Por eso pienso cuan difícil debe haber sido para Padilla el tener que denunciar a sus amigos y retractarse, publicamente, por algo de lo que debe haberse sentido sumamente orgulloso: de haber escrito su libro de poesias.

Para mi, Heberto Padilla fue uno de los primeros disidentes pacíficos de la isla; y claro, que también un buen poeta. (El Dr. Jorge Luis Romeu, Fulbright 1994 en Mexico, es Profesor Emerito de SUNY y dirige el Proyecto Juárez Lincoln Martí de Educación Internacional.



Preparing for Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship

Boys and Girls both are invited to participate in the KofC Free Throw Championship that will take place at Hodges Elementary Gym on Friday Feb. 10th. Ages admitted will be from 10-14 year olds. Registration will start at 8:30 a.m. with the contest going from 10 until 11:30 a.m. Trophies, certificates and jacket patches will be awarded. For information call Herman Hernandez at 794-2522 or Ray Carillo at 763-9087.

While Hospitals Continue to Provide Emergency Services to Undocumented Immigrants Balanced Budget Act Bleeds the American Health Care System

Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez, chairman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on Health, joined members of the House Border Caucus today as an original co-sponsor of legislation which would defray, in part, the overwhelming costs of emergency medical services hospitals provide to undocumented immigrants.

"In 1997, under the Balanced Budget Act, Congressional leadership slashed funding to financially strapped hospitals," Congressman Rodriguez said.

"Four years later, we are still witnessing the fallout. Hospital districts, and their taxpayers, are forced to absorb the high costs of treating undocumented immigrants and other medically indigent patients. It's a struggle to maintain the level and quality of services our communities deserve."

Currently, counties along the Texas-Mexico border spend more than \$23.3 million on emergency medical services and criminal justice proceed-

ings for undocumented immigrants. Other border states are similarly affected. New Mexico spends \$5 million; Arizona spends \$24.2 million; and California spends \$55.7 million. The legislation would amend the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997 to reimburse hospitals and related health care providers who furnish emergency medical services to undocumented aliens.

"San Antonio's University Medical Center is a great example," Congressman Rodriguez said. "The county hospital is committed to treating anyone seeking medical assistance. They have done a tremendous job with the limited resources they have available, but the unrealistic funding cuts are unfair to our community and unfair to the outstanding health care professionals who serve our community. This legislation, at the very least, will give many of our health care providers the resources they need to take care of us."

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Castro Hopes Bush Is 'Not As Stupid As He Seems'

Fidel Castro this week fired his first verbal shot at President Bush since he took office, saying he hoped his new adversary in the White House is "not as stupid as he seems."

In a Sunday speech shown late Wednesday on state television, Castro said that "someone very strange, with very little promise, has taken charge of the leadership of the great empire that we have as a neighbor."

"That gentleman has arrived there, and hopefully he is not as stupid as he seems, nor as mafia-like as his predecessors were," the Cuban leader said. He added, however, that he was not troubled by Bush's presence, saying "he's there, and we are calm over here."

What do you think of Castro's comments about Bush? The United States "cannot invent anything against us," said Castro.

In Washington, White House spokeswoman Mary Ellen Countryman declined to comment on most of the Cuban leader's remarks. As for Castro's statement that the island nation was "calm" about the Bush presidency, she said lightheartedly: "That's good. We are calm over here too."

Bush is the 10th American president to serve since the 1959 triumph of Castro's revolution.

The new U.S. president has expressed support for the four-decade American trade embargo on Cuba. He has said he envisions no change in U.S. policy toward the communist island unless free elections are held and political prisoners are freed.

During last year's presidential campaign, Castro described Bush, a Republican, and Democratic candidate Al Gore as "boring and insipid."

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Polémica en Torno a Beneficios Del Vino

La Asociación del Corazón de Estados Unidos ha restado importancia al pretendido poder beneficioso del vino tinto en la salud cardíaca y afirma que, si se quiere disminuir el riesgo de infarto, lo mejor es hablar con el médico.

Aunque hay estudios que confirman que el vino tinto aumenta el llamado colesterol "bueno" y que posee antioxidantes beneficiosos, para la Asociación del Corazón esos beneficios son "inciertos". El organismo que vela por la salud cardiovascular de los estadounidenses considera que la denominada "paradoja francesa", el hecho de que los países que consumen más cantidad de vino tengan índices menores de enfermedades del corazón, no es un hecho científico

constatable. Lo que sí es eficaz para disminuir el riesgo, ha indicado la asociación en su revista médica *Circulation*, es la reducción del colesterol, la presión sanguínea y el peso corporal, hacer ejercicio y mantener una dieta saludable. Para los especialistas del corazón, el consumo de vino, sin negar que podría tener un efecto beneficioso en algunos casos, entraña riesgos, ya que puede llegar a crear hábito incluso en dosis bajas. Además, los estudios que destacan las virtudes del vino tinto se refieren a cantidades que no superan un vaso de vino diario. El consumo medio en países mediterráneos excede en mucho esa medida. Ira Goldberg, del Comité de Nutrición de la Asociación del Corazón de EE.UU. y profesor de Medi-

cina de la Universidad de Columbia, en Nueva York, ha señalado que la hipótesis benéfica del vino podría deberse a factores diferentes al simple consumo de esa bebida. "Puede ser un marcador de otros estilos de vida diferentes. Hay un alto número de factores dietéticos, como el consumo de fruta fresca, vegetales y pescado y el bajo consumo de lácteos que están asociados con la reducción del riesgo de enfermedad cardíaca", según Goldberg. En total, existen cerca de 60 estudios que muestran que el consumo moderado de alcohol incrementa el denominado colesterol "bueno", o HDL, hasta en un 12 por ciento, indica la experta en nutrición. También hay numerosos estudios que destacan las virtudes de los

antioxidantes que contiene, la mayor parte de ellos procedentes de sustancias que se encuentran en las uvas. Para la asociación del corazón, esos mismos antioxidantes se encuentran en el zumo de uva sin fermentar, con lo que podrían evitarse los peligros del alcohol que el vino contiene. La Asociación del Corazón de EE.UU. considera que deben sopesarse las ventajas del consumo del vino respecto del aparato cardíaco, con los riesgos que plantea el consumo de una bebida alcohólica. "El alcohol es una sustancia adictiva con numerosos efectos secundarios", opina Goldberg, quien agrega que "incluso un consumo moderado puede afectar de modo adverso a algunos individuos". EFE

Crazy Like a Fox?

Maniax Not Changing Name Despite Criticism

The XFL's Memphis Maniax aren't changing their name despite criticism that it is a slap at the mentally ill.

"The name and logo of the Memphis Maniax is demeaning to the 54 million Americans and their families who are affected by mental illness each year," said Michael M. Faenza, the president of the National Mental Health Association in Arlington, Va.

Maniax quarterback Marcus Crandell tries to avoid Birmingham's Patrick Scott. (Allsport)

The Maniax -- the spelling is deliberate -- are one of eight teams in the XFL, a new football league owed by the World Wrestling Federation and NBC.

"Maniac is a person who has unbridled enthusiasm. ... We're just trying to have a little fun," Maniax general manager Steve Ehrhart said Wednesday.

Other teams in the league have such names as the Chicago Enforcers, the New York/New Jersey Hitmen and the Orlando Rage.

The mental health association says the logo of the Memphis team, a drawing of a man with frizzled hair and spirals for eyes, also is de-

meaning. The group also contends that displaying the letters "ax" from the end of the Maniax name on players' helmets perpetuates a stereotype that mentally ill people are violent and dangerous.

"To sell this message of fear and hate to the XFL's target audience of teen-age boys and young men takes America back to the days when people with mental illness were locked away in institutions. The Memphis team even goes so far as to call its headquarters 'The Asylum,'" Faenza said.

It is more likely for the mentally ill to be the victim of violence than to perpetrate it, the advocacy group said.

It urged NBC, the city of Memphis and game sponsors, including the U.S. Army, to voice their objections.

"It's time to send the message that demeaning and misrepresenting people with mental illness will not be tolerated," Faenza said.

Ehrhart said his team's name was selected at the league level and has nothing to do with mental illness.

"We're thoughtful and we're sensitive about that," Ehrhart said, "and we're just about the fun and the enthusiasm."

IRS TAX TIP 2001-14 COMMON ERRORS TO AVOID

The IRS recommends reviewing your entire tax return to be sure it is accurate and complete. Even a simple mistake can cause problems with your tax return, which might lead to delays in processing your return and receiving your refund.

Want to avoid frequent trouble spots? Check these areas, which can reduce problems: Use the peel-off label. You may line through and make necessary corrections right on the label. Be sure to fill in your social security number in the box provided on the return. It is not on the label.

If you do not have a peel-off label, fill in all requested information clearly, including the social security numbers. Check only one filing status on the tax return and check the appropriate exemption boxes. Enter the correct social security numbers for each of those exemptions.

Use the correct Tax Table column for your filing status. Double check all figures on the return. Math errors are a common mistake.

Sign and date the return. If filing a joint return, both spouses must sign and date the return.

Attach all Forms W-2 and any Forms 1099 that reflect tax withheld. Attach all other necessary forms and schedules, in the order of the "Attachment Sequence No." in the upper right corner of each form.

Do you owe tax? If so, enclose a check or money order made payable to the "United States Treasury" with the return. You may choose to pay by credit card by contacting one of the two credit card service providers. If you file electronically, you may authorize the U.S. Treasury to withdraw the payment directly from your bank account.

For a complete checklist and a listing of some of the most common errors, see Tele-

Tax Topic 303 under the "Taxpayer Help & Ed" section of the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov. It can be accessed directly at http://www.irs.gov/tax_edu/tel_etax/tc303.html

IRS TAX TIP 2001-15 TAXABLE OR NONTAXABLE?

Generally, most income you receive is taxable. But there are some areas where certain types of income are partially taxed or not taxed at all. A complete list is available in IRS Publication 525, "Taxable and Nontaxable Income," at www.irs.gov.

Some common examples of items not included in your income are:

- Child support payments
- Gifts, bequests and inheritances
- Workers' compensation benefits
- Meals and lodging for the convenience of your employer
- Compensatory damages awarded for physical injury or physical sickness
- Welfare benefits
- Cash rebates from a dealer or manufacturer

If you surrender a life insurance policy for cash, you must include in income any proceeds that are more than the cost of the life insurance policy. Otherwise, life insurance proceeds paid to you because of the death of the insured person are not taxable unless the policy was turned over to you for a price.

Another example of income that you may or may not exclude is a scholarship or fellowship grant. If you are a candidate for a degree you can exclude amounts you receive as a qualified scholarship or fellowship. Amounts used for room and board do not qualify.

These examples are not all-inclusive. For more information, visit the IRS Web site at www.irs.gov under the "Forms and Pubs" section and view or download Publication 525, "Taxable and Nontaxable Income". It is also available at local offices or by mail.

Drugs and Grapefruit Juice Don't Mix

LUBBOCK - While sitting at breakfast reading the morning paper, it never occurs to many people that their morning breakfast may significantly alter their body's response to medications.

According to the American Medical Association (AMA), one glass of grapefruit juice or half of a grapefruit can significantly increase absorption of some medications into the blood stream as well as decrease the metabolism of many oral medications. This effect, known as the "grapefruit juice effect," causes greater amounts of some drugs to enter the bloodstream, either having therapeutic effects or increasing toxicity.

"The potential for interaction with medications exists whether you consume grapefruit juice with your medications or at a later point in the day," said Michael Robertson, M.D., chief of staff at Covenant Health System.

The "grapefruit juice effect" commonly occurs with medications containing enzymes that decrease, or metabolize, the amount of the drug that enters systemic circulation. If the enzyme is inactivated by grapefruit juice, the amount of medication that enters the blood stream is increased.

"Typically the 'grapefruit juice effect' causes an increase in the peak plasma concentration of the drug," Dr. Robertson said. "That increase is equivalent to taking a higher dose of the drug than the physician prescribed."

"Although the effect may occur in anyone, it can be more pronounced in the elderly, individuals with existing hepatic disease or those taking other drugs such as erythromycin, anti-fungal medications or itraconazole."

Grapefruit juice may

interact with caffeine, cocaine, some tranquilizers, some antihistamines, cholesterol-lowering drugs, oral contraceptives, some antibiotics and other medications.

"To avoid any unwanted interactions with grapefruit juice, consult with your physician before consuming grapefruit juice or grapefruit juice supplements if you take prescription medications," Dr. Robertson said.

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¿Que Pasa?

FREE Immunizations at Fire Station #6

The City of Lubbock Health Department in conjunction with the City of Lubbock Fire Department will once again team up to provide free childhood immunizations. The free immunization clinic will be held at Fire Station #6 located at Indiana Avenue and 35th Street on Saturday, February 10th from 10 am-2 pm.

This clinic is for all children ages 2 months through 18 years needing immunizations.

There will be free popcorn, drinks, prizes, tours of the fire station, and McDonald's clown providing animal balloons and face painting.

It's Powwow Time!

The West Texas Native American Association is hosting their 9th Annual Intertribal Powwow March 24th & 25th, 2001, at the Panhandle South Plains Fairgrounds Coliseum in Lubbock. This event is open to the public at 11:00 am each day with an admission fee of \$3.00 for adults. Children under 12 are free.

The West Texas Native American Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and preservation of Native American Culture by raising public awareness of local Native Americans and promoting traditional ways of conservation. This powwow is a gathering of many tribes, coming together for the purpose of singing, dancing, feasting, selling and trading arts and crafts and upholding traditional customs. Intertribal powwows enrich cultural education and personal pride in all participants and visitors.

Kids Looking For A Few Good Voices

CASA-Court Appointed Special Advocates volunteers are trained and court appointed to investigate, monitor, report and serve as advocates in court for abused and neglected children. While the time commitment is not huge, only 5-15 hours a month, the impact CASA volunteers have on these children's lives is immeasurable.

The Spring 2001 training will begin on Feb. 19 thru Mar. 5. Training sessions will cover the topics of child abuse and neglect, foster care, the legal system, child protective systems, and advocacy.

Spring Softball

Lubbock Parks and Recreation will hold adult league registration beginning Feb. 5 through Feb. 16. Teams can sign up at the Parks Offices at 1010 9th Street from 8am-5pm. The cost is \$280 per team.

There will be an additional \$25 fee for late registration. The season begins March 19 and concludes in mid- to late June.

HAW Accepting Scholarship Applications

Hispanic Association of Women promotes education through Scholarship awards and encouragement

The Hispanic Association of Women (HAW) is accepting applications for individuals interested in scholarship awards. Since 1983, HAW has provided scholarships to Hispanic women interested, or pursuing, higher education degrees. The members of HAW raise funds for the scholarships through annual fundraisers. Thus, the awards sponsored by the organization encourage college bound women to pursue degrees in various areas of studies.

To be eligible for the HAW Scholarship, the individual must present financial need and demonstrate academic potential.

1. To establish need, the Scholarship Selection Committee will follow

standard evaluation criteria based financial need and academic potential.

2. Grades, academic performance, goals, community service/involvement, motivation and character of the individual will serve as indicators of potential.

Eligibility:

1. The applicant must be a resident of Lubbock County.

2. The applicant must provide a copy of an application or enrollment verification letter from an accredited college, university or graduate school.

3. A person attending a vocational or trade school is not eligible for scholarship funds.

4. Other scholarships, grants or loans received, as long as they are not full scholarships or grants, do not exclude the applicant from eligibility.

5. A person related to a member of the Scholarship Selection Committee or

the Executive Board of the Association is not eligible for application.

6. The applicant should be clear and concise in filling out the application

since the decision and selection of the recipient will be made on the

application information and not by personal interview. Two letters of

recommendation or reference should be included with the application.

To request an application please contact Delores Pena, Scholarship Committee Chair, at 742-1997 ext. 290. Entries should be accompanied by a completed application, a personal essay, two letters of recommendation or reference, a copy of a completed Financial Aid Form, a copy of an official transcript, and college attendance or admittance verification. Applications submitted should be returned by March 30, 2001 and must include all required documentation or will not be considered. Completed applications should be mailed to:

Hispanic Association of Women - Scholarship Committee
P.O. Box 1217
Lubbock, TX 79408

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NewsChannel 11 has an immediate opening for part-time Production Assistant. Broadcast background in beneficial. Pre-employment drug test is required. Apply at KCBD-TV, 5600 Avenue A, Lubbock, TX 79404. Hiring decision is expected to be made on or about February 9th. KCBD is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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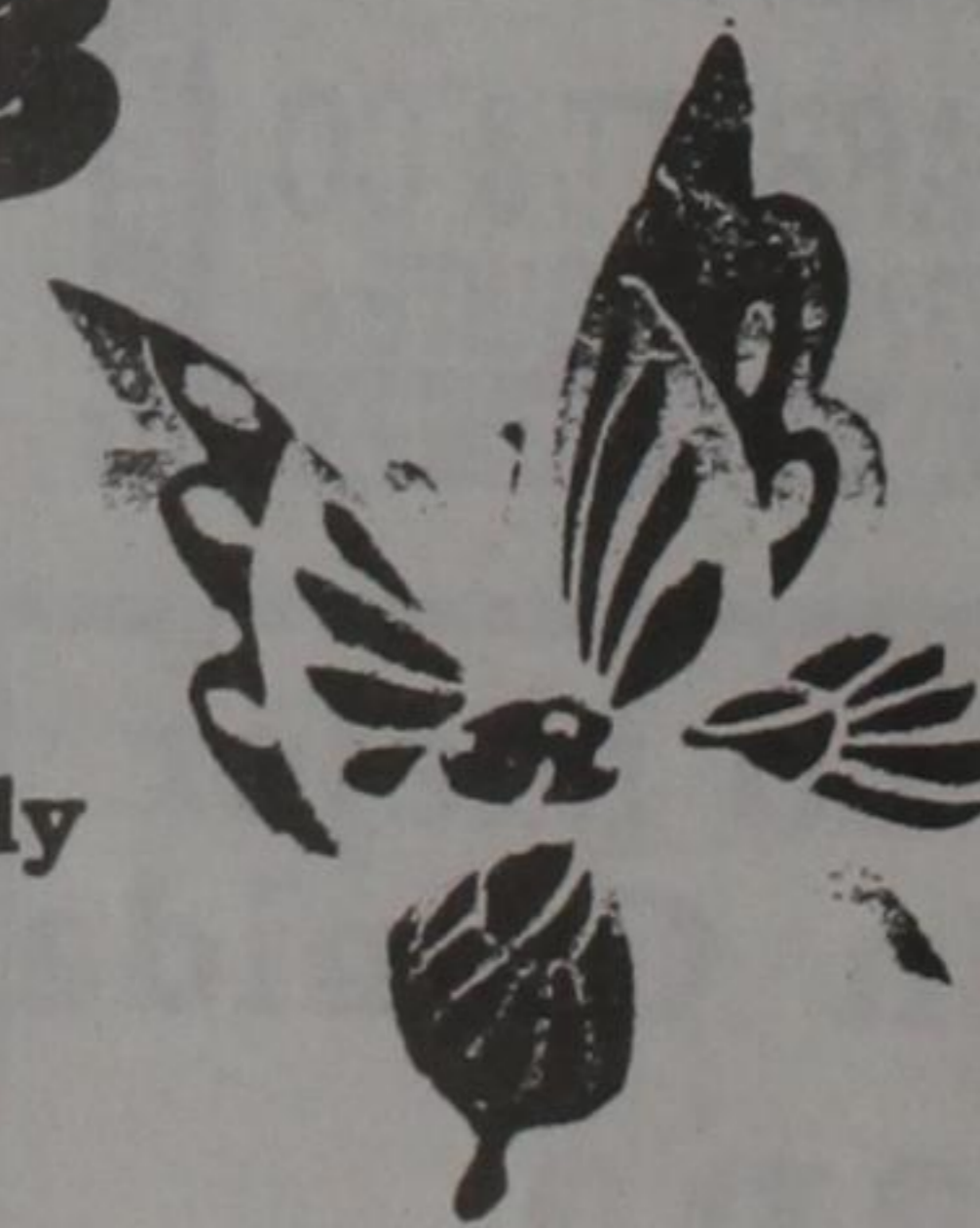
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Friday, February 9
KCBD-TV

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All proceeds from the event will benefit Project Help, a non-profit organization that provides temporary assistance to those who need help paying their utility bills.

We're all in this together. Donate to the Winter Warmth Telethon because Warm Hearts make Warm Homes.

To make a donation, call 770-KCBD. For more information about Project Help, call 741-0459.