

El Editor

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Lic Benito Juarez

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Bush Address Leaves Hispanics Waiting

By Sonia Meléndez

As President George W. Bush officially embarked on his second and final term Jan. 20, many national Latino leaders agreed that his inaugural address fell short in detailing a domestic agenda that will address the community's pressing needs.

Now they must wait until his State of the Union speech Feb. 2.

The dominating theme of the president's 21-minute inaugural talk was his pledge to expand freedom and liberty to all the corners of the world.

On the home front, Bush promised to elevate teaching standards and promote an "ownership culture."

"We will bring the highest standards to our schools and build an ownership society. We will widen the ownership of homes and businesses, retirement savings and health insurance, preparing our people for the challenges of life in a free society," Bush promised.

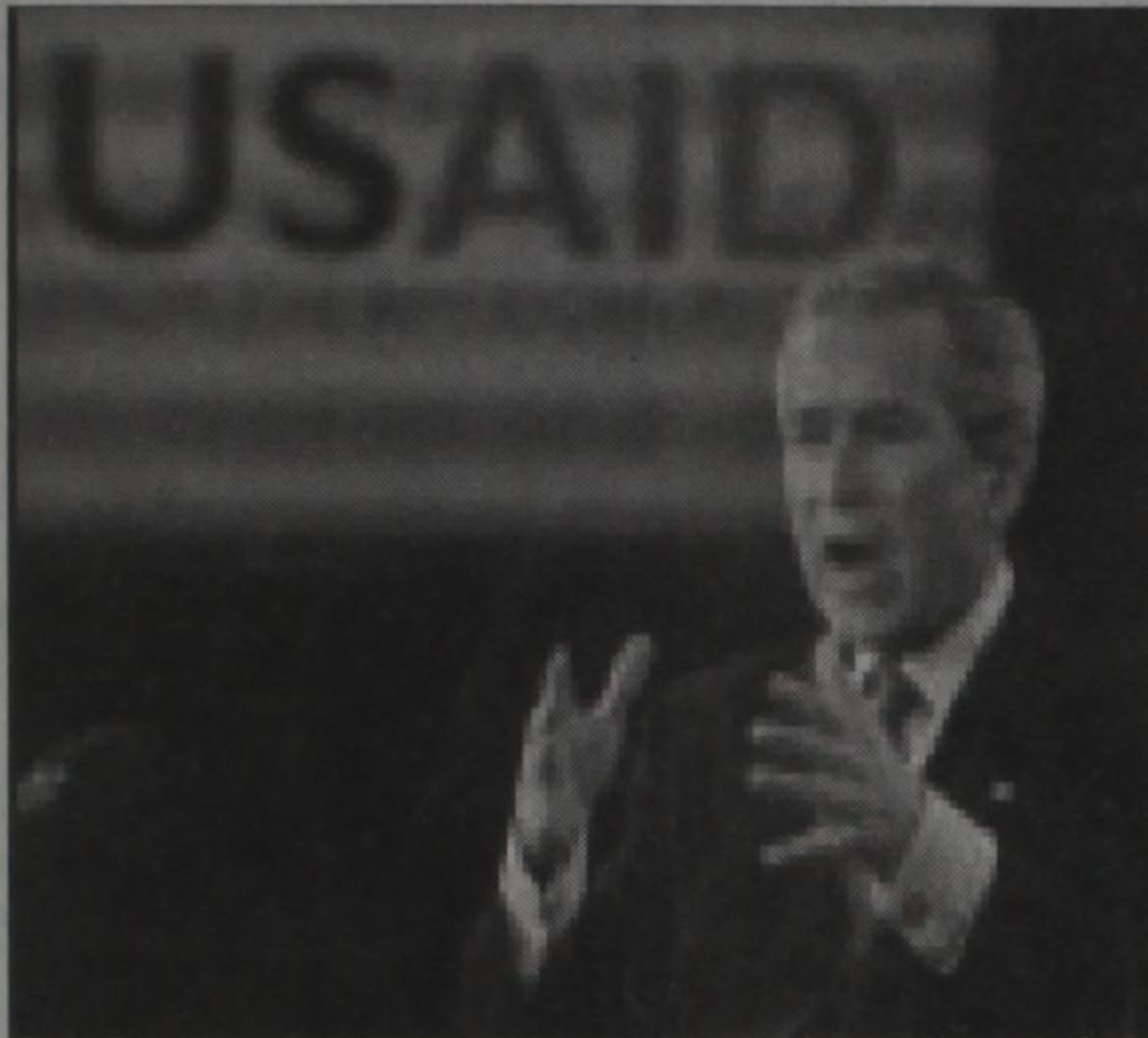
After hearing those words, the ever-patient Arturo Rodríguez, president of the United Farm Workers, reacted to Hispanic Link, "The president's speech was heavy on rhetoric and short on specifics. No domestic issues were cited by name." He was disappointed, he says, that Bush did not mention such issues as immigration reform.

Brent Wilkes, executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, sees the president's second term as presenting opportunities as well as challenges for Hispanics.

Social programs promoting education, health care and Social Security will continue to be cut, he predicts, "We invested a lot of money trying to rebuild Iraq but the reality is that we are not investing much in the United States. And this is where the future of our people is being deter-

mined.

"But," he adds, "there is an opportunity on the immigration front with this president, perhaps one that we haven't seen since President Reagan signed the first amnesty in 1986." Immigration reform could be addressed as early as March, he believes



Janet Murguía, executive director of the National Council of La Raza, warns, "It's going to take a lot of uniting for the president to achieve what he has set out to do. I hope we can see the administration reaching out to include everyone as part of that vision. We would like to be part of that future, making sure Hispanics are part of those stakeholders."

Rodríguez, Wilkes and Murguía all say they are looking forward to Bush's State of the Union address for more specifics on the president's domestic agenda.

Latinos showed strong support for the president during inauguration week. Although none were designated as official, three separate Latino inaugural balls brought together more than 2,000 community activists to the capital.

Community advocate and longtime

GOP supporter Jane García, from Detroit, commented to Hispanic Link that regardless of party affiliation, "As Raza, we must unite and fight for la causa." A growing wave of young Republicans have that quality to find a common ground where Latino Republicans and Democrats can work for the same cause, she said.

Echoing her sentiments was newly elected Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Colo.), a well-received invited speaker at one of the Hispanic balls. He added the sentiment, "This is a very exciting time for Hispanics. I look forward to being the best senator Colorado has seen, I look forward to working with the president."

Some 10,000 protestors from around the country, organized by the San Francisco-based A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition, took to the streets to demonstrate their opposition to the war in Iraq.

Macrina Cárdenas, spokesperson for the Mexico Solidarity Network, stated that the coalition is sending the president this strong antiwar message: "Iraq Is Bush's Vietnam, Bring the Troops Home Now." The protest groups made history by being the first coalition to have bleachers and a stage and sound system along the parade route.

In the inaugural ceremony and festivities, three Latinos played roles. Reverend Dr. Luis León of St. John's Episcopal Church in the District of Columbia gave the invocation at the inaugural ceremony. Ana Cristina performed "The Star-Spangled Banner" at one of the official presidential balls. Songwriter Ryan Cabrera, a Dallas native, took part in the youth concert "America's Future Rocks Today" along with teen idol Hillary Duff.

Insistence on Anti-Immigrant Provisions Creates Stumbling Block for 9/11 Intelligence Legislation

By Sonia Meléndez

A special Congressional session starting Dec. 6 could be Congress's "do or die" chance to agree on an intelligence reform bill. Otherwise, the 9/11 legislation must be reintroduced in the 109th Congress and it might take up to six months to act on it.

Democrats are calling on Bush to pressure conservative House Republicans to drop their opposition to a bill.

The two key negotiators opposing the bill include Armed Services Committee chairman Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) and Judiciary Committee chairman F. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.).

Both are adamant about including anti-immigrant provisions such as a national standard for persons to secure driver's licenses.

"If the president wants for this to happen, he should be able to prevail upon people within his party to back off and support a bill closer to the Senate version," Brent Wilkes, national executive director of the League of United Latin American Citizens, told Weekly Report.

Wilkes predicted that the current Congress will not come to an agreement.

Lynn Tramonte, senior policy and communications associate for the National Immigration Forum, said that regardless of what happens with the current 9/11 bill, "We expect that in the next Congress we are going to see anti-immigration legislation introduced - especially in the House There is just a group of House members who don't like immigrants."

Mexicans are the fifth minority in New York

New York, U.S., January 24, 2005 (Notimex) - The Mexican community has become the fifth minority in New York, where it has experienced a greater growth quadruplicating its presence, although with the lowest levels of income and education.

In the report "The Newest New Yorkers: 2000: Immigrants in New York in the New Millennium" the growth of Mexican immigrants in that entity stands out, and how the arrival of a new big wave of immigrants has transformed the city.

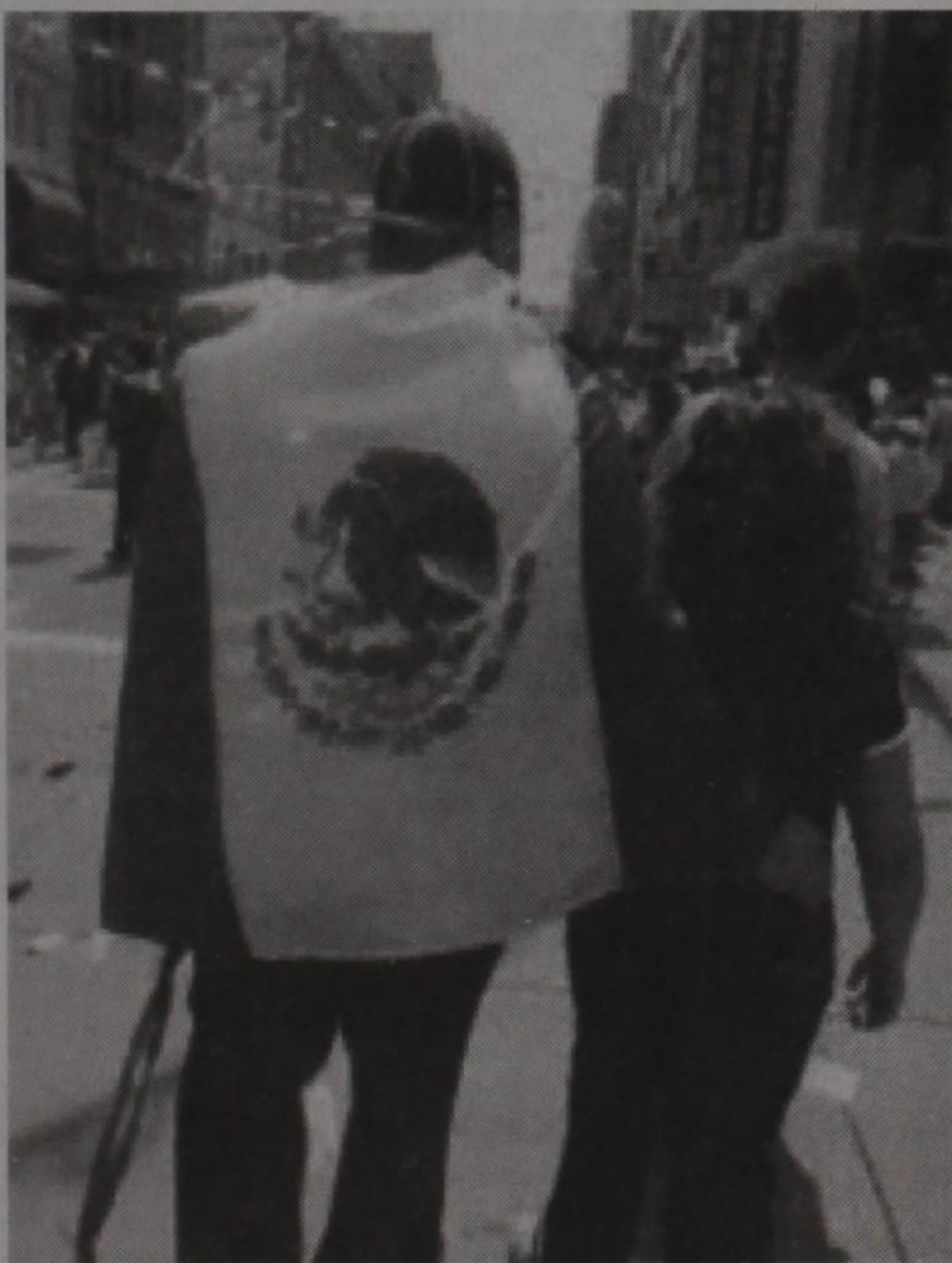
The text, elaborated by a group of demographers headed by Joseph Salvo of the New York City Department of City Planning, by request of the NY council, indicated that from 2000, six of each 10 children born here have an ancestor of foreign origin.

The authors of the 265 pages report, considered as one of the most complete made to date indicated that the massive arrival of immigrants to the Great Apple is similar to others registered in the past.

Thus, the report concludes that the number of immigrants in the city has

reached a new record by reaching 3.2 million, as opposed to 2.9 million registered in 2000.

The report emphasizes that Mexicans are the group of Latin immigrants who has experienced a more remark-



able growth between 1990 and 2000, quadruplicating its number up to 122 thousand 550 from 32 thousand 689 that were in 1990.

That new number supposes an increase of 274.9 percent in the Nineties, although in the first years the Mexicans placed themselves in the 17 position of the list of immigrants with more presence in the city.

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Discurso de Bush Deja a los Hispanos Esperando

Por Sonia Meléndez

Al embarcarse oficialmente el presidente Bush en su segunda y última administración el 20 de enero, concordaron muchos dirigentes latinos en que su discurso de inauguración quedó corta en los detalles sobre un programa doméstico dirigido a las necesidades apremiantes de la comunidad. Ahora se deben esperar a su discurso sobre el estado de la unión el 2 de febrero.

El tema dominante de la ponencia presidencial de 21 minutos de largo fue su promesa de expandir la libertad a todos los rincones del mundo.

En cuanto a lo doméstico, Bush prometió elevar los niveles de enseñanza y promocionar una "cultura de propietarios".

"Llevaremos los más altos estándares a nuestras escuelas y construiremos una sociedad en base a la propiedad. Ampliaremos el número de propietarios de viviendas y comercios, ahorros de jubilación y seguros de salud, preparando a nuestra gente para los retos de una vida en una sociedad libre", prometió Bush.

Tras oír estas palabras, el siempre paciente Arturo Rodríguez, presidente del Sindicato de Trabajadores Agrícolas, ofreció su reacción a Hispanic Link, "Al discurso del presidente le sobra la retórica y le faltaba elementos específicos. No se citó ningún tema doméstico directamente". Se sentía decepcionado, dijo, por lo que Bush no mencionó temas como la reforma migratoria.

Brent Wilkes, director ejecutivo de la Liga de Ciudadanos Unidos Latino Americanos, percibe que el segundo término del presidente presentará tanto oportunidades como retos para los hispanos.

Los programas sociales que promueven la educación, la salud, y el Seguro Social continuarán recortándose, augura. "Invertimos mucho dinero en el intento por reconstruir Irak, pero la realidad es que no invertimos mucho en los Estados Unidos. Y es allí donde se determina el futuro de nuestra gente".

"No obstante", agrega, "existe una oportunidad en el frente de la inmigración con este presidente, tal vez una no vista desde que el presidente Reagan firmó la primera amnistía en 1986". Wilkes cree que se podrá enfrentar el tema de la inmigración tan pronto como marzo.

Janet Murguía, directora ejecutiva del Concilio Nacional de La Raza, advierte, "Va a haber que fomentar mucha unidad para que el presidente logre lo prometido. Espero ver que la administración se extienda hacia incluir a todos como parte de esa visión. Nos gustaría formar parte de ese futuro, asegurando que los hispanos sean parte de los que se toman en cuenta".

Tanto Rodríguez como Wilkes y Murguía dicen que se anticipan al discurso del estado de la nación del presidente el 2 de febrero, en el que esperan ofrecerá mayor especificación sobre el programa doméstico.

Los latinos mostraron fuerte apoyo al presidente durante la semana inaugural. Aunque ninguna fuera designada oficialmente, hubo tres galas latinas que reunieron a más de 2,000 activistas comunitarios en la capital.

Luchadora comunitaria y antigua promotora del partido republicano, Jane García, de Detroit, comentó a Hispanic Link que sin importar la afiliación de partido, "Como raza, debemos unimos y luchar por la causa". Una ola creciente de jóvenes republicanos cuentan con el don de encontrar una causa común por la cual pueden luchar republicanos y demócratas latinos, dijo.

Recientemente elegido senador demócrata por Colorado, y discursante popular en una de las galas hispanas, Ken Salazar, hizo eco de sus sentimientos. Añadió que "este es un momento muy emocionante para los hispanos. Quisiera ser el mejor senador que haya visto Colorado nunca, y me dará mucho gusto trabajar con el presidente".

Unos 10,000 manifestantes de todo el país, organizados por la coalición A.N.S.W.E.R. de San Francisco, se dispersaron por las calles protestando la guerra en Irak.

Macrina Cárdenas, vocera de la Red Solidaria Mexicana, declaró que la coalición envía al presidente el siguiente mensaje fuerte anti-guerra: "Irak es el Vietnam de Bush, Que Regresen Ahora las Tropas". Los grupos de protesta hicieron historia al ser la primera coalición en contar con gradas, un tablero y un sistema de sonido a lo largo de la ruta del desfile.

Jugaron un papel tres latinos durante la ceremonia y las festividades inaugurales. El reverendo doctor Luis León, de la iglesia episcopal de San Juan del Distrito de Columbia, ofreció la invocación durante la ceremonia inaugural. Ana Cristina cantó el himno nacional en una de las galas presidenciales. Compositor Ryan Cabrera, nativo de Dallas, formó parte del concierto juvenil "El Futuro de América Rockea Hoy" al lado de la ídolo adolescente Hillary Duff.

(Sonia Meléndez es corresponsal con Hispanic Link News Service en Washington, D.C. Comuníquese con ella por correo electrónico a: SoniaM@HispanicLink.org)

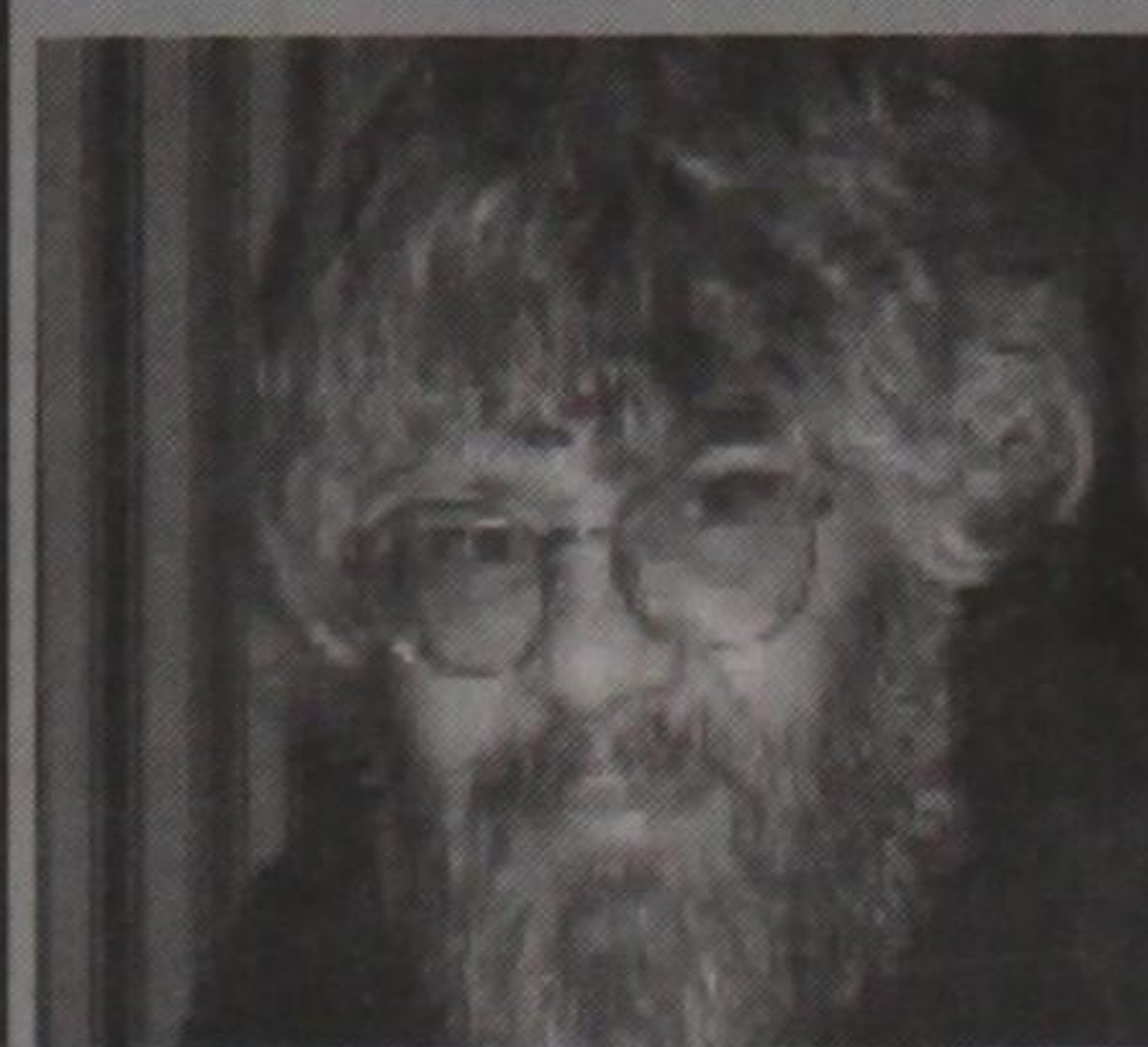
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Comentarios

by Bidal Agüero

Our series of Hispanics are Hot will continue next week with an article on how Hispanics are contributing economically to West Texas and the progress that has been realized by Hispanic in recent years.



Hispanics are Hot!

Send in your comments and opinions to El Editor - P.O. box 11250 - Lubbock, Tx 79408 or electronically to eleditor@llano.net

A Mexican Inmport We Must Stop at the Border

By Marisa Treviño

As vigilant as our Border Patrol agents are at trying to keep people from entering our country illegally, there is nothing they can do to prevent malicious ideas from crossing the border.

The latest one to join the ranks of easy money to be made by drug dealing or human trafficking is kidnapping someone for ransom.

For us, such a scenario is more common in Hollywood movies or TV dramas than in daily life.

In Mexico, where it is estimated that there are 3,000 ransom kidnappings a year, it's a ripped-from-the-headlines kind of story.

Unfortunately, the story is repeating itself in this country.

On Jan. 19, on a sunny morning in a quiet family neighborhood south of downtown Dallas, 30-year-old Mexican-American Oscar Sánchez, a new father and the director of business operations for his family's successful restaurant business, was rear-ended on his way to work.

He was on the phone with

his mother when she heard him get out of the car and actually greet the guy by name who ran into him.

After that, the line went dead and it's been one big pesadilla for the Sánchez family.

The kidnapers, who later were identified as José Félix, a local public school teacher, and Edgar Acevedo, a former restaurant employee of Sánchez, called the family demanding \$3 million in ransom or they would kill Oscar. When the family said they couldn't come up with that kind of money, the ransom was reduced to \$78,000.

The abductors never showed up to claim the money. It was later discovered that Oscar had already been killed and his kidnapers were trying to flee to Mexico. Félix was caught in Chicago trying to board a plane to Guadalajara. Acevedo was able to escape.

In interviews, Acevedo's family attributes his fixation on money because of his background growing up poor in the Mexican state of Zacatecas, and the ridicule he suffered for being gay.

So, he came here illegally to start a new life.

Too bad he brought an old idea.

He must have thought this was a foolproof way to make fast money. It's done back home and those people get away with it.

But like too many criminals, Acevedo isn't too bright. Otherwise, he would have realized he wasn't dealing with some Latino family living here illegally who would do anything to keep a low profile.

The Sánchez family may have Mexican roots but they are an American success story. Part of their success is being contributing members to the local community. They have no reason to hide in the shadows, nor fear publicity, or help from the police.

He should have realized that unlike in Mexico, where law enforcement is considered too corrupt to be effective, our police agencies don't suffer from the same degree of compromise or shortage of manpower when it comes to tracking down criminals.

And there's that little

detail that kidnapping can be punishable by life imprisonment or death.

In a state renowned for enforcing the death penalty, chances are high that Acevedo and Félix face the prospect of knowing when their day of reckoning will be.

The most frustrating part of this story is Acevedo's escape into Mexico. He may feel confident that he won't be extradited to the United States because of Mexico's stand against the death penalty. And maybe, he's right.

I hope not.

If ever there was a situation calling for the United States to take a stern stand on an issue and demand Mexico's cooperation, it is this one. Otherwise, others will try to mimic a crime proven profitable back home, a crime that has turned their country into a private police state where broad-shouldered, unsmiling men wearing dark suits and sunglasses are hired to form human walls.

It is one thing to have to live our lives in fear of terrorists. It's another to live our lives terrorized by opportunists.

Demócratas critican con dureza el nombramiento de Rice para Estado

Mientras los demócratas del Senado aprovecharon las nueve horas de debate sobre la candidatura de Condoleezza Rice para condenar la "fallida" política estadounidense en Irak, la Casa Blanca les proveyó argumentos nuevos para la crítica al solicitar 80,000 millones de dólares adicionales para gastos operacionales en Irak y Afganistán.

La petición del presupuesto suplementario se produjo al mismo tiempo que la Oficina de Presupuesto del Congreso (CBO) pronosticaba un déficit de 368,000 millones de dólares para este año fiscal 2005.

La cifra anticipada no incluye los nuevos fondos para Irak y Afganistán ni las medidas que el presidente George W. Bush incluirá en su nuevo presupuesto, entre ellas la anticipada reforma del Seguro Social y la extensión de las reducciones tributarias creadas en el primer periodo presidencial de Bush.

La CBO pronosticó déficits de 855,000 millones de dólares durante la próxima década, más bajos que los 2.3 billones (trillones) que se pronosticó el año pasado.

Aún así, la Casa Blanca insistió en que el déficit es manejable porque representa poco más del 3% de la economía estadounidense.

Bush prometió en su campaña de reelección que para 2009 el déficit será reducido a la mitad.

Sin embargo, el Presidente pretende avanzar una costosa agenda legislativa encabezada por la reforma del Seguro

Social, reforma que, según diversos pronósticos, podría costar hasta dos billones (trillones) de dólares para compensar los fondos que los trabajadores más jóvenes destinarían a unas cuentas personales de inversión. Como es sabido, los beneficios de los jubilados o retirados estadounidenses se pagan con dinero retenido a los trabajadores en activo. Por ello, si éstos pueden destinar parte de sus ingresos a una cuenta personal, el gobierno deberá buscar el dinero faltante para costear los beneficios a los cuales tienen derecho los jubilados.

Costos militares. Además, los costos militares siguen subiendo aunque el presidente Bush dijo ayer que la nueva partida solicitada es necesaria "para cumplir la misión" en Irak.

"Cuando decidimos proteger a Estados Unidos de una amenaza creciente al quitar a Sadam Husein del poder, hice dos promesas fundamentales: primero, que nuestras tropas tendrán todo lo que necesitan para protegerse y completar su misión. Y, segundo, que Estados Unidos estará de parte del pueblo iraquí en contra de los terroristas que desesperadamente intentan bloquear la democracia y el avance de los derechos humanos", declaró Bush.

Los demócratas, sin embargo, ven en la petición de fondos adicionales una muestra del fracaso de la política de Estados Unidos en Irak ya que en un principio la ofensiva militar se basó en una premisa que después resultó ser falsa: la existencia de

armas de destrucción masiva en Irak.

Rice en la picota. Condoleezza Rice, candidata a suceder a Colin Powell en el Departamento de Estado, es uno de los artífices de la política nacional para Irak.

A pesar de que su nombramiento será confirmado, los demócratas, que están en minoría tanto en la Cámara Baja como en el Senado, lograron nueve horas de debate que destinaron en gran parte a criticar a Rice y la política de Bush en Irak, que el domingo celebra la primera de tres elecciones que deben conducirse este año.

El senador demócrata de Massachusetts, Edward Kennedy, encabezó la lista de demócratas que criticaron a Rice ya que, como asesora de Bush para la seguridad nacional, tuvo una parte fundamental en las decisiones que llevaron a la ofensiva militar en Irak.

De no haberlo hecho, agregó el senador demócrata, "podría haber cambiado el curso de la historia".

Kennedy dijo que Rice no debe ser aprobada como secretaria de Estado ya que no debe recibir una recompensa por ser parte de una política que ha sido evidentemente "un fracaso catastrófico y un atolladero constante".

El senador demócrata de Minnesota, Mark Dayton, acusó a Rice de mentir. "Me mintió a mí, le mintió a los habitantes de Minnesota y le mintió al pueblo estadounidense", afirmó Dayton refiriéndose a que Rice promovió las razones basadas en inteligencia errada para justificar la guerra en contra de Irak y, aún a la vista de las pruebas, insistió, como otros en la

Casa Blanca, como el vicepresidente Dick Cheney, en que Irak era una amenaza por sus armas de destrucción masiva y siguió vinculando a Irak con el 9/11 aunque nunca hubo pruebas de tales lazos.

Y el senador demócrata Carl Levin, de Michigan, acusó a Rice de ocultar la renuencia de la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA) de respaldar informes de que Irak intentaba obtener uranio en África para usarlo en la fabricación de armas nucleares.

Por su parte, el senador demócrata Evan Bayh dijo que "tenemos la obligación moral de aportar un liderazgo mejor".

"Los encargados deben ser responsabilizados de sus errores", dijo Bayh, aunque reconoció que la Casa Blanca intenta hacer lo correcto en Irak.

Pero otros demócratas, como la senadora de California, Dianne Feinstein, favorecen a Rice y dicen que Bush tiene derecho a integrar su gabinete.

Por otra parte, la senadora republicana Kay Bailey Hutchinson, de Texas, acordó que aunque fueron cometidos errores, de nada sirve volver sobre ellos. Elogió a Rice por su "mano firme" en mantener la política de la guerra contra el terrorismo.

Aunque el nombramiento de Rice no estaba en peligro, la acción de los demócratas tuvo el objetivo de renovar las críticas hacia la política de Bush en Irak y también poner en claro para la Casa Blanca que, aunque son la minoría, no se convertirán en un simple sello de goma de las decisiones del Presidente.

Hoy, los senadores emitirán unas breves declaraciones y seguramente votarán a continuación confirmar a Rice como secretaria del Departamento de Estado.

El Pueblo Unido -- Making the Case for a United Latino Front

by Grace Bastidas

Ahora es el momento. A Spanish-speaking president, one who can do more than stumble through a few phrases at a political rally, may be nowhere on the horizon, but for activists like Rosa Clemente, the time to forge a powerful Latino bloc is now.

Even with the latest census showing that some 37 million Latinos now live in the United States—making us by some measures the nation's new largest minority—we have no place at the political table. For our numbers to mean anything to George Bush or the challengers now vying for the chance to defeat him, we'll have to find common threads—not an easy task when our first instinct is still to check off the box that says "other."

"If we as a community that's being called Latino don't become racially conscious and don't begin to identify in racial terms, people will do it for us, and that leaves us with less power," says Clemente, an activist for the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement.

The idea of a Latino or Hispanic race is almost a necessary fiction in black-versus-white America, where influence hinges on identity. Under the label of Hispanic, first used by the U.S. government in 1973, Dominicans become the same as Argentines and Nicaraguans. In reality, those groups have little to do with one another. When Afro-Latinos mark off "Black, African Am., or Negro" along with Hispanic, the government shoves them into one compartment, essentially telling them they don't exist. In the narrow view of the United States, they're Latino, regardless of how they're perceived when they walk down the street.

And the community is split not just along color lines but on the issue of nationality. "American" is too wide a category for Latinos, who still see themselves primarily as the product of another land. "I would say I'm Puerto Rican, Honduran, and Greek," says Calixto Chinchilla, executive producer of the New York International Latino Film Festival. "It's a reflex."

It doesn't help that the different nationalities have unresolved, historical beef with each other. Ecuadorans begrudge Peruvians. Puerto Ricans don't get along with Dominicans. Argentines belittle Uruguayans. Mexicans, now immigrating in droves, have a hard time gaining acceptance by other Latinos because they're willing to work for lower wages and thus displace those who came before them. That's much like what happened to the Irish when the Italians showed up. Eventually, these two marginalized adversaries joined forces as "white," the elite. Perhaps it will be years yet before Latinos accept that they have to move beyond old national identities in order to get in on the debate.

"Sometimes we can be so separatist—but wait a minute, we all speak the same language," says Chinchilla, who's more comfortable talking in Spanglish, which is also a way of life. Walk through an immigrant neighborhood, like Jackson Heights in Queens or Washington Heights in Manhattan, and count the phone-booth businesses selling llamadas to Latin America. Check out the restaurant awnings decorated with Mexican or Dominican flags. So often, we live with one foot in this country and the other entrenched someplace else.

Latinos in New York have managed to elect local leaders, even if they've had to settle for one gringo mayor after another.

Adolfo Carrion Jr., borough president of the Bronx, which has the highest concentration of Latinos in the city, says he wonders about the "grand prize" his people will get for being named the country's biggest minority. "That comes with the distinction of being the poorest community, having the lowest educational attainment levels, poor health conditions, and certainly being at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder."

If you break down the numbers, one in three Hispanics is under the age of 18, and those teenagers have the highest dropout rate in the country. Over 36 percent of Latinos lack medical insurance. Hispanics are afflicted by high risks for asthma, hepatitis C, cervical cancer, and HIV/AIDS. In New York City alone, 71.1 percent of Latino children are born into poverty.

In spite of these alarming statistics, or perhaps because of them, Hispanics lack the voz to bring about significant change. The Latino approach to power is in part determined by culture. "Our parents teach us that we cannot demand something, that we have to ask, and if it's not given to us it's fine," says City Council member Margarita Lopez, of Manhattan. "We are not aggressive. We tend to be more laid-back."

Hispanics, she adds, suffer from "battered-woman syndrome"—meaning that no matter how bad the situation gets, there's no attempt to escape. If things are bad, that's just the way they are.

Lopez also counts a history of colonialism in some Latin American countries as an impediment. "We do not stand up and take responsibility for our own future, our own present, and our own destiny," she says.

You have to know where you came from in order to know where you're going, and the only point of reference for most Latinos is the countries where they, their parents, or even their grandparents were born. Those links are tightly held, though the larger society seems eager to sever them. "In school, we don't learn much about ourselves," says Chinchilla. "I know more about Dr. King and Malcolm X than I know about [Puerto Rican Nationalist] Pedro Albizu Campos. That's a lack of education that is somewhat dangerous. Unless you go to college and take Latino studies, you're not going to find out. We're not part of the curriculum."

Increasingly, Latino activists are studying the example set by black leaders trying to win equality. "We have to say thank you to the African American community and the African American struggle," says Lopez. "We have to kiss the floor on which Martin Luther King walked, because it was them who put the struggle for civil rights out there, and it was them who framed the issue clearly."

African Americans and Latinos share many of the same problems, Clemente argues. She rattles them off: "Economic oppression. Economic exploitation. Police brutality. Lack of housing. Lack of access to health care. Lack of access to education."

The black and Latino struggles may be much the same, but key disparities separate the groups. African Americans were forced to come to this country, and most Latinos came of their own volition. There is no single event in the history of Hispanics here as poignant or as unifying as slavery. That's not to say Latin America didn't participate in the slave trade—some countries did. What Latinos do have, though, is a history of internal struggle with classism, sexism, and racism. In some cases, Latinos have held that the only way to "better the race" is to marry someone lighter skinned. We've got our own "paper bag" test.

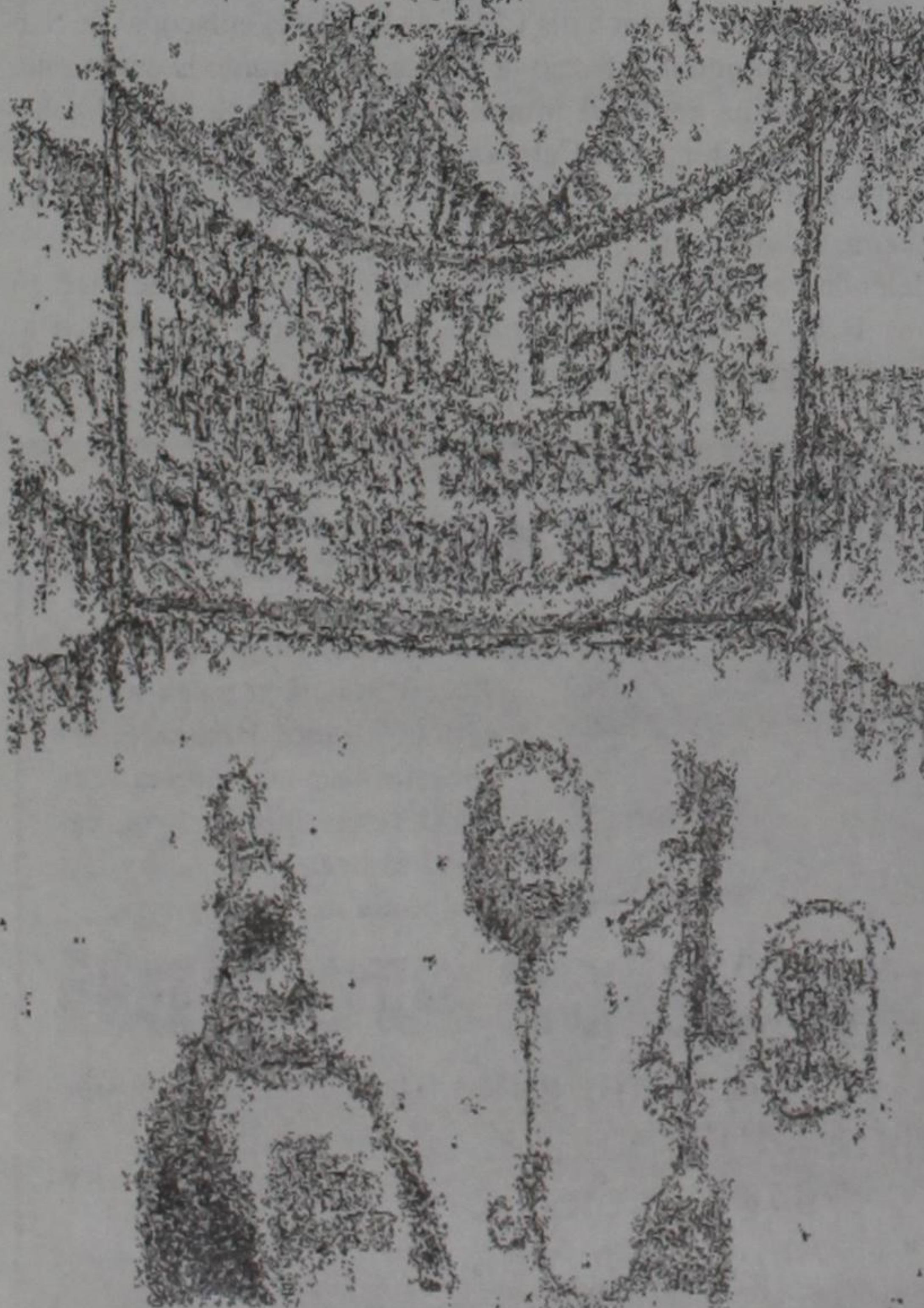
The preoccupation with differences, both among different Latinos and among our natural allies, has frustrated attempts to form an agenda. While we worry about whose country is better or skin fairer, decision-making power where we live remains in the hands of white men. The absence of Latinos in high elected offices has nothing to do with apathy. "In many places in South America, voting is not a right, it's an obligation," says Santiago Bonilla, a community reporter for Hoy, one of the city's most widely read Spanish-language newspapers. "By nature, we do have an interest in politics."

But when politicians don't show an interest in us—when Governor George Pataki, for example, is content to win our support by calling himself an "amigo" and then fights against better funding for the city's public schools—they push us to the sidelines. And for too many sons and daughters of disenfranchised immigrants, these conditions have lasted so long that anything else seems unattainable.

He and his peers still contend with tired stereotypes. "In the movies, they portray us as drug dealers, dishwashers, wetbacks," says 18-year-old Jose Luis Moreno, a freshman at John Jay College. "They don't think a Latino can be very successful."

Young Latinos are working to counter that notion, and to consider, on a greater scale, what it means to be Latino in the United States. On MiGente.com, a community-based site, their inquiries find a forum. One asks, are Puerto Ricans and blacks a lot alike? Do you get accused of not being "Latino enough"? What's the difference between Hispanic and Latino? If you could nominate a Latino for president, who would it be? Can we achieve unity without an all-encompassing cause? In answer to the last question, the overall outlook seems positive. Perhaps the United States is the place where Latin American liberator Simón Bolívar's dream of unity based on a common Hispanic heritage will become a reality. Listen to the responses on MiGente:

Can Latinos find a new power in numbers? Obviously, we'd like to believe so. As the fastest-growing segment of the population, we can only claim our rightful place if we step forward and join African Americans as people of color. Because at the end of the day, no matter our shade, the system writes us off as "nonwhite." La revolución es nuestra, y ahora es el momento.



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Sorry, doc: Owens still planning to play in Super Bowl

PHILADELPHIA -- Terrell Owens is treating his doctor's orders the way he deals with pesky cornerbacks: shrugging them off and forging ahead.

Philadelphia Eagles head trainer Rick Burkholder said Wednesday that Owens started jogging and plans to continue rehabbing his injured ankle in an attempt to play in the Super Bowl.

Dr. Mark Myerson, the surgeon who operated on the All-Pro receiver in December, said Tuesday he would not clear Owens to suit up against the New England Patriots on Feb. 6.

"We understand Dr. Myerson's point of view. It's just that our risk-reward is different than his risk-reward," Burkholder said. "He has great risk in clearing Terrell to play and no reward. We think there's some risk and we think there's great reward, so right now we're going to progress with his rehab."

The final decision on Owens' status will come down to the player, coach Andy Reid and the team's medical staff.

"We're never going to put Terrell at risk," Reid said.

Owens was at the Eagles' practice facility for rehab work Wednesday, but the team said he wouldn't be made available to reporters until next week's



"We will continue to see whether he can jog and see how he does day in and day out, see if he can change direction," Burkholder said.

"If he passes all those tests, then we'll start talking about practice time. Right now, the game isn't even in our vision right now. If he has any setbacks in his rehab, then the whole idea of playing in the Super Bowl is probably off."

Quarterback Donovan McNabb and other Eagles have said they don't need Owens to beat the defending champion Patriots, who are 7-point favorites.

"If T.O. plays, it's an added bonus," McNabb said. "If he doesn't, it's not going to stop anything we're

doing. You have to have it in the back of your mind about your future, so that's a tough call. That's something as a player you have to think about."

mandatory media day at the Super Bowl.

Burkholder said Owens worked out on a treadmill when he returned to Philadelphia on Tuesday.

Power Rankings: First half portends delightful finish

Can you believe it's only half-time?

The season that has given us the brawl, the Bobcats, Kobe/Shaq, Kobe/Ray, Kobe/Karl, and the return of up-tempo basketball, reaches its midpoint this week. Only a handful of teams have ostensibly been eliminated from playoff pursuit, which means an arms race should develop before the Feb. 24 trade deadline.

If the Suns can keep their core five healthy, they'll remain contenders until the end. The way things set up now, SportsLine.com's projected champion, San Antonio, assumes the top spot. Yes, we were up watching the Spurs lose to Portland on Monday. Sometimes in this universe, one can't explain Joel Przybilla hanging with Tim Duncan, so call it an aberration or you'll give yourself a headache.

Over the course of 40-plus games, the Spurs have shown they can persevere against any style, remaining the most consistent winners in the league.

Miami has emerged as the Eastern Conference's chief power, replacing Detroit, which

visits American Airlines Arena on Sunday looking to make a statement in what has been an erratic season. There's a lot of tension in Motown right now, but if Larry Brown flips the right switch, the defending champs are still a threat. Then again, he could alienate his team to the point of no return by flicking the wrong ones.

Phoenix, when completely healthy, also looks formidable. Remember, teams are going to have to run with those rabbits in a best-of-7. In the East, Washington has emerged as the conference's biggest surprise. Quietly, they've assembled one of the league's deepest teams. Seattle, Cleveland and Chicago are

enjoying revivals and should continue to have success in the second half.

The league's most disappointing team? Indiana and Minnesota are contenders, but have time to turn things around. Philadelphia and New York didn't expect to be under .500, but are still alive in the eyesore Atlantic. In our estimation, Utah claims the prize. The Jazz fell off the map without Andrei Kirilenko and shipped away their most talented point guard, Carlos Arroyo, for virtually nothing. Given their offseason additions and aspirations, they have been the biggest losers.

Mayweather Defeats Bruseles

Floyd Mayweather, Jr., avoids a punch from Puerto Rico's Henry Bruseles during the first round of their WBC super lightweight eliminator match at the American Airlines Arena in Miami, Saturday, Jan. 22, 2005. Mayweather, Jr., defeated Bruseles with a TKO 55 seconds into the 8th round.



El Editor

Jets reveal Pennington has torn right rotator cuff

New York Jets quarterback Chad Pennington will have surgery to repair a tear in his right rotator cuff shortly after the Super Bowl, and team doctors are optimistic he will be ready to throw by training camp.

The arthroscopic surgery will be conducted by shoulder specialist Dr. James Andrews, Pennington's choice.

Team medical director Elliott Pellman revealed at a news conference Tuesday that the team, which initially described the injury as a strain,

knew there was a tear in the muscle since the first MRI exam was conducted after the injury in November.

Pellman insisted that the Jets didn't risk further injury or damage to Pennington's shoulder by clearing him to play those final seven games of the season, during which the Jets went 3-4.

"We did not allow him to return to play until we were satisfied that he was strong enough and pain-free enough to be able to return to play with minimal risk," Pellman said.

"Was there risk with him returning to play? Minimal. The area of his cuff was torn. The rest of his cuff looked absolutely fine.

Chad Pennington will try to return from a surgery that is unusual for quarterbacks. (AP)

"The rehabilitation continued, and as Chad has said publicly, and to us as well behind closed doors, that as the season progressed his shoulder felt better and better. And, in fact, by the last two games of the season, his shoulder felt actually quite well."

After surgery, which won't take place until after the Feb. 6 Super Bowl because Pennington is away in Florida, Pellman said there will be three to four weeks of full rest with the arm in a sling and then three to four months of range-of-motion physical therapy.

That would mean Pennington should be able to start throwing sometime in late June or even early July, just before training camp begins.

"We are optimistic that Chad will do absolutely fine, and we are optimistic that, in fact, he

will be ready for training camp," Pellman said. "Given that, however, it is surgery, and there are black holes with any type of surgery. We will have to wait and see."

Pennington was hurt Nov. 7 against Buffalo after he was hit hard following a scramble, and missed three games. The Jets did their best to hide the extent of the injury. When asked whether there was a tear in the rotator cuff the day after Pennington got hurt, coach Herman Edwards said, "No. Strain. That's what it is."

The severity of the injury is disconcerting, because rotator cuff tears are uncommon for quarterbacks. Pitchers are the most likely athletes to sustain the injury, and many take up to a year to fully recover. But quarterbacks do not throw the ball as hard and have fewer motions, so the recovery time could take as few as six months.

In addition, the Jets gave Pennington a \$64 million, seven-year contract extension before the season started, banking their future on him.



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Maná llovido del cielo



Los rockeros mexicanos que comenzaron en los 70 bajo el nombre de Sombrero Verde tocando en pequeños antros de Guadalajara son hoy en día unos de los mayores exponentes del rock en español. Su éxito con el público es rotundo y lo han constatado una vez más con el lanzamiento de su nuevo DVD Maná Acceso total que ya ha superado las 50 mil copias en Estados Unidos y 20 mil en México.

Maná Acceso total ofrece a sus fans una llave mágica o tarjeta V.I.P. al universo de la banda, atrayéndolos a través de imágenes, relatos y fragmentos grabados durante su gira Revolución de amor, al íman de creatividad y amistad que une a sus cuatro miembros. El documental muestra las vivencias de los músicos durante su gira 2002-2003, durante la cual visitaron 28 países y ofrecieron más de 110 conciertos. Además de mostrar escenas inéditas de la banda en pleno

"desmadre", Acceso total hace énfasis en una de sus mayores fuentes de inspiración: su organización Selva Negra y su continua lucha por el medio ambiente y los derechos humanos.

Según Fher, vocalista del grupo, su objetivo es motivar a sus fans a través de sus canciones y esfuerzos filantrópicos "a pensar globalmente y actuar localmente", algo que Maná aprendió de otros grandes de la música como Bob Marley, John Lennon y Bono (vocalista de la banda irlandesa U2). Entre sus logros está el haber sido nombrado embajadores de la FAO (una rama de las Naciones Unidas dedicada a combatir la hambruna mundial) para México. Un segmento del DVD está compuesto por desgarradoras imágenes de desastres naturales, ballenas masacradas y otras manifestaciones del abuso diario al que está expuesto nuestro planeta. Imágenes que a la vez son contrarrestadas por hermosos

paisajes y un video de Fher devolviendo tortugas bebés al mar que reflejan la esperanza que la banda siente por el futuro de su causa.

Además de fragmentos de conciertos desde Los Ángeles, Miami, San Juan, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, México D.F., Rio de Janeiro y decenas de ciudades más, el DVD integra 12 canciones, incluyendo versiones en vivo de clásicos como "Oye mi amor", "Clavado en un bar", "En el muelle de San Blas", "Rayando el sol" y "Me vale".

Por otra parte, el segmento V.I.P. nos lleva detrás de los telones, mostrando momentos más íntimos de la gira. Lo mismo puede ver a los integrantes de la banda durmiendo en trenes, autobuses y carros, que escuchando flamenco en una taberna española, tomando fotos frente a la Torre Eiffel o bebiendo cerveza en Alemania.

Según el guitarrista Sergio

Vallín, no sólo disfrutaron de visitar las atracciones turísticas, sino de "meterse con la gente y tomarle el pulso a la ciudad" donde estén. Este segmento también incluye entrevistas sobre sus encuentros con celebridades como Mario Benedetti, Salma Hayek, Bono o Brian May, de Queen, durante sus viajes, y sus colaboraciones con íconos como Santana, Rubén Blades o Miguel Bosé. Privilegios que aunque uno extraña "la comida de su mamá, su cama, su almohada o su mujer" por andar de gira (como diría el baterista Alex González) no deja de agradecer.

"Somos una gran familia que va como una tribu viajando de una ciudad a otra, con las alegrías y tristezas que produce andar como gitanos", señala Fher sobre su errante equipo de producción.

Otro interesante segmento es el de Acceso limitado, que muestra el lado más desinhibido y parandero de Maná. Las cámaras nos llevan hasta sus camerinos y nos muestran escenas inéditas de sus integrantes tomando tequila y cantando corridos desentonados, destruyendo varios espejos a pedradas, montando carritos de carreta, bailando en clubes y rodeados de mujeres. Además de las pícantes (y excesivas) tomas de traseros, escotes, tatuajes y lenguas con aretes de sus complacientes groupies, el segmento muestra a los miembros de la banda diciendo malas palabras y peleándose como adolescentes. Algo que demuestra que después de múltiples discos de oro y platino, premios Grammy y Billboard, los cuatro integrantes de Maná siguen siendo aquellos chavos traviesos y soñadores que despegaron de Guadalajara en los 70 con destino al mundo.

El cuarteto que lanzó el DVD a finales de noviembre regresará este año a los estudios para grabar un nuevo álbum.



Soraya to Release Next May "El Otro Lado de Mi"

Soraya, the Colombian singer and songwriter who survived a breast cancer situation, announced she will release her newest album called "El otro lado de mi" next May.

Soraya's new album contains 12 new tracks, led by the rock-pop band "Llévame" according to information given by the singer raised in the United States but who was born in Cali, Colombia.

The singer of "Quédate" and "Casi" also included the song "Soy Alma", inspired by María Amparo Amaya, a shoe polisher who won Colombia's Poetry National Prize and who goes by the name "Alma de la Calle".

The singer, who lives in Miami, was part of the TotalHealth expo

last weekend in which she sang several songs, signed autographs and talked about how to beat breast cancer.

Soraya has become an outstanding activist in the United States and Latin America to make women aware of the importance of early breast cancer exams.

She is the most important Latin celebrity against breast cancer in the country and has headed several information campaigns and medical assistance to fight the disease.

Soraya was named this week a member of the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS), a Washington D.C. based organization.

Meredith to Start Hispanic Women Magazine

Meredith Corp., publisher of such magazines as Better Homes and Gardens and Ladies' Home Journal, will launch a new magazine aimed at Hispanic women, the company announced Wednesday.

The bimonthly Siempre Mujer! will make its debut next fall with an initial circulation rate base of 350,000.

"We believe that our strong editorial expertise and in-depth understanding of the shelter and women's lifestyle categories will enable us to create a magazine that speaks to the priorities of Hispanic women, their families and their homes," Jack Griffin president of Meredith's publish-

ing group, said in a statement.

Meredith cites census figures showing that within the next decade, one in five new homeowners will be Hispanic. The Hispanic market represents \$600 billion in annual spending power, expected to grow to \$1 trillion by the year 2010, a company statement said.

Johanna Buchholtz-Torres, formerly editor of Ser Padres magazine, will serve as editor in chief of the new magazine.

Meredith publishes 17 magazine brands, also including More and American Baby, and about 150 special interest publications. The company also owns or operates 14 television stations.

Sandino considers nomination "incredible & motivating"

Something "incredible but motivating to proudly represent Colombia", was Catalina Sandino's Oscar nomination, which was unveiled yesterday by the AMPAS.

Sandino Moreno is the only Hispanic nominated in the category of Best Actress next to Hilary Swank (Million Dollar Baby).

Annette Bening (Being Julia), Imelda Staunton (Vera Drake) and Kate Winslet (Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind).

"It came as a surprise to me; this nomination made me feel excited and committed to my country as well", the young actress reiterated.

"Maria full of grace", has been awarded more than ten times since the day of its release, some of them include the Audience Award

at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival.

The story was written and directed by the debuting director Joshua Marston, 32, dealing with two young ladies who are used as "mules" (human mail) to smuggle drugs from Colombia to New York.

"After taking on this role, everything has come up very well, it was all magical" Sandino stated after adding that "I didn't expect any of this and, to be honest, I did not accept the role to win an award or even an Oscar, I did it because that's what I like to do".

"I am proud of this film. Everything has turned up to be amazing", the actress who played María Alvarez, a 17-year-old girl who, out of need and after knowing she is pregnant, accepts five

thousand dollars to transport drug to New York.

"Maria Full of Grace", which cost three million dollars, has earned other awards including the 2004 Berlin Film Festival, where Sandino won the Best Actress award.

The film won the Best Debuting Film award at the Cartagena Film Festival; best Actress, Best Colombian Film, Special Prize from the Jury and from a Catholic Cultural Organization.

It also won at the International Newport and Carolina Film Festival, as well as the Golden Needle at the Seattle Film Festival for Best Actress.

The film premiered last July 16 in American theaters and months later in Mexico and Latin America, Europe and Japan, where it has been well received.

The actress said she is not interested in reaching Hollywood now "I'll go wherever life and my destiny take me to, it all depends on a good script. I like independent films, that is why I am not interested in making it to Hollywood".

"Some artists are obsessed by getting there, but not me, I am not interested in superheroes stories or deadly viruses that kill all humanity", she said.

"With 'Maria Full of Grace' I am happy because an American and a Colombian were able to

show a good side of Colombia that is not just Pablo Escobar and kidnapers", she affirmed.

"It is the story of a 17-year-old girl, it's simple, real and very humane, I feel quite satisfied with it. I loved all the process and I learned to represent it, that is why I am proud of my work and worked very hard to achieve this".

She said such opportunity came to her as something magical "because I was studying advertising in Colombia and someone knew I was doing some acting and invited me to the castings. When I did the casting I never acted, I just read the lines because I knew nothing about 'Maria'. Some days later, I was told I had been selected for the part".

She said the scene in which the girl practices by swallowing a huge grape that made her shed some tears she did it naturally and without rehearsing. "The way such scene was made shows how tough life is for these people used as drug smugglers".

Sandino stated that so far, she has not been offered other films. "I am still tied to Maria, and I want to wrap up this cycle the good way, and that would be me standing on my own. What I would really love to do is working with filmmakers like Pedro Almodovar, Alfonso Cuaron or Miguel Arzeta".

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La Guerra genera un déficit gigante

El costo de la guerra en Irak pesará fuertemente en el déficit fiscal estadounidense y le hará superar los \$400,000 millones este año, según proyecciones oficiales dadas a conocer ayer.

La Casa Blanca espera un déficit fiscal récord de \$427,000 millones o 3.5% del Producto Interno Bruto (PIB) durante el año fiscal 2005, que cierra el 30 de setiembre, indicó un responsable del gobierno.

Este monto incluye el costo de las operaciones en Irak, para las cuales la Casa Blanca pidió ayer una ampliación presupuestaria. El gobierno necesitará \$80,000 millones adicionales, de los cuales \$75,000 millones serán para sus operaciones en Irak y Afganistán, precisó el responsable de la administración estadounidense, que pidió mantener el anonimato.

Estas proyecciones son compartidas por la Oficina de Presupuesto del Congreso (CBO, por su sigla en inglés), una comisión bipartidaria que indicó ayer que prevé un déficit de \$368,000 millones en el 2005 y \$295,000 millones en el 2006, sin incluir el costo de operaciones militares.

Si se suma el costo de la guerra en Irak, "nos acercamos a los \$400,000 millones de déficit en el 2005 y superamos ampliamente los \$300,000 millones en el 2006", según la comisión.

Estados Unidos debería por lo tanto terminar el año fiscal 2005 con un amplio déficit, tras el agujero récord de \$412,000 millones registrado en el 2004 (3.6% del PIB). Los detalles serán precisados el 7 de febrero, durante la presentación del presupuesto del 2006.

Por lo pronto, parece difícil reducir a la mitad el déficit en cinco años, como prometió el presidente George W. Bush, lo que ya generó vivas reacciones en todo el espectro político.

"El déficit es demasiado elevado y una parte demasiado grande de nuestros gastos está en piloto automático", estimó Judd Gregg, republicano de la comisión presupuestaria del Senado, mientras que del lado de los demócratas, Nancy Pelosi se in-

dió por que el presidente Bush haya "abdicado de toda responsabilidad presupuestaria".

El incremento de los déficit revela hasta qué punto las operaciones en Irak pesaron y pesarán sobre las cuentas del país.

Durante los últimos 18 meses, costaron en promedio \$4,700 millones por mes. Y para el 2006 hay que esperar un monto presupuestario "del mismo orden" que en 2005, precisó el responsable del gobierno.

La CBO calculó que la guerra en Irak y Afganistán costaría \$30,000 millones en el 2005 y \$418,000 millones en el periodo 2006-2015.

"Si las operaciones militares en Irak y Afganistán así como otras actividades vinculadas a la guerra contra el terrorismo continúan (al tiempo que se reducen progresivamente) durante los próximos meses, el déficit total previsto para los años 2006-2015 pasaría de \$855,000 millones a 1.4 billones de dólares", subrayó la Comisión.

Es mucho más que el monto calculado en el escenario de base, que prevé un déficit acumulado de \$855,000 millones de dólares del 2006 al 2015.

La factura sería mucho mayor si se consideran los escenarios alternativos que tomen en cuenta varias incógnitas presupuestarias, subrayó la CBO.

Está en primer lugar la reforma de las jubilaciones que quiere impulsar Bush, para que evolucione hacia un sistema de capitalización individual, con cuentas de ahorro privadas.

Esto pesaría menos sobre las finanzas a corto plazo, pero habría un largo periodo de transición que --según los analistas-- podría obligar al gobierno a pedir prestados hasta 2 billones de dólares.

Volver permanentes las reducciones de impuestos, como desea el gobierno, también pesaría sobre las finanzas: en ese caso, en el 2015, Estados Unidos registraría todavía un déficit de \$262,000 millones, advirtió la CBO, en vez de un excedente de \$141,000 millones en el escenario de base.

Anuncian nueva tecnología para controlar a los visitantes

Caracterizado como el uso de tecnología más innovador que se implementa en los últimos 50 años para controlar la entrada y salidas de turistas por los puntos de entrada al país, el Departamento de Seguridad Interna (DHS) anunció ayer el uso de identificaciones de radiofrecuencia (RFID) para tener un registro de este tipo de actividades.

Aún no se ha decidido cómo se implementará la fase de prueba ni quiénes serán elegibles para utilizar la nueva tecnología RFID, que estará disponible para peatones y conductores de vehículos, y que será implementada a partir del 31 de julio en puntos de revisión ubicados en tres estados: Arizona, Nueva York y en el estado de Washington.

"Nos sentimos impulsados por la visión que tenemos de la forma en que nuestras fronteras pueden y deben operar en el futuro, y este futuro se acerca más y más con cada etapa del programa US-VISIT que aplicamos", dijo Asa Hutchinson, subsecretario de DHS, hablando del sistema biométrico de datos del programa para control de turistas extranjeros el cual será ampliado con RFID.

"Con el uso de la tecnología de identificación por radiofrecuencia visualizamos la posibilidad de no sólo mejorar la seguridad de nuestro país, sino también de lograr las mejoras más relevantes en las infraestructuras de las fronteras terrestres de EU en más de 50 años. Trabajando en conjunto con nuestras contrapartes en las fronteras y queremos lograr que todo se haga en la forma correcta y al paso adecuado", agregó Hutchinson al hacer el anuncio ayer en Nogales, Arizona.

A través del nuevo sistema de alta tecnología, se pretende agilizar el cruce peatonal y vehicular de turistas en un futuro, al lograrse un registro automático de las entradas y salidas de los tur-

istas. Sin embargo, DHS aclaró que no se trata de un sistema de radar de satélites por el cual se puede localizar la ubicación en territorio estadounidense de las personas que porten dicha tecnología.

Códigos numéricos Los "gafetes" o identificaciones RFID sólo contarán con un código numérico y transmitirán señales a un receptor, donde se archivarán los datos personales del turista en cuestión al momento de cruzar el inmigrante por el punto de revisión que cuente con este sistema de este tipo de tecnología moderna.

El DHS aseguró que las identificaciones RFID no pueden ser falsificadas y que éstas serán activadas una vez que hayan sido oficialmente otorgadas al portador. "Aún estamos por elaborar todos los detalles de quiénes serán elegibles, cómo podrán solicitarlas o cómo se les entregará la tarjeta de identificación de radiofrecuencia a estas personas que participen", informó Kimberly Weissman, portavoz nacional del programa US-VISIT.

La portavoz agregó que los turistas que tienen visas y que han participado en el programa US-VISIT son elegibles para utilizar la nueva tecnología de identificación de radiofrecuencia, así como las personas que viven en las franjas fronterizas y cuya tarjeta para cruzar las garitas son de tipo visa.

"Por la geografía de Arizona, estamos hablando de personas que viven en las fronteras y que

vayan a internarse más allá de 75 millas de la frontera, en Texas y en California son 25 más allá de la frontera y que tengan planeada una estancia de más de 30 días, entonces si tenemos que documentar su salida y su entrada", agregó Weissman.

La fase inicial se implementará únicamente en los puntos de revisión en la parte este y oeste de Nogales en Arizona, en la Bahía Alexandria de Nueva York y en los puertos Pacific Highway y en Peace Arch, ambos en el estado de Washington con la frontera de Canadá.

"Nos preocupa que este tipo de identificación caiga en manos de personas equivocadas. Es difícil tratar de evaluar este programa porque aún no hay mucha información disponible al respecto sobre quiénes la podrán utilizar o quiénes no", dijo por su parte Ira Mehlman, portavoz nacional de la Federación para la Reforma Migratoria (FAIR), organización que ha pedido en numerosas ocasiones que se refuercen los sistemas de control para la entrada legal de turistas con el fin de evitar que se pudieran repetir atentados terroristas como los del 11 de septiembre.

El programa US-VISIT funciona en 115 aeropuertos del país y en 15 puertos marítimos, donde han sido procesados más de 17.5 millones de visitantes extranjeros con la tecnología biométrica. Según el DHS, el programa ha sido eficaz en lograr el arresto o impedir la entrada al país de más de 400 personas.

Grupos Latinos Apoyan Gonzales

Las mayores organizaciones hispanas de Estados Unidos manifestaron ayer su apoyo al nombramiento de Alberto Gonzales como futuro secretario de Justicia del país, en cartas enviadas a los miembros de la comisión del Senado que debe ratificarlo en el cargo.

"El juez Gonzales no sólo es una convincente historia americana de éxito, sino que también queda claro que pocos candidatos para esta posición están tan altamente calificados", escribió Janet Murguía, presidenta del Consejo Nacional de La Raza (NCLR), la mayor organización hispana de Estados Unidos.

Su nombramiento por el Comité Judicial del Senado, que debe reunirse para votar hoy, sería "un reconocimiento a la contribución y el liderazgo de los latinos en Estados Unidos", añadieron otras nueve organizaciones que brindaron su apoyo por separado al actual asesor jurídico de la Casa Blanca.

Entre ellas, figuran la Asociación Nacional de Funcionarios Electos Latinos (NALEO), la Liga de Ciudadanos Latinoamericanos

Unidos (LULAC) y la Coalición Latina (CL), la que había respaldado la candidatura del presidente republicano George W. Bush en las elecciones del pasado 2 de noviembre.

Si su candidatura es aprobada, Gonzales, hijo de emigrantes mexicanos nacido en Texas, se convertiría en el primer hispano en asumir la función de fiscal general.

Ninguna de las organizaciones mencionó la polémica causada por su posición sobre el tratamiento de los prisioneros de la lucha antiterrorista.

La organización Human Rights Watch (HWR) anunció su oposición a la designación de Gonzales por su "papel clave en la justificación legal de las políticas de torturas y abusos" por parte de militares estadounidenses.

Como asesor jurídico de la Casa Blanca, Gonzales redactó documentos en 2002 en los que aconsejó a Bush no considerar como prisioneros de guerra a los detenidos en Afganistán y otras regiones como lo establecen las Convenciones de Ginebra.

Hubo quien propuso leyes como la 187 de California pero nos unimos y protestamos... se hizo fuerza y no prosperaron las peticiones", dijo.

Alonzo agregó que, por su parte, se mantiene al tanto sobre las iniciativas de leyes.

Líderes están guardia para evitar una 'Ley 200' en Texas

Mientras que en el estado de Arizona algunas dependencias ya se preparan para iniciar con el cumplimiento de la ley conocida como Proposición 200, en Dallas, Texas, grupos defensores de derechos de los inmigrantes, líderes y autoridades estatales dan su opinión sobre esta medida y la forma en la que evitarían el ingreso de leyes similares en esta entidad.

La Proposición 200, que entró en vigor el primero de este mes, prohíbe el acceso a servicios generales de salud y económicos a los residentes indocumentados y exige su deportación inmediata.

Esta medida, dicen, puede abrir el camino a otros estados para someter iniciativas similares, por lo que grupos de derechos humanos en el norte de Texas preparan programas diseñados para impedir el avance de leyes parecidas.

Mario Fernández del Centro para Derechos Humanos de Dallas dijo que, sin lugar a dudas, existe el temor de que en Texas surjan grupos que impulsen este tipo de propuestas, sin embargo, agregó, hay confianza en que esto no suceda.

"Pedimos a la comunidad que no se deje intimidar ante el temor de que en este estado tengamos leyes parecidas", dijo Fernández.

Agregó que la Proposición 200 afecta a los más desprotegidos.

"Esta ley perjudica a los desamparados, a los más humildes y a gente de bajos recursos, es decir a los inmigrantes indocumentados", apuntó.

El líder centroamericano dijo que el grupo que representa ya está listo para empezar a dialogar

con dirigentes sindicales de la región "para una fuerza común en contra de leyes antiinmigrantes".

El pedido de apoyo a los sindicatos, dijo Fernández, es porque estos representan a la clase trabajadora, a la clase media e inmigrante.

Al respecto, Miguel Reyes, líder de la Unión de Alimentos y Trabajadores Comerciales (UFCW, por sus siglas en inglés), dijo que su grupo sindical está dispuesto a dar el apoyo a los representantes de los derechos de los trabajadores.

"Claro que vamos a dar nuestro apoyo para evitar estas leyes", señaló.

En este grupo sindical, dijo Reyes, hay muchos hispanos y vamos a trabajar para que no sur-

gan aquí propuestas como la 200.

Por otro lado, el diputado Roberto Alonzo, dijo que habrá que estar alerta.

El demócrata recordó que en 1994, grupos antiinmigrantes intentaron copiar leyes como la 187 de California y seguramente, dijo, habrá en Texas quien quiera pro-

poner proyectos como la ley 200 de Arizona.

"Hubo quien propuso leyes como la 187 de California pero nos unimos y protestamos... se hizo fuerza y no prosperaron las peticiones", dijo.

Alonzo agregó que, por su parte, se mantiene al tanto sobre las iniciativas de leyes.

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Síntoma No. 3

Two Trains Collide in California



At least nine people were killed and more than 100 injured in Los Angeles on Wednesday when two passenger trains collided after one of them hit their vehicle on the line, police said.

The death toll is expected to grow further as rescuers pick through the mangled wreckage of the two trains, at least one of which caught fire, after they collided in the Los Angeles area of Glendale just after 6:00am.

"Preliminarily, the word that we have is that there nine deaths," said Los Angeles Sheriff Lee Baca at a news conference following the massive morning rush hour pile-up.

More than 100 people were rushed to hospital as a hundreds of rescuers and convoys of ambulances flooded the area of the crash in the Atwater Village area.

Glendale Police Chief Randy Adams said that a total of three

trains, include a parked freight train, were involved in the crash that was caused when a southbound locomotive struck a Jeep-type vehicles on the line.

"Initial indications lead us to believe that there was a vehicle on the tracks and southbound Metrolink train collided with that vehicle," Adams told the news conference.

The passenger train then jumped its tracks and its tail flew into the path of an oncoming

northbound commuter train, striking it with what local residents said was a deafening impact of metal.

"It sounded like thunder," said Karen Mendoza, an employee at a nearby wholesale store who called emergency services when she heard the accident.

Passengers were tossed around the inside of their trains and some had to jump from the upper decks of the burning wreckage, eyewitnesses told reporters.

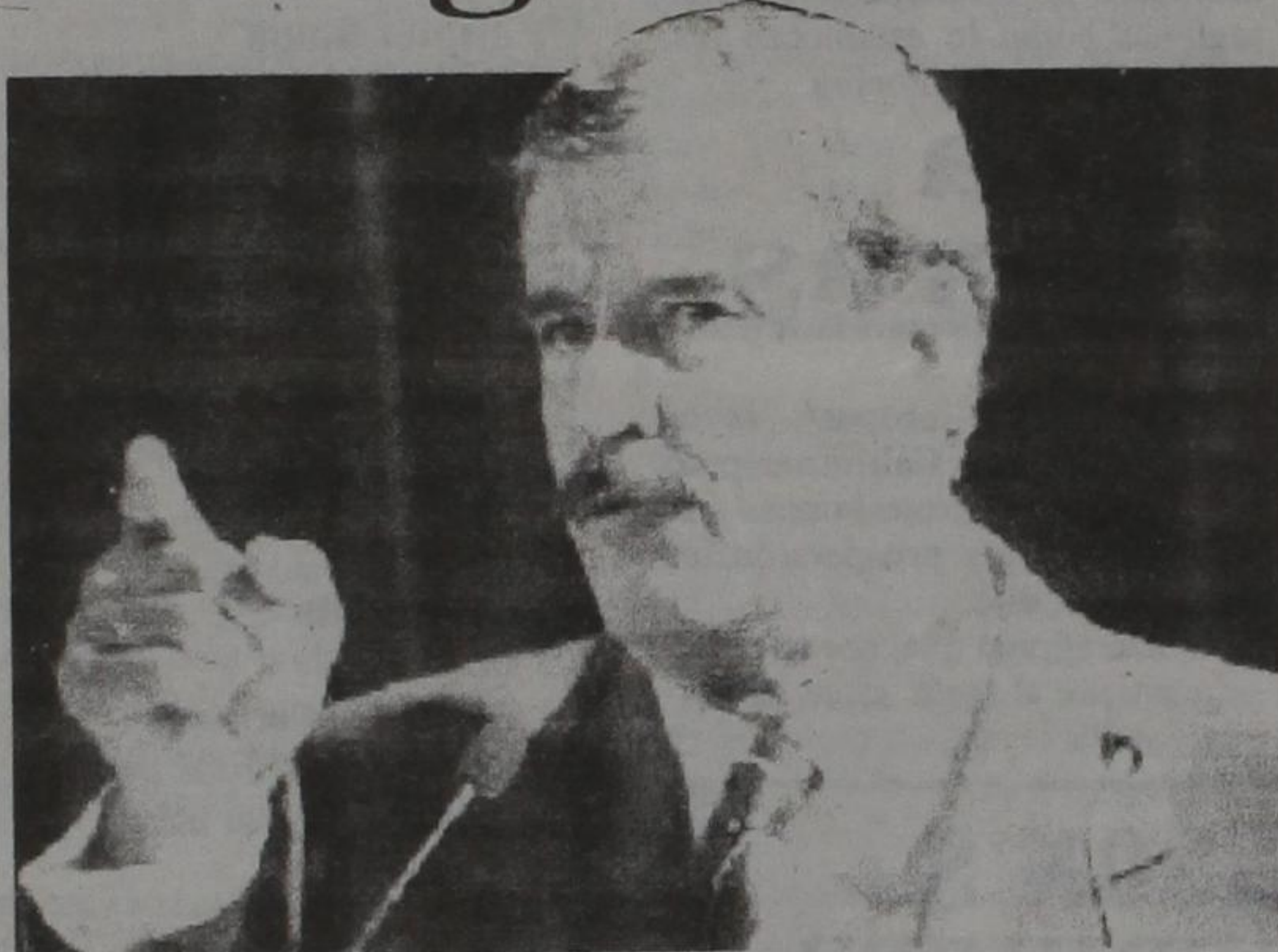
Fox to Strengthen Actions against Organized Crime

The government of Mexico will respond with all its force and State resources against organized crime, as a consequence of the murder of six employees of the Federal Center of Social Re adaptation of Matamoros, Tamaulipas.

The Presidency of the Republic stated the latter after an extraordinary meeting of the National Security Cabinet, and emphasized that the government of president Vicente Fox won't allow that criminal groups try to undermine the institutions.

In a press release, affirmed that Fox government guarantees the citizens that against organized crime will be no contemplations and that all that action that attempts against the Mexican State and the well-being of the population will be punished.

"Mexicans must have the certainty that in this war against organized crime, that we'll win with



the support of all, the federal government will not stop and will continue demonstrating its firmness and unity", indicated the text.

It recognized that it is clear that the homicides committed in Tamaulipas mainly constitute an attempt to challenge the Mexican State, as a reaction to the force-

fulness whereupon the federal government has attacked the interests of organized crime, mainly drug trafficking.

The document clarified that in this fight against delinquency, the federal government won't have more limits than those stated by the Constitution, and summoned all the political, economic and social actors, and citizens in particular, to endorse the actions of the Executive.

The extraordinary meeting of the National Security cabinet was summoned by the President of Mexico, after knowing the murders of six employees of Federal Center of Social Re adaptation of Matamoros, as well as other activities related to drug trafficking.

Have a Safe & Good Day!

México:

Agentes federales toman control de otra penal federal

Agentes federales apoyados por militares tomaron el miércoles el control de un penal de máxima seguridad del noreste del país, el segundo en menos de un mes como parte de un programa de limpieza de las prisiones.

El subsecretario de Prevención y Participación Ciudadana de la Secretaría de Seguridad Pública federal, Miguel Angel Yunes, informó en rueda de prensa que en el operativo en el penal de Matamoros, en la frontera este con Estados Unidos, participan 650 elementos entre agentes federales, militares y personal de la Armada.

El operativo en el penal se realiza unos días después de que aparecieran ejecutados a unos metros de la entrada seis empleados de esa prisión y se desarrolla bajo las mismas directivas que el realizado en el penal de "La Palma", a las afueras de la ciudad de México, desde el 14 de enero.

Yunes dijo que los agentes comenzaron a hacer una revisión del penal de Matamoros en busca de armas, celulares, droga o algún otro objeto prohibido, pero los primeros reportes señalan que no se ha encontrado nada.

El funcionario anunció que en los próximos días también se realizará un operativo similar en el tercer penal de máxima seguridad, en el estado occidental de Jalisco,

aunque no precisó la fecha.

Al penal de Matamoros habían sido trasladados desde "La Palma" dos reos relacionados con cabecillas del narcotráfico que lograron tener el control interno de la prisión, desde donde planeaban diversas operaciones.

A la prisión de Jalisco también fueron reubicados tres reos más desde "La Palma".

Yunes dijo que los capos Osiel Cárdenas, líder del Cártel del Golfo, y Benjamín Arellano, del Cártel de Juárez, tendieron redes de complicidades que les permitía operar con impunidad desde la cárcel y estaba integrada por "seudo abogados, personas de confianza, asociaciones de abogados, organismos de derechos humanos creados ex profeso".

Los cabecillas, dijo, "se coordinaron para fortalecer esquemas de control interno y para planear operaciones que consideraban su fuga".

Añadió que datos de inteligencia permitieron establecer que se planeaba un ataque a "La Palma", situación que desde el 2004 fue alertada por funcionarios de la Procuraduría General de la República.

Dijo que las propias autoridades de "La Palma" propiciaron que los capos vulneraran la seguridad, mediante acuerdos para permitirles ciertos privilegios.

New York Times asks the Senate Vote Against Gonzales

The New York Times asked the Senate to vote against the candidacy of Alberto Gonzales to be the next general prosecutor, proposed by president George W. Bush, by considering him "not qualified" for the position in relation of his past.

The newspaper's position agrees with the calls of the coalition United for Peace and Justice that groups dozens of pro human and civil rights associations, to make a mobilization against his confirmation.

In the editorial "the erroneous General Prosecutor", the newspaper indicated that the curriculum and background of Gonzales make him "not qualified for the charge or to represent the U.S. judicial system facing the rest of

the world".

It indicated that for that reason the Senate "would have to reject his nomination" when referring that he was one of the persons that approved torture toward prisoners, made evident in Iraq.

Gonzales, of Mexican ancestry, as a legal adviser of the White House, was behind the elaboration of a memorandum in which he described as "obsolete" the Vienna Convention against tortures, recalled the metropolitan newspaper.

On the other hand, the National Council of La Raza, one of the more influential Hispanic organizations, endorsed last Tuesday Gonzales candidacy of whose approval by the plenary session of the Senate could be produced next week.

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