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WORLD

THE BATTALION

Wednesday, August 23, 2000

Columbia requests U.S. trade

CARTAGENA, Colombia (AP)—President Andres Pastrana said Tuesday he will urge President Clinton during his visit to drop trade barriers to create alternative jobs for the thousands of Colombians who work in the drug trade.

Clinton arrives in Colombia today with a high-powered delegation of U.S. lawmakers, Cabinet members, diplomats and military brass to speed implementation of a \$1.3 billion U.S. anti-narcotics aid package.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Pastrana lauded the visit—the first by a U.S. president since George Bush came in 1990—as evidence that “we are not alone in the fight against drugs.”

Ahead of Clinton’s arrival, workers were hurriedly repaving streets in this walled Spanish-colonial city on the Caribbean and painting over anti-U.S. graffiti, such as one that read: “Clinton go home.”

Army troops erected roadblocks on the outskirts and frisked motorists, part of a massive security operation involving 5,000 Colombian soldiers and police and some 350 U.S. personnel.

Leftist rebels have promised not to disrupt the visit, but some minor violence and protests have been reported.

Police said they found anti-Clinton pamphlets signed by the rebel Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, outside three banks damaged by small explosions Tuesday in the western city of Cali. No one was injured in the blasts in the city 470 miles from Cartagena.

“This is one of the most important subjects we must discuss with Bill Clinton.”

— Andres Pastrana
President of Columbia

In Medellin, Colombia’s second-largest city, riot police with water cannons clashed with ski-masked university students who burned a bus, chanted anti-Clinton slogans and waved Colombian flags.

Troops and rebels also skirmished with no reported casualties outside Guayabetal, an Andean mountain town 33 miles southeast of the capital, Bogota.

Pastrana said he expects the U.S. assistance to continue no matter who is elected to the White House in November because the aid plan has both Democratic and Republican support.

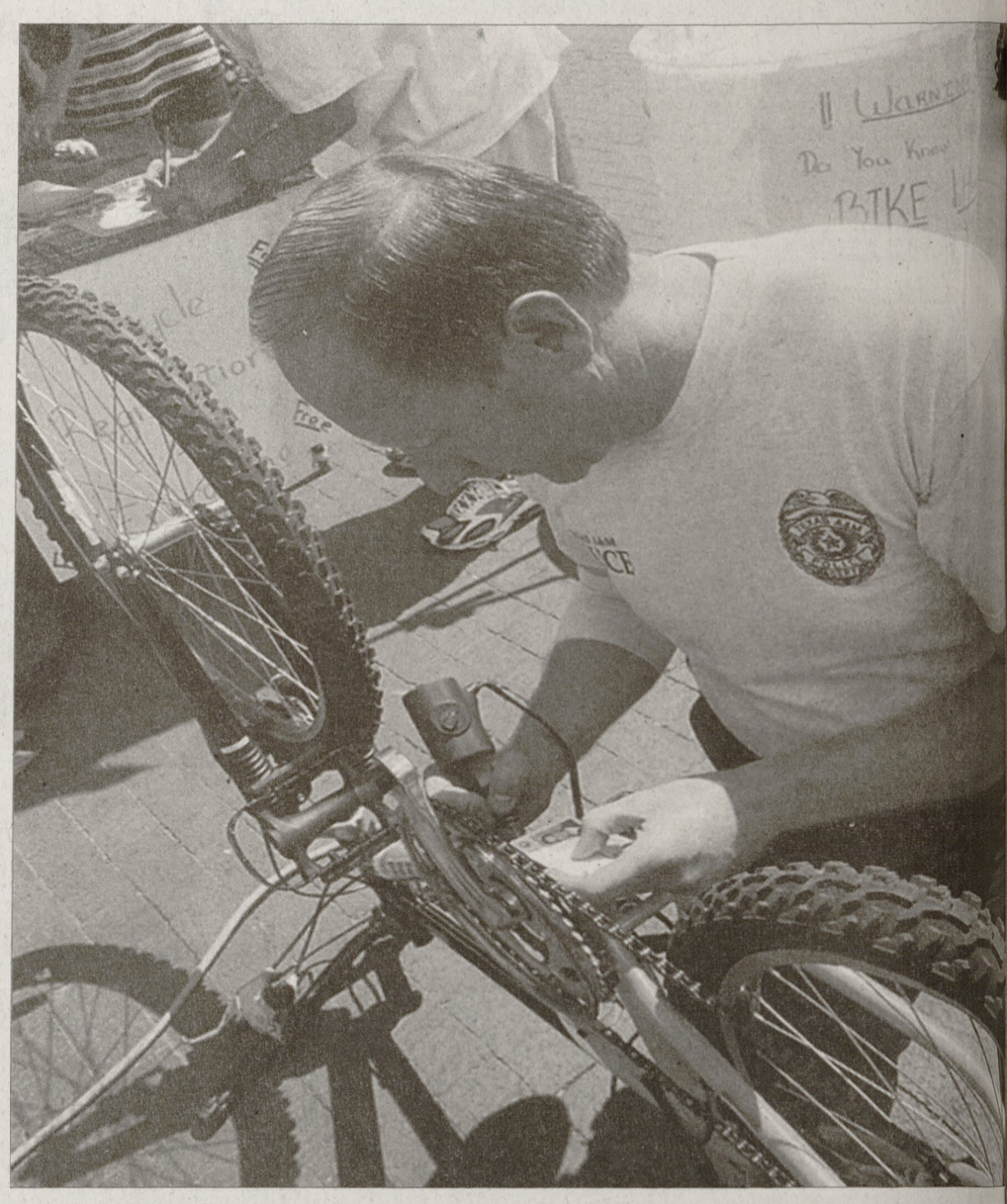
But Pastrana urged the United States to drop trade barriers to Colombian products, which would generate employment here and give Colombians an alternative to narcotics production.

“This is one of the most important subjects we must discuss with Bill Clinton,” Pastrana, appearing relaxed and casually dressed in a blue sport shirt and tan chinos, told the Associated Press.

Clinton’s visit is a political boost for Pastrana, whose popularity has plummeted here amid disappointing peace talks, a major recession and ongoing rebel and right-wing paramilitary violence.

The American aid, most of it in military hardware and training, is aimed at combatting the armed groups who protect plantations producing 90 percent of the world’s cocaine and a rising share of its heroin.

Can I see your ID?



Lt. Bert Kretzschmar of the University Police Department engraves a bicycle with the owner's driver's license number as part of Welcome Week.

Pope gives guidelines for research

ROME (AP)—Pope John Paul II sought Tuesday to lay down moral guidelines for medical research in the 21st century, endorsing organ donation and adult stem cell study but condemning human cloning and embryo experiments.

John Paul’s address to an international conference of 5,000 transplant specialists appeared to be an attempt to set moral limits on such life-and-death issues as organ transplants and related research.

John Paul won applause from the transplant experts when he encouraged organ donation, calling it an “act of love.”

But if his stance against embryo research were followed, “all these people with serious diseases would have no hope,” said one supporter of the research, Dr. Robert Goldstein of the New York-based Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Underscoring how important he considered the issue, the 80-year-old pontiff left his summer retreat at Castel Gandolfo outside Rome to address the International Congress of the Transplantation Society.

But the address went beyond being a booster speech for organ donations.

John Paul spelled out the church’s position on transplant-related matters, condemning the sale of organs, insisting on informed consent on both sides of the exchange and singling out the complete end of brain activity as an acceptable way to determine that death has occurred.

Calling organ donation “a genuine act of love,” he said, “Accordingly, any procedure which tends to commercialize human organs or to consider them as items of exchange or trade must be considered morally unacceptable.”

The decision on who should be

first in line to receive organs can be based only on medical factors, John Paul said—not on age, sex, race, religion, social standing, usefulness to society or any other standard.

He left the door open for cross-species transplants.

The pope’s support for organ donation was likely to have an impact on his 1 billion-strong flock of Roman Catholics. Traditionally, many Catholics have been adverse to both organ transplants and cremation for reasons having to do with keeping the body intact for resurrection.

“Methods that fail to respect the dignity and value of the person must always be avoided.”



POPE JOHN PAUL II

John Paul also spoke out against cloning and related embryo research, a rapidly developing field in the four years since Dolly the lamb first struggled to its cloned hooves.

The pope renewed his opposition to both techniques just weeks after Britain moved toward allowing limited human cloning for research and the United States approving federal funding for research on human embryo stem cells.

The British and U.S. actions both grew out of scientific excitement about the promise of research on em-

bryonic stem cells—parent cells that go on to form most types of tissues.

Researchers hope the cells some day be used to grow tissues or whole organs—offer hope for scores of diseases from diabetes to Alzheimer’s.

Experts say one of the most promising areas for the research is Parkinson’s—a neurodegenerative disease of which the pope himself shows symptoms. The Vatican longer denies he has it, although he has never confirmed it.

In the church’s view, cloning is reconcilable with its position on life between married couples is an acceptable way to create human embryos.

“Methods that fail to respect the dignity and value of the person always be avoided,” John Paul said to the medical workers.

“I am thinking in particular of attempts at human cloning with the aim of obtaining organs for transplant. These techniques, insofar as they involve the manipulation and creation of human embryos, are morally unacceptable, even when the proposed goal is good in itself.”

John Paul ruled out use of embryonic cells as well, pointing to the direction of adult stem cell research as the acceptable route for research.

Adult stem cells already have been the object of research for 25 years now, with minimal success, said Goldstein, speaking by phone from New York.

In all this time, “there’s no indication, none whatsoever, that stem cells have the same embryonic,” Goldstein said.

“For those people, who have no other hope, this offers a remarkable hope and promise.”

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