

U.S. Gives \$1.3 Billion in Aid to Colombia

The Associated Press

CARTAGENA, Colombia — In a country beset by decades of violence, President Clinton delivered a \$1.3 billion U.S. package Wednesday that he said would help Colombia defeat its drug traffickers without getting the United States into a Vietnam-like quagmire.

"We will not get into a shooting war," with Colombian guerrillas, he said, standing alongside Colombian President Andres Pastrana, both in short sleeves in the sweltering heat of this Caribbean

port city. Pastrana stressed that Colombia has no intention of drawing the United States into its military conflict.

"As long as Andres Pastrana is president, we will not have a foreign military intervention in Colombia," he said.

There were reminders, during Clinton's half-day visit to Cartagena, of the fear and violence that bleeds this Andean nation. Police said they discovered and deactivated a 4.4-pound bomb found five blocks from a neighborhood Clinton planned to tour.

Officials said the bomb was intended

to spread rebel pamphlets and would have been unlikely to cause harm. A U.S. Secret Service official, Terry Samway, insisted that only materials for explosives were found, not a bomb.

In an unusual display of bipartisan support, Clinton was accompanied by House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and 10 other members of Congress. Hastert was instrumental in pushing the aid package through Congress, despite misgivings by some who feared the United States would get drawn into the guerrilla conflict and help an army long criticized for human rights abuses.

Clinton was also accompanied by Attorney General Janet Reno, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Barry McCaffrey, Clinton's chief drug policy adviser — part of a delegation of 35. Daughter Chelsea also came along.

"Why are we here today?" Hastert said. "Not only do we share a great heritage of democracy, but we also share a great burden" — the threat drugs pose both to countries that produce drugs and those that consume them.

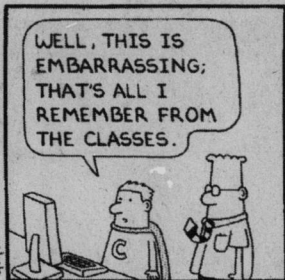
"In our nation, over 14,000 young people lose their life every year to either drug use or drug violence, and it happens in our wealthiest communities and the street corners of our most devastated inner cities," Hastert said.

The U.S. assistance is part of Pastrana's \$7.5 billion "Plan Colombia," designed to end decades of civil war, fight drug trafficking, strengthen the judicial system and revive an economy in the doldrums.



Bhakta James serves a free vegetarian meal to junior Charles Wilson. The feast, hosted by the UNC Vegetarian Club, takes place from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. every Wednesday in the upper quad.

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THE Daily Crossword

By Diane C. Baldwin

ACROSS	kitchen	stink-o	31 Pumps and	44 Skyrocket	53 Deflected
1 Cinema	50 Gaucho's	7 Mercury or	loafers	45 Cavalry sword	55 Youngster
footage	weapon	Saturn	32 Gulp down	46 Words to live	56 Shade or tone
5 Plucked sound	51 Triangular sail	8 Final degree	33 Quaker William	47 Openings	57 Enemy
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14 Inspiration	apparent	10 Categorizes	dance	count?	
15 Course of a	58 Utopia	11 Spherical	36 Lumberjack's	50 Word before	
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16 Housecoat	60 Pizzeria fixture	13 With 61A, flag	37 Prune	51 Indonesian	
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22 Mysterious writings		24 Attractions			
23 Quasi-religious	DOWN	25 Religious cere-			
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24 Fabric care	2 Golden calf, e.g.	26 Border on			
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26 After-market	4 Game piece	beasts			
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29 Features of	6 Superlatively	29 Commingle			
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35 Feeling poorly					
39 Golf-bag item					
40 Items in the					
fire?					
41 Seek prey					
42 Worked under-					
cover					
43 Champions'					
gestures					
45 Rifts					
48 Sign gas					
49 Lure of the					

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CP&L

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cern for Orange County, but something all employees of the plant and CP&L share.

"Safety goes beyond the gate," he said. "When we talk about safety, it affects me personally."

The informal setting was then opened up for public questioning, ranging from concerns about higher power bills to inquiries regarding alternative power sources.

Richard Hargrader of Durham, a board member of N.C. Solar Power Association, questioned the efficiency of nuclear power and raised environmental concerns.

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

MERGER

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ered," Spalt said.

If negotiations don't go as planned, AOL-Time Warner could be facing some competition.

"There is one other cable operator that has expressed interest in setting up in towns in the area," Spalt said. "We are interested in that. We would welcome more competition in the town."

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POLICY

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residence halls, while upperclassmen are suspended from the university.

Last year, 40 UD students were suspended from residence halls and 23 from the university, Cummings said.

"The program has worked very well for UD," she said.

But UNC officials say it is unlikely the University will adopt a "three strikes" policy. Don Apparius, UNC assistant dean of students, said the University handles its drug and alcohol violations on a case-by-case basis — either through the Honor Court or the administration.

"Student housing basically has a zero-tolerance policy for drugs," Apparius said. "Students (found using drugs) will probably lose their lease."

But he said underage students caught with alcohol are sent to his office for assessment and are often required to go to alcohol classes.

"It does no good to graduate students with knowledge in academic areas, and then on their 21st birthday, they wrap their car around a tree because we didn't teach them about the effects of alcohol and how to drink responsibly."

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Rain Could Snuff Out Forest Fires

The Associated Press

RED LODGE, Mont. — A sprinkling of rain fell on some of Montana's vast wildfires Wednesday, and firefighters hoped it signaled a change in the region's hot, dry weather.

Thirty major fires continued to burn on more than 650,000 acres in the state. A steady drizzle developed in late morning at Red Lodge, where a 2,500-acre fire four miles outside the town

kept some 50 families out of their homes.

"A couple of days of this and we'd just about have her surrounded," said Jeff Gildehaus, fire information officer.

Light drizzle also helped firefighters attack a new fire north of Helena that forced five families out of their homes near Wolf Creek overnight. The evacuation order was lifted Wednesday afternoon, and managers said they expected to have the 450-acre fire contained later

Wednesday.

Rain also fell Wednesday on Wyoming's largest fire, a 14,750-acre fire in the southwestern part of the state.

The National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho, said 30 large fires were burning in an area of 656,991 acres in Montana, while 85 major fires were burning on 1.64 million acres nationally. Wildfires have charred 6.3 million acres nationally this year, mostly in the hot, dry West.

Judge Criticizes Ford, Plans to Order Recall

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A judge said he might order a recall of as many as 2 million Ford Motor Co. vehicles over concerns that they are prone to stalling, and he accused the company of deceiving federal safety investigators and consumers.

Ford denied the allegations.

The Alameda County Superior Court judge's preliminary decision was issued late Tuesday in a lawsuit filed in 1996 on behalf of 3.5 million current and former California owners of Ford vehicles in model years 1983-95.

They claim the vehicles stall because an ignition device was mounted in the wrong place.

"I think it's a huge victory. The judge studied this information for five years now," plaintiff's attorney Jeffrey Fazio said Wednesday.

It's a new blow for the automaker, which is involved in this month's recall of 6.5 million Firestone tires, which were standard equipment on some Ford trucks and sports utility vehicles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating 62 deaths that might be linked to the tires.

Ford denies any ignition defects and said no injuries have resulted from the alleged faulty devices.

Company spokeswoman Susan Krusel said the automaker would ask Judge Michael Ballachey to reverse his preliminary decision at a Sept. 28 hearing in Oakland.

No other judge has ever ordered a vehicle recall, but Ballachey has said that the law gives him the power to do just that.

If the judge makes the order final, Ford believes it would be overturned on

appeal, Krusel said.

The suit challenges Ford's placement of the thick film ignition (TFI) module, which regulates electric current to the spark plugs.

In 300 models sold between 1983 and 1995, the module was mounted on the distributor near the engine block, where it was exposed to high temperatures.

Plaintiff's lawyers have said Ford was warned by an engineer that high temperatures would cause the device to fail and stall the engine, confirmed the problem in internal studies, and could have moved the module to a cooler spot for an extra \$4 per vehicle.

Consumer advocates estimated that a recall would cost Ford \$70 million to \$250 million, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

Ballachey's preliminary order harshly criticized how Ford dealt with the federal safety agency and agreed with the plaintiffs that the company withheld information.

"Ford's strategy, clearly established by the credible evidence, was: 'If you don't ask the right question, we don't have to answer with what common sense tells us you want to know,'" Ballachey wrote.

Ford presented a blizzard of unpersuasive statistical evidence in an attempt to disprove the obvious — that TFI modules failed in enormous numbers from the outset, that they continued to fail in unacceptable numbers for many years before being replaced by successor technology, and that they presented a serious safety risk to its consumers."

Ford denied it concealed critical information and said its vehicles were no more prone to stalling than any others and posed no hazard.