

Colombian drug 'super state' emerges

By **GEORGE GEDDA**
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A troubling challenge facing President Bush as he gropes for ways to combat drug smuggling is the emergence of a drug "super state" in Latin America, an entity with many of the trappings of a nation state.

The drug "super state" — a term once used by a Colombian attorney general shortly before he was murdered by drug traffickers last year — has a defense establishment, controls large swaths of territory, issues communiques, and even boasts what amounts to a "commerce department," which assiduously promotes the export of cocaine and other illicit drugs.

It also has what its defenders regard as a progressive political philosophy.

Diego Cordoba, a lawyer employed by Colombian drug barons, contended in an interview with a Brazilian newspaper last year that drug trafficking has done more to alleviate poverty and hunger in Latin America than any government in the region.

Another lawyer for the traffickers, Mario Arango, wrote in a best-selling book that the drug business has opened new opportunities for the underprivileged classes.

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brake on the social and political deterioration of the country," Arango says.

According to U.S. government figures, as much as \$1.7 billion in cocaine-generated revenues last year bolstered the economies of Peru and Bolivia, the two largest cocaine producers in the world. The figure for Colombia, the conduit for 80 per cent of the cocaine consumed in the United States and Europe, is estimated at \$4 billion.

The super state boasts a formidable defense establishment. While the underfunded Colombian police have about 30 helicopters at their disposal, one single trafficker, Jorge Luis Ochoa, reportedly has 50 aircraft and an arsenal of weapons.

Unlike the Colombian government, which requires months and sometimes years to acquire weaponry for its military, the drug traffickers —

unhindered by red tape — can get what they want in days or even hours.

Another characteristic of a nation state the drug lords have is the ability to declare war. After Colombian President Virgilio Barco ordered a crackdown on the drug traffickers two weeks ago — confiscating millions of dollars worth of property and arresting 11,000 suspects — the cartel issued a statement asserting the existence of a state of "absolute and total war" with the government.

If the drug super state has a capital, it is, of course, Medellin, a city located about 150 miles northwest of Bogota. Medellin is described as the "central star" of a "sprawling, fluctuating constellation" by Douglas Payne, director of hemispheric studies for the pro-democracy research organization Freedom House.

The super state has numerous branch offices, including one in Panama where a key ally, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, from time to time has welcomed Colombian drug kingpins needing a safe haven.

With the combined economic, political and military powers of a government, Payne says, the cartel is now acting like a state and asking to be treated like one.

"Will he present the first drug-based development model?"

Eastside H.S. begins era without Joe Clark

By **MICHAEL MORAN**
Associated Press Writer

PATERSON, N.J. — The year was 1975 B.C. — "Before Clark," as former Eastside High School principal Joe Clark likes to call it.

The school reeled under the weight of no discipline, he says. Drugs were sold openly in hallways. Fist fights turned to stabbings. Pregnant 15-year-olds and boys headed for welfare sat in graffiti-scarred classrooms designed more to restrain than to teach, Clark says.

It is now 1989 A.D., which could easily stand for After Discipline.

Clark is gone from Eastside, a victim, he says, of the politics of Paterson's Board of Education. Officially on sabbatical while recovering from open-heart surgery, he has said he will not return.

"Now, the building is in a high state of decoration," Clark said, his speech slightly adorned. "The kids are straightened out, the place is conducive to learning. My job is done."

"I can't physically stand the rigors

and difficulty of a large inner-city school anymore," he said. "And I see little hope for inner-city education. I no longer want to be a part of institutionalized child abuse."

Charles Lighty, a former vice principal at Eastside and last year principal of Paterson's Elementary School No. 6, takes the principal's chair this year.

Clark's legacy remains unsettled. Others, including some on the school board, see him as a shameless self-promoter, a man who expelled students without due process and whose authoritarian style promoted order without improving academics.

Lighty's appointment is no rebuke to Clark, but board members and school officials have made it clear they want academics to improve.

"He knows Eastside very well, worked with Clark in starting some of the initiatives there," said Frank Napier, city schools superintendent. "His curriculum oriented and the primary focus at Eastside now is to move it into the realm of improving academics."

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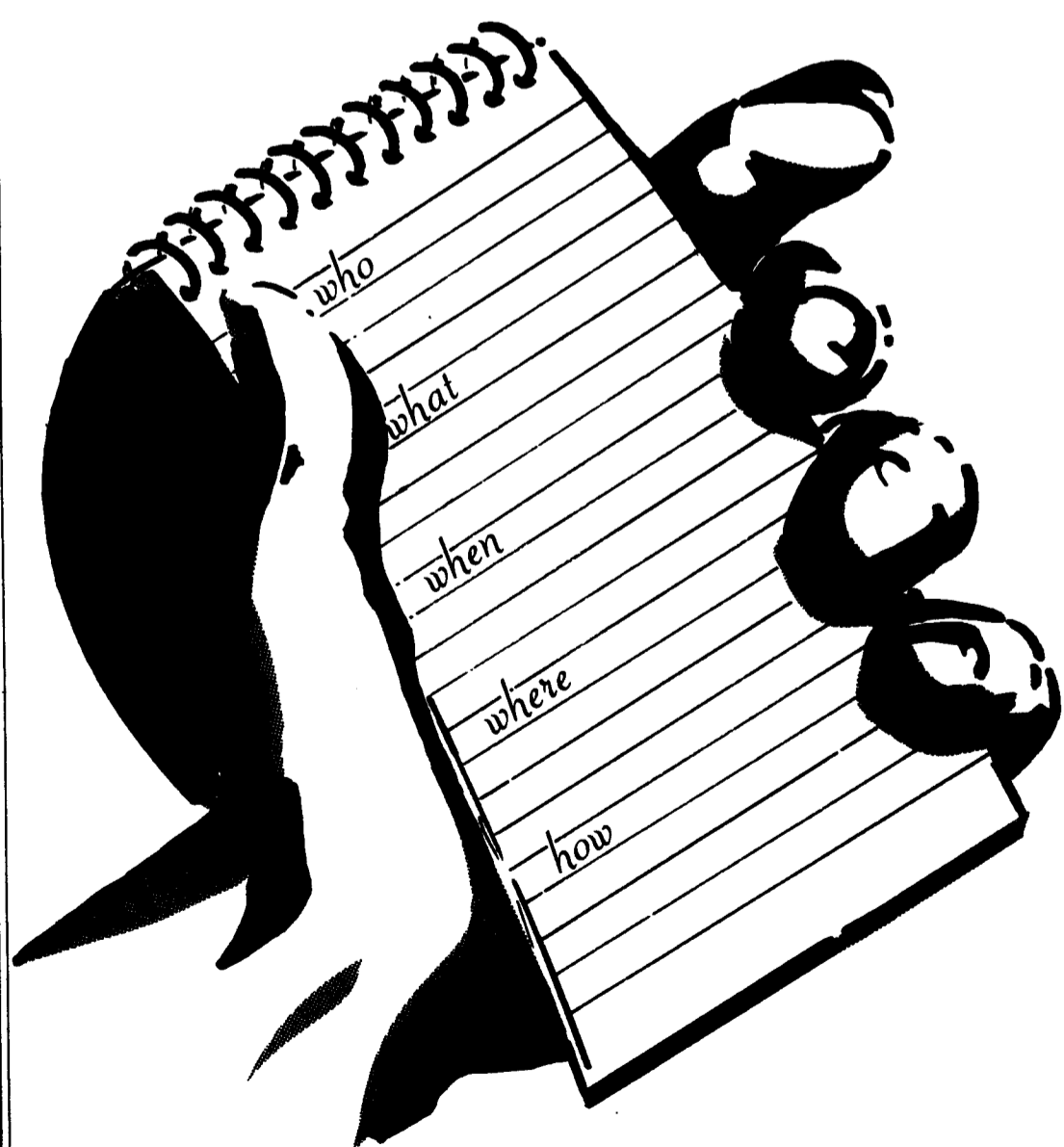
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