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soc.culture.filipino:34713 alt.politics.vietnamese:240

Via NY Transfer News Collective \* All the News that Doesn't Fit

AGRICULTURAL EXPERT & VIETNAM VET TOM HARGROVE KIDNAPPED IN COLOMBIA

[NY Transfer News Editor's Note: Tom Hargrove is the author of "A Dragon Lives Forever," a very moving chronicle of his experiences in Vietnam as a member of a military agricultural team, his attempts to write about the war, and how it changed his life, and his eventual return trips to Vietnam. After two decades working at the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines -- a career largely inspired by his wartime experiences in the Mekong Delta -- Hargrove moved to Latin America with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture. (The institute has an unfortunate acronym -- "CIAT"-- in Spanish.)

While both the IRRI and the CIAT were projects initiated by Rockefeller and Ford Foundation grant money, there is no evidence that these institutes are engaged in any repulsive counterrinsurgency activity for US intelligence. Unlike the AID's Institute for Free Labor Development, for example, the goal of these organizations does seem to be primarily an increase in global food production, and not suppression of popular insurgency.

Readers can find addresses and recommendations for action in the material that follows. We will attempt to follow this story as it develops, and recommend Hargrove's excellent book "A Dragon Lives Forever." which is now available in paperback. -- NY Transfer]

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Tues. Dec 13, 1994

Please post the accompanying news release to all interested persons. Tom Hargrove is Director of CIAT, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and was kidnapped in Colombia on September 23, 1994 (see article from Reuters, below). Friends and family have been anxiously awaiting news of his well-being for the past two and a half months, and finally received some word (news release, further below). Please send any words of support or assistance to Tom's family c/o Bill Smith at

In peace,  
Jim Coats

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Here is the Reuters story that appeared in the 9/26/94 New York Times:

Headline: \*Rebels in Colombia Kidnap American.

Text: BOGOTA, Colombia, Sept. 25 (Reuters) -- Soldiers and the police were searching today for a United States citizen who authorities said had been kidnapped by Marxist guerrillas in the southwestern province of Cauca -- the fourth American to be taken by Colombian rebels this year.

The police said about 15 armed men dressed in military uniforms kidnapped the American, identified as Thomas Hargrove, at a roadblock on Friday just outside the town of Puerto Tejada, more than 150 miles southwest of Bogota.

Mr. Hargrove, who works at the International Center of Tropical Agriculture, was traveling to Candelaria in the province of Valle del Cauca when he was kidnapped.

The police later found his abandoned jeep with his identification papers inside. It was not known if Mr. Hargrove was traveling alone.

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Here is the most recent report on the kidnapping:

On Friday, 25 Nov. 94 CIAT issued a news release announcing that a ransom for Tom's release had been demanded. It amplified the basic information contained in Susan Hargrove's status report of the same date. Since this release was not picked up widely outside Colombia, I am distributing it FYI for friends-of-tom.

Note that in its news release CIAT mentioned your letter-writing efforts. Nathan Russel, Tom's colleague at CIAT, told me by telephone that there has been wide coverage in Colombia media the last three weekends. Now would be a good time to increase our efforts. If you have been meaning to write a letter, but have not done so yet, it is still worth the effort.

You might consider asking your parent institution, or any other professional organizations you belong to, to write on Tom's behalf. Now that Tom has been made an important person in the Colombia media, we should make sure that he is perceived as important to as diverse a personal and professional community as we can. --Bill Smith

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PRESS RELEASE FROM CIAT  
For Immediate Release  
25 November 1994

Kidnappers Demand Ransom for the Release of American Journalist in Colombia

The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (known by its Spanish acronym, CIAT) was appalled to learn that the kidnapers of Thomas Hargrove, its Communications Unit head, are demanding a large amount of money for his release.

The kidnapers made the ransom demand through a letter, accompanied by evidence that the science journalist is alive.

CIAT's Deputy Director General, Fritz Kramer, explained the difficult position of the center, whose sole source of funding consists of donations from national governments and international institutions, making it impossible for CIAT to meet the ransom demand.

"With donor support, our scientists carry out agricultural research aimed at alleviating hunger and poverty around the world," Kramer noted.

The demand for money comes at a time when donors are expressing grave concern about the welfare of CIAT staff. "Donors urge the center to work at locations where its personnel are reasonably secure," Kramer said, "and insist that their funds be used only to advance scientific investigation and better the human condition."

"CIAT calls on the captors of Thomas Hargrove to liberate him immediately and unconditionally," Kramer added.

Since the center's establishment in 1967, it has contributed enormously to improving the quantity and quality of basic staples, specifically common bean, cassava, and rice, as well as tropical forages. This work has benefited poor farmers and consumers, not only in Colombia, but around the world.

In addition, CIAT develops improved systems for conserving and managing natural resources that help protect the environment for the benefit of humanity.

Hargrove has dedicated his entire professional life to serving the poor in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

He was kidnapped on 23 September of this year between the towns of Puerto Tejada, Cauca, and Candelaria, Valle, on his way to work. Since then colleagues in Colombia and around the world have mounted a solidarity movement to protest his abduction and demand his swift release.

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Jim Coats  
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+ Since 1985: Information for the Rest of Us +  
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