

July 12, 2008

LETTER

The Other Hostages

To the Editor:

Re “Families Fear for Hostages Still in Jungle” (front page, July 8):

Magdalena Rivas, whose son, Lt. Elkin Hernández Rivas, was captured by the FARC a decade ago, is rightly upset because the celebrations have come too soon. Trophy hostages were released when Colombian intelligence agents tricked narco-guerrillas, and the resulting applause likely caused tensions to flare.

The FARC makes money through kidnapping, extortion and the lucrative drug trade. The Colombian government has been struggling in its battle against the group since the 1960s, and there is no end in sight.

Before the Champagne is uncorked, it must be acknowledged that the FARC continues to cause havoc and must be stopped. In addition, the government must continue to improve economic and sociopolitical conditions so that the guerrillas will reintegrate into society.

Unless the Colombian government cuts off the FARC’s financing by ending the drug trafficking, the narco-guerrillas will thrive and innocent people like Lieutenant Rivas will remain in jeopardy.

Annie Rohrhoff
Arlington, Va., July 10, 2008

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