

**ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS OF
ARTICLES PUBLISHED ON MARCH 16 and MARCH 17, 2003**

**EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO
Monday, March 17, 2003**

**ROSELLO □ AFFIRMS
END OF MINDSET OF RESIGNATION
IN THE PNP**

[Photo Caption/left corner:

Aerial view of the place where 50,000 Progressive Party supporters came together to welcome former Governor Pedro Rossello □ upon his arrival in Puerto Rico.]

[Photo Caption/right corner:

Rossello □ spoke yesterday with *El Vocero* about his candidacy for the governorship under the banner of the PNP.]

EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO

“End of Defeatism”

By Denise Y. Pérez

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The majority of problems that have confronted the New Progressive Party (PNP) have their roots in an attitude of defeatism and resignation that has been exhibited by the party leadership until now, according to former Governor Pedro Rosselló.

That attitude has taken away the motivation of the supporters of statehood, and has kept the party with few resources and with the ever-present mindset that winning future elections is impossible. According to Rosselló, that’s going to change with him.

“What I have seen is that there is an attitude of resignation or defeatism. And therefore, there has been little motivation to contribute, to bring something to the fight. As with everything, unless there is a vision and a reality, the kind of situation we now see is very predictable,” Rosselló stated at a round table discussion with reporters from *El Vocero*.

During the chairmanship of Carlos Pesquera, the PNP had faced economic problems of such magnitude that on certain occasions it had to suspend basics such as telephone service, and in a certain manner was prevented from getting out its message. Pesquera has placed a good part of the responsibility for this debt on Rosselló.

Rosselló said that there is a parallel with the Puerto Rican Independence Party in the sense that it is a solid party, although very limited in its ability to raise funds because of the perception that it can’t be a winner.

[Photo caption:

Former Governor Pedro Rosselló stated that the PNP had little motivation to contribute and labored under a perception that no real options exist.]

“I believe that what happened with the PNP was precisely that. There was a perception that there weren’t any real options available to turn it into a winner. Now I feel that the situation has changed,” said Rosselló. “Since when?” he was asked. “Since the race began,” he responded.

Rosselló stated assuredly that he is the one who is responsible for raising funds in order to mount a campaign. Up to now, there has been no campaign committee to solicit donations for 2004. The Committee for a Better Future, explained Rosselló, was created for activities related to his comeback. “The committee will become inactive as soon as the books are squared away, since it was conceived with the principle that it would have a ‘limited life’,” he added.

Will present his team

The former governor acknowledged that he has some expectations as regards the people who will be part of his campaign, taking into account the many cases of corruption that have come out into the open. The critics who said that it's the same old crowd will be back this week," Rosselló said.

"That argument will fall by the wayside when we release the make-up of the new team that we are putting together. There are times when people are willing to serve and others will come after them. Our philosophy is that of change. Nothing has to remain the same. But in order to bring about that change, I need a young team that will bring with it the energy and idealism that has been missing. For me, those are the very essential ingredients," he said.

That philosophy does not exclude people "with experience," and most of all those who have performed well, Rosselló added. "No one is excluded because they might have served previously. That is unfair," he said. Rosselló has in mind to set up a corporate type of campaign committee, such as done by the Democrats in the United States. Regarding Pesquera's arguments that "we can't return to the past," Rosselló responded, "I agree. I am here to present the ideas of the future. That is my ideology."

Surprised over the reception

Rosselló was surprised over the number of people who were at Saturday's welcoming reception, and said that what he saw had been totally beyond his imagination. "I had expected that there would be a decent turnout, but this one exceeded all of my calculations. What impressed me was the enthusiasm, the energy, the happiness of the people there. I was totally dumbfounded. I felt so elated. Maga was surprised," he said.

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“Heading Off Corruption”

By Obert Betancourt

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Former Governor Pedro Rosselló would concentrate most of his energies on preventing corruption, and would allow the government’s investigative agencies and judicial authorities to do that work, he disclosed yesterday at a round table discussion held with reporters from *El Vocero*. The mechanics, however, are still not worked out since the question of how the machinery is set up may either fall to him or to an independent agency.

“It is a mechanism addressed in that direction (prevention). Preliminarily, I believe that the mechanics should be the governor’s job so that that information can be brought directly to him. However, through inquiries I have made, I believe that it should be an independent agency so that there are no outside influences by the governor. Until now, I have not decided, from the point of view of the Governor, well, I would like to have the information, but I also have to determine the pertinence” of charging the Governor who himself has influence in the process. Said organization would operate a kind of internal affairs that police departments have, through which information on crimes committed by police officers is gathered and investigated.

Rosselló’s administration was blamed by the media and opposition political parties for alleged corruption, more than anything else. In a message to the country delivered last Thursday, the former chief executive agreed that even though he did not know [about corruption], “I should have known.” Rosselló said in the interview that he will be more receptive and less on the defensive whenever any accusations of that type arise.

Even so, the former chief executive made it clear that the primary role of the governor “cannot be that of a person who is always looking over the shoulders of officials” to the detriment of his other duties and functions. Accordingly, he has come up with the idea of placing a lot of energy on preventing corruption, and one specific idea is that of a kind of police department internal affairs bureau. That is something that has to be done, but that does not mean that he becomes the police chief who is actually doing the oversight work. “We already have corruption-detection agencies, such as the Office of the Comptroller and others,” said Rosselló.

In fact, the so-called agency for investigating corrupt government officials is the NIE. However, for several years now, that investigative arm has been practically inoperative. Also, that agency has directed its efforts towards investigations involving cases of illegal drugs, although there has been no shortage of critics because many of its cases have been thrown out of court for poor investigative procedures. In addition, according to the law that created the NIE, its secret police should be directed at organized crime and not bought with hidden drug money.

On the other hand, Rosselló indicated that in characterizing his entire administration as corrupt, there has been “a process of criminalization, including by extension public employees. I see a complete demoralization of the public servant, because now everyone sees government service and corruption as one and the same. And that is not to minimize, but if we see the image of the public servant, and talk about a quarter of a million workers compared with the handful of officials involved found to be involved in crime, the generalization that that has been made of my administration is not correct. The vast majority of government employees do their jobs and do them well,” the ex-governor asserted.

EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO
“New Tactics Offered For Status Question”

By Jorge Luis Medina

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A new approach to resolving the 100-year old problem of Puerto Rico’s political status is to attack the same doctrine of the unincorporated territory, the ex-governor Pedro Rosselló asserted.

The only official who has promoted status plebiscites in each of his gubernatorial terms, Rosselló□ asserted that Puerto Rico has historically proposed mechanisms for equality such as in the presidential election, without challenging the crux of the problem: the legal doctrine that permits the United States to maintain indefinitely territories in which the Constitution is not applied completely.

The doctrine of the unincorporated territory, recalled Rosselló, was established in the 20th century in the so-called Insular Cases (*Casos Insulares*), a series of decisions by the Federal Supreme Court that established the manner in which the overseas territories obtained under the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War would be handled.

Those cases, recalled Rosselló, occurred at the same time that the doctrine of “separate but equal” was being developed, a doctrine that justified racial segregation.

The philosophical foundation for the policy development emerged from the debate in the pages of specialized publications, notably the Harvard Law Review, in particular an article by the future president of Harvard, Abbot Lawrence Lowell, who argued that some territories were part of the United States and others not. Lowell’s theory was based on the doctrine of territorial integration developed in the dissent by Justice [illegible name] in *Downes v. Bidwell*, one of the so-called insular cases.

The United States “changes its essence with those decisions, and it is in response to the political situation that was prevalent at that time. In essence (the doctrine) validates territorial segregation, says that the United States can have territories indefinitely, where not all civil rights are recognized. It is this very same Court that developed the concept of white supremacy,” said Rosselló in his interview with *El Vocero*.

The doctrine served to remove the historical trend developed by the Northeast Ordinance, under which the territories of the United States acquired all of the way until the annexation of Hawaii in 1898, were territories solely on a temporary basis, i.e., in a state of preparation to become member-states of the Union.

“The irony is that the United States, which is in essence a direct reaction to European colonialism, becomes exactly the same kind of power against which it fought for

independence. In view of that, I believe that the time has come to change the essence of the American nation because of those decisions. What is interesting is that the doctrine which established racial segregation was reversed by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 (but) the policy of territorial segregation continues in effect," said Rosselló.

According to the former governor, Puerto Rico must study the battle for the civil rights that were given to the United States, and apply those lessons to the fight to resolve the problem of status.

When the civil rights movement began, Rosselló said, "the original emphasis was on equality. Black Americans said, 'hey, wait a minute. There's a school for whites and another school for blacks and what we want is for our school to have the same resources as the other. The emphasis was on equality; there was no challenge to separation. Until the time came when someone said, 'we are going to challenge the doctrine now.'"

"Let talk now about the time of the presidential election, when I threw in the concept of "equal," but why do we not challenge the essence of that doctrine which established that the United States can have territories to which it does not *ad infinitum* have recognize rights? To me, this has been the instructive, because it mirrors our situation. How can we terminate this? Does the Supreme Court have to say that this territorial doctrine is invalid? How do you resolve it? Independence won't be a problem, because then Puerto Rico would not fall under the Constitution of the United States, but if Puerto Rico is under the United States Constitution, then it has to have the very same rights as the other states," said Rosselló.

EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO

More than 50,000 People

“Warmest Reception”

By Denise Y. Perez

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More than 50,000 supporters welcomed Pedro Rosselló during an event that far surpassed attendance expectations and reawaken the foundation of the New Progressive Party (PNP), which at the present time is debating between its loyalty for President Carlos Pesquera and the return of the ex-governor to the political arena.

The excitement could be noticed since early Saturday morning when people started to arrive to the area in front of the Hiram Bithorn Stadium. At noon the traffic was heavy on the main roads, giving the impression that it was an election day.

Rosselló arrived in the country on Saturday at 2:04 p.m, along with his wife Maga, and immediately held the first press conference in two years. The subject of corruption and accusations of negligence in his role of supervisor top the meeting. Rosselló who had portrayed himself as “changed” during his recent televised message, did not face the journalists, who received his answers with a similar disposition as before. Later, after almost one hour of press conferences, the former Governor departed to meet his followers.

Even though a caravan was not planned, just outside Luis Munoz Marin international airport, which faces Los Gobernadores avenue, thousands of people met and literally stopped traffic and parked their vehicles on the street itself in order to greet Rosselló.

Flags of the United States, La Palma, Rosselló pictures, stickers and the most uncommon ways to welcome were seen, like the gentleman who raised above his head a disposable diaper on which he printed the words “PPD” and “Sila,”

Even though followers were diverse, it was remarkable the amount of young people who followed Rosselló along the Baldorioty de Castro avenue all the way to El Bithorn. “Gosh, Look at this!” he exclaimed once he arrived at a point of the Baldorioty where the view is extensive.

Dancing “La Macarena,” pointing at people, blowing kisses and placing his hand over his heart while he set his sight on his followers, Rosselló even ran into people who were crying emotionally and showed him their love with signboards. “Pedro, you are the Messiah,” “Sila your days are counted,” “We love you Pesquera, Rosselló Governor,” “Take us out of the hole,” “Proud Firefighters,” were some of the signboards seen by Rosselló. Others showed signs of devotion.

Residential buildings in the area showed hundreds of people waiving from their apartments. Others expressed rejection, like a young man who came out of his apartment window with a giant Puerto Rico flag and a signboard reading “Homeland or Death.” A few showed their middle fingers, as suggested by a campaign to that effect, even when the young people dressed in the orange romper suits never showed up to send an anti-corruption message as it was announced.

Besides the 50,000 people assembled at the Bithorn, Police estimated an approximate number of 20,000 people who waited for Rosselló at the Baldorioty.

When Rosselló passed in front of the PNP headquarters in Santurce, he placed his right hand on his forehead, making a military salute, which he would repeat when he encountered police in uniform along his way.

After the three-hour journey, it became impossible to continue the parade in a vehicle, for this reason Rosselló caught a ride with a motorcycle driver up to the intersection of Las Americas expressway and Roosevelt Avenue. At that moment he had to get off because they could not get through; he continued on foot, amongst a sea of people who literally dragged him to the stage. He even lost his belt on the way. The Plaza Las Americas parking lot with multiple levels was packed with people, all the way from the first to the top floor.

Later that night, and after several brief messages, Rosselló spoke, repeating phrases from previous campaigns. Justifying his return, he spoke about a Puerto Rico in a serious social situation, about this time he used the subject of corruption to take him into the PPD playfield, which caused rage among the people.

“It has been stated that I was going to be treated like a criminal, that they were waiting for me to be put on a jumpsuit and be put in jail. I tell those people, the name and last name: Pedro Rosselló is here!”

After acknowledging corruption existed in his administration, he made a challenge “Do you want to talk about corruption? Let’s talked about corruption” he stated.

“In two years this government has had more recognized cases of irregular handling than in previous years. This time government officials, mayors, legislators, secretaries and counselors are immersed in corruption and embezzlement up to their necks. Since you want to talk about corruption, let’s talk about secret accounts overseas, planes that don’t fly, taxes not collected from the friends who sell gas, and about those who protect those who own supermarkets and organizers of baseball,” Rosselló stated.

“Let’s talk about trips with secretaries paid with public funds, and illegal donations not reported, of proven lies, of helicopters for personal use, of laundering campaign funds, of parking contracts in the San Juan Municipality when it had a female mayor, and at this same place of the expenses due to political advertising exposed by the Controller... So you want to talk about corruption? Well, let’s then talk about corruption” he added.

Somewhat mocking the expressions made in the past by the federal District Attorney Guillermo Gil in regards to corruption having a name and last name, “PNP,” Rosselló said: “I come here with a name and last name. I, Pedro Rosselló, represent those who built the progress and hope of a country. In this land, progress and social justice have only one name and last name: it is called PNP”.

After finishing his message, as in the 1992 and 1996 campaigns, Rosselló jumped off the stage to join his followers.

Medical emergencies provided services for 38 cases, from people who fainted due to suffocation to cardiac arrest patients.

[Photo caption:] More than 50,000 people assembled in the parking lot of the Hiram Bithorn Stadium.

[Photo caption:] Thousands of people cheered the former governor during his journey from the airport to Halo Rey.

[Photo caption:] The multi-level parking lot of Plaza Las Americas was also packed with people who wanted to see and listen to Rosselló.

[Photo caption:] Above, Rosselló is lost among his followers after finishing his message. Below, the ex-mandatory “catches a ride” from a motorcycle rider on his way to Bithorn Stadium.

[Photograph caption:] To the left, the ex-governor Rosselló greets the thousands of followers who waited for him along the Baldorioty de Castro Avenue. Above, partial view of the huge caravan.

[Photograph caption:] A little bit of everything. The return of the ex Governor Pedro Rosselló to the island unleashed passions from his followers and also from his critics. To the left, alleged sympathizers of the PPD express their support to the ex mandatory. Below, a lady holds a signboard with a message for supporting Rossello □ and on the far left an opponent refers to the subject of corruption.

EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO

“Rossello □ Begins Visits”

By José R. Ortózar

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Caguas. – To the rhythms of “La Macarena,” “La Copa de la Vida,” old ditties and jingles from past election campaigns, dozens of supporters yesterday welcomed the former governor, Pedro Rosselló before the Municipal Committee of the New Progressive Party (PNP) in this city.

The visit to one of the seats of the voting for the chairmanship of the Organization of Progressive Women marks the start of meetings by the ex-governor with statehood organizations.

Nearly one hundred men and women of different ages waited for over an hour for the arrival of the former chairman of the PNP, with flags and hand cards waving slogans in favor of his candidacy for the governorship.

Many of the people who were outside the committee did not vote because they were men or because they were not delegates, but nonetheless waited to greet Rosselló.

Although they were not delegates, Carmen Rivera and María Jiménez, both 60 years old and residents of Caguas, were on hand to welcome the ex-governor.

Rafael López Aponte said that he did not feel he was an outsider just because the reception was for the Progressive party women, since his desire to see Rosselló was greater.

“I am happy that he has returned to Puerto Rico because he’s going to be the next governor,” he said.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Velázquez, 49 years old, held up a placard that read “You were the best. Say what you want to say”.

At 2:30 PM, Rosselló leaned out the window of the blue *guagua* in which he was traveling to greet the crowd and shake hands.

To the beat of “La Macarena,” just like in old times, Rosselló, dressed in a blue and white and white *mahones*, got out of the vehicle with his wife, Maga Nevares, to enter the building where the Municipal Committee of Caguas was meeting, warmly greeting all of the people who had come out to see him.

[Photo caption:

Former Governor Pedro Rosselló greets his followers at a welcoming held yesterday in Caguas].

EL VOCERO de PUERTO RICO

“Pesquera States that He Will Not Discuss His Withdrawal”

By Gladys I. Archilla

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LAS MARIAS – Carlos Ignacio Pesquera will not negotiate with Pedro Rosselló his withdrawal his candidacy for governor of Puerto Rico.

The president of the New Progressive Party (PNP) has clear plans: to exit on top in the primary process against Rosselló and in the 2004 elections and assume the post of Governor of Puerto Rico in January 2005.

“There is no one asking me to withdraw my candidacy,” exclaimed Pesquera before a crowd of supporters in the town of China Dulce. “This is not possible,” he remarked.

“I will not go back. I am here to work in creating jobs, improving people’s health, education and engage us in the world economy to be able to compete one on one with anyone,” he added.

With this in mind, the Doctor of Engineering assured that his best credentials as far as the New Progressive people are concerned is that he has never left Puerto Rico and that he remains here. He said that his ideas are clear and that his vision is that of something which the country needs, including the New Progressive Party; that is what is in the final version of his work plan.

“I confront things. I spoke with you, the members of the media, I didn’t hide and I came face-to-face with everything that was presented to me, from the possible physical move of our committee to claims of alleged corruption by some people from our party”, said Pesquera during the China festival in Las Marias.

Sometime during the day, Pesquera and Rosselló will meet to discuss some PNP internal matters. The main issue of the primaries is an obligation and at the same time sharing the responsibility for strengthening the party as the best alternative to win the 2004 elections. Pesquera emphasized that the primaries process will have to be one of unity and not of separation.

[Photo caption:
Pesquera maintains that he will not walk away.]

EL NUEVO DI□A
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Front Page

Warm Reception for Rossello□

EL NUEVO DÍA
Sunday, March 16, 2003

“If there were many saying they were waiting to put me in jail, here I am.”

[Photo caption:

To the left former Governor Rosselló greets the public when arriving at Luís Muñoz Marín Airport where he offered his first press conference. Above these lines, an enthusiastic follower.]

“I Don’t Have to Apologize”
By Pepo García

DESPITE the understanding he must have been aware of the corruption scandals that unfolded during his administration, Pedro Rosselló preferred yesterday not to apologize before the Puerto Rican people, as various sectors had demanded.

“I don’t have to apologize for something I might have done wrong. I do recognize there were decisions or actions that, now, with the knowledge I have, I might have made differently but it is not a question of apologizing. It is a question of recognizing which areas can be improved,” said yesterday the former Governor who arrived in the country accompanied by his wife, Irma Margarita Nevares, shortly after 2:00 p.m.

Questions versus questions

Visibly anxious, nervous and sometimes answering the journalists’ questions with other questions, Rosselló later said in the first press conference he held in more than two years, that he was willing to face and discuss the rumors which have circulated concerning a possible accusation against him.

“If there were many who were saying they were waiting to put me in jail, here I am. Here I am. We’ll see what they do,” he said in an emphatic tone when he was told there were rumors Federal Attorney Guillermo Gil Bonar was after his head.

Dressed in a dark suit and a multicolor sweater, Rosselló met for approximately 40 minutes with members of the media in the Admirals Hall of American Airlines.

Nearly the whole of the press conference was focused on the topic of corruption, as anticipated, and Rosselló, self-defensive and sometimes upset by the assumptions put forth by certain questions in which he demanded more “precision” and “responsibility,” tried to provide answers to the various questions made by the media representatives.

Rosselló insisted on the fact that it was not “real” that he had been aware of all of the events, but he stated that, to prevent that from happening again, some new mechanisms

he did not mention had to be set in place to terminate the problem in a preventative manner or through “early detection.”

He also tried to answer some questions with regard to the assertion that under his administration nearly a third of the anti-corruption legislation from 1952 to 2002 was passed.

“I would like to discuss this in a calm and thorough manner and not to analyze it so superficially,” said Rosselló when he was asked about specific corruption cases such as that of his former assistant Angie Rivera and former Secretary of Education, Víctor Fajardo, among others.

Angie Rivera and Víctor Fajardo

He denied that Rivera had gone to La Fortaleza in a Jaguar and that the 24-million embezzlement in Education had a detrimental effect in the almost \$2 Billion handled by said government department in charge of the public education.

On some occasions taking advantage of the questions to criticize the current administration and promising a better future, Rosselló said that the fact of understanding that he must be behind “every action of the people who worked with him” was a “pretense.”

He did not take any responsibility concerning the allegation of large amounts of money that ended up in the strongboxes of the PNP either.

“Wrong assumptions”

“This was not my role during the campaign,” said Rosselló adding that, “here we are dealing with some wrong assumptions.”

When he was told the former representative José “Nuno” López was backing him, Rosselló emphatically said that “I come here to form a new team and I ask you to take a look at this team when we announce it.”

He finally pointed out that they will not ask Carlos Pesquera to withdraw as the PNP candidate for governor.

When he was asked whether Pesquera was a good candidate for governor, he said that “Carlos Pesquera is an excellent human being, he is an accomplished professional, has some great human qualities and I am very grateful to him because he cooperated with me during my administration”.

When he was inquired once again whether Carlos Pesquera had the stature to be governor, he said: “I think he does have the stature, of course he has the stature”.

[Photo caption:
Rosselló escorted by the Mayors of San Juan, to his left, and Manatí in the caravan
towards the Hiram Bithorn.]

EL NUEVO DÍA
“Rosselló Meets With His Supporters”
By Sandra Morales Blanes
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Despite his two years of political retirement and having led an administration in which he admitted there were people who “failed,” former governor Pedro Rosselló was welcomed yesterday at the parking lot of the Hiram Bithom Stadium in Hato Rey by thousands of people who celebrated his return with cheers and songs.

At about 5:30 p.m., Rosselló arrived there with his wife, Irma Margarita Nevares, escorted by a large security contingent and riding a motorcycle just as he was accustomed to doing on several occasions during his previous campaigns. Others who arrived together with him included the mayor of San Juan, Jorge Santini, the mayor of Fajardo, Aníbal Meléndez, and other leaders who accompanied him on a long caravan that departed from Luis Muñoz Marín Airport.

After greeting supporters and finally managing to arrive at the platform, Rosselló (nearly an hour after his announced arrival) disappeared among hugs with other leaders of the New Progressive Party (PNP), such as Carlos Romero Barceló, who publicly expressed his support for Rosselló, Leo Díaz, and Charlie Rodríguez, among others. Senator Norma Burgos, who worked in the cabinet of the former governor, was conspicuous by her absence.

José Aponte was in charge of presenting Rosselló, and this caused the crowd to break out in applause and shout for him to dance “La Macarena,” the song that set apart his prior campaign.

The former governor satisfied their demand immediately.

Rosselló offered a message in which he assured PNP members of the party's triumph in 2004.

“We are on a path of stagnation and decline. We have an ineffective government that is given to persecution. That is why I am hearing your voice again. Today I am hearing a new call from you all... Today you have once again issued an order for action; you have once again demanded a response; you have called for a new beginning,” expressed Rosselló.

“And I, heeding your call, listening to your voice, sharing your desires, respond with the same commitment as always: that the people should speak, because I will heed [them],” the statesman declared.

“COME BACK, PEDRO, come back, come back, Pedro, come back,” some shouted to him. “Pedro, calm down, the people are with you,” said others. In the sea of people, hundreds of PNP flags were visible, as were United States flags. Also visible were street banners and posters that were prepared for the occasion and read “Returning to progress with Rosselló,” “The savior has arrived, the Messiah has arrived,” and “[The] Police [are] with Rosselló,” among others. Meanwhile, small airplanes with messages both in favor and against him were seen on more than one occasion. One message read: “Give Rosselló the Slip.” A short while later, another plane passed by, bearing the message “Rosselló [for] Governor 2004.”

In his message, Rosselló assured that he would bring “progress” and “new hope” to the country. Likewise, he acknowledged that the campaign that is approaching on the part of the opposition will be a tough one. “They will try to lead us toward a field mined with insults, unfounded insinuations, and malevolent accusations. Their issue will be corruption, and they are determined to give it our first and last names,” he said. “Let's stay calm,” he requested of those present.

“They have stated that they were going to make me a criminal, that they were waiting to put overalls on me and put me in jail. To them I say, using my first name and last name, Pedro Rosselló is here,” he stated in a challenging tone.

“I AM NOT going to deny that in the past there were people who failed us, who failed the people... who failed me. They will pay for what they did,” he claimed. Rosselló assured that he is not coming with “hatred,” “daggers,” or “weapons of war” to wage destruction, but rather with “tools” with which to build.

“I am not coming with ideas that are corroded by inability but rather with a spirit of renewal in order to make possible a new dawn. You have ordered that I resume this path of hope we once enjoyed. I understand the challenge and accept the challenge,” he declared.

Adalberto Mercado, chief of police of San Juan, estimated there were 50,000 people in attendance.

[Picture caption] Above, surrounded on the platform by members of the PNP's leadership and [illegible] collaborators, Rosselló greets the audience that has congregated in the area of Hiram Bithom Stadium, while representative José Aponte, at the far right, introduces him. In the right-hand picture, the former governor [appears] together with his wife, Irma Margarita Navares, Jorge Santini, Kenneth McClintock, and Miriam Ramírez.

PRIMERA HORA

“Many Familiar Faces in Pedro’s ‘Backstage’ ”

By Mabel M. Figueroa

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THEY WENT to see their friend.

With the return of former Governor Rosselló to the island last Saturday, the faces of his friends and collaborators who had remained anonymous since the New Progressive Party (PNP) lost the 2000 election, re-emerged.

In front of the stage prepared for Rosselló’s speech were the supporters of the PNP and behind that same pavilion, the VIPS which weren’t seen for a long time.

Since the early hours of Saturday, former Health Secretary Carmen Feliciano was seen wearing a T-shirt alluding to Rosselló’s campaign, ready to live “one of the happiest days of my life.”

“I’m happy that Dr. Pedro Rosselló has made the decision to return to politics,” said Feliciano after stating that in the past two years, after her retirement, she has been devoted to her family and an activist in the Disciples of Christ church.

“Besides, I’m available to answer to the disinformation given by the Governor, by the Health Secretary and to answer the Controller’s reports,” she added.

“Are you interested in being a part of Rosselló’s team?”

“At this time we are not thinking of positions, we are evaluating how we can help Pedro Rosselló become Governor of Puerto Rico. I’m available to help in all that he considers I can help to achieve goals.”

Under the VIPS’ tent, long-time Rosselló publicist Ramón Flores was also coming and going, as was Zoraida Fonalledas. Armando Izquierdo, another one of those who endeavored to help Rosselló during his terms in office in the area of public relations and television was also present to greet “my friend.”

“I’m a friend of Dr. Rosselló’s since he ran for Resident Commissioner in Washington. Then, I was his TV Director and personal friend for many years. I have been speaking with him on a weekly basis for a year and a half through the Internet,” said Izquierdo, who now aims to become a PNP senator in the 2004 elections.

Since Rosselló departure, Izquierdo maintained a “small” office along with his son Pito providing commercial and documentary production services called ARIZ Televisión.

“We both run the office; the thing is that, since we don’t have much work, we manage between the both of us. We do whatever jobs come up,” he said.

Former President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Jorge Inserni, also dropped by Saturday at the VIP area at the Hiram Bithorn because “I thought it was better to be here than to watch it on television.”

“I took the day to be here with many long-time friends, both politicians and non-politicians,” said Inserni who, after leaving the corporation, is now providing consultancy and assessment in the communications area for different companies outside the island.

“Will you be a part of the campaign?”

“No, I’m greeting people, having a good time, complying with what I consider to be my responsibility and welcoming a good, good friend.”

Besides former Rosselló’s Washington-based lobbyist, Arturo Guzmán, former Housing Secretary Carlos Vivoni was also present and who, since Rosselló left, has worked for MG Management, a residential and commercial real estate administration and development company.

“Right now I am not contemplating a return to political life, but I do reassure myself as a statehood supporter to keep supporting the ideological efforts” said Vivoni.

Roselló’s former Secretary and personal friend Luís Fortuño was another one who arrived at the place to welcome the former Governor. Fortuño did admit to being available to help Rosselló in the policy area for the drafting his government proposals for the 2004 elections.

“I felt that my family and I had to be here” stated Fortuño.

“Would you be willing to return to public service?”

“One can never say yes I am or no I’m not, it isn’t something I’m contemplating at the moment.”

[Photo captions:

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[Top left]

Among those who welcomed Rosselló were former representatives José “Nuno” López, above, and Jesús Chu Valle, to the right.

[Middle left] Publicist Ramón Flores.

[Middle left] Zoraida Fonalledas talks to Arturo Guzmán.

[Lower left] Former Housing Secretary Carlos Vivoni listens to former Tourism Secretary, Luís Fortuño.

[Top right] Former Channel 6 Director, Jorge Inserni, to the left, and former President of the Senate, Charlie Rodríguez, above.

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[Left] Former Health Secretary Carmen Feliciano exhibits her T-shirt in support of Pedro Rosselló's candidacy while, below, former Governor's sister, Jackie Rosselló, holds a U.S. flag. To her right, TV Director, Armando Izquierdo, was also present.

PRIMERA HORA

“No Answers on the Corruption Cases”

By Maritza Díaz Alcaide

Monday, March 17, 2003

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Former Governor Pedro Rosselló was unable to answer last Saturday one of the most important questions concerning his administration at La Fortaleza: why if being warned of some corruption cases, he did not order the corresponding investigations.

Rosselló, in his first press conference after returning to the island, was unable to mention a single instance in which he had ordered a search of the kind and, in fact, he chose to leave the topic on the table for future meetings with the media, when he had the relevant documents at hand, he said.

When Rosselló was told that in cases such as the CRIM's, he asked the journalists to produce the evidence and that, in the end, the federal authorities were those who performed the corruption investigations in his government, at first he said that back then he “had to recognize people's rights.”

When it was pointed out to him that it was necessary to investigate exactly when he was the Governor, he defended himself saying that his administration has approved more anti-corruption laws than any other since 1952.

“And how many investigations were carried out (with those laws)?”

“At the moment I think it is better to discuss that more widely with you, if you let me find the data.”

“Do you happen to remember any investigation right now?”

“I'd like this to be discussed in a calm and thorough manner;” was part of Rosselló's dialogue with the press concerning one of the topics he had more difficulty in dealing with after his arrival on the island. Corruption was the topic of the Popular Democratic Party's political advertisements published in the press and broadcast on television last Saturday, in which the names of 27 officials of the Rosselló administration were pointed out as convicted for fraud, bribery and blackmail.

Rosselló, tense and sometimes nervous, used in several occasions during his first press conference in two years, his old strategy of asking the journalists what they would have done in his situation.

“I ask you, if you would be aware of all your colleagues at the station” he ventured to ask a TV reporter, who answered that he does not work as a supervisor in the company.

Likewise, Rosselló ruled out that, as the President of the New Progressive Party, he could have been aware of the detail of the funds the party received, this with regard to the huge amount of money allocated as a donation to the Education Department's officials.

"This was not my role in the campaign and I believe it is not the role of anyone as president of the party or Governor," he said.

Rosselló was also asked last Saturday how it is possible for him to know there is corruption in Sila Calderón's Government from Washington when in his office he never knew that his personal secretary was involved in this kind of practice. His answer was that his reports are based on the media.

Concerning the selection of those who will accompany him on the ticket, the former official did not specifically answer about José "Nuno" López, who cashed a \$8,375 check for Edison Mísla Aldarondo, but said he comes to form a new team. "I have always thought that actions speak more eloquently than words," he stated. He used that same phrase when he was asked about his former assistants Angel Morey and Eduardo "Tito" Laureano.

Rosselló pointed out that while residing in the United States, he has also prepared contribution plans about incomes on the island. He said he did not know if he had accepted the credit against the form he filed in the United States.

[Photo caption-Above Right:

Rosselló, in his first press conference after returning to the island, preferred to leave the corruption topic on the table for future meetings with the press. Above, a message against the former leader.]

PRIMERA HORA

"Pesquera and Rosselló Meet Today"

By Mariana Cobia

Monday, March 17, 2003

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The meeting between Carlos Pesquera, chairman of the New Progressive Party (PNP), and his former boss and current political rival, former governor Pedro Rosselló, will finally take place today.

The meeting, which was called by Pesquera and will be the first since Rosselló announced his candidacy for governor, is slated to take place this morning. Although there has been speculation that the meeting will produce an agreement whereby [the names of] both men will appear on a ballot slip, Pesquera reiterated yesterday that he still considers himself the best candidate for governor.

Yesterday, while Pesquera was announcing in Santurce the results of the votes to elect the chairperson of the women's organization of the New Progressive Party, which favored representative Iris Miriam Ruiz, Rosselló met with hundreds of members of the Progressive Public Servants, which is affiliated with the PNP, at the Convention Center of the Association of Police Members in Río Piedras.

With the song "Macarena" playing in the background, which was the same song he used for his 1996 campaign, the former governor criticized the government of Sila Calderón, branding it as "the most incompetent government in the history of Puerto Rico."

"I am not going to stop working until we have achieved the greatest triumph in history in November 2004," stated [illegible] Rosselló, who was accompanied by his wife, Mega Nevares, the mayors of San Juan, Fajardo, and Canóvanas, Jorge Santini, Aníbal Meléndez, and José Solo Rivera, respectively, senator Miriam Ramírez, and representative José Aponte.

During the meeting, Rosselló thanked the officials who had worked under his administration in the Department of Education, where his then right-hand man, Victor Fajardo, had embezzled millions of dollars, because Rosselló said that many of those officials "worked honestly, and they (the members of the Popular Democratic Party) do not want to mention them." Those in attendance responded with cheers and chanted refrains such as "Go on, Pedro, go on," "We need you," and "Count on us," among others.

In a side meeting held with the press, Rosselló stated that he proposed improving public servants' working conditions and affording them a "fair salary."

Upon concluding the meeting, Rosselló danced with some of the women who were present, signed autographs, and greeted everyone who stopped him on his way out.

Rosselló was also in Caguas and Humacao yesterday, where he met with Commonwealth groups and leaders. Tonight he will spend the evening in the covered-seating section of the stadium in Las Piedras, and tomorrow he will be at the Acropolis in Manalí.

While all of this was going on among the divided conservative masses, the governor, Sila Calderón, traveled through various towns yesterday in her role as chairperson of the Popular Democratic Party. Calderón participated in swearing-in ceremonies for municipal chairmen of la Pava in Vega Baja, Cidra, and Yauco, but in no place did she wish to make comment on Rosselló's arrival or any other matter.

[Picture caption: Former governor Pedro Rosselló, greeting a supporter at his second political event yesterday in Caguas, plans to meet today with Carlos Ignacio Pesquera, chairman of the PNP].
