

**Transcript of interview of A. Eduardo Balarezo
on "Directo desde USA," CNN en Español
February 24, 2014**

JCL – Juan Carlos Lopez (Host)
AEB – A. Eduardo Balarezo

JCL In our studios is Eduardo Balarezo, criminal defense attorney. Thank you Eduardo for being with us.

Let's begin with the theme of the day, for the United States how important is it that Joaquin "el Chapo" Guzman has been captured?

AEB It's absolutely important. The United States, with the capture of el Chapo, demonstrates that it has the intelligence and the forces to attack a person of interest in another country, in Mexico. It is said that the DEA and the Marshal's Service shared information with the Mexican authorities to be able to capture him. This was because of the United States.

JCL The United States and Mexico worked ... there is a relationship of mistrust between both countries. Recently, there was a case in Chicago where one witness declared that there were agreements between the DEA and drug traffickers to attack other drug cartels. Does that change in any way that perception? Could this be a response to those allegations?

AEB I think so. The case in Chicago concerns the son of a partner of el Chapo, Mayo Zambada. Vicente Zambada Niebla is now in Chicago on trial. And in that case, his lawyers have alleged that the DEA was allowing the Sinaloa Cartel to continue operating in Mexico without too much problem if they would share information with the authorities about the other cartels so that law enforcement could attack the cartels that were competing with Sinaloa.

JCL Now, you spoke about Zambada, the partner of Chapo Guzman. Something that experts on the Sinaloa Cartel note is that it did not depend upon any one person. That if Guzman didn't run it, Zambada would run it. Could the capture of el Chapo Guzman be about internal disputes and does the cartel fall apart with el Chapo Guzman in jail?

AEB That's not possible. The Sinaloa Cartel is a name only. It's called the Federation. And that had two heads. Chapo Guzman who had his part and Mayo Zambada who ran his. Now, with Chapo out of the picture, Mayo has an opportunity to take over the entire cartel. But you also have to take into account that Chapo's lieutenants will rise up and try to grab a piece of the business.

JCL Joaquin Guzman was presented before a court and has until Tuesday to define his situation. What comes now? The United States wants him extradited. There are at least 5 cases. The initial information is that Mexico expects to process him and have him serve his sentence in Mexico before extraditing him. What awaits Chapo Guzman if he is extradited to the United States?

AEB If he is extradited to the United States, as you say, he has six cases in the United States: in San Diego, in Florida, Texas, New York and in Washington. What I understand is that Brooklyn, the Eastern District of New York, is the District that will request his extradition. And if that happens, that process may take one year, two years -- it depends on the process in Mexico, and when he comes here, he will have an option of going to trial to defend himself, which probably will be very difficult with the evidence they have and with the people who are going to testify against him, or to reach a deal with the American authorities.

JCL Is the pressure on Mexico to send him to the United States great because it was a joint operation? Is it great because he already escaped from a prison in Mexico, a maximum-security prison? What would be the scenario that would cause Mexico to extradite him when there is a lot of pressure for him to be prosecuted and stay in his country?

AEB I think the first would be security. Mr. Guzman, although he is detained, of course still wields a lot of power in Mexico. As you know, there is a lot of corruption in Mexico, he still has ways to manage his business while he is in Mexico. If he is extradited to the United States, that power is gone. He would be here alone and under the custody of the American authorities. Therefore he would not have that same power as he had before if he came to the United States.

JCL For drug trafficking in the United States (we spoke to Duncan Woods), supply and demand is independent of who provides the drug. Does the business of drug trafficking change in any way? Will the supply of drugs to the United States change with the capture of el Chapo Guzman?

AEB Initially, I don't think so. Because the business will continue with Chapo or without Chapo. The kilos continue coming from Colombia, passing through Central America to Mexico. The question is who is going to control the routes, who is going to control the kilos, who is going to control that business. That's the only thing that will change but the business will continue.

JCL The business will continue. Twenty years ago, almost twenty-one years, Pablo Escobar died. At that time he was the world's most wanted narco-

trafficker, considered one of the richest men in the world, one of the most dangerous. What differences are there between Chapo Guzman and Pablo Escobar?

AEB Well, the difference is that el Chapo managed his business very differently from Pablo. Pablo was a person who wanted to attack the state. Chapo wanted to control the state. And el Chapo had more power in Mexico than Pablo had in Colombia. Chapo had more routes, to the United States, to Europe, to Asia than Pablo ever had. He is much more powerful than Pablo was.

JCL And Chapo's power does not diminish with his entry into prison?

AEB I don't believe so. Especially if he stays in Mexico. Because his entire structure is still in place and he can run it from Mexico.

JCL Well, we'll see what happens. Much anticipation about what could happen in the judicial process he faces in Mexico. Thank you Eduardo Balarezo. He is a criminal defense attorney. Thank you for helping us put this into context how the process could be in the United States depending on what happens to el Chapo Guzman in Mexico.