

## Panama Report by Carlos Wesley

### Did Bush-man seek Noriega's death?

*Carlos Eleta, an accused drug runner employed by the U.S. government, is implicated in an assassination plot.*

**A**ccused Panamanian drug-trafficker Carlos Eleta Alamarán allegedly sought to arrange the assassination of Gen. Manuel Noriega, the commander of Panama's Defense Forces (PDF), the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported May 27. Eleta was part of the U.S. government plot to sabotage Panama's May 7 national elections and, according to reports published in the U.S. press, received millions of dollars from the Central Intelligence Agency to promote the campaign of Panama's Democratic Opposition Civic Alliance (ADO-C) on his television and radio networks.

Eleta was arrested by U.S. narcotics agents on April 6 in Bibb County, Georgia, on charges of conspiring to smuggle 600 kilos per month of cocaine into the United States. Panamanian authorities charged that part of the expected \$300 million monthly profits from the drug sales was used to supplement the financing that the ADO-C received from the CIA for its electoral campaign. The Panamanian government annulled the elections because of foreign interference.

Eleta's arrest came as the result of a series of meetings in Miami and elsewhere with undercover agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Videotapes of these meetings show Eleta and two of his trusted employees, Juan Karamanitis and José Castillo Bourcy, seeking to establish a new drug-smuggling route into Georgia. Eleta's role in the drug operation was to be chief money-lauderer.

It turns out that more than drugs was discussed during Eleta's video-

taped meetings with the undercover DEA agents. "There is the possibility of bringing charges under state law against one of the Panamanians for soliciting an undercover officer to go to Panama and kill Noriega," said Bibb County District Attorney Willis Sparks May 26, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The story added: "A federal source, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that Carlos Eleta Alamarán, one of Panama's wealthiest industrialists, allegedly made the offer during videotaped negotiations with undercover agents posing as drug tycoons."

That U.S. government collaborator Eleta was publicly exposed for soliciting the murder of Noriega, apparently sent chills down the spines of the Bush administration officials in charge of the operation against Panama, who went into a coverup mode. On June 1, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* published an ambiguous "correction" noting that the previous story naming Eleta as the one who solicited the murder of Noriega was inaccurate. One law enforcement authority familiar with the case, when contacted by *EIR*, suggested that the inaccuracy referred to was that Noriega's assassination was solicited by one of Eleta's underlings and not by Eleta personally.

The fact remains that the Bush administration was more than happy to enlist Eleta—currently free on \$8 million bail pending his federal drug-conspiracy trial—in its campaign to get Noriega. There are no limits, it appears, to the depths to which the Bush administration will sink in this obsession. Here, an accused drug-

dealer acting as the administration's agent, Eleta, has been caught soliciting the assassination of a leader of a foreign government, an act expressly forbidden by U.S. law—while U.S. officials continue to baldly lie to the world that they care about fighting drugs!

Eleta is not just any Panamanian. The owner of the Panamanian subsidiaries of Philip Morris and General Mills, Eleta is a business partner of Panamanian opposition leader Gabriel Lewis Galindo, who coordinated the campaign against Noriega and the Panamanian government from the Washington law offices of William D. Rogers at Arnold and Porter. Rogers—Henry Kissinger's attorney for many years—brags that he is the brains behind the opposition's "revolution" in Panama.

But the nationalist Panamanian general has not been cowed. On the morning of May 26, in a display of military might, U.S. armored vehicles surrounded a PDF installation where Noriega and a commission of the Organization of American States were to meet. The incident took place in Fort Amador, a facility shared by the PDF and the U.S. military Southern Command. When the general arrived at the base, he ignored the show of force, walked alone across the street to a U.S. Navy installation, shook hands with the sentries, toured the building saying a friendly hello to American personnel on duty and, munching a mango, walked out "before anyone could figure out what to do," reported one U.S. TV network.

It was no accident that Noriega was munching a mango, a fruit the CIA-financed opposition has taken up as a symbol against Noriega, whose initials are MAN, thus: "MAN-go." This time, it was the armored troops that withdrew.