

## Bush installs partners of Cali Cartel to rule Panama

Partners of the Cali Cartel have been given key positions in the new administration sworn into office by the U.S. Army in Panama at midnight on Dec. 19. The Cali Cartel, headquartered in Cali, Colombia, is one of the two major crime syndicates that traffic in cocaine out of Colombia, and together with its "rival," the Medellín Cartel, has been responsible for the terrorist slaughter of thousands of Colombian citizens, including an attorney general, a justice minister, hundreds of judges, and a presidential candidate.

The government of the U.S.-appointed Panamanian "President," Guillermo Endara, has named Carlos Lucas López Tejada as Chief Justice of Panama's Supreme Court, Rogelio Cruz as Attorney General, and Mario Galindo as Treasury Minister. All three—López Tejada, Cruz, and Galindo—sat on the board of directors of First Interamericas Bank, owned by Cali Cartel chief Gilberto Rodríguez Orejuela.

First Interamericas was shut down by Panamanian authorities working with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in March 1985, because of the bank's involvement in drug-money laundering. At that point, it was discovered that Rodríguez Orejuela owned 70% of the stock.

Panama's new Attorney General Cruz remained loyal to Rodríguez Orejuela to the end. Even after it was made public that Rodríguez Orejuela was the owner of First Interamericas, Cruz continued to appeal the government's decision to shut down the bank. The appeal was turned down in April 1985.

### CIA and AIFLD

The CIA collaborated for many years with Rodríguez Orejuela, through the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). Rodríguez Orejuela is a close collaborator of the Medellín cocaine cartel. In November 1984, he was arrested by Spanish authorities together with Jorge Luis Ochoa, kingpin of the Medellín Cartel, at the latter's luxurious Madrid apartment. Both were extradited to Colombia and, eventually, set free.

President of First Interamericas at the time it was under the control of the Cali Cartel, was Jaime Arias Calderón,

the brother of Endara's First Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderón. Ricardo's banker brother is also one of the owners of Banco Continental, which has served as a conduit for financing the election campaigns of Ricardo's party, the Christian Democrats. In 1985, a captured Colombian drug-runner confessed that he had laundered some \$40 million for the Colombian drug-traffickers through the Banco Continental—with the full knowledge of another opposition leader, César Tribaldos, who sat on the board of Banco Continental.

Named to run the Colón Free Zone by the Endara regime was Jaime Ford Lara, nephew of Panama's Second Vice President Guillermo ("Billy") Ford. According to the *Miami Herald* Jan. 5, convicted Medellín Cartel money launderer Ramón Milián Rodríguez "laundered millions of dollars in drug money in the early 1980s through a Panamanian company in which Ford's brother Henry was an officer." The *Herald* reported that Ramón Milián became a friend of the Ford family through Jaime Ford Lara, the vice president's nephew.

The *Herald* added that Milián Rodríguez, currently serving a 43-year racketeering sentence, said that "Guillermo Ford was also involved with laundering money through Corporación Ford. The *Herald* could find no documents to support Milián's claims."

### Ford and Endara, also tied to traffickers

*EIR* reported on Jan. 5 that "Second Vice President Guillermo 'Billy' Ford is up to his elbows in drug money-laundering." Ford and two political associates, Carlos Rodríguez—named by Endara as Panama's ambassador to Washington—and Roberto Eisenmann own the Dadeland National Bank in Miami, Florida. That bank was revealed in 1985 to have served as a laundromat for one of the largest marijuana-smuggling rings ever caught in the United States, that of Antonio ("Tony") Fernández. (Ford's associate, Eisenmann, publisher of Panama's *La Prensa*, also sits on the board of Banco Continental.)

And Guillermo Endara, who was installed as President of Panama by George Bush, is a business partner of a leader of the Panama's former opposition caught red-handed in the dope trade, Carlos Eleta Almarán. Besides being the corporate attorney for the Eleta family's considerable interests, Endara owns significant stock in, and sits on the board of, Harinas Panama, S.A.; Carlos Eleta is the company's president and founder.

Eleta was arrested in April 1989 in Macon, Georgia by the Bibb County Sheriff and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration personnel, and charged with conspiring to import 600 kilos of cocaine per month into the United States, and planning to set up shell companies in Panama to launder the estimated \$300 million per month in drug profits.

Two associates of Eleta arrested in the same scheme have since pleaded guilty in a plea-bargaining agreement. Eleta remains free on \$8 million bail pending trial.