

## Panama Report by Carlos Wesley

### U.S. agents are tied to drugs

*They stole millions and were in business with Colombia's "Godfather," but Bush allied with them. Why?*

**P**rominent Panamanians employed by the U.S. government to oust "drug-trafficking" Gen. Manuel Noriega and "bring democracy" to Panama organized a scam by which millions of dollars were stolen from Panamanian taxpayers, documents obtained by *EIR* show. The scam was interwoven with drug trafficking and drug-money laundering. In fact, it was carried out with the help of Celso Barreiros, arrested last year in Spain for trafficking drugs, as a result of "Operation Nécora."

According to the official Panamanian government records obtained by *EIR*, the Spaniard Barreiros Rodríguez was an accomplice of Panamanians Gabriel Lewis Galindo, brothers Carlos and Fernando Eleta Almarán, and Juan David Morgan, in the multimillion-dollar swindle against the Panamanian treasury. Most of the Panamanians were employed by the U.S. government in the campaign to oust General Noriega. They are all considered viable replacements, in the event Washington decides to change the current U.S.-installed government of Guillermo Endara, which is itself controlled by officials involved in the drug trade.

**Gabriel Lewis Galindo** ran the anti-Noriega Civic Crusade in Washington, an office funded by the U.S. government's National Endowment for Democracy, a.k.a. Ollie North's "Project Democracy." A member of Panama's millionaire elite and a former ambassador to the U.S., banker Lewis Galindo—his family owns Panama's Banco del Istmo—is a long-standing business associate of former Colombian President Alfonso López

Michelsen, "Godfather" of the arrangement by which power in Colombia is being handed to the drug traffickers. It was López Michelsen who carried out the initial negotiations with drug cartel capos Pablo Escobar and Jorge Ochoa in 1984 at Panama's Marriot Cesar Park Hotel, co-owned at one time by Lewis Galindo. Japan's Aoki Corp. is another major investor in the hotel, and one of Aoki's partners is Prescott Bush, brother of the current occupant of the White House.

**Carlos and Fernando Eleta** own Banco Exterior, through which the swindle was carried out. Members of Panama's millionaire elite, the Eletas are business partners of Endara. More important, they have ties to Bank of America, General Mills, and Phillip Morris, the tobacco company which has invested money to promote drug legalization. Carlos was the CIA's bagman for the anti-Noriega operations until his arrest in April 1989, in Macon, Georgia, for masterminding a plot to smuggle 600 kilos of cocaine per month into the U.S. and for drug-money laundering. After the U.S. invasion of Panama, lawyer Gregory Craig, of the intelligence-linked law firm Williams and Connolly, got the U.S. government to drop all charges against Eleta because of "insufficient evidence."

**Juan David Morgan**, a lawyer, was the president of Cofina, the National Finance Corp. established by Panama's government to promote business investments. It was Cofina that was swindled.

These gentlemen set up a company in Panama, Promarsa, ostensibly to

get into the fishing business. Barreiros became the president, Lewis Galindo the vice president, Fernando Eleta the treasurer (the documents also name his brother Carlos as treasurer at one point), and Morgan the secretary. Promarsa bought two boats from the Spanish company Cieisa—owned by Celso Barreiros and his brother Valeriano.

The purchase was financed by the Banco Exterior of Spain, through its Panamanian subsidiary owned by the Eletas. But the more than \$6 million loan was guaranteed by Cofina. At the time, the president of Cofina was—you guesses it—Juan David Morgan, one of the owners of Promarsa.

To get Cofina to guarantee the loan obtained by Barreiros on behalf of the buyer, Promarsa, to pay the seller, the same Barreiros, on behalf of Cieisa, Banco Exterior vouched that they knew Barreiros and had loaned him "important amounts over eight years, with satisfactory results."

The two boats were renamed *Promarsa I* and *Promarsa II*, but they don't seem to have done much fishing. Investigators report the vessels were used to haul drugs from Panama to Spain, and drug money from Spain for laundering in Panama.

Shortly after the boats were purchased, the Barreiros brothers, who were supposed to sell the catch through their Spanish companies, went out of business in Spain. Then Promarsa in Panama, owned by Barreiros, Morgan, Lewis Galindo, and the Eletas, defaulted on the loan.

The money, of course, was owed to the Eletas' Banco Exterior, which demanded that Cofina, of which Morgan—the secretary of the defaulting Promarsa—was president, honor its guarantee. Cofina recommended that the government make good the loan to "protect the nation's good credit," and Banco Exterior got paid. More later.