

Eagleburger admits U.S. backs drug figures against Panama's Noriega

by Carlos Wesley

A federal court on Sept. 7 convicted LBS Bank of New York on charges of illegally laundering millions of dollars for underworld figures. Lawrence Eagleburger, the U.S. deputy secretary of state and former president of Kissinger Associates, Inc., was on the the board of directors of that Yugoslavian-owned bank when the money-laundering took place.

Despite his ties with LBS, a bank that now faces a fine of up to \$500,000, and despite other questionable connections established through his former employment with Henry Kissinger's consulting enterprises, Eagleburger has emerged as one of the Bush administration's leading spokesmen in its campaign to oust the commander of Panama's Defense Forces (PDF), Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, using the excuse of trumped-up charges of drug trafficking which have been denied by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

The Bush administration has been attempting to incite a rebellion within the ranks of the PDF; it has provided funds to the opposition to provoke civil insurrection in Panama; and it is mobilizing the soon-to-be-unemployed Nicaraguan Contras as a possible mercenary invasion force. It has even mooted employing the U.S. military to oust Noriega by force, although, according to the *Los Angeles Times* on Sept. 1, "American troop commanders oppose military action, pointing out that the 13,000 American combat troops in the country are insufficient for offensive operations in Panama. They estimate that it would take more than 200,000 troops to occupy the country."

President Bush himself has gone as far as entertaining Rambo fantasies of kidnaping Noriega, even if such an attempt could result in the assassination of the Panamanian leader. On Aug. 15, Bush said he had "an obligation" to kidnap the Panamanian general.

But, by going after Noriega, the Bush administration is, in fact, working on behalf of the drug pushers whose interests Eagleburger and his former colleagues at Kissinger Associates defend. One of the reasons that the United States has never had a real war on drugs, is the control that Kissinger and his cronies have wielded over every American administration since Richard Nixon's.

On Aug. 31, Eagleburger openly took up the defense of the drug mob, while engaging in a raving diatribe against Noriega. The occasion was a speech delivered to an emergency session of the Organization of American States (OAS).

According to Eagleburger, when Panama's nationalist

leader Gen. Omar Torrijos died in a suspicious airplane accident in 1981, "The senior officers of the Panamanian National Guard drew up an agreement to provide for institutional stability and transfer of command." That agreement, said Eagleburger, "involved General Noriega, who solemnly signed this compact. It was provided that he would assume command from Gen. [Ruben Dario] Paredes in March of 1984, and would place the support of the military behind General Paredes's candidacy for the presidency."

"We know what happened," said Eagleburger. "Once Paredes was out, Noriega worked against his candidacy. . . . This destabilization of the institution was the proximate cause" of the Panamanian crisis, he said.

General Paredes and the drug mob

Who is General Paredes, whose cause Eagleburger so stoutly defends? The former commander of Panama's National Guard, the institution that Noriega transformed into the PDF, Paredes arranged to let the Medellín cocaine cartel transfer major chunks of its operations to the jungles of Darien and elsewhere in Panama, to escape the war on drugs launched by Colombia's justice minister, the martyred Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, in 1984. Paredes's presidential candidacy was a project promoted by Henry Kissinger and the U.S. State Department, who considered him "a staunch anti-Communist" and a useful asset for the Nicaraguan Contra operation.

A report put out by the Panamanian government in August 1986, "Sixteen Years of Fighting Drug Trafficking," noted that the mafia's plan was "designed to get clear transit of cocaine through Panama; to use Panamanian banking facilities for their transactions; and finally to install a big laboratory in Darien, Panama's less-populated jungle province." Noriega earned the hatred of Eagleburger and Kissinger by blocking their plans to put Paredes into the presidency, which would have put Panama under the total control of the drug mob.

Almost as soon as he took over command of Panama's Armed Forces, Noriega began to dismantle the drug operation that Paredes had allowed to be established. The PDF destroyed a cocaine-processing laboratory installed by the Medellín Cartel in Darien. (In his speech, Eagleburger acknowledged that the lab was dismantled on Noriega's orders, but claimed that Noriega "double-crossed" the Medellín Car-

tel with whom he was in partnership.) one of Paredes's protégés, Lt. Col. Julián Melo Borbua, who had "sold his influence to the Colombian mafia," according to Panama's report.

Melo was the intermediary with the Ochoa clan in Colombia, and was on the scene "when they presented a previous commander of the National Guard [Paredes] with pace horses." Besides drugs, the Ochoa family of the Medellín Cartel is also involved in the breeding of pace horses, and the patriarch of the family, Fabio Ochoa, is one of the world's leading purveyors of these expensive horses to the elites of the United States, Ibero-America, and the European aristocracy. Fabio Ochoa was implicated in the April 30, 1984 murder of Colombian Justice Minister Lara Bonilla.

Paredes himself revealed his ties with the Medellín Cartel following the disappearance of his son, Rubén Darío Paredes, Jr., on March 13, 1986, during a trip to Colombia. As reported in *EIR's* Special Report "White Paper on the Panama Crisis," when his son disappeared, together with César Rodríguez—a pilot running weapons for the Nicaraguan Contras, as well as for Colombia's narco-terrorist M-19—and Nubia Pino de Bravo, widow of a pilot for the drug mob, Paredes promptly picked up the phone and requested assistance from

Jorge Ochoa, one of Colombia's top drug lords. On March 25, the three missing persons were found buried in a Medellín cemetery. All had been killed in the manner of the mafia—hands tied, blindfolded, without underwear, a single bullet hole in the left side of the head.

The reason for the mob's vengeance emerged. Colombian authorities intercepted the luxury yacht *Krill*, as it refueled at the island of San Andrés. Found aboard the *Krill* were 304 kilos of cocaine, 80% pure. Its owner was listed as one of Rodríguez's companies, Crystal Sky Investments, which in turn listed the young Paredes as its attorney.

As for the elder Paredes, whom Eagleburger now defends, although the press reported that the kidnaping and murder of his son was carried out by the Ochoa clan, "General Paredes insisted that he could vouch for their innocence, because the Ochoas 'have given me their word,'" reported *La Estrella de Panama* on March 25. "General Paredes says he could establish that his son was not in the power of the Ochoas, because they assured him of that."

For Paredes, his son's drug trafficking was no big deal. "He did not deserve this end. . . . He was just an adventurer like any 25-year-old. . . . He paid dearly for his lack of experience."

Whose fortune, Mr. Eagleburger?

In his Aug. 31 diatribe at the Organization of American States against Gen. Manuel Noriega, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger claimed that "the private, ill-gotten gains of General Noriega" were proof of his "abuse of power and venality." Eagleburger said it was simply not credible that Noriega, "a poor youth of humble origins," could have amassed his alleged fortune, "by virtue of individual effort, merit, and talent." According to Eagleburger, Noriega got wealthy not only because of his alleged drug-trafficking ties, but by peddling his influence as head of the armed forces.

Which raises the question: Where did Eagleburger get his money?

It so happens that both Eagleburger and his former boss at Kissinger Associates, Dr. Henry Kissinger, were also "poor youths of humble origins," who have amassed huge fortunes. Dr. K. bought a condo in the same East Side New York building as designer Oscar de la Renta, where the asking price is in the millions of dollars. Every Christmas season, Henry and Oscar vacation at the exclu-

sive resort of La Romana in the Dominican Republic, where one has to be at least a millionaire to be allowed in the front door.

When Eagleburger left the presidency of Kissinger Associates, Inc. and that of the related Kent Associates, to join the Bush administration, Kissinger gave him a "golden handshake" worth almost \$800,000. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, former vice chairman of Kissinger Associates, also got a "golden handshake" when he left the firm to become President Bush's national security adviser, and, according to the *New York Times* of April 30, when Scowcroft "belatedly disclosed that he held stock in Kissinger Associates . . . he arranged last month to have Mr. Kissinger buy it back for nine times its estimated worth."

While Kissinger forbade his former associates from revealing all their customers—in violation of the 1978 Ethics in Government Act—clients are known to include the Bank of Hongkong and Shanghai, a laundromat of drug money from the China-Burma-Thailand opium-growing Golden Triangle; several companies that are major players in trade with the Soviet Union, such as the Italian Montedison; the key players in the China trade; and the major holders of Third World debt, including Midland Bank, Chase Manhattan, and Citibank. Every decision taken by the former executives of Kissinger Associates while in the government, will affect the firm's clients, to which these individuals owe their huge wealth.