

Panic has a longstanding political and business relationship with Jerry Brown, whose family's links to the California mob are legion. Brown served on the board of Panic's ICN Pharmaceuticals, whose Serbian subsidiary, Galenika, is run by a former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, a protégé of Henry Kissinger and former president of Kissinger Associates, who served as U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, was on the board of ICN, as is Robert Abboud, formerly of the First National Bank of Chicago and Occidental Petroleum Corp.

Panic has been the main contributor to the political action committee which financed Brown's political activities after he stepped down as California governor. Brown served on ICN's board from 1988 through 1991, for which he was paid \$20,000 a year. During the presidential primaries, charges surfaced in the media that Brown had tried to peddle his political influence in Congress on ICN's behalf.

Questioned about Panic during an interview on John McLaughlin's "One-on-One" television broadcast July 4-5, Brown said that Panic has been a political supporter of his for 20 years, and said he hoped that his "friend" could help bring peace to the Balkans. "I imagine the State Department must be giving him some kind of a green light," Brown said.

His policies

New Perspectives Quarterly recently distributed a column which Panic wrote on the Balkans crisis, which was also published in the *Washington Times*. In it, Panic vowed to disband and disarm all the "irregular" forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Concerning economic policy, he emphasized the priority of rapid privatization and payment of the foreign debt of former Yugoslavia. He wrote: "I will pursue a rapid policy of privatization modeled on the highly successful example of Galenika, which is now the subsidiary of . . . ICN Pharmaceuticals. . . ."

"In the months ahead, my government also will pursue an initiative to bring all the newly independent states of the former Yugoslavia back into an economic union. Collectively, all the states owe \$14 billion in foreign debt. Six billion dollars is owed by Serbia and the other \$8 billion by the rest.

"After Serbia reviews its assets and eliminates its debt, as a gesture of good will, I intend to propose that we also pay off the debt of the others—Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia."

While this blithe promise to pay off the debt will undoubtedly make former Yugoslavia's foreign creditors happy, Panic may not find it as easy as he makes it sound. Why, back in the United States, the Resolution Trust Corp., the federal authority mandated to bail out the bankrupt savings and loan industry, is suing Panic for defaulting on an \$8.4 million loan he assumed when he brought a motel in Mission Valley, California, in December 1985. According to the July 11 *Los Angeles Times*, Panic also owns another California motel on which he has not paid his real estate taxes since 1990.

Interview: Edgardo López Grimaldo

'Colombia has become Endara's jailer'

by Javier Almario

Panamanian Maj. Edgardo López Grimaldo was interviewed by EIR correspondent Javier Almario in the La Picota jail in Bogotá, Colombia on July 20. A former spokesman for the Panamanian Defense Forces and aide to Gen. Manuel Noriega, he has been imprisoned in Colombia with the aim of extraditing him to Panama on political charges. He is gravely ill and requires medical treatment by a specialist. His attorneys are demanding his release and that Colombia grant him political asylum.

"The Colombian government, surely without wishing to, has become the jailer, the policeman that imprisons the political enemies of the illegal Panamanian government of Guillermo Endara," stated Edgardo López Grimaldo, a major in the extinct Panamanian Defense Forces, who is now imprisoned in the maximum security wing of the La Picota jail in Bogotá. There, he is waiting for the government of César Gaviria Trujillo to either extradite him to Panama, or else to grant him political asylum.

López Grimaldo was the head of press and public information for the Panamanian Defense Forces when the United States on Dec. 20, 1989 invaded Panama with 30,000 soldiers—"half of them drugged," he says—60 Blackhawk helicopters, laser-guided weapons, and Stealth bombers invisible to radar. At least 4,000 persons died in the invasion.

"They even killed 12,000 chickens and 600 head of cattle that the Panamanian soldiers were raising in a self-sufficiency plan to feed the troops," said López. "It was that invasion which imposed the Endara government. It is an illegal government which now pursues its political enemies inside and outside of Panama.

"The great fear of Endara and his masters, the Americans led by George Bush, is that in the next elections we can retake control of the country, that is, if they allow more or less free elections." They want me in prison because I am a powerful enemy, because I could be elected to the Legislative Assembly and in the future become a nationalist President that defends Panamanian sovereignty," said López Grimaldo. Endara's lack of independence from Bush is so severe that "the government itself and Endara's own supporters, call the U.S. ambassador in Panama, Dean Hinton, 'the Proconsul.'

"They have been persecuting me since the invasion. First,

U.S. troops raided my house three times. One of my sons was thrown in a concentration camp run by U.S. troops. I sought asylum in the Peruvian embassy. While I was there, charges were brought to prevent my being granted political asylum. The man who brought the charges is the supposed owner of La Exitosa radio station. He alleged that I sent some soldiers to destroy the station.

"The prosecutor in the case asked that the charges be dropped, because there is no proof of this false accusation. But, now that I am held prisoner in Colombia, the judge, instead of ruling, returned the papers to the prosecutor and asked that I be called in for questioning, to get my statements for the record. Am I going to testify against myself? Couldn't an affidavit be submitted to the prosecutor through a consulate?"

"This is clearly a political persecution," stated López Grimaldo. "What am I doing in a Colombian jail, when I have committed no crime in this country?" he asked.

Warrant prepared long before

The arrest warrant with the goal of extradition was signed April 27, 1992 by former Foreign Minister Fernando Carillo, under a 1928 extradition treaty that was only valid for five years. The warrant was signed long before López Grimaldo came to Colombia.

At the beginning of 1990, López Grimaldo was granted a safe conduct by the Endara government, so that he could leave Panama for Peru, where the government of Alan García had agreed to give him political asylum. When Alberto Fujimori came to power, the Endara government requested López Grimaldo's extradition. Fearing that the new Peruvian government would revoke his political asylum, López Grimaldo left Peru. He went to Chile, and finally he relocated to Ecuador, where he was living with his wife. Since his wife is Ecuadoran, he requested a resident visa.

"They told me that I would have to request the the visa in my country, but since that was not possible, I could ask for it in a country that was friendly to both Panama and to Ecuador." That's why he came to Colombia. He crossed the border at Ipiales, a Colombian town bordering Ecuador, and sought and obtained the visa he needed. As he was returning to Ecuador, he was arrested by Colombian DAS security agents attached to Interpol.

"In Ecuador, I was living very peacefully and no one knew that I was there, until one day Harmodio Arias, Endara's ambassador, saw me and raised a great hue and cry. He immediately contacted Panama, and the Panamanian government requested my extradition. The Ecuadorans ignored the request, but the Colombian government took it up," said Major López.

"Now Endara is much more anxious to put me in jail. He wants to eliminate the opposition, especially after what happened to Bush, who had the fantasy that he would be received as the hero who liberated Panama from the terrible dictator, Manuel Antonio Noriega. Bush does not understand that if

his invasion produced 4,000 victims, each of those 4,000 persons has at least five family members opposing him.

"Endara and Bush know that the Panamanian situation is explosive. Panama, which under [Omar] Torrijos was a prosperous nation, now has 28-30% unemployment, the most of any Latin American country. That's why they they want us nationalists either behind bars, fleeing, or dead.

"The invasion of Panama was not to capture Noriega to put him on trial. It was to destroy the Defense Forces, whose very existence is a requirement of the Torrijos-Carter treaty. The canal treaty calls for Panama to be capable of protecting the canal in the year 2000. Now that there is no Defense Force, but only police with whistles and nightsticks, the United States is going to say that Panama is not ready to protect the canal and that the gringo troops will have to remain."

Our last question to López Grimaldo was: "Why do you think Manuel Antonio Noriega entered the Nunciatura instead of organizing a guerrilla resistance movement?"

Major López Grimaldo replied: "Because Noriega had enough sense of responsibility to his people and his country to stop the massacre. The gringo soldiers there were drugged, and they were shooting everything that moved, and they were going to continue doing that until they found Noriega. Noriega acted responsibly."

López Grimaldo in a grave state of health

"While Edgardo López Grimaldo was in the prison cells of the DAS secret service in Bogotá, he had two severe attacks of high blood pressure," a businessman who was jailed for seven days along with him told *EIR*. "López turned purple and his arms got red, and we had to urgently ask that a doctor see him. We thought that he was going to die."

"My blood pressure was up to 210/120 when I had those attacks," commented López Grimaldo. "Now, my pressure is 160/90 and the doctor ordered me to take a double dose of the medicine that I was taking to lower my blood pressure."

Physicians consulted by *EIR* agreed that such extremely high blood pressure would put López Grimaldo in a high-risk category for a heart attack or cerebral hemorrhage.

His attorneys have sought to have him moved to a hospital for immediate attention. Nevertheless, he has been in La Picota jail more than 15 days since his attack, and the Colombian Justice Ministry has not responded to the request.