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A History Of Arnaldo Aleman

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On Dec. 22, two judges sentenced former President of Nicaragua Arnaldo Aleman (1997-2001) for the crimes of fraud, embezzlement, money laundering, and conspiracy against the state (see other article, this edition). These sentences were made possible by a vote of the Asamblea Nacional to remove Aleman's immunity from prosecution, a privilege that all deputies of the Asamblea enjoy.

Aleman has appealed the sentences, and continues to assert that the immunity he still has as a member of the Parlamento Centroamericano (Parlacen) nullifies the competence of the courts to judge him in these matters. Nevertheless, he is presently serving a sentence under house arrest. The following chronology provides a synopsis of the politico-criminal trajectory of Arnaldo Aleman:

1989 Founds the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista (PLC)

1990 Elected president of PLC * 1990 February - Elected Managua councilman for the Alianza Liberal
* 1990 April - Elected mayor of Managua and takes office in May

1991 February - Involved in a corruption scandal over the purchase of materials destined to aid the poor

1995 July - Becomes Alianza Liberal candidate for president

1996 October - Elected president of Nicaragua with 50.99% of the vote

1997 Jan. 10 - Takes office for five-year term

1998 - Confrontations with then Contralor General de la Republica Agustin Jarquin who charges him with illicit enrichment

1999 January - Jarquin charges that Aleman's wealth increased 900% from 1990 to 1997

2000 Jan. 18 - Makes secret deal with Sandinistas to allocate high-level positions in state institutions

2001 - Three dissident PLC deputies go to the Contraloria to charge that Aleman's wealth reached US\$250 million since he was elected mayor (see NotiCen, 2001-05-17)

2002 Jan. 10 - His presidency ends * 2002 Jan. 17 - Elected president of the Asamblea Nacional

2002 March 21 - Judge Gertrudis Arias opens judicial process for fraud of more than US\$1.3 million involving state- owned television station Channel 6

2002 April 4 - Special criminal prosecutor Alberto Novoa accuses him of fraud, embezzlement, and criminal conspiracy

2002 April 23 - Directiva of the Asamblea Nacional decides to table petition to remove Aleman's immunity

2002 Aug. 7 - Special criminal prosecutor Ivan Lara accuses Aleman and 13 others of money laundering and five other crimes against the state amounting to US\$10 million

2002 Aug. 15 - Judge Juana Mendez goes before the Asamblea to ask for lifting of Aleman's immunity

2002 Aug. 19 - Aleman breaks quorum to avoid vote on his immunity

2002 Sept. 10 - Judge Mendez sentences 10 of the 14 accused by the Procuraduria, but excludes Aleman from the judgment because of his immunity

2002 Sept. 12 - Directiva of the Asamblea Nacional rejects petition to remove immunity

2002 Sept. 19 - New parliamentary majority removes Aleman as president of Asamblea (see NotiCen, 2002-09-26)

2002 Nov. 1 - Alternate PLC deputy Maria Dolores Aleman, daughter of Arnolando, leaves Nicaragua to reside in the Dominican Republic

2002 Nov. 14 - First attempt to lift Aleman's immunity fails in Asamblea

2002 Dec. 12 - Asamblea passes, 47-0, motion to lift immunity

2002 Dec. 12 - Aleman appears before court, files briefs and appeals to avoid having to make declarations in case against him

2002 Dec. 22 - Aleman sentenced to house arrest

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