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Panama: Pro-government Coalition Calls For End To Dispute With U.S. Based On Mutual Respect

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On May 4, in Panama's last major pre-election rally, the pro-government coalition presidential candidate Carlos Duque told a huge crowd assembled in the Cinco de Mayo plaza that an end to disputes with the US must be found. The solution to problems between the two nations, he said, "would have to be based on mutual respect and without impositions." Spokespersons for the National Liberation Coalition (COLINA) said some 500,000 attended the rally, held in the Cinco de Mayo plaza, located in one of the city's low-income suburbs. After signing the Panama Canal treaties, the late Gen. Omar Torrijos and former President Jimmy Carter participated in a public ceremony at the same plaza. According to Duque, "We are the only ones who can unite all of the social forces of the country." He referred to the memory of Torrijos several times during his speech. Next, said Duque, "We are the only ones who can speak with all members of the international community," in reference to Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega's connections with governments considered unfriendly by the US. Public employees were given the afternoon off to attend the rally. (Basic data from AP, Notimex, 05/04/89)

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