
Deborah Tyroler

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General
Published: Friday, June 9, 1989

In an exclusive interview with Notimex on June 5, Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega acknowledged that the annulment of the May 7 presidential elections had caused great frustration because the elections were perceived at home and abroad as the means to end Panama's political crisis which began in February 1988 with the ouster of President Eric Arturo Delvalle. Noriega said the government had decided to hold the elections because of such expectations, and despite inadequate finances resulting from US "economic aggression"; the discovery of an espionage network mounted by the US to denounce electoral fraud and call Panamanians to rebellion; and, the channeling of millions of dollars to the opposition by the US. Next, the general asserted that the violence of May 10 resulting in injuries to the opposition's three principal candidates was the last straw. Soon thereafter, the electoral tribunal, he said, decided to annul the elections. Noriega added that one of the candidates' bodyguards was killed in the incidents of May 10, and four government security agents and seven members of the "Dignity Battalions" were injured. (Basic data from Notimex, 06/05/89)

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