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Deborah Tyroler

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## **Notes On Trial Developments, Former Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega**

*by Deborah Tyroler*

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On Feb. 8 in Miami, Federal District Court judge William Hoeweler rejected arguments that he had no jurisdiction in the drug trafficking case against former Panamanian Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, and refused to have him sent to a neutral country. Noriega's lawyers had attempted to have Noriega recognized as a prisoner of war. In this event, the judge would have dismissed himself from the case. Hoeweler said, "I don't find that under the Geneva Convention I must divest myself of jurisdiction." At a status conference on the indictment, US deputy solicitor general William Bryson supported the judge's argument, although he said it had been "agreed to treat General Noriega as a prisoner of war." Noriega's attorney Frank Rubino said the US government was interpreting the Geneva Convention in such a way as to justify the Panama invasion and the detention of his client. "Your honor is going to decide whether we are going to strictly observe the Geneva convention, or whether we are going to push it aside a little bit so we can bring General Noriega to trial," he said. Rubino requested that Noriega be sent to a neutral country from which the US could try and have him extradited "fair and square." (Basic data from AFP, 02/08/90)

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