



Department of Justice

APRIL 9, 1992

ATTORNEY GENERAL BARR'S STATEMENT AT NORIEGA PRESS CONFERENCE

GOOD AFTERNOON. DEA ADMINISTRATOR ROB BONNER AND I HAVE BRIEF STATEMENTS AND THEN TWO OF US, ALONG WITH BOB MUELLER, ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE CRIMINAL DIVISION, WILL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS.

THE CONVICTION OF FORMER PANAMANIAN DICTATOR MANUEL NORIEGA ON 8 COUNTS OF RACKETEERING, DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CONSPIRACY IS AN HISTORIC ACCOMPLISHMENT AND A GREAT VICTORY FOR THE RULE OF LAW AND FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

THIS DAY WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY PRESIDENT BUSH'S COURAGEOUS DECISION TO BRING TO AN END THE CORRUPT AND LAWLESS REGIME OF THE DICTATOR NORIEGA.

I WANT TO COMMEND THE INVESTIGATIVE AND PROSECUTORIAL TEAM HEADED BY ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY PAT SULLIVAN FOR THEIR SUPERB PROFESSIONALISM AND SKILL IN BRINGING THIS CASE TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

JUDGE HOVELER OBSERVED THAT IT WAS THE BEST PREPARED CASE HE HAD SEEN. WE ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR TEAM.

I ALSO WANT TO COMMEND THE JURY FOR THEIR SACRIFICE AND HARD WORK, AND THEIR FAITHFUL DELIBERATIONS.

I ALSO WANT TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT JUDGE HOVELER FOR HIS STEADY AND FAIR OVERSIGHT OF THIS TRIAL.

WHEN GENERAL NORIEGA WAS INDICTED NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO, FEW OBSERVERS BELIEVED THAT THIS DAY WOULD EVER COME. MANY REGARDED THE INDICTMENTS AS BEING FUTILE. MANUEL NORIEGA, TODAY STANDS CONVICTED IN A UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE DRUG LORDS: THERE ARE NO SAFE HAVENS; THEIR WEALTH AND THEIR FIREPOWER CANNOT PROTECT THEM FOREVER.

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