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Noriega's Lawyer Claims 7 CIA Chiefs Sought Gun Deals

MIAMI—Deposed Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega allowed illegal weapons shipments through his country at the request of seven Central Intelligence Agency directors, including George Bush, Noriega's attorney said in a court document released yesterday.

Noriega also permitted illegal drug shipments under direction of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the document alleged. Filed March 22, it was kept secret as part of the procedure in Noriega's federal drug-trafficking case that allows U.S. authorities to review documents for classified material.

The material indicated that Noriega may admit to some trafficking charges during his trial, set to begin Sept. 3, and may claim that U.S. authorities asked him to cooperate in their drug and weapons investigations.

In a document dated March 22, Noriega defense attorney Frank Rubino referred to seven former CIA directors, including Bush, Richard Helms and William Colby.

He alleged that all "requested and authorized Gen. Noriega to allow shipments of weapons to either pass through Panama or be unloaded in Panama for transshipment to Honduras or Nicaragua."