

Noriega's Surrender: Overview; NORIEGA GIVES HIMSELF UP TO U.S. MILITARY; IS FLOWN TO FLORIDA TO FACE DRUG CHARGES

By Andrew Rosenthal, Special To the New York Times

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President Bush announced tonight that Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega had surrendered to the United States military authorities in Panama, giving the President the final victory he had been seeking in the invasion of Panama.

General Noriega, who had defied American efforts to drive him from power for more than four years, was removed under cover of night from the Vatican Embassy in Panama, where he had taken refuge 10 days ago. He was then flown by United States military helicopter to Howard Air Base in Panama City, where he was arrested by agents of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration.

The general is under indictment in two Federal courts in Florida on drug trafficking charges and Mr. Bush has made bringing him to trial in the United States a major justification for invading Panama on Dec. 20 and an important aspect of his Latin American policy in general.

Bush Thanks the Vatican

Mr. Bush appeared in the White House briefing room at about 9:40 P.M., less than an hour after General Noriega surrendered, to announce that the deposed Panamanian strongman was aboard an Air Force C-131 transport plane bound for Homestead Air Force Base in southern Florida.

Thanking the Vatican for its "evenhanded, statesmanlike assistance" in getting General Noriega into American hands, Mr. Bush told reporters at a hurriedly called White House briefing that the general would be arraigned in Federal District Court in Miami on the drug charges filed in Miami in 1988. He was also indicted in Tampa.

An Administration official who asked not to be identified said that the White House had been expecting a breakthrough in the negotiations for several days, but that General Noriega's final surrender came without warning.



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