

U.S. Expands Its Sanctions Against Panama

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The United States announced today that it has expanded economic sanctions against Panama in an effort to force Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega to relinquish power there.

The State Department spokeswoman, Margaret D. Tutwiler, said the measures included suspending imports of Panamanian sugar and widening the list of Panamanian companies and individuals associated with General Noriega to whom Americans will be barred from making payments.

The United States first imposed sanctions against Panama last year but so far they have failed to budge General Noriega, who is under United States indictment on charges of illegal drug trafficking.

"All of these actions are a direct result of General Noriega's continued unwillingness to respect the will of the Panamanian people by stepping down and permitting the installation of a freely elected government," Miss Tutwiler said.

She said Panama's 1989 sugar quota of 30,537 metric tons has been reallocated to the other countries, which she did not name, that take part in the United States sugar quota program. The loss of the sugar quota denies the Panamanian Government close to \$15 million in revenue, she said.

In addition, Miss Tutwiler said, the United States trade representative has suspended a further quota of 23,043 metric tons to which Panama would have been entitled because of a quota increase.

She also said that on Aug. 31, the Bush Administration expanded a list, first published last year, of Panamanian companies and individuals affiliated with General Noriega and the military-backed administration to which Americans cannot make payments. The list is undergoing further revisions and more additions will be published soon, she said, But she could not say how broad the expansion would be or how much revenue this action would keep from the Panamanian Government.

Although she acknowledged that the United States objective was General Noriega's removal as head of the Panamanian Defense Forces, she said the Administration could not be certain the new sanctions would achieve that goal.

President Bush opposed sanctions on China after Beijing's crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators last June, saying sanctions would hurt the people more than the leadership.

Asked to square that rationale with increased sanctions against Panama, Miss Tutwiler said, "And as far as hurting the people, Noriega is hurting them more by staying."

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