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Jeb Bush, the Mexican Drug Cartel and “Free Trade”. The Bush Family and Organized Crime

By Prof Michel Chossudovsky

May 12, 2015



Jeb Bush is a presidential candidate.

But Jeb is not only the brother of George W. and the son of George H. W. Bush.

*Jeb Bush also had close personal ties to **Raul Salinas de Gortari**, brother of Mexico’s former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. In the 1990s, Raul the “drug kingpin”, according*

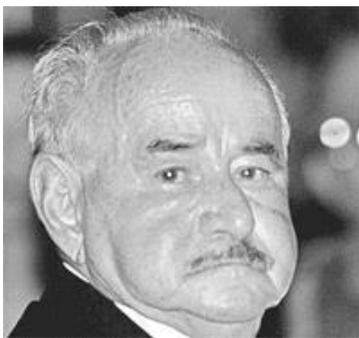
to Switzerland's federal prosecutor Carla del Ponte, was one of the main figures of the Mexican Drug Cartel.



Jeb Bush –before becoming Governor of the Sunshine State– was a close friend of Raul Salinas de Gortari

“There has also been a great deal of speculation in Mexico about the exact nature of **Raul Salinas’ close friendship with former President George Bush’s son, Jeb. It is well known here that for many years the two families spent vacations together — the Salinases at Jeb Bush’s home in Miami, the Bushes at Raul’s ranch, Las Mendocinas, under the volcano in Puebla.**

There are many in Mexico who believe that the relationship became a back channel for delicate and crucial negotiations between the two governments, leading up to President Bush’s sponsorship of NAFTA.” (Prominent intellectual and former foreign Minister of Mexico Jorge G. Castañeda, The Los Angeles Times. and Houston Chronicle, 9 March 1995, emphasis added)



The personal relationship between the Bush and Salinas families was a matter of public record. Former President George H. W. Bush — when he worked in the oil business in Texas in the 1970s– had developed close personal ties with Carlos Salinas and his father, **Raul Salinas Lozano.** (left)

Raul Salinas Lozano was the family patriarch, father of Carlos and Raul Junior. According to the former private secretary to Raul Salinas Lozano (in as statement to US authorities):

“... **Mr. Salinas Lozano was a leading figure in narcotics dealings that also involved his son, Raul Salinas de Gortari,** his son-in-law, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the No. 2 official in the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, and other leading politicians, according to

the documents. Mr. Ruiz Massieu was assassinated in 1994.” (Dallas Morning News, 26 February 1997, emphasis added).

Former president George H. W. Bush and Raul Salinas Lozano were “intimo amigos”. According to former DEA official Michael Levine, the Mexican drug Cartel was a “family affair”. Both Carlos and Raul were prominent members of the Cartel. And this was known to then US Attorney General Edward Meese in 1987 one year prior to Carlos Salinas’ inauguration as the country’s president.

When Carlos Salinas was inaugurated as President, the entire Mexican State apparatus became criminalised with key government positions occupied by members of the Cartel. The Minister of Commerce in charge of trade negotiations leading up to the signing of NAFTA was Raul Salinas Lozano, father of Raul Junior the Drug kingpin and of Carlos the president.

And it is precisely during this period that the Salinas government launched a sweeping privatisation program under advice from the IMF.

The privatisation program subsequently evolved into a multibillion dollar money laundering operation. Narco-dollars were channelled towards the acquisition of State property and public utilities.

Richard Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies, testified to the US Congress (April 14, 1994) that

“billions of dollars in state assets have gone to supporters and cronies” (Dallas Morning News, 11 August 1994).

These included the sale of Telefonos de Mexico, valued at \$ 3.9 billion and purchased by a Salinas crony for \$ 400 million.(Ibid).

Raul Salinas was behind the privatisation programme. He was known as ”El Señor 10 por Ciento” [Mr. 10 Percent] “for the slice of bid money he allegedly demanded in exchange for helping acquaintances acquire companies, concessions and contracts [under the IMF sponsored privatisation program”(The News, InfoLatina, .Mexico, October 10, 1997).

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)



Raul Salinas de Gortari is the brother of former president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in December 1992 alongside US President George H. W. Bush and Canada's Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.(image left)

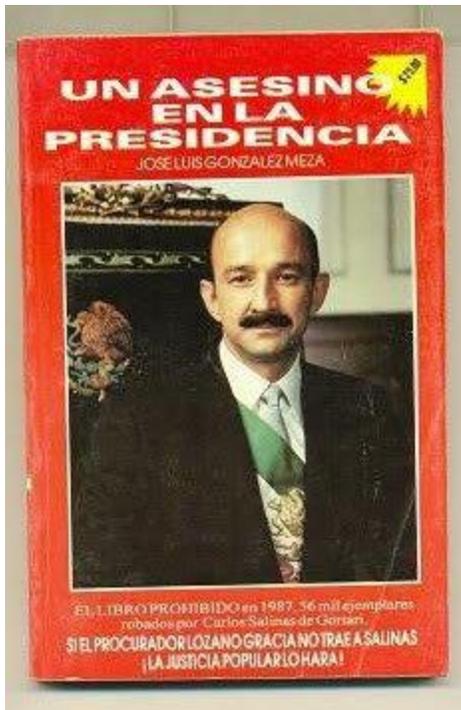
In a bitter irony, it was only after this historical event, that Carlos Salinas' family links to the drug trade through his brother Raul were revealed.

The George H. W. Bush Senior administration was fully aware of the links of the Salinas presidency to organized crime. Public opinion in the US and Canada was never informed so as not to jeopardize the signing of NAFTA:

"Other former officials say they were pressured to keep mum because Washington was obsessed with approving NAFTA".

"The intelligence on corruption, especially by drug traffickers, has always been there," said Phil Jordan, who headed DEA's Dallas office from 1984 to 1994. But "we were under instructions not to say anything negative about Mexico. **It was a no-no since NAFTA was a hot political football.**" (Dallas Morning News, 26 February 1997)

In other words, at the time the NAFTA Agreement was signed, both Bush Senior and Mulroney were aware that one of the signatories of NAFTA, namely president Salinas de Gortari had links to the Mexican Drug Cartel.



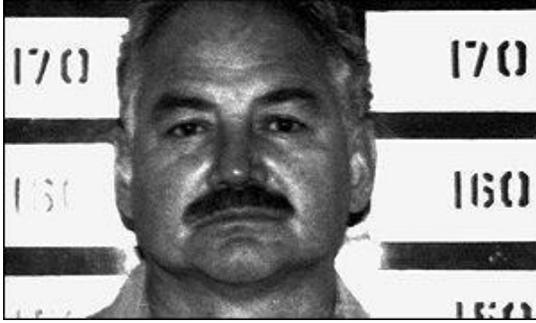
In 1995 in the wake of the scandal and the arrest of his brother Raul for murder, Carlos Salinas left Mexico to take up residence in Dublin. His alleged links to the Drug Cartel did not prevent him from being appointed to the Board of the Dow Jones Company on Wall Street, a position which he held until 1997:

Salinas, who left Mexico in March 1995 after his brother, Raul, was charged with masterminding the murder of a political opponent, has served on the company's board for two years. He was questioned last year in Dublin by a Mexican prosecutor investigating the murder in March 1994 of Luis Donaldo Colosio, who wanted to succeed Salinas as president. A Dow Jones spokesman last week denied that Salinas had been forced out of an election for the new board, which will take place at the company's annual meeting on April 16... Salinas, who negotiated Mexico's entry into the free trade agreement with the United States and Canada, was appointed to the board because of his international experience. He was unavailable for comment at his Dublin home last week." (Sunday Times, London, 30 March 1997).

Washington has consistently denied Carlos Salinas involvement. "it was his brother Raul", Carlos Salinas "did not know", the American media continued to uphold Salinas as a model statesman, architect of free trade in the Americas and a friend of the Bush family.

In October 1998, The Swiss government confirmed that the brother of the former Mexican president had deposited some 100 million in drug money in Swiss banks:

"They [Swiss authorities] are confiscating the money, which they believe was part of a much larger amount paid to Raul Salinas for helping Mexican and Colombian drugs cartels during his brother's six-year term ending in 1994. Mr Salinas' lawyers have maintained he was legally heading an investment fund for Mexican businessmen but the Swiss federal prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, described Salinas' business dealings as unsound, incomprehensible and contrary to customary business usage. (BBC Report)



A few months later in January 1999, after a four-year trial, Raúl Salinas de Gortari (left) was convicted of ordering the murder of his brother-in-law, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu:

“After [Carlos] Salinas left office in 1994, **the Salinas family fell from grace in a swirl of drug-related corruption and crime scandals.** Raúl was jailed and convicted on charges of money laundering and of masterminding the assassination of his brother-in-law; after spending 10 years in jail, Raúl was acquitted of both crimes. ...

With the scandal unraveling, **Jeb’s friendship with Raúl did not go unnoticed. Jeb has never denied his friendship with Raúl, who [now] keeps a low profile in Mexico.**

Kristy Campbell, spokesperson for Bush, did not respond a request for comment. **The Salinas family’s demise caught the Bushes by surprise.** “I have been very disappointed by the allegations about him and his family. I never had the slightest hint of information that President Salinas was anything but totally honest,” Bush senior told me in the 1997 interview. (Dolia Estevez, Jeb Bush’s Mexican Connections, Forbes, April 7, 2015, emphasis added)

“The Salinas family’s demise caught the Bushes by surprise”? (Forbes, April 2015) The Bushes knew who they were all along.

Former DEA official Michael Levine confirmed that Carlos Salinas role in the Mexican drug cartel was known to US officials.

US President George H. W. Bush was regularly briefed by officials from the Department of Justice, the CIA and the DEA.

Did Jeb Bush –who is now a candidate for the White House under a Republican ticket– know about Raul’s links to the Drug Cartel?.

Was the Bush family in any way complicit?

These are issues which must be addressed and debated by the American public across the land prior to the 2016 presidential primary elections.

According to Andres Openheimer writing in the Miami Herald (February 17 1997):

“witnesses say former Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, his imprisoned brother Raul and other members of country’s ruling elite met **with drug lord Juan Garcia Abrego at a Salinas family ranch; Jeb Bush admits he met with Raul Salinas several times but has never done any business with him.**”

US authorities waited until after Carlos Salinas finished his presidential term to arrest Mexican drug lord Juan Garcia Abrego, who was a close collaborator of the president’s brother Raul. In turn, Raul Salinas was an “intimo amigo” of Jeb Bush :

Juan Garcia Abrego, a fugitive on the FBI’s most-wanted list, was flown to Houston late Monday, following his arrest by Mexican police ... Garcia Abrego, the reputed head of Mexico’s second most powerful drug cartel, had eluded authorities on both sides of the border for years. His arrest is an enormous victory for the U.S. and Mexican governments. CNN, January 16, 2015

But there is more than meets the eye: while the Bushes and the Salinas have longstanding ties, Wall Street was also involved in the laundering of drug money:

A U.S. official said the Justice Department has made significant advances in its money-laundering investigation against Raul Salinas de Gortari and has identified several people who can testify that **the former first brother received protection money from a major narcotics cartel.**

If the U.S. were to indict Mr. Salinas, it could have implications for a **Justice Department investigation into possible money laundering by Citibank, where Mr. Salinas had some of his accounts.** Citibank, a unit of Citicorp , has denied wrongdoing. (WSW, April 23, 2015)

The involvement of Citibank in the money laundering operation is documented a Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs Report (US General Accounting Office “Private Banking: Raul Salinas, Citibank, and Alleged Money Laundering” Washington, 1998).



United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Office of Special Investigations

B-281327

October 30, 1998

The Honorable John Glenn
Ranking Minority Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
Committee on Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

Dear Senator Glenn:

On February 28, 1998, you expressed concern about reports that Raul Salinas de Gotari, brother of the former President of Mexico, Carlos Salinas de Gotari, had allegedly been involved in laundering money out of Mexico through a U.S. bank, Citibank, to accounts in Citibank affiliates in Switzerland and the United Kingdom. At that time, you requested that we determine

The End Game

Raul Salinas de Gortari was set free in 2005. All charges were dropped.

The matter involving the Bushes and the Salinas has largely been forgotten.

Meanwhile, American political history has been rewritten...

Not to mention the 1992 "Free Trade" Agreement (NAFTA), which was signed by a head of State with links to organized crime. Does that make it an illegal agreement? The legitimacy of NAFTA has so far not been the object of a legal procedure of judicial inquiry.

An "illegal NAFTA" sets the stage for the TPP and TTIP "agreements" negotiated behind closed doors.

All is well in the American Republic.

At least until the forthcoming 2016 presidential elections.