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General Abelardo Colomé Ibarra. Born 1939 in Oriente province. He studied military sciences in the U.S.S.R. and is an Army Corps General; Minister of Interior (MININT); First Vice Minister of the MINFAR; and First Substitute of the Minister of the Armed Forces.

Colomé Ibarra joined the guerrillas in 1957 and he is an "historico" having participated in Santiago de Cuba's underground and in the Second Eastern Front, and perhaps, Raul Castro's closest associate. Now, as an Army Corps General, he not only holds the highest rank after Fidel and Raul, but also holds key political and military positions. He is a member of the State Council, the Politburo, and Minister of Interior (following Jose Abrante's dismissal in 1989), and stands out as the strongest candidate in the line of succession behind Raul.

In late 1961, he was sent to Venezuela (where he was wounded), the first rebel army officer to be sent in support of a guerrilla movement in Latin America. This was the start of his brilliant military career that included studies in the Soviet Union, missions abroad, and (with Raul Castro's support) entry into the inner circle of power. He is not only an outstanding military officer, but he is a political player, influential among the ruling elite, with a "watchdog" role both within and outside the Armed Forces. He is not perceived as corrupt or given to heavy drinking, although he is reported as a womanizer. He is easy to communicate with, discreet, open to new ideas and suggestions, and enjoys sports. Although he is respected among the military, there exists an element of distrust and fear—his responsibility for internal surveillance of the military has made him a feared figure.

Time Line:

- 1959: Chief of the Intelligence division of the Rebel Army.
- 1962: Chief of the Revolutionary Police.
- 1963: Official of Intelligence in Special Foreign Services.
- 1965: Commander, Armed Forces. Member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.
- 1968: Chief, Northeast Army.
- 1970: Mayor; Chief of the Eastern Army.
- 1972: Vice Minister of the Armed Forces.
- 1974: Mayor; Vice Minister, probably in charge of the Military Counter-Intelligence.
- 1975: Chief, Troops in Angola.
- 1977: Division General; Chief of MINFAR's Internationalist Troops in Angola. Member

of the Council of State. Deputy to the People's Power National Assembly, representing the Municipality of Contramaestre (Santiago de Cuba Province).

1978: First Deputy Vice Minister, MINFAR.

1980: Alternate Member, Politburo.

1989: Minister of the Interior.