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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED
2000-0429-F
JL 8/21/09

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call with Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela

PARTICIPANTS: The President
David Pacelli, NSC Notetaker
Humberto Charneco, State, ARA, Translator
President Perez

DATE, TIME May 10, 1989, 2:50 - 3:03
AND PLACE: Oval Office - Presidential Residence

President Bush called President Perez to discuss the Panamanian situation.

The President: Hello, Mr. President, Como esta?

President Perez: Hello, who is speaking?

The President: George Bush.

President Perez: Mr. President, at your orders.

President Bush: It is nice to talk to you and touch base again on our favorite subject. I just talked with Felipe Gonzalez and he asked me to withhold any action that the United States might take for 24 hours. I told him of your position of leadership in trying to get a common statement from our neighbors and both of us think that what you are trying to do is important and could be very productive.

But I had one question and the question is -- do you think that these countries that you are working with will together recognize the opposition as a legitimate government, recognize Endara as the legitimate head of Panama? Will the 7 or 8 countries be prepared to do that?

[At this point communications were lost for about 30 seconds.]

President Perez: Hello, Mr. Bush, I am trying to respond to your question, we have a different situation here in Latin America. A meeting of the Group of Eight is not possible because I couldn't convince President Salinas. He says that the Estrada Doctrine does not permit him to support the initiative.

We have started a different initiative. I talked all last night and today with the presidents and the situation is as follows:

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Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela are prepared to request a meeting of the OAS Council at the ministerial level to look at the situation in Panama and will publish a communique. I can read the communique to you later. [It could recognize Endara.]

Notetakers comment: The translator did not say the bracketed text, and the President said, "He said something about Endara."

President Bush: When do you visualize that taking place?

President Perez: I have provided the U.S. Embassy with a copy of the communique. I have answers from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru and Uruguay. I only need to make contact with El Salvador and the Dominican Republic and the rest are in agreement with the meeting.

President Bush: When do you plan on doing this?

President Perez: Monday at the foreign ministers level. (President Perez then read the text of his proposed announcement which said that an OAS ministerial meeting was being convoked because of the situation in Panama.)

President Bush: And where will that meeting be held, in Washington? On Monday?

President Perez: Yes, in Washington. I talked with Felipe Gonzalez and I agree with both of you to allow 24 hours and that will be our last chance.

President Bush: As I told him [Gonzalez], we must take some action and we are perfectly prepared to wait 24 hours if your effort has any chance to succeed. It would be worth a wait on our part.

President Perez: Great, I will inform you today about six or seven o'clock about the final outcome.

President Bush: Do you feel there is a chance Noriega will step down?

President Perez: No, I am not confident about his resignation. But he is receiving a lot of pressure even from his own people; many are in opposition. It is worth it to make this final effort.

President Bush: You are making a heroic effort for democracy and to respect the electoral process. Our government has respect for that. With respect to the recognition of Endara, we have been recognizing Delvalle but that is nothing but a charade and a myth but we are impressed with your concept of recognizing Endara. We don't want to unilaterally take action if your efforts in that regard are in a multilateral way.

President Perez: Yes, we should wait until tomorrow and see what the outcome will be.

President Bush: You have my respect and admiration and I look forward to hearing from you.

President Perez: Thank you very much and we'll continue coordinating and supporting our efforts. I think at the end we will win.