

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Alan Garcia of Peru (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Alan Garcia, President of Peru
Interpreter: Stephanie van Reigersberg
Notetaker: David A. Pacelli

DATE, TIME: May 13, 1989, 7:18 - 7:44pm
AND PLACE: Air Force One - Presidential Residence

President Bush telephoned President Garcia from Air Force One shortly after taking off from Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, to talk about the troubled situation in Panama. (U)

The President began, "How are you, sir?" (U)

President Garcia said he could hear well and that he was fine. He wished the President a good afternoon and said he wanted to say hello. (U)

The President said he was delighted. He added that he was calling in the spirit of consultation about the troubled situation in Panama and the nullification of the election of Endara. He said that he would welcome any thoughts that President Garcia might have. (U)

President Garcia said that he has been following the President's statements very carefully. He stated that he believed it is very important that the United States have started from a firm position of defense of Panamanian democracy. Naturally, he continued, he believed it was his responsibility to point out that the firm and juridical position of the United States be very careful to avoid a conflict in Panama and with the rest of Latin America. For this reason, President Garcia said his first initiative was to reject the stealing of the election and second to look to the most important countries in Latin America for their rejection. Third, he said, was to give a comprehensive solution to democracy in Panama. (U)

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President Garcia continued, saying he believed there are three elements, and without exaggeration, any one of them may well come together and carry toward a solution. First, regarding the internal solution in Panama, he regarded the legitimacy of our friend Endara as the winner of the election. Second, is the legitimacy of the position of the United States. Third, the necessity of Latin America and the Group of Eight to have better pressures in the OAS in attempting to help Panama toward a solution. (Ø)

President Garcia said his suggestion is to let the situation mature a bit more in Panama. According to his information, the new situation is not being accepted in Panama. Within the Panama Defense Forces, there are people who do not accept the situation. More precisely because of the enormous importance of U.S. pressures, he suggested that the President wait a few days or at least a few hours. (Ø)

The President asked, "Wait in what sense, sir?" We are in a consultation phase. Do you mean wait for any other actions? (Ø)

President Garcia said he was assuming that in the perspective of the United States there are a series of steps that will be given before any hypothesis of using force. What I am saying is to wait before going through those steps. During the first days of the coming week, Monday and Tuesday, there will be meetings of the Latin American countries most interested in this affair to determine how to make pressures felt inside Panama. (Ø)

The President observed that the comments were very interesting and very helpful. He stated that in his view there was no expectation of any early [military] action by the United States unless U.S. citizens are put in jeopardy. Then, the President said, he would have the responsibility to protect them. After watching on Noriega's thugs on television, the President said he felt he had to move reinforcements without any other intention than to be available to protect U.S. citizens. He said he appreciated President Garcia's advice in that regard. (Ø)

President Garcia said he would like to say that this is an important opportunity for the United States and for the President's administration. Because depending on the intensity of your action, you can get a great deal of support from the governments of Latin America and the peoples of the democracies. Nevertheless, Noriega may try to provoke you to harsh reaction to force governments to take his side. "But I trust in the good judgment ["tino"] of President Bush." He added that he wanted the President to know for certain that we are able to distinguish when Noriega is engaging in provocations. Noriega has set on an irreversible course with this election. Even though he has cancelled the election, he has awakened the thirst for democracy in Panama in an irreversible way. (Ø)

The President said he thought was President Garcia had said was very true. The President said he would be very prudent. He stated that he recognized the importance of making and full and open consultation with President Garcia and the other democratic leaders of the hemisphere. (Ø)

President Garcia said he would wait for any new communication from the President to contribute to ending the problems in Panama. (Ø)

The President said he appreciated that. He went on to say that he would like to tell of a statement that he made to the press today. (Ø)

President Garcia said, "yes, yes." (U)

The President said that today he said that if Noriega left Panama it would, first, lead to the instant normalization of relations with Panama. Second, he said that there could be a useful role for the Panama Defense Forces. We have no fight with the Panama Defense Forces. Under the newly elected regime of Endara, the Defense Forces would have a useful role to play. Third, if Noriega went to a country with no extradition agreement with the United States, "that would be okay with us." The President summed up, saying that the most important signal that we want to send is that there can be normal relations, recognition of Endara as the legitimately elected leader, and that we have no quarrel with the Defense Forces as an institution. (Ø)

President Garcia said he thought the President's statement was well thought out and precise ["atinado y preciso"]. The importance of the statement is very great. Permit me to say, however, that you should say nothing more of what might happen to Noriega. A second suggestion is that the statement amounts to a clear signal to Latin America about the defense of democracy. (Ø)

The President said he appreciated Garcia's support. The President stated that we would like to see Noriega "just take off." He said he wanted to make our position clear about the Panama Defense Forces because we have learned that some in the Defense Forces believe we oppose it as an institution, and that isn't true. (Ø)

President Garcia said he thought that the President's point was justified, to separate out Noriega from the Panama Defense Forces as such. It could be limited to one mention. He went on to clarify his second point above. You need to give Latin American opinion a clear signal that you are not just interested in democracy in Panama, because of your historical interest there, which you know too well, but that you have an interest in democracy everywhere in Latin America. (Ø)

The President said that President Garcia had made a good and useful point. He thanked him for his suggestion. He also hoped for something important to come from the OAS meeting. He recognized the need for something important for Latin America, not just for the United States. In this spirit, he said he wanted to continue the consultations. The President asked President Garcia to please tell him if he had anything important to say. (Ø)

President Garcia said he just wanted to thank the President for his consultation with him and the rest of the leadership in Latin America, that he was very pleased and surprised. This nuance and new perspective would be very important to strengthening ties with Latin America. President Garcia said he was at the President's disposal and would definitely get in touch with him to tell him what we are going to do. (Ø)

The President said thanks and good luck. He enjoyed the consultation. (U)

President Garcia thanked the President, saying he hoped to talk to him soon. (U)

The President asked if President Garcia was going to Paraguay for the inauguration. (Ø)

President Garcia said it was not possible; he was sending his foreign minister. He would be in Bogota in a few days for a state visit, then he would go to a meeting of the presidents of the Andean Group. He said he could not travel more with that schedule. (Ø)

The President agreed that it was a lot of travel. He concluded by saying, "Contact me, or I'll contact you," and said thanks once more. (Ø)

President Garcia said "bye-bye" (in English). (U)

The President said goodbye and the conversation was concluded. (U)