

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Barco
of Colombia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Virgilio Barco
Notetaker: David Pacelli

DATE, TIME December 20, 1989, 2:27 - 2:31 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Mr. President. (U)

President Barco: Yes. (U)

The President: This is George Bush. I know it is very late but I wanted to officially tell you about an ongoing operation that commenced at 1 o'clock. (Ø)

At 12 o'clock, Mr. Endara was sworn in as the elected President of Panama. (U)

At 1 o'clock, substantial U.S. forces went to support the duly elected government of Panama and to apprehend Mr. Noriega. I wanted to tell you that I have run out of patience in this situation. In the last couple of days, there was Noriega's declaration of war against us. The PDF killed a Marine officer, they physically assaulted a Navy officer and sexually harassed his wife. In addition, there have been several other incidents. My patience simply ran out in view of all this. (Ø)

We took what action we did in the hope that we can help start Panama toward the democratic path. There have been some casualties. The operation is fairly substantial. But I wanted you to know about it. (Ø)

Eventually, with Panama on the democratic path, I hope that Colombia will recognize Endara as the legitimate government. We have already recognized him. (Ø)

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There is fighting still going on right now. I don't know about the fate of Noriega. If he is apprehended, he will try to have him come back to the United States to stand trial. I wanted to explain this all to you personally. (Ø)

We tried international consultation. We tried consulting through the OAS, and that didn't work. He ignored the OAS. And I have a responsibility for American lives. I just decided that I have had enough after those recent incidents. I hope that down there in Colombia you will be able to support the Endara government. (Ø)

President Barco: Alright. (U)

The President: But I wanted to call you and tell you this. (U)

President Barco: I wish to tell you that I hope everything goes well for you. I will convene my people early in the morning to see in what ways we can help. (Ø)

The President: That would be good. Apparently there have been some statements on the radio. He is urging the PDF to lay down their arms and urging them to support democracy. There is still fighting going on. We of course hope that it is over very soon. Well, thank you, Mr. President. (Ø)

President Barco: Thank you. It was nice talking to you and I wish you good luck. (U)