

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Salinas of Mexico (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Carlos Salinas
Notetaker: David Pacelli

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: December 20, 1989, 3:03 - 3:11 a.m. EST
The Oval Office

NOTE: Notetaker was alerted to the telephone call while it was in progress (3:05 a.m.).

The President: . . .and they threatened her for 30 minutes. At that point, we couldn't tolerate their actions. I have an obligation to protect the lives of American citizens. We could not permit Noriega to brutalize Americans. (Ø)

At 1 o'clock this morning we took action. We hope to apprehend Noriega. I don't know about his fate. We have 6,000 highly trained forces there. They went to the prison and freed the PDF people who were involved in the coup. (Ø)

The key point is that Endara was sworn in as President, and Calderon and Ford as Vice Presidents, by Panamanian magistrates at 12 o'clock. They have been on radio or television, urging the PDF to support them. We have recognized the Endara government as the legitimate Government of Panama. (Ø)

We will move, as soon as the situation is calm, to help Panama return to democracy. We will lift our economic sanctions. We will permit the reflagging of Panamanian ships. (All this, so long as Noriega is out.) We will implement the Canal Treaties and confirm a Panamanian nominee to be Administrator. If all goes smoothly, we will soon remove the forces we have added in reinforcements. We want a chance for democracy. (Ø)

We have lost 6 American servicemen so far, and there have been 12 Panamanian casualties. I don't know if there are more. The headquarters, the Commandancia, surrendered, and according to one

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report, it is on fire. Kurt Muse, an American who was held by Noriega without trial, has been freed. I said, if we are going to go in there, we should free him, and he is now free. (Ø)

I just hope, after your government gets all information on this, that Mexico will recognize the Endara government. I regret calling you at 3 in the morning and not having all the facts, but I wanted to tell you this personally. (Ø)

President Salinas: I appreciate the call. You know that I have spoken out repeatedly against Mr. Noriega. Nevertheless, this action rebels against our principles. We would have hoped that diplomacy would have worked. We will apply the Estrada Doctrine on recognition. Our Ambassador is there, and he will remain. (Ø)

The President: How does the Estrada Doctrine work? (Ø)

President Salinas: It does not make any difference who is in power. We recognize everyone. (Ø)

The President: I see. That seems very strong; very sound. I know that you have problems with this, but recognize that there are certain limits. You know this -- you have been good about this -- including that Noriega is a drug trafficker. I couldn't condone his actions any longer. We may end up with different views because of our different histories, but I hope that you understand our views. (Ø)

President Salinas: I understand your views completely and you understand ours. We will be cautious in our reaction. (Ø)

The President: Very well. I am sorry to call you at 3 a.m. Forgive me for interrupting your sleep. (U)

President Salinas: On the contrary, Mr. President. I will be very attentive to what is going on. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)