

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

**MEMCON**

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AS AMENDED  
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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Barco of Colombia

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Barco  
Notetaker: David Radi

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: January 28, 1990, 9:52 - 10:10 a.m. EST  
White House Residence

The President called President Barco concerning the upcoming Cartagena Summit. (S)

The President and President Barco exchanged greetings. (U)

The President and President Barco discussed a recent meeting U.S. Ambassador McNamara conducted with President Barco. (S)

The President noted he appreciated President Barco's concerns from U.S. newspapers clippings about the security threat surrounding the summit. The President said he wishes to work out any problems, but that he does have legitimate security concerns and wishes President Barco to discuss these with the head of the U.S. Secret Service. This would enable U.S. security people to share their concerns and provide intelligence reports that the Colombians may not have seen. (S)

President Barco noted he and his family often travel to Cartagena and that he believes it is safe there. He said he had talked with the head of the naval base at Cartagena who also believed that President Bush could be received without problems. (S)

The President noted the strong sentiment in the U.S. Congress and among the U.S. people that he should not make the trip. He noted the courageous actions by President Barco have made the U.S. populace concerned for his safety in Cartagena. (S)

The President noted that Ambassador McNamara had talked about the carrier option. The President said the original plan had nothing to do with a blockade, rather it was to highlight to President Barco and the other presidents in the region the U.S. Navy's aircraft interdiction capability in the drug effort. (S)

President Barco said he understood, but that it would be much easier for the President to arrive at Baranquilla. He offered the adjacent air base for the arrival and said the President could then be flown by helicopter to Cartagena. (S)

The President asked if the Baranquilla option is agreeable. (S)

President Barco said he understood how U.S. security forces are concerned for the President's safety. President Barco said he did not want the President to feel that he was forcing him. He noted the geographic conditions in Cartagena are good and then mentioned "the missiles." (S)

The President noted he would like to share reports about this threat with him. (S)

President Barco noted his strong desire to have the President attend the summit, but not if it was a risk to him. He said the President should decide the arrival means that is best for him and that this would be fine with the Colombians. (S)

The President asked that President Barco see Ambassador McNamara and the head of the U.S. Secret Service in a very quiet meeting to agree on how best to resolve the arrival issue. (S)

President Barco offered to take the head of the U.S. Secret Service to Cartagena if he has not surveyed the area. President Barco noted the front page of a Colombian newspaper which indicated 5,000 men would be coming to protect President Bush. (S)

The President noted the additional problem of the large press contingent and their security. The President said he would attempt to keep the size of our delegation down. (S)

President Barco suggested use of a nearby convention hall to house the press. (S)

The President said he or General Scowcroft would call Ambassador McNamara and make a determination about how to proceed. The President noted that the favorite option of U.S. security people is use of a helicopter carrier, but that the Baranquilla option may take care of this. (S)

President Barco said that would be very good, but that he does not want to push the President. (S)

The President noted that he does not want to do anything to embarrass President Barco with regard to the arrival issue. The President indicated he did not want to signal that Colombia is in a state of siege. (S)

President Barco said he has been asked by MIT to deliver their commencement address in June, but that MIT newspapers have

indicated it would be dangerous to have him come to the university. (S)

President Barco asked if the President had seen his letter on the coffee agreement that he had given to Ambassador McNamara for delivery to the President. (S)

The President said he would get it from General Scowcroft. (S)

President Barco noted it was nothing urgent, just some issues that may come up. (S)

The President noted he had met with the President-elect of Brazil and that the President-elect had asked him to do something about the coffee agreement. (S)

President Barco noted that he would soon like to meet with President-elect Collor. (S)

The President indicated President-elect Collor was someone we want to help. (S)

President Barco said he was worried about the Avianca crash in New York and was looking forward to the results of the U.S. investigation. (S)

The President noted it appeared to be a fuel problem, not an act of foul play. He said the U.S. safety board would take a strong look and share the report with Colombia. (S)

President Barco indicated he had flown much longer flights without running into fuel problems, but that he would be looking forward to the U.S. results. (S)

The President and President Barco exchanged goodbyes. (U)

-- End of Conversation --