

THE WHITE HOUSE
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PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED2000-0429-F
JL 8/21/09

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone conversation with President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Oscar Arias, President of Costa Rica
Interpreter: Stephanie van Reigersberg
Notetaker: Donald C. Johnson

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 26, 1990, 6:35 - 6:38pm EST
The Oval Office

The President telephoned President Arias concerning the results of the Nicaraguan elections. (U)

The President: Hello, how are you? (U)

President Arias: I'm very well. (U)

The President: I want to tell you that UNO's victory is also your victory and a victory for the peace process. I want to salute your support for the electoral process, which was clearly decisive. (U)

President Arias: I appreciate your call. (U)

The President: I have sent a message of congratulations to Violeta Chamorro. I feel the transition will be peaceful. President Perez of Venezuela told me that he also thinks it will be peaceful. (U)

President Arias: It will be a peaceful transition. Violeta will have to negotiate many issues with the Sandinistas. But we in Latin America are used to negotiations of this type. Aylwin has had to do this in Chile. We can solve the difficulties that may come up. (U)

The President: We'll try to do what we can, and we'll be in touch with the Europeans to help. I'll try to get Gorbachev on the same wave length. But there is no need for the contras to be fighters any more. (U)

President Arias: Congratulations to you for what you have achieved with President Gorbachev. (U)

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The President: We have to keep working with him on this issue.
(Ø)

President Arias: I spoke to Vice President Quayle in San Salvador yesterday and told him that Violeta would win. (Ø)

The President: Yes, he called and told me about his conversation with you. (Ø)

President Arias: I learned a great deal about elections from reading the book entitled The People's Choice, about the Roosevelt-Wilkie presidential race in a small community in Ohio. I was convinced that if the Nicaraguan people were given the chance to vote freely, that they would choose Violeta. So the outcome was no surprise to me. (Ø)

The President: A lot of people here had given up on the opposition's chances in the election because of those damned polling results published in the Washington Post. (Ø)

President Arias: Those polls relied on friends of the Sandinistas. They were cheating. According to polls done by organizations here in Costa Rica, Violeta was going to win by a large margin. (Ø)

The President: I remember you told me that there had been a very good poll for her some months back. (Ø)

President Arias: We made a poll to see who was the most popular politician in Nicaragua, and she won. (Ø)

The President: She's an important symbol, but she will need lots of help and advice. This would be better if it comes from Carlos Andres Perez and you, as you know the area better than we do. But we'll try to do what we can to be helpful. (Ø)

President Arias: Thank you, Mr. President. (U)

The President: Good going. Bye-bye. (U)