

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President-elect Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President-elect Violeta Chamorro
Notetakers: David Pacelli/Don Johnson

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: March 15, 1990, 7:30 - 7:56 PM
The Oval Office

The President called President-elect Violeta Chamorro to discuss the process of demobilization and demilitarization of Nicaragua. (U)

The President: Hello. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: How are you? (U)

The President: How are you feeling? (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Better, better; I'll be out of the hospital tomorrow. (U)

The President: Oh, wonderful. It's good talking to you. I'm very pleased with the reaction to my proposal for a Fund for Democracy. It has been pretty good on Capitol Hill. It has gotten a good reception. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Thank you very much, my dear Mr. President. In the first place, I want to thank you for your request of the emergency package of aid for \$300 million dollars, and also the \$30 million dollars for demobilization of the Resistance and their relatives. At the same time, thank you for lifting the embargo, a measure which has been well received by all the political sectors of Nicaragua. (U)

The President: I'm glad to hear it. If you've got a minute, I'd like to talk to you about demobilization. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Yes, sir. I had some ideas also, which I would like to read to you. (U)

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The President: I would like to read you some ideas. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Yes, sir, as you wish. (U)

The President: In the first place, demobilization is a complex issue. We are working on a strategy for achieving demilitarization. Jack Leonard will give you a detailed plan in a few days, but we need to agree on a framework for the immediate future. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Yes, sir. (U)

The President: I realize that you and your UNO partners must take the lead, but I propose the following outline for you to consider. First, get both sides to commit themselves publicly to a formal cease-fire that would go into effect as soon as possible. Second, have both sides agree to freeze themselves in place. This would mean having the Resistance move to enclaves, and the Sandinistas staying in garrison. Third, ask the UN for expanded authority for ONUCA, so it can monitor the ceasefire and confirm that both sides are abiding by the freeze in place. Finally, number four, get both sides to agree to the principle of simultaneous steps for demobilization. If we can get them to agree, then we can start putting proposals for simultaneous action on the table. (Ø)

It would be good if you could appoint an authoritative representative who could talk to the Resistance along with Cardinal Obando. Violeta, this is the short run, the immediate task, stopping armed acts on both sides, giving ONUCA a mandate, and ending the present stalemate where each side wants the other to go first. Once confidence has been created, we can proceed to larger steps, such as repatriation, disarmament of combatants, and destruction of weapons, which we want. But it is our view that we have to get the fighting stopped and the parties separated. These are just a few ideas, and we want to hear your views. Jack Leonard will have all the details on this, just as soon as you get back to Nicaragua. These are just our suggestions. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Perfect, my dear George, Mr. President. I also have some ideas. Maybe they're not identical. (Ø)

The President: That's fine. Do you want to go ahead now or later? (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Now, I don't have a FAX machine near, but I want to read a list of ideas, sir. (U)

The President: Good. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: I am aware that some Resistance combatants are entering Nicaragua. They are entering armed, and this is dangerous. This is not tolerable. It increases the level of tension and makes difficult the transition to democracy.

(Ø)

I support the idea of putting the Resistance in enclaves, but they have to be unarmed. Second, only by demobilization of the Resistance can I control the Sandinistas and reduce the size of the Army gradually. I think the Sandinistas would no longer have an excuse to engage in military activities and would have to demobilize. (Ø)

Moreover, I request your support in helping us with a massive program that would give implements of work instead of weapons to the Army and the Resistance. I wish strongly, sir, to be the first president of a democratic nation that will throw weapons into the sea, as I said during my campaign. The U.S. can contribute toward this effort. They can encourage big corporations to donate tools they don't use to Nicaragua. (Ø)

I wish that the Resistance would have laid down their weapons before my inauguration on April 25. Fourth, if it is something you can do, I request that you send to Nicaragua paramedics as soon as my inauguration takes place, so the people can see that the U.S. is forthcoming with humanitarian assistance and that my Government, the UNO Government, can satisfy the basic needs of the Nicaraguan people. (Ø)

There are some radical elements in the Resistance that are playing a negative role as far as demobilization. They are few but speak on behalf of many. I ask that you can help so that these people, if they don't change their attitude, not be allowed back into Honduras. And with respect to your idea to ask Cardinal Obando to work for demobilization, I think that's an excellent idea. He's the most capable person in the country. We all have faith in him. (Ø)

[Interruption by Mrs. Chamorro's son, Pedro Joaquin, to say that the interpreter had made a mistake in saying that Mrs. Chamorro had said that the Resistance must have laid down its weapons by April 25. What Mrs. Chamorro had really said was that the process would have begun or would be far along by April 25.] (C)

The President: I see. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: These were the points I wanted to raise. I can send you a list or I will send them through my good friend Jack in Managua. (U)

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The President: Well, that's good. Obviously, I think you should be in the lead. I want you to know that we'll help in any way we can -- with the Contras, the UN, or with business people. (Ø)

I have one question. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Yes, yes. (U)

The President: You mentioned the need for doctors once you come into office. What's the situation regarding medicine? (Ø)

[Interruption by Mrs. Chamorro's son, again. The interpreter had Mrs. Chamorro requesting medics, when in fact Mrs. Chamorro had asked for brigades of paramedics that would go to Nicaragua.] (Ø)

The President: I understand that. But what about medicine itself? (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Anything, anything you or your friends could send would be welcome. Anything in that area would be most welcome from the U.S. or its allies. The drugstores are empty. The Sandinistas even threw some medicines into the sea. There's nothing. (Ø)

The President: There is a marvelous private organization here that sends medicine all over the world, called Americares. I know that they would send big planes with medicines if you wanted them. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Whatever you want. I don't know whether the Sandinista government would allow them into Nicaragua. It would be an excellent idea if this were done after the 25th of April. (Ø)

The President: Okay, I will get something started on that. We could have a big flight arrive the day after your inauguration. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Perfect. (U)

The President: All right. If you talk to Jack, I'll assign our very best people to do this. Whatever you like. I'll see what we can do with the Resistance. I'll wait till I hear from you or from the Embassy. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Right. Thank you for your good offices. (Ø)

The President: Okay. Listen, take care of yourself, and I'll be waiting to hear from you. (U)

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President-elect Chamorro: Right. And thank you for all these young men you have assigned to protect me. I'm not used to all this. (Ø)

The President: Everyone wants you to succeed. Everyone wants to pitch in and help. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Thanks very much. (U)

The President: Incidentally, Quayle saw Ortega again and they had another pleasant talk. Maybe he's getting more reasonable. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: Maybe he wants to move to the United States. (Ø)

The President: I don't think so. I saw him giving you a big abrazo. Maybe he wants to stay in Nicaragua and be a good boy. (Ø)

President-elect Chamorro: (laughs) (U)

The President: Take care of yourself. (U)

President-elect Chamorro: Adios, mi amor. (Ø)

-- End of Conversation --

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