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PER E.O. 12958,
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2000-0429-F
ZL 8/21/09

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

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

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Virgilio Barco Vargas, President of Colombia
Notetaker: Donald C. Johnson

DATE, TIME April 27, 1990, 11:25 - 11:30 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President telephoned President Barco to express his condolences over the Pizarro killing and to reaffirm our support. (U)

The President: Mr. Barco, Mr. President, sir. (U)

President Barco: I am very glad to hear you. (U)

The President: I'm calling because I wanted to say how outraged we are over the murder of Pizarro. Just when it seems the drug lords have gone to the outer limits of brutality, they carry out some even more terrible act. I just wanted to know that we are thinking of you. We wanted to convey our condolences to Pizarro's family. Obviously we did not share a common ideology, but Pizarro had renounced violence and was working within the democratic system. And, it was through your leadership that he had been convinced to compete through the polls and not through bullets. We applauded that and I feel very badly for the people of Colombia. (Ø)

President Barco: It was very bad because it was an example of how we had changed. He had many enemies, but we are almost sure that it was done by the narcotraffickers. (Ø)

The President: But they claimed it, didn't they? (Ø)

President Barco: The killer was only 19. Sometimes they claim and sometimes we are not sure. Now they are using this as a form of paid suicide. They pay him some money and they say to him, "Give it to your mother or girlfriend," and ask him to commit suicide and carry out this killing. (Ø)

The President: Paid suicide, isn't that terrible. The guy must have known he couldn't get out of the airplane. (Ø)

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President Barco: Yes. (U)

The President: I wanted to call and give my condolences and let you know we've had a good visit here with Carlos Andres Perez. We talked about this last night at dinner. I wanted to call and pay my respects and say we are sorry. (Ø)

President Barco: His (Pizarro's) people are being helpful. He will be buried tomorrow. (Ø)

The President: I hope they don't have some big demonstration or anything like that which will cause embarrassment to you. Are you saying publicly that he was doing the right thing and that his people have been helpful? (Ø)

President Barco: He had changed completely. He and his people turned in their armaments. This was a case in which there were five generals from Europe and elsewhere and they witnessed the destruction of the weapons. They started to play the political game everywhere. (Ø)

The President: This was a good job. It's a shame that the killing happened. I hope his people will continue working in the democratic system. (Ø)

President Barco: I really appreciated that and hope that his people continue his party. They will continue this policy to play in the democratic way. They only have about six percent in the polls, but this was very important because of the great change of position that they represented. (Ø)

The President: That is wonderful and I just wanted to identify with you on this. (Ø)

President Barco: I think it was very much because of the great change they have made as a people and became convinced of the democratic way. I appreciate your call. I saw the Vice President in Managua. It was wonderful what happened there. They had difficult problems the night before, but it was very good how Carlos Andres Perez helped to resolve them. (Ø)

The President: The Vice President reported back to me and said he had a good visit. I think he (Perez) did help. We are concerned over the Ortega matter, but we are going to support Violeta and hope this works out well. (Ø)

President Barco: I think (unintelligible). (U)

The President: Okay, sir, good luck, nice talking to you! Thank you, good bye. (U)

President Barco: Thank you, good bye. (U)