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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Carlos Andres Perez  
President of Venezuela on October 10, 1991  
(C)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Andres Perez  
Interpreter: Lillian Nigaglioni  
Notetaker: William T. Pryce/Robert B. Morley

DATE, TIME October 10, 1991, 4:14 -4:28 pm DST  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

NOTE: Neither the notetakers nor the interpreter could hear the entire conversation because of technical problems. Parts of some sentences were inaudible.

President Bush: Hello, hello, are you there? This is George Bush. (U)

President Perez: Yes, how are you? (U)

President Bush: It is good to talk to you again. We had a telephone problem here, so the call was delayed. (U)

President Perez: I am very much concerned now about the new situation in Haiti. I think the situation is getting out of hand. We need to consider the problem with objectivity. We may be getting into a situation of chaos. (C)

President Bush: What do you suggest we do? (C)

President Perez: I am very concerned, sir. There is lots of confusion around the issue of what we should be trying to achieve. Perhaps Aristide is not the best or most desirable person to lead Haiti, but he is the elected President of Haiti, and we have to support him. We cannot let the coup plotters succeed. It is important that we act now, that we make plain they cannot succeed. It would be bad for the region. Bouterse would win in Suriname. It would be a bad example for Peru and spread to Guatemala. (C)

President Bush: I agree with you that the coup cannot succeed. But, we cannot do other than support OAS actions. We cannot act independently of them. (C)

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President Perez: I am in complete agreement with you, Mr. President. But, we must find a way to be successful in restoring Aristide, he is key. If we want this to be successful, we must give the right signal. (C)

President Bush: I can understand that, but the OAS mission came back very discouraged. (C)

President Perez: I know what happened with the second mission of the OAS. I repeat, I remain very concerned. I think we have to act now to restore civil authority. We must make sure a civilian regime is created. I am afraid this will not happen, and I am worried about the consequences if it does not happen. I was very worried, for example, when a puppet President was inaugurated this week. They may be having new elections without Aristide's participation. (C)

President Bush: I agree with you that we must maintain a position of seeking the return of Aristide to Haiti if possible, but the situation is changing and it may be impossible to do that. It may be impossible to convince people he should return. If he does go back, it will be important that we set conditions on his return. (C)

President Perez: I agree with the idea of Aristide's restitution with conditions. We have to set up conditions for his return. It cannot be as it was before. (C)

President Bush: So, we agree. It might be best if we just watched the situation, watched it for a while. Thanks for the telephone call. (C)

President Perez: I agree fully with you. I won't take any further action until I have consulted with you again. This has been my position throughout this crisis -- that we should talk before we act. But, I want to take a little more time to talk about another issue that is important -- the border crisis between Ecuador and Peru. Both sides have been too excited and should calm down, asked to cooperate to reduce tension. The United Nations address of President Borja was particularly disturbing. Elements of his talk were disturbing. And the press, especially in Ecuador, has made the situation worse. Ecuador should be pressed to leave the base close to the frontier. The Ecuadoran military should draw back from the section in dispute, and they should make no movement in the region. I talked the day before yesterday to the President of Peru, President Fujimori, and to President Borja this morning. I urged restraint. I will call Fujimori again, and urge him not to make any moves that will fuel the dispute. It is dangerous to the peace in the region. However, if you called, if the United States President called, it would be much more effective. (C)

President Bush: I would be glad to help out if I can, with a phone call. But, why don't you call first, send me a flash message with the results of your call, and then I will check, and we can decide what to do. That would make more sense. (C)

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President Perez: I agree. Thank you. I will let you know when I get a reaction. (C)

President Bush: Okay. Sorry about the problem with the telephone. (U)

President Perez: Thanks a lot. As soon as I get a reaction from the call to Peru, I will let you know. (C)

President Bush: I will be glad to help. Thanks for the phone call. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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