

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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Document No. and Type	Subject/Title of Document	Date	Restriction	Class.
10. Memcon	Re: Meeting with Violeta Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua [FOIA EXEMPTIONS REDACTED] (6 pp.)	4/9/92	(b)(1)	C

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P-1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
 P-2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
 P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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 P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a](5) of the PRA]
 P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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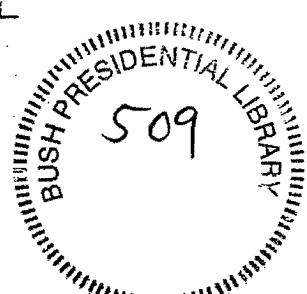
Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]
 (b)(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Violeta Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua (U)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
Samuel Skinner, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Bernard Aronson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
William T. Pryce, Senior Director, Latin America and Caribbean Affairs, NSC (Notetaker)

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2009-0651-MR

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Violeta Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua

Ernesto Palazio, Ambassador to the United States

Jose Adan Guerra, Vice Minister of the Presidency

Cristiana Chamorro, President's Daughter, Chairman of the Board of La Prensa, and wife of the Minister of the Presidency, Antonio Lacayo

DATE, TIME
AND PLACE: April 9, 1992, 3:05 - 3:50pm DST
The Oval Office

There was an initial exchange of amenities before the press. And then the President commented on the Noriega conviction. This conversation begins after the press left.

President Chamorro: How did things go at the meeting you just had? (U)

The President: Oh, the one where I just held you up in traffic. If I had known you were near, we could have asked you to come down with us. I think it went well. The idea is to get public opinion to support aid for Russia. Much of it will go through the international financial institutions. There was a very lively question and answer period. (S)

General Scowcroft: They are the group that Mrs. Chamorro will be speaking to tomorrow. (U)

The President: They will be very polite to you. (U)

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President Chamorro: I'm scared of the press. I don't like to speak before them. (P)

The President: It is a frustrating year with politics everywhere in the air. Everyone wants to find bad news. But the good news is that the economy is beginning to turn around. That will help us and help other countries. It will get confidence up. When the economic matters begin to turn around, you get a better overall atmosphere. (P)

How are things at home for you? How are things going? (U)

President Chamorro: Thank you so very much for receiving me and thanks to all your colleagues here present who have helped so much. We could not have done what we have done without their help. (U)

I went out to Kansas yesterday and spoke to the school. I brought back a gift -- a scholarship. (P)

The President: How will you decide who gets it? (U)

President Chamorro: We will have a contest around the country to see who is the best. (U)

The President: Did you speak in Spanish? (U)

President Chamorro: Yes, with a translation. (U)

It is wonderful to be with you. (U)

(Coffee and tea are served)

I won't have any, we need to watch our figures. (U)

The President: Actually, that's skim "leche" (U)

President Chamorro: I will be going to the hospital tomorrow to see my grandson. (U)

The President: Is that the boy who was in Texas? (U)

President Chamorro: Yes, he has Philadelcorrison Leukemia. It's not very common and they couldn't treat it down in Texas. They recommended three places for him to have a bone transplant and one of them is here. (U)

The President: How is the boy? Is he scared? (U)

Mrs. Chamorro: He has done very well. At one point, he got dizzy and felt weak and said, "help me, help me, I'm afraid." But when he got over being dizzy and he was healthy again, he said "forget what I said, it wasn't important." (U)

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President Chamorro: On holy week, I will spend time there. If you are a mother and a grandmother, you are the mother of all. (U)

From the very first, way in the past, people said my family was split -- it was not so. But now, more than ever, we are together. We have enormous forgiveness and a desire to get along together. Regarding Nicaragua's problems, I thought to say to you, don't leave me. By all means, don't leave me, I need all the help I can get. We have drug plans and we have two oceans and we have to have ways of dealing with this problem. (C)

The President: Are we working on drugs, Bernie? (P)

Mr. Aronson: Yes, yes we are. (U)

The President: How will the conviction of Noriega be received in Latin America? (C)

President Chamorro: I don't think there will be reaction of any kind, because the drug problem is a criminal problem. (C)

The President: I hope there will not be a reaction at home. And that, when there is a reaction, it will be positive. (C)

Mr. Aronson: Mr. President, Panama has done very, very well. It has had a 9.8 percent growth rate and if employment has gone down 20 percent, they are doing wonderfully, and then this person asks that kind of a question. (C)

The President: We need to get that word out. We'll need to talk to Judy (Deputy Press Secretary) on that. (C)

Well, I see we're okay on drugs. How about your economy? (U)

President Chamorro: We are progressing faster than any one of you ever thought. My economic team was just up here. I thought people were going to fall in love with them and bring them all here. People were so impressed with them. I think that what has been done in connection with privatization has been good -- and this has been a terrible headache. This is an incredible job. Like I said to Secretary Baker when he visited, it is very difficult to have to untie this knot. So little by little we are untangling this problem. I need to do it so that what happens to me is not what happened in Haiti and in Peru. (C)

The President: Speaking of your second biggest admirer, Carlos Andres Perez, he can hardly talk. He has laryngitis. We agreed that the OAS should send a group down there to try to work the problem. I said that we needed to get everyone together. He said that there would be a meeting of the Rio group. I said "that's good, but we don't want it to replace the OAS." He started off by saying that things are good in Venezuela. I don't know whether things are really good or if that is wishful thinking. (C)

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President Chamorro: I don't know whether he (Fujimori) did this with the advice of the group or what. When I visited France, where I saw Mitterrand, I said that you are a politician and not me -- I am a humble housewife. Aristide went too far, too fast. People criticize me because I have gone gradually with reconciliation and forgiveness. I have talked with many people who have come back. Many people in the resistance are working, many people in the Sandinistas are working. (S)

We are changing the Cabinet when it is time to do so. I change members when it is time to do so in the democratic process. (S)

I say that people have confidence in the transition. Those people put me there. I don't know if we can succeed, but the people put me there. I need help. The help I need is not for my sake, but for the people. (S)

I talked with AID about a \$30 million program for schools. What I am saying is that you should not abandon me. I know that the budget must go through Congress but let me tell you that you will finish your term when I finish mine. (S)

The President: And when is that? (U)

President Chamorro: You will finish in four years and nine months and that is when I will finish. (U)

The President: I was checking my figures a little while ago. I think we are furnishing about \$200 million. How are we doing, are we doing what we said we would? (S)

Mr. Pryce: Yes, we are. (U)

Mr. Aronson: Yes, we are working with the Nicaraguans very satisfactorily. (U)

The President: How about the Ortega brothers? (S)

President Chamorro: I want you to know that Roberto Ortega decorated one of your people. (S)

The President: Oh? (U)

President Chamorro: Yes, and he also stopped in the U.S. and said ... (S)

The President: Did he talk with us? (S)

President Chamorro: I want to explain how we have been working. Private business invites investors to talk. We get a number of people. Some from the Sandinistas, some from the government, one of UNO investors -- a number of people are invited. We say that he is not a Sandinista. He said I'm going to the U.S. with you. What happened to Daniel before when he went with his new Vice President wouldn't happen here. He was going to come but he had to go somewhere else, so we asked the Sandinistas who they would

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send and they decided to send Daniel. He was all dressed up. He didn't wear his red bandanna. I wore a red dress, but he didn't wear his red bandanna. He gave good support to the government. I think that he did not want to come off badly. (S)

The President: Did he talk with us? (S)

Mr. Aronson: No, he didn't ask to see us. (S)

Secretary Baker: We talked with him in Mexico. (S)

Ambassador Palazio: Mainly about Cuba. (S)

The President: I wonder how you were with Daniel, because he said some tough stuff in other places, but that's your stuff -- that's up to you to decide -- (b)(1) (b)(2) (S)

President Chamorro: New people just dissolve CL -- I'm not just defending him. (S)

The President: (b)(1) (S)

What about the Contras? (U)

Foreign Minister Leal: There is a group covering problems. A larger group of reContras who have handed over their arms and we have collected them and helped them resettle. We gave them land for their arms. There is a small group in the region of the north where the government is trying to get together with them, but at this point they don't represent any real danger. (S)

The President: Any questions? Are things going fairly well, Bernie? (U)

Mr. Aronson: Yes. (U)

President Chamorro: What happens is that it is in Nicaragua that there are too many weapons from all over. Weapons from the Soviet Union, from the United States, from everywhere. I and Antonio (Lacayo, Minister of the Presidency) talked and we decided that we have to buy off these weapons. They are Russian weapons, American weapons. We have been taking weapons apart and burying them because we can't even make souvenirs of them. But I no longer have money to buy them. People are seeking them. (S)

The President: Who buys them? Arms dealers? (S)

President Chamorro: The government, but the problem is that there is not enough money. They need to be taken out. I'm sure that with the allotment of funds, with just 5 million we can get all the weapons. (S)

Secretary Baker: We can help in demining. (S)

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President Chamorro: We have discussed this. You were going to send a team down to help us on this. (C)

Secretary Baker: We are working on this. (U)

President Chamorro: Don't get scared. (U)

The President: We have a couple of one-legged people with experience in this and we can send them down. (O)

The conversation broke up with a renewed exchange of amenities at this point. The President introduced Mrs. Bush who invited President Chamorro to visit Camp David with her grandson. President Chamorro declined but mentioned that it might be possible to do so some time in the future. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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