VIA LDX

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

~~SECRET~~/GDS

May 18, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Peter Tarnoff
Executive Secretary
Department of State

SUBJECT: Nomination of Cabranes as Ambassador to Colombia

The President has approved the Acting Secretary's recommendation of May 11. The Department is authorized to cable Ambassador Vaky instructing him to go to Bogota and convey an oral message from President Carter to President Lopez.

The President has also approved without change the wording of the proposed oral message.

Michael Hornblow
Acting Staff Secretary

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NARA B Date 2/6/2015

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THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM

TIME SENT: MAY 18 PM 5.40

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DESCRIPTION/CONTENT

FROM: MIKE HORNBLOW

TO: PETER TARNOFF

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

May 16, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: ROBERT PASTOR

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

SUBJECT: Jose Cabranes

Please implement the enclosed Presidential decision as appropriate.

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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

May 16, 1977

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI ZB.

SUBJECT: The Colombians React Negatively to the Nomination of Jose Cabranes

Colombian Foreign Minister Lievano told Terry Todman on May 10 that they were thinking seriously of not granting agrement to Jose Cabranes because he is of Puerto Rican origin, and he would therefore be liable to attacks by Colombian leftists.

Warren Christopher proposes, and I concur, that Ambassador Vaky be instructed to convey a personal message from you to Colombian President Lopez Michelsen strongly requesting that Colombia accept his appointment. Cabranes has excellent qualifications, and Colombian prejudice against Hispanic-Americans should be contested.

Warren Christopher's memorandum is attached at Tab A.

RECOMMENDATION

That you authorize Ambassador Vaky to convey a personal message from you to President Lopez Michelsen.

Approve ✓ Disapprove_____

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2861

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

May 13, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: ROBERT PASTOR

SUBJECT: The Colombians React Negatively to the Nomination of Cabranes

Attached as Tab I is a memo from you to the President strongly supporting State's recommendation at Tab A that the President personally request the Colombian government to accept the nomination of Jose Cabranes.

The Colombians are being outrageously prejudiced in their refusal to accept Cabranes' nomination. I thought they might, and actually warned Jose of that possibility several weeks ago when he told me that Vance had offered him the Bogota post.

As you may recall, I recommended Cabranes for an Ambassadorship in a memo several months ago. I am convinced he will be one of our finest Ambassadors, and we cannot let the Colombians deny him the post because he is Puerto Rican.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you send the memo as TAB I to the President.

✓ per phone 5/16/77

_____ Approve _____ Disapprove

Attachments:

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NARA (B) Date 2/10/2015

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 11, 1977

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Warren Christopher, Acting WC.

SUBJECT: Nomination of Cabranes as Ambassador to Colombia

The Colombian Government has reacted negatively to the request for agrement for Jose Cabranes. It is now necessary to make a decision on whether to press the Colombians on this matter and, if so, how.

Foreign Minister Lievano, in a meeting with Terry Todman May 10, said that he and President Lopez had discussed the nomination of Mr. Cabranes and that they frankly wanted Washington to know that they were thinking seriously of not granting agrement. They stated that Cabranes' Puerto Rican origin and his family and government ties on the island would make his job in Colombia difficult and prompt attacks from leftists (who oppose Puerto Rico's links to the U.S.). They concluded that Mr. Cabranes would not be good for our relations with Colombia. Todman explained Cabranes' excellent qualifications and his personal association with Secretary Vance.

The Colombian reaction to the Cabranes nomination probably reflects their unhappiness with prior ambassadorial shifts. When Ambassador Vaky was transferred from Colombia to Venezuela last year, the Colombians, who feel superior to the Venezuelans, felt downgraded. When Vaky was replaced by Philip Sanchez, a Mexican-American, they felt offended.

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The elitest Colombian Government officials were uncomfortable with Sanchez who also found it difficult to relate to them. As a result, Sanchez had virtually no access to the President and the Foreign Minister during his tenure. And the Colombian Government actually held up replacing its Ambassador in Washington.

The question now is how do we respond. We feel it would be a serious mistake not to support Cabranes, whom the Colombians will find to be an altogether different person from Sanchez. In the Colombian Government, the President calls the shots. We want to make only one appeal to the Colombian Government and we have concluded it should be at the highest level. I, therefore, recommend that you authorize us to send an oral message to President Lopez strongly endorsing the Cabranes nomination.

We propose to cable Ambassador Vaky in Venezuela instructing him to go to Bogota to convey your message personally to President Lopez. Vaky is highly regarded by Lopez and knows the Colombian mind better than anyone in this government. Using Vaky as an emissary will be proof to the Colombians that we are conscious of the need to send someone to Bogota who is able to work effectively with their government.

Vaky would convey the following message from you to President Lopez:

-- I have asked Ambassador Vaky to present to you my views on the importance I place on our relations with Colombia. I have asked him to convey this message personally because of the high esteem in which Ambassador Vaky is held by my government and by yours.

ok

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-- From the very beginning of this Administration, the importance to us of the most cordial, friendly and warm relations with the democracies of this hemisphere was central. The shared traditions and values that we have with the American democracies must be emphasized in our words and in our deeds in order to keep this spirit alive and project it in the most positive sense to our neighbors.

-- Colombia, however, has an even more special place in our relations because of the cooperation which your government has shown consistently and because of its leadership role in regional and global discussions of importance to all of us.

-- The visit of Mrs. Carter to Colombia I hope will add to the impact of your recent visit to Washington to demonstrate to our peoples these strong ties of friendship.

-- It is in this context that I have asked Ambassador Vaky to stress to you the great importance Secretary Vance and I placed on selecting a first-rate Ambassador to represent my government in Bogota.

-- Being fully aware of the high regard in which you hold Ambassador Vaky and the importance of establishing a good rapport with his successor, Secretary Vance personally recommended to me one of the most outstanding Americans he has met in or out of the U.S. Government. That person was Jose Cabranes.

-- I share Secretary Vance's esteem for Mr. Cabranes. This is why I seek your agreement to accept him as Ambassador to Colombia.

In addition to the points above, we will instruct Vaky to provide information on Cabranes' high qualifications. Vaky will strongly urge

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the Colombian Government to give Cabranes an opportunity to demonstrate his skill and convey Secretary Vance's conviction that he will prove to be an outstanding Ambassador.

Cy has endorsed this overall approach to President Lopez.

Recommendation:

That you authorize an oral message to President Lopez as discussed above.

Approve ✓ Disapprove ____

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