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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

INFORMATION

October 5, 1989

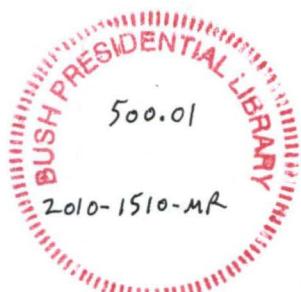
MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT M. GATES

FROM: WILLIAM T. PRYCE

SUBJECT: Panama Coup Lessons Learned

Deputy Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

Here are some conclusions about lessons to be learned drawn from discussions among the group which prepared the chronology:



1. Coordination on the ground in Panama was good except for the major misunderstanding on the Cisneros conversation which led to false signals and contradictory information being supplied to Washington. The confusion ultimately had little impact upon our decision-making process but the Agency briefed the Hill using inaccurate information and this is now causing us problems.
2. The flow of information from elements in Panama to their Headquarters in Washington was hampered only in the case of State's and Defense's telephonic contact with the Embassy. (Noriega's people may have been monkeying with the phones.) State should have a radio backup capability.
3. 1.4(c); 3.3(b)(1)

4. There is a clear need for better coordination in Washington at a level below the principals so that all the principals are operating on the same information. Our Sit Room often had to call around for information which should have come to it automatically. (The NSC did not learn of the Cisneros conversation until the following day.) What we need is a better way for the information being received by top officials to get quickly to that official's command center and be disseminated laterally to other command centers for appropriate distribution.

Larry Eagleburger made a point of getting the deputies to use the conference T.V. Frankly, I don't think the principals or their deputies will ever feel comfortable with the system and I doubt you'll use it. But you might want to suggest trying to use it for a Deputies Meeting to see if it can function that way.
5. We need to do more contingency planning.

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2010-1437-MR

MR 4/22/2016

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NSC/S PROFILE

RECORD ID: 8921570
RECEIVED: 06 MAR 90 10

TO: GATES

FROM: PRYCE

DOC DATE: 06 OCT 89
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: PANAMA

DC

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS POSED BY GATES DURING DC MTG ON 6 OCT

ACTION: FOR RECORD PURPOSES DUE DATE: 09 OCT 89 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: PRYCE LOGREF: 8921221

FILES: IFM 0 NSCP: DC062 CODES:

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White House Guidelines
E.O. 12958, SEC 3.4 (B) September 11, 2006
By DR NARA, Date 3/5/09

COMMENTS: _____

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OPENED BY: NSBTM CLOSED BY: NSBTM DOC 1 OF 1

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 8921570

DOC ACTION OFFICER

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CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

X 90031417 FOR RECORD PURPOSES

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White House Guidelines

E.O. 12958, SEC 3.4 (B) September 11, 2006

By PK NARA, Date 3/5/09

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Magruder

Bob

Have now the answers
to the questions on the RIBSC's
meeting with Cisneros.

Bill Pryce

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2010-1510-MR
32 5/13/13

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21570

SUBJECT: Questions Posed by Mr. Gates During White House NSC Deputy's Meeting

1. How did the negotiator get out of the commandancia to talk with Cisneros?

Ans: The sergeant in the group crawled out through a hole in the fence. One officer also came from the commandancia; route not known.

2. What communications did the negotiator have with the rebels?

Ans: During the conversation with Cisneros they made two telephone calls to the rebels inside the commandancia.

3. Did the rebels have control of Noriega physically or did they have him surrounded?

Ans: Yes, the rebels had physical control of Noriega.

4. When did they get control of Noriega?

Ans: Being determined through debriefings.

5. Was there communication from the rebels inside to anyone outside?

Ans: Yes. They had telephone communications.

6. Did SouthCom issue a statement on their own the morning of the coup, or were they directed to make a statement?

Ans: The statement referred to is a written communication developed solely by SouthCom and delivered from SouthCom staff headquarters to the PDF representatives of the Combined Joint Board the morning of the coup. There was no public statement issued by SouthCom.

NOTE: It is important for principals to be aware that no public statement was made and this was private communication between U.S. Forces and PDF to clarify the movement of US Forces during the coup attempt.

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2010-1510-MR
ES 6/20/13

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TO: AGENCIES

FROM: HUGHES

DOC DATE: 05 OCT 89
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: PANAMA
AGENDA

DC

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF DC MTG ON 6 OCT RE PANAMA

ACTION: SITTMANN SGD MEMO TO AGENCIES DUE DATE: 08 MAR 90 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: PACELLI LOGREF: 8921570 8921571

FILES: IFM 0 NSCP: DC062 CODES:

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E.O. 12958, SEC 3.4 (B) September 11, 2006

By Paul NARA, Date 3/5/09

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