

43957

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE, TIME November 16, 1981, 4:00-5:00 p.m.,
AND PLACE: The Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: Strategy Toward Cuba and Central America;
Proposed United States Peacekeeping Force
in Chad

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

USUN

Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

The Vice President

JCS

General David C. Jones

Lt. Gen. Paul F. Gorman

StateSecretary Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Deputy Secretary William P. ClarkThe White House

Mr. Edwin Meese III

Mr. James A. Baker III

Mr. Michael K. Deaver

Mr. Richard V. Allen

Admiral James W. Nance

Ms. Janet Colson

OSDSecretary Caspar W. Weinberger
Deputy Secretary Frank C. CarlucciOMB

Mr. William Schneider

CIA

Director William J. Casey

NSC

Mr. Roger W. Fontaine

Mr. Fred Wattering

MINUTES

Mr. Allen stated the first agenda item would be discussion of the strategy toward Cuba and Central America. Consideration would be given to Phase One with implementation of steps and costs short of an ultimatum to Nicaragua and the commitment of U.S. forces in regard to Nicaragua. Other steps to be taken would also be considered.

Sec. Haig stated the first question to be asked is will the American people support vigorous action. His feeling is they will if we lead. If we don't, then they will not have the proper sense of alarm. If we start Phase One we must be prepared for the consequences if we are not willing to use Phase Two. We cannot afford failure in the form of a Bay of Pigs. We don't have to accept specific steps within Phase Two, but must accept conceptually the possible need to use force.

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Sec. Haig then reviewed the twelve steps listed under Phase One. Under step one, the commitment of money to Central America, the Secretary said \$100 million was earmarked for El Salvador, \$75 million for Costa Rica, \$25 million for Honduras, \$50 million for Jamaica, \$40 million for the Dominican Republic, and \$10 million for Belize.

In addition, another \$50 million in military assistance under Section 506 for El Salvador and Honduras should be requested. The good news, the Secretary added, was the El Salvador Defense Minister is willing now to train forces outside his country which is mentioned in step three. Under step four are actions to be carried out in Nicaragua. Step five which would cut off trade and credit should be carried out only if the private sector is completely wrapped up. Secretary Haig repeated that Nicaragua is moving toward a totalitarian regime.

The President asked about the Nicaraguan ambassador who just resigned.

Sec. Haig said he is a loyal Nicaraguan but uncomfortable with the Sandinista government.

Amb. Kirkpatrick interjected that Amb. Cruz was an original junta member although a businessman. He has a long history of collaborating with the Sandinistas and he will find it difficult to admit openly he was wrong.

The President then asked if there were divisions within the Sandinista leadership?

Mr. Casey said there were divisions and he reminded the NSC that covert action alone won't liberate Nicaragua. It was even more important to create a political force within the country. He mentioned a La Prensa poll that showed 64% of those polled were dissatisfied with the government. There is growing disenchantment within Nicaragua.

Mr. Carlucci reminded the NSC the FSLN was never monolithic, and we are seeing a falling out among the three original groups that made up the FSLN.

Sec. Haig added, however, that according to a Jesuit priest defector in Guatemala, the Cubans are already in charge in Nicaragua. At the same time, the Nicaraguan government has carried out a number of repressive actions and now seems prepared to appear to be letting up a bit. But the private sector won't participate in this process anymore.

The President asked if we can use this evidence regarding the Cubans if we decide to cut off trade and credit.

Sec. Haig said yes, but it was important to look at each credit and loan decision and decide who it hurts more, the government or the private sector.

The President asked how we would get help to the right people?

Sec. Haig said we must look at each specific loan.

Amb. Kirkpartick added that during the Carter Administration all loans went thru the nationalized banking system and no more than 30% went to the private sector. She believes it is probably less than that now.

Sec. Haig then went on to point out that currently the carrier task force in the Caribbean has raised Cuban fears to unprecedented heights. This is good, but the next time they may be less frightened. The Cuban government is trying to contact us in as many ways as possible. Meanwhile, we want the maximum pressure on them at the time we decide to talk with them.

The President asked shouldn't we negotiate with them while we are quite credible?

Sec. Haig agreed with that, and suggested we do so now but make it very tough. Either behave or else.

The President said the bottom line was would Cuba rejoin the American community or continue on its course.

Sec. Haig added that others do object to talking to them now -- they feel its premature. Furthermore, the Cubans are tough as nails, and won't back down now. The Secretary concluded, however, that we should talk now; it won't cost too much to try now.

The President asked what this would cost us?

Mr. Casey said it would lose time.

Sec. Haig added there was the danger of being strung along.

The President suggested we put limits on that.

Mr. Baker said we are still willing, meanwhile, to do these actions under Phase One.

Sec. Weinberger said we are agreed on the items presented. Defense's problem has been the prior commitment to use force without approval of the American people and the U.S. Congress. We could keep the carrier task force a little longer in the Caribbean if it is helpful in creating the right atmosphere for talks.

Sec. Haig said he had questions in regard to two add-ons. We needed to be careful about forming a Nicaraguan government-in-exile.

Sec. Weinberger said we would need a respectable group.

Mr. Casey said we should not proceed on this until the process in Nicaragua goes far enough.

The President added that there can be no taint of Somoza in this.

Sec. Weinberger pointed out that 1,500 guerrillas won't overthrow the FSLN but could do a lot of damage.

The President asked if there was a possibility of taking away cover for the El Salvador guerrillas?

Mr. Allen suggested it would be difficult and Gen. Jones said it would be very difficult because it is vital and difficult to pinpoint the guerrillas first.

Mr. Allen offered to have this checked out further, however.

(The Vice President joined the meeting at this point.)

Mr. Meese said that list point nine could be changed to encourage formation of exile organizations for Nicaraguans and mount a propaganda campaign against the Sandinista government. Regarding point eleven: support free radio station broadcasting to Nicaragua in English and Spanish.

Sec. Haig asked if point ten -- taking our case to the UN -- would be counter-productive?

Amb. Kirkpatrick said the UN was hopeless. We need others like the Venezuelans to sponsor it. We would still lose, however.

The President asked if we could get defectors or victims to go on speaking circuits in this country. The President then mentioned the defecting Jesuit priest.

Amb. Kirkpatrick mentioned that one of the wives of the arrested businessmen might be available. But our media has not published this kind of information.

Mr. Allen reminded the President that Pres. Herrera Campins had said the same thing at Cancun.

Amb. Kirkpatrick said the President must make a speech laying out what's happening in Central America.

The President emphasized it must be totally documented information.

Mr. Allen said an early December meeting in Miami under Prime Minister Seaga's chairmanship would be available.

Sec. Haig again reminded everyone that the hard question remained: if we go down this road, and when such things happen like Cuban troops going into Nicaragua, where will we be?

The President said that would depend on the climate of opinion we have created.

Sec. Haig added don't go into Phase One unless you are prepared to look at Phase Two.

Sec. Weinberger believed there were branches in this road, and that we should decide then. We should have the option to go or not without appearing to retreat. We should have para-military activity but deniability as well.

Mr. Schneider expressed his concern over resources. We cannot fit in this amount in our current FY 82 international account. We need approval for additional requests.

The President said we cannot afford not to and this request can follow the speech.

Mr. Allen said we can put these options in decision form.

Sec. Haig said that he would like to register a dissent. The point to be made was if Cubans react, we need the planning and the allocation of resources to meet their moves.

The President said if the Cubans do something overt, then we can make the decision. But we must have contingency planning.

Sec. Weinberger added that in the event of overt action by them -- land or sea -- we must be prepared and we must have contingency plans.

Sec. Haig said that what he wanted was a set of plans if Phase One doesn't work.

Sec. Weinberger said that contingency planning is one thing but a previous commitment to use force is another.

Sec. Haig said we are not asking the President to commit himself to the use of force. But before we go to Phase One, we must assemble our assets to do the planning and be ready.

Sec. Weinberger said we can do the contingency planning. But Phase One with its twelve points should go on.

Mr. Casey said our decision to act must be based on how blatant the Cubans are.

The President said if the Cubans were to intervene blatantly in Nicaragua, then a naval squadron could cut-off seaborne supplies, and we could knock down aerial support.

Sec. Weinberger agreed we should be ready to do it under those circumstances.

Gen. Jones said we could develop options -- some within hours. Others like interdicting supplies to guerrillas in El Salvador would take longer. He said too we need a much higher priority placed on human and technical intelligence in Central America. We need to share information with friendly governments.

The President said he supported that.

Mr. Casey said there was a long list of things we are doing.

The President then asked if instead of sending in a division of Marines into Vietnam, we helped the South Vietnamese logistically, and bombed the north, would there have been a Vietnam war?

All agreed no.

Sec. Haig added if Pres. Johnson had been prepared to do what the military said was necessary, the north would not have prevailed. We cannot permit Central America to go Marxist.

Amb. Kirkpatrick raised one matter on point four, namely, it should be "support and assist political and para-military forces from second, and third country nationals". But they should not be "our" army.

The Vice President asked if the Honduran elections will spoil any of this?

Mr. Casey said not likely.

But, Amb. Kirkpatrick added the Liberal Party has a longstanding association with the Sandinistas.

Mr. Allen said we can now refine the steps in Phase One, and start to lay out contingency plans, and that these all be passed around for approval.

Sec. Haig agreed to sit down with State, NSC, etc., and look at each one.

Mr. Meese said OMB should look at where the money can come from and we should do this before pushing on the supplemental.

Mr. Allen said we will also look into the speech proposal.

Mr. Allen summarized the joint request by Secretaries Haig and Weinberger for authority to begin consultations with the OAU and other states to discuss U.S. assistance to an African Peacekeeping Force for Chad, and to begin consultations with Congress concerning sources of funding up to \$12 million for this assistance.

Sec. Haig noted there was some danger here. He noted that we have been full supporters of replacing the Libyans in Chad with an OAU force and working very closely with the French in this effort. He stated that it was vital that the French see us as backing them up in this and added that they will be footing the heavy cost of this peacekeeping force.

The President stated he approved the action requested by Secretaries Haig and Weinberger.

THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

November 19, 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

THE HONORABLE ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR.
The Secretary of State

THE HONORABLE CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
The Secretary of Defense

THE HONORABLE DAVID A. STOCKMAN
Director, Office of Management and Budget

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. CASEY
Director of Central Intelligence

THE HONORABLE JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK
Representative of the United States
of America to the United Nations

GENERAL DAVID C. JONES
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Proposed United States Assistance for an African
Peacekeeping Force in Chad

At the National Security Council meeting of November 16, 1981,
the NSC approved as submitted a joint request by Secretaries
Haig and Weinberger regarding United States support to an
African Peacekeeping Force in Chad. (S)

The specific courses of action approved are: Approval to undertake
consultations with African and other concerned states regarding
assistance to an African Peacekeeping Force in Chad; approval to
begin consultations with Congress concerning sources of funding
up to \$12 million for a U.S. contribution to the peacekeeping
effort in Chad. (S)

Richard V. Allen

Richard V. Allen
Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

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Review 11/16/87

NLRR M330/1 #43958
BY RW NARA DATE 9/6/19