

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

December 30, 1993

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526
2015-0910-M (1.01)
3/6/2019 KBH

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH VICTOR CARDENAS,
VICE PRESIDENT OF BOLIVIA

Participants

- United States:
 - The Vice President
 - William Wise, Deputy Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
 - Michael Skol, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
 - Barbro Owens, NSC Director for Latin America
 - Jim Carman, Military Advisor to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
 - Lilian Nigaglioni, State Department Interpreter
- Bolivia:
 - Vice President Victor Cardenas
 - Jose Justiniano, Minister of Sustainable Development
 - Fernando Gonzalez, Bolivian DCM in Washington
 - Bolivian Interpreter

Discussion

- Vice President Gore: Congratulations on your election victory! This marks a new beginning for Bolivia -- your President called to tell me about your visit to Washington, and I was anxious to meet you. You hold a special mantle for all indigenous people in this hemisphere and are a symbol of hope for indigenous people everywhere.

President Clinton and I were very pleased with the results of the expert environmental mission that visited Bolivia at your President's invitation earlier this year. From what I have seen, it appears that you and your President have as close a relationship as I have with President Clinton. And thank you for the kind comments on my book.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- VP Cardenas:

On behalf of all indigenous people who have lived in peace with the environment -- many of whom have read your book and followed your public life -- we view you as a brother for your strong defense of the environment. We look forward to working together and were happy to see the force with which you met Mr. Perot during the NAFTA debate. Congratulations on a great win!

I have felt a close relationship with the United States since I was a small boy and was exposed to President Kennedy's Peace Corps Program. That program provided part of my diet, and I am very grateful. Both of our Administrations are vitally concerned with the welfare of our people, and we want to cooperate for the benefit of both of our countries.

- Vice President Gore:

Thank you. I am humbled by your kind words. I feel a special bond with native people because of the way you relate to and think of the Earth. There is much our world can and must learn from the traditional ways. Because of your indigenous heritage, you are a crucial bridge for political leaders to find connections -- your wisdom and insight helps political leaders see the connections between human-kind and the Earth.

Sustainable development attempts to capture the essential meaning of this new relationship -- to foster progress without damaging the Earth. The traditional relationship between civilization and ecological systems is being transformed by three phenomena: population growth; new technologies which expand our reach and are accompanied by consequences that outstrip our imagination; and a modern way of thinking that makes it all too easy to avoid responsibility for what we are doing -- assuming responsibility only to the present.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

This is a false assumption built into our thinking. We face three challenges. First, to stabilize the population by: raising the education level of women; improving the infant mortality rate; and expanding knowledge of birth control techniques -- while being respectful of the values of different cultures. Second, to take advantage of new technology -- that makes it easier to reconcile progress with the environment. And most importantly, to change the modern way of thinking. This last imperative is where you are well equipped to play a lead role because of your demonstrated ability to bridge two ways of being -- you are conversant in both cultural languages.

- VP Cardenas:

We will put forth our best efforts in this endeavor. We have a president who is also intrigued with liberty and freedom. During the campaign -- as we worked together -- he (President Sanchez de Lozada) lost all the prejudices with which Bolivia's elite has always viewed indigenous people. This helped us get together and better relate to all the people of Bolivia.

We are in the midst of a series of transformations in Bolivia. Executive power is changing: cabinet ministers have a management focus, while their key assistants have a technical function. The cabinet's focus and charter is based on three areas of emphasis: economic development; human development; and sustainable development -- managed by the Sustainable Development Ministry -- which is on top of both; almost with a veto power over the former two.

Next year -- after the government organization we want is in place -- we will focus on educational reform. A key foundation of this reform will be a bilingual education system where students first learn their native language and then Spanish. This approach to education will ensure people

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

of different backgrounds will continue to live in harmony and gain an appreciation for different languages, traditions, and cultures.

With me today is Minister Justiniano who leads our most difficult ministry.

- Minister Justiniano: We are working hard to redesign our government from the start within a framework of sustainable development. Mine was the first ministry created and I thank you for the expert mission last August that was instrumental in helping us get organized. We are making important progress with our UNDP programs and with the IDB, U.S. AID and the OAS -- our objective is to prepare for the Sustainable Development Summit (referred to as Americas 501) and the associated meeting of foreign ministers. I was with President Sanchez de Lozada when the two of you spoke on this subject last month. As the President explained, our people appreciate your assistance and we reiterate our gratitude.

- Vice President Gore: Our advisors are very impressed with the quality of your team -- they have high probability of success and we are delighted to respond. President Clinton and I look upon you as partners, and we are committed to continuing our good working relationship.

Americas 501 is an exciting idea for this hemisphere. During the Hemispheric Summit I announced in Mexico City, we propose to do all we can to elevate the level of attention paid to the meeting in Bolivia. As you know, no date has been proposed for President Clinton's Hemispheric Summit -- we intend to consult widely to avoid conflicts with election cycles and national holidays.

As you know, I mentioned to your President that he may want to consider moving the Sustainable Development Summit from the Fall of 1994 to the

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Spring of 1995. Of course, this is for you to decide. But remember, the world meeting on population is scheduled for the Fall of 1994 in Cairo and will command a lot of attention from the people who focus on sustainable development issues. There could be a diminished level of attention on the Americas 501 Conference if it conflicts with the Cairo meeting. Something to consider in your planning process is that President Clinton's Hemispheric Summit in the Spring or Summer of 1994 and the Cairo meetings later next year could be stepping stones to your Sustainable Development Summit. This approach would also provide a longer planning cycle. If, however, you decide to continue with a Fall 1994 meeting, we will do all we can to ensure its success.

I want to mention our meeting with seven Central American presidents two weeks ago. During their meeting in the White

House with President Clinton, they asked that their region be considered as a model area for sustainable development. President Clinton agreed to enter into this arrangement with them -- so you can see that some of these ideas we are discussing are becoming widely accepted.

Again, let me emphasize that we want to be your partners as you work to improve education, eliminate corruption, foster sustainable development, protect the environment, promote democracy, and strengthen free markets.

- VP Cardenas:

I want to ask if it would be possible for you to visit Bolivia before President Clinton's Hemispheric Summit next year. Your visit would be a unique opportunity to discuss many of your sustainable development ideas with the Cabinet Ministers and observe the participation of indigenous people in our democratic system. It would be a great honor if you could observe first-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

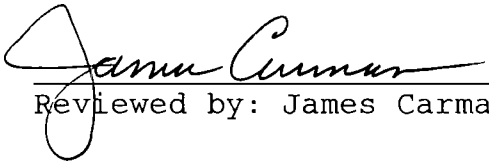
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

hand the reforms we are trying to implement.

- Vice President Gore: Thank you for your kindness. I would like very much to come, but I can't accept now. Tell your President I will try to make the visit.

I wish you well with your Washington meetings.

-- End of Conversation --


Reviewed by: James Carman


Approved by: William Wise

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~