

TOP SECRET

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
July 26, 1977

Zbig Brzezinski

The attached was returned in
the President's outbox. It is
forwarded to you for appropriate
handling.

Rick Hutcheson

cc: Peter Bourne

RE: BRIEFING OF PRESIDENT
LOPEZ-MICHELSSEN

DOJ Review
Completed.

NLC Review Completed.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

	FOR STAFFING
	FOR INFORMATION
X	FROM PRESIDENT'S OUTBOX
	LOG IN/TO PRESIDENT TODAY
	IMMEDIATE TURNAROUND

ACTION	FYI	
		MONDALE
		COSTANZA
		EIZENSTAT
		JORDAN
		LIPSHUTZ
		MOORE
		POWELL
		WATSON
		LANCE
		SCHULTZE

	ENROLLED BILL
	AGENCY REPORT
	CAB DECISION
	EXECUTIVE ORDER
	Comments due to Carp/Huron within 48 hours; due to Staff Secretary next day

		ARAGON
	X	BOURNE
	X	BRZEZINSKI <i>-original</i>
		BUTLER
		CARP
		H. CARTER
		CLOUGH
		FALLOWS
		FIRST LADY
		HARDEN
		HUTCHESON
		JAGODA
		KING

		KRAFT
		LINDER
		MITCHELL
		MOE
		PETERSON
		PETTIGREW
		POSTON
		PRESS
		SCHLESINGER
		SCHNEIDERS
		STRAUSS
		VOORDE
		WARREN

No Objection To Declassification 2008/08/13 : NLC-126-8-25-1-6

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

To Zbig -

J

No Objection To Declassification 2008/08/13 : NLC-126-8-25-1-6

TOP SECRET

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

July 23, 1977

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Peter Bourne P.B.

SUBJECT: Briefing of President Lopez-Michelsen

25X1 The promised briefing was conducted by Peter Bensinger, Administrator of D.E.A., [redacted] the Central Intelligence Agency and myself. We were accompanied by Robert Drexler the Charge d' Affaires. President Lopez-Michelsen was alone.

The material had been very carefully prepared and checked, and Peter Bensinger did an excellent job in presenting it in a low key and non-accusatory way. We left behind a written copy of the briefing without any identification as to its source. The President did not flinch at any of the information we provided. When we reached Defense Minister General Abraham Varon Valencia, Lopez-Michelsen questioned us closely as to whether we had other information that we might not have written down because it was not solid. He said that at different times there were rumors Varon was trying to overthrow him, was smuggling Scotch whiskey, and involved in other illicit activities. Because of the changing nature of the rumors and the lack of hard evidence he sometimes questioned whether any of it was true. As he talked more I had the feeling that he not only wanted us to know that he knew a good deal more about Varon than we did, but that this was the one person on the list he could not move against directly.

At the end of the briefing he said that since our previous visit he had made considerable investigations on his own, and had been amazed at the degree of corruption, not merely around the drug issue, but also in connection with terrorist kidnappings and ransom payments. In one instance members of the National Police had even served as an execution squad for a kidnap victim. He described F-2, one of the National Law Enforcement Agencies, as "a nest of criminals".

He was extraordinarily candid and open in talking about the problems he faced. He reacted only with appreciation for the material we gave him, adding that he feared it represented only 10 per cent of the problem. It is clear also that he plans to move aggressively against these people. He thanked me profusely.

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MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Peter Bourne

SUBJECT: Briefing of President Lopez-Michelsen

for the helicopters and the team we sent down there after the meeting to study the feasibility of spraying the marijuana fields. He said he plans to completely reorganize the National Law Enforcement Agencies and establish a special elite unit of loyal, well paid people of high integrity reporting directly to the Attorney General. (A formal announcement of this move was in the Bogota newspapers yesterday morning).

In summary I believe this is a tired embattled old man depressed by his failure to accomplish more than 20 per cent of his administrations original program, who is not particularly popular with the people, and who was badly stung by accusations that his sons were involved in illicit financial transactions. I think he had planned to drift through his remaining year in office. Now, I believe, the interest you and Rosalynn have taken in him has lighted a fire under him and given him the energy, clear goals and inspiration to try to redeem himself in the time he has left. We have also placed in his hands some powerful weapons. He said that the top objectives for the remainder of his administration will be crime, and corruption especially as it relates to drugs. I think he is very sincere, and Drexler said that he has never seen him so animated and filled with life. It will remain to be seen whether he is up to the task.

I thought it might be nice if you sent him a letter along the lines of the attached draft.

PGB:ss

c.c. Rosalynn Carter

Attachment

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THE WHITE HOUSE

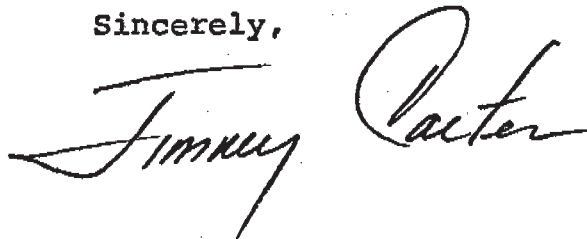
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. President:

Dr. Peter Bourne has reported to me on your recent meetings and on the considerable progress that we have been able to accomplish together since Rosalynn's visit, in dealing with the problem of drug abuse.

I think you can be proud of the aggressive steps you have taken to deal with the effects of trafficking in Colombia, a task that I know is not easy. I want you to be aware of my appreciation and that of the people of the United States for the strong leadership you have demonstrated, and my desire to continue to work closely with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

His Excellency
Alfonso Lopez Michelsen
President of the Republic
of Colombia
Bogota