



News Release

#180
SCPA RELEASE 90-1-17

JUST CAUSE CIVILIAN DEATHS

QUARRY HEIGHTS, PANAMA --January 9--The U.S. Southern Command currently estimates the total number of civilian deaths directly related to Just Cause operations at 220. In their continuing attempts to refine the accuracy of that figure, the U.S. military in Panama is working in concert with representatives of all hospitals, several agencies across the spectrum of the Panamanian government, and various relief and humanitarian organizations.

Panama's Institute of Legal Medicine, the official reporting authority for all violent and suspicious deaths, has reported today 203 civilians killed between 20 December 1989 and 3 January 1990 as a direct result of Just Cause. Included in these numbers are presumably Panama's Defense Forces and Dignity Battalions members not in uniform and otherwise unidentifiable, as well as bonafide civilians.

The Institute has been unable to make any determination as to whether the deaths were caused by U.S. military, PDF, Dignity Battalion, looters, other civilians, etc.



United States Southern Command

News Release

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SCPA RELEASE 90-1-19

CIVILIAN DEATH UPDATE

QUARRY HEIGHTS, PANAMA--January 11, 1990--The U.S. Southern Command, in conjunction with Panama's Institute of Legal Medicine (equivalent to a Coroner's Office), the official reporting authority for all violent and suspicious deaths in Panama, now counts the total number of civilian deaths resulting from Operation Just Cause as 202. This number has been reduced from 220 civilian deaths reported Tuesday after it was later determined by the Institute that 18 of those reported were in fact armed combatants.

This revised number of dead was briefed here by the Southern Command staff and the Director of Panama's Institute of Legal Medicine to humanitarian and relief organizations Wednesday afternoon. Organizations which had representatives attending that meeting included America's Watch, the Center for Investigation of Human Rights and Legal Assistance, the Panamanian Committee for Human Rights, CARITAS (a Catholic aid organization), and the Washington Office on Latin America.

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Not all of the 202 have been positively identified at this time. These unknown could conceivably include more members of the Panama Defense Forces and Dignity Battalions not in uniform. The Institute will continue to try to establish the status of those still unidentified.

These deaths were caused by many sources and could include the U.S. military actions associated with Just Cause, PDF, Dignity Battalion, looters, other civilians, etc.

DoD News Briefing
Tuesday, January 9, 1990 - noon
Mr. Bob Hall, DASD/Public Affairs

Good afternoon. We will have a bluetop today for your edification about the all-time record contributions made by Department of Defense contributors to the 1989-1990 Combined Federal Campaign. Military and civilians within the Department of Defense contributed \$8,287,093 to the recent Combined Federal Campaign. I have two other announcements.

The first is, we've had several queries as to when we plan to report on progress of the Defense Management Review. I'm happy to announce that Secretary Cheney will kick-off a press conference next Thursday at 11:00 here in the briefing room. He'll be followed by Deputy Secretary Donald Atwood and the Under Secretary for Acquisition, John Betti. This will be a six-month progress report on the Defense Management Review. Which, of course, you'll remember President Bush in his February 1989 address to the Joint Session of Congress charged the Secretary of Defense with under-taking a review of defense management practices.

In response, Secretary Cheney sent the Defense Management Report to the President in July '89. The Report provided a plan to implement fully the Packard Commission recommendations; improve substantially the performance of the defense acquisitions system and manage more effectively the Department of Defense and defense resources. I think the fact that the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretary are all coming here to talk to you about this indicates how seriously they regard this initiative.

Q: By next Thursday you mean two days from now?

A: Two days from now.

Q: Will we see a copy of it in advance so we can ask intelligent questions?

A: I think not. Although there will be some paper on it; whether we'll have it actually in advance of the press conference, we'll have to check on. I can understand your interest. I also might mention that there'll be both some paper from us, but I think also from the Services and they will have people talking about it as well.

The third announcement is another response really to your questions about civilian casualties in Panama. The U.S. Southern Command currently estimates the total number of civilian deaths directly related to the Just Cause Operation, to be 220. In their continuing attempts to refine the accuracy of that figure, which is an estimate, the U.S. military in Panama is working in concert with representatives of all hospitals, several agencies across the spectrum of the Panamanian Government and various relief and humanitarian organizations.

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Panama's Institute for Legal Medicine, the official reporting authority for all violent and suspicious deaths, has reported today, 203 civilians killed between 20 December 1989, and 3 January 1990, as a direct result of Just Cause. Included in these numbers are presumably Panamanian Defense Forces and Dignity Battalion members who were not in uniform and otherwise unidentifiable. Also, possibly looters, as well as bonafide civilians. The Institute has been unable to make any determination as to whether the deaths were caused by U.S. military, PDF, Dignity Battalions, looters or other civilians. I'm ready to take your questions.

Q: Bob, does that include the two Americans civilian casualties, or are these separate?

A: These are Panamanians.

Q: (inaudible)

A: I guess I should hedge that with saying, you know, obviously some of them have not been identified, but these are the ones that we believe to be Panamanians.

Q: Two that we know of?

A: Yes. We know of two Americans, and we think that those are the only two Americans.

Q: What's the difference between the 220 and the 203? Are any of those 203 included in the 220?

A: They are included in the 220. The Institute for Legal Medicine, which is essentially the equivalent of the coroner's office, obviously still has a few cases to review. We're being conservative. We think that there is going to be a few more.

Q: So all of the 203 are included in the 220?

A: All are included in the 220. We expect the figure to rise slightly.

Q: Your 220 -- are these deaths?

A: These are deaths.

Q: What in terms of wounded?

A: That I don't have for you. Again, SouthCom is working very closely with the Panamanian Government and a number of organizations to try to determine all these kinds of figures, but I don't have anything on injuries.

Q: I think Jessie Jackson was saying the other day it was thousands and thousands.

A: I believe his figure was deaths. These are what we consider to be authoritative figures.

Q: Within the constrictions of what you can and cannot talk about on ship and ship movements and drug policy, what can you tell us about the KENNEDY and VIRGINIA; Colombia and drug interdiction, big umbrella?

A: I think last Thursday we confirmed for you that the KENNEDY and the USS VIRGINIA departed Norfolk to conduct routine operations in the Atlantic Operating Area. Last evening, we confirmed that both ships were in the Jacksonville Operating Area, conducting routine flight operations with the ships air wing and we will continue our policy of not discussing future ship operations or locations.

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Q: ...been cancelled, I heard that reported this morning.

A: The operation that I'm referring to is the KENNEDY and VIRGINIA. They left Norfolk and are in the Jacksonville Operating Area, conducting operations. That's continuing.

Q: That happened several days ago. There is a report out of Colombia that they are heading back to Norfolk.

A: I don't have anything on future ship movements.

Q: But do they plan to continue this type of whatever it is?

A: It's continuing at the moment, but I'm not going to go into the future.

Q: A follow-on. It was a six week deployment. Do you have any indication that it will be less than a six week deployment?

A: I don't have anything for you, no indication.

Q: In relation to Panama, there have been some reports that the U.S. military is acting as a police force in Panama, and also, they have surrounded the Peruvian Embassy.

A: What was the first part of your question?

Q: That U.S. military is acting as a police force in Panama.

A: What about the police force?

Q: It is acting as a police force in Panama.

A: U.S. servicemen/women continue their operations, their patrols with Panamanian forces. In that sense, they are acting to preserve the common stability. My understanding is that there was no military activity last night.

Q: What about the Peruvian Embassy?

A: I checked on that just before I came out here. I don't have very much for you. As we've stated on several occasions, U.S. troops have been monitoring the activities of several embassies in Panama City, early on in the crisis. Last night, as a precautionary measure, U.S. forces set up some roadblocks near the Peruvian Ambassador's residence, in order to better monitor traffic activity. Vehicles exiting the Peruvian Embassy and the Ambassador's residence are being searched. That's about all I can give you at the moment.

Q: Why the Peruvian Embassy versus other embassies?

A: There have been some reports about people who may or may not be in the embassy. That's something I'll ask you to check with the State Department on; they've been in touch with the Panamanians and with the Peruvian Government.

Q: Bob, did you say the Ambassador's residence was being searched?

A: No, vehicles exiting.

Q: Just the vehicles exiting or entering?

A: Exiting.

Q: Bob, could you try to talk about the issue of who is in charge in Panama in an operation like this? Is it SouthCom? Is it the Panamanian Government? Are there any U.S. troops being deployed or directed at the request of the Panamanian Government...

A: The Panamanian Government exists...

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Q: Who is running the show, I guess is what I want to know?

A: U.S. forces are conducting their operations and we are cooperating with Panamanian authorities. In terms of each specific instance, I'd have to address that separately.

Q: Do you have a list of things that we are doing? How many people we have doing them? What kind of operations they are doing and who are they reporting to?

A: At this point we have 23,000 troops remaining in Panama. About 4,000 have returned. I'd also note that about 700 additional troops have deployed to Panama to assist in the nation building exercises or efforts to cooperate and help assist the Panamanian Government build its institutions.

In terms of their activities, they are continuing patrols or securing key sites, they are protecting U.S. lives and installations, generally keeping order.

Q: When are you going to have a timetable on withdrawing these troops?

A: The last I heard was that when Secretary Cheney gets back he'll probably talk to General Powell and they may have something more for you after that conversation. But at this point, I don't have any timetable and I wouldn't want to project one for you.

Q: On the civilian casualty question once more. The estimates or allegations of higher levels of casualties are all premised on the destruction in the Chorillo and other neighborhoods. As yet, there hasn't been any pictures or description or accounting for any efforts to search that rubble to develop a count, even if this had been an earthquake we would have seen at least some evidence of more searching, either to discount or to prove these various widely divergent estimates. Can you comment as to what SouthCom is doing, plans to do, to your knowledge?

A: Only in respect that I think that they have undertaken a very serious effort to work with the Panamanian Government and with a number of institutions in Panama to try to come up with as comprehensive account as possible. This is not something that they've taken lightly. They have been working very hard on it. As we said earlier, it has been a difficult task because there was no set up procedure like we would have for U.S. military personnel in terms of reaching these numbers.

Q: Going back to the conduct and comportment of our troops on the ground in Panama -- place roadblocks near embassies, search vehicles coming in and out -- who makes the decision to search vehicles coming out of the Peruvian Embassy and the Ambassador's residence. By whose authority is this?

A: That's a good question. I really am going to have to refer to SouthCom -- any operational decision making, checking in certain areas, what kind of patrols they are doing; what kind of searches, that something...

Q: Is this a decision that General Thurman makes on his own or is it a decision that is made by people...

A: This is a decision of SouthCom.

Q: And was the Peruvian Ambassador consulted as to whether he would like to see American forces on the ground in Panama inspecting vehicles coming into and out of his embassy?

A: That's a question you will have to check with the State Department.

Q: Does anybody weigh the policy virtues of doing this against the extreme need for cooperation with the Peruvian Government in such miniscule matters as stopping the flow of drugs into the United States?

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A: I think policy considerations have been weighed?

Q: By General Thurman? Is he situated and trained to make foreign policy judgments at that level?

A: I think General Thurman has the complete confidence of the Chairman, the Secretary and the President.

Q: If these people that are in the Peruvian Embassy that you are looking for, come in or go out or whatever, what orders do the U.S. military have?

A: I'm not going to go into specifics on the on-going operation.

Q: Bob...is there a decision point or is there a point coming up in which security operations will be turned over to Panamanian authorities using all Panamanian forces, for example. Do you have any idea when that might...

A: I can't give you any kind of specific timeframe. I mean, that's something that obviously is connected to the redeployment of troops, something that we are discussing with the Panamanians as part of how fast their institutions get back on their feet. I can't give you any timeframe on it.

Q: ...situation where the Panamanians are doing all the security work, but a situation where they are under the patrol or direction of the Panamanian authority?

A: At this point, we are working jointly in a number of areas, and I would expect to see that increased.

Q: Does jointly mean our forces are under their control?

A: That is something I'd have to refer you to SouthCom on.

Q: The Nicaraguans have alleged that there was a second diplomatic property raided by U.S. troops. What is the Department's response to this?

A: Are you referring to this one of about two weeks ago? We checked into that. There was no indication that that ever happened. The only situation I know about was the Ambassador's residence.

Q: Bob, are these roadblocks around the Peruvian Embassy with the support of the Panamanian Government? You say they are operating in conjunction with them? Were they consulted?

A: I'm going to have to ask you to check with State in terms of who has been talking with the Panamanian Government about the situation. My information is U.S. Forces, but I'll refer you to State.

Q: What reports does the U.S. have, Southcom got that would suggest that someone or something is going to get free passage from the Peruvian Ambassador's house. I mean, what are you looking for?

A: That's not really what I was suggesting, but I don't really want to go into the basis of the information that caused us to set up and start monitoring. We get into an intelligence area that I just don't want to get into.

Q: This is a pretty extraordinary move. I mean vehicles leaving an Ambassador's house are being searched. What for? (Inaudible) must be making a case for it?

A: I just don't have anything for you.

Q: Is it true that supporters of Noreiga are in there? Is that why the United States is trying to keep them from escaping? I'm not asking how you got the information, is that basically what we're talking about?

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A: I think I have to refer you to State for any discussion about people who might or might not be inside the Embassy because they are in discussion with the Peruvians.

Q: Are U.S. Forces conducting similar type of roadblocks around any other country's Embassy.

A: They have been the ones that have been reported in the past.

Q: Any other ones that have not been reported in the past?

A: Not that I'm aware of, but that's the kind of specific operational detail that would have to be addressed to SouthCom. I checked into this one because I saw the wire story.

Q: Do you have either a text or a feed of Mr. Cheney's remarks at White Sands or Los Alamos today?

A: I'll have to check on that. I'm sure we'll get a tape eventually and produce a text, but how soon we'll have it, I don't know.

Q: This is U.S. military decision to do that. This was not done on the orders of the State Department?

A: That's the kind of operational decision-making that you'll have to address to SouthCom. I just don't have it.

Q: I mean you're the spokesman for the Defense Department. SouthCom is just allowed to set these things up willy-nilly without -- you said, I think, that policy considerations had been made, made at that level? I mean, one wonders if the United States would object to the Peruvian military suddenly decided to throw-up roadblocks outside the U.S. Embassy in Lima.

A: The situation is a little different.

Q: Not to the Peruvians.

A: Again, I refer you to the State Department in terms of our discussions with the Peruvians.

Q: Is there a Joint U.S. command that integrates the State Department, the military and other Agencies on decisions like this. The decision...

A: There consultation on the scene. These decisions are made on the scene with the SouthCom and the Embassy. So it's hard for me to get up here and try to fine tune things.

Q: Is there a State Department liaison person who sort of signed off on this decision?

A: I can't speak to that.

Q: This is something you may want to tell us now, because the State Department after the U.S. troops went into the Managua Embassy turned around and said they had nothing to do with it. So get it on the record.

A: I'll try to check and see what I could find out for you.

Q: Is there any operation to stop the flow of drugs from Colombia to the United States in which the Navy is involved?

A: Let me make one generic point and that's I would say we would expect to have an announcement next week on those drug plans -- the drug plans from the CINCs that the Secretary has approved. Now, if you're going to ask about the specifics of what we've been doing in the region, I mean, you'll have to accept the fact that we have always been looking for better ways to improve our interdiction efforts.

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Q: Is there any cooperation you are receiving from the Colombian Government in that respect? Do you expect any?

A: There's been a great deal of cooperation from the Colombian Government in the past. Just to deal with this speculation about this particular story: Let me emphasize, we are not proposing doing anything -- we will not be doing anything without close consultation and cooperation with any other government that might be involved. I'm not sure if that answers your question, but it's meant to.

Q: Specifically with Colombia, have you been dealing in that respect with Colombia in this particular operation?

A: Which particular operation are you referring to -- that's my problem, I'm not sure what you're referring to?

Q: The reports that the United States was going to stop the flow of cocaine from Colombia into the United States and the KENNEDY and the VIRGINIA were going...

A: Stopping the flow of cocaine into the United States is certainly a goal of the United States Government.

Q: In international waters, in front of Colombia?

A: At this point, I can't give you any details about the drug plans. As I say, we expect an announcement on those the Secretary has approved, next week.

Q: Have other countries in the region, Peru and Bolivia been consulted?

A: That's something you'd have to address to the State Department.

Q: But to follow-on that in terms of the announcement next week that Mr. Cheney is supposed to be making, are those the types of plans that involve discussions with foreign governments, or are they more directly related to our own borders?

A: I guess I don't want to get specific about what we'll be talking about next week in terms of this announcement.

Q: Wasn't the whole idea of using the supercarrier and the VIRGINIA, using that class of weapon for possible interdiction outside of Colombia a bit of overkill. I mean, why don't we monitor this with AWACS or HAWKEYE out of Panama? Why do we have to send a carrier battle group...

A: I'm in a difficult position. I don't want to speculate on the plans until we're prepared to make an announcement. I'll just say a lot of things are considered and if they're considered to be useful, we'll try to do it. But you know, you have to make that kind of judgment on it. But I can't get into, saying, well, we're not going to do this, we will do that, or any kind of specifics.

Q: If I can take you back for a second, can you go over guidelines that the Endara Government has worked out with SouthCom or others in the U.S. military forces in terms of operations within Panama City or the countryside?

A: I don't have any specifics. I can check and see if we can get something if there are any operational guidelines.

Q: Is there any guidelines or outlines for what are the conditions for the release of the political detainees that were held. I think last week we got a number of 5,600 or so, not only PDF members but political figures in Panama who have been detained. Are the conditions on which they're going to be reintegrated or not, have charges been brought against any number of these people, what has happened to this whole thing?

A: That's something I think the Endara Government is going to have to address.

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Q: We detained them. I mean they were arrested by American soldiers and they're under our administration. Soldiers are running the camps, not the Endara Government as I understand it. These are under command of U.S. military officials?

A: I guess I don't really have the answer. I'll see if I can get something in terms of the guidelines used when we examine people.

Q: How many detained now?

A: Detained, 4,320; released 3,555.

Q: Again, you said that the 220 was an estimate. Is that a body count? Is that a projection, or is that a firm figure?

A: Two hundred twenty is what we believe. This is an estimate but we think it's going to be...

Q: You found 215 bodies and you estimate five might be buried somewhere in the rubble or... You're saying 220 have been killed but you're not sure that that will be --- there may be more?

A: No, we believe it's going to be about 220. If its more, it isn't going to be much more.

Q: Would you say the 3,555 of the 4,320...
(multiple talking)

Q: With the invasion of Panama, I think some of our Latin American allies are concerned that we might be planning military assaults on drug production in Colombia. Is that even under consideration?

A: I just reemphasize it. Nothing that we will do, or contemplating doing, will be done without consultation and cooperation with the governments involved.

Q: But you don't rule that out?

A: I'll just leave it with my statement.

Q: Was there any change of plans in the KENNEDY and the VIRGINIA at all?

A: We don't talk about operational matters of that kind. I can tell you where they were when we last reported them, but that's all.

Q: Do you have anything on resumption of B-2 test flights?

A: The B-2 successfully completed eight flights, accumulating 30 flight hours, and is currently in the first of two planned lay-ups at Edwards Air Force Base. All planned primary test objectives were met to include flights up to its high altitude design cruise speed, aerial refuelings, air starts of all four engines, and normal and alternate landing gear extensions. Thus far, the B-2 has demonstrated excellent flight characteristics in handling, and handling qualities that meet or exceed simulation-predicted performance.

The first lay-up will last about four months; additional sub-systems will be added, and previously planned structural changes made. Plus, initial preparations will be undertaken to begin low-observable testing. Starting in April, there will be six to eight flights to test the changes and complete block one testing. The B-2 will then undergo a second lay-up before low-observable flight demonstration testing.

Q: Do you have anything on how that low-observable testing will be done?

A: No, I don't. You may want to check with the Air Force.

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Q: Bob, getting back to the question of General Thurman's authority on the scene. Has Secretary Cheney or the Department in general issued any kind of guidelines as to when commanders need to check with US diplomatic personnel on an operational matter?

A: I don't know. I'll have to check on that. If I can get something on that, I will.

I'm told the cumulative total of (a side this is the number that are still there -- still being detained -- is 675 still being detained in Panama).

Q: Another question on Panama. Any estimate now of the strength of the Endara security force?

A: No, I don't have anything on that.

Q: Is that overall number of 4,320 still...

Q: The 220 killed -- were they killed in any particular area of Panama, in the city?

A: I don't have any details where the most or...
There will be more information on this--this is an on-going process.

Q: The Panamanian Institute for Legal Medicine -- is it clear that at the time of the invasion, that they were operating fully and independently of the U.S. government, or did they have to have U.S. advisors in helping them out? What was the situation there?

A: This is essentially the equivalent of a coroner's office, a government coroner's office.

Q: I wonder if it sort of collapsed during the invasion, and whether U.S. civil affairs people basically came in and took up the slack.

A: That I don't know.

Press: Thank you.

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News Briefing by
Lt. Gen. T. W. Kelly, USA
Rear Admiral Ted Scheafer, USN
Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Friday, December 22, 1989 - 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Pete Williams, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).
I'd like to give you an up-date on the situation in Panama. We have with us again today our two experts from the Joint Staff who have been following this operation since it began -- they were in on it the planning of it, they've been following it very carefully. General Tom Kelly, who is Director of Operations of the Joint Staff and Admiral Ted Sheaffer, who is the Chairman's intelligence assistant or J-2.

Let me just begin by saying we've heard yet another set of rumors and questions about whether General Noriega has been captured. As I've told several of you individually, they are not true. Obviously, when that word comes out, we'll certainly let you know.

General Kelly and Admiral Sheaffer have a statement to make -- give you an up-date. We'll take your questions, but we need to be finished by five minutes to the hour because they have another engagement that they have to attend.
General Kelly.

General Kelly: Operations continue in Panama. The city is our primary concern right now. As you may recall, our strategy which I briefed you on the first day, was to take on the PDF units first and to take them down; we've pretty much done that. We have turned our attention to the city. We are conducting mopping up operations there, but they are not easy. Greater Panama City is about a million people; Panama City proper is about 500,000 people. It is a large city. It's old. It's not built according to a square plan, so there are a lot of places to hide. It simply is a difficult operation.

I've talked to the chain of command down there last night. Their estimate in completely clearing the city ranges from five to ten days. We took a look at some history and found out that that is not an unrealistic number. It took us about ten days some years ago to clear Detroit when we had a functioning government and police department, which we don't have right now in Panama. The cops left the streets as you know on Wednesday. The Dignity Battalions are in the city. They are looting, sniping, they are lawless. There are some others who are lawless, however, we have been able to make some progress.

We have the 82d Airborne in the city, moving from northeast to southwest. The 193d Brigade with elements of six MP companies, moving from Southwest to Northeast. At some point they'll link up. We have taken a number of buildings. As you know, we have the legislative assembly building from which the Endara government is operating now. We have taken the Presidential Palace; very

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significantly the Central Bank, that gives us the capability to move funds into the city and the government to move funds around. The Foreign Ministry, the Finance Ministry and the Health Ministry. So that's all to the good.

In the city itself at Fort Amador, there was stiff resistance there, as you know. The 5th Company fought pretty well, but they finally got it cleared out. They went in and searched a number of buildings there, Building 8 in particular. As you know, at Fort Amador, I believe it was in Building 8 they found 50 kilos of cocaine, \$83,000. They have uncovered a total of \$266,000 so far, all in cash, in the Comandancia, the engineering compound, and Building 8 at Fort Amador. They have not gotten into a big safe yet at Fort Amador which they found. When they get into it they'll find considerably more, I'm sure.

The troops that went in there were stunned by what they saw. They saw opulence unlike any that they had ever seen before, and I can't guarantee you what that level of opulence is because soldiers aren't used to an awful lot -- (Laughter) a movie theater, jade, art, jewels; at least one picture of Hitler; a collection of off color stuff, some antique weapons, and a number of other things. So they were very surprised and stunned when they got in there. Also around there somewhere was a witch's house. As you know, Noriega was into that and had some advisers that I believe came from Brazil who dealt in witchcraft.

In the city itself, at Balboa High School, we've set up a refugee collecting point, and that ranges between 5,000 and 8,000 people at any given time of every stripe imaginable -- some former PDF members, some PDF people coming in to turn in their weapons. The Modelo prison was emptied almost immediately when the battle there began and a lot of those people are there. Allegedly some people from the AIDS ward of that prison are there. And some people are coming in just to be fed, so it ranges between 5,000 and 8,000. It tends to go up at meal time.

We do have a program going whereby we will assist people as much as can, and our J-4 as well as other agencies of the government are working on a humanitarian relief program. You'll have to check the other agencies and see specifically what they're doing, but we expect the first airplanes with food, medicines and other things that are necessary to be going down there within 48 hours. We'll use stocks in country to carry us through to that point.

Ted will talk a little bit more about refugees, but I'm happy to tell you the folks from the Smithsonian, 11 of them have been rescued.

We've planned some future operations. I'll talk a little bit more about what they are, but there is an operational briefing being given in Panama I believe about the same time that we're speaking, and certainly they would be more authoritative on that than we are. We do plan to move out to the west of Panama city, and just to set the stage, this is La Escomdida which is where one of Noriega's major retreats was. This is David, the major metropolitan center in western Panama. Out here we have Battalion Paz. We don't have plans to go out here immediately. We have plans to do everything, but we don't intend to go out there immediately. I think we'll stay closer in. We'll have some objectives in that area, and I'm obviously not going to say what they are because

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we don't want to help anybody get ready. But I think over the next couple of days we'll begin to see some progress there. We have additional forces in Panama. As you know, a brigade of the 7th Infantry Division closed I think yesterday, and they'll be available to do that kind of work. We are considering other reinforcements as necessary, and I don't want to get into specifically what they are.

So the primary endeavor at the moment is to clear Panama City, assist the government in restoring law and order. A call went out yesterday for the police to report to work today and they will be paid, and that may be an incentive for them to come back. We have ministries that are cleared and hope to have ministers appointed soon and have them operating. When I say we, I mean the Endara government hopes to do that. We would like to be able to put Panamanian police and U.S. military police out in pairs, one Panamanian and one U.S. military, and in that way begin to restore law and order. So we want to restore law and order, build a police force, take care of emergency food distribution, establish a night watch, and we're doing that with helicopters that have search lights on them. There is a curfew, as you know. I believe it's from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., yet there are still people out at night trying to loot and do those kinds of things. Helicopters last night were fairly successful in preventing that from being done. Protect persons and property, clean up the city, and that's from a sanitation standpoint. As you saw on the television, the city is quite dirty. And establish a newspaper. The newspaper would, of course, be a free newspaper, to print whatever it felt that it wanted to print, but there is no newspaper functioning there now.

Possibly the biggest thing that's happened since the last time I talked to you are the weapons caches that have been uncovered that are little short of astounding. We've already found about 10,000 weapons in three caches: In the Comandancia, at Fort Cimarron, and at Rio Hato. In talking to the J-3 in Panama, he expects that number could double. These are not a bunch of old French muskets laying in the basement of a building, these are, in many, many cases, new weapons still packed in cosmoline, fully functional, and ready to go once they're cleaned. One wonders what the intentions of the fugitive Noriega were in getting them there. One has pause for concern at what would have happened if we'd tried this operation six months from now instead of now. It's very possible that it might have been considerably more dangerous and more difficult. So I think it was fortuitous. It was indeed lucky that we went when we did. We of course, went on the orders of the President, but maybe he saw something that we didn't.

Q: U.S weapons or Soviet weapons?

A: Various types of manufacture, mostly Eastern Bloc. All that needs to be analyzed and is being analyzed. There is an absolute mass of weapons and data that has to be sorted through and it's slow and painstaking work, and I'll ask Ted to say a word about that and I'll ask him to say a word about the hostages.

Adm. Sheafer: There are already document exploitation folks in country that are exploiting the wealth of material that we've uncovered. There is an interagency team of about 25 more people that are going down tonight from various agencies: DIA, Department of Defense, State Department, Treasury, DEA, all with their own interests and with the support of the Panamanian government to exploit the cache of documents.

MORE

We expect, as General Kelly said, when we get into the large safe that's in Building 8 at Fort Amador, to find a treasure trove of things that even exceeds what we've found already.

As far as the hostages are concerned, in working closely with SOUTHCOM who of course has the lead, we've taken about the baker's dozen worth of reports we had on various hostage incidents and we've essentially resolved three of those, the most recent one being the Smithsonian activity. We did fly a Cobra and a Black Hawk last night to try to find the individuals. We were unable to locate them in the dark. They flew out this morning and picked all 11 up and they've been returned to Howard.

We still have what we consider to be three pretty credible reports of hostages which we're working to resolve that have not been resolved yet. There may be others that we're unaware of.

Gen. Kelley: In the report up from Panama this morning they indicated that some of the so-called hostage situations were people who were isolated but not threatened and felt afraid, and they were calling in. But I can tell you, there's no higher priority we have than getting to the Americans in Panama City and making sure they're safe and secure. There are 10,000 of them, non-DoD connected individuals who live in Panama City, so there is a great big bunch.

Adm. Sheafer: If I may add one thing to something General Kelly said about Building 8 at Fort Amador. SOUTHCOM informed us this morning there are going to be press tours of Fort Amador. I don't know when they're going to start, today or tomorrow, but I think you'll find a great deal of evidence that Noriega was in fact a corrupt, debouched thug. In addition to some of the things General Kelly's mentioned, we found a witch's diary that goes along with the evidence we have that periodically up from Brazil would come normally two female and one male member of the occult who would counsel him on I can't imagine what.

Q: Maybe how to stay away from the U.S. (Laughter)

A: He didn't succeed, did he?

Q: As someone in intelligence, would you expect Mr. Noriega to try to get some broadcasts out, try to rally his troops? Or would you expect him at this point to simply stay under cover...

A: I think very quickly he's not going to have any troops. The Endara government this morning swore in the first new members of the new PDF.

Q: But from intelligence (inaudible) do you think he will try to broadcast them out from hiding in some way or...

A: He has not had any broadcast capability that we're aware of, at least that we've heard, in the last 24 hours.

Q: General Kelly, you keep telling us the situation is under control there, but we had reports within the last hour or so of mortar rounds being fired in Panama City by the PDF. If it's under control...

Gen. Kelley: There was sporadic firing in the city. I am aware of a mortar round that went into Quarry Heights. Incidentally, I've been over at the Senate Armed Services Committee all morning, so I'm not as far up the learning curve as I would like to be. Things like that can happen in a city that's in

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the shape that Panama City is in. We are moving out to correct these things. Popping off one mortar round is a fairly easy thing to do. You drop your tube and take off. Maybe you leave it there, maybe you don't. So those things are somewhat understandable. They're not acceptable and we're going to work very hard to resolve them, but I can understand how that could happen.

Q: You're satisfied it's under control?

A: I am satisfied it's under control, yes.

Q: What's the situation in Albrook Air Force Base? I understand they took some mortar rounds, too. One building at least was seen in flames.

A: It's possible that they did. I'm unaware of it because, as I said, I haven't been able to stay as abreast of the situation as I would have liked.

Q: Were there anti-aircraft weapons in caches that you found?

A: I am not certain. We'll have a list of that available. I'm not sure when it will be. There were no sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons in that. There may have been some SA-7's. That's the reason why I'm hesitating when I give the answer.

Q: Have there been any tactical air operations other than the A-7's?

A: We have in Panama A-7's, A-37's, and AC-130's, all of which have been up and been used, yes.

Adm. Sheafer: But the reports of air attacks in San Miguelito this morning were wrong.

Q: What are the civilian casualties as a result of the air actions and other actions?

A: Civilian casualties, you're talking about Panamanian civilians, we do not have a very good handle on yet. We have two that we know were killed. They were both Americans, so we don't have any information on Panamanians who were killed. I believe about 200 were injured, that's one of the areas that we're trying to look into. Remember, we're not all the way into the city yet, so there are some gaps in our knowledge.

Q: Many members of Congress couched their praise for this maneuver on the basis that Noriega would in fact be caught. It's now three days into this operation and he has not been caught. Are you afraid that you're going to start having to respond to criticisms that this has been a failure because of that?

A: No, let me say that our primary purpose in going to Panama was to restore democracy. That's been said by all of my bosses. And to get Noriega from power and to capture Noriega. We've accomplished two of the three. Noriega, as I said I think yesterday, doesn't have a payroll, doesn't have a bunch of thugs that are out pushing the people around, isn't skimming money off the top any more, isn't doing those things, and I don't think has a very long half life. I think he will be captured one way or another, and I hope it's very soon. It could be two minutes from now, by the way. We just don't know. But he sure is out of power and we sure did accomplish our main objectives. The government that was elected by the people of Panama has been installed, and I think that's something that all Americans can be very proud of.

Q: Why are you considering sending in further reinforcements?

A: To speed up cleaning up the city.

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Q: You talked about sending, I think, the 7th Infantry Brigade through the city. But now you're talking that the 82nd Airborne is going through the city, and what did you say, the 193rd.

A: Yes.

Q: Why the change in plans?

A: I'm not certain I said the 7th Infantry yesterday, although I admit I may have. I didn't memorize every word. But we have operations that we plan in Panama that do not have to do with Panama City proper. I alluded to them out west of the city, so we'll use what forces are available the way the commander feels is best. He has a solid plan. I know what it is, and I think it's a fairly impressive plan. I said it would take five to ten days to clean up the city. Possibly with some more force there, and I'm not certain that it's going to go, but possibly with some more force we'd be closer to the five than we are to the ten.

Q: Can you characterize the military activity as still mopping up?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think you underestimated the PDF resistance or the activities of the so-called Dignity Battalions?

A: First, the PDF as an organization has been rolled up completely, but they fought a little bit harder than we thought they would, and it took us a little bit longer to get that job done than we thought it would take. You know there's an old saw that no plan ever survives contact with the enemy. You've got to take it the way it comes once you engage in combat. So it took us a little bit longer than we thought, but it is done.

The Dignity Battalions are in the city, in some sections of it, running loose. We have to clean that up. We plan to clean that up. I think a lot of the things that I saw on television yesterday, the looting and things like that, were lawless and criminal elements. Many of the people I saw were not armed, so they didn't look like they were members of Dignity Battalions. But I have seen similar pictures in the United States from time to time. It's just something that we want to get in and clean up as quickly as we can. I told you, I think, the other day, I thought that phase of the operation would be over in three days.

Q: (Inaudible) at Quarry Heights? Hearing about this and about the mortar fire, it's fairly intense fighting from what we hear from our reporters down there. Are you surprised at the scale of what's going on near the Southern Command?

A: We are not getting fairly intense fighting. We are getting light resistance. We are getting one mortar round. I don't know about the other one. I'll have to look into that just as soon as we're through here. But we are not running into anything in Panama City that we can't handle.

Incidentally, in clearing that city, and we have already taken a number of buildings, and as you know, we have some troops at several embassies, it is extremely expensive in terms of use of troops to do that. We have almost a company of the 82nd around the Marriott Hotel, for example. And as you move street by street you've got to out-post what you've taken or it will simply go

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right back the way it was. So that's causing the commanders a problem in terms of the numbers of troops that they're using.

Q: How much training have these troops had or are they having now, in relations with the Panamanians, sensitivity training if you will?

A: What training have they had?

Q: What kind of training have they had? Were they prepared for dealing in these civil affairs?

A: All of our soldiers, all of our sailors, airmen, and marines do receive that training from time to time. It's a part of our normal training schedule. I think that some of the people you saw interviewed on TV would indicate that they're doing a pretty good job of it.

Q: How were those attack planes employed? Did you have to bomb something with them, or did they just fly cover or...

A: Most of the airplanes that I'm talking about, the A-7's, the A-37's, the AC-130's, the helicopter gunships are just, were just, are just providing close in fire support for the troops who are in contact.

Q: What are they firing -- rockets, dropping bombs?

A: I'll have to check this to be exact, I would guess that they're firing their machine guns, 20mm guns, 762mm guns. The weapon suite on an AC-130 is a 105mm gun, twin 40mm guns, and a 20mm Gatling gun. All of those weapons are extremely accurate, and the reason they're being used is to minimize collateral damage.

Q: What effect would the capture of Noriega have on the situation on the ground, in your view?

A: I think it could help convince those members of the PDF who are not already convinced, that maybe it's futile. And incidentally, we are seeing some signs that some of them are getting that message anyway. I think it could be a real rallying point for the Endara government, we have finally caught Noriega. But I don't think it's a war stopper one way or another. I see the guys being out of work, and my opinion is that the average Panamanian now thinks of him as a fugitive. I don't think anybody down there thinks he's going to rise again. And we're seeing some indications of that.

Q: General Powell said yesterday that there just aren't enough troops to go street to street and to occupy that city block by block. Are you going to have to bring more troops in? Or what is your estimate... What will happen over this next five to ten day period?

A: We are looking at bringing more troops in. We are also looking at reestablishing the police force. As I said, a call went out yesterday. That police force was able to maintain order in Panama before the operation took place. They are offering to pay those guys, which in some cases is more than the previous regime was doing. We'll have to see by the end of the day how many of them came back to work. It's possible that a lot of them will come back to work. It's instructive I think that when we interviewed some of the people from the 4th Company in the Comandancia after the 3 October coup, they weren't being paid and couldn't pay their family.

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Q: What kind of U.S. troops are you talking about?

A: We have MP's in country, a large number of them. We just reinforced with more MP's yesterday.

Q: How many?

A: Two companies yesterday. I don't have the exact number of MP companies that are there now, but there's a lot of them and they're the ones we want in the street with the police because they have the training to do it.

Q: Do you have numbers of how many more...

A: We're not going to announce that until we get a decision

Q: General, you said you had a situation west of the city that was (inaudible) troops. Can you elaborate on that and tell us what you're talking about? What kind of situation?

A: We're looking at operations west of the city. We have the capability to do that now. I don't want to get into the specific target or types of target because we'd be telegraphing where we're coming. But I think over the next day or so you will see some things emerge which I think will be interesting and which I think will be very supportive of the Endara government.

Q: Outside of the city in the suburban area, or further out?

A: Outside of the city.

Q: How close have you come to capturing Noriega? Have you just missed him at some points?

Adm. Sheafer: The operation is ongoing and that would not be a good question for us to address.

Mr. Williams: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry, we have to get General Kelly and Admiral Sheafer back. I just have a quick couple of housekeeping details for you. Thank you General, Admiral. Thank you very much.

Let me just discuss a couple of operational details with you. First of all, General Thurman is briefing right now at SOUTHCOM. It started a few minutes ago. We'd obviously hoped to have the briefing start after we finished here, but it's sometimes hard to get ahold of SOUTHCOM and they didn't know about our delay. So he's briefing there.

I would think that for the next few days at least, daily briefings will come out of SOUTHCOM. I don't anticipate a briefing here in the Pentagon tomorrow or Sunday, or later today. Monday, I don't know about, but I would say that for the next few days certainly, for Saturday and Sunday for certain, the daily briefings will come out of SOUTHCOM. It makes more sense that way. They're a little less intense down there so they can take some of the questions down there.

Q: You announced knocking off the briefings through the holiday season. Has that changed, the regular briefings?

A: All that was written before this current situation. All bets are off for the moment. I don't know precisely what the schedule is, but come Monday, well, of course, that's Christmas day, we'll try and let you know. I just can't

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predict right now. But I would think for the next few days, at least through Christmas day, let's say, I think the most logical thing is to have the daily briefings done at SOUTHCOM. Then come Tuesday we'll reexamine that.

Q: Since the General wasn't totally up to speed, is it unrealistic to expect maybe somebody can fill us in say around 5:00 o'clock on any important military...

A: We have listened to the questions he wasn't able to answer, the fire fight questions and so forth. We've taken those questions. We'll try to get an answer for you. I can't promise you somebody back down in the briefing room.

Q: Can you give us daily reports, written reports on how many troops are being brought in after they are brought in. Would you tell us in some sort of a fashion what has happened this day?

A: We'll do our best. Let me say that I believe it's the opinion of the operators who are running the show that we're getting into order of battle information and...

Q: Once they're in, it's public information.

A: I appreciate what your viewpoint is and it's an interesting debate. Let me simply say that they've made the determination that that's order of battle information. We're trying to be as forthcoming as we can about that. But I wouldn't promise a lot of detail on that.

Q: (Inaudible) current strength down there? We started at 13,000, brought in 7,000, then 2,500.

A: Yes, we will attempt to do that.

Q: What about a list of dead and wounded?

A: Names?

Q: Will that continue to come from here?

A: It most likely will, I would think. It's a good question, Susanne. Some of this stuff we just haven't had time to think through, really. We'll try to do that.

Q: Last time we heard, a lot of the (inaudible) on Howard or at SOUTHCOM headquarters and couldn't get out to do any reporting. What is the status of those people? Are they out on the streets? What's going on with them?

A: You're talking about the pool reporters or all the reporters in Panama?

Q: Not the pool, all the people who came in behind the pool.

A: Clearly the first priority must be and remains to be to get the pool out. That's obviously the one thing we have to do at the very minimum. I think we've all discussed the problem we had on the first day trying to get people out. It wasn't satisfactory to us, wasn't satisfactory to the pool, it wasn't satisfactory to SOUTHCOM. So we are making efforts, I think if you look at what the pool filed yesterday -- print product, pictures, video, all that stuff -- we made a much better show of getting them out to where the action was. That continues. I'm told today that it gets even better. So we are obviously making an effort to do that.

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A number of news organizations have made requests to get people to come into Panama. We clearly do not have the manpower to escort 200 reporters into where the action is. The request to us was can we come in. We said yes, but we're not in the housing business, we're not in the bus business, and you're sort of on your own, and everybody has understood that. So we have limited resources and we can't escort 200 people around Panama City. The goal remains to get the pool around. Every night we talk to the pool members, we talk to our people who escort the pool, we talk to SOUTHCOM, we say should we keep the pool going another day or not. So I can't, frankly, promise very much and I don't think it would be realistic to expect 200 people to be escorted around. But we're trying to be as open as we can.

Q: How long do you contemplate keeping the pool active?

A: I don't have a long range vision. I think we'll look at it at the end of every day.

Q: When do commercial flights start going back in?

A: I don't know. Obviously that would make it easy on everybody, but they won't go back until people at SOUTHCOM feel confident that the situation is safe.

Let me just say one other thing before Mr. Zelnick has to go file. We welcome you back, Bob. We're glad to have you, we missed you. I want to make it clear to everyone that I am extremely proud to work with the people in the public affairs of the United States military. I said some things yesterday by which I stand, which is that we've had a lot of difficulty getting things out of the pool and we're sorry about that. No one was satisfied with that situation. I used the word incompetence. I was referring to my own in not having better planning. I want to make that very clear. I'm quite serious about this. I think it's extremely important.

The people at SOUTHCOM are in a situation where we have just invited 200 of your colleagues to join them. They are overwhelmed, and yet I think they're doing an outstanding, superb job of accommodating people. We've had some glitches, we admit that. The decision was made to deploy the pool early on and we're continuing to try to do that. But I want to make it absolutely clear so that there can be no misunderstanding in anyone's mind that I have nothing but the highest regard for the people in the U.S. military and the public affairs structure who are, I think, doing an excellent job of getting the word out.

Q: Yesterday afternoon Secretary Cheney said he thought it would be possible in the next three weeks to start moving some of these additional troops back home. Does he still stand by that given the events of today and last night and this morning?

A: Sure. But I think he also said that it's difficult to predict a precise time. It's going to depend on how things go there. But I haven't seen any change in heart on his part.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: I'm confident of the answer.

Q: You wouldn't rotate anyone out as long as you're still rotating people in, sending people in would you?

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A: I don't know, Carl. I don't know whether they would take people down there who have been at it pretty hard and rotate them out. I'm not sure.

Q: Can you give us an update on Mr. Cheney's activities? Is he going to the White House or...

A: Today?

Q: For the weekend.

A: I don't know that he's been at the White House today. Tomorrow he will be here. As you know, he had originally planned to go out to Nebraska and on to Wyoming. That is cancelled. But I'm not sure. I think he has a commitment to do one of the Sunday broadcasts, but beyond that I can't say right now.

Q: Is he going away for Christmas?

A: I seriously doubt that, but let me just leave it somewhat open for Sunday and beyond.

Q: The General said the Army would be creating a newspaper. Can you describe why it is necessary to create a new newspaper, and is it the perception of the Army or the military in this operation that essentially a new government will be created de novo?

A: I haven't heard anything about that. I don't know anything about that, and I'll take the question. Pardon the expression, but it's news to me.

Q: Do you have any more details about (inaudible) shot and killed?

A: I just know of one incident. That was at the Marriott Hotel yesterday. I don't know the details of it. Obviously it's one of the things we're very interested in trying to reconstruct as best we can. I spent quite a bit of time on the telephone yesterday with concerned news organizations and with the people at SOUTHCOM and I'm not confident that I have a definitive answer on it yet, but clearly it's a great concern to us.

Q: Have we seen major defections by the PDF forces in terms of giving up arms and coming over to the Endara government?

A: In terms of giving up arms, yes. In terms of what's happening to them, I just don't know. We'll take the question and try to get you a more definitive answer.

Q: What is the troop level there now? Are we still 24,000?

A: That was a question we had earlier. We'll try to get you the best answer. You add it up one way you get one answer, you add it up another way you get another answer. We'll try to meld the math together and get you an answer.

Q: No briefing tomorrow, no Sunday, maybe Monday?

A: Well, no briefing here tomorrow. SOUTHCOM, yes. No briefings, but instead briefings in SOUTHCOM on Saturday, tomorrow; on Sunday; and on Monday. Tuesday I can't make you any promises, but we'll look at the situation again.

Q: What if Noriega is caught?

A: We would be delighted. I'm sure the question is though, how would you get the word. I don't know the answer to that, but I have a hunch that would

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not be a very well kept secret and we would be very eager to share that with you.

Q: (Inaudible) how it was done, and blah, blah, blah?

A: Oh sure.

Q: Can we get an update on the POW's and your latest figures on that?

A: We will try to give you another update on the numbers about 5:00 or 6:00.

Q: If there is a capture of Noriega that the briefing schedule you outlined would perhaps, all bets are off?

A: I would say that's a fair assessment.

Q: What level of staffing through the weekend? Normally on Saturday you have one person, maybe three people in here, and Sunday no one. Then you've got a holiday. Will there be people in the building through the weekend?

A: Yes there will. There will be the usual situation here tomorrow with the duty people. I don't know, I suppose maybe a few more. Clearly we have to accommodate your needs and still be humane to the staff and try to make everybody happy, so we will, I just don't know the full answer to that question but I certainly understand that people will have a need to get information over the weekend.

END

~~SECRET~~

THE JOINT STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

25 Jun 90



Reply ZIP Code:
20318-0300

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS)

Subject: House Resolution 411--Inquiry on JUST CAUSE

1. This is in response to your request of 22 June 1990 regarding House Resolution 411--Inquiry on JUST CAUSE.

2. Reviews of available records reveal the following information:

a. (U) Request: An accurate accounting of the number of Panamanian civilians killed during, or by virtue, of the US invasion of Panama.

(U) Response:

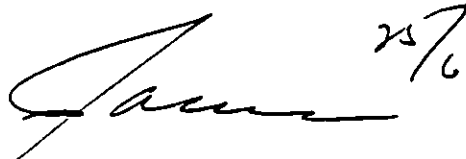
The Panamanian Ministry of Health initially estimated that 201 civilians died. Revised reporting by Panama's Director of Institute of Legal Medicine, based on recovered remains and unresolved reports of missing persons, increases the number of total civilian casualties to 207. To date, 47 of the 207 have not been positively identified.

PARAGRAPH 2a. only
DECLASSIFIED BY JCS
DATE 28 OCT 1998

NOT
RESPONSIVE

NOT
RESPONSIVE

3. I hope this information will be helpful to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in its review of the military action in Panama.



MICHAEL P. C. CARNS
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director, Joint Staff

DANIEL K. INOUE, HAWAII
ERNEST F. HOLINGS, SOUTH CAROLINA
J. CENNETT JOHNSTON, LOUISIANA
QUENTIN N. BURDICK, NORTH DAKOTA
PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
JIM SASSER, TENNESSEE
DENNIS DECONCINI, ARIZONA
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FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, NEW JERSEY
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CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA
DON NICKLES, OKLAHOMA
PHIL GRAMM, TEXAS

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4902

March 27, 1990

JAMES H. ENGLISH, STAFF DIRECTOR
J. KEITH KENNEDY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Mr. Dave Gribbin
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon - 3E966
Washington, D.C. 20301

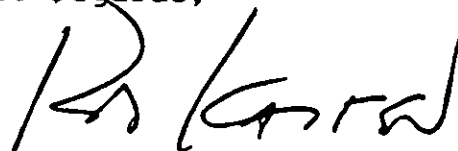
Dear Mr. Gribbin:

Please find enclosed correspondence I received from Mr. and Mrs. Harold Frey. Because of my desire to be responsive to the constituents in my state, I am referring this matter to you for your review.

I would like to request your assistance in evaluating the information provided. I would greatly appreciate your forwarding your findings in duplicate form to Mr. Gene Feller, on my staff, at your earliest convenience.

Again, many thanks for your time and attention to this matter.

Best regards,



Robert W. Kasten, Jr.

RWK/ggf
Enclosure

06618

[REDACTED]
March 19, 1990

The Honorable Robert Kasten
Suite 110
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kasten:

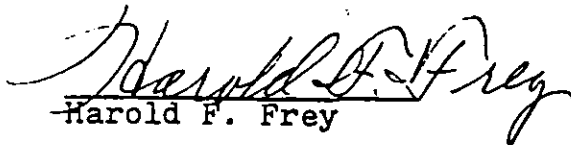
The March issue of Co-op Currants, published monthly by the La Crosse People's Food Co-op has one article of which is enclosed a photocopy. The article contains statements which because of their nature gave rise to concerns on our part.

Reports of casualties to U.S. personnel involved in the Panama invasions have appeared but casualties to the local populace have not been publicly revealed. Does your office have access to such information? Can you establish the accuracy of the report of a thousand inhabitants killed in the burning of a slum area? Who is responsible for the torching resulting in these casualty figures?

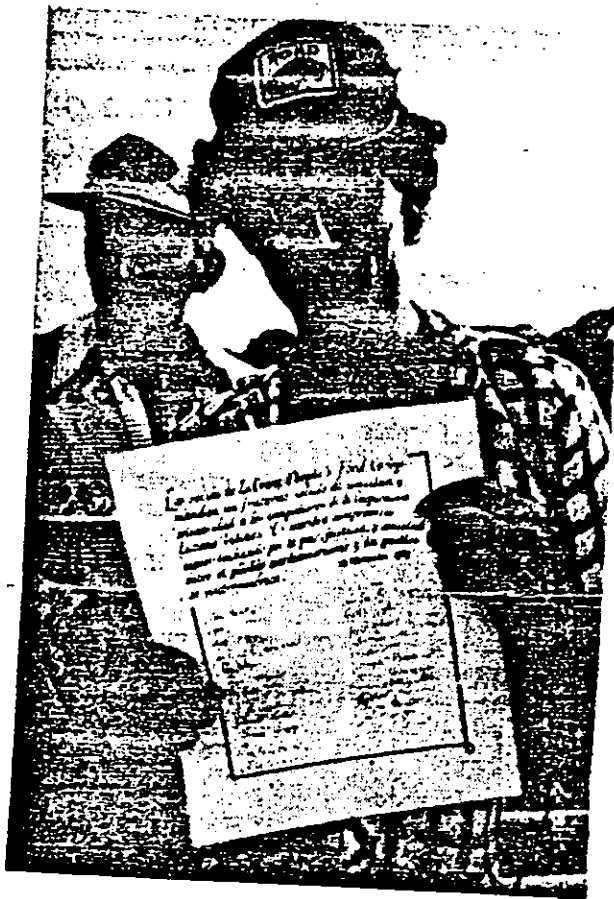
Your interest in establishing the accuracy of such information is invited. We shall be appreciative of any clarification related to these reports.

Sincerely,


Amy B. Frey


Harold F. Frey

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SISTER CO-OP REPORT

In 1985, at the suggestion of Joel Lazinger, the People's Food Co-op began its sister co-op relationship with Cooperativa Luciano Vilches, a small agricultural cooperative near Managua, Nicaragua. Over the years, PFC members have helped our sister co-op purchase dairy cows and related supplies. Merrill Barneby, a former PFC member who now lives in Texas, and his wife, June, traveled to the area recently. Here is his report.

June and I were honored to be asked to deliver a scroll and the 1990 Co-op calendar to the sister co-op, Luciano Vilches, near Managua, Nicaragua, during our recent visit to Costa Rica.

The bus from San Jose to Managua had about ten people in the aisle. June and I had reserved our seats some ten days in advance. As a result of the crowding, the bus was delayed an extra three hours at the Nicaragua border. We also had a flat tire while still in Costa Rica. So we were three hours late, arriving in Managua after dark. Our taxi to the hotel had

for thermo-electric power. Accompanying us was Jose McIntire, director of the Quaker Center in Managua. He had heard of the co-op but hadn't had an opportunity to see it.

We were all favorably impressed with the beautiful vegetable fields and the well-kept dairy cows, some with calves, donated by the La Crosse People's Food Co-op. The workers were about to quit for the afternoon and were impressed by the scroll. They were very pleased with the calendar, too, recognizing their own pictures and, of course, Joel's.

The visit to the co-op was the highpoint of our too brief visit into Nicaragua. But we also enjoyed hospitality at the Friends Center and at the Ben Linder House, Casa Ben Linder. At the latter, we heard three reporters present a somewhat different view of the Panama invasion than one sees in the main media. It included a report of the torching of a slum which killed at least a thousand inhabitants in the middle of the night.

Among the most interesting and inspiring experiences of our trip, in both Costa Rica and Nicaragua, were the great variety of people with whom we had meaningful dialogue. They were from Canada, the United States, and many European countries, as well as Latin America.

If any of you have the opportunity to visit Central America, by all means do so!



ter

90 FEB 12 PM 12:39

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 30, 1990

The Honorable Margo Carlisle
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Carlisle:

I am enclosing a copy of an inquiry from Ms. Victoria Dragseth regarding the death of her husband, Raymond M. Dragseth, during the U.S. invasion of Panama.

I would appreciate your comments on the concerns raised by Ms. Dragseth. Please direct your response to Tim Ryan of my staff.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator

Enclosure

02622

January 7, 1990.

Dear Honorable: *Senator Joseph Biden*
90 JAN 22 AM 9:16

I am writing you this letter to bring to your attention the abduction and ruthless execution of an American citizen, my husband Raymond M. Dragseth. On December the twentieth, the night of the U.S. invasion of Panama my husband was taken from my house at gunpoint by a group of men who identified themselves as members of the Panamanian Defense Forces. For eight days my daughter and I anguished over his fate. Every time the phone rang we answered it with a mixture of hope and despair. Finally, on the twenty-seventh of December, we learned that he had been executed. He was mercilessly shot five to seven times with an automatic weapon.


Throughout this entire time, and up until the present we have received minimal amounts of aid from U.S. authorities. This has come as a great shock to me since I was under the impression that the action was taken to protect U.S. citizens, yet during the invasion we were offered no assistance more importantly, the long standing instructions we were given (and with which we complied) contemplated either advance warning or evacuation as required by the developing situation. It was only after my high profile in the media and criminal charges that I filed in the Republic of Panama against Noriega that I received military protection, which could be withdrawn at any time. I am now the sole support of my two children who are in college, a role I cannot fulfill with my temporary position. I am asking you, as one of the highest legislative officials of my government not only to find a way to offer support for my family but also the reason why we, as U.S. citizens, were not protected in this time of crisis. I know that my husband was only one of many lives that were lost, but he was one of only three Americans civilians who died. I submit that there is no rational explanations for this lack of protection and compassion by U.S. authorities who carried out the liberation of Panama but omitted steps to protect their own nationals.

Thank you for your cooperation and concern

Sincerely,

Victoria I. Dragseth

VICTORIA I. DRAGSETH



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, U.S. OF THE
WASHINGTON, D.C. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

90 FEB -1 PM 12: 22

January 24, 19 90

Mr. David J. Gribbin
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, D.C. 20301

The attached communication is submitted for your consideration, and to ask that the request made therein be complied with, if possible.

If you will advise me of your action in this matter and have the letter returned to me with your reply, I will appreciate it.

Very truly yours,

Jack Brooks

JE A

M.C.

Ninth, Texas

District

01866

January 7, 1990.

Dear Honorable *Congressman Jack Brooks*

I am writing you this letter to bring to your attention the abduction and ruthless execution of an American citizen, my husband Raymond M. Dragseth. On December the twentieth, the night of the U.S. invasion of Panama my husband was taken from my house at gunpoint by a group of men who identified themselves as members of the Panamanian Defense Forces. For eight days my daughter and I anguished over his fate. Every time the phone rang we answered it with a mixture of hope and despair. Finally, on the twenty-seventh of December, we learned that he had been executed. He was mercilessly shot five to seven times with an automatic weapon.

Throughout this entire time, and up until the present we have received minimal amounts of aid from U.S. authorities. This has come as a great shock to me since I was under the impression that the action was taken to protect U.S. citizens, yet during the invasion we were offered no assistance more importantly, the long standing instructions we were given (and with which we complied) contemplated either advance warning or evacuation as required by the developing situation. It was only after my high profile in the media and criminal charges that I filed in the Republic of Panama against Noriega that I received military protection, which could be withdrawn at any time. I am now the sole support of my two children who are in college, a role I cannot fulfill with my temporary position. I am asking you, as one of the highest legislative officials of my government not only to find a way to offer support for my family but also the reason why we, as U.S. citizens, were not protected in this time of crisis. I know that my husband was only one of many lives that were lost, but he was one of only three Americans civilians who died. I submit that there is no rational explanations for this lack of protection and compassion by U.S. authorities who carried out the liberation of Panama but omitted steps to protect their own nationals.

Thank you for your cooperation and concern

Sincerely,

Victoria I. Dragseth

VICTORIA I. DRAGSETH



90 MAY 15 09:47

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 8, 1990

Mr. Dave Gribbin
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
US Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Gribbin:

I have been asked by a constituent to assist in the matter described in the enclosed correspondence. I am referring this inquiry to you for your consideration.

Please provide the necessary information in duplicate and return the enclosures. Your correspondence should be sent to my Washington, Dc office.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Slade Gorton
United States Senator

SG/weg
Enclosure

09195

100-111111-38

January 25, 1990

Senator Slade Gorton,
708 Hart Senate Office Building,
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gorton,

The attached letter which expresses my views on the invasion of Panama was sent to President Bush. I think that Congress should investigate the number of deaths in the attack. European reporters say several thousand Panamanian civilians were killed, whereas the U.S. figure is around 225.

Sincerely,

Ronnie A. McDonald
Ronnie A. McDonald



Back to State Dept.

DOD - why discrepancy - ?

Panama/R.R.B

51732

Panama letter

January 12, 1990

President George Bush,
The White House,
Wash. D.C.

Dear President Bush,

I strongly object to the attack on Panama during which 27 US Servicemen were killed, many more were wounded, and hundreds of Panamanian civilians were killed.

Your stated reasons for conducting the attack are very inadequate. Because one Marine was killed you sacrifice 27 more. Was not the Marine in civilian clothes and running a roadblock in their country? The morally acceptable rationale for starting a war require much more provocation than this.

The other reasons you stated such as protecting the canal and catching Noriega appear illfounded. The canal was never in jeopardy. Catching Noriega appears to be a boondoggle. It looks like the US Justice system will maintain him, at taxpayers expense, for years to come. We may not even be able to convict him. As far as curtailing drug runners transitting through Panama, this was being stopped prior to the invasion according to news reports.

My strongest objection to the invasion was the killing of several hundred Panamanian civilians, All the civilized world is against making war on civilians. International law forbids it. The main-line churches in this country call it morally evil. As a Marine Corps fighter bomber pilot in WWII and again in Korea, I refrained from bombing civilian targets. If we were uncertain about target identification we were advised not to attack, lest we injure civilians.

The peoples of Central and South America are fed up with our domination by force. The American interest that seem to be the cause are American landowners and Corps. who want cheap labor. We force totalitarian governments on the people. They are not democracies and we are not acting morally.

I believe there are other political reasons you decided to attack Panama. You felt you had to make up for the aborted coup attempt that did not help with. I think you wanted to silence Noriega so he could not spill the beans about your joint CIA experiences. Most of all you worried about your P.R. image. So you attacked so you could achieve as Lee Atwater called it, a "political jackpot."

The UN General assembly, the Organization of American States and most of the rest of the world are right in condemning us. You may get a few words of good P.R. but history will also condemn you.

I sincerely hope that you will give more regard in the future for innocent lives, and for international law.

Sincerely

Thomas A. K. Connel

90 MAY -7 AM 10:11

DANIEL K. INOUE, HAWAII
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS, SOUTH CAROLINA
J. BENNETT JOHNSTON, LOUISIANA
QUENTIN N. BURDICK, NORTH DAKOTA
PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT
JIM SASSER, TENNESSEE
DENNIS DECONCINI, ARIZONA
DALE BUMPERS, ARKANSAS
FRANK R. LAUTENBERG, NEW JERSEY
TOM HARKIN, IOWA
BARBARA A. MIKULSKI, MARYLAND
HARRY REID, NEVADA
BROCK ADAMS, WASHINGTON
WYCHE FOWLER, JR., GEORGIA
J. ROBERT KERREY, NEBRASKA

MARK O. MATFIELD, OREGON
TED STEVENS, ALASKA
JAMES A. MCCLURE, IDAHO
JAKE GARN, UTAH
THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI
ROBERT W. KASTEN, JR., WISCONSIN
ALFONSE M. D'AMATO, NEW YORK
WARREN RUDMAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ARLEN SPECTER, PENNSYLVANIA
PETE V. DOMENICI, NEW MEXICO
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA
DON NICKLES, OKLAHOMA
PHIL GRAMM, TEXAS

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4801

JAMES H. ENGLISH, STAFF DIRECTOR
J. KEITH KENNEDY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

April 23, 1990

Ms. Margo Carlisle
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, DC 20301

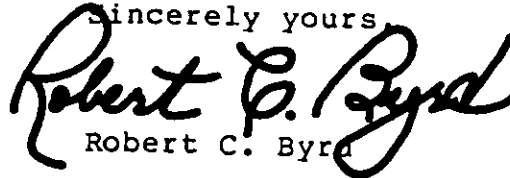
Dear Ms. Carlisle:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter from my constituent,
Miss Elinore D. Taylor.

As you will note in the section highlighted, Miss Taylor is
concerned about the number of Panamanian casualties resulting
from the December 19, 1989, military action in Panama, and the
cost of the U.S. invasion. I would appreciate your taking the
time to provide me with information that would address this
issue, in order that I might respond to my constituent.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration of this request,
I am

Sincerely yours,



Robert C. Byrd

RCB:tes
Enclosure

08507

THOMAS S. FOLEY
5TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

THE SPEAKER

CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE:
1201 LONGWORTH HOB
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4705
AREA CODE (202) 225-2008

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
90 APR 11 AM 8:13
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DISTRICT OFFICES:
WEST 601 FIRST AVENUE
SECOND FLOOR WEST
SPOKANE, WA 99204
AREA CODE (509) 353-2155

E. 12929 SPRAGUE
SPOKANE, WA 99216-0736
AREA CODE (509) 926-4434

28 W. MAIN
WALLA WALLA, WA 99362-2816
AREA CODE (509) 522-8370

March 30, 1990

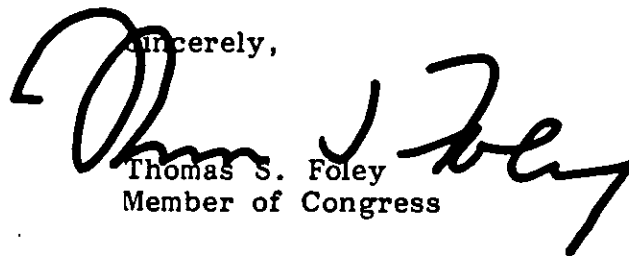
Dear Secretary Gribbin:

Enclosed please find a letter from Gary Edwards requesting information regard the number of Panamanians killed during "Operation Just Cause" in Panama.

In light of my constituent's question, I would be grateful if you could provide me with your Department's best estimate regarding Panamanian military and civilian casualties.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,



Thomas S. Foley
Member of Congress

Mr. David Gribbin
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, D.C. 20301

TSF:jes
enclosure

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JES
MAR 20 1990

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DEAR REP. FOLEY,

LOGGED

NA

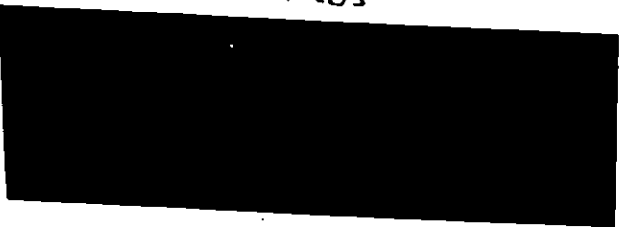
ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO I WROTE TO YOU CONDEMNING THE AMERICAN INVASION OF PANAMA. IN THE LETTER I ASKED YOU A QUESTION BUT YOU DID NOT RESPOND, SO I AM ASKING YOU AGAIN: HOW MANY PANAMENIANS WERE KILLED AND HOW MANY WERE WOUNDED BY AMERICAN FORCES DURING OPERATION "JUST CAUSE"? PANAMA CITY'S CHIEF OF HEALTH, JAMIE ARANTES, ESTIMATED THE DEATH TOLL AT 2,000. WOULD YOU REFUTE THAT NUMBER?

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO KNOW YOUR RESPONSE TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONDEMNATION OF THE INVASION AS A FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE.

SINCERELY,

GARY EDWARDS



MEMO

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
90 FEB -1 PM 12:21

TO: MR. DAVID J. GRIBBEN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS.

FROM: GREG STEWART, STAFF MEMBER TO CONGRESSMAN HOWARD C.
NIELSON.

RE: I AM REFERRING THIS LETTER TO YOUR OFFICE ON THE ADVICE
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE. PLEASE RESPOND.

01883



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

23 FEB 1990

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

In reply refer to:
I-90/50722

Honorable Howard C. Nielson
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of Secretary Cheney to concerns raised by Mrs. Victoria Dragseth regarding the intervention in Panama by U.S. forces and on the investigation of the murder of her husband, Raymond Dragseth.

One of the principal objectives of Operation Just Cause was the protection of U.S. citizens. Prior to 20 December, Panama had become an increasingly dangerous place for Americans. The President and, subsequently the State Department, had also issued several advisories warning U.S. citizens during this period concerning the risks of traveling to, or residing in Panama.

For obvious operational security reasons, advanced notification of the U.S. action was impossible. However, steps were taken in the planning and execution to minimize civilian casualties. We believe we largely accomplished this goal but even three American civilian lives are a high price to pay. We share the grief of all those who lost loved ones during Operation Just Cause.

It is our understanding that Mrs. Dragseth has received counseling from SOUTHCOM's Civilian Personnel Office regarding insurance, monetary payments and other benefits. The Director of the Department of Defense schools in Panama will continue to work with Mrs. Dragseth on her application for continued employment as a permanent employee and to assist her in obtaining dependent benefits due her children. Of course, additional counseling will always be available to her, at her request.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

James L. Woods
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)

DISTRIBUTION: (Congressional)

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- 1 - ASD/ISA
- 1 - DSAA/CONG REL
- 1 - ASD/LA
- 1 - CCD
- 1 - CMD

01863

MAR 31 1990

Honorable Thomas S. Foley
Speaker of the House
of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

This is in reply to your letter of March 30 to Mr. David Gribbin, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs), on behalf of Mr. Gary Edwards. You requested that we provide casualty figures in connection with Operation Just Cause in Panama.

Twenty-three U.S. military personnel were killed in action. There were two non-combat deaths, and 324 wounded. Three American civilians were also killed and one was injured.

The U.S. Southern Command had originally estimated enemy casualties to be 314, based on figures reported by individual units and coordinating the tally with Panamanian officials. The U.S. Southern Command has acknowledged that the actual figure may be substantially lower (some sources put the figure at about 50 persons) due to redundancies in the reporting. The number of enemy wounded is estimated to be 124. The official U.S. and Panamanian figure for Panamanian civilian deaths is 202. Included in this number are, we presume, Panamanian Defense Force and Dignity Battalion members who were not in uniform or were otherwise unidentifiable. Others, such as looters, may also have been included, in addition to bona fide civilians. The Defense Department does not have a figure for the number of Panamanian civilians who were injured.

No U.S. President commits our Armed Forces into action lightly. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Cheney have expressed deep regret at the loss of life--both civilian and military--during the operation. Given the nature of any combat situation, the United States acted very selectively in the application of military force to achieve its objectives. Operation Just Cause represents perhaps the most precise military operation of its size ever conducted.

I am enclosing material about Operation Just Cause which I hope will also be useful in responding to your constituent.

Sincerely,
Signed
Daniel J. Kalinger
Deputy Assistant Secretary
DANIEL J. KALINGER
Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense

Enclosures

0 5/14

JUN 13 1990

Honorable Robert C. Byrd
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Byrd:

This is in reply to your April 23 letter to Ms. Margo Carlisle, formerly the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, on behalf of Ms. Elinore Taylor. You asked that we provide you with information about the number of Panamanian civilians killed during Operation Just Cause and the cost of that operation.

Twenty-three U.S. military personnel were killed in action. There were two non-combat deaths, and 324 wounded. Three American civilians were also killed and one was injured.

The U.S. Southern Command had originally estimated enemy casualties to be 314, based on figures reported by individual units and coordinating the tally with Panamanian officials. The U.S. Southern Command has acknowledged that the actual figure may be substantially lower (some sources put the figure at about 50 persons) due to redundancies in the reporting. The number of enemy wounded is estimated to be 124. The official U.S. and Panamanian figure for Panamanian civilian deaths is 202. Included in this number are, we presume, Panamanian Defense Force and Dignity Battalion members who were not in uniform or were otherwise unidentifiable. Others, such as looters, may also have been included, in addition to bona fide civilians. The governments of Panama and the United States found no factual basis whatsoever to reports that "several thousand" Panamanian civilians were killed.

The cost figures in question are still being tabulated and are not yet available. At this time of fiscal constraints, I can appreciate your constituent's concern about costs, but I also believe it is important not to lose sight of overall U.S. goals and achievements regarding Operation Just Cause.

Although I recognize that you are very familiar with these matters, perhaps the following discussion will be helpful in responding to your constituent. For nearly two years before the military action, the United States worked with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean to peacefully resolve the crisis in Panama. U.S. goals were always clear and consistent: to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaties.

Unfortunately, all of the numerous attempts to resolve the crisis through diplomacy and negotiations were rejected by Manuel Noriega. In May 1989, Panamanians voted to end the rule of their dictator. The results were never fairly tabulated, however, because the Noriega-backed government resorted to force and ballot fraud to hold onto power.

On December 15, at Noriega's instigation, the Panamanian National Assembly declared that a state of war existed between Panama and the United States. The very next day, Noriega's Panama Defense Forces (PDF) killed an unarmed U.S. Marine officer without justification. Other elements of the PDF beat a U.S. Navy officer and unlawfully detained, physically abused, and threatened the officer's wife. These acts of violence were directly attributable to Noriega's dictatorship, and there was legitimate and understandable concern that these attacks were only the beginning.

The President concluded that the Noriega regime's threats and attacks upon Americans in Panama created an imminent danger to the 35,000 U.S. citizens there. Acting to safeguard these citizens, the President directed the Armed Forces to protect the lives of these U.S. citizens, restore democracy, ensure the integrity of the Panama Canal, and bring Noriega to justice in the United States. In the view of the legitimate government of Panama, as well as the United States, these objectives have been achieved.

In undertaking Operation Just Cause, the United States used its resources in a manner consistent with political, diplomatic, and moral principles. The deployment of U.S. forces has been an exercise of the right of self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. In forming her assessments of Operation Just Cause, your constituent may also wish to bear in mind that the democratically-elected government of Panama welcomed it, as have the great majority of the people of Panama.

Sincerely,

Signed
Daniel J. Kalinger
Deputy Assistant Secretary
DANIEL J. KALINGER
Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense

HHeilsnis/4June90/OASD (PA) PC/2E777/x76462

JUN 13 1990

Honorable Slade Gorton
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gorton:

This is in reply to your May 8 letter to Mr. Dave Gribbin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, on behalf of Mr. Ronnie McDonald. Mr. McDonald has questions about the number of Panamanian civilians killed during Operation Just Cause.

The following information about casualties may be useful in responding to Mr. McDonald. Twenty-three U.S. military personnel were killed in action. There were two non-combat deaths, and 324 wounded. Three American civilians were also killed and one was injured.

The U.S. Southern Command had originally estimated enemy casualties to be 314, based on figures reported by individual units and coordinating the tally with Panamanian officials. The U.S. Southern Command has acknowledged that the actual figure may be substantially lower (some sources put the figure at about 50 persons) due to redundancies in the reporting. The number of enemy wounded is estimated to be 124. The official U.S. and Panamanian figure for Panamanian civilian deaths is 202. Included in this number are, we presume, Panamanian Defense Force and Dignity Battalion members who were not in uniform or were otherwise unidentifiable. Others, such as looters, may also have been included, in addition to bona fide civilians. The governments of Panama and the United States have not found any factual basis whatsoever to reports that "several thousand" Panamanian civilians were killed.

No U.S. President commits our Armed Forces into action lightly. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Cheney have expressed deep regret at the loss of life--both civilian and military--during the operation. Given the nature of any combat situation, the United States acted very selectively in the application of military force to achieve its objectives.

Sincerely,
Signed
Daniel J. Kalinger
Deputy Assistant Secretary
DANIEL J. KALINGER
Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense

HHeilsnis/4June90/OASD (PA) PC/2E777/x76462

07/1/95

1778/451-00



THE JOINT STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Reply ZIP Code:
20318-3000

J-3M 0177-90
18 May 1990

The Honorable Pete Wilson
United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510-0502

Dear Senator Wilson,

This is in response to your letter of March 29, 1990 concerning the request of your constituent, Marie McKechnie, City Clerk Berkeley, California. Your letter has been referred to me by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for direct reply.

During the execution of Operation JUST CAUSE, 23 US Servicemen were killed and an additional 324 wounded in action. Three US civilians also died during the conflict.

As the Panamanian Government continues to recover, its ability to assume its role in compiling accurate casualty figures is improving. The Panamanian Ministry of Health estimates that 51 uniformed PDF soldiers, 58 unidentified civilians, and 143 identified civilians died. A total of 118 Panamanians identified as soldiers were treated: 51 in Panamanian hospitals and 67 in US facilities. Others may have been treated but categorized as civilians if they were not in uniform and did not acknowledge their military affiliation. Approximately 1700 civilians were treated for wounds incurred during the period of the liberation. US authorities do not have the records to distinguish between the innocent Panamanian civilians and/or PDF casualties not in uniform, Dignity Battalion members, looters, or vandals in the wounded population. Requests for additional information about Panamanian casualties should be referred to the Republic of Panama Institute for Legal Medicine. Release of more specific data with respect to casualties is within the purview of that Government.

In general, the largest concentration of civilian casualties occurred as a result of fires in the low income housing area of Chorrillo. This area was also the location of "La Commandancia," former headquarters of the PDF. Apparently, many of the fires were set by members of Noriega's Dignity Battalions, paramilitary forces recruited from questionable segments of the Panamanian society, in an effort to generate confusion and cover their retreat.

According to the Minister of Housing, Republic of Panama, approximately 2400 families did suffer loss/damage to their

homes. Most homes were lost as a result of fires set by fleeing Dignity Battalion members in a low income housing area. Many of the homeless have found temporary shelter with friends or relatives. Others are being housed temporarily in facilities built by the US military and Agency for International Development. This support is now administered by the Panamanian Red Cross. Costs associated with providing temporary and permanent housing are not available through Department of Defense funding channels.

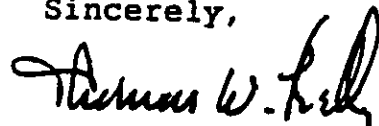
At the height of the operation, approximately 5,800 detainees were held in two detention centers under humane conditions. Detainees ranged from members of the former PDF to criminals released from the Panamanian prisons at the onset of the fighting. Temporary detention allowed for the identification and segregation of individuals which the Government of Panama desired to charge for crimes committed during the Noriega regime. The detention also allowed the Government of Panama to identify those former members of the PDF who desired to join the emerging Panamanian Police Force. The last detainees under US control were transferred to Panamanian control on or about February 4, 1990. Some detainees remain in the custody of the Panamanian Government pending investigation of alleged wrongdoing.

The US Army has been receiving damage and injury claims from Panamanians; however, claims caused by combat action are not payable under US law. Nevertheless, all claims are accepted and registered, given an identification number, and processed. Additionally, the claimant is informed in writing that his claim has been received and the prohibition regarding payment is also explained. The majority of these claims describe damage and injury without referring to a dollar value. For damages arising from alleged illegal acts by US forces during Operation JUST CAUSE, claimants submit a claim form to either the US Military Claims Office in Panama or to the US Army Claims Service, Ft. Meade, MD. US authorities, in accordance with the Foreign Claims and Military Claims Acts, will determine whether the particular claim is payable. To date, the Government of Panama has not established or designated a system for claims processing. Until a system is designated, exact claims figures are unavailable.

Approximately \$31.6 million has been spent for transportation of forces associated with operations in Panama. This is an estimate as support to Panama continues. The full cost of the operations is not yet available.

I hope this information will prove helpful in responding to your constituent. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



THOMAS W. KELLY
Lieutenant General, USA
Director for Operations

PETE WILSON
CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

90 APR -4 AM 10:52

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0502

March 29, 1990

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The Honorable Richard B. Cheney
Secretary
Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter that I received from the Berkeley, California City Clerk regarding the December 1989 American operation in Panama. I would appreciate your bringing this letter to the attention of the appropriate officials within DoD and a reply as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



PETE WILSON

PW:gh

06445



City of Berkeley



City Clerk Department
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Civic Center Building
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, California 94704
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (415) 644-6915

(415) 644-6480

March 15, 1990

Honorable Pete Wilson
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wilson:

The Berkeley City Council at its meeting of March 6, 1990, adopted a resolution which urges California's Senators and our Representative in Congress to seek information from the United States Government concerning the following matters:

1. Deaths and injuries of U.S. and Panamanian people in the course of the invasion: Civilians, military personnel, paramilitaries, children, and other special categories; procedures, if any, for filing claims for damages against the United States for illegal acts resulting in deaths and injuries and, if no such procedures exist, the legal justification therefor; and
2. Detainees taken in and after the invasion: Numbers, bases for such detention and release, treatment during detention, reasons for some remaining in custody, Panamanian authorities to whom remaining detainees have been released; procedures, if any, for filing claims for damages for illegal detention and/or treatment and, if no such procedures exist, the legal justification therefor; and
3. Damages to and destruction of property: Again, numbers and amounts of damage and destruction; procedures for redress, if any, and, if none, justification therefor; and
4. Creation of homeless people: Numbers of houses destroyed; number of people made homeless; cost of providing temporary housing, and cost of providing permanent housing; and
5. United States budget amounts needed to meet destruction and damages; names of proper Panamanian government officials to whom U. S. payments should be made under Panamanian law.

Sincerely,


Marie McKechnie, City Clerk

MM/vd



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

23 FEB 1990

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

In reply refer to:
I-90/50721

Honorable Jack Brooks
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of Secretary Cheney to concerns raised by Mrs. Victoria Dragseth regarding the intervention in Panama by U.S. forces and on the investigation of the murder of her husband, Raymond Dragseth.

One of the principal objectives of Operation Just Cause was the protection of U.S. citizens. Prior to 20 December, Panama had become an increasingly dangerous place for Americans. The President and, subsequently the State Department, had also issued several advisories warning U.S. citizens during this period concerning the risks of traveling to, or residing in Panama.

For obvious operational security reasons, advanced notification of the U.S. action was impossible. However, steps were taken in the planning and execution to minimize civilian casualties. We believe we largely accomplished this goal but even three American civilian lives are a high price to pay. We share the grief of all those who lost loved ones during Operation Just Cause.

It is our understanding that Mrs. Dragseth has received counseling from SOUTHCOM's Civilian Personnel Office regarding insurance, monetary payments and other benefits. The Director of the Department of Defense schools in Panama will continue to work with Mrs. Dragseth on her application for continued employment as a permanent employee and to assist her in obtaining dependent benefits due her children. Of course, additional counseling will always be available to her, at her request.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,


James L. Woods

Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)

DISTRIBUTION: (Congressional)
1 - USD (P)
1 - ASD/ISA
1 - DSAA/CONG REL
1 - ASD/LA
1 - CCD
1 - CMD

61866



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

23 FEB 1990

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

In reply refer to:
I-90/51043

Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
ATTN: Mr. Tim Ryan

Dear Senator:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of Secretary Cheney to concerns raised by Mrs. Victoria Dragseth regarding the intervention in Panama by U.S. forces and on the investigation of the murder of her husband, Raymond Dragseth.

One of the principal objectives of Operation Just Cause was the protection of U.S. citizens. Prior to 20 December, Panama had become an increasingly dangerous place for Americans. The President and, subsequently the State Department, had also issued several advisories warning U.S. citizens during this period concerning the risks of traveling to, or residing in Panama.

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Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

James L. Woods

Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)

DISTRIBUTION: (Congressional)
1 - USD (P)
1 - ASD/ISA
1 - DSAA/CONG REL
1 - ASD/LA
1 - CCD
1 - CMD

02622



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

23 FEB 1990

In reply refer to:
I-90/50975

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

Honorable Bill Nelson
Melbourne Office
780 South Apollo Blvd
Suite 12
Melbourne, FL 39201-1423

Dear Congressman:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of Secretary Cheney to concerns raised by Mrs. Victoria Dragseth regarding the intervention in Panama by U.S. forces and on the investigation of the murder of her husband, Raymond Dragseth.

One of the principal objectives of Operation Just Cause was the protection of U.S. citizens. Prior to 20 December, Panama had become an increasingly dangerous place for Americans. The President and, subsequently the State Department, had also issued several advisories warning U.S. citizens during this period concerning the risks of traveling to, or residing in Panama.

For obvious operational security reasons, advanced notification of the U.S. action was impossible. However, steps were taken in the planning and execution to minimize civilian casualties. We believe we largely accomplished this goal but even three American civilian lives are a high price to pay. We share the grief of all those who lost loved ones during Operation Just Cause.

It is our understanding that Mrs. Dragseth has received counseling from SOUTHCOM's Civilian Personnel Office regarding insurance, monetary payments and other benefits. The Director of the Department of Defense schools in Panama will continue to work with Mrs. Dragseth on her application for continued employment as a permanent employee and to assist her in obtaining dependent benefits due her children. Of course, additional counseling will always be available to her, at her request.

Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

James L. Woods

Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)

DISTRIBUTION: (Congressional)
1 - USD (P)
1 - ASD/ISA
1 - DSAA/CONG REL
1 - ASD/LA
1 - CCD
1 - CMD

02428

JAY 6 1990

Honorable Robert W. Kasten, Jr.
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-4902

Dear Senator Kasten:

This is in reply to your letter of March 27 to Mr. Dave Gribbin, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Frey. The Freys requested casualty figures in connection with Operation Just Cause in Panama.

Twenty-three U.S. military personnel were killed in action. There were two non-combat deaths, and 324 wounded. Three American civilians were also killed and one was injured.

The U.S. Southern Command had originally estimated enemy casualties to be 314, based on figures reported by individual units and coordinating the tally with Panamanian officials. The U.S. Southern Command has acknowledged that the actual figure may be substantially lower (some sources put the figure at about 50 persons) due to redundancies in the reporting. The number of enemy wounded is estimated to be 124. The official U.S. and Panamanian figure for Panamanian civilian deaths is 202. Included in this number are, we presume, Panamanian Defense Force and Dignity Battalion members who were not in uniform or were otherwise unidentifiable. Others, such as looters, may also have been included, in addition to bona fide civilians. The Defense Department does not have a figure for the number of Panamanian civilians who were injured. As concerns the "report" cited in the article your constituents enclosed, the allegation that U.S. forces brought about the death of a thousand civilians by "torching of a slum" is completely without foundation in fact.

No U.S. President commits our Armed Forces into action lightly. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Cheney have expressed deep regret at the loss of life--both civilian and military--during the operation. Given the nature of any combat situation, the United States acted very selectively in the application of military force to achieve its objectives. Operation Just Cause represents perhaps the most precise military operation of its size ever conducted.

Sincerely,
Signed _____
Daniel J. Kalinger
Deputy Assistant Secretary

DANIEL J. KALINGER
Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense

06 EP

90 MAR 26 AM 9:34

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

6TH DISTRICT OFFICE:
1-800-242-4883

March 19, 1990

Mr. Dave Gribbin
Asst. Secretary of Defense
for Legislative Affairs
Room 3E966, The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Mr. Gribbin:

I am writing to you on behalf of one of my constituents, Mr. Dick Smith of Sparta, Wisconsin. Mr. Smith is very concerned over our recent actions in Panama. He would like to know the final death toll among both Americans and Panamanian military and civilians. Mr. Smith is also interested in knowing how much the invasion cost the U.S. government and if it will be paying any reparations to the people of Panama.

Any information you could give me on this matter would be greatly appreciated.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Petri
Member of Congress

TEP:gw

05654

CLARENCE E. MILLER
TENTH DISTRICT, OHIO

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
DEFENSE SUBCOMMITTEE
TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT BOARD
(VICE CHAIRMAN)

62 MAY -2 11:03:51
Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

ROOM 2308
RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
202-225-5131
DISTRICT OFFICE:
212 SOUTH BROAD STREET
LANCASTER, OH 43130
614-654-5149

May 1, 1990

The Honorable David J. Gribben, III
Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Legislative Affairs)
The Pentagon, Room 3E966
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

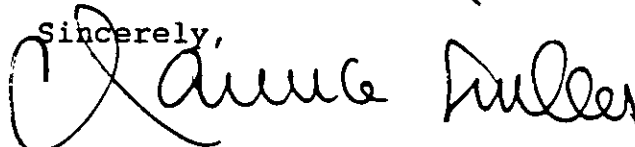
I was recently contacted by Mr. Mark Snoke of Lancaster, Ohio concerning some reports he had read on the conduct of our soldiers in Panama during Operation Just Cause.

He had read about U.S. soldiers throwing Panamanians killed in the fighting into a mass grave. If the reports were true, he felt such actions were barbaric and wanted to know if any actions were taken against those responsible.

Mr. Snoke also wanted to know why there was such a disparity in the fatalities reported. He is concerned about a possible coverup on the part of our government to keep the true number of deaths from being reported to the American public.

Any assistance you can provide in answer to these concerns would be appreciated.

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Miller
Member of Congress

CEM:bg

08626

APR 12

Miss Elinore D. Taylor

CH

April 5, 1976

Dear Sir:

I am writing you for 2 reasons.
The enclosed short article indicates,
That there has been no change in
El Salvador since the early 1950s when
They killed Archbishop Romero. The fascist
military continue to terrorize And cut the
shots in that country. I urge you to
support Sen. John Kerry's Senate bill
2083 calling for cutting off war-related
assistance pending progress in human rights,
military restructuring & negotiation efforts.
The govt. of El Salvador should be forced
into an election as fairly run as the
one conducted by the Sandinista govt.
in Nicaragua. Before you ~~write~~ vote
any money to the oligarchy in

El Salvador headed by Cristiani, I suggest
you see the film or view the video-tape
Romero. Recent events in that country
indicate nothing much has changed and
our tax money going down there to
support such thuggery is a disgrace.

Second, I enclose a long article from
the April 9 issue of Central America
Update, put out by the Coalition for
Justice in Central America located in
Blacksburg, Va. I would like to know the
US government's figures for the financial

~~cost of that invasion (Panama). Secondly,~~
~~do you accept or deny the Catholic Episcopal~~
~~Church's belief that 3,000~~
~~Panamanians were killed? Thirdly, are~~

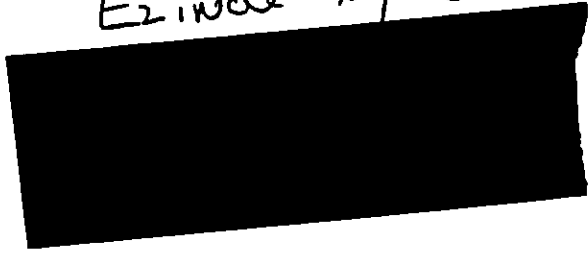
you or any other Senator going to ask
for an investigation of the behavior of the
American military in the invasion and
occupation of Panama given the violation of
the 1949 Geneva accords as cited in
the article as well as other atrocious
behavior described, I appreciate that
to my knowledge, no member of the

House on Senate voiced disapproval of the
Bush invasion of Panama, but I enclose
a 3rd article from The New Yorker
Magazine, basically a left-wing organ, which
very concisely, states my view on the
stupidity, immorality, not to mention
hypocrisy of that invasion.

I look forward to hearing
from you regarding my requests and
questions in regard to articles 1 and 2.

Yours very truly

Erinace Taylor



90 APR -6 AM 0:45

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 30, 1990

To: Office for Legislative Affairs
Department of Defense
Room 3E966, The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Inquiry from: Richard C. Ivey
6333 College Grove Way, #A-3
San Diego, California 92115

Re: Please respond to my constituent's inquiries as
described in the enclosed.

I forward the attached for your review and consideration.

Your report, in duplicate, along with the return of the
enclosure, will be appreciated. The response should be directed
to the attention of Colleen Sechrest in my Washington office.


Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Alan Cranston

Enclosure

05631



Thursday, December 28, 1989

Hon. Alan Cranston
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cranston:

Please send me the list of names and locations of civilian casualties occasioned by President George Bush's sending of American combat troops into Panama in pursuit of General Noriega. What specific efforts were made to obtain a timely listing of said civilian casualties?

I am particularly interested in knowing about the casualties among women and children and what kind of advance planning that President Bush carried out to make sure that the lives of innocent women and children were safeguarded.

What specific efforts have taken place to insure that money claims by Panamanian civilians against the United States can be processed promptly and fairly? Which particular United States agency is processing said claims?

In total about how much United States taxpayer money is going to be spent in President Bush's sending of American combat troops into Panama in pursuit of General Noriega?

What has been your position in the matter of protecting the civilian Panamanian population against becoming casualties in this war occasioned by President George Bush's sending of American combat troops into Panama in pursuit of General Noriega?

Sincerely,

Richard Ivey

BARBARA BOXER
6TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
HUMAN RESOURCES TASKFORCE CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN,
YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
(ON LEAVE)

MILITARY REFORM CAUCUS
CO-CHAIRMAN

WHIP AT LARGE



SECRETARY OF LETTERS
90 APR 20 AM 8:48

307 CANNON BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5181

DISTRICT OFFICES:

SAN FRANCISCO
450 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102
(415) 626-6943

MARIN
3301 KERNER BLVD.
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94901
(415) 457-7272

VALLEJO
(707) 552-0720

SONOMA
(707) 783-8033

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 1990

Major General
Charles E. Dominy
Pentagon, Room 2C-600

Dear Mr. Dominy:

Enclosed please find the letter of my constituent, Mr. Bob O'Brien, regarding the invasion of Panama by U.S. forces.

He has several detailed questions about the fighting there and I would urge you to answer to him directly at his home address. His address is 219 Stanyan St., San Francisco, CA 94118.

Thank you very much for your response.

Sincerely,

BARBARA BOXER
Member of Congress

07490

[REDACTED]
April 5, 1990

Congresswoman Barbara Boxer
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Representative Boxer:

RE: US INVASION OF PANAMA, DECEMBER 1989

Several months ago I asked Bill, your aide, try to find out the death count of the US soldiers who died because of fighting in Panama, as well as other information regarding the US invasion of that country. He said he would try to get the information for me. I subsequently called him on the matter; unfortunately he had difficulty obtaining the information, and he was still not able to help me. Thus I am writing you to obtain answers to the following questions:

- 1) How many US soldiers died because of the US invasion of Panama?
- 2) What are the names of the soldiers who died?
- 3) How many US soldiers were wounded because of the invasion?
- 4) How many US soldiers lost a limb (or limbs) because of the invasion?
- 5) What are the ethnic backgrounds of the soldiers who died?
- 6) How many civilians (both US and Panamanian) died because of the invasion, according to the most recent report (please give name and date of report)? How many civilians were wounded?
- 7) How many civilians were rendered homeless because of the invasion?
- 8) How many Panamanian soldiers were killed as a result of the invasion?
- 9) How many Panamanian soldiers were wounded?
- 10) How many US troops are currently in Panama?

I as well as others concerned about the US invasion of Panama, would greatly appreciate your response to the preceding questions. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Bob O'Brien
Bob O'Brien



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310-1600

April 18, 1990



OFFICE, CHIEF OF
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

Honorable Barbara Boxer
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Boxer:

This replies to your inquiry in behalf of Mr. Bob O'Brien, concerning Operation Just Cause.

Since this is a matter under jurisdiction of the Department of Defense, I have forwarded your inquiry to that agency for review and further response directly to you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Joseph G. Pallone
Major, U. S. Army
Congressional Coordinator

HERBERT KOHL
WISCONSIN

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-6653

COMMITTEES:

JUDICIARY

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

90 MAR 29 PM 3:19

Milwaukee Office:
205 East Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 291-4451

Madison Office:
14 West Mifflin Street
Suite 312
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 264-8338

Eau Claire Office:
3409 Golf Road
Eau Claire, WI 54701
(715) 832-8424

Kenosha Office:
625 52nd Street
Room 303
Kenosha, WI 53140
(414) 657-7719

March 28, 1990

The Honorable Richard Cheney
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1155

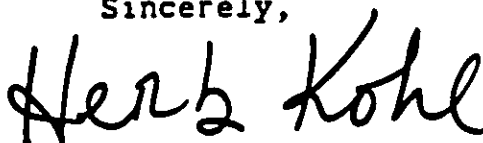
Dear Honorable Cheney:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter from a constituent of mine, Harold and Amy Frey, regarding civilian casualties during the Panama invasion.

Any assistance you could provide in responding to these concerns would be greatly appreciated. Please mark your return correspondence to the attention of Mr. Tom Mullooly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Herbert Kohl, U.S.S.

HK:tmz
Enclosure

06115

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
March 19, 1990

The Honorable Herbert Kohl
Suite 708
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kohl:


The March issue of Co-op Curreants, published monthly by the La Crosse People's Food Co-op has one article of which is enclosed a photocopy. The article contains statements which because of their nature gave rise to concerns on our part.

Reports of casualties to U.S. personnel involved in the Panama invasions have appeared but casualties to the local populace have not been publicly revealed. Does your office have access to such information? Can you establish the accuracy of the report of a thousand inhabitants killed in the burning of a slum area? Who is responsible for the torching resulting in these casualty figures?

Your interest in establishing the accuracy of such statements is invited. We shall be appreciative of any clarifying information related to these reports.

Sincerely,


Amy B. Frey


Harold F. Frey

90 FEB -8 PM 12:44

**Congress
of the
United States
House of Representatives**



January 30, 1990

BILL NELSON
FLORIDA
ELEVENTH DISTRICT

Colonel Fred K. Green, U.S.A.
Legal Advisor and Legislative
Counsel to the Chairman, JCS
Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Pentagon, Room 2E841
Washington, D.C. 20318-0001

CHAIRMAN OF SUBCOMMITTEE:
SPACE SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS
COMMITTEES:
SCIENCE, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY
BANKING, FINANCE AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Dear Colonel Green:

I am writing on behalf of my constituent, Mrs. Victoria I. Dragseth, whose correspondence is attached. I would appreciate it if you would look into this matter and respond as soon as possible. Please respond to my Melbourne office.

Your attention to my interest in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

BN:sel

02428

IN RESPONSE, PLEASE REPLY TO:

WASHINGTON OFFICE
2404 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0912
(202) 225-3671

MELBOURNE OFFICE
780 SOUTH APOLLO BLVD., SUITE 12
MELBOURNE, FLORIDA 32901-1423
(407) 676-1776

ORLANDO OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, SUITE 300
ORLANDO, FLORIDA 32801-2225
(407) 841-1776

KISSIMEE OFFICE (407) 847-1280
MERRITT ISLAND OFFICE (407) 453-9524
TITUSVILLE OFFICE (407) 268-1776
VERO BEACH OFFICE (407) 569-1976

JAN 4 1990

January 7, 1990.

Dear Honorable *Congressman Bill Nelson*

I am writing you this letter to bring to your attention the abduction and ruthless execution of an American citizen, my husband Raymond M. Dragseth. On December the twentieth, the night of the U.S. invasion of Panama my husband was taken from my house at gunpoint by a group of men who identified themselves as members of the Panamanian Defense Forces. For eight days my daughter and I anguished over his fate. Every time the phone rang we answered it with a mixture of hope and despair. Finally, on the twenty-seventh of December, we learned that he had been executed. He was mercilessly shot five to seven times with an automatic weapon.

Throughout this entire time, and up until the present we have received minimal amounts of aid from U.S. authorities. This has come as a great shock to me since I was under the impression that the action was taken to protect U.S. citizens, yet during the invasion we were offered no assistance more importantly, the long standing instructions we were given (and with which we complied) contemplated either advance warning or evacuation as required by the developing situation. It was only after my high profile in the media and criminal charges that I filed in the Republic of Panama against Noriega that I received military protection, which could be withdrawn at any time. I am now the sole support of my two children who are in college, a role I cannot fulfill with my temporary position. I am asking you, as one of the highest legislative officials of my government not only to find a way to offer support for my family but also the reason why we, as U.S. citizens, were not protected in this time of crisis. I know that my husband was only one of many lives that were lost, but he was one of only three Americans civilians who died. I submit that there is no rational explanations for this lack of protection and compassion by U.S. authorities who carried out the liberation of Panama but omitted steps to protect their own nationals.

Thank you for your cooperation and concern

RECEIVED

Sincerely,

JAN 29 1990

Victoria I. Dragseth
VICTORIA I. DRAGSETH

