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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

about
10-23-74

From the President:

To: Gen. Scowcroft

Date: _____ Time _____ a.m.
p.m.

He talked with me
about this. In answer
indicate appreciation of his concern
& interest etc

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 18, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: William E. Timmons *WT*
THROUGH: Gen. Brent Scowcroft *BS*
SUBJECT: Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-SC) *ST*

Subject has asked me to call the attached letter to your personal attention.

Sen. Thurmond is expressing his concern over the Panama and Canal Zone situation - a matter which has interested him for quite some time.

JOHN C. STENNIS, MISS., CHAIRMAN

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

T. EDWARD BRASWELL, JR., CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR

September 11, 1974

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

The purpose of this letter is to express my deep concern over recent developments in Panama and the Canal Zone. These developments may have serious implications for the Panama Canal and vital U. S. interests there, and, in addition, may well result in equally serious situations throughout Latin America.

In recent weeks, the situation has deteriorated rapidly. The government of Panama has been rapidly drifting to the left. My Panamanian contacts advise me that many Cubans are presently in influential positions in the Torrijos regime, and that the General himself is isolated from all but radicals and Communists. Indeed the Communists there are increasingly aggressive and bold.

The two developments of greatest concern are Panama's unilateral resumption of diplomatic relations with Cuba, and the so-called "banana war" against United Brands. The latter has been settled, but not without bitterly anti-American agitation inspired by the government, including the stoning of the United States Embassy by the pro-Communist student federation. The banana war has been held up by government propagandists as a prototype for action against the United States. Moreover, the Panamanian ambassadors to the United States and the United Nations have openly threatened violence against the United States.

These activities have been of great concern to many freedom-loving Panamanians who see their nation quickly falling into Communist domination because of recent developments in Cuban activity in Panama and the current Panamanian regime.

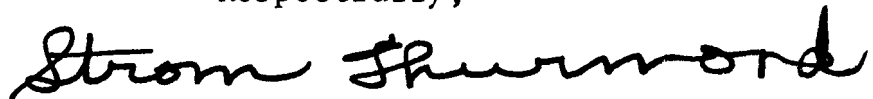
September 11, 1974

I share the concern about current Cuban-Panamanian political activity. Obviously, all of Latin America is watching this situation closely. Needless to say, any action on the part of the United States that indicates the slightest position of weakness or a willingness to accommodate anti-American sentiment in Panama, would result in many other Latin American countries moving in the same leftward direction.

Our negotiations for a new canal treaty are fundamentally in error. More than one-third of the Senate --- thirty-five Senators --- have sponsored Senate Resolution 301 against the surrender of U. S. sovereignty in the Canal Zone. Any loss of control of the Canal would be extremely detrimental to our vital interests, especially in Latin America. We should make it clear that U. S. vital interests there are not negotiable.

With kindest regards,

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Strom Thurmond". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.


Strom Thurmond

ST/jb

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 23, 1974

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT
FROM: JERRY H. JONES 
SUBJECT: Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-SC)

The attached memorandum was returned in the President's outbox with the following comment to you:

-- He talked with me about this. In answer indicate appreciation of his concern and interest, etc.

Please follow-up with the appropriate action.

Thank you.

cc: Don Rumsfeld
Bill Timmons