

15 East 235th Street
Bronx, New York 10470
December 25, 1989

The Honorable George Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

I cannot remain silent; I am compelled to protest with my utmost emphasis our intervention in Panama, to express my agreement with the justified protests of Latin American countries such as Mexico and Peru. Whereas they acted on their objections to Noriega's actions in accord with international laws and treaties, our intervention was a violation.

Mr. President, as I read the attempted justifications of our attack, I had a bitter reminder of similar attempts throughout history. It required nothing more than the replacement of a phrase such as "the democratically elected government" with a phrase such as "the defense of Socialism" to recall the hollow phrases in support of the intervention in Prague in the recent past.

According to the New York Times, Administration spokesmen were embarrassed by the apparent contradiction between our applauding the new Soviet policy of nonintervention and our intervention. I was not merely embarrassed, but dismayed and saddened.

Mr. President, I must hope that the damage to our relations with Latin American countries and their vigorous protests will lead to our appreciation of the costly mistake we have made and serve as a barrier to its repetition.

Respectfully yours,

Edwin S. Campbell
Edwin S. Campbell

copies to:

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
Senator from New York

The Honorable Mario Cuomo
Governor of New York

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel
Congressman from New York

The Honorable Claiborne Pell
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 26, 1990

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Thank you for your message concerning United States military activity in the Republic of Panama -- Operation Just Cause.

For nearly two years, the United States and nations of Latin America and the Caribbean have worked together to resolve the crisis in Panama. The goals of the United States have been to safeguard the lives of Americans, to support democracy in Panama, to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaties, and to bring General Manuel Noriega to justice.

On December 15, 1989, at the instigation of General Noriega, the illegitimate Panamanian National Assembly declared that a state of war existed with the United States. The very next day, an unarmed U.S. Marine officer was killed, another was wounded, and a Navy officer was brutally beaten and his wife threatened with sexual abuse by Panama Defense Forces personnel. General Noriega's reckless threats and attacks upon Americans in Panama made it clear that the lives and welfare of our citizens living there were increasingly at risk, and the continued safe operation of the Panama Canal would be in serious jeopardy if such lawlessness were to continue.

Under these circumstances, I ordered the deployment of U.S. forces to Panama. Our forces conducted themselves courageously and selflessly in defense of their fellow citizens and in defense of democracy. We accomplished our objectives, including bringing Manuel Noriega to the United States to face the drug-related charges on which he was indicted.

The brave Panamanians elected by the people of Panama last May -- President Guillermo Endara and Vice Presidents Calderon and Ford -- have assumed their rightful leadership roles and have begun to put in place a democratic government. The Panamanian people have expressed their enthusiastic support for America's friendship and help in establishing their democratically elected government. We will continue to assist President Endara as a government is established in Panama that allows freedom, peace, and democracy to flourish.

We will always remember the brave Americans who gave their lives or were wounded in order to see justice done and freedom restored to Panama. The gratitude of our nation will endure, and a democratic Panama will be a lasting tribute to their sacrifice.

Sincerely,

Mr. Edwin S. Camp²tell
15 East 235th Street
Bronx, New York 10470