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May 14, 2018

The Government and People of the United States of America:

As the former President of Panama (2009-2014), I am being persecuted by my former Vice-President, now current President of Panama, because of a personal political vendetta. He has fabricated charges against me to harm my political career and attack me and my family. He has asked the United States for help to extradite me, leading to my year long detention in a U.S. jail. The goal: to politically disable me in 2019.

I chose to come to this country, although I am also a citizen of Italy through my heritage (a country that does not extradite its nationals). I chose to come here because I was "invited" by the highest officials of your former government. After years of friendship with this country I did not expect to be thrown into a U.S. jail. Although a U.S. court has found "probable cause" for my extradition, the courts are not allowed to consider the all the facts. I want to explain to you why this extradition should never have happened.

It is futile to explain the faults in the charges against me and the influence imposed by the former US Ambassador to Panama, John Feeley, who not only lent Panama a "helping hand" during this process but did the impossible. I will however explain events of relevance that either led me to the United States or substantiated my belief that the U.S. would not condone the vendetta against me by President Varela.

- When the CIA requested that I stop a North Korean ship leaving Cuba that was crossing through the Panama Canal I did not blink an eye. I personally searched the ship and found weapons, missiles, planes, and radars that violated the UN embargo.
- Before seizing the North Korean Ship, I was called by President Raul Castro



and Cuba's Foreign Minister/Vice Minister where I was threatened. It was made very clear that if I stopped the ship I would suffer grave consequences. It is important to appreciate their close relationship to President Varela.

- After seizing the ship, the President of the United States called to thank me for intervening and following the CIA's instructions. Ironically, this was around the same time that the President was being accused of tapping into Chancellor Merkle and the Brazilian President Rouseff's conversations. At that time I informed the United States of the threats made by the Cuban government.

- The President of the United States sent the Vice President and the Secretary of State to Panama, not only to extend their personal thanks, but to reassure me that the threats were taken seriously and that in the event I needed to come to the United States, I could do so without fear. I was under the impression that promises made by such government officials could be relied upon. I was mistaken.

- When the FARC negotiations began in Cuba, we supported US interests. We did not allow the guerillas to use Panama's territory as a sanctuary nor safe haven. We also reduced drug trafficking through Panama that was headed to the U.S., which under the current government has increased significantly.

- On a separate occasion, we were called by the CIA to "rescue" the former station chief of Milan, Italy who was being condemned for killing several Islamist terrorist in Italy. He had an Interpol red alert and was captured in Costa Rica. We were asked to conduct a "special ops" mission to target and safely deliver him to the CIA, which we did. Being an Italian citizen, I was called by the Italian ambassador and other authorities who also threatened me and emphasized that I "faced serious consequences for impeding Italian authorities from capturing a most wanted fugitive."

- Panama continued the "monitoring" ordered and funded by the CIA of the "Matador" system that provided extremely useful information of targets both locally and abroad through legal and "other means". This was a deterrent to money laundering, terrorism, and drug trafficking.



- During my tenure, we installed the "face recognition system" that was tied to the FBI's database of felons and persons of interest. Tocumen International Airport is the largest hub of passengers in Latin America and by now thousands of people have been detained.
- We also began to install 19 radars that were intended to be connected to the US Southcom. When completed, drugs coming from Colombia to the U.S. would have been captured and decreased substantially. However, the Varela administration cancelled that project alleging that it was corrupt. Investigations were conducted and nothing was found to substantiate those accusations. Since then however, there has been roughly a 300% increase in the amount of drugs entering the U.S. Sometimes, I wonder if it's my opposition to drug trafficking that has warranted this vendetta against me, including the extradition request.
- While in office, we captured many drug dealers from powerful cartels among them Mexicans, Colombians, and the son of the President of Surinam.
- In the U.N., Panama voted with Israel 100% of the time. For that reason I was declared a 'non grata person' by various Arab organizations, particularly the Hezbollah who has an enormous presence in Panama through some very high ranking officials of Panama's ruling party.
- Additionally, I was invited to Langley by the CIA to attend a private lunch in the Director's office on the 7th floor along with Minister J.R. Mulino and the Head of Police Julio Molto. I received a sincere thank you and once again an invitation was extended to come to the United States if I ever needed "protection" from the Varela government as well as other governments' who threatened me while I was in office.

My political career is far from over. If anything, this process has turned me into a political martyr. My approval ratings in Panama had increased at the end of my term and recent polls show those ratings are rising once again. When the extradition proceedings began, there were 23 politically motivated cases open against me, since then only 4 remain and soon enough all will be dismissed. If there's one thing I've learned in this lifetime is that the truth always comes to




light. I just wish the former U.S. Ambassador would have dug a little deeper, before so openly partaking in this vendetta via tweets and declarations, something very unusual from such a position. I respect the former U.S. Ambassador's opinion of me and my administration (which was 100% pro American) but his personal opinion should have never influenced the United State's decisions. I have learned that extradition proceedings do not provide due process, that bail is almost impossible to attain, and that the U.S. looks only to the treaty and not the basis for the crimes allegedly committed in the requesting country. My fear with this extradition is that there is no way for the U.S. to ensure that my human rights will not be violated when returned to Panama. I've been threatened with solitary confinement if I keep openly questioning President Varela's crooked government. The goal in all these proceedings is to politically disable me.

After what my country and I did for the U.S. I truly believed the U.S. would not involve itself in Varela's personal vendetta against me, keep me detained in sub par conditions for such a long period of time, and fight tooth and nail to defend a government that has clearly fabricated this case.

I want the U.S. government to know that I have always sided with the U.S when I was president of Panama. I was betrayed and set up by my own Vice-President, a duplicitous politician, who manipulated his way to succeed me and is now trying to do away with me for good. I want the U.S. government to know that Varela is trying to make the United States party to his political persecution of his enemies.

Should the State Department choose to extradite me, I request it be expeditiously, pursuant to the 1905 Treaty between the U.S. and Panama and that the Doctrine of Specialty be expressly applied.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Alberto Martinelli Berrocal


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