7-21-1989

U.S. General Says U.S. Troops Should Depose Panamanian Military Chief Noriega

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
U.S. General Says U.S. Troops Should Depose Panamanian Military Chief Noriega

by Deborah Tyroler  
Category/Department: General  
Published: Friday, July 21, 1989

In early July Brig. Gen. Marc Cisneros, chief of the US Army South in Panama, told Spanish news service EFE that US troops should depose the "criminal" Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega and the "Nazis" around him. Cisneros said that he would need 30 minutes to accomplish most of the work, and that only a handful of Panamanian soldiers would risk their lives for Noriega. Copley News Service attempted unsuccessfully July 13 to contact Cisneros, but an aide said the general had been quoted accurately. Cisneros was made commander of the 8,000-member detachment in Panama last month. He is a veteran of two combat tours in Vietnam. In the interview with EFE, obtained by the San Diego Union July 13, Cisneros asserted that a "military solution would have to be used" to force Noriega from power. "Most of the officers (of US Army South), and particularly the troops, share my point of view," he said. Cisneros said a US military operation against Noriega would be "very easy: We would advise all the (Panamanian) officers that they have 30 minutes to hand over their weapons. Otherwise, we would enter into combat." Most of the 15,000 members of the Panamanian military would surrender, he added. According to Cisneros, "Noriega only has 15 or 20 soldiers disposed to fight for him. I see Noriega fleeing as soon as someone shows him their teeth and he understands that they are really going to bite him." Cisneros said that political necessities would force some Latin American nations to reject a US military intervention in Panama. However, he added, many countries in the region "would applaud" Noriega's overthrow. "All the military chiefs" he has met in his travels through Latin America, said Cisneros, favor the US armed forces acting against Noriega. Cisneros said the Organization of American States lacks the strength to convince Noriega to abandon power. "We know that 90% of the (Panamanian) people want Noriega to go, that many soldiers voted against him (May 7) and that the morale of the Defense Forces is low," Cisneros said. However, Cisneros said he doubted that the Panamanian military would revolt against Noriega. In any case, Cisneros said, there was no hope of reforming the Panama Defense Forces "because it is evil and corrupt." (Basic data from Copley News Service, 07/14/89)

-- End --