

SEN. SARBANES: -- Now what was the problem with Mr. Rodriguez, as you perceived it?

COL. DUTTON: In any particular area, sir? (Laughter.)

SEN. SARBANES: Well, you said you had -- you said you had a lot of difficulties with him. Why did you have difficulties with him?

COL. DUTTON: Sir, Mr. Rodriguez was -- I guess the term is "well connected" in the United States government, and had also ingratiated himself to one of the high-ranking local officials. Mr. Rodriguez and I had different ideas on how a special operation should be run. I considered myself to have more expertise, and I certainly had the support of the manager and his deputy that were working for me that the way I intended to work it was correct. It became a difficult issue when you're at odds with one of the people that are down there and well situated with the locals, that if you have to be in an argument with him over how the operation is going to run. He had to be handled very carefully, but we could not allow the operation to get out of control or, as far as I was concerned, to break any of the tenets that I thought were appropriate for running this kind of a special operation.

SEN. SARBANES: Well, could you look at your deposition, please, at pages 52 -- right at the bottom of page 52, and then over on page 53.

COL. DUTTON: The answer at the bottom --

SEN. SARBANES: Beginning at the bottom of page --

COL. DUTTON: Fifty-two, the answer?

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SEN. SARBANES: Yes. "He became a major problem in the conduct of the operation. He interfered with the -- " this is you responding to a question.

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir.

SEN. SARBANES: "He interfered with the operation, the operational side of it. He wanted as much control of the money as he could." And then you detail some examples of that. And then a question was put to you, "What did you consider were his motives for doing this?" And you responded, "Money."

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir.

SEN. SARBANES: And that was essentially your perception of Rodriguez and the essential problem?

COL. DUTTON: That was my concern. His interference with the operation wasn't for money. The attempt to get control of an

emergency funds and to control the fuel account, there my concern was
controlling the money.

SEN. SARBANES: Now you had the view that he was feeding information for a lawsuit that was designed to bring an end to this operation?

COL. DUTTON: Sir, I don't have direct knowledge of that, and I think there are others that are going to appear here that'll be able to give you much greater detail on that. I was told by General Secord that they had information that he was feeding the other side on this, and that was a concern to them. But I think others can give you much, much better information than I.

SEN. SARBANES: Was there an anxiety that he was going to reveal this matter publicly and then blow your cover?

COL. DUTTON: There was a time

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when the pressures built up, there was a threat to us that he was going to get the local general to start charging us landing fees, and that if he didn't get satisfaction, that he might go public.

SEN. SARBANES: Now to prevent that, what steps were taken? He was brought here to meet with North in the White House complex, is that correct?

COL. DUTTON: I'm not sure that it was tied directly to that meeting. That was more of a communication security problem. I discussed, I believe in one of the KL-43 messages that you all have, the fact that Max had set himself up with a number of groups down there, some of them -- the relationships quite questionable. I don't believe a United States citizen is supposed to be a part of a

The fact that he was using US military, the Milgroup vehicles, that he was using the State Department radios, possibly put him in a vulnerable enough position that we could get him removed without also getting ourselves removed. It was a difficult situation to be in.

We -- he was hurting us on the operational side. He stopped flights -- when we had the aircraft that got stuck on the runway in the southern neighboring country, it was necessary that we get more people down there and another aircraft to lighten the load that was on the aircraft that was stuck and also to help dig it out. He stopped that flight from departing, because either he didn't understand what was going on, or he had some other agenda. I don't know what it was.

But we just couldn't afford to have him stepping in and interfering with things that were truly Mr. Cooper's call.

SEN. SARBANES: Let me turn to my final area of questioning, because my time's about to expire. I'm interested in the extent of support which your operation received from US government officials.

COL. DUTTON: Yes sir.

SEN. SARBANES: And you have testified to that at different times, about this person and that person. But let's try to get it all together, if we could, for just a couple of minutes. Why don't you recount that, beginning with the people out in the field, and then we'll come back to Washington, in terms of US government officials who were being helpful to your operation. I take it you had the station chiefs in all three of these Central American countries?

COL. DUTTON: Sir, I think if we were to -- if we can take that section separately, one of the station chiefs supported us directly

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and very strongly throughout the entire -- and as I say, we're talking about four to five months of operation -- but he was of great assistance to us all the time.

In one of the neighboring countries, the station chief was called on to assist us and at times would, and at times would not. The station chief in -- where the host base was, did not really support, at any particular time, to the degree even as I felt that he could have. And that means providing intelligence and weather information. So it was a variance, I couldn't just put one face on it.

SEN. SARBANES: The ambassadors?

COL. DUTTON: I had heard them mentioned, sir, but I didn't

COL. DUTTON: I had heard of them mentioned, sir, but only once involved, if I had a problem in the focal area and if I were to call Colonel North with it, it would seem to get resolved. I don't know how it could have gotten resolved without the ambassador being part of it. I don't know how we could have set up a refueling in the southern country at their international airport with both their Milgroup commander and the chief of station involved, and the ambassador not know about it. I would find that very strange.

SEN. SARBANES: And the Milgroup commanders in these countries?

COL. DUTTON: We only had the two occasions with the southern neighboring country where we had assistance. And Colonel Steele was, I guess you'd say blew hot and cold. He -- there were times that he was helpful to us, in the August-September timeframe, when we finally became successful, he had come in to -- I won't say "run it," it wasn't close to that, but he would stay close to it, and if he saw something he didn't like, he would let us know. There were other times where he had, in fact, made Max his surrogate and given him the KL-43 and said, "I'm hands off. I have nothing to do with this."

SEN. SARBANES: And what about back here in Washington?

COL. DUTTON: I didn't deal with many people other than Colonel North and General Secord and Mr. Gadd back here in Washington.

SEN. SARBANES: So you have no (?) -- Poindexter, Casey, Meese?

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COL. DUTTON: Only the references by Col. North and Gen. Secord to discussions with Mr. Casey, and Col. North's discussion, reference Mr. Meese.

SEN. SARBANES: And Shultz and Weinberger?

COL. DUTTON: I have no direct knowledge on that, sir.

SEN. SARBANES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN INOUYE: Senator McClure:

SENATOR JAMES A. McCLURE (R-IDAHO): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. There is a very small area of the entire speculation that has surrounded this entire matter. Back in March, the news

articles carried in some Scandinavian newspapers that the CIA stole \$40 million. That was several different news accounts appeared on March the 17th, simultaneously in several different European -- in Scandinavian newspapers. And a week later, it appeared in a United States news magazine, dated March 23rd.

COL. DUTTON: Was that of this year, sir? Excuse me.

SEN. McCLURE: March -- yes, of 1987.

COL. DUTTON: All right.

SEN. McCLURE: The story went on to indicate that the Danish ship, the (Eria?), carried \$40 million in U.S. one-hundred dollar bills as it sailed from the Middle East to Denmark. The news weekly attributed the story to a CIA source, and went on to say that one port of call in that period was Haifa, Israel. The captain of the Eria was interviewed by the staff of this committee, and, although he indicated he had knowledge of \$40 million, he did indicate that he received an envelope in Israel which contained money. My question, Mr. Dutton, relates to the money that you and Gen. Secord took to Israel, because I think that may, in fact, be the so-called \$40 million to which the exaggerated press accounts have made reference.

When did you fly to Geneva to meet Mr. Willard Zuckert to obtain a large quantity of cash?

COL. DUTTON: That was at the end of October, sir.

SEN. McCLURE: In 1986?

COL. DUTTON: That's correct.

SEN. McCLURE: Was this the only time you, alone or with others, obtained cash from Mr. Zuckert or CSF?

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COL. DUTTON: The trip with Gen. Secord in August, I understood that he had picked up some cash to take down to Israel, but it certainly wasn't in any amounts like what you're talking about. And I probably can help explain what it was for.

SEN. McCLURE: During the trip, did you obtain a quantity of cash from Mr. Zuckert -- that October 1986?

COL. DUTTON: My October trip, I obtained \$40,000 from him.

SEN. McCLURE: And what were the circumstances of that transaction?

COL. DUTTON: I went to CSF. He went to the bank, came back

with the money, I counted it, signed a receipt for it.

SEN. McCLURE: That was \$40,000?

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir.

SEN. McCLURE: Not \$40 million?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir. I counted it very carefully.

SEN. McCLURE: Which bank?

COL. DUTTON: I don't know, sir. I stayed in the office, and he just left for a while. When he came back, he had the money.

SEN. McCLURE: And what were your instructions to do with that money?

COL. DUTTON: I was to take it to Israel and turn it over to the Israeli officials there. I was to withdraw part of it to give to the flight crew to carry with them when they went into Iran. We were never sure whether they were going to have to eventually pay for the gas themselves or not. To date, the Iranians had given them the direct(?) gas for free. But if they ever said, "We want payment for it," we want them to be able to get back out of town.

SEN. McCLURE: At one point in your statement to the committee, I believe you said that the Israelis paid the hotel bills out of the money which you had -- which had been provided them.

COL. DUTTON: Sir, what I did was, I gave the \$30,000 -- I gave

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\$30,000 dollars of it to the aircraft commander. He took it in the country with him. When he came back, he gave it back to me. Per General Secord's instructions, I paid the crew an incentive pay of \$8,000. And, I had expenses, General Secord instructed that I take \$1,000 dollars of it, which I have completely documented. I turned out it cost me \$3,000 dollars for the trip. I turned the \$31,000 dollars back over to the Israelis, and the idea, sir, was that we felt other missions were going to have to be flown, and to have to carry \$40,000 dollars in every time we went, we didn't want

future.

SEN. MCCLURE: And the balance of the money was left with the officials in Israel?

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: Was contact made with Mr. Hakim before you were given the cash?

COL. DUTTON: Not that I know of, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: As I recall your testimony, you said that was all in one hundred dollar bills?

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: What was your impression of who controlled the bank accounts? Was it Mr. Hakim or General Secord, Mr. Zucker, or who may it have been?

COL. DUTTON: It was my impression that Mr. Hakim controlled the accounts. All the invoices that I received, once they were -- once I cleared them, I would take them to General Secord and he would either call Mr. Hakim, or if he was out, he would ask me to call him, and request that I -- and wire transfer be made.

SEN. MCCLURE: When you went there to get this cash that you referred to, was Mr. Hakim with you?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: Did you have a written authorization from him to get the \$40,000?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: If Mr. Hakim controlled the account, how was it that you were able to get to withdraw \$40,000 dollars?

COL. DUTTON: Sir, that was something between General Secord and Mr. Hakim and Mr. Zucker and I would assume maybe a phone call from Mr. Hakim giving the authorization would do it, but that is purely an assumption on my part.

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SEN. MCCLURE: Mr. Dutton, in mid July of 1986, General Secord, Col. North, Mr. Hakim and yourself met to discuss the entire contra operation. What was your impression of Mr. Hakim's role and knowledge of that operation?

COL. DUTTON: The occasion of the meeting was Mr. Hakim's birthday, and in that evening we generally went over how the operation was going, the problems that we were having. My feeling was that he was totally out of the operational side, that he was handling the financial side. That's what I thought.

handling the financial side. That was his bag. The rest of it was being run by General Secord and Col. North.

SEN. MCCLURE: Did you have enough discussions with him that evening to get any impression as to how much detail he knew of the financial records and accounts?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: Did you ever get the impression that Mr. Hakim was not concerned with the details and that he left such concerns to Mr. Zucker?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir. I have no knowledge either way on that.

SEN. MCCLURE: Was Mr. Zucker at that meeting?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir.

SEN. MCCLURE: At this point in time, that would be mid-July 1986, the Danish ship, the Erria, was stranded with its arms cargo, which I think was estimated at \$2 million dollars. There were extensive discussions between the principals, Mr. Hakim, General Secord, Mr. Clines, and others, including the ship's agents, Queen Shipping. What discussions are you aware of between the principals on the disposition of the cargo, its ultimate sale, and the division of the profits?

COL. DUTTON: Sir, I was not involved in the acquisition -- the munition acquisition portion of this operation. When the warehouse was full, my only job was to empty it. I did not have anything to do with the acquisition at any time.

SEN. MCCLURE: In your deposition -- excuse me.

COL. DUTTON: Sir, counsel was asking that part of your question was, did I have any knowledge of that particular discussion, and I do not.

SEN. MCCLURE: In your deposition, on page four, you state, and you may want to make reference to it; quote from your deposition at the top of the page, --

COL. DUTTON: Yes, sir?

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COL. DUTTON: "I went to work for him" -- that would be Secord -- "in Tehran in the airforce section of the Military Assistance Advisory Group. We were stationed there two and a half years and returned to Washington." With reference to that experience, while in Tehran, did you ever meet Albert Hakim?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir, I did not.

SEN. MCCLURE: To your knowledge, did General Secord know Mr.

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COL. DUTTON: "I went to work for him" -- that would be Secord -- "in Tehran in the airforce section of the Military Assistance Advisory Group. We were stationed there two and a half years and returned to Washington." With reference to that experience, while in Tehran, did you ever meet Albert Hakim?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir, I did not.

SEN. MCCLURE: To your knowledge, did General Secord know Mr. Hakim?

COL. DUTTON: I have been told subsequently that yes, he had met him and the conditions under which he met him.

SEN. MCCLURE: But, you didn't know that at that time?

COL. DUTTON: No, sir, I did not.

SEN. MCCLURE: What did you know about Mr. Hakim?

COL. DUTTON: I didn't know anything about Mr. Hakim.

SEN. MCCLURE: Did you know Mr. Ghorbanifar before this -- before you were -- or while you were in Iran/

COL. DUTTON: I have never met Mr. Ghorbanifar.

SEN. MCCLURE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions.

CHAIRMAN INOUE: Senator Nunn. Is he out of the room?
Senator Cohen.

SENATOR WILLIAM COHEN (R-ME): (audio problem) legal opinion said, as long as you had a legal opinion handed to you by General Secord, and endorsed by Oliver North, did you?

COL. DUTTON: I cared very much, sir.

SEN. COHEN: Hypothetically speaking,

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National Security Council when he called people, when he sent memos, when he issued directives or whatever it is he did. It wasn't in the rank of colonel in the Marine Corps, but as a relatively high official with the approval of perhaps his immediate superiors in the National Security Council. It just seems to me -- I mean, some members of this prosecutorial exercise probably made it to the Boy Scouts but not much beyond. I haven't checked on everybody; a few I have. But they still wield enormous power as senators, as members of Congress. So it just seems to me a kind of a false issue to be talking about his rank while he was assigned to the National Security Council. I don't suppose you have any comment on that? And I don't solicit one, but I want to make the point. But I --

COL. DUTTON: The only point I would make, sir, is I never referred to a lieutenant colonel as "lowly."

REP. HYDE: Well, that's --

COL. DUTTON: That's a good way to lose support.

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REP. HYDE: I suppose if you're a lieutenant or a lesser rank, you're right. Now one last question: In your work, because of its covert nature, I know you used code names. Some of them are very interesting -- Steelhammer and Blood & Guts. And you had encryption devices to communicate with each other to keep things from the public gaze, and you talked in obscure, murky terms to conceal the reality. And I understand that, and I've read some of these messages, and I've figured out a lot of the obscure language. DZ, I guess, is Drop Zone. Is that -- and -- but some of the language is obscure to me, and I wonder if you could tell me what -- I know what -- I'll read you the code, and you tell me what you really meant. For instance, your Exhibit 9, RCD-9: "Send Fawn." (Laughter.) "Can't continue on milk and cookies. Regards, Bob." What was the reality behind that code message? (Laughter.)

COL. DUTTON: Sir, that's highly classified.

REP. HYDE: (Laughs.) I wouldn't want that disclosed in public.

COL. DUTTON: Sir, at that point in time, we had finally been

messages, and I've figured out a lot of the obscure language. Sir, I guess, is Drop Zone. Is that -- and -- but some of the language is obscure to me, and I wonder if you could tell me what -- I know what -- I'll read you the code, and you tell me what you really meant. For instance, your Exhibit 9, RCD-9: "Send Fawn." (Laughter.) "Can't continue on milk and cookies. Regards, Bob." What was the reality behind that code message? (Laughter.)

COL. DUTTON: Sir, that's highly classified.

REP. HYDE: (Laughs.) I wouldn't want that disclosed in public.

COL. DUTTON: Sir, at that point in time, we had finally been successful, and it was time to put just a slight bit of levity into what was going on. We'd been dead serious for a long time, and the idea of sending Fawn just struck me at a weak moment. (Laughter.)

REP. HYDE: No one can say you exercised poor judgment all the time, Colonel. I think we could use a little here, too, and I thank you, Colonel. I have no more questions.

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Mr. Broomfield.

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MR. BROOMFIELD: Colonel, all I want to do is compliment you on a number of things. Certainly, your public service to our government has been outstanding. But you're been a very, very impressive witness, and I just want to say that it's nice to have a person like you -- so honest and frank about things. I think every member -- most of the members I've talked to have been extremely impressed with your appearance here today, and I just want to

compliment you.

COL. DUTTON: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Mr. Dutton, I think Mr. Broomfield has expressed it very well for all of us. We thank you very much for your testimony. We're glad to have had you with us, and you have helped the work of the committee. You're excused.

COL. DUTTON: Could I make that one clarification point?

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Oh, yes. Please do, sir. Please do.

COL. DUTTON: If I could make just one point of clarification, and if we can go back to Exhibit 14, which we've all fallen in love with. But, in that exhibit and in testimony that was taken the other day, there was a question asked of, I believe, it was Mr. O'Boyle of how shocked would he be to find out that Gen. Secord had claimed the three Maules to be his and had them part of the enterprise. And, if I could, in Exhibit 14, call attention to page 8 that lists our assets -- and the assets were listed at that time as one C-123, a second C-123, two C-7s, and only one Maule. The three other Maules were always the property of the contras. They had been sold, and I understood the bill of sale has the contra address on it. I have seen them in location -- I mean, in location there. They were never considered part of our operation, and I just thought that it was -- it came as a shock to me to find out that it was stated that Gen. Secord might have called those part of his enterprise. He did not.

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Thank you, sir. You are excused.

MR. DOWD: Mr. Chairman, may I just express on behalf of myself and Col. Dutton -- I just want to thank the committee, but particularly your staff. You've been most professional and courteous over the last few months. I know you get criticized, like other people do in the government. But I just want to thank you and thank Mr. Niels and Mr. Liman and their associates. We've been treated very well, and I just wanted people to know that.

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Mr. Dowd, we thank you for that, and I know the staff will thank you, as well. You are excused, sir. (Whereupon, the witness was excused.) The joint committees will take a five-minute recess while the new witness comes in. (The committee recessed for five minutes.)

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(the witness is sworn in)

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: The questioning will begin by Mr. Barbadoro.

Mr. BARBADORO: Good afternoon Mr. Rodriguez. Your true name is Felix Rodriguez, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, yes.

MR. BARBADORO: And you have also been known by the name of Max Gomez, correct?

FELIX RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, you are a citizen of the United State who was born in Cuba, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: And you came to the United States in 1954 to attend school and in 1958 you moved here permanently. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: From 1960 until 1976 you were involved with a number of operations associated with the Central Intelligence Agency. Could you give the Committee an outline of the activities that you were involved in with the Central Intelligence Agency?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: All right sir. I came to school in 1954, in Pennsylvania, PERKUEM(?) preparatory school. In 1959, I temporarily seperated from my schooling. I went to the Dominican Republic to what was a anti-communist legion at the time. After that, I came back to the States and in 1960 I finally graduated from high school. At the end of 1960 I joined the training camps -- Central American country that we all know -- where later the Bay of Pigs invasion was launched from. I was trained there, I was trained in another Central American country. After that, we were -- as you've asked me to give a run-down on it -- (pause)

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do after the Bay of Pigs invasion?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well there was a group of about 80 people that they seperated from the main force of the brigade, out of which they selected around 35 people. We were infiltrating inside Cuba, approximately 2 months before the invasion, to participate in supporting the resistance inside the country and to await for the Bay of Pigs invasion -- what later became the Bay of Pigs invasion -- to come in.

MR. BARBADORO: And after the invasion failed, you returned to the United States. Is that right?

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I was lucky enough to be able to make it to the embassy of Venezuela, in Havana. Spent five and a half months in the embassy until I was able to leave with a safe conduct for Caracas, Venezuela. After two weeks in there, I was able to make it back to the States with a visa. And soon after that, I was -- (inaudible) -- the leader contact inside the Island after the fiasco -- the Bay of Pigs, I was one of the few who maintained contact and continued to infiltrate the Island several times in support of intelligence operations for the Agency.

MR. BARBADORO: So you were sent to Cuba prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion, eventually came back to the United States after the invasion failed, and were sent back to Cuba on other occasions after the Bay of Pigs invasion. Correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Later on you were sent to Bolivia, were you not?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well that was in 1967, before that I -- 1963 I went to the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant, in a special commission by President Kennedy. And I spent several months in the Army. At that time, I was requested to participate in special operation approved by the President in Central America. And I joined special training camps, and at that point in time, also in Central America in two different countries, we were on a special operations against Castro.

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few months -- sort of a TDY job in another Central American country, Venezuela. And after that, I returned and I was elected between two individuals. Among several individuals, I was one of the two that was elected to go to Bolivia to participate in the capture of the late Che Guerrera.

MR. BARBADORO: All right. So you participated in the capture and interrogation of Che Guevara in Bolivia, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I was the only foreigner who was able to talk to Commander Guevara for approximately two hours before he died.

MR. BARBADORO: All right. After Bolivia, you went to Vietnam, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. After Bolivia, I went in 1968 to train a special intelligence unit in Ecuador. I spent several months in there. And afterwards, I was asked to be a special advisor to the Peruvian police anti-guerrilla unit. As a matter of fact, when I went there, I was not a paratrooper. It was a paratrooper unit. So I might tell this to you. When I first arrived, I was asked if I was a paratrooper, so I did my first jump without ever getting any training. I told them that I was a paratrooper, and (I?) jumped both times and I then got my wings from them. While I was here, the military coup of Delascalvaro(?) took place. My unit was surrounded by the army. Eventually, they solved the problem -- terminated all kind of U.S. aid in Peru at that time. I returned to Miami, and I volunteered to go to Vietnam, which I did in 1970. I extended, and I went there in 1970, '71 and '72.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do in Vietnam?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, in Vietnam, I started advising a special group called the Provincial Reconnaissance Unit. During that time, I started very small to develop [a] helicopter concept that became very successful as time went by, and got recognition from the Armed Forces, and ---

MR. BARBADORO: That helicopter concept was something that was used against insurgents, correct? Could you explain briefly what that helicopter concept was?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. It was very, very difficult to locate very small guerrilla units in the area around Saigon. So the only thing that it occurred to me, [there] had to be eyeball-to-eyeball contact with them. First of all, intelligence was very important. It was very accurate, provided by the Agency. We then ran(?) a very small Hughes 500 helicopter at treetop level with a

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soon as we had eyeball-to-eyeball contact with them, they were
some fire, we were able to mark them with (inaudible) grenade and
get an immediate reaction from the gunships.

MR. BARBADORO: All right. Did Vietnam did you work for a
person named Don Gregg?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. Don Gregg was the regional chief in
the area around Ben Hua(?) of Saigon, what they call Region 3.

MR. BARBADORO: When did you retire from the CIA?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, after that, I did put another tour of
duty in South America and some other in the Caribbean area. And,
due to some back injury that I had sustained, I was recommended in
1975 that I should apply for disability, which I did and it took
about a year to process, and I retired in 1976.

MR. BARBADORO: To get something out of the way right away, Mr.
Rodriguez, is it fair to say that you have spent virtually your
entire adult life fighting Communist movements around the country --
around the world, excuse me?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I have tried my best, sir. It's very hard to
lose your country to Communism, and the experience that we went
through is something that it stick with you, and I want to take
this time to tell you. When I was in Cuba and we felt left alone --
we had nobody to turn to. To me, it was -- the feeling that I see
now in the Nicaraguan freedom fighters, I know their experience
because I was left inside once, and I wanted to help them, as much as
I could. And I suspect that this would be understand [sic] by a lot
of you -- [so that] it doesn't happen to them what happened to us.

MR. BARBADORO: You are also a strong supporter of the contra
cause, then, I take it. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Absolutely, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Would you ever do anything to undermine the
contra cause?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, let me turn to 1983. At some point in 1983, you decided to go to Central America to assist a Central American country there with an insurgency movement that was operating in that country. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: In 1983? I, yes.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you think you could do to help this country with its insurgency movement?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, the scenario change in different part of the world, but I believe that my concept was going to be valid.

MR. BARBADORO: The helicopter concept that you used in Vietnam?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Absolutely, sir. So, I did went to different places. I visit those countries down there. At that time, let me make very clear, was not with any help from people in Washington. It was directly on my own with old friends that I acquired in the past, but it was not much, had much of a luck in implementing the concept at that time.

MR. BARBADORO: Eventually, in 1985, you did go to the Central American country and start to implement your concept. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I did.

MR. BARBADORO: Prior to going there, did you meet with some United States government officials?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I did. I met with several of them. I visited Ernesto Sanchez, US Secretary of Defense for Latin America. I also talked to Don Gregg, and through other means I did meet with officials of Central American countries that were -- they believe I could help with my concept.

MR. BARBADORO: What was Mr. Gregg's position at that time?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He was the assistant to the vice president for national security.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you also meet Col. North before you went to Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. As a matter of fact, the date was December 21st, 1984. I'd like to apologize that my first testimony wasn't that clear, because I didn't recall much at that time. Right now, it's obvious and everybody knows Col. North, very popular. At

that time, he was not very well-known by many people. I've really thought that I was introduced to him by Don Gregg, but having a lunch the other day with a friend of mine from the State Department, he remind to me that on December 21st 1984, while I was in his office and telling him that I was planning to visit Dawn at the White House, he suggested that I meet with Col. North who had the responsibility of the area in Central America where I was planning to go and believe that we have common ideals, and he could be very helpful. So, he called (inaudible) Dawn secretary, who made the arrangements so I could meet the Col. in his office, after my meeting with Mr. Gregg.

MR. BARBADORO: What happened in that meeting with Col. North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I went over to see him after I finished my meeting with Mr. Gregg, and I carried an album that I had from my experience, sort of to show him my capabilities in that field, expecting that he could help me also. I would turn to any help I could anywhere to be able to go and try my concept in Central America.

MR. BARBADORO: Did he agree to support you in your efforts in trying to go to this Central American country?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: In general terms, I would say he was very positive about it.

MR. BARBADORO: Also, did you meet with Vice President Bush prior to going to the Central American country?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I asked Mr. Gregg that I had an interest of meeting the Vice President. So, he arranged for me, I believe it was the 29th of January, for a very brief meeting.

MR. BARBADORO: It was 1985? Is that correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: 1985. It was not even recorded. I was just to go in and shake hands and we spend a little longer time because, if I recall, there was a news program where they had the Vice President's family. We watched it together, and I showed him my album, and he was very interested in my life story.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you tell the Vice President that you intended to go to this Central American country to assist them with your helicopter concepts?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, I did, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you have any discussion with the Vice President at that time about the contras?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. None whatsoever.

MR. BARBADORO: How long did that meeting last?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, it tooks probably a little bit longer than we expected, because he was actually watching the tv program with his family. So, but actually our conversation was specifically showing my album; I even brought him an album that I have picture taken with Che Guevara and others, and I think it was very interesting for him when he saw it. We shook hands and I left.

MR. BARBADORO: When did you actually go to Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, I actually arrived in a Central American country where I worked and help these people in -- exactly on the 15 of March, 1985.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do when you got there?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, when I got there, first of all, I had an introduction to the local people where I went there. And, when I got there, it was sort of settled my shop in a place that a friend of mine provided for me, which is in the city, and is a private individual which I know, and he's a local nationality, not in the US. And, I sort of very easily tried to start

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providing the -- my advice, which was very hard to do at the time, because very few people would understand how anybody would go there and trying to implement a concept like that without requesting any money. I believe if I had requested a salary it would have been much easier than what it was, because nobody would believe that somebody could do this for free.

MR. BARBADORO: You weren't being paid for what you were doing?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir, I was not being paid. I was paid morally by own feelings.

MR. BARBADORO: All right. How were you supporting yourself while you were down there?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, my retirement would take care of my family. This friend of mine who was a local individual, provided me with a place to stay and I consigned(?) to pay where I was for food.

MR. BARBADORO: And did you begin to assist the government?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was hard, in the beginning it was very hard. I had a big break in April 18 when we were able to capture a commandante alive. And that was my breaking point in introducing the concept and getting respect for the local people for the concept itself.

MR. BARBADORO: Between March of 1985 and September of 1985, how many missions did you engage in for this government?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, all together, sir, it was over 100. I don't know exactly during that period. My helicopter was hit over 15 different times, I crashed once, I was able to fly back, my pilot was wounded in one of the operations.

MR. BARBADORO: Between March and September of 1985, did you do anything to support the contras, or were your activities solely confined to assisting the government with the counter-insurgency operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was monthly, yes, strictly on that type of a deal(?) the helicopter concept, and trying to get parts, it was some kind of hard to get it at times.

MR. BARBADORO: When did you first hear from Colonel North after arriving in Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I think we met in several occasions, sir, during that period. One point in time he asked me that he wanted to talk to me, I think it was in Washington, I cannot recall the exact time, but it was before September of '85. We just -- because of his schedule and mine we could not get together, so he told me he was sending me a letter that will give me, you know, his ideas, what he wanted me to do.

MR. BARBADORO: And did you get a letter from Colonel North in September of 1985?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I finally got it while I was down there on the 29th of September, and the letter was dated the 20th of September.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, could you take a look at Exhibit FIR-1?

(Pause while looking for exhibit.)

MR. BARBADORO: And there should be a book of the exhibits in front you.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: What was it, say that again, sir?

MR. BARBADORO: There should be -- the exhibits should be in the book in front of you. It has a copy of the letter you received from Colonel North, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: What did this letter ask you to do?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was basically a request from the area where I was -- location for maintenance of aircraft. I was told that where they were operating it was very difficult to maintain their aircraft, they didn't have any place with enough security to do it. And he felt that I had the respect of the people where I was, and I could be instrumental in asking them to see if they would support strictly for a space ramp(?) to maintain his aircraft.

MR. BARBADORO: Let's go over this letter in a little more detail, Mr. Rodriguez. The letter notified you that the UNO FDN air arm was going to commence a resupply operation using a C-7 aircraft and a Caribou aircraft, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, a C-7 and a Caribou are the same thing, sir, yes.

MR. BARBADORO: I'm -- a C-7 Caribou and a Maule aircraft, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: And what the letter asks you to do was to provide maintenance facilities at the airbase in the country where you were working. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. It's basically to get a space. I was told that there would be no need for any local maintenance, the group will have their own maintenance and clear people -- clear personnel that would be able to maintain this aircraft.

MR. BARBADORO: So, the FDN would provide the mechanics to work on the planes, all that Colonel North wanted was for you to gain the permission of the government to use the airbase as a place to work on the planes, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Did this letter say anything to you about storing arms and ammunition on this airbase?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. Nothing whatsoever. Strictly a space.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do after you got the letter?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, I contacted the individuals that could help me in this. I explained to them the need for this type of an operation and I got the concurrence to go ahead with it. I think it was(?) to the best interest to every single country in Central America.

MR. BARBADORO: And did you call Colonel North to tell him that you had gotten the permission of the authorities to use the airbase?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I called him on the following day and told him that it was a go, and the only thing that I had to wait was the letter explaining that somebody would contact me by the name of Mr. Green, and he would be the one who will help to implement and set up this shop down there.

MR. BARBADORO: And were you eventually contacted by someone who identified himself as working for Mr. Green?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. In the middle of December 1985, it was.

MR. BARBADORO: Tell us about that contact, was it by telephone?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir it was a

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telephone call and the individual identified himself as Mr. Green. The voice sounded familiar, so I knew who he was.

MR. BARBADORO: Who was it?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Rafael Quintero.

MR. BARBADORO: And how did you know Rafael Quintero?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well sir, we were together back in the Bay of Pigs invasion. We infiltrated Cuba together at that time. As a matter of fact, after the failure of the invasion, the -- one of my operation in reestablish the link inside Cuba, he was one of the people that I infiltrated inside Cuba at the time.

We also worked together in the other program in Central America in 1963, '64, '65.

MR. BARBADORO: What did Mr. Quintero say to you in this conversation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He explained to me that he was on behalf of Mr. Green, and they -- he will require if I will get authority for arrival on the following day of a Boeing 707, which he described as "heavy stuff," which I understood to be military equipment.

MR. BARBADORO: You understood to be military equipment?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And did the 707 arrive the next day?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir, it did.

MR. BARBADORO: What was it carrying?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Pardon?

MR. BARBADORO: What was the 707 carrying?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was carrying military equipment, basically the things that we got all along, but after that it was 81 millimeter rounds, it was 60 millimeter rounds and AK-47 ammunition, some C-4 explosives. It was somewhere around the 85,000 pounds load of equipment.

MR. BARBADORO: So the plane carried approximately 85,000 pounds of various types of ammunition?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's right, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Who owned this 707?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, it had the marking of Southern Air Transport.

MR. BARBADORO: And did you subsequently learn where these arms had come from?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, according to the manifest that was not accurate, because it said only 36 pound on board, it was coming from Portugal.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do with the ammunition?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was -- we had to storage in a local warehouse.

MR. BARBADORO: You stored it at a warehouse on the airbase, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Later on, did other 707's carrying ammunition arrive at the airbase?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir, I believe it did. Several came in on the following year.

MR. BARBADORO: And approximately how many airplanes came in loaded with ammunition?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I would say approximately between five and six, the amount about 500,000 pounds of equipment that we had a storage in the warehouse, give or take.

MR. BARBADORO: And approximately when did this ammunition -- when was this ammunition delivered to the airport?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I believe it was done (?) in March of 1986.

MR. BARBADORO: So between December of 1985 and March of 1986?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I would say the first part of 1986 most of them came in.

MR. BARBADORO: And all the ammunition was stored at this warehouse on the airbase?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir.

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MR. BARBADORO: Did you also receive flights carrying non-lethal aid?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir. There were some L-100 that came in with non-lethal aid.

MR. BARBADORO: And about when did those flights come in?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Let me check some of the notes that I have here, sir.

(Pause)

MR. RODRIGUEZ: (Off-mike) -- February -- no, the first one came on January 17.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, could you pull the microphone a little bit closer?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: All right.

MR. BARBADORO: Thank you sir.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Sorry.

MR. BARBADORO: And how many flights came in carrying non-lethal aid?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Sir, you know, as I was telling you, it's not easy for me to recall, because at the same time, I was doing my flying, so it was on and off. If I give you an exact amount it would not be very accurate, but --

MR. BARBADORO: Would it be less than ten flights?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Could be around -- less than ten is correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Where was the non-lethal aid stored?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Same place.

MR. BARBADORO: It was stored in the warehouse along with the ammunition?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Did a C-7 Caribou arrive at the airbase at some point?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Finally.

MR. BARBADORO: When was that?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, it didn't actually arrive, it actually had an emergency landing before it got there. It was in such a poor condition that he had to drop everything that was on the inside in the middle of the field and eventually make an emergency landing nearby our area. And it was --

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Would it have been in February or March of 1986?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was in February of 1986, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And you mentioned there were some problems with the aircraft? Could you describe what those were?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir. It lost one engine and normally those aircraft were supposed to be able to fly with the other engine. It was in such a poor shape that it could not fly with one engine alone. Even at sea level, after dropping everything from the inside, it still would not fly. So it had to make emergency landing.

MR. BARBADORO: All right. You say

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they had to drop things out of the plane. What did they drop out of the plane?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: They dropped spare parts and a spare engine, and even the manuals (?); the spare tires and everything.

MR. BARBADORO: This was while they were flying to the air base in Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Right, that's when they were trying to find a place to land for an emergency, before they even got to the air base.

MR. BARBADORO: Did additional aircraft arrive at the air base?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, then eventually one Maule arrived and then one C-123.

MR. BARBADORO: Once the operation became fully operational, how many aircraft were there?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, we had altogether, I would say after June, 25. We had altogether two C-123. We had two C-7 (?) Caribou and one Maule.

MR. BARBADORO: When did the operation actually start to make air drops?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, there was a first air drop -- as I recall, it was made by the L-100 (?), and it actually was made at nine (?). The first time they could not talk to the -- they did talk to the people, but were not able to find them. On the second night they were successful in finding them (?); at nighttime they make a successful air drop in the south front.

MR. BARBADORO: Would that have been in March of 1986?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Could be, sir. I'm too good at dates, and I didn't follow that closely.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, were there records made of what was taken out of the warehouse to be dropped to the contra forces?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: What was taken out of it?

MR. BARBADORO: Were there records kept of what was taken out of the warehouse?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I made it available to this Committee.

represent to you that FIR-3 is the translation of FIR-2.

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: Right, that's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Are these the records of what was distributed from the warehouse between May and September, which you provided to the Committee?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, sir. I believe it to be very accurate.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, the records that you provided us showed that there were nine resupply drops to the southern front forces between May and September, and nine to the FDN forces in the north between May and September. Would you accept that as an air estimate of the number of resupply drops that were made during that period?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I have no reason to believe otherwise.

MR. BARBADORO: They also show that the vast majority of the drops were made in September of 1986. Is that your recollection of when the drops were made?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Why did it take until September for these drops to be made?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That was about the time that all the problems that the aircraft were having were able to be corrected; in the meantime -- agents (?) and communication equipment and navigational gears and all the problems that you had in timing (?) through all of that months (?) were finally taken care of and finally were in operational condition about that time.

MR. BARBADORO: What was your role in this air resupply operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, my role was, sir, to coordinate with the local authorities and this group and try to facilitate their entrance to the area and the clearance to take off and land, and logistical (?) of the houses (?) where all the personnel lived.

MR. BARBADORO: Is it fair to say that you acted as a liaison with the host government?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's fair, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And without your connections with the host government, the operation wouldn't have been able to operate out of the air base. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, after it was established, I would assume that nobody is indispensable, that somebody else could have taken my role.

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MR. BARBADORO: You also managed a fuel fund, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I made a point to keep very clear records on that for my own responsibility with the local people, and you have been given the complete details of those (inaudible) that we managed -- that you go from every single (inaudible) to every aircraft, the date when it was put in there and the cost that we paid for it.

MR. BARBADORO: Col. Dutton has testified that he was concerned about giving you money for the fuel fund. How did you manage to obtain control of this fuel fund, and why did you obtain control of the fuel fund?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, it was not a matter of gaining control of the fuel fund. It was a matter of establishing -- it was established that way. And to facilitate the movement, we agreed that only two individuals had access to sign for the fuel. So they would bring the money in cash; we would deposit it with the local accountant. And we obtained a receipt for the exact amount that we have given them, and then maintain a precise record of every single dollar that we have spent and kept the balance. When it was (inaudible), we allowed those people to know in Washington that (inaudible) plans (?) to replace it.

MR. BARBADORO: And you have given those records to the committees, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Complete, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: When you first got this letter from Col. North in September, who did you think was going to be running this resupply operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I had no idea.

MR. BARBADORO: At some point in February of 1986, did you learn that Tom Clines was connected with the operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was a gradual process. Even when I talked to Mr. Quintero, he never told me who all was involved. I thought at the beginning that he was dealing directly with Col. North. And then somebody who was in a neighboring country approached me and mentioned to me that they had received a boat, and that's where they (?) got the figures that have been so widely publicized. And Mr. Clines was waiting for the boat, and he was able to receive the manifest. It could have been not during (inaudible); maybe before that.

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And, this individual mentioned to me that in the manifest, the hand grenades that they were charging Mr. Calero over \$9 dollars were being bought in Switzerland a little bit over \$3 dollars, which make a tremendous profits of 200%, and that concerned me.

MR. BARBADORO: Who did you you understand was selling the hand grenades to the contras?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It wasn't that clear to me, sir. I just knew the fact that the boat had arrived, that someone was waiting for it, and the price was tremendously high.

MR. BARBADORO: And, when you say "Tom", you mean Tom Clines. Right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And, it was your understanding that these hand grenades were being sold for \$9 dollars when they actually cost \$3 dollars?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's what I was told, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: How'd you know Tom Clines?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I knew Tom back in the 1961. When I came back from Venezuela, he was my case officer. I want to make clear to tell you that we were very close friends. I had a high regard for him at the time. It was unfortunate because of the Wilson and Libyan situation in 1979, we completely broke with each other. It was very hard for me, because he did a lot for me and my career, but it got a point in time where perhaps principles and what I have fought for so long became conflict with Mr. Clines' activities at the time. From that time, we didn't have any fight or anything, but we just separated from that time on.

MR. BARBADORO: So, you knew Tom Clines from your days working for the CIA. Correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And you are a close friend of his?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And, at some point you broke with Mr. Clines.

is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And, what was the reason for breaking with Mr. Clines?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, I knew about his involvement with Mr. Wilson at the time, and I had very little respect for Mr. Wilson and connection with Gadhafi, which I consider an enemy of Cuba, and enemy of the United States. And, at that point in time, we sort of separated, and I rather not speculate more about it.

MR. BARBADORO: And, what was your reaction when you learned that Mr. Clines was connected with this operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was a big surprise, because I know how he was very close to Mr. Quintero, and why wouldn't he have tell me anything about it. So, I felt it kind of funny that he was involved in that and never even told me of anything.

MR. BARBADORO: Were you concerned that Mr. Clines was involved with the operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: When did you learn that General Secord was running this operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, it had to do with a incident of a mechanic that came to our area.

MR. BARBADORO: That would have been February of 1986. Wasn't it?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: Why don't you describe that incident?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Let me give you the exact date, if I don't forget that date. It was on the 5th of February of 1986. We had been told -- I believe it was a phone call from Mr. Gadd to pick up this mechanic who was going to be working as our product(?) the day before. Our people went to pick him up at the airport, and they actually could not identify the individual. It turned out to be that, what they told me because I never saw the individual, was that he was so old, it looked like he was walking to a nursery home after that. So, but that afternoon, he called in to the house and he was picked up by some of the people, American crews, and on the following day I had a call from Mr. Vernon Hughes which I consider a professional and a friend of mine, and he asked me that he wanted --

of the resupply operation.

MR. BARBADORO: He was one of the employees of the resupply operation?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: So, he came to me and told me, he said, "Look, Max, we got a problem here." I say, "Why?" He said, "This guy came here and the first evening he drank 24 beers. Second day, he drank 36, and he said he was told that this was a money-making operation, that he didn't like our house, that he wanted to move to a hotel." He mentioned that he had made \$5,000 dollars in Belize while fixing a plane that was going to do some contraband in Mexico, and that he himself have participated in fixing some airplanes in Puerto Rico, that were Colombian that had to do with drugs. He told Mr. Hughes not to tell him anything where he was, or what was our operation about it, and to try to get him a ticket to leave immediately, our area.

MR. BARBADORO: And, did you call Col. North to complain about this mechanic?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I called on the 5th. On that day, I called the Colonel. Maybe that's why I'm security risk. I called him on the open telephone. We didn't have the equipment at the time. And, I told him that that was not the agreement that he had told me about it. He told me the people were clear, coming down here and explain to him the incident I just told you. Before I finished that, he said, "Wait, here is the man that you have to talk to. He's in charge of this. Here's Dick." He put Dick on the phone. And, later I understood that Dick was General Secord.

MR. BARBADORO: Who told you that the Dick on the telephone was General Secord?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I thought at the beginning it was the a big guy because the voice didn't sound familiar. He was very -- Generals have a very peculiar voice, very strong one. And, he say, "All right, I'll take care of that." I said, "It's all right if I send him back tomorrow, sir?" He said, "That's fine. Do that." And, that's what I did.

MR. BARBADORO: So, you sent the mechanic back the next day?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I don't think he ever knew

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where he was or what type of operation it was.

MR. BARBADORO: He spent two days in Central America and had 24 beers the first day and 36 the second ---

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. BARBADORO: And the next day, you sent him back. Is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, and he didn't know why. We said that we just -- we didn't have any requirement at that time for him. We just came up and just sent him back.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you later meet with Gen. Secord in Central America?

MR. BARBADORO: Yes, sir. I did.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: When was that?

MR. BARBADORO: He came accompanying Col. North in a meeting that took place in my area. I think it was -- sorry about my memory on this, but I have to refer to my notes.

MR. BARBADORO: Let me remind you. It was on April 20th, 1986, wasn't it?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay, that's correct. On April 20th, they came in a jet -- in a private jet -- a November 10-12 Bravo(?), if I recall correctly. And there was supposed to be a meeting between them and Mr. Bermudez -- sort of a coordination type deal.

MR. BARBADORO: Who was Mr. Bermudez?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He's the military chief of the FDN for the north front.

MR. BARBADORO: What happened at that meeting?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, the FDN were not very happy with the

too old. They thought that [they were] not only old, they didn't carry enough equipment. It was a tremendous risk to resupply a unit deep inside Nicaragua with that type of an aircraft. The payload that we carry was very small and the risk would be too great. He thought that they should buy better aircraft, and bigger and faster aircraft.

MR. BARBADORO: What ---

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: He shared that concern [with] Col. North, and Col. North told him that those were donations, that he didn't control that -- that, if he had the money to buy, he probably would buy him a C-130. But, since he didn't have money to buy, whoever donated [to] him aircraft, that's what he will take and make it available to them. It was better than nothing. Also that they were going to have crews capable of flying this aircraft, and they will teach the AVN(?) that it could be flown in there and it could be done safely, and they could serve the purpose.

MR. BARBADORO: When Mr. Bermudez complained to Col. North about the condition of the aircraft, Col. North's response was that the aircraft had been donated and there was nothing he could do about the condition, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, sir. And that's probably where I got my idea that, if it were a donation, it does belong to the Nicaraguan freedom fighter.

MR. BARBADORO: Did Col. North also say something about training FDN pilots to operate the aircraft?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: What did he say?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He said about it that, when they got sufficient confidence on this aircraft, then they maybe would be willing to go ahead and get their pilot -- talking about the Nicaraguan pilot -- trained so they can continue with the mission.

MR. BARBADORO: Was there also discussion at this meeting about end-user certificates for blow-pipe missiles?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Tell us about that.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I was requested about two-three weeks before by Mr. Quintero that there was a need, which I recognized to be very valid, of some ground-to-air missile to provide to the Nicaraguans.

They had this new helicopter. And he said that they will require a local end-user certificate to acquire the blow-pipes. This unit was from a South American country whose company's name was Udall(?) in Panama. No, excuse me. It was Lake Resources in Panama -- and to make the certificate in the name of Lake Resources, and that it was a South American country who owned this company and had the missiles.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you obtain the end-user certificates in the name of Lake Resources?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I did.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you have a discussion with Col. North at this meeting about the end-user certificates?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. I asked him before I even asked our friends to provide it, if it was all right to go ahead and produce this end-user certificate, and he told me yes. So I gave the end-user certificate to Gen. Secord.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you ever learn whether the end-user certificates had been used?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. After a month or a month-and-a-half or two months, I inquired from them what happened to the deal, and I was told that the deal was dead. They couldn't get any agreement with the South American country who had the unit. And knowing the importance of something like this, and I felt responsible for getting this certificate, I requested very strongly that I be returned to the country several times.

MR. BARBADORO: Were the end-user certificates returned?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. It was never returned.

MR. BARBADORO: Do you know what happened to them?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, at some point that spring, did you make a decision to leave the resupply operation and your involvement with the country in Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Two days after that trip, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: What was the reason for your

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decision to leave?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, it was a very personal reason. I don't know if I got a sixth feeling or something, but after I saw all the people in there I didn't feel comfortable with it, and I thought I'd better leave.

MR. BARBADORO: You didn't trust the people that were running this operation, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Basically, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: You didn't trust General Secord and you didn't trust Tom Clines, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: On this type of operation and that much money, no, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Why didn't you trust them?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I think it's my -- it's hard for me to answer that. It was just a feeling. I just didn't want any part of the operation any more at that point.

MR. BARBADORO: Well, let me suggest something to you, could it have been that you were concerned that in prior activities that General Secord and Tom Clines had been in profiteering and you were concerned that they might be involved in profiteering in this case, as well?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: You said it. It could be.

MR. BARBADORO: Well, what's your answer?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I don't have any specific; I just had a

feeling, sir, I just wanted to leave at that time.

(Pause.)

I like to speak when I have proof, and I don't, I think it's for somebody else to determine in a court of law.

MR. BARBADORO: Let's see if we can leave it this way. Is it fair to say that you were concerned about the people that were running this operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: There has been considerable testimony about communication security devices called KL-43s. Did you ever have a KL-43?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I had a KL-43 and I all together sent over 77 messages with -- I gave copy to you of all of it.

MR. BARBADORO: Who did you communicate with using the KL-43?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I check the record again, cause all the time it was Mr. Quintero, it was Mr. Dutton, and I believe there was one message to Mr. Cooper that was used in the machine that I had from somebody else in Miami(?). But the rest of the 76 messages were between myself and Quintero, and myself and Mr. Dutton.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you ever use the KL-43 to communicate with Colonel North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir, never did.

MR. BARBADORO: Let me go back to your decision to leave in May, and let me ask you, at around the same time did you have an appointment to meet with Vice President Bush?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: When did that meeting take place?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: The meeting actually took place on the first of May of 1986.

MR. BARBADORO: Prior to the meeting did you meet with Colonel North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was after the meeting that I had this contact.

MR. BARBADORO: Who was at the meeting with Vice President Bush?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, if you want me to go a little bit backwards, when I decided to leave I communicated to my local friend in the area that I was planning to leave. I would not give him any reason; I just told him that I was tired, that I had been for a year flying there. I had been separated from my family too long, and I was going to leave for a while. He asked me why, that he was concerned. He believed that I was very useful in the area and he wanted to know why I was leaving. It didn't make much sense to him that I had taken the decision right after that trip. I told him that I will return and I explain to him after I make my final decision.

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I requested that day to meet with the ambassador of that place, which was a friend of mine. I want to make sure that everybody knows I did not discuss with him anything on the military aspect of it. That we were in a meeting before where humanitarian aid was considered, and he was there and I was there. I didn't tell the ambassador either my principal motive for leaving, I just told him that I was planning to leave, that I was tired, that I would also feel bad about, I put it like begging for airline ticket for my friends to be able to commute back and forth to Central America. And he told me that I was doing a magnificent job from the helicopter concept, he hate to see me leave, but anyway he took my address and telephone number, he'd like to keep, as a friend, keep in touch.

MR. BARBADORO: Let's then move ahead to May 1st. And I want to ask you again, didn't you meet with Colonel North before meeting with the Vice President?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I made a point during that meeting to go a little earlier to the White House. I went to the third floor to Colonel North's office. I didn't give him any reason, I gave basically the same reason that I gave my other friend. I told him, I said, "Look Colonel, I am tired. I have been well over a year now down there, and I can arrange for anybody else to continue with this type of operation, but I am leaving."

MR. BARBADORO: What was Colonel North's reaction when you told him you were leaving?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He told me that I was very important to state, that all soliders get tired, and to take a week's vacation if I wanted. But he didn't want me to leave. And I told him I was still leaving, I was still planning to leave.

MR. BARBADORO: What happened then?

4. MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I left his office. I came downstairs to the office of Mr. Gregg and we jointly went to visit the Vice President. I had carried with me an album of my operations in Central American country where I was which shows my helicopter operation. It shows even my crash in the helicopter while we recover it, and the whole sequence of that. I briefed the Vice President --

MR. BARBADORO: Who else was at the meeting, besides you and Mr. Gregg?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was Sam Watson and it was also Nick Brady(?), a senator, I believe who was in the Kissinger Commission,

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and the Vice President said he that it was -- he thought it was interesting to Mr. Brady to stay since he was in the Kissinger Commission interested in Central American affairs.

MR. BARBADORO: How long did the meeting last?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It could have lasted anywhere between 15 minutes and 25 minutes, because it took a little time while I was showing him the album. And I went by to explain to him why I started, the problem that I had with the operation in the area where I was, all the problems that I went through to finally get the operation established, the successes that we had. And I also explained to him the report that we had that the guerilla in the area had reduced tremendously from 11-12,000 when I was there until less than 4,000 at that point in time.

MR. BARBADORO: What operation are you referring to?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Helicopter operation.

MR. BARBADORO: So you told the Vice President about what you were doing in conjunction with the government of that Central American country in dealing with the insurgency, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct, sir. And I showed him the album that had to do with my operation there. I want to make clear that at no point in any of this conversation did I ever mention

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doing anything that will remotely be connected to the Nicaraguans -- to the Contras.

MR. BARBADORO: You anticipated my next question Mr. Rodriguez.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I knew you were coming to that. (laughter)

MR. BARBADORO: Let's be sure we're clear on that. Did you say anything to Vice-President Bush about your activities on behalf of this resupply operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No sir. Not to him or anyone on his staff.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you say anything to Vice-President Bush about what Colonel North was doing in connection with the resupply operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No sir, not at all.

MR. BARBADORO: Why didn't you discuss this with Vice-President Bush?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I didn't see a reason why to discuss it -- to the area it went -- it was for something completely different and now they have become a big issue. At the time it was just -- it wasn't of that important. I didn't feel that it was my duty to tell him or anybody else, for that matter.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you tell Vice-President Bush of your decision to leave the Central American country?

decision to leave the Central American country?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I was planning to sir.

MR. BARBADORO: What happened?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, when we went into the meeting, I was just about -- I was showing him the picture from my helicopter concept -- and the aide came in and said that the Ambassador to the area where I was, wanted to talk to him briefly. And the Vice-President said, if I recall correctly, said, "He didn't have time, he had somebody else, another appointment" and his aide insisted that it would take it only a few seconds. So, at that point in time the Vice-President agreed, and the Ambassador to the country where I was came in with Colonel North. Colonel North did stay in the background, and the Ambassador came in and shook hands with all of us and he told the Vice-President that I had done a magnificent job in his area and that he wanted that as long as he was Ambassador there, that I will stay. I'm sure the Vice-President knew what he was talking about because I haven't made my decision that I was leaving yet.

MR. BARBADORO: So at that point, you decided to stay?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: It was kind of hard, and I think everybody got flattered when -- It's not everyday a ambassador goes there and asks the Vice-President for somebody to stay in a country. So I think that I made that decision.

MR. BARBADORO: So out of embarrassment about telling the Vice-President you were going to leave, you decided to stay and you returned to Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. I didn't even mention anything from there on.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you meet with the Vice-President again later in May?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. We knew there was going to be a celebration that takes place in Miami -- Cuban Independence Day on the 20 of May, so I did visit that place with a local officer friend of mine. And we met with the Vice-President very, very briefly. It was in a room with about forty different people and he came in and shook hands with us and I asked him if he would take a picture with my friend's wife, with him, which he did, gladly. And he introduced us to his son, Jeff, and that was about the extent of it.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you say anything at this meeting with the Vice-President, about what you were doing, in connection with the resupply effort?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Not at all.

with the Vice-President?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No sir. That's all the three meeting that we ever had. If you can consider this a meeting, it was very, very short.

MR. BARBADORO: Colonel Dutton has described a meeting, which he and you attended in Colonel North's office in June of 1986. Do you remember that meeting?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir.

MR. BARBADORO: What was the purpose of that meeting?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, when I was called, over the telephone by Mr. Quintero -- actually what I was told over the telephone -- they were considering making me a manager for the area -- I have no idea one way or the other -- And they wanted me to go to talk them in Washington. And later in that day, Mr. Dutton called and he asked me if I could be in Washington by the 25th of June.

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MR. BARBADORO: And did you go to Washington on the 25th of June?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir. I flew into the Washington area on the 24th. I was staying at a hotel, he called me that night. Then he informed me later on that we were going to have a meeting at the White House at Colonel North's office at noontime.

MR. BARBADORO: What happened at the meeting?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, let me tell you when I got in there, I was thinking, Mr. (inaudible) one and two punch. And it was something a little bit similar here, probably to -- for me to (inaudible) my position with these people -- first of all we got into the gate of the White House and Mr. Dutton was clear and I was not. I don't know if it was purposely not.

At the same time, I had requested, on my own, a meeting -- not a meeting, but access to one of the secretaries at the Vice-President's office, to be able to pick up the photograph of my friend's wife with the Vice-President. She had been asking for it, and, of course, since they didn't know anybody or people like that, they asked me to come up and pick up the book that they have, the picture of the two of them, so that the Vice-President will sign it for them.

So I asked them to call the office and, as I understand, the Vice-President was out of the country, and so was Don. And one of the secretaries there -- Medley(?), I believe -- was going to take me at 1:30 to pick up this picture. So we got in there before time -- we got in at 12 o'clock, because I had this other meeting with

the Colonel and I wasn't in, so I called in and finally got myself clear. And we finally got into the office of Colonel North, which is a different office at this time, two level.

MR. BARBADORO: When you got into the meeting, with Colonel North and Mr. Dutton, did you discuss this proposed reorganization plan? .

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He showed me the paper of the reorganization with more (inaudible) than people that we had. But it looks pretty impressive in paper.

MR. BARBADORO: What was your role to be in this reorganized operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I was the liaison between them and the host government.

MR. BARBADORO: What was your reaction when you were shown the reorganization plan?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I smiled. I just gave it back to him, the papers.

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MR. BARBADORO: Did Colonel North also talk to you about a communication security problem at that meeting?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes sir. The Colonel started by saying that Bob here, referring to Mr. Dutton, one of his people down there said you have been very helpful with them, and they want you to be part of this organization. But, I am not sure because, you know, I have been told that you are a security risk. That you open -- you speak openly over the telephone, over a radio that you have. And I have to admit that it was mad, and frank. I'll be very polite here, but my words to him were not that polite. I told him that, if he thought I was a security risk, he could -- in very stronger word -- keep his operation, I would have nothing to do with it.

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I had nothing to do with it. He told me that I had to understand that it was a matter of record that I had been a security risk. And I said, "Well, prove it to me. Show me any paper that says I have compromised any operation in this process." The colonel told me that because of the freedom of information act, or whatever -- I don't recall exactly what he said -- that he could not show it to me. I said, "Well, I'll give you an authority paper. I'll sign for you any paper you want so that the CIA, the FBI, the NSC, will release any of my telephone conversations to you or to the press or to the world. But prove to me that I am a security risk." He lowered his face, he took some notes, and he didn't mention that (?) to me. And then he asked, he wanted me to accept that job and receive compensation of \$3,000 a month.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you agree to work for \$3,000 a month?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. I told him that I had a retirement (?); that I would help him the same. Then he asked me, "Well, you don't want to be part of the organization?" I said, "It's not a matter of being a part of the organization or not. I will help you all the way along if you need that. He told me, "Well, think about your family." It was kind of ironic, because in a year and a half that I had been flying down there, nobody ever worried about my family.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, did you also complain to Col.

North about the condition of the aircraft that were being used in the resupply operation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I did.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you tell him?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, we explained to him the poor condition of the aircraft. I brought up with me a concern that was (inaudible) by one of the pilots, and it was right after one of their aircraft almost crashed. It had such poor equipment that it was about 10 miles off (inaudible) we were flying at nighttime, and it hit the top of a mountain. It destroyed the left jet engine. We took pieces of wood about this size from inside the engine. And this crew wrote a letter of complaint to them the following day. I got a hold of a copy and I brought it up with me.

I gave it to the colonel and the colonel started reading this letter, and he looked at Mr. Dutton, looked at me, and said, "Is this a joke?" And I said, "I don't believe it's a joke. These people who wrote it almost got killed the day before they wrote that." So he looked at Dutton and said, "Do you know about this letter?" And Dutton said, "Oh, yes, but (inaudible) was important to bring it to your attention." So the colonel said, "Well, you know, a letter like this, if it goes to the press, will do a lot of harm." He said -- Mr. Dutton answered, "Don't worry about it. He's now our chief maintenance officer for the whole program, and we have increased his salary tremendously starting next month."

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MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, take a look at Exhibit FIR-4. Is that the letter that you showed to Col. North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, that's the letter.

MR. BARBADORO: Who wrote that letter?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. Payowarte (?).

MR. BARBADORO: And who is he?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He's one of the pilots that was in the operation; a retired colonel, as I recall, or lieutenant colonel.

MR. BARBADORO: What was wrong with these aircraft?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: They were very old. The communication equipment was very old. The radars were very old and would not -- well, you have all the -- in the letter -- explaining all the anomalies and all the problems that they had. You can read some of it, if you wish, of what his complaint was.

MR. BARBADORO: Well, did the planes have inadequate radar?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: According to all that he wrote here, it didn't have anything adequate.

4. equipment to detect radar?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I (inaudible), what I brought back. This was a small radar detector. I imagine it was to detect the radar system inside Nicaragua. It couldn't have been that expensive, because it was a Fox (?) Double-X made by RadioShack (?).

MR. BARBADORO: It was a radar detector used for cars, is that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: In this case it was used by airplanes.

MR. BARBADORO: And they were using a radar detector for cars to detect radar in the airplanes.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: Were there other problems with the aircraft?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Ask me if there was anything right with it, and I might be able to answer (inaudible).

MR. BARBADORO: Well, is it fair to say that the aircraft were frequently broken down?

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: They were frequently flying (?); not too much. Most of the time they were broken down, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: They were broken down more often than they were working, isn't that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, they were very old and they were hard to maintain.

MR. BARBADORO: And in your opinion, did these aircraft, because of their poor condition, pose a safety risk for the people flying them?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Absolutely, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: In fact, one of the aircraft hit the top of a mountain, and that's what prompted this letter to be written, isn't that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: What was Col. North's reaction when you showed him this letter?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, he -- I just explained to you the reaction that he took to it. He looked at Dutton and --

MR. BARBADORO: Could you repeat it, please?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: He looked at Mr. Dutton and said -- well, first of all he looked at me and said, "Is this a joke?" And I said, "No, I don't think it's a joke when the people who wrote it almost got killed the day before." And then he looked to Mr. Dutton and said, "Do you know about this?" And Dutton said, "Yes, but I didn't think (?) it was important to bring it to your attention." So he said, "The situation like this, if the press got a hold of it, would bring a lot of problems." So Mr. Dutton answered, "Well, you don't have to worry about it. He's now our chief maintenance pilot and his salary has been increased starting next month."

MR. BARBADORO: So Mr. Dutton's reaction was to promote the person complaining rather than to improve the aircraft.

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MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, apparently, he had taken that decision before this, the way it sounded to me.

MR. BARBADORO: After discussing the condition of the aircraft with Mr. Dutton present, did you ask to speak to Col. North alone?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir, I did.

MR. BARBADORO: What did you say to Col. North when you spoke to him alone?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I was very concerned with the whole thing, and I asked if I could talk to him briefly alone. And I looked straight at him and said, "Colonel" -- it's pretty hard for me to go over this here. I said, "Colonel" ---

MR. BARBADORO: I'd like you to repeat what you told him, please.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I said, "Colonel, I have learned that there are people stealing here. I have to understand that there are hand

involved connected to the Wilson case before, it's going to be worse than Watergate, and this could destroy the President of the United States." He told me that that was not the case, that Mr. Clines was a patriot, that Mr. Clines was not buying any equipment from anybody, that he was just helping him with the transportation of the equipment. So, at that point, I told him that I was going to leave. I had to go down to pick up some pictures, and I left the room.

MR. BARBADORO: And was that your last meeting with Col. North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: At some point before the end of the meeting, Col. North also made a reference to Congress, did he not?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. That was the day, if I recall, when the -- you all had the voting on the aid to the contras. And, well, I've learned through listening to all of the testimony here, he's [the] kind to go into the dramatic side. So he went looking to the TV when the hearings were taking place, or the voting was taking place.

MR. BARBADORO: A Congressional debate was going on. It was being shown on TV, right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Right. And he looked at the TV and said, "Those people want me, but they cannot touch me because the old man love my ass." I'm sorry. But he told me to say it in that way.

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MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, after you left that meeting with Col. North, you went to the Vice President's office, correct?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir. I went on my own, not escorted by Mr. Dutton.

MR. BARBADORO: You didn't go with Col. Dutton?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir.

MR. BARBADORO: And you picked up the picture at the Vice President's office?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, when I came to the Vice President's office, I knew that Mr. Gregg and the Vice President were out of town. I believe they were out of the country at the time. And I rung(?) to Mr. Watson. So I got together with him in Don's office, and we started discussing the -- some problem we had in getting helicopters [that] were approved for 1985, for the area that I was, and the spare parts that we badly needed for the helicopters. (Audio interruption) And then very shortly after that, when Ms.

Madly(?) who came to the other room to pick up the pictures and show her the pictures I needed for my friend down there and his wife. And then we left together.

MR. BARBADORO: Did you tell Mr. Watson anything about what you were doing with the resupply effort, or your dissatisfaction with the resupply effort?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. We were discussing the helicopter program.

MR. BARBADORO: After that meeting, did you return to Central America?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, I did.

MR. BARBADORO: Mr. Rodriguez, at some point later on (audio interruption) accused by Mr. Quintero of stealing one of the resupply aircraft. Could you describe that incident for us?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, sir, I was in my place in Central America when a general friend of mine from another Central American country way out -- far from Central America -- was visiting us in Miami. And I saw the opportunity to visit with him in my house. And there was a friend of mine who was flying a private plane back to Miami. I did. And I was told that one of the C-123s was just about ready to be finished -- repairs they were conducting on the aircraft, and you(?) should be returning back to the area in Central America. So I decided it would be a good ride to go in with my friend and return in that aircraft, which didn't cost me anything, spend a few days with my friend.

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So, on the weekend, I expressed to Mr. Quintero that I was planning to take this aircraft and go back when it(?) was ready. The aircraft was loaded with spare parts that we badly needed for the other aircraft down there. He told me that we should hold on it because he was waiting for some medicine. There was mountain leprosy(?). That was badly needed in that area. My understanding from the past was that what we were waiting for was a big box of medicine. I thought it was uneconomical to a C-123 for a box of medicine. It could be sent

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commercially. You want to explain that to me. He told me another, it was a half-planeful of medicine that was needed down there. So, I consulted with Mr. Jim Stevenson from Southern Air, explained what I have been told, and asked him if he would consult with Mr. Lonton(?) because I think he needed to go back there. We had a whole bunch also of I-V that were donated. That's at no cost to anybody that I got from a friend of mine for the Nicaraguan freedom fighters. And, it was already loaded in the plane, about fifteen hundred pounds worth of I-V. I was afraid to stay longer in the heat, it will go bad. So, he checked with Mr. Lonton, he said that they had enough material in there to fill a C-130, that if this load of medicine would arrive, that they could always charter a C-130 from Southern Air. It would be considerably more cheaper than to fly the 123 back and forth. So, then, I said, "Okay, then we'll go on" -- I believe it was -- "a Monday." So, we boarded that aircraft

the way it was and we flew to the Central American country and it takes seven hours to get there in that thing.

MR. BARBADORO: When you got to Central America, did you get a call from Rafael Quintero?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, first of all, it was like a joke. A friend of mine was waiting for me, and he looked at me and he said, "Max, guess what." And, I said, "What?" He said, "You have a stolen aircraft." I said, "You are kidding." I thought either hijack or a stolen aircraft. So, we joke about it, and he said that he got instructions from Mr. Quintero. With mine, I am sure it was from Quintero, higher, not from him, to refuel the aircraft and send it back just the way it was to Miami, with all the spare parts and everything on board. So, I went to -- I thought it was ridiculous because whatever was on that aircraft was (inaudible) spare parts for the planes that were badly needed to put in shape, continue the operation down there. So, I told them to go ahead and unload the aircraft, on my responsibility.

MR. BARBADORO: And, then did you get a call from Mr. Quintero?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: We went to the house for dinner that evening, and Mr. Quintero called and he asked my friend if the plane arrived. He was ready to return. He was told, "No, it was unloaded." He said, "It was Max." He said, "All right, can you talk to him?"

So, I got on the telephone. He told me in Spanish, say, "Well, are you with me or against me?" So, I told him, I say, "Rafael, I don't think this is a situation of being for or against anybody. I think this is equipment which is needed here for spare parts for these aircraft." This operation was finished and terminated, and he told me that's precisely what happened. He said, "We have terminated the operation. Should be back in your area in the next three days to close down all the houses and tell the pilots on behalf of their principal that if they do fly on those aircraft it would be under their responsibility, that there would be no salaries for them, that there would be no compensation, no security.

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There would be no money for the houses and there would be no fuel account, no money for the fuel."

MR. BARBADORO: What did you do after being told that the operation was being closed down?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I was very concerned, sir, because even though the aid had already been approved by Congress, I know it would take a while before they could take over before these people decide, Nicaragua, and I felt very strongly about it. I was abandoned once inside my country, and I felt it would be disaster if these people are abandoned at this time like that. So, I went to Mr. Hughes, a friend of mine, asking if he could get for me a crew that would fly for free. But, I knew him and how he felt about the operation, and

previously shown Mr. North, the Piawati (?) letter, I believe you referred to it, Exhibit 8.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I don't recall if I did or I didn't.

MR. LEON: Did you ask him to conduct an investigation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir, I did not.

MR. LEON: Did you ask him to do anything?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, sir. I just hoped that this period will go by, pass, have the Agency take over and it will be better for everybody.

MR. LEON: Now did you point out to him, Mr. Rodriguez, that Ollie North, the September before, had recruited you to assist him in this effort?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Did I tell him --

MR. LEON: Did you tell Mr. Gregg on that occasion, on August 8th --

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I don't believe so, sir.

MR. LEON: Why didn't you tell him that Ollie North had recruited you and you had been working with Colonel North?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I didn't see any reason why to tell him. I really didn't.

MR. LEON: He didn't ask you, did he?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No.

MR. LEON: Now turning to that June 25th meeting that you had with Mr. Dutton and with Mr. North. At the end of the meeting, you testified that you pulled Colonel North aside and you had a little discussion with him alone, isn't that right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. LEON: And that lasted only a matter of minutes, didn't it?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

MR. LEON: And it was during that conversation with him that you, for the first time, I believe your testimony is, brought to to his attention some of your concerns --

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. LEON: -- about the situation down there.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's correct.

MR. LEON: Even though you had had many opportunities on prior occasions to bring it to his attention?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, that's correct.

MR. LEON: And I also believe you testified that his response was to say that your concerns about Mr. Clines weren't proper because, as far as he knew, Mr. Clines was a patriot and was not acting improperly. Is that about right?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: That's what he said, sir.

MR. LEON: And so, too, had General Secord, did he come up in that conversation?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: No, I don't think so.

MR. LEON: And your reaction to hearing that was to leave right on the spot, was it not?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. LEON: Was it your impression on hearing Colonel North say that that Colonel North had been duped or blinded by General Secord or any of the other people in that organization?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Could be, sir. I would not have any comment on that.

MR. LEON: You didn't think he was --

MR. RODRIGUEZ: It would be improper for me to try to speculate. I think that will have to come out in another way.

MR. LEON: Did you think he was collaborating with them in any way to try to hurt the contra cause or to harm the movement down there?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I just don't have -- I would rather not express a view on that. I really don't know.

MR. LEON: You were concerned with regard to the best interests of the contras, were you not?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.

MR. LEON: And there was nothing that indicated to you that Colonel North wasn't interested in the best interests of the contras as well, was there?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Can you repeat that again?

MR. LEON: There wasn't anything that Colonel North said or did, was there, that gave you the impression that he, too, wasn't interested in the best interests of the contras?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I didn't quite get your question really.

MR. LEON: Well, was it your impression that Colonel North, like you, was interested in the contras' best interest?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Well, there was no question about it that the <way he got support (?)> in the past that he was interested in helping them.

MR. LEON: No further questions, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: Without objection, the Exhibits marked RCD one through 18 and FIR one through five will be made a part of the record. The committees stand in recess until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow morning in Room 2172.

END OF AFTERNOON SESSION

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