

## U.S. planned to seize Noriega

WASHINGTON -- The Bush administration was preparing covert action to seize Panamanian leader Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega during a coup attempt last week but the uprising collapsed before the plan could be executed, officials said Sunday.

President George Bush made the decision near the end of a failed coup Tuesday, and the order was conveyed to the commander of U.S. forces in Panama, Gen. Maxwell Thurman, said Secretary of State James A. Baker III and Brent Scowcroft, the White House national security adviser.

"The message that was sent was that if there were an opportunity to do this, without risking bloodshed and significant loss of American life, and to do so without open military in-

volvement, then he was free to go ahead, the commander on the ground was free to go ahead," Baker said on the NBC-TV program, "Meet the Press."

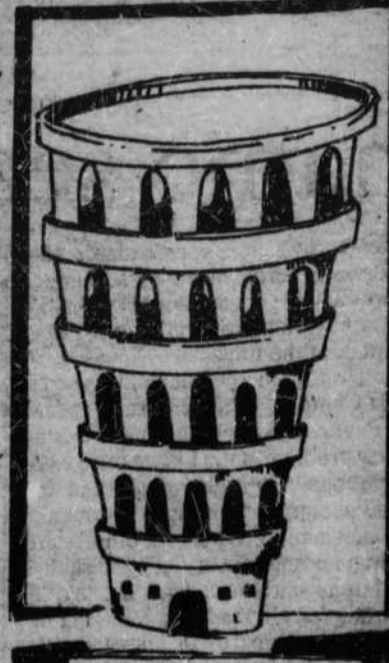
Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said that at the outset of the coup he told Thurman to be prepared to use peaceful means to take custody of Noriega, but the chance never came.

"After the Panamanians had contacted us and told us... that they had Noriega but that they would not give him to us, I made it clear that our commander on the scene was authorized to get him if he could, without using military force, and that he should develop an option or a plan to use military force to get him," Cheney said on the CBS-TV program "Face the Nation."

"We never made the decision to use military force, that would have involved going in against the rebels and taking Noriega from them. I never thought that was a very good idea, but we told to him to be prepared in case he got the order to do so. Shortly after that, the coup fell apart," said Cheney.

The order to ready non-uniformed U.S. forces for a covert action to grab Noriega was first reported in Sunday editions of The Washington Post.

Baker, Cheney and Scowcroft said top presidential advisers believe they acted correctly during the failed coup, despite criticism from Congress that U.S. forces should have helped the rebels or to intervene to seize Noriega for trial in the United States on drug charges.



TOWER OF PISA  
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Brian Shelton/Daily Nebraskan

## Pisa tower keeper says new warnings amount to nothing

PISA, Italy -- The tower of Pisa has been leaning for 800 years, so the keeper of the marble wonder can't understand what all the latest fuss is about.

It's true that experts have been making dire predictions for years. But there was a real tower tizzy after the minister of public works, Giovanni Frandini, sounded an alarm recently that scared all of Italy.

Newspapers immediately published headlines warning of a "red alert" for the tower, raising fears that one of the symbols of Italy could, at worst, topple, or at best, be closed for repairs.

But Giuseppe Toniolo, chairman of the committee responsible for preservation of the monument, says there's nothing to get excited about.

"There is absolutely nothing new in the situation," he said in an interview. "To say that the tower is in danger, so what? It's always been in danger."

## East German police break up demonstrations

BERLIN -- East German police arrested hundreds of people during pro-democracy protests in East Berlin that lasted into early Sunday, and also broke up huge weekend demonstrations in five other major cities.

In East Berlin, citizens cheered protesters from apartment balconies.

Hundreds of injuries were reported as police swinging truncheons repeatedly charged the demonstrators. Police punched, kicked, beat and dragged the protesters away, and roughed up Western journalists covering the demonstrations in East Berlin.

Clusters of plainclothes and uniformed security forces were stationed throughout East Berlin Sunday to prevent further demonstrations.

The protests, coinciding with the visit of Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev on East Germany's 40th anniversary, were the largest since a workers' uprising was put down by the Soviets in 1953.

Western journalists accredited to cover the anniversary were told Sunday they could not extend their visas, and some who had traveled to West Berlin were not allowed back.

Despite the growing unrest and the exodus of East Germans to the West, East German leader Erich Honecker said during lengthy talks with Gorbachev Saturday that he would stick to his hard-line course.

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