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NSC BRIEFING

27 May 1954

HONDURAS ASKS US AID AGAINST COMMUNIST  
THREAT

- I. Honduras says cannot guarantee life and property against "international Communism." Note asks US to:
  - A. Cooperate with Honduras, under Rio Treaty, "in facing dangers"
  - B. Dispatch two warships to stand off Honduran north coast.
  - C. Detain ships bringing Orbit arms to Guatemala.
- II. Honduras sees threat as both internal and from Guatemala.
  - A. Internally Communists exploiting general strike.
    1. Communists seek to control 35,000 employees of two US-owned fruit companies etc.
    2. Overt strike leaders dominated by hidden Communist leaders.



REVIEWER

25X1

State Dept. review completed

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~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~

3. Communists sabotaging non-Communist attempt at settlement with Standard Fruit Company.
4. Honduran Communist Party reportedly being organized at Progreso, striker stronghold.
5. Communists oppose government participation in United Fruit negotiations.
6. Strikers hitherto well disciplined, but situation explosive.
  - a. Strikers said to be armed.
  - b. Strikers becoming defiant of government.
  - c. Government probably could not enforce martial law.
7. Ambassador Willauer believes Communists want strong government intervention for propaganda

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Attachment:

THE RIO TREATY

I. Rio Treaty (officially the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance) signed 1947. Now has 20 parties (Guatemala not full party)

A. Action under treaty must be approved by 14 of the parties, and reported to UN.

II. Honduran request for US help under treaty has no precedent.

A. Failing armed attack, request for help goes first to Council of OAS. In case of attack, self defense and individual aid permissible, if accompanied by request to OAS.

B. Honduras may think present request an extension of self-defense under armed attack.

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exploitation.

B. Honduras fears Guatemalan intervention.

1. Alarmed by 15 May arms shipment to Guatemala.
2. Guatemalan troops reported at border by Hondurans.
  - a. Guatemalans claim troops pursuing railroad saboteurs near border.
  - b. Overt Guatemalan invasion unlikely.
3. Greater danger is Guatemala's capacity to arm Honduran strikers
  - a. Weapons in hands of Honduran strikers before 15 May said to be Guatemalan.

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