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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Guatemala
SUBJECT Port Information: Puerto Barrios

REPORT NO.

PLACE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE)



DATE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

RESPONSIVE TO	
1	2
CD NO.	
OO/C NO.	Ed 38
ORP NO.	
DAS NO.	
OCI NO.	

DATE DISTR. 7 APR 54

NO. OF PAGES 3

NO. OF ENCLS.

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SUPP. TO REPORT NO.

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Merchant mariner, officer on a ship which called at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala on 16 Dec 53.

The Navy interviewing officer assigned an evaluation of "B-2" to the report, stating that source had previously furnished his general observations on subject port and that he was thereafter briefed in advance on more specific subjects of interest, which are herein reported.

THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE FURNISHED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO CIA FOR FAC DISSEMINATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 3 c OF NSCID #7 (DIO, 8ND No 19-54).7

- The following information is based on personal observations of the source.
- Boarding Inspection Eight officials comprised the boarding party including Port Doctor, Port Captain, Assistant Port Captain, Immigration Officer, Customs Officer, Postmaster, Chief Hacienda Police, and Chief Civil Police. Boarding inspections last an average of 45 minutes.
- Harbor Craft A United Fruit Company wooden motor boat is used for line handling. It has a six cylinder, 68 horsepower BUDA diesel engine. No tugs or pilot boats are available.
- Communications Radio in subject port, call letters TGG, is owned by Tropical Radio Telegraph Company and provides service from 0700 to 2000 at frequencies of four megacycles 4400 kilocycles, five megacycles 5820 kilocycles, and seven megacycles 7872 kilocycles. Radio is located in the Puerto Barrios Department Building, Tropical Radio Central Plant Las Torres, and operates on power of three kilowatts. Telephone service is inefficient because of old equipment. Central telephone equipment consists of a 150 plug, Kellogg switchboard and serves 50 telephones. There are no telephone subscribers; service is rendered to government and municipal departments, International Railroad of Central America (IRCA) office, Texaco Oil Company office and all United Fruit Company agencies, offices and employees. World-wide telegraph and cablegram service is provided by Radio Comunicaciones Nacionales (Government Telegraph).
- Railroad Facilities Condition of railroad facilities which are owned by International Railroads of Central America (IRCA) is fair. Rails are 60 to 75

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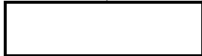
pounds, 36" gage. Railroad cars: 964 box, 336 flat, four refrigerator and miscellaneous passenger coaches and cabooses, all US built. Baldwin locomotives are in general use. Eighty and forty-ton switching engines are used. An average of 10 trains of 30 cars, carrying 800 tons per train, travel this line daily. One single track main line extends between Puerto Barrios and Guatemala City and intermediate points to Mexico, San Salvador, and the Honduran border. IRCA holds the right-of-way. Passenger facilities consist of first and second-class railway coaches; the former generally have wicker benches and the latter, wooden benches. A few salon (tourist type) cars are available, but there is no pullman service. Main repair facilities are in Puerto Barrios and Guatemala City and are equipped for all car and locomotive overhaul and heavy repairs. The main yards, in Puerto Barrios, Zacapa and Guatemala City, have a capacity of up to 500 cars. They average 15 main yard tracks with related ladder system, loading side spurs, and switch spurs.

6. Roads The Puerto Barrios-Guatemala City highway, consisting of one lane, is under construction with a completion date of August 1955. Width and load capacity are unknown, but it is presumed that when complete, it will be able to handle all kinds of heavy traffic. Construction is of earth and sand with rock ballast and asphalt covering. Number, if any, of tunnels or bridges is unknown. Only short sections of the road between Puerto Barrios and Guatemala City are presently complete.
7. Wharf - Pier Facilities Average daily cargoes in long tons handled by the port are: coffee 165; abaca 11; bananas 340; miscellaneous cargo 71. There are generally three vessels working at a time. An average of 300 stevedores are at work daily for eight hours with a possible six hours overtime. Congestion will sometimes occur due to excessive number of ships present, loaded warehouses, or shortage of railroad cars. Turn-around time for cargo vessels using the port is usually about one week. No railroad cranes are available at Puerto Barrios, but, if advance notice is given, IRCA can supply from Guatemala City either a 40 or 15-ton Browning crane which operates from railroad spur located on the wharf. One 10-ton caterpillar crane is available at Tela. Warehouses of corrugated iron construction extend from about the middle to the end of the wharf. Their estimated height is 30 feet. Fire protection consists of chemical fire extinguishers at strategic points and one 75-HF electrically operated pump of 500 gallons per minute capacity with a 315' range and a maximum pressure of 137 psi which can operate four main stations with 200' length hose connections. Ten Yale fork-lift trucks of five thousand pounds capacity are available.
8. Building Materials All building materials are imported, since none are locally available.
9. Water The local water supply is drawn from the water fall in the hills near Los Escobas at the southern end of Barrios Bay. Water is carried from the reservoir at the Los Escobas dam to Puerto Barrios by cast-iron pipeline. One pumping station is located at the railway shop. Although no purification plant or equipment for treating water exists, the water is very good. Water is pumped to tanks and basins (partial gravity) and from these to houses and offices by gravity feed.
10. Port Administration The Port Captain is in charge of the port. Port security is under the cognizance of the National Army. Official services include military, civil government, municipal, customs, immigration, police, post and telegraph.
11. Communist Activity Source believes that most of the 23 thousand inhabitants of Puerto Barrios have little to do with Communism. They are willing to work and are generally friendly to him personally. They are forced to obey orders of higher party functionaries. Most of the individuals causing trouble are merely opportunists who are more interested in financial gain than in Communism. Most of the orders are believed to come from the Communist leaders in Guatemala City.

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who only occasionally visit subject port. The few trouble makers, or "goons," are placed in the crowd at labor meetings to throw the meeting into confusion if it does not go as they want it. Anyone disagreeing with their policy is "booted" and laughed at, and others in the same situation are inclined to go along with policy to avoid the same treatment. Most of the natives are disgusted at being treated as "pawns" and would welcome any change by someone with a "clear-cut plan." A potential asylum or refuge for Communists or others seeking access to Puerto Barrios lies in the undeveloped dense territory up the Rio Dulce and around Izabal Lake. The country abounds with game and the land is capable of supporting a fairly large number of persons who could infiltrate the city and withdraw to the comparative safety of the hinterland without danger of apprehension.

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