

VIA: AIR  
(SPECIFY AIR OR SEA POUCH)

RYBAT

DISPATCH NO. HGG-A-601

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Security Classification

TO : Chief, WHD  
FROM : Chief of Station, Guatemala  
SUBJECT: GENERAL— PBSUCCESS  
SPECIFIC— ESQUIRE

DATE: 30 December 1953

1. Attached is a copy of a memorandum for the Ambassador prepared by Mr. Andrew B. Wardlaw, First Secretary of the Embassy, dated December 29, 1953, which contains information received from an unidentified source.
2. It is definitely known that Mr. Wardlaw's source is the subject.

[ ]  
Kenneth S. Givloch

30 December 1953

Enclosure: as noted

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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

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OFFICE MEMORANDUM - UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Date: December 29,

TO : The Ambassador

FROM : A. B. Wardlaw

SUBJECT: Conversation Regarding Possibility of Attempt against  
Guatemalan Government

Recently an individual whom I believe to be reliable informed me in the course of a conversation that he had been a member of a group planning an attempt against the Guatemalan Government when the Salama uprising occurred in March 1953. This uprising, he said, was premature and was not launched by the leaders of the main anti-Government groups. In fact my informant believed that the Government had had a hand in setting it off. Nevertheless, most of the people arrested subsequent to the uprising were actually involved in the groups seeking to overthrow the Government.

The particular group with which my informant was associated had for its task a surprise assault on the National Palace in which the chief figures of the Guatemalan Government were to be liquidated on the spot. This assault was to have been coordinated with a surprise attack on the military base at Zacapa and an invasion of the country by the forces of CASTILLO Armas and YDIGORAS Fuentes. The leaders in these groups believed that the Army could be neutralized by the sudden attack on Zacapa, by Army officers willing to assist the movement actively and by the voluntary or enforced neutrality of other Army officers.

In preparing for this attempt the anti-Government forces had collected some \$40,000 with which they had purchased arms. They also were in a position to lay their hands on considerably more money. The system of collection was to get persons willing to help to pledge funds and to keep as cash on hand the funds pledged. Thus it was contemplated that the anti-Government group would never have large funds on hand but would be able to obtain readily money needed.

Of the arms purchased approximately one half were lost with the capture of a truckload of them which was en route to El Progreso which is near Zacapa. The other half is cached away in the country where the ~~arms~~

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anti-Government forces can presumably lay their hands on them.

One of the great difficulties in launching the attack on the Government was that of coordinating the activities of the various interested groups. The group in Guatemala would send its representatives to Ydigoras Fuentes and Castillo Armas with their plans, but these leaders would always consult with their advisers and would insist upon modifications of the plans. These modifications would then have to be taken back to Guatemala for approval by leaders there, and before this clumsy program could be carried to conclusion the Salama uprising occurred which completely disrupted the anti-Government organizations.

My informant felt that it would be difficult but not impossible to rebuild an anti-Government movement and he said that if he could see a "gleam of hope" he would be willing to attempt it. He explained that by a gleam of hope he meant indication of some kind of support from outside which would eliminate some of the problems of the collection of funds locally and particularly would give members of the organization a feeling that they were not alone. He said that he could not estimate how much money would be needed since this could be determined only after the organizational program was under way.

Regarding Ydigoras Fuentes and Castillo Armas, he said that he thought they would both be willing to cooperate with another movement and that while Ydigoras Fuentes could command a certain amount of popular support in Guatemala, Castillo Armas would be of much more value as a military leader. He said that he felt fairly confident that Castillo Armas would be willing to enter into a movement in which he knew that he would not be the supreme leader and he thought possible that Ydigoras Fuentes might also be willing to join such a movement. He regarded Castillo Armas as the more valuable in a movement and he said that Ydigoras wished to have someone else overthrow the Government and present him with the Presidency.

He said that since he had not been in on the portion of the previous planning which dealt with Army officers, he did not know whom the group considered reliable. However he stated that personally he thought that Colonel MONZON was an individual who might prove of value, citing that Colonel Monzon had

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recently informed a neighbor of his that while he was an anti-imperialist he hated the Communists thoroughly. Colonel Monzon was also quoted as having said that he had done more than anyone to hold the bulk of the Army loyal to President AREVALO at the time of the uprising following the ARANA assassination but that he had never been given the rewards which he thought were due him for this work.

My informant also suggested that Colonel MENDIZABAL, the Commander of the Air Base might be well-disposed towards a movement against the Government. He said that he had recently held a conversation with Colonel Mendizabal at the home of Mr. J. H. Wilson in the course of which the Colonel had told him that he had a few days earlier informed President ARBENZ that he considered that affairs in Guatemala had taken a disastrous turn and that the situation could be retrieved only by eliminating some 15 Communist leaders. He said that he had offered to take a squad of soldiers and do the job personally. However, President Arbenz had rejected his offer explaining to him that the situation in Guatemala was much more complicated than he thought. Apparently the President did not clarify this statement to the Colonel's satisfaction.

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