

RYBAT

VIA: AIR
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DISPATCH NO. HGG-A-578

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Security Information
CLASSIFICATION

DEC 23 1953

TO : Chief, WHD

DATE:

FROM : Chief of Station, Guatemala []

SUBJECT: GENERAL— PBSUCCESS

SPECIFIC— Psychological Barometer Report (Period Ending
19 December 1953)

Reference: HGG-A-561

1. The last previous psychological barometer report noted that recent developments had introduced an element of expectancy. Rumors and reports during this period continue to contribute to this feeling of expectancy, as shown in the following examples:

- a. On 17 December 1953 an Army major of unknown reliability reported to Esconson-3 that the Guatemalan Army is becoming increasingly conscious of an invasion reportedly being mounted in the exterior. This source stated that Army vigilance has been redoubled, commanders of posts and garrisons are constantly being shifted about, and many officers are becoming convinced, somewhat belatedly, that their tacit support of Communism is traitorous. This officer also claimed that discontent and lack of confidence at all levels is spreading and that the Army will not respond much longer in favor of the government. Many officers, according to source, feel that the government will not last through the month of December 1953; source himself believes it will not be overthrown before March 1954. The many rumors that have been circulating in recent weeks are, according to this source, expressions of the fear now permeating the government -- it sees itself in constant danger, threatened from every side.

(Pending confirmation this item is treated as a rumor, possibly true, source as stated, and not for re-use).

- b. On 18 December 1953 a source who claims to be a partisan of exiled General Miguel IDIGORAS Fuentes told Esconson-2 that the invasion being mounted in El Salvador for the purpose of overthrowing the Arbenz government has the support of the Salvadoran government. Source stated that the United States could not directly intervene in the affairs of Guatemala or declare war on such a small country but it (the U.S.) can help other American republics in their fight against Guatemala and Communism. Source claiming to express the beliefs of all Idigoristas in Guatemala

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said that he is confident that the invasion is well organized and is bound to succeed.

(Also considered a rumor, the source and truth of which cannot be judged; re-use may be determined by Headquarters without danger to source).

- c. Two unconfirmed rumors during the reporting period allege that high Army officers are planning an Arbenz-approved "simulated" coup aimed at freeing the Arbenz government from the stigma of Communism. It is alleged that the Army officers will declare themselves against Communism and call on Arbenz to root out those Communists who have infiltrated government departments and supported agencies since they constitute a threat to security and have caused Guatemala to be isolated from the American family of nations. One source claimed that ex-President Juan José AREVALO was involved in recommending that the Army take steps to convince the people that it is in command and controls the situation in order to dispel the growing concern over Communism. AREVALO allegedly stated that unless such action is taken the Arbenz government will eventually be overthrown by internal and/or external forces and will be replaced by a rightist dictatorship which will prevent the fulfillment of the "revolution." The simulated coup is reportedly designed to eliminate the Communist issue, prevent a rightist rebellion, and still permit fulfillment of revolutionary aims.

(These rumors have not been confirmed and they have not yet attained widespread circulation. They are considered possibly true and may be re-used at Headquarters discretion.)

2. Unrest, quarrels and scandals within the official parties appear to reflect further discredit upon such parties and the government itself. With dissensions in the Partido Acción Revolucionaria (PAR) still a matter of public discussion, a gun-slinging exhibition of "gangsterism" in politics developed during the reporting period in the Partido Renovación Nacional (PRN) involving Jaime DIAZ Rozzotto, Secretary General of the Presidency and Secretary General of the PRN. The matter is at present unresolved but it is known that violent clash resulted when one PRN faction headed by Hector FION Garma attempted to depose DIAZ Rozzotto as head of the party. It is reported that a congressional resolution has been directed to President ARBENZ asking him to control the gangster tactics of his Secretary General. Whatever the outcome of this squabble as pertains to the future of the PRN, it appears certain that public respect for "revolutionary" groups has been lowered.

22 December 1953

[George L. Tranger]

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