

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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LINCOLN

Chief of Station, Guatemala

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Operational

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Reference: HULA-40

The tenor of both friendly and opposing groups in Guatemala in reporting period was set by the same chain of events, and while it is possible to note the superficial reactions of both forces, it is difficult to describe with accuracy the depth or intensity of these sentiments. While it was apparent that enemy forces were worried by developments occurring during this period, it was equally clear that they continued to take active measures to halt or suppress the sources of this discomfort. On the other hand, although friendly elements were interested and impressed by anti-government activity, it is not known to what extent they themselves were inspired to support or participate in further such activity.

The difficulty in sounding the depth of feeling in both groups was enhanced by a lack of information concerning certain events such as the disturbance in San Juan Ermita, Department of Chiquimula, the details of which remain confused and uncertain.

Nevertheless, despite the qualifying factors mentioned above, it is believed that the dominant mood in enemy circles was one of increased nervousness and strain. Under the mounting pressure uneasiness and a lack of belief in the government's ability to silence the opposition have grown.

ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION

Although enemy forces were far from passive in the face of mounting opposition, they exhibited signs of increased nervousness and frustration. In addition to such tangible manifestations of the opposition as the "32s" and the clandestine radio, high officials were preoccupied with "invasion jitters" and fear of revolutionary plots still to be uncovered.

Following reports of a clandestine radio station calling itself La Voz de la Liberación, the government began making every effort to silence and/or counteract the effects of this station. Although conflicting reports as to its position made such efforts difficult, the police immediately undertook an intensive search to locate the station. The possibi-

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lity that it might not lie within the borders of Guatemala, and therefore not be subject to Guatemalan authority, caused enough concern so that Carlos ALVARADO Jerez, Communist director of TGW and the individual responsible for the control of radio broadcasting in Guatemala, denounced the station's treasonous messages and appealed to an international broadcasting regulatory agency for assistance. As the week wore on, the government's attempts to track down the station became more frenzied. La Voz de la Telefunken tried to "drown out" the evening program; the government ordered a blackout and was reportedly using an airplane-mounted "radio-compás" to detect its position.

In the meantime, police were maintaining a close surveillance on the offices of the CEUA and making numerous arrests in an effort to uncover opposition plans. These arrests were reported to include 4 anti-Communists in Jutiapa; a North American businessman who was held for some two hours before being released, and a father and son named Carlos Enrique and Arturo SARAVIA who were detained for several days, beaten and tortured before being abandoned without funds in the interior Department of El Quiche. While held they were questioned concerning individuals who were recruiting persons in Guatemala to be transported to Honduras for "invasion training."

That the government was aware of and concerned over the possibility of invasion from Honduras was also indicated by reports of Guatemalan management of the major labor dispute in Honduras aimed against the fruit company and the government.

In addition to the above, enemy nervousness and indecision were inherent in reports of Guatemalan troop and tank movements along the Salvadoran and Honduran borders, and in rumors of uneasiness in the leadership of the Communist Party and bewilderment and inability of Major Jaime ROSENBERG in silencing the opposition or learning its plans. There are also indications that the government believes the Catholic Church may be involved and/or masterminding a plan to overthrow the government but has no idea of how to combat opposition from such a quarter.

ESTIMATE OF THE FRIENDLY SITUATION

A great deal of interest and curiosity was aroused in opposition circles during reporting period, and those persons unallied with the organized opposition speculated as to its potential strength.

One of the leading causes of excitement and talk was the appearance of the clandestine radio station and as government efforts to suppress it increased, popular interest mounted. While little is known concerning the reaction to the contents of the programs, it is believed that the general reaction was very favorable.

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At least a small sector of the opposition was upset by news of the death in Tegucigalpa of Manuel MORALES Orell, an exiled student who was residing in the home of Col. CASTILLO Armas, and viewed with disbelief reports that he was killed while playing "Russian roulette." There were rumors to the effect that he was actually murdered by Guatemalan government agents as a warning to the opposition.

The confused reports of the disturbance in Chiquimula also aroused speculation.

Despite the government's active stand, it is believed that the anti-government activity of recent weeks has been effective and that faith on the part of both friendly and enemy circles in the ability of the opposition to outsmart the government and act in an organized fashion has grown. The explanation of the significance of "52" and the continuance of other anti-government activity should augment this belief.

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11 May 1954

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