

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

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2003

5 May, 1954

Memorandum For: Mr. []

Subject: HULA-600
Possible Attacks against ARBENZ

1- It is believed that the most effective attacks that can be launched against Arbenz are those directed at him personally. To utilize "black" emanating from without the hemisphere would indicate:

a- a network of world-wide magnitude--this is inconsistent with the overt assets of the CALLIGERIS movement and would be highly suspect.

b- That a plot had been hatched by world-wide forces. This could readily be revealed to Arbenz as a plot and indicate to him the serious nature of the personal threat thus making him look to the Communists as his sole means of support.

2- Paragraph four of the reference carries considerable merit in that it is consistent with the experiences of the Latin American and Guatemalan populace. It plays upon their first-hand knowledge of greed and corruption in high places, knowledge which they know is consistent with the pending departure of political leaders from the country.

The following is suggested in way of implementing para 4a

As a starting point for a campaign to indicate Arbenz is preparing to flee the country the recent open letter of exiled trade union leader Ruben Villatoro to Arbenz can be exploited. In the letter which was publicized in the well-known Mexican newspaper Ultimas Noticias Villatoro asked Arbenz

" Don't you see, Colonel Arbenz, how your very collaborators forebode evil? Don'T you see how your principal functionaries take their money out of the country because they fear a strong popular reaction?

You yourself, Colonel Arbenz, why do you have your family in Switzerland? Is it not true that you are not sure of what will happen?"

It is suggested that all attempts be made to have this letter, ^{be} widely circulated within Guatemala giving it the legitimate source and utilizing the Mexican article. In addition SYNCARP publications, reprint it extensively elaborating and embellishing on the story ie: transfer of monies to Switzerland from whence the Arbenz family originated, transfer of prized personal possessions etc.

Rumor campaigns should be conducted, again utilizing the Mexican article as source, not necessarily Villatoro. Additional sources for the information of transfer of Arbenz effects to Switzerland could be the ICFTU from which the Mexicans and Villatoro could be learned of it. This last, the ICFTU source is only for rumor purposes since that organization might deny anything of this type in print. The use of ICFTU as source would tend to lend impartial authenticity to the rumor.

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To implement 4b the following is suggested:

That the activities of the Argentine labor attache in Guatemala, ^{might} be used as a peg. It ~~should~~ be pointed out that while those unions in contact with ORIT-ICFTU have not been allowed to function openly ie: the UNTL, those being supported by the Argentine Embassy and ATLAS, the Peronist labor international, continue to function unmolested, despite the protests of the CGTG. ~~The question, should be asked, why? The answer should be,~~ ^{the answer to the question} It is obvious ^{that} because Argenz needs the support of Peron ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and Argentina as Arevalo did before him in order to insure a safe haven for himself. Another line ~~to be taken~~ could be that ARBENZ hopes to use the Peronist unions as a nucleus of support ~~at~~ the time he believes the Communist issue becomes too hot to handle vis a vis the Army. The long stay of Arevalo in Argentina prior to his ascendancy to the presidency can lend authenticity to this line.

The source of this information could be an ATLAS official disenchanted with Peronist maneuvers. The present disaffected state of many ATLAS leaders, which is well known in labor circles, would lend credence to the source. SYNCARP could carry this ball through their contact with UNTL leaders in WSHOOPS.

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Mexico, D.F.
April 5, 1954

Mr. President
of the Republic of Guatemala
Colonel Jacobo Arbenz
Guatemala City, Guatemala

I come before you in this letter not as an exile asking for clemency, as I don't need it. I come to ask you, in name of my country, unjustly sacrificed, that you, as a Guatemalan and President of the Republic, put your energy and intelligence to the exclusive service of our country. You, Colonel Arbenz, can have the absolute assurance that, for this patriotic task, you can count on the aid of thousands of Guatemalans who today look with deep sorrow upon the dark future that threatens the country.

I, Colonel Arbenz, am not a man of profound ideas, and you, who know me, know that very well. I am a democrat that does not want to see his country subjected to an iron dictatorship. My position is like that of many who surround you but are incapable of presenting you with a frank and honest observation so that you can see where this tolerance with which you allow the communists to participate in our internal affairs can lead our country. I, with many other Guatemalans, also democrats, cannot offer any reason to justify this communist interference in our efforts toward social progress. The communists, Colonel Arbenz, have one objective: to oppose all that signifies progress, because they are forced to spread misery in the countries which they plan to conquer, in order to justify the implantation of their systems. This you know very well as you have read much communist literature.

The Communists pretend to be your friends, while they grow strong under your protection, but they are in the service of a foreign nation. For this reason, they deserve the repudiation of the people and you should also repudiate them; but far from this, we see with great sorrow that you offer them all your support, as if they were indispensable for the functioning or livelihood of our country.

You can win the sympathy of the democratic world, with the aid of all the men of advanced societies, but you need to eliminate these bad elements that only cause difficulties and loss of prestige for you and your government. It is also time,

Colonel Arbenz, for you to rectify your position and guide the country toward progress, but on firm bases that may restore the faith of our people, lost during the last few years.

I, Colonel Arbenz, was a militant, front line participant in the revolutionary struggles. Nevertheless, on realizing that the communists were taking command of our labor movement and were directing it along paths contrary to the interests of our country, we organized the NATIONAL UNION OF FREE WORKERS, with the firm purpose of giving the non-communist workers an opportunity to have a free organization to which they could belong. This did not please the communists which had infiltrated our government, and, after a series of intrigues, I was seized as a common criminal, I was subjected to tortures worse than those we had fought against, and I was expelled from the country, after being stripped of all my clothing by the police. These abuses are committed by jackals that have infiltrated the public offices of the government and who only cause lack of prestige and aversion on the part of the democratic men of America.

All that I have suffered is not sufficient to make me lose my democratic faith. You, Colonel Arbenz, could see to it that the political panorama of the country is changed, directing the movement along truly democratic paths and preventing the communists from dragging it down to the depths of degradation, as they have tried to do up to now.

I am not the first victim, Colonel Arbenz. Other men of democratic faith have also been victims of communist intrigues. You have had knowledge of some cases.

The Communists are taking over everything and everyone, Colonel Arbenz, and for that reason fear and distrust in the country has spread. You know for example, that Abel Cuenca, who is not even aided by the qualification of being a Guatemalan, is issuing appeals to the people to begin the slaughter, and yet you tolerate him, conferring on him one of the positions of greatest responsibility in the Secretariate of the Guatemalan Institute of Social Security. Abel Cuenca, who is not even a Guatemalan, is trying to destroy the security and the tranquility of our people. You have many other communists of this same type in your government to whom it makes no difference that our country may perish, because it is not their's, nor do they have any reason to honor or respect it.

You maintain, Colonel Arbenz, that your government is not communist. Very well, I accept that it may not be, but why do you tolerate the communists who go to extremes in endangering the stability of your government, creating an adverse atmosphere in the international world? And for what reason do you confer the positions of greatest responsibility on those functionaries of the communist party, scorning the collaboration offered by honest, capable and democratic citizens? I cannot believe that you have any compromise with the communists that could surpass the sacred interests of our country, nor do I believe that you find yourself helpless or unable to improve your government through your own initiative. To come to this conclusion would be disastrous for you and the country.

I am well aware that when the dictatorial systems were overthrown, an era of progress and well being followed, but carefully and dispassionately examine the national situation and you will discover an unfortunate situation in the economic, political and moral spheres. And history. Have you thought about history, Colonel Arbenz? In your hands lies what history will say tomorrow about your government. Would you like it if tomorrow's history would say that you could have saved the country but because of a whim or because he wanted to remain in good favor with a minority of "fatherland sellers", he let it sink into the obscurantism of many years? And your children, Colonel Arbenz, what will they say about this accusation of history?

You have in your hands, what could be a beautiful page, but on your decision rests whether that page will be a beautiful one or black and bloody. I hope that soon, reality will show you the way. I desire to see my country free, prosperous and happy but I will not allow that prosperity, that liberty to be turned to oppression and fear through the fault of a small group of individuals for whom the word patriotism does not have any human significance.

If you should fall, who would replace you? Would you like it, Colonel Arbenz, if our country were transformed into a frightful slaughter house? Would it please you to have brother fight against brother; that the roads be covered with the bodies and the blood of humble workers and farmers whom you have promised to defend? And what of all the women and the thousands of abandoned children in the towns and in the country, inquiring as to who was the cause of their misfortune? And all this,

a result of tolerating a handful of men without a country that do not deserve anything but general repudiation?

The destinies of our country, Colonel Arbenz, should be in the hands of the Guatemalans. In your government there are many foreign communists and the indigenous can no longer be considered Guatemalans, because on accepting communism, they have renounced their nationality. We Guatemalans can well shape our own future without foreign interference, or perhaps, Colonel Arbenz, you cannot do this for yourself? Perhaps you find yourself unable to act due to communist influence?

You can be sure that no sane Guatemalan opposes social legislation. We do not oppose the Labor Code, nor the regime of Social Security, nor the Agrarian Reform. What we desire is that social legislation be applied correctly and honestly, so that it may constitute a positive benefit for the people and not be a political arm in the hands of unscrupulous and anti-patriotic people.

We Guatemalans of democratic spirit, agree that we should defend the national patrimony, that we would struggle to intelligently achieve the economic liberation of our country and that the conditions and relations among the workers in the foreign companies that operate in the country should be improved. But from this patriotic struggle that we all support giving the greatest opposition to the communist party, to the other extreme of making this patriotic effort of the people a political flag to serve foreign interests rather than those of Guatemala, there is a diametrical distance.

Through fault of the Communists, the country, far from progressing is going through an economic paralysis. Many of our few industries have been closed, others find themselves on the verge of this, and it is for this reason that you have seen thousands of Guatemalans, unemployed, without bread, lined up in front of the presidential balcony. And, that Colonel Arbenz is the social work of the Communists that surround you and that offer you their support, but on seeing you in danger will abandon you without any consideration.

Don't you see, Colonel Arbenz, how your very collaborators ferebode evil? Don't you see how your principle functionaries take their money out of the country because they fear a strong popular reaction?

You yourself, Colonel Arbenz, why do you have your family in Switzerland? Is it not true that you are not sure of what will happen? And nevertheless, why do you grant such tolerance to the communists that are the cause of all the evils that the country suffers?

You see how crime, disorder, and terrorism has increased in the last few years. The communists tell you that the government is strong, but no government is strong when it is incapable of keeping order in the country, and less so when its strength comes as a result of crime and terrorism. You can see how your police rob the prisoners, assail strikers, insult and despoil openly. And all this can be considered a democratic regime? No, Colonel Arbenz, democracy has disappeared in Guatemala due to the influences around it, but there is still time to return to normalcy and to put the democratic ship of the country back on the right course.

Act now, Colonel Arbenz, before our country is subjected to the blackest and most despotic dictatorship in the nation's history. The international panorama is now unfavorable to it now, but with a little decision on your part, it could be made favorable. It is never too late when there is time, Colonel Arbenz.

I hope this letter gets to you through some means and that it penetrates from the iron curtain that the communists have formed around you.

I greet you from exile without animosity,

Ruben D. Villabore
President of the National Union of
Free Workers of Guatemala