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TO : LINCOLN

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FROM : Chief of Station, Guatemala L3 INFO: Chief, WHD

SUBJECT: GENERAL - Operational

SPECIFIC:

Weekly Psych Intelligence Report, 5-12 April 1954

REFERENCE: HULA-40

1. In one of the last weekly psychological reports from this station, written in late January, we noted that a feeling of expectancy was definitely spreading. It is believed that statement is also valid for the period 5-12 April 1954. However, during the present reporting period the feeling of expectancy was overshadowed by that of nervousness, insecurity, discontent and uncertainty regarding the future as felt among enemy target circles.
2. There follows a resumé of what are believed to be significant factors contributing to the attitudes of friendly and enemy groups with attention given primarily to the capital city area. It is regretted that our knowledge of the other 8 target areas is so limited and it is hoped that wider coverage can be granted them during following weeks.

ESTIMATE OF ENEMY SITUATION

Reporting period has been marked by an ever-increasing discontent and uncertainty throughout most of the arenas of interest. The government has lagged farther and farther behind in paying the wages of its employees, the struggle for unity in pro-government political parties has not met with complete success nor are the Communists satisfied with their position, and rumors concerning activities of high-ranking military men are rife. The government has sought to hold the groups which support it by such measures as opening an exhibit illustrating Guatemalan success at Caracas and by freeing one of the Salamá prisoners, while at the same time displaying its uneasiness in such actions as the arrest of Oscar CONDE on his arrival in Guatemala. In addition, the alleged attempt on SOMOZA in Nicaragua and his retaliatory measures have been the subject of government press releases and have received wide press coverage - presumably in an effort to

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divert attention from the local scene.

On 8 April the press reported that complete work stoppage was threatened by 2,000 public roads workers due to the failure of the government to pay their salaries for the past 8 weeks, and on 10 April announced the protest of 200 members of a postal workers' union regarding their failure to receive overtime payments due them for the past 8 months. Municipal employees are also awaiting labor benefits afforded them by the First Labor Court in a recent ruling.

Although the PAR Congress, held during the latter part of March sought to re-establish party unity, five now "independent" ex-PAR Deputies have still not been restored to party membership and in addition, there are approximately 10 other "dissident" Deputies (formerly of the PRG and the RN) who no longer claim any party affiliation. While it is not known how serious the government considers this rift to be, the fact that the unity of the pro-government Congressional bloc has been weakened is believed significant.

It has been strongly hinted that those five PAR Deputies who are still outside the PAR fold are strictly opportunistic in their political outlook. At the same time, however, each would not hesitate to seek an audience with President ARBENZ for the purpose of informing the latter of any attempt to "convert" or to attempt to influence the Deputy to join some other cause currently regarded by the government as in opposition to their aims. In other words, if the Deputy were approached and asked to engage in something contrary to ARBENZ' way of thinking, the Deputy would run to ARBENZ as an informer in order to gain the supposed pat on the back he feels would be forthcoming from the President.

The Communists themselves have been rumored to be too afraid to attempt any disturbances in the near future and are making evacuation plans in the event a need for such should arise. During the period they have devoted a great deal of attention and publicity to the forthcoming May Day celebration and parade in an effort to further solidify their position among labor. It has previously been reported that Carlos Manuel PELLECCER, Communist labor leader, has been in the Quezalteango area during this period where his efforts among market women have not been received with favor. It has also been reported that he may be "exiled" to a diplomatic post in Czechoslovakia due to his differences with the head of the DAN, Major Alfonso MARTINEZ. Heretofore, PELLECCER has held undisputed sway in the Escuintla area and has personally supervised the campesino invasions of fincas there. His removal and the campaign to install MARTINEZ, with his pledges of just administration of the Agrarian Reform, as the ultimate authority in agrarian matters, appear to be part of a plan to "play down" Communist influence in this realm.

As for military circles, rumors of discontent with the ARBENZ regime among high-ranking military men continued to be heard and news of an armed movement against the government planned for Holy Week by [] and Col. GONZALEZ Segui was reported. Col. Carlos

Enrique DIAZ, Chief of the Armed Forces, is reported to have said that ARBENZ is a "setting sun" shortly before he departed for South America accompanied by two aides. Although there was much speculation in the press concerning the purpose of his travel, the government issued no statement regarding his departure nor the true reason behind such travel at this time.

On 6 April Col. Alfredo ~~V~~CASTANEDA Rodriguez, arrested in connection with the Salamá uprising of 29 March 1953, was released by the government while university students demanded that attention be given the case of Maria ~~S~~SANDOVAL, a university student similarly arrested who is believed to be losing his eyesight as a result of maltreatment in the Salamá jail.

However, despite the example of government leniency toward opposition elements mentioned above, Oscar CONDE, outspoken anti-Communist owner of Radio Universal, was arrested as he arrived at Aurora Airport following his return from the Caracas Conference. Although he disclaimed any illegal activity, he was still believed under arrest as the period closed.

On 9 April the government, under the direction of the Foreign Ministry, opened a "Caracas Exposition" in the National Palace which exhibited press clippings, photographs and works of art in an effort to defend and glorify Guatemala's stand at the conference. The "Caracas Exposition" is gaudy, colorful and boastful. Not a few Quetzales were spent in its preparation and the final result is an eye-filling array of huge photographs (in color) depicting the forceful stand of Guatemala and TORIELLO's brilliant speeches during the conference. It is noteworthy, however, that only a handful of people are seen at any given time within the "Exposition" and it can best be described as a flop.

The reporting period fell at the end of the month-long student "strike"/vacation and was the week in which the student variety show (5 April) and parade (9 April) took place. Although both had primarily anti-government political themes, they were carried out in a spirit of good humor and satire and generally without any militant bitterness with the U.S. and the Caracas Conference coming in for a large share of the "treatment." It was noted that police confiscated anti-government, anti-Communist propaganda within 4 blocks after it had begun to be distributed among onlookers. However, only an inebriated individual who had volunteered to help circulate this material was arrested.

ESTIMATE OF THE FRIENDLY SITUATION

The feeling of expectancy mentioned in paragraph 1, above, was combined with hopefulness on the part of opposition groups during reporting period but was tempered by a note of impatience.

There has been an increase of anti-Communist, anti-government feeling among friendly groups within the capital during this period due primarily to the approach of Holy Week with its elaborate religious processions and rituals and the well-timed appearance of a pastoral letter prepared by the Archbishop which clearly brought out the danger to Guatemala inherent in the anti-Christian, anti-religious tendencies of the present government. Anti-government feeling has also been sustained among landowners due to daily reports of continued illegal invasions of fincas by Communist-led campesinos.

A chain reaction was set off by the release by the independent press on 9 April of a pastoral letter calling for a national crusade against Communism which was prepared by Archbishop Mariano ROSSELL y Arellana and first presented as a sermon on 4 April (See HGG-A-899). Enough interest was aroused by this letter to lead local Communists, including Alfredo GUERRA Borges and Victor Manuel GUTIERREZ, to reply for the party in the 11 April issue of Tribuna Popular, PGT daily organ, in which they accused the Archbishop of forsaking his own field of religion to enter the political arena and of following the same line as "the reaction and the imperialists." By 12 April the independent press had begun to take issue with the Communist views as presented by GUERRA Borges and GUTIERREZ and were replying in their editorial columns. It is anticipated that the issue will be kept alive by the press and sustained by ESSENCE efforts to publicize the letter throughout the country. Despite the Communist rebuttal, it is believed that this letter met with almost universal approval within the capital and represents the first instance in which an anti-Communist/religious appeal has evoked such widespread interest and approbation among all sections of the populace, including non-practicing Catholics and Protestants from all economic levels.

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Clara M. Heagey

16 April 1954

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