

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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28 July 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:

SUBJECT: Discussion in OCB meeting of 28 July re sending Guatemalan Communists to the Iron Curtain.

1. At six o'clock today Mr. Robert F. Woodward, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, telephoned Mr. Wisner. Mr. Woodward said that he had had a call from Mr. Radius (State Department's OCB Staff man) who informed him that at the OCB meeting today Mr. Allen Dulles had stated that CIA would be prepared, if this should prove necessary in order to get it done, to finance the securing of a ship to transport the Communist asylees now in various Embassies in Guatemala, over to the Iron Curtain. Mr. Woodward felt that although there was a relatively slim chance that the other aspects of such a project could be worked out, if it were Mr. Dulles' disposition to finance the ship part of it the "other people" in State and CIA should be informed that this facility would be available. Mr. Wisner said that this was the first he had heard of this and asked whether it was proposed to handle this formally or informally; openly or secretly -- and observed further that in his own opinion our hand should not be shown, so that it came down to a question of who, ostensibly, would be buying the ship -- the Guatemalans or us? Mr. Woodward said he thought the locals should be the ostensible owners and wondered "how we should let them know." Mr. Wisner said we could send a cable to the field on this matter if such a procedure had the approval of the Department, but that he would, of course, want to check with DCI first. Mr. Woodward stated that at the OCB meeting Mr. Dulles had said if the project were undertaken he thought it would be best for the ship to fly the flag of the country "doing it" -- preferably one of their own ships if they had one, but if not "we should help them find one." Mr. Wisner said perhaps it should be a Panamanian flag vessel as Panama had so many. He then said he would see what we could cook up. (He asked Mr. Woodward if he, Mr. Woodward, personally thought this a good idea and remarked that in his own opinion it would not come to anything. Mr. Woodward said that he didn't think so either but thought we had to allow for the possibility. He said he was not any too sure in his own mind that the idea was a good one, but that we had already encouraged the Guats along this line.)

2. Mr. Wisner asked Mr. Woodward whether we were to take the foregoing as an official State Department guidance in this matter, and Mr. Woodward hesitated and then said he would have to ask Henry Holland about this first and would call Mr. Wisner again. Mr. Wisner then said he would not want to take this matter up if it were not checked out with the Department, as, of course, Mr. Allen Dulles does not make policy.

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3. Mr. Wisner spoke briefly to Mr. [] on the telephone on 29 July and later in the morning Mr. [] came in and left the following observations on this subject:

In the OCE status report there had appeared an item to the effect that the Guatemalan Under Secretary for Foreign Relations had inquired of our Ambassador whether the US had facilities which could be used for the transportation of the Communists now in Guatemala to the Soviet Union. Mr. Allen Dulles saw this item, and remarked that although he knew nothing about any deal of this kind, if it could be worked out and the only hitch were the problem of financing it he would be willing to help in this respect. Mr. [] said he understands that the actual suggestion about shipping these people to the Iron Curtain had been contained in a cable from Ambassador Peurifoy to the Department of State reporting the inquiry from the Guatemalan official. But neither Mr. Dulles nor Mr. [] has actually seen the cable.

At the OCE meeting there were comments to the effect that it would certainly be nice if you could send all these people to the Soviet Union, but nobody thought there was even a chance that the Sovs would take them. Mr. [] thought it was [] who then spoke up and said there were Communists in the US but he was sure if you gave them a choice between going to jail or to the Soviet Union, they would all choose the jail. There was also some talk of the kind of vessel, the flag she should fly, etc. But the general feeling of the meeting was that there was only a very remote possibility that the Guatemalan Communists could be disposed of behind the Iron Curtain in this fashion.

Mr. [] said that Mr. Dulles' only suggestion was that if it were worked out and the only hitch was the question of who would pay for the passage, he would be willing to help, and Mr. [] feels sure that is all he intended. He is certain that there was no proposal that we should undertake to explore anything in this connection. Mr. [] stresses that the initiative in connection with the matter was NOT taken by Mr. Dulles, and Mr. [] himself has done nothing whatsoever about it. He said he thought that in talking with Mr. Wisner, Mr. Woodward was probably just trying to find out if Mr. Dulles' offer was a firm commitment.

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