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Air CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

[]-071

2003

Chief, WHD

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Operations

[] Mission

The following information is being set forth to present an idea of the situation encountered in Honduras in an effort to obtain documentary evidence that the Guatemalan Government was connected with the general strike in Honduras.

1. Many United Fruit Company officials, Government officials and private individuals all concurred in one statement: "The Guatemalans were behind the strike". When questioned as to the evidence upon which they based this statement their replies usually indicated that they had reached the conclusion because: a) the development of the strike of the UFCO workers followed the same pattern as strikes in Guatemala, b) the demands of the strikers were phrased in almost identical language as demands made upon the UFCO in Guatemala, and/or c) Honduran workers did not have the experience and knowledge to organize and carry out a general strike without foreign guidance. In other words, most of those who concluded that the Guatemalans were behind the strike reached this conclusion on the basis of analysis rather than as a result of knowledge of the specific activities of Guatemalan agents.

2. One UFCO official who was asked for leads he might be able to furnish, such as the names of people who could be interviewed regarding their knowledge of Guatemalan support of the strike, stated that he had absolutely no leads to offer with the exception of Identity A of [] 029 whom he already knew to be collaborating with the writer.

3. Most of the Army commanders in the strike area indicated that while they believed there was Guatemalan influence in the strike, they had no evidence and no specific leads to offer. The one exception was [] Army Commander in [], who was the source [] was requested to obtain from [] a signed statement of his attempted recruitment by Francisco GARCIA, believed to have been a Guatemalan agent, but [] was unable to comply with this request. The exact role of [] is in doubt as it is now understood that he furnished bail for Juan B. CANALES a Communist who had been arrested in Puerto Cortés.

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4. Lt. Col. Raul FLORES Gomez, Acting Commander of the Army in the Department of Cortés has been very cooperative and has a reputation of being very pro-United States. He was unable, however, to furnish any specific leads of Guatemalan connection with the strike and repeatedly referred to Identity A of []-029 as the authority on Communist activities in Honduras.

5. Identity A has repeatedly made the statement that the strike was organized and directed by Honduran Communists who had studied in Guatemala and Europe. He pointed out that these Honduran Communists had been trained for their job and they did not need outside direction although three members of the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo were in Honduras during the early stages of the strike to serve as advisors. Further, any advice or instructions the Honduran Communists received were delivered orally by Communists who had travelled overland from Guatemala to Honduras, and funds they received were in cash and delivered by courier.

6. One difficulty which was encountered constantly was with regard to stories which had been repeated frequently and incorrectly. One specific example is with regard to stories circulating about the illegal landing of a Guatemalan plane at Puerto Cortés on 1 May 1954 []20). Many stories were circulating that Government authorities had seized envelopes from that plane as well as a map showing all airfields and UFCO installations. Official requests made by the Embassy to the Government for these documents did not produce them. The UFCO official who was present when the plane landed at Puerto Cortes was interviewed. He stated that he believed, in view of the circumstances, that documents had been taken from the plane by Identity A who with the Minister of Government had searched the plane. The UFCO official admitted that he had not seen any documents taken from the plane, and he had not been told they were taken from the plane. The Army Commander at Puerto Cortés stated emphatically that no documents had been taken from the plane. Identity A emphatically denied that he had taken any documents from the plane. He stated that while he had observed a map on the plane showing airfields in Honduras and some sealed envelopes, he had not been permitted to seize them.

7. Identity A did state that when the pilot and air attaché in the Guatemalan plane were ~~being~~ held incommunicado at the airport in Puerto Cortes the Guatemalan consul arrived at the airport with lunch for the pilot and the Air Attaché. According to Identity A, the Guatemalan pilot and Air Attaché had no means of contacting the Guatemalan consul from the airport and therefore "the consul may be presumed to have had advance knowledge of the arrival of the plane and thus must have been engaged in clandestine activities"!! Identity A stated that this was one of the reasons the Guatemalan consul was declared persona non grata.

8. Constant efforts have been made to determine upon what evidence the Guatemalan consuls in San Pedro Sula and Puerto Cortes were declared persona non grata. Official inquiries of the Honduran Govern-

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ment failed to produce this evidence. Identity A of []-029 has stated that the Guatemalan consuls were engaged in propaganda activities, but he had no concrete evidence. He as well as many other people who were questioned as to the specific contacts of the Guatemalan consuls were unable to furnish specific names.

9. It is believed that the attachment to []29 will be of interest in connection with the legal proceedings followed in subversive cases in Honduras. A competent Government official makes a denouncement to the appropriate judge, describing the charges against a subject and naming witnesses who can testify to the facts. Declarations of the witnesses are not required at the time the denouncement is made. It is then up to the judge to obtain the testimony of witnesses before the case is tried. In many instances, it has been found that there are denouncements of Communist activities of certain individuals, but there are no actual signed statements to support the charges. It is believed that the case of the Guatemalan consuls may have been similar in that there were probably charges against them but no actual evidence.

10. Identity A has stated that he is certain the Guatemalan Ambassador in Tegucigalpa assisted the strikers financially and spread Communist propaganda, but he has no evidence to support this statement.

11. All investigation as to tangible leads to Guatemalan and Communist influence in the strike pointed to Identity A as the person who would be most likely to have evidence. Identity A's principal source has been Identity B of []029.

12. Identity B could testify, if necessary, to a) Guatemalan Communist "recommendations" as to the action Honduran Communists should take, b) Honduran Communist organization of the strike assisted by advisors from the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo and c) Honduran Communist control of the strike in its initial phases. For the reasons outlined in []-069, it would not be desirable to use Identity B as a witness unless it is absolutely necessary.

13. A brief review made on 6 July 1954 of the files of CALLIGERIS on Communist activities in Honduras revealed that those files contained many leads to suspected Guatemalan agents in Honduras. If those files would have been available at the time the [] mission was initiated, investigation of the leads contained therein might have led to the evidence desired. It is believed that those files should be studied and information extracted for future operational assistance in Honduras.

Earl G. Knox

3-Headquarters
1-Lincoln
2-Files