

4 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEFS, ALL AREA & IO DIVISIONS

ATTENTION: PP CHIEFS

SUBJECT: Recent Developments in Guatemala

1. Attached hereto is a propaganda guidance together with background information on the recent shipment of arms to Guatemala from the Soviet orbit and Guatemala's offer of 27 May for a treaty of non-aggression with Honduras. (Attachment 1)

2. Attachment 2 contains a copy of State Department Policy Information Statement for USIA on "Possible Action by the Organization of American States Regarding Guatemalan Situation". This policy statement indicates the United States intends to obtain inter-American action to meet the Guatemalan threat and that in order to do this it "is necessary to convince the governments and people of Latin America that communism is intervening in the internal affairs of Guatemala and through Guatemalan Communists is intervening in the internal affairs and menacing the peace of neighboring countries..."

3. Stations able to support efforts to discredit the Guatemalan government as communist-controlled should report on action taken so that the material, when possible, can be picked up for play in the Western Hemisphere.

4. For your information, press coverage of these developments in Guatemala was carried in the Daily News Highlights beginning 18 May. Further information on Soviet violations of non-aggression pacts was transmitted with ICD memorandum of 18 February, subject: Soviet Plan for European Security Pact.

SIGNED: []

FOR []

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Acting Chief

Political and Psychological Warfare Staff

Attachment:
As described

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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

BACKGROUND AND GUIDANCE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GUATEMALA

I. BACKGROUND:

1. On 17 May the State Department announced it had reliable information that "an important shipment of arms" had been sent from the Soviet orbit to Guatemala. It said the arms were being unloaded at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, and had been shipped from Stettin, a former German Baltic seaport, which has been occupied by Communist Poland since World War II.

2. The State Department announcement said: "Because of the origin of these arms, the point of their embarkation, their destination and the quantity of arms involved, the Department of State considers that this is a development of gravity."

3. The announcement made it clear that the size of the arms shipment-- according to press reports 2000-tons--was in excess of what could be considered the legitimate defense needs of Guatemala.

4. It will be recalled that at the 10th Inter-American Conference at Caracas, Venezuela, 13 March 1954, Guatemala cast the only vote against a resolution declaring that communism was "a threat to the sovereignty and political independence of the American states, endangering the peace of America," and that increasing communist control of the government of Guatemala since 1944 has been a source of concern in the Western Hemisphere.

5. On 27 May the Guatemalan government proffered a treaty of non-aggression to neighboring Honduras, despite the fact that the treaty of Chapultepec of 1945 and the Treaty of Rio de Janeiro of 1947 contain mutual security provisions which guarantee that in the event of an attack on any country (such as Honduras) the other 20 allied American states would come to its assistance. These treaties afford Guatemala the same protection.

II. TREATMENT:

The following lines are suggested with reference to the arms shipment:

1. Guatemalan Foreign Minister Toriello in replying to accusations of importing arms from communist controlled territory stated: "For us, communist controlled territory is the Soviet Union. Other countries are sovereign." This remark can be used to point out that the type of sovereignty the present Guatemalan regime is bringing its people is Soviet-dictatorship similar to that imposed on the countries of Eastern Europe by force of Soviet arms.

2. Point out

2. Point out that if these arms really were paid for by the Guatemalan government, it is forcing a completely unnecessary, back-breaking expense on the Guatemalan people since for defensive purposes Guatemala has no need for such a quantity of arms.

3. In connection with 2 above, suggest that if the arms were given or sold below price to Guatemala by the Soviet orbit, it is obvious the Soviets are using them to gain a foothold in Latin America and to create a new satellite. Historically such shipments of Soviet arms have been followed by teams of Soviet "technicians" and "instructors" and finally by complete Soviet domination of the country concerned.

4. Emphasize that Western Hemisphere concern over the arms shipment stems from the fact that the quantity and type of arms indicates clearly they are intended for aggression not for any internal use except possibly ruthless repression of elements of the Guatemalan population which refuse to knuckle under to Kremlin domination.

5. Expose this Soviet willingness to supply arms for aggressive purposes as additional proof that international communism is dedicated to the principle of violence and is bent only on increasing international tension and undermining the peace and security of the free world.

The following lines are suggested with reference to the non-aggression pact:

1. Point out that since the Rio treaty obviates the necessity for any unilateral non-aggression treaties in Latin America, this offer of Guatemala's is an act of divisive intrigue designed to undermine the collective security system in force in the American states which stands as a bar to communist aggression.

2. In connection with 1 above, highlight the fact that this act on the part of Guatemala is patterned after the practice of the Soviet Union which has consistently used non-aggression pacts as a preliminary to invasion. Indicate that such an offer coming on the heels of the arms shipment is particularly ominous. (In 1932 the Soviet Union signed non-aggression pacts with Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The USSR invaded Finland in 1939 and seized Eastern Poland in 1939 and annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1940. Each of these pacts prevented the signers from taking steps to insure their own safety on the grounds that such moves would be "unfriendly" to the USSR and therefore contrary to the spirit of the non-aggression pact.)

3. Identify this effort at dividing the solidarity of the American

states

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ATTACHMENT I

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states with the effort of the Soviet Union to undermine the NATO alliance, and point out that persistent communist attempts to disrupt free world mutual security efforts prove the value of free world measures for collective security as deterrents to communist aggression.

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Department of State

Policy Information Statement
for USIA (ARA-134)

June 2, 1954

POSSIBLE ACTION BY ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN
STATES REGARDING GUATEMALAN SITUATION

BACKGROUND:

See Department's circular telegram No. 443 of May 29, 1954.

DISCUSSION:

It will be the purpose of the United States Government within the near future to obtain inter-American action to meet the danger from extensive Communist infiltration of the political institutions of the Guatemalan government.

To take collective action under the inter-American system necessary to halt or isolate this infiltration requires a vote of two-thirds of the American states. Because of misconceptions of U.S. motives and the true situation, it is not clear that two-thirds of the governments of the other American republics would at present vote to support collective action against Guatemala. It is clear that a great segment of public opinion in Latin America for the reasons just stated, and because Guatemalan and direct Communist propaganda have carried on an effective campaign to obscure the issues, would not at present support, or at best would be apathetic toward, collective action against Guatemala. Since public opinion in many of the Latin American countries will strongly influence their governments in such action as may be taken with regard to the Guatemalan issue, it is essential that such opinion be informed of the true state of affairs in this matter.

It is important to note that not only is the danger in Guatemala itself involved in this action, but in addition the ability of the painstakingly constructed inter-American system, the oldest and to date the most effective of international organizations in operation, to meet a real and present danger is involved. If contemplated action fails, the prestige of the Organization of American states and other regional security systems might suffer so severely as effectively to cripple the usefulness for years to come of such organizations in peacefully meeting potential dangers.

The principal reason some governments and a large segment of the general public of Latin America have found difficulty in accepting the U.S. point of view with regard to Guatemala and its danger to the peace of the hemisphere is that Communist, Guatemalan, and some other traditionally anti-American propaganda has convinced many people that:

1. The Guatemalan

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1. The Guatemalan revolution, similar to the 1910 Mexican revolution, is not Communist directed.
2. Such Communism as is discernible in Guatemala is not serious; the United States sees dangers that don't exist.
3. The principal purpose of the United States in Guatemala is to protect the interests of the United Fruit Company.
4. Under the present Administration the United States is about to return to policies of "dollar diplomacy", unilateral intervention and interference in the internal affairs of Latin American countries.
5. The United States diplomatically supports and gives arms to dictatorial governments at the expense of democratic regimes, thereby jeopardizing the few remaining democracies (including Guatemala) in the hemisphere.

While developments in the Guatemalan situation are likely to be so fluid as to make it impossible to lay down rigid guidelines on operating procedures, nevertheless, the following general recommendations should be followed in so far as possible and whenever possible:

1. In so far as possible we should depend on affirmative statements of other Latin American governments and respected Latin American individuals backing up United States policy statements.
2. While we should give due notice to all such statements, we should encourage and exploit to the greatest extent possible statements from democratic Latin American governments or individuals known for their "liberal" tendencies which back up our policy.
3. Because statements on the subject will be more effective coming from such sources as are noted above, statements from U.S. official sources will be restricted to a minimum. Statements from such U.S. private sources as the AFL or CIO which serve the above tasks should be encouraged and exploited as much as possible.

OBJECTIVE:

We shall seek inter-American action under the Rio Treaty to eliminate the extensive Communist infiltration in the Guatemalan government which has become a menace to the peace of the hemisphere.

To achieve the stated objective it will be necessary to convince the governments and people of Latin America:

1. That Communist imperialism is intervening in the internal affairs of Guatemala and through Guatemalan Communists is intervening in the internal affairs and menacing the peace of neighboring countries by:

a. Demonstrating

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- 3 -

- a. Demonstrating that Guatemala is effectively pursuing dictates and objectives of the Soviet Union;
 - b. Demonstrating that Guatemalan policy and political life is strongly influenced if not actually dominated by international Communism;
 - c. Demonstrating Communist efforts to disturb the peace of neighboring countries and overthrow anti-Communist or non-Communist line governments; and
 - d. Unmasking Guatemalan and other Communist attempts to discredit the United States and U.S. policies in Latin America.
2. That the United States is second to no nation in its effective efforts to improve the lot of underprivileged people throughout the world, and that it is making especially effective efforts in this regard in Latin America.
 3. That the United Fruit problem in Guatemala has no association with United States efforts to halt Communist aggression in the Americas.
 4. That the Guatemalan case involves saving democracy from totalitarian aggression.

PUBLIC POSITION:

The posture of the United States in the Guatemalan situation will be that of a nation which, while cognizant of its great strength, is acting in collaboration with the other American Republics with forbearance, patience and dignity befitting such strength in the presence of a weaker (if potentially seriously dangerous) neighbor. We have no quarrel with the Guatemalan people as such, and we will help them and the other nations of the hemisphere rid the area of Communist imperialist intervention in the hemisphere.

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