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Guatemalan Leftists Encouraged by Salvadoran Coup

The 26 October coup in El Salvador has encouraged opposition elements in neighboring Guatemala and has generated a number of rumors in Guatemala concerning an imminent coup there. While these rumors are unconfirmed, their circulation contributes to a climate of unrest in Guatemala, where modified forms of a "state of siege" were enforced because of political unrest between mid-July and mid-October. The Ydigoras administration is currently weakened by a declining economic situation that led the government to announce last month a drastic budget cut and the reduction of salaries of government employees.

President Ydigoras has attempted to govern by relatively democratic methods despite sporadic plotting against him both by leftist, Communist-infiltrated revolutionary factions and by rightist groups. Although Guatemalan leftists at the moment are disunited and probably incapable of staging a successful coup, leftists now appear influential in the new Salvadoran government and may plan to assist their Guatemalan colleagues. If pro-Castro elements become entrenched in the new Salvadoran regime, they would become a genuine threat to the Guatemalan and other Central American governments. Cuban embassies, presently in El Salvador and Honduras, would probably step up their covert aid and liaison to Central American revolutionary movements

A usually reliable source who is a high-level member of the Guatemalan Communist party reports Communist preparations to exploit the Salvadoran coup in Guatemala. He reports plans by Communist-infiltrated labor and student groups to stage a demonstration shortly, ostensibly to show solidarity with the Salvadoran people but actually to attack Ydigoras' alliance with the United States and to demand his resignation

The ouster of Salvadoran President Lemus was a personal blow to President Ydigoras, who had made every effort to strengthen Lemus and to this end initiated a meeting with Lemus at the border less than three weeks before the coup

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