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CITE

DIST 10 July 1967

COUNTRY GUATEMALA

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs  
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DOI 7 JULY 1967

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SUBJECT SITUATION APPRAISAL. STATUS OF THE GUATEMALAN REVOLUTIONARY  
MOVEMENT, AS OF 6 JULY 1967.

- ...BATOR
- ...BOWDEN
- ...BUDGET
- ...DAVIS
- ...GINSBURGH
- ...HAMILTON
- ...JESSUP
- ...JOHNSON
- ...JORDEN
- ...KEENEY
- ...KOMER
- ...MOYERS
- ...TAYLOR
- ...WRIGGINS

ACQ

SOURCE

THIS APPRAISAL

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TO HIM AT THE TIME OF ITS PREPARATION.

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1. (SUMMARY: AS A RESULT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESSFUL COUNTER-  
INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN, THE REBEL ARMED FORCES (FAR) IS UNDERGOING THE MOST  
CRITICAL PERIOD OF ITS FOUR-YEAR HISTORY, A PERIOD IN WHICH ITS CONTINUED  
EXISTANCE MAY WELL BE DETERMINED. FAR OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY IN THE NORTHEAST  
AREA HAS BEEN PRACTICALLY ELIMINATED AND THE URBAN RESISTANCE FRONT, THE  
"NERVE CENTER" OF THE FAR, HAS RECEIVED IMPRESSIVE SETBACKS AT THE HANDS OF

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THE GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES. DISSENSION WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAS INTENSIFIED SHARPLY WITH THE "RED GUARD" FACTION OF THE FAR TRYING TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE MOVEMENT FROM THE GUATEMALAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PGT).)

2. THE REBEL ARMED FORCES (FAR) IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING THE MOST CRITICAL PERIOD IN ITS FOUR-YEAR HISTORY, A PERIOD IN WHICH THE CONTINUED EXISTANCE OF THE FAR AS A SIGNIFICANT REVOLUTIONARY FORCE MAY WELL BE DETERMINED. THE FAR HAS SUFFERED A SERIES OF SEVERE SETBACKS SINCE THE INITIATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCY CAMPAIGN IN LATE 1966. BY EARLY 1967, THE GUATEMALAN ARMY HAD STRIPPED FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES THE OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY FROM THE EDGAR IBARRA GUERRILLA FRONT (FGEI, GUERRILLA ARM OF THE FAR) IN THE NORTHEAST AREA OF GUATEMALA, AND HAD FORCED THE FGEI INTO EXPENDING ITS ENERGIES IN A QUEST FOR SURVIVAL AND IN EFFORTS TO REGROUP ITS MILITARY FORCE. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE REMNANTS OF THE FGEI ARE BELIEVED TO NUMBER APPROXIMATELY 60 MEN, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE REPORTEDLY HIDING IN THE MOUNTAINS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF IZABAL.

3. THE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN BY THE ARMY AGAINST THE RURAL INSURGENT WAS SOON FOLLOWED BY GOVERNMENTAL EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE THE "NERVE CENTER" OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, THE URBAN RESISTANCE FRONT OF THE FAR. THE APPOINTMENT OF COLONEL MANUEL FRANCISCO SOSA AVILA AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF

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THE NATIONAL POLICE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ACHIEVING CLOSER COORDINATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE POLICE IN COOPERATIVE EFFORTS AGAINST THE URBAN SEGMENT OF THE FAR. SOSA IS ALSO CREDITED WITH THE PROMOTION OF A HIGHER ESPRIT DE CORPS WITHIN THE NATIONAL POLICE, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT INCREASE IN POLICE MORALE AND EFFECTIVENESS.

4. THE SUCCESSES OF THE SECURITY FORCES AGAINST THE URBAN RESISTANCE FRONT OF THE FAR SINCE APRIL 1967 HAVE BEEN IMPRESSIVE. A MAJOR PORTION OF THE FAR'S PROPAGANDA NETWORK, THE ENTIRE WORKERS SELF-DEFENSE UNIT (UNIDAD DE AUTODEFENSA OBRERA), LED BY FRANCISCO RAMIREZ CORADO, A LARGE PART OF THE FAR "SHOCK UNITS" (UNIDADES DE CHOQUE), AND MOST RECENTLY THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FAR SUPPLY UNIT HAVE ALL BEEN NEUTRALIZED BY GOVERNMENTAL ACTION. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE URBAN CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LARGELY ATTRIBUTABLE TO GOVERNMENT-SANCTIONED POLICE AND MILITARY TERRORISM. THE HARSH INTERROGATION METHODS UTILIZED BY THE POLICE HAVE BROUGHT FORTH INFORMATION WHICH HAS ALLOWED THE SECURITY FORCES TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE VERY HEART OF THE URBAN RESISTANCE FRONT. THE ASSASSINATIONS AND TERRORIST BOMBINGS BY THE SPECIAL COMMANDO UNITS OF THE GUATEMALAN ARMY, COUPLED WITH THE PROPAGANDA BOMBARDMENT OF THREATENED ASSASSINATIONS, HAS SERVED TO KEEP THE COMMUNIST LEFT IN A STRICTLY DEFENSE

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POSTURE AND HAS UNDOUBTEDLY DECREASED PARTICIPATION OF FAR MILITANTS AND HINDERED EFFORTS BY THE FAR TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS. WHATEVER THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF THE GOVERNMENT ACTION, THE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS. THE QUESTION OF MAJOR CONCERN AT THIS POINT IS WHETHER THE GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT, HAVING UNLEASHED THIS INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE COMMUNIST OPPOSITION, CAN MAINTAIN SUFFICIENT CONTROL OF THE RIGHTIST FORCES INVOLVED TO PREVENT THESE FORCES FROM POSING AN EVENTUAL THREAT TO THE STABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF.

5. CONCURRENT WITH, AND PERHAPS BECAUSE OF, THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE COMMUNIST INSURGENTS, DISSENSION AMONG THE LEADERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAS INTENSIFIED SHARPLY. THIS DISSENSION HAS BEEN PRIMARILY VOICED BY THE "RED GUARD" LEADERS OF THE FAR WHO OPPOSE THE DOMINATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT BY THE GUATEMALAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PGT) AND THE FAILURE OF THE PGT TO AGREE TO A MORE MILITANT STAND IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS. THIS DISSENSION IS NOT UNLIKE DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN COMMUNIST PARTIES WHICH ARE BEING CHALLENGED BY PRO-CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS.

6. THE LEADERS OF THE "RED GUARD" FACTION OF THE FAR ARE GABRIEL SALAZAR, PSEUDONYM OF A FAR LEADER WHOSE IDENTITY HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED, JOSE MARIA ORTIZ VIDES, AND RICARDO RAMIREZ DE LEON. ALL THREE HAVE RECENTLY

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BEEN IN CUBA FOR EXTENDED PERIODS. SALAZAR HAS RETURNED TO GUATEMALA AND ORTIZ HAS BEEN TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNIST BLOC, INCLUDING CHINA AND VIETNAM. THE POSITION OF CESAR MONTES IN THE TACTICAL DISSENSION IS SOMEWHAT UNCLEAR. IN RECENT MONTHS MONTES HAS VACILLATED BETWEEN THE HARD AND SOFT LINES, TAKING A PRO-PARTY POSITION WHEN IN THE COMPANY OF PGT LEADERS, BUT BEING MENTIONED IN INTERNAL FAR CORRESPONDENCE AS SUPPORTING THE POSITION OF SALAZAR. PGT LEADERS HAVE VOICED THE OPINION THAT SALAZAR, WHO WAS REMOVED FROM ALL POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY WITHIN THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT WITH THE REORGANIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FAR INTO THE HIGH COMMAND, WILL ATTEMPT TO FORM HIS OWN SEPARATE REVOLUTIONARY FORCE. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONFIRMATION THAT SALAZAR IS ATTEMPTING TO FORM HIS OWN MOVEMENT. HOWEVER, SUCH A MOVE WOULD APPEAR TO BE A LOGICAL ONE.

7. PGT LEADERS HAVE EXPRESSED THE VIEWPOINT THAT THE FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE IN HAVANA OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY ORGANIZATION (LASO) WILL BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN RELATION TO THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE REVOLUTION IN GUATEMALA. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE "RED GUARD" FACTION OF THE FAR WILL ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE CUBANS TO PROD THE PGT INTO ACCEPTING A MORE MILITANT FORMULA TO RESOLVE THE SOLUTION TO THE ARMED

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STRUGGLE. THE PGT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY DEFEND ITS THESIS AND POINT TO THE RECENT LOSSES OF THE FAR AS FRUITS OF THE "RED GUARD" STRATEGY. IT IS NOT BELIEVED THAT THE PGT CAN BE CONVINCED TO FOLLOW THE LINE ADVOCATED BY THE "RED GUARD" LEADERS. HOWEVER, THE CUBANS MAY WELL ENCOURAGE SALAZAR TO ORGANIZE HIS OWN PRO-CUBAN MOVEMENT BY PROMISING TO SUPPLY FUNDS AND OTHER MATERIAL SUPPORT. SUCH A MOVE BY THE CUBANS WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE IMMEDIATE REPERCUSSIONS AMONG THE COMMUNISTS IN GUATEMALA AND WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN SEVERE FRAGMENTATION AND INFIGHTING.

8. EVEN DISCOUNTING THE INTERNAL DISSENSION AMONG THE COMMUNISTS AND ITS HARMFUL RAMIFICATIONS WITHIN THE GUATEMALAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT, THE FAR IS STILL IN A PERIOD APPROACHING STAGNATION. AT THE PRESENT TIME, ITS CAPABILITY FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION IS PROBABLY LIMITED TO OCCASIONAL AND BOTHERSOME ACTS OF VIOLENCE WHICH WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE STABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THE FAR IS IN SHORT SUPPLY OF FUNDS AND SUPPLIES, WHICH ARE TWO INDISPENSABLE ITEMS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT OF RESERVE FRONTS IN THE WESTERN AND CENTRAL AREAS OF GUATEMALA. IN ORDER TO REGROUP ITS FORCES, THE FAR WILL NEED A LARGE INPUT OF FUNDS AND SUPPLIES FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES. IN ADDITION, THE REVOLUTIONARIES NEED TIME AND RELATIVE FREEDOM OF ACTION TO REORGANIZE. AS LONG AS THE GOVERNMENT'S AGGRESSIVE

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CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE INSURGENTS CONTINUES, THE COMMUNIST LEFT WILL EXPERIENCE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN ATTEMPTING TO REVITALIZE THE FAR INTO A VIABLE REVOLUTIONARY THREAT.

9. FIELD DISSEM: NONE. SHOWN TO AMBASSADOR AND DCM.

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