

RYBAT

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DISPATCH NO. HGG-A-714

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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2003

TO: Lincoln

DATE: FEB 10 1954

FROM: Chief of Station, Guatemala [] INFO: Chief of WHD

SUBJECT: GENERAL— PESUCCESS

SPECIFIC— Psychological Barometer Report (Period Ending
6 February 1954)

Reference: HGG-A-703

1. It seems reasonably certain that a majority considers the government's "white paper" charges to be pure fantasy and an expression of the fear and uncertainty prevailing in government circles. By revealing such fear and uncertainty it also appears that the government has dissipated much of the hopelessness that has long enervated oppositionists. Although internal anti-government groups and individuals will probably not be inspired to immediate and effective action by reason of this new-found hope (because of the government's retaliatory powers), it is believed that most members of the articulate upper and middle classes here are now convinced that the Arbenz regime probably will not survive. Again, it is believed that external forces will be decisive. As stated in the last previous barometer report, it does not appear that the government has inspired any substantial "solidarity" through the "white paper" revelations, but the incident is being heavily propogandized in order to sustain the devotion of present partisans and possibly to arouse pro-Guatemalan sentiment among left wing groups in other Latin American countries.
2. Except for continued editorials in the official and independent press, interest in and speculation concerning the "white paper" has quickly subsided. The Communist-sponsored pro-government manifestation held on Friday, 5 February 1954, in protest against the alleged conspiracy was not a success despite claims to the contrary. On-the-spot observers reported only a small group of pro-government militants in attendance. The "several thousands" reported in the local press are said to have been mostly curious by-standers.
3. The expulsion of an American priest and two American newspapermen has caused considerable speculation and angry charges that the government is guilty of suppression of freedom of religion and freedom of the press, but a paucity of reports from other than press sources precludes an accurate appraisal of these incidents except to note with certainty that the government has further antagonized the already hostile independent press and caused indignation among Catholics.

8 February 1954

GLT/cmh

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[George L. Tranger]

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