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~~SECRET PBSUCCESS RYBAT~~

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Weekly Psych Intelligence Report, 19-26 April 1954

Reference: HULA-40

1. The period 19-26 April 1954 was marked primarily by increased nervousness and lack of confidence and control on the part of pro-government forces and an increased display of strength, unity and confidence on the part of the opposition. Events of the week, with the exception of one, tended to widen the ever-increasing gulf between pro-and anti-government elements. The only unifying factor was the appearance of the U.S. Government claim for some \$16,000,000 in payment for lands expropriated from the United Fruit Company which drew forth emotional reaction based on the almost universal dislike of the fruit company. The first reaction has tended to die down and it is of interest that even the pro-government press did not push the matter unduly. However, it is regarded as probable that this matter will again be brought up to public attention in the future.

ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION

During reporting period an apparent and increased nervousness was noted in enemy arenas of interest, particularly those of military and political circles, and a note of bewilderment was introduced. The Communist position appeared to be moving toward the defensive and rumors regarding ARBENZ and his family and top government officials spread.

The Communist position during the reporting period was not the aggressive one of the past. Contrary to previous years when thousands of campesinos were imported into the capital to make it the center of May Day activities, the Committee announced that similar celebrations and parades would be held in some 72 towns and cities throughout the country, among which all nine target areas are numbered. Discontent among the ranks of labor was indicated by the fact that labor leaders were meeting with difficulty in their attempts to collect the payments regularly exacted from union members to cover the costs of May Day activities.

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In higher circles, Alfonso SOLORZANO, Mexico-trained Communist director of the IGSS, was heard to state during the period that he viewed the prospects of the present regime with discouragement (See HGG-A-966). In view of differences existing between SOLORZANO and other Communist leaders, it is not possible to estimate the extent to which his opinion is shared. It is believed to be not without significance, however.

The PELLECCER-MARTINEZ struggle appears to have resolved itself in favor of MARTINEZ who was reported during the period to have been negotiating for the purchase of several large fincas, including that owned by the HODGSDON family in the Patulul area, a Grace Company property in the same region and a third near Pochuta.

The press announcement to the effect that members of 7 agrarian committees in the Escuintla area had been removed due to their failure to conform to the "precepts contained in the Agrarian Law" was an indication of continuing efforts to play down Communist influence in that region (See HGG-A-919).

Nervousness in government circles was indicated by the outbreak of unusually bitter exchanges between pro- and anti-government forces in Congress provoked by the proposed homage to ESTRADA de la Hoz and the proposal to cancel payment of the government's share in the maintenance of the IGSS and the INFOP. (Considering the fact that the IGSS was established to care for and aid the working class, it was of interest to note that Carlos Manuel PELLECCER and Victor Manuel GUTIERREZ took determined stands in favor of canceling the government debt to that agency. Whether this is due to strained relations with Alfonso SOLORZANO, IGSS head mentioned above, is not known).

Perhaps the greatest cause of speculation and strain came with the rumored dismissal of Chief of the Guardia Civil, Rogelio CRUZ Wer accompanied by the accusation that he was the leader of a Communist movement against the present regime. Although quickly denied by "creditable" sources, the veracity of the report was supported by the fact that several individuals had seen a photostatic copy of his PGT carnet and because CRUZ Wer was not available at his office for some but confined to a sick bed with a "bad cold."

That the sense of impending change or attempt at change had penetrated the highest government circles was indicated by a report and Embassy contact to the effect that President ARBENZ' mother had recently left unwillingly and under pressure for San Francisco on her way to Switzerland where she is to remain with the ARBENZ CHILDREN. According to source, her departure followed her pleas to her son for more moderate policies, his response that it was too late for such changes, and his insistence that she go to Switzerland where she would be safer should anything happen.

It was also reported that the armed guard at the National Palace was suddenly increased during the reporting period by the addition of 70 soldiers armed with automatic weapons (ametralladores de mano). They were reportedly dispatched from the Guardia de Honor on short notice and their assignment is said to have caused much speculation and nervousness among both the officers and troops concerned who presumed that a coup was expected.

Lastly, the attack on Radio Internacional and the vigorous pursuit of participants in the "32" campaign (see below) evidenced the government's uneasiness and desire to crush opposition activity together with what appeared to be a lack of knowledge as to how to proceed most effectively.

ESTIMATE OF THE FRIENDLY SITUATION

If the enemy picture indicated loss of composure and some bewilderment, friendly forces showed a confidence and strength not previously demonstrated.

The outstanding example of this new position was that of the opposition press which has previously shown itself reluctant to go too far on controversial issues. Following the armed attack on the offices of Radio Internacional and the announcement by Francisco BAEZA that he had received instructions to omit politics from his daily radio news program over La Voz de la Telefunken, editorial columns decried the use of such tactics and played up the abuse of civil liberties in general, devoting particular attention to the dangers of suppressing freedom of press and radio channels.

Support for the Archbishop and his anti-Communist stand continued to be forthcoming in editorials and from Acci3n Catolica de Guatemala as well as from a group in Antigua. In addition, groups have been formed in various other parts of the country to back him and his position.

The "32" campaign in its initial phase undoubtedly served its purpose in arousing curiosity, speculation and suspense. Unfavorable reactions were noted, however, primarily because of the universal dislike for the defacing of property -- the "vandalism" aspect of the program. However, the vital fact is that many people who had been reaching a dangerous complacency and apathy have suddenly realized, with considerable shock, that there does exist an organized resistance to the present regime which is not only willing but able to go out and "do" something. The success of this maneuver in the face of unusual police precautions is also regarded as extremely important because it will tend to hearten many people who have been simply afraid to do anything. Furthermore, the "32" campaign is now being shifted and the "vandalistic" tactics will be launched against members of the government and their property. It is human nature that those who are not

harmed frequently take a perverse pleasure in seeing the powerful "top dogs" be given the treatment, and since the government is the target, the fact that the government people become victims will not go amiss. We expect, however, that the newspapers will say that this is vandalism because there is little else that they can say. Actually, it will be vandalism but vandalism with a purpose.

~~That~~ this initial effort upset government and police circles was evidenced by the immediate arrests -- many of individuals of proven innocence -- made in the capital, Puerto Barrios (where a woman was the first person detained) and other outlying areas.

Clara M. Heagey

GMH/ENB/GLT/cmh

26 April 1954

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