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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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NOTES ON DISCUSSION WITH MR. BARNES.

SUBJECT: Present status and possible future course of PBSUCCESS.

1. Mr. Barnes has reported his very tentative view -- which is his own estimate of the situation and which lacks the benefit of a report from [] (who will return to LINCOLN Monday night), that the original para-military plan may not be capable of fulfillment and that we should consider now an alternative approach which would not depend absolutely for the success of the operation upon getting all of the ducks in a row as originally conceived and having everything come to pass and go off according to the large plan of carefully-timed, completely integrated para-military action. Mr. Barnes' thought is that we should endeavor to proceed in such a way as to continue to build up pressures both internally and externally and that we should employ certain of the assets of which we presently dispose for this purpose. We should work toward a situation on the para-military side of this operation which would have two alternative possibilities, viz.:

(a) The development of a situation which would enable the original para-military plan or a substantial part thereof to function more or less as previously envisioned; and

(b) To ~~xxx~~ so conduct the operation as to place ourselves in a position to go into a longer-term resistance type activity within Guatemala, having the ordinary and usual aims, objectives and methods as is consistent with true resistance operations most everywhere.

2. The virtue of the second alternative, as I see it, is that it allows for and permits of the use of assets during the very near-term for the build-up of pressures against the regime which, in their cumulative effect, might very well accomplish the desired result, via., the stirring of the Guatemalan armed forces to rise against the regime with a coup of their own making. It is, of course, a fundamental part of both approaches -- in fact it is a sine qua non of both, that a very substantial part of the Guatemalan armed forces will move against the Government. This being the case, if it is

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possible to get them to move with sufficient strength to overthrow the regime in a manner other than that which was originally contemplated -- and especially if this can be done at an earlier date than would be necessary to perfect all of the arrangements required under the original concept -- this should be all to the good.

3. Under this new concept or approach, there would be a corresponding willingness to divert the amount of strength from the central para-military operation to enable the harassment actions contemplated to be accomplished. Presumably this would mean that if it were deemed desirable to undertake specific sabotage actions in the near future, this would be permissible. The same would apply to other types of harassment actions, the accomplishment of which would require the use of existing assets.

4. At least one of Mr. Earnes' reasons for arriving at this conclusion is the increasing disappointment of LINCOLN (and Headquarters, for that matter) in the apparent capabilities and strength of Armas himself. Armas has been given the most extraordinary amount of assistance, support and guidance through PBSUCCESS, and if he had any real strength and capability of his own/^{he} should by now have accomplished a great deal. However, as time has gone on, he has emerged more and more clearly as a bold but incompetent man, having very little ability of his own to translate ideas and thoughts into concrete action. More and more we have been holding up his hand and more and more our resources have been employed to do the job which he should have done. In addition to his other weaknesses, he has shown a marked lack of toughness, and this is nowhere more clear than in the cases of his inexplicable leniency toward persons within his own ranks who have betrayed him. He has been far too gullible and ~~too trusting~~ trusting of the people around him. He was evidently either unable or unwilling to spot the bad actors within his own entourage and when we were able to do this for him he was most loath to take any punitive or restraining action against these persons.

4. Our actual hard information concerning the size and strength of his claimed internal organization is very slight. We are still almost entirely dependent upon his representations in this regard. There has been no adequate opportunity to test the existence or strength of this organization. Accordingly,

there is another virtue in the proposed new alternative approach in that we will actually have an opportunity to gauge the ability of the organization to deliver on specific targets assigned to them.

5. Finally, the state of tension and turmoil in Guatemala has already reached such a point that it would be extremely difficult to maintain it at just the proper pitch and intensity for the amount of time which would be necessary to complete the preparations for readiness under the old plan. It seems that one of ~~the~~ two developments will occur; either there will be a relaxation of tensions and a cooling-off of tempers, or the pressure will continue to mount rapidly to a point of explosion. It is considered that a relaxation and cooling-off would be far more disadvantageous than the continued build-up to the point of boiling over. If this is a correct estimate, ~~we~~ we should continue to apply our efforts to the end that pressures will increase and the temperature will continue to rise. This happens to be the viewpoint of the station as well as of JMBLUG. Also to be considered in this connection is the report of the military person which, if any substantial credibility is to be attached to it, would indicate that the Army has a plan of its own which it may be on the verge of putting into effect. Added pressures would seem to be the best way of effecting this.