

16 May 1955

2003

in re: "WHY ARBENZ REGIME COLLAPSED?"

As of June 27, ARBENZ was behind the 8-ball in the following respects:

D-i-p-l-o-m-a-t-i-c

HOSTILITY OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

No hope that this hostility would ever diminish.

No hope of ever receiving arms or other aid from U. S.

Everybody aware that U.S. was hostile to Arbenz.

Therefore Guatemalan Army and politicians knew there was little if any real future in sticking with Arbenz.

HOSTILITY OF NEIGHBOR: HONDURAS

Honduras a staging ground for invasion and a permanent base for guerillas.

HOSTILITY OF NEARBY NICARAGUA

Training base and base for Air operations.

NEUTRALITY OF NEIGHBOR: EL SALVADOR

NEUTRALITY\*\* OF NEIGHBOR: MEXICO

\*\*Permitted Congress Against Soviet Imperialism to be held.

\*\*Mexican Radio, June 18-27, relayed rumors: "Army is against Arbenz, etc."

HOSTILITY OF DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Radio HIZT broadcast encouragement to Liberation Movement.

HOSTILITY OF VENEZUELA

NEUTRALITY OF COSTA RICA

~~SECRET~~

2

M-i-l-i-t-a-r-y

MILITARY SITUATION, PER SE, NOT CRITICAL, --BUT HOPELESS IN LONG-RUN VIEW

At time of cease-fire Arbenz forces around Zacapa-Chiquimula may still have had a superiority, in numbers, of around 2 to 1, but:

No hope of receiving more weapons from anywhere outside Guatemala.

No hope of receiving any planes.

Land communications badly disrupted; no hope of preventing continued bombing and strafing to keep them disrupted.

Arbenz forces at Chiquimula and Zacapa had taken a very bad mauling from "CASTILLO's devastating mortar fire" on land, and their morale badly affected by:

**AIR SUPERIORITY OF CASTILLO**

A small margin numerically, often only 1-0, but it exposed Arbenz forces to a future of always being on the receiving end of bombing and strafing; communications vulnerable; Castillo had monopoly of reconnaissance from air and of air drops for reinforcement and re-supply; exposure to leaflet drops over all main cities; etc.

**CASTILLO SUPERIORITY IN WEAPONS (Quality?), LEADERSHIP (Kubeck) & MORALE**

**HONDURAS A PERMANENT, INACCESSIBLE BASE FOR CASTILLO GUERRILLA OPERATIONS**

so long as Castillo skilful enough to avoid getting destroyed in a pitched battle, remaining "in being" (as recommended in cable from JMBLUG) and ducking back into Honduras when necessary, CASTILLO would be able to maintain the Political and Psychological and Diplomatic tensions, --between Arbenz and Army, between Arbenz and population persecuted by Guardia Civil & Judicial, between Guatemala and other countries.

**ARMY LEADERS**

1. Regarded as "key" to situation by PBSUCCESS planners from the start (as per Stage IV, p. 14).
2. Though not actually defeated in the field, they took a look at the combined Diplomatic, Military and Psychological factors and found they added up to: "There's no future with Arbenz; Arbenz has got to go." [ ] prodded by Defection Program, did good work in this direction.

~~SECRET~~

3

Psychological

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS, BASIC, BROUGHT INTO DECISIVE PLAY BY MILITARY PRESSURE

Fact that Arbenz really was Communist-dominated was his single greatest basic vulnerability, since it brought against him the irreversible hostility of USA Government and of enough neighboring Governments (Honduras, Nicaragua) to make possible application of enough military pressure to act as a catalyst on the psychological-political situation.

INACCESSIBLE CLANDESTINE RADIO....extremely effective.

Leaflets.....effective (especially when dropped from Air)

"32 Campaign".....simple and effective

Deception Program

Defection Program.....paid off at end; should have been started sooner & more

Guatemala Press hostility to Arbenz

"Long after most of the anti-Communist leaders had fled the country, the press stood alone as the champion of freedom and democracy in Guatemala." James, "Red Design", p.270.

Effect of ALPHEM shipment within Guatemala and through Latin America?