

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

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13 August 1954

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: []
FROM : []
SUBJECT : Guatemalan Document Collection

1. In accordance with your request, I am outlining below a few suggestions regarding the exploitation of the Guatemalan official documents collection, as a supplement to previous RQM/OIS support on mechanics and methodology, given when [] as here organizing the project.

2. It seems to me urgent that an early decision be made on a basic plan of publication. Even though this is only one of the long-term aims of the project and will require extensive time and review before completion, once the plan is outlined and announced, it will serve as a useful device to which all of the immediate, piece-meal and other uses of the material can be related. This will be particularly useful, it seems to me, for the following reasons: (1) the Guatemalan Government will be definitively established as responsible for the documents, their exploitation and release and (2) subsequent news and propaganda treatment of any aspect of the subject or of information derived from this source can be repeatedly tied into the announced Guatemalan Government publication program.

3. As a practical approach to the basic plan, it is suggested that arrangements be made with the Guatemalan Government to publish several volumes of collated, edited documents as a sober historical record and a scholarly, objective presentation of the evidence regarding events which led to the endangerment of the national sovereignty through penetration of national institutions by international communism. This publication would contribute to the better understanding of some of the main problems of modern constitutional and democratic governments and therefore would be of interest and value to statesmen and students throughout the free world.

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4. Such a plan would have the advantages of (a) placing the exploitation of the documents on a level of dignity and scholarship suitable for an official government publication, (b) publicly establishing the Guatemalan Government as responsible for publishing the documents; (c) presenting the new government as objective and sincere in its anti-Communist policy rather than revengeful and opportunistic; (d) giving the new government an opportunity to appoint distinguished intellectuals to paying and honorary positions as editors and advisory board members. (The Communists in Guatemala have given intellectuals a lot of opportunity and glory to live for. This offers a way of bringing out, backing and increasing the prestige of another group of intellectuals who can help to mold opinion in support of the new government and its programs.)

5. Announcements of this plan and the appointment of members of the local historical advisory group can be widely exploited for propaganda purposes through release of photos, biographic data and statements of the individuals concerned, while screening for substantive material in the documents is in process. This would give satisfaction to the subjects and further establish the undertaking as the work of the Guatemalan Government.

6. Continuing publicity could be obtained by scheduling lectures on the findings, in various countries, by Guatemalan scholars connected with the project.

7. Arrangements might well be made for translation and publication in English, French, and Portuguese of these volumes or selected portions of them under the auspices of some Guatemalan scholarly and patriotic society, or some inter-American organization of scholarly type.

8. It goes without saying that a basic outline of the prospective content and arrangement of the several volumes should be prepared in advance and in such a way that it can be used as a basic guide for screening and related propaganda development. This should be worked up in Spanish and represented as the brainchild of whatever Guatemalan leader undertakes to sponsor it before the Guatemalan Board of Editors for their adoption.

9. As illustrative of the type of ultimate publication we have in mind, we have ordered copies for your retention of several volumes of captured German documents which have been published by the US Department of State. The translation and editing was done by joint US and British teams.