

27 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: []

The following are some random thoughts which I have had during the day about the situation of our team.

1. I first received some very troublesome news from Jake Esterline about the inspection team but on talking to Frank Wisner over the telephone I found that it probably will not hit Nicaragua before July 7. In the meantime [] is working up some thoughts on how it might be delayed and Headquarters is doing the same. In order to play safe we should probably figure that it might arrive at Managua on the morning of July 6 giving us 8 full days after today.

2. Once we have to move aircraft out of [] it is my view that we will no longer be able practically to supply Calligeris forces and we certainly cannot give any fighter support unless we can obtain an operational air field within Guatemala. This conclusion as to fighters is obvious. As to supply a C-47 could not fly from Robalo to a supply point and back without refueling. Even assuming a controlled air strip this would be of no value without substantial fueling facilities since a C-47 requires about 4200 lbs of fuel which, plus containers, would mean that its total load would be fuel for the return trip. Even the availability of a C-54 would not correct this problem since it, too, would require refueling to complete a round trip.

3. In view of the above it is essential that either the conflict be terminated prior to July 6 or an internal position be secured with air

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field plus a supply capability. Puerto Barrios seems to be the only solution.

4. In order to take Puerto Barrios men must be shifted from the Zacapa area to Puerto Barrios. I am now of the opinion that probably the only way these men can get there is either on foot or perhaps to a minor extent (though even this is doubtful) on the railroad. The reason that I do not include an airborne capacity is that two of the three available fields, i.e. Esquipulas and Chiquimula would seem to be clearly unusable for loaded takeoffs of C-47s while the third, i.e. Zacapa, may or may not permit such takeoffs. On the other hand Zacapa may be usable and there is an additional possibility namely a strip in Zacapa reported to have been started in 1952. Sherwood should be asked to check with [] and anyone else in the know regarding the Zacapa facilities. Under any circumstances the greatest number of combat equipment and men with which the C-47 can take off is 20. Conceivably taking overloading risks, an additional 5 to 10 men might be added ^{but} ~~for~~ unless the takeoff facilities are extremely good, I would think that at best 20 would be the maximum.

5. Assuming the worst, i.e., that Zacapa has no adequate air facilities, the only way of reaching Puerto Barrios with additional men will be overland or a matter I would suppose of 3 days minimum between the date of departure and the time of combat.

6. Assuming usable air facilities at Zacapa, some sort of air lift plan might be worked out.

7. Under any circumstances I would suggest that we encourage Headquarters to go ahead with the arrangements on the boat (ref. DIR 06735)

obtaining it if possible on the scheme stated in paragraph 3B of the reference. I would suppose that the main advantage of the boat would be to lend perhaps some support for an attack on Puerto Barrios but more particularly to provide supplies for the Calligeris units and air force on the assumption that Puerto Barrios is taken. Actually it is my offhand opinion that the boat should probably lie off shore until it receives a signal either from an aircraft or from shore that all is clear and it can land. This may be too conservative a view since with air support a ship with proper weapons might prove a valuable offensive weapon in support of the attack on the city. It would, I suppose, be fairly vulnerable as it approached shore but with its own fire power and supporting air craft, this might not be too serious while once in close, it could provide good fire cover for a small select number of assault troops. I take no position on this except to say that obviously this latter possibility is preferable though if it involved too great a risk with respect to the loss of a ship, the more conservative approach might have to be chosen.

8. Under any circumstances it is my view that our major effort at least for 28 and 29 June (assuming that it is necessary for both days) should be to support to the limit the fight at Zacapa, Chiquimula and Ipala in the hope of seriously harming the enemy effort plus consolidating the Calligeris position in these 3 cities and hopefully making a connection with friendly forces in Jalapa. In my opinion this result is a possibility since as of the morning of 28 June, we should have additional aircraft ready for operational use, i.e., the 3 F 47s which were grounded for lack of tail wheel tires.

9. During these 2 days I would also recommend bombing at least one Guatemala City target and preferably two. Since the inspection team will probably be in Guatemala City on 30 June it would seem that these may be the only two days available for bombing the city for quite a while. This raises the serious question of whether or not the Casa Presidencial should be included as a target in this period. I have not yet made up my own mind whether we should request it but at the moment I am rather inclined to put it up to Headquarters.

10. Assuming that by the night of 29 June the cities above mentioned are firmly taken a decision would have to be made whether or not to try to proceed toward Guatemala City to hold and send some of the available forces to try to take Puerto Barrios or to try to proceed in both directions. This decision will depend upon the facts at the time, the damage done by the enemy, the condition of our forces, the availability of usable airports at Zacapa and other facts. It should be noted that as of June 30 we may have available for operational use additional pilots and P-51 aircraft. If so this added air support might justify an allout drive for Guatemala City.

11. The additional air power just mentioned would be a factor if the Zacapa-Chiquimula-Ipala area was not firmly taken by the night of 29 June and our forces not defeated or disorganized.

12. Finally under any circumstances we should start planning immediately for some practical plan of action against Puerto Barrios on the assumption that circumstances will force us to try and capture it.

13. Conclusions reviewed:

a. Advice Headquarters to obtain boat.

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b. Start immediately preparation of plan for capture of Puerto Barrios.

c. Plan of action for next few days or until completed due to victory or defeat an all out effort with full air support against Zacapa, Chiquimula and Ipala.

d. One or two bomb attacks during the next two days against Guatemala City targets perhaps Casa Presidencial being one.