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22 June 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT : Defection of Guatemalan Air Force Pilots

2003

1. Only three Guatemalan Air Force pilots on active duty are known to have defected. These men were reported to have been in the Salvadoran Embassy in Guatemala City on 20 June:

Col. Luis URRUTIA de Leon
(Major) Dick HERRERA
Major POSADAS, fmu

2. These officers reported that one other pilot was already in the Panamanian Embassy (unconfirmed) and that another was planning to flee in his aircraft on 21 June (unconfirmed).

3. On 19 June Salvador reported that a pilot named ASENCIO, fmu landed in Santa Ana, Salvador. Guatemala replied that no pilot named ASENCIO was known to be on active duty with the Guatemalan Air Force, and stated that it was believed the pilot was Julio ASENCIO Hunderlich, a former U.S. Embassy source believed to be anti-government.

4. In addition to the above six defections, only three of which are confirmed, there have been reports of five other defections of Guatemalan Air Force pilots on active duty and the death of one pilot who crashed while searching for one of the aircraft dropping leaflets in Guatemala. The Guatemalan Government has confirmed his death.

5. Three pilots were reported to have fled in a bomber and two fighter aircraft on 8 June and to have landed in Tegucigalpa. One of the pilots was reported to be Captain Alberto SAMAYOA Paz. This information was reported by refugees from Guatemala arriving in Salvador. The name of SAMAYOA Paz was also reported on 9 June by the Guatemala station as being that of a pilot who had defected. Another report from Guatemala on the same day said two pilots had taken off to search for a leaflet dropping plane and that only one had returned. It was believed that SAMAYOA Paz was the pilot of the plane which did not return. The defection of SAMAYOA Paz and two other pilots has not been subsequently confirmed.

6. Two other pilots in AT-6's were reported to have taken off on patrol from Guatemala City on 15 June and failed to return. This Guatemala Station report has not been confirmed.

7. The status of Air Corps defections appears to be as follows:

3 confirmed
3 possible (one not air force pilot)
5 unconfirmed (probably not true)
1 dead

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