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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM

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RELEASE AS SANITIZED

18 June 1954

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Henry F. Holland
Assistant Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D. C.

SUBJECT:

British attitude toward the Guatemalan situation.

1. Reference is made to our previous conversations concerning highly critical attitudes reflected in the British press toward the United States' position with respect to Guatemala, and the fact that articles and editorials appearing in the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN and other British newspapers have been played up propaganda-wise in Latin America in such a way as to undercut the rectitude of the US position and State Department "case" against Guatemala. [Although I have caused the London TIMES to be researched back to the first of June, I have not found the article or language which I am sure I saw last week on the newsticker as being attributed in certain Latin American capitals as appearing in the London TIMES.]

2. On the CBS "World News Roundup" at 8:00 this morning the reporter from London devoted his entire time to British hostility toward the United States' position on Guatemala and more specifically toward the proposal to interfere with arms shipments. Various unnamed British sources were quoted as saying such things as "despite the United Fruit Company, the United States does not yet own all of Central America and the Caribbean." The CBS reporter said that attitudes in England ranged from cold official hostility to flaming indignation with regard to our proposals about the stoppage of arms shipments.

3. I understand from Mr. Laddy that some good missionary work has been done with the British along the lines of giving them the facts of life, and that the Department has the impression that this effort has met with some success. However, it would seem to me that more needs to be done, and at a higher level, and very soon, if the current wave of British hostile and damaging utterances is to be quelled. It is my thought in this connection that the visit of Sir Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden might be taken advantage of for this purpose and that they might be given a number of the more essential facts in the case. It would probably also be wise to further brief the British Embassy prior to their arrival, and perhaps

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even to request the Embassy to advise the Foreign Office that the Department wishes to discuss this matter with Churchill and Eden when they are here.

4. We have all, of course, recognized that the British would be very sensitive on the subject of interference with shipping. However, Sir Winston is one person who understands the facts of power operations and the significance of the international Communist organization and its works. He also has a pretty clear comprehension of British vulnerabilities to subversive work in their colonial areas. It has not been very long since his government was placed on the hot seat as the result of inadequate knowledge of and preparation for developments in British Guiana. British Honduras could well be next. It is my recollection that at the time of the British trouble over Guiana the United States was one of the few powers which took the part of the British and expressed a sympathetic attitude -- and that we did so despite the known disadvantages which would accrue to us in our relationships with other Latin American nations, as well as more generally throughout the world where our preferred posture of anti-colonialism has been borne down by our concern over the position and difficulties of our major allies (the British and the French). These are lines which could be used with Mr. Churchill.

SIGNED

FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

cc: Mr. Leddy

- DD/P-FGW/bjm 6/18/54
- Orig. to Mr. Holland by hand of FGW
- 1 cc - Mr. Leddy by hand of FGW.
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