

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

8 June 1954

2003

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT:

Guatemala; suggested lines for use in official statements.

1. Our representatives in the field have advised us that the people of Guatemala apparently accepted the premise that the US has a vital and over-riding interest in denying the USSR lodgment on Guatemalan soil. In line with this premise it is requested that you consider suggesting to the Secretary of State or some other appropriate person of your selection, that a statement be issued at a propitious moment to the effect that the US is, as a matter of course, taking a sympathetic and active interest in the courageous efforts of all Guatemalans from all walks of life to ward off Communist attempts to destroy the freedom and independence of Guatemala. In the opinion of our field personnel, such a statement would not be construed as unilateral intervention in the domestic affairs of Guatemala, but rather would be accepted as a corollary to the Secretary of State's statement at Caracas that the domination of the political institutions of any American State "would be a threat to the sovereignty and independence of us all, endangering the peace of America and calling for appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties."

2. An official statement of the kind suggested above would be a major contribution to the success of our mission. It would undoubtedly stiffen the backs of those political elements which now seem resigned to Communist ascendancy, and it would push off the fence certain individuals who feel that no enterprise of this kind can possibly succeed unless the US puts the full weight of its moral and material power behind it.

Note: The substance of the foregoing paragraphs was recommended by our operating personnel and I am sending it on to you notwithstanding the fact that I am aware of certain plans and statements which you already have in mind, including the proposed question-and-answer for the Secretary's use at his next press conference. I have seen considerable evidence during the past two days to the effect that the Guatemalan regime is making every effort to persuade the people of Guatemala, and particularly influential anti-Communist circles, that the regime has

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- 2 -

nothing to fear from the United States or from our attempt to obtain multilateral action. This line of the regime is having its impact and strong anti-Communists have become very discouraged. Moreover, it does not seem to me that in the official statements and utterances of this Government enough has been done to make a clear-cut separation between our view of the regime and our view of the Guatemalan people, as such. This wedge can and must be driven more persuasively and more effectively.

~~SECRET~~