

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003 COURIER

~~SECRET~~

*Line*  
X HGG-A-1108

MAY 21 1954

[ ] Chief of Station, Guatemala [ ] INFO: Chief, WHD; Lincoln

Request for Identification of Automobile Registration

Reference: [ ] -1791

1. From the description of the automobile license plate set out in the dispatch of reference, it is believed the plate is for the year 1953. For that year, license plates in Guatemala had a dark background with white numbers. For the current year, Guatemalan plates have a white background with black numbers.

2. Esconson-2 was able to have performed a check of the automobile registration records within the Guardia Civil and has ascertained that license plate PE-718 (for 1953) was issued to the Direccion de Caminos Ruta al Atlantico, "Campamento El Rancho." The same source has ascertained that it is the practice of the Guardia Civil to assign license numbers in blocks of ten to the various government agencies which require licenses for the private automobiles of the employees of that agency. In the event the automobile is to be used for official purposes or is the property of an official of the agency, the license plate issued is an "Official" or "O" plate. If the automobile is not to be used for official purposes or is the property of an employee, a regular plate is issued such as the above. Judging from that, source is of the opinion the automobile is the private property of an individual connected with the "Campamento El Rancho."

3. There is quoted below the text of a memorandum just received from the Air Attache to this Embassy. For the information of the reader, [ ] [ ] is a casual source of information for the Air Attache.

~~SECRET~~

JUN 1954

[ ] called today and offered the following information:

1. An individual whom he described as a Honduran national and named ZUNIGA (first name unknown) is one of the principal couriers operating between GUATEMALA and the North Coast of HONDURAS. This individual is alleged to have made two trips to the North Coast within the past 20 days, one during the current strike and one just prior to the strike, for the purpose of delivering funds to strike leaders. According to [ ], this man is an employee of the Guatemalan Government in SALAMA, working on a public works project there. His immediate superior on this project is supposed to be Colonel PAZ TEJADA, and it is he who allegedly delivers the money to ZUNIGA for him to carry to HONDURAS. [ ] said that this information is considered by him to be extremely well-founded.

2. He stated that a Mr. Ernesto BERGER, whom he described as a GUATEMALAN who has worked closely with this Embassy for a number of years, is under suspicion by [ ] "group" as being employed by the GUATEMALAN Government. He stated that BERGER has gone to MEXICO twice within the last two months and there has been observed driving an automobile with Guatemalan license plates No. 5718. According to [ ] sources, BERGER is reported to have been attempting to purchase arms in MEXICO for the Guatemalan Government. [ ] stated that, while BERGER belongs to a well-known anti-Communist family here, members of this family have told [ ] recently that they do not trust Mr. BERGER.

3. This item even Mr. [ ] classed as a rumor. He stated that some 15 days ago, three CZECH planes landed at LA AURORA Airport carrying a RUSSIAN commercial mission; that when the planes left some days later, they left eight men behind; and that these men are pilots who will fly aircraft which are alleged to be coming to GUATEMALA at some unspecified date."

Cyrus E. Burnette

19 May 1954

CEB/SGL

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