

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

VIA AIR POUCH

RYBAT

DISPATCH NO. [ ]-629

2003 ~~SECRET~~  
PBSUCCESS  
CLASSIFICATION

TO : LINCOLN

DATE: 20 May 1954

FROM : [ ]

INFO: CHIEF, WHD

SUBJECT: General - KUFIRE.  
Specific - Guatemalan Rail Disturbances.

1. JUNCTURE I made a hasty trip to Guatemala on 20 May at which time he obtained the attached report.
2. JUNCTURE I also added the following:
  - A. The entire movement of these arms would require more than 80 cars.
  - B. Among the cargo were 14 knocked-down aircraft and some tanks.
  - C. At least 50 cases have dimensions of 3 feet at the base, tapering to 18 inches at the top, with a height of 9 feet.
  - D. If the Guatemalan Railroad employees join the strike it would not be until after all of the arms were transported to Guatemala City.
  - E. The section where the attempted derailment occurred would be heavily patrolled in the future.
  - F. He could not speculate as to the possible effect it might have on any projected PBSUCCESS plans to transport arms by rail.
  - G. Reliable WSBURNT source states two more shiploads are expected.
3. Due to the involved details [ ] is submitting the entire report. After giving the attached letter to [ ] JUNCTURE I felt obliged to submit part of the information to PBPRIME Ambassador and Military Attache, who cabled the information to Washington. In compliance with request for minimum use of cable traffic, the contents

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are not being cabled. [ ] would appreciate LINCOLN's comment regarding the method of communication this report as similar cases will probably occur in the future.

4. In order to protect JUNCTURE I it is requested contents of attached letter are not revealed en todo--nor identity of addressee and addresser.

[ ]  
PHILLIP L. PURWELL

INCLOSURE:

Personal Letter....3 pages.

20 May 1954  
PLP/hdw

DISTRIBUTION:

2-LINCOLN w/encl as noted above in duplicate.  
1-Washington w/encl as noted above in single copy.  
2-Files w/encl as noted above in single copy.

~~SECRET~~

AIR MAIL - PERSONAL

May 20th, 1954

Dear [ ]

I confirm my radiogram to you of this morning, as follows:

"BANANERA WENT ON STRIKE SIX THIS MORNING ALL [ ]  
EQUIPMENT REMOVED AND TRAIN SERVICE SUSPENDED STOP  
AT ONE THIS MORNING UNKNOWN PARTIES ATTEMPTED BLOW  
UP EXTRA SOUTH WITH EIGHT CARS SPECIAL FREIGHT AT  
BRIDGE MILE SIXTEEN BY PLACING SEVERAL INFERNAL  
MACHINES ON EACH RAIL IN BRIDGE CONNECTED BY WIRE  
IN BUSH TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY BUT ONLY ONE EXPLODED  
AS ENGINE PASSED BREAKING RAIL BUT TRAIN PASSED  
WITHOUT DAMAGE TRAIN CONTINUING WITH PILOT."

On May 18th several newspapers and many rumors spread the news  
that the labor syndicate at Bananera would go on strike at 10 o'clock on  
the morning of May 19th. [ ]

strike did not materialize [ ]

] However, the

] The mixed train from Zacapa to Barrios, which passes through the  
Fruit Company lines, operated normally but the Bobos extra, which runs out  
of Bananera, was delayed several hours, though it did make its run.

We do not know just why the strike was not pulled off as scheduled  
but for general consumption it was due to some legal angle which had not been  
covered and the leaders, located at Morales, stating they had not yet received  
definite instructions from the City. On the other hand, we received  
information to the effect that as soon as the people, many of them not employed  
by the Fruit Company nor syndicate members, who were located in the outlying  
districts served by our trains, realized their situation, they sent a  
representation to the syndicate leaders at Bananera and Morales telling them  
that if they were to be left abandoned without means of transportation and  
possibility of getting food, etc., they would take their machetes and go into  
Bananera and Morales and tap off the heads of the leaders. Shortly before  
10 a.m. yesterday [ ] information that the strike would be held  
up for possibly 48 hours until a committee could be sent to the City to secure  
support and definite instructions.

At one o'clock this morning I was informed that advice had come  
through from Bananera to the effect that the strike had been set for 6 a.m.  
to-day. [ ]



May 20th, 1954.

[ ]

There has been considerable publicity to the effect that there are two reasons for this strike. The first is to get increased wage and other benefits from the Fruit Company and the second to support the Honduras strike. It may be that within a few days this strike will spread to Barrios and also to Tiquisate. Of course, if Barrios goes out this would automatically close down Tiquisate and the Tiquisate laborers' legal position with regard to pay, etc., would then doubtless be different than if they officially went on strike, which latter would no doubt take considerable time due to the necessity of going through various legal maneuvers. [ ]

[ ] it is understood that the SAMF should not be able to go on strike but if they decide to do so, I frankly do not know who would prevent them nor whether they would be influenced by overtures from any one, though my guess right now is that they will not bring about a tie-up unless something unforeseen at the present time develops or unless this is being handled as the final club in the "leaders" plans.

Section I

As I finish this [ ] has just arrived to discuss various matters and informs me that he was called to the office of the Labor Minister, Salazar, at 4:40 p.m. yesterday. On his arrival there Salazar was talking on the phone to President Osorio who asked [ ] to get all the information possible from me on the cargo of the ALFHEM, as he was very much interested as well as perturbed over this matter. I shall do my best. Minister Salazar was naturally interested to know what [ ]'s ideas were with regard to possible spreading of Guatemala strikes to Salvador and also asked [ ] to determine my ideas on this matter. The Minister then told [ ] that the General Secretary of the UTF, Hector Venture, an I.R.C.A. employee and a Deputy in Congress, who is agitating in the railways as well as in higher government circles, will no doubt be given enough rope to hang himself politically and then perhaps will be given his walking papers. Salazar then stated point blank that there would be no railroad strike in Salvador. [ ]

The reports here are to the effect that there are two more shipments of this kind from the same place to arrive here shortly.

Nicaragua and Guatemala suspended diplomatic relations as of yesterday and the Nicaraguan Ambassador, along with the Nicaraguan Consul and their entire forces, left Guatemala for Managua yesterday on Pan-American Flight 501. The press states that at the same time this delegation left Guatemala, the Guatemalan official representation in Nicaragua were handed their passports.

Yours very truly,

[ ]

[ ]