

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

720.001/4-1756
 XR 714.001.16
 COPY NO. SERIES B

FROM : AMEMBASSY - GUATEMALA 622 DESP. NO.
 TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.
 REF : Foreign Service Despatch #594

April 17, 1956
 D474147

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	REC'D	INFO
	OTHER	R M/R OLI P
		4-23 CIA USA

SUBJECT: Embassy Liaison on Communist Affairs

The Embassy liaison officer met with Mr. LEMUS, his Guatemala counterpart, on April 10 and April 13.

At the aforementioned meetings the Embassy liaison officer delivered the two remaining portions of the "Operational Plan of International Communism in Latin America" to Mr. LEMUS. Mr. LEMUS stated at the meeting on April 13 that he had read the first and second sections of the paper with interest and that he had distributed them to selected members of the Direccion General de Seguridad Nacional for study. He commented, however, that he had found the paper a bit too general to be completely useful. He suggested that he would appreciate more specific information re Communist techniques, i.e., Soviet operations in the Hemisphere. The Embassy liaison officer advised Mr. LEMUS that he did not have that sort of information at his disposal but he was able to satisfy the request by making available to Mr. LEMUS a copy of E. H. Cockridge's book entitled, The Net That Covers The World. The enthusiasm with which Mr. LEMUS accepted the book leads the undersigned to believe that liaison officers may find it useful to make available unclassified literature of this nature to their counterparts. It serves two purposes:

1. It facilitates establishing rapport with one's counterpart, and
2. it serves as it did in Mr. LEMUS' case, as a means of satisfying requests which are difficult to comply with definitively.

Since the initial meeting, Mr. LEMUS had demonstrated his desire to cooperate on the Communist problem. Although quite understandably he has not provided intimate details of his government's operations against the Communists, he has given the Embassy liaison officer his analysis of the Guatemalan Government's estimate of the capability of the Communist internal organization. Briefly, Mr. LEMUS has stated that the Communists do not represent a threat to stability, but that they have some potential in the propaganda field. He cited as an example the fact that the Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo is planning a propaganda offensive for the period April 20 through May 3. Mr. LEMUS indicated that although his government does not know the location of the Communist printing equipment, it is not concerned and will squelch the offensive as soon as it opens.

*Dalton new book
 would be a
 good item
 for release.*

JDESTERLINE/pjw

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Approved For Release 2000/08/27 : CIA-RDP78-00915R000500020014-9

A recent Guatemalan press release stated that seventeen people incarcerated on charges of Communist activity by the now defunct Committee for Defense Against Communism would soon be released from prison. The Embassy liaison officer queried Mr. LEMUS during their April 10 meeting re the accuracy of this article. Mr. LEMUS informed the liaison officer that the government had twenty-four people in prison, not seventeen, and that they were not being released in a "carte blanche" manner as had been published. He indicated that the prisoners' cases were being studied individually, and would be acted upon in the near future. The liaison officer then stated to Mr. LEMUS that he was pleased to hear this because the Embassy had noticed that the Guatemalan Government had not yet sentenced any Communists under the old Decree 59 or the new constitution. Mr. LEMUS affirmed that there had been no prosecutions, stating that he had been reluctant to take cases into court because it would compromise his sources of information. The liaison officer agreed with this, but suggested that it might be useful to assume that risk in order to secure the conviction of at least one major Communist since such a conviction would, in his best judgment, do much to discourage the Communist underground. Mr. LEMUS agreed with this, stating that he shared the liaison officer's view. He then referred to the case of ALVARADO Monson, former Secretary General of the Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo, who was detained under Decree 59 for six months and then expelled from the country on February 29. He said that he had recently learned that ALVARADO Monson planned to return to Guatemala clandestinely the end of April and take over as Secretary-General of the Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo from SILVA Jonama, its present chief. The liaison officer queried Mr. LEMUS concerning the whereabouts of SILVA Jonama and why he was still at large. Mr. LEMUS replied that JONAMA lived in Guatemala City but that his many friends, non-Communist as well as Communist, had provided him with refuge, and that various police and investigative agencies had been unable to apprehend him to date.

During the April 13 meeting the Embassy liaison officer discussed the First American Congress for Civil Rights with Mr. LEMUS (see CA-7791 of April 5, 1956). Mr. LEMUS said that he had heard of it, indicating that the Guatemalan Embassy in Chile had provided the information. He had no information other than that contained in CA-7791, however.

The liaison program has been in existence approximately one month. It is developing satisfactorily, and all indications are that it will improve with time. Information of a general nature has been exchanged on a regular basis and Mr. LEMUS shows an increasing inclination to discuss his problems with the Embassy liaison officer. It is essential, however, that information be made available by the Department on a continuous basis to ensure success of the program, because any liaison program to be successful over a protracted period of time must provide for a two-way exchange of information.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR:

Jacob D. Esterline
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Second Secretary of Embassy

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