

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Chief, Lincoln

MAR 3 1954

Chief of Station, Guatemala

INFO: Chief, WHD

PBUSCESS

Views of ex-Guatemalan Army Officer Concerning
Current Guatemalan Political Situation

As of possible interest to receiving station, there follows the contents of a memorandum prepared by Lt. Colonel T. J. McADAM, Assistant Air Attaché, American Embassy, and dated 19 February 1954.

"SUBJECT: Opinions on Current Guatemalan Political Situation

"Recently a source believed to be usually reliable gave me the following information on the current situation in Guatemala. His remarks are of considerable interest because this individual is an ex-Guatemalan Army officer who at one time was a close personal friend of President and Mrs. ARBENZ and is, or has been, close to the present-day ranking officers of the Guatemalan Army.

"1. Feelings of Army Officers: A great number of officers are extremely unhappy about the Communists in the government and the poor U.S.-Guatemalan relations. However, none dare speak out for fear of jeopardizing his personal security.

"2. Is ARBENZ a Communist? Source believes he is not. However, he admits that ARBENZ has openly encouraged the growth of Communism in Guatemala. Source explains this inconsistency by stating he believes ARBENZ to be unaware of the dangers of Communism. Source feels that the Communists have ARBENZ so completely surrounded that none of ARBENZ' old friends can reach him to explain to him the dangers in the Government's recent actions. Source feels that he might have some influence with ARBENZ but has been unable to see him for a private talk. He has tried several times but with no success.

"3. Mrs. ARBENZ Dislikes the U.S.: Source states that Mrs. ARBENZ hates the U.S. but is at a loss to explain why.

"4. Colonel Enrique PARRINELLO: Source stated that PARRINELLO is a good man, fully aware of the dangerous courses of action in which the Guatemalan Government is presently engaged. He further stated that PARRINELLO was the only high-ranking Army officer who has had the courage to point out the dangers of Communism to ARBENZ.

"5. Major Alfonso MARTINEZ: Source stated that he believes MARTINEZ has left Guatemala and will not be back. The statements made

RYBAT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL
2003

by the Government that MARTINEZ will be back soon are a screen designed to ease MARTINEZ' name out of the news.*

"6. Should the ARBENZ Administration Fall, Who Among the Army Would Most Likely Take Over? Source stated that there are three possible choices and that one officer stood head and shoulders above the others. He believes that Colonel Anselmo GETELLA, now engaged in construction of the port of Santo Tomas, would be practically the unanimous choice of the officers of the Army. GETELLA has remained aloof from politics but is aware of and dislikes the present situation, is scrupulously honest, and is a hard and fair leader. Source believes GETELLA would not actively seek the Presidency but could be persuaded to do so because of his high sense of patriotism and devotion to duty. Other possible candidates for the Presidency or members of a ruling Junta are believed to be Colonel Elfego MONZON and Colonel Carlos ALDANA Sandoval. Both are good men not in accord with the present regime, ALDANA Sandoval being more to the left than the other two.

"7. Will the ARBENZ Administration Last? Source feels that the ARBENZ Administration cannot go on long, that something is bound to happen in the near future. Unfortunately, source did not elect to elaborate on this statement."

* Station Comment: Major Alfonso MARTINEZ returned to Guatemala on 21 February 1954 via KLM flight 647 from Mexico City.

The source of the above information is not known to this station.

Kenneth S. Givloch

25 February 1954

KSG/cmh

Distribution:

2-Linc

2-Wash

1-Files