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[ ]

TO : Chief, WHD

DATE: JAN 11 1954

FROM : Chief of Station, Guatemala [ ]

INFO: Lincoln

SUBJECT: GENERAL— PBSUCCESS\*

SPECIFIC— Memorandum of Conversation - José Luis ARENAS

1. Enclosed as a matter of possible interest in connection with PBSUCCESS is a memorandum of conversation which took place on 18 November 1953 between José Luis ARENAS, opposition Deputy, and an Embassy officer.
2. This and similar memoranda are being forwarded so that PBSUCCESS personnel may be aware of current attitudes and activities of personalities of possible interest.

[ ]  
George L. Tranged

Enclosure:  
Memo as noted

8 January 1954

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

American Embassy,  
Guatemala City, Guatemala  
November 18, 1953

Participants: Sr. José Luis ARENAS, Opposition Deputy in Congress  
Sr. Joaquin OCAÑA  
Mr. William L. KRIEG

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Sr. Arenas and Sr. Ocaña called without appointment this afternoon and discussed the segment of the anti-Communist movement with which Sr. Arenas is affiliated. Sr. Arenas did virtually all the talking with Sr. Ocaña a silent spectator.

Sr. Arenas began with a historic review of recent Guatemalan revolutions commencing with the one which overthrew President Manuel Estrada Cabrera in 1921. This movement, he said, was a popular one which had used as its vehicle the Partido Unionista, a group ostensibly interested in founding a Central American union. The fall of Estrada Cabrera came about when mass demonstrations against him took place in Guatemala City, and the Army and police refused to repress the demonstrators.

Advancing to the more recent overthrow of General Jorge Ubico in 1944, Sr. Arenas said that Ubico had not been unpopular and that "almost a majority of the people" supported him. (Later in the conversation, Sr. Arenas said that "80% of the people supported Ubico.") His downfall was brought about by the activities of professional men and students in Guatemala City and had in a sense been voluntary since the bulk of the Army still supported him.

Sr. Arenas went on to say that the "Minutes of Silence" in 1950 had almost succeeded in overthrowing AREVALO. It had reached the point that Arévalo had been forced to turn over control of the Government to Colonel Carlos PAZ Tejada, Chief of the Armed Forces; Paz Tejada had sent a hand written note to Sr. Manuel Cobos Batres, leader of the "Minutes of Silence" offering to accede to all his demands. Cobos Batres accepted Paz Tejada's offer and disbanded his adherents, after which Paz Tejada betrayed him by returning the Government to Arévalo.

Sr. Arenas said that the Partido Unificación Anticomunista (PUA) is well organized in all parts of the country, and it is his plan to attempt the overthrow of the Arbenz Administration by civic pressure of the same type which overthrew Estrada Cabrera and Ubico.

Mr. Krieg inquired what the crowd would do if the Army fired on them. Sr. Arenas implied that they would have means of self-defense and later said that he planned to utilize the "volunteers" who were

organized in Ubico's day and drilled once a week for an hour in the plazas of all the rural communities. These people, he said, all understood the use of firearms.

Sr. Arenas then said that despite the PUA's official organization and its overwhelming popular support, it could not carry out its plan for lack of funds, and he inquired without ambiguity whether the Embassy could not furnish money for his campaign. He said "for \$200,000, I could bring the entire Republic to Guatemala City." Mr. Krieg explained that the Embassy had no funds for such purposes and, in response to an inquiry, said it could not make even a "down payment" so that the campaign could get under way. Sr. Arenas then said that he planned to go to the U.S. in December, ostensibly to visit his wife and children who are there and that he would call at the Department of State and on Vice President Nixon and Senator Mundt to ascertain whether funds could be made available.

He said he would take a complete plan of his campaign along as evidence that it was well thought out and carefully organized.

Mr. Krieg said that he was sure officers of the State Department would be interested in talking with Sr. Arenas and offered to inform the Department in advance of his departure. Mr. Krieg stressed however, that he could give no assurances that any assistance could be given and suggested the possibility that a private organization in the U.S. might be found which would be interested in supporting the anti-Communist movement in Guatemala.

WLKrieg/hhm