

# CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM

RELEASE AS SANITIZED REPORT ON THE POLITICAL  
SITUATION OF GUATEMALA AND ITS RE-  
LATION TO HEMISPHERIC SECURITY.

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## U. S. Prestige in Guatemala

Since the end of the war the prestige of the United States in Guatemala has been declining. This is due to several factors. In the first place, communism has been steadily gaining ground in Guatemala, not only in the government, but also in the labor movement. Communism has taken hold in the peasant movement by means of infiltration of communist agents in the local agrarian committees. In the second place, the United States has not been careful enough in the fostering of democratic according to the western pattern. The communists have had wide-open fields to take over the labor movement. Labor leaders have received training in Moscow, and the United States has failed to use the inter-American agreement in order to bring more people to the United States to be properly trained in the democratic processes. In the third place, forces opposing communism feel that they have not been getting proper understanding of their problems on the part of the U.S. embassy in Guatemala. Forces opposing communism have not been fully equipped and instructed in the ways and means to fight communism, and therefore they have been only able to accomplish an amateur job. In the fourth place, American officials have denied the existence of communism in Guatemala. Inasmuch as the democratic opposition has not been able to produce tangible evidence of the existence of a Soviet conspiracy, they have not even been heard. It has not been until the last twelve months that the American public has become aware of the present danger of communist domination of Guatemala.

Ever since Ambassador Kyle went to Guatemala, embassy officials have explained the social movement of Guatemala as just a democratic movement tending lightly to the left, and slightly tainted with nationalism. Embassy officials have staunchly dismissed any charges of communist infiltration in the Guatemalan government. The attitude assumed by the American government in regard to communism in other parts of the world has effect upon communists in Guatemala. Every time the United States has failed to make a strong stand against communism in other parts of the world, Guatemalan communists have gained ground. Strong attitudes, like intervention in Korea, have been a deterrent to further advance of the Guatemalan communists. But as a whole, they have been left alone to the extent that at the present time they control most of the key positions in the government.

Democratic forces in Guatemala feel disgruntled about the failure of the United States to prevent the spread of communism in the western hemisphere. They feel now that they would be better off now in their democratic progress if they had only been left alone without the democratic propaganda poured into the country

during the war., They feel that Ubico's dictatorship was a deterrent to the spread of communism, and that democratic progress would necessarily have been made without the intervention of the extreme left. Although no one either justifies, or wishes to return to, the type of dictatorship exercised by Ubico, they feel the need of a strong government which at the same time prevents the growth of communism, and prepares the country for democratic progress in accordance with the U.S. type of democracy. Guatemalans also feel that the evils of Ubico's dictatorship have been greatly exaggerated, in view of the present existing conditions, and that communists have a lot to do with the propaganda campaign directed against many Guatemalans who honestly supported Ubico's pro-American policies during the war.

### A Communist Beachhead

During the war it was feared that Guatemala could become a Nazi beachhead, on account of the presence of several hundred Germans, settled in the country as coffee-growers. Ubico lent full cooperation to the United States in averting this danger. But after the war, a more serious condition has developed regarding the security of the hemisphere. Extreme leftists have taken over strong positions in the Guatemalan government. They control the labor movement, the social security, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics, and have been infiltrating heavily in the rank and file of the army. Communist deputies have been sent to Congress, due to the fact that the opposition has not been properly organized. Although anti-communists have demonstrated that their numerical strength is overwhelming, nothing competent has been done to organize them. Personal ambition has been a deterrent to an organic and unified opposition. Several uprisings have only resulted in the jailing or expatriation of the ablest anti-communist leaders. A few of the anti-communists have sought to obtain direct help from abroad, in their efforts to throw the communists out of the country; but the majority of the anti-communist leaders look only for moral support and understanding. They feel that their efforts have been obstructed by the presence of leftist elements in the foreign missions accredited by various governments to Guatemala. Several times when the anti-communists tried to secure recognition for a new government, they found that word had been passed to the communist government of Guatemala.

They have come to believe that the United States is not willing to throw the communists from Guatemala because the communists do not represent a clear and present danger or because they can be quickly disposed of in case of an armed conflict.

The fact that so many communists in high places in the Guatemalan government are on such friendly terms with Russia, makes it clear that under their leadership Guatemala will side with the Soviet in case of an armed conflict. Guatemala's voting record in the United Nations is a clear indication that the present government is to be considered a member of the Soviet bloc.

Even if the Guatemalan government dares not openly side with the communist countries, the presence of communists in high positions will enable the enemies of the United States to sabotage any efforts made for protecting the Panama Canal. Furthermore, every Guatemalan communist is a potential spy in the event of war. They have access to diplomatic files, and are able to prevent the use of Guatemalan labor in the building of military airfields, should the case arise.

The destruction of any remnants of opposition may turn out to be a very difficult problem in the event of war. If no democratic opposition is allowed to survive under the communist domination, it may become imperative to occupy the country and establish a military government. Such a condition may in turn result in ill will on the part of the masses of the people. Real nationalist pride will be touched off and such an occupation will be resented not only by Guatemalans but also by the people of the rest of Central America. The fruits of the Good Neighbor policy will be lost, and if any understanding between the peoples of Guatemala and the United States is to be reached, the work will have to be done all over again.

#### The Monroe Doctrine and Communist Intervention.

For several years it is apparent that no one but the students of international law has taken into consideration the existence of the Monroe Doctrine. To the present condition of Guatemala the Monroe Doctrine is an applicable instrument. The Monroe Doctrine was intended to stop colonialism in the western hemisphere. Especially it was intended to prevent intervention on the part of the European powers in American affairs, to stop compulsory collection of foreign debts and undue privileges for foreign interests located south of the Rio Grande.

The tumultuous history of the Latin American republics gave rise to the establishment and consecutive acceptance of two different doctrines regarding intervention. The Tovar Doctrine was the first doctrine of American solidarity based upon the maintenance of democracy in the western hemisphere. It gave authority (moral) to the governments of the western world to intervene in the domestic affairs of any American country in which democracy was in danger, or where democracy had ceased to exist. In other words, whenever an American republic would fall under the rule of a tyrant, the neighboring nations would have the right to intervene and to restore the democratic processes.

Development on the part of the United States of high-handed methods towards the Latin American republics; the existence of the so-called "big stick" and "dollar diplomacies" gave rise to a tremendous current of nationalism on the part of the Latin American republics. Latin Americans thought that the United States was brandishing the Monroe Doctrine only as an instrument of their own imperialism, and that such a doctrine was no longer useful in dealing with the European powers.

The Estrada Doctrine came into being as a result of undue intervention in domestic affairs of the Latin American republics, either one upon another, or on the part of the United States. The Estrada Doctrine forbids intervention in the domestic affairs of the nations of this hemisphere. The principle involved in such a doctrine has been embodied in the Good Neighbor policy. Most Latin American republics have been following it during the last 25 years. However, Guatemala, under communist domination, has broken the principle of inter-American solidarity several times during the so-called revolutionary regimes. In 1944, while the country was governed by the Military Junta that preceded Arevalo, Guatemala gave aid to a group of revolutionaries, who invaded El Salvador. Guns of the Guatemalan Army were captured by the Salvadorian Army and were exhibited in San Salvador's show-windows. Arevalo's government organized the Carribbean Legion and lent support to the Costa Rican revolution of 1948. Guatemalan planes, loaded with rifles and ammunition, were flown to Costa Rica, to aid the rebels. A large number of officers of the Carribbean Legion were taken to Costa Rica in Guatemalan Army transport planes. Arevalo's government also organized the attempted revolution against Nicaragua, and gave aid to the Carribbean Legion and the government-in-exile of Arguello. Guatemala, under Arevalo's administration, supplied the money, the arms, and the air bases, for the unsuccessful attack on Luperon. The Guatemalan government also had a lot to do with the Cayo Confites expedition. The present president of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz, was Minister of Defense during the whole administration of Arevalo, and there is no doubt that he was instrumental in Guatemala's intervention in the domestic affairs of the Carribbean nations.

At the present time, communism is actively engaged in the domination of the Carribbean Sea. Communism is actively intervening in the domestic affairs of Guatemala, and has completely seized control of the country's domestic and foreign policies. Communism as an international weapon depends entirely on a European power. Through the Cominform, Russia is intervening in the affairs of a Latin American republic, and has been constantly trying to intervene in the domestic and international problems of Latin America. The purpose of this intervention is to establish, first in Guatemala, and later in other countries of this hemisphere, a form of democracy entirely foreign to the American tradition. Socialism, and not democracy, is the goal of the communists, and by that, we mean that the real purpose of the communists is to secure for the imperialistic movement of Russia the complete subservience of the peoples of the western world, and the resources therefrom.

In view of the danger, it is high time to consider a revision of the international principles which have guided American policy towards the countries south of the Rio Grande. The Latin American republics were born to democracy, inspired by the principles of the French and American Revolutions. The upheavals which have occurred in Latin America are not conclusive evidence that democracy as such has failed there. Several Latin American countries have

given an example of good democratic government, and democracy has been proven a suitable form of government for the best development of the Latin American peoples.

Outright intervention is not contemplated, inasmuch as it may prove to be a source of ill will and resentment, and is far from being an instrument of hemispheric cooperation. However, the democratic forces of Latin America may be sooner or later in the same position in which are now the forces opposing Arbenz and his communists in Guatemala. The problem now is to remove as soon as possible the clear and present danger existing in Guatemala, which is at the same time a source of unrest and fear on the part of the nations of the Caribbean. The next problem in order of importance is to consolidate democracy by means of an active policy of cooperation, by training the leaders to whom may be later entrusted the responsibility of maintaining the democratic system, and by giving the democratic forces the means to achieve social reforms well ahead of any plans propounded by the extreme left or by the communists. Democratic leaders, of well-known responsibility and capacity, trained and educated if possible in the democratic way of living, should be compelled to carry out the social and economic reforms which are needed, thereby preventing the reform movements from falling into the hands of the communists.

#### Evidence of Communist Success

Anyone familiar with political conditions now in Guatemala knows that there is a large number of foreigners in high positions in the government. Communists by the dozens are on the government payrolls, without any apparent specific jobs to do. They move around the country, and the most important ones are Spaniards who form the communist brain-trust of the government. Minor Spanish communists have even taken jobs in private concerns, and there are at least a dozen or so who hold jobs as traveling salesmen, in order to move freely around the country. They are known to have been attending communist meetings in towns and villages. Most of these Spaniards were carefully chosen by Muncz Meany, former Minister to France, and an avowed communist, among the rank and file of the Loyalist Army.

The opposition papers recently reprinted full pages of Hungarian, Polish and Czech papers, which give an account of the success of the Cominform in Guatemala. It is evident that the communists have learned a lot from their previous failures in other Latin American countries, and the fact that they have succeeded in Guatemala shows that they have now a proven method of conquest for several other republics which are under similar circumstances. Having now a stronghold in Guatemala, the task of conquering other countries will be a much easier one. The communist success makes it also clear that public opinion in the western world cannot be only sentimental in regard to the social and economic problems of that small country; it has to become aware that the situation is to be handled with a realistic and direct approach. The people of Guatemala have demonstrated that they are not communists but rather that communism has been imposed upon them from above. The

Guatemalan people do not have hard feeling against the United States, but rather are pro-American. However, if communism continues its victorious path in Guatemala the people will forget the very existence of democracy in America, and anyone wishing to survive will have to bow under the communist yoke.

### The Official Press

The Guatemalan government's press is entirely subservient to communism. They play the communist line all along. The war in Korea as waged by the United Nations is labeled an imperialistic war; the United States is branded as a war-monger; and any effort to maintain the rule of law is considered reactionary. Democrats in Guatemala who oppose the advance of communism are also labeled reactionaries and slaves of imperialism. The official press follows strictly the line of "Octubre", which is the official organ of the Communist Party. Several communist Spaniards held jobs as either reporters or writers in the official press.

Official newspapermen are being lavishly paid in order to keep them in line with the official policies of the government. The editors of official newspapers have traveled to Vienna and Moscow in order to attend Peace Congresses. The general attitude of the Guatemalan official press is one of antagonism towards the United States and the United Nations. Lies and innuendo are constantly printed, and the official newspapers are delivered free in every hamlet or village.

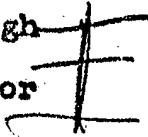
### The Courts

Until now, a certain amount of independence was preserved in the courts. Only last month 4 judges of the Supreme Court were dismissed by the Congress for having admitted the revision of an expropriation under the agrarian reform, which was based on the infringement of civil rights. The 4 justices elected by the Congress are completely subservient to the communist policies of the government, and the first step taken by the new court was a refusal to review the case. Several cases related to back taxes still pending, were quickly disposed of, and regardless of the principles involved, the defendants lost all of them.

Several magistrates and district judges have recently resigned under communist pressure. Scores of other judges, whose appointment rests with the Supreme Court, have been summarily dismissed. Up to this time there was a fair chance of legal protection against infringement of civil liberties, but under the present set-up, citizens do not have any legal effective measures to prevent the encroachment upon their rights. Any person, holding rural property, is liable to get fined, with fines ranging up to \$2,000.00, if he dares to bring legal action against the government. At the present time the people have been left with no protection whatsoever from the actions of the agrarian authorities. Under the agrarian set-up, the civil code cannot be applied or invoked for the protection of personal rights, inasmuch as everything is related to the agrarian and political authorities, and the few remaining democratic officials do not dare to issue injunctions or to start

criminal proceedings against any official or authority, due to fear of being fined, imprisoned or dismissed.

The Organization of Central American States

Guatemala is a member of the Organization of Central American States, but has consistently evaded a meeting of the General Assembly. The reason for Guatemala's reluctance to join her sister countries in dealing with their common problems lies in the fact that El Salvador introduced in the agenda of the next meeting of the Assembly a proposal to fight communism. Twice the Assembly has been called, and twice also the Guatemalan government has prevented the meeting. Although the Assembly is to convene in May, many political observers believe that the Guatemalan government will find a pretext for delaying indefinitely the meeting. 

Guatemalan anti-communists feel that the United States is aware of the problems related to communism, and especially have taken due notice of the fact that President Eisenhower has stated that the United States will fight communism everywhere. They feel that, as part of hemispheric solidarity, the fight against communism is also to be carried in the western world, and that communism must be fought in Guatemala inasmuch as the country is right in the backyard of the United States and in the heart of the western world and not anywhere else. If Guatemalan anti-communists are prevented from doing by themselves what they think is best for the country and for the western world, resentment may result in desertion to communism.

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