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JEROME C. DUNBAR

24 March 1954

Attachment:

4 News Items

Distribution:

2 - C J (w/att)

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24 MAR 1954

Ref: F 1. - g Guatemala City -
Misc News Digest
March 16

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Selected News Items

1. A reputable military source has declared that military personnel have been informed that there will be fighting soon: in preparation of this, the soldiers will find themselves subject to frequent alerts, their leave curtailed, and their visits with their families more restricted.
2. An anti-communist student group has informed the public of another apostate and can substantiate the charge with concrete evidence: wealthy, prominent Max ARRIOLA has acquired a membership card in the Partido Accion Revolucionaria (PAR) as the most effective means of protecting his finca. The student group is naturally discouraged by ARRIOLA's action, realizing that it may set an unfortunate example for others who, by reason of their social and economic status, should be foremost in defense of the anti-communist movement.
3. It is a fight to the finish between Communist Carlos Manuel PELLECEER and Major Alfonso MARTINEZ, head of the DAN: the two men have translated their conflict over agrarian abuses in the Escuintla area into a personal battle. MARTINEZ, who has steadily opposed the agrarian abuses sanctioned by PELLECEER, has not been afraid to take upon himself the defense of his ideas. Guatemalans who have dined at MARTINEZ' favorite haunts have reported that he deliberately lays out two guns on a chair which is placed within easy reach of his table.
4. In early March unimpeachable sources disclosed that President Jacobo ARBENZ has acquired still more valuable property: one finca in the Escuintla area where abuses of the agrarian law have been most flagrant, and another in the Lake Izabal area. In the second instance ARBENZ decided that rather than providing the public with such concrete proof of his wealth he would make the purchase in the name of his brother-in-law Antonio VILANOVA, and in collaboration with Colonel Elfego MONZON and Roberto BERGER. But BERGER, a friend of ARBENZ' for many years, found that this business favor was no protection against agrarian abuses: BERGER's personal finca suffered a serious invasion by campesinos in recent weeks.

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