

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE IN FULL

6 January 1955


2003

NOTES

1. Suggested theme for Latin American treatment-could be overt -- Arbenz not even a Guatemalan as demonstrated by his request for Swiss passport. This is a fine situation which has now come to light. Arbenz never did consider himself a Guatemalan but was in fact at all times, even in his own mind, a foreigner. For that matter a great many of the other top Communist leaders in Guatemala, who for years have posed as great Guatemalan patriots, are well known to have been Communists of various foreign nationalities. (It might be well to list the names of a number of "Guatemalans" who we have good reason to believe were or are foreigners.)

2. A suggested line for your consideration for use in Europe would be somewhat as follows: If as Arbenz now claims he is not intending to go behind the Iron Curtain, this is probably because of a reversal of plans ordered by Moscow in light of all the recent adverse publicity concerning these plans which have caused Moscow to conclude that Arbenz is too hot to handle for the moment. This line would be for our media as distinguished from official outlets since it is speculative and tendentious.

3. Discuss with Mr. Leddy with probable follow-up discussion with Mr. Higgs and someone from Mr. Merchant's office the desirability of making available to the Swiss Government, through our legation, a certain amount of documentary information concerning Arbenz and the record of his regime in Guatemala. Suggested documents: (a) the Kersten report on Communist penetration of Latin America, (b) the dispatch from the British legation in Guatemala City which constitutes the first item in the British Foreign Office White Paper. It would be a sad mistake, in my opinion, for us to sit on our hands while Arbenz successfully rehabilitates himself in Switzerland and draws about himself the cloak of the martyr and victim of U.S. cynical intrigue. Also in this same connection, consider possibilities of planting a few stories in European newspapers apt to be read in Switzerland concerning the bloody record of tyranny under Arbenz in Guatemala, complete with a few choice photographs. Also wrap up in any such stories alleged verbatim accusations against Arbenz on the part of other disgruntled confederates, for example Martinez. Do we have any newspaper contacts in Switzerland as such which could be safely approached in this connection? If not, do we have any other contacts who could act as non-American cutouts for bringing material of this kind to the attention of Swiss reporters and editors.


FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

~~SECRET~~