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15 July 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR, PLANS

SUBJECT: Disposition of Principal Guatemalan Communist Leaders

REFERENCE: DIR 07823 (OUT 59911)

1. Pursuant to your request for suggestions on the disposition of those Guatemalans now in prison or asylum as a result of the overthrow of the Arbenz regime, the following is submitted for your consideration.

2. If the problem is strictly limited to "principal Communist leaders," our suggestion would be that they be put on trial for real (or notional) common law crimes, or charged with treason for taking orders from the USSR, if Guatemalan law or other factors permit. In any case, the charge should be airtight and skilfully handled, so that the trials may not boomerang (as the trial of Mossadegh tended to do).

3. If the problem extends to "sympathizers," the new regime should be careful not to antagonize segments of its own population. Experience in Iran has shown us that the Zahedi government's indiscriminate arrest, subsequent harsh treatment, and eventual release of Mossadegh sympathizers created a large body of dedicated enemies of the new government, which could have been avoided. Tudeh (Communist) leadership, on the other hand, went underground, remaining practically untouched. We would suggest, therefore, that so-called sympathizers be "re-educated," i.e. treated well, given a chance for a fresh start. We understand that a similar method was used with captured Huks in the Philippines with considerable success and to some degree by the Chinese Nationalists in Formosa.

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Chief
Division of Near East
and Africa

Attachment: Reference Cable

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