

2003

17 March 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

FROM: Acting Chief, Western Hemisphere Division

SUBJECT: Guatemalan Situation

1. Conversations between Mr. [redacted] and [redacted] in New Orleans on 13 March 1952 revealed that Col. Castillo Armas is unable to leave Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and [redacted] is unable to leave Guatemala, at this time. [redacted] verified that only he and MR. [redacted] are aware of U. S. Government interest in this matter. He indicated his belief that Castillo Armas and [redacted] have a good chance of succeeding, but also indicated uncertainty as to their plans, resources, requirements, and opposition. [redacted] cooperation was complete to the extent of [redacted] in order to complete the conversations. His orders to [redacted] in Mexico City directed full cooperation.

2. Conversations between [redacted] in Mexico City on 14 March 1952 confirmed that [redacted] is not fully informed on present opposition plans, resources, requirements, and their opposition although he is in communication with and has the full confidence of Castillo Armas and [redacted]. Castillo has the moral, and possibly some material, support of ex-President Carías of Honduras and the good will of President Galvez. He has been promised the support of President Somoza of Nicaragua who has offered to send a personal representative with him to ask aid of President Trujillo of the Dominican Republic. [redacted] indicated that he is not certain of the chances for success of any movement at this time, but expressed confidence that sufficient opposition to the present Guatemalan regime exists or can be generated and mobilized to insure the success of a well organized movement. He verified that Castillo Armas can not leave Tegucigalpa at present because of pressure by Guatemala on President Galvez of Honduras. (Galvez has promised [redacted] that in an emergency Castillo can leave Tegucigalpa.)

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[] feels that Guatemalan refusal to allow [] to leave that country resulted from suspicion cast on [] by [] who has been working for the Assistant U. S. Air Attache, Major Chavez, and is doubtless in Guatemalan Government pay. []

[] Although [] would not commit himself, he has been refused permission to leave Guatemala.

3. The lack of intelligence available at this time makes it imperative that this deficiency be corrected before final plans can be made.

4. In consultation with the [] [] Mexico City, and [] on 15 March 1952, and later with Mr. [] on the same date, the following course of action was evolved:

a) [] will return to [] in La Lima, Honduras, the week of 18 March 1952. At his suggestion Castillo Armas will prepare a complete Order to Battle to include all details of Guatemalan Government and opposition strength. From his other sources [] will fill in all possible missing details.

b) [] San Salvador, will contact [] in Tegucigalpa during the week of 25 March 1952 to receive the first report and arrange for the transmission of weekly reports from []. Reports will be forwarded to Headquarters with copies to [].

c) A prominent Mexican anti-Communist [] leader will visit Guatemala the week of 18 March 1952 to establish contact with Guatemalan anti-Communist [] leaders for the purpose of gaining intelligence and providing support.

d) A prominent Mexican anti-Communist leader has been refused admittance to Guatemala because of his anti-Communist activities. His exclusion from Guatemala will be widely publicized, but his group will receive intelligence from and render support to the organized anti-Communist group in Guatemala headed by Carlos Simmons.

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e) The formation of a Free Guatemalan Committee [] will be expedited.

f) As the required intelligence becomes available the PW campaign against the present Guatemalan Government will be intensified. All PW weapons will be utilized under the direction of []

g) As the PW campaign develops, parallel efforts to swing the balance of power to the opposition will utilize all resources to unite and strengthen the opposition and weaken the present government. If the Guatemalan Government does not fail of its own weight it is conceivable that more direct measures may eventually become necessary, and planning for such an emergency will proceed. However, at this time, the primary effort in this field must be directed toward forestalling any premature attempt to take over the government by force.

[]

WH []

Distribution:

- Original - Addressee
- cc - Inspector General
- Col. King
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Carlos CASTILLO Armas

Born: 1914

✓ 5' 5", 135 lbs., slender, black hair, dark brown eyes [

Strong personality; soft and slow speaking; serious, hard worker; intelligent, amenable to ideas; analytical mind; studious; light drinker.

✓ Education:

- 6 years of primary school
- 2 years Industrial Technical School of Guatemala
- 3 years basic military studies at the Military Academy
- 6 months specialized in Artillery at the Military Academy
- 1 year basic course in School of Applied Tactics, Guatemala
- 3 months, General Staff course (Ground) Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas
- 4½ months, Service Course at Ft. Leavenworth.

Career:

Entered the Military Academy - June 1933
Graduated - June 1936
Captain - June 1939
Major - June 1944
Lt. Colonel -

Commander of Artillery Unit, Ft. Matamoros - 1936 - 1937
Instructor of Artillery, Ft. Matamoros - 1937 - 1942.
Chief of Artillery of the Atlantic Sector - 1942 - 1944.
First Chief of Expeditionary Force for the Defense of the Atlantic Sector - July 1944.
Instructor of Artillery, Ft. San Jose - Sept. to Oct., 1944.
Chief, G-4 Section, General Staff, Oct. 1944 - June 1945.
Chief, G-3 Section, General Staff, June 1945 - November 1945.
Sub-Director of Military Academy, Nov. 1945 to March 1947.
Professor of Tactics, Second Course, Military Academy, May 1946 - Mar. 1947
Director of Military Academy - March 1947 until early 1949. Then transferred to become chief of garrison at Mazatenango, a secondary post.

Detailed to visit USMA in Sept. 1947.

Definitely pro-American. Cooperated with U. S. missions and the Military Attache.

On Saturday, 27 August 1949, the government police arrested CASTILLO Armas, Chief of Mazatenango garrison. CASTILLO was an Araniista. When the government called for him to send troops to the capital on 18 July 1949, he arranged to have his soldiers miss the train which stopped in Mazatenango for them. Following the 18th, he was naturally very much out of favor with the government, and he resigned his army commission and became a civilian. As a civilian he appears to have

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started organizing a revolutionary movement immediately.

CASTILLO Armas is well-known for his integrity and patriotism. He has made no secret of his opposition to the present moral corruption of those in power. He has steadfastly refused to accept any position offered by ARBENZ, apparently not wishing to compromise his reputation by being associated with the regime.

CASTILLO Armas led an armed attack on the Military Base the 5th of November 1950. In the attempt, he was wounded. The movement failed, and he was imprisoned.

(According to the AIR/ATTACHE, - reports say that CASTILLO Armas is a very close personal friend of ARBENZ - but the law had to be complied with regarding such revolutionary acts by an officer in the Guatemalan army.)

The evening of 11 June 1951, CASTILLO Armas escaped from the National Prison, took refuge in one of the embassies, and was granted salvo conducto to El Salvador.

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