

IRREGULAR WARFARE IN LATIN AMERICA:
THE AMERICAN POLICY AND STRATEGY OF IRREGULAR WARFARE
IN GUATEMALA

Christopher Duggan, BA
East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in History
To the Office of Graduate and Extended Studies of East Stroudsburg University of
Pennsylvania

January, 10 2020

SIGNATURE/APPROVAL PAGE

The signed approval page for this thesis was intentionally removed from the online copy by an authorized administrator at Kemp Library.

The final approved signature page for this thesis is on file with the Office of Graduate and Extended Studies. Please contact Theses@esu.edu with any questions.

ABSTRACT

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in History to the Office of Graduate and Extended Studies of East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.

Student's Name: Christopher Duggan

Title: Irregular Warfare in Latin America: The American Policy and Strategy of Irregular Warfare in Guatemala.

Date of Graduation: January 10, 2020

Thesis Chair: Martin Wilson, Ph.D.

Thesis Member: Michael Gray. Ph.D.

Abstract

The United States developed a policy and strategy of irregular warfare to be deployed in Guatemala in 1954. The changing political climate post World War II created a need for the United States to utilize a measured, proportional possibly covert method of dealing with a communist incursion without escalating into a massive full-blown war. This strategy was deployed under Operation PBSUCCESS in 1954. This study concludes that while the strategy of irregular warfare was a successful failure during Operation PBSUCCESS, it would not have succeeded if reproduced. Additionally the operation would provide a blueprint for future irregular operations worldwide. The first chapter outlines the global political and economic climate that culminates in the development of Operation PBSUCCESS. Chapter two focuses on the operation development. Finally chapter three focuses on the launching of PBSUCCESS in Guatemala and the immediate aftermath.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES:	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	vii
CHAPTER	
I. A Prelude to Irregular Warfare.....	1
II. The United States in Guatemala and the Development of PBSUCCESS and PBFORTUNE.....	37
III. The Successful Failure: Operation PBSUCCESS.....	65
EPILOGUE	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	109

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter I

- 1.1 Mohammed Mossadeq on Cover of Time Magazine 5
- 1.2 Map of Iranian Oil Fields..... 7
- 1.3 Map of Guatemala..... 20
- 1.4 Jacobo Arbenz Guzman on Cover of Time Magazine..... 26
- 1.5 Map of United Fruit Company, 1952..... 33

Chapter II

- 2.1 Castillo Armas in Full Military Dress.....43

Chapter III

- 3.1 Image of Castillo Armas Forces being trained.....71
- 3.2 Map of Invasion, 1952..... 73
- 3.3 Map of Invasion, 1954..... 85
- 3.4 Bombing of Gasoline Depot..... 92

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all of family and friends who have helped and supported me through the entire thesis process. Thank you for not letting me give up on it. Thank you to Dr. Michael Gray for his insight and guidance on my topic when it was in its early stages and his help with reviewing my many drafts. For Dr. Martin Wilson who constantly stayed with me through everything. Taking the time to mentor me, helping with my writing style and taking the time out of an already full schedule to help me finish my thesis was greatly appreciated. I would never have been able to finish this without his support and encouragement. Lastly, I would like thank Dr. John Borek (LTC, US-Army Retired) for all his help, encouragement, advice and guidance throughout. Thank you for staying with me and constantly being there for me to discuss ideas or bounce concepts off you.

INTRODUCTION

In the years following World War II, the global geopolitical landscape changed dramatically. In Europe, the fascist in Germany and Italy had surrendered to Allied forces. In the Pacific theater of operations, the Japanese Imperial Army had unconditionally surrendered to Allied forces only after the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese home island.¹ Great Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union were left with the arduous task of rebuilding a devastated Europe. However, building tension between the United States and the Soviet Union that started during the war derailed any idea of a combined rebuilding effort. The Soviet Union captured much of Eastern Europe including half of Germany, while the United States and her allies restored the liberated countries of Western Europe to their respective democracies.

Europe was in need of desperate rebuilding. The bombing missions carried out by both the Allies and the Nazis destroyed many of the major cities. Instead of having a

¹ The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked the first and only time in history that such a weapon of mass destruction had been used.

clear picture and joint cooperation to rebuild, Europe again found itself divided by politics. Western European countries returned to their democratic status. Germany was divided into four occupied zones, Great Britain in the northwest portion, France in the southeast, and the United States in the South while the Soviet Union occupied the eastern half of Germany, dividing it into East and West Germany. Even the German capital of Berlin, which was situated in the Soviet zone, was divided in half with Great Britain, the United States and France controlling one half and the Soviet Union controlling the other.

In Asia, the United States led the Allied forces in occupation and rehabilitation of the Japanese state. The occupation was divided into three phases: the initial effort to punish and reform Japan, the work to revive the Japanese economy, and the conclusion of a formal peace treaty and alliance.² Allied forces, under the command of U.S. General Douglas MacArthur, began the arduous task of rebuilding Japan. War crimes trials and removal of Japanese Imperial army personnel from key positions was part of the all important first phase. This also included removing most of the Imperial Japanese emperor's power thus making his position all but ceremonial.³ In addition, Allied leaders dismantled much of the Japanese military and turn it into a strictly defensive force charged with protecting Japan.⁴

² "Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945-1952". U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/japan-reconstruction> (Accessed 10-March 2019)

³ Emperor Hirohito was the head of state of Japan during World War II. Credited with managing Japan through financial crisis as well a massive military overhaul of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy, Hirohito surrendered to Allied forces in August 1945. After the surrender, he was not prosecuted for war crimes.

⁴ Until the outbreak of the Korean War, Japan struggled to rebuild and worried about their future protection from the growth of Communist China. When the Korean War broke out, Japan solidified itself as a major center for Allied operations. The United States opened several military bases in Japanese territory

Throughout American history, the United States did not possess a national strategy for the employment of force or the threat of force to attain political ends. Military force was only used during war as a means to achieve victory. The United States was not involved in international politics continuously enough to permit the development of a coherent national strategy for the consistent pursuit of political goals with a combination of diplomacy and armed force. During the Cold War, the United States departed from historical habits of isolationism and sought to form a national strategy for the employment of America power in defense and promotion of the country's values and interests. The new national strategy would be not merely a military strategy but an all-inclusive plan for the use of the nation's total resources encompassing military strategy and diplomatic and political means to defend and advance the national interests.⁵

In addition to a new military strategy to combat the growth of communism, the United States entered into its first peace-time alliance outside the western hemisphere. Europe required an enormous influx of aid to help war torn landscapes, re-establish industries, produce food, and to provide assurance against a resurgence of Germany or incursion from the Soviet Union. Western Europe was increasingly concerned about their physical and political security against the backdrop of Soviet expansion. In 1949, the Truman administration agreed with Western European leaders to form a European-American alliance to bolster security of Western Europe. The North Atlantic Treaty

to support the war effort in Asia. As a result, the United States basically ensure that Japan would never have to worry about being attacked again. The United States and Japan signed a mutual defense pact that also cover Japan under the "nuclear umbrella."

⁵ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 191), XV.

Organization (NATO) would be comprised of twelve member nations all agreeing to mutual support and to consider an attack against one of them as an attack against all of the member nations.⁶ This collective defense also put most of Western Europe under the “nuclear umbrella” of the United States, giving a further deterrence against the Soviets and its satellite countries.⁷

When the Eisenhower Administration took over from Truman, they embraced deterrence enthusiastically. Dwight D Eisenhower was less inclined to look towards plans of mobilization on the pattern of the World Wars. Eisenhower’s administration was keen to extricate the United States from the Korean Police Action and to ensure against future involvements in prolonged wars. The strategy of deterrence was inherited from the Truman administration, as was the Korean mobilization. Eisenhower’s administration was also the heir to unquestioned American military superiority, particularly in nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them.⁸

However, there were those within the Eisenhower administration who feared that a danger to American security existed within the very plans of the Truman Administration’s enhancement of military superiority. These officials believed that the

⁶ NATO was comprised of twelve founding countries, in North America the United States and Canada. In Europe, the countries of Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom all signed the mutual defense pact. As of 2019, NATO has expanded to include twenty nine countries. When the Soviet Union collapsed several countries previously aligned with the Soviet Bloc signed the treaty to formally become part of NATO. Montenegro become the most recent signing came in 2017

⁷ “North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949.” U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/northatlantictreatyorganization,1949> (Accessed 10-March 2019)

⁸ Weigley, 399-400.

American contest with the Soviet Union was as much an economic engagement as a military or diplomatic one. They believed that as part of the communist design, if America could not be conquered in war, then the communists would strive to strain the United States economy into eventual collapse by baiting them into excessive military spending over an indefinite period of time. Eisenhower felt that having achieved total military superiority, the United States must limit its further military buildup and reduce military expenditures for the sake of the economy. Rather working against any specific immediate military danger, the American military should maintain a constant state of readiness over a prolonged period of time.⁹ This heightened state of perpetual readiness created less economic strain. To gain military security at the cost of fiscal and economic peril would be contraindicated and play directly into the Soviet's plan.

Massive nuclear retaliation could not deter all types of Communist aggression. The United States needed to return to a strategy of deterrence not centered around nuclear weapons alone but a balancing of all military aspects. The strategy should deter aggression on any scale by means of readiness to make proportioned responses according to any type of enemy assault.¹⁰ Such a measured response would provide several different options to be on the table in the event of Communist aggression within any part of the world.

This paper looks to explore the American strategic thought and the employment of an irregular warfare strategy in Guatemala beginning in 1950 building up to and

⁹ Weigley, 400-401.

¹⁰ Weigley, 411.

through 1954. With the shift in American military strategy going away from direct prolonged conflict, irregular warfare presented a different method to achieve a military goal with minimal cost of U.S. resources and personnel, and allowed for maximum effectiveness in achieving the goal. For the United States, this would be the first time that an irregular warfare operation was developed and implemented outside the purview of a declared war. The rhetoric and motivation of the United States changed following World War II; Operation PBSUCCESS reflects the change in the approach towards conflict without pulling the world into another global war. By combining economic, diplomatic, military and psychological warfare, the umbrella term of irregular warfare offered the United States the chance to utilize a measured, proportional possibly covert method of dealing with a communist incursion without escalating into a massive full-blown war. The changing tense political climate only heightened the need for a measured response that allowed the United States to combat Communism beyond the scope of nuclear deterrence but not break the economic bank. The irregular warfare strategy employed by the United States offered a unique approach to engage in direct and indirect combat against a foreign country without drawing down the attention of the entire world or bring down the Communist military hammer.

While other authors have examined the reasons why the United States went into Guatemala, no one has examined these events from a more strategic and military standpoint. Historians have broken down the Guatemala events primarily into political or economic ones. They have looked at it from many different points of view, but with the advancement of the internet and documents being declassified and digitalized, more

information is available for researchers to look at.¹¹ Nicholas Cullather, CIA staff historian, wrote a history of the CIA's role in PBSUCCESS in 1994 for the CIA itself. He came to the conclusion that the CIA operation "barely succeeded." This is an entirely accurate and logical conclusion; the operation succeeded in spite of operational and security set backs. The operation was a "successful failure" that would later be launched against Fidel Castro and the communists in Cuba.¹² But there it was a complete disaster. Cullather's look at the history of the CIA's involvement is essential in order to examine the complexities between national policy and irregular operations.

Outside the intelligence community, the historical dialog concerning Operation PBSUCCESS is intricate and is complicated, but it can primarily be narrowed to two main arguments, political and economic. Historians and authors have varying arguments as to why the United States intervened in Guatemala. Journalists Stephen Kinzer and Stephen Schlesinger corroborated on a work on why the United States intervened in Guatemala. According to Kinzer and Schlesinger, through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the U.S. organized, trained, financed and equipped the invasion force that overthrew President Arbenz. While heavily biased against the coup d'état in Guatemala, Kinzer and Schlesinger come to the conclusion that the United States in theory was

¹¹ Documents including assassination guidelines and information about Operation PBSUCCESS were among several hundred documents released by the CIA on 23 May 1997. Many of these were heavily redacted but were digitalized by the National Security Archive at George Washington University. Additionally, more than 80 million pages were discovered by accident in Guatemala on 21 October 2011. These documents primarily concern Guatemala during their 36 year long bloody civil war.

¹² The "Successful Failure" comes from the facts that the operation succeeded despite the tactical and logistical problems that occurred. But more importantly, the incompetence of their enemy combined with a massively successful psychological warfare campaign, allowed for the operation to succeed. It was a one in a million victory that could not be duplicated in that form. It is why the operation was a complete disaster in Cuba.

looking to combat communism but in reality was operating to enhance the economic benefits for the United States.¹³

While there is little room to argue that there was a correlation to key members of United States government involved in the operation were connected to the United Fruit Company, it is a far stretch to say it was the main reason why the United States launched an irregular operation against a democratically elected government. The United States took massive risks even contemplating the operation with several security breaches occurring prior to the operation even being launched. The potential political or even military retaliation by the Soviets against the United States would make it unlikely that the United States was “in it for the money.” Following World War II, there existed paranoia about the Soviet Union, communism, and the threat it presented to the United States. It is hard to prove that with all of the potential fallout and risk of starting a new world war, the United States would intervene in Guatemala solely for economic gains, specifically for the United Fruit Company. Kinzer and Schlesinger make a strong argument that in the long term, the 1954 coup in Guatemala severely damaged U.S-Latin American relations and destroyed the general notion of social democracy in Guatemala in its aftermath.¹⁴

Historian Piero Gleijeses’ work, *The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*, gives a thorough account of the overthrow of the Jacobo Arbenz

¹³ Schlesinger, Stephen C., and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 7.

¹⁴ Kinzer and Schlesinger, 229.

regime from a Guatemalan background and perspective.¹⁵ Gleijeses argued that the brief government of Arbenz might have become Guatemala's best government until the overthrow in 1954. Unlike Kinzer and Schlesinger, Gleijeses downplays the role of the United Fruit Company. Instead he suggests that there was in fact a growing and significant communist presence within the Arbenz regime. Yet despite the significant presence, Gleijeses explains that Guatemala was in no danger of experiencing a communist overthrow.

Gleijeses concludes that there was no "convenient villain of piece," instead it was a combination of imperialism, security concerns and economics that influenced the intervention in Guatemala.¹⁶ This was something other historians have also concluded. There was no one true "villain" to blame the cause of PBSUCCESS on. His account showed that American and Guatemalan sources, both oral and written, show that "they would have overthrown us even if we had grown no bananas." While Gleijeses' analysis of the events and conclusions offer new insight, the political, military and economic issues at this time in history make the narrative of the overthrow very complex with no definitive answer. The most important piece that Gleijeses offers to the historiography is his utilization of Guatemalan sources.

¹⁵ Unlike many of the other works exploring the Guatemalan coup, Gleijeses takes a different approach to gathering information and first hand accounts. While other historians focused on the American sources, Gleijeses interviewed Guatemalan sources and personnel close to Arbenz. This is an invaluable account in the historiographic account of the event. Gleijeses provides a new perspective for researchers and historians.

¹⁶ Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 7.

From both a military history and an operational stand point, there are many firsts that took place. This is the first time we see the development and implementation of an irregular warfare operation outside the purview of a declared war. Before, any and all irregular warfare operations that took place did so during a declared war. During World War II, there were numerous examples of irregular warfare. One clear instance was the French Resistance and their operation against the German Occupation in France. The Resistance engaged in a wide variety of different attacks against the Germans with everything from small direct engagements to assassinations of German military personnel. The Resistance was aided by supplies, weapons and explosives given to them by the Allied forces. Allied leadership credited the French Resistance for tying up thousands of German soldiers who could have otherwise been used to reinforce German defenses during Operation OVERLORD.¹⁷ General Dwight Eisenhower, acknowledged that without the assistance of the French Resistance, the liberation of France and the defeat of Germany would have taken much longer and as a result greater Allied casualties. Attempts by the Germans to deal with the Resistance fighters had only made the guerillas more effective.¹⁸ General Eisenhower estimated the value of the Resistance to have been to ten to fifteen divisions at the time with one infantry division comprising about ten thousand soldiers.¹⁹ The value of such irregular forces could not be understated in relation to swiftness and success of the Allies in liberating France.

¹⁷ Operation OVERLORD was the code name designated for the amphibious landing across the English Channel by Allied forces on the French coast. The successful operation allowed for Allied forces to establish a foothold in what was once called "Fortress Europe."

¹⁸ Will Iron, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944* (New York: Public Affairs, 2006), 240.

PBSUCCESS is a clear example of the United States undertaking and engaging in irregular warfare outside a defined conflict. There was no official declaration of war against Guatemala. In fact, the conflict itself was supposed to be conducted in a manner that could not be traced back to the United States. The forces that attacked the Guatemalan military during the coup were not technically under the command of any specific military. Rather, they acted independently.²⁰ Castillo Armas's forces attacked the Guatemalan military as a guerilla force with the objective of overthrowing Arbenz government.²¹

Beginning in the late 1940s, irregular warfare was in its infancy and would evolve into a major tool in the United States military arsenal. Every war fought by the United States following World War II had some aspect of irregular warfare within it. Specific wars like the Vietnam War and the War in Afghanistan are more closely aligned with irregular warfare because of the manner in which they were fought. The North Vietnamese Army employed irregular warfare tactics against conventional American military forces. United States Special Forces also employed the tactic against them successfully. In Afghanistan, irregular warfare was the predominate manner in which the war was fought. In the opening weeks of the War in Afghanistan, American forces

¹⁹Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Norwalk, CT: Easton Press, 2001), 295.

²⁰ In regards to military association, it is true that the United States was essentially the "Man behind the Curtain" but Guatemala had no clear evidence that would stand up in an international court. The United States managed to keep their distance just enough.

²¹ It is important to point out, that in the Post 9/11 world, Castillo Armas' military force could be defined as terrorists. Based on the parameters and definitions of 2019 United States military definitions, the United States in 1954 could be seen as conspiring, sponsoring and encouraging terrorist actions against a democratically elected government.

utilized local tribes and anti-Taliban militias to combat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces. Taliban and insurgent forces did not engage in open direct battle, like was conducted in World War, but utilized ambush tactics, fighting in cities, and terror tactics like improvised explosive devices.²²

With irregular warfare style conflicts on the rise, the United States and her allied have had to completely get away from nuclear deterrence and actively engage these threats with standard military forces as well as with forces train to deal with this style of warfare. Regular infantry forces are now trained in street-to-street fighting and guerilla style engagements. This is a direct reflection of the forever changing battle dynamics United States forces are required to deal with. In addition, the United States has increased their deployment of local tribes and military forces to provide security within a territory but also to engage in direct combat with the insurgent forces. The training of these forces by U.S. military personnel allows the United States to reduce the number of combat troops in a conflict region but also put more responsibility on the forces that will be responsible for ensure the stability and control of the area.

This American strategy of fighting insurgents has evolved since the beginning of the war. But the strategy for fighting in this manner can trace its lineage back to the early 1950s. The strategy developed under the Truman and Eisenhower administration had a far longer reach than either administration could have possibly comprehended. The

²² In Afghanistan, the United States was the superior military force compared to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda insurgent forces. As a result, the Taliban and insurgents failed whenever they tried to engage in direct engagements with U.S forces. Instead, the Taliban and insurgents switched to an irregular warfare strategy of fighting the enemy in hit and run tactics, ambushes, street to street fighting within a city as to neutralize the American numerical advantage. To combat this, the United States relied more on Special Forces and units trained in this style of fighting to spearhead operations,

events that led to and followed Operation PBSUCCESS provided the United States with a stronger case study in the evolution of irregular warfare as a military strategy rather than sole reliance on nuclear deterrence or massive military mobilization.

Based on the information presented, it is safe to conclude that the United States did have mixed motives for their involvement in Guatemala but the prevention of the spread of communism was a driving factor. From a military aspect, the strategy of irregular warfare worked despite all of the negative aspects that came about in the mission. It may not have been the prettiest or neatest operation ever conducted but it did achieve its goal. In the context of military strategy, irregular warfare provided the United States with another non-nuclear weapon in their arsenal of deterrence. Irregular warfare could be a viable option against targets, enemies or countries where conventional warfare was out of the question. Instead of risking open-war with the Soviet Union, the United States could have a satellite force wage the war against communism without ever putting an American soldier on the ground.

In the historiography of PBSUCCESS but also Latin America, more research could be done into the complexities of irregular warfare across the whole of Latin America. In the Post-9/11 era, there has been a massive expansion into the study of irregular warfare.²³ The evolution of battle in Afghanistan and Iraq has taken on the

²³ On 11-September 2001, terrorists hijacked four domestic airliners in the United States with the intent of committing mass suicide attacks. Two of the hijacked airliners were crashed into the both the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center. The damage was catastrophic resulting in the collapse of both towers. Another airliner was crashed into the side of the Pentagon in Washington D.C. The final airliner crashed outside of Shanksville, PA after passengers on board stormed the cockpit and overtook the terrorists. In total, more than 3,000 people were killed in the attack. The coordinated attack was perpetrated by Osama bin Laden and the terrorist group al-Qaeda. As a result, the United States invaded Afghanistan with the intent of eliminating Al-Qaeda and removing the Taliban Government. The ensuing conflict would

qualities of irregular warfare. For future historians and researchers, PBSUCCESS and the subsequent conflicts that ensued following PBSUCCESS might offer new insight into the study and literature of irregular warfare. Additionally, with new documents being declassified and digital archives making more of the information available. It would be interesting to see what new information could reveal about the various aspects of the build up to and the operation itself.

become the longest conflict in United States history to date. (Information taken from a variety of sources including the Library of Congress, news articles from CNN, and the 9/11 Commission Report).

CHAPTER I:

A Prelude to Irregular Warfare

After World War II, the United States saw the growth of the Soviet Union as an immediate and imminent threat to U.S. interests. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine launched the United States into a new era of foreign policy.¹ This policy would be put to the test when political tensions reached a crescendo in Iran in 1951. Truman would not be in office to see the final result of his policy; its follow through would fall to newly elected president Dwight Eisenhower. Rather than undertaking direct military intervention to prevent a Communist foothold in Iran and risk direct conflict with the Soviet Union, the United States took a different yet more irregular route to handle the situation in Iran. Following the situation in Iran, the United States saw communism as the main opponent of the Truman Doctrine and U.S. interests. Iran was thought to be securely under British control. The loss of Iran would mean loss of the resource of oil as well as a symbolic loss. The Soviet Union and the ideal of communism was the clear and imminent danger. While Iran was many thousands of miles away from Washington D.C., fear began to grow within the United States government over how rapidly communism was spreading and

¹ The Truman Doctrine was named after then President Harry Truman.

potentially where it could take root next. The major area of concern was Latin America, specifically Guatemala. When a similar situation arose in Guatemala in 1952, the United States again looked to a different method to combat potential communist growth. This method would look to provide maximum effectiveness with minimal direct U.S. military involvement and danger to U.S. military personnel all while maintaining deniability that an operation was even happening.

In March 1947, Harry Truman declared that the United States would support free peoples everywhere in “resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”² This declaration came to be known as the “Truman Doctrine.”³ The Truman Doctrine informed the world that the United States would not sit passively by and allow outside governments or subversive forces to interfere in free democratic countries. Truman identified with “Wilsonian Internationalism,” especially with the League of Nations and neutrality revision.⁴ He had an unquestioned faith in American moral superiority and favored a foreign policy of military preparedness.⁵ While Truman supported the infant United Nations, he feared

² *Public Papers of the President of the United States, Harry S. Truman* (Washington, DC, 1947) 179.

³ “Address of the President of The United States; Recommendation For Assistance to Greece and Turkey.” (Delivered to: 80th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives; Document No. 171).

⁴ After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, he remarked that they should be left to destroy one another. Although he opposed Germany winning, he likened Russian leaders to Adolf Hitler and Al Capone and the “twin blight” of atheism and communism.

⁵ Arnold A. Offner, *Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman’s Responsibility*, Dennis and Patterson, Thomas G., *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations* (Houghlin Mifflin Company, New York, 2006) 304-306.

that appeasement, lack of preparedness and enemies at home and abroad would thwart America's mission to "win the peace" on its own terms.⁶

Truman's philosophy would be put to the test when the political situation in Iran culminated in the installation of a new pro-Communist government in 1951. Any operation or intervention under consideration by the United States in Iran would require something other than conventional military ground forces, like those being used in a "police action" on the Korean peninsula.⁷ Conventional US military troops, along with forces from different countries under the United Nations (UN), were being deployed to aid in a "military police action" against Communist North Korea. UN forces had intervened in the conflict on behalf of South Korea.⁸ Deployment of conventional US ground troops against a potential pro-Communist government could anger the Soviet Union, upsetting the delicate power balance and sending the world into another world war or possible nuclear confrontation. Such an undertaking presented a new and unique challenge for the Department of Defense and the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁹ In order for the United States to achieve

⁶ Offner, *Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman's Responsibility*, 306.

⁷ The conflict in Korea is sometimes referred to as the Korean War or Korean Police Action.

⁸ In 1950, the United States, South Korea and forces from the United Nations were engaged in military action on the Korean peninsula. The Communist country of North Korea, later supported by Communist China, invaded the democratic country of South Korea on 25 June 1950. North Korea was initially aided with materials and weapons from the Soviet Union and China. China would eventually formally enter the war with its own troops on the side of North Korea. Allied and Communist forces would eventually become stalemated and a ceasefire was signed on 23 July 1953. However, no formal peace treaty ending the war was ever created.

⁹ The Central Intelligence Agency was developed from its World War II predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services or OSS.

their mission objective while maintaining their distance from the operation they would need to overthrow the Iranian government and install a pro-United States government using minimal resources and non-US military personnel.

Immediately after World War II, Premier of the Soviet Union Josef Stalin aimed to restore Russia's 1941 boundaries, establish a sphere of influence in border states and provide security against a recovered Germany or Japan or other hostile capitalist state.¹⁰ The Soviet Union sought to expand and tighten its grip on territories that were captured from the Nazis. Soviet forces remained in northern Iran to encourage pro-Communist groups and regimes in the region. The United States would have preferred to withdraw from the Persian Gulf after World War II, but postwar retrenchment by Great Britain from the areas east of the Suez Canal left a vacuum that needed to be filled. For Iran, this meant that the United States would replace Great Britain as the geopolitical counterweight to the Soviet Union.¹¹ Washington considered Iran to be a major strategic prize in the global power struggle and ideological battle with the Soviet Union. During World War II, Iran was a critical aid route for Allied supplies to Soviet Union forces fighting against Nazi forces. It served as a major strategic point of interest within the region both politically and

¹⁰ Offner, *Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman's Responsibility*, 304-306.

¹¹ Scott A. Koch, "ZENDEBAD, SHAH!": *The Central Intelligence Agency and the Fall of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, August 1953*. Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, DC, June 1998, 4.

geographically. Additionally, the United States strategically sought to deny the Soviet Union the ability to gain control over this area, denying the expansion of communism in the region.

On 7 March 1951, tensions in Iran came to a head when the Iranian leader was killed. Islamic fundamentalists assassinated Iranian Prime Minister General Ali Razmara. Mohammed Mossadeq succeeded Razmara as prime minister.¹² (See Figure 1) Mossadeq's immediate concern was gaining full control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).

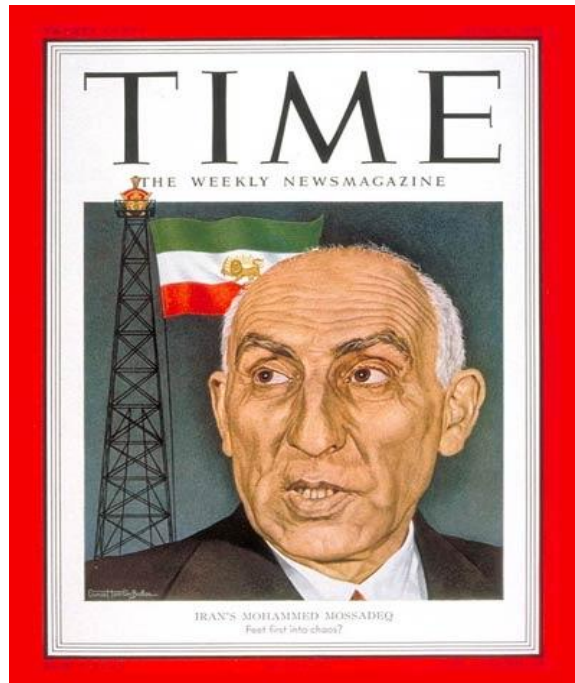


Figure 1.1: Image of Mohammad Mossadeq from Cover of Time Magazine¹³

¹² Mohammed Mossadeq (Other sources have his name spelled "Mossadegh") was described as a "pixie" with a bald "billiard-ball head." Before rising to power, he was known as a shrewd politician and fervent nationalist. Walter LeFaber, *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy At Home And Abroad; Volume II-Since 1896* (W.W. Norton and Company- New York-London), 545.

¹³ Image taken from Time Magazine Cover 4-June, 1951. (www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19540628,00.html : Accessed 13 August 2018.)

The AIOC earned 250 million pounds sterling from its Iranian operations. Iranian oil fields provided Britain with twenty-two million tons of oil products and seven million tons of crude oil annually, which was essentially, 85 percent of all the fuel used by the British Admiralty.¹⁴ The nationalization of the AIOC brought Iran and the Mossadeq government into direct conflict with Great Britain and, in turn, the United States. The loss of Iranian oil would have immediate and far-reaching consequences on the economies of Western Bloc countries.¹⁵ For Great Britain it would have devastating effect on their prestige and the perception of their place in the world. It would be the inability of Great Britain and Iran to resolve this dispute on their own that inevitably drew the United States into the conflict.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mary Anne Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism*, Dennis and Patterson, Thomas G., *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, (Houghlin Mifflin Company, New York, 2006), 340.

¹⁵ National Intelligence Estimate (NIE-14) 8 January 1951, *The Importance of Iranian and Middle East Oil to Western Europe under Peacetime Conditions*, 1-2.

¹⁶ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism*, 341.

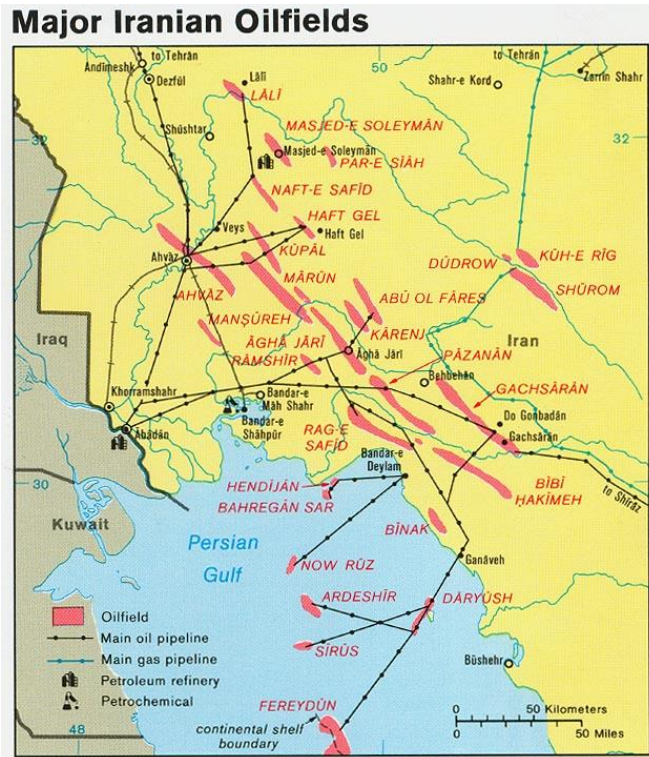


Figure 1.2: Map of Iranian Oil Fields (Early 1950s)¹⁷

US officials saw the oil crisis as a potentially devastating destabilization force in Iran and possibly the entire Middle East. Such a dramatic political shift in the Soviet Union's favor could have led to more communist advances and provide the Soviets with a route to the oil-rich Persian Gulf. (See Figure 1.2) The US government believed that the best option to stop the Soviet advance was a land barrier. The only direct barrier to block the Soviet advance was Iran. Iran served as a crucial link in the Western security chain. The loss of Iran to the Soviets would make defending Greece, Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean impossible.¹⁸

¹⁷ Image taken from Stanford Digital Library, Undated Map of Iranian Oil Fields from CIA 1950s (www.library.stanford.edu/iran)

¹⁸ Merrill and Paterson, *Cold War Culture and the "Third World,"* 340-341.

Iran was rife with intense domestic problems that required Mossadeq's immediate attention. Mossadeq alienated or angered many political groups within Iran until the Tudeh, a pro-communist group aligned with the Soviets, was the only group still supporting him.¹⁹ American officials feared that a British failure to compromise with Mossadeq would allow him to rally Iran's virulent nationalism further, with potentially devastating results for American interests. Initially, the Truman administration behaved as an honest broker in the search for a settlement between the British and Iran. On one hand, United States policy makers wanted a strong yet commercially acceptable agreement that would not set a dangerous precedent or encourage nationalism elsewhere. On the other, they sought a more flexible approach to the rise of nationalism and the current dispute that allowed a settlement to be reached before Iran domestically collapsed or succumbed to Soviet infiltration, both politically and, potentially, militarily.²⁰ The failure to find a compromise could see the political situation in Iran spiral into chaos allowing the Soviet-sponsored Tudeh to gain control of the country. The State Department believed that these developments jeopardized the security and stability of the entire Middle East. In addition, the

¹⁹ Koch, 8-14. The Tudeh was Iran's Communist Party. According to Koch, the Tudeh was Iran's best organized, best financed, and most effective political group.

²⁰ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism*, 341

instability would send a clear message that the West was unable to protect the independence of important Third World states.²¹

As the dispute continued and the destabilization of Iran became more of a reality, officials within the Truman administration abandoned their neutrality stance and aligned themselves with the British stance on Iran.²² By the summer of 1952, Truman joined British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill²³ in a joint Anglo-American proposal to Mossadeq that formally joined the US government to the British position.²⁴ Iran was rich with oil reserves that US officials believed were vital to the rebuilding and rearmament of Western Europe. Loss of such an important resource would have terrible short and long term consequences. In the short term, it would cause a serious shortage of aviation gasoline and other fuels needed for the military effort in Korea. Long term, it would severely hamper not only the United States' ability to fight a protracted war against the Soviets, but all of Western Europe's.²⁵

²¹ Koch, 14. State Department memorandum noted that with American influence decreasing daily, Iranians identified the United States with British interests.

²² At the same time the United States aligned with the British position on Iran, they aligned themselves with the British on their stance in Egypt. Later, they would do the same with the French in Indo-China. (Merrill and Paterson, *Cold War Culture and the "Third World,"* 341).

²³ Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill was Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Churchill was leader of Great Britain throughout the entirety of World War II overseeing all British military involvement. After the war, Churchill warned against the Soviet Union and the rise of the "Iron Curtain" calling on European countries to unify against the Soviets.

²⁴ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism*, 341.

²⁵ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism*, 341.

On 20 November 1952, the U.S. National Security Council (NSC 136/1) defined basic policy concerning Iran.²⁶ NSC 136/1 maintained that the United States was committed to ensuring Iran would not fall under communist control. Iran's strategic position in the region and its resources made it vulnerable to Soviet political and military subversion.²⁷ NSC 136/1 argued that if the Tudeh party seized or attempted to seize control of the Iranian government, the United States, in conjunction with the British, should create a contingency plan to support a non-communist Iranian government militarily, economically, diplomatically and psychologically.²⁸

When Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in January 1953, his immediate focus was not on Iran but on fulfilling his campaign pledge to end the Korean War.²⁹ The Eisenhower administration maintained the US position backing Great Britain on the Iranian situation. Eisenhower and his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles

²⁶ National Security Council, NSC 136/1, *United States Policy regarding the Present Situation in Iran, Top Secret Report, 20 November, 1952*. Documents obtained through the Iranian National Archives-<http://iranianarchives.org/documents/1953-coup-in-iran/45-national-security-council-nsc-136-1-united-states-policy-regarding-the-present-situation-in-iran-top-secret-report-november-20-1952> (Accessed:16 March 2015).

²⁷ National Security Council, NSC 136/1, *United States Policy regarding the Present Situation in Iran, Top Secret Report, 20 November, 1952*. (Accessed 16- March 2015)

²⁸ Koch, 14. Koch cites *United States Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954, Vol. X, Iran 1951-1954* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989), 529-534.

²⁹ Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower was formally a Five Star General in the United States Army. He earned the rank of General of the Army. During World War II, he was the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe in World War II. Eisenhower was elected President of the United States in 1953.

believed that Mossadeq was simply giving the Soviet Union lip service, all the while remaining firmly against communism.³⁰ The new administration needed to re-assess Soviet-American relations. The prolonged oil crisis was taking its toll on Iran domestically. The dismal state of the Iranian economy coupled with the economic dislocation spawned mass-demonstrations that US officials feared would grow into a full-scale revolution.³¹

In March 1953, State Department officials met with British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden to discuss the escalating situation in Iran following the collapse of the Anglo- Iranian Oil negotiations. Washington viewed Mossadeq as a source of instability and feared his continued position encouraged a Tudeh overthrow. In the the United States government, the Soviet leadership would capitalize on the destabilization and use it as a diplomatic opening. Potentially the Soviet Union would add a submissive southern ally to the expanding Soviet sphere of influence.³² Further compounding these fears, US officials believed that Mossadeq continued to grow ties to the Communist Tudeh Party and to move his country closer to the Soviet Union

³⁰ John Foster Dulles was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as Secretary of State on 21 January 1953. He was grandson of former Secretary of State John Watson Foster. During the 1950s, Dulles and Eisenhower forged a close friendship that allowed him unprecedented access to the president. His time in office was marked by the philosophy that peace could be maintained through containment of communism. *Biographies of the Secretaries of State: John Foster Dulles(1888-1959)*. Office of the Historian, www.history.state.gov/departments/history/people/foster-john-dulles. (Accessed 30-May 2018).

³¹ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil and Iranian Nationalism*, 341.

³² Koch, 16-17.

and its satellites. He even threatened to sell oil to the Soviet Union through a new trade agreement. In actuality, Mossadeq was a staunch anti-communist who hoped these political maneuvers would gain him US financial assistance for his economically wounded government. Unfortunately for Mossadeq, US fears over the growth of communism would not allow them to dismiss his apparent flirtation with the Soviet Union.³³

Before Iran and the Soviet Union could hold negotiations, Eisenhower decided to remove Mossadeq as the Iranian Prime Minister.³⁴ Mossadeq's successor could expect the full support of the United States. General Fazlollah Zahedi was hand picked by the United States to succeed Mossadeq. The State Department recognized that General Zahedi was not the ideal candidate but his positive attitude towards the United States and Britain and his willingness to accept the job made him the best option.³⁵ Publicly, American officials limited their official statements to reassuring the United States' unwillingness to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Covertly, U.S. officials within Iran were instructed by the Eisenhower administration to avoid using regular diplomatic channels but rather to utilize back-channels and

³³ Heiss, *Culture Clash: Gender, Oil and Iranian Nationalism*, 341-342.

³⁴ Koch, 18.

³⁵ Koch, 18-19.

third party contacts to reassure the Shah of Iran and the new prime minister of Washington's full support and forthcoming military aid.³⁶

Before any action was undertaken, Eisenhower's administration convinced several large international oil companies, including AIOC and Aramco, to cooperate in preventing Iranian oil from reaching the global market. Mossadeq found that he could produce oil but could not sell it. In early summer 1953, he asked Eisenhower for economic assistance which Eisenhower promised only after an agreement on the oil dispute was reached. Realizing his power was diminishing, Mossadeq called a public referendum to approve his policies. He then fixed the results to gain 95 percent of the votes which Eisenhower then inferred could have only occurred as a result of Communist influences. When pro-Mossadeq supporters took to the streets in mass, Eisenhower decided it was time to make a change.³⁷

The Mossadeq situation left Eisenhower with several options. A conventional military force could invade Iran but this was completely impractical because it would draw world-wide attention and might lead to a full scale war with the Soviet Union. A diplomatic solution was no longer viable. Previous attempts at finding a diplomatic solution had failed and the situation in Iran was worsening daily. Eisenhower's final

³⁶ *Measures Which the United States Government Might Take in Support of a Successor Government to Mossadeq*, March 1953, Department of State, Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Issues, RG 59, Lot 57, D 529, Box 40, National Archives and Records Administration. Original memorandum was found through Koch's citations and examined further. Cited in Koch's work, Koch, 19.

³⁷ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 545.

option was a covert and unconventional operation to be spearheaded by the CIA. This covert operation, it was hoped, could secure the results that the Eisenhower Administration desired with minimal casualties, cost and international attention. If the operation failed or became compromised, Washington could disavow any knowledge or connection.³⁸

The National Security Council (NSC) had made the decision that covert action against Iran was a legitimate and justifiable instrument to enforce US policy.³⁹ Eisenhower received only verbal briefings on the plans, never discussing them with his Cabinet or NSC and left no documents that could implicate him. He also did not discuss the plans with either his Cabinet or the NSC. Keeping his distance from the operation, Eisenhower was constantly apprised of the situation by John Foster Dulles in the privacy of the Oval Office, and maintained unyielding control of the CIA's activities.⁴⁰

The main objective of the CIA campaign in Iran, through legal or "quasi-legal" methods, was to cause the fall of the Mossadeq government and replace it with a pro-Western government under the Shah of Iran's leadership with General Zahedi as

³⁸ Koch, 19. National Security Council, NSC 10/2 is cited as where this threat assessment and course of action came from.

³⁹ Available documents do not indicate who authorized the CIA to begin planning. Koch cites Eisenhower's biographer Stephan E. Ambrose as confirming that the absence of such documents reflected the President's "style."

⁴⁰ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower, vol. 2, The President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 111.

Prime Minister.⁴¹ The action was to be implemented in four phases.⁴² The first phase was to strengthen the Shah's ability to exercise his constitutional power and sign the necessary decrees to have Mossadeq legally removed as Prime Minister.⁴³ Phase two was to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of political factions, with emphasis on the highly influential clergy, sympathetic to Mossadeq's removal in order to gain their support for any legal action taken by the Shah to remove Mossadeq.⁴⁴ The third was to maneuver the will of the people against Mossadeq by showing his collaboration with Communists and the manipulation of his constitutional authority to serve his own personal ambitions.⁴⁵ At the same time, a "war of nerves" was carried out against Mossadeq with the purpose of showing him and the Iranian general population

⁴¹ *Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505)*. No formal title or location of origin is visible on the documents possibly sanitized by the CIA. Series of documents contains four pages that contain some sanitized portions. Previously "Top Secret" accessed from the National Security Archives at George Washington University. (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951-54Iran/d363>) (Accessed: 16 March 2015).

⁴² The section that would contain "Phase 4" is in a block section below "Phase 3" redacted, meaning that it was purposely withheld. It is unclear if the section that followed was apart of "Phase 4" or was done in conjunction with the initial phases.

⁴³ Despite originally being broken up into four phases, there is only documentation of three phases.

⁴⁴ The Shah of Iran was the monarch of Iran.

⁴⁵ *Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505)* (Accessed: 16 March 2015) Portions of the document have been sanitized and information has been redacted or is missing concerning certain phases of the operation, mainly phase four.

that the United States was displeased with the Mossadeq government. Iran would receive no further economic aid from the United States.⁴⁶

An original date for Operation TPAJAX, code designation “D-Day,” was set by the CIA but Mossadeq learned of the plan and took immediate counter measures to neutralize the plan. ⁴⁷ He arrested dozens of supposed conspirators and General Fazollah Zahedi went into hiding at the same time the Shah fled the country. The CIA continued as planned by convincing the Iranian population that the sole authority to govern the people rested with religious leader, the Shah. Mossadeq’s continued to stay in power in defiance of the Shah’s decrees removing him from office.⁴⁸ The Shah held true power to sway public opinion and influence the political sphere within Iran.

CIA agents found supporters in the capital of Tehran, especially within the military. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who had been the monarch since taking over from his father on 16 September 1941, was much loved by members of the military and the general populace.⁴⁹ His father was forced to abdicate following the

⁴⁶ *Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505)*
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951-54Iran/d363> (Accessed: 16 March 2015)

⁴⁷Specific information about the leak as to how Mossadeq discovered the plan, was “sanitized” from the report. Additionally, information as to what specific action Mossadeq took to counter-act the plan was also left out along with an actual start date. The document only reads “...was launched in the interim between the original and final D-Days.”

⁴⁸ *Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505)*
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951-54Iran/d363> (Accessed: 16 March 2015)

⁴⁹ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 545.

invasion by Anglo-Soviet forces during World War II. The Shah's abrupt and dramatic flight out of the country only fueled the Iranian people's loyalty towards the Shah. These actions cause a general revolt in Iran. CIA assets within Iran continued to support the mass protests against Mossadeq. The military and security forces joined the populace and Mossadeq was forced to flee on 17 August 1953. The official ouster of Mossadeq was successfully accomplished on 19 August 1953 when he was arrested by the pro-Shah military.⁵⁰ As a result, the pro-Western Shah was returned to power.⁵¹

The operation in Iran was a resounding success not just for the Eisenhower Administration and CIA but for the development of irregular warfare strategy. It was a baby step towards its eventual growth into the more complex strategy deployed in Guatemala. While military force, conventional or irregular, was not needed, manipulating the will of the Iranian populace, and its psychological component was fundamental to TPAJAX success. A key aspect that is commonly overlooked is that Mossadeq did not want a military confrontation with the United States. Despite the potential for Soviet Union support, there was no guarantee that they would pledge any. At the first hint of an operation against him, Mossadeq began mass arrests.⁵²

⁵⁰ *Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505)*
<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951-54Iran/d363> (Accessed: 16 March 2015)

⁵¹ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 545,

⁵² Historians like LaFeber and Heiss go in depth into the political and economic elements leading up to the coup and Mossadeq's arrest. They spend a lot of pages going over what the United States and British believed about Mossadeq but what they do not go into is Mossadeq's belief or thoughts on the US military. Without having access to CIA files on the subject, it is clear from their research that Mossadeq

Mossadeq's overthrow showed this type of operation was a viable option in the U.S tactical arsenal. The mission objectives were achieved without the deployment of conventional military troops all while maintaining operational deniability. The United States was able to keep American military personnel minimally involved by utilizing pre-existing forces and sympathetic entities within Iran. While the personnel on the ground were nominal, intelligence acquisition, logistical and political coordination were paramount to the mission's success.

The Iranian operation gave Eisenhower, his administration, and the CIA the confidence to explore other scenarios where an irregular operation was needed. Future operations, like in Guatemala, would see an evolution in strategy. There, the United States government would incorporate guerilla forces and non-state sanctioned armed groups to actually conduct military operations within and against the targeted government. Expanded missions would require increased logistics, planning, financial influx, intelligence and personnel from both the CIA and the Department of Defense. With more complex operations come increased risks as well as domestic and foreign scrutiny. The situation that arose in Guatemala presented a more complex problem which the United States would need a solution. The Guatemala problem would be an audacious attempt to overthrow the democratically elected Guatemalan government, an operational codename PBSUCCESS.

was trying to play the political game with the United States but it is very unclear whether Mossadeq feared conventional military invasion or intervention by the CIA or intelligence forces.

The events that set Operation PBSUCCESS into motion in 1954 began ten years before in 1944. Then, Dwight D. Eisenhower was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe tasked with defeating the Nazis. The Central Intelligence Agency did not exist yet. In Guatemala, a revolution had begun in 1944. Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, future president of Guatemala, was a captain in the Guatemalan army.⁵³ Arbenz, Francisco Arana and Jorge Toriello Garrido led a military uprising against the Guatemalan government in July 1944, forcing the resignation of thirteen-year president Jorge Ubico. Ubico, who took power in 1931, ruled Guatemala as a “fiefdom with tacit support of the traditional landowning class.”⁵⁴ Juan Jose Arevalo returned from exile in Argentina and was elected president of Guatemala in December 1944.⁵⁵ Francisco Arana became Chief of the Armed Forces while Arbenz became the Minister of Defense. Arevalo’s new democratically elected government turned increasingly more leftist in its policies. From the Revolution there developed a strong national movement to free Guatemala from the military

⁵³ Born in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, in 1913, to a Swiss father and Guatemalan mother, Arbenz grew up in a middle-class family. Arbenz was primarily raised by his mother; his father committed suicide when Arbenz was still very young. Due to the structure of Guatemalan society at the time, Arbenz had few options to move into a different social class; instead Arbenz chose a career in the military. He attended the Escuela Politecnica, the Guatemalan Military Academy, where he excelled under the leadership and tutelage of U.S. officers who served at the Academy. He grew into a “superb” officer in a neglected army, having the qualities of a born leader. These qualities would later allow him to retain the loyalty of the officers in the Guatemalan military. He graduated as “sub- lieutenant” in 1935. He returned to Escuela Politecnica in 1937 to teach history and science. (Glejjeses, 15.)

⁵⁴ Glejjeses, 136-137.

⁵⁵ Arevalo was a university professor before being president and was exiled because of teachings about politics and social reform. He would later freely remove himself from the country following Arbenz's overthrow in 1954.

dictatorship, social backwardness, and “economic colonialism” which had been the pattern of the past. (See Figure 1.3) This new nationalist movement, coupled with a small but growing communist sentiment, represented a clear danger to US companies and investments in Guatemala.⁵⁶



Figure 1.3: Map of Guatemala⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Gleijeses, 137-138.

⁵⁷ Image taken from University of Texas-Austin Archive (www.legacy.lib.utexas.edu-Accessed 1-August 2018).

The United States policy towards Guatemala was to maintain stability. It was to remain a place for U.S. capital investment for corporate and private investors.⁵⁸ After President Ubico's removal from power, Guatemalans loudly voiced their criticisms of foreign monopolies controlling their country's resources. Until 1944, the ruling Guatemalan elite made up 2 percent of the population but held 60 percent of the land. The poorest 50 percent held only 3 percent of the land which they desperately needed for farming.⁵⁹ Total United States investment in Guatemala in 1944 was about \$93 million, concentrated through three companies: the Empresa Electrica de Guatemala, the International Railways of Central America (IRCA), and the United Fruit Company (UFCO). The Empresa Electrica was originally a German company before the Guatemalan government seized control during World War I. Under intense pressure from the United States, Guatemala sold the thriving company to the US company Electric Bond and Share Company, a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company for such a low price that it would fester in the minds of Guatemalans.⁶⁰

⁵⁸Richard Immerman, *The CIA In Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (University of Texas Press, 2007), 83.

⁵⁹ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 546-547.

⁶⁰ Immerman, 84-85.

The IRCA held the monopoly over the railways in Guatemala. Guatemala only owned and controlled 29.5 miles of railway, seized from the Germans in World War I, where as the IRCA owned and controlled 580.7 miles of single-track rail. The absence of an adequate road system in Guatemala reinforced the effects of this monopoly. The IRCA controlled the only railway that connected the capital, Guatemala City, to the deep water port of Puerto Barrios where 60 percent of the country's foreign trade occurred.⁶¹

But the IRCA was not the biggest culprit when it came to the monopolization of resources; it was the Boston based United Fruit Company.⁶² Earning the nickname “the Octopus” because of the company “seemed to have a tentacle in different entities and enterprises across North America and Latin America,” the UFCO was the world's greatest grower and exporter of bananas.⁶³ They controlled almost all of the fruit production, transportation and even regional governments.⁶⁴ The United Fruit Company (UFCO) owned 42.68 percent of the IRCA, which they bought for half the normal share price. Like the IRCA, the UFCO held a vast railroad network with over 200 miles of railway running through their plantations. The budget alone of the

⁶¹ Gleijeses, 86-87.

⁶² LaFeber, *The American Age*, 546-547.

⁶³ Gleijeses, 89.

⁶⁴ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 546-547

UFCO was larger than that of any of the countries in which it operated. Eighty-five ships carried UFCO products, mainly bananas, to North America and Europe.⁶⁵

In addition to the United Fruit Company's wealth and resources, they had strong political connections in the United States. Many of their shareholders were members of the United States Congress. Lobbyists were kept on the payroll to make sure that UFCO was well known to the State Department. They also sought to convince the American people that the United Fruit Company deserved their support and attention. A large contingent of lawyers supplemented the lobbyist's efforts.⁶⁶ In 1936, the widely known American law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell negotiated UFCO's contract with then dictator General Jorge Ubico who controlled Guatemala. Coincidentally one of the firm's senior associates was John Foster Dulles, the future United States Secretary of State. His brother, future Director of the CIA, Allen Welsh Dulles was also an employee of the law firm.⁶⁷

U.S. officials failed to grasp the magnitude of growing anti-American sentiment and the force of Guatemalan nationalism building across the country. The failure of the Truman Administration's policies and collected intelligence on Guatemala caused a cascading affect when coupled with the policies of the

⁶⁵ Gleijeses, 86-87.

⁶⁶ Gleijeses, 91.

⁶⁷ LaFeber, *The American Age*, 546-547.

Eisenhower Administration. The result was an increased in hostilities towards US based companies that had previously thrived.⁶⁸ United States companies who had previously thrived and expanded in Guatemala faced growing opposition to their presence and monopolization of land not only by the people of Guatemala but by the Guatemalan government as well. The expropriation of U.S. land and resources in Guatemala only furthered American suspicions that Guatemala was moving closer to becoming a communist satellite in the Western Hemisphere.⁶⁹ By taking control of the land from the U.S. government with the intent of returning it to the Guatemalan people, the Guatemalan government, whether knowingly or unknowingly, aligned themselves with the ideal of communism and the Soviet Union. This potential growth of communism was cause for worry for the United States.

Not every member of the Arevalo government agreed with this trend. Arana had hopes for a more moderate and conservative government in Guatemala, while maintaining the United States as an ally. The presidential election in 1951 presented Arana with an opportunity to achieve his political goals. Arana's personal rival for leadership, Arbenz, associated himself more closely with the Arevalo government and

⁶⁸ Immerman, 85.

⁶⁹ David M. Barret, *Sterilizing a "Red Infection": Congress, the CIA, and Guatemala, 1954* (Central Intelligence Agency Resource: www.cia.gov – Accessed 24- Jan 2014), 23.

the shift towards a leftist position in Guatemala. When Arana was assassinated in 1949, Arbenz's path to the presidency opened.⁷⁰

Arbenz was elected president of Guatemala in 1951.(See Figure 1.4) He received 65 percent of the vote in an election that historian Walter LeFaber contended was a "remarkably open and free election."⁷¹ In his inaugural address, Arbenz said that his goals were to

transform Guatemala from a dependent nation with a semi-colonial economy into a country that is economically independent, to transform Guatemala from a backward country with an semi-feudal economy into a modern capitalist country; to proceed in a way that will ensure the greatest possible improvement in the standard of living of the greatest masses of our people. ⁷²

As early as 1952, the United States government and policymakers became alarmed with the growing Communist influence within President Arbenz's administration and established the belief that Arbenz had formed a working alliance with the Communists.⁷³ Arbenz was not the opportunist that the United States had hoped for. His predecessor, Arevalo, was a staunch nationalist and could never have been the "malleable" friend that the United States hoped him to be. Yet Arevalo had

⁷⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1962-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) Access 31-March 2014, 17:15

⁷¹ LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*,116.

⁷² Gleijeses, 149.

⁷³ Gerald K. Haines, Central Intelligence Agency Staff Analysis: *CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals 1952-1954*. June 1995 (Declassified documents obtained as part of the National Security Archives of George Washington University).

hoped to maintain a cordial relationship with the United States, as he, too, was firmly against communism.⁷⁴ But Arbenz chose to become stubbornly defiant of the United States.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the elite in Guatemala helped persuade U.S. journalists, members of Congress and the Executive branch that the Guatemalan government was becoming increasingly more Communist.⁷⁶

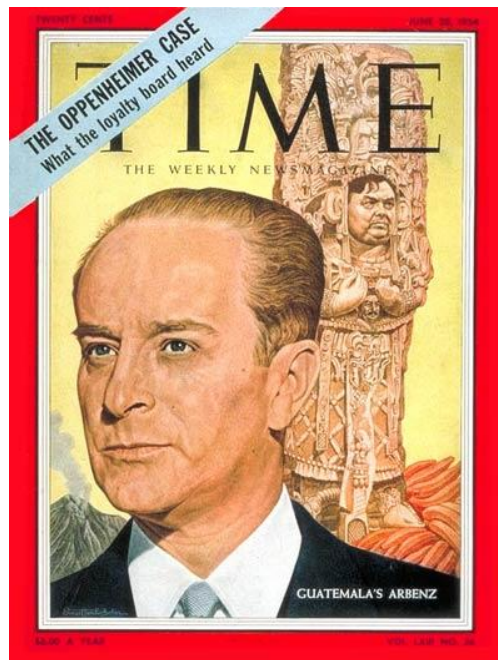


Figure 1.4: Image of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, President of Guatemala on the cover of TIME magazine ⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Gleijeses, 116.

⁷⁵ Gleijeses, 134. Gleijeses argues that it was Arbenz El Salvadorian wife, Maria Vilanova, who pushed him towards being defiant of the United States. Gleijeses suggests that “he was putty in her hands.”

⁷⁶ Barrett, 23.

⁷⁷ Image taken from TIME Magazine, 28 June 1954.
(www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19540628,00.html : Accessed 13 January 2015.)

Early concern by United States officials over communists potentially penetrating the Guatemala labor movement were only part of a much larger concern. In addition to their ideological opposition to Communism, US officials were convinced that the communists would use their influence among the workers within the labor movement and the unions to gain political leverage. Overtime the communists would work themselves into key positions within the Guatemalan government, eventually taking complete control.⁷⁸ According to the US State Department's *National Intelligence Estimate* on Guatemala, published on 11 March 1952, on the question of the present political situation in Guatemala and the possible developments during 1952, U.S. officials concluded that "Communists already existed in Guatemala as a political influence. Their influence will probably continue to grow. The political situation in Guatemala adversely affects US interests and constitutes a potential threat to US security."⁷⁹ The State Department summarized, in its "white papers" on the supposed Communist penetration of Guatemala, the international aspects of this Communist challenge:

The Guatemalan PGT (Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo, the Guatemalan Labor party, which was controlled by Guatemalan Communists) acted within a global, not a local Guatemalan context. It conceived of the ultimate triumph of communism in Guatemala as part of a successful world wide advance of the

⁷⁸ Immerman, 91.

⁷⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. National Intelligence Estimate- Washington D.C.- 11 March 1952 (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) Accessed: 10 March 2014.

Communist [that is, Soviet] forces, and as a disciplined battalion in advance of an army. It adjusted its tactics and objectives to support the main effort.⁸⁰

One estimate in 1951 by U.S. officials estimated the total number of Communists in Guatemala to be around two hundred.⁸¹ However, another estimate of the Communist Party of Guatemala went as high as five hundred, and one-third of them were militant.⁸² Many who believed that Guatemala was becoming dominated by Communists were not simply subscribers to Joseph McCarthy⁸³ extremism; rather the idea was more widely shared by both liberals and moderates within governmental, journalistic, and academic communities around the country.⁸⁴ This belief was solidified when President Arbenz enacted widespread agrarian reforms calling for the expropriation and redistribution of uncultivated land, including land owned by the U.S. based United Fruit Company (UFCO).⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Immerman, 103.

⁸¹ A former CIA official, Clair George, testified in 1983 that the agency's records on the coup d'état ran to about 180,000 pages. Taken from NEW YORK TIMES 28-MAY 1997 (Accessed 24-Feb 2014) <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/guatemala/list.htm>)

⁸² Foreign Relations of the United States, 1962-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) (Access 31-March 2014)

⁸³ Joseph McCarthy was a United States Senator from Wisconsin from 1947 until 1957. McCarthy believed that Soviet Communists had infiltrated all aspects of the United States government and were impossible to detect. The term McCarthyism is derived from his name and describes his obsessive belief that Communists had infiltrated.

⁸⁴ Immerman, 101. While the assumption of Guatemalans converting to communism was widely held, the statistics and numbers are inconclusive about the idea.

⁸⁵ Immerman, 104.

While many high level U.S. officials accepted the fact that an antagonistic and hostile government in Guatemala was not a direct threat to the United States, their fear came from the idea that Guatemala could potentially become a client state of the Soviet Union. U.S. officials worried that if that were to become a reality the Soviet Union could develop their own sphere of influence and power in Latin American and potentially all of the western hemisphere. ⁸⁶ However, Arbenz was convinced that the success of Communism on a global scale was not only inevitable but desirable. He believed that history was marching toward Communism and that capitalism would cease to exist.⁸⁷

When Arbenz was elected president in 1951, the cooperation between communist entities and Guatemalan government evolved into an effective working relationship. After previously only being tolerated under the Arevalo government, communist groups within Guatemala found themselves to have more freedom and ability to spread their message. To ensure his election as president, Arbenz committed to mutual support with the communists, but stopped short of pledging his full commitment to them. ⁸⁸ A small group of communists agreed with Arbenz's proposed

⁸⁶ Haines, 1.

⁸⁷ Gleijeses, 147. These are Arbenz thoughts and ideas as explained by his wife, Maria de Arbenz through interviews conducted by Piero Gleijeses.

⁸⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) (Access 31-March 2014, 17:15)

land reforms and offered their full support in his campaign against the UFCO. Arbenz was willing to work with whomever he needed to, so long as they shared his ideas, in order to win the election and make his campaign goals a reality.⁸⁹

There were communist groups active in Guatemala during this time. Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT) sought to advance nationally by pushing communist ideals into the country-side where the peasants were more subjected to exploitation and poor conditions.⁹⁰ Communism was easily relatable to the communal beliefs of the indigenous people. These relatable concepts allowed the PGT to gain a foothold with the indigenous people.⁹¹ The influence of the communists in Guatemala had increased significantly while the influence of the United Fruit Company (UFCO) drastically declined. With their land holdings shrinking and influence dwindling, the UFCO was helpless to stop Arbenz. Without direct political intervention by the United States government, the UFCO would essentially cease to exist in Guatemala.⁹²

⁸⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) (Access 31-March 2014, 17:15)

⁹⁰ Greg Grandin, *Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 54.

⁹¹ Grandin, 123. Even after the overthrow of Arbenz in 1954, the PGT incorporated individuals across ethnic and cultural boundaries in an effort to include everyone, including the inclusion of women. In Grandin's eyes, the PGT built and help provide a foundation for a modern democratic Guatemala.

⁹² Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944- 1954* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991), 7.

The Guatemalan Congress, under heavy presidential pressure and pressure from open public demonstrations in the capital, approved the bill for the land expropriation in the early hours of 17 June 1952. The law was known as Decree 900 and was signed into law immediately by Arbenz. This series of democratic reforms by Arbenz gave control of previously unused prime agricultural land back to the peasants and poor farmers. A senior Arbenz official reported that the law “was constructive and democratic in its aims...It would bring about a land structure and a system of land tenure largely centering around the needs and aspirations of the individual peasant families.”⁹³ Arbenz actions, both private and public, made it clear that agrarian reform was the key issue and would become “the heart of his program, almost an obsession.” The United States Embassy reported that Arbenz was extremely obstinate about land reforms and had never been so focused on a single issue like this previously.⁹⁴

Arbenz’s redistribution of land had an immediate negative effect on U.S. business and economic interests in Guatemala.⁹⁵ UFCO had set aside land as business assets not be used or developed. UFCO officials argued that the banana industry

⁹³ Gleijeses, 150.

⁹⁴ Gleijeses, 146. Gleijeses obtained this information through interviews with the following Guatemalan politicians: Galich (who was quoted) Charnaud, Morgan, Capuano. The second quotation was taken from United States Embassy letters dated 27 March, 1952. See page 146.

⁹⁵ Haines, 1.

required that vast amounts of land be held in reserve since tracts of land were periodically flooded so as to “drown out” the fungus-induced Panama Disease that bananas in the region were susceptible to.⁹⁶ However, it was Arbenz belief that devoting so much of the country’s agricultural development on the growing bananas and coffee severely restrict the long term potential for growth.⁹⁷ The land monopolized by the UFCO belonged to the people of Guatemala and needed to be redistributed to them.

Under President Arbenz’s new land reform, UFCO would lose authority over their Guatemalan land holdings (See Figure 1.5); they would be confiscated by the Guatemalan government.⁹⁸ His plan was to divide and distribute the idle land of any *latifundios* that were larger than 233 acres.⁹⁹ As of 1950, thirty two of the largest *latifundios* totaled 1,719,740 acres. Of that acreage, 1,575,181 acres were not being utilized for cultivation. Under this plan, Arbenz allowed those proprietors whose land holdings were between 233 to 669 acres to keep a third of their lands uncultivated and further exempted permanent pastures and woodlands from economic development. ¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Immerman, 80.

⁹⁷ Immerman, 64.

⁹⁸ Schlesinger and Kinzer, xv.

⁹⁹ *Latifundios* is the Spanish term for large land holdings

¹⁰⁰ Immerman, 65.



Figure 1.5: Actual map from 1952 of United Fruit Company holdings in Latin America¹⁰¹

The expropriation of land began in December 1952.¹⁰² The Regional Peasant Confederation, the units overseeing the redistribution, recommended the reallocation of 55,000 acres of UFCO's uncultivated lands in the Pacific region of Tiquisate. Approval by the Agrarian Committee of the Guatemalan government was swift. By 25 February 1953, the committee approved an additional claim for 179,000 acres. This brought the total number of UFCO's holdings seized to 234,000 acres.¹⁰³ A year later, on 24 February 1954, the Guatemalan government expropriated another

¹⁰¹ Image taken from La Salle University. www.lasalle.edu/~mcinneshin/303/week07.htm (Accessed 21 February 2015)

¹⁰² Immerman, 65-66.

¹⁰³ Immerman, 80-81.

173,000 acres of UFCO lands. The combined total of all the expropriated land was over 400,000 acres, roughly one seventh of all of the arable land in Guatemala. The fee the Guatemalan government offered to pay in compensation, based on the tax records Guatemalan government possessed, to the United Fruit Company was \$1,185,000. The United Fruit Company petitioned the U.S. State Department directly to intervene on their behalf. On 20 April 1954, the United States government formally submitted a bill to the Guatemalan government for \$15,854,849; nearly ten times the total Guatemala offered to pay.¹⁰⁴ The Arbenz government never made any payments.¹⁰⁵

The actions of the Arbenz government and the increasing fear over the potential rise of communism in Latin America by the United States put both countries on a collision course for confrontation. The major question was what type of action the United States would take to handle this situation. Both countries were already engaged in a political sparring match. Any course of action involving military intervention needed to be carefully considered. Military action against a democratically elected government would almost certainly cause widespread condemnation by the rest of the world and potential backlash by the Soviet Union.

¹⁰⁴ Assessment was based on the projected income and value of the land.

¹⁰⁵ Immerman, 81-82.

Another major concern was that if tensions between the Soviets and the United States reached a critical level, it could lead to a nuclear confrontation.

Any military operation or campaign in Guatemala would require a more subtle approach than the Iran operation. The United States would need to maintain full deniability. Unlike Iran, Guatemala was a more complex and volatile environment. The overthrow of the Arbenz government could not be achieved without using some type of armed guerilla force. This increased the risk of U.S. involvement being discovered. Initially the Eisenhower Administration wanted to make Guatemala a center-piece for anti-communist reform which other countries could follow.¹⁰⁶ With vital political and economic interests at stake, Eisenhower wanted more than to simply topple the Arbenz government. He believed Guatemala could be a viable democratic system with a thriving capitalist economy derived from trade and commerce. Guatemala would once again become a place for investment and market for U.S. entities, the United States being the primary trading partner.¹⁰⁷

The Eisenhower Administration, in conjunction with the CIA and Department of Defense, decided that direct intervention needed to be taken against the Arbenz government.¹⁰⁸ Rather than using conventional U.S. military forces, this operation would remain covert with the emphasis on minimizing the risk of the operation being

¹⁰⁶ Streeter, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Streeter, 21.

¹⁰⁸ Without the strong support of the Eisenhower administration, the actions taken in Guatemala would never have succeeded.

traced back to the United States. Unlike the operation in the Iran, the complex environment of Guatemala called for an upgrade to the blueprint used in Iran and an evolution of strategy. The methodologies, operational constructs and tactics that were employed would become integral components of the irregular warfare umbrella. With all the pieces in place, it was time for the United States to begin preparations for the operation, designated PBSUCCESS.

CHAPTER II:

The United States in Guatemala and the Development of PBFORTUNE and PBSUCCESS

On 2 December 1823, United States President James Monroe issued a warning to the rest of the world declaring that the United States would not tolerate further colonization or puppet monarchs in the Western Hemisphere. This warning to European countries would come to be known as the Monroe Doctrine.¹ Latin America was of particular interest when it came to foreign policy and economics. The United States government and private businesses had invested great sums of money, material and personnel to develop a thriving infrastructure that benefited U.S. industries. U.S. corporations owned enormously large pieces of land that were using for growing profitable crops that could be sold in the United States. Portions of these lands were often left unsown. To countries like Guatemala, this monopolization and exploitation

¹ Message of President James Monroe at the commencement of the first session of the 18th Congress (The Monroe Doctrine), 12/02/1823; Presidential Messages of the 18th Congress, ca. 12/02/1823-ca. 03/03/1825; Record Group 46; Records of the United States Senate, 1789-1990; National Archives. (Accessed 8-October 2019).

of the land had a detrimental effect on the local economies. The elite within Guatemalan became wealthier on these capitalist ideas while the average citizen struggled to make a living. To the Guatemalan people, communism could present an answer to their problems, a redistribution of wealth that could benefit them. This is what the United States government and private U.S. corporations feared most, both from an economic and political stand point.

With global communism on the rise, the United States became increasingly wary of any potential situation that would allow communist sympathies to grow and potentially to blossom into a communist regime with loyalties to the Soviet Union. Growth of pro-communist groups and a desire by the people of various countries to liberate themselves from foreign dependency were becoming increasingly more commonplace around the world. Latin America was no exception. To the United States, Latin America was theirs to control. Loss of even a single country within the U.S sphere of influence could launch a cascading effect that could push Latin America communist, or so the United States believed, into the hands of the communists. The murmurings of land reformation and redistribution in Guatemala immediately drew renewed attention from the United States.

The CIA and members of the State Department began to publish reports that supported the idea that Guatemala and the Arbenz government were quickly shifting towards Communism. ² Created under the National Security Act of 1947 (61 Stat.

² Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution And the United States, 1944-1954*. (Princeton University Press, 1991), 187-188.

495), the CIA was charged with coordinating the nation's intelligence, correlating, evaluating, and disseminating intelligence which affected national security under the direction of the National Security Council.³ Under this act, the Director of Central Intelligence was defined as the head of the intelligence community, head of the CIA, and principle intelligence advisor to the President of the United States. The Act also prohibited the CIA from engaging in law enforcement activities, restricting them to internal security functions. In 1949, the Central Intelligence Agency Act allowed the CIA to use confidential fiscal and administrative procedures and exempted the Agency from many of the usual limitations on expenditures of federal funds. The Agency was allowed to request funds through other budgets and departments and have the funds transferred to the Agency without regard to initial budget appropriation.⁴

The Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), Walter Bedell Smith, and other U.S. officials believed that the growing communist movement in Guatemala could no longer be dealt with by the Guatemalan opposition and the anti-communist elements

³ Within the National Archives there is a discrepancy between the actual date the CIA began. The official history of the CIA by the CIA has the established date as 18 December 1947. The National Archives Guide, Sec.263.1 (1995) uses the 18 September 1947 as the establish date. (See National Archives: Central Intelligence Agency. (12/041981-))

⁴ Administrative History Note: National Archives: Central Intelligence Agency. (12/041981-))
<http://arcweb.archives.gov/> (Accessed- 2 March 2014)

in the country.⁵ The United States government believed that the Guatemalans were inept, inefficient and disorganized in dealing with the communist threat. The conclusion reached by the DCI and the intelligence community was that without intervention, the Guatemalans would succumb to the growing Communist influence, thus undermining democracy and U.S. power and influence in the region. The anti-communist elements, such as the Catholic hierarchy, the railroad workers union, a small percentage of university students, landowners, and the Guatemalan Army were prepared to prevent a Communist ascent to power, but they had little outside support.⁶

While some United States officials saw the rise of communism as an ever growing threat to the security of America other officials in the government did not see this as such a threat to national security. Officials within the State Department called for a more cautious approach, one that would not cause potential diplomatic fallout. For example, officials at the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs believed it would be better not to appear as an “elephant shaking with alarm before a mouse.”⁷ State Department officials preferred to apply diplomatic pressure to nations around

⁵ Walter Bedell “Beatle” Smith was a highly decorated officer who served in World War I and World War II. During World War II, he served as a senior United States general and chief of staff to General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Following World War II, he became the ambassador to the Soviet Union before leaving his post as ambassador to become the director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

⁶ Haines, 2.

⁷ PBSUCCESS Planning Documents, Director of Operations, Latin American Division Records, Job Number 79-101025A, CIA Archives (5). Accessed in the National Security Archives through George Washington University.

Guatemala. They desired to withhold all cooperative assistance and end any military defense pacts with El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. ⁸ The State Department's position became the official United States policy toward Guatemala. The result of the support from within the Truman's administration led to the creation of detailed covert program specifically designed to take down the Arbenz government under the official codename PBFORTUNE.⁹

Planning for such an operation would require an enormous amount of resources such as intelligence, personnel, equipment and armaments. This would take time to plan and to coordinate. In April 1953, following a meeting with the Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza, President Harry Truman instructed Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Smith to investigate the possibility of overthrowing the Arbenz government using Guatemalan dissenters and exiles. Members of the Truman administration, especially within his security council, sought some manner in which to be involved, without "risking improper identification, even by implication, with any movements in Guatemala against Arbenz."¹⁰ Somoza bragged that he and

⁸ Bureau of Inter- American Affairs, "Alternative Policy Lines, 1953." And NSC. "Guatemala," 19 August 1953, FRUS, 4:1074-1086. Accessed in the National Security Archives through George Washington University.

⁹ PBFORTUNE was to codename designate for the covert operation to be deployed in Guatemala to combat communism and undermine or overthrow President Arbenz.

¹⁰ Immerman, 109.

Guatemalan exile Carlos Enrique Castillo Armas (See Figure 2.1)¹¹ could overthrow Arbenz using Guatemalan exiles and weapons provided by the United States. DCI Smith required that human intelligence (HUMINT) be gathered in order to provide an accurate and current analysis about the sensitive private information of individuals being targeted and those who could possibly be used in the potential overthrow.¹²

HUMINT involves manipulating other humans as a source of information using a wide variety of techniques.¹³ Agents trained in this type of intelligence gathering frequently engage in both quantitative and qualitative intelligence collection.¹⁴ All information gathered held some type of relevance towards forming a larger picture of the overall objective or specific personnel being investigated. A HUMINT agent codenamed SEEKFORD, was sent by Smith to make contact with exiles and Guatemalan dissidents about the possibility of armed conflict against Arbenz. SEEKFORD compiled a detailed report on his findings which were then handed over to the Directorate of Plans (DP).¹⁵ “Directorate of Plans” served as the

¹¹ Richard Immerman calls Castillo Armas a “fugitive” and “except for his thin mustache,” could easily been mistaken for a native Mayan. Other authors and official sources refer to Castillo Armas status as an exile.

¹² Haines, 2.

¹³ Jeffrey H. Norwitz, “Armed Groups: A Study in National Security, Counter-Terrorism, and Anti-Insurgency” (US Naval War College), 326.

¹⁵ “Directorate of Plans” served as the clandestine arm of the CIA and authority on the coordination and evaluation of clandestine operations in the United States. Original files contained the names of the person whom the reports were sent to and the recommendations made by that person were later send to Dulles who had made official proposals to Smith. However, the name and branch that the person worked for were blacked out. The only information about the individual that was provided was that he was a Chief of a division within the Directorate of Plans.

clandestine arm of the CIA and authority on the coordination and evaluation of clandestine operations in the United States.¹⁶ DP made a proposal to the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, that the CIA should supply Castillo Armas with weapons, armaments, and \$250,000.¹⁷ In addition to the money and weapons, Nicaragua and Honduras would provide the Guatemalans with air support.¹⁸



Figure 2.1: Castillo Armas in Full Military Dress Uniform¹⁹

¹⁶ “Mission of the National Clandestine Service,” www.cia.gov (Accessed 22-Jan 2015, 15:25).

¹⁷ In addition to the collection of intelligence on Guatemala for PBFORTUNE, SEEKFORD collected intelligence on the Castillo Armas. Intelligence agents commonly collect information on individuals they are dealing with in order to have a full and complete knowledge of the specific individual. SEEKFORD reported that on 18 September 1952, Castillo Armas had reached out to Dominican Republic dictator Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo for aid. In return for aid, Castillo Armas would be required to eliminate four Santo Dominicans, at the time residing in Guatemala.

¹⁸ Haines, 2-3.

¹⁹ Image acquired from www.latinamericanstudies.org (Accessed 24-Mar 2014, 17:35).

A force that would be needed to execute this type of operation without involving any U.S. military units directly could not be defined as a conventional force. This force would be operating in covert means in an irregular warfare campaign in Guatemala. The proposed plan of attack and Castillo Armas' group of exiles would be directly defined as an "armed group." An armed group refers to any group of terrorists, insurgents, militias, or criminal gangs. The motives of these armed groups can be political, ideological, or religious. Armed groups are typically characterized by their willingness and ability to challenge the authority and legitimacy of states and international systems. Such groups have the ability to operate and function in clandestine operations that can attack within and across global and state boundaries.²⁰ For the United States, this type of group would be ideal for deployment in Guatemala. While the political or ideological factor of defeating communism motivated the United States into action, Castillo Armas and his armed group would require more substantial and tangible rewards. Money was a large motivator but for Castillo Armas, his hubris and his quest for power were the key factors motivating him.²¹

Two key aspects that make these groups extremely dangerous for nations and governments is the fact that they, along with the operations they conduct, are not

²⁰ Dew, 257.

²¹ In modern definitions, Castillo Armas and his exiles could be classified as "insurgents."

bound by the laws or conventions of international warfare, increasing their propensity for potential indiscriminate violence. The second key factor, one the Castillo Armas would seek to employ, would be to purposely by-pass the military superiority of the nation and government in order to directly attack established social, economic, political, and symbolic targets and personnel.²² This would be a major tactical element within the US mission plan. A direct conventional engagement against the Guatemalan military would certainly result in a resounding defeat of Castillo Armas' force. In open field battle or conventional military engagements, the Guatemalan military held the upper hand. The Guatemalan military greatly outnumbered Castillo Armas. The Guatemalans also possessed mechanized units, like armored cars and trucks, which Castillo Armas did not. In order to negate the Guatemalan military's numerical superiority, Castillo Armas would have to engage in small battles in different areas simultaneously so as to not only confuse the Guatemalan military but also to deny them the ability to deploy their forces en mass in any one place.

When PBFORTUNE was developed, the operation was one of the first of its kind. The CIA was still in its infancy; this plan marked one of its first attempts at a covert operation and was a direct evolution from the Iranian operation.²³

²² Dew, 257.

²³ The plan deployed in Iran was on a much smaller scale and did not require an outside insurgent group to achieve the goal. As discussed in Chapter 1, Iran only employed entities within Iran itself to achieve the mission goal. Guatemala would require more substantial planning and logistics.

PBFORTUNE became a detailed plan and outline for the covert assassinations and kidnappings that would occur as a result of quelling the rising perceived communist threat. The plan called for the creation of a “hit list” comprised of those individuals who were deemed a threat. Those individuals were then divided into two separate categories.²⁴ “Category I” was for those Guatemalans who were too dangerous to continue in their present manner and needed to be eliminated.²⁵ “Category II” was comprised of Guatemalans that were to be imprisoned or exiled.²⁶ The names included on the “hit-list” were comprised using a 1949 Guatemalan Army list of known communists and communist sympathizers as well as information given by the Director of Intelligence. The CIA sent a telegraph to a CIA station on 26 January 1952, requesting a firm list of “top flight Communists” that the potential new government desired be eliminated immediately in the event of a successful anti-communist coup.²⁷

²⁴ The original “hit list” is in the National Security Archives but due to the sensitive nature of the information, all of the fifty names on the list are redacted.

²⁵ The CIA never clearly stated whether these individuals were to be eliminated.

²⁶ *Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during Military Operation CALLIGERIS.* Actual list has been blacked out in addition to any names or agency that was possibly involved. The lists were divided into categories for either termination or exile depending on the category the individual was placed in. “Category I” contained fifty-eight names. “Category II” contain seventy-four names. The list was revision of an original list prepared by “Headquarters” in February 1952. (Accessed from National Security Archive: George Washington University- Accessed 15 January 2014.)

²⁷ The final destination of the telegraph sent to the CIA Station was redacted. It can be assumed from the information available that the CIA Station in question was in the surrounding region of Guatemala. The CIA had active stations in both Nicaragua and Honduras which could also have be the final destination. Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-01025A, Box 145, Folder 12. Secret; Priority.

Officials compiled a list of essential personnel who would need to be eliminated if the anti-communist coup was going to succeed. The list was comprised of fifty eight Guatemalans who were put into “Category I” and seventy four Guatemalans who were placed in “Category II.”²⁸ In a telegraph on 29 January, the CIA station chief suggested an additional sixteen communist sympathizers be added if the coup d’état was successful.²⁹ These individuals were to be incarcerated immediately. However the chief of station doubted whether the new government could be in control for long unless these individuals were deported. ³⁰

After gaining support within the State Department, Smith approved the plan and began to initiate PBFORTUNE to aid Guatemalan exiles in overthrowing Arbenz. However, planning for PBFORTUNE lasted only a month. The Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, asked Smith to suspend the operation indefinitely effective immediately in October 1952 after discovering that certain portions of the operation had been leaked. Nicaraguan President Somoza leaked information that he and the

Information also seen in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Retrospective Volume, Guatemala, Document 5.*

²⁸ All names on the list have been redacted but there are fifty eight blacked out spaces in Category 1 and seventy four in Category 2.

²⁹ Taken from CIA documents on PBFORTUNE. Cable from Washington to unknown recipient, 29 January 1952. The recipient of the cable was blacked on the document. Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-01025A, Box 145, Folder 12. Secret;

³⁰ Taken from CIA documents on PBFORTUNE. Cable from Washington to unknown recipient, 29 January 1952. The recipient of the cable was blacked on the document.

CIA were involved in planning to support rebellious operations in Guatemala directly and that led to the cancellation of PBFORTUNE.³¹ The suspension of PBFORTUNE directly coincides with the U.S. government's desire for total deniability and complete anonymity. With damaging information potentially undermining the secrecy of the operation, the United States was unwilling to launch such a delicate operation. The State Department maintained its unwillingness to sanction any U.S. military operation in Guatemala.

Despite the cancellation of PBFORTUNE, intelligence and threat assessments were still being gathered on the region and specifically Guatemala. When PBFORTUNE was officially terminated, intelligence agencies continued to have reports of planning and operations being undertaken. HUMINT, or Human Intelligence, continued to receive both confirmed and unconfirmed reports of assassination planning by opposition leaders in Guatemala.³² The agent codenamed SEEKFORD was still actively gathering intelligence in the region and continued to maintain relationships with various contacts. In one verified report from November 1952, after having several conversations with Castillo Armas, SEEKFORD confirmed that special assassination groups codenamed "K" groups had been assembled.³³ The

³¹ Immerman, 120-122.

³² HUMINT or Human Intelligence refers to intelligence gathered, acquired, or disseminated by a human source.

mission of these “K” groups was to terminate all leading political officials and military leaders who were contained on the hit-list given to the “K” groups. In another report on 12 December, SEEKFORD reported that Castillo Armas fully intended on making these “K” groups fully operational and deploy the “K” groups to carry out these missions. HUMINT sources also confirmed that Nicaraguan, Honduran, and Salvadorian soldiers could potentially disguise themselves in civilian clothing and infiltrate Guatemala in order to eliminate specific communist leaders.³⁴

While PBFORTUNE may have been cancelled, the general blue-print and plan for future covert clandestine and irregular warfare operations for eliminating communist personnel in Guatemala was already formed. The conclusions reached on PBFORUTNE were that Guatemala would have to undergo dramatic and considerable changes before the environment would be suitable to implement an operation of this magnitude.

When Dwight D. Eisenhower took office in January 1953, the situation in Guatemala reflected the escalation of tensions between the United States and Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union and communism expanding globally, the United States

³³ Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be Disposed of During Military Operation of CALLIGERIS,” (Castillo Armas) 18 September 1952, Box 134.

³⁴ Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be Disposed of During Military Operation of CALLIGERIS,” (Castillo Armas) 18 September 1952, Box 134.

desired complete control over its sphere of influence within Latin America.³⁵ With a new president came a new administration. John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State while his brother Allen Dulles became the new Director of Central Intelligence.³⁶ Eisenhower's immediate foreign policy focused on the external foreign and security policies of other states.³⁷ Eisenhower's overall strategy did not pay significant interest to the Third World except to defend U.S. credibility or to ensure that particular states, like Guatemala, did not fall under communist control.³⁸

On 18 March 1953, the National Security Council met in Washington, D.C., to discuss the foreign relations policies of the United States government. The goal of the Council was to identify the interests in specific regions and remedy the shortcomings of the Truman policies.³⁹ The Council laid out the objectives and potential courses of action with respect to Latin America.⁴⁰ The Council hypothesized that the trend in

³⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower was a five star general in the United States Army. He earned the rank of General of the Army. He was formerly the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Europe in World War II.

³⁶ Barrett, 23.

³⁷ Elizabeth Nathan Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2011), 52.

³⁸ Saunders, 54. Richard Immerman defined Eisenhower as having a concrete set of ideals and beliefs prior to ever running for president. Both Saunders and Immerman contend that these beliefs and ideas were developed during his time in the Philippines, his various commands in the military including Supreme Allied Commander as well as his experiences concerning the policies of nations he was in.

³⁹ Eisenhower sent his brother, Milton Eisenhower to investigate the situation in Latin America and to testify about the short comings of the previous administration. It was Milton Eisenhower who reported that Guatemala had "already succumbed to Communist infiltration." See Immerman, 133.

⁴⁰ NSC 144/1 was a Top Secret "Statement of Policy by the National Security Council." The policy covered twenty countries dubbed "The American Republics."

Latin America was that of growing support for nationalistic regimes maintained in part by appeals to the general population.⁴¹ Responsively, the objectives coincided with the goal of safeguarding the hemisphere from both internal and external aggressions.⁴² Specific emphasis was put on reducing and eliminating communist and anti-U.S. subversion within Latin America.⁴³

The State Department and the CIA continued to monitor the situation in Guatemala. The primary agenda pushed for by the Agency was to eliminate key figures in prominent positions within Guatemalan society and the government. Secondary options such as sabotage, defection, infiltration and propaganda efforts within Guatemala were also being explored.⁴⁴ During this time, an active psychological warfare campaign was undertaken directed out of Guatemala City.⁴⁵

⁴¹ National Security Council, NSC 144/1. *United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Latin America*. Documents obtained from the Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, The American Republics, Volume 4, Document 3. www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d3 (Accessed 1 Mar 2018, 1420)

⁴² DCI Dulles received information from the Board of National Estimates on 22 April 1954, that “the Communists were now effectively control the political life of Guatemala” (Barrett, 23.) Taken from ADDI Diary, 12 December 1952; Harold Bull to Dulles, 22 April 1954; In CIA Declassified Reference Materials (CIA/DRM), Box 185, National Archives.

⁴³ National Security Council, NSC 144/1. *United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Latin America*.

⁴⁴ Originally from a memorandum, “Purposed Course of Action If Plan is Not Continued in Present Form.” Haines has this memorandum listed as undated, probably 1953, Box 154 (S).

⁴⁵ Guatemala City or Ciudad de Guatemala is the capital of Guatemala. Founded in 1776, is the political, cultural and economic centre of Guatemala Central Intelligence Agency used Guatemala City as a center of operation for planning and conducting covert and overt missions.

Beginning on 15 April 1953 and continuing for thirty days, the CIA station in Guatemala City began to send out “death notice” cards to all leading communists in Guatemala. They repeated the same operation again beginning on 15 June 1953. There were no reported reactions by any Communist leaders that received the notices.⁴⁶

Eisenhower had only been in office for six months prior to preparation for the overthrow of the Arbenz government and it is unclear exactly how much operational knowledge Eisenhower had of the situation prior to his election.⁴⁷

Policymakers as well as the CIA were scrambling to come up with a viable solution to dealing with the Arbenz government and perceived communist problems in Guatemala. ⁴⁸ On 12 August 1953, a Strategy Board was convened and approved the exploration of operations concerning Guatemala. Within two weeks after the initial meeting, Guatemala was given the highest priority among U.S. initiatives.⁴⁹ Allen

⁴⁶ Haines, 3-4.

⁴⁷ Immerman, 133. Richard Immerman argues that it is unclear exactly how much knowledge and intelligence Eisenhower had of the situation in Guatemala. However Stephan Streeter’s work, *Managing the Counterrevolution: United States and Guatemala, 1954-1961*, explains that Eisenhower and his administration had a firm grasp on situation in Guatemala. Eisenhower did not simply pass off matters of foreign affair to his Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who had first hand knowledge of Guatemala through his dealings with the UFCO and Ubico. Rather he was very active and a part of planning the long term goal for Guatemala.

⁴⁸ Immerman, 133.

⁴⁹ John Prados, *Safe For Democracy: Secret Wars of the CIA*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dec 2009), 107.

Foster Dulles gave the responsibility of Guatemala to a young CIA member, C. Tracy Barnes.⁵⁰

The first key meeting on the Guatemala operation took place “around Labor Day” 1953 in Frank Wisner’s office.⁵¹ The meeting’s attendees comprised Wisner, Barnes and J.C. King of the Western Hemisphere Division. The purpose was to go over all existing intelligence networks and operations in Central America. The “man in Guatemala,” Carlos Castillo Armas, had already been recruited and immediately faced significant obstacles. Castillo Armas’ overall position was weak. He did not command any military force, possessed few assets outside the country, and even fewer within the country. Additionally, his entire plan was centered around gaining popular support within the country which would further weaken the Guatemalan government’s position.⁵²

Allen Dulles became the executive agent over PBSUCCESS. The overall plan was based on the intelligence that the Guatemala army was a poorly trained, ill-

⁵⁰ Specializing in Law, C. Tracy Barnes was described as one of the CIA’s “Ivy Clique.” The “Ivy Clique” also included another important person in the Guatemala development, Frank Bissell. He received his undergraduate degree from Yale. He worked extensively for Allen Dulles in World War II. Barnes was a member of the Office of Strategic Services, OSS, twice parachuting into France to work with French Resistance. He received the Silver Star and two French Croix de Guerres (one with Palm and one with Star). Prados, 108.

⁵¹ Theoharis, Athan G., *The Central Intelligence Agency: Security Under Scrutiny* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2006), 108. Frank Wisner was head of the Office of Strategic Operations during World War II in southeast Europe from 1944 to 1945. Immediately after the war, he became the Deputy Director of Plans (DDP) in charge of the Directorate of Plans of the CIA from August 1951 to 1 January 1959.

⁵² Prados, 109.

equipped force of no more than seven thousand soldiers. When the plan for PBSUCCESS was created, the so-called “September 11 paper,” it immediately went to Director Dulles for approval.⁵³ The paper called for an operation led by the CIA coordinating an “overall-plan of combined overt and covert action of major proportions.”⁵⁴ The Directorate of Operations estimated that the operation would require \$2.74 million, rounded to \$ 3million by the Directorate, to execute. The stated objective of PBSUCCESS was “to remove covertly, and without bloodshed if possible, the menace of the present Communist-controlled government of Guatemala.”⁵⁵ Eisenhower’s policies towards limiting U.S. defense spending and capabilities for conventional ground warfare suggest a shift towards utilizing more covert operations. He favored these types of operations because they appeared to offer a relatively quick, cheap fix.⁵⁶ These operations aimed to use indigenous personnel and institutions that already existed or could easily be reinstalled so that no significant building or rebuilding of domestic institutions would be required.⁵⁷

The plan was to be executed in three phases. First, a propaganda campaign would be launched in Guatemala aimed at undermining the loyalty towards President

⁵³ It is important to note that the United Fruit Company, who was a principle supporter of some type of intervention in Guatemala, wanted no part in any future action taken against Guatemala.

⁵⁴ Prados, 109.

⁵⁵ Gerald K. Haines, Central Intelligence Agency Staff Analysis: *CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals 1952-1954*. June 1995 (Declassified documents obtained as part of the National Security Archives of George Washington University).

⁵⁶ Saunders, 54.

⁵⁷ Saunders, 54-55.

Arbenz. Simultaneously, the second phase would be an incursion of CIA trained dissidents and mercenaries led by Castillo Armas. The third phase would be the psychological warfare phase. A CIA air force would drop bombs, leaflets and other propaganda material while the CIA radio station would broadcast false battle reports, sounds of battle and casualty reports.⁵⁸

Due to the top-secret and compartmentalization of the operation, only specific individuals were given the plan to read. Dulles looked over the operation but he also included the deputy director of Central Intelligence and Air Force General Charles P. Cabell. Additionally, Wisner was to draft a memorandum to use with the Bureau of the Budget to obtain the funds needed.⁵⁹ The memorandum needed to contain only the necessary information required to receive the funds, the true nature of the operation was to remain top-secret. On 18 September, another key meeting was held, only this time in Allen Dulles's office. On hand were all of the key personnel involved, including General Cabell, Frank Wisner, Tracy Barnes, Kermit Roosevelt and J.C. King. Also present was CIA's Senior Analyst Sherman Kent and Barnes' newly appointed chief of operations Hans V. Tofte. ⁶⁰

J.C. King briefed the group on the obstacles and measures that would need to be taken for the ground portion of PBSUCCESS to succeed. King gave a thorough

⁵⁸ Prados, 109-110.

⁵⁹ Prados, 111.

⁶⁰ Prados, 111.

briefing covering the CIA stations in Central America, action required to build up the necessary networks, the psychological warfare components needed and the personnel that would need to be shifted. Diplomatic pressure needed to be applied against the Arbenz government and would require a strong CIA compatible ambassador. Additionally, other key diplomatic personnel would need to be relocated from other areas into countries where CIA operatives would be working. The State Department decided that the new Guatemala station chief would be John Doherty, codenamed “Tranger.”⁶¹

In order for the logistical and military portion of the operation to be a success, several countries would also need to be utilized leading up to and during the operation. In Honduras the agency would build forward operation bases. These bases would house the “black” radio station and specific air bases. Additionally Honduras would be the location for the training center of Castillo Armas and his forces.⁶² Cooperation between diplomats and CIA assets was also a crucial factor. The cooperation between the CIA and the State Department was most important in Nicaragua. Nicaragua would be the location of both ground and air bases. It was vital that the CIA and Nicaraguan government work in tandem throughout the entire campaign. Fortunately for the CIA, Castillo Armas had long maintained ties with the

⁶¹ Prados, 111.

⁶² Haines, 4.

leadership in Nicaragua which he would refer to when speaking with the United States as “friends to the North.”⁶³

Once Dulles gave his approval and began the allocation of the funds needed, Wisner was tasked with selecting a field commander for PBSUCCESS. He chose to recall former army colonel and Korea Station Chief Albert Haney. The colonel had CIA guerilla units in Korea and similar irregular forces would be required for the paramilitary portion of the Guatemala operation. Haney accepted the position in late October 1953 and immediately left for Opa Locka, Florida. Opa Locka was codenamed “Lincoln” and serve as the main forward base for the operation. Haney held general supervision over all CIA chiefs in the countries being utilized plus direct control of the forces used in PBSUCCESS. Haney then used the psydonym “Jerome B. Dunbar” for the operation. Dulles would later order that all communications and cables relating to the operation be directed to Lincoln for Dunbar. ⁶⁴

When Haney assumed command of the operation, he had many difficulties that required immediate rectification, some of which came from within the CIA itself. The director of their Western Hemisphere Division was a counter-intelligence person as well but was from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) not the military. Joseph Caldwell King, the man who had formal control of the station, , was not a supporter of PBSUCCESS. King’s personal opinion was that the operation was completely

⁶³ Prados, 112.

⁶⁴ Prados, 113.

foolish and he did not want this operation to deprive him of any personnel. It would be up to Haney's deputy, Jacob Esterline, to maintain peace and cooperation between the two men as well as the other departments that would be involved. Station Lincoln opened a few days before Christmas 1953.⁶⁵

While assassinations were not specifically mentioned in the general overall plan, a high-ranking branch "chief" requested a special paper on the "liquidation of personnel" on 5 January 1954. The paper would be used by senior officers to brief the operational training chief for PBSUCCESS prior to his departure to link up and beginning training Castillo Armas' irregular forces in Honduras on 10 January 1954. The following day a cable dispatch sent to the CIA requested twenty silencers for .22 caliber rifles. ⁶⁶ The silencers shipped the following day. Three days later, the same chief who requested the assassination papers met with SEEKFORD to discuss the training plan for Castillo Armas and PBSUCCESS indicated that another officer should be sent to train two assassins for the operation.⁶⁷

While the paramilitary and psychological portions of PBSUCCESS contained proposals of assassination and proposed individuals for assassination, none of the proposals ever appeared to be implemented. Certain branch chiefs and members of

⁶⁵ Prados, 113.

⁶⁶ Haines, 4-5.

⁶⁷ These "assassination specialist" were discussed again on 3 February 1954.

LINCOLN had wanted to use the “K” groups in the operational setup; however, there was no support from the State Department or the White House. During weekly status meetings of PBSUCCESS there were continual discussions about eliminating specific Guatemalan high ranking leaders.⁶⁸ Operation officials, agency officers and State Department representatives had been instructed that these type of assassinations and eliminations were included in the master plan and able to be carried out at a moments notice, but in the interest of the operation it would be better to reassess the assassination option at a later time should it be needed.⁶⁹

Individuals selected for disposal had to meet a given set a criteria. Officers revised and updated the prospective target list on 31 March. In order to qualify for “disposal,” an individual needed first to be a high government or organizational figure “irrevocably in Communist doctrine and policy.” Second, the United States government had to confirm that the individual in question was a communist. The third condition was that to ensure the success of the military action any individual in key government position whose removal would benefit psychological, organizational or “other reasons” be considered for “disposal.”⁷⁰ Disposal did not mean execution; the

⁶⁸ Discussions about potential targets for marginalization were at various meetings but the date 9 March 1954 is specifically mentioned in Haines’ work.

⁶⁹ Haines, 6.

⁷⁰ Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group. Dated 31 March 1954*

final list consisted of two categories.⁷¹ Individuals deemed Category I were selected to be executed, while Category II was defined as imprisonment or exile.⁷² A “tentative” agreement was established that any assassinations that were to happen would take place during the actual invasion by Castillo Armas’ forces.⁷³

Before the operation could move out of the developmental stage, a major security breach had to be dealt with. In January 1954, an associate of Castillo-Armas who was utilized as a courier named Jorge Delgado gave Arbenz and the Guatemalan government copies of communications between Castillo-Armas and other important individuals including Nicaraguan President Somoza. This went on for several months and Delgado’s access to sensitive material made this even more problematic. Delgado was present on 12 January 1954 when the first CIA “black” aircraft landed in Nicaragua with weapons and supplies. With the information he provided, Guatemalan police arrested the person responsible for being the liaison between Castillo-Armas and the internal Guatemalan resistance. The Arbenz government immediately presented all of the Delgado materials to the Organization of American States and

⁷¹ The 31 March list was the final revision of Guatemalan Communist personnel selected for “disposal.”

⁷² Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group. Dated 31 March 1954, Attachment 2.*

⁷³ Haines, 6.

other Central American governments condemning any and all United States intervention.⁷⁴

The CIA immediately began damage control as they made Delgado out to be a fabricator and a liar who wanted to sow unrest. Castillo-Armas was recalled to Station Lincoln to meet with CIA operatives where he adamantly denied that his organization was the source of the leak. Meanwhile, the United States Ambassador to Guatemala John Peurifoy, kept political pressure on the Guatemalan government. He told a reporter for *Time Magazine* that “public opinion” in the United States might “force” actions “to prevent Guatemala from falling into the lap of international Communism.”⁷⁵

Eisenhower and his administration had a potential problem unfolding in Guatemala that might require immediate action by the United States. Shipments of armaments had begun arriving in Guatemala from Czechoslovakia, a satellite of the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ As a result of clandestine negotiations, Guatemala was able to procure weapons and ammunitions from the Soviet-satellite country of Czechoslovakia. The negotiations for the armament purchase were held in Prague

⁷⁴ Organization of American States is a collection of countries within the Americas. The goal was to allow for a platform for The first International Conference of American States was held in Washington D.C. in October 1889 for the “purpose of discussing and recommending for adoption to their respective Governments some plan of arbitration for the settlement of disagreements and disputes that may arise between them.” (www.oas.org/en/about/our_history.asp– access 25 Feb 2018); Prados, 113-114.

⁷⁵ Prados, 114.

⁷⁶ Immerman, 158-159.

from 21 January to 9 February 1954 between Major Alfonso Martinez, personal representative of President Arbenz, and the high level officials of the Czechoslovakian government.⁷⁷ At the same time, steps were taken towards establishing diplomatic relations between the Guatemalan and the Czechoslovakian government overseen by Jose Manuel Fortuny. Fortuny, Secretary General of the Guatemalan Communist Party (PGT), was sent to Moscow two months before the negotiations and only returned home after the deal for the armaments was secured.⁷⁸

According to CIA records, neither the captain nor the crew of the *Alfhem* knew either the final destination or the contents of their cargo. Their suspicions of what was in the cargo grew once they saw the dimensions of the cases and the strength of the packaging. Their suspicions were confirmed when the *Alfhem* was met by Guatemalan military officers. Just hours before making port, the captain was told by the Guatemalans that his destination was the port of Puerto Barrios, Guatemala. The financial transactions were routed through various banks and entities. Great efforts were taken to conceal the logistics of this mission through false manifests and mislabeled crates and the Guatemalan military took every precaution to ensure the cargo would remain secure. Despite the lengths taken to conceal the cargo, details

⁷⁷ Although he bore a military title, Martinez had no relation to the Guatemalan government and did not take orders from them. His official post was as the Chief of the National Agrarian Department. *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 23-Jan 1954*. Page Central Intelligence Agency Declassified Documents released under CIA Historical Review Program "Release As Sanitized." (Elements of the document have been redacted) www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000921353.pdf (Accessed 1-Mar 2018)

⁷⁸ *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 23 Jan 1954*.

became known. The shipment itself consisted of mortars, howitzers, grenades, landmines, machine guns, automatic rifles and other military items. The CIA believed that the amount of weapons and munitions far exceeded any foreseeable Guatemalan need for national defense or internal structures such as police or government agencies.

79

When the ship finally docked in Puerto Barrios on or about 15 May, there was a substantial increase in the number of police and soldiers throughout the port. The Guatemalans tried to ensure security for their “innocuous cargo of machinery,” however the amount of security present at the time of the *Alfham*’s arrival made that nearly impossible. At any given time, there were twenty to thirty guards to ensure no unauthorized personnel had access to any area around the ship. All military personnel were moved to provide protection during the off-loading of weapons and subsequent transport via rail. Any United States attaché or personnel were kept under constant surveillance.⁸⁰

The ship was welcomed into port by the Guatemalan Minister of Defense, General Manager of the International Railways of Central America (IRCA). No manifests or bills of sale were presented to the general manager, as is normal for such a vessel. The first railcars loaded with munitions left Puerto Barrios on 16 May. Unloading of the munitions and weapons was completed on 23 May 1954. According

⁷⁹ *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 24 Jan 1954.*

⁸⁰ *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 24 Jan 1954.*

to CIA sources present at the unloading, the weapons were reconditioned Soviet-models of varying caliber and type but seemed to be in excellent condition. The same source confirmed that the weapons were accompanied with a large supply of spare parts. The CIA concluded that the amount of weapons and munitions would be able to last the Guatemalan army for “the next ten to fifteen years.”⁸¹ However, all the arms and weaponry were obsolete and deficient in comparison to those of the United States. The CIA believed that the Guatemalans would continue to seek more armaments and maintained surveillance over suspected vessels carrying weapons from that point forward.⁸²

While the Soviet Union guaranteed that only a third of the armaments would remain in Guatemala, the United States and the Eisenhower administration had no way of confirming that no more armaments would make it to Guatemala or other Latin American countries where Communists were active. Intelligence and information about the growth of Communist subversion in Latin America became clearer to the United States. ⁸³ All the pieces were now in place for a confrontation between Guatemala and the United States.

⁸¹ *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 24 Jan 1954.*

⁸² The CIA document cites various sources and personnel involved including itineraries for key individuals. *Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 24 Jan 1954.*

⁸³ Immerman, 158-159.

CHAPTER III

The Successful Failure: Operation PBSUCCESS

In the months after Eisenhower was elected, the situation in Guatemala had changed. President Jacobo Arbenz expropriated even more lands from the UFCO in defiance of protest of the acquisitions by the United States. Arbenz also passed legislation that legalized the Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo¹ (PGT, formally the Guatemalan Communist Party) and suppressed the anti-communist uprising.² The immediate objective of the party was to continue their push into the leftist-nationalist government and dominate the more radical intellectual circles of the country.³ The PGT desired to further influence “progressive” Guatemalan political groups towards

¹ With government support, the Communist group encouraged and organized popular feeling against the United Fruit Company during the labor disputes in 1951.

²Gerald K. Haines, Central Intelligence Agency Staff Analysis: *CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals 1952-1954*. June 1995 (Declassified documents obtained as part of the National Security Archives of George Washington University), 4.

³ United States Department of State, *Communism in the Free World: Capabilities of the Communist Policy, Guatemala* (p57). Accessed 1 October 2018. www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54Guat/d33.

extreme agrarian and educational reform. They also sought to intensify the growing nationalist resentment and dissatisfaction towards US private interests in Guatemala as well as portray US foreign policy as the instrument of “imperialist warmongering.”⁴

For Eisenhower, two main principles shaped his foreign policy. First, communism could not be allowed to expand. Second, capitalism must not go bankrupt trying to combat communism. As much as Eisenhower was obsessed with containing communism, he feared that capitalists would ruin their system by spending too much on defense. The president warned that those communists might be correct in their assumption that capitalism was too selfish. Capitalists were too willing to spend and profit later at the cost of long term interests, eventually destroying any free market system. Eisenhower was worried that a militarized U.S. economy “would either drive us to war- or into some form of dictatorial government.”⁵ Eisenhower was under constant pressure from Congress and private corporations for increased military spending. Instead, Eisenhower sought a cheaper and more practical way to contain communism.⁶

⁴ United States Department of State, *Communism in the Free World: Capabilities of the Communist Policy, Guatemala* (p57). Accessed 1 October 2018. www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54Guat/d33.

⁵ Eisenhower, because of his time in the military, greatly feared over spending and going to war over communism.

⁶ Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: US Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), 540.

In mid-1953, Eisenhower and his top advisors met to work out a policy dubbed Operation SOLARIUM.⁷ The group came up with three different plans of containment. The first was continued containment largely through conventional means. The second was to threaten the Soviet Union with nuclear retaliation if the Soviets tried to take anymore territory. The last option was using unconventional, economic and propaganda campaigns against the Soviets. Instead of fighting expensive and unpopular conventional wars, Eisenhower chose to use containment and the threat of nuclear weapons against the Soviets.⁸ In Eisenhower's eyes, conventional operations against Guatemala were completely out of the questions. He would need to rely on unconventional warfare against Guatemala.

In early 1954, the CIA was planning and assembling teams that would be designated as "K" groups. The first two "K" groups would be tasked with sabotage and harassment while the other two "K" groups would specialize and perform assassinations. The main mission of these sabotage teams (also designated "harassment teams") was to attack local communists and communist's property but to

⁷ Operation SOLARIUM was given code designation simply because the meeting took place in the White House sun room.

⁸LaFeber, *The American Age*, 540.

avoid attacks on the Guatemalan army.⁹ Intelligence packets were distributed to Castillo Armas' troops, codenamed CALLEGERIS, in the spring of 1954.¹⁰

In selecting an assassin, special considerations needed to be made in regards to the qualities of the assassin. A clandestine agent must possess determination, courage, intelligence, and resourcefulness. Most importantly, the candidate must not be morally squeamish. If the assassin was to utilize special equipment during the clandestine operation, he or she would need to be highly skilled with this equipment. The assassins would need to blend into their environment completely and have minimal contact with the target prior to the operation. The instructions were to be given only orally by one person to the assassin. Ideally, the same person who was instructing and giving orders to the assassin would cover the assassin's withdraw and evacuation once the target had been eliminated. Assassinations could be used in resistance situations as a "counter reprisal" against the government or groups who have taken hostile action against innocent civilians. ¹¹

The psychological parameters of the assassins would vary depending on the mission but the general guideline had been established for those who were deemed to

⁹ Haines, 5.

¹⁰ Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group.* Dated 31 March 1954.

¹¹ *Training File of PBSUCCESS* (Undated) Job-79-01025A, Box-73, Folder 4. There are no page numbers on these documents.

be the best candidates. The techniques that were described in PBSUCCESS training documents detail that “assassination is an extreme measure not normally used in clandestine operations.”¹² These assassins were trained in various ways to kill their target; their primary objective was the death of their target. “Accidents” were deemed the most effective technique for elimination: a fall from seventy-five feet or higher onto a hard surface, or down an elevator shafts, stair wells, at opened windows, or off of bridges were also effective. Other methods such as drowning, automobile crashes, arson, train and alcohol induced accidents were also described under the “Accident” portion of the file.¹³

In war, there is a psychological component that must be utilized to the fullest in order to cause chaos in the country in which military action is going to take place. In conjunction with the operational information in PBFORTUNE before it was terminated, a rigorous psychological warfare campaign was conducted in parallel with the paramilitary operation. Using a network of anti-communists dissidents, agents at LINCOLN developed a major propaganda campaign to discredit and harass the Arbenz government. In addition, agents continued to use the model that had been setup during PBFORTUNE; they began sending “mourning cards” to various high

¹² *Training File of PBSUCCESS* (Undated) Job-79-01025A, Box-73, Folder 4.

¹³ *Training File of PBSUCCESS* (Undated) Job-79-01025A, Box-73, Folder 4. Drug overdose and poisoning were also discussed but only contained a small section. But it is important to mention that the information was available and described to these assassins.

ranking Communist agents forewarning them of the eminent purge or execution.¹⁴

The psychological campaign in Guatemala City also included sending wooden coffins, hangman's nooses, and fake explosive devises to selected individual's homes. Also included were slogans painted on the houses such as "Here Lives A Spy" and "You Have Only 5 Days."¹⁵

The primary goal of this psychological campaign was not to kill but to scare their targets. LINCOLN believed in undermining and causing chaos within Guatemala as well as destroying moral without mass bloodshed. The purpose was to essentially destroy the usefulness of the person without having to eliminate the person all together. LINCOLN reinforced this objective by turning down repeated requests by the dissident leader to allow him to put together a covert group to carry out "violent disposal" of key communist members in Guatemala (See Figure 3.1). LINCOLN did, however, reaffirm the possibility that such actions could potentially be carried out in the future and could remain a potential option later in the conflict.

¹⁴ Later files, memorandums, cables and intelligence packets would evolve on the frame work of PBFORTUNE, making PBFORTUNE the initial starting point for future covert operations for eliminating personnel in Guatemala.

¹⁵ Haines, 5.



Figure 3.1: Castillo Armas forces being trained in Honduras¹⁶

Individuals selected for disposal had to meet a given set a criteria. Officers revised and updated the prospective target list on 31 March. In order to qualify for “disposal,” an individual needed first to be a high government or organizational figure “irrevocably in Communist doctrine and policy.” Second the United States government had to confirm that the individual in question was a communist. The third condition was the person should be in a government position whose removal would

¹⁶ Image taken from <http://posthegemony.blogspot.com/2006/11/coup.html>

benefit psychological, organizational or “other reasons.”¹⁷ The 31 March list was the final revision of Guatemalan Communist personnel selected for “disposal.” A “tentative” agreement was established that any assassinations that were to happen would take place during the actual invasion of Castillo Armas’ forces.¹⁸

In the weeks that followed the betrayal by Delgado in January 1954, the United States was forced to do immense damage control, both to the operational integrity of *PBSUCCESS* and to its image abroad. The Guatemalan Foreign Ministry rounded up numerous personnel suspected of being involved. It expelled *New York Times* correspondent Sydney Gruson, CBS correspondent Marshall Bannell, and several other United States journalists and a priest.¹⁹ Frank Wisner and J.C King met immediately to discuss the damage and decide whether to continue or to abort the operation. The conclusion was reached that the intelligence breach “unquestionably has provided the enemy with adequate information to deduce the official support of the US Government in Castillo Armas’s operation plus considerable details concerned

¹⁷ Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group. Dated 31 March 1954.*

¹⁸ Haines, 6.

¹⁹ Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala 1952-1954*. Center for the Study of Intelligence (Central Intelligence Agency, Washington D.C., 1994) 38. Portions of Cullather’s work were redacted by the CIA, blocking specific names and details. Much of the information collected comes from specific cables or letters sent between various agents or entities involved as well as operational documents that have since been redacted or omitted.

therewith.”²⁰ However, the decision was made that the United States was past the point of no return and to press on with the operation. (See Figure 3.2)



Figure 3.2: Map of the Invasion of Guatemala, 1954.²¹

With operational intelligence leaked to Arbenz, senior-officials within the PBSUCCESS hierarchy worried of foreign sympathy and intervention. Mexico had always maintained an interest in Guatemala and its democracy. The Mexican

²⁰ Director to LINCOLN, DIR 36511, 30 January 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 7. (Cullather, 38.)

²¹ Gleijeses, 325.

government, run then by Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, had strong ties of friendship to Arbenz.²² In 1953, Cortines awarded the Great Necklace of Aztec Eagle, the highest honor that can be bestowed to a foreign dignitary, to Arbenz. Officials worried that while Mexico had previously caved to US pressures towards Guatemala, this time Mexico would react strongly against any action. The overt response that could be taken by the United States had to be limited and it was paramount to maintain deniability.²³

Arbenz released copies of all of the documents and materials concerning PBSUCCESS but the international press and the skeptical worldwide public dismissed the accusations as a political ploy to garner favor for Guatemala. The American press followed suit accepting the US State Department's delineation of the charges being nothing more than an elaborate propaganda stunt.²⁴ The widespread acceptance by the general public led to even more condemnation and a greater push by the American press for action against Guatemala. Newspapers and broadcast networks gave even more credence to the opinion by airing and publishing stories about the dangers that were lurking in America's backyard. In early spring of 1954, the National Broadcast Company (NBC) aired a documentary "Red Rule in

²² Cullather, 33.

²³ John Stephens Zunes, *Decisions on Intervention: United States Response to Third World Nationalist Governments, 1950-1957*. (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1990), 66-67.

²⁴ Gleijeses, 260-262.

Guatemala” portraying the Arbenz government as a significant threat to the Panama Canal.²⁵ Publications like *Reader’s Digest*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Chicago Tribune* released articles depicting Communist Guatemala as an ever growing threat to America.

Reader’s Digest preached that Guatemala had become a Soviet colony, and that Soviet intelligence agents filled Guatemala City and were busily establishing military installations from which to threaten not only the region but the United States.²⁶ Every publication within the “liberal-conservative arc” vehemently dismissed the accusations that the United States was plotting against the Arbenz government. *The New York Times*, which harshly criticized the Guatemalan government for the expulsion of Gruson and Bannell, published an editorial lecturing the Guatemalan president. The article stated that “the Guatemalan Government could help itself and the whole hemisphere by being less sensitive and less prone to carrying a chip on its shoulder... it is fighting a ghost of the dead past, resurrected only in the imagination of extreme nationalists and Communists.”²⁷

Despite acquiring intelligence about the operation and openly accusing the United States of plotting, Arbenz had failed to capitalize on the situation. His accusations in January 1954 only increased anxiety among the Guatemalan public and

²⁵ Cullather, 39.

²⁶ Michael Scully, “Red Ruin for Guatemala?”, *Reader’s Digest*, December 1953, 25-30.

²⁷ “Guatemalan Reforms.” *The New York Times*, 9 February 1954, p 26. Accessed 17 October 2018. www.nytimes.com/1954/02/09/archives/guatemalan-reforms.html

caused many within his country to believe this was a pretext to assuming a dictatorship. He failed to turn his international accusations into diplomatic success. Arbenz's hope of using the meetings of the Organization of American States (OAS) in March in Caracas to lodge formal charges against the United States were ruined by the preparations John Foster Dulles took prior to the meeting. Dulles traveled to the Tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas to lobby for a resolution condemning communism in Latin America.²⁸ Dulles gambled on the fact that the Latin American nation's main priority at the conference would be on economics and as such would yield on the issue of Guatemala in return for trade concessions and credit from the United States.²⁹ It paid off; despite the accusations and details Guatemala presented against the United States, the other countries were too preoccupied with their own economic issues to ally themselves with Guatemala. Arbenz and the PGT in Guatemala came to the realization that they were alone against the United States.³⁰ The OAS voted seventeen to one in favor of condemning communism in Guatemala.³¹ However, when Dulles asked for help from the OAS in taking action against Guatemala, they refused. Their decision was even more set in stone after Dulles

²⁸ Jeremy T. Gunn, *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion*. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009), 220.

²⁹ Immerman, 145.

³⁰ Gleijeses, 284.

³¹ Gunn, 219.

admitted it was “impossible to produce evidence clearly tying the Guatemalan Government to Moscow.”³²

Even with the security setbacks, the operational planning continued to gain momentum. Many of the security breaches came from within Castillo Armas’ own inner circle.³³ The general planning for the operation was complete, with some logistical and intelligence assets still being gathered. As of 7 April 1954, no date was given for the operation to actually begin. State Department officials pressed the issue of assassinations further saying that “more drastic and definitive steps” were needed to overthrow the Guatemalan government.³⁴ State Department officials and CIA officers were directly questioned as to the viability of Guatemala being “salvageable.” Their response was that it was no longer possible to salvage Guatemala and that certain individuals needed to be eliminated. On 17 April, the State Department and CIA gave “full green light” to PBSUCCESS.³⁵

LINCOLN and senior officials came to the conclusion that severing Arbenz from international communism and eventual removal would simply not suffice. Case

³² Walter LaFebar, *The America Age: U.S. Foreign Policy At Home And Abroad 1750 to Present* (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, NY, 1989), 547.

³³ Several of Castillo Armas associates failed polygraph tests regarding the security breaches. One US official (whose name was redacted) confessed that members of Castillo Armas group had taken classified documents containing irrefutable proof of United States involvement.

³⁴ The official designation for the date the operation would begin was given the codename “D-DAY.” Just like the original designation for OPERATION OVERLORD in 1944, this would mean that the military and paramilitary operations against Guatemala would begin on that date, D-DAY.

³⁵ Gunn, 220.

officers carefully laid out the goals of PBSUCCESS beginning with the replacement of Arbenz. Guatemalan politics required dramatic changes that would necessitate an authoritarian leader whose allegiance and compliance to United States' desires would be absolute. This new leader could then terminate the land reforms and implement total anti-communist policies. Planners foresaw an extended period of totalitarian rule at which time Guatemala would be dependent on US aid, trade and armaments.³⁶ Officials concluded that centralizing power around a single person created the danger of a Somoza-style dictatorship.³⁷ Instead of a single leader, a ruling committee or junta would manage the country for the immediate six months following the operation allowing for a moderate authoritarian leader to be selected.

The final plans consisted of three main areas of action: irregular, political and psychological operations. ³⁸ The overall preemptive psychological operations succeeded in presenting the Guatemalan government as a repressive regime, just as the United States wanted. Utilizing specific sabotage and assassinations, Arbenz would be presented as losing control of Guatemala to not only the general population but also to the military. But the more desired effect was to instill a sense of fear and impending doom on those forces that would attempt to stop the invasion. In essence,

³⁶ Cullather, 43.

³⁸ The Psychological portion of the campaign had begun in early 1953 with the radio, newspaper and false reports but operators at LINCOLN planted the seeds with the minds of the Guatemalans that an active underground resistance existed. The additional focus of the early campaign was to instill doubt, fear and a lack of faith in the leadership within the Guatemalan military.

the psychological campaign would soften the defense by using calculated raids and eliminations of strategic individuals of importance. In turn, this would cause fear to spread within the army and the communists within Guatemala potentially weakening it before the invasion, causing desertions from the military and increasing the likelihood of PGT members fleeing the country without having to kill them all.

Meanwhile, Castillo Armas and his forces were making final preparations for their part of the invasion. His irregular forces completed their initial training. It came to light that most of them could not read and could barely write. The American advisors in charge of training Castillo Armas complained that the rebel forces could not comprehend the technical concepts of tactical deployments. Castillo Armas was given credit for being bold but was regarded as an incompetent officer.

Major delays in the training, particularly in the training of radio operators, resulted in the date for the operation to be pushed back from May to sometime in June. Thirty-seven saboteurs graduated from training in April and thirty field officers graduated in May.³⁹ Each soldier involved in the operation was issued a rifle and ammunition. Since they would not have supply lines or reinforcements, the men would have to take whatever food and rations they could carry. Castillo Armas force was equipped for battle but would be without the support of armor or artillery.⁴⁰

³⁹ Gleijeses, 293.

⁴⁰ Callather, 52.

Even with all the planning and preparations done before the invasion, Castillo Armas' invasion force still faced a major obstacle once they entered Guatemala, the Guatemalan army. Prior to the invasion, the Guatemalan army consisted of approximately 6,200 soldiers, outnumbering Castillo Armas' force. United States intelligence briefings described the Guatemalan soldiers as poorly trained and ill-equipped with out-dated Soviet weapons. Its navy was comprised of various smaller ships and about one hundred and fifty men. While the Guatemalan military did possess an air-force, it lacked trained mechanics to maintain the planes and enough pilots to fully deploy them.⁴¹ Arbenz, a professional army officer, had left the armed forces of Guatemala virtually unchanged despite knowing of impending US intervention.⁴²

By early May 1954, PBSUCCESS was ready to begin putting sustained pressure on the Arbenz regime. Psychological warfare would be the primary method during the initial phase. Propaganda and the impending threat of US military power was designed to induce fear within the general public as well as the Guatemalan army. The propaganda, equipment and insurgent force were designed to maximize the psychological campaign not simply to function as a military force. Radio broadcasts throughout May, claiming to be speaking from "deep in the jungle," urged on people

⁴¹ Gleijeses, 198.

⁴² Michael Warner, *Lessons Unlearned: The CIA's Internal Probe of the Bay of Pigs Affair*. (www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol42no5/html) Accessed 22 Feb 2014. Unclassified document: Based on internal probe of the failed Bay of Pigs operation.

to support Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas and his forces of liberation.⁴³ Due to increased scrutiny from officials within Panama, a new broadcast station was established at a classified location in Nicaragua dubbed SHERWOOD. This new location increased the signal strength of the broadcast allowing messages to reach Guatemala City clearly where previously they only came through intermittently. ⁴⁴ On 1 May, SHERWOOD began broadcasting from Nicaragua to Guatemala.⁴⁵

At the same time SHERWOOD became operational the *Alfhem*, the Swedish freighter carrying the armaments from the Soviet-satellite Czechoslovakia, arrived in Puerto Barrios. Arbenz was cleverly able to evade the US State Department and the CIA's efforts to delay or stop the freighter. Unfortunately for the State Department and the Agency, they mistakenly believed the armaments were aboard another ship. SHERWOOD immediately sought to turn the tables and capitalize on the arrival of the armaments fearing that the new weapons could bridge the growing divide between Arbenz and the Guatemalan military. The Guatemalan military commanders had grown frustrated with Arbenz and his perceived lack of ability to lead the country. Broadcasts began throughout Guatemala City spreading the rumor that the weapons were not for the military but that Arbenz's actual intent was to arm labor unions and

⁴³ LINCOLN TO GUATEMALA STATION, LINC 2212, 29 April 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 4. (Cullather, 56) Exact document was taken from Cullather's sources as it was unable to be verified in digital form.

⁴⁴ Cullather, 38.

⁴⁵ Gunn, 220.

peasant militia for the communist cause.⁴⁶ Four successive sabotage teams were dispatched to destroy the shipment from Castillo Armas force. Of the four, three failed completely while the fourth only slightly damaged the train engine they were being transported with. During the fourth attempt, one of Castillo Armas insurgents and one Guatemalan soldier were killed. Before the *Alfham* arrived, there was still a chance that State Department officials could cancel the operation. Once the *Alfham* arrived, even the skeptics believed the Soviet and Guatemalan governments were fast becoming allies.⁴⁷

U.S. officials, especially CIA chief of clandestine operations Frank Wisner, were furious over the failed interception of the *Alfhem* by the U.S. Navy. In response, the U.S. Navy launched Operation HARDROCK BAKER on 24 May 1954, to blockade Guatemala. Submarines and surface warships intercepted and boarded every ship that entered Guatemalan waters. The intercepted ships were “forcefully searched” for contraband and weapons that could be used by the Arbenz regime.⁴⁸ American sailors even searched British and French ships, in violation of maritime national sovereignty agreements.⁴⁹ In correlation with the blockade, on 7 June 1954 a

⁴⁶ Gleijeses, 309. Cullather and Gleijeses suggest that the United States alerts the Army to the shipment but deemed it unlikely. Officials within the State Department and the CIA were completely shocked when the shipment arrive, believing they themselves could stop it without any help from the Army.

⁴⁷ Cullather, 61.

⁴⁸ Jerry Carrier, *Hard Right Turn: Assassination of the American Left- A History* (Algora Publishing, New York, NY, 2015), 151.

force consisting of five amphibious assault craft, a Marine helicopter assault battalion and aircraft carrier were sent to aid the blockage and support the impending invasion force.⁵⁰

By early June, the Arbenz regime began directly confronting any opposition against him within Guatemala. Civil liberties were suspended and any suspected “subversives” were detained. Those arrested were not kept in regular jails or prisons but rather transferred to military facilities for processing. In the first two weeks of June, 480 people were arrested, interrogated and many were tortured. By 14 June, an estimated 75 detainees were executed and buried in a mass-grave.⁵¹

Staging for the invasion began on 15 June. Castillo Armas’s force of 480 insurgents were divided into four teams and sent to launch points in the Honduran towns of Florida, Nueva Ocotepeque, Copan, and Macuelizo (See Figure 3.3). Prior to the initial invasion, ten trained saboteurs would be deployed across the country with various objectives ranging from destroying railroads, cutting telephone lines, blocking roadways and, most importantly, sowing fear and confusion throughout the entire country. Arriving at the border at midnight on 17 June, the four insurgent units were to make separate simultaneous penetrating incursions into Guatemala giving the

⁴⁹ Despite the flagrant disregard for established maritime agreements, the British and French did not protest or lodge any formal complaints. For reasons unknown, the British and French governments did not make any protests about the incidents.

⁵⁰ Carrier, 151-152.

⁵¹ Gleijeses, 283-286.

impression of a massive assault. Another reason for dividing Castillo Armas' clearly outnumbered troops was to avoid the entire assault force being destroyed in a single engagement.⁵² This maneuver would cause chaos and confusion within the Guatemalan military. With no conventional military force to engage in a single decisive battle, the Guatemalan troops would have no idea of where the main fighting actually was.

⁵² Cullather, 65.

Actual Invasion, Late June 1954

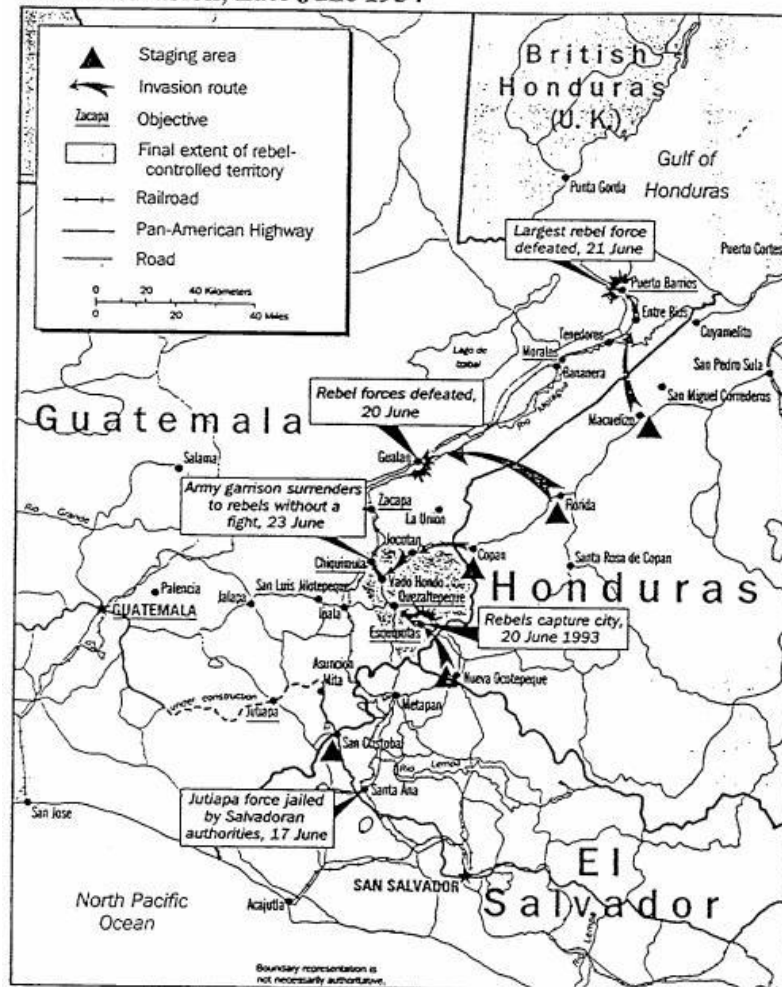


Figure 3.3 : Map of Guatemala Invasion 53

From a logistical perspective, PBSUCCESS had been set up to operate without supply lines. Initial supply drops of cargo, propaganda pamphlets and “bombing” runs were approved for 14 June.⁵⁴ However, this was not as detrimental as it would be for a large conventional force. In fact, it could be an advantage to Armas. His small force

⁵³ Map taken from the National Archives- <http://blogs.archives.gov/TextMessage/2012/02/13/the-cia-in-guatemala/> (Accessed 24-Feb 2014)

⁵⁴ Gunn, 220.

was outfitted with the same type of weapons and munitions that the Guatemalan army used. By using the same types of armaments, Castillo Armas forces could use the ammunition captured from the military or collected from fallen Guatemalan soldiers. Instead of relying on supply drops and supply lines to keep Castillo Armas' men fighting, they would be able to be self-sufficient while operating within a hostile territory making them a more versatile, mobile and potentially dangerous fighting force.⁵⁵

Each of the main assault groups had specific objectives. The largest force of 198 insurgents would cross the border near Macuelizo and attack the port city of Puerto Barrios.⁵⁶ A force of 122 insurgents staged at the town of Florida would assault the Guatemalan Army's largest frontier garrison at Zacapa. The third assault group would divide into two separate groups of 50 insurgents each to be commanded personally by Castillo Armas. The two groups would attack and capture the lightly defended border towns of Esquipulas, Quezaltepeque and Chiquimula. Once these towns were secure, the two assault groups would rejoin and march on the capital.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ The idea of utilizing the same weaponry as the force that is being fought against is one of the principle ideas of Che Guevara. Guevara would become an iconic leader of the irregular warfare campaign in Cuba that led to the establishment of Communism in Cuba. In order for an insurgent or irregular campaign to be successful, guerilla forces need to be able to survive without the utilization of supply lines. To achieve this, these forces would need to be able to scavenge ammunition from fallen or captured enemy soldiers. By using the same caliber and type of weapon, ammunition and supplies would be more readily available to the guerillas. This would allow for the irregular forces to conduct a more prolonged campaign against the established enemy.

⁵⁶ It is unclear from the documents and information whether or not the objective of the Macuelizo insurgent group was to simply attack and keep the heavily guarded city occupied or capture Puerto Barrios.

The smallest insurgent group comprised of 60 men would launch from El Salvador and penetrate into Guatemala from the south with the objective of capturing the provincial capital of Jutiapia.⁵⁸

Arbenz believed that Castillo Armas posed no threat. Before the invasion, his informants in Honduras assured him that Armas' forces numbered no more than a few hundred and could easily be dealt with. In addition to their small numbers, Castillo Armas' forces had been armed with weaponry that dated back to World War II. This was not a disadvantage to his forces solely because the Guatemalan army was armed with the same weaponry. Armas' forces did hold a clear technological advantage in communications equipment and aircraft given to him by the CIA. ⁵⁹

There is another factor that would make Castillo Armas and his troops difficult to find and destroy. Castillo Armas lacked a centralized command structure, as exists within a conventional military.⁶⁰ A conventional army operates from forward operation bases (F.O.B) and outposts with their area of occupation. These F.O.Bs and

⁵⁷ Cullather, 65-68.

⁵⁸ Cullather's notes and official documents have been redacted with key information about smallest assault group missing. From official documents, El Salvador refused to allow Castillo Armas to invade from their country which would explain why he only commanded a force that launched from Honduras. It is unclear what, if any, concessions were made by the CIA or State Department to El Salvador for allowing an assault force from their territory or whether senior El Salvador officials knew they were actually there. What is clear is that El Salvador wanted to limit any connection to PBSUCCESS in case it failed and there were any political, economic or military ramifications.

⁵⁹ Gleijeses, 321.

⁶⁰ It is unclear whether or not the planners of PBSUCCESS originally intended for the operation to be launched in this manner.

other high value targets were at risk for enemy attack. The destruction or capture of high value targets like an airfield, communications facility or military installation could potentially weaken or cripple government forces in that area. The lack of a centralized command structure or permanent base of operations made the irregular or insurgent force more difficult to track and engage in combat. Castillo Armas did not operate out of a permanent command outpost. The small size of the force and lack of mechanization meant that they were not bound to roadways.⁶¹ This made their movements difficult to track and the chances of unintentionally engaging the Guatemalan military slimmer. There was no definable target that the Guatemalan military could attack or destroy that would immediately cripple Armas. Since his forces were small and dispersed, Guatemala intelligence was unable to acquire actual troop numbers, movements and locations. Additionally, the military air support that Castillo Armas would receive was launched from another country, making it nearly impossible for the Guatemalan military to identify and engage.

Before the main assault groups launched their attacks, the plan hit a major setback. On the afternoon of 17 June, El Salvadorian police came across the Jutiapa insurgent group on a roadway just outside of Santa Ana. The entire group was arrested and thrown in jail in Santa Ana when the police discovered machine guns, rifles and grenades hidden in the wagon they were riding in. They were eventually

⁶¹ The manner in which Castillo Armas' force operated was very similar to how U.S. special operations forces conduct operations behind enemy lines. Many of the tactics and methods are discussed in *FM (3-05.130), Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare*, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 30 September 2008.

deported to Honduras, with help from Armas. Castillo Armas used his connections within the region to get his men released but without their weapons. ⁶²

The Ciquimula assault force encountered the first resistance of the mission later in the evening of the seventeenth. When this force reached the border near Esquipulas, they discovered that the previously unoccupied border station was manned by a customs official and a soldier. The soldier was captured and the customs official was killed, making him the first casualty of the operation for either side.⁶³ Armas and his troops crossed the border at 8:20 P.M. on 18 June, a day later than the Ciquimula assault group. Simultaneously, CIA airplanes buzzed pro-government demonstrations at a railway station in Guatemala City. SHERWOOD blasted radio reports across the city that a battle was underway around Esquipulas with “no tally of a death toll yet.”⁶⁴ Armas and his men made slow progress on foot to their objective due to all the weapons and supplies they were forced to carry. They captured Esquipulas several days later on the twentieth.

On 19 June, insurgent aircraft blew up the railway bridge at Gualan. SHERWOOD continued to broadcast propaganda that people were fleeing in droves from the major cities. By 20 June, the initial fear and panic of the invasion had begun

⁶² Cullather, 67.

⁶³ LINCOLN to Director, LINC 3997, 18 June 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 6. (Cullather, 67) It is unclear from various sources is whether the Guatemalan customs official or the Guatemalan soldier actually confronted the assault force or opened fire. Reports only indicated that the customs official was killed.

⁶⁴ Cullather, 67.

to wear off. Castillo Armas assault groups were making very slow progress and were losing the initiative by failing to make strategic strikes into the capital. The same day, the assault group of 122 insurgents heading for Zacapa encountered 30 Guatemalan soldiers led by Lieutenant Cesar Augusto Silva Giron garrisoned at the town of Gualan. Outnumber four to one, Lt. Giron engaged the enemy in a thirty-six hour firefight without orders or reinforcements.⁶⁵ Giron routed the insurgents; only 30 insurgents managed to escape capture or death.⁶⁶ The surviving insurgents reported back that they were “decisively defeated” by a superior force.⁶⁷

The insurgents would suffer an even larger loss on 21 June at Puerto Barrios. The assault was two pronged, a small force of about 20 attacking from the water while the larger force attacked from the east. Police quickly armed the dock workers who were able to repel the amphibious force. Those who were not capture or killed refused to continue the fight either fleeing across the border back to Honduras or dispersed into the jungle. The loss at Puerto Barrios cost Armas nearly half his fighting force with no major objective achieved.⁶⁸

CIA agents in Guatemala continued the psychological warfare operations by undertaking a massive propaganda campaign spreading broadcasting rumors over the

⁶⁵ Carrier, 152.

⁶⁶ The defeat of the larger insurgent group by the small garrison of soldiers calls into question both the training and fighting prowess of the insurgents but also the amount of training the Guatemalan soldiers had.

⁶⁷ Cullather, 69.

⁶⁸ Cullather, 68-69.

radio in Guatemala City that two rebel divisions were converging on Guatemala City.⁶⁹ In an attempt to regain the momentum, American-flown planes were ordered to drop small sticks of dynamite on the capital.⁷⁰ CIA employed pilots dropped bombs and launched strafing runs in and around Guatemala City.⁷¹ During all of the bombing and strafing runs, no casualties were reported by civilians or military. The desired effect was not to kill civilians or Guatemalan soldiers but rather to “shock and awe.” The bombs used were designed to create maximum noise and smoke. Adding to the psychological warfare portion, planes flew over populated areas or cities making plenty of noise and even dropped glass bottles to create a shattering effect to induce panic. The strafing runs were to convince the civilians and Guatemalan military that they faced an overwhelming and technologically superior enemy.(See Figure 3.4) ⁷²

The bombing and psychological campaign had the desired effect on Arbenz. A frightened Arbenz made one last attempt to stand firm against Armas.⁷³ Arbenz

⁶⁹ While all of these events were unfolding in Guatemala, the United States government was denying any involvement in the Guatemala. *Washington Post* and *New York Times* articles reported different accounts than that the of the official government version of the events.

⁷⁰ Walter LaFeber, *The America Age: U.S. Foreign Policy At Home And Abroad 1750 to Present* (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, NY, 1989), 547.

⁷¹ Immerman, 174.

⁷² The psychological campaign that involved the aircraft was hindered somewhat by Armas’ constant demand for air-cover. With the major defeats in the other prongs of the attack, Armas threatened that without out heavy bombardment and cover he would be forced to abandon the campaign. (Cullather, 70).

⁷³ Castillo Armas ordered Arbenz unconditional surrender. It is unclear whether the conditions for surrender were decided by Castillo Armas or the C.I.A.

believed that Armas attack was a diversion from where the real battle would take place: Guatemala City. He believed that his army would defeat Armas and that his efforts should be turned to dealing with U.S. retribution when Armas lost.⁷⁴ Arbenz was afraid that with Armas's failure, Eisenhower would send in the Marines to finish the operation.⁷⁵



Figure 3.4 : Gasoline Depot bombed by CIA rebel Air Force⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Gleijeses, 323.

⁷⁵ Gleijeses, 328.

⁷⁶ Image taken from www.latinamericanstudies.org/cia-coup.htm (Accessed 31- Mar 2014 13:20)

Firmly believing that the Guatemalan army would handle Armas' force, Arbenz shifted to starting a new battle on the diplomatic front. The Guatemalan government attempted to reach out to neighboring countries in Central America to acquire their diplomatic support against the United States. The request to El Salvador was met with the Salvadorian ambassador leaking the request to the United States ambassador John Peurifoy. Mexico received the Guatemalan emissaries but remain unapproachable on the issue. Arbenz only remaining hope was the United Nations.⁷⁷

Arbenz and the Guatemalan government believed they had a solid case and the evidence of foreign intervention by the United States and complicity of Honduras and Nicaragua would ensure U.N. assistance. The motion was put forth on 18 June, before Armas force even entered the country, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala Jorge Toriello Garrido⁷⁸ specifically against Honduras, Nicaragua and the United Fruit Company.⁷⁹ On 20 June, the Security Council approved a French motion calling for "the immediate termination of any action likely to cause bloodshed."⁸⁰ All members of the United Nations needed to abstain from giving any assistance to such

⁷⁷ Gleijeses, 328.

⁷⁸ Jorge Toriello Garrido was one of three leaders who lead Guatemala following the October Revolution in 1945, along side a then Captain Jacobo Arbenz

⁷⁹ Cullather, 70.

⁸⁰ United Nations, Security Council Official Records, 20 June 1954, S/3236/Rev.1. (www.un.org-accessed 2 April 2014, 17:35)

action. Toriello appeared before the Security Council again on 21 June to ask for the Security Council to take more aggressive steps to stop the flow of foreign assistance to the “rebels.”⁸¹

A rapid series of meeting and phone calls to discuss how to handle this occurred between Winser, the Dulles brothers, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Eisenhower. Eisenhower seemed to expect this contingency and was prepared to use the United States veto power on the Security Council.⁸² During the four days leading up to the Security Council’s decision, the United States put constant pressure and issued numerous threats to various members in an attempt to sway their vote away from action in Guatemala. The Security Council decided on 25 June to refuse to hear the Guatemalan case.⁸³

With the diplomatic battle being fought in the United Nations, the military conflict in Guatemala continued. In the wake of consecutive defeats, Eisenhower authorized U.S. Air Force raids againsts Guatemala military targets and cities. The US government and the CIA lied to the media about US military involvement, blaming the bombings on independent rebel air force.⁸⁴ Initially, Arbenz’s Chief of the Armed Forces urged Arbenz and leading politicians to have faith that the military

⁸¹ Gleijeses, 329.

⁸² Cullather, 70-71.

⁸³ Gleijeses, 331.

⁸⁴ Carrier, 152-153.

would defeat Armas. Arbenz made the executive decision not to arm civilians.⁸⁵ The PGT and other administrators agreed with this decision.⁸⁶ What Armas was not counting on was the betrayal of the Guatemalan military. The gravity of the desertion would not be realized until 25 June, the same day the Security Council refused to hear the Guatemalan case.⁸⁷ In the eyes of the PBSUCCESS leadership, the prospects of an insurgent victory seemed to be getting slimmer by the hour. The original assault group that attacked Esquipulas divided their forces even further. The bulk of the force remained in the town while a small contingency splintered into smaller detachments consisting of ten to twenty men each and pushed on. Remnants of the Gualan assault group and the small groups from the Esquipulas assault group spread out into towns further south. From their vantage points, the insurgent groups could see government troops on the move.

Planners of PBSUCCESS had counted on a certain amount of defections from the Guatemalan military and local recruits who would in turn swell their ranks from the original 480 to several thousand. This did not happen on the scale the planners had hope for, though defections were substantial. In areas where the insurgents met the most resistance, no defectors or recruits materialized. In fact it was quite the opposite;

⁸⁵ It is unclear if this decision was made out of fear that the general population would use these weapons and rise up against him or whether he genuinely believed that the Guatemalan Army could defeat the insurgent force.

⁸⁶ Gleijeses, 321.

⁸⁷ Cullather, 73.

the insurgent force were the ones who were deserting. But in areas where no resistance was met, deserters and new recruits began to fill the dwindling ranks. Planners had logistically planned for an increase in numbers once the assault forces entered and had prepared weapons and munitions to be airdropped into Guatemala to arm this force. Armas' forces in Chiquimula eventually grew to the ranks of 1200 men. But the group that Armas himself was commanding had dwindled from 180 men to around only 30.⁸⁸

Neither Arbenz nor his staff feared Armas' scattered "army." Rather, they believed that this was the precursor for a larger invasion led by conventional US troops.⁸⁹ Arbenz was told that the US Marines and Air Force were standing by to invade his country and not only completely destroy it but also to eliminate him.⁹⁰ Arbenz chose to try and destroy Armas assault in a massive battle at Zacapa. He ordered the Guatemalan military to amass at Zacapa and allow Castillo Armas to advance unopposed. When Armas's forces arrived at the outskirts of Zacapta they witnessed train loads of supplies and troops arriving hourly. Despite the appearance of clear military direction, the truth was that the Guatemalan officers were severely demoralized and overwhelmed by the responsibility put on them to single handedly save Guatemala. Like their president, the army feared direct military confrontation

⁸⁸ Cullather, 74-75.

⁸⁹ Cullather, 73.

⁹⁰ Carrier, 152-154.

with the US military. But unlike Arbenz, they placed no faith in the United Nations ability to reign in the United States. The entire time troops were pouring into Zacapa, the officers of Guatemalan army wondered whether the United States marines were landing in Honduras.⁹¹

Arbenz was initially warned by the PGT, upon their return from Zapaca on 23 June, that the Guatemalan army could not be relied upon to defeat Castillo Armas.⁹² Arbenz sent his own military advisor to give him a report on the situation. He returned with the same findings and the message that “the officers think that the Americans are threatening Guatemala just because of you and your Communist friends. If you do not resign, the Army will march on the capital and depose you.”⁹³

In the evening of 25 June, Arbenz called a meeting at the Presidential Palace where he told various leaders of government and the labor confederations that the army had deserted and the population must be armed. Party leaders agreed with Arbenz and pledged several thousand volunteers, with the provision that the volunteers be orderly armed and trained. The numbers promised to Arbenz never came to fruition. Of the thousands promised, very few actually presented themselves

⁹¹ Cullather, 76.

⁹² The PGT reported on their return that there was a clear lack of discipline and leadership in Zacapa. Officers were seen cowering in their barracks and refused to lead.

⁹³ As quoted in Gleijeses, 332-333.

for training. Those who did come to train and fight never received the weapons that Arbenz had promised them.⁹⁴

Although the garrison at Zacapa had no interest in engaging in direct battle and despite their growing numbers, Armas faced an increased threat from police and armed peasants. On 26 June, nearly every one of his dispersed units called for air support. The following day, Armas launched an assault on Ipala but was repelled. With his forces spread thin, he still tried to capitalize and occupy large areas of territory. Wisner and senior PBSUCCESS officials did not want Castillo Armas to engage in direct conventional battle but rather turn the conflict into a true guerilla campaign by attacking the enemy and then disappearing into the jungle. But there was no need for a tactical change, the mission was over.⁹⁵

The campaign in Guatemala was a success without much of a battle.⁹⁶ On 27 June 1954, President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman resigned his position as Guatemala's leader. He sought asylum in the Mexican Embassy in Guatemala City. The eleven days that followed Arbenz resignation, there were five provisional governments staffed entirely by military officers.⁹⁷ Upon his resignation, the CIA immediately

⁹⁴ Gleijeses, 342- 343.

⁹⁵ Cullather, 77.

⁹⁶ Barrett, 23.

⁹⁷ Gleijeses, 353.

sought to support Colonel Elfregio H. Monzon, a Guatemalan military officer they “persuaded” to assume the presidency once Arbenz had resigned. But Armas had the support of U.S. ambassador Peurifoy. Peurifoy was the U.S. official in charge in Guatemala. He spoke with power and authority on behalf of the United States.

Monzon was reluctant to relinquish his new position to Armas. Despite the support Monzon was receiving from Guatemalan military officers, none of those officers were willing to go against the United States.⁹⁸

By 1 July, CIA officers involved with PBSUCCESS were concluding their operational tasks and beginning to withdraw. *The Voz de la Liberacion*, the CIA sponsored radio station responsible for much of the propaganda that went over the radio waves, was dismantled and the equipment packaged for shipment to the United States. Guatemala Station was ordered to destroy all documents pertaining to PBSUCCESS. The CIA wished to capitalize on the “victory of PBSUCCESS.” In the United States, the CIA wanted to use the operation to boost the Agency’s reputation in Congress and with the Eisenhower Administration.⁹⁹ The mission parameters

⁹⁸ Gleijeses, 355.

⁹⁹ Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala 1952-1954* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency: Washington DC, 1994), 8. Original text was 113 pages and classified as “SECRET” but the document has been “sanitized” and much of the chapters have been removed. The page numbers do not correspond to the page numbers on the paper but to the pages that were available.

switched to gathering intelligence on Guatemalan communists, Soviet mechanisms of communism in Latin America and key documents throughout the country.

When the election for president finally occurred, Armas had received ninety-nine percent of the votes. Armas was elected provisional president of Guatemala on 7 July 1954. That same day, Armas joined forces with Monzon and together they marched up the steps of the National Palace.¹⁰⁰ When Castillo Armas took over as president, he granted Arbenz permission to leave the country for Mexico had granted him political asylum. Armas allowed 120 Arbenz government officials or communists to leave Guatemala unharmed for other countries. Throughout the entire campaign, there was no evidence that any Guatemalans were executed. ¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Immerman, 175-176.

¹⁰¹ Haines, 8.

EPILOGUE:

PBSUCCESS was the culmination of years of planning and work by the CIA and State Department of the United States. It achieved its main goal of replacing President Arbenz. The new leader, who would be selected by the United States, could immediately terminate the land reforms and implement anti-communist policies favorable to the United States. CIA planners had expected there to be a period of totalitarian control in order to achieve the immediate desired changes. However, the victory was short lived. The United States government vastly underestimated the backlash that came from Latin America over the intervention in Guatemala and overthrow of Castillo Armas.¹ Despite there being no danger of a Soviet military presence in Guatemala, the United States implemented a covert operation to dislodge President Armas. The reverberations revealed the growing anti-United States sentiment and nationalistic push in Latin America.²

The aftermath of the overthrow in Guatemala in 1954 had a profound effect on many different areas. The Eisenhower Administration came under heavy scrutiny

¹ Michelle Denise Getchell, *Revisiting the 1954 Coup in Guatemala: The Soviet Union, the United Nations, and 'Hemispheric Solidarity.'* *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17, no. 2 (2015): 73-102. (https://doi.org/10.1162/jcw_a_00549) Accessed 12-October 2019

² Getchell, 101.

over its role in the operation. Guatemala became a symbol of the stubborn resistance of the United States to progressive, nationalist policies in Latin America.³ Castillo Armas new regime proved to incredibly inept. Once the United States left Guatemala, Castillo Armas turned the country into a dictatorship. His repressive and corrupt policies ignited a new civil conflict within Guatemala that last for over forty years.⁴

Both the United States and Arbenz had major failures during this operation. Arbenz major failure that inevitably led to his downfall was his lack of understanding of the geo-political state that the world was in at the time when he chose to enact the land reforms that drew the attention of the United States.⁵ Arbenz may not have intended to make the United States his enemy but his actions against United States businesses and what were perceived as a movement towards a communist state was enough to make him an enemy of the United States. Arbenz failed to understand United States' position towards communism. To the United States government, no idea agitated and invoked fear more so than communism achieving a foothold in the Western Hemisphere.⁶

³ Nicholas Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Accounts Of Its Operations In Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 106.

⁴ Cullather, 106.

⁵ Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1994), 75.

⁶ Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 338-342.

For the United States, PBSUCCESS was a “successful failure.” Senior level officials at “Headquarters” had all but lost hope that the CIA trained invasion force could overthrow the leftist Arbenz government when the Guatemalan military unexpectedly turned on Arbenz. The sudden change by his troops completely shocked Arbenz, who resigned and fled the country. The CIA learned from PBSUCCESS that “coups are chaotic.”⁷ Despite all of the careful planning that went into the preliminary stages of the operations, the later stages of the operations were not able to be crafted in such a way simply because it was not sensible. Experience had taught CIA officials to expect a certain amount of chaotic uncertainty after the initial stages in any paramilitary covert operation; rigid plans were not possible.⁸ The operation in Guatemala did not succeed because the CIA-trained rebels won on the battlefield or frightening Arbenz into fleeing. The combination of a paramilitary invasion, psychological warfare campaign, and Guatemalan military’s growing concern of Arbenz increasingly leftist policies gave the military pretext for overthrowing Arbenz. In addition, the Guatemalan military feared the potential intervention of conventional United States military forces.⁹ CIA personnel met directly with high ranking members in

⁷ Gleijeses, 338-342.

⁸ Michael Warner, *Lessons Unlearned: The CIA’s Internal Probe of the Bay of Pigs Affair*. (www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol42no5/html) Accessed 22 Feb 2014. Unclassified document: Based on internal probe of the failed Bay of Pigs operation, 5.

⁹ Gleijeses, 338-342.

Guatemala City face to face in order to persuade the Guatemalan military's indecisive leadership to act.¹⁰

The operation in Guatemala was a “successful failure.” The United States government and the Central Intelligence Agency had achieved the goal of taking down the Arbenz government in Guatemala and alleviating what the United States government perceived as the threat of a communist Guatemala. They saw the operation as a “success.” The framework for covert operations and intelligence gathering were laid during PBFORTUNE and PBSUCCESS. The general sense of success of PBSUCCESS by intelligence and State Department officials was unfounded.

A variety of factors came together that allowed for the successful coup d'état in Guatemala. First the division of Colonel Jose Castillo Armas forces created a general sense of chaos in Guatemala. When Castillo Armas' force invaded Guatemala from the north, his forces were divided into two main separate groups. One group was to make their way towards the capital while the other was to push eastward. The result of this division led to a general sense of chaos for the Guatemalan military because they lacked the intelligence of just how many enemies they were actually fighting and where the enemy actually was.

¹⁰ Warner, 5.

Second, the CIA launched a massive psychological warfare campaign coupled with American flown aircraft undertaking a bombing campaign. The propaganda broadcasts spread confusion and false information throughout the country.¹¹ False casualty reports, fake troop movements and constant broadcasts urging support for Castillo Armas' insurgents had the desired effect. The American flown bombing runs spread fear and panic but more importantly gave the impression to President Arbenz, the Guatemalan people, and the Guatemalan military that they faced a vastly superior force.¹²

The third factor was a lack of general and human (HUMINT) intelligence on the part of the Guatemalan military. This lack of intelligence played into the very successful psychological warfare campaign that was conducted. Arbenz forces had no idea where Castillo Armas' invasion force actually was and how many they numbered. He firmly believed that the Guatemalan military would quickly handle Castillo Armas and rather than focus on stopping Castillo Armas, Arbenz redirected his efforts to acquiring diplomatic support from neighboring countries.¹³ Playing on this lack of intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency sent false broadcasts and radio messages warning of thousands of troops closing in on the capital. Finally, the

¹¹ Cullather, 48.

¹² Walter LaFeber, *The America Age: U.S. Foreign Policy At Home And Abroad 1750 to Present* (W.W. Norton and Company, New York, NY, 1989), 547.

¹³ Gleijeses, 328.

revolt by the Guatemalan military against President Arbenz dashed any hope of mounting a counter attack against Castillo Armas' forces. All these factors directly contributed to why the United States succeeded in Guatemala.

The false sense of success during PBSUCCESS carried over into the next major paramilitary operation the CIA was going to undertake, Cuba. But unlike the CIA, Fidel Castro, leader of Communist Cuba, learned from Jacobo Arbenz mistake's and the CIA tactics used in Guatemala. Castro was not about to make the same mistakes that Arbenz did that allowed his country to be invaded and lost him the support of the Guatemalan military.¹⁴

Yet one aspect of both operations that was never actually used but gave the CIA a frame work for which to work off of for future operations was the assassination guide and the "K-groups." The importance of the assassins and their ability to conduct their mission covertly and then withdraw without arousing suspicion was key. In Guatemala, during OPERATION PBSUCCESS and PBFORTUNE entire units were organized and trained to carryout eliminations on selected targets. While the groups were never actually utilized, their training methods laid a blueprint for conducting clandestine operations within Guatemala. With a system already potentially in place, the CIA had trained assets on the ground in Guatemala for which to carry out any covert assassination in the future. The operations conducted in the

¹⁴ Warner, 5.

1960's in Guatemala by the United States government have their birth in the framework of PBFORTUNE and PBSUCCESS.

By 1958, the CIA had evolved as a clandestine agency into formidable weapon of the United States government. In Guatemala the situation had changed drastically as well. Castillo Armas was no longer president of Guatemala, he was assassinated in by a member of his presidential guard. His successor, General Ydigoras Fuentes pushed the Guatemalan government towards being an even more repressive regime. In November 1960, officers in the Guatemalan military attempted a failed uprising against the Guatemalan government. These defeated officers fled to the hills where they began an insurgency campaign against the Guatemalan government, marking the beginning of the civil war that would span thirty years.

For Guatemala, the downfall of the Arbenz government marked a turning point in their history. For the next several decades, from 1960 until 1996, Guatemala would be embroiled in constant paramilitary fighting and civil war. Irregular warfare was the primary manner the military campaigns were conducted by both the government and insurgent groups in Guatemala. The Guatemalan military continued to seek out and destroy any possible or potential threat against the totalitarian regime. Under the guise of anti-communist operations, the military used brutal force against its own people, mainly indigenous people, to ensure full obedience and control.

Assassinations, kidnappings, and torture were widely utilized practices by the Guatemalan government.¹⁵

Regardless of why the United States intervened in Guatemala, the aftermath was clear. For the United States and the CIA, Guatemala marked an early success but also gave them a false sense of confidence in their abilities. But the CIA would continue to grow and be involved in every major conflict the United States has been involved in since its inception. Guatemala would enter into a cycle of perpetual internal struggle and war. Countless civilians died as during these periods of unrest. Communism never did become a major threat in Guatemala but rather Guatemala became a place of despair and totalitarianism. All of which can be traced back to Operation PBSUCCESS.

¹⁵ Greg Grandin, *Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), xvi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran Authority, July 1953(C01384505). Central Intelligence Agency, DDO Files, Job 80-01701R, Box 3, Folder 11, Misc. TPAJAX, Correspondence.

Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-01025A, Box 145, Folder 12. Secret. Information also seen in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Retrospective Volume, Guatemala, Document 5.

Director to LINCOLN, DIR 36511, 30 January 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 7. Correspondence

<https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/ike/guat/20177.htm>

Foreign Relations of the United States 1952-1954, Vol. X, Iran 1951-1954. Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989.

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) Access 31-March 2014

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1962-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989.

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>) Access 31-March 2014

Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954 Volume IV, The American Republics, Document 410. National Intelligence Estimate- Washington D.C.- 11 March 1952. Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1989.

(<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v04/d410>)

Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be Disposed of During Military Operation of CALLIGERIS," (Castillo Armas) 18 September 1952, Box 134.

Guatemalan Procurement of Arms From Soviet Orbit, 23-Jan 1954 Central Intelligence Agency

Historical Review Program "Release As Sanitized."

www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000921353.pdf

LINCOLN TO GUATEMALA STATION, LINC 2212, 29 April 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 4.

LINCOLN to Director, LINC 3997, 18 June 1954, Job 79-01025A, Box 6

Measures Which the United States Government Might Take in Support of a Successor Government to Mossadeq, March 1953, Department of State, Office of Greek, Turkish and Iranian Issues, RG 59, Lot 57, D 529, Box 40

Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group. Dated 31 March 1954*

Memorandum to Staff Officers: *Subject: Selection of individual for disposal by Junta Group. Dated 31 March 1954, Attachment 2.*

National Intelligence Estimate (NIE-14) 8 January 1951, *The Importance of Iranian and Middle*

East Oil to Western Europe under Peacetime Conditions, 1-2.

(<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R01012A000300070001-9.pdf>) Accessed 8 February 2018

National Security Council, NSC 136/1, *United States Policy regarding the Present Situation in Iran, Top Secret Report, 20 November, 1952*. Documents obtained through the Iranian National Archives-

<http://iranianarchives.org/documents/1953-coup-in-iran/45-national-security-council-nsc-136-1-united-states-policy-regarding-the-present-situation-in-iran-top-secret-report-november-20-1952>

PBSUCCESS Planning Documents, Director of Operations, Latin American Division Records, Job Number 79- 101025A, CIA Archives (5).

Training File of PBSUCCESS (Undated) Job-79-01025A, Box-73, Folder 4.

Truman, Harry S. "Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey." Delivered to 80TH Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives; Document No. 171. 29 March, 1947.

U.S. Department of State. "North Atlantic Treaty Organization." n.d. *Office of the Historian*. 10 March 2019. <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/northatlantictreatyorganization,1949>>.

—. "Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945-1952." 10 March 2019. *Office of the Historian*. <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/japan-reconstruction>>.

---. "Communism in the Free World: Capabilities of the Communist Policy, Guatemala (p57)".

Office of the Historian. < www.history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54Guat/d33. >(Accessed 10 October 2018)

BOOKS

- Ambrose, Stephen E. *Eisenhower, Vol 2, The President*. New York: Simon and Simon, 1984.
- Carrier, Jerry. *Hard Right Turn: Assassination of the American Left- A History*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2015.
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. Norwalk: Easton Press, 2001.
- Gleijeses, Piero. *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Grandin, Greg. *Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004.
- Gunn, Jeremy T. *Spiritual Weapons: The Cold War and the Forging of an American National Religion*. Westport: Praeger, 2009.
- Heiss, Mary Anne. "Culture Clash: Gender, Oil, and Iranian Nationalism." Merrill, Dennis and Thomas Paterson. *Major Problems in American Relations*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006. 340-245.
- Horwitz, Jeffrey. *Armed Groups: Study In National Security. Counter-Terrorism, and Anti-Insurgency*. Washington DC: United States Department of Defense , 2008.
- Immerman, Richard. *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention*. University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Iron, Will. *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944*. . New York: Public Affairs, 2006.
- Kinzer, Stephen C. Schlesinger and Stephen. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.

- LaFeber, Walter. *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy At Home and Abroad, Volume II- Since 1896*. New York-London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994.
- . *The American Age: US Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to Present*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.
- Merrill, Dennis and Thomas Paterson. *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006.
- Office of the Historian. *Biographies of the Secretaries of State: John Foster Dullas*. n.d. 18 February 2019. <<https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/dulles-john-foster>>.
- Offner, Arnold. "Provincialism and Confrontation: Truman's Responsibility." Merrill, Dennis and Thomas Paterson. *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*. Vol. II. New York: Houghlin Mifflin Company, 2006.
- Prados, John. *Safe for Democracy: Secret Wars of the CIA*. Chicago: Ivan R Dee Publishing, 2006.
- Saunders, Elizabeth Nathan. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Scully, Michael. "Red Ruin for Guatemala." *Reader's Digest* December 1953.
- Theoharis, Athan. *Central Intelligence Agency: Security Under Scrutiny*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006.
- Weigley, Russell F. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Zunes, John Stephens. "Decisions on Intervention: United States Response to Third World Nationalist Governments, 1950-1957." Ph.D Dissertation. 1990.

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

- Barrett, David M. "Sterilizing the "Red Infection": Congress, The CIA, and Guatemala, 1954." 08 May 2007. *Central Intelligence Agency*. 24 January 2014. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol44no5/html/v44i5a03p.htm>>.

Cullather, Nicholas. "Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala 1952-1954" *Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency*: Washington DC, 1994

"Guatemalan Reforms." *The New York Times* 9 February 1954: 26.

Haines, Gerald K. "CIA And Guatemala Assassination Proposals 1952-1954." Central Intelligence Agency, 1995.

Koch, Scott A. "ZENDEBAD SHAH!: The Central Intelligence Agency and the Fall of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, August 1953." Central Intelligence Agency, 1998.

Warner, Michael. "Lessons Unlearned: The CIA's Internal Probe of the Bay of Pigs Affair." n.d. *Center for the Study of Intelligence*. 14 December 2016.
<www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol42no5/html> .