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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Guatemala

DATE DISTR. 2 December 1948

SUBJECT Plot of Col. Arana to Overthrow President Arevalo  
25X1A6a

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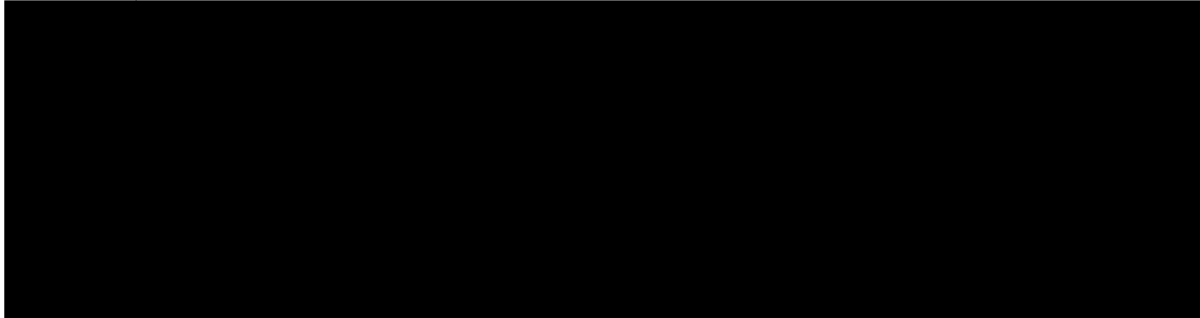
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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



1. Rumors persist that Col. Francisco Javier Arana, Chief of the Armed Forces of Guatemala, is contemplating a coup to overthrow President Arevalo, following criticism by the latter and the National Congress directed toward the meddling of the Army and Arana in politics. Arana has considerable support and sympathy among conservative elements and groups of the civilian population, particularly the UNE (Union Nacional Electoral). Lic. Eugenio Silva Iena, former Minister of Foreign Relations, is believed to be supporting Arana, and secretly aiding his cause against Arevalo.
2. As a result of the protest of the National Congress, the Superior Council of Defense (Consejo Superior de la Defensa) was called into urgent session during the week ending 6 November. Col. Arana who is a "first vocal" of the Superior Council by virtue of his position as chief of the armed forces, was questioned concerning the alleged "Arana for President" propaganda that is being carried out in the various departments of the Republic. Arana is said to have replied that he is ignorant of any such activity on his part, and that if persons are working for his candidacy they are doing so without his authorization. Arana and Major Jacobo Arbenz, Minister of War, were both asked what their attitude would be should President Arevalo attempt to remove other military governors from their posts. Arana and Arbenz are said to have hedged on making a direct reply, merely stating that in the two instances cited by the Superior Council the officers concerned had been transferred to important posts within the Army itself, and thus their removal was not actually a reflection on the Army.
3. Two days after the first meeting, a second urgent meeting of the Superior Council of Defense was called to which neither Arana nor Arbenz was invited. A thorough discussion of the national political situation reportedly took place and the following conclusions were reached.

A. That Arevalo has given Guatemala the reputation abroad of being on the side of Communism. That the administration has committed many serious errors which have received national and international condemnation. That it has permitted the infiltration into the country of dangerous elements and doctrines of a Communist character.

B. That Arevalo has consistently shown his disregard for the National Army, and has evidenced what appears to be a growing desire to

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destroy it. Consequently, it behooves the Army to look to the safety of its organization.

- C. That the new American Ambassador to Guatemala undoubtedly will have as his number one mission the control and elimination, where possible, of Communism in Central America. That there is a real danger that the Army, by its support of the Arevalo Government, will be viewed in the eyes of the United States Government as sharing the Communist policies of the Arevalo Government.
- D. That if disturbances should break out during the coming congressional elections (26-27-28 November), the Army, headed by "officers of the school" should move in, force Arevalo's resignation, close Congress, and remove Arana (not a graduate of the Politechnic school) from his position as Chief of the Armed Forces, then set up an interim government to rule until new presidential elections can be held.
4. It is reported that Arana may endeavor to force the resignation of Col. Victor Sandoval, director of the Guardia Civil, and a brother-in-law of President Arevalo. Presumably, Sandoval would be replaced by an officer of Arana's choosing. If Arana should succeed in this effort, it would greatly increase his strength within the army, and would moreover indicate his superior power in the contest with Arevalo.

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