

Management of a Cover-up: The Secrecy Behind the 1954 Guatemalan Coup

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The full details of the 1954 CIA-sponsored Guatemalan coup have never been fully released, despite the CIA gradually declassifying documents related to the operation. The coup, nicknamed PBSUCCESS internally in the agency, has been researched and disputed multiple times over by historians eager to understand the intricacies of the operation. It is not possible to understand these complexities; many of those key individuals in the coup have long since passed away, declassified documents released, but sanitized, eliminate information that may be pertinent to understanding, and discussion of past CIA actions no longer reaches the news cycle as it once had in the previous century. There are limitations that historians have had to work around, but the in-depth work of many of these historians have added to the bigger picture of the coup. While it is not possible to know every gritty detail of what became of the deposition operation against the Arbenz administration, it is imperative to discuss a key piece of the coup: the tactics the U.S. employed against Guatemala.

The world of 1954 was one filled with a fear of communism amid the Cold War. This fear, according to the United States government, was exacerbated by the actions of Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, the democratically elected president of Guatemala. A reformer at heart,¹ Arbenz sought to make his country “economically independent” and he “emphasized the need to modernize the country’s physical infrastructure.”² However, it was Arbenz’s ambitions of agrarian reform that

¹ Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States, 1944-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 135.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 135.

waved the red flag of communism at the United States, so to speak.

The United States, and further, the State Department and the CIA, knew of the control and authority they had over the hemisphere, and how to assert that authority in their foreign diplomatic relations. Asking whether or not the United States had the legal authority to intervene in the politics of another country would lead to endless debates. It has been stated that several of their controversial actions, such as its interception of British ships on a trade route, were illegal.³ The issue of legality is not unimportant; it becomes important when put into the context of a cover-up. It is now understood that the State Department did in fact stage this coup, but how exactly did U.S. officials manage to cover up their operations in Guatemala, and why did they feel the need to? The former question is much easier to begin to answer, the latter not so much. The United States employed the use of covert, psychological, and reactionary operations to facilitate coup operations and the subsequent cover-up of their involvement.

Interpretations of the coup are presented in very different manners in the books written about the situation. *Bitter Fruit* authors Stephen Schlesinger and Steven Kinzer approached the subject through a narrative lens with the actions of the United Fruit Company (UFCo) serving as a primary focus of the authors' argument as to the motives of the coup. Both had great knowledge in Latin American history with Schlesinger having monitored the 1990 Guatemalan election. Historian and author Richard Immerman of *The CIA in Guatemala* takes a scholarly approach, almost scientific in his tracings of the coup. As the title suggests, his main arguments concern the direct actions of the State Department in the country and the actions of the Arbenz administration. Piero

³ Richard H. Immerman, *The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 159.

Gleijeses, professor of foreign policy and author of *Shattered Hope*, takes a similar approach; the main difference is that while Immerman has a United States perspective of the situation, Gleijeses takes a Guatemalan perspective. He mixes narrative threads as he had direct access to key Guatemalan players, many of whom he was able to interview, and he took a scholarly approach as he delved into American newspapers and State Department archives. Finally, Nick Cullather's *Secret History* offers a perspective from inside the CIA's classified documents archive. His approach would not fit into the scholarly or the narrative, but rather a concise display of the information. Cullather's account of the coup offers the most insights as to the covert aspects of the coup, a helpful resource to tackle a question such as presented.

The covert aspects of the coup were the specific steps that were taken by the State Department to distance themselves from any wrongdoing, and usually involved the planting of evidence and the shifting of responsibility to blame the communists. This distancing also frequently occurred hand in hand; the overlap of tactics to achieve this goal was constant. In particular, this planting of evidence is a crucial piece to the distancing aspects of the cover-up, and it did not involve simply placing evidence, but twisting any evidence found naturally to fit under the Cold War ethos of the time. A major example of this is PBHISTORY, in which Frank Wisner, Deputy Director of Plans during the time of the coup, sought to seize any documents that would "conclusively prove the Communist nature of the Arbenz regime."⁴ The confiscation of documents and subsequent report is echoed in CIA in Guatemala: "Such programmed testimony...totally exonerated the United States from any charges of complicity and left no room for any interpretation regarding the extent

⁴ Nick Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of Its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 106.

of Communist threat in Guatemala.”⁵ It appears as though PBHISTORY was to be used to convince the United States side of the coup—that is, the lower level governmental workers who were unaware of United States intervention—that their hands were clean. The documents found during PBHISTORY were to produce pamphlets passed out to the National Security Council, and while there are senior members of the government within the council, many did not take part in PBSUCCESS. These seizures of documents worked internally for the United States, as it was enough to convince the council of the communist threat in Guatemala.⁶ Further unclassified CIA documents find plans dated to occur before the coup itself that directly suggests provocation events to be used to imply Soviet intervention. Dated June 1, 1954, and sent to the “Chief/Project,” though a name is either not specified or is redacted, outwardly stated for these events to “divert responsibility further away from the United States government or, on the contrary, provide justification for United States of even international (Pan American) intervention.”⁷ As the document continues, it talks of Soviet bombs exploding under the Honduras president’s car, Guatemalan air force insignia flown over Honduras, and falsified cables from the Soviets to Mexico as a suggested provocation.⁸

The question again arises: why did the United States find it necessary to invest so much time and effort in a cover-up if they believed they were “saving” the hemisphere from being overtaken by communism? A potential answer could be that they knew their actions were wrong, and either did not care or

⁵ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, p. 181.

⁶ Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 107.

⁷ DOC #0000135807. Central Intelligence Agency, *Provocation Plans* (United States: 1 June 1954), p. 1.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2.

rather wish to serve their interests.⁹ The full motives of United States officials cannot be known.

Under the Eisenhower administration, covert operations were the preferred tactic of intervention. While it is known that many covert actions occurred in the planning years of the coup, it was the necessity to cover up the actions that drew attention. This was not just seen through PBHISTORY and the falsified story of the coup, but also in taming reactions towards the deposition. In a sanitized document dated July 26, 1954, nearly a month after the coup, a memorandum that appears to have been released internally in the C.I.A. details actions taken to “counteract unfavorable world reaction to overthrow of Arbenz Regime in Guatemala.”¹⁰ The overarching question of why the United States felt it necessary to cover their actions looms over the document. Drawn to attention is that the document goes country by country and expresses plans to be undertaken in each to quell

⁹ Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1982), p. 229. Government officials looked at Guatemala through a banana-colored lens and sought to save their capitalist interests that they found in UFCo. While this may have been the case for the United States to originally keep a watchful eye on the country, the years after the coup saw the collapse of UFCo and its merger with Del Monte. The undefined “alliance” between the United States and the United Fruit company can be seen as the catalyst for its “watchful waiting” policy of the Central American country, and its further export interests that the company helped lobby for and facilitate. However, its direct connection to the invasion itself appears to be overstated, as the United States’ more prominent interest in Guatemala was preserving an anti-Communist government. See pp. 11-13, 53-54, and 75 for more on the relationship between the United States and UFCo, and the beginnings of the agrarian reform that “threatened” the initial interests of the United States.

¹⁰ DOC #000920218. Central Intelligence Agency, *Report on Actions Taken to Counteract Unfavorable World Reaction to Overthrow of Arbenz Regime in Guatemala*. (United States: 26 July 1954), p. 1.

any dissenting opinion of the coup. For Thailand, it is suggested that “materials for use in anti-communist indoctrination school as case study...;” this is a particularly insidious suggestion, as it targets the children of the country rather than officials who can act towards the United States, the implication here being to program the children of the country to think as the United States does, whether or not that thinking is right or just.¹¹ Thailand has had several coups in its history, and the government is set up very similarly to Guatemala in that it is run by a military junta. The secretive establishment of an anti-communist indoctrination school shows the power the United States had and was willing to use, regardless of the population living in these countries.

Even more fascinating, and perhaps more telling about the motives of the United States, is the plan suggested for Iran, a country in which the United States had already staged a successful coup. The only plan suggested is for Tehran to send a press reaction assessment, but it is the actual cable back from Tehran that carries interesting information. “Tehran replied that little interest was shown, that general assumption was that the United States was responsible for the revolt and the feeling was that the U.S. had a definite right to protect itself in such a vital area.”¹² First, Iran makes it known that they—rightfully—assumed that the U.S. was behind the Guatemalan situation, and it may be safe to assume that as the U.S. had done the same thing to their country a year prior that they should recognize the signs of U.S. intervention. However, it is the second half of the quote that draws even further attention, as Iran then states that the U.S. was justified in their actions. After the U.S. ousted Mosaddegh, they then placed an American-sympathetic leader into power who would be willing to overlook certain issues. Including Iran in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 3.

the memo about reducing negative reaction gives the U.S. the appearance of an arrogant imperialist, but is also an example given by the United States that their coups were successful in the long-term, and that they occurred through its covert actions within the countries they intervened in.

The crux of the issue as it stands here is that United States officials believed themselves successful in their intervention, and with the Eisenhower administration's leaning to covert actions as its preferred method of interference, the State Department felt justified in its intervention. America believed itself the authority of the hemisphere and would, therefore, justify any negative aspects in the name of restraining communism.

While it was the covertness of PBSUCCESS that defined the coup from start to finish, further technical aspects explain how the coup succeeded, and how the United States managed its image in the years after. This was the psychological aspect of the coup, a key piece in that it guaranteed the success of PBSUCCESS on the Guatemalan side. In short, the U.S. used psychological warfare to manipulate the American press and the Guatemalan public. A memorandum dated in the middle of the invasion states this goal outright: "The entire effort is thus more dependent upon psychological impact rather than actual military strength, although it is upon the ability of the Castillo Armas effort to create and maintain for a short time the *impression* of very substantial military strength that the success of this particular effort primarily depends."¹³ This meant that for the invasion itself, it was believed that the façade of strength would be enough. Guatemala, despite dealing with the challenge of an arms embargo, had one of the strongest armies in the region, with officers that were very loyal to Arbenz. This façade was to convince the

¹³ Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, The American Republics, Volume IV*, Allen Dulles. (Washington: Eisenhower Library, 20 June 1954), p. 1.

Guatemalans that Castillo Armas's forces were much larger than they truly were. Further, Guatemalans also needed to be convinced that the United States could give support to Castillo Armas's forces.¹⁴ Estimates of Armas's forces show that he did not have enough men to oust Arbenz by military force alone, and Allen Dulles, the Director of the C.I.A, predicted that without the months before the coup fabricating the size and power of Armas's forces, the invasion may not have succeeded.¹⁵ This was the process; its goal was to prove to the Guatemalan army that they would not stand a chance against Armas, and rebel against Arbenz themselves.

Thus began the many months of psychological warfare on the Guatemalan people. Nearly a year before the coup, however, there were suggested plans on the types of psychological warfare that could occur in Guatemalan, with plans including the dropping of "propaganda materials designed to incite discontentment throughout Guatemala" and to have rumors spread throughout the levels of Guatemalan society. Rumors included that Soviet officers would be sent to Guatemalan officers to check on their "ideology," for enlisted soldiers, a rumor of poisoned supplies was to be spread, and towards the PGT, "a letter from a Communist European front will ostensibly be mailed to FORTUNY [sic], telling him that GUTIERREZ [sic] has been reporting to Moscow about the activities of FORTUNY and that unless GUTIERREZ can be silenced, FORTUNY may be purged."¹⁶

Further psychological materials were supplied to the Guatemalans by opposition forces. It was common for pamphlets and visual materials to be dropped despite rates of

¹⁴ Immerman, *CIA in Guatemala*, p. 162.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 162.

¹⁶ DOC #0000914820. Central Intelligence Agency, *A Suggested Plan for Psychological Warfare Operations in Connections with Over-all Guatemalan Operations*. (United States: 2 August 1953), p. 1-3.

illiteracy in the country.¹⁷ Cullather quotes George Tranger, the Chief of Station in Guatemala, who states that the goal of these psychological materials was to “intensify anti-Communist, anti-government sentiment and create a disposition to act; and create dissension, confusion and FEAR in the enemy camp.”¹⁸ Castillo Armas was never meant to come into direct conflict with the Guatemalan military forces, as the psychological warfare was to break down the existing members of Guatemalan society, and force them to rise against themselves—the so-called communists—rather than the invading force that was going by the moniker “The Liberator.”¹⁹

It was easy to spread rumors through the military; it would be safe to assume that their literacy was higher than that of the common Guatemalan. However, the common Guatemalan had access to an important piece of propaganda: the radio.²⁰ Operation SHERWOOD took advantage of this fact, and the radio stations began to be filled with anti-Communist and anti-Arbenz propaganda. “La Voz de la Liberación,” the Voice of the Liberation, was broadcast through Guatemala, “announcing amid popular American songs that the hours of the ‘traitor Jacobo’ were numbered.”²¹ A document containing psychological materials to be used as support in Guatemala stated the topics they sought to control. Subset D. contains information on discrediting the government and intellectuals “who have fallen for the Communist line” and “warning intellectuals who may be used

¹⁷ DOC #0000914007. Central Intelligence Agency, *Materials for Psychological Warfare Support – Guatemala*. (United States: 26 Jan 1954), p. 1.

¹⁸ Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 66.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 70; Schlesinger and Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 170.

²⁰ Schlesinger and Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, p. 168.

²¹ Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 295.

by Communists.”²² Further program suggestions are to play the music of Russian composers, the poetry of Latin American students and teachers, and to broadcast religious appeals.²³

While it is difficult to surmise whether all of these plans were put into effect, the fact that many were even suggested is valuable for debate. On the surface, it is obvious that the main points of the document are to divide the officers, soldiers, and political leaders in Guatemala, which would, in turn, sow further disloyalties towards Arbenz. It is the façade that would lead to a successful coup, and so if the officers believe that they are outmatched and outnumbered, the State Department believed a mutiny would be impending. However, it is worthwhile to point out that these tactics were used to blame the communists for the coup, and therefore distance the appearance of United States intervention. If the United States believed the communists to be bad and that they were spreading ideology to the country, would there not be evidence of communist “tampering?” If the threat of communism had reached a pinnacle where the United States felt justified in deposing a democratically elected president, would it not have been easier then to search out communism evidence before resorting to an invasion two years in the making? In short, if there truly was a threat of Soviet communism, why did the United States have to plant evidence and use psychological warfare tactics to convince the

²² CIA, *Materials for Psychological Warfare Support – Guatemala*, p. 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14. This is not to say that radio broadcasts were the decisive turning point in the invasion, and it would even be incorrect to overstate its influence as Cullather reasserts that “only one Guatemalan in 50 owned a radio,” but it still held power: “radio, nonetheless, became a central feature of the operational plan. Although Guatemalans were ‘not habituated’ to radio, an analyst observed, they ‘probably consider it an authoritative source, and they may give wide word-of-mouth circulation to interesting rumors’ contained in broadcasts.” See Cullather, *Secret History*, pp. 41.

Guatemalans that the threat was there? Yes, it was clear that Arbenz was moderate to left leaning, and the PGT was a communist party. It is also true that it was Arbenz's Decree 900 that signified a communist threat in the hemisphere, but these actions are nowhere in the suggested plans of the State Department nor do they make up the essence of rumors to be spread. If these actions were not communist enough for the C.I.A to use as propaganda in Guatemala and internationally, then why did they see the threat at all? Again, these questions rarely have readily available answers, but, while rhetorical, are important to the continuous analysis of PBSUCCESS.

It was not only in Guatemala that psychological tactics were used; the American press received a certain level of influence, even though it was not to the extent as was done in Guatemala. The goal was for the United States to wipe their hands clean of the operation, and to do so, they needed the United States public, and beyond, internationally, on the same wavelength. The press was to portray the United States as the victims of a communist aggressor, with Guatemala being the antagonist. The *New York Times* became vociferous reporters of anti-Communism at this point in the Cold War. What was spoken of in Congress and what was coming out of the White House would then be echoed back to the public. Gleijeses points out an example of shifting public opinion from as early as June 1951:

Secretary of State Acheson testified... "The Guatemalan situation is a very troublesome one...The Communists...have gotten into the Government and they are causing a great deal of concern to us..."...Three days later, a *New York Times* editorial concluded: "It is time to register a sense of deep disappointment and disillusionment over the trend of Guatemalan politics in the two months since Colonel Arbenz

became President...the Communist trend, far from being reversed, has been strengthened.”²⁴

Other headlines from between 1950 through 1954 show the animosity towards the smaller country: “Guatemala Is ‘Halfway to Poland’” in the *Washington Post* in February 1950, “Red Front Tightens Grip on Guatemala” in the *Washington Post* in February 1952. The need to control how the press viewed the Guatemalan situation proved easy under the Cold War ethos of the time. “Newspaper and broadcast media...accepted the official view of the Communist nature of the Guatemalan regime.”²⁵

In an essay, Gregory F. Treverton, former chairman of the National Security Council, makes a connection between the secrecy of the coup and the nature of the plan itself: “Not every covert action exposé, however, has made for controversy...some stayed in the tabloids or were relegated to the back pages of the major dailies. They did not produce political controversies to which the American government felt any need to respond.”²⁶ The message here is clear. Should United States officials have thought their operations warranted a direct press response, they would have done so themselves. They did not believe their actions to be controversial; in fact, they believed them justified in the face of the Cold War. This does not take away from international response however, as it is here that the shift into the reactionary tactics of the United States starts to become apparent. In its own country, the government is an authority figure in the eyes of the press and the public, and what it

²⁴ Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 226.

²⁵ Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 56.

²⁶ Treverton, Gregory F. "Covert Action: From "Covert" to Overt." *Daedalus* 116, no. 2 (1987): 95-123. Accessed May 1, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/20025098.

chose to give a platform to was important in the influencing of opinion. Outside of its borders, the diplomacy increased in complexity.

The United States, as a country, was born on principles of imperialist expansion and intervention. Where it saw fit to intervene in the affairs of others, even in actions deemed just in hindsight, it did so, or at the very least considered it. The years of the coup, the United States acted as the authority figure not over just its own people, but over the whole hemisphere and in the international forums. It asserted its imperial authority wherever it could to push their anti-Communist agenda. The term “reactionary” here is to be somewhat redefined from its dictionary definition. Here, the term is used to signify the actions of the United States against threats to its covert operations and negative reaction towards the previous operation. Policy changes towards a foreign body are notable examples of this concept. “Until the spring of 1952, Truman’s policy toward Arbenz was similar to that adopted toward Arévalo in the late 1940s. Diplomatic pressure was accompanied by the denial of economic aid.”²⁷ This is the last piece as to how the United States managed to continue covering up its operations in Guatemala; it used its international authority to silence dissenting decisions. This diplomacy is captured constantly through the multiple secondary sources referenced, even though the long-term motives of the State Department’s actions were not yet known—this being the coup itself, not the instability of the region in the subsequent years.

The documents that precede the invasion event by mere weeks are often the most transparent towards this concept of reactionary tactics. A sanitized document dated May 29, 1954, illustrates how the United States was handling both the invasion effort and the curbing of negative opinion towards

²⁷ Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 227.

the country. The document details what a potential conference would look like with the OAS, and the “factors considered important.” The author of the document is redacted, though it is clear that it is neither Wisner nor J.C. King, as they are mentioned in the third person in the remarks section.²⁸ It has multiple handwritten notes in the margins, both editing and redacting pieces. Most important is a quote that occurs on the very first page: “It is possible that Guatemala could produce ‘evidence’ of US intervention, a step that would not only embarrass the US but would be damaging to US prestige and influence in Latin America.”²⁹ The State Department expressly states that should a meeting occur, their cover could be blown, which would be devastating to coup efforts that were to occur less than a month later. Further, placing the word “evidence” in quotes within the document is a subtle shifting of blame, as it discredits any information the Guatemalans may be able to present and distances the United States. Additionally, it isolates Guatemala from its neighbors with the threat of United States intervention, a fear that was spread through multiple psychological and reactionary support. Documentation such as this is prevalent throughout the PBSUCCESS case files within the C.I.A. archives, and its tactics are the culmination of years of preparation for the coup.

Documentation such as this is not the only example of how the United States uses its authority to shift blame away from themselves. For Immerman, the Caracas conference

²⁸ The author may be Tracy Barnes as he worked almost directly with Wisner, and it appears as though it may not be Colonel Albert Haney, who is cited as often disliking King, and the tone of the remark does not hold a negative voice.

²⁹ DOC #0000923079. Central Intelligence Agency, *Factors we consider important concerning a consultative meeting of the American States on Guatemala [sic]*. (United States: 29 May 1954), p. 1.

stands as the major example of the overarching authority exerted by the U.S., as it is one of the prime examples of the shifting of blame through pushing a different agenda. “The State Department planned its Caracas strategy...carefully... advisers wanted to avoid the *appearance* [of a showdown]. They feared that other nations might interpret the resolution as a means of *bullying* Guatemala...” [*emphasis added*].³⁰ The explanation of the State Department’s actions is not always as clear as it is here, but Immerman lays out the details plainly. The tactics of the State Department often intermingled; psychological propaganda, covert action, and reactionary tactics frequently looked similar to each other. Caracas was the pinnacle of all three. In terms of reactionary, the United States asserted its authority in the Organization of American States (OAS) to get their anti-Communist proposal to the top of the bill. With the propaganda and psychological aspect being the need to explain that the United States was against Communism, not Guatemala, the assertion here being that if Guatemala felt indicted by the United States, then there truly were communists in the government, and justified intervention, thus leading into the covert, the coup itself. These tactics, paired together, allowed the United States to maintain diplomacy with the rest of the world while asserting its authority against Guatemala and allowed for a “successful” coup.

The questions that have arisen over the course of discussion stand as they were presented: how did the United States government manage to cover up its operations in Guatemala, and what were its motives behind the cover-up? Why did U.S. officials find it necessary to cover up their actions? Under the guise of anti-Communism, intervention could have been justified through the OAS and the United Nations, and yet, actions were taken to convince these

³⁰ Immerman, *CLA in Guatemala*, p. 145-146.

organizations that communism was present. Documents showed that a lot of this evidence may have been planted, that the United States influenced those it came into contact with that belief as they did rather than look for the truth.

The technical aspects of the coup are understood, and as more documents are reviewed and released with redactions, the underlying motives may come through. The Cold War colored much of how the world was understood between the late 1940s to the early 1990s, and the United States both believed in the Red Scare and played into the fear of communism. Guatemala was an easy target; its October Revolution of 1944 introduced a decade of reform that culminated in a deposition that collapsed the stability of the country for nearly thirty-six years after. As Arbenz stated in his resignation speech, he had long tried to convince the world of Guatemala's innocence: "My Government has been called Communist in nature. We have used every means to convince world reactionaries that what US Government circles say is untrue."³¹ U.S. officials had indicted them on the crime of spreading communism, and the punishment was American intervention and the instability of a country in the middle of moderate reforms.

The question remains: why? Why did the United States see Guatemala as such a threat when the number of communists that existed in the government has been overstated and were not in control of the Guatemalan government?³² The actions of the United States increased the culture of fear that spread through Latin America, a region which in recent years has been called out on human rights abuses. One particular example is former dictator of Guatemala Efraín Ríos Montt, a man who spread further fear through his actions that intensified a civil war that lasted over three decades and was

³¹ Juan Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán, "Arbenz Resignation Speech." (Speech, Guatemala, 27 June 1954).

³² Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 24; Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope*, p. 365.

indicted on the crime of genocide against the indigenous peoples of Guatemala.

The answers to the questions posed throughout are not definitive, but a contemplation of the issues that arose in the years after the coup is incredibly important. The United States, whether or not they were truly justified in their actions and whether or not they were honest in their motive being the pursuit of anti-Communism in the western hemisphere, destabilized a country in the Central American region through covert actions, psychological warfare, and reactionary tactics. “The Guatemalan intervention shaped the attitude and stratagems of an older generation of radicals, for whom this experience signaled the necessity of armed struggle and an end to illusions about peaceful, legal, and reformist methods.”³³ For Guatemala, the future still looks uncertain, but the recent years of indictment on dictators in the region carry hope. For the United States, the future is certain; their justification for their actions is enough.

³³ Cullather, *Secret History*, p. 112-113.