

**Red Sky Take Warning;
The 1954 CIA Intervention in Guatemala**

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Chapter One: Intervention and the Nonintervention Norm

Intervention Defined

The concept of intervention is a rather vague political phenomenon. It has traditionally been broadly defined to include any type of influence exerted by one government or political body on the internal political or economic structure of another. This definition includes actions as varying as the donation of foreign aid, vote brokering in the United Nations, and full scale military invasion. However, this definition is too large and inexact for the purposes of this paper because it fails to distinguish between the acts of intervention and influence.

The act of intervention and the act of exerting influence differ in two primary ways. First, intervention is based on the “stick” principle while influence works on the “dangling carrot” principle. That is to say that while a country usually exerts influence by promising rewards sought by the influenced government, intervention works on the basis of threatening the weaker government in order to force them to make the desired changes. This threat works by asserting that if the weaker country does not make the desired domestic changes, the stronger country will simply intervene and effect the changes themselves. The difference between exerting influence and intervention can be shown by presenting an example of each action.

The United States demonstrated an attempt to influence another government when it made the renewal of China’s most favored nation trading status contingent on improvement in China’s human rights record. In this case, the United States sought a change in China’s human rights practices and attempted to bring that change about by offering the trade rewards which China desired. However, it is important to note that the U.S. did not make any threat of, or forced entry into the Chinese domestic political scene.

In contrast, the United States demonstrated an example of intervention when it deposed General Manuel Noriega in 1989. In this case, the U.S. desired that the Panamanian leader be deposed and tried on narcotics charges. When the people of Panama failed to effect this change and United States citizens were attacked by Panamanian troops, U.S. military forces entered Panama and deposed Noriega themselves, an action which obviously constituted a forcible entry into the Panamanian domestic political system.

The second major difference between an attempt to exert influence and an intervention is the fact that influence can be exercised by a weaker nation on a stronger one. Intervention, on the other hand, is by nature coercive and dictatorial and therefore can only be exercised by a strong nation on a weaker power. As Hedley Bull states, "A basic condition of any policy that can be called interventionary is this sense that the intervener should be superior in power to the object of intervention: it is only because the former is relatively strong and the latter relatively weak that the question arises of a form of interference that is dictatorial or coercive."¹

Because the general definition of intervention fails to take into account the differences between influence and intervention, this paper will be based on a somewhat more narrow definition offered by Hedley Bull. Intervention will thus be defined to be a "dictatorial or coercive interference, by an outside party or parties, in the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state."² Bull explains that intervention in this sense may be forcible or non-forcible, direct or indirect, and open or clandestine.

¹ Hedley Bull, Intervention in World Politics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) 1.

² Bull 1.

A Historical Appraisal

Intervention of the type Bull defines has long been a tool used in the world of international relations. As Hans Morgenthau points out, "from the time of the ancient Greeks to this day, some states have found it advantageous to intervene in the affairs of other states on behalf of their own interests and against the latter's will."³ This type of intervention was even present in the Peloponnesian War where Thucydides tells us "it became a natural thing for anyone who wanted a change of government to call in help from the outside."⁴ This use of intervention continued throughout fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth century Europe where domestic plots to murder or overthrow monarchs were constantly aided by foreign governments with similar interests. Examples continued into the nineteenth century with British intervention into the American Civil War on behalf of the Confederate forces.

Despite this historical trend, the United States' use of intervention as a political tool did not originate until the early 1820's. In 1823, the United States government laid the cornerstone policy which would justify U.S. intervention in the western hemisphere throughout the following century and a half. This policy, known as the Monroe Doctrine, declared that the United States would not tolerate intervention by any European nation in the affairs of the nations of the western hemisphere. In essence the United States was proclaiming itself, as Secretary of State Richard Olney stated in 1895, "practically sovereign in the western hemisphere."⁵ The Monroe Doctrine

³ Quoted in Richard Little, Intervention: External Involvement in Civil Wars (Totowa: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975) 3.

⁴ Little 3.

⁵ John Quigley, The Ruses for War: American Interventionism Since World War II (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992) 26.

provided the basis for the United States intervention into Cuban/Spanish relations which directly resulted in the Spanish American War of 1898.

American authority in the Western Hemisphere initially laid out in the Monroe Doctrine was supplemented in the first decade of the twentieth century by the Roosevelt Corollary. In the corollary, President Theodore Roosevelt claimed that the United States had the right to intervene in any Latin American country that defaulted on its debt. The adoption of the corollary paved the way for U.S. intervention into the Dominican Republic in 1905. The United States conducted numerous interventions in Latin America during the first three decades of the twentieth century, each justified in part by either the Monroe Doctrine or the Roosevelt Corollary. Examples of these interventions included the U.S.-generated rebellion in Panama in order to secure the isthmus for construction of the Panama Canal and the posting of U.S. troops in the Dominican Republic in 1916 in order to ward off the threat of a German attack which intelligence sources knew never existed.

Following the heyday of U.S. involvement in Latin American affairs during the 1920's, the trend of intervention was temporarily brought to a halt by the adoption of President Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. United States interventionism in Latin America remained almost nonexistent until after the Second World War. However, beginning in the 1950's a new wave of U.S. interventions began. In fact, "in the periods of acute cold war-- in other words, the late forties, fifties, and early sixties, and again in the late seventies and the eighties-- the forms of intervention caused by the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union become countless."⁶

⁶ Bull 18-19.

The reemergence of interventionism as an important policy tool following World War II was the result of three characteristics of the Cold War world which made intervention particularly useful in the international political environment. The first of these characteristics was the existence of the bipolar ideological battle between democratic capitalism and communism. With two clearly identifiable ideologies and ways of life, it became very easy to categorize nations into two groups: those which supported democracy and were allies, and those who were pro-communist and were allies of the Soviet Union. As a result, at least maintaining the balance between the two groups, and preferably tipping the balance in our favor became the goal of Cold War international policy. A new importance was placed on intervention as a policy tool because it was effective in accomplishing that end.

A second Cold War characteristic which led to the increased use of intervention was a natural abundance of targets of opportunity. In essence the Cold War political structure was populated by what Bull terms as "artificial states" which existed only because they were generally tolerated by the superpowers and other strong nations. These artificial states were plagued by internal problems including inept governments and ethnic, social, and religious conflicts. These states could be manipulated without difficulty and were ripe for intervention. As a result, they became easy prey for the superpowers in their quest to tip the balance of power in their favor.

The final Cold War characteristic which resulted in the increased use of intervention was what many political thinkers label the internationalization of conflict. Simply stated, direct conflict between the two superpowers was viewed as infeasible because of the danger of escalation to nuclear war. As a result, the superpowers chose to battle each other indirectly over the political alignment of small dependent countries. In short, the level of intervention increased

because “the moderation of means introduced by the perils of nuclear war, and the superpowers’ need to limit their goals for the same reason, [left] ample room for interventions aimed at changing the international milieu by affecting the domestic political make-up of other countries.”⁷

The United States’ orchestration of the 1954 coup in Guatemala was the indirect product of these three cold war conditions.

The Nonintervention Norm

The concept of nonintervention is defined in relation to the concept of intervention as the absence of intervention. That is to say that nonintervention occurs when a given country or political group does not take action to intervene in a given situation when intervention is possible, or in the case of a bifurcated actor, the given country or political group maintains relations with both sides in the dispute because an absence of relations is understood as support of the status quo side of the conflict. Interestingly, the concept of nonintervention and the adoption of the nonintervention norm occurred much later in history than the concept of intervention. The concept of the nonintervention norm was first introduced in the middle of the eighteenth century by Wolff and Vattel, both international lawyers. These two men first introduced the doctrine that all states regardless of size or power enjoy the same equal rights to sovereignty. They then introduced a subsequent doctrine which stated that as a result of each state’s right to sovereignty, all states were bound to a duty of nonintervention. This duty of nonintervention arose because intervention necessarily involves a violation of the weaker state’s right to sovereignty and thus

⁷Bull 20.

violates Wolff and Vattel's first sovereignty principle.

The duty of nonintervention introduced by Wolff and Vattel in their two doctrines on state sovereignty became accepted as an international norm. The nonintervention norm was established in two ways. First, the nations of the world came to a common agreement that all states had the right to sovereignty and intervention was morally unjust because it violated that right. As Bull confirms, "Intervention...is generally believed to be legally and morally wrong: sovereign states or independent political bodies are thought to have the right to have their spheres of jurisdiction respected, and dictatorial interference abridges that right."⁸ Second, the concept of nonintervention was incorporated as a part of international law.

In the Covenant of the League of Nations and the Charter of the United Nations, it is accepted that while the organizations have the right to regulate inter-state behaviour, intrastate behaviour is inviolable....the obligation of the state, as opposed to the international institution, to refrain from intervention is reasserted in a General Assembly Resolution which declares that intervention is inadmissible and that there is a duty to protect the independence and sovereignty of all states.⁹

The acceptance of Wolff and Vattel's duty of nonintervention by both state consensus and international law has made it an international norm. Despite acceptance of the nonintervention norm, interventions have continued throughout history and even exist in the present day. This inconsistency in norm and behavior can be explained by the existence of what most political thinkers label as justified "interventions."

Justifiable Interventions

Although the international community has reached a consensus that intervention into a

⁸ Bull 2.

⁹ Little 15.

sovereign state's jurisdiction is always morally wrong, they have also reached a consensus that sometimes an intervention although morally wrong can be justified. An intervention is justifiable when the alternative to intervention, nonintervention, will result in such dire consequences for the intervened upon country or the intervening country that the prospective disadvantages vastly outweigh the moral incorrectness of the act. In essence, justifiable interventions are examples of cases where the ends justify the means.

Political scientists offer a myriad of specific cases of interventions which could be justified. However, there are essentially six types of justifiable interventions which repeatedly appear in the writings of political scientists and merit special attention. The first of these interventions are those which are performed at the invitation of an incumbent government. This is the type of intervention the U.S. made into Vietnam and the Soviet Union made into Afghanistan. This type of intervention is believed to be justifiable because the interference into a sovereign state's jurisdiction is made at that state's request and thus the violation can be considered to be less severe.

The second type of commonly recognized justifiable intervention is a counter-intervention. Counter-interventions are usually undertaken to assist a weak state to repel an intervention already undertaken by another power. An example of this type of intervention in a collective context was the U.S. led alliance's intervention into Kuwait in order to expel the Iraqi intervention. The counter-intervention argument was often used by the superpowers to justify their interventions throughout the Cold War period and it was a common defense for United States interventions into Latin America.

The third type of justifiable interventions are those interventions undertaken on the

grounds of self-defense. Israel's 1981 bombing of nuclear installations in Iraq was an example of this type of justifiable intervention. Interventions on the grounds of self-defense are believed to be justified because the consequences of nonintervention place the intervening country in grave danger. This was the justification used by the Israeli government which claimed that a fully functional Iraqi nuclear weapons program would pose a clear and present danger to the people of Israel.

The fourth and fifth types of justified intervention are sometimes grouped into the single category labeled intervention to defend the rights of foreign subjects of an oppressive ruler. However, for the purposes of this paper, we will treat each of the two types of intervention on behalf of subjects of an oppressive ruler separately. We will label intervention for the protection of human rights as the fourth type of justifiable intervention and intervention in support of self-determination as the fifth.

An example of intervention to protect human rights was the U.S. intervention in Somalia which delivered aid supplies to the starving Somalis and attempted to bring a halt to the civil war ravaging the country. Interventions to protect human rights are viewed as justifiable because it is commonly agreed that the good they accomplish in securing basic human rights for those people who were previously without them due to an oppressive government or the existence of civil war, far outweighs the moral incorrectness of the act of intervention itself.

The support of self-determination is the most used and most debated rationale for a justifiable intervention. Those who argue that an intervention in support of self-determination is indeed a justifiable intervention base their argument on the belief that every individual is entitled to the right of self-determination. Therefore, they argue that if an oppressive government is

standing in the way of a people's right to self-determination, an outside political power has the right and even the obligation to intervene on behalf of the oppressed people to help them exercise self-determination.

John Stuart Mill leads the argument against using the support of self-determination as a cause for justifiable intervention. Mill argues that rather than fostering self-determination, intervention actually precludes it. Mill asserts that "the (internal) freedom of a political community can be won only by the members of that community."¹⁰ As a result, he concludes that any intervention by an outside party to help that community gain freedom will be counterproductive. In Mill's own words, "self-determination, then, is the right of the people 'to become free by their own efforts' if they can, and nonintervention is the principle guaranteeing that their success will not be impeded or their failure prevented by the intrusions of an alien power."¹¹ In essence, Mill argues that it is nonintervention rather than intervention which insures self-determination and therefore intervention to support self-determinism cannot be justified.

The sixth and final type of interventions commonly agreed to be justifiable are interventions which are collectively authorized by the international community. An example of this type of intervention is the United Nations and NATO intervention into the Bosnian conflict. Interventions which are collectively organized are believed to be justifiable because they are the responses to situations which the international community as a whole agrees are dangerous enough to either the world or the people living within the situation country to warrant the morally incorrect action of intervention.

¹⁰ Michael Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars (New York: Basic Books, 1977) 88.

¹¹ Walzer 88.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to accomplish three things. First, it has defined what constitutes an intervention. Second, it has established that an international norm of nonintervention exists which reflects the consensus of the international community that intervention is morally incorrect because it violates the principle that every state enjoys the equal right to sovereignty. Finally, it has established that despite the nonintervention norm, the international community agrees that there are some situations which justify the use of intervention despite the moral incorrectness of the act.

What remains, then, in the following chapters is to examine the events that preceded the 1954 coup in Guatemala, the conduct of the coup, and the results which immediately followed the coup in order to assess whether the U.S. intervention into Guatemala could be considered a justifiable intervention in the framework just provided and if not, why an unjustifiable intervention was undertaken by the Eisenhower administration. An assessment of these two questions must begin by examining the political change which swept through Guatemala in the twenty-five years prior to 1954. It was this political revolution within Guatemala, designed to foster both a more democratic system and a healthier, more independent economy, which eventually provided the pretext for U.S. intervention in June of 1954. Somewhat poetically, the Guatemalan political revolution which lasted ten years began and ended with the same man, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. Together with Juan Jose Arévalo, Arbenz was able to temporarily transform Guatemala from the oppressive, militaristic, dependent, class-driven nation it had been for decades under President Jorge Ubico and his predecessors.

Chapter Two: On the Edge of Revolution, Guatemala 1931-1954

The Ubico Era 1931-1944.

Guatemala's last great caudillo prior to the revolution of 1944, President Jorge Ubico, took office in 1931 following a landslide election victory. A career military man from an upper-class background, Ubico was a self-styled Napoleon of sorts. Described as "impulsive, arbitrary, stubborn, opinionated, dominating, energetic, and inflexible... a policeman at heart," Ubico ruled Guatemala with an iron fist from his election in 1931 until he was forced to resign in 1944.¹²

The Ubico era was marked by several very conservative trends. The first of these trends was the militarization of Guatemalan society. Ubico began his presidency by immediately replacing each of Guatemala's twenty-two elected departmental governors with generals from the army. In addition, Ubico placed the National Radio, the Department of Roads, the post office, and several other formerly civilian departments under military control. The most far reaching of these reforms was the militarization of secondary education. In a sweeping school reform package, Ubico replaced all of the nation's principals with senior military officers, and captains and lieutenants were placed in charge of discipline within the schools. Society became so militarized during Ubico's thirteen years in office that even the national symphony was forced to play in uniform.

Ubico's dependence on the military went beyond his fascination for its pomp and circumstance. It was based instead on his desire for absolute control over every aspect of Guatemalan life. A long time admirer of the European dictators Franco and Mussolini, Ubico

¹² Richard H. Immerman, The CIA in Guatemala: The Foreign Policy of Intervention (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982) 32.

fashioned his government based on their far-reaching autocratic models. As a result, Ubico attempted to bring every aspect of society under military control in order to consolidate and maximize his own power. As the U.S. naval attache explained, "With the militarization of these minor civilian officials, President Ubico further extends his military control over the everyday life and every thought and action of the people of Guatemala."¹³

The second major trend marking the Ubico era was the repression of labor movements and communism which Ubico viewed as essentially one and the same. Ubico was very conservative and extremely anti-communist. Despite the fact that the communist movement within Guatemala was practically nonexistent (no official party existed and the unofficial party numbered between one and two hundred members in the early 1930's), Ubico constantly warned of the threat of a communist revolution within Guatemala. He moved against suspected communists without mercy, arresting and torturing those who were not able to flee to exile. Part of Ubico's paranoia emerged from his broad definition of communism. "Extremely conservative, Ubico called anyone a Communist whose social, economic, and political ideologies were more progressive than his own, and he equated Communism with any disobedience to his laws or opposition to his regime."¹⁴ In addition, Ubico used the threat of communism to maintain his base of support among the upper-class. This was accomplished by spreading propaganda which depicted the Communists as hiding in the shadows waiting to rape and murder the upper-class and then to expropriate their property.

¹³ Piero Gleijeses, Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) 15.

¹⁴ Immerman 33.

Ubico's treatment of labor was little better than his treatment of Communists and in many cases he equated the two. Beginning in 1931 with the labor strike at Novella and Company, Guatemala's largest cement company, Ubico set a precedent against any labor organization or unrest. Ubico ordered all of the leaders of the Novella strike to be arrested and tortured in an effort to deter any unrest in the future. In an additional effort to deter labor organization, Ubico placed a clause in the official penal code recommending the death penalty for anyone found guilty of union organizing. The result was that many of the unions were forced to disband throughout the 1930's and labor in Guatemala lost the opportunity for advancement that was being successfully sought all over the world.

The laws against organization and unrest were supplemented by measures which prevented the Guatemalan laborer from making any progress in terms of wages or standard of living, a position Ubico assumed because of his conviction that "general prosperity bred revolution." He once commented, "if people have money they will kick me out."¹⁵ As a result of these beliefs, Ubico refused to let wages increase despite world inflation. He even went so far as to make a formal complaint to the U.S. government in 1942 when the American army paid Guatemalan laborers a wage higher than the prevailing Guatemalan daily wage for construction on a project they were undertaking.

The U. S. The brunt of Ubico's opposition to labor fell on the Indians who composed over two thirds of the Guatemalan population and an even larger percentage of the labor force. The U. S. embassy described the labor situation in the 1930's as follows: "the Indian, illiterate, unshod,

¹⁵ Immerman 34.

diseased, is the Guatemalan laborer."¹⁶ Until 1934, Indians were bound to their masters by debt peonage. In 1934 Ubico made the Indian bound to the state instead. He passed a series of vagrancy laws which eliminated the requirement of debt peonage and replaced it with a law that required all Indians who owned no land or less land than the prescribed amount to hire themselves out to landowners for at least one hundred days of every year. Under the vagrancy laws the Ubico government retained complete power because it was responsible for allotting the Indian labor to the landowners. And as in other dealings with labor, Ubico insisted that prices remained fixed. As a result, large groups of landowners banded together to fix prices for labor and wages were artificially pushed down.

Perhaps the worst injustice done to the Guatemalan Indian labor population by the Ubico administration was the adoption of resolution 1816 in April of 1932. Resolution 1816 essentially legalized murder on the part of the landed elites. Under the resolution, landowners were absolved from any consequences of any action taken to protect their goods or lands. The resolution freed land owners to deal with disobedient or stubborn Indians in any way that they deemed appropriate without consequence. All they had to do was claim that they were protecting their goods or property.

The third trend of the Ubico administration is slightly surprising in light of the first two. The Ubico era was marked by excellent relations with both the United States government and U.S. business. One might think that the U.S. would have found Ubico's tyrannical rule and the absence of human rights and basic freedoms within Guatemalan society to be anti-democratic and thus a danger to democracy within the western hemisphere: however the exact opposite was true.

¹⁶ Gleijeses 13.

For his part, "Ubico was gentle with the United States." He knew that "the Caribbean belonged to the United States. Moreover, Ubico saw the Americans as a valuable shield against Mexico, a neighbor that in the nineteenth century had annexed vast regions claimed by Guatemala and had become...a breeding ground for communist infection."¹⁷

In an effort to please the U.S. government, Ubico "diligently courted American officials, diplomats, and businessmen, exhibited a preference for Yankee investors, and showed considerable imagination in discovering ways to demonstrate his support."¹⁸ This effort involved three major components. The first component was the quick affirmation and support of U.S. foreign policy such as the declaration of war against Japan following Pearl Harbor, and at Roosevelt's request, the rounding up of German nationals within Guatemala during World War II. Second, Ubico was instrumental in helping U.S. businessmen to establish favorable terms for foreign investment within Guatemala even at the expense of Guatemalan national interests. Ubico's helpfulness was exemplified in 1936 when he allowed the United Fruit Company to default on its portion of an agreement to build an Atlantic port in Guatemala in exchange for some Guatemalan property the government gave it in 1930. The UFCO no longer wanted to build the port because it had made an agreement with the International Railways of Central America (IRCA), another U.S. company operating in Guatemala in which it already owned stock. The deal increased UFCO stock in the IRCA and allowed the UFCO to ship bananas at very cheap rates to Guatemala's only existing port which was on the Pacific. The deal benefitted both the UFCO and the IRCA because it maintained their monopoly powers and profits which would have

¹⁷ Gleijeses 19.

¹⁸ Gleijeses 19.

been threatened by a second port. However, it harmed the Guatemalan economy and public as a whole because it forced them to continue to rely on the Pacific port in which the only pier was owned by the UFCO and thus to pay monopoly prices.

The third component of Ubico's effort was his anti-communist stance. Even prior to the Cold War containment policy, the U.S. feared Communism in the western hemisphere. As a result, they were willing to overlook the structure of Ubico's government as long as he maintained his anti-communist posture. Ubico's anti-communist stance combined with his pro-American business position earned him the support of the American government which described him as the "biggest man in Central America" and "the man who could best maintain pro-American stability in the world recession."¹⁹ The government also added that "Given local conditions, he has done a lot.... Relations between the United States and Guatemala are in every way excellent, better than they have ever been before."²⁰

Despite Ubico's tight hold on the Guatemalan population and the support of the U. S. government, Ubico's grip on government began to slip in 1944. Ubico's decline in power was precipitated by two major events: the allied victory in World War II and the subsequent anti-dictatorial feelings it spawned, and the overthrow of several regional dictators including Fulgencio Batista in Cuba and Isaias Medina Angarita in Venezuela. Anti-dictatorial feelings began to spread throughout the University of San Carlos, Guatemala's only center of higher education in 1942. When Ubico announced in 1943 that he would seek a third six year term, tensions began to rise. Then, in May of 1944, a wave of urban strikes and student revolts toppled Salvadoran

¹⁹ Gleijeses 21-22.

²⁰ Gleijeses 21.

dictator, Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez. The success of protestors in El Salvador prompted similar measures in Guatemala. By mid June both students and teachers were protesting and on June twenty second, Ubico suspended constitutional guarantees. On June 24, a petition requesting Ubico's resignation signed by over three hundred of Guatemala's most prominent citizens was delivered to his office. Then on June 26, all stores and places of business within Guatemala closed and remained closed for the following four days.

On July first, Ubico resigned despite the fact that the army had maintained control and the U.S. had never asked Ubico to step down. It is unclear why he resigned in the face of a battle he could have potentially won. However, it is speculated that the realization that the majority of the Guatemalan people were against him, including the landed elite which he believed to be his greatest supporters, dealt him a strong emotional blow. This letdown, accompanied by the fact that the United States did nothing to support him because of the prevailing anti-dictatorial views, is believed to have led to his resignation. On July 1, Ubico resigned in favor of a three-man junta composed of three of his generals: Federico Ponce Vaides, Eduardo Villiran Ariza, and Buenaventura Pineda. Ubico then retired to New Orleans, Louisiana.

The October Revolution.

Following the announcement of the junta, General Ponce quickly emerged as the strongest and most ambitious of the three generals and had no difficulty persuading the Congress on July fourth to declare him the provisional president. A U.S. military attache observed later that "a Thompson sub-machine gun is a very good persuader."²¹ Upon attaining the presidency, Ponce

²¹ Gleijeses 27.

permitted the formation of trade unions and political parties and promised to hold free elections. With Ponce's announcement, two opposition political parties were formed: Frente Popular Libertador led by university students and Renovacion Nacional which was led by school teachers. Renovacion Nacional's candidate, Juan Jose Arévalo, became the leading contender for the presidency.

However, it soon became clear that only those people who supported Ponce would be permitted to vote in the election. The result was renewed unrest led once again by the university students and teachers who were later joined by labor. The administration attempted to quell the unrest first by raising fears of an Indian revolt. The government asserted that the Indian majority supported Ponce and they bussed in thousands of Indians from the countryside to march through the capital waving placards supporting the Ponce government.

When the false threat of Indian revolts failed to sway the opposition, the Ponce government attempted to crush the opposition. The government strong-arm tactics culminated on October first when Alejandro Cordova, the editor of the leading opposition newspaper, *El Imparcial*, was assassinated by order of the government. Following the assassination, opposition leaders including Arévalo took refuge in foreign embassies and it appeared that the opposition to Ponce had been crushed.

Without Ponce's knowledge, a plot had begun to hatch among a group of young military officers. The conspiracy was being led by Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán and Carlos Aldana Sandoval, a member of the Guardia de Honor. On October nineteenth the plotters struck. Frightened, Sandoval had fled. However, his place was filled by Major Francisco Arana, the tank commander of the Guardia de Honor. The plotters fought with several army units and armed approximately

three thousand civilians. The battle lasted throughout the night as several units within the city remained loyal to Ponce. However, early in the afternoon of October twentieth, Ponce resigned. He was replaced by a three man junta composed of Arbenz, Arana, and Jorge Toriello, a civilian. The new junta promised free elections for president and congress and governed until the elections took place on December nineteenth. Juan Jose Arévalo won the elections with eighty five percent of the popular vote and assumed the presidency on March 15, 1945.

The Arévalo Administration 1945-1951.

Arévalo was the first of the Revolution presidents. "His election incarnated the movement's intentions, for he personified change, liberalism, and democracy."²² He was from a middle-class background and was a school teacher and author by profession. He completed his education in Argentina; and after the publication of his dissertation, he returned to Guatemala. Upon his return, Arévalo approached Ubico about a position as an under-secretary of education. Ubico responded by giving Arevalo a mid-level position within the department of education, and two years later Arévalo returned again to Argentina. He remained in Argentina until he was named the Renovacion Nacional's candidate on July 2, 1944.

During the course of the 1944 election Arévalo quickly became the opposition's prime candidate. He earned the support of the Frente Popular Libertador, the student party, and of the several labor parties. His only real opposition came from the Adrian Recinos, Ubico's ambassador to the United States. However, Recinos' connection to Ubico made him less appealing and Arévalo was able to easily defeat him.

²² Immerman 45.

When Arévalo assumed the presidency in March of 1945, Guatemala was impoverished. "The annual per capita income of agricultural workers-- the majority of the population-- was less than \$100. Approximately two percent of the population owned seventy percent of the arable land. Only one quarter of the land . . . was under cultivation. The economy was barely industrialized. Seventy percent of the population was illiterate... among the Indians illiteracy rates approached ninety percent."²³ In the face of these obstacles, Arévalo undertook his administration with the desire to evoke change, a goal which he accomplished. Arevalo's period in office was marked by the existence of a multi-party system, the development of and concessions to trade unions, the enfranchisement of a large section of the population, and massive educational reforms.

Although Arévalo did not have a clear socioeconomic program for his country, he did have a political ideal known as "arevalismo." Arévalo himself described arevalismo as a "spiritual socialism." It was a "vigorous popular movement proposing to liberate the citizens from rigid authoritarianism and, subsequently, to free Guatemala from its dependence on more developed nations."²⁴ Arévalo's first step in implementing arevalismo was expanding the political freedoms of the Guatemalans. He expanded freedoms by granting the right for political parties to form and by granting greater personal rights. These individual freedoms included the freedom to vote, the freedom to express one's opinions, and the freedom to read a broader range of books and newspapers.

²³ Stephen G. Rabe, Eisenhower and Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Interventionism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 43.

²⁴ Immerman 46.

The second step of arevalismo was the implementation of labor reform. Arévalo and his congress passed the Labor Code on May 1, 1947. The labor code established the right to form unions, dismantled the vagrancy laws, afforded protection from unfair dismissal, guaranteed the right to strike with a conciliation mechanism, established a forty-eight hour work week, and regulated the work conditions of women and children.²⁵ Arévalo's labor laws still held limitations; for instance, agricultural labor unions could only form if they had at least fifty members, two-thirds of whom were literate. However, this stifling limitation was lifted the following year. The result of Arévalo's labor reform was that real wages climbed even in the face of inflation and workers in Guatemala were finally able to gain protection from arbitrary dismissal.

Because these reforms were very beneficial to the lower and middle-classes, they were not warmly received by the upper-class land owners and foreign interests such as the United Fruit Company. The upper-class "branded these freedoms as intolerable excesses."²⁶ Forced to pay higher wages and deal with collective bargaining, the UFCO, Guatemala's largest employer, repeatedly complained to government officials and even persuaded the U.S. State Department to argue its case. In the face of repeated clashes with workers and steadfast Guatemalan governmental support for the workers, the UFCO was finally forced to comply. However, a bitter taste was left in the UFCO's mouth and subsequently the United States government's mouth which they would not soon forget. Because of its revolutionary nature, Arévalo's reform program necessarily threatened "traditional interests, among them the United Fruit Company. When this happened, United States observers took another look at spiritual socialism and this time

²⁵ Gleijeses 41.

²⁶ Gleijeses 43.

interpreted it as radical Communism."²⁷

The third step of arevalismo was massive educational reform. For the first time in Guatemalan history, Arévalo made education available to everyone including the Indians. As part of this program Arévalo constructed new schools including technological institutes and a model school in every region. When he had finished there were over six thousand places of learning in Guatemala including a special Indian institute to help educate the Mayans. The educational reform did help to raise the literacy rate and present the Indians and rural laborers with a better education and skill set. Arévalo also helped the plight of the Guatemalan laborer by introducing the Guatemalan Institute of Social Security in January of 1948. Although both programs bettered the situation of the laborer, the two programs could not be successful in substantially raising the lower-class' standard of living as long as the inequity of property distribution continued; that is, as long as the lower-class did not have access to any property of their own while thousands of arable acres sat uncultivated on huge estates owned by the landed elite. Unfortunately, this was a fact Arévalo was never willing to recognize.

Completely separate from the concept of arevalismo was the role that the Guatemalan military played throughout the Arévalo administration. Arévalo was very intelligent and he "was a master of politics-- that is, he possessed an uncanny ability to manipulate men, including his own key supporters."²⁸ He understood from the outset that the military decided the fate of Guatemalan presidents; the military had helped place him there, and the military could take him away bringing an end to his reforms. As a result, Arévalo refrained from interfering in military

²⁷ Immerman 48.

²⁸ Gleijeses 39.

matters and the "officer corps became the pampered child of the revolution through large salary increases, generous scholarships to study abroad, well paid positions in the government bureaucracy, and other alluring benefits."²⁹

The top two military officials in the Arévalo administration were Arana and Arbenz. While still a member of the three man junta, Arana had agreed to free elections in exchange for a constitutional clause in the 1945 constitution which made him the chief of the armed forces dismissable only by Congress. As chief he was responsible for making all military appointments subject to the approval of the minister of defense, a position Arbenz occupied. Arana was very ambitious and when Arévalo was temporarily injured in an automobile accident it was feared that Arana would stage a coup to attain control of the government. To prevent this from happening, the Partido Accion Revolucionaria (PAR), the majority party, made an agreement with Arana known as the Pacto de Barranco. The agreement stated that in exchange for his support of President Arévalo, the PAR would select Arana as its candidate for the 1950 elections.

As the Arévalo administration progressed, Arana, as the most conservative of the high ranking officials, was befriended by the upper-class landed elite who urged him to stage a coup and overthrow the liberal Arévalo whom, for the reasons discussed above, they believed to be a Communist. Arana, flattered by their praise, expressed sympathy in private but was still unwilling to oppose Arévalo publicly or stage a coup even though the vast majority of military officers were aranists and loyal to him. This was because Arana wanted to be a popularly elected president, not a strong man who seized power.

Despite the agreement made with the PAR, the leading revolutionary party, support for

²⁹ Gleijeses 50.

Arana began to wain among the revolutionaries as he appeared increasingly conservative. This fear was brought to a head in early 1947 when, after a failed right-wing conspiracy to overthrow the government and an attempt by a few individuals to form a communist party in Guatemala, Arana sought only to punish the subversives on the left and attempted to deport several labor leaders that he thought were particularly dangerous. At that moment, Arbenz, who characteristically avoided non-military business, stepped in to defend the labor leaders and became the choice of the revolutionary parties. By late 1948 and early 1949 most of the labor leaders had also decided to back Arbenz because they believed that only a military man could beat Arana and Arbenz was "the most progressive officer."³⁰

As pressure mounted from the right and it became increasingly clear to Arana that the revolutionary parties would back Arbenz instead of him, he became less dedicated to achieving the presidency by means of election. However, if he were to run for election Arana would have to resign from his military position six months before the election. Arana wanted to maintain control of the military because he knew that the only way that he could win the election was for the army to deliver the peasant vote. His successor was to be chosen by the Consejo Superior de la Defensa (CSD), a board of twenty-three officers, half of which were elected. Arana wanted the elections to be open and supervised by the commanding officers who were all aranistas. Arbenz wanted the ballots to be secret so that no influence would be exerted on the troops. A bitter oral battle was waged between the two forces and then, unexpectedly, Arana gave in. When Arbenz was questioned about the incident he replied, "They don't care any more. They've made up their

³⁰ Gleijeses 59.

minds to go for a coup."³¹

Arana had decided to attempt a coup, but his overconfidence and lingering internal conflict prevented him from being successful. Instead of launching a straightforward coup, Arana confronted Arévalo on July 16, 1949. He gave Arévalo an ultimatum demanding the replacement of the cabinet with aranists and the retirement of Arbenz and his supporters. He asserted that if Arévalo complied, he would be allowed to complete his term and if he failed to comply, he would be deposed. The ultimatum would expire at 10 p.m. on July eighteenth. After Arana left, Arevalo called Arbenz and other key aides and informed them of the ultimatum. The next day the Permanent Committee of the Guatemalan Congress met in secret and agreed that Arana should be dismissed. Arrangements were made to send Arana to exile in Cuba and all that remained was to form a plan to take Arana by surprise.

The opportunity to catch Arana presented itself the next day when he came to Arevalo's office to inform him that he was going to El Morlon, a presidential residence to recover some hidden weapons. Arévalo called Arbenz and his men and they were sent to arrest Arana on his return. Details of what followed are unclear, but in the course of a shoot-out between the two parties, Arana was killed. Arbenz asserted that Arana's driver fired on them first and that his men returned fire. The official statement released by Arévalo never mentioned the ultimatum and claimed that Arana had been assassinated by his right-wing supporters because he refused to stage a coup. As news spread of his death, the aranist military officers rose in revolt. Arbenz and forces loyal to him were able to maintain control despite their numerical and weapons disadvantage.

³¹ Gleijeses 62.

Following the revolt, Arévalo completed his six-year term. Arbenz quickly became the candidate of the RN, PAR, organized labor, and the Partido de Integridad Nacional (PIN), a party composed of upper-class citizens of Arbenz' home city of Quezaltenango. The FPL, the most conservative of the revolutionary parties, nominated Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes, one of Ubico's generals who during the October revolt had offered his services as a mediator to the American embassy. Simultaneously in 1950, ten of the leading members of the PAR including Jose Manuel Fortuny, Alfredo Guerra Borges, and Bernardo Alvarado Monzón broke from the party to form the Communist Party of Guatemala (CPG). They established a newspaper, the *Octubre*, and the Jacobo Sanchez school of Marxism. In September of the same year the Arevalo government closed both the paper and the school saying that the Communists could express their views in private "but not proselytize."³²

Arbenz was elected by popular election on November 8-10, 1950. He assumed the presidency on March 15, 1951. Of 404,739 ballots cast, he won 258,987 compared to Ydigoras' second place finish with 72,796 votes. Arbenz's ascendancy marked the first peaceful political transition in decades.

The Arbenz Administration 1951-1954.

At age thirty-seven, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was the youngest president in the Americas upon his inauguration. Arbenz came from a middle-class background and had been a career military man. Educated at the national military academy, the Escuela Politecnica, Arbenz had quickly become frustrated with the Guatemalan class system and gravitated toward the

³² Gleijeses 81.

revolutionary movement which had led to his orchestration of the October Revolution in 1944. Arbenz married Maria Cristina Villanova, an upper-class Salvadoran with similar liberal tendencies. Maria was slightly more liberal than Jacobo and did have communist friends. It was at her insistence that Jacobo read the *Communist Manifesto* earlier in his military career. It is important to note here that while neither Jacobo or Maria were Communists, their ideas about the reforms needed in Guatemala happened to coincide with communist interests within Guatemala and thus were mistaken for communist doctrine.

When Arbenz took office in 1951 he had one clear goal in mind, promoting the economic development of Guatemala. Arbenz hoped to accomplish this end by breaking the "economic and political power of the traditional groups which controlled the countryside and the foreign interests which owned and operated the nation's largest public utilities and agricultural properties."³³

Arbenz said:

We are going to promote the economic development of Guatemala in accordance with three fundamental objectives: first, to convert our country from a dependent nation and semi-colonial country into an economically independent country; second, to transform our nation from a backward country and a predominantly feudal economy into a modern capitalist country; and third, to effect this transformation so that it is accompanied by the greatest possible increase in the living standards of the large masses of people.³⁴

Arbenz undertook this economic development with a two-plank plan calling for massive land reform and an aggressive public works campaign. It was this reform and suspicions of Arbenz's communist tendencies which eventually precipitated United States involvement in Arbenz's overthrow.

³³ Cole Blasier, The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976) 152.

³⁴ Blasier 152.

The vast majority of Arbenz's land reform came in the form of Decree 900 which was passed on June 17, 1952. The decree, which had originally been secretly drafted by Fortuny and other members of the CPG, required that all uncultivated land in private estates of more than 672 acres be expropriated; idle land in estates of between 224 and 672 acres would be expropriated only if less than two thirds of the estate was under cultivation; estates of less than 224 acres would not be affected and all of the national fincas (government owned farms) would be alienated. The estates would be compensated in the form of three percent agrarian bonds maturing in twenty five years. Compensation would be equal to the value of the property claimed on the 1951 tax returns.³⁵

Expropriated land would be given in private ownership or in lifetime tenure according to the recipient's wishes. For twenty-five years, every beneficiary would pay the government three percent of the annual value of the crop if the land had been received in lifetime tenure and five percent if it had been received in outright ownership.³⁶ The administration of the agricultural reform was hierarchical in nature. The Departamento Agrario Nacional controlled expropriation and distribution of land at the national level, and the decree was enforced at the local level by elected comites agrarios locales (CALs) and comites agrarios departamentales (CADs).

Arbenz's agrarian reform was extremely successful. By June 1954, over 1.4 million acres had been expropriated and over 100,000 heads of families which belonged to the lower-class or Indian population owned their own land for the very first time. The amount of total land under cultivation drastically increased and American scholars reported in 1954 that "existing data seem

³⁵ Gleijeses 150-151.

³⁶ Ibid.

to indicate that agrarian reform... unleashed new productive energies from both the peasants and those finqueros whose previously idle land was put into use."³⁷ In 1953 embassy reports concluded that corn production had risen by fifteen percent, rice production had increased by seventy-four percent, and wheat production had risen by twenty-one percent.³⁸

Despite its success, U.S. officials were strongly against the Guatemalan land reform plan. This opposition was the direct result of the adverse effects the reform had on the United Fruit Company. As the largest land owner in Guatemala, the UFCO, which grew bananas, was economically damaged by Decree 900. The majority of the UFCO's land holdings were uncultivated. As a result, the government of Guatemala expropriated 234,000 uncultivated acres of UFCO's 295,000 acre plantation at Tiquisate in March of 1953. And in February of 1954, Guatemala expropriated 173,000 acres of uncultivated land from the 253,000 acre Bananera plantation owned by the UFCO. In total, the Guatemalan government reimbursed the United Fruit Company with \$1,185,000 in agrarian bonds, the same amount that the UFCO had listed as the property's value on its 1951 tax returns.³⁹

The United Fruit Company, echoed by the United States State Department, erupted in a chorus of complaints. The UFCO began by claiming that the expropriated land was really valued at \$19,355,000, a claim which the State Department endorsed. In addition, the State Department on UFCO's behalf argued that Decree 900 was discriminatory and aimed at damaging foreign interests such as the UFCO. The State Department also claimed that Decree 900 did not follow

³⁷ Gleijeses 158.

³⁸ Gleijeses 158.

³⁹ Gleijeses 164.

the international precedent for land expropriation because the bonds were not prompt, fair payments. Finally, UFCO claimed that it needed its uncultivated land to protect the banana crops from natural disasters and disease.

However, it is important to note that Guatemala's land reform system could not be condemned on any of these grounds. First, Guatemala used the companies' own stated property values, an argument the State Department responded to by claiming that properties are typically undervalued on tax returns. Second, Decree 900 could not be considered discriminatory because it applied equally to all farms of the same size and most harshly to the state owned fincas which were completely expropriated; even some of Arevalo's and Arbenz's own land was expropriated. Third, the compensation system which the U. S. claimed was so unjust was modeled after one it had originated during the U. S.-directed agrarian reform in Formosa and Japan which also stipulated payment in the form of twenty-five year agrarian bonds with interest rates of three percent. Finally, the Guatemalan government argued that the amount of land that was needed to protect the bananas from natural disasters and disease was much smaller than UFCO estimates. That debate has never been resolved; however it appears that both sides greatly exaggerated.

The second plank of Arbenz's economic plan also jeopardized United States economic interests. Arbenz planned an aggressive public works campaign which included the construction of a new highway which would link the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Guatemala, the construction of a second Pacific port, and the construction of a new power plant. These steps endangered American economic interests because they directly conflicted with monopolies enjoyed by American corporations. The highway would compete with the International Railway of Central America (IRCA), an American firm partially owned by the UFCO which was at that time the only

method of freight transport across the country. The port of Santo Tomas would be in direct competition with the UFCO owned port twenty miles to its north. As the only port in Guatemala, the UFCO port held the monopoly on all freight shipping. The new power plant would ruin the monopoly on power supply in Guatemala also held by an American firm. In total, Arbenz's public works projects meant the destruction of monopolies and monopoly rents for American corporations and more affordable services for Guatemalans.

Although Arbenz's economic plan antagonized the American government, it was not the primary cause of American involvement in his overthrow. The real impetus for American involvement was the fear that Guatemala had become a "beachhead" for communism in the western hemisphere. As John Foster Dulles stated, "If the United Fruit matter were settled, if they gave a gold piece for every banana, the problem would remain just as it is today as far as the presence of communist infiltration in Guatemala is concerned."⁴⁰ To understand U.S. fears of communism in Guatemala one must first look at the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America in the Cold War period.

Latin America is strategically and economically important to the U.S. As the *New York Times* editorialized three months before Arbenz's overthrow, "Latin America's geographic proximity, along with its historic, economic, and political connections, gives it a position of paramount significance."⁴¹ Latin America's strategic importance lay in its proximity to the U. S. as well as the fact that it contained numerous U. S. military bases and the Panama Canal which our ambassador to Guatemala in 1954, Peurifoy, labeled "our greatest strategic installation

⁴⁰ Immerman 82.

⁴¹ Immerman 7.

anywhere in the world."⁴² Latin America was also viewed as economically important because as an export market it was more important than Asia, Africa, and Oceania combined. And U.S. investment in the region surpassed that of all other regions except Canada.

Secondly, Latin America was viewed by the U.S. to be more susceptible to Communism because it was run by dictators and received less economic aid and attention from the U. S. than other democratic regions such as Europe. Thirdly, as the National Security Council Resolution 68 stated, "the Cold War world...was divided into two antithetical camps led by the United States and the Soviet Union. The principal objective of the Soviet camp was to acquire absolute hegemony; thus conflict between the two systems was endemic. Only when one side emerged as the clear victor would this conflict abate."⁴³ This feeling was piqued at the onset of the 1950's by the communist revolution in China and the Korean War. "By the 1950's, alarmists claimed that the Kremlin was pouring hundreds of agents into Latin America.... The communist aim was quite simple: the destruction of Washington's influence in the western hemisphere and the conversion of Latin America into a 'hotbed of hostility and trouble for the United States.'"⁴⁴

As a result of this relationship and these fears, Washington viewed Arbenz's acceptance of the Communist Party within Guatemala and his personal relationships with some of its members with alarm. Fear grew so quickly that the U.S. seemed to be creating a communist threat where none existed. "Repeatedly government experts used McCarthy-like inferences rather than facts to find evidence of Guatemalan Communism. They inferred that any policy opposing that of the

⁴² Immerman 8.

⁴³ Immerman 9.

⁴⁴ Immerman 10.

United States or even independent of it, was inherently pro-Soviet."⁴⁵ For instance, Eisenhower pointed to the Guatemalan posture during the Korean War as an example of its communism.

During the war, Guatemala publicly supported the U.S. action but it did not send troops because the U.S. would not accept troops from any country that did not at least comprise a brigade and could stay for 90 days, a qualification many Latin American nations including Guatemala could not fulfill. Contrary to U.S. efforts to make it appear not to be, Guatemalan foreign policy was in fact pro-U.S.

State Department reports also claimed that the Communists exercised significant control over the Arbenz's government and the president himself. In reality, there were no Communists in the Arbenz cabinet and the Communists only controlled four of the fifty-six seats in the Guatemalan congress. In fact, the only place where the Communists wielded any power was in their control of organized labor. More important, the Communists "most emphatically did not control the most powerful organization in the country-- the armed forces."⁴⁶ "At its height in 1954, membership within the Guatemalan Communist Party numbered about four thousand... About the only way that the activities of Guatemalan Communists could seriously endanger the United States was through their connection with the Soviet Union."⁴⁷ As of the late 1970's, however, investigators had found "no convincing evidence...of direct Soviet contact" with the Guatemalan Communists or government.⁴⁸ Due to its small numbers and the fact the Guatemalan

⁴⁵ Immerman 93.

⁴⁶ Blasier 157.

⁴⁷ Blasier 157.

⁴⁸ Blasier 158.

Communist Party did not hold any important government offices, and did not exercise any influence over the military; instead of the State Department assertion that communist interests controlled the government, it would have been "fairer to say that the groups which controlled Guatemala under Arbenz had interests and policies established independently of the Communists which the Communists supported. As a result of domestic and foreign developments, the government's and the Communists' policies overlapped in many areas."⁴⁹

Conclusion

In the two and a half decades preceding the 1954 U.S. intervention, the Guatemalan government, first under Arévalo and later under Arbenz, was becoming increasingly liberal and democratic. Simultaneously, Guatemalan agrarian production and the overall economy were also growing, creating greater economic independence than at any other time in Guatemala's history. While one would have expected the United States to openly embrace a more democratic and economically stable Guatemala, this was not the case. In fact, while Guatemala became increasingly democratic and economically self-sufficient, U.S. foreign policy towards it became increasingly alarmist and interventionary-- eventually resulting in a situation in which the United States as the leader of the free world, acted to overthrow Guatemala's democratically elected president in order to replace him with a military dictator.

⁴⁹ Blasier 157.

Chapter Three: From Truman to Eisenhower, the Road to Intervention

U.S.- Latin American Foreign Policy 1900-1944

For the first three decades of the twentieth century, United States foreign policy towards Latin America was based primarily on the Monroe Doctrine and its supplement, the Roosevelt Corollary. The Monroe Doctrine, introduced in 1823, stated that the United States would view any foreign intervention in the western hemisphere as a clear threat to U.S. sovereignty. Later in the 1850's, the Monroe Doctrine became a formal declaration to the world that the western hemisphere fell completely within the U.S. sphere of influence, and that any involvement within the region on the part of the European powers would no longer be tolerated.

Following several disputes over Latin American nations' inability to pay their European lenders, the Monroe Doctrine was supplemented by the Roosevelt Corollary. The corollary claimed the right for the United States "to exercise, in Theodore Roosevelt's words, 'international police power' to ensure that Latin Americans paid their international debts and respected foreign lives and property."⁵⁰ Together, these two policies formed the justification for, and the battle cry of United States intervention into the internal affairs of Latin American nations throughout the first decades of the twentieth century.

The United States' apparent disregard of sovereignty was strongly resented by Latin Americans. Latin American discontent came to a head at the 1928 Inter-American conference in Havana. During the conference, several Latin American representatives, led by the Argentina,

⁵⁰ Rabe 7.

Mexico, and El Salvador delegations, sponsored a resolution which asserted that no state had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of another. The United States, with its controlling interest in the group, was able to table the resolution. However, the severity of Latin American discontent had made it clear to Washington policy makers that U.S. policy towards Latin America needed to undergo a change.

The Hoover administration which took office in 1929 was the first to attempt to overhaul policy towards Latin America. Hoover began his attempt for policy reconciliation with a pre-inaugural goodwill tour of South America. Upon taking office, his administration quickly made its goodwill overtures known by publicly accepting the Clark Memorandum, a foreign policy analysis which denounced the use of the Monroe Doctrine as a justification for intervention in Latin America. Despite Hoover's intent of goodwill, the effects of his conciliatory policies were largely undermined by the economic hardships which plagued the United States during his administration.

Between 1929 and 1933 the real value of inter-American trade fell by seventy-five percent.⁵¹ The majority of the decline was linked to the depression of the U.S. economy. However, despite the massive economic slowdown, Latin Americans maintained that the trade decrease was really the result of the United States' aggressive trade practices embodied in the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930. As U.S. effective tariff rates rose, Latin Americans became increasingly convinced that the United States was protecting domestic producers at the expense of Latin American economies. The precipitous drop in trade wreaked havoc on the export-sensitive Latin American economies. Unable to generate sufficient income to pay the interest on their

⁵¹ *ibid.*

international debt, the Latin American nations were forced to default on their loans. The resulting economic slowdown forced hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans into poverty and spawned political instability throughout the region. In the wake of the financial disaster, Latin Americans were left questioning both the free trade principle and the "goodwill" of American foreign policy.

Following his inauguration, Franklin Roosevelt worked quickly to repair the damaged inter-American relationship. To accomplish this goal, Roosevelt introduced the Good Neighbor Policy, a two-part policy which was designed to de-emphasize the threat of U.S. intervention in Latin America while simultaneously rebuilding the inter-American trade relationship. The Good Neighbor Policy diminished the threat of intervention in a political context using a series of policy changes. The administration orchestrated a massive withdrawal of U.S. troops and economic "advisors" from the Caribbean. This diminishment of the United States' physical presence within Latin America was designed to symbolize a decrease in U.S. efforts to influence the internal affairs of its neighbors. The Roosevelt administration supplemented the U.S. troop withdrawal with the formal relinquishment of the Platt Amendment of 1903, an agreement which had nominally granted Cuban independence while serving as a pretext for U.S. intervention in the region. Finally and most important, beginning with the seventh International Conference of American States in late 1933, the Roosevelt administration demonstrated its commitment to amicable inter-American relations by consistently supporting Latin American resolutions which outlawed military intervention. Together, these three policy changes worked to successfully assuage fears of U.S. intervention in the region.

The Roosevelt administration supplemented its political efforts to reconstruct the inter-

American relationship with a series of economic policies designed to rebuild Latin American economies and inter-American trade. The administration began by passing the Reciprocal Trade Agreement of 1934. The trade agreement gave Roosevelt the power to reduce effective tariff rates by up to fifty percent in exchange for equivalent concessions. By 1939, the administration had negotiated independent trade agreements with eleven Latin American countries and the level of U.S.-Latin American trade had nearly doubled in value from its 1933 low.⁵² In addition, the administration also increased aid to Latin America in an effort to help diversify the Latin American economies and generate growth.

Roosevelt's economic policy overtures combined with their political counterparts to make the Good Neighbor Policy one of the most clearly recognized successes in inter-American relations. By 1942, inter-American relations had improved to such an extent that the United States was able to build a strong war time alliance with its neighbors to the south. By February of 1942, eighteen of the twenty Latin American nations had either signed an alliance with the United States or formally terminated relations with the Axis powers. Chile severed relations with the Axis powers a year later, leaving Argentina as the only remaining neutral nation in the hemisphere.⁵³ Latin American support in the war effort proved to be a strategic advantage in terms of the United States and Allied war efforts. The U.S. was able to gain access to six bases in Latin America, and two nations, Brazil and Mexico, sent troops into battle on behalf of the Allied war effort.

The true benefit of Latin American participation in the Allied effort was the product of the

⁵² Rabe 8.

⁵³ *ibid.*

economic element of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. The rebuilt Latin American economies were able to produce significant amounts of raw materials and commodities which were trafficked through strengthened inter-American trade structures. As a result, throughout the war, nonmilitary agencies of the U.S. government were able to purchase \$2.4 billion worth of commodities from Latin American suppliers, 54% of all of the supplies purchased world wide during the war period.⁵⁴ The United States war effort relied on Latin American suppliers for such strategically important raw materials as beryllium, copper, manganese, tungsten, tin, tantalum, and zinc. In addition, Great Britain received 80% of its oil imports during the war from Venezuela.⁵⁵ "In effect, Latin America served as an arsenal for the United States and the United Nations."⁵⁶

It is important to note that while the Roosevelt administration strove to and did actually improve inter-American relationships, it did not do so at the expense of United States power within the hemisphere. Roosevelt no longer ordered the marines into Latin America, but he replaced their influence with that of the Reciprocal Trade Agreement. He compelled Latin American nations into action by the threat of economic rather than military consequences. This threat, while just as real, was more subtle and apparently less offensive to Latin Americans because it was accompanied by economic growth and opportunity.

The Roosevelt administration policy had the effect of not only preserving U.S. influence, but also increasing it in the post war setting. World War II effectively devastated the German economy and severely weakened Great Britain, the United States greatest competitors in Latin

⁵⁴ Rabe 9.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

American markets. The Roosevelt administration took advantage of these conditions, assisting Latin American governments in their confiscation of German holdings and moving quickly to assume the market share vacated by its weakened European competitors. "In sum, the Roosevelt administration pursued traditional sphere-of-influence goals in Latin America: it wanted to exclude foreign influence from Latin America, preserve U.S. leadership in the hemisphere, dominate the Caribbean basin, and maintain political stability."⁵⁷ "Military intervention had proved costly, unpopular, and counter-productive-- it had not produced peace and order, and it had jeopardized the expansion of trade and investment."⁵⁸ As a result, Roosevelt turned to economic influence as a policy tool to meet his ends. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, then, was "in terms of means not ends, the anti-thesis of the previous policy of force diplomacy."⁵⁹

Because of its success in rebuilding inter-American diplomatic and economic relationships and due to the advantages it generated during World War II, Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy has been hailed as both "the 'most successful' policy in the history of U.S. foreign relations," and "the golden age of Pan American cooperation."⁶⁰ It was a popular policy both at home and abroad, and it was naturally a policy which Roosevelt's Democratic successor, Harry S. Truman, would and did chose to continue.

Latin American Policy in the Truman Administration 1944-1952

⁵⁷ Rabe 10-11.

⁵⁸ Rabe 11.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Rabe 9.

The Latin American foreign policy of the Truman administration was a natural extension of the successful Latin American policy of the Roosevelt administration. In fact, the Truman administration's foreign policy differed from the Roosevelt policy in only one way-- it was conducted in the context of the bi-polar Cold War environment. The increasing tensions of the Cold War period forced Truman to reemphasize the importance of maintaining the United States' sphere-of-influence in the western hemisphere. However, Truman was also partially bound by Roosevelt's success to seek to maintain inter-American relationships. The result of these two often conflicting goals was a Latin American foreign policy program which at times appeared confused and inconsistent.

To understand the key to the Truman administration's foreign policy, one must first understand the men who undertook that policy. The men primarily responsible for making foreign policy in the Truman administration were the President himself, Secretaries of State George Marshall and Dean Acheson and, to a lesser extent in the second administration, Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. All four of these men were fiercely anti-communist, and all four were men of action. President Truman made the decision to drop the only atomic bombs ever released on a civilian population and created the Central Intelligence Agency. It must be mentioned here that although both Acheson and Marshall were very strong influences in policy making, Truman himself played the largest role in the formation of U.S. foreign policy during both of his administrations.

Initially neither Truman nor his high level foreign policy staff had particularly strong backgrounds in Latin America. However, Truman was indeed interested in Latin American policy. This interest was spawned by necessity. Latin America was simply too important to the

United States in both economic and strategic terms to ignore. Truman only appeared to be uninterested in Latin America at times because it required relatively less attention than other regions. Truman's foreign policy "reflected the overarching objective of containing communism. Since most Latin American countries, especially the dictatorships, posed no threat to the United States policy, the region generally received less attention and fewer resources than such areas as Europe and the Far East, which appeared more vulnerable to Communist expansion."⁶¹ However, as Cold War tensions heightened, the policy of containment became clearly delineated and Latin America began to take on a larger focus in administration policy.

The Truman administration's initial policy toward Latin America was a direct continuation of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy as yet unaffected by cold war hostilities. The Truman administration continued to vote in support of outlawing interventions while maximizing its influence within Latin America. United Nations Article 51 is the best example of early Truman administration policy towards Latin America. At the United Nations Conference on International Organization in 1945, the Truman administration, represented by Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Nelson Rockefeller, supported Latin American arguments that the United Nations should sanction regional security organizations. The proposition was accepted by the United Nations and became Article 51 to the United Nations Charter. In 1947 the U.S. signed a mutual defense agreement with its Latin American neighbors, and one year later in Bogota, Colombia the charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) was incorporated. While Latin Americans perceived the OAS as a "forum to influence the United States, a treaty that guaranteed the nonintervention principle, and a vehicle for transferring economic aid," the

⁶¹ Immerman 9.

Truman administration believed that it had succeeded in preserving the "the unilateral character of the Monroe Doctrine'; if the United States needed to enforce peace in Latin America, it would not be 'at the mercy of getting the assent of the Security Council.'"⁶² The creation of the OAS provided the United States with a forum in which it clearly had a controlling interest and where it was essentially free from the influence of its European and Soviet counterparts in the Security Council. The OAS was the perfect vehicle for the U.S. to maintain its sphere of influence in the hemisphere.

The OAS provided the initial operating context for U.S.- Guatemalan relations during the first Truman administration. The Truman administration had been displeased with the Arévalo administration in Guatemala since its installation in 1944. This distaste was the result of what the State Department perceived as Arévalo's antagonism towards U.S. business interests and his complacent acceptance of the small communist movement in Guatemala. The Truman administration's displeasure with Arévalo reached a peak in 1947 following the adoption of his labor reform code.

While Truman disliked Arévalo's policies, his ability to influence the Guatemalan leader's actions were limited by his effort to maintain good inter-American relations. The Truman administration wanted to hold Arévalo accountable for the damage his labor package was doing to American corporations, most notably the UFCO. However, the administration felt that it could not use the OAS as a decision making body because it would be all but impossible to convince other Latin American nations that Arévalo was the aggressor against the United States. In addition, the administration believed that any such attempt would be perceived by the other Latin

⁶² Rabe 13.

American countries as an example of U.S. interventionism.

The Truman administration was further limited in terms of its policy response options because Guatemala received only small amounts of foreign aid, the United States' most powerful policy tool in Latin America. The Truman administration did discontinue what little aid Guatemala had formerly received, however, the effect was insignificant. The U.S. expanded this withholding of aid to an arms embargo in 1949. Because the U.S. was Guatemala's primary arms supplier, this eventually had a significant effect on Guatemalan politics. However, the full impact of Truman's "selective withholding of cooperation" to Guatemala did not begin to be felt until the beginning of 1950 when it was expanded to include benefits from Truman's Point Four program and World Bank funds.

Truman had initiated the Point Four Program as an extension to Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. It was "predicated on the realization that worsening economic conditions could lead to increased social unrest and open the door to Communist subversion."⁶³ As a result, Point Four was designed to provide third world countries with increased levels of foreign aid and technological assistance to spur their economic development and prevent communism from taking a toehold within society. Much of the Point Four money was directed into Latin America which was becoming more important strategically as the Cold War heated up. The increased strategic importance had lead Truman to simultaneously adopt a plan to arm Latin America nations in conjunction with the fight against communism. Latin American nations were eager to accept both U.S. funds and arms. As a result, withholding Point Four funds from Guatemala in conjunction with the arms embargo represented an excellent opportunity for Truman to punish the Arevalo

⁶³ Immerman 12.

administration. The effect of decreased aid flows and the arms embargo was further compounded when the U.S. used its substantial influence in the World Bank to block several development loans to Guatemala. In sum, through 1950 the Truman administration followed a policy of "withholding favors from the Guatemalan government."⁶⁴ Following 1950, however, the administration came to the consensus that the withholding policy was not effective enough and a policy change was necessary. This realization was the direct result of the heightening of Cold War tensions and the election of leftward leaning Guatemalan president, Jacobo Arbenz.

Cold War tensions rose in the early 1950's as the result of two events: the communist revolution in China in 1949 which altered the balance of power in favor of communism, and the onset of the Korean War, the first armed conflict between the superpowers, in 1950. The heightening of tension placed an increased focus and importance on two policies which would define all of the foreign policy of the Truman administration and much of the foreign policy of succeeding administrations for generations to come. The first of these two policies was the concept of containment. The theory of containment was first introduced in the July, 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* by George Kennan. "Its basic premise was that the world was divided into two antithetical camps, led by the United States and the Soviet Union. The principal objective of the Soviet camp was to acquire absolute hegemony; thus conflict between the two systems was endemic."⁶⁵ This theory led to the direct conclusion that as the only other superpower, the United States had an obligation to protect the free world and democratic ideals from the communist onslaught. As a result, the U.S. adopted a policy of containment which was formally recognized

⁶⁴ Immerman 109.

⁶⁵ Immerman 9.

in National Security Council Resolution 68. It would concede to communism all of the nations which were already allied with the Soviet Union; however, it would fight to protect every non-communist in the free world from the communist influence.

The second defining policy of the Truman administration was the Truman Doctrine. The Truman Doctrine emerged in 1947 as an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine. It stated that the United States would protect any sovereign government from a revolution from both within and outside the nation. In essence, the doctrine served to justify any U.S. intervention on the basis of communist containment.

The perceived communist threat within the western hemisphere as a whole and within Guatemala in particular was compounded by the popular election of Jacobo Arbenz in 1950. Following Arana's assassination in 1949, the State Department had expressed a little concern about Arbenz's apparent leftist leanings. However, both State Department and intelligence analysis soon confirmed that "Arbenz was a dishonest and unsavory character, [whose] self-interest would drive him into the familiar embrace of Washington."⁶⁶ As a result, the Truman administration "reassured itself that under Arbenz (and U.S. influence) the Guatemalan army would remain a formidable bulwark against communism.... The military, Guatemala's most powerful institution, was still healthy-- that is, anticommunist."⁶⁷ This belief, combined with the preponderant non-interventionist philosophy of the State Department, explains why despite its indignation, the Truman administration did not plot to overthrow the Arévalo administration prior to or following Arana's death in 1949.

⁶⁶ Gleijeses 127.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

Following Arbenz's inauguration and the announcement of Decree 900 in June of 1952, the Truman administration's policy toward Guatemala underwent a metamorphosis. The building tensions of the Cold War no longer permitted Truman's apparent passivity in the face of Arbenz's communist sympathies and anti-American economic policies. The administration had come under a great deal of pressure to change its Guatemalan policy in the first two years of the 1950's. This pressure had flowed from two primary sources: the American public and the UFCO lobby. Beginning in 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy began to stir up fears about the communist threat both at home and abroad. These fears were quickly heightened by the McCarthyism movement, and by 1952 the American public was gripped by anticommunist feelings and fear of the red scare. The national hysteria and witch hunt atmosphere generated by McCarthyism pressured the Truman administration to be particularly hard on communism. This pressure was especially strong within the Latin American context because the average American considered the western hemisphere to be the United States' backyard. Because Guatemala represented the first overt communist threat in the hemisphere it naturally became a test case of Truman's policy intent.

The second source of pressure on the Truman administration was the powerful UFCO lobby. The UFCO had been pressuring the administration to take definitive action since Arevalo had announced his labor reform package in 1947. The reforms had driven up wages within Guatemala and resulted in lower profits for UFCO, Guatemala's largest employer. UFCO pressure culminated in 1952 after the adoption of Arbenz's land reform plan which eventually led to the expropriation of 400,000 of UFCO's 550,000 acres in Guatemala. It was increased UFCO pressure which provided the Truman administration with the final impetus to undertake an intervention.

After consulting with a UFCO representative during the first month of land expropriations, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Mann sent a memorandum to Truman's special council, Charles Murphy, recommending a more forceful policy alternative. Mann reported that in an earlier meeting, the United Fruit lobbyist Thomas Corcoran told him that "'the die was already cast' between the Guatemalan government and UFCO and that he had been turning over in his mind the possibility that the American companies might agree between themselves on some method to bring the moderate elements into power in Guatemala."⁶⁸

Although Mann favored a more forceful policy in Guatemala, it is unclear whether he was ever aware of the secret proposal to overthrow Arbenz. The proposal had its inception in the 1952 Washington visit of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, the United States' greatest ally in the region. At a Oval Office meeting with Truman, Acheson, Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett, and Truman's military aids Vaughan and Morrow, the senior Somoza "proposed that he take action to bring about the downfall of the Communist government in Guatemala.... He boasted that if the United States would supply him with sufficient arms, (he) would 'clean up Guatemala for (the U.S.) in no time.'"⁶⁹

Somoza's plan apparently called for collaboration on the part of Guatemala's neighbors. Truman found the option worth exploring and sent his second military aid, Morrow, back to Latin America with Somoza to explore the opportunities for cooperation. Morrow returned shortly with a report that the proposal was feasible. Truman then bypassed the State Department's Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, approved the report himself, and sent it on to CIA director

⁶⁸ Immerman 119.

⁶⁹ Gleijeses 120.

Walter Bedell Smith. Meanwhile, Somoza was tacitly coordinating support for the intervention in Colombia, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. Cuba's Batista seemed wary of the plan and whether Somoza had trouble convincing El Salvador's Oscar Osario remains unclear. It is clear that Somoza felt that even without Cuba and El Salvador, he had formed a sufficiently strong alliance, and he began to question Assistant Secretary of State Miller about when the promised arms shipments would arrive. Miller, unaware of both the plan and Truman's authorization, consistently told Somoza that he knew nothing of any arms agreement. Bedell Smith continued on with the preparations and recruited Castillo Moreno, a Guatemalan exile living in Honduras, as the liberator of Guatemala. Smith also made arrangements for the promised arms to be shipped aboard a United Fruit freighter in cases marked "agricultural machinery." The freighter had only been at sea a few days when Miller received the authorization request from the State Department's munitions division. He quickly realized what had happened and confronted Acheson, who appears to have been kept out of the loop. Acheson presented the State Department's case to President Truman and the plan was immediately aborted. The freighter was redirected to Panama where the arms were unloaded.

The question which remains is why did Truman call off the intervention so abruptly? "After all this would have been a low risk operation for the United States and would have resolved a very thorny problem. All the United States would have done was supply the arms. Somoza pledged to do the rest. Truman, while clearly not the master of covert operations that Eisenhower was, must have found such a seemingly simple solution most appealing."⁷⁰ The answer to this question lies in three possible places. First, Truman may have been worried that his

⁷⁰ Immerman 121.

circumvention of Miller and possibly Acheson would have caused irreparable damage to his relations with the State Department. Second and more likely, several of Truman's advisors on the project may have reassessed the situation and advised Truman that an anti-Arbenz invasion had little chance of success given Arbenz's total control of the armed forces. A failed attempt could have lead to U.S. embarrassment, worsened inter-American relations, and increased support for the Guatemalan revolution. Third, the intervention may have been called off due to the reservations expressed by Galvez and Osario. Galvez had apparently wanted State Department assurances prior to making any commitment and these assurances had been precluded by the fact that State had been left out of the decision making loop. "Because Honduras was strategically critical to any successful invasion, the plan became too risky."⁷¹

The likely answer includes all three rationales. While the reasoning behind the halted intervention remains nebulous, a change in the policy approach of the administration rang clear. "By the end of the Truman administration, at least some officials as well as the CIA had become convinced that a policy of conciliation toward Guatemala was unproductive."⁷² The sentiment expressed in the closing days of the Truman administration was the argument upon which Eisenhower based his 1952 bid for the White House. Eisenhower campaigned on the principle that containment was not a sufficient foreign policy agenda. Instead he advocated an aggressive rollback of communism. The concept of rollback combined with a decreasing concern for maintaining Good Neighbor relationships to form the ideological frame work from which the Eisenhower administration approached foreign policy in Latin America.

⁷¹ Immerman 122.

⁷² Ibid.

Latin American Policy in the Eisenhower administration (1952- June, 1954)

As mentioned above, the Eisenhower administration based its 1952 campaign on the criticism of what they labeled as "twenty years of treason." "Relentlessly, they had charged that the Democrats had embarked on a road to surrender that had led to Yalta, the loss of China, and disaster in Korea.... Containment, the Republicans charged, was negative, futile, immoral. To the American people, they now offered a credo of victory: rollback."⁷³ Despite Eisenhower's aggressive stance and active foreign policy in other regions, the Eisenhower administration's initial Guatemalan policy strongly resembled the passivity of the Truman administrations. However, the contradiction between doctrine and policy can be easily explained. "Eisenhower's 'passivity' vis-a-vis Guatemala was due to very prosaic and transient considerations: the new administration was just settling in after two decades of Democratic presidents, it was preoccupied with ending the Korean War and defining a policy toward the Soviet Union, and it had already embarked on a major covert operation in Iran."⁷⁴

The Eisenhower administration's passivity began to fade in early 1953 as Korean considerations began to lessen and evidence of increasing communist influence in the western hemisphere began to surface. The administration's first substantial discussion of Latin American policy took place on February 18, 1953. At the National Security meeting that morning, Director Allen Dulles delivered an unsettling report on the progress of communism in Latin America. Dulles warned that Latin America "was deteriorating not only in cordiality of relationships with

⁷³ Gleijeses 234.

⁷⁴ Gleijeses 243.

the United States but in the economic and political spheres" and that "the Kremlin was exploiting this situation." Dulles continued by stating that these conditions were resulting in "trends in the direction of economic nationalism, regionalism, neutralism, and increasing communist influence."⁷⁵ Dulles concluded by stating that "in particular, 'communist infection' in Guatemala was 'such as to mark an approaching crisis.'"⁷⁶

Director Dulles' February warning led directly to a reformation of U.S. policy towards Latin America. This new policy was recorded on March 18, 1953 in the form of NSC Resolution 144/I. NSC 144/I formally defined inter-American relations within the context of the Cold War struggle. Informally, the resolution communicated the U.S. desire for "Latin America to support the U.S. position at the United Nations, eliminate the 'menace of internal communist or other anti-U.S. subversion,' produce raw materials, and cooperate in defending the hemisphere."⁷⁷ Under the guise of NSC 144/I, the Eisenhower administration used its first two years in office to employ "a variety of measures to combat communism."⁷⁸ An intense anti-communist propaganda campaign and a significant military aid program were among these measures. The Eisenhower administration's efforts to fight communism within the hemisphere culminated in June, 1954 with the sponsorship of a successful CIA intervention into Guatemala to overthrow Arbenz.

A careful analysis of how the Eisenhower administration's Guatemala policy changed from an initial Truman-like passivity to active intervention in the course of two years highlights the

⁷⁵ Rabe 31.

⁷⁶ Rabe 31.

⁷⁷ Rabe 32.

⁷⁸ Rabe 38.

importance of two impetuses for change. The first impetus can be understood by examining the character of the four major policy makers in the Eisenhower administration; John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, Walter Bedell Smith, and the president himself. The first of these men, John Foster Dulles was extremely anti-communist. "His hard-line attitudes developed from deep-seated theological, philosophical, and intellectual beliefs, as well as profound concern for the political impact of McCarthyism."⁷⁹ Dulles was an extremely intelligent man who, "when it came to working for, or adjusting to, some new global order.... fell back on a very traditional pursuit of national interest."⁸⁰

Like Acheson, Dulles knew very little about Latin America. His only experience within the region had been gained during the inter-war period when he served as a corporate attorney representing many U.S. multinationals. The United Fruit Company was among the clients represented by the Dulles' firm. Dulles had little interest in Latin America "except peripherally as a side issue in his anti-communist crusade."⁸¹ Dulles did know, however, "who his country's best friends in the region were. 'His instructions are flat,' remarked an aide. 'Do nothing to offend the dictators, they are the only people we can depend on.'"⁸² Dulles' embrace of dictatorships in the fight against communism surpassed that of the Truman administration and it set a precedent for ideologically independent foreign policy relationships in the coming decades. Lastly, Dulles like

⁷⁹ Immerman 17.

⁸⁰ Gleijeses 235.

⁸¹ Gleijeses 236.

⁸² Gleijeses 236.

Eisenhower held a strong belief that "security was inextricably linked to economic well-being."⁸³

As a result, he viewed the economic health of both the United States and its Latin American neighbors as an important component of defense posture.

Like his brother, Allen Dulles was extremely anti-Communist, and his only major exposure to Latin America had come through his work as a corporate attorney. However, Allen Dulles differed from his brother in one major respect: he had an extensive background in covert operations and intelligence. Dulles was described as "an adventurous director, inclined to rely on his own extremely good and informed intuition, widely traveled, read and experienced, with great prestige and the best connections in Congress."⁸⁴ The unique relationship between the Dulles brothers and their posts created the first trend which marked Eisenhower foreign policy: the ability of the CIA and the State Department to work together in a non-competitive, efficient, and extremely secretive manner. This arrangement meant that the CIA "was nearly independent of the department's regular procedures in its dealings with the Guatemalans."⁸⁵

Under-Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, like the Dulles brothers, was extremely anti-Communist in his ideological outlook. Smith, who had served as Eisenhower's chief of staff during World War II and as the Director of the CIA under Truman, was described as "a rabid enemy of the Soviet system abroad and any form of socialism at home."⁸⁶ Smith offered a unique

⁸³ Immerman 18.

⁸⁴ Bryce Wood, The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985) 158.

⁸⁵ Wood 158.

⁸⁶ Gleijeses 237.

influence to the group in that he had already been involved in the aborted attempt to oust Arbenz.

Although each of the three aforementioned men played a large role in the formation of the Eisenhower administration's foreign policy, President Eisenhower himself was the chief policy maker. Eisenhower has been described as "a strong, decisive, and intelligent leader" who, despite reports to the contrary, was never dominated by Dulles.⁸⁷ "Dulles never dominated Eisenhower, but he did earn the respect and trust of his superior, and only on the rarest occasions was his counsel not followed. As a rule, the two men agreed on matters of principle and strategy, and the formation of policy towards Guatemala was no exception."⁸⁸

Eisenhower, like his predecessor, was a staunchly anti-communist man of action. However, Eisenhower differed from Truman in two primary ways. First Eisenhower was exceedingly comfortable with the use of covert action as a policy tool. For Eisenhower, "massive retaliation was not the only basis for his strategy for combating international Communism. Covert operations also played a major role, and their use in Guatemala represented a significant departure from the policies of Truman."⁸⁹ Second, Eisenhower had a much better understanding than Truman about the then emerging relationship between nationalism and communism. "He well understood that the ultimate struggle between the Communist and Western worlds would occur in the underdeveloped regions."⁹⁰ This "espousal of cold war ideology [related] directly to his

⁸⁷ Gleijeses 235.

⁸⁸ Immerman 123.

⁸⁹ Immerman 14.

⁹⁰ Immerman 16.

approval of the overthrow of the Arbenz government in Guatemala.”⁹¹

The backgrounds, ideological perceptions, and interrelationships of these major policy makers resulted in four trends which marked the Eisenhower foreign policy. Three of these trends, a greater understanding of the relationship between nationalism and communism in the third world context, a belief in the interrelatedness of economic stability and security, and the unique relationship of the CIA and State department have already been mentioned. These three trends led the Eisenhower administration to react more strongly than its predecessor to the same set of stimuli.

The Eisenhower administration viewed growing Guatemalan nationalism with a great deal of concern because they understood that it was closely linked with communism. In addition, because of the importance the administration placed on the connection between economic well-being and security, it viewed the expropriations of U.S. properties in Guatemala as an indirect threat to U.S. defense capabilities. As a result, the administration had a greater impetus to respond with strong policy. This stimulus was much more easily acted upon owing to the ease with which the Dulles brothers were able to communicate and formulate policy.

The fourth trend which has not been mentioned previously is perhaps the most important. Simply stated, it was the administration's ideological isolation from the Good Neighbor Policy. On the whole, "the new men which came to office with President Eisenhower were uncommitted to the Good Neighbor Policy. They were members of the Republican party, which had taken no position, as a party, on the Good Neighbor Policy.”⁹² As a result, these men were able to

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Wood 157.

formulate policy which was to some degree less bound by the constraint to maintain amicable inter-American relationships than the Truman administration had been. This is not to say that the Eisenhower administration was completely free from this constraint. To be sure it was still legally bound by the Bogota Charter to continue the policy of nonintervention. However, in a psychological context, the removal of the Good Neighbor Policy as an over-riding ideology did allow policy makers to surrender a portion of their noninterventionist indoctrination. This partial surrender was further supplemented by the successful covert intervention in Iran in 1953, and it became, in essence, the most important single change in American ideology which precipitated the 1954 intervention into Guatemala.

A final influence which precipitated the 1954 intervention was independent of the Eisenhower administration. This influence was an increased demand on the part of Congress and the American people for decisive action in Guatemala. This increased demand was the direct product of a successful propaganda campaign launched by the American press and the UFCO which accentuated the communist threat within Guatemala and berated Arbenz's policies. Like the four trends mentioned above, the increased political pressure on the Eisenhower administration served to make intervention into Guatemala more likely.

Truman and Eisenhower, a Comparative Analysis

In general, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' foreign policies were very similar.

Like his predecessor, Eisenhower

followed a policy of containment vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Like his predecessor, the linchpin of his policy was Europe, where he continued and developed Truman's work. Like Truman, he knew very little of the third world; he was aware that emerging nationalism and rising expectations confronted the United States with challenges that required innovative responses, but he, too, was distracted by other problems and crippled

by bias and by narrow anticommunism.⁹³

The question that then arises is why, when faced with essentially the same set of stimuli, did the Eisenhower administration launch a successful intervention while the Truman administration aborted a less involved plan for intervention? The answer to this question lies in two of the characteristics of the Eisenhower administration which have already been discussed as well as two which have not been fully explored.

The two characteristics which we have already discussed are the CIA- State Department relationship and the ideological isolation from the Good Neighbor Policy, both of which prevented the problems which resulted in the abortion of the Truman intervention attempt. The excellent communication and common direction of the CIA and State Department prevented the type of mis-communication which left Miller and possibly Acheson out of the loop during the Truman attempt. Simultaneously, the ideological shift away from the Good Neighbor Policy prevented State Department officials from falling victim to the influence of the nonintervention doctrine which may have influenced Truman's advisors to warn against intervention at the last possible minute.

The two additional characteristics which differentiated the Eisenhower administration from its predecessor were its overt acceptance of and collaboration with Latin American dictators, and its ability in the persona of Secretary Dulles to conduct very successful carrot and stick diplomacy. The Eisenhower administration's foreign policy in Latin America was distinguished by its "unabashed embrace of anti-communist military dictatorships and its unwillingness to criticize,

⁹³ Gleijeses 235.

however mutely, rampant political and civil repression in Latin America.”⁹⁴ This policy allowed the Eisenhower administration to build strong relationships with the same Latin American dictators who failed to support Truman's proposal and eventually to secure their full cooperation in the 1954 coup attempt. This influence was further supplemented by Dulles' ability to effectively influence Latin American leaders. Where Somoza had failed in 1952, Dulles was able to excel.

To summarize, the differences between the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were very slight, and the divergence between their Guatemalan policies was the product of small differences in personalities and circumstances rather than any over-riding ideological difference. These small differences, however, created substantially different results. Where the Truman administration had failed in 1952, the Eisenhower administration successfully conducted a covert intervention in June of 1954 and completely altered the government of Guatemala.

⁹⁴ Rabe 41.

Chapter Four: The Conduct of PBSUCCESS

The Planning Stages

The planning for PBSUCCESS, the CIA's code name for the 1954 covert action in Guatemala was very secretive. Only President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, Director Dulles, and a select group at the highest levels of the CIA and the State Department were even aware that the covert action existed. A significantly smaller group was acquainted with the operational details of the action. Although the coup was a joint operation conducted by both the State Department and the CIA, there was no question that the CIA "held the ultimate responsibility for PBSUCCESS."⁹⁵

The CIA relished the thought of another covert action attempt. Top level officials were just coming off the successful covert action which had placed the Shah on the throne of Iran. The Iranian action had been the first of its type in the CIA's brief history and Director Allen Dulles was eager to try this new weapon against the communist forces in Guatemala. Director Dulles involved himself extensively in the planning of PBSUCCESS, corresponding with his brother on a daily basis about the operation. Richard Bissell, Dulles' special assistant during the conduct of PBSUCCESS and later the Deputy Director of Plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion, has asserted that Dulles "was actually closer to the Guatemalan operation than he was to the Bay of Pigs."⁹⁶ However, Director Dulles had many other day-to-day responsibilities like the building crisis in Indochina. As a result, he placed Frank Wisner in charge of the Guatemalan operation. Wisner was a former under secretary of state and a former commander of the OSS. He was a workaholic

⁹⁵ Immerman 141.

⁹⁶ Immerman 139.

with a profound concern for the security of the nation. This self-induced pressure led to a nervous breakdown in his later years and eventually to his suicide.

Functioning under Wisner was an administrative crew of essentially four people. Tracy Barnes, also a former member of the OSS as well as a high society attorney, functioned as the liaison between the operation's headquarters in Opa Locka, Florida and Washington. He was assisted in this role by Richard Bissell, Dulles' special assistant, whose primary duty was to keep the director and indirectly the Secretary of State and the President accurately informed at all times. The two field officers were Colonel J.C. King, the CIA's head of operations for the western hemisphere, and Al Hanesy, the commander for PBSUCCESS itself.

The CIA operatives were assisted by a team of diplomatic support from the State Department whose job it was to ensure the cooperation of the Central American nations sympathetic to the U.S. position. Whiting Willauer testified in 1961 before a Senate subcommittee investigating the Internal Security Act that in addition to himself as Ambassador to Honduras, the team was composed of the ambassador to Nicaragua, Thomas Whelan, Ambassador Robert Hill who was stationed in Costa Rica, and the leader of the team, John Peurifoy, the ambassador to Guatemala.⁹⁷ Willauer himself played a fairly significant role. His responsibilities included making sure that the Honduran government fully cooperated with the operation, the field office of which was located within Honduras on some United Fruit Company land, and supervising the landing of equipment earmarked for Castillo Armas' forces.

There is no clear evidence indicating a date of inception of the covert action; however it is widely believed that the project planning began in the summer or early fall of 1953. Several

⁹⁷ Immerman 140.

indicators point to the fact that the covert action was initially conceived in the summer of 1953. Officials from the U.S. State Department were sent to meet with officials from Honduras and Nicaragua in November of 1953. This in and of itself would not be unique except for the fact that the visit marked the first intense formal State Department attention given to the nations of Latin America with the exception of Guatemala. Even more interesting was the fact that Honduras and Nicaragua were the two nations which cooperated with the U.S. effort to overthrow Arbenz. The conclusions reached at the meeting were simple: "the only means of overthrowing the government [Arbenz's] was through a decision by the United States Government to do so."⁹⁸

The second indication of a summer start-date for the operation's planning was a conversation held between assistant Secretary of State Cabot and former director of the CIA and then Under Secretary of State Bedell Smith. According to Cabot, when he "reluctantly conceded to Bedell Smith in September that a 'CIA-organized coup was the only solution (to the Guatemalan dilemma),' the under secretary 'nodded and smiled,' giving Cabot the impression that the agency had already begun working on it."⁹⁹

The third and most persuasive indicator that the planning of the coup had been initiated in the summer of 1953 was a series of letters between Castillo Armas and the Somozas of Nicaragua. These letters fell into the hands of the Arbenz government in January of 1954 and were quickly published as examples of the United States-led international plot against Guatemala. Although the United States is not explicitly mentioned in the letters, evidence which has come to light since the 1954 coup irrefutably concludes that the U.S. was the "neighbor to the north." The

⁹⁸ Immerman 135.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

letters which were written during the previous September and October indicated that U.S. participation in a plan to oust Arbenz was already actively underway. In the first letter Armas wrote, "I have been informed by our friends here that the government of the North, recognizing the impossibility of finding another solution to the grave problem of my country has taken the decision to permit us to develop our plans."¹⁰⁰

The plans Armas spoke of in the letter referred to the armed revolution he was to lead supported by the Nicaraguan government. The Nicaraguans had previously approached both the United Fruit Company and the U.S. government in an effort to drum up support for their plan. They were finally successful in persuading the new Eisenhower administration to act at some point during the summer of 1953. The second of Castillo Armas' letters sent in October, 1953 supported this assertion. Armas wrote to the younger Somoza, "our work with our friends from the North has ended in complete triumph in our favor," thereby "confirming to his Nicaraguan allies that the United States had finally extended the guarantees that Somoza had sought for such a long time."¹⁰¹

Although this series of meetings, conversations, and letters indicated that the U.S. had begun planning PBSUCCESS, the appointment of John Peurifoy as the new ambassador to Guatemala is the best evidence that by the end of the summer the plan was well underway and gaining momentum. As the *New York Times* commented shortly after Peurifoy's appointment as ambassador, his selection "means a change in the asserted passivity with which the United States

¹⁰⁰ Immerman 136.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

has watched the growth of Communist influence [in Guatemala]."¹⁰² A large component of the successful nature of PBSUCCESS was the teamwork that existed between the CIA and the State Department. Peurifoy received the posting in Guatemala after the Dulles brothers concluded that the former ambassador, Schoenfeld, would be unable to coordinate this cooperative effort in the field. Although he was an effective diplomat, Schoenfeld had very little experience working with the CIA and he was judged to be too cautious to perform well in the context of a covert operation.

Whiting Willauer was considered extensively for the Guatemalan ambassadorship. He had a distinguished record as an anti-communist and a great deal of paramilitary experience from his days with the Flying Tigers stationed in China. However, the administration wanted to place a Democrat in the post so that in the event that the operation failed, he could take the fall without heavily implicating the Republican administration. As a result, Peurifoy was chosen. Peurifoy was attractive to the administration in several respects. He was vehemently anti-communist, a record he had established while posted as ambassador to Greece. In addition, he was closely identified with Dean Acheson, the architect of Truman's foreign policy, a trait which made him the perfect fall-guy.

Peurifoy was a very straightforward diplomat, and what he lacked in creativity, he more than compensated for in terms of action. If anything, he was a little less cautious than the administration would have liked. This lack of caution was exemplified by Peurifoy's comments to the press shortly after arriving in Guatemala. Much to Washington's dismay, he stated that "public opinion in the U.S. might force us to take some measures to prevent Guatemala from

¹⁰². Immerman 137.

falling into the lap of international Communism. We cannot permit a Soviet republic to be established between Texas and the Panama Canal."¹⁰³ Although Peurifoy's boldness temporarily embarrassed Washington, it encouraged the CIA and State Department to see that upon surveying the current conditions, he was firmly on their side and a true believer in the cause. After interviewing Arbenz following his arrival, he reported to the State Department that "in view of the inadequacy of normal diplomatic procedures in dealing with the situation, there appears no alternative to our taking steps which would tend to make more difficult continuation of [Arbenz's] regime in Guatemala."¹⁰⁴ Peurifoy's boldness would prove to be an asset as the operation wore on.

The Pre-Combat Stages of Operation PBSUCCESS

Once the operation received official permission from the National Security Council, its initial stages began in earnest. The operational headquarters were set up in Opa Locka, Florida, a small town a few miles outside of Miami. The field headquarters were constructed on a piece of United Fruit Company land in Honduras close to its western border. All told, the operation cost somewhere between five and seven million dollars and involved about one hundred CIA agents and contract operatives.¹⁰⁵

The pre-combat stages of the operation involved essentially two components: the training of and supply of arms to Castillo Armas' Army of Liberation and an international propaganda

¹⁰³ Immerman 138.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Immerman 139.

campaign to both steer speculation away from U.S. involvement and gain support for the cause. In terms of the first component, preparation was quite simple. Castillo Armas had recruited most of his 250-man force prior to official U.S. involvement in the operation. The U.S., by means of the CIA, simply brought Armas and his men to the field headquarters where they received pay, arms, and paramilitary training from CIA operatives. Armas and his men remained at the field headquarters for a few months until receiving the go-ahead command for the invasion in early June of 1954.

The propaganda campaign was by far the most complicated of the two pre-combat components and was probably the more effective of the two. As stated above, the U.S. government did not want to appear involved in the Guatemalan coup in any way. As a result, it was decided that a propaganda campaign would be launched to make the desire for Arbenz's overthrow and the outrage against communism in Guatemala appear to be a representation of Guatemalan popular sentiment. Thus when Castillo Armas and his men invaded Guatemala, the move could be labeled a popular revolution rather than an internationally directed coup. In addition, the propaganda campaign was also supposed to prevent sympathy for the Arbenz regime on the part of other Latin American governments. To accomplish the second goal, it was decided that the propaganda campaign would also draw a strong link between the Arbenz government and the Kremlin.

The United States Information Agency was employed by the CIA to administer the massive propaganda campaign. To accomplish the two goals of the campaign the United States Information Agency took a three pronged attack. The first prong of the attack was focused on printed media in countries other than Guatemala. As part of this prong, the USIA wrote hundreds

of un-attributed articles warning of the growing tide of communism within Guatemala and its links to the Soviet Union. Guatemala was described as a "beach head" of communism within the western hemisphere and Arbenz and his government were said to be the lifeguard on duty who was welcoming the communist influence ashore. The first prong also distributed literature describing the growing discontent of the Guatemalan people with regard to these developments, and told of a revolutionary force of thousands of government exiles which were rumored to be organizing in a plan to invade and overthrow the government. The countries which received information from the first prong included Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and many other Latin American nations. The United States also received a small portion of the propaganda generated by the USIA; however, most of the information that the American public received was generated by American papers which clearly sympathized with the U.S. government position.

The second prong of the attack focused on Guatemala. The USIA had articles inserted in Guatemalan papers denouncing the government's communist ties and arguing that it was the duty of the Guatemalan people to rise up against the force of communism. In addition, thousands of pamphlets denouncing communism and warning of the impending revolution were airdropped throughout the countryside by operation PBSUCCESS planes. The pamphlets called on the people of Guatemala to join the liberating forces which were of course vastly exaggerated by the USIA. The first two prongs of the USIA's propaganda attack had the desired effect. People throughout the U.S. and Central America were led to believe that the Communists had a much stronger hold on the Guatemalan government than was actually the case. The Guatemalan citizens became confused and ill at ease as fears of yet another bloody revolution grew. This fear

was compounded within the armed forces whose members suffered from an arms shortage due to the boycott which the U.S. had established in response to Guatemala's seizure of United Fruit lands. The fears of the Guatemalan people and armed forces were further exploited by the third and most vital prong of the USIA attack: the creation of the Voice of Liberation radio station. The station which claimed to broadcast from an undisclosed location in Guatemala and to move nightly was really located to the east inside Honduras. It went into operation in conjunction with the onset of the Armas invasion and kept the Guatemalan people updated on the progress of the revolution around the clock. The station both vastly exaggerated the strength of the Armas forces and reported regular defeats of the national army and large scale desertions. The broadcasts were easily believed by the Guatemalan public who were already on edge and had been cut off from government broadcasts due to CIA jamming. The station's power of persuasion was so great that after it reported several defections of Guatemalan air force pilots with their planes, one pilot did defect, forcing Arbenz to ground the small air force in fear of further losses.

The Voice of Liberation went to great extents to be believable, even faking government raids into the station while they broadcast. In addition, the Voice of Liberation was very effective. Even the army officers began to believe the radio reports. The Guatemalan people were so reliant on the Voice of Liberation that a few days into the coup the majority of Guatemalans listened to the radio station rather than Arbenz's update on the situation. The result was that while the government knew that Armas' forces were only a few hundred in number and poorly armed, the people of Guatemala believed that they numbered in the thousands and were quickly being joined by the regular army. It would be this popular mis-conception which would eventually bring about Arbenz's fall.

The most important piece of propaganda in international terms was not achieved by the USIA. Instead it was consciously organized and orchestrated by the U.S. State Department at the tenth Inter-American Conference in Caracas between March first and twenty-eighth. While the Latin American countries approached the conference with the goal of acquiring economic concessions, Secretary Dulles outlined that the chief interest of the United States at the conference would be "to secure a strong anti-Communist resolution which would recognize Communism as an international conspiracy instead of regarding it as an indigenous movement."¹⁰⁶ Secretary Dulles, who headed the delegation to the conference, introduced the resolution with which he planned to achieve these goals during the first session of the conference. In his speech he denounced communism as foreign intervention which posed an immediate threat to the western hemisphere. He referred to the Rio Pact "which called for a consultation in the event of an aggression, armed or not" and "concluded by proposing that Communist domination or control of any country would justify 'appropriate action in accordance with existing treaties.'"¹⁰⁷

The resolution quickly took center stage at the conference and was debated over the following seven sessions. The Guatemalan delegation, realizing that they were the unstated target of the U.S. resolution quickly formulated a response. They labeled the resolution the "internationalism of McCarthyism" and warned that if the resolution was passed, "pan-Americanism would become an instrument exclusively in the service of monopolistic interests and a weapon of coercion to strangle any attempt at political and economic liberation of the oppressed

¹⁰⁶ Immerman 145.

¹⁰⁷ Immerman 147.

peoples of Latin America."¹⁰⁸ Despite Guatemala's warnings that the resolution was nothing more than an effort by the U.S. to keep colonial-like control over the nations of Latin America, the resolution passed almost unanimously. Guatemala was the only nation to vote in opposition. (The rest of the reluctant Latin American nations' votes had been won over by back room trade and economic aid concessions on the part of the U.S.) The successful passage of the Caracas Resolution was a material representation of the fact that Latin American public opinion had been martialled and crystallized behind the U.S. position. Following the coup Arevalo pointed out that the resolution was little more than "a public relations charade, an empty gesture advanced with the sole purpose of establishing the proper climate for Castillo Armas' invasion," and Arevalo was right.¹⁰⁹

A Pretext for Invasion

By late April or early May all of the pre-combat preparation for PBSUCCESS had been accomplished. Castillo Armas' forces had finished their training and were well equipped with the arms that they would need. The propaganda campaign had been underway for months and had been effective in swaying public opinion within and without Guatemala against the Arbenz administration. The Caracas resolution had been adopted by a clear majority, creating the perfect international conditions for the invasion. All that remained was one last element which would further discredit the Arbenz government and destabilize the Guatemalan military enough to make officers who were already shaken abandon their loyalty to Arbenz. This final element came a few weeks later as if delivered by some divine intervention.

¹⁰⁸ Immerman 148.

¹⁰⁹ Immerman 150.

On May seventeenth the Swedish freighter the *Alfhem* docked in Puerto Barrios carrying two thousand tons of Czechoslovakian arms for the Guatemalan military. Ambassador Peurifoy, his men, and several members of the press were at the pier to meet the ship. This was the event that they had all been waiting for, the perfect last straw. The CIA had discovered the *Alfhem* and its cargo as it left Poland and had later confirmed the report as the ship passed through a British port. They had originally planned to intercept the ship and destroy it, but the captain had followed such a circuitous route that the ship seemed to have disappeared. Having missed this opportunity, they hoped that the arms would not alter the balance too far in Arbenz's favor and set about publicizing the incident in an effort to further martial public opinion against Arbenz. The USIA was once again employed for this purpose and "immediately began an aggressive information campaign to discredit the Arbenz government, to dramatize the threat to hemispheric security, and to encourage action by all nations of the free world. It prepared two hundred articles and backgrounders, designed some twenty-seven thousand anti-Communist cartoons and posters, and developed both films and scripts for media outlets."¹¹⁰ The barrage proved damaging indeed, producing an international climate conducive to an attack on Arbenz.

Guatemala defended itself against the torrent of bad press by claiming that it had done nothing illegal and that it had gone to Czechoslovakia for arms only out of desperation. Arbenz had known for months that an attack from Castillo Armas was eminent. However, he had been unable to obtain the arms which his military needed due to the boycott instituted by the United States. The U.S., Guatemala's previous supplier, would no longer sell to the Arbenz government and Guatemala's Latin American neighbors were either unable, because they could not spare the

¹¹⁰ Immerman 158.

arms themselves, or unwilling to sell arms to Guatemala because they feared reprisals from the U.S. As a result, Arbenz claimed that he was forcefully driven to seek arms from a Soviet bloc country.

Washington countered the Arbenz argument with a very effective response from the former Supreme Allied Commander, President Eisenhower. Eisenhower stated, "it is disturbing, I think that above all it highlights the circumstances, the background, that led to the adoption of the resolution at the Caracas conference regarding communism in this country. This quantity [of arms] exceeded any legitimate, normal requirements of the Guatemalan armed forces."¹¹¹

Secretary Dulles echoed President Eisenhower's comments warning, "a government in which communist influence is very strong has come into a position to dominate militarily in the Central American area."¹¹² While Eisenhower's and Dulles' s warnings were effective, they clearly overstated the impact of the Czechoslovakian arms, the majority of which were outdated, useless, or both.

In addition to denouncing the arms shipment publicly, the U.S. government also responded by stating that they would evoke the Caracas Resolution and call another meeting of the Inter-American Conference to discuss this clear "attack" by communism. Although the U.S. repeatedly postponed the conference and eventually canceled it, its calling had the desired effect of clearly highlighting the depth of danger that communism in Guatemala presented to the western hemisphere. The U.S. also decided to undertake a policy of boarding and inspecting ships destined for Puerto Barrios in an effort to prevent any more arms shipments from landing in

¹¹¹ Immerman 156.

¹¹² Immerman 156-57.

Guatemala. However, the State Department was forced to abandon this policy when Great Britain lodged a formal complaint with the U.N. after one of its ships was boarded. The fear that future arms shipments might tip the balance toward Arbenz and the belief that the failure of the Arbenz government to attain usable arms had greatly weakened Guatemalan troop morale, led Washington to conclude that the time to launch the coup was at hand.

PBSUCCESS and the Fall of Arbenz

Castillo Armas and the majority of his Army of Liberation crossed the border from Honduras on June 18, 1954. They went six miles into the Guatemalan countryside and established their command base at the Church of the Black Christ in Equipulas. Armas' forces encountered no resistance on their way into Guatemala and they remained in Equipulas awaiting further commands from the CIA. The U.S. government hoped that Armas and his men would be able to create a revolution without actually ever engaging the Guatemalan army in any military conflicts. The revolutionary forces were simply one component of the psychological war; their task was to create the illusion of great military strength to help sway the loyalty of the regular Guatemalan army officers. The other two components, the air support and the operations of the Voice of Liberation, would also contribute to the breakdown of troop loyalty. As a CIA memorandum to Eisenhower on June twentieth pointed out,

'the action of Colonel Castillo Armas is not in any sense a conventional military operation'.... The loyalty of the regular army officers (is) the 'controlling factor.' If Arbenz's regular forces elected to fight, they could repel the invasion without any difficulty. In sum, 'the entire effort is thus more dependent upon psychological impact 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 a very substantial military strength

that the success of this effort primarily depends.¹¹³

The best manner for the Armas forces to maintain the illusion of great military strength was to hide out in Equipulas and await further orders while the Voice of Liberation manufactured victories for the revolution.

If the U.S. approach to the coup was based on psychologically creating a larger troop force than Armas actually had, the Arbenz response to the coup was based on his belief that the revolutionary army was composed of only a few hundred men and therefore posed no threat and could easily be defeated. "Arbenz's realistic assessment of the military insignificance of the rebel challenge had a perverse effect on his overall assessment of the invasion," reinforcing his illusion that the army would remain loyal when faced with an attack in which the U.S. did not directly participate.¹¹⁴ Arbenz's wife recalls that he "believed that the army would defend the motherland. Our army would refuse to submit to Castillo Armas, a traitor who had been defeated in 1950.... The army would not dishonor itself. Officers would not capitulate to a traitor."¹¹⁵

Because he believed that the revolutionary forces posed no threat and that the army would remain loyal, Arbenz refused to arm the civilians until it was too late. The arming of civilians had been a tactic historically used by Guatemalan leaders when under the threat of a coup. However, Arbenz was unable to use this tool because he believed, and his advisors agreed, that the military would take such action as an affront and the officers would revolt. Although Arbenz did not really fear Armas' forces or a revolt on the part of his troops, he was very shaken by the invasion,

¹¹³ Immerman 161.

¹¹⁴ Gleijeses 320.

¹¹⁵ Gleijeses 321.

or rather what would follow the invasion. Arbenz recognized that the invasion was being sponsored by the United States. As a result, he feared that when his forces defeated Castillo Armas, worse consequences would follow. He believed that the U.S. might either resort to a direct invasion by claiming Guatemalan aggression against Honduras or rely on economic strangulation.

Due to his fears, Arbenz did not send his troops to confront Armas. He speculated that a confrontation so close to the Honduran border would give the U.S. a pretext to invade. Instead, on June nineteenth, he sent most of the troops from the Base Militar and the Guardia de Honor to Zacapa, a town about twenty-four miles from the rebel base. These troops were led by three officers whom Commander of the Armed Forces Diaz had personally hand picked for loyalty. Colonels Victor Leon, Pablo Díaz, and Jose Barzanallana were chosen for the command. All three were personal friends of both Arbenz and Díaz. Indications are that when the three colonels left with their men for Zacapa, they were still loyal to Arbenz; however, they were not pleased with their assignments. Before leaving the capital, Colonel Pablo Díaz complained, "I can't understand Carlos Enrique [Díaz]. Why is he sending his friends to fight against Castillo Armas? Why can't he send someone else?"¹¹⁶ Once they reached Zacapa, the Guatemalan troops awaited further commands from Arbenz who was seeking one last avenue of escape from confrontation--an appeal to the U.N. Security Council.

On June eighteenth when the invasion began, Arbenz had sent foreign minister Toriello to appeal to the Security Council to halt the internationally driven hostility against Guatemala.

Toriello described the situation in Guatemala as an invasion sponsored by the United States,

¹¹⁶ Gleijeses 338

Honduras, and Nicaragua. He requested that the United Nations intervene to stop this obvious abuse of sovereignty. The U.S., enraged that the French had requested that the matter be heard in the first place, responded that they were completely innocent and that the situation in Guatemala was a civil war. Furthermore, the U.S. asserted that the situation as such came under the jurisdiction of the Organization of American States and suggested that a committee from the OAS should be appointed to look into the conflict. The Guatemalan government knew that such a committee could never be impartial in the United States-dominated OAS and Toriello pressed harder for U.N. intervention.

With the council's composition and current leanings, Secretary Dulles was unsure that he could prevent the matter from being considered. He told the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. Henry Cabot Lodge who was then acting President of the Security Council to postpone the meeting until he could line up votes. However, Lodge quickly came under pressure from the press and was forced to hold the meeting on June twenty-fifth. By the time the meeting took place Secretary Dulles had been able to guarantee a majority in favor of the U.S. He had spoken personally to British Foreign Minister Eden and contacted the French foreign minister, threatening that if they authorized U.N. interference into the western hemisphere, the U.S. would have no reservations about encouraging intervention into colonial matters such as Cyprus and Indochina.¹¹⁷ After five hours of debate on the evening of the twenty-fifth, the resolution to consider the Guatemalan conflict was defeated by a vote of five to four. The Soviet Union, Denmark, Lebanon, and New Zealand voted against the measure. Voting with the United States were two of Guatemala's Latin

¹¹⁷ This is noted in James C. Hagerty, "Entries from the James C. Hagerty Diary April 26, 1954- August 4, 1954." James C. Hagerty Papers. (Abilene: Eisenhower Library.)

American neighbors: Colombia and Brazil. England and France abstained. The U.N. decision had meant so much to the United States that Eisenhower had authorized Lodge to use America's first ever veto if necessary.

The news of the resolution's defeat shattered Arbenz. However, he was soon assaulted by more damaging news; the forces at Zacapa had rebelled. On June twenty-first a revolutionary force composed of about one-hundred men had launched a surprise attack on Puerto Barrios. Within a few hours they were retreating, leaving their arms and boats behind. Arbenz had sent word to Zacapa that the two thousand troops under the command of Leon should seize this moment to chase the revolutionary forces out of Guatemala for good. However, after Leon's troops failed to follow Armas, Arbenz received word from Zacapa that they could not attack because a train carrying their supplies had been attacked and the damage was great. The attack would have to be postponed. The train in question had indeed been bombed, but it had sustained no real damage and the attack could have gone on as scheduled.

While Arbenz believed Leon's story and remained convinced about the loyalty of the Guatemalan officers, Army Chief of Staff Parinello went to Zacapa to investigate and returned convinced that the army would not attack. He did not, however, tell either Arbenz or Commander Díaz. Parinello was reflecting the common view among officers; he was not afraid of Castillo Armas, "he was afraid of the United States. Eisenhower, he believed, had decided that Arbenz had to go, and the Americans 'would most likely send the marines if Castillo Armas failed.' Parinello was not ready to join any plot-- not yet, at least-- but neither was he willing to take any risks. He epitomized the loyal officer."¹¹⁸ The average Guatemalan officer was afraid to

¹¹⁸ Gleijeses 328.

fight not because he feared Armas, but because he feared the force behind him. The majority of Guatemalan officers shared the same fears as their president. They believed that if the Castillo Armas invasion failed, the U.S. would launch a direct invasion against Guatemala.

It is interesting to note that the CIA and the State Department underestimated the level of fear among Guatemalan officers throughout the intervention. A CIA memorandum on June twentieth reported, "the outcome of the efforts to overthrow...Arbenz...remains very much in doubt. The controlling factor in the situation is still considered to be the position of the Guatemalan armed forces, and thus far this group has not given any indication of whether it will move, and if so, in which way.... If it remains loyal...Castillo Armas...will be defeated."¹¹⁹ Glum reports such as this one continued up until the twenty-fifth of June when the CIA reported that Guatemalan officers were finally coming to the realization that "getting rid of President Arbenz and the Communists would be 'an easy way out.'"¹²⁰ Ironically, without its knowledge, the CIA's first slightly optimistic reports coincided with the Guatemalan army's ultimatum to Arbenz to step down.

After Parinello returned and failed to disclose any real news from Zacapa, Armas' forces attacked Chiquimula, a town a few miles from Zacapa. Receiving no aid from Zacapa, the Guatemalan troops at Chiquimula were forced to surrender. Fortuny was very worried about these developments and sent one of his assistants to Zacapa for a report on the situation. Getella returned the following night after having barely escaped with his life. He reported that the army was completely demoralized and would not fight. He also delivered an ultimatum which stated

¹¹⁹ Gleijeses 336.

¹²⁰ Gleijeses 337.

that if Arbenz did not step down, the army would join Armas' forces and overthrow him.

After receiving the ultimatum, Arbenz held a meeting with the leaders of the government parties and the labor confederations. He announced that the army at Zacapa had deserted and that the population must be armed. The various leaders responded by pledging four to five thousand volunteers; however the next morning fewer than two hundred appeared. Arbenz's request for the people to rise up failed because it did not reach his true allies, the members of the countryside whom his programs had helped most. "Thousands of peasants might have fought on that twenty-sixth of June. For them, Arbenz meant freedom and land. But they had no weapons. Unaware that their government was collapsing, they continued to man roadblocks, to search for weapons dropped by rebel planes, and to flood the capital with telegrams pledging their loyalty."¹²¹

Arbenz was crushed by the population's paralysis. While he and Fortuny spent the night of the twenty-sixth in resignation at the presidential palace, a plot was developing among some of his closest advisors. On the morning of the twenty-seventh, Armed Forces Chief Díaz, Defense Minister Sanchez, Army Chief of Staff Parinello, Air Force Chief Luis Giron, and the president of the Consejo Superior de la Defensa, Carlos Sarti, met at Diaz's house and decided that Arbenz must go. They then contacted Peurifoy who met with them a few hours later. During the meeting Díaz presented the officers' offer. He explained that he and his colleagues were ready to force Arbenz to resign and offered a plan in which he would replace Arbenz as president, outlaw the PGT, and exile its leaders. In return the United States would agree to discontinue its sponsorship of Armas. Díaz argued that Washington would no longer need Armas because "their

¹²¹ Gleijeses 343.

Guatemala would be stable, anti-communist, and pro-American."¹²²

Peurifoy responded to Díaz's offer by commenting that the removal of Arbenz was the first order of business and the rest could be negotiated at a later date. Díaz and his accomplices incorrectly took Peurifoy's response as a tacit agreement to all of the aspects of their plan rather than just a confirmation of the ouster of Arbenz. Satisfied, Díaz went to the palace to inform Arbenz.

Díaz spoke privately with Arbenz. Emerging a half an hour later, he confirmed that Arbenz had agreed to step down. During the brief meeting Díaz presented himself as a messenger rather than a participant in the plan. He told Arbenz that if he did not resign by 5 p.m. army units would attack the presidential palace. He also told Arbenz that the U.S. had already approved his replacement of Arbenz. He assured the president that he would make every effort to preserve the benefits of the October Revolution and that he would not negotiate with Armas under any circumstance. Arbenz accepted Díaz's account because Díaz was a close and trusted friend. Besides portraying himself as a messenger rather than a conspirator, Díaz did tell Arbenz what he perceived to be the truth. "Díaz was not consciously lying. He was stating what he thought would occur, and his confidence was reinforced by what he believed to be Peurifoy's blessing. He would prove wrong on both accounts."¹²³

Based on Díaz's account, Arbenz was left with a very difficult decision and he had to choose between the lesser of two evils.

A Díaz presidency would spell the end of the revolution, and it would abort his plans to

¹²² Gleijeses 345.

¹²³ Gleijeses 348.

turn Guatemala into an independent nation. The alternative, however, was worse. A victory of Castillo Armas meant the surrender of all national dignity, the obliteration of all reforms undertaken since 1944, the return to power of the landed elite, and an orgy of repression. Reports were already coming in that the Liberacionistas were killing 'subversives.' Arbenz could no longer protect the Guatemalan peasants. He had lost, and they with him. His timely resignation could lighten the burden of their defeat.¹²⁴

Arbenz is often criticized for making the decision to resign. It has been argued that he should have fled into the mountains and led a guerilla movement from the countryside or died as a martyr in the palace as Chile's Salvador Allende had. However, Arbenz made the decision that he did because he felt that he was choosing the best possible option, the one which would best preserve the gains of the October Revolution and consequently best maximize Guatemalan welfare. As Arbenz himself explained later, "I agreed to withdraw in favor of a loyal officer, Colonel Díaz, under two conditions: that there were no deals with Castillo Armas and that the achievements of the October Revolution were preserved."¹²⁵ He continued on to say, "perhaps many people will think that I am making a mistake, from the bottom of my heart I do not believe this. Only history will decide."¹²⁶

Arbenz left the palace at 8 p.m. on June twenty-seventh. He went to his residence to pack and then on to seek asylum in the Mexican embassy. By the time he left, he had already taped his farewell address which Fortuny had helped write. The speech was broadcast at 9 p.m. Thousands of Guatemalans watched as a saddened Arbenz bade them farewell. Arbenz did not mention the army ultimatum. He said only that he was resigning in order to eliminate "the pretext

¹²⁴ Gleijeses 350.

¹²⁵ Gleijeses 349.

¹²⁶ Gleijeses 350.

for the invasion of our country.”¹²⁷ He told the people that he said goodbye to them “with bitterness and pain, but firm in (his) convictions” and that he had reached this decision with his “eyes on the welfare of the people.”¹²⁸ He explained that “he would hand over power to friend Enrique Carlos Díaz ‘with the hope of saving the democratic gains of the October Revolution.... A government that, although different from mine, is still inspired by our October Revolution is preferable to twenty years of bloody tyranny under the men whom Castillo Armas has brought into the country.’”¹²⁹ While Arbenz did not attack the army, he did reserve some scathing comments for both Armas and the United States. These comments did not go unnoticed by the State Department and Peurifoy, and they precipitated the already imminent downfall of Díaz.

Musical Chairs; Government Leadership from Diaz to Armas

In the week and a half following Arbenz’s resignation, Guatemala government was controlled by a series of five different military juntas, each one more sympathetic to Castillo Armas than the one which preceded it. As planned, Díaz assumed the presidency following Arbenz’s resignation on the night of the twenty-seventh. Díaz kept his word to Peurifoy and immediately outlawed communism and consequently the PGT. However, Díaz was not yet willing to kill communists. As a result, he freed PGT leader Manuel Gutierrez who had been jailed a few hours earlier and advised him, Pellecer, and Fortuny to seek asylum immediately because there were certain conditions which he could no longer control. This action, added to the

¹²⁷ Gleijeses 347.

¹²⁸ Gleijeses 347.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

fact that Díaz had allowed Arbenz to condemn the U.S. in his farewell address, led to a night time visit on the twenty-seventh. Díaz was awakened by two armed men who worked for Peurifoy. They related that he was to resign effective immediately. When Díaz confronted Peurifoy in person a few minutes later, the ambassador echoed the armed men's words. Peurifoy explained that the U.S. did not believe that Díaz was a true anti-communist and that they wanted a hard-liner like Colonel Monzón.

Díaz left the meeting and returned two hours later with Colonels Monzon and Sanchez at his side. He offered Peurifoy a new plan in which he exchanged his presidency for the leadership of a three man governing junta composed of himself and the two colonels. Peurifoy found the new option to be more acceptable than the last so he gave his consent temporarily. Monzón, however, was not content with his position and, sensing opportunity, he moved to force Díaz's and Sanchez's resignations. Within twenty-four hours, a new junta took power in which Monzón served as acting President beside Colonels Cruz Salazar and Dubois. Peurifoy and the Eisenhower administration as a whole were very pleased with this latest change. Monzón was recognized to be both harshly anti-communist and pro-American.

Following a U.S. request Salvadoran President Osario invited both Monzón and Castillo Armas to hold peace talks in San Salvador. The two men arrived in American planes on June thirtieth. After two days of quarreling moderated by Peurifoy, the two men signed the Pacto de San Salvador on July second thereby establishing yet another junta. The new Junta was composed of Monzon, Cruz Salazar, Dubois, Armas, and a fellow liberacionista, Major Enrique Trinidad Oliva. Since both Dubois and Cruz Salazar secretly supported Armas, the revolutionary leader had control of the junta. On July third, Peurifoy, Armas, and Monzón returned to

Guatemala City. Four days later, Dubois and Cruz Salazar resigned from the junta giving their votes to Armas to assume the presidency. Monzón was forced to capitulate and Armas was unanimously elected as the president of the junta.

Finally on September eleventh, the junta unanimously voted to disband itself and Castillo Armas became the president of Guatemala. The Eisenhower administration was at last successful. They had rolled back the tide of communism in the western hemisphere and succeeded in placing an administration in control of Guatemala which would be sympathetic to U.S. interests for decades to come. With its successful administration of a covert intervention into Guatemala, the Eisenhower administration violated both the nonintervention norm and the Bogota Charter. These violations necessitate an assessment of whether the intervention was justifiable.

Chapter Five: The 1954 Guatemalan Intervention Evaluated

The 1954 Guatemalan Coup as an Intervention

The preceding four chapters have both created a model for justifiable intervention and outlined the causes and conduct of the 1954 coup in Guatemala. This chapter will synthesize the information presented in previous chapters into an analysis of the 1954 coup as an intervention. The purpose of this analysis is to determine whether the Guatemalan coup can be classified as a justifiable intervention.

To begin, the 1954 coup must be formally established as an intervention. In Chapter One, an intervention on the part of the United States was defined as a coercive interference into the sphere of jurisdiction of a sovereign state involving either the deployment of U.S. military personnel and equipment or administration by U.S. government agencies. The 1954 coup in Guatemala satisfies each of these three criteria, thereby clearly meeting the definition. First, the 1954 coup was coercive in nature in the sense that its success hinged on the U.S. army's ability to successfully intimidate or coerce the Guatemalan army into surrendering. Once the army surrendered, the United States manipulated the Guatemalan leadership structure until Castillo Armas was named president.

Second, the Guatemalan coup involved the deployment of both U.S. military personnel and equipment. The coup itself was administered by active CIA operatives from Opa Locka, Florida. The actual fighting forces were composed of Guatemalan exiles but they were CIA-trained and supplied with U.S. arms. In addition, the U.S.-supplied bombers, which provided air support were flown by CIA contractors, and the Liberation Radio, which waged the psychological component of the coup, was broadcast by the United States Information Agency.

The overall administration of the 1954 coup was supervised by the CIA, the U.S. State Department, and President Eisenhower's office.

The 1954 coup's status as an intervention, combined with the fact that the nonintervention norm was, and still is, dominant in the international system, raises the key question of this paper: was the 1954 coup in Guatemala an illegal act according to international moral guidelines and rules? The answer to this question lies in another: was the 1954 Guatemalan coup a justifiable intervention? The latter can be determined by applying any of three separate tests: a definitional analysis, an application of justification models, and a comparative conditions analysis.

Justification of the 1954 Coup: A Definitional Analysis

The first of these analyses is a definitional test. Chapter one asserted that an intervention is by definition justifiable when the alternative to intervention, nonintervention, will result in such dire consequences for the intervened-upon country or the intervening country that its disadvantages would vastly outweigh the moral incorrectness of intervention. The definitional test requires that the 1954 intervention and the probable results of nonintervention be examined from both a Guatemalan and a U.S. perspective.

From a Guatemalan perspective, nonintervention on the part of the United States would not have generated significant disadvantages. In fact, nonintervention would most likely have generated advantages. At the time of the coup, several conditions existed which made the Guatemalan status quo very desirable. Jacobo Arbenz was a democratically elected president who enjoyed popular support. He had used his presidency to extend the political and personal freedoms granted by the Arevalo administration. In addition, his vast land reform package was successfully redistributing land and Guatemalan productivity rates were rising. Overall the

standard of living and quality of life for the majority of Guatemalans was rising at a faster rate than at any other time in Guatemalan history. One must assume that had the United States not intervened to overthrow Arbenz, his land reform plan would have been concluded and these trends and the advantages associated with them would have continued. As a result, the 1954 coup cannot be defined as justifiable from a Guatemalan perspective.

The definitional analysis from the intervening or United States perspective is slightly more complicated. First, we must analyze the dangers of nonintervention from an economic perspective. Had the United States not intervened, the expropriations of United Fruit land associated with Decree 900 and the construction of a new Guatemalan highway, port, and electric power plant would have continued. While these reforms may have temporarily dampened the profit margin of the UFCO and a few other American corporations, they would not have been significant enough to drive these multinationals out of the market, and they would have posed no discernable threat to the U.S. economy as a whole. In response to this assertion it may be argued that the Guatemalan expropriations could have set a precedent which may have sparked similar expropriations throughout the region, eventually creating an impact large enough to adversely affect the U.S. economy as a whole. However, this argument weakens when one considers that the United States, clearly unafraid of a precedent effect, had previously allowed Mexico to expropriate land with a similar compensation package. Thus it can be said that had the United States remained loyal to the nonintervention norm, it would not have faced any economic disadvantages significant enough to merit the 1954 intervention.

The U.S. perspective also requires that the dangers of nonintervention be examined from a political perspective. At the onset of the 1950's Cold War tensions were at a peak level and

United States foreign policy hinged on the concept of containing the communist threat. As a result, the prospective disadvantages of nonintervention must be evaluated in this context. U.S. policy makers believed that Guatemala was quickly becoming a beachhead for Communism in the western hemisphere. They based this belief on the nature of Arbenz's land reform package and on evidence gathered by the CIA which named some of Arbenz's closest friends amongst the leadership of the PGT (the Guatemalan Communist Party). U.S. policy makers believed and claimed publicly that if no action was taken, Guatemala would become the first communist nation in the western hemisphere. Furthermore, they argued that the establishment of communism in Guatemala would create a domino effect in the region. For the Eisenhower administration, nonintervention signified unbearable disadvantages.

While the preceding argument implies that the 1954 coup would be considered justifiable under the definitional test, its conclusions are not necessarily reliable. This is due to the fact that U.S. policy makers vastly overestimated the communist threat in Guatemala and subsequently the dangers associated with nonintervention. In reality, the Guatemalan communist movement, if it could even be labeled that, was relatively weak. Generous estimates place the number of active communists at the time of Arbenz overthrow around 2,000. And while Arbenz was close friends with some of the communist leaders, Fortuny in particular, none of these men held cabinet level positions within his government. Even more important was the fact that the military, the true key to Guatemalan power, was decidedly anti-communist. Finally, despite their best efforts, neither the CIA or the State Department was ever able to produce any evidence of contact between the Soviet Union and either the Guatemalan government or the PGT. In fact, most evidence points to the weak Mexican communist party as the PGT's mentor. When the true stature of communism

in Guatemala is evaluated, the threat of a communist revolution and the disadvantages associated with it seem to disappear. Thus, from a political perspective, nonintervention did not pose disadvantages to the United States which were significant enough to merit intervention.

This analysis demonstrates that nonintervention in the case of the 1954 coup would not have resulted in dire consequences for either Guatemala or the United States. At the very least, nonintervention would have maintained the status quo position of the United States and improved conditions in Guatemala. Due to an absence of threatening disadvantages facing either the intervened upon country or the intervening country, the 1954 coup in Guatemala fails to meet the definition of a justifiable intervention. Simply stated, an application of the first method of analysis, the definitional test, concludes that the 1954 coup in Guatemala was not a justifiable intervention.

Justification of the 1954 Coup: An Application of a Justification Models

These results can be confirmed through a second method of analysis, the application of a justification model. Chapter one constructed a model of six intervention types which were generally considered justifiable by political theorists. The six types established within the model were intervention as a product of a government request for assistance, intervention as a counter response to a previous third party intervention, intervention on the grounds of self defense, intervention for the protection of human rights, intervention to enable self-determination, and collectively authorized intervention. The following analysis will examine the 1954 Guatemalan coup in order to determine whether its causes and conduct fit into any of the six justifiable patterns included in the model.

Upon completing a quick examination of the structure of the 1954 coup, one can conclude

that the Guatemalan case clearly does not fit into the first and sixth justifiable intervention patterns. To begin, the goal of the CIA intervention was the overthrow of the ruling Arbenz government and therefore obviously not a response to an official Guatemalan government request for assistance. Second, the 1954 coup was executed solely by the CIA and United States State Department. While other nations including Honduras and Nicaragua had knowledge of the coup and provided passive assistance, there was by no means a collective authorization of the action. In fact, fearing international condemnation, the U.S. placed a great deal of political pressure on its European and Latin American allies to block Guatemala's request that the matter be considered by the United Nations Security Council. The U.S. argued instead that the "revolution" in Guatemala was a matter which fell within the jurisdiction of the newly formed Organization for American States, an institution which was dominated by the U.S. Preventing U.N. or collective international judgement on the Guatemalan action was so important to the Eisenhower administration that the President actually authorized Ambassador Lodge to use the first ever U.S. veto should the measure come before the Security Council.

Further examination of the 1954 Guatemalan coup demonstrates that the action also fails to fit with the fourth and fifth patterns of justifiable interventions. The CIA intervention into Guatemala was clearly not predicated on protection of either human rights or self-determination. The Arbenz government increased personal freedoms and expanded the right of suffrage while simultaneously carrying out the largest land reform program in Guatemalan history. The result was that the quality of life and the degree of self-determination reached all-time highs in Guatemala while human rights offenses all but disappeared. Rather than being based on the protection of human rights and self-determination, the CIA intervention into Guatemala actually

endangered these fledgling movements.

The elimination of the four previous justifiable intervention types leaves only a comparison between the 1954 coup and the second and third intervention patterns. A valid argument can be made that the 1954 CIA action fits into both the counter intervention and the self-defense intervention patterns. The 1954 coup can be labeled a counter intervention if one assumes that the Soviet Union was actively pursuing the creation of a communist government in Guatemala. In such a case, the U.S. policy of containment would have been threatened and both the Monroe and Truman Doctrines could have been used as a basis for the intervention. However, as was mentioned above, neither the CIA nor the State Department was ever able to produce evidence which directly linked the Soviet Union and the Guatemalan government or PGT. There were no meetings or communiqués between Soviet and Guatemalan officials throughout the first half of the 1950's and the majority of the PGT's outside communications were with the communist party in Mexico.

The only evidence which even proposed to establish a link between Guatemalan communists and the U.S.S.R. and the piece upon which United States policy makers based their case for Soviet intervention was the 1954 arms shipment which Guatemala received from Czechoslovakia. However, the arms shipment aboard the *Alfheim* fails to establish a Soviet link for two reasons. First, the U.S., had placed an arms embargo on Guatemala during the Arevalo administration. As a result, Guatemala was unable to secure arms from either the U.S., its primary source in the past, or its Latin American neighbors who were either unwilling or unable to ignore the U.S. ban. Aware of the imminent Armas invasion, Arbenz was forced to seek arms from the only countries willing to supply them-- Soviet bloc nations. The fact that Guatemala did

not approach the Soviet Union directly for arms demonstrated that the Arbenz administration wished to avoid formal relations with Moscow. Second, the arms shipment which Guatemala received from Czechoslovakia was hardly one which would be sent to an ally. The majority of the weapons were outdated and unusable. Had the Soviets and the Arbenz administration actually been collaborating to produce a communist revolution within Guatemala, the arms shipment from Czechoslovakia would have most certainly included state-of-the-art, Soviet-developed weapons. In the absence of documented or even realistic evidence of Soviet intervention into Guatemala, the 1954 coup fails to fit the counter intervention pattern.

An argument that the 1954 coup was an intervention on the grounds of self-defense rests largely on the same foundations as the counter intervention argument. A Soviet attempt to influence or interfere in the internal government of Guatemala would have constituted a direct violation of the Monroe and Truman Doctrines and subsequently by definition, a threat to U.S. national security. Guatemala lacked the obvious Soviet involvement and the definable clear and present danger which was evident in the case of the Cuban missile crisis. Because there was no identifiable Soviet threat to American security in 1954, the Guatemalan coup fails to qualify as a justifiable intervention on the grounds of self-defense.

The application of a justification model confirms the results of the definitional analysis. The 1954 CIA intervention into Guatemala fails to fit any of the commonly agreed upon patterns of justifiable interventions and therefore must be considered an unjustified intervention. The second analysis again provides a negative answer to the question presented at the outset of the chapter. The 1954 coup in Guatemala was not a justifiable intervention.

Justification of the 1954 Coup: A Comparative Conditions Analysis

Before the above conclusion is accepted, however, one final method of analysis needs to be applied. This third method of analysis, the comparative conditions analysis, is the most complex of the manners of appraisal which have been used. The comparative conditions analysis involves evaluating the pre-coup conditions in both Guatemala and the United States relative to the post-coup conditions in both countries. The goal of this analysis is to develop a cost-benefit analysis of sorts which will determine whether either Guatemala or the United States was better off in absolute terms as a result of the 1954 coup. If this evaluation confirms that either or both of the nations were better off in the post-coup era, than the coup could be justified from at least one nation's perspective.

Before starting this analysis a note of caution must be made. The application of a comparative conditions analysis is always dangerous because it is very difficult if not impossible to pinpoint the exact causes of change. Most change is the result of multiple stimuli which influence events to different degrees. The result is that critical events such as coups inevitably receive the majority of blame for conditions which they may have only partially caused. This danger becomes more acute as one evaluates conditions further away from the critical action. As time passes, the impact of the critical event may become diluted as other events or changes contribute more to the existing conditions. The following comparative conditions analysis is made with these dangers in mind. However, because the comparative analysis is serving as a confirmation of the two preceding justification tests rather than as the decisive evaluation, the dangers associated with misattribution of cause are minimized.

As stated above, the comparative conditions analysis must evaluate the pre- and post-coup conditions in both the Guatemala and the United States. We will begin the analysis with an

evaluation of pre-coup Guatemala. In the decade preceding the coup, Guatemala made great advances as a nation. Beginning with the Arévalo presidency and his reform concept of Arevalismo, personal freedoms and political rights were increased and the quality of life in Guatemala climbed steadily upward. These conditions were the result of several innovative policy changes on the part of the Arévalo administration.

Arévalo significantly decreased the censorship of the Ubico period and granted new freedom to the press. In addition, he granted greater freedom of expression. For the first time in decades Guatemalans could voice their opinions on the government and social structure without the fear of censorship and punishment. On the political level, Arévalo legalized the formation of opposition parties and extended the right of suffrage to non-property owners, thereby expanding the opportunity of self-determination.

Arévalo also undertook large scale labor reform designed to end the exploitation of the Guatemalan laborer. The first component of this legislation dismantled the oppressive vagrancy laws, shortened the work week, and created guidelines for women and child laborers. The second component of the labor legislation legalized the formation of unions, afforded protection from unfair dismissal, and guaranteed the right to strike with the option for reconciliation. The success of Arévalo's labor reform created actual increases in the quality of life and standard of living for the common Guatemalan laborer for the first time in decades.

Arévalo's education reform plan was perhaps the most welfare enhancing of his innovative policy changes. The massive reform package was designed to make education available to every Guatemalan including the Mayan majority. The plan undertook vast amounts of new school construction. Secondary, post-secondary, technical, and Indian institutions were among these

projects. By the time the reforms were completed, Guatemala was home to six thousand learning institutions and the literacy rate, especially among Indians, was increasing rapidly. Higher education levels led to increased prosperity and the quality of life crept ever upward. However, significant increases in the standard of living were dependent on land redistribution.

Wide-scale land redistribution was undertaken by Arévalo's successor, Jacobo Arbenz. Once he assumed office, Arbenz undertook massive economic reform in an effort to make Guatemala an economically independent country. The keystone of this reform was Arbenz's land redistribution package, Decree 900. The goal of Decree 900 was to correct the fact that two percent of the Guatemalan population owned seventy percent of all the land in the country. This condition resulted in the majority of land remaining uncultivated which led to extremely low food productivity rates and forced dependence on other nations. To deal with this problem, Decree 900 expropriated uncultivated land from large estates and redistributed it among the landless peasants. By the time of Arbenz's overthrow he had "presided over the most successful agrarian reform in the history of Central America. Within eighteen months, 'the agrarian reform had reached its half-way mark': five hundred thousand peasants had received land without disrupting the country's economy."¹³⁰

Decree 900 was an unparalleled success. American scholars reported in 1954 that "agrarian reform unleashed new productive energies from both peasants and those finqueros whose previously idle land was put into use."¹³¹ As the amount of land under cultivation was augmented, the production of wheat, rice, and corn increased by an average of thirty-six percent.

¹³⁰ Gleijeses 381.

¹³¹ Gleijeses 158.

The new levels of production drove the Guatemalan standard of living up and made the nation less dependent on outside resources than at any time in its history. But Decree 900's benefits were not limited to economic gains. "Decree 900 brought more than land to the poor; it broadened political freedom in the countryside. Serfs were becoming citizens."¹³²

The decade of social and political reforms carried out by the Arevalo and Arbenz administrations produced a Guatemala much different from the country it was before 1944. For the first time in the country's history, an effort had been made to extend political rights, education, and labor protection to Guatemala's landless majority. Decades of oppressive dictatorship were replaced with an open party system and free elections, and the country was experiencing an era of unprecedented economic growth. Overall, Guatemala in the years immediately preceding the 1954 coup was a more politically and economically stable nation than at any other time in its history.

While pre-coup Guatemala was a picture of steady improvement and success, post-coup Guatemala was a country in a downward spiral. This spiral began with Castillo Armas' assumption of the presidency. By placing Castillo Armas in power, the United States "returned to power the very elements of society which had created the conditions that the 1944 revolution tried to eradicate. Arevalo and Arbenz wanted Guatemala to become a model of democracy and progress; Castillo Armas and his successors made it a model of reaction and oppression."¹³³

From the time of its installation, the Armas administration "initiated policies to roll back

¹³² Gleijeses 381.

¹³³ Immerman 197-98.

the Guatemalan clock.”¹³⁴ In one of his first official acts as president, Castillo Armas returned over 99% of all the land which had been expropriated from the United Fruit Company. In conjunction with the same legislation, Armas restored the national farms and returned expropriated property to most of Guatemala’s large estate owners. In the process, the Armas administration forcibly evicted thousands of peasants who had acquired land under Decree 900. “By the time Castillo Armas had governed for eighteen months, he had managed to drive all but one half of one percent of the peasants who had won plots under the Arbenz agrarian reform off their new land. Most Guatemalans who had improved their lives in the 1940’s and early 1950’s found their hard-won progress had slipped away.”¹³⁵

Armas replaced Decree 900 with his own land reform plan developed with U.S. guidance. Armas’ plan exempted private property from the expropriation process leaving only state-owned land or land which was undeveloped, inaccessible, or of poor-quality available for distribution. At the time Armas’ new land reform package was announced, experts estimated that “at the rate at which land was distributed in Guatemala in the post-Arbenz years, it would take 148 years for all peasant families to receive some land-- if there were no population growth in the meantime.”¹³⁶

The Armas administration’s regressive policies were not limited solely to land reform. In order to deal with the unhappy majority’s outcry against land reform repeal, Armas initiated a massive campaign of political oppression. Armas began his oppression campaign by repealing the

¹³⁴ Immerman 198.

¹³⁵ Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, Bitter Fruit: the Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1982) 233.

¹³⁶ Immerman 198.

1945 national constitution, investing himself with all executive and legislative functions, and creating the National Committee for Defense against Communism (NCDC.) The NCDC worked in conjunction with a special police force to conduct surveillance and arrest any “dangerous persons.” The police force led by Bernabe Linares investigated any Guatemalan who could be even remotely connected with opposition movements. This group included virtually every person who had ever joined a union, took part in a protest, signed a petition, or accepted land under Decree 900. “*Hispanic American Report* estimated that the police files contained the names of over seventy thousand suspects.” Amongst this group, “thousands were arbitrarily imprisoned ‘for reasons of security.’ Many were executed; others simply disappeared.”¹³⁷ Those who were imprisoned rarely were brought to trial; instead they often faced torture and abuse at the hands of the special police force. Linares was rumored to have “submerged his subjects in electric shock baths or applied a head-shrinking steel skullcap in order to ‘pry loose secrets and crush improper thoughts.’”¹³⁸

In addition to these gestapo-like tactics, Armas also undertook a series of legislative actions to codify his authoritarian power. In 1955 he indefinitely suspended the next year’s scheduled presidential elections and limited participation in the congressional elections to only his own party, the National Liberation Movement. In addition, Armas disenfranchised over two-thirds of the population. Finally, in 1956 Armas passed a new constitution which institutionalized the 1954 statute investing him with complete legislative and executive authority. The result of all of these actions was that Armas successfully ensured that there would be no organized opposition

¹³⁷ Immerman 199.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

to his governing party.

In addition to limiting political rights, Armas also successfully decapitated Guatemala's labor movement. He repealed Arevalo's 1947 Labor Code and canceled the registration of more than five hundred unions. Armas also passed a law which required all new union charters to be approved by the NCDC. He invested his government with the right to declare any strike illegal and to punish offenders accordingly. Punishments for striking workers usually involved up to three years in prison during which time they would most likely be subject to the torture of Linare's special police force.

Incidents of workers being crushed to death by runaway trucks or accidentally shot reached epic proportions as Bernabe Linare's police carefully monitored labor activities. By the end of the decade, Guatemala's union membership had fallen to ten thousand, one-tenth of the total during Arbenz's last year in office. In all of Latin America, only Haiti had fewer organized workers.¹³⁹

In sum, Armas' policies reduced political and personal freedom and drove down the Guatemalan quality of life. In addition, his repeal of both Decree 900 and the Labor Code decreased agricultural and industrial production and subsequently the standard of living. Reaction to Armas' policies sparked guerilla movements within the nation which further destabilized the political scene and ravaged the economy. However, Castillo Armas did not live to see the full results of his policy changes. He was assassinated on July 22, 1957 by one of the members of his personal guard.

Castillo Armas was succeeded by a series of U.S. supported, caudillo-like rulers "who in the name of anti-communism have ruled by terrorism and repression."¹⁴⁰ Armas was immediately

¹³⁹ Immerman 200.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

followed by Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes. Ydigoras generally followed the policies of his predecessor; however he took relations with the United States to a new level by allowing the CIA and U.S. military to openly train Cuban exiles and build airstrips on Guatemalan soil. Ydigoras' concessions to the U.S. were met with a great deal of condemnation on the part of Guatemalan citizens. Several social protests occurred including a military uprising involving almost half of the officer corps. With the help of the United States, Ydigoras was able to crush the revolt. His administration killed or jailed hundreds of students, labor leaders, ex-military officers, and professionals and was subsequently met with the criticism of the Catholic church.

Due to Ydigoras' domestic difficulties, he was soon forced to resign at the insistence of the U.S. He was succeeded by Minister of Defense Enrique Peralta Azurdia. Under Peralta, "the Guatemalan dictatorship took on a new zeal. Peralta Azurdia abandoned most efforts to improve the lot of the masses of the poor people. Instead he heavily militarized the country. He specially trained army squads to track guerillas, keeping the rebels on the run and inflicting many casualties."¹⁴¹ On March 6, 1966, in the first general election in a decade, Peralta was replaced by Cesar Mendez Montenegro, a civilian.

Liberals and centrists had rallied behind Montenegro in the hope that a civilian would bring a moderating force to the Guatemalan government. However, the military immediately tried to oust Mendez Montenegro, only backing down after the United States brokered a deal in which military commanders were essentially given a free hand in repressing the opposition movements. Following the agreement, Mendez Montenegro named Colonel Carlos Arana Osario to head up anti-guerilla military operations and political assassinations began on a mass scale. "Thousands of

¹⁴¹ Schlesinger 244.

people suddenly met death at the hands of unseen gunmen under the presidency of Mendez Montenegro. Few of the victims were actual guerillas; many were middle class professionals who had supported Arevalo and Arbenz."¹⁴² Amnesty International concluded that in the decade and a half of the Montenegro and later the Osario administrations more than 30,000 people were abducted, tortured, and assassinated.¹⁴³

In sum, post-coup Guatemala was a nation in political and economic ruin. The guerrilla movements sparked by the social injustice of the late 1950's and 60's have continued to fight in the countryside and the government has continued its authoritarian and oppressive policies. The perpetual guerrilla warfare as well as the unequal distribution of land and resources have taken their toll on the productivity of the economy. And the majority of Guatemalans remain landless, uneducated, and without basic political and personal freedoms. Post-coup Guatemala was not an improvement over its predecessor from either a political, economic, or social perspective. In essence, the coup resulted in a backward progression of the nation. All of the social, political, and economic steps forward which were taken as a result of the October Revolution were wiped away with the installation of Castillo Armas, and the lost ground has not been retaken forty years later. Thus only one conclusion can be reached following a comparative conditions analysis from Guatemala's perspective. Guatemala was and is worse off as a result of the 1954 coup and therefore the coup can not be considered a justified intervention from the Guatemalan perspective.

A comparative conditions analysis of the 1954 coup involves the evaluation of the coup's

¹⁴² Schlesinger 246.

¹⁴³ Schlesinger 247.

effect on United States in terms of its foreign policy making ability. Prior to 1954, the United States had spent over two decades trying to rebuild relations with Latin America. As discussed in Chapter Three, the United States' interventions into Latin America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been met with a great deal of discontent on the part of Latin American nations. As a result, the Hoover and the Roosevelt administrations had undertaken policies of reconciliation towards their neighbors to the south. These policies culminated in Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy which was designed to de-emphasize the threat of U.S. intervention in Latin America while simultaneously rebuilding the inter-American trade relationship.

The Good Neighbor Policy was one of the most successful foreign policies in United States history. By the onset of World War II, inter-American trade had doubled from its 1933 low and relations had improved to such an extent that the United States was able to build a strong war time alliance with its neighbors to the south. Following the war, Roosevelt's policy not only preserved U.S. influence in the region, it led to an absolute increase. When Truman took office in 1945 he naturally chose to continue the inter-American themes originated by his predecessor.

Truman's initial foreign policy towards Latin America was essentially a direct extension of Roosevelt's. However, as the Cold War tensions began to rise, Truman was forced to place a greater emphasis on maintaining the United States' sphere of influence within the hemisphere. The culmination of Truman's effort to preserve good inter-American relationships and maximize U.S. influence was the establishment of the Organization for American States in 1948.

Despite the Truman and later the Eisenhower administration's emphasis on preserving the sphere of influence, both were able to generally maintain the positive inter-American relationships generated by the Good Neighbor Policy. Prior to 1954, political relations between Latin America

and the U.S. were amicable and the United States policy of nonintervention still had a great deal of credibility. The 1954 coup brought these conditions to an end.

U.S. intentions and credibility first came into question in January of 1954 when the Guatemalan government published a series of Somoza's letters lending credibility to a charge that "the U.S. Government had acquiesced in a plot by other nations against Guatemala."¹⁴⁴ The United States responded by stating that it was official U.S. policy not to intervene in the internal affairs of other nations, and any charges of intervention were necessarily ridiculous and untrue. However, the damage was done. "The accusation, of course, caused a sensation in Latin America, and when several months later troops crossed the borders with air support as outlined in the revelations of 29 January 1954, the credibility of the U.S. government reached zero."¹⁴⁵ The loss of U.S. credibility in Latin America was accompanied by a simultaneous condemnation of the part of the United States' European allies.

Few in Western Europe believed that Guatemala had been on the verge of becoming a communist bastion. Many thought that Eisenhower had brought down Arbenz on behalf of United Fruit; others thought his behavior that of the lord of the manor using 'a cannon... to render a poacher harmless.' It is not surprising then that Assistant Secretary Holland complained of 'the bad European press.'¹⁴⁶

Following the coup, a wave of anti-Americanism swept through Latin America. All but the most pro-American authoritarian states were aflood with pro-Guatemalan and anti-U.S. demonstrations. The *New York Times* reported from Brazil that it was difficult to find anyone who did not believe that the United States was directly responsible for Arbenz's overthrow. In

¹⁴⁴ Wood 186.

¹⁴⁵ Wood 186.

¹⁴⁶ Gleijeses 370.

the wake of the mass condemnation, John Foster Dulles confided in his brother that "our people... are frightened by reactions all over."¹⁴⁷ The anti-U.S. sentiment was not the fickle outcry of the masses-- it was a disillusionment felt by the intelligencia. As Carlos Fuentes explained, "the residue of good feeling left by the Roosevelt era had died in Guatemala; the majority of universities and scientific and cultural organizations in Latin America had sided with Guatemalan revolutionaries and had decided to shun their U.S. counterparts after the invasion of 1954. This was the result of disillusionment [and] of outrage."¹⁴⁸ This outrage continued into the coming years as evidenced by Nixon's poor reception in Lima and Caracas in 1958 where Latin Americans actually threw stones at him. "PBSUCCESS, most analysts now agree, left a lasting legacy of anti-Americanism in the region."¹⁴⁹

Latin Americans' general dislike for the United States was particularly focussed on the agency they believed to have carried out the coup, the CIA.

The CIA was more notorious than ever, its role being far too great to hide from any other intelligence agency, even if the American press had been deceived; and the scale and publicity surrounding the operation had inevitably compromised many CIA assets. If the Dulles brothers considered the operation a victory for the Free World, many Latin Americans did not agree. If anything they liked the CIA even less than they liked the Marines. When Lyman Kirkpatrick made a tour of Latin America in 1956 he found resentment of the Agency for the coup wherever he went.¹⁵⁰

However, the coup's most drastic repercussions on the CIA came not in the form of foreign condemnation but rather in the form of overconfidence. PBSUCCESS was, from the CIA's

¹⁴⁷ Gleijeses 371.

¹⁴⁸ Fuentes quoted in Wood 208

¹⁴⁹ Gleijeses 371.

¹⁵⁰ Wood 189.

standpoint, a perfectly executed operation. Following on the heels of the successful covert action in Iran, the 1954 coup left the Central Intelligence Agency euphoric and overconfident. This overconfidence led directly to the disaster at the Bay of Pigs. As Lyman Kirkpatrick explained in an interview, the Guatemalan operation “induced euphoria: we [could] do anything if we [wanted] to.”¹⁵¹ It was with this attitude that the administrators of the Guatemalan operation approached Cuba, and with this attitude they failed at the Bay of Pigs.

The failure of operation ZAPATA, or the Bay of Pigs, in April 1961 was the result of many factors. After over twenty separate investigative hearings, the Taylor group concluded that the failure was due largely to tactical error. This error included a shortage of ammunition and the United States’ failure to neutralize Castro’s air force. Overall, Taylor concluded that the operation had been too limited in nature to succeed. The size constraints were a result of the requirement that the operation be conducted in such a way that the United States could plausibly disclaim any involvement. Following the Taylor group’s report, questions arose as to how America’s best and brightest political, intelligence, and military minds would have allowed an operation which had no reasonable chance for success to be carried out. The cause of this failure was believed to be “group-think” phenomenon introduced by Yale psychologist, Irving Janis. Janis reported that the Kennedy administration’s decision making process was plagued by the absence of dissension.

Pressed for a decision due to the CIA’s estimate that Castro’s ability to repel an invasion increased each day, policy makers sought to avoid any substantive internal dissension. Firmly believing in United States superiority, they unquestionably accepted the agency’s faulty analysis and proposal. Hence subordinates with serious misgivings, such as Secretary of State Dean Rusk, concurred with the majority and convinced themselves that

¹⁵¹ Gleijeses 372.

the operation could succeed.¹⁵²

However, as Janis himself recognized, group-think in and of itself can only account for part of the administration's poor decision-making in the formation and execution of operation ZAPATA. The rest of the administration's error was, in large part, a direct result of the overconfidence generated by the successful operation in Guatemala.

This assertion was supported by the findings of the Taylor Group. In addition to outlining the tactical errors of operation ZAPATA, the Taylor group also found that "the connection between the two covert projects [Guatemala and Cuba] was much closer than has been hitherto acknowledged and, moreover, that the CIA's easy success in 1954 significantly contributed to its downfall in 1961."¹⁵³ As Howard Hunt stated, "if the agency had not had Guatemala, it probably would not have had Cuba."¹⁵⁴

The link between the two operations was based primarily on the fact that both were administered by the same group of men. "Indeed, virtually the entire PBSUCCESS apparatus was transplanted to ZAPATA."¹⁵⁵ Allen Dulles, Bissell, Hunt, Tracy Barnes, David Phillips, and J.C. King were among some of the top administrators of ZAPATA which had played major roles in the conduct of PBSUCCESS. "They were all proud of the part they had played in the victory against Arbenz and eager to duplicate it."¹⁵⁶ And duplicate it they did. Bissell's plan for

¹⁵² Immerman 192.

¹⁵³ Immerman 190.

¹⁵⁴ Hunt quoted in Immerman 190.

¹⁵⁵ Immerman 194.

¹⁵⁶ Immerman 194.

operation ZAPATA followed the Guatemalan operation's pattern almost perfectly. "He produced a plan that he thought would work-- because it had worked before. From the time that he first received the Cuban assignment, Bissell had based his strategy on the precedent established in Guatemala.... His scenario projected 'a possibly protracted period of psychological and political warfare.'"¹⁵⁷ The Voice of Liberation was replaced with Radio Swan, the F-47s were replaced by B-26s, and the younger Somoza played his father's role, but the fundamental approach was the same. In essence, Bissell believed that a PBSUCCESS type plan would succeed in Cuba because he believed that when faced with pressure, Castro would succumb in the same manner that Arbenz had. Unfortunately, Bissell and his fellow policy makers failed to appreciate the differences between Arbenz and Castro and, more importantly, to recognize that Castro had watched Arbenz and learned from his mistakes. He was prepared for an American intervention.

Overall, the 1954 coup in Guatemala weakened the United States' foreign policy position. Reaction to the coup was largely negative and it spread throughout Latin America and Europe. In addition, the United States' nonintervention pledge lost all credibility, and as a result inter-American relationships were weakened from their pre-1954 levels. Most significantly, the 1954 coup artificially inflated the CIA's confidence level and led them to pursue an operation in Cuba which was poorly suited for the conditions and doomed to failure. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the 1954 Coup in Guatemala did not make the United States better off in its ability to conduct foreign policy within Latin America. Thus, based on a comparative conditions analysis from a United States perspective, the coup was not a justifiable intervention.

¹⁵⁷ Immerman 194.

Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated the 1954 CIA intervention into Guatemala using three different analyses. All three of these evaluations have found that the coup could not be considered justifiable from either a U.S. or a Guatemalan perspective. By producing a negative answer to the second question which was posed at the beginning of this chapter, we have in essence answered the first and true question of this paper in the positive. The 1954 intervention into Guatemala was not a justifiable intervention and therefore must be considered an illegal act according to international moral guidelines and rules. This is the case because without justification, the United States intervened in the internal affairs of Guatemala, forcing it to undergo a violent political change from which it received no tangible benefit as a nation and from which it has never truly recovered. The United States action in this case was clearly an illegal action according to international guidelines and rules.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have outlined the causes and conduct of the 1954 CIA intervention into Guatemala and assessed it in terms of its justification. I have come to the conclusion, which has incidentally been widely accepted among political observers, that the 1954 intervention cannot in fact be labeled as a justifiable intervention. In addition, the 1954 intervention actually caused a number of concrete disadvantages for both Guatemala and the United States foreign policy establishment which were enumerated in Chapter Five. Looking at these results, one remaining question about the 1954 intervention naturally arises: why did intelligent, capable leaders who were generally well intentioned administer an unjustifiable intervention which resulted in disadvantages for both the United States and Guatemala?

The answer to the preceding question can never be known conclusively. The exact decision making stimuli for the 1954 intervention can only be uncovered through the first hand knowledge of those few men who participated directly in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these men are deceased. Thus we are left to piece the stimuli together based on the few accounts which they left behind and the general conditions which existed during the period of the first Eisenhower administration. An examination of these sources points to three factors which functioned as stimuli in the 1954 intervention decision process. These three factors vary in their immediacy to the actual decision to take action with the third of the three stimuli being the most influential. The three causes can be simply stated as administration connections to the United Fruit Company, the phenomena of McCarthyism which swept the country in the early 1950's, and the heightened level of Cold War tensions during the same period.

Eisenhower Administration Connections to the UFCO

While there were extensive personal and professional connections between the Eisenhower administration and the UFCO, these connections were the least immediate of the three stimuli involved in the decision to launch PBSUCCESS. Administration connections to the UFCO were centered primarily in the State Department and CIA. Both Secretary and Director Dulles had well developed professional relationships with the UFCO. Sullivan & Cromwell, the law firm in which both Dulles brothers practiced as senior partners prior to their assignments to government posts, was one of the United Fruit Company's chief counsels in its Latin American dealings. In fact, John Foster Dulles had personally handled several of UFCO's large railroad deals in Central America. In addition to the Dulles connection, the United fruit Company was also connected to the Eisenhower administration through attorney Thomas G. Corcoran. Corcoran, who was also lead counsel for Civil Air Transport, was a close friend of former Director of Intelligence and Assistant Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith. In fact, following the successful administration of the 1954 coup, Corcoran was able to secure a seat for "Beetle" on the UFCO board of directors. The first official meeting between Corcoran and Bedell Smith held in the summer of 1953 is recalled by CIA officers as "the clear starting point of the plan [to overthrow Arbenz]."¹⁵⁸

The plan to intervene in Guatemala was originally proposed by Corcoran as a joint CIA/United Fruit Company undertaking. However, after further CIA analysis, a plan was drawn up in which the UFCO would not be a direct participant. This was met with agreement on the part of

¹⁵⁸ John Prados, Presidents' Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations since World War II (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1986) 99.

UFCO executives who, upon further consideration, had decided that active participation by the fruit company would be too risky. They believed that "if the operation failed, the company would be grievously damaged, not only in Guatemala but globally."¹⁵⁹ Despite their decision to abstain from direct participation, the UFCO did wish to be kept continually informed on the status of the intervention and they consequently retained Corcoran to continue serving in his go-between role.

While the UFCO did not participate directly in the 1954 intervention, it did have a great deal of unofficial involvement. First, the United Fruit Company provided a pre-existing structure for the PBSUCCESS plan. Having actively participated in the Truman administration's aborted intervention, Operation Fortune, the UFCO had cultivated several personnel contacts. These contacts were furnished to the Eisenhower administration and almost the exact same cast of characters was used by PBSUCCESS in Nicaragua and Honduras. Second, the UFCO also participated in an unofficial capacity in the administration of the 1954 intervention. Castillo Armas' men were trained by the CIA on United Fruit Company land in Honduras and they crossed over into Guatemala on UFCO lands. In addition, during the pre-combat stages of PBSUCCESS, arms shipments were shipped to Armas' men labeled as machinery aboard UFCO freighters. Finally, due to Corcoran's persistence, the UFCO was kept abreast of developments in 1954 intervention throughout its administration.

The connections between the Eisenhower administration and the United Fruit Company were clearly extensive. Their influence was supplemented in large part by a very aggressive and successful UFCO lobbying campaign in Congress and a comprehensive public relations campaign in the American press following the Guatemalan expropriation of UFCO land. Together, these

¹⁵⁹ Prados 100.

factors resulted in the large though indirect role played by the UFCO in the administration of PBSUCCESS.

Despite this role, it would be a mistake to overestimate the impact of administration/UFCO connections in the decision to undertake the 1954 intervention. It is certain that the UFCO's close relationship with the Eisenhower administration and the government as a whole resulted in a situation in which its complaints about the Arbenz administration received more attention from the administration and Congress than they otherwise might have, had the company been smaller and less connected. However, these relationships are best categorized as a removed rather than an immediate cause. That is to say that they helped focus administration attention on Guatemala as a potential problem area for U.S. policy, but they did not in and of themselves precipitate action. The more immediate cause of action lies instead in the second and third decision stimuli, both of which center around the threat of communism.

McCarthyism

The phenomenon of McCarthyism was a more immediate stimulus in the 1954 intervention decision making process than the administration connections to the UFCO, but it was still not the spark which ignited definitive action on PBSUCCESS. Senator Joseph McCarthy burst onto the national scene on February 9, 1950 while giving a speech to a Republican women's group in Wheeling, West Virginia. McCarthy received national press coverage for this speech when he claimed that he possessed a list of two hundred and fifty State Department officials who were card carrying members of the Communist Party. This proclamation was the first of many to come in which Senator McCarthy accused members of the government, the military, and civilians of ties to the Communist Party.

Due to his absence from the country in 1951 and early 1952 (during which time he served as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO troops and was stationed in Paris), very little news of McCarthyism came to Eisenhower's attention. In fact, Eisenhower did not become fully aware of the Senator from Wisconsin's impact until mid-1952 after he had received the Republican party's nomination for president and his political advisors informed him that McCarthyism was likely to be a national issue in the presidential campaign. After being apprised of the situation, Eisenhower established the stance he would take with regard to Senator McCarthy throughout the first two years of his term until McCarthy's condemnation by the Senate in late 1954. Eisenhower explained his position toward McCarthy in his summation of his first term, *The White House Years; Mandate for Change 1953-1956*. He states,

I took the personal position that as a consistent and established opponent of Communism and all it stood for, I would, if elected, initiate measures to make certain that no Communist or fellow traveler would remain in government. At the same time I pledged that, in attempt to discover and uproot Communists, I would countenance only methods that were completely consonant with American juridical practices and that respected the individual rights of those accused. This placed the matter on a positive basis and I declined to be drawn into arguments with, or accusations against, Senator McCarthy himself.¹⁶⁰

In late 1952, Eisenhower's stance toward McCarthy was put to its first test. Following an apparent miscommunication with his campaign staff, Eisenhower was scheduled to make several stops in Wisconsin. He had specifically told his staff not to schedule events in Wisconsin because he did not want to be associated with, or forced to endorse, Senator McCarthy who was at the time running for reelection. Unable to cancel the stops without calling undue press attention to the issue, Eisenhower made the trip. At one of the first stops, Senator McCarthy boarded the

¹⁶⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change 1953-1956* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1972) 192.

campaign train and requested a personal interview with Eisenhower to inquire as what the general's position would be towards him and his hearings. During the interview, Eisenhower reiterated his objection to un-American judicial procedures and told McCarthy that he planned to tell the same thing to the people of Wisconsin. McCarthy responded by warning that the crowds would "boo" Eisenhower if he took that position, and he left. The following day when Eisenhower delivered his message condemning a hunt for communism which did not include due process, he was met by applause from his Green Bay audience. However, McCarthy did not extend the same warm reception and that speech spelled the end to any potential for amicable relations between the senator and Eisenhower. As Eisenhower commented, "from that time on, however, it could not be expected that my relations with Senator McCarthy would be cordial. As time went on, he began to include my associates and me in his innuendos and sometimes in his all-out attacks."¹⁶¹

Following the national election, in which the presidential ticket incidentally surpassed the McCarthy ticket in Wisconsin by 100,000 votes, President Eisenhower continued to maintain his original stance towards Senator McCarthy who continued to garner more press coverage by the day. Despite multiple requests from every sector for the president to publicly condemn the McCarthy, Eisenhower decided that the best manner in which to deal officially with the senator was to ignore him. The president argued that any condemnation he could make publicly would do nothing but bolster McCarthy's influence. He explained, "it seemed that almost every day I had to point out that if I were to attack Senator McCarthy, even though every personal instinct so prompted me, I would greatly enhance his publicity value without achieving any constructive

¹⁶¹ Eisenhower, White 319.

purpose. I was convinced that his influence, such as it was, would be gone completely if he lost his headline value."¹⁶² In addition, he believed that the only person who could bring about McCarthy's political end was the senator himself. Eisenhower continued,

convinced that the only person who could destroy McCarthy as a political figure was he himself, and finding evidence piling up that he was gradually doing exactly that, I continued my determination to ignore him. But at the same time I declared-- almost every week it seemed-- that I opposed, to the limit of my official power and personal influence, all unfair, unjust, and un-American practices in trials, investigations, and inquiries.¹⁶³

The sentiments of the president were shared by many of the high ranking officials in his administration. James C. Hagerty, Eisenhower's press secretary, felt that the administration's ideal policy was to underplay the McCarthy hearings, distancing themselves from the proceedings as much as possible while simultaneously appearing to be open and cooperative. Secretary Dulles also shared Eisenhower's views on McCarthy from early on. He stated at a press conference in April of 1950, that the McCarthy hearings were creating "a sense of frustrating confusion" within the nation, and he argued that there should be "procedure which operated without this public suspicion."¹⁶⁴ Later during the same year in some personal correspondence, Dulles "made it clear that he approved of neither the form nor the substance of McCarthy's attacks and the subcommittee's procedures. Referring to the Senator from Wisconsin as 'sincere and misguided,' Dulles did not approve of much that the Senator had done. On the other hand, he perceived no

¹⁶² Eisenhower, White 320.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Michael A. Guhin, John Foster Dulles: A Statesman and His Times (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972) 192.

advantage to his 'getting down to the level of personal attack and abuse.'"¹⁶⁵

While Eisenhower and his administration followed a reserved public attitude toward Senator McCarthy and his subcommittee hearings, their private feelings on the subject were far more animated and harsh in their criticism. In his assessment of his first term, President Eisenhower highlighted the fact that the problem of government security was exacerbated by the "extravagant and often baseless charges made against individuals and groups by Senator McCarthy."¹⁶⁶ He continued stating that "Senator McCarthy's general and specific accusations were, from the start, so extreme, often involving unsupported and unjustified allegations of the gravest kind, that his attacks, which at times degenerated to persecution, became known as 'McCarthyism'. Protected as he was by congressional immunity, anyone could be irresponsibly attacked."¹⁶⁷ The President's personal frustration with McCarthy came to a head in late 1952 when the Senator launched his last and most ambitious attack-- this time against the army.

McCarthy's hearings investigating the army began in December of 1952. They originated to investigate the Communist leanings of a dentist posted at Fort Kilmer. The dentist, Doctor Irving Peress, had been inducted in 1952 and when issued a loyalty questionnaire, had failed to answer some of the questions. An investigation by the army followed during which period Peress, in accordance with the doctor's draft regulations, was promoted to the rank of major. When the investigation was completed, the army discharged Peress at his own convenience, meaning that he had 90 days to leave the military. McCarthy meanwhile heard about the story and called Peress

¹⁶⁵ Guhin 192.

¹⁶⁶ Eisenhower, White 316.

¹⁶⁷ Eisenhower, White 316.

into answer some questions. Peress exercised his fifth amendment rights in response to several questions and immediately filed for his honorable discharge which was granted to him. Upon hearing the latest developments, McCarthy smelled blood and went straight for the top, Secretary of the Army Stevens who was a close friend of the President.

The subsequent army investigations lasted until June and were fully televised. As Eisenhower explained, "cameras and klieg lights were installed in the Senate committee rooms where he held hearings, a circumstance which helped still more to sustain public interest in his appearances and incited him to become even more extreme in his accusations."¹⁶⁸ The furor of McCarthyism hit its climax during the early months of the army trials. Eisenhower recorded this sentiment in his February 26, 1954 diary entry. He wrote, "McCarthy is grabbing the headlines and making people believe that he is driving the administration out of Washington."¹⁶⁹ However, as the trials wore on into their final weeks McCarthy's brazen cruelty in the treatment of army officials and several allegations which surfaced about the inappropriate conduct of his own staff began his decline in popularity. Eisenhower's prediction came true and McCarthy became his own undoing. As the President later noted, "ultimately and ironically, television helped to bring about his downfall."¹⁷⁰ Senator McCarthy was eventually publicly condemned on December 2, 1954 in a Senate resolution which cited him for conduct unbecoming a United States Senator.

The apex of McCarthy's influence and popularity coincided with the planning stages of the

¹⁶⁸ Eisenhower, White 320.

¹⁶⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower, Robert H. Ferrell ed., The Eisenhower Diaries (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981) 276.

¹⁷⁰ Eisenhower, White 320.

1954 intervention. During this period, aside from the accusational risks explained above, McCarthyism also created two other problems for the administration. First, President Eisenhower often complained that he was unable to get his programs passed on the Hill because of the focus McCarthy was receiving. Second, McCarthy represented a potential threat during the midterm elections due the polarizing effect he was having on the Republican party. While recognizing the threat McCarthyism represented, Eisenhower also realized it was a greater concept than the man himself. As Eisenhower explained,

McCarthyism was a much larger issue than McCarthy. This was the truth that I constantly held before me as I listened to the many exhortations that I should 'demolish' the senator himself.... Of one thing I was certain: McCarthyism antedated the appearance of Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin and would last longer than the man's power or publicity. Lashing back at one man, which is easy for a President, was not as important to me as the long-term value of restraint, the due process of law, and the basic rights of free men.¹⁷¹

As a result of this understanding as well as Eisenhower's unwillingness to confront McCarthy publicly, the best option left for the administration was to ignore the senator as much as possible. However, the risks associated with McCarthyism and the senator's increasing influence during late 1953 and early 1954 did not allow the administration to take a completely passive position on McCarthy. Instead, the administration was forced to try to undermine McCarthy's power without direct conflict and the best way to accomplish this was to erode McCarthy's foundation-- the fear of communism. As Eisenhower biographer Fred Greenstein notes,

A second [one of Eisenhower's approaches towards McCarthy] was to frame and execute policies which would make McCarthy's activities unnecessary and would otherwise diminish his importance....increasingly Eisenhower was able to use a broader range of his policies in employing 'the positive approach' to deflating McCarthy, drawing on the

¹⁷¹ Eisenhower, White 321.

public acclaim he received for his foreign policy actions.¹⁷²

This could be accomplished through a well publicized, decisive victory over communism. Such a victory would theoretically lessen the American public's fears and consequently their focus on McCarthy and a portion of his influence would be lost.

The communist threat in Guatemala represented an excellent opportunity for the administration to achieve just such victory, and thus the planning of the intervention may have been undertaken in part as an effective and indirect method with which to deal with McCarthy. However, this impetus was at best an intermediate motivation in the decision-making process of the intervention itself. The fact that a successful coup could in fact downplay the McCarthy threat was icing on the cake for the Eisenhower administration which had the containment of communism as its primary motivation. Stated simply, McCarthyism by itself would not have precipitated the 1954 intervention into Guatemala, but its existence sweetened the pot of intervention and made it more likely.

The Heightening of Cold War Tensions

The heightening of Cold War tensions was the most immediate decision making stimulus of the 1954 intervention. Between 1949 and 1954, Cold War tensions rose to an as yet unexperienced level. This rise was the product of three separate occurrences which threatened the concept of containment and weighted the communist scales in the quest for the balance of power. The first of these three events was the communist revolution in China in 1949. With its large population and land mass, abundant natural resources, and strategic location with respect to

¹⁷²Fred I. Greenstein, The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader (New York: Basic Books, 1982) 170.

the Soviet Union, China's conversion to communism substantially altered the balance of power and sent ripples of fear throughout the Western World.

The outbreak of the Korean war, the first armed conflict between proxies of the two superpowers, followed on the heels of the Chinese revolution in 1950, further exacerbating already tense Cold War conditions. The Korean War began on June 25, 1950 when North Korean troops with the tacit approval of the Soviet Union marched across the 38th Parallel into South Korea with the intent of unifying the country under communism. In response to this action, the United Nations quickly passed a resolution calling for a U.N. defense of South Korea to be led by the United States. Truman, without declaring war and subsequently without the consent of Congress, then deployed troops under the command of General MacArthur to South Korea.

MacArthur succeeded in landing north of the North Korean troops and cutting off their supply lines. He was then able to encircle them with the help of the South Korean forces and American forces who were already engaged on a southern front. The North Korean army was decimated and MacArthur quickly marched northward across the 38th Parallel. He succeeded in driving the North Koreans to within a few miles of the Yalu River and Manchuria at which point he made his famous "home by Christmas" proclamation, promising that Korea would be united under one democratic government and American troops would return home before Christmas. However, China entered the war on the side of the North Koreans, claiming as it had said it would that the approach of South Koreans and U.S. forces beyond the 38th Parallel would be interpreted as an aggression toward China. Reinforced by the Chinese volunteers, the North Koreans drove the U.S. forces back below the 38th Parallel and the fighting eventually stopped

with both sides having reestablished themselves at the 38th parallel. A peace agreement was subsequently signed on July 27, 1953 establishing the parallel as the official boundary between North and South Korea and creating a demilitarized zone between the two nations.

The Korean War was neither a total success nor a total failure for the United States. If MacArthur and the administration had remained committed to simply satisfying the U.N. resolution of reestablishing the territorial integrity of South Korea and had stopped at the 38th parallel, the war would have been a success. However, because U.S. forces attempted to take control of the entire country and were pushed back by the Chinese, Americans perceived the war as a defeat of sorts at the hands of communism. The feeling of stalemate or defeat generated by the Korean War added to the Western World's tension about the Cold War and further increased the fear of communism within the United States. The American public began to perceive communism as a giant red wave which was rolling across the globe.

The third and final event which led to the heightening of Cold War tensions and subsequently American fears of communism was France's loss of portions of Indochina in 1954. Following the Japanese surrender in World War II in 1945, the Viet Minh led by Vietnamese nationalist Ho Chi Minh proclaimed independence for the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and assumed power. The French who had been planning to reclaim their possessions in South East Asia following the war contested Ho Chi Minh's claim while simultaneously moving to retake control of Laos and Cambodia before their monarchies could take similar steps. Fighting ensued between French troops and Ho Chi Minh's guerillas in early 1946. This conflict became known as the first Indochina war and lasted until a peace settlement was signed in 1954. During a lull in the fighting in 1950, the French signed three different agreements recognizing Vietnam, Laos ,

and Cambodia as independent states belonging to the French Union. Puppet rulers were installed in the newly independent states and they remained in power until 1954 when the peace agreement was signed. The fighting continued throughout the early 1950's at which point the United States came to France's aid in a non-combat role. The U.S. sent material aid, technicians to maintain the U.S. arms, and U.S.-piloted evacuation aircraft to Indochina.

As the situation worsened in Dien Bien Phu, the U.S. tried to organize a coalition to intervene on France's behalf. However, Great Britain refused to participate and the Eisenhower administration could not attain congressional approval for the deployment of U.S. troops without a guarantee of coalition participation including Great Britain. Dien Bien Phu fell to the Viet Minh on May 7, 1954 and a peace agreement was signed on July 21, 1954. The agreement designated Laos and Cambodia as independent and provided for democratic elections by 1956. It also partitioned Vietnam along the 17th parallel creating communist-controlled North Vietnam and U.S.-supported South Vietnam.

The loss of North Vietnam to communism simply inflamed the already heightened fears of communism within the United States. It seemed that containment was a failing policy as country after country in South East Asia seemed to fall behind the red curtain. This trend and the heightened level of tension it caused within the Cold War was the most immediate stimulus in the decision making process of the 1954 intervention into Guatemala. The heightened fear level within the United States and the free world as a whole affected the Eisenhower administration in two ways. First, it placed greater pressure on the administration to conclude a decisive victory over communism. Thus when the situation in Guatemala presented just such an opportunity, the Eisenhower administration was eager to make a decisive and successful stand. Second and most

important, high tensions led the administration to perceive the communist threat in Guatemala as more dangerous than it was in reality. As a result, the administration took action more quickly and decisively than was actually necessary given the circumstances.

The heightened Cold War tensions of the early 1950's were the spark in the decision-making process of the Guatemalan intervention. Unlike the other two stimuli, administration/UFCO connections and McCarthyism, the Cold War tensions were reason in and of themselves for the United States to intervene in Guatemala. The three stimuli together provided the Eisenhower administration with a persuasive argument for, and ample incentive to intervene in Guatemala in 1954 despite the unjustifiableness of the act. While it can never be conclusively proven, it would seem that the capable, intelligent, and generally well-intentioned members of the Eisenhower administration administered the 1954 intervention because given the conditions and their incentive structure, it was the rational thing to do. The covert intervention represented a quick, relatively inexpensive (in terms of both dollars and American lives) manner to win a much needed, decisive victory over communism.

List of Primary Figures

Acheson, Dean: Secretary of State during the latter portion of the Truman administration.

Arana, Francisco: One of the leaders of the October Revolution and later chief of the armed forces under Arevalo. He was killed during his attempt to overthrow Arevalo on July 17, 1949.

Arévalo, Jaun José: The first of Guatemala's popularly elected presidents following the October Revolution. He initiated massive political, labor, and educational reform in an effort to liberalize Guatemala.

Armas, Castillo: Guatemalan exile recruited by the United States to lead the 1954 coup. He became president of Guatemala in July, 1954 and served until his assassination in July, 1957.

Bissel, Richard: Allen Dulles' special assistant during the conduct of PBSUCCESS and later the Deputy Director of Plans for Operation ZAPATA.

Borges, Alfredo Guerra: One of the founders of the Guatemalan Communist Party and a leader of the PGT.

Díaz, Carlos Enrique: Commander of the armed forces under Arbenz, he delivered the army's ultimatum to Arbenz and was provisional president for several hours following Arbenz's resignation.

Dulles, Allen: Director of the CIA under Eisenhower.

Dulles, John Foster: Secretary of State under Eisenhower during the period of the 1954 intervention in Guatemala.

Eisenhower, Dwight D.: President of the United States from 1953-1960, his administration presided over the administration of the 1954 intervention in Guatemala.

Fortuny, Jose Manuel: Founder of the Guatemalan Communist Party and later leader of the PGT, its replacement. He was a close friend of President Arbenz and the primary author of Decree 900.

Guzmán, Jacobo Arbenz: One of the two original planners of the October Revolution, he became Guatemala's second and final revolutionary president. He initiated massive land reform in the form of Decree 900 and was forced to resign during the United States intervention into Guatemala in 1954.

Lodge, Henry Cabot: U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and acting president of the Security

Council during the 1954 intervention.

Monzón, Bernardo Alvarado: Member of three of the five provisional juntas following Arbenz's resignation.

Peurifoy, John: U.S. ambassador to Guatemala during the administration of the 1954 intervention.

Sandoval, Carlos Aldana: One of the tow original planners of the October Revolution.

Smith, Walter Bedell: Former Director of the CIA under Truman and Assistant Secretary of State under Eisenhower. Worked closely in planning PBSUCCESS.

Toriello, Jorge: Member of the provisional junta following the October Revolution, and later the foreign minister of Guatemala under Arbenz

Truman, Harry S.: President of the United States from 1944-1952. He initiated key foreign policies affecting Latin America including the Truman Doctrine, the Point Four Program, and the Organization of American States.

Ubico, Jorge: Militaristic dictator who was president of Guatemala from 1931-1944.

Vaides, Federico Ponce: Military general who replaced Ubico as president of Guatemala. He ruled from July 1- October 20, 1945 when he was overthrown by the October Revolution.

Willauer, Whiting: U.S. ambassador to Honduras during the administration of the 1954 intervention.

Chronology of Major Events

- 1931** Jorge Ubico takes over Guatemalan presidency.
- 1934** Ubico passes the vagrancy laws.
Roosevelt administration passes the Reciprocal Trade Agreement.
- June, 1944** Ubico suspends constitutional right in response to urban protests and strikes.
- July 1, 1944** Ubico resigns in favor of a three man junta led by General Ponce.
- October 19, 1944** October Revolution is launched and Ponce resigns the following day.
- March, 1945** Juan José Arévalo becomes Guatemalan president (by popular election.)
- May 1, 1947** Arévalo establishes new labor code granting workers basic rights.
- 1948** The charter of the Organization of American States is incorporated.
- January, 1948** Arévalo introduces the Guatemalan Institute of Social Security.
- 1949** U.S. announces arms embargo against Guatemala.
- July 16, 1949** Arana attempts coup against Arévalo and is killed in a shootout the following day.
- 1950** Formation of the PGT (Guatemalan Communist Party.)
- March 15, 1951** Jacobo Arbenz becomes president of second revolutionary president.
- June 17, 1952** Arbenz passes Decree 900.
- March, 1953** Guatemala expropriates 234,000 acres of UFCO land in Tiquisate.
- March 18, 1953** NSC 144/I is passed by the National Security Council.
- January, 1954** Arbenz recovers letter sent between Armas and Somoza outlining intervention.
- February, 1954** Guatemala expropriates 173,000 acres of UFCO land in Bananera.
- May 17, 1954** The Alfhem docks in Puerto Barrios carrying Czechoslovakian arms.
- June 18, 1954** Castillo Armas and the his Army of Liberation cross the border into Guatemala.

June 19, 1954 Arbenz sends troops from Guatemala City to Zacapa.

June 25, 1954 Resolution for U.N. Security Council to hear Guatemalan complaint is defeated.

June 27, 1954 Arbenz receives ultimatum to resign from Diaz. He resigns that evening.

June 30, 1954 Monzón and Armas sign the Pacto de San Salvador.

July 7, 1954 Castillo Armas becomes president of fifth junta since Arbenz's resignation.

September 11, 1954 Junta disbands itself and Armas becomes president of Guatemala.

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