

RS#09: Source 6 - Eisenhower Memoirs, 1963

In 1963, three years after the end of his presidency and nine years after the Guatemalan coup, President Dwight D. Eisenhower published his memoirs, *A Mandate for Change*. Eisenhower never acknowledged the CIA's role in the coup or in Operation PBSUCCESS.

The troubles had been long-standing, reaching back nine years to the Guatemalan revolution of 1944, which had resulted in the overthrow of the dictator General Jorge Ubico. Thereafter, the Communists busied themselves with agitating and with infiltrating labor unions, peasant organizations, and the press and radio. In 1950 a military officer, Jacob Arbenz, came to power and by his actions soon created the strong suspicion that he was merely a puppet manipulated by Communists.

The American republics (other countries in Latin America) wanted no Communist regime within their midst. They recognized that subversion by Communism was only another form of aggression, even more evil than that achieved by naked military force. However, in unstable regions where revolutions and rioting were not uncommon, where some governments were being maintained by dictatorial means, where resentments against the United States were sometimes nurtured by groups other than Communist cells, it was difficult to differentiate positively between Communist influence and uncontrolled and politically rebellious groups. For example, on February 24, 1953, the Arbenz government announced its intention, under an agrarian reform law (land reform law), to seize about 225,000 acres of unused United Fruit Company land. Of all lands expropriated (taken), two thirds belonged to United Fruit. In return the company was to receive the woefully inadequate compensation of \$600,000 in long-term non-negotiable agrarian bonds.

Approximately six weeks after the announcement of the United Fruit Company land seizure...Guatemala withdrew from the five-nation Organization of Central American States, alleging aggression by Guatemala's neighbors. In this instance, the real reason was apparent: Guatemala could not risk participation in a debate on an anti-Communist resolution scheduled for presentation by El Salvador at a forthcoming meeting of the organization...

...[in 1954] Arbenz had declared a state of siege and launched a reign of terror. Then on June 18 armed forces under Carlos Castillo Armas, an exiled former colonel in the Guatemalan Army, crossed the border from Honduras into Guatemala, initially with a mere handful of men--reportedly about two hundred. As he progressed he picked up recruits.

...By the middle of 1954 Latin America was free, for the time being at least, of any fixed outposts of Communism.