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Guatemala

23 June 54

Arriola, Eduardo C. (Ambassador of Guatemala to the U.N.)

- 5 letters to D.H. and President of the Security Council.

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



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15 April 1953
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LETTER DATED 15 APRIL 1953 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
GUATEMALA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On the second of this month I delivered personally to the Secretariat of the United Nations a document, signed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala, which described a series of facts amounting to open hostility and a threat of intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of Guatemala.

My Government requested the Secretariat to communicate this statement to the States Members of the United Nations and to the Security Council, since the facts related therein affect the security and sovereignty of Guatemala. We hold that facts of this kind, since they endanger international security, may properly be brought before the Security Council at any time.

The Secretariat considers that it has sufficiently done its duty by circulating Guatemala's statement with a covering note to the States Members and to the members of the Security Council individually.

The Government of Guatemala, however, desires that the document should be laid before the Security Council as a body at its next meeting, so that that highest authority may take note of the facts contained therein and of the declaration in connexion therewith made by my Government in the exercise of its lawful and incontestable rights. My Government does not intend to bring a charge, but to place this statement on record in case events should occur constituting a violation of Guatemala's territory and national independence.

I therefore request you on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Guatemala to be good enough, if necessary, to place this statement of Guatemala's upon the agenda of the Security Council's next meeting, purely for the purpose indicated above.

I enclose two copies of the document, in Spanish and English.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) Eduardo Castillo Arriola
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Guatemala

DELEGACION PERMANENTE DE GUATEMALA
ANTE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

Guatemala, April 1st., 1953.

To the Secretary-General,
United Nations, N.Y.

Sir:

On the instructions of the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, I have the honour to request you to inform the States members of the United Nations and the Security Council of a succession of developments in recent years which demonstrate the intention of certain international political circles to intervene openly in the domestic affairs of Guatemala, thus denying the right of self-determination of peoples, which is one of the basic principles of the United Nations.

In taking this step, my Government wishes to place on record the fact that its sovereignty is seriously threatened and to enter this protest in the form of a document that will be available as evidence in the event of an attempt, on the part of those who are pursuing these tactics, to infringe by force the territorial inviolability and the national independence of Guatemala. The developments referred to are as follows:

I. Since the Guatemalan Revolution of 1944, newspaper chains in the United States, important journals in other countries and the largest North American news agencies, have carried on a systematic propaganda campaign of false and tendentious reports which, taking advantage of the international tension that has prevailed for some years, attempts to represent Guatemala as an "outpost of Soviet communism on the American continent", a "tool of Moscow" and "spearhead" of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against the United States of America.

An example of the lengths to which this campaign has gone is given by the report of a well-known British journalist who went so far as to state that there was a secret base for Soviet submarines in Guatemala.

It has also been said that Guatemala has concluded a secret agreement with Czechoslovakia under which it would receive arms in exchange for coffee.

II. Attempts have been made to represent the Guatemalan Government, as a "disturber of the peace in the American continent" and a threat to the "security of the countries of the Western Hemisphere". These accusations have repeatedly been made by, among others, Mr. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, when he was President of the Dominican Republic and later in his present capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Head of the Armed Forces of his country and representative to the seventh General Assembly of the United Nations. Mr. Trujillo has stated that armed units are being trained in Guatemala for the purpose of intervening in the domestic affairs of the Dominican and Cuban Republics. Mr. Trujillo is seeking to create an atmosphere favourable to the intervention of other countries in the domestic affairs of Guatemala, by representing the latter as a violator of international agreements between the countries of the American continent.

III. Among these actions designed to cause enmity between Guatemala and the friend nation of the United States of America, mention must be made of the unfortunate activities in which the former United States Ambassador to Guatemala, Mr. Richard Patterson engaged during his tenure of that post. Mr. Patterson announced openly that the Government then headed by Dr. Juan Jose Arevalo would be overthrown as the result of international pressure, incited; incited various groups of conspirators to engage in subversive activities against the constitutional regime and expressed to high officials of the Guatemalan Government the opinion that the Guatemalan problem was a matter which could easily be settled, as it represented a just claim and involved only a few million dollars, but that if the United States were to give way in the case of Guatemala, it would be obliged to do so elsewhere, which would mean a loss of many thousand million dollars.

IV. Although some Central American Governments formally state that they are animated by a spirit of Central American brotherhood and of friendliness toward the Government of Guatemala, in practice certain high officials of those Governments have been engaging in intensive diplomatic activity by no means friendly to the Guatemalan Government, since it is designed to form a coalition of Central American countries to exercise pressure upon Guatemala within the Organization of Central American States, and to arm a military conspiracy plainly directed against our Government.

These facts have been widely publicized in Central America and although there have been reports, unofficially, of instances of disagreement and even denunciation of them, there have not been the official denials which such acts of obvious aggression call for.

V. On 12 March 1953, Mr. Spruille Braden, former Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs in the United States Department of State, a person who is in close touch with some government circles in the friendly country, and who is a large shareholder in the powerful copper monopoly and head of the public relations department of the United Fruit Company, which, as you are aware, also operates in Guatemala, made a number of statements in the course of a lecture at Dartmouth College, Hannover, clearly suggesting the need for foreign intervention in the domestic affairs of Guatemala and advancing the extraordinary argument that action by the armed forces of a foreign nation against a country which is - as is persistently alleged to be the case of Guatemala - a "communist" danger to the security of the United States, should not be regarded as intervention.

VI. The President of the United Fruit Company, which has extensive interests in Guatemala, recently stated to the United States newspaper The Times Picayune that the UFCO intended to ask the United States Department of State to intervene in the matter of expropriation of uncultivated land owned by the Company in Guatemala, which had been authorized under the Agrarian Reform Act, and therefore in exercise of the sovereign powers of the State of Guatemala and in accordance with the spirit of recommendations approved by the United Nations.

What is the purpose of the slanderous charges that Guatemala is an "outpost of Soviet communism in the American continent", a "secret base for Soviet submarines", etc., etc.? The purpose is obvious. Those who are interested in maintaining the present international tension and in fomenting antagonism between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to the grave detriment of world peace and international friendship, make these charges in order to represent Guatemala as an enemy of the United States. The truth is that the democratic Governments of Guatemala since 1944 have practised a policy of cordial and honest friendship towards the Government and people of the United States.

The Government of Guatemala is not a satellite of the Soviet Union, the United States or any other country. Guatemala has diplomatic relations with a great many countries, including the USSR. The USSR does not intervene, either directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of Guatemala, just as Guatemala does not intervene or attempt to intervene in or disturb the peace of any other country, since its international conduct is strictly in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the international agreements it has signed and its repeated desire that States should, in all circumstances, secure the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. The Guatemalan Government maintains a firm and unwavering policy of peace, because it believes that only thus will it be able fully to satisfy the aspirations of Guatemalan people.

My Government considers that the causes of this vast interventionist conspiracy against Guatemala are to be found in the powerful interests which are the reason for the backwardness of our country and against which a series of measures has been taken by the forces of democracy in Guatemala since 1944, when a historic popular movement brought to an end the succession of tyrannies which had denied the people of Guatemala the exercise of universally recognized human rights, and which operated against our people and in favour of the powerful interests of the monopolistic companies to which we shall refer below.

Guatemala is an under-developed country and at the present time is without the means to carry on freer trade, develop industrial production and agriculture and provide its own port facilities. It does not control its mineral resources and it had no large sources for the production of electrical power.

Almost all Guatemala's exports and imports are carried in vessels owned by the United Fruit Company, which earns substantial profits every year from this source alone. The United Fruit Company directly or indirectly controls the only three Guatemalan ports and holds a large number of shares in the International Railways of Central America (IRCA), which has a monopoly of rail transport in the country and charges the highest fares and freight rates in the world which are fixed entirely at the company's will, so that Guatemalan traders and producers pay more for the carriage of their goods from Puerto Barrios to Guatemala (200 miles) than from Europe or the United States to Guatemala. These facts have been verified by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which recommended that an early change should be made.

The Empresa Electrica de Guatemala, a branch of the well-known trust, "Bond and Share Company", has a monopoly of the supply of electricity to the capital of Guatemala and other large centres.

The three companies mentioned are operated in Guatemala under the protection of contracts signed many years ago by anti-democratic governments of Guatemala, and thanks to these contracts enjoy harmful privileges and concessions which place Guatemalan investors in a disadvantageous position as regards competition, and subject the entire country to high rates which raise the cost of living for our people.

Under the protection of contracts of this kind, the United Fruit Company is exploiting large areas for the cultivation of bananas and hemp, and, as a result of its monopolistic position is subjecting Guatemalan banana producers to crippling conditions.

The companies mentioned and the United Fruit Company in particular have never concealed their disagreement with the Labour Code and other social legislation promulgated by democratic Governments since 1944; they have described the Labour Code, for example, as "discriminatory" as an excuse for not giving it full effect as is the duty of any company which respects the laws enacted by the Guatemalan State in the exercise of its sovereignty.

When the workers of the United Fruit Company and the IRCA in particular, requested the companies to enter into collective labour contracts, the companies prolonged the labour disputes with serious prejudice to public order and on some occasions endeavoured to boycott the Government of Guatemala economically, as a means of coercion so that the workers would be obliged to accept disadvantageous agreements with the companies, by such measures as the suspension of the regular arrival of the United Fruit Company vessels which are the only vessels carrying the trade of our country.

In labour disputes, the IRCA, for example, acting in league with the United Fruit Company in order to put pressure on the Guatemalan Government, threatened the mass dismissal of railway workers on the false pretext of imminent bankruptcy.

The IRCA is illegally retaining many millions of dollars which, acting merely as an agent, it collected in the form of a welfare tax paid by the Guatemalan people.

The charges and services of the Empresa Electrica de Guatemala are also protected by one-sided and unfair contract, signed in 1922, as a reward for arranging the international recognition of a de facto government.

Recently, under the Agrarian Reform Act, 13,929 hectares of unutilized land have been expropriated from the Compañía Agrícola de Guatemala, a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company, while in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the land under cultivation was not expropriated.

The Government of Guatemala, in response to the demands of all democratic forces in the country, is steadfastly pursuing a policy designed to adjust the operations of foreign undertakings to national interests, special emphasis being placed on the development of the national economy. The policy is intended, as is clearly stated in the programme of the Government of President Jacobo Arbenz, to "transform our country from a dependent nation with a semi-colonial economy into an economically independent country."

That is not all. As stated in the programme of the Government of President Arbenz and by the progressive forces of our country, Guatemala has for hundreds of years been a country with a predominantly semi-feudal economy, under which hundreds of thousands of peasants have lived in inhuman conditions; national industry has languished owing to the limited domestic market and the workers and the people have suffered as a result of low wages. Hence, in the interest of Guatemala's economic development, the Government last year promulgated an Agrarian Reform Act which met with opposition from all whose interests were contrary to the national welfare and were affected thereby.

The Guatemalan Government has pursued an unwavering policy of respect for democratic freedoms, which, to judge by the latest news reports, has become an undesirable practice at a time when fascism is rife in countries which were at one time members of the victorious alliance of nations that fought the threat of Hitlerian and Japanese fascism.

The Guatemalan Government considers that the facts mentioned, which have been all too briefly described, are the real cause of the threats of intervention and of the defamatory campaign which we are now reporting to the United Nations.

The Guatemalan Government has no doubt that it is the combination of foreign and domestic interests affected by its progressive and patriotic policy which is concealing its objectives behind the smoke-screen of "the fight against communism", which, there is no need to say, has always been used whenever it suited their purpose by those who cannot publicly avow their nefarious objectives.

Even as this communication is being drafted, new developments have taken place which give added force to my Government's protest; a group of rebels took up arms against the constitutional government, counting on reinforcements which they were to receive from abroad to ensure the success of their subversive actions. As proceedings have just been instituted in this case, my Government wishes merely to mention this serious incident.

This Government has always extended a friendly hand to all countries with a view to establishing the broadest possible peaceful collaboration and has always shown itself to be an unwavering supporter of the pacific settlement of all disputes between States. It consistently observes a policy of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other nations and on more than one occasion has expressed its just hope that international relations would be governed by the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

For these reasons the Guatemalan Government indignantly condemns and duly protests against the facts set forth in this document since it considers that they constitute a threat to its national dignity, sovereignty and independence and that attempts may be made to violate these rights by force. In conformity with the aforesaid principles, the Guatemalan Government affirms its full right to repel any act or threat of aggression, whatever its origin or pretext and whoever it may be who seeks to intervene in its domestic affairs.

Despite the threats and the conspiracy of foreign and domestic interests against its progressive and patriotic policy, the Guatemalan Government is firmly resolved to pursue its programme, which the people so urgently require, and is fully convinced that in so doing it is rendering the best possible service to the cause of democracy and of peace among nations.

I shall be very grateful to the Secretary-General for transmitting this communication to all Member States and to the Security Council.

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



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S/3241
23 June 1954
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

LETTER DATED 22 JUNE 1954 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Sir,

I have the honour to request you to inform the Security Council, and the President of the Council, on behalf of the constitutional Government of the Republic of Guatemala, that the resolution adopted by the Council at its 675th meeting, held on 20 June 1954, has not been complied with by those States Members of the United Nations which have acquiesced in or assisted from their territories the acts of aggression suffered by Guatemala, although the resolution is absolutely binding upon them under Article 25 of the Charter.

During the last forty-eight hours, aggressive acts against my country have continued by land, sea and air and have undoubtedly been committed from airfields and centres of operations situated outside Guatemalan territory while the Guatemalan National Army has confined its operations to the defence of the national territory and to repelling the aggressors.

My Government therefore officially requests, through me, that an urgent meeting of the Security Council should be convened so that the Council can use its authority with Honduras and Nicaragua as States Members of the United Nations to secure the cessation of all assistance to, or acquiescence in, the aggressive acts which are being committed by the mercenary forces.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
New York.

54-17828

When the Security Council adopted the above-mentioned resolution, it implicitly recognized that some States Members of the United Nations were giving assistance to Guatemala's invaders, and warned them all that they should cease doing so immediately. The resolution juridically defined the international aggression against Guatemalan soil and must take precedence over any other decision having the character of a personal or unilateral opinion which it may be wished for selfish motives to give against Guatemala.

I reiterate, in the name of my Government, the request that the President of the Security Council should immediately convene a meeting of the Council in virtue of the fact that Guatemala officially gives notice that the resolution adopted on 20 June 1954 by the Security Council has not been complied with by other States Members, thus creating a situation covered by Article 35 of the Charter, which takes precedence over any different unilateral definition.

The Security Council, by adopting the resolution dated 20 June 1954, assumed full jurisdiction in this matter in that it not only called upon the States Members that were giving assistance to commit the aggression against the Guatemalan Republic to abstain from doing so altogether but also rejected the draft resolution submitted by the Brazilian and Colombian Delegations which referred examination of the other aspects of the aggression against Guatemala to the Organization of American States. Even in that case, which is juridically impossible, the Security Council of the United Nations retains full jurisdiction in the matter, because Article 52, paragraph 4, of the Charter makes the obligations of the Council under Articles 34, 35 and 39 imperative.

The Organization of American States by strict standards of international law cannot take action because:

- (a) the Guatemalan Government which is the victim of aggression has, fully within its rights, expressly requested that that Organization should not deal with this matter;
- (b) under Article 103 of the Charter of the United Nations, in the event of a conflict between the obligations of Guatemala as a Member of the United Nations under the Charter and any obligations it may have towards the Organization of American States its obligations towards the United Nations prevail;

(c) although Guatemala might be considered to belong to the Organization, which is the case, as far as this specific instance is concerned, it has not completed the ratifications of the Organization's fundamental agreements of Rio de Janeiro and Bogota. It follows that neither the Organization of American States itself, nor the Inter-American Peace Commission, which forms part of it, may deal with the aggression against Guatemala; the former for the reason already noted, and the latter because it is only competent to deal with disputes between the Member States, and certainly Guatemala has no dispute of any kind with the neighbouring States of Honduras and Nicaragua.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) Eduardo Castillo Arriola
Permanent Representative of Guatemala
to the United Nations

ROUTING SLIP

TO

The Secretary General

APPROVAL	MORE DETAILS
REPLY, PLEASE	YOUR INFORMATION
SEE ME, PLEASE	RETURNED AS REQUESTED
YOUR SIGNATURE	INVESTIGATE AND REPORT
NOTE AND FILE	FOR ACTION
NOTE AND RETURN	REPLY FOR MY SIGNATURE
YOUR COMMENTS	INITIAL AND FORWARD

22-6-54

Cha

DATE

FROM

Unofficial translation

I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that in spite of the decisive resolution approved yesterday by the Security Council, which legally binds all Member States in conformity with Article 25 of the Charter, last night and today aggressive activities against this Republic are continuing, from bases in Member States of the United Nations, in open contravention of the referred decision of the Council, in conformity with the following details: from midnight of the 20th, until two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st, the following facts have occurred:

(a) at 01.25 hours unidentified planes dropped packages with armament by means of parachutes in the places Vega de Chile (Aldea de Pachalum, Joyabaj, Quiche) and Vega de Goninez (San Martin Jilotepeque, Chimaltenango). Those packages were picked up by peasants and handed to the authorities.

(b) at 03.00 hours in "Marimplan", Bahia de Puerto Barrios, the Honduran schooner "Siesta de Trujillo", with Honduran flag, was captured at the moment it was landing armament. Its load consisted of a great number of machine guns, rifles, hand grenades and equipment for communications. This armament needed many trucks for its transportation. Several prisoners were taken and the rest of the crew, who fled to the mountains, are being pursued. Another similar schooner is marauding outside of the bay awaiting the appropriate moment to land.

(c) At 07.16 hours unidentified planes machine gunned the city of Zacapa.

(d) At 07.30 the same planes damaged the railroad stations of the same city.

(e) At 08.35 unidentified planes machine gunned the villages of York and Cristina, and bombarded the North railroad, causing considerable damage in mile 68.

(f) At 08.50 again there were incursions of pirate planes over the city of Zacapa and the railroad bridge of "Zacapa" was bombarded and severely damaged, the reparations for which will require at least one week.

(g) At 14.05 the foreign invaders dropped parachutes with material for acts of sabotage and destruction near the village of Agua Caliente, aiming for the destruction of the railroad bridge of Chato, Agua Caliente, El Chile, Platanos, and two tunnels that ^{are} in the section.

(h) During this period the pirate aviation made several reconnaissance flights over the harbours of San Jose (Departamento de Escuintla) and Champerico (Retalhulent).

I deem it necessary to reiterate the important fact that all these flights referred to have been made exclusively from air fields situated outside the national territory of Guatemala. The factiousus have not captured any air strips in the country.

In accordance with the preceding, I very attentively ask Your Excellency and, through you, the Security Council, that this high organ take the necessary ^{steps} ^{measures} dispositions and interpose its authority over the Governments of Honduras and Nicaragua in order that all help to the mercenary forces, who are continuing aggressing and invading the national territory of Guatemala, ceases. I take this opportunity to reiterate to Your Excellency the assurances of my most distinguished considerations.

Guillermo Toriello.

UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY
COUNCIL



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S/3244
24 June 1954

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CABLEGRAM DATED 23 JUNE 1954 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF GUATEMALA
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to request that the following message be transmitted to the President of the Security Council: In view of intense air attacks on open cities in Guatemala where civil population has been machine-gunned and bombed with 100 pounds explosives and the warning of the aggressors broadcast through their clandestine radio station of being about to unleash heavy bombing of Guatemala City and other important cities, I officially request an urgent meeting of the Security Council not later than tomorrow June 24.

(Signed) EDUARDO CASTILLO ARRIOLA,
AMBASSADOR OF GUATEMALA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS

54-17962

Mr Chai

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SI NEW YORK NY JUN 23 759PME

S/ 3244

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD, SEC GENL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
UNITED NATIONS NYK

I HAVE THE HONOR TO REQUEST THAT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE BE
TRANSMITTED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: "IN
VIEW OF INTENSE AIR ATTACKS ON OPEN CITIES IN GUATEMALA
WHERE CIVIL POPULATION HAS BEEN MACHINEGUNNED AND BOMBED
WITH 100 POUNDS EXPLOSIVES AND THE WARNING OF THE AGGRESSORS
BROADCAST THROUGH THEIR CLANDESTINE RADIOSTATION OF BEING
ABOUT TO UNLEASH HEAVY BOMBING OF GUATEMALA CITY AND OTHER
IMPORTANT CITIES, I OFFICIALLY REQUEST AN URGENT MEETING OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL NOT LATER THAN TOMORROW JUNE 24

EDUARDO CASTILLO ARRIOLA AMBASSADOR OF THE GUATEMALA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

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EXPLS ACK

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