

## Guatemala Lesson Plan

### Central Historical Question:

*How and why did the United States fight the Cold War in Guatemala?*

#### Materials:

- Copies of Two Textbook Accounts Worksheet
- Copies of CIA Declassified Document
- OPTIONAL: Copies of Original CIA Documents (PDF)

#### Plan of Instruction:

1. Introduction: *As we've learned, the Cold War started heating up after WWII. The United States passed policies—the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine—to prevent the spread of Communism in Europe. We've also learned that the United States sent troops to Korea to fight Communist North Korea.*

*Throughout the Cold War, the United States also engaged in covert (or underground/hidden) action.*

*Today, we're going to look at what happened in Guatemala.*

2. Hand out Two Textbook Accounts and have students complete in pairs.
3. Debrief: What happened in Guatemala?

Whole class discussion:

- Why did the United States get involved in Guatemala?
  - What are some differences between Textbook A and Textbook B? What details appear in only one of the textbooks and not the other?
  - How do the details affect the overall story?
  - Why do you think one textbook found these details important to include but the other did not?
  - What more do you want to know about what happened in Guatemala?
4. Hand out declassified CIA document. (Explain what 'declassified' means).

Write the following questions on the board. Students should answer in pairs:

- What type of document is this?
- What does it say about the U.S. involvement in Guatemala?
- What else was happening in 1954 that would have influenced the United States's decision to use covert methods in Guatemala?

- Does this document challenge the textbook accounts? Why or why not?

5. Debrief as whole class. Discussion:

- Why is this event in Guatemala considered part of the Cold War?
- How does this event help you understand the United States' behavior during the Cold War?
- Are you surprised by this story? Why or why not?

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Citations:

"Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during Military Operations of Calligeris", Origin deleted, Undated. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Two Textbook Accounts

Textbook A	Textbook B
<p>In 1954, the CIA also took covert actions in Guatemala, a Central American country just south of Mexico. Eisenhower believed that Guatemala's government, headed by Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, had Communist sympathies because it had given more than 200,000 acres of American-owned land to peasants. In response, the CIA trained an army, which invaded Guatemala and captured Arbenz Guzman and his forces. The army's leader, Carlos Castillo Armas, became dictator of the country.</p> <p><i>Source: The Americans, 2002, p. 626.</i></p>	<p>[In 1954] the CIA acted to protect American-owned property in Guatemala. In 1951 Jacobo Arbenz Guzman won election as president of Guatemala with Communist support. His land reform program took over large estates, including those of the American-owned United Fruit Company. In May 1954, Communist Czechoslovakia delivered arms to Guatemala. The CIA responded by arming the Guatemalan opposition and training them at secret camps in Nicaragua and Honduras. Shortly after these CIA-trained forces invaded Guatemala, Arbenz Guzman left office.</p> <p><i>Source: American Vision, 2006, p. 655.</i></p>

### What happened in Guatemala?

Answer the questions below. Write (A) if the answer appears in textbook A; write (B) if the answer appears in textbook B; and write (A + B) if the answer appears in both textbooks.

1. **Who was the leader of Guatemala in 1954?** Which textbook contains this answer? \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Why did the United States oppose this leader?** Which textbook contains this answer? \_\_\_\_\_
3. **What did the U.S. do to overthrow this leader?** Which textbook contains this answer? \_\_\_\_\_
4. **What was the result of the U.S.'s actions?** Which textbook contains this answer? \_\_\_\_\_

## DECLASSIFIED CIA MEMO

### **"Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during Military Operations of Calligeris"; origin deleted; undated.**

This document is an assassination list compiled by the CIA and Carlos Castillo Armas (code-named "Calligeris"), who overthrew Arbenz Guzman.

The names of the agency's intended victims were divided into two categories: persons to be disposed of through "Executive action" (i.e., killed) and those to be imprisoned or exiled (sent away) during the operation.

Before declassifying and releasing this document to the public, the CIA deleted every name.

TO: Chief, [            ]

FROM: [            ]

SUBJECT; Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during Military Operations of Calligeris

1. Included herein is the list of Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be disposed of during military operations to be carried out by Calligeris.
  - a. Category I – persons to be disposed of through Executive action (attachment #1)
  - b. Category II – persons to be disposed of through imprisonment or exile (attachment #2)
2. This list is a revision, revised by Calligeris, of an original list prepared by Headquarters in February, 1952

Attachments: 2

Distribution: Orig. & 1, Headquarters