**Country:** Guatemala

**Committee**: General Assembly 1: Disarmament and Security

**Agenda Item**: Israel-Palestine Conflict

Since the CIA-sponsored coup in 1954, Guatemala has been ruled by a succession of right-wing regimes determined to suppress an indigenous revolutionary movement that traces its lineage back to the American intervention. Most of these were military juntas, but even under the nominally civilian regime from 1966 to 1970 military officers filled critical government posts, and during the 1960s the state waged a brutal counterinsurgency campaign against a guerrilla movement based mainly among the country’s Ladino population. Although this guerrilla movement had been dealt a devastating blow by 1970, new sectors of resistance emerged in the 1970s, particularly in the Indian communities, which evoked new strategies of repression and counterinsurgency.

These were the same years that saw Israel “pacify” and consolidate its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and Golan territories seized in 1967. Ties between the two states going back to Israel’s establishment were thus reinforced in the 1970s by a shared interest in counterinsurgency. These affinities, old and new, took on new force when Menachem Begin and his Likud coalition came to power in Israel in June 1977. The new Israeli leaders remembered the key role played in 1947-1948 by Jorge Garcia Granados, Guatemala’s representative to the UN Special Committee on Palestine. Garcia Granados, who had been serving as ambassador in Washington, was personally drawn to the Zionist cause long before taking this post and exerted strong influence on the Special Committee to recommend partition. Granados had gone out of his way to meet personally with Begin, Shamir and others in the terrorist underground in Palestine in 1947; in 1948 he urged Guatemala’s president to immediately recognize Israel.

Israel’s present attention to Guatemala is not, of course, predicated entirely on history. Guatemala can still be an asset in international forums such as the UN, where Israel is often quite isolated. Israel also has significant commercial interests in Guatemala. Moreover, Guatemala’s strategic importance to the United States in the context of its Central American policy, coupled with the often stormy relations between Washington and Guatemala City, have afforded Israel a special role in Guatemala. Guatemalan rulers, for their part, see Israel as the world’s foremost practitioner of counterinsurgency, and look to Israel for advice, models, expertise and arms. Israeli assistance began in 1971, but it took on increased importance after 1977, when the Guatemalan generals rejected US military aid in response to Carter administration pressures to remedy their gross human rights violations. Israel has displayed no similar reluctance to work with the country that one Guatemalan lawyer characterized as “a nation of prisoners.”

The United Nations, which took the responsibility of resolving the problem, formed a committee called the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), which consists of 11 members, to investigate the situation in Palestine and make recommendations. Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Switzerland and Uruguay among the members of the 41 Committee, in which no permanent members were present to prevent the Soviets from joining, called the 'majority plan', and the partition of Palestine into three regions under the auspices of the Arab state, the Jewish state and the UN under the tutelage of Jerusalem. proposed the plan.

Three fundamental factors underlie Israel's involvement in Guatemala and all Israeli Third World relations. First, Israel's global involvements are directly linked to its efforts to break out of its international isolation. Because of that isolation, Israeli leaders reason that they cannot be particular about the kind of regimes they assist