

Process Paper

History is full of events in which were fueled by United States intervention. From the Middle East to Latin America, the U.S. has attempted and often succeeded in propping up leaders in the nations they seek to influence. Because of the ongoing U.S. intervention in the Middle East, this topic had come to my attention. I was astounded by the amount of influence America had on other nations. Specifically, how they used their influence for economical and monetary gain. I began to understand that the United States was not as much of a benevolent peace-keeping nation as I had once thought.

My research was conducted entirely online. Thanks to the overwhelming amount of digitized information, I acquired many documents from the Central Intelligence Agency. This was mainly due to the Freedom of Information Act that required the disclosure of United States documents. Using these documents, I was able to understand the scope of propaganda that was to be used in the plot. Newspapers and magazines also were vital to displaying the media's reaction to the events that composed the coup. I was able to find a few well-researched books that went into detail about the topic. I was able to go from knowing very little about the 1954 Guatemalan Coup d'état to being able to explain it and describe the socio-political climate surrounding it.

I chose to do a website to showcase my topic because of the ability websites have to display a great deal of information. I was able to fuse a large number of visuals and quotes with my own information. This way I believed I could present the most amount of information to a reader. This was my first time building a website for History Day and the NHD web builder served as a barrier for me. It was a challenge starting to layout the website, but by fiddling around with it I was able to get started. It was a constant learning process throughout the duration of my project.

The CIA used multiple forms of communication in the 1954 Guatemalan Coup d'état. By using propaganda in the forms of news media, radio, and the spreading of misinformation through troops and the general populous. These forms of communication were targeted at the people of the United States and Guatemala. They were deep-rooted forms of fear-mongering that were only effective because of the socio-political climate that had been created in the West. For decades, the United States had thrown down the rights they held dear, to persecute and squash communist influence. For decades they communicated to Americans the antagonism of communism, cementing in their minds. The CIA took advantage of America's bigotted mindset about this political ideology and used it to justify their economic ventures in foreign nations. The significance of this coup d'état cannot be understated. A 36-year long civil war followed the event between the government and leftist insurgents fighting for policies that had disappeared during American backed rule.