

Editorial

# Israel's Worrisome Presence in Latin America

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During the years of the “hot war” in Latin America, Israel had a notorious lethal presence in the region. They sent mercenaries, intelligence advisors, torture instructors, and people versed in other savage interrogation methods and selective killings. Israel also sent thousands of tons of weaponry.

In Guatemala, for instance, of the almost 200,000 victims, two-thirds died under fire from Galil rifles or Uzi machineguns; or by bombs dropped by Araba or Pilatus airplanes. Israeli experts also helped set up the telecommunications system of the Guatemalan army. And Israel brought the technology to assemble the Kusuco semi-armored vehicle for troop transport.

The long arm of Israel was felt throughout the rest of Latin America. They teamed up with extreme right military leaders in their effort to wipe out all progressive elements of society, killing thousands of young people in the name of anti-communism.

As of the 1980s, the Israeli presence in Latin America was so disguised that it was one of the best kept secrets, although not all traces had been erased.

Many Latin American countries are still a major market for Israel's military industry. Throughout the region, there is a proliferation of private security companies which are rooted in Israel, like Global CST, part of the Mikal Group and rated as the second largest arms manufacturer in Israel. Global CST has signed a 10 million dollar agreement to train the Peruvian army; and it claimed responsibility for the rescue operation of former Colombian presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.

Global CST is headed by retired General Israel Ziv, former chief of operations of the Israeli army and an active member of the fascist organization Task Force on Future Terrorism and on Fighting International Terrorism. In 2008, Ziv was hired as an advisor for Colombia's former Defense Minister, today's president-elect Juan Manuel Santos, following the purchase of 24 F-21 Kfir fighter-bombers to supposedly combat drug trafficking and insurgency.

Just a few minutes after take off, these planes could be flying over neighboring Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and even Nicaragua.

Another interesting case is that of the Israeli company SIA, which stands for Security and Intelligence Advising. According to its website, the company was founded by retired security and intelligence experts from various elite units of Israel's armed forces.

That company provides espionage services, interventions, wire tapping, and other such services to governments all around the world. It also organizes courses, workshops and seminars on security, antiterrorism and intelligence methods for private companies.

Its presence in Latin America has been widely documented, including some of the scandals it has been involved in.

Now, Israel is not content with just having its policemen and military in the region. Spurred by the global economic crisis, they have their eyes on the Latin American market. That was one of the reasons for the 2009 Latin American tour by Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman.

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\* Sources: Radio Havana (RHC):

[http://www.radiohc.cu/ingles/a\\_comentarios/10/julio/jul9.htm](http://www.radiohc.cu/ingles/a_comentarios/10/julio/jul9.htm)