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In January 2020, Vicente Gonzalez received an award from the Government of Guatemala that has also been given to dictators Fidel Castro and Benito Mussolini; the creator of the award—Guatemalan President Jorge Ubico—stated in 1944, “I am like Hitler. I execute first and give trial afterwards:”

- On January 6, 2020, Gonzalez received “Guatemala’s highest honor: The Order of the Quetzal,” an award “that acknowledges foreign officials, organizations, and people who have given back to the nation of Guatemala...” “On Monday, January 6, Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (TX-15) received the Republic of Guatemala’s highest honor: The Order of the Quetzal. The award was presented by the president of Guatemala Jimmy Morales Cabrera. This award comes as a recognition of Congressman Gonzalez’s support for the U.S.-Guatemala relationship. Congressman Gonzalez has staunchly advocated for both countries to continue working on ways to create educational and employment opportunities, increase economic investment and prosperity, and cooperate on matters of national security...The Order of the Quetzal is an award that acknowledges foreign officials, organizations, and people who have given back to the nation of Guatemala whose artistic, civic, humanitarian, or scientific work merit special recognition.” (“Congressman Gonzalez Receives Guatemala’s Highest Honor,” [Press Release](#), 1/30/20)
- **Picture of Gonzalez receiving the award from President Jimmy Morales Cabrera.**



(“Congressman Gonzalez Receives Guatemala’s Highest Honor,” [Press Release](#), 1/30/20)

- Gonzalez stated that he was “proud and humbled” to receive the award, and “join the ranks of those that have received this honor before me.” “I am proud and humbled to receive this distinction and join the ranks of those that have received this honor before me. I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the government of Guatemala for nominating

me for this prestigious award, including my esteemed friends, Guatemalan Ambassador to the U.S. Manuel Espina and President Morales.” (Ronnie Marley, “Congressman Vicente Gonzalez Receives Guatemala’s Highest Honor,” [Valley Central](#), 1/30/20)

- **The Order of the Quetzal, created by former Guatemalan President Jorge Ubico, is “the highest honorary distinction that the Government of Guatemala can grant,” but has been considered controversial because it is purportedly granted “according to the interests and ideology of the leaders in power” in order to “please in political matters.”** “The Order of the Quetzal is the highest honorary distinction that the Government of Guatemala can grant to national and foreign leaders, individuals and organizations, whose humanitarian, cultural or political work has been relevant to the country. It was created by President Jorge Ubico in 1936. In 1973 the degrees were approved: Grand Collar, Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer and Knight. ‘Controversy’ is the qualifier that analyst José Carlos Sanabria, from the Association for Research and Social Studies (Asies), prefers to use when referring to this award. The expert adds that this order ‘is granted according to the interests and ideology of the leaders in power. It represents the recognition they make to certain political figures, but there are no established criteria, basically, at the discretion of each ruler....’ The anthropologist Danilo Palma affirms that ‘the Order of the Quetzal is an allegory.’ In what both academics agree is that in the exercise of power this honorary distinction is used to please in political matters... The most recent example, Palma recalls, was the exchange of decorations between President Otto Pérez and his Mexican counterpart Enrique Peña Nieto, last March. The recognition was granted to the Aztec ruler while plans are being refined to build a mega-project for a gas pipeline between Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.” (Claudia Palma, “Controversial Order of the Quetzal,” [Prensa Libre](#), 4/12/15, Translated)
- **In 1944, Jorge Ubico—Guatemala’s dictator who reportedly killed suspected political enemies—said “I am like Hitler. I execute first and give trial afterwards.”** “Visitors from the U.S. have loudly praised Guatemala's Dictator Jorge Ubico. They have admired Guatemala's orderliness, its clean-swept streets, its impressive public buildings. But these observers did not see, or else ignored, the real Guatemala behind this façade. Last week, after a stay in Dictator Ubico's realm, a TIME correspondent reported in detail on one of the world's most flagrant tyrannies. Back in the days of waning dollar-diplomacy, Dictator Ubico was ‘elected’ President with U.S. blessing. Guatemalans noted that at the same time (1931) the potent United Fruit Co. wanted a juicy concession which the previous regime had refused to grant on United Fruit's terms. Ubico's first important act as President was to force the Assembly to pass the concession bill. Three years later Ubico entrenched himself, canceled all legal limits on his tenure. Guatemalans never forgot the massacre which took place at that time in which scores of students, workers, prominent citizens suspected of plotting a rebellion were seized in their houses, killed without formality. Hundreds were thrown into prison, tortured, executed. Cried Ubico, admirer of Hitler's 1934 bloodpurge: ‘I am like Hitler. I execute first and give trial afterwards.’” (“Guatemala: Heat on a Tyrant,” [Time](#), 6/26/1944)

- **In 1937, Benito Mussolini of Italy was awarded the Order of the Quetzal.** “As supreme chief of the Order of the Quetzal, President Jorge Ubico of Guatemala awarded the Order's Grand Cross to King Victor Emanuel III of Italy, Premier Benito Mussolini, Presidents Albert Lebrun of France, Lin Sen of China, Maxmiliano Martinez of El Salvador, Tiburcio Carias Andino of Honduras, Leon Cortes of Costa Rica, Alfonso Lopez of Colombia, Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua and Stenio Vincent of Haiti ‘for personal merits and friendship to Guatemala.’” (“People, Mar. 8, 1937,” [Time](#), 3/8/1937)
- **Fidel Castro of Cuba was awarded the Order of the Quetzal in 2009.** “The Order of the Quetzal in the degree of Great Collar was awarded the day before, to the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, by the president of Guatemala, Álvaro Colom Caballeros.” (Radio Rebelde, “Fidel Castro is Awarded the Order of the Quetzal of Guatemala,” [Radiorebelde](#), 2/17/09)