

Report

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US: Militarizing Latin America

By Noam Chomsky

“The “drug war”—like the “war on crime” and “the war on terror”—is pursued for reasons other than the announced goals.”

The United States was founded as an “infant empire” in the words of George Washington. The conquest of the national territory was a grand imperial venture. From the earliest days, control over the hemisphere was a critical goal.

Latin America has retained its primacy in US global planning. If the United States cannot control Latin America, it cannot expect “to achieve a successful order elsewhere in the world,” observed President Richard M. Nixon’s National Security Council in 1971, when Washington was considering the overthrow of Salvador Allende’s government in Chile.

Recently the hemisphere problem has intensified. South America has moved toward integration, a prerequisite for independence, has broadened international ties, and has addressed internal disorders – foremost, the traditional rule of a rich Europeanized minority over a sea of misery and suffering.

The problem came to a head a year ago in Bolivia, South America’s poorest country, where, in 2005, the indigenous majority

elected a president from its own ranks, Evo Morales. In August 2008 after Morales’ victory in a recall referendum, the opposition of US-backed elites turned violent, leading to the massacre of as many as 30 government supporters.

In response, the newly-formed Union of South American Republics (UNASUR) called a summit meeting. Participants – all the countries of South America – declared “their full and firm support for the constitutional government of President Evo Morales,” whose mandate was ratified by a big majority. “For the first time in South America’s history, the countries of our region are deciding how to resolve our problems without the presence of the United States,” Morales emphasized.

Another manifestation: Ecuador’s president Rafael Correa has vowed to terminate Washington’s use of the Manta military base, the last such base open to the United States in South America. In July, the US and Colombia concluded a secret deal to permit the United States to use seven military bases in Colombia.

The official purpose is to counter narcotics trafficking and terrorism, but senior Colombian military and civilian officials familiar with negotiations told the Associated Press,

“that the idea is to make Colombia a regional hub for Pentagon operations.” The agreement provides Colombia with privileged access to US military supplies, according to reports. Colombia had already become the leading recipient of US military aid (apart from Israel-Egypt, a separate category).

Colombia has had by far the worst human rights record in the hemisphere since the Central American wars of the 1980s. The correlation between US aid and human rights violations has long been noted by scholarship.

The AP also cited an April 2009 document of the US Air Mobility Command, which proposes that the Palanquero base in Colombia could become a “cooperative security location.” From Palanquero, “nearly half the continent can be covered by a C-17 (military transport) without refueling,” the document states. This could form part of “a global en route strategy,” which “helps achieve the regional engagement strategy and assists with the mobility routing to Africa.”

On Aug. 28, UNASUR met in Bariloche, Argentina, to consider the US military bases in Colombia. After intense debate, the final declaration stressed that South America must be kept as “a land of peace,” and that foreign military forces must not threaten the sovereignty or integrity of any nation of the region. And it instructed the South American Defense Council to investigate the Air Mobility



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Command document.

The bases' official purpose did not escape criticism. Morales said he witnessed US soldiers accompanying Bolivian troops who fired at members of his coca growers union. "So now we're narco-terrorists," he continued. "When they couldn't call us communists anymore, they called us subversives, and then traffickers, and since the September 11 attacks, terrorists." He warned that "the history of Latin America repeats itself." The ultimate responsibility for Latin America's violence lies with US consumers of illegal drugs Morales said; "If UNASUR sent troops to the United States to control consumption, would they accept it? Impossible."

That the US justification for its drug programs abroad is even regarded as worthy of discussion is yet another illustration of the depth of the imperial mentality.

Last February, the Latin American Commission on Drugs and Democracy issued its analysis of the US "war on drugs" in past decades. The commission, led by former Latin American presidents Fernando Cardoso (Brazil), Ernesto Zedillo (Mexico), and Cesar Gaviria (Colombia), concluded that the drug war had been a complete failure and urged a drastic change of policy away from forceful measures at home and abroad and toward much less costly and more effective measures – prevention and treatment. The commission report, like earlier studies and the historical record, had no detectable impact. The non-response reinforces the natural conclusion that the "drug war" – like the "war on crime" and "the war on terror" – is pursued for reasons other than the announced goals, which are revealed by the consequences.

During the past decade, the United States has increased military aid and training of Latin American officers in light infantry tac-

tics to combat "radical populism"—a concept that, in the Latin American context, sends shivers up the spine. Military training is being shifted from the State Department to the Pentagon, eliminating human rights and democracy provisions formerly under congressional supervision, always weak but at least a deterrent to some of the worst abuses. The US Fourth Fleet, disbanded in 1950, was reactivated in 2008, shortly after Colombia's invasion of Ecuador with responsibility for the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the surrounding waters. Its "various operations include counter-illicit trafficking, Theater Security Cooperation, military-to-military interaction and bilateral and multinational training," the official announcement says.

Militarization of South America aligns with much broader designs. In Iraq, informa-

tion is virtually nil about the fate of the huge US military bases there, so they presumably remain for force projection. The cost of the immense city-within-a-city embassy in Baghdad is to rise to \$1.8 billion a year, from an estimated \$1.5 billion. The Obama administration is also building mega-embassies in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The United States and United Kingdom are demanding that the US military base in Diego Garcia be exempted from the planned African nuclear-weapons-free-zone – as US bases are off-limits in similar zoning efforts in the Pacific.

In short, moves toward "a world of peace" do not fall within the "change you can believe in," to borrow Obama's campaign slogan.

Source: *In These Times*, September 9, 2009 (web only)

COLOMBIA: Base Agreement Signed

By John Lindsay-Poland, Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)

On October 30, Colombian and US officials signed an agreement to grant the United States the use of at least seven military bases in Colombia for ten years, an agreement that was fiercely criticized by South American leaders, Colombian civil society, US lawmakers and humanitarian groups.

The new US air base in Palanquero will "expand expeditionary warfare capability" and "improve global reach" for "conducting full spectrum operations," according to a newly disclosed Pentagon budget document. The Air Force document describes South America as "a critical sub region of our hemisphere where security and stability is under constant threat from narcotics funded terrorist insurgencies, anti-US governments, endemic poverty and recurring natural disasters." The document flatly contradicts well-publicized claims by US Ambassador William Brownfield that soldiers based in Colombia will "never, never, never" participate in armed operations, and that the base agreement doesn't allow operations outside Colombian territory.

While the US Embassy in Bogota said the agreement enters into force immediately, a Colombian court ruling said the agreement is "broad and unbalanced" in favor of the United States and is not based on any previous treaty, and so must be reviewed by the Colombian Congress and Constitutional

Court. The agreement puts no limits on the number of US personnel to be deployed in Colombia nor on the number of military bases they will use.

Colombia's constitution requires legislative approval for the stationing of any foreign troops on Colombian territory, as well as for all international treaties. The Colombian State Council, a court created to issue opinions on the presence of foreign troops, found that the agreement gives the US the power to decide what operations will occur, gives immunity to US troops, allows access to bases beyond the seven bases named in the agreement, and defers the most important questions about military operations to future "operational agreements."

The Council also reviewed 15 prior treaties and declarations cited by the Colombian government as the foundation for the current base agreement, and found that none of them offer a basis for the current agreement on stationing of military troops and use of military bases. It concludes that the agreement is a treaty, and so must be approved by the Colombian Congress and reviewed by the Constitutional Court. But Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez, in signing the deal, said the government would bypass legislative approval of the base agreement.

In addition, twenty-seven European organizations today called on President Obama to

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HONDURAS: Violations of Human Rights Under the Coup D'état

By Bertha Oliva, General Coordinator of COFADEH (Committee of Families of Detained and Disappeared in Honduras)

Ed. Note: *The article is an executive summary of a longer report*

I am a veteran human rights defender. As I prepared this second human rights report since the coup in Honduras, I have felt profound distress. Perhaps because I had begun to think that during the long process of the last decades, we had made some small advances in the area of human rights.

Perhaps it is because I look to the past in order to see the future, and to evaluate and to value the present – that today, over 100 days since the fateful coup on June 28th, I realize that something has shaken COFADEH to the core, and nothing is the same. Immediately after the coup we knew that we had regressed 25–30 years, maybe more.

As the impact of the blow set in, we realize that we are now in the midst of a modern military coup d'état in the 21st century. Unfortunately, we are well versed in the effects of military dictators and we understood that what we were witnessing was not an isolated act but an entire strategy to seize and hold power for the long term; in other words, the dictatorship intends to stay in the region.

We realized that if such an offense could be committed against the person who holds the highest office in the country, what would happen to the rest of the population. We began to prepare ourselves. The military dictatorship wasted no time. Today, just as in the past, we are the depository for tears, anguish, pain and hopelessness.

The military dictatorship that we live under today is very similar to that of the decade of the 1980s; however, there is an important difference. During the 1980s, those who repressed the people hid their faces and their names. Today, those who repress the people have names, faces and uniforms: “blue-green – olive and white.”

In our second human rights report we have focused our concerns on the actions that the X Battalion, based in Marcala - La Paz, has carried out against members of the Resistance against the Military Coup throughout the zone, including the region of Colomoncagua. Similar levels of persecution are also being suffered by people in the Department of Santa Barbara on the part of authorities of the de facto regime.

Another of our primary concerns is the



strategy employed by the military dictatorship against teachers in the country which includes illegal and arbitrary retention of salaries, profiling, legal suits brought against them by the Public Ministry, persecution, illegal detentions and even assassination.

With indignation and pain we must condemn and repudiate the persecution un-

leashed on the youth of our country. To some we have had to say, “Until we meet again in another country” in order to prevent them becoming victims of kidnapping, torture and assassination... And to other young people we have said, “Goodbye, we will meet again in the next world.”

This second report documents an accelerated deterioration of human rights in the context of the coup d'état:

Between June 28th and October 10, 2009, COFADEH has registered over 4000 violations of human rights. The most grievous include 108 violations of the right to life, including 21 assassinations and violent deaths.

The coup regime is consolidating with the goal of remaining in government beyond the de facto government. This process relies on the use of excessive force on the part of the military and police, control of the media and closure of media outlets that are not allies of the regime, use of paramilitaries to intimidate, threaten and kidnap those opposed to the coup, and the emission of illegal decrees that suspend the exercise of fundamental rights.

It is clear that a repressive apparatus is being mounted to intimidate and annihilate resistance to the coup. In the 115 days since the coup, thousands of human rights violations have been registered that reflect the evolution of state violence and the rupture of institutionality.

As of June 29th, COFADEH began to register violations of human rights directly related to peaceful demonstrations on the part of the population. This violence has taken different forms and patterns: generalized violence, violence targeting particular sectors, and selective violence targeting journalists and leaders of the resistance. In addition, judicial intimidation is being used as a tool to demobilize the opposition.

Based on proof and documentation in our possession, we affirm to the world that we are living a situation of National Emergency in Honduras. We appeal to the International Community to stay vigilant and observant in order to assume the challenge of bringing those who perpetrate crimes against humanity to justice.

Source: <http://quixote.org/executive-summary-cofadeh-report-human-rights-abuses>

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reconsider the agreement for the Pentagon to use seven military bases in Colombia, and urged the president to prioritize human rights in US relations with Colombia. “The militarization of Colombia,” the groups wrote, “will lead to an increase in internal destabilization, will involve even more of the civilian population in the war, increasing the violations of human rights and strengthening the resurgence of the paramilitary groups and the receding guerrilla groups.”

This agreement extends an alliance with a murderous military, reinforces arbitrary ex-

ecutive power in Colombia, and is openly unconstitutional. Progressives in Congress should immediately call hearings to review and revoke the agreement. “There is no guarantee that Colombian territory would not be used by the US to launch military operations into third countries,” added Susana Pimiento, the FOR Colombia Representative. “Such a condition would severely impact Colombian relations with its neighbors and the international community in general.”

Source: *FOR Press Release, October 30, 2009*

HONDURAS: Triumph for Democracy?

By Tom Loudon Co-director, Quixote Center

Ed.Note: On November 6, President Manuel Zelaya stated that the accord which would have unblocked the political standoff in Honduras had failed.

On Friday October 30th, a US-brokered "Agreement for National Reconciliation and the Strengthening of Democracy in Honduras" was signed between President Zelaya and putsch leader Micheletti. Among many sectors, the deal is being hailed as a triumph for democracy in Honduras. Indeed, in their statement also issued on Friday, the National Resistance Front announced a "celebration of the upcoming restoration of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales as a popular victory over the narrow interests of the coup oligarchy."

The Resistance Front recognizes that this victory has come as a result of four months of struggle and sacrifice by the people in the face of ruthless repression. And indeed, this agreement is a victory and Zelaya's restoration will happen only because the people have stayed in the streets, have suffered countless acts of repression and have refused to cave in the face of this repression. One lingering question which remains is: Can any true will of the people of Honduras be expressed by conducting elections in four weeks, in a context where civil liberties are virtually non-existent and widespread repression by the military and the police continue unabated? The question regarding viability of elections was not addressed in the communication issued by the National Front on Friday. It remains unclear what their position will be regarding the elections.

The other major point in the statement was the affirmation of "a National Constituent Assembly as an un-renounceable aspiration of the Honduran people and a non-negotiable right for which we will continue struggling in the streets, until we achieve the re-founding of our society to convert it into one that is just, egalitarian and truly democratic." This was a direct refutation of point number two of the Agreement which asks for an "abstention from calls for a National Constituent Assembly, either directly or indirectly, and also renouncing the promotion or support of any public consultation for the purpose of reforming the Constitution to permit presidential reelection, modify the form of government or contravene

any of the un-amendable articles in our Constitution." The Resistance Front continues to move forward communicating with their base regarding what that would look like. On Sunday during the now traditional Sunday Assemblies, the theme of the presentation was: "Paths of Latin American Peoples on the roads to Constituent Assemblies." There is a firm commitment to the need for this path, as the only real vehicle for meaningful change.

Regarding the elections, in response to the nearly unanimous international consensus that elections conducted by an illegitimate government needed to be rejected, the US decided that it was imperative that the upcoming elections be legitimated. If the elections were to be held in this context it would result in an undefined extension of the chaos. This is clearly not an acceptable option.

To avoid this scenario, the US exerted some muscle against the recalcitrant Micheletti's de facto government, which resulted in an agreement that ostensibly opens the way for Zelaya's return to the Presidency, albeit in the context of a "National Unity and Reconciliation Government." If the Honduran Congress, after consulting with the Supreme Court, does in fact reinstate Zelaya as President, it will be an admission that their previous actions were illegal, and will constitute a reversal of the coup which they had previously endorsed. This is a small triumph for democracy but this is where the positive aspects of the Agreement end. The US is now involved in a "full court press" to assure international recognition of the upcoming elections, in spite of a total lack of conditions in Honduras for holding elections.

It was widely predicted months ago that Zelaya would be reinstated at a very late date, in order to legitimize the elections and effectively exclude the participation of alternative candidates. Due to the lack of clarity of the Agreement, it is difficult to predict when Zelaya might be reinstated, but even if it happens at the earliest possible moment, it is practically impossible for there to be transparent and fair elections this month.



Protesters demonstrate their opposition to the coup.

There are two alternative candidates for president: one from the left wing UD party and an independent candidate who, in the new political context of Honduras could conceivably mount a substantial challenge to the two traditional parties as a unity candidate. The Agreement has put these two candidates in an exceptionally difficult situation. Because of their proactive resistance to the coup, they have been subject to extensive persecution. The independent candidate, Carlos H. Reyes, has spent part of the last four months in hiding, due to death threats. He was also viciously attacked at a protest three months ago, and has spent his time since the attack in the hospital, and currently is undergoing therapy for his mutilated wrist.

Neither of these two candidates has spent the last months campaigning, due to constant persecution. The restrictions on individual rights have made campaigning essentially illegal. How can there be fair elections when opposition candidates are being actively pursued and persecuted by the police and army? The candidates have not spent time organizing the estimated 26,000 poll workers needed in order to insure transparency at each polling place, and fraud-free counting and tabulation. Is there any conceivable way a structure like this can be put in place in such a short period of time, in a context where widespread repression of opposition expression continues? What will prevent the commission of massive fraud in these elections? No systems have even begun to be put in place by alternative candidates that would be able to detect or prevent complete and total fraud.

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Honduras: Military Coup Engineered by two US Companies?

By John Perkins author, *Confessions of an Economic Hitman*

In writing my new book *Hoodwinked* (Random House, Nov 2009 publication date), I recently visited Central America. Everyone I talked with there was convinced that the military coup that had overthrown the democratically-elected president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, had been engineered by two US companies, with CIA support. And that the US and its new president were not standing up for democracy.

Earlier in the year Chiquita Brands International Inc. (formerly United Fruit) and Dole Food Co had severely criticized Zelaya for advocating an increase of 60% in Honduras's minimum wage, claiming that the policy would cut into corporate profits. They were joined by a coalition of textile manufacturers and exporters, companies that rely on cheap labor to work in their sweatshops.

Memories are short in the US, but not in Central America. I kept hearing people who claimed that it was a matter of record that Chiquita (United Fruit) and the CIA had toppled Guatemala's democratically-elected president Jacobo Arbenz in 1954 and that International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT), Henry Kissinger, and the CIA had brought down Chile's Salvador Allende in 1973. These people were certain that Haiti's president Jean-Bertrand Aristide had been ousted by the CIA in 2004 because he proposed a minimum wage increase, like Zelaya's.

I was told by a Panamanian bank vice president, "Every multinational knows that if Honduras raises its hourly rate, the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean will have to follow. Haiti and Honduras have always set the bottom line for minimum wages. The big companies are determined to stop what they call a 'leftist revolt' in this hemisphere. In throwing out Zelaya they are sending frightening messages to all the other presidents who are trying to raise the living standards of their people."

It did not take much imagination to envision the turmoil sweeping through every Latin American capital. There had been a collective sign of relief at Barack Obama's election in the US, a sense of hope that the empire in the North would finally exhibit compassion toward its southern neighbors, that the unfair trade agreements, privatizations, draconian

IMF Structural Adjustment Programs, and threats of military intervention would slow down and perhaps even fade away. Now, that optimism was turning sour.

The cozy relationship between Honduras's military coup leaders and the corporatocracy were confirmed a couple of days after my arrival in Panama. England's *The Guardian* ran an article announcing that "two of the Honduran coup government's top advisers have close ties to the US secretary of state. One is Lanny Davis, an influential lobbyist who was a personal lawyer for President Bill Clinton and also campaigned for Hillary. . . The other hired gun for the coup government that has deep Clinton ties is (lobbyist) Bennett Ratchiff."

Democracy Now! broke the news that Chiquita was represented by a powerful Washington law firm, Covington & Burling LLP, and its consultant, McLarty Associates.

President Obama's Attorney General Eric Holder had been a Covington partner and a defender of Chiquita when the company was accused of hiring "assassination squads" in Colombia (Chiquita was found guilty, admitting that it had paid organizations listed by the US government as terrorist groups "for protection" and agreeing in 2004 to a \$25 million fine).

George W. Bush's UN Ambassador, John Bolton, a former Covington lawyer, had fiercely opposed Latin American leaders who fought for their peoples' rights to larger shares of the profits derived from their resources; after leaving the government in 2006, Bolton became involved with the Project for the New American Century, the

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The Agreement was reached on Thursday October 29th (and signed on Friday). On Thursday there were three separate massive attacks by police and army against unarmed protesters in different locations in Tegucigalpa. Even the march, which had a permit, was brutally attacked in spite of the permission. Another attack happened at night after the Agreement had been announced in one of the barrios where "pot banging" protests continue in defiance of continued repression. How is it conceivable that these repressive forces will 'cease and desist' from one minute to the next? Even more frightening, the Agreement puts this same army, which has exhibited persistent brutality during the

Council for National Policy, and a number of other programs that promote corporate hegemony in Honduras and elsewhere. McLarty Vice Chairman John Negroponte was US Ambassador to Honduras from 1981-1985, former Deputy Secretary of State, Director of National Intelligence, and U.S. Representative to the United Nations; he played a major role in the US-backed Contra's secret war against Nicaragua's Sandinista government and has consistently opposed the policies of the democratically-elected pro-reform Latin American presidents.

These three men symbolize the insidious power of the corporatocracy, its bipartisan composition, and the fact that the Obama Administration has been sucked in. The *Los Angeles Times* went to the heart of this matter when it concluded: What happened in Honduras is a classic Latin American coup in another sense: Gen. Romeo Vasquez, who led it, is an alumnus of the United States' School of the Americas (renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation). The school is best known for producing Latin American officers who have committed major human rights abuses, including military coups.

All of this leads us once again to the inevitable conclusion: you and I must change the system. The president – whether Democrat or Republican – needs us to speak out.

Chiquita, Dole and all your representatives need to hear from you..

Zelaya must be reinstated.

Source: <http://www.globalwomenstrike.net/>

coup regime "at the disposition of the Supreme Electoral Council." The question for all is: Will they see their role as protecting the right to vote for everyone, or repressing those they feel might not vote the way they demand?

As the resistance movement in Honduras celebrates the victory in turning around the coup, they are also grappling with the many implications this new context brings. The obvious danger is that an election under these circumstances could bring a very similar power structure as that present under the putsch government, the repressive apparatus firmly entrenched and a sheen of legitimacy which would have never been possible for Micheletti.

Source: *Quixote Center, November 2, 2009*

MEXICO: Union Busting Under NAFTA

By Laura Carlson Director, Americas Program, Center for International Policy

Ed. Note: The article has been excerpted

On the night of Saturday, October 10, thousands of soldiers and federal police moved into position in the darkness. After cutting fences and forcing out the workers, they occupied over 50 installations of the state-owned utility company, Central Light and Power (Luz y Fuerza), awaiting the administrative blow that would follow. At midnight, President Felipe Calderon issued an executive decree to liquidate the company and its union, the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), one of the strongest and most vocal independent unions in the nation.

The move had been carefully prepared by the government. Troop movements throughout the central part of the country serviced by Central Light went unnoticed under cover of the massive mobilization of security forces fighting the militarized drug war.

The decree follows a union conflict that the government fueled and then took advantage of, to eliminate the company and its union. Union elections last June were contested amid rumors that the federal government was actively fomenting division. In a warning sign, on October 5 Secretary of Labor Javier Lozano rejected registration of the new union leadership without waiting for a decision from the labor tribunal. The "Sabadazo," or Saturday Offensive, took place when the union and the government were still in talks.

The Mexican economy is at a crossroads as it faces a multi-billion dollar deficit this year. Due to its heavy dependency on the US economy under NAFTA, it is the hardest-hit country in Latin America and predicts a 7.5% drop in gross domestic product (GDP) for 2009. The number of poor has increased to above pre-NAFTA levels, leaving millions more families in poverty, while the unemployment rate has doubled.

The congressional leader of Calderon's National Action Party (PAN), Mario Alberto Becerra, estimated that even after doling out severance pay, the government will save money through the reduced costs of operating Central Light. The government plans to use some of that money for hand-out programs for the poor, a model it considers preferable to maintaining unionized workers

in jobs. Treasury Secretary Agustin Carstens announced that the 42,000 SME workers will be replaced with 10,000 new hires. He didn't say any would be hired back; the message was clear—union members need not apply.

Obama promised a renegotiation of NAFTA to incorporate the toothless labor side agreement into the text and integrate core International Labor Organization principles in defense of workers rights. At the recent Summit of North American Leaders he said that the promise has been placed on the back burner. But that burner seems to be turned off. At an October 19 meeting between trade representatives of the three NAFTA nations, they reaffirmed their commitment to the trade agreement with no mention of renegotiation.

Unionized workers are not the only ones who suffer. NAFTA has displaced some two million Mexican small farmers in the countryside due to competition with US agricultural imports. A recent ruling of a NAFTA tribunal delivered a record ruling of \$77.3 million to Cargill Incorporated to compensate the company for a government program that blocked the use of corn syrup to save Mexico's sugar industry—an industry heavily protected in the United States. NAFTA's investment provisions (known as "Chapter 11") allow corporations to sue governments under special tribunals as one of the many privileges offered transnational corporations under the agreement. This obscene ruling for one of the world's wealthiest agro-businesses illustrates the priorities of NAFTA and the constant erosion of workers rights and livelihoods.

Studies have revealed that the Central Light Company hasn't been funded for years, in preparation to make the case that it's non-functional. A 2005 report showed that the company had not installed new generating capacity since 1974.

Privatization of the parastate company lurks behind the liquidation on October 10. Marchers carried signs that warned "Today it's us—tomorrow PEMEX [the national oil company] and SEP [the education system]," and "No to privatization."

The Central Light Company leases over a thousand kilometers of fiber optic cable in its electrical network that it planned to offer to consumers in a "triple play" package.

This combined service of electricity, telephone, internet, and cable threatened existing economic interests and lucrative future contracts in the private sector.

Although the Calderon administration has said it isn't privatizing the state-owned enterprise, SME Leader Martin Esparza revealed that two former secretaries of Energy, Fernando Canales Clarion and Ernesto Martens, have formed a private company to use the publicly-funded LFC fiber-optic network for internet and voice services, called WL Communications. Esparza reports that the businessmen have already negotiated government discounts and subsidies for the lucrative enterprise.

For now, Central Light has been fused with the Federal Electricity Commission that manages services in the rest of the country. The suspicion is that the consolidated state-owned utility, stripped of a feisty union that rejected both privatization and the erosion of worker rights, will eventually be privatized. Pressures to privatize state-owned enterprises, including the oil company PEMEX and aspects of the education system, have characterized the Calderon administration and those of his predecessors from the PAN political party.

SME member Juan Carlos Saucedo notes that the struggle to regain the company and the union "is just beginning." But it will be an uphill battle. The union has demanded a legal review of the measure and insisted that it violates the Mexican Constitution. As SME member Apolinar Romero stated at the march, the issue at hand goes beyond income for workers and rests on "what kind of future we will leave our children." A unilateral move to eliminate a union and a state-owned company sets a terrible precedent for union-busting in the nation.

Interviews in the Mexican press with government officials reveal that the obliteration of the union was carefully planned for over six months. The Calderon government was just looking for the chance. Ironically, it was the profound economic crisis in Mexico that provided the Calderon administration with its opportunity. Over the past months, 76,000 businesses have closed their doors. The Mexican daily *La Jornada* reports that 2.8 million workers have lost their jobs in the Calderon administration. For families living on the edge, the blow against the union places them be-

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IMMIGRATION: An Inconvenient Woman

By Rose Arrieta, *In These Times*

You could call Isabel Garcia an inconvenient woman. Inconvenient because she speaks her mind, like it or not. She has raised the ire of anti-immigrant groups and the Mexican government alike.

In 2006, after Garcia was recognized for her work as the Pima County Arizona public defender with a prestigious award from Mexico. She refused to accept it publicly so as not to provide a “photo op” for Mexican President Felipe Calderón. She had requested five minutes when she was to accept the award to talk about death, militarization and criminalization on the border and the complicity of his government, and how the Mexican elite had to do more to foster economic justice.

But the government refused to let her speak, and the National Human Rights Award from the *Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos de Mexico* was delivered to her quietly later in Tucson. It was the first time that the award was granted to someone who was not from Mexico.

She has also tangled with controversial Maricopa County Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who is now under investigation by the U.S. Justice Department for civil rights violations. Arpaio has made it his mission to publicly humiliate undocumented immigrants—re-instituting chain gangs and setting up Tent City, an outdoor extension of the Maricopa County jail. Last year, during a protest in Tucson against Arpaio’s book, *America’s Toughest Sheriff*, protesters hit a likeness of the sheriff in the form of a piñata. The head fell off and Garcia, a petite woman, held it up. This set off a scandal. The sheriff called her action “violent,” and his anti-immigrant supporters took to the radio airwaves demanding Garcia be fired.

But Garcia, who is also co-chair of the *Coalicion de Derechos Humanos*, a grassroots immigrant rights organization in Tucson, stood her ground. She has been at the forefront of the fight for immigrant and refugee rights since 1976, and has experienced calls to revoke her law license and numerous death threats.

In These Times met with Garcia in Tucson, shortly before the Senate passed a bill that would fund the deployment of 1,600 officers and 400 canine units from the US

Custody and Border Protection to the US-Mexico border.

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, the former governor of Arizona, said the agency is going to send more federal agents to the border because of the



Arizona / Mexico border wall.

“spillover” of drug-related violence.

It’s disappointing but not surprising. We had hoped that the Obama administration would look at the situation and at root causes and look for real solutions. Unfortunately, his

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tween a rock and a hard place.

Members of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers and the Latin American Association of Labor Lawyers stated in a press conference on October 18 that the decree violates 25 clauses of the Mexican Constitution, and urged workers to file injunctions against the measure instead of accepting severance pay. But each day that passes with no wages sees more workers accepting the government’s severance offer.

The administration has launched a campaign to malign the union, implying that the union members had manipulated cushy jobs at the expense of consumers. Official statistics show that union members made an average of around \$500 a month, and 20,000 members earn below this level, hardly a princely wage. What the union did manage to achieve for its members in democratic processes and benefits was an example for Mexi-

can unions. selection of Janet Napolitano spelled bad news. To continue to fund enforcement, to continue to enrich military contractors, to continue to fuel the fear along the border is really irresponsible.

They act as if there’s a crisis, but how many decades have we been fueling the alleged war against drugs? It’s been decades now—and at the expense of the American and Mexican public, and now for the enrichment of a few. It is the US citizenry that is involved in the drug-running and arms-running and the profiteering off drugs – it is all done here. The consumption is all here.

There were great hopes when Obama won.

Unfortunately, for those of us who strongly supported Obama, we knew the reality. We knew that we, at the border, were still going to have an uphill fight because Obama has no clue. He doesn’t know.

Napolitano may have been a moderate on other issues, but she certainly was not on immigration. She made her name on the backs of Mexican immigrants. As governor, she signed the anti-smuggling statute that prosecutes immigrants for being their own smuggler. She signed a law equating people utilizing fictitious Social Security numbers—which has been done since the 1930s—to aggravated identity theft. She made it a crime to drive without an Ari-

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can unions.

The real question is who will pay for the crisis. The Calderon administration tried to force through a tax on basic foods and medicines in the federal budget—another move to make the poor pay for the inordinate wealth and privilege of the elite in a vastly unequal nation. It was blocked at the last minute.

The US government, instead of helping to provide jobs and labor protections as Mexico sinks into the deepest crisis in recent history, has concentrated aid in the Merida Initiative to corrupt Mexican Armed Forces and police through the war on drugs. It also continues to support NAFTA’s skewed terms.

It’s time to develop a more integral and humane binational relationship and renegotiate NAFTA. The long-term effects of allowing this crisis to erode labor rights and further impoverish an already stricken nation will only lead to instability throughout the region.

Source: www.americaspolicy.org

VENEZUELA: US Escalates Propaganda

By Federico Fuentes, writer, Caracas

The US State Department and the coup regime in Honduras have publicly stated what many of us already knew: the June 28 military coup was not just directed against Honduran President Manuel Zelaya, but also Venezuela and the unfolding Latin American revolution.

On July 20, US state department spokesperson Phillip Crowley said he hoped Zelaya now understood that in “choosing a model government and a model leader for countries of the region to follow”; the US believes “the current leadership in Venezuela would not be a particular model. If that is the lesson that President Zelaya has learned from this episode that would be a good lesson.”

The same day, vice foreign minister of the Honduran coup regime, Marta Alvarado, said: “Honduras is playing a very important role in the sense that the continuity or otherwise of the avalanche of the ALBA countries depends on Honduras, and whether the people who are under the pressure of the ALBA countries wake up.” ALBA, an initiative of the revolutionary Venezuelan and Cuban governments, unites nine Latin American and Caribbean countries into an anti-imperialist bloc that combines solidarity-based trade agreements with a coordinated political intervention into regional politics. In response to the global economic crisis, the ALBA bloc has denounced the capitalist system. It has proposed radical measures that place the burden for the crisis on the capitalist elites who created it — not the workers and poor. This revolutionary challenge is a dangerous threat to an empire in decline.

The June 28 coup in Honduras shows that, as the crisis deepens, Washington is increasingly turning to military solutions to “solve” this problem. With two failed coup attempts so far this century (Venezuela in 2002 and Bolivia in 2008) and one successful one (Haiti in 2004), this strategy is not new. But extending this strategy is becoming more likely — and more dangerous, as military incidents threaten to spill over the borders and become a regional conflict. Pro-imperialist governments in Latin America are aiding the US in this task. Colombia, which in March 2008 bombed Ecuadorian territory, has just opened the door to the use of five new military bases on its territory. This occurred just day after the US began to move

out of its base in Ecuador, from which the government of President Rafael Correa expelled it.

This move has been combined with a heightened propaganda campaign against Venezuela, not unlike the one that preceded the Iraq invasion. Venezuela has been accused by Washington and the Honduran coup regime of “interference” in Honduras. The US Congress Foreign Relations Committee decided that Venezuela is a “narco-state” that protects guerrilla and criminal organizations. A tampered video has been released purporting to show a leader of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) admit they funded the election campaign of Ecuador’s Correa, whose government has joined ALBA. Israel joined in, claiming a Hezbollah cell is now operating in Venezuela near the border with Colombia.

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zona license and, therefore, they can take your car away. She is the one who has demanded tougher employer sanctions. Her language and rhetoric and her hype and fear are irresponsible.

Mexican society does not want to be militarized and yet that’s all we are giving Mexico. Are we giving Mexico any true aid? Are we even looking at the impact NAFTA has had on Mexico—especially in regard to agriculture—that has led to the displacement of so many workers flooding into our country? We say we don’t want people coming in and, at the same time, for 17 years have been supporting an agreement that has been unilaterally beneficial for a few and disastrous for the Mexican workforce. Mexico has gone from being an exporter nation to an importer nation of its basic staples.

The United State has promoted border security while not at all explaining what border security measures look like. We can show you what it looks like: it’s death, devastation, destruction of our environmental treasures here in Arizona, the destruction of the Tohono O’odham Nation and its ways and culture. We have massive racial profiling. We have Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. We have local police collaborating with border patrol. Everybody is acting like the *migra* [border patrol].

These are just the latest shots fired against ALBA and specifically Venezuela. Venezuela has initiated a review of its diplomatic relations with Colombia in response to the new US bases. Bolivia has called for ALBA to increase military integration and denounced governments that allow US bases as “traitors to the homeland.”

It is essential that there is a clear rejection of the US war drive from those within the belly of the beast. An important task for anti-war activists is to build a movement that can hold back US imperialism in Latin America. Immediately, this means opposing the US bases in Colombia, the disinformation campaign against Venezuela and solidarity with the Honduran people.

Source: www.greenleft.org.au/2009/, July 25, 2009

The US spends a huge amount protecting its borders. The government pays at least \$11 million a month to a private Tennessee corporation: Correctional Corporation of America (CCA), which has become rich since the 9/11 attacks. It was a discredited Tennessee corporation with many lawsuits related to corruption, violence and other abuse. Then 9/11 occurred and now their stock is rising. They have made a killing here in Arizona.”

The CCA is a private prison-building company. They incarcerate all the immigrants that are charged and convicted for the crime of “illegal entry.” When we continue criminalizing everybody then, of course, we are going to grow that pool larger while enriching the stockholders of CCA, and enriching the Wackenhut Corporation, the private security firm that is contracted to transport them and physically deport immigrants.

When are we going to stop this? Migration is not a police problem. Migration is a worldwide social-economic phenomenon.

Do you see any hope in the Obama administration when it comes to immigration rights?

The Obama administration pulled back from nominating Thomas Saenz as assistant attorney general for civil rights. He is a respected civil rights lawyer and counsel to the

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CHILE: Mapuche Struggle for Land

By Kaitlin Porter, Research Associate,
Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA)

On August 17, dozens of Mapuche communities in southern Chile united to form the Mapuche Territorial Alliance to continue their struggle for political autonomy. Many of them had carried on angry protests, most recently on August 12, when a police operation to evict the Mapuches who had seized land left one dead and eight injured. Mapuche demonstrators sought to regain their ancestral lands by any means possible and their simmering discontent had finally boiled over, yet Mapuche demands continue to be ignored and negotiations remain at a standstill.

The indigenous people of Chile were demonstrating that their community was no longer willing to remain silent after decades of being disregarded, exploited, and forcibly removed from their lands. However, although authorities were taken by surprise by the growing stream of violent reactions against the police and logging corporations, they have shown no signs of allowing the Mapuches to return to their land nor have they offered them any reparations for human rights violations during the Pinochet regime. Instead of reaching out and seeking a solution, the government criminalized these actions. While this may temporarily quell the protests, it has done little to resolve the issue. In order to come to a resolution that will satisfy both sides, serious negotiations between disaffected communities and the national government need to take place.



Mapuche march for land and autonomy on Oct. 12 in Santiago, Chile. Photo: Carolina Dutton

Like most of Latin America, class divisions in Chile are highly defined by race and ethnicity, with the Mapuches occupying the lowest rung of the social ladder. In comparison to other indigenous groups in the hemisphere, the Mapuche hold a strong legacy of resistance. For over three hundred and fifty years, they vehemently fought against the Spanish *conquistadores* before they were ultimately defeated in

1881 by the long-established nation of Chile. The Mapuche were then forced to assimilate to the European way of life as their beliefs, religions, and political and social practices were replaced.

The current Mapuche situation in Chile is complicated. While the Mapuche have been accused of committing violent acts to reclaim land that had been seized by logging, mining and hydroelectric industries, the police typically have been excessively brutal. Their response has rarely been proportionate to the offenses of which the Mapuches are accused. After years of unsuccessful non-violent demonstrations that were met with suppression by police, it is not surprising some have resorted to violent

measures in order to make their concerns heard.

The passage of time has rarely been kind to the Mapuche, the largest indigenous group in Chile, which constitutes about ten percent of the Chilean population. Half of the Mapuche nation live in the southern region of the country (between the Bío Bío River and Chiloé Island), but many have relocated to Santiago, the capital city and its surrounding districts.



Following a raid of her community, Mapuche woman demands release of husband & 13 year old son. Photo: Carolina Dutton

While prospects for land reclamation were optimistic with the country's transition to democracy in 1990, the new coalition party, the *Concertación*, did little to improve their situation. Despite the new government's efforts to compensate some families with land, the plots were small and the soil was infertile. As the Pinochet regime implemented free market policies, the price of agricultural products began to decline. This was detrimental to many Mapuche who relied on farming as a source of income and a means of subsistence. Furthermore, an expanding forestry industry in southern Chile resulted in the degradation of Mapuche ancestral lands. Over time, water resources have dried up and caused permanent droughts. The water that remains has grown contaminated due to excessive use of pesticides and herbicides. Native plants were replaced with invasive foreign species that had been originally introduced for their commercial utility. This continual disregard for Mapuche sovereignty and their traditional way of living has forced over half the population to move to Santiago.

The Mapuches face an uphill battle when it comes to reclaiming their lands. Many are skeptical of trusting the Chilean legal system given that they have suffered repeatedly under the hands of the law. While other Chilean citizens can access the legal system to protect their civil rights, it is difficult for the Mapuche. Legal redress is made difficult as they face all but insurmountable obstacles.

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Primarily, due to an inadequate access to education, many Mapuche lack knowledge about the legal system. For those few who do, the cost of legal counseling is too high. Even if they do possess the necessary funds, many communities live too far away from where the proceedings take place. Many are unable to obtain competent representation. Finally, negative encounters with law enforcement officials have caused many to mistrust judges, juries, and all others in the criminal justice system.

The government initiated the Commission on Historical Truth and New Testament in 2001, with the objective of laying a foundation for the equal treatment of the Mapuche, while aiming to integrate them into the national society. However, the Mapuche remain on the fringe of Chilean society.

The Mapuche protests have initiated continuous, though often fruitless, attempts for dialogue and negotiation at both national and international levels. On August 14-15, a group of Mapuche leaders traveled to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to testify on accusations made in 2007 against the Chilean government. The leaders accused the government of "environmental racism" directed toward the Mapuche people. Their complaints focused on the government's plan to build landfill and wastewater treatment plants on Mapuche territory in Region IX, which has led to an increase in tensions in the region.

The Chilean government prosecutes the Mapuche under the statute of anti-terrorism, which under legal procedures dating back to the Pinochet era, allows suspects to be held for up to a year in pre-trial proceedings. This is problematic because being charged under such legislation harms the impartiality of the jury if and when, the case is brought to trial. This law leaves the Mapuche vulnerable to persecution. In contrast, police officers are routinely protected for crimes they committed against the indigenous. Many are protected under military jurisdiction, which allows them to evade persecution.

Most recently, a protester, Jaime Codozo Cullfo, was shot and killed while occupying a Region IX farm with 50 others. The police report stated that he was killed in self-defense; however, an autopsy

confirmed that police officer José Patricio Jara Muñoz shot Codozo in the back. Codozo was part of a group of demonstrators fleeing from the police, all of whom were unarmed aside from a few sticks. Such violent reactions are typically instigated by the police. Only because of the publicity that this particular event received, military authorities were forced to press charges against Muñoz.

Mapuche demonstrations in Chile are part of a greater struggle for indigenous rights in Latin America, of which Peru and Bolivia are also a part. The election of Evo Morales, the first indigenous president of Bolivia, brought indigenous perspectives and issues to the political forefront across the region. All are fighting the same battle: denial of land ownership rights and the privatization of their ancestral lands. Large-scale business projects that occupy indigenous territory have not benefited the indigenous communities at all, but instead have triggered a series of protests. In Honduras and Ecuador, indigenous communities have stood in opposition to the mining industries, while the native population of the Brazilian Amazon continues to

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mayor of Los Angeles and former top litigator for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. I know we have to give Obama a chance. He hasn't been there long, but he has already been a disappointment.

The most important thing we can do is face up to the real work of politically educating our communities. When we have a Democrat in power, we have to fight hard for him or her not to collapse and converge to the right. We can't forget that it was President Clinton who militarized this border. We can't forget it was he who went along with NAFTA and the free-trade policies that have devastated our countries to the south. It's been Democratic and Republican administrations alike that continue to act unilaterally with no respect for the people south of the border.

But we might get a few things from Obama. He might push the Dream Act, which would allow undocumented immigrant students who have lived in the US for more than five years and who meet other qualifications, greater access to higher education. They would be given temporary residency for a period of six years under the Dream Act.

struggle for land rights. President Morales has proven to be the champion of the indigenous community. His commitment to the indigenous people of Bolivia has motivated native populations in other countries throughout Latin America to follow suit.

Nancy Yáñez, a lawyer from the NGO *Observatorio Ciudadano* stated: "I am worried about the Mapuche's marginalized position and connection being made to certain radical groups. But once the convention on its future status takes effect, Chile's government will be obligated to finally face its historical debt with respect to land ownership issues." The Mapuche ask the world, and especially the Chilean government, to recognize and respect their right to equality. They are fighting for their homeland, often at the cost of their own lives. Violence is never something to be endorsed, but at this point the indigenous have been left with few options. Promises of future negotiations should no longer be tolerated; solutions that satisfy both the Chilean government and the Mapuche must be found.

Source: *COHA, September 2009*

At great personal risk, you have lobbied publicly for the rights of immigrants. What keeps you strong in this unending battle?

The people give me a lot of strength. When opponents were threatening to kill me and get me fired, I felt protected because so many people prayed for me. People suffer a lot and yet they give such inspiration. They are my heroes and we are wimps by comparison, including me. I could not live through what they've lived through.

Migration on the Mexican border has nothing to do with any of this terrorism. If we want to do away with terrorism, we better start addressing our world relationships. If we want real security, we had better start funding healthcare, education, jobs and infrastructure. That makes a secure people, not this police state that they have on top of us.

If we're going to spend all that money, they ought to use it to investigate deception on Wall Street and in Washington, D.C., instead of on the border where people from Oaxaca are coming to join their families or because they are starving. It's an outrage. I continue to speak out because we have to. We just have to.

Source: *In These Times, May 2009*

BOLIVIA: UN Honors President Morales

On August 29, the president of the UN General Assembly, Rev. Miguel D'Escoto declared Bolivian President Evo Morales as "World Hero of Mother Earth" in a ceremony at the presidential palace in La Paz.

Morales received the honor because he helped the most in getting the United Nations to declare last April 22 as International Mother Earth Day, or "Pachamama" as Mother Earth is called in Bolivia's Aymara indigenous language. Morales said that honor is not his, "but for our ancestors and the native peoples who have always defended Mother Earth." Besides Morales, Fidel Castro of Cuba was named, "World Hero of Solidarity" and the late ex-president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, will be honored as "World Hero of Social Justice." "What we want to do is present these three people to the world and say that they embody virtues and values worth emulation by all of us," said D'Escoto, who like the socialist Morales is a staunch critic of US foreign policy in Latin America.

Source: <http://BoliviaRisingblogspot.com/Sept.1, 2009>

BRAZIL: Call for End to Haiti Occupation

Brazilian activist organizations delivered an open letter to the UN Information Center in Rio de Janeiro on October 6, opposing the continued presence of Brazilian troops in Haiti. On October 13, the UN Security Council approved a one-year extension of the mandate for the Brazilian-led UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, a 9,000-member military and police force, now five years old.

Brazilian economist Sandra Quintela, Institute of Alternative Policies for the Southern Cone, told the Brazilian activist news service, *Adital*, that there have been repeated reports of abuses and human rights violations by Brazilian soldiers against Haitians. She called Haiti a "field of experimentation" which provided Brazilian troops with training for actions in impoverished urban neighborhoods like Rio de Janeiro. She also noted the connection of the occupation to the September 17 accord between Brazil and the US encouraging Brazilian business operations in

Haiti's *maquiladora* sector. Maintaining UN troops in Haiti costs a total of \$600 million a year; the open letter notes: "This amount is more than what would be necessary to resolve the population's fundamental problems—lack of energy, food, housing, education and employment."

Source: *Adital*, Oct. 2, 2009

CUBA: UN Condemns US Embargo

On October 28, the UN General Assembly voted 187-3 to again condemn the US embargo on Cuba. For the 18th consecutive year, the General Assembly passed this resolution with near universal support. (Only Israel and Palau voted with the US). Calling it a blockade and citing the deleterious effects on the Cuban people as well as the whole world community, Atilio Baron, an Argentine sociologist said, "It is not only the George W. Bush administration which has ignored the UN General Assembly's recommendations, but its successor as well—the current Nobel Prize winner no less, who has continued with the same policy..."

Source: www.atilioboron.com

PANAMA: An Accord for US Bases

On November 4, the Panamanian government announced the signing of an accord with the US for establishing four "aero-naval" bases in the Atlantic and Pacific regions of the country. The accord included US access to police bases in addition to the military aero-naval bases.

Julio Yao, an internationalist, denounced the accord in the presence of Panamanian President Martinelli and his cabinet: "the bases put at the disposal of the USA deepen the militarization of a large territory...from which it will be possible to execute operations throughout the region in a clear conspiracy against the peaceful coexistence between people and the peaceful solution of conflict."

The agreement is the similar to the one signed by Colombia and the US in Bogota for the use of seven military bases. Under this accord, "Panama is unable to exercise jurisdiction over civil and

military functions of the United States, accusations of war crimes, nor to take them to the International Criminal Court." Yao said.

Source: alai-amlatina.org, Nov. 4, 2009

MEXICO: US Human Rights Report Criticized

The US State Department Merida Initiative Report makes a mockery of the intent to include human rights concerns in the security aid package. Despite citing a six-fold increase in human rights complaints against the Mexican Army, failure to prosecute a single reported case of torture, and the continued practice of military immunity from civilian courts—among many other dismal indicators—the State Department justifies release of withheld funds based on empty promises, programs yet to be implemented, and reform policies that in practice have had negative impacts on human rights.

Violence related to organized crime in Mexico is a very serious problem. So are the human rights violations and corruption of security forces. These challenges do not have to be viewed as mutually exclusive. The report glorifies the bi-national supply-side drug war as if it were the only approach to confronting illegal drug trafficking, when research shows that health-oriented strategies are more cost-effective and tend to enhance rather than violate human rights. It fails to even mention concerns that funneling massive amounts of US taxpayers' money exclusively to Mexican military, police, and intelligence agencies actually exacerbates violence, corruption, and human rights violations.

The three-year Merida Initiative designed by the Bush administration ends in 2010. It has not been effective in stemming the flow of illicit drugs. It has failed spectacularly in reducing violence. The power of organized crime in Mexico is burgeoning, including in areas that are occupied by US-supplied military forces. Congress attached few measurable benchmarks to the Merida Initiative. At the end of this cycle, the public should demand a full accounting of the results, not the intentions.

Source: *Inter-American Dialogue's Latin America Advisor*, Aug. 26, 2009

US: Limited Transparency Approved from SOA

On October 19, Congress approved the release of information on the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), formerly known as School of the Americas SOA. The approval requires the Pentagon to release the names and enrollment information of students and instructors at the facility for fiscal years 2009 and 2010. But the bill falls far short of expectations by not requiring the disclosure of the same information for the years 2005 through 2008, leaving a large hole in the public record of who the US military trained and what was taught to Latin American military personnel in attendance during those years.

Moved to Ft. Benning GA in 1984, the SOA has continued its controversial training while cloaked in a veil of secrecy by US authorities. Most recently, several leaders of the military coup in Honduras, who ousted the democratically-elected president Manuel Zelaya, were trained at the SOA/WHINSEC, highlighting the enduring negative impact that the school has had on Latin America.

Source: *Council of Hemispheric Affairs*,
Oct. 19, 2009

Venezuela Delegation

February 7-16, 2010

*Learn about the ongoing Bolivarian
Revolution from within!*

What is ALBA?

The delegation will meet with a representative from Banco del ALBA and hear about projects designed for member countries.

Cooperatives and Social Programs.

Our group will visit classrooms and a medical clinic to learn how these programs are being implemented. See public and private, agricultural and urban cooperatives in action.

Participatory democracy.

Talk with campesinos who are leading their community councils and prioritizing at the local level the issues that would best benefit the population.

Trip Leader.

The 9-day delegation will be led by Lisa Sullivan, Latin America Coordinator for SOA Watch.

Information.

For more information and an application, please contact Dale Sorensen, 415/924-3227 or geodale1@earthlink.net. *Ground cost is \$1400*

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