

Report

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EL SALVADOR: FMLN Wins Presidency

By Roger Stoll, Task Force on the Americas

Ed. Note: The author was an official observer in the 2009 elections in El Salvador with fellow Task Force members

Sue Severin, Lucienne O'Keefe, Dale Sorensen and George Friemoth. The Task Force originated during the war, a part of the North American sanctuary and solidarity movement in support of the people of El Salvador.

In March, after a three decade struggle, El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) has won the presidency, defeating the right wing Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party. Under the FMLN's leadership, the country will now join popular governments in Venezu-

ela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua trying to free themselves from US political, military and economic subjugation. President-elect Mauricio Funes, former TV journalist, and Vice President-elect Sánchez Cerén, former FMLN commander and Legislative Assembly member, will take office in June.

The electoral victory is the culmination of a long political and military struggle. The FMLN was founded in October 1980 as a coalition of five distinct revolutionary political-military organizations formed in response to repressive right-wing governments, super-exploitation of the workers and peasants, and an anti-democratic military coup. From 1980 to 1992, civil war raged, ultimately claiming more than 75 thousand lives. The US spent at least \$7 billion backing the government, which

placed El Salvador, then a country of fewer than 6 million people, among the top recipients of US military aid in the 1980s.

The war was characterized by the unrivaled brutality of the US-trained and directed military and paramilitary forces. Massacres,

and raped, by the military's elite Atlacatl Battalion, trained by the US at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. In November 1989, six priests of the Jesuit university in San Salvador were killed, along with their housekeeper and her daughter.

By 1992 the FMLN had fought the government and its US directorate to a stalemate. There were many reasons the insurgent forces could not triumph as Nicaragua's Sandinistas had in 1979. El Salvador is physically less suited to guerilla warfare. It is the most densely populated and second-most deforested country in the Western Hemisphere, while Nicaragua is sparsely populated, with numerous forested and mountainous regions from which to wage a guerilla struggle. The US government, terrified of a repeat of Nicaragua, committed vast resources to the war. And in 1990, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (a direct result of the criminal US Contra War and



March 15, Mauricio Funes was elected El Salvador's first FMLN president.

disappearances, rapes and indescribable torture-murders of civilians were routine and systematic. Some of the Salvadoran government's atrocities drew particular international attention. In March 1980, San Salvador's Archbishop Romero was shot while celebrating mass. The shooting was a response to an earlier sermon he had given in defense of the right of Salvadorans to resist oppression and his call for government soldiers to disobey orders to fire on civilians. In December 1980, four North Americans (three nuns and a Catholic lay worker) were raped and murdered while doing humanitarian work in El Salvador. In December 1981, at El Mozote, Morazán Province, nearly a thousand civilian men, women and children were massacred, many after being tortured

resources to the war. And in 1990, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (a direct result of the criminal US Contra War and

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blockade against that country) deprived the FMLN of its rear-guard ally.

Moreover, the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern European socialist states in the early 1990s hurt liberation struggles throughout the third world. A nuclear-armed USSR could no longer limit the prerogatives of the US-led western powers. Nor would there be material aid, development assistance and commerce with the socialist world that had been so important to revolutionary Nicaragua. And Cuba's sudden loss of its main trading partner and fuel supplier made it impossible for it to continue practicing the exemplary solidarity it had shown in support of liberation struggles around the world, in southern Africa, Grenada and Central America. For all these reasons the FMLN had little choice in 1992 but to sign the Peace Accords and continue the struggle as an electoral party.

Yet after the Accords El Salvador remained – and remains – a US vassal state, ruled by the same elites as before. The ARENA party, along with the smaller right-wing National Conciliation Party (PCN), retained the politics and personnel of the government and military leadership of the war years, along with impunity for war crimes. Neoliberalism was imposed more thoroughly than anywhere else in Central America: all the banks were privatized and sold to international companies (tax free, no less); the currency was abandoned in 2001 in favor of the US dollar, placing the country at the mercy of US monetary policy; land and wealth are not taxed, leaving only the regressive Value Added Tax; child labor laws are

unenforced; and maquiladoras operate in special "Free Trade Zones" where labor unions are banned.

In El Salvador as elsewhere, neoliberalism effected a massive upward redistribution of wealth in what became another savage war against the people. While not the poorest country in the hemisphere, El Salvador's extreme inequality (52.4 on the UN Gini Index) makes some Salvadorans among the poorest people in the world. 60% live on less than \$2 a day, half of those on less than \$1 a day. One of every three children is malnourished. Illiteracy and very low levels of education predominate in the countryside.

In the Western Hemisphere, the country is 7th from last in the UN's Human Development Index. Massive unemployment and government corruption have created epidemic rates of murder and street crime. Because of the rate of unemployment, underemployment and unlivable wages, more than one-third of the citizenry live abroad. The remittances they send home to their families contribute 18% of the country's GDP.

In the 15 years since the FMLN entered elections, democracy in El Salvador has been blocked by countless obstacles, in addition to the harsh social and economic conditions that everywhere impede expression of the popular will.

ARENA consistently outspends the FMLN in election campaigns. (ARENA spent \$100 million to the FMLN's \$5 million in the 2004 presidential campaign.) And the right controls all major media. One consequence of this is that the people cannot learn the truth about popular political opinion. The only truly reliable and scientific political polling is done by the internationally respected Public Opinion Institute of San Salvador's University of Central America (UCA), not by the commercial media's hired pollsters. Yet the academic polls are simply never published in the mainstream media.

In 2008, the right ran a fear-based, often fraudulent campaign against the FMLN, with talking points that seem to have been penned by US handlers. Campaign ads warned that an FMLN victory would kill US/El Salvador relations and result in a halt to remittances from Salvadorans in the US. Other ads claimed that the FMLN is aligned with international terrorism, that it wants El Salvador ruled by Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, that it seeks a totalitarian state and that it is closely linked to the FARC guerrilla of Colombia and the ETA

(Basque separatists) of Spain.

As in the past these messages are often echoed by US government personnel, US legislators and US think tanks. In the 2004 election the US allowed the Salvadoran media's oft-repeated warning of a cutoff of remittances in the event of an FMLN victory to go unchallenged throughout the campaign. Absent such US interference (and massive election-day voting fraud), there is little doubt that victory would have gone to presidential candidate Shafik Handal, a beloved founder of the FMLN. Remarkably, a US Embassy official admitted US interference in the 2004 elections.

Other impediments to democratic elections include the massive disenfranchisement of the 2.5 million Salvadorans living abroad, who cannot vote without returning to the country. And as in previous elections, high profile political assassination marked the campaign season. This past year, FMLN officials, community leaders and political activists have been killed; even the son of President-elect Mauricio Funes was killed last year under circumstances many Salvadorans believe implicated ARENA.

Election fraud by the ruling ARENA party (and the allied PCN) has been the norm in El Salvador. The most common type of fraud has been ballot stuffing. Next are double voting, the buying of votes and unauthorized, often foreign voters, using false identification. It is difficult legally to address such fraud, since the right controls the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) which has final authority over election rule violations. The TSE itself violated the Salvadoran Constitution in permitting the 2009 elections to be split in two (municipal and legislative elections in January and the presidential election in March). This move favored ARENA's vastly greater resources. The TSE has also refused to implement residential voting nationwide, though that was promised by the 1992 Peace Accords. Currently voters are assigned to polling stations alphabetically, forcing many to travel great distances to vote. Often members of the same household must vote at different sites. Nor will the TSE adequately verify the voter registration lists, or release them to the public. As a result, fraud in the lists is widespread and obvious. For example, one voting district in an ARENA stronghold has as many registered voters as the total population – including children.

The extent and significance of election fraud is demonstrated by the results. While the

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GUATEMALA: Breakthrough in Genocide Cases

By NISGUA staff

Ed Note: As the Guatemalan people have sought to bring to justice those responsible for egregious human rights violations, NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala) has provided accompaniment, advocacy, and public education for precedent-setting human rights lawsuits, particularly the cases against former military dictators Ríos Montt and Lucas García, and their military high commands who are charged with genocide in Guatemalan courts. NISGUA has provided physical accompaniment to witnesses and their lawyers since they launched Guatemala's first genocide-case in 2000.

Guatemala's war survivors are closer to the truth – and to justice – than ever before. They now have access to key military documents that will bolster the legal cases charging former military officials with genocide and crimes against humanity.

This breakthrough is particularly gratifying considering the numerous obstacles and setbacks that have plagued the genocide cases for eight long years. Most recently, on February 25, 2009, in violation of a court order, Defense Ministry officials failed to submit two of four key documents detailing military plans during the “scorched-earth” period of the 1980s. The judge then refused to accept even the two files that the Minister did present.

On February 27, the witnesses' Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR) filed a complaint against the Defense Minister for obstruction of justice. A week later, the judge accepted the two plans provided by the Ministry: *Victoria 82* and an eight-page fragment of *Firmeza 83*. Moreover, proceedings were initiated to penalize the disappearance of the other two: *Plan Sofía* and *Operación Ixil*.

Former officials implicated in the archives, many of whom still hold powerful positions in Guatemala, are on the defensive. In interviews with the press, genocide-case defendant and current Congressman Efraín Ríos Montt has downplayed the importance of the documents, calling them “simply plans,” yet has admitted that he has lost sleep over the matter; and his legal advisors have tried every possible maneuver to block the

declassification of the files.

The Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation and Congresswoman Otilia Lux have publicly expressed their suspicions that General Otto Pérez Molina – 2007 Presidential candidate for the Patriot Party – played a role in suppressing the documents. They believe that the Patriot Party's recent approval of funds for the military amounted to a payment for the cover-up.

However, an unofficial, presumed copy of *Plan Sofía* mysteriously made its way to President Álvaro Colom's office. The document directly identifies Pérez Molina, who commanded in the hard hit Ixil, Quiché region during the war.

Even a cursory read of published excerpts makes it clear why the implicated parties would prefer to keep these plans under wraps. *Victoria 82* admits outright that army troops committed “vandalism, rape, robbery, and destruction of crops.” *Plan Sofía* sets out a chilling strategy for controlling the



Genocide survivors of the AJR demand access to military documents in February 2009; a month later, they had key files in their hands.

population: “The population... has lived in horrible conditions which have made it fertile grounds for communist doctrine... I recommend that they be punished and militarily combated but that later they be granted a better quality of life.”

Mario Minera, Director of the Center for Human Rights Legal Action, mused: “It is historic that the Army has had to turn over these pieces of evidence... It is a tacit recognition of their responsibility. The locks to achieving justice have been removed.” ●

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reliable UCA polls showed San Salvador's popular mayor would be reelected in January by a large two-digit margin, she was nevertheless defeated. Fraud also narrowed the FMLN's March presidential win. There the margin of victory was only a few percentage points (51.3% to 48.7%), yet the UCA poll showed the FMLN consistently ahead by 15 to 20% throughout the campaign.

Thus while the right was able to steal enough votes in January to deny the FMLN a simple majority in the Legislative Assembly or predominance in the municipalities, it simply could not steal enough votes nationwide to overcome the FMLN lead in the presidential elections. (The thousands of national and international election observers who came in response to the FMLN's call may have placed some limits on electoral fraud.)

The election of Mauricio Funes is an extraordinary accomplishment of the people of El Salvador and the FMLN, rightly celebrated by the solidarity movement. Still, there are

worries. President-elect Funes changed his public message in the latter days of the campaign, saying he would not abandon El Salvador's free trade policy, CAFTA-DR (the free trade law) or dollarization. Neither would he undo the amnesty for war crimes committed during the civil war. And given the power of Salvadoran elites and their international puppet masters, it would be extremely difficult for any new government to bring the Salvadoran people the kind of democracy, social development, equality and sovereignty which in this hemisphere only Cuba has achieved.

Yet the FMLN remains a highly unified and popular party of the left, and the FMLN platform is clearly anti-neoliberal, anti-imperial and directed at social development. Thus we might expect El Salvador's new administration to be in much the same position as other left-leaning Latin American governments: while holding a measure of political power, they remain insurgent governments in resistance to imperial powers as well as their own national elites. ●

BOLIVIA: Interview with Vice President

By Pablo Stefanoni, *Clarín newspaper, Argentina with translation and introduction by Federico Fuentes. Bolivia Rising*

Ed. Note: *In this interview Vice President Álvaro García Linera explains why the government rejects the "delusional" proposal of the right, arguing that any pact has to begin with an acceptance of the new constitution and the process of change underway in Bolivia.*

On January 25, the people of Bolivia voted overwhelmingly to approve a new constitution, a demand first raised by the indigenous movements in the early 1990s. It was also a key promise of the successful 2005 election campaign of the country's first indigenous president, Evo Morales.

The new constitutional text will dramatically increase the rights of the indigenous majority within a "plurinational" state. This includes official recognition of the languages of Bolivia's 36 indigenous peoples and the right to "self government and the exercising of self-determination," allowing for greater indigenous control over local development and natural resources.

Along with indigenous autonomy, the new constitution also establishes autonomy at the departmental, provincial and municipal level, but within the framework of defending national integrity. The state will also now have greater

control over natural resources, in line with the Morales government's push to nationalize strategic parts of the economy. The most recent move was announced two days before the referendum, when the government bought out a British Petroleum subsidiary.

Public services are now enshrined as basic rights and the state is obliged to ensure access to such things as water, food, education, health care, housing, retirement, electricity, and telecommunications. Education must be free.

A separate question was asked of voters

on whether the new constitution should limit private land holdings to 5000 or 10,000 hectares (12,500 or 25,000 acres). The first option received 80.73% of the vote.

Following the vote, the right-wing opposition has called for a new national pact to heal political divisions in Bolivia, pointing to the fact that the four eastern states, controlled by opposition prefects, voted against the new constitution.

Question: Is it possible to submit the constitution to a national pact as the opposition is asking for?

This is a delusional proposal. The re-



Álvaro García Linera (right) with Bolivia's President Evo Morales.

sponse of the government has been clear: there is a clear path forward. As the president has already pointed out, the pact can only be understood within a framework of applying and developing the new constitution.

Question: The request for a new pact is based on the idea of a "catastrophic deadlock," which was a concept disseminated by you a few years ago. Why do you think this is no longer pertinent?

Firstly, in statistical terms, a 60-40 victory cannot be seen as a deadlock. And sec-

ondly, in these elections, Bolivians did not turn up for a confrontation between two national projects, which is when the idea of "catastrophic deadlock" becomes valid.

We are in the presence of a national project that is encountering regionalized resistance based on a number of fears. The "No" to the new constitution was based on the dissemination of fear; fear in relation to religion, to the family, to property rights. Fear is not a political project.

Question: So in your opinion, there are no longer two Bolivias?

My hypothesis is that the deadlock was resolved when the popular project subsumed the autonomy project and the right was left without banners. As we saw in the referendum, the conservative sectors have a potential base but they do not have a propositional line. That is why we are consolidating a single matrix of state, economy and society as expressed in the new constitution.

Question: But the government lost votes in relation to the August 10 recall referendum, while the pro-autonomy forces [right-wing forces in the East] once again begin to appear.

One thing is Evo and what he symbolizes in terms of honesty and the recuperation of strategic natural resources, and another thing is a proposed constitutional text that brings with it a series of tensions. But I want to insist on the fact that there is a solid core of 60%. And this in the context of a confronta-

tion with a grand coalition of the right, where only Donald Duck was missing, and which sought to activate the most sensible fibers of society.

Absolutely all of them were there, semi-disappeared political parties, conservative sectors of the church, fascist civic forces, opposition mass media, hard business sectors, all cohered around rejection and not the construction of an alternative.

Source: *International News, Green Left Weekly issue #781, 4 February 2009.*

COLOMBIA: Social Conflict Replaces Warfare

*By Raúl Zibechi, international analyst
for Brecha of Montevideo, Uruguay*

Social conflict has overtaken the center of the political stage, displacing President Álvaro Uribe, who merely repeats the script that brought him so much success in the war: the Indians, sugarcane workers, teachers, government workers, truckers, and anyone else who protests and mobilizes is being manipulated by the FARC guerrillas.

"If you watch what is happening in Cauca department, you can understand that a new political perspective has substituted social action for armed confrontation," says journalist and sociologist Alfredo Molano. In Cauca, in southwestern Colombia, tens of thousands of Nasa Indians along with other ethnicities have been on a "Minga por la Vida," a collective mobilization in support of life values, since Oct. 12. And an equal number of sugarcane cutters have been on strike for two months. Something is changing in Colombia.

So far in 2008, the government has hit the FARC rebel forces hard, but political initiative no longer resides in the president's Nariño Palace offices. In the street, ways of doing politics are being reconfigured into mass actions that cannot be denounced as terrorism, as the president and his closest ministers would wish. The temptation to criminalize social protest can lead to a grave failure for Uribe, because people are beginning to overcome their fear, and even the union movement is showing its face.

Strong denunciations of human rights violations are beginning to appear at the same time. Uribe was forced to retire 27 military officers in a scandal that cost the Army commander, General Mario Montoya, his job. It was proven that military troops kidnapped poor young men from urban peripheries and later counted them as dead "guerrillas" in the mountains. Three thousand members of the military are being investigated by the justice system. In the last tele-

vised US presidential debate, Barack Obama told John McCain that as long as trade union members were being murdered in Colombia, the Free Trade Agreement would not be signed.

September and October have been filled with strikes, work stoppages, and demonstrations. Federal Justice Department workers carried out a prolonged strike for better wages and a department budget that would guarantee its autonomy. The government declared a state of "internal disturbance," an outlandish reaction showing the mindset of the government that thinks it sees guerrillas behind every union, every strike and every protest. Shortly afterward, federal workers in the electoral system, the "Registraduría," followed suit, as later did teachers and truck drivers who had been on strike in August.

On Sept. 15, 12,000 sugarcane cutters (CUT) went on strike and occupied eight sugar mills in Cauca Valley. The cutters, almost all of whom are Afro-Colombians, arise at four in the morning, work from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. under a punishing sun, and return home around 8:00 p.m., after making 5,400 slashes with their machetes and inhaling smoke from the burning canes and the herbicide glyphosate used on the plantations.

They earn about \$10 a day and must pay for their own social security, tools, work clothes, and transportation to the cane field. At dusk, long brown silhouettes can be seen along the Pan-American Highway between Cali and Popayán, staggering like zombies after a criminally brutal workday.

At the beginning of the strike, they described their miserable living and working conditions and won the support of a good part of the population that usually turns its back on demands by Afro-Colombians and indigenous people. The authorities were surprised by the long continuation of a strike they thought would be over in a few days. The demands

were simple: the cutters want contracts and wages for days not worked when the mills are shut down and for days when they seek medical treatment, since accidents at work disable 200 workers each year. And they want to eliminate the mobile scales that tip in the owners' favor.

For the government and the Association of Sugarcane Growers, the main problem is that the strike forced the importation of sugar from Ecuador and Bolivia, paralyzed the production of ethanol, and raised the price of gasoline. In a show of little common sense, the Minister of Social Protection told the parliament that the strike was not a social problem but a protest by criminals. Several cane cutters were detained, and it was decided to expel foreign journalists who were covering the strike.

The labor reforms approved in Colombia in 1990 and, especially, in 2002, completely deregulated the labor market. In 1992, for each temporary job, five permanent ones were created. With the establishment of the Associated Work Cooperatives (CTAs), labor's map was turned on its head: in the first 10 months of 2008, for each permanent job, 10 temporary jobs were created, according to a study by the National University.

With the CTAs, employers avoid paying fiscal costs and other taxes to the state and enjoy a huge reduction in labor costs. The U.S. Congress questioned the "dumping" of the labor force, among other issues, in order to freeze the signing of the Free Trade Agreement with Colombia.

The cane cutters redoubled their resistance to the owners, who had to spend 54 days negotiating with delegates from the Sinalcorteros Union. The cutters were unable to eliminate the CTAs or get an agreement on direct contracts, but they won a 12% increase in wages, control over the weighing scales, and provision of tools, broader owner coverage of

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SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: US Policy in Latin America

By *Cispes staff*

From April 17-19 heads of state from throughout the Americas gathered in Trinidad and Tobago for the 5th Summit of the Americas. President-elect of El Salvador, Mauricio Funes, was invited as a guest and accompanied current president Tony Saca at the Summit. The Summit marked the first opportunity since US President Barack Obama's election for him to meet and share with other leaders of the region, and to define the new relationship he has promised with the rest of the Americas. Obama has pledged to break from the Bush Administration's policies and forge multi-lateral relationships based on mutual respect and cooperation.

Despite this pledge, Obama stated early on that the US' role in the world would remain central considering the size of its economy. Many of Latin America's growing number of leftist presidents took issue with this assertion and Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega and Argentina's Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner criticized this "economic imperialism" in speeches they made.

The member countries of the Bolivarian Alternative for the People of Our Americas (ALBA) regional integration initiative refused to sign the final statement released at the 5th Summit of the Americas. In a statement signed by ALBA countries Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Honduras, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; the two reasons cited for not signing on were the failure of the document to address or propose any solutions to the current global economic crisis, and the fact that the Summit "unjustifiably excludes Cuba in a criminal manner."

The final declaration of the Summit, which despite the lack of consensus was officially approved, calls for continued promotion and development of the Americas' private sectors through the strengthening of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). ALBA's statement faults these institutions, along with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and World Bank, for causing the global economic crisis through the neo-liberal economic conditions they put on their loans. Another part of the Summit's final declaration calls on increased investment in and production of bio-fuels to address the energy crisis. In a region being hit hard by the

global food crisis, the idea of devoting land and natural resources to fuel instead of food is condemned by ALBA's declaration.

Presidents from Central America had a chance to meet with Obama separately from the rest of the Summit to discuss themes of specific interest to the region. As president of the Central American Integration System, Nicaragua's President Ortega presided over the meeting. US immigration reform was a central theme of the meeting, with Ortega noting that over 5.5 million Central Americans live in the United States. A record was set last year with the deportation of over 80,000 Central Americans in 2008 alone. Other themes

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missed work for illness or accidents, and a work day ending at 4:00 p.m. The union came out of this strengthened: it went from 870 to 3,000 members.

Deterioration in working conditions and the constant increase in the cost of food is at the root of the re-launching of the work protest. That is why Molano, persecuted by a government that forced him into a six-year exile, insists that: "The current protest is the tip of the iceberg of a social movement that can move toward the democratization of the country." The national strike by the CUT union on Oct. 23, the first of its magnitude in years, can be taken as a sign of evolving changes.

The important protest, which disturbed the government the most, began on Oct. 12 – the Minga of Indigenous Peoples – a mobilization of collective and community work that seeks to reverse the situation of Colombia's 100 ethnic groups and was called by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia (ONIC), Cauca Regional Indigenous Council (CRIC), and Association of Indigenous Councils of Northern Cauca (ACIN).

The demands are: rejection of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, which they consider an agreement "between owners and against the people"; repeal of the

discussed at the meeting included US companies shutting down operations in Central America and laying off mass numbers of employees, organized crime, and drug trafficking.

Overall, the Summit was a friendly affair; however at one point Obama found himself defending the US against reminders of recent and past forms of intervention. "The United States changed. It wasn't easy, but it changed. I think it is important to remind the leaders here that the US is not the only one that has to change," he said. Still, Obama's promises left many people in Latin America skeptical.

Source: *CISPES update, April 27, 2009*

constitutional reforms that subject indigenous peoples to isolation and death; rejection of Plan Colombia, "which infests our lands and sows them with displacement and death;" government fulfillment of its agreements after the 1991 El Nilo massacre – in which 20 Indians were killed from the Nasa tribe, the most mobilized and best organized indigenous group – including the transfer of thousands of acres of land promised by the state as compensation.

The indigenous mobilization began with the blocking of the strategically important Pan-American Highway by some 10,000 people who were brutally attacked by the armed forces, with two dead and some 90 wounded, mostly from gunshots. The communities retreated and occupied other sections of the highway. When the government refused to meet with them, they began a march toward Cali, joined by sugarcane workers and other union groups.

As on previous occasions, the Indians were catalysts for social action, since their demands are more political than those of other sectors, and they are better able to explain them. They denounced the fact that in the six years of the Uribe administration, 1,243 Indians were murdered from the 100-plus ethnic groups in Colombia, and 54,000 were displaced from their

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CUBA: US Lawmakers Push to Open Travel

By Jim Abrams Associated Press

Washington – It's time for Congress to end the restrictions that for more than half a century have prevented most Americans from visiting Cuba, a bipartisan group of senators said in late March.

The lawmakers, at a news conference where they were joined by trade and human rights groups, also made clear that their proposal to allow travel should be a first step toward breaking down economic and trade barriers between the two countries. The travel embargo, said Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-ND, is a "failed policy that has failed for 50 years."

Lawmakers, backed by business and farm groups seeing new opportunities in Cuba, have been trying for years to chip away at the trade and travel bans imposed after Castro took power in Havana in 1959. They have made little headway because of strong political resistance led by Florida's influential Cuban-American community.

But the situation has change in the past year with an ailing Fidel Castro turning political control over to his brother Raúl and the election of President Barack Obama, who, like other Democratic presidents, is more open to increasing nonpolitical contacts with the Cuban people.

The Obama administration, while steering clear of the more controversial issue of ending the trade embargo, this month backed changes making it easier for Cuban-Americans to visit and send remittances to their relatives on the island. It's also thought the administration could take other steps, such as revising rules that have impeded farm and medical sales to Cuba, before a summit of Latin American countries in Trinidad.

The Dorgan bill – co-sponsored by Richard Lugar, top Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee; Mike Enzi, ranking Republican on the Health Committee; and Banking Committee chairman Christopher Dodd, D-CT – would prevent the president from stopping travel to Cuba except in cases of war, imminent danger to public health or threats to the physical safety of US travelers. The legislation is S.428. Reps. Bill Delahunt, D-MA, and Jeff Flake, R-AZ, have an identical bill in the House with 120 co-sponsors (HR. 874).

Dorgan said there are sufficient votes in both chambers to pass the legislation, al-

though there is certain to be lively opposition. Sen. Robert Menendez, D-NJ, the son of Cuban immigrants, slowed confirmation of several administration officials and passage of a major spending bill because that bill contained the changes in rules on Cuban-American travel. Cuban-born Sen. Mel Martinez, R-FL, said he would continue to oppose the legislation. "This is the time to support pro-democracy activists in Cuba, not provide the Castro regime with a resource windfall."

Supporters stressed that Cuba is the only country in the world to which the United States bans travel; there are a few exceptions, such as for journalists or humanitarian visits. They said open travel would make Cubans more favorable to American people and ideas. "I think it will make a huge impact. It will change Cuba," said Enzi, R-WY.

The list of groups supporting the bill, including the American Farm Bureau, the US Chamber of Commerce and associations representing rice, wheat and dairy industries, was

indicative of the broader goals of opening up Cuba. American Farm Bureau Federation president Bob Stallman said tightly controlled food sales to Cuba, initiated by the Clinton administration, could grow from the current \$400 million a year to more than \$1 billion with eased restrictions.

Ending the travel ban, said the Chamber of Commerce's Myron Brilliant, "is an important first step. We also want to see an end to the trade embargo." Dodd said that while there is support for lifting the travel ban, it was too early to talk about ending the trade embargo. "That's a step too far at this juncture."

URGENT ACTION: Contact your member of Congress and make sure that he/she supports Freedom to Travel to Cuba.

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lands. The motto, "We are all cane cutters, we are all Indians," showed a new political and social connection in a country until recently polarized, and paralyzed, by war.

In Cali more that 20,000 indigenous people waited four hours for Uribe to show up in order to begin a round of conversations, after having walked for a week along the Pan-American Highway. Uribe finally arrived as the Indians, tired of waiting, were leaving. The mis-encounter of Sunday, Oct. 19, was not improved by the Nov. 2 meeting in La María (Piendamó), where thousands of indigenous people have been gathered since Oct. 12 and have formed what they call a Land of Dialogue, Co-existence, and Negotiation.

After six hours of listening to presidential arrogance and providing data to show the continual violation of human rights in Colombia, the Indigenous and Popular Minga decided to "walk the word," to keep walking in support of life. The Minga then marched 300 kilometers to Bogota. Groups joined from Antioquia, Nariñia and Guajira. Other

popular sectors also joined the human river of resistance.

On November 22 the Minga became a national demonstration converging on the capital city's main plaza demanding: Human Rights; Return of Territories; Implementation of State Agreements with the social sectors.

Throughout the process, indigenous leaders and independent indigenous media outlets were persecuted. And people were assassinated. Despite these problems a conference of delegates from Afro-descendent students, trade unions, indigenous and many other organizations met to affirm their support for the ongoing Minga of Social and Community Resistance. During the conference a plan of sector mobilizations was decided on through 2009 leading up to a summit of social organization in the last quarter of this year. The participants know full well that some of them will pay with their lives for standing up to the regime.

Source: www.americapolicy.org or <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/5725>

Letter to Obama

Ed. Note: *In early April 2009 this letter was circulated by the Alliance for Responsible Trade, Oixote Center.*

Dear President Obama,

At the upcoming Summit of the Americas, you will have the opportunity to demonstrate how the change you promise can translate into new policies towards the hemisphere. The history of relations between the United States and Latin America is a painful one, based on domination and military intervention to assure compliance with U.S. agendas.

Progressive governments have been democratically elected in many Latin American countries. These governments are promoting agendas that meet the needs of their impoverished majorities. The prevailing economic model has not worked for most people in Latin America or the earth. For this reason, many governments, spurred by their social movements, are implementing dramatic new policies. These policies reverse the concentration of resources so that the wealth of their countries is not controlled by a few, or stolen by transnational companies, but is used to serve the common good. Four countries in Latin America have made significant improvement between 2002 and 2007 in narrowing the gap between people at extreme ends of the income spectrum; Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil and Nicaragua.

The upcoming Summit of the Americas will offer an opportunity for you to set a new course in US relations with the hemisphere. The people of Latin America need the same things you have said people in the United States need: good jobs, education, healthcare, food, and a decent home. The United States must respect each country's autonomy and not interfere in its sovereign right to seek the well-being of its people. New relations between the United States and the rest of the continent must be based on total respect for sovereignty, mutuality, and cooperation without conditions or impositions.

For the Summit of the Americas the people of the continent are not hoping for 'generous offers' from your government; they hope for horizontal relations between equals, so that together we can find solutions to the current crisis which was generated by the ambitions of a few. The people of Latin America should not be made to pay for a crisis they

have not created.

To confront the global crisis and reestablish relations between the United States and the rest of the hemisphere, we need agreement on the following points:

Debt: In this moment of economic crisis, your own Administration has thrown away the rule book, articulating the need for unprecedented spending to create jobs and stimulate the economy with additional spending on education, health care, and greening the economy. Latin American countries have also been severely impacted by the crisis, yet they have no stimulus and fewer policy options available. Many countries are crippled with massive external debt which must be paid before responding to the desperate needs of their people.

The situation demands more radical debt cancellation programs and elimination of the conditionalities imposed by International Financial Institutions, which severely limit the ability of Latin American countries to respond to the crisis. We welcome your initiatives to make additional resources available, but these are only viable if they come without conditionalities which have forced privatization of public resources, leading to the further impoverishment of people in these countries. You must accept the re-nationalization of resources and services when governments determine that they belong in the public domain.

Militarization: We ask the United States to cooperate with efforts to de-militarize the countries of the hemisphere. Money spent on weapons or the military is money which is not available for food, education or health care. Latin American democracies and citizens have been brutalized by military solutions to social problems and troops trained in torture at the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, previously known as the School of the Americas. Their police and military should not be trained in U.S. schools to oppress and torture. It is time to shutter these programs. The United States must also recall the Fourth Fleet from the hemisphere and close our military bases in the region.

Increased funding for the Merida Initiative and Plan Colombia will only increase violence and human suffering. Funds should be spent on meeting basic human needs. It is time for a new, non-military approach to solving drug problems. It is also time for the United States to cease manufacturing and exporting weapons which only increase levels of

violence in all of our countries. At the same time the anti-democratic, corporate-driven Security and Prosperity Partnership, which has resulted in intensified military intervention in Mexico and Canada, must be halted, and not extended to the rest of the hemisphere, given its failure to resolve the problems of these countries.

Democracy building: It is clear that countries in Latin America are engaged in profound democratic change. The US role has often been to undermine these governments because they don't defend the interests of our corporations. US funds supplied through the National Endowment for Democracy and similar institutions are routinely used to subvert popular governments, promote instability, political turmoil, and violence. Ironically, these NED 'democracy building' programs are often used to undermine democracy. These institutions need to be dismantled and funds redirected to governments for use in meeting vital human needs. USAID programs which promote similar objectives must also be eliminated.

Trade: We believe that trade between our countries can, under proper conditions, bring mutual benefits. However, there are fundamental flaws in the current model which was designed exclusively to promote the interests of corporations rather than people. A comprehensive re-visiting of existing agreements must be the first step, and movement on all pending FTAs must be postponed. Our concerns are articulated in the comprehensive Alternatives for the Americas document, written by members of the Hemispheric Social Alliance. Two areas which demand urgent rethinking are investment and agriculture. Investment provisions must focus on empowering governments to raise standards of living. As currently written, investment provisions do nearly the opposite and function as a straitjacket, limiting governments' abilities to control transnational corporations and capital. Current rules inhibit governments from protecting food security and sovereignty. The economic crisis brings into serious question the benefits that were promised under the 'Free Trade' model.

We propose three immediate actions you could take before the Summit begins, which could signal a change of spirit. These actions would demonstrate that you recognize that the world has changed in dramatic ways, and that a new relationship with the hemisphere is

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IMMIGRANTS: Jailed Without Justice

By Ken McLaughlin, San Jose Mercury News

In a scathing report on the treatment of immigration detainees held in detention centers and more than 300 local facilities such as the Santa Clara County Jail, Amnesty International charges the federal government violates human rights by allowing tens of thousands of people to languish in custody every year without receiving hearings to determine whether their detention is warranted.

According to the 51-page report from the human rights group released today, the vast majority of the detainees have a hard time getting an attorney, some so desperate they ask to be deported even if they believe they're entitled to stay in this country. "Officials are locking up thousands of human beings without due process and holding them in a system that is impossible to navigate," said Larry Cox, executive director of Amnesty International USA.

Reflective of a new administration trying to soften ICE's often harsh reputation during the Bush era, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) says Amnesty might have some good points. "We do see reason for concern and are working hard to improve," said Cori Bassett, an ICE spokeswoman based in Washington, D.C. "We care deeply about a fair, humane system for folks in our custody."

Much of the research for the report, titled "Jailed Without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA," was done in the Bay Area, whose main facility for immigration detainees is the Santa Clara County Jail, where nearly 200 such detainees are incarcerated.

Amnesty's criticism of the jail is relatively muted. The report's most serious complaint is that the jail commingles criminal inmates with immigration detainees – which Amnesty says is a violation of international standards because people in "civil administrative detention" should be kept separate from criminals. Such commingling, however, is a common practice in the immigration detention system throughout the country.

Santa Clara County began housing immigration detainees in 2003 – and now depends on the income from its federal contracts with the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Marshals Service as the county's budget gap grows. In the last fiscal year, which ended in October, the county received nearly \$7 mil-

lion from ICE.

ICE says about 40 percent of the people it incarcerates are "criminal aliens" – a sweeping term that includes everyone from illegal immigrants awaiting deportation after finishing state prison sentences to legal permanent residents targeted for deportation because they've been convicted of serious traffic offenses. The remainder are undocumented immigrants, often picked up in immigration raids at workplaces and homes where immigration fugitives are suspected to be hiding.

The fact the county houses so many immigration detainees has generated little controversy over the years. "But I think that this report will raise a lot of eyebrows," said Blanca Alvarado, who recently stepped down as a county supervisor.

Last year, *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and CBS News found evidence of shoddy health care, secrecy, lax standards and inadequate staff in the detention system, where more than 400,000 people end up each year.

During the past decade the number of immigrants in detention each day has tripled from 10,000 in 1996 to more than 30,000 last year. "It's easy to lock up someone, throw away the key and then make him prove that ICE is wrong," said Banafsheh Akhlaghi, director of Amnesty's Western regional office in San Francisco.

Amnesty says in the report that ICE increasingly relies on contracts with states and counties to house its detainees – two-thirds are now held in local and state facilities – and that the practice leads to abuses. Amnesty

says oversight is "almost nonexistent."

But Santa Clara County Jail officials say Amnesty seems to be off the mark on the "oversight" point. Edward Flores, chief of the County Department of Correction, said the main jail and the women's facility at Elmwood go through annual ICE inspections as well as monthly audits, and have "been found to be acceptable."

Unlike criminal defendants, who are entitled to a free attorney if they cannot afford one, low income immigrants usually have to depend on the kindness of pro-bono attorneys. The result is that more than 80 percent of immigration detainees lack a lawyer.

In the Bay Area, immigration detainees looking for free attorneys depend mostly on two groups: the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco and the Immigration Law Clinic at the University of California Davis School of Law. But those groups are inundated with requests.

Sin Yen Ling, who handles all of the immigrant detention cases for the Asian Law Caucus, said the group gets about five daily calls from detained immigrants and their relatives, but can only take a maximum of three cases per month.

Without representation, Amnesty says, many immigrants simply give up and return to their home countries, even if they feel they have a strong case that they're entitled to stay in the United States.

Source: <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2009/03/25-0>

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imperative. They are:

1st – Normalize relations with Cuba and end the economic blockade: Recognize that the world has changed in the last 50 years; an embargo on Cuba serves no purpose. To jump start the new relationship, we challenge you to invite Cuban President Raul Castro to attend the Summit with full status.

2nd- Normalize relations with Bolivia: The expulsion of Ambassador Goldberg was a consequence of unacceptable U.S. intervention. We challenge you to normalize diplomatic relations with Bolivia and immediately restore ATPDEA preferences which were revoked as a form of revenge by the Bush Ad-

ministration and against the will of the U.S. Congress.

3rd – Normalize relations with Venezuela: The United States should not penalize President Chavez, whose rule has been legitimized by more electoral processes than any other leader in the hemisphere. We insist that you extend your hand to the people of Venezuela, who have a profound connection to the United States. Venezuela is also one of our most important trading partners in the hemisphere. Secretary Clinton needs to stop the 'war of words' with Mr. Chavez.

These actions would send strong signals of good will, and demonstrate a concrete commitment to the change so urgently needed at this moment and for the future. ●

Not Just Change but Justice:

US Trade Policy and Its Impacts on Food, Land and Immigration in the Americas.



The half-day conference held on May 2 at UC Berkeley was a joint project of the Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC) and the North America Congress on Latin America (NACLA). The program examined such issues as food security, biofuels and GMOs, NAFTA and migration, and indigenous land rights.

Grassroots groups and individuals came together to assess the recent history of US trade policies toward the region with the goal of creating a future that places the rights of people above profits.

Moderator: Christy Thornton, NACLA; Panelists: Maria Ramos, NISGUA; Eric Holt Giménez, Director of Food First; Katherine Hoyt, Nicaragua Network; David Bacon, author, "Illegal People"; Angus Wright, professor, Cal. State Sacramento; Martin Sanchez, Consul General of Venezuela in San Francisco; Colin Rajah, Migrant Rights Program NNIRR.
Photo: Mark Silva

ECUADOR: Correa Triumphs

Ecuadorian President, Rafael Correa, was re-elected yesterday in a large field with an impressive 51.7 percent of the vote to serve another term as head of state. Illustrating his widespread popularity in the country, his untainted presidential victory comes as the first such electoral triumph since 1979 that did not require a later run-off vote. His closest contender, Lucio Gutiérrez, managed to command only 28.4 percent of the ballot. Finishing in third with the lowest level of support in his four bids for the presidency, banana magnate, Álvaro Noboa saw his right-leaning electorate seriously dwindle.

It could be argued that Correa is one of the most successful contemporary Latin American political leaders of this era. Since taking office, he has come forth with a very specific socio-political program which has significantly alleviated the country's political instability and hobbling strategic and economic conditions, while at the same time advancing his overt leftist platform aimed at job creation and lifting the country's living standards. "So-

cialism, of course, will continue. The Ecuadorian people voted for that," he exclaimed after his victory Sunday. "When have we concealed our ideological orientation? We are going to emphasize this fight for social justice..."

Despite having expelled a pair of US diplomats stationed in Quito this year on allegations of their "unacceptable meddling" in Ecuadorian matters, Correa has generally avoided going out of his way to flail at the US. At the same time he did not fawn over seeking Washington's goodwill when he announced that the US lease on the military and anti-drug base at Manta would not be renewed in November. The same cannot be said of his left-leaning counterparts, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, and Evo Morales of Bolivia, who never avoided exchanging pot shots with the Bush White House, but seem more interested in re-establishing a diplomatic relationship with Washington now that a new president is occupying the White House.

Having been largely effective at maintaining relatively good relations with Washington while still holding his own, Correa appears keen on continuing his social and economic

programs. Although he does expend a good deal of time on political dickerings and forming non-productive alliances, he is not anything like a regional visionary in the mold of Chávez or Morales. Correa's pragmatic, hands-on nature and his genuine preference for domestic matters over foreign affairs, and being his own man rather than fabricating a satellite personality is a decided asset. Correa's feisty performance has improved the myth or reality that the Ecuadorian poor believe that their president has drastically improved the lives of everyday Ecuadorians, including themselves.

Source: *Council of Hemispheric Affairs*, April 27, 2009

VENEZUELA: Colombian Drug Labs Dismantled

On March 11, the Venezuelan government reported it had dismantled seven drug laboratories near the Colombian border, seizing 420 kilos (925lbs) of cocaine and coca paste. Authorities also confiscated a large quantity of chemicals used in transforming

coca into cocaine. No arrests were made because the labs were “a scant 300 meters from the Colombia border,” which allowed the occupants to escape.

Interior Minister Terek El Aissami said this operation showed Venezuela’s determination and readiness to continue making progress in the head-on fight against drug trafficking. While Venezuela is not a drug-producing nation, neighboring Colombia – recipient of around 6 billion in US aid over the past nine years – is the world’s leading source of cocaine, and some of that product is moved through Venezuelan territory.

In 2005 President Hugo Chávez expelled the US Drug Enforcement Agency from Venezuela after accusing it of political espionage and corruption. Chávez responds to US criticism about his country’s counter-narcotics policy by citing documented large drug seizures made by Venezuelan police and denouncing Washington’s complaints as politically motivated.

Source: *venezuelanalysis.com*, March 11, 2009

US/CUBA: Posada Carriles Indicted

On April 8, a federal grand jury accused anti-Castro Cuban exile and former CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles of lying to US authorities about his role in bomb attacks against tourist sites in Cuba in 1997.

In an indictment filed by the grand jury in El Paso, Texas, Posada is accused of seeking to “obstruct and impede” the work of the US government by lying during an immigration interview about his role in the attacks. An Italian man was killed in the 1997 bomb blasts in Cuba in a case the indictment highlights as an “offense involving international terrorism.” The arraignment of Posada, who has a long history of violent opposition to former Cuban leader Fidel Castro, has been set for April 17. Jury selection for a trial is expected on August 10.

Posada is wanted in both Cuba and Venezuela, where he is accused of masterminding the 1976 suitcase bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed 73 people. That bombing occurred while Posada, a naturalized Venezuelan, lived in the oil-rich nation.

The latest indictment marks the first time since Posada arrived in the US seeking asylum in March 2005 that he has been linked in a

court’s proceeding to the Cuban bombing which killed Italian national, Fabio di Celmo.

Source: *Tom Brown, Reuters*, April 9, 2009

PERU: Fujimori Convicted

On April 17, former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori was convicted of human rights violations and was sentenced to 25 years. The historic verdict marks the first time an elected head of state has been convicted of human rights abuses by a national court in his own country. A panel of three judges found Fujimori guilty for his role supervising the murder, kidnapping, and torture of civilians by death squads waging a counterinsurgency campaign in the early 1990s.

“The Supreme Court of Peru’s conviction of former President Alberto Fujimori is an extraordinary example of the rule of law prevailing over the rule of men. Peru, a young and fragile democracy recovering from years of violence, sets an important example for all nations: a real democracy is only possible where no one is above the law and the victims can achieve justice. We applaud today’s ruling and the hope it brings to thousands of victims and their representatives working to seek justice,” said Pamela Merchant, Executive Director of the Center for Justice and Accountability.

Source: *www.cja.org*, April 7, 2009

HAITI: Senatorial Elections

Haiti’s Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) suspended voting for senators on April 19 in the Central Plateau department after violence disrupted the process there in at least three cities. A candidate and his supporters occupied a polling place in Lascahobas, in the Central Plateau near the border with the Dominican Republic. Armed men in five vehicles disrupted voting at two polling places in downtown Mirebalais, and an election worker received a bullet wound early in the day. Local electoral authorities suspended voting in Saut D’eau after people threw rocks at one voting center and charged into others.

Senator Edmonde Supplice Beauzile, who took refuge in Mirebalais’ Mirage hotel

with the candidate of her Fusion Center party, charged that there was a plot by President René Préval’s LESPWA (“Hope”) party and the Haitian Citizens Union for Democracy, Development and Education (UCADDE) to prevent the likely victory of the Fusion candidate. The UCADDE’s Willot Joseph was reportedly carrying a Galil assault rifle and threatening to kill Senator Beauzile if he saw her.

Voting continued in the rest of the country; 12 of the 30 seats in the national Senate were up for renewal. “The people have voted,” CEP president Frantz-Gérard S. Verret said at the end of the day, “but not massively.” There were no official figures on turnout nationwide, but observers said it was very low. The CEP had rejected the candidates of Lavalas Family (FL) party of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide (1990-1996 and 2001-2004), who refused to file paperwork from his exile in South Africa and the party called for a boycott of the election. Verret complimented FL members for their “citizen-like behavior” and said they had not been blamed for any of the violence.

Source: *Weekly News Update on the Americas*, # 986, April 19, 2009

Martinique and Guadeloupe: Strikes Settled

On March 14, the French government and the government of the French Caribbean department of Martinique signed an accord with a coalition of unions and grassroots organizations that led a strike lasting over one month. The accord, meets a principal demand of the strikers: a raise of 200 euros a month (\$253) for low-wage workers.

The settlement is similar to the accord won on March 4 by a 44-day general strike in the nearby department of Guadeloupe, which helped trigger the strike in Martinique. In Guadeloupe as many as 100,000 marched in the streets demanding social and economic change. There were violent confrontations with the French police, and the death of one union militant. But in the end the French government agreed to a 200euro increase in the monthly minimum wage.

Source: *Weekly News Update* March 22, 2009

Delegations for 2009

Venezuela: June 17-26

After 10 Years of the Bolivarian Revolution, come find out what's REALLY going on in Venezuela today. Travel from Caracas to the coast and to the state of Lara. Explore the revolution from within and celebrate the Afro-Venezuelan San Juan festival. ~~\$1450~~ \$1250 from Caracas. Contact Dale at geodale1@earthlink.net Co-sponsors: Task Force and SOA Watch

Bolivia: August 14-24

"Social Movement Democracy" On Jan. 25 the Bolivian people approved a new constitution, a demand first raised by the indigenous social movements. Travel will begin in Santa Cruz, then to Cochabamba of "water war" fame, on to La Paz and the coca growing area of Los Yungas. \$1350 includes hotels, most meals and internal flights. Contact Dale at geodale1@earthlink.net or 415/924-3227 Co-sponsors: Task Force and SOAW

Caravan to Cuba: July 3-August 3

15 routes will visit 130 US and Canadian cities. Travel in school buses, trucks and cars to Cuba via Mexico with construction, medical and educational supplies collected from groups across the US as a collective challenge to the US blockade and travel ban on Cuba. Join, as a vehicle passes through your community, or meet in Texas on July 18. Spend 9 days in Cuba returning August 3. Contact cucaravan@igc.org or 212/926-5757. for an application or to donate. See: www.pastorsforpeace.org

NEW Chile: October 8-18

Experience the magic of springtime while grasping how the deep wound of Pinochet remains raw. Answer the question: is Chile the economic model of success that it is purported to be by mainstream economists? Learn how the Mapuche people are struggling to keep their vibrant culture alive and join them on October 12 for the "Day of Indigenous Resistance." Our guide Pablo Ruiz is a former political prisoner under Pinochet, a torture survivor. \$1300 includes accommodations, most meals and in-country transportation. Contact: Dale Co-sponsors: Task Force and SOA Watch.

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