



1946-Present

- The School of the Americas is a military training school for Latin American soldiers, located in Fort Benning, Georgia. Renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in 2001, the school has been producing assassins, death squad leaders and human rights abusers for dirty work in Latin America since its founding in 1946.

- Dubbed the 'School of Assassins,' the SOA/WHINSEC is a school that is synonymous with torture and military repression for millions around the world. Graduates of the school have a long history of participating in and orchestrating killings, targeted violence and the suppression of popular movements. Research continues to turn up SOA graduate involvement in human rights violations across the Americas.

- Around 1000 soldiers receive training at the SOA/WHINSEC each year, where courses are being taught in Spanish. The institute is paid for with U.S. taxpayer dollars, money for foreign military training that is authorized by Congress annually.

- In 1996, the Pentagon, under intense public pressure, released training manuals used at the school for over a decade that advocated torture, extortion and execution.

- Among those targeted by SOA graduates are union organizers, student leaders, religious workers, educators, and others who work for the rights of the poor. Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been tortured, raped, assassinated, 'disappeared', or forced into refuge by those trained at the School of Assassins.

- The purpose of the SOA/WHINSEC is, and has always been, to control the economic and political system of Latin America by aiding and influencing Latin American militaries. The SOA/WHINSEC is not an aberration of U.S. foreign policy but a clear illustration of it. The map on the right provides some examples of U.S. interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- Countries with the worst human rights record have consistently sent the most soldiers to be trained at the SOA/WHINSEC. For example: Bolivia during the reign of terror of SOA graduate Hugo Banzer; Nicaragua during the Somoza family dictatorship; El Salvador during the period of bloodiest repression; Mexico after the 1994 Indigenous uprising; and currently Colombia.

In the beginning of the 19th Century, the U.S. claims its right to intervene in Latin American affairs to further U.S. interests. The "Monroe Doctrine" of 1823 was put to practice in 1846 with the declaration of war on Mexico and the take of extensive territories including California and Texas. In 1898, the U.S. declares war on Spain in order to take Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines and Hawaii. In 1912, Marines invade and occupy Nicaragua until 1933. Over the first half of the 20th Century, the U.S. interferes with internal affairs of Cuba, Dominican Republic, Colombia; provoking Panama's breakup in order to control that strategic point- among other countries. This graphic shows some of the later interventions.

