

## A Mas Represion, Mas Lucha!

### Strengthening the Latin American Solidarity Movement in the Struggle against US Imperialism

- by Burke Stansbury,

On July 5, students took to the streets in San Salvador to protest transportation fare increases, part of a series of protests in El Salvador attacking the economic failures brought on by privatization and the US-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Such protests are common in El Salvador since the neoliberal system imposed by the US government has eroded opportunities for the poorest communities. Yet this day would end up being a chilling and violent reminder of El Salvador's past, an era of right-wing death squads and government repression. Riot police attacked, protesters were injured, and ultimately two police were killed by shots from within the protest. Then the real repression began, with helicopters strafing the University campus and the police violating the Peace Accords by breaking in and occupying the National University.

In El Salvador, the leftist FMLN party continues to hold significant political power: and social movements aligned with the party have fought and resisted the implementation of CAFTA and other US-imposed policies. Meanwhile, the US is building a new law enforcement academy in San Salvador called the ILEA and feared to be the next "School of Assassins" (SOA).

But there is a coup taking place outside of Central America, as the "other Latin America" - led by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia - continues to break the chains of dependence on the US. Therefore, we in the solidarity movement find ourselves at a crucial juncture in the trajectory of our hemisphere, with a unique opportunity to support this critical shift -- to the Left and away from US hegemony.

So as CISPES and our partners continue opposing CAFTA and the repression that comes with it, back in the belly of the beast the US-based Latin America solidarity movement still lacks a united front that coordinates and mutually supports campaigns against US economic and military intervention.



The author at right with niece.

On one hand, CISPES believes that the power of solidarity organizing can and will continue to politicize and shape young activists, and this has been a key legacy of the nearly three decades of the Latin America solidarity movement in this country. Yet in order to truly counteract increasing political violence in El Salvador, Colombia and beyond, in order to shut down the SOA and the ILEA, in order to roll back CAFTA and other bilateral free trade agreements, we need a common banner to struggle under and coordinate around as a solidarity movement. Perhaps more than anything, we need to broaden our movement to include more people, especially young people, Latin American immigrants, and other people of color. Following the inspiring example of our partners in the global south, we can build a broad progressive movement against US imperialism. But we still have a long way to go.

*(The author is Director, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, [www.cispes.org](http://www.cispes.org))*

## US Interference in the Nicaragua Presidential Election

Nicaragua Network sent a delegation of academics and solidarity/human rights activists to Nicaragua June 17-24, 2006 to investigate reports that Paul Trivelli, the US ambassador, is campaigning hard against Daniel Ortega and for the election of a conservative candidate favorable to the US. They held formal meetings with 30 people

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**It Can't Happen Here?**

An Editorial by Malcolm Bell

One hand washes the other. By launching the 9/11 attack, bin Laden bestowed excessive power and undeserved popularity on Bush. By flouting the rule of law and launching wars and torture, Bush has done bin Laden's work of undermining US democracy, provoking vast opprobrium for the US, and enlisting a host of new terrorists. Bush's war in Iraq will soon outdo bin Laden in the killing of Americans.

Whether or not bin Laden is still capable of attacking the US, he doesn't need to. Why risk reviving the widespread support that 9/11 aroused and Bush squandered? What could bin Laden do to bring down our democracy that Bush is not already doing? Most significantly, Bush is erasing the separation of powers that guards us from tyranny and anointing himself The Decider.

Three good sources, among many, on Bush's Usurpation: Elizabeth Drew, "Power Grab" in the June 22 New York Review of Books; Jane Mayer, "The Hidden Power" in the July 3 New Yorker; editorials in the July 16 and 30 New York Times.

Bush and his coterie can't do it alone; their accomplices include:

- Craven corporate media.
- A largely passive public.
- The House and Senate Republicans.

The few Republicans with the character to stand against Bush nonetheless give him his majority control in both chambers. Most ominously in the long run, if Republicans keep control of the Senate in November, they may enable Bush to stack the Supreme Court with a majority of justices who will uphold the Usurpation.

It is vital to stop the Usurpation and call Bush, Cheney, Gonzales, Rumsfeld, and the others to account. While too many Congressional Democrats have proved flaccid so far, the best hope for everyone is to elect Democratic majorities that will be finally and fully able to stop the putsch, expose the criminal violations of the laws against torture and warrantless eavesdropping and the fraud that launched the Iraq war, and impeach as appropriate.

The forte of the Latin America Solidarity Community may not be to elect politicians, but it is to act for truth and justice. What is at stake, unfortunately, is not partisan politics; it is the survival of the United States as a Constitutional democracy. That survival will benefit Latin America along with everyone else except the perpetrators and their wealthy backers.

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*Cont. from Pg. 1*

representing all political parties, and with the Ambassador and the International Republican Institute (grantee of the National Endowment for Democracy). All except the Ambassador and the IRI agreed that Trivelli's interference was "particularly heavy-handed" and inappropriate. Even the spokesperson for Eduardo Montealegre, the US-favored candidate of the National Liberal Alliance, said that Trivelli's statements probably had hurt his chances.

The delegates call on US citizens to contact Congress and demand that our government stop this sabotage immediately. They will return to Nicaragua before the November 5 election.

(The full report is at [www.nicanet.org](http://www.nicanet.org) and includes a list of US interventions.)

## The Godfather's Downfall: The End of the IMF Era

- by Sameer Dossani



Nearly everywhere we look in the Western hemisphere today we see signs of hope: In the alternatives to neoliberalism represented by the current governments of Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela and the trade deal that they are currently negotiating (ALBA); or in the mass ongoing protests in Mexico over the alleged theft of an election. But one of the most hopeful developments is the loss of power of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Since 1980, the community of rich countries has been able to set the rules of international development through its control over the IMF. Through its so-called "gate keeper" function, the IMF provides a green light for aid flows into countries in the global South, and a substantial part of those aid flows often goes to pay off older debt. If the IMF refuses to give a green light, a country's economy is likely to grind to a halt. This amounts to an enormous amount of power and control over decisions that should be made by citizens and their elected representatives.

Or so the story went until recently. Three things have happened in the past few years which change the situation. 1) The IMF was implicated in causing, and then exacerbating, the traumatic financial crises in East Asia and Argentina, among other countries. 2) China is now an economy on a par with the industrialized powers and can therefore afford to ignore IMF policy advice. The US and EU, who want the IMF to do a better job of "controlling" China, are not pleased. 3) Countries including Venezuela, China, and possibly Saudi Arabia are increasingly playing the role of regional "IMFs", lending to war-torn or impoverished countries in their respective regions on much better terms than the IMF would.

Given these conditions, chances are very high that the IMF is going to be reinvented in the next few years. A less powerful IMF would allow countries more sovereignty in making economic policy. Or, the powers-that-be - the US government and others - are likely to want a stronger, more powerful IMF to bring countries like China under control and to ensure that less powerful countries still play

by their rules, preventing any hint of a challenge to the dominant paradigm and making sure the profits keep flowing from the South to the Northern corporations.

For us in the US there is a clear plan of action. We must pressure our government (which largely controls the IMF) to back away from these policy conditions that the World Bank's own data have shown to be a failure. We must tell our government that an institution based in Washington DC has no business making policy for Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Bolivians, or anyone else.

A new campaign to "shrink or sink" the IMF is being launched at the time of the September meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Singapore. The 50 Years Is Enough Network and other economic justice organizations around the world will be responding to a call for action with demonstrations and educational events about the international financial institutions. Please contact us if you are interested in coordinating or participating in an event in your community. Write to [info@50years.org](mailto:info@50years.org), or call 202-IMF-BANK (463-2265).

*(The author is Director of 50 Years Is Enough: US Network for Global Economic Justice)*

## New Book by INTERCONNECT Co-Editor

**C**ancer in the Body Politic: Diagnosis and Prescription for an America in Decline, is the title of Peter Mott's first book, to be published by EPICA in September (\$10, EPICA, 1470 Irving St NW, Washington, DC, 202-332-0292, [swright@epica.org](mailto:swright@epica.org)). In 90 pages he applies the discipline of a medical work-up to an analysis of US domestic and foreign policy, examining the last 60 years of "Patient USA": discussing symptoms, signs of illness, normal standards, diagnosis and treatment (including preparing the people for change).

Howard Zinn says: "Peter Mott has brought together his life as a physician and his activism on behalf of human rights to give us what he calls a "diagnosis and prescription" for our nation, which badly needs both. This is a work of both fact and imagination, with a spiritual thread, a moral center, and it comes at a time in our history when we can use both common sense about the present and hope for the future."

Ani Di Franco says: "I've met too many idealistic young people without the skills to organize or the know-how to actually effect social change (I fear most

days that I am one of them!). In this book, Dr. Mott does something vital, which is to not just develop a well-researched prognosis of "patient USA's" socio-political disease, but provide a useful personal account of activist technique, as well as a comprehensive vision for a cure."

**"If you don't know where you're going, you might not get there."**

**- Yogi Berra (from Peter Montague, Rachel's News #860: "Building a Movement.")**



## **The Latin American Solidarity Movement 2006**

- by Chuck Kaufman

I see the challenges for US solidarity with Latin America as the same tomorrow as they were yesterday. Our job is to 1) expose and oppose US imperialism and work to transform our own country, and 2), provide solidarity support to the progressive/revolutionary popular struggles in Latin America and the Caribbean.

What is different is that we are in a much more optimistic period than we were 16 years ago when the Sandinista revolution was being devoured by the imperialist monster from the North and the armed struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala were foundering. Today, Cuba is not the only example of a government that has what liberation theology calls a “preferential option for the poor.”

After more than a decade of living on the thin gruel of solidarity with civil societies’ and popular movements’ struggles to keep from being swept utterly away by the onslaught of neoliberal capitalism’s free trade, sweatshop, and debt slavery regimen, we are seeing transformations in State power that provide hope for

humankind. Granted that none of these changes have created utopias. But I agree with the proposition that President Chavez made to the World Social Forum in January that, unless your goal is to take State power, you are in danger of becoming nothing but a debating society.

Oxfam UK in the early 1980’s called Nicaragua “the threat of a good example.” Today we have several “good examples” in Latin America and that gives us an optimism to go forward in support of our sisters and brothers in the Global South and to work harder to transform our own country which, after all, is our greatest obligation.

*(The author is National Co-Coordinator of the Nicaragua Network)*

## **Campesino Resistance and International Accompaniment in Colombia**

- by Hendrik Voss

In June of this year, I had the privilege to travel with members of the International Peace Observatory (IPO) to Barancabermeja and to communities in the Magdalena Medio Region in Colombia. IPO is a group of international activists who work in cooperation with Colombian social movements and provide accompaniment to rural communities. Barancabermeja and the surrounding regions have been a focal point in the ongoing war that is tearing local communities apart in order to clear the way for the greed of multinational corporations.

In Barancabermeja, we stayed in the heavily fortified office of the Asociación Campesina del Valle del Río Cimitarra (ACVC), a peasant organization that is organizing against the violent displacement of local farmers, against indiscriminate fumigations and in defense of human rights. ACVC’s diligent work has placed their organization in the crosshairs of the state and the paramilitaries. ACVC leaders have been murdered, criminalized, illegally detained and submitted to psychological torture but, despite all this pressure, ACVC continues to resist and is implementing projects that benefit the communities.

We showed a video about the School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation to youth and campesino groups. Discussions about the situation in Colombia and the SOA were intense. The Colombian Army is led by Mario Montoya Uribe, an SOA graduate and guest instructor who himself

has been implicated in paramilitary activities. The SOA has trained more than 10,000 Colombian soldiers. SOA Watch has documented SOA graduates and instructors involved in massacres, the killing of striking workers, assassinations and torture. The human rights report State Terrorism in Colombia cites 247 Colombian officers for human rights violations. Fully one half of those cited were SOA graduates. Some were even featured as SOA guest speakers or instructors or included in the “Hall of Fame” after their involvement in such crimes.

We need to stand in solidarity with the people of Colombia, change US foreign policy, and close the SOA.

For more information about IPO or how to join their team in Colombia, visit [www.peaceobservatory.org](http://www.peaceobservatory.org). To learn about SOAW: [www.SOAW.org](http://www.SOAW.org).

*(The author is Director of SOAW in DC.)*

## From the Literature: Paraguay

(excerpted from Ben Dangl's article, "US military descends on Paraguay," The Nation, 7/17/06 (www.thenation.com/doc/20060717/dangl)).

- "On 5/26/05 the Paraguayan Senate allowed US troops to train their Paraguayan counterparts. The US had threatened to cut off millions in aid. In July 05 hundreds of US soldiers arrived, and Washington's funding for counter-terrorism doubled."
- The soy industry has expanded and "ninety thousand poor families have been forced off their land. Campesinos have organized protests, road blockades and land occupations, with subsequent repression from military and paramilitary forces. According to Serpaj one method used to force farmers off their land is to spray toxic pesticides around communities until sickness forces residents to leave."
- "The US Embassy...rejects all claims that the US military is linked to the increased repression."

## From the Literature: Immigration

(excerpted from Sean Garcia's article in The Advocate, Latin America Working Group [LAWG], 7/06. www.lawg.org)

In December 2005, the House of Representatives passed HR 4437 (the Sensenbrenner bill) which takes an enforcement-only approach with dramatic increases in the militarization of the US-Mexico border, including:

- construction of over 700 miles of fencing;
- hiring of thousands of extra Border Patrol agents;
- installation of high-technology tools like video surveillance;
- increased penalties against employers, and make undocumented presence in the US and providing assistance (humanitarian or otherwise) a federal felony punishable with jail time.

"Senate Bill S2611 takes a more moderate approach and was passed in late May...including:

- legalization for some...
- a guest worker program... (only 200,000 visas per year)
- continued militarization of the border, with 400 miles of fencing, increased Border Patrol staffing, use of the National Guard.

"Both chambers are responsible for negotiating the differences between the two different bills - [but] stalemate is looking like an increasingly attractive outcome..."

"Immigrant communities are increasingly vocal in their opposition to both the House and Senate bills. With the belief that the legalization program could split families, there are also concerns that this plan will drive migrants deeper into the shadows, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse."

Log onto [www.lawg.org](http://www.lawg.org) to sign the LAWG petition to end border militarization.

(From Molly Ivins, 7/7/06)

"Not gonna work, y'all. Build a 50-foot fence, and they'll build a 51-foot ladder. Hire Halliburton with a non-bid contract to build the fence, and it will hire illegal workers to do it."

## The Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas (MITF)

- by George Friemoth

*[Ed. Note: In the San Francisco Bay Area MITF is an exemplary organization, as you will see, below. We asked them to describe current goals for MITF and their hopes for the movement.]*

*P*roceeding from our hope and commitment to world peace, our mission is to educate North American citizens about realities in the Americas and the role the US plays there, provide humanitarian aid and support for projects in those regions

Our goal is to work in solidarity with grassroots organizations committed to social justice and alleviating poverty. Presently, the government of Hugo Chavez is leading the way by helping other countries with their social and energy needs, and championing health care and education for poor majorities. Venezuela's formal entry into the Mercosur trade pact this month resulted in eight presidents agreeing to work towards regional integration to offset US influence. It was a big step forward. We view Venezuela as the hope for the hemisphere.

This year MITF has prioritized Venezuela by leading our third and fourth solidarity delegations there. And we are currently in the process, via the Venezuela Solidarity Network, of organizing a pre-election delegation for October. We must educate US citizens and members of Congress regarding the truth about Venezuela; and we must strengthen the Venezuela Solidarity Network by outreaching to other solidarity groups via the Latin American Solidarity Coalition (LASC) and whatever other means we can think of, such as community events open to the public and letters to the editor.



At the same time we are giving priority to Haiti, the oldest victim of US aggression, and we are concerned about the war of words between Bush and Evo Morales, the new president of Bolivia. We are organizing a delegation with SOA Watch to go to Bolivia in late October in order to educate ourselves and report back to our communities and Congress. Last but not least, we must work to end the embargo of Cuba, which has lasted over 40 years, even as Bush appears to be tightening the screws.

*(The author is Board Member of the Marin Interfaith Task Force.)*

## RESOURCES

### Major Events

- Sept. 14-20. Singapore. Meetings of the International Financial Institutions (World Bank, IMF). Sign on to Call for Global Actions Against International Financial Institutions at [www.50years.org](http://www.50years.org).
- Oct. 15. Ecuador. Presidential election.
- Nov. 17-19. Converge at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia to Close the SOA/WHINSEC and change oppressive US foreign policy ([www.soawatch.org](http://www.soawatch.org)).
- Dec. 3. Venezuela presidential election.
- Dec. 5-7. Santiago de Cuba. Conference on Introduction of Renewable Energy Systems in Rural Communities ([www.uoedu.cu/fac/fim/CEEFE.html](http://www.uoedu.cu/fac/fim/CEEFE.html)).
- Jan. 24, 2007. Nairobi, Kenya. World Social Forum, 5th Local Authorities Forum.
- April 14-15. Chicago. Latin America Solidarity Conference IV.

### Special Studies

- Latin America: The End of an Era, by Mark Weisbrot, Co-Director, Center for Economic and Policy Research, 1611 Connecticut Ave NW, #400,

Washington, DC 20009 (2006, 18 pp. 202-293-5380 or

[www.cepr.net/columns/weisbrot/2006\\_06\\_end\\_of\\_era.htm](http://www.cepr.net/columns/weisbrot/2006_06_end_of_era.htm).)

- Justice for All: The Struggle for Worker Rights in Colombia, from the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center (75 pp, \$5 from US/LEAP, POB 268290, Chicago, IL 60626, 773-262-6502; [info@usleap.org](mailto:info@usleap.org).)
- Dole, Behind the Smoke Screen, documenting Dole worker rights violations in Latin America. (\$3 from US/LEAP, see above, or [www.usleap.org](http://www.usleap.org)).
- Green Tide: Plantations, Indigenous Rights and Genetically Engineered Trees, confronting corporate strategies to expand plantations, by Anne Peterman and Orin Langelles at the Global Justice Ecology Project, [www.globaljusticeecologyproject.org](http://www.globaljusticeecologyproject.org) (Z Magazine, 3/06, Vol 19, #3).

### Teaching/Learning

Fall Study Abroad Program, Mexico Solidarity Network, studying social movements in Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Chihuahua City and Ciudad Juarez (MSN@mexicosolidarity.org).

### Speakers

- Oct, Nov. Guatemalan activists speaking on Plan Puebla Panama, or International Arrest Warrants for military leaders in the "Genocide Case" (NISGUA at 202-518-7638 or [nisgua@igc.org](mailto:nisgua@igc.org)).
- Oct, Nov. Mexican activists and MSN staff speaking on Immigrant issues, or Building Autonomy in Zapatista communities (MSN@MexicoSolidarity.org).

### Campaigns

#### Haiti.

- "Break the Chains of Haiti's Debt!" Poorest nation in this Hemisphere. President Rene Preval elected 5/14/06 but debt payments (on a \$1.4 billion debt, much of it due to the former military dictatorship) are still demanded by the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and Inter-American

Development Bank (IDB). In April 2006 Haiti was admitted to the Highly Indebted Poorer Country (HIPC) Initiative. But HIPC requires three years of austerity measures before cancellation, and it does not cover the IDB (to join see [www.haiti.quixote.org](http://www.haiti.quixote.org) and [www.jubileusa.org](http://www.jubileusa.org)).

- The Haiti debt cancellation resolution (H Res 888) urges the IMF, WB, and IDB to completely cancel Haiti's debt now.

### **McDonald's and Farmworker Rights**

- The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) won an historic agreement with Taco Bell after a four-year national boycott, to increase the wages of tomato pickers. Now McDonald's needs to do the same. Pickers earn about 45 cents per 32-pound bucket, a rate that has not risen since 1978 (two tons of tomatoes per day brings a worker \$50!). McDonald's recently agreed to purchase only fair-traded coffee for 650 of its restaurants but refuses to pay even a penny more per pound for its tomatoes. The campaign is to drop a model letter to the manager of every McDonalds we pass, urging them to request Corporate Headquarters to pay one penny more per pound, make sure it goes to better wages, and to work with CIW for an enforceable code of conduct for fair and safe working conditions for farmworkers. (From Buyers Guide to Human Rights, [www.humanrightsaction.net](http://www.humanrightsaction.net) and [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org) Take Action.)

### **Sweatshop-Free Clothing Purchases**

1. Make your campus sweat-free. Join United Students Against Sweatshops. Visit [www.studentsagainstssweatshops.org](http://www.studentsagainstssweatshops.org) and [www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/sweatshops](http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/sweatshops). USAS is launching a new campaign to pressure uni-

versities purchasing apparel and to get them to sign on to the "Designated Supplier Program," requiring them within three years to license 75% of their apparel from factories where workers have democratic representation and better wages.

2. Make your state Sweat-Free. Urge your governor to join with Maine's Gov. Baldacci ([www.sweatfree.org/documents/baldacciletter022806.pdf](http://www.sweatfree.org/documents/baldacciletter022806.pdf)). On 2/28 Maine announced a new collaborative effort to use state government procurement to "level the playing field for ethical businesses and advance justice for sweatshop workers." In 2001 Maine ended taxpayer support for sweatshop abuses, requiring a code of conduct. All state contractors and subcontractors adhere to international fair labor standards. Now CA, IL, NJ and PA, along with 60 cities, counties and school districts require the same (see [www.sweatfree.org](http://www.sweatfree.org)).

**Travel (see Codes below)**

- Bolivia:** Oct. 8-18 (GX: natural resources, social movements); Nov. 9-17 (WPN Indegenous Rights)
- Border: Fall** TBA (CPT: human rights, immigration); 9/1-4 (GX: Beyond Borders: health, labor, environment).
- Colombia: 10/3-16** (CPT human rights, accompaniment, Bogota, Magdalena Medio; 10/23-31 (WP and Institute for Policy Studies: sowing peace in time of war, human rights, military aid).
- Costa Rica:** 12/20-30 (GX: ecotourism, sustainability, Pacific Coast).
- Cuba:** 11/25-12/4 (GX: sustainable agriculture); 12/27-1/3 (GX: protected areas/birds).
- Ecuador:** 10/13-24 (GX: Amazon, addiction to oil).
- El Salvador:** 11/25-12/4 (GATE: grass-roots movements, trade, history).
- Haiti: 8/19-27** (Grassroots Haiti Solidarity Committee, 718-284-0889,

[www.grassrootshaiti.org](http://www.grassrootshaiti.org); Port au Prince, Cap Haitian, border, activists, unionists)

- Honduras:** 11/6-16 (GX: resilient roots - the Maya and the Garifuna legacy).
- Mexico:** 10/30-11/7 (GX: Oaxaca - Day of the Dead); 12/26-1/3 (GX: Chiapas, anniversary of NAFTA, Zapatista uprising); \_-14 (GATE: Mexico quest, Central Basin, the feminine divine, culture, women, history); 1/17-27 (GATE: Mexico City, Chiapas, human rights, indigenous).
- Nicaragua:** 8/26-9/4 (NN: reforestation brigade - see article above); 10/29-Nov, 8 (WPN Election monitoring); 10/8-15 (NN: 2nd election interference delegation - see article above); 11/1-8 (CGE: democracy, dialogue, dissent, presidential election); 12/13-21 (GX: fair harvest exchange program); 1/5-14 (CGE: coffee with a conscience, justice, poverty).
- Venezuela:** 9.2-13 (GX: labor, land reform, agriculture); 10/8-18 (GX: indigenous rights in the Bolivarian Revolution); 11/24-12/6 (GX: democracy, development, regional integration, presidential election); Jan, 31-Feb, 11 (WPN: D.C. and Venez.).
- Latin America:** TBA (MADRE: women's rights, youth. 212-627-0444, [www.MADRE.org](http://www.MADRE.org)).

**CODES**

- CGE:** Center for Global Education, Augsburg College. 612-330-1159; [globaled@augsburg.edu](mailto:globaled@augsburg.edu).
- CPT:** Christian Peacemaker Team. 773-277-0253, [delegations@cpt.org](mailto:delegations@cpt.org).
- GX:** Global Exchange. 800-497-1994, x242, [latinamerica@globalexchange.org](mailto:latinamerica@globalexchange.org); [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org).
- GATE:** La Crosse, WI. [www.GATE-travel.org](http://www.GATE-travel.org); 608-791-5283.
- WP:** Witness for Peace. 202-547-6112, [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org), [erik@witnessforpeace.org](mailto:erik@witnessforpeace.org).
- WPN:** Witness for Peace, NE. 802-434-2980, [www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org), [wfpne@witnessforpeace.org](mailto:wfpne@witnessforpeace.org).

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Abroad," on this subject. 202-518-7638, [nisgua@igcorg](mailto:nisgua@igcorg).

**School of the Americas:** For the first time, the debate over closing the SOA made it to the floor of the House. It lost 188-218, but 26 Republicans voted to close.

**Colombia:** In the May 28 presidential election, although Uribe was reelected and his party won 60 of the 100 Senate seats, leftists became the second largest political force. The Alternative Democratic Pole (PDA) party united only three years ago. The PDA and the Liberal Party will have 28 Senate seats. (Latinamerica Press 7/12/06).

**Equal Exchange,** with its fair-traded coffee and other products, is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year!

**The Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America** in Cleveland is 25 years old!

**In a world unified by money,  
a lot more people are cast  
aside than integrated.**  
- Eduardo Galiano

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Acteal, a community of Tzotzil Indians in Chiapas, Mexico, is an amazingly peaceful and spiritual place. The community lives much the same way as it lived several hundred years ago. Their message is simple "All we want is peace". "We want to live by our customs not by what NAFTA has to offer".  
- Joanne Ranney, Regional Coordinator, Witness for Peace, New England, Ramblings from Mexico, 7/3/06

## Movement News In Brief

**Cuba:** 1) The IFCO/Pastors for Peace caravan of 2006 (17th Friendshipment), with over 50 tons of medical equipment and medicines collected in 127 Canadian and US cities and carried in nine brightly painted vehicles, was permitted by US Customs to pass, unlicensed, into Mexico and on to Cuba.

2) On 5/16 Cuba was elected to the new UN Human Rights Council with 135 votes out of the 191 in the General Assembly.

**Haiti:** 1) After successful grassroots organizing, President Rene Preval was inaugurated 5/14; his choice for prime minister, Jacques Eduard Alexis, was approved by both chambers of the National Assembly; and Alexis' 8 choices for cabinet were approved 6/20 unanimously in the Senate and with 84/86 votes in the House of Deputies. On Preval's first day in office he signed an agreement with Venezuela for low-cost oil imports. 2) Half of Haitians survive on 43 cents a day and have no safe drinking water. 10% have electricity. Half don't read. 80% of prisoners have not been charged.

**Venezuela:** 1) The South American trade bloc Mercosur, despite US pressure, has endorsed Venezuela's bid for a temporary seat on the UN Security Council (7/28 newsandaction@veninfo.org). 2) Exports to India tripled over the past year. Oil sales to China are expected to double this year and increase fivefold by 2010. Pres. Chavez "parlayed the 2004 election of Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero into a strategic victory." (His predecessor, Aznar, had backed the US "war on terror" and strengthened neoliberalism in Latin America through Spain's banking sector.) Now Zapatero and Chavez have a corridor linking South America and the European Union.

**Bolivia:** 1) On 3/6/06 the Bolivian Congress passed legislation to convene a constitutional assembly. On 7/2 Bolivians elected 255 representatives to write a new constitution. This assembly will begin work on 8/6/06. A new constitution must be approved by 51% of voters in a referendum. 2) President Morales has given 18,600 square miles of land to indigenous peasant communities. Big landowners walked out of the talks.

**Peru:** On 6/4, in a runoff election, 53% of voters elected Alan Garcia president against 47% for the leftist Lt. Col. Ollanta Humala. Humala's Peruvian Nationalist Party joined with the Union for Peru Party and won 45 seats of the 120 in Congress.

**Ecuador:** After two years of legal battles the government cancelled its contract with Occidental Petroleum Corp. and transferred all OXY's operations to the state-run Petro-Ecuador and surrounded them with police and militia. The US is displeased (Latinamerica Press, 5/31/06).

**Banana workers:** Chiquita - the successor of the United Fruit Co. - is 40% unionized but, in the last five years, it has been selling off its wholly-owned unionized plantations to evade unions. Its subcontracted plantations are 100% non-union (NACLA, Report on the Americas, 5/6/06).

**US-Mexico border:** US Border Patrol announced 7/22 that, from 10/1/05 to 7/16-06 there were 319 deaths of immigrants trying to enter the US. The number is down in Arizona, but up in Texas (UPI).

**Guatemala:** The Spanish courts have issued arrest warrants for former military dictators Generals Efraim Rios Montt and Humberto Mejia Victores and other high ranking officials on charges of genocide, torture and illegal detention during the 1980s war. The charges were brought in 1999 by Nobel Peace Laureate Rigoberta Menchu (Guatemala Human Rights Commission 7/7/06). Ask NISGUA for Catherine Norris' article, "Seeking Justice