

Militarism and Its Discontents: Neoliberalism, Repression, and Resistance in Twenty-First-Century US–Latin American Relations

Ginger Williams & Jennifer Disney*

THE UNITED STATES HAS LONG FLEXED ITS MUSCLES IN LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS and exerted its power over the Western Hemisphere. The end of the Cold War failed to ease tensions in US–Latin American relations. The expansion of state-sanctioned terrorism in the Americas until the arrest of Augusto Pinochet in 1998 rested on the privileges of impunity for Latin American security forces and their brethren in the United States. Impunity reinforced US hegemony by enabling Latin American militaries (and those who trained them) to get away with torture, murder, and the disappearance of thousands of people during the many dirty wars that ensued during the last half of the twentieth century. According to Leslie Gill (2004, 237), “the impunity-backed state terror that fractured countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, and Argentina while they were ruled by harsh regimes set the stage for the consolidation of neoliberal economic models under civilian governments.” John Bellamy Foster (2007, 2–3) further articulates the connection between militarism and neoliberalism in Latin America, and identifies the role the United States played in the process: “It was in the US-sponsored dictatorships of the Southern Cone of South America (Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay) that neoliberalism, i.e., the promotion of a new naked capitalism in response to world economic slowdown—requiring the elimination of all state protections for the population and all limits on the movement of capital—was first imposed.” The return to “democracy” in the 1980s and 1990s did not alleviate the fears, as repressive entities largely remained intact (in Chile, for example). The arrest of Augusto Pinochet tilted the balance as former repressive leaders started to face

* **GINGER WILLIAMS** is an Associate Professor of History and Director of the Peace, Justice, and Conflict Resolution Studies Program, which she founded in 2006, at Winthrop University. Specializing in the history of US–Latin American relations, her current work focuses on twentieth-century social movements in the United States and Latin America. She is a past president of the Peace History Society. **JENNIFER LEIGH DISNEY** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and Director of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at Winthrop University. Her areas of teaching, research, and scholarship are in the fields of comparative politics and political theory, focusing on development, underdevelopment, and social movements in Africa and Latin America. Temple University Press published her 2008 book, *Women’s Activism and Feminist Agency in Mozambique and Nicaragua*.

the courts after 1998, and the poor began to blame the new “democratic” leaders for selling the state to transnational capital. The trial and conviction of José Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala in 2013 demonstrates that 15 years later, it is possible to convict a former head of state of crimes against humanity.¹

Since 1998, 17 left-leaning presidents have been elected in Latin America.² In different ways, they helped to orchestrate a movement against the Washington Consensus and loosen the grip of the United States on the region.³ When some of these new presidents entered office, they challenged the power relations in the hemisphere, promising to overhaul the government and the economy and to reassert the place of government above that of transnational corporations. In response, in 2002, President George W. Bush announced that “the future of this hemisphere depends on the strength of three commitments—democracy, security, and free-market development.” Democracy proved to be a problem for the Bush administration with the elections of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, who challenged the power of the Washington Consensus in the region. Populist-style democracy was something that policymakers in Washington thought had died with Juan Perón and Getúlio Vargas in the 1950s; moreover, these populist-style democratic leaders have fervently worked to reassert the power of the state over transnational capital, which US policymakers have interpreted as a threat to stability in the region. Because of the perceived instability in Latin America, the United States has reasserted one of its strongest Cold War policies—US military presence and training in the hemisphere—to deal with the perceived rising threats.

How do we explain US militarism in the region in the wake of the overwhelming rejection of the Washington Consensus since 1998? How do US policymakers justify policies at home that Latin American nations and inter-American organizations deem obsolete? Why is the United States intent on executing a War on Drugs in Latin America that has not curtailed the entry of drugs into the United States, but has cost the United States over seven billion dollars in military aid to Colombia alone since 1996?⁴ The answers to these questions are revealed by examining the nature of the relationship between militarism and neoliberalism in Latin America.

Militarism and Neoliberalism in Latin America

The current integration of the world economy into a neocolonial system of capitalist production, consumption, and reproduction requires access to and control of resources including labor so that transnational corporations can maximize profits. Corporations need the assurance of political stability and protection of their investments. As part of the nation-state apparatus, the military is on hand whenever necessary to intimidate and repress popular resistance to exploitative working conditions, to structural adjustment programs, or the privatization of resources in aid of profit accumulation. (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2000, 3)

At the end of the Cold War, US policy in Latin America turned to “shaping the strategic environment to prevent conflict and promote stability” (McSherry 2000, 34). But by the end of the twentieth century, US leadership became synonymous with global market capitalism, and the US government forced Latin American nations to jump on board the neoliberal economic train or face reprisals. In their special issue of *Social Justice* on “Neoliberalism, Militarism, and Armed Conflict,” Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey (2000, 1) assert that neoliberalism and militarism are inextricably linked. “In critiquing and challenging neoliberal economic integration,” they argue, “it is essential to take account of militarism as an intrinsic element. Conversely, in analyzing militarism, war, and armed conflict, it is also necessary to consider global economic forces and institutions.”

Although much recent scholarship on Latin America focuses on the widespread political shift to the Left, our article examines military and political movements that subvert democracy in the region.⁵ We explore the rise of militarism in Latin America in response to the backlash against the imposition of neoliberal economic policies. One of the strongest elements of US Cold War policy in Latin America, US military presence and training, grew stronger in the new millennium. US expenditures on the military and military training in Latin America now exceed Cold War levels. The wars on drugs and terrorism have been used to justify increased militarization in the region, when the primary motive has been to repress resistance to neoliberalism. This study concentrates on Colombia, Mexico, and Honduras. Militarism and neoliberalism in Latin America have three operational dimensions: (1) neoliberal globalization has led to increasing poverty and inequality in the region; (2) neoliberalism requires increased military expenditures to repress resistance and/or impose neoliberal structural adjustment policies that perpetuate the interests of dominant-class elites in particular and capital accumulation in general; (3) US military training of Latin American armed forces increases military and paramilitary violence, reinforces US hegemony, buttresses the imposition of neoliberal policies, and subverts democracy in the region.

This article describes the impact of neoliberal globalization in Latin America. After discussing the nature of US militarism after the Cold War, we detail the connection between a consistent, increasing presence of the US military and the imposition of neoliberalism in the region. Then we explain how the United States has resurrected old forms of neocolonial strategies (such as gunboat diplomacy and the training and financing of military coups) and subverted democracy through military and paramilitary violence. By exploiting existing domestic conflicts in Colombia, Mexico, and Honduras, the United States has justified increased military involvement in these countries to counter growing regional resistance to the Washington Consensus. Mexico has witnessed ongoing militarization since the Zapatista rebellion in 1994. Honduras experienced a military coup that overthrew a left-leaning, democratically elected president. Colombia is in its 50th year of

civil war. Thus, these three countries provide the best case studies for examining militarism and neoliberalism in the region.

**Neoliberal Globalization in Latin America:
Human (Under-)Development, Poverty, and Inequality**

The fact that the term “globalization” did not become part of our lexicon until the late eighties/early nineties, was not because it wasn’t already pervasive—international trade, production, and finance had already been growing much faster than domestic economies by the mid-sixties—but because its later combination with neoliberalism accelerated those international trends and the process seemed to take on a life of its own. (Panitch and Gindin 2003, 19)

Neoliberal globalization has dominated the Latin American region throughout the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. Richard Peet (2003, 3–4) distinguishes between the humanitarian potential within globalization and the reality of existing neoliberal globalization, which is based on neoliberal ideas, policies, and institutions. Laura MacDonald and Anne Ruckert (2009, 3) define neoliberalism as a set of economic policies associated with the Washington Consensus and its corresponding “ten neoliberal commandments.” Senior Institute for International Economics (IIE) official John Williamson enumerated those reforms for Latin America at the conclusion of a 1989 IIE conference attended by participants from international financial institutions, US government agencies, and the Federal Reserve Board. The prescriptions include fiscal discipline, public expenditures in fields with high economic returns, tax reform, financial liberalization, unified and competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, removal of barriers to foreign direct investment, privatization, deregulation, and secure property rights (Hristov 2005, 91; Macdonald and Ruckert 2009, 3). Panitch and Gindin (2003, 24) define neoliberalism as “state-led economic restructuring oriented to removing, through the expansion and deepening of markets, democratically imposed barriers to accumulation (earlier concessions on the part of capital that once reflected capitalism’s munificence now resurfaced as problems that demanded reversal).” For MacDonald and Ruckert (2009, 4), neoliberalism represents “a new form of social rule under which elite class power and the profitability of capital have been successfully restored.”

Neoliberalism has had a devastating effect on inequality, poverty, and unemployment in Latin America. In 1996, “the superiors of all 18 Latin American provinces of the Society of Jesus issued an urgent letter on neoliberalism . . . addressed to all those in the Americas participating in the Jesuit enterprise and ‘those who make common cause with our people, especially the poorest’” (Gent 2008a).⁶ The Jesuit leaders noted that, at the time, “180 million people (43.5 percent) in Latin

America (and the Caribbean) lived in poverty, and 80 million (19 percent) lived in extreme poverty” (Latin American Provincials of the Society of Jesus 1997, 48). The “lost decade” of economic growth of the 1980s saw the number of Latin Americans living in poverty increase from 41 percent in 1980 to 48 percent in 1990 (Foster 2007, 3). Between 1990 and 2000, joblessness rose 10 percent in Latin America (ibid.). In the 1980s and 1990s, there was high and persistent income inequality:

The most striking fact is the resilience of high inequality, through many different policy regimes over the past few decades. The 1970s saw some tendency for mild reductions in inequality, and the 1980s a more marked tendency for increased inequality in the context of macroeconomic difficulties. The 1990s has seen a more mixed picture: more countries experienced increases than declines in inequality, but there is no overall pattern. (Walton 2004, 171)

The “Economic Snapshot of Latin America” in the *Latinobarómetro 2010 Report* estimates that “in 2009, the region’s poverty rate rose to 33.1 percent, up from 33 percent in 2008, and, in the case of extreme poverty, to 13.7 percent, up from 12.9 percent.” However, the report also notes that in 2002, 44 percent of people in Latin America were living in poverty, with 19.4 percent experiencing extreme poverty. According to the IMF, by 2010 poverty in Latin America had declined to 31.4 percent, its lowest level in 20 years (Barcena 2012, 1). IMF figures also reveal that the rate of extreme poverty fell to 12.3 percent between 1990 and 2010 (ibid.). Despite these achievements, 177 million people remain in poverty, including 70 million in extreme poverty (ibid.). The IMF attributes the drop in poverty to strong economic growth, higher wage earnings, a decline in fertility rates, and better social programs (ibid.). Yet it does not acknowledge that many of these changes came about during the tenure of democratically elected leaders on the Left, who revitalized the state’s role in alleviating poverty and unemployment and implementing social programs for the poor. “There can be no doubt,” states the *Latinobarómetro 2010 Report*, that the most important problem in Latin America is inequality, which, “measured as the Gini coefficient, is greater than in any other region of the world.”

US Militarism in Latin America since the End of the Cold War

One of the strongest elements of US Cold War policy in Latin America was retained and grew stronger in the new millennium: US military presence and training in the region. After the Cold War ended, US military expenditures in Latin America increased. After declining in 2001, US military aid, training, and arms sales to the region increased each year from the beginning of the war on terror through 2010 (Emerson 2010, 41).⁷ US military and police aid to Latin America increased steadily, reaching a height of \$1.6 billion in 2010.⁸

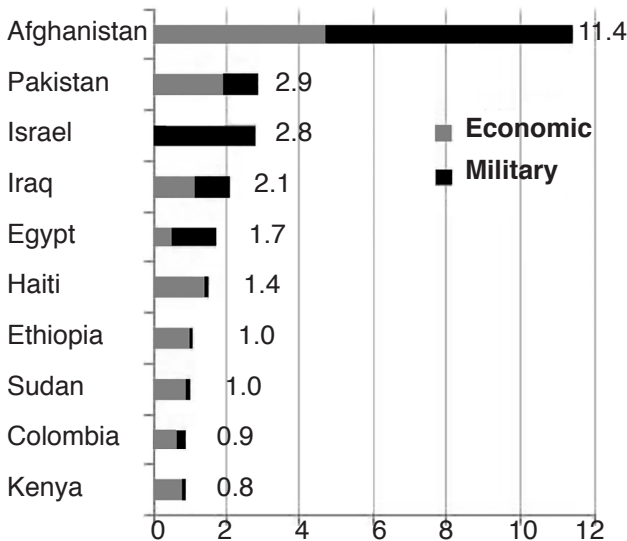
Total US Military and Police Aid to Latin America (2001–2010)

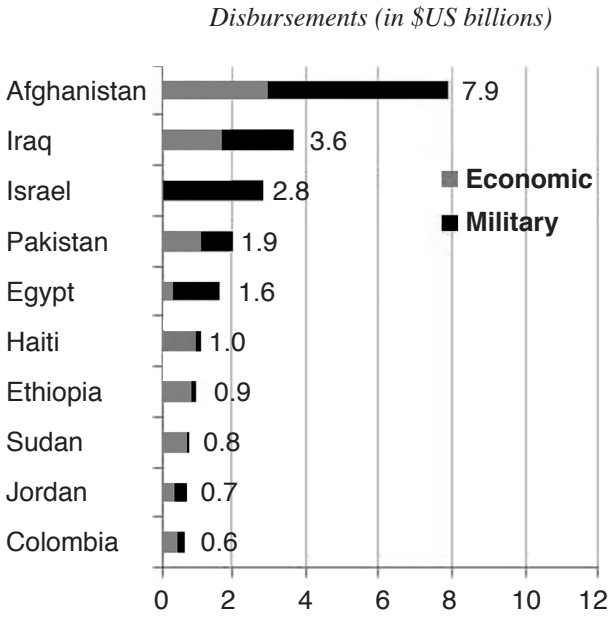
1999	\$595,000,128
2000	\$1,055,984,292
2001	\$484,258,711
2002	\$736,337,026
2003	\$878,448,935
2004	\$1,075,866,367
2005	\$1,051,232,689
2006	\$1,090,968,724
2007	\$1,219,297,683
2008	\$1,303,783,517
2009	\$1,460,817,247
2010	\$1,602,799,501
2011	\$1,042,057,064
2012	\$719,515,876
2013	\$667,478,314

Source: Just the Facts (at *justf.org*), 2014.

Beginning in 2005, five Latin American countries were among the top 20 global recipients of US military assistance (Emerson 2010, 41). In 2010, Colombia and Haiti were among the top 10 global recipients of US economic and military assistance (USAID, *US Overseas Loans and Grants, Greenbook*, 2012).

Chart: FY2010 Top 10 Recipients of US Economic and Military Assistance
Obligations (in \$US billions)





Source: USAID Foreign Assistance Database (at <http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov> [prepared by USAID Economic Analysis and Data Services] and http://gbk.eads.usaidallnet.gov/data/fast_facts_text_descriptions.html#).

According to Tovrov (2012), “the United States allocates more than \$50 billion a year to send abroad in the form of military and economic aid. Among the top 10 nations, military assistance is generally the largest percentage of the total amount sent.” In 2012, the top 10 recipients of US aid were Afghanistan, Israel, Pakistan, Egypt, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Mexico, Kenya, and Nigeria (ibid.).

There are other measures of US militarism in Latin America in the post-Cold War period and after the initiation of the War on Terror. Between 2001 and 2005, 85,820 Latin American soldiers were trained in the United States. In contrast, 61,000 soldiers were trained at the infamous School of the Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (SOA/WHINSEC) between 1946 and 2000 (Emerson 2010, 41). Moreover, the Fourth Fleet, which was established in 1943 and disbanded in 1950, was reactivated on July 1, 2008, by the US Department of Defense to “operate in the Caribbean, and Central and South America” (Cruz 2008). US Navy spokespersons insist that the fleet’s reactivation was “administrative in nature only” (Espinoza 2008), but Admiral Gary Roughead stated that it “will send a strong signal to all Navies operating in the region” (Ross 2008). Government officials in Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia consider the “US decision to reactivate the Fourth Fleet a matter of concern” (Espinoza 2008). According to John Ross, an American journalist and author who lived and worked in Mexico for decades, “the

resurrection and imminent dispatch of the United States Fourth Fleet to patrol the coasts of Latin America invokes the bad old days of Monroe Doctrine impositions and gunboat diplomacy for many citizens of those southern latitudes” (ibid.).

In the early twenty-first century, electoral victories of the Left have multiplied and emergent social movements increasingly challenge neoliberalism in Latin America. For the first time in US–Latin American relations since World War II, more US troops and military facilities were located in the region than aid agencies (Chomsky 2006, 4). Military tensions are higher now than during the Cold War. Its grip on the region weakening, the US government also lacks the credibility to reassert it.

Emerson (2010, 38) argues that the War on Terror replaced the Cold War as “the guiding paradigm for US policy toward Latin America during the George W. Bush administration.” For Emerson (ibid., 43), continuity exists in foreign policy logic between the post-September 11 Pentagon strategy of “effective sovereignty” (in which US national security is threatened by “ungoverned spaces” within Latin American countries) and the Cold War conception of “internal enemies.” “In contrast to assumptions that the disconnect was a product of US neglect,” Emerson notes, “a growing militarization of US policy became evident, a policy that viewed the Western Hemisphere as complementary to the ‘War on Terror.’” Jasmin Hristov (2005, 106) argues along similar lines that after September 11, the National Security Doctrine focused on the use of low-intensity warfare “under the cover of the War on Drugs or War on Terror” aimed at the “internal enemy.” She contends that the internal enemy includes social movements and organizations, as well as “entire sectors of society that have been excluded and marginalized by the current economic model, who are potential sources of challenge with their demands for social justice” (ibid.).

Over the last decade, the Pentagon and US Southern Command (Southcom) have become more responsible than the State Department for policy in Latin America. This undoubtedly explains the shift to a security focus (Emerson 2010, 41). Southcom’s Command Strategy 2018 announced its intention “to expand its scope by acting as the regional coordinating body for both military and non-military operations” (ibid.). Using data from Just the Facts (at *justf.org*), Emerson correlates this policymaking shift toward the Pentagon with increased military spending in the region (ibid.). Southcom’s change in terminology from “narcotraffickers” to “narcoterrorists” enabled a “doubling of military training in Colombia, with funds originally designed for counternarcotics programs diverted to support counterinsurgency missions” (ibid., 43). According to Delacour, Plan Colombia “exemplifies this exercise of hegemony and the masking of counterinsurgency measures as a counternarcotics policy” (in Kirk and Okazawa-Rey 2000, 6).

Continuously resorting to military solutions to address social and political problems has exacerbated conflict and sidetracked development in the region. Increased military presence and assistance, as well as counterinsurgency training,

in Colombia, Mexico, and Honduras in the name of the wars on drugs and terror reinforce US hegemony, buttress the imposition of neoliberal policies, and subvert democracy in the region.

Militarism and Neoliberalism in Colombia

In Colombia, increases in military training and aid have been justified via the War on Drugs. The country is the prototypical case in Latin America of rising US military expenditures in efforts to repress resistance, from Afro-Colombians to unionized workers to the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia—Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). US military training of Colombian armed forces has increased military and paramilitary violence, reinforced US hegemony, and subverted democracy.

Colombia's 50-year conflict is extremely complicated, with the situation defying comprehension. Four armed groups, some of which cooperate, are fed by the drug trade. They operate in a nation deeply divided by geography, economic status, ethnicity, and ideology. Unfortunately, the United States—now a key actor in the conflict—is pursuing a dangerously simplistic strategy, one that is doomed to failure. Instead of recognizing the complexity of Colombia's crisis and addressing its many root causes, Washington's approach is dominated by the priorities of the wars on drugs and terror. The Andres Pastrana administration conceived Plan Colombia in 1999. In 2000, the Clinton administration agreed to fund the program, which sought to eradicate drug output and to strengthen democracy in Colombia, at a cost of \$1.3 billion (Delacour 2000, 63). The United States has poured over seven billion dollars into Colombian military and police aid grants since 1996 (*justf.org*). Since the late 1980s, the United States has aided the Colombian government in combating the drug trade. Then, Washington's mandate was to avoid involvement in Colombia's long-standing civil war. As counterdrug operations became increasingly dangerous, and guerilla attacks on Colombian security forces grew more successful in the mid-1990s, US efforts to engage Colombian security forces in counterdrug policies conflicted with congressional efforts to condition such assistance on human rights criteria. In August 2000, however, "Clinton waived five of the six human rights conditions, making a mockery of the administration's pronounced concerns for human rights" (Delacour 2000, 63).

As of 2006, approximately 82 percent of US aid to Colombia went to its military police, largely to aid drug interdiction, arrest drug traffickers, and ensure the safety of the massive herbicide fumigation operation in coca- and poppy-producing areas (Witness for Peace 2006). In 2002, before the war in Iraq erupted, Colombia was the third-largest recipient of US security assistance, behind Israel and Egypt (Isaacson 2003a, 16). Between 1997 and 2002, US aid to Colombia's military increased six times, equaling \$1.5 million per day in 2002 (*ibid.*). In mid-2002, the Bush administration asked Congress for more worldwide anti-terror funding, which became law on August 2, 2002. The bill provided for an expanded campaign

against narcotics trafficking and against the FARC, the National Liberation Army, and the paramilitaries, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC). This broadened mission laid the foundation for a dramatically increased US military commitment. With the attention of the US public focused on Iraq and the Middle East, the Bush administration helped Colombia's military protect a vulnerable Colombian oil pipeline. In 2002, US troops were sent to Colombia to protect the Cano Limon pipeline, where Occidental Petroleum and Colombia's Ecopetrol produced \$5 billion a year in oil (Tate 2004, 73).⁹ With 170 attacks on the pipeline in 2001, the Colombian government petitioned the US government for military aid specifically to protect the pipeline (Leech 2002, 3). In 2003, the Bush administration projected \$104 million in expenditures to help Colombia's army protect the Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline, of which US oil company Occidental Petroleum owns 44 percent (Isaacson 2003b). In Colombia, the military has historically protected the few at the expense of the majority.

The appeal of military aid has grown in the wake of recent international crises. US supporters of military aid to Colombia believe a stronger security force is the best way to protect territory and people. As is the case with other Latin American nations, however, the historical role of Colombia's military has not involved protecting people. While the US and Colombian governments were busy fighting the FARC and other "insurgents" and waging the War on Drugs, Colombia's local governments and its civil society (churches and business associations; labor, human rights, and peace activists; student, *campesino*, and women's groups; and Afro-Colombian and indigenous organizations) were busy working peacefully for change. Many in these groups were identified as "insurgents," especially union activists, and were killed or displaced. Over the last 20 years, 4,000 trade unionists have been murdered in Colombia (American Center for International Labor Solidarity 2006, 2). Each year, more union activists are killed in Colombia than in the rest of the world combined (*ibid.*). On June 30, 2005, "the Colombian Commission of Jurists reported that paramilitaries had killed at least 2,548 civilians since the 2002 cease-fire declaration" (*ibid.*, 7). In an interview cited in the labor center's report, Carlos Castaño, former head of the AUC paramilitary umbrella group, said: "We kill trade unionists because they interfere with people working" (*ibid.*, 12). Of the trade unionists victimized, teachers have been especially targeted (Otis 2012, 5).

Removal of Afro-Colombians from their oil-rich lands is another use of militarism to reinforce neoliberalism. In 1996, paramilitaries forced Marino Córdoba, an Afro-Colombian from the Riosucio municipality of Colombia and former director of the Association of Displaced Afro-Colombians, out of his home for working for the legal recognition of land for Afro-Colombians (Córdoba 2003). Now in the United States, he continues to raise awareness of the plight of displaced Colombians. According to the Human Rights and Displacement Consultancy, over 2.7 million Colombians have been displaced, and Córdoba estimates that Afro-Colombians account for 90 percent of that figure (*ibid.*).

Hristov's *Blood and Capital: The Paramilitarization of Columbia* cites hundreds of examples of what she calls SCA-sponsored terrorism¹⁰ against peasants, indigenous groups, and human rights workers of all kinds:

The SCA, which can also be described as the machinery of terror, runs through a system of mutually reinforcing mechanisms that can be grouped into three broad categories: legal, military, and ideological.... Here, the penetration of civil society by the SCA, especially during the last fifteen years, has not been sporadic but rather organized, systematic, and intense. (Hristov 2009a, 26–27; 25)

Perhaps the most damning evidence of the relationship between the state and the paramilitaries in Colombia comes from Captain Gilberto Cárdenas, former director of the Judicial Police Investigative and Intelligence Unit (Sección de Investigaciones Judiciales e Inteligencia de la Policía), in a statement made to authorities of the Colombian state and the United Nations:

The paramilitaries were created by the Colombian government itself to do the dirty work, in other words, in order to kill all individuals who, according to the state and police, are guerrillas. But in order to do that, they [the government] had to create illegal groups so that no one would suspect the government of Colombia and its military forces.... Members of the army and the police even patrol side by side with the paramilitaries. (Quoted in Hristov 2009a, 58)

Colombia's civil war continues. A tenuous peace process began in 2002, when newly elected President Álvaro Uribe approved a law enabling official negotiations with any illegal armed group. By July 2004, the government and the largest paramilitary organization in Colombia, the AUC, reached an agreement known as the Acuerdo de Santa Fe de Ralito, which provided for the demobilization of about 50 paramilitary blocs spread over 28 of Colombia's 32 departments (Hristov 2009b, 12). According to Uribe, "this was the beginning of a process toward peace and the restoration of human rights" (ibid.). The Colombian people had good reason to wish for the dismantling of the paramilitaries. Paramilitaries have committed about 80 percent of all human rights violations against the civilian population of Colombia, which has the regions' worst human rights record, and one of the world's largest populations of internal refugees (Amnesty International 2010a). By 2004, the paramilitaries had gained the upper hand in the fight against the guerrillas, and Uribe gave the "green light to Plan Patriota, the second phase of Plan Colombia" (Brito 2009, 36).

Colombia's relationship with SOA/WHINSEC further confirms that US military training increases violence and human rights violations and subverts democracy in the region. Over 10,000 Colombian soldiers have trained at the school, with Latin

American military officers supposedly learning how to operate professionally within a democratic society. However, Colombia's human rights atrocities have continued to rise as more Colombian soldiers are trained at the US military school. In 2004, over one-third of the soldiers who attended WHINSEC were from Colombia, while Colombia's human rights abuses continued to escalate (WHINSEC 2004a). For the past decade, Colombia has had the worst human rights record in the hemisphere. Nonetheless, the day after President Uribe was reelected in June 2006, the US State Department certified that Colombia was meeting human rights conditions for US military assistance (McFarland Sánchez-Moreno 2006).

When General Bantz Craddock, the head of US SOUTHCOM, addressed graduates of the SOA/WHINSEC's Command and General Staff Course in the summer of 2004, he warned soldiers that "today's complex challenges include transnational terrorism, narcoterror, and radical movements" (Board of Visitors Meeting, WHINSEC 2004a). Most Latin American security experts say that, aside from Colombia, the terrorist threat is overstated and terrorists who threaten US citizens on US soil are "scarcer still" (Isaacson 2005). In March 2006, CIA Director Porter Goss testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the United States should pay greater attention to threats "in our own backyard" (ibid.). He noted that "presidential elections will be held in eight South and Central American countries in 2006" and warned that "destabilization or a backslide away from democratic principles would not be helpful to our interests and would probably be threatening to our security in the long run" (Priest and Pincus 2005). Thus, Colombia, an exceptional stronghold of right-wing conservatism in the region, is the country in which the United States remains the most deeply entrenched militarily.

More bothersome to the United States than Colombia's human rights record is the decade-long challenge to the Washington Consensus posed by Latin America's anti-neoliberal forces. The Colombian government intensified the conflict in March 2008 when its military crossed the southern border into Ecuador and bombed a FARC encampment, killing 25 (Walcott 2008, 11). This violation of territorial boundaries set off a diplomatic standoff with Ecuador that continued until November 2010. Despite the easing of tensions and averting of war, this event highlights the growing polarization in South America. The United States heightened its military presence in Colombia, and on October 30, 2009, US and Colombian officials signed an agreement that gave US armed forces access to seven Colombian military bases for the next decade (Grandin 2010, 1). Within the hemisphere, this deal was hotly debated, since the repercussions transcended the dynamics of US-Colombian relations. In July 2009, the US Air Force made its last flight from its base in Manta, Ecuador. Growing Ecuadoran dissatisfaction with the base and its effects upon the country prompted its closure. In 2006, President Rafael Correa's campaign promised to close the base when its lease expired in 2009. The leasing of seven new bases in Colombia offset the base closure in Ecuador, and the US foothold in South America

became firmer. According to Grandin, “the Obama decision to go forward with the bases accelerates a dangerous trend in US hemispheric policy” (ibid.).

A decrease in US military aid to Colombia between 2009 and 2013 had been projected, but the Obama administration continued to justify aid by claiming that enhanced hemispheric security was needed. In 2009, Presidents Obama and Uribe signed the US-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA), giving the United States access to the seven bases noted above. On April 15, 2012, Presidents Obama and Santos signed the US-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security as a “response to increasing insecurity generated by transnational organized crime” (US State Department 2012). If there is greater insecurity in Colombia, does this indicate that Plan Colombia has failed, or is the plan being extended via further militarization of the region? Plan Colombia’s original conception was as a military strategy to combat the FARC and eradicate coca production intended for the US market. The plan did diminish FARC forces. Yet coca production is still going strong in Colombia, and even greater quantities are being produced in other Andean countries, such as Bolivia and Peru (Crandall 2008).¹¹

Although Plan Colombia failed to eliminate the drug trade or the FARC, US policymakers adopted it as a model for policy in Afghanistan and Iraq (Hylton 2010). In a 2009 op-ed piece that connects the two counterinsurgencies, Rozoff (2012) argues: “CBS News quoted an unnamed Pentagon official stating, ‘The more Afghanistan can look like Colombia, the better.’ The equation is now being reversed.” As Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Martin Dempsey reported, “we’re getting ready to send some brigade commanders who have been in Iraq and Afghanistan down here to partner with their Joint Task Force commanders in a leader developmental function. The challenges they face are not unlike the challenges we’ve faced in Iraq and Afghanistan” (ibid.). In April 2012, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta visited Colombia as part of a three-nation tour to coordinate the American role in the “final solution to cut the FARC in half by 2014” (ibid.). Colombia thus remains the focus of US hemispheric military aid in the region, and the model for counterinsurgency doctrine throughout the world (Hylton 2010).

Militarism and Neoliberalism in Mexico

While the Obama administration intends to reinforce diplomatic relations in response to the open militarization carried out by the George W. Bush government (2001–2009), this diplomatic agenda is still linked to security and military power. In this sense, despite the change in discourse, the practice remains the same.... As the Colombian case has shown and as is becoming evident in the Mexican one, this leads to authoritarian systems with increasing military and paramilitary power, human rights violations, and increased US interference under the guise of help, cooperation, or the defense of its interests and investments in the region. (Delgado-Ramos and Romano 2011)

Perhaps no state in Latin America reflects the relationship between neoliberalism and militarism better than Mexico. Neoliberalism there has created growing poverty and resistance, and the state has increasingly resorted to militarism in response. Mexico is now one of the top 10 global recipients of US aid. US military training of the Mexican armed forces intensified with the Zapatista rebellion in 1994. It coincides with increasing military and paramilitary violence and human rights abuses, buttressing the imposition of neoliberal policies and subverting democracy in Mexico.

Since the early 1980s, a “neoliberal revolution” has been underway in Mexico, with well-documented effects: “severe cuts in social spending, the gutting of protective legislation, heightened foreign investment and privatization, growing income inequality, and the expansion of crime and violence. Neoliberalism is an attempt to realign and strengthen capitalist imperialism using the tools of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund” (Ochoa 2001, 148). On January 1, 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect, a group of armed guerrillas calling themselves the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) rose up and occupied government buildings in the town of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in the state of Chiapas. The Zapatistas called upon Mexican workers, the poor, and the labor movement to rise up against neoliberal economies and the violence of poverty, providing a blueprint for a broader Latin American movement, while sending a foreboding message to the power structures in Mexico City and Washington, DC: “This is our response to the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, because this represents a death sentence for all of the indigenous ethnicities in Mexico” (Burns and Charlip 2007, 292).

In the Center for Economic and Policy Research’s assessment of NAFTA after 20 years, Mexico is 18th in a list of 20 Latin American countries when ranked by real growth of GDP per capita, the most basic economic measure of living standards (Weisbrot et al. 2014). Mexican national statistics show that its poverty rate of 52.3 percent in 2012 is almost identical to the 1994 rate (*ibid.*). As such, 14.3 million more Mexicans were living below the poverty line in 2012 than in 1994 (*ibid.*). NAFTA’s impact on agricultural employment was severe, causing increased poverty and eliminating many small farmers. This was due especially to policies such as the dumping of US corn at 30 percent below the cost of production: “From 1991–2007, there were 4.9 million Mexican family farmers displaced, while seasonal labor in agro-export industries increased by about 3 million. This meant a net loss of 1.9 million jobs” (*ibid.*).

Although the Zapatistas never threatened to take state power, the Mexican government immediately sent troops and heavily militarized the state of Chiapas. On behalf of Mexico’s indigenous and non-indigenous poor, the Zapatistas demanded land, work, housing, nutrition, health, education, liberty, democracy, peace, justice, and dignity. Instead of upholding the February 16, 1996, San Andrés

Accords between the Zapatistas and the Mexican government, the state responded with military and paramilitary violence. Violence in Chiapas peaked in 1997 as the paramilitaries (with close ties to the Mexican army) committed horrific atrocities, the most famous being the massacre of Acteal, in which a pacifist community of 45, mostly women and children, was brutally executed while praying in their local church.¹² Since 1994, the state of Chiapas has withstood low-intensity warfare in a global counterinsurgency strategy supported by the United States.

The state of Oaxaca has figured prominently in Mexico's neoliberal resistance and militarized repression. On May 1, 2006, members of Local 22 of the National Education Workers Union (SNTE) delivered a list of economic demands to the state government. It included the creation of education infrastructure, new teaching positions, more teaching materials, support for scholarships and school breakfasts, and improved salaries for teachers (González and Baeza 2007, 30). After no response was forthcoming, hundreds of teachers initiated an encampment in Oaxaca, blocked access to Oaxaca's airport, held mega-marches of about 80,000 people, and created the Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca, APPO), a coalition of "365 social, political, human rights, non-governmental, environmental, gender, student and union organizations, the indigenous communities, and thousands of independent Oaxacans" (ibid.). APPO's Constituent Assembly, including over 1,000 delegates, adopted the goals of anticapitalism, anti-imperialism, direct democracy, independence from the state, and gender and ethnic equality (ibid., 33).

Between May 2006 and April 2007, thousands of teachers, workers, and citizens of Oaxaca "rebelled against the corrupt and oppressive government of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz despite assassinations, disappearances, beastly abuse, and imprisonment.... In retaliation for the events of 2006, federal police repressed hundreds of protestors and arrested dozens of people. They broke into homes without warrants, and raped women" (ibid., 26). On October 27, 2006, teacher Emilio Alonso Fabián and US journalist William Bradley Roland (Brad Will) were assassinated; APPO reported 16 wounded, one disappeared, and three kidnapped teachers (ibid., 32). On October 28, the secretary of government conceded all 17 points on the list of the teachers' demands, and the day after, the federal and state governments initiated even more repression, resulting in three dead, eight wounded, and 50 detained (ibid.). Upon visiting Oaxaca, an International Civil Commission of Observation of Human Rights concluded that "the events that occurred in Oaxaca form part of a juridical, police, and military strategy, acting on a psychosocial and community level, whose goal is to control and intimidate the population in areas where community-based or non-partisan social movements are unfolding" (ibid., 34).

In late November 2006, the administration of President Vicente Fox "sent hundreds of military-trained Federal Preventative Police [Policía Federal Preventiva, PFP] to lay siege on the city" (Magaña 2010, 83). Fox augmented the repressive forces of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz with the power of the national government, unleashing

an overwhelming display of state power and repression on Oaxaca's resistance movements:

The brute force used by the PFP was too much for the nonviolent APPO to overcome, no matter how flexible and adaptable. In one week at least 192 people were taken prisoner by the PFP, many of them shipped to a maximum-security prison in the Northern state of Nayarit.... One of the women I interviewed told me about a friend who was among those arrested and shipped to Nayarit. While in police custody, she was tortured and humiliated. She received electric shocks to the nipples and vagina, was photographed naked by police, and was hung from a helicopter where she was told to scream like she did in the marches. (Ibid.)

Between June 14 and December 10, 2006, the violence in Oaxaca resulted in "26 murders, 450 arrests, countless injuries, and almost 30 people 'disappeared.'" According to the International Civil Commission for Human Rights Observation's most recent report, the number of politically motivated murders in Oaxaca between the summer of 2006 and April 2008 was 62" (ibid.).¹³

US military expenditures for the War on Drugs contribute to the violence in Mexico. With the crackdown on drug cartels in Colombia, "the United States has supported Mexico's crackdown on drug cartels with both money and personnel," including \$1.6 billion between 2007 and 2010 (Tovrov 2012). In 2008, the Bush administration began to implement a multiyear, \$1.4 billion foreign aid plan known as the Mérida Initiative, "with the stated purpose of enhancing Mexico's ability to reduce crime, with overwhelming emphasis on the drug trade. This aid package complements other forms of US security aid to its southern neighbor, including millions of dollars in annual military aid from the Department of Defense" (Brewer 2009, 9). Most Mérida Initiative funds support military aid:

The detailed spending plan prepared by the US State Department in September 2008 outlines the proposed uses of Mérida funding, including the purchase of airplanes and helicopters for the Mexican military for surveillance, counternarcotics, and counterterrorism operations; the purchase of scanners and armored vehicles; the establishment of law enforcement databases; training for specialized police units combating organized crime; and anticorruption activities in the federal police. (Ibid.)

In 2008, Mexico received nearly \$13 million in aid from the Department of Defense (ibid., 13). Critics of the initiative and human rights activists call attention to abuses committed by military forces in Mexico. They particularly fault the deployment of "forces trained for war to perform the work of civilian police" (ibid., 10). Delgado-Ramos and Romano (2011, 99) also connect human rights abuses, US military aid, and the drug war in Mexico: "According to Mexico's National

Human Rights Commission, complaints against soldiers have increased 500 percent; in 2009 alone, some 1,800 complaints were registered, most of them from the states in which most of the antidrug army contingents are stationed (Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Michoacán).”¹⁴ Militarization of the Mexican state has increased military and paramilitary violence and human rights abuses against indigenous communities, women, teachers, students, labor-rights activists, and other marginalized communities in the name of the War on Drugs and neoliberalism, subverting democracy in Mexico.

Military Coup in Honduras

Honduras represents one of the most egregious examples of militarism in Latin America. Since the end of the Cold War, it is the only Latin American country in which a military coup successfully deposed a democratically elected leader. The 2009 coup demonstrates the extent to which Latin American elites, with the backing of US military training and aid, will use force to support neoliberalism and subvert democracy. Adult Hondurans remember the brutality of the Honduran government during the 1980s, when the military assassinated and tortured suspected opponents. Honduras’s infamous paramilitary Battalion 316 was found responsible for the kidnapping, torture, disappearance, and murder of hundreds of people (Center for Justice and Accountability 2009).

On June 28, 2009, democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya was ousted in a coup and whisked away to Costa Rica by the *golpista* government of Roberto Micheletti, which maintained power through force and unleashed a wave of human rights violations in Honduras for more than 125 days without agreeing to negotiate or cede power to the elected president. One week after the coup, the military fired 160 rounds of live ammunition into a nonviolent crowd, killing a teenager (Goodman 2011). By mid-August, the coup regime had carried out nine politically motivated murders, countless military attacks on peaceful protesters, and ordered the arrest of over 1,300 people (Beachy 2009). Direct links exist between the 2009 military coup and the military government of the 1980s. The *golpista* government’s special security advisor was Billy Joya, a former member of Battalion 316, who was trained in counterinsurgency techniques at the School of the Americas. General Luis Javier Prince Suazo, the head of the Honduran Air Force and SOA graduate, arranged to have Zelaya flown into exile in Costa Rica (Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice 2009). Similar to the 1980s, the military detained hundreds, and protesters and teachers, peasant farmers, students, and journalists disappeared. The elite Honduran police force, COBRA, harassed Hondurans in urban and rural areas. To shut down the press and restrict freedom of expression, major television and radio stations were militarized as part of the coup (Amnesty International 2010b, 4).

On June 28, the Obama administration decried the coup and called for the restoration of democracy in Honduras, but US policymakers responded sluggishly and ambivalently throughout the summer and fall of 2009, reflecting ingrained

patterns of US-Honduran relations, especially longstanding ties with the military. US policymakers had begun to distrust President Manuel Zelaya, who inched toward the Left after his election in 2005. Before the coup, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a neoliberal US government aid agency, pumped nearly \$17 million in foreign aid to Honduras between April 1 and July 31, 2009 (Conroy 2010). Created by Congress in 2004 with strong bipartisan support, the MCC was to “provide some of the world’s poorest countries with large-scale grants to fund country-led solutions for reducing poverty through sustainable economic growth.”¹⁵ The MCC claims to be committed to helping poor countries reduce poverty, but it only helps “those countries committed to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens,” that is, those with a strict neoliberal free-trade development model. Zelaya had “fallen out of favor with the Honduran business class” in part because he joined the Chavez-led Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a move ratified by the Honduran Congress in October 2008 (*ibid.*). The 2009 Honduran coup demonstrates that Latin American leaders who reject the Washington Consensus and neoliberalism and lack the support of their militaries and economic elites can face reprisals in the form of militarism, often backed by the United States:

Just a month before his overthrow, Zelaya—in response to an investigation that charged Goldcorp, another Vancouver-based company, with contaminating Honduras’s Siria Valley—introduced a law that would have required community approval before new mining concessions were granted; it also banned open-pit mines and the use of cyanide and mercury. That legislation died with his ouster. Zelaya also tried to break the dependent relationship whereby the region exports oil to US refineries only to buy back gasoline and diesel at monopolistic prices; he joined Petrocaribe—the alliance that provides cheap Venezuelan oil to member countries—and signed a competitive contract with Conoco Phillips. This move earned him the ire of Exxon and Chevron, which dominate Central America’s fuel market. (Grandin 2010)

In Europe, Latin America, and the United States, human rights organizations called for the United States to cut diplomatic relations and economic aid to Honduras to comply with international laws governing military coups (Section 7008 of the US Foreign Operations Law) (Dangle 2009a). After the June 28 announcement that a coup had occurred, however, the US government “withheld determination” until mid-August. It refused to demand Zelaya’s return, because, according to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “we’re working with others on behalf of our ultimate objectives” (Dangle 2009b). US policymakers were ambivalent about returning Zelaya to power. The US ambassador to Honduras, Ambassador Hugo Llorens, previously served as President George W. Bush’s National Security Advisor on issues pertaining to Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador.

His resume includes the 2002 Venezuelan coup attempt against Hugo Chávez. As human rights atrocities mounted, international pressure against the Honduran coup gained legitimacy. By August, US officials again admitted that a coup had taken place, but it was too late to save Manuel Zelaya's presidency.

The November 2009 election "was marked by violence and fraud, was boycotted by the EU, the UN, the Carter Center, the OAS, and half of the Honduran voters" (Fasquelle 2011, 20). Porfirio Lobo won the election, which has been described as the "progeny of the military coup that deposed President Zelaya on June 28, 2009" (Frank 2012, 11). After the election, heads of state throughout the region refused to recognize Lobo's presidency; the United States "hailed him for restoring democracy and restoring reconciliation" (*ibid.*). President Obama even invited him to the White House. Upon his inauguration in January 2010, President Lobo declared the crisis over and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed those remarks as ex-President Manuel Zelaya was "allowed" to leave the Brazilian embassy. Since Lobo's inauguration, repression in Honduras has increased. Honduras has the highest homicide rate in the hemisphere, and protesters and human rights advocates have experienced illegal detentions, executions by death squads, intimidation, and torture. In Honduras, a man, woman, or child is killed every 74 minutes (*ibid.*, 14).

Despite the repression, activists in Honduras and throughout the hemisphere have protested the "illegitimate" government of the Lobo administration. On May 28, 2011, through a deal brokered by Colombian President Manuel Santos and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, Manuel Zelaya was allowed to return to Honduras almost two years after he was deposed. This marked the largest demonstration in Honduran history, with an estimated 11 percent of the Honduran population attending (Frank 2011). Upon Zelaya's return, the United States called for the reinstatement of Honduras to the OAS, which took place in June 2011. Only Ecuador dissented due to persistent human rights violations. Some voices in the United States have spoken out against the undemocratic and violent government in Honduras. Ninety-four members of the House of Representatives signed a letter dated March 9, 2012, which called for the suspension of police and military aid to Honduras. On March 5, 2012, seven senators signed a letter expressing concerns over the "increasing human rights violations in Honduras" (Frank 2012, 14). Although the US State Department admits that human rights violations exist in Honduras, the US government sees working with the Honduran military as a solution. On March 6, 2012, Vice President Biden flew to Honduras and promised to increase military and police funds to \$107 million under the Central American Regional Security Initiative. President Obama's proposed budget for 2013 more than doubled police and military funds for Honduras (*ibid.*). Given the increases in US military funding and the extensive political and social violence, Honduras has become the Colombia of 10 years ago.

Honduras remains strategically important for the US military in the region, serving as the regional hub for US military operations in Central America. Human

rights organizations in Honduras such as COFEDAH (Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos en Honduras—Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared in Honduras) agree that the drug war is “a pretext for a greater military occupation” (ibid., 17). Human rights workers in Honduras and defenders of human rights in the United Nations and throughout the world have called on Honduras to guarantee basic human rights. This is difficult since the United States props up the government, the police, and the military, which are heavily involved in human rights violations, the drug trade, and criminal activity. Delgado-Ramos and Romano (2011, 101) summarize the role of US hegemony in the context of the Honduran coup:

The US Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies . . . organized a workshop to advise Honduran police and army forces, as well as Congress members and government officials, on the planning of national security strategies. . . . The seriousness of US interference in internal affairs through this type of “advising” is compounded by the fact that the Honduran government receiving these internal security “suggestions” is the product of a technical coup d’état against a constitutional president.

US military training of the Honduran armed forces has unequivocally increased military violence, reinforced neoliberalism, and subverted democracy in the region.

SOA/WHINSEC: Architect of Violence and Repression

The US Army School of the Americas (SOA/WHINSEC) is the model for US military training and counterinsurgency in Latin America. SOA/WHINSEC was established in 1946 in Panama as a Cold War mechanism for keeping order and stability in the region and serving as a bulwark against the Soviet Union. In 1984, in compliance with the Panama Canal Treaty, the school was moved to Ft. Benning, Georgia. For over 60 years, the school, under several names, has taught courses to Latin American military officers on counterinsurgency methods, counter-narcotics, command and general staff, human rights training, and democratic consolidation (WHINSEC 2004b).

The US military and policymakers view the school as a way to secure democracy in Latin America and to help professionalize their militaries. Yet it gained notoriety in the hemisphere as a “School of Assassins” and boasts among its graduates men who have committed some of the most horrific atrocities in Latin America.¹⁶ In December 2000, the SOA Watch movement, which sought to close the school while investigating past and current atrocities and their links to its graduates, won enough support from Congress and the American public to motivate the US Army to close the Army School of the Americas. Only three weeks later, in January 2001, the army reopened the school in the same building, with the same instructors, under a new name—The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation. As the SOA Watch movement would attest, “New Name, Same Shame.”

Katherine McCoy's (2005) article on the school's torture and human rights record directly challenged the US government's argument that US military training leads to the professionalization of Latin American militaries and the democratization of Latin America. She analyzed the course records of nearly 12,000 SOA graduates from six countries (Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, and Panama), between 1960 and 2000, and tracked their human rights records during the 40-year period to determine the impact of SOA training. The more courses an SOA graduate took, McCoy concluded, the more likely the graduate was to commit human rights abuses. Moreover, if the graduate took two or more courses, they were more than three times as likely to commit human rights abuses than soldiers who took one course (*ibid.*, 57). Students who took three courses had a higher rate of abuse and committed abuses sooner after graduation (*ibid.*). McCoy concluded that "repeated SOA training was associated with increased human rights violations in times of war and peace, under democratic presidents and dictatorial regimes, and both during and after the cold war" (*ibid.*, 61).

The recent coups in Haiti in 1991 and 2004, the Venezuelan coup attempt of 2002, and the Honduran coup of 2009, which was led by an SOA graduate, exemplify the continuation of violence in the region. A legacy of the Cold War, SOA/WHINSEC remains the bulwark of US military training, and thus violence, in the hemisphere. Though not the only US military training school for the region, it is the premiere one and a shining example. Newly elected Latin American leaders are beginning to withdraw troops from the school because of its reputation. Leaders in the United States must likewise cease this perpetuation of violence (funded by US taxpayers) in Latin America.

Conclusion: Moving beyond Militarism

Colombia and Honduras are the most violent and heavily militarized nations in Latin America. Mexico is not far behind. Military solutions have not worked in these countries, and innocent civilians continue to die. Poverty and inequality caused by neoliberalism lead the marginalized communities most affected by neoliberal policies to resist. US military expenditures in Latin America and ongoing military training of its armed forces by entities such as SOA/WHINSEC repress that resistance, increase military and paramilitary violence, reinforce US hegemony, and subvert democracy in the region. In this context, are peace and change possible?

Guatemala is the first Latin American country to place a former president on trial for genocide. President Jose Efraín Ríos Montt, a former SOA graduate, whose 14-month rule between 1982 and 1983 resulted in the killing or disappearance of 70,000 people and the displacement of hundreds of thousands, was charged in 2011 with genocide and crimes against humanity and placed under house arrest while awaiting trial (Wirtz 2012). On May 10, 2013, in Guatemala City, a three-judge trial court convicted Ríos Montt of crimes against humanity and genocide of more than 1,700 indigenous Ixil Mayans (Castillo 2013). After a six-week trial

and testimony of over 90 witnesses, dozens of forensic and other experts, and the presentation of documentary and other evidence, Ríos Montt was sentenced to 80 years in prison. Prosecutors presented

a month of chilling testimony from survivors of Army massacres carried out 30 years ago during one of the bloodiest periods of Guatemala's long civil war. Experts in the trial described how the Army had marched into remote hamlets in the Maya Ixil region in search of leftist guerrillas during General Ríos Montt's 17-month rule in 1982 and 1983. Soldiers killed all those who could not flee, burning down houses, killing livestock and destroying crops. (Malkin 2013)

The trial court issued a 718-page judgment laying the foundation for the 80-year sentence (Open Society Foundations 2013). Three days later, the Constitutional Court overturned the conviction due to a "procedural irregularity," and now lawyers on both sides believe that the case must be retried in front of new judges (Malkin 2013). Nevertheless, the Open Society Justice Initiative states the importance of this case in addressing military violence in Latin America: "The trial marks the first time a former head of state has been tried for genocide in a domestic court. It is an important milestone in holding political and military leaders accountable for international crimes" (ibid.). The arrest of Augusto Pinochet in 1998 and the conviction of Efraín Ríos Montt in 2013 prove that world leaders must concern themselves with what happens when they leave office, as well as how they treat their citizens while in office.

The United States needs a new foreign policy in Latin America based on democracy, development, and the preservation of human rights, not one that defends neoliberal economic policies with arms. Latin American nations will demand no less. Perhaps Rigoberta Menchú, the Guatemalan activist and politician, put it best in 2001 in a letter she penned to President George W. Bush, when she responded to his statement that "all nations in all regions of the world must now make a decision: You are with us or you are with the terrorists" (Menchú 2001). She retorted: "Before you give the cry for war, I would like to invite you to think about a different type of world leadership, one which must convince rather than conquer, in which the human species can show that in the last 1,000 years we have overcome the idea of an eye for an eye."

NOTES

1. We discuss Ríos Montt's complicated trial in greater detail at the end of the article.
2. 1998: Hugo Chávez, Venezuela; 1999: Ricardo Lagos, Chile; 2002: Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, Brazil; 2003: Néstor Kirchner, Argentina; 2004: Tabaré Ramón Vázquez, Uruguay; 2005: Evo Morales, Bolivia; 2006: Michelle Bachelet, Chile; 2006: Manuel Zelaya, Honduras; 2006: Rafael Correa, Ecuador;

2006: Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua; 2007: Cristina Fernández Kirchner, Argentina; 2008: Fernando Lugo, Paraguay; 2009: José Mujica, Uruguay; 2009: Mauricio Funes, El Salvador; 2010: Dilma Rousseff, Brazil; 2011: Ollanta Humala, Peru; and 2013: Nicolás Maduro, Venezuela.

3. For many authors, the Washington Consensus is the conflation of US foreign policy and economic interests through the domination of neoliberal structural adjustment policies via the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. Many scholars have also written about the New American Imperialism, American Empire, and the unilateralism that accompanied the US policy agenda during the Reagan-Bush years. George W. Bush's administration took this to new heights and the Obama administration largely left it unchallenged.

4. Data from Just the Facts. See http://justf.org/All_Grants_Country?year1=1996&year2=2013&funding=All+Programs&subregion=Entire+Region&x=68&y=6.

5. See, for example, our recent article, "Latin American Social Movements and a New Left Consensus: State and Civil Society Challenges to Neoliberal Globalization" (2014) in *New Political Science: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 36(1): 1–31.

6. See Latin American Provincials of the Society of Jesus (1997, 43) and Gent (2008b).

7. See also Berrigan and Wingo (2005) and *Just the Facts* for data collected throughout this period.

8. The Congressional Research Service Report on *U.S. Foreign Assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean: Recent Trends and FY2013 Appropriation* covers the Obama administration's foreign aid budget request for fiscal year 2013, citing "the recent downward trend in assistance to Latin America and the Caribbean," beginning in 2010. However, in taking non-fuel Pentagon contracts into account, John Lindsay-Poland argues that "US military spending in the region is still considerably higher than during the George W. Bush administration, when the equivalent Pentagon spending in Latin America averaged \$301 million a year" (at <http://forusa.org/blogs/john-lindsay-poland/pentagon-continues-contracting-us-companies-latin-america/11782>).

9. See also Joseph L. Galloway, "U.S. Forces Expanding Role in Colombia Beyond Drug Mission, Troops Now Working to Protect Oil Pipeline," *Charlotte Observer*, January 21, 2003.

10. SCA stands for state's coercive apparatus; see Hristov (2009, 26–27; 25).

11. Aerial spraying has reduced coca production in Colombia somewhat, but not the amount of cocaine entering the United States. Supplies from nearby countries compensate for Colombia's decline.

12. During a July 2005 Witness for Peace delegation to study neoliberalism in Chiapas, the authors heard directly from members of Las Abejas ("The Bees"), who gave direct and moving accounts of the massacre that occurred while they were attending church.

13. See also Comisión Civil Internacional de Observación por los Derechos Humanos (CCIODH), *Informe Sobre los Hechos de Oaxaca* (2008, Barcelona: Graficas Lunas), 209; and Lynn Stephen, "'We are brown, we are short, we are fat.... We are the face of Oaxaca': Women Leaders in the Oaxaca Rebellion," *Socialism and Democracy* 21(2): 97–112.

14. Mexico's case is not exceptional in the region: "According to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, in 2001 three out of four Latin American countries receiving US military and intelligence assistance had serious human rights violations" (Delgado-Ramos and Romano 2011, 99).

15. The US Secretary of State chairs the MCC board of directors and the US Treasury Secretary is the vice chair. Information on the MCC is found at www.mcc.gov.

16. Argentina: General Roberto Viola, General Jorge Rafael Videla Redondo, Emilio Massera; Chile: Colonel Pablo Belmar, Miguel Krassnoff; Bolivia: General Hugo Banzer; El Salvador: Captain Roberto D'Aubisson, Colonel Francisco del Cid Diaz; Colombia: General Luis Alfonso Zapata Uribe, General Rafael Samudio Molina; Guatemala: General Efraín Ríos Montt; and Panama: General Manuel Noriega.

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