History

The School of the Americas (SOA) is a combat training school for Latin American soldiers, located at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 2001 renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC).

It was initially established in Panama in 1946 however it was expelled from Panama in 1984 under the terms of the Panama Canal Treaty (article iv) and reinforced under the Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal (article v).

Former Panamanian President, Jorge Illueca, stated that the School of the Americas was the “biggest base for destabilization in Latin America.” The SOA have left a trail of blood and suffering in every country where its graduates have returned. For this reason the School of the Americas has been historically dubbed the “School of Assassins”.

Since 1946, the SOA has trained over 64,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, military intelligence and interrogation tactics. These graduates have consistently used their skills to wage a war against their own people. Among those targeted by SOA graduates are educators, union organizers, religious workers, student leaders, and others who work for the rights of the poor. Hundreds of thousands of Latin Americans have been tortured, raped, assassinated, “disappeared,” massacred, and forced into refugee by those trained at the School of Assassins.

SOA Changes its Name to Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

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