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SOA Watch is an independent organization that seeks to close the US Army School of the Americas, under whatever name it is called, through vigils and fasts, demonstrations and nonviolent protest, as well as media and legislative work.

On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests, their co-worker and her teenage daughter were massacred in El Salvador. A U.S. Congressional Task Force reported that those responsible were trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

In 1990 SOA Watch began in a tiny apartment outside the main gate of Ft. Benning. While starting with a small group, SOA Watch quickly drew upon the knowledge and experience of many in the U.S. who had worked with the people of Latin America in the 1970's and 80's.



Today, the SOA Watch movement is a large, diverse, grassroots movement rooted in solidarity with the people of Latin America. The goal of SOA Watch is to close the SOA and to change U.S. foreign policy in Latin America by educating the public, lobbying Congress and participating in creative, nonviolent resistance. The Pentagon has responded to the growing movement and Congress' near closure of the SOA with a PR campaign to give the SOA a new image. In an attempt to disassociate the school with its horrific past, the SOA was renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in January of 2001.

[Read more about the history of the SOA Watch movement .](#)

Mission Statement

SOA Watch is a nonviolent grassroots movement that works to stand in solidarity with the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, to close the SOA/WHINSEC and to change oppressive U.S. foreign policy that the SOA represents. We are grateful to our sisters and brothers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean for their inspiration and the invitation to join them in their struggle for economic and social justice.

Staff Collective

The [staff collective](#) works out of Chile, the United States, and Venezuela. We currently also have two SOA Watch activantes on the ground in [Honduras](#). The SOA Watch national office is located in Washington, DC.

SOA Watch Structure

Read more about [SOA Watch structure](#) and how you can get more involved. Go directly to the [working groups](#) page, or find a [local SOA Watch group](#) in your community.

Read more about the [SOA Watch Council](#), the national decision-making body of SOA Watch.

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Crowd photo by Linda Panetta, November 2003