

SOA WATCH STATEMENT
on
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
January 22, 2003

Introduction

We of SOA Watch have long claimed that the foreign military training school located at Fort Benning, Georgia, for Latin American soldiers should be closed down. Our claims have been thoroughly researched and corroborated by the renowned independent human rights organization, Amnesty International USA.

First

The Amnesty International investigative report is titled ***UNMATCHED POWER, UNMET PRINCIPLES: The Human Rights Dimensions of US Training of Foreign Military and Police Forces***. The US military claims that the School of the Americas (SOA) has been closed and that the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) is an entirely new institution. However, the AI report specifically states:

*"...WHINSEC is essentially the same school as the SOA,
with the same primary mission—
conveying military skills to members of Latin American armed forces."*

Second

The AI report recommends that the US government take immediate steps to **establish an independent commission** to:

1. **investigate past activities** of the SOA and its graduates;
2. **suspend training at the WHINSEC**, pending findings of this inquiry; and
3. **recommend appropriate reparations** for any violations of human rights to which training at the SOA contributed, including **criminal prosecutions, redress for victims and their families, and a public apology**.

We of SOA Watch support congressional legislation to close WHINSEC and to establish an independent commission to investigate past atrocities committed by graduates of the SOA.

Third

The AI report recommends increased transparency, accountability and more oversight for the training of foreign militaries.

We of SOA Watch demand that the Department of Defense annually provide the US Congress and the general public, specific reports tracking applicants and graduates of WHINSEC.

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| <p>Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles: The Human Rights Dimensions of US Training of Foreign Military and Police Forces. Amnesty International USA, 2002. http://www.amnestyusa.org/arms_trade/</p> |
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