

UPSIDE DOWN WORLD



“If the world is upside down the way it is now, wouldn't we have to turn it over to get it to stand up straight?”

– Eduardo Galeano

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LETTER TO READERS

Leaked U.S. Embassy Cables Document Efforts to Counter SOA Watch

🕒 March 15, 2011 👤 Lisa Sullivan, SOA Watch 📁 News Briefs 💬 0



WikiLeaks, the whistle-blower website that has published thousands of classified diplomatic cables, has posted two cables from the U.S. embassy in Costa Rica, that offer insight into the U.S. pressure tactics to keep the SOA/ WHINSEC in business.

Read the cables here:

Upside Down World Says Goodbye, For Now



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Cable 1:

<http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/11/07SANJOSE1999.html>

Cable

2:<http://213.251.145.96/cable/2007/12/07SANJOSE2073.html>

A message from Lisa Sullivan:

When we join together as small grassroots groups from around the Americas to resist militarization and promote a culture of peace we are, quite simply, very powerful. So much so, that the world's largest military giant not only takes notice, but sometimes has to scramble to keep up as we take the lead.

Just days ago, Wikileaks revealed cables from the US embassy in Costa Rica that unveil an all-out six-month campaign by the embassy, in conjunction with the Pentagon's Southcom and SOA/WHINSEC to subvert one of SOA Watch's major strategies: the appeal to governments to withdraw their troops and police from SOA/WHINSEC.

Specifically, the target was the government of Costa Rica and their decision to withdraw from the SOA in 2007. Coming on the heels of similar announcements by the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay and Venezuela, this announcement by President Oscar Arias, a Nobel Peace Laureate, was too much for the Pentagon to ignore.

Arias's announcement was the result of a meeting with Fr. Roy Bourgeois and myself, along with members of the Costa Rican Quaker Peace Center who had arranged the meeting. The cable describes our meeting as *"the Problem."* Arias' decision stunned officials, as the cable indicates.

These three entities worked together for six months, together with Costa Rica's Security Minister Fernando Berrocal, who they lobbied with ample resources, to find what they called *"the Solution."* **U.S. ambassador Langdale was tasked with informing Arias that his decision would result in a loss of \$1.2 million in cooperation agreements.** Not wanting his image as international peacemaker to be tarnished, Arias finally bowed to six months of pressure from the U.S. and agreed to allow Costa Rican police to return to SOA/WHINSEC, but under the condition that Berrocal take responsibility for the decision and that no public announcements by Arias be made. The cable made it clear that they feared a major SOA Watch-led pressure campaign against Arias if the overturn of his decision were made public.

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I will always remember how he Arias' eyes watered when I spontaneously jumped up to hug him – breaking protocol – upon hearing his consent to our proposal to withdraw from the SOA. I thanked him *“in the name of the tens of thousands who had lost their lives because of this school.”* It was clear that this was a decision that touched the fibers of his commitment to peace. It is shameful that the U.S. government enlisted so many people and funds to appeal to his lesser interests to change his mind.

However, *our* minds will not be changed nor our direction detoured. We are clear that *the real problem* continues to be militarization and *the real solution* is to work together for justice and peace. In just a few weeks Father Roy and I will continue our journey to meet with our Latin American partners to find ways to work together to close this School of Assassins and resist other forms of US militarization. We will be visiting **Honduras from April 30 to May 9**, to bring the solidarity of the SOA Watch movement to the Honduran Resistance that is struggling to return dignity to a country ravaged by an SOA-led coup. **We invite you to consider joining us.**

And, if Honduras is too far to travel, please consider joining Father Roy and I in **Washington, DC from April 4-11, 2011 for the Days of Action** to take our demands to the White House, the halls of Congress, and other places where military and foreign policy decisions are made. The mobilization will include a **7-day-fast**, an Anti-Militarization **conference**, a march to the White House, **nonviolent direct action**, a concert, **lobbying** and more. Visit **www.SOAW.org** for more information.

Somos Una America! Working together as one America to resist militarization and promote a culture of peace, we are powerful and we will be heard.



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