

From CAFTA to the ILEA

HOW US ECONOMIC POLICY IS DRIVING REPRESSION AND MILITARIZATION IN EL SALVADOR... AND THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA

Fact Sheet on the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) from the Committee in Solidarity with the people of El Salvador - for more information, see www.cispes.org/ilea



The Battle over CAFTA brings increased repression and militarization in Central America



❖ The Bush Administration managed to pass the US-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) by just 2 votes in Congress in July of 2005. Opposition in Central America and by grassroots groups and labor unions in the US nearly spelled doom for the US trade agenda, and led to the closest trade vote ever in Congress. **Still, the implementation of CAFTA has proved divisive and contradictory, as the US pushes for further concessions from the Central American countries.** Despite CAFTA having passed in four Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, the resistance to the implementation continues, with large street protests throughout the region.

❖ The Bush Administration and the Central American elites were so determined to ratify CAFTA that they turned to repression targeting social movement organizations that opposed the agreement. **Anti-CAFTA protests were met with police violence in El Salvador leading up to the vote in 2004, and CAFTA was only able to pass after the National Assembly was surrounded by riot police.** In Guatemala, 2 protesters were killed in April 2005 during anti-CAFTA protests, while the Honduran government also used riot police to keep back thousands of protesters before the vote there.



❖ **Since CAFTA was first proposed in Central America, US military training and aid to the region has increased dramatically,** and El Salvador tops the list of recipients of U.S. military aid, with almost \$23 million since CAFTA negotiations were announced in 2002. This certainly is not surprising given that El Salvador is one of the Bush administration's few remaining allies with troops in Iraq, and Washington has also sought to draw a parallel between El Salvador's transition to "democracy" and that of Iraq.

❖ El Salvador is already the second largest recipient of military training in Latin America, and purchased a total of \$46.8 million in weapons between 2000 and 2003. **El Salvador also is host of a US military base at the Comalapa airport, and in the early part of 2005 an FBI office was opened in San Salvador.** Such blatant intervention hasn't been seen since El Salvador's civil war, during which Washington contributed \$1.5 million a day in military and economic aid over 12 years to support the brutal counter-insurgency.



Amidst Increased Repression, The United States introduces new SOA to El Salvador: the ILEA
**** for more information about the ILEA and how to take action to stop it, see the reverse side ****



Amidst Increased Repression, The United States introduces a new SOA: the ILEA

❖ In June of 2005 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced before the Organization of American States (OAS) the opening of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador. **Salvadoran social movement organizations immediately denounced the project as a "new School of the Americas" or SOA**, the US military academy where Salvadoran officers were taught techniques of torture and repression during the civil war.

❖ The ILEA could enroll as many as 1500 students a year, more than the current manifestation of the SOA (the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation.) Backers of the ILEA promise that only civilians would be trained there, but in fact **the text of the agreement leaves open the possibility of military training.**

❖ The US government has long sought a home for the ILEA South. After being thwarted in Panama and Costa Rica, the US turned to El Salvador, one of its closest allies in Latin America. Through the State Department's Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) **the ILEA would be managed largely by functionaries from the US, and its curriculum designed by US officials.**

The State Department says the ILEA will "enhance the functioning of free markets ... and increase social, political, and economic stability by combating crime." Salvadorans say it will be used to consolidate the tactics of repression and human rights abuse already being practiced by the police.



❖ There are four other ILEAs worldwide, and the mission of the police academies is allegedly to strengthen transnational security cooperation. The State Department's statement of purpose says that the ILEAs serve to "enhance the functioning of free markets through improved legislation and law enforcement; and increase social, political, and economic stability by combating narcotics trafficking and crime." Salvadorans worry that such justifications will be used to consolidate the tactics of repression and human rights abuse already being practiced by the police, especially since the "war on terrorism" is often being cited as a justification for profiling activists and cracking down on peaceful protests.

❖ The text of the ILEA passed the Salvadoran Assembly in late 2005 with minimal debate and despite the opposition of the FMLN and other parties in the Assembly. **The US Congress must now approve funding for the ILEA in order for it to be built.**

The Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) is working with groups in El Salvador to develop a campaign to stop the ILEA by pressuring the US Congress to not fund this new SOA. Join us! To find out more information, go to www.cispes.org/ilea or call your Congressional Representative and tell her/him:

"NO ILEA IN EL SALVADOR!"



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