

mala and its history.

Anaheim Unitarian Church, welcoming a severely wounded child from Iraq together with her father and Iraq war veterans.

Fairness and Accuracy in Media, panel on current events.

Recent guests on WORLD FOCUS: Mike Wilken, Amado Albanez, Chief Teodoro Cuero of the Cumiai, Jim Wallis, Melissa Hill, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Marjorie Cohn, Yael Berda, Edward Herman, Charles Kernaghan, Medea Benjamin, Michael Mandel, Claudia Samayoa, Michael Ratner, Bert Sachs, Claude Anshin Thomas, Andrew Schmookler, Rev. Alex Awad, John Choe, George Monbiot, Rahul Mahajan, Jodie Evans, Laura Carlson, Father Roy Bourgeois, Rabbi Arik Ascherman.

Transcripts of our weekly commentaries on Pacifica Radio News are available by calling 323/852-9808.

Our weekly radio program WORLD FOCUS can be heard locally at 10:00 AM, Sundays on KPFK, 90.7 FM and on 98.7 in Santa Barbara. Complete CD copies can be obtained from the Pacifica Archives: 800/735-0230. Audio of WORLD FOCUS is also available on our website: <[www.officeoftheamericas.org](http://www.officeoftheamericas.org)>

## Thanks for Your Support

As we begin 2005, the Office of the Americas is profoundly grateful to you for twenty-one years of sustaining our work. 2004 was a particularly difficult year for OOA as political campaigns greatly diminished our donor support. Even after our most successful fundraising event ever, we are still close to red ink. Any additional assistance you can give at this time would be deeply appreciated. We have only two fundraising events a year, and the rest of our income has always been from you, our loyal supporters. Receiving no grants, we are proud of the fact that we are entirely membership funded.

## Help Needed

OOA is looking for a venue for its 22nd Anniversary Event. We need a main hall for 500-600 people, a dining area for 150-200 people, as well as parking. If you have any suggestions, please let us know: e-mail to: [ood@igc.org](mailto:ood@igc.org) write to: Office of the Americas 8124 West Third St. #202 LA, CA 90048 telephone us:323-852-9808 fax us:323-852-0655 Many thanks!

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OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS

# FOCUS: Peace Now!

OfficeOfTheAmericas.org

## RAYS OF HOPE

### Latin America Brings Hope to the United States

Over three decades ago Theresa and I heard a song. She was in Southern Chile and I was in Guatemala. The song was "GUANTANAMERA." The words written by Jose Marti touched us both. "Con los pobres de la tierra quiero yo mi suerte echar." (With the poor of the earth I want to throw in my luck.) This is the definition of revolution. When we throw in our luck with the poor of the earth, the revolution is at hand.

We finally met each other for the first time here in Los Angeles. Our hope was to carry out the message of Jose Marti in his poem "Guantanamera."

Twenty-one years ago we found that our home was uninhabitable because it also became our headquarters. Theresa determined that we must incorporate into The Office of the Americas. We placed ourselves into your hands and you have sustained this venture for justice and peace ever since.

What we have witnessed in the past twenty-one years is beyond belief. And now we look to Latin America to give hope to the despondent people of the United States. Truly it is the weak things of the earth that confound the strong.

### VENEZUELA

Recently Venezuela overcame a coup directed by the United States and returned its president to power within twenty-four hours. When a recall election was demanded by Hugo Chavez's opponents, voting machines were used which gave a hard copy receipt, a paper trail for each ballot. Is there a message here? Such machines are still for sale. There is hope in Venezuela

and they would like to share it with the United States. Twenty out of twenty-two governorships in Venezuela support Chavez.

### BOLIVIA

In Bolivia we saw the poorest and best organized country in Latin America respond to Bechtel's attempt to privatize the water. Bolivia sent Bechtel back to San Francisco. Later, when the same interests came back to Bolivia to attempt to privatize the natural gas at a time when Bolivians had no access to their own natural gas, the people threw out their president. Is there a message here? They were unarmed. What a lesson for the non-violent militant struggle for justice. The armed struggle had been romanticized in Latin America. It is romanticized no longer.

### ECUADOR

I cannot forget the militant indigenous people of Riobama and throughout the small country of Ecuador. These resurrected indigenous people have thrown out two presidents in as many years. Is there a message here? The weak things of the earth will confound the strong. Militant non-violence has found its place.

### BRAZIL

Brazil, which was formerly ruled by the iron fist of the generals, has elected its chief spokesperson for labor and peasant rights, Lula. Listen to the music. Can you hear it? Lula's Worker's Party received the most votes in recent elections and now governs more cities than any other party, including nine state capitals.

### URUGUAY

170 years of oligarchic rule ended in Uruguay with the election of Tabare Vazquez. The two conserva-

tive parties, similar to our Republicans and Democrats, could not stem the poverty, inequality and corruption. Uruguay pulled together its formerly armed rebels and its liberals into a political movement and now has its first progressive government.

### ARGENTINA

Argentina, bankrupted by the World Trade Organization, has directed its attention to self determination. The absolute failure of the neoliberal economic model in Argentina and throughout the Americas elsewhere was the trigger for this hemispheric turn to progressive politics.

### CHILE

Chilean President Ricardo Lago's progressive coalition is leading voters to elect a forward looking president in the 2005 elections. Chile has indicted its former Nazi dictator who was placed in power by the likes of Henry Kissinger and has restored its previously peaceful history. George W. Bush was greeted by thousands of Chileans protesting his trade and military policies and telling him to go home.

### CENTRAL AMERICA

And what shall we say of Central America? The United States poured billions of dollars and troops into a war designed to destroy the FMLN of El Salvador, the FSLN of Nicaragua, and the URNG of Guatemala. Those wasted billions for arms, mercenaries and massacres were part of an illegal plan with the Ayatollah Khoemenei of Iran. Yes, we illegally sold him arms in order to illegally support an illegal army. Now everything has been uncovered. What did these policies achieve? Simply death and destruction. The policies failed on every



OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS

## Become an Office of the Americas Sustainer or Member

All contributions are tax-deductible  
Members receive OOA's quarterly newsletter and the satisfaction of being part of an international movement for peace and justice. Sustainers receive monthly mailings of OOA issues, activities and special events.

### Sustainers

- I pledge: \$\_\_\_\_\_ each  month  quarter  year  other \_\_\_\_\_ for OOA's work.
- Enclosed is my first pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_  Please charge my first pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to my
- Visa  Mastercard Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

### Members

Enclosed is my membership contribution:

- Founder \$1,000  Patron \$500  Sponsor \$500  Donor \$200  Friend \$100
- Family \$35  Individual \$25  Limited income \$10
- Please send me information on your volunteer program.  Please remove me from your mailing list.
- I would like an OOA speaker for a house/church/organization meeting.
- I would like to receive OOA's weekly email calendar.
- Please send me a copy of Blase Bonpane's new book, *Common Sense for the Twenty-First Century* @ 16.95
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Note: FAX and e-mail addresses are assurances that you will receive more notices of special events.

front. The policy failed in Vietnam. The policy failed in Nicaragua. The FSLN is the major political power in Nicaragua today and has elected officials in practically every municipality in the country. Former President Aleman is now serving a twenty year sentence for corruption. Is there a lesson here?

And what did we gain in El Salvador? The FSLN has been duly elected both in major population centers and in the countryside.

And what did we gain in Guatemala by supporting one of the world's most abusive armies? We gained nothing. The URNG rebels are currently a vital and non-violent political movement in Guatemala. Peace accords in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala were negotiated by the United Nations, not the United States. Had it not been for the United Nations, our country would probably still be militarily engaged in Central America.

## MEXICO

We were present at the very beginning of the Zapatista Revolution in Mexico in January of 1994 and later to observe the peace talks at San Andres Larrainzar where Bishop Samuel Ruiz served as mediator between the Zapatistas and the Mexican government. Zapatistas have used their weapons principally as a prop. They have not fired a shot since the cease fire of January 1994. The weapons are more of a statement, echoing the words of John Kennedy, "Those who make non-violent change impossible make violent change inevitable." We cannot say the same for the Mexican army and its murderous paramilitary adjuncts which have served as a force of oppression throughout Chiapas. We were present in the wake of the Acteal massacre and privileged to cover the war zones of Chiapas together with Bishop Ruiz. The Zapatistas have made revolutionary history by not seeking state power. What they are doing is demonstrating governance from the base of society,

what is rightfully called democracy.

## CUBA

The Cuban revolution has been in process for over 50 years (July 26, 1953). Whatever criticisms are directed at Cuba must be seen in the face of ongoing acts of war against that country by the United States for over forty years. What cannot be denied are Cuba's amazing achievements in health care, education and international service. United Nations data credits Cuba with health care delivery that leads the hemisphere. Education on all levels is free. Latin America looks with admiration on this nation which has produced a constitutional right to health care and education. We have the hope of seeing similar rights here at home.

## HAITI

Is the work complete? Of course not. We have witnessed continued crimes against Haiti. That tortured people chose exactly the president they wanted in two landslide elections. No Electoral College and no Diebold Machines. And we saw the people's choice murderously smashed twice with U.S. direction and support. Haiti's best hope, Jean Bertrand Aristide is now in exile in South Africa. Our compliant, obedient and servile media says that Jean Bertrand Aristide fled Haiti. He did not. He was kidnapped and initially dropped in Central Africa. Thanks to Congresswoman Maxine Waters and the Congressional Black Caucus for their denunciation of the fraudulent government imposed on Haiti. Jean Bertrand Aristide abolished the army of Haiti just as Pepe Figueres abolished the military of Costa Rica in 1948. Once the army was gone, Costa Rica developed one of the best medical and educational programs in the Americas. The United States maintains its control of Latin America by way of its control of Latin American armies. This includes our training at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. How can we control these nations if they don't have armies designed to oppress their own people?

**Getting duplicate mailings? Misspelled name or address? Please let us know so we can update our records.**

## COLOMBIA

Colombia remains as an ongoing disaster. After visiting the war zones there, we returned to Bogotá to have a meeting with the representative of the United Nations. Our "leaders" still refer to the United Nations as irrelevant. The UN is so irrelevant that it brought peace to Guatemala, El Salvador and many other lands. It is so irrelevant that it is willing to negotiate a peace in Colombia. We were stunned when the UN director in Bogotá told us that they would love to negotiate a peace in Colombia but that would depend on the president of the United States. This is not the way the UN is structured but it represents the real politics of the situation. Our country remains an obstacle to peace by way of its unilateral attempt to control the world.

## IRAQ

One evening back in January of 1991 we returned from Babylon to Baghdad and were ushered into a small dinner gathering with Yasser Arafat. We spent some five hours in conversation with him as he described the lose...lose situation that was unfolding. "I can talk to anyone in the Arab world," said Arafat, "but your country will not even speak to me and will not let me attempt to negotiate a peace." Strange isn't it, Rumsfeld was talking to Saddam Hussein but no one was allowed to talk to Arafat. We only talk to nice people?

As our delegation left Iraq, eighty-eight thousand tons of bombs followed. This criminality has continued for fourteen years. By way of sanctions, Clinton presided over more deaths in Iraq than young George Bush has. Neither the sanctions nor the daily war crimes of today are acceptable. We must seek a Richard Nixon solution. Nixon won by a landslide in his second term and after that great electoral victory he had to resign from the presidency. We must urge our current head of state to do the

same, Noblesse Oblige. The Bolivians did not have to impeach their president, they shouted him out. The Ecuadorians did not have to impeach two of their presidents, they shouted them out. Whether by impeachment or by our absolute non-cooperation, Bush must leave office. The weak things of the earth will confound the strong. And war crimes continue at this moment throughout Iraq.

Napoleon said, "There are no bad soldiers, there are only bad officers." That might not be entirely correct, but our commander in chief has proven himself to be immovable in his malicious cunning and indiscriminate violence. We must work together to seek his retirement and to take all of his counterproductive appointees with him. A disheartened populace in the United States can keep hope alive by following the trends in Latin America.

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## Here are some contacts to make our hopes a reality:

As we reflect on the achievements of the people throughout Latin America together with overwhelming obstacles, what can we in the U.S. hope for? By sharing in this movement we are part of the largest effort our country and the rest of the world has ever made for enduring justice and peace.

Some organizations are listed here. We hope you will visit these web sites and become involved with your time, energy and funds. As Joe Hill said, "Don't mourn, organize!" That is our hope.

## \*\* A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition Act Now to Stop War & End Racism

Answer is a national coalition of hundreds organizations which have campaigned against United States intervention in Latin America the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia as well as for social and economic justice for working people domestically. Since September 11, 2001, Answer has been responsible for some of the most successful demonstrations.

For a list of upcoming vigils, demonstrations, or volunteer and internship opportunities, visit [www.answerla.org](http://www.answerla.org) or call 323-464-1636.

Los Angeles ANSWER Coalition  
1800 N. Argyle Ave., #410  
Los Angeles CA 90028

## \*\* CAMS (Coalition Against Militarism in Our Schools)

Cams brings together teachers and war veterans to speak against the misleading military recruitment efforts in our schools.

[www.militaryfreeschools.org](http://www.militaryfreeschools.org) or call 626-799-9118.

## \*\* United for Peace and Justice

United for Peace and Justice is a coalition of more than 800 local and national groups opposing our government's policy of permanent warfare and empire building.

[www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org), or call them at (212)868-5545. You can also reach them by mail, PO Box 607 Times Square Station NY, NY 10108.

## \*\* Military Families Speak Out

Military Families Speak Out is an organization of people who are opposed to the war in Iraq and who have relatives or loved ones in the military. Members both in and out of the military have made some of the strongest statements against the Iraq War.

[www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)

## \*\* Code Pink

Code Pink is a women's organization (not excluding men) that has made some of the most dramatic and creative non-violent actions against the war in Iraq. They recently brought hundreds of thousands of dollar of aid to Iraq with the Families for Peace Delegation. They were joined by parents of our troops killed in Iraq.

[www.codepinkalert.org](http://www.codepinkalert.org)

## \*\* Voices in the Wilderness

Voices in the Wilderness is a heroic group of people who have maintained a presence in the war zones of Iraq throughout the horror of the sanctions during the Clinton Administration and into the current Iraq war.

[www.vitm.org](http://www.vitm.org)

773-784-8065  
1460 West Carmen Avenue,  
Chicago, IL 60640

## \*\* School of the Americas Watch

School of the Americas Watch has focused world wide attention on the training given to international troops at Ft. Benning, Georgia including torture techniques and assassination. As a result of the pressure, the school changed its name to The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation without changing its curriculum. Up to 16,000 people appear at the gates of Fort Benning every year to demand its closure. School of the Americas Watch is supporting House Resolution 1258 to close this disgraceful place of training.

[www.SOAW.org](http://www.SOAW.org)

## \*\* And don't miss: [www.officeoftheamericas.org](http://www.officeoftheamericas.org)

## OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

OOA welcomed Kathy Kelly, director of Voices in the Wilderness, who came to Dolores Mission, East Los Angeles to explain her peacemaking work in Iraq.

UCLA, presentation on Nicaragua and its history.

Immanuel Presbyterian, preside over a Southern California gathering on the peace movement in the post-election period.

San Diego Coalition for Justice and Peace, keynote address.

Twenty-First Anniversary of Office of the Americas honoring Edward Asner, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and Ramona Ripston.

California State University Northridge, presentation to members of the campus peace coalition on uniting forces in the aftermath of the election of 2004.

Alliance for Democracy, presentation on, "Where do we go from here."

In depth interview on the work of the Office of the Americas by Spanish TV.

Glendale College, on communication and dialogue with opposing forces.

UCLA, presentation on Guate-

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