

LEGISLATION TO CLOSE THE U.S. ARMY SCHOOL
OF THE AMERICAS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to close the U.S. Army School of the Americas. The school is the Army's Spanish language training facility for Latin American personnel. It is located in Fort Benning, GA. The school is a relic of the cold war with a terrible legacy of teaching torture and assassination. It deserves to be closed for what it has taught in the past, what it stands for in Latin American democracies today, and what its counterinsurgency training at such a tainted institution may create in the future.

This school was formed after World War II. Its mission, starting in the 1960s, was to fight Communist insurgencies in Latin America. To do this, instruction manuals used at the school from 1982 to 1991 recommended execution, torture, and blackmail of insurgents. These manuals at the U.S. Army School of the Americas advocated that Latin American militaries spy on and infiltrate civic organizations such as opposition political parties, community organizations, and unions. They fundamentally confused what constitutes armed insurgency with genuine civic opposition. To the Latin American dictators of the time, insurgents were anybody who did not agree with them, leading to a virtual war against civilians, religious leaders, and Native Americans.

The Chicago Tribune recently wrote an editorial noting the fact that there would likely be very few reunions of the graduates of the Army School of the Americas. It is not surprising when you take a look at the list of the graduates of this U.S. Army School of the Americas and consider that it contains a list of some of the worst human rights abusers in recent Latin American history.

Let me be specific: 19 Salvadoran soldiers linked to the murder of 6 Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter in El Salvador in 1989. Among the other graduates of the School of the Americas: 48 of 69 Salvadoran military members cited at the United Nations Truth Commission report on El Salvador for involvement in human rights violations. The list goes on: Former Panamanian dictator and convicted drug dealer Manuel Noriega and nine other Latin American military dictators; El Salvador death squad leader Roberto D'Aubuisson; two of the three killers of Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador.

I continue reading the list of graduates from the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA: Mexican General Juan Lopez Ortiz, whose troops committed the Ocosingo massacre in Chiapas in 1994; Guatemalan Colonel Julio Alpirez, linked to the murder of U.S. citizen Michael Devine in 1990, and Efrain Bamaca, husband of Jennifer Harbury in 1992; 124 of the 247—more than half—Colombian military officials accused of human rights

violations in the 1992 work "State Terrorism in Colombia," compiled by a large coalition of European and Colombian nongovernmental organizations; 2 of the 3 officers prosecuted by Guatemala for masterminding the killing of anthropologist Myrna MACK in 1992, as well as several leaders of the notorious Guatemalan military unit D-2.

I continue to read the list of graduates of the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA: Argentinian dictator Leopoldo Galtieri, a leader of the so-called "dirty war," during which some 30,000 civilians were killed or "disappeared;" Haitian Colonel Gambetta Hyppolite, who ordered his soldiers to fire on a provincial electoral bureau in 1987; several Peruvian military officers linked to the July 1992 killings of 9 students and a professor from La Cantuta University.

I read on from the list of graduates of the U.S. Army School of the Americas, Fort Benning, GA: Several Honduran officers linked to a clandestine military force known as Battalion 316 responsible for disappearances in the 1980s; 10 of the 12 officers responsible for the murder of 900 civilians in the El Salvadoran village of El Mozote; and, finally, 3 of the 5 officers involved in the 1980 rape and murder of 4 U.S. churchwomen in El Salvador. These are all graduates of the U.S. Army School of the Americas, Fort Benning, GA.

This school is not a victim of a few isolated incidents of wrongdoing by its graduates. This list shows that human rights violations are endemic among its graduates, with far in excess of 200 murders and other human rights violations by its past roll of honor graduates.

Can the School of the Americas claim innocence in the actions of its graduates? Many do not think it is possible. For example, just a few months ago the Guatemalan Truth Commission Report faulted the school's counterinsurgency training as having "had a significant impact on the human rights violations during the armed conflict," a conflict that killed 200,000 people.

How, in the name of humanity or democracy, can the people of America allow this school to remain open? How can we sanction the legacy perpetuated by its name today? The Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s have given way to democracy, some fragile, some strong. But to the people of these countries, the continued existence of the Army School of the Americas perpetuates the unfortunate link between the United States and the perpetrators of the heinous crimes I have just listed. The school should be closed to send a powerful signal to democratic countries of Latin America that America repudiates the terror, the torture, and the murder carried out against civilian populations by Central and South American military forces run amok.

I am not proposing that we hold this U.S. foreign military program accountable for the actions attributed to the graduates. We know from experience

that people can be brutal with or without training. But neither can we deny the links of those human rights abusers to the School of the Americas. Just a few of those examples should have been enough for us to quickly close that school in shame.

In the post-cold-war era, it is more important than ever for the United States to promote democratic values and human rights in developing countries and to reject militaries that view their own countries' citizens as the enemy.

The Pentagon will tell you that the Army has tried to make changes at the school by updating the curriculum to include discussions of human rights and by approving the selection process for students and the quality of the teaching staff. I do not doubt that some changes have been made, but I am not confident that these changes are enough or could ever be enough at a facility with such a sorry history.

To be sure the continuing counterinsurgency training will not lead to future abuses against legitimate civic opposition, we must close this school. The U.S. Army School of the Americas is trying to sell itself with a new mission—certainly a topical mission—counternarcotics training. But the Chicago Tribune in an April 16 editorial addressed this assertion of a new mission directly:

Attempts to recast the school as an anti-narcotics center are so much hokum. Little in the curriculum is related to drug interdiction, and it is not at all clear that the U.S. Army is qualified to impart such instruction or that training the notoriously meddlesome Latin militaries to get involved in civilian law enforcement is advisable.

Most importantly, cosmetic changes in the curriculum cannot salvage the savage reputation of this school's graduates or erase the U.S. Army School of the Americas' bloody and embarrassing legacy. We offer plenty of other training opportunities for Latin American military personnel. We do not need this school, Latin America's fragile democracies do not need it, and it should be closed.

Last weekend it was my privilege to be part of a delegation sent by the leadership in Congress to go to Germany, Italy, Albania, Macedonia, and Belgium. During that visit, we met many of America's finest men and women in uniform who are literally doing their duty for this country, fighting to protect democracy and to accomplish the mission that has been assigned to them. I was so proud to be there and greet those from Illinois and from around the country and to thank them for the job they are doing for this country.

What I am about today is no reflection on them. In fact, I suggest to the leaders in the Pentagon, in the name of the men and women currently in uniform, to make certain that they don't

have to answer the troubling questions about the existence of this School of the Americas, it should be closed forthwith.

If there are those who want to come forward and suggest there are some missions at the school that can be transferred to another place, entirely peaceful, entirely constructive, entirely defensible, I will listen to that and I am open to it. But, please, once and for all let us close this sorry, sad chapter at the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 38

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 38, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to phase out the estate and gift taxes over a 10-year period.

S. 59

At the request of Mr. THOMPSON, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 59, a bill to provide Government-wide accounting of regulatory costs and benefits, and for other purposes.

S. 72

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 72, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to restore the eligibility of veterans for benefits resulting from injury or disease attributable to the use of tobacco products during a period of military service, and for other purposes.

S. 247

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 247, a bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to reform the copyright law with respect to satellite retransmissions of broadcast signals, and for other purposes.

S. 344

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. GRAMS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 344, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a safe harbor for determining that certain individuals are not employees.

S. 345

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 345, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to remove the limitation that permits interstate movement of live birds, for the purpose of fighting, to States in which animal fighting is lawful.

S. 434

At the request of Mr. BREAUX, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 434, a bill to amend the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986 to simplify the method of payment of taxes on distilled spirits.

S. 472

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 472, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide certain medicare beneficiaries with an exemption to the financial limitations imposed on physical, speech-language pathology, and occupational therapy services under part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 556

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 556, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes.

S. 638

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. HOLLINGS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 638, a bill to provide for the establishment of a School Security Technology Center and to authorize grants for local school security programs, and for other purposes.

S. 662

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) were added as cosponsors of S. 662, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical assistance for certain women screened and found to have breast or cervical cancer under a federally funded screening program.

S. 712

At the request of Mr. LOTT, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 712, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to allow postal patrons to contribute to funding for highway-rail grade crossing safety through the voluntary purchase of certain specially issued United States postage stamps.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. HELMS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to promote the development of a government in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) based on democratic principles and the rule of law, and that respects internationally recognized human rights, to assist the victims of Serbian oppression, to apply measures against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and for other purposes.

S. 738

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. KERREY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as co-

sponsors of S. 738, a bill to assure that innocent users and businesses gain access to solutions to the year 2000 problem-related failures through fostering an incentive to settle year 2000 lawsuits that may disrupt significant sectors of the American economy.

S. 796

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, a bill to provide for full parity with respect to health insurance coverage for certain severe biologically-based mental illnesses and to prohibit limits on the number of mental illness-related hospital days and outpatient visits that are covered for all mental illnesses.

At the request of Mr. WELLSTONE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 796, supra.

S. 801

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRIGELLI) were added as cosponsors of S. 801, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce the tax on beer to its pre-1991 level.

S. 815

At the request of Mr. ROTH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. WELLSTONE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 815, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the credit for producing electricity from certain renewable resources.

S. 835

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 835, a bill to encourage the restoration of estuary habitat through more efficient project financing and enhanced coordination of Federal and non-Federal restoration programs, and for other purposes.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. GRAMS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of Senate Joint Resolution 21, a joint resolution to designate September 29, 1999, as "Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Day."

SENATE RESOLUTION 29

At the request of Mr. ROBB, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. WELLSTONE) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of Senate Resolution 29, a resolution to designate the week of May 2, 1999, as "National Correctional Officers and Employees Week."

SENATE RESOLUTION 59

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 59, a bill designating both July 2, 1999, and July 2, 2000, as "National Literacy Day."