NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Reading the record at SOA

Tom Roberts | Jun. 25, 2009 NCR Today

According to an article posted on the Council on Hemispheric Affairs [1]Web site, Congress is scheduled to vote today on an amendment to the Defense Authorization Act that would require the former School of the Americas (renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation) to release to the public the names, ranks, countries of origin, courses taken and dates of attendance of all the students and instructors at the institute.

The location of the School of the Americas/WHINSEC at Fort Benning, Ga., has become a symbol of the already well documented trail of Latin American military officials and troops who committed atrocities against civilians over several decades in places such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Argentina, Colombia and elsewhere.

Much of the abuse began in the same era -- the Eisenhower administration -- when we saw fit to overthrow, in succession, the democratically elected governments of Iran and Guatemala. Combating communism was the justification at the time. As we know looking back, enormous troubles and considerable torture, death and other human rights violations resulted from such actions.

There is much to be accountable for in our own hemisphere. What happened throughout Latin America did not occur all on its own and separate from U.S. interests and considerable influence. Reading the record at the School of the Americas would be a good first step toward filling out the truth of what happened in this hemisphere in recent history. The hundreds of thousands of innocents who lost their lives to death squads and government campaigns of disappearances and outright massacres deserve no less.

Source URL (retrieved on *05/06/2016 - 06:56*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/reading-record-soa

Links:
[1] http://www.coha.org/2009/06/a-thoroughly-un-american-institution/