

MEDIA RELEASE
DESERT GREENS GREEN PARTY OF UTAH
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**Utah Residents to Join Thousands in Georgia Calling for Closure
of Controversial Training Facility for Latin Americans**

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Greens will join other Human Rights Advocates from around the country to Demand Closure of U.S. Army's School of the Americas

11.12.07-SALT LAKE CITY, UT - This weekend residents of Utah will join thousands from across the nation at Fort Benning, Georgia to demand a dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy and the closure of the controversial U.S. Army's School of the Americas (SOA).

"Despite a shocking human rights record, this school continues to operate with US taxpayer money," said Deanna Taylor, Co-Chair of the Desert Greens Green Party of Utah. "Closing the SOA would send a strong human rights message to Latin America and the world."

The SOA, now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), made headlines in 1996 when the Pentagon released training manuals used at the school that advocated torture, extortion and execution. Despite this admission and hundreds of documented human rights abuses connected to soldiers trained at the school, no independent investigation into the facility has ever taken place.

Support for the SOA/WHINSEC continues to erode. In 2007, Presidents Evo Morales of Bolivia and Oscar Arias of Costa Rica announced that their countries would end all military and police training at the school, becoming the fourth and fifth countries after Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela to announce a cessation of training.

"Shutting down the School of Assassins is a vital part of the overall struggle to reign in rampant militarism," said Tom King, Desert Greens member, who will also travel to Georgia this weekend.

Last November, 22,000 people gathered at the gates of Ft. Benning to call for the closure of the school, the largest demonstration yet in a 16-year history of opposition to the school.

The Green Party of the United States opposes the continued operation of the SOA/WHINSEC and both calls for its immediate closure, and stands in solidarity with people across the Americas to support and endorse the nonviolent direct action proposed by School of the Americas Watch to shut down SOA/WHISCEC. Green Party members from other states including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and South Carolina will also be participating in the event.

MORE INFORMATION

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Desert Greens Green Party of Utah -<http://www.desertgreens.org>

Green Party of the United States -<http://www.gp.org>

Green Party Peace Network -<http://gpuspeace.wordpress.com>