

America's criminal meddling in Central America driving now-permanent forced migrancy crisis

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/americas-criminal-meddling-in-central-america>

- Below: Article by Stephen Schlesinger

President Joe Biden advisor Juan Gonzalez recently said (<https://www.elheraldo.hn/pais/1455947-466/eeuu-dispuesto-trabajar-juan-orlando-hernandez>) of the US relationship with the military-backed, drug-trafficking government of Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez:

"He is the elected president of Honduras. We are going to work with his government, we are going to look for areas of common interest."

Canada, Spain and the EU, the World Bank and IMF will predictably follow in line. There is no end in sight for the suffering and despair of the majority of Hondurans. There is no end in sight to thousands of Hondurans being forced to flee home and country, every year.

America's Forbidding Legacy on the Southern Border

By Stephen Schlesinger, Apr 11, 2021

<https://www.passblue.com/2021/04/11/americas-forbidding-legacy-on-the-southern-border/>

While the United Nations focuses fitfully on its own long string of refugee problems, President Joe Biden has [tapped](#) Vice President Kamala Harris to resolve the problems of migration at the United States-Mexico border.

There are legitimate reasons for Americans to be concerned about the flood of migrants, mostly coming from Central America. But those concerns mainly center on our public policy, not the legitimacy of immigration itself. As a nation, we have failed to revise and update our immigration statutes to appropriately answer the question of whom among the men, women and children fleeing crime, oppression and violence deserve entry into our land and citizenship in our nation. Our border challenges are largely due to our old, inadequate immigration laws.

But another factor is at play — an issue that lies in the darker recesses of our past. That is America's indiscriminate and criminal meddling in Central America over seven-plus decades, long justified under the rubric that the US was simply trying to help Latin regimes thwart "Communist subversion" (and, later on, drug trafficking and terrorism).

Such interventions have been enormously destabilizing to the region, upending politics throughout Central America and rendering countless people poor and disenfranchised.

The truth is in the historical record. Take, for example, one of the most egregious interventions in the region: the [1954 CIA coup in Guatemala](#). There, the US overthrew the democratically elected government of President Jacobo Árbenz on spurious Cold War grounds. Árbenz had implemented an agrarian reform program that attempted to provide acreage to the landless peasants who constituted roughly 80 percent of the country's population. By expanding the country's agricultural production, he aimed to create a new class of farmers and foster a broader middle class.

But his plan threatened to take control of some of the unused banana land that was owned by the United Fruit Company, an American corporation and the largest landowner in the country. That prospect infuriated the company, and, alleging that Soviet-sponsored Communists were about to seize the country, United Fruit convinced their allies in the Eisenhower administration to depose the regime.

Thus, a CIA-led coup was secretly mounted, leading to the downfall of Árbenz and the takeover of the country by a succession of thuggish military dictators — and, more grimly, a brutal civil war that lasted some 36 years and claimed the lives of more than 200,000 people. Today, the country remains a fragile democracy, having never fully recovered from the US attack. The Guatemalan example served as a warning to the rest of Central America: stay at one with the US or else.

Things could have turned out much differently. Had America refrained from ousting the government, Árbenz would likely have served out his five-year term, allowing for subsequent free elections. Democracy might then have firmly implanted itself in Guatemala, as it had done in nearby Costa Rica, an exemplar of democracy since 1948.

Had a democratic Guatemala had the opportunity to sit at the top end of the isthmus, with a thriving democratic Costa Rica at the bottom, the majority of the other Central American countries — Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua — might have been convinced to move toward democracy.

Instead, from the 1940s onward, the US broadly supported authoritarian regimes in Central America, including providing military and security assistance — as long as they opposed Communism.

In Nicaragua, the US firmly backed the Somoza dictatorship until it was overthrown by the Sandinista insurgents, only later to promote the Contra invasion to overthrow the Sandinistas.

We also propped up corrupt, right-wing governments in El Salvador, assisting in their bloody wars against reformers. In Honduras, Washington supported a series of reactionary regimes, which sided with the nation's wealthiest one percent at the expense of the majority poverty-stricken population.

For decades, American officials have been more interested in eradicating supposed “security threats” in Central America than they have been in supporting freedom and prosperity. As long as leaders in the region embraced US interests on Communism, drug trafficking or terrorism, the US turned a blind eye to human-rights abuses or antidemocratic measures. Our approach has destroyed any chance for a destitute citizenry to achieve political liberty, push for economic reforms and solidify democracy within their societies.

We cannot be surprised, then, that today thousands of Central Americans are trying to escape their homelands for better lives and safety in the US. The Biden administration is proposing \$4 billion in aid for the Northern Triangle countries to ward off further migration. This is a good first step. But the tragedy remains that ideological-driven and fear-based US foreign policy decisions in the past are among the core causes of today’s Central American disorder. America is now reaping the whirlwind that it helped to sow.

Why do thousands of Hondurans & Guatemalans flee into exile year after year?

The US and Canadian governments, the World Bank and global businesses and investors (in the sectors of mining, dams, African palm, sugarcane, bananas, garment “sweatshop” factors, tourism, etc.) maintain enriching and empowering relations with anti-democratic, corrupt, repressive governments in Honduras and Guatemala, contributing to and benefitting from exploitation and poverty, environmental harms, repression and human rights violations, corruption and impunity.

Act / Stir up the pot / Chip away

Keep sending copies of Rights Action information (and that of other solidarity groups/ NGOs) to family, friends, your networks, politicians and media, asking *‘Why do our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to poverty, repression and violence, environmental and health harms that caused the forced migrancy / refugee crisis in Guatemala and Honduras?’*

- U.S. Senate: <https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact>
- U.S. House: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- Canadian Parliament: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

Rights Action (US & Canada)

Since 1995, Rights Action: funds human rights, environment and territory defense struggles in Guatemala and Honduras; funds victims of repression and human rights violations, health harms and natural disasters; and works to hold accountable the U.S. and Canadian governments, multi-national companies, investors and banks (World Bank, etc.) that help cause and profit from exploitation and poverty, repression and human rights violations, environmental harms, corruption and impunity in Honduras and Guatemala.

Follow work of and get involved with other solidarity/NGO groups

- CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with People of El Salvador): www.cispes.org
- Honduras Solidarity Network: www.hondurassolidarity.org
- Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective: www.solidaritycollective.org
- Friendship Office of the Americas: <https://friendshipamericas.org>
- NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with People of Guatemala): www.nisgua.org
- GHRC (Guatemalan Human Rights Commission): www.ghrc-usa.org
- Breaking the Silence: www.breakingthesilenceblog.com
- Alliance for Global Justice: www.afgj.org
- CODEPINK: www.codepink.org

- School of Americas Watch: www.soaw.org
- Mining Watch Canada: www.miningwatch.ca
- Mining Injustice Solidarity Network: <https://mininginjustice.org>
- Mining Justice Alliance: <https://miningjusticealliance.wordpress.com>
- Common Frontiers Canada: www.commonfrontiers.ca

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)

To support land, human rights and environmental defender groups in Honduras and Guatemala, and COVID and hurricane relief work, make check to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations: <http://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Donations of securities in Canada and the U.S.? Write to: info@rightsaction.org

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