



C/O Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador
168 7th St., 3rd floor, Brooklyn, NY 11215

An Invitation to Support the 4th Latin America Solidarity Conference this April!

February 7, 2007

Dear friend,

I'm writing to express my excitement about ongoing developments in Latin America. I'm deeply impressed by the wave of hope sweeping the region. For years smugly manipulated and brutally exploited by the US political and economic elite, our former "backyard" is taking bold steps to throw off North American domination and to overcome its severe internal problems.

Politically voters have refused to be misled or intimidated and defied the Bush Administration by electing popular leaders across the region. Late 2006 brought the election of leaders in Venezuela and Ecuador on platforms committed to regional integration, and freedom from control by Washington and the international economic institutions to which it is closely linked. Last year, Bolivians overwhelmingly elected their first ever President of indigenous heritage.

Economically those governments are defying the "Washington Consensus" by rejecting Bush's mislabeled Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement, sending the IMF packing and retaking national resources from multinational corporations, while developing and strengthening plans for regional integration along the lines of The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and Mercosur.

Most exciting of all, from Mexico to Argentina grassroots social movements have taken significant actions on their own, deposing neo-liberal governments, frustrating corporate designs on public resources and building powerful base-level institutions – truly showing that not only is a better world possible, but that its within reach.

Foremost in the minds of Latin Americans is a question that we should be facing urgently as well: **"What will the US elite do to counter these historic developments?" – and for us, how can we act to allow Latin Americans the opportunity pursue their independent courses without foreign interference and impediment?**

Latin Americans understand very well that the traditional modes of outside control -- violence and economic warfare -- have been weakened, in part by Bush's aggressive militarism, and that a result there are new openings for social movements in this hemisphere. But they also remember bitterly the tragic history of US subversion and military intervention that strangled many other hopeful movements in the past fifty years from the CIA-sponsored overthrow of the popularly elected government of Guatemala in 1954 to the US-organized terrorist wars in Central America in the 1980s.

They are rightly counting on solidarity movements in the US to mount effective opposition to Washington's efforts to restore the traditional order of subordination, repression, and injustice.

We all know that such movements do exist. **I would like to urge you to join in supporting one of its strongest initiatives: the "Alternatives to Empire" Conference sponsored by the Latin America Solidarity Coalition (LASC) April 13, 14 & 15 in Chicago, Illinois.**

For the past seven years, the LASC has brought together US solidarity groups, local and national, to promote unified opposition to US intervention in the region and to build support "in the belly of the beast" for the alternative to domination that Latin Americans are constructing. LASC has a strong record of action:

- LASC played a central role in the formation last year of the Venezuela Solidarity Network (VSN), insuring a strong center of support for progressive initiatives there, and against US intervention and hostility.
- The LASC working group on the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has exposed one of Washington's main weapons in funding right-wing organizations throughout the region, organizing protests which expose institutions that function within the NED
- The LASC supported the International Haiti Tribunal, drawing international attention to the illegal overthrow of Haiti's president in 2004, and the violence which followed.
- In 2002 LASC worked with the American Indian Movement to organize local popular education events on indigenous rights, environmental justice, and trade issues on the 510th anniversary of the beginning of the European invasion of the Americas.
- Last November LASC groups participated in the largest ever protest at the gates of the infamous School of the Americas, demanding that the closure of military training center in Ft. Benning, Georgia which has trained countless Latin American officers to commit human rights abuses.
- The LASC has organized three previous conferences since 2000 which have built cross linkages between Latin America solidarity groups, educated local activists, and engendered closer working relations between groups concerned with social justice issues in Latin America.

You can learn more about these campaigns and other LASC activities at www.lasolidarity.org

From April 13-15, 2007 the LASC is bringing together US grassroots activists with counterparts from Latin America and the Caribbean to plan, evaluate and celebrate the growing solidarity movement.

Participants in the "Alternatives to Empire" conference will exchange information on the state of campaigns against US economic, political and military intervention and work to develop common action plans. Art and culture, which are an integral component of grassroots movement building throughout the Americas, will be a strong part of the conference.

"Alternatives to Empire" will be a space for reflection and discussion about vision, strategy and tactics. Workshops, featuring activists with decades of experience, will address some of the most pressing

issues for the solidarity movement and the Left.

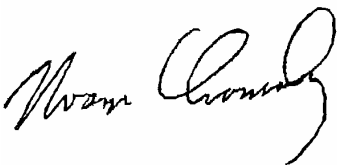
Speakers from across the region will lead workshops and plenaries on topics such Challenging military, political, and economic U.S. Intervention in Latin America and “How to implement strategies that challenge current power structures without falling into a narrowly reformist trap?” **The LASC is also supporting a large protest organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers that same weekend targeting the McDonalds Corporation.**

The groups organizing and sponsoring "Alternatives to Empire" form the backbone of US solidarity with Latin America (*for a complete list of sponsoring organizations go to www.lasolidarity.org/lasc4/endorsers.html.)* They range from exemplary local groups like the Marin Interfaith Task Force on the Americas and the Stop Impunity Project (both based in California), to well established national organizations like the Quixote Center, CISPES, NISGUA, Nicaragua Network, Campaign for Labor Rights, Mexico Solidarity Network, Pan-African Roots, Witness for Peace, and the Global Justice Ecology Project.

As a supporter of organizations active in the LASC I would like to urge you to consider their invitation to you to register and participate in the "Alternatives to Empire" conference, which provides an outstanding forum for you to roll your sleeves up and participate in shaping solidarity work in this new, promising era.

The groups organizing the LASC conference are united by their commitment and the timeliness of their work but unfortunately also by their bare bones budgets. They need \$20,000 to adequately fund the conference--the major expenses being travel subsidies for Latin American participants and for low income activists from around the US. **I hope you will join me in guaranteeing that this milestone event takes place by sending a supporting tax deductible donation of \$25 to \$100 today. If you can't afford \$100, any gift will be gratefully accepted and will help build this crucial conference.**

In Solidarity,



Noam Chomsky

PS: Please return the enclosed envelope with your check today. (Tax deductible checks may be written to the CISPES Education Fund with LASC in the memo line.) Then check out the enclosed flyer and go to www.lasolidarity.org to learn about how you can attend the "Alternatives to Empire" Conference!

(Note: You are receiving this appeal as a supporter of one or more of the LASC member organizations--you will not be added to any new list when you make a donation.)