

# ***50 Years is Too Much: Drawing the Connections Between US/Guatemala Military and Business***

## **NISGUA SPRING DELEGATION**

Feb 29<sup>th</sup> - March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

***Join our 2004 Spring delegation to explore the historical convergence of US and Guatemalan business and military interests and how they continue to drive U.S. foreign policy today, often with devastating political and economic results.***

What has U.S. and Guatemalan business and military collaboration led to over the years?

- the overthrow of a democratically-elected government,
- the death of more than 200,000 Guatemalans,
- the expansion of military control over Guatemala's resources,
- the continuing death of Guatemalans who suffer extreme poverty & malnutrition due to misappropriation and maldistribution of State resources, and
- the promotion of a free trade agreement that promises benefits to military and business elites but endangers Guatemala's sovereignty.

Why have these military and business interests been allowed to reap the benefits of Guatemala's wealth at the expense of the Guatemalan people? Because those responsible for Guatemala's past repression and today's social inequalities have not been brought to justice, either in the U.S. or Guatemala.

NISGUA's 2004 Spring delegation will focus on this legacy of US and Guatemalan military and business partnerships, what these cozy bedfellows plan for the future, and what we can do to stop them in the context of a new Guatemalan administration.

To better understand Guatemala's long history of impunity and how it is inextricably linked to the economic and social woes suffered by the majority of Guatemalans today, we will meet with the following sectors in Guatemala City and the Guatemalan countryside\*:

- Human rights defenders seeking justice for genocide against former Guatemalan military dictators, including the survivors' organization Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR) and the AJR's legal counsel, the Center for Human Rights Legal Action (CALDH), founded by 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee Frank La Rue
- Prominent human rights activists seeking to establish institutional government and military responsibility for human rights abuses committed during the civil war, including staff at the

Myrna Mack Foundation, recent recipient of the highest reparations award ever ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

- Forensic anthropologists, who will explain and demonstrate – through visits to their labs – how they facilitate human rights cases by conducting exhumations of mass graves around the country
- Activists and political analysts who can discuss how military and business elites will benefit from megadevelopment projects and free trade agreements promoted by the U.S. and multilateral institutions at the expense of the majority of the population
- Organizations promoting alternative, sustainable development initiatives and agrarian strategies that, if supported, would guarantee food security for the majority of Guatemalans
- Rural and indigenous community organizations whose members can speak to past repression and their current demands for collective justice and reparations
- High-level officials from the United Nations and Guatemalan and U.S. governments

\*Final itinerary subject to change

For about half their stay, participants will be based in Guatemala City; the rest of the delegation will take place in the countryside in the Rabinal area. In addition to educational meetings, the delegation will include cultural activities, such as visits to museums, monuments, and nearby archeological sites.

We view delegates both as receivers and conveyors of important information that often doesn't reach people in the U.S. So as part of the delegation, delegates will be asked to participate in an activity (to be decided by the group) designed to share the information delegates have learned for advocacy, educational, or lobbying purposes. This may take the form of giving a presentation in your community, advocating for a Guatemala-focused editorial in your local paper, or meeting with your local Congressperson upon your return, among other possibilities.

**In light of the economic downturn and the financial struggles we know so many are facing, we have – only for 2004 – lowered our delegation price to just \$575 per person.**

In exchange, we'll provide: room and board, in-country transportation, logistical support, translation, and reading materials, among other things. Extra donations beyond the \$575 price, of course, are more than welcome, as they help us provide scholarships to prospective delegates who may not be able to afford the trip otherwise.

**Interested in joining us on this exciting exploration?**

**Please visit our website at [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org) to download a delegation application and waiver form. Deadline for receipt of applications and an initial down payment is Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>.**

***Sign up now, while space is still available. We can only take a limited number of delegates, and spots are filling up quickly, so please don't wait to get in touch with us.***

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