

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8130

To establish a commission to address the fundamental repercussions of misguided interventions by the United States in multiple sovereign Western Hemisphere nations over the course of the twentieth century, including to study and consider an apology and proposals for the repairment of relations and reconciliation with the peoples of said nations, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 26, 2024

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself and Ms. TLAIB) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To establish a commission to address the fundamental repercussions of misguided interventions by the United States in multiple sovereign Western Hemisphere nations over the course of the twentieth century, including to study and consider an apology and proposals for the repairment of relations and reconciliation with the peoples of said nations, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Commission on the  
3 United States Occupations in the Americas Act” or the  
4 “La Comisión de las Ocupaciones Americanos Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 Congress finds the following as it relates to misguided  
7 United States military interventions in the following na-  
8 tions:

9 (1) **FIRST OCCUPATION OF NICARAGUA.**—On  
10 November 18, 1909, President William Howard Taft  
11 sent warships off the coast of Nicaragua to signal  
12 United States support for an uprising against Nica-  
13 raguean President José Santos Zelaya, whose Presi-  
14 dency was viewed as unfavorable to the interests of  
15 United States businesses operating in Nicaragua.  
16 While United States forces were not ordered to in-  
17 tervene directly, a small group of United States Ma-  
18 rines nevertheless made landfall on the Nicaraguan  
19 coast and assisted in the successful rebellion against  
20 President Zelaya, who resigned on December 14,  
21 1909, and later fled the country. A new pro-United  
22 States President of Nicaragua, Juan Estrada, was  
23 later installed in August 1910, due in large part to  
24 the pressure imposed by the continual presence of  
25 United States warships off the Nicaraguan coast.  
26 President Estrada’s pro-United States stances

1 proved unpopular, and he was forced to resign in  
2 May of 1911 by the Nicaraguan Minister of War,  
3 Luis Mena. President Estrada was replaced by his  
4 Vice President, Adolfo Díaz. Nevertheless, Díaz's  
5 close connections to the United States also made  
6 him unpopular, and in mid-1912, Nicaragua's Con-  
7 stituent Assembly appointed Mena as the successor  
8 to the Presidency over Díaz. When the United  
9 States refused to recognize Mena's Presidency as le-  
10 gitimate, Mena's and Díaz's forces clashed in July  
11 of 1912 in a full-scale civil war. Díaz requested the  
12 United States support in the war. Beginning on Au-  
13 gust 4, 1912, multiple contingents of United States  
14 Bluejackets and Marines arrived in Nicaragua and  
15 assisted Díaz's forces, resulting in Díaz's victory on  
16 October 6, 1912, when his forces captured the city  
17 of Leon, Nicaragua. Although only 7 members of the  
18 United States military died in the conflict, the war  
19 nevertheless resulted in approximately 2,000 total  
20 casualties. The United States withdrew most of its  
21 forces toward the end of October 1912. However, a  
22 smaller contingent of approximately 100 Marines  
23 would remain in Nicaragua's capital city of Mana-  
24 gua for over a decade before eventually withdrawing  
25 in August 1925.

1           (2) FIRST OCCUPATION OF MEXICO.—On April  
2           21, 1914, at the order of President Woodrow Wil-  
3           son, 500 Marines and 300 Navy personnel invaded  
4           the port city of Veracruz, Mexico, to seize control of  
5           the city. President Wilson’s pretext for this oper-  
6           ation was to enforce a United States arms embargo  
7           against Mexico and prevent the arrival of an arms  
8           shipment in Veracruz that had been ordered by  
9           Mexican President Victoriano Huerta, who was  
10          viewed as an enemy of the United States at that  
11          time. The ensuing fighting saw United States forces  
12          destroy most of the Mexican Naval Academy in  
13          Veracruz. The United States military was eventually  
14          able to take full control of Veracruz by April 24,  
15          1914, beginning a 6-month occupation by the United  
16          States of the city. The United States military suf-  
17          fered just shy of 100 casualties while approximately  
18          550 Mexican soldiers and civilians died while defend-  
19          ing the city. United States forces eventually with-  
20          drew from Veracruz on November 23, 1914. The  
21          United States occupation of Veracruz had broad  
22          negative consequences for the favorability of the  
23          United States amongst Mexican citizens and in-  
24          creased anti-American sentiment throughout Mexico  
25          and Latin America for decades to come.

1           (3) SECOND OCCUPATION OF MEXICO.—From  
2           March 16, 1916, through February 14, 1917, an ex-  
3           peditionary force of more than 14,000 United States  
4           Army troops was sent into northern Mexico. These  
5           forces were instructed to engage in the singular pur-  
6           suit of capturing Mexican revolutionary Francisco  
7           “Pancho” Villa. President Woodrow Wilson ordered  
8           this expedition in response to Villa’s army’s raid of  
9           Colombus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916, which  
10          killed 17 United States citizens. Over the course of  
11          the next 11 months, multiple battles occurred in  
12          Mexico between Pancho Villa’s forces and United  
13          States forces, leaving a total 15 United States citi-  
14          zens and 251 Mexicans dead. Mexican President  
15          Venustiano Carranza viewed the United States expe-  
16          dition in pursuit of Villa as a clear violation of Mexi-  
17          can sovereignty. The expedition ended before Villa  
18          was ever captured, and United States forces eventu-  
19          ally withdrew from Mexico on February 14, 1917, in  
20          order to consolidate forces to fight in World War I  
21          in Europe.

22           (4) FIRST OCCUPATION OF THE DOMINICAN RE-  
23          PUBLIC.—On May 13, 1916, a contingent of the  
24          United States Marine Corps landed on the shores of  
25          the Dominican Republic with the goal of militarily

1 occupying the island nation due to concerns about  
2 the possible German use of the Dominican Republic  
3 as a base for attacks on the United States during  
4 World War I. After 2 months of fighting, the United  
5 States military took control of the nation, estab-  
6 lished a government, and continued to occupy the is-  
7 land for 8 years before withdrawing on September  
8 18, 1924. By the time United States forces with-  
9 drew, 144 marines had died and 50 were injured.  
10 The 8-year occupation also resulted in 950 Domini-  
11 can casualties between those who died and those who  
12 were injured in the conflict.

13 (5) SECOND OCCUPATION OF NICARAGUA.—On  
14 January 24, 1927, when Nicaragua was embroiled in  
15 another civil war that threatened United States busi-  
16 ness and diplomatic interests in the region, 3,000  
17 United States Marines were deployed to Nicaragua  
18 by President Calvin Coolidge with the goal of dis-  
19 arming rebel groups, supervising the highly conten-  
20 tious 1928 Presidential election, and developing and  
21 training the Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua (Nica-  
22 raguan National Guard). While the Marines were  
23 successful in disarming various rebel groups  
24 throughout the country, Nicaraguan rebel leader  
25 César Augusto Sandino and his forces resisted due

1 to Sandino’s ideological opposition to United States  
2 interventionism in his country. Sandino’s army and  
3 the United States Marines engaged in a 6-year-long  
4 military conflict through 1933. A total 136 Marines  
5 died and estimates of Nicaraguan casualties, al-  
6 though imprecise, were even larger. Sandino’s will-  
7 ingness to stand up to United States forces at-  
8 tracted sympathy and galvanized anti-American sen-  
9 timent both in Nicaragua and throughout the West-  
10 ern Hemisphere. Despite Sandino’s resistance, the  
11 United States successfully supervised Nicaragua’s  
12 November 1928 elections, which saw President José  
13 María Moncada ascend to power. After the election,  
14 President Herbert Hoover, slowly withdrew troops  
15 from Nicaragua until the last Marines left Nica-  
16 ragua on January 2, 1933. Sandino’s rebel forces  
17 continued to engage in periodic guerilla warfare  
18 against United States troops until these last Marines  
19 were evacuated. Today, Sandino is a popular folk  
20 hero amongst the Nicaraguan political left and his  
21 name provides the inspiration for the modern-day  
22 “Sandinista” political party that rules Nicaragua.

23 (6) GUATEMALA AIR OCCUPATION.—On June  
24 18, 1954, through June 27, 1954, as part of “Oper-  
25 ation PBSuccess”, the United States Central Intel-

1       ligence Agency (“CIA”) planned, designed, and led  
2       a successful coup in Guatemala, overthrowing the  
3       predominantly capitalist government of President  
4       Jacobo Árbenz, coinciding in time with President  
5       Arbenz’s plans to redistribute land owned by the  
6       United Fruit Company, a prosperous United States-  
7       based fruit company which controlled 42 percent of  
8       all land in Guatemala at that time. In justification  
9       for Operation PBSuccess, the United States spuri-  
10      ously alleged that President Árbenz’s government  
11      had been infiltrated by anti-American communists.  
12      The CIA provided both supplies and a small fleet of  
13      combat troops for the rebellion, during which United  
14      States pilots bombed fortresses and other areas of  
15      Guatemala City. Operation PBSuccess was success-  
16      ful, and on June 27, 1954, President Árbenz fled  
17      Guatemala. The 1954 coup is widely viewed by his-  
18      torians as ushering in an unprecedented era of civil  
19      war in Guatemala that lasted until 1996 and  
20      claimed the lives of over 200,000 Guatemalans,  
21      many of which were lost in connection with various  
22      additional covert CIA operations that operated in  
23      the nation during this time period.

24               (7) SECOND OCCUPATION OF THE DOMINICAN  
25      REPUBLIC.—On April 28, 1965, the second interven-



1       tion and occupation of the Dominican Republic by  
2       the United States Armed Forces, called “Operation  
3       Power Pack”, commenced and provided United  
4       States air and ground troops to assist future Domin-  
5       ican President Donal Reid Cabral’s army in the Do-  
6       minican 1965 civil war. Operation Power Pack took  
7       place between 1965 and 1966, after a period of po-  
8       litical instability and military coup following the as-  
9       sassination of former Dominican dictator Rafael  
10      Leónidas Trujillo in 1961. In 1962, socialist politi-  
11      cian Juan Bosch became the elected President of the  
12      Dominican Republic before being overthrown in a  
13      separate coup in 1963. From 1963 through April  
14      1965, a 3-man military junta of General Antonio  
15      Imbert Barrera, General Luis Amiamo Tió, and  
16      General Victor Elby Viñas Román held power before  
17      growing dissatisfaction led to another rebellion on  
18      April 24, 1965. Four days later, President Lyndon  
19      Johnson sent a total of 42,000 United States troops  
20      from multiple branches of the military to the island,  
21      supplemented by an Inter-American Peace Force of  
22      2,000 troops, to assist rebels led by Donald Reid  
23      Cabral. In what is now known as the 1965 Domini-  
24      can Civil War or “La Revolución del 65” Cabral’s  
25      forces prevailed due to the United States military

1 backing. Shortly after the war ended, on July 1,  
2 1966, democratically questionable elections were held  
3 in the Dominican Republic which resulted in the  
4 election of Joaquín Balaguer as President. United  
5 States troops withdrew from the island nation there-  
6 after on September 21, 1966. In total, 44 United  
7 States combatants were killed in the conflict, along-  
8 side over 2,000 Dominicans, roughly half of whom  
9 were civilians. Following the withdrawal of United  
10 States troops, President Balaguer, a previous mem-  
11 ber of the Trujillo-led government, ruled the Domini-  
12 can Republic for a 12-year period characterized by  
13 turmoil, the disappearances of Balaguer’s political  
14 opponents, and the deaths of hundreds of young po-  
15 litical and social activists. In this manner, the  
16 United States intervention during Operation Power  
17 Pack played a key role in depriving Dominican citi-  
18 zens of a free and sovereign government for at least  
19 12 additional years through 1978.

20 (8) GRENADA OCCUPATION.—From October 25,  
21 1983, through October 29, 1983, the United States  
22 conducted “Operation Urgent Fury”, a full-scale  
23 military invasion of Grenada in which thousands of  
24 troops from the United States Army, Marines, Navy,  
25 and Air Force were deployed to Grenada and partici-

1       pated in active combat against native Grenadians  
2       and Cuban fighters. The United States invasion was  
3       authorized by President Ronald Reagan based on  
4       the asserted need to prevent a military coup and  
5       communist takeover of the small island nation, in  
6       addition to the need to protect the approximately  
7       1,000 United States citizens who resided on the is-  
8       land at that time. United States forces achieved a  
9       swift victory in just 4 days, but the fighting resulted  
10      in the deaths of 45 Grenadian combatants, 25  
11      Cuban combatants, and 19 United States combat-  
12      ants. The last United States troops eventually exited  
13      Grenada on June 13, 1985.

14           (9) PANAMA OCCUPATION.—On December 20,  
15      1989, approximately 27,000 United States troops in-  
16      vaded Panama at the order of President George  
17      Bush under the ignominiously named “Operation  
18      Just Cause”. The purpose of Operation Just Cause  
19      was to remove General Manuel Noriega, the coun-  
20      try’s dictatorial ruler, from power and secure his ex-  
21      tradition to the United States, where Noriega was  
22      wanted on charges of drug trafficking and money  
23      laundering (he was later found guilty on these  
24      charges upon his successful extradition). Relations  
25      between the United States and Panama’s Govern-

1       ment soured over the course of 1988 and 1989 due  
2       to Noriega’s antidemocratic behavior and monopo-  
3       lization of power, Noriega’s 1988 indictment in the  
4       United States on drug smuggling charges, notably  
5       escalating tensions between Panamanian troops and  
6       United States troops stationed in the Panama Canal  
7       Zone, and United States concerns about maintaining  
8       physical control of the Panama Canal Zone. Ten-  
9       sions boiled over on December 15, 1989, when the  
10      Noriega-led Panamanian Assembly declared Panama  
11      to be in a “state of war” with the United States. On  
12      December 16, an off-duty United States Marine was  
13      shot and killed by Panamanian soldiers, prompting  
14      President George Bush to order Operation Just  
15      Cause in the aftermath of this incident. The United  
16      States would win the ensuing ground conflict, gain  
17      control of the Panama Canal, and force Noriega’s  
18      surrender on January 3, 1990. However, this oper-  
19      ation came at a great cost, as according to the Pen-  
20      tagon’s official tally, 23 United States soldiers, 300  
21      Panamanian soldiers, and 214 Panamanian civilians  
22      were killed during the United States invasion. Some  
23      human rights groups also estimate the death toll  
24      amongst Panamanian civilians to be far higher. Fur-  
25      thermore, the United States repeated bombing of the

1 impoverished Panama City neighborhood “El  
2 Churillo” during Operation Just Cause destroyed  
3 approximately 4,000 homes and displaced thousands  
4 more civilians, resulting in Panamanians nicknaming  
5 the neighborhood “Little Hiroshima” following the  
6 war.

7 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND DUTIES.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a Com-  
9 mission to Study and Develop Reconciliation Proposals for  
10 Misguided Interventions in the Americas (in this Act re-  
11 ferred to as the “Commission”).

12 (b) DUTIES.—The Commission shall be responsible  
13 for the following duties:

14 (1) Identifying, documenting, examining, com-  
15 piling, and synthesizing the relevant body of evi-  
16 dentiary documentation relating to the United  
17 States interest in intervening in—

18 (A) the 9 conflicts in Nicaragua, Mexico,  
19 the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Grenada,  
20 and Panama discussed in section 2 of this Act;  
21 and

22 (B) any additional United States military  
23 involvement in nations in the Caribbean, Latin  
24 America, or South America that the Commis-  
25 sion, via a majority vote at any meeting of the

1 Commission containing a quorum, identifies as  
2 misguided and believes merits investigation and  
3 action by the Commission.

4 (2) Identifying, documenting, examining, com-  
5 piling, and synthesizing the relevant corpus of evi-  
6 dentiary documentation relating to the United  
7 States military occupations identified in paragraph  
8 (1) of this subsection, as it pertains to—

9 (A) the United States involvement in these  
10 nations internal affairs and its financial and  
11 military support to different rebellions and re-  
12 gime changes in these nations;

13 (B) the treatment of the native persons by  
14 both the United States military and under the  
15 regimes ushered in a result of United States  
16 military action, including any repressions of  
17 basic rights and freedoms by United States-sup-  
18 ported governments; and

19 (C) the lingering negative effects of these  
20 United States-supported regimes on each indi-  
21 vidual nation's citizens, collective psyche, and  
22 society.

23 (3) Recommending appropriate ways to educate  
24 the United States public on the Commission's find-  
25 ings.

1           (4) Recommending appropriate remedies in con-  
2           sideration of the Commission's findings on the dif-  
3           ferent United States military occupations described  
4           in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection. In  
5           making such recommendations, the Commission  
6           shall address among other issues, the following ques-  
7           tions:

8                   (A) How such recommendations comport  
9                   with international standards of remedy for  
10                  wrongs and injuries caused by the United  
11                  States Government, including repair and rec-  
12                  onciliation efforts, as understood by various rel-  
13                  evant international protocols, laws, and find-  
14                  ings.

15                  (B) How the United States Government  
16                  may offer a formal apology on behalf of the  
17                  people of the United States for the invasions  
18                  and occupations studied by the Commission for  
19                  those occupations which the Commission deems  
20                  worthy of an apology.

21                  (C) How the repercussions resulting from  
22                  matters described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of  
23                  this subsection may be reversed and provide ap-  
24                  propriate policies, programs, projects, and rec-

1           ommendations for the purpose of reversing the  
2           effects of the invasions and occupations.

3           (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 4 years  
4 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission  
5 shall submit to Congress a written report of its findings  
6 and recommendations under this section.

7           (d) MEMBERSHIP.—

8           (1) IN GENERAL.—

9           (A) STATED MEMBERS.—The following  
10 shall be members of the Commission:

11           (i) The Under Secretary for Western  
12 Hemisphere Affairs of the Department of  
13 State.

14           (ii) The current United States Amba-  
15 sadors to each of the sovereign nations  
16 studied by the Commission.

17           (B) APPOINTED MEMBERS.—Not later  
18 than 90 days after the date of enactment of  
19 this Act, the following shall be members of the  
20 Commission, appointed as follows:

21           (i) One member shall be appointed by  
22 the President of the United States.

23           (ii) Two members shall be appointed  
24 by the Speaker of the House of Represent-



1           atives, in consultation with the minority  
2           leader.

3           (iii) Two members shall be appointed  
4           by the majority leader of the Senate, in  
5           consultation with the minority leader.

6           (C) MEMBERS UNDER INTERNATIONAL CO-  
7           OPERATION.—The President shall seek to nego-  
8           tiate with the governments of previously occu-  
9           pied nations to seek, to the extent practicable,  
10          the following as members of the Commission:

11          (i) The Ambassador to the United  
12          States for each sovereign nation being  
13          studied by the Commission pursuant to  
14          subsection (b)(1).

15          (ii) The Ambassador, Permanent Rep-  
16          resentative to the Organization of Amer-  
17          ican States for each sovereign nation being  
18          studied by the Commission pursuant to  
19          subsection (b)(1).

20          (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—All members of the  
21          Commission shall be persons who are especially  
22          qualified to serve on the Commission by virtue of  
23          their education, training, activism, or experience,  
24          particularly in the fields of Western Hemisphere re-  
25          lations or reparatory justice.

1           (3) TERMS.—The term of office for members  
2 shall be for the life of the Commission. A vacancy  
3 in the Commission shall not affect the powers of the  
4 Commission and shall be filled in the same manner  
5 in which the original appointment was made.

6           (4) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall conduct  
7 its initial meeting not later than 365 days after the  
8 date of enactment of this Act. The Commission shall  
9 establish rules of procedure at such meeting. All  
10 meetings of the Commission shall be public. The  
11 Commission should meet not less often than 4 times  
12 per year, including virtual meetings called to order  
13 by either the entire Commission or any member  
14 thereof.

15           (5) QUORUM.—More than half of the total  
16 members of the Commission shall constitute a  
17 quorum for the purposes of holding a meeting in  
18 compliance with subsection (d)(4), but a lesser num-  
19 ber may hold hearings.

20           (6) CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR.—The Commission  
21 shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among its  
22 members. The term of office of each shall be for the  
23 life of the Commission.

24           (7) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the  
25 Commission who is not an officer or employee of the

1 Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate  
2 equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of  
3 basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive  
4 Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United  
5 States Code, for each day (including travel time)  
6 during which such member is engaged in the per-  
7 formance of the duties of the Commission. All mem-  
8 bers of the Commission who are officers or employ-  
9 ees of the United States shall serve without com-  
10 pensation in addition to that received for their serv-  
11 ices as officers or employees of the United States.

12 (8) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the  
13 Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, includ-  
14 ing per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates author-  
15 ized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of  
16 chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while  
17 away from their homes or regular places of business  
18 in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

19 (e) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

20 (1) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commis-  
21 sion may, for the purpose of carrying out the provi-  
22 sions of this section, hold such hearings and sit and  
23 act at such times and at such places in the United  
24 States, and request the attendance and testimony of  
25 such witnesses and the production of such books,

1 records, correspondence, memoranda, papers, and  
2 documents, as the Commission considers appro-  
3 priate. The Commission may invoke the aid of an  
4 appropriate United States district court to require,  
5 by subpoena or otherwise, such attendance, testi-  
6 mony, or production.

7 (2) POWERS OF MEMBERS.—Any member of  
8 the Commission may, if authorized by the Commis-  
9 sion, take any action which the Commission is au-  
10 thorized to take by this subsection.

11 (3) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commis-  
12 sion may acquire directly from the head of any de-  
13 partment, agency, or instrumentality of the executive  
14 branch of the United States Government, available  
15 information which the Commission considers useful  
16 in the discharge of its duties. All departments, agen-  
17 cies, and instrumentalities of the executive branch of  
18 the United States Government shall cooperate with  
19 the Commission with respect to such information  
20 and shall furnish all information requested by the  
21 Commission to the extent permitted by law.

22 (f) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate  
23 90 days after the date on which the Commission submits  
24 its report to Congress under subsection (c).

25 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be  
2           appropriated \$20,000,000 to carry out this Act.

3           (2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts appropriated pur-  
4           suant to the authorization under paragraph (1) are  
5           authorized to remain available until the termination  
6           of the Commission in accordance with subsection (f).

○