

GREAT DECISIONS

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Panic at the border: U.S. relations with the Northern Triangle

Acronyms and abbreviations

CIA—Central Intelligence Agency

CICIG—International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala

DR-CAFTA—Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement

ECLAC—Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

FMLN—Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front

ICE—Immigration and Customs Enforcement

MACCIH—Mission to Support the Fight against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras

MS-13—Mara Salvatrucha

NTCA—Northern Triangle of Central America

OAS—Organization of American States

OECD—Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

TPS—Temporary Protected Status

USAID—United States Agency for International Development

Glossary

Alliance for Prosperity: is cooperative plan between the United States, the NTCA and the Inter-American Development Bank that seeks to reduce the rate of migration from the region through economic development.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador(1953–): is the 58th and current president of Mexico. Obrador has served as Mexican president since 2018, where he represented the Mexican left-wing coalition, Juntos Haremos Historia.

Asylum: refers to the legal act of providing sanctuary to victims of persecution from other countries.

Barrio 18: is one of the names given to the “18th Street Gang” a transnational criminal group that started in Los Angeles and has spread throughout the U.S, Mexico and Central America.

Berta Cáceres (1971–2016): was a Honduran environmentalist and human rights activist. She was most well known for her campaign against the Agua Zarca Dam project.

Contras: refers to U.S. backed military groups in Central America during the 1980s. Contras combatted Soviet-backed forces in Nicaragua. Contras gained notoriety for their human rights violations during the conflict with the Sandinistas.

El Mozote: is a village in El Salvador where the El Mozote massacre took place on December 11, 1981. The massacre was carried out by the Salvadoran Army and between 800 and 1,000 people were killed. It is the largest massacre in Latin American modern history.

Esquipulas Peace Agreement: is a peace treaty between many Northern Triangle and Central American countries. The deal was signed on August 31, 1987, and brought about the end of the many civil conflicts happening in the region during the 1970s and 80s.

Felipe Calderon(1962–): was the 56th president of Mexico, serving from 2006–12. Calderon was responsible for escalating the Mexican war on drugs and joining the Merida Initiative.

FMLN: is a left-wing political party in El Salvador. The FMLN was one of the major parties during the Salvadoran civil war and has since participated in democratic elections and has had two candidates elected to the office of president.

Guatemalan Civil War: was a conflict between the government and military of Guatemala and a series of left-wing rebel groups. The civil war went on for 36 years (1960–96) and was the cause of more than 200,000 Guatemalans being killed or displaced.

Hurricane Mitch: was a devastating storm that made landfall in 1998 and led to massive amounts of infrastructure damage and fatalities to Central American and Caribbean countries. It is the second deadliest hurricane in history, with between 11,000 and 20,000 casualties.

Jimmy Morales (1969–): is the 50th and current president of Guatemala. Born James Morales Cabrera, he grew to prominence in Guatemala starring as a television comedian. He is most famous for his attempted expulsion of the CICIG from Guatemala for wanting to launch an investigation into his campaign donations.

Juan Orlando Hernandez (1968–): is the president of Honduras. He assumed office in 2014 and was reelected in 2018. Hernandez’s re-election is mired in controversy due to what has been deemed a “fraudulent vote.”

Manuel Zelaya (1952–): was the president of Honduras from 2006–09. He was removed as president in 2009 by a military coup that forced him to flee to Costa Rica.

Merida Initiative: is a security cooperation agreement between the United States, Mexico and Central America launched in 2007 to combat the transnational drug trade.

MS-13: is an international criminal group. The gang has members in the U.S., Mexico, Canada and Central America. Similar to Barrios 18, the gang was founded in Los Angeles, and was brought to many Central American countries through criminal deportation.

Nayib Bukele(1981–): is the 46th and current president of El Salvador, Bukele was elected in June 2019. The former mayor of San Salvador, Bukele is the first Salvadoran to win the presidency from outside the two major political parties (running for the GANA party).

Panama Canal: is a 51-mile canal located through the Central American country of Panama that serves as a waterway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The canal was begun in 1881 by French workers, but was taken over by the United States after years of setbacks. The canal opened in August 1914 and was turned over fully to the Panama Canal Authority in 1999. The canal sees 800,000 or more ships pass through it every year.

Sandinistas: also known as the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), named in honor of Augusto Sandino. The Sandinistas are a left-wing political party that led the rebellion against Anastasio DeBayle in 1979, then fought in the Nicaraguan civil war against the U.S.-backed Contras. The FSLN are now the largest political party in Nicaragua, having elected party leader Daniel Ortega four times to the office of president.

