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Jessica Bryant

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Elusive Peace: A Comparative Analysis of Civil Wars and Conflict Resolution in El Salvador and Colombia

by
Jessica Bryant

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Approved by

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Advisor: Professor Oliver Dinius
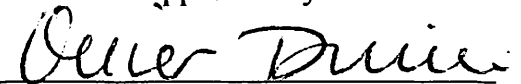
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Reader: Professor Holly Reynolds

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Reader: Professor Kees Gispen

Elusive Peace: A Comparative Analysis of Civil Wars and
Conflict Resolution in El Salvador and Colombia

Jessica Bryant
(Under the direction of Dr. Oliver Dinius)

Abstract

This study compares the historical contexts of the rise of civil wars and their modern trajectories in Colombia and El Salvador. Through an analysis of the successful negotiation of peace in the Salvadoran case via a United Nations peacekeeping mission, it makes conclusions about the relevancy of such an operation for obtaining peace in Colombia. After a brief discussion of the United Nations evolving peacekeeping mandate and recent literature about this type of peace negotiation, this thesis examines each country's history and its war's termination (in the case of El Salvador) and transformation (in the case of Colombia). Recent literature supports multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations undertaken by organizations such as the United Nations and uses El Salvador as a model for the successful implementation of such missions. This study concludes that such an outlook is too optimistic and that particular historical-political factors played a larger role in achieving peace in El Salvador which do not exist in Colombia. Furthermore, there are several major obstacles with which the United Nations has never contended but that it would have to confront in developing a peacekeeping mandate for Colombia

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List of Abbreviations

FMLN – *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional*, Farabundo Martí Front for Nacional Liberation

ONUSAL – United Nations Observer Mission to El Salvador

FARC-EP – *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo*, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - People's Army

ELN – *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, Nacional Liberation Army

M-19 – *Movimiento del 19 de Abril*, April 19th Movement

FN – *Frente Nacional*, National Front

MNR – *Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario*, National Revolutionary Movement

UP – *Unión Patriótica*, Patriotic Union

AUC – *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia

PCS – *Partido Comunista Salvadoreña*, Salvadoran Communist Party

CEB – Christian Base Communities

OPM – *Organizaciones Politico-Militares*, Political Military Organizations

BPR – *Bloque Popular Revolucionario*, Popular Revolutionary Block

FPL – *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación*, Popular Forces of Liberation

ERP – *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*, Revolutionary People's Army

LP-28 – *Ligas Populares del 28 de Febrero*, 28th of February Popular Leagues

FARN – *Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional*, Armed Forces of National Resistence

FAPU – *Frente de Acción Popular Unificada*, Unified Popular Action Front

PRTC – *Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanas*, Central American Revolutionary Workers Party

FDR – *Frente Democrático Revolucionario*, Revolutionary Democratic Front

ESAF – El Salvador's Armed Forces

MINUSAL – United Nations Mission in El Salvador

Introduction

The end to El Salvador's twelve year civil war was successfully negotiated in January 1992 during a series of meetings led by a United Nations peacekeeping mission. A revolution that claimed an estimated 75,000 lives, involved an insurgent group of more than 12,000 members, and sought reforms that would alter the foundations of Salvadoran society ended peacefully with a cease fire that has not been broken. Only a decade later, the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation, FMLN), former guerrillas and the most powerful challenge to the state during the revolution, became the country's second largest political party to participate in electoral politics, consolidating what UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali called, "a revolution achieved by negotiation".[1]

Colombia, on the other hand, still suffers from a war that originated with revolutionary guerilla struggles in the mid-sixties. Colombia's largest guerrilla group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC), is estimated to have between 12,000 and 18,000 members and maintains the support of close to one million *campesinos* dependent on *coca* cultivation.[2] Revived by funds extracted from illicit cultivation, the FARC became more active than ever in the 1990s. The effects of the war are devastating. Guerrilla presence in the

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[1] Charles Call, "Assessing El Salvador's Transition from Civil War to Peace", in *Ending Civil Wars*, ed Cousens, Rothchild, and Stedman. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002). 71
[2] Council on Foreign Relations, "FARC, ELN, and AUC". http://www.cfr.org/publication/9272/#4 (Accessed February 20, 2007).

countryside prevents the historically weak state from establishing rule of law. Since 2002 alone, the conflict displaced three million people.[3] The spillover effects of the war destabilize border areas of Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Brazil.

Recent literature on peacekeeping shows that peace negotiations undertaken by an international actor with the ability to adopt a multi-dimensional role in the process are successful. The case of El Salvador is hailed as a shining example of just how successful these types of negotiations are. In addition to successfully disarming and demobilizing thousands of insurgents, the Salvadoran peace accords affected sweeping institutional reforms and created a political space in which former revolutionaries could address the grievances that previously caused them to take up arms. The mission's greatest challenge was the restructuring of the country's armed forces, a group whose hegemony and repressive measures fomented the insurgency. In Colombia, a UN peacekeeping mission would have to contend with very different conditions (the least of which being the country's booming drug trade) and its mandate would reflect those challenges.

This thesis will use the example of El Salvador's negotiated peace to make conclusions about the current chances for ending Colombia's civil war and suggest the necessary elements of a peace process there.

Despite the overwhelming support for multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations in recent literature and the success of just such a mission in El Salvador, there has been no successful attempt at a similar process in Colombia. In a departure from the literature on conflict resolution, one could hypothesize that the country-specific historical conditions before and during the conflict made a peaceful resolution more or less likely.

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[3] Human Rights Watch, "Colombia: Dislaced and Discarded", 2005.
http://hrw.org/reports/2005/colombia1005/.

In our concrete case, such an interpretation would hold that the political history of El Salvador made peace there more easily achievable than the political history in Colombia. To try to explain the persistence of conflict, this thesis explores the contemporary history of both El Salvador and Colombia with respect to the origins of the civil conflict, the rise of the insurgency, and the conflict's conclusion (for El Salvador) and transformation (for Colombia).

Chapter one discusses the historical context of each country's civil war and the rise of its insurgency. Both elements are important when trying to understand the specific components necessary in peace negotiations. While the prescription of a United Nations peacekeeping mission may be the same for all civil wars, each mission's mandate must be modified to fit the country. This chapter shows that conditions institutionalized as early as the turn of the twentieth century became catalysts for the outbreak of civil war in both El Salvador and Colombia.

Chapter two analyzes the events of the civil war after the consolidation of revolutionary forces and, in the case of El Salvador, how the conflict came to an end. While the historical factors that led to civil wars in each country tell us much about how the conflict can be negotiated, the circumstances and consequences of the actual fighting must be investigated to determine what challenges a peacekeeping mission faces. In El Salvador, a 12,000-strong insurgent group had to be demobilized and the country's population was forced to attempt reconciliation after twelve years of bitter fighting. For Colombia's part, in addition to the issues of demobilization and reconciliation, the structural instability created by the war has led to the growth of narcotrafficking; an issue integral to any discussion of the possibilities of peace for the country.

Chapter three explains how the ways in which peace was successfully negotiated in El Salvador are and are not relevant to a similar process in Colombia. While many specific elements of ONUSAL's mandate (United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador) provide important lessons for Colombia, the particular circumstances in which they were implemented were unique to El Salvador at the end of the 1980s and, to a great extent, explain the mission's success. It argues that the present situation in Colombia prevents similar success on the part of the United Nations. The country's forty year history of failure to end the conflict, narcotrafficking boom, and thoroughly entrenched insurgency create challenges that were not present in El Salvador.

I

Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Conflicts: Recent Literature

The origins of these two conflicts are disparate and complex, but certainly the most important difference is that the conflict in El Salvador came to an end with the help of a United Nations Peace Mission. Recent studies argue strongly that third party intervention on the part of an international actor such as the United Nations is the only option for successful civil conflict termination. This thesis will investigate the validity of these claims by comparing El Salvador, a country in which this conclusion has proven true, with Colombia, a country that may or may not benefit from this type of intervention. The following is a brief discussion of the evolving role of the United Nations in civil conflicts and a review of recent peacekeeping literature.

Since the end of the Cold War, the majority of the world's armed conflicts have been between intrastate actors.[4] As a result, the United Nations has seen a shift in its policies with respect to conflict resolution. The organization's traditional peacekeeping involved stationing its troops on borders or in particularly weak areas of States negotiating the end to interstate conflicts. Maintenance of each party's sovereignty was paramount and mediation was the extent of the organization's commitment.[5] After the end of the Cold War and with the rising occurrence of internal conflicts, the United Nations began formulating an interventionist and multi-dimensional strategy for peacekeeping. The Secretary General and Security Council's evolving interpretation of Chapters VI and VII of the UN charter reaffirmed the organization's commitment both to peace keeping operations of a much more complex nature and to the right of UN troops to use force in self-defense or to defend the mission's chief goals.[6] In 1995, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali identified the United Nation's new peacekeeping responsibilities as,

> the supervision of cease-fires, the regroupment and demobilization of forces, their reintegration into civilian life and the destruction of their weapons; the design and implementation of de-mining programmes; the return of refugees and displaced persons; the provision of humanitarian assistance; the supervision of existing administrative structures; the establishment of new police forces; the verification of respect for human rights; the design and supervision of constitutional, judicial and electoral reforms; the observation, supervision and even organization and conduct of elections; and the coordination of support for economic rehabilitation and reconstruction.[7]

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[4] Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). 6
[5] Ibid, 7
[6] Ibid, 11
[7] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace": Position Paper of the Secretary General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.* A/50/60; S/1991/1, January 3, 1995.

In just three years, between 1987 and 1994, the organization's peacekeeping budget increased from $230 million to $3.6 billion, three times its regular operating budget.[8]

The literature supporting the effectiveness of third-party or international intervention in the termination of internal conflicts is extensive. Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis are the most enthusiastic supporters of UN peace missions. Based on quantitative studies of all civil wars since 1945, they argue that the success of achieving sustainable peace (defined as both a "negative peace" in which the State's monopoly on violence is restored and a "positive" peace which includes a broader consolidation of peace) is dependent on international intervention, specifically the type which only the UN is committed to providing.[9] They conclude that the political space for successful negotiations is defined by the level of hostility in the country (measured by things such as the number of casualties, refugees, and the type of conflict), the local capacity (both democratic and economic), and the willingness or ability of the international community to make up for the lack of the first two elements.[10]

Using a similar dataset from J. David Singer and Melvin Small's project on *Correlates of War*, Beverly Walter finds that the "critical barrier" to conflict resolution resides in the lack of credible guarantees that parties can make to one another during negotiations. The barrier derives from the complete vulnerability that a peace process demands of insurgent groups: "At a time when no legal institutions exist to enforce a

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[8] Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). 6
[9] Ibid, 64
[10] Ibid, 339

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contract, they are asked to demobilize, disarm, and disengage their military forces and prepare for peace".[11] She concludes,

> groups fighting civil wars almost always chose to fight to the finish unless an outside power stepped in to guarantee a peace agreement. If a third party agreed to enforce the terms of a peace treaty, negotiations almost always succeeded regardless of the initial goals, ideology, or ethnicity of participants. If a third party did not intervene, these talks usually failed.[12]

In *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America*, Cynthia Arnson looks at six cases of internal armed conflict in Latin America: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, and the state of Chiapas in Mexico. In an attempt to discern those things which facilitated or impeded the peace processes in each case, Arnson comes to a similar conclusion, "the role of the international community, through such institutions as the United Nations...has been essential to the conclusion of peace agreements."[13] Her theory of negotiations emphasized the primacy of perceptions (the insurgent's perception of government's willingness to negotiation and their commitment to the process and vice versa) over objective conditions which, "leaves open the possibility that "ripe moments" (for peace) can be created and orchestrated".[14]

Patrick M. Regan and Fen Osler Hampson find that mediation on the part of a multinational authority is essential both because it facilitates open communication and encourages agreement by "changing the costs and benefits of cooperation" respectively.[15] Hampson looks at the post-conflict conditions in Cyprus, Namibia, Angola, Cambodia, and El Salvador and concludes that the countries which have the highest possibility of

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[11] Beverly Walter, "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement". *International Organizations* 51 (1997). 336

[12] Ibid, 336

[13] Cynthia J. Arnson, *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999). 9

[14] Ibid, 451

[15] Fen Osler Hampson, *Nurturing Peace* (Washington D. C.: US Institute of Peace, 1996). and Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers* (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2000).

maintaining peace were the ones in which third-party actors were extensively involved in negotiations and implementation of agreements.

The proponents of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations undertaken by international actors such as the United Nations base their conclusions on case studies in which those types of operations were successful. El Salvador is one such case. Contrary to the conclusions of the works mentioned above, however, this thesis argues that the successful negotiation of the Salvadoran peace was facilitated by the country's particular historical context. As a result, the prescription of a similar process to Colombia will not necessarily see the same success.

1

The Origins of War: Institutionalized Sources of Discontent in El Salvador and Colombia

The peacekeeping literature reviewed above minimizes the significance of the particular histories of countries involved in civil conflicts when prescribing a multi-dimensional operation undertaken by an international actor. This thesis contends, however, that some historical factors may present challenges which threaten the success of such operations. The following is a discussion of the context of Colombia and El Salvador's civil wars. For Colombia, this discussion is centered on the paradoxical nature of the country's history. Unlike the military dictatorships and economic crises which plagued many Latin American countries during the twentieth century, Colombia maintained a nominal democracy and a presidentialist tradition. The country also experienced an average 5% growth rate of its economy between 1945 and 1995 and escaped the 1980s debt crisis and astronomical inflation faced by many countries.[16] With the exception of four short years between 1953 and 1957, Colombia has seen the consistent election of civilian leaders in free elections. The paradox lies in the fact that, despite the country's prosperity and institutional stability, it is home to both the world's longest running civil war and, as of 2001, three organizations on the U.S. State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations.[17] Eduardo Pizarro Leongómez, professor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and former director of the Institute of

[16] *The Economist*, "Colombia. Drugs, War, and Democracy", April 21, 2001. and Kissinger, Henry. *Does America Need a Foreign Policy? Towards a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
[17] Eduardo Pizarro, *Colombia: Situación actual y perspectivas* futura (Rio de Janeiro: Fundación Konrad Adenauer, 2001). 6

Political Studies and International Relations, correctly points out that the high levels of violence in Colombia are due, in large part, to its electoral tradition.[18] As this chapter attempts to show, the origins of violence in Colombia and the insurgency which arose in the 1960s have their roots in the country's two party political system, the outbreak of *La Violencia*, and the inability of the Colombian government to address the demands of the emerging insurgency.

I

Nominal Democracy and the Militarization of Politics: The Context of Colombia's Civil War

Part of Colombia's institutional stability stems from its success at maintaining a strong two party system in which candidates gained office through consistent free elections, but one must turn a more critical eye towards this process to see its problems and the way in which it contributed to the link between politics and violence. The militarization of politics that occurred early on in the country's history and was perpetuated by bloody periods such as *La Violencia* has much to do with the outbreak of the country's civil war in the 1960s. While free elections of civilian governments did occur on a regular basis throughout the 20th century, neither national nor municipal elections were completely free from corrupt election practices such as clientelism. Frustration was prevalent as conservatives allied with the Catholic Church and *hacendados* (owners of large estates) held onto power for nearly fifty years. It was not until the election of Enrique Olaya Herrerra (1930-1934) that the Liberal Party gained its

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[18] Ibid, 7

first real foothold in Colombian political life. Colombian liberalism was in its early stages of development at this time and, while members of the extreme left were influenced by Mexico's 1917 Constitution and Peru's social democratic Aprista movement, there was not much momentum behind the idea of profound social change.

The Liberals of the early 20th century favored a decrease in the role of the Church in education, legalization of divorce, decentralization of government, and limited government influence in the economy. For the first time in many years, supporters of a more socially conscious government (one that would attend to the agrarian question or labor issues, for example) felt that the administration was sympathetic to their concerns. With respect to changes such as income or land redistribution during the so called "Liberal Republic" much was left neglected, however, and popular political representation was almost non-existent. During the previous fifty years of Conservative rule, worker rights and the agrarian question were non-issues, and while they would be on the liberal president's nominal agenda, not much positive change was accomplished. President Olaya initiated some reforms; he strengthened voting rights and encouraged the unionization of workers. His successor, Alfonso López Pumarejo (1934-1938) continued a moderate reform agenda. It was during his tenure that the Colombian Worker's Federation (CTC) was founded.

By the end of the "Liberal Republic", the Liberal party's only real contribution was the provocation of social turmoil by making superficial changes without ensuring the implementation of more profound social transformation or popular political representation. Perpetuated over and over again by administrations from both parties, this process intensified the perception of dissidents who came to believe that change could

only be achieved through revolution. The Liberals' reign in government lasted for 16 more years but the reform agenda fell by the wayside as presidents chose to maintain the support of moderate party members and the country's elite. Little was done to answer the agrarian question that would be so central to the insurgent groups of the 1960s. President López Pumarejo made significant changes to property laws but only in response to pressure from international oil companies. According to the new legislation, all land that was not being utilized would officially come under the control of the State. The government was slow to act on the new law, however, and many landowners had time to make the necessary changes to keep their holdings. Arbitration was also nearly non-existent in many rural areas. The rise of Colombian communism in the late '30s and early '40s caused a panic throughout Colombia's elite and the CTC was purged by the Liberals themselves in 1947.

During the Liberal Republic, the Conservatives' reaction to losing their hegemony exacerbated the partisan division that caused extreme levels of violence during the ensuing decades. The Conservatives abstained from elections in 1934, 1938, and 1942. While they lost control of politics on a national level, they maintained influence in rural areas where clientelist *hacendados* were still very powerful and *campesinos* remained poor and uneducated. However, by the mid-1940s, the Liberals controlled both houses of Congress and had succeeded in gaining control of the judiciary and almost all municipal police forces. In 1946, as a result of divisions within the Liberal party, Luis Mariano Ospina Peréz (1946 – 1950) became the first Conservative president to hold office in two decades with 41% of the vote. Despite his victory, Ospina Peréz would soon be

overshadowed by Liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, who, "in the last three years of his life (1945-1948)…was the most influential politician in Colombia"[19].

Gaitán appeared on the scene when Colombia most needed a Liberal capable of mobilizing the masses with a message they could understand and is important because of the way in which he galvanized opposition to the government and status quo. More palatable to the average Colombian than Marxism, Gaitán's rhetoric was a socialist-inspired populism which spoke against the capitalist evils specific to Colombia, namely, how the country's oligarchs had been manipulating the people and the economy in their favor for decades. Sectarian violence was becoming more and more frequent and in response to two decades of Liberal control and entrenchment, the Conservatives began an informal campaign of "cleansing" and intimidation through the murder of Liberal politicians and supporters. Eliécer Gaitán, aware of his precarious position, often told his followers: "If they kill me, avenge me!"[20] His assassination on April 9, 1948, caused an immediate backlash of rioting known as the *bogotazo*. It is estimated that over a thousand people died during the *bogotazo's* two days. Surprisingly, the conservative president Ospina Peréz managed to maintain his office as the army soon regained control of the city and pledged its allegiance to him. In a meeting with Liberals on April 10, Ospina Peréz promised to confront the civil unrest by increasing Liberal representation in his government. Many in his party, however, did not agree with this solution and municipal governments ignored his compromise with the Liberals.

The long fought contest between conservatives and liberals emerged in Colombia as it did during the 19th century in many Latin American countries, namely, as a struggle

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[19] Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). 139
[20] Ibid, 140

between the wealthy elite, the Church and its allies, and anticlerical reformers, but ended up being the source of bitter violence that left a devastating legacy.[21] What had begun as an organic process in which citizens made a lifelong commitment to one of the two strongest political parties ended in the institutionalization of what statesman Miguel Antonio Caro called "hereditary hatreds."[22] Before Eliécer Gaitán's death, the sectarian tensions that had been present for nearly a century had manifested themselves in short bursts of violence. After his death, those tensions erupted into an all out civil war. This violent period of Colombia's history would claim an estimated 300,000 lives and marked what one historian calls the "militarization of the social polarization"[23].

The effects of *La Violencia*, which most historians periodize as occurring between 1945 and 1965, on Colombian society cannot be overstated. This period graphically demonstrated the fact that, for nearly a century and a half, violence in Colombia had been used as a tool with which to gain representation during long periods of the opposition party's hegemony. During this period, frustrated political factions formed guerilla groups and began a systematic violent "cleansing" of members of the opposition party. Gonzalo Sánchez states,

> To note that many Colombian children and adolescents between 1949 and 1965 (to establish a limit that from today's perspective is arbitrary), that is, an entire generation, were socialized not in the street, the neighborhood, the family, or school but in the guerilla unit is not simply a trite commentary on the scope of the entire process. [24]

Guerrilla groups emerged in many rural areas outside of Cundinamarca (the department in which Bogotá is situated) and while political leaders from both parties denied the

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[21] David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself* (University of California Press, 1993).

[22] Robert Dix, *The Political Dimensions of Change* (New Haven, Connecticut, 1967).

[23] Gonzalo Sánchez, *Guerra y política en la sociedad colombiana* (Bogotá, 1991).

[24] Ibid, 14-15

existence of a civil war, in many cities the violence was comparable to one. Towards the end of Ospina Peréz's presidency, a large number of recruits for the national police force were taken from the city of Chulavita, a Conservative stronghold in the department of Boyacá. Groups of police officers, which became known as *chulavitas*, began moving into Liberal cities and establishing their presence in a way that can only be described as occupation. In addition to *Chulavitas*, death squads known as *pájaros* swept the countryside employing brutal tactics. In many cases, the wombs of pregnant women were slashed open and the testicles of men were removed in a symbolic gesture about the procreation of the opposition party.[25]

The violence dropped off sharply after the country's only 20th century coup d'etat during which General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957) came to power. Both Liberals and Conservatives supported the new military government and his immediate pardon of those involved in guerrilla activities and initiatives aimed at reconciling the two factions gained him popular support as well. This opinion shifted only four years later, however, when Rojas began using oppression to maintain his control over the country. He was ousted in 1958 by the military and quickly replaced by a civilian government eager for unity and reconciliation.

Despite the hopeful beginning of Rojas' regime, Colombia still lacked popular political representation, and in 1958, with the foundation of the *Frente Nacional* (National Front, FN), this deficiency would be institutionalized. The FN was formed as an answer to the partisan violence wreaking havoc on the country since its independence. In a declaration signed by former conservative president Laureano Gómez and former liberal president Alberto Lleras Camargo (1958 – 1962), the two parties agreed to share

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[25] Jenny Pearce, *Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth* (London: Latin American Bureau, 1990).

power of the presidency by rotating between a candidate from each party every four years. The rotating presidency and equitable power sharing in all other offices would be maintained for the next sixteen years but the violence would not stop and the success of politicians was based on elite connections.[26]

During the second phase of *La Violencia*, a new type of violence emerged which is eerily familiar when one looks at the evolution of the county's late 20th century guerrilla groups. This process, which historians refer to as the "mafia-ization" of violence, had a new goal.[27] The transformation of violence was such that participants, "had become socialized to murder as a social instrument during the first phase. Now, however, the principal aim of organized homicide was not political power but rather economic gain."[28] In rural areas where the state was nearly non-existent and the *campesino-hacendado* conflict still raged, independent armed groups materialized to provide protection. Soon, both sides were contracting the services of or pledging their allegiances to one of these groups. These armed units had their roots in the partisan conflict but maintained as their principal goal their own economic welfare and used such tactics as extortion to achieve that goal.

The absence of political representation which began as a result of elite control of government and was later institutionalized by the FN, combined with the firmly cemented link between politics and violence due to *La Violencia*, created the conditions which would lead to the country's civil war. The bitter sectarian violence in the country caused war to be seen not as "a perversion of politics but its most efficacious

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[26] Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (New York: Oxford, 2002).
[27] Ibid, 349
[28] Ibid, 351

instrument."[29] The rift that divided Colombia's rural areas prevented the state from establishing a legitimate presence and the violence that raged across the country caused the appearance of independent armed groups. The "cleansing" of opposition party members by death squads caused an unconscious polarization of society that turned Colombia into what one historian described as "a nation of cities," independent municipalities ruled and guarded selfishly by each party's local oligarchy. It also led to the migration of an estimated 150,000 people and the displacement within the country of hundreds of thousands more.[30] The violence also destabilized the country's justice system; the Ministry of Justice, established in the midst of the sectarian battles in 1945, never established legitimacy with either party and as a result neither would turn to it for the legal adjudication of their conflicts. Meanwhile, Colombia's elite were still enjoying the country's remarkable macroeconomic growth and the socioeconomic divide continued to grow.

II

Violence Perpetuated: The Rise of the Insurgency in Colombia

The conditions discussed above, including an audacious military maneuver by the Colombian army, led to the creation of the guerrilla groups which would fight Colombia's civil war in the second half of the 20th century. During the 1960s, several armed groups materialized. Originally a reaction to extreme partisan violence, one historian explains,

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[29] Gonzalo Sánchez, *Guerra y política en la sociedad colombiana* (Bogotá, 1991). 7

[30] Geoff Simons, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London: SAQI, 2004). 41

> The same organizations which saved them from being killed by the *chulavitas* in 1950, which enabled them to confront the army in 1955, which defended their lives during the marches, allowed them in the 1960s and 1970s to limit the advance of the latifundio.[31]

Inspired by Guatemala's October Revolutionaries, Bolivia's *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Movement, MNR), and Castro's successful revolution in Cuba, Colombia's insurgent groups drew on Marxist and Leninist teachings for their ideological foundations. The ability to mobilize *campesino* masses hinged on the agrarian question and the state's historic inability or unwillingness to provide a realistic answer, two issues addressed by the socialist doctrines the groups adopted. These early guerrillas hoped to capitalize on the tendency towards armed conflict which evolved during *La Violencia's* most violent periods and saw combat as the only means with which to overcome their marginalized role in Colombian politics.[32]

In the first years of the 1960s, loosely organized self-defense groups emerged to protect rural *campesinos* from the country's large landowners and the liberal-conservative oligarchy. It was not until 1964, during an operation undertaken by the Colombian military called Plan Laso that these groups evolved into their more modern manifestation. Plan Laso was the first real demonstration of the Colombian military's commitment to "internal security" and was aimed at a group of insurgent peasants in the valley of Marquetalia, a stronghold of the group's leader Manuel Marulanda. The maneuver, which included 16,000 troops and an aerial bombardment, regained control of the area for the Colombian military but very few peasants were killed or captured and the aggressive tactics used pushed the self defense groups into militancy. Marco Palacios writes, "...this was, in a sense, the birth of the FARC as a national organization of dispersed and shifting

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[31] Historian Alfredo Molano, quoted in Geoff Simona, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London: Saqi, 2004). 42

[32] Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). 190

regional "fronts", which today number over forty."[33] As a result, what had been a

stationary self-defense group became a mobile insurrection force and evolved into the

world's oldest guerrilla group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaria de Colombia*

(Revolutionary Armed Forces, FARC), whose slogan remains: "¡Desde Marquetalia hasta

la Victoria!"

In 1966, at the second conference of the *Bloque Sur*, the group officially became

the FARC. Throughout the rest of the 1960s and the 1970s, the FARC gained momentum

and became more and more aggressive. Through prolonged guerrilla warfare the FARC

hoped to overthrow what it considered a repressive government ruled by the Colombian

oligarchy. A central tenet of their ideology was agrarian reform, considered an

"indispensable condition of vertically elevating the level of every *campesino's* material

and cultural life, liberating them from unemployment, hunger, illiteracy, and the endemic

illnesses that limit their capacity of work; to break the bonds of *latifundismo* and to

motivate the country's development of agricultural and industrial production."[34]

Originally closely allied with the Communist Party, during the 1980s, the FARC

distanced itself and developed its own political and military strategy.

A major event in FARC history, one that would engender a profound distrust in a

politically negotiated solution to the conflict occurred when President Belisario Betancur

Cuartas (1982 – 1986) legalized the FARC's political manifestation, the *Unión Patriotica*

(Patriotic Union, UP). The political violence of *La Violencia* was renewed in one of

Colombia's bloodiest periods. Nearly 3000 members of the UP were systematically

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[33] Ibid, 193

[34] Manuel Marulanda Veléz. "Programa agrario de los guerrilleros".
http://www.farcep.org/resistencia/internacional/?issue=current&section=2&article=contenido12&article_id
=11, accessed 19/3/07.

assassinated, including three of the party's candidates for president. This bloody period increased the FARC's belief that the only means of achieving the reforms it desired was through continued warfare.

The *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army, ELN) the second largest guerrilla group in Colombia, differs from the FARC in both its ideological foundations and the composition of its directorate. While a *campesino* membership was present, this group grew mostly from student protests and the majority of its leadership was comprised of urban intellectuals. While also Marxist-Leninist, the ELN never had close ties with the Communist Party but instead followed the *foco* theory of Che Guevara. This theory, which holds that a small, urban based leadership (*foco*) should establish revolutionary communities in rural areas to serve as models for the rest of the country, is less concerned with political action than with the successful consolidation of war with the state. In the years directly following the ELN's foundation, a small group of intellectuals, peasants, and oil workers traveled to Cuba for training and returned with new military knowledge and the promise of Cuban assistance. The group's focus on warfare made it difficult for it to develop a coherent political reform agenda. Discussions on the subject in the late sixties, "ended almost always in internal fighting."[35]

This lack of ideology proved discouraging to the ELN's *campesino* base. The rural guerrillas often came into conflict with the "petty bourgeoisie of the city" and the group saw periodic "cleansings" of members who were considered too distanced from the revolution.[36]

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[35] Ejército de Liberación de Colombia, IV Congreso. "El Mundo de los años sesenta". http://www.eln-voces.com/, accessed 19/3/07.

[36] Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). 191

Colombia's paramilitaries arose from the same context of violence from which both the FARC and the ELN did. They began as conservative *autodefensas* (self-defense groups) initially devoted to protecting the interests of wealthy *hacendados*. Although originally merely a reactionary force, the group's conservative members sought to protect the state and "social order" from the threat of communism.[37] These groups owe their survival and consolidation to the Cold War Doctrine of National Security which focused on counterinsurgency and the fight against "internal enemies" of the state. Two 1960s laws encouraged the growth of paramilitaries. Decree 3398 and Law 48 effectively legalized the formation of 'self-defense' groups that would fight against the newly formed leftist guerrilla groups.[38] The state's support would continue for several decades more or less explicitly; in 1982, Minister of Defense General Rafael Samudio explained, "the civil defense committees of autodefense are legitimate if these communities are organized to defend their property and their lives."[39]

A turning point in the history of Colombia's paramilitaries occurred as a result of the rising power of the country's narcotraffickers. During this period, the paramilitaries returned to their reactionary origins; their modern manifestations resulted from a desire to protect the country's new cocaine oligarchy from guerrilla groups relying on extortion to finance themselves. The 1981 kidnapping and murder of Carlos and Fidel Castaño's father and the kidnapping of Martha Nieves Ochoa, sister of a prominent drug trafficker, led to the consolidation of paramilitaries in the department of Antioquia. *Muerte a Los*

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[37] Nazih Richani, *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). 100

[38] passed in 1965 and 1968, respectively

[39] quoted in William Ramírez Tobon, *Uraba: Los Inciertos Confines de Una Crisis* (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, 1997). 126

Secuestradores (Death to Kidnappers), founded by the Ochoa family and a separate group created by the Castaño brothers received military and logistical support from active members of the *Fuerzas Públicas* (Public Forces, the armed forces and police force). During the 1990s, Carlos Castaño created the *Autodefensas Unidas Colombianas* (United Colombian Self-Defense Group, AUC) in an effort to unite the country's paramilitaries and formulate a political agenda which would allow them a place in negotiations to end the conflict.

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Colombia's claim to one of the longest running civilian-led democracies in Latin America quickly loses its relevance with a deeper investigation of the country's history. The militarization of Colombian politics began early in the twentieth century with *La Violencia* and was perpetuated during the *Unión Patriotica* massacre. Barriers to popular representation originated from the oligarchy's political hegemony and were institutionalized with the *Frente Nacional*. These are the most crucial elements in an understanding of Colombia's paradox. The inability of the Colombian government to establish a presence in large areas of the country left a void that was quickly filled by emerging guerrilla groups that capitalized on the instability created by these factors. As a result, Colombia finds itself in the midst of a 40 year civil war with no end in sight.

III

The Institutionalization of Inequality: The Context of Revolution in El Salvador

Just as in Colombia, the story of the revolutionary movement of the 1970s and 80s in El Salvador requires a discussion of developments that have their roots in the late 1800s. While the origins of Colombia's revolutionary history can be found in the incestuous link between politics and violence, the ideology behind El Salvador's insurgency stems from a century of inequality, agrarian unrest, and the institutionalization of the military as protector of oligarchic privilege. The country's inequities are both social and political. While most Salvadorans experienced extreme poverty and landlessness, the country's elites maintained a political system that neither encouraged nor allowed popular representation or social reform. This section, like the segment on Colombia, seeks to explore the conditions that led to El Salvador's civil war in order to more thoroughly understand how the country successfully negotiated an end to the conflict.

An analysis of El Salvador's history shows that the roots of the country's extreme inequities, the very ones upon which the socialist insurgency of the 1970s would capitalize for support, derive from conditions established as far back as 1800s. By the mid-19th century, coffee had become El Salvador's main export crop. Wealthy Salvadoran businessmen, made rich from the country's previous monocrop, indigo, were in a strong position to buy up the fertile lands that would be so important in coffee cultivation. The necessary investment of capital and time for coffee cultivation is intensive; coffee trees do not begin producing for several years after having been planted

and require constant care. This investment was impossible for the subsistence farmers or landless *campesinos* that made up the majority of the country's population. It was not long before a coffee oligarchy had been established and the all too familiar Latin American story of the chasm between the extremely rich and the desperately poor played out in El Salvador as well.[40]

The country's small size and large population had made it difficult for coffee barons to accumulate large tracts of land, but legislation introduced in 1856 and 1881, proposed as a form of economic liberalization that would generate new revenue for the country made this process much easier. The first decree required that two-thirds of communal lands be planted with coffee. The second went even further and abolished the communal lands altogether.[41] In 1879, close to 40% of country's land had been communal and up to 60% of the country's population may have been dependent on it.[42] The transition was not easy, as a result, and between 1872 and 1898 there were five popular uprisings during attempts to remove indigenous populations from their lands. With the rise of private armies that protected large haciendas, the entrenchment of the coffee elite in Salvadoran society proceeded apace. The beginning of the long standing tradition of using the country's *Fuerzas Publicas* (Public Forces, the military and National Police) to control the ever-growing landless population became officially established when the government consolidated these private protection forces and created the Rural Police (which would eventually evolve into the National Police) and the Mounted Police, mandated by decrees in 1884 and 1889. The world financial crisis

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[40] Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and* Evolution (Colorado: Westview. 1982). 40

[41] Ibid, 41-42

[42] Jeffrey M. Paige, *Coffee and Power: Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America* (Massachusetts: Harvard. 1997). 106

triggered by the First World War between 1914 and 1922 provided another opportunity for the coffee elite to build their economic power as small landholders were bankrupted and forced to sell their holdings at low prices to the *hacendados* whose capital base allowed them to weather the storm.

For the first half of the twentieth century, El Salvador's government was ruled directly by the oligarchy. During the first two decades, power was handed off between two brothers, Carlos and Jorge Meléndez, and their brother-in-law Alfonso Quiñonez. Economic liberals, all three worked to open up El Salvador's markets to further enrich the elites. In 1927, the brothers chose Pío Romero Bosque as their successor, expecting him to continue their tradition of liberalism for the benefit of the few. Romero took office in 1930 in an environment that was rapidly becoming politically charged. The US stock market crash of 1929 sent coffee prices diving and the landless peasants, now making a living off wage labor on large haciendas, faced a 50% cut in their pay. Suddenly, the country's growing proletariat was feeling more than just discontent and the burgeoning *Partido Comunista Salvadoreño* (Salvadoran Communist Party, PCS) found many people who were attracted to its doctrines,

> There came a time when we were not given land or work, or if there was land, it was of the worst quality...I had to abandon my wife and children. I did not get enough work to be able to give them food, still less clothing, or to educate them. I do not know where they are. Misery has separated us forever...For this I became a communist. [43]

A new consciousness was clearly emerging in the countryside: 40 new labor unions had been created by 1930.

Despite *campesino* unrest and the oligarchy's growing concerns about the new president's unwillingness to follow their rules, Romero called open elections in 1930. In

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[43] Thomas Anderson, *Matanza: El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981). 30, quoted in Paige, 108

what were "the most open and honest elections in Salvadoran history,"[44] Arturo Araujo won. Although still a member of the coffee growing elite, Araujo became known for his worker-friendly attitude. He paid laborers on his hacienda twice the national average and eventually gained the endorsement of the country's leftist newspaper, *Patria*. Despite his lack of sincere intentions to perform the necessary agricultural reform as evidenced by his unwillingness to do so during his administration, his election gave the Salvadoran working class hope that change could be effected through legitimate political action. This hope was premature, however, because on December 2, 1931, just eight months after taking office, Araujo was deposed in the first of many twentieth century coups. It had not taken long for the Salvadoran oligarchy to learn their lesson. The status quo was difficult for them to both perpetuate and protect at the same time and the solution to this problem was the institutionalization of the Salvadoran military as the new defender of the country's privileged elite. The situation was aptly described by an oligarch in 1980: "We have traditionally bought the military's guns and paid them to pull the trigger."[45]

The 1931 coup began the longest unbroken record of conservative military rule in Latin America and provided a wake-up call to a new, politically conscious leftist movement. Augustín Farabundo Martí, a member of the young PCS who had spent time with Augusto César Sandino, Nicaragua's leftist revolutionary leader, began planning a coup to overthrow the increasingly repressive military junta. However, the government discovered the plot days before it could be set into action. After the failed 1932 attempt, Martí was tried by a military tribunal and executed by a firing squad. The government's retribution did not end there: in what would come to be known as *La Matanza* (The

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[44] Tommie Sue Montgomery. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

[45] Ibid, 55

Massacre), anywhere between 17,000 and 40,000 Salvadorans were hunted down and killed by government security forces. Death squads hunted down any person in indigenous dress or with their characteristic physical attributes even though fewer than 10% of those killed had actually participated in the rebellion. The effects of this violent period were profound: "The *matanza* so deeply scarred the collective memory of the peasantry that they virtually abandoned Indian custom and dress and did not attempt to organize themselves again for three decades."[46]

The consequences of Martí's failed popular uprising would affect El Salvador in profound ways that fostered many of the conditions underlying the outbreak of civil war in 1979. The oligarchy's dependence on violence as a means of securing and protecting its power cemented the military's role in Salvadoran politics.

> If before the coup d'etat the political idea that only civilians must serve as president had triumphed and been consolidated, afterwards the opposite idea was pursued…afterward the entire oligarchy withdrew from the political game in order to leave it to military tyranny…(the army) was transformed, in practice, into the great elector and into a type of political party permanently in arms[47].

The harsh repression by the military junta, led by General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931 – 1934), caused the fledgling political consciousness of the 1920s to go underground or disappear entirely. Hernández outlawed all peasant organizations and demonstrations and banned any political organizations. The General would continue this repression in more subtle ways. He created *ProPatria*, the first manifestation of the Salvadoran "national party". He also decentralized decision making in the country and placed members of the military in important offices at national and local levels. As a

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[46] George Gelber and Anjali Sundaram, ed. *A Decade of War: El Salvador Confronts the Future* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991). 12

[47] Jorge Arias Gómez, "Augustín Farabundo Martí (Esbozo biográfico)" (San Salvador: La Universidad de El Salvador: July-August 1971). 181-240, quoted in Montgomery, 53

result of Hernández's repressive tactics and ban on political organizations, almost all visible opposition to the government vanished.

The Hernández regime established mechanisms that continued to characterize Salvadoran politics for most of the twentieth century and frustrated the kinds of social and economic reform that the 1970s insurgency held as its main tenets. The first, and most obvious, was the institutionalization of the military as the "custodian of Salvadoran politics."[48] The second was the use of corruption as a means of keeping conservative military officers in power. Tommie Sue Montgomery describes the situation as a political cycle. The cycle occurs as follows. First, there is repression on the part of the Conservative military regime. This repression leads to the emergence of a dissident, reformist faction within the army that attempts or is successful in accomplishing a coup. The new junta gains power for a short time but eventually military violence reestablishes the conservative hegemony and repression begins again. El Salvador endured this cycle no less than six times during the twentieth century.[49]

This cycle and the repression associated with it was a direct consequence of the symbiotic relationship between the military and the oligarchy. The link between the two most powerful sectors of Salvadoran society eliminated any opportunity for the political representation of opposition parties and allowed conservative governments to ignore issues such as agrarian reform. A 1944 attempted coup against Hernández strengthened the elite's desire to consolidate its control, led to the declaration of martial law, and caused an increase in the regime's repressive measures. In a stunning display of popular

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[48] George Gelber and Anjali Sundaram, ed. *A Decade of War: El Salvador Confronts the Future* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991). 12

[49] Tommie Sue Montgomery. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 57

power, one that provided a glimpse of the capacity for mobilization that the Salvadoran people would develop in the 1970s, students from the University of El Salvador, labor activists, and leftist organizers called a general strike that brought the country to a stand still on May 8, 1944. As a result, Martínez resigned, but not before passing power to his chosen successor, General Andrés Ignacio Menendez (1944 – 1945)[50]. Menendez initiated some reforms; he reinstated freedom of the press and named leaders from several political factions to his cabinet. This proved to be too much for the oligarchy. Still wary of the infiltration of "communist elements", the elites saw these changes as too dangerous and on October 21, 1944, director of the national police, a close ally of Hernández, executed a counter coup.

Real reform was stalled again during the regime of General Salvador Castaneda Castro (1945-1948) who performed a give and take which became common in Salvadoran government. In order to pacify the masses, he opened borders, promised a restructuring of the military and police, and allowed several political parties to remain in existence. At the same time, he reigned in these parties' political capacities by taking away civil liberties and delegitimizing figures deemed too outspoken or popular. These diversionary tactics would be used by the next six presidents, including Carlos Humberto Romero (1977-1979), the president in office at the start of the country's civil war. Hugh Byrne, author of *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* puts it concisely,

> ...at least from 1946 to 1979, the Salvadoran system was characterized by rigid control to maintain order, repression against any threats to oligarchic rule in the countryside, and oscillation between repression and concession in the cities and toward the working and middle classes.[51]

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[50] Ibid, 61

[51] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (London: Lynne Riener, 1996). 24

Military coup d'etats that occurred in 1948 and 1960 were two more examples of the ruling party's reaction to governments that strayed from the conservative agenda: maintenance of the status quo which kept land in the hands of a few families and limited the political opportunities of leftist movements. Not even the superficial reforms, such as Castaneda's legalization of political parties incapacitated by his restrictions, made any significant social impact and were almost immediately overturned by repressive military juntas.

IV

The Rise of the Insurgency in El Salvador

The extreme economic disparities which originated in El Salvador in the 1800s were perpetuated throughout the twentieth century as a result of the military's position as a protector of the oligarchy's power. Despite the continual prohibition of leftist political parties, the extreme poverty faced by the majority of the country's population motivated the persistence of underground leftist groups. The clandestine opposition did not have widespread popular support, however. Writing during the 1960s, historian Alastair White observed of the peasants that,

> the vast majority make no connection between the existing political regime and their poverty, and…the lack of any sign of rebellion, protest, or even much opposition voting since 1932 is not, as is claimed in some left-wing writings, simply a matter of fear of a repetition of the holocaust that occurred then. There is discontent, but it is vaguely focused on the rich or on landowners rather than sharply focused against the government[52].

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[52] Alastair White, *El Salvador, Nations of the Modern World* (New York: Prager, 1973). 208

By the beginning of the civil war in 1979 however, the revolutionaries had at their disposal an "extended rear guard" consisting of hundreds of thousands of *campesinos* involved in several popular mass organizations.

The continued inability or unwillingness of the government to enact reforms to alleviate the country's high rates of poverty and unemployment combined with the introduction of liberation theology to Latin America had profound effects on the growth of political consciousness and participation in El Salvador. The 1960 "Soccer War" was a perfect example of the government's neglectful attitude towards the country's economic needs. The military junta decided to invade Honduras without considering the disastrous consequences. It spent roughly one-fifth of the country's annual budget in 100 hours of fighting and lost a trading partner that had imported $23 million worth of Salvadoran goods. In addition, 100,000 Salvadorans, living in Honduras before the war, were repatriated. In a country where a large percentage of fertile land remained in the hands of a very small group of people, the majority of the returning citizens became landless, unemployed *campesinos*.[53]

These additional strains on the economy only worsened living conditions. During the 1970s, "the poorest 20 percent of Salvadorans earned one-fiftieth of the country's income, while the most comfortable 20 percent earned two-thirds."[54] Over 40% of these peasants had become landless by 1975. [55] This was in stark contrast to the prosperity of El Salvador's elite. In 1971, 38% of the country's top 1,429 firms were in the control of

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[53] Tommie Sue Montgomery. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 57, 82

[54] Mario Lungo Uclés, *El Salvador in the Eighties: Counterinsurgency and Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1996).

[55] Charles D. Brockett, *Land, Power, and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988). 75

the 36 largest landowners.[56] The oligarchy succeeded in maintaining its privilege for almost a century but developments in Latin America, among them successful leftist revolutions in Cuba, the developing Sandinista movement in Nicaragua, and most importantly for El Salvador, the development of Liberation Theology, would unite hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries and make this task much harder.

Liberation Theology caused the traditional alliance between the Latin American church, military, and economic elite to be reexamined. Developed during Vatican II and the 1968 meeting of the Latin American Episcopal Conference in Medellín, Colombia, Liberation Theology was the product of the Latin American bishops' desire to confront the tremendous social and economic strain that they saw their parishoners facing. Its "preferential option for the poor" came from a new reading of the Bible in which liberation through Christ no longer applied only to the release of the soul towards heaven but began to be interpreted also as a path of escape from the acute poverty and inhumane conditions in which so many *campesinos* lived. The bishops that met in Medellín decided that it was their duty, "to defend the rights of the oppressed" and "to denounce the unjust action of world powers that works against the self determination of weaker nations."[57] Priests began promoting Christian Base Communities (CEBs), Bible study groups which were designed to develop their own leadership. CEBs were intended to incorporate the laity into the rituals of the church and propagated the idea that all Christians were equal before God.[58]

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[56] Luis Domenech, et al. *The Basis of Wealth and Reaction in El Salvador* (San Salvador: 1976). quoted by Byrne, 20

[57] *The Church in the Present Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the* Council (Washington D.C.: US Catholic Conference, 1970). quoted in Montgomery, 99

[58] Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 105

In seven centers all across the country, 15,000 lay teachers and preachers were trained during the 1970s.[59] While the influence of most of the clergy on the work of the CEBs was strictly spiritual, the secular ramifications of Liberation Theology were profound. *Campesinos* who had always been taught, "accept your lot here on earth because your real reward will come in the hereafter" began to apply the new Biblical message to their social situations. These peasants soon began to use their new organizational skills and network of communities to call strikes, plan marches, and mobilize large groups for demonstrations. By the late 70s, the influence of the new Christian theology and the work of the CEBs had become such a threat to the oligarchy that fliers surfaced proclaiming, "Be a Patriot! Kill a Priest!".[60]

While the "popular church", the church organization formed by lay members that was quickly developing a political life of its own, formed an important part of the "extended revolutionary rear guard" in El Salvador in the countryside, a vital source of urban revolutionary mobilization came from the National University.[61] Following an international trend during the 60s and on the heels of the successful Cuban Revolution, Marxist and Leninist thought spread among the faculty and student body of the University of El Salvador. One of its most well known rectors, Fabio Castillo, was a member of the Salvadoran Communist Party and promoted many of his colleagues within the University. Speaking of one of the most important insurgent organizations, the *Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional*, historian Cynthia McClintock said, "The birthplace of the revolutionary movements that were to compose the FMLN was the

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59 Ibid, 105
60 Ibid, 109
61 Mario Lungo Uclés, *El Salvador in the Eighties: Counterinsurgency and Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996). 48

National University of El Salvador."[62] In 1972 the administration of Colonel Arturo

Molina (1972-1977) occupied the University and purged it of faculty, staff, and students

believed to have leftist leanings. In a 1975 demonstration against the extravagance of the

Miss Universe Pageant (on which the Salvadoran government spent $30 million, again

showing their indifference to its citizens' poverty), at least fifteen students were killed

and dozens were injured when attacked by security forces.[63] In protest of the

government's extreme reaction, more than one hundred activists occupied the National

Cathedral for nearly a week. It was during this time that the *Bloque Popular*

Revolucionario, (BPR, Popular Revolutionary Block) one of the most influential leftist

organizations in Salvadoran politics was formed. By the end of the 1970s, the

consequences of political repression manifested themselves by producing students and

professors who became an integral part of the insurgency.

In addition to the popular mobilization of *campesinos* and urban intellectuals, the

military component of the Salvadoran revolution evolved and unified into five Political-

Military Organizations and with corresponding mass popular organizations aimed at

mobilizing large groups of supporters. While each group maintained distinct ideologies,

by the end of the decade they were united under the banner of the *Frente Farabundo*

Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN, Farabundo Martí Front for National

Liberation). Despite this unity, encouraged mostly by the extreme repression and lack of

political representation in the Salvadoran government, it is important to examine each

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[62] Cynthia McClintock, *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace. 1998).

[63] Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 89

actor's ideology individually as divergent rhetoric threatened the stability of this umbrella organization.

The first of the OPMs, the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación* (FPL, Popular Liberation Forces) emerged from a rift in the Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS). For most of the 1970s, the PCS maintained that change could be affected in El Salvador through a "bourgeois-democratic revolution."[64] It sought support from progressive military officers and members of the middle class. The party's secretary general, Cayetano Carpio, disagreed with this strategy. In 1970, Carpio left the party and formed the FPL. This organization believed in a "people's war" and focused heavily on achieving reform through military struggle. In 1972 the FPL concentrated its efforts on building popular support from the masses and by mid-1975 had formed the country's largest mass popular organization, the *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* (BPR, Popular Revolutionary Bloc) with 80,000 – 100,000 members. This group's key participants were students, professors, and peasants who also believed in a military-led revolution.[65]

The *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (ERP, People's Revolutionary Army) materialized as El Salvador's second OPM in 1972. Founded by intellectuals and university students who supported Liberation Theology, the group worked closely with priests in the Salvadoran countryside. The organization also included previous members of the *Juventud Comunista* (Communist Youth) and radicalized bourgeoisie.[66] The ERP focused on building a military answer to the repressive regime in power. Its mass popular organization, the *Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero* (28th of February Popular Leagues, LP-

[64] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996). 36

[65] Ibid, 36-37

[66] Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 121

28), grew to have 10,000 members who were primarily university students and intellectuals that sympathized with the ERP's militarily focused theories of revolution.

The third OPM was created because of an internal dispute over the group's rhetoric. Poet Roque Dalton began advocating for less emphasis on military action and more popular mobilization. The ERP saw Dalton as a threat to its stability and arrested him, charging him with treason.[67] Dalton's execution in 1975 led his supporters to form the Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional (FARN, Armed Forces of National Resistance). The FARN maintained its opposition to a revolution based solely on military action but acknowledged the necessity of an armed group for protection from government repression while it worked towards it goal of popular mobilization. It developed relationships with reformist military officers and cultivated a strong support base in urban laborers. The FARN was also one of the only groups in El Salvador to use kidnapping as a strategy; the group added $40 million to its "war fund" in the 1970s.[68] The *Frente de Acción Popular Unificada*, the FARN's mass popular organization, drew its support originally from *campesinos* influenced directly by politicized priests working in the countryside but expanded its membership by mobilizing labor unions.[69]

By 1980, the FMLN consolidated the organization of the FPL, the ERP, the FARN, the *Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos* (PRTC, Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers; the fifth and smallest OPM). The PCS, finally frustrated by its inability to affect reform through legal or political channels, joined as well. The political organizations were unified under the banner of the *Frente*

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[67] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996). 37

[68] Ibid, 38

[69] Tommie Sue Montgomery. *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 125

Democrático Revolucionario (Democratic Revolutionary Front, FDR) and this organization, together with the FMLN, protagonized the civil war while the Salvadoran military fought desperately to maintain the status quo.[70]

The number, high level of organization, and size of the OPMs and popular mass organizations that emerged in the seventies demonstrate the profound changes that occurred in El Salvador between the time that White made his conclusions about the non-existent political consciousness of the masses and the outbreak of civil war in 1979. By 1980, "the Salvadoran regime model that had operated since 1948 was in crisis."[71] The example set by successful leftist movements in Latin America paired with Liberation Theology's radical message created an awareness which finally connected the extreme poverty of the majority of Salvadorans to its government. For the FMLN, revolutionary war became the only means of achieving the reforms that it desired. The conditions created in the early 1900s – the institutionalization of the military-oligarchic alliance's political and economic hegemony and the resulting extreme political repression and poverty – finally pushed the country to the brink of civil war.

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[70] Ibid, 74, 134
[71] Ibid, 46

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The Trajectory of Civil War in El Salvador and Colombia

In the same way that knowledge of how civil wars begin dictates the ways in which peace should be negotiated, the trajectory of the war once it has begun is important to analyzing the success or failure of negotiations. This chapter discusses important events of both El Salvador and Colombia's civil wars and further explores the differences between each country's histories which precipitate peace (in the case of El Salvador) or impede it (in the case of Colombia). El Salvador's story of revolution culminates in a successfully negotiated peace process observed and implemented by a United Nations peace keeping operation. Conflict continues to plague Colombia. Despite the divergent contexts from which war arose in each country, in each case revolution was seen as a means of implementing significant reforms – a task judged impossible through the existing political process.

I

Civil War in El Salvador

The conditions that had been developing in El Salvador since the beginning of the twentieth century finally pushed the country towards a crisis by the end of the 1970s. Inequalities created by the institutionalization of the landed oligarchy, the establishment of the military as protector of elite privilege, and the Salvadoran state's unwillingness to address the issue of agrarian reform and poverty fomented unrest in the majority of the country's impoverished *campesinos*. With the growing popularity of Liberation Theology

in the Latin American Catholic Church in the late seventies, mobilization of the masses became possible in a completely new way. By the end of the seventies, five political-military organizations had united as the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación* and together with the *Frente Democrático Revolucionario* was planning its next step in achieving, "the conquest of power and the installation of a revolutionary democratic government, which at the head of the people will undertake the construction of a new society".[72]

While civil war was certainly on the horizon, the failure of a 1979 reformist coup cemented the FMLN's belief that *their* revolution was the only means of change. The coup brought a junta of three civilians and two progressive members of the military to power. The new executives included representatives from all political parties, intellectuals from the *Universidad Centroamericana*, and progressive businessmen in their administration. While the coup was originally conceived to include only young, reformist members of the armed forces, two senior officers discovered the plot and demanded they be included. Their presence, combined with opposition from the oligarchy and more conservative members of the military, debilitated the new government's capacity to make changes.[73] While the junta attempted to develop agrarian reforms and encourage a democratic opening of the political process, extreme conservative elements of society embarked on a "dirty war" forming paramilitary groups, led mainly by Major Roberto d'Aubuisson. D'Aubuisson encouraged the development of

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[72] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996). 76

[73] Tommie Sue Montgomery, *Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). 18

death squads in every sector of the country's security forces and created civilian squads as well.[74]

Despite the promise of change that the coup of 1979 initially held, its legitimacy in the eyes of the OPMs and mass popular organizations soon diminished as conservative repression increased and the military members of the junta became more and more powerful. The FMLN-FDR soon became convinced that the coup would not give them an opportunity to affect their revolution politically and that change necessitated civil war. On January 10, 1981, the FMLN launched what it called the "final offensive." While the insurgency believed that the military campaign, coupled with a popular revolution, would topple the government quickly, in just a few months it had reached a stalemate with El Salvador's Armed Forces (ESAF). Over the next few years the advantage went back and forth between the two parties. The weakness of the ESAF stemmed from their inability to develop an appropriate strategy for fighting the guerrilla attacks being waged against it. For the FMLN, its attempt to build a regular army during this time caused its overextension.[75]

During the rest of the 1980s, neither side managed to gain a definitive advantage over its opponent. The Sandinista government in Nicaragua and Communist countries around the world provided the FMLN much needed money, equipment, and training, allowing it to continue its military campaigns. The ESAF was funded heavily by a U.S. government intent on preventing "the take-over of the country by a Leninist-Castroite" guerrilla army.[76] When Ronald Reagan came to office in 1981, he increased U.S. aid to El Salvador from $64.5 million to $156 million. This figure rose to $302 million in 1982,

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[74] Ibid, 53-8
[75] Ibid, 75
[76] *The Making of U.S. Policy: El Salvador 1977-1984*, National Security Archive, doc. # 01805

a figure which included $80 million in military aid. The insurgents countered this influx of money by focusing its military strategy on targets which would damage the country's economy. During this decade, a US embassy study reported that damage caused by the FMLN reached as much as $598.6 million.[77]

By the end of the decade, the two parties had reached a stalemate. Several circumstances, both international and domestic, heightened the standoff and increased the relevance of negotiations as an option to end the war. First, an aggressive offensive launched by the FMLN in 1989, the largest of the war, showed both the Salvadoran government and the U.S. that a military victory by the State was all but impossible. It also, "had the effect of reinforcing the beliefs of some (Salvadoran) government and business leaders that economic recovery and the maintenance of public support would require a negotiated end to the conflict necessitating compromise and concessions on both sides".[78] This growing pressure from the business class, combined with a swell of public support from a population exhausted by poverty and instability that they came to associate more with the war than an oppressive government, encouraged President Alfredo Cristiani (1989 – 1994) to commit to negotiations.[79] On an international level, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union had a powerful effect on both sides. The end of the Cold War, combined with the defeat of the Sandinistas in the 1990 Nicaraguan elections, meant the loss of important sources of support for the FMLN. Ironically, with the threat of Communism waning in Latin America and the fall of the Communist

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[77] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienncr, 1996). 102

[78] Ibid, 175

[79] Alfredo Rángel, *Guerra Insurgente: Conflictos en Malasia, Perú, Filipinas, El Salvador, y Colombia* (Bogotá: Intermedio, 2001).

superpower, the Salvadoran government also lost a significant amount of aid as the United States no longer felt it necessary to ensure the defeat of the FMLN.

The military stalemate, deepened by the loss of external aid for both parties, the decrease in both elite and popular support for the war, and the enthusiasm of the Cristiani government to end the conflict, led both groups to agree to negotiations led by a UN mediator. On April 4, 1990, the FMLN and the Salvadoran government signed the Geneva Agreement which outlined the framework and objectives of the peace process. For the next two years, the insurgents, government, and UN mediator met frequently to discuss issues ranging from human rights verification, judicial and electoral reform, the future role of the ESAF, and the legitimization of the FMLN as a political party. Two major issues threatened the process during this time. The first was the issue of a cease-fire. The Salvadoran government wanted an immediate disarmament of rebel forces but the FMLN maintained that its military was its only bargaining chip. The insurgents' continued military offensives during 1990 and 1991 and newly acquired surface to air missiles reminded the government that it would have to concede important points if the war was to end. The second issue was the role of the ESAF. The FMLN wanted "the phasing-out of both armies in a gradual, symmetrical and simultaneous process with the formation of a new public security force of a civilian nature."[80] The ESAF, accustomed to their institutionalized position in society, was more than reluctant to concede. In the end, September 1991 agreements signed in New York called for the "purification," reduction of size, and reform of doctrine and training of the ESAF. The accords also created a new

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[80] Farabundo Martí Liberation Front, General Command, "The FMLN's Rationale for Ending Militarism, Reaching a Cease-fire, and Advancing to an Unarmed Democracy", communiqué (El Salvador: 17 August 1990). quoted in Byrne, 183

National Civilian Police force that would integrate former FMLN combatants.[81] On

January 16, 1992, the two groups signed the final agreement for the end to the war in

Mexico.

The end to the Salvadoran civil war was precipitated by the convergence of

several important domestic and international factors. The military stalemate, the fall of

the Soviet Union and the Sandinista defeat, and the internal call for peace forced each

side to think seriously about negotiations to end the war. US support of the peace process

and the presence of an objective, third-party negotiator from the United Nations ensured

that the negotiations would not stall.

II

Civil War in Colombia

In the decades immediately following the insurgency's emergence, Colombia's

conflict can be characterized as low intensity warfare. Following a crushing defeat during

an ambitious maneuver to establish its presence in the coffee growing regions of the west,

the FARC decided to avoid any future "adventurist action" and returned to traditional

guerrilla strategy. For the next ten years, the group remained hidden in rural areas east of

the Cordillera Central. The group recruited, trained, and filled the void left by the lack of

state presence by installing its own mayors, police forces, and judicial systems. The

absence of guerrilla presence in urban areas and of major offensives against the state

caused the Colombian military to adopt a passive attitude. "For decades following *La*

Violencia, the insurgents remained largely "out there," out of sight, out of mind, patiently

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[81] Hugh Byrne, *El Salvador's Civil War: A Study of Revolution* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996). 187

building an alternative to society."[82] The ELN, following Guevara's *foco* theory, was intent on finding a rural area that was easily accessible by the urban high command. Internal tensions in the ELN, including the tension which came from divisions between the urban commanders and their rural support base, caused the group to be very vulnerable. It suffered significant defeats, the largest of which occurred when its most important column was decimated at Anorí in Antioquia Department in 1973.[83]

It was not until 1982 that the FARC decided to shift its emphasis from its political goals to the consolidation of an *Ejército del Pueblo* (People's Army, EP – thus its new acronym, the FARC-EP). At the Seventh Party Conference, the FARC set as its goal the increase of its army by around 26,000 members and the establishment of 48 fronts. Due to the discovery of petroleum in areas of ELN presence and the group's increasing use of extortion and strategic attacks on oil companies and pipelines, the group experienced an increase in its resources and recruitment abilities. During the eighties, the aggressive urban guerrilla group M-19 perpetrated the most impressive guerrilla attacks. The seizure of the Dominican embassy in 1980 (during a banquet attended by the U.S. ambassador and the papal nuncio) and the daring invasion of the Palacio de Justicia in 1985, brought the reality of the war home to many urban elites.[84] The rapid, heavy handed response of the military to the M-19's successes and its lack of a wide support base or funding caused it to be so weakened that it demobilized at the end of the decade.

The increase in insurgent capabilities due to narcotrafficking profits and a change in the nature of combat led to an escalation of violence during the late 1980s and

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[82] Thomas Marks, "Colombian Army Adaptation to FARC Insurgency" (US Army War College, 2002).

[83] Marco Palacios and Frank Safford, *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). 359

[84] Ibid, 359

throughout the 1990s. The FARC-EP made significant progress towards achieving its 1982 goals; by the beginning of the decade its army had grown to include almost 20,000 members on 60 fronts. Due to a process of "counter-reform" in which, "narcotraffickers and their associates in organized crime...acquired more than 10 percent of the most fertile lands in the country,"[85] the interests and territories of traditional influence of the FARC-EP suddenly came into conflict with the new illicit activities and investments. The rural based guerrilla organization began taxing the drug lords' products and running protection for large landowners and *campesinos* alike. Revenues from these activities, combined with ransom payments, earned the FARC between $60 million and $100 million a year.[86]   The ELN also profited significantly from extortion of both narcotraffickers and oil companies; it earned an estimated $150 million annually during the nineties.

As a result of a surge in resources, the FARC-EP began a series of direct clashes with government forces which took the Colombian military by surprise. The group also developed a new strategy, the aim of which was to expel the state from large areas in order to establish itself as the de facto power.[87] The FARC-EP did this militarily but also found that, acting as an alternative to the violent and extortive presence of the narcotraffickers made it possible to build a large support base. It is estimated that *coca* cultivation provides a crucial source of income for more than one million peasants. [88] The guerrilla group emerged as this group's protector, forcing drug lords to pay peasants

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[85] Ibid, 73, based on Alejandro Reyes data
[86] Ibid, 75
[87] Camilo Echandia, *Dos décadas de escalamiento del conflicto armado en Colombia (1986-2006)*, (Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2006). 136
[88] Nazih Richani, *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). 75

market price for coca leaves and regulating everything from alcohol consumption to domestic abuse in marginalized areas of colonization where the state had no real presence.[89]

The intensification of violence perpetrated by insurgent groups rejuvenated by a surge in profit and support combined with the failure of Andrés Pastrana's peace talks (to be discussed further in the next chapter) led the Colombian public to call for a hard-lined, military response. The administration of Alvaro Uribe Veléz (2002 – present) heeded this call but, to date, his success is questionable. Despite the considerable U.S. aid the Colombian military has at its disposal (The U.S. contributed $1 billion in 2000 alone and has given, to date and including funds spent by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), $7.7 billion dollars), it has been unable to make any real headway in defeating the guerrilla militarily.[90] Plan Patriota, an ambitious counter-insurgency operation which began in 2002 has been unable to kill or capture a single member of the FARC-EP's high command. [91] Despite the successful demobilization of 27,000 members of the AUC, negotiations with the FARC-EP have stalled repeatedly.

The situation in Colombia seems to be at a deadlock in which each side believes it can win what is, currently, an un-winnable war. The Colombian military's lack of organization, ability, and willingness to respond to the insurgency in its first few years of existence allowed the FARC-EP and ELN to build their support bases and strategy in the countryside. The spectacular profits from narcotrafficking, an industry which will not be

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[89] Ibid, 64

[90] Michael Durnan and Mark Peceny, "The FARC's Best Friend: US Antidrug Policies and the Deepening of Colombia's Civil War in the 1990s", *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (Summer, 2006). 95 – 113; Francisco Thoumi, *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes* (Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003). 230

[91] Antonio Navarro Wolff, "Ending the Conflict with the FARC" *Inter-American Dialogue Working Paper* (January 2007). 8

defeated easily, provided the country's oldest and strongest guerrilla group, the FARC-EP, the ability to finance a new wave of fighting supported by a disenfranchised population dependent upon *coca* cultivation. The lack of military success during the administration of Álvaro Uribe leads one to wonder if Colombia's war can be won on the battlefield.

El Salvador's Lessons and Colombia's Challenges: On the Possibilities of Peace

The origins and context of the civil wars in El Salvador and Colombia differ greatly. The most important dissimilarity, and the one that motivated the analysis and conclusions of this work, is the peaceful settlement of the Salvadoran conflict with the help of a United Nations peacekeeping mission. Requested by both the insurgency and the state, the mission was one of the first post-Cold War instances of intervention in an internal conflict. Indicative of an evolution in UN peacekeeping, the operation was unprecedented both in its nature and the success it achieved. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali commented: "It is no exaggeration to say that, taken together, and given their breadth and scope, these agreements constitute a prescription for a revolution achieved by negotiation." [92] Recent literature on peacekeeping suggests that a similar remedy can be prescribed to a variety of patients with equal success. The case of Colombia, and the failure of a negotiated end to its civil war, contradicts this idea. However, some aspects of the Salvadoran process remain relevant and provide important lessons about how to proceed. This chapter explores those aspects and then discusses the barriers to peace specific to Colombia.

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[92] Call, Charles, "Assessing El Salvador's Transition from Civil War to Peace", in *Ending Civil Wars*, ed Cousens, Rothchild, and Stedman. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002). 71

I

El Salvador's Lessons

El Salvador's twelve year civil war officially ended in January 1992 with the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City. The cease-fire brought an end to violence that involved 12,300 FMLN combatants, claimed an estimated 75,000 lives, and displaced more than a million people.[93] Observed and implemented by an unprecedented United Nations peacekeeping mission, "most analysts consider El Salvador's transition from civil war to peace among the most successful implementations of a peace agreement in the post-Cold War period."[94] Between May 1991 and April 1995, the United Nations Peace Keeping Mission to El Salvador (ONUSAL) negotiated not just peace but profound changes in the country's institutions.

Several things stand out about ONUSAL that are relevant for Colombia. In one of its first opportunities after the Cold War, the UN took the opportunity to demonstrate its flexibility and evolving mandate in peace missions, two things that will be necessary for the development of sustainable peace in Colombia. The deployment of UN observers and human rights verifiers before a cease-fire was achieved in El Salvador signaled a commitment that went beyond the will of the negotiating parties. This dedication to peace continued throughout the process as the UN held each party accountable for upholding conditions defined in the accords when the Salvadoran government or FMLN later attempted to renegotiate.[95] In its unflinching role as a third-party guarantor, ONUSAL

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[93] Ibid, 386

[94] Ibid, 383

[95] Cynthia J. Arnson, *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999). 413

"provided a frank assessment of the state of implementation of the accords, which apparently embarrassed the government into taking its commitments more seriously, increased donors' pressure for compliance, and demonstrated the moral and political influence of the UN's verification judgments."[96] While the UN's mandate originated from the request of both the FMLN and the Salvadoran conflict, the organization made it clear that it was committed to negotiating peace regardless of either party's willingness to implement a specific accord once the process was underway.

Another element of the UN mission in El Salvador that is relevant for Colombia is the way in which its expanded mandate influenced the essence of the peace process in El Salvador. The underlying goal of UN involvement in negotiations became "to recreate state institutions so as to legitimize and confer credibility on democracy and its rules; in other words, to establish a true rule of law."[97] ONUSAL was committed to building a sustainable peace through institution building. In that vein, the mission's mandate was extended twice, first to allow for the creation of the Joint Group for the Investigation of Politically Motivated Illegal Armed Groups in December 1993 and later to expand its capabilities to observe the 1994 elections. Each was intended to allow enough safe political space for elections that the FMLN, the government, and the Salvadoran people would see them as legitimate. After the 1994 elections, when international donors pressured a decrease in ONUSAL activities, the mission did not leave but rather downgraded to the United Nations Mission in El Salvador (MINUSAL) to continue to

[96] Charles Call, "Assessing El Salvador's Transition from Civil War to Peace", in *Ending Civil Wars*, ed Cousens, Rothchild, and Stedman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002). 393

[97] Antonio Cañas and Héctor Dada, "Political Transition and Institutionalization in El Salvador" in *Comparative Peace Processes in Latin America* ed. Cynthia Arnson (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999). 71

verify the implementation of peace accords and maintain an accurate flow of information between all parties.[98]

Just as the pre-cease fire human rights verification established the UN's commitment to building a sustainable peace, the creation of commissions to investigate human rights abuses generated an atmosphere of reconciliation between the FMLN, the government, and the Salvadoran people. The Truth Commission and Ad Hoc Commissions in charge of this task were responsible for, "the most thorough housecleaning ever carried out of a Latin American military not defeated in war" and recommended the removal of the minister and vice minister of defense, most of the generals, and 102 officers.[99] These purges, along with other radical reforms which included reducing the military's size from 60,000 to 6,000 members, initiated profound changes in a society previously controlled by the institutionalized power of the military.

By the end of ONUSAL and MINUSAL's missions, the 12,000 member FMLN had been demobilized and reintegrated into society. By 2000, the FMLN's political party had won mayoral positions in the country's largest cities, including its capital San Salvador.[100] The military never reasserted itself as a hegemonic political power and, for the most part, has accepted its newly defined role as defender of, "the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of its territory".[101] While El Salvador still suffers from high poverty and crime rates, the goal of ONUSAL, to negotiate a sustainable peace, was accomplished.

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[98] "El Salvador – ONUSAL, Mandate".
http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/onusalmandate.html. accessed 3/20/07
[99] Charles Call, "Assessing El Salvador's Transition from Civil War to Peace", in *Ending Civil Wars*, ed Cousens, Rothchild, and Stedman. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002). 397
[100] Ibid, 409
[101] T. A. Wilkins in *Keeping the Peace: Multidimensional UN Operations in Cambodia and El Salvador* ed. Doyle, Johnstone, Orr, (Cambridge: Cambridge UniversityPress, 1997). 262

The UN mission's commitment must be duplicated in Colombian negotiations. Its dedication to institution building will be crucial in a country that historically has had very little state presence in rural areas. Human rights and election observation will also be necessary in ensuring that a future political manifestation of the FARC-EP will not find itself in the midst of a massacre like the one that annihilated the *Unión Patriotica* in the 1980s. Despite the different origins and context of El Salvador's civil war, the country's negotiated peace does, in fact, provide many lessons for Colombia.

II

Colombia's Challenges to Peace: The Failure of Previous Negotiations

The successful termination of the Salvadoran conflict and recent literature suggests that a UN peacekeeping mission would be a viable means of bringing peace to Colombia. There are, however, several complicating factors unique to the country which, currently, rule out the possibility of a negotiated peace. Beginning with President Belisario Betancur (1982-1986), the search for such a peace has been at least a nominal plank in the platforms of all the country's subsequent presidents. The failure of these attempts signals the lack of willingness on the part of both the insurgency and the state to fully commit to the peace process. The failure of negotiations in the 1990s demonstrates the current deadlock in which neither side believes it can be defeated (and so has no real motivation to lay down its arms). The developments which led to this deadlock – the rise of narcotrafficking, the military failure of the state, and the effect of US aid – are also

discussed in this section. These factors provide an important contrast to the precipitous conditions which materialized in El Salvador to facilitate its peace process.

The failure of previous attempts to successfully negotiate Colombia's conflict is evidence of the lack of objective conditions precipitous for peace. A brief look at this history is important in understanding the specific challenges a peace mission would face in Colombia. President Belisario Betancur's place in history, as well as the failure of his initiatives, can paradoxically be attributed to the same thing: his unprecedented commitment to peace. Taking office with ambitious goals, Betancur immediately offered a general amnesty to insurgents and established a bi-partisan Peace Commission. The president also pledged his support to the Central American Contadora Peace Process and the contingent of Cold War non-aligned countries. In 1984 he signed the La Uribe Accords with the FARC-EP, the EPL (a small, Maoist guerrilla group that believed in a "prolonged popular war"), and the urban insurgent group the M-19 declaring a ceasefire.[102] Despite this success, Betancur's radical efforts earned him the suspicion of the military and political elite who believed the President to be a communist sympathizer. As a result he "never accomplished the unification of the establishment around his peace policies."[103] The ceasefire soon fell apart as violence between the military and guerrilla groups broke out once more.

Although many of Betancur's objectives fell by the wayside, not the least of which was his goal of ending the conflict, the "democratic opening" associated with his administration had lasting effects. In 1985, the FARC-EP created the *Unión Patriotica*

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[102] Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). 203
[103] Alfredo Rángel, Guerra Insurgente: Conflictos en Malasia, Perú, Filipinas, El Salvador, y Colombia. (Bogotá: Intermedio, 2001). 363

(Patriotic Union, UP), a political party whose goal was to open up an alternative route to political participation for all leftists in Colombian society. In the FARC-EP's eyes, the UP would also be an alternative to the bipartisanship exercised by the liberal and conservative parties which previously left no political space for opposition.[104] To the country's elite, however, the UP was yet another sign of the government's weakness and the creation of the political arm of an illegal group. During the rest of the eighties and into the early nineties, the UP was met with an onslaught of political violence. An estimated 3000 members of the party were killed, including two presidential candidates.[105] The spectacular failure of the FARC-EP's integration into the Colombian political system would serve as a major impediment to future negotiations.[106] This, combined with the occupation of the Palace of Justice by the M-19 in 1985 which led to the deaths of 11 of 24 Supreme Court judges, allowed the destruction of the peace process and a renewed faith in the military option for both the state and the insurgency.[107]

The search for a solution to the country's civil conflict continued to be a key issue for Colombia's presidents in the 1990s. Cesar Gaviria (1990-1994) failed in negotiations with the country's largest guerrilla groups but managed to engineer the demobilization and reintegration of combatants from the Corriente de Renovación Socialista, a faction of the ELN. His successor, Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) made ambitious pronouncements about his intentions to obtain peace during his campaign but was almost immediately hindered by allegations of his involvement with narcotraffickers. The release of the

[104] "Acuerdos que no fueron tales: La Uribe". www.farcep.org/?node=1,1,1. accessed 3/23/07
[105] Marco Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006). 211
[106] Ibid, 201-3
[107] Lawrence Boudon, "Guerrillas and the State: The Role of the State in the Colombian Peace Process". *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28 (May 1996). 282

narcocasetes, tapes which implicated the president in accepting money from the Cali Cartel, and Samper's subsequent impeachment trial, stripped him of legitimacy in the eyes of the guerrillas. Samper's subsequent war on drugs, a gesture undertaken to prove his commitment to fighting the rapidly growing problem, became the main focus of the remaining years of his presidency.

When Andrés Pastrana (1998 – 2002) came to office, violence had escalated between the FARC, ELN, and paramilitaries. Kidnapping rates were at an all time high; in 1998 an average of six Colombian citizens were kidnapped a day.[108] Colombian civil society showed its desire for an end to the conflict with the *Mandato Para La Paz* (Mandate for Peace) that was included on the 1997 ballot for local and regional offices. The "yes" vote of nearly ten million was a clear signal that Colombian citizens were fed up with the fighting.[109] During his campaign, Pastrana announced that he had met secretly with the FARC's highest in command, Manuel Marulanda (also known as *Tirofijo*). This meeting was one of several to come, not just with the FARC but also the ELN, and showed the willingness of the guerrillas to negotiate now that Samper had left office. In an effort to capitalize on this willingness, Pastrana agreed to a *zona de despeje*, a demilitarized zone of five municipalities in which the FARC could organize itself for the peace talks without fear of government military action. This was, by far, the most controversial element of Pastrana's peace plan. As a result, the Colombian minister of defense, Rodrigo Lloreda resigned along with 14 generals and 200 officers.[110] Meanwhile, violence in the countryside increased. As the FARC continued attacks on

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[108] Antonio Navarro Wolff, "Ending the Conflict with the FARC" *Inter-American Dialogue Working Paper* (January 2007). 7

[109] Gary Hoskin and Gabriel Murillo. "Can Colombia Cope?", *Journal of Democracy* 10 (1999). 12

[110] Geoff Simons, *Colombia: A Brutal History* (London: SAQI, 2004). 202

rural villages, the AUC responded forcefully. Attacks on the armed forces also rose to more than 300 between 1998 and 1999.

Despite a series of negotiations between the government and guerrilla groups, the rising level of violence in the country was impossible for Pastrana to ignore. Acknowledging that the increasingly important role that narcotrafficking played in the conflict, Pastrana requested a sort of "Marshall Plan" for Colombia. The resulting aid package, unveiled in 1999, was Plan Colombia. The implementation of Plan Colombia adversely affected negotiations; $1.3 billion was to be contributed by the United States, the majority of which was directed towards the military's war on *coca*.[111] The US-led military fortification did little to encourage insurgents to decrease their military offensives. Pastrana's peace process was destined for what would become a familiar deadlock: insurgents refused to negotiate until the government army agreed to a ceasefire, and even as talks took place, paramilitary activities increased. The guerrillas, viewing the paramilitaries as an extension of State sponsored violence insurgents refused to continue negotiations. Pastrana left office in 2002 having accomplished very little in the way of a peace process. His legacy would be a shift in Colombian opinion. A far cry from *Mandato Para La Paz*, Colombians had become frustrated by a series of fruitless negotiations and escalating violence and popular support was growing for a leader that would restore some semblance of order to the country.

Álvaro Uribe Veléz's (2002 – present) doctrine of "democratic security," a hawkish approach to reducing the violence in Colombia, has been successful in some respects. His approach to confronting the country's violence, which has led to a 73% drop

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[111] Francisco Thoumi, *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). 229-30

in kidnapping rates, earned him popularity rates at or above 70% during all four years of

his first term and led to support for a Constitutional amendment which allowed his

reelection in 2006.[112] Uribe accomplished a historical step towards Colombian peace; he

achieved a ceasefire agreement with the AUC and has, to date, demobilized 27,000

members. In 2006, for the first time ever, Colombians cited the economy (and not

security) as their primary concern. Despite this success, the FARC-EP remains strong and

entrenched in the countryside; while attacks on the government perpetrated by the group

have been reduced significantly from the highest levels (close to 500 in 2002), the group

initiated military action more than 350 times in 2005.[113]

III

Recent Developments: Narcotrafficking and the Failure of Uribe's Democratic Security Initiative

While the resolution of the conflict in El Salvador was precipitated by a military

stalemate due, in large part, to the lack of each party's financing at the end of the Cold

War, the impasse in Colombia is caused by the opposite problem. The country's

insurgent groups have seemingly infinite sources of wealth due to their involvement in

narcotrafficking. According to the Colombian Department of National Planning, the

FARC and the ELN extracted around $600 million in protection rents from

narcotraffickers in 1996 and estimates of subsequent FARC profit are as high as $500

million dollars a year. The AUC's annual budget is estimated at between $80 and $100

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[112] Eduardo Posada Carbo, "Colombia Hews to the Path of Change". *Journal of Democracy*. 83-84
[113] La Fundación Seguridad y Democracia, "20 años de ataques de los grupos irregulars y los narcotraficantes la fuerza pública". 8
http://www.seguridadydemocracia.org/docs/pdf/especiales/informeEspecial10.pdf, accessed 3/23/07

million dollars; 70% of which, according to leader Carlos Castaño, derives from extortion of or direct participation in narcotrafficking.[114]

In addition to the resources that narcotrafficking provides the country's insurgent groups, it has given them a new source of popular support, particularly in the case of the FARC-EP. It is estimated that coca cultivation provides a crucial source of income for more than one million peasants. While the Gini Index of Colombia's cities fell from 0.30 to 0.25 between 1973 and 1995, it remained stable at 0.34 in rural areas, leading one to believe that the FARC-EP and *coca* cultivation do a better job of ensuring income inequality than the government does in its cities.[115] The economic security that illicit cultivation provides is augmented by the guerrilla organization's ability to establish order in small towns. The guerrillas fill a void left by the State by policing towns and imposing laws which regulate everything from fishing and hunting to domestic abuse and liquor consumption. They ensure that peasants get fair prices for their product by forcing narcotraffickers to pay market value for coca leaves.[116] One final reason for the increasing popular support of the FARC is due to the process of "counter-reform" during the late 1990s. During just a few years the narcotrafficking cartels managed to buy up an estimated 10% of the country's fertile land.[117] The FARC-EPs old claims for land reform became relevant again during this period.

Civil war literature which analyzes the economic dimensions of conflict indicates that the presence of easily lootable resources like coca lead to the protraction of the conflict and the failure of peace processes. As Jack Hirschleifer and Todd Sandler argue,

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[114] Nazih Richani, *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). 75-6
[115] Ibid, 75
[116] Ibid, 64
[117] Ibid, 112

civil wars are a basic cost-benefit analysis in which combatants make decisions based on the rents they can extract during war time versus those available during peace time.[118] As Collier explains in his analysis of rebellions as "quasi-criminal activity," in which "Victory over the government is not an objective, and so conflict is treated as equilibrium phenomenon."[119] Recent works on civil wars motivated by greed and grievance arrive at similar conclusions about the connection between the protraction of war and the benefits perceived by parties involved.[120] Richani posits the existence of a positive political economy in Colombia in which war is much more profitable than peace. These theoretical analyses of the capacity of resources to prolong war are confirmed by the case of Colombia. The total annual cost of four or more attacks on military bases by the FARC-EP averages $4 million and the maintenance of an 18,000 member force (which includes ammunitions, armament, and logistical support) would be between $80 and $100 million. With FARC profits anywhere from $300 to $500 million, continuation of the war is more than feasible for them.[121]

If the protraction of the conflict in Colombia is due, in large part, to the presence of an easily lootable resource in the form of coca, it is worthwhile to examine the Colombian government's ability to eradicate cultivation. The largest offensive in the country's "war on drugs" began with the Plan Colombia. The plan was created to be a complex aid packaged aimed at improving Colombia's economy, increasing the strength of its institutions, combating narcotrafficking, and ending the conflict. It called for

[118] Hirschleifer, 1995, "Theorizing about Conflict", *Handbook of Defence Economics*, Sandler, 2000, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*

[119] Paul Collier, "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44 (December 2000). 841

[120] Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Collier and Hoeffler; Regan

[121] Nazih Richani. *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). 75-6 130-1

economic assistance from a number of countries, but when the European contingent never materialized, the United States became the program's main sponsor. The U.S. contributed $1 billion in 2000 alone and has given, to date and including funds spent by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), $7.7 billion dollars. The majority of this money is used militarily with only, "a residual amount...assigned to alternative development and social problems".[122]

While drug interdiction and aerial fumigation did reduce cultivation during the Plan's first few years, it increased by 6,000 hectares in 2005 (ending a four year decline) and remains 20,000 hectares higher than the average amount cultivated in the nineties, the decade which saw a boom in FARC forces and armament.[123] Fumigation's inefficiency stems from the ease and speed with which it can be replanted and the crop's huge profit margins.[124] Mark Peceny and Michael Durnan argue that, "the strengthening of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) during the 1990s was an unintended consequence of a series of tactical successes in U.S. anti-drug policies."[125] They contend that the dismantling of the Medellín and Cali cartels left narcotrafficking territories and networks open for the FARC and that drug interdiction led traffickers to move cultivation to Colombia rather than risk transportation from Peru or Bolivia. By the end of the 1990s, the most aggressive decade for Colombian counter-narcotics, the FARC

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[122] Mark Peceny and Michael Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend: US Antidrug Policies and the Deepening of Colombia's Civil War in the 1990s", *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (Summer, 2006). 97; Francisco Thoumi, *Illegal Drugs, Economy, and Society in the Andes* (Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003). 230

[123] U.N. World Drug Report, 2006

[124] Nazih Richani, *The Political Economy of War and Peace in Colombia* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). 75-6, 130-113

[125] Mark Peceny and Michael Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend: US Antidrug Policies and the Deepening of Colombia's Civil War in the 1990s", *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (Summer, 2006). 95

had doubled its forces and 75% of the region's coca was grown in the country. [126] The case of Colombia also appears to support the analysis of Fearon, which states that third-party aid which manipulates only the structural balance of capabilities prolongs rather than decreases the duration of conflicts. In his statistical study, diplomatic interventions were the only type of international involvement which shortened the length of civil wars. [127]

As a result of the Colombian government's inability to decrease coca cultivation, it has also been unable to defeat the guerrilla militarily. Just as in previous administrations, negotiations conducted by the government have failed. While Uribe has had substantial success in demobilizing the AUC, these demobilizations were not, the product of intensive talks which addressed the group's fundamental grievances. Therefore, they were not the product of a process conducive to a sustainable peace. This achievement may have been due to the fact that "while the FARC is still largely an insurgent organization that engages in criminal activity to advance its political agenda, the AUC represents a fusion of paramilitary and criminal organizations"[128] and thus is more willing to disarm without a comprehensive set of accords. Demobilization of the FARC-EP will require an intensive UN led peace process to consolidate a lasting peace in Colombia.

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[126] Ibid, 95, 107

[127] James Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation". *International Organization* 52, 2 (Spring 1998). 741-750

[128] Mark Peceny and Michael Durnan, "The FARC's Best Friend: US Antidrug Policies and the Deepening of Colombia's Civil War in the 1990s", *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (Summer, 2006). 111

Epilogue

The conflict in Colombia is at a deadlock; thus far the government has been unable to defeat the insurgents either militarily or economically, while the only victory the insurgents can claim is their survival in the face of an aggressive new military strategy undertaken by President Uribe. With the US funding the state military and narcotrafficking rents supporting the guerrillas, neither side will gain a definitive advantage over the other anytime soon and each still firmly believes it has the ability to continue fighting. The United States' Congress agreed to send roughly $430 million dollars in military and economic aid to the country in 2006 and this partnership will continue for the duration of George W. Bush's term in office. On the part of the insurgents, coca cultivation has become the source of support for hundreds of thousands of peasants and no alternative crop even approaches the profit it provides, ensuring that it will continue to be a problem in the country and a source of funding for illegal armed groups for many years to come.

The peace accords in El Salvador did not address all of the FMLN's concerns for social and cultural reform, but the restructuring of important institutions assured that these changes could be pursued in the political arena. Colombia, a country where the same assurance does not exist for the FARC-EP, would benefit from the same types of institutional reform affected under ONUSAL. While political participation in Colombia has increased in the country due to the 1991 Constitution, Álvaro Uribe's democratic security strategy has won him high approval ratings and a reelection in 2006. This strategy, a militaristic approach to defeating the guerrilla, limits political space for leftists

from parties such as the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* which won only 17 seats in the country's legislature in 2006.

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A United Nations Peacekeeping operation is the best option for ending the conflict in Colombia but is not currently a possibility for the country. The literature overwhelmingly concludes that third-party intervention is crucial to negotiated conflict settlement and the case of El Salvador seems to prove that conclusion.[129] However, an analysis of the historical conditions present at the time of the negotiations demonstrates that peace was not solely a product of ONUSAL's involvement. The end of the Cold War and the subsequent cessation of funds provided to each side created a negative stalemate in which each side conceded that it could not defeat the other.

It remains true, however, that no internal actor in the war can make credible promises to the others without outside monitoring and enforcement of the implementation of accords. Less than a month prior to the completion of this thesis, five mayors were detained for alleged ties with paramilitaries – yet another reason for the insurgents to be distrustful of state-led negotiation.[130] For the government's part, violence continues to plague the country – the April 9th bombing of a military college in Bogotá and the April 13th attack on police headquarters in Cali have served only to strengthen President Uribe's military resolve.[131] Additionally, the United States' failure to terminate hostilities

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[129] Doyle and Sambanis, Walter, Arnson, Hampson
[130] *BBC Mundo*, "Colombia: Ordenan detener alcaldes".
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_6525000/6525745.stm, accessed 17 April 2007.
[131] *BBC Mundo*, "Colombia: Bogotá se traslada a Cali".
http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/latin_america/newsid_6551000/6551799.stm, accessed 17 April 2007.

stems from the fact that the aid it provides only affects the balance of power, one of the main causes of conflict protraction.[132]

Despite the discouraging outlook for Colombian peace and given the failure of Colombian-led negotiation, a United Nations peacekeeping operation is the only option for achieving peace in Colombia. No other international actor has the capability, resources, or willingness to implement the type of multidimensional peacekeeping process that Colombia requires. The United Nations successfully performed several roles in El Salvador that will be important elements of a Colombian peace. Investigation and prosecution of human rights abuses by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Ad Hoc Commission in El Salvador contributed greatly to healing deep wounds created by the conflict and will be extremely beneficial for Colombia. In addition, incorporation of FARC-EP combatants into the national military and police forces, completed successfully in El Salvador with the FMLN, will be an important step in reassuring the country's largest guerrilla organization that disarmament will not mean its annihilation. Judicial reform and strengthening of the State can be supported by the United Nations as well, two key elements in fighting the criminal activities of illegal organizations which both benefit from and contribute to the State's weakness in large areas of the country. Finally, just as it did in El Salvador, the UN can encourage incorporation of ex-combatants in the political process by providing protection for candidates (effectively quelling fears of another UP-like massacre).

What remains to be seen, and really the most fundamental question for Colombia, is if the United Nations can undertake a comprehensive counter-narcotics program. The

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[132] James Fearon, "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation". *International Organization* 52 (Spring 1998). 741-750

only real advances in the war on drugs must be made hand in hand with economic and social development. The State must be strengthened in areas where the FARC-EP has implemented its "state making capabilities" and hundreds of thousands of peasants will have to be compensated or convinced of the benefits of the legality of alternative crops. Ex-combatants must be reintegrated into society in a way which deters participation in narcotrafficking and supports sustainable, legal involvement in society. The UN has been successful with reintegration programs in the past but rarely in situations where illicit profits were so high. In addition to measures aimed at preventing guerrilla and peasant participation in the illegal economy, government involvement in narcotrafficking must be investigated aggressively.

The United Nations proved in El Salvador that it is capable of undertaking a flexible, multi-dimensional, intensely committed peacekeeping operation unlike ever before. It has the economic resources and international backing to make it successful in ways that a smaller organization or independent country cannot be. These things, coupled with a UN peacekeeping mission's capability and experience in performing functions which are crucial to conflict resolution make it the only option for achieving a sustainable peace in Colombia. The important conclusion of this thesis is, however, that the UN option is not relevant *at present* given the Colombian conflict's developments in the 1980s and 1990s and the country's present day deadlock. Narcotrafficking and US aid provide each side with the confidence that it will succeed and, in turn, eliminate any will to negotiate.

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