

# From War to Politics: An International Conference on El Salvador's Peace Process March 31 - April 2, 2016

## **Day 3, Panel 1: The Role of External Actors in Shaping Peace (English)**

**Moderator: William M. LeoGrande, Professor, American University**

### **Participants:**

- **Joaquín Chávez, Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago**
- **Peter F. Romero, former Assistant Secretary of State**
- **Francesc Vendrell, former UN Secretary-General's Deputy Personal Representative for the Central American Peace Process**
- **Rubén I. Zamora, former member of the FMLN/FDR Political-Diplomatic Commission**

Barbara Weinstein: Good morning, buenos dias, welcome to the third day of this conference, From War to Politics, on The Peace Accords in El Salvador. Bienvenidos a todos. I am Barbara Weinstein, I think most of you are return participants, but for the few of you who are new I am going to just introduce myself, say a few more words about how the conference will proceed, and then say a few things about the organization of the conference and the first couple of days. So, I'm Barbara Weinstein, I'm the chair of the History Department, and a professor of Latin American History here at NYU. I just want to mention a few things, if you need simultaneous translation we will provide it, we also will take questions midway through the session; you should have received cards, tarjetas, to submit your questions, to be distributed to the ushers. So, if you need a card please raise your hand and let someone know. If you want to submit a question on twitter for those who are watching the live stream, the twitter hashtag is #elsalvadoraccords2016. Aso we ask that you please silence your cell phones, thank you. According to the program this session will break at 11:30, we are of course starting a little late, and this is Saturday morning, so I think that is permitted, so we will start soon and break close to 11:30. We will then resume at 1:30 for the final session, which will be a semi-open discussion, a moderated discussion, that everyone will be invited to participate in. And, that will be in a different building and room, it will be in the Kimmel Center which is right down the block.

As many of you know, this is a conference jointly sponsored by the Center for Latin and Caribbean Studies, CLACS, at NYU, and the Institute on Latin American Studies at Columbia University. Other funders of this conference, generous funders include my own department, the History Department at NYU, but I particularly want to recognize the generosity of the two provosts of NYU and Columbia. At Columbia, we were very fortunate that the provost, aside from being an excellent administrator, is a very eminent historian of Latin America, John Coatsworth, who has written a major book on the Central American conflicts, and he very generously agreed to contribute a significant amount to the funding of this conference, and then my provost here at NYU Dave McLaughlin who is a mathematician and probably knows very little about El Salvador nonetheless agreed that NYU would match the funding, and similarly fund it, so I just want to mention how grateful we are to the two provosts for their support for this conference. I also want to thank again the entire organizing committee Van Gosse, Jill Lane, José Moya, in absentia, Héctor Lindo-Fuentes, George Vickers, Omar Dauhajre, and especially the miraculous Maritza Colón, without whom this would have just been impossible. And, of course, I want to thank the many distinguished guests who made time to come and participate in this conference.

If you will forgive a slightly longer introduction than usual, I want to do two things. Second, I will sight some topics or insights that have emerged from the discussion so far in the conference, and first I briefly want to share with you the history of this conference, since I am a historian. So, starting with the latter. Most historians these days argue that it's hard or even impossible to determine exactly when a process began. So if I wanted to say "exactly when did the conflict in El Salvador begin, there's many different ways to talk about that." But, I can say exactly when the planning for this conference began, because I never delete emails. On July 11, 2013 I received an email from a dear colleague, Marilyn Young who studies US Foreign Relations, and she wrote, "I had breakfast with Van Gosse recently, he asked about the possibility of a conference on the peace process in El Salvador, I'm attaching his proposal. I told him, it's summer, people are away, etc., but I was wondering if along with the thousands of other things you were doing (I had to put that in..) you could take a look at this as something the History Department might help fund." Attached was a proposal for the conference, raising many of the issues that have emerged as central to the discussion. For a variety of reasons, despite everything else I was doing, I had to respond. For one thing, I began teaching Latin American

history in the Fall of 1979. And, so, my first twelve years in the classroom the conflict and then the civil war in El Salvador was ever present in my mind and in my conversations with my students and colleagues. Happily CLACS and ILAS took up the idea as well. Three-hundred and twenty-three emails later here we are. So I want to take this moment to express my gratitude to Van Gosse for both coming up with the idea, and for keeping this ball rolling. So, thank you, Van.

I do want to say just a couple of things that Van mentioned in his original proposal that are relevant to what we will be talking about today. So, for example, he said what was the role of the FMLN's international solidarity apparatus in influencing various governments in aiding their war effort? What were the relationships between the FMLN to the Frente Sandinista in Nicaragua, and Cuba? And, how did those sympathetic governments either facilitate its arms struggle, or encourage its pursuit of a negotiated solution? Finally, he said, how did the many different parties to this process evaluate its outcomes since 1994? Who or what won this war, and is that question relevant? So, that would be something to think about for this afternoon.

So moving on to what I see as some of the key highlights of yesterday's talks starting with the keynote and the rest of yesterday's discussions. So, first of all I think there was general agreement that the Civil War in El Salvador should not be thought of primarily as a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union, but rather it reflected internal political and socio-economic processes, how much weight different speakers gave to different sides of it, socio-economic, versus political, varied. But, at the same time, of course, responses to El Salvador in the United States both among the American public and the US Congress were very crucial in determining various policies toward the war. It was also described as not just a war of the poor against the rich, but a much more complex socio-economic conflict. Then there was the question of was there a stalemate, *empate*, can we talk about a stalemate, was the beginnings of the negotiations about fatigue with the war? Was it the cost of the war in lives, or economic decline? We also talked about the key role of the murder of the six Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her sixteen year old daughter. And, I want to emphasise here that it was very clear from the context, that while this had a particular impact, that of course there were many other murders and atrocities. And, so it is not just the horrifying nature of that particular set of murders, but also the timing of it which was seen as de-legitimizing the military as an actor at a crucial moment.

There were interesting and differing interpretations of the impact of the end of the Cold War with Facundo Guardado arguing that the end of the Cold War basically undermined the US premise for support of the Salvadoran military. The key role of Alfredo Cristiani as president, as the ARENA president, was repeatedly indicated because he was seen as a credible negotiator, whereas being the implication that José Napoleon Duarte in an earlier iteration of peace talks was not able to be as credible a negotiator. Also somewhat different views of Roberto D'Aubuisson emerged. Integration into the military, and subsequent re-legitimization of the military was seen as crucial to the success of the Peace Accords, but it was also repeatedly indicated that the Peace Accords did not create structures for dealing with the kind of gang violence that has emerged in El Salvador more recently, and this was also several times indicated as partly due to policies created by the United States itself.

So, on that note I want to introduce the moderator of our morning session on external actors and the civil war in El Salvador, we are very pleased to have William Leogrande with us here to moderate this session. William Leogrande is someone whose work is known to anyone who studies recent Latin American History, Politics, Social Movements, and US-Latin American Relations. He is associate vice-Provost for academic affairs, Professor of government, and dean-emeritus of the School of Public Affairs at American University. He is the author of *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America 1977-1992*, and coauthor of *Backchannel to Cuba, the hidden history of negotiations between Washington and Havana*, published in 2014, and I am hoping it's selling really well now, Bill. We very much appreciate his joining us for this conference, and for moderating this morning's session. And, he will introduce the other members of the panel, thank you, Bill.

William Leogrande: Thanks, Barbara. If the rest of our panelists could come up and grab a seat. I want to start of course by also thanking the organizing committee for what's been, I think so far, a really fascinating conference, and we'll try to keep up the standard that was set yesterday. Let me begin with a quick introduction to our panel, although there are longer ones in the program. First, Ruben Zamora was a member of the diplomatic commission of the FDR-FMLN, served as Vice-President of El Salvador's national assembly, he was presidential candidate of the Democratic Convergence in 1984, he served as ambassador to the United States, and is currently El Salvador's permanent representative to the United Nations. Francesc Vendrell had a forty year

career as diplomat at the United Nations and the European Union, and for our purposes most importantly, he was the secretary general's deputy representative in the Salvadoran peace talks. Peter Romero is a retired career foreign service officer who worked for several years on issues related to El Salvador, he was chief of mission in El Salvador at a critical moment during the peace process, and subsequently ambassador to Ecuador, assistant secretary of state for western hemisphere affairs. He serves today on for-profit and nonprofit boards and is CEO of Exporior Advisory LLC, and finally, Joaquin Chavez is a historian of Latin America with a particular focus on intellectuals, revolutionary movements, and the Catholic Church in El Salvador. He is currently assistant professor in the department of history at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the author of *Poets and Prophets of the Resistance: Intellectuals and the Origins of El Salvador's Civil War*. And, Professor Chavez has also been deeply engaged in peace and reconciliation work in his native El Salvador, as well as other hotspots in the world including Nepal.

So thank you all for joining us, to get started I'd like to begin talking about how the peace process began, and most of my questions will be directed to a particular member of the panel, but I also want to encourage other members to jump in if they have something to say about a topic that I've started out with another panelist.

So, Peter, President Bush seemed to have a different approach to El Salvador than the Reagan Administration, the Cold War was coming to an end, and we know that Secretary of State James Baker was interested in trying to build bipartisan support for the approach to bringing the Cold War to an end, and that Central America had been a very divisive issue over the previous eight years. So, as the new administration came in, how was the United States thinking about El Salvador, and thinking about moving forward toward a resolution to the conflict.

Peter Romero: Thank you, professor. That's a very good question, I think there were a number of factors, you can't just cite one factor, two factors, or a lot of motivations. As you said, I was in Washington for most of that time, and it was exceedingly divisive in our country, parties were divided over Republicans and Democrats, I can remember groups of nuns and other demonstrators almost on a weekly basis in front of the State Department. Things were very, very

tense and I think the difference was that under Bush 41, they had gone through something called Iran-Contra, and there was a very definite desire to do what they needed to do to try to bring an end to the wars in Central America. And I remember, the first thing I was asked to do as director of Central American affairs at the time was to prepare a seven page paper on what could be done, had to be short; Vice President Bush had won the election, so this was the interregnum period between the time he had won the elections, and the time he was sworn into office. And, they wanted a short, concise, blueprint. And, I put that together and quite frankly, looking at it, you know twenty years later it was followed pretty meticulously. And that is that they realized that Central America had torn our country apart, that it was exceedingly divisive, they wanted a way out and what they did do was begin to move closer to a solution that included Esquipulas that included what Oscar Arias was proposing at the time, and also the beginnings of contact with the FMLN. My boss at the time, assistant secretary Aronson did have contact very informally and very quietly, with the FDR in Washington, some of that was transmitted to us underlings, some not. But, he did have a regular contact with them. And, I think that our support for an end to the war would have started earlier, had it not been for the downing of a US helicopter in El Salvador by the ERP and the killing of some of our crewmembers. And I remember very vividly, secretary Aronson had been speaking to President Bush about the possibility of making contact with the FMLN on a deeper basis, on a regular basis, and trying to do what we could to bring the war to a close, and I can recall after that helicopter was downed and our crewmen were killed, I was accompanying Mr. Aronson to the White House, we were under the awning of the West Wing and President Bush came out with his bodyguards and said "Bernie, nice job you were recommending contacts with the FMLN and now they've killed our crewmen, nice timing," in a very sarcastic way.

So, that set things back, I think probably the next thing that really did happen was the so-called final offensive, and I think you all talked about that yesterday. At my level, at the State Department, we had our first contacts with the FDR and the FMLN because we had four trapped Americans in a hotel in San Salvador that we were trying to get released, and quite frankly, the FMLN was quite helpful in trying to, Facundo Guardado is in the audience, to get the US troops out of the hotel safely, they were armed themselves, it could have been very, very bad, and the communication was excellent. That gave us another indication. Finally, during the peace talks in Mexico City, one of the things that still to this day astounds me, is that I had established a

relationship with the designated person by the FMLN to talk to me during the peace negotiations, and this was something like the eighth or ninth round of negotiations, and after a while, we would meet on a regular basis on a daily basis, sometimes a couple times a day during the talks on the side, and he gave me a letter. In that letter it said among other things, we want to achieve peace, we want to do what we can, at the end of the day we will disarm and we do not want you to cut off military assistance to the Salvadoran military. Which astounded us. I sent that back to Washington and you could hear a pin drop. It was so astounding to us. But, basically what they said was you have the greatest influence over the Salvadoran military, we will be disarmed, they will have the guns and we want you to maintain that influence and that assistance and technical cooperation, et cetera.

William Leogrande: So, Rubén, I don't know, you were one of the contact people that was talking with Bernie Aronson, but could you tell us how did the FDR/FMLN perceive the shift in US policy that began with the Bush Administration?

Ruben Zamora: I think that - we perceived very vague the change. You know, because it was very difficult for us to perceive changes in US position for two reasons, one: their presence in El Salvador, their complete support for the government, that we could understand, but blurred the changes. In the same way that I saw they didn't perceive our changes... because we were changing. You take the first proposal for the nation of the FDR/FMLN it was clear that that proposal means that the army had to be disappear, and only the democratic officers could be reincorporated into the new army, that was the proposal. The second proposal, that we made some years after said that the merge of the two armies that means the "Zimbabwe modo" right? Put together the two armies and put it then. And at the end, was the acceptance of the salvadoran forces with a constitutional reform. I mean that was a complete change of position. But I suppose that was not well perceived clearly, and not only in that camp, and that's why I insist on this was the crucial one. In that sense, for us it was difficult.

Secondly, because the relationship between us and the state department was not very good. Quite frankly, a contention. Was not good; I was at that time for the political and diplomatic commission of the FDR/FMLN, in charge of the United States, the Reagan Administration almost threw me out of the country, right? I lost my visa, I couldn't enter, and I

needed usually to come here, not very often then, to be invited by congress for a hearing or for whatever, or some senators that invited us, that allowed me to have a waiver to enter the United States. That made it become very difficult to communicate here. And, I think that created the problem, and what we see, what we perceive is when the negotiation was started seriously, right, that means when they sit down in Venezuela, and agree in an agenda. Agree that the United Nations has to be the intermediary between the two sides, and the whole thing started to cease to be dialogue and started to be negotiations, that for us was a fundamental change. A fundamental change. And, when we saw that, then our perception of the way the United States; that first the United States stays outside of the negotiations. We were very pleased with that. Because we didn't want another ally of the government in the middle of the negotiations. Its obvious. Secondly, I see the United Nations was pleased with that as well. But, we saw how the United States began to be more and more involved in the process....

Peter Romero: But, Ruben, remember, the friends of the process, okay, was four plus one. And, secretary Baker wanted us to insure that we were not one of the friends on paper because that would have given us too much influence among the others. And, we were the plus one for a very specific reason.

Ruben Zamora: I don't dispute that, I am telling you what was our perception, that is yours. But the United States state department started to be more and more involved, with a central problem that I discussed something like three times with Bernie Aronson whom I met when he was a democrat, the officer the main officer at the democratic party headquarters. And, we sat down and talked about the massacre and everything and one time we started to cry together, you know, talking about that. But, then when he moved to the republican side, then was not. And then before the negotiations we started to talk again, and the fundamental problem that he was, is could we believe on those communists of the FMLN. That was a problem of credibility, the central problem. Why? Because they had the experience that they had with the Nicaraguan revolution, because they believe that the Sandinistas were a sort of good guys you know, liberals, sort of advanced liberals that were doing a revolution, that were going to do more or less the same thing. Well, the Nicaraguans were not good guys in that sense, they were Marxists. And, when they started to behave in a different way they feel betrayed, and Bernie Aronson felt

betrayed, and quite a lot of our friends in congress felt betrayed, and that was a big problem for us when we started to move there. But, it was a problem of confidence, lack of. It was not for the United States a serious problem of content of the agreement. I think they give space for that, and do not intervene too much on that. In the process of negotiations, you know better than me about that, Álvaro, but the problem was a different one. And, to gain confidence, a basic confidence on the part for the United States to support, and at the end the United States clearly was supporting the process of negotiations, and being very, very useful in certain very critical moments at the negotiations especially when they finished here in New York. Then was a big problem, that's what I could tell you.

William Leogrande: I would imagine that there was also a problem of credibility with the FMLN believing that the United States was really going to support the process. Joaquín, you were in El Salvador at the time, is that right? Would you talk to how people on the ground saw this shift in US policy and was it believable and at what point did it really become believable?

Juaquin Chavez: Yeah, I think the main point I would like to make is the importance of the peace movement that actually emerged in El Salvador in the mid-1980s and I thought that most of the narrative and the history of the peace process in El Salvador has been centered on negotiations between the FMLN, the government, and the role that the UN played in that process, the group of friends, the United States, but I think a fundamental actor has been pretty much left out of the narrative, which is pretty much the peace process, the peace movement which actually emerges in El Salvador in the mid 1980s that had many different manifestations, and actually had a very coherent intellectual leadership, particularly on the part of Ignacio Ellacuría who was pretty much one of the main forces behind this movement, so in that sense I think that the way the change was interpreted was mostly I believe as a byproduct of a failure of the strategy. The war strategy; basically that was the main interpretation. In other words, the idea that the US supported war strategy in El Salvador has failed, and mostly that this outcome was precisely to open up a real possibility for a substantial dialogue and negotiations. In a way, many of the sectors involving this process, Catholic Church, social movements, and many others, thought that that was a very crucial opportunity to pretty much engage in the process, so that I would say was the main frame of interpretation, but also I think there was a substantial frustration with the fact

that their voices were not really taken into consideration perhaps enough in the process, right. So, in a way they were seen as outside actors, or at the end of the story not really a fundamental protagonist in the process, that's more or less the impression I have from my recollection.

William Leogrande: Francesc, tell us a little bit about how the United Nations came to be involved, because normally the United Nations deferred to the OAS in the western hemisphere intended to not become involved in these types of conflicts so this was really in some ways unusual so tell us a little about how that happened.

Francesc Vendrell: Well, that would be a fairly long explanation. Uhm, Pérez de Cuéllar and his associates did not differ to the OAS necessarily, he was, there was a tendency by the US to consider that any issue in the Southern Hemisphere was a matter for the OAS and based any issue for its "own backyard." So we became involved first with the Nicaragua process as a followup to the Esquipulas conference. Esquipulas, in my view, did two things, on the one side he pretended he was trying to end the conflict in Central America, in practice the effort in Esquipulas was to ensure that there would not be an international war between Nicaragua and the US so that the concentration was on Nicaraguab But, because they had to appear that the issues that were demanded of Nicaragua applied to everybody else that was also a demand in the case of El Salvador and Guatemala. We used that as a way to become involved first in Nicaragua, and the second step was El Salvador and finally was Guatemala. So, I think there was an active interest on the part of the Secretary General who was Latin American, and of us to get the UN involved because we felt that the UN probably had greater credibility with the FMLN and with perhaps the Left.

Now, I should point out that unlike the URNG in Guatemala, and unlike many rebel movements in Africa today, the FMLN had a much greater international projection. In 1981, the presidents of France, and of Mexico recognized the FMLN/FDR as a substantive force. Secondly, the FMLN, very intelligently, managed to become an observer at the non aligned movement, something that in fact the Salvadoran government was not. Now I'll jump now to 1983 the UN had been deeply involved at the Human Rights level on the situation in El Salvador.

And, there had been yearly resolutions criticizing the human rights problems in El Salvador with a special reporter and so on. That meant that, and it was not purely a Cold War division, supporting the resolutions, criticizing the Salvadoran government were not only Cuba and the Soviet Bloc, but most of the European countries as well. There was a great deal of discussion about this.

Now I jump to 1989, to May 1989. There was a meeting of foreign ministers of the non-aligned movement in Harare which I attended on behalf of the Secretary General. The leadership of the FMLN including Schafik Handal, Ana Guadalupe Martinez, were at the meeting. I had an entry to them, I had met Samayoa before, and anyway, we talked about the possibility of the secretary general becoming an intermediary. They seemed to like the idea, at least they claimed they liked it, and then while we were talking an event occurred in Namibia. Namibia at that time was in a transitional period, the Secretary General had a special representative, but South Africa also had forces. So APO broke the agreement and brought forces into Namibia from Angola. The South Africans demanded from the SRSG, who was then Martti **Ahtisaari**, that they be allowed to go and hit SWAPO for entering Namibia. And, Ahtisaari actually accepted. So, the result of that was a larger number of casualties for SWAPO, in 1989, when the UN was involved and was already there, than ever before. So, this created enormous commotion in the non-aligned movement.

Schafik Handal, Ana Guadalupe, went to see Mugabe they must have mentioned that they were thinking perhaps of the UN playing a role. Immediately Mugabe said, “absolutely not, you are totally wrong, the UN is in the hands of the Americans look what is happening now in Namibia, and so we are not going to be able to...”. So they came to me and said: “compañero, let's talk again.” And, I tried to persuade them that behind the UN there were people, that the people that would be dealing with El Salvador would probably be a little stronger, but they were left with the feeling that, well how are you going to cope with the overwhelming pressure of the Americans when they are perhaps the only main part involved except for perhaps Cuba. So, that's when I went back to New York, we talked with Alvaro, and the idea then developed of having a group of friends, a group of friends of the Secretary general, which I'm sorry to say did not include the US, because we basically planified the table of the negotiations as three concentrical circles: one was the table of FMLN, government, and the PRSG (de Soto); a second tier were the US, to some degree Cuba and the Soviet Union. They were involved in the issue. And the third

tier were the friends. And, the friends were meant to help the Secretary General whenever he felt the need for them to either speak to the Americans, or the Cubans, or indeed the two parties of the conflict. And, we chose four countries; Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, and Spain. Spain because at that time Felipe González was prime minister, he was well perceived in Latin America, and he was also a bridge to Europe. We chose Mexico, because Mexico of course has been deeply involved in the issue. We chose Venezuela because we wanted to ensure that Venezuela and Carlos Andres Pérez would play a supportive role and not perhaps draw on a different tangent. And, we finally chose Colombia because they were in the Security Council at the time. So that's how the friends were established.

William Leogrande: So, Peter, how did the United States react to this UN initiative?

Peter Romero: Well, you know much has been said of a term called the “fog of war,” and on the battlefield you don't know where the enemy is, you don't know everything about the enemy, where you are, where your forces are. I'd call this the fog of diplomacy, and I have to tell you this is the first time I'm hearing this background in terms of the UN. But, I have to say we supported the UN involvement simply because, and Francesc is too diplomatic to really talk about why, and that is because the OAS at the time could never have undertaken this, they're not structured to do this sort of thing, they would have had to set up a separate committee, they would have had to empower that committee through the Secretary General, there is no precedent for it, and quite frankly, while a lot of the agencies of the OAS function very well, the General Assembly does not. They would still be debating today about what to do in El Salvador, I have no doubt, so we supported it. There was a structure at the UN that we could work with, that we were very comfortable with. And that is not only the General Assembly and the Security Council, and then the offices like Francesc headed and that sort of thing. We had great confidence in that, and we felt that it was a much better vehicle. And, luckily the government of El Salvador felt that way and there was a confluence among all of us even the FMLN that this is a better way to go.

Ruben Zamora: I think that in that way, why the United Nations is very interesting? Because, according to the charter of the United Nations, clearly says, that regional conflict has to be dealt

first at the regional level, and only if they fail, like a sort of supreme court of justice, they go to the United Nations, that was. [Francesc Vendrell shakes his hand in questioning] But, the problem was the government, President Cristiani government wanted the American State organization, their role in Nicaragua during the process of the revolution had been very good, about the American State Organization, therefore they have certain legitimacy. But, we reject it completely. For this simply reason, you know, the whole story, that the American State Organization is the department of colonies of the United States as we used to call it, really, yeah well... Then we say, we wanted the United Nations, and that was the discussion. That's why it was necessary, a letter of the five President to the General Secretary, asking the General Secretary to try to intervene, to help in the process, that's very important.

Francesc Vendrell: That is very important.

Ruben Zamora: Because, that gave the justification, that means because El Salvador wanted the negotiation, right, and was in agreement well, "okay, lets take the United Nations". Then the president of Central America, Esquipulas, presented that letter to the General Secretary. The problem, and this is my addition to you, was when the General Secretary named his personal representative, because it was a very negative reaction on our side. I have never told you that. But is true, why? First, your brother who was writing the books and then they were like "Oh, my God," right? That was the reaction. "This guy has to be very, very conservative," but secondly somebody had told us that you had been part of the Christian Democratic Party, that was for us was, at that time, with Duarte being now our opponent for so many years, was not right. But, there was a big discussion between the FDR and the FMLN, I remember Guillermo and myself being there and discussing... because the comandancia, the FMLN, was clear that they can not reject the representative of, but they didn't like it. But, then somebody was illuminated and said "look look, wait a moment, wait a moment," "yes, he was a Christian Democrat, but remember that our central point in this negotiation is how we get the military out of politics, yeah, otherwise there is not going to be democracy in El Salvador never." And, the Christian Democrat supported the military regime, the progressive military regime in Peru, and the oligarchy, just in case that don Alvaro de Soto belonged to the oligarchy of Peru, was against the military. Therefore, he was a very good guy, that was the argument you know it... I can tell you now 25

years... and, in fact, he was very good on the issue of trying to move the country out of the military's control. That was shared, but quite a lot of people of the party ARENA as well starting with the president of ARENA, who was Armando (Calderon Sol), that then became president of the country in the next period. All those things helped a lot to move these things in a good way for the Salvadoran people. But, I wanted to say that, just to see how sometimes it things that seem very bad can be arranged in a very positive way.

William Leogrande: Well, we're learning lots of new and interesting things in the conference, um, Joaquin, you were involved in the peace talks once they began, what was the toughest issue to resolve?

Juaquin Chavez: Well, I think that was pretty well discussed yesterday, was fundamentally the issue of militarization, and I actually wanted to take the opportunity to share some of my larger interpretation very briefly of what actually, what kind of fundamental intellectual and political paradigm shift actually informed the FMLN negotiation policy in that period. And, my point is very straightforward, there is basically a situation in which the French and Mexican declaration of 1981, plus the Socialist International, were the political movements and states which articulated the fundamental thesis that ultimately resolved the conflict. Which was, the only alternative to resolve the Salvadoran war is actually a negotiated political solution, and that was stated in 1981. That particular paradigm, right?, actually experienced different transformations in the 1980s, but fundamentally did one fundamental thing which was... is a paradigm that ultimately ended up transforming the FMLN itself, right? Basically, it became a kind of political (unintelligible) engagement that ultimately transformed the fundamental ethos of the FMLN, in other words I'm talking about a fundamental shift, of course a gradual shift that took roughly eight years, from a Marxist-Leninist movement into what one can fairly say a socialist democratic movement at the end of the decade right.

It was of course, a very complicated process. There were many important crises in that process in different... well I won't give the details of the crisis, but the fundamental point I wanted to make is that the specifics of the negotiation policy of the FMLN in the two year negotiation mediated by the UN was fundamentally informed by that, or perhaps better was a derivative of that paradigm shift that took place in that particular time period. So in a sense the

consistency of, what your question is about, of the objectives of the negotiation have everything to do with this paradigm shift which of course was very clearly explained yesterday as a fundamental objective of the negotiation was to conduct a demilitarization of the state, and to enable a sustainable transition to democracy in the country, but again it is basically the Socialist International plus the French and Mexican declaration who pretty much set the intellectual and political basis for those fundamental transformations in what, ultimately, this conference is about, it's basically a transition from war to peace. So basically the paradigm shift, the intellectual and political paradigm shift has everything to do with those fundamental premises set by the Socialist International and the French and Mexican government.

William Leogrande: So, Francesc, was there a moment when you thought that the talks would break down, that you wouldn't be able to actually get an agreement? Once the talks had begun.

Francesc Vendrell: No, I really thought that, I've always felt that we'd be able to succeed. But, what the FMLN was demanding, and we discussed that yesterday, basically represented what even Washington deep-down would want, which was the de-militarization of Salvadoran society and the establishment of really, as much as possible, of a system based off the rule of law. And, we also realized that the FMLN was aware that Pérez de Cuellar was going to cease being Secretary General on December 31st 1991, it was also in their interest. And, I think that the US, once we overcame the period when the US felt that we were taking too long in discussing, and trying to work out the military agreement, once that was done, I think we had a lot of support from them, and indeed from the French. So, I didn't think that it would break down, so basically no, there were difficult moments, but I never got the feeling that this was going to be a failure.

William Leogrande: Peter, would you talk a little bit about the kinds of things the United States tried to do to move the process along once the talks got going, confidence building measures and that kind of thing.

Peter Romero: Sure, but if I can go back to the issue of whether this was a Cold War. I think that what you're getting, what I'm getting a sense of here is that the FMLN evolved over time, but there is no denying the fact that early on in the war, you all went to, the FMLN went to people

that could help them, and those people were the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and others, and I mean it's a fact, okay. And, there were people like Cayetano Carpio and others in the movement who were very hard-line people who were Marxist-Leninist, and Schafik Handal were he here today would admit to you he's a Marxist-Leninist, okay. So when you look at that, and you look at it through the filter or the context of what was happening in the United States at the time, President Reagan comes into office, he sees that we have problems everywhere in the world, that President Carter has been too weak, he believes, and we have American hostages who have just been released on the day of the inauguration, and had been captive for almost two years in Iran, and he's trying to assert American strength again as a goal of his, that's why he's elected to office. And, at the same time you have tumult and chaos and war in Central America in our so-called backyard. So to say that there was little to no Cold War context to this early on would be a big mistake, there was a big Cold War context to it in the United States. Now, that changed over time, okay, that did change over time. And, I think a lot of it had to do with our direction from the White House, to try to do what we could to ameliorate this situation and bring it to peace. It had to do with the actors both on the government side and on the FMLN side, that we talked about all those kind of contacts and things that really helped along the way. I think that probably, if there was ever a time when things got really stuck, it was about midnight on the night that Pérez de Cuellar was supposed to leave... and, oh, by the way he stayed and Francesc remembers this, he stayed about 5 hours; 1 hour? Okay.. they pushed the clock back, but he stayed beyond his mandate to get this done with his wife waiting at an airport for him to leave and he would not leave. Oh, she was in the office? Anyway, one of the things that gave us confidence in the UN at the time was Pérez de Cuellar was a Latin American, he was a Peruvian, and he understood what was going on. There didn't need to be a lot of education. And, he was committed to it, in fact his behavior showed it, he stayed beyond his mandate to get this done.

William Leogrande: Rubén, I would like you to reflect on the impact that ambassador William Walker's trip to Santa Marta had in June of 1991, my understanding is that this trip actually made an impression on the FMLN and sort of set a good stage if you will for moving forward. Is that your recollection as well?

Rubén Zamora: Yeah, I think that he is one of the people I learned to respect a lot, and when he died I really feel very very deep in my heart his loss, or our loss of him. But, the whole thing started very bad. Because when he came as ambassador, I remember he came from Paraguay, and he as ambassador in Paraguay has confronted the dictatorship in Paraguay very clearly and then he was in El Salvador and I had still some contact with him there. And, what I noted was somebody who was trying to impose in El Salvador; “Has to be done this, and this, and this”. And, immediately because of our culture I rejected that, you know? And, I did not have a very good relationship with him. A little bit after I left the country, because I could be killed there, and I started my diplomatic career there from zero, with my other friends who were at zero with diplomacy, we were learning doing the whole thing. Anyway, and then we saw how he moved and the whole thing that he was sort of fighting for human rights, because basically that was his point at the time, human rights and the idea not to allow the situation to deteriorate, and we started to respect him. Quite frankly. Until he was demoted, expelled as ambassador by the Reagan administration and he became one of the most outstanding voices in the United States against the military control of the government, against the violation, and keep it that way his whole life until he died. In that sense for us, the ambassador is a hero, but he’s a hero who learned his process. I think, Paraguay taught him, and it is very difficult to teach something to an ambassador who is in another country, because he’s representing another government. But, he learned. And, that is the important thing. In that Walker remembered me a lot, Monseñor Romero, as well he learned - Robert White, Sorry -

Francesc Vendrell: Robert White you were talking about

Ruben Zamora: Who were you asking me about? (to Leogrande)

William Leogrande: William Walker.

Ruben Zamora: Oh, William Walker... Oh, my God, I’m sorry... Because I..

Francesc Vendrell: I’m glad you brought up Robert White because he deserves a mention.

Ruben Zamora: I don't know I was thinking of him at that moment... Sorry about that.

William Leogrande: Joaquín do you have any thoughts on that on Ambassador Walker's trip to Santa Marta in 1991 and the impact that that had?

Juaquin Chavez: Um, I think there were a series of events at the time that were part of the, what we can generally term, the ending of the war between the FMLN and the United States government, right? I think it was a similar event to the one that Schafik Handal actually describes in his memoir that came out a few years ago perhaps 2-3 years ago, a big volume, in which he candidly talks about the meeting FMLN leaders had under secretary Aronson, I think it was at the East Tower here in New York City. And roughly, I'm just paraphrasing Handal here, so basically he said Aronson actually entered a very crowded room, and everybody they were sitting on the bed and in the room and Aronson said, according to Handal we were interested to see what Mr. Aronson remembers about the event, actually, right? But, the point was very very clear, Aronson said this might seem like an informal meeting, but in fact it's a very formal meeting. He said, I'm here representing the US government to declare that the war between the US government and the FMLN has ended, and that the second point was that the US government wanted to establish friendly relations with the FMLN, that was Aronson. So, Handal in the memoir says that he responded very briefly saying; "first I also want to tell you that were very happy that the war between the US government and the FMLN has ended", and Handal added, "hopefully the United States has never actually participated in this war", but he followed with another sort-of statement saying, "we also want to establish friendly relations with the United States, based on two conditions", he said, first condition is that the United States play a very active role in the implementation of the peace accords, in particular the United States actually deal with the resistance that certain segments of the Salvadoran military might have to a military reform. Secondly, he said we want friendly relations under the premise that the FMLN is not a subordinate actor of the US, in that mutually productive relations of cooperation should be established. And then Aronson responded, pretty much emphasizing that he was in the capacity to pretty much say yes to those things.

So, basically I guess the visit of ambassador Walker was part of a series of events in that period. There was another event in which ambassador Pickering was also involved, but the

message is the same, right. To me as an historian, the meaning of these events is very significant in that at the end of the war, apparently and of course in a private setting, the US government actually acknowledged what everybody knew, that the US government was a party of the war. They formally acknowledged it in a private manner. And, in that sense, that acknowledgment, in my view is as important actually as the peace settlement signed between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government. And, actually also emphasize a premise of the initial period in the FMLN/FDR diplomacy which, this is probably something Ruben would remember, that one of the first demands of the FMLN/FDR was pretty much direct conversations between the FMLN/FDR and the US government, that was the first demand. And, eventually it came down to that direct dialogue towards the end of the war. In that sense it is one of those significant events that mark the end of the war, and the start of a new more productive relation.

William Leogrande: So, before we turn to questions I want us to have a little bit of a chance to talk about the implementation phase of the peace agreement. Francesc could you tell us a little about the role that ONUSAL played and what going into the implementation phase were the highest priority.

Francesc Vendrell: Well, I have to say that I would ask Alvaro de Soto to also say something, because my role in El Salvador was during the whole peace negotiations, and in particular the deployment of ONUSAL Human Rights. And, that I think was extremely rude.... I want to say about the deployment of ONUSAL the human rights field mission that we had a meeting in Geneva in June 1990, paid for by the Swedish government, which brought together twenty, approximately twenty human rights experts from all over the world, some of the most credible people. And, we sat with them, at the Santenay and basically to ask the following; the Salvadoran government was already a party to most human rights instruments. So the problem was not adherence to human rights in law, the question was implementation of the agreement. And, eventually the formula... well ideally it would be superb to be able to deploy a civil mission just as before there were military missions, a mission of human rights observers who would be deployed across the country with a great deal of rights, and with a mandate which would be extremely fulfilling. We thought of course this would be splendid, I don't think we expected that the Salvadoran government would accept this formula. Nonetheless, a month later,

we went to Costa Rica, the first meeting took place, I actually was dealing with Guatemala on that particular occasion. And, I gather that when the proposal was made, two days later, or a day later, Álvaro would remember better, actually this proposal that perhaps we thought no Salvadoran government would accept actually was accepted. And then, although we had agreed in Geneva when we set up the framework agreement that nothing was agreed until everything was agreed, we did have the opportunity, and I think the US was helpful on that occasion, in getting the Salvadoran government to accept the deployment of ONUSAL Human Rights several months before the agreement was concluded. And, I think the role of ONUSAL there on the human rights side was enormous, and I think the impact was also enormous. Now, when it comes to other aspects of implementation, like the electoral and the DDR process, I was less involved, because by then I had moved to another topic.

William Leogrande: Can we get you to say a few words about the rest of the implementation?

Álvaro de Soto: Perhaps you could clarify slightly... the idea of a nationwide, longterm, monitoring of human rights was in itself quite revolutionary, it had never been tried before anywhere by anyone. And, in fact, the Human Rights Center at the time, the predecessor for the High Commission for Human Rights, was extremely prudent and said we can't do this, we won't do this. So it fell into the lap of the secretariat in New York to organize this whole thing. But, this came only after the agreement was actually reached. Now, I have to confess that it was I that insisted that this monitoring of the compliance with the human rights obligations of the parties was only something that could be done once there was a cease-fire. I put that in out of prudence, because of consultations with people on the peacekeeping side at the United Nations secretariat. Where they were, in those times, quite rigorous on insisting that we didn't get involved in peacekeeping unless there was a peace to keep; things have evolved a bit since.

What happened was that the reaction against the FMLN negotiators by their own people in the field at the time, or so at least so we were told. Not only in the field, as well as in some of your own leadership as well as people in the field, because they had departed from the script, according to which, there would be nothing until there was an agreement on the army issues, was such that they said well on top of that you're giving us an agreement that's not even going to be complied with right away. And, it's at that time that the FMLN said listen we have no objection

to monitoring beginning earlier, and the government at that time was sort of cornered into saying, "yes we will accept that," that's how that evolved. Now as to the deployment of the later on of ONUSAL, that was not an issue, the issue had been overcome when the Security Council, at a time when some members, two permanent members of the Security Council, were against any reference whatsoever in Security Council resolutions to anything involving Human Rights at that time, they nevertheless accepted, in a sort of leap of faith, that their could begin the deployment of ONUSAL solely for the purpose of monitoring human rights, on the understanding that this was the first stage in a process that could lead, down the road, to an overall peacekeeping mission. So, that sort of broke the floodgates and allowed easily, and by that time of course we had had ONUCA for a certain amount of time, so people had gotten used to the idea that people with blue berets going around and the region was not necessarily a spearhead of the advance of world communism or something like that, right. So, that facilitated. So, there was never any issue on that account.

William Leogrande: Thank you. Before we turn to the questions, Peter, I would like to ask you. You were chargé d'affaires when the ad hoc commission report came out, and recommended the retirement of virtually the entire high command, which, of course, the armed forces was not too happy with. Would you talk a little bit about the role the United States played in seeing to it that that didn't derail the whole process.

Peter Romero: That's an excellent question, and I think your whole thrust here with respect to the implementation of the accords is just as important as reaching the accords, and we tend to overlook that part of it - oh, they reach the accords, fine we'll move on to the next subject, - no, it was tough, it was hard work as everyone knows, but just to backtrack a little bit, I was in Washington most of this time during the discussions of the Peace Accords, and with the exception of a hiatus between '84 and '88 I was involved in El Salvador since 1980 from the Washington side, and it was obvious that what was happening in Washington was because of the murder of the Jesuits, we were losing our support in congress. And, I remember a key vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were Nancy Kassebaum from Kansas, was being lobbied heavily to cut off aid to El Salvador. And, I went to her and I said, "look, no matter how you feel about this, they are in the middle of negotiations, and this will derail negotiations", and she voted

in favor of continuing aid which was key at the time. But, it was obvious that the clock was ticking here, okay.

With respect to the implementation and the ad hoc committee, one of the things that was different from my stay in El Salvador as chief of mission as chargé, and my predecessor's as ambassador's was, that while I served at the courtesy and acceptance of the government of El Salvador, and I never lost sight of that, my primary goal there was to make sure that both sides implemented, and were obligated to what they had signed on to with respect to the peace accords. That was my number one priority. And, it was obvious to all of us that if one side was able to slack off on implementation, completion of their part of this, that the whole thing would unravel. And, when the FPL had been found with hiding weapons, we cut off assistance to the FPL during that time. When that taller in Nicaragua blew up, and discovered all this stuff, we cut off assistance, and when the de facto or the ad hoc committee led by Abraham Rodríguez decided that they would basically take out I think it was 52 officers, actually 100, more than a 100, but never was made public, I have it on good authority over here there was an officer in the Salvadoran military.

There's a picture that my deputy chief of mission Phil Cicola has, and it was a Sunday at Coatepeque lake and Abraham Rodríguez asked me to walk out on a dock to talk to me privately and he walked out on the dock and he told me that tomorrow he was going to be issuing a list to president Cristiani, and that he wanted me to know ahead of time that the whole high command save one general and 100 others would be sited by them and they would have to leave. And, I remember when he gave me some of the names and he gave me this, Phil has a picture of me pulling some of my hair out you know bending over like, "my god what's gonna happen?" But, on Monday morning I asked to see the high command because they had already gotten the news and I felt they needed to hear it from us, and not be ambiguous on where we stood on it, and I met with them and I said you all, except I think for general Vargas that they all had to leave, and the question to me was, well this is not fair. And, it wasn't fair; they had no right of reclama to any of this, but it's what they had signed on to. And, they couldn't not comply as far as I could see, because if they did not comply the whole thing would unravel, and they did. Where the difficulty came was with some of the colonels, who felt that this was manifestly unfair and unjust, and at the time I called Bernie Aronson in Washington, and I said, "I need some help here Bernie, there's some officers that are digging in, they just don't want to, they don't think it's fair

or just, their right, but they've signed on to it they've got to do it", and he said "let me see what I can do," and he came back about an hour later and he said, "there's a general Colin Powell who is chairman of Joint-Chiefs-of-Staff, and he is in a visit in Chile, and he's coming back to Washington", it was a weekend, "he's coming back to Washington and I'll see what I can do to have him stop by and talk to the Salvadoran military high command and others." And, I said, "that would be great," in fact he did, he spoke to them at the military school, he's a quick study, and talked about how when you sign onto the military you give yourself to your country, that some of you fall on the field of battle, some fall on the field of politics, but you always put your country first, and I am with you, I understand where you're coming from, it's not fair, but this you've got to do for your country. And, I have to tell you it was very emotional, and you could hear a pin drop in that room, it was at the military academy, and they all did the right thing after that.

William Leogrande: So we have just a couple of written questions, so we may have some time for broader questions as well. Let me do the written questions first: After the 1989 FMLN offensive, the friends arranged a trip to Europe for FMLN commanders, how important was that trip in fostering the commitment to negotiations by the FMLN, Rubén?

Rubén Zamora: Well, in my opinion, the most important was the offensive. Probably we saw of the offensive over '89 of the FMLN, and how it develops, will be impossible the negotiations. Why? Because the negotiation as we know, as you say in English is always the second best. Prior to the offensive, the armed forces of El Salvador, and the United States, I don't know if it is the Department of Defense or the whole government, believed that the FMLN was strategically defeated already, and the only thing that was going to come was a process of bandaging by the remaining of the FMLN, as happened in those cases, and I am talking about it because that is what was told to me directly by the vice-minister of defence of El Salvador when I had a talk with him. He said, "No, no, no," because I knew that the offensive was coming, and I said to him, "Don't you think that maybe they are going to do something." "No, no, no," he said "You hear too much Radio Venceremos, they are already defeated strategically, it is a question of time."

On the other hand, in our conversation with the comandancia of the FMLN at that time, prior to the offensive, in which Guillermo Ungo, Padre Ellacuría and myself went there and had two, in two occasions conversations there was a big discussion. And the discussion was always if there was insurrectional elan on the part of the masses or not. We were, the three of us, Ellacuría, Guillermo and myself telling them no, there is tiredness about the conflict, what people want is a solution, not insurrection, please understand that and, the thesis of the comandancia at that moment, expressed to us was to say, “no, no Rubén, no Guillermo, what happened is that the spirit of insurrection of the masses still exists, but we the military force are too separated from them, and what we have to do is to close that gap, come to the city, and then the spirit of insurrection of the masses will raise and we are going to have...” and that’s what they tried to do. Remember that most of the FMLN combatants that went back from the offensive to San Salvador were with two rifles, carrying two rifles. And, after that two or three truck full of arms were discovered in San Salvador, and were left there, why? Because everyone who knows about insurrection knows that the first thing you have to do is you start to give arms to the people and tell them, shoot that way, it doesn’t matter what you shoot.” Because that is what creates a whole Spirit of an insurrection, right?

What then the insurrection shows to both sides: you are wrong. The FMLN is not defeated strategically, how can you say that a guerilla had been defeated strategically if they were a big part of the capital of the country for three or four days and they move backward as if they are doing nothing. And, the army cannot do anything against them? Come on, right? And, on the other hand for the FMLN it was absolutely clear that no insurrectional spirit existed in the country. That for me is a determining factor, and on top of everything, the military committed the worst political error that they have committed, killing the Jesuits. Why, and for me this is absolutely clear, they killed them is because they wanted to kill Ellacuría. Why? Because Ellacuría was talking with President Cristiani about a political solution. He told us, he told the comandancia as well and said no, President Cristiani is opening the way for a political solution give him time, they said, give us time to move the whole thing. But, the comandancia was not going to stop something that they had been preparing, and believing that that was the right thing to do. And, then when the military killed, what they wanted to kill is Ellacuría, because Ellacuría was the possibility of a political solution according to their perception because the president was moving to one, or at least it was possible. And, this is something that we have to look at. That’s

why I think that that offensive was the turning point for opening the second best, that was our negotiation. In the same, for me this is a very crucial moment that we have to understand in the history of our country. And, that's why sometimes from error on both sides something good comes.

William Leogrande: So, I have a couple of written questions that I'm going to direct to Peter, because they ask: how could the United States justify providing military assistance to a government that for so many years in the 1980s was a gross and consistent violator of internationally recognized human rights?

Peter Romero: Very good question, and it was very difficult to do, its one of those issues where you don't have any great options, okay? We face in the world today those kinds of situations even more so than we did back then. You don't have great actors, you don't have white hats and black hats, you have a lot of gray area and it was very difficult. We did know that if El Salvador fell, that there would be chaos there, that there were revolutions going on in Guatemala at the time, lots of terrorism in Honduras, and there needed to be some stabilization, did we have to hold our nose in a lot of areas, yes we did, but there wasn't a lot of great options...

Audience Member: You've got blood on your hands, you've got blood on your hands!

William Leogrande: So far we've been able to have a conference and talk about some controversial issues without too much disruption, so I hope we'll have respect for all the speakers who have come and shared their history with us today.

Peter Romero: Thank you. You know, sometimes you make decisions based on what could happen if you don't act, what could happen even worse, basically being able to look around the corner if you will. I think that in many ways those people that deserve applause today are not necessarily those people who at the UN, or in Washington, or at the capitals of the Friends, but those Salvadorans who put aside personal loss, and the killing of family members, and maiming and wounding and that sort of thing, and not just from the FMLN side, but from the private sector, and the government side who at some point in time decided that enough was enough, and

came together enough to craft a piece, and to get that piece enacted. Is El Salvador perfect today, no it's not perfect today there's a lot of problems, and I would hope that Salvadorans would come together the way they did back then to solve their problems now under strong leadership, the kind of leadership that Cristiani showed at the time, but you know it's great to sit in the back of the room and to say "you have blood on your hands," when what we were trying to do was to mitigate as much as we possibly could. Did we evolve over time, US government, State Department? Absolutely. But, what I think you can get from this whole exercise is that everybody evolved over time. And, there became a confluence when everyone decided that peace was the right thing to do at that particular time.

Cindy Arnson: It's mostly a question for Pete, but also a question for Francesc and even Álvaro. There was, I think, the perception of a great deal of tension between the Bush Administration and particularly Bernie Aronson, and I wish he were here to address this directly, between Bernie and Álvaro de Soto, I don't want to personalize this, but a general perception that the UN negotiators were more on the side of the FMLN than they were on the side of the Salvadoran government, and I was wondering if people could address that. I know that Bernie was one of the principals and is not here to address it directly, but I was wondering if any of you could shed light on that phenomenon.

Peter Romero: First, let me correct the record, because Rubén had mentioned that Bernie had moved from the Democratic party to the Republican party; he never did. He served a Republican administration, but he still to this day is a Democrat, and would take issue with you calling him a Republican. I can't think of... during the course of the negotiations, they went on for about two years if my memory serves, and there were ups and downs, peaks and valleys and that sort of thing, but I never felt we had lost confidence in the UN in doing this, I really didn't. I think that we had issues with some of the Friends, I can tell you right now Pico de Coaña the Spanish representative, head of Latin America for the Spanish government, we had serious problems with. But, that was okay because the Spaniards had a very good relationship with the FMLN, and the purpose of creating the Friends was to have a representative body that could assist both sides in moving this ahead. So, it wasn't a big deal. Cynthia, I don't remember there being really a disconnect between the United States and the UN, I don't know, Álvaro, do you recall?

Álvaro de Soto: I recall it vividly. The point from which I felt I had a strong confidence on the US side for what the UN was doing began in September of 1991. But, until then one could almost feel, smell, taste the suspicion and the distrust. There's a long record of second guessing that seemed like undercutting frankly. I'll say it quite openly, I've actually said it in writing before, I've published this. But, people can have differences. And, differences can be ironed out, and sometimes it takes time. And, that is understandable. And, I agree, by the way, that most of the parties evolved over time, you're absolutely right, Peter, in this. I was also quite interested to learn of my own political antecedents in the course of the revelations of Rubén here. I had an uncle who was actually a very prominent Christian Democrat, a leader, and he was a senator for about thirty years and Vice-President of Peru, but I dabbled in university politics, but more of as a maverick than in association with any political grooving. And, I'm actually very interested to hear that there was a suspicion. I had heard that there was at least one member of the FMLN general command who was convinced that I was in the pay of the CIA, and so I thought that more or less balanced things out.

But, in any case, I think that was resolved over time, and I think I had the enormous benefit of having the complete trust of the Secretary General at the time. And, that he stood, as Tom Pickering put it, stalwartly behind me, and that it sort of helped things along. We were, I think, and we had reason to be, confident that what we were doing was the right thing. And, asking us, as we were in effect, being asked at a certain point, to as a practical matter move the goal post. Try to unilaterally, arbitrarily, when we were merely the third party trying to help them reach an agreement, change the rules that had been set by agreement between the parties was an inappropriate thing to be doing. But, we overcame.

If I can just clarify one or two little historical points for the record, about The Friends, Francesc's version of it by the way is perfect down to the last detail, but I would add a couple of things, the first is that whilst we agreed that it would be a good idea to have such a grouping that would be a sort of buffer, knowing that the Security Council has a tendency when there is a group of countries who play a prominent role, to allow them to lead it, or to take their keynote from such a grouping, we thought that it would be useful to have countries who were not on particular sides on this, who were not taking sides. They were almost by definition neutral and they were in touch with both sides and therefore able to be helpful. But, I would say for the first

14 or 15 months of the negotiations, we did not deal with them as a group. They only became a group starting in July of 1991 in fact, when there was an Ibero-American summit in Guadalajara, Mexico, and President Salinas took the initiative of inviting the Secretary General together with the presidents of Venezuela, Columbia, and the Prime Minister of Spain.

This was precipitated by an incident, the leader of Venezuela at the time, Carlos Andrés Pérez was irrepensible, and he took a great interest in matters Central American, not only matters Central American, and he at one point thought that at an admittedly difficult moment in the negotiations after the constitutional reform agreements of April 1991, he took an initiative without notifying us in advance, which failed, but the other Friends thought that it would be useful perhaps to put him back on the straight-and-narrow. This was achieved in July. And, this only from that moment that we dealt with them as a group. Of course, they all knew that I was seeing each of the other ones separately, they knew it perfectly well, but the other point about the rules that applied to the Friends of the Secretary General was that they were that precisely, friends of the Secretary General. And, we wanted to make sure, and that was one of the purposes, that they realized fully that the Secretary General was in charge of this negotiations, and that if they really wanted to help it would not be a good idea for each of them to go off on their own, but rather that we would keep them informed, and we did, in considerable detail, perhaps more than they wanted to process. But, we would keep them informed, and we asked them please act only at our bidding, and we gave them talking points, quite frankly. They did it, each of them in their own way and they played an important collaborative effort. Sorry for branching off.

William Leogrande: Thank you. Fransesc, did you want to add something?

Francesc Vendrell: No, I suspect that just as the FMLN in 1989 was concerned that Álvaro was conservative, and might be swayed by the Americans, I think that they learned, or they found out soon afterwards, that actually he was no easy push. And, that he was actually not necessarily sympathetic to the FMLN as opposed to the government, but was going to stand for... I mean our effort was to achieve what we had set out to do. And, in some ways, perhaps there was some coincidences with the FMLN, that is the changing of the Salvadoran society into a civilian-led, rule-of-law based administration.

William Leogrande: So, we're almost out of time, and I want to give each of the panelists an opportunity for final words, and encourage you, if you would, to looking back: is there anything in the accords that should have been different or that proved to just not be feasible? In other words, looking back on this, just what lessons can we take from it, for other conflicts as well. Let me start with Joaquin, and move this way.

Juaquín Chávez: Yeah, I have sort of a main thought which is that as far as the implementation phase goes, I think that it achieves very limited goals pertaining to the mobilization of the two armies, and some very basic aspects of reintegration into civilian society, but there was a fundamental, in my view, failure in the political economy of peace, which meant that even though the accord was, I think in many different respects, a paradigmatic achievement, right. As far as the implementation phase, I think that there was a fundamental tension or contradiction between the... not only lack of resources, it was an element, right.

If you think about, for instance, about the 4.1 billion dollars that the United States Government actually invested in the war, and think about the amount of money that was invested into the transition to peace, it is a very modest amount, right. So, what I'm trying to say here is that the cost of war was immense, not only in terms obviously of more than 75,000 Salvadorans were actually victims mostly of state violence, the thousands of "disappeared" people, the almost 1 million displaced people from El Salvador, and refugees as a result of the conflict, you know in short, it was a social catastrophe of inordinate, unprecedented proportions not only in Salvadoran history, but in many respects in Latin American history. Some historians have pointed out that this displacement of 1 million people, in El Salvador, as a result of this war, is only comparable by the displacement produced by the early process of the Spanish conquest in the region. It is only comparable in magnitude, historical magnitude. If you think along those proportions, right, I think that the peace accords, particularly in its initial phase, was permeated by a very technocratic, and in many ways short-sighted vision, and I think in many respects, and I beg to disagree with some of my esteemed colleagues. I discussed this matter yesterday in the previous panel in which some assertion was made that the current social crisis... criminal... the crisis in El Salvador with violence and these things had nothing to do with these things had nothing to do with the war, I beg to actually disagree with that premise. Of course, one has to understand in very particular ways, what kind of legacies have what kind of impacts. In the social realm, in the

economic realm, in the psycho-social dimensions, in the cultural dimensions, which of course is something that needs to be explored, right, from an academic, and scientific perspective. But, as a premise, I basically kind of disagree with that kind of assessment. And, the reason is that precisely, it's the fact that the political economy of peace was simply insufficient, and that has had, in many respects, a very catastrophic result for El Salvador. And, this is something I have to suggest as my last commentary, I have actually conducted research on the post-war process in El Salvador, I interviewed many members of the Salvadoran military, soldiers, even members of the high-command at the time, of course members of the FMLN, and they all agree pretty much on this point; they basically talk about the insufficiencies in resources that the Salvadoran state actually had to comply with this enormous challenge of how to deal with these catastrophic results of the war. So, that's my commentary.

William Leogrande: Thank you. Peter?

Peter Romero: Well, I don't share his view of the international community not stepping up. There are never enough resources when you're talking about a country with the wide income gaps, and the underdevelopment that El Salvador had, but let's keep something in mind here, this was a peace process that was meant not just to drop weapons and to sing "kumbaya," but to try to reform key government institutions, and I think that the process that was involved in that, and there's nothing that I would say that was superfluous, or unnecessary, or something that was lacking, I think it was a pretty good process with a lot of really good components. But, I think where the failure has come is in the kind of leadership that El Salvador had under Fredy Cristiani.

You can say what you want about Cristiani, but at the time he was a president who stepped up, and, he wanted peace, and he made sure that it happened. In terms of the implementation of the peace process itself, where it has fallen apart is that all of the parties in El Salvador have gone to their respective corners in the boxing ring, and have gone back to doing what they normally do not in warfare but in politics. That's where it's fallen apart. As opposed to continuing the momentum of reform, and making this a real process that continues over time, that brings together political parties for the sake of the country, the way they did back in that time, this is where it's fallen apart, unfortunately.

Francesc Vendrell: Well, I think, and I have been involved in quite a number of other peace processes afterwards, and I have followed what's been done elsewhere. I don't think any mediator, or team of mediators have succeeded in carrying out or engineering so much change in the course of a two-year negotiation. I think we were, not only myself, but Álvaro, we were daring, and we had the support of the Secretary General. In other negotiations, perhaps a mediator hasn't been as daring, or the support he or she enjoyed wasn't so strong. There's been some discussion that we did not tackle economic and social issues in El Salvador. Having been involved at the beginning in the negotiations from Guatemala, I would disagree, I don't think that reach towards a peace agreement should really cover what I will call an economic and social program. Partly because the implementation of this program is incredibly long. It can only be carried out on a progressive basis, and therefore the kind of verification by third parties fades away. Countries are interested in seeing the militarization, the removal, elections, constitution making, but they are not really up to following up in a 15 year process, how land reform or how economic and social rights are implemented. So I think we achieved as much as possible.

I want to add one thing for the record. And, this is the role of a priest, Rafael Moreno. And, again, I want to link this to the importance of the human rights issues in terms of El Salvador. The reason why in the West there was so much interest on El Salvador, and so much support, not sympathy for the FMLN, but certainly anger at the government, was the human rights violations in El Salvador. Now, in the 1980s I had been involved for a variety of reasons on this human rights situation in Chile, I had a great deal of contacts with Amnesty International, and at the church center in New York there was a woman called Margo Picken who was the representative of Amnesty, and nearby there was the representative of the FDR/FMLN, a Jesuit priest called Rafael Moreno. With Rafael I developed very close links, and I think Rafael helped in opening the door to the involvement of the UN, and in ensuring that the UN would have the right credibility. So, Rafael played an important role behind the scenes throughout the entire negotiations, he's now in Mexico, but I just want to pay tribute to him because he played a very important role behind the scenes.

Rubén Zamora: Two things I wanted to express, both are back to - one in our discussion, one in our discussion this past two or three days, and the other is in the country. The first thing, is that in all of our discussions we have not dealt with what, for me, is one of the fundamental elements

to explain why we succeeded in the negotiation, and it is the negotiation, or the table, outside the negotiation. We have talked about on the table, what happened or didn't happen, under the table, the backchannels, already we have talked about. But, the other element, in a negotiation the size of the Salvadoran, with the problematica that it was confronting has been absent, is society. And, in El Salvador we have to recognize something; there was a fundamental change in the ideology of the people through the process.

Remember, at the beginning of the war to talk to the other side was an example of treason, or that you are selling yourself to the other side. What, for them - for the military, or for us, that was very clear. And, therefore, you have to confront, no way if you don't talk to the other side you have to kill it, in terms of politics, because in the end it's a problem of power, right. At the end of the negotiation, at the end of the process, negotiation was the ideology of the people. That was a change in the mentality of the Salvadoran people. I feel, myself, to be very proud of that process, to help to change the mentality of our people. Because, not only the FMLN, not only the government change, the people change. And, because the people changed, the implementation of the peace agreement has a space that they didn't have in Guatemala.

And, I am afraid to say, I don't know what is going to happen in Columbia, because I don't see that change in the mentality, on the contrary, I see the opposite, in the case of Columbia. And, remember, that the peace agreement in Guatemala was rejected in a popular vote, in a referendum. Horrible, right? Well, that is the first, we have to take that into account in our discussion. But, the second thing, the other thing that seems to me to be absent is what you have said, the socio-economic dimension. But, let me say two things about that. It was impossible to discuss that; you cannot sit down a government that was starting to implement a neoliberal program reduction of the state, privatization, and so on, because that was the proposal of the government of ARENA at that time. You could be against that, but that doesn't matter, that was their proposal, and they were the government. And, making economic agreements with groups that were thinking in terms of socialism, right? It's impossible. There is not the necessary space to have an agreement. And, secondly, you want to deal with the economic problem... guerrillas and government alone cannot solve those problems. Because there are actors that are absolutely indispensable to do it, to be there: the private sector, the other sectors of society. That's why it is impossible. It is not a failure of the peace agreement, it is an impossibility. But, that doesn't mean that the whole thing has changed, and because it was impossible the problem

doesn't exist. Continue to be true what President Cristiani said in his speech in Chapultepec. That is the most clear definition of what I have found of the problem; this war is because of economic and social exclusion, and political exclusion. We dealt with political exclusion, but we have not dealt with the other exclusions, and that is why we have the problems we have now in El Salvador. Therefore, I want to finish just in saying this is the best task that now we have, not the two actors of 25 years ago, but more complex actors. Because we have to face if we want to get out and have security and development in El Salvador, we need to deal with the socio-economic exclusion.

William Leogrande: So, thanks to our panelists, thanks to our audience and now on to the next session.