Liberal Social Reconstruction and the Resolution of Civil Wars in Central America

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Are forceful security guarantees necessary to resolve civil wars? Drawing on realist insights, Barbara Walter argues that insecurity is "the critical barrier to civil war settlement" and that security guarantees are a "necessary [but] not sufficient condition for settlement."[1] Civil war combatants are reluctant to relinquish weapons because doing so renders them vulnerable to physical retaliation by enemies within the postsettlement state and makes it impossible for them to enforce concessions included in the agreement. International actors can best overcome this obstacle, according to Walter, by offering credible and forceful guarantees of postwar security for the disarming side. She found that combatants in civil wars occurring between 1940 and 1990 "almost always failed to reach successful negotiated solutions to their conflicts unless an outside power guaranteed the safety of the belligerents during the ensuing transition period."[2] Of the eight cases of successful negotiated settlements in her study, only two involved no international security guarantees. The more profound the guarantees, as manifested in the commitment of troops prepared to fight to preserve peace, the greater the probability that agreements will be honored. From 1940 to 1990 such guarantees never failed to lead to successful negotiated settlements.[3] Nonmilitary interventions, traditional peacekeeping operations, and mediation are unlikely to succeed, she argues, unless "extensive internal

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1. See Walter 1997, 362; and Walter 1999, 137.
2. Walter 1997, 360.
3. Ibid., 350.

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power-sharing arrangements have been designed and all parties are guaranteed an effective voice in the new government," thus resolving the security dilemma by domestic means.[4]

The record of the last decade exhibits a more complex set of outcomes than observed during the Cold War. Some contemporary cases, such as Bosnia and Mozambique, confirm the importance of forceful international guarantees.[5] Other contemporary cases, however, suggest that security guarantees are not as effective or necessary as they may have been previously. On the one hand, among civil wars where negotiations have been recently attempted, in several of the cases where strong international security guarantees have been offered—such as Cambodia, Angola, Liberia, and Somalia—agreements collapsed and conflict continued. On the other hand, two of the three Central American civil war settlements—those in El Salvador and Guatemala—had no international security guarantees and limited or nonexistent power-sharing agreements, yet they have been among the greatest successes of international efforts to resolve civil wars.

We argue that the termination of civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala during the 1990s demonstrates that noncoercive, liberal international intervention can, under some circumstances, substitute for security guarantees in helping to resolve civil wars. We suggest that the logic of the interstate democratic peace also applies to civil wars. If local actors come to believe in liberal ideals of tolerance for diversity and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts, they will be more inclined to settle their civil wars. The construction of political institutions that limit the ability of the state to use force against its citizens can provide institutional solutions to security dilemmas. If the adversaries are economically interdependent, they will seek ways to resolve their differences to achieve the gains of mutually beneficial economic relationships.[6] Most importantly, if the dominant groups in a civil war signal credible commitment to liberal norms and practices, potentially vulnerable groups (such as those who would be expected to disarm as part of a settlement) can have reasonable confidence in their future safety, even in the absence of power-sharing or forceful external guarantees. While clearly not a necessary condition for civil war settlement, even limited liberal social reconstruction can be a sufficient condition for settlement, as suggested by evidence from Central America.

We argue that constructivist approaches to international relations provide insight into this process of conflict resolution through liberal social reconstruction.[7] Political adversaries in El Salvador and Guatemala (and to a lesser extent Nicaragua) adopted liberal norms because virtually every international actor, including those with significant material influence and those with the greatest moral legitimacy, spread the same message and cooperated in socializing Central American political actors according to liberal principles. This effort was facilitated by the region's

4. Ibid., 362.
5. Walter 1999.
6. Wood 1999.
7. See Wendt 1994; Katzenstein 1996; and Ruggie 1998.

history of liberal thought dating to the nineteenth century, though until the 1990s only in Costa Rica did actual political practices reflect liberal norms.

The Central American cases suggest that the transmission of liberal norms occurs in three phases. In the first phase local actors adopt liberal practices as part of tactical efforts to legitimize themselves to the international community. Initially for show, these practices over time become institutionalized. In the second phase the internationally mediated negotiations that lead to peace accords demonstrate to combatants that their adversaries have changed their preferences and can be trusted to forgo violence and follow political rules established under the accords. Finally, in the wake of peace settlements, the UN and other international actors engage in concrete and direct efforts to support liberal social reconstruction. In this phase international actors work to deepen the commitment to liberal ideals and institutions within the state and attempt to extend an elite commitment to liberal norms to society as a whole.

Of the three Central American cases, the Nicaraguan case illustrates the limitations of international security guarantees and power-sharing agreements for the creation of an enduring civil peace. The Salvadoran experience presents the clearest example of how liberal social reconstruction can lead to civil war resolution. Liberal international intervention also helped bring about the settlement of a civil war in Guatemala that had persisted for thirty-six years, although the commitment to liberal practices there appears more tenuous than in El Salvador.

Today the international community has become increasingly reluctant to commit armed troops to assist in the resolution of civil wars. Instead, international actors have increasingly relied on the promotion of liberal democratic norms and institutions to resolve such conflicts. Walter's argument that security guarantees are a necessary condition for settlement would lead us to be pessimistic about the potential for success of this noncoercive strategy.[8] The Central American experience, however, provides evidence that liberal social reconstruction can lead to successful civil war resolution.

Explanations for Civil Peace: Security Guarantees and Liberal Social Reconstruction

According to Walter, civil wars transform domestic politics into an anarchic microcosm of the international system as seen by realists. In anarchic realms, wars can happen because there is no central political authority to keep actors from launching wars of aggression.[9] Wars can also begin or rekindle after a negotiated settlement even if none of the combatants has aggressive intents. In the self-help world of anarchic systems, actors arm themselves to protect their security. Actions

8. Walter 1997, 362.
9. Waltz 1979.

taken by one group to protect their security may be seen as threatening to others, who then respond in kind, generating a spiral of hostility.[10]

Walter argues that such security dilemmas are especially acute in civil wars because, in contrast to settlements of international wars, which usually leave both states intact and capable of defending themselves, civil war settlements generally require one side to disarm and to live within a state dominated by their former enemies.[11] Even partial disarmament or demobilization of combat-ready forces is enough to render rebels highly vulnerable. In this context, "nonmilitary intervention, although politically more acceptable and financially less costly, is unlikely to accomplish much."[12] According to Walter, international mediation by itself does not lead to peace, unless it is backed by some kind of enforcement, and "the only type of peacekeeping that appears to help end a war is that which is backed by a promise to use force. Observers or unarmed peacekeepers with no military backup will have little positive effect on either negotiations or treaty implementation."[13] In the language of the prisoners' dilemma game, even combatants who prefer a negotiated settlement to the status quo will find themselves defecting from a peace agreement because they fear receiving the sucker's payoff if they cooperate and are tempted to grasp for the high payoff associated with successful cheating. Although power-sharing agreements can help address these problems, Walter argues that security dilemmas are extremely difficult to resolve unless international actors make credible commitments to intervene forcefully to protect disarming combatants.

An alternative to this security-oriented view is one that considers a wider range of motivations and does not assume that all actors possess similar preferences.[14] Civil wars do not begin or persist only because political groups with similar preferences interact in an anarchic order. They also take place because combatants possess sharply contrasting visions for their society and have irreconcilable preferences. Significant change in the preferences and identities of the combatants, and their reidentification of former adversaries as potential partners in the reconstruction of the nation, or as loyal opponents in a democratic state, can dramatically reduce the perceived likelihood of hostile action. Thus groups that are objectively vulnerable to a bolt-from-the-blue attack can nonetheless feel subjectively safe and accept a settlement, even in the absence of forceful security guarantees.

With the end of the Cold War, the international community has increasingly turned to a liberal strategy that seeks to resolve civil wars by changing the preferences of the combatants and encouraging them to embrace liberal values and institutions.[15] A variety of states, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations have tried to transform paramilitary death squads and revolutionary

10. Jervis 1978.
11. Posen 1993.
12. Walter 1997, 363.
13. Ibid., 361.
14. Moravscik 1997.
15. See Paris 1997; and Barnett 1997.

movements into political parties competing in the electoral arena. They have tried to transform reactionary oligarchies into liberal business elites who embrace global markets and liberal democracy. They have sought to change local militaries from repressive institutions with broad domestic powers into conventional armies focused on external defense. They have worked to create nonpartisan civilian police forces. They have tried to convince combatants that political conflicts should be resolved through bargaining, compromise, and the rule of law rather than force, and to persuade likely victors in postwar electoral contests to respect the civil and political rights of the losers. Twenty-five of the thirty-three UN peacekeeping missions initiated between 1989 and 1998 involved some effort to promote liberal democracy.[16]

This liberal strategy involves the international community in what Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink call "strategic social construction."[17] International actors encourage others to adhere to new norms through a process of socialization and peer pressure that combines discursive strategies of praise for appropriate behavior and denunciation for violation of norms with material strategies of rewards for good behavior and sanctions against those who do not adhere to the relevant norms.

This effort at strategic social construction reflects the logic of the interstate democratic peace, where liberal states have been able to overcome the fears engendered by anarchy by credibly signaling their "dovish" intentions to states with similar qualities and preferences.[18] If shared belief in tolerance for diversity and the nonviolent resolution of conflicts leads to mutual respect among like-minded states,[19] actors within states are less likely to fight about political differences if they credibly demonstrate that they have come to value individual freedom, the rule of law, and other liberal norms. If the political institutions of liberal democracy, such as elections, legislatures, and constitutional and legal protections for individual rights, inhibit the state's ability to engage in international war,[20] the same institutions should constrain the state's ability to use force against its own citizens.[21] Mutually beneficial trade relationships give liberal states a material interest in avoiding conflict with their trading partners;[22] likewise, the greater the economic interdependence between combatants in civil wars, the greater the incentives they will have to resolve their differences peacefully.[23] Liberal democracies do appear to be less likely to experience civil wars than nondemocracies.[24]

16. United Nations 1998b.
17. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 910.
18. Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992.
19. See Doyle 1983; and Russett 1993.
20. See Morgan and Campbell 1991; Gaubatz 1991; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992; and Lake 1992.
21. Huntington 1991.
22. Oneal and Russett 1997.
23. Wood 1999.
24. See Gurr 1993; and Bensen and Kugler 1998.

Walter agrees that democracy provides the best long-term solution to civil wars. She believes, however, that security dilemmas are so profound that actors cannot trust their adversaries to sustain professed commitments to liberalism. They fear that the winner of postconflict elections will turn the country into a one-party state. In this context long-term security guarantees and power-sharing arrangements are necessary to achieve settlements that make future democratization possible.[25] We argue that the causal relationship can work in the opposite direction. The promotion of liberal values and institutions at the outset of a peace process can address the fears of vulnerable combatants to such an extent that the demobilization of combatants becomes unproblematic, and forceful international security guarantees unnecessary.

While the international community has been "teaching the norm" that liberal democracy is the best way to resolve civil wars throughout the world,[26] nowhere have combatants embraced this norm more consistently than in El Salvador and Guatemala. What accounts for the more successful transmission of liberal norms in this region than in others? Within Central America, why have Nicaraguans been slower to embrace these norms? More broadly, what do these cases tell us about how international actors and norms reshape the preferences and identities of local actors? Explaining how norms and identities change represents a principal challenge facing constructivist scholarship today.[27]

We argue that international norms have transformed the preferences and identities of local actors in three sequential phases. In the first phase, which began during the 1980s, local elites in El Salvador and Guatemala proclaimed adherence to liberal norms in order to legitimize themselves to the international community and maintain access to material benefits available in the international system. Several aspects of Central America's insertion in the international system made this a region where local actors needed to legitimize themselves in this way. The depth of U.S. hegemony is greater in this region than in others. The United States' increasing emphasis on liberal democracy pushed local actors to respond by proclaiming adherence to liberal norms. During the Cold War, electoral democracy was a tool for achieving victories in civil wars. In Central America the Reagan administration embraced the promotion of democratic parties in an effort to legitimate U.S. military interventions to a skeptical U.S. Congress; build stronger, more stable, and more compliant allies in wars against leftist guerrillas; and delegitimize the leftist government of Nicaragua.[28] Local elites felt pressured to adhere to liberal norms and adopt liberal democratic practices if they wanted to maintain U.S. support in their civil wars. This was most crucial for Salvadorans, for whom the adoption of electoral competition unlocked billions of dollars from the U.S. Congress, but international pressure also helped convince the Guatemalan military to implement a

25. Walter 1999.
26. Finnemore 1996.
27. See Kowert and Legro 1996; and Price 1998.
28. See Arnson 1993; Carothers 1991; and Peceny 1999.

controlled transition to elected civilian rule.[29] The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) government of Nicaragua convoked elections in 1990 in an effort to undermine U.S. congressional support for the Contra war. These coerced elections achieved for the United States what the Contras had not—the removal of the Sandinista government.

In the post–Cold War world the United States embraced the concept of "democratic enlargement," proclaiming itself the leader of a union of liberal states cooperating for mutual peace and prosperity.[30] In this new context it promoted liberal democracy in Central America as a means to resolve civil wars, not win them. The changed attitude of the United States, coupled with the disintegration of the USSR and the Leninist ideal, encouraged leftist movements to embrace a social democratic vision rather than revolutionary socialism.[31]

U.S. hegemony did not provide credible commitments to protect disarming rebels in the region. The United States could have used its overwhelming power and proximity to the region to issue useful guarantees to disarming combatants, without needing to deploy troops. The United States had spent the 1980s trying to defeat leftists in Central America, however, and thus could not be fully trusted to act as an impartial mediator in postwar settlements. In the post–Cold War era, the Salvadoran Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) could anticipate that the United States would no longer actively seek their annihilation and would accept their inclusion in democratic politics in their countries. It would have been absurd, however, for them to think that the United States would intervene militarily to protect them from attacks by local governments. The United States did not even provide credible guarantees to the Nicaraguan Contras, despite its extensive role in forming, financing, and directing them. Local actors had to rely on a broad U.S. commitment to support liberal democratic governance in the region rather than on specific guarantees to protect local combatants.

The general spread of democracy in the Western Hemisphere supplemented direct U.S. pressures on Central American states to adopt democratic practices. By the late 1980s, the inter-American community had adopted the promotion and defense of democracy as one of its central missions.[32] This message was first codified in Central America by Costa Rican president Oscar Arias, in his peace plan approved by Central American presidents at the 1987 summit in Esquipulas, Guatemala. By calling on all three countries to resolve their civil wars by convoking internationally supervised, fully inclusive, free, and fair elections, the Arias Plan represented a milestone for the emerging global norm that liberal democracy is the most appropriate way to resolve civil wars. In an excellent example of strategic social

29. Schirmer 1998.

30. Lake 1993.

31. Castañeda 1994. This transition took longer in Nicaragua given the Sandinistas' decade in power and the continued U.S. hostility toward the Sandinistas.

32. See Farer 1996; and Tesón 1996.

construction, the Arias Plan appropriated U.S. pro-democratic rhetoric, which had been a central justification for funding wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and used it as the formula for ending those wars. In doing so, Arias also reconstructed the regional environment in ways more congenial to the ideals and interests of Costa Rica, the most liberal state in Central America. In 1991 all members of the Organization of American States (OAS) embraced the Santiago Declaration on the Collective Defense of Democracy, which called for prompt action by the region's democracies in the event of a threat to democracy in a member state. In this context business elites feared that illiberal behavior could lead to the imposition of region-wide trade sanctions.

Another way in which the Americas are distinct from other regions is that preferential trade initiatives by the United States and the promise of regional free trade agreements have created strong incentives for states to do whatever is necessary to gain access to U.S. markets and capital. Because liberal democracy has become the normative standard in the Americas, economically liberalizing governments have generally found it necessary to embrace political liberalism as well. Thus, in an extension of Etel Solingen's work, we argue that governments dominated by "liberalizing" coalitions are more likely than "statist-nationalist-confessional" coalitions to accept democracy as a means to resolving civil wars.[33] Indeed, the parties most closely tied to the internationalist sectors of the local economic elite controlled the governments that negotiated the final peace agreements in El Salvador and Guatemala. These elites believed that their economic agenda required political liberalization. The weakness of the economically liberalizing coalition in Nicaragua helps to account for the comparative reluctance of Nicaraguans to embrace liberal political norms as a means to ending political violence in their country.

In the second negotiating phase of this process the UN plays the crucial role, offering mediation, monitoring, and verification services to the combatants as they discuss potential peace agreements. While the United States and, to a lesser extent, other states in the region might be viewed as having ulterior motives for their involvement in Central America's wars, the Europeans, Asians, and Latin Americans who represented the UN in the region had moral authority untarnished by material or partisan interests. Local actors viewed the UN as an impartial mediator.

The role played by the UN at this stage reflects a neoliberal institutionalist logic as much as a constructivist one.[34] Neoliberals accept that actors operating in anarchic environments are subject to security dilemmas. They argue, however, that impartial international actors can help combatants overcome security dilemmas by mediating between civil war opponents, increasing the information flow between the parties, verifying the agreements, and assisting in the development of institutions capable of reducing security dilemmas for both sides. Peace frameworks, timetables for implementation, and provisions for UN verification help lock in repeated

33. Solingen 1998.
34. Axelrod and Keohane 1993.

nonbellicose interactions between the parties and can improve transparency sufficiently to make it less likely that adversaries can cheat with impunity.[35]

This second phase includes an important element consistent with the constructivist approach. Neoliberalism, like neorealism, suggests that the actors are trapped in a prisoners' dilemma game, in which the actors possess similar preferences and cooperation is difficult to achieve. The logic of liberal social reconstruction, however, focuses on changing the preferences of the actors so that they place a higher value on mutual cooperation. Even if both actors' preferences have become more liberal, however, fears that their adversaries have not changed their minds could still inhibit cooperation. The intensive contact and transparency made possible by the UN's impartial mediation provides both sides with ample evidence that the identities and interests of their adversaries have indeed changed and that both can be trusted to implement liberal peace accords—at least to the point of eschewing violent solutions. Peace negotiations can also have a transforming impact as the two sides engage in precisely the kind of dialogue and compromises central to liberal democratic practice.

In the third postsettlement phase the UN works to create new liberal institutions, reform old institutions, and inculcate liberal values in a direct and conscious attempt to transform the identities of the actors. The explicit goal in this third phase is to move from what Finnemore and Sikkink refer to as the "norms cascade" stage, in which local actors often respond to global norms in instrumental ways, to the "internalization" stage in which actors' compliance with a norm becomes habitual.[36] These stages mirror the distinction in the comparative politics literature on democracy between transitions to and the consolidation of democracy. Whereas literature on democratic transitions argues that strategic actors who do not subscribe to democratic principles can build democracies,[37] democracies are "consolidated" when they become "routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life," and when democracy is considered the "only game in town."[38] We find that the practice of democratic politics and the intensive socialization process led by the UN have begun to transform the identities of even those pro-authoritarian elites who had initially adopted superficially liberal identities to achieve materialist goals.

UN efforts to promote liberal ideals and institutions were most profound and comprehensive in the Salvadoran case, building upon changes already underway before the negotiations began and liberal accords with clear and specific expectations for all parties. While the Guatemalan peace accords were more sweeping in their scope, both the extent of prenegotiation identity change and the content of the accords themselves are more ambiguous. Not surprisingly, the UN role in helping to implement and deepen subsequent liberal reforms in Guatemala has been more

35. Lake and Rothchild 1996.
36. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 901–904.
37. O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986.
38. Linz and Stepan 1997, 15–16.

limited. Whereas elites in El Salvador appear to have committed themselves to liberal practices, elite adherence to liberal norms in Guatemala remains largely instrumental and contingent. International influences in Nicaragua were contradictory; the United States and OAS contributed to continued polarization, while the involvement of the most neutral and consistently liberal actor in this case, the UN, lasted only a few months.

In sum, we argue that liberal social reconstruction can serve as an alternative to forceful security guarantees for the resolution of civil wars. The Nicaraguan case, which provides the clearest Central American example of the application of a security-centered approach, demonstrates that security guarantees and power sharing may be helpful for initial war termination but do little for the subsequent consolidation of peace. The Salvadoran and Guatemalan experiences show that forceful intervention is not necessary to resolve civil wars. Both cases illustrate how liberal social construction can reduce the need for initial security guarantees and subsequently help consolidate peace.

Civil War Resolution in Central America

Nicaragua

At first glance the Nicaraguan case seems to support Walter's argument, given that security guarantees helped encourage the Nicaraguan Resistance (RN, or the Contras) to demobilize and disarm.[39] This case clearly shows the limitations of security guarantees for the consolidation of peace, however, in that large-scale political violence persisted for years after the formal end of the war. The combatants in Nicaragua's civil war had not adopted liberal identities before the end of the war. The Nicaraguan peace did not flow from intensive direct negotiation between these combatants that could build mutual trust and a shared commitment to a liberal solution to the war. Finally, the failure of the international community to promote liberal reforms after the 1990 elections contributed greatly to the fragility of the peace.

The end of the civil war began with the pivotal 1990 elections called for by the Esquipulas accord. Ironically, these elections ended the war not because liberal institutions had been successfully implanted, but because they made possible the kind of security guarantees emphasized by Walter. Most participants in the civil war adhered to the liberal principles of the Esquipulas agreement for instrumental reasons, not because they had embraced liberal identities. The Sandinista government faced such severe economic and political problems by late 1989 that it accepted an internationally supervised election to gain international legitimacy and delegitimize U.S. funding for the Contras.[40] The Arias Plan also allowed them to

39. Walter 1997, 346.
40. Arnson 1993, 231–42.

join a rhetorical democratic consensus among fellow Central American governments rather than capitulating to the United States.[41] Finally, the Sandinistas accepted elections because they expected to win them, thereby ratifying their single-party dominant regime.

The Contras were not committed to a liberal democracy in which their Sandinista enemies were full participants. Rather, they were compelled to accept an electoral solution because congressional pressure had led U.S. policymakers to cease the provision of lethal military assistance to the Contras in the months leading up to the elections. The Bush administration anticipated an FSLN victory, and developed contingency plans to discredit such an outcome, but also spent over $20 million to build the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO) coalition and develop its media and campaigning abilities.[42] While not confident of success, the United States hoped to achieve its major aim of the war, the defeat of the Sandinistas, through electoral means. In this context the Contras had little choice but instrumental acceptance of liberal norms. The Contras' passivity was reinforced by their never having formally participated in the process that forged the Esquipulas accord (negotiated by Central American heads of state) and that led to the FSLN's agreement to hold elections. Except for participating in talks leading to a limited cease-fire agreement signed at Sapoa in 1988, the combatants experienced none of the transformative effects of participation in comprehensive negotiations and had few opportunities to build the mutual trust that can emerge from negotiated settlements.

The unexpected election of the counterrevolutionary government of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro of the UNO in 1990 enabled Nicaraguans to negotiate agreements that included both external security guarantees and internal power sharing. A small contingent of armed peacekeepers (a battalion of Venezuelan paratroopers) helped reassure the Contras during their demobilization. This was supplemented by an unarmed OAS civilian mission (known as the International Commission for Assistance and Verification, CIAV) to verify human rights conditions for ex-Contras after demobilization.[43] The Contras agreed to demobilize rapidly because they expected Chamorro to look out for their interests, since the Contras and UNO were ostensibly on the same side. To further encourage the Contras to demobilize, Chamorro offered them opportunities to control local government in their areas of resettlement, including local police forces.[44]

To avoid Sandinista opposition, Chamorro agreed to enshrine the autonomy of the military and allow Humberto Ortega, brother of former president Daniel Ortega, to remain as army chief. In exchange Ortega committed the army to support the constitutional framework. Prominent Sandinistas retained control over the national

41. Goodfellow and Morrell 1992.
42. See McConnell 1996; and Robinson 1996, 226.
43. Child 1992, 88–92.
44. Spalding 1999, 40.

police as well, and both institutions initially retained their revolutionary names (Ejército Popular Sandinista and Policía Sandinista).[45]

These external security guarantees and internal power-sharing arrangements formally ended the war, but they did not produce lasting peace and reconciliation. Although Nicaragua has not returned to civil war, it has experienced intense political violence and is stuck in what Rose J. Spalding calls "low-intensity peace."[46] Within months of the Contras' disarmament, rearmed elements of ex-Contras (popularly known as *recontras*) carried out military takeovers of Sandinista cooperatives, state farms, roads, and towns in the northern part of the country.[47] In addition to the *recontras,* thousands of discharged government soldiers formed their own rearmed groups, dubbed *recompas.*[48] Early concessions to these groups led to the perception that the most effective way to obtain resources from the government was to rearm.[49] Nicaraguan government sources estimated that by 1992, 22,835 irregular troops had rearmed. This force roughly matched the size of the dismantled Contra army as well as the much-reduced size of the Nicaraguan national military.[50] Vengeance killings by partisans of both sides became common. Yet at times the *recontras* and *recompas* combined forces to carry out actions designed to call attention to shared economic grievances. In March 1992 over one thousand *recontras* and *recompas* jointly occupied the town of Ocotal in a dramatic and highly coordinated action, spurring an army crackdown that killed more than one hundred people.[51] Between 1990 and 1994, some fifteen hundred people died in renewed fighting. Although the frequency of these conflicts declined after 1995, rearmament had become an institutionalized way of calling the government's attention to grievances, and such incidents continue to this day.

The problem of rearmament was symptomatic of a broader lack of commitment to liberal norms and institutions within the Nicaraguan polity. The power-sharing agreement between Chamorro and the FSLN ensured that much of the Nicaraguan state would remain unchanged and illiberal. The lack of politically neutral security forces became, and remained, one of the central causes of political frictions and violence. The Nicaraguan courts, which were similarly partisan and technically weak, compounded this by making prosecutions of rights abuses unlikely and imposing few constraints on the state's use of force.[52]

These problems were exacerbated by an unusual political dynamic that emerged soon after Chamorro's inauguration. Immediately after the elections, FSLN leader Daniel Ortega announced that the FSLN would continue to govern from below. It carried out a series of general strikes that forced the government to limit its austerity

45. Dunkerley 1994, 59–60.
46. Spalding 1999, 32.
47. Dye et al. 1995, 39–40.
48. *Recompa* derives from the word *compa,* short for *compañero* or comrade.
49. Spalding 1999, 44, 48.
50. Ibid., 43.
51. Dye et al. 1995, 40.
52. Human Rights Watch Americas 1994.

measures and abandon plans to roll back Sandinista property transfers. The strikes, and resulting government caution on such issues as reprivatization of nationalized firms, drove a wedge between conservative and moderate factions within UNO. The conservative sectors fixated on reversing the property reforms and seizures of the Sandinista era, even at the expense of stability—and broader economic and political reforms—that could have assisted Nicaragua in attracting investment and expanding markets. The result was an unexpected political arrangement in which Chamorro was forced to reach a pact with the FSLN and govern with its political support, against disloyal opposition from much of the UNO coalition in the legislature.

Conservative opposition parties boycotted the legislature, for a time preventing a quorum and forcing the government to rule by decree. Repeated impasses developed over the role and authority of the executive, legislature, courts, military, and police. Political actors bitterly debated which of two constitutions was in effect. Key protagonists eschewed compromise, with conservatives pressuring the government to oust Sandinista security officials and return lands expropriated during the 1980s. Elections in 1996 produced a victory by conservative presidential candidate Arnoldo Alemán, who initially adopted an aggressive stance in reversing Sandinista socio-economic reforms, then forged a much-criticized pact with top FSLN leaders to share governmental spoils and evade public accountability.[53]

The fragility of the Nicaraguan peace stems in part from the failure of the international community to sustain its ostensible commitment to promoting liberal democracy after the 1990 elections. UN and OAS mediators who assisted with the 1989 peace talks did little if anything to encourage broader negotiations on institutional questions.[54] Efforts to foment democratization were short-lived: the UN deployed an electoral observation mission (ONUVEN), accompanied by a smaller OAS effort and private observer missions from groups such as the Carter Center. But these missions all left after the elections, leaving no neutral international presence to assist with ongoing mediation, institution building, or verification of peace-related commitments. CIAV monitored security and social conditions for the Contras, but its partisan support for the Contras limited its effectiveness. By the time CIAV tried to develop local capacity for conflict resolution, rearmament had become an institutionalized practice.[55]

The international community did provide considerable financial resources to the Chamorro government, but these resources were not targeted toward programs that would help consolidate democracy and peace in Nicaragua. Instead, the bulk of assistance was contingent on the implementation of an austerity plan to control the hyperinflation inherited from the Sandinistas. Most international funds went to service Nicaragua's debt, and little went to direct reconstruction projects.[56] This

53. See Dye et al. 1995; and Spalding 1996.

54. Interview with UN official who participated in these talks, September 1996. See also Spalding 1999.

55. Spalding 1999, 42.

56. Dye et al. 1995, 10.

economic strategy placed two obstacles in the path of a consolidated peace. First, reducing state expenditures involved dismantling the socialist political economy the FSLN had erected during the 1980s. The harder the international community pushed for fiscal austerity, the more pressure this put on the coalition crafted by Chamorro as a means of national reconciliation. Second, the failure of the Chamorro government to provide the land, inputs, loans, and other financial and development assistance promised to the Contras was a direct result of pressures from international donors to curb spending. Thus funding was available to support the structural adjustment of the economy but not to support the process of transforming former combatants into economically viable civilians and democratic citizens. Instead, in the climate of shrinking governmental resources imposed by fiscal austerity, they found that taking military action was the best way to obtain material concessions from the state.[57]

The United States did not work for the deepening of democracy as a means of consolidating peace. It did nothing to prepare the Contras for reinsertion into Nicaraguan society and politics.[58] When it embraced an electoral strategy of support for UNO in 1990, the United States retained the Contras as a military force to pressure the Sandinistas should they win the elections.[59] Following their hard-line leadership, most Contras refused to participate in the campaign and even to vote. Individuals who defied their commanders by campaigning for Chamorro were branded traitors. Many Contras were "utterly bewildered" by Chamorro's victory, and their failure to participate in the elections was a strategic error, given Chamorro's retention of Sandinista military and police institutions.[60] It was an error the Contras could not quickly correct, since the next elections were not until 1996. They were effectively disenfranchised for six years. They were also abandoned by the United States, which saw little need to continue aid to the Contras in the wake of Chamorro's election. This loss of support, combined with internal divisions that had in the past been "papered over" with U.S. money, led to the demise of the Contra movement. The remnants of the movement negotiated terms for their demobilization but soon turned to rearmament to assert their demands.

The United States' failure to support the Chamorro government's political strategy also undermined the possibilities for national reconciliation through democratic compromise. The U.S. government never accepted Chamorro's cooperation with the FSLN. In 1992 Senator Jesse Helms persuaded the Bush administration to place a hold on $104 million in assistance, pending the return of properties to U.S. citizens, including recently naturalized citizens, whose lands were expropriated

57. Spalding 1999, 44.

58. Indeed, no international actor did anything to foment transformation of the Contras into a democratic political movement. One faction of the Contras later formed a political party, but it performed poorly in the 1996 elections.

59. McConnell 1996.

60. Dillon 1996, 313.

during the revolution.[61] The government was never able to satisfy these demands, due to organized resistance by beneficiaries of Sandinista property transfers. The United States also suspended aid disbursements to push Chamorro to remove Sandinista leaders from the army and police.[62] Continued U.S. opposition to the Sandinistas, even in a democratic coalition with U.S. allies, encouraged intransigence among right-wing political groups and provided ammunition to radical elements within the FSLN. Thus the United States contributed to the polarization of Nicaraguan politics.

This partisanship reflects the unfortunate timing of the Nicaraguan peace process at the beginning of a transition in U.S. policy from Cold War thinking toward a more unalloyed commitment to promoting liberal values, especially in the Americas. Whereas the United States was later able to adopt a generous, low-profile, and nearly neutral stance in El Salvador, in Nicaragua it remained partisan, promoted winner-take-all values, and failed to promote democratic values among its former clients, the Contras. Had the Nicaraguan process taken place at a time of reduced salience of Cold War lines of division, the United States might have played a more constructive role. Available multilateral actors were either too partisan (OAS) or insufficiently engaged (the UN) to provide the support for liberal norms that Nicaragua needed. The design of the peace process itself—with its dependence on early elections and complete lack of prior negotiations regarding political rules and state institutions—impeded the construction of confidence between political adversaries and acceptance of liberal norms.

El Salvador

The success of the peace accords in El Salvador demonstrates that normative and institutional change can substitute for security guarantees in helping to resolve civil wars. The international community provided no forceful security guarantees to the combatants and actively discouraged them from adopting power-sharing arrangements to resolve their security dilemmas. Instead, international actors pursued a liberal strategy of conflict resolution by promoting democracy. This strategy succeeded in part because Salvadoran elites had begun to adopt liberal norms during the 1980s in order to legitimate themselves to the international community. The intensive UN-mediated peace negotiations helped the combatants to recognize that their adversaries had changed and could be trusted to honor their agreements. Then, during a five-year peace-building mission, the UN pushed for the social reconstruction of El Salvador, strengthening liberal political institutions and promoting dialogue, compromise, and nonviolent conflict resolution, successfully diffusing

61. Dye et al. 1995, 23–24.
62. Central America Update 1992.

liberal practices to state bureaucracies and a society that had not lived by such norms in the past.[63]

The success of the peace accords depended on changes in the goals and identities of the adversaries, since both sides began exhibiting openness to liberal political norms years before the January 1992 accords. El Salvador's economic elite began the 1980s committed to autocratic rule. When the armed forces carried out a major land reform in 1980, expropriating the largest properties in the country, the wealthy "oligarchy" that had ceded control of the country to the military in 1932 began to rethink its dependence on the armed forces. In April 1981 a coalition of ultra-conservative business people and death squad operators formed the National Republican Alliance (ARENA). At the outset the party's positions were extreme—extermination of the political left and a return to a hazily remembered yesteryear when entrepreneurs were in charge and peasants were obedient.[64] The early ARENA was associated with death squad murders and organized crime.[65] By the end of the decade, however, the most influential faction of the economic elite had accepted liberal democracy and ARENA had largely shed its death squad heritage. This transformation reflected both a decade of U.S. efforts to promote democracy and changes in El Salvador's political economy that empowered new segments of the economic elite.

The U.S.-sponsored elections held during the 1980s helped change the identity of the political right.[66] Conservative elites initially participated in these elections to curb the reformism of the military and spoil Washington's plans to promote the election of the Christian Democrats.[67] These efforts met with some success; an ARENA-led coalition won the 1982 Constituent Assembly elections and sought to name death squad mastermind Roberto D'Aubuisson as president. The United States intervened with the military high command, however, which convinced D'Aubuisson to forgo the presidency in favor of a compromise candidate, Alvaro Magaña.[68] The United States later worked to ensure the election of Christian Democrat José Napoleón Duarte as president in 1985 in his race against D'Aubuisson. U.S. opposition, and the lack of alternatives to successful electoral competition, forced ARENA to moderate its positions. D'Aubuisson withdrew into the background, promoting moderate coffee and pharmaceutical magnate Alfredo Cristiani as party leader. Under Cristiani's leadership, ARENA revamped its organization and broadened its base to incorporate modernizing sectors of the

63. See Johnstone 1995; Holiday and Stanley 1993; Stanley and Holiday 1997; Weiss-Fagen 1996; United Nations 1995; and Wood 1996.

64. Interview with former coffee grower from Usulután, San Salvador, 1992. See also Paige 1997.

65. A former leader of the Broad National Front, a predecessor of ARENA, chose not to join ARENA because of the extent of "gangster" activities and his own fear of being kidnapped by party members. Interview, San Salvador, October 1989.

66. See Karl 1988; and Peceny 1999, 115–47.

67. Interviews with former member of the Productive Alliance and past president of the National Association of Private Enterprise, Juan Vicente Maldonado, San Salvador, 1989 and 1992.

68. Interview with former President Alvaro Magaña, San Salvador, September 1989.

business community. In 1988 it won control of the legislature, and in 1989 Cristiani won the presidency.

ARENA's success changed the outlook of the party leadership and transformed the political attitudes of elites.[69] By 1989, business elites were ready to govern on their own authority, using electoral mechanisms, and no longer believed that repression and a dominant political role for the military were necessary or desirable.[70] In this context they were willing to accept the inclusion of the leftist FMLN in the electoral arena, even if this meant sacrificing the coercive apparatus that had compelled labor discipline since the nineteenth century.[71]

Shifts in which groups within the elite were ascendant economically and had greatest political influence within the main private sector associations also enhanced the willingness of the elite to negotiate. Coffee growers who had diversified into coffee processing and marketing, as well as finance and industry, were more likely to express views tolerant of democratic competition and liberties.[72] The war, along with declines in coffee prices, had radically transformed the structure of the economy.[73] Coffee was no longer king and agricultural exports represented a small and declining share of GDP, whereas construction, commerce, and industry showed major gains. As a result, more tolerant, diversified factions within the elite were ascendant.[74] These groups found a political home in ARENA after its transformation in 1986.[75] Moderate, less wealthy entrepreneurs gained influence within the main private sector associations such as the National Association of Private Enterprise or the Salvadoran Industrial Association as they replaced wealthier oligarchs who had fled the country. These sectoral shifts were reinforced by generational change, because younger business people had more liberal educations, had traveled more widely, and were more open to liberal values.[76]

The United States contributed to the ideological shift within the business elite by funding a private sector think-tank, the Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES), which promoted social market ideologies and economic modernization policies. FUSADES helped design ARENA's economic policies from 1987 onward and provided an organizational base for the more diversified and modernizing sectors of the elite.[77]

The conversion of the elite to democracy also flowed from its assessment of the consequences of continued war. The FMLN, though unable to defeat the army in

69. Interview with Jorge Velado, an ARENA founder, San Salvador, October 1989.

70. David Holiday interview with former president Alfredo Cristiani, September 1995, San Salvador.

71. See Miles and Ostertag 1989; Paige 1997; Wolf 1992; and Wood 1996 and 2000.

72. Paige 1997.

73. Wood 1996.

74. Interviews with Eduardo Barrientos, Salvadoran Coffee Association, June 1993; Luís Cardenal, director of the Salvadoran Center for the Study of Democracy, July 1993; Dr. Francisco Lima, July 1993; Juan Vicente Maldonado, September 1989, July 1993; and Héctor Vidal, director of the National Association of Private Enterprise, June 1993.

75. Interview with Luís Cardenal, June 1993. See also Paige 1997; and Johnson 1993.

76. Interview with Luís Cardenal, July 1993. See also Johnson 1993.

77. See Rosa 1992; and Johnson 1993.

major battles, could hold the economy hostage indefinitely through sabotage. In 1989 the FMLN launched a massive offensive, occupying parts of the capital city for nearly a week, until driven out by air strikes. Some units regrouped in a wealthy neighborhood where the army was unwilling to launch air strikes, demonstrating to wealthy Salvadorans that the military could not defend them.[78] The scale and intensity of the FMLN's attack shook the government's confidence, countering claims by the military (and the U.S. embassy) that the FMLN had been reduced to a "problem of banditry."[79] Moreover, the military's decision to murder six Jesuit priests and two witnesses at the University of Central America led the U.S. Congress to insist that aid be reduced and conditioned on the military's reform and support for peace negotiations. The United States put the Salvadoran military on notice in September 1991 that no significant future assistance was in the offing and that compromise with the FMLN was necessary.[80] The armed forces were so dependent on U.S. aid, especially for their air force, that they could not expect to win if cut off from their supplier. Although massively outnumbered and outgunned, the FMLN had been able to achieve a politico-military stalemate in the sense that it could continue to disrupt the economy, impose losses on the military, and destabilize the government indefinitely.[81]

Moreover, by the early 1990s, there was a growing perception that El Salvador would need to integrate with other economies, particularly that of the United States, to succeed economically. It would only be an attractive partner for economic integration if it were no longer involved in a civil war, and business elites believed that they faced a brief window of opportunity to insert themselves successfully into the nascent free trade order in the Americas. If they missed this opportunity because of civil war, El Salvador might never achieve its economic potential.[82]

The FMLN leadership also reassessed its goals, moving away from pursuing military victory. The most powerful lesson of the November 1989 offensive for the FMLN was that an urban mass insurrection was not forthcoming, leaving no plausible expectation of quick victory. Meanwhile, the collapse of Soviet client states in Eastern Europe shook confidence in Leninist models, while the Sandinistas' experience indicated that a military victory would be unlikely to achieve the movement's goals in the face of U.S. opposition.[83] In the 1991 elections some FMLN activists worked for the Democratic Convergence, a social-democratic coalition that had achieved legal status. The coalition's surprisingly strong showing gave FMLN leaders greater confidence in their own ability to compete electorally.[84]

78. Gibb and Smith 1990.
79. Quote from interview with U.S. embassy official, September 1989.
80. Interview with former U.S. Military Group officer, 1995.
81. Interview with Gen. Mauricio Vargas, San Salvador, August 1995.
82. Interviews with Alvaro Magaña, June 1995; and Luis Cardenal, June 1993.
83. See Miles and Ostertag 1989; Montgomery 1993; and Torres-Rivas 1996.
84. Interviews with Democratic Convergence leader Rubén Zamora, June 1995; FMLN leader Facundo Guardado, June 1995; and former FMLN information officer Paulo Martin, May 1995.

Thus the adversaries' gradual adoption of liberal values and identities during the 1980s reflected a combination of cost-benefit calculations, socialization by international actors, and habituation from a decade of democratic practice. However, in the absence of mutual recognition of the changes that had taken place within both camps, these attitudinal changes would have been insufficient to bring about peace. The UN-sponsored negotiations that began in 1990 played a crucial role in building this mutual trust. Talks between the two sides took place with Alvaro De Soto, special representative of the UN secretary general, serving as intermediary, providing both sides with assessments by a credible informant regarding the intentions and negotiating positions of the other side. The actors' attitudinal shifts, combined with the transparency afforded by the negotiating process, made it possible for the UN to promote a peace strategy based on liberal institutions and individual-level guarantees.[85]

From the first stages of the negotiation process, the mediation and socialization roles of the UN were united. De Soto and his staff provided working drafts of agreements designed to incorporate the concerns of each side, offering solutions to contentious issues that emphasized liberal norms and the formation of politically neutral, professional state institutions rather than power-sharing. The UN focused on a thorough reformation of the central coercive institutions of the state to guarantee that the army and police would be professional apolitical institutions clearly subordinated to civilian control. For example, UN negotiators broke a deadlock on how to reform the military and deal with punishment of past human rights abuses by drafting an agreement that called for a UN human rights verification mission with authority to investigate allegations, inspect government facilities without prior warning, and communicate directly with the population regarding their rights. The UN deployed the observer mission, ONUSAL, in July 1991, seven months before the end of armed conflict. This deployment reassured the FMLN regarding the future safety of demobilized combatants.

The UN also proposed liberal solutions to the security dilemma faced by the guerrillas. The FMLN had insisted that either they be allowed power-sharing by combining their forces with the government's army or that the army be disbanded. Both positions were unacceptable to the government, and this remained a source of deadlock until late 1991. At the local level the FMLN sought an arrangement similar to that of the Contras in Nicaragua, under which they would police their areas of political influence—what one negotiator characterized as a "local sheriff."[86] The UN broke this deadlock by convincing the FMLN to accept an arrangement under which the military would be largely excluded from internal security roles and the FMLN would have minority participation in a professional, apolitical, National Civilian Police force with doctrine emphasizing protection of individual rights and extensive organizational safeguards against abusive conduct. El Salvador represents

85. Regarding the distinction between group and individual guarantees, see Rothchild 1999.
86. Interview with UN official who participated in these negotiations, July 1993.

the only recent peace settlement in which the UN convinced the disarming party to accept minority participation in a police force governed according to liberal norms as their primary security guarantee.[87] Despite problems, the National Civilian Police has become one of the most successful aspects of postwar institutional reform and has clearly produced more stable results than the de facto power-sharing arrangement in Nicaragua.[88]

The final peace accords signed in January 1992 called for the constitutional exclusion of the armed forces from any role in internal security matters, except in emergencies. A civilian commission was appointed to purge the armed forces of officers inappropriate for service in a democratic society, a human rights procurator's office was established, and reforms were made to the courts and prosecutors' offices.

The UN was named the final arbiter of whether each side was fulfilling its obligations. The information flows provided by the UN's unarmed observers were sufficient to ameliorate the most acute security concerns of both sides. Forceful guarantees proved unnecessary. The first year was crucial, because the government was responsible for demobilizing two notorious public security forces, recruiting and training the first elements of the new police force, and initiating a land transfer program to benefit the FMLN. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal was to certify the FMLN as a legal political party. The FMLN was obligated to concentrate its combatants, demobilize them in 20 percent installments over nine months, and permit the reestablishment of governmental authority in formerly conflictive areas.

When these interactions generated a degree of negative reciprocity during 1992, the UN repeatedly intervened to warn both parties that continued deadlock could result in a resumption of war and issued negative reports that nearly led international donors to limit contributions. Significant failures or delays by one side brought prompt sanctions from their adversary in the form of nonperformance of other obligations. For example, government delays in transferring land to former FMLN combatants and supporters led to delays in the FMLN's demobilization. This deadlock was resolved through binding arbitration of the land issue by the UN.[89]

The FMLN did not depend entirely on the soft protection provided by the UN. It kept substantial caches of arms as a hedge. An explosion at a cache in Managua, Nicaragua, in May 1993 led to a crisis in the peace process and to UN insistence that the FMLN reveal the location of all of its remaining arms.[90] The FMLN readily complied, since by this time the rebels were less concerned about security and more

87. In a survey of seventeen recent efforts at civil war settlement, Call and Stanley found no other cases in which disarming combatants agreed to an apolitical police force as the primary guarantee of their future security. Call and Stanley 1999.

88. See Stanley and Call 1997; and Stanley and Loosle 1998.

89. Wood 1996.

90. FMLN commanders claim that retention of weapons increased the confidence of their combatants and lessened the risk of violence or insubordination during the demobilization. Thus the logic of the security dilemma argument was not entirely absent in El Salvador. Interview with former FMLN commanders, San Salvador, 1995.

concerned about the potential damage that further discoveries of weapons caches might inflict on their electoral prospects.

Other disputes developed during subsequent years: over dismissal of military officers associated with past abuses, implementation of reforms recommended by a UN truth commission, investigations of suspicious killings of FMLN leaders, voter registration, election irregularities, demobilization of the old National Police, implementation of land transfers, and economic reconstruction. Throughout the peace implementation phase, from 1992 to 1996, the UN convened regular tripartite meetings of the government, FMLN, and UN mission to resolve these issues. These meetings, plus regular UN reporting on progress of the accords, provided extensive and prompt information that reduced uncertainties about intentions and capacities of both sides. Notwithstanding occasional alarmist talk, there was little possibility of a "bolt from the blue" resumption of armed conflict by either side. The security dilemma was effectively resolved through institutional means without the need for forceful guarantees.

For five years during the 1990s, the UN missions ONUSAL, MINUSAL, and ONUV actively monitored these reforms, challenged the government when it failed to act in good faith, and provided extensive technical assistance to new or reforming state agencies. The UN also promoted liberal values in numerous ways through its daily work throughout the country. At the national and local levels UN political officers promoted constant negotiation, debate, and compromise between the parties. Human rights educators used media and local community talks to make Salvadorans more aware of their rights under domestic and international law. Electoral monitors cajoled and assisted state officials to register hundreds of thousands of new voters. UN civilian police worked with the newly deployed National Civilian Police to ensure their practices were consistent with democratic policing norms. Human rights monitors worked with both the police and military to revise their doctrines and practices.[91] During street demonstrations and labor confrontations that might have escalated into violence, ONUSAL officials modeled less confrontational ways of dealing with citizens, often persuading Salvadoran authorities on the scene not to resort to violence.[92] Belatedly, the UN also attempted to build the capacity of civil society organizations such as nongovernmental human rights organizations.

These efforts helped transform the political acceptance of liberal rules by leaders of the government and FMLN into more of a reality at all levels of the political system. Although the UN has not been fully successful in this massive resocialization project, El Salvador is a fundamentally more peaceful and liberal polity than it was a decade ago. The electoral system has held up through three major elections

91. One product of this effort was a pair of books, jointly authored by the human rights division of ONUSAL and the staff of the Salvadoran armed forces, on military doctrine and practices in democratic societies. Fuerza Armada de El Salvador/ONUSAL 1994a,b.

92. Interviews with UN officials in El Salvador, July through December 1992, March through July 1995.

without violence or significant fraud. The basic constitutional order is stable. The civilian police force has conducted itself with greater respect for individual rights than any previous security force. The judicial system has shown some progress toward providing citizens with equal protections under the law. Surveys of citizens' attitudes show increasing levels of political tolerance.[93]

Guatemala

Like El Salvador, Guatemala challenges the security guarantees argument while pointing to the importance of change in the goals and identities of the parties to the civil war. Guatemala's civil war ended without the benefit of forceful guarantees or power-sharing arrangements. This was possible because Guatemalan elites increasingly adhered to liberal norms in order to legitimize themselves to the international community. International mediation and verification, combined with confidence-building measures undertaken by Guatemalans, enabled the war parties to perceive these changes in ideals and identities and to exploit them to make peace. In the end the URNG put down its weapons in exchange for government promises to carry out liberal political and institutional reforms. Although the lack of internalization of liberal norms by many elites and the limited nature of UN efforts to resocialize the polity have kept Guatemala from fulfilling the ambitious program of liberal reforms called for by the peace accords, there is little if any chance of renewed armed conflict.[94]

While Guatemala's military rulers of the 1980s were not as dependent on U.S. military assistance as their Salvadoran counterparts, they nevertheless initiated a controlled process of democratization in the mid-1980s in part to burnish Guatemala's image in the United States and the international community. In 1985 military President Mejía Víctores permitted elections for a constituent assembly, followed in 1986 by a presidential race won by Christian Democrat Vinicio Cerezo. Though Cerezo faced substantial military encroachment on his authority, including several coup threats, he managed to complete his term and hand power over to an elected civilian successor, Jorge Serrano.

Doctrinal shifts within the military reinforced the institution's acceptance of formal democracy. A defense minister of the mid-1980s, Héctor Gramajo, developed a new strategic doctrine entitled the "thesis of national stability." Gramajo argued that victory over the guerrillas was not sufficient and that the long-term stability of the nation depended on governmental legitimacy, which required a degree of political participation. Gramajo and his "institutionalist" supporters within the military also argued that the institutional integrity of the military depended on

93. Seligson and Cordova Macías 1995.

94. Interviews, URNG commander Rodrigo Asturias, June 1998; Gen. Julio Balconi, former defense minister, June 1998; Secretary to the President Gustavo Porras, July 1998; and various MINUGUA officials, June 1998.

reducing its political role.[95] By the 1990s this thinking had evolved to consider that in a context of globalization, international legitimacy was essential for the success of the country. Thus the military, in its political role, began to shift from its defiant, proud-to-be-a-pariah posture of the 1980s toward greater concern for international sensibilities.[96]

As in El Salvador, one factor in elites' changing preferences was a shift in the structure of the economy toward a greater share of gross domestic product generated in services and industry. The changes in Guatemala are not as dramatic as those observed in El Salvador: agriculture remains an important source of export earnings for Guatemala and has continued to grow, in contrast to El Salvador where agriculture shrank in both relative and absolute terms during the war.[97] Guatemala thus lacked a clear shift from domination by agrarian elites to domination by diversified entrepreneurs in new emerging sectors.[98]

Despite the less dramatic structural changes and more limited opportunities for international leverage, a liberalizing coalition emerged in the 1990s, including such improbable allies as the intelligence branch of the armed forces, the constitutional court, elements of the business community, and most political parties. The dual trends in the Americas toward trade liberalization and collective defense of democracy required elites to shift from authoritarian practices and make greater efforts to establish Guatemala's international legitimacy.[99]

This shift was tested, and ultimately reinforced, by events surrounding President Jorge Serrano's May 1993 attempt to carry out a "self-coup"*(autogolpe)* in which he closed Congress and the courts and attempted to seize dictatorial powers. This interruption of democratic governance triggered strong domestic elite opposition, particularly from the business community, and unanimous international condemnation, including condemnations by the OAS and the imposition of sanctions by the United States. Portions of the military initially supported Serrano, but faced with both international and domestic resistance, top army leaders began looking for a way out. When the Constitutional Court called on the high command to reverse the coup, they did so.[100] Amidst a brief attempt by Serrano's vice president to carry out a coup of his own, intense dialogue ensued among business leaders, military officers, representatives of labor unions, indigenous groups and other civil society organizations, legislators, and jurists. Ultimately, Congress elected an interim president,

95. See Gramajo 1989 and 1997; Arévalo de León 1998; and Schirmer 1998.

96. Interviews with Gen. Julio Balconi and Col. Otto Noack, former deputy chief of military intelligence, June 1998.

97. World Bank 1998, 210, 212. No study comparable to Wood's work on El Salvador exists for Guatemala. Wood 1996 and 1998.

98. Dosal 1995.

99. David Holiday interview with Roberto Ardón Quiñonez, executive director of the private-sector association CACIF, April 1996; and author interviews with Col. Otto Noack and Gen. Julio Balconi, June 1998.

100. Sikkink 1996; and interview with Col. Otto Noack, June 1998.

former human rights ombudsman Ramiro de León Carpio, who was acceptable to all parties.

This remarkable alliance between military, business, political, civil, and judicial leaders to defeat Serrano's seizure of power demonstrated both the increased salience of democratic norms within the Americas and the internalization of those norms by at least some Guatemalan elites. These events increased the confidence of URNG leadership that authoritarian values were giving way to liberal ones among the military and political elite. Negotiations that had begun under the Serrano government accelerated during the de León administration. The government and the URNG reached important agreements on individual-level human rights protections, repatriation of refugees and resettlement of "uprooted" populations, establishment of a "Historical Clarification Commission" to investigate past rights abuses, and recognition of indigenous identity and cultural rights.

The election of President Alvaro Arzú in late 1995 reinforced the liberalizing coalition. Arzú, who positioned himself as a representative of the modernizing sector of the business community, narrowly defeated rival Alfonso Portillo of the conservative Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG). Arzú's party, the National Action Party (PAN), also won a slim majority of seats in the legislature. With this somewhat shaky mandate, Arzú moved quickly to intensify negotiations with the URNG. He met with URNG leaders before his inauguration and appointed a former member of one of the revolutionary groups, Gustavo Porras, as the government's lead negotiator. Porras proceeded to complete the remaining issues on the negotiating agenda in less than a year. The accords from this final year included such delicate issues as socioeconomic redistribution and the "agrarian situation," strengthening civilian authority and diminishing that of the military, constitutional and electoral reforms, the calendar for implementation, and a final accord implementing the accords previously reached.[101]

The UN played a central role in mediating between the parties and crafting elements of the peace accords during both the de León and Arzú administrations. Participants in the negotiations characterize UN mediator Jean Arnault as very effective in increasing transparency between the two parties and gradually building trust. The Guatemalans supplemented these interactions with military confidence-building measures of their own involving direct meetings between field commanders who pinpointed locations of their troops, discussed patrol patterns, and exchanged beeper numbers, radio frequencies, and cell phone numbers.[102] These arrangements prevented unwanted skirmishes and helped convince URNG leaders that the military was serious about ending the fighting. As it became clear to the URNG leadership how extensively the goals of the government and the armed forces had changed, the rebels became willing to accept disarmament and demobilization with a minimal international verification presence.

101. United Nations 1998a.

102. Interviews with Rodrigo Asturias, Gen. Julio Balconi, and retired Maj. Mauricio López Bonilla, Guatemala City, June 1998.

The UN also deployed a human rights verification mission, MINUGUA, in November 1994, more than two years before the final accords. As in El Salvador the presence of a UN human rights mission before the cease-fire helped reassure the rebels regarding their future safety and limited the conflict. Once the final accords were signed, MINUGUA's responsibilities increased dramatically to include verification of all of the accords. For that task, MINUGUA deployed a small, unarmed military observer contingent but otherwise worked with the personnel already deployed, expanding their work responsibilities to include matters other than human rights, almost overwhelming MINUGUA's capabilities in the process.[103]

The Guatemalan accords embrace the basic premise of the liberal social reconstruction model for the resolution of civil wars. Most importantly, the parties committed themselves to compete in the electoral arena rather than on the battlefield, with full respect for the civil and political rights of their adversaries. The URNG agreed to transform itself into a political party. The accords also call for major increases in taxes and public spending, investigation and restitution of usurped lands, recognition of indigenous culture and use of indigenous languages in conducting official and legal matters, exclusion of the military from internal security roles, creation of a civilian police force, and judicial reforms.[104]

Unfortunately, implementation of the many reforms called for under the accords has lagged. This failure reflects, in part, the fact that the accords include few specific, verifiable commitments by the government. Instead, they delegate the formulation of detailed plans on dozens of issues to a Byzantine set of civil society commissions. Intended to provide opportunities for citizen participation in the peace process, these commissions have also diluted responsibility for implementation and sometimes slowed implementation by months or years.[105]

More importantly, the underlying problem is that the coalition that negotiated the peace—including the URNG, the PAN, and liberalizers within the armed forces—could not consistently dominate other, illiberal forces within the political system. The two parties that negotiated the accord were *both* out of power by early 2000, clinging to minority positions in the legislature. This is in sharp contrast to El Salvador, where the FMLN rebels could compel significant concessions from the government, where ARENA had enough power to implement the accords despite opposition from some quarters, and where ARENA and the FMLN are still the dominant actors in the political system eight years after signing the accords.

By the time serious peace negotiations began in Guatemala in the 1990s, the URNG was a shadow of the powerful force it had been in the early 1980s. Reduced to three thousand combatants, of whom only roughly five hundred were full-time fighters, the URNG could have fought on indefinitely, financing its operations

103. Interviews with MINUGUA personnel, May and June 1998. The U.S. maintained a low profile during the negotiations and implementation, offering economic and technical assistance but allowing the UN to take the political lead. Interview with senior UN official, New York, June 1999.

104. United Nations 1998a.

105. See Spence et al. 1998; and Stanley and Holiday 2000.

through "war taxes," the proceeds of criminal activities such as kidnappings, and international solidarity donations. However, the rebels lacked the ability to disrupt the economy or seriously threaten the government and thus had only modest leverage at the bargaining table. This weakness contributed to the accords' lack of specifics.

The PAN government also lacked the political hegemony to bring along elements of the business community, the armed forces, and other conservative sectors. Signs of the government's weakness appeared quickly as implementation began. In November 1997 the government passed a tax law that would have increased property taxes while favoring small holders and increasing incentives for owners to sell unused lands. This was crucial, both to raise funds needed to fulfill the government's obligations under the accords and to make more land available for small farmers. After a few minor protests in rural communities and a nuisance legal challenge, however, the government reversed itself and repealed the law.[106] Related steps such as implementation of a land ownership survey and creation of a land bank lagged, in part due to inadequate funding by the government.[107]

Similar reversals took place with respect to military affairs: the senior officers who helped negotiate the peace accords were ousted early in Alvaro Arzú's government, replaced by more conservative officers. The military continued to involve itself in criminal investigations, and despite repeated promises by the government to abolish the notorious Presidential Military Staff, implicated in many abuses into the 1990s, Arzú never did so. Political pressures from the FRG's law-and-order rhetoric, and from popular fears about crime, led Arzú to take a very expedient path to developing the new National Civilian Police. Ignoring the requirements of the accords, as well as clear lessons from police reform in El Salvador, the government built the "new" institution entirely around the existing police leadership, retaining almost all the existing personnel and requiring little additional training.[108]

In May 1999 voters in a popular referendum rejected a package of constitutional reforms that had been attacked in the media by right-wing opponents. The referendum's defeat halted the implementation of many key institutional reforms promised by the accords. Finally, elections in November 1999 produced a victory for the FRG. While President Alfonso Portillo of the FRG publicly committed his government to implementing most remaining elements of the accords, it remains uncertain at this writing whether the FRG will succeed where the PAN failed.[109]

This has created a frustrating situation for the UN. In contrast to El Salvador, where the government was generally responsive to UN pressures, in Guatemala the

106. Valdéz and Palencia 1998. Inexplicably, the legal challenge was brought by a pro-Mayan organization headed by Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu.

107. See Spence et al. 1998; and Hernández Alarcón 1998.

108. Stanley 1999.

109. The PAN consistently sought to portray the FRG as opposed to the accords, but the FRG campaigned actively in favor of the constitutional reform referendum. Portillo's cabinet appointments have reflected a commitment to pluralism and diversity surprising to some observers.

daily work of the verification mission, and reports issued from New York, have had little impact on the government's decisions. The mission operated in a climate of nationalism verging on xenophobia, in the form of verbal attacks in the press and harsh criticism from business and political leaders. In reaction MINUGUA maintained a low profile and failed to use the media adequately to explain its activities to the public. A survey commissioned by MINUGUA in 1998 found that few Guatemalans understood the mission's mandate or valued the UN's presence.[110]

The defeat in May 1999 of the referendum on constitutional reforms illustrates the limited influence of the UN and other international actors. Nationalist sensitivities made it impossible for international actors to campaign openly for a "yes" on the referendum lest they be seen as meddling in Guatemalan constitutional affairs. Despite months of quiet efforts by various international donors to support Guatemalan organizations campaigning for the "yes," and despite the fact that all the political parties supported the proposed reforms, voters rejected it.

In this climate the UN has been unable to carry out the extent of resocialization and institutional development that it achieved in El Salvador. With no constitutional mandate to frame institutional changes, and with accords that provided few details regarding design of new or reformed institutions, the UN has had little to work with. Although the UN began "institutional strengthening" projects for police, prosecutors, and other institutions, these faced constant frustrations. Leadership, personnel, and institutional structures in the Guatemalan state remain largely unchanged, and UN advisors consistently confronted bureaucratic inertia. In contrast to El Salvador the Guatemalan military has not felt compelled to change its doctrine, to redeploy its troops for territorial defense, or to give up aspects of its internal defense role. UN officials report having little access to the military.[111]

In the end it appears that changes in elite goals were sufficient for the rebels to feel safe in disarming but that insufficient consensus existed among elites and voters to support sweeping institutional and economic changes. In this context, the UN has had difficulty playing an effective postwar social reconstruction role. Until a broader cross-section of the Guatemalan elite and electorate embrace the vision of state and society embodied in the peace accords, full implementation is unlikely. The fact remains that even limited liberal social reconstruction was sufficient to facilitate a settlement, in the absence of any external guarantees or power-sharing arrangements for the former rebels.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, security concerns were a primary obstacle to civil war resolution in both El Salvador and Guatemala, just as Walter argues. Yet forceful security

110. Interview with a MINUGUA official who had been briefed on results of the confidential survey, July 1998.

111. Interviews with MINUGUA officials, June 1998 and May 1999.

guarantees and power sharing proved unnecessary. Changes in the goals, identities, and institutions of the opposing sides wrought by liberal social reconstruction provided sufficient basis for civil war resolution. Potentially vulnerable rebel groups saw enough change in the states and social elites they were fighting against, and developed enough confidence in the constraining influences of international norms and reformed domestic institutions, to be willing to disarm without any forceful guarantees, despite intense and well-founded distrust and fear at the outset of the negotiations. State elites, for their part, saw convincing evidence that the rebel forces were willing to confine themselves in the future to democratic political competition, eschewing arms.

The finding that liberal social reconstruction is an effective means of ending civil wars has both practical and theoretical significance. The security guarantee strategy for the resolution of civil wars calls for states to intervene forcefully, yet realist theory would suggest that most states lack the incentives to do so. States whose power and security interests are not threatened by a civil war in another nation will not intervene, and any promises to intervene will not be credible. States whose interests are affected by such a war often have partisan interests that would render any security guarantees they offer one-sided. Thus Walter's view points to a pessimistic conclusion that civil war settlements require international actions that will probably not be forthcoming.

Our findings suggest that measures within the limited political means of the international community can go a long way toward managing conflict and preventing violence. More broadly, these cases show that the development of an increasingly liberal international order, whatever its sometimes negative social and political consequences,[112] can change the goals and identities of national political actors in such a way as to assist in the resolution of conflict.

To what extent are the lessons of the Central American cases applicable to other cases? When and where is liberal social reconstruction likely to lead to conflict resolution? How much liberal social reconstruction is enough? This project has established that liberal social reconstruction can work and has traced out the causal patterns through which it worked in these cases, but the evidence presented here cannot systematically address the question of the broader relevance of the Central American cases. Future research should take the insights of this study and apply them to a wider universe of cases. Here we offer some preliminary thoughts on these questions.

Our hypothesis that the adoption of liberal norms by combatants in civil wars will lead to conflict resolution will probably be the most difficult to examine across a wider universe of cases. It is difficult to assess the extent of the adoption of liberal norms independently from the overall outcomes of peace processes. One would have to survey civil war combatants across a wide range of cases to determine the level of their commitment to liberal norms. Such evidence would still be difficult to

112. Robinson 1996.

interpret given the incentives leaders might have to misrepresent their adherence to liberalism to appeal to international and domestic audiences. The substantial interview data that has allowed us to spell out the connections between the adoption of liberal norms and conflict resolution, at least for the Salvadoran case, will be difficult to replicate across a wide range of cases.

The other hypotheses we present are more amenable to analysis across a broader range of cases. Among countries experiencing civil wars, the Central American cases were among the most likely to be resolved through a process of liberal social reconstruction because the Americas stand out as a region in which liberalism is comparatively strong. Movement in the Americas toward regional economic integration, the emergence of liberalizing domestic coalitions intent upon embracing global markets, the hemisphere-wide acceptance of democratic governance by the 1990s, and the powerful (and in the 1990s more liberal) regional influence of the United States all contributed to the perceived advantages of accepting liberal norms. These advantages, in turn, helped to make possible the reconfiguration of politics along liberal lines that facilitated civil war settlements. In Central America these transformations built upon a historical base of economic liberalism dating to the nineteenth century, as well as a putative tradition of political liberalism enshrined in the constitutions of all the countries in the region. The fact that the real practice of politics was decidedly illiberal in all Central American states except Costa Rica until the 1990s does not negate the fact that liberal ideas have roots in the region. Furthermore, the international community pursued a deeper and more comprehensive set of liberal reforms in the most successful case, El Salvador, than in most of its other peacekeeping operations.

Thus we would expect liberal social reconstruction to be most effective in countries that are deeply integrated into the global economy and exist in a regional neighborhood dominated by democratic regimes and liberal international institutions. The prominent involvement of the United States should also enhance the possibilities for conflict resolution through liberal social reconstruction. Finally, those countries that experience the most intense and comprehensive international efforts to promote liberal democracy should be most likely to achieve conflict resolution through liberal social reconstruction, although even the most intensive efforts are likely to fail in the absence of a supportive liberal regional context. Levels of integration into the global economy, the democratic status of neighboring countries, the extent of U.S. intervention, and the depth of international efforts to promote liberal institutions are all amenable to systematic measurement and analysis.

Beyond the Americas, such liberal influences are strongest in Europe, where multilateral institutions, backed by trade and aid policies, provide strong incentives for states in Central and Eastern Europe to adopt liberal norms. In contrast to Central America, however, the European countries that have experienced civil war in recent years have had a weak liberal heritage and limited connections to the global economy. Nonetheless, the liberalizing influences in Europe have been strong enough that Croatia, with its comparatively strong economic, political, and identity

ties to the West, has taken unexpected strides toward a genuinely liberal regime. Elections in Croatia, about which many observers were skeptical given the nationalist and authoritarian flavor of the Tudjman regime, have produced a dramatic shift toward democratic tolerance. The new government elected in February 2000 has invited Serbs to return, and some repatriation has occurred. The outcome to date in Bosnia has been less promising, in part because international actors initially failed to insist on liberal practices as implementation of Dayton began.[113] Now that international pressures have increased on the Bosnian parties to accept liberal terms, it may eventually be possible to construct a settlement that will not depend on ongoing international security guarantees.

Support for liberal norms is weaker in Asia, although the region's deep connections with the global economy may have played a role in the recent transition toward democracy in Indonesia and that government's embrace of liberal social reconstruction strategies for trying to end its civil wars in East Timor and Aceh. Such norms are still incipient in Africa, with the exception of South Africa, where the adoption of liberal norms helped resolve that country's civil war. We would therefore expect liberal social reconstruction to be more applicable to civil war resolution in the Balkans, for example, than in Sierra Leone or Congo. In the latter two cases international peace enforcement is clearly needed, although it is by no means clear as of this writing that the necessary forces will be forthcoming.

This should not lead us to dismiss out of hand, however, the potential value of liberal social reconstruction as a means of conflict resolution, even in countries and regions where these norms currently have little influence. Mozambique stands as an example of successful liberal social reconstruction in a region that does not provide much support for such solutions. One of the clear lessons of the Central American cases is that liberal social reconstruction is a long-term project. U.S. support for civil elections in the early 1980s—largely a counterinsurgency strategy at the time—helped establish political habits and skills that paved the way for settlements based on liberal rules ten to fifteen years later. Many academic observers in the 1980s believed the region to be a singularly improbable place for liberal politics to take root. We would argue, therefore, that investments by the international community in promoting liberal norms, even in regions where authoritarianism is the norm, can help provide the foundation for settling future civil wars, perhaps decades hence.

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113. Cousens 1999.

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