

**Disarmament and Conflict  
Resolution Project**

**Managing Arms  
in Peace Processes:  
Nicaragua and  
El Salvador**



**UNITED NATIONS  
NATIONS UNIES**

**UNIDIR**  
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research  
Institut des Nations Unies pour la recherche sur le désarmement

UNIDIR  
United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research  
Geneva

**Disarmament and  
Conflict Resolution Project**

**Managing Arms in Peace Processes:  
Nicaragua and El Salvador**

Papers: *Paulo S. Wrobel*

Questionnaire Analysis: *Lt Col Guilherme Theophilo Gaspar de Oliverra*

Project funded by: the Ford Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, the Winston Foundation, the Ploughshares Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the governments of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Finland, France, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.



UNITED NATIONS  
New York and Geneva, 1997

## NOTE

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

\*  
\* \*

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Secretariat.

UNIDIR/97/1
-------------

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION
----------------------------

<i>Sales No.</i> GV.E.97.0.1
------------------------------

ISBN 92-9045-121-1
--------------------

# Table of Contents

	Page
Previous DCR Project Publications .....	v
Preface - <i>Sverre Lodgaard</i> .....	vii
Acknowledgements .....	ix
Project Introduction - <i>Virginia Gamba</i> .....	xi
List of Acronyms .....	xvii
Maps .....	xviii
<b>Part I: Case Study: Nicaragua</b> .....	<b>1</b>
I. Introduction .....	3
II. National Disputes and Regional Crisis .....	3
III. The Peace Agreement, the Evolution of the Conflicts and the UN Role .....	8
1. The Evolution of the Conflict in Nicaragua .....	10
2. The Role of the UN .....	13
IV. The Establishment of ONUCA .....	15
1. The First Phase of the Mandate .....	16
2. The Second Phase of the Mandate .....	19
3. The Return to the Original Mandate .....	22
V. Demobilization and Voluntary Disarmament in Detail .....	26
1. The VENBATT and the Collection of Weapons .....	29
VI. Assessment of the Demobilization and Disarmament Operations .....	32

<b>Part II: Questionnaire Analysis: Nicaragua</b> .....	37
<b>Part III: Case Study: El Salvador</b> .....	115
I. Introduction .....	117
II. The Regional Setting .....	118
1. Regional Disputes .....	118
2. Regional Negotiations .....	119
III. The Evolution of El Salvador's Conflict and the Search for a Peaceful Solution .....	123
1. The Evolution of El Salvador's Conflict .....	123
2. The Negotiated Solution .....	126
IV. The Role of ONUSAL in Disarmament and Demobilisation .....	129
1. The Military Division of ONUSAL .....	131
2. The End of the Military Structure of the FMLN .....	132
3. The Demining Operation .....	135
4. The Restructuring of the Armed Forces .....	136
5. Total of Arms Handed Over by the FMLN .....	137
V. Assessment of the Operation .....	138
<b>Part IV: Questionnaire Analysis: El Salvador</b> .....	143
Biographical Note .....	223
<b>Part V: Bibliography</b> .....	225

## **Previous DCR Project Publications**

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Somalia

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Cambodia

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Mozambique

Small Arms Management and Peacekeeping in Southern Africa

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Liberia

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Psychological Operations and Intelligence

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: The Issues

Managing Arms in Peace Processes: Haiti



# Preface

Under the heading of Collective Security, UNIDIR is conducting a major project on Disarmament and Conflict Resolution (DCR). The project examines the utility and modalities of disarming warring parties as an element of efforts to resolve intra-state conflicts. It collects field experiences regarding the demobilization and disarmament of warring factions; reviews 11 collective security actions where disarmament has been attempted; and examines the role that disarmament of belligerents can play in the management and resolution of internal conflicts. The 11 cases are UNPROFOR (Yugoslavia), UNOSOM and UNITAF (Somalia), UNAVEM (Angola), UNTAC (Cambodia), ONUSAL (El Salvador), ONUCA (Central America), UNTAG (Namibia), ONUMOZ (Mozambique), UNOMIL (Liberia), UNMIH (Haiti), and the 1979 Commonwealth operation in Rhodesia.

Being an autonomous institute charged with the task of undertaking independent, applied research, UNIDIR keeps a certain distance from political actors of all kinds. The impact of our publications is predicated on the independence with which we are seen to conduct our research. At the same time, being a research institute within the framework of the United Nations, UNIDIR naturally relates its work to the needs of the Organization. Inspired by the Secretary-General's report on "New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post-Cold War Era,"<sup>1</sup> the DCR Project also relates to a great many governments involved in peace operations through the UN or under regional auspices. Last but not least, comprehensive networks of communication and cooperation have been developed with UN personnel having field experience.

Weapons-wise, the disarmament of warring parties is mostly a matter of light weapons. These weapons account for as much as 90% of the casualties in many armed conflicts. UNIDIR recently published a paper on this subject (*Small Arms and Intra-State Conflicts*, UNIDIR Paper No. 34, 1995). The Secretary-General's appeal for stronger efforts to control small arms - to promote "micro disarmament"<sup>2</sup> - is one which UNIDIR will continue to attend to in the framework of the DCR Project.

---

<sup>1</sup> Document A/C.1/47/7, No. 31, 23 October 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Document 50/60-S/1995/1, 3 January 1995.

This volume examines the UN missions in Nicaragua and El Salvador, which constitute two significant examples of successful multilateral intervention in the resolution of internal conflict. Specifically, the volume traces the background of the Nicaraguan and El Salvadoran conflicts, and examines the UN contribution to the settlement of these conflicts in the form of the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). Furthermore, the volume details the efforts at disarmament and demobilization as part of these UN missions. The case studies were researched and authored by Dr. Paulo Wrobel during his stay at UNIDIR in the spring of 1995. The report is the eighth in a series of UNIDIR publications on the disarmament dimension of peace operations.

The author of the case studies has drawn on the professional advice and assistance of military officers intimately acquainted with peace operations. They were Col. Roberto Bendini (Argentina), Lt. Col. Ilkka Tiihonen (Finland) and Lt. Col. Jakkie Potgieter (South Africa). UNIDIR is grateful to all of them for their invaluable contributions to clarifying and solving the multitude of questions and problems we put before them.

I would like to thank the staff at UNIDIR who assisted in the publication process: Virginia Gamba, for leading the DCR project until the end of March 1996; our Editorial Staff, for editing this volume; and our Specialized Publications Secretary, Anita Blétry, for designing and producing the camera-ready copy.

UNIDIR takes no position on the views or conclusions expressed in this report. They are that of Dr. Paulo Wrobel. I am grateful to him for his contribution: UNIDIR has been happy to have such a resourceful and dedicated collaborator.

Sverre Lodgaard  
Director, UNIDIR

# Acknowledgements

The DCR Project takes this opportunity to thank the many foundations and governments who have contributed financially and with personnel to the establishment and evolution of the research associated with the Project. Among our contributors the following deserve a special mention and our deep appreciation: the Ford Foundation, the United States Institute of Peace, the Winston Foundation, the Ploughshares Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the governments of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Finland, France, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.



# Project Introduction

## Disarmament and Conflict Resolution

The global arena's main preoccupation during the Cold War centered on the maintenance of international peace and stability between states. The vast network of alliances, obligations and agreements which bound nuclear superpowers to the global system, and the memory of the rapid internationalization of disputes into world wars, favored the formulation of national and multinational deterrent policies designed to maintain a stability which was often confused with immobility. In these circumstances, the ability of groups within states to engage in protest and to challenge recognized authority was limited.

The end of the Cold War in 1989, however, led to a relaxing of this pattern, generating profound mobility within the global system. The ensuing break-up of alliances, partnerships, and regional support systems brought new and often weak states into the international arena. Since weak states are susceptible to ethnic tensions, secession, and outright criminality, many regions are now afflicted by situations of violent intra-state conflict.

Intra-state conflict occurs at immense humanitarian cost. The massive movement of people, their desperate condition, and the direct and indirect tolls on human life have, in turn, generated pressure for international action.

Before and since the Cold War, the main objective of the international community when taking action has been the maintenance and/or recovery of stability. The main difference between then and now, however, is that then, the main objective of global action was to maintain stability in the *international* arena, whereas now it is to stabilize *domestic* situations. The international community assists in stabilizing domestic situations in five different ways: by facilitating dialogue between warring parties, by preventing a renewal of internal armed conflict, by strengthening infrastructure, by improving local security, and by facilitating an electoral process intended to lead to political stability.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations is by no means the only organization that has been requested by governments to undertake these tasks. However, the reputation of the United Nations as being representative of all states and thus as being

---

<sup>1</sup> James S. Sutterlin, "Military Force in the Service of Peace," *Aurora Papers*, No. 18 (Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Centre for Global Security, 1993), p. 13.

objective and trustworthy has been especially valued, as indicated by the greater number of peace operations in which it is currently engaged. Before 1991, the UN peace operations' presence enhanced not only peace but also the strengthening of democratic processes, conciliation among population groups, the encouragement of respect for human rights, and the alleviation of humanitarian problems. These achievements are exemplified by the role of the UN in Congo, southern Lebanon, Nicaragua, Namibia, El Salvador, and to a lesser extent in Haiti.

Nevertheless, since 1991 the United Nations has been engaged in a number of simultaneous, larger, and more ambitious peace operations such as those in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Mozambique and Somalia. It has also been increasingly pressured to act on quick-flaring and horrendously costly explosions of violence, such as the one in Rwanda in 1994. The financial, personnel, and timing pressure on the United Nations to undertake these massive short-term stabilizing actions has seriously impaired the UN's ability to ensure long-term national and regional stability. The UN has necessarily shifted its focus from a supporting role, in which it could ensure long-term national and international stability, to a role which involves obtaining quick peace and easing humanitarian pressures immediately. But without a focus on peace defined as longer-term stability, the overall success of efforts to mediate and resolve intra-state conflict will remain in question.

This problem is beginning to be recognized and acted upon by the international community. More and more organizations and governments are linking success to the ability to offer non-violent alternatives to a post-conflict society. These alternatives are mostly of a socio-political/economic nature, and are national rather than regional in character. As important as these linkages are to the final resolution of conflict, they tend to overlook a major source of instability: the existence of vast amounts of weapons widely distributed among combatant and non-combatant elements in societies which are emerging from long periods of internal conflict. The reason why weapons themselves are not the primary focus of attention in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies is because they are viewed from a political perspective. Action which does not award importance to disarmament processes is justified by invoking the political value of a weapon as well as the way the weapon is used by a warring party, rather than its mere existence and availability. For proponents of this action, peace takes away the reason for using the weapon and, therefore, renders it harmless for the post-conflict reconstruction process. And yet, easy availability of weapons can, and does, militarize societies in general. It also

destabilizes regions that are affected by unrestricted trade of light weapons between borders.

There are two problems, therefore, with the international community's approach to post-conflict reconstruction processes: on the one hand, the international community, under pressure to react to increasingly violent internal conflict, has put a higher value on peace in the short-term than on development and stability in the long-term; and, on the other hand, those who *do* focus on long-term stability have put a higher value on the societal and economic elements of development than on the management of the primary tools of violence, i.e., weapons.

### **UNIDIR's DCR Project and the Control of Arms during Peace Processes (CAPP)**

The DCR Project aims to explore the predicament posed by UN peace operations which have recently focused on short-term needs rather than long-term stability. The Project is based on the premise that the control and reduction of weapons during peace operations can be a tool for ensuring stability. Perhaps more than ever before, the effective control of weapons has the capacity to influence far-reaching events in national and international activities. In this light, the management and control of arms could become an important component for the settlement of conflicts, a fundamental aid to diplomacy in the prevention and deflation of conflict, and a critical component of the reconstruction process in post-conflict societies.

Various instruments can be used to implement weapons control. For example, instruments which may be used to support preventive diplomacy in times of crisis include confidence-building measures, weapons control agreements, and the control of illegal weapons transfers across borders.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, during conflict situations, and particularly in the early phases of a peace operation, negotiations conducive to lasting peace can be brought about by effective monitoring and the establishment of safe havens, humanitarian corridors, and disengagement sectors. Finally, after the termination of armed conflict, a situation of stability is required for post-conflict reconstruction processes to be successful. Such stability can be facilitated by troop

---

<sup>2</sup> Fred Tanner, "Arms Control in Times of Conflict," Project on Rethinking Arms Control, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, PRAC Paper 7, October 1993.

withdrawals, the demilitarization of border zones, and effective disarmament, demobilization and demining.

Nevertheless, problems within the process of controlling weapons have cropped up at every stage of peace operations, for a variety of reasons. In most cases, initial control of arms upon the commencement of peace operations has not generally been achieved. This may be due to the fact that political negotiations necessary to generate mandates and missions permitting international action are often not specific enough on their disarmament implementation component. It could also be that the various actors involved interpret mandates in totally different ways. Conversely, in the specific cases in which peace operations have attained positive political outcomes, initial efforts to reduce weapons to manageable levels - even if achieved - tend to be soon devalued, since most of the ensuing activities center on the consolidation of post-conflict reconstruction processes. This shift in priorities from conflict resolution to reconstruction makes for sloppy follow-up of arms management operations. Follow-up problems, in turn, can result in future threats to internal stability. They also have the potential to destabilize neighboring states due to the uncontrolled and unaccounted-for mass movement of weapons that are no longer of political or military value to the former warring parties.

The combination of internal conflicts with the proliferation of light weapons has marked peace operations since 1990. This combination poses new challenges to the international community and highlights the fact that a lack of consistent strategies for the control of arms during peace processes (CAPP) reduces the effectiveness of ongoing missions and diminishes the chances of long-term national and regional stability once peace is agreed upon.

The case studies undertaken by the DCR Project highlight a number of recurrent problems that have impinged on the control and reduction of weapons during peace operations. Foremost among these are problems associated with the establishment and maintenance of a secure environment early in the mission, and problems concerned with the lack of coordination of efforts among the various groups involved in the mission. Many secondary complications would be alleviated if these two problems areas were understood differently. The establishment of a secure environment, for example, would make the warring parties more likely to agree on consensual disarmament initiatives. Likewise, a concerted effort at weapons control early in the mission would demonstrate the international community's determination to hold the parties to their original peace agreements and cease-fire arrangements. Such a demonstration of resolve would make it more difficult for these agreements to be broken once the peace operation was underway.

The coordination problem applies both to international interactions and to the components of the peace operation. A peace process will be more likely to succeed if there is cooperation and coordination between the international effort and the nations which immediately neighbor the stricken country. But coordination must not simply be present at the international level; it must permeate the entire peace operation as well. To obtain maximum effect, relations must be coordinated among and within the civil affairs, military, and humanitarian groups which comprise a peace operation. A minimum of coordination must also be achieved between intra- and inter-state mission commands, the civil and military components at strategic, operational and tactical levels, and the humanitarian aid organizations working in the field; these components must cooperate with each other if the mission is to reach its desired outcome. If problems with mission coordination are overcome, many secondary difficulties could also be avoided, including lack of joint management, lack of unity of effort, and lack of mission and population protection mechanisms.

Given these considerations, the Project believes that the way to implement peace, defined in terms of long-term stability, is to focus not just on the sources of violence (such as social and political development issues) but also on the material vehicles for violence (such as weapons and munitions). Likewise, the implementation of peace must take into account *both* the future needs of a society and the elimination of its excess weapons, *and also* the broader international and regional context in which the society is situated. This is because weapons that are not managed and controlled in the field will invariably flow over into neighboring countries, becoming a problem in themselves. Thus, *the establishment of viable stability requires that three primary aspects be included in every approach to intra-state conflict resolution: (1) the implementation of a comprehensive, systematic disarmament program as soon as a peace operation is set-up; (2) the establishment of an arms management program that continues into national post-conflict reconstruction processes; and (3) the encouragement of close cooperation on weapons control and management programs between countries in the region where the peace operation is being implemented.*

In order to fulfill its research mission, the DCR Project has been divided into four phases. These are as follows: (1) the development, distribution, and interpretation of a *Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations*; (2) the development and publication of case studies on peace operations in which disarmament tasks constituted an important aspect of the wider mission; (3) the

organization of a series of workshops on policy issues; and (4) the publication of policy papers on substantive issues related to the linkages between the control of arms during peace processes (CAPP) and the settlement of conflict.

The first case study examined the way in which three international peace processes (UNOSOM, UNITAF, and UNOSOM II) struggled with the issue of controlling and managing light weapons in Somalia; the second volume focused on the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) in Rhodesia; the third on the complex missions in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNPROFOR); the fourth study looked at the UN mission in Cambodia (UNTAC); the fifth examined the UN operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ); the sixth volume addressed the United Nations observer mission in Liberia (UNOMIL); and the seventh dealt with the combined efforts of the Multinational Force (MNF) and United Nations mission in Haiti (UNMIH) to manage the restoration of the democratically elected Aristide government in Haiti. This volume examines both the background of the Nicaraguan and El Salvadoran conflicts and the UN contribution to the resolution of these conflicts through the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), UN Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEM), and UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). The paper is presented with a summary of the responses regarding these missions, which were obtained through the Project's own *Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations*.

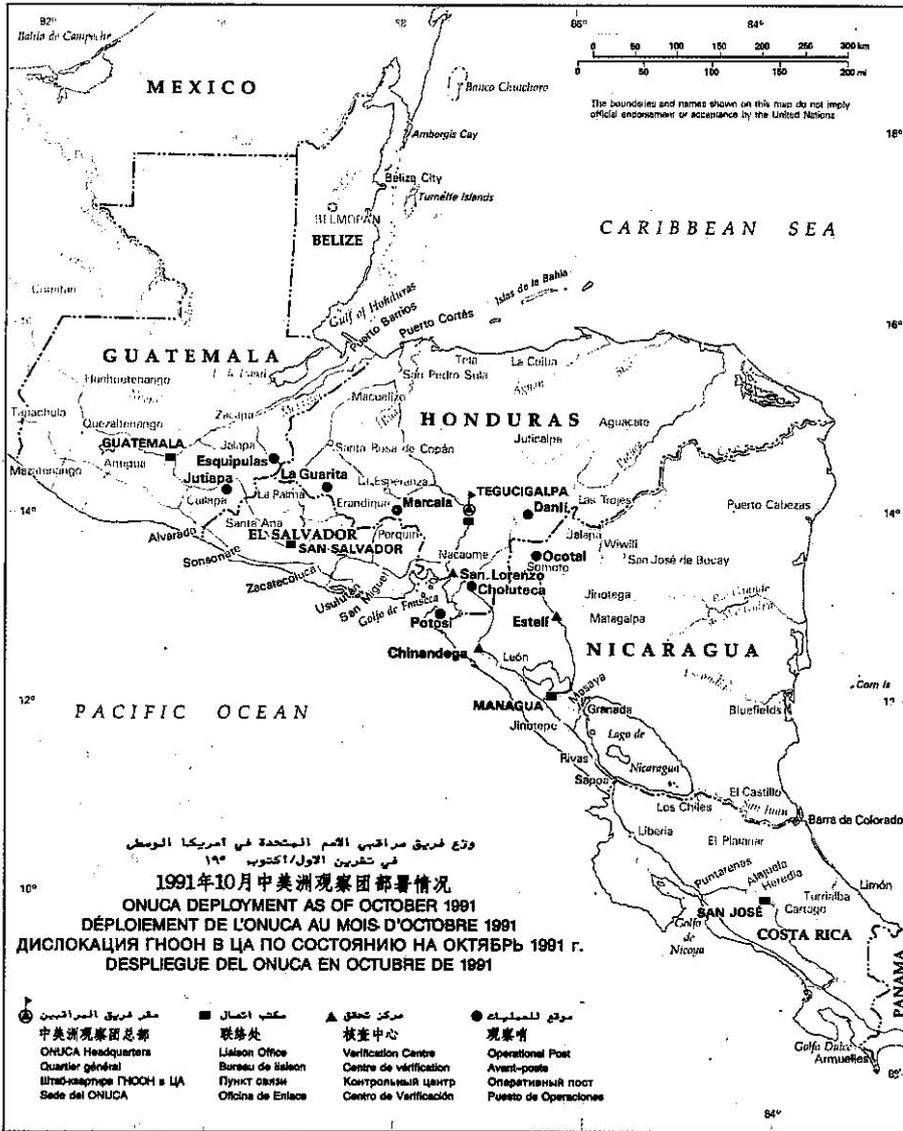
Virginia Gamba  
Project Director  
Geneva, March 1996

## List of Acronyms

ARENA	Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (National Republican Alliance)
CAPP	Control of Arms during Peace Processes
CIAV	Comision Internacional de Apoyo y Verificacion (International Commission of Support and Verification)
COPAZ	Comision Nacional para la Consolidacion de la Paz (National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace)
ERP	Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo/Expression Renovadora del Pueblo (People's Revolutionary Army)
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (National Liberation Front Farabundo Marti)
FPL	Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion (Popular Liberation Forces)
MINUSAL	Mission de Observacion de Naciones Unidas en El Salvador (UN Mission in El Salvador)
NR/Contras	Nicaraguan Resistance
OAS	Organization of American States
ONUSCA	United Nations Observer Group in Central America
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
ONUEN	United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua
PAM	Prevention of Accidents by Mines
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	Union Nacional Opositora (Opposition National Union)
UNSF	United Nations Security Force
URNG	Unidad Revolucionara Nacional Guatemaleca (National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unit)
VC	Verification Centre
VENBATT	Venezuelan Battalion

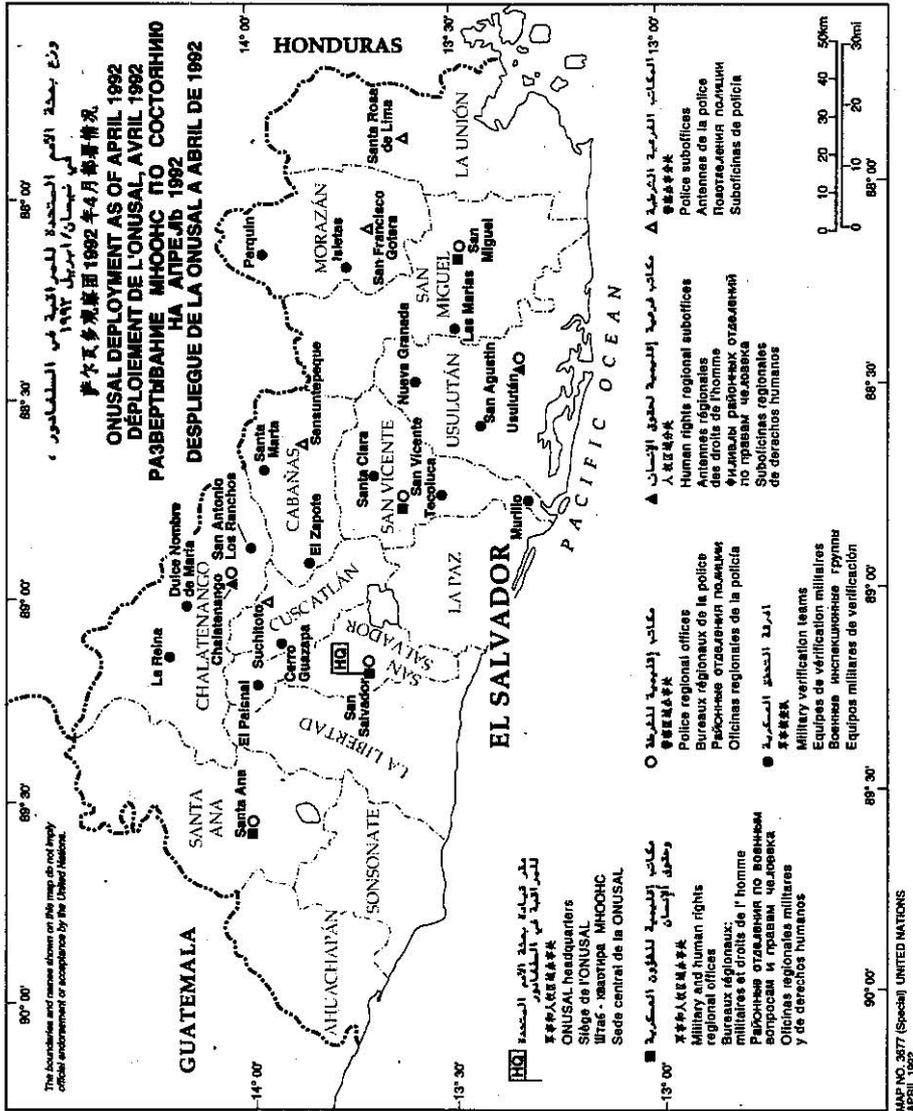


MAP NO. 2648 UNITED NATIONS  
APRIL 1982



MAP No. 2298 Rev. 2 UNITED NATIONS  
OCTOBER 1991







# **Part I: Nicaragua**

## **Case Study**



## **I. Introduction**

The United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) was established by the UN Security Council in November 1989 and lasted until January 1992. Its main role was to monitor the security provisions undertaken through a regional peace agreement. As the situation progressed, the mission was expanded and became responsible for supervising the demobilization and disarmament of the Nicaraguan Resistance (NR or Contras) and its reintegration into civilian life.

After a decade of regional polarization and widespread use of violence, the easing of the international tension contributed to settle the enduring disputes of Central America. National reconciliation and a lasting regional peace through negotiations became attainable after the near exhaustion of the contending parties. Through lengthy negotiations, the five Central American states were able to build up a framework for regional peace. Nevertheless, the difficulties in implementing the peace agreements required a deep involvement by the United Nations (UN).

After following closely the negotiations, and helping to mediate, the UN was asked by Managua in March 1989 to establish a mission to monitor the presidential election scheduled to take place no later than 25 February 1990. As the negotiations evolved, the Central American Presidents requested the UN to establish a peacekeeping mission in the area to observe, monitor and verify the commitments undertaken under a regional peace agreement.

The monitoring of presidential elections, the verification of security commitments, the coordination of the demobilization of irregular and insurgent forces, the disarmament of the warring parties (including the downsizing of the regular armed forces) to help in the formation of a new civilian police force, and monitoring human rights are, among others, some of the tasks that the UN was asked to perform in Central America. All these tasks constitute a new style of UN peacekeeping operations: multifunctional peacekeeping operations. This study concentrates on the demobilization and disarmament aspects of the mission which took place in Nicaragua.

## **II. National Disputes and Regional Crisis**

Central America is a region where deeply ingrained, indigenous conflicts had been exacerbated by the Cold War rivalry. It is a region which possesses all the right ingredients for national insecurity and regional instability. The region is constituted by five small, relatively poor nations namely, Costa Rica,

Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. A history of social injustice and economic vulnerability characterizes the isthmus. Dependent on the export of few agricultural products for their survival, these Central American states have been governed by powerful oligarchies, and have been prone to civil unrest. Civil unrest has usually been dealt with by harsh repression. Moreover, long and unprotected borders run through underpopulated areas, mostly surrounded by difficult terrain, consisting mainly of tropical forests, swamps, and high mountains. Porous borders, poorly controlled by the state, allowed for the continuous supply of weapons, and the free cross border movement of illegal activists, either irregular and insurgent fighters or smugglers, drug traffickers and bandits. Most of the Central American nations still lack the basic resources to fully develop the governmental authority needed to effectively control their own territory.

Decades-long insurgency movements (in Guatemala, for example, the insurgents have been active since the mid-1950's) have perhaps contributed further to the deterioration of public life. Lawlessness and indiscriminate use of violence have been common in the region.

In 1979, one of the most active regional insurgent movements, the Nicaraguan Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional, led a coalition of political forces in a victory against the crumbling Somoza regime. With the coming to power of a rebel force, with a blueprint for revolutionary social change, and open alignment with the Soviet bloc, a totally new political environment was created in Central America. Ironically, one of the insurgent movements became governmental authority. An immediate reaction followed, and in 1982 armed opposition against the Sandinistas was organized. With hostilities getting worse between Managua and Washington, the armed opposition became ultimately fully financed, trained and equipped by the US. The opposition movement became known as the NR, and waged a war of attrition against the Nicaraguan government.

As the situation in Nicaragua deteriorated and became increasingly part of the East-West rivalry, in El Salvador the ideological and political disputes also deepened. Five opposition groups united in a common front, called the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN), and decided to embark on an armed struggle against the Salvadoran government. As a result, the FMLN constituted a powerful fighting force in a decade-long bloody civil war against the Salvadoran government, in El Salvador alone it is estimated that in the ten years-

long conflict about 75,000 people lost their lives, and more than 1,000,000 became displaced).<sup>1</sup>

In Guatemala, the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) has been fighting a bloody guerrilla war against the Guatemalan government. The URNG forces numbered less than 2,000 against a 38,000 military, with a strong structure of rural control. Although the rebels posed no major military threat, they operated over wide areas in small units, occasionally ambushing army outposts and occupying small population centers. Even if they did not have the same strength and popularity as the Sandinistas or the FMLN, the URNG, despite negotiations conducted with the government since 1991, still carries out an armed campaign against the Guatemalan government which allegedly has already cost about 150,000 lives.<sup>2</sup>

In this environment, permeated by social injustice and indiscriminate use of violence, the distinction between a national and a regional dispute has been blurred. Well-equipped irregular and insurgent forces have been freely crossing borders, preparing and carrying out attacks against regular forces. The region was inundated with all sorts and shapes of light and heavy weapons, while governments became totally impotent to control the channels of weapons supply and the use of their territory as bases for insurgents of the right and left.

Foreign nations became entirely entangled in the conflicts. The US supported the government of El Salvador, build military bases in Honduras and fully equip the Contras. On the other hand, Soviet hardware was introduced in the area by the Sandinistas, who were helping to train and equip the FMLN. Cuban military advisers were present in Nicaragua and along the FMLN. Allegedly Argentinean military advisers were also involved.

Throughout the 1980's many complaints were made by the Central American nations about the interference in other nation's sovereignty, through the channelling of weapons and the use of other nations' territory by irregular and insurgent forces. Mistrust and mutual recriminations combined with the states' incapacity to prevail against rebel forces. Illegal border crossings of insurgent and irregular forces were actually taking place freely, as the territory of one nation was being used as a sanctuary to organize operations, hide weapons, and train and

---

<sup>1</sup> *The United Nations and El Salvador, 1990-1995*, New York: The United Nations Blue Book Series, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Security Council Document A/49/857, 1 March 1995, "La Situacion en Centroamerica: Procedimientos para Establecer la Paz Firme y Duradera, y Progresos para la Configuracion de una Region de Paz, Libertad, Democracia y Desarrollo."

prepare attacks. In this volatile environment, force was perceived by all sides to be the only way to resolve the disputes.

In fact, when the term peace is used to refer to the main goal in Central America, it is worth noting that the five Central American nations were not at war among themselves. Even with the escalation of the disputes, pressure was placed on all sides, including the US, to avoid interstate fighting. Although unresolved historical disputes and regular complaints about the behavior of others in supporting irregular forces were turning regional relations sour, they were not by any means approaching the point of possible interstate warfare.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the amount of resources spent on defense had increased dramatically, and there was a perception throughout the region that poverty and social distress were approaching a dangerous level, and that Central America was filled with military weapons. Thus, an overall regional peace plan required the concerted political will of the five states Central American states, and their acceptance that the international community should be involved in monitoring and verifying the agreements concluded, especially those relating to the dismantling of insurgent and irregular forces and the control of the weapons supply.

Nonetheless, the growing amount of resources spent on defense, and the increasing number of people in arms throughout the region, either regular or irregular forces, were constraining the diplomatic negotiations. In a region which had not yet been able to achieve a clear subordination of the armed forces to the civilian authorities, the increasing level of spending on weapons as well as the strengthening of the armed forces, have made military establishments even more independent from civilian control, and more assertive in their mission as champions of national salvation.

Still, despite the impressive number of soldiers mobilized, and the use of compulsory drafting so opposed by the civilian population, neither Managua nor San Salvador were able to destroy the opposing irregular and insurgent forces. Open support from the US, the increased sophistication in training and in weaponry employed by the regular armed forces, were not able to defeat militarily the irregular forces. Meanwhile, the supply of weapons for both parties continued unabated.

With the overall deterioration of the political climate and the weakness of the civilian authority, the armed forces have self-appropriated the primary goal of

---

<sup>3</sup> Actually the government of Nicaragua filed a protest in the World Court in the Hague against the US for attacks against its territory. When the World Court ruled against the US, Nicaragua filed protests against Honduras and Costa Rica. Those were dropped later on when the negotiations began to progress.

counter-insurgency, deteriorating even further the level of respect for human rights. It inevitably followed that winning at any price became the *raison d'être* of the military, and the widespread use of violence in public life became a vicious circle.

Because of these realities, the downsizing of the armed forces, and the transformation of their traditional role in Central American societies- with the exception of Costa Rica, which has abolished the armed forces since 1948-49, came to be a demand for those seeking a lasting peace, as well as a stable democracy and development in the region.

In this context, the freedom to smuggle light as well as heavy weapons, possessed by irregular forces throughout the region, convinced the five Central American governments of the need to make a concerted effort to disband these irregular forces, and to diminish the amount of military weapons in the hands of both irregular or regular forces.

Despite the indiscriminate use of force, diplomacy had also been pursued since 1983 as a way to terminate disputes which were draining national resources. National reconciliation and a lasting regional peace were the main objectives sought by the negotiations. By 1987, the hard and highly complex negotiations gained momentum. The five nations became gradually convinced that there was a real chance to resolve by diplomatic means what the use of force could not achieve, and a regional peace plan put forward by the Costa Rican President, Oscar Arias, was accepted. In August 1987, a peace agreement was finally signed in Guatemala City by the Presidents of the five Central American states.<sup>4</sup>

The peace agreement had the advantage of being indigenously designed, and thus of not being perceived as a solution imposed from abroad. Despite this achievement, however, the next step, namely, the implementation of the peace plan, was a lengthy and difficult process, which required further negotiations, as well as the support and assistance of the international community.

In Nicaragua, the implementation was facilitated by the election of the opposition candidate Violeta Chamorro. In El Salvador, the opposition of the Salvadoran armed forces against their downsizing was one of the most difficult aspects of the negotiations, between San Salvador and the FMLN, although eventually, it became part of a peace agreement signed between San Salvador and the FMLN, along with a cease-fire and the demobilization of the FMLN, and its transformation into a legitimate political party. In Guatemala, it is still a

---

<sup>4</sup> Jack Child, *The Central American Peace Process, 1983-1991, Sheathing Swords, Building Confidence*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.

contentious aspect of the peace agreement between Guatemala City and the UNRG.

### **III. The Peace Agreement, the Evolution of the Conflicts and the UN Role**

After five years of hard negotiations and bargaining, the five Central American nations finally arrived at a regional peace agreement. The proposal put forward by the Costa Rican President, Oscar Arias, in February 1987 ("Procedures for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America") was used as the basis for the Esquipulas II Peace Agreement signed in Guatemala City on 7 August 1987 by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Equipulas II was the framework which allowed concrete steps to be taken towards the pacification of the area. The peace agreement proposed by President Arias was able to break through the deadlock which had blocked further steps undertaken under the auspices of a group of eight Latin American countries (the Contadora negotiating process).

Actually, attempts had been made to settle the disputes by negotiation since 1983. As the regional situation deteriorated, following the Sandinista revolution, the armed opposition formed against it, and the worsening of the Salvadoran conflict, the five Central American nations welcomed the efforts undertaken by some Latin American countries to mediate. Through the Contadora Group (formed by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, joined later on by the Contadora Support Group, including Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay), the Latin Americans became involved in seeking a concerted diplomatic solution to Central America. The process advanced steadily from 1983 to 1986, through the successive drafting of Contadora Peace Acts.<sup>5</sup>

The Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group were formed in an attempt to apply the conciliatory tradition of Latin America to Central America. Moreover, it was an initiative developed independently of the US, which was new as far as regional peace and security are concerned. Because Washington was a key Central American player, supporting both the government of El Salvador and the NR against the Sandinista government, the US did not

---

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Bagley, *Contadora and the Diplomacy of Peace in Central America*, Bulder: Westview, 1987.

encourage a diplomatic solution. Washington considered that the Contadora process was a way of consolidating the Sandinista government.

Although the Contadora process had passed through different periods of successes and failures, by 1986 it was actually winding down, mainly due to the deterioration of the political climate in the area, and the persistence of the use of force. During most of the negotiations Nicaragua became completely isolated, defending its own beleaguered Sandinista administration against the accusations that Managua was fomenting revolution and helping to finance and arm insurgency throughout the area. Moreover, the other four had their own different agendas, and a consensual solution leading towards a lasting peace appeared to be far from close.

Nevertheless, the Contadora attempt to mediate the Central American conflicts is considered a step in the right direction, even if it was not able to achieve its final aim. It suggested a mechanism for conflict resolution through gradual steps, based on evolving confidence-building measures, which eventually paved the way to an agreement designed by the Central Americans themselves. The Contadora peace process was also able to keep open a channel of communication, and the initiative introduced by President Arias was welcomed by a regional leadership exhausted after many years of violence, and eager to find a negotiated solution.

Following Contadora, the Esquipulas II framework for peace applied the idea that the crises had no solution other than a political one of national reconciliation and a lasting regional peace through cooperation. It became the basic framework which allowed national reconciliation in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, and opened the way for a future settlement of the decades-long conflict in Guatemala.<sup>6</sup>

In Esquipulas II, the five Central American nations undertook a series of joint commitments, where national reconciliation, the end of hostilities, democratization and free elections, the cessation of aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements, the non-use of territory to attack other states, the problem of refugees and displaced persons, cooperation and development, and international verification and follow-up were the top priorities. The security provisions included in the Esquipulas II framework thus, required that the governments of Central America make concrete efforts to control more effectively their own borders, seek to prevent the continuing smuggling of weapons and the free movement of

---

<sup>6</sup> Francisco Rojas Aravena, "Esquipulas: UN Proceso de Construcción de Confianza," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 8, July-December 1993.

irregular and insurgent forces. It also required their commitments not to allow their own territories to be used as sanctuaries for irregular and insurgent forces.

Through the successful conclusion of a regional peace agreement, the Central American Presidents showed their political will to terminate the widespread use of force. Nonetheless, this did not guarantee that the peace agreements would be actually implemented, and indeed respected by all the parties concerned. The implementation of Esquipulas II was very problematic.

The irregular and insurgent forces as well as the US were not consulted on the terms of the peace agreement, and, therefore, they did not constitute part of the agreement. Moreover, the governments of the area lacked the capabilities required to enforce it, or to control efficiently their own borders, and stop the influx of weapons. In addition, many different interpretations existed on aspects of the agreement, concerning democratization, the respect for the constitutional governments, and the dialogue between governments and rebels. Compliance with the agreements signed therefore, was a hard task despite the good intentions of the signatories.

### 1. The Evolution of the Conflict in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, as the armed resistance against the Sandinista government was organized, a state of emergency was declared in March 1982. The state of emergency was eased in August 1984, but was in force again by 1985 and only eased again in 1988. Meanwhile the economic situation deteriorated sharply throughout the decade, further eroding popular support for the Sandinistas.

The Sandinistas raised the size of Nicaraguan armed forces, which numbered 72,000 in 1986, 77,000 in 1987, 80,000 in 1989, and 63,500 in 1990. After the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in 1991, the armed forces were sharply reduced to about 30,000. The number of Contras mobilized was around 20,000 to 22,000, although not all were combatants.<sup>7</sup> The Contras were a mobile, lightly armed force, relying entirely on the US for supplies. Nevertheless, fighting between the two sides was heavy, with each side claiming to have inflicted heavy losses on the other.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> The International Institute of Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance*: 1986-1987; 1987-1988; 1988-1989; 1989-1990; 1990-1991; 1991-1992, London: Brassey's.

<sup>8</sup> A helpful summary of the development of fighting in Central America can be found in: The International Institute of Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey*: 1983-1984; 1984-1985; 1985-1986; 1986-1987; 1987-1988; 1988-1989; 1989-1990; 1991-1992; 1992-1993, London: Brassey's.

Even if they were to double their numbers, the Contras, would be unlikely to pose a serious military threat without the effective control of border areas from which to expand, and without support in the cities. They depended too much on air drops for supplies and had to move back across the border to Honduras and Costa Rica, following every Sandinista offensive. Moreover, they were unable to establish a presence in the cities.

In 1986 the tightening of the Sandinista regime led the US to increase its support for the Contras to a total of about US\$100 million. This in turn led to further Sandinista restrictions and a tightened state of emergency. Increased conscription and mobilization of the reserves were the answer to Washington's increased support for the Contras. Moreover, deliveries of Soviet equipment to Managua ensued. The Soviet Union provided over US\$ 3 billion in military and economic assistance to Nicaragua between 1979-89.

By January 1987 there were only about 2,000 Contras within Nicaragua, the rest being based in Honduras and on a smaller scale in Costa Rica. The Contras concentrated in one central region and attacked only lightly defended or purely civilian targets. The Sandinistas were better prepared militarily with the increased amount spent on defense. Negotiations between the two sides took place in December 1987 and January 1988, but failed to establish conditions for a cease-fire.

Eventually, a 60-day cease-fire was reached in 1988. The Sandinistas began to realize that there was a possibility of implementing Esquipulas II, disbanding the Contras and holding power. Economic plight and the cut-off of US Contra aid combined to open the chances for a cease-fire.

Moreover, a political agreement was reached between the Sandinistas and 21 political parties which had joined the Union Nacional Opositora (UNO), which ensured its participation in the elections promised to take place in 1990, and called for the demobilization of the Contras.

On 23 March 1988 in Sapoá, Nicaragua, a provisional agreement between the Sandinistas and Contras was signed. A cease-fire would come into effect, and the Contra forces would concentrate in agreed designated areas and then send delegates to a national dialogue with the aim of implementing Esquipulas II. Nonetheless, the progress on Sapoá was halted by differences, sharp disagreements within the Contras between hard-liners and moderates, and the deterioration of the economy. In January 1989 austerity measures included for the first time a cut on the defense budget.

At a Presidential Summit held in El Salvador on 13-14 February 1989, President Ortega announced a process of democratization and national reconciliation within the framework of Esquipulas II, which included: reform of

the electoral law and legislation to guarantee freedom of expression and political organization; bringing forward presidential elections from November 1990 to 25 February 1990; formation of a Supreme Electoral council with balanced representation; and supervision of elections by international observers.

The *quid pro quo* was that the five Presidents should agree to prepare within 90 days a joint plan for the voluntary demobilization, repatriation and resettlement of Contras, and to seek UN technical assistance to achieve it.

In early August 1989, the five Central American Presidents met at Tela, Honduras, and produced a joint plan for the voluntary demobilization of the Contras. An International Commission of Support and Verification (CIAV) was created, which was made up of representatives from the Secretary-Generals of the UN and the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Contras were urged to begin demobilization within 90 days of the establishment of CIAV. The Sandinistas called onto the FMLN to enter into negotiations with the government and demobilize like the Contras.

The situation deteriorated rapidly after the Tela summit. The Contras returned to Nicaragua and resumed their fighting against the Sandinistas. Disputes also erupted between El Salvador and Nicaragua, and between Nicaragua and Honduras, with the Sandinista army concentrating on the border with Honduras.

The peace process continued in the Presidential Summit held in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica on 10-12 December 1989. At the summit, an understanding was reached on interstate disputes, and the FMLN was sacrificed by President Ortega against support for the disbandment of the Contras. Also a broader role for the UN in supervising cease-fires and demobilizations was requested.

The persistence of differences between the Contras and Managua, as well as between Nicaragua and the other Central American nations, pointed to the need to find a formula by which the international community could assist in monitoring and verifying the security commitments agreed in Esquipulas II. In fact, although the UN Secretary-General had offered his good offices to mediate since 1986, UN involvement in the settlement of the disputes in Central America had been received with mixed reactions.

Both the Contadora and Esquipulas initiatives were essentially diplomatic and political agreements, with no inherent capabilities for effective verification through either peacekeeping or peace-observing. For this verification function the Central Americans turned to the UN.

## 2. The Role of the UN

The willingness of different nations, or indeed regions, to accept in good will international assistance in dealing with peace and security is perhaps a result of the nation's historical experience, and the memories held about intervention from abroad. In Latin America, some traumatic events have made the area very reluctant to accept openly the legitimacy of an intervention from abroad on peace and security issues.<sup>9</sup> Another relevant factor is that Latin America developed its own machinery for peace and regional security, codified since 1947-48 in the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Treaty of Rio) and the Charter of the OAS. In addition, the regional security machinery encompasses all the Americas, and it is therefore quite evident that the disparity of power in the hemisphere between the US and Latin America has given pre-eminence in peace and security matters to the former. With Washington deeply involved in the disputes, there was fear that the US would use the regional machinery to achieve its own political and military agendas. In this context, the regional machinery for conflict resolution could not operate successfully, despite efforts to mediate on the part of the OAS Secretary-General, Baena Soares. The OAS became virtually paralysed by the contending views of its members. It would, nevertheless, perform a relevant task in organizing the civilian aspects of the demobilization of the NR and their re-integration into civilian life, and jointly manage the CIAV with the UN.

For historical reasons, peacekeeping had a bad name in Latin America, and the very term peacekeeping reminded of past occupations of territory and the lengthy presence of foreign military forces. As a consequence, reluctance was the initial reaction in Central America to accept a multinational force to monitor and verify cease-fires and the separation of forces, under the control either of the regional organization, the OAS -or the international organization, the UN.

However, international assistance turned out to be the only solution to further the peace process and implement the Esquipulas II peace agreements. Due to the nature of the disputes, verification and follow-up of the commitments undertaken was fundamental. After some initial reluctance, the five Central American Presidents gradually turned more to the UN to provide the expertise needed on observing, monitoring and verifying the security commitments of Esquipulas II.

---

<sup>9</sup> The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (Treaty of Rio) had been used sometimes to create *ad hoc* peace-observing or peacekeeping missions in Latin America. The UN had not been hitherto involved in the area. See Jack Child, 1992, and Jack Child "Peacekeeping and the Inter-American Military System" paper for a conference on Peacemaking, *Peacekeeping and Coalition Warfare: The Future Role of the United Nations*, Norwich University, 1994.

In addition to the efforts already taken to mediate the disputes, other instances of UN involvement in the area had shown the UN's potential to assist, and gave confidence about its impartiality. The first UN mission set up to monitor a peace commitment in Central America was the establishment of a mission to monitor the elections called by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to take place not later than 25 February 1990. The mission, the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), was set up as a result of a request made by the government of Nicaragua on 3 March 1989.<sup>10</sup> It was the first time that the UN monitored an electoral process in a sovereign state, and represented the first major UN operation in the Americas. ONUVEN officially opened its offices in Managua on 25 August 1989. The mission was carried out in three phases, from August 1989 through February 1990. During the election day 207 ONUVEN observers travelled throughout Nicaragua to monitor the voting. Together with other international observers, they attested that the election was carried out freely and fairly.

The second UN involvement in Central America was the set up of a peacekeeping mission, ONUCA. Responding to a plea made by the Central American Presidents, the UN Secretary-General wrote a letter to the UN Security Council explaining the reasons why he found it wise at this moment to set up a peacekeeping operation in the area.<sup>11</sup> After studying the conditions of the operation, the UN Security Council approved the establishment of a relatively small mission for an initial period of 6 months, with a mandate to monitor and verify the security provisions arrived at Esquipulas II. ONUCA was thus established, and was made up of civilian personnel and unarmed military observers.

As the situation evolved rapidly to unexpected results, (the defeat of the Sandinistas in the elections held in February 1990, and the ensuing NR acceptance of a voluntary demobilization and disarmament) the UN had to expand ONUCA's original mandate, and assist in the process of demobilizing and disarming the Contras.<sup>12</sup> This task took about 3 months to complete, following which, ONUCA

---

<sup>10</sup> See "Surveillance d'élections: l'expérience des Nations Unies en Namibia et au Nicaragua," DPI/1105-41101, New York, January 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Letter Dated 28 August 1989 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council S/20856, 28 August 1989, and Report of the Secretary-General S/20895 11 October 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Group in Central America S/21194, 15 March 1990.

returned to its original objective of observing and monitoring the security provisions of Esquipulas II.

#### IV. The Establishment of ONUCA

The commitments undertaken by the five Central American Presidents under Esquipulas II required that they implement firm actions to avoid the presence in their territory of irregular or insurgent forces, or the use of their territory as sanctuaries. The peacekeeping mission was then sent in to monitor and verify compliance of these commitments. In drafting Esquipulas II, a paragraph was purposefully devoted to the role of international verification and follow-up.<sup>13</sup>

The difficulties which pervaded the process of regional confidence-building had already suggested that external assistance, and a careful monitoring of the commitments undertaken, would play a key role during the period of implementation of the peace agreements. Furthermore, national pacification and reconciliation, and ultimately a lasting regional peace, had to be gradual, hence monitoring and verifying every step of the commitments agreed to by the different parties, was seen as a guarantee that the parties would abide by the peace agreements.

With the approval of the UN Security Council, ONUCA was established for an initial period of 6 months (Resolution 644 7 November 1989). It was sought that through the establishment of verification centers in the five Central American nations, routine verification of non-compliance and special verification of complaints would help to boost confidence, and create a climate conducive to dialogue between governments and rebels. The UN military observers had the mandate to move freely throughout the area, and to observe and verify infractions. In fact, the UN presence was used as a deterrence against those crossing the uncontrolled borders to continue their struggle.

The growing number of irregular or insurgent forces, as well as the extraordinary growth of the regular armed forces, were considered major security threats to a lasting regional peace. Nevertheless, ONUCA's original mandate did not guarantee that the military observers would have free access to the areas under the control of the insurgent and irregular forces. It did not include either their voluntary demobilization and disarmament or the downsizing of the regular armed

---

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 10 deals with the establishment of an International Verification and Follow-up Committee and the support that the Central American nations should give to its verification tasks.

forces. At this stage of the peace negotiations, cease-fires between governments and irregular forces had not yet been agreed upon.

Despite the persistence of fighting, the disarmament of the warring parties was a goal of the peace process. The monitoring undertaken by ONUCA's military observers, aiming to control the channels of weapons supply and the movement of the irregular forces, implied that disarmament was considered a top priority in the area. The processes of national pacification, and ultimately a lasting regional peace, depended on a great extent on the ability of the Central American states to control the free supply and circulation of weapons throughout the region.

Esquipulas II, and the process that it unfolded, have shown that the political will existed, among the regional leadership, to resolve the ongoing conflicts through negotiations. Nevertheless, the insurgent and irregular forces of the three countries disturbed by internal conflicts (Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala) were not consulted previous to, or during the negotiations on the terms of the accords. But, as the process evolved through successive meetings of the heads of states which followed Esquipulas II (Costa del Sol 12-14 February 1989, Tela 5-7 August 1989, San Isidro de Coronado December 1989, and Montelima 1-3 April 1990) the demobilization and disarmament of the irregular and insurgent forces emerged as the principal topic of negotiations.

Therefore, a mandate that was initially set up as a mission to monitor and verify compliance with security commitments eventually become extended into a mission which included demobilizing and disarming the NR.

### **1. The First Phase of the Mandate**

In its first phase, ONUCA's mandate was designed specifically to monitor the security provisions of the Arias/Esquipulas II plan. Paragraph 5 of the Peace Agreement called for the cessation of aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements:

The governments of the five Central American states shall request governments in the region or those outside it that are providing, either overtly or covertly, military, logistic, financial or propagandistic aid or assistance in the form of troops, weapons, munitions, and equipment to irregular forces or insurgent movements to cease such aid as an essential requirement for achieving a stable and lasting peace in the region.

Paragraph 6 dealt with the non-use of a state's territory to attack other states and stated that:

The five countries signing this document reiterate their commitment to prevent the use of their own territory and to neither furnish nor allow logistical military support for persons, organizations, or groups seeking to destabilize the governments of the Central American countries.

ONUCA was therefore organized so that its military observers would monitor (as broadly as possible) the territory of the five Central American nations to carry out the tasks assigned. The plan was to set up a number of verification centers (VC's) in the five nations, and organize mobile patrols consisting of unarmed military observers to observe and report on movements along the main roads and frontiers, as well as to investigate allegations made from any of the five that weapons were being smuggled in through their borders.

ONUCA was formed with local and UN civilian staff and military observers, provided initially from the following countries: Canada, Colombia, Spain, Ireland and Venezuela. Canada and Venezuela provided logistics units. Later on, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, India and Sweden also provided military observers. A civilian logistic unit was provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. Venezuela agreed to send in a crucial Infantry Battalion (VENBATT), the "Unidade Especial de Seguridad Venezuela," which had the task of assisting in demobilization and disarming, and in taking possession of the weapons and military *matériel* handed in by the Contras.

The military observers were organized in mobile patrols, consisting of at least seven men using land vehicles painted white to circulate freely and monitor periodically the roads, and check any violation which might occur along the borders. The mobile teams made regular reports to the Chief Military Observer who, in turn, made his regular reports to the UN Secretary-General.

ONUCA also set up an air wing, composed of a helicopter unit provided by Canada, as well as civilian planes for logistical support provided by the Federal Republic of Germany (helicopters: 4 Alouettes and 2 Bell 212; planes: 1 Cessna and 1 Dornier). The helicopters were used for transportation and monitoring. A naval verification post was later set up in the Gulf of Fonseca. It was provided by Argentina, and the aim was to control the smuggling of weapons by sea. The Gulf of Fonseca, where Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador meet, had for long been considered an easy spot and a safe passage for smuggling in weapons the irregular or insurgent forces. Hence, it was expected that navy patrols, equipped with fast boats, could be used as a deterrent instrument against the alleged continuing influx of arms into the region.

The mission became active in December 1989, and Major-General Augustin Quezada Gomez from the Spanish army was appointed the Chief Military Commander. The headquarters were located in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The Chief

Military Commander was assisted by a Political Officer, a Legal Officer and a Press Officer. By June 1990 the UN force reached full strength, and in addition to the headquarters and the liaison offices in the five capitals, the force became fully operational in 13 verification centers, and 3 operational posts. One VC was established in Costa Rica and in El Salvador, 3 in Guatemala and Nicaragua, and 5 in Honduras. The VC's, with the exception of those in Costa Rica, were positioned on main roads in a crescent around El Salvador. The basic verification task was to ensure that no signatory of Esquipulas II was aiding irregular or insurgent forces in the region, or was permitting its territory to be used for cross-border attacks.

During the initial period of its mandate, ONUCA's main task of observing and verifying was performed dutifully. The military observers patrolled the area as extensively as possible, given the conditions and resources. In each of the Central American nations, under the command of a colonel, a Group of Military Observers, was established. The VC's were headed by a Lieutenant-Colonel, and some VC's were located at areas of difficult access (designated Operational Patrol Points).

However, neither in Nicaragua, El Salvador nor Guatemala, had the disputes between the authorities and the irregular and insurgent forces have been settled, therefore, military operations were carried out, and weapons circulated freely throughout the area to supply the combatants. As a consequence of the extreme difficulties faced by ONUCA's military observers to monitor intensively the borders during ongoing conflicts, ONUCA's initial phase of operation was more a symbolic than effective success. It was very difficult to assist in the verification of the commitments undertaken, while military engagements were still taking place. Nonetheless, the UN presence in the area contributed to raise the level of confidence. Ultimately, the initial set up of ONUCA allowed the military observers to become familiar with the regional environment, and establish a relationship with the local authorities.

The fact, however, which gave ONUCA a more prominent role and an active participation in the peace process, was its role in the demobilization and disarming of the NR. This role required an expansion of ONUCA's original mandate, and a large increase in the size of its military component. This followed the unexpected result of the election held in Nicaragua on 25 February 1990. The election, monitored by, among others, ONUVEN and the OAS, took place and was won by the UNO, a coalition of opposition parties headed by Violeta Chamorro. It was her intention to continue negotiations to achieve the demobilization, repatriation and resettlement of the NR, which should take place as soon as possible. The new President was scheduled to assume office on 25 April 1990, but through a

succession of talks between the representatives of the new President, the government and the armed forces under the control of the Sandinistas, and the leadership of the Contras, a timetable was agreed upon to demobilize, disarm and reintegrate the Contras even before the new President took office in Managua.

The UN, together with the OAS, was required to perform this task. As a result, the UN Security Council agreed to expand ONUCA's mandate by Resolution 650, on 27 March 1990. The process of voluntary demobilization of the Contras might be considered as a landmark in regional pacification, and the most absorbing task performed by ONUCA.

## 2. The Second Phase of the Mandate

As the dialogue in Managua evolved, and the five Central American heads of state progressed at the negotiation table, a new task for the UN was envisaged.<sup>14</sup> With the full support of the UN Security Council, the expansion of ONUCA's mandate was granted, allowing the mission to organize the voluntary demobilization, resettlement, repatriation, disarmament, and reintegration into civilian life of one of the main irregular forces of the area.

In the second phase of ONUCA's mandate, the UN was given the task of monitoring a cease-fire between Managua and the NR, and the separation of forces which this entailed. The expanded UN mandate charged ONUCA with the task of organizing and supervising, along with the OAS, the demobilization of the NR, and with taking delivery of, and destroying *in situ*, Contras weapons and military equipment, including military uniforms.

To deal with the civilian aspects of demobilization, a new body, CIAV (coordinated jointly by the UN and the OAS,) was created. To accomplish ONUCA's extended mandate an increase in its military component was required. ONUCA's original mandate did not include armed military personnel, but it was understood that to perform the task of separating the fighting forces after the cessation of hostilities, and to organize and carry out the demobilization of irregular forces, an armed battalion would be needed. Expertise and special equipment to destroy the weapons handed would also be needed. After some negotiations which took place in New York, Venezuela agreed to provide a lightly armed infantry battalion. It was also understood that it was essential to have an armed battalion in the field to guarantee the security of the Contras.

---

<sup>14</sup> See S/21194.

The architecture of the operation to demobilize the Contras, (Operation Home Run,) followed the basic principle that demobilization should be voluntary. Enforcing demobilization and disarmament was out of the question, and no combatants would be compelled to demobilize or hand in their weapons to VENBATT. But, it was expected that the combatants would follow their to disband. Thus, all the combatants were supposed to assemble in designated areas (security zones) where, under the protection of the UN, they would turn in their uniforms, arms, ammunition and war-related *matériel*.

With the arrival of the first company of VENBATT, the demobilization operation began in Honduras, where a significant number of Contras were based. From there, the operation progressed to the different areas of Nicaragua, including the borders with Costa Rica, where a series of designated areas had already been established.

Initially, 5 security zones were planned to be based in Nicaragua. After some hesitation from the Contras' leaders to comply, and difficulties which had arisen in some particular areas in Nicaragua where the Contras were based, 3 more security zones were created, making a total of 8 security zones. The combatants were encouraged to present themselves in one of the security zones. There, without the presence of the regular Nicaraguan armed forces, and protected by the UN forces, they were supposed to hand in their weapons, ammunition, military *matériel* and uniforms, and receive a certificate of demobilization, and support from the UN/OAS personnel. CIAV/OAS was charged with the civilian aspects of the operation, that is providing medical checks, new documents, civilian clothes, and the basic conditions necessary to allow the combatants to disband, and reintegrate into civilian life. The Contras which were based in Honduras, were transported back to Nicaragua under the responsibility of the UN, after they had been demobilized and disarmed.<sup>15</sup>

The Sandinista army committed itself to respect the integrity of the ex-combatants within the security zones, maintaining a distance of at least 20 kilometers from their established limits. Within the security zones, the UN troops would maintain order, and assure the personal security of the disbanded fighters. Humanitarian relief organizations also helped, providing support for the Contras within the security zones. The combatants had to be reassured that they would not be attacked by the Sandinista army after demobilizing and handing in their

---

<sup>15</sup> Actually, because ONUCA was not able to provide the number of helicopters required to transport the Contras based in Honduras back to Nicaragua, the US provided for their transportation. Interview with Colonel Baily, US Army, UNIDIR, April 1995.

weapons. The presence of the VENBATT was sought to provide the utmost reassurance that they would be protected by an armed neutral force.

In April 1990, a strict timetable was agreed upon by the parties, which called for the immediate demobilization of the NR. The demobilization was going to unfold over 5 phases. Actually, a strict timetable was encouraged by the UN as a form of pressure. A peacekeeping operation is essentially a temporary measure, intended to help terminate violent disputes. As a result, a mission does not have its mandate automatically renewed. This is done according to the evolution of the operation. Henceforth, a strict timetable is deemed essential to maintain leverage on the parties to comply with the agreements undertaken. In the case of the Contras, pressure was exerted on them to demobilize as quickly as possible. After some initial delays, the operation started. From April to June 1990, 22,373 Contras and their families were demobilized in Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The operation ended later than originally scheduled in the original timetable, but was considered a complete success. The UN Secretary-General reported to the UN Security Council that by the end of June, the extended ONUCA mission would be successfully concluded with the end of the Contras as a capable fighting force.<sup>16</sup>

The conclusion of Operation Home Run led to the return of ONUCA to its original mandate: monitoring the security provisions agreed in Esquipulas II. After demobilizing the NR, the other large contingency of irregular and insurgent forces based in the area was the Salvadoran FMLN. However, their demobilization was not part of ONUCA's mandate, and it had to wait for a cease-fire between San Salvador and the FMLN, and the establishment of another UN peacekeeping mission in Central America, UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

---

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Group in Central America S/21379, 29 June 1990.

### 3. The Return to the Original Mandate

The original mandate of verifying that no irregular or insurgent forces were using the territory of one nation to attack another, and that no weapons were illegally smuggled in from one country to another was a hard task to fulfill, given the political and geographical conditions prevalent in the area. Still, after the successful role played by the UN and the OAS in demobilizing the Contras, the Central American Presidents requested ONUCA to increase the level of its involvement in the area, and bring in more military observers as well as sophisticated equipment to carry out the tasks of monitoring and verification. Nevertheless, despite this request, after the successful conclusion of Operation Home Run, the UN decided to improve the level of coordination between its military observers and the responsible authorities of the area, instead of strengthening the mission. Thus helping the local authorities prepare themselves more effectively to fulfill these very tasks became ONUCA's main objective.

The effort deployed to demobilize the Contras and to destroy *in situ* their weaponry ended up being the single most important task performed by ONUCA in Central America. Following this, the UN was very reluctant to strengthen the mission in the proportion demanded by the Central American Presidents. The UN opted to continue to monitor and verify compliance, but the Central Americans were to equip themselves better to carry out the protection of their own borders. As a consequence, ONUCA personnel was constantly reduced, and for the remainder of the mission, its main objective was to develop closer liaison with the local authorities. However, the continuing UN presence in the area was considered to be a positive factor in the process of building confidence, as it assisted states to maintain their commitments to respect the peace agreements, and the insurgent forces to trust the commitments made by the governments.

As an example of the continuing UN interest to perform dutifully its observer and verification tasks, on 29 June 1990 (about the same time that the demobilization of the NR ended) a squadron of 4 fast patrol boats, provided by Buenos Aires, began operating in the Gulf of Fonseca. The squadron, and its crew of 29 Argentine naval officers and men, were based at the naval VC established by ONUCA at San Lorenzo, in Honduras.<sup>17</sup> The squadron operated in the territorial waters of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, under the direct command of

---

<sup>17</sup> An extensive report on the activities developed by the Argentinean Naval Squadron may be found in Juan Carlos Neves, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in the Gulf of Fonseca by Argentine Navy Units*, Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993.

ONUCA's Chief Military Observer. All 4 patrol boats were painted white, carried UN flags and all weapons were off-loaded. Naval patrolling took place for 18 months until 17 January 1992 when the UN mission was terminated altogether. More than 72,000 nautical miles were sailed in 6,479 patrol hours, which means a daily average of 12 hours. The naval patrols were able to establish a highly visible and credible deterrent capacity, in order to verify the cessation of maritime aid to irregular forces and insurgent movements. However, they were not allowed to stop, intercept or inspect seaborne traffic. Joint patrolling with helicopters were introduced in October 1990, and the Naval VC was able to build up a database to identify divergences from established patterns of traffic that could suggest possible violations of the security commitments.

On the other hand, the periodical downsizing of ONUCA continued, and on 1 December 1990, the helicopter component of ONUCA's air wing was halved from 12 to 6, because the Canadian helicopter squadron began to be repatriated to Canada.

In terms of controlling the channels of arms supply, during the last phase of its mandate, when further confidence of its neutrality had been gained, ONUCA received some requests made by San Salvador and Tegucigalpa to investigate alleged violations of the security commitments of the regional peace agreement. Some requests were connected to the discovery of sophisticated weapons in the hands of irregular forces.<sup>18</sup>

A first request was received on 7 January 1991, from the government of El Salvador, which asked ONUCA to investigate the origin of SAM-7 and SAM-14 surface-to-air missiles, apparently used by the FMLN in El Salvador in November 1990, particularly in the Department of Usulután. During the investigations, the government of Nicaragua extended its full cooperation to ONUCA and confirmed that the missiles in question had been illicitly removed from Nicaraguan army arsenals, with the assistance of some Nicaraguan army officers, and had been handed over to FMLN in October 1990. Seventeen of these missiles were actually returned by the FMLN to the government of Nicaragua on 2 February 1991, while a further 11 had apparently already been fired by the FMLN. The end results of ONUCA's investigation were officially communicated to both the governments of Nicaragua and El Salvador in a report dated 8 March 1991.

---

<sup>18</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Group in Central America S/22543, 29 April 1991.

A second request concerned the government of El Salvador, after the confiscation of a large number of weapons, mostly small arms, by the Salvadoran armed forces. San Salvador required that ONUCA should investigate their origin.

A third was a request made by the Honduras government. Following the interception by the Honduran army of a truck loaded with arms and other war *matériel* near the Honduras-Nicaraguan border on 22 February 1991, the Honduran government asked ONUCA to investigate the origin of the *matériel*. In response, ONUCA received information (from the government of Nicaragua,) which indicated that the *matériel* might have been shipped illegally to Honduras, with the assistance of Nicaraguan army personnel.

A fourth was a request for a formal investigation, made again by the government of El Salvador on 21 May 1991, to establish the origin of SAM-16 surface-to-air missiles, reportedly under the possession of the FMLN. As Nicaragua is the only country in the region to possess this type of missiles, ONUCA asked Managua to verify in its inventory if any missiles of this type were missing. Receiving a negative answer from Managua, a team of ONUCA observers was allowed to inspect and count the firing mechanisms of the SAM-16 missiles, and on 5 July 1991, were able to count the missiles themselves. The verification team found no discrepancy between the counting and the certificates handed over to ONUCA by Managua. Therefore, it reported to the governments of El Salvador and Nicaragua that it could not find the original owners of the missiles, unless more information was made available.

On 25 July 1991, ONUCA was asked by the Honduran military authorities to inspect two "Redeye" missiles that had been discovered by the Honduran army as part of an arms cache it had unearthed in Southern Honduras. Senior ONUCA officers examined the missiles and witnessed their destruction on 26 July 1991.

Later on, on 26 August 1991, a team of ONUCA observers examined some weapons discovered and seized by the Salvadoran armed forces in El Salvador, including heavy weapons. The team saw that the serial numbers had been obliterated on several of these weapons.

All these investigations pointed out that trust had been developed by the authorities of the area on ONUCA's capacity and impartiality. However, they showed the limited capacity ONUCA had when carrying out the investigations. Moreover, the complaints made by the governments of El Salvador and Honduras made clear the fact that heavy military weaponry were probably still freely circulating through the area, and that the new administration in Managua had problems in controlling the armed forces still under the influence of the Sandinistas.

ONUCA also participated in some humanitarian relief operations. It helped in the assistance of wounded Salvadoran military personnel who had crossed the Honduran borders following clashes between the Salvadoran army and the FMLN. ONUCA had used its own helicopters to help transport the wounded after an earthquake in Guatemala. It also mediated conflicts which took place between the government of Nicaragua and protesting ex-combatants.

In December 1990, the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Agustin Quesada Gomez from Spain returned home, and was succeeded in an interim basis by his deputy, Brigadier-General Lewis Mackenzie from Canada. From May 1991, Brigadier-General Victor Suanzes Pardo of Spain became the Chief Military Observer. The Chief Military Observer of ONUCA was invited to attend (in an observer capacity) the meetings of the Central American Security Commission, the organ responsible for pursuing the security negotiations of the Esquipulas II peace agreement. According to the evaluation made by Brigadier-General Victor Suanzes, ONUCA filled a relevant diplomatic role in mediating the divergent positions, and was successful in keeping the negotiations alive.

Following its objective, in the third phase of the operation, ONUCA established closed liaison at various levels with both civilian and military authorities in the five countries. To that effect, ONUCA increased its visits to and intensified the exchange of information with national armies and security authorities, both in the field and in the five capitals. The idea was to assist the national authorities to in performing the tasks of controlling their own borders and building up a credible deterrence capability. As a result of ONUCA's pressure, the five had started to take steps to increase vigilance of their own borders, and to improve their capability to act in a coordinated manner. ONUCA even performed a simultaneous helicopter patrol with the Honduran armed forces to investigate a rumor of the existence of armed Nicaraguan irregulars on Honduran territory close to the Nicaraguan border. However, no evidence was found.

The border between Honduras and El Salvador was patrolled more intensively by the Hondurans, following incidents between Salvadoran soldiers and the FMLN combatants. ONUCA assisted in this patrolling. It also assisted in the patrolling of borders between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, where it was reported that illegal transposing by Nicaraguans was taking place.

As for Guatemala, ONUCA's mandate confined its role to patrolling the country's borders with Honduras and El Salvador, which are rather far removed from the main areas of internal unrest in Guatemala. Guatemala's borders with these countries are relatively quiet, demanding thus less observation and monitoring from ONUCA.

By the end of 1991, only 3 VC's had remained. ONUCA ended rather abruptly in January 1992, when a cease-fire between the government of El Salvador and the FMLN was concluded on 31 December 1991. The cease-fire included a provision asking for the establishment of a UN mission to monitor their peace agreement signed on 16 January 1992. Henceforth, most of ONUCA's personnel, based in Tegucigalpa, was transferred to San Salvador, where it became responsible for setting up a new UN peacekeeping mission: United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

## V. Demobilization and Voluntary Disarmament in Detail

The establishment of ONUCA in November 1989 had the primary goal of observing, monitoring and verifying the security provisions undertaken in Esquipulas II. It was thought that the presence of an international force was required to assist in efforts to develop processes of national reconciliation, and ultimately a lasting regional peace. But, the mission set up was relatively small, constrained in its actions by the amplitude of the tasks, and the lack of a cease-fire between the warring parties. The mission was not, therefore, set up initially with the intention to disarm the warring parties.

The demobilization and disarmament of the Contras agreed upon in the successive meetings among the five Presidents, and codified as an annex to the Tela Summit, asked for their rapid voluntary demobilization. Nevertheless, demobilization had to await the conclusion of a cease-fire between the Sandinista government and the leadership of the Contras. When this came about, the request made to the UN to organize the demobilization was a natural step, given the UN presence in the area, through the previous establishment of ONUVEN and ONUCA. The need to speed up the process, and supply the logistics necessary for an unprecedented task, was facilitated by the UN capacity to assemble international support.

The request came about shortly after the results of the elections. With the unexpected defeat of the Sandinistas, it appeared that the Contras had actually achieved by the ballot box what they were seeking to achieve by force, hence their *raison d'être* as a fighting force had suddenly vanished.

However, it is worth noting that even if the Contras' leadership knew after the Tela Summit that their days as a fighting force were numbered, they were not at this stage of the negotiations part of the peace agreements. In fact, even after the UNO's electoral victory, the Contras' willingness to voluntarily demobilize and disarm could not be taken for granted. Eventually, the Contras bargained hard to

get from Managua the best deal possible. It was also a factor running against their voluntary demobilization that the ability of the leadership to control the grassroots fighters had dramatically diminished.

A succession of meetings, (mediated by the Archbishop of Managua,) had to be hastily assembled to organize the politics and the logistics of demobilization. As a result of the series of negotiations held, an agreement was signed in Managua on 19 April 1990, between the government of Nicaragua, the representatives of the President-elect, the leadership of the Northern, Central and Atlantic fronts of the NR, and the Archbishop of Managua, Cardinal Obando y Bravo. This agreement reached the aim of terminating the Contras' capacity as a fighting force, and established the procedures to carry out their voluntary demobilization. The Chief Military Observer of ONUCA, as well as the personal representative of the Secretary-General of the UN, also attended the meetings.

A cease-fire came into effect that same day. The parties requested that ONUCA should monitor both, the cease-fire and the separation of forces which would result from the withdrawal of the Sandinista army from the security zones. The use of security zones in this case had the novelty that it was the first time that it was conducted with irregular or insurgent forces. Therefore, assuring the security of the Contras was especially important to carry out the demobilization. To accomplish these tasks, the UN Security Council approved the extension of ONUCA's mandate, and the deployment of additional military observers, including the armed VENBATT. The UN Security Council expressed firmly its intention that the process of demobilization should follow a strict timetable, and that by 10 June 1990 it should be concluded.

The demobilization of the Contras took place simultaneously in several different locations, starting in Honduras and then progressing to Nicaragua and Costa Rica. It began in Honduras on 16 April 1990, actually even before a definitive cease-fire had been agreed upon in Managua. The UN Secretary-General asked for the immediate deployment of an Infantry Battalion in Honduras.<sup>19</sup> In the end, a total of 2,759 Contras were demobilized in Honduras. This was done in the following locations:

---

<sup>19</sup> The role of the VENBATT in assisting the demobilization and disarmament of the Contras is well documented in *Informe sobre la Actuación de la Unidad Especial de Seguridad "Venezuela" en Centroamérica a orden de las Naciones Unidas*, Venezuelan Army, Caracas, 1990.

Danli:	474
La Kiatará:	295
Las Vegas:	17
Yamales:	1,574
Ocotal:	399

After completing its mission in Honduras, VENBATT was transferred to Nicaragua. The UN Secretary-General requested Caracas to deploy in Nicaragua a second company of its infantry battalion as soon as possible, to speed up the demobilization process in Nicaragua. The remainder of the Venezuelan battalion was directly deployed in Nicaragua.

Instead of the 5 originally planned, 8 security zones had to be established in Nicaragua. Zones 1 to 5 were earmarked for the members of the Northern and Central Fronts, zones 6 and 7 for the Atlantic Front, and zone 8 for the Southern Front. A temporary demobilization post was established on 20 June 1990 at El Cedro, when ONUCA discovered the presence of some stragglers who had not reported to the security zones in that area before they were closed.

Demobilization had started on 8 May 1990, but proceeded slowly until the Managua Protocol was signed (with the members of the Northern and the Central Fronts,) on 30 May 1990. In the Atlantic zone, the situation was peculiar, and two further zones had to be established. The second group of the members of the NR belonged to the Atlantic Front (Yatama). Their demobilization started on 21 May 1990. Logistical difficulties in concentrating them delayed their demobilization. The third group was the Southern Front, the last one to reach an agreement with the government.

After the signing of the Managua Protocol, the pace of demobilization increased remarkably without, however, achieving the timetable put forth during the April 1990 negotiations. The total number of Contras actually demobilized in Nicaragua was 19,614. Demobilization proceeded there until 28 June 1990, the last day of the demobilization process. It was concluded officially on 5 June 1990. The exact numbers demobilized, by each of the security zones were:

S.Z.1: El Amparo:	2,246
S.Z.2: Kubali:	1,633
S.Z.3: San Andres de Boboke:	2,555
S.Z.4: La Pinuela:	3,239
S.Z.5: El Almendro:	6,404
S.Z.6: Bilwaskarma:	1,440
S.Z.7: Alamikamba:	172

S.Z.8: Yolaina:	1,559
El Cedro, Esteli, Matagalpa:	366

The total number of demobilized Contras reached 22,373.

### 1. The VENBATT and the Collection of Weapons

Members of the NR were deemed to be armed if they presented themselves for demobilization carrying a weapon or some other item of ordnance, such as mines or hand grenades. If they were not armed but were wearing uniforms and were certified by a commander of a Contras unit, they would also be considered ready for demobilization.

In the Montelimar Summit, the five Central American Presidents decided that the weapons collected at the security zones should be destroyed *in situ*. Then VENBATT was assigned the tasks of collecting, registering, destroying, transporting, storing, and taking custody of the weapons, ammunition, equipment and uniforms handed over. In the security zones, a special team was appointed to receive the arms, ammunition, military *matériel* and uniforms. The arms were destroyed by a group of experts, the uniforms and other *matériel* were taken to a special place and burned.

On 10 April 1990, the first contingency of VENBATT, consisting of 160 men and officers, was sent to Honduras. The command post and the camp were based in Las Trojes, near the Nicaraguan border. Phase I initiated on 16-17 April 1990, with the handing in of personal weapons, grenades and explosives by the Miskito members of the Atlantic Front in La Kiatara. Phase II took place on 18-20 April 1990 in Yamales, when weapons, ammunition and *matériel* were handed in by members of the North Front still on Honduran soil.

On 22 April 1990, the Second Company of VENBATT arrived in Tegucigalpa to start the demobilization in Nicaragua. The Company entered Nicaragua through the border post of Las Manos to proceed with Phase III of the plan. The 8 security zones were occupied by the Venezuelan troops following successive movements on 22-24 and 30 April 1990. The first 5 security zones were reached by the Venezuelan troops coming from Honduras. On 14 May 1990, the security zones number 6 and 7 were reached, thus, concluding Phase IV of the operation. Finally, on 23 June 1990, Phase V was concluded with the occupation of security zone number 8, which sought to assemble the Contras located on the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

The major commander post of the VENBATT was located near the village of Matagalpa, about 120 kilometers northeast of Managua. In the end, a total of 700 men and officers participated in the operation which lasted 85 days.

ONUCA had been informed both by senior officers of the Nicaraguan army and by the leaders of the NR that the latter had always been a lightly armed and mobile force that hardly ever deployed heavy weapons within Nicaragua. However, it was reported that they had possession of heavy machine-guns and surface-to-air missiles. Actually, 4 heavy machine-guns were handed in, and the leaders of the Contras said that all the heavy weapons were returned to the original supplier before the members left Honduras and returned to Nicaragua, or were in an unserviceable state. In relation to surface-to-air missiles, 84 "Redeye" and 28 SAM-7 missiles were handed over to ONUCA. On the basis of consultations with various parties who might be in a position to form an estimate of the number of such weapons in the possession of the Contras at the time of demobilization, those figures approximate closely what was expected.<sup>20</sup> The Chief Military Observer reported that the weapons handed in could be described, with few exceptions, as being in serviceable condition.<sup>21</sup> The commanders of all the fronts solemnly assured ONUCA, both orally and in writing, that no arms or military equipment remained under their command or had been hidden.

#### **a. The Numbers of Weapons Handed In**

The difficulty in asserting precisely if the number of arms actually handed in by the Contras matched with their actual possession is related to the fact that there was no previous estimate made by the UN on the weapons in the possession of the Contras. The UN had to trust the word of the Contras' commanders, and had to rely on the estimates made by the Nicaraguan armed forces and the Contras' leadership. Hence, the lack of a precise inventory of what should be disarmed was a primary deficiency of the disarmament process, because without an inventory it is impossible to verify and attest that the process was successfully concluded.

---

<sup>20</sup> The main source of information on the number of weapons actually handed over by the Contras was the official report of the UN Secretary-General, based on the figures given by the Venezuelan Battalion. The complete information on the total military strength of the diverse groups which constituted the NR was probably held only by the US.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Brigadier-General Victor Suanzes Pardo, UNIDIR, 7 April 1995.

The final report, prepared by VENBATT, and presented by the UN Secretary-General as ONUCA's official report, gave the following numbers of the total of arms handed in by the Contras in Honduras and Nicaragua:

	Honduras	Nicaragua	Total
Small arms (includes AK 47s, other assault rifles, rifles and light machine-guns)	512	14,408	14,920
Heavy machine guns	2	2	4
Mortars (includes light and medium mortars)	28	106	134
Grenades launchers (includes RPG-7s and LAWs)	83	1,182	1,265
Grenades (all types)	570	740	1,310
Mines (all types)	4	134	138
Missiles	30	82	112

#### **b. The Quality of Weapons Handed In**

The quality of the weapons handed in varied substantially. Initially a huge amount of old, rusty, unserviceable light weapons were collected. But, subsequently light weapons which were in good shape and a significant amount of heavy weapons were also handed in. Apart from the heavy machine-guns and mortars, a number of surface-to-air missiles were collected: 84 "Redeye" and 28 SAM-7's, in perfect condition attesting to the compliance of the Contras leadership.

On 4 July 1990, VENBATT returned to Venezuela, after they had concluded their tasks in the securing, disarming and destroying of the weapons handed in by the NR. On 29 June 1990, demobilization had been completed at all locations, and the last security zone (number 8) was disbanded. The leaders of all the Contras'

fronts, as well as ONUCA, certified that the process was completed, and all Contras were demobilized and their weapons handed in.

## **VI. Assessment of the Demobilization and Disarmament Operations**

ONUCA was set up in the to aid in the settlement of ongoing military conflicts, and help achieve a lasting peaceful solution to Central America. Negotiations had progressed positively since their timid start in 1983, and by 1987 a genuine and local framework for peace was achieved. In this framework a clause was included which affirmed the need for international verification and follow-up of the agreements.

The mandate set by the UN in organizing ONUCA was to verify compliance with the security commitments of the Esquipulas II peace agreements. Even if the UN was closely following the development of the peace process, the decision taken by the UN Secretary-General to deepen the UN's involvement in Central America, and monitor the peace agreements, was not free from controversy. Because cease-fires had not yet been concluded with the irregular and insurgent forces, the UN was initially very reluctant to broaden its assistance. Moreover, at the same time that the situation in Central America was evolving rapidly, the UN was receiving several other requests to set up peacekeeping missions all over the world. Thus careful consideration had to be given to the possibility of sending a mission to Central America during other ongoing conflicts.

The personal involvement of the UN Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, and his special representatives in finding a negotiated solution were unique, in the sense that they were able to transcend the role of a mediator to become rather like an active participant in the negotiating process. This may be explained by the personal commitment of the UN Secretary-General to find a negotiated solution in Central America. As a consequence, the initial reluctance of the governments of Central America to accept an active UN role to monitor and follow-up the peace agreements waned.

The irregular and insurgent forces also were initially very reluctant to trust the UN's impartiality, but ONUCA was able to gain their confidence during the time of its presence in Central America. Therefore, when the process further advanced to include the demobilization and disarmament of the irregular forces, both the governments and the irregular forces turned to the UN for assistance.

The security provisions of Esquipulas II were very difficult to monitor and verify, given the geographical and political circumstances described, but nonetheless, the presence of the UN in the field was important to boost confidence. A gradual process of erosion of governmental authority, and the inability to exercise this authority on the whole national territory, combined with the difficulties in controlling the frontiers and the free movement of combatants and weapons, had generated an explosive social situation. The authorities, even if committed to a peaceful solution, were not strong enough to control the increasing number of people directly or indirectly affected by the fighting, as well as the continuing supply of weapons to the region.

Growing numbers of irregular or insurgent forces were matched by increasing numbers of regular armed forces, and mounting arguments from the armed forces that a military solution was attainable. The large number of civilians displaced by the fighting further disrupted the economy and society, created hundreds of thousands of refugees, and turned young, poor, desperate peasants into a fertile terrain for both irregular forces and forced conscription.

In this environment, the involvement of the international community, through either humanitarian aid or mediation was welcomed. Through a concerted effort, a process leading towards a lasting peace was implemented, irregular forces were disbanded, democratic governance was introduced, and deep economic and social reforms were initiated. On the other hand, what is less certain is to what extent ONUCA was able to assist in decreasing the amount of weapons in the area.

A few months after beginning the mission (deploying the infra-structure of the headquarters, the liaison officers, the VC's, and the civilian and military personnel required to perform the mission) the Nicaraguan government, with the backing of the other four, requested the UN to expand its original mandate to include the organization of the demobilization and disarmament of the NR. To attain this aim, CIAV was set up. This added to ONUCA a component of armed military personnel able to receive the weapons handed in by the Contras, destroy them, and assure the security of the disbanded combatants.

From April until June 1990, this was the principal task undertaken by ONUCA in Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. By all accounts, the demobilization of the NR, completed by late June 1990, can be considered a success. It was able to eliminate the Contras as a capable fighting force. There are, however, disagreements concerning the right assessment about their disarmament. For some observers, the weapons handed in were only a fraction of the total, and

were mostly in unserviceable conditions, while the weapons in good conditions were kept by the Contras.<sup>22</sup>

Certainly, the re-emergence of armed movements in Nicaragua after the complete demobilization of the Contras does suggest that disarmament was not entirely successful. But, it is difficult to assess if this was done as a conscious effort to use force to obtain certain political purposes, or occurred rather as a result of the deteriorating social and economic conditions which prevailed in Nicaragua. The data officially available shows that it was representative of the number of light, and heavy, weapons handed over by the Contras. According to the evidence, most of them were in serviceable conditions.

The persistence of a high level of violence, and the violations of borders in Central America which continued to occur, appear to be linked to expanding criminal activities. The radical downsizing of the Nicaraguan armed forces to around 21,000 personnel has apparently contributed to making more difficult the task of monitoring effectively Nicaraguan borders.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the further re-organization of ex-combatants, with the formation of the Re-Contras, and the use of threats, intimidation and violence to achieve certain political demands, have showed that some, or maybe most, individual fighters, had kept some of their weapons. Moreover, the subsequent organization of a movement of demobilized ex-Sandinista soldiers, called the Re-Compas, also armed with military weapons, showed that Nicaragua continued to be flooded with military weapons. But, there was no confirmed evidence that such groups had received external assistance, in violation of the Esquipulas II agreement.

The sharp deterioration in public order and the rise of organized crime with the frequent use of military weapons, especially in Nicaragua and El Salvador, attested to the fact that an expressive amount of heavy and light weapons were held by ex-members of the Contras, the FMLN, as well as by demobilized members of the regular armed forces in both countries.

It is very difficult to assert, however, to which extent were the arms kept for political purposes and not for other reasons such as tradition, personal security, commercial asset, a symbol of machismo, or for further personal revenge. The line between these purposes is very difficult to draw, after a decade-long and bloody dispute, and a political culture historically given to the use of force. As a consequence of mounting crime the nations of Central America have also asked

---

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Baranyi and Liisa North, *Stretching the Limits of the Possible: United Nations Peacekeeping in Central America*, Aurora Paper 15, Canadian Centre for Global Security, 1992.

ONUCA to implement a program aiming to disarm the civilian population, but it was impossible for ONUCA to carry it out.

These difficulties explain why the armed combatants bargained so hard to agree to demobilize and disarm, forcing the Chamorro administration to subsequently introduce schemes such as the inducements promising access to land, credit and the "polos de desarrollo." It is also of note that in El Salvador the access to land and credit facilities became the most contentious issues in the demobilization of the FMLN and the downsizing of the regular armed forces.

The peace agreement concluded in Central America resulted from complex political negotiations and hard bargaining involving mutual concessions. It was not the result of a military defeat. Therefore, keeping some weapons for personal security, even after the conclusion of their demobilization as a political force, may be understood as a kind of insurance for an ex-combatant. In this case, the number and quality of the weapons actually handed in by the combatants would vary perhaps according to the expectations held about a swift re-integration into civilian life. In Central America, a tradition of settling disputes by force was part of the political culture. In addition, the prospects for a rapid re-integration into civilian life were not bright, given the social and economic distresses of the whole area. Hence, if only out of sheer instinct, it is not surprising that significant numbers of ex-combatants wanted to keep their personal arms.

Many of the demobilized ex-combatants were involved in fighting for perhaps their whole adolescent and adult life (the average age of a Contra fighter, as reported by CIAV to the UN Secretary-General, was 25 years old), and many became probably tempted by the prospects of a brighter future in illegal activities, where they could use their acquired skills as fighters. Thus, the precarious economy, and the lack of governmental support to start a productive civilian life are most probably the root causes for the subsequent re-emergence of the armed struggle among ex-combatants of both the Contras and the Sandinista armed forces.

In this complex and rather long process of passing decades in a conflict-prone environment, the disarmament of the warring parties was a fundamental task. The disarmament aspect of the UN mission in Nicaragua has to be assessed as a partial success. The disarmament operation might be considered a success not only because it symbolically gave the right signal to the overall population, but because it was part of a process to build up the pre-conditions for a society based on the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In this sense, perhaps disarmament should be perceived as an ongoing process, which should be understood as closely connected with the betterment of economic conditions and,

fundamentally, to the disarmament of the combatant spirit through education and social reform.

## **Part II: Nicaragua**

### **Questionnaire Analysis**



**DISARMAMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROJECT**  
**The Disarming of Warring Parties**  
**as an Integral Part of Conflict Settlement**

**PRACTITIONERS' QUESTIONNAIRE ON:**  
**WEAPONS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT, AND**  
**DEMOBILIZATION DURING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

---

---

**ANALYSIS REPORT: NICARAGUA**

COMPILED BY: UNIDIR'S MILITARY EXPERT GROUP

COMPLETED BY: LT COL GUILHERME THEOPHILO

DATE: 28 FEBRUARY 1996

---

---

---

**Note to Readers:** The responses which appear in this analysis have been reproduced directly from the respondents' answers to the DCR *Practitioner's Questionnaire*. Changes, if any, have been made only to correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure; all efforts have been made to maintain the integrity of the original responses. Illegible portions of the original written responses have been indicated with ellipses.

---

Reference Number:  
UNIDIR/ONUCA/004



# Analysis Report Of Practitioners' Questionnaires

## SUMMARY

Number of questionnaires analyzed: 12

## IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

### 1. OPERATION

- a. **Name of operation:** ONUCA
- b. **Location of operation:** Central America
- c. **Time Frame of Operation:** November 1989 - January 1992

### 2. QUESTIONNAIRES

- a. **Number of questionnaires analysed:** 12

- b. **Time frame covered by questionnaires:**

- 1. (C003) 01/02/90 - 31/12/91
- 2. (C004) 01/12/89 - 30/06/91
- 3. (C020) 01/05/90 - 30/05/91
- 4. (C022) 09/05/90 - 17/12/91
- 5. (C062) 01/12/90 - 31/12/91
- 6. (C085) 27/02/90 - 27/02/91
- 7. (C090) 01/12/89 - 10/12/90
- 8. (C091) 01/12/89 - 30/12/90
- 9. (C092) 01/12/89 - 30/12/90
- 10. (C116) 01/04/90 - 30/06/90
- 11. (C117) 01/12/89 - 31/12/90
- 12. (C118) 02/05/90 - 18/12/90

- c. **Respondents' Primary Role:**

UN Civilian: 00  
Chief : 00

Other : 00

Military Officer: 12

Commander : 03

Other : 08

Humanitarian Relief Operator and/or NGO personnel: 00

National Official: 00

**d. Respondents' Primary Mission:**

Military: 00

HQ Staff : 02      Military Observer : 08

Infantry : 01      Armour : 00

Artillery : 01      Engineer : 00

Medical : 00      Aviation : 00

Transport : 00      Logistics : 00

Mil Police : 00

Civilian : 00

Civil Affairs : 00      Staff HQs : 00

Representative : 00      Relief Coordinator : 00

Relief : 00      Volunteer : 00

Other : 00

**e. Regular Activities:**

Convoy Operations : 08      Convoy Security  
: 03

Base Security : 01      Patrolling : 11

Search Operations : 03      Check Point Operations : 06

Cease Fire Monitoring : 11

Cease Fire Violation Investigation : 09

Weapons Inspection : 05

Weapons Inventories : 08

Weapons Collection - Voluntary : 10

Weapons Collection - Involuntary : 02

Weapons Elimination : 08

Cantonment Construction	: 01
Cantonment Security	: 01
Disarmament Verification	: 07
Information Collection	: 11
Police Operations (Military policeman)	: 00
Special Operations:	: 00
Humanitarian Relief	: 05
Other : Demobilization	: 02
Other: Refugee Repatriation	: 01
Other : Refugee Camps Inspections	: 01
Other: Liaison with National	
Authorities & Armed Elements	: 01
Other : Operations Staff	: 01

## SECTION ONE : SUMMARY OF ANSWERS

*(Note to readers: Two caveats should be kept in mind when surveying the respondents' answers to the Practitioner's Questionnaire. First, in answering the questionnaire, respondents were instructed to answer only those questions which pertained to their specific mission and/or function; as a result, most respondents did not answer all of the "yes" or "no" questions. The number of responses for each question, therefore, will not always add up to the total number of respondents. Second, respondents often provided additional commentary for questions they should have skipped -- they may have answered a question with "no", for example, and then elaborated on their answer in the space provided for the "yes" respondents. For this reason, certain questions may contain more responses than the number expected.)*

### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT:

#### Q1.1 Was there a disarmament component in the original peace agreement and/or relevant UNSC Resolution?

Yes: 03                  No: 07

**Q1.2 Was the disarmament component a central feature of the agreement?**

Yes: 04            No: 00

**Q1.3 Describe the desired outcome of the disarmament component vis-à-vis the peace agreement.**

(C003) ONUCA mandate includes the verification of the cessation of aid to irregular and insurrectionist movements. Use of territory of one state for attacks on the other states. This was later expanded to the disarmament and demobilisation of the ERN.

(C085) It was one of the main points of the demobilisation agreement.

(CO92) Disarmament was a key point of the peace agreement in the operation.

(C116) Se ... todos los resultados previstos. [All the previous results were.]

**Q1.4 Was there a timetable planned for implementation?**

Yes: 05            No: 00

**Q1.5 If so, did it go as planned?**

Yes: 02            No: 03

**Q1.6 If not, why? Give three reasons.**

(C002) What was negotiated and what was passed to subordination were sometimes not the same thing. Political posturing from both sides. Those involved were trying to get the most for the least.

(C085) Progressive enlargement of the initial agreement. Political discussions between parts involved. Distrust, indecision.

(C092) Both parties delayed the process due to political reasons.

**Q1.7 If there were delays in the implementation, summarize their impact on the disarmament process.**

(C002) Nil -- if anything were too quick.

(C085) Create tension and some dangerous situation while attending.

(C116) Se demoro' le proceso pero no afecto' lo fundamental de su ejecucion.. [The process was ... but did not affect the fundamental part of its execution.]

**Q1.8 Did, at any time, the existing agreements hinder you from conducting disarmament measures?**

Yes: 00                      No: 05

**Q1.9 If so, mention some of the ways in which you felt hindered.**

[No responses.]

Analyst's Comments:

*The Peace Agreement originated with Oscar Arias, the President of Costa Rica, in February 1987, and was the base of the Esquipulas II Agreement in August 1987, commonly called the Guatemala Procedure. Signed by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, it stated that: "The Central American Presidents undertook to launch a process of democratization in their countries, to promote a national debate, to decree a general amnesty, to cause a genuine cease-fire and to promote the holding of free, pluralist and fair elections." They also requested all Governments concerned to terminate support for irregular forces or insurrection movements and reiterated*

*their commitment to prevent the use of their own territory for destabilization in the region.*

*On 27 July 1989, in Resolution 637, the Security Council welcomed Esquipulas II and other agreements made by the five Central American Presidents. It also lent its full support to the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices in the region.*

*At the Tela, Honduras summit meeting of 5-7 August 1989, the five Presidents signed a Joint Plan which provided for the voluntary demobilization, repatriation and relocation of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance (NR) and their families. In that context, an International Support and Verification Commission (CIAV) was established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Organization of the American States (OAS) to help with this process.*

*Obviously, the original ONUCA mandate did not sit well with the 10,000 Contras fighting the Sandinistas (FSLN) from base camps in Honduras. Also, the insurgents in El Salvador (FMLN) or the revolutionaries (URNG) in Guatemala could see little benefit from instituting the accords as written. It would take over a year and a half of politics and peace plans before enough international, regional, and domestic consensus could be reached to allow the ONUCA mission to begin.*

## II. MANDATE:

**Q2.1 At the start of your mission, were you informed of the part of the mandate regarding disarmament?**

Yes: 08                      No: 04

**Q2.2 How was the disarmament component expressed in your mission mandate? (Summarize.)**

(C003) Initially, disarmament was not part of the mandate. It was added since agreements had been reached between the warring parties. Additional resources and weapons were added at that level.

(C004) Disarmament of the Nicaraguan resistance followed the Nicaraguan elections won by Chamoro. UNSC original mandate was expanded to include disarmament.

- (C022) Agreement between Nicaraguan gvt. and the Contras resulting in an additional mandate for ONUCA.
- (C085) Demobilisation of guerilla forces.
- (C091) It was not expressed in the original mandate, but only four months later -- "collect and then destroy the Contra-Nicaragua" armament.
- (C092) Disarmament as such and demobilization.
- (C116) Recibir, destruir,... las armas entregados voluntariamente per la resistencia Nicaraguese [CONTRAS]. [To receive and to destroy the arms handed voluntarily by the Nicaraguan Resistance.]
- (C117) There was not a disarmament component.
- (C118) On 27 March 1990, ONUCAS's mandate was expanded to allow it [to take] delivery and dispose of the weapons, materiel and military equipment of the Resistance.

**Q2.3 How did you interpret the mandate you received?**

- (C004) Initially, the mandate was clear: report violations of arms smuggling between countries.
- (C022) Guarantee the security of NR members, receive their arms and destroy them, hand over the UN certificate and turn them over to CIAV to be provided for and transported home.
- (C062) As a verification task and search.
- (C091) It was very clear. There was no possibility to make [a] mistake in my interpretation.

(C116) En forma clara y precisa, no habia duda en cuanto a su ejecucion. [In a clear and precise form. There was no doubt about its execution.]

(C117) ONUCA was to verify that the five Central American governments complied with the ESQUIPOCAS II agreement.

(C118) I went to the security zone (SZ) and then I received the weapons and the military equipment of the Nicaraguan Resistance's volunteer.

**Q2.4 Did the way the disarmament component was expressed hinder or assist your disarming task?**

Hindered: 01      Assisted: 08

**Q2.5 If it was a hindrance, how would you have preferred your mandate to read?**

(C004) We were asked to conduct disarmament without any means of imposing the will. We were fortunate that disarmament was voluntary through diplomatic and good will of the Nicaraguan resistance.

**Q2.6 Were your actions/freedom of action during disarmament operations influenced by external factors other than the mandate?**

Yes: 05      No: 05

**Q2.7 If so, which ones?**

(C003) Disarmament of the Contras in Honduras was directly affected by what was happening in Nicaragua. Since the USA was no longer supplying weapons and stores and there was a government change in Nicaragua, the Contras decided to disarm.

- (C004) It is always the case that in any missions the local commander may not necessarily agree to adhere to his own chain of command wishes.
- (C022) The reported efforts made NR gain political advantages by delaying their demobilisation.
- (C085) A continuous political conversation to improve the initial agreements.
- (C092) Political play of both parties and technical hindrances.

Analyst's Comments:

*ONUCA was established by the Security Council on 7 November 1989 in Resolution 644 (1989) following a request from the five Central American Governments. On 12 December, the Central American Presidents, in a declaration signed at San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica, requested the Secretary-General to expand the mandate of ONUCA to include verification of any cessation of hostilities and demobilization of irregular forces that might be in the region. Subsequently, shortly after the Nicaraguan elections of 25 February 1990, the Government of Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan National Opposition Union (UNO) asked the Secretary-General to consult with them about the manner in which ONUCA could assist in the transition process in Nicaragua. In the course of these consultations, the original agreement was reached on the modalities for the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance.*

*Accordingly, on 15 March 1990, the Secretary-General asked the Security Council to approve, on a contingency basis, an enlargement of the mandate of ONUCA and the addition of armed personnel to its authorized strength of 260 observers to enable it to play a part in the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance. The Nicaraguan Resistance agreed, at Toncontin, Honduras, on the terms for the demobilization of the resistance forces. The parties declared their decision to initiate the general demobilization of the resistance, beginning with that of those resistance members still in Honduras. To this end, they requested the cooperation and assistance of ONUCA and CIAV. The Security Council agreed to ONUCA's expansion on 27 March in Resolution 650 (1990), adding some 800 troops to its strength and giving it the responsibility of receiving and disposing of the weapons, material and military equipment of the resistance. At a further summit meeting in Montelimar, Nicaragua, on 2 and 3*

April 1990, the five Central American Presidents emphasized the urgent need for the immediate demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance pursuant to the Joint Plan agreed upon at Tela and requested ONUCA and CIAV to take the necessary steps to ensure timely support for the demobilization and disarmament of the members of the Resistance in Nicaragua, a process which was to be concluded no later than 25 April. They also agreed that the weapons to be received by ONUCA would be destroyed in situ. The voluntary demobilization of the NR in Honduras commenced on 16 April when members of the Atlantic Front (Yatama) of the Resistance handed over their weapons and military equipment to ONUCA military personnel at La Kiatara, Honduras.

The mandate of ONUCA was again expanded by the Security Council on 20 April 1990 (Resolution 653), following an agreement which had been concluded in Managua two days earlier by the outgoing and incoming governments, by leaders of the NR and by the Archbishop of Managua. The expanded mandate enabled ONUCA to monitor the cease-fire and separation of forces agreed upon by the Nicaraguan parties as part of the demobilization process. According to the agreement, demobilization was to be completed by 10 June 1990.

On 4 May 1990, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of ONUCA, as defined in the above-mentioned resolutions, for a period of six months (until 7 November 1990).

### III. SUBSIDIARY DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS:

**Q3.1 Did the warring factions enter into a separate disarmament agreement?**

Yes: 03            No: 07  
(If not, go to question 4.)

**Q3.2 If so, describe the agreement.**

(C085) Guerilla demobilisation, army reduction.

(C117) ONUCA was to monitor the cease-fire and separation of forces in Nicaragua and to demobilize the members of the Nicaraguan resistance (NR).

**Q3.3 Was the agreement formulated with the mandate in mind or independent of the mandate?**

Mandate-oriented: 03

Independent of mandate: 00

**Q3.4 Were there any contradictions between the mandate and the agreement?**

Yes: 00

No: 03

**Q3.5 If so, which ones?**

[No responses.]

**Q3.6 What was the impact of the agreement on the mandate?**

(C003) It was added to the mandate. If the first part of the mandate had not been achieved, then disarmament and demobilization could not have been reached.

(C117) It was necessary to add armed personnel to ONUCA.

Analyst's Comments:

*The final "conventional Peacekeeping mission" was only achieved after the elections and successful negotiations that were brokered by the President elect, Chamorro. Without this "subsidiary agreement" and the mutual consent of all warring parties the mandate and expanded mission of ONUCA would have never come about. The single most important factor in the successful execution of the ONUCA mission was the voluntary consent of all parties. This provided enhanced legitimacy and insured that ONUCA's Military Observers would now have the authority to investigate and report on allegations of agreement violations, made by all parties.*

**IV. TOP-DOWN CHANGES: CONSISTENCY OF THE MANDATE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DISARMAMENT COMPONENT:**

**Q4.1 Did the mandate change while you were engaged in the UN/national operation?**

Yes: 04 No: 07

*(If not, go to question 5.)*

**Q4.2 If so, what was(were) the change(s)? (Describe the most important aspects.)**

(C003) Expanded to include disarmament and demobilisation.

(C004) As see 2.2

(C117) We were requested to participate in the demobilization of the NR.

(C118) There were created more three SZ.

**Q4.3 Did this(these) change(s) affect your disarmament operations?**

Yes: 01 No: 03

**Q4.4 If so, how? (Name the three most important effects.)**

(C004) Planning and execution times were significantly shortened. Logistics were lacking.

**Q4.5 If disarmament was affected, was it still possible for you to implement disarmament measures as first envisaged?**

Yes: 02 No: 09

**Q4.6 In the context of 4.5, did you have to change or abandon procedures?**

Change: 01 Abandon: 00

**Q4.7** If you changed procedures, what were the changes?  
(Mention the three most important ones.)

(C003) Direct liaison at the lower levels to ensure changes had to be passed.

**Q4.8** Were you adequately informed of changes when and as they occurred?

Yes: 02 No: 10

**Q4.9** Were you able to implement alternative measures immediately?

Yes: 01 No: 10

**Q4.10** If not, why? (Give the three most salient points.)

[No responses.]

Analyst's Comments:

*The expanded mandate (demobilization and disarmament of the Contras) known as "Operation Home Run" (April-June 1990) was a definite top down change from the original Esquipulas II document. However, as mentioned previously, this expanded mission would have never taken place unless the political, economic and military issues had been dealt with. ONUCA, "a conventional Peacekeeping mission" was a result of successful negotiations and voluntary consent by all parties.*

**V. BOTTOM-UP CHANGES: DISPUTES AMONG THE WARRING PARTIES ARISING DURING THE MISSION:**

**Q5.1** Was there a mechanism or a provision for the settlement of disputes if and when these emerged?

Yes: 09 No: 01

**Q5.2 If so, what type of mechanism/provision did you have (i.e., mission, special agreement, the UN process, special commission, etc.)?**

(C003) Through the chain of command -- from outpost to verification centre into observer group to ONUCA HQ.

(C004) By means of processing information at lower levels first i.e., local commander with local UN military observer responsible for an area of ops.

(C116) En cada caso, los UNMO (observadores militares de NU) condujeron negociaciones locales con los jefes de algunas unidades para resolver pequeñas diferencias que se presentaron en las zonas de seguridad. [In each case the UNMO's (UN military observers) conducted local negotiations with the commanders of certain units in order to solve the small differences in the security zones.]

(C085) UN special commission.

(C091) Special commission to make arrangements and select the collection points.

(C092) UN process: negotiations by UN.

(C117) Mediating negotiations between the interested parties.

(C118) The Venezuelan Light Infantry Battalion provided our security.

**Q5.3 What kind of regulations were agreed between the parties and the peacekeepers for the collection of arms?**

(C003) A complete set of military orders were written for operations which detailed: set-up, organisation, disposal, safety, registration etc.

- (C004) Weapons and uniform were collected at control points, processed, destroyed, meanwhile support for return to civilian status i.e., clothing, ID card etc., were processed on the spot by [the] UN.
- (C022) To be done by [the] UN. To destroy on the spot the junk to be turned over to government authorities.
- (C085) Settlement of demobilised zones. Zones controlled by UN observers. Destruction of guerilla forces between zones.
- (C091) To choose demobilisation area. To choose several routes to arrive at selected points. To choose collection points. To choose way for destruction. To certificate all the process.
- (C092) The weapons had to be registered by UNMOs and they were collected by UN military contingents in the presence of UN representatives of both parties.
- (C116) Recibir las armas ... a destruirlas 'INSITU' en cada zona de seguridad establecida. [To receive the arms... and to destroy them in every security zone which was established.]
- (C118) Inside SZ and about twenty kilometers per radius there couldn't be any troops or barracks and any movement within the zone was permitted only after informing the UN.

**Q5.4 What kind of negotiations/regulations were agreed at the top and lower levels with respect to the storage of arms?**

- (C003) Arms were not stored -- they were destroyed on sight.
- (C004) Arms were not stored. They were destroyed on sight. Remaining metal was collected and disposed of by UN authorities.

- (C022) No storage whatsoever to be done.
- (C085) Personal compensations between UN observers and guerilla lower commanders to clarify the agreements and the security measures.
- (C092) The weapons were destroyed on the spot in OMICA (Nicaragua).
- (C116) Almacenarlas despues de destruirlas y esperar la decision final del gobierno nicaraguese ... de su destino.  
[To gather them after destroying them and to hope for the final decision of the Nicaraguan government... of its destiny.]
- (C118) The weapons will only be stored in the security zone by the UNMO or VENBATT then will be destroyed.

**Q5.5 Was there a conflict between these *new* agreements and the *original* agreement and/or mandate?**

Yes: 01            No : 07

Analyst's Comments:

During the initial phase of ONUCA operations, prior to April 1990, the ability for the ONUCA verification centers in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala to settle any disputes was minimal. The ongoing tactical operations in those countries made ONUCA peacekeeping operations and dispute resolution capabilities, symbolic at best. In essence, it was only after the establishment of the security Zones in Nicaragua (safe havens for the Contras,) that ONUCA's local role of mediator and facilitator began.

In reference to questions 5.1 & 5.2, the settlement of disputes, was an informal "local" mediation process brokered by the ONUCA verification centers in the five countries. Also, there were formal procedures to investigate any alleged violations of Esquipulas II. Due to excellent mediation at the local level, within the countries and the five Nicaraguan security zones, by October 1991, almost two years after the beginning of the mission, ONUCA had received only eight formal complaints of alleged violations.

**VI. PROTECTION OF THE POPULATION DURING THE MISSION:**

**Q6.1. Did you consider the protection of the population when negotiating disarmament clauses with the warring parties?**

Yes: 04                      No: 04

**Q6.2. Was the protection of the population a part of your mission?**

Yes: 02                      No: 07

**Q6.3 If so, did you have the means to do so?**

Yes: 02                      No: 02

**Q6.4 What were the three most important means at your disposal to achieve this objective?**

(C003) Linkage with UNHCR, most of the fighters were collocated with families. Difficult to separate the fighters from the local population.

- (C004) Efficient communications with all involved and well disciplined, organised unit of 700 men from Venezuela. The simple fact that the unit soldiers could speak the language of the population must not be underestimated.
- (C022) UN observer team within the VC demob. organisation. CIAV team and OPS team.
- (C085) UN presence and tight contact with both sides.

Analyst's Comments:

*The original mandate of the mission did not include the protection of ex-combatants, so at first it was only United Nations Military Observers (UNMO's) without weapons monitoring the agreement. With the expansion of the agreement and the arrival of Venezuelan Battalion (VENBATT), the mission became the demobilization of the NR. The NR would be gathered in the Security Zone (SZ) where, under the protection of VEBATT, it would hand over its weapons and military equipment.*

*The main problem was the Nicaraguan Resistance (NR) members themselves. Drunken celebrations commemorating the peace and internal divisions often ended in shooting and violence. The NR commanders did not have control over their subordinates, but it was not the mission of VEBATT to interfere in the internal problems of the NR. Often, members of the NR would be seriously wounded after these shootings and, depending on their injuries, they would be evacuated to Managua or for treatment at CIAV.*

*During the mission the local population was exceptionally well behaved, welcoming UNMO's, cooperating with valuable information, and helping to locate guerrillas that wanted to be demobilized.*

*The help of the support forces of the guerrillas, the local authorities and the Sandinista army were essential to bring the convoys of the guerrillas from their hiding place to the SZ.*

*It was only after Operation Home Run began, in April, 1990, with the deployment of the lightly armed Venezuelan light Infantry battalion (VENBATT) that ONUCA forces could provide any protection for the demobilized Contra soldiers and their families. However, this token force was spread over a wide area of rough terrain and could never hope to provide comprehensive protection to the 22,000 Contras and their families that demobilized by the end of June 1990.*

**SECTION TWO: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS****VII. FORCE COMPOSITION AND FORCE STRUCTURE**

**Q7.1 Was the force composition for your mission area unilateral or multilateral?**

Unilateral: 02                      Multilateral: 09

**Q7.2 Describe the three most important advantages in acting in the manner described in 7.1.**

Multilateral force composition:

(C004) Visibility of UN involvement as opposed to one or two countries. Under range of experience. More sustainable.

(C022) Liaison with Sandinista army as well as with NR brigade staff. Cooperation with CIAV and OPS civilian teams and good support from VENBATT.

(C062) Have different approaches to solve the problems when they start or sort.

(C085) Exchange of experience, flexibility in order to skip the problems with the parties.

(C091) Cooperation. Possibility of covering more extension in areas. Flexibility.

(C092) Impartiality. Complementarity.

(C118) To bring together of various countries experiences, militaries with experience in other peacekeeping operations, and demonstrates international assistance.

Unilateral force composition:

(C003) Easy to control, much simpler clearing with one command situation/ set of players, get to know the players very well.

(C116) Mantener unidad de criterio de comando. Coordinar el entrenamiento y situación de los tropas con sus oficiales suboficiales. Lograr mejor desempeño de las tropas al ser representantes únicos de su país. [To maintain the unity of the commander's criteria. Coordinate the training and the situation of the troops with its subordinates. To reach a better understanding of the troops being that they are unique to their country.]

**Q7.3 Describe the three most important disadvantages in acting in the manner described in 7.1.**

Multilateral force composition:

(C004) Cultural/language differences. Different level of expertise. Communications.

(C062) There [is] more than one chain of command. Communication between observers require a high level of understanding because of the languages and the culture.

(C085) Communications. Different languages. National mentalities.

(C091) Language fluency, UN/DIS coordination.

(C092) Different backgrounds. Different languages. Different procedures.

(C118) Because of the various languages and the fact that the observers don't speak language of the country, it caused difficulties to command, coordinate and control.

Unilateral force composition:

(C003) Tend to get a view from only one side. Difficult to know who the players are. Sometimes working in isolation [from] other areas.

(C116) No se interrecio con tropas de otros paises, lo cual hubiera podido brindar mayores experiencias para nuestro pais. [There was no interaction with other troops from other countries, which would have improved the experiences for our country.]

**Q7.4 If you worked in a multilateral context: how important was consensus (with peacekeepers from other countries) for the achievement of disarmament and demobilization components during the operation?**

(C004) Extremely important.

(C022) No problems with the cooperation on the UN side (except for poor admin. support).

(C085) Important.

(C091) Total, because the mandate was very clear.

(C092) Consensus based on the established rules and procedures was essential.

(C116) Fue muy importante. Hubo constante intercambio con los UNMOS, en cada zona de seguridad un observador ejecia le comando y control operacional de una compania o peloton reforzado para ejecutar las operaciones de desarme. [It was very important. There were constant exchanges with the UNMO's; in each security zone an observer exerted the command and operational control of a company or platoon reinforced to execute disarmament operations.]

(C117) I could say that what was important was coordination and consensus.

(C118) Consensus was jeopardized due to the difficulties of developed countries to understand the needs of the people.

**Q7.5 Was adequate consideration given to the disarmament component as the mission evolved?**

Adequate: 11 Inadequate: 00

**Q7.6 If it was inadequate, explain how this affected your mission (mention the three most important issues).**

[No responses.]

**Q7.7 Did the force composition identify a specific structure to support the disarmament component of the mandate?**

Yes: 09 No: 01

**Q7.8 If so, what was it?**

(C004) The rapid deployment of a lightly equipped elite unit.

(C022) Engineers from VENBATT took care of the destruction of weapons and blowing up of ammunition.

(C085) Initially it was only observers mission, the disarmament forces were given.

(C091) Sorting depots of armament till the moment of destruction.

(C116) La estructura de la Unidad Especial de Seguridad Venezuela fue preparada especialmente para su despliegue en zonas de seguridad aisladas y distante entre si, cada unidad fundamental tenia especialistas en Sanidad, armamento y autonomia logistica de ... [The structure of VENBATT was specially prepared for its leader in isolated and distant security zones; each

fundamental unit had specialist in the medical, armaments and logistics.]

(C117) The Venezuelan battalion was structured to accomplish the mission assigned.

(C118) The Venezuelan Battalion(VENBATT).

**Q7.9 Did the force composition allow for verification and monitoring measures for the control of weapons and disarmament?**

Yes: 07 No: 03

**Q7.10 If so, what were they?**

(C003) Made up of UNMO's and the battalion of infantry.

(C004) Force composition was sufficient for the task.

(C022) VENBATT security units.

(C091) Sort and destroy.

(C118) While the observers received military equipment and weapons VENBATT stored and destroyed the weapons and burned the military equipment.

**Q7.11 Was the chosen force structure appropriate for executing the mission?**

Yes: 11 No: 00

**Q7.12 Were the units efficient for the mission given?**

Yes: 11 No: 00

**Q7.13 Were the units appropriate for conducting the disarmament operations?**

Yes: 10                      No: 00

**Q7.14      Were your units augmented with specific personnel and equipment for the disarmament mission?**

Yes: 09                      No: 01

**Q7.15      If so, what additional capabilities did they provide? (List the five most important ones.)**

(C003) Security/armor/weapons technicians/maintenance personnel/helicopter support.

(C004) Engineers(destruction), logistics(explosive, etc.), transport (refugees, weapons), medical , civilian staff.

(C022) See 7.8.

(C085) Security, logistic, capability to destroy armament on sight.

(C091) 1 more battalion.

(C116) Personal de sanidad para cada unidad fundamental.  
 Personal de armamento para cada unidad fundamental.  
 Major capacidad logistica y autonomia funcional.  
 Personal de comunicaciones especializado en cada UF.  
 Personal de ingenieria para cada unidad fundamental.  
 [Medical personnel for each fundamental unit.  
 Armaments personnel for each fundamental unit. Better logistical capacity and functional autonomy.  
 Communications personnel specialized in UF communications. Engineering personnel for each fundamental unit.]

(C117) Overall, the unit was augmented with technical personnel and equipment to allow it to be self-sufficient on everything but transportation.

(C118) Military experts in explosives, in weapons destructions and engineers.

**Q7.16 If you were a commander, were you briefed by HQ's prior to your disarming mission and before your arrival in the area of operations?**

Yes: 02 No: 01

**Q7.17 Did the security situation in the mission area allow for weapons control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 10 No: 00

**Q7.18 If not, what steps were required in order to establish and maintain a secure environment?**

[No responses.]

**Q7.19 Did these force protection measures affect the accomplishment of the disarmament operations positively or negatively?**

Positively: 07 Negatively: 00

**Q7.20 Elaborate on the impact mentioned in 7.19 above.**

(C022) Those to be demobilised felt secure.

(C085) Given an image of severe determination, the presence of international forces made the guerilla more confident in [the] UN.

(C118) Given more tranquillity for NR and for UNMO's job.

**Q7.21 Were command and control/operational procedures adequate for your task?**

Yes: 09 No: 00

**Q7.22 If not, mention three examples which demonstrate their inadequacy.**

[No responses.]

**Q7.23 Summarize your salient experiences with command and control/operational procedures while on this mission.**

(C022) Adequate communications equipment, good vehicles, adequate heli. support, and sufficient Spanish [speaking] officers.

(C062) Communication must be ensured between HQ and the deploying patrols in any weather conditions or situations. Sometimes some crypto systems needed.

(C085) The normal and good contacts.

(C091) Normally without problems: from time to time some UN/DIS coordination between civilian and military components.

(C116) Recibir ordenes precisas del jefe de ONUCA directamente en le comando de la unidad o en las zonas de seguridad de acuerdo a la actuacion de los UNMOS, permitio una excelente relacion de trabajo para todos. [Receiving precise and direct orders from the commander of ONUCA in the command units and security zones in accord with the actions of UNMO's, permitted excellent work relations for all.]

(C117) I believe command and control/operational procedures were carried out very well by the chain of command.

(C118) It was very important that there was a timetable for the patrols, services, information collection as well as an efficient communication network, that permitted us to contact the base from any point in Nicaragua.

**Q7.24 What additional support (special capabilities/force multipliers) did you receive which helped the disarmament mission? List the three most important ones.**

(C022) 6.4

(C085) Security of demobilisation, logistics, destroying armament means.

(C091) Logistic support (vehicles), personnel support (surveillance).

(C116) Recibimos apoyo de transporte de la ONU y alimentacion, así como agua potable... [We received transportation support from the United Nations and food supplies, as well as drinking water...]

(C117) Personnel. Equipment not assigned by TO&E.

(C118) VENBATT, weapons and explosives specialists.

**Q7.25 Were they adequate?**

Yes: 07 No: 00

**Q7.26 If not, what other capabilities would you have needed to make your mission more effective? (List the most relevant.)**

(C022) Better admin. support now we "survived" thanks to VENBATT.

Analyst's Comments:

*ONUCA was organized in a way where its military observers would monitor as broadly as possible the territory of the five Central American nations to carry out the tasks assigned. The plan was to set up a number of verification centers in the five nations and organize mobile patrols consisting of unarmed military observers to observe and report back about the movement along the main roads*

and frontiers, as well as to investigate allegations made by any of the five countries regarding weapons being smuggled in through their borders.

ONUCA was formed with local and UN civilian staff and military observers, initially provided by the following countries: military observers from Canada, Colombia, Spain, Ireland and Venezuela. Canada and Venezuela provided logistics units. Later, Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, India and Sweden also provided military observers. A civilian logistic unit was provided by the Federal Republic of Germany. Venezuela agreed to send in a crucial Infantry Battalion (VENBATT), which had the primary tasks of assisting in the demobilization and disarming, and taking possession of the weapons and military matériel handed in by the NR.

ONUCA also set up an air wing, composed of a helicopter unit provided by Canada, as well as civilian planes for logistical support provided by the Federal Republic of Germany (helicopters: 4 Alouettes and 2 Bell 212; planes: 1 Cessna and 1 Dornier). The helicopters were used for transportation and monitoring. A naval verification post was later on set up in the Gulf of Fonseca. It was provided by Argentina to control the smuggling of weapons by sea. The Gulf of Fonseca, where Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador meet, had long been considered an easy and safe passage for smuggling weapons to the irregular and insurgent forces. Hence, it was hoped that navy patrols, equipped with fast boats, could be used as a deterrent against the continuing influx of arms into the region.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of respondents, believed that they had the right "force mix" to accomplish the disarmament mission if all parties provided their mutual consent to be disarmed and demobilized. The VENBATT provided presence, and the personnel and equipment necessary to accomplish most of the expanded "voluntary disarmament and demobilization" mandate.

One of the unique aspects of ONUCA that none of the respondents touched on, was the fact that it was a "joint" multilateral U.N operation involving land, sea and air components. The land component consisted of the UNMO's, which conducted monitoring operations only during daylight hours. Later the lightly armed VENBATT deployed. Its primary missions were: disarmament, demobilization, reconnaissance/reporting, security and arms trafficking monitoring. The VENBATT was equipped with 72 night vision devices but, there is little evidence of any night operations being conducted in support of any of the above missions.

The Argentine naval contingent (Naval Operation Center) operating in the Gulf of Fonseca, was equipped with fast patrol boats (FPB) and maintained surveillance operations with navy crews and UNMO officers. It monitored the Gulf of Fonseca and littoral waters for arms trafficking. The naval arm of ONUCA, did

conduct night operations and provided some deterrent to arms shipments during its deployment.

The air component, which contained helicopters and later on some small fixed wing aircraft conducted reconnaissance and reporting, usually along remote border regions and over the Gulf of Fonseca. Having an airmobile and air assault capability was a significant "force Multiplier" but the aircraft were only used during hours of daylight and were totally unarmed.

In reviewing the questionnaires and in my research, I found little evidence that ONUCA, the first UN Joint multilateral peacekeeping operation, ever leveraged its air land and sea components to conduct even squad size combined joint operations. The naval and air components did in October of 1990 start conducting limited joint patrols over the gulf.

The force, its structure and composition seemed adequate to support the expanded mandate. However, it was not adequate to execute the mission (if called upon) of providing protection to the 22,000 Contras that demobilized. The Secretary-General's 15 March 1990 report to the UN Security Council, requested that the ONUCA mandate be enlarged to among other things:

"Ensure their [Contras] safe custody until their final disposal is decided upon by the five

Central American Presidents and to ensure the security of the assembly points which will be temporarily established in Nicaragua."

The government of Nicaragua could have withdrawn its consent. Or more likely, incidents or allegations could have renewed open warfare between Sandanistas and the partially demobilized Contras. A light (Airborne) Battalion of 700 soldiers, deployed in platoon and company-size formations, with little or no intrinsic mobility, sustainability, or fire support, could have (like in the "safe areas" of Bosnia) found itself quickly outgunned and outmanned.

General ONUCA Organization/Military Observers				
VC Costa Rica	VC Honduras	VC Guatemala	VC El Salvador	VC Nicaragua
VC El Platanar	VC La Esperanza OPP Guarita	VC Cuilapa	VC San Miguel	VC Chinandega OPP El Tanque OPP Potosi
	VC S. R. de Copan	VC Jutiapa		VC Esteli
	VC Danli	VC Esquipulas		VC Matagalpa

	VC Choluteca			VC Puerto Cabezas
	NOC San Lorenzo			VC Juigalpa OPP Nueva Guinea OPP San Carlos
Legend: VC: Verification Centre NOC: Naval Operation Centre OPP: Operation Patrol Post				VC Ocotal OPP Jalapa OPP Las Trojes OPP Wiwili

## VII. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES/RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

**Q8.1 Did you abide by national or UN rules of engagement/operational procedures during the pursuit of your mission?**

National: 02 UN: 08

**Q8.2 Were these rules/procedures adequate for the performance of your task?**

Yes: 10 No: 00

**Q8.3 If not, what other rules should you have had?**

[No responses.]

**Q8.4 If and when the situation changed, were your rules altered accordingly?**

Yes: 07 No: 00

**Q8.5 If so, summarize the relevant changes.**

(C062) Restriction in night patrols and increase the distance to the coast when we had some shooting from ashore.

(C091) New mandate, new rules but always coordinated.

(C118) To establish the security zone, intensification of patrols and increase means of communications.

Analyst's Comments:

*The majority of the respondents clearly believe they received and clearly understood their ROE and operational procedures. However, the expanded mandate and the mission of providing security to the demobilized Contras commented on in the last section, seems not to have been effectively transmitted to VENBATT. The 10 August 1990 Venezuelan government After Action Report,*

ANNEX 3, provides the mission and Table of Organization & Equipment (TOE) for the VENBATT. The report makes no mention either explicitly or implicitly, of any responsibility of providing security for the 22,000 demobilizing Contras. Such a mission should and would have significantly altered VENBATT's "operational procedures."

The initial mission did not address demobilization and therefore the UNMO's waited for new guidelines from the UN. The beginning period was more boring for the UNMO's because they were camping in remote places with poor conditions, in extreme heat for part of the morning and downpours in part of the afternoon. The heavy rains complicated the patrols by helicopters and by car. Crossing rivers was also difficult in some moments, because the hard rains flooded the rivers and there were no bridges.

Another significant problem were the tropical illnesses like malaria, "leishmaniose" and viruses brought on by the poor quality of the water. The German medical team did not have experience in these kinds of illnesses. Preferably, the medical team should have been from a tropical country with experience in these types of afflictions.

After the authorization of the demobilization, the operational procedures and rules of engagement were well defined and there were no additional problems.

## IX. COERCIVE DISARMAMENT AND PREVENTIVE DISARMAMENT

**Q9.1 Did you have to use force (coercive disarmament) to achieve the mission as mandated?**

Yes: 00 No: 11

**Q9.2 Judging from your experience, is it possible to use coercive disarmament in these types of operations?**

Yes: 00 No: 11

**Q9.3 Do you believe that force can and should be used to enforce the disarmament components of an agreement?**

Can: Yes: 02 No: 08  
Should: Yes: 01 No: 09

**Q9.4**      **Mention three reasons why force can/cannot and should/should not be used to enforce the disarmament component of an agreement.**

- (C003) Once you force the disarmament, you become part of the problem. Due to the terrain, it would be extremely difficult to control. Resources required to conduct an enforced disarmament would have to be quadrupled..
- (C004) Loss of impartiality. Loss of freedom of movement. Escalation/retaliation.
- (C022) UN must act on a voluntary agreement and can never actually enforce peace in conventional UN missions. For enforcement you have to lead an operation as the Gulf War was led.
- (C085) Increasing of tension. Difficulty to capture personnel involved. Need of excessive forces.
- (C091) It is impossible to enforce disarmament of guerilla or insurrection troops that live in mountains or jungle. In case it were possible to do so it should never be done because it would lead to escalation.
- (C092) To avoid being part of the conflict and creating Vietnam/Afghanistan situations with UN (and other international organisations) as enforcer.
- (C117) If there is an agreement to do so you do not need coercive disarmament.
- (C118) I don't believe that the peacekeeping operation has had positive results if the people of this country aren't conscious of the internal conflicts. The country will not progress, unless conflicting ideas are set aside.

**Q9.5**      **If fighting was an ongoing process, was it possible for you to continue with your disarmament tasks?**

Yes: 00            No: 08

**Q9.6      If so, describe how it was possible to continue with your disarmament tasks.**

[No responses.]

**Q9.7      Were you involved in any preventive deployment operations (i.e., as an observer, preventive diplomacy official, etc.)?**

Yes: 04            No: 06

**Q9.8      If so, was disarmament a major concern of this deployment?**

Yes: 01            No: 02

**Q9.9      If so, were there already arms control agreements (i.e., registers of conventional weapons, MTCR, etc.) in place within the country where you were operating?**

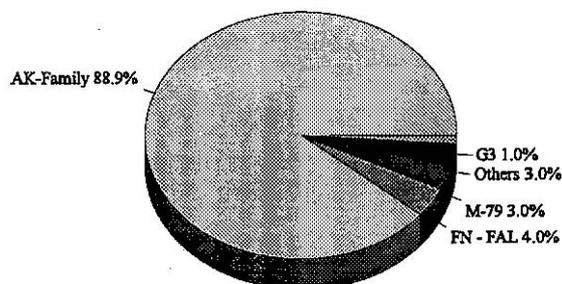
Yes: 01            No: 00

Analyst's Comments:

*ONUCA's mandate provided for voluntary disarmament, by virtue of an agreement reached between the belligerents. Because the disarmament was voluntary, problems were minimized. Some doubts arose, such as why most of the weapons handed over by the NR were Russian? Were these weapons apprehended from the Sandinistas during the war? Was the NR hiding its US-made weapons? While these questions should be considered, they are only one facet of the whole successful operation - an operation supported by the will of the parties to find a peaceful way to resolve their problems.*

## Arms Handed Over by the NR

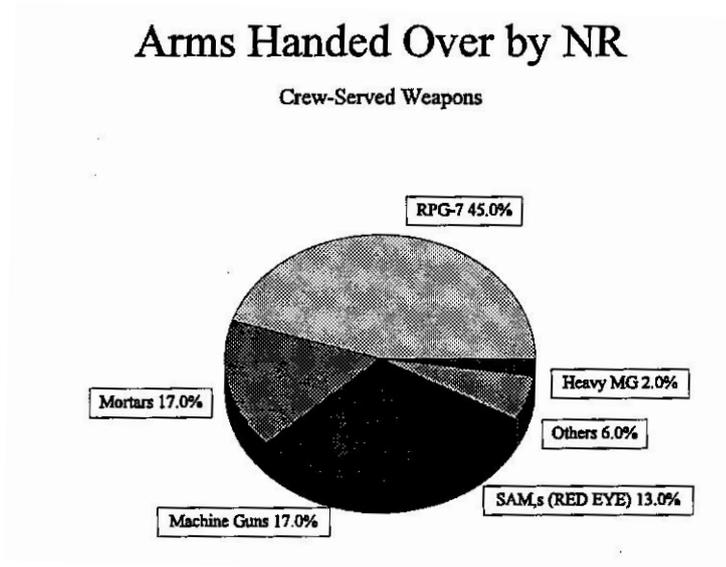
### Individual Weapons



### Analyst's Comments:

*In the case of Nicaragua, forced disarmament would not have been successful because the UN forces would have been involved in guerrilla warfare where the foe knew the terrain very well, had great mobility and was adapted to the difficulties of the environment. In this case, forced disarmament would have led to similar circumstances that the US troops faced in Vietnam.*

*Internal divisions between the Sandinistas and the NR after the disarmament operation were caused by the appearance of "Re-Contras" and "Re-Compas", two armed groups that fought with each other. This demonstrated that the disarmament operation must be the most important phase of demobilization, and should have been continued by the local authorities*



### SECTION THREE: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS

#### X. INFORMATION: COLLECTION, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AND THE MEDIA

**Q10.1 Did you receive sufficient relevant information prior to and during your disarming mission?**

Prior:	Yes:	09	No:	02
During:	Yes:	10	No:	01

**Q10.2 Was information always available and reliable?**

Yes:	07	No:	04
------	----	-----	----

**Q10.3 How did you receive/obtain your information prior to and during the mission? (Describe the three most important ways.)**

(C003) Daily SITREPS, orders, newspapers, publications, military/HF radio, telephone.

(C004) Through the chain of command.

(C020) Prior: during the mission training. During: by info received by ONUCA, by public means.

(C022) Briefing at ONUCA Hqs. Briefing OGNIC. Briefing by predecessor.

(C062) During the mission, by our own sources and by briefing at HQ.

(C085) Work conferences, briefings. Reports, radio reports.

(C091) National ways (prior), UN way (during).

(C117) Through the chain of command.

(C118) General information from the people, conversations with local governmental authorities, conversations with Sandinistas army and information from headquarters.

**Q10.4 Was there a structured information exchange between HQ's and the units in the field?**

Yes: 10            No: 02

**Q10.5 And between the various field commanders?**

Yes: 08            No: 02

**Q10.6 Did you use sensor mechanisms for verification/information purposes?**

Yes: 04 No: 08

**Q10.7 If so, list which ones and for what purpose. (Mention not more than three.)**

(C022) Verification on the spot.

(C062) Radar to plot sea going vessels and their movements. It will be useful to have personnel to operate them in order to check shore communications and to plot.

(C091) Photo (plane), radar.

**Q10.7.1 Was the use of on-site and remote sensing an adequate tool for verifying and monitoring weapons control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 03 No: 01

**Q10.7.2 In your opinion, could sensor systems (acoustic, radar, photo, video, infrared, etc.) play a useful role in monitoring the weapons control and disarmament aspects of a peacekeeping operation?**

Yes: 07 No: 01

**Q10.7.3 If so, give some examples of phases of the peacekeeping process in which such sensors could be used.**

(C004) Preventive, deployment phase, employment, monitoring.

(C020) Monitoring remote areas during the mission.

(C022) Guards and verifying missions.

(C091) All the period, but specially at the beginning.

**Q10.7.4 What would you suggest about the possible organizational set-up of the use of such sensor systems (i.e., UN, regional organization, national, etc.)?**

(C004) UN.

(C020) UN.

(C022) UN, and as part of national equipment, personnel must be well trained.

(C091) It will depend on the capacity of the countries command-control. Communications is very important.

**Q10.8 Do you think that normal information collection assets (i.e., intelligence) could and should be used for peacekeeping and disarming purposes?**

Yes: 10            No: 00

**Q10.9 Why? (List three reasons.)**

(C003) Prevent "knee jerk" reactions, allows a system which is in place used by all the military forces. It is part of any planning process.

(C004) To monitor agreement. To evidence guilt for whatever reason or actions. Accurate reporting to UNHQ.

(C020) Gives more info., established methods, ways.

(C022) You must be able to verify info by your own sources.

(C062) Better than nothing. Every source of information should be used.

(C085) It permits a major control. Security. Better knowledge of the people.

(C091) The most important is to accomplish the mission, and intelligence is one of the best.

(C117) You cannot go into an operation without intelligence no matter if it is a peacekeeping one.

(C118) Knowledge about country, people and political situation. Anticipate of some problems and complete the mission in the best manner possible.

**Q10.10 Is there a need for satellite surveillance in peacekeeping/peace enforcing operations?**

Yes: 08            No: 03

**Q10.11 Did you use the local population for information collection purposes?**

Yes: 10            No: 01

**Q10.12 Did you implement any transparency measures to create mutual confidence between warring parties?**

Yes: 11            No: 00

**Q10.13 If so, did you act as an intermediary?**

Yes: 08            No: 03

**Q10.14 Was public affairs/media essential to the disarming mission?**

Yes: 07            No: 04

**Q10.15 Were communication and public relations efforts of importance during your mission?**

Yes: 11            No: 01

**Q10.16 If so, give three reasons why this was so?**

- (C003) Directly related to the political situation in Nicaragua. The success of the mission was based on what was happening in the sector.
- (C004) Keep the local population informed. Have the media on your side. Provides influence outside area of ops.
- (C020) Gives public info. on progress. Explains development. Reduces risk for bias behaviour.
- (C022) To maintain good will as both parties frequently isolated the truth of their propaganda.
- (C090) Information is a basic tool in a peace-keeping mission.
- (C117) The political sensitivity of these missions. To keep the local population informed.
- (C118) Communication would permit sending information about the location of convoys and the guerrillas that wanted to be demobilized. Public relations permit greater confidence and support of the local population.

**Q10.17 Was there a well-funded and planned communications effort to support and explain your activities and mission to the local population?**

Yes: 01            No: 08

**Q10.18 If not, should there have been one?**

Yes: 07            No: 01

**Q10.19 Did media attention at any time hamper or benefit your disarming efforts?**

Hamper: 02        Benefit: 08

**Q10.20 Summarize your experience with the media.**

- (C003) Varied between excellent to very poor. It depended as what made the story. It was not based on what was being attempted by ONUCA.
- (C004) If used properly the media communication play a substantial role in keeping the population informed of the process of the mission. The problem lies when the media is looking or searching for sensationalism.
- (C020) UN restricted media communication.
- (C022) Frequent visits from various international teams always on authorised visits. No problems -- but took considerable attention away from other tasks.
- (C085) Difficulty to control the different media which supported the parts themselves. To control the media should be the main objective.
- (C091) The media must try to avoid the non-official media that can be interested in saying things different from the truth.
- (C117) None.
- (C118) The media was not in my security zone very often but my experiences with the media were positive. They helped to demonstrate to the world the dangerous conditions of the daily life as well as demonstrating the UN's efforts in the enforcement and maintenance of the peace agreement.

**Q10.21 Was there sufficient briefing to the general public in the conflict area on the disarming process?**

Yes: 05            No: 05

**Q10.22 If so, who organized this and who carried it out?**Organized:

(C003) Military observers in the area.  
(C091) Verification centers.  
(C117) HQ.

Carried it out:

(C003) Military observers in the area.  
(C091) Commanders of verification.  
(C117) HQ.

**Q10.23 Was there cooperation with the local media in explaining the steps of disarmament you were carrying out?**

Yes: 07                      No: 01

**Q10.24 Were leaflets distributed?**

Yes: 03                      No: 05

Analyst's Comments:

a. **Information:** Information is very important for peacekeeping operations, from the preparation phase up to the deployment in the country.

During the preparation phase is important to know the economic aspects (such as the principal products, exports, imports, countries with whom the country has trade relationship, etc.), military aspects (such as which weapons are used by the factions, forces structure and organization, etc.) and political aspects (such as the kind of government, parties and politics leaders, etc). But perhaps the most important aspect is socio-cultural. The UNMO's must know the customs, the language, religion and various norms to have a good relationship with the people of the country.

All the respondents seem to strongly agree that information/intelligence is required even for peacekeeping missions. However, the VENBATT had little or no intrinsic or attached tactical intelligence assets. The night vision devices previously mentioned were little used and the land patrols executed by the UNMOs

*had no technical capabilities of any kind and only operated during daylight hours. Except in the case of the ONUCA naval contingent, the night, belonged to the arms smugglers!*

*At a minimum, Ground Surveillance Radars and Unattended Remote Sensors could have been used by ONUCA to help achieve its mandate of deterring arms shipments and arms smuggling in the region. Since ONUCA was based on the total consent of all the parties, then one member nation could have been tasked to provide tactical and operational intelligence collection, all-source analysis and dissemination to support the mission of deterring arms smuggling in the region. Also, if ONUCA possessed a tactical and operational intelligence capability then its ability to accomplish its mandated mission of investigating alleged violations by any of the five countries would have been significantly improved. Reviewing several of the incidents and formal complaints received by the headquarters, by the time ONUCA personnel got on-sight, there was little or no evidence left of any violation.*

**b. Public Affairs:** *Knowledge about local public affairs is also important. Knowing the needs of the people, the UNMO's can ask the government and international organisms for support and help with the demobilization.*

*Their is little or no evidence from the respondents that a pre-planned psychological operation (PSYOPS) was instituted to help persuade the already consenting groups to disarm and demobilize. Leaflet drops and loud Speaker Teams can be targeted to send/pursue a population to follow ONUCA requests.*

**c. Media:** *The media is very important too. But it is necessary to be careful when dealing with media to avoid sensational and false reporting. When the media is acting professionally, it can show the rest of the world the realities of the country as well as increase respect for the UN. The relationship between the media and the UN was for the most part very friendly and always well conducted.*

#### **SECTION FOUR: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS**

### **XI. EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTROL OF WEAPONS AND IN DISARMAMENT DURING YOUR MISSION:**

**Q11.1**      **Describe, by order of importance, your specific tasks, if any, in weapons control and disarmament during this mission.**

- (C003) Cease fire, separation of forces ( from security zones), within security zones: demobilize, hand over weapons, material and equipment negotiation. Then relocate demobilised personnel.
- (C004) Identification, location, inventory, collection, destruction, disposition.
- (C062) Survey the cessation of aid or military assistance to irregular forces from any of the central America nations, specifically Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras. Verify any incident as required by any CA nation.
- (C085) Demobilisation carried out in security areas.
- (C091) Staff in the camp installed to destroy and collect the armament. To cooperate and supervise the destruction.
- (C092) Collection of weapons, arms and explosives. Destruction or storage.
- (C117) None other than preparing the post order, SOP's and directives to guide the operation.
- (C118) Patrols to confirm complaints (regarding government/ police), convoys escort the Nicaraguan Resistance to the security zone. Received weapons and equipment. Collected personal data and information about the guerrillas. Verification of development areas. Verification after demobilization of implementation of the accords.

**Q11.2 Did the security situation in the mission area allow for arms control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 10 No: 00

**Q11.3 If not, what steps were required to establish and maintain a secure environment?**

[No responses.].

**Q11.4 Do you think your weapons control and disarming tasks could have been handled more efficiently?**

Yes: 03 No: 08

**Q11.5 If so, mention three ways in which your task could have been improved.**

(C062) Having some sort of political task or authorization to stop and check.

**Q11.6 Were opportunities missed to take advantage of or implement weapons control and disarmament measures?**

Missed: 00 Not missed: 10

**Q11.7 If opportunities were missed, mention the main reasons why this happened.**

(C022) Efforts made by COANIC to speed up the demobilisation resulted in the opposite -- obstruction.

**Q11.8 Did you find the national diversity of contributed troops a problem for command and control during disarmament operations?**

Yes: 01 No: 09

**Q11.9 If so, mention the three problems you considered most challenging.**

(C085) Command is more easy with only one nationality due to discipline and language.

**Q11.10 Was the disarmament process reversible (i.e., were there instances where devolution was foreseen or requested)?**



Mortars-81/60mm.

(C118)

Weapon: Mines. Whom: Nicaraguan Resistance.  
 Hand grenades.  
 Red eye missile.  
 Assault rifle (AK-47, FAL,  
 M16 and G3).  
 RPG-7.  
 Machine gun (Dragonov).

Weapon: Machine gun Whom: Sandinista Army.  
 (Dragonov)  
 Only weapons made in  
 Russian (missiles SAM  
 and helicopters MI-17).  
 Assault rifle (AK-47,  
 Kalashnikov).

Weapon: Assault rifle (FAL). Whom: VENBATT.  
 Pistols.

Other comments:

(C003) All forces lightly armed for 'jungle warfare'.

**Q11.13** Were you given priorities as to the type of weapons you should disarm first?

Yes: 00 No: 10

**Q11.14** If so, how were priorities assigned (i.e., on what basis)? (List three reasons.)

[No responses.].

**Q11.15** At the beginning of your mission, were you able to have sufficient information on military capabilities in regard to numbers and quality of equipment used by warring parties?

Yes: 05            No: 04

**Q11.16    Did you have the impression that there were caches of weapons in your sector or adjoining sectors?**

Yes: 10            No: 00

**Q11.17    Were illicit weapons a problem for you (illicit as in: not in your inventories)?**

Yes: 05            No: 04

**Q11.18    Was there evidence in your sector that the warring parties continued to have access to weapons through external channels of supply?**

Yes: 05            No: 05

**Q11.19    Could you control external channels of weapons supply in your sector?**

Yes: 00            No: 11

**Q11.20    How important was the control of external channels of supply for the success of the mission?**

Very Important: 02            Important: 04            Unimportant:  
06

**Q11.21    In your experience, do weapons continue to flow during the conflict even after sanctions, inspections, and checks have been applied?**

Yes: 07            No: 03

**Q11.22    Were there any security zones established?**

Yes: 10            No: 01

**Q11.23 If so, were you able to control your sector effectively?**

Yes: 09 No: 02

**Q11.24 Depending on your answer under 11.23, elaborate on How (i.e., how were you able to control the sector?) and Why (i.e., why were you unable to control it?).**

(C003) Through the Honduras army in location and the Venezuelan battalion that we had under command.

(C004) Sectors were well defined on the ground and known by all parties.

(C022) Only one poor track leading into the camp area in the centre of the security zone -- we controlled that and a river by check points.

(C062) To have a change of the ONUCA mandate.

(C085) The area was very isolated, only with few and small populations. Control was established carrying out continual patrols by car and helicopter.

(C091) Area surrounded by surveillance and protected by army forces.

(C117) The SZ were well organized and defined. It helped our work.

(C118) Security zones were established inside which a radius of 20 kilometers there couldn't be any troops or barracks but movement within the zone was permitted only after informing the UN.

**Q11.25 Were you involved in any monitoring of arms embargoes/sanctions?**

Yes: 01 No: 10

**Q11.26 What was your experience in this respect?**

(C062) None.

(C117) None.

**Q11.27 Were any weapons collected for cash or land during your mission?**

Yes: 03 No: 07

**Q11.28 If so, comment on the effectiveness of this incentive.**

(C003) Part of the demobilisation process. \$50 cash and a choice to resettle in Nicaragua for every man and woman who turned in their weapons and uniforms. Some tried to take advantage by going through this process several times.

(C004) Very effective especially in poor countries.

**Q11.29 Were national police involved in the collection of arms?**

Yes: 01 No: 09

**Q11.30 Were other organizations involved in the collection of arms?**

Yes: 00 No: 09

**Q11.31 If so, which ones?**

[No responses.].

**Q11.32 If involved in chapter VI operations (peacekeeping), were military observers used in the collection of arms?**

Yes: 10 No: 01

**Q11.33** If so, what type of military observer was used (i.e., UN, regional, other organization, etc.)?

(C004) UN.

(C022) Our own UN obs. after demob. camp was closed 18 June 90.

(C062) UNMO's.

(C085) UN.

(C091) UNMOS of different countries but under the auspices of UN.

(C092) UN.

(C117) UN.

(C118) UNMO and VENBATT.

**Q11.34** Answer if applicable: was there satisfactory coordination between military observers and yourself as unit commander/chief of operation?

Yes: 07            No: 00

**Q11.35** Were the warring factions themselves involved in the collection of arms?

Yes: 04            No: 06

**Q11.36** Did you use opposite party liaison officers so that all factions were represented in the collection of arms and the disarming process?

Yes: 03            No: 06

**Q11.37** If so, reflect upon your experiences in this issue.

(C004) Both ways, communications and trust are vital elements.

(C022) LO's were used for verification purposes only.

(C085) It was a very good issue because it creates a liaison based on confidence between parties.

**Q11.38 With regard to the UN/national mission you participated in, do you believe arms can be effectively collected?**

Yes: 06 No: 05

**Q11.39 Were you involved in the disarming of individuals, private and irregular units, and/or bandits?**

Yes: 09 No: 02

**Q11.40 Was the UN police involved in these tasks?**

Yes: 01 No: 09

**Q11.41 Were local authorities involved in disarming individuals?**

Yes: 01 No: 09

**Q11.42 If so, what was their role?**

[No responses.]

**Q11.43 Were there regulations in the mandate or peace agreement with respect to how to deal with private and irregular units?**

Yes: 04 No: 06

**Q11.44 If not, do you think your task would have improved if there had been such an accord?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q11.45 Did you experience problems with snipers?**

Yes: 01 No: 08

**Q11.46 If so, how did you counter this?**

(C004) Objected to local commanders that violation of agreement took place.

Analyst's Comments:

Any disarmament operation demands "an inventory" from both parties of their weapons, from the beginning of the conflict until the end. In spite of the difficulties, this process is the best way to control the quantity and kind of weapons handed over and to confirm the percentage delivered. It is more accurate.

In low intensity conflicts (LIC) like in Nicaragua, this inventory was very complicated because of the many factions involved (North, Central, South and Atlantic fronts), the problems with smuggling and because the lack of an original inventory.

Another very important detail observed is that when the convoys of guerrillas arrive in the SZ, their weapons should be handed over and recorded for destruction, to avoid a great number of guerrillas staying in the area without anything to do, creating conflicts among themselves and risking the lives of the personnel of the international organizations.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the respondents believed that they took advantage of "every opportunity" to implement weapons control and disarmament (Q11.6). However eleven of the twelve in Q11.19 believed that they had no control of any kind of the flow of weapons into their sectors. Since the disarmament efforts were totally voluntary, ONUCA had no way of gauging the success or failure of Operation Home Run. The 29 June 1990 Secretary General's report to the Security Council stated in ANNEX III that over 17,000 small arms, mortars and machine-guns had been voluntarily turned over to the ONUCA personnel. The only measure of disarmament success that the UN had was a letter signed by the Contra front commanders in which they stated that

"all arms ammunition and military equipment have been turned over to ONUCA ... and that no such material has been hidden".

Disarmament operations need "measures of Success" that are quantifiable and obtainable. The commander can define an "end state" for the operation but he has to have the means to verify that he has reached his disarmament goal. In the case

*of ONUCA, the Nicaraguan government sent a letter to UN officials stating that they were "satisfied" with the process of demobilization that ONUCA had carried out. In the end, if the Nicaraguan government was happy and the Contras were happy, then, the United Nations was happy. However, it is believed that the 17,000 weapons were only a small part of the Contra inventory. Because the United States did not turn over to ONUCA information on how many weapons were delivered to the Contras, ONUCA had no idea if it had collected 90%, 50% or 10% of those weapons.*

*The emergence and rearming of 1,200 to 3,000 "Recontras" in northern Nicaragua by 1991 is an indicator that "letters of intent" are probably not the best measure of success when undertaking disarmament operations.*

**SECTION FIVE: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS****XII. DEMOBILIZATION EXPERIENCES**

**Q12.1 Did the disarmament component of your mission include or infer demobilization?**

Yes: 09 No: 00

**Q12.2 If so, what types of demobilization operations were conducted during this UN/national operation (i.e., cease-fire monitoring, weapons cantonment, etc.)?**

(C003) Included cease fire, separation of forces, setting up security zones, disarming and resettlement.

(C004) As previously stated.

(C022) Demob. of the whole NR movement in Nicaragua.

(C085) Initially cease-fire monitoring. Then, demobilisation.

(C091) Weapons cantonment, weapons collection, weapons destruction.

(C092) Soldiers cantonment. Disarming. Demobilization.

(C117) Cease fire monitoring.

(C118) To receive weapons and military equipment. To give food, clothes financial aid for six month, ID cards and plot of land. Control of cease fire. Destroy weapons and military equipment.

**Q12.3 Was the demobilization process accompanied by a national reintegration process involving government forces and opposing forces?**

Yes: 10            No: 00

**Q12.4    If so, were sufficient means available for an effective reintegration process?**

Yes: 05            No: 05

**Q12.5    If not, elaborate on the problems you experienced with this task.**

(C022) Promised land-lots were not distributed in time.

(C085) Economic problems due to long war situation.

(C117) Nicaraguan government was not able to fulfill the promises.

(C118) The hate between the two factions. The land given to the guerrillas (areas) was of poor quality ( rock, swamps, etc). After demobilization, people were without professions or jobs.

**Q12.6    Which organizations assisted you in demobilizing (i.e., other services, international organizations, national organizations, or nongovernmental organizations)? List by order starting with most assistance to least assistance.**

(C003) UNHCR, international support and verification commission (CIAV), and the National Reconciliation Commission.

(C004) UNHCR.

(C022) CIAV, OPS, UN admin., Human Rights observers from Nicaragua, Catholic Church.

(C085) OEA.

(C091) ACNUR, Medical of world, UNHCR, Red Cross.

(C092) International Immigration Organisation (OIM), World Food Program (WFP).

(C117) ACNUR, CIAV.

(C118) CIAV, OPS, OAS and team of Cardenal Obando y Bravo.

**Q12.7 Was there a person or a branch responsible for plans for demobilization?**

Yes: 08 No: 02

**Q12.8 If so, who or which branch was it?**

(C003) ONUCA, UNHCR.

(C022) Og.NIC.

(C091) ONUCA UN mission.

(C117) Operations.

(C118) ONU - Operation Officer in HQ.

Analyst's Comments:

*To deal with the civilian aspects of demobilization, a new body was created, the International Commission of Support and Verification (Comision Internacional de Apoyo y Verificacion or CIAV), coordinated jointly by the UN and the Organization of the American States (OAS).*

*The operation to demobilize the NR, followed the basic principle that demobilization should be voluntary. No forced demobilization and disarmament was to be attempted, and no combatant should have been forced to comply with demobilization or hand in his weapons.*

*Initially, five security zones were planned to be based in Nicaragua. After some hesitation from the NR's leadership to comply, and difficulties which arose*

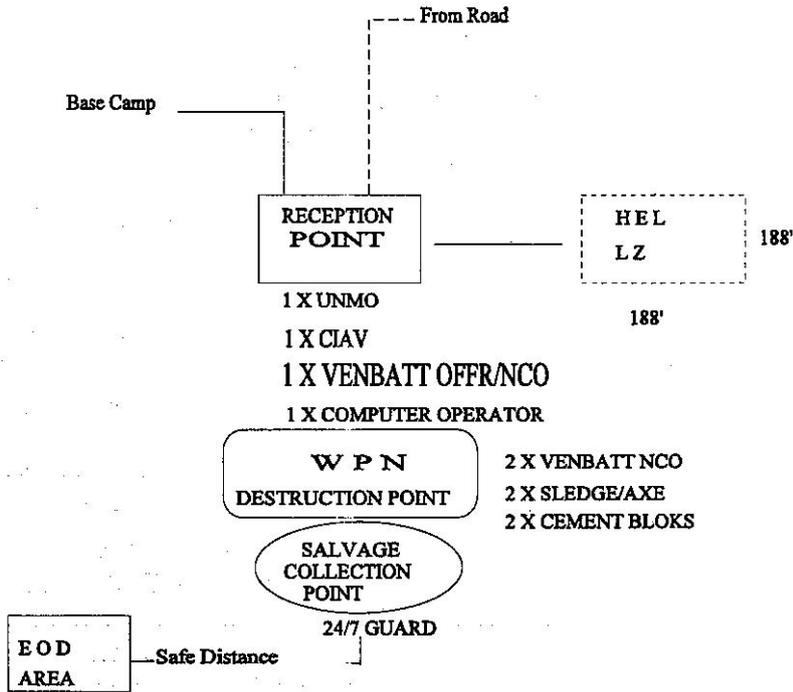
*in some particular areas in Nicaragua where the NR were based, three more security zones were created, making a total of eight security zones. The combatants were encouraged to present themselves in one of the security zones, carrying their weapons, ammunition, military material and uniforms. There, without the presence of the regular Nicaraguan armed forces and protected by the UN forces, they were supposed to hand in their weapons, ammunition, military material and uniforms, and receive a certificate of demobilization. Support from the UN/OAS was given for the civilian aspects of the operation, such as providing medical checks, new documents, civilian clothes, and the basic conditions necessary to allow the combatants to disband and reintegrate into civilian life. Members of the NR who were based in Honduras were transported back to Nicaragua under the responsibility of the UN after they had been demobilized and disarmed.*

*The respondents make it clear that there were many organizations that were involved in demobilization. CIAV, handled the "civilian" aspects of demobilization, while ONUCA was responsible for the initial processing, disposal of weapons and security for the demobilizing Contras. ONUVEN, (United Nations Observer Mission for Verification of Elections in Nicaragua) another UN organization, played a major role in the successful 1989 presidential elections but had little to do with later disarmament and demobilization.*

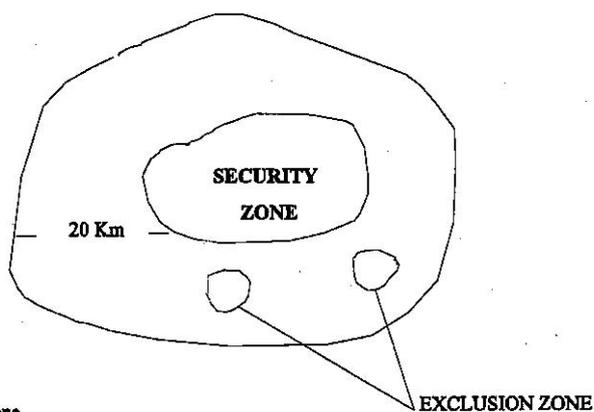
*All of these organizations seemed to work fairly well together executing a common goal in Nicaragua but, during later disarmament and demobilization efforts in El Salvador (ONUSAL) the UN opted for a more "Stove pipe" vertical organization which centered all functions under one command.*

*In ONUCA the UN was organized for "Unity of Effort." In El Salvador the "Unity of Command," was the preferred target for the UN command and control (C2) structure.*

### Demobilization Centre Not to Scale



## Layout of Demilitarized Zones



### Demilitarized Zone

- A- Area contained by a 20 Km. circle around the Security Zone
- B- Must not have artillery or offensive troops of any kind, no militia, no paramilitary or security forces.
- C- The Police are disarmed.

### Exclusion Zone

Contains installations such as a Brigade HQ or Barracks, which are frozen in place.

## XIII. DEMINING EXPERIENCES

**Q13.1 Did you experience mine problems?**

Yes: 04            No: 07

**Q13.2 If so, what did you do to counteract them?**

(C004) Follow advice of local population: mark, clear and destroy.

(C022) We destroyed lots of anti-personnel arms brought to us.

(C085) Trying to avoid the mined areas.

(C117) Nothing.

**Q13.3 Was there an exchange of maps of minefields at the outset when the agreements were signed?**

Yes: 03 No: 07

**Q13.4 If not, was it feasible to have such maps?**

Yes: 00 No: 07

**Q13.5 If so, do you think there should have been an agreement for the exchange of maps at the outset as part of the agreements signed?**

Yes: 04 No: 00

**Q13.6 If no maps were available and it was not feasible to chart the location of minefields, did you consider yourself adequately prepared to deal with the demining of haphazard minefields?**

Yes: 02 No: 06

**Q13.7 Did your unit play a role in the demining process?**

Yes: 01 No: 08

**Q13.8 Was the UN involved in demining?**

Yes: 03 No: 06

**Q13.9 Was the UN interested in becoming involved in demining?**

Yes: 03 No: 06

**Q13.10 Was the host nation involved in demining or interested in becoming involved in demining?**

Yes: 07 No: 03

**Q13.11 Were local groups/militias involved in demining?**

Yes: 02                      No: 08

**Q13.12 Do you think local groups and militias should be encouraged to undertake demining tasks?**

Yes: 07                      No: 03

**Q13.13 Why?**

(C003) If they lay them -- they should pull them.

(C004) We only have to convince them that left over mines will kill their own people in due course.

(C022) Only professionals should be used in demining operations.

(C085) There are no means nor experience in militias groups to accomplish this kind of tasks.

(C091) They are responsible for placing mines.

(C117) It was too dangerous.

(C118) Because they have more knowledge about location of the mines and can help to guide the mined areas.

**Q13.14 Were humanitarian organizations or private firms involved in demining?**

Humanitarian Organizations:    Yes: 01    No: 09

Private Firms:                      Yes: 01    No: 08

**Q13.15 In your opinion, who should undertake demining processes and why?**

(C004) Local authorities with UN assistance.

- (C022) See 13.13
- (C085) Professionals and well prepared staff for this task.
- (C091) Local army supported by engineers of UN (armies of participating countries).
- (C117) No, it was too dangerous.
- (C118) Specialists from the host country (with the participation of both sides) supervised by the UN because they know about the location of the mines and will take responsibility for incidents after the operation is completed.

Analyst's Comments:

*The existence of mined areas was a great problem during the mission. In future missions, the UNMO's could investigate the existence of mined areas, mark their boundaries, offer technical support and coordinate the task of demining. The UNMO's should never accept the responsibility of a demining operation which could produce innocent victims for which the UN would be held responsible.*

*Maybe it would be better or more convenient to consider the capabilities of civilian demining companies (in countries that have private demining companies) for demining and the possibility that their resources could be used by military experts.*

*The process of demining could have been incorporated into the demobilization operation in Nicaragua to avoid that UN patrols, civilians, or animals would pass through a mine field. The principal victims of mine fields are children. Both sides must be obligated to undertake demining with the support of UN experts.*

*In Nicaragua, ONUCA and VENBATT soldiers were not expected to be involved in demining operations. VENBATT thus, had little or no demining technical equipment or expertise to carry out large demining operations.*

**SECTION SIX: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS**

**XIV. TRAINING**

**Q14.1 Prior to deployment, did your units undertake specific training programs related to disarmament operations?**

Yes: 03 No: 07

**Q14.2 If so, were these training programs based on guidance from the UN forces already in the field, from the UN in general, or from your national authorities?**

UN forces in field: 00 UN in general: 00  
National authorities: 00 Other: 00

**Q14.3 Were your units trained specifically for the collection of arms and cantonment of factions?**

Yes: 02 No: 06

**Q14.4 Were you and/or your units trained in on-site inspection and observation techniques?**

Yes: 04 No: 05

**Q14.5 Have you been trained in verification technologies nationally?**

Yes: 06 No: 04

**Q14.6 Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific weapons control and disarmament operations (i.e., weapons searches, inventories, elimination, etc.)?**

Yes: 02 No : 09

**Q14.7 Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific demobilization operations?**

Yes: 05 No: 06

**Q14.8** Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific demining operations?

Yes: 00            No: 11

**Q14.9** On the whole, did you consider yourself technically and tactically prepared for the accomplishment of your mission?

Technically:    Yes: 08        No: 02  
Tactically :    Yes: 06        No: 02

**Q14.10** Was there anything done at the end of the mission to gather lessons learned?

Yes: 08            No: 03

**Q14.11** Back in your own country, were you debriefed?

Yes: 09            No: 03

Analyst's Comments:

*It is of the greatest importance that troops sent for peacekeeping operations have a period of training in their home country. The subject of the training should be how to accomplish the mission in the best way, and if possible, similar geophysical areas should be used for training to make adaptation easier.*

*The creation of peacekeeping academies that could train officers and sergeants in this kind of missions would be ideal. Preferably, these academies would be placed regionally or gathered in groups of the same language, located in a central region between the different countries.*

**SECTION SEVEN: SUMMARY OF ANSWERS**

**XV. INTERACTIONS**

**Given that there are three common elements to a UN mission -- the military, the humanitarian agencies, and the political branch:**

**Q15.1** Would you consider the relationship between humanitarian elements/organizations and the military personnel during the mission to have been very good, adequate, or inadequate?

Very good: 00 Adequate: 01  
Inadequate: 00

**Q15.2** If you think it could have been improved, specify three ways in which this could have been achieved.

(C020) Better understanding of the role of each other, tight coordinated briefings, to working in mixed teams.

(C022) There should have been standing operating procedures for this coop. Instead, I had to do this of my own initiative.

(C062) To have some briefings from the UN humanitarian and political side in the field and to have more local contacts with the military and political.

(C091) More dialogue, more coordination, only one command.

(C118) If there had been more conferences between the different sides, there would have been an opportunity for debate and expression of opinions, as well as coordination of the manner of action.

**Q15.3** How was the overall cooperation of the three elements of the UN components achieved during your mission? Summarize.

(C020) Could be better -- personnel chemistry not the very best.

(C022) Poor coordination and functioning. Locally due to various commanders' initiative.

- (C062) We had some monthly meetings with all the UN authorities in the field that helped very much knowing the evolution of the situation. I felt that we had a lack of contacts with the Nicaraguan and El Salvador authorities so I suggested and approved visits that helped, but did not end the problem.
- (C085) Good in general except the UN logistic system. The change from the military line of command to the political/ administrative hands was always problematic.
- (C091) Adequate but should be improved, by the ways expressed in 15.2
- (C117) Even though there are always problems between the military and civilian personnel, the cooperation can be classified as very good.
- (C118) On my level of the UNMO, I didn't have access to the high-level political groups and humanitarian agencies until the repatriation of those injured during the war.

**Q15.4 Did cooperation exist between the UN military, private and irregular elements, and existing police forces (UN or local)?**

Yes: 07            No: 01

**Q15.5 If so, describe which components cooperated with whom and the level of their cooperation.**

- (C022) I had, as VG and demob. camp commander, coop. on a daily basis -- liaison meeting -- with NR, CIAV, OPS, coy commander, LO from EPS and, when needed, with Sandenista police.
- (C062) UN cooperates but it was some sort of non-confidence from Nicaragua Military forces due to their training.

- (C091) Local military, UN military, police, local and political government.
- (C117) UN military/civilian irregular element.
- (C118) The relationship among UNMO, EPS and NR was always cordial and friendly. In the end the local population did not receive us well because of the problems with the inflation of the local economy and the treatment of local women.

Analyst's Comments:

*In Nicaragua, the relationships between the many organisms that participated in the mission were very good. An exception was that the administrative civilian personnel of the UN should have stayed in the camp or in the VC together with the UNMO's to provide the necessary logistical support, but this was never done. They stayed in Managua while most of the time that the UNMO's were without adequate drinking water, fuel and food. The administrative civilians seldom appeared in the SZ and did not resolve the problems at all or took a long time in resolving them. The arrival of VENBATT brought a great improvement because they supported the UNMO's.*

**XVI. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS****On reflection,****Q16.1 What was the overall importance of the disarmament task for the overall success of the mission?**

Very important: 06                      Important: 01  
 Not important: 00

**Q16.2 What were the three major lessons you learned from your field experience?**

(C003) Do not take things for granted -- always double check. Make sure you have the agreement of all sides before proceeding with operation. You must have completed the agreement by all sides before disarmament will take place, they will only disarm if they are ready.

(C004) Commitment of warring factions to disarmament. A smile can go a long way. Gain confidence of local commanders and maintain it.

(C022) To have frequent cooperation with all parties and organisations involved. To have well taught officers with lots of common sense, to have support from a military unit.

(C085) A tight contact and communication with parts involved was the secret of success in these kind of missions, create a self-confidence is the first aim.

(C091) Possibility of accomplishing a very difficult mission.

(C117) The experience of participating on a UN mission. How much we have to value the peace in which we live.

(C118) Disarmament is the principal factor for the maintenance of peace and it should have continuity with local

authorities. Assistance to individual must be all encompassing including land jobs, training, school. Great effort should be made so that both parties have a balance in political posts.

**Q16.3 What other question should we have asked here and how would you have answered it?**

Questions:

(C003) Was there any outside influence which directly affected the demobilisation process?

(C004) Do you think that the UN should maintain its presence if the peace agreement is a failure?

(C022) What is your general opinion about UN administrative support?

(C085) Was the language a very important factor for the accomplishment of your mission?

(C118) What is the ideal duration of a specific military's participation within peacekeeping operation?

Answers:

(C003) In the care of ONUCA, yes -- influence by the USA, election in Nicaragua pressure from surrounding Central America countries and the Contra no longer having the support nor funds to continue operations. Here are the reasons why the operation was deemed a success. If the Contra wanted to continue ONUCA did not have the resources nor the power to stop them.

(C004) Yes but initial deployments should be accompanied by an ultimatum in time and space, i.e., the UNSC has agreed to deploy a force of numbers and will remain there until date/time. If no satisfactory progress is

achieved by date/time UN shall withdraw its commitment to the peace process.

(C022) In general, very bureaucratic and inefficient.

(C085) It was very important to have the capacity to communicate, to speak, to contact with the parts involved in their own language.

(C118) I think six months is ideal because of problems with the families and personal, relations of the peacekeepers after an extend absence. Also the local population does not want the PKO to stay for too long. There should be a rotation for the peacekeepers to give the opportunity for other militaries to participate in the missions of the UN and do not have problems for the officers or the UN.

**To be answered only by those who participated in completed UN/national peacekeeping missions:**

**Q16.4 Do you think that the disarmament-related tasks which you undertook had an impact on the national reconstruction processes which followed the end of the mission?**

Yes: 08 No: 01

**Q16.5 If so, briefly explain how and why:**

(C004) The political authorities in place have the responsibility to do that.

(C022) Mainly because the parties involved were fed up with the war and could come to a holding agreement with UN assisting as mediator and by adding security and trust.

(C062) The ONUCA mission did not include disarmament tasks. Some particular questions should be presented to some ONUCA participant to gain experience and learn lessons. Anyhow the task performed by the Navy was

unique and we understood that the deterrence of the day and night patrols helped to stop or reduce the smuggling of arms.

(C085) It permits a slow recuperation of national life after years of war. The disarmament and demobilisation has reduced the high level of violence in the country.

(C091) They support the arrival of peace.

(C118) It was the beginning of the end of the war that had lasted several decades: it assisted in the national reconstruction through financial aid and acted as an example for other countries working towards the establishment of a true democracy.

Analyst's Comments:

*The peace process in Nicaragua had influence in El Salvador and Guatemala, because they used a similar process which in turn extended peace to all of Central America.*

*Language skills are fundamental in this kind of operation. It was essential to know Spanish for communicating with the people of the country and also English for working with the UNMO's.*

*The well-designed and continuous functioning of the communications system was of great importance because of the great distances, poor conditions of the terrain and the rainy season.*

*Helicopters were the best way to supply critical necessities (such as food, water, medicines, etc.) to the patrols along the border as well as medical evacuations.*



## **Part III: El Salvador**

### **Case Study**



## I. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The UN peacekeeping operation in El Salvador, UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), was established in July 1991 and lasted until 30 April 1995. This was the second peacekeeping mission in Central America and it was established to assist, monitor and verify a comprehensive peace agreement concluded between the government of El Salvador and a coalition of five armed opposition forces, the Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).<sup>2</sup>

After eleven years of devastating civil war, which cost the lives of about 75,000 people and contributed to a sharp deterioration in living standards and widespread violations of human rights, a negotiated solution between the warring parties was concluded on 31 December 1991. The UN played a unique role in helping to bring peace to El Salvador.<sup>3</sup> Even before the conclusion of a formal cease-fire between the government of El Salvador and the FMLN, the parties asked the UN to send a mission to verify the respect of human rights. As negotiations progressed and the parties signed comprehensive peace accords, ONUSAL was greatly expanded. After its expansion, ONUSAL might well be considered a good example of the new style, multi-functional peacekeeping operation.<sup>4</sup>

The peace agreement signed between the government of El Salvador and the FMLN assigned several tasks to the UN, including *inter alia* the supervision of the demobilization, disarming and reintegration into civilian life of the rebel forces, the downsizing, purification and restructuring of the armed forces,

---

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the following people for their comments, advise and suggestions: Tammie Sue Montgomery, General-Brigadier Victor Suanzes Pardo, Colonel Cecil Bailey, Karin de Gruyel, Andres Fontana, Edward Laurance and David Cox. I would also like to acknowledge the support provided by the UNIDIR staff: Virginia Gamba (DCR Project Director) and my colleagues from the DCR Project.

<sup>2</sup> The UN had already established a substantial observing capacity in Central America through the set up of the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) in November 1989. After ONUCA concluded its main task of assisting in the demobilization of the Contras in July 1990 and helping control the borders between the Central American states in January 1992, most of its personnel and equipment was transferred to ONUSAL in El Salvador.

<sup>3</sup> A good summary of the UN's role in El Salvador, including all the relevant documents can be found in *The United Nations and El Salvador, 1990-1995*, New York: The United Nations Blue Book Series, Volume IV, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> For a good discussion of multi-functional peacekeeping missions see John Mackinlay, "Improving Multi-functional Forces," *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 149-73.

monitoring human rights, assisting in the creation of a new civilian police force, land tenure and judicial reforms, and the supervision of elections.

This study concentrates on the disarmament and demobilization aspects of ONUSAL. The study provides an overview of the regional setting; describes the evolution of the fighting between the El Salvador government and insurgent forces, and the attempts made to find a negotiated solution to this conflict; gives an account of the disarmament and demobilization missions conducted under the supervision of the UN; and concludes with an assessment of the operation.<sup>5</sup>

## II. The Regional Setting

### 1. Regional Disputes

The first military operation conducted by the FMLN against the government of El Salvador took place in 1981. This was followed by almost a decade of military stalemate and failed negotiations between the government and the insurgents. The civil war that inflicted so much damage on Salvadoran society was part of a series of intra- and inter-state conflicts which took place in Central America during the 1980's. Stimulated by the East-West rivalry, a combination of civil strife and intra-regional disputes erupted throughout the isthmus, and through direct economic and military aid received from abroad, governments and rebel forces in the region continued fighting until near exhaustion.

Central America is a region where deeply ingrained, indigenous conflicts were exacerbated by the Cold War, and where irregular forces were able to mount a formidable challenge against the governments of the area, especially the FMLN in El Salvador and the Nicaraguan Resistance (NR, also referred to as the Contras) in Nicaragua. Deep social injustice, economic crisis, ideological disputes, dissatisfaction with governments, and the widespread use of violence for political purposes, also contributed to these civil wars.

Starting in 1979, with the fall of the Somoza oligarchy in Nicaragua, the political climate throughout Central America deteriorated. Moreover, there were

---

<sup>5</sup> For a general overview of ONUSAL see Tommie Sue Montgomery, *The United Nations and Peacemaking in El Salvador*, North South Issues, Vol. IV, No. 3, University of Miami, 1995; Christopher C. Coleman, *The Salvadoran Peace Process: A Preliminary Inquiry*, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Research Report No. 173, 1993; and David Holoway and William Stanley, "Building the Peace: Preliminary Lessons from El Salvador," *Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Winter 1993.

traditional disputes in the region related to unsettled historical rivalries, border demarcation and political influence. Therefore inter-state and intra-state disputes in the region were blurred. As a result, all states in the area, with the exception of Costa Rica, responded to such insecurity by strengthening their military capabilities. A sharp increase in defence spending occurred, and an influx of great quantities of arms.<sup>6</sup>

It is important, therefore, to understand the evolution of the conflict in El Salvador as part of the polarization of the political situation in the region as a whole. Throughout the 1980's, there were risks of border conflicts, but there were also strong pressures on all parties, including the US, to control the level of conflict. Tension in the area remained high, especially between Nicaragua and its neighbours, Honduras and Costa Rica, because of attacks, organized by these countries, against the Sandinista government.. New US military installations were built in Honduras, and Washington became more directly involved in the fighting in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Washington's assistance to its allies in the area increased several times from 1982 to 1985. With tensions rising, even Costa Rica (which abolished its armed forces in 1948-49) invested in training and equipping its 8,000-strong para-military forces.

The entire area was deeply affected by the tragedy concerning the problem of refugees from El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.<sup>7</sup> In El Salvador alone an estimated 20% of the population (about one million people) fled or was displaced by the war. The nations of Central America were becoming increasingly dependent on external aid for survival. In El Salvador, for instance, external aid accounted for one quarter of GNP.

## 2. Regional Negotiations

Attempts to negotiate a peaceful solution to the disputes of Central America date back to the early 1980's.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the 1980's, a group of four Latin American countries (Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela and Panama) took the initiative to promote a negotiated solution to the Central American crisis and set up the Contadora peace process. In September 1983, at a meeting of Foreign

---

<sup>6</sup> See Raul Sohr, *Centroamerica en Guerra*, Alianza Estudios, Mexico City, 1988.

<sup>7</sup> See Cristina Eguizabal *et al.*, *Humanitarian Challenges in Central America: Learning the Lessons of Recent Armed Conflicts*, Occasional Paper No. 14, Providence: Watson Institute, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> See Jack Child, *The Central American Peace Process, 1983-1991. Sheathing Swords, Building Confidence*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992.

Ministers of the states of Central America and the Contadora Group, held in Panama, 21 objectives aimed at achieving lasting regional peace and cooperation were spelt out. These objectives included: dealing with arms races, growing arms traffic, and the presence of foreign military advisers and other forms of military interference. Concern about foreign military intervention and the excessive supply of arms to the region were key factors in the initiative.

The Contadora process, however, despite the possibilities for achieving a stable peace in the region, was considered by Washington as a way of consolidating the Sandinista regime. Contrary to this position, the Europeans supported the Contadora Group, and aid to Nicaragua as part of their economic aid to Central America. Later, four other Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay) joined the peace process and formed the Contadora Support Group.

As confrontation continued, however, the Contadora peace initiative entered an unending cycle of stagnation, reinvigoration, suspension and relaunching. Washington's resistance to a diplomatic solution and Nicaragua's complaints about US aid to the Contras, as well as continuing cross border incursions from Honduras and Costa Rica into Nicaragua, decreased the chances for a peaceful settlement of these conflicts.

The Contadora proposals included commitments to halt foreign arms supplies, withdrawal of foreign military advisers, guarantees of free elections, the promotion and support of regional programs for economic development and cooperation, and the control of the use of a nation's territory for attacks on neighbouring countries. Washington did not believe that Contadora alone could bring about genuine political change in Nicaragua, while the Sandinistas in Managua explicitly made any settlement conditional on an end to US support for the Contras. Moreover, the five states in the region lacked confidence that the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group would be able to guarantee their security if unilateral measures to reduce their military strength were taken. Tensions between the five countries continued to escalate during the Contadora peace process.

The success of a negotiated solution depended much on the US. In January 1984 the bi-partisan Kissinger Report was released. The report emphasized that Washington had a vital security interest in Central America, it asked for more civilian and military aid to the region, and it endorsed a belligerent strategy, above all against the Sandinistas and the FMLN. In short, US policy gave priority to helping the Contras maintain military pressure on Managua.

The Contadora Group and Support Group continued to call on all countries in the area to respect each other's sovereignty, to refrain from joining military or

political alliances that would involve the region in the East-West conflict, to forgo aggression, and to stop supporting irregular forces in the area. The new, supposedly final, version of the Contadora Peace Act which was presented in 1986, however, was considered much too favourable to Nicaragua by Washington, and President Ronald Reagan sent Secretary of State, George Schultz, to the region to persuade Honduras and El Salvador that the accord was fatally flawed.

Despite deteriorating relations, following the rejection of the Contadora Peace Act, the new Costa Rican President, Oscar Arias, announced his intention not to allow his nation's territory to be used by the Contras, and affirmed Costa Rican neutrality in the conflict between the Sandinistas and the Contras. Others also began to raise doubts about supporting the armed movements against the Sandinistas. In Honduras, the Contras' presence was becoming increasingly problematic, bringing disruption to agricultural production and border conflicts with the Sandinistas (direct fighting between the Sandinista and Honduran armed forces ensued after the Sandinistas entered Honduran territory to pursue the Contras).

Despite the US policy against a negotiated solution, a Central American Presidential Summit meeting was held in Esquipulas, Guatemala, on 24-25 May 1986 (Esquipulas I). At the Summit the Presidents of the five Central American nations agreed to form a directly-elected Central American parliament whose purpose would be to strengthen dialogue, and promote cooperative development and democracy as key elements for a lasting regional peace. Despite the persistence of political suspicion between Nicaragua and the other four Central American nations, hopes were raised that this approach might create an opening for a more favourable climate for both the promotion of democracy and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

During 1987, the leaders of the five Central American states made another concerted effort to resolve their differences and agreed to a process that would eventually lead to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the region. In February 1987, President Arias presented new proposals for a regional peace treaty. After five months of difficult negotiations, an accord (Esquipulas II) was reached. The "Procedures for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America" represented the beginning of the pacification of Central America.<sup>9</sup> Commitments concerning amnesty, cease-fire, democratization, termination of aid

---

<sup>9</sup> See Francisco Rojas Aravena, "Esquipulas: un Proceso de Construcción de Confianza," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 8, July-December 1993, pp. 64-82.

to irregular forces and the non-use of territory for aggression were to be fulfilled within three months. Negotiations on security issues were to continue. The resolution of such issues as military force levels, foreign military advisers and joint military operations between the US and local governments were postponed to a second stage of negotiations. Nevertheless, despite the agreement, difficulties arose immediately as to the implementation and verification of Esquipulas II. Hereafter, the question of how to proceed with the implementation of the peace plan became the main source of contention.

Meanwhile, insurgent forces in both Nicaragua and El Salvador continued to receive external support even after Esquipulas II, (most openly in the case of US aid to the Contras). During 1988, lack of the means necessary for enforcement and the fact that neither the rebels nor the US were parties to the agreement (and, thus, did not see themselves bound by the agreement) emerged as the main problems for the effective implementation of Esquipulas II. Differences also persisted as to what precisely was required under Esquipulas II. In the case of constitutional reforms and democratization in Nicaragua, there was a clear tension between the agreement's explicit recognition of the existing constitution and the opposition's argument that constitutional reforms were essential to fulfilling commitments of democratization.

With regard to cease-fires, the fundamental problem was similar in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. The governments argued that, under Esquipulas II, they were not obliged to hold dialogues with armed opposition groups, and that cease-fires were explicitly required to take place within the constitutional framework. On the other hand, the rebels demanded that the implementation of Esquipulas II commitments to democratization, and other measures affecting the government and armed forces, be simultaneous with the negotiation of a cease-fire.

In January 1988, Nicaragua suspended its state of emergency, and promised to hold direct talks with the Contras. The negotiations between the Sandinista government and the Contras to achieve a cease-fire and end conflict, suffered many twists and turns according to changes in Managua's willingness to negotiate, and Washington's ability to aid the rebels. However, a completely unexpected turn of events occurred with the defeat of the Sandinistas in the free and fair presidential election held on 25 February 1990. Following the election of the opposition candidate, Violeta Chamorro, a rapid demobilization and disarming of the NR, assisted by UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), was concluded by June 1990. In El Salvador, however, negotiations between the government and the rebels did not lead to peace.

### **III. The Evolution of El Salvador's Conflict and the Search for a Peaceful Solution**

#### **1. The Evolution of El Salvador's Conflict**

The insurgent forces in El Salvador started operating in 1981, mostly in the north and east of the country, and in the central areas of San Vicente and Guazapa. As the fighting escalated, however, the insurgent forces, were able to bring the war to the cities, and in 1989, even to the capital. In certain areas, the rebels were able to expel the authorities and establish their own civil administration. Continuing acts of sabotage devastated the country's physical infra-structure, contributing even further to the deterioration of living standards. Casualties were very high on both the rebel and government sides, as well as among civilians (approximately 20 % of the armed forces personnel died or were wounded during the first years of the conflict).

Given the military stalemate, the evolution of the dispute followed the economic and political initiatives taken by both sides. The rebels sought to establish strongholds in the rural areas, where they could implement programs of land reform and conduct their own administration. Responding to the escalation of violence, the government was committed to embark on economic and social reforms, and in 1980 it started a program of land reform. In the first phase of the program, the government expropriated 300 large farms and organized the farmers into cooperatives. Nevertheless, neither initiatives succeeded in bringing about support for the government or the rebels, or a lasting solution to the plight of the people.

In 1984, the first round of talks between the rebels and the government led nowhere, due to unbridgeable differences between the government's offers and the rebels' demands. There was also strong opposition from the extreme right-wing to negotiate with the insurgents. Prospects loomed large for a prolonged war of attrition and it appeared that both sides were preparing to win through military means.

As a result, El Salvador's armed forces grew from around 11,000 in 1980 to around 56,000 in 1986, as US military aid almost doubled. With US training, the anti-insurgency strategy became more efficient, with greater use of search-and-destroy missions conducted by small units. Also more air mobile warfare was introduced, with the deployment of additional helicopters. US aircraft based in Honduras gave reconnaissance and intelligence support to the Salvadoran army operations which helped to reduce large-scale movement by the rebels. Aerial

bombardment against rebels and allegedly civilian supporters of the FMLN increased dramatically.

Responding to the increased efficiency of the armed forces, the guerrilla's tactics also changed: dispersing their forces through larger areas and increasing economic sabotage and disruption in the central areas of the country. They also began to move more often into the cities to carry out urban actions and to attempt to mobilize political support for their cause.

As the US increased its support to the Salvadoran armed forces, the support from the Sandinistas to the FMLN also grew, despite promises made by Managua to diminish its help as part of a possible trade-off with the US. Responding to mounting US support for the Contras, the Sandinistas introduced heavy Soviet military hardware in the region, and called in Cuban military advisers. Washington's open support for the Contras, and Soviet and Cuban support for the Sandinistas and the FMLN, undoubtedly contributed to further regional destabilization.

Continuous fighting led to human rights violations being committed by both sides in El Salvador's civil war. The insurgent forces, which numbered between 5,000-8,000, were able to expand their presence throughout the country, and by 1988 were operating in all 14 provinces.<sup>10</sup> The rebels continued to carry out sabotage and economic disruption conducted by smaller units, and relied more on anti-personnel mines, which at times accounted for about 70% of army casualties, as well as many civilian casualties. The FMLN faced supply and recruitment problems, but still held the ability to mount large-scale attacks on government centres and armed forces installations. Furthermore, the FMLN retained the capacity and the determination to continue fighting for years for a negotiated solution, including some formula for power-sharing, merging of forces, political reconstruction, and structural reforms.

The government, with the victory of the reformist Christian Democratic Party of Jose Napoleon Duarte in March 1984 and despite considerable popular support and high expectations, was unable to deliver on either of its campaign promises of economic reforms and peace. This was due to two main factors: a recalcitrant armed forces and a US administration committed to a military victory over the rebels. Living standards continued to fall in El Salvador, and by 1985 they were at half of their pre-war level.

---

<sup>10</sup> The annual data collected by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) gave the figure of 10,000 FMLN's combatants for 1986. See *The Military Balance 1986-87*, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987.

By 1986, the FMLN continued to operate throughout the country, but the armed forces were trying to consolidate the initiative gained as a result of their improved equipment, mobility and performance. The rebel and army's increasing reliance on anti-personnel mines led to significant civilian casualties, and both sides resorted to political killings and kidnappings. No significant peace talks occurred during 1985 and 1986. The military initiative seemed to be on the government's side, especially with the continued strong military support from the US.

Talks between the government and the FMLN in October 1987 failed to produce agreement on the rebels' demands for a cease-fire, or on political agreements concerning the future of the government and the armed forces. Economic sabotage and urban operations by the FMLN continued, but problems with logistics and recruitment persisted. The military stalemate continued, while the government invested further in civil action programs and rural development. The FMLN tactic to gain widespread support in the cities failed. With the deterioration of the political climate and mounting criticism of the Duarte administration, the right-wing party, Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) appeared to be gaining support throughout the country, despite its alleged connections with the death squads.

On 19 March 1989, ARENA won the presidential election, ending a troubled period of Christian Democratic governing. On the other hand, the FMLN succeeded in carrying out attacks throughout most of the country, causing significant destruction, as well as small-scale attacks on army units and positions. Attacks on larger targets also increased, as did car bombings, political assassinations, and kidnappings.

President Alfredo Cristiani was elected as the candidate of ARENA and assumed office on 1 June 1989. Although ARENA was supposedly not in favour of a dialogue with the rebels, Cristiani was seen as a moderate, and called for peace talks within days of his election. In his inauguration address, Cristiani announced an immediate and unconditional dialogue with the FMLN. After assuming office, he nominated a national commission to hold talks with the rebels. Meanwhile, political assassinations and widespread violence continued. A first round of talks was held in Mexico City on 13-15 September 1989, in the presence of representatives of the UN, the Organisation of American States (OAS) and the Catholic Church, which produced an agreement on procedures. Another round was held in Costa Rica on 16-18 October 1989.

These talks ultimately failed because the government believed that the FMLN was militarily weak and, thus, sought to impose its own conditions for the FMLN's surrender. On 11 November 1989, following a series of increasing

human rights violations by the death squads, the FMLN opened its largest offensive of the war and brought the war to the capital for the first time. Over 2,000 civilians were killed. A state of siege was decreed by President Cristiani on 12 November 1989, followed by brutal repression.

With the deterioration of relations between the government and the FMLN which followed the November offensive, the Central American Presidents, in a meeting held in mid-December 1989 in Costa Rica, requested the UN Secretary-General's personal intervention to stop the fighting. The November offensive showed that dialogue was the only way to end the civil war.

## 2. The Negotiated Solution

Negotiations between the government and the FMLN progressed slowly after Esquipulas II, but the November 1989 military offensive mounted by the FMLN showed that the rebels could not be defeated militarily.

Even with a consensus that negotiations had to take place, the government demanded that the FMLN first end its armed struggle and then enter into serious negotiations with the authorities. The FMLN, however, wanted to keep its military force intact during the negotiations, and only demobilize and disarm after their successful completion. Moreover, the FMLN demanded as a *quid pro quo* for a cease-fire a set of structural reforms in Salvadoran society, including its admission as a legal political party, the downsizing, purification and restructuring of the Salvadoran armed forces, the creation of a new civilian police force, and land tenure reforms. Initially, the FMLN also demanded power-sharing and the merger of its forces with the government armed forces, but those demands were later dropped in exchange for its incorporation into a new civilian police force. After years of bloody conflict, there was continued resistance from the government, especially from the armed forces, to accept the FMLN demands, and many in San Salvador still favoured a military solution.

These differences were only mitigated by the personal involvement of the UN Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, or his Special Representative, Alvaro de Soto. The UN was able to keep open the channels of communication between the parties, and assist in the development of negotiations.<sup>11</sup> A succession of high level

---

<sup>11</sup> See Herbert David Ortega Pinto, "El Proceso de Paz de El Salvador bajo la Mediación de las Naciones Unidas," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July-December 1991, pp. 143-161.

meetings between the government and the leadership of the FMLN took place under the mediation of de Soto, and a timetable for negotiations was produced.

The resumption of negotiations after the November 1989 rebels' offensive was this time strongly backed by the Central American and other friendly nations. The reasons for the authorities and rebels' willingness to negotiate included internal exhaustion, growing pressure for a negotiated solution, the end of the Cold War, the electoral defeat of the Sandinista regime in Managua, as well as Washington's pressures on the Salvadoran government.<sup>12</sup>

During 1990 the UN, with US and Soviet support, undertook its first direct initiative to achieve a negotiated peace and political settlement in El Salvador. Negotiations resumed under UN auspices. On 31 January 1990, President Cristiani met with UN Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar, in New York and asked for UN mediation. Meanwhile, the FMLN was also meeting UN officials, with the objective to restart negotiations. The UN continued to assist the dialogue (both ONUCA and ONUSAL members were flying the FMLN leaders back and forth to negotiations in Mexico and New York). This time, Washington was committed to achieve a peaceful solution, and put pressure on San Salvador, cutting its military aid by 50%.

Government and FMLN representatives met in Geneva in April 1990, under the auspices of the UN, and announced their willingness to enter UN-sponsored negotiations. On 4 April 1990, the Geneva Agreement was concluded, with the presence of the UN Secretary-General, Pérez de Cuéllar. In Geneva, the parties agreed to accept UN verification of the implementation of any agreement.<sup>13</sup> The UN also gave technical assistance to the preparations for elections to the Legislative Assembly on 10 March 1991.

Unexpectedly, given the terrible record of human rights violations during the decades-long conflict, the first agreement reached by the parties was the San Jose Agreement on Human Rights, concluded on 26 July 1991. The UN immediately agreed to open a Human Rights Mission in July 1991, and established offices in the capital and regional centres of El Salvador to verify compliance with the accord.

---

<sup>12</sup> On Washington's change of policy towards the conflicts in Central America see William M. Leogrande, "From Reagan to Bush: The Transition in US Policy towards Central America," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, October 1990.

<sup>13</sup> See Herbert David Ortega Pinto, "Naciones Unidas, Acuerdos de Paz y Verificación Internacional: El Caso de El Salvador," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 8, July-December 1993, pp. 83-91.

With mounting pressures from the UN, Washington and Moscow, as well as friendly nations, the negotiations progressed and President Cristiani and the FMLN were able to sign, at the UN headquarters in New York, on 31 December 1991, a comprehensive peace agreement labelled by UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Gali, a "negotiated revolution".<sup>14</sup> The agreement set up a strict timetable for a cease-fire and the termination of the armed struggle, and the demobilization and disarming of the rebel forces and their reintegration into civilian life. The government agreed to implement a program of structural reforms, dealing with the sources of the civil strife. Deep reforms, which corresponded to the virtual creation of a new polity and democratic political culture in the country, were agreed upon by the parties. With unsolved issues in the socio-economic area pending, a final Peace Agreement was signed in Mexico City on 16 January 1992.<sup>15</sup>

The UN became a trusted third party and played a unique role in bringing about the peace agreements. As a result, ONUSAL was asked to expand its Human Rights Mission and assist, monitor and verify fulfilment of all the agreements concluded between the parties. To accomplish this task, the UN expanded the mission, adding a Military Division and a Police Division to the already established Human Rights Mission.

In 1993, an Electoral Division was also added, with the aim of monitoring the Presidential, Legislative Assembly, Mayoral and Municipal Council elections that took place in March 1994. These elections were the first to occur with the participation of the full spectrum of Salvadoran political groupings. Thus, it was considered an important step in the process of reconciliation and the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador.

As a relatively successful example of a multifunctional peacekeeping operation, ONUSAL played a fundamental role in promoting compliance with the peace agreements, not only helping to demobilize the rebel forces and overseeing the downsizing of the armed forces, but also in assisting with the development of a new civilian police force, in monitoring free and fair elections, human rights, and verifying the development of a series of new or reformed institutions or established to create a democratic polity in the country.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Terry Lynn Karl, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 147-64.

<sup>15</sup> See *Acuerdos de El Salvador: en el Camino de la Paz*, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1992.

#### **IV. The Role of ONUSAL in Disarmament and Demobilisation**

In January 1991 a UN preparatory office opened in San Salvador, with the objective of analysing the conditions for further involvement in assisting and supporting the peace efforts undertaken by the UN Secretary-General and his Special Representative, and prepare for the arrival of a UN mission.<sup>16</sup> The UN Security Council, through Resolution 693, 20 May 1991, approved the establishment of an operation in El Salvador. On 26 June 1991, ONUSAL was formally established.<sup>17</sup> Even if the mission had an initial limited role (monitoring human rights abuses after the conclusion of the San Jose Agreement on Human Rights) it was set up with the aim of creating an integrated peacekeeping mission.

The idea of establishing an integrated mission, including civilian and military observers, even before a formal cease-fire had been agreed upon by the warring parties, was based on the motion that it would be fundamental for the UN to assist the implementation of peace accords. During the difficult period between the conclusion of the first agreement on human rights in July 1990, and the final cease-fire and settlement by political means of the conflicts on February 1992, ONUSAL's presence in the field was meant to act as a deterrent against further acts of violence that could impede the negotiations, and as an active supporter of a negotiated solution.

An important breakthrough occurred on 25 September 1991, when the first New York Accords were signed. These agreements created the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ). COPAZ became an important mechanism for political dialogue among all the political forces in El Salvador. It was intended to be the national institution which was assigned, in parallel with ONUSAL, to supervise the peace agreements. COPAZ was formed by two representatives from the government, including one from the armed forces, two from the FMLN, and one from each of the political parties or coalitions represented in the Legislative Assembly. The Archbishop of El Salvador and one representative from ONUSAL had observer status.

---

<sup>16</sup> See *ONUSAL El Salvador*, Hoja de Informacion no's. 1-8, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1991.

<sup>17</sup> Information on the UN role in monitoring human rights in El Salvador is from *ONUSAL in El Salvador*, United Nations Focus: Human Rights, New York: UN Department of Public Information, May 1992.

Following the final peace agreement, the UN Secretary-General asked the Security Council on 10 January 1992 to extend ONUSAL's mandate, with the addition of a military and a police division. The UN Security Council, through Resolution 729, 14 January 1992, approved the UN Secretary-General's request.

The small mission on human rights was already in place. A Chief of Mission, appointed by the UN Secretary-General, worked closely with local organizations and institutions responsible for monitoring human rights, and relied on the cooperation of the government and the FMLN to accomplish his task. ONUSAL was allowed to take any initiative deemed necessary to successfully carry out its mandate, without any constraint from the government. ONUSAL had the right to circulate freely throughout the country, listen to complaints, and investigate and offer suggestions regarding ending human rights violations. Moreover, the FMLN agreed to allow the members of the mission free access to the areas it controlled, and agreed to respect the integrity of ONUSAL officers. The government and the rebels each nominated a liaison officer with the mission.

After the successful conclusion of the New York negotiations and the promise that on 16 January 1992 a definitive peace agreement would be signed in Mexico City, the UN Secretary-General immediately began to design a military division for ONUSAL. The Spanish General-Brigadier Victor Suanzes Pardo, who was already heading ONUCA was assigned the task of coordinating, as quickly as possible, the establishment of a military division for ONUSAL. The deployment of military observers began on 20 January 1992, and by February 1992 it achieved full strength. A police division was also added to monitor the behaviour of the existing national police prior to its dissolution and replacement by a new national civilian police, and to assist in the creation of a Public Security Academy and the development of a new civilian police force. From 7 February 1992, police observers were deployed throughout El Salvador.

## 1. The Military Division of ONUSAL

The task of ONUSAL's military division was to supervise the cease-fire, the separation of forces, the assembling of government and FMLN forces in designated areas, the destruction of arms and war-related materiel in the possession of the FMLN, and the reduction of the armed forces. At its peak, ONUSAL's military division numbered 368 military observers drawn from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Spain, Sweden and Venezuela.<sup>18</sup>

ONUSAL's military observers had a very sensitive task to accomplish. The FMLN was able to mobilize a reasonable military force, estimated between 7,000 and 8,000, while the government of El Salvador had invested substantially in the armed forces, which had been raised to a total of about 56,000 (including the security forces) when the cease-fire was concluded. The role of the military division was to supervise the compliance of both sides with a strict timetable, leading towards the end of the military conflict by early October 1992, and the total demobilization of the FMLN's forces by mid-October 1992. Eventually, the original timetable was extended, and demobilization was completed by 15 December 1992. Also, the destruction of the FMLN military equipment took longer than originally planned, and was not completed until July 1993.

According to the peace agreement, a detailed schedule was agreed to implement a cease-fire, to separate the forces, and to assemble and demobilize the combatants. A schedule to gradually reduce the armed forces was also agreed upon. The following were the main aspects of the disarmament and demobilization agreements, as set forward in the peace accords:

- a. Period of cease-fire: from 1 February 1992 until 31 October 1992. From 1 February 1992, ONUSAL was entitled to officially verify compliance of the parties with the accords.
- b. The separation of forces was to be undertaken in two phases, so that the armed forces of El Salvador could progressively abandon their war posture, and return to a peacetime position. Simultaneously, the FMLN would progressively concentrate itself in 15 designated areas within the former conflict zones.

---

<sup>18</sup> Interview with General-Brigadier Victor Suanzes Pardo, UNIDIR, 7 April 1995.

- c. In the first phase of the separation of forces, during the first five days after the cease-fire, the armed forces would concentrate, under the supervision of ONUSAL, in military installations described in the peace accords.
- d. During the following 25 days, the army would redeploy to its normal, peacetime installations; meanwhile, the FMLN would concentrate its forces in the assigned areas. ONUSAL had the responsibility for supervising all these operations, and organizing the logistics for the supply of the FMLN combatants. The ONUSAL Chief Military Observer had responsibility for mediating, and consulting with both the government and the FMLN leadership.
- e. Both the armed forces and the leadership of the FMLN committed themselves to communicate to General Suanzes detailed information regarding their exact numbers and amount of weapons and war-related materiel, which were to be concentrated in the designated areas.
- f. The arms, ammunition, explosives, mines and military materiel of the FMLN were to be concentrated in the designated areas, following an inventory produced and handed over to ONUSAL by the FMLN's leadership.
- g. ONUSAL sent liaison officers to all army garrisons to ensure that the armed forces were not violating the cease-fire and conducting military operations in contravention of the peace agreement. The military officers and men assembled in garrisons could not leave without permission from ONUSAL. The assembled combatants of the FMLN also had to request the permission of ONUSAL to leave their designated areas.

## **2. The End of the Military Structure of the FMLN**

Fifteen designated areas were created by the peace agreements where all FMLN combatants were due to assemble with their weapons and war-related materiel. In each of the designated areas, all weapons and military materiel, with the exception of the personal rifle and equipment of the combatant, were locked into special deposits, under the control of ONUSAL military observers. The deposits had a double key system: one key was held by a ONUSAL military observer, another by the local FMLN commander. ONUSAL periodically verified that the deposits were not opened and the contents removed.

The personal rifle and military equipment kept by the combatants were supposed to be collected by the military observers and locked in the deposits, when each ex-combatant left the designated areas for reintegration into civilian life. The original idea was that in the final period of the cease-fire, between 15

and 31 October 1992, the FMLN would carry out the destruction of all the assembled weapons and military materiel, supervised by the military observers of ONUSAL. The whole process, however, took much longer than originally agreed in the peace agreements.

The timetable agreed upon was very tight, and based on simultaneous and balanced measures taken by both sides. The parallel measures, however, did not progress as expected, and during the year a succession of events contributed to the delay of the original timetable. Adjustments to the timetable had to be made twice, on 17 July and 19 August 1992. Moreover, on 30 September 1992, the FMLN suspended its demobilization and a new timetable was agreed upon by the parties after a proposal was made by the UN Secretary-General's Personal Representative on 13 October 1992.

Due to a series of obstacles that occurred in the implementation of the accords, the FMLN decided to keep some of its military force intact as a form of pressure against the government. Its leadership argued that if its demobilization and disarmament progressed without parallel government compliance with its part of the deal, the FMLN would lose all leverage. The government, in turn, accused the rebels of deliberately delaying their demobilization, lying about the exact number of weapons they held, and complicating the process by demanding measures with which the government could not comply.

Despite these problems, no break in the cease-fire took place. This was a remarkable achievement, and it showed that both sides were committed to ending the conflict. Nevertheless, the reluctance of the government to start the depuration of the armed forces, delays in economic and social measures, and in the replacement of the old police force with the new civilian police force, plus the continuation of threats and political intimidation were reasons given by the FMLN for delaying its complete demobilization. The government's strong reaction to the report of the Commission on Truth, announced on 15 March 1993, also contributed to further delays in the process.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, because all the agreements were based on trust, the task assigned to the military observers of ONUSAL (to verify compliance with the agreed upon timetable) had to be based on figures handed over by the parties. In relation to the weapons inventory first produced by the FMLN, senior military observers were conscious that the figure did not include the total amount of weapons and war-

---

<sup>19</sup> On the Commission on Truth see Arturo Diaz Cordova, "El Proceso de Paz in El Salvador: La Comision de la Verdad, analisis e implicaciones de su trabajo," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 5, No. 9, January-June 1994, pp. 85-104.

related materiel held by the rebels. Nevertheless, they had to accept the inventory in good faith, because trust was the basis upon which the UN role, in monitoring the agreements, rested.

Confirmation by ONUSAL that all the weapons included in the FMLN inventory had been assembled and destroyed, was considered a necessary requirement to allow for the FMLN's transformation into a legal political party. A register of party members would then be given by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, allowing the FMLN to participate in future elections. After this process was formally completed on 15 December 1992, and all the combatants had been disbanded and their weapons destroyed, ONUSAL certified completion of the process, based on the figures it had been given by the FMLN leadership.

In May 1993 an explosion occurred at an arms cache in a garage in Managua which, after investigation, was accused of belonging to the FMLN.<sup>20</sup> One of the five constituent groups of the Frente, the Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion (FPL), after initially denying that the arms cache belonged to it, assumed full responsibility and acknowledged that it was part of a series of arms caches held in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador (which was, in itself, an absolute contradiction of the peace agreements). Eventually, 104 arms caches were disclosed in El Salvador alone, some holding unserviceable arms, but most holding small quantities of weapons and ammunition in serviceable conditions.<sup>21</sup>

With the development of the crisis, the FMLN was forced to produce a second, more accurate weapons inventory, which added about 30% more to the original inventory handed over in 1992. The amount of weapons and war-related materiel included in the second inventory was considered by the Chief Military Observer of ONUSAL to be similar to his own original estimate of the military capacity of the FMLN.<sup>22</sup>

After the second inventory was delivered, ONUSAL assisted in destroying the remaining weapons and finally certified, on 18 August 1993, that the UN had completed its mandate to oversee the destruction of the FMLN's weapons and equipment. This ended the role of the FMLN as combatant force. A total of 8,430 certificates of demobilization were given by ONUSAL to ex-FMLN combatants,

---

<sup>20</sup> See Report of the Secretary-General concerning illegal arms deposits belonging to the FMLN, S/26005, 29 June 1993.

<sup>21</sup> See Report of the Secretary-General on developments concerning the identification and destruction of clandestine arms deposits belonging to the FMLN, S/26371, 30 August 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with General-Brigadier Suanzes.

of whom 1,018 were war-disabled.<sup>23</sup> On 5 September 1993, the FMLN held its national convention, during which it formally decided to participate in the elections.

In conclusion, ONUSAL military observers had to make a great effort to pursue the task of supervising the destruction of the FMLN's weapons. Initially, given the distinct quality of the arms in possession of the five groups comprising the Frente, a proper inventory could not be made. In the initial period the difficult access to FMLN bases, and the lack of cooperation made the task difficult to perform. It was only after pressure from ONUSAL officials that all five groups allowed the military observers to count all their weapons, and register their serial numbers.

### 3. The Demining Operation

As already mentioned, anti-personnel land-mines accounted for a great number of casualties among the regular forces, rebels and civilians. Therefore, demining the territory of El Salvador after the end of hostilities was considered very important to the demilitarization of El Salvador.

The demining operation was planned with care and considered by all involved to have been a great success.<sup>24</sup> In May 1992, a program for the Prevention of Accidents by Mines (PAM) was created to centralize and analyse all information available concerning mines and explosives. PAM was formed with individuals from the Salvadoran armed forces, the FMLN, ONUSAL and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Over an area of 202 square kilometres, 192 areas containing mines were identified. IDAS, a private Belgian company, was selected to conduct the demining operation. From 15 March 1993 to 30 January 1994, a total of 425 minefields were uncovered with the disposal of over 9,500 mines of various types. The demining operation was successful, because it had the full cooperation of the FMLN, which had kept maps with the exact location of the minefields, and allowed these maps to be used by those charged with clearing the minefields.

---

<sup>23</sup> See *Proceso de Desmovilizacion del Personal del FMLN*, ONUSAL, San Salvador, n.d.

<sup>24</sup> A detailed analysis of the demining operation was produced by ONUSAL, *Las Minas en el Conflicto Armado de El Salvador*, Oficina de Informacion Publica de ONUSAL, San Salvador, November 1994.

The UN wanted to avoid post-war injuries caused by mines. UNICEF started a program against mine accidents involving children, and became fully involved in the demining operation. PAM was officially concluded on 30 January 1994.

#### 4. The Restructuring of the Armed Forces

One of the most contentious issues in the entire peace process involved the future of the armed forces. Downsizing, depuration of officers suspected of human rights violations, and change in the structure of the armed forces were all addressed during the negotiations. One of the main FMLN demands was the radical transformation of the armed forces (at times this included the merger of FMLN and government forces, other times it included the abolition of the armed forces altogether). The government, under strong pressure from the armed forces, resisted these demands. Ultimately, Chapter I of the peace agreements was entirely dedicated to the restructuring of the military, including its reduction by 50%, the purification of the officer corps, and a new structure based on the complete subordination of the armed forces to civilian authority.<sup>25</sup>

The restructuring of the armed forces included the following aspects:

- a. Constitutional Principles: subordination to civilian authority and defence of the national territory as the main task.
- b. Educational System: respect for human rights and human dignity as essential values to be taught. The Military School would have a collegiate direction, including civilians. The director of the school would be appointed directly by the President.
- c. Purification of the Armed Forces: an *Ad Hoc* Commission was created to evaluate the behaviour of military officers during the civil war. In its final report, submitted 22 September 1992, the Commission recommended the immediate discharge of 103 officers.
- d. Reduction of the Armed Forces: this reduction had the objective of adjusting the armed forces to its new peacetime role in a democratic society.
- e. End of Impunity for Armed Forces members.

---

<sup>25</sup> A good discussion is found in Walter Knut and Philip J. Williams, "The Military and Democratization in El Salvador," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 1, pp. 39-88.

- f. End of military control over public security: this included the elimination of the Guardia Nacional, the Policia de Hacienda (Treasury Police) and the National Police.
- g. Changes in the Intelligence Services: Intelligence Services would be subordinated to civilian power, under the supervision of the Legislative Assembly.
- h. Elimination of the Immediate Reaction Battalions.
- i. End of para-military groups, including suppression of the Rural Civil Defence.
- j. Elimination of Conscription.

### **5. Total of Arms Handed Over by the FMLN**

The first period of collecting and destroying weapons and war-related materiel lasted from February to 15 December 1992. Figures for items turned in by 15 December 1992 and later, but prior to the Managua explosion of 23 May 1993, included respectively: 5,929 and 1,216 individual arms; 334 and 26 support weapons; 163,891 and 219,080 rounds of ammunition; 25 and 7 rockets; 756 and 1,632 grenades. A total of 687 kilograms of explosives, 54 surface-to air missiles and 29 pieces of communications equipment were also located and destroyed.

The second period of arms destruction, after the discovery of the arms cache in Managua and the production of a second inventory list, lasted from 21 June to 4 August 1993. On 17 June 1993, the ONUSAL technical team that had travelled to Managua on 29 May 1993, at the invitation of the government of Nicaragua, to work jointly with the government Special Disarmament Brigade (Brigada Especial de Disarme) analysing the facts surrounding the May 1993 explosion, reported that the task of itemizing and destroying weapons and war-related materiel that were under the control of the FPL had been completed. Based on the information provided by the FPL, which cooperated fully in the investigation, ONUSAL and the Nicaraguan authorities verified sixteen "safe houses," including the auto repair shop where the accident took place. Five of these houses contained armaments that were mostly in serviceable condition, and that included: 1,240 rifles; 2,025 kilograms of explosives; 1,406,300 rounds of ammunition; 1,330 mortar grenades; 350 rockets (LAW); 35,700 detonators; 42 machine-guns; and 19 surface-to-air missiles. Another constituent group of the FMLN, the former Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), renamed Expression Renovadora del Pueblo, separately handed over to ONUSAL in San Salvador, on 17 June 1993, some 2-3 tons of materiel, consisting primarily of small-arms ammunition and explosives, some of them in poor condition.

In total, 114 arms caches within and outside El Salvador were identified by the five constituent groups of the FMLN. Therefore, the total amount of weapons and war-related materiel destroyed under the supervision of ONUSAL, after the explosion in Managua took place included: 2,706 individual arms; 19 support weapons; 3,649,635 rounds of ammunition; 108 rockets; 6,840 grenades; 4,420 kilograms of explosives; 20 surface to air missiles; and 34 pieces of communications equipment. Total figures for the complete inventory of FMLN arms and war-related materiel, identified and destroyed since the cease-fire came into effect on 1 February 1992 were: 10,230 arms (9,851 individual and 379 support weapons); 4,032,606 rounds of ammunition; 140 rockets; 9,228 grenades; 5,107 kilograms of explosives; 74 surface-to-air missiles; and 63 pieces of communications equipment. The total number of arms caches belonging to the five constituents groups was 128 (109 in El Salvador, 14 in Nicaragua, and 5 in Honduras).<sup>26</sup>

According to unofficial sources and the press, the Salvadoran armed forces captured between 4,000 and 7,000 individual weapons, 270 support weapons, 4,500,000 rounds of ammunition, and 31 surface-to-air missiles during the conflict.

On 23 August 1993, the FMLN's Coordinator General, Schafik Handal, sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General stating, on behalf of the five constituents groups, that they had now fully complied with the dismantling of the insurgent military structure. The UN Secretary-General then wrote the Salvadoran Supreme Electoral Tribunal a letter confirming this fact, thereby allowing ONUSAL to finally certify that all items in the FMLN inventory had been destroyed.

## **V. Assessment of the Operation**

El Salvador's civil war lasted eleven years and had a terrible cost in human suffering and material destruction. The conflict shook the foundations of Salvadoran society, forced around a quarter of the population to flee the country, and left a tradition of indiscriminate use of violence.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> See *Informe de ONUSAL sobre el Proceso de Verificacion de los Acuerdos de Paz en lo Referente a Control y Limitacion de Armamentos y Fuerzas Militares*, ONUSAL, San Salvador, n.d.

<sup>27</sup> In November 1993, the UN Secretary-General instructed the Director of the Division of Human Rights of ONUSAL to assist the government in investigations concerning politically-motivated violence in El Salvador. The conclusions are in the Report of the Joint Group for the Investigation of Politically Motivated Illegal Armed Groups in El Salvador, S/1994/989, San

The militarization of Salvadoran society was, however, the result of a troubled regional environment. As the political situation deteriorated throughout Central America, all nations in the region (except Costa Rica) initiated programs to strengthen their military forces. The high amount of resources spent on defence by the region's governments (Nicaragua at the height of the war against the Contras, for example, spent more than 60% of its total budget on defence) contributed to chronic insecurity, perpetuated the regional economic crisis and increased people's mistrust in their governments.

From the first efforts attempted by the Contadora Group to find a peaceful solution to the region's conflicts, preoccupation with the militarization of governments and rebels, the influx of foreign weapons and military advisers, and the use of one nation's territory to attack its neighbours, were fundamental components of the negotiating agenda. The region had become progressively flooded with heavy and light weapons and military advisers from abroad, and it appeared that all sides could only envisage the widespread use of force to resolve political issues.

Nonetheless, in spite of the factors pointing towards the parties favouring a military solution, the peace process did succeed. Among the more convincing reasons for this outcome would be the following: the easing of the Cold War rivalry; the exhaustion of fighters and civilians; unexpected events such as the defeat of the Sandinistas in the February 1990 presidential election; and the prospect for a real negotiated solution under the assistance and supervision of the international community.

The UN involvement in the area as a peace force began with the establishment of ONUCA in November 1989. As a second peacekeeping mission in Central America, ONUSAL was first established as a mission to monitor the San Jose Agreements on Human Rights before the conflict between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN ended. Under the auspices of the UN, negotiations between the government and the rebels progressed towards a cease-fire and an end to the 11-year civil war. Following the 16 January 1992 Peace Agreement, signed in Mexico City, ONUSAL's mission was expanded to accomplish the tasks of monitoring and verifying all the agreements concluded. The end of widespread human rights violations, judicial reforms, a pluralist political system, a new public security policy, as well as social and economic reforms, are some of the ongoing changes which are contributing to El Salvador's transformation into a democratic society.

To fulfill the expanded mandate of ONUSAL, a military division, and a police division (joined later by an electoral division) were added to the original human rights monitoring mission. Military and police observers were charged with the objective to assist in the cease-fire, the separation of forces that it entailed, the assembly of FMLN and government armed forces in designated areas, the disarmament and destruction of weapons and the supervision of former combatants' reintegration in civilian life.

ONUSAL's mandate to monitor and supervise the disarmament operation inevitably faced many difficulties. Disarmament was based on trust, therefore, its first component (the counting of what should be disarmed) had to be based on inventories made by the very parties that were to be disarmed. This operation was certainly problematic, because disarmament is a part of a dynamic political process, not an end in itself. The evolution of the political process in El Salvador, with its ups and downs and many postponed commitments, shaped the course of the disarmament process. As the situation evolved, the FMLN openly acknowledged that it was politically expedient to keep part of its military force intact, while the demobilization process was taking place, as a way to put pressure on the government. To keep intact some of its military structure was deemed as a necessary negotiating card against alleged government attempts to cheat, delay or postpone agreed upon measures. This mistrust was aggravated by the fact that the government was keeping its military structure intact, although albeit significantly reduced.

The operation that this study has analysed was the disarmament of the FMLN, a fighting force of about 8,000 men and women, which took place from 1 February 1992 to 18 August 1993. Despite the delays, the political manoeuvring, and the attempts to evade full compliance, ultimately, the mission was successfully completed. The FMLN ceased to exist as a fighting force and the purification and downsizing of the armed forces did take place. ONUSAL concluded its job certifying that disarmament and demobilization occurred as agreed in the peace accords. ONUSAL ended on 30 April 1995, and a much smaller UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (MINUSAL) started on 1 May 1995.

ONUSAL's mission, however, was not to supervise the disarmament of the Salvadoran society. To achieve this objective, other formulas had to be devised,

such as buy-back programs, gun-control laws, educational programs, and a more extensive and efficient presence of a new civilian police force.<sup>28</sup>

Disarming the Salvadoran society is a daunting task. A permissive political culture concerning the use of violence to settle political disputes, contributed to the widespread use of arms in El Salvador. It is notable that many private individuals, politicians and businessmen were allowed to keep military weapons in their possession as self-protection against the wave of political killings which took place during the civil war. The government has been trying to gather all military weapons still in the hands of private individuals and institutions. A law was approved by the Legislative Assembly on 9 December 1993, and entered into force on 11 January 1994, for the control of weapons, munitions, explosives and related artifacts. The law was motivated both by the possession of military weapons by private individuals and by the spiralling crime rate.

In relation to public security, the transition from a military-led police force, with a terrible human rights record, to a new civilian-led police force, doctrinally respectful of human rights, is a long term process. It is thus not surprising that during this period there was a sharp deterioration in public security.<sup>29</sup> During the period of training the new civilian police force, public security suffered and the country experienced an escalating crime rate. This escalation in violence led the government to pursue a stricter policy to prevent further deterioration, and to disarm the civilian population.

The high level of armaments still in possession of many individuals make it difficult to determine the extent to which Salvadoran society is truly pacified (the main objective of the peace talks). The Salvadoran peace agreements, unlike many other cases, attempted to deal with the root causes of the conflict. Deep economic injustice, lack of access to land in an over-populated country, democratic reform of the political system allowing representation for all sectors of the society, and the resolution of political differences by political means, were all addressed in the peace accords. A radical and lasting transformation of Salvadoran political culture however, which the accords clearly intended, will probably take a generation.

It has been reported, for example, that Salvadoran adolescents, who returned home after years of exile, brought back to San Salvador street-gang techniques

---

<sup>28</sup> See Edward J. Laurance, *Buy-Back Programmes and El Salvador: Assessment and Proposed Actions*, Draft Monograph for the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Monterey Institute of International Studies, April 1995.

<sup>29</sup> See Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador, S/1995/220, 24 May 1995.

learned in Los Angeles, where their parents had emigrated searching for a better life. This kind of unpredictable event contributed a new dimension to the indigenous level of violence. For the time being, however, it is clear that the parties involved in the peace agreements (the government of El Salvador and the FMLN) have kept their word. The cease-fire was never violated, despite many twists and turns, and the violence that caused so much suffering in El Salvador ended. Disarmament was an important part of the process and it should continue to be a goal for the lasting pacification of El Salvador.

**Part IV: El Salvador**

**Questionnaire Analysis**



**DISARMAMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROJECT**  
**The Disarming of Warring Parties**  
**as an Integral Part of Conflict Settlement**

**PRACTITIONERS' QUESTIONNAIRE ON:**  
**WEAPONS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT, AND**  
**DEMOBILIZATION DURING PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

---

---

**ANALYSIS REPORT: EL SALVADOR**

COMPILED BY: UNIDIR'S MILITARY EXPERT GROUP

COMPLETED BY: LT COL GUILHERME THEOPHILO

DATE: 22 MARCH 1996

---

---

---

**Note to Readers:** The responses which appear in this analysis have been reproduced directly from the respondents' answers to the DCR *Practitioner's Questionnaire*. Changes, if any, have been made only to correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure; all efforts have been made to maintain the integrity of the original responses. Illegible portions of the original written responses have been indicated with ellipses.

---

Reference Number:  
UNIDIR/ONUSAL/005



# Analysis Report Of Practitioners' Questionnaires

## SUMMARY

Number of questionnaires analyzed: 06

## IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

### 1. OPERATION

- a. **Name of operation:** ONUSAL
- b. **Location of operation:** El Salvador
- c. **Time frame covered by questionnaires:**
  - (E084) 01/01/92 - 30/03/93
  - (E107) 01/02/92 - 01/02/93
  - (E108) 31/04/92 - 31/05/93
  - (E166) 08/01/91 - 10/30/92
  - (E167) 15/07/91 - 31/10/92
  - (E168) 01/02/92 - 15/10/92

### 2. RESPONDENTS

#### a. Primary Role:

UN Civilian: 00

Chief : 00

Other : 06

Military Officer: 06

Commander : 00

Other : 00

Humanitarian Relief Operator and/or NGO personnel: 00

National Official: 00

#### b. Primary Function/Mission:

Military: 06

HQ Staff	: 01	Military Observer	: 05
Infantry	: 00	Armour	: 00
Artillery	: 00	Engineer	: 00
Medical	: 00	Aviation	: 00
Transport	: 00	Logistics	: 00
Mil Police	: 00		

Civilian

	: 00		
Civil Affairs	: 00	Staff HQs	: 00
Representative	: 00	Relief Coordinator	: 00
Relief	: 00	Volunteer	: 00

**c. Regular Activities:**

Convoy Operations	: 05	Convoy Security	: 04
Base Security	: 02	Patrolling	: 05
Search Operations			: 02
Check Point Operations			: 03
Cease Fire Monitoring			: 05
Cease Fire Violation Investigation			: 05
Weapons Inspection			: 04
Weapons Inventories			: 06
Weapons Collection - Voluntary			: 03
Weapons Collection - Involuntary			: 00
Weapons Elimination			: 04
Cantonment Construction			: 01
Cantonment Security			: 02
Disarmament Verification			: 05
Information Collection			: 06
Police Operations (Military policeman)			: 00
Special Operations:			: 01
Humanitarian Relief			: 04
Other: Demarcation mining areas			: 01

**SECTION ONE**

*(Note to readers: Two caveats should be kept in mind when surveying the respondents' answers to the Practitioner's Questionnaire. First, in answering the questionnaire, respondents were instructed to answer only those questions which pertained to their specific mission and/or function; as a result, most respondents did not answer all of the "yes" or "no" questions. The number of responses for each question, therefore, will not always add up to the total number of respondents. Second, respondents often provided additional commentary for questions they should have skipped -- they may have answered a question with "no", for example, and then elaborated on their answer in the space provided for the "yes" respondents. For this reason, certain questions may contain more responses than the number expected. Also note that responses from participants E166 and E168 have been translated from Spanish.)*

**I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT:**

**Q1.1 Was there a disarmament component in the original peace agreement and/or relevant UNSC Resolution?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q1.2 Was the disarmament component a central feature of the agreement?**

Yes: 05            No: 01

**Q1.3 Describe the desired outcome of the disarmament component vis-a-vis the peace agreement.**

(E084) The disarmament component was the most important part of the contribution of the guerilla to the peace agreement process

**Q1.4 Was there a timetable planned for implementation?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q1.5 If so, did it go as planned?**

Yes: 02            No: 04

**Q1.6 If not, why? Give three reasons.**

(E084) Other agreements (social, economical...) did not go as planned

(E107) Because the guerilla war force retarded the devolution of his weapon, the demobilization of his personnel and the registration of his political party.

(E108) Both the conflicting parties refused to act according to what was agreed. Delay on armed forces demobilization, delay on military police forces demobilization.

**Q1.7 If there were delays in the implementation, summarize their impact on the disarmament process.**

(E084) The disarmament process did not go as planned because [of] the delays of the other agreements.

(E107) They did not influence the disarmament process.

(E108) Delay on FMLN's transportation into a political party. Delay in all process.

**Q1.8 Did, at any time, the existing agreements hinder you from conducting disarmament measures?**

Yes: 02            No: 04

**Q1.9 If so, mention some of the ways in which you felt hindered.**

(E084) People did not like [to] hand in their arms if they [were] not sure that they [would] achieve other goals of the peace agreements.

(E108) Weapons collection was not made timely. As a result the same weapons were not eliminated in accordance with timetable.

Analyst's Comments:

*The peace process in El Salvador was formalized with the Geneva agreement of 4 April 1990. The agreement identified four subject areas essential to the process: ending the armed conflict through political settlement; democratization; the guarantee of human rights; and the reconciliation of Salvadoran society.*

*The Caracas Agreement of 21 May 1990, produced political agreements in several fields, and pointed to several possibilities for ending the conflict.*

*The San Jose Agreement was the first agreement to be signed between the El Salvador government and the FMLN. The Agreement included the creation of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) whose mandate was to supervise the implementation of the San Jose accord. With ONUSAL, for the first time in the history of UN peacekeeping operations, a mission was established which had a triple composition: a Human Rights division, a Military division, and a Police division.*

*The 27 April 1991 Mexico Agreement, included constitutional reforms of the armed forces, judicial and electoral systems, and human rights. The Agreement also created a "Comission de la Verdad," for investigating human rights violations during the 1980's. The rejection of the Mexico Agreement by the Armed Forces however, lead to the "nudo gordiano" crisis..*

*The "nudo gordiano" crisis, was resolved by the New York Agreement and the creation of the "Comission Nacional para la Consolidacion de la Paz" (COPAZ) later that same year. The New York Agreement opened the way for the definitive peace accord, signed on 16 January 1992, in Castle of Chapultepec, Mexico City, by the El Salvador government (GOES) and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN).*

*The peace agreement included the following points regarding the restructuring of the armed forces:*

*a. doctrinaire principles: subordination to civilian authorities and defense of the national territory as the main task.*

*b. educational system: respect for human rights and dignity as essential values to be taught. The Military School would have a collegiate direction, including civilians. The director of the School would be nominated directly by the president.*

c. *deputation of members of the armed forces: an Ad Hoc Commission on Purification of the Armed forces was created to evaluate the behavior of military offerers during the civil war, under certain criteria. Its final report was submitted on 22 September 1992. The recommendations of the Commission concerned the deputation of 103 officers.*

d. *reduction of the armed forces: the reduction had the objective of adjusting the armed forces to their new peacetime-role in a democratic society.*

e. *end of immunity for armed forces members.*

f. *end of control of public security by the armed forces: suppression of the Guardia Nacional and the Policia de Hacienda.*

g. *changes in the intelligence services: subordination to civilian power, under the supervision of the National Assembly.*

h. *end of the Infantry Battalion of Immediate Reaction (Batallones de Infanteria de Reaccion Inmediata).*

i. *end of para-military groups: suppression of the Defesa Civil and the Escoltas Militares.*

j. *suppression of compulsory drafting.*

#### The National Civilian Police (NCP)

a. *creation of the NCP (illustrates the preoccupation with replacing all security forces, whose conduct during the conflict, having been frequently associated with the slaughter of civilians, proved problematic)*

b. *the non-subordination of the NCP, to the Salvadoran Armed Forces (Fuerzas Armadas de El Salvador - FAES). (The new police force became to be the only body responsible for public security in El Salvador.)*

c. *establishment, in detail, of the doctrine, structure, and recruitment/training of personnel criterion.*

d. *former members of the National Police and the FMLN, could incorporated in the NCP, provided they meet the recruitment criteria and graduated the National Academy of Public Security.*

e. *the process of recruitment and training would be followed and verified by ONUSAL.*

#### The cessation of the armed conflict (CAC)

a. *CAC shall begin on 1 February 1992 ( hereafter referred to as D-Day) and shall be completed on 31 October 1992.*

b. *CAC, as defined in this agreement, consists of four elements:*

(a) *the cease-fire;*

(b) *the separation of forces;*

*(c) the end of the military structure of FMLN and the reintegration of its members, within a framework of full legality, into the civil, political and institutional life of the country;*

*(d) United Nations verification of all the above-mentioned activities.*

*c. the cease-fire shall enter into force officially on D-Day. As of that date, each of the parties shall, refrain from carrying out any hostile act or operation by means of forces or individuals under its control, meaning that neither party shall carry out any kind of attack by land, sea or air, organize patrols or offensive maneuvers, occupy new positions, lay mines, interfere with military communications or carry out any kind of reconnaissance operations, acts of sabotage or any other military activity which, in the opinion of ONUSAL, might violate the cease-fire, or any act that infringes the rights of the civilian population.*

*Official verification of compliance shall begin on D-day. Any alleged violation of the cease-fire shall be investigated by ONUSAL.*

*d. the purpose of the separation of forces is to reduce the risk of incidents, to build trust and to allow ONUSAL to verify both parties' compliance with this agreement.*

*The separation of forces shall take place in two stages: (1) the Salvadoran Armed Forces shall fall back progressively from their present positions until deployed as they would normally be in peacetime, and (2) the forces of the FMLN shall concentrate progressively in designated locations within conflict areas, as determined in the peace agreement.*

*e. dissolution of the military structure of FMLN and reintegration of its members, within a framework of full legality, into the civil, institutional and political life of the country:*

*(a) during the CAC, all the weapons and equipment of the FMLN shall be stored in a warehouse safeguarded and controlled by ONUSAL and by the local leader of the guerrillas.*

*(b) light weapons and equipment possessed by combatants shall be delivered to ONUSAL before their return to civilian, life. Collected matériel shall be stored in secured warehouses.*

*(c) five periods were planned for the reintegration to civilian life, with a target of reintegrating 20% of demobilized combatants during each period.*

*(d) from 15 to 31 October 1992, the FMLN shall destroy all stored weapons, equipment and ammunition, under the supervision and assistance of ONUSAL.*

(e) *ONUSAL's verification of reintegration into civilian life and the destruction of weapons, is fundamental for the recognition of the FMLN as political party.*

*f. United Nations verification:*

*(a) the numbers of ONUSAL military and civilian personnel shall be increased to enable it to fulfil its tasks related to the agreed processes, as described in this agreement.*

*(b) the Secretary-General shall request the Security Council to approve this expansion of the mandate and personnel of ONUSAL. He shall also request the General Assembly to provide the necessary funding from the budget. The individual country contribution to the military component of ONUSAL and the appointment of the commander of this military component shall be decided by the Security Council on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, who shall first consult with the two parties. In order to fulfil its new tasks effectively, ONUSAL will require, as in the other aspects of its mandate, complete freedom of movement throughout the territory of El Salvador.*

*(c) to facilitate the application of this agreement, a joint working group shall be set up immediately after the agreement has been signed. The working group shall consist of the ONUSAL chief Military Observer (as Chairman) and one representative from each of the parties. The members of the working group may be accompanied by the necessary advisers. The Chairman of the working group shall convene meetings on his own initiative, or at the request of either or both of the parties.*

## **II. MANDATE:**

**Q2.1 At the start of your mission, were you informed of the part of the mandate regarding disarmament?**

Yes: 03            No: 03

**Q2.2 How was the disarmament component expressed in your mission mandate? (Summarize.)**

(E084) As part of the demilitarization of the guerilla and scheduled for fourth every two months.

(E107) The guerilla force had to deliver his weapon to be destroyed. The El Salvador army had to demobilize any special battalion of infantry.

(E108) Through the agreements between the conflicting parties through UNHQ regulations.

(E168) Ordered by the commander of the mission.

**Q2.3 How did you interpret the mandate you received?**

(E084) As it was expressed.

(E107) I interpreted that I had to work for the peace and not for the El Salvador's army or the FMLN guerrillas.

(E168) Yes it was an observatory mission.

**Q2.4 Did the way the disarmament component was expressed hinder or assist your disarming task?**

Hindered: 01      Assisted: 03

**Q2.5 If it was a hindrance, how would you have preferred your mandate to read?**

(E107) I preferred that the guerilla force had delivered his weapon at the first time we had contact. In El Salvador they remained with his weapon for a long time during my mission mandate.

**Q2.6 Were your actions/freedom of action during disarmament operations influenced by external factors other than the mandate?**

Yes: 02      No: 04

**Q2.7 If so, which ones?**

- (E084) The delays in implementation of the other agreements. Some actions of the army and other social groups.
- (E108) The actions depended upon the guerilla commanders willingness to accomplish the agreed measures. Usually there was veiled intention to delay [the] mandate's accomplishment.

Analyst's Comments:

*On 20 May 1991, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 693 (1991), which established ONUSAL (26 July 1991) for verification of all the agreements between the government and the FMLN, particularly in respect to Human Rights.*

*The tasks assigned to ONUSAL included observation of the human rights situation; the investigation of specific claims of violations these rights in the country; the formulation of the recommendations of how to eliminate human rights violations and to promote the respect of these rights; and, finally, the presentation of periodic reports to the Secretary-General and, through him to the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council.*

*Besides verification of the Human Rights agreement, ONUSAL would supervise all aspects related to the cease-fire, the separation of the forces, and the maintenance of public order during the transition time up to the creation of the NCP.*

*The principal missions of the Military Division were as follows:*

- 1. Give permission to the FAES and the FMLN members to leave their assembly areas.*
- 2. To verify that the weapons, ammunition, mines, etc., were collected in the designated areas.*
- 3. To supervise the movements of the FAES and the FMLN.*
- 4. To supervise the destruction, by the FMLN of its weapons and military equipment, and offer support through technical assistance.*
- 5. To receive previous notification about flights of the Salvadoran Air Force (SAF).*
- 6. To investigate all claims regarding the presence of personnel or military matériel in places not permitted as well as any violation of the CAC.*
- 7. To coordinate the demarcation of minefields in the country.*

*ONUSAL developed in four distinct phases. The first phase, marked by the beginning of the mission in July 1991, one day before the implementation of a cease-fire. During this period, human rights specialists, legal officers, and ONUSAL police forces worked together toward the monitoring of human rights and the preparation of an effective cease-fire. In addition, in mid-September 1991, the UN sponsored "Operation Palomino" began with ONUSAL/ONUCA helicopters shuttling FMLN field commanders out of their strongholds into Mexico via Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for the peace talks. Four to eight human right officers were assigned to each regional office, and 150 observers were dispersed throughout the country to deal with reported violations.*

*The second phase of ONUSAL, beginning with the formal cease-fire on 1 February 1992, focused on five main objectives: 1) demobilization and disarmament of the FMLN in five stages; 2) reduction by one-half of the armed forces and the dismantling of the "rapid-reaction battalions" and security forces; 3) preparation for the new NCP; 4) re-establishment of public administration in former conflict zones; and 5) the removal of land mines.*

*The third phase of ONUSAL was characterized by two major issues: increasing attention to the political aspects of the accords and the creation of the Electoral Division. This phase began with the end of the cease-fire and lasted through the March 1994 elections. The first major issue, political and economic concerns, became virtually the entire focus of the fourth and final stage of the mission.*

*Political and Economic Issues. The first major issues involved pursuing compliance with troop reintegration, land transfers, and the creation of the NCP. Throughout 1993, troop reintegration into civilian society and land transfers to former combatants continued, but with difficulties. In mid-November, Murrack Goulding made an eight-day visit to the country with two purposes in mind: to investigate paramilitary armed groups and to reach agreement on a timetable for implementation of pending accords, preferably before the beginning of the electoral campaign. This phase also included increased ONUSAL involvement with the NCP and the new National Public Security Academy (ANSP). ONUSAL took the lead in ensuring the establishment of the NCP because the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) failed to fulfill its assumed responsibility of overseeing the NCP's creation.*

*ONUSAL, had its genesis in ONUCA, which was deliberately kept in the area for an extended period of time in the hopes that its presence would create confidence in UN peacekeeping and thus permit the creation of ONUSAL. There was also the practical aspect that it was far easier to move ONUCA*

personnel and equipment into El Salvador from the other Central American nations rather than to create ONUSAL from scratch.

ONUSAL had significant differences (as well as many similarities) with ONUCA. Both were involved in supervising the demobilization of guerrillas (the FMLN, and the Contras, respectively). But these two guerrilla groups were rather different, as were the local military establishments. Because the Salvadoran peace process also involved a major restructuring of the Army, and a sharp decrease of its political role, there was predictable anti-ONUSAL reaction from within the military and the right wing in El Salvador.

In contrast to ONUCA, ONUSAL did not require an infantry battalion to persuade the guerrillas to demobilize. As with ONUCA, ONUSAL relied on military observers from a range of countries, including both traditional UN peacekeeping contributors as well as newly-involved Latin American nations. The latter included Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela; as with ONUCA, there were also substantial contingents from Canada and Spain. Perhaps because of the ONUCA educational experience, in ONUSAL there did not seem to be as great a gap, or as much friction, between the traditional UN contributing nations and the Latin American ones.

One special aspect of ONUSAL was the restructuring and re-training of the Salvadoran police. Historically, the police in El Salvador (and this includes Treasury Police and Border Police as well as traditional urban police forces) have been under direct military control, usually having senior active duty army officers as commanders. In addition, there have been strong links between the police and paramilitary groups at the service of conservative elements in El Salvador. The Salvadoran peace accords thus required that most of the old police establishment be disbanded and that a new police force (which would include individuals from a wide range of political persuasions) be trained. The role of training this new police force was left to ONUSAL, which brought in police officials and trainers from a range of countries. Hemisphere contributor nations included Guyana, Chile, and Mexico. The less than pristine reputation of the latter's corruptibility sparked numerous comments and more than a few jokes about the new Salvadoran police learning the fine art of the "mordida" (Mexican slang for police extortion or bribe). As with ONUCA, there was also pointed criticism from human rights groups about the backgrounds of some of the observers from various Latin American nations.

### **III. SUBSIDIARY DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS:**

**Q3.1 Did the warring factions enter into a separate disarmament agreement?**

Yes: 01            No: 05  
(If not, go to question 4.)

**Q3.2 If so, describe the agreement.**

(E168) Following the agreements of the amendments of Chapultepec.

**Q3.3 Was the agreement formulated with the mandate in mind or independent of the mandate?**

Mandate-oriented: 02      Independent of mandate: 00

**Q3.4 Were there any contradictions between the mandate and the agreement?**

Yes: 00            No: 02

**Q3.5 If so, which ones?**

[No responses.]

**Q3.6 What was the impact of the agreement on the mandate?**

[No responses.]

**IV. TOP-DOWN CHANGES: CONSISTENCY OF THE MANDATE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DISARMAMENT COMPONENT:**

**Q4.1 Did the mandate change while you were engaged in the UN/national operation?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

*(If not, go to question 5.)*

**Q4.2 If so, what was(were) the change(s)? (Describe the most important aspects.)**

(E084) It was approved a delay in the agreement implementation.

(E108) Changes in timetable. Continuing of the armed presence [in] the conflicted areas.

**Q4.3 Did this(these) change(s) affect your disarmament operations?**

Yes: 02 No: 00

**Q4.4 If so, how? (Name the three most important effects.)**

(E084) It was necessary to extend the mandate.

(E108) More time was necessary to collect and eliminate the weapons.

**Q4.5 If disarmament was affected, was it still possible for you to implement disarmament measures as first envisaged?**

Yes: 00 No: 02

**Q4.6 In the context of 4.5, did you have to change or abandon procedures?**

Change: 02 Abandon: 00

**Q4.7** If you changed procedures, what were the changes?  
(Mention the three most important ones.)

(E084) The schedule, the places.

(E108) New timetable for weapons delivery, new timetable for weapons elimination, new weapons for demobilization.

**Q4.8** Were you adequately informed of changes when and as they occurred?

Yes: 02 No: 00

**Q4.9** Were you able to implement alternative measures immediately?

Yes: 02 No: 00

**Q4.10** If not, why? (Give the three most salient points.)

[No responses.]

**V. BOTTOM-UP CHANGES: DISPUTES AMONG THE WARRING PARTIES ARISING DURING THE MISSION:**

**Q5.1** Was there a mechanism or a provision for the settlement of disputes if and when these emerged?

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q5.2** If so, what type of mechanism/provision did you have (i.e., mission, special agreement, the UN process, special commission, etc.)?

(E084) A special commission named Joint Work group.

(E108) New timetable for weapons delivery, new timetable for weapons elimination, new weapons for demobilization.

(E166) COMISIM especially, UNISOS.

(E167) The UN process, special commission.

(E168) UN process.

**Q5.3 What kind of regulations were agreed between the parties and the peacekeepers for the collection of arms?**

(E084) The way arms should be collected. Inventories. way of the weapons deduction.

(E107) They had some dates to return their weapons( the guerilla war force) and to demobilize the special battalion of infantry and the peacekeepers had to verify the obedience of this process.

(E108) The specific regulations in the peace agreement ( five phases for weapons collections, and the same numbers of phase for weapons elimination, etc.)

(E166) FMLN collected the arms and the military observations in the storage places and received a receipt that indicated the personal identification and then the type of weapon they handed over.

(E168) Concentration of armament for future destruction.

**Q5.4 What kind of negotiations/regulations were agreed at the top and lower levels with respect to the storage of arms?**

(E084) Who was supposed to take care of the containers.

(E107) The arms were stored in container with the peacekeepers until their destruction.

(E108) At the level, changing on timetable. At the lower level, intensity of elimination.

(E168) Secure containers for all the armament. No permission of access to the members of the FMLN without authorization from ONUSAL.

**Q5.5 Was there a conflict between these *new* agreements and the *original* agreement and/or mandate?**

Yes: 00 No : 06

Analyst's Comments:

*Several disputes did arise among the parties that clearly affected the timetable for completion of the disarmament mandate. On 30 September 1992, the FMLN suspended their part demobilization due to its perception that the government's 50,000-man Army was not demobilizing in-kind. It took several weeks, for the UN to get the disarmament and demobilization programs back on track.*

**VI. PROTECTION OF THE POPULATION DURING THE MISSION:**

**Q6.1 Did you consider the protection of the population when negotiating disarmament clauses with the warring parties?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q6.2 Was the protection of the population a part of your mission?**

Yes: 04 No: 02

**Q6.3 If so, did you have the means to do so?**

Yes: 04 No: 01

**Q6.4** What were the three most important means at your disposal to achieve this objective?

(E107) The defense of humans rights.

(E108) Demarcation of conflicted area, patrolling; [in] UN vehicles; UN organization system divided into military regions which were subdivided into observational forward posts where populations could make the claims (Denunciations).

Analyst's Comments:

*It can only be inferred that the four respondents who stated that they had the "means" to protect the population were referring to the "power of presence and legitimacy." ONUSAL observers did patrol with the PN and monitored their actions. Also, a credible system of reporting human rights infractions had finally been established in the country. ONUSAL had no military coercive force capable or authorized to protect the population. At the height of its deployment, ONUSAL had only 295 military observers from ten different countries spread out in all areas of El Salvador.*

*The means available for the protection of the population were passive; the UN did not establish active steps to prevent a possible rupture in the agreement. Like ONUCA's mission, one battalion or more should have been designated for the protection of the population and the United Nations Military Observers (UNMO's).*

*There should also have been an evacuation plan to protect the UNMO's and part of the civilian population if conflict erupted between the parties.*

## SECTION TWO

### VII. FORCE COMPOSITION AND FORCE STRUCTURE

**Q7.1** Was the force composition for your mission area unilateral or multilateral?

Unilateral: 00                      Multilateral: 06

**Q7.2            Describe the three most important advantages in acting in the manner described in 7.1.**

Multilateral force composition:

(E084) The international society is more concerned. You can obviate countries relations problem. Only a country concerned could be a bad policy.

(E107) The different experiences of [its] members. The different ideas of [its] members. The integration of the knowledge of [its] members.

(E108) Ensure actions impartiality. Avoids unilateral political trend. Interchanging of experience among the participating countries.

(E166) To get acquainted with the experiences of other officials. To see and know the procedures of UN. To obtain information related to the parties in the conflict.

(E168) Increase the general acquaintances. To appreciate everything valuable from different countries.

Unilateral force composition:

[No responses.]

**Q7.3            Describe the three most important disadvantages in acting in the manner described in 7.1.**

Multilateral force composition:

(E084) Not everyone knows the language. Not everyone knows the culture.

(E107) The difficulty of understanding with the people of the country, the different thinking of the peacekeepers, the different culture of the members.

(E108) Advantages are such that it makes [it] difficult to count any disadvantages notwithstanding, there is a certain difficulty in linguistic communication.

Unilateral force composition:

[No responses.]

**Q7.4 If you worked in a multilateral context: how important was consensus (with peacekeepers from other countries) for the achievement of disarmament and demobilization components during the operation?**

(E084) As far as you have a mandate the most important concern is about the interpretation you made.

(E107) The consensus was very important and it happened in all opportunities.

(E108) Once was a rule that every mission should be accompanied by at least two national observers (different nationality) one observer usually cared for the other one's correction.

(E166) Know the attitude and disposition of the factions in order to control arms.

**Q7.5 Was adequate consideration given to the disarmament component as the mission evolved?**

Adequate: 06      Inadequate: 00

**Q7.6 If it was inadequate, explain how this affected your mission (mention the three most important issues).**

[No responses.]

**Q7.7 Did the force composition identify a specific structure to support the disarmament component of the mandate?**

Yes: 04 No: 02

**Q7.8 If so, what was it?**

(E084) The military decision.

(E108) There were adequate rules [and] warehouses for storage and security. Considering that all observers were military personnel, all of us were habilitated to disarmament mission.

(E168) Efficient logistical support from UN.

**Q7.9 Did the force composition allow for verification and monitoring measures for the control of weapons and disarmament?**

Yes: 03 No: 01

**Q7.10 If so, what were they?**

(E084) Verification training, verification centers.

(E108) Inventory of weapons, quantity control, destruction control.

(E166) Military observations of the United Nations.

(E168) The team work helped to obtain excellent results.

**Q7.11 Was the chosen force structure appropriate for executing the mission?**

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q7.12 Were the units efficient for the mission given?**

Yes: 05 No: 00

**Q7.13 Were the units appropriate for conducting the disarmament operations?**

Yes: 05 No: 00

**Q7.14 Were your units augmented with specific personnel and equipment for the disarmament mission?**

Yes: 02 No: 03

**Q7.15 If so, what additional capabilities did they provide? (List the five most important ones.)**

(E108) HE experts, mines experts, missile experts, demo experts.

**Q7.16 If you were a commander, were you briefed by HQ's prior to your disarming mission and before your arrival in the area of operations?**

Yes: 01 No: 01

**Q7.17 Did the security situation in the mission area allow for weapons control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q7.18 If not, what steps were required in order to establish and maintain a secure environment?**

[No responses.]

**Q7.19 Did these force protection measures affect the accomplishment of the disarmament operations positively or negatively?**

Positively: 03      Negatively: 00

**Q7.20      Elaborate on the impact mentioned in 7.19 above.**

[No responses.]

**Q7.21      Were command and control/operational procedures adequate for your task?**

Yes: 06              No: 00

**Q7.22      If not, mention three examples which demonstrate their inadequacy.**

[No responses.]

**Q7.23      Summarize your salient experiences with command and control/operational procedures while on this mission.**

(E084) The communications network allowed the commander to establish every procedure on command and control he wanted. It was the main success of the mission.

(E168) Patrolling continued in the different centers of verification.

(E107) We had direct contact with the population and the forces and learned important experience.

(E108) Caution in keeping a diplomatic contact with the considered parties, total control over classified matters, precise information on the situation to the higher commands.

**Q7.24      What additional support (special capabilities/force multipliers) did you receive which helped the disarmament mission? List the three most important ones.**

(E108) Experts on missiles destruction, mines detection experts, air-ground bombs experts.

(E168) Equipment, maps, communication equipment.

**Q7.25 Were they adequate?**

Yes: 01 No: 01

**Q7.26 If not, what other capabilities would you have needed to make your mission more effective? (List the most relevant.)**

[No responses.]

Analyst's Comments:

*ONUSAL had a "stove pipe", vertical organization. ONUCA, in Nicaragua, was decentralized and had several separate but equal components. ONUSAL had both the UN military observer division and the Police Division reporting to the UN civilian authority. This structure, definitely simplified the command and control procedures of the operation.*

*The original structure of ONUSAL included:*

- one chief of the mission and one director of human rights;
- regional offices in San Salvador, San Miguel, San Vicente and Santa Ana;
- sub-regional offices in Chalatenango and Usulután, subordinate to, respectively, San Salvador and San Miguel (see map).

*The regional offices were composed of: a regional coordinator, human rights observers, a judicial assistant, a police investigator and military officers.*

*The fieldwork was done by teams of 2 or 3 people. Each mission was made up of appropriately qualified individuals.*

*The main function of the military officers was not verification, but of liaison with the local military authorities and with the FMLN. The military officers also assisted in the coordination of regional security conditions, and made recommendations for the deployment of the different observer teams.*

*Regional military were a key part of the Military Division. There were four such offices: Santa Ana (ORMSA), San Salvador (ORMSS), San Vicente (ORMSV) and San Miguel (ORMSM). Each office was managed by one colonel and had a staff of three to five officers with the functions of: operations, intelligence and personnel/logistics.*

*Except for ORMSA, all of the other offices had (in the third phase) five Verification Centers (VC's) each, for a total of fifteen VC's. These VC's were responsible for the tasks assigned by the ORM: verification of the FAES and the FMLN.*

*After 1 January 1993, with the re-structuring of the Military Division following the reduction of the mission, there were only two military regional offices left: the ORM Central (ORMC), which absorbed the territory of the old ORMSA, ORMSS and part of the ORMSV; and the ORM Oriental (ORMO), which absorbed the old ORMSM and the Department of San Vicente of the ORMSV.*

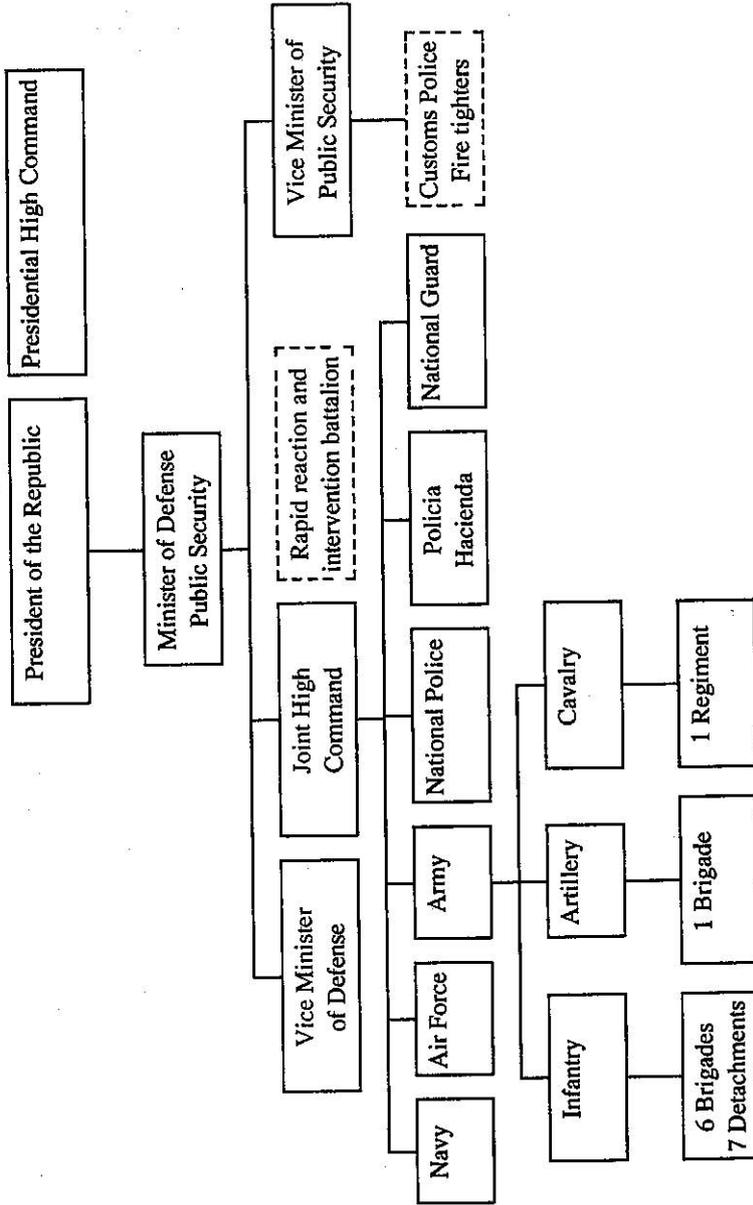
*These new ORMs would become the framework for four military observers groups (MOGs) each one ORM for a total: of eight MOG's.*

*The principal disadvantage of the multilateral composition of the force was that the UNMO's from developed countries, who spoke a different language and had a different culture did not understand the real problems of the Salvadoran people, complicated matters by misreporting to commanders, often times giving the wrong impression about the true situation. For example, in the mediation of a small claim, it was very important to understand the culture and the habits of both factions, so as not to make a wrong decision. See Q7.3 (E107).*

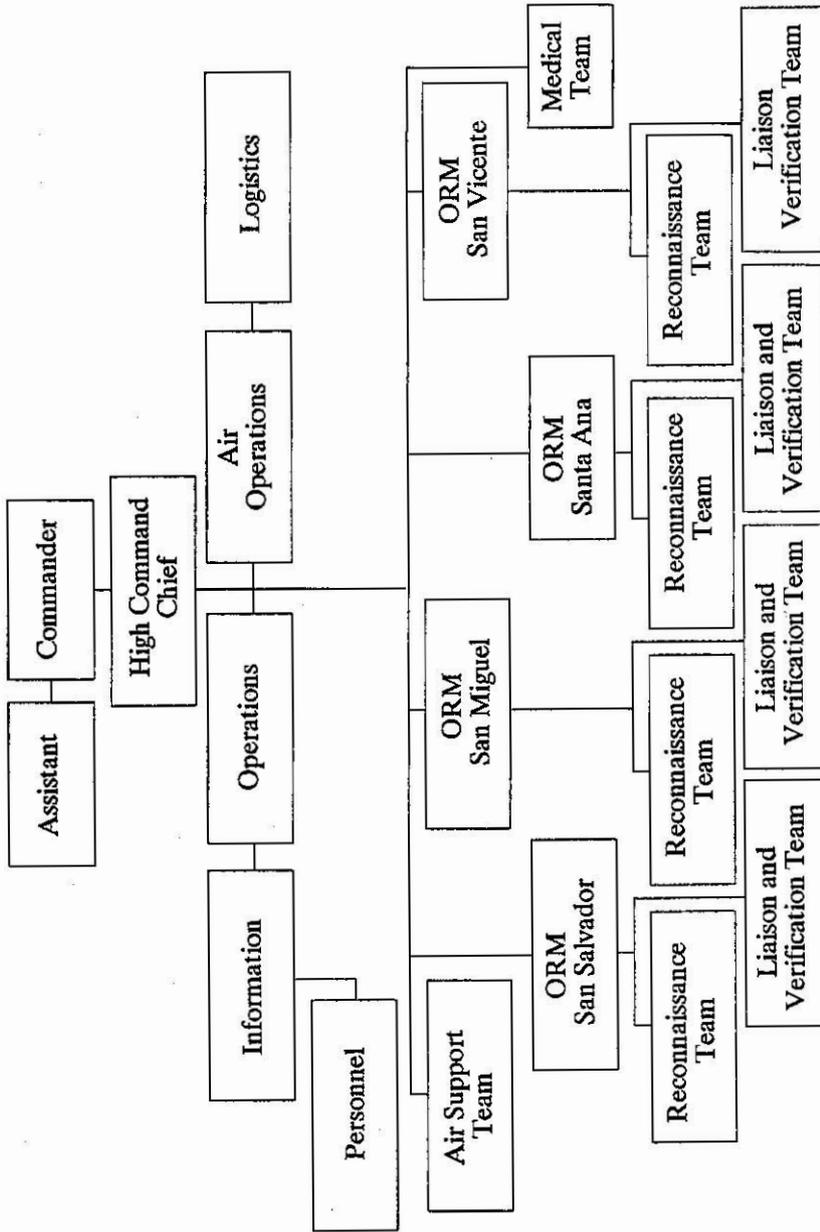
*It's important that observers patrols always consist of different nationalities, and that at least one of the observers speak the local language, or a translator be present so to understand a claim properly. See Q7.4 (E108).*

*Another important facet of force composition and force structure is the aspect of command and control. In El Salvador the means of communication worked very well, which helped provide a good relationship among the UNMO's, the civilian population and the local authorities. See Q7.23.*

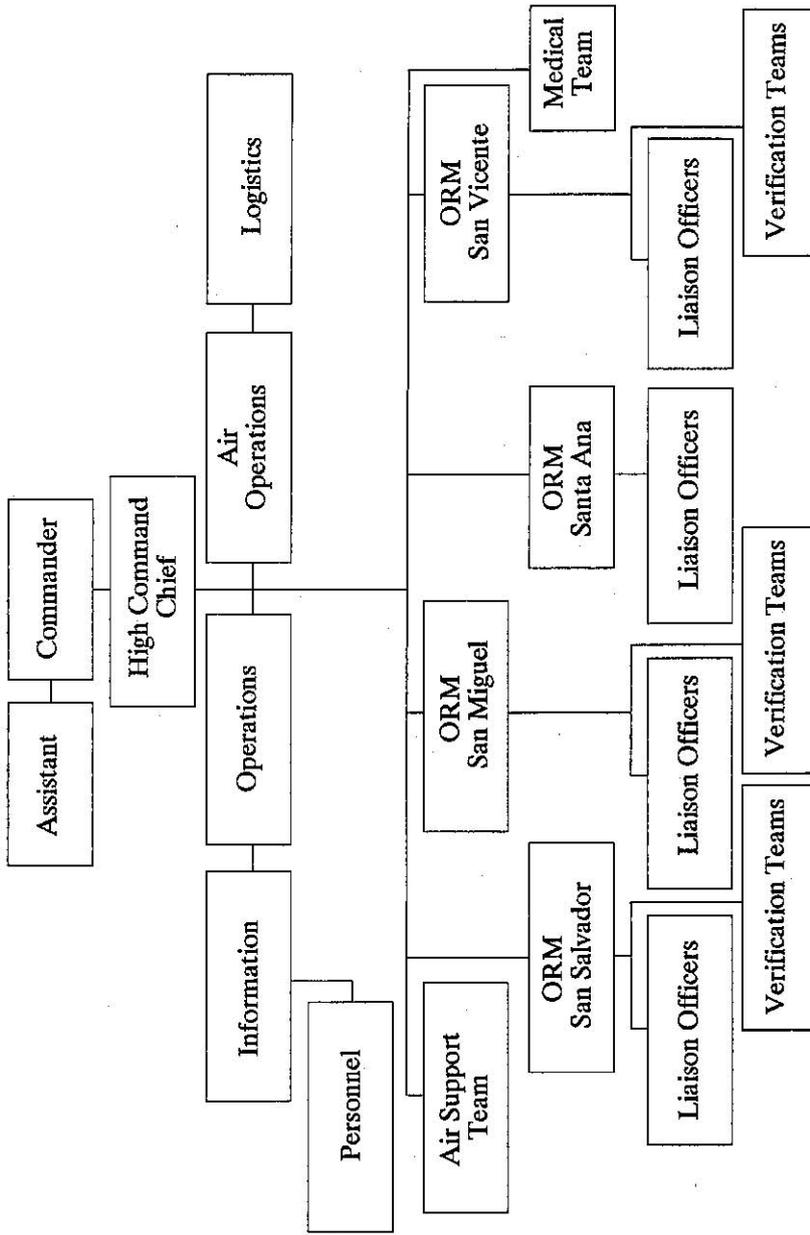
Armed Forces Organization - El Salvador



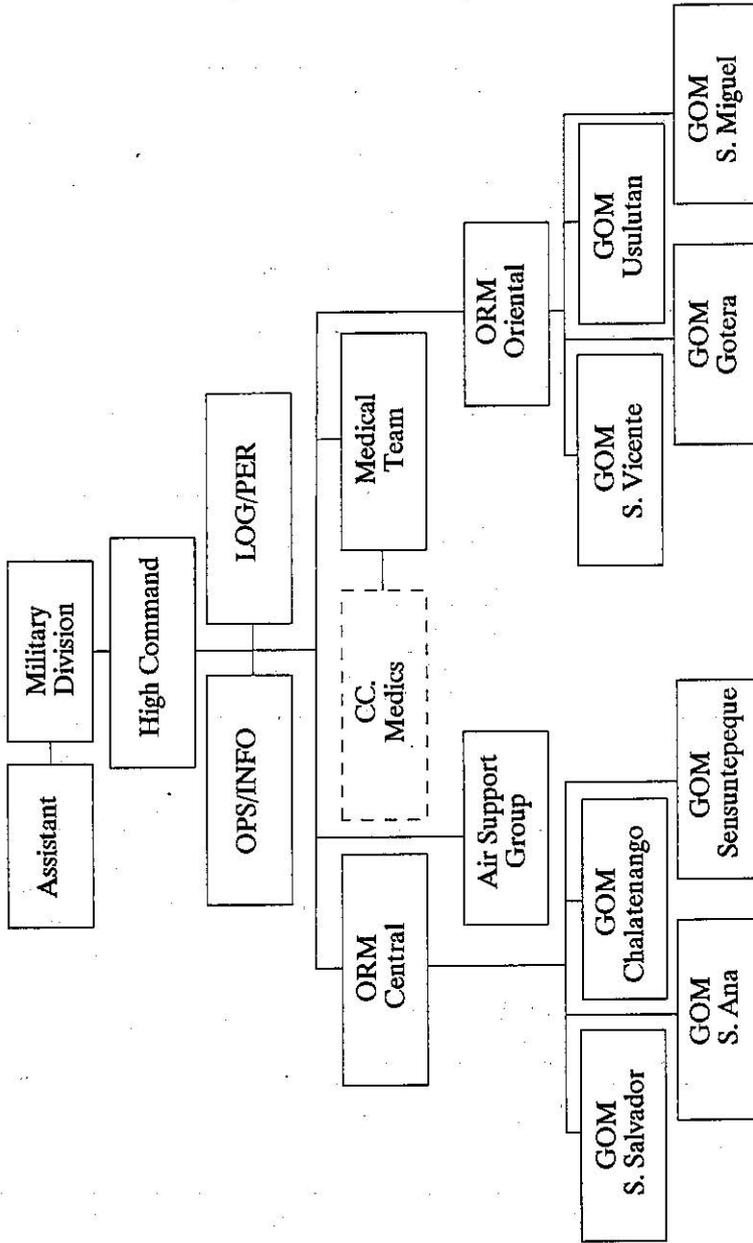
**ONUSAL Military Division (Phase I and II)**



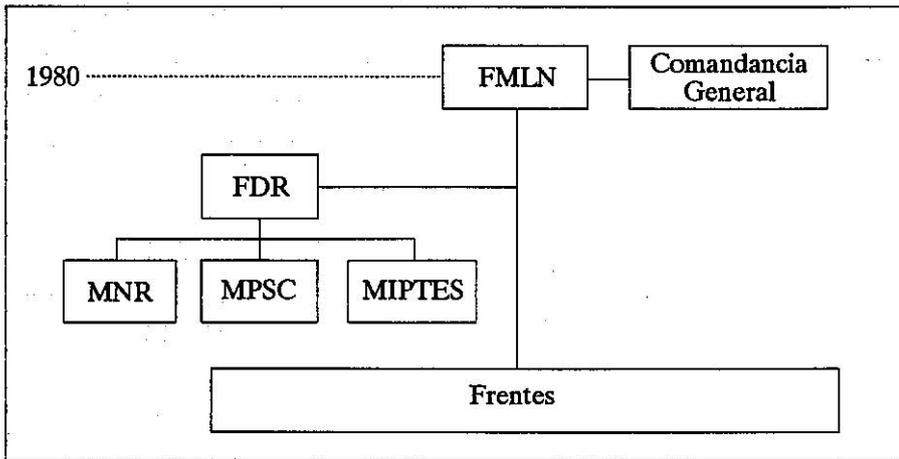
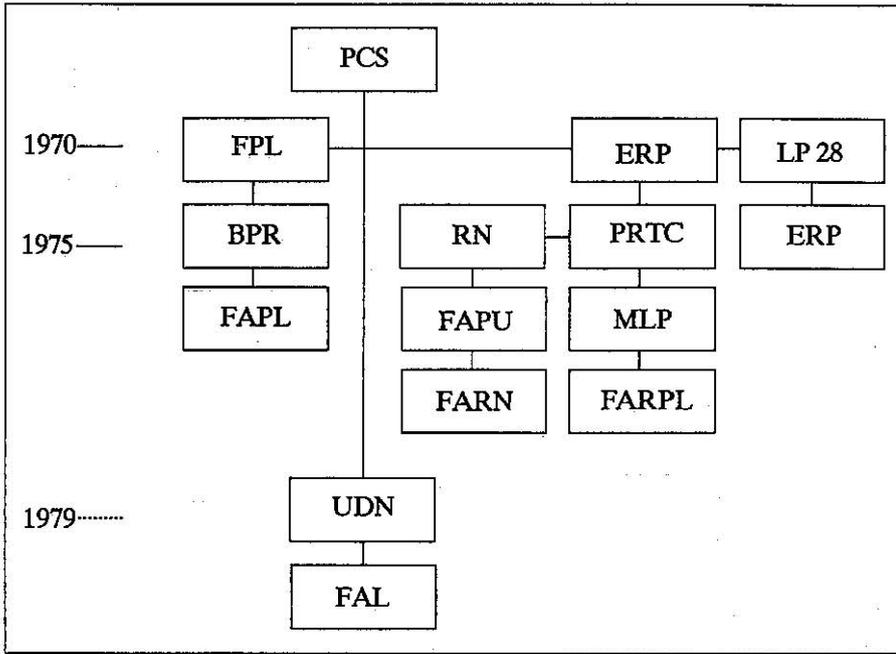
ONUSAL Military Division (Phase III)

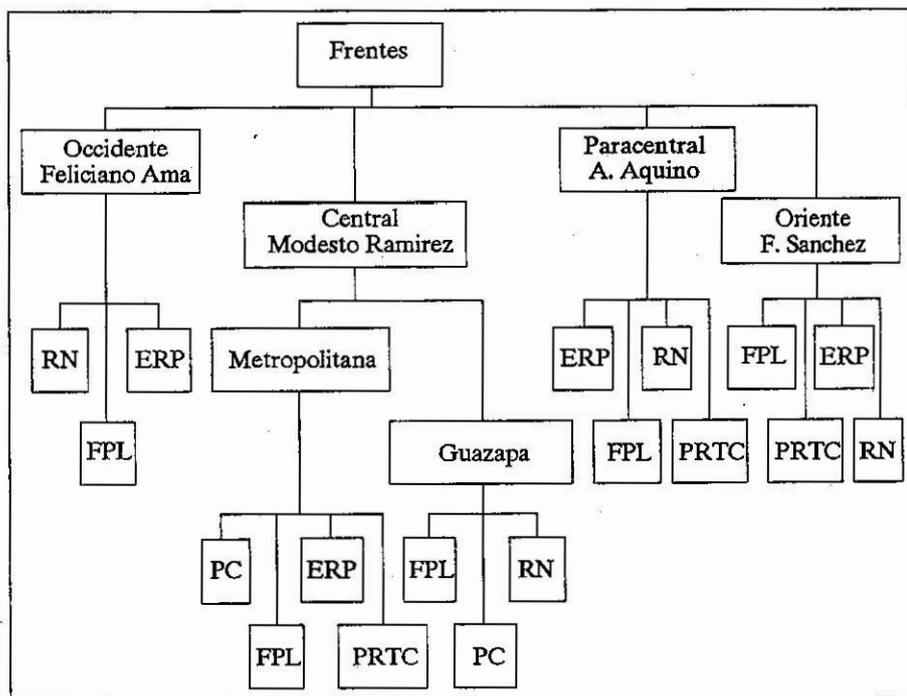


**ONUSAL Military Division (Phase IV)**



### FMLN-FDR Structure





**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

- PCS Partido Comunista de Salvadoreño (Salvadorean Communist Party)
- FPL Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion (Popular Liberation Forces)
- PRS Partido de la Revolucion Salvadoreña (Salvadorean Revolutionary Party)
- ERP Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo (People's Revolutionary Army)
- RN Resistencia Nacional (National Resistance)
- FARN Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional (National Resistance Armed Forces)
- PRTC Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centoamericanos (Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers)
- FAL Fuerzas Armadas de la Liberacion (Liberation Armed Forces)
- MNR Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement)
- UDN Unión Democrática Nacionalista (Nationalist Democratic Union)

**VII. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES/RULES OF ENGAGEMENT**

**Q8.1 Did you abide by national or UN rules of engagement/operational procedures during the pursuit of your mission?**

National: 00 UN: 06

**Q8.2 Were these rules/procedures adequate for the performance of your task?**

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q8.3 If not, what other rules should you have had?**

[No responses.]

**Q8.4 If and when the situation changed, were your rules altered accordingly?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q8.5 If so, summarize the relevant changes.**

(E084) As far as the situation changed our tasks changed and so did the command structure and the division organization.

(E108) Changes on structure due to effectiveness reduction.

**IX. COERCIVE DISARMAMENT AND PREVENTIVE DISARMAMENT**

**Q9.1 Did you have to use force (coercive disarmament) to achieve the mission as mandated?**

Yes: 00 No: 06

**Q9.2 Judging from your experience, is it possible to use coercive disarmament in these types of operations?**

Yes: 03                      No: 03

**Q9.3 Do you believe that force can and should be used to enforce the disarmament components of an agreement?**

Can:                      Yes: 04                      No: 02  
Should:                      Yes: 03                      No: 03

**Q9.4 Mention three reasons why force can/cannot and should/should not be used to enforce the disarmament component of an agreement.**

(E084) If you use the force you become part of the problem for society if you use the force you are fighting and they do not like their armies to do that. When using the force the part coerced would not like you (UN) to stay.

(E107) To impose our decision, to defend one of forces in the contact, to defend the population in the country.

(E108) The local armed country on external support were not able to make disarmament. Considering the guerilla was used by the belligerent, only a large scale operation making country mass destruction would have any chance to succeed.

(E168) Use of force only in case of self-defense.

**Q9.5 If fighting was an ongoing process, was it possible for you to continue with your disarmament tasks?**

Yes: 00                      No: 05

**Q9.6 If so, describe how it was possible to continue with your disarmament tasks.**

[No responses.]

**Q9.7** Were you involved in any preventive deployment operations (i.e., as an observer, preventive diplomacy official, etc.)?

Yes: 05            No: 01

**Q9.8** If so, was disarmament a major concern of this deployment?

Yes: 04            No: 01

**Q9.9** If so, were there already arms control agreements (i.e., registers of conventional weapons, MTCR, etc.) in place within the country where you were operating?

Yes: 04            No: 00

Analyst's Comments:

*The UN must have operational procedures for UNMO's, respecting the culture of the host country, and observers must abide by these.*

*Enforced disarmament would not have been successful in El Salvador because the parties would have reacted violently, sparking a confrontation with the UN forces.*

*Popular support for the mission was considerable because people had a personal stake in a lasting peace. See Q 9.4 (E084)(E108).*

*Disarmament originating from a peace agreement must be voluntary; when the populace and the belligerents become conscious of the need to end the war, they will be willing to accept the rules of the agreement.*

*The patrols were defined as follows:*

*a. Long Distance Patrols: composed of several military units; sought to verify the situation as well as the activities of the FAES.*

*b. Scheduled Patrols: had preestablished missions; normally sought to patrol the assembly areas and the conflict areas.*

*c. Fixed Point Patrols: maintained in fixed points one or more observers to carry-out the verification of personnel and the movements of military*

vehicles and airplanes, which could jeopardize the implementation of the peace agreements.

d. *Alert Patrol*: composed of two or more observers; stayed in the regional headquarters of the Military Division and attended to problems related to the observers' mission.

e. *Land patrols*: consisted of two observers of different nationalities; utilized vehicles for transportation. Here, neutrality was important. While one of the observers drove, the other navigated by map or used the radio equipment. The observers on patrol had to transmit frequently their positions so to be able to receive help if necessary.

*Escorting*, was one of the normal activities of the military observers in El Salvador. This activity followed the tactical or administrative movements of the FAES and FMLN. Tactical movements, were those made from an assembly point to another point. These movements were previously communicated to the Military Division through the observers or by the VC.

### SECTION THREE

#### X. INFORMATION: COLLECTION, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, AND THE MEDIA

**Q10.1 Did you receive sufficient relevant information prior to and during your disarming mission?**

Prior: Yes: 04 No: 01  
During: Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q10.2 Was information always available and reliable?**

Yes: 03 No: 01

**Q10.3 How did you receive/obtain your information prior to and during the mission? (Describe the three most important ways.)**

(E084) The mandate, the military decision orders and plans.  
The public information section documents.

(E107) By the HQ, by the television, by the newspapers.

(E108) UN(NY), UN(HQ), Military Region.

(E166) From the military chief of the mission. From the chief of the military contingent.

**Q10.4 Was there a structured information exchange between HQ's and the units in the field?**

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q10.5 And between the various field commanders?**

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q10.6 Did you use sensor mechanisms for verification/information purposes?**

Yes: 01 No: 03

**Q10.7 If so, list which ones and for what purpose. (Mention not more than three.)**

(E108) Codified texts, codified telecommunication, secret radio bands.

(E166) Photos, videos.

(E167) On site, photo and video for verifying and monitoring weapons control and disarmament operations.

**Q10.7.1 Was the use of on-site and remote sensing an adequate tool for verifying and monitoring weapons control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 05 No: 00

**Q10.7.2** In your opinion, could sensor systems (acoustic, radar, photo, video, infrared, etc.) play a useful role in monitoring the weapons control and disarmament aspects of a peacekeeping operation?

Yes: 04            No: 01

**Q10.7.3** If so, give some examples of phases of the peacekeeping process in which such sensors could be used.

(E107) To control the movement of troops, weapons and machine gun and the war activities.

(E108) Before cease fire.

(E166) Photos and videos to verify armaments.

(E167) On site, photo and video weapons control photo and video disarmament operations.

**Q10.7.4** What would you suggest about the possible organizational set-up of the use of such sensor systems (i.e., UN, regional organization, national, etc.)?

(E108) UN.

**Q10.8** Do you think that normal information collection assets (i.e., intelligence) could and should be used for peacekeeping and disarming purposes?

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q10.9** Why? (List three reasons.)

(E084) You must know the real situation, not what parts want you to know. You must be prepared for any change before it occurs.

(E107) To know the activities of the troops, the positions of the weapons and the possibilities of conflict.

(E108) Because the gathering of data and their systematic processing could lead to discovering of new armaments.

**Q10.10 Is there a need for satellite surveillance in peacekeeping/peace enforcing operations?**

Yes: 05            No: 01

**Q10.11 Did you use the local population for information collection purposes?**

Yes: 05            No: 01

**Q10.12 Did you implement any transparency measures to create mutual confidence between warring parties?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q10.13 If so, did you act as an intermediary?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q10.14 Was public affairs/media essential to the disarming mission?**

Yes: 04            No: 01

**Q10.15 Were communication and public relations efforts of importance during your mission?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q10.16 If so, give three reasons why this was so.**

(E084) It improved the credibility of the mission. It was the way of fighting people against the mandate. It forced parts to carry out the agreement.

(E107) To obtain the confidence of the people and the troops, to show the peacekeeping work, to know the people's necessity.

(E108) Obtaining confidence of the parties. Population coordination, make mediation actions easier.

**Q10.17 Was there a well-funded and planned communications effort to support and explain your activities and mission to the local population?**

Yes: 05            No: 01

**Q10.18 If not, should there have been one?**

Yes: 01            No: 00

**Q10.19 Did media attention at any time hamper or benefit your disarming efforts?**

Hamper: 02        Benefit: 03

**Q10.20 Summarize your experience with the media.**

(E084) When the conflict is between people having all the money and people having nothing, every media is in only one side.

(E107) The people knew our job, had respect for us and defended the peacekeeping position.

(E108) The radical and partial groups used the media to hamper (damage) [the] peacekeeping mission. Generally media efforts undertaken in impartial and positive way benefited the goal, peacekeeping.



*One member country could take responsibility for the collection, analysis and dissemination of all-source intelligence to support disarmament and demobilization efforts during a UN operation. This "force multiplier" would go a long way in providing the UN with some "measures of success" that could be demonstrated and verified. Currently, the UN asks all the parties to turn-in all their weapons but no verification mechanism to determine compliance exists.*

*ONUSAL employed a well designed radio, television, print and billboard information campaign.*

*Public relations efforts purposed to inform both the factions and the population about the peace agreements, and to warn people about the risk of land mines.*

*There was a public competition to choose the best billboards to be used throughout the country, which encouraged community participation.*

*The Human Rights Division produced several community theater pieces to encourage people to collaborate with ONUSAL.*

*The agreements themselves provided valuable contributions in the following aspects: the restoration of public administration in the conflict zone; maintenance of the roads, schools, electric power, etc; and re-establishment of legal administration. The mayors returned to their cities where they were elected. The NGO's helped without problems.*

*UNMO's have to always collect information which should be passed to the commanders for analysis and dissemination to the mission's members.*

*Communications and public relations are of fundamental importance for enhancing the credibility of the mission, to gain the confidence of the populace, and to encourage negotiations. See Q10.16, (E084), (E107) and (E108).*

*Good media management is important in peacekeeping operations: it publicizes the work the UN, it protects the mission, and it encourages the implementation of agreements.*

*Radical groups should not be allowed to use the media to damage an operation and delay a peace process. See Q10.20, (E084) and (E108).*

**SECTION FOUR****XI. EXPERIENCES IN THE CONTROL OF WEAPONS AND IN DISARMAMENT DURING YOUR MISSION:**

**Q11.1 Describe, by order of importance, your specific tasks, if any, in weapons control and disarmament during this mission.**

(E084) The work of the UNMO's was carried out as specified in the peace agreements.

(E108) Collecting and storage of military weapons, collecting of weapons from civilian population, mined and demarcation, weapons, munitions and explosives elimination, mine elimination teams coordination.

(E168) Verification of the concentration of the parts, disarmament of FMLN, integration of FMLN in the public life, reduction of the armed force.

**Q11.2 Did the security situation in the mission area allow for arms control and disarmament operations?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q11.3 If not, what steps were required to establish and maintain a secure environment?**

[No responses.]

**Q11.4 Do you think your weapons control and disarming tasks could have been handled more efficiently?**

Yes: 02            No: 03

**Q11.5 If so, mention three ways in which your task could have been improved.**

(E084) More and better previous information is the only way to imposed task. It is necessary to have something to offer or deny.

(E166) I think that if FMLN put more emphasis on the disarmament, the process could have been more efficient and the control much better.

**Q11.6 Were opportunities missed to take advantage of or implement weapons control and disarmament measures?**

Missed: 00 Not missed: 06

**Q11.7 If opportunities were missed, mention the main reasons why this happened.**

[No responses.]

**Q11.8 Did you find the national diversity of contributed troops a problem for command and control during disarmament operations?**

Yes: 00 No: 06

**Q11.9 If so, mention the three problems you considered most challenging.**

[No responses.]

**Q11.10 Was the disarmament process reversible (i.e., were there instances where devolution was foreseen or requested)?**

Yes: 01 No: 04



	Weapon	M-16 Cannon: 90mm Machine gun: .30 cal. & .50 cal.	Whom: Armed Forces
(E166)	Weapon:	Ak-47 SAM-7, SAM-14 M-16 Dogonov FAL RPG-2, -7	Whom: FMLN
(E167)	Weapon:	FAL M-16 AK-47 Galil Dragnov AFAG SAM-7, SAM-14 Hand grenades Mines-AP RP6-7, RP6-2	Whom: Irregular Units

Other comments:

(E107) The peacekeepers did not use arms.

(E108) A large number of house-made artifacts (mortars, grenade, mines).

**Q11.13** Were you given priorities as to the type of weapons you should disarm first?

Yes: 01            No: 05

**Q11.14** If so, how were priorities assigned (i.e., on what basis)?  
(List three reasons.)

[No responses.]

- Q11.15** At the beginning of your mission, were you able to have sufficient information on military capabilities in regard to numbers and quality of equipment used by warring parties?
- Yes: 00            No: 06
- Q11.16** Did you have the impression that there were caches of weapons in your sector or adjoining sectors?
- Yes: 06            No: 00
- Q11.17** Were illicit weapons a problem for you (illicit as in: not in your inventories)?
- Yes: 05            No: 01
- Q11.18** Was there evidence in your sector that the warring parties continued to have access to weapons through external channels of supply?
- Yes: 04            No: 02
- Q11.19** Could you control external channels of weapons supply in your sector?
- Yes: 00            No: 06
- Q11.20** How important was the control of external channels of supply for the success of the mission?
- Very Important: 04    Important: 01    Unimportant:00
- Q11.21** In your experience, do weapons continue to flow during the conflict even after sanctions, inspections, and checks have been applied?
- Yes: 04            No: 01

(E108) They didn't flow, but there were weapons out of the country controlled by guerrillas.

**Q11.22 Were there any security zones established?**

Yes: 02 No: 03

**Q11.23 If so, were you able to control your sector effectively?**

Yes: 01 No: 01

**Q11.24 Depending on your answer under 11.23, elaborate on How (i.e., how were you able to control the sector?) and Why (i.e., why were you unable to control it?).**

(E084) You can control a security zone but [the] sectors are too large and [the] means too short.

**Q11.25 Were you involved in any monitoring of arms embargoes/sanctions?**

Yes: 00 No: 06

**Q11.26 What was your experience in this respect?**

[No responses.]

**Q11.27 Were any weapons collected for cash or land during your mission?**

Yes: 00 No: 05

**Q11.28 If so, comment on the effectiveness of this incentive.**

[No responses.]

**Q11.29 Were national police involved in the collection of arms?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q11.30** Were other organizations involved in the collection of arms?

Yes: 03 No: 03

**Q11.31** If so, which ones?

(E084) Army.

**Q11.32** If involved in chapter VI operations (peacekeeping), were military observers used in the collection of arms?

Yes: 06 No: 00

**Q11.33** If so, what type of military observer was used (i.e., UN, regional, other organization, etc.)?

(E084) UNMO.

(E107) UN.

(E108) UN.

(E166) Military observations.

(E167) Regional and UN.

**Q11.34** Answer if applicable: was there satisfactory coordination between military observers and yourself as unit commander/chief of operation?

Yes: 05 No: 00

**Q11.35** Were the warring factions themselves involved in the collection of arms?

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q11.36 Did you use opposite party liaison officers so that all factions were represented in the collection of arms and the disarming process?**

Yes: 01 No: 05

**Q11.37 If so, reflect upon your experiences in this issue.**

[No responses.]

**Q11.38 With regard to the UN/national mission you participated in, do you believe arms can be effectively collected?**

Yes: 04 No: 02

**Q11.39 Were you involved in the disarming of individuals, private and irregular units, and/or bandits?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q11.40 Was the UN police involved in these tasks?**

Yes: 04 No: 02

**Q11.41 Were local authorities involved in disarming individuals?**

Yes: 03 No: 03

**Q11.42 If so, what was their role?**

(E084) They acted through national police disarming people involved in common crimes.

**Q11.43 Were there regulations in the mandate or peace agreement with respect to how to deal with private and irregular units?**

Yes: 03 No: 02

**Q11.44 If not, do you think your task would have improved if there had been such an accord?**

Yes: 02 No: 00

**Q11.45 Did you experience problems with snipers?**

Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q11.46 If so, how did you counter this?**

(E168) Continued for a year, increased my military knowledge on: anti-guerilla doctrine of combatants, fight in the urban zones, importance of the operations with civil action.

Analyst's Comments:

*The Chapultepec agreement stipulated that all weapons and military equipment of the FMLN should be handed over to the UNMO's, in any of the fifteen VC's in El Salvador.*

*According to the peace agreement, these weapons and equipment would be destroyed, under the direct supervision of the Military Division of ONUSAL.*

*The FMLN had a military arsenal with a wide variety of weapons, of several calibers, from many countries. This can be explained by the fact that the FMLN was composed of five different factions.*

*ONUSAL had in its registers the inventory of the weapons supplied by the FMLN. Besides this data, the UNMO's undertook a meticulous search for the actual number of existing weapons.*

*At each VC, all of the weapons, ammunition and military equipment which were delivered were stored in one container. The stored matériel was guarded by the UNMO.*

*On 6 December 1992, the process of destroying the weapons began. Destruction, conformed to the instructions given by the Military Division of ONUSAL.*

*The weapons and military equipment delivered by the FMLN, were cut with a gas blowtorch. Antiaircraft missiles were deactivated and destroyed by military experts from the US embassy in El Salvador. The destruction of weapons was completed in March 1993.*

*During the conflict, El Salvador became an "armed country." Any person or organization, which had the "contacts" and the "necessary resources," could get a machine gun or a rifle.*

*The peace agreement called for the collection of private weapons that the armed forces had distributed to bodies and personnel, during the conflict. Such weapons were to be collected by the FAES itself, and inspected by ONUSAL.*

*This procedure should have been completed by 8 December 1992. Despite constant warnings by ONUSAL, the El Salvadoran government did not adopt effective ways to carry out the collection of such weapons.*

*Until 9 March 1993, the situation was as follows:*

<i>Weapons</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Verified</i>
<i>Registered</i>	<i>1083</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Collected</i>	<i>320</i>	<i>78%</i>
<i>Percentage</i>	<i>29,54%</i>	<i>-----</i>

*A certificate issued by ONUSAL to the government confirming that all the weapons included in the inventory were assembled and destroyed was considered a necessary prerequisite for the transformation of the FMLN into a legal political party. A register would then be issued by the Supreme Electoral Commission allowing the Frente to participate in the future elections. After the process was completed (15 December 1992) and all the combatants had been disbanded and their weapons destroyed (according to the figures which had been provided by the FMLN) ONUSAL issued the necessary certificate,*

*Nevertheless, in May 1993 an explosion occurred at an arms cache in a garage in Managua which, following an investigation, was deemed to belong to the FMLN. One of the five groups constituents of the Frente, the Fuerzas Populares de Liberacion (FPL), admitted ownership and affirmed that the cache was part of a series of arms depots held in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador, in contravention of the terms of the peace agreements. Ultimately, a total of more than one hundred arms caches were disclosed, some holding unserviceable arms, but most holding small quantities of weapons and ammunition in serviceable condition. 104 caches were disclosed in El Salvador alone.*

*Following the government's threats not to allow the FMLN to take part in the upcoming elections, the FMLN produced a second, more accurate weapons inventory list, which added about 30% more to the original inventory handed over in 1992. The amount of weapons and war-related matériel included in the second inventory list was considered by the ONUSAL to be similar to its own original estimate of the military capabilities of the Frente.*

*The government should have introduced a project to help those who gave up their weapons, by offering them land, education subsidies, medical care, or financial aid, so to promote disarmament. See Q11.5 (E084).*

*Both parties should have demanded a list of each others' weapons inventory so to be able to verify the exact percentage of weapons decommissioned.*

*The respondents' answers clearly indicate a frustration with the lack of control they had due to the voluntary nature of the disarmament process. They believed that "they missed no opportunities for disarmament" (Q11.6) and yet agreed that they had no real idea how many weapons and of what type remained in the hands of the FMLN (Q11.16-21).*

## SECTION FIVE

### XII. DEMOBILIZATION EXPERIENCES

**Q12.1 Did the disarmament component of your mission include or infer demobilization?**

Yes: 06            No: 00

**Q12.2 If so, what types of demobilization operations were conducted during this UN/national operation (i.e., cease-fire monitoring, weapons cantonment, etc.)?**

(E084) Ceasefire monitoring. Weapons cantonment. Weapons destruction, Incorporation of the guerilla [in]to the civil society.

(E107) Cease fire monitoring. Weapons cantonment. Arms delivery. Convoys control.

(E167) Ceasefire monitoring. Weapons cantonment.

(E166) Verification of the movements of the forces, control of the UN components. Control in cease-fire.

**Q12.3 Was the demobilization process accompanied by a national reintegration process involving government forces and opposing forces?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q12.4 If so, were sufficient means available for an effective reintegration process?**

Yes: 03 No: 02

**Q12.5 If not, elaborate on the problems you experienced with this task.**

(E084) The land promised to guerrillas was not available.

(E108) After a twelve year war, guerilla forces were illiterate. Usually armed forces soldier and guerillas had no qualification.

(E168) No confidence of the involved parties in UN.

**Q12.6 Which organizations assisted you in demobilizing (i.e., other services, international organizations, national organizations, or nongovernmental organizations)? List by order starting with most assistance to least assistance.**

(E084) ACNUR, PHA, CEE, Medicos sin fronteras, OPS.

(E107) Other services, nongovernmental organizations, international organizations.

(E108) UN human rights division, UNICEF, some national organizations. Some foreign countries( Canada, Germany, Japan, USA, Spain, etc.).

**Q12.7 Was there a person or a branch responsible for plans for demobilization?**

Yes: 03 No: 03

**Q12.8 If so, who or which branch was it?**

(E084) Military division of ONUSAL.

(E108) A branch of UN human rights division.

Analyst's Comments:

*Demobilization included the monitoring of the cease-fire, the collection and destruction of the weapons, the incorporation of the guerrilla into civilian life and the verification of the movements of both parties.*

*The demobilization process must be followed by a well-designed project of land reform, professional education for the guerrilla forces, and confidence that the government will to carry out its promises.*

*Also important was the help of international bodies, such as: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Medecins sans Frontiers, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and nongovernmental organizations. See Q12.6 (E107).*

*During the peace process, ONUSAL was charged with verifying the FMLN's incorporation into civilian life, according to the laws of El Salvador.*

*Demobilized personnel was divided in the following categories: fighters, former fighters, wounded fighters, wounded non-fighters and former fighters that can chose to become part of the CNP.*

*15 designated areas were created by the peace agreements where the FMLN combatants (including the clandestine combatants) were to assemble, carrying with them all their weapons and war-related matériel. In each of the designated areas, all the weapons and military matériel, with the exception of personal arms and equipment, were held in special deposits, under the control of ONUSAL military observers. The deposits had a double key system, one key was held by a military observer from ONUSAL, another by the local*

commander of the FMLN. ONUSAL periodically verified that the deposits were not opened and the contents removed.

The personal arms and equipment allowed to be kept by the combatants were supposed to be also taken by the military observers and locked in the deposits in the moment when the ex-combatant left the designated areas for the reintegration into civilian life. The original idea was that in the final period of the cease-fire (15 to 31 October 1992) the FMLN would be carry out the destruction of all the weapons and military matériel assembled, under the supervision of ONUSAL military observers. The whole process however, took much longer than expected.

Some factors which helped achieve successful demobilization were as follows. First, the collaboration of each FMLN commander which allowed the Frente to carry out more effectively the demands of demobilization. Second, ONUSAL was fortunate to have the assistance of the "Association Salvadoreña de Lisiados de Guerra" (23 de Febrero), which was managed by former combatants who were wounded during the war. They were especially motivated to bring about a speedy close to the conflict. Third, and maybe most important, was the presence, help, and cooperation of the UNMO's.

Demobilization was the aim of stage one. The standards of conduct and the observers could define their functions. Combatants were to present themselves to complete a family report, deliver their weapons, hand over their departure pass (if they had one), receive their demobilization card and their record of agricultural experience, and finally, to leave the VC.

This phase was to last until 31 October 1992, when the FMLN should have had all of its weapons destroyed and its personnel incorporated into the civilian life of the country.

In reality, the demobilization lasted until January 1993.

While the demobilization was to be the principal and more important phase of the mission, the Military Division also accomplished one other significant achievement: the verification and collection of the armed forces weapons that were in civilian hands.

Demobilization took place on both sides in conflict. The FMLN dissolved its military structure and re-incorporated its members into the civilian life, according to the laws of El Salvador. The FAES reduced its numbers according to the peace agreement.

*FMLN Demobilization:*

<i>Percentage</i>	<i>First 20%</i>	<i>Second 20%</i>	<i>Third 20%</i>	<i>Fourth 20%</i>	<i>Fifth 20%</i>
<i>Schedule Date</i>	<i>01 May</i>	<i>31 May</i>	<i>30 July</i>	<i>28 Sept.</i>	<i>31 Oct.</i>
<i>Demobilization Date</i>	<i>30 June</i>	<i>21 Sept.</i>	<i>29 Oct.</i>	<i>20 Nov.</i>	<i>15 Dec.</i>

*FAES Downsizing:*

<i>Verified</i>	<i>01 Jan. 92</i>	<i>01 March 93</i>	<i>Reduction</i>
<i>Officers</i>	<i>3324</i>	<i>2220</i>	<i>33,2%</i>
<i>Troop</i>	<i>59851</i>	<i>26537</i>	<i>56,0%</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>63175</i>	<i>28757</i>	<i>54,5%</i>

Another kind of demobilization overseen by ONUSAL, was detailed in the Operation Order "URRACA". This operation sought to support the Creative Associates International (CREA), an organization charged by the Secretary of the National Reconstruction of El Salvador with the distribution of food and agricultural equipment to each of the FMLN's components that was re-incorporated into civilian life.

During the "URRACA" Operation, ONUSAL offered support in the form of convoy escort and transport trucks, as well as helped with communications by providing radio equipment and military observers.

The comment concerning the lack of land reform is a extremely valid. By March of 1995, only half of the land promised to the demobilizing forces (both FMLN and FAES), had been made available. This was the single biggest frustration of ONUSAL and UN officials as they closed this successful peacekeeping operation.

**XIII. DEMINING EXPERIENCES****Q13.1 Did you experience mine problems?**

Yes: 02            No: 03

**Q13.2 If so, what did you do to counteract them?**

(E084) By signposting mine fields and securing their lifting.

(E108) Demarcation of mined areas. Support from both the parties to minefield demarcation.

**Q13.3 Was there an exchange of maps of minefields at the outset when the agreements were signed?**

Yes: 00            No: 06

**Q13.4 If not, was it feasible to have such maps?**

Yes: 03            No: 03

**Q13.5 If so, do you think there should have been an agreement for the exchange of maps at the outset as part of the agreements signed?**

Yes: 03            No: 00

**Q13.6 If no maps were available and it was not feasible to chart the location of minefields, did you consider yourself adequately prepared to deal with the demining of haphazard minefields?**

Yes: 00            No: 06

**Q13.7 Did your unit play a role in the demining process?**

Yes: 03            No: 03

**Q13.8 Was the UN involved in demining?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q13.9 Was the UN interested in becoming involved in demining?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q13.10 Was the host nation involved in demining or interested in becoming involved in demining?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q13.11 Were local groups/militia involved in demining?**

Yes: 03 No: 03

**Q13.12 Do you think local groups and militia should be encouraged to undertake demining tasks?**

Yes: 05 No: 01

**Q13.13 Why?**

(E084) They know where mine fields are. They should be responsible for mines they have planted.

(E107) Because they knew the mines' location. They installed the minefields.

(E108) They have no adequate experience [for] this task.

**Q13.14 Were humanitarian organizations or private firms involved in demining?**

Humanitarian Organizations: Yes: 00 No: 05

Private Firms: Yes: 02 No: 04

**Q13.15 In your opinion, who should undertake demining processes and why?**

(E084) The parts in the conflict, because they know where the mines are, and they are responsible for everyone. UN and other organizations could help giving advice, looking for private firms to do it or looking for the money.

(E107) The El Salvador's army and the guerilla forces because they had installed the minefields and they had to know the localization of them.

(E108) Governmental or private organizations with technology and knowledge required in this case.

Analyst's Comments:

*The FMLN used minefields on a large scale, following the "minado al avance" doctrine. Minefields were placed in front of advancing FAES units and removed after they passed through. The FMLN used homemade mines. It is impossible to describe all the types of mines and systems used, because these depended on the person or group that prepared the mines (their main feature however was that they employed materials which was undetectable by metal detectors).*

*The demining operation was considered a great success. As already mentioned, mines accounted for a great number of casualties. In May 1992, a Program for the Prevention of Accidents by Mines (PAM) was created to centralize and analyze all the information available concerning mines and explosives. PAM consisted of personnel from the FAES, the FMLN, ONUSAL and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 192 areas containing mines were identified, including an area of 202 square kilometers. A Belgian private company (IDAS) was selected to conduct the demining operation. From 15 March 1993 to 30 January 1994, a total of 425 minefields were uncovered and over 9,500 mines of various types were destroyed. The demining operation was very successful, because it had the full cooperation of the FMLN, which had kept maps indicating the exact location of the minefields, and which were made available to those clearing the minefields. UNICEF started a program against mine accidents involving children, and became fully involved with the*

demining operation. PAM officially ended on 30 January 1994, and planning for a PAM II operation to clear explosive artifacts was initiated.

The government and the FMLN asked ONUSAL to coordinate and to plan elimination of the mined fields.

The activities began with the receiving of white stakes, which served to mark the boundaries of the fields.

At the same time UNICEF supported and executed an intense public information campaign for the civilian population. The campaign consisted of several messages broadcasted on television, on the radio and in the newspaper, as well as through leaflets and magazines, informing people what to look for, to identify mines by their shape, warning the population about the risks posed by mines, and what to do to prevent mine accidents.

The FMLN used two kinds of minefields during the conflict: tactical minefields and permanent minefields.

Tactical minefields were used to inflict casualties on FAES forces forced into the field by gunfire. Tactical minefields were also used to facilitate the retreat of the guerrillas after a fight.

Permanent minefields were placed in areas of special interest. For example, in places where the FMLN had hidden logistical resources or command posts.

The places which were considered by FAES as dangerous, with a large possibility of existence of mines, were: near fruit-bearing trees, camouflaged path, the summit of hills, sources of drinking water, access passages, abandoned trenches, in the shadow of trees, etc.

Even with the help of the FMLN, minefield reconnaissance was difficult because the mined areas were on mountain sides and in poor terrain.

Usually, a support area was set up where the equipment and personnel could be assembled. This area was located as near as possible to the demarcated field. From this point the work teams were deployed and the signs and the material were transported, by foot, by the personnel themselves.

The areas which were possibly mined were enclosed with one stake every 25 meters.

Each work team was accompanied by a military observer. Because of the temperature, (around 36 ° Celsius), and the difficulties of the terrain, it was decided that the job should begin as early as possible in the morning and end at noon. When activities continued past this schedule the work was not productive.

### **Mined fields delimited until March 1993**

<i>Number of Fields</i>	<i>187</i>
<i>Number of Mines (Approximately)</i>	<i>6600</i>
<i>Number of Stakes</i>	<i>6500</i>

*From February 1992, the Police Division of ONUSAL had an explosives unit, consisting of Technicians Experts in Deactivation of Artifacts Explosives (TEDAX). These police observers collaborated with the Military Division from the collection phase, to the destruction of matériel belonging to the FMLN.*

*In the second half of August 1992, the UNMO's received the mission to coordinate the demarcation of the FMLN minefields. They had little and inaccurate information about these fields when they began carrying out reconnaissance with help of experts of the Frente. Even with the security measures, the work was exhausting and very dangerous. The reconnaissance had outstanding results because of the collaboration of the FMLN.*

*There was a consensus among respondents that the militia, guerrillas and local armed force should be involved in the demining process, because of their knowledge of the region and of the location of the mines. See Q13.3 and Q13.5 (E084) (E107), (E108).*

## **SECTION SIX**

### **XIV. TRAINING**

**Q14.1 Prior to deployment, did your units undertake specific training programs related to disarmament operations?**

Yes: 03                      No: 02

**Q14.2 If so, were these training programs based on guidance from the UN forces already in the field, from the UN in general, or from your national authorities?**

UN forces in field: 00                      UN in general: 03

National authorities: 00 Other: 00

**Q14.3 Were your units trained specifically for the collection of arms and cantonment of factions?**

Yes: 03 No: 02

**Q14.4 Were you and/or your units trained in on-site inspection and observation techniques?**

Yes: 03 No: 02

**Q14.5 Have you been trained in verification technologies nationally?**

Yes: 01 No: 04

**Q14.6 Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific weapons control and disarmament operations (i.e., weapons searches, inventories, elimination, etc.)?**

Yes: 03 No : 02

**Q14.7 Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific demobilization operations?**

Yes: 03 No: 02

**Q14.8 Were you trained and prepared to conduct specific demining operations?**

Yes: 00 No: 05

**Q14.9 On the whole, did you consider yourself technically and tactically prepared for the accomplishment of your mission?**

Technically : Yes: 02 No: 03

Tactically :    Yes:    05                    No:        00

**Q14.10    Was there anything done at the end of the mission to gather lessons learned?**

Yes:    05                    No:        00

**Q14.11    Back in your own country, were you debriefed?**

Yes:    01                    No:        04

## SECTION SEVEN

### XV. INTERACTIONS

**Given that there are three common elements to a UN mission -- the military, the humanitarian agencies, and the political branch:**

**Q15.1    Would you consider the relationship between humanitarian elements/organizations and the military personnel during the mission to have been very good, adequate, or inadequate?**

Very good:    04                    Adequate:    01  
Inadequate:    00

**Q15.2    If you think it could have been improved, specify three ways in which this could have been achieved.**

(E084) Civilians must know that military people are first people then military, they must not be afraid of them. The previous meetings are very profitable in this way.

**Q15.3    How was the overall cooperation of the three elements of the UN components achieved during your mission? Summarize.**

(E084) It was very good. It is necessary to be like this because only with a good coordination and the cooperation of everyone the mandate could be accomplished.

(E107) The cooperation was very good and real. The UN components had a very good relationship and formed a peacekeepers team who worked very hard to obtain the peace for El Salvador.

(E108) Though common working contacts, social relationship and specially through the common interest for the success of the mission.

**Q15.4 Did cooperation exist between the UN military, private and irregular elements, and existing police forces (UN or local)?**

Yes: 03            No: 02

**Q15.5 If so, describe which components cooperated with whom and the level of their cooperation.**

(E168) There is a clear conscience of the harmony and the team work of all personnel of UN.

(E108) Understanding irregular elements as guerillas, there was good overall relationship with rare non-cooperation incidents.

Analyst's Comments:

*Interactions between the civilian personnel, politicians, and the administrative officers of UN were by and large cordial.*

*ONUSAL was always respected and recognized, even though some of those against the peace process tried to impair its efficiency.*

*Relations with the members of the FMLN, were always positive, if not truly friendly.*

*UNMO's had a similar relationship with the El Salvadoran army officers. Escorts for units transferring to new positions were always followed by sporting events, like a soccer game.*

*The civilian population was very friendly, providing guest houses, meals or assistance with guiding patrols through terrain that could be mined.*

*The escort of the leadership of the FMLN involved special aspects, which were regulated by the Operation Order "PALOMINO". FMLN commanders used*

*ONUSAL helicopters and vehicles, when they did not have the appropriate means of transportation. Originally, the purpose of the transportation support supplied by the UN was to transport, with security, the FMLN commanders participating in the peace negotiations. Following this, the FMLN commanders were escorted throughout the country, for contacts with their subordinates.*

*Operation PALOMINO, was key in the execution of the peace agreements in El Salvador.*

## **XVI. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS**

**On reflection,**

**Q16.1 What was the overall importance of the disarmament task for the overall success of the mission?**

Very important: 04      Important: 01  
Not important: 00

**Q16.2 What were the three major lessons you learned from your field experience?**

(E084) For the people doing the field tasks it is very important to know the language and the culture of the parts in the conflict. Coordination and cooperation between every component of the mission is very important.

(E107) The peace is very important for the people. The nations had to respect the other's sovereignty. The nations had to have troops in perfect coordinations to defense their interest.

(E108) The worst country situation is that in which it loses its kingdom of law and right. War can only lead to an end, social chaos. Victory of a civilian democratic president's persistence and patience in conducting the peace process.

(E167) Irregular operation (tactical). Disarmament operations.  
Sensor mechanisms for information purposes.

**Q16.3 What other question should we have asked here and how would you have answered it?**

Question: (E084) Should a UN mission work only under a mandate accepted by the parties in conflict?

(E108) How could other countries help Salvadoran people to achieve peace?

Answer: (E084) No you should have something to give or to deny. On the other hand, no country or organization should give anything to parts but through UN. Every mandate should include a joint work group as it was done in ONUSAL.

(E108) Peace achievement in El Salvador is a UN lesson to the world. The way to consolidate it and be everlasting is necessary that Salvadoran people is not left to their own destiny. A permanent world assistance is necessary to this so suffered people.

**To be answered only by those who participated in completed UN/national peacekeeping missions:**

**Q16.4 Do you think that the disarmament-related tasks which you undertook had an impact on the national reconstruction processes which followed the end of the mission?**

Yes: 01            No: 00

**Q16.5 If so, briefly explain how and why:**

(E107) At the end of my mission, El Salvador was free of 12 years of guerilla war. The nation [was at peace]. The

political situation became normal and [the] economy [began] to increase.

Analyst's Comments:

*(E084) makes an excellent comment concerning UN operations however, the success of ONUCA in Nicaragua and ONUSAL in El Salvador was not because the UN was able to coerce the parties into peaceful disarmament and demobilization. Instead the UN acted as a facilitator. It provided a successful framework for implementation through an impartial and legitimate third party. ONUSAL and ONUCA are two UN success stories. The main reason or their success, lies in one simple but, important fact: for both El Salvador and Nicaragua, the time for war had passed, and the time for peace had come! The UN was there to make peace a reality.*

*ONUSAL was a great success (in particular the work of the Military Division,) because there was no ongoing fighting, not even during the informal cease-fire.*

*Besides the cooperation of both faction, much of this success must be attributed, to ONUSAL itself:*

*- for the first time in the history of the UN there was a mission with the three components (human rights, military and police) acting independently under the supervision and coordination of the commander.*

*- the existence of work groups, together with the FMLN and FAES, under the supervision of the Military Division, contributed to the resolution of new problems.*

*- the great number of countries represented ONUSAL marked the international aspect of the mission. Preferably, all the contingents must have equal numbers and the head of the mission should be from one of the participating countries.*

*- the creation of the Military Division with the personnel and matériel of ONUCA (that was deployed in the area) had a great influence.*

*- the use of the native language of the country improved communication with the factions and with the people.*

*- the quantity and the quality of the matériel supplied, especially in the areas of transportation and communication, provided safety for the components of the mission.*

*- the Military Division's organization permitted sufficient flexibility to adapt easily to the several phases of the mission.*

*Despite the personnel, administrative, and logistical problems, ONUSAL's very real successes should be celebrated. First, during the ten and a half months in 1992 that it took to disarm and demobilize the guerrillas and to reduce the Salvadoran army by half, the cease-fire was never violated. Second, the FMLN's entry into the political life of the country precipitated no serious incidents until late 1993, when three senior FMLN officials were murdered within a month. Nevertheless, even this crisis did not derail the process of re-incorporation, a development that would have been inconceivable a mere five years earlier.*

*Third, Salvadorans are developing increasing respect for, and consciousness of, human rights. While human rights violations still occur, their numbers constitute just a small fraction of annual figures from the 1980's. Such violations are no longer government policy, and Salvadoran political culture no longer finds it acceptable to kill people for political reasons.*

*Fourth, UN pressure has contributed to a significant judicial reform process, which a multi-million dollar US assistance program specifically targeted for this purpose failed to achieve during the 1980's. While much remains to be done in this area, the rule of law and a competent and honest judiciary are beginning to take hold.*

*Fifth, El Salvador now has an all new civilian police force (NCP). Despite delays and continuing problems, 8,000 newly trained officers are deployed throughout the country. ONUSAL's role in overseeing the selection of NCP leadership candidates, and in preparing a human rights component for the National Public Security Academy (Academia Nacional de Seguridad Publica, ANSP) curriculum helped inculcate modern conceptions of "public security" and the police force's role in society (for example, police officers as public servants instead of agents of a repressive state). Significantly, the mission was able to deter government efforts to incorporate ex-security force personnel into the NCP without their undergoing the requisite screening or training process.*

*A great deal remains to be done in the area of electoral reform, however. The Salvadoran Legislative Assembly has passed a new law providing for the creation of a single identity/voter registration card. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other international donors are preparing to finance an overhaul of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral - TSE).*

*ONUSAL has come to a close, but in recognition by all sides of the still unfinished tasks, a new mission, the United Nations Mission in El Salvador, Misión de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en El Salvador (MINUSAL), is headed by ONUSAL's last head of mission, Enrique ter Horst. Meanwhile, a*

*number of responsibilities have been transferred to the UNDP, reflecting a marked improvement in the working relationship between the temporary and permanent missions.*

*The civil war in El Salvador killed, for twelve years, about of 75 thousands lives and triggered an exodus of about 1 million people. The FMLN considered the terms of the peace agreements and their implementation a victory, which would bring about true social revolution. The FAES, carried out its main obligations, but contested many of the small details. In reality however, the country changed. The problems facing El Salvador today, are different. To combat increasing delinquency, the society adopted a new Penal Code and the Penal Process Code, which represented a democratic reaction. The FMLN signaled that it was prepared to participate in the democratic process. Another revolution, either on the left or on right, is unlikely. Neither the country, nor the international community would not support it.*

*El Salvador is dependent on the American government, which has declared that the only way to continue to receive external aid, is to continue with democratization. Only time will bring progress to this small country which war destroyed.*

*The FAES received from the US about 6 billion dollars of military aid over ten years. Nevertheless, it was unable to defeat the guerrillas. One of the most important causes of that incapacity was the inability of FAES to develop a doctrine particular to the situation of the country. There was a separation between officers and soldiers, an absence of preparation, an absence of continuity in its actions, and internal corruption. The BIRI and the special troops of the Brigades were well trained, but the rest of the army was not, and in general, the troops of the Infantry Battalion were not reliable. The guerrilla did not have respect for them. As the draft was enforced, desertion, as well as infiltration by the FMLN, became common. Often soldiers were sympathetic to the FMLN; they would go in the army, receive basic military training, acquire information about barracks, and then they would desert and return to the guerrillas.*

*Due to the lack of proper training of most FAES units, the BIRI was used where there was a crisis. These elite troops took action and returned to their bases, or were used in other critical zones. After their removal however, the guerrillas would re-assume control little by little.*

*From the moment the FAES adopted the American army doctrine without adapting it, its possibility of success was eliminated. The American doctrine does not consider the possibility of a revolutionary war in the USA. Because of*

*this, the populace of the country where the US is fighting a guerrilla war, will be by and large sympathetic to the guerrillas and oppose the American army.*

*Practically all Salvadoran officers graduated from American schools. Because of this, solutions proposed by the USA army (rich) were adopted by the Salvadoran army (poor) without adaptation. The inability of the FAES to devise solutions itself, hindered the detection and resolution of the internal conflict in the country.*

*The doctrine of "minado al avance" and the war of mines in general, the ability "to live close to the enemy," the capacity to gather and disperse and the skilful planning of its actions, are characteristic of the FMLN's irregular war. The FMLN's main deficiency however was its lack of unity. The FMLN, was a union of five groups, which agreed to help one another. In combat there was usually cooperation but no coordination. This fact helped the FAES in action, principally against the great offensives of the guerrillas.*

*Ultimately, action against a revolutionary movement must take place in all spheres: economic, military, social, etc. Initially, the revolutionary movement in El Salvador was fought only with military power. A minimal amount of attention was given to the psychosocial field, due to political confusion and economic difficulties, which created a fertile ground, well explored by the extremist movements. By the time the government of El Salvador directed social action toward the lower classes, extremism was already well entrenched difficult for to dislodge.*

*During the conflict civil defenses were formed by paid civilians. Their task was to defend the populace against guerrilla attacks, to maintain public order, and to pursue delinquents. With the end of the conflict, the end of civil defenses created another social problem for the country by adding another 13,000 unemployed by and large without any qualifications and little prospect of finding work.*

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

*While ONUSAL's rich and complex experience in El Salvador cannot be precisely duplicated in any other missions, its varied responsibilities provide many helpful examples for present and future missions that call for blue berets and baseball caps rather than blue helmets. The mission's role in peacemaking also offers lessons for US policy-making toward El Salvador in particular and other regional missions in general. The most important lessons for the United Nations and the international community include the following elements:*

1. A willingness on the part of the warring factions to use the United Nations as a mediator, both before and after the peace accords were signed;

2. Solid leadership, including both the quality and tenacity of the United Nations' negotiating team, and, with rare exceptions, a first-rate ONUSAL staff in El Salvador;

3. Support from most Salvadorans across the political spectrum for the accords and ONUSAL's presence in their country; and

4. The "good offices" of outside actors who had an interest in the successful completion of the peace process.

In the Salvadoran case, the "Group of Friends of the Secretary-General" played a critical role during the negotiating process. After a hiatus of several months in 1992, the ambassadors who were members of the "Group of friends plus on" began to meet with ONUSAL, the government, and the FMLN. The "Friends" were particularly instrumental in pushing compliance at critical junctures. A specific convergence of events made the positive contribution of the "Friends" possible. These events included the 1983-1985 effort of the "Contadora countries" (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) to seek a political solution to the Central American conflicts, the great interest of the European Community in the region, Spain's historic ties to Latin America, and the end of the Cold War. While it has been difficult to duplicate this experience in Guatemala, it is useful to identify sympathetic and supportive external actors who can help a peace process.

5. When it becomes clear that socioeconomic issues will be an integral part of peace accords, it is imperative to find a way to bring into the process the international agencies and organizations that have responsibility for funding reconstruction programs and reforming or creating new institutions. This is particularly true of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and in the Western Hemisphere, the Inter-American Development Bank. In the case of El Salvador, agreements were struck to implement reforms and establish new institutions that assumed millions of dollars in international financing as well as some modification of the neoliberal economic model that El Salvador adopted after 1989. Thus, a built-in contradiction existed between what the accords committed the government to do and its economic policy. At the same time, it was assumed that the Salvadoran government would absorb the costs of new institutions. The government, however, balked at these expenditures, which meant that the United Nations had to scramble to find outside donors, resulting in delays of months, in many cases, while funding and donations were arranged. This suggests a related lesson:

6. *Who will pay and where the funds will come from must be addressed in the negotiations.*

*The last lesson to be learned relates to interagency cooperation and coordination. ONUSAL was not the only UN presence in El Salvador. The UNDP had been in the country for 30 years. The UNHCR had been present since the 1980's. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) also predated ONUSAL. The difficulty, as both ONUSAL and UNDP senior officials have noted in interviews, is that the former operated in terms of months, while the latter operated in terms of years. This situation points to an underlying tension in and inherent challenge to the present UN organizational structure:*

7. *Complementary organizations must work together efficiently and maintain constant contact in order to prevent the bulk of the work from falling on one agency. Achieving these objectives with the framework of differing mandates is the principal challenge.*

*The Salvadoran experience imparts a number of equally important lessons for the United States. As the United Nations observed its 50th anniversary last year, it was fitting to celebrate its successes. Those peacemaking successes, not only in El Salvador but also in Cambodia, Namibia, and Mozambique, remind us that:*

1. *Multilateral approaches to conflict resolution work when they have the active support of all the parties, national and international, that have a stake in their success; and*

2. *Multilateral approaches to peacemaking cost less than bilateral assistance because the burden of reconstruction and institution building is shared.*

*In an era of shrinking budgets and reduced foreign assistance, it is in the United States' interest to get the most out of its foreign aid dollars. The Clinton administration's original policy objectives of developing multilateral approaches in several areas of foreign policy were effectively derailed by the perceived failure in Somalia. Nonetheless, policy-makers should support viable multilateral initiatives. In the Salvadoran case, the United States can make a virtue of necessity by helping the process along rhetorically, diplomatically, and through the careful application of resources in the bilateral pipeline, in coordination with other donors whenever possible. Thus,*

3. *Nation building takes time. In El Salvador, it will also require a sustained effort by the United States and other interested parties to help keep the process on track because significant political forces in the country would like to return to the status quo ante of the 1970's. The United States has a track*

*record of multilateral cooperation in El Salvador, beginning with the period of negotiations and continuing after the peace accords were signed. This cooperation has served US policy, UN goals, and Salvadoran interests well. The United States has a huge stake in El Salvador as a result of its political and financial commitments during the 1980's. Therefore, the United States should focus on consolidating peace and avoid the temptation of relegating the country to the back burner of policy concerns. In the final analysis, the Salvadoran peace process has come as far as it has, in essence, because Salvadorans have wanted it to succeed. This process and ONUSAL's success serve to remind us that international peacekeepers can carry out their mission only if supported by the parties to the conflict themselves. This is the most important lesson of all.*

*The signing of the Peace Accords in January 1992 foresaw the creation of a National Reconciliation Plan destined to solve a series of conflicting problems such as: the demobilization of an important armed contingent, the relocation of refugee populations, and the reconstitution of the political system. The implementation of these accords during the last year has allowed some advances in the peace-building process, especially in relation to the demobilization of the armed forces, to the efforts of democratization of the main institutions of the State, and to the execution of a series of projects of the National Reconstruction Programme. The peace-building process in El Salvador has produced important experiences at an institutional level. Negotiation and co-operative actions between the different forces involved in this process have generated agreements in key areas for the country, such as the National Reconstruction Plan, the Forum on Economic and Social Concertation, COPAZ and mechanisms which have systematically allowed the development of a dialogue and the construction of a consensus in the political sphere.*

*However, many relevant tasks still remain to be executed and resolved, in particular, those related to the internationalization and institutionalization of the values of peace. The Government of El Salvador considers that, while it is true that the peace building process in El Salvador is advancing, a stronger support is nevertheless necessary to consolidate this process as an integral part of Salvadoran society. The Salvadoran Government, with the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the collaboration of other international organizations, celebrated a National Reflection Forum on Education and Culture of Peace (28-29 April 1993). The contributions from this Forum helped confirm the consensus of vast national sectors on the Culture of Peace Programme. The above-mentioned contributions also produced*

*conceptual elements on this issue and made it possible to identify concrete projects and work-guidelines for this purpose.*

*One fundamental instrument for the construction of peace is culture in its many different manifestations. The objective of the Culture of Peace Programme is to build and strengthen the values of peaceful living in interpersonal, national and international relations. The consolidation of peace in El Salvador is not only a fundamental responsibility of the government, but it concerns society as a whole. With this in mind, the Culture of Peace Programme in El Salvador must to be built upon a national consensus.*

*The consolidation of peace requires a development process that will integrate the concept of human development and promote equity in all areas. Peace learning and living should be emphasize in this process, through common actions by the different sectors of society. To promote a day-to-day culture of peace, criteria have to be defined to support a systematic Programme. These criteria must ensure that the Programme becomes a national task.*

*The different cultural identities reinforced or generated during the conflict were fundamentally based on the rejection of the party, of what is different. The Programme should facilitate the birth of a new identity that will take into consideration the process of "human development". Therefore, various cultural factors which endanger peace will have to be taken into consideration, whether in the vision of a national identity which existed before the conflict, or in those that have been generated after the conflict. It is necessary to reconcile these cultural visions with peace, creating a space for cultural dialogue to recover, generate and diffuse peace values through education, social communication, cultural creativity and the exercise of democracy. In day-to-day life, these values will be assumed at the moment when they are shown to facilitate the fulfillment of common wishes, needs and aspirations and that they also build solidarity.*

*The central postulate implied by a culture of peace that the respect towards human rights will be the basic reference of the political system. The culture of peace promotes the evolution of a formal democracy into a democracy with greater participation and more decentralization. To allow the culture of peace to take root in daily life, it is necessary to strengthen a development process which promotes equity. This process, necessarily co-operative, must be centered in human development which involves an integrated vision of development, beyond simple economic growth. Human development, in the context of the consolidation of a culture of peace, implies the promotion of*

*dialogue and co-operation at local and community levels and the implementation of initiatives to improve the population's quality of life.*

*Peace, and consequently, the culture of peace will always be a task and a process which are un-finished in human society. Under these circumstances, the Culture of Peace Programme is an ambitious task. The Programme as a whole, from its design to its execution and evaluation, must be a practice of the culture of peace. The Programme should reach from the most simple to the most complex, from the common to the different. It should begin with a basic conceptual reference framework and a system of co-ordination, evaluation and systematization, followed by concrete projects whose execution should be undertaken by the participating actors. Such projects will only become real manifestations of a culture of peace through the participation of these actors.*



## Biographical Note

Paulo Wrobel received his Ph.D. in International Relations from the Department of War Studies, Kings' College, University of London. Since 1991 he has held the position of both lecturer and researcher at the Instituto de Relacoes Internacionais da Pontifica Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro (IRI/PUC-Rio), during which time he has also worked as a researcher for the Centro de Pesquisa e Documentacao do Brasil da Fundacao Getulio Vargas (CPDOC-FGV), from 1992 until 1994. Not only is Paulo Wrobel a distinguished academic, but also the author of numerous articles, in particular: "Nuclear Rapprochement: Argentina, Brazil and the Non-Proliferation Regime," in *The Washington Quarterly* (with John R. Redick and Julio C. Crasales), "An Analysis of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," in *IPRI*, "Brazil's Nuclear Diplomacy: Non-Proliferation and the Treaty of Tlatelolco," in *Contexto Internacional*, and "Aspects of Independent Foreign Policy: The Question of Disarmament and the Case of Cuba," in *Estudos Historicos*.



## **Part V: Bibliography**



## BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND PAPERS

- Acuerdos de El Salvador: En el Camino de la Paz*, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1992.
- Aravena, Francisco Rojas, "Esquipulas: un Proceso de Construcción de Confianza," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 8, July-December 1993, pp. 64-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Centroamérica: Dos años de Trabajo por la Paz," *Relaciones Internacionales*, Costa Rica, No. 30, 1990.
- Baranyi, Stephen, "Ampliando los límites de lo posible: Misión de paz de Naciones Unidas en América Central," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 5, No. 9, January-June 1994, pp. 105-124.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Beyond Traditional Peace-Keeping? Caveats from International Theory and from Experiences in Central America," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 5, No. 9, January-July 1994, pp. 153-166.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and Liisa North, *Stretching the Limits of the Possible: United Nations Peacekeeping in Central America*, Aurora Paper No. 15, Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Global Security, 1992.
- Barahona, Francisco and Elizabeth Escalante, "Centroamérica: Proceso de Paz, Desmilitarización y Desarrollo," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July-December 1991, pp. 118-129.
- Berdal, Mats R., "Fateful Encounter: The United States and UN Peacekeeping," *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Wither UN Peacekeeping?*, Adelphi Paper 281, London: IISS, 1993.
- Blachman, Morris and William Leogrande, eds., *Confronting Revolution: Security through Diplomacy in Central America*, New York: Pantheon, 1986.
- "Blocks remain on path to El Salvador peace," *Financial Times*, 3 March, 1995.
- The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping*, New York: Department of Public Information, 1990.
- Boutros-Ghali, Boutros, "An Agenda for Peace: One Year Later," *Orbis*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 1993, pp. 323-332.
- Bricker, Calvin, *Central America and Peacekeeping: A Workshop Report*, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1986.
- Buvollen, Hans Peter, "Low-Intensity Warfare and the Peace Plan in Central America," *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, September 1989, pp. 314-334.
- Calvert, Peter, *The Central American Security System*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

- Cesse del Enfrentamiento Armado*, San Salvador: Military Division of ONUSAL, 1993.
- Child, Jack, "Peacekeeping and the Inter-American Military System," paper presented at the conference on *Peacemaking, Peacekeeping and Coalition Warfare: the Future Role of the United Nations*, Norwich University, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Central American Peace Process, 1983-1991: Sheathing Swords and Building Confidence*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992.
- Coleman, Christopher, C., *The Salvadoran Peace Process: A Preliminary Inquiry*, Research Report No. 173, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 1993.
- Cordova, Arturo, Diaz, "El Proceso de Paz in El Salvador: La Comision de la Verdad, Analisis e Implicaciones de su Trabajo," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 5, No. 9, January-June 1994, pp. 85-104.
- Cordova, Ricardo and Raul Benitez Manaut, eds., *La Paz in Centroamerica: Expediente de Documentos Fundamentales (1979-1989)*, Mexico: CIIH-UNAM, 1990.
- Dallanegra Pedraza, Luis, *Proceso de Desmobilizacion de la Resistencia Nicaraguense*, Buenos Aires: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1990.
- Diehl, Paul F., *International Peacekeeping*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Institutional Alternatives to Traditional UN Peacekeeping: An Assessment of Regional and Multinational Operations," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter 1993, pp. 209-230.
- Downes, Cathy, "Demobilisation after Civil Wars," *Strategic Survey 1993-1994*, London: Brassey's for the IISS, 1994.
- Drouhaud, Pascal, "Salvador: La Construction de la Paix," *Défense Nationale*, No. 1, January 1993, pp. 121-130.
- Dunkerley, James, *The Pacification of Central America*, London: Verso, 1994.
- Durch, William J. (ed.), *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1993.
- Eguizabal, Cristina et al., *Humanitarian Challenges in Central America: Learning the Lessons of Recent Armed Conflicts*, Providence: Watson Institute, Occasional Paper 14, 1993.
- El Salvador: Implementation of Post-War Programs Slower than Expected*, Washington, DC: United States General Accounting Office, Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 1994.

- Enriches, Laura, *et al.*, *Nicaragua: Reconciliation Awaiting Recovery: Politics, the Economy and USAid under the Chamber Government*, Washington DC: Washington Office on Latin America, 1991.
- Fitful Peace: Human Rights and Reconciliation in Nicaragua under the Chamber Government*, New York and Washington DC: Americas Watch, 1991.
- Goulding, Marrack, "The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping," *International Affairs* 69, Vol. 69, No. 3, July 1993, pp. 451-464.
- Holiday, David and William Stanley, "Building the Peace: Preliminary Lessons from El Salvador," *Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Winter, 1993.
- Informe sobre la actuacion de la unidad especial de seguridad "Venezuela" en centroamerica a orden de las Naciones Unidas*, Caracas: Comando de la UESV, 1990.
- Karl, Terry, Lynn, "El Salvador's Negotiated Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 147-164.
- Klepak, Hal, P., "Peacekeeping in Central America," in David, A., Charters, ed., *Peacekeeping and the Challenge of Civil Conflict Resolution*, Saint Jean: University of New Brunswick, Centre for Conflict Studies, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Security Considerations and Verification of a Central American Arms Control Regime*, Arms Control Verification Occasional Paper No. 5, Ottawa: The Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada), 1990.
- Informe de ONUSAL sobre el Proceso de Verificacion de los Acuerdos de Paz en lo Referente a Control y Limitaciones de Armamentos y Fuerzas Militares*, San Salvador: ONUSAL, n.d.
- James, Alan, "Internal Peacekeeping," *Peacekeeping and the Challenge of Civil Conflict Resolution*, editor David A. Charters. Saint John: University of New Brunswick, Center for Conflict Studies, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Problems of Internal Peacekeeping," *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1994, pp. 21-46.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Internal Peacekeeping: A Dead End for the UN?," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Peacekeeping in International Politics*, London: Macmillan, 1990.
- Joly, John, D., "ONUCA - A Story of Success in the Quest for Peace," *Canadian Defense Quarterly*, July 1991.
- Las Minas en el Conflito Armado de El Salvador*, San Salvador: Oficina de Informacion Publica de ONUSAL, 1994.

- Laurance, Edward, J., *Buy-Back Programmes and El Salvador: Assessment and Proposed Actions*, Draft Monograph for the United Nations Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Monterey Institute of International Studies, 1995.
- Leogrande, William, M., "From Reagan to Bush: The Transition in US Policy Towards Central America," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3, October 1990.
- Lewis, William, H. (ed.), *Peacekeeping: the Way Ahead*, Washington DC: National Defense University, 1993.
- Lyons, Gene, M., "A New Collective Security: the United Nations and International Peace," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1994, pp. 173-199.
- MacFarlane, Neil, S. and Thomas, G., Weiss, "The UN, Regional Organisations and Human Security: Building Theory in Central America," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1994, pp. 277-295.
- Mackinlay, John, "Improving Multifunctional Forces," *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 149-173.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *The Peacekeepers*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Manaut, Raul, Benitez, "Centroamerica y el Nuevo Sistema Internacional: Negociaciones, Paz, Integracion y Geopolitica," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July-December 1991, pp. 96-117.
- Martin, Laurence, "Peacekeeping as a Growth Industry," *The National Interest*, No. 32, Summer 1993.
- Montgomery, Tommie, Sue, *The United Nations and Peacemaking in El Salvador*, North-South Issues, Vol. 4, No. 3, University of Miami, 1995.
- Neves, Juan Carlos, *United Nations Peace-Keeping Operations in the Gulf of Fonseca by Argentine Navy Units*, Newport: Center for Naval Warfare Studies, Naval War College, 1993.
- New York Times*: 15 October 1989; 21 October 1989; 10 January 1991; 10 November 1991; 11 February 1992.
- ONUSAL El Salvador*, Hoja de Informacion No's. 1-8, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1991.
- ONUSAL in El Salvador*, United Nations Focus: Human Rights, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1992.
- O'Shaughnessy, Laura Nuzzi, "La Verificacion/Observacion Internacional como Medio Democratico de Legitimacion: Los Acuerdos Centroamericanos de Paz en Nicaragua y El Salvador," *Relaciones Internacionales*, No. 46, 1994, pp. 31-40.

- Orrego, Vicuna Francisco, "Nuevas Modalidades para el Restablecimiento de la Paz y Seguridad en Derecho Internacional: El Grupo de Observadores de las Naciones Unidas en Centroamerica," *Estudios Internacionales*, No. 93, January-March 1991, pp. 3-18.
- "Palabras del General de Brigada (EJ) Alvaro Rafael Barboza Rodriguez durante el acto conmemorativo del 5° año de la activación y salida de la Unidad Especial de Seguridad "Venezuela" en Misión de Paz A/O ONUCA (America Central)," Maracay: Sede de la 42 Brigada de Infanteria Paracadista, 1995.
- Parsons, Anthony, *From Cold War to Hot Peace*, London: Michael Joseph, 1995.
- Pastor, Robert A., "Nicaragua's Choice: The Making of a Free Election," *Journal of Democracy* 1, Summer 1990.
- Paz e Integración en Centroamerica: El Umbral de una Nueva Etapa*, Madrid: IRELA, Dossier No. 37, 1992.
- Peacekeeping and International Relations*, Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies.
- The Peace Process in El Salvador and the United Nations*, ONUSAL Fact Sheets 1-8, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1991.
- Peralta, Gabriel Aguilera (ed.), *Reconversion Militar en America Latina*, Guatemala: FLACSO, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Problemas de la Desmovilización en Centroamerica," *Seguridad, Funcion Militar y Democracia*, Guatemala: FLACSO, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "La Reconversion Militar en Centroamerica," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 3, No. 5, January-July 1992, pp. 39-59.
- Pico, Giandomenico, "The UN and the Use of Force," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 5, September/October, 1994.
- Pinto, Herbert David Ortega, "Naciones Unidas, Acuerdos de Paz y Verificación Internacional: El Caso de El Salvador," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 4, No. 8, July-December 1993, pp. 83-91.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "El Proceso de Paz de El Salvador bajo la mediación de las Naciones Unidas," *Estudios Internacionales*, Vol. 2, No. 4, July-December 1991, pp. 143-161.
- Proceso de Desmovilización del Personal del FMLN*, San Salvador: ONUSAL, n.d.
- "Revista Unidad Especial de Seguridad Venezuela," Special Number, Caracas, n.d.

- Rikhye, Indar Jit, *The UN and Peacekeeping: Results, Limitations and Prospects*, London: Macmillan, 1990.
- Roberts, Adam, "The Crisis in UN Peacekeeping," *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Autumn 1994, pp. 93-120.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The UN and International Security," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp.3-30.
- Rosenau, James N., *The United Nations in a Turbulent World*, Occasional Paper Series, International Peace Academy, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_, and W. Michael Fagen, "Domestic Elections as International Events," in Carl Kaysen, Robert A. Pastor and Laura W. Reed (eds), *Collective Responses to Regional Problems: The Case of Latin America and the Caribbean*, Cambridge Ma: The Committee on International Security Studies, American Academy of Arts and Science, 1994.
- "Salvadorans Complain Postwar Crime Defeating Rebuilt Police Force," *Washington Post*, 15 March 1995.
- Sohr, Raul, *Centroamerica en Guerra*, Mexico City: Alianza Estudios, 1988.
- Spence, Jack and George, Vickers, *Negotiated Revolution? A Two Year Progress Report on the Salvadoran Peace Accords*, Cambridge Ma: Hemisphere Initiatives, 1994.
- Soto, Alvaro, de and Graciana, del Castillo, "Implementation of Comprehensive Peace Agreements: Staying the Course in El Salvador," *Global Governance*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1995, pp. 189-203.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Obstacles to Peacebuilding," *Foreign Policy*, No. 94, Spring 1994, pp 69-86.
- Sutterlin, James, S., *The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Security. A Challenge to be Met*, Westport and London: Praeger, 1995.
- The United Nations and El Salvador, 1990-1995*, New York: UN Department of Public Information, Blue Book Series, Vol. IV, 1995.
- Una Triple Renovacion en America Central? Elecciones, Integracion y Desarrollo Economico*, Madrid: IRELA, Dossier No. 48, 1994.
- The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peacekeeping*, New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1990.
- United Nations Chronicle*, 27, No. 3, September 1990; September 1992; March 1994; June 1994; September 1994; December 1994.
- United Nations Peace-Keeping*, New York: Department of Public Information, 1993 and 1994.

- Walter, Knut and Philip, J., Williams, "The Military and Democratization in El Salvador," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 1993, pp. 39-88.
- Wehr, Paul and John, Paul, Lederach, "Mediating Conflict in Central America," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1991, pp. 85-98.
- Williams, P., "Elections and Democratization in Nicaragua: The 1990 Elections in Perspective," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 32, No. 4, Winter 1990, pp. 13-34.
- Weiss, Thomas, G., "The United Nations and Civil Wars," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4, 1994, pp. 139-159.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Collective Security in a Changing World*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Intervention: Whither the United Nations?," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1993, pp. 109-128.

#### UN DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

*United Nations Secretary-General Reports ONUCA: S/20895, S/21019, S/21194, S/21257, S/21259, S/21274, S/21274 Add.1, S/21341, S/21349, S/21379, S/21909, S/22031, S/22032, S/2057, S/22543, S/23171, S/23421.*

#### UNIDIR PRIMARY SOURCES

- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Analysis Report of Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament, and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations: Nicaragua*, Geneva: United Nations, unpublished draft.
- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Analysis Report of Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament, and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations: El Salvador*, Geneva: United Nations, unpublished draft.
- United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Practitioners' Questionnaire on Weapons Control, Disarmament, and Demobilization during Peacekeeping Operations, Nos., C003, C004, C020, C022, C062, C085, C090, C091, C092, C116, C117, C118, E084, E107, E108, E166, E167, E168. Geneva: United Nations, unpublished survey responses.