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# El Salvador: Prospects for Negotiations



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An Intelligence Assessment

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ALA 83-10055  
April 1983

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# **El Salvador: Prospects for Negotiations**



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**An Intelligence Assessment**

This paper was prepared by  Office of  
African and Latin American Analysis. Comments and  
queries are welcome and may be directed to the  
Chief, Middle America-Caribbean Division, ALA, on



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This paper was coordinated with the Directorate of  
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**El Salvador:  
Prospects for Negotiations** [Redacted]

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**Key Judgments**

*Information available  
as of 10 March 1983  
was used in this report.*

The Salvadoran insurgents have launched a series of major military offensives to force the government to the bargaining table, while renewing earlier calls for unconditional talks with San Salvador to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict. Although the insurgents publicly declare their desire to end the fighting, it is our judgment that the "peace" initiative thus far represents part of a joint political-military strategy to bolster international support for the guerrillas, promote government disunity, and buy time for the military struggle. We believe a major insurgent goal is to disrupt or discredit the presidential elections scheduled for December 1983.

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[Redacted]

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Although some moderate leftists in the insurgent alliance reportedly are willing to reach a political accommodation with the government, they have little leverage because of the domination of the alliance by Marxist-Leninists. We also believe they would be forced to abandon the insurgent alliance and would face reprisals should they attempt an independent solution. The largest and most radical insurgent faction has indicated both privately and publicly that it does not believe a peaceful solution is possible and would oppose one in any case.

The government in San Salvador also is built around a loose coalition of hardliners and moderates, and the internal debate over negotiations has yet to produce a coherent strategy. Nevertheless, a hard-bought consensus has evolved among rival parties and the military against any dialogue aimed at sharing power with the insurgents. The government's recently appointed peace commission is charged only with offering an amnesty to the insurgents and an opportunity to join in the election process. While some moderates in the provisional government might be willing to make greater concessions to the guerrillas in an effort to seek a peaceful solution, in our judgment they will continue to be constrained by government hardliners.

On the basis of these factors, we therefore believe the prospects are slim for any meaningful negotiation on the government's terms. We believe the best the government can hope for is that a few non-Marxist insurgent leaders—such as political spokesman Guillermo Ungo—will risk breaking with the guerrilla alliance and will participate in the 1983 elections. This will not end the fighting, however, and, unless the military situation deteriorates sharply, it is unlikely that there would be negotiations on guerrilla terms.

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Considering the fragility of the government and the sensitivity of the negotiation issue, we believe that international pressure for unconditional talks would precipitate increased turmoil within the civil-military power structure and would heighten the risk of collapse of the coalition. Nevertheless, San Salvador's acceptance of foreign calls for talks aimed at establishing a cease-fire and holding internationally supervised elections may place the insurgent alliance on the diplomatic defensive and improve the government's image at home and abroad.



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**Contents**

	<i>Page</i>
Key Judgments	iii
Introduction	1
Recent Insurgent Bids and Government Responses	1
The Insurgents' Dual Strategy	2
Development of the Strategy	2
Cuban and Nicaraguan Support	3
Position of the Democratic Left	3
Program Results and New Initiatives	4
Government Strategy on Negotiations	4
Hardliners Against Moderates	4
A Consensus on Basic Goals	5
Scenarios for Negotiations	6
Implications for the United States	8
<b>Appendixes</b>	
A. Organization of the Insurgent Alliance	9
B. Chronology of Negotiation Efforts by the Salvadoran Insurgent Political-Military Alliance (FMLN/FDR)	13

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## El Salvador: Prospects for Negotiations



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### Introduction

The concept of a negotiated settlement has been at the center of domestic and international debate on El Salvador since the outset of the conflict. In 1980 the civil-military junta led by the Christian Democrats introduced an amnesty program and offered to engage the insurgent alliance in Church-mediated dialogue aimed at heading off a full-scale war.<sup>1</sup> Leftist forces rejected the government's call for talks, choosing instead to launch a "final offensive" in January 1981 that they hoped would spark a Nicaraguan-style insurrection. After two weeks the offensive collapsed and US military aid was extended to the government. For the two years since then, the left has conducted a campaign to promote a power-sharing arrangement with the government in San Salvador.<sup>2</sup>

This paper analyzes the negotiation strategies of both the government and the guerrillas and the prospects for a political settlement during 1983. Especially highlighted are the various schools of thought within the leftist alliance and the military and political game plans of the insurgents. Based on the left's organizational structure, we examine several plausible negotiation scenarios and consider their implications.

### Recent Insurgent Bids and Government Responses

The insurgent alliance has sought to regain lost support—domestic and international—by portraying

<sup>1</sup> See appendix A, "Organization of the Insurgent Alliance." The terms "insurgent alliance" or "the left," as used in this paper, cover five Marxist-Leninist guerrilla factions, their respective political fronts, and three small splinter groups of democratic socialists with whom they are loosely allied. Although deeply divided by tactical questions, personalist quarrels, and ideological doctrines ranging from orthodox Stalinism to Maoism, Trotskyism, and Castroism, leaders of all five insurgent organizations share a totalitarian view of the future. This totalitarian view, however, is not monolithic in style or degree. This paper addresses both "hardline" and "moderate" divisions within the Marxist camp and distinguishes them from the pluralist aspirations of the non-Marxist democratic socialists, also referred to in this paper as the "democratic left."

<sup>2</sup> See appendix B, a chronology of negotiation efforts by the insurgents.

itself as the more legitimate governing alternative to the civil-military power structure in San Salvador. The most recent formal proposal for negotiations was offered by the left at the beginning of the guerrillas' 1982 fall offensive.

On 26 October 1982, political spokesman Guillermo Ungo and guerrilla leader Ana Guadalupe Martinez held a press conference in Mexico City to publicize a "new" peace plan. The key points of this *Proposal for a Dialogue* are:

- The leftist alliance and the civil-military leadership in San Salvador should initiate a direct dialogue without prior conditions.<sup>3</sup>
- Both sides should designate plenipotentiary representatives for this purpose.
- Other governments' "good offices" should be employed to organize and facilitate the dialogue.
- Other public and private interests in El Salvador should be considered for participation in such a dialogue.

Government and military leaders view this latest initiative by the left as another tactical ploy to gain international support and secure a power-sharing arrangement without having to face democratic elections, according to US Embassy and press reporting. Nevertheless, because of international and domestic pressures, officials in San Salvador privately and publicly have shown interest in addressing the negotiation issue, but on the government's terms. They have formed a peace commission and submitted an amnesty proposal for review by the Constituent Assembly. The proposal calls on the left to renounce violence and join in the presidential elections now scheduled for December 1983.

<sup>3</sup> [Redacted] leftist spokesmen privately view "dialogue" as a preliminary stage in formal negotiations aimed at producing a mixed democratic/Marxist government and a restructured military institution led by "progressive" officers and guerrilla cadre.

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**The Insurgents' Dual Strategy**

[redacted] we judge that the current leftist "peace" initiative is part of a larger two-track political-military strategy to bolster international support for the guerrillas, weaken the government and the armed forces, and buy time for a total guerrilla victory. This dual strategy, moreover, has evolved through considerable debate and compromise within the leftist alliance—particularly on the part of hardliners, who, [redacted] [redacted] have no intention of bargaining with either the government or the military. We believe this argues against serious concessions by the left in any negotiations. Although some democratic leftists probably are willing to reach a genuine accommodation with the government in San Salvador, they have little leverage in an alliance dominated by Marxist-Leninists. [redacted]

**Development of the Strategy**

The election in March 1982 was privately viewed by the left as a major tactical defeat and initially deepened internal divisions among insurgent hardliners and moderates over ideology and tactics, [redacted]

[redacted]

Conversely, moderates in the insurgent alliance—including both Marxist military and political elements and the democratic socialists—warned that an intensified war could prove counterproductive, [redacted]

[redacted] They reasoned that the Salvadoran public would be further alienated by attacks on the country's economy, and expressed concern that both the government and the United States might react more strongly to such a purely military challenge. A reasonable negotiation alternative offered by the left, they argued, would strengthen domestic and international support for the guerrillas,

reduce US options for greater involvement, and eventually drive a wedge between the government and the armed forces. [redacted]

We believe these different tactical viewpoints and other personalist and factional rivalries so strained the leftist alliance that some compromise had to be worked out. [redacted]

[redacted] a new political/military policy was issued by the insurgent general command to its field units. The new guidelines emphasized military action as the primary component of the strategy but stipulated that, on the diplomatic front, the insurgent alliance "would pay lipservice to a negotiated solution while rejecting negotiations privately as a viable means to end the war." [redacted]

Greater public cooperation and coordination between guerrilla leaders and their political spokesmen have been evident since the outset of the guerrillas' sustained series of offensives begun last October. In our view, this underscores the insurgents' dual plan to advance combat operations while increasing political pressure on San Salvador to negotiate. [redacted]

Indeed, simultaneously with their initial October military campaign, leftist political spokesmen introduced a new proposal for negotiations at a press conference in Mexico City. Shortly before—according to reliable US Embassy sources—copies of the proposal had been hand-delivered to Salvadoran leaders by then acting Catholic Archbishop Rivera y Damas with the understanding that the guerrillas would reduce operations and await a private response. The premature public declaration by the left and its warning that large-scale attacks would continue until San Salvador agreed to a dialogue place the sincerity of the approach in question. [redacted]

The two-track strategy offers significant benefits and minimal risks for the insurgents. [redacted] [redacted] even those guerrilla leaders who reject compromise with the government

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now view the negotiation strategy as usefully complementing their military operations, gaining them time to reorganize front groups, and sufficiently placating moderate leftists to ensure unity in the alliance. [redacted]

**Cuban and Nicaraguan Support**

Since the outset of the insurgent war, the Salvadoran left has received substantial political, logistic, and material backing from its principal allies, Cuba and Nicaragua. In our opinion, these two countries remain deeply committed to Marxist revolution in the region and therefore perceive they have much at stake strategically in the fortunes of the Salvadoran guerrillas.

[redacted]

We believe that Nicaragua is promoting revolution in El Salvador and radical left causes elsewhere in Central America as much for reasons of security as ideology. The euphoria of the Sandinistas following their victory in 1979 has given way to what they view as a struggle for survival against hostile neighbors and agents of the United States, [redacted]

[redacted] they recognize that continuing support for Central American insurgent and terrorist groups is taxing their own resources while also threatening to isolate their regime. [redacted]

Thus, we believe Managua's public support for negotiations in El Salvador is predicated on the hope that the insurgents can strengthen their own base of popular support and relieve some of the pressure on Managua. The Sandinistas' biggest fear—as suggested by US Embassy [redacted] reporting—is that a protracted conflict in El Salvador could tempt the United States to take more direct action against Nicaragua itself. In our judgment, advocating negotiations in El Salvador is perceived by Managua as a way of inhibiting greater US involvement in the

conflict. At the same time, however, the Sandinistas are likely to continue to provide arms and other aid to the insurgents to sustain the military effort. [redacted]

Similarly, the Cubans increasingly have publicly indicated their support for negotiations in El Salvador while championing the guerrillas' military campaigns. [redacted] Havana has been disappointed by the inability of the guerrillas to foment a popular insurrection and is concerned over what might be the US response to an escalating conflict. The Cubans are actively seeking to undo the established order in Central America but do not believe this can be accomplished soon by military means, [redacted]

Havana views negotiations as a ploy to buy time for Salvadoran insurgents and relieve pressures on Cuba and Nicaragua. Moreover, negotiations in El Salvador would set a precedent favorable to Marxist groups elsewhere in the region who are weighing their own abilities to foment revolution. [redacted]

**Position of the Democratic Left**

We believe that calls for a power-sharing arrangement prior to elections by non-Marxists like Guillermo Ungo are compelled by ideological considerations and concern that the totalitarian majority of the leftist alliance would block by force any incipient defection from the dual military-political strategy. Nevertheless, Ungo and his small coterie of democratic socialists have in the past pressed San Salvador both publicly and privately for concessions and guarantees which, in our judgment, reflect their desire to contest the presidential elections and possibly to consider a separate peace with the government. [redacted]

Although Ungo and his backers—who left the government and joined the insurgents in early 1980 largely because they believed a successful popular insurrection was imminent—dutifully denounced the March 1982 elections, they probably were impressed with the conduct of the balloting and the large voter turnout.

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Since that time, their attempts to have government leaders in Costa Rica and opposition figures in Nicaragua act as intermediaries for a dialogue aimed at discussing elections suggests they may be concerned that the December 1983 contest could prove to be an important watershed they cannot afford to boycott.

While there is no reporting to substantiate duplicity by the democratic left toward the Marxist majority, some of their peace feelers—which on occasion have not been endorsed by the guerrilla leadership—have appeared independent of the official insurgent position they purport to represent. In addition, Ungo loyalists have told US officials of their party's interest in running for public office with appropriate personal safety guarantees. Furthermore, Ungo and other socialists last fall publicly announced conditions under which they would return and participate in the electoral process, including an end to the state of siege, reopening of the National University, access to the media, and release of political prisoners.

#### Program Results and New Initiatives

The insurgents' success so far in implementing their dual political-military strategy has been impressive and threatens to increase the costs for San Salvador throughout 1983. Since mid-October 1982, attacks by guerrilla forces have disrupted harvests of vital cash crops and crippled transportation, communications, and electrical power over a wide area. At least a dozen towns in four provinces have been occupied by guerrillas and others contested, with significant losses suffered by the government in men and materiel. The military's difficulties in countering sustained guerrilla operations in several fronts while attempting to protect vulnerable economic targets have underscored the increased effectiveness of the insurgents' training, planning, and logistic support.

Politically, we believe the insurgent dual strategy has deepened existing fissures in both the armed forces and the government. Guerrilla successes on the battlefield have added to existing dissension within the armed forces over the leadership of Defense Minister Garcia and have undermined public confidence in the government's ability to provide security in the towns and cities, much less in the countryside. Moreover,

insurgent propaganda and "peace" maneuvers in other countries—particularly in the United States—have raised serious doubts in San Salvador about the reliability of friendly governments, according to US Embassy

We believe that such developments are convincing both hardline and moderate leftists that their dual strategy is paying off. The insurgents are likely to become bolder in both their military and political initiatives during 1983. In our judgment, guerrilla strategy for 1983 will be to neutralize through military and political actions the presidential elections scheduled for the end of the year

#### Government Strategy on Negotiations

Increased efforts by leftists to force negotiations on their terms have succeeded in heightening domestic and international pressures on the government in San Salvador to accede to a power-sharing settlement. Internal political problems in the government and military also have reinforced perceptions among leftists and neutral observers alike that momentum for a negotiated settlement is growing. Moreover, compounding the effect of guerrilla exploits on the battlefield and leftist propaganda abroad have been media speculation that both Congressional and administration officials in the United States now favor talks between San Salvador and the guerrillas.

Nevertheless, as indicated by US Embassy and other reporting, San Salvador still is firmly committed to dealing with the leftists only on its own terms. For the moment, however, such terms and a timetable for introducing them are unclear because moderates and hardliners in the government remain deadlocked on negotiation strategy.

#### Hardliners Against Moderates

The issue of how to arrange talks is, in our view, as important to Salvadoran officials as the talks themselves. In the wake of the election last year, rightist forces announced an electoral victory on the grounds that 60 percent of the vote went to five conservative

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parties. They have claimed a popular mandate that rejects negotiations in favor of prosecuting the war against the insurgents more vigorously. [redacted]

The official position of the right has been stated publicly by president of the Constituent Assembly D'Aubuisson:

*We will not permit dialogue or negotiations with the criminal groups of the FDR/FMLN (insurgent political-military alliance). It would be vile treason and the most absurd politics describable if the government were to converse with, much less negotiate with, those who have sown such mourning and destruction among the Salvadoran people.* [redacted]

Privately, however, civilian hardliners have demonstrated some interest in discussions with the left, according to US Embassy and other sources. Although he has publicly denied it, D'Aubuisson attempted last July to meet secretly with insurgent representatives in Panama City. A colleague of D'Aubuisson's has confided to US officials in San Salvador that his party would like to be credited with a political breakthrough with the left—"a la Nixon and China"—in order to boost its prospects for victory in the election. [redacted]

In our opinion, D'Aubuisson and other ultrarightists would be willing to conduct talks with the left that would outline terms for an insurgent surrender and possible leftist participation in the elections. We also believe, however, that rightist hardliners will work to obstruct similar efforts by government moderates in order to limit public support for the political center prior to the presidential elections. [redacted]

Moderates, meanwhile, appear to be gradually coalescing around the policy of dialogue espoused by the liberal Christian Democrats—who cite their 40-percent plurality in the March election as evidence of their own public mandate. Partisan maneuvers aside, US Embassy reporting demonstrates that the Christian Democrats—and independents like President Magana—have been increasingly successful in seeking common ground with moderate conservatives on this and other issues to counter the influence of D'Aubuisson and the far right. [redacted]

We believe they recognize possible advantages to engaging the left in talks:

- Government-initiated talks would improve chances for increased international support for the provisional administration. 25X1
- This would strengthen the hand of the moderates in government, increase the momentum of reforms, and undermine both extremes of the political spectrum.
- Talks might precipitate serious splintering within the guerrilla factions, and among regional Marxist groups as well. 25X1
- Such discord would be likely to hamper insurgent military effectiveness and could reduce their ability to obtain arms from abroad. [redacted] 25X1

One means of initiating this process, according to discussions between US Embassy officials and President Magana and other leaders, is through the new peace commission.<sup>4</sup> The three-man commission, which includes a Catholic bishop, an independent, and a private-sector representative, is tasked with helping to draft an amnesty law for leftist insurgents and political prisoners. In our judgment, the commission may also be given authority to seek talks with leftist leaders and present terms for peace. The commission, however, has been the subject of heated debate within the government, particularly over whether it or the Constituent Assembly should formulate negotiation policy. We believe that the government will be hard pressed to reach a consensus on the terms and the timetable for a dialogue. [redacted] 25X1

#### A Consensus on Basic Goals

Despite fundamental differences in tone and rhetoric, both rightist hardliners and moderates in San Salvador have shown some signs of agreement on the purpose of a negotiation strategy, if not on the strategy itself. A common—albeit unwritten—position on future talks has emerged in recent months. 25X1

<sup>4</sup> Following the March 1982 elections, the establishment of an elected Constituent Assembly and provisional government led political parties and groups to consider the negotiation question. In August, the major parties in government signed the "Pact of Apaneca"—a document that calls for a peaceful resolution to the conflict and the creation of political, human rights, and peace commissions to seek ways of bringing this about. [redacted] 25X1

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Ultrarightists, moderate conservatives, and liberals appear to agree on three major points:

- Dialogue and/or negotiations at the initiative of the left are unacceptable.
- The left must compete for power in democratic elections.
- Any talks promoted by the government should have as their only objective the participation of the left in elections or its surrender. [redacted]

We believe this position represents a consensus compatible not only with the conflicting aspirations of rival political parties, but also with the interests of the military institution. The majority of the officer corps shares a center-right political orientation that lends itself to basic unity on the negotiation issue. [redacted]

[redacted] the armed forces appear essentially united in their stand on negotiations. The armed forces oppose any talks with the left beyond setting the terms whereby the guerrillas would relinquish their arms and join in the democratic process. Most officers believe a dialogue with the left would award power and legitimacy to the guerrillas that they have not won militarily or politically. [redacted]

In our judgment, the military also perceives that:

- Insurgent negotiating terms could place the government in the role of the intransigent.
- The left would be pressuring for advantages at the bargaining table and rebuilding political front groups even as it continued its military operations.
- Student elements and labor groups allied with the left would foment additional street violence to press demands, thus forcing the hand of the security forces and perhaps setting back elections.
- Engaging in a dialogue could further strain the unity of the government and military and encourage coup plotting by civilian and military extremists. [redacted]

The military high command has stated publicly that the armed forces will abide by whatever decision the Magana administration makes on negotiations. Clearly, however, the military's position will weigh heavily in any such decisionmaking. [redacted]

[redacted] civilian officials generally have adopted the military's position that the government should present

its terms for a dialogue only after having gained the upper hand against the insurgents on the battlefield. [redacted]

### Scenarios for Negotiations

In our judgment, some form of dialogue between San Salvador and moderates of the insurgent alliance is possible, though not likely, before the election takes place in December. Should talks occur, they could help convince some non-Marxists to participate in the presidential election. Even so, we view as negligible the prospects for negotiating a comprehensive and binding solution during this time frame because insurgent terms for settlement appear irreconcilable with the goals of San Salvador. [redacted]

[redacted] insurgent hardliners believe it unlikely that negotiations will result in any political settlement. They continue to view their "prolonged war strategy" as the best avenue to victory. One guerrilla unit commander publicly has rejected a negotiated end to the war, describing the conflict as the "lifeblood" of the revolution and the "right to fight" as nonnegotiable. The senior spokesman for another insurgent faction publicly has echoed that position, contradicting democratic leftist Ruben Zamora, who in recent months has called for both a cease-fire and a dialogue. [redacted]

Less doctrinaire elements in the insurgent camp believe, meanwhile, that negotiations offer significant tactical advantages. [redacted]

[redacted] They doubt a military victory is possible any time soon and think negotiations will force reduction in US aid to San Salvador and buy valuable time to strengthen their forces. They envision a temporary political settlement whereby the government would be rebuilt around elements of the current provisional coalition and insurgent leaders. According to both private and public statements by insurgent spokesmen, the armed forces would be purged of "undesirables" and melded with the five guerrilla factions. The existing paramilitary security organizations would be abolished altogether. [redacted]

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[redacted] a power-sharing arrangement would allow the insurgents to begin restructuring the country's socioeconomic system along socialist lines while consolidating their political power. Access to the media, labor unions, and student groups would permit the left to organize a mass base of popular support. Opponents would lack the political and military means to reverse this process, and pluralism would eventually give way to control by the Marxist leadership. [redacted]

Assuming that US military aid to El Salvador continues, we offer three broad negotiation scenarios through this year in the order of their probability:

• **No Talks Occur** (60-percent probability).

- The military stalemate continues; the government and the guerrillas continue to propagandize the negotiation issue while trying to gain the battlefield advantage.
- Insurgents intensify their military operations as they renew calls for negotiations; they seek to strengthen their credibility and perhaps force a military coup.
- The guerrillas are pressured by the electoral timetable; hence their negotiation initiatives are aimed at preempting the presidential elections.
- The government is unable to establish a consensus for dialogue with the left; it focuses on the electoral process and an amnesty law as the formula for reconciliation.
- The amnesty law promotes a few leftist desertions, but is rejected by the insurgent leadership and the bulk of the rank and file.
- The fighting continues unabated; the government is able to keep to the election timetable, despite stepped-up terrorism and offensive operations.

• **Talks Occur on Government Terms** (30-percent probability).

- Government gains significant momentum on the battlefield.
- San Salvador reaches consensus on terms and format for talks with the left; it makes contact, through intermediaries, with moderate leftist spokesmen.
- Leftist spokesmen attempt to promote official insurgent terms for dialogue, which are quickly rejected by the government.
- The government offers separate peace for moderate leftists, promising security, access to the media, and amnesty for any insurgents willing to lay down their arms.
- Splits develop within leftist ranks over the utility of talks and a proper response; the insurgents reduce operational coordination and moderate socialists begin to defect. The government permits registration of moderate socialist parties; they consider forming a coalition with the Christian Democrats.
- The guerrillas continue the prolonged war strategy despite loss of support from the moderate left; assassinations of Christian and Social Democrats are carried out by both the extreme left and right.
- The election is held amid continued violence and a state of emergency.

• **Talks Occur on Guerrilla Terms** (10-percent probability).

- The guerrillas gain significant momentum on the battlefield.
- The government agrees to mediated dialogue with insurgent spokesmen; the electoral process is interrupted and postponed.

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- The guerrillas moderate their terms for power-sharing and promise not to punish military “war criminals”; a cease-fire is called, but the insurgents refuse to lay down their weapons until after the armed forces are restructured.
- Insurgents begin to reorganize rural and urban front groups; students, teachers, and workers stage massive demonstrations and strikes to press more radical changes.
- The situation polarizes rapidly and renewed fighting breaks out.

The key implication of the evidence we have reviewed in preparing this assessment is that the objective conditions for a negotiated settlement in El Salvador probably will remain essentially unchanged over the course of 1983. There is, however, enough uncertainty about this outcome and sufficient political sophistication on the part of the leftist alliance that the government of El Salvador and its friends need to be prepared to respond to sudden changes in circumstances surrounding a negotiated settlement.

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### Implications for the United States

Insurgent appeals for dialogue with the government have raised speculation in San Salvador and abroad that a political compromise could evolve in the near term if the process were fully supported by the United States and other countries. We believe, however, that the ability of third parties to usher the government and the guerrillas to the bargaining table is limited at present since both sides view the negotiation issue largely in tactical terms.

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So long as this atmosphere persists—and we now see nothing on the horizon that suggests change—there will be recurrent international pressure on the government of El Salvador to advance negotiation proposals that offer a bridge to the leftist alliance. These pressures, likely to come from within and without the hemisphere, will tend, as they have in the past, to add to the complexity of US relations with San Salvador and with our other friends and allies.

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Attempts to force the government of El Salvador to broaden its negotiation stance in an effort to put the insurgents on the defensive would run the risk of fracturing the current political-military coalition. Considering the substantial evidence of the government’s distrust of insurgent motives for a negotiated settlement, moreover, we believe that the United States would be approached to provide material assurances beyond those now contemplated—including sharply increased military and economic aid—before San Salvador would make such a proposal.

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## Appendix A

### Organization of the Insurgent Alliance

#### Marxist-Leninist Military Organizations

**DRU—Unified Revolutionary Directorate.** Founded in Havana in May 1980, the directorate oversees the entire military-political alliance. Three representatives from each of the five guerrilla factions compose the 15-member executive board, which is based in Managua, Nicaragua.

**FMLN—Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.** Created by the DRU in November 1980, the front comprises the five guerrilla factions in a loose military alliance. The head of each faction serves on the five-member General Command, which is based in Managua along with the five separate General Staffs.

**FPL—Popular Liberation Forces.** Founded in 1970 as a radical splinter of the orthodox Communist Party, the group is the largest of the five factions. Run by 63-year-old former labor activist Cayetano Carpio, the FPL soon developed from an urban terrorist to a rural guerrilla movement. Maoist in doctrine, the faction adamantly opposes a cease-fire, elections, or a power-sharing settlement.

**ERP—Peoples Revolutionary Army.** Founded in 1972 by militant students and dissidents of the orthodox Communist Party as an urban terrorist cell, the group now is the fastest growing and most aggressive of all the rural guerrilla factions. An eclectic blend of anarchists, Maoists, Trotskyites, and Castroites, the group is led by 31-year-old former university student Joaquin Villalobos. The faction favors a power-sharing settlement leading to totalitarian consolidation if an armed victory is not forthcoming by means of a popular insurrection.

**FARN—Armed Forces of National Resistance.** A 1975 breakaway faction of the ERP, this group has undergone several identity crises to become perhaps the least aligned and least doctrinaire of the Marxist-Leninist movements. The most financially independent, this group is commanded by Ferman Cienfuegos,

a 36-year-old upper class idealist who believes in pushing for a popular insurrection but is willing to build a totalitarian system through a temporary power-sharing arrangement with San Salvador. As a student in 1971, he and other colleagues in the Communist youth movement formed "El Grupo," a band of urban terrorists responsible for the kidnappings and murders of upper class Salvadorans and foreign nationals.

**PRTC—Central American Workers Revolutionary Party.** Founded in 1976 by leftist patriarch Fabio Castillo as a regional terrorist organization, the party has small branches in every country of Central America. A mix of Trotskyite and Castroite elements, the Salvadoran faction is run by 35-year-old Roberto Roca, a dissident of the Communist youth movement at the National University. He and the PRTC General Staff continue to vacillate on whether to support hardliners or moderates on the negotiation issue.

**PCS-FAL—Communist Party—Armed Forces of Liberation.** Smallest and least radical of the five insurgent groups, this orthodox Stalinist party was founded in the late 1920s by Farabundo Marti. Its armed guerrilla wing was established in 1979 following the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua. Leader Shafik Handal, 52, a member of the upper middle class, has firm ties to Moscow and has secured considerable funding and weapons for the insurgent alliance from the Soviet Bloc and Vietnam. Handal's party is the strongest advocate of negotiating a power-sharing arrangement with the government.

#### Marxist-Leninist Political Front Groups

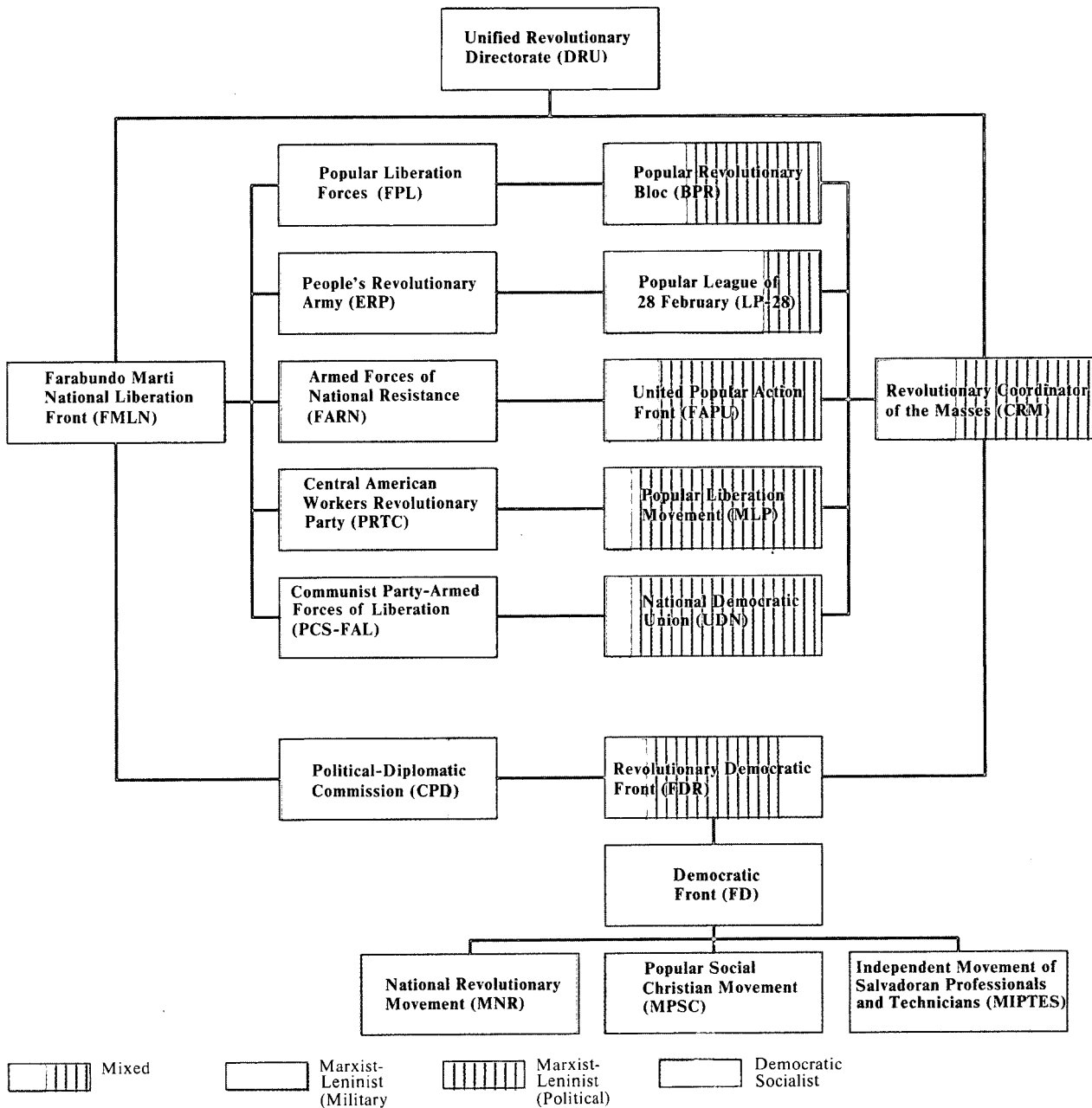
**CRM—Revolutionary Coordinator of the Masses.** Founded in January 1980 as an umbrella movement comprising the five Marxist front groups—BPR, FAPU, LP-28, UDN, and MLP.

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El Salvador: Organization of the Insurgent Alliance



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**BPR—Popular Revolutionary Bloc.** Formed in 1975, the bloc is the political appendage of the FPL. It is the largest Marxist front group, composed of numerous peasant, worker, teacher, student, clerical, and human rights organizations. General membership has been greatly reduced by security constraints, defections, and recruitment into guerrilla ranks. Some BPR militants remain active in urban terrorism, and others serve propaganda functions locally and abroad.

**FAPU—United Popular Action Front.** Created in 1974, the front subsequently became the political arm of the FARN guerrilla faction and is the second-largest front group. It controls several Communist labor organizations, numerous Christian “base communities,” and other peasant groups. Many members inducted into guerrilla ranks while general membership greatly diminished by security constraints, defections, and casualties of political violence.

**LP-28—Popular League of 28 February.** Formed in 1977 after a government shooting of protesters in San Salvador following fraudulent elections, this small group is composed of a radical mix of students, teachers, and peasants. Led by members of the guerrilla ERP, the Popular League has lost most of its personnel to the insurgent ranks. Its leaders founded the ERP clandestine Radio Venceremos more than two years ago.

**UDN—National Democratic Union.** Considered the only legitimate Marxist party by the government, this Communist Party front movement was built around trade unions, student groups, and slumdwellers organizations in 1968. It joined with the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in 1972 and 1977 in the National Opposition Union coalition, and again in 1979 when members became part of the new civil-military junta. Most of its activists either have joined the ranks of the FAL guerrillas or left the country.

**MLP—Popular Liberation Movement.** Created in 1976 as a political front for the PRTC, its small membership of students and teachers is incorporated into the PRTC militia.

#### Democratic Left

**FD—Democratic Front.** Founded in April 1980 by the three moderate socialist splinter groups that withdrew from the civil-military junta: MNR, MPSC, and MIPTES. Total membership probably does not exceed 300.

**MNR—National Revolutionary Movement.** Small social democratic party of Guillermo Ungo founded in 1964. Only a portion of its perhaps 150 card-carrying members left with Ungo to join the insurgent alliance.

**MPSC—Popular Social Christian Movement.** A tiny splinter of militants from the Christian Democratic Party which broke off in March 1980 and joined the insurgent alliance. Of perhaps two dozen original members, only Ruben Zamora and a handful of colleagues are active.

**MIPTES—Independent Movement of Salvadoran Professionals and Technicians.** Also formed in early 1980 as a moderate socialist movement, its original membership of perhaps 200 now includes only a few spokesmen for the insurgent alliance.

#### Democratic/Marxist-Leninist Coalition

**FDR—Revolutionary Democratic Front.** Formed in April 1980; this group represents the alliance of the Marxist-Leninist CRM and the democratic FD. The front has served as the principal political organization of the insurgent alliance in charge of propaganda and fundraising. Its titular leader is social democrat Guillermo Ungo.

**CPD—Political-Diplomatic Commission.** A seven-member body representing each of the five Marxist guerrilla organizations and the FDR. All seven members share equal billing as public spokesmen for the alliance, but are rarely in accord with one another.



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**Appendix B****Chronology of Negotiation Efforts  
by the Salvadoran Insurgent  
Political-Military Alliance (FMLN/FDR)****1981****January-March**

Various vague proposals in media and private discussions with Europeans and Latin Americans about talks with the United States, excluding the Salvadoran junta.

**13 April**

West German socialist leader Wischnewski conveys insurgent negotiating terms to Salvadoran junta during his trip through Central America. Document essentially calls for talks with Christian Democrat leaders which would lead to negotiations to be mediated by the Socialist International (SI) in Mexico, Panama, Ecuador, or Venezuela.

**15 May**

At press briefing in Santo Domingo, Salvadoran leftist spokesman Guillermo Ungo calls for a negotiated solution that would center on talks with both the United States and the junta. Format initially would be a mediated dialogue by the SI which would bring a representative of the United States and one other Latin American government together with Salvadoran Christian Democrats and insurgent representatives.

**18 August**

Political-Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN/FDR releases a *new* position paper entitled *Armed Conflict in El Salvador and the Position of the FMLN/FDR To Reach a Just Solution*. The paper lists "conditions" to end the insurgent war:

- Withdrawal of all external aid to the junta.
- Repeal of all junta restrictions on civil liberties.
- Release of political prisoners and better treatment of prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention.
- Humanization of the war by the security forces.
- Guerrilla access to the Salvadoran media.
- All issues of importance to guerrillas must be guaranteed in the agenda of any negotiations.

**28 August**

Release of the Mexican-French Joint Declaration recognizing the insurgent movement as a legitimate political force and calling for mediated talks.

**7 October**

Daniel Ortega announces a *new* FMLN/FDR proposal for peace at UN General Assembly meeting, with FDR's Ungo seated with Nicaraguan delegation. Avoiding use of word "negotiations," Ortega outlines "peace dialogue" without "preconditions" that would be "global in nature," would be conducted in presence of

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interested foreign observers, and would be subject to public progress reports. Aims of talks would be to form a new political and economic order in El Salvador, and to integrate "noncriminal" elements of the Salvadoran military with FMLN forces.

**15 December**

Salvadoran leftist spokesman Ruben Zamora meets with Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Briggs to push the case for negotiations and the cancellation of the March 1982 elections.

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**January**

The FMLN/FDR leadership distributes copies of yet *another new* position paper on negotiations to Mexican President Lopez Portillo, the West German socialist leadership, President Mitterand of France, Fidel Castro, and several other Latin and European leaders. Entitled *Proposal of the FMLN and FDR in Search of a Political Solution to the Salvadoran Conflict*, the text emphasizes the following:

- Composition of a "broad pluralist government" including the military and the FMLN.
- "Plebiscite" to take place after six months to ratify new government.
- Policy of strict "nonalignment" for the new government.
- Expanded socioeconomic reforms and new political constitution.
- Restructuring of the armed forces; the Army to remain initially intact but "reformed," while security forces to be "dissolved." Negotiations will explore ways of integrating "noncriminal" elements of the military with the armed forces of the FMLN.
- When negotiations have reached their final stages, a cease-fire can be "discussed."

The document is signed by FDR leader Ungo and the five guerrilla commanders of the FMLN.

**15 February**

FDR spokesman Ruben Zamora spearheads a renewed publicity campaign on US television, newspapers and magazines, school campuses, and halls of Congress to argue the points of this latest FMLN/FDR proposal. Focus is on US public opinion, with moderate conciliatory arguments, soft on facts, and appeals to negotiate and "stop complete takeover by the Marxist elements of the ever stronger guerrilla ranks."

**February-March**

Zamora's efforts correspond to renewed SI, Mexican, Cuban, and Soviet public statements of support for negotiations.

**7 and 14 March**

Secretary Haig meets with Mexican Foreign Minister Castaneda in New York City to discuss Mexico's proposals for mediating negotiations.

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**17 March**

Ruling party leader Calvani expresses Venezuelan concerns to US Ambassador in Caracas over reports of Secretary Haig's meetings with Castaneda which suggest US interest in working with Mexicans toward negotiations with FMLN.

**Mid-March**

Venezuelan President Herrera Campins reportedly receives FMLN letter on *new* negotiations proposal through Venezuelan OAS Ambassador Cardozo who has secretly met with guerrilla leader Cayetano Carpio in Mexico.

**19 March**

Cardozo reportedly holds additional secret meetings with the other FMLN commanders in Managua to discuss disposition of letter already delivered to Herrera.

**22 March**

President Herrera holds televised news conference in Caracas—reportedly catching even his close ministers by surprise—in which he announces receipt of FMLN letter, which he interprets as a positive sign that the Salvadoran insurgents sincerely wish to reach a political accord with the junta. FMLN text repeats earlier public proposals of FMLN “search for peace” in the format of mediated negotiations. New format emphasizes FMLN desire for a “broad pluralist government, transformation of economic and social structure in El Salvador,” and respect for human rights. FMLN introduces new language, calling for talks of a “global character,” without preconditions, and public notification of the progress of the talks. FMLN claims that elections will be part of this “global solution.” Letter is signed by all five leaders of the FMLN General Command but makes no reference to FDR position.

**June-July**

[redacted] non-Marxist members of the FDR are working harder behind the scenes to promote informal dialogue with moderates in the provisional government.

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**July**

FDR President Ungo visits Bonn and Caracas, apparently seeking to make contact with former Salvadoran President Duarte, who is also visiting those cities.

**August**

US Embassy in San Salvador reports that some leftist clergy and intellectuals are pessimistic about prospects for negotiations, but suggest that elements of the FDR will consider taking part in coming elections anyway.

[redacted] Ungo and Zamora, and other FDR moderates are making concerted efforts internationally to pressure US and Salvadoran governments to negotiate with insurgents.

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Ungo approaches Costa Rican President Monge to ask for help in convincing the Magana government to talk with FDR officials. Costa Rican Foreign Minister Volio visits El Salvador to pass on Ungo's latest negotiating proposals.

**September**

FDR democratic elements publicly announce that they will consider returning to El Salvador and competing in the presidential election. They request full guarantees for their personal safety, access to the media, freedom of organization for rural unions, and release of political prisoners.

Salvadoran Government and military officials publicly reject any negotiation proposals that imply a power-sharing agreement with insurgents, and call instead for all leftist elements to renounce violence and participate in the electoral process.

**October**

FMLN guerrillas launch new series of offensive strikes against towns in three northern provinces to regain lost prestige and pressure the government toward a dialogue. FDR publicizes *new* negotiation proposal from Mexico City only days after earlier copies delivered to Salvadoran Government by acting Archbishop Rivera y Damas with understanding that the proposal would remain secret until San Salvador offered its response.

**December**

FDR hardliner Fabio Castillo publicly denounces calls by FDR moderate Ruben Zamora for a cease-fire—insurgent spokesmen for FMLN echo that denunciation, claiming that guerrilla military strategy is not subject to political negotiation by the FDR.

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**January**

Ruben Zamora privately admits to US Congressional staff members that “dialogue” is only a preliminary phase in which leftist terms for “negotiation” will be outlined. These terms include restructuring the military and government around insurgent elements before any consideration for future elections.

**February**

Guerrilla leaders privately commit themselves to reject all efforts to force a cease-fire but will continue to push for negotiations on their terms.



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