
El Salvador Elections 1994

Toward a Level Playing Field?

A Report on the Post-War
Salvadoran Electoral Process

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Introduction

On March 20, 1994, Salvadoran citizens will be asked to elect a President and Vice President, all 84 members of a Legislative Assembly and mayors and city councils of 262 municipalities. The nature and extent of citizen participation and the conditions under which it takes place will provide important evidence on the degree to which democratic principles are given concrete expression in El Salvador.

These "elections of the century" will be subject to intense national and international scrutiny. They are the first since the January 16, 1992 peace accords that ended a civil war, and the first (under a new Constitution adopted in 1983) in which elections for President, Assembly and local mayors coincide in the same year.¹ An invited United Nations mission (called ONUSAL) has been supervising the implementation of the peace accords for over two years and began observing the electoral process seven months ago. ONUSAL will field 900 observers on election day, and many other international groups will be represented.

Hemisphere Initiatives (HI) has also been observing these processes since the signing of the peace accords. HI maintains an in-country team of investigators tracking the implementation of key provisions of the peace accords. In addition, members of HI's Board of Directors have made fact-finding trips to El Salvador on a bi-monthly basis since the signing of the accords. This is HI's sixth report; several more will follow.²

This report provides a framework for monitoring the process of democratization in El Salvador. It examines the context of civil war and negotiated peace that shaped the parameters of the electoral process. The report also outlines the electoral process as it emerged from the peace negotiations, describes the key players in that process, and identifies the key issues that must be monitored carefully between now and March.

I. Criteria for Evaluating Democratization in El Salvador

Democracy and elections are not the same thing. While elections are a necessary ingredient of democratic systems, merely holding elections does not establish democracy. El Salvador's history, as that of many other countries, includes numerous elections used to legitimate authoritarian rule. Elections themselves further the cause of democracy when they result in a system where important decisions in the society are actually made through the electoral process. Elections seldom foster democracy in societies controlled by non-elected elements such as the military or powerful oligarchies or elites. In practical terms democratic rights must include:

- * free speech
- * the right to publish political opinions
- * the effective right to associate and assemble freely
- * the right to oppose incumbents or powerful sectors without fear of persecution or general political threat
- * the right to petition government and to win redress from abuses of authority by those in power
- * effective rights of participation for minorities as well as majorities.

Not all democracies guarantee those democratic rights in exactly the same form and through the same procedures. The adoption of a constitution that specifies agreed-upon rules for political intercourse is an important step in institutionalizing democratic principles. Even with a formal constitution, however, one society can be more, or less, democratic than another.

Elections are a mechanism for exercising democratic rights and providing for public participation in governance. They provide citizens and observers a means for evaluating the substantive performance of the formal trappings of democracy.

Because democracy is not an absolute, outside observers seeking to evaluate electoral processes must be careful not to impose absolute or arbitrary criteria for judging fairness. No existing electoral system effectively insures, for example, that all parties and candidates have exactly the same funds or the same advantages of incumbency. Standards that existing democratic countries do not satisfy should not be imposed.

The problem of setting reasonable standards is compounded in regions like Central America where (with the exception of Costa Rica) there has been an absence of democratic institutions and traditions. Evaluation must take into account the political history of the country and how the process of democratization in that country compares with other countries similarly situated.

Given these considerations we believe that the **March 1994 Salvadoran elections and the process leading up to them** must be evaluated in terms of breadth, fairness, and the extent to which they contribute to the consolidation of peace and democracy.

The election must foster broad participation by Salvadoran citizens. Eligibility requirements, ease of registration, and actual voter turnout must be examined in light of prior Salvadoran elections and the terms of the peace accords.

Does the electoral process guarantee in practice essential democratic rights in the implementation of technical procedures and campaign conditions? Given the recent past, fairness of the electoral process must be evaluated in terms of the extent to which a climate of actual or potential political violence impacts on political participation.

Elections can build political stability and a culture of support for democratic values. That will happen if the electoral process and the election results foster increased consensus and accountability among key groups in Salvadoran society. It will not happen if some social sectors are severely disadvantaged through the electoral process. Though no democratic system gives everyone an absolutely equal chance, the rules, their implementation and the context of the rules must establish a level playing field.

Outside observers must appreciate that the Salvadoran electoral system has been evolving since 1982

in the context of civil war. This does not mean that the five elections since 1982 were undemocratic. But the March 1994 elections are the first in which all political factions and forces, from left to right, have agreed to participate. Outside observers must also take into account the fact that the March elections are intimately connected to a larger peace process requiring significant institutional changes in Salvadoran society. The degree of successful implementation of those changes will have a significant bearing on the electoral process.



II. Civil War and Negotiated Peace: the Electoral Context

The March 20 elections will follow by 26 months the end of a devastating civil war that pitted leftist guerrilla groups and civilian allies against a government and conservative military backed by the United States. In a country of 5 million, over 75,000 people died in that war, the great majority of them civilians. Virtually every Salvadoran citizen above the age of 5 knows at least one friend or family member who was killed. Over one million refugees left El Salvador.

The civil war officially ended on January 16, 1992 with the signing of comprehensive peace accords by representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Government of El Salvador at Chapultepec Palace in Mexico. The uniqueness of the Chapultepec accords is that they seek to address the root causes of the war. There are four principal objectives set forth in the accords:

- * to end the armed conflict by political means as speedily as possible;
- * to promote the democratization of the country;
- * to guarantee unrestricted respect for human rights;
- * to reunify Salvadoran society.

The accords were preceded by and incorporated several earlier agreements which specifically addressed the constitutional framework and resulted in changes being made by the Legislative Assembly to the electoral system.

The accords have their roots in the 1987 Central American peace agreement signed by all heads of state in the region and aimed, primarily, at settling the military conflicts in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. This agreement called for a cease fire, promoting dialogue, building democracy and holding free and fair elections.

Following a military offensive by the FMLN in November 1989, guerrilla leaders and government representatives held talks in Geneva that led to preliminary accord in April 1990 to hold talks aimed at achieving a political end to the war, reunification of the society, promotion of democracy and guarantees for human rights. The first agreement resulting from the talks was signed in San José, Costa Rica in July, 1990. It provided guarantees for unrestricted human rights and laid a foundation for the first entry of the United Nations as a verifying agency for at least this portion of the overall agreement. A year later, the ONUSAL Human Rights observer mission arrived in San Salvador.

As the negotiations proceeded the FMLN implicitly accepted the 1983 Constitution while seeking institutional changes that required constitutional amendments and enabling legislation. Constitutional amendments required approval by two consecutive Legislative Assemblies. In April of 1991 (just four days before the end of the legislative life for the Assembly elected in 1988) negotiators agreed upon numerous Constitutional changes, including changes in military doctrine, changes in the manner in which the Supreme Court was appointed, the creation of a new electoral authority, and constitutional guarantees of the rights of parties to make timely reviews of electoral rolls. The outgoing and incoming Assemblies approved most of these amendments.

Following the signing of the Chapultepec accords additional negotiations led to approval of a new electoral code to govern the first post-war elections. The expressed hope of all parties to the conflict is that the elections will mark another step in the peace process, putting behind them the political violence of past decades and ushering in an era of full democracy.

Just prior to the official campaign kick-off on November 20, 1993, the presidential candidates signed an agreement sponsored by ONUSAL to wage a "high road" campaign, which not only means avoiding the vulgar insults of previous campaigns but avoiding dredging up vengeful memories of the war.³

In October 1993, however, two senior leaders of the FMLN were assassinated, raising fears of a return to political intimidation, repression and death squads. On December 10, a third senior FMLN leader was assassinated. Responsibility for these assassinations had not been fully determined at the time this report went to press (see page 14 for more details.).

This post war electoral period, then, has two contradictory tendencies. The presidential candidates' "high road" campaign pledge (which was followed by private agreements between FMLN leaders and leaders of the governing ARENA party) seeks to eliminate talk of the political violence of the past. But the peace accords, and specifically those aspects which aim at eliminating shadowy purveyors of political violence remain incomplete.

Spurred by the recent assassinations, which have included grassroots ARENA participants as victims, an investigative commission with ONUSAL representation was named on December 9. It will attempt to determine whether or not death squads are operating and to identify and prosecute participants in such illegal armed groups. Even though their final report is not due until after the election, inevitably their investigation will involve digging into the very past the campaign seeks to avoid. The most recent assassination of an FMLN leader occurred the morning after the investigative commission was named, raising doubts that the mere existence of the commission will inhibit continuing political violence during the electoral campaign period.

The March 1994 elections will be the sixth held since the outbreak of the civil war in 1980.

The War and Elections - 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1988

Escalating political violence in the 1970's lurched into a civil war in 1980 following the assassination of Archbishop Romero by a rightist death squad. The escalation resulted from the collision of three political forces. First, when efforts to replace forty years of

military governments with moderate civilians were thwarted by fraudulent elections in 1972 and 1977, center-left and left political groups increasingly turned to militant, confrontational tactics calling for radical political and economic transformations. Second, these militant organizers found adherents because the economic growth of the 1950's and 1960's had by the mid 1970's actually led to reduced urban wages and dramatic increases in rural landlessness and poverty. Third, these forces were met by a threatened conservative military establishment and wealthy landed class that saw in the militant organizations the threat of communism.

Leftist guerrilla groups also appeared and engaged in limited military actions as well as kidnapping of wealthy businessmen for ransom and exchange of prisoners. Leftist civilian organizers were assassinated or "disappeared". Following the Sandinista victory in 1979, a reform minded group of military officers staged a coup and brought into government civilians promising significant change, including an agrarian reform. But six months later, in March of 1980 two groups of civilians had resigned from the government because political assassinations, primarily by rightist death squads, had dramatically increased to the rate of several hundred a month in a country of but five million. The left opposition that survived went underground, into exile or joined the guerrillas.

The Carter administration, which had severely criticized the human rights record of the pre-coup military government, was now faced with the prospect of a leftist defeat of the new government. Despite the increase in rightist, military and death squad violence, and the pleas of the Archbishop, it increased military aid. United States support for the Salvadoran military increased much more when Ronald Reagan became president.

In 1982, elections were held for a Constituent Assembly that was to elect an interim president and draft a new political constitution for El Salvador. In the two years preceding that election some 30,000 people had been killed, the great majority of them in non-combat situations. Among them were dozens of labor leaders, teachers, reporters, political leaders of the left and church leaders, including the Archbishop. No one had been tried for these political crimes. The country was under a state of siege for most of the period, with legal restrictions on civil liberties.

Voting was a legal requirement in 1982. Citizen identity cards, which were needed at frequent military check points and for legal transactions, were marked if one had voted. Prior to the election the Minister of Defense announced that abstaining from voting amounted to treason, not idle words in the prevailing climate of assassinations. Hoping that the civilian left in exile would break their political alliance with the guerrillas, the government invited them to participate in the 1982 election, and the invitation included the suggestion that they might campaign from outside the country by videotape on TV. The offer was refused.

In that election the Christian Democrats (PDC) received 40% of a reported 1.5 million votes cast.⁴ However, the remaining parties were all to the right of the PDC. The largest of them, the new ARENA party, captured 29% of the vote, outdistancing the PCN which gained 19%. The PCN had been the traditional electoral vehicle of the military, but this time ran civilian candidates.

A coalition of the rightist parties was able to control the Constituent Assembly. Under pressure from the United States the Assembly elected as president Alvaro Magaña, rather than the ARENA party leader Roberto D'Aubuisson. While Magaña was a banker with close ties to the military, D'Aubuisson had been accused, most prominently by a former U.S. Ambassador Robert White, of organizing death squads. Nevertheless, ARENA captured the key government ministries including one overseeing the agrarian reform (which it opposed), and the right coalition generally dominated the drafting of the Constitution. The constitution was adopted in 1983.

The new Constitution called for a presidential election in 1984. With significant financial support from the U.S., Christian Democrat José Napoleon Duarte defeated D'Aubuisson in a run-off. In the first round ARENA and the PDC received approximately the same percentage as in the 1982 election, but Duarte won 53.6% in the second round.

The Constituent Assembly elections of 1982 and the presidential elections of 1984 were hailed by the U.S. government and the participating Salvadoran political parties, as evidence that democracy was taking root and that the boycotting left was isolated from the vast majority of the Salvadoran electorate. For the Reagan administration these two elections were keys to convincing a reluctant Congress to vote for increases in aid to El Salvador. Following the 1984

election, the aid appropriations for El Salvador increased dramatically, only raising occasional minor controversy in Washington.

For the exiled political opposition and the guerrillas, these initial elections were without redeeming merit. They argued that the elections were simply part of a counter-insurgency project to guarantee U.S. aid for the war, and that elections would not change the sources of real power in the country (the landed oligarchy, the military and the U.S.) They said that in a climate of extreme violence, voting could not be free and fair. The only way to have legitimizing elections would be to negotiate peace, they said, install an interim government made up of representatives of all social forces (save the military) and then have that government draw up rules for elections.

In areas of El Salvador where the guerrillas were militarily strong in 1982 they could, and did, prevent the elections. Arguing that the government was illegitimate, they sought to prevent it from holding elections. For subsequent elections during the 1980's the guerrillas went beyond this. They controlled more municipalities and attacked the elections in areas of the country not under their military control. They took away ID cards from voters, an implicit threat. They refused to declare a cease fire on election day, and some military actions were close enough to polling places so as to give the impression of an attack on the elections, though no voters were killed.

The PDC consolidated its gains in 1985, winning 53% of the vote and a majority of Legislative Assembly seats, against 5 other conservative parties. This was sufficient to outvote an ARENA-PCN alliance in the Assembly.

Given the conditions of the war, and two campaigns characterized by insults hurled by ARENA at the PDC (Duarte's mental competence was regularly questioned), and PDC insults about ARENA's insults, it is difficult to know from the campaigns what motivated people to vote for which party or candidate. But surveys before the election in limited areas of the country suggested that voters saw in the PDC a chance to end the war and to better the economy. It would seem clear also that some voters saw the same possibilities in ARENA. ARENA also complained, quite accurately, that the PDC's campaigns were being heavily financed by the CIA, but it is not clear what impact this nationalistic appeal had on voters.

Three years later, the PDC suffered massive reversals at the polls in the 1988 Assembly and Municipal elections. Among the parties on the right, ARENA was the main beneficiary of this electoral swing. From its 53% share in 1985, the PDC fell to 35.7%. ARENA went from 29% to 48%, giving it a working majority in the Assembly.

Peace Negotiations and the Electoral System

Whatever the merits of the FMLN's position against the war time elections, and they were considerable, the elections and international pressure to improve the horrifying human rights conditions of the early 1980's created an increasingly difficult political problem for the guerrillas. The elections had been successful in getting Washington to guarantee the Salvadoran military a steady line of supply and in eliminating by late 1984 FMLN hopes for an early military victory. Improved human rights conditions resulted in somewhat more political space for political organizing, at least in the larger cities. Groups sympathetic to or allied with the FMLN took advantage of that space, even in quite dangerous political conditions.

In a surprise move, two months before the 1989 presidential election, the FMLN offered, under certain conditions, to accept as legitimate the results of the election. This was a fundamental shift from its prior position of demanding an interim government (including representatives of the FMLN) that would draft rules for a new election of a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution. The new position was a step in the direction of accepting the 1983 Constitutional framework. The FMLN also offered to accept the 1988 election of mayors in FMLN controlled territory so long as the mayors did not participate in civil defense plans of the military. It offered a five day cease fire around election day.

The FMLN proposal also called for political guarantees for the leftist political parties and popular organizations that had returned from exile in the two previous years. A coalition of those parties, calling itself the Democratic Convergence, had decided to run in the 1989 elections, offering Guillermo Ungo and Rubén Zamora as its presidential ticket. To give these parties a chance to build strength and become an electoral force after years in exile, the FMLN's new negotiating position called for: a six month delay

in the election; guarantees that there would be no repression against popular political activities such as demonstrations; that the Convergence would get representation on the Electoral Council charged with conducting the elections, and that there be a new electoral code formed by consensus of participating parties.

When critics of the proposal noted the contradiction between accepting the legitimacy of the forthcoming elections and apparently not also offering to dismantle the FMLN military structure, the FMLN supplemented its original offer. It offered to lay down its arms and return to civilian political life if those in the military guilty of human rights abuses were removed, tried and punished, and the military restructured.

The proposals were not accepted or negotiated by the government, the military or the political parties (apart from the Democratic Convergence). The main objections centered around the Constitutional problems of changing the June 1 deadline for the transition of government.

Though the FMLN had carefully calculated the timing of its proposal to coincide with the departure of President Reagan, and had given advance notice of the proposal to the incoming Bush administration, the proposal was too late in the electoral process to have a chance to be negotiated. This left the FMLN and the Convergence in the uncomfortable position of the FMLN repudiating the legality of an election and holding ongoing military actions during the electoral period, while its long-standing political allies, the Convergence, were running in the election.

In the 1989 presidential election the decline of the PDC and the ascension of ARENA continued. The PDC presidential hopeful Chávez Mena received 200,000 fewer votes than Duarte had in 1984 in the first round and 400,000 fewer than in the second round. In 1989 a second round was not needed. Whereas D'Aubuisson had received 29.9% of the vote in the first round in 1984, and 46% in the second, Alfredo Cristiani received 54% against all opponents in 1989.⁵

Discussions and negotiations between the government and the FMLN did begin following the 1989 electoral victory of President Cristiani, but made very few advances.

Three prominent rightists were slain that year. Perhaps in retaliation, in late October there were two bombings against Convergencia targets, one against the PDC, and two against pro-left organizational headquarters, the last one of which killed ten people and injured thirty more. The FMLN broke off talks with the government and launched the largest offensive of the war.

The focus of the attack was San Salvador, therefore largely immune from the military effects of the war. Despite some advance intelligence, the army was unprepared for the attack, but it (and the U.S. embassy) initially issued confident predictions of the early defeat of the guerrillas. As army casualties mounted and the guerrillas occupied several large neighborhoods of poor people the military responded with air attacks on those neighborhoods.

Then came the military decision, made at high levels, to attack what it called the civilian supporters of the FMLN, many of whom had gone into hiding or joined the attack. The target became the Jesuit leaders of the Central American University. Six internationally known Jesuit intellectuals, their housekeeper and her daughter, were murdered in cold blood.

The FMLN advanced the offensive into the richest neighborhood of the city, took over several homes and at one point occupied the Sheraton hotel. This neighborhood was not bombed. Then, after suffering significant casualties, particularly in their strained supply lines, the guerrillas began to pull back from the attack.

The offensive created the conditions for the peace negotiations. In a fighting force of some six to eight thousand, the guerrillas lost more than 500 killed in combat. Though they received considerable support in some of the poor neighborhoods and found new recruits, there was no insurrection and the Salvadoran military demonstrated its willingness to bomb poor neighborhoods to insure against that eventuality. In the end the FMLN retreated after staying much longer than the early predictions of their opponents. But it was not an offensive they could soon repeat.

The military could not take much heart in the retreat. The military suffered high casualties and on a turf that had been immune from the war. They staged a highly visible bombing of their own territory. Prominent and wealthy citizens had the war brought to their own backyards. Finally, the killing of the Jesuits meant that a war that had largely been forgotten in Washington, D.C. was suddenly controversial. Some

members of Congress wondered if \$4 billion in U.S. aid and supposed U.S. attempts to reform the military were worth it when the results were a full scale assault by the enemy on the capital city and the military's murder of Jesuit priests. In that sense, politically the offensive was similar to another Tet.⁶ The days of the infinite supply line enjoyed by the military were now suddenly numbered.

The Negotiations and Electoral Trends

In April 1990, serious talks began. A year later those talks had a direct effect on the 1991 electoral climate and the ensuing Assembly. For the first time the FMLN called a cease-fire on the days surrounding the elections.

Legislative Assembly elections in 1991 showed ARENA still to be easily the strongest party. But ARENA failed to maintain its working majority in the Assembly gaining 39 of the 84 seats, and 44.3% of the vote. It received 40,000 fewer votes than in 1989 despite an overall increase of 110,000 voters. Nonetheless its closest competitor, the PDC, received 28% of the vote (and 26 seats), continuing its decline (from 53% in 1985, to 35.7% in 1988, to 28% in 1991.) In elections for municipal councils, ARENA won 177 of the 262 municipalities, the PDC 70, the PCN 14 and MAC 1.

The left opposition parties (the Democratic Convergence and the UDN) got on the electoral map after barely being visible in the 1989 elections. The CD won 12% of the vote (8 seats) and the UDN 2.7 (1 seat). Because of the vagaries of proportional representation, the CD received one fewer seat than the PCN even though it got 12% of the vote nationally compared with 9% for the PCN. This cost it a place on the electoral council.

The institutionalization of elections, the acceptance of electoral results by losing parties, and civilian candidates are frequently cited as evidence that a democratic consensus was growing in El Salvador despite the civil war. There is an element of truth in this perspective. The 1987 return to El Salvador of social-democratic politicians allied to the FMLN, and their subsequent decision to compete in the 1989 elections, is testimony to the fact that political space had widened since they were forced to flee the country in 1980. The willingness of right-wing forces to seek power through electoral competition rather

than military coup also provides evidence of a change from the political past.

Coexisting with this evidence of increasing political pluralism, however, were trends that suggested a much less optimistic assessment of the prospects for electoral democracy. Over the course of five elections from 1984 through 1989, for example, some thirty-five percent of the 1982 electorate dropped out of the process.⁷

In addition to the decline in voter turnout, electoral trends over the course of many elections suggest a repolarization of voters, with the right-wing consolidating behind the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and centrist voters dropping out of the electoral ARENA.⁸ In their first appearance in Legislative Assembly elections in 1991, parties on the left of the Salvadoran political spectrum received almost 15% of the valid votes, up from 3.8% in the 1989 presidential election. Participation by leftist parties may also account for the increased voter turnout in 1991. Voter turnout increased by just under 150,000 votes, while leftist parties received 130,000 more votes than in 1989.

The 1991 elections for Legislative Assembly and municipal councils were transitional. Held while the war was still going on, they were influenced by the peace negotiations even though the FMLN did not formally participate.

An Inter-Party Commission was formed in April of 1990 to monitor the peace negotiations, comment upon them and even draft legislation that might contribute to the peace process. It was composed of representatives of each legal party, including the Democratic Convergence. Recommendations from the commission led to reforming the apportionment of seats in the Legislative Assembly by adding 4 seats in the rapidly expanding metropolis of San Salvador, and by adding 20 seats to be elected by "national slates" apportioned by summing the national votes received by each party. Both of these measures aided smaller parties with urban bases - and the left opposition parties fit that description.

The reforms also increased party participation in the administration of the election, broadening representation at local boards that supervise the vote count, and creating a watchdog committee (Junta de Vigilancia) made up of all legal parties to keep track of the then Central Electoral Council or CCE.

The Inter-Party Commission served as a model for COPAZ, one of the supervisory bodies established under the 1992 peace accords to monitor implementation of the accords. COPAZ was agreed upon in a New York round of negotiations in September of 1991. COPAZ included FMLN representation (as well as that of all the political parties in the Legislative Assembly), and it was given semi-governmental powers (drafting legislation and supervising the implementation of the accords, but without legislative or police powers).

Although negotiators reached partial agreement on further electoral reforms, the final accords only stipulated that COPAZ would create a special commission to consider more fundamental revisions of the electoral code. The following December a new electoral code drafted by COPAZ, after extensive discussion, was adopted by the Legislative Assembly by unanimous vote. This new law added guarantees for broader participation of political parties in the supervision of elections, effectively giving the civilian leftist parties which had gained a presence in the 1991 elections a place among the 5 magistrates of the new Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

In accordance with another provision of the peace accords, once the last of five groups of FMLN combatants had laid down their arms in December of 1992, the Assembly legalized the FMLN as a political party. The new electoral code also reapportioned the 64 seats to give rapidly populating urban districts somewhat greater representation. A UN technical mission concluded that the accords and the subsequent legislation, though not without problems, provided an excellent legal framework for free and fair elections. Implementation of the new law was another issue.⁹

III. The Rules of the Game¹⁰

Each political party must be legally inscribed with a minimum number of signatures gathered nationwide. Coalitions of parties can also register themselves for elections.

Elections for President and Vice President are held every five years (1984, 1989). The President cannot run for re-election. Legislative Assembly and Municipal elections are held every three years (1985, 1988, 1991). The political administrative units of El Salvador are national, departmental, and municipal. Departments are roughly equivalent to states in the U.S. system. Departments have governors who are administrators appointed by the President.

Of the 84 Assembly seats 64 are assigned to the nation's 14 departments in rough approximation to population. The Department of San Salvador has 16 seats, other departments have from 3 to 6. The other 20 are elected by national vote totals.

Each party nominates rank-ordered slates of candidates for each Department and for the 20 national seats. Voters vote for the party slate, not for individual candidates. A formula of proportional representation awards seats in approximate proportions to the percentage of the vote gained by each party in each Department. (See Appendix IV for examples).

At least in departments with larger numbers of seats, the system tends to provide minimum representation to smaller parties (e.g., in San Salvador, with 16 seats, a party can get a representative with less than 6% of the vote).

There are 262 municipalities in El Salvador. In rural areas municipalities are roughly similar to counties, or in San Salvador, urban boroughs. Municipal elections use a "winner-take-all" system, rather than proportional representation. Parties run slates of candidates for municipal councils, and the party with the largest number of votes wins the entire council (its top listed candidate becomes the mayor). When there was a chance to change this system during the drafting of the new electoral code, to provide for proportional representation on city councils, the parties passed up the opportunity to make the change. (See Appendix IV on the possible consequences.)

The Supreme Court has in the past been appointed, in effect, by the party which controlled the Assembly. This will change with the new election; it will take a two-thirds vote to elect members of the court, and professional associations will have greater say in nominating slates of candidates.¹¹

IV. The Players

The main contending parties in the March 1994 elections are the governing ARENA party, the Christian Democratic party (PDC) which governed from 1984 to 1989, and the left opposition parties including the Democratic Convergence (CD) and the FMLN. Several smaller parties will also participate, including two new parties seeking to appeal to evangelical Christian voters.¹²

ARENA

The governing party's presidential candidate is Armando Calderón Sol, who demonstrated his electoral appeal by wresting the mayorship of San Salvador away from the PDC in 1988 and keeping it with ease in 1991. The party has been controlled by an executive committee since the death of party founder Roberto D'Aubuisson, who passed away in 1992. Some analysts believe that the "Cristiani line", that is the moderate, pro-business line favored by the current President, has won out over the more hard line anti-left position associated with D'Aubuisson.

Cristiani is a conservative who authorized the peace negotiations and did much to win support for a negotiated agreement from harder line elements of his party and the military. These cleavages led some party stalwarts to leave the party.

Cristiani has also been a very tough negotiator vis a vis the FMLN in a series of post Accord negotiations and some critics claim that as the end of his term nears he has acted more to unite the party and less in an independent statesman's role. A member of the business class, he is highly regarded in those circles. He has been tough on labor issues, though also played a key role in ushering in a new labor code that, though falling short of labor's goals, contains main features which, if implemented, will

give labor, particularly rural labor, some of the protections unions have had for two generations in Europe and the U.S.

The ARENA government significantly changed the political economy of the country. It reversed changes made in the early 1980's under the influence of Christian Democrat Duarte. The Cristiani government reduced taxes on export products, increased sales taxes, reduced (in real terms) government spending, privatized a nationalized system of marketing exports and began to privatize the banks. Despite this generally pro-business, neo-liberal stance on economic policy, there have been significant fissures within ARENA between coffee growers, on the one hand, and processors and exporters on the other, most recently over the issue of whether to join an effort by international coffee growers to raise prices by limiting exports to national quotas.

Calderón Sol is alternatively viewed as either in the center of the party, or part of the party's right wing, depending on the source. Most claim that his closeness to D'Aubuisson, and his proven vote-getting ability were the chief factors in winning the party nomination. He might have been damaged by the recent declassification of U.S. government documents that associate him with rightist terrorist activities in the early 1980's. He has denied the charge, and the party has claimed the U.S., by releasing the documents just before the opening of the election campaign, is once again interfering in Salvadoran elections to the detriment of ARENA. The U.S. denies that charge.

ARENA has built a formidable political apparatus over the past decade, and has consistently demonstrated an ability to get between 400,000 and 500,000 votes. The party will campaign as the party that brought peace and economic revival.

The Christian Democratic Party (PDC)

The Christian Democrats are headed by presidential candidate Fidel Chávez Mena, who was also their standard bearer in 1989, when they were soundly defeated by ARENA. The party spent most of 1993 in turmoil, as different factions sought to displace Chávez Mena. His candidacy was opposed by highly respected businessman and party founder, Abraham Rodríguez, who hoped to ally the PDC with left parties on a unity ticket to defeat ARENA. Chávez Mena won a primary in which only party militants could vote. The opposition cried fraud, and Rodríguez refused to accept the results of the election.

Chávez Mena has recently dismissed three party leaders from the party, and there is a court challenge pending. The challengers have gone so far as to claim that Chávez Mena should not be allowed to be the presidential candidate, four months before the election.

Historically, the party divisions have not simply been over quests for personal power but over ideological differences. Chávez Mena is regarded as more conservative than his opponents within the party. His main opponent was inclined toward an alliance with the left, even including the FMLN, a thought that was not to the liking of conservatives in the party who recalled the assassination of PDC mayors in the 1980s. Under the Rodríguez plan it was not clear what would happen to the candidacy of Rubén Zamora, but sectors of the FMLN were drawn to the plan. It is not clear how either branch of the party would confront, if at all, the neo-liberal policies of ARENA nor what the splits in the party might portend for a possible anti-ARENA coalition in the new Assembly.

It is obvious that the continued divisions within the party will hurt its electoral possibilities as they did in 1989. Polls indicate a decline, and that the PDC is no longer the second force. Hemisphere Initiatives viewed the campaign kick off-rally of the party in San Salvador, and, for a party that had real muscle in the mid 1980's it was strikingly small. Nonetheless, the party received 28% of the vote in 1991.

The Left Opposition

This will be the Democratic Convergence's third election, though its presence was extremely weak in 1989. Its standard bearer is Rubén Zamora and the CD will also be supported in the presidential campaigns by the FMLN. The MNR, a social democratic party with ties to the Socialist International, left the CD a year ago and initially announced plans to run its own candidate, Victor Valle, for president. He withdrew in December. It is unclear how forcefully the MNR will support Zamora's candidacy, but his withdrawal may bring money from the Socialist International to the cash starved CD campaign.

In theory, the FMLN could bring a good many campaign workers to support Zamora's campaign, but their ability and willingness to do so will have to be proven. The FMLN's five constituent groups were highly organized during the war and, despite fractious internal politics, presented a generally unified front to the enemy. Its challenge now is to translate those organizational skills into electoral activity at a time when its organizations are also having to confront many other peacetime challenges: implementation of the multifaceted and complex peace accords, establishment of a financial base, organization and maintenance of party activists outside a military framework and negotiation of agreements among themselves on a whole new range of issues.

In early polls the FMLN has drawn more support than the CD and is no doubt better known, though Zamora himself has high name recognition. The FMLN coalition of five ex-guerrilla groups was divided in its support of Zamora, but has pledged to unify around the campaign. The largest and best organized group, the FPL, supported him as did two smaller groups (the Communist Party and the PRTC). The National Resistance, and the ERP, the latter the second largest group in the FMLN, voted against.

The FMLN is running its own candidates for Legislative Assembly. In several municipalities the CD and the FMLN will coalesce for local races and in some they will not. And in Santa Ana, it appears there will be a coalition of these groups behind a PDC candidate.

The different strategies could bring about damaging confusion for voters. The ballots for each of the three

elections will simply display the flags of each of the parties. Voters for Zamora will have to be careful not to mark both the CD and FMLN flags, an act which would invalidate their ballot. ARENA has run a TV ad featuring its candidate which concludes with an X being marked in the ARENA flag. Such an ad would be difficult for the CD-FMLN ticket.

Other Parties

The conservative PCN has lost votes in the elections during the 1980's and by 1991 had slipped to 4th position. It has had considerable internal divisions and made two efforts in September and October to enlist as its candidates well-known conservative retired military figures. One of these, former Air Force head General Rafael Bustillo, was named in the Truth Commission report as a participant in the decision to assassinate the Jesuits. Both officers eventually turned down the PCN offer because they could not wrest a measure of power away from the entrenched leadership of the party. Their candidate, an ex military officer, Roberto Escobar Garcia, does not have much name recognition. The PCN party

apparatus is capable of mounting a minimal campaign in a number of departments. Given the proportional representation formula for Legislative Assembly elections, in the past this capability has secured a number of Assembly seats for the PCN.

There are two new parties with roots in the growing Evangelical Protestant movement. They are both regarded as conservative in profile. Neither mention the religious roots in their public presentations. The Unity Movement, headed by Jorge Martínez, seems to be aiming its appeal toward upper-middle class voters, while the Solidarity party (which began the campaign with surprisingly frequent TV ads), headed by Edgardo Rodríguez Engelhard, seems to present a more populist image. Pre-campaign polls show very little voter familiarity with these parties.

The Authentic Christian Movement (MAC), which divided from the PDC in 1989, is headed by Julio Rey Prendes, a veteran politician and influential member of the Duarte administration. Its candidate is his wife Rhina Rey Prendes. The MAC won enough votes in 1991 to capture 1 Assembly seat.



V. Political Conditions to Watch

Political Violence and Intimidation

The chief issue to watch in this election is political violence and the threat thereof. It could be said that fourteen years ago death squad activities on a massive scale were the fundamental force, in a situation of increasing political militancy within a closed fraudulent electoral system, prevented a political solution to the crises and pushed the country into war. The 1992 peace accords ending that conflict are based upon a strategy, exemplified in numerous provisions, of providing guarantees to the exiled and guerrilla opposition that it would be safe to return to civilian, peaceful political activity.

Three high-level FMLN leaders were killed in a little over a month between late October and early December. FMLN officials have accepted the results of a police investigation into one case, that of former comandante Eleno Castro (of the ERP faction of the FMLN),¹³ which found the killing to be a common crime. His car was struck by another car in a rural area in which Eleno Castro had been the ERP's chief negotiator in land conflicts, and after an argument he was killed by one of the occupants of the other car, a local landowner. He has not been apprehended. Accepting the ONUSAL version of the crime, the FMLN also believes the author of the crime might have been inflamed by political passions over the land issue.

Another former comandante, Francisco Velis (of the PRTC faction of the FMLN), was killed while dropping his infant child off at a day care center known to be run by the FMLN. Two men came up to him and shot him using silenced pistols, and walked away. Nothing was stolen. All evidence suggests that this was a political assassination, although investigators have given no definitive opinion.

The third FMLN leader, Mario López (also of the PRTC), was shot while he and his body guard attempted to prevent the robbery of an elderly woman who had just left a bank. However, there is evidence the robbery may have been staged as a trap for López. There were two to four men with assault rifles in a vehicle with polarized windows waiting outside the bank. The woman had less than \$250. López was stopping to visit a family member who he normally saw at that time of day and he seems to have been shot from several angles.

Both Velis and López were candidates on the FMLN ticket.

Though crime and homicide are at shockingly high levels in post-war El Salvador, and while many urban and rural gangs have assault rifles, it is hard to believe that by pure coincidence three high-level political leaders of one party were victims of random crime during a little more than a month. It is even harder to believe that these were random crimes, given that they occurred just as the electoral campaign was to begin.

While these three killings were very high profile, they do not exhaust the list of killings of people, on the right and left, who have been political activists. Some of these killings appear to have been common crimes, but others are of unclear motivations and some seem clearly politically motivated. These killings of lower level figures might also indicate the ongoing existence of national level death squads, or local repressive apparatuses. They are as serious as the killing of the senior FMLN leaders. The FMLN is not going to drop out of politics as a result of these killings, but local level activists from all parties, or others thinking of becoming active will surely shrink from political participation in such circumstances.

Whatever the actual facts of the three most prominent homicides, the initial impact was to raise fears about a resumption of political violence just as political parties were seeking to recruit campaign workers and to win support for their candidates.

In one western municipality which had a reputation during the war as a place of death squad activities, fliers threatening supporters of the left have been placed around the town by a group calling itself the Angels of Death. ARENA also claims that several local party activists have been killed under suspicious circumstances. Other prominent figures have offered compelling evidence of receiving serious threats, and the recent killings underscore the seriousness.

ONUSAL's human rights division has expressed increasing alarm over politically motivated human rights abuses. In July it concluded that "crime utilizing analogous methods to those death squads used in the past" were on the increase. Its subsequent report, written before the December assassination of López, called the more recent human rights violations "a grave deterioration." In an analysis of 94 cases of severe human rights abuses with apparent political motivations ONUSAL found only 18 cases in which there had been arrests and only one in which there was a judicial sentence.¹⁴

Ten years of war, several decades of repression, and a history of people being hired to spy in rural areas, casts a shadow over this election that is very difficult to measure. In rural areas of the country in which one party or group has long been dominant, will common citizens feel safe to take the risk of organizing and being active for another party? Will they feel safe in casting a minority ballot? In a national poll taken two months before the 1991 election (and while the war was still going on) a remarkable 74% of respondents said they feared to express their political opinions in public.

Voter Registration - An Update

As Hemisphere Initiatives has detailed in two previous reports, voter registration has been a problem in past Salvadoran elections and continues to be one up to the present. Setting up and maintaining a voter register was not easy in the midst of war, due to destruction of records in the war (primarily by the FMLN), and an ever shifting population. El Salvador

has never had a national civil register and the keeping of birth certificates and death certificates was decentralized with widely varying archival practices. The issuance of ID cards is also widely decentralized and not standardized - without, in the words of a UN report, "excessive controls."

The legal framework for getting a voting card is quite complex, placing very heavy burdens on the citizen. Its many checks and balances reflect a suspicion of widespread, wholesale, cheating, but the burden of checks and balances are placed on common citizens, the vast majority of whom are not likely to want to go to the trouble of fraudulently voting twice.

A citizen must go to an electoral registration center (one in each municipality) to apply to register. An ID card or birth certificate is required. If the citizen has neither, with two witnesses, one or both can be acquired for a fee—in some municipalities a quite high fee. The application is forwarded, by hand, to a central computer base. The computer checks for duplicate names, death certificates and birth certificates. Even if the citizen applies with a birth certificate the application is rejected unless the central computer data base also has a copy of that birth certificate. If all goes well, however, the citizen's name is placed on the voting list and the record is sent to the local electoral office. The citizen must then go back to the local office to have a picture taken which is placed on the voting card. The problem is that the citizen is not notified when his application is ready to be turned into a card, frequently resulting in wasted trips by poor people for whom the trip is costly in time and money.

As indicated in HI's previous reports, there was always a large gap between those who successfully applied and those who actually had their card - at least 15% were on the rolls but could not vote, though the number is in doubt because the base statistics were always suspect. Many more who applied were rejected through no fault of their own.

A UN survey last July estimated that there were 780,000 eligible citizens without voting cards. This amounted to more votes than the sum of those gained by the two leading parties in the 1991 elections. In September and October there were vast increases in the number who applied to vote, but smaller increases in the number who received cards. As of the end of December, it would appear that some 200,000 of the 780,000 who did not have cards in July had received them. The TSE has until March

12, 8 days before the election, to get cards into voters hands. If it can issue another 100,000 cards, about 82% of the voting age population as of last July will have cards (and a somewhat lower percentage if one were to include those turning 18 after July).

This would seem, given the amount of time and international assistance that has gone into the effort, a minimum acceptable level. It would mean that many people would have applied for cards, perhaps as many as the historic 15% level, and not have received them through little or no fault of their own. There is another danger. Some have proposed that if card issuing remains problematical that legislation could be passed at the last minute allowing people to vote who could show evidence that they had applied. While such a measure has an initial appeal, it has two major drawbacks. It says to those who struggled through the system they need not have bothered. And it runs the risk (despite the precaution that voters have their finger stained in indelible ink) that those who have applied to vote several times (and it appears that in the final rush many did) might also be able to vote several times.

Media and Funding Rules

While all electoral laws prohibit incumbent parties from using any state resources, such laws are usually honored in the breach. At issue is the size of the breach and the ability to detect violations. So far opposition parties have not claimed a major violation or stretching of these laws save in the media case, cited below. ARENA party propaganda commonly appears on the walls of local municipal government offices, but this has not been a focus of attention.

The government has succeeded in gaining substantial funds from abroad to finance reconstruction. Although the Reconstruction Program is part of the peace accords, during an election campaign it poses risks of abuse for partisan purposes. The language

of the Accords gave the FMLN very little hold over these funds, though some donors have specifically channeled funds through pro-FMLN organizations. Other political parties have had almost nothing to do with these funds. It is quite likely that the governing party will derive the major benefit from distribution of these funds.

The communications media are obligated to carry the ads of any political party without discrimination in price, time or quality. The media must inform the TSE of their rates. However, most admit that infractions of the equal price provision would be extremely difficult to detect, in the event, for example, that a media outlet wanted to give a more favorable price to a particular party. The state controlled media must give free, equal advertising space to the political parties. The news media, in its news coverage, does not appear to be obligated by internal rules or the electoral code to give time to the various candidates. It is quite frequent to see one candidate being asked to comment on a news story and not the others.

Prohibited from campaign activity are active military officers and police, and ministers or pastors, though these citizens can vote.

The electoral code establishes a system of public finance of campaigns based on the number of votes a party gets during the elections (for each level of the election), which is the amount paid per vote in the previous election plus inflation. Parties can draw an advance payment to meet campaign expenses in a range of 3% to 70% of the votes the party got in the last election. Parties which did not participate in the last election can draw an advance of 500,000 colones (\$57,800). If the party overestimates the votes it will get it must pay back the overdraw it has made after the election. Private financing, domestic or foreign, is permitted without restrictions.

Subsequent HI reports will assess the effectiveness of these rules.

VI. Preliminary Prospects for Free and Fair Elections

The electoral process that will culminate in the first post-civil war Salvadoran elections is well under way, and it is important to stress a caveat that must guide the scrutiny of this process by outside observers. It concerns context: the Salvadoran elections are not taking place in a vacuum, free of external restraints and conditions. On the contrary, the framework of the electoral process emerged out of a negotiating process that involved mutual obligations by the FMLN, the Salvadoran government, and the international community.

Specifically, the electoral framework was agreed to as one element of a series of institutional reforms of Salvadoran society covered in the Chapultepec accords. These reforms included the creation of a new civilian police force (PNC) that was to be fully deployed in all departments before the election to provide security guarantees to the former guerrillas, and to replace the previous military police forces which frequently had undue political and repressive force in local areas.

Another reform called for peasants living in "conflict zones" on lands either abandoned during the war or forcibly occupied, to receive either the opportunity to buy those lands (if the owner was willing to sell to a government Land Bank), or to be relocated to comparable lands.

Implementation of these provisions of the Chapultepec accords, as well as others, is well behind schedule. The original deadlines for implementation have long since passed, and there have been frequent renegotiations of deadlines. These delays have implications for how level the electoral playing field will be. In the eastern and northern areas where the PNC has been deployed, they have worked well with the population and have made progress cleaning up crime. It is not clear which

political parties will get credit for this, but it is clear from the early campaign ads of the ARENA and Democratic Convergence candidates that both would like to be associated with the program. Left political parties complain that the PNC has not been, and generally will not have been deployed in the Western parts of the country during the electoral period. The guerrillas had the smallest presence there during the war, and the left complains that in rural areas the old repressive climate, backed as in the past by the national security forces, will undermine their efforts to break into this region.

Similarly, the provisions with respect to land distribution were widely interpreted to be an economic and political benefit to a population the FMLN and its opponents had considered to be the social base of the FMLN. To the extent that peasants received land titles during the implementation process it would seem to electorally benefit the FMLN and left political parties in general. However, the transfer process has been slowed, snarled by complicated negotiations, bureaucratic delays on the part of the land bank (controlled by ARENA), and delays on the part of the FMLN to figure out which people are to go with which of several hundred pieces of land. Even in situations in which resources have come into the hands of the FMLN "social base", it is not entirely clear whether the FMLN, the government or an international donor will get the credit from the recipients. But it is fair to say that delays in the process will hurt the FMLN politically more than other parties. Their peasant followers, occupying lands without titles and, therefore, without access to credits will wonder how the end of the war has benefited them, while the titled landowners have enjoyed a vast increase in the value of their land in conflict zones since the guerrillas stopped fighting.

There is also a political reality that outside monitors must keep in mind. The major contestants in the election do not start on an equal footing. Even if the implementation process was on schedule, the left opposition would face considerable obstacles in competing on an equal footing with political parties that have been participating in the wartime elections. The goal of both PDC and ARENA governments during the war was to shrink the political presence of the left to the smallest, most marginal areas of the country, or to outside the country. One veteran ARENA member said to Hemisphere Initiatives, that he thought the FMLN and its civilian allies had a more effective "foreign policy" apparatus over the years than had the government of El Salvador. But it was very difficult for the left to project a political image inside the country. It was outlawed, had no access to the media (until some coverage of it began after the 1989 offensive), had but two clandestine radio stations broadcasting a few hours a day, could not hold political rallies and, in populous areas of the country could only operate in clandestine fashion.

During the same period of time ARENA and the PDC were able to freely operate, save in the areas controlled by the FMLN (which were sparsely populated), to organize electoral campaigns and learn to project a populist image with sophisticated techniques. That ARENA was able to do this in a fashion so much superior to its electoral opponents during the 1980's is both a tribute to its organizing abilities and to the ample financial support it received from the business community. In a sense, the governing party, the PDC and PCN have a ten year head start on the CD and FMLN in electoral activity.

ARENA also has the advantages, and disadvantages, of incumbency. Because President Cristiani cannot succeed himself (and he would very likely be a more popular candidate with fewer negatives than Calderón Sol) the incumbency advantage is not automatic. On the negative side, the economy is not in a strong position. There is very extensive poverty which has not been alleviated and high unemployment and underemployment. By some estimates 70% of the population lives in poverty. The government's image worsened a year ago (exactly midway between the 1991 and 1994 elections) when it instituted a highly unpopular and regressive 10% sales tax. This combined with problems in some basic crops has resulted in higher prices on many commodities. Recent polls reflect the resonance these issues have with voters. When asked to cite the errors of the government, a December poll by the

Central American University (UCA) found a third of those polled (and 40% of those offering an opinion on the question) cited various economic problems affecting the population.

However, the incumbents and many economic sectors have benefited greatly from two years of peace. Inflation has been held in relative control compared with other Latin American countries. The economy has rebounded to show solid rates of growth; the government claims 5% for 1993. However, this has not trickled down to the poor. Despite this fact, the December poll also showed that 41.4% thought the economy had grown worse in 1993, 32% thought it was the same and 24.4% thought it was better - that is over 56% thought it had not gotten worse. For several thousand rural property holders and some property holders on the outskirts of San Salvador near FMLN encampments, the end of the war created vast increases in their property values. Ironically, the economy has been propped up by an economic resource produced by the war itself, refugees who fled to the United States. Money sent home to families is now the leading source of dollars in the Salvadoran economy (a much larger source, for example, than coffee, the leading export crop). This has cushioned the economy and has been a resource which trickles down. Ironically, the donating Salvadoran diaspora will not be able to vote in the election unless they return to the country.

These family monies from abroad combined with very significant amounts of post-war aid from governments and international agencies have softened the impact of a structural adjustment program the Cristiani government began with the encouragement of the United States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In third world countries these programs normally bring sharp reductions in production, in consumption and in government subsidies of social programs, and increases in poverty. In El Salvador economic growth and the government budget have increased somewhat in the midst of the structural adjustment program. Politically structural adjustment was not a subject of sharp debate during the peace negotiations nor has it been, to date, in the electoral campaign.

The ARENA government has taken advantage of its position by launching a sophisticated, professionally produced series of campaign ads saluting the accomplishments of each government ministry and showing happy, smiling citizens. There have been some TV programs in which almost half the ads have

been by the government, a striking approach given the anti-state philosophy of the ARENA government. The ads even boldly include promotions celebrating the accomplishments of the unpopular sales tax in building schools and other popular projects. Opposition parties, particularly the PDC, have claimed that these ads, before and during the campaign, violate the electoral code.

By contrast, the leadership of the FMLN has been preoccupied with renegotiating and implementing the various provisions of the accords. Its organizational resources for these tasks are much less ample than those of the government. The FMLN and the CD, as well as other parties, have had to scramble for money. It must also be said that the FMLN leadership, because it remains divided in five different groups, as it has been for the last 16 years, spends a good deal of human resources negotiating among themselves.

The material resource differential between ARENA and the other parties has been amply demonstrated in the first few weeks of the campaign. Calderón Sol ads blanket the air waves and can frequently be seen in expensive, full color ads on the back pages of the morning newspapers. Hemisphere Initiatives will study the issue in detail, but an early estimate is that ARENA's ads outdistance all of the competition put together in quantity as well as production techniques. ARENA held a pre-Christmas party in a poor area of San Salvador attended by thousands of people who received from the presidential candidate toys brightly painted in ARENA's red, white and blue colors presidential. No other party could afford this.

Given the above, it should come as no surprise that all polls thus far have shown ARENA or Calderón Sol to have a large lead over rivals. However, the above mentioned December poll by UCA, showed a decline in ARENA and Calderón Sol support, their first poll after the first two assassinations of FMLN commanders and after the appearance of Calderón Sol's name among those who planned or participated terrorist acts in the early 1980's in the documents released by the U.S. government. He had gotten around 38% in early polls but dropped to 28% in this poll. In the June and October UCA polls, the ARENA party received support from 26% and 27% respectively, 14 to 16 points above their closest rival. In December, their support dropped to 20%, eight points above the CD-FMLN.

However, the drop in ARENA support did not appear to go to other parties. Those who did have or would not state a preference shot up from 39% in October (and 30% in June) to 55%. From June to December the CD-FMLN went from 11% to 12%. The PDC dropped from 12% to 7.8% (in October) to 3.5% in December, following several more rounds of well publicized factional fights. Those saying they would vote for none of the listed parties dropped also, from 17% in June, to 11.7% in October to 7.6% in December.

One theory about the dramatic size of the group not expressing a preference is that the spate of killings, and the saturated, grisly TV coverage of them, frightened people into not expressing a preference. In the same poll, however, much higher percentages of people are willing to offer opinions about the existence of Death Squads (52.4% said they still exist, 29% did not express an opinion) and who might be sponsoring them (35.7% did not offer an opinion; 47% were divided among those linking the death squads to the government, the rich, ARENA, the military or some combination of them, 5.8% said it was the FMLN and ARENA, and 3.8% said it was the FMLN).

The main hope of the Democratic Convergence and the FMLN, as well as other opposition parties, is in this large and perhaps undecided group (a large portion in this category said simply that their vote was secret.). However, even with this drop in the December polls, ARENA received 44% of those polled who did express an opinion (including those who did not want to vote for any of the listed parties, and therefore might not vote.) about the same level they received in October and more than they received in June. For another party to finish first, it would have to get a heavily disproportionate share of the undecided vote and, at the moment, there is no evidence to suggest that this will happen.

The opposition is not without hopes. First, none of the polls give ARENA a majority (though the early polls and even the December poll results can, with certain assumptions about levels of support among those who will actually vote, can be construed to give ARENA a majority). The opposition hopes to throw the presidential election into a second round and coalesce around the second place finisher. Such a coalition would be difficult for the party leaders to put together and, even if they did, it is far from clear that

the parties leaders could transfer their first round votes. Voter allegiance to parties in El Salvador, as elsewhere is simply not that mechanical.

Second, the opposition can place hopes in negative images the electorate has about their circumstances, as revealed in polls, and hope they can convince voters they would get a better deal under them. The negative images are powerful with polls showing very high percentages of people afflicted by or worried about crime, poverty and unemployment. In the June UCA poll, 69% listed either the high cost of living (30%), lack of jobs (15%) or poverty (15%) as the most important problem, and 23% listed crime. However, so far the campaigns (as revealed through ads of the opposition parties) have not taken much advantage of this, certainly no more so than Calderón Sol.

The opposition can also hope to win a majority in the Legislative Assembly, even if it cannot win control of the executive branch. That might mean the opposition could block ARENA legislation and it might even

mean that the opposition could pass legislation against ARENA's wishes. But it would not be easy to forge a solid coalition out of all the opposition parties. ARENA could count on votes from the PCN and some conservative PDC deputies, and an ARENA president might have many incentives to offer a sufficient number of opposition deputies to vote for important legislation.

On the other hand, this is a post war election, and that may be the biggest unknown factor. Almost by definition, elections cannot accurately poll a population in the midst of a civil war. One might have many doubts about the accuracy of the polls even in the post war situation given lingering citizen uncertainty and fears. In the most recent poll, among the undecided category were over a third of those polled who simply said their vote was secret; they were not going to reveal it to a strange poll taker pledging confidentiality. And, as the Sandinistas discovered to their chagrin, incumbent parties at the end of a war should not be too confident of victory over a divided and apparently weak opposition.

VII. Conclusion

Is there a level playing field? The various parties to the war and to this electoral conflict have agreed upon a set of rules for ending the war and for staging this election. Those agreements have resulted in Constitutional changes and have been formulated by an unprecedented diversity of political forces.

While the implementation of those agreements, particularly the peace accords, has been the subject of very considerable controversy and many crises, the agreements have held. In the electoral arena there has also been conflict about implementation of the rules, particularly in the voter registration process and in the early stages of media campaigning. But none of these complaints have been sufficient for any party to suggest pulling out of the election, a step which, for the FMLN, having negotiated the peace accords and disarmed, would be extremely difficult.

The perpetuation of political violence and the ongoing uncertainty about the continued existence and membership of death squads, on the other hand, could unravel the fabric that is being woven. All parties maintain that the peace process is irreversible and that there will be no return to war. However, a

senior FMLN leader, following the second assassination of an FMLN leading figure, told Hemisphere Initiatives, that the leadership was getting heavy pressure from their political base to pull out of the elections, a pressure they were resisting.

A democratic society cannot be built upon a foundation of political killings. Failure to stop the killings by identifying those responsible will undermine the credibility of the elections.

In a political sense, it is evident that there is not a level playing field. The left opposition is entering an electoral terrain that is unfamiliar. Relative to their main opposition, they lack experience, human resources and money for entering the campaign. But they, along with the rest of the opposition, could surprise many observers of this election, and ARENA may not sail through the campaign unscathed. There is a long way to go. Moreover, the new opposition groups hope, at a minimum, to lay a foundation for future elections. Barring additional acts of violence, they have a very good chance of gaining at least that out of this electoral process.

Appendix I

Results of Prior Elections

YEAR	Total Votes	ARENA	PDC	PCN	AD	POP	PPS	PAISA	MERE-CEN	VP	PAR	LIB	CD	UDN
1982	1,551,687	402,304	546,218	261,158	100,586	12,574	39,504	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1984 A	1,419,493	376,917	549,727	244,556	43,929	4,677	24,395	15,430	6,645	—	—	—	—	—
1984 B	1,524,079	651,741	752,625	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1985	1,101,606	286,665	505,338	80,730	35,765	838	16,344	36,101	689	—	2,963	—	—	—
1988	1,084,132	447,696	326,716	78,756	16,211	1,742	—	19,609	—	—	5,059	34,690	—	—
1989	1,003,153	505,370	338,369	38,218	4,363	—	—	—	9,300 (MAC)	4,607	3,207	—	35,642	—
1991	1,051,481	466,091	294,029	94,531	6,798	—	—	—	33,971 (MAC)	—	—	—	127,856	28,206

1982 Constituent Assembly election
 1984 A First round Presidential election
 1984 B Second round Presidential election
 1985-1991 Legislative Assembly elections

Appendix II

The Political Parties

ARENA - Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (National Republican Alliance). Candidate: Armando Calderón Sol. Founded 1981. Rightist. President Cristiani elected 1989 (53.8%). 39 Deputies elected 1991 (44.3%).

PDC - Partido Demócrata Cristiano (Christian Democratic Party) Candidate: Fidel Chávez Mena. Founded 1960. Center or Center Right. President Duarte (1984-1989). 1989 candidate Chávez Mena (36.5%). 26 Deputies elected 1991 (28%).

PCN - Partido de Conciliación Nacional (National Conciliation Party) Candidate: Roberto Escobar García. Founded 1961. Rightist. Governing party with military heads of state 1962-79. Won 19.8% of vote in 1984 (first round), 4.1% in 1989 and 9% (and 9 Deputies) in 1991.

CD - Convergencia Democrática (Democratic Convergence). Candidate: Rubén Zamora. Coalition founded 1987. Center Left or Leftist. Its three constituent parties united into one party November, 1993. They were the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC, founded 1980 in split from PDC), the Social Democratic Party (PSD, founded 1895), and the Nationalist Democratic Union (UDN, founded 1969). The 1989 CD candidate Guillermo Ungo won 3.8% in 1991 (The MNR - see below - was then part of the CD). The CD won 12.% in 1991 and 8 seats while the UDN, running alone, won 2.7% and 1 seat.

MNR - Movimiento Nacional Revolucionario (National Revolutionary Movement). Candidate: Victor Valle dropped out of race in December. Founded 1965.

Center left member of Socialist International. Its main leader, Ungo, died in 1991 and Hector Ouelí was assassinated in 1990. Was part of CD in 1991 and won 3 deputies. Left CD in 1992.

FMLN - Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. Candidate: Supports CD presidential ticket headed by Zamora, but running its own candidates for the Assembly. Founded as military front 1980; became legal political party in December 1992. Made up of five former guerrilla organizations: The FPL, the largest and most left. Headed by Salvador Sánchez; The ERP, second largest, recently declared itself social democratic headed by Joachin Villalobos; The RN, social democratic headed by Eduardo Sancho; The PCS or Communist Party, historically center left or left headed by Shafík Handal who is also the General Coordinator of the FMLN party; and The PRTC, the smallest of the five headed by Fernando Jovel.

MAC - Movimiento Auténtico Cristiano (Authentic Christian Movement). Candidate: Rhina Rey Prendes. Founded 1988 in conservative split from PDC. Won 3.2% in 1991 and one Deputy.

MSN - Movimiento Solidaridad Nacional (National Solidarity Movement). Candidate: Edgardo Rodríguez Engelhard. Founded 1992. Evangelical origins. Conservative. First election.

MU - Movimiento de Unidad (Unity Movement). Candidate: Jorge Martínez Menéndez. Founded 1993. Evangelical origins. Conservative. First election.

Appendix III

Outline of Electoral Structure

Elections for President and Vice President are held every five years (1984, 1989). The President cannot run for re-election. Legislative Assembly and municipal elections are held every three years (1985, 1988, 1991). In 1994 they coincide. The political administrative units of El Salvador are national, departmental, and municipal. Departments are roughly equivalent to states in the U.S. system. Departments have governors who are administrators appointed by the President.

Of the 84 Assembly seats 64 are assigned to the nation's 14 departments in rough approximation to population. The department of San Salvador has 16 seats, other departments have from 3 to 6. The other 20 are elected by national vote totals.

Each party nominates rank-ordered slates of candidates for each Department and for the 20 national seats. Voters vote for the party slate, not for individual candidates. A formula of proportional representation awards seats in approximate proportions to the percentage of the vote gained by each party in each department.

Municipal Council seats have a winner take all system; the party with the most votes, no matter how low the percentage, wins all seats and the mayorship.

The Electoral Power

The Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), composed of five magistrates serving 5 year terms, administers the election. The three parties which obtained the most votes in the previous presidential election each get one magistrate; the other two are to be elected by a two thirds vote of the Legislative Assembly from lists

proposed by the Supreme Court. The present TSE has a President (who had an affiliation with ARENA), and one magistrate each from ARENA, the PDC, the PCN and the Democratic Convergence.

The TSE has staff in each municipality supervising the voter registration process, and magistrates nominate staff affiliated with their own parties. The vote count is supervised by departmental, and municipal electoral committees composed of members from five parties, as are representatives at each voting table (Junta de Receptora de Votos or JRV).

The electoral code establishes a Junta Permanente de Vigilancia, (Vigilance Committee) a kind of watchdog group made up of representatives of all legal parties to inspect all activities of the TSE. Its budget is to come from the TSE. There has been consensus within this group that the TSE has not been responsive to its efforts.

Political Parties

For a group to become a political party is relatively easy under Salvadoran law. A group of 100 persons can apply. The group then has 60 days to get 3000 signatures of party affiliates. Each party has a symbol or flag which is used on the ballots. Legal parties may also form coalitions without losing their legal party status. A coalition may use the individual symbols of each party, as the CD-FMLN coalition has chosen to do, or might adopt a coalition symbol.

Parties lose their legal status if they don't participate in two consecutive elections or if they get less than 1% of the valid votes in a presidential or legislative election.

Campaigns

Campaigns have a legal beginning and end. No campaigning was legal prior to November 20th (4 months before the election). All campaign activities must stop 3 days before the election. No party propaganda is permitted in voting centers.

The law establishes freedom to have meetings. Parties must ask permission of mayors for rallies and demonstrations, but mayors may only deny such application under grave threat of disturbance of the public order.

Prohibited from campaign activity are active military officers and police, ministers or pastors. State resources cannot be used for campaigns.

The communications media are obligated to carry the ads of any political party without discrimination in price, time or quality. The media must inform the TSE of their rates. However, most admit that infractions of the equal price provision would be extremely difficult to detect. The state controlled media must give free and equal space to the political parties.

The electoral code establishes a system of public finance of campaigns based on the number of votes a party gets during the elections (for each level of the election). Parties can draw an advance payment to meet campaign expenses in a range of 3% to 70% of the votes the party got in the last election. Parties which did not participate in the last election can draw an advance of 500,000 colones (\$57,800). If the party overestimates the votes it will get it must pay back the overdraw.

Voting

When citizens apply to register they may indicate that they want to vote in one of the 262 municipalities either where they live or where they work. On election day they must go to the place so indicated where their name should appear on a voting list. They must have their voting card with them. As of this writing, there is some possibility that the Assembly may change the latter requirement at the last minute if the TSE has been unable to process a sufficient number of applications so as to get voting cards into the hands of voters.

The national voting list will be organized alphabetically for each municipality. There will be about 400 voting sites in the country with at least one for each municipality. Most voting sites will have several voting tables or Junta Receptora de Votos (JRV). Each voting table will have a voting list of some 400 names (a section of the alphabet from the municipal list). The UN estimates there could be as many as 7000 JRVs.

This arrangement has transportation implications. In rural areas, municipalities are likely to have one or two voting sites, each with several tables, so voters will have to travel distances from outlying areas to vote. In larger urban municipalities voters will have to know which voting site will have JRV's with their section of the alphabet and will have to travel to those sites, perhaps on the other side of the city. Political parties will attempt to mobilize transportation resources to get their adherents to the polls, with an advantage to those who have more resources.

There are no provisions for absentee voting, an obvious disadvantage to the elderly and infirm and to over one million Salvadorans living outside the country.

Our registration reports have indicated serious problems cleaning the voting rolls. The main provision against double voting, though not the only one, is that the voter's finger is stained with indelible red ink following voting. The UN has confidence in this method.

Appendix IV

Proportional Representation: Examples and Effects

In each Department, Legislative Assembly seats are awarded by a system of proportional representation (PR). If a party wins 20% of the vote the party should get approximately 20% of the seats. As the examples will show, approximate is a key word. The Assembly has 84 seats. Twenty are National Seats apportioned according to the total national votes won by each party. The rest are apportioned to departments roughly in accord with population size.¹⁵

Municipal Council seats, on the other hand, have a winner take all system; the party with the most votes, no matter how low the percentage, wins all seats and the mayorship.

In both Assembly and municipal elections voters vote for a party. Within a Department each party has a rank ordered slate of candidates, though the ballot lists only the party flag and name.

The system affords a greater opportunity for minority parties to gain representation than a single district winner take all system. Massachusetts had 11 House of Representative districts. The Republicans generally won 1 seat though, statewide, they normally get over 40% of the vote. Were Massachusetts to have used proportional representation, the GOP would have put up a statewide slate of 11 candidates and in most elections the top 4 or 5 would have won seats.

The calculation process: Step 1. The total number of votes is divided by the number of seats. The result is the electoral quotient (Q).

Step 2. The Q is divided into the vote totals for each party. A party is awarded a seat for each whole number that results from the division.

Step 3. Any remaining seats are awarded to the

party(ies) with the largest "remainder" votes resulting from the division in Step 2.

Examples with 1991 votes:

The Department of Chalateno has 3 seats. There were 37,663 valid votes. Step 1. Electoral Quotient = 37,663 divided by 3 or 12,554. Step 2. Divide party votes by quotient.

Party	Votes	Seats and Remainder
ARENA	(39.6%)	14950/1 25541 + 3008
PDC	(32.7%)	12337/1 25540 +12337
PCN	(9%)	4110 + 3411
MAC	(.7%)	26630 + 2663
Conv	(10.5%)	39510 + 3951
others		381

Under step 2 ARENA wins a seat.

Step 3. The PDC has the largest remainder vote, just under the quotient, so it wins a seat. The Convergencia has the second largest remainder vote so it wins the third seat.

In Step 1 for 20 National Seats divide the total votes, 1,051,481, by 20 to get quotient (Q) of 52,574. Steps 2 and 3:

ARENA	(44.3%)	466091/5	25748 + 45499
PDC	(28%)	294029/5	25745 + 31159
PCN	(9%)	94531/5	25741 + 41957
MAC	(3.5%)	33971	
Conv	(12.2%)	127875/5	25742 + 22727
UDN	(2.7%)	28206	
AD	(.6%)	6798	

Step 2 awards 16 of the 20 seats. Under Step 3 the remaining 4 go in order to ARENA, PCN, MAC and PDC.

The winner take all system El Salvador has adopted at the municipal level has an opposite effect to the system used for the Legislative Assembly. If 4 parties run in a municipality one can win all council seats with but 26% of the vote. Given the post war goals of inclusiveness and encouraging negotiation, Hemisphere Initiatives believes a more representative system would have been better.

In 1991 the winner take all system allowed parties in 63% of the 262 municipalities to gain 100% control of the Municipal Council with less than 50% of the vote. And in 43 municipalities the difference between the

winner and the second place party was less than 4% of the vote; in a handful it was less than 5 votes. The municipal formula increases the difficulty for new parties to enter; a partial victory is impossible. Though the Convergencia in 1991 got 12.1% of the vote for Legislative Assembly seats, it received only 9.1% of the total vote in municipal elections and 0 (zero) votes in 159 municipal elections. The system favors the incumbent, and in this election, it might have created among some mayors an incentive to hinder, or not encourage, new voters from registering.¹⁶



Appendix V: Things to Read

The following brief guide is designed as series of first steps for readers interested in exploring further selected issues and contexts raised by this report. It is only suggestive, and is biased toward readers of English. († means published in Spanish and English).

Hemisphere Initiatives Reports

Endgame: A Progress Report on Implementation of the Salvadoran Peace Accords. By George Vickers & Jack Spence, et al. HI, December 3, 1992.

Justice Impugned: The Salvadoran Peace Accords and the Problem of Impunity. By Margaret Popkin, George Vickers & Jack Spence. HI, June 1993.

El Salvador Elections 1994: The Voter Registration Tangle. By Madalene O'Donnell, Jack Spence, & George Vickers. HI: July 1993.

Risking Failure: The Problems and Promise of the New Civilian Police in El Salvador. By William Stanley. HI/WOLA, September 1993.

El Salvador Elections 1994: Voter Registration Progress and the Tasks Ahead. By Madalene O'Donnell. HI, November 1993.

General History

Anderson, Thomas P. Matanza: El Salvador's Communist Revolt of 1932. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971.†

Armstrong, Robert and Shenk, Janet. El Salvador: The Face of Revolution. Boston: South End Press, 1982.

Browning, David. El Salvador: Landscape and Society. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.†

White, Alistair. El Salvador. New York: Praeger, 1973.†

Political developments in the late 70's to mid 1980's

Baloyra, Enrique A. El Salvador in Transition. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981. †

Dunkerley, James. The Long War: Dictatorship and Revolution in El Salvador. London: Junction Books (Verso Editions), 1982.

Montgomery, Tommie Sue. Revolution in El Salvador: Origins and Evolution. Boulder: Westview Press, 1982. (a revised edition is forthcoming)

On the war, from a U.S. perspective

Manwaring, Max G., and Prisk, Court, eds. El Salvador at War: An Oral History of Conflict from the 1979 Insurrection to the Present. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988.

Schwartz, Benjamin C. American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, National Defense Research Institute, 1991.

And from the guerrilla side of the battle lines

Hamecker, Marta. Estrategia y Táctica. Ediciones Sistema, Radio Venceremos, 1986.

López Vigil, Mario. Las mil y una historias de radio venceremos. San Salvador: UCA Editores, 1991.

Pearce, Jenny. Promised Land: Peasant Rebellion in Chalatenango, El Salvador. London: Latin America Bureau, 1986.

For the social impact of the war

See the series of annual sociological survey's (1984 to 1989) on El Salvador (refugees, poverty, population, etc.) by the late Segundo Montes, published as separate monographs by UCA Editores in San Salvador.

On United States policy

Amson, Cynthia J. Crossroads: Congress, the Reagan Administration, and Central America. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.

Leiken, Robert S., ed. Central America: Anatomy of Conflict. New York: Pergamon Press, 1984.

On elections, for a comparative perspective

Booth, John A. and Seligson, Mitchell A., eds. Elections and Democracy in Central America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Herman, Edward S., and Broadhead, Frank. Demonstration Elections: U.S.-Staged Elections In The Dominican Republic, Vietnam, and El Salvador. Boston: South End Press, 1984.

For reports on individual Salvadoran elections

There is a wide spectrum, from the reports of Freedom House (in New York), to David Browning's reports (for the Parliament of Great Britain), and the Central American Information Office's (CAMINO) 1982 election reports. For a continuous electoral history, see the detailed analysis following each election in the journal ECA (Estudios Centroamericanos) published by the Universidad Centro-americana José Simeón Cañas. This journal, in general, is indispensable for studying El Salvador.

On human rights

Americas Watch. A Year of Reckoning: El Salvador A Decade After the Assassination of Archbishop Romero. Washington, D.C.: AW, March 1990; and more than a dozen reports over the past decade.

On the 1989 offensive and the killing of the Jesuits

Doggett, Martha. Death Foretold: The Jesuit Murders in El Salvador. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993.

On the omnibus Truth Commission report

La Comision de la Verdad. De La Locura A La Esperanza: La guerra de 12 años en El Salvador. [From Madness to Hope: 12 years of war in El Salvador.] San Salvador/Nueva York, Naciones Unidas (UN) March 1993.†

On the Peace Accords

The United Nations has published, in English and Spanish, the texts of all the peace accords.

Endnotes

¹ With Presidential elections every five years, and Assembly and local elections every three years, they coincide once in 15 years.

² See Appendix V for a list of HI reports.

³ The Christian Democratic Party candidate, Fidel Chávez Mena did not sign, saying the statement should concretely address existing problems.

⁴ The turnout figures, 1.5 million total votes, remain very controversial, some claim they were exaggerated by 25% to 50%. See Appendix I for all vote results.

⁵ His vote total was actually 150,000 less than D'Aubuisson had received in the second round in 1984, a reflection of the continuing decline in voter turnout.

⁶ The Tet offensive of the Vietnamese guerrillas in January, 1968 caught the United States and the South Vietnamese army by surprise, and convinced the U.S. public that official assertions that the guerrillas were nearly defeated were a lie. As happened in El Salvador, the Vietnamese guerrillas overestimated their support and strength, and suffered heavy casualties in government counterattacks.

⁷ The first round of presidential elections in 1984 drew 1,419,996 voters, and the second round brought increased turnout to 1,523,946 voters. In the Legislative Assembly elections in 1985, only 1,101,606 Salvadorans went to the polls. The decline continued in the Legislative Assembly elections of 1988, which drew 1,092,567 voters. The 1989 presidential election witnessed a further decline to 1,003,161 voters.

⁸ Although ARENA got sixteen percent more votes

in March 1991 than in 1982, for example, all rightist parties together received 80% of their 1982 total. The centrist Christian Democratic Party (PDC), by contrast, got only fifty-four percent as many votes in 1991 as it received in 1982. All centrist parties together received in 1991 only 46% of the votes they received in 1982. Votes for rightist parties increased by 2.5% from 1989 to 1991, whereas votes for centrist parties declined by 14% during the same period.

⁹ "Incorporación de Actividades de Observación Electoral a ONUSAL: Informe de la Misión Preparatoria" May 1992.

¹⁰ See Appendix III for more information.

¹¹ See Hemisphere Initiatives report Justice Impugned.

¹² The parties are sketched in Appendix II.

¹³ See Appendix II for descriptions of groups within the FMLN.

¹⁴ See ONUSAL human rights reports #VII, VIII, and IX.

¹⁵ Assembly seats by department (with valid votes cast in 1991) are: San Salvador = 16 (326,329); Santa Ana = 6 (104,948); San Miguel = 5 (68,489); La Libertad = 5 (115,328); Usulután = 4 (57,199); Sonsonate = 4 (87,129); La Unión = 3 (37,037); La Paz = 3 (55,709); Chalatenango = 3 (37,663); Cuscatlán = 3 (35,938); Ahuachapán = 3 (51,211); Morazán = 3 (23,930); San Vicente = 3 (29,260); Cabañas = 3 (21,311).

¹⁶ See Hemisphere Initiatives' July and November voter registration reports.



Hemisphere Initiatives

Hemisphere Initiatives (HI) was formed in 1989 to report on the Central American peace process and efforts to establish and strengthen democratic institutions throughout the region. It monitored and extensively reported on the Nicaraguan electoral process from May 1989 through the February 1990 election.

HI is currently monitoring the implementation of the Salvadoran Peace Accords signed on January 16, 1992 and the impact of those Accords on processes of democratization in El Salvador. The terms of reference for HI's mission include monitoring the political and electoral process leading up to the 1994 elections to assess the extent to which the Accords help guarantee free and fair competition for votes to the entire Salvadoran political spectrum.

Members of HI's Board of Directors visit the country regularly to measure progress and assess problems. They meet with government and opposition leaders, with journalists, with academic experts and independent observers. HI also maintains an in-country team of experts monitoring the principal areas covered by the Accords: demobilization and reforms to the military and security apparatus, the creation of a new national civilian police force under civilian control, human rights and reforms to the judicial system, the creation of a new electoral tribunal and new electoral code, and social/economic reforms including agrarian reform.



Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee first began work in Central America in the early 1970s. UUSC provides support to grassroots organizations in El Salvador and works with Washington policymakers on a range of issues that affect the region's poor. The Service Committee has led 19 Congressional fact-finding delegations to Central America since 1978. UUSC also develops educational materials on current issues and mobilizes its membership for policy advocacy.
