

**“THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF DOMESTIC CONFLICTS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF COLOMBIA, EL SALVADOR AND
GUATEMALA”**

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Abstract

The internationalization of internal conflicts has been seen either as imposed, as inevitable, or as resulting in further interstate conflict, but it has not been defined as the varied result of actors' strategies. I argue in this research that this is a serious omission and that in order to overcome it, it is necessary to posit a two-step question: first, if, when and why is internationalization decided? second, in case internationalization is decided, how can we account for the form it adopts? This two-step question partially suggests that in order to comprehensively understand the dynamics of civil conflicts, it is necessary to develop yet another dimension of the concept of internationalization. This new form of internationalization adds a crucial component to existing studies: the analysis of the international strategies domestic actors pursue or avoid. In other words, this new facet of internationalization would allow us to observe how the preferences and actions of domestic parties to the conflict interact with the interests of international actors and their willingness (or reluctance) to participate in domestic conflicts.

The main argument of this dissertation is that even though international and internal forces and processes shape and somehow limit the choices parties to the conflict make, and that even though international actors may and can impose their decision to internationalize, there are also other instances and forms of internationalization in which local actors or parties to the conflict may still have the agency, the ability and the space to make the decision of inviting (or not inviting) international agents to participate in their struggle. Parties' decision to internationalize is then conditioned or shaped by the international and the national contexts, but domestic actors still have a substantial amount of autonomy to decide whether or not international agents should eventually participate in their conflict and under what conditions they would eventually do so. Finally, parties internationalize in order to obtain military support or political legitimacy from international actors. In order to prove these arguments, I compare three cases of civil wars in Latin America: Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Chapter 1. Introduction..... | p. 1 |
| On the Concept of Internationalization..... | p. 6 |
| The Existing Literature on Internationalization..... | p. 9 |
| <i>Domestic Factors.....</i> | <i>p. 9</i> |
| <i>Interest-based Explanations.....</i> | <i>p. 10</i> |
| <i>Identity Explanations.....</i> | <i>p. 13</i> |
| <i>International Factors.....</i> | <i>p. 14</i> |
| Main Argument and Hypotheses..... | p. 20 |
| <i>Main Interests: Military Support and International Legitimacy.....</i> | <i>p. 21</i> |
| <i>Additional Factors that Facilitate or Hinder Internationalization.....</i> | <i>p. 33</i> |
| <i>Structural Constraints.....</i> | <i>p. 33</i> |
| <i>Fragmentation.....</i> | <i>p. 36</i> |
| | |
| Chapter 2. A Brief History of the Colombian Conflict. Background Notes..... | p. 38 |
| The Origins of the Colombian Conflict..... | p. 40 |
| The Beginning of the National Front and the Birth of the FARC..... | p. 43 |
| Colombia as A Low Priority for Washington: the End of the 1960s and the 1970s...p. | 45 |
| The 1980s and The Intensification of Counter-Insurgency: Military Internationalization..... | p. 47 |
| Betancur and the Peace Process: Political De-Internationalization..... | p. 49 |
| Barco's Administration and the Implementation of Pragmatic De- internationalization..... | p. 54 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Gaviria and Other Peace Processes..... | p. 56 |
| Samper and the End of the Special Relationship with Washington..... | p. 58 |
| Chapter 3. Colombia: The Government..... | p. 61 |
| The Pastrana Administration 1998-2002..... | p. 62 |
| <i>Political Internationalization I: The U.S.....</i> | <i>p.70</i> |
| <i>Military Internationalization toward the U.S.: Genesis and Evolution of Plan Colombia.....</i> | <i>p. 75</i> |
| <i>The Arrival of the Bush Administration, 9/11 and the End of the Peace Process in Colombia.....</i> | <i>p. 83</i> |
| <i>Political Internationalization II: Other Actors.....</i> | <i>p. 90</i> |
| <i>Cuba.....</i> | <i>p. 91</i> |
| <i>Venezuela.....</i> | <i>p. 94</i> |
| <i>The Creation of the International Commission of Facilitators and the Group of Friends.....</i> | <i>p. 95</i> |
| <i>Europe.....</i> | <i>p. 99</i> |
| <i>The U.N. and the last effort of the Group of Friends.....</i> | <i>p. 104</i> |
| <i>Internationalization in Search of Delegitimizing the FARC: the End of the Peace Process and the Construction of Insurgency as Terrorism.....</i> | <i>p. 107</i> |
| <i>Political Internationalization III: the Process with Paramilitary Groups..</i> | <i>p. 109</i> |
| Uribe and the ‘Internationalization of War’—2002-currently..... | p. 113 |
| <i>Continuing Military Internationalization Toward the U.S.....</i> | <i>p. 113</i> |
| <i>Affirming Shared World Views: Uribe support to the U.S. War in Iraq.....</i> | <i>p. 118</i> |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Extending Plan Colombia and the Creation of Plan Patriota.....</i> | <i>p. 121</i> |
| <i>The Effects of Military Internationalization toward the U.S. on the Peace Process with the Paramilitaries.....</i> | <i>p. 123</i> |
| <i>The Second Term: Finding U.S. Support for Plan Colombia II.....</i> | <i>p. 126</i> |
| <i>Political De-Internationalization: The United Nations.....</i> | <i>p. 129</i> |
| <i>The Beginning of the Disagreements.....</i> | <i>p. 131</i> |
| <i>Political Internationalization: The O.A.S.....</i> | <i>p. 138</i> |
| <i>The Non Governmental Organizations.....</i> | <i>p. 145</i> |
| Chapter 4. Colombia II: Armed Movements..... | p. 154 |
| FARC..... | p. 157 |
| <i>Internationalization toward Venezuela.....</i> | <i>p. 159</i> |
| <i>Military Internationalization: Various Actors.....</i> | <i>p. 161</i> |
| <i>Political De-internationalization During the Peace Process.....</i> | <i>p. 162</i> |
| <i>Additional Contacts.....</i> | <i>p. 165</i> |
| <i>Venezuela as a Mediator during the Uribe Administration.....</i> | <i>p. 167</i> |
| <i>The Search for the Belligerent Status.....</i> | <i>p. 168</i> |
| <i>Reyes' Computer: Internationalization toward Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua.....</i> | <i>p. 169</i> |
| <i>The Participation of Switzerland and the Gotard Affair.....</i> | <i>p. 173</i> |
| ELN..... | p. 175 |
| <i>Political Internationalization: Germany.....</i> | <i>p. 176</i> |
| <i>The Group of Friends during the Pastrana Peace Process.....</i> | <i>p. 180</i> |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Mexico</i> | p. 181 |
| <i>Venezuela</i> | p. 182 |
| Chapter 5. El Salvador | p. 185 |
| The FMLN and its internationalization strategy..... | p. 190 |
| <i>FMLS's Military Internationalization: Cuba and Nicaragua</i> | p. 192 |
| <i>Political Internationalization I: The Franco-Mexican Communiqué</i> | p. 194 |
| <i>The Allies: France and Mexico</i> | p. 200 |
| <i>FMLN's Political Internationalization II: The United Nations</i> | p. 205 |
| <i>FMLN's Political Internationalization III: International NGOs</i> | p. 215 |
| The Government's Internationalization Strategy..... | p. 216 |
| <i>Government's Military Internationalization: The U.S.</i> | p. 216 |
| <i>The arrival of the Reagan Administration</i> | p. 222 |
| <i>The Transition to Democracy</i> | p. 230 |
| <i>Support for Washington's War Against the Contras</i> | p. 231 |
| <i>Bush and Cristiani: the Weakening of Military Internationalization</i> | p. 233 |
| <i>The Salvadorian Government's Political Internationalization I: A Response to the Franco-Mexican Communiqué and the Caracas Declaration</i> | p. 239 |
| <i>The Salvadorian Government's Political Internationalization II: The United Nations</i> | p. 245 |
| <i>Government's Political Internationalization II: Contadora, Esquipulas I and II and ONUCA</i> | p. 248 |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Chapter 6. Guatemala..... | p. 258 |
| The Government’s Military Internationalization: the US and a ‘closeted’ alliance.... | p. 264 |
| <i>The Rejection of U.S. military support: De-internationalizing (militarily) the conflict.....</i> | <i>p. 266</i> |
| <i>Critical Alignment: Regional Internationalization through Military De-internationalization vis-à-vis the U.S.....</i> | <i>p. 269</i> |
| <i>The Exceptions to Active Neutrality: Internationalizing During the Reagan’s Years.....</i> | <i>p. 275</i> |
| <i>Combining Active Neutrality with Internationalization.....</i> | <i>p. 279</i> |
| Mexico and Guatemala. A struggle for regional hegemony and further internationalization..... | p. 283 |
| The Government’s Political Internationalization: United Nations..... | p. 287 |
| Internationalization and the Guatemalan Insurgency..... | p.292 |
| <i>URNG’s Military Internationalization.....</i> | <i>p. 295</i> |
| Chapter 7. Conclusions..... | p. 304 |
| References..... | p. 314 |

Chapter 1. Introduction

The relationship between domestic conflicts and the international system has been widely explored. A growing body of literature, for instance, has emphasized the role foreign states and international organizations play in the duration and outcomes of civil wars. However, this research has virtually ignored the domestic context under which this international involvement takes place and how parties to the conflict relate to it. In fact, the constant use of the term ‘intervention’ implicitly assumes that most of the time international actors make the decision to participate in these conflicts and local actors are passive receptors.¹ Other lines of research have explored how domestic conflicts exercise some sort of ‘contagion’ or ‘diffusion’ effect on their neighbors, but they have not provided a compelling story about precisely how the international system constrains this ‘spillover’ effect.² Furthermore and as in the case of intervention theories, these approaches do not grant any sort of agency to the parties involved in the conflict at the domestic level. Finally, another part of the literature suggests that civil wars can expose states’ vulnerabilities and therefore invite other states’ opportunistic attacks against the state that suffers from an internal struggle. A related argument posits that governments engaged in civil wars can initiate military action against neighboring states through cross-border counterinsurgency actions or retaliatory attacks against interventionist neighbors.³ But these theories grant only limited agency to one of the parties to the conflict—the

¹ For good summaries of approaches to the study of intervention see Forbes I, Hoffman M. 1993. *Political Theory, International Relations and the Ethics of Intervention*. London: Macmillan and Ramsbothan O, Woodhouse T. 1996. *Humanitarian Intervention in Contemporary Conflict: A Reconceptualization*. Cambridge: Polity Press

² For a complete overview of this literature, see Hill S, Rothchild D. 1986. The Contagion of Political Conflict in Africa and the World. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 30

³ For a good summary of these theories see Gleditsch KS, Salehyan I, Schultz K. 2008. Fighting at Home, Fighting Abroad: How Civil Wars Lead to International Disputes. *Ibid.*52:479-506

state, and not to the other—the insurgencies. Furthermore, they conceive interstate war as the only possible form of internationalization of civil struggles. They do not consider, for instance, that parties to the conflict—instead of waging war against other states—can eventually form alliances with international actors to strengthen their political or military position vis-à-vis their internal opponents.

In sum, the internationalization of internal conflicts has been seen either as imposed, as inevitable, or as resulting in further interstate conflict, but it has not been defined as the varied result of actors' strategies.⁴ I argue here that this is a serious omission and that in order to overcome it, it is necessary to posit a two-step question: first, *if, when and why is internationalization decided?* second, *in case internationalization is decided, how can we account for the form it adopts?* This two-step question partially suggests that in order to comprehensively understand the dynamics of civil conflicts, it is necessary to develop yet another dimension of the concept of internationalization. This new form of internationalization adds a crucial component to existing studies: the analysis of the international strategies *domestic actors* pursue or avoid. In other words, this new facet of internationalization would allow us to observe how the preferences and actions of domestic parties to the conflict interact with the

⁴ In fact, the study of the way in which internal actors engage and involve international actors in their struggle has remained untheorized. Some approaches have touched on different aspects of this theme: Rosenau JN. 1964. Introduction. In *International Aspects of Civil Strife*, ed. JN Rosenau, pp. 1-13. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Midlarsky MI. 1992. *The Internationalization of Communal Strife*. London, New York: Routledge; Deutsch KW. 1964. External Involvement in Internal War. In *Internal War. Problems and Approaches*, ed. H Eckstein, pp. 100-111. New York, London: The Free Press and Collier-Macmillan Limited

interests of international actors and their willingness (or reluctance) to participate in domestic conflicts.⁵

Another serious omission in the existing literature results from its emphasis on the state as the most important and almost unique unit of analysis. I argue here that it is necessary to advance an analysis of this new form of internationalization of civil conflicts beyond the notion of the state as a hegemonic presence. It is precisely this necessity that motivates me to study the process through which *all* the conflicting parties use or reject internationalization as a strategy. Both governments and insurgent groups use or reject diverse strategies of internationalization, and it is only by observing how their distinct strategies interact with each other that we can understand the complexity of the various forms of internationalization that develop in conflicts.

But the reasons to explore these specific dimensions of internationalization of civil struggles go beyond the need to overcome the theoretical gaps I have identified. Historically, civil wars have been a far greater scourge than interstate war (Fearon & Laitin 2003, p. 75). Conflicts between states make up a relatively limited share of the armed conflict involving nation states in the contemporary international system (Gleditsch 2002, p. 74). In fact, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, only three major armed conflicts were fought between states during the entire period 1998–2007: Eritrea–Ethiopia (1998–2000); India–Pakistan (1998–2003); and Iraq

⁵ Even though I assume actors have enough agency to decide whether they would internationalize or not, this decision is not absolutely autonomous and free of constraints. Powerful and weak actors all have to make choices in a highly restrictive national and international environment. That is why even though I study a decision making process, I cannot ignore the existence and role of broader national and international structural factors. For a complete debate on the relationship between agent and structure see Wendt A. 1987. The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory. *International Organization* 41:335-70

versus the U.S.A. and its allies (2003). The remaining 30 major armed conflicts recorded for this period were all fought within states (SIPRI 2008, p.5). Civil war then, is our contemporary form of war “and no thinking on regional security can now exclude any social engineering that holds this violence in check to whatever small degree” (Hazan 2004, p. xxi). The study of civil wars should constitute a priority not only because these are frequent phenomena, but also for additional reasons. To begin with, these wars, due to their length and intensity, cause tremendous suffering; they almost always affect and involve neighboring states; they often engage the interests of distant powers and international organizations; “and efforts to deal with the problems posed by internal conflict are in the process of being reassessed by policymakers” (Brown 1996, p. 3). Unlike interstate wars, civil wars rarely end in negotiated settlements. The numbers give solid support to this premise: “between 1940 and 1990, 55 percent of interstate wars were resolved at the bargaining table, whereas only 20 percent of civil wars reached similar solutions. Instead, most internal wars ended with the extermination, expulsion, or capitulation of the losing side” (Walter 1997, p. 335).

Additionally, multiple international actors are increasingly engaged in modern civil wars. In the language of this thesis—these civil wars are increasingly internationalized. For example, in two of the many contemporary examples of these internal struggles, the Congo and Colombia, the devastating effects of war are salient and international actors keep playing significant and very polemic roles. A decade of fighting in the Democratic Republic of Congo is continuing to kill about 45,000 people each month—half of them small children—in the deadliest conflict since the Second World War. Congo has endured two foreign invasions and protracted civil war since the

aftermath of Rwanda's genocide spilled across the border in 1994 with an influx of more than a million Rwandan Hutu refugees; “the years of conflict resulted in millions of people fleeing their homes, sometimes to live for years in forests where many died” (McGreal 2008). Aside from neighboring countries, ex-colonial powers—such as France and the United Kingdom, and international organizations—such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court—have all played a crucial part and have deeply affected the military confrontation in this African country.

In Colombia, armed groups forced at least 270,000 Colombians to flee their homes in the first half of 2008; rebels, paramilitaries and drug gangs are all forcing people from their land as they fight for land to grow cocaine (BBC 2008). For decades, the war against drugs, the war against the insurgency and the recent global war against terrorism seem to conflate in a very complicated manner in this South American country. And, as in Congo, international actors have been constantly involved: the United States, the Organization of American States and various neighboring countries have all participated, in one way or another, for good and ill, in Colombia's struggle. However, even though people in Congo, Colombia and in many other countries experience on a daily basis the effects of these confrontations and, even though international actors are involved in complex ways, there are still questions about the international dimension of these struggles that the discipline of international relations has not answered yet.

The purpose of this dissertation is then to address this gap in the literature on the pressing topic of the internationalization of civil wars. I have stated that in this research I ask two different but related questions: first, whether or not domestic conflicts are internationalized, when and why? And second, in case they are indeed internationalized,

how can we explain the various forms internationalization adopts? The first question treats internationalization as a dummy variable (either it happens or it does not) and it attempts to explain why it is used or it is not used by actors. The second question deals with cases in which internationalization does occur and it attempts to explain the process through which it is conceived and implemented.

On the Concept of Internationalization

Internationalization, defined in a general way, is the process through which an *explicit* and *conscious decision* is made: the *decision* to involve international actors in any phase—hostilities or negotiation—of a domestic conflict. The alternative strategy is to isolate the internal conflict and consciously exclude international actors.

The decision to internationalize (or not to) can be made by different agents: it can be initiated and sometimes imposed by an external actor (such a hegemonic state) or it can be made by local parties to the conflict. In other words, the concept of internationalization moves along a continuum in which on one extreme, external actors such as powerful or neighboring states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations can decide to participate in a unilateral way. In this scenario, *internationalization* takes the form of *intervention*. On the other extreme of the continuum, parties to the conflict make this decision. They invite external actors of the same type, i.e. states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to participate in their own confrontation. In the same vein, on one extreme, international actors may decide not to take part or intervene in a certain internal conflict, and on the other, local parties can opt for blocking or avoiding international participation.

Since external actors and parties to the conflict are rarely absolutely autonomous in making the decision to internationalize, most of the cases fall in the middle of the continuum, where it is possible to find decisions to internationalize (or not to) that are the result of an agreement or at least the interaction between parties to the conflict and external agents. As I have suggested, the literature on the causes of foreign states and international organizations' intervention (or the lack of it) in domestic conflicts is more extensive than the literature on the type of internationalization advanced (or avoided) by local parties to the conflict: little effort has been dedicated to analyzing when the parties to the conflict will (or will not) decide to internationalize their own struggle. Therefore, I am interested in exploring this specific new dimension of internationalization of civil conflicts.

The word 'internationalization' has been loosely used. Like 'globalization', 'internationalization' is a word that seems to imply a fuzzy intersection between the domestic and the international realms and efforts to define it in a more precise manner are rare. In order to make even more visible and tangible the conceptual boundaries of this definition, it is also necessary to identify what lies outside of those boundaries or, more simply, to describe the sort of phenomena that I *do not* include in the definition of internationalization. For the purposes of this project, internationalization *is not* a process through which international cultural and socio-economic divisions are broken up—or at least reformulated—producing new patterns of politics and substantially changing the nature of international governance (Kaldor 1999, p. 70). In this sense, internationalization is *not* a loose synonym of globalization. It is *not* a cosmopolitan politicization that could be located within transnational NGOs or social movements, and

within international institutions, as well as among individuals, around a commitment to human values and to the notion of transnational civil society (Kaldor 1999, p. 76). It is *not*, then, cosmopolitanism from above or from below or a loose new form of global governance. In fact, internationalization is not a structural phenomenon. On the contrary, it is a decision-making process made by specific agents with specific goals and interests in mind.

The concept of internationalization *does not* refer either to the widely analyzed impact of globalization on the structure of the nation-state and its political survival; it is *not* then about how globalization renders territorial sovereignty no longer possible (Strange 1996). Internationalization *does not* describe either how violence has spread to the international system; it does not address the problem of how difficult it is to contain the condition of war both in space and in time and how this local problematic remains a source of international instability after the end of the Cold War (Brzezinski 1989/90; Jervis 1991/92; Mearsheimer 1990; Snyder 1990). Internationalization is not a synonym of *spillover* or *contagion* effects; it is not a synonym either of collateral damages or externalities that result from internal conflicts (Murdoch & Sandler 2001). First, states are still crucial actors since they do make the decision to participate or to invite actors to participate in a domestic conflict. Clearly, they are not the only actors, but they are some of the most relevant agents that make the engine of internationalization work. Hence, internationalization does not necessarily undermine states; it may be the result of their own choice. Second, internationalization is not inadvertent or unintentional, and this is why the metaphors of spillover, contagion and collateral damage are inappropriate. Internationalization is, on the contrary, a *conscious* and *explicit* policy that results from a

rational decision-making process made by different sorts of actors. As I define it, internationalization is clearly intentional, intended and calculated.

The Existing Literature on Internationalization

In this section I review different approaches to the study of internationalization and I assess analytically how the discipline has approached its origin, nature, and scope. Unfortunately, the theoretical contributions to the study of the internationalization as I use the term here, are inadequate and sparse. Neither international relations nor comparative politics has comprehensively approached the questions about when and how the decision to internationalize domestic struggles is made. My research treats internationalization as its dependent variable because I am more interested in unveiling the factors that explain if, when, how and why internationalization takes place rather than in examining the effects of internationalization processes themselves. Here, I have classified the literature identifying explanations to the emergence of internationalization processes in two sub-groups and have denominated them domestic and international factors.

Domestic Factors

Two components are crucial in this group: domestic actors' interests and their identities. This set of theories is mainly dedicated to the origin and dynamics of civil and ethnic conflicts and the formation of alliances. They mainly explore actors' motivations, the sources of those motivations and, to that extent they suggest important elements for the analysis of internationalization. In a continuum, they can run from purely rational cost/benefit-based choices to decisions in which identity plays an important part. Therefore, the division between the section on interest-based explanations and identity

factors should be read only as a device used in order to facilitate the presentation of this literature and nothing else.

Interest-based Explanations

There are three main theories that contribute to the understanding of internationalization of internal conflicts as the result of domestic interest-based factors: externalization, diversionary theories, and Barnett and Levy's approach to the construction of alliances. According to Gleditsch et. al. externalization is a phenomenon according to which governments engaged in civil wars can initiate military action against neighboring states for two fundamental reasons. First, these governments may undertake cross-border counterinsurgency actions because rebels often seek out foreign sanctuaries or attempt to flee repression by slipping across borders. As they suggest,

“in many cases, these external rebel bases may be welcomed and supported by foreign actors; in other cases, rebels may be able to flee to and/or operate from foreign soil simply because the host state is unable to control its borders. In either event, rebels located on another state's territory provoke strikes on external rebel positions and/or 'hot pursuit' raids across the frontier” (Gleditsch et al 2008, p. 486).

A second form of externalization, according to these authors, occurs when states experiencing civil wars engage in retaliatory attacks against interventionist neighbors in the hope of coercing them into withdrawing support (Gleditsch et al 2008, p. 486).

Diversionary theories also suggest a high probability of dispute initiation by states experiencing civil wars but for different reasons. According to this perspective, leaders in civil war states seek to draw attention away from domestic problems by invoking a 'rally around the flag' effect or by creating scapegoat foreigners. By picking diversionary targets and using foreign adventures, leaders attempt to silence internal

dissent (Gleditsch et al 2008, p. 484). International conflict serves a twofold purpose: it diverts attention from domestic struggles and it serves as a pretext to crack down on domestic opponents. Along the same lines, Mansfield and Snyder suggest that when countries are in the process of consolidating their democracies and face regime transitions, unstable political coalitions or strong contests for power, they are more likely to engage in aggressive foreign policy in order to strengthen their control and eliminate rivals (Mansfield & Snyder 1995).⁶

Even though these two approaches recognize the state's ability to internationalize its internal struggle, they do not contemplate the possibility that states might attempt to internationalize through cooperation and alliances and not necessarily through war. In fact, a state might try to tackle cross-border counterinsurgency action through cooperation and not through retaliation. Additionally, these approaches assume that the only actor able to internationalize is the state and this ignores the ability insurgency organizations have to internationalize themselves. However, both externalization and diversionary theories constitute an important yet incomplete approach to the study of the internationalization of civil struggles.

Barnett and Levy, on the other hand, contemplate the possibility of interstate alliances by suggesting that internal threats to governments' rule produce incentives for state leaders to seek interstate cooperation. Economic and political constraints on the state's mobilization of societal resources are, according to the authors, a powerful incentive to make alignment concessions to others in return for military support to deal

⁶ Some alternative approaches suggest that leaders may themselves instigate or escalate civil wars—and not interstate wars—in a desperate gamble to stay in power. See Gagnon VPJ. 1994-1995. Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia. *International Security* 19:130-66.

with external threats to security and for economic support to deal with threats to the domestic political economy. Hence Third World leaders might prefer alliances over internal extraction because “political leaders are often tempted to try to secure the material resources necessary to deal with (internal) threats (by placating disgruntled social groups or by other means) through external alliance formation rather than through internal extraction from a society that is already economically stretched and politically alienated. That is, Third World states often form external alliances as a means of confronting internal threats” (Barnett & Levy 1991, p. 378). As I have suggested, Barnett and Levy’s argument, although conceived to explain state action, is also useful to explain when non-state actors decide to internationalize their own conflict.

Rationalist analyses, so far, partially tell us what factors explain whether or not parties to the conflict would be interested in internationalizing their struggle and what sort of international interaction they would favor. To that extent, they provide crucial elements to answer the question posed by this research project. But they do not help us explain *who* parties to the conflict would invite to participate and why they would eventually privilege some actors over others. In fact, when a party to the conflict attempts to find assistance of whatever type, the party knows that help rarely comes without trade-offs or commitments of different sorts. This is why domestic agents would try to find help not only from international actors that can provide it, but also from international actors that somehow ‘sympathize’ or share a world view with them and, therefore, would not impose additional costs on the domestic party that asked for assistance.

Identity Explanations

The literature on ethnic conflicts has suggested that ethnic movements tend to construct alliances with kindred groups in different countries, creating what Ted Gurr has called transnational minorities or ethno-classes (Gurr 1993, p. 16). In part, this is the case because ethnic divisions within countries both constrain and compel leaders as they develop policy toward other countries that also suffer from those divisions. In other words, “ethnic identity shapes what supporters prefer in both domestic and foreign policy. Individuals prefer that their states support those with whom they share ethnic identities” (Saideman 1997, p. 722). These approaches normally include theories about the psychology of groups and analysis of discursive framing advanced by political entrepreneurs within the state and society. In this sense, wars are viewed as ‘framing contests’ between states and social actors, involving the use of symbols and the manipulation of group deprivation, security fears and status concerns (Kaufman 2001; Mihailescu 2006).

The essential question for the purposes of this project is how well this contribution encompasses cases in which class conflict or struggle over non-ethnic issues are more prominent. If, in the case of ethnic conflicts, ethnic identity determines the nature of the alliances actors seek to construct, what is the key factor to take into account in the case of non-ethnic civil conflicts? This is a central question because most armed conflicts we observe in Latin America, for instance, are predominantly the result of ideologies involving class confrontations or political exclusion. Even where ethnic divisions are profound (such as Guatemala and Peru) conflicts were framed in ideological and not exclusively ethnic terms. In the next section, I will construct an explanation that

incorporates ideational factors—not only related to ethnic membership. These factors are crucial to understand why actors prefer certain types of internationalization and certain external alliances over others.

For now, suffice it to say that both rationalist and ideational explanations are essential to understand, first, why parties to a conflict decide to internationalize a domestic struggle under some circumstances and, second, why they decide to isolate it or keep it domestic under others. Both approaches also help explain the different forms internationalization adopts, both in terms of the international actors that are invited to participate in the domestic conflict and the mechanisms through which this participation occurs.

International Factors

There are two main approaches in this category: the one related to opportunism theories and the other related to intervention. Opportunism suggests that civil wars can increase the risk of interstate violence by lowering the expected costs or increasing the expected benefits of using military force. Civil wars expose and exacerbate weaknesses in the state's military capabilities and divert resources away from defense against foreign enemies (Davis 2002; Walt 1996). In those cases, "this position of weakness may invite opportunistic attacks against the state, which would not have taken place in the absence of internal conflict" (Gleditsch et al 2008, p. 483).

Another part of the literature that emphasizes the role of international actors is related to the concept of intervention and the main question they try to answer is what motivates external actors to *intervene* in domestic conflicts or what are the conditions that make this intervention more likely. These analyses do not address the role parties to the

conflict play in the internationalization of their own struggle and that is why I do not describe this literature extensively here. However, it is important to say that civil wars can generate new issues of contention that can motivate (or not) states and other international actors to participate more actively, through political or military means, in a domestic conflict. Gleditsch et. al., for instance, suggest that interstate conflicts can arise when external states perceive an interest in a rebel victory. They can support rebel groups for various reasons: because they want to weaken their international rivals and drain them of resources, which would give them a military advantage; because they want to remove a government whose regime type may be regarded as odious or whose policies are seen as hostile; because if the conflict involves separatism they can eventually join the disputed territory to their own; because they want to protect ethnic kin from oppression (in case of ethnic conflicts); and because “one state’s support for rebels can lead to retaliation in kind” (Gleditsch et al 2008, pp. 484-485). Hence, this approach provides some tools to understanding the motivations external actors have to accept or reject invitations by parties to the conflict to participate in the internal struggle.

In the first part of this literature review I summarized different theoretical and ideational contributions that stress the importance of domestic features and their impact on the likelihood of international involvement in a domestic war and the forms it might assume. Actors’ motivations and their sources (interest and ideational factors) have been identified as key elements that, according to the literature, determine whether or not internationalization takes place and how it unfolds. In the second part, I summarized an additional group of explanations that account for internationalization. There, I explored arguments that suggest civil wars create opportunities for other states to wage war against

states engaged in civil struggles and, the different motivations external actors might have to intervene in these confrontations.

I should clarify, once again, that even though I employed the categories ‘domestic’ and ‘international’ to organize the literature, I do not see these two groups of explanations as opposed or rival in any sense. On the contrary, these two categories constantly interact with each other in complex and dynamic ways. At the most basic level, and just as an instance of this interaction, international factors substantially constrain and shape the choices parties to the conflict can make and, simultaneously, whatever sort of involvement external actors exercise will be constantly limited by the dynamics of the internal conflict and it will need to adapt to domestic actors’ motivations and behavior.

In order to find out if, why and when internationalization happens (and why and when it does not), I use a comparative case approach to study the internationalization of civil struggles in Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala. Skocpol and Somers have defined this approach as macro-causal analysis. This analysis permits specifying configurations favorable and unfavorable to the particular outcome I am trying to explain: internationalization processes. As Skocpol and Somers state, this variant of the comparative method is

“indeed, a kind of multivariate analysis to which scholars turn in order to validate causal statements about macro-phenomena for which, inherently, there are too many variables and not enough cases. (Scholars) proceed by selecting or referring to aspects of historical cases in order to set up approximations to controlled comparisons. Always this is done in relation to particular explanatory problems and (one or more) hypotheses about likely causes” (Skocpol & Somers 1980, pp. 182-183).

In other words, the three cases I compare in this text allow me to predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons (Yin 2003, p.47). They let me observe a puzzling variation of the dependent variable (i.e. internationalization) or how it acquires different values in different cases (King et al 1994. p. 141). Domestic actors in El Salvador and Colombia (in Colombia more so during the end of the 1990s) opted for the intense involvement of international actors while Guatemala and Colombia (in Colombia before the 1990s) did not. The cases are similar to the extent that they represent the most salient cases of civil wars in Latin American and therefore allow to observe how common factors such as the role of the hegemonic power in the area (the U.S.) and the role of neighbor countries and regional organizations (most importantly, the OAS) contributed to shape the process of internationalization in these three countries. I advance this macro-causal analysis through process-tracing because this method allows me to generate and analyze data on the causal mechanisms, or processes, events, actions, expectations, and other intervening variables, that link putative causes (Bennet & George 1997) to the internationalization of domestic struggles. In other words, process tracing will allow me to observe both the causes of internationalization of domestic confrontations and the causal mechanisms through which it unfolds.

In order to answer the research question I have posed, I construct a comparative approach of the nature I have previously stated based on three cases in Latin America: they are the former armed conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala, and the ongoing civil war in Colombia. These cases constitute an interesting group for the comparative analysis I construct here for various reasons. While the case of El Salvador allows me to

observe and evaluate a conflict that reached a situation of stalemate before its end and that developed in the context of a bipolar international system (De Soto 2000; Flores Acuña 1995; Holiday & Stanley 2000; Nations 1995; Rights 1995; Stanley 1996; Whitfield 1999), the case of Guatemala provides an example of a conflict located in the same historical and regional context, but one in which ethnic components were seriously involved and the situation of stalemate was not as clear as in El Salvador (Azpuru 1999; Franco et al 1996; Guatemala 2000; Whitfield 1999). Additionally, the participation of international actors adopted fundamentally different characteristics in these two cases, both during the war and during peace negotiations. Why is that so? Why, if the international context remained unchanged for both actors, did internationalization differ? Once again, my initial assessment suggests that to understand when actors decide to internationalize their conflict, we have to look at the internal dynamic of each armed struggle and to the nature of the interaction between this domestic dynamic and the broader international context.

The Colombian case adds another interesting twist to the puzzle. The contemporary version of Colombia's civil war began in 1964 and it has survived the end of the Cold War. This means that during part of it, this conflict overlaps in time with the wars in Guatemala and El Salvador (I study these two Central American conflicts since the beginning of the 80s when their respective insurgent movements formed a coalition to fight against the state). This condition will allow me to analyze its process of internationalization under both bipolar and unipolar/hegemonic international systems. Even though the emergence of insurgent movements was associated with Marxist ideologies and the communist experiences in the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, the end

of the global confrontation did not lead to the end of the Colombian struggle. During this long conflict the balance of power among the parties has significantly switched back and forth numerous times. The country has also moved from periods of negotiation (such as during the Betancur and the Pastrana administrations) to periods of high and intense military confrontation (such as the current one). International participation, in turn, has varied too. For instance, not until the Pastrana administration's peace process did the government officially indicate a willingness to invite international mediators to participate in peace talks (Bagley 2000; Carvajal & Pardo 2002; Chernick 2003. p. 297; Internacionales-IEPRI 2001). But long before this, both the guerrilla movements and the government have used additional, less formal and very diverse strategies of internationalization many of which I explore in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. Why did actors decide to internationalize in these ways? Why did they opt for internationalization at certain junctures and not others? The Colombian case provides a very interesting and constantly changing scenario that contributes significantly to addressing my main research question.

It is important to say that although I do not take up cases of civil war in Africa, such as the Congo, the answers this research provides should be of interest to scholars of civil war elsewhere in the world. Indeed, the fact that Colombia is now the only remaining civil conflict in Latin America, a region that has previously been plagued by such conflicts, suggests that the Latin American cases may be particularly helpful in understanding how internationalization can contribute to resolving civil wars.

Main Argument and Hypotheses

My main argument in this dissertation is that even though international and internal forces and processes shape and somehow limit the choices parties to the conflict make, and that even though international actors may and can impose their decision to internationalize, there are also other instances and forms of internationalization in which local actors or parties to the conflict may still have the agency, the ability and the space to make the decision of inviting (or not inviting) international agents to participate in their struggle. Parties' decision to internationalize is then *conditioned* or *shaped* by the international and the national contexts, but domestic actors still have a substantial amount of autonomy to decide whether or not international agents should eventually participate in their conflict and under what conditions they would eventually do so.

Furthermore, to the first part of my research question, namely if domestic actors initiate or reject internationalization, I hypothesize that they do so constantly. Moreover, when parties to the local conflict chose not to internationalize, as in Guatemala, internationalization rarely happens. In fact, I posit here that cases of imposed internationalization are exceptional. I illustrate and prove this argument by identifying numerous instances of internationalization in Colombia, Guatemala and El Salvador initiated, rejected or terminated by domestic actors.

In the case of these Latin American countries, I have identified two specific groups of actors that are invited to participate in local conflicts through a myriad of internationalization strategies. The first column in Table 1 suggests that the United States and so-called revolutionary governments such as Cuba (from 1959 on), Nicaragua (from 1979 on) and more recently Venezuela, are the actors the state and insurgent

organizations are more likely to invite to participate in their conflict in order to obtain military and logistic support. The second refers to all other actors: non-committed neighboring states, European states, international organizations and international non-governmental organizations. These actors are more likely to be invited when parties are interested in obtaining political support and recognition. This usually, but not only, takes place during peace negotiations.

To summarize, in the case of Latin America, I describe two types of internationalization I have identified in the study and, the group of actors that parties to the conflict are more likely to contact in the following table:

| | Type of Internationalization | |
|--|---|---|
| | Military Internationalization | Political Internationalization |
| Invitees by the State | United States | Non committed neighbor states, some European states, International Organizations, among others. |
| Invitees by insurgent organizations | Revolutionary Governments, other insurgent groups | Non committed neighbor states, some European states, International Organizations, NGOs, among others. |

Having stated the first part of my argument, I now turn to explain the main interests that motivate internationalization.

Main Interests: Military Support and International Legitimacy

I argue here that parties to the conflict look for two fundamental assets when they internationalize their conflict: *material resources* to fight the war and international *legitimacy*. In terms of material resources, as Barnett and Levy suggest, internal threats to government rule produce incentives for state leaders to seek an external alliance. In

this sense, “while the process of developing and producing resources within a threatened state can be slow and difficult, alliance formation can bring a rapid infusion of funds and other resources, including military expertise and equipment” (Barnett & Levy 1991, p. 374). Additionally, in Third World countries the sense of insecurity tends to emanate from within their boundaries (Ayoob 1991, p. 263; David 1991); hence, governments have limited capabilities to extract resources from society; that is why these countries are more likely to look for external material support than others. To be sure, “although many Third World governments would like to develop an independent arms production capacity and thereby preserve their autonomy, this goal is constrained by an insufficient industrial base, an inability to achieve the desired economies of scale, and a lack of appropriate technology, all in an age in which military technology has become increasingly sophisticated and expensive” (Barnett & Levy 1991, p. 377). The logic also applies for insurgent organizations since they are not willing to extract resources from the population they supposedly defend from the abuses of the state. I call this type of alliance *military internationalization* and I characterize it as the type of internationalization parties to the conflict use in order to obtain external military or logistic support to fight the war and improve their military position vis-à-vis their opponents.

Parties to the conflict also attempt to gain *legitimacy* and in this endeavor international agents are crucial. Here the objective is to obtain political support for their cause: for the state, it is about obtaining international approval for its right to govern and to fight threats against itself; for insurgent organizations, it is about obtaining international support for their right to fight against what they consider an illegitimate state. I call this *political internationalization*. In the realm of legitimacy though, the

state is obviously in a more comfortable position than insurgent organizations. On the one hand, guerrillas are challenging the prevailing status quo and therefore they have to work harder to construct their case against the state, both nationally and internationally. On the other, states are formally recognized by the international system and that puts them a step ahead in the race to obtain international approval and acceptance.

It is important to highlight that even though I do not assess the impact of domestic legitimacy on the design and implementation of internationalization, I recognize that domestic and international legitimacy are different and they do not necessarily complement each other.⁷ On the contrary, they can compete against each other and some times international legitimacy might erode domestic legitimacy. That is especially the case when internationalization takes the form of intervention and it is perceived as a serious threat against state sovereignty. However, international legitimacy might constitute a temporal substitute for the lack of internal legitimacy; while parties work to gather local support, they might invite international actors and use their support to convince the local population to be on their side.

Parties' interest in obtaining military or political support fluctuates across cases and this fluctuation, in turn, helps explain variation in levels of internationalization. These levels of internationalization move in a continuum that goes from, on one extreme, the parties' decision to internationalize fully their struggle (politically and militarily); to the opposite extreme, in which they decide to prevent, to end or reject international involvement. To be sure, internal conflicts without international involvement do not constitute a kind of natural state that is only disrupted through intervention or invitation

⁷ I thank Arjun Chowdhury for calling my attention to this point.

to international actors. If, as I argue here, combatants frequently confront a choice to invite outsiders or not, then it is possible to observe internationalization and its absence as statuses constructed through decision making processes.⁸ As I have already stated, there is still a third possible scenario, a scenario that does not appear frequently in the comparative analysis I elaborate in this study but it is worth mentioning. Domestic actors may attempt to reject a specific sort of international participation but they may fail and internationalization in the form of pure intervention could take place. But again, I do not observe this instance regularly enough in the cases and the junctures I study here so I do not theorize this outcome.

Before dealing with the process through which internationalization or its absence is constructed, it is necessary to assess the nature and the origin of parties' interests. In order to do that, I start this analysis with a basic assumption: *actors in an armed conflict are constantly interested in improving their military and political capabilities vis-à-vis the capabilities of their counterparts*. This occurs even during peace talks, because actors are still uncertain about the results of those negotiations and whether they would need to resume a military offensive or not. Parties know that their weakness renders their counterpart more powerful and they also know that their counterpart will always take advantage of an opportunity to improve its own military and political position.

However, internationalization cannot be explained only by taking into account the balance of military power between conflicting parties. A militarily strong actor may still decide to internationalize in order to consolidate its advantage and eventually win the war. Equally, a weak party may still decide to reject internationalization even though it is

⁸ I thank Joe Soss for calling my attention to this point.

aware that it might be defeated, only because it perceives that it is a very costly strategy. Moreover, an extremely weak party might even lack the set of necessary skills to internationalize. These *internationalization skills* basically constitute the main devices parties need to communicate with external actors and they range from language proficiency, communications infrastructure and technology, to the knowledge about which external actors may be useful or proximate to the parties' cause, what they do, how they operate and how they can be reached. To be sure, internationalization requires a repertoire of language, technical skills as well as knowledge of the possibilities the international system offers to parties to the conflict. Urban middle-class guerrilla members may count on these skills more than indigenous peasant guerrilla fighters. But the local military balance of power can also hinder the ability of insurgent groups to acquire and use these skills and hence to internationalize their struggle. When these groups are defending themselves and are being wiped out by state repression, their autonomy and margin of action to internationalize is very small and does not allow them to strategize in the international realm. This was the case of the Guatemalan URNG. Again, this demonstrates that the adoption of an internationalization strategy does not only depend on the internal balance of power among the parties.

I posit here that the decision to internationalize (or not to) relies mainly on the nature of the relationship between the party to the conflict and its eventual international ally. More precisely, I argue that *parties to the conflict are more likely to internationalize if they share a 'world view' with the external actors they want to ally with*. I borrow Goldstein and Keohane's definition of world views. They suggest that:

“At the most fundamental level, ideas define the universe of possibilities for action. (...) These conceptions of possibility, or *world views*, are embedded in the symbolism of a culture and deeply affect modes of thought and discourse. They are not purely normative, since they include views about cosmology and ontology as well as about ethics. Nevertheless, world views are entwined with people’s conceptions of their identities, evoking deep emotions and loyalties. The world’s great religions provide world views; but so does the scientific rationality that is emblematic of modernity” (Goldstein & Keohane 1993, p. 8).

Taking this into account, I argue that local parties *are less likely to internationalize if they do not share a ‘world view’ with the international actors that could provide military or logistic support*. This is the case mainly because alliances are costly in terms of security and autonomy. Barnett and Levy suggest that the risks include “abandonment by a ally that fails to fulfill its commitment, entrapments in a war involving an ally’s interest rather than one’s own, and a general loss of autonomy or freedom of maneuver” (Barnett & Levy 1991, p. 374). Hence, a shared world view might substantially reduce the risks and the costs of alliances. For instance, the URNG in Guatemala was an organization with a strong indigenous component that allowed it to think about its struggle against the state, as a particular and very local enterprise not strongly connected with other revolutionary experiences in the area. They were essentially not interested in obtaining political support or recognition from international actors, partially because the actor they actually needed recognition from was the Guatemalan state. Therefore, their links with international actors were substantially less significant than in other cases. The FARC in Colombia also remained relatively ‘local’ for a long period of time, while the FMLN in El Salvador had a more urban middle-class membership that associated more easily with other revolutionary organizations and governments in the region.

The content of world views is broad and changeable according to geographic and historic junctures. Ethnic issues, nationalism and class struggle are some of the possible components of this concept. In the case of internal wars in Latin America, I suggest that world views are mainly related to *nationalism*, but they can also relate to ideology and the parties' position in terms of the cold war confrontation and, human rights violations.

The Cuban revolution facilitated the emergence of nationalist armed and un-armed movements and organizations in Latin America mostly directed against various forms of U.S. imperialism and intervention. In this sense, nationalism was mainly conceived in emancipatory terms and the region's

“experience of neo-imperialism meant that even internationalist Marxists tended to emphasize the importance of the nation as the arena for revindication of masses: the people, who constituted the nation, were deemed to have been deprived of their entitlement to sovereignty by the elites selling out their country in order to collaborate with the imperialists. (Therefore), nationalism in Latin America often assumed a left-leaning developmentalist, anti-imperialist and popular' emphasis” (Miller 2006, p. 204).

Hence, even though it is possible to find revolutionary organizations—such as the Farabundo Martí Front in El Salvador or the Sandinistas in Nicaragua—with a strong socialist-internationalist ideological orientation, many other organizations—such as the FARC in Colombia and the URNG in Guatemala—put less emphasis on the internationalist dimension of socialism and, tend to be more nationalist and therefore more internationally isolated.

But since the 1960s, Latin American nationalism also assumed a right-wing hue with the spread of repressive military regimes (Miller 2006, p. 202). In fact, conservative, authoritarian versions of nationalism that drew upon concepts of the

organic state were salient in Latin America until transition to democracy took place in the 1980s. Therefore, nationalist dictatorships in Central America, and especially in Guatemala, tended to be very skeptical of alliances with foreign states and international organizations. In this case, this skepticism and the existence of a nationalist position were in part the result of the U.S. intervention in the country and the overthrow of President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. In this vein, right-wing nationalism as a world view accounts for the less systematic use of internationalization strategies by Guatemalan governments during most of the civil struggle in that country.

In terms of human rights norms, Goldstein and Keohane suggest that in the broad sense, they can be defined as *principled beliefs*, since they “consist of normative ideas that specify criteria for distinguishing right from wrong and just from unjust. (...) Principled beliefs are often justified in terms of larger world views” (Goldstein & Keohane 1993, p. 9). This subset of world views clearly facilitated the closeness between the FMLN in El Salvador—a party to the conflict interested in denouncing the state’s massive violations, and some international non-governmental organizations dedicated to human rights advocacy.

The argument related to world views then works in a similar manner when parties evaluate the possibility of obtaining international legitimacy. *If the party to the conflict perceives that it does not share a world view with eventual international allies, it would avoid political internationalization.* And, consequently, *if the party to the conflict shares a world view with its future international ally, it would be more likely to implement this strategy.* However, it is important to keep in mind that military internationalization and political internationalization operate in slightly different ways since they constitute

different sorts of resources for the parties to the conflict. For this reason, it is necessary to introduce a caveat related to *political internationalization* or the internationalization advanced in order to obtain international legitimacy.

The value of international legitimacy is, clearly, more difficult to assess than the value of material (military and logistic) support. Hence, *legitimacy is not perceived as crucial when an insurgent organization or the state has remained relatively isolated and this situation has not directly affected their military or political position in the struggle.*

This is a path dependency argument: the absence of internationalization for a long period of time can lead to further isolation since parties have more difficulty trying to assess the value and the benefits of constructing political alliances with international actors.⁹

Moreover, international legitimacy can be valued less by local actors with deeply nationalist world views than by those who hold more internationalist ones. In both cases, parties would rarely use internationalization strategies: that is the case of the FARC—Revolutionary Armed Forces in Colombia—probably the most important insurgent group in that country until the end of the 1990s. But through time, parties can have access to international actors and learn about the value of legitimacy once they have been exposed to external agents and dynamics. In other words, once the parties have learned the virtues

⁹ Concomitantly, the history of the relationship between parties to the conflict and external actors also contribute to the implementation or rejection of internationalization strategies. More precisely, the nature and trajectory of the relationship between the party and the international agent might facilitate or hinder the implementation of internationalization. For instance, as it is suggested in Chapter 6, the indignation and outrage that the 1954 U.S. military intervention in Guatemala produced, might partially account for the Guatemalan Armed Forces' rejection of U.S. military aid. Another instance in which history matters is narrated in Chapters 2 and 3, where I describe how the long lasting Colombian alignment to the U.S. interests in the area facilitated the construction of a strategic alliance between these two governments against the FARC and the ELN. The traditional alliance between the U.S. and military governments in El Salvador contributes to explain the success of the Salvadorian government's attempt to internationalize its war against the FMLN.

of international legitimacy, they are more likely to internationalize. The paradigmatic case here, again, is the FARC in Colombia. During the peace process that began in 1999, the organization was exposed to international actors in a constant and systematic manner and this experience drastically changed their evaluation of the costs and benefits of their internationalization strategy. I address this process in Chapter 4.

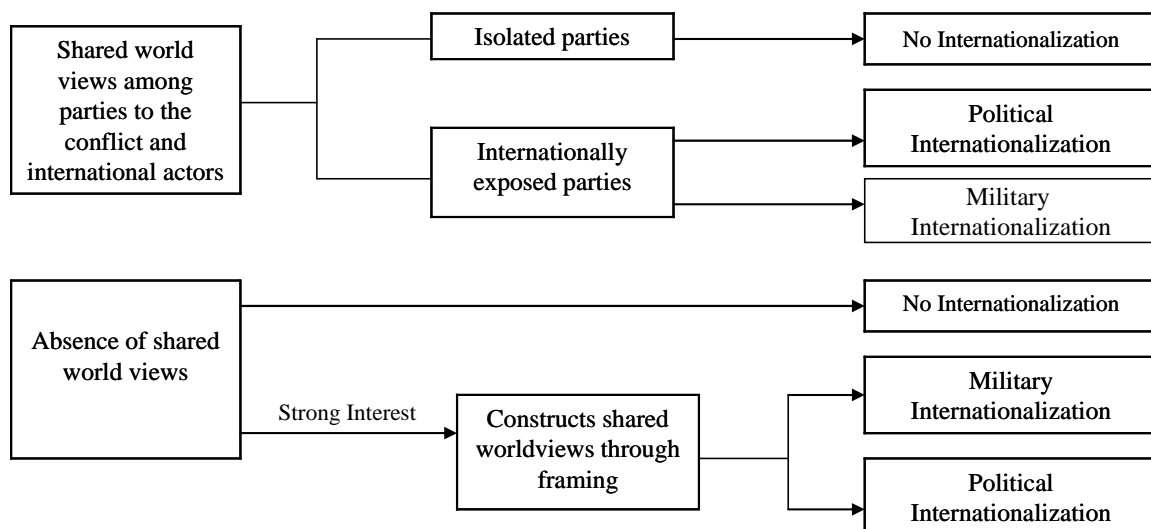
Now, it is crucial to highlight that these shared world views between local and international actors could be explained in terms of the nature of the state or the insurgent group but, when it does not exist and the party still has a strong interest in forming international alliances, it is likely to be constructed in a calculated manner. In this scenario, parties to the conflict exercise different forms of *framing* to obtain either material aid or legitimacy from external agents. *States are more likely to engage in framing than the insurgency because they do not base their struggle on the content of these 'world views':* they can be either a counter-insurgent state, a paradigmatic ally in the war against drugs and/or part of the coalition against global terrorism and, at the end of it, the transition from using one type of frame to the other does not affect their nature as states. Additionally, states count on pre-existent social ties with international actors and they are probably already receiving resources from them. Guerrillas, however, do not have this advantage and cannot switch from one *raison d'être* to the other so easily. In Latin America, for instance, nationalism, their fight against illegitimate states, exclusionist political systems and social inequality are principles that deeply shape their world view as insurgent organizations. In other parts of the world, local insurgent groups have agendas shaped by ethnic claims that may also hinder the construction of potential alliances.

According to Goffmann, frames are employed as attempts to strategically construct some of one's own experience in a way that is compatible with the counterpart's world view, mainly in order to obtain what it is desired from it. The party then presents itself to its counterpart in a planned and calculated manner by using frames or as Goffmann conceptualizes them, definitions of situations built in accordance with principles of organization which govern events—at least social ones—and our subjective involvement in them (Goffman 1969, p. 155).

Parties to the conflict interested in obtaining international support (military or political) constantly engage in the construction of frames. This practice is even more frequently used when there is no established world view that might eventually facilitate the construction of an alliance. Framing allows actors to link their own world views, in case they appear to be different from the counterpart's world views, and be constructed and presented as similar and compatible. For instance, states tend to engage in framing with powerful states in order to obtain military and logistic support from them. State parties to conflicts assess the powerful state, read its intentions, unveil its priorities and then they attempt to present themselves, through the interaction, in a way that allows them to coordinate their actions with the actions and preferences of the powerful state. By framing its own motivations and actions in a way that resonates with the powerful state's own motivations and actions, state parties to the conflict construct a world view they share with other international actors; and by doing this, they obtain the expected payoff or, to be more precise, political, military and logistic support to fight the insurgency in their countries. This is the case of the Colombian government and its framing of the domestic conflict as part of the global war on terror post 9/11.

Additionally, in all the cases I analyze and compare in this text, states engage in framing toward the United States in order to obtain its military support by using frames that resonated with U.S. foreign policy priorities. All three, El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia, understood that the U.S. priority during the cold war was the containment of the Soviet threat throughout the world, but especially in Latin America. Civil and military governments in the area understood that by framing their struggle against guerrillas as a counterinsurgency policy or as mechanisms through which Washington could fight communism in the area, they could obtain resources from the U.S. to combat these organizations. They framed conflicts in their countries as additional manifestations of the East-West confrontation and constantly defined the guerrillas as mere tools of international communism, as Soviet Union's puppets. By doing this, they coordinated their course of action with the U.S. and very easily obtained military and logistic resources from the super power. With the end of the cold war, this sort of frame did not resonate anymore with Washington's interests and priorities and that is why the Colombian government, still far from resolving its internal struggle at the end of the 1980s, had to transform the frame it employed to present its domestic conflict: it emphasized a renovated 'war against drugs' frame and, more recently, the 'war against terrorism' frame. I explore how all three Latin American states brought on board the U.S. in their wars against local insurgent organizations in the following chapters.

I summarize the argument as it has been exposed so far in *Graph 1*:



Additional Factors that Facilitate or Hinder Internationalization

A party's willingness to obtain military support or legitimacy and the existence of shared world views with its international counterpart are crucial and necessary factors but they are not enough for internationalization to succeed. Here, I review two additional sets of facilitating conditions for internationalization: I call the first group of factors *Structural Constraints*, and the second, *Fragmentation*.

Structural Constraints

International or systemic constraints shape to a very important extent parties' decision to internationalize. In fact, the nature of the international system helps explain when international actors are more likely or more willing to respond to parties' calls to collaborate in local struggles. In other words, the system, as Kaplan suggests, can encourage or discourage an international actor's involvement in a domestic conflict: intervention in internal wars is to be expected in a loose bipolar system and it is less

likely in a 'balance of power' international system. On the one hand, in 'balance of power' systems, interference by one major state in the internal political quarrels of another is potentially destabilizing because it can create ties that make for a long-term alignment. This, in turn, would create the dominance of one major state and, threaten the security of other states and the stability of the balance of power; "thus, there is a strong incentive within the 'balance of power' system to insulate internal political quarrels—including internal wars or revolutions—from external manipulation" (Kaplan 1964, p. 100). In a loose bipolar system, on the other hand, each bloc has an interest in opposing or preventing internal changes within the political system or its members that might "possibly produce a switch in bloc affiliation" (Kaplan 1964, p. 106). Hence, the conditions of possibility for internationalization in loose bipolar systems, such as the Cold War system, are more favorable. Kaplan's argument contributes to understanding the U.S.' willingness to answer Latin American governments' call for military and logistic support in their wars against insurgent organizations; and also, it helps understanding the process through which this willingness faded after the end of the cold war.

Furthermore, the different types of containment strategies operated by the U.S. during the cold war help explain why the U.S. government was more receptive to some internationalization attempts than to others. For instance, by the end of the Ford administration, the limits of containment had become clear and the Carter administration had a hard time aligning itself "with any coherent conception of American interests in the world, potential threats to them, or feasible responses" (Gaddis 2005, p. 344). This ambiguity, the new emphasis on human rights, a more moral foreign policy and, the

initial intention to remove the Soviet Union “from the privileged position it had long occupied as a central obsession of American foreign policy” (Gaddis 2005, p. 344) are all factors that contribute to explaining why the Salvadorian and the Guatemalan military internationalization strategies were only partially successful during this period of time.

The arrival of Ronald Reagan to the White House constituted a crucial departure from Carter’s approach. As Gaddis describes:

“The fundamental premise of containment had always been that the United States was acting *defensively* against an adversary that was on the offensive, and was likely to continue of that path for the foreseeable future. Now, just at the moment when the U.S.S.R. seemed to be pushing for superiority in strategic weaponry as well as influence on a global scale, Reagan rejected that premise, raising the prospect of regaining and indefinitely sustaining American preeminence” (Gaddis 2005, p. 351).

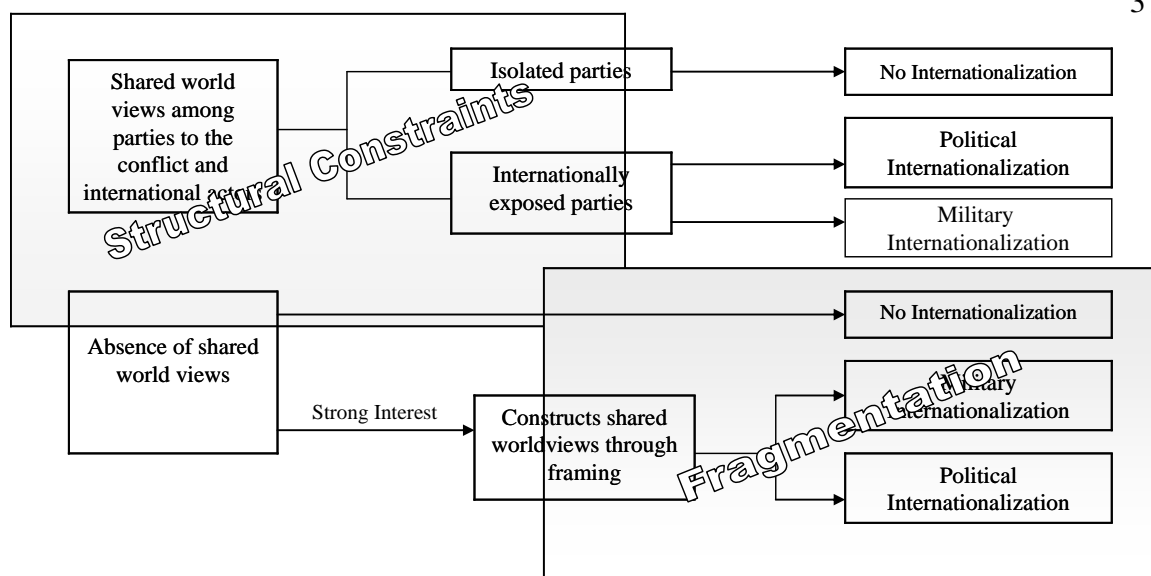
Thus, the Republican administration of Ronald Reagan was determined to go on the offensive in Central America and support various governments’ war against insurgent organizations, even beyond legal limits. This new approach to the cold war made human rights violations a secondary issue and privileged the need to undermine the Soviet power in the U.S.’ own backyard. As I will show, these were objectives highly compatible with Guatemalan and Salvadorian military internationalization strategies.

Having weakened the power of the Soviet Union and facing the almost inevitable end of the East-West confrontation, the next administration of president George Bush lowered the profile of the Central American crisis and pushed countries in that area to negotiate the end of their civil conflicts. The proximity of the cold war’s end hindered again the implementation of military internationalization strategies by both Salvadorian and Guatemalan governments: by withholding military and economic aid, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union pushed conflicting parties toward the negotiation table. It also

forced the Colombian government, far from ending its own internal struggle, to strengthen its framing strategy of presenting the internal conflict as a vital part of the war against illegal drugs. This strategy guaranteed the continuing flow of military and economic aid from the U.S. In sum, changes in terms of the U.S. containment strategies and the nature of its interaction with the Soviet Union through time constitute crucial conditions of possibility for the design and implementation of internationalization strategies by parties to the conflict.

Fragmentation

Parties to the conflict have an additional incentive to internationalize their struggle: internationalization might help them overcome significant levels of internal fragmentation. In other words, subgroups within parties might construct an alliance with an international actor in order to push other subgroups toward their own political and/or ideological position and in this way overcome internal fragmentation. That was certainly the case with the FMLN moderate faction in El Salvador. They internationalized their struggle by finding political support and recognition from France and Mexico and, through this strategy, they alienated the radical Stalinist wing of the organization. I analyze this process in Chapter 5. In the Guatemalan and the Colombian cases, the low level of insurgent groups' ideological fragmentation partially account for their relative lack of internationalization. I explore this explanation in Chapters 4 and 6. The final argument is graphically represented in *Graph 2*.



In the following chapters I develop a comparative analysis of the civil wars in Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala in order to support a couple of central arguments: First, I provide empirical evidence to demonstrate that even though internationalization can be advanced by different sorts of actors—national and international, most of the time local parties to the conflict have enough autonomy and space to invite international actors to participate or to prevent them from doing so. Second, I provide support for the hypothesis that parties to a conflict are more likely to internationalize their struggles when they share a world view with international actors. Internationalization does not depend strictly on the internal balance of military power. Parties to a conflict internationalize to obtain either military and/or logistic resources, or international legitimacy, both crucial assets that enhance or augment their military and political position vis-à-vis their counterparts. I provide evidence of the use of framing devices by the parties to the conflict—mainly the states—when these world views are weak or do not exist.

Chapter 2. A Brief History of the Colombian Conflict.

Background Notes

Colombia's conflict remained relatively isolated from the international context in its initial phase. In this chapter, I register some historical instances of internationalization but, at the same time, I argue that they are—in war and peace—scattered and not very systematic. This trend did not experience a substantial change until the beginning of the peace process during the Pastrana administration. I analyze in depth and in detail this dimension of internationalization in Chapter 3. But in spite of the fact that internationalization was not a salient feature of the Colombian conflict from the 1960s until the end of the 1990s, I also argue here, more precisely, that these very few instances of internationalization unveil trends that remain after the 1990s, when internationalization becomes more a pattern than an exception.

To be sure, I refer to two specific trends that I have already registered in Chapter 1: on the one hand, the military internationalization—as it was the case with Plan LASO and Operation Marquetalia—tends to emphasize the participation of the United States under the Cold War counterinsurgency framework. On the other hand, political internationalization involves less powerful countries and frequently, neighboring states that usually pay more attention to the economic and social dimensions of the conflict. An example of military internationalization took place during the Turbay administration, and to an extent, an instance of political internationalization took place under the Betancur administration.

Military internationalization or the process of finding or constructing international alliances to strengthen the state's military position vis-à-vis the guerrillas, as it happened during the Turbay administration, takes the form of a strong alliance with the United States. During the cold war, this alliance was facilitated by the dynamics of the confrontation between East and West and the consequent design of a containment policy and a counter-insurgency strategy by the U.S. government. Later, the U.S. war against illegal drugs and the increasing link between drug trafficking and insurgency in Colombia strengthened the alliance between Bogota and Washington. And most recently, the U.S. anti-terrorist crusade finally consolidated a long lasting partnership that has allowed Colombia to combat guerrillas counting on the strongest ally it is possible to find in the international arena today.

Political internationalization has attempted to find political support and/or international legitimacy from other less powerful actors and from international organizations. This strategy puts more emphasis on the regional and multilateral scenarios and sees international actors not as suppliers of material and logistic support for war, but as guarantors of peace and sources of international legitimacy. Consequently, international organizations and states that tend to recognize the specificity of the local struggle and do not frame it as a prolongation of cold war dynamics, are more likely to be invited to participate in the local conflict. It is important to highlight that in the case of the Betancur administration, as I will show, this strategy can also be directed toward de-internationalizing the conflict. In other words, by recognizing the specific and very local nature of conflicts abroad (especially the Central American ones), Betancur attempted to find that same sort of recognition from international actors vis-à-vis the Colombian

conflict. By participating in certain ways and through certain mechanisms in the Central American crisis, Betancur sent a clear message to the international community about the sort of international participation in the Colombian conflict that he would or would not accept. I summarize in this chapter different instances of internationalization that even though are not systematic, show the initial contours of more calculated and planned governmental internationalization strategies implemented later in the 1990s.

The Origins of the Colombian Conflict

Even though there is no consensus over the concrete beginning of the Colombian conflict and its causes, most literature treats *El Bogotazo* as a key moment in which it is possible to find most of the causes of the contemporaneous struggle in Colombia. The assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán—a leader from the Liberal party, in 1948, resulted in a spontaneous and unprecedented popular uprising in Bogota. Interestingly enough, for the purposes of this work, one of the political scandals that turned Gaitán into the strongest opposition leader to the Conservative government of Mariano Ospina (1946-1950) had to do with a secret document he disclosed “exposing Ospina government’s plan to illegally import massive United States arms into the country to deal with the growing Liberal unrest. Gaitán told the public that the United States was shipping the Conservatives tear gas, rifles, automatic weapons, antitank rocket launchers, medium and light tanks, armored cars and armored personnel carriers” (Ruiz 2001, p. 52). Gaitán’s accusations were serious since only the Armed Forces were constitutionally authorized to receive military support from other countries. After a while, Ospina confessed he had illegally obtained U.S. military support intended to maintain public order in a moment of high political unrest in the country. This constituted probably one of the first attempts of

military internationalization by the Colombian government, an attempt that took place before the emergence of the Colombian conflict in its current form. Ospina presented Liberal opposition as an arm of international communism and used this frame to ask and obtain U.S. help, all in order to remain in power and to crush the opposition, a move very similar to the strategy both Salvadorian and Guatemalan dictatorships followed a decade later.

Gaitán was assassinated on April 9th, 1948 and the Colombian armed forces reacted strongly to the popular uprising that followed. Even though the murderer was captured and killed by the masses, the conspirators were never identified. This event marked the beginning of a large-scale civil war between Liberal and Conservative parties; this period that followed *El Bogotazo* is commonly known as *La Violencia*—with capital ‘V.’ In ten years, an estimated of 200.000 people died during a lapse of time in which Colombia’s population was around 13 million people. During this period, governmental repression was strongly supported by the United States, and even after Ospina, various Colombian leaders understood they would find a strong military ally in the U.S. if they were successful in framing Colombia’s unrest as another scenario of the cold war dispute: “the Cold War played a critical role in the American passiveness towards the violence in Colombia. Rojas Pinilla (1953-1957), like Gómez before him (1950-1953) (Gómez, also a Conservative, followed Ospina as president), played the communist card brilliantly. He fully understood that powerful American officials feared a communist take over in Colombia” (Ruiz 2001, p. 104). Rojas, the only member of the Colombian Armed Forces who has ever exercised power in Colombia, framed civil unrest and Liberal opposition to the authoritarian Conservative state as an attempt by international communism to hijack

the Colombian state. That allowed him to become “the first in Latin America to acquire U.S. built jet aircraft when six Lockheed T-33A training planes were delivered in 1954. Later that year, Colombia received 19 B-26 bombers, four helicopters and a substantial number of M2A1, 105mm Howitzer artillery pieces from the U.S. In addition, in 1955, the U.S. Army provided special instructors so that the armed forces could establish the Escuela de Lanceros (Lancers School), a training facility created to instruct Colombian troops in state-of-the-art counterinsurgency techniques” (Ruiz 2001, p. 104).

According to Stokes, the U.S. recognized since this initial moment the dangers of Colombia’s crisis and declared it “to be threatening because of strategic, political and economic considerations with Colombia’s radical departure from customary practices a vital concern to the United States” (Stokes 2005, p. 68). The U.S. also considered that unsettled conditions in Colombia might have helped the advance of communist organizations in Latin America and as a result, it decided to provide Colombia with military aid. The Colombian government framed its own conflict in a way that allowed it to construct a shared world view with Washington. In the name of a crusade against international communism, the Colombian government was able to obtain enough resources to remain in power:

“This aid was designed both to insulate the National Front arrangement from popular pressures for reform by using the Colombian military to suppress the peasantry, and also to strengthen the Colombian military in its increasingly counter-guerrilla strategy directed against the remnants of armed peasant groups left over from the years of *La Violencia*. Total U.S. military aid for Latin America between 1950 and 1957 was \$156 million with Colombia receiving \$18.3 million; over 11 percent of the total for Latin America as a whole” (Stokes 2005, p. 69).

The military aid was accompanied by a U.S. Special Survey Team comprised of counterinsurgency experts that had the task of surveying the situation in Colombia and making recommendations about it. The survey recommended establishing counterinsurgency brigades, setting up an effective military intelligence network, improving training methods and rehabilitating the national police into a formalized counterinsurgency structure: “The US role was primarily related to training and the provision of military aid along with an overall advisory role” (Stokes 2005, p. 70). The debut of Colombia’s new counter-insurgency strategy, financed by the United States, was the implementation of Plan LASO—Latin America Security Operation, the first U.S. initiative designed to pre-empt the spread of communism in its own backyard after the Cuban revolution.

The Beginning of the National Front and the Birth of the FARC

In the domestic realm, traditional political parties (Liberal and Conservative) agreed upon a final political resolution that ended Rojas’s dictatorial regime. This was achieved through the formation of the National Front: an agreement based on a *consociational* pattern of alternation in the presidency between Liberal and Conservative parties that lasted from 1958 until 1974 (Hartlyn 1988). But the National Front did not end violence. In fact, liberal factions who did not approve the accord remained armed and constantly resisted both Liberal and Conservatives in power. The accord, in sum, was perceived as a gentlemen's agreement in which the social bases of each party did not participate.

As a consequence, at the beginning of the National Front and during the first part of the 60s, most of the Liberals in the country side were abandoned by their leaders after

they committed to the National Front agreement. In order to protect themselves from the Conservatives in power, they sheltered in a rural enclave called Marquetalia, a place Conservatives leaders denominated an ‘Independent Republic’ since the state power was practically inexistent and population and territory were under the control of guerrilla organizations. In order to eliminate this last enclave of Liberal resistance, on June 14, 1964, the Colombian army overran the area in what was called ‘Operation Marquetalia,’ which involved a third of the Colombian army (16000 troops) and combined heavy artillery bombardments, the use of Colombian air force and the mobile light infantry ‘Hunter/Killer’ paramilitary units (Stokes 2005, p. 71). This Operation was funded through Plan LASO, a U.S. initiative dedicated to support fighting against leftist rebels in Latin America and the spread of communism through the area after the Cuban Revolution. According to Stokes, Plan LASO “was designed to destroy the various armed groups in Colombia’s rural areas left over from the years of *La Violencia* and was principally targeted at the peasant agriculturalists found in Colombia’s south” (Stokes 2005, p. 71).

After Operation Marquetalia, most of the liberal rebels scattered and then managed to reunite to give birth to the FARC—Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces. Referring to the consolidation of the FARC after Operation Marquetalia, Gilhodes argues that from a strictly military point of view, the Colombian government *made up* the enemy in the name of a continental response. The inspiration for it came from outside: The U.S. put pressure over a weak president to maintain and implement a counter-insurgency policy (Gilhodes 1991, p. 317). It has been argued, along Gilhodes’s lines, that it was the implementation of the National Security Doctrine in the continent and the need to put into

place preventive action against the spread of communism what constituted the determinant explanatory factor for the emergence of the FARC. This argument feeds the idea of the governmental attacks on Marquetalia as the FARC's founding moment, an argument that "looms large in FARC's mythology" (Ruiz 2001, p. 109). However, Pizarro advances complete historical research suggesting that the FARC and its strategy of combining all the possible forms of combat was articulated already in 1961, years before Marquetalia and Operation LASO took place (Pizarro Leongomez 1991, p. 168). Hence, at least in the case of the FARC, this first instance of state military internationalization cannot be interpreted as the cause and main determinant of the Colombian conflict. In this context, military internationalization was still the result of the government's attempt to stay in power and to counter-attack the leftovers of a Liberal insurgency which gradually turned into a communist guerrilla organization.¹⁰

Colombia as A Low Priority for Washington: the End of the 1960s and the 1970s

During the 60s, 70s and 80s, U.S. involvement in Colombia's conflict continued to follow the logic of Washington's cold war with the Soviet Union. As Randall suggests, "the military security program and the containment of communism in Colombian politics and organized labor both reveal the consistent efforts of the United States to bring Colombia within the larger framework of cold war defense and to foster those moderate anticommunist (...) elements in the political mainstream" (Randall 1992, p. 188). Even before but especially after 1960, Colombia was targeted as the 'showpiece'

¹⁰ For an account of the process through which the FARC transformed from a liberal organization to Marxist guerrilla see Alape A. 1998. *Las Muertes de Tirofijo*. Santafé de Bogotá: Seix Barral

of U.S. aid programs, as the United States sought to compensate for the 'loss' of Cuba. Colombia remained onside in the cold war; but then there had been no real danger of a different result (Randall 1992, p. 189). However, the interest in Colombia did not last long due to the crisis in Vietnam and the Nixon-Kissinger movement toward détente with the Soviet Union and China. Colombia also lost faith in the alliance with the U.S. after the assassination of president Kennedy and the failure of the Alliance for Progress. Hence, after the 60s and during most of the 70s, the South American country was not a key actor for Washington's diplomats and the struggle between government and guerrillas did not classify as a priority for cold war State Department officers in charge.

This situation allowed an exercise of relative autonomy since Washington's lack of attention permitted the South American country to be more creative in its foreign policy design and more independent. This explains why, at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, Colombian scholars identify the re-emergence in Colombian foreign behavior of an "intensified policy of interdependence with increased autonomy from the United States. This orientation was strongly evident under Lleras Restrepo, especially in trade policy. The Foreign Ministry stressed in 1966 and 1967 that independence was the main characteristic of Colombian foreign policy toward the United States (...). To Lleras, the United States had lost a valuable opportunity (with the failure of the Alliance for Progress) to make a political impact and to give eloquence to hemispheric solidarity. Lleras also expressed his opposition to interference in the internal affairs of other nations" (Randall 1992, p. 243).

Even though Colombia was not one of Washington's priorities, during the 1960s and early 1970s, U.S. officials still treated the Colombian guerrilla as a threat to national security for Colombia, the United States, and the region as a whole:

“U.S. and Colombian officials from the early 1960s, viewed the guerrilla movements as Cuban-Soviet inspired (...). U.S. officials did not believe in 1960s that a few thousand guerrillas constituted a significant threat to Colombian governments, but Washington did provide military assistance, especially helicopters, throughout the decade. The supply of helicopters not only improved the capacity of the Colombian army to deal with the guerrilla movement but also to provide surveillance of the Caribbean coast against possible importation of arms from Cuba. Official concern heightened in the 1970s and early 1980s, when there were apparent links between some of the guerrilla factions and the major narcotics cartels” (Randall 1992, p. 248-249).

From 1977 on, narcotics control assumed an increasing proportion of the energy, funding, and attention of the two nations (Randall 1992, p. 247) and by the 80s with Reagan in power and the war against illegal drugs as one of his administration's priorities, drug trafficking was already an essential part of the bi-national agenda. Simultaneously, “in the 1970s, the FARC was a somewhat limited force with marginal military capacity, operating about nine fronts with what some observers have described as ‘enormous internal divisions.’ It was not until the 1980s that the FARC began to generate its highest levels of social and political support” (Murillo 2004, p. 62).

The 1980s and the Intensification of Counter-Insurgency: Military Internationalization

The FARC's growth during the beginning of the 80s accounts for the partial revival of Washington's involvement in Colombia's war against insurgency. Perceiving FARC's visible military advance, Julio César Turbay's government (1979-1982) launched a total war against various guerrilla organizations and, consequently, his

administration's record on human rights violations was probably one of the worst the country has experienced. His Statute of National Security condensed his counterinsurgency policy and his attempt to exercise control over popular discomfort and guerrilla activities (García Durán 1992, p. 48). Turbay strategically framed the Colombian conflict in terms of the East-West confrontation and presented 'internal violence' as a sub-product of 'external violence' in order to bring Washington on board. As Pardo and Tokatlian suggest, for him, "the 'root of evil' was primordially outside. This led to 'internationalizing' through rhetoric and practice, not only the origins of violence, but also the mechanisms to confront it. With this, a search for more U.S. support was accentuated, both in the strategic and in the security realms" (Pardo & Tokatlian 1988, p. 139). Turbay decided to frame the Colombian domestic insurgency in terms of international communist subversion rather than an indigenous response to social and economic injustices.

However, at this point, Turbay's comparatively hard line against dissent and the adoption of the Statute of National Security to combat urban and rural guerrillas rapidly brought the administration into conflict with Carter administration's emphasis on human rights, "but Turbay's perception of the insurgency in terms of the East-West conflict made him consistent with the views and policies of the subsequent Reagan administration." (Randall 1992, p. 251). Turbay and Reagan clearly shared a world view in terms of how to confront the communist international threat through the re-intensification of counter-insurgency measures. In an effort to make his case even more compelling to Washington and to advance a military internationalization strategy, Turbay supported various U.S. initiatives related to Central and Latin America: First, he aligned

with the U.S. position vis-à-vis the Salvadorian and Guatemalan wars in various ways. The Colombian government openly criticized the 1981 French-Mexican Declaration that recognized the FMLN-FDR as a representative force in the Salvadoran conflict; it also met members of the U.S. military establishment in 1982 in order to discuss the possibility of setting up a special base on the San Andres island—in the Caribbean sea and subject of a border dispute with Nicaragua; it criticized and attacked the Nicaraguan revolutionary administration and, it participated—together with the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras—in the Central American Democratic Community, which undertook the diplomatic defense of the Salvadoran government. Second, and in the broader Latin American context, Colombia persistently obstructed Cuba's candidacy to the U.N. Security Council and it suspended diplomatic relations with that country in 1981. Third, and also in 1981, Colombia "participated in Operation Ocean Venture (together with troops from the United States, NATO, Argentina, Venezuela and Uruguay)—an operation then considered a mock invasion of Grenada (finally invaded in 1983)" (Tokatlian 2000, p. 337). And finally, Colombia did not support Argentina during the Malvinas conflict. Only Chile and the U.S. adopted this position, the rest of Latin American countries supported Argentina. As a result, Turbay received consistent military support from the Reagan administration (Tokatlian 2000, p. 337).

Betancur and the Peace Process: Political De-Internationalization

After Turbay's administration, the promise of peace became one of the key proposals during the presidential elections the head of the Conservative Party, Belisario Betancur, won. He advanced one of the most ambitious peace processes in the country and with very broad support of various Colombia's civil society sectors. However,

Betancur did not have the support of the military establishment or the traditional political parties. Guerrilla groups, with the notable exception of the ELN—National Liberation Army, participated in these dialogues with a double purpose in mind: first, to recover political space that would allow them to exit their current marginality and to strengthen their project; “but they still believed in war, and they took advantage of the cease fire conditions to augment their member and column numbers” (García Durán 1992, p. 49). The guerrilla’s very weak political will and the constant opposition by the military establishment resulted in the failure of peace dialogues.

Betancur is probably the first president who designed an international strategy to support his domestic peace efforts. Even though this strategy cannot be strictly defined as internationalization, it did constitute an important effort to validate the peace process and to make it more coherent. In Malcom Deas’s words, “the Colombian government should continue peace negotiations at home and abroad, while it proclaimed that Colombia’s problems were essentially Colombian, and Central American problems were essentially Central American” (Deas 1988, p. 12). Betancur emphasized this link between the internal struggle and Central American conflicts in order to break with Turbay’s approach to the internal conflict in Colombia as another scenario of the cold war. Betancur announced Colombia’s entrance to the Non-Aligned Movement, he gave Colombia’s support to Argentina in its Malvinas war, and most importantly, he revitalized Colombia’s participation in Contadora.¹¹ According to Ramírez and Restrepo, “president Betancur framed the internal peace process in a coherent

¹¹ As I elaborate more extensively in Chapter 5, the Contadora Group was an initiative launched in the early 1980s by the foreign ministers of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela to deal with the military conflicts in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala.

international context, by doing this, he wanted to subtract the national conflict from international interference, making it to the extent it was possible, purely domestic” (Ramirez & Restrepo 1988, p. 69). In a way, Betancur implemented an internationalization strategy designed to prevent the military internationalization by the guerrilla organizations; he did not want the Colombian conflict to be another cold war scenario in Latin America.

According to Silva, this strategy was implemented in order to improve the chances of peace in the country. First, it would give more credibility to the government vis-à-vis the guerrilla and would help it conquer the support of countries such as Cuba or Nicaragua. An instance of cooperation with Cuba took place during the U.S. invasion of Granada in October 1983: Colombia intervened on behalf of the Cuban contingent so that it could be allowed to leave the invaded island. This, among other factors, led Fidel Castro to write two letters to the ELN—National Liberation Army—asking them to free the president’s brother, Jaime Betancur—who had been kidnapped by this organization and was liberated less than a month later. Castro, at Betancur’s request, also mildly withdrew Cuban support for the M-19 (Tokatlian 2000, p. 339). Second, promoting peace in Central America through Contadora would prevent the expansion of the Salvadorian and Guatemalan conflicts toward Colombia. Third, it would stop, somehow, the guerrillas desire to strengthen their international connections, a desire stimulated by the increasing U.S. intervention in the area (Silva Lujan 1985, pp. 97-116). However, both the peace process and the Contadora initiative did not succeed.

As it was already stated, the peace process failed due to the lack of support by the military establishment and also due to the genuine lack of political will by the guerrilla.

Additionally, Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara's assassination in 1984 by drug cartels, moved Betancur to bend towards U.S. pressure in order to obtain resources for the war against those same cartels and, to initiate the extradition of Colombian nationals to the United States. The economic situation did not help either: "Colombia's growing economic crisis pushed the Betancur administration closer towards the United States inasmuch as Washington was crucial for obtaining the US\$ 1 billion dollar 'Jumbo' loan in 1985" (Tokatlian 2000, p. 339). In terms of Contadora, by September 1984, Central American and Contadora Ministers of Foreign Affairs signed a Revised Version of the Cooperation and Peace Act for Central America. This was considered the final and definite document for Contadora members. At the end of the month, Nicaragua (now under the Sandinista Revolution led by Daniel Ortega) accepted all the terms of this act, prompting a strong U.S. diplomatic counter-offensive directed to prevent a sub-regional consensus on the Act. Washington's policy lowered Contadora's profile in the region and with it, president Betancur's internationalization strategy to support and legitimize internal peace efforts.

But the coup de grace for his peace attempts was the M-19's siege of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá on November 6, 1985. About 300 lawyers, judges, and Supreme Court magistrates were taken hostage by 35 armed rebel commandos at the Palace of Justice, the building that houses Colombia's Supreme Court. When the situation became public, the Colombian Army surrounded the Palace of Justice's perimeter with soldiers and EE-9 Rattlesnake Armored Reconnaissance Vehicles. Despite the desperate pleas that were transmitted telephonically by some of the hostages involved, the government decided that the military should be allowed to handle the situation and they should attempt to recover

the Palace by force. This led to a controversial turn of events which continues to be debated in Colombia to this date; some even suggest that a mini-*coup d'état* took place during the military seize of the Palace. In the ensuing heavy crossfire between the incoming soldiers and the entrenched rebels, which included supporting gunfire from the EE-9 Rattlesnake tanks, the building was set aflame, more than 100 people died, and valuable legal records were destroyed. This marked the end of Betancur's peace attempts.

Marc Chernick evaluates Betancur's policy of coupling the domestic peace process with an autonomous foreign policy and his conclusion is that Betancur could have over-estimated guerrilla groups' links with international actors. This over-estimation led to an unexpected result: Betancur's foreign policy was a great effort that had a very minimal impact on the peace process. More specifically, Chernick suggests that the Colombian diplomatic offensive toward Nicaragua and Cuba and the reconstruction of diplomatic relations with those countries, was intended to facilitate and complement the internal negotiations with the M-19, but it played no significant role. The purpose was also to "de-internationalize war zones and border conflicts in Central America or the Colombian guerrilla could be trapped in the regional polarization (...). The first effect of Colombia's foreign policy was to block the Central-Americanization of the Colombian conflict" (Chernick 1988, p. 25). But the strategy failed, according to this author, because foreign policy was not a critical variable in terms of war and peace in Colombia (Ocampo Madrid 2004). To be sure, Nicaragua, Cuba and other insurgent actors did not have leverage on Colombian insurgent organizations and therefore the government effort to bring these international actors on board probably had no effect on local negotiations.

Barco's Administration and the Implementation of Pragmatic De-internationalization

President Virgilio Barco's (1986-1990) international agenda gave priority to the recovering of the Colombian economy that Betancur could not achieve (Vásquez Carrizosa 1988). To accomplish this purpose the administration adopted a pragmatic foreign policy that attempted no ideological or political alignment with the U.S. or any other power in the international arena. This 'ideological neutrality' inspired a search for 'universalism' in Colombia's international relations, a relative marginal place for the East-West confrontation in the definition of Colombia's international agenda, and the establishment of relationships with various actors, independently of their political affiliation (Pardo 1987). Hence, the Barco administration tried to give a not so salient place to the domestic conflict in its international agenda since the priority was to find international resources to strengthen the economy. Its strategy, in sum, was to avoid any type of internationalization of the conflict in order to prevent the 'contamination' of Colombia's foreign policy agenda. Its diplomacy was relatively operative insofar as an agreement was reached with the M-19 regarding an end to the war and the reinsertion of insurgents to political and civil life. Barco's administration fell short of achieving a profound and lasting peace for Colombia though. His foreign policy, although not as autonomous as Betancur's, kept promoting a peaceful settlement to the conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador, and bitterly criticized the US invasion of Panama in 1989.

It is important to highlight that in April 1990, at the end of Barco's period, FARC's General Secretariat proposed a bilateral cease-fire, open and public peace

dialogues and a form of international mediation to find a political solution to the conflict. They specifically suggested U.S. ex-president Jimmy Carter and Venezuelan President Carlos A. Perez as mediators in these eventual conversations (García Durán 1992, p. 187). Although there is no information available that allows the identification of FARC's motivations for this initiative, it is probable that it constituted one of their first attempts to find international legitimacy. The initiative takes place right at the end of the cold war and when Central American conflicts seemed to be coming to an end; this international and regional context might have pushed the FARC to find additional sources of international legitimacy.

During the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, the FARC militarily grew and this situation pushed the government toward partially adopting internationalization strategies. As Murillo states,

“the FARC continued to grow: it has almost quadrupled in size in the last fifteen years, from roughly 3600 combatants in 1987, to 7000 in 1995, to today with estimates ranging between 15000 and 20000 fighters operating in more than 105 fronts with control of more than 40 percent of the national territory. Some people attribute this growth to guerrillas' growing involvement in narco-trafficking. Others say it is the result of the forced recruitment carried out by the FARC in the countryside and has less to do with the personal ideological convictions of new combatants” (Murillo 2004, p. 70).

Gaviria and Other Peace Processes

During the Gaviria administration (1990-1994), Colombia's foreign policy took a different turn since his administration still attempted to advance a peace process. President Gaviria tried to re-construct the relationship with Cuba in order to strengthen its negotiations with the insurgent movement M-19. Within the framework of the UN Commission on Human Rights Colombia sought, by abstaining or voting against the

United States, to prevent sanctions against the Cuban regime for the human rights situation in the island. Within the framework of the U.N. Security Council, where Cuba and Colombia coincided in 1990, both countries together with Yemen and Malaysia, formed the Group of Four which harmonized their postures regarding the Gulf War after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. And, as Tokatlian suggests, "Bogota' and Havana's closeness proved to be decisive towards bringing about two phenomena which were to influence Colombia's domestic and foreign policies: it facilitated Cuba's role as an important moderator in the negotiations with a highly weakened M-19 and it contributed to keeping Colombia from being severely criticized by the international community in spite of its disastrous human rights record" (Tokatlian 2000, p. 341). The Gaviria government also advanced the negotiations with the EPL (Ejército Popular de Liberación—Popular Liberation Army), the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party) guerrillas and the Quintín Lame, probably the only indigenous armed movement in Colombia. On January 30th 1991, a last meeting between the government and the EPL took place and they signed up a peace agreement on February 15th. The government and the EPL agreed upon an international oversight by the Spanish Workers Socialist party and the Socialist International (García Durán 1992, p. 136). At the end of the process, the EPL handed in its weapons to these same organizations.

At the end of his four-year term, Gaviria also advanced peace talks with the Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar (CGBS)—made up of the FARC, the ELN and a splinter EPL Group. Conversations took place in Caracas, Venezuela in 1991 and Tlaxcala, Mexico in 1992. All the same, the Gaviria administration did not seek the active participation of Mexico and Venezuela as moderators or mediators of what was

still considered mainly a Colombian conflict (Tokatlian 2000, p. 343). During these peace dialogues, guerrilla forces kept growing and as a result of this rapid growth, “in the late 1990s the Colombian army was handed a series of humiliating military setbacks at the hands of the FARC, suffering numerous casualties throughout the country after a number of dramatic assaults on military installations and police stations” (Murillo 2004, p. 70).

Also during Gaviria’s administration, an instance of overlapping between U.S. support for the war against illegal drugs and support for counter-insurgency efforts took place. This is probably the first instance of a military internationalization strategy that was also implemented by the following administrations. By conflating the illegal drug business with insurgent activities, the Colombian government was able to skillfully construct arguments to convince Washington to military support governmental counter-insurgency strategies. The construction of this frame allowed the emergence of a common course of action between Washington’s war on drugs and Colombia’s concern with the growth of insurgency. In the fall of 1990, a team formed by U.S. military and intelligence advisers made recommendations to the Colombian Defense Ministry for the reorganization of their military intelligence networks. The Colombian military, based on the recommendations made by the U.S. commission of advisers, “presented a plan to better combat what they called ‘escalating terrorism by armed subversion.’ So the Colombian Defense Ministry took the America’s team counternarcotics advice and U.S. dollars and turned them around for use against insurgents. (...) What started out as a joint U.S.-Colombian counter-narcotic effort turned into an illegal, covert partnership between the Colombian military and paramilitary death squads” (Ruiz 2001, p. 181). Even though

Washington constantly insisted on sending resources to help Colombia only in its fight against illegal drugs, the line that divided this effort from the counter-insurgency activities was very thin and the Colombian government was aware of the potential advantages of conflating these two issues. Instances as the one described here, in which U.S. counter-narcotics resources were used in the war against guerrillas were frequent and were a crucial part of the governmental military internationalization strategy, as I show in the next chapter.

Samper and the End of the Special Relationship with Washington

The following presidential administration by Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) took various international decisions that affected the course of the Colombian conflict. Samper submitted Protocol II (Additional) to the Geneva Conventions to the Colombian Congress and accepted to open an Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, among other acts. During the second half of his four-year term, Samper's focused on creating an opportunity for peace talks with the guerrilla. However, as Tokatlian suggests, as Samper's conciliatory gestures towards the FARC multiplied, the insurgency's reluctance to hold peace talks became increasingly apparent; and as the president sought greater external support for his initiatives to establish contacts with the FARC, the guerrilla's unwillingness to involve the international community became also evident (Tokatlian 2000, p. 345). The ELN seemed more amenable to the international dimension of contact and rapprochement, at least in terms of initial good offices, as shown by the meeting held by members of this armed group with spokesmen from Colombian civil society in Maguncia, Germany, towards the end of Samper's term. At the same time, during his last year in office,

“this Liberal president attempted to enlist the aid of as many countries as possible towards his peace efforts: Venezuela, Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Spain, and Germany, among others. At a rhetorical level—or that of formal and generic declarations—it was easy to accompany Colombia. However, since there was still no precision as to the guerrilla’s willingness to accept the good offices of these counterparts and no accuracy as to the role that Bogotá intended these friendly nations to play, the international component of an eventual peace process became vague” (Tokatlian 2000, p. 345).

Finally, Samper’s foreign policy and more precisely, his relationship with the United States, were affected by accusations (later confirmed) that his presidential campaign was financed by illegal drugs’ money from the Cali Cartel.¹² This accusation was based “on evidence that members of his staff had arranged for the payments, once delivered in boxes wrapped in Christmas paper. The investigation became known as the ‘8.000 investigation,’ a media-friendly round number assigned by the attorney general” (Kirk 2003, p. 230). Samper faced a very strong domestic opposition that constantly threatened his government and, he also confronted a systematically hostile U.S. policy toward himself, his staff and his entire government. Just to cite one instance of this contentious and difficult relationship, the U.S. government canceled Samper’s visa and when he had to travel to a United Nations general meeting, he had to do it on a special U.N. document, the same mechanism used by other heads of state barred from entry, among them Fidel Castro. Also, the U.S. Ambassador in Colombia was accused of being part of a conspiracy movement together with some members of the opposition and the Colombian armed forces, to end Samper’s presidential period by using undemocratic means.

As a result, the area of Colombian politics that probably suffered the most during

¹² The Cali Cartel was probably the most important criminal group of drug traffickers after the dead of Pablo Escobar and the dismantling of the Medellín Cartel in 1993.

Samper's presidential term was the international one and this substantially hindered the possibility of advancing any internationalization strategy directed toward the U.S. government. The country went through four years of relative international isolation and, an almost unconditional historic alliance with the U.S. was interrupted by constant and public confrontations between Washington and Bogota. Rumors of a U.S. military intervention to expel Samper by force spread across the country. In this context, Andrés Pastrana—the same person who handed in the audio records that proved Samper's relationship with the Cali Cartel to the United States authorities—came to power promising to return 'international dignity' and a place in the world to Colombia. I analyze his internationalization strategy in the following chapter.

Even though I have register various instances of internationalization during these first years of the domestic struggle in Colombia, they are scattered and not very systematic if they are compared to president Pastrana's political and military internationalization strategies. As I suggest at the beginning of this chapter, these internationalization attempts started to follow clear trends that replicated during both Pastrana and Uribe's presidencies but on a more frequent basis. This chapter has also supported the idea that Colombian insurgency did not internationalize in a frequent manner either, although here the evidence is weaker. In chapters 3 and 4, I describe and analyze the process through which both insurgent groups and the government (during the Pastrana and the Uribe administrations) overcame their relative international isolation and started designing and employing varied military and political internationalization strategies.

Chapter 3. Colombia: The Government

In this chapter I argue that the internationalization of the Colombian conflict during the last part of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s is substantially stronger and more systematic than the scattered attempts to internationalize that took place before this moment and that I briefly described in the previous chapter. The purpose in this chapter is to answer two basic but crucial questions. First, why does the government—as one of the parties to the conflict—decide to start a systematic internationalization strategy at this point and not before? And second, what factors led the government to adopt the different types of internationalization I describe in this chapter? In other words, I examine here what group of factors or set of conditions led the Colombian state to strongly and systematically internationalize both the peace dialogues with guerrilla groups—during the Pastrana administration, and the war against them—during the Uribe administration. I also account for the conditions that led to one type of internationalization during the Pastrana period, and a different one during the current presidency of Alvaro Uribe. To be more precise, during most of Pastrana's administration, peace dialogues took place without a cease fire, but months before his period was over, negotiations finally ended with no results. President Uribe began his term in a moment of open military confrontation with the FARC and no negotiations in process. Hence, various and different internationalization strategies during both administrations were designed under only two possible scenarios: negotiations during war or war with no negotiations.

The Pastrana Administration 1998-2002

I defend in this section two different but complementary arguments. First, I argue that Pastrana's attempt to internationalize the conflict and the peace process can be interpreted as a response to the increasing power of the guerrillas—especially the FARC—and, the relative but clear weakness of the Colombian state. This part of the explanation accounts for the military internationalization and toward the United States that was inaugurated with Plan Colombia. Second, I also argue that Pastrana found in international actors the legitimacy and support to the peace process he could not find domestically. Hence, internationalization was a strategy the government followed in order to overcome the division that the peace process created within its own government, within the state and among public opinion. To an extent, it can be argued that the lack of domestic support also facilitated the adoption of a less sophisticated internationalization strategy during the Betancur administration during the 1980s. Again, as in El Salvador and Guatemala, political internationalization is partially a strategy parties to the conflict employ in order to overcome high levels of internal fragmentation. This part of the explanation accounts for political internationalization toward neighboring and European states, and international organizations. It is important to take into account that military and political internationalization are not necessarily compatible and, on the contrary, they might generate serious tensions.

But both strategies can also complement each other. In fact, military internationalization was crucial in the context of the peace process. President Pastrana learned an important lesson from the peace process advanced by the Betancur administration: state military strength is a crucial pre-condition for peace negotiations. It

helps the government in trying to convince the guerrillas that the best option they have is to talk and sign up a peace agreement. In case the government is not successful in persuading the insurgency, state strengthening prevents the result Betancur's dialogues had: guerrillas were re-arming and re-articulating themselves during peace negotiations and once conversations were over, with no peace agreement in hand, they were militarily stronger than the state. In other words, when Pastrana officially initiated peace negotiations with the FARC in 1999 (again, with an ongoing war as a background), only two outcomes were possible: talks could succeed and the war would be over or—as it had happened in Colombia before, talks could fail and war would continue. The government decided to internationalize with these two possible options in mind and therefore, even though it designed an internationalization strategy to support its peace efforts, it did not leave aside the possibility of failing. Hence, it acknowledged that advancing peace negotiations with the FARC assuming that they would end in final peace was naïve and could do more harm than good; consequently, it consolidated a military alliance with the U.S. to be prepared for war.

In sum, to avoid repeating previous mistakes, Pastrana designed a two-fold internationalization strategy: he implemented political internationalization in order to end war through negotiations, but he also prepared the state for war if peace talks finally led nowhere. These two objectives were not completely disconnected though. On the one hand, the strengthening of the Colombian military apparatus could serve to put additional pressure to the guerrillas by sending them the message that the cost of leaving the

negotiation table had increased. On the other, if dialogues failed, guerrillas would face a stronger and modernized army in the field that they might not be able to defeat.¹³

Having in mind Pastrana's objectives, it is possible to identify additional factors that contribute to further answering the second question I pose in this chapter, which is what set of conditions led to the adoption of certain types of internationalization. I have argued that Pastrana opted for implementing military internationalization with the United States government as its most salient and crucial ally, because the U.S. could certainly provide the military and economic resources the government was searching for in order to modernize and strengthen the army. This is not surprising though. What is counter-intuitive about the success of the U.S.-Colombia alliance is that the United States was actually interested in helping the Colombian government strengthening its military position vis-à-vis Marxist guerrillas, even though the cold war was over and the communist enemy had vanished. What is interesting here is not the state's attempt to internationalize its war through the construction of a military alliance with the U.S., but the actual success of this strategy.

I posit that this success is explained by the very calculated and skillful incorporation of Colombia's main interests in Washington's own agenda through framing. The strategy of framing Colombia's war according to 'themes' that would resonate in the U.S., allowed the Colombian government to attract U.S. attention and resources and to gradually convince Washington to participate in an internal conflict that

¹³ In fact, Pastrana's intuition proved right. Recently, Fidel Castro has declared that the FARC's General Secretariat, months before starting peace dialogues with the government, told the Cuban government about their intentions to sustain negotiations for a couple of years, to gain a good image and some time to be able to reorganize militarily. See Castro Ruz F. 2008. *La Paz en Colombia*. La Habana: Editora Política. Pp. 105-106 and 120-124.

constituted no strategic interest or priority for the U.S. government. I argued in Chapter 2 that during the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, the governmental strategy was to frame the Colombian civil unrest as another cold war dispute. However, the real objective was to obtain military resources from Washington to crush the internal opposition to a close and clearly un-democratic Conservative regime. More recently though, and especially after the end of the cold war, two framing strategies have predominated: one has been to systematically link the insurgency problem to the illegal traffic of drugs and the other, implemented shortly after 9/11, has been to frame the Colombian insurgency as an additional and salient dimension of global terrorism.

In fact, after the end of the peace process during the Pastrana administration, the process of finding resources was facilitated by the ideological empathy or the construction of a shared world view between the U.S. and the Colombian government after 9/11, a shared world view that resulted from a framing exercise employed by the Colombian government. The end of the peace process and the 9/11 attacks were separated only by four months and that allowed the government in Colombia to adopt the U.S. anti-terrorist rhetoric to frame its own confrontation against the guerrillas. This new approach not only permitted the continuation of Plan Colombia after the end of Pastrana's period, it also emboldened Colombia's government and gave a new twist to the traditional strategy of labeling guerrilla movements as terrorist when peace talks fail. In fact, by using the war against terrorism as a way to frame the conflict, the government legitimized the use of military force even beyond legal limits.

However, the military internationalization toward the U.S. had two main flaws. First, it undermined the guerrillas' trust on the government's intentions at the negotiation

table. For the FARC, it was always hard to believe that the government seriously wanted peace while Pastrana was strengthening its alliance with the U.S. in order to modernize the Colombian army. Hence, the guerrilla thought, dialogues were only a 'distraction' from war the government was using in order to gradually make them militarily weaker. The guerrilla had historically mistrusted the government and the alliance with the U.S. was an additional motive to maintain this attitude. Second, since in order to invite the United States to participate in the conflict the government had to frame the case in such a way that would resonate with Washington's own interests, this constructed and calculated compatibility was interpreted by some, not as an internationalization move but as pure American interventionism. Due to such confusion, the government simultaneously and probably unwillingly alienated other international actors that either had different interpretations of Colombia's war or different international agendas. As I will narrate in this section, that was the case of various European countries and their reluctance to participate in Plan Colombia. The absence of European contributors in this program led various sectors in Colombia to judge Plan Colombia as interventionism but also and consequently, it made very difficult for the government to present it as a plan that supported peace. On the contrary, it was always interpreted as a plan for war precisely because the U.S.—principally motivated by its own war against illegal drugs and later, against terrorism—was its main contributor and insisted on prioritizing military spending over other provisions.

The political internationalization to support the peace process, however, was more complex to the extent it needed to satisfy multiple purposes at the same time. First and as I mentioned, the government needed international legitimacy to compensate for the

general domestic skepticism the peace process constantly faced. Second, the presence of international actors could allow continuity in spite of changes in presidential administrations. Pastrana had only four years and he knew that would not be enough to finish 50 years of war. For him, the involvement of the international community allowed him to send a clear message to the FARC: even without him, the peace process will continue. Again, this continuity was crucial also to signal the FARC the government's real and long-term intentions to achieve peace.

Third, political internationalization allowed the government to construct an overall balanced and legitimate internationalization strategy. Equilibrium was an essential principle because it allowed the government to present international participation, not only as a tool to modernize and re-organize its armed forces, but also as a mechanism to support the peace process. That is why both the Americans and the Cubans were part of the strategy. The FARC was very reluctant to accept international participation so to convince them, it was necessary for the government to constantly insist on the fact that the international community, in general and in every case, was not necessarily on the governmental side. The tactic was to invite international actors that were eventually closer—politically and ideologically—to the guerrillas, such as Cuba or other moderate socialist governments such as Venezuela, to participate in the search for peace. These countries were crucial in times of crisis since they served as bridges and in various occasions prevented the definite collapse of negotiations. For Pastrana, the role of these countries was even more relevant because his government was considered very conservative and distant from the insurgency political position: Pastrana himself was a member of a traditional and relatively wealthy family in Colombia, his father was

president during the National Front and he was a member of the Conservative Party.

In sum, a balanced strategy that would allow the participation of friends and foes would be more convincing for the FARC and also useful for the government.

Finally, by inviting international actors the government also demonstrated to the FARC that it had the power to do so. It was a technique the government employed to show the insurgency that the cold war was over and they were isolated from the international community while the government was not. The government wanted the FARC to acknowledge the costs of being alone and it is very probable the insurgency understood the lesson since right after the end of the peace process, they intensified and consolidated their own internationalization strategy. I provide evidence of how political and military internationalization interacted in the next section.

The day Pastrana won the elections (after running against one of Samper's closest allies, Horacio Serpa) he gave a speech in which he started by highlighting some of the main elements of his internationalization strategy:

“We have to internationalize peace to end the war. I propose to invite the international community to participate in all the phases of this process: as facilitator of pre-negotiation conditions, as a proponent of understanding formulas that facilitate negotiations, as a witness of commitments and, as a verifier of each party's compliance with these commitments” (Pastrana 2006, p. 50).

Since the beginning of Pastrana's conversations with Manual Marulanda (alias Tirofijo—Sure-shot), FARC's head commander, Pastrana insisted on the relevance of involving the international community in the process. Just months after the beginning of informal talks, president Pastrana highlighted the necessity of inviting the international community to the peace process with a crucial argument: the best guarantee they had that

the peace process would continue, even if they ran out of time, was the presence of international actors.

Pastrana's commitment to peace and negotiations came at a time when guerrilla organizations, and especially the FARC, had increased their military power and their control over important parts of the Colombian territory. In fact, "the FARC had humiliated the Colombian army on several occasions in 1998" (Ruiz 2001, p. 19): they launched an attack and annihilated a unit of the Third Mobile Brigade—an elite Colombian army antiterrorist force—in El Billar; and in August, right after president Pastrana took office they launched a massive nation wide guerrilla offensive that included 55 raids on military and economic targets in 18 of Colombia's provinces (Ruiz 2001, p. 20). But the strongest attack took place on November 1st 2008 when the FARC decided to take over Mitú, the capital city of the Vaupés province. The Red Cross reported 80 soldiers and police were killed and 40 were taken prisoners, ten civilians were killed; few FARC dead or wounded were left behind. The battle for the control of Mitú lasted 14 hours and it took the Colombian armed forces three days to take back the town from the entrenched FARC guerrillas (Ruiz 2001, p. 24). After several military attacks that humiliated the Colombian army the Washington Post finally revealed a top secret American report made by the United States Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) "which concluded that Marxists insurgents could defeat Colombian military within five years unless the armed forces drastically restructured. (...) It read: 'the DIA assessment notes that the guerrillas now have small aircraft for surveillance operations and for moving rebel leaders and munitions around the country, as well as surface-to-air missiles and sophisticated heavy weapons (...) the Colombian military has proved to be inept, ill-

trained and poorly equipped” (Ruiz 2001, p. 21).

At this point and months before the beginning of peace dialogues there was a widespread perception that the government was losing the war against the guerrillas; their dominion of the countryside was so strong that urban population was almost held hostage in cities and could only travel by using commercial airlines. As Murillo suggests, “the fact that the government of president Andrés Pastrana demilitarized five municipalities in southern Colombia controlled by the FARC in January 1999 in order to jumpstart peace talks was a clear demonstration of the military successes of the guerrilla” (Murillo 2004, p. 71).

Political Internationalization I: The U.S.

In this context, president Pastrana planned to initiate peace dialogues with the FARC in February 1999. For him, it was crucial that the U.S. would know, first hand, the complexities of the peace process and would eventually participate in the negotiations. With this purpose in mind, Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guillermo Fernández, and Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, Victor G. Ricardo met in the U.S., just two months before the negotiations officially started (on November 9th 1998), with Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs at the Department Of State, Peter Romero, to request the U.S. government to meet with FARC head commanders. James Lemoyne, Special U.N. Adviser and Romero’s close friend helped the Colombian government in its negotiation with the Department of State. At the end, Romero approved the idea under one condition: the meeting was to be absolutely private. They decided the best place for that meeting to take place was Costa Rica or Mexico.

On December 13th and 14th, 1998, FARC members and the Colombian

government representatives met with U.S. government officials in San Jose, Costa Rica. Phil Chicola, Director of the Office of Andean Affairs in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, emphasized two basic points during the conversation: one, he asked the FARC about their involvement in illegal drug trafficking and, he also asked the FARC members about three American citizens kidnapped by them in January 1993 (Pastrana 2006, p. 133; Ruiz 2001, pp. 64-65). By January 1999, the information about this meeting was leaked to the Colombian and the American press and “the Americans attributed the leak to *Comandante Sureshot*. They were certain he was quite proud of his ability to arrange a face-to-face meeting with Uncle Sam; it was a sign of his power and had terrific propaganda value” (Ruiz 2001, p. 65). Even though Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, affirmed that the U.S. government participated in this meeting only to demonstrate its support to the Colombian peace process, to force the FARC to liberate the U.S. citizens and to inform them about U.S-Colombian anti-narcotics efforts (La Lucha Antinarcóticos no es Negociable 1999), in February of that same year, U.S. Congress decided not to confirm Peter Romero as Assistant Secretary mainly due to his role in this affair.

Another incident further hindered the government’s political internationalization strategy toward the U.S. shortly after peace dialogues began. On February 25th 1999, the FARC kidnapped three American citizens who had come to Colombia to help the U’wa indigenous community prevent oil drilling on land they claimed as their own. On March 4th, they were found dead by Colombian authorities and as Robin Kirk suggests, it is likely “the rebels had known who the Americans were. At that time, the FARC wanted drilling to proceed, so it would ‘tax’ the oil companies. Previously, FARC guerrillas had

executed ELN guerrillas who backed the U'wa and their efforts to stop oil drilling” (Kirk 2003, p. 227). It is not clear to what extent this and other kidnappings and the murder of foreign nationals were a form of internationalization advanced by the FARC, but these events definitely had important effects on the government's attempts to find international legitimacy for the peace process. Washington did not wait to react and next day the State Department condemned the murder of these citizens and defined it as a 'barbaric terrorist act' (Pastrana 2006, p. 164). Curtis Kamman, U.S. Ambassador in Colombia, made clear that the U.S. policy toward the Colombian peace process was about to change drastically: “We are not in conditions to continue the contacts we had in December with the FARC if they do not do what is necessary to bring those who were responsible for the kidnapping and murder of these citizens, to the ordinary justice, not to the revolutionary one (¿Haciéndose el Gringo? 1999).

It was not clear why the FARC would commit these murders precisely at a moment when they were interested in negotiating with the United States at the table. In one of the army's radio intercepts, Jorge 'Mono Jojoy' Briceño, can allegedly be heard talking to his brother 'Granobles': “they were discussing the devastating political impact the killings were having on the FARC. During the radio intercept Mono Jojoy told his brother to come up with 'any name' to put forward as a murderer of the Americans. 'This is the biggest political screw-up of all,' he said. 'This is a mistake from hell'” (Ruiz 2001, p. 72). The political screw-up was defined as such since the killing of U.S. nationals seriously hindered FARC's intention to obtain international legitimacy for its own cause. The incident could have been the result of the fragmentation between the General Secretariat and the FARC base and it seriously affected the insurgency political

internationalization strategy. According to Pastrana, what the FARC achieved with this crime was to marginalize a crucial international actor and to obtain, for the first time, the ‘terrorist’ treatment by the U.S. government. Since then, the U.S. limited itself to back up in a very general way our peace efforts, conditioning any new involvement to the delivery of the assassins to the ordinary justice (Pastrana 2006, p. 166). From this moment on, the eventual political support and legitimacy the U.S. could have given to the peace process debilitated and military aid was prioritized. But not only was the U.S. officially out of peace negotiations; even more importantly, the rules of the game for anti-narcotics assistance changed drastically: a failure in the government’s political internationalization strategy had spilled over its military internationalization plan.

The Colombian government retired all the armed forces from a strategic region in Colombia, the size of Switzerland, in order to hold peace talks. This zone, called *Zona de Distensión* (Détente Zone) served as the scenario for peace conversations and it was a territory where the FARC could remain with the assurance that governmental forces will not attack them. To an important extent, the government formally renounced to its authority on this territory¹⁴ which, of course, provoked serious criticism by the opposition and by the U.S. government. Randy Beers, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Crime, right after the killing of the three American citizens, made official Washington’s discomfort with the Zone and announced a serious step back on U.S. anti-narcotics aid. In front of the U.S. Congress he stated that “we had made clear to the Colombian government that we are not going to support alternative development projects in areas that are not under the Colombian government control—this

¹⁴ Even though it was a zone that, on and off, had remained under FARC’s military control.

area (the Zone) is currently where most of the coca crops are. That is why, our support will be limited to the projects in regions where poppy seed is grown, until the Colombian government warrants the proper control of regions where coca is produced” (*¿Haciéndose el Gringo?* 1999).

But both the Colombian and the U.S. government were negatively affected by this new restriction. The Pastrana administration knew that a step back in its war against narcotics would only strengthened the guerrillas; that is why it decided to further intensify its military internationalization strategy by inviting a group of American congressmen to visit the Zone so they could know exactly what it was been used for. The purpose was to lobby Washington’s decision makers in order to re-obtained resources for the war on drugs. Additionally, during the summer of 1999, a delegation from the New York Stock Exchange travelled to the Zone invited by Pastrana’s government. But the final factor that complemented Pastrana’s attempt to internationalize and made the U.S. government realize the steep price it was paying for limiting assistance to Colombia, was a document elaborated by the U.S. General Accounting Office. In it, the GAO summarized the multiple negative effects the establishment of the Zone had had on anti-narcotics efforts. It affirmed, for instance, that the numerous promises Pastrana made to the FARC had made impossible to fly over the south part of the country in order to identify the size and location of coca crops. It stressed that the Colombian government had not approved new fumigation operations over those regions until a crop substitution project was implemented. According to the GAO, the Colombian government was afraid that fumigation in those regions under the control of the guerrillas could increase peasant support to them (*En Alerta Roja* 1999).

Both the Colombian government and the U.S. Embassy kept insisting on the fact that drug traffickers and insurgents were virtually impossible to distinguish and that issue made it very difficult to channel American aid, since U.S. legislation at that moment still forbade military aid for counter-insurgent purposes. On this issue, the GAO document also stated that “new guidelines have been created to share information, starting on March 1999. The increasing guerrilla participation in drug trafficking is recognized and that is why intelligence information is being facilitated to the counter-insurgency combat units in regions where drugs are produced” (En Alterta Roja 1999). In sum, due to Colombia’s lobby and to the GAO’s report, Washington realized that it was not a good idea to take too much distance from the peace process. More importantly, it realized that limiting counter-narcotics aid to Colombia in the Zone, where the dialogues were taking place, was a shoot-your-own-foot strategy. With this in mind, Thomas Pickering, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, traveled to Bogotá at the end of the summer (in August). He met with President Pastrana and offered, to the president’s great surprise, the possibility of U.S. support not for one year but for the three left from Pastrana’s term. According to Pastrana, Pickering’s proposal coincided almost perfectly with his internationalization attempts and his idea of a ‘Plan Marshall’ for Colombia (Pastrana 2006, p. 203). After this visit, the president and his staffers started to work on a more elaborated and detailed version of Plan Colombia that would include Washington’s initiative.

Military Internationalization toward the U.S.: Genesis and Evolution of Plan Colombia.

In his inaugural address, Pastrana mentioned his analysis on the relationship

between the illegal drug business and the armed conflict. This formula was the first key framing resource his own administration and current president Uribe's have used in order to obtain more U.S. involvement to end the war against the guerrillas:

“the narco-crops are a social problem and its solution passes through the end of the armed conflict (...) developed countries have to help us implement a sort of ‘Plan Marshall’ for Colombia; a plan that allow us to develop great investments in the social field, the agricultural sector and in regional infrastructure, just to offer our peasants different alternatives to illegal crops” (Pastrana 2006, p. 51).

His strategy, as it was stated at the beginning of his mandate, was to visit industrialized nations, specially the United States, to find assistance to initiate a structural reform that would improve the most impoverished population's social and economic situation. Very soon, he appointed Colombia's ambassador to the U.S., Luis Alberto Moreno, who started conversations with Nick Mitropolous, one of Pastrana's friends from his time in Harvard. Mitropolous served as an intermediary between Moreno and James Steinberg, Deputy National Security Advisor to President Bill Clinton. The first meeting between both presidents was agreed for August 3rd 1998, four days before Pastrana took office.

Pastrana's trip had a very clear objective: to invite the U.S. to participate in the peace process through bipartisan political and economic support. At this point, Pastrana's internationalization strategy seemed broader and able to encompass not only military but also economic support. To implement this strategy, a comprehensive approach to both Democrats and Republicans was necessary to prevent the subjection of the policy toward Colombia to the comings and goings of U.S. domestic politics. Clinton promised to work with Congress so his administration could increase anti-narcotics assistance aid for sustainable economic development, human rights protection and

humanitarian aid. He also promised to help stimulate private investment and join other donors and financial international institutions to promote economic growth in Colombia (Pastrana 2006, p. 122). Simultaneously, the Colombian government was being successful at selling the 'counter-narcotic plus counter-subversive' frame to top officials at the U.S. Congress: the governmental argument was that an efficient war against illegal drugs could not and should not be separated from a strategy to end the armed conflict. Benjamin Gilman, back then the chair of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, subscribed the thesis:

“if the guerrillas are involved in narcotics trafficking we are not going to draw the line and say that ‘these’ guerrillas are rebels and they are fighting for the revolution, and that ‘these other’ guerrillas are involved in narcotics traffic. If they are involved in narcotics traffic we are going to treat them all the same way... If they are producing and overseeing drug traffickers and helping them to take all the supply out of Colombia, we are going to support all the policy efforts to stop them” (Benjamin Gilman: "El Despeje Nos Preocupa" 1998).

The true colors of Pastrana's internationalization strategy started to appear later in his second visit to president Clinton. At that point, it was already clear that U.S. assistance was mainly intended to reinforce Colombia's military so guerrillas could be forced to negotiate or, in case negotiations failed, the government could have a Plan B to face the insurgency: “it was also rather apparent that the decision (to ‘cautiously reengage’ the Colombian military by supplying it with sophisticated weapons) was made because the Colombian armed forces were losing the war with the guerrillas” (Ruiz 2001, p. 65). The social components of the aid package took a secondary place. Pastrana understood that guerrillas would strengthen during the peace process if the government would not modernize its military apparatus and if the war against drugs was not successful. He described his strategy to the U.S. in the following way:

“I explained that there was a real opportunity to achieve peace in Colombia but that, in order to do it, we needed to strengthen all the programs related to the fight against narcotics, because they were the main financial source of illegal armed groups. At that moment, the official numbers stated that drug production increased by 30% in Colombia, which showed that between 1994 and 1998 production practically duplicated.¹⁵ This implied an important increase in weaponry and the FARC’s size and, a correlative loss of military and state capacity compare to the insurgency’s capacities” (Pastrana 2006, pp. 124-125).

As part of the ‘counter-narcotics plus counter-insurgent’ frame his administration was promoting, his concrete proposal was to try to involve the armed forces more actively in the war against drugs. The idea was to obtain resources to modernize and update the armed forces by using U.S. funding, since traditionally, U.S. assistance was sent to the Police—the institution historically in charge of the war on drugs—and not the army.

In order to achieve this objective, the government officially launched the main product of his brand new line of internationalization toward the United States: the Plan Colombia. On December 19th, 1998, president Pastrana presented this Plan as “an alliance...with the countries of the world and with the private sector to fight for peace, for human rights, for social rights and ecology, and as a group of foreign investment projects strategic for peace” (Pastrana 2006, pp. 118-119). In spite of this rhetoric, Plan Colombia was mainly a form of military internationalization, it was an instrument to modernize and strengthen the Colombian army, to create new army brigades specialized in the war against drugs, brigades that would now be able to receive military aid from the United States” (Pastrana 2006, p. 119).

But there was a constant matter of concern for domestic public opinion and for the

¹⁵ Even though during the same period of time the main members of the Cali Cartel were imprisoned and extradited to the United States.

rest of the international community. First, Plan Colombia's original version was written in English. Second, to an important extent and as I narrated in the previous section, it was the result of an offer made by the U.S. Third and to add insult to injury, one of the writers, Jaime Ruiz, spent much of his writing time in Washington and not in Bogotá. All these factors created an aura of U.S. intervention in the process of creating and implementing Plan Colombia. President Pastrana had a hard time trying to convince the domestic opposition and European governments that this was not an American Plan. On the contrary, he insisted, it was an internationalization strategy advanced by his own government: "it was a plan made by Colombia for the Colombians, but with the very clear and deliberate objective of obtaining substantial and necessary international resources to support it" (Pastrana 2006, p. 204). At the end and in spite all debates, the Colombian government finally presented a Plan that requested US\$2.500 million from the international community.

However, the U.S. resources for Plan Colombia were not approved during 1999. As Ruiz explains, strong confrontation between Democrats and Republicans in Congress hindered the approval of this aid package: "the political and financial constrains of the federal budget were starting to emerge as a problem for Colombia. Neither the White House nor Republican lawmakers wanted to be the first to break the balanced budget limits by embracing an expensive foreign aid program. Another major problem for Colombia was continued allegations by major human rights organizations that members of the army acted 'hand in glove' with paramilitary groups and cooperated in civilian killings and even mass massacres" (Ruiz 2001, pp. 232-233). Colombia's internationalization attempt faced, as it did in El Salvador, an increasing level of

fragmentation within the U.S. government and this remained a major problem for future military internationalization attempts.

During the last days of 1999, President Clinton decided to ask Congress for an exceptional support to Plan Colombia of US\$1600 million but the final approval by the U.S. House of Representatives was still pending at the end of the year. On January 11th, 2000, Clinton formally announced his aid package to Colombia for the following three years. The Plan's final objectives were to send resources and equipment to two anti-narcotics brigades operating in the south part of Colombia, to support operations of aerial interdiction in Colombia and neighboring countries, to improve justice administration and human rights and, to strengthen the rule of law and alternative economic development in Colombia (El Cheque del Tío Sam 2000). Only four days later, Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, traveled to Colombia's main touristic site, Cartagena de Indias, to ratify the seriousness of her government's commitment with Plan Colombia. Ten days later, Pastrana traveled to Washington and had another meeting with President Clinton who promised to travel to Colombia with congressmen from both parties, once the aid package was approved by Congress.

The U.S. Congress rejection of Plan Colombia and this initial failure of the military internationalization strategy could not come at a worse moment. The government military position vis-à-vis the FARC was only getting weaker, so weak that by that time, U.S. Army Major Andy Messing, a highly regarded counter-insurgency expert, "made an astounding assessment of the conflict. Messing told the Miami Herald that the FARC were capable of assuming power. 'We're not dealing with a bunch of farmers with pitchforks here,' he said" (Ruiz 2001, p. 86). Additionally, Pastrana had

lost substantial popular support for his administration and for the peace process. In fact, “the numbers were so lopsided against him that influential politicians in Colombia were whispering that he would not complete his four-year term, that he would eventually step down to prevent the disintegration of the Republic” (Ruiz 2001, p. 155). More than 66 per cent of Colombia’s public opinion had an unfavorable image of Pastrana, more than a half disagreed with Pastrana’s efforts and, to add insult to injury, Moody’s Investors Service, the highly regarded grading agency, “stripped Colombia of its prized investment-grade rating, which guaranteed low-price foreign loans. The rating had provided Colombia with bragging rights on Wall Street. (...) *The Economist* reported (...) that Colombian economy was in the worst recession in almost 70 years” (Ruiz 2001, p. 156).

Being aware of this adverse scenario, the Colombian government realized the approval of Plan Colombia in the U.S. Congress was a priority and it would require additional efforts. With this in mind and decided to achieve the success of its main military internationalization attempt, it implemented a broad and expensive lobby campaign in order to convince the Republican opposition about the advantages of Plan Colombia and obtain the resources. Almost 50 U.S. legislators were invited by the Colombian government to know anti-narcotics efforts first hand; the lobby firm Washington Gump, Strauss, Hauer and Feld (in which Vernon Jordan, a close friend of the Clintons, worked) was hired for US\$193.479, from June until December 1999; and finally, the Colombian government also hired the media company Sawyer and Miller to contribute with a mass media campaign in the U.S. The efforts paid off. By June 2000, the U.S. Congress approved a military and humanitarian aid package of US\$1043.7

million, a sum slightly lower than the one approved by the House previously (March 2000): US\$1336.9 million.¹⁶ It was the greatest U.S. aid package to Colombia in history: 68% was dedicated to military and police assistance and 32% was dedicated to social and justice programs, human rights and alternative development (Pastrana 2006, p. 256).

In August 2000, as he promised, Bill Clinton visited Colombia. The trip had different purposes: First, it was a way to send the message that his administration was ‘tough’ on the illegal drugs issue; and second, it contributed to present Colombia as another front of Clinton’s concern with facilitating peaceful solutions to conflicts; that was also the case in the Middle East and Ireland. As a White House communiqué suggested, he came to Colombia to “personally highlight the U.S. support to Colombia’s efforts to find peace, to fight against illegal drugs, to build its economy and to deepen its democracy” (El Espaldarazo 2000). Kenneth "Buddy" MacKay, White House Special Envoy to the Americas, also stated that it was necessary to clarify that Plan Colombia was a creation of the Pastrana administration and that it was not a U.S. plan: “We will give advice. There are human rights conditions¹⁷ that were included in the law that approved the funding for this Plan. Our president has to certify before Congress that Colombia has complied with these norms” (“Queremos que el plan funcione” 2000). Colombian officials also insisted that “Americans are not telling us how we should invest their money or how to develop actions. We are just filling the form so they know exactly

¹⁶ The difference resulted from a change in helicopter brands: Instead of sending the expensive Blackhawks, Congress decided to send the older, cheaper but improved UH-1H Super Hueys 2000. El Hombre del Plan Colombia. *Semana*:24-9.

¹⁷ These restrictions are stated in the General Provisions Chapter, Section 3201 of Public Law 106-246, authorizing counter-narcotics aid to Colombia. The conditions on assistance for Colombia were the prosecution of Armed Forces members that have violated human rights, their suspension from duty for the same reason or for aiding paramilitaries, and the investigation, prosecution and punishment in civilian courts of armed forces personnel who “are credibly alleged to have committed gross violations of human rights” 2000. Excerpts from Conference Committee Report 106-710

how we are going to spend the money” (Llegaron los Gringos 2000). For the government it was a priority to present itself as the ‘first mover’ in the design of this internationalization strategy and to demonstrate that it did not constitute another veiled form of U.S. intervention.

The Arrival of the Bush Administration, 9/11 and the End of the Peace Process in Colombia

Once George Bush took office as president of the United States, the Colombian government began to work on organizing a meeting with the new U.S. leader in order to renew support for Plan Colombia. In February 2001, a Bush-Pastrana summit took place and as Pastrana relates, his impression was a sign of what the new administration priorities would be:

“The first impression I had of these so-called ‘hawks’ (Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz) was that they had a more skeptical position than the previous administration on finding a negotiated peace with the FARC and the ELN; and that they supported, on the contrary, taking more military actions against the guerrilla. They were not that worried about the drug problem as they were worried about the risks that terrorist organizations imposed on Colombian society and on the defense of democracy. Of course, this was a position they emphasized even more after the tragic 9/11” (Pastrana 2006, pp. 434-435).

Proof of this new emphasis and the twist U.S. foreign policy was experiencing was a statement by U.S. ambassador in Colombia, Ann Patterson, less than a month after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon:

“The 9/11 terrorist attacks turned our attention to linkages with international violence; that includes terrorism, drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime (...). Plan Colombia continues to be the most effective anti-terrorist strategy we could ever have designed. Plan Colombia will take the drug traffic money from the hands of guerrillas and self-defense groups” (2001).

The government understood immediately that the post 9/11 context, constituted a

great opportunity to finally remove the restriction on U.S. military aid that prevented the Colombian government from using U.S. counter-narcotics aid in its war against guerrilla organizations. This was the last obstacle to the full implementation of Pastrana's military internationalization strategy. To an important extent, through this restriction Washington had tried to avoid additional involvement in Colombia's civil conflict. The U.S. government did not want to escalate its participation mainly due to the so-called Vietnam syndrome: getting enmeshed in a foreign conflict, in a geographically unknown scenario and without assessing very well the odds of winning could result in a high domestic political cost. Additionally, international and domestic NGOs, both in the U.S. and in Colombia, also played a key role in preventing the use of U.S. military resources to combat insurgency.¹⁸ However, shortly after 9/11, conditions in Colombia changed dramatically and these two courses of events facilitated the final removal of U.S. aid restrictions.

On February 20th 2002, during the last year of Pastrana's administration, peace talks with the FARC ended with no concrete results after the FARC hijacked a domestic airliner, forcing it to land on a stretch of highway. All passengers were freed but one, Colombian Senator Jorge Gechem Turbay, the fifth member of Colombia's Congress to be kidnapped by the guerrillas since June 2001. The FARC's constant offensives and their sabotage of infrastructure and bombings of urban areas also helped increased the skepticism about the peace process. Additionally, the insurgency continued to cite government controls on the demilitarized zone as the main obstacle to progress in the

¹⁸ For a recent account of NGO activism in Colombia see Tate W. 2007. *Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

talks, and kept using this argument to delay further advance in the negotiations. They demanded a suspension of government's overflights of the demilitarized zone, an end to military incursions in the Zone, and suspension of the government's ban on authorized foreigners in the Zone.

President Pastrana ended conversations after he realized the FARC were not seriously committed to achieving peace through negotiations and after strong domestic pressure. That day he declared: "no one can doubt that, between politics and terrorism, the FARC has chosen terrorism. We Colombians offered an open hand to the FARC and they have responded us with a slap in the face" (Isacson 2003, p. 3). This public definition of FARC members as *terrorists* marked a change in strategy long known by Colombians: when the government is in the process of advancing peace dialogues, explicitly or implicitly recognizes these groups as illegally armed actors with political agendas. However, when the predominant strategy is a military one and peace talks are not contemplated by the government, *terrorists* and, more often, *narco-terrorist* are the labels members of the government prefer to use to refer to these groups in public settings. By defining guerrilla movements as terrorists instead of combatants, the government removes the political and social content of the insurgents' agenda and it contributes to delegitimize internally and internationally the activities of these groups; it undermines the principle under which these groups fight in the name of marginalized sectors of the population and, by contrast, it portrays their activities as hostile to this very same population and to the whole country. This strategy also contributes to legitimizing and justifying the use of military force against them and the complete elimination of an eventual political solution to the conflict. And finally and most importantly, in the post

9/11 context, this perspective “leaves no room for the application of international humanitarian law with regard to them. This position recalls the classification by the U.S. administration of all suspected terrorists captured following the military campaign in Afghanistan as ‘unprivileged’ (or ‘illegal’) combatants” (Sossai 2005, pp. 260-261).

Washington and Bogotá were again sharing a world view in terms of the new global anti-terrorist war. Pastrana’s strategy of framing these groups as *terrorists* adopted a whole new meaning after 9/11: it easily resonates, now more than ever, with Washington and its new international war on terror; it puts both governments almost automatically in the same course of action and, it promotes the Colombian war as a priority for U.S. foreign policy. Pastrana’s administration, and especially current president Uribe, understood very well how the new situation created opportunities for a new and more effective strategy of military internationalization.

Even though the area of overlap between U.S. aid for counter-narcotics and counterinsurgency operations had grown dramatically in the past years (Guáqueta 2005; Isacson 2000), only until the end of Pastrana’s administration the audience in the United States was receptive to the frame designed by the Colombian government. The U.S. finally and formally recognized the link between guerrillas, narcotics and terrorism, a link that the Colombian government had been promoting for a long period of time. The 9/11 attacks marked the emergence of new parameters in U.S. foreign policy that the Colombian government try to make compatible with its own new militaristic approach to the domestic struggle. The first step had already been taken since the FARC, ELN and the paramilitary had been included in the U.S. list of international terrorists early in October 2001. Subsequently, by May 2002 and just months before president Uribe took

office, Colombia's Ambassador in Washington articulated the connection in an even clearer way. In an eloquent exercise of framing, Moreno stated the new governmental position and spelled out its function within the broader counter-insurgent framework:

“While the United States’ attention is fixed on fighting terrorism in Afghanistan, the Middle East and Asia, a grave threat lurks in the Americas. Colombia is the leading theater of operations for terrorists in the Western Hemisphere. Under the false pretense of a civil war, Colombian guerrilla groups have ravaged the nation with violence financed by cocaine consumers in the United States. The Bush administration, appropriately, is pushing in Congress to have anti-narcotics aid expanded to strengthen Colombia’s ability to defeat terrorists.”

And to reinforce the construction of the already recognized association between insurgency and illegal drugs, he further explained the new frame:

“Drugs are the root of almost all violence in Colombia. It is simple: everywhere there are poppies or coca in Colombia, there are guerrillas and paramilitaries.¹⁹ The Pastrana administration has moved aggressively to sever ties between the armed forces and the paramilitary group called the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, which is itself involved in the drug trade; in 2001 government forces, including police, captured 992 paramilitaries and killed 116. Where there are guerrillas and paramilitaries, there are terror and violence against civilians. While they may hide behind a Marxist ideology, Colombia’s leftist guerrillas have ceased to be a political insurgency. They have traded their ideals for drug profits” (Moreno 2002).

Some might think that guerrilla leaders in the mountains of Colombia have little to do with Osama Bin Laden and his followers (Sossai 2005, p. 206). However and not surprisingly, given the atmosphere of fear of the newborn war against terrorism, the Colombian government was successful in framing and therefore including Colombia as part of the U.S. international war on terrorism. As a result, the Pastrana administration attempted to include an emergency supplemental operation to change the destination of military aid. The bill act that the Colombian government wanted the U.S. Congress to

approve, would have to authorize the use of military assistance to combat both drug trafficking and illegal armed groups. The government ended peace dialogues with the guerrillas and it was clear that the Pastrana's administration needed now, more than ever, military resources to start a new phase of the war against the FARC. Already in March 2002, Pastrana's attempt to remove restrictions on military support and to deepen its military internationalization efforts started to show important results. The Bush administration declared through Secretary of State, Colin Powell, that it was willing to support Colombia's counter-insurgent efforts:

“It could be necessary for us to give Colombia additional support, out of the anti-narcotics basket, to face this threat to its survival as a nation (...) even though so far policy has been framed by the Andean Regional Initiative and that Plan Colombia has remained, as it was approved by Congress, 90% focused on fighting illegal drugs, reality has changed and this implies we need to review the policy” (¿Un Nuevo Plan Colombia? 2002).

On March 6th, another sign of Pastrana's framing strategy success emerged. Tom Lantos (D) and Henry Hyde (R) presented a resolution to the House of Representatives expressing their support to the Colombian people and government and, to their fight to protect their democracy from terrorism and from the illegal drug scourge. They also asked the Bush administration to present before Congress legislation allowing Colombia to use U.S. aid in its fight against guerrillas, paramilitaries and drug trafficking (¿Un Nuevo Plan Colombia? 2002). While the bill was being processed in Congress, the U.S., for the first time in history, formally accused a high FARC commander, alias *Negro Acacio*, of drug trafficking. This was a clear sign of Washington's new approach to insurgent organizations in Colombia and of the final consolidation of U.S. participation and military contribution to Colombia's civil struggle.

On March 21st 2002, the Bush administration issued a request to the House of Representatives and by May 24th it had approved versions of an "emergency supplemental" appropriation—a bill that would approve the use of about \$28 billion in new funding for 2002 to address counter-terror priorities. This bill, as it was expected, included several provisions relevant to Colombia. A House-Senate "Conference Committee" finished reconciling differences in mid-July between both houses' versions of the bill (Gómez Maseri Recursos Antidrogas, Ahora Contra La Guerrilla 2002). The bill stated that in fiscal year 2002, funds available to the Department of State for assistance to the Government of Colombia shall be available to support “a unified campaign against narcotics trafficking, against activities by organizations designated as terrorist organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), and to take actions to protect human health and welfare in emergency circumstances, including undertaking rescue operations.”

This bill passed only days after Colombians elected their new president, Alvaro Uribe, a right wing independent candidate who promised an iron fist against insurgent organizations. Hence, the bill also stipulated that the newly elected President of Colombia had “committed, in writing, to establish comprehensive policies to combat illicit drug cultivation, manufacturing, and trafficking (particularly with respect to providing economic opportunities that offer viable alternatives to illicit crops) and to restore government authority and respect for human rights in areas under the effective control of paramilitary and guerrilla organizations” (Making Supplemental Appropriations For Further Recovery From And Response To Terrorist Attacks On The

United States For The Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2002, And For Other Purposes 2002).

President Uribe received a strong alliance between Washington and Bogota, an alliance that would contribute not only to Colombia's war against drugs, but more importantly, it would facilitate his own military efforts against insurgency.

Political Internationalization II: Other Actors

The opening ceremony of the peace process was probably the first scenario during peace negotiations in which both government and guerrilla measured their own capacity to call on the international community. The government thought that it was too early to politically internationalize this act. They wanted to verify FARC's intentions to negotiate and consequently, they thought it was not a good idea to give the group so much international visibility when the government had not received clear signs from their counterparts at the negotiation table. But FARC leaders were already sending invitations to their friends and sympathizers in Sweden, Norway, Mexico, Italy and Cuba which immediately provoked a change of the governmental strategy. Then, Pastrana decided to officially invite all the diplomatic representations in Colombia to undermine the FARC's initiative: "we ended up having about 1500 guests for the opening ceremony, among them all the credited ambassadors in the country" (Pastrana 2006, p. 139).

Clearly and after this incident, the Pastrana government understood that the international community's support would have to incorporate actors that were closer, ideologically and politically, to insurgent groups. These actors were in position to provide legitimacy to the government's peace efforts and to the negotiations themselves. It was, among many things, a political internationalization strategy to demonstrate that

the administration was also trying to find external allies for peace, not only for war.

Pastrana had a clear ally to support its war efforts—the United States, but the government also needed international actors that could serve as bridges between itself and the insurgency; at the end, peace dialogues were more than a simple façade for war. Cuba was one of these actors but the initial approach to Castro was difficult.

Cuba

Pastrana, as it was mentioned before, belongs to the Conservative Party in Colombia. This is still a political party very close to the Catholic Church and, in the ideological spectrum, probably closer to the far right than to the moderate left. Pastrana, himself, was the son of Colombia's traditional oligarchy and never flirted, as many people from his generation and social background did, with any armed or unarmed leftist group in the country. He was a critic of Castro's financial and military support to insurgent groups in Colombia, and never accepted Castro's lack of condemnation of illegal armed groups in a democratic country. In September 1998, Pastrana met for the first time with Cuba's president in Durban, South Africa, during the Non-Aligned Countries Movement's Summit and it asked for an official appointment with the Cuban president to "request his collaboration in channeling and supporting the peace process and the peace initiative" (Fidel Entra en Escena 1998). With this meeting the government initiated the implementation of a political internationalization strategy that would serve to compensate and complement the military internationalization described in the previous section.

The Colombian government understood Castro's limitations in a post-cold war international environment though. More than a concrete facilitator, Pastrana was

bringing a sort of international symbol to the negotiation table: “Fidel and Cuba can be crucial to solve logistic problems but not to convince Tirofijo to hand in his weapons (...). The great value of it is that everybody will be in the picture, including Cuba and the United States, and that gives credibility to the process” (¿Cuánto Aporta Fidel? 1999). Indeed, Castro’s lack of leverage with the FARC and the proof that its relationship with this organization was not significantly strong became evident in December 2001.

Andrés Felipe, a 12 year old child whose father was a policeman kidnapped by the FARC for over three years, suffered from a terminal cancer and his wish was to see his father, for the last time, before dying. Pastrana met with Castro and told him about this case in an attempt to find collaboration to pressure the FARC. Castro immediately wrote a letter and he asked his ambassador in Colombia to hand it to Manuel Marulanda, FARC’s head commander, directly. According to Pastrana’s account of the meeting, Castro said that he had never asked a favor to the FARC—and they, on the other hand, have asked him plenty. “That is why I am going to write to them so they liberate the father of this kid before he dies” (Pastrana 2006, p. 445). The FARC’s answer to Castro was almost a revolutionary cliché. They argued that the problem was not only Andrés Felipe but all the social inequities in the country and the thousands of kids that die in poverty while the oligarchy does nothing for them (Pastrana 2006, p. 445). Andrés Felipe died on December 18th and could not see his father who, desperate due to his son’s disease, tried to escape and was killed by the FARC. Castro’s lack of power to influence FARC’s behavior was now public and another proof of FARC’s historic international isolation.

Castro’s role in peace dialogues with the ELN—National Liberation Army was

more productive. As I will explain in Chapter 3 (dedicated to insurgency groups) the ELN's origin is closely linked to Cuba's revolution and this ideological empathy allowed Castro to play a more active role. During the summer of 1999 the Colombian government, in part pressured by civil society sectors, decided to initiate peace conversations with the ELN after various frustrated attempts. This time around, Colombian ambassador in Havana, Julio Londoño, suggested Cuba as the location for an initial meeting with ELN and government representatives, taking note of Castro's good disposition for peace negotiations. Castro agreed under two conditions: "the first one, that contacts would be between the ELN and the government directly—not civil society sectors—and the second one, that Cuba, as a state, would not participate in this conversations. It would only play a role as facilitator" (Pastrana 2006, p. 275).

On August 7th 2001, and with no concrete results at hand, the government decided to suspend conversations with the ELN but on November 24th of that same year negotiations began again by signing the Accord for Colombia (Acuerdo por Colombia) that, according to Pastrana, Castro helped draft. Both the ELN and the government asked constantly for Castro's participation and were comfortable with this dimension of political internationalization. In January 2002 and less than a month before the government ended the peace process with the FARC, the ELN and Pastrana's administration signed the Summit for Peace Declaration in Havana. At the end of this summit, on the night of January 31st, Castro had a meeting with Camilo Gómez, Colombian High Commissioner for Peace, and Julio Londoño, Colombia's ambassador in Cuba, to analyze this important step. Gómez and Londoño made clear to Castro that it was crucial for the government if he could use his 'good offices' to achieve a cease fire

accord with the ELN. At midnight Castro called Francisco Galán, Felipe Torres and Ramiro Vargas (ELN's head commanders) and told them it was necessary for them to agree on a cease fire (Pastrana 2006, p. 493). Unfortunately, the government was already running out of time; the ELN decided to wait for presidential elections and to suspend contacts with Pastrana's lame-duck government. Even though Castro's relationship with the ELN was significantly stronger than with the FARC, he could not exercise enough pressure to keep the ELN at the negotiation table to achieve a cease fire.

However, Pastrana's evaluation of Cuba's participation is still optimistic. He suggests that he even transformed Castro's position on the Colombian conflict:

“At the end of my administration, Cuba's position reached definitions no one could have expected, even inviting the guerrillas, vehemently, to abandon the armed struggle and to participate in the democratic contest. This Caribbean state turned into our ally to achieve peace and, for the first time in the history of that country and of revolution, it actively participated in a foreign process of that nature” (Pastrana 2006, pp. 147-148).

Venezuela

Venezuela also participated in the peace process but here, governmental political internationalization was more dedicated to solve logistic issues and facilitating communication among the parties than to obtain legitimacy. In a first instance of political internationalization, the Colombian government asked Venezuela to serve as a sort of *facilitator* to begin conversations with the ELN. The Colombian government tried to organize a meeting, later called Convención Nacional (National Convention), under the necessary security conditions for all the participants and with the active involvement of Colombia's civil society. For this task, the Pastrana administration asked Venezuela for help.

In a second instance of internationalization, later in the process, in July 2001, Venezuela served as the *site* (Isla Margarita specifically) of talks between the government and the ELN. These talks were suspended in August 2001. And finally and as a third instance, at the end of that year the Colombian government decided to ask Venezuela to *transmit the message* to the ELN that they were willing to reinstate peace dialogues with this group, under the condition that all five ELN head commanders would be at the table. Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan president, was the person in charge of delivering the message to the ELN and letting them know about the government's position (Pastrana 2006, pp. 486-487). Thanks to Venezuela's participation, the dialogues started again on November 24th of that same year in Havana.

The Creation of the International Commission of Facilitators and the Group of Friends

As I have suggested, by May 1999 the peace process with the FARC entered one of its most serious crisis and appeared to lead nowhere. Pastrana decided that it was a moment to renovate the government commitment and to try to push the conversations ahead. He traveled to San Vicente del Cagúan—where the conversations were taking place and the Détente Zone's capital city—and insisted on the need to open the process to the international community as a guarantor and facilitator of conversations. The government had suggested the FARC to invite international actors but the organization always accepted international participation only for the verification of agreements and, rejected foreign presence during the dialogue or negotiation phases. However, the government still wanted international participation, among other things, to dissipate

rumors about the misuse of the Détente Zone by the insurgency.²⁰ Clearly, Pastrana's intention was to obtain international legitimacy for its peace process in general, and for the Zone in particular; especially at a time when local elites were complaining about Pastrana's peace strategy for being too lenient with the FARC and the United States had already shown its discomfort with the lack of state presence in the Zone.

In that occasion, the president even recommended that FARC hire international advisers for the negotiations, as the government itself was doing it. Pastrana told Marulanda: "you have to get rid of that idea that the international community is part of the governmental team. They are absolutely independent, that is their duty and their obligation. If you violate the agreements or the Détente Zone, they are going to be the first ones in denouncing it, but if the government or I violate the agreements, they are going to be the first in denouncing us. So think thoroughly about it" (Pastrana 2006, p. 179). As a result of this meeting, the parties agreed to "create ... an international commission to accompany the process and, that would verify and help overcome any inconvenience that could take place" (Pastrana 2006, p. 184). The functions of this commission were not clearly stated but it was a victory for the government since it could count on an outsider's eye to observe dialogues and, simultaneously, the FARC's behavior at the Zone.

On February 8th, 2000, president Pastrana met FARC leader, Manuel Marulanda, to give some dynamism to conversations that at that point seemed stagnated. In this meeting, Pastrana insisted on the necessity of further internationalizing the peace process:

²⁰ In fact, "outside of San Vicente, guerrillas set up weapons production facilities and allegedly brought in IRA explosive specialists to teach them how to aim their cylinder bombs better and plant more sophisticated remote-control bombs. Units slipped out to attack or ambush, then rushed back, protected from pursuit by the government's commitment to peace" (Kirk 2003, p. 216).

“...the goal was that the table could be advised by third parties, such as the United Nations. The idea was that the international organization could contribute with draft documents for the table of negotiations. These documents would overcome the logic parties’ suspicion of each other’s proposals since they would be written and presented by a third party. In fact, the U.N. Secretary General’s Special Adviser for International Assistance to Colombia, Jan Egeland, had already suggested this possibility” (Pastrana 2006, p. 315).

Pastrana also suggested requesting a group of international personalities to present concrete recommendations to work on the issues that were hindering and delaying the advancement of conversations: the combat against paramilitary groups, the end of kidnappings and the decrease of the military conflict intensity. The FARC agreed on this formula but they did not agree with the international component of the initiative and consequently, the group was formed by national personalities.

On March 8th and 9th, FARC and governmental representatives held a meeting with a group of Ambassadors at Los Pozos town, located in the Détente Zone. The government finally convinced the FARC to create a smaller Group of Friends that would serve as the link between the negotiation table and the rest of Ambassadors and members of the international community. They would inform the broader group of countries about the status and evolution of conversations, they would encourage a more active role of the international community and, would support discussions on illegal crop substitution and Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Finally, they would collaborate in the organization of two international events related to these crucial topics (Pastrana 2006, p. 375). This group was denominated Comisión Facilitadora Internacional (International Commission of Facilitators) or Group of Facilitators and its members were the Ambassadors from Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Mexico, Norway, Sweden and Venezuela. The purpose was to find a geographic and political balance in its

composition. Later, Italy and Switzerland were included to complete 10 members.

Something similar happened with the ELN. It is important to highlight though, that this organization was not reticent to allow international participation for reasons I will evaluate in the section dedicated to the insurgency's strategy of internationalization. Camilo Gómez and Julio Londoño met with ELN commanders and agreed to count on the concrete and defined participation of the international community. They asked a group of countries to serve as friends and facilitators of the peace process: Spain, Norway, Cuba and Switzerland. Their mission was to conciliate, facilitate and verify, and to provide humanitarian assistance (Pastrana 2006, p. 278). Around a month later, government, ELN and civil society representatives met in Geneva, Switzerland in what was called the Meeting for the National Consensus and for Peace in Colombia (Encuentro por el Consenso Nacional y por la Paz para Colombia). One of the first tasks of this Group of Friends was to analyze, together with a group formed by various sectors of Colombia's civil society, the obstacles to create an Encounter Zone (Zona de Encuentro) to formally initiate conversations with this organization and to present confidential reports to the parties.²¹ This Group of Friends was not only backing up peace efforts with the ELN but also explaining the possibilities of negotiations with this organization.

In March 2000, both the ELN and the government further internationalized their conversations by asking the participation of a technical international commission to define the conditions under which an International Verification Mission would work to evaluate the chances of a disarmed territory for dialogues. As a result, the United

²¹ This Zone never took place because paramilitary organizations and local population firmly opposed to it. Additionally, and this is a key difference between this process and the FARC's, the ELN did not have enough military control of this area.

Nations financed a group of experts that established technical parameters under which verification work could take place. This international mission was in the country from March 24th until April 2nd and it handed in its recommendations to both the government and the ELN the third week of April.

Europe

Aside from their work in both Groups of Friends, European countries played a further role in Pastrana's effort to sign peace with the FARC. Probably the first moment in which his administration approached European countries to obtain support for his peace efforts was in October 1998, a month after his presidential term began. During this month, the ELN provoked a tragedy of enormous proportions in its attempt to blow up a central oil pipeline near the Pocuné River. As Kirk narrates it, after the explosion:

“a clump of vaporized light crude slid down and inclined and jumped the water, landing on the other side where the settlement called Machuca lay. It took six minutes to make the trip. The vapor arrived near midnight, when many residents were asleep. But someone had a flame burning. The gas ignited. In the flash produced by vapor meeting flame, seventy-three people were burned to cinders. Thirty-six were children (...). The ELN claimed the attacks were to protest the role multinationals played in extracting crude; yet they never shut down the industry entirely. It was too important a cash cow. Just as the FARC used cocaine taxes, the ELN used oil extortion to clothe and feed and arm its fighters” (Kirk 2003, p. 198).

At the moment of the disaster, President Pastrana was in Porto, Portugal, assisting to the Ibero-American Summit and there, he achieved his first diplomatic success in terms of his political internationalization strategy. The presidents of Portugal, Spain and all Latin American countries expressed in a formal declaration “the most firm and unconditional support to the peace building effort that the Colombian government has initiated as the most important task and as a development of the Colombian people's

will” (Pastrana 2006, p. 110). These governments strongly condemned the ELN’s attacks and encouraged them to be part of Pastrana’s peace efforts.

Concerning Plan Colombia, the government began its efforts to find European support in October 1999. As I have suggested, for the broad governmental internationalization strategy European support was crucial. It would allow the government to present Plan Colombia in a less militaristic and U.S. oriented manner and therefore, it would give additional legitimacy to Pastrana’s peace efforts. But finding economic resources was also a priority of this internationalization strategy. Hence, around that time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guillermo Fernández, and the authors of Plan Colombia, Jaime Ruiz and Mauricio Cárdenas, invited a group of international experts (most of them from the Inter-American Development Bank) so they could advise them on how to find resources from industrialized countries to support the Plan. In this meeting emerged, for the first time, the idea of a Table of Friends that would be willing to donate resources to support Pastrana’s peace process (El Hombre del Plan Colombia 2000). However, since the beginning of this endeavor a tension between the United States and the Europeans emerged. The latter frequently thought that Plan Colombia was a militaristic plan designed by the United States in which they would play only an accessory role. This tension was to become even more evident in the following year.

In January 2000, the negotiation table announced that it had decided to leave the country to learn about successful experiences, ideas and models in other countries. The goal, according to the government, was to “show the FARC how the world works and to internationalize the peace process” (Pastrana 2006, p. 221). The purpose of the trip, additionally, was to keep lobbying and obtain political and economic support for the

peace process from European countries. The idea was to present a more comprehensive vision of Colombia and its conflict and, to insist on the international responsibility in terms of Colombia's war against illegal drugs. The Peace High Commissioner and the rest of the governmental team, other state and civil society representatives, and seven FARC members visited seven countries in Europe.

Pastrana further deepened his internationalization strategy by asking the United Nations for help in the organization and coordination of this 'European Tour.' More broadly, the Colombian government asked Kofi Annan to designate a person from this international organization that could coordinate all international efforts to support the peace process. This was the official beginning of the U.N. participation in this phase of the Colombian conflict. Annan appointed a Norwegian expert in negotiation, Jan Egeland, as Special Adviser for International Assistance in Colombia and he remained in office until the end of 2001. Egeland played an active role in the tour preparation and also included Norway, his own country, in it. He considered that its political, economic, social and human rights situation could serve as a point of reference for both government and FARC delegates.

Other countries were selected for different reasons. Spain, for instance, was selected by the government taking into account the cultural roots that tie it to Colombia, but also for two additional reasons. First, Spain went from the Franquista dictatorship to a democratic system and then, from a socialist government (Felipe González) to a center-right administration (Jose María Aznar), all through pacific means. Second, Aznar was a close personal friend of Pastrana and both presidents shared a center-right political ideology. France was chosen for its own political, economic and social model.

Switzerland was selected for being the territorial site of the Red Cross and for its commitment to Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Finally, Italy and the Vatican state were chosen at the last minute, mainly due to the important role of the Catholic church as mediator and facilitator in different phases of the Colombian conflict (Pastrana 2006, pp. 221-224).

The government's balance of this bold attempt to internationalize the conflict toward Europe was very optimistic and reveals that the strategy attempted to obtain international legitimacy and credibility. In Pastrana's terms:

“It was a patent demonstration of the *credibility* that exists on our peace process outside of Colombia. We cannot understand in any other way that states, through their higher officials, would have *legitimated* our efforts to reach a negotiated peace. This *trust vote* for the Colombian government and its peace policy were, without a doubt, some additional effective results from our Diplomacy for Peace, a policy we enunciated since the beginning of my mandate” (Pastrana 2006, p. 226).

The effect of the political internationalization implemented was also evaluated:

“The environment left after the tour was absolutely positive (...) in less than a month we tore down the distrust walls and we reached a consensus with the guerrillas, at least in theory, on the necessity to respect Human Rights and the International Humanitarian Law, on the importance of the international community participation and, on our faith on negotiation as the ideal path for progress and welfare. Without a doubt, our efforts to ‘show them how the world works’ and to break their ‘autism’ vis-à-vis the 21st century realities that we just began, were starting to show results” (Pastrana 2006, p. 228).

From this moment on, the participation of the international community was more active than ever before in the history of the Colombian conflict. Ambassadors were constantly traveling to San Vicente del Caguan and kept contact with FARC's head commanders. In June 2000, for instance, an International Audience on Illicit Crops and Environment took place at the Zone. Delegates from 21 states attended and members of

international organizations and the European Union were also present. For the FARC this was an opportunity to advance in their goal of obtaining political recognition and the status of belligerence. For the government, it was another chance to convince the guerrilla about the relevance of certain foreign actors' involvement in the process and, an opportunity for the international community to hold the FARC accountable for their attacks to civil population and for the practice of kidnapping (Pastrana 2006, p. 238). Pastrana had a clear vision on the nature and purpose of the international community participation:

“When the ambassadors visited (...) the Détente Zone to attend specific events or to accompany negotiations, they did it due to a direct invitation by the state, by the Colombian government, and their presence cannot be interpreted as a form to legitimate the guerrillas, and even less so, as something that put them closer to achieve a status of belligerence” (Pastrana 2006, p. 245).

Clearly, for Pastrana, the government ability to convene international actors was a mechanism to obtain recognition and political legitimacy for the government itself. The participation of international actors strengthened the government's political position. This Audience was also important because in it, the parties to the conflict gave the first step toward the establishment of a group of countries that would serve as facilitators.

In July 2000, the nature of the European support to Plan Colombia and its tension with the U.S. approach—and therefore the inevitable tension between military and political internationalization implemented by the government—became even more evident. The Table of Donors that the Inter-American Bank for Development recommended took place in Madrid but it only achieved the commitment of two countries: Spain and Norway. President Aznar of Spain promised a contribution of US\$100 million in the following six months and Norway offered US\$20 million. The

United Nations offered a contribution of US\$131 million. Those numbers added up to US\$251 million, an amount very similar to the American contribution to the Plan. Additionally, Japan offered US\$70 in 'soft credits' and the Inter-American Bank for Development, the World Bank and the CAF- Andean Corporation of Promotion offered each one a credit for US\$100 million (El Malestar Europeo 2000). But the meeting divided the members of the European Union and made even more visible the fragmented nature of European policy toward the Colombian conflict. Many considered that the linkage between illegal drugs and guerrillas was Washington's idea to further its involvement in the Colombian internal conflict. Others resented the fact that Spain monopolized funding as its own when the issue at stake was related to Latin America. And to add insult to injury, France—back then the country president of the Union—was under the impression that Plan Colombia was designed in a scenario of a 'strict and exclusive' relationship between Bogotá and Washington. Paris also expressed doubts on the voluntary and 'free' nature of the American contribution when such a high percentage of it was dedicated only to military support. The socio-economic programs the EU was asked to support were perceived as the bones that were thrown at them by the Americans (El Malestar Europeo 2000).

The U.N. and the last effort of the Group of Friends

After a year of peace process and multiple suspensions of negotiations, talks between the government and the FARC were again in crisis. This time the cause of interruption was the FARC's constant complaint of lack of warranties at the Détente Zone; they requested that the government withdraw all restrictions in place. The government considered this was an unacceptable proposal and that it would not concede

any more privileges to the insurgency at the Zone. At this point, James Lemoyne, U.N. Secretary General's Special Adviser, offered its participation as facilitator to solve the crisis. As I described in previous sections, FARC's military offensives and the lack of serious commitment with the peace negotiations were eroding popular support to the process. Mass media and opposition political forces suggested the government could not compromise anymore when there was no equivalent commitment on the FARC's side.

After various suspensions and delays and with the Zone deadline approaching, the government decided to dedicate one last effort to the process and accepted Lemoyne's initiative. It is important to note though, that the government's faith in dialogues was fading and as a consequence, it did not ask the U.N. for further involvement. Pastrana simply accepted Lemoyne's proposal and gave him 48 hours, at the end of which, the Détente Zone would be dismantled and the peace process would be over (*¿Cómo Sería una Guerra Total?* 2002). However, and according to the government, the FARC were trying to 'negotiate' with Lemoyne, whose special mission was only to get the guerrillas to admit that conditions at the Zone were enough for the talks to resume. The government insisted to Lemoyne that its position was not negotiable and when it realized that these negotiations between the insurgency and the U.N. envoy were taking place, the president asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to call Lemoyne and tell him that the government would not accept any change in its original position and that it did not accept the procedure he was using. Finally, the government requested him to return to Bogotá immediately. Lemoyne remained at the government's headquarters in San Vicente del Caguán.

The incident with Lemoyne would acquire additional dimensions during Uribe's

administration but, at this point, it revealed how the government not only had the ability to internationalize the conflict, but also to de-internationalize it. International actors are invited to participate, in this case in the peace talks, to accomplish a purpose the government already has in mind. Lemoyne's task, for instance, was to send a clear message to the guerrilla about the need to keep the Zone's restrictions in place. As soon as he began negotiating the government's position on this issue, his participation was no longer welcome. As I narrate in Chapter 6, a similar episode took place with U.N. representative Vandrell during the peace process in Guatemala.

Cuban ambassador, Luis Hernández, and French Ambassador, Daniel Parfait, kept communication over the phone with the FARC though. The last night before the government's deadline the members of the Group of Facilitators requested a meeting with the president as part of their attempt to save the process. In the meeting, they asked presidential permission to travel to San Vicente del Caguán to try to save negotiations. There, and after long hours of conversation, they finally made the government and the FARC agree upon an intermediate formula that allowed the continuation of peace conversations (Pastrana 2006, pp. 458-459). It was a success story that the government did not wait to declare a result of its own political internationalization strategy and its Diplomacy for Peace policy (La Tercería 2002), but it also gave more credibility to the international community in the eyes of the FARC. As a consequence, on February 7th, the parties signed the Accord on National and International Accompanying to the Table of Dialogue and Negotiation, in which they agreed upon a permanent presence of the Group of Facilitators, the U.N. Special Adviser and the Catholic Church. They would be active participants and could offer technical advice when the parties judge it necessary.

They could also offer their 'good offices' to overcome any difficulties that might take place during negotiations (Pastrana 2006, p. 264).

Internationalization in Search of Delegitimizing the FARC: the End of the Peace Process and the Construction of Insurgency as Terrorism

However, less than a month later the FARC hijacked a domestic flight, forcing it down on a remote highway in the southern part of Colombia, all in order to kidnap a senior senator who was on board. Hours later, President Pastrana broke off the last peace talks with Colombia's largest rebel group. This new scenario of war provoked drastic changes in the government's strategy of internationalization. Clearly, the 'Diplomacy for Peace' and a political form of internationalization designed to obtain international legitimacy relinquished its space to a new and stronger form of military internationalization that would see its more salient expression during the administration of president Alvaro Uribe. The Pastrana government began the implementation of an internationalization strategy dedicated to undermine FARC's political and military position, at home and abroad. The first step in this direction was to ask Mexico to close the FARC headquarters in that country since they served no purpose in the new war scenario (La Oficina de las FARC en México no Tiene Sentido 2002). Then Pastrana proceeded to ask the same European countries he previously invited to support peace negotiations, to include the FARC in the European list of terrorist organizations:

"I consider it is not fair to a country like ours, to the poorest people, to the most forgotten people, who have been affected by terrorist attacks, that the FARC are not in this list when the whole world is calling them terrorists and narco-terrorists. The European Union is sending a bad signal to Colombia and to the world while the Colombians are dying" (Sangrienta Paradoja 2002).

Pastrana attempted to modernize FARC's political status and to accomplish this,

he also sent a letter to Spanish president José María Aznar, noting that Spain had the EU presidency that year (2002) and ask him again to include the FARC in the EU's list of terrorist organizations. Not doing it, Pastrana argued, "constitutes a very painful message, not only to my government, but to all the Colombian people that suffers every day the disastrous consequences of their actions" (Pastrana 2006, p. 482). This was part of a broader diplomatic offensive that only attempted to end any possible sympathy the FARC could still had in Europe. Pastrana repeated in every possible international scenario: "in Colombia we don't have a civil war; our war is one from a few violent against civil society" (Pastrana 2006, p. 481). Colombia's positions at multilateral organizations clearly supported this new strategy: the government led the process that resulted in a O.A.S. resolution to condemn the 9/11 attacks; as a non-permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Colombia also supported all decisions and resolutions created to strengthen the global fight against terrorism; and through the Group of Río, it supported Chile's thesis of 'shared responsibility' in the combat against terrorist groups (Pastrana 2006, p. 480).

The FARC, to put it mildly, were not helping their case. In the morning of May 2nd 2002, paramilitaries and guerrillas attacked each other at the small town of Bojayá (with its urban centre also referred to as Bellavista), in Chocó department. The AUC paramilitaries established positions around the church, using the buildings and the cement wall around the church yard for protection. The FARC took up positions to the north, and began launching gas cylinder bombs toward paramilitary positions, with two landing nearby but the third going through the roof of the church civilians were using as a shelter, and exploding on the altar. The explosion caused approximately 119 dead and 98

wounded, though the UN was not able to verify the exact numbers. A large number of the dead and wounded were children (Paz Todos Deben Responder: Onu 2002).²²

After this tragedy, on May 17th and 18th, at the II Latin America, the Caribbean and European Union Summit in Madrid, Pastrana vigorously insisted on the importance of including the FARC in the list:

“Anyone who doubts that this is terrorism would need to teach us a new definition. Because today there is not worse terrorism than the one used by illegal armed groups to massacre poor people in Colombia...Passivity not only brings despair to my country. It made us feel alone. But I hope I am wrong. We could not understand that a country like Colombia, a country that has accompany with decision the rest of its friends in their fight against terrorism, would be abandon to its fate” (Sangrienta Paradoja 2002).

On June 17th the EU Council included the AUC and other 18 organizations in their list of terrorist groups (Vargas 2002). At the end of the administration, the ELN decided to suspend negotiations and wait until the next presidential administration. In April 2004, during the presidency of Alvaro Uribe, the ELN was included in the EU list. It was the beginning of a new phase for both guerrillas and the government.

Political Internationalization III: the Process with Paramilitary Groups

Colombian paramilitary groups were originally organized during the Cold War and created as either a preemptive or reactive consequence to the actions of guerrillas and militant political activists of Marxist-Leninist ideology. They became one of the conflicting parties most responsible for continuing human rights violations in Colombia

²² It is crucial to point out that the UNHCHR also found that the Colombian government failed to act in order to prevent the massive human suffering resulting from the events in Bojayá - suffering that was predicted and of which the government was explicitly warned beforehand. At least 250 paramilitary combatants moved into Bellavista on 21 April, and remained in the populated area despite protests by local residents. The UNHCHR sent an official communication to the Colombian government on April 23 expressing their concern regarding the presence of the paramilitaries and the possible consequences for the local people. The Public Ombudsman (Defensoría del Pueblo) also visited the region on April 26 and released an early warning regarding the possible consequences of an armed confrontation in the area.

during the later half of the Colombian conflict. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other human rights organizations, paramilitary groups and the Self-Defense Units of Colombia (AUC) in particular, can be considered responsible for 70 to 75% of identifiable political murders in Colombia. Paramilitarism also became associated with several of the major drug-lords that operate the illegal drug trade of cocaine and other illegal substances.

During Pastrana's administration, paramilitary groups constantly opposed peace negotiations with guerrilla organizations and the major concessions the government was conceding to these groups in order to facilitate the peace process. Even though there was no major negotiation process with the AUC, the government approached paramilitaries in various occasions, in order to prevent them from using extreme violence against civilian population or in order to prevent them from hindering the peace process with the guerrillas.

The government initially attempted to politically internationalize this process by contacting the ex-president of Spain, Felipe González. This was a curious approach since Felipe González, the leader of the Socialist Party in Spain, was the main political opponent of José María Aznar, a close friend and political ally of President Pastrana. Pastrana was aware of it but considered that González was an important political figure and that additionally, he had strong socialist credentials that would help the government approaching insurgent movements who "pretended to defend leftist ideologies" (Pastrana 2006, p. 355). However, the task Pastrana gave to González had nothing to do with his socialist credentials. On the contrary, they could have worked against the main objective: Pastrana asked Felipe González to approach some representatives of the AUC. He

wanted González to talk the AUC into terminating massacres as a first step to begin negotiations and an eventual demobilization. He agreed and a meeting took place in México but there were no clear results. Pastrana's internationalization strategy here could have been to use González international credentials as a leverage to convince the paramilitaries of humanizing their military strategy. However, his long known political and ideological orientation might have hindered this same objective.

These conversations, however, did not show any progress and consequently, presidents Aznar and Pastrana decided to invite Abel Matutes, Spanish ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, to continue efforts to demobilize the AUC. However, in March 2001, the participation of Spain in these attempts officially ended. Josep Piqué, Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, traveled to Cartagena where he met the Colombian President and his Minister of Foreign Affairs to announce that Spain would not continue to take part in the contacts with paramilitaries. Spain was already part of the Group of Facilitators in both processes with the ELN and the FARC and considered that even informal talks with the AUC could undermine its credibility and its role in the process with the insurgency (Pastrana 2006, p. 362). Clearly, the very controversial status of the paramilitaries due to their constant and massive violations to human rights and the virtual lack of a political agenda, made internationalization strategy in this realm more difficult to implement.

The implementation of a two-fold internationalization strategy, simultaneously military and political, revealed its inevitable tension during the Pastrana administration. On one side, the government attempted to obtain military support from the United States

in order to strengthen its Armed Forces and prepare then for an eventual failure of peace negotiations. On the other, Pastrana also attempted to accumulate political support in the form of international legitimacy, not only for the process itself but also to consolidate the governmental position. However, finding internal support for both war and peace at the same time proved challenging and ultimately provoked contradictions that seriously undermined the peace process. But beyond this, Pastrana's internationalization strategy exposed the true colors of the Colombian conflict to the world, for good and for bad.

Uribe and the ‘Internationalization of War’—2002-currently

The full and explicit institutionalization of the U.S. participation in Colombia’s war was achieved during this administration. By February 2002 another round of peace talks had ended and presidential elections were rapidly approaching. After numerous failed attempts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, Colombians decided to elect (on the first round in a two rounds system and with 53% of popular vote²³) the candidate who offered a ‘strong hand’ approach for dealing with guerrilla groups. Álvaro Uribe, a member of the Liberal Party who ran for office on an independent platform, personified the frustration most Colombians felt with what appeared to be, the insurgency’s lack of commitment with peace. Hence, his political campaign insisted on the inadequacy of a political resolution to the conflict. Uribe’s argument was simple and clear: these groups did not have a political agenda; they were threatening democratic institutions and did not have popular support. On the contrary, they were constantly attacking civilians in their war against a legitimate state. Consequently, a military response was the only possible way to end the war and to end what was now denominated a terrorist threat.

Continuing Military Internationalization Toward the U.S.

To confirm Colombia’s attempt to join the U.S. in its global war against terrorism, elected president Uribe had his first meeting with Otto Reich, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, in which he obtained U.S. approval for an eventual peace process with paramilitary groups. Reich did not commit to participate in the process but he accepted international mediation and promised strong

²³ It is also interesting to note that since his election in 2002, Uribe has maintained some of the highest approval ratings of any Latin American president, usually around 70%-80%. During early 2008, Álvaro Uribe’s approval rating hit an impressive 81%, one of the highest popularity levels of his entire presidency. In June 2008, after Operation Jaque, Uribe's approval rate rose to an unprecedented 91.47%.

support from the U.S. (Diálogo Con Paras , En Agenda De Uribe Y Reich 2002).

Uribe also travelled to Washington two months before taking office and among different meetings, he met with Condoleezza Rice, when she was National Security Advisor, in order to ask the U.S. government for more resources that could be dedicated to combat guerrillas, self-defense and drug cartel groups (Uribe Pedirá Más Ayuda A E.U. 2002). Uribe requested the renewal of an aerial drug interdiction program—interrupted a year before (Gómez Maseri Colombia, Prioridad Para E.U. 2002). Since the beginning of his administration, Uribe's intention to further military internationalize the conflict was clear.

Other signs of mutual understanding between Washington and Bogotá, a shared world view that conceived the Colombian conflict as a chapter of the U.S. new war on terror, emerged soon. On June 2002, the first Colombian insurgent was extradited and brought to American justice. Eugenio Vargas, alias Carlos Bolas—Charles Balls, was prosecuted not only under drug trafficking charges but also as the intellectual author of the murder of three American citizens in 1999. This clearly reflected the U.S. perception of drug trafficking and terrorism as a single enterprise (Paz E.U. Pasa De Las Palabras, A Los Hechos 2002). At the end of 2002, the Secretary of Justice, John Ashcroft, formally accused other FARC commanders (Mono Jojoy and Romaña) of different crimes, among them, the kidnapping (1999) and murder (1999) of three American New Tribes Missionaries—Dave Mankins, Rick Tenenoff, and Mark Rich. Ashcroft also accused them of illegal drug and weapons trafficking (Una Operación de Película 2002).

However, not everything between Washington and Bogotá was agreement and understanding; obstacles to Uribe's internationalization strategy started to emerge soon. By August 2002, at the very beginning of Alvaro Uribe's presidency, the U.S. officially

asked Colombia to sign up an agreement to exempt American citizens in Colombia from the International Criminal Court jurisdiction. Marc Grossman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, traveled to Bogotá and met with president Uribe to advocate official exemption of American citizens by the Colombian government (E.U. Solicitó Inmunidad 2002) (Gómez Maseri E.U. Pide Que Se Firme Rápido Inmunidad Para Sus Soldados 2002). That same week, president Bush decided that he would not authorize sending US\$10 million to help internal refugees in Colombia since that did not constitute an emergency or a national security issue (Gómez Maseri E.U. Pide Que Se Firme Rápido Inmunidad Para Sus Soldados 2002). Washington's pressure to convince Bogota to give ICC immunity to American citizens was about to become even stronger and, at the end, it was successful in twisting Uribe's arm.

But in spite of the pressure, the Colombian government kept working on its relationship with the U.S. on other fronts. In order to consolidate the alliance between these two countries, at the beginning of September 2002, Colombia resumed fumigations of illegal crops, this time with no territorial restrictions and following Washington's instructions (Efe-Afp-Ap 2002). Additionally and also in September, president Uribe began his first official visit to Washington. Bogotá was interested in sending two clear messages to the U.S. government: First, Colombia will not sign any additional exemptions to the ICC treaty. Uribe argued that the U.S. and Colombia already had a 1962 treaty that gave exemption to American civilian and military officers in Colombia so an additional one would not be necessary. Second, Uribe wanted to maintain and expand Plan Colombia: he attempted to further implement a military internationalization strategy by requesting more intelligence and economic support in order to fight illegal

drugs and subversive groups. However, conversations between Uribe and Bush ended on a sour-sweet note: just right after the private meeting and without giving a warning to Uribe, Bush went to the press conference and announced that the U.S. government would officially request the extradition of Carlos Castaño, AUC's head commander and a key actor in future negotiations with paramilitaries (Castaño Será Juzgado Por Terrorismo : Bush 2002). Bush also announced he would insist on a new bilateral agreement on the ICC issue since he considered the 1962 exemption was not enough and, Colombia should give total immunity to all American citizens, not only to governmental officers (Gómez Maseri Insisten En Acuerdo Sobre Cpi 2002).

Since the beginning of the Uribe administration then, the relationship with the U.S. was mixed. While the disagreement over ICC jurisdiction demonstrated that the Colombian government was not completely identified with the U.S. war against global terrorism, on some other issues identification was complete and evidence of a shared world view was strong. No less than a week after president Uribe's official trip to Washington, it was announced that the U.S. would send the first members of its Special Forces to train Colombian soldiers in counterinsurgency. They would train members of the XVIII Brigade, situated in Arauca, to defend the Caño-Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline from insurgent attacks (Gómez Maseri Fuerza Élite De E.U. Llega A Arauca Este Mes 2002) (En Diciembre Llegan A Colombia 30 Marines 2002). But only two weeks later, the second week of October, another obstacle to the military internationalization of the conflict emerged: the U.S. Congress decided that Colombia was not be able to use the resources for the combat against insurgency and paramilitaries because president Uribe had not complied with the conditions Congress stipulated when they finally eliminated

restrictions over counternarcotics resources. Congress asked for a written commitment from president Uribe in which he clearly promised to modernized Armed Forces, restore governability and respect human rights. Uribe did hand in a commitment letter but according to senator Patrick Leahy, it was vague and full of generalities. Since there was no clear statement of how and when the government would fulfill its own goals, Congress decided to freeze the elimination of restrictions until conditions were met by the Colombian government (Gómez Maseri Freno A Ayuda Antigüerrilla 2002). Again, the political division between the U.S. Congress and the Executive was hindering the delivery of political and military aid to Colombia.

At the end of 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell traveled to Bogotá and the Uribe administration attempted to further internationalize by asking for additional U.S. military support, mainly through intelligence sharing and additional resources for a reward program designed to put drug traffickers and terrorists behind bars (Gobierno, A Concretar Ayuda En Inteligencia Con Powell 2002). On February 4th 2003, President Bush responded by asking Congress to approve US\$463 million for the fight against narco-terrorism for fiscal year 2004 (Afp 2003). This budget contemplated US\$110 million to support the Armed Forces in their anti-terrorist operations and to protect critical infrastructure and, US\$1,6 million for the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program (Gómez Maseri Bush Confirma Ayuda Militar 2003).

In February 2003, the Colombian government used the assassination of an American citizen and the kidnapping of three more as an excuse for asking further escalation of the U.S. presence in Colombia: 49 soldiers, FBI and forensic specialist personnel arrived to support the search of these American citizens: “with these special

forces, plus 100 soldiers that arrived as part of the Plan Colombia package, the number of American military personnel ascended to 411” (Gringos al Rescate 2003; Washington, Tenemos un Problema 2003). All three contractors were liberated by the Armed Forces polemical Jaque Operation on July 2nd 2008, together with other 15 hostages, including ex-congresswoman Ingrid Betancourt.

Affirming Shared World Views: Uribe support to the U.S. War in Iraq

In March 2003 the United States invaded Iraq and almost immediately, the Colombian government made public its support for this new manifestation of the war on terror. President Uribe kept using the frame it inherited from the Pastrana administration and stated that “Colombia has asked the world for support to defeat terrorism and we cannot deny our support for the war on terror wherever it takes place. In order to ask for solidarity we need to give solidarity” (Para Pedir Solidaridad Debemos Ser Solidarios 2003). Again, the Colombian government conflated its own war against insurgent groups with the broader war against global terrorism, as part of its framing strategy to keep the United States on board and obtain military and logistic support. This support clearly resonated in the U.S. where Uribe’s leadership undertook unsuspected dimensions. Tom Shannon, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, declared that “for the United States, the Colombian president Alvaro Uribe Vélez represents in Latin America, what prime ministers Tony Blair and José María Aznar in Europe: an ally who understands the terrorist threat because he has experienced it in his own skin... Uribe, in his own country, knows what this means and he acts with courage. But aside from that, he understands that the problem does not stop within his own territorial borders. It goes beyond that. That is why we are so grateful” (Gómez Maseri Uribe, El Blair De América

Latina 2003). The reward for this kind of loyalty arrived soon. Less than a week later, when president Bush asked the Congress for a budget addition to finance the war, he asked for US\$100 million for Colombia. This new aid packet was additional to the US\$500 million already authorized for 2003 and it would be destined to the war against terror.

At the end of April, president Uribe traveled again to further internationalize the conflict by asking George Tenet, C.I.A. Director and Vice-President Dick Cheney for Predator Spy planes that would help decrease kidnappings and locate FARC head commanders. Clearly, the objective was to strengthen and modernize Colombian Armed Forces to improve the military position of the state in its war against subversion. Uribe justified his request and strengthened his case by affirming that “we are decided to rescue them (the three American citizens kidnapped by the FARC). We have made the political decision. But in order to actually do it we need technical aid and sophisticated equipment” (Gómez Maseri Uribe Pide Ayuda En Inteligencia 2003). A couple of months later, however, the U.S. made clear that no more support would reach Colombia unless the government signed an ICC immunity agreement with the United States. The U.S. government gave less than a week to the Uribe administration to make a decision on this issue (Gómez Maseri Peligra Ayuda Militar por Cpi 2003). President Bush left Colombia out of the list of 22 countries that would be temporarily ‘forgiven’ for not signing an immunity treaty and he informed, through the Department of State’s Spokesman, Richard Boucher, that at least US\$5 million in aid to Colombia would be suspended until Uribe would change his mind (Gómez Maseri Cpi Enfrenta A Uribe Y Bush 2003). Uribe quickly reacted by publicly saying that aid could not be subjected to

petty conditions. He stated that incorrect pressures cannot happen between friends and that Colombia was willing to listen and resolve discrepancies always within its own legal arrangement (Diálogo, Sin Presiones: Uribe 2003).

Two weeks after this confrontation, Colombian Ambassador in the U.S., Luis Alberto Moreno, announced that the government was already working on a second phase of Plan Colombia. It would take four months to have it ready and then the government would present it to the U.S. Executive and Congress to obtain support (Plan Colombia II Atacará Terrorismo Y Secuestros 2003; Gómez Maseri Gobierno Anuncia Fase Dos Del Plan Colombia 2003). It was clear that at one point or another, these two issues—Plan Colombia and the military internationalization of the conflict, and ICC immunity—would clash and the Colombian government would need to concede on one or the other.

In the meantime, in August 2003 Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, and General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited Colombia and provided an additional opportunity for the Colombian government to further military internationalize its struggle against insurgencies. Their message was clear and substantially different from Washington's usual stance on the war on drugs: if there is aid for Colombia in its war against drug trafficking, it is only because that is the oxygen of terrorism. Rumsfeld insisted that drug trafficking was not a danger in and of itself, on the contrary, it was a danger because "it feeds terrorism and terrorist networks and this is something that people who think alike, should work together to confront" (¿Giro Radical? 2003). Taking advantage of this scenario and recognizing that thanks to Colombia's framing strategy Washington and Bogota's main interests were practically the same, Colombian Minister of Defense, Martha Lucía Ramírez, asked Rumsfeld for

real time satellite intelligence transmission,²⁴ training for jungle brigades, and high tech assistance such as cameras, surveillance circuits with weapons incorporated, specially to monitor oil and energy infrastructure (Gómez Maseri La Visita Crucial De Rumsfeld 2003).

By September 2003 it was clear what the Colombian government's priority was. During this month negotiations over the ICC immunity to American citizens reached their end with a less than flattering result for Colombia. The word 'immunity' disappeared from the language of the agreement between both countries, but it was stated that Colombian authorities will not send any American citizens to the ICC without previous approval by the U.S. government. The difference between this arrangement and conceding complete immunity was almost impossible to see and that is why it provoked strong reactions from key sectors of Colombia's public opinion. Two weeks later president Bush authorized the delivery of those US\$5 million he had withheld to pressure the Colombian government (Gómez Maseri Estados Unidos Exonera A Colombia De Sanciones 2003). As I stated in Chapter 1, aid and support rarely come without costs and this time around, the prize of Uribe's internationalization strategy was the loss of Colombia's and the ICC's jurisdiction over American citizens resident in Colombia.

Extending Plan Colombia and the Creation of Plan Patriota

In March 2004, Uribe traveled to Washington again and this time his main objective was to have a four year extension of Plan Colombia (Uribe Pide Más Plan Colombia 2004). Around that same time, president Bush obtained congressional

²⁴ Colombia receives American intelligence support on the location of insurgency and paramilitary groups. However, the Pentagon receives the information first and it takes too long, according to the Colombian government, for the Armed Forces to receive it in Colombia.

approval to increase the number of U.S. military personnel and contractors in Colombia from 400 to 800 military personnel and, from 400 to 600 military contractors (Gómez Maseri Ambiente En Congreso De E.U. Para Envío De Más Soldados A Colombia 2004). Later in May, the House of Representatives authorized an increase of only 100 army personnel for a 500 total (Gómez Maseri Más Tropas De E.U. En Colombia 2004) and in the final conciliation between House and Senate, a cap of 800 military personnel and 600 contractors was agreed upon, as the Executive initially suggested (Gómez Maseri Congreso De Estados Unidos Aprobó Duplicar Sus Tropas En Colombia 2004).

Also in March 2004, in Colombia there was already some public talk about Plan Patriota—Patriot Plan, a military plan developed by the Government of Colombia with the financial support and approval of the United States government, dedicated to uprooting guerrilla groups. The plan is currently part of the government's Democratic Security doctrine and is intended to promote military presence to the most remote areas of Colombia, where the guerrillas had their main enclaves. El Tiempo, the most important newspaper in Colombia, revealed that for a year or so there were at least a dozen meetings between Colombian and American high ranked officers, among them General James T. Hill, head commander of the U.S. Southern, to discuss the tactic, political and budgetary dimensions of this Plan. The main objective was to take the war to the enemy and to deploy an armed force of about 14000 or 15000 men to jungles and to southern towns (Sierra et al 2004).

In the field, the U.S. involvement in counter-insurgency operations through Plan Patriot became public. In May 2004 U.S. ambassador in Colombia, William Wood,

declared that there was American equipment and military training involved in the capture of alias Sonia, one of the FARC head commanders. He confirmed that the U.S. gave military advice to Colombian generals in the planning, logistics and tactics of this important operation: “We lent Plan Patriota more than 100 hours of helicopters’ air time... we transported more than 1.000 soldiers and 58.000 pounds of equipment ... but the pilots were Colombian. We did not participate in combat” (Los Paras Perdieron su Disfraz 2004). He later insisted on the content of his country’s position vis-à-vis the FARC: “They are not political actors anymore; they are kidnappers, murderers, and drug traffickers” (Las AUC no son un Actor Político 2004). To confirm this trend, in November 2004, president Bush visited Colombia to announce that his government would support a round-two of Plan Colombia (Hernandez 2004). The governmental military internationalization strategy was a success and it kept Washington on board in the war against insurgency.

The Effects of Military Internationalization toward the U.S. on the Peace

Process with the Paramilitaries

But Uribe’s internationalization strategy had, since the beginning, a boomerang effect that seriously affected its peace process with the paramilitary organization AUC (United Self-Defense of Colombia). Paramilitary groups emerged in Colombia in 1981 as an additional and illegal option to combat rebel groups.²⁵ Their links with the military, the private sector, multinational companies and Colombia’s political class have been demonstrated in many occasions. Their violations of human rights have also been

²⁵ For a vivid account of these groups impact on Colombian recent history see Dudley S. 2004. *Walking Ghosts. Murder and Guerrilla Politics in Colombia*. New York and London: Routledge

documented numerous times by local and international NGOs. President Uribe initiated a peace process with one of the paramilitary groups, the AUC, but his position in this dialogue has been harshly criticized for being too soft. Some sectors of Colombian public opinion and media have insisted that the president has been too lenient, to the point that has allowed most of paramilitaries' very serious crimes to remain unpunished.

The U.S. government ask for the extradition of some of the main AUC leaders and, when the peace process with this organization was at a critical stage, U.S. Attorney David Kelly from New York's Southern District, asked the Colombian government to extradite alias Don Berna, one of the head commanders of the AUC, on the count of trafficking several tons of cocaine to the United States (La Hora de la Diplomacia 2005). U.S. concern with its war against illegal drugs was compatible and complemented by the government's war against insurgency but it was trumping and seriously undermining its support to the Colombian government in its attempt to sign peace agreements and demobilize paramilitary groups. Recently, in 2008, when detained paramilitary leaders denounced the participation of key governmental allies in their illicit activities and threatened to directly denounce Uribe himself, they were extradited to the United States where they still wait to be judged for their participation in illegal drug trafficking.²⁶ That ended the shadow of conflict between Washington and Bogotá.

Additionally, U.S. senators Edward Kennedy, Christopher Dodd, Barack Obama, Russel Feingold, Joseph Biden and Patrick Leahy sent a strong letter to president Uribe

²⁶ The government argued that they were extradited because they did not stop their illegal activities in jail but Uribe promised he will make sure they will be judged also for their crimes against humanity and their multiple violations to human rights. However, ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo visited Colombia in August 2008 precisely to investigate the paramilitary's extradition process and the lack of prosecution of human rights related crimes.

expressing their concern about the negotiation process with the AUC. This trend was accompanied by Human Rights Watch's constant criticism of the government soft treatment of paramilitaries. The strength of these criticisms forced the government to send a high profile mission to the U.S. that attempted to explain the nature of negotiations. In July 2005 a high profile Colombian group traveled to Washington to convince the U.S. Executive and Congress about the benefits of the Justice and Peace Law (Ley de Justicia y Paz), a law that served as a framework for negotiations with and demobilization of paramilitary groups (Gómez Maseri Misión Para Vender La Ley En E.U. 2005). But the high level commission found a rare and almost hostile environment, and most of all, strong skepticism of the peace process with paramilitary head commanders (De la Mano de Bush 2005). In August, president Uribe traveled to president Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas also to convince him about the appropriateness and legitimacy of the Justice and Peace Law and to ask for about US\$40 million of annual assistance to support the peace process with paramilitary groups (Gómez Maseri Con Buenas Nuevas, Bush Recibe Mañana A Uribe En Su Rancho 2005). Uribe was aware that material and political support from Washington was necessary to advance dialogues with paramilitaries and its internationalization strategy rapidly incorporated this dimension of the conflict.

But this trip and the constant lobbying were not enough though. In 2006 the U.S. Congress lowered the amount of money allotted to demobilization of paramilitaries to 20 million dollars (from the 80 million the Bush administration initially suggested) and conditioned this part of the aid package to a State Department's certification on Colombia's cooperation with the extradition of leaders and members of terrorist

organizations required by the U.S. justice. It was clear that the U.S. Congress did not share the strategy Uribe was implementing in the peace process with the paramilitary groups and it was concerned about the implications of these negotiations on the war against illegal drugs. However, the aid package was still substantial: of 734 million dollars given to Andean countries, Colombia received almost 600 and even though there was no clear satisfaction with the way the Colombian government was dealing with paramilitaries, the U.S. Congress softened its conditions in terms of human rights (Gómez Maseri E.U. Aprueba Us\$ 20 Millones A Proceso Con Auc Bajo Condiciones Más 'Suaves' 2005).

This was, probably, the beginning of a trend in terms of the nature and volume of U.S. aid toward Colombia and the changes it still experiences. The eventual transformation of the relationship between the U.S. Congress and the president, and the arrival of the Democratic Party to the White House, might be crucial factors affecting the amount and nature of U.S. support to Colombia. Again, as in the case of El Salvador and Guatemala, the internationalization strategy implemented by the government was hindered by increasing fragmentation within the U.S. government and especially between Congress and the Executive.

The Second Term: Finding U.S. Support for Plan Colombia II

At the end of May 2006, President Uribe was reelected, again with a majority of the votes and with no second round. Some have attributed his re-election and his approval ratings to major improvements in security, continuous social programs and sustained economic growth. Soon after, it was clear that his main objectives in terms of the relationship with the United States were two: a free-trade treaty (TLC-Tratado de Libre

Comercio) and a renewal of U.S. aid through the approval of Plan Colombia's second phase. However, this time opposition in the U.S. was substantially stronger due to the Democratic majority in Congress and again, fragmentation constituted a problem for Uribe's internationalization strategy. Even John Craddock, in charge of the United States Southern Command, insisted that "there should be a reduction (of aid) with the passage of time. It makes sense. Colombians are winning... I am not worried if we lose some funding because the Colombian state has improved its security standards" (General De E.U. Apoya Posible Reducción De Ayuda A Colombia 2006). In October 2006 a high ranked commission led by Nicholas Burns, United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, visited Colombia and president Uribe asked them not to reduce the usual aid package that included US\$700 million, since it was necessary to continue and win the war against drugs and insurgency (Peña 2006) (Se Necesitan \$ 8,5 Billones Para Guerra 2006). At the end of his trip, Burns publicly announced that both governments kept working on Plan Colombia's new version (Empieza A Gestarse El Plan Colombia II 2006). To consolidate this strategy, president Uribe traveled to Washington in November, right after elections in the U.S., to obtain support for both the FTA and the Plan Colombia. Unfortunately, U.S. policy toward Colombia was not bipartisan anymore since U.S. elections had increased the Democratic majority in Congress and Democrats grew increasingly skeptical of Plan Colombia and its military emphasis during the Bush administration. Even though Colombia still receives aid from the U.S. through Plan Colombia, the FTA does not face a promising future.

In January 2007 a U.S. commission went back to Colombia to continue negotiations over Plan Colombia II. This time the commission was led by Thomas

Shannon, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, who met with Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Consuelo Araujo, to work on the Plan design. The new plan emphasized illegal drug interdiction, strengthening of institutions and intensification of democracy, new commitments on human rights issues and specific projects related to the social reinsertion of ex-paramilitares (US\$ 3.400 Millones: Rubro Militar Del Nuevo Plan 2007). Plan Colombia II was publicly presented in Washington and it contemplated a US\$3600 million aid package from the United States, US\$1600 million less than its previous version 2000-2006 (Plan Colombia II 2007). As a result, in February, president Bush asked the U.S. Congress to authorize US\$705 million, more or less the same amount of aid that Colombia had received from the U.S. during the last 5 years (Gómez Maseri 2007). In April, and already as a part of an annual routine, President Uribe travelled to Washington to obtain U.S. congressional approval to the budget proposed by the Executive and continue its alliance with the U.S. Uribe did not find a clear cut answer from Nancy Pelosi and the rest of the Democrat senators he talked to so he changed his strategy. In order to further improve the chances of his military internationalization strategy toward the U.S. and the congressional approval of the aid package, in May, Uribe appointed a new Minister of Culture and a new Vice-Minister of Social Security, both members of the African-Colombian community. The objective, according to Colombian media, was to win over the African-American Democrat caucus at the U.S. Congress (42 members) who could eventually help advance the Colombian agenda (Peña 2007).

In an even additional effort to obtain funding for a second round of Plan Colombia and approval from the U.S. Congress for an FTA between Colombia and the United

States, the Colombian government also hired various lobby firms in Washington, the two most important ones were Johnson, Madigan, Peck, Boland and Stewart—composed mainly by republican ex-members of Ronald Reagan’s administration, and Glover Park—mainly composed by ex-officers from Bill Clinton’s administration and hence, very close to the Democrats in Congress. The government spent each month about US\$70 thousand and according to the Colombian embassy, these firms would facilitate contacts with at least 1500 influential people in Washington (Las Firmas De ‘Lobby’ Que Le Cuadraron Las Citas A Uribe 2007). Later it was made public that the government also hired Burson-Marsteller with a team composed by professionals close to the Clintons, among them its CEO, Mark Penn (Estas Son Las Firmas De ‘Lobby’ Que Asesoran A Uribe En E.U. 2007).²⁷

Political De-Internationalization: The United Nations

In his first public speech after winning the 2002 presidential elections, Alvaro Uribe announced he would seek international mediation in order to begin a new round of conversations with illegal armed groups. In fact, during his entire campaign Uribe made explicit his intention to find international mediation, and specifically, he mentioned in May 2002 that he would invite the United Nations and a Group of Friends, under a

²⁷ By 2007, the dual role of Mark Penn as the CEO of Burson-Marsteller and chief strategist for Hillary Clinton started to displease some labor leaders in the U.S. On April 4th, 2008, complaints became louder when it was publicized that Penn was working with officials of President Álvaro Uribe for the purposes of lobbying for a free trade agreement that Hillary Clinton opposed. Penn was criticized for meeting with Colombia’s ambassador to the United States on the subject of advancing a potential bilateral trade agreement between the two countries but he suggested that he had conducted the meeting as part of his role as CEO of Burson-Marsteller. However, the ambassador was unclear in what capacity Penn was conducting the meeting and Penn’s advocacy for the trade agreement seemed to undercut his client Hillary Clinton’s “well known” opposition to the deal Broder JM. 2008. Clinton Strategist Lobbied for Trade Pact She Opposes *The New York Times* . On April 5 2008, the Colombian government terminated its business with Penn and his Burson-Marsteller firm Broder JM. 2008. Colombia to Penn: You’re Fired. *The New York Times* .

concise mandate to help resume dialogues with guerrillas. But first, the guerrillas would have to abandon terrorist tactics and they would have to facilitate the end of hostilities. In exchange, “the government would give security warranties to these groups so their members would not be killed” (A Mi No Me Asusta Nadie 2002). It was clear by then that this proposal sounded more like a plea for military surrender than a call for peace dialogues. Uribe traveled to New York before taking office and met with U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, to discuss this proposal but the results of this meeting were not made public (Mercado & Sierra 2002; Sandoval Gómez 2002).

By August, Vice-President Francisco Santos announced that the U.N. would participate in order to achieve a humanitarian agreement to liberate FARC hostages in exchange from freeing imprisoned guerrilla members. The U.N., according to Santos, would play a ‘good offices’ mission with prudence and away from the mass media (Acuerdo Humanitario, En Manos De La Onu 2002). On August 8th 2002, President Uribe announced that the U.N. had accepted its requirement for a ‘good offices’ task in Colombia once the guerrilla initiated a cease fire (Paz Onu Acepta Gestión De Buenos Oficios 2002). During the following days, the government dedicated an important amount of time clarifying what the role of the U.N. in the domestic conflict would eventually be and setting the limits of its own invitation to the U.N. To begin with, the High Commissioner for Peace, Luis Carlos Restrepo, stated that the U.N. would not participate in particular negotiations to liberate FARC hostages. On the contrary, he emphasized, a ‘good offices’ mission would only support the process of constructing agreements between the parties, agreements that would terminate kidnappings and other abuses committed by the FARC (Reloj de Arena 2002; Paz La Onu No Tramita

Secuestros 2002).

The media also informed the public that Uribe's campaign promise to bring the U.N. Blue Helmets force to Colombia was not possible anymore. Another of Uribe's proposals was also rejected by the U.N.: the organization would not delegate or appoint Colombian public armed forces as Blue Helmets in their own country. Volker Petzoldt, U.N. spokesman in Colombia, announced that the U.N. would only design and present a humanitarian plan to the Colombian government in which it would attempt to alleviate the internal refugee problem and the suffering of civilians (Paz Onu Descarta Cascos Azules A La Colombiana 2002). Even though Uribe formulated the invitation to the U.N. under certain conditions, the international organization was also setting the legal and political limits of its own involvement in the domestic conflict.

The Beginning of the Disagreements

Soon after, in May 2003, the conflict between the government and the international organization started. The government started to feel uncomfortable with some of the U.N. Special Adviser's declarations and it first expressed it through Minister of Defense, Marta Lucía Ramírez. She reacted strongly to one of James Lemoyne's public assessments in which he stated that the FARC had about a thousand or thousand and a half men and women with a deep political formation and experience of 15 or 30 years of combat. She affirmed that the country did not need diplomats who justify FARC's atrocious human rights violations such as kidnapping and murder, and that a 'good offices' mission required an attempt to understand which actors are involved in the conflict and how they should be treated in order to reach a negotiated solution: "that does not imply taking sides. It means doing whatever is necessary to understand the situation."

Lemoine replied that it was not his intention to justify any type of violence and that the U.N. had never defended terrorism (Mindefensa Reprueba A Asesor Especial De La Onu 2003).

A month later, president Uribe in a speech before the Interamerican Court of Human Rights said that the U.N. was afraid to criticize violent groups in Colombia and that the organization was very outspoken but it actually helped too little to resolve issues (División Por Críticas De Uribe A La Onu 2003). This was the official beginning of the Uribe's administration attempt to politically de-internationalize the Colombian conflict. As it happened in El Salvador and Guatemala during the peace process, the government distrusted the U.N. and it did not perceive it as an impartial actor in the conflict. Moreover, judging by Uribe's declarations, the government perceived the organization was undermining its own legitimacy by allegedly supporting or justifying FARC's actions.

Another key issue related to the definition of the Colombian conflict emerged during that year. The U.N. Human Rights High Commission office in Colombia revealed in June 2003 a document entitled 'On the importance of the humanitarian principle that distinguishes an internal armed conflict.' In it, the Office asserted that there was an internal armed conflict in Colombia and not just organizations using terrorist tactics. Moreover, it concluded that this distinction was crucial to distinguish combatants from non-combatants, to protect the civilian population and to hold illegal armed groups and state armed forces accountable in terms of International Humanitarian Law. This document was a clear response to president Uribe, who weeks before, had declared that "we do not call this violence a conflict. We do not grant the actors the title of

combatants. They are terrorists” (Guerrilla Sí Es Combatiente 2003).

To make matters worse, in August, this same office insisted that the bill introduced by the government to facilitate the demobilization of armed groups and their incorporation into civilian life might eventually open the door to impunity. This law was designed to serve as framework in the peace process with paramilitary groups but, according to the U.N. office, it rescinded the execution of the sentence and allowed those who committed crimes against humanity not to spend a single day in jail. In sum, the law standards were too soft and it infringed serious damages to the democratic principles of fair retribution and proportionality of criminal sanctions (Alerta Roja De La Onu A Uribe Vélez 2003). On top of all these disagreements, the U.N. office also made public its dissatisfaction with the Anti-Terrorist Act the government submitted to Congress and denounced that the content of such act clearly contradicted international law (Política 2003). These U.N. positions only widened the gap between the government and the international organization and motivated Uribe to take further steps in order to reduce the role of the institution in the conflict to its minimum expression.

But, as I show in the following section, in the realm of the O.A.S. participation things were pointing in almost the opposite direction. By January 2004, it was official that the Inter-American organization would serve as observer and would verify agreements between the government and the paramilitary groups during peace talks. But information related to various O.A.S. country members that did not agree with the organization’s participation in that process was filtered to the press. According to the government, it was James Lemoyne who was informally filtering this information. Uribe immediately contacted the U.N. headquarters in New York to express his discomfort with

Lemoyne's attitude and to ask three specific questions: why Mr. Lemoyne, if he wanted to make public his opinion, decided to express it anonymously through the Colombian media? what is the official U.N. position on this matter—the O.A.S. participation in peace dialogues with paramilitaries? is Lemoyne's position shared by the U.N. General Secretary? (Justicia 2004).

Exactly one year later and after all these incidents, the government decided to construct the case and send a high profile governmental commission to New York to officially express the government's discomfort with the terms of U.N. cooperation with Colombia. Their arguments were the following: First, in Colombia there was no conflict but a legitimate democracy threatened by terrorist groups funded by the illegal drug business. Second, since there is no conflict, the government was not seeking a political negotiation to end it; it expected these groups to unilaterally cease their attacks on society and to contemplate their incorporation into civilian life. Hence, the government did not believe in peace negotiations, it believed in demobilization. Third, there was no humanitarian crisis and international organizations had exaggerated Colombia's situation in order to justify their bureaucratic spending. Therefore, they did not recognize the enormous improvement in terms of protection and relief to victims that had taken place. Fourth, international cooperation could not be conditioned to respect for human rights. On the contrary, it is the support to the strengthening of state institutions allows respect to human rights. Fifth, the principles that must orient demobilization of armed groups are Credibility (in terms of real facts in favor of peace), Equilibrium (no impunity or just trials) and Universality (applicable to paramilitaries and guerrillas equally), instead of Justice, Truth and Reparations, principles that NGOs and the international community

advocate (La Batalla Diplomática 2005). At this point it was clear that the administration was not interested in peace dialogues and was willing to use its high approval ratings internally, and its strong military alliance with the U.S., to finally block national and international actors who could eventually oppose a purely military option to solve, once and for all, the Colombian conflict. The state military advantage over the insurgency and the partial success of the military internationalization strategy advanced by the government facilitated a critical attitude toward the United Nations, and the eventual and partial political de-internationalization of the conflict.

The distance between the government and the international organization and specifically, between the government and James Lemoyne, grew to the extent that Colombian ambassador to the U.N., Maria Angela Holguín, declared that the government did not trust Lemoyne anymore and since November 2004 it was negotiating with the headquarters in New York the end of this special mission in Colombia. She also reported that in September 2004, during conversations between Uribe and Annan in New York, they concluded that the situation had substantially changed since the appointment of the U.N. special envoy for Colombia. She concluded that the best decision was to put the special envoy agency to sleep until contacts with the guerrilla resume and there is a moment for peace (Política 2005). It was relatively easy for the government to make the case that Lemoyne's good offices mission had failed since Uribe's own requirement to initiate dialogues with the FARC was virtually a military surrender. With no dialogues or intention to talk, there was virtually nothing Lemoyne could do and as a result, Annan announced that he would leave the country in April and the U.N. good offices mission in Colombia was over until both parties to the conflict would decide otherwise (Mercado &

Villamizar 2005; Política 2005). The government took advantage of the opportunity and not only demanded Lemoyne's exit but also let the U.N. know that the Uribe administration understood the organization's recommendations as suggestions and not as duties. It also requested clear evaluation criteria to establish whether Colombia had moved forward in its human rights situation and, it asked for an honest treatment by Michael Fruling (U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia) who, according to the commission, "strongly criticized the government outside of the country but not in its own face" (La Batalla Diplomática 2005). The end of Lemoyne's mission clearly demonstrated that domestic actors are frequently able not only to start and implement internationalization, but also and equally importantly, to end political forms of internationalization when they do not contribute in any way to obtain legitimacy.

Right after Lemoyne left the country, the government worsened the tone of its attacks against the U.N. and this time, through the High Commissioner for Peace, declared that it was 'absurd' that although Colombia is a member of the organization, the U.N. still invoked neutrality vis-à-vis the terrorist groups that constantly threatened democracy. He added that it was necessary that the General Secretary "redefine its protocols to advance 'good offices' missions vis-à-vis a terrorist groups that threaten a member state. How can the organization declare neutrality toward organizations that are included in Europe and the U.S.'s terrorist lists and that flagrantly attack civilian population?" (Que Onu Se Defina Frente A La Guerrilla 2005).

Three months later, the government went even further in defining the 'rules of the game' for international actors present in Colombia at that time. It distributed to all the diplomatic corps and through e-mail, a memo entitled *Guidelines for the Approach of*

International Cooperation Projects Developed in Colombia. In it, the government tried to stop the sort of diplomatic language that did not agree with the official position on the nature of the conflict. It was an attempt to shape and limit the participation of international actors in the local struggle. Explicitly, it stipulates that diplomatic missions in Colombia should not use the term ‘armed conflict’ or ‘non-state actors,’ ‘armed actors,’ or ‘actors in conflict’ since it parallels these illicit groups to the public legal force. Terms such as ‘civil protection,’ ‘communities of peace,’ ‘peace territory,’ ‘humanitarian regions or fields,’ and ‘observatory of humanitarian situation’ are ambiguous and should not be used or funded by the international community (Mercado 2005). Roberto Meier, UNHCR’s delegate in Colombia responded to this memo by saying that the agency would leave the country if it received through the traditional diplomatic channel (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) this set of instructions. He also revealed that the document was not signed and it did not have an official character (Circular Del Comisionado Podría Causar La Salida De Acnur Del País 2005).

In January 2006, Michael Frühling left his position as the U.N. Human Rights High Commissioner for Colombia and this triggered a new debate within the Colombian government on whether or not the office, after about 10 years in the country, should be closed. In another attempt to restrict and limit the U.N.’s participation in the conflict, the government had been insisting on changing this office’s mandate so it would assist the government on technical issues and would decrease its monitoring tasks. However, this proposal was not accepted by the U.N. and that worsened the relationship between the Uribe administration and Frühling (Frühling, El ‘Duro’ De Los Derechos Humanos, Se Va 2006). Colombian vice-president Francisco Santos declared that “the public

diplomacy exercised by this office was oriented toward unproductive blaming.”

However, the European Union formally and explicitly supported the office’s performance in Colombia and declared that it expected that “conversations about the extension of this office’s mandate would be guided by a close collaboration spirit and constructive dialogue.” The EU also called on the Colombian government to use all the available instruments: advice, technical cooperation, supervision and evaluation of the human rights situation (¿Se Acaba Oficina De Dd.Hh. De Onu En El País? 2006). As a result of European pressure, in June, it was announced that the office would continue in Colombia although some of its tasks would be reformulated (Oficina De Onu Para Dd.Hh. Seguirá Funcionando En El País 2006). In July, the Uruguayan Juan Pablo Corlazzoli was appointed as the new U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia. In September, both the Colombian president and vice-president initiated talks to transform the office into an agency more focused on advice and technical cooperation than on observation and evaluation (Las ‘Maletas’ Que Uribe Lleva A La Onu 2006) (¿Colombia Le Gana Pulso A La Onu? 2006). The result of this negotiation process is still unknown.

Political Internationalization: The O.A.S.

On February 7th 2003, a car containing 200 kg of explosives blew up in front of El Nogal club, located in one of the most exclusive zones in Bogotá. The attacks killed 36 people and wounded more than 200. For a country accustomed to a war that had normally taken place in the country side, this attack was unprecedented for its dimension and for openly targeting Colombian political and social elites. Even though no group claimed to be the intellectual or material author of this attack, the government blamed the FARC and initiated an international campaign to condemn the attacks and this insurgent

organization. The first multilateral scenario in which this campaign was implemented was precisely the O.A.S. The objective was to pass a resolution condemning the attacks and declaring the FARC an international terrorist group. On February 13th and through a unanimous decision, the Colombian government was successful in convincing the 34 state members of the O.A.S. to commit themselves to pursue and capture members of this and other terrorist organizations in the hemisphere (Gómez Maseri Oea Perseguirá A Las Farc 2003). The Uribe administration rapidly learned that this organization was functional to its attempt to undermine the insurgency's legitimacy.

In May, the Rio Group²⁸ approved a resolution in which it asked the U.N. Secretary General to encourage the FARC to negotiate with the government once it stops hostilities and declares a unilateral cease fire. In June, during the XXXIII O.A.S. General Assembly in Santiago de Chile, Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carolina Barco in another attempt to undermine FARC's political position, asked O.A.S. country members to back this Rio Group's declaration in order to encourage the FARC to negotiate with the government (Barco Pide A Oea Acoger Declaración De Río 2003). Nineteen nations backed this proposal and Kofi Annan took note of this call with interest (Alta Tensión De Uribe Con La Onu 2003). Annan's laconic response can possibly account for the beginning of a difficult relationship between the Uribe administration and the U.N., as described in the previous section.

²⁸ The Rio Group is an international organization of Latin American and Caribbean states. It was created in 1986 in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro by means of the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro, signed by Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (the members of the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group). It was perceived by some observers as an alternative body to the Organization of American States during the Cold War, since that body was mainly dominated by the United States. The Rio Group does not have a secretariat or permanent body, and instead relies on yearly summits of heads of states. Current member states are: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Caricom, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Uribe's administration soon understood that the region and its main institutions were a friendlier scenario for his security agenda and for his political internationalization strategy than the United Nations, so it continued to call on neighboring countries to collaborate in its war against guerrillas. Precisely, as part of this strategy, by August, the government decided to invoke the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance or Rio Treaty²⁹ as a way to reinforce the combat against terrorism, kidnappings, illegal traffic of weapons and drugs, and corruption. But the most important aspect was to prevent other nations from sheltering illegal armed groups and, on the contrary, to stimulate them to join Colombia in its war against these insurgent organizations through judicial and intelligence cooperation (Cumbre Hemisférica 2003). As a result of this strategy, all 34 O.A.S. members approved a declaration in October, during a hemispheric security summit, in which they supported president Uribe's fight against terrorism and demanded from the FARC a cease fire and participation in peace negotiations (Oea Exige Cese Del Fuego 2003).

In November, the Uribe internationalization strategy toward the O.A.S. went a step further. In an airplane that took Cesar Gaviria, O.A.S. General Secretary, and Álvaro Uribe to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, for the XIII Ibero-American Summit, Uribe explicitly asked Gaviria to consider the O.A.S. participation in the peace process with paramilitary groups. Gaviria argued that the organization had substantial experience since it was involved in the Contra demobilization agreement in Nicaragua during the 90s. Both Gaviria and Uribe thought about Sergio Caramagna as the O.A.S. mission

²⁹ The Rio Treaty was ratified on 1947 in Rio de Janeiro among most countries in the hemisphere. The central principle contained in its articles is that an attack against one is to be considered an attack against them all; this was known as the "hemispheric defense" doctrine.

chief in Colombia, since he had acquired broad experience in Central America during the Contra and other movements' demobilization (Aire Fresco 2004).

In January 2004 the government signed an agreement with the paramilitaries for their demobilization and the parties agreed upon O.A.S verification of compliance with the accords. Specifically, the organization would verify cease fire, demobilization, disarmament, and ex-paramilitaries reinsertion. The MAPP-O.A.S mission, as it was officially called in the organization's document that authorized its creation, would serve initially to verify the peace process between the government and the paramilitaries but it would be available for future processes with insurgent organizations (Misión De La Oea Verificará Procesos De Paz En Colombia 2004). The O.A.S involvement was a significant political internationalization success for president Uribe and his administration since it provided important multilateral legitimacy when international skepticism prevailed. As it was mentioned earlier in the chapter, president Uribe was constantly accused for his previous links with paramilitary movements when he was the governor of the Antioquia department.³⁰ Important opposition groups in Colombia and international human rights NGOs felt the government was too lenient during the peace process and that paramilitary leaders were not being held accountable for their constant violations to human rights and to international humanitarian law. Hence, the O.A.S. participation added an important dose of credibility and international legitimacy to these

³⁰ During his tenure as Antioquia's governor, Uribe supported a national program of cooperative neighborhood watch groups that became known as CONVIVIR, which had been created by a February 11, 1994 decree of Colombia's Ministry of Defense. The groups quickly became controversial since many members apparently abused civilians, without serious oversight of their operations. In 1998, Human Rights Watch stated: "we have received credible information that indicated that the CONVIVIR groups of the Middle Magdalena and of the southern Cesar regions were directed by known paramilitaries and had threatened to assassinate Colombians that were considered as guerrilla sympathizers or which rejected joining the cooperative groups" Watch HR. 1998. Human Rights Watch Report 1998, Human Rights Watch, New York.

negotiations and to the government itself.

Gaviria's acceptance of Uribe's invitation to the O.A.S. created debate in Colombia and at the O.A.S. First, Gaviria was accused of not consulting member states before making his decision to involve the organization in the talks with the paramilitaries. To this, he replied that he did not have to ask for permission from anybody but that, in spite of it, he knew most of the member states would approve this mission. Days after the agreement was signed, *El Tiempo* informed that a diplomat in Colombia (whose identity was not revealed) had leaked information about various countries dissatisfaction with Gaviria's decision. Among those countries were Canada, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. Days later it was known that that diplomat was James Lemoyne, U.N. Special Envoy for Colombia. This created a scenario of confrontation between the O.A.S. and the U.N. in Colombia that, as discussed in the previous section, resulted in the end of Lemoyne's mission in the country. By the end of January, the U.S. State Department publicly supported the role the O.A.S. mission would eventually play in Colombia (Eu, Lemoyne Y Restrepo Apoyan La Verificación 2004) and later, it sent resources to support conversations on the future reincorporation of paramilitaries.

On February 7th 2004 and after all this debate, the O.A.S. Permanent Council finally held a discussion on the resolution that would formally approve the mission in Colombia. In the discussion the Council decided to add various elements to the agreement Uribe and Gaviria signed initially: first, they suggested incorporating the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as part of the verification mission. Second, the Council would maintain the right to evaluate periodically the mission's role in Colombia. Third, the Secretary General would have to send a report every three months informing

on the status and situation of the mission. For some, these changes altered the initial spirit of the agreement since what Uribe and Gaviria agreed to was almost a blank check in which the organization would play a technical role, not a political one. But the final resolution project made clear that “for the Council, there cannot exist a divorce between the technical (demobilization and reinsertion) and the political (the peace process and the framework for the demobilization)” (Verificación Incluirá Dd.Hh. 2004). In other words, even though the initial internationalization attempt by the Colombian government envisioned an almost technical participation of the O.A.S. in the demobilization process, the organization still remained autonomous and with the ability to substantially change the terms and conditions of its mandate.

In March 2004, the first obstacles to the mission became visible. In order to have an effective verification of the cease fire, according to Gaviria, it was crucial to concentrate the self-defense groups in certain zones and that concentration was difficult to accomplish. Paramilitaries refused to concentrate in areas designated by the government since they perceived that the government did not have enough resources and political will to guarantee their security. This constituted probably the most salient moment of crisis during the dialogues with these groups (Oea Dice Que Sin Concentración Es Imposible La Verificación 2004). Local authorities also denounced the virtual absence of a real verification mechanism and insisted that there was increasing evidence that the paramilitaries were not complying with the agreements. The Santafé de Ralito³¹ Secretary of Government even suggested that if the verification process was not drastically transformed, it could undermine the entire peace process (La Oea No Está

³¹ Name of the town where negotiations and the demobilization process took place.

Verificando El Proceso 2004). As a response, Sergio Caramagna declared that part of the problem was the great restrictions in terms of resources that the mission was facing; restrictions that resulted mainly from the doubts the international community had about the process. He added that the O.A.S. also had doubts but that participating in the process was the best way to find answers, instead of undermining the legitimacy of conversations (Faltan Recursos para la Verificación 2004). In his official report to the O.A.S. General Council he highlighted: “the difficulties in finding funds to develop the mission’s mandate integrally, greatly affect its performance and it limits its possibilities” (Critican Débil Verificación De Oea 2004). It was evident at this point that Uribe’s invitation to the regional community to be part of the peace process with the paramilitaries faced opposition and high levels of skepticism, and this rendered his political internationalization strategy only partially successful.

After a series of criticisms from the opposition, the international community and various NGOs, the government decided to revitalize the mission and announced, by June 2004, that it would help the O.A.S initiate a new phase of the verification process. The concentration of paramilitary forces and the opening of new O.A.S. offices in various small cities across the country, according to the Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs, would facilitate this new phase and would guarantee more effectiveness in the verification task (Adelante Verificación En Proceso Con Paras 2004). However, Cesar Gaviria clarified that a complete and absolute verification was impossible and that the O.A.S. mission could only verify paramilitary’s compliance with the agreements in areas where members of these organization were concentrated. However, verification outside of those zones was not feasible (Verificación Es Casi Inalcanzable 2004).

But the organization was critical of another dimension of the process. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights questioned the legal framework for the paramilitary's demobilization. According to the Commission, there was no legal clarity on how the government would eventually hold paramilitaries accountable for war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law. In one of the reports to the O.A.S. Council, Caramagna insisted on the lack of legal guarantees and the difficulties to give truth, justice and reparation to the victims (Organo De La Oea Advierte Sobre Riesgos De Impunidad En Proceso Con Paras 2004). Later, the O.A.S. also announced that some paramilitary leaders left dozens of armed men that were still controlling the traffic of illegal drugs from Colombia, or that were involved in criminal bands in big cities. In sum, many paramilitary combatants did not reincorporate into civilian life and kept participating in various illegal activities (Oea Denuncia Graves Fallas En El Proceso Con Los 'Paras' 2006) (Misión De La Oea Denuncia 'Conejo' En Desmovilización De Bloques 'Paras' 2006). The criticisms of the process in general, and the MAPP-OAS continue but in spite of them, the organization will continue its tasks in Colombia until February 2010 (Tres Años Más De Oea Para Verificar Justicia Y Paz 2007).

The Non Governmental Organizations

The work of Non Governmental Organizations dedicated to human rights advocacy in Colombia has become even more contentious as the United States' government began to increase military and other kinds of assistance to the Colombian government. As Tate relates, American NGOs specifically, came to the issue of human rights in Colombia with the Central American peace movement as their primary reference point. Hence,

“For activists schooled in the Central American peace movement, the debates over U.S. policy towards Colombia had many similarities with the policy towards El Salvador in the 1980s: the U.S. appeared to be strengthening an abusive military with a history of well publicized collusion with paramilitary forces, taking sides against long running Marxist insurgencies” (Tate (forthcoming), p.4).

But European NGOs have also constituted strong opposition to Plan Colombia and more recently, to president Uribe’s security policies. The key arguments these organizations have used relate to Uribe’s early involvement with paramilitary forces in the Antioquia province where he was elected governor and, consequently, his participation, by action or omission, in human right rights violations perpetrated by these forces.

One of the first governmental responses to this sort of activism was the expulsion of three Spanish activists due to their participation in a peasant protest in Chalán and Icononzo. Two of these Spanish citizens belonged to the Sol de Paz ONG (from Andalucía) and the other was a member of the Solidarity Organization for Asia, Africa and Latin America; they were all expelled from the country and accused of intervening in domestic matters and altering the public order (Soto & Mercado 2002). This was the first demonstration of what would constitute a de-internationalization strategy vis-à-vis the NGOs that was strongly advanced and promoted by the Uribe administration. These organizations were seriously undermining the domestic and international governmental legitimacy and their participation in the internal struggle was clearly not welcomed.

As part of this de-internationalization attempt, in 2003 president Uribe announced that various human rights NGOs were serving terrorism in Colombia. His Minister of Defense announced that the government was going to initiate an investigation to determine the identity of these organizations, who are their members and, what kind of

activities they advance in Colombia. Minister of Defense Martha Lucía Ramírez justified the beginning of this investigation by arguing that some of these NGOs were openly attacking the state and by informing that some accused terrorists recently imprisoned were members of an NGO (Gómez Maseri Rechazan En Estados Unidos Críticas A Ong 2003).

But this de-internationalization strategy was implemented more systematically during the second Uribe administration. In September 2008, when the representatives from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and many other national and international NGOs just landed in Colombia to participate in the National and International Meeting on Human Rights, Peace and Democracy, president Uribe openly attacked these organizations in front of a predominantly military audience. He classified these organizations in three main sub-groups. Uribe suggested:

“some are theoretical critics and we respect them but we do not agree with their thesis on the weakness of the state; some are serious human rights organizations that we respect and welcome, we will keep a permanent dialogue in order to improve those things we need to improve; and some are just human rights traffickers that should get rid of their masks once and for all, they should appear with their true political ideas and stop being so coward as to hide their political ideas behind human rights. These are just *politiqueros* (derogatory term for bad politicians) who serve terrorism, they are prophets of disaster” (La Ira Presidencial 2003).

Finally, it is important to highlight that even though some analysts might suggest that these activist organizations are clearly biased against the state,³² this does not imply that they are close to insurgent organizations in Colombia either. According to Orozco,

³² Even though President Uribe accusation is motivated by his government desire to reject the NGOs' participation in the domestic conflict, it is crucial to highlight that academic observers have concluded that some international human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, do have a strong bias against the state in their observations and reports. For an academic evaluation on this topic see Ballesteros A, Restrepo JA, Spagat M, Vargas JF. The Work of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch: Evidence from Colombia. In *NGO Monitor*.

at the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s human rights advocacy groups started to proclaim their independence vis-à-vis both conflicting parties and to support the idea of a negotiated peace. In fact, as part of this doctrine of open neutrality, most of these organizations decided to employ Humanitarian International Law instead of Human Rights norms as a framework to denounce violations and abuses by all the parties to the conflict. Orozco suggests that this new emphasis was the result of an increasing symmetrical use of violence in Colombia and of international NGOs influence, such as Human Rights Watch, that wanted to avoid strategic alliances between insurgencies and NGOs, such as the one that took place between American activist organizations and the FMLN in El Salvador (Orozco 2005, pp. 258-260). Tate adds that the brutality of the conflict, the declining popular support for guerrilla groups, the widespread criminality within their ranks (including criminality developed as part of their military strategy, such as FARC's use of profits from kidnapping and drug production to finance its military expansion in the 1990s), and their rejection of human rights standards and international humanitarian law, are all factors that have made Colombian insurgent organizations largely unresponsive to international pressure and very distant from the international NGO community (Tate (forthcoming), pp.5-6).

Hence, there is only evidence on the government's attempt to de-internationalize the conflict and prevent these organizations from participating directly in the Colombian struggle, but not on the existence of alliances between these organizations and insurgent groups.

By linking issues—drugs/insurgency, terrorism/insurgency—the Colombian government strategically framed a situation that under different circumstances would not have meant much for the US, into one of the priorities for that government in terms of military aid. The persistence of a Marxist rebel group in a Third World country after the end of the Cold War could have been interpreted by Washington as a purely local matter with no international or regional implications. However, by actively attempting to include the Colombian conflict first in the war against drugs and then, in the war against terror, the Colombian government did not allow for the construction or interpretation of the struggle as a purely domestic event.

In 2002, after president Pastrana's failed attempt to provide a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict, current President Uribe was elected with an absolute majority of votes and came to power promising a strong military stance against insurgency. In 2006, President Uribe was reelected, again, with a majority of votes in the first round, by using a very similar agenda. Colombian media already started to discuss the very solid chances for a third mandate. It is crucial to say that the Colombian Constitution did not permit the re-election of presidents until his arrival to the Casa de Nariño. Soon after he started his first period, Uribe initiated a national campaign to change the Constitution and allow re-election. In December 2004, the Colombian Congress agreed to reform the Constitution to allow this possibility and, in October 2005, the Colombian Constitutional Court ruled in favor of the reform. As a result and for the first time in Colombian history, presidential re-election is today permitted. To be sure, "a majority of Colombians from all social sectors were willing to try the iron fist that only Uribe offered among the candidates for President" (Dugas 2003, p. 1134). Hence, Uribe

has been so far, the strongest advocate of the form of military internationalization I have described in this chapter.

The new world order has allowed his administration to strategically articulate the Colombian conflict in terms of the war on terrorism (as it has been done many times before) but more importantly, it made possible for president Uribe first, to demand “more funds and privileged treatment (from the U.S.) (today, both governments are deeply convinced that they are dealing with ‘narcoterrorists’); second, to ask for a further relaxation of human rights standards to more easily confront the terrorist threat; and third, though in a rather oblique manner, to invite deeper intervention by the U.S. Thus, the conflict is used to suggest that guerrillas threaten vital U.S. interests” (Gutiérrez 2003:148). The war on terror has finally landed in Colombian territory. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, made it official in the U.S.: “What we are doing—as a partner, and anxious to be as cooperative as possible—is working, military-to-military, to see what are the kinds of things we can do as the Colombian war on terror migrates into a somewhat later stage, as is now happening” (Defense 2003).

The United States and the Organization of American States have been the protagonists of Colombia’s internationalization strategy during the administration of president Álvaro Uribe. The military alliance with the U.S. has allowed the government to launch a military offensive against the guerrilla organizations that, at the point this text is being written, has left the insurgency seriously weakened. The O.A.S. provided the political legitimacy the very polemic peace process with the paramilitaries needed and the government has not paid a great price for it. Instead, the participation of the United Nations was becoming increasingly uncomfortable for a government with no interest in

negotiations. To the extent the U.N. representatives were undermining instead of providing legitimacy to the government, the strategy toward this international organization was precisely to de-internationalize; in other words, to reduce its participation in the conflict to its minimum expression.

Uribe's approach to the United Nations (U.N.) and the Organization of American States (O.A.S.) offers an interesting contrast: while the government tried, until it was successful, to reduce to the minimum the U.N.'s role in the conflict; it asked the O.A.S. to contribute in a more active way to participate in the peace process with paramilitary groups. This difference can be explained by different factors. On one hand, the O.A.S. and its General Secretary, ex-Colombian president César Gaviria, had a strong interest in the Colombian conflict, so strong that Gaviria decided to authorize the organization's involvement in the very polemic peace process with paramilitary groups, even against the will of numerous country members. Gaviria argued that the organization had substantial experience in this field since it participated in the Contra demobilization process in Nicaragua. On the other hand, even though Uribe's presidential campaign emphasized the need to invite the U.N. to participate under the form of 'good offices' in an eventual negotiation process with the guerrillas, soon after he took office there was a series of debates between the government and various U.N. officers in Colombia that led to the partial dismantling of the organization's representation in the country.

In sum, the last two presidential administrations exemplify with great eloquence, two of the most salient forms of internationalization advanced by the Colombian government. From 1998 until 2002, President Pastrana designed a political internationalization strategy that was defined as the 'internationalization of peace.' His

purpose was to obtain support, of various kinds and from the international community, in order to strengthen the peace talks between his government and various guerrilla groups in Colombia. But from 2002 until recently, and more specifically, after the end of peace dialogues months before the Pastrana administration was over, a strategy of military internationalization has clearly predominated.

In this chapter, I explained and compared the core elements of both strategies. I argue that even though the Pastrana and the Uribe administrations represent very different moments of the Colombian conflict—Pastrana ran peace talks while Uribe has intensified the state war against the guerrilla groups—their strategies have many common elements. This might be explained by the fact that even when the parties to the conflict were at the negotiation table, the war and military offensives did not stop. For both administrations, the construction of international alliances would eventually contribute to strengthening state's military capacities. However, while president Pastrana thought a strong army would serve to push the insurgent groups toward the negotiation table, Uribe has been more ambivalent about the possibilities of negotiation and at times, it appears as if his government only contemplates a military victory over the guerrillas.

There is, however, an important difference between these two internationalization strategies. I have argued here that while Pastrana used internationalization in both scenarios war and peace; Uribe has emphasized military internationalization and has systematically abandoned or rejected forms of internationalization that might be more conducive to a negotiated solution to the conflict. As a consequence, a strategy of military internationalization toward the U.S. is almost a perfect complement of a strategy of political de-internationalization directed to the United Nations and the international

community of human rights NGOs. These organizations undermine governmental legitimacy and as such are not welcome to participate in the conflict and are constantly attacked and vilified by the Uribe administration.

Chapter 4. Colombia II: Armed Movements

The Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces—FARC, as it was stated in Chapter 4, were born at the beginning of the 1960s. This insurgent organization was originally made up of Liberal guerrillas and the peasant founders that included followers of the Colombian Communist Party. However, the organization was not a military wing of the Colombian Communist Party, a party that was perceived to be pro-Moscow. In spite of this influence, “the FARC by no means represented a transplanted, externally influenced insurrection, as the U.S. government had at times tried to convey” (Murillo 2004, p. 58). Other guerrilla groups also emerged during this period, including the National Liberation Army, or ELN, a Cuban-inspired movement founded in 1965 in stretches of the Middle Magdalena Valley in the northeastern department of Santander. The ELN was substantially different from the FARC to the extent it was not a genuine peasant movement. Instead, it drew its base of support from disaffected, urban, middle-class youth. Additionally, “its ideological formation came from a revolutionary brand of liberation theology personified by one of its most famous recruits, the priest Camilo Torres, killed in combat in 1966” (Murillo 2004, p. 59). It might be possible to suggest that the FARC is more similar to the Guatemalan URNG, since they both have a strong peasant component, while the ELN and the FMLN in El Salvador have a very similar urban middle-class base.

As it is to be expected, insurgent movements in Colombia followed different internationalization strategies. While the FARC is still the oldest guerrilla organization in the country, it has remained relatively more isolated from the international system and its dynamics than the other groups. Even though information about the international links

of most insurgent organizations is still scattered, it is possible to observe that the FARC has been substantially more reluctant to accept the participation of international actors either in times of war or in times of peace. Groups such as the M-19, the EPL and the ELN had stronger ties with other governments in the region, especially with the Cuban revolution. I argue here that an important and crucial factor explains this difference: as I have stated, the M-19, the EPL and the ELN are more urban and ‘modern’ guerrillas, closer to the FMLN in El Salvador; the FARC have a stronger peasant component and its agenda is more driven by the Colombia’s country side problematic.

Pizarro describes it in the following way:

“While all the groups that were born in the country following the Cuban example all have a *foquista* and voluntarism orientation—the Workers, Students and Peasants Movement (MOEC), the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Popular Liberation Army (EPL)—and a mainly urban origin from radicalized middle classes, communist guerrillas are born in an articulated way with peasant resistance against official violence. In that sense, they were guerrillas articulated to a political party (the Communist Party) but, in general, with deep social roots” (Pizarro Leongomez 1991, p. 20).

In other words, even though the FARC have no ethnic component, their origins and nature are closer to the UNRG in Guatemala and this local orientation accounts for its relatively permanent isolation from the international system. The UNRG in Guatemala and the FARC in Colombia share a common feature: they have weaker links with the international system and its actors since their agendas and members have less in common, ideologically and strategically, with other revolutionary groups or governments in the area. They tend to see their conflicts as unique and to have a nationalist world view. Hence, they are more likely to fight their wars by themselves and to constantly try to avoid international third parties during peace processes.

As I argue in Chapter 5 where I analyze the case of the FMLN in El Salvador, more modern and urban guerrillas are more likely to articulate internationalization strategies and to communicate easily with other guerrilla movements or revolutionary governments that share their world views. This stock of common world views does not exist when guerrillas have strong local origins, are composed more by peasants or indigenous members than radicalized middle classes, and are highly nationalistic.

But there is an additional factor that also accounts for the FARC's isolation and it is related to the internal structure of this insurgent organization. The FARC, as it was also the case of the URNG, is a very monolithic guerrilla. Even though it has attempted to construct alliances with other guerrilla organizations in Colombia, these have not lasted long. Hence, the lack of strong political and ideological division lines within the insurgent organization also contributes to explain why the FARC have not used internationalization as a way to negotiate and solve internal disputes.

However, this trend changed when the insurgent movement identified resources it could obtain from the international system and that could eventually improve its political and military position vis-à-vis the Colombian state. This process took place due to the peace process with president Pastrana and the high levels of exposure to the international system and its actors the insurgent organization experienced. Simultaneously, this identification of international opportunities took place when the guerrilla started to perceive that they were in a disadvantaged situation, militarily and politically, and hence they opted for political or military internationalization. This is why it is after the arrival of Plan Colombia and the peace process with president Pastrana that the FARC started to implement in a more systematic manner its campaign to find international recognition as

a belligerent force. Furthermore, it is during the Uribe administration, when it is broadly perceived that the Armed Forces are military stronger than the FARC, that this insurgent organization began to strengthen its liaisons with left-wing governments in the area such as Venezuela and Nicaragua. In other words, even though the strong peasant component of the FARC would, in general, predict the lack of an internationalization strategy by this group, this trend can be altered by a serious change in the military balance of power between the state and the insurgent organization and furthermore, it can be altered by exposure to international actors and the advantages of forming alliances with them. This exposure took place precisely during the peace process with the Pastrana administration. I will describe how both the FARC and the ELN differ in terms of their internationalization strategies and how those strategies have evolved.

FARC

Officially, the FARC's internationalization strategy began in their 8th Conference on April 2nd 1993 when this insurgent group created the 'Comisión Internacional' (International Commission). According to their conclusions, the commission had the purpose of "strengthening the friendship among socialist countries, dedicating its efforts to spread the organization's image and projects, in order to contribute to the recognition of their struggle" (La Guerra Diplomática 2000). However, in 1996 the FARC's internationalization project suffered a radical change. During this year, the FARC Secretariat decided to augment its international relations and it started by strengthening the structure of the International Commission and changing its name to International Front. Its objective was to have a solid infrastructure that would allow it to go from

simple and clandestine approaches with leftist movements and parties, to openly contact governments and parties in other countries.

As it happened with domestic fronts, the international front was formed by the *Estado Mayor*, having some autonomy from the Secretariat. At that time, Raul Reyes was commissioned to be in charge of this front and as part of his assignment, he lived some years in Costa Rica and from there, he coordinated contacts with organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The International Front was sub-divided in three areas: Central and South America, North America and Europe. The first purpose, as it was stated, was to obtain international recognition in the form of a status of belligerence. The second objective was to obtain logistic support, mainly through neighboring states such as Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru. The North American front was in charge of obtaining economic resources from various non governmental agencies, mainly in Canada. In Europe, however, the FARC had started to be present only recently (4 years ago) while the ELN, as I will describe, has been constructing alliances in that region for a longer period of time. Among other tactics, the FARC had “exploited sensitive topics such as human rights and environment. (...) They have relations with most of the European social-democratic governments such as Switzerland, Sweden, Belgium, France and Spain. The FARC have ‘permanent embassies’ in 15 countries of the world (La Guerra Diplomática 2000).

However, the government and the media in Colombia might have exaggerated the FARC’s international linkages since information has always been scattered. This exaggeration serves both parties to the conflict. If the FARC are presented as an insurgent group with numerous international linkages, the government can argue that this

organization is transnational in its character and, therefore, it requires a transnational response or effort against it. In other words, framing the FARC as part of a transnational criminal network justifies and legitimizes the government's own attempt to construct international alliances to fight against the FARC. But the FARC also benefits from overplaying its international profile. It allows the organization to state that even though the Cold War is over and most of the revolutionary experiments have failed, they can still find organizations, parties and even governments, willing to support and legitimize their cause. If they can show that some agents in the international system still approve of their fight, they can prove their objectives and methods are not as isolated, outdated and parochial as the government constantly portrays them.

Even though Colombian media and the government tend to overemphasize FARC's international liaisons, this organization has not used an internationalization strategy as systematically as the Salvadorian FMLN did. Additionally, information about FARC's links with international actors is rare and sparse since Colombia's war is still not over and interviews or primary resources are not available. There is, however, some recent information related to their international activity that it is worth registering. This information points to still not very clear links between the FARC and governments in neighboring countries such as Venezuela and Ecuador. In this chapter I will describe, chronologically, FARC's attempts to construct these and other international alliances.

Internationalization toward Venezuela

In January 1998, the FARC announced the creation of a new political movement: they called it Movimiento Bolivariano para la Nueva Colombia (Bolivarian Movement for the New Colombia) (Afp & Reuters 1998). FARC's Bolivarian platform was very

close to the Bolivarian project president Chávez has also tried to promote from his administration in neighboring Venezuela. This ideological compatibility has been accompanied by other friendly gestures from the Venezuelan government toward the Colombian insurgent organization. For instance, just a couple of months after the inauguration of FARC's Bolivarian movement, Chávez declared publicly that "if a guerrilla column retreats and arrives to (the Venezuelan town of) Guasdalito (in Apure—a province that borders with Arauca, a Colombian province) and gives up his arms and ask for asylum, we will give it to them. And maybe I will talk to them and convince them that peace is the right path" (Chávez Abre Boquete A Beligerancia 1999). Since then, the press in both countries started a debate on Chávez intention to recognize the belligerent status to insurgent movements in Colombia. These attempts repeated various times and the relationship between the Venezuelan government and the insurgent organization only intensified over time. For instance, during peace talks with the Pastrana administration, the FARC officially invited president Chávez to San Vicente del Caguán, the capital of the Détente Zone, so he could meet with 'Sure-shot', the FARC's head commander. However, Pastrana's government did not allow this trip (Cristancho Chávez Espera Cita Con Marulanda 1999). FARC's Commander Ariel even traveled to Caracas to contact Chávez and members of the Venezuelan political class, legislators and media establishment to make official FARC's invitation to the Venezuelan president (Cristancho Tirofijo Espera Ver A Chávez El 7 De Julio 1999).

The FARC kept their contacts with the Venezuelan government and just a week after they rejected the verification commission, Chávez declared he was willing to open conversations with the FARC, "in order to obtain a higher level of security for the

Venezuelan people. It is our duty.” His Minister of Foreign Affairs supported Chávez position by arguing that the Venezuelans “are sovereign and we can meet with whomever we want in Venezuela” (Cristancho Decisión De Chávez, Sin Antecedentes 1999). Just days after, the Colombian government reacted through his ambassador and affirmed that any international support to the peace process should be coordinated with the Colombian government and should not constitute an inappropriate intervention in Colombia’s domestic issues (Pastrana No Acepta Diálogo De Chávez 1999). Clearly, the Colombian government was not willing to let the FARC advance its own political internationalization strategy. Later and after knowing about the presence of FARC members at a conference on Plan Colombia in Caracas, the Colombian government had to call his ambassador for consultations to send Venezuela a strong message on its discomfort with the president’s attitude (Crece Molestia Con Venezuela 2000).

Additionally, by 2002, the FARC presence in Venezuelan territory was denounced in more detail. The Venezuelan Military Intelligence Direction (DIM), stated that about 740 illegally armed men and women, members of various Colombian guerrillas, were in Venezuelan territory (Mayorca 2002). Later in the year, it was also known that the Venezuelan government gave visas to Pedro Elías Cañas, one of ELN’s head commanders, and Aldo Moscoso, a FARC member, so they could remain legally in the country. The report also pointed out that these were not the only guerrilla members who had been authorized entrance to Venezuelan territory (Corresponsal 2002).

Military Internationalization: Various Actors

In 2000, another demonstration of military internationalization between the FARC and a neighboring country came to light. Ten thousand Kalashnikov rifles and Russian

AKM were confiscated by the Peruvian National Intelligence Service (SIN). The weapons were going to be dropped for the FARC from an airplane at the Peruvian-Colombian border. When this illegal network from Jordan, through Peru and with a final destination in the Colombian jungle was discovered, Vladimiro Montesinos—the most important adviser to Peruvian president Fujimori—declared that corrupted members of the Peruvian army might have participated in the transaction (Conexión Peruana De Las Farc 2000). However, the Jordanian government replied to Montesinos and affirmed that the weapons were legally sold to the Peruvian government and the initial transaction had nothing to do with the FARC (Cargamento De Armas Es Legal : Jordania 2000). Later it was known that Montesinos himself participated in the transaction and that he negotiated with the FARC the delivery of the weapons (Reuters 2000).

In August too, the FARC implemented military internationalization to obtain logistic support from members of the IRA (Irish Republican Army). A group of them were captured in Bogotá after spending about five weeks in the Détente Zone. According to the press, the Irish men were experts in home made mortars, rocket-launchers and, remote-control detonators and they were actively supporting the FARC's attempt to strengthen their urban strategies (Justicia & Internacional 2001). In May 2002, Martin McCauley, James William Monaghan and Niall Connolly were freed and left the country (Semana 3/5/04).

Political De-internationalization during the Peace Process

The FARC was, in general, not very receptive to the international community's participation during peace talks with the Pastrana government. In spite of the fact that the government convinced them about the benefits of an international Group of Friends, the

FARC always insisted that they should not act as verifiers; they would accompany the process but, the FARC insisted, they should not be powerful actors at the negotiations table (Definidos Los Siete Países Acompañantes 1999). FARC's Commander Raul Reyes, subscribing a highly nationalistic reading of the Colombian conflict stated that "the FARC does not accept, under any circumstances, an instance or a commission coming from the international community that puts pressure to solve the conflict. It has to be Colombian. Colombian problems, including the conflict, can be solved by Colombians. We need to be able to do it" (Sí De Farc A Verificación Del Despeje 1999). By August 6, the FARC made public they did not accept an international commission for verification (Paz No Definitivo De Farc A Verificación 1999); the commission was finally formed by Colombian personalities and the dialogues resumed in September (Acuerdo Sobre Comisión 1999). Nationalism, as a world view, was deeply ingrained in the FARC's perception of the Colombian conflict.

The organization was also rejecting additional forms of internationalization such as the one related to international organizations. As it was mentioned in Chapter 3, when the Uribe's administration started in August 2002, one of his proposals was to invite the United Nations to participate in eventual peace dialogues and in the liberation of hostages in exchange of imprisoned guerrilla members. In this opportunity, the FARC made clear its position toward this international organization. In a communiqué, this group affirmed they did not agree with the participation of the U.N. because they were not consulted on this matter and also, because "to negotiate, both parties are always needed." They also declared that when dialogues ended, it was clear for them that the United Nations and the

broader international community took the government's side and hence, they did not trust them anymore (Reloj de Arena 2002).

They also opposed Plan Colombia, the most important component of the government's military internationalization strategy. A crucial consequence of Plan Colombia's final approval was observed at the negotiation table with the FARC. The arrival of the aid package undermined and hindered discussions between the government and insurgents who thought this was a clear U.S. intervention in domestic affairs and, it sent mixed signals about the government's peace intentions. Ivan Ríos, one of the FARC's head commanders, reacted strongly:

"We do not agree with Plan Colombia because it was discussed neither in Colombia, nor at the negotiations table, and because it is a plan for war (...). Hundreds of peasants are going to arm themselves because they are going to be attacked... when the helicopters arrive we are going to shoot them down... This is very dangerous because it undermines the peace process" (El Hombre del Plan Colombia 2000).

Sureshot added:

"The FARC disagrees with this aid from the United States because assistance should be for social spending and peace, not for increasing the conflict with the blessing of the few who directly benefit from the war (...). We can be attacked by the security forces when the President considers it convenient, since we are an organization that has taken up arms against the state. But it's wrong that they should do this with the participation of the United States, under the slanderous pretext that we have links to the drug trade" (Ruiz 2001, p. 248).

Pablo Beltrán, an ELN leader, also complained about Plan Colombia:

"the White House aid is supposedly for the fight against drug trafficking, but it is really for the armed forces. (...) How can they expect us to disarm when they're reinforcing the army? Our fight will have to grow, and we will not disarm" (Ruiz 2001, p. 248).

The FARC declared that they recognized the official beginning of Plan Colombia as the simultaneous beginning of a new chapter in their war against the Colombian state:

they launched a cruel military offensive in nine different provinces on the day the Plan was inaugurated. The insurgency quickly understood that Plan Colombia was an internationalization strategy designed by the government to improve its military position and as such, it constantly opposed it.

Additional Contacts

On December 16th 2004, Rodrigo Granda, was taken by unidentified men from a cafe in Caracas, Venezuela. Later, the Colombian government announced his "capture" in the last week of December. Uribe initially claimed that Granda, who had represented the FARC in its negotiations with the Colombian government, had been captured inside Colombia, in a town near the border with Venezuela. Later, it was known that the Colombian rebel leader was kidnapped by renegade Venezuelan Army officers who were paid by the Colombian government. The Colombian government finally admitted that a ransom was handed out for the capture of the FARC leader. This incident led to a crisis between the two countries: Venezuela retired its ambassador in Bogotá and demanded an apology. It also suspended bilateral ties with Colombia.

In January 2005, after Granda was captured (he was until his capture the so-called FARC's 'Chancellor') he told the press he contacted an organization in Libya called Mataba, "an anti-imperialist, anti-Semitic, anti-colonialist organization created by Gadhafi. According to Granda, the FARC had an International Commission in charge of informing various international sectors about the domestic conflict, the FARC's position vis-à-vis the Colombian state and, Uribe's frequent violations to human rights. He also revealed that this commission was financed by various individuals in different countries, some non-governmental organizations, friends and sympathizers. The commission also

participated, according to Granda, in international events in order to open new spaces and to find more concrete commitments and support from other countries (Lio Granda 2005).

Granda also revealed a new dimension of FARC's relationship with the Venezuelan government of Chávez. He declared that he participated in the *Congreso Bolivariano de los Pueblos* (People's Bolivarian Convention) that gathered about 600 people. Being a self-defined Bolivarian movement, the FARC wanted to be included in this new South American effort. However, some participants expressed their concern about FARC's involvement, since they were attempting to consolidate a democratic leftist movement, a new International Socialist, in which armed illegal groups should not be welcome. That was the case of the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil and its leader Lula Da Silva (Lio Granda 2005).

In February 2005 another international connection was revealed by the press: the FARC supported the Paraguayan extreme left organization *Patria Libre* in the kidnapping and later assassination of Cecilia Cubas—ex-president Raul Cuba's daughter. Osmar Martínez, one of the *Patria Libre*'s leaders was captured and confessed that he received instructions and FARC training to execute the abduction. When Martínez was captured at his place, the police found FARC's propagandistic material, uniforms and a video where a person with a Colombian accent was imparting instructions in a kidnap simulation (Prueba Reina 2005).

Finally, in September 2008, Sebastian Piñera—the main opposition leader in Chile and a member of the center-right National Renewal (RN) party, traveled to Bogota and met with president Álvaro Uribe. Uribe handed him a report that described a series

of e-mail exchanges between a Mapuche activist and FARC's commander Raúl Reyes. The Mapuche leader was identified as 'Roque' and he asked the FARC, in 2006, for military training to indigenous groups. These Chilean groups want to recover southern lands they consider belong to them as part of their ancestral rights; but those lands currently belong to powerful business men and big national and multinational companies (Escándalo en Chile por supuesto nexo entre las Farc y grupos mapuches 2008).

Venezuela as a Mediator during the Uribe Administration

Uribe's government rejected Chávez's request for permission to meet 'Sure-shot' in Colombian territory to facilitate a humanitarian agreement to liberate hostages ('No' Al Viaje De Chávez A La Selva 2007). The government wanted to hinder in every possible way the consolidation of the FARC's political internationalization move. Colombian Congresswoman, Piedad Córdoba, decided then to travel and meet FARC's commander Raul Reyes to negotiate the humanitarian agreement. She came back with a video sent to Hugo Chávez who, together with senator Córdoba, was finally designated as a mediator between the insurgent group and the government. Reyes suggested Chávez to agree upon a meeting between the Venezuelan president and members of the FARC's General Secretariat (Lares 2007).

In November 2007, Chávez met with Iván Márquez, a member of the FARC's General Secretariat, senator Córdoba and unknown French government's envoys (Ya están en Venezuela representantes del secretariado de las Farc, anunció el presidente Hugo Chávez 2007). In this meeting, they insisted on a Chávez-Marulanda summit and advanced on details on the humanitarian agreement (Entre Risas, Chávez, 'Márquez' Y

Piedad Terminaron Encuentro 2007). On January 9th 2008, the first group of hostages was liberated. Venezuelan Minister of Interior, Rodríguez Chacín, travelled to the site of the liberation, somewhere in the southern Colombian jungles. Colombia and Venezuela's public watched live from the site how the Venezuelan Minister was friendly and affectionate with the group of insurgents that liberated the hostages and even called them 'comrades' and encourage them to 'continue the fight.' One of his staffers was wearing a Ché Guevara shirt; the type of shirt FARC guerrillas constantly wear when they appear in public. The Venezuelan public T.V. network, TELESUR, was broadcasting live and exclusively at the scene of the liberation. Less than a week later and before Venezuela's National Assembly, Chávez asked the international community to remove the 'terrorist' label when referring to the FARC or the ELN as a pre-condition to 'normalize' diplomatic relations between Bogotá and Caracas. He asserted: "We need to give recognition to the FARC and the ELN, they are insurgent forces with a political project, they have a Bolivarian project that we respect here" (Rechazo de Colombia a propuesta de levantar calificación de terroristas a las Farc y al Eln 2008).

The Search for the Belligerent Status

Again, the FARC saw in international actors, among them Chávez, an opportunity to be recognized as a belligerent group now that the Colombian Armed Forces, reinforced through American military and intelligence support, were forcing them to retreat. Even though it was implemented more consistently in this period, the project of finding belligerent status was an old one. *El Tiempo* newspaper had found, years before Plan Colombia, a document in which the FARC presented the legal and political reasons why they should be recognized as belligerent; simultaneously, a letter sent by a group of

European intellectuals and legislators also recommended the government to acknowledge the FARC as a belligerent group (Paz Beligerancia, El As Oculito De Las Farc 1999). Additionally, Carlos Alberto Plotter, a demobilized guerrilla member, stated in numerous occasions that the “FARC are truly concerned about their status of belligerence and that is why they are paying attention to the international realm” (Las FARC Van a Pasar Calmaditas el Chaparrón de Uribe 2003).

Later, in October 2007, the FARC contacted U.S. senators James McGovern, Bill Delahunt and Gregory Meeks to set up a meeting and talk about the humanitarian agreement ('Diplomacia' que Farc tejen hace meses precede pedido de Chávez para darles estatus de beligerancia 2008). They were using foreign hostages such as the American contractors and Ingrid Betancourt (a French-Colombian citizen), as instruments to contact foreign governments and obtain their recognition of their group as a belligerent force. The FARC had clearly advanced a campaign in order to obtain not only legal recognition as a belligerent force, but also in order to obtain legitimacy from the Venezuelan government. In this sense and ironically, the kidnapping of foreign nationals, a practice that delegitimizes insurgent organizations because it goes against International Humanitarian Law, was used as an internationalization mechanism to find political support and recognition from external actors.

Reyes' Computer: Internationalization toward Venezuela, Ecuador and Nicaragua

Different versions and rumors of the linkages between the FARC and the Ecuatorian government of Rafael Correa began to circulate when in October 2006, as a presidential candidate, Correa publicly declared that the FARC was not a terrorist

organization but a guerrilla movement. He also insisted that the FARC was not the only party committing excesses in the war, but that the Colombian Armed Forces were doing exactly the same (Las Farc no son terroristas, según el candidato a la presidencia de Ecuador Rafael Correa 2006). Less than a month later, Colombia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carlos Holguín, said in a radio interview that there was solid proof that FARC's head commander, Raul Reyes, was in Ecuadorian territory and that the guerrillas were using that country as a shelter (Presidente Álvaro Uribe dice que pruebas de presencia de 'Raúl Reyes' en Ecuador son sólidas 2006).

In March 2008 the Colombian government bombed a FARC's camp located in Ecuadorian territory, close to the border with Colombia. Reyes, as Holguín announced, was there and killed in the operation. The Colombian armed forces confiscated a series of laptops and disks where the Interpol, the FBI and the Colombian government found valuable information. First, there were a series of e-mail exchanges where it was clear that the FARC met with Ecuadorian Minister of Defense, Gustavo Larrea who acted as President Correa's representative. There, Raúl Reyes reported that the Ecuadorian government was interested in making 'official' its relationship with the FARC, it wanted to coordinate social activities to help the border population, and it wanted to exchange information on paramilitary delinquency in Ecuadorian territory. In the e-mail Reyes informed that Larrea was willing to remove public force's members that are hostile to the FARC and also recognize the belligerent status to the FARC. There was an additional e-mail in which Reyes told the General Secretariat that the Ecuadorian government offered to invite a Secretariat member to Quito to talk about the humanitarian exchange, border

policy, the political solution to the conflict, Ingrid Betancourt and the role of president Hugo Chávez.

In another e-mail, Reyes proposed to the Secretariat releasing some hostages to Chávez while they wait for a humanitarian agreement with Uribe. The purpose, according to the message, is to encourage other 'friendly' governments to recognize their belligerent status. By unilaterally liberating some hostages, asserts Reyes, they might strengthen Chávez's position and that would benefit the FARC. Various e-mails also revealed that president Chávez received a thousand million pesos from the FARC when he was in jail after attempting a coup d'état in his country. Evidence in the computers also showed that during the last semester of 2007 and the beginning of 2008, the FARC received at least US\$300 million from Chávez (2008). After Reyes was killed in Ecuador, Chávez held a national minute of silence; he described Reyes as a 'good revolutionary' in a national televised speech and talked about the operation by the Colombian army as a 'coward assassination' (Peñaloza 2008).

In September 2008, the U.S. Department of State acknowledged the links between the FARC and the Venezuelan government by expelling the Venezuelan ambassador in that country and simultaneously announcing the inclusion of Ramón Rodríguez, ex-Minister of Interior in Venezuela, in the Clinton List—a list designed to identify all enterprises and people related, in different ways, with drug traffic activities. The inclusion was the result of existing and proved links between Rodríguez, other Venezuelan officers and close supporters of Hugo Chávez and the FARC. Concretely, they were accused of arming, encouraging and financing the FARC, a guerrilla organization that the U.S. defines as a terrorist group of drug traffickers. Washington

accused Rodríguez of being the “main contact for weapons traffic in the Venezuelan government and for facilitating a US\$250 million loan from the Venezuelan government to the FARC at the end of 2007” (Gomez Maseri 2008).

Two people survived the bombing by the Colombian government to the FARC’s camp and they remained for some weeks in Ecuador. Two months after Raúl Reyes death, the Nicaraguan government conceded political asylum to these two women and the Ecuadorian government authorized them to leave the country and travel to the Central American country. This provoked yet another diplomatic crisis among these three governments since it was later proved that these two women were active FARC members and they were being sheltered by the Nicaraguan government of Daniel Ortega (A Nicaragua Viajan Dos Colombianas Heridas En Ecuador 2008). The women still remained in Managua and they usually accompany Ortega in public settings and demonstrations. Months later, Ortega invited various other FARC members to join him in the celebration of the Sandinista Revolution anniversary. Even though Colombia asked the Interpol to circulate a note letting judicial authorities know about the guerrilla members trip, no one was captured (Interpol había alertado sobre supuesta movilización de integrantes de Farc hacia Nicaragua 2008) (Defiende "acogida humanitaria" de presuntas guerrilleras el vicepresidente de Nicaragua 2008). Later and again, thanks to Reyes’s computer, it was known that Alberto Bermudez, a member of the FARC’s international commission, had met with Miguel D’Escoto—back then Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs and currently the Nicaraguan Ambassador to the U.N.—and he expressed interest in meeting with members of the General Secretariat. Additionally, according to some of the e-mails found in the computer, Ortega was serving as an

intermediary between the FARC and the Libyan government in a transaction that would allow the insurgent organization to buy anti-aerial missiles to react against the U.S.-Colombian aerial operations (Justicia 2008).

The Participation of Switzerland and the Gotard Affair

In July 2008 another debate on the role of international actors in the Colombian conflict began. This time the central figure was Jean Pierre Gotard, a Swiss citizen who had been acting as a mediator for the liberation of hostages with the authorization of the Colombian government. Gotard, an external adviser for the Swiss government, visited in numerous occasions the Détente Zone during the peace process with the Pastrana administration and he convinced the FARC to liberate two foreigners. The Colombian government found evidence of this transaction in Reyes's computer: Gotard appeared there as the bearer of US\$500.000 that the government confiscated from the FARC in San José de Costa Rica. Apparently, this was the amount of money it paid to the FARC for the liberation of these two people. But the Colombian government found more evidence of Gotard's relationship with the FARC: he was a professor of many Colombian students in Switzerland, among them, the son of 'Alfonso Cano', FARC's main head commander after 'Sure-shot's death in 2008 (Apoyo Del Gobierno De Suiza Al Intercambio Humanitario Sigue Firme, Dice Embajada En Bogotá 37 Correos De Pc De 'Reyes', Sombra Sobre Gestión De Facilitador Suizo Gontard Fue Profesor Del Hijo De 'Cano' 2008). The Colombian Attorney General decided to open a formal judicial process and to call Gotard to give testimony, but only hours after, the Swiss government asked the Colombian government "to cease its attacks against Gotard" (Suiza Pide No 'Atacar' Más A Gontard 2008). Colombian Minister of Defense Juan Manuel Santos had

accused Gotard, some Swiss non-governmental organizations and the Swiss government itself, of supporting the FARC, or at least, of allowing them to enter and exit the country easily (Afp 2007).

Also due to the computer content, both Colombian and European authorities identified 8 citizens from different European countries, key elements of FARC's international network. They captured a Spanish citizen and fully identified other three Spanish collaborators. In the list there is also a Danish citizen who was in charge of contacts in Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen and also in charge of Anncol, FARC's internet information service. Some of the information in the computer suggests that he also helped the FARC contact labor unions in Denmark and obtain resources for the organization from the Sweden government and from labor unions in the U.K. (Investigativa 2008). Two Italian citizens—alias Ramón and Consuelo—that belong to the re-founded Communist Party in Italy publically accepted they had a political relation with the FARC (Dos Italianos Admiten Tener Nexos 'Político' Con Las Farc 2008).

In spite of increasing evidence, analysts coincide in suggesting that the FARC actually does not have an International Front: "It is still a very parochial guerrilla. These are just small enclaves of supporters, it is nothing, it does not count. Any other guerrilla in the world has had people, commanders that produced texts and theoretical analysis that seduced people outside (...) Even in Cambodia with the Pol Pot, there was intellectuals, even French intellectuals, that said this was a guerrilla who wanted to reinvent the human being. I have never seen an intellectual text, by analysts saying that these FARC people are going to create a new society (Soto 2008). In conclusion, even though this insurgent organization has increasingly contacted international actors during the last decade, its

efforts still do not amount to the parallel diplomacy the Salvadorian FMLN implemented during the 1980s.

ELN

During the 70s, the first group in designing a clear international strategy with concrete goals was the ELN. The strategy was published in 1989 in a document called '*Cartilla de Trabajo Internacional*'. The group highlighted in these documents what the ELN called '*Colectivo de Trabajo Internacional*' which was "oriented not only toward obtaining solidarity, but also to add other elements of political and diplomatic struggle, overcoming the national framework in order to conquer international recognition for the revolutionary project and to facilitate the relationship with other states and political forces. International work broadens political frontiers and contributes to the process of force accumulation" (La Guerra Diplomática 2000). The original headquarters of the *Colectivo de Trabajo Internacional* were located in Cuba at the end of 1990. This is considered the first diplomatic stage of the ELN. During this phase they started contacting subversive movements and politicians through the continent. Due to geographic proximity the first ones in the list of contacts were Central American organizations such as the FMLN and the URNG.

The second phase of the *Colectivo* started at the end of 1991 and it was directed to strengthening and broadening relationships with South America. The first ones were insurgent organizations such as *Túpac Amaru* in Perú and the *Movimiento Revolucionario Patria Libre* from Paraguay. However, work with leftist groups in South America was broader than in Central America and strategically more important. The third and last

phase was marked by the Third Congress of the ELN in 1996, considered the most important international phase of this guerrilla organization (La Guerra Diplomática 2000).

Political Internationalization: Germany

But even before the internationalization strategy took shape in the form of this *colectivo*, the ELN started its contacts with the German government. The relationship between Helmut Kohl and the ELN started in 1983 when this insurgent group was militarily weak and had no financial support of any sort. The ELN, in sum, was about to disappear. At this moment, one of the most important German oil companies—Manessmann—arrived in Colombia to construct the Caño-Limón-Coveñas oil pipeline. The ELN kidnapped four engineers from that company and demanded a millionaire ransom. Nobody in Colombia ever knew the exact amount of money the company paid for the release of the hostages but it is said that it was about 8 million dollars. The company paid four million to the ELN directly and the rest was paid in social and educational investment, health, roads, and water systems in the areas where the company just started to function. Some media versions point out that in the negotiation with the company, the ELN even asked the Germans to attach to their cars a label saying ‘Manessmann has a heart for the children.’ Thanks to Manessmann’s resources the ELN revived.

After this kidnapping, Helmut Kohl decided to ask his Minister of State—Bernd Schmidbauer—to be in charge of the issue. He hired a couple of spies—Werner Mauss and his wife Isabel—to negotiate with the ELN. They arrived in Colombia in July 1983. Mauss and the *elenos* sympathized immediately. The Mauss negotiated with the ELN

and made them promised that they will not kidnap more Manessmann workers. But soon enough, in May 1988, they kidnapped two German consuls, two Swiss officials, a French diplomat, a Sweden social worker and six journalists (included two foreign correspondents). This was all part of an oil nationalization campaign called ‘Vida y Soberanía Manuel Gustavo Chacón.’ At the end of 1988, and as a result of negotiations, an insurgent delegation traveled to Germany, visited the German parliament and European human rights organizations.

The Mauss couple was commissioned to work in another country from 1990 until 1995 and this lowered the profile of the relationship between the insurgent group and the German government. But during the summer of 1995 the Mauss couple went back to Colombia, obeying Schmidbauer’s orders to explore the ELN’s willingness to negotiate with the Samper administration. The Mauss returned to Germany with a draft document about peace and the ELN’s petition to coordinate another trip to Europe. As a result, at the beginning of 1996, Antonio García and 18 guerrilla men traveled to Spain, Switzerland, France, Italy, Netherlands and Norway. They also visited the Vatican where the initiation of the peace process was blessed by the Catholic Church and the Vatican was invited to participate in the project. The president of the German Episcopal conference, Karl Lehman, was designated to accomplish this mission. The dialogues between Germany and Colombia continued during the summer of 1996. As Horacio Serpa—Colombian Minister of Interior during Samper’s administration—narrates it, “during that time, we met twice with chancellor Schmidbauer, the Colombian ambassador in Germany and the Mauss. We had a private lunch to analyze the ELN’s proposal. That same meeting took place in New York when president Samper

participated in a U.N. General Assembly meeting. I think that at that moment there was a lot of interest from the German government to encourage the peace process with the ELN” (El ELN y los Alemanes 1999).

The relationship between the German government and the ELN took a drastic turn also in 1996 and contributed to the military revival of the insurgent movement after a long period of crisis. During this year, the ELN kidnapped the German citizen, Brigitte Schöنة, the wife of former Basf’s³³ president in Colombia. They requested a ransom of 1.5 million dollars and through a process that is still not publicly known, the German government was involved and later decided to support the ELN in its attempt to find a political solution to the conflict. This happened at the end of the Samper administration and Germany’s participation in the Colombian peace process was an important part of the international platform for Helmut Kohl’s reelection. The Mauss went to Colombia to try to negotiate with the ELN the liberation of Brigitte Schöنة and when they were going on board of an airplane in Ríonegro, Antioquia, the Mauss couple were detained by the anti-kidnapping police and accused by the General Attorney’s office of kidnapping for ransom. The Mauss went to jail and the peace process was suspended. They were released after spending 8 months in prison and thanks to various diplomatic efforts from the German government.

In July 1998, the Kohl government, the Mauss and the German church organized a meeting in a monastery called Puerta del Cielo with Colombian civil society representatives and with ELN representatives. Pablo Beltrán, third in command in the

³³ BASF is a German chemical company and its portfolio ranges from chemicals, plastics, performance products, agricultural products and fine chemicals to crude oil and natural gas.

ELN, guided the conversations. However, they were running out of time and the imminent triumph of the opposition party led by Andrés Pastrana made the ELN suspend the dialogues with the then lame duck government of Ernesto Samper. With Andrés Pastrana as the president in Colombia and Gerhard Schröder as Chancellor in Germany, the peace efforts ended: “Neither Pastrana wanted to know about Samper’s allies, nor Schroeder wanted to know about Kohl’s” (El ELN y los Alemanes 1999).

In April 1999, right at the beginning of Pastrana’s administration, the ELN hijacked an Avianca domestic flight with 46 passengers and crew on board. Just one month later, this same insurgent group attempted to kidnap an entire congregation at La Maria church in Cali and escaped with 63 people. As a response, the government suspended peace talks with the ELN and revoked its political status. During this time, Schmidbauer—now a congressman, the Mauss and Nicolás Bautista alias Gabino, met in Germany to try to convince the international community and the church that the ELN kidnap of church attendants pursued only a political end: to press for negotiations with the Pastrana administration (Altibajos de Una Mediacion 1999; El ELN y los Alemanes 1999). Gabino in an attempt to politically internationalize negotiations, conditioned the liberation of hostages to the participation of Germany in the peace process: they made this request to Guillermo Fernández, Colombia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, and both parties finally agreed upon the participation of three German legislators. Bern Schimdtbauer, Karen Kartham y Frantz Henpel would represent the German government and, the governor of the Venezuelan province of Zulia, Francisco Arias, and Venezuelan Ambassador in Colombia, Fernando Gerbasi, would represent the Venezuelan government. A Spanish diplomat and ex-Ambassador in Colombia, Yago Pico de Coaña,

would also be present in the negotiations (Mediacion Extranjera Para Liberacion 1999) (Gabino Presiona Mediacion Alemana 1999). The German government neither accepted nor refused the involvement of the congressmen in the process of liberating the hostages but did not accept additional involvement (Cano Correa 1999).

By June 1999, the links between the ELN and various German governmental officers became again, subject of debate. A special report published by *Semana*—a weekly magazine of national circulation—elaborated on the nature of the relationship between Germany and the ELN. It highlighted that these links had been active for about 17 years and that both the ELN and the Germans had their own interests in this alliance. For the ELN, the main objective was to open the European Union doors in order to obtain political recognition from its governments and from different human rights organizations in the old continent. Facts have demonstrated, according to the publication, that the ELN has taken great steps in this direction.

The Group of Friends during the Pastrana Peace Process

After many families paid millionaire ransoms and the government and the ELN negotiated an agreement, the hostages were liberated and the peace negotiations continued. The parties agreed upon inviting further involvement from the international community through a Group of Friends composed by five countries that would serve as facilitators. They would give strength and security to the various commitments that parties would eventually agree upon, and they would serve as honor witness of those agreements the parties construct. The group would also be in charge of humanitarian tasks, advising, logistic, political and financial support, and when it was required, it would serve as mediator (Definida Participacion Internacional 2000). In July 2000, the

government and the ELN designated France, Spain, Norway, Switzerland and Cuba as members of the Group of Friends (Nombrados Paises Amigos Con ELN 2000). In August, the parties wrote a document in which they specified the parameters the Group of Friends would follow during the peace process (Paz 2000).

After various periods of crisis, the ELN and the government continued talks in Havana thanks in part to the direct mediation of president Fidel Castro (*¿Cómo Sería una Guerra Total?* 2002). In May 2002, Pastrana suspended peace talks with the ELN, claiming that they were not committed to peace. The peace process was postponed until the new president would be elected.

Mexico

In June 2004, the Uribe administration attempted, for the first time, to establish negotiations with this insurgent group. Both ELN and government agreed upon requesting the Mexican president Vicente Fox to act as a mediator for an initial round of negotiations (*Faltan Recursos para la Verificación* 2004). Less than a year later, in April 2005, Mexico unilaterally decided to finish its mission as mediator in the process. The decision was the result of various events but the most immediate one was a letter written by the ELN Central Command in which they criticized Mexico's decision to vote against Cuba in the U.N. Human Rights Commission and the anti-democratic official posture against Manuel Pérez Obrador, after the presidential elections of that year.³⁴ But the

³⁴ Pérez Obrador held the position of Mayor of Mexico City from 2000 to 2005, before resigning in July 2005 to contend the 2006 presidential election, representing the Coalition for the Good of All, a PRD-led coalition that also includes the Convergence party and the Labor Party. In 2006 the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) announced the final vote count in the 2006 presidential election, resulting in a narrow margin of 0.56 percentage points of victory for his opponent, Felipe Calderón. López Obrador appealed against the results and mobilized large protests against the election. However, on 5 September 2006, the

ELN had previously complained about the Mexican mediation since it considered that the Mexican government was closer to the government's position than to that of their own. The tone of the complaint and the constant ambiguity by the Colombian government left the Mexican government no choice but to leave the negotiation table (México Renunció A La Facilitación Con El Eln 2005). In spite of this, negotiations continued and even went beyond the exploration phase. In December 2005 both parties decided to advance toward the definition of a negotiation agenda (Lopez de Guerenó 2005). By August 2007 dialogues were suspended and resumed in November 2007 when Venezuelan president Chavez acted as a mediator.

Venezuela

Even president Pastrana recognized that during negotiations, the ELN was substantially more open than the FARC to the participation of international actors (Pastrana 2005, p. 78; 2006, p. 78). But the ELN was also contacting actors outside of the negotiations itself. The organization strengthened its relationship with neighboring countries, especially with Venezuela: in October 1998, Andres Oppenheimer and Tim Johnson from the Miami Herald published an article in which they denounced the existing links between Chávez and insurgent groups such as the ELN in Colombia. They revealed the existence of a connection between high profile Venezuelan intelligence officers and FARC commanders and, provided evidence of at least a dozen meetings since 1996. But the main contacts, according to the article, were with the ELN and started in 1995 when Chávez and Nicolás Rodríguez—alias Gabino, met in Arauca, a

Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF) ruled that the election was fair and that Felipe Calderón was winner and would become President of Mexico.

border province in Colombia. The article also mentioned an intercepted communication between ELN head commanders of the Armando Cagua and the Domingo Laín fronts. The ELN denied the existence of any of these contacts though (Relaciones Peligrosas 1998).

Finally, in February 2008 the ELN sent a communiqué in which they asserted they have been complying with International Humanitarian Law and therefore, they should be recognized as a belligerent force. This was a straight response to Venezuelan President Chavez, who after facilitating the liberation of an important group of FARC hostages suggested the FARC and ELN should be granted status as a belligerent force. The ELN argued that “the organization fulfilled the requirements on the humanization of the conflict and it fulfilled International Humanitarian Law” (‘Gabino’ considera que el Eln “merece” el estatus de beligerancia 2008) (ELN acogió propuesta de reconocer beligerancia a guerrillas e insistió en humanización de la guerra 2008).

Even though none of the Colombian guerrilla organizations was as internationalized as the Salvadorian FMLN, it is important to highlight that those with a strong urban middle class component and origins related to the Cuban revolution were more likely to develop links with international actors. The FARC, even though a Marxist organization, had a wide peasant base and adopted in a more systematic way nationalist world views, both in peace and war. Hence, it is an organization more reticent to accept or invite international actors to participate in the conflict. However, there is a salient change in this attitude that takes place during the peace process with the Pastrana administration. During negotiations, the FARC was more systematically exposed to

international actors and had the chance to learn more about the possibilities and the risks that the implementation of an internationalization strategy might eventually offer. This factor and a previous disposition to find international legitimacy through the international legal recognition of its status as a belligerent organization, transformed its posture vis-à-vis international actors and vis-à-vis the advantages of military and politically internationalizing.

Chapter 5. El Salvador

The civil war in El Salvador constitutes a special scenario to observe why and how the internationalization of domestic conflicts takes place, since international actors actively participated during both the military confrontation and the peace process. In this chapter, I intend to trace and explain the process through which domestic actors decided to invite external actors to be part of their internal struggle and I also explain their motivations to do so. I describe how almost all possible forms of internationalization are present at different stages of the conflict and the peace dialogues: each actor in this conflict used various types of internationalization such as asking for military assistance, bilateral economic aid, logistic and training assistance and legitimacy (Grabendorff 1984, p. 168). Parties to the conflict invited external actors that were equally diverse. The United States, Mexico, France, Colombia and Venezuela, revolutionary governments such as Cuba and Nicaragua, and international organizations such as the United Nations, were all decisive at different stages of both war and peace. In this chapter I try to reconstruct the process through which these different types of internationalization took place.

In El Salvador, internationalization was a strategy parties to the conflict used in order to strengthen their military position and to obtain legitimacy, both in times of war and in times of peace dialogues. In the case of the government, a military alliance with the United States was constructed in order to obtain resources to improve the government's military position vis-à-vis the insurgency. This alliance was facilitated, as I show, by the constitution of a U.S. and Salvadorian shared world view: the need to combat, at home and abroad, the threat of communism and the USSR's attempts of

expansion. The Salvadorian government engaged in framing in order to construct a shared world views and a joint course of action with the U.S. It strategically framed local guerrillas as a form of this communist expansion and through this, it obtained Washington's attention and resources. In the case of the insurgency, alliances with other insurgent organizations, with revolutionary governments in Cuba and Nicaragua, and with more moderate international actors such as France and Mexico, were also intended to improve its political and military position. Such a strategy was possible because the FMLN had a strong middle class urban base and leadership that found a common worldview with other revolutionary organizations and governments in the area. Internationalization was easier to achieve also because various international actors were willing to provide help due to the international dynamics and context in which the war took place. This help, constituted an opportunity for each party to improve its own military and political position vis-à-vis its counterpart. This premise is also applicable to the other cases I analyze through the text. However, in the Salvadorian case, there is yet another factor that explains not only why internationalization took place, but also why it takes its very specific form.

In El Salvador *each internationalization strategy facilitated a very special type of internal transformation within each party to the conflict.* In other words, internationalization in El Salvador took place due to three sets of circumstances: first, each party wanted to use internationalization to improve its position vis-à-vis the other; second, and as I stated before, there were shared world views among parties to the conflict and external actors that facilitated this task; and third, internationalization was also a strategy groups within each party to the conflict used to ideologically and

politically orient the whole party toward certain direction and objectives. That is, internationalization also took place due to internal fragmentation.

More specifically, certain actors within each group (the state and the insurgency) decided to 'use' international actors in order to strengthen their own sub-group's position and in order to weaken others' position within the coalition. Hence, these sub-groups' interests adopted various forms in the case of the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) and the Salvadorian government. The FMLN was a broad coalition of leftist armed and un-armed movements and, in this case internationalization was used to favor the most progressive/liberal wing of the movement and to isolate and debilitate the most radical members. Internationalization contributed to ideologically, politically and militarily re-orienting the coalition. The Salvadorian government attempted to internationalize the conflict with a very similar objective in mind. As Stanley suggests, "state violence was not only a response to opposition but also a means of competition for state power, a way of blocking reformist impulses and reformist leaders" (Stanley 1996, p. 5). In this sense, "the Salvadorian military state was essentially a protection racket: the military earned the concession to govern the country (and pillage the state) in exchange for its willingness to use violence against class enemies of the country's relatively small but powerful economic elite (Stanley 1996, pp. 6-7). Hence, governmental internationalization (and more specifically, U.S. military support) was achieving two compatible purposes: first, it was a mechanism the military used to strengthen their position vis-à-vis armed and un-armed reformist impulses. Second, the alliance with the U.S., especially during the Reagan administration, simultaneously and constantly fed a strong counterinsurgency discourse (compatible with the very widespread cold war logic)

which in turn, legitimated the absence of the political elite in the government and justified the militarization of politics in El Salvador.

But fragmentation has another dimension that directly affected internationalization strategies adopted in El Salvador. The United States, as the main target of the Salvadorian government's military internationalization strategy, was also internally fragmented. The divisions between the Executive and the Legislative, as I show in this chapter, made the implementation of the internationalization strategy more challenging and ultimately, the U.S. Congress seriously hindered the delivery of military and logistic support to El Salvador. In this aspect, the Colombian and Salvadorian government have faced the same type of obstacle in attempting to advance their military internationalization strategy.

In this chapter, I explore the most important instances of internationalization in El Salvador in order to support these arguments. I start by exploring the most relevant and visible processes of internationalization advanced by the FMLN, starting with the Franco-Mexican Communiqué. I also explain the insurgency's internationalization strategy at the United Nations. Especially for the FMLN, this was an important step in its transition toward civilian life and toward its insertion into the Salvadorian political and electoral competition. The United Nations is the scenario where an important part of the terms of reference for the settlement are negotiated and this is why the organization constitutes a crucial mechanism both parties used in order to design and implement their internationalization strategies. Then I examine the most important form of internationalization advanced by the Salvadorian government: its alliance with the United States in its war against the insurgency. I also explore another form of

internationalization advanced by the government, that is, the alliances with regional governments and the participation in regional multilateral mechanisms, such as Contadora and Esquipulas. I use this as an introduction to explore, in the final section of this chapter, the different attempts by the government to internationalize (and also de-internationalize) the last stage of the conflict through the United Nations. Indeed, the United Nations constituted the scenario in which both government and insurgency attempted to accumulate political capital by achieving recognition and by legitimating their activities as parties to the conflict.

In the late 1880s, coffee became a major cash crop for El Salvador, bringing in 95% of the country's income. This wealth was confined within only 2% of the population, the traditional Salvadorian elites, and this situation facilitated the emergence of social and economic tensions between these particularly small elites and a vast majority of the population. In 1932, Augustin Farabundo Martí formed the Central American Socialist Party and led oppressed and impoverished sectors of the population against the government. In response, the government supported military death squads which killed anyone who may have supported the uprising. The killing became known as La Matanza (the Massacre) and left more than 30,000 people dead. Martí was arrested and put to death. The struggle continued through the 1970s and both sides continued to fight back and forth in an endless string of assassinations and coups. The presence of guerillas grew and the military reinstated the death squads in order to combat the rebel forces. In 1980, after various insurgent groups formed a coalition inspired by Augusto Farabundo Martí's struggle in the 30s, denominated the FMLN (Farabundo Martí

National Liberation Front), El Salvador' civil war officially began. Over the ensuing twelve years, about 75,000 people died as result of this war.

The FMLN and its internationalization strategy

The FMLN coalition was composed both by armed movements and one opposition party. The insurgent movements were the most important in El Salvador: the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación—Popular Liberation Forces (FPL) were founded in 1970, they separated from the Communist Party at the beginning of the 70s after a long ideological dispute and then adopted a stance closer to the Cuban revolution. Another member was the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—People's Revolutionary Army (ERP) founded in 1971 and also formed by a dissident group from the Communist Party and by a dissident group from the Christian Democratic Party and members of the Salvadorian bourgeoisie. This faction was later considered the most militaristic element of the FMLN. A third member was the Resistencia Nacional—National Resistance (RN) a dissident group from the ERP that advocated the political struggle of the masses over a military group strategy. This group was composed mainly by catholic elements from the ERP and, as a consequence, it was the first one in establishing strong links with the Catholic Church. Later the RN formed the FARN—Fuerzas Armadas de Resistencia Nacional—National Resistance Armed Forces. These three groups (the FPL, the ERP and the FARN) together with the Salvadorian Communist Party (PCS) integrated in May 1980 the Dirección Unificada de las Organizaciones Político Militares—Unified Direction of Political and Military Organizations (DRU). In October of this same year, the DRU joined forces with the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores Centroamericanos—Central American Workers Revolutionary Party (PRTC)—born in

1976 to finally create the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional—
Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

At the end of 1980 the alliance between the FMLN with the FDR—Revolutionary Democratic Front—was formally announced. The FDR was a non-armed democratic organization that emerged from the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas—
Revolutionary Coordination of the Masses (CRM) and various social-democratic and progressive forces in El Salvador. The CRM, in turn, was a coalition of the Bloque Popular Revolucionario—Popular Revolutionary Block (BPR) created in 1975 and linked to the ERP; the Frente de Acción Unificada—Unified Action Front (FAPU) created in 1974 and linked to the FARN; the Partido Unión Democrática Nacionalista—Nationalist Democratic Union Party (UDN) created in 1970 by the Communist Party as its electoral organization; and, the Ligas Populares 28 de Febrero —Popular Leagues February 28th (LP-28) created in 1975 and linked to the ERP. The FDR was founded after the assassination of Archbishop Romero in 1980, and later that same year, the alliance between the FMLN and the FDR was announced.

Joaquín Villalobos was the founder in 1972 and the main leader of one of these organizations, the ERP. He defines three fundamental components of the FMLN's internationalization strategy: the military, the political and the economic element. He asserts that the two most important countries that contributed to the FMLN strategy by providing arms and military assistance were Nicaragua and Cuba. The most crucial ally in terms of politics, he argues, was Mexico. And finally, Europe and the United States were the most relevant economic contributors to the insurgent organization, mainly

through non-governmental organizations located in those countries, according to Villalobos.³⁵

FMLN's Military Internationalization: Cuba and Nicaragua

The alliance between the FMLN, Nicaragua and Cuba was known by the U.S. government. By 1980, the year the FMLN coalition was born, Washington was already aware that “leftist extremists are increasing the size and sophistication of their armaments with Cuban assistance, are laying the logistic groundwork for resupply especially through the porous Honduran border. (...) Arms, including antitank weapons and submachine guns, have also been received from Sandinista elements in Nicaragua and from Guatemalan guerrilla groups” (Growth and Prospects of Leftist Extremists in El Salvador, Classification Excised, Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, January 1980). In June 1980, a Panamanian registered aircraft carrying munitions crashed providing “the most obvious evidence to date of gun running to Central American revolutionaries.” The CIA reported that “arms come primarily from stocks left over from the conflict in Nicaragua or from supplies purchased on the illegal international market. Some reportedly have been donated by revolutionary sympathizers around the world, including Cuba, the USSR, and the Palestine Liberation Organization” (Arms Trafficking in Central America, Classification Excised, Memorandum, October 1980). Castro himself admitted that most of the weapons the FMLN employed came from Saigon and they were donated by Vietnam to Cuba, and from Cuba to the Salvadorian guerrilla (Castro Ruz 2008, p. 6).

³⁵ Author's translation of the author's interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

The explanation for this military alliance has an important ideological and strategic component. Ideologically, *Sandinismo* represented the less dogmatic and more liberal version of the insurgency in Nicaragua. This orientation allowed, according to Villalobos, a more fluid relationship with the also progressive moderate wing of the FMLN he represented. In other words, a common view in terms of how to advance the revolution existed between the moderate sector within the FMLN coalition and the Nicaraguan *Sandinistas*.

The empathy with Castro was of a very different kind. Villalobos describes it in the following way:

“Fidel Castro is a fighter and he is going to die in his olive green uniform because he belongs to a generation that saw the worst of the United States; hence, he has a historical perspective. (...) He had a great empathy for those of us who he perceived on his side and that worked effectively, but I did not talk much about politics with him. I think that deep inside, he knew we were not going to be compatible. But in war, we were. Fidel was an admirer of our guerrilla fighters. (...) In 1982, in one of my trips to Cuba, I saw him and he gave me 12 rifles for the main commanders, including mine.”³⁶

In other words, an ideological alignment between Villalobos’ moderate wing within the FMLN and the Sandinismo can explain the alliance with Nicaragua, while a shared militaristic perspective might help understand the relationship with Cuba. Both sets of understandings can be defined as worldviews on the nature of revolution in the region. These shared agendas and views on the purposes of insurgency and its method explain the form insurgency’s international alliances adopt in the Salvadorian case, and also and more recently, in Colombia. But the Cubans also had a strong disposition to participate in Central American countries because they thought they knew more about

³⁶ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

how to advance a revolution, since they have the resources and since most Latin American guerrillas look up to them (Castañeda 1993, pp. 64-65). After 1979, this was also the case of *Sandinismo* in Nicaragua. In sum, the FMLN's military internationalization strategy toward revolutionary governments took place and was successful not only because those governments were willing to participate and help these guerrilla organizations in their struggle, but also because there was a shared world view on how the war should be fought and what objectives they had to pursue.

Political Internationalization I: The Franco-Mexican Communiqué

Evidence of the FMLN's strong emphasis on its political internationalization strategy and this group's emphasis on obtaining international legitimacy is the almost institutionalized level that its foreign representations reached, right at the moment of its creation. In 1980, the FDR and FMLN called a press conference in Mexico City to announce the formation of their Political-Diplomatic Commission (CPD). The body was composed by seven members. One of them, Guillermo Manuel Ungo was Napoleón Duarte's running mate in 1972 and had served in the first junta after the October 1979 coup. Ungo had been elected president of the FDR following the assassination of Enrique Álvarez Córdova. He was, in sum, a prominent and maybe the most important member of the un-armed democratic left in El Salvador. He clearly stated at the press conference that the purpose of the CPD was to represent the FDR/FMLN in the international arena. In the following months, the CPD acquired the character of a foreign ministry and its members began traveling around the world in search of support from governments, political parties, and international organizations. Ungo had strong ties to the Socialist International and was particularly effective in garnering support in Europe.

Meanwhile, the FDR/FMLN sent official representatives—the equivalent of ambassadors—to thirty-three countries. An FMLN leader commented that “this was ‘not only more missions than the Salvadorian government has embassies,’ but that these representatives ‘exercise a stronger presence.’ In other words, the FDR/FMLN was aggressively seeking out government ministers and legislators as well as talking to the media and citizens’ groups on a daily basis” (Montgomery 1995, p. 114). In addition to the CPD, the FDR/FMLN created the International Relations Commission, which was responsible for developing international solidarity among the citizenry of various countries and for overseeing social and relief work connected with the hundreds of thousands of Salvadorians who, beginning in early 1980, were fleeing their own country and seeking refuge in countries from the United States to Panama” (Montgomery 1982, p. 140).

This sort of ‘diplomatic infrastructure’ facilitated the construction of political alliances. The main result of this strategy was a communiqué France and Mexico emitted in September 1981. I partially transcribed the content of the communiqué here:

“Both governments recognize that the alliance between the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) constitutes a representative political force willing to assume the obligations and rights that derive from its status. Consequently, it is legitimate that this alliance participated in the construction of negotiation mechanisms, necessary in order to achieve a political solution to the crisis” (La Declaración Franco-Méxicana 1981).³⁷

This declaration is crucial and dramatically changed the nature of the Salvadorian conflict for various reasons. First of all, through this document, both governments declared their recognition of the Salvadorian FMLN as being at war with the regime and

³⁷ Author’s translation.

began a diplomatic offensive to solve the conflict on the basis of negotiations (Jung 1984, p. 82). It went against the government's theory that the conflict in El Salvador was not a civil war and therefore, it undermined the idea that only a governmental victory through mere military means was possible. Second, with this declaration, the brand new coalition of insurgent movements called attention to its cause and obtained international recognition. The declaration conceded legitimacy to the FMLN's political existence and it debilitated, ostensibly, the Salvadorian government's domestic and international political position. To this extent, the FMLN satisfied one of the main interests that motivates internationalization: the communiqué strengthened the FMLN's political position by obtaining international legitimacy vis-à-vis the Salvadorian state. Third, the declaration highlighted a fundamental difference between the FMLN's internationalization strategy and the strategy advanced by other insurgent groups in the area, such as the URNG (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity) and the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). These guerrilla organizations never obtained such an important level of international visibility and recognition. In fact, none of them were awarded the status of belligerence by any international actor, even though, as I analyze in Chapter 4, the FARC is still trying to obtain this status through its alliance with the Venezuelan government. Hence, the Franco-Mexican communiqué constitutes a unique success story for the FMLN's political internationalization strategy and it reveals how for this organization, internationalization was a key component of its struggle against the state. This is not the case of insurgencies in either Guatemala or Colombia.

But even though evidence is scattered and the FMLN members decline to talk about the communiqué as part of their internationalization strategy, the declaration was,

to an important extent, the result of an intense diplomatic effort advanced by the FMLN. Joaquín Villalobos recognizes that the organization was consistently trying to obtain international recognition as a belligerent force, but he also suggests that there was an additional purpose. He describes it eloquently:

“We were running a risk, the risk that this conflict would result in (...) fundamentalist excesses from the right and the left. When Mexico and France recognized the FMLN as a representative force, politically, they made us subjects of international law and humanitarian international law. (...) We were wise enough to realize that there was a commitment. Given a government and a military force that was massacring and massively killing people, the Franco-Mexican declaration was our way to prevent the insurgency from becoming terrorism.”³⁸

Clearly, for the moderate wing of the FMLN led by Villalobos, the communiqué—as the result of an internationalization effort—was a tool they used in order to neutralize the more radical and Stalinist sectors of the organization. Internationalization was then a mechanism groups within the organization used in order to partially resolve, in their favor, confrontations that took place within the coalition. This in turn reveals that the FMLN experienced high levels of ideological diversity and internal fragmentation. Fragmentation, in turn, resulted from the fact that the FMLN was born as a coalition of moderate, radical, democratic and undemocratic sectors of the Salvadorian left.

Signs of a strong internal division emerged often. One of the most salient incidents that affected the FMLN’s internationalization strategy took place precisely in 1981, the year the coalition was founded. Through most of the year, the FMLN made clear its intention to negotiate a political solution to the Salvadorian conflict and

³⁸ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

consequently, they openly endorsed an international form of mediation to facilitate the negotiations. In March, the Socialist International Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean led a meeting in which FMLN head commanders made public this position. Hans Jurgen Wischnewski—head of the International Socialist—traveled various times to the region and met with Salvadorian president Napoleón Duarte. His mission was precisely to facilitate the beginning of peace talks. However, president Duarte did not accept the proposal because one of the most radical members of the FMLN, Salvador Cayetano Carpio, had leaked an internal document in which the FMLN explicitly asserted that they were using the negotiations and the international mediation just as a tactical maneuver (Samayoa 2003, p. 36). In Villalobos’s words, “the fundamentalist wing of the FMLN burned down the negotiations.”³⁹ To an extent, the radical wing of the FMLN led by Cayetano Carpio neutralized or hindered the more moderate attempt to internationalize and obtain legitimacy.

The tension between the liberal, progressive, pro-negotiation and pro-internationalization group and the more radical, dogmatic, anti-democratic, anti-negotiation and anti-internationalization wing was clear. The way in which Villalobos describes Cayetano Carpio and the group he represented unveils the content of the debate among FMLN’s members:

“Salvador Cayetano Carpio, was something like a contemporaneous Abimael Guzmán. A terrible guy. He was not liberal at all. He was a mix of Catholicism from the 30s (because he was a *seminarista*), but he was not a ‘theology of liberation’ type of catholic. Not at all. No, he was an even worse mix of

³⁹ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

Catholicism with Stalinism because he was educated in the Soviet Union. That guy was a serious thing.”⁴⁰

In this context, the Franco-Mexican declaration constitutes a “political reflex act.”⁴¹ It was the opportunity for moderates within the FMLN to push the whole organization toward their own political position. In fact, moderates actively participated in the agreement that led to the declaration. The idea was initially elaborated by Jorge Castañeda, the son of the then Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs (Castañeda himself became Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Fox administration). He first consulted Regis Debray (François Mitterrand’s political adviser), then he consulted the FMLN’s leader Salvador Samayoa and FDR’s Guillermo Ungo, “with whom Castañeda had a special friendship and political affinities” (Samayoa 2003, p. 37). Even though as Samayoa describes it, the process that led to the final declaration was initiated by Castañeda, the role of the FMLN was still of crucial importance in the process of consultation advanced by Castañeda. Again, there is no evidence that the declaration was only the result of the insurgency initiative. This sort of evidence would be hard to find since asserting that the FMLN created and promoted the communiqué would portray the Mexican and French governments just as instruments of the FMLN and its internationalization strategy. However, I have provided evidence that supports the fact that FMLN’s head commanders acknowledged the importance of achieving international recognition and saw in the declaration, an important opportunity to provoke internal transformations in their own organization.

⁴⁰ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

⁴¹ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

After informal conversations that included consultations with the FMLN, the official diplomatic process took place: Mexico sent Ambassador Porfirio Muñoz to negotiate the terms of the declaration with the French Government and both Castañedas (father and son) participated directly in the process. The FMLN-FDR accompanied closely the process, “Guillermo Ungo, Héctor Oquelí and Salvador Samayoa traveled to Paris so they could keep contact with Mexican and French representatives during the discussions” (Samayoa 2003, pp. 37-38).

Again, the declaration was actively promoted by the moderate wing of the FMLN because it satisfied their interests in two ways. It was first and most importantly an international document that supported the existence of the insurgent group as a political actor and the negotiated resolution to the conflict—one of the FMLN’s key proposals. Second, it strengthened the moderate group within the organization and pushed it toward a more democratic stance. The radical wing was inevitably weakened. But the satisfaction of the insurgency’s objectives would have not been possible without a clear convergence of interests between the FMLN on one side, and Mexico and France on the other. Both Mexico and France had their own agenda and their own stakes. Their interests put these two governments in a political position closer to the insurgent group than to the Salvadorian government and it was this closeness what made the declaration possible.

The Allies: France and Mexico

France and Mexico were against interpreting the situation in Central America as another scenario of the confrontation between Cold War superpowers, an interpretation strongly opposed to the U.S. Both were vigorous opponents to American and Soviet

expansionism and saw in them, the potential for further international instability.

Hence they supported a negotiated solution to the conflict and openly refused to support the Salvadorian government or the radical faction of the FMLN. For them, backing the Salvadorian government and its main ally, the U.S., would provide the Soviets with the political opportunity and the propaganda they needed to export communism; supporting the anti-negotiation faction of the FMLN would imply support for a coup d'état and the end of possibilities for a legitimate democracy in El Salvador.

It is widely known that Mexico's foreign policy toward Central America during the 1980s was highly autonomous; it attempted to constitute a real alternative to the open and flagrant U.S. interventionism in this area. In the case of El Salvador, the López Portillo administration (1976-1982) actively worked toward securing a negotiated settlement of the civil war. Its policies were characterized by an opposition to the Salvadoran military, the right-wing parties, and the Christian Democrats and a strong political support to the armed and un-armed left. Even though Mexico distanced itself from the Salvadoran government through such policies, "it did not break diplomatic relations with El Salvador as it had done with the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. (...) It appears that both the Mexican government and the Salvadoran left wanted relations to be maintained in order to allow Mexico to continue to play a mediating role in El Salvador, a role that would have been impossible had relations been broken altogether" (Bagley 1984, pp. 268-269). Its links with the FMLN were clear and with time, they had been openly recognized by all the protagonists of this story. In his book, Salvador Samayoa (one of the FMLN head commanders) describes in the introduction his very special relationship with Castañeda and the officers of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He describes Mexico as his 'second homeland,' a very hospitable country that allowed the FMLN to continue their functioning from their headquarters located in a flat on the Calle Benjamín Franklin, Mexico D.F. He finally narrates how he went back to El Salvador in 1992, with many head members of the FMLN on board of the Mexican presidential airplane (Samayoa 2003, pp. 19-20).

According to Wolf Grabendorff, during this juncture Mexico had a positive attitude toward political change in Central America on account of its own revolutionary past and its long experience in dealing with revolutionary regimes. "Mexico's confidence in its own 'revolutionary political system' was so strong that the revolutionary disputes in neighboring nations were regarded not only with calmness but even with certain satisfaction. Mexico considered every interference by the United States in Central America's process of change to be of graver consequences than the instabilities connected with this process of change. Mexico also appeared to be willing to accept one or several socialist nations in Central America. Its long-term interests are most likely aimed at integrating, rather than isolating, such nations in a regional subsystem of the future." (Grabendorff 1984, pp. 162-163). Mexico's strategy stressed its own revolutionary tradition and provided the guerrilla groups with at least political, and probably also financial support. Through its diplomatic actions, it paved their way to international respectability. Mexico's interest was evidently attempting a "long-term consolidation of its status as a dominant power vis-à-vis the new and old elites in the region, beyond the current conflict constellations" (Grabendorff 1984, pp. 162-163).

The López Portillo administration viewed the Reagan 'military' approach toward Central America as directly destabilizing for Mexico itself:

“first, as long as violence continues in Central America, Mexico will continue to be beset with economic and political refugees it can ill afford to receive, and its own internal political order will be increasingly threatened. (...) Second, the López Portillo government was convinced that by befriending revolutionary forces and governments in Central America, Mexico would be able to purchase a kind of ‘insurance policy’ against the export of revolution. The argument was that if the revolutionary Central America regimes were economically indebted to Mexico and in need of continued economic and technological support, it was unlikely that they would permit hostile acts against Mexico to be launched from their territory. The López Portillo government also believed that the chances of moderating the subsequent behavior of these regimes would be greater if a cooperative strategy was pursued. (...) (Finally), the Mexican authorities are aware that Mexico, unlike other Latin American countries, has an ‘institutionalized’ political left—made up mostly of intellectuals, journalists, students, some union leaders, and the left parties—that they must take into account, particularly in the area of foreign policy” (Bagley 1984, p. 263).

Timing was a key issue to bring the French government on board. Precisely in 1981, the leader of the Democratic Union of France, Valéry Giscard D’Estaing was replaced as president by the Socialist leader, François Mitterrand. Smith suggests that “the Socialist government’s Central America policy was distinctive in that it actively promoted a ‘Third Worldist’ orientation to the problems facing Central America. The Socialist Party rejected the view that the conflict was caused by the Communist subversion but considered that the crisis had arisen due to instability caused by socio-economic inequalities and poverty. *The Mitterrand approach to the South was that ‘to strengthen world peace the Third World must be taken out of the East-West conflict so that they be given a chance to develop rather than remaining pawns in the great power conflict’*” (Smith 1995, p. 129).

The difference between the French and the U.S. governments was about the means but not about the ends. France understood that in order to preserve international peace it was imperative to contain Soviet expansionism. However, instead of openly

opposing these insurgent movements through military means, Mitterrand considered that if they were offered support, their need to turn to the Soviet Union for help would disappear. A couple of Mitterrand's public statements demonstrate the French government's position:

“Communism is born out of misery and, if the West does not show more understanding, the people will take their weapons and try to find others' help, that is to say the Soviet Union. Thus we will end by pushing into the opponent's camp people who are not the natural adversaries of the West, but who will become that by the logic of the situation which we impose on them” (quoted in (Smith 1995, p. 131).

“I have serious reservations, not to say more, about the United States policy in Central America... What is happening there is not a Communist subversion, but resistance to misery and indignity. When (these people) cry for help, I would like Castro not to be the only one who can hear them” (quoted in (Smith 1995, p. 133).

In sum, both countries were following a trend in terms of foreign policy that clearly facilitated the elaboration of the declaration, in particular, and a pro-FMLN policy, in general. The FMLN, in turn, did not hesitate and seized the opportunity. The organization rapidly and skillfully recognized the potential for allies and for a positive and productive internationalization process that in search of legitimacy that Mexico and France offered. The FMLN participation in the design of the Franco-Mexican declaration constituted the beginning of the FMLN's political internationalization strategy, a strategy that attempted both to consolidate politically the insurgency and, to transform it ideologically and politically. In a sort of 'boomerang effect,' the insurgency found allies in the international system that would help it improve its political position in relation to the government and that would fundamentally strengthen the moderate components of the organization.

FMLN's Political Internationalization II: The United Nations

As I showed in the previous section, the creation of the FMLN insurgent coalition at the beginning of the 1980s marked the starting point of a diplomatic offensive directed to states and international organizations. As I suggested in Chapter 1, in this field, the Salvadorian state had a clear advantage over the FMLN: it was an actor already recognized by the international community and it was the active member of various important international organizations, among them, the United Nations; therefore, the United Nations environment was a familiar and to some extent, a friendly setting. However, it was not equally friendly to the FMLN. Precisely for this reason, the UN constituted the main multilateral scenario where the insurgency attempted to obtain international legitimacy, against the will of the Salvadorian state. A first and important step in terms of international recognition was given with the Franco-Mexican Declaration. But the FMLN had still to fight a tougher battle at the U.N. that I describe in this section.

The first instance of U.N. participation in El Salvador's conflict after the formal constitution of the FMLN was not so favorable for the Salvadorian state, in spite of its clear advantage over the insurgency as an active and recognized member of this organization. On December 15th 1980, the General Assembly of the United Nations in Resolution [A/RES/35/192](#) expressed *deep shock, profound indignation, and dismay* over the violation of human rights in El Salvador. The General Assembly called on the Salvadorian government to 'curb the reprehensible activities of paramilitary groups' and 'to take the necessary steps to ensure full respect for human rights.' The resolution also urged other governments to refrain from supplying arms to El Salvador. In terms of the

voting process, “the resolution carried with seventy affirmative votes, ten negative votes (El Salvador among them), and fifty-five abstaining votes (the United States among them)” (Fisher 1982, p. 25). It was clear at this point that for the FMLN, part of its political internationalization strategy consisted in denouncing the government’s responsibility in terms of human rights violations.

The FMLN decided to take an additional step in its internationalization strategy at the U.N. On October 7th 1981, the Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega read before the U.N. General Assembly an FDR-FMLN proposal for direct negotiations. In this proposal they stated:

“We would like to thank the solidarity of the governments and the peoples of Mexico and France, who have recognized our *Frente* as a representative political force, as well as the expressions and the initiatives of a majority of the countries in the international community in favor of a political solution (to the conflict) (...) “All this leads us to express our firm will to begin a dialogue with the civilian and military representatives that the *Junta* appoints to this effect, and to continue toward a peace process. (...)

“We would like to directly address the U.S. government to demand that it stops its military intervention in El Salvador, since this is contrary to the interests of the Salvadorian and the American people and it puts in danger the security and peace in Central America.

“Our position responds to a demand for justice compatible with International Law’s purest principles, the interest of all the nations and peoples of the world in their search for pacific solutions to the center of tensions” (Propuesta del FDR-FMLN para Negociaciones Directas, leida por el Comandante Nicaraguense Daniel Ortega en la Asamblea General de la ONU 1981).⁴²

Two months later, Mexico, along with France, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, Greece, Yugoslavia, Nicaragua, and Algeria, jointly sponsored a U.N. General Assembly Resolution on December 16th 1981, that stated conditions for free elections did not exist in El Salvador, expressed concern for the human rights situation and, endorsed a

⁴² Author’s translation.

peaceful settlement and a political solution to the conflict. However, the resolution did not provide a strong ground for the peace initiatives the FMLN was exploring: “It did not mention by its name the parties to the conflict and it did not make any reference to the applicability of Additional Protocols to the Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. In this sense, the demanded conduct to the parties was not covered by a proper supporting framework compatible with the premises of international law” (Samayoa 2003, p. 39). For the FMLN, the application of the Geneva Conventions constituted an implicit recognition of the Salvadorian struggle as a civil war or internal conflict. This would have been a step forward in their attempt to obtain international legitimacy and political recognition.

The terms of the resolution A/RES/37/185 of 1982 changed substantially though. First of all, the resolution, carefully worded, “*draws the attention* of all Salvadorian parties concerned to the fact that the rules of international law, as contained in article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 on the laws of war, *are applicable to armed conflicts not of an international character* and requests *all parties to the conflict* to apply a minimum standard of protection of human rights and of human treatment to the civilian population.” It also reiterated its appeal “to the Government and *other political forces* in El Salvador to work together towards a comprehensive negotiated political solution.” Clearly, a very important step toward fully recognizing the FMLN as a political force in El Salvador was given in this resolution. As Samayoa suggests, the possibility of negotiation was introduced with “notable conceptual precision, but it did not recognize the interlocutors that would advance it” (Samayoa 2003, p. 40).

In December 1983, resolution A/RES/38/101 took a step forward in the same direction. The General Assembly “again *draws the attention* of the Salvadorian parties concerned to the fact that the rules of international law, as contained in article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions (...) and *Additional Protocols I and II* thereto, are applicable to armed conflicts not of an international character, *such as that in El Salvador.*” This resolution formally typified the Salvadorian war as an *internal conflict* and it recognized explicitly the FMLN capacity to maintain military operations in the Salvadorian territory, keeping forms of identifiable control over these zones and under a unified command. This command should have the responsibilities and obligations related to the humanization of the military confrontation. The General Assembly conceded a certain political and military nature to the FMLN (Samayoa 2003, pp. 40-41).

Later, on a resolution adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on December 14, 1984, for the first time, this organization used the term *insurgent forces* to talk about the FMLN-FDR and it *welcomed with satisfaction* that “talks were resumed between the Government of El Salvador and the *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional-Frente Democrático Revolucionario.*” It also recognized that “this dialogue is an important step in the process of pacification and democratization of the country and therefore calls upon the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN-FDR to intensify their talks until they achieve a negotiated comprehensive political solution.” The document gave in this way, full recognition to the status to the FMLN both as insurgent force and as interlocutor of the government in the peace dialogues.

Among other countries, Mexico, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway in consultation with Venezuela, Costa Rica y Colombia promoted this resolution. In its

defense of the draft, the Mexican Ambassador to the U.N. insisted that it was crucial to pass a declaration in which countries declared their awareness “that the delicate process aiming at the political settlement has been initiated in El Salvador” and that it could be hindered by arms or military contributions of any kind. These contributions would made it possible to prolong or intensify the war and hence, it requested “all states to refrain from intervening in the internal situation in El Salvador and, instead of supplying arms or helping in any way to prolong and intensify the war, to encourage the continuation of the dialogue until a just and lasting peace is achieved” (Summary Record Of The 66th Meeting 1984, p. 4).

But a serious set back for the FMLN was taking place: the Central American governments were being successful in promoting the establishment of ONUCA⁴³—the United Nations Observer Group in Central America, an on-site verification mission the insurgency firmly opposed. Before the official establishment of ONUCA, the FMLN representation at the United Nations circulated a document entitled “Our Position in Relation to ONUCA” in which they questioned the validity of this international verification mechanism arguing that it did not apply to the particular situation in El Salvador. The main argument the FMLN used was that there was no need to install ONUCA in El Salvador since the FMLN was not providing assistance or support to any other insurgent movements and, since militarily zones controlled by the insurgency were

⁴³ ONUCA was established in November 1989 to verify compliance by the Central American Governments with their undertakings to cease aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements in the region and not to allow their territory to be used for attacks on other States. In addition, ONUCA played a part in the voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance and monitored a ceasefire and the separation of forces agreed by the Nicaraguan parties as part of the demobilization process. I discuss the regional process that led to ONUCA more in detail later in the section dedicated to the governmental political internationalization strategies.

not been used to attack other Central American states. Additionally, ONUCA was a U.N. operation conceived for *peacekeeping*, and in El Salvador, there was no peace agreement that would need to be kept (Samayoa 2003, pp. 88-89). The FMLN added:

“if there is no agreement on the cease of hostilities, the ONUCA operation could not be integrally implemented in El Salvador, among other reasons, because it is objectively impossible for any of the parties to the conflict to guarantee reasonable security conditions in zones of conflict to the ONUCA mobile patrols and their centers of observation” (Samayoa 2003, p. 89).

However, ONUCA and the resolutions that emanated from the meetings among the Central American presidents constituted, to an important extent, the terms of reference to settle the conflict in El Salvador. This, of course, posed a difficult situation for the FMLN. For the insurgency, the resolution to the Salvadorian conflict could not take place only under the terms the government and its regional allies had agreed upon. Therefore, on December 6th 1989, FMLN commanders Salvador Samayoa and Ana Guadalupe Martínez requested a meeting with UN Deputy Assistant of the Secretary General Alvaro de Soto, which took place in early December in Montreal. They conveyed “the message that the FMLN was interested in having the UN act as a third-party broker for the negotiations but was concerned that the Secretary-General’s office was too much under Security Council (meaning U.S.) control” (Burgerman 2000, pp. 67-68). The objective was to find alternative mechanisms for an active U.N. participation in the solution of the conflict that would not necessarily involve ONUCA. Furthermore, the FMLN raised the question of the “involvement of states that might provide them with a counterbalance to the Security Council. Their idea was to create two concentric circles of states with differing levels of engagement in the conflict. In the first circle—the ‘support group’—should be countries knowledgeable and concerned about the Salvadorian

conflict, but with no strategic interest in its outcome. An outer circle of the United States, the Soviet Union, and Cuba would form a different group of ‘guarantor states.’ De Soto clearly perceived that the FMLN wanted to ensure the impartiality of the secretary-general” (Whitfield 2007, p. 58).

As a result of this meeting, Secretary General Pérez de Cuellar sent a letter to the Central American presidents on December 7th. In it, he clearly stated “that the dialogue between the government and the FMLN in El Salvador should be treated within the frame of reference agreed upon by the parties in San José in October. Additionally, he established as a central thesis in the letter, that the presidential agreements, including Esquipulas and the following ones, would only commit the five signatories and not the remaining actors in the Central American scenario, being those internal or external” (Samayoa, 2002, P. 80). As Samayoa suggests, in this letter, Perez de Cuellar carefully started to differentiate the international verification instruments applicable to Nicaragua and El Salvador and it clearly suggested that ONUCA would not be in conditions to perform its mandate in El Salvador” (Samayoa 2003, p. 90). Another result of this meeting that took form later when negotiations formally began was the idea of the Group of Friends. The Group would give the FMLN the guarantee that the United Nations, as an eventual mediator, would not take the side of the Salvadorian government and would not favor the Security Council’s position.

A note needs to be introduced at this point to make a brief reference to the composition of this Group of Friends. Various factors explain the selection of the Spain, Venezuela, Mexico and Colombia as members of the Group of Friends. They all shared a history of engagement with the Central American crisis; two of them—Spain and

Venezuela—had left-leaning governments that were members of the Socialist International which would eventually facilitate the communication with the FMLN; they were culturally and linguistically homogeneous; and with the Colombian exception, “they were relatively unchallenged internally, allowing for a freedom of action with respect to El Salvador that extended to the direct involvement of their presidents” (Whitfield 2007, p. 62). Mexico led a pragmatic and independent foreign policy toward Central America and constituted an alternative to the region’s relationship with Washington. Its relationship with the insurgency, as I have described, was a strong one, allowing the FMLN to run their diplomatic and political offices from Mexico City. Venezuela’s involvement reflected the “commitment, energy, and wealth of contacts in the region of president Carlos Andrés Pérez (...). His personal commitment to the Salvadorian process—evident in a somewhat hyperactive barrage of ideas and telephone calls to all parties at all hours of the day or night—was never in doubt, but required a considerable amount of steering by de Soto (...). The activist position taken by the Venezuelan president reflected an unspoken rivalry with Mexico for influence over the secretariat in the process” (Whitfield 2007, p. 63). Spain wanted to consolidate its position as the bridge between the EU and Latin America and Colombia was part of the group since it was one of the Contadora’s leaders but “carried less weight than the other Friends, in part because of the preoccupation with its own internal conflict” (Whitfield 2007, p. 64).

The FMLN kept trying to block ONUCA after the governments agreed to ask for an extension of this mission in the San Isidro Declaration⁴⁴. Only days after this

⁴⁴ I elaborate on the content of this Declaration in the section dedicated to the governmental internationalization strategy.

declaration, the U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution on El Salvador supported by Holland, Denmark, Spain, France, Canada, Ireland, Greece, Sweden, Norway and Portugal. It was approved by 159 countries and the Central American governments were practically excluded from the political negotiation of this resolution (Samayoa 2003, p. 81). Resolution A/RES/44/165 of December 15th 1989, in a very laconic way simply *took note* “of the holding of the summit at San Isidro Coronado” and *recognized* the importance of previous meetings held by the Central American presidents. In spite of the Salvadorian government insistence, the resolution did not assume, in any way, the premises of the Central American presidential declaration” (Samayoa 2003, p. 81). On March 14th 1990, the Government counterattacked: in an official communiqué it affirmed that it was willing to begin as soon as possible conversations with the FMLN, with the ‘good offices’ of the U.N. Secretary General, but all within the spirit of the Esquipulas II and the following agreements that culminated with the San Isidro Declaration of Central American Presidents. However, only three weeks later, the parties signed up the Geneva agreements in which once and for all, the terms of reference for the negotiation and the role of the Secretary General were defined in a very different direction from the one presidential resolutions would have wanted (Samayoa 2003, p. 82).

An FMLN victory was achieved in one front: the Central American presidents’ resolutions did not constitute the frame of reference for negotiations. But the insurgents still faced the possible extension of ONUCA and with it, the almost inevitable undermining of their military position. To prevent this, on December 18th 1989, the FMLN sent a letter to the Secretary General insisting on its position. The organization

declared that it would not accept, as a frame of reference, any of the agreements among the Central American presidents in the context of a negotiation with the government (Samayoa 2003, p. 80). But in spite of its insistence, the organization could not stop the implementation of ONUCA's second phase. On March 27th 1990, the Security Council, by its resolution 650 (1990), authorized on a contingency basis, an enlargement of the mandate of ONUCA and the addition of armed personnel to its force in order to enable it to play a part in the voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan Resistance (<http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/onucamandate.html>). The best the FMLN could do was to practically block the presence of international observers in key zones in order to continue their military and logistic operations. Their opposition, according to Samayoa, was transformed into informal agreements with the members of the operation, these informal agreements reduced to an important extent the activities of ONUCA in Salvadorian territory "without the open confrontation that would bring us important problems in terms of international isolation" (Samayoa 2003, pp. 97-98). In fact, "the FMLN leaders in El Salvador subsequently told Alvaro de Soto that they had continued to bring in large quantities of weapons during the ONUCA operation" (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997, p.409). Finally, on April 20th 1990—following the signing by the Nicaraguan parties of a complex set of agreements relating to the voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan Resistance broadly supported by the United States—the Security Council, by its resolution 653 (1990), decided to expand ONUCA's mandate to include additional tasks of monitoring the ceasefire, the separation of forces and the demobilization process

(<http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/onucamandate.html>), but it also limited its activities to the Nicaraguan situation.

FMLN's Political Internationalization III: International NGOs

As a reaction to Reagan's intensification of the cold war and the delivery of billions of dollars to the Salvadorian military despite its human right abuses, thousands of people joined a range of solidarity organizations, participating in a range of protests and providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and victim communities. The activities of international NGOs and humanitarian organizations were widespread: Amnesty International published several reports on El Salvador during the 80s, Americas Watch released frequent updates of their reports on El Salvador, the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, "in addition to issuing several reports on judicial reform and on particular cases, co-authored with Human Rights Watch an annual critique of the U.S. State Department Country Reports in El Salvador" (Burgerman 2001, pp. 37-38).

These human rights activists focused their campaigns mainly in the United States, "as the major benefactor of the Salvadorian government and therefore the actor with the greatest leverage. But many network members also sought support from, and worked in conjunction with the U.N. Commission of Human Rights" (Burgerman 2001, p. 43). The coincidence in terms of the agenda and the forums the FMLN diplomatic apparatus and the NGOs were targeting is salient. Two salient members of the FMLN were appointed to act as the representatives of the organization both in the U.N. and the United States and their main task was to denounce the human rights abuses committed by the

Salvadorian government.⁴⁵ Hence, one of the FMLN head commanders recognizes— although without giving much detail—that international non-governmental organizations both in Europe and the United States were of key importance for undermining the government’s political power and reputation at the international level. This, clearly, was at the core of the FMLN’s political internationalization strategy.⁴⁶

In sum, and as Tate explains when referring to American NGOs, “the organizations that developed during this period range from radical supporters to revolutionary groups to moderate groups pushing for limiting military aid and promoting negotiated settlement to the conflicts” (Tate (forthcoming)). Orozco goes even further and suggests that the human rights movement, especially the Non-Governmental Commission—a coalition of domestic NGOs, had very strong ties with the FMLN. A very important number of the insurgency’s leadership had a ‘double life’ as human rights advocates and as guerrilla members (Orozco 2005, p. 251).

The Government’s Internationalization Strategy

Government’s Military Internationalization: The U.S.

As I have suggested, the alliance between the Salvadorian and the U.S. government constitutes one of the most important instances of internationalization that is possible to observe in this country. The U.S. saw regional conflicts as another manifestation of the cold war logic and consequently, it openly and actively supported the Salvadorian government position when it decided to strategically frame the local struggle in this fashion. The government defined the FMLN as another arm of international

⁴⁵ Author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

⁴⁶ Author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

communism and hence, in conjunction with the U.S., it advocated a counterinsurgency war. Hence, the nature of the U.S. containment strategy partially explains the U.S. willingness to help the Salvadorian government in its war against insurgency. This is why the U.S. main contribution to the conflict took the form of military aid and logistic and training assistance. Consequently, when the cold war logic started to fade at the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s, this form of internationalization and the Salvadorian strategy suffered important transformations. I will describe these transformations in detail later in this section.

The government's use of the Cold War frame to define the Salvadorian conflict soon showed its payoffs. On the one hand, the U.S. provided military aid to El Salvador's government with one clear objective in mind: to fight and eliminate the 'communist threat' the FMLN represented. This would prevent the occurrence of another Nicaragua and the spread of the communist threat in the U.S.' own backyard. For Washington, El Salvador was yet another scenario to combat the spread of the Soviet/Cuban/Nicaraguan power and, the Salvadorian government took note and advantage of Washington's main interest very quickly. On the other, Salvadorian elites were interested in preventing any sort of reformist attempt that would undermine their economic power so they openly invited and welcomed a strong military government that, with the help of the U.S., could accomplish this purpose. To be sure, Salvadorian elites were not interested in political power or the appropriation of the state *per se*. The state and political power were for them mere tools that facilitated their extraction and accumulation of resources. However, a state in the wrong hands could seriously endanger their economic stability so they had a clear interest in maintaining the army in power and the FMLN far from it. The military

in turn, accepted the elite's delegation of political power to them and made all possible efforts to stay in power and to strengthen the state by accepting and very frequently asking Washington's help.

As I will show, the Salvadorian government, especially during the Reagan administration and after the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, rapidly engaged in strategic interaction by understanding that appropriating the Cold War discourse was the easiest way to grab Washington's attention and resources. It was, in sum, the easiest way to obtain help to win the war against the FMLN. The alliance with the U.S. would help the military not only to defeat the FMLN, but it would simultaneously keep them in power: if the alliance with the U.S. was strong, the army would seem more committed to defeat the insurgency, and this would keep the elites satisfied. If the elites were happy, the military would stay in power. Hence, two elements were at the core of the Salvadorian government's international discourse: first, El Salvador was the victim of another advance of international communism; second and consequently, *the conflict was not a civil war*. On the contrary, it was the result of an attempt, by international led forces, to destabilize and eventually overthrow a democratic and legitimately constituted government. This attempt had to be defeated through military means, and that would only be possible with U.S. assistance.

There are various aspects of the Salvadorian government internationalization strategy that demand special attention. First, both states, the Salvadorian and the U.S., did not act as monolithic or unitary actors. In fact, internationalization in El Salvador resulted precisely from constant fragmentation and the existence of diverse interests. A special instance of this phenomenon is the difficult and contentious interaction between

civil/economic elites and the Armed Forces head commanders. The Armed Forces in power before 1982 used, the alliance with the U.S. to feed a counterinsurgency discourse, a practice that allowed them to remain in power. Once counterinsurgency started to fade partly due to the relaxation of Cold War tensions and partly due to the U.S. Congress's hesitation to unconditionally support the war against the FMLN, it debilitated the elite-military agreement and allowed the transition toward a democratic regime.

Another instance of fragmentation takes place at the other end of the internationalization strategy: the United States. Internationalization does not succeed if the party to the conflict does not find a sort of 'resonance' when it asks for help or support. The Salvadorian government did find this 'resonance' or willingness to help in Washington and I explain in this section the reasons why its internationalization strategy was partially successful. But again, it was partially and not completely successful due to the constant division between the U.S. Congress and the Executive on issues related to foreign aid and human rights. It was clear that at various moments during the conflict, the messages that the president and Congress were sending to the Salvadorian government were different and very often, contradictory. But the Executive itself did not follow a consistent policy toward El Salvador and the content of such policy changed according to which party, the Democrat or the Republican, was in power.

Since international actors in general and the U.S. in particular are changeable agents, the Salvadorian internationalization strategy needed to adjust and adapt to very diverse and increasingly challenging junctures in terms of the U.S. internal political process. In this analysis I also reveal that fragmentation even takes place within the Executive itself: while the Defense Department constantly emphasized the need to

eradicate the communist threat from El Salvador through the delivery of military aid, the State Department was more likely to use a diplomatic approach and pay more systematic attention to human rights violations. All these factors contribute to increase the level of complexity a government has to address when it makes the decision to internationalize its war against an insurgent movement, and it also explains why internationalization, very often, does not render the results the government initially expected.

But the process through which the Salvadorian government realized that it shared a common worldview with Washington was a complex one. It has been suggested that Central America was not an area of concern for the United States until the intensification of the Cold War and more explicitly, the arrival of the Soviet influence to the U.S. backyard. Indeed, the argument goes, it was the Cuban revolution “and its favorable attitude toward revolutionary change in Central America (that) introduced another important element into the political process. The United States turned its attention to the region and to the preliminary efforts toward economic integration. The need to agree on a policy of containment of communism became evident” (Villagran Kramer 1982, p. 18).⁴⁷ However, and possibly due to the U.S. focus on the Vietnam war, this concern did not translate into more attention and a specific policy until the 70s and more concretely, until the Carter administration. In fact, “by and large, El Salvador was off the radar screen of U.S. foreign policy until the Carter administration, pursuing its human rights policies, became engaged” (Pastor 1984, p. 177). During the first years of the Carter

⁴⁷ The most salient exception to this argument is the 1954 U.S. intervention in Guatemala to overthrow president Jacobo Arbenz.

administration, Central America did not play an important role, aside from the negotiations with Panama concerning a new canal treaty (Feinberg 1982, p. 60; Grabendorff 1984, pp. 156-157), but the massive abuses and human rights violations Central American governments were committing in their war against internal insurgent movements, turned these countries into priorities for an administration concerned with violations to human rights:

“Considering that the United States viewed the Central American republics as relatively unimportant strategically and economically, the Carter administration saw in this region an opportunity to assert, in an exemplary way, its conception of human rights as an instrument for social change and democratization. The purpose of the Carter administration’s ‘controlled evolution’ idea was to reform the political system in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua through pressure on the military establishment and simultaneous advancement of democratic parties, especially the Christian and Social Democrats” (Grabendorff 1984, pp. 156-157).

Another crucial event would reinforce this trend and attract even more attention from Washington. In 1979 Anastasio Somoza was overthrown and the Junta de Reconstrucción Nacional—National Reconstruction *Junta*, mainly dominated by the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) took power in Nicaragua. Carter had decided to cut aid to Nicaragua as a result of Somoza’s regime poor record in human rights and once the revolutionary Sandinistas seized power his administration was accused of ‘losing’ Nicaragua to the Soviet/Cuban clique. Carter’s administration recognized that it had to avoid the same course of events in El Salvador and as a result, the entire weight of U.S. power was dedicated to support the new government, despite its failure to observe human rights standards. Economic aid for 1980 skyrocketed to \$58.3 million (with \$9.1 in supplemental security assistance), five times what it had been in any of the previous three years. The United States also helped the junta secure \$48 million in

loans from the multilateral lending agencies, institutions which normally avoid volatile revolutionary situations. Additionally, requests for \$5.7 million in 'non-lethal' military aid were prepared at the Senate Department and three hundred Salvadoran soldiers were sent to Fort Gulick in the Canal Zone for counterinsurgency training which included a human rights component. But the provision of weapons was withheld. In sum, by summer 1980, "U.S. foreign policy in El Salvador had developed three goals: the implementation of some measure of reform, the control of right-wing terrorists and the security forces, and the isolation of the radical left" (Fisher 1982, pp. 29-30) and as a result, by the end of the year, the dependence of the Salvadorian government on the United States to remain solvent was almost absolute (Montgomery 1982, p. 172).

The arrival of the Reagan Administration

But the U.S. participation in the Salvadorian war was still to take an additional step. In early November 1980, the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, was elected president. The election seriously weakened the influence of Carter on Central America and emboldened the right in El Salvador. Just months before, in March 1980, Napoleón Duarte—a founding member and Secretary General of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) in El Salvador—joined the *Junta* as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and by December, he became the head of state and of the *Junta*. Before Carter's presidency was over, Duarte was already secretly traveling to Washington to meet with some of the president-elect Reagan's advisers. Cold war tensions were about to escalate and the Salvadorian leadership rapidly understood that the arrival of the new Republican president to the White House constituted an opportunity to implement a bold

internationalization strategy to obtain military and logistic support from the United States.

However, although a lame-duck president, Carter still had to handle an important series of crises that emerged in El Salvador before the end of his administration. In the last days of November, six highly respected political leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) allied with the guerrillas, were assassinated by security forces. The following week, on December 2nd, four U.S. churchwomen and a layworker were murdered. The U.S. government reacted strongly. According to Deputy Secretary of State, Christopher Warren, this was:

“the last chance to make (the U.S.) policy in El Salvador work. (...) If we do not send these clear signals, within two months the government of El Salvador will be just another repressive military dictatorship reversing the reforms and rejecting any movement towards pluralism and elections. Moreover, absent a strong reaction which contains important penalties for the military’s behavior, this type of killing will continue and increase. Specifically, I recommend a strong note to the government stating that we are suspending all military assistance to El Salvador until the assassination of the FDR leadership is dealt with in a satisfactory way” (Assassinations of FDR; Leaders: Consequences and Recommendations. Confidential, Cable, November 29 1980).

President Carter subsequently suspended all economic and military aid and demanded a full investigation of the various murders.

Aid was rapidly reactivated and there is a clear domestic explanation for this. On January 10th 1981, the FMLN’s launched an all out attack on San Salvador, also called ‘final offensive’ that left the Salvadorian government uncertain about the insurgency’s military capabilities and feeling weak vis-à-vis its opponent. It is the precariousness of its own military position that led the *junta* to take steps in the investigation of the killings, to give greater authority to Duarte, and to transfer or dismiss a dozen key military officers

associated with the repression (Pastor 1984, pp. 179-180). In a way, responding to Washington's demands was one of the first manifestations of military internationalization: by taking steps in order to prevent additional human rights violations, the Salvadorian government attempted to obtain more military support to fight against the guerrillas. Ambassador White's stated the U.S. official position arguing that the rationale for renewing lethal military aid to El Salvador should be the flow of weapons from Nicaragua to guerrillas and not a reaction to the January offensive, "otherwise, it appears we are just propping up another regime which cannot survive without our support" (Insurgency in El Salvador: Renewal of Lethal Military Assistance, Secret, Cable, January 16 1981). Consequently, "the U.S. government shelved its human rights concerns completely and offered military hardware to the Salvadoran army. Two days before leaving office, President Carter authorized the delivery of \$5 million worth of equipment, including M-16 rifles and ammunition, grenade launchers, and Huey helicopters. The White House stated publicly that leftist guerrillas were being supplied and trained by Communist countries" (Fisher 1982, pp. 31-32).

Again, the bipolar confrontation and Washington's need to contain Soviet expansionism trumped human rights concerns and facilitated the military internationalization of the Salvadorian war, a strategy advanced by the counter-insurgent government. In fact, this discourse about the regional spread of communism found a very compatible line of argumentation constructed by *Junta* leader Napoleón Duarte. As part of the strategy, very early in the conflict, in January 1981, the Salvadorian *junta* committed itself to a clear premise: there was no civil war in the country. This premise, as I show in Chapter 3, was also embraced by current president Uribe in Colombia and in

both countries constitutes an important part of a broader and similar strategy of military internationalization, a type of internationalization that has as its main purpose the construction of a military alliance with the United States. Duarte was emphatic in his use of the counter-insurgent frame:

“(Communists) want the world to believe that there is a civil war in El Salvador so they can be internationally recognized as a belligerent faction. They want people to believe that a part of the national territory is in their hands, so a government committed to them can give them diplomatic recognition, and with this recognition they can obtain international help, a blockade against El Salvador and the pressure of governments and international organisms to overthrow our revolution.

But there is no civil war. What we have is armed groups, self-defined as Marxists, that do not respect even a single one percent of the population. They have every type of ammunition, obtained overseas and with it they constantly harass cities and small Armed Forces battalions. Rarely, they openly combat and they have never won a small battle; their tactic is to attack and then run away. (...) This is not a civil war (...). They do not have popular support either” (El Pueblo de El Salvador y su Gobierno llaman a los Pueblos y Gobiernos del Mundo 1981).⁴⁸

The perfect complement for this approach, in which guerrillas are more an arm of international communism and less the result of local political and socio-economic exclusion, was the re-intensification of the cold war confrontation that took place during the Reagan administration. After a very convoluted end for the Carter government, Reagan assumed the presidency of the United States with a very clear policy in mind for Central America, in general, and for El Salvador, in particular. The new administration clearly defined the civil strife in El Salvador primarily in East-West terms, proposing to solve it by ‘going to the source,’ meaning Nicaragua, Cuba, or even possibly the Soviet Union. Additionally, although Reagan was willing to consult with European allies and Latin American friends, it sought to obtain its objectives largely by unilateral and direct

⁴⁸ Author’s translation.

action (Pastor 1984, p. 181). Hence, decisions were made in the first weeks of the new administration to step up greatly military and economic aid to El Salvador and to dispatch 55 military advisors to the country. Even though Carter had tried to help Duarte to develop some control over the military, the Reagan administration instructed the U.S. military mission to negotiate a package directly with El Salvador's military. Duarte would never again be in a position where he could give instructions to the military (Pastor 1984, pp. 180-181).

However, by this point it was clear that the internationalization strategy had a crucial obstacle to overcome: the U.S. Executive was willing to provide military aid but the U.S. Congress had strong concerns in terms of human rights and its conditions were seriously threatening the Salvadorian military internationalization strategy. The U.S. Congress did not wait to react to Reagan's new line of policy. In September 1981, when President Duarte was in Washington advancing a lobbying campaign in order to obtain additional U.S. military support, the Senate voted to halt all military aid to El Salvador and withdraw U.S. military advisors unless President Reagan could certify that the Salvadoran government was 1) attempting to control human rights violations, 2) making progress in economic reforms, and 3) negotiating with the leftist to achieve free elections" (Fisher 1982, p. 38). The administration objected to these amendments because it considered that they undermined 'the confidence of vulnerable allies.' Nevertheless, Reagan adjusted its policy, privately—though not publicly—exhorting the Salvadoran government to improve its human rights performance. Additionally, it implemented another set of initiatives that could bring the Congress on board. Reagan "developed a Caribbean Basin Initiative, which emphasized private investment but

included public aid to address the long-term economic and social problems of the region. It affirmed its support for the agrarian reform in El Salvador and its opposition to a right-wing coup.” (Pastor 1984, pp. 180-181).

In the spring of 1983, Congress again threatened to reduce or terminate aid to El Salvador unless the administration promoted talks with the armed left. Although the U.S. Executive opposed negotiations with the insurgency, Reagan appointed Richard Stone in April 1983 to facilitate negotiations in the region, hoping thereby to strengthen congressional support for its policies. Indeed, Stone’s appointment seemed more designed to satisfy domestic political necessities. Pastor suggests that “his contacts with the Salvadoran left in August and September 1983 seemed aimed primarily at proving that the left does not seriously want to participate in the next elections rather than in searching for opportunities to bring the two sides together” (Pastor 1984). Indeed, the possibilities for dialogue with the insurgency were almost completely inexistent for both the U.S. and the Salvadorian governments. This position about negotiations was stated most explicitly by Under Secretary of Defense Fred Iklé in a speech on September 12, 1983: ‘We can no more negotiate an acceptable political solution with these people than the social democrats in revolutionary Russia could have talked Lenin into giving up totalitarian Bolshevism... You have to defeat these ‘rule or ruin’ forces militarily.’ (Pastor 1984, pp. 186-187). The Salvadorian government did not wait to engage again in strategic framing and with equal emphasis it echoed Washington’s position: “the President of the Republic, doctor Alvaro Magaña,⁴⁹ (...) expressed: ‘We have nothing to

⁴⁹ On March 28, 1982, elections were held to the National Congress in which Duarte's Christian Democratic Party (PDC) party gained 24 of the 60 seats, putting them in opposition against the Nationalist

revenge, nothing to repress, nothing to negotiate. We only have to comply with a clear mandate to live in peace. (...) (The President) absolutely rejects any attempt of dialogue or negotiation with the FDR-FMLN terrorist minorities, because our people has expressed it that way with its vote in the elections on March 28th 1982”⁵⁰ (Comunicado de la Secretaría de Información y Prensa de la Presidencia de la República 1982).

It is important to note that even though the Reagan administration was a clear ally of the Salvadorian government in its war against insurgency, its relationship with Congress and the balance of power within the U.S. presented the first scenario of entrapment for the Salvadorians. As I suggested in Chapter 1, when actors decide to internationalize a conflict they calculate some of the benefits they can obtain from this strategy, but they do not control all the possible effects of internationalization. U.S. aid was permanently conditioned to the Salvadorian government’s human rights record. At some juncture the fulfillment of this condition was systematically supervised by the U.S. (during the Carter administration, for instance) but during the Reagan administration, it constituted only an inconvenient obstacle to the delivery of military resources to the Salvadorian government. In 1983, as I suggested, this obstacle was stronger than ever before and it seriously threatened to curtail U.S. support and seriously threatened El Salvador’s military internationalization strategy. To avoid this scenario and help the Salvadorians, the U.S. Executive implemented a high profile strategy that included the visit of Vice-President Bush to El Salvador in December of that year. Bush handed two lists to the government: one with the names of various military officers and the other with

Republican Alliance (ARENA) right wing party which gained 36 seats. As a consequence, on May 2, he handed over power to Álvaro Magaña, who had been chosen President by the National Congress.

⁵⁰ Author’s translation.

the names of civilians involved in serious violations of human rights. Bush's main demands were clear:

“First, on the murders of American citizens: A. The military deserter Captain Avila, currently residing in Santa Tecla, should be taken into custody and made available for discussions about the Sheraton murders.⁵¹ B. We should agree on a schedule to complete the pending judicial proceedings against those now charged in the Sheraton case and the accused in the Klin case. This approach was effective in moving the churchwomen's case to its final stage (plenario) in October. C. A public commitment should be made to continue the investigations of the remaining cases: Sullivan, Schaufelberger and Cuellar. Actions in this area must be taken by January 18, 1984” (Vice President Bush's Meetings with Salvadoran Officials, Secret, Cable, 11567, December 14 1983).

After a short period of time, the Salvadorian government conceded and captured a captain and two high-ranked military officers were extradited, all of them accused in one way or another of human rights violations. According to information given by President Magaña to U.S. Ambassador Pickering, “the military officers remain firm on the agreement with U.S. and will continue pushing. The military officers have all been reassigned as requested” (Magana on Post Visit Progress, Secret, Cable, December 22 1983). It was clear that the alliance with the U.S. came with important costs and these restrictions in terms of human rights were already threatening to alter the delicate equilibrium between Salvadorian civil/economic elites and the Armed Forces. The restrictions on the same U.S. military support that helped the Armed Forces justify their hold on power, was threatening the agreement between economic elites and the military.

⁵¹ On the night of January 3, 1981, Michael Hammer and his associate Mark Pearlman were meeting at the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador with Rodolfo Viera, a Salvadoran involved in agrarian land reform. All three were gunned down by two Salvadoran National Guardsmen. Hammer and Pearlman were staff members of the American Institute of Free Labor Development (AIFLD), an AFL-CIO affiliate representing the interests of the federation in Central and Latin America. The two Salvadoran Guardsmen who actually carried out the killing, Valle Acevedo and Gomez Gonzalez, eventually served short terms in prison for their crimes. Major Moran, Captain Avila, and Lt. Sibrian—known to be the intellectual authors of the killing—were never charged. According to the 1993 UN Truth Commission Report on El Salvador, the US Army trained all three at the School of the Americas (SOA).

For them, the army had to do what Washington demanded as long as military aid to defeat the insurgency kept flowing. But the military officers were increasingly unsatisfied with U.S. Congress conditions.

The Transition to Democracy

Even though conditions imposed by Congress on U.S. aid were creating tensions between the civilian and the military leadership in El Salvador, the government's bet to obtain military assistance intensified. The tension was partially solved by the transition to democracy that took place initially in 1982 and consolidated in 1984. In 1982 elections were held to the National Congress in which Duarte's Christian Democratic Party (PDC) gained only 24 of the 60 seats, putting his party in opposition to ARENA, the extreme right wing party which gained 36 seats. Major D'Aubuisson, a key political figure in Salvadorian political landscape, funded ARENA (National Republican Alliance) in September 1980 and consolidated a party supported by the landed gentry and the law-and-order general public. D'Aubuisson and ARENA were constantly accused of supporting and working in conjunction with Salvadorian death squads. Due to this electoral outcome, on May 2 of that same year, Duarte had to hand over power to Álvaro Magaña, who had been chosen President by the National Congress. By March 1984, El Salvador celebrated presidential elections and Duarte, running as the PDC candidate, came in first with 43.4% of the vote. In the second round he won by 53.6% of the vote against ARENA's candidate, Roberto D'Aubuisson. To an important extent, the transition revealed the Salvadorian civilian elites willingness to assume political power and it seriously debilitated the alliance between the U.S. and the military. With the military out of power, the counterinsurgency consensus also begun to fade: an important sign of this

trend was Duarte's acceptance of the guerrilla invitation to start peace dialogues. In October 1984 he met face to face with the FMLN leadership at La Palma, Chalatenango and although this initial approach did not result in final peace for El Salvador, some suggest it constituted the beginning of the end of the civil war in that country.

Support for Washington's War Against the Contras

But the alliance between San Salvador and Washington was far from over. On October 5th 1986, a C-123 airplane was shot down in the southern part of Nicaragua. On board of that airplane, a group of American mercenaries transported military material for the Nicaraguan Contras. A survivor, Eugene Hasenfus, had various documents and among them, an I.D. No. 4422, issued on July 28th 1986 by General Juan Rafael Bustillo, the chief of the Salvadorian Air Force (FAS). Hasenfus declared that he did at least another 10 trips to provide military equipment to the Contras and six of these flights departed from the military airport of Ilopango, in El Salvador. The remaining ones departed from the Aguacate base, in Honduras. Hasenfus had phone numbers in San Salvador, where bases of operations were located. Even though the involvement of El Salvador was denied by Duarte and members of the Armed Forces in El Salvador, various sources in the U.S. government openly accepted the Salvadorian participation in the Iran-Contras operation (Cruz Alfaro 1986, p. 1049).

The involvement of El Salvador in this operation constituted a trade-off between Washington and San Salvador: if the U.S. helped the Salvadorian elites and the army in their war against different forms of revolutionary opposition, the Salvadorian government would also contribute to the U.S. broader war against communism in the area. As I showed in Chapter 2, to an extent, this sort of 'agreement' resembles Colombia's very

lonely support to the United States in its war against Iraq in 2003. Salvadorian General Bustillo openly recognized the implementation of this military internationalization strategy, in December of that year, and clearly stated a shared world view between El Salvador and the United States:

“People of the United States, I want and I wish you to understand that support with only one direction is aid, but what exists between you and us is cooperation. I want these great people to be clear about this: here in our country, and with the effort of the good Salvadorians, we have stopped temporarily the expansionist communism-marxism and if it were not because of us, the Salvadorians and all the Central American anti-communists and in a not very far future, you, your sons and your grandsons, could be fighting against this common enemy, in your own border or even within your own territory” (1986, p. 1081).⁵²

However, the Iran Contra’s scandal and then the triumph of the Democratic Party in the Congressional elections of 1986 seriously debilitated Reagan’s policy toward Central America. At the end of the year, on November 4th, the Democrats won 55 out of 100 seats in the senate and, as a result, they won control over various senate committees for the following two years. Reagan’s policy faced probably the most serious backlash and this dramatically changed his administration’s approach to the war in El Salvador (Cruz Alfaro 1986, p. 1046), affecting directly the Salvadorian government’s internationalization strategy.

In spite of the reversal, the Salvadorian government kept insisting on obtaining additional military help to combat the FMLN. On June 29th 1987, head members of the Salvadorian Armed Forces traveled to Washington to explain to the Pentagon and the State Department the necessity of increasing military assistance to El Salvador, and especially, improving and modernizing the Salvadorian Air Force (Crónica del Mes.

⁵² Author’s translation.

Mayo-Junio 1987, p. 366). Later in October, President Duarte traveled to Washington with a very large governmental representation. He celebrated the success of Reagan's policy in El Salvador and affirmed that he would do "whatever it takes to ensure the endurance of the democratic success." In a very symbolic and telling gesture, Duarte asked Reagan for permission to break the protocol and kissed the U.S. flag explaining his behavior in the following way: "I have seen many people, with hatred in their hearts, burning the U.S. flag; allow me today to kiss it" (Crónica del Mes. Octubre 1987, p. 731). The tactics Duarte employed in order to strengthen his alliance with Washington and his own military internationalization strategy clearly went beyond the usual diplomatic channels and gestures.

Bush and Cristiani: the Weakening of Military Internationalization

In 1989 both El Salvador and the United States had elections. In the U.S., Republican President George Bush took power and in El Salvador, ARENA's candidate Alfredo Cristiani received the presidential sash from Napoleon Duarte. Cristiani was born into a wealthy family and was educated at the Escuela Americana (American School) in San Salvador. He also attended Georgetown University where he obtained a degree in Business Administration. He returned to El Salvador to continue working for the family business, which included pharmaceuticals, coffee, and cotton. Cristiani represented then, the final decision of the Salvadorian elites to seize political power and to compete under the rules of a democratic regime.

At this point, the political right in El Salvador confirmed that it could win elections and did not need the military in power in order to advance their interests; conservative elites were then ready to allow the consolidation of the democratic transition

(Stanley 1996). For decision-makers in El Salvador, by December 1989, it was very clear that the new U.S. administration would necessarily be less ideological and more practical than the previous one. Two days after the election, Cristiani called for immediate talks with the FMLN, which responded on April 6 in Washington D. C. with a new proposal for negotiations (Montgomery, 1995. P. 215). In an interview with Terry Karl, Salvador Samayoa, one of the FMLN's head commanders synthesizes how this transition was perceived in El Salvador:

“We discovered that the new (U.S.) administration wanted to overcome the problem of the U.S. trade deficit and to deemphasize Central America. These officials were aware that the military focus of U.S. foreign policy also needed to be deemphasized and that they needed to search for an understanding among their allies, both in Western Europe and in Latin America. They realized that they could not formulate a foreign policy against everyone, as Reagan had for eight years; they needed a foreign policy that had the support of their allies. (...) There were also practical signs. The first of these was the meeting of the Organization of American States in San Salvador in mid-November, when for the first time—really for the first time in eight years—the position of the United States, especially the position of (Secretary of State) Shultz, was no longer so aggressive. We also observed that the U.S. was taking a more practical approach to the Middle East.

“Finally, we believe that the United States does not have the option to use the blackmail threat of introducing its own troops in El Salvador. This would be absurd at a time when the Vietnamese are withdrawing their troops from Cambodia, the Soviets are leaving Afghanistan, there is a cease-fire in the Persian Gulf, and there is a possibility of negotiations in the Middle East. At a time when everyone is withdrawing troops from all sides, it would be absurd for the U.S. to send its own troops to El Salvador” (Karl 1989, pp. 332-333).

Even though George Bush was Ronald Reagan's Vice president, his policy toward Central America was substantially different. This difference was not only marked by clear ideological and political divergences, but also because it was during the Bush administration that the beginning of the end of the cold war took place. The serious erosion of the East-West confrontation obviously undermined the understanding of the

Salvadorian civil strife within the terms of that ideological quarrel. The designation of James Baker as Secretary of State and the appointment of other officials after the election in November, reflected a more flexible approach toward Central America. To an extent, the proximity of the end of the cold war and Washington's new approach to Central American not only debilitated the government's traditional military internationalization strategy, but it also pushed both the government and the guerrilla toward the negotiation table. This constituted one of the instances of internationalization advanced by an external actor: the U.S. decided to use military aid as a leverage to push the parties toward peace talks.

In November 1989, the FMLN launched its so-called 'final offensive.' Even though the group did not come close to taking power, it was clear that the Salvadorian Armed Forces could not defeat it easily either. The offensive did make evident that the conflict in El Salvador had turned into a military stalemate. The war was tied and neither a governmental victory nor an insurgent one was going to be possible (Gibb & Smyth 1990, p. 247). Probably, the effect was more negative for the Salvadorian state than for the FMLN. Montgomery argues that "the offensive exposed the utter failure of nine years of U.S. policy. Apart from the Armed Forces' incompetence, it soon became clear that 'professionalization'—teaching the army to respect human rights and subordinating itself to civilian authority—was an illusion. On the fourth night of the offensive, an army unit of the Atlacatl battalion, trained by U.S. Green Berets, entered the grounds of the Jesuit-run Central American University and killed six priest-scholars, including the rector and vice-rector, their housekeeper, and her daughter" (Montgomery 1995, pp. 219-220).

The Jesuits' murders reopened, for the first time in years, the debate over El Salvador in the U.S. Congress. President Bush could no longer assume continued funding for El Salvador at previous or increased levels, as he had asked for in 1990. On July 27th 1990, the U.S. House of Representatives agreed to withhold 50% of the 86 million dollars of military aid programmed for fiscal year 1991 to El Salvador. The House decided that if the judicial process against the military officers responsible for the killing of the priests did not advance, all the military aid would be suspended (*Crónica del Mes. Junio-Julio 1990*, p. 528). President Cristiani, aware of the risk, traveled to the U.S. in September, with the clear objective of asking for support for his continuing military internationalization strategy: he had to convince the U.S. Congress that a cut in military aid would send a wrong signal to the FMLN. He argued that the Congress was planning to withdraw military aid precisely when it was more necessary, just when his administration was involved in peace negotiations with the FMLN. His argument was very similar to the one Colombian president Pastrana used to convince the U.S. to support Plan Colombia: the state has to be stronger than ever when it participates in a negotiation process. It needs to be strong to advance its own agenda during the conversations and, it needs to be strong to convince the guerrilla that talking and finding a negotiated solution is for them a better option (less costly) than going back to war. However, his arguments were not very persuasive and Senator Dodd reacted by saying that all Cristiani was doing was saying 'give me more money, trust me', once again. The House, he argued, could not accept that and either should the Senate (*Crónica del Mes. Septiembre 1990*, pp. 790-791). The Salvadorian government's internationalization strategy was not working as well

as it did in the 1980s and trying to get the U.S. on board in the war against the FMLN was proving to be a very difficult task for Cristiani.

On October 10th, the Appropriations Committee at the Senate voted in favor of the Dodd-Leahy amendment that proposed a similar legislation to the one the House approved in July (*Crónica del Mes. Octubre 1990*, pp. 923-924). On October 19th, the Senate approved, 74 votes in favor and 25 against, the Dodd-Leahy amendment and it rejected by 58 in favor and 39 against, the Gram-McCain amendment that suggested reinitiating military aid if the FMLN did not accept Cristiani's proposal of a unilateral cease fire. As Burgerman argues, "continued U.S. military support, which the armed forces had been able to take for granted for more than a decade, was suddenly insecure. The impact of this action on military cooperation with the peace process cannot be overstated." (Burgerman 2000, p. 67). President Bush, although he had threatened to do so, did not veto the Congress decision (*Crónica del Mes. Octubre 1990*, pp. 923-924). His government had already made clear its support for negotiations through its Sub-Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Bernard Aronson. In a Washington Post article, he argued that it was time to end the war through negotiations and that the search for a military victory by any of the parties was a formula for destruction and suffering (*Crónica del Mes. Octubre 1990*, p. 918). The Salvadorian government had no choice: if Washington wanted a peace process, military internationalization was not possible anymore.

The Salvadorian government kept insisting on obtaining military aid from the U.S. until the last moment and the U.S. Executive still responded positively in various occasions. In spite of the Dodd-Leahy amendment approval in Congress, the State

Department announced on December 7th of that same year that it would send an advance of the 37.5 millions in military aid approved for FY 1991 to El Salvador; all this in addition to 10.6 millions that were left from FY 1990. These 48.1 millions would be dedicated to replace damaged equipment after the recent guerrilla attacks, especially air equipment. The State Department spokesperson suggested that as long as the FMLN insisted on the idea of a military victory, the U.S. would keep helping the Salvadorian government (*Crónica del Mes. Noviembre-Diciembre 1990*, pp. 1054-1055).

Additionally, in the summer of 1991, Cristiani officially visited Washington for three days. His objective was to discuss with President Bush, the Congress and other groups in the U.S. the situation in El Salvador and he stated once again that economic and military aid were just part of the agenda. As part of his continuing military internationalization strategy and in order to strengthen his case, in a breakfast meeting with the press, he denounced the FMLN acquisition of anti-aerial missiles SAM-16 and highlighted, once again, the links between the FMLN, Cuba and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (1991, p. 604).

During peace dialogues, the U.S. government consistently pressured the Salvadorian government. Military aid would be available under two essential conditions: accountability of those military officers involved in human rights violations and, the serious and committed participation of the government in peace dialogues with the FMLN. The Salvadorian government never imagined that its alliance with the U.S., an internationalization strategy designed to keep the military in power and to help them win the war against the FMLN, would end up producing almost the exact opposite effect: the human rights restrictions the U.S. Congress imposed on the government, to an important

extent, debilitated the alliance between elites and the military. The deterioration of this alliance facilitated the end of long years of military dictatorship and the oligarchy final entrance to the political game. But the U.S. government was also surprised by the same outcome: Washington did not imagine its democratization strategy would lead to the election of the extreme right. The U.S. eventually ended up using its military aid not to help the government win through pure military means the war against the insurgency, but as leverage to push the government toward the negotiation table and toward a political and negotiated solution to the conflict. In this sense, ARENA's government and the Salvadorian right would prove a better U.S. ally than Duarte and the Christian Democrats.

The Salvadorian Government's Political Internationalization I: A Response to the Franco-Mexican Communiqué and the Caracas Declaration

After the Franco-Mexican declaration recognized the FMLN and called for peace negotiations, the Duarte administration immediately reacted to what the president considered was a clear interference in the domestic matters of El Salvador. This is a clear instance of *internationalization by reaction*; it illustrates why internationalization has to be seen as a relational process and cannot be abstracted from its social environment. In an open attempt to undermine the political internationalization move made by the FMLN through the Franco-Mexican communiqué, Duarte emphasized the existence of what he considered was a purely 'domestic' struggle:

“This type of attitude, increasing external intervention, contributes to worsen our conflict.

“It is crucial to point out that by encouraging armed or terrorist groups with this type of policy and support, serious and grave international precedents are being

created and they seriously affect the stability and the democratization process in Central America, Latin America and, in general, all countries. Besides, this type of action puts in danger the necessary social peace in our region.

“It is precisely in the United Nations Charter that we find the most categorical rejection to the intervention in other states’ domestic matters, in their peoples’ self-determination right and their sovereign quality.

“In consequence, the Revolutionary Junta energetically protests against that communiqué, because it is not up to the Republic of France or the United States of Mexico, or any other country, to suggest models for the solution of internal matters in El Salvador. It is not up to them to identify internationally and at their will, who in this country has legitimacy and political representation” (Discurso de Rechazo del Ing. Duarte 1981, p. 917).⁵³

Duarte’s insistence on the purely domestic features of the Salvadorian conflict was the government’s response to the FMLN’s success in politically internationalizing the conflict. He openly opposed the participation or interference of any international actor and his government sought to coordinate and organize regional reaction to the Franco-Mexican communiqué. The purpose of this strategy was to prove that the government was able to block any attempt by the insurgency to internationalize the conflict. Obviously, the principle did not apply for everybody and in the abstract. The government insisted on the domestic nature of the conflict when it rejected the FMLN’s attempts to internationalize the conflict but, for obvious reasons, the long-lasting military internationalization that the government itself had been advancing by asking the U.S. for aid was a legitimate exception.

This strategy became public when the Caracas Declaration was released to the public, shortly after the communiqué, on September 3rd. Various Latin American governments (Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay,

⁵³ Author’s translation.

Dominican Republic and Venezuela) reacted to the Franco-Mexican communiqué in strong terms:

These governments “point out, with great worry, that the declaration of these two governments in favor of one of the subversive extremes, that through violence it attempts to twist the democratic destiny and the self-determination of the Salvadorian people, tacitly invites other foreign entities to be in favor of these extremist elements that are part of the crisis. Hence, far from contributing to the solution of the problem, by internationalizing it they are making it worse. They “affirm that only Salvadorians can find a political and democratic solution to their conflict, without any sort of direct or indirect foreign intervention” (Texto de la Declaración de Caracas 1981).⁵⁴

But why was this reaction to the Franco-Mexican communiqué initiated in Venezuela? Why was the role of the Venezuelan government so fundamental in this political *internationalization by reaction* that the Salvadorian government was trying to advance? The answer has to do with the ideological and personal links between the Venezuelan administration and Duarte’s Junta. After the Partido Social Cristiano de Venezuela (Copei) and its candidate Luis Herrera Campins won the elections in 1979, the ideological orientation of Venezuela’s policy toward Central America changed. Venezuela focused its involvement in Central America on the *junta* in El Salvador, led also by the Christian Democrat Napoleón Duarte since 1980. President Herrera had served as secretary-general of the Latin American Christian Democratic Organization (ODCA) and consequently, for his administration, the party Napoleon Duarte led was regarded as a sister member of the International Christian Democratic movement (Bond 1982, pp. 195-196). As a demonstration of this affinity, at the very beginning of Duarte’s administration, the Herrera government issued a statement of approval and asserted its economic support to El Salvador would continue. Herrera made this statement in spite of

⁵⁴ Author’s translation.

the internal opposition led by the Partido de Acción Democrática—Democratic Action Party (AD), which had called for the suspension of economic aid until the Salvadorian *junta* began negotiations with the FMLN. Copei's leaders argued that the civil-military junta represented the political center in El Salvador and was, therefore, the only hope for a peaceful resolution to the civil war. Its leadership stated that they too favored an end to the oligarchic domination of El Salvador's political and economic life, but expressed concern that totalitarianism of the right might be replaced by that of the left, induced by outside agents. According to government spokesmen, the only option open to Venezuela was to continue to strengthen Duarte, for he was the key to controlling the Salvadorian security forces (Bond 1982, pp. 195-196).

The other reason for the active involvement of Venezuela was personal: *Junta's* chief Napoleón Duarte had spent seven years in exile in Caracas and developed a strong and personal friendship with leading Copei politicians, including former president Rafael Caldera and former foreign minister Aristides Calvani. Calvani, who was Copei's Deputy Secretary General, was a leading advisor to President Herrera on Central American policy. Hence, it did not come as a surprise that Venezuela joined the United States in an unconditional policy of support for the Salvadoran junta headed by Duarte. Boersner suggests that Copei leaders constantly sought to belittle reports of rightist atrocities in the Central American country and joined the Americans in vehement propaganda against the FMLN. Consequently, "when France and Mexico issued their call for the recognition of the Salvadorian rebels as legitimate belligerents and for negotiations in search of a 'Zimbabwe-type' solution, the Venezuelan government emitted shouts of rage and did not hesitate to join some of Latin America's most

discredited right-wing dictatorships in a common statement against Mexico and France.” (Boersner 1984, p. 255).

This empathy between the Salvadorian and the Venezuelan political elites, to an important extent, determined the FMLN reticence to let Venezuela participate in the peace dialogues later in the 1980s. During peace dialogues, Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez acted as mediator. Pérez was a member of the Democratic Action Party and he led Venezuela during one of the most prosperous moments in the history of that country. This prosperity was due to the enormous income the country was receiving from petroleum exportation. Villalobos describes the sources of the FMLN’s position:

“Carlos Andrés Pérez, Venezuela, tried to interfere sometimes but we did not like it. As it happens now, Central America has always been an area of geopolitical dispute between Mexico and Venezuela (...). What happens is that the Venezuelan government did not understand (...), the way Mexico behaved and their very politically skillful diplomatic school. They (Mexico) had the ability to influence the process through a very careful management of the situation. In Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez sometimes scolded us and he almost told us what to do.

“So we did not like to hang around there...

“It was not an ideological thing. And here (in Mexico), here it was a liberal environment. (...) That language (Venezuela’s) was the wrong one. We did not like the opulence of your typical petroleum country. Why? Because... look, once, he hired a cook, the best cook in Caracas, and he (Carlos Andres Perez) asked every single person, ‘what do you want to eat?’ Of course, the identification with the governmental party was absolute. They said ‘what a wonderful thing!’ Once, he sent us to a very isolated island where we cannot communicate with people outside (...). There was a certain resistance because it was like assuming that we were going to surrender to material stuff, and us, our scenario was so complex that we came from sleeping on the floor in a war front, to sleep in a five star hotel; we came from meeting with a president, to then meet with some combatants. In other words, we got used to it. So what they would do did not affect us much.”⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Author’s translation of the author’s interview with Joaquín Villalobos on November 29, 2006 at the Hotel Camino Real, Mexico City.

The FMLN also became increasingly suspicious of Venezuela's activism within the process and very critical of Pérez's desire for visibility, "and came to distrust some of Venezuela's positions. Although they were grateful for Pérez's availability and generosity toward them, they were perturbed by what one FMLN negotiator described as 'indecent flirtations with the United States' and generally considered him and his behavior as 'altogether too Caribbean'" (Whitfield 2007, p. 63). However, it is crucial to highlight that the FMLN's international profile was so prominent that even in Venezuela, a country not so clearly aligned with any of the parties to the conflict, they were received and indulged by Pérez.

Again, the interaction between the Franco-Mexican communiqué and the Caracas Declaration reveals an important feature of internationalization: it is, by essence, a relational process. Internationalization strategies are, most of the times, responses to the attempt by the rival party to internationalize. *Internationalization by reaction* can adopt two different forms. One response can be the firm rejection of any form of international participation or 'interference' in the domestic struggle. Duarte skillfully used this strategy when he first reacted to the Franco-Mexican declaration by arguing that these two countries were clearly violating El Salvador's right to self-determination and the country's sovereignty. The other response is to use alternative forms of internationalization that might eventually counteract the effects of the insurgency's attempt to politically internationalize war. This is precisely what the Caracas Declaration was about: the government's purpose was to show that for every country willing to accept and recognize the FMLN as a belligerent force, there would be plenty more willing to do exactly the opposite. In other words, the internationalization of conflicts cannot be

studied in the abstract since internationalization attempts are frequently the result of prior interactions among parties to the conflict, and more specifically, they are often a response to previous attempts to internationalize.

The Salvadorian Government's Political Internationalization II: The United Nations

After denouncing the 'interference' of Mexico and France in the domestic affairs of El Salvador, on September 29th 1981 president Duarte articulated his response to the U.N. accusations and the government's position on the U.N. participation in the conflict. Shortly after the Caracas Declaration, Duarte pronounced a speech against the participation of this organization in the Salvadorian war before the General Assembly. Mainly, the objective was to reject further involvement of the United Nations, a strategy very similar to the one advanced by the Uribe administration in Colombia. The position of his government was clearly stated:

"The United Nations' objective is to create a system that overcomes (sic) international peace and security, and to advance economic, social, cultural and humanitarian programs. It should not serve as a propagandistic resonance box of purely domestic conflicts. If it follows this path, it denaturalizes the purpose of the organization and it makes it lose respectability. (...) It does not help the revitalization of this world organization to intervene in internal matters of a state, whatever pretext it has to do so, because what it is not permitted to a single state, it is not permitted to any state according to the universal rules accepted in all international codes of conduct, that is, what concerns to the internal structure of a state or its future destiny, should be resolved only and exclusively by that state. The best service to the peace cause is not to interfere in the internal affairs of another state" (Discurso pronunciado por el Ing. José Napoleón Duarte, en la Asamblea General de la ONU el 29 de Septiembre de 1981 1981, p. 1049).⁵⁶

Duarte accused the U.N. of serving as a propagandistic resonance box because for his government, accusations of violations to human rights were subversive propaganda

⁵⁶ Author's translation.

and therefore, it saw the U.N. as an organization that legitimated the FMLN and delegitimized the state. The U.N., according to the Salvadorian government, served the FMLN's political internationalization strategy.

Additionally, Duarte once again rejected any possibilities of negotiation or the establishment of any bases for dialogue with armed groups. These groups, he insisted, would be welcome to the electoral competition only if they surrender their weapons. That was the content of the 'peace proposal' he was "exposing to all the peoples of the world reunited in the magnum forum" (Discurso pronunciado por el Ing. José Napoleón Duarte, en la Asamblea General de la ONU el 29 de Septiembre de 1981 1981, p. 1051).⁵⁷

Facing the slow but solid development in favor of the political and military recognition of the FMLN by the U.N., Duarte counterattacked. Less than a year after, on October 8th 1984, Duarte surprised Salvadorians and the international community by announcing in front of the U.N. General Assembly his invitation to the FMLN to initiate direct peace dialogues with no pre-conditions. He demanded that the first meeting should take place a week after, on October 15th but openly excluded FDR members. Even though the invitation seemed awkward since it was done with an apparent and inexplicable rush, and even though the FMLN did not trust Duarte's intentions, the group decided to accept Duarte's invitation in a very particular way: the FMLN sent its letter of acceptance to the Colombian president Belisario Betancur, simultaneously asking him to hand in the missive to Duarte and to participate in negotiations as a mediator. Betancur himself was advancing a peace process with guerrilla groups in Colombia and, he came

⁵⁷ Author's translation.

to power not only with a peace proposal for the country, but also with a progressive social and political agenda. Duarte rejected Betancur's participation and dialogues started in the town of La Palma on October 15th.

But the FMLN kept advancing at the U.N. General Assembly: the Salvadorian government rejected yet another U.N. resolution (December 14th, 1984) that recognized the FMLN as an insurgent force and invited to peace talks. Through his Ambassador, the government argued that the document "was still tendentious. First, the text departed from the human rights issue to enter into subjective political considerations in violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States enshrined in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. Secondly, it played down the armed interventions of the left, carried out under the protection of totalitarian regimes, which jeopardize the economic, civil and political rights of the Salvadorian people." Salvadorian Ambassador Sandino Salazar openly accused Mexico for being a co-sponsor of the draft (resolution), and in this way, adopting

"an indefensible position by assuming responsibility for accusations against the Salvadorian government, whereas it was supposed to engage in a mission of good offices as a member of the Contadora Group. (The Salvadorian Ambassador) wanted to make it clear that his government could not accept that a State remained a full member of a negotiating group if it set itself up as both judge and jury (...) (He) wholly disapproved of the way in which the different versions of draft resolution (...) had been negotiated (...) because he had not taken part in these negotiations" (Summary Record Of The 66th Meeting 1984, p. 5).

The resolution was finally approved with the vote, among others, of Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, and Venezuela. Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Paraguay, Uruguay and the U.S., among others, voted against. The resolution was adopted by 83 votes to 13,

with 35 abstentions. At least in the field of the General Assembly, the government kept losing and its political internationalization strategy was not successful. But at the regional level, the story was very different.

Government's Political Internationalization II: Contadora, Esquipulas I and II and ONUCA

Later in the decade, very important steps were taken by the government in order to deepen the role of the United Nations in El Salvador under its own conditions. In numeral 5 of an agreement that the Central American presidents agreed upon in Tela, Honduras, they committed themselves to ask the U.N. General Secretary to adopt the necessary measures to put into practice a security verification mechanism. A word then, needs to be said about the course of events that led to the Tela agreements and the establishment of ONUCA though. In January 1983 Panama, Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia designed Contadora, an experiment in collective mediation, the goal of which was “to detach Central American conflicts from larger US-Soviet competition and to shift them from military to political and diplomatic levels” (Wehr & Lederach 1991, p. 88). Furthermore, both Contadora and later Esquipulas, were mechanisms designed in order to regionally cope with Central American conflicts. The increasing flows from U.S. illegal arms to the Contra in Nicaragua after the Sandinista revolution, and the Sandinista military support to local guerrillas were both worsening the situation in the area. In this vein, Contadora and Esquipulas were designed to control both Nicaragua and the U.S. behavior.

Following the first meeting in January, Contadora governments contacted the five Central American governments and negotiations began based on three points of

understanding: “(1) the conflicts had not only political-military but socio-economic roots as well, (2) the crisis was symptomatic of much more than the East-West conflict, and (3) a peaceful solution was the only option” (Oliver 1999, p. 151). But Contadora failed due to its own inability to reach consensus, the weakness of its ties with both the government and the FMLN, and also due to the U.S. constant opposition to the process. Additionally, “the Central American states never solicited its mediation and, even more importantly, never endowed the four members with any specific mandate” (Oliver 1999, p. 152). Hence, Contadora was not born out of any of the domestic parties’ internationalization strategy.

But in spite of its failure, the group provided the bases on which Esquipulas—an agreement between all Central American governments to cope with the regional crisis—could build: “It provided a consultative history and framework, and a comprehensive and accurate diagnosis of the region’s conflict” (Wehr & Lederach 1991, p. 89). Esquipulas was not a break with Contadora, but a continuation of it since “eight Contadora documents are acknowledged as precedents in the Esquipulas treaty. Contadora states subsequently participated in both the International Verification and Support Commission and the U.N. Observer Group-Central America peace-keeping force” (Wehr & Lederach 1991, p. 89). In May 1986 the five Central American governments met again and signed the Esquipulas Declaration, in which they expressed their “willingness to sign the Contadora Act; and approved the creation of a Central American Parliament” (Oliver 1999, p. 152). In April 1987, the Contadora Group met in Argentina and issued an statement expressing their support for the Esquipulas initiative; “this represented the

formal termination of the Contadora phase in the Central American process” (Oliver 1999, p. 164).

About a year later, Costa Rican President Óscar Arias submitted a Central American Peace Plan which evolved from this meeting.⁵⁸ His plan contained similar provisions to the ones Contadora included regarding regional security, “the only difference was that the Arias Plan enshrined democracy as the basic foundation of peace and development” (Oliver 1999, p. 154). On August 7 1987, the five Central American Presidents signed a modified version of the Arias Plan, later known as the Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America or Esquipulas II. The document defined a number of measures to promote national reconciliation, an end to hostilities, democratization, free elections, the termination of all assistance to irregular forces,⁵⁹ negotiations on arms controls and assistance to refugees. It also laid the ground for international verification procedures and provided a timetable for implementation.

Hence, these regional presidential meetings constitute the main antecedents of ONUCA, the United Nations Observer Group in Central America. ONUCA was an initiative by Central American presidents inspired by Esquipulas I and II. It was established by Security Council resolution 644 (1989) of November 7th 1989 and its mandate was:

⁵⁸ Arias' efforts on behalf of the Esquipulas Peace Agreement earned him the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize.

⁵⁹ According to Oliver, “the Esquipulas II Accord found a nearly magical formula for dealing with the question of U.S. military assistance to the region. (...) By calling for a cessation of aid to all irregular forces and their expulsion from Central American territory, the accord required that the other states of the region—particularly Honduras—eliminate *contra* camps and supply routes in their territory. At the same time, there was no prohibition on foreign militaries in Central America, as long as they were not using one state’s territory to engage in aggression against another. This allowed El Salvador to maintain its large contingent of U.S. military advisers and, through them and the aid they brought, their edge over the FMLN” Oliver J. 1999. *The Esquipulas Process: A Central American Paradigm for Resolving Regional Conflict. Ethnic Studies Report XVII:149-79*

“to conduct on-site verification of compliance by the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua with their security undertakings contained in the Esquipulas II Agreement, namely (a) the cessation of aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements, and (b) the non-use of the territory of one State for attacks on other States. The latter undertaking was to include preventing the establishment or use of facilities for radio or television transmissions for the specific purpose of directing or assisting the military operations of irregular forces or insurrectionist movements in any of the five countries.” (<http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/onucamandate.html>).

ONUCA’s mission was, to put it bluntly, to satisfy the security concerns of five Central American governments. It was, in sum, a governmental political internationalization attempt and to that extent, it seriously undermined the FMLN’s political and military interests. Even though the insurgent movement systematically and skillfully obtained political legitimacy and legal international status from the United Nations, it firmly opposed the establishment of ONUCA, as I showed in a previous section.

Sensing the content of the conversations between the Secretary General representative and the FMLN that I described in the previous section, the Central American presidents met in San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica and urged—in the numeral 6 of their declaration—for an acceleration in the implementation of the ONUCA mandate (Declaración de San Isidro de Coronado, Sexta Cumbre de Presidentes Centroamericanos, San Isidro de Coronado, Costa Rica 10-12 de Diciembre de 1989 www.sica.int/busqueda/busqueda_archivo.aspx?Archivo=decl_990_1_26052005.pdf).

The General Secretary offered then to implement the second phase of ONUCA. This second phase constituted an important military step back for the FMLN. First, it could obstruct the logistic operations of the organization and it could neutralize the support that the FMLN was receiving from Nicaragua and some other countries. Additionally, the

Central American presidents' resolution asked the ONUCA mandate to be expanded to include the verification of cessation of hostilities and demobilization of regional irregular forces. This was the main danger for the FMLN, "to have approved, created and implemented on the terrain, before the beginning of any negotiation, the international instrument that intended to verify the cease fire and the demobilization of military personnel" (Samayoa 2003, p. 91).

It is important to highlight that Salvadorian parties to the conflict found a very receptive attitude in the U.N. when they asked for its involvement due to various reasons. In general, the end of the Cold War facilitated the U.N. participation in the resolution of various conflicts, according to Whitfield, in three fundamental ways:

"by staunching the flow of resources from the United States and the Soviet Union to parties in 'proxy' wars across the developing world; by largely removing, or at least undermining, the ideological causes of such conflicts; and by liberating the Security Council from the shackles imposed on it by the politics of the Cold War and thereby allowing it to play the role its founders had intended" (Whitfield 2007, p. 19).

Along these same lines, an important change in the U.S. policy toward the region took place with the arrival to the new republican administration of George Bush. U.N. Secretary General at that time, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, states that

"the attitude of President Bush and Secretary Baker was quite different. In talking with them, I gained quickly the impression that they wanted to see the Central American problem settled. By the time of George Bush's inauguration, it was clear, too, that the Cold War was coming to an end—that there was no need to fear the extension of the Soviet influence in the Western Hemisphere through Nicaragua. (...) These considerations surely influenced the readiness of the Bush administration to accept an active UN role in the most sensitive aspects of the peace process" (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997, p. 403-404).

Additionally, the new U.S. approach to the Central American crisis was complemented by the U.S.S.R. withdrawal from the same area. In October 1989, the

Soviet Foreign Minister Edouard Shevardnadze, visited Nicaragua and reiterated the Soviet decision to interrupt arms deliveries to that country. He expressed the hope that this Soviet restraint would encourage a similar U.S. restraint with regard to other countries in the region” (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997, p. 406).⁶⁰ Both Soviet and U.S. foreign policy internationalization strategies ended up pushing the parties toward the negotiation table and accepting strong terms and conditions for peace.

Other factors also account for the U.N. interest in the Salvadorian process. Pérez de Cuéllar recognizes he “gave very high priority to El Salvador, where it seemed to me a newfound potential of the United Nations was being severely tested” (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997, p. 419). Finally, cultural affinities also played a key role. Even the U.S. Under-Secretary of State Robert Kimmitt emphasized that Pérez de Cuellar “should involve (him) self personally in the process during the ten months that were left in (his) term. He suggested that (because he was Peruvian) (his) cultural links with El Salvador gave (him) a greater chance to succeed there than on other issues with which (he) was dealing” (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997p. 428).

Finally, there are two issues that deserve to be highlighted. First, even though Salvadorian parties to the conflict constantly looked for political legitimacy at the United Nations, they chose different scenarios to find that legitimacy. While the General

⁶⁰ As Whitfield suggests, the impact of the U.S.S.R. new foreign policy should not be overstated since the links between that country and the FMLN broke before Shevardnadze’s trip to Managua: “Shafik Handal, the leader of the Salvadorian Communist party and senior figure in the FMLN’s general command, had been incensed to find that letters he had written to Mikhail Gorbachev, critical of those addressed by Gorbachev to communist parties across the world on the subject of *perestroika*, were being shared with the United States. Accordingly, when (...) Shevardnadze visited Managua in October 1989 and asked to see the General Command, the FMLN said no. The request was repeated, but the FMLN said no again. Relations between the two did not recover, and the FMLN would subsequently inform de Soto that efforts to exert leverage over them through the Soviets would not prosper” Whitfield T. 2007. *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press

Assembly and the Office of the Secretary General were spaces in which the FMLN's political internationalization strategy was more successful, the Security Council was the setting in which the Salvadorian government found more resonance to its own position. Evidence of this is the set of General Assembly resolutions that ended up recognizing the existence of the insurgency and their status as an actor within the conflict, and the active participation of Alvaro de Soto as a Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General during the last phase of the negotiations. In the meantime, the Security Council provided more support for ONUCA and openly recognized and incorporated the set of governmental agreements signed up by the states in the region. Both ONUCA and these agreements were designed and implemented by the Salvadorian state and the other four Central American governments.

Secondly, a key actor differentiates the internationalization process that took place in El Salvador and the one that took place in Colombia during the Pastrana administration. In El Salvador, it was the government, the Cristiani administration, the party to the conflict that was initially opposed to the U.N. involvement during negotiations. Pérez de Cuéllar states it clearly:

“I must add that Cristiani was initially somewhat distrustful of direct U.N. involvement in the negotiation process, feeling that the United Nations, especially (Alvaro) de Soto, was overly sympathetic to the FMLN position. (...) The suspicion was not difficult to understand. The FMLN leaders were young, intelligent and with a good sense of humor. Their principal negotiator, Joaquín Villalobos, was especially impressive. I always enjoy my meetings with them, and I think de Soto developed a genuine affection for them. This was far less true of the government delegation” (Pérez de Cuéllar 1997, p. 417).

On the other side, the FMLN's leadership constantly and actively looked for U.N. involvement in the peace dialogues, especially during their trip to Montreal where they

directly asked Alvaro de Soto to act as a mediator. As I showed in Chapter 3 and 4, in Colombia occurred exactly the opposite: president Pastrana's administration was constantly trying to convince the FARC to agree on further involvement of the international community, in general, and of the United Nations, in particular.

Various factors account for this difference. In Chapter 3, I addressed some of them but in terms of the Salvadorian case, three essential elements might help understand why the United Nations was welcomed by the FMLN to participate in the negotiations, but it was accepted with some degree of reluctance by the government. First, as I have already suggested, the United Nations had a clear interest in participating in the Salvadorian peace process so for the FMLN, more than the government, it was relatively easy to find a positive and enthusiastic response from the international organization to its invitation to participate in peace negotiations. Secondly, this positive response was also the result of a long-lasting attempt by the FMLN to construct solid alliances with the organization and some of its most important members, mainly in order to obtain political legitimacy. At moments, the FMLN diplomacy at the U.N. seemed stronger and more efficient than the governmental strategy. Hence, the conversations with Alvaro de Soto were just the culmination of a diplomatic initiative that began in 1981 with the inception of the insurgent coalition itself. As I show in Chapter 4, the FARC did not have this diplomatic tradition and its ties to the international community were less broad and solid than the ones the FMLN constructed and that led to the participation of the U.N. in the conversations. On the contrary, the FARC had a constant suspicion that the international organization was always on the side of the government and consequently, could not constitute a neutral and impartial third party that could help the 1999 peace process.

And third, the FMLN attempt to involve the U.N. Secretary General through Alvaro de Soto, can be defined as a form of internationalization by reaction. The FMLN, as Samayoa narrates it, had the perception that ONUCA was an operation that could only hurt militarily the insurgency. It was, additionally, a regional governmental initiative that did not include the FMLN participation. Hence, the FMLN leadership asked Alvaro de Soto to act as mediator in the negotiations as a response to the governmental internationalization strategy. As I have shown, the government did not like the idea and was constantly suspicious, together with the U.S. government, of de Soto's performance during the negotiations. But neither the FMLN could block the ONUCA, nor the government could block de Soto's participation. The military stalemate and the prospective of a substantial reduction of international military support for both the government and the guerrilla, put the parties to the conflict in a scenario where choices were very narrow. ONUCA and de Soto's participation were the last attempts to internationalize the peace conversations by both government and guerrilla and as such, they did not experience strong levels of resistance by any of the parties.

By April 1991, negotiations between the FMLN and the Salvadorian government resumed, finally resulting in a truce that successfully concluded in January 1992. The subscription of a Peace Agreement in the Castle of Chapultepec, under the auspices of the United Nations, brought about the war's end. A new Constitution was promulgated, the Armed Forces were subject to purged, a civilian police force was established and the FMLN transformed from a guerrilla army to a political party. Additionally, in order to

deal with war crimes, a Truth Commission was created and later in 1993 and an amnesty law was legislated by the Salvadorian government.

The Salvadorian conflict stands in this comparative study, as one of the most internationalized wars in Latin America. Both the government and the FMLN advanced intense political and military internationalization campaigns that contributed to improve their own positions within the conflict. However, the international system played a crucial role in challenging the implementation of these internationalization strategies; that was predominantly the case when the cold war was over and both the Soviet Union and the United States transformed their policies toward Central America. This specific juncture demonstrated that even though parties to the conflict have a substantial autonomy to either start or end internationalization, the final implementation of this strategy crucially depends on the resonance it encounters in its external targets.

Chapter 6. Guatemala

Both government and guerrillas in Guatemala used internationalization as a strategy in war and peace, but to a lesser extent than parties to the conflict did in El Salvador. As I stated in Chapter 4, both wars took place around the same time and in the same regional context. However, Salvadorian parties to the conflict used internationalization in a more systematic and articulated way than Guatemalan parties did. I argue here that this difference can be explained mainly by two factors: First, the government saw the U.S. Congress restrictions on aid as forms of intervention they were not willing to tolerate and the guerrilla, mainly due to its salient indigenous composition, did not share a worldview with other regional revolutionary governments or organizations. Hence, both parties remained relatively isolated from the international system. Second, the low level of fragmentation within each party to the conflict also affected their decision to internationalize: government and guerrillas had a higher level of unity and hence, they did not see in internationalization a tool they could use to reorient themselves ideologically or to neutralize rival subgroups. In the case of the government, I show in this chapter that once signs of fragmentation became evident within the army, the military faction in power attempted to internationalize and to ask the U.S. for military aid, even though that implied contradicting a foreign policy tradition of ‘critical alignment’ or ‘active neutrality’ vis-à-vis the U.S. In the case of the insurgent coalition, there is evidence that the URNG—the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, solved internally the differences among groups and consequently, did not have to use internationalization to achieve this purpose. There is also evidence that these differences were less salient than in the Salvadorian FMLN.

There are additional factors that also account for the low level of internationalization of the Guatemalan conflict. On the governmental side, it is crucial to highlight that neither the military governments nor the civil elites faced a scenario in which the insurgency was close to taking power. The military stalemate that characterized the beginning of the peace process in El Salvador did not take place so clearly in Guatemala. As Whitfield documents:

“although almost 3000 (URNG) members of its four constituent parts would be demobilized under the peace agreements, (U.N.) secretariat officials involved in the negotiation had estimated combatants to number no more than 1000. Far from a military stalemate, the URNG—which had never enjoyed either the levels of non governmental organization (NGO) support or the external assistance afforded the Salvadorian guerrillas—had suffered a strategic military defeat that left it in control of only small pockets of the country. (...) Meanwhile, the state itself, which had returned to civilian authority only in 1986, was weak and circumscribed by the counterinsurgency machinery that had been developed to conduct the war” (Whitfield 2007, p. 81).

The government did not perceive that the military balance of power was against itself and consequently, did not see the need to strengthen itself military by using foreign aid. Washington’s human rights restrictions during the Carter administration pushed even further the Guatemalan decision to reject U.S. military aid to fight its war against the local guerrillas. By rejecting U.S. help and separating its interests from Washington, the government achieved a strong and autonomous internal and regional position: Internally, it allowed the government to launch a more ‘effective’ military effort against the insurgency with no restrictions of any type, although precisely the lack of restrictions also facilitated systematic human rights violations. Regionally, it allowed Guatemala to present itself as a possible sub-hegemon for the area by using its size and its distance from Washington as strong arguments to support its aspirations. Guatemalan elites and

Armed Forces also maintain a nationalist attitude vis-à-vis the United States that resulted from the 1954 U.S. intervention and the Jacobo Arbenz removal from the presidency. As I will show, the Guatemalan discourse that supported the *active neutrality* policy had strong nationalist components and it generated pride within the Armed Forces. Guatemala's regional leadership and nationalism also allowed the government to create and consolidate the Esquipulas process that, among other things, strengthened regional efforts to solve the Central American crisis, with no intervention from the United States or any other neighboring countries. One of the main objectives of Esquipulas, as I showed in Chapter 5, was precisely that every government could contribute autonomously to solve the crisis within its own borders: the agreement encouraged the United States to stop the illegal arms flow to the Contra and, it also encouraged the Sandinistas to stop their own illegal arm flow to insurgent organizations in the area. In other words, Guatemala's regional leadership and nationalism, and the Esquipulas agreement as one of its most clear expressions, would help the government maintaining its conflict within its own borders and preventing any sort of undesired international involvement.

In terms of the Guatemalan insurgency, various accounts suggest that cultural factors such as the strength of the ethnic component within the insurgent organization can partially explain why the URNG did not share a worldview with revolutionary governments in Cuba and Nicaragua, as the FMLN did. Guatemalan guerrillas had a stronger peasant/indigenous component while guerrillas in El Salvador had a stronger urban/modernized base that facilitated, from a cultural but also from a purely logistic point of view, the construction of alliances with the FSLN in Nicaragua and Castro's

revolution in Cuba. However, it is important to highlight that isolation was not absolute and the URNG did receive aid from those countries. Even though some guerrilla fighters were trained in Cuba and there is evidence they received weapons from both Cuba and Nicaragua, their links with those governments appear to be weaker than the ties between those governments and the Salvadorian FMLN. The URNG's weak military and financial position also hindered its ability to reach international actors. The military balance between government and insurgency was such that it put the URNG in a very defensive position in which room for maneuver was practically inexistent. The lack of restriction on the government's military repression contributed to weaken the insurgency to a point where the design and implementation of an internationalization strategy of any type was almost impossible. This factor in addition to the historical international isolation of the Guatemalan guerrillas contributes to explain its lower levels of internationalization compared to the FMLN in El Salvador.

In Guatemala, 1954 is a year that witnessed some of the most important political events in that country. During that year, the United States, supported by opposition forces within Guatemala, intervened militarily and overthrew reformist and democratically elected president Jacobo Arbenz. Partly as a consequence of the U.S. intervention but also as the natural result of a very poor and unequal society, many insurgent movements emerged during the years that followed. Hence, the inevitable establishment of a counterinsurgency policy that constituted a commonality among Central American countries took place during the 60s. This policy, as well as the actual militarization of the Guatemalan state, the increasing closing of the political system and

the predominance of military autocratic regimes provoked a constant and rapid polarization of Guatemala's political process.

The expansion of guerrilla's activities between 1963 and 1972 toward mostly indigenous parts of the country and the adoption of a recruitment strategy based on ethnic and social demands, led the state to adopt a stronger military strategy based on the use of indiscriminate terror and scorched earth campaigns, also known by the Guatemalan army as the 'take the water away from the fish' tactic.

This intensification of the conflict reached its peak at the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s. In this context, the occupation of the Spanish Embassy in 1980 made even more visible the polarization of society, the prevalent exclusion posed by the political system and the lawlessness of the Guatemalan conflict. During this year, a group of about 30 people, including about twenty Indian delegates from El Quiché, hoping to gain an audience with the Guatemalan government decided to enter and occupy the Spanish embassy in Guatemala City. Very poorly armed, the group took about ten hostages including the ambassador, some diplomatic personnel, a former Guatemalan vice-president and a former Guatemalan minister of foreign affairs. The ambassador tried to intercede between the group and the Guatemalan government in order to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict. But as a response, the government decided to surround the embassy, cut phone lines and any other form of communication with the outside. What happened next is part of one of the most traumatic episodes in Guatemalan history:

“Fearing the worst, since the police were threatening the embassy itself, the ambassador went to the doorway and demanded that the building's sanctuary be respected, especially since a solution to the crisis had been negotiated. The police

responded by opening fire on the embassy. Thirty-nine people, including the hostages, were burned to death in the explosions in all-consuming fires, apparently ignited by incendiary materials tossed into the building by the police. (...) The events at the Spanish embassy marked the end of peaceful attempts by many popular groups to influence the government” (Trudeau 1993, p. 20).

But they also marked the beginning of a trend: the parties to the Guatemalan conflict would not have, in the years to come, a strong or fluid relationship with the international community. Spain, for instance, would abstain to participate in an active manner in the Guatemalan struggle. On the contrary, the relationship with the international community was characterized by constant interruptions, miscommunication and, in general, by relative isolationism.

The Spanish embassy event especially constituted a consolidation moment for the relative isolation that the Guatemalan conflict experienced during most of the military confrontation. In general, internationalization in Guatemala was substantially dissimilar from the one in El Salvador. There were two very salient differences. First, even though the Guatemalan government was constantly aligned with the United States in its fight against subversion, this alignment was seriously interrupted from 1978 until 1985 due to Washington’s concern with indiscriminate human rights violations in the Central American country, violations that in some instances directly affected American citizens. As a result, the Guatemalan government attempted, at least publicly, to lower the profile of the alliance with the U.S. and sometimes it even denied its existence. The *relative* and *active neutrality* policies were designed by the Guatemalan government to satisfy this and other purposes. I will review in detail the nature of the alliance with the U.S. in this chapter.

Second, the Guatemalan insurgency had, for various reasons I explore also in this chapter, a very different approach to the role of international actors in their conflict. Hence, their relationship with other insurgent movements in the area and with socialist governments in Cuba and Nicaragua was not as 'special' as it was in the case of the Salvadorian FMLN. The international isolation that resulted mainly from these two elements led to a conflict where neither political nor military internationalization were as intense or as constant as in El Salvador. The difference is not less than striking. Both conflicts took place approximately at the same time, they had very similar characteristics and they were located in the same geographic area. However, the internationalization of both struggles was fundamentally different. In this chapter, I construct and support a set of explanations that will possibly account for this difference.

The Government's Military Internationalization: the US and a 'closeted' alliance

The presence of the United States in Guatemala was constant and undisputable during an important part of the internal war in that country. It had its most important precedent during the 1954 U.S. intervention that ended the administration of the reformist Jacobo Arbenz but it remained part of Guatemalan politics long after that. The open and official beginning of U.S. military assistance to Guatemala took place in 1960 though, when the U.S. Special Forces set up a secret military training base in 1962. This program became massive in 1966, when the guerrilla movement became a real threat and the Guatemalan army proved incapable of containing it. (Jonas 1991, p. 120). This process took place under the elected military government of Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes. Military assistance was substantial during the 60s and the 70s and it clearly transformed the

Guatemalan army: “the Guatemalan army is unquestionably a U.S. creation, given the centrality of U.S. national security doctrines and given the level of U.S. military assistance and training at every level, from the formation of death squads in the 1960s to the extensive civic action programs” (Jonas 1991, p. 120). According to Trudeau, in this specific juncture, the Guatemalan military underwent major changes in terms of institutional cohesion and military efficiency. US assistance was a key ingredient in these crucial transformations. In his words, “the United States had provided military assistance to Guatemala since 1954, but after the attempted coup of 1960, aid increased dramatically. By 1961, the Alliance for Progress, designed to encourage social reform while simultaneously providing counterinsurgency assistance to prevent ‘another Cuba,’ offered increased military assistance to Guatemala.” (Trudeau 1993, p. 57).

However, as I suggested in Chapter 5, U.S. foreign policy toward Guatemala and El Salvador experienced a breaking moment during the Carter administration. In spite of all the military aid, after the coup against Jacobo Arbenz and before Carter’s arrival to the White House, there was no other clear interest in Central America and therefore, the area was not the subject of special attention from Washington. To the extent Guatemala did not constitute a serious threat to U.S. interests during the 70s, it was possible and feasible to incorporate this country into the U.S.’ human rights agenda. After the fall of Somoza in Nicaragua and the beginning of the Sandinista revolution (1979), Carter continued pressing for democratization and the defense of human rights, but the policy “failed miserably. The Guatemalan ruling class (...) became increasingly convinced that the State Department was dominated by Marxists” (Gleijeses 1984, p. 131).

An additional issue emerged in 1975 that intensified the dispute between the U.S. and Guatemalan elites and, that hindered the possibilities of implementing a military internationalization strategy by the Guatemalan government directed to the United States. During that year, under the military government of General Kjell Laugerud (there was important evidence of fraud in this election) the U.S. sided with the U.K. in its dispute with Guatemala over Belize “and withheld military equipment scheduled for delivery because of Guatemalan threats to invade Belize. This prompted Guatemala to seek alternative suppliers of military equipment, mainly U.S. allies” (Jonas 1991, p. 195) including Israel, Argentina and Taiwan (Barry 1992, p. 271). The issue here was that Guatemala’s position had been (until the beginning of the 90s) that Belize was legally an integral part of its national territory and this had been the source of various conflicts with Great Britain. In fact, “the Belize question typically has been a nationalistic rallying cry in Guatemalan politics” (Trudeau 1993, p. 165). Guatemala broke consular relations with the UK and initially closed the Guatemalan-Belize border, thereby cutting trade between the two countries.

The Rejection of U.S. military support: De-internationalizing (militarily) the conflict

But a more serious decision in Washington pushed even further away the Guatemalan government and prevented the use of military internationalization strategies. Again, in the mid 1970s and during the Carter administration, the U.S. Congress began to link U.S. foreign aid to human rights conditions in recipient countries. President Carter decided to implement these foreign assistance laws (unlike his predecessors) and the Laugerud government in Guatemala “unilaterally renounced U.S. military assistance

agreements containing human rights conditions, it defined them as ‘interventionist’ and consequently, it stepped up its arms purchases from other countries (Jonas 1991, p. 195). This was the first instance in which the Guatemalan government openly ended and rejected military internationalization in the form of U.S. support. For the Laugerud government, the cost of the alliance with the U.S. was too high and the human rights conditions were unacceptable.

The military’s description of this episode shows how different the relationship with the U.S. was, compared to the relationship between El Salvador and the U.S. and it also shows a certain nationalistic pride in rejecting U.S. military support:

“In the Guetamalan case, the military were irreverent vis-à-vis president Jimmy Carter’s policy. (...) The army obtained weapons from Israel and South Korea and that gave an independent line to the army during the development of its fight. Of course, if we would have had stronger surveillance and the international community presence, of the U.S. government itself, probably the social cost would have not been so high. However, both in war and peace, the Guatemalan army can feel responsible, for good and bad, they are the only responsible ones. Here, we have a strong sense of dignity in that, you know? It was shocking to see the Americans practically running the military operations of the Salvadorian army. (...) We were always very proud to do it by ourselves.”⁶¹

General Julio Balconi, former Minister of Defense, recalls:

“In 1997 military aid was suspended and, since then until the end of the internal armed conflict, there was no collaboration or economic aid of any type. The army had to develop its very own counterinsurgency strategies, such as the creation of Civil Defense Patrols—to compensate for the lack of personnel and adequate equipment to advance military operations, operations at a national level that the army was not able to assume. (...) The army faced the most difficult years of the Guatemalan war with its very own resources (...). To logistically support our own units in combat, we only had an airplane and a helicopter. In many occasions, due

⁶¹ Interview with Mauricio López, Army Representative at the Negotiation table during the peace talks that led to the end of the Guatemalan war. He also worked at the Guatemalan Ministry of Defense with Minister Henriquez, González Taracena and Balconi. He was the liaison between Minister Balconi and the URNG during the peace talks. Interviewed by Carlo Nasi, August 1998, Guatemala City. Professor Nasi provided the content of this interview to the author. Author’s translation.

to the lack of additional helicopters, our wounded men died because we did not have the capacity to take them to a medical center on time.”⁶²

The legacy of this rupture between the U.S. and Guatemala remained even until the peace process. The Guatemalan Armed Forces were proud that they were able to fight the war against the insurgency in their own terms and under their own conditions. Balconi’s comparison with El Salvador reflects that rejecting U.S. support was, to an important extent, motivated by nationalism:

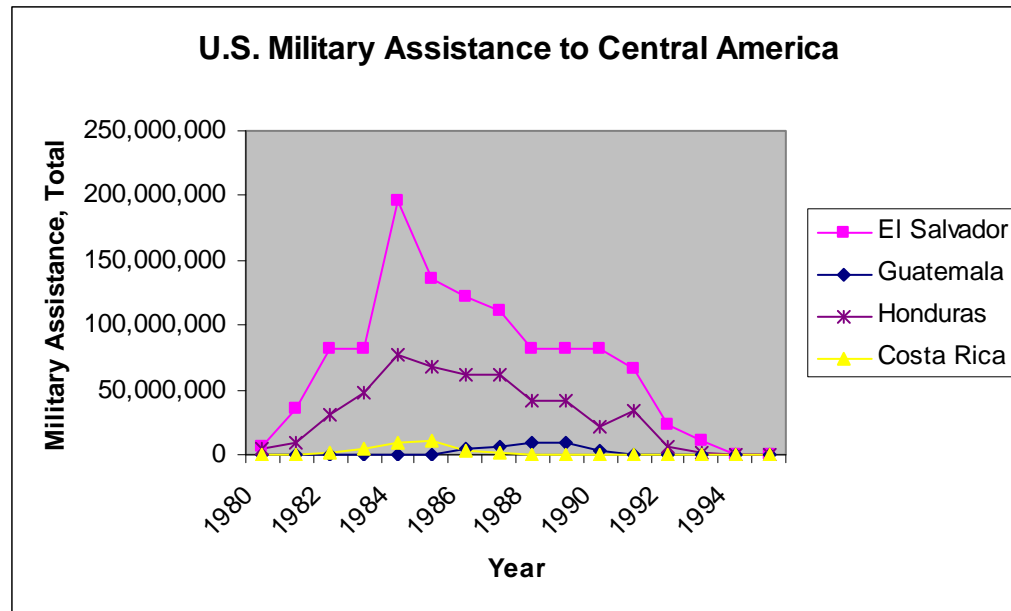
“These sacrifices typical in war, allowed that, at the moment of negotiation and discussions, and most importantly, at the moment of making decisions at the table, these decisions were eminently Guatemalan, with no influence or pressure coming from outsiders or the United States. In El Salvador, the U.S. invested big amounts of money that gave it the ‘right’ to be another actor in the negotiation table and it was key to achieve peace in that country. Event though the U.S. was part of the group of friends during the peace process in Guatemala, its role was secondary during negotiations, it only sent a representative and kept a very low profile.”⁶³

However, even though the U.S. military assistance was discontinued between FY 1978 and FY 1985, “Guatemala continued to buy arms and other military supplies from the United States during this period. During the aid hiatus, Commerce Department licenses were issued for over \$100 million in military or dual-use supplies, including such items as aircraft, pistols, shotguns, and military vehicles” (Barry 1992, p. 272). In fact, the U.S. refrained from taking more serious action such as cutting off ESF aid or voting against multilateral financial support for Guatemala (Barry 1992, p. 274). But overall, U.S. aid was low during this period. It was especially low if it is compared to the amount

⁶² Interview with former Minister of Defense, Julio Balconi, via e-mail. February 15th and 25th, 2008. Author’s translation.

⁶³ Interview with former Minister of Defense, Julio Balconi, via e-mail. February 15th and 25th, 2008. Author’s translation.

of U.S. support directed to El Salvador and even to Honduras and Costa Rica, as the following graph illustrates:



Source: USAID Development Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean

(<http://quesdb.cdie.org/lac/index.html>)

Critical Alignment: Regional Internationalization through Military De-internationalization vis-à-vis the U.S.

Aside from the consequences Balconi and López highlight, the virtual end of the military alliance with the U.S. also resulted in what could be denominated a foreign policy of ‘critical alignment’ toward Washington. In fact, Jonas suggests that

“one effect of the years of international isolation was the growth of right-wing military nationalism and anti-Americanism within the Guatemalan armed forces based on scorn for the ‘fickleness’ of a U.S. government beholden to congressional liberals. To the extent that it forced the Guatemalan armed forces to look elsewhere for assistance and hardware, it also gave them a certain margin of autonomy vis-à-vis the United States” (Jonas 1991, p. 200).

The emergence of right wing nationalism, a phenomenon that many Latin American dictatorships experienced, further hindered the implementation of a military

internationalization strategy and facilitated the construction of a relatively autonomous foreign policy. Guatemala became very critical of the U.S. approach to the so-called Central American crisis and the government was not very proud of the various occasions when it could not help it, and had to ask for American aid to fight its war against the guerrillas. These developments during the 70s and 80s and the emergence of governmental right wing nationalism explain why it is possible to find a 'quasi-independent' foreign policy in Guatemala and almost absent military internationalization, while in El Salvador what we observe is an almost unconditional alignment with the U.S.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, a foreign policy of this nature can be defined as an attempt, orchestrated by the army and the dominant class, to improve its reaction capacity in the regional scenario but mainly, in the context of their internal conflict. Its first creator was the army, especially the dictatorship of General Ríos Montt (1982-1983) and General Mejía Vitores (1983-1986), but it was followed and deepened by the Vinicio Cerezo's administration, the first civil and a Christian Democratic government (1986-1991). The main components of this policy were a 'relative neutrality' on the confrontation between the Reagan administration and the Sandinismo in Nicaragua and, diplomatic support, sometimes clear and active, to the peace initiative of the Contadora Group⁶⁴ (Castañeda 1987, p.59). Guatemala decided to support the Contadora peace efforts because the military saw this as an opportunity to overcome the international isolation, to approach Mexico and, to reactivate the Central American economy (Castañeda 1987, p. 88). By mid 1980s, Guatemala's neutrality policy was

⁶⁴ The Mexican, Panamanian, Venezuelan and Colombian governments created the Contadora group initially in order to formulate a 'Latin-American solution' to the Central American crisis. See Chapter 4 for further description.

widely known in the area and by the U.S. In May 1984, Guatemalan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fernando Andrade Díaz-Durán, under the dictatorship of General Mejía Vitores, proclaimed the main tenants of this policy, not ironically, in Washington. The most relevant points were the following ones:

- Guatemala will never be a trampoline for foreign interventions in the region
- Any peace effort has to take place in the context of Contadora and not in any other international forum (the reference to the U.S. attempt to move the issue to the O.A.S was clear)
- Guatemala will not participate in the second phase of Granadero I⁶⁵
- Condeca⁶⁶ does not exist and Guatemala will not participate in any effort to reactivate it.
- The promotion of democracy is the only possible solution to the Central American conflict
- Central American problems have social and economic roots, even though there is a strong East-West confrontation component.

⁶⁵ Granadero I was a U.S.-Honduran military join and combine exercise. The purpose was to assist Honduras in enhancing the readiness and capability of their military forces, to provide a local military presence, and to offer American units the opportunity to conduct joint exercises involving all services and their components. Honduras was the major theater of operations for these exercises. El Salvador sent an infantry battalion, while Honduras provided an infantry and an airborne battalion. Panama assigned an observer team to the exercise. The units spent a week engaged in combined operations and a second week performing a multinational airborne/air assault at Jamastran near Honduras' southern border with Nicaragua. U.S. Army personnel performed humanitarian acts to assist the local inhabitants, including medical and veterinary care as well as an airlift of food and medical supplies for Indian refugees. (<http://www.history.army.mil/books/DAHSUM/1984/ch02.htm>).

⁶⁶ Condeca (Consejo de Defensa Centroamericano-Central American Defense Council) was created as a collective security mechanism after the Cuban revolution took place. It was created in 1964 together with the Central American Common Market (Mercado Común Centroamericano) and was actively promoted by the United States. Its members were El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The U.S. had member status due to the South Comm in Panama. It attempted to coordinate the region's counterinsurgency strategy but its role was debilitated by the so-called 'soccer war' between El Salvador and Honduras. The Sandinista success in overthrowing Somoza's regime in Nicaragua, a close U.S. ally, constituted the coup de grace for Condeca.

- There is foreign presence in Central America: Cuba in Nicaragua and the U.S. in Honduras (Castañeda 1987, p. 92).

But to understand the construction of this ‘critical alignment’ policy as a Guatemalan governmental decision to openly reject internationalization of its conflict, it is necessary to take into account some additional elements. Only the lack of U.S. military aid and the unsupportive position vis-à-vis Belize do not explain the construction of such a long-term international approach to the internal conflict. Various elements related to domestic politics, to the search for international legitimacy and a more active regional role also account for the nature of this policy.

As mentioned before, for Guatemala it was of key importance to reestablish a satisfactory level of external and internal legitimacy in order to win the war against the insurgency. The lack of internal legitimacy that resulted from indiscriminate governmental repression and constant human rights violations that increasingly qualified as genocide, motivated the adoption of a different stance in the foreign policy realm. In other words, in order to compensate for the virtual annihilation of indigenous communities and social organizations, armed and unarmed, the government opted for a moderate and a neutral approach to other regional conflicts. In Jonas’s words, “the Guatemalan army began to see that one possible vehicle for resolving these contradictions could be a ‘legitimate’ foreign policy. (...) A quasi-independent foreign policy of regional neutrality was seen as *internally* stabilizing, as part of the ‘recomposition’ process implicit in the 1982 counterinsurgency plan. It gave the Guatemalan state legitimacy, as well as increased autonomy and room for maneuver internally” (Jonas 1991, p. 200). The end of the alliance with the U.S. facilitated the

gradual adoption of a political internationalization strategy in search for international legitimacy. This change coincided with the end of the genocidal campaign that took place predominantly from 1979 until 1982.

Additionally, as it is stated in a U.S. declassified cable, "...Guatemala believes that its size and population, resource base, relative economic strength, geographic location, counterinsurgency success, and historical role in the region argue for its adoption of a more assertive, leading regional role" (Guatemala: Central American Policy and U.S. Relations. Secret, Analysis. May 14. 1984). Hence, a policy of 'critical alignment' provided Guatemala with two crucial elements. First, in dissociating itself from Washington it prevented the other countries in the region from seeing Guatemala as yet another American pawn in Central America. In this sense, Guatemala was in a very different position from El Salvador and due to its size and historic regional pride, it could try to consolidate itself as a sub-regional hegemon—an alternative not available to a very small country such El Salvador. Second, the partial lack of U.S. official aid and explicit presence "freed the Guatemalan army to wage an all-out war, unimpeded by human rights restrictions—the 'Guatemalan solution'" (Jonas 1991, p. 206). Therefore, the *regional neutrality* policy was a two-fold move: it allowed the Guatemalan government to find more sources of international and internal legitimacy by waging an 'independent' war against insurgency and, it allowed it to fight with no supervision and restrictions. In other words, the 'regional neutrality' policy was partially the result of the virtual lack of governmental military internationalization and, it was a strategy calculated to obtain regional legitimacy through political internationalization.

This neutrality policy was challenged by an important change in American foreign policy toward the region: the arrival of Ronald Reagan's republican administration to the White House and the consequent turn in the policy toward Guatemala. The constant violations of human rights by the army were seen as 'moderate' and they were directed only against what the Reagan administration and the Guatemalan government defined as "terrorists backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union" (Gleijeses 1984, p. 133). As Gleijeses suggests, "the United States had to provide assistance to a beleaguered and loyal ally, rather than indulge in intemperate and naïve criticism of a deeply rooted social reality" (Gleijeses 1984, p. 133). Reagan wanted to restore military aid but it did it only when the Lucas regime (1978-1982) ended due to another coup that installed General Ríos Montt in power—one of the regional neutrality policy's creators. American interests in restoring military aid to Guatemala were very clear: "Guatemala was (...) a staunch front-line ally of the United States that had to be strengthened to carry on the battle against communism. Less commonly acknowledge as a factor was the substantial economic stake: \$226 million in U.S. private investments in industry, oil, and nickel, more than double the amount in El Salvador. (That is why) the Reagan administration tried to get around human rights concerns and urged renewal of lethal military aid precisely during the worse years of the holocaust" (Jonas 1991, Pp. 197-198). By 1983, the U.S. unilaterally lifted the arms embargo and restarted arms sales to Guatemala. Later in 1984, the Kissinger report recommended full resumption of military and economic aid. Although assistance was finally restored in 1985, "in late 1990, (again) renewed concerns about human rights, especially the army's attempt to cover up its

murder of a U.S. citizen, provoked the suspension of U.S. military assistance”

(Whitfield 2007, p. 81).

The Exceptions to Active Neutrality: Internationalizing During the Reagan's Years

Hence, it is very important to highlight that the U.S. interests in helping the Guatemalan government in its war against insurgency, interests that are clearly explained by the logic of the East-West confrontation, were compatible with Guatemala's requests for military aid and economic assistance. In spite of the *active neutrality* policy and Guatemala's reluctance to appear as a strong U.S. ally in the region, the government took advantage of the arrival of Reagan and the Republicans to the White House and explicitly asked for military support in many different instances. For example, on December 4th, 1982, president Ríos Montt and president Reagan met in Honduras. President Ríos Montt explained to Reagan that the Guatemalan government had established civil defense forces to help counter the insurgents. He told president Reagan that there were some 300.000 persons organized but that they lacked weapons so he explicitly asked the U.S. president for M-1 rifles and carbines, as well as some ammunition: “He hoped that these items could be given to Guatemala from U.S. surplus stocks. These items were no longer in U.S. army inventory, he asserted. He was not asking for any sophisticated weapons. He just wanted these few items”(Draft Memorandum of Conversation--Bilateral between President Reagan and the President of Guatemala, General Efraim Ríos Montt. Confidential, Cable, December 6 1982). He also asked for assistance to reconstruct key areas affected by the armed conflict and ask the U.S. to donate prefabricated buildings and bailey bridges; “he did not specifically ask for loans or grants, but he asked that the

USG (U.S. government) assist Guatemala in negotiations to obtain loans” that would come from international financial institutions and private banks” (Draft Memorandum of Conversation--Bilateral between President Reagan and the President of Guatemala, General Efraín Ríos Montt. Confidential, Cable, December 6 1982).

A few months later, president Ríos Montt publicly admitted that “his government would be pleased were the Reagan administration also to provide military aid in addition to economic assistance. The president, when asked about the possibility of U.S. military assistance being forthcoming replied that he did not know ‘what they (the U.S.) think’. He added, ‘let us hope it comes; we would like them to give us military aid” (Ríos Montt Reportedly Willing to Accept U.S. Military Assistance. Confidential, Cable, July 22. 1983). Clearly, this public declaration was an important setback in terms of the *active neutrality* policy but it also revealed the proximity between Ríos Montt government and the Reagan administration that did not exist during the Carter years.

In part, both governments shared a world view in terms of the importance and necessity of re-intensifying the cold war. But fragmentation within the Guatemalan government can also account for this change of strategy. The explanation the U.S. government itself constructed seems to point out in that direction:

“This public reversal of a Guatemalan policy extending back to 1977 is apparently an attempt by Ríos Montt to shore up his hold on power following the abortive coup attempt of June 28-29. A positive U.S. response to Ríos Montt’s sudden public willingness to accept military assistance would be utilized by him to undercut those in the Guatemalan military seeking his ouster. Any such signals of U.S. support could be powerful weapons for Ríos Montt to brandish about in the coming weeks and months” (Ríos Montt Reportedly Willing to Accept U.S. Military Assistance. Confidential, Cable, July 22. 1983).

Even though the Guatemalan government did not experience the level of division it was possible to find in El Salvador, when military factions attempt to take control of the state, in other words, when division and fragmentation within the government became visible, military internationalization was a strategy the faction in power had available to strengthen the military apparatus and the counterinsurgent discourse and policy. To be sure, as it was the case in El Salvador, the strengthening of the counterinsurgent discourse and practice was a function and a result of division and lack of stability within the government. High levels of fragmentation facilitated and almost pushed the military leadership to obtain military aid from the U.S. In this sense, Active Neutrality began as and remained largely a function of the internal struggle not only against guerrillas, but also among the army itself. To follow the trend, later on July 23rd 1983, president Ríos Montt and Foreign Minister Castillo Arriola received Senator Stone and directly asked him for some ‘special help’: a loan of ten helicopters for three months and a loan of \$2 million for helicopter spare parts. Ríos Montt explicitly suggested that if a “kind of barter arrangement with a private firm were possible, he had two Aviateca Boeing 727s which he could swap. Ríos Montt said that, in light of an upsurge in guerrilla activity in north, he urgently required enhanced mobility” (Stone Mission: Meeting with President Ríos Montt and Foreign Minister Castillo, Secret, Cable, July 25 1983)

Fragmentation was so acute that in 1983, a coup d’état led by General Oscar Mejía overthrew General Ríos Montt. Shortly after, U.S. Assistant Secretary Motley visited Guatemala and Mejía did not wait to implement its own military internationalization strategy. He insisted that Salvadorian General Vides Casanova had

offered to have El Salvador served as a conduit for U.S. arms and ammunition to Guatemala if it were possible to persuade the U.S. Congress to authorize them directly. Mejía, in an almost desperate attempt to consolidate its own administration, suggested that if the United States could not obtain Congressional approval of new weapons, it should donate obsolete weapons lying around the warehouses: “Aside from helicopters and helicopters spare parts which the army needed for mobility to bring supplies to isolated civilian hamlets and to evacuate the wounded, they could use tractors, bulldozer and other engineering equipment to build rural roads and mobile hospitals. General Mejía clearly advocated additional U.S. military assistance” (Assistant Secretary Motley's Visit to Guatemala, Confidential, Cable, September 6 1983).

The interesting aspect of Motley's trip to Guatemala was that on the very same day Mejía requested assistance of various types, Montley went to a 75 minute briefing on the guerrilla situation in Guatemala by the acting Chief of Staff, Colonel Gramajo (Chief of Staff Lopez Fuentes had left that morning for Europe). After some discussion of the Guatemalan situation, Gramajo suddenly and surprisingly announced that “Guatemala did not need U.S. military assistance: that the U.S. should concentrate its efforts with the U.S. Congress to provide whatever economic assistance was possible” (Assistant Secretary Motley's Visit to Guatemala, Confidential, Cable, September 6 1983). The U.S. government explained this sort of governmental schizophrenia by suggesting that it was Guatemala's way to deal with what they thought was a *fait accompli*: “Col Rodriguez, the U.S. Milgrp Commander, later learned from Col. Gramajo that he had made this startling declarations which was at 180 degree variance from statements just made by the Chief of State, because Col. Gramajo and other military officers (probably including Chief of Staff

Lopez Puentes) have concluded that the Congress will simply not provide any military assistance to Guatemala in the foreseeable future” (Assistant Secretary Motley's Visit to Guatemala, Confidential, Cable, September 6 1983). The contradiction also reveals how ingrained was *active neutrality* and how reluctant were the Armed Forces to military internationalize the conflict.

Combining Active Neutrality with Internationalization

However and in spite of the partial renewal of U.S. support to Guatemala's counterinsurgency war, the Central American country remained reluctant to get involved in Washington's attempts to overthrow the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and, it did not abandon its neutrality policy. A declassified U.S. government document of 1984 suggests that in fact, attempts by other countries to obtain Guatemalan backing in disputes with Nicaragua—particularly efforts by the United States and Honduras—had strengthened the national sense of strategic importance. Moreover, public and private statements by General Mejía Vitores and Andrade (Foreign Affairs Minister) over the past several months indicated that this courting of Guatemala had led them to believe that they had leverage with the United States and others (Guatemala: Central American Policy and U.S. Relations. Secret, Analysis. May 14. 1984). The same document adds that another reason for Guatemala's so-called independent position on the Nicaraguan issue, results from the fact that ‘Guatemala does not see Nicaragua as a direct military threat nor as a critical supporter—much less the lifeline—of its domestic insurgents even though Mejía had publicly accused the Sandinistas of supporting the Guatemalan guerrillas. Moreover, the Guatemalans consider the spread of communism in the region, represented by the Sandinistas, as a manifestation of the larger East-West struggle of the

superpowers that should be primarily addressed by the United States. Thus, they believed that policies designed to diminish the Nicaraguan threat more directly benefited the United States and Guatemala's regional neighbors" (Guatemala: Central American Policy and U.S. Relations. Secret, Analysis. May 14. 1984). In other words and according to Guatemalan elites' calculation, Nicaragua was 'two borders away' from Guatemala. Furthermore, by dissociating Guatemala from the U.S. Contra war, Guatemala was in a better position to insert itself in the regional scenario and strengthen its relationship with Latin American nations: by supporting the U.S. anti-Contra campaign, the government would have undermined its own efforts to politically internationalize in order to obtain legitimacy at the regional level. This was also an internationalization strategy that would neutralize the diplomatic support enjoyed by the URNG during the early 1980s (Jonas 1991, p. 200).

The neutrality policy had intended and unintended consequences. First, by breaking the explicit and direct dependence "and establishing a margin of autonomy vis-à-vis the United States, it paved the way for diversifying sources of economic support. Ironically enough, this strategy also contributed to a reconstruction of relations within the United States, by getting the U.S. Congress to lift the sanctions against Guatemala; it proved an indirect route to winning over liberal democrats in Congress who opposed Reagan's Contra policy. Meanwhile, Guatemalan army officers could rest assured that, no matter how annoyed the Reagan administration might be with them for not supporting its Nicaragua policy, it had no choice but to support this most effective of counterinsurgency armies for 'holding the line' in Guatemala" (Jonas 1991, p. 200).

Another crucial element of this equation is that in no way, *regional neutrality* and its posterior reformulation, *active neutrality*, implied the actual end of U.S. aid to Guatemala. As Jones affirms, “Guatemala did receive some military aid from the United States during the years of the dirty war: (...) the Reagan administration lobbied continuously to renew military aid and there were increasing loopholes in the ban of such aid” (Jones 1991, p. 206). However and as I have suggested, this support was relatively low compared to the aid provided to the Salvadorian government. Additionally and for the reasons explained before, the Guatemalan government was not willing to go public and openly admit its strong alliance with the United States. There is a very eloquent example of this sort of ‘internationalization under the table’ that took place later in 1987.

General Mejía allowed a transition to democracy when in July 1984 he convened elections for a Constituent Assembly to draft a democratic constitution. By 1985, Vinicio Cerezo, a civilian politician and the candidate for the Christian Democratic Party won the first election held under the new constitution and took office in 1986. Even though with the transition to democracy the military moved toward the more traditional role of providing internal security and fighting against the armed insurgents, this process did not mark the end of the internationalization strategy they initially designed and implemented. An instance of the continuing governmental strategy of internationalization took place on April 30, 1987. President Cerezo telephoned U.S. ambassador Piedra and requested U.S. assistance in the airlift of approximately 340 combat troops from Guatemala City to Playa Grande, located 120 miles north of the city. Playa Grande was an area where guerrillas were increasingly active and the military was gradually losing ground at that moment. An offensive movement was necessary but it would have taken days for the

troops to reach there by ground. Cerezo's request was to use three Chinooks stationed in Honduras: they would fly to and refuel in Guatemala City and then make about eleven trips of 36 minutes each to Playa Grande. The American embassy's personnel recommended a positive response to this request because they thought that if Cerezo concluded that "Central America has become so controversial an issue in Washington that we cannot even help him this way against the guerrillas in Guatemala, this is likely to affect his willingness to work with us in the broader Central American context. Moreover, a negative reply to Cerezo's request—especially on the eve of his official working visit to the U.S.—is likely to send a message to the Guatemalan army that even with the new democracy, the U.S. is reluctant to help them in their internal struggle" (Airlift on Guatemalan Troops. Secret, Action Memorandum, May 1 1987).

The U.S. government approved the airlift support and less than a week later the story was leaked to the press; that led President Cerezo to tell the media that U.S. helicopters "were just passing through, and were flown to train Guatemalan pilots in their use and to avoid a long truck journey for the recruits" (Guatemala: Misleading Comments on U.S. Airlift Support, Confidential, Summary, May 8 1987). The U.S. Embassy interpreted Cerezo's reaction to the press in the following way: "Cerezo's efforts to evade personal responsibility for the request and undercut U.S. statements on the airlift were probably designed to avoid criticism from the Guatemalan left and any damage to his pose of 'active neutrality.' The Guatemalan military could have transported the troops by land in time to counter alleged guerilla activity. The request for U.S. assistance was a test by the armed forces of both Cerezo's commitment to counter-insurgency and U.S. willingness to assist Guatemala" (Airlift on Guatemalan Troops. Secret, Action

Memorandum, May 1 1987). Even though the government insisted on a very calculated line of argumentation according to which the airlift was an 'administrative' as opposed to tactical mission, the event spurred a widespread debate among defenders of the active neutrality policy in Guatemala and led some to suggest that "the action had undermined the government of Guatemala's 'moral leadership' in promoting peace in the region"(Guatemala: Central American Policy and U.S. Relations. Secret, Analysis. May 14. 1984).

As I suggested in Chapter 5, the Bush administration attempted to lower the profile of Central America in the U.S. foreign policy agenda. That trend was demonstrated by a cut in military aid and its temporary suspension at the end of 1990 and the beginning of the U.S. support to peace dialogues with the URNG. In fact, by 1994 the U.S. became a member of the 'Group of Friends' and in its role, it facilitated and supported the peace dialogues and the tasks of the U.N. Its role in this peace process was of great importance since it "remained the only international player with the leverage to pressure for demilitarization" (Jonas 2000, 122-123).

Mexico and Guatemala. A struggle for regional hegemony and further internationalization

During more than 150 years Mexico had the possibility to participate actively in the political struggles of various Central American countries. However, according to Castañeda, the U.S. recognized the Mexican revolutionary order in exchange of a Mexican passive role in Central America and the Caribbean (Castañeda 1987, p. 15). Hence, in general, Mexico's participation in the Central American crisis was less substantial than U.S. participation, especially in times of war.

Additionally, Mexico's profile in the Guatemalan conflict was substantially lower than in El Salvador and its role in terms of providing military support and legitimacy to the parties to the conflict was substantially less salient. In fact, the Guatemalan government tried to block Mexico's participation in various occasions. This resulted from Guatemalan bourgeoisie's perception of Mexico as an economic power that could have affected negatively their interests and encouraged revolutionary attempts in Central America:

“the Mexican Revolution of 1910; the Lázaro Cárdenas government (1934-1940); Mexico's foreign policy which favored the Spanish Republic and the Cuban Revolution, and was opposed to the American intervention in Guatemala (1954)⁶⁷, to the expulsion of Cuba from the O.A.S (1962), to the American invasion of Santo Domingo (1965), to the coup d'état against Salvador Allende orchestrated by the C.I.A. (1973), a policy in favor of the Nicaraguan revolution and the overthrow of the Somoza dynasty (1979) and, that supported the revolutionary and democratic struggle in El Salvador, for instance, through the Franco-Mexican communiqué (1981), that supported Belize's independence (1981) and, in general, a policy that allowed Mexico to adopt a position as a place for Guatemalan political refugees, were all enough reasons for considering 'anti-Mexican' feelings a not so superficial feeling” (Castañeda, p. 18).

Guatemala's perception of Mexican expansionist intentions resulted in part from the Mexican annexation of an important part of Central America during the Iturbide Empire⁶⁸ and the constant border disputes during the 19th century (Castañeda, p. 72). These disputes included the clarification of borders in the currently Mexican areas of Chiapas, Soconusco and El Petén and thanks to the U.S. mediation, they were resolved in 1895 through the De León-Mariscal agreement. Even though the dispute was solved,

⁶⁷ During the X O.A.S. Conference (Caracas-1954) Mexico and Argentina firmly opposed a resolution passed by U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, a resolution that sought for Latin-American support for the 'Operation Success' prepared by the C.I.A. This operation resulted in the overthrow of the democratically elected President Jacobo Arbenz.

⁶⁸ After Mexico achieved its independence through the *Tres Garantías* Plan, the political form of organization they adopted was a monarchy and that explains the creation of the First Mexican Empire, led by General Agustín de Iturbide.

Guatemala still perceives that these territories were taken by Mexico illegally and every now and then, signs of dissatisfaction emerge at governmental and social levels.

Castañeda registers many instances, during the Guatemala's conflict, of open hostility toward Mexico. In various occasions, *La Nación*, one of the most important newspapers in Guatemala, accused the Mexican government of initiating an arms race linked to Belize's independence and dedicated to defend its oil reserves in the south. The military also accused Mexico, after signing the Franco-Mexican communiqué, of stimulating insurgent Guatemalan groups and of intentionally serving as a safe heaven for them. More explicit and violent attacks also took place against the Mexican diplomatic representation in Guatemala. On December 31st 1983, the Mexican embassy was attacked with heavy ammunition with no casualties but important material damage. A group called "Solidaridad Contrarrevolucionaria" assumed responsibility. Later in May 1985, Guatemalan soldiers provoked and intimidated Mexican soldiers in the border area and in August, a grenade exploded inside of the Mexican embassy and killed two Guatemalans (Castañeda, p. 98).

The refugee issue was also contentious in the bilateral agenda. Political exiles from Guatemala in Mexico have always been numerous. However, until 1981, the refugee population was composed by an important part of the Guatemalan petit bourgeoisie, union and popular organizations leaders and intellectuals. They were easily integrated into the Mexican labor force due to their educational level and their professional experience. After that year though, mostly Indian peasants coming from border areas such as Huehuetenango, El Quiché and El Petén, began to migrate to Mexico. Many of them spoke only canjobal, mam, kekchí, quiche, jacalteco or

cakchiquel but not Spanish and this, among other factors, made their incorporation into Mexican society a more complex process (Castañeda, p. 103). The Guatemalan government's scorched earth and genocidal campaigns produced, according to Americas Watch, a million refugees. From those, "about 150 thousand went to Mexico and were distributed in the following way: about 46 thousand settled in the COMAR and ACNUR refugee camps; other 20 thousand spread around the Lacandona jungle and the Marqués de Comillas area; another 25 thousand went to Tziscaco y Trinitaria and finally, 50 thousand more went to the Tapachula and Soconusco areas" (Castañeda, p. 104). These refugee camps were constantly threatened by Guatemalan forces due to two essential reasons. First, they were the most visible evidence of the government's constant and systematic violations of human rights against the indigenous population and deeply hindered its search for international legitimacy, and second, they were perceived by the government as guerrilla sanctuaries. Strong evidence suggests that, indeed, important guerrilla's leaders operated from Mexico, and specifically, from the refugee camps. For instance, the head of ORPA-one of the URNG members, Commander Gaspar Ilom (his real name was Rodrigo Asturias and he was the son of Miguel Angel Asturias, the winner of the Literature Nobel Prize in 1967) operated most of the time from Mexico, according to another ORPA leader, Santiago Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz Mendoza 2006).

All these factors hindered the implementation of a political and military internationalization strategy by the Guatemalan government directed toward Mexico. As it happened in El Salvador, Mexico was constantly associated with the insurgency and the progressive nature of its foreign policy; and in a very polarized international system, this was interpreted as hostile by Central American governments. However and maybe due to

the factors mentioned above, both in El Salvador and Guatemala, Mexico played a crucial role during the implementation of a *internationalization of peace* strategy at the beginning of the 1990s as an active member of the Group of Friends in both negotiation tables. In other words, the same elements that hindered Mexico's involvement during the war, can account for its role and participation during peace conversations.

The Government's Political Internationalization: United Nations

The Guatemalan peace process took place only a few years after parties signed up peace accords in El Salvador. However, the international dynamic had changed substantially and various factors turned the Guatemalan negotiation in almost a sideshow. Between 1994 and 1996, when negotiations were being moderated by the United Nations in this country, international attention was fixed on event in the Balkans, Somalia, and Rwanda; "far from the optimism surrounding the United Nations at the time of the Salvadoran peace agreements, the standing of the organization was a low ebb" (Whitfield 2007, p. 79). Before the U.N. participation though, talks took place starting in 1987 and remained stagnated until 1990 when president Cerezo appointed Monsignor Quezada as a mediator and decided to move the negotiation table to Oslo where talks took place under the auspices of the Norwegian government and the Lutheran World Federation. In this occasion both government and guerrilla used internationalization as a device to re-energize peace talks. Under the Oslo accords, an additional form of internationalization in order to obtain legitimacy for the negotiations was agreed upon: "the U.N. secretary-general was formally asked to observe these meetings and to act as a 'guarantor of compliance' with the terms of the agreement" (Whitfield 2007, p. 83). The first round of

talks between the government and the insurgency was held in Mexico in April 1991 and Frances Vendrell acted as the U.N. observer in that opportunity.

During this initial part of the informal talks, the government realized that a different approach to international actors was necessary. Specifically, the army became conscious that it could not advance its interests in the context of a negotiation process without overcoming its still substantial international isolation. Mauricio López, a member of the governmental team at the negotiation table, describes eloquently how the army observed its situation and how it planned to change it:

“Since 1987, here in Guatemala we realized that we were weak in the international realm and that, somehow, we needed to work that out. So, in 1988, they started the organization of governmental commissions to go to the U.N., to the human rights commission in Geneva, to the sub-commission of prevention and discrimination and protection to minorities from the human rights commission also in Geneva, and the U.N. General Assembly in New York, in order to cover the human rights area, because the denunciation weapon was very strong against the Guatemalan state. The army began to participate in those delegations since 1988 and that had a twofold effect: one was that active participation of the government delegations and their attempt to defend the Guatemalan state in those forums. The only defense we could use was to provide information about those denunciations, vanish whatever was possible to vanish and to clarify whatever it was possible to clarify. But aside from this, it had a very important feedback effect because we realized what our flaws were: our army doctrinaire flaws fundamentally in the human rights realm. There was no teaching on human rights.

“Since 1989 the army began implementing within its study program (...) human rights classes. We went to the Human Rights Institute in San Remo, Italy, to study the law of armed conflicts and this was followed by a process in which, nowadays, the military academy and the army professional center both have human rights and international humanitarian law classes. (...) Our participation at the U.N. turned us into lobbyists.”⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Interview with Mauricio López, Army Representative at the negotiation table during the peace talks that led to the end of the Guatemalan war. He also worked at the Guatemalan Ministry of Defense with Ministers Henriquez, González Taracena and Balconi. He was the liaison of Minister Balconi and the URNG during peace talks. Interviewed by Carlo Nasi, August 1998, Guatemala City. Professor Nasi provided this interview to the author. Author’s translation.

Clearly and according to López, the army started to take the U.N. into account, as part of its internationalization strategy, in order to overcome the international isolation it was experiencing since the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s. Internationalization was for them a weapon to obtain international legitimacy and to overcome the isolation that resulted from their record as one of the worse violators of human rights in the region. This initiative was in part stimulated by the FMLN experience in El Salvador. López himself admits it:

“Constantly, two scenarios have been considered as basic for struggle: the military and the political one. (...) They (FMLN commanders) were able to develop their actions in what they defined as the three arenas of struggle: they added the international one. They were present at the U.N., human rights forums, I heard Ana Guadalupe Martínez talked at the U.N. human rights commission. So they were a very successful guerrilla, the most advanced of all, with mentality...a lot of pragmatism, you know? (...) And I point that out because in 1987, here in Guatemala, we looked at that and realized our weakest dimension was the international one.”⁷⁰

Members of the governmental team at the negotiations suggest that there was a strong consensus among them and the insurgency on the idea inviting the U.N. as mediator during the peace talks and to assume verification tasks. Raquel Zelaya suggests that it is not very probable that anybody at the table would have thought that it was possible to advance negotiations without international participation. That was clear for both the government and the URNG. In the government case, it is crucial to take into account that the arrival of Ramiro León del Carpio, former Human Rights Prosecutor, to the Guatemalan presidency facilitated not only the negotiation, but also the participation of international actors along the process. Zelaya confirms that León del Carpio even met with URNG commanders when he was presidential candidate, a bold move that could

⁷⁰ Interview with Mauricio López. Ibid.

have seriously endangered his candidature. His resolution to pursue a negotiated peace was very solid.⁷¹

However, after the peace process in El Salvador, skepticism about the U.N. role in Guatemala increased and to some extent, it made the parties, and especially the government, hesitant about the benefits of internationalizing the peace process by inviting the U.N. As Whitfield narrates, “consultation between the two government militaries reinforced Guatemalan fears of a bias in the secretariat toward the guerrillas, while the presence of U.N. peacekeepers in neighboring El Salvador only confirmed the view of many Guatemalans that such an intrusive nature should never be accepted in Guatemala” (Whitfield 2007, p. 84). An instance of this distrust provoked the end of Vandrell’s job as an observer of the negotiation. This constituted the most serious governmental attempt to reject or end a form of political internationalization during the peace negotiations. General Balconi registered an incident that constituted an important attempt by the government to resist certain implications of the U.N. role during the talks. He narrates the event in the following way:

“I want to talk about the only incident that took place with the U.N. General Secretary’s personal representative. It was mister Francesc Vendrell, who very rapidly won all the parties’ distrust, especially the government delegation’s because he took distance from his role as observer, to work as a meeting facilitator between insurgency delegates and other actors that were not part of the negotiation. In one opportunity, he organized and coordinated a meeting at the headquarters of the San Egidio Community in Italy, between URNG’s delegates and representatives from the governments of the Groups of Friends, with the purpose of influencing the negotiation table, without the knowledge of the government and with no participation from the peace commission. This led the president of Guatemala to ask the U.N. Secretary General for his dismissal. Once

⁷¹ Interview with Raquel Zelaya, member of the governmental negotiating team during the peace negotiation. Casa Dann Carlton, Bogota, February 2008. Author’s translation.

the incident was overcome, I do not remember other manifestations of discomfort or distress with international actors.”⁷²

Vendrell’s work as an observer had turned into a more active approach and almost a mediator role. Uncomfortable with the incident and, in general, distrustful of his involvement, the government asked for him to be relieved for having exceeded his mandate; his place was taken by Jean Arnault, “an official junior enough to be considered a ‘real’ observer” (Whitfield 2007, p. 84). The government had proposed to replace Vandrell with a retired president but the URNG vigorously opposed concerned about the institutional allegiances of presidents (Whitfield 2007, p. 320). This incident is very similar to the process that led to the exit of James Lamoyne, the U.N. Special Representative for the peace dialogues in Colombia during the Uribe administration.

Later in January 1993, recently elected Guatemalan president Serrano attended a meeting in Caracas with the presidents of Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela and there he decided to constitute a Group of Friends that could serve the renewal of his peace initiative. This group was fundamentally different from the Salvadorian one since it was called only by president Serrano and did not have the URNG’s approval. The insurgency did not reject the initiative but it suggested that the Group could not be transferred automatically from the Salvadorian experience and that other countries needed to take part in the effort. Additionally, the URNG “saw little point in including Colombia, which was increasingly preoccupied with its own internal conflict and hardly sympathetic toward long-standing rural insurgencies elsewhere. (...) The URNG pushed for the group to be expanded through the addition of Norway (...) and after much internal

⁷² Interview with former Minister of Defense, Julio Balconi, via e-mail. February 15th and 25th, 2008. Author’s translation.

debate, the United States (which had already been approached separately by Serrano)” (Whitfield 2007, p. 86).

Internationalization and the Guatemalan Insurgency

Even though the Guatemalan conflict took place in the context of the global confrontation between East and West, and even though it was mostly the result of one of the highest levels of economic exclusion that is possible to find in Latin America during that time, it differs from the Salvadorian war precisely to the extent that it was much more than that. Susan Jonas describes the complexity of the Guatemalan conflict in a very eloquent way:

“The vast majority of Guatemalan Indians are also part of the 87 percent of the population that lives in poverty. Hence, it is necessary to recast Guatemala’s structural crisis in their ethnic-national dimensions. (...) For the vast majority of Guatemala’s indigenous population (poor peasants, members of the rural semi-proletariat, or the urban informal proletariat), then, class *exploitation* and ethnic *oppression* are intertwined. Their condition as exploited (and their response to exploitation) is part of their condition as oppressed (and their response to oppression)” (Jonas 1991, p. 105).

In other words, beyond a classic class struggle, what it is possible to observe in Guatemala is a confrontation between the Indian populations and a *ladino*⁷³ state.

Some of the most important insurgent movements in Guatemala emerged by 1962, when radicalized former army officers founded an armed insurgent movement denominated the Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre—November 13th Revolutionary Movement (MR-13), in the Izabal zone in eastern Guatemala.

Ideologically, “they evolved from a national /reformist perspective to embrace an explicit

⁷³ Although “beyond the definition as Spanish-speaking and culturally Westernized, the ladino identity is one of the most elusive elements of Guatemalan society,” (Jonas S. 1991. *The Battle for Guatemala. Rebels, Death Squads, and U.S. Power*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, Inc. Pp.15-16) a *ladino* in Guatemala can be generally defined as a person who does not belong to any Indian community or group.

socialist program demanding (...) land for the peasants” (Jonas 1991, p. 66). Later that same year, the PGT (Guatemalan Workers Party—Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo) formed its own guerrilla front and soon after joined the MR-13 to form the Rebel Armed Forces—Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR). This group supported the presidential elections in 1966 and began a partial demobilization. Later in 1972, the EGP (Poor’s Guerrilla Army—Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres)—one of the largest guerrilla organizations—emerged and by 1975 it began to attract peasant Indian support in the Ixcán region. By 1980, “the EGP was operating in several departments and was able to field fighting units composed of significant numbers of Indians” (Trudeau 1993, p. 41). Another important group that emerged during the 70s in the Lake Atitlán area was ORPA (People in Arms Organization—Organización del Pueblo en Armas) which also had a strong Indian membership, as the EGP. And finally, “a third major group in the early 1980s was a regeneration of one of the 1960s’ groups, the Rebel Armed Forces—Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes FAR, which for a time was allied with a faction of the Guatemalan Communist Party (Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo-PGT).

In 1982, under the dictatorship of General Romeo Lucas García, human rights violations and state and paramilitary violence reached their peak and broke every possible form of social organization in the country. During this period, opposition groups were being virtually wiped out. Under these circumstances, all these guerrilla organizations proclaimed their unity and created a coordinating group, the URNG-Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity). The EGP operated primarily in the *altiplano* of the departments of Huehuetenango and El Quiché. ORPA forces were concentrated to the south of the EGP’s in the mountains of

San Marcos, Solola, and southwestern coastal Departments. The FAR focused its attention on the northern Department of El Petén, and the PGT-D operated primarily in Chimaltenango Department and Guatemala City (Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983).

Even though the URNG was a coalition of various insurgent movements; it differed substantially from the FMLN coalition in one aspect. The URNG worked the ideological and strategic differences in a more efficient way. One of its members recognizes the importance of this aspect:

“Notice that I think one of the important things that facilitated the political negotiations was the unity of our guerrilla movement. And that unity was possible because we never worked (...), maybe since the beginning of the 80s, to highlight these ideological and strategic differences. On the contrary, we worked on reinforcing our identities: those things that put us together, as revolutionaries. (...) There are natural differences. Because even though we come from a common trunk, the radicalized revolutionary movement from the beginning of the 60s, in reality, when we constructed our organizations each group had a particular origin, with a clear idea of how the organization was supposed to act, to fight the war, and where to fight this war. (...) There are different origins, different ways to view reality. But the really important thing is that we constructed a political approach since very early. In other words, we unified in order to develop a war strategy, and we achieved an agreement and compatibility based on those particular differences. When the negotiation process began, at the end of the 80s and beginning of the 90s, there was a strategic identity, a fundamental political identity.(...) We always had military structures under political control and under a strict military discipline.”⁷⁴

To an important extent, the URNG's level of unity and its military and logistic weakness made political and military internationalization a strategy less feasible for the Guatemalan insurgency than it was for the FMLN in El Salvador. To the extent that political and strategic differences were negotiated within the coalition, international

⁷⁴ Interview Pedro Palma Lau (alias Pancho), URNG-ORPA leader. Interviewed by Carlo Nasi, August 1998, Guatemala City. Professor Nasi provided the content of this interview to the author. Author's translation.

actors were not necessary to move the organization in a certain ideological direction or to neutralize certain radical sectors as it happened with the FMLN in El Salvador. The lack of resources and the lack of what I denominated in Chapter 1 *internationalization* skills (i.e. knowledge of international languages and contacts) also account for URNG international isolation. Hence, this level of unity and the insurgency weakness might explain, to an important extent, why the Guatemalan insurgency did not use political and military internationalization strategies as frequently and as systematically as it was used by the FMLN in El Salvador. In fact, in an interview with Teresa Whitfield, former URNG commander Rodrigo Asturias alias Gaspar Ilom, admitted that ties between the URNG and the Soviet bloc, and even Cuba, were much weaker than those enjoyed by the FMLN (Whitfield 2007, p. 319).

This explains why, when Susan Jonas describes the URNG, she suggests that “like its predecessor in the 1960s, it was an authentically *Guatemalan* movement, receiving virtually no material support from Cuba or other outside forces” (Jonas 1991, p. 139). However, it is relevant to take into account that various U.S. declassified intelligence documents affirm otherwise and contain, in various occasions, important evidence to prove the existence of ties between the URNG and the revolutionary governments in the region. I will review this evidence in the next section. In peace, as I will show, international actors were also invited to participate again but to a lesser extent than in El Salvador.

URNG’s Military Internationalization

In terms of military aid, there is a first crucial event that the U.S. government identifies in its declassified documents. It clearly suggests that a first instance of

internationalization took place precisely during the creation of the URNG. The U.S. affirms that the union of the four guerrilla groups was first contemplated seriously in October 1980 in Managua: “The Managua meeting established the URN, which was reworked into the URNG in Havana in January 1982” (Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983). In fact, the same document goes on and insists that “the impetus for organization of the URNG was the Cuban desire to unify the Guatemalan armed left into a coherent national command structure similar to that of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador” (Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983). However, the U.S. government recognizes that they had no evidence to support the idea that the URNG “uses a dedicated radio network for transmission of orders from Nicaragua to Guatemala. Nor does it appear that URNG decisions promulgated in Managua (no matter how transmitted to the member organizations) are respected by the Guatemalan guerrillas” (Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983).

Already in 1982, the U.S. affirmed that there was evidence of Cuban and Nicaraguan logistical support to Guatemalan guerrillas. The declassified documents suggest that some members of the guerrillas had been trained in Cuba and that leaders had been known to travel to Nicaragua and Cuba for strategy meetings. This finding is supported by Santiago Santa Cruz Mendoza, an ex-commander of ORPA who relates in his memories his own experience and other insurgents' experience in Nicaraguan and

Cuban training camps (Santa Cruz Mendoza 2006) and by other guerrilla fighters' accounts (López Herrera 2005, pp. 32-33). The American documents highlight that there was also evidence that Mexico provided some "discreet financial, political, and moral support to Guatemalan guerrillas, as well as sanctuary for the nation's political exiles. Additionally, unconfirmed reports state that Mexico has allowed Guatemalan guerrillas to enter Mexico for rest, recuperation, and re-supply. Most Guatemalan military officers are convinced that Mexico is also funneling arms to the guerrillas and serves as a route of infiltrations" (Military Intelligence Summary (MIS), Volume VIII--Latin America. Secret, Intelligence Summary, November. 1982). Governmental memos also indicated that the 'Cuban-Nicaraguan supply pipeline' extended to Guatemala and not just to El Salvador. Finally, "U.S. weapons from former Vietnam stocks (M-16s, AR-15s, and M-79 grenade launchers, .50-cal machineguns, 57-mm recoilless rifles, M-60 machineguns, and 60-mm mortars) have found their way to Guatemalan insurgents. Also, Soviet-type hand-grenades and Communist Chinese rocket-propelled grenades have been captured by Guatemalan military forces" (Military Intelligence Summary (MIS), Volume VIII--Latin America. Secret, Intelligence Summary, November. 1982).

In February 1983, during General Ríos Montt's intense military offensive against guerrillas, a new task force from the Guatemalan armed forces captured 4 guerrilla members in the southwest part of the country who confirmed that "selected guerrilla (...) are being sent to Cuba for an intensive course which covers: weapons, first aid, commo, demolitions, land navigation, and tactics. The length of the course has been lengthened (sic) from six months to one year. No reason was given for the lengthening of the course" (Theater of Operations TOSO. Confidential, Cable, February 6 1983). However,

U.S. government reports also insisted that although Nicaragua and Cuba have supplied the insurgency with some weapons, and other ideologically close countries have supplied training, “the insurgent groups are essentially Guatemalan in character” (Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983).

Some of the guerrilla weapons were imported and many, after being found by the Guatemalan army, were identified as belonging to the U.S. inventory in Vietnam. Since the Vietnamese probably did not send them directly to Guatemala, the U.S. government concluded that Cuba obtained them from Vietnam and then transferred them to the guerrillas. Another possible alternative was that “Vietnam sold some of them to international arms merchants to obtain foreign exchange and had no control over the subsequent transfer. Nonetheless, most M-16s probably are obtained by Cuba on the world arms market”(Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983). According to reports made available to the U.S. embassy in Guatemala, imported guerrilla weaponry entered Guatemala from two primary supply lines, both originating in Cuba: one route was said to traverse Mexico and the other primary route, “like the FMLN supply line, is believed to traverse Nicaragua and Honduras before entering Guatemala from the east”(Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983).

A final source of logistic support, although not very well documented, is Mexico. In August 1982, an attack on an ORPA camp netted several rifles of Mexican Army origin. Guatemalan officials, including President Ríos Montt himself, regularly asserted

that “Mexico condones large levels of arms smuggling through and guerrilla training centers on its territory. Repeated Guatemalan incursions into Mexico, however, have yet to yield solid evidence of this. What the Guatemalans consider guerrilla training centers are described by American embassy personnel and international observers as refugee camps. It is likely that guerrillas residing in refugee camps cache their weapons in Guatemala and engage in training only at safe distances from the camps”(Guatemala's Guerrillas Retreating in the Face of Government Pressure. Secret, Intelligence Research Report, March 3 1983). This was a frequent accusation against the Mexican government that, as I explained in the section on Mexican-Guatemalan relations, had historical roots not necessarily related to the domestic conflict itself.

In spite of U.S. declassified documentation, Susan Jonas and others have highlighted the very particular and localized nature of the Guatemalan guerrillas. It is clear that these groups did try to find international support, and even though they were frequently successful in this endeavor, they certainly received nothing compared to what Nicaraguans, Salvadorians, and Colombians obtained from Cuba (Castañeda 1993, p. 95). Joaquín Villalobos’ explanation when he is asked why Salvadorian guerrillas were closer to Castro and Ortega, and more internationalized than Guatemalan groups, is slightly compatible with the argument I advance here:

“It is because of their conservatism. In the case of El Salvador, we were confronting Reagan and they could not defeat us. The problem with the guerrilla in Guatemala was that it was politically and militarily inactive. We did not have a strong relationship with them. In one occasion, I remember, there was a political opportunity, a government fell and there was a change in the relationship. We said, ‘get involved, take advantage of the political space.’ And they say no. They stayed there, with the political leadership living in Mexico and the combatants eating monkeys and snakes in the jungle. With that attitude, you don’t do anything. They made an offensive move every three months, far away from cities

and vital centers. We, on the other hand, had this obsession with sizing the capital city, with keeping pressure on main roads, with making constant offensive attacks. (...) We, very often, made big military efforts... it was my fixation. Coordination and simultaneity were for me, basic principles in war. Because if you do a thing one day and a different thing another day, if you do different things, they cannot feel you.

“In one occasion, the Guatemalans told me, ‘but you advance offensive campaigns and never win,’ and I answered, ‘at least we try, but you, how many have you done? (...) That is the dynamic and that is what Fidel loved (...) ‘Fidel did not appreciate the Guatemalan guerrillas because they were lazy and he was a warrior.’”⁷⁵

Implicit in Villalobos statement is the idea that he developed strong empathy with Fidel Castro and with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua that was not about political ideology, it was a shared world view about how to fight the war. They agreed on the necessity of having an offensive military behavior and that made them close allies. Villalobos’s idea of the URGN’s conservatism can be better defined as military conservatism, a military behavior closer to defense than to offense. Moreover, a senior official of the Cuban Communist party explained the difference in Cuban support as follows: “the main difference was a different military prowess and yield. There was also a politically different presence of the FMLN in El Salvador from that of the URNG in Guatemala” (Whitfield 2007, p. 319). According to his and Castañeda’s accounts, this prevented the existence of a common world view between the Guatemalan guerrillas and regional revolutionary regimes. More generally, this conservatism can also be related to a characteristic of Guatemala’s society that Raquel Zelaya describes clearly:

“Guatemala has to be judged by our experience in 1954. Even though that affected generations that are not in circulation any more, the meaning of the American intervention marked our society. (...) So I think we are very sensitive to that, and unconsciously, to the international theme too. Additionally, I think

⁷⁵ Entrevista con Joaquín Villalobos, Noviembre 29 de 2006, Hotel Camino Real, Ciudad de México.

our profile is that of a very provincial citizen for whom, his/her world is his/her country. We are not even open to the regional Central American realm. So, to locate ourselves in the world is not something easy for the common citizen.”⁷⁶

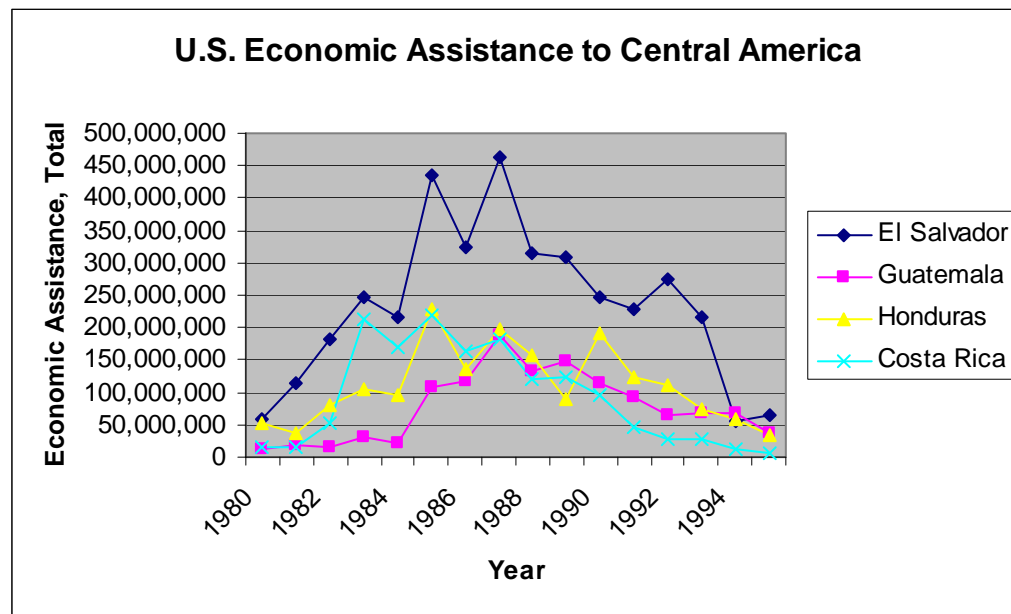
Again, the source of the URNG isolation might not only be purely cultural. What Villalobos defines as a problem of attitude or military tactics is also a problem related to the smaller size of the Guatemalan guerrilla and the worse and stronger version of state repression in that country. In such scenario, a more offensive position was replaced by purely survival techniques and a more defensive military position that left no time or resources for internationalization.

In June 1993, Congress, pursuant to the 1985 constitution, elected the Human Rights Ombudsman, Ramiro de León Carpio. De León continued the peace process that, now brokered by the United Nations, took on new life. The government and the URNG signed agreements on human rights (March 1994), resettlement of displaced persons (June 1994), historical clarification (June 1994), and indigenous rights (March 1995). They also made significant progress on a socioeconomic and agrarian agreement. Under the following presidential administration of Alvaro Arzú, peace negotiations were concluded, and the government and the URNG signed peace accords ending the 36-year internal conflict in December 1996.

I have shown in this chapter how, during the years of war, the military alliance between the Guatemalan and the U.S. government was less automatic than the alliance between the Salvadorian government and the U.S. Even though the Guatemalan rejection of U.S. aid was not as definitive as the Guatemalan Armed Forces and the government

⁷⁶ Interview with Raquel Zelaya, member of the governmental negotiating team during the peace negotiation. Casa Dann Carlton, Bogota, February 2008. Author's translation.

presented it, there were substantial periods of time in which the army fought the insurgency by using its own means and resources. Even U.S. economic aid to Guatemala, as the following graph illustrates, was substantially lower than in El Salvador and frequently, it was even lower than in Costa Rica and Honduras. This allowed the construction of a relatively autonomous foreign policy that insisted on the necessity to combat the URNG locally and without international interference. As I showed, the relationship with neighboring countries such as Mexico, was also characterized by a constant attempt to avoid the participation of international actors in the Guatemalan war.



Source: USAID Development Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean

(<http://qesdb.cdie.org/lac/index.html>)

In terms of the U.N. participation, the disagreement on Vendrell's action as the U.N. observer reveals a crucial feature of internationalization: when parties to the conflict perceive they have lost control over international actors involved, in this case in the peace process, they would try to block them or to de-internationalize. As Balconi suggests, this

is the tactic the government used once it realized the U.N. participation was leaning in favor of the URNG and its negotiation agenda. However, as it was the case in El Salvador, both parties agreed upon the participation of the United Nations first as an observer and later as a mediator and in charge of the accords verification. A very similar instance of this decision to de-internationalize took place at the end of the peace process held by the administration of president Pastrana in Colombia. When U.N. representative James Lemoyne attempted to change the government's negotiation position in order to resume talks with the FARC, the government strongly rejected its 'good offices' and asked him to withdraw from his mediation task.

Finally, in this chapter I have supported one of the main propositions I try to advance in this research, which is that domestic actors are able and frequently chose not to internationalize their own struggle. For the most part, international actors acquiesced, even though massive human rights violations were occurring and foreign diplomatic representations were being attacked. Guatemala has been considered the only instance of genocide in Latin America and during the worst years of state repression (1978-1982) international actors remained unconcerned and aloof. The URNG was so isolated and militarily weak that it did not have the chance to use the information about systematic and massive killings outside of the country, as an internationalization device to advance its own political and military position.

Chapter 7. Conclusions

In this thesis I have demonstrated three important arguments that constitute an important addition to the literature on the international dimensions of civil wars. First, I have argued and supported with empirical evidence that conflicting parties in domestic struggles do have an important amount of autonomy to decide if and when to invite international actors to participate in their struggle, actors such as states, international organizations or non-governmental organizations. Second, I posit that when parties do decide in favor of internationalization, the main assets both governments and insurgencies attempt to obtain through the employment of this strategy are military or logistic support and legitimacy. These two types of interests account for the main types of internationalization I identify in this thesis: military and political internationalization. Third, I have also suggested that the selection of actors conflicting parties decide to invite to participate in their wars or peace processes is broadly explained by the existence of shared world views with these international actors.

I have added a couple of caveats to this argument. First, I have suggested that the impact of these world views on the occurrence of internationalization is mediated by the parties' level of international exposure to the international system. In other words, parties who are not familiar with the benefits and risks that the international arena offers are less likely to employ internationalization strategies. Once they are exposed, they tend to identify more easily the world views they may share with international actors, they have more information to evaluate the benefits and costs of calling upon external allies, and in general, they tend to incorporate more frequently and systematically this strategy within their menu of options. The second caveat suggests that in the absence of shared world

views but in the presence of a very strong interest in obtaining military support or legitimacy from external actors, parties to the conflict (and more consistently, the state) engage in framing, mostly in order to construct these shared world views and then facilitate the creation and consolidation of alliances.

The final part of the argument insists that two factors act as conditions of possibility for internationalization to happen. The first is what I call structural elements—or the nature of the international system and the consequent willingness of international actors to participate. I insist in Chapter 1 that parties to the conflict never have an absolute autonomy to decide if and when to internationalize. In fact, if international actors have no interest in participating in these struggles and if parties fail to construct shared world views that attract their attention, then internationalization will not happen. The second condition of possibility is the conflicting parties' high level of internal fragmentation. In various cases I demonstrated that the necessity and the willingness to negotiate and solve these internal divisions lead sub-groups to construct alliances with international actors.

The comparative study of the internationalization of domestic struggles in Colombia, El Salvador and Guatemala has allowed me to examine empirically this argument. The occurrence of internationalization substantially varies in these three cases. As I suggest in Chapter 1, it is possible to observe high and consistent levels of internationalization in El Salvador and in Colombia at the end of the 1990s. That is not the case of the conflict in Guatemala or in Colombia before the 1990s. In Chapter 5 I posit that in El Salvador both the state and the insurgency are highly internationalized due to various reasons. In the case of the government, the cold war confrontation and the

shared world views between Washington and San Salvador in terms of counterinsurgency strategies facilitated this alliance. The level of fragmentation within the government, among elites and armed forces, also facilitated the employment of internationalization strategies. In fact, I describe various instances in which the government strengthened its alliance with the U.S. in order to weaken the opposition of various opposition sectors within the Armed Forces. In terms of the insurgency, the existence of world views—both ideological and strategic—between the FMLN and revolutionary governments in Cuba and Nicaragua explains this group's constant and systematic use of internationalization. But in this case, two additional factors are crucial: first and as I have documented, the need to overcome internal fragmentation and to move the organization toward a more moderate ideological position also account for the employment of internationalization; and second, the urban middle-class composition of the guerrillas made them closer and more exposed to regional and international dynamics, which also facilitated the implementation of their military and political internationalization strategies.

In Guatemala, both the government and the insurgency were substantially and traditionally more isolated from the international system than Salvadorian parties. Both the government and the insurgency had an interpretation of their conflict that did not necessarily fit the dynamics of the international confrontation between East and West. The government was more skeptical about allying with the United States and even rejected U.S. military and economic assistance due to its distrust toward Carter's administration and its human rights policy, which contradicted years of anti-communism and counter-insurgency in Central America. This distrust fed a deeply ingrained

nationalist world view. The design of the 'active neutrality policy' implemented by various military and civilian governments was a demonstration of this nationalist world view. However, this policy also helped the government accomplish a more pragmatic objective: it allowed the government to create a friendly regional scenario for Guatemala and its government, a scenario that served as a counterbalance to its very low levels of domestic legitimacy. The government thought that the only alternative to avoid an eventual international intervention due to its massive violations to human rights was to construct a regional scenario in favor of self-determination principles and in favor of a regional solution for regional problems.

In the case of the insurgency, the absence of shared world views with other insurgent groups or revolutionary governments was salient. The important indigenous component of the guerrilla, the lack of international exposure and, the absence of what in Chapter 1 I call *internationalization skills* account for the URNG's relative international isolation. Here the military balance of power between the conflicting parties is a crucial explaining factor to the extent that the URNG's constant and substantial weakness can also account for the lack of internationalization skills: a conflicting party that is being wiped out by governmental forces is less able to strategize at the international level. I demonstrated also that low levels of internal fragmentation and the existence of a nationalist world view within the URNG are also factors that contribute to understanding their reluctance to internationalize their struggle.

The Colombian conflict remained relative isolated from the international scenario until the beginning of the peace process in 1999. Even though, as I argue in Chapter 3, the government constructed an important alliance with the United States, the participation

of other international actors remained marginal. In fact, as it was the case during the Betancur administration, there were policies directed specifically at blocking the participation of international actors. During those years, efforts such as Contadora, were designed in order to further isolate the Colombian conflict from regional actors and influences.

In the case of what some have denominated the ‘special relation’ with Washington, it is crucial to highlight that there—due to the existence of a strong interest in obtaining military and economic support from the U.S.—consecutive Colombian governments employed very successful framing strategies in order to maintain and deepen Washington’s involvement. First, the construction of a counter-insurgent frame was helpful to obtain U.S. aid for combating liberal guerrillas, later the FARC and other insurgent organizations. Second and during the 80s, the construction of a ‘war against drugs’ frame constituted the main argument for the Colombian government to convince Washington of continuing its military assistance flow. The internationalization toward Washington adopted its most institutionalized form during the Pastrana administration and through Plan Colombia; this new and intensified alliance helped president Pastrana overcome high levels of internal fragmentation and opposition to negotiations with insurgent groups. Later, during the Uribe administration, the consolidation of a ‘global anti-terrorist’ frame to present the internal conflict in the post 9/11 context, facilitated the arrival of additional military aid from the U.S. in order to combat drugs and insurgency, now all part of the same illegal phenomenon.

The Colombian insurgent organizations, although in this topic the evidence is weaker than in the Salvadorian and Guatemalan case, remained relatively isolated from

the international arena only until recently. For the FARC, for instance, the conflict was strictly Colombian and needed to be resolved or negotiated by Colombians, which reflects the existence of a deeply nationalistic world view. Additionally, low levels of internal fragmentation did not facilitate the design and employment of an internationalization strategy. As I have documented, this anti-internationalization position remained even during the peace process with the Pastrana administration. But precisely during that time, the FARC was exposed more systematically to the international community and that facilitated a change in their attitude toward foreign actors. As I have described, FARC's main internationalization attempts took place or at least intensified after this peace process. The ELN, on the contrary, was an organization consistently more exposed to international trends and actors and therefore, less reluctant to allow their participation. I have documented ELN's contact and experiences with important sectors of the German, the Venezuelan and the Cuban government.

Even though I have demonstrated that it is crucial to observe and analyze conflicting parties' interests in order to understand if, when and how internationalization happens, I have to insist (as I did in the first Chapter) that this analysis needs to incorporate the international system dynamics. Without them, it is impossible to understand why external actors are willing or unwilling to participate in domestic struggles, and why they accept to participate under some formulas and not under others. In the same vein, it would be impossible to explain how levels of internal fragmentation within external actors also hinder parties' attempt to internationalize. I have demonstrated, for instance, how fragmentation within the U.S. government and divisions between the U.S. Congress and the Executive made parties' attempts to military

internationalize, in all three cases, strategies difficult to implement. Clearly, the U.S. Congress' concern with human rights issues hindered the delivery of military aid to El Salvador and to a lesser extent, to Guatemala; political disagreements between Congress and the Clinton government on the administration of the budget also hindered the initial approval of Plan Colombia.

However, fragmentation within all the actors involved poses a problem for the analysis of internationalization strategies. I suggested in Chapter 1 that internationalization is a mechanism parties to the conflict employ in order to improve their political and military position vis-à-vis their opponents. Clearly, this decision is mediated by various factors, such as the existence of shared world views and the level of the parties' international exposure. But even though internationalization is a highly constrained choice, it is still a decision based on a rational calculation. The benefits are international legitimacy and military improvement and that costs are normally given in terms of autonomy. The fact that fragmented parties are more likely to internationalize or that fragmented external actors can hinder internationalization, introduces a problem since rational choice approaches assume actors are unitary. However, as I have demonstrated, subgroups within conflicting parties still think about internationalization in a calculated manner; but the aggregation of their calculations does not necessarily account for the party final choice of internationalizing.

However, this is not the only problem still needs to be solved. In Chapter 1 I clarified that I would treat internationalization as a dependent variable since I am interested in exploring the decision-making process that lead to the construction of alliances between conflicting parties and international actors. However, I did not observe

the effects internationalization can produce in terms of the eventual resolution to the conflict and the status of the conflicting parties. This analysis is crucial for two reasons. On one hand, parties might take into account the eventual effects internationalization can have on the dynamics of the conflict and hence, they might introduce the probable results of internationalization into their calculations. In fact, parties might learn from other internationalization experiences and then derive lessons that shape their final decision to internationalize. On the other hand, an analysis of the effects of internationalization can have important implications in terms of policy: if it is possible to identify whether internationalization is more likely or less likely to end the conflict or reduce its intensity, or whether the forms it adopts might lead to a pacific and rapid resolution to the conflict, then it would be possible to suggest or recommend certain internationalization policies for states involved in domestic struggles. The case of Guatemala suggests, for instance, how the lack of internationalization and the relative absence of U.S. leverage to put pressure on the Guatemalan government, led to a high level of human rights violations in that country. This sort of conclusion invites us to analyze in a new fashion the practice of internationalization and to avoid its exclusive association with negative effects: internationalization leads to much more than the undermining of state sovereignty and in some cases, as I suggested in Chapter 1, it even strengthens state power. In the case of Guatemala, precisely the lack of internationalization contributed to the so-called *Guatemalan solution*: a war with no rules in which the government committed the genocide of an important part of the indigenous population in that country; this was complemented by the almost complete international community's indifference.

Also in terms of policy, this study has attempted to unveil an additional scenario for the study of the internationalization. The emphasis on the concept of intervention in the study of internationalization of civil conflicts has caused a perverse effect. To the extent all the weight of the decision relies on external actors, conflicting parties are not recognized as agents that could play a relevant role in the design and implementation of various forms of internationalization. This approach then removes any sort of political responsibility from the hands of domestic actors and portrays them exclusively as passive receptors of interventions. This reading is a very dangerous weapon in the hands of domestic political elites. It allows them to simply present themselves as powerless vis-à-vis foreign interventions and to keep denying they have any autonomy to make decisions related to the international dimensions of their own struggles. And as a consequence, nobody can hold them responsible.

This phenomenon is clearly observable in Colombia. The war against drugs, just to cite an example, has been presented as an imposition from Washington that Bogota has been unable to reject. In this interpretation, ironically, sometimes both left and right coincide and nobody is held accountable for the huge investment and the enormous failure of the war on drugs. Politicians and media repeated it endlessly: 'we had no choice.' According to this thesis, decision makers did have a choice. They decided that the 'war on drugs' frame was functional to their own objectives and by mixing it with the war against insurgency, they convinced the U.S. government to increase its military and financial support for both wars. In the same vein, when the anti-terrorist global war emerged, the Colombian government also had the choice to join or not to join the U.S. crusade; it opted for the former to the extent it considered that the benefits were high

and costs were relatively low. Consequently, interpreting internationalization and this sort of framing exercise as tools and choices available to internal parties to the conflict allows us to evaluate their role as policy makers and to assess responsibility.

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